Chinese Outbound Tourism Research: A Review

Abstract

Chinese outbound tourism has been developing at a phenomenal pace, attracting the interest of both academics and industry practitioners. This paper utilizes a hybrid review method that combines the narrative and systematic quantitative review methods to delineate the status of research on Chinese outbound tourism and to indicate areas that lack academic inquiry. It evaluates the scope, method, and themes of 161 articles published in 16 top tourism and hospitality journals between 2000 and 2014. The review calls for future research to shift from an advocacy stance to the sustainable and ethics platforms under research paradigms that are more fertile for cross-cultural research.

Introduction

Over the last 15 years, the nature of tourism and its relationship with society have changed significantly owing to "dramatic historical events, major technological innovations and far-reaching social and cultural changes in both the Western and non-Western parts of the world" (Cohen and Cohen 2012, p. 2177). For China, these transformations have been associated with political liberalization, the fast transition from a planned to a market-driven economy, and the changing and diversifying socio-cultural values (Cai, Li, and Knutson 2008), which lead to improved income and living standards, a greater emphasis on leisure and tourism, and a burgeoning middle class, resulting in a boom of outbound travel. Chinese outbound tourism refers to overseas trips made by Mainland Chinese. Although Hong Kong and Macau are special administrative regions of China, they are regarded as outbound destinations for Chinese travelers in the travel literature (e.g., China Tourism Academy, CTA 2014). China is considered the leading tourism source market in the world, spending US$129 billion on international tourism (UNWTO 2014), with almost up to a half of this expenditure directed to shopping (CTA 2014). In 2013, the top 10 outbound destinations for Chinese travelers were Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, the United States, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. Popular long-haul destinations include European countries, Australia, and New Zealand (CTA 2014). Nine of the top 10 destinations are located in Asia, indicating Chinese tourists' tendency to go somewhere near before venturing further afield. The Chinese government's relaxation of tourism policies coupled with overseas destinations' liberalization of visa-issuing procedures for Chinese citizens have contributed significantly to this growth (Lim and Wang 2008; Wang and Davidson 2010).

The economic and social factors that have underpinned the market growth remain positive in the long term. Following the China–U.S. agreement allowing for a 10-year tourist visa and Australia's granting of the work holiday visa to the Chinese youth market, further

liberalization of visa restrictions by more overseas destinations is expected. China's outbound tourism is still in the early growth stage (Li 2014). As more Chinese can afford overseas travel, this market's economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts on destinations will increase significantly.

Four papers have reviewed Chinese outbound tourism research. Keating and Kriz (2008) focused exclusively on Chinese tourists' destination choice, with particular reference to push and pull factors, internal and external moderators, and destination image. Cai et al. (2008) categorized 30 articles into three groups: market overview, destination-specific research based on secondary data, and destination-specific research based on primary consumer data. That review identified Hong Kong, Australia, and the U.S. as the most researched destinations, and suggested that cultural values shape Chinese travelers' preferences and expectations. The authors posited that most research papers have applied Western models to the Chinese context and that future research should be more methodologically diverse. Tse (2014) classified 80 papers as destination, tourist, and source market related studies and commented that research in general tends to be circumstantial, time-specific, and similar in design, and thus has not contributed much to the understanding of Chinese outbound tourism per se. Keating, Huang, Kriz & Heung (2015) selected 148 articles from three top tourism journals and outlined research stages (before 1992, 1993 to 2002, and 2003 to 2012) with a metaphor of human evolution. However, only 35 of the articles were 'central' to the topic, although their analysis was based on all 148 articles.

Increasing numbers of articles on Chinese outbound tourism have appeared in top-ranked journals. This enlarged body of literature needs to be reviewed in a format that compares scope, topic, and themes. The purpose of this paper is to provide a holistic and comprehensive review of tourism and hospitality journal articles published between 2000 and

2014 to determine the status of research on Chinese outbound tourism. Particularly, the review addresses two questions:

- What insights does current literature offer regarding Chinese outbound tourism?
- Have studies on Chinese outbound tourism contributed to tourism research from a methodological or cultural perspective?

