

**EFFECTS OF GUEST EXPERIENCE,
WELL-BEING, AND ALTRUISM ON RESORT
HOTEL GUESTS' E-WORD-OF-MOUTH
INTENTION IN CHINA**

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INTENTION IN CHINA**

by

FAN YEDAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xv
ABSTRAK	xvi
ABSTRACT	xviii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.2.1 Developmental Background of China's Tourism Industry	1
1.2.2 The Tourism and Hospitality Industry in China	3
1.2.3 Embracing the Digital Age of the Hospitality Industry	6
1.2.4 COVID-19 Pandemic Hit Hospitality Industry in China	10
1.2.5 Domestic Market Opportunities during Post-Pandemic Era	11
1.2.6 Resort Hotel Segment of the Hospitality Industry in China	13
1.2.7 Marketing Value of eWOM for the Resort Hotel Sector	15
1.3 Problem Statement	17
1.3.1 Lack of Engagement in eWOM among Hotel Guests in China	17

1.3.2	Lack of Understanding on Well-being and Altruism to Drive eWOM	
	Intention	18
1.4	Research Gap	17
1.5	Research Objectives	29
1.6	Research Questions	30
1.7	Significance of the Study	30
1.7.1	Theoretical Contributions	30
1.7.2	Managerial Contributions	37
1.8	Definitions of Key Terminologies	36
1.9	The Scope of This Study	38
1.10	Summary	38
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	40
2.1	Introduction	40
2.2	Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM) Intention	40
2.2.1	Consumer Behaviour	40
2.2.2	eWOM Behaviour	42
2.2.3	eWOM Intention	48
2.3	Guest Experience	47
2.3.1	Entertainment Experience	49
2.3.2	Education Experience	51
2.3.3	Esthetic Experience	52
2.3.4	Escapism Experience	54

2.4	Well-being	55
2.4.1	Hedonic Well-being	59
2.4.2	Eudaimonic Well-being	61
2.5	Altruism	65
2.6	The Underpinning Theories	68
2.6.1	The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory	68
2.6.2	The Experience Economy Theory	77
2.7	Hypotheses Development	93
2.7.1	Stimulus-Organism: Guest Experience and Hedonic Well-being	93
2.7.2	Stimulus-Organism: Guest Experience and Eudaimonic Well-being ..	97
2.7.3	Organism-Response: Hedonic Well-being and eWOM Intention	101
2.7.4	Organism-Response: Eudaimonic Well-being and eWOM Intention	104
2.7.5	The Mediating Role of Hedonic Well-being	107
2.7.6	The Mediating Role of Eudaimonic Well-being	109
2.7.7	The Moderating Role of Altruism	111
2.8	Theoretical Framework	114
2.9	Summary	115
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		117
3.1	Introduction	117
3.2	Research Philosophy	117
3.3	Research Design	120
3.3.1	Research Approach	120

3.3.2	Research Method	122
3.3.3	Research Strategy	123
3.4	Date Collection	125
3.4.1	Target Population	125
3.4.2	Unit of Analysis	125
3.4.3	Sample Size Determination	126
3.4.4	Sampling Technique	129
3.4.5	Data Collection Procedure	129
3.5	Questionnaire Development	130
3.5.1	Section One	131
3.5.1(a)	Entertainment Experience	131
3.5.1(b)	Education Experience	131
3.5.1(c)	Esthetic Experience	131
3.5.1(d)	Escapism Experience	132
3.5.2	Section Two	133
3.5.2(a)	Hedonic Well-being	133
3.5.2(b)	Eudaimonic Well-being	134
3.5.3	Section Three	135
3.5.4	Section Four	136
3.5.5	Section Five	137
3.5.6	Section Six	138
3.6	Questionnaire Pretest	138

3.7	Questionnaire Translation	139
3.8	Pilot Test	140
3.9	Data Analysis Technique	141
3.9.1	Reflective Measurement Model Assessment	142
3.9.2	Structural Model Assessment	144
3.9.3	Analysis of Mediation Effects	147
3.9.4	Analysis of Moderation Effects	149
3.10	Summary	152
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS	154
4.1	Introduction	154
4.2	Response Rate and Missing Value	154
4.3	Data Assumption	155
4.4	Common Method Bias	156
4.5	Descriptive Analysis	159
4.5.1	Demographic Profile	159
4.5.2	Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Variable	162
4.6	Internal Reliability Assessment	163
4.7	Measurement Model Assessment	165
4.7.1	Construct Reliability and Validity	165
4.7.2	Discriminant Validity	167
4.7.3	Goodness of Model Fit Assessment	168
4.8	Structural Model Assessment	170

4.8.1	Collinearity Assessment	171
4.8.2	Assessment of the Significance of Path Coefficients (Direct Paths) ..	172
4.8.3	Mediation Effects Assessment (Indirect Paths)	175
4.8.4	Moderation Effects Assessment (Indirect Paths)	178
4.8.5	Assessment of Structural Model's Explanatory Power	179
4.8.5(a)	Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Assessment	179
4.8.5(b)	Effect Size (f^2) Assessment	180
4.9	Importance and Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA)	181
4.10	Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results	183
4.11	Summary	185
CHAPTER 5	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	186
5.1	Introduction	186
5.2	Results Recapitulation	186
5.3	Discussions	188
5.3.1	Research Question 1	189
5.3.2	Research Question 2	195
5.3.3	Research Question 3	197
5.3.4	Research Question 4	201
5.4	Conclusions	203
5.4.1	Theoretical Implications of This Study	203
5.4.2	Managerial Implications of This Study	209
5.4.3	Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies	213

5.5 Summary	216
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REFERENCES	217
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APPENDICES

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1 Previous studies of SOR model.....	72
Table 2.2 Previous studies of experience economy.....	84
Table 2.3 Hypotheses summary.....	115
Table 3.1 Structure of questionnaire.....	130
Table 3.2 Section one of questionnaire.....	132
Table 3.3 Section two of questionnaire.....	134
Table 3.4 Section three of questionnaire.....	135
Table 3.5 Section four of questionnaire.....	136
Table 3.6 Section five of questionnaire.....	137
Table 3.7 The list of experts invited for pretest.....	139
Table 3.8 Results of pilot test (reliability statistics).....	140
Table 4.1 Response rate.....	155
Table 4.2 Results of Harman's single-factor test.....	158
Table 4.3 Common method variance testing using marker variable.....	158
Table 4.4 Demographic profile of respondents (N=445).....	161
Table 4.5 Mean and standard deviation.....	162
Table 4.6 Rules of thumb regarding Cronbach's alpha value.....	164
Table 4.7 Reliability statistics for the variables (N=445).....	164
Table 4.8 Results of construct reliability and validity.....	166
Table 4.9 Results of discriminant validity (HTMT ratios).....	168
Table 4.10 Model fit summary.....	169
Table 4.11 Collinearity Assessment.....	171
Table 4.12 Results of hypotheses testing (direct effects).....	174
Table 4.13 Results of hypotheses testing (mediation effects).....	177
Table 4.14 Results of hypotheses testing (moderation effects).....	178
Table 4.15 Coefficient of determination (R^2) values.....	180

