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Chinese Cultural Values: Their Implications for Travel and Tourism Marketing

Connie Mok
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ABSTRACT. The influence of cultural values on behavior has been well documented (Adler and Graham, 1989; Hofstede, 1980). However, very limited research has been reported on the linkages between cultural values of the Chinese people and their preferences and expectations as consumers. The China market, with one quarter of the world population, has been recognized as the market with the greatest buying potential for the 21st century. This paper aims to highlight and discuss the dominant Chinese cultural values and their implications for travel and tourism marketing. A conceptual framework of dominant Chinese cultural values is presented and it is followed by a discussion of the cultural attributes of the framework with possible marketing implications for each attribute for the hospitality and tourism industry. Based on the framework, hypotheses are presented to stimulate future research. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com <Website: <http://www.haworthpressinc.com>>]*

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INTRODUCTION

It was reported that frugality and family values could help ethnic-Chinese businesses stay afloat in stormy economic waters (Vatikiotis and Daorueng,

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1998). This survival instinct is characteristic of millions of ethnic Chinese, not only in mainland China, but also in other parts of Asia. It suggests that most economies in which ethnic-Chinese family businesses are dominant could weather the 1998 economic crisis in Asia. "The Chinese family business format was designed to survive intense volatility," said Gordon Redding, a Hong Kong-based expert on ethnic-Chinese business in Asia (South China Morning Post, January 15, 1998, www.scmp.com). He cited strategic flexibility and speedy response to changing conditions as two major strengths of the ethnic-Chinese family business.

While experts are relating Chinese family values to business success, this paper aims to highlight and discuss the pertinent characteristics of the Chinese culture and their implications for travel and tourism marketing. The characteristics and implications identified in this paper may serve as guidelines for the formulation of marketing communication and strategies and the provision of quality services to customers from ethnic-Chinese origin. In order to better understand these consumers, one needs to first uncover their cultural values and then examine how these values influence their consumption preferences and expectations.

The influence of culture on values has been well supported in many studies (Adler and Graham, 1989; Armstrong, Mok, Go, and Chan, 1997; Hofstede, 1980; Pizam, Pine, Mok, and Shin, 1997). These studies reported that people from different cultures have different preferences and expectations. Customer satisfaction is largely based on meeting or exceeding expectations. Therefore, understanding these differences and then providing quality service which meets customer expectations are the focal points for today's tourism marketers.

With one fifth of the world's population, China has the greatest number of consumers in the world. It was projected that China will become Asia's largest outbound market, overtaking Japan by the year 2000 (Pacific Asia Travel Association, 1994; Qu and Li, 1997). Besides the huge population that China has (1.2 billion), there are two other reasons for such prediction. First, the increase in the disposable income of mainland Chinese; and secondly, the relaxation of outbound travel restrictions by the Chinese government (Cai and Woods, 1993; Wang and Sheldon, 1995). Other than the people in China, there are millions of ethnic Chinese living outside China. It was commented that it would be difficult to find a country in this world without an ethnic Chinese living there (Wu and Murphy, 1994) just like one will find a Chinese restaurant in almost every town in the United States. However, this paper will focus on countries predominately populated by residents from ethnic Chinese origin-China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan.

To illustrate the growth of outbound tourism from China, Table 1 reports mainland Chinese arrivals to Southeast Asia from 1991 to 1996.

TABLE 1. Mainland Chinese Arrivals to Southeast Asia (Thousands)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	% change (91-96)
Southeast Asia	135	296	625	601	815	1,258	+831.8

Source: Source: www.world-tourism.org/omt-agent/

Over this time period outbound travel from China has increased significantly. Wang and Sheldon (1995) reported that the Chinese market has been moving much faster than anyone had anticipated, and China was already delivering large numbers of tourists to any countries prepared to accept them. Table 2 summarizes the number of visitor arrivals from ethnic-Chinese countries to the United States from 1991 to 1995. It shows the number of visitor arrivals from countries predominately populated by residents from ethnic Chinese origin have grown steadily from 1991 to 1995 with Singapore showing the strongest growth. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong was returned from Britain to China and has become a Special Administration Region (SAR) of China. However, the most current report from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) still classifies Hong Kong as a separate entity. This paper, therefore, follows the WTO classification for discussion purposes.