This review differs from other reviews in that it applies a hybrid method to enable both bibliometric mapping of studies and critical analysis of topical areas. We selected 161 articles from 16 top tourism journals identified by their global impact on knowledge dissemination. Through systematic review, we categorized topics based on Weaver and Lawton's (2009) model of multi-disciplinary linkages. To further frame a critique of the articles, we linked discussions within each main topical area to Jafari's (1990) platforms for research, Macbeth's (2005) ethics platform, and a cross-cultural perspective (Cohen and Cohen 2012). The semantic network analysis of the topics provided further insights on the connections of topics, trends and disciplinary differences.

The review outlines current achievements and future directions for Chinese outbound tourism research, and is pertinent to both theory building and professional practice. Furthermore, this review calls for research related to Chinese outbound tourism to shift from an advocacy stance to the sustainable and ethics platforms under research paradigms that are more applicable to cross-cultural research. This adjustment would support a move from short-term development and profit-seeking to long-term sustainable and responsible tourism policy, planning, development, and management.

Method

Meta-analysis, narrative, and systematic quantitative reviews are commonly used for review studies. A meta-analytical approach requires that studies have similar methodology, subjects,

and response variables to allow the application of statistical methods to their combined results to assess effect size using weighted averages (Lim 1999). A narrative review can indicate research progress, but it is mainly based on the experience and subjectivity of the author and often lacks an unambiguous and objective method, possibly resulting in methodological flaws and biased conclusions (Cipriani and Geddes 2003). Systematic quantitative reviews map a disciplinary area in a systematic, quantitative, comprehensive, and structured way, following precise steps for collection and analysis to identify what is important about the literature (Petticrew and Roberts 2006).

The present study adopted a hybrid design comprising the narrative and systematic quantitative review methods, supplemented by semantic network analysis. Using a systematic method, we document the geographical spread of the papers by author, year, and destination of interest, as well as research methods, data analysis techniques, and primary topical areas, thus providing a reproducible and reliable assessment of current progress in the research field. The narrative discussion within each of the topical areas indicates research production in that area, explores emerging themes and methods, and identifies knowledge gaps for future research directions. Semantic network analysis further explores connections among key topical areas.

We record relevant studies published in English in 16 tourism and hospitality journals (Table 1). Fifteen journals were selected on the basis of four journal ranking studies: Hall (2011), McKercher et al. (2006), Ryan (2005), Pechlaner et al. (2004), and the Social Science Citation Index list. A journal must appear in three of the rankings to be eligible. In addition, the *International Journal of China Tourism Research* (*JCTR*) is included for its specific focus on Chinese tourism. In 2000—a milestone year in Chinese outbound tourism development—the volume of Chinese outbound travelers exceeded 10 million (UNWTO 2003). Thus, the review covers papers published from January 2000 to May 2014, when the search was

performed, and include advanced online versions. The study excludes papers on econometric analyses of demand, where China is of minor interest. While numerous articles were published in other journals and in languages other than English, these articles fall outside the scope of this study.

The review database was developed in a spreadsheet format and was imported to SPSS for further analyses. Weaver and Lawton's (2009) model of multi-disciplinary linkages within tourism studies includes the categories of geography, history, law, ecology, sociology, psychology, business management, anthropology, marketing, agriculture, political science, and economics. This model provides examples of subcategories for each of the disciplinary categories, allowing us to identify the primary topical areas for each paper.