Table 4.16	Effect size (f^2) of the latent construct.....	181
Table 4.17	Results of importance-performance.....	183
Table 4.18	Summary of hypotheses testing results.....	184

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1	Revenue generated from tourism in China from 2011 to 2021..... 4
Figure 1.2	Annual change in the tourism revenue in China from 2011 to 2021....4
Figure 1.3	Ratio map of hotel grades distribution..... 5
Figure 1.4	Revenue of hotel enterprises above designated size in 2006-2021..... 6
Figure 1.5	Number of hotel room nights booked online.....8
Figure 1.6	Top 5 sources of inspiration (% of respondents, weighted)..... 9
Figure 1.7	International tourist arrivals (in thousands) all over the world..... 10
Figure 2.1	A Venn diagram of a re-conceptualised SOR model..... 70
Figure 2.2	The four realms of an experience..... 79
Figure 2.3	Theoretical framework..... 114
Figure 3.1	G*Power analysis..... 128
Figure 3.2	A mediator of M..... 148
Figure 3.3	Two mediators of M1 and M2..... 149
Figure 3.4	A moderator of M..... 151
Figure 3.5	Interaction term in moderation..... 151
Figure 4.1	Results of Mardia's multivariate skewness and kurtosis calculation156
Figure 4.2	R^2 value and path coefficient without marker variable..... 158
Figure 4.3	R^2 value and path coefficient with marker variable..... 159
Figure 4.4	Two stages of assessments in PLS-SEM..... 165
Figure 4.5	Importance-performance map..... 183

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average variance extracted
BC	Before Christ
B&B	Bed and breakfast
CHA	China Hospitality Association
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
CI	Confidence interval
CMV	Common method variance
CR	Composite reliability
eWOM	Electronic word-of-mouth
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoF	Goodness of fit index
GOSC	General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China
GSB	Graduate School of Business
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio
ICT	Information and communication technology
IPMA	Importance-performance map analysis
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LM	Linear regression model
MCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China
MV	Marker variable
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
OTA	Online travel agency
PLS	Partial least squares
PLS-SEM	Partial least squares-structural equation modeling
RO	Research objective
RQ	Research question
SD	Standard deviation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEM	Structural equation modeling

SOR	Stimulus-organism-response
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	Standardised root mean square residual
TPB	The theory of planned behaviour
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
VIF	Variance inflation factor
VR	Virtual reality
WB	World Bank
WOM	Word-of-mouth

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Results of Pretest
APPENDIX B	Survey Questionnaire
APPENDIX C	Survey Form (English Version)
APPENDIX D	Survey Form (Chinese Version)
APPENDIX E	Frequency Tables: Demographic Profile of Respondents
APPENDIX F	Descriptive Statistics
APPENDIX G	Common Method Bias
APPENDIX H	Internal Reliability Assessment
APPENDIX I	Measurement Model
APPENDIX J	Structural Model
APPENDIX K	R-square

**KESAN PENGALAMAN TETAMU, KESEJAHTERAAN DAN ALTRUISME
TERHADAP NIAT E-MULUT KE MULUT OLEH TEMAMU HOTEL
RESORT DI CHINA**

ABSTRAK

Perkataan mulut ke mulut (WOM), terutamanya WOM elektronik (eWOM), adalah penting untuk kejayaan perniagaan. Walau bagaimanapun, statistik menunjukkan trend penurunan kesediaan perkongsian eWOM dalam kalangan tetamu hotel di China sejak 2015. Memandangkan pengalaman dinilai sebagai tempat kelebihan daya saing mengikut sejauh mana tetamu menikmati pengalaman mereka dan mencapai perasaan dan fantasi positif, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memahami mekanisme antara pengalaman, kesejahteraan dan niat eWOM. Kajian ini menyepadukan model *Experience Economy* dengan skema rangsangan-organisma-tindak balas (SOR) untuk menilai kesan tidak langsung pengalaman tetamu terhadap niat eWOM tetamu di China melalui reaksi psikologi. Secara khusus, pengalaman hiburan, pengalaman pendidikan, pengalaman estetik dan pengalaman pelarian berfungsi sebagai rangsangan, kesejahteraan hedonik dan kesejahteraan eudaimonik telah disesuaikan sebagai organisma, yang akhirnya membawa kepada niat eWOM sebagai tindak balas tingkah laku. Selain itu, peranan penyederhanaan altruisme sebagai motif niat eWOM telah disiasat. Pemodelan persamaan struktur kuasa dua terkecil separa telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data kuantitatif yang dikumpul dalam talian daripada tetamu domestik sektor hotel

tempat peranginan di China (N=445). Keputusan menunjukkan kesan langsung ketara pengalaman tetamu terhadap kesejahteraan, serta perkaitan langsung antara kesejahteraan dan niat eWOM. Tambahan pula, kesan pengantaraan kesejahteraan hedonik dan kesejahteraan eudaimonik antara pengalaman tetamu dan niat eWOM juga digambarkan sebagai penting. Walau bagaimanapun, peranan penyederhanaan altruisme mengenai niat eWOM gagal disokong. Kajian ini memberikan pandangan tentang mekanisme psikologi antara pengalaman tetamu, kesejahteraan, altruisme dan niat eWOM dalam konteks hotel tempat peranginan. Sehubungan itu, penemuan juga membawa kepada implikasi pengurusan yang memberi manfaat kepada pemasar hospitaliti, pembuat dasar untuk melaksanakan atau menyesuaikan strategi pemasaran. Had termasuk tahap kebolehgeneralisasian, pengabaian perbezaan budaya, dan gagal menangkap penyederhana niat eWOM.

EFFECTS OF GUEST EXPERIENCE, WELL-BEING AND ALTRUISM ON RESORT HOTEL GUESTS' E-WORD-OF-MOUTH INTENTION IN CHINA

ABSTRACT

Guests' word-of-mouth (WOM), especially electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), is critical for business success. However, statistics showed a decreasing trend of eWOM sharing willingness among hotel guests in China since 2015. Since experience is valued as a venue of competitive advantages according to the extent to which guests enjoy their experience and achieve positive feelings and fantasies, this study aims to understand the mechanism between experience, well-being and eWOM intention. This study integrated the *Experience Economy* model and positive psychology into the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) schema to predict guests' eWOM intention in China. Specifically, entertainment experience, education experience, esthetic experience and escapism experience served as stimuli, hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being were applied as organism, which ultimately led to eWOM intention as behavioural response. Besides, the moderating role of altruism as a motive of eWOM intention was investigated. Partial least squares structural equation modelling was utilised to analyse quantitative data collected online from domestic guests of the resort hotel sector in China (N=445). Results demonstrated significant direct effects of guest experience on well-being, as well as direct associations between well-being and eWOM intention. Furthermore, the mediation effects of hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being between guest

experience and eWOM intention were also illustrated as significant. Nonetheless, this study was not able to support the moderating role of altruism concerning eWOM intention. This study provided insights on the psychological mechanism between guest experience, well-being, altruism and eWOM intention in the context of resort hotel. Accordingly, findings also led to managerial implications which were beneficial for the hospitality marketers, policy makers to implement or adjust marketing strategies. Limitations included the level of generalisability, neglect of cultural differences, and was not able to capture the moderator of eWOM intention.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter began with an introduction of the economic and political background of tourism and hospitality industry in China, then explained new market trends and marketing opportunities for the hospitality industry, especially for the resort hotel sector in post-pandemic era, followed by a specified research problem in the hospitality industry. Based on the problem statement, research gaps were identified, research questions, research objectives and the significance of this study were stated, key items derived from literature review were defined, as well as the scope of this study was presented with a summary of this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Developmental Background of China's Tourism Industry