The expenditure of outbound travelers from ethnic-Chinese countries was also significant. Table 3 reports total tourism spending from three of these four countries. Both Taiwan and Singapore were ranked within the top 20 countries with China following closely in a total of 60 countries that WTO had ranked. These statistics might signify future consumption potential of these people despite the current economic hardships that some of these countries are experiencing.

CHINESE CULTURAL VALUES

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The influence of culture on values has been the subject of a number of studies (Adler and Graham, 1989). Hofstede's (1980) study on culture-related work values was one of the most widely cited. His study on cross-national differences revealed that national cultures differed mainly along four dimensions:

1. Power Distance refers to the extent to which a culture encourages unequal distribution of power among people. In other words, it is the extent to which the less powerful members accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
2. Individualism versus Collectivism. This dimension describes the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. The basic societal issue to which it relates is the individual's dependence on the group; his or her self-concept as "I" or "we."
3. Masculinity versus Femininity. Masculinity is defined as a situation in which the dominant values in society are success, money, and material. Femininity is defined as a situation in which the dominant values in society are caring for others and the quality of life.
4. Uncertainty Avoidance indicates the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured, unstable, ambiguous situations and try to avoid them. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level.

Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan were included in Hofstede's survey sample in 1980. Along with several other Asian countries, these three countries were classified as high Power Distance, medium Uncertainty Avoid-

TABLE 2. Arrivals to US from Ethnic Chinese Countries (Thousands)

Country	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% change (91-97)
China	76	124	178	158	167	199	210	+176.3
Hong Kong	178	191	193	194	220	242	222	+24.7
Singapore	57	65	72	79	102	114	127	+122.8
Taiwan	268	287	327	379	413	415	442	+64.9

Source: Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, World Tourism Organization, 1997; and www.tinet.ita.doc.gov/research/index

TABLE 3. Tourism Spending in 1995

Country	Tourism expenditure (US\$ million)	Average annual growth rate (80-95)	1995 rank
Taiwan	8,457	16.85	12
Singapore	5,039	20.12	17
China	3,688	NA	23
Hong Kong	Not reported	NA	NA

Source: "Yearbook of Tourism Statistics," World Tourism Organization, 1997.

ance, low Individualism and medium Masculinity. These findings seemed to imply that these people accepted that power was distributed unequally in societies; they were highly integrated into groups; they tended to avoid uncertainty rather than adventure seeking; and they valued money and material.

Confucius and Confucianism

Researchers have postulated that Chinese are primarily collectivistic, with emphasis on the group and authority and not on the individual (Everett, Stening and McDonald, 1987; Hofstede and Bond, 1984; Hsu, 1985). In the study of the psychology and personality of Chinese people, the predominant emphasis and rationale have relied on confirming the cultural stereotype of Chinese as derived from Confucian thinking (Lau, 1988). The general thrust of Confucianism was the importance of proper human relationships. It emphasized the ideal of harmony which has become the leading objective of Chinese philosophy (Bond, 1986; Moise, 1995). The Chinese cultural values are largely formed and created from interpersonal relationships and social orientations. This is shown in the teachings of Confucius, whose doctrine is still a basic pillar of Chinese life today. Confucius' teachings are lessons in practical ethics without any religious content. Confucianism is a set of pragmatic rules of daily life, derived from what Confucius saw as the lessons of Chinese history. The fundamental Confucian assumption is that man exists in relationship to others (Bond, 1986). In Bond's (1986), *The Psychology of the Chinese People*, he stated that "The Chinese are brought up to remain an integral part of their families throughout their lives, instead of being trained to function independently of the family network" (p. 53). Among the Confucian ideas, the key principles of Confucius' teaching are:

1. The stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people. These relationships are based on mutual, complementary obligations: The junior owes the senior respect and obedience; the senior owes the junior protection and consideration.
2. The family is the prototype of all social organizations. A person is not primarily an individual; rather, he or she is a member of a family. Children should learn to restrain themselves, to overcome their individuality in order to maintain the harmony in the family.
3. Virtuous behavior toward others consists of treating others as one would like to be treated oneself; a basic human benevolence-which, however, does not extend as far as the Christian injunction to love your enemies.
4. Virtue with regard to one's tasks in life consists of trying to acquire skills and education, working hard, not spending more than necessary, being patient, and persevering.