We also content-analyzed the papers' themes and keywords through Leximancer, a software program that automatically extracts semantic networks from qualitative data. Leximancer identified (1) the connections among topics, (2) shifts in research interest over time, and (3) differences in research focus between tourism and hospitality literature. Used primarily in the fields of psychology, language, and health (Tseng, Wu, Morrison, Zhang, and Chen 2015), Leximancer generates conceptual maps based on co-occurrences of words in keyword lists (Croft and Bisman 2010). Leximancer analysis features reliability as reflected in stability (i.e., intercoder reliability) and reproducibility (i.e., high consistency in the way data are coded). It has also been successfully employed for literature review (e.g., Cretchley, Rooney, and Gallois 2010; Sotiriadou, Brouwers, and Le 2014; Crofts and Bisman 2010) and recently has gained traction in tourism and hospitality research (e.g., Scott and Smith 2005; Tseng et al. 2015; Wu, Wall, and Pearce 2014). We used Leximancer 4 to analyze the papers' key words. The system's automatic Run Project function generated an initial concept list. We then removed from the list words that are general terms (e.g., outbound, factors) or names of geographic locations (e.g., Australia, Hong Kong), or that describe research and

analytical methods (e.g., multistage, log). Variations of words (e.g., perceived and perception) and similar concepts (e.g., risk and constraints) were merged and compound concepts were created (e.g., word-of-mouth and decision-making). Leximancer can also perform group comparisons through tagging. For this review, Leximancer automatically tagged the set of key words for each paper with the relevant time period (i.e., 2000–2003, 2004–2006, 2007–2010, and Since 2010) and study domain (i.e., tourism and hospitality).

We link discussions to Jafari's (1990) platforms and Macbeth's (2005) ethics platform for research, given the recognition of these platforms for evaluating knowledge advancement (Weaver and Lawton 2009; Xiao and Smith 2006). Jafari's framework (comprising advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy, and knowledge-based platforms) appraises the growth of tourism knowledge from the chronological/evolutionary perspectives (Jafari 1990). An advocacy platform is industry- and economy-oriented, focusing on the perceived risk-free contributions of the industry to growth and development. The cautionary platform examines phenomena from sociological and anthropological perspectives, whereas the adaptancy platform is a dialectical synthesis from the standpoint of maximizing benefits and minimizing costs and shows a close linkage to the development of alternative forms of tourism. The knowledge-based platform is multi-disciplinary and is driven toward sustainable development and scientification of tourism (Jafari 1990). Studies using exchange theory, host–guest interaction, and residents' attitudes toward tourism development are examples of knowledge-based assessments of tourism development (Xiao and Smith 2006). Macbeth (2005) added an ethics platform, in which industry "must combine a moral position with the scientific, technical positions currently invoked" (p. 973) in pursuit of sustainable development. The evolution of research subjects over time in the publications of the *Annals of Tourism Research* closely matches the progression along Jafari's four platforms (Swain, Brent, and Long 1998, cited in Xiao and Smith 2006).

In response to the call to examine non-Western tourism phenomena by approaches other than the established Western research models (Cohen and Cohen 2012), we also used a cultural lens to critique the results. Non-Western frameworks are derived from the diverse and distinct traditions of non-Western contexts and include, for example, linguistic, religious, philosophical, historical, and logical dimensions (Miike 2006; Steers, Sanchez-Runde and Nardon 2011) that can serve as a basis for frameworks for Chinese outbound tourism.

Results and Discussion

Number of Publications by Journal, Authors, and Institutions

Table 1 presents the number of publications in the selected journals cross-referenced to four time periods: since 2010, 2007–2009, 2004–2006, and 2000–2003. Research has increased significantly since 2010. For example, *JCTR* and *JHMM* each produced a special issue for Chinese outbound tourism. Importantly, five of the 10 most productive researchers are currently affiliated with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Table 2). Nine of the 10 are of Chinese origin. Many papers have at least one Chinese-speaking author, possibly because these authors are familiar with the study context. Future studies completed independently by academics of non-Chinese origin may provide interesting and potentially different insights. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University tops the university ranking, followed by Griffith University, Sejong University, the University of Queensland, and the University of South Carolina, and the Macau Institute for Tourism Studies (Table 3). The strong interest of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the subject may be a result of geographical proximity to Mainland China, relatively long experience with Mainland travelers, and the critical importance of this market to Hong Kong's local economy.