Benefits from the reform and opening-up policy implemented in China since 1978, China has transformed from an underdeveloped country to the world's second largest economy as early as in the year of 2010 (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2011). As one of the world's fastest-growing major economy, China's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 has reached to 99.09 trillion RMB (i.e. 14.28 trillion USD, World Bank, WB) with a 6.1% growth rate compared to the last year (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2021). In 2020, China's GDP increased to 101.6 trillion RMB (i.e. 14.72 trillion USD, WB) though

the annual growth rate suffered a decline of 2.3% compared to that of 2019 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The rapidly economic development has improved the level of living standard of Chinese people, while per capita GDP (current USD) leaped from 156.4 in 1978 to 10500.4 in 2020 (WB).

Along with the economic growth and the rising standard of living, Chinese consumers have shifted their consumption patterns towards a more diversified ones. As a result, tourism and leisure has been an imperative part of people's lives. To better support the development of tourism industry, to satisfy the increasing needs and demands for leisure and tourism, as well as to improve the level of well-being of Chinese citizens, the General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (GOSC) has issued the official document of "Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Tourism Industry" (GOSC, 2009) and subsequently "The National Tourism and Leisure Outline (2013-2020) " in 2013 as a national policy (GOSC, 2013). Furthermore, the centralised government has formulated the "13th Five-Year Tourism Development Plan" (GOSC, 2016), and "14th Five-Year Plan for Culture and Tourism Development" (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, MCT, 2021a).

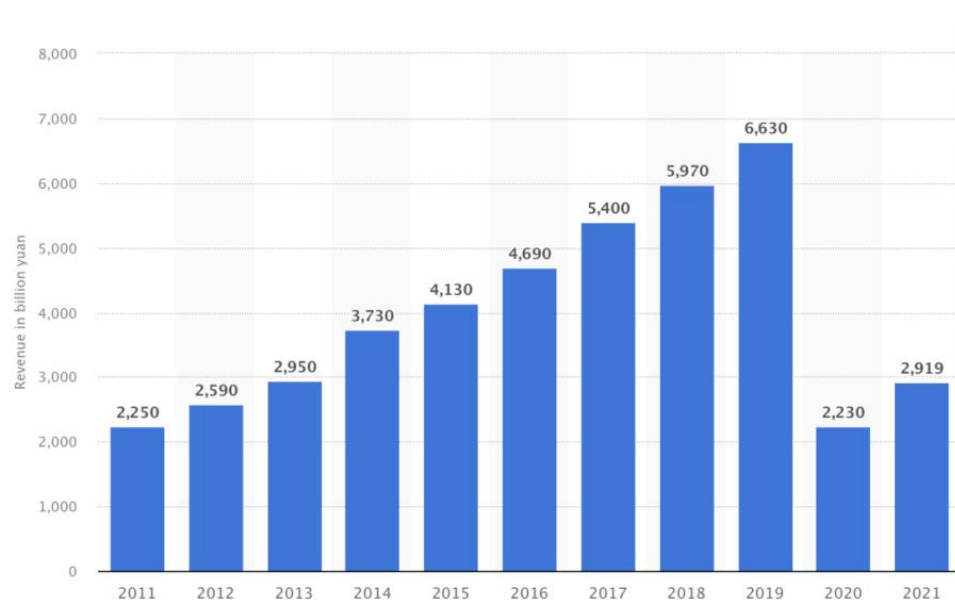
The intensive policies and official documents have revealed a macro-oriented supportive environment for tourism industry in China, which highlights the government's determination and confidence in sustaining and developing tourism industry. The nationwide support from the Chinese government, align with a solid

economic base and improved standard of living have laid great foundation for the prosperity of tourism industry, which is viewed as a beneficial sector to promote citizen's physical and mental health.

1.2.2 The Tourism and Hospitality Industry in China

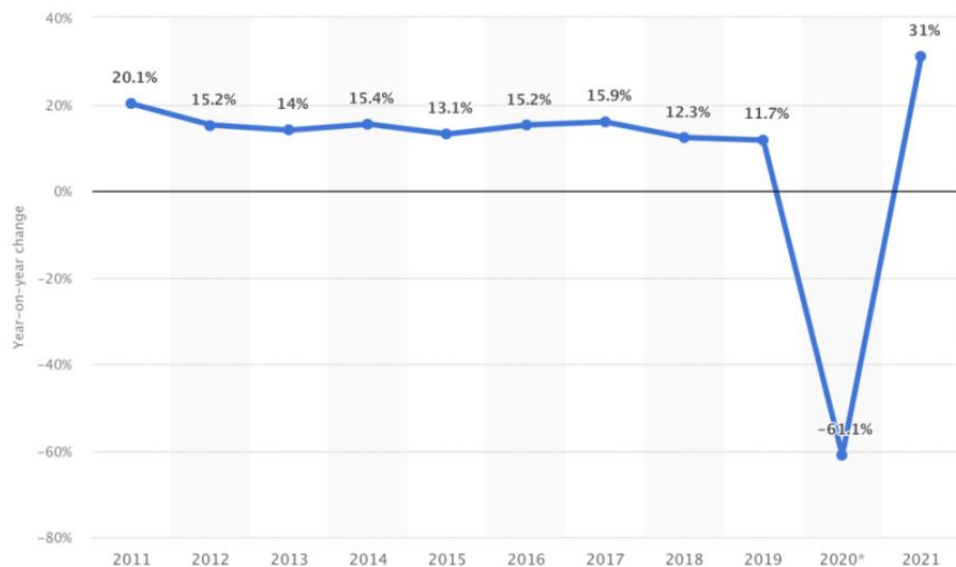
Supportive policies, as well as the improved economic conditions have facilitated the booming of the tourism in China. Recent years have witnessed the explosion of numbers of travelers in China, with a huge contribution of tourism revenue to the national GDP. The tourism industry has become a vital contributor to China's economy, and due to the considerably potential domestic market with a population of 1.4 billion, China has been the world's largest travel and tourism economy with a global market share surpassing the United States in 2019 (Statista, 2022a). Estimated by Statista (2022a), the whole tourism industry (i.e. travel for recreation, leisure, business or other purposes) has experienced a surge growth over the last decade and contributed 6-7 trillion U.S. dollars in revenue. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual growth rate of tourism revenue in 2019 in China was 11.7%, while the highest annual growth rate was 20.1% in 2011 (Statista, 2022b). However, the year 2020 witnessed a considerable drop in revenue due to the pandemic whereas in 2021, the revenue from tourism in China increased by 31% compared to the prior year. The figures provided below (see Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2) showed an upward trend of tourism revenue in China before the pandemic, as well as a dramatic drop during the pandemic (Statista, 2022a), along with a

fluctuating annual change of the tourism revenue in 2011-2021, respectively (Statista, 2022b).