Chinese people, in general, because of the principle of harmony, avoid conflicts and prefer resolving issues through mediation and compromise (Moise, 1995). The Chinese saying that, "When one is alive, one dare not go into a police station; and when one is dead, one dare not go to hell" summarizes the avoidance of anything that may cause trouble. The family becomes the focal point of relationships and thus business dealings. The family name always comes first in presenting oneself whereas in Western societies the first name is mentioned before the family name (Kenna and Lacy, 1994). Family members stand by one another in trial and distress. The younger generation is expected to take care of the aged. Reverence is always given to the elders, who tend to exert marked influence. If the father unfortunately passes away, the oldest son will take over the position of the patriarch and the widow mother will make the decisions behind the scenes. Within the family, the male dominance is obvious. In olden days, a man could divorce his wife for the simple reason that she could not bear him a male child.

Changing Values in China

China's open-door policy since 1978 has great impact on the work values of the people in China (Cai and Woods, 1993; Wang and Sheldon, 1995). It was not the intention that the open-door policy would import Western ideology and culture. However, through media people began to see what was going on both inside and outside of China while through contacts with foreign tourists, they gained a better understanding of capitalism (Zhang, 1980). Realizing that there is a better world outside has led to rising expectations on living standards. Cai and Woods (1993) reported that the definition of basic needs of employees in China escalated dramatically. In the 1970s, bicycles, sewing machines, and watches were considered luxury items. Today, the same items became daily necessities while TV sets, VCRs, refrigerators, or even top brand goods are pursued by most urban workers. As a result, material rewards such as wages, welfare, and bonuses became an important motivator for workers in China. Obviously, this change not only deviates from the fundamental Marxist principle that individuals should emulate the communist ideology of sacrificing self interest for the society, it also have tremendous implications on the buying and consumption patterns of the people in China.

Value Orientation Model

Yau (1988) adopted the value-orientation model of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) to describe each of the Chinese cultural values and investigated the possible marketing implications for each orientation. Chinese cultural values were classified into five orientations: man-nature orientation, man-

himself orientation, relational orientation, time orientation, and personal activity orientation. The relational orientation, a fundamental Confucian philosophy, was reported to have the greatest implications on marketing to the Chinese consumers. Yau (1988) called for further research to study the relationships between Chinese cultural values and determinants of consumer behavior.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING TO THE CHINESE CONSUMERS

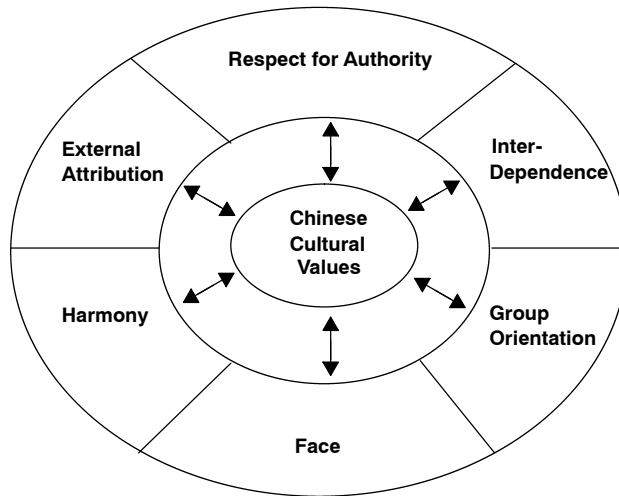
Based on the literature reviewed, a conceptual framework of dominant Chinese cultural values (Figure 1) is presented for discussion. The following section discusses the cultural attributes of the framework with possible marketing implications for each attribute in the hospitality and tourism industry. Based on the framework, hypotheses are presented to stimulate future research. People from Chinese ethnic origin will be referred to as Chinese in the following discussion.

Respect for Authority

Consistent with Hofstede's (1980) findings, Yau (1988) lamented that the Chinese have a strong respect for authority. The early root of the Chinese respect for authority is in Confucius's five cardinal relations, between sovereign and minister, father and son, husband and wife, old and young, and between friends. These relations have served effectively to control social behavior in society (Moise, 1995). The Chinese have to observe and act according to the norms prescribed for each instance of interpersonal relations. It is not surprising to see that the Chinese today still prefer to address others in more hierarchical-type terms than Westerners. For example, one would very rarely hear Chinese people address their parents, teachers, or relatives of senior ranks by their first names (Kenna and Lacy, 1994).