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Destinations of Interest

Research has responded to the geographical expansion of the Approved Destination Status program, a key facilitating policy (Arita, Edmonds, La Croix, and Mak 2011), which establishes the overseas destinations to which Chinese nationals can travel (UNWTO 2003). The system, initiated in the early 1980s to allow travel to Hong Kong and Macau, was extended to Asia and Oceania in the 1990s and to other long-haul destinations in the 2000s. The most studied regions or countries are Hong Kong, Australia, the U.S., Taiwan, Macau, and South Korea (Table 4), with the primary destinations of interest remaining the same as those prior to 2006 as identified by Cai et al. (2008). Europe, despite being the principal Western destination for Chinese outbound tourism, remains under-explored in research, possibly because of its non-English academic environment and its relatively smaller number of academics with a Chinese background. Research findings derived from empirical data generated from one destination may not be generalizable to other destinations owing to socio-cultural disparity, and thus attention should be extended to Southeast Asia and Europe.

Please insert Table 4 about here

Methods Applied

The majority of studies adopt a positivistic or post-positivistic paradigm, reflecting a pursuit of objectivity. Most studies also take a quantitative approach (Table 5). Cross-sectional field surveys and interviews or focus groups are the dominant forms of data collection for quantitative and qualitative research, respectively, with observation, online and print materials, and experimental design being used less frequently. Factor analysis, regression, and structural equation modeling constitute popular data analysis techniques for quantitative research and thematic content analysis for qualitative studies. Actual and potential visitors are the main respondents, whereas residents and tourism employees are under-represented.

As Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou were the primary data collection locations, the recent extension of outbound tourism to other regions in China is not reflected. Furthermore, China's disparity in economic status and variety of subcultures limit the generalizability of the findings derived from populations in first-tier cities. Several studies collected data from tourists visiting Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, which are short-haul destinations of Chinese cultural origin, and findings may not extend to more culturally distant destinations. In addition, only a small number of studies surveyed or interviewed tourists and service providers in destination countries and regions (mostly Hong Kong SAR, Australia, and the U.S.), reflecting the difficulty of accessing tourists and suppliers on-site.

Future research should strive to achieve greater methodological rigor and vigor. Creative and innovative data collection techniques, such as the use of online and print media, longitudinal design, observation, and eye-tracking, could be employed. An emic approach, which seeks rich data to capture phenomena rather than relying on researcher-imposed categories, could offer benefits—visual ethnography, for example, assesses the embodied, sensual, and emotional experience of tourists. Experimental design relevant to psychological studies of tourists is under-utilized, reflecting an application-dominated research (Oh et al. 2004). Future studies could incorporate this method. Further, future studies could recognize the cultural distinctiveness of respondents and data collection locations. Geographical differences in perceptions among tourists could be explored through samples from different tiers of Chinese cities.

Primary Topical Areas Discussed

Drawing on Weaver and Lawton's (2009) model of multi-disciplinary linkages, we classified articles into the following categories: psychology (50 articles), marketing (42), business management (27), economics (7), history (4), sociology (4), political science (3) and others

(1). The remaining 23 articles are of a cross-disciplinary nature. The following section focuses on the three most studied disciplines.

Psychology. Travel motivations, expectations, and barriers are the most investigated topics under psychology, and primarily adopt an etic approach based on a researcher-imposed frame of references.

Several common motivations were established across multiple destinations, such as knowledge, relaxation, novelty, prestige, escape, and self-development (Hsu, Cai, and Li 2010; Li and Cai, 2012; Li, Xu, and Weaver 2009). These motivational studies are not informed by a single established framework such as push/pull factors (Dann 1977), basic motives (Crompton 1979), the social environment model (Iso-Ahola 1982), the leisure motivation theory (Beard and Ragheb 1983), or the travel career ladder model (Pearce 1988). A common practice for developing instruments to measure motivations is to draw upon destination- or market-specific attributes (e.g., Johanson 2008) or to employ a combination of measurements from previous studies (e.g., Hsu et al. 2010; Li et al. 2009). The studies gave insufficient consideration to the uniqueness of the Chinese market.