Source: Statista (2022a)

Figure 1.1 Revenue generated from tourism in China from 2011 to 2021

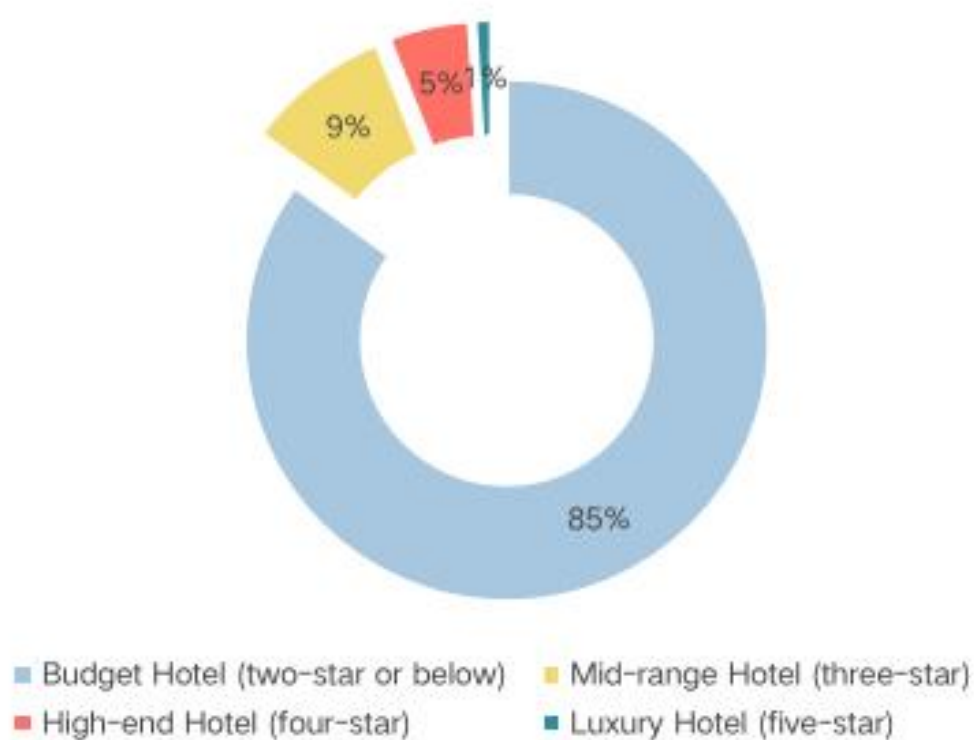


Source: Statista (2022b)

Figure 1.2 Annual change in the tourism revenue in China from 2011 to 2021

The hospitality industry, which guarantees the providing of food, accommodation, leisure spaces for travelers in tourism destinations, is highly

interlinked with the booming tourism. Over the past decade, the hospitality industry in China has grown steadily in size and revenue with a total number of hotel accommodations surpassing 447 thousand and room numbers over 16 million in end of 2020 (China Hospitality Association, CHA, 2021a). The hospitality industry offers a wide range of accommodation choices spanning from budget inns to luxury resorts (Ma, 2020). By the end of 2020, China has recorded more than 279 thousand star-rated hotel accommodations, classified into two star or below (budget), three star (mid-range), four star (i.e., high-end) and five star (i.e., luxury) (CHA, 2021a) (see Figure 1.3). The majority of the Chinese hospitality market is occupied by budget and mid-range hotels, while the supply of high-end and luxury hotels is only 6% as a whole (CHA, 2021a).

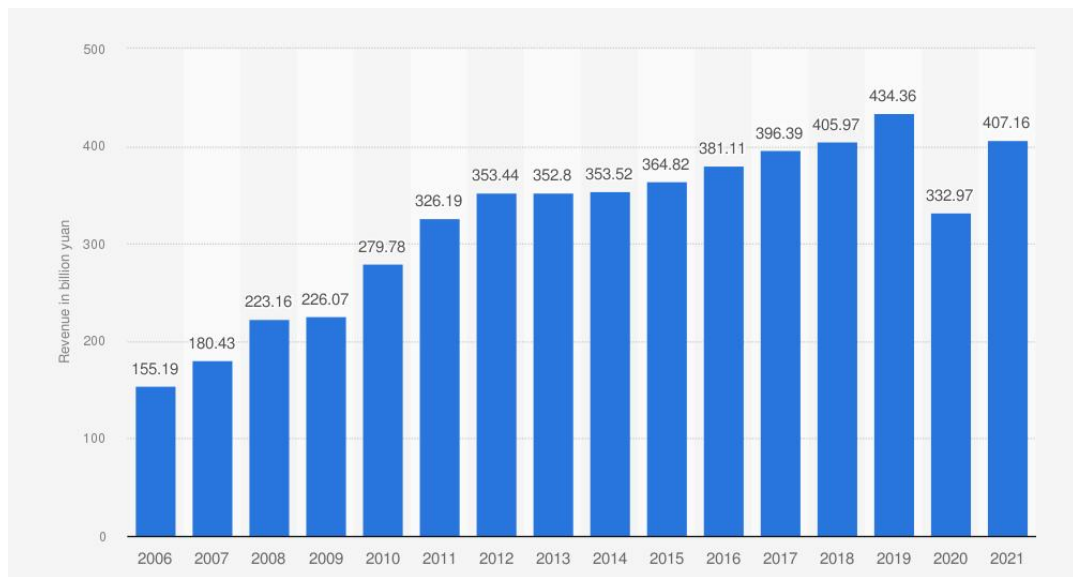


Source: China Hospitality Association (2021a)

Figure 1.3 Ratio map of hotel grades distribution

In general, the hospitality industry in China has entered the fast-evolving era, with an upward trend of revenue from 2006 to 2021 (Statista, 2022c). According to

Statista (2022c), the industry has contributed a highest revenue of 434.36 billion yuan in 2019, followed by a considerable drop in 2020. Figure 1.4 has revealed the increasing trend of hotel revenue in China before the pandemic, along with the influence of the pandemic on revenue of the hotel industry (Statista, 2022c).