This attribute has important implications for marketing communication. Because of the Chinese people's high respect for authority, airline, tour package, or hotel advertisements using public figures as endorsements to tourism products and services will tend to be more effective. Public figures including well respected senior figures in societies and people with position or expert power will be influential in their purchase decisions. The respect for authority can be witnessed by the giving of *Li Mu* or gifts brought back from foreign places to parents and elders. The Taiwanese tourists are well known for their excessive shopping behavior (Mok and Lam, 1997). On average, each Taiwanese tourist spends US\$1,200 on their trips to Hong Kong and 60% of

FIGURE 1. A Conceptual Framework of Dominant Chinese Cultural Values



these expenses are on shopping. Other than shopping for themselves, they shop for gifts for their relatives, particularly the elderly. This is a way to show respect to them. Shopping facilities and varieties are important destination attractions for Chinese tourists. Destination marketing communication should emphasize such facilities. Package tours aiming to attract Chinese travelers should allow ample time for shopping activities. Recommendations and advice from tour guides about shopping places, bargains, and special items will be welcome and appreciated.

Hypothesis 1: Chinese tourists are more likely to engage in shopping activities during their trips.

Hypothesis 2: Chinese consumers are more likely to be influenced by opinion leaders than are Westerners.

Interdependence

Yau (1988) and Kindle (1983) stated that the flexibility of the Chinese in dealing with interpersonal relations comes from the principle of "doing favors," which signifies one's honor to another. Favors done for others are often considered what may be called "social investments," for which returns are expected. The Chinese proverb "If you honor me a linear foot, I should

honor you ten feet in return” clearly reveals this principle. They believe that reciprocity among people should be as certain as a cause-and-effect relationship. One way to maintain relations among Chinese is by the presentation of gifts which is a form of *Li*-propriety. Gifts in Chinese societies have become a symbol of courtesy, respect, appreciation, and friendship. When Chinese people visit their relatives or friends as guests, even if they are not wealthy, they bring something. In fact, a visitor without a gift is usually seen as unreasonable or impolite. It was reported that quite a few people in China spend about ten percent of their yearly income on gifts (Huang, Andrulis, and Chen, 1994). Some even borrow money in order to be able to give presents. Accepting a gift is equated with accepting others’ feeling and the emotion they felt in giving the gift. It is believed that Chinese people maintain a ledger in their mind keeping track of who owes them favors and whom do they owe. Understanding this interdependence principle is extremely important for anyone who wants to successfully conduct business with Chinese people. This attribute has important implications for hotel and travel agency salesmanship. Being aggressive using hard sell methods in most cases does not work in Chinese societies. They prefer personal and business relationships to be continuous and broad in scope. Giving thoughtful and appropriate gifts to potential clients is one way to establish relationships. This technique has a different connotation from bribing since the gifts do not need to be expensive or extravagant. It is the thoughtfulness that counts. Adding a personal touch to sales efforts will go a long way. It is by building long term relationships through tactful human skills that good marketing results are achieved.

Hypothesis 3: Chinese consumers are more responsive to relationship marketing techniques.

Face

The face or *Mien-tzu* concept in Chinese society is a good example of the high value that the Chinese people place on interpersonal relationships (Lau, 1988; Bond and Lee, 1981). To give other people face refers to allowing others to escape the humiliation implicit in not knowing, failing to understand, having been mistaken, or being inferior to others. When a person’s face is harmed (loses face), a sense of shame arises. Trying to save each other’s face is extremely important in maintaining good interpersonal relationships in Chinese society. In a static society where the importance of structural harmony within a group is emphasized, every person has to concern himself or herself with the right conduct in maintaining one’s place in a hierarchical order (Yang, 1981; Lau, 1988). He or she must pay attention to preserving others’ face in social encounters, especially the face of superiors. Since exposing a person’s mistake may provoke public reaction and create dishar-

mony, Chinese usually show heightened reluctance to criticize others. If it is necessary to do so, they tend to use vague or moderate language to protect the face of those being criticized (Bond and Lee, 1981). One's face could also refer to the prestige one possesses by virtue of social achievement such as wealth, talents, social status, and scholarship. The more of these social achievements one has, the more face this person possesses. This face concept has a profound influence on approaches to people in Chinese societies.