A representative study regarding Chinese outbound tourists' expectations of a destination is that of Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline, and Wang (2011). Chinese tourists' major considerations are food and accommodations. They highly value cleanliness, safety, and value for money, but are concerned about being taken advantage of and desire genuine respect and hospitality. Tour guides play a critical role and are expected to be bilingual, friendly, professional, and culturally and historically knowledgeable. However, current research generally fails to explain what may underpin tourists' expectations. In addition, studies focus primarily on travel expectations rather than service expectations, particularly in relation to interpersonal interactions at various service venues. For instance, exploration

could include questions such as whether Chinese conceptions/assumptions regarding services provided by hotels, scenic and historic sites, or museums differ from those of Westerners.

Travel barriers have received considerable research attention (e.g., Sparks and Pan 2009; Li, Zhang, Mao, and Deng 2011). Common barriers include currency, flight time, media warnings, language barriers, safety and risk, negative media coverage of the relationship between China and the destination country, and visa regulations (Sparks and Pan 2009). Li et al. (2011) reduced the constraints to categories of structure, culture, information, and knowledge, which were used to identify four constraint-based segments of the Chinese outbound travel market displaying different levels of loyalty to a destination. Most recently, Wu's (2014) study on drive tourism indicated concerns such as unfamiliarity with vehicles, road conditions, driving rules, and accommodation, which were compounded by personal factors such as language skills, driving experience, confidence, stress, and physical condition.

Much of the literature on motivations, expectations, and barriers is situated within the advocacy platform, with the discourse focused on the potential for market development. The tourism and hospitality literature increasingly applies social psychology theories to understand travelers' cognition, affection, experience, and behaviors, particularly theories of social cognition, social comparison, social reinforcement, and self (Tang 2014). The psychology of Chinese outbound tourists has been investigated primarily through the lenses of social cognition (e.g., attribution theory, elaboration likelihood model) and reinforcement (e.g., social exchange theory, equity theory, disconfirmation theory). Research is sparse from the perspective of social comparison, using justice, role, frustration-aggression and social learning theories. As psychology is culturally tied or relative, investigations into behavior and experience could be conducted through different cultural lenses (Pearce and Packer 2013). The Chinese traditional cognition of self and related concepts suggest new horizons for the investigation of Chinese self and Chinese gaze. For example, the constitution of the Chinese

self is influenced largely by interdependence, situation, group merit, harmony, fitting in and acceptance, and face-saving, whereas the Western self is characterized more by independence, individualism, personal merit, fairness and equality, self-achievement, and debate and argument (Steers, Sanchez-Runde and Nardon 2011). Rather than borrowing concepts from Western literature, studies on the social-psychological aspects of Chinese tourists should propose new theoretical frameworks by drawing from Chinese language and literature and principles of Chinese religious–philosophical traditions and connecting with indigenous intellectual roots, situated knowledge, and local modes of thinking (Dissanayake 2003). Given their relevance to social impact assessment and critical cultural studies, these aspects can help move research beyond an advocacy platform.

Future studies could address several questions. First, what social, cultural, and psychological factors underlie Chinese travelers' motivations, perceived barriers, and expectations? Second, how and to what degree do these motivations, barriers, and expectations affect tourist behaviors? Third, what can cross-cultural analysis contribute to the understanding of Chinese tourists? To obtain Chinese outbound tourists' full frame of psychological reference, we recommend more studies adopting an emic approach.

Marketing. Studies on destination image, positioning, and market segmentation dominate the marketing research area, mainly employing Western frameworks and published in accordance with the progress of market development.

Destination image and positioning are of great interest to researchers. Selected topics and researched destinations include perceived image and celebrity endorsement (van der Veen and Song 2010, Hong Kong), salient and organic images (Lin, Chen, and Park 2012, Taiwan), projected images (Hsu and Song 2012, Southeast Asia), effects of product perceptions on destination image (Lee and Lockshin 2012, Australia), image richness, evenness, and dominance (Stepchenkova and Li 2012, the U.S.), long-haul travelers' image

(Li and Stepchenkova 2012, the U.S.), preference and positioning analysis (Kim, Guo and Agrusa 2005, multiple destinations; Li, Chen, Kim, and Li 2012, the U. S. vs. five other Western destinations), and intra-cultural variance in image reception (Kwek and Lee 2008 Australia).

Most image studies examine images of a particular destination without exploring issues such as image formation or its relationship to other constructs, such as loyalty and destination selection. Destination-specific studies have focused almost exclusively on Australia (e.g., Huang and Gross 2010; Kwek and Lee 2008), Hong Kong (van der Veen and Song 2010), Taiwan (e.g., Lin et al. 2012), and the U.S. (e.g., Li and Stepchenkova 2012; Stepchenkova and Li 2012; 2014). The image of a destination often comprises iconic attractions, induced images, and organic images. Travelers who had visited the destination held more multi-sensory image clues than those who had not (Huang and Gross 2010). Chinese travelers perceived the U.S. as a highly urban, economically and technologically advanced destination with an open and democratic system (Li and Stepchenkova 2012). The image of the U.S. differed among four groups of travelers with varying travel experiences. Groups who had traveled outside Asia perceived the U.S. as a friendly, open, democratic, and free society that offers a relaxing experience, whereas less experienced groups based their image of the U.S. on tangible attributes and perceived the country as economically developed, scenic, and beautiful (Stepchenkova and Li 2012). Another study analyzed the structure of brand association on the basis of Chinese travelers' top-of-mind images of the U.S., reflecting recent interest of academics in the topic of branding (Stepchenkova and Li 2014). Notably, Li and Stepchenkova (2012) and Stepchenkova and Li (2012, 2014) adopted frameworks or methods from fields outside social science. These studies offer new methods based on analyzing increasingly available big data.

Targeting and positioning were relatively neglected areas in mainstream tourism and hospitality research (Oh, Kim, and Shin 2004). Likewise, only Li et al. (2012) and Kim et al. (2005) investigated the relative preference and positioning of selective destinations in the Chinese outbound market. Li et al. (2012) concluded that the U.S. holds a unique position compared to its competitors. Kim et al. (2005) analyzed the relative standings of a range of ADS and non-ADS destinations. Since that study, the range of destinations has expanded to include most major tourist destinations, and depending on their history of being part of the ADS scheme, destinations may be at different stages of the destination lifecycle in the Chinese outbound market. Therefore, a renewed effort to identify the relative standing of destinations is of interest to both tourism practitioners and researchers. Targeting and positioning, which are strategically important and closely related to destination image and market segmentation, also deserve more attention in the future.

Another group of studies recognized the heterogeneity of the Chinese market, focusing on specific market segments and types of products, such as youth travel (Liu and Ryan 2011), backpackers to Macao (Ong and du Cros 2012), film tourism to Korea (Kim 2012), medical tourism to Korea (Han and Huang 2013; Yu and Ko 2012), and drive tourism in Australia (Wu 2014; Wu and Pearce 2014), as well as casino visits to Korea (Kim, Cai, and Jung 2004), Las Vegas (Wong and Fong 2010), and Macau (Liu and Wan 2011; Wong, Fong, and Liu 2012; Wong and Rosenbaum 2012; Shi, Prentice, and He 2013; Zeng, Prentice, and King 2014). Some segmentation studies are based on motivation (e.g., Li et al. 2009). Generally, as the Chinese market becomes increasingly sophisticated, research into special interest groups and product types is increasing, but it still lags behind industry development. To provide a foundation and knowledge for effective marketing and product development, more studies could focus on non-group and specialist travel.

Studies on destination image, preference, and positioning aim for effective promotion of destinations in the Chinese market. Likewise, studies on specialist tourist segments such as film, gaming, and medical tourism advocate the penetration of these products into the Chinese market. As these studies largely take an advocacy stance, future investigations could generate insights from a knowledge-based platform. First, researchers can consider the identification of environmentally friendly segments within the Chinese markets and how destinations can develop and promote socially and environmentally responsible products to the Chinese travelers. Second, investigators can direct attention toward marketing processes such as image building and branding and evaluate marketing effectiveness. In particular, issues like website development, online transaction and distribution, and social media marketing have emerged as important topics in general tourism and hospitality literature (Oh et al. 2004), but e-marketing has not been pursued earnestly in Chinese outbound research, especially as one recent examination of Chinese mobile internet users suggested that 77.3% of social communication and 51.9% of shopping and booking occurred via mobile devices (ADER 2013).

Third, studies should explore the role of Chinese popular culture, media, and social media in marketing practices. Research on the relationship between tourism, popular culture, and the media is lacking in general (Long and Robinson 2009) and for the Chinese outbound context in particular. Popular culture and media, as practices shaping tourist expectations and imagination, are culturally framed, and destination attractiveness is a result of cultural appraisal (Cooper 2012). This finding suggests that to better align marketing strategy with travelers' preferences, research should take a cultural perspective to examining how Chinese tourists perceive destinations and adopt marketing practices different from those for other groups of tourists.

Business management. Business management was also prominent in our review, with key topics being shopping, tourist expenditure, unethical practices, and management of tourists' experiences (i.e., service quality, satisfaction, and on-site experience).

Several articles explored the shopping component of Chinese outbound trips using constructs and scales derived from Western literature. Chinese travelers had a positive image of shopping in the U.S., but desired more assistance and convenience (Xu and McGehee 2012). Those visiting Hong Kong exhibited shopping behaviors distinct from those of local shoppers. Unlike local shoppers, who valued service quality and product quality most, Chinese tourists considered perceived risk, price, and product quality to be most influential to their satisfaction and behavioral intention (Lloyd, Yip, and Luk 2011). Chinese leisure travelers' expenditures varied with socio-demographics, trip characteristics, and psychological factors (Lew and Ng 2012; Wang and Davidson 2010). Expenditure studies provide insights allowing destinations to maximize revenues, emphasizing the enormous economic impact of this market (UNWTO 2014) as well as the importance of offshore shopping to Chinese tourists. However, studies fail to incorporate culturally related constructs (e.g., cultural identity and values) to explain the distinctiveness of Chinese tourists' shopping behavior, requiring further research effort.

These studies of shopping and expenditure with an aim to maximize economic benefits took an advocacy stance. In contrast, five articles adopted the cautionary platform and discussed unethical business practices related to Chinese outbound tourism, such as zero-fare tours and coercive shopping. Zero-fare tourism, which originated in Southeast Asian destinations, is particularly relevant to package tours, where operators at destinations underprice tour packages and then, during the tour, recoup the lost revenue from miscellaneous shopping and entertainment options, which are often offered at inflated prices (Zhang, Heung, and Yan, 2009). Misleading information, deceptive and bullying language,

exorbitant prices, and ineffective post-tour complaint handling were associated with such practices (Zhang, Yan, and Li 2009; Zhang et al. 2009).

Likewise, Australian researchers acknowledged the prevalence of unethical practices in the inbound Chinese market to Australia as an adverse factor that could jeopardize the long-term sustainability of this market (King, Dwyer, and Prideaux 2006; March 2008; Keating 2009). These researchers identified a range of underlying issues similar to those arising in zero-commission tours. However, the cultural roots and underlying institutional drivers have not been explored. The effectiveness of regulatory efforts to curb these unethical business practices—including the Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China, implemented in 2013—is yet to be evaluated. On Australia's Gold Coast, operators quickly found loopholes in the law and reinvented packages following the previous unethical practices. Evaluation should take a stakeholder approach to assess the impacts of such efforts on tourist experience and satisfaction, operator willingness and efficiency, and host destination responses. In addition, academic attention to the issue is largely restricted to Hong Kong and Australia, although the media have repeatedly exposed unethical practices in other destinations. Comparative studies of different destinations (such as Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America) will enable exploration of the historical, cultural, and political derivation of the phenomenon and inform regulatory efforts.

Service quality and satisfaction are also gaining increasing academic interest. Actual visitation to Australia changed Chinese visitors' perception, influencing satisfaction across a range of tourism experiences (Wang and Davidson 2009). The interplay of operator reputation, consumer product knowledge, and perceived operator effort in delivering quality service could affect price sensitivity and service quality (Chen, Mak, and Li 2013). Several articles commented on casino service quality and how it affected patrons' satisfaction and loyalty (e.g., Tsai, Lo, and Cheung 2013; Shi, Prentice, and He 2014; Zeng and Prentice

2014). Such interest has recently been extended to the airline industry (Han, Hyun, and Kim (2014) and to food services and tourists' food preferences at destinations (e.g., Chang, Kivela, and Mak 2011; Guillet and Tasci 2010; Hoare, Butcher, and O'Brien 2011; Kim and Park 2008; Kim, Wen, and Doh 2010; Law, To, and Goh 2008; Lin and Chen 2012). Although quantitative studies are useful for destinations in monitoring performance, qualitative studies could provide insights into what references tourists use and how they use these references to evaluate on-site experiences (e.g., Li et al. 2011). Further, limited research has explored post-visit reflection. For instance, mainstream tourism and hospitality research emphasizes tourism complaint behavior, service failure, and recovery (Oh et al. 2004), but this pattern is not apparent in Chinese outbound tourism research with one exception, which compares Chinese and American attitudes toward complaining (Ekiz and Au 2011).

While Cai et al.'s (2008) review acknowledged some destinations' concerns regarding the revival of mass tourism owing to the influx of Chinese tour groups, research is almost non-existent regarding the socio-cultural impact of Chinese tour groups on the host destination. Recent media coverage (Liu 2012) on the socio-cultural interaction and conflicts between Chinese tourists and local residents in Hong Kong highlights the need to address these issues to assist tourism planning, policy making, and management. Research into the environmental impacts of Chinese outbound tourism is also lacking. Further, the effects of visitation by both package and non-package tourists on their own social, cultural, and psychological composition are yet to be explored. Future investigations need to move from advocacy to cautionary and beyond. An emic approach will contribute to conceptualization and theory building in this regard.

Development and Connections of Key Topics

To triangulate authors' identification of topics and seek further insights, semantic network analysis was performed using Leximancer 4. A visual network of research interests over time and domain derived by the analyses largely confirmed our identification of key topical areas. Figure 1 provides a bird's eye view of how key concepts are related and shows trending from period to period in terms of topical interest. The four periods (i.e., 2000–2003, 2004–2006, 2007–2010, and Since 2010) clearly connect to different ranges of topics. While research in the period of 2000–2003 focused on hotel, quality, characteristics, and satisfaction, interests in 2004–2006 extended to areas of tourist motivation, market segmentation, and tourist behavior and perception (e.g., information search behavior), and also moved into the restaurant, event, air service, and gaming sectors. Period 2006–2009 saw emerging topics such as independent, female travel, destination image, and choice. In contrast, themes of wine, film and needs are related only to the Since 2010 period, reflecting recent interest in specialist segments.

Please insert Figure 1 about here

Tourism and hospitality fields differ substantially in topics investigated (Figure 2). Tourism research's coverage is more comprehensive; and several