Source: Statista (2022c)

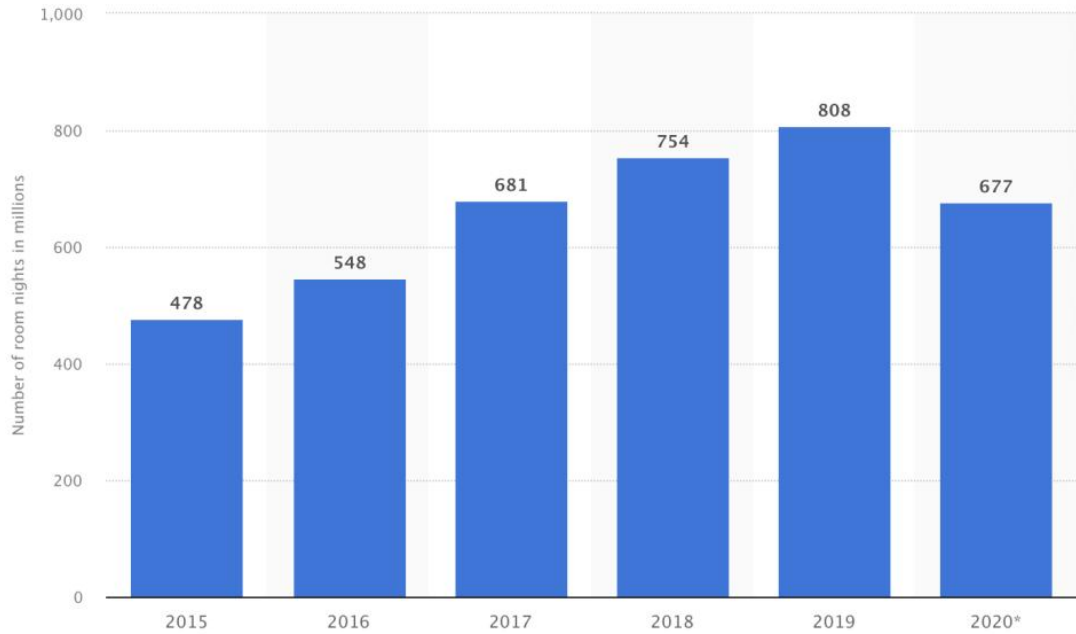
Figure 1.4 Revenue of hotel enterprises above designated size in 2006-2021

1.2.3 Embracing the Digital Age of the Hospitality Industry

With the development of advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs) (e.g., mobile application) (Tan, Lee, Lin & Ooi, 2017), China has embraced the digital age and witnessed a surge number of Internet users and mobile Internet users in the recent two decades. According to the latest official report provided by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, 2023) by the end of December, 2022, the number of Internet users in China has increased to 1.067 billion, with an Internet penetration rate of 75.6%; the number of mobile Internet

users has reached 1.065 billion, with a proportion of 99.8% of mobile Internet users using mobile phones to access the Internet.

Based on the prevalence of Internet, mobile Internet, smart devices and digital payments in China, the hospitality industry has encountered the frontline of the digital age, which involving thrived online booking business (Ma, 2022). China's hospitality industry has been widely cooperating with several leading platforms, which is also called as Online Travel Agency (OTA), such as Ctrip, Qunar, Meituan, to further compete in the accommodation market. According to Ma (2022), the number of monthly active online accommodation booking service users was more than 14 million at the beginning of 2021 with the inclusion of hotels and short-term rentals. As a key indicator of online hotel booking business, the number of online bookings of hotel room nights in China reached 808 million nights in 2019 (Statista, 2022d). However, there was a decreased estimate for 2020 due to the pandemic issue (Statista, 2022d). Figure 1.5 showed the detailed information.



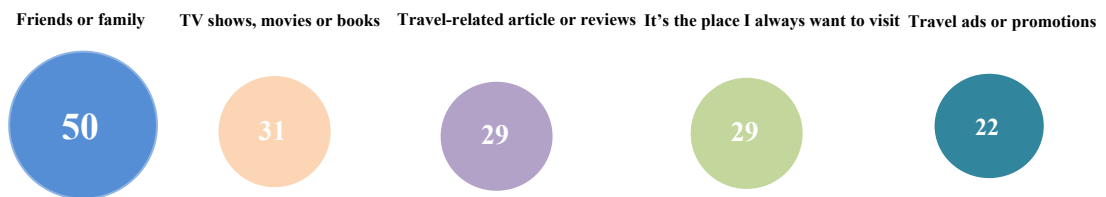
Source: Statista (2022d)

Figure 1.5 Number of hotel room nights booked online in China from 2015 to 2019 with an estimate for 2020

In addition to the increasing popularity of online booking, to some extent, the ICTs also significantly influence Chinese guests' behaviour. Since hotel products and services are intangible and experiential in nature, guests are cautious about their decisions of hotel choice, while the Internet and ICTs make it possible, available and convenient for guests to seek related information and facilitate decision-making via online sources (Yen & Tang, 2019; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). For example, online reviews on Ctrip (i.e. China's largest OTA, Statista, 2022d) about a hotel product or brand which consist of textual, visual or rating information, can help its potential guests to reduce risks and uncertainties of the intangible attributes and to add confidence of their decisions (Jeong & Jang, 2011; Litvin et al., 2008). Besides, online reviews from different platforms, such as Meituan, Fliggy, Qunar, Tongcheng, Booking, Agoda, Expedia (Top Ten Brand Networks in China, 2021), can be used to

compare and identify discrepancies of a product, to recognise reliable information and to finalise decisions (Jeong & Jang, 2011; Litvin et al., 2008).

Furthermore, online reviews has been a source of stimulation that can elicit consumption demand which is beneficial to business performance. According to a report of McKinsey & Company, which is named as “China consumer report 2021: Understanding Chinese consumers, growth engine of the world special edition” (see Figure 1.6), “travel related article or reviews” is evaluated as the third source of inspiration that influenced consumers’ travel-related choices and decisions (McKinsey & Company, 2020).



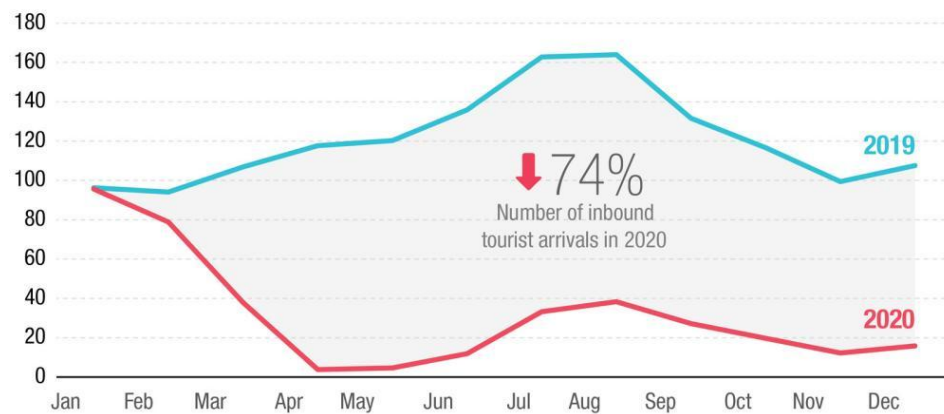
Source: McKinsey & Company (2020)

Figure 1.6 Top 5 sources of inspiration (% of respondents, weighted)

The powerful impact of online information on consumers has been highlighted in the digital age. On one hand, along with the increasing base of Internet users in China, the marketplace for online business is more and more attractive for the hospitality industry. On the other hand, online reviews has been viewed as a source of inspiration that can be employed as a tool to stimulate consumers’ demands. Therefore, it’s necessary to understand the important role of eWOM for the hospitality industry as consumers rely on shared information and recommendations online with regard to their travel related decisions, such as hotel booking.