Symbolic values of products and services are at least as important to the Chinese as their functional values. Possession of material and wealth is one way that Chinese people show face or status. *The World Almanac and Encyclopedia* (1993) reported that Hong Kong has the highest per-capita ownership of Rolls-Royces, Mercedes Benz and Rolex watches, Hong Kong, with its 6.2 million people, consumes the most cognac per capita in the world. Top brand goods such as Giorgio Armani eye-glasses, Gucci handbags, Lacoste shirts, Nike shoes, and others are the pursuits of the Chinese people. Patronizing five-star international hotels has been seen as a high-class and fashionable activity in today's China. In Hong Kong, people view an afternoon tea at the lobby cafe of the Peninsula Hotel as a status and image boosting activity more than a leisure activity. Visiting Disneyland is as much for prestige as for fun. Ap and Mok (1996) in their study on leisure travel motivations of Hong Kong residents found that prestige is an important reason for traveling abroad. In dealing with Chinese business people, nothing can be more damaging than making them lose face. Relationship marketing techniques, especially those at the social level (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991), work well in Chinese societies. They will view the personalized service delivery as giving them face, thus long term relationship is more likely to be maintained. Therefore, any hotel or tourism products or services marketed as status symbols or have "face enhancing" qualities will appeal to the Chinese consumers. A good example to illustrate this point is one multinational chain hotel in Asia offers Chinese tea service on Chinese guests' arrivals; serve authentic Chinese breakfast items in buffet; provide Chinese slippers; and train their employees on Chinese protocol. These extra services will be perceived as "face enhancing" qualities because they made them feel special.

Hypothesis 4: Chinese consumers are likely to be more brand conscious than Westerners.

Group Orientation

Hofstede's (1980) "collectivism" identified with Confucian doctrines that emphasize ties of kinship and close personal relationships. Individuals are perceived as part of a network of social relations. They find their identities with reference to others around them and adopt group goals and opinions in

exchange for reciprocal care and protection. In business, a group relationship is manifested in interpersonal connections or *Guanxi*, which overpower the formal organizational structure in many cases (Chu, 1991). As the popular saying goes, "It is not what you know but who you know."

Tourism literature consistently reported that Chinese people preferred to travel in groups rather than individually (Ap and Mok, 1996; Mok and Armstrong, 1995; Mok, Armstrong, and Go, 1995; Wang and Sheldon, 1995). Besides the commonly cited convenience and economic reasons, it is logical to attribute such behavior to their value for group activities. Inclusive package tours, therefore, were most popular among the Chinese followed by basic package tours which include air passages, accommodation, and transfers. One might argue that it is due to their inexperience in travel that they traveled in groups. However, if you take Hong Kong as an example, since the 1970's many Hong Kong people have been traveling abroad. The Hong Kong Tourist Association reported that on average, there were over 2 million Hong Kong residents who took overseas vacations every year. Ap and Mok (1996) reported that 87% of outbound travel from Hong Kong was made in package tours while Mok, Armstrong, and Go (1995) found that 70% of Taiwanese traveled in groups. Destinations that plan to attract more tourists from these countries should design competitively packaged tours and promote them through advertising featuring scenes of group members sharing their trip experiences. Chinese travelers' overwhelming preference for traveling in groups by joining package tours might require special arrangements by hotels. Instead of catering to individual needs and requests, special arrangements for groups would be very much appreciated. Assigning rooms to tour group members on the same floor or preparing special breakfast items just for the groups are examples of how hotels can exceed customers' expectations.

Hypothesis 5: Tourism services consumption decisions for the individual Chinese are the resultant of group decisions.

Harmony

The value for harmony has profound implications for Chinese consumer behavior which concerns complaints. Influenced by Confucius' emphasis on harmony (Bond, 1986; Moise, 1995), Chinese people tend not to complain to consumer councils or service providers even though they were dissatisfied with the products or services in order to maintain harmony. They are more likely to switch suppliers without making it known to the previous suppliers or service providers. They view taking public action as extreme behavior. Little is reported in the literature on complaint behavior of Chinese consumers. From personal communications with hotel and travel agency managers, the authors understand that the majority of Chinese tourists do not complain

unless they are extremely dissatisfied. Marketing managers who wish to obtain feedback from Chinese consumers need to consider a more active approach.

Most Chinese people do not appreciate advertisements which display scenarios involving conflicts, misfortunes, arguments, division, and disunity. Smart marketers have learned to use harmony, happy events, status and prestige, opinion leaders, scientific evidence, price/value benefits as themes of advertisements. In targeting the Chinese communities in the United States, the best approach is a multi-cultural scenario which, in fact, has been adopted by many companies. Multi-cultural scenarios might be perceived as different people living together harmoniously.

Hypothesis 6: Chinese consumers are less likely to complain to tourism suppliers about their dissatisfactions than Westerners.