1.2.4 COVID-19 Pandemic Hit Hospitality Industry in China

Unexpectedly, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has attacked world's economy and turned the world upside down. The tourism and hospitality industry was particularly vulnerable and was seriously suffered, and China was no exception. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), due to the lockdown implementations all over the world, in 2020, the number of international tourist arrivals declined by about 1 billion or 73% compared to the previous year (UNWTO, 2021). The decreasing trend has continued in the first quarter of 2021, in which there was a decline of 84% of the number of international tourists arrivals (UNWTO, 2021). The trend map presented the difference of international tourist arrivals before and after the pandemic (see Figure 1.7).



Source: UNWTO (2021)

Figure 1.7 International tourist arrivals (in thousands) all over the world

With regard to the hospitality industry in China, during the first outbreak of the COVID-19, that from mid December, 2019 to mid January, 2020, the overall occupancy level dropped by 89% then stayed around 10% until the end of February,

2020 (Zhang, Cui, Xu & Wang, 2020). The impact of the pandemic was highest in February, 2020, when all major Chinese cities has a decline of more than 85% of hotel revenue (Zhang et al., 2020). The direct influence of economic loss was prominent in hospitality industry, both from the inbound and domestic market in 2020. The indirect impact of the pandemic roots in Chinese citizen' attitudes and behavioural patterns toward lifestyle and travel preference (Wen, Wang & Kozak, 2021a; Li, Zhang, Liu, Kozak & Wen, 2020). From an individual perspective, the COVID-19 increases risk perceptions, including health risk, psychological risk, image risk, etc., and leads to a higher level of sensitivity of individual's physical and mental health (Wen, Kozak, Yang & Liu, 2021b; Li et al., 2020). To respond this emerging issue, scholars have also predicted a trend of the growing popularity of free and independent travel, luxury trips and health-related products and services (Wen et al., 2021b). As the hospitality industry suffered a lot amid COVID-19 pandemic, a rapid recovery needs deliberate efforts to mitigate the potential guests' perceptions of risks and cater the needs for health and well-being (Li et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2021a, 2021b).

1.2.5 Domestic Market Opportunities during Post-Pandemic Era

Due to the effective and efficient lockdown restrictions executed in China, the COVID-19 pandemic was under control in the mid-year of 2020, and all the industries were recovering after the loose of lockdown measures. With the rejuvenated economy, leisure demands for traveling is recovering among Chinese

citizens. However, as a result of the strict restrictions and closed borders all over the world, the international outbound tourism is still limited, which is transformed into the domestic market surprisingly. Even though international inbound market of 2020 in China had little function on the tourism and hospitality revenue, the domestic market really performed dramatically due to the demand transformation. In the mainland China, all types of domestic travel have been recovering from the pandemic, including local leisure trips, domestic short haul and long haul, and domestic business travel (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

The Labor Day Golden Week of 2021 in China remarked the resurgence of domestic hospitality industry. According to the official statistics announced by the MCT, from May 1st to 5th, a total amount of 230 million domestic tourists traveled across the country, with an increased of 119.7% compared to 2020, as well as an increase of 103.2% of the same period before the pandemic (MCT, 2021b). The compensatory consumption during the golden week shed lights on recovery opportunities for the hospitality. The long-lasting lockdown restriction over the world has greatly limited international travel, indicating that previous outbound hospitality market has the potentiality to shift into the domestic market in China, especially for high-quality hotels (e.g., resort hotels).

The reality echoed the prediction of Wen et al. (2021b) in hospitality industry, where information from the MCT showed a prevailing trend of high-quality lifestyle products, such as luxury resort hotels (MCT, 2021b). In the meanwhile, Ctrip (one of

China's major OTA) and Xinhua Finance have jointly published the "2021 Labor Day golden week travel big data report" in China, in which ranked Top 10 Popular Hotel during the period, and 8 of whom are resort hotels equipped with experiential theme (Ctrip & Xinhua Finance, May 8th, 2021). The prevalence of resort hotel, which representing a leisure- and experience- oriented lifestyle, is indicating a momentum of high-end hospitality products in domestic market.

1.2.6 Resort Hotel Segment of the Hospitality Industry in China

According to Law Insider online (2021), resort hotel is defined as "a place providing a wide variety of recreational facilities/programs (golf courses, tennis courts, beach access, or other amenities) rather than convention and meeting business". "Resort hotels are normally located in suburban or outlying locations on larger sites than conventional hotels", which is "similar to conventional hotels which provide sleeping accommodations, restaurants, cocktail lounges, retail shops, and other guest services, while the primary difference is that resort hotels cater to the tourist and vacation industry".

In China, the MCT has assessed the hospitality industry (which including food service and/or accommodation service) with a star-rated hotel rating system, and the lodging segment is counted with the minimum criteria of 15 rooms in accommodation facilities. Though official statistics of the whole hospitality industry is available, less attention has been paid to the sub-segment markets, hence, seldom official statistics of resort hotel can be found with some exceptions of industrial

information. Commonly, in China, the resort hotel segment is included in the five-star hotel category. A resort hotel may be located in a variety of settings from urban cities to remote rural ones, which is characterised by distinguished architecture, luxury design of indoor environment, entertainment facilities such as gym or spa center, restaurants, and recreation activities, such as golf, skiing, or surfing. A business report from LeadLeo (2019) categorised Chinese resort hotels into three types: weekend resort hotels, travel-related resort hotels and ecosystem-related resort hotels based on their locations and facilities. The weekend resort hotel is related to those located in medium- or large- scale urban cities with convenient transportation, which provides cultural activities, shopping experiences, natural or artificial surrounding and attractions (LeadLeo, 2019). The travel-related resort hotel refers to those located in the natural tourism destinations, with leisure activities such as golf, ski, spa, surfing, etc, (LeadLeo, 2019). The ecosystem-related resort hotel is developed based on ecosystem, in which the local rural, forestry, or other nature-based resources are the main characteristics with related leisure entertainment activities and services (LeadLeo, 2019).

As mentioned before, the hospitality market is embracing an increasingly popularity of high-end products, and the importance of resort hotel has been consistently accelerating due to the healthy lifestyle with various natural-based resources and activities (Ahn, Back & Boger, 2019; Juan & Lin, 2011). The resort hotel is showing a considerable momentum in the hospitality market in China for recovering from the pandemic, which makes the resort hotel segment as an

interesting field of study in the post-pandemic era. However, the context of resort hotel hasn't been paid too much attention even though it has been acknowledged as an importance segment for the development of tourism and hospitality. Hence, the resort hotel context is studied where an emerging trend has been observed in China during post-pandemic period.

1.2.7 Marketing Value of eWOM for the Resort Hotel Sector

The high potentiality of domestic market and the popularity of high-end hospitality products are all indicating more marketing value of eWOM for the hospitality industry, especially for the resort hotel. The marketing value of eWOM has been studied in prior WOM literature, which is particularly significant for hospitality industry (Lopes, Dens, De Pelsmacker & Malthouse, 2023; Phillips, Barnes, Zigan & Schegg, 2017; Ye, Law & Gu, 2009). eWOM information can not only be provided by reliable families, friends, relatives, who share verbal or visual contents by using their blogs, instant messages, social media apps, or virtual conversations (Ring, Tkaczynski & Dolnicar, 2016; Litvin et al., 2008), but also be shared from anonymous online users (Phillips et al., 2017; Litvin et al., 2008). With various formats and channels, eWOM has enlarged the range of information diffusion, enriched the content of textual, pictorial, and visual information, increased the ability of long-time storage, and provided with abundant alternatives for potential consumers, thus is evaluated as an interactive, credible and trustworthy source of

information (Mukhopadhyay, Pandey & Rishi, 2023; Sann, Lai & Chen, 2021; Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Prendergast, Ko & Yin, 2010).

As a reliable source of information, eWOM can help potential guests to decrease their time and effort on decision making, as well as contribute to a more satisfying decision outcome (Abbasi, Tsiotsou, Hussain, Rather & Ting, 2023; Lopes et al., 2023; Kim & Hwang, 2022; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Litvin et al., 2008; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). eWOM, as a source of advice can stimulate potential guests' demands (e.g., prepurchase intention) (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2023; Lim, Ahmed & Ali, 2022; Liang, Choi & Joppe, 2018; Yen & Tang, 2015). Hence, eWOM (e.g., positive hotel reviews online as a proxy) has the power to increase the number of hotel bookings, ultimately leads to increased sales (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2023; Ye et al., 2009). In this vein, eWOM, is deem to be an effective marketing tool for hospitality industry.

With this regard, more attention should be paid to the online landscape, in terms of the online booking business and potential market force. Taken into account of the marketing value of eWOM, the resort hotel sector of the hospitality industry should intentionally formulate their marketing strategies to better grasp the marketing opportunities during the post-pandemic era in China.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Lack of Engagement in eWOM among Hotel Guests in China

China Hospitality Association issued a report called “2020 online word-of-mouth report of China’s hotel market”, based on a systematic analysis of 291 million online reviews of hotels derived from 18 main OTAs of more than 900 thousands hotels in China (CHA, 2020b). The report provided a set of data of numbers and changes of online reviews and rating of China’s star-rated hotels. There were 44.47 million online reviews and rating of star-rated hotels generated in 2015, however, the overall number decreased to 33.56 million in 2016. After a little increased amount of 37.98 million in 2017, the number decreased again in 2018 and 2019, which was 37.33 million and 35.83 million, respectively (CHA, 2020b). Furthermore, the growth rate of the number of hotel online reviews and rating indicated a rapid drop from 78.28% in 2015 to -4.01% in 2019 (CHA, 2020b). Moreover, the number of online reviews and rating continually shrunk with a -27.6% percent in 2020 compared to 2019 due to the rapidly drop in demand of accommodation during the pandemic period (CHA, 2021).

Overall, generated online reviews and rating of star-rated hotels in China, in terms of numbers and growth rate, showed a declined trend during 2015-2020. As a kind of non-verbal communication, online reviews and rating could be viewed as a proxy of eWOM (Raguseo & Vitari, 2017; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), however, the statistics showed a decreasing trend of eWOM willingness among hotel guests.

The declined situation of non-verbal communication and rating indicated that hotel guests were reluctant to spending extra time on writing comments and rating hotels. It's reported that the increasingly homogeneous service reduces consumers' willingness to comment so that eWOM marketing is facing the new problem mentioned above (CHA, 2020b).

The decreasing trend of non-verbal engagement and rating may lead to less opinion leaders and less voluntary recommendations for hotel products and services. While encourage guests' engagement in eWOM frequently could significantly influence marketing performance, in terms of visible booking sales and invisible benefits, such as image and reputation (Abbasi et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2017; Litvin & Hoffman, 2012; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), how to encourage guests' willingness of eWOM remains unclear.

1.3.2 Lack of Understanding on Well-being and Altruism to Drive eWOM Intention

While experience is viewed as a venue for competitive advantages in business, extensive attention has been paid to investigate the role of experience on consumer behaviour, such as recommend intention, revisit intention, WOM intention (Kim & Han, 2022; Lee, Jeong & Qu, 2020; Radder & Han, 2015; Hosany & Witham, 2010). Empirical evidences have demonstrated the direct effect of experience on behavioural intention, for example, cuisine experience is directly related to revisit intention to a hot spring destination (Lin, 2014; Lin, 2013); escapism experience

directly exerts influence theme park visitors' revisit intention significantly (Lee et al., 2020), and esthetic as well as entertainment experience is significantly related to intention to recommend among cruise passengers (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Yet, studies also revealed insignificantly direct influences of experience on behavioural outcomes, in which entertainment, education, esthetic experiences have no impact on revisit intention, escapism and esthetic experiences are not antecedents of revisit and WOM intention, furthermore, education and escapism are found as insignificant variables in terms of predicting recommend intention (Lee et al., 2020; Radder & Han, 2015; Hosany & Witham, 2010). More importantly, potential mediator, such as satisfaction, has been investigated and verified in prior research. Results from Hosamy and Witham's (2010) study indicated a partially mediated relationship between experience and behavioural intention. Similarly, Lee et al. (2020) reported an indirect effect of experience on revisit intention through satisfaction. Prior findings imply that the mechanism between experience and hotel guests' eWOM intention remains mostly ambiguous so that it's necessary for further exploration on new mediators (e.g., well-being) between experience and behavioural intention since partially mediation effect demonstrates the possibility of other potential mediators' existence that transfers the effect of experience on behavioural outcome (Rasoolimanesh, Wang, Roldán & Kunasekaran, 2021). Nevertheless, to our best knowledge, the role of well-being in the association between experience and eWOM intention remains unclear.

Furthermore, from a theoretical viewpoint, the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model provides an appropriate framework to understand the influential mechanism of resort hotel guests' eWOM intention. While experience has been well explained as stimulus in past studies (see Wei, Baker & Onder, 2023; Lee, Jan & Lin, 2021; Chen, Cheng & Kim, 2020; Kim, Lee & Jung, 2020), well-being, as an experiential outcome, has been scarcely examined as organism, with regard to explain and predict eWOM intention as response. The organism naturally mediates the relationship between stimulus and response, consequently, well-being may play a mediating role between experience and eWOM intention. However, no deliberate efforts have been made to investigate the mediation effect of well-being in the lens of positive psychology based on the SOR framework with a few exceptions (i.e., Vada et al., 2019b; Loureiro et al., 2019). A comprehensive understanding of the mechanism of resort hotel guests' eWOM intention is lacking, let alone examining the mediating role of hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being between experience and eWOM intention from the perspective of positive psychology.

Previously, altruism is regarded as an intrinsic motivation of pro-social behaviour with voluntary will, such as knowledge sharing behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour (Wang, Wang, Li & Yang, 2020; Rahman & Reynolds, 2019; Ma & Chan, 2014). Altruism is largely invoked by altruistic concern for others without expecting any rewards. Stimulated by altruism, people behave more positively to increase the welfare of others. For example, derived by altruistic motive, people are more willing to share their knowledge with others in order to help others

as well as benefit the society (Ma & Chan, 2014; Fang & Chiu, 2010); individuals with higher altruism are more inclined to choose pro-environmental or pro-social behaviour which is beneficial to environmental and social development (Pfafftheicher, Nielsen & Thielmann, 2022; Park, Lee, Lee & Reisinger, 2022; Patwary, Rasoolimanesh, Rabiul, Aziz & Hanafiah, 2022; Wang et al., 2020; Kim, 2020). Therefore, altruism is viewed as an influential driver of individuals' voluntary sharing behaviours, such as experience- and/or information- sharing.

As mentioned before, the mechanism between well-being and eWOM intention remains unclear in current studies. On one hand, the relationship between well-being and behavioural intention has been established (Kim & Han, 2022; Kim, Lee & Preis, 2020; Kim, Lee, Uysal, Kim & Ahn, 2015; Huang, Chen & Gao, 2019). On the other hand, results from empirical studies demonstrate that well-being exerts little influence on behavioural intention (Huang, Chen & Gao, 2019; Vada et al., 2019a; Hwang & Lyu, 2015). More interestingly, it is claimed that eudaimonic well-being is significantly related to WOM (White & Yu, 2019) whereas eudaimonic well-being is found no influence on tourists' WOM intention (Vada et al., 2019a). These inconsistent findings requires further examination the relationship between well-being and eWOM intention. In other words, this knowledge gap may need altruism to be included as a potential moderator. However, the existing literature only conceptualises the interrelationships between experience, well-being and eWOM intention (Cho, Chiu & Tan, 2021; Withe & Yu, 2019; Vada et al., 2019a; Vada et al., 2019b; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Radder & Han, 2015) but omit to attach

motivational factors, such as altruism in their theoretical frameworks. Predicting resort hotel guests' eWOM intention from the perspective of motivation may fail due to the lack of understanding of altruism.

1.4 Research Gap

To address the research gap from eWOM marketing, the lacking willingness of engagement in eWOM among guests in China mentioned in this study emphasises the urgency to encourage more eWOM behaviour among guests in the post-experience stage, while the first and foremost concerns is to clarify the drivers and mechanism of eWOM intention. A coherent body of literature has highlighted the antecedents and determinants of WOM intention, e.g., motivation-related factors (Hu & Kim, 2018; Ishida, Slevitch & Siamionava, 2016; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004), experience-related factors (Barari, Ross & Surachartkumtonkun, 2020; Zhang, Hu, Guo & Liu, 2017; Yen & Tang, 2015; Jeong & Jang, 2011), affective-related factor (Lu, Wang, Dai, Chen & Feng, 2021; Ahn, 2019), to name a few. Above studies prefer to explain WOM behaviour from the perspective of motivation, yet more related factors need to be included and examined to understand the mechanism of how guest experience affects eWOM intention with regard to the resort hotel context.

For instance, concern for other customers, positive self-enhancement, social benefits, economic incentives were associated with eWOM motivations in terms of the frequency of visits and number of comments written on platforms (Jeong & Jang

2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, motivations are directly derived from experience, as Litvin et al. (2008) state, consumption experience is the “source of WOM behaviour” for generating WOM information. In other words, motivational factors of eWOM root in experience. Experience is viewed as a venue of competition battleground in modern economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), since consumers are emotional and rational who are seeking positive feelings and fantasies to enjoy their consumption process (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Furthermore, emotional responses associated with experience is evaluated due to the imperative impacts on subsequent consumer behaviour (Hosany & Witham, 2010; Hemmington, 2007; Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Within the emotional responses, well-being is emphasised as one of the ten high-impact drivers of consumer behaviour, since consumers are “enjoying a sense of well-being” during the consumption process (Zorfas & Leemon, 2016; Magids, Zorfas & Leemon, 2015). These findings shed light on explanation of diverse antecedents of eWOM intention, not only intrinsically organismic responses of well-being, but also extrinsically stimulus of experience. These insightful studies also imply that eWOM intention could be predicted in the lens of the SOR model. In other words, following the logic of the SOR model, eWOM intention maybe directly or indirectly linked with well-being and experience.

Experience is far more important for the resort hotel sector since it is experiential in nature based on its unique characteristics of leisure activities or events and location (Channoi, Clemes & Dean, 2018; Kandampully, Zhang & Jaakkola, 2018; Ali, Hussain & Omar, 2016b). To better understand “experience” in a resort

hotel setting, the theory of experience economy provides an appropriate basis to cover different dimensions of experience which closely related to diverse attributes of a resort hotel (Ali, Hussain & Ragavan, 2014; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The theory of experience economy identifies entertainment experience, education experience, esthetic experience and escapism experience based on the level of engagement of an activity and the connection with external environment, which offers a theoretical understanding for how experience could be categorised. The theory of experience economy has been well applied in prior literature with the resort hotel context, while empirical findings support adequate reliability and validity which indicate guest experience in resort hotel can be represented in terms of entertainment experience, education experience, esthetic experience and escapism experience (Ali et al., 2014; Ali et al., 2016b). The theory of experience economy has also been widely applied in various contexts, e.g., cruise tourism (Hosany & Witham, 2010), rural tourism (Loureiro, 2014; Loureiro, Breazeale & Radic, 2019), temple stay (Song, Lee, Park, Hwang & Reisinger, 2015), wellness tourism (Luo, Lanlung, Kim, Tang & Song, 2018), to name a few. The relationship between experience and behavioural intention has been theorised with several intervening variables of memory, satisfaction and emotion based on the theory of experience economy in previous studies (Loureiro et al., 2019; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Ali et al., 2016b; Loureiro, 2014; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Oh et al., 2007).

In addition, modern consumers are seeking a sense of well-being through various experiences (Al-okaily, Alzboun, Alrawadieh & Slehat, 2023; Kim & So,