Hypothesis 7: Chinese are likely to be less responsive to advertisements which are openly critical of competitors and their products and services.

External Attribution

The Chinese have a great tendency to attribute outcomes to fate or to external factors. They regard human beings as a part of nature and that they should not try to master nature, but to adapt to it so as to reach harmony. They believe that the existence or absence of interrelations with the universe is predetermined by a powerful external force (Yau, 1988). The Chinese have been described as superstitious (Huang, Andrulis, and Chen, 1994) and they have many taboos. If one unknowingly behaves in a way that violates a Chinese taboo, it may lead to misunderstanding, or hurt one's friendship. These taboos are mainly based upon religious beliefs and superstition.

When you check the telephone number of travel agencies, or businesses in the U.S. which are owned by Chinese or Chinese-Americans, you will face a very interesting phenomenon. They will invariably include the number 6, 8, or 9. The reason is that in Cantonese (a Chinese dialect spoken by people in the southern part of China), the pronunciation of some numbers such as that of 1688, is close to the words meaning "Getting rich all the way." On the other hand, 4 is perceived as an unlucky number which means death to them. They will try hard to avoid this number. Chinese people will not hesitate to offer a high price for a lucky number. For example, a Hong Kong business man paid about \$70,000 US dollars to buy the number 8888 for his car because the number, 8, means "get rich." He perceived that this number would bring him good luck and success in his business. Besides Hong Kong, Guangzhou (Canton) and Shanghai where the economy has developed the

most, these taboos about numbers have developed in tandem with commercial development. Table 4 explains the homophones of numbers 1 through 10 in Cantonese.

A Chinese tourist once checked into a hotel in the United States. When he found out he was given room 104, which means “certainly dead,” his face darkened and he immediately asked for a change of room. The front office receptionist of the hotel was puzzled and could not understand why this guest asked for a change of room without looking at the room first. This is an interesting characteristic of the Cantonese speaking Chinese consumers which is important for hotel and tourism marketers to understand. Hotel receptionists and tour guides should avoid assigning rooms or floors which contain number 4 to their Chinese guests.

Hypothesis 8: Chinese consumers are more sensitive to product or services which concern numbers.

CONCLUSION

The influence of cultural values on behavior has been well documented (Adler and Graham, 1989; Hofstede, 1980). However, very limited research has been reported on the implications of these cultural values on travel and tourism marketing. The China market, with one fifth of the world population, has been recognized as the market with the greatest buying potential for the 21st century. As Wang and Sheldon (1995) and Cai and Woods (1993) pointed out since China adopted its open-door policy in 1979, it has tripled the size of its economy. The Washington-based U.S.-Business Business Council predicts that by 2010 China’s economy may be the world’s largest (Miller, 1993). One notable change in China is the emergence of a middle class. Today one will find durable goods such as TVs, VCRs, washing machines, and refrigerators in many of the homes in the big cities in China, especially those along the southern coast. More and more people no longer need to struggle for the basic necessities, and these people seek opportunities

TABLE 4. Homophones of Number 1 Through 10 in Cantonese

1 = certain, absolute	6 = money, admission
2 = easy, pair	7 = certain
3 = grow	8 = get rich
4 = death, die	9 = forever, longevity, long
5 = no, do not have	10 = actual, real

Source: Huang, Andrulis, and Chen (1994).

to go abroad to "broaden their views." The rise in the level of disposable income may translate into increased travel and spending on leisure activities. The travel industry is set to be among the prime beneficiaries of fundamental economic change in China. Therefore, their demand for consumer products and services will continue to grow. Besides leisure travel, business travel is also growing due to increasing trade and investment activities (Wang and Sheldon, 1995). The liberalization of outbound travel and currency regulations also encourage traveling out of China. Despite the current economic setback in Asia which affects Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the consumption power of these countries in the long term cannot be underestimated due to their general rise in disposable income and standard of living in the last decade.

As mentioned earlier, meeting expectations is the foundation for delivery of quality service. Understanding the Chinese cultural values and how Chinese shape their preferences and expectations is the first step of any business who wants a share of this market. This is an initial attempt to highlight the pertinent cultural values of the Chinese people and their implications for marketing. A full discussion of Chinese values is beyond the scope of this paper. It is the wish of the authors that the hypotheses presented in this paper will be tested in future research of an empirical nature to gain more insight into the buying behavior of Chinese consumers. Knowing your customers and meeting their expectations is the only way to succeed.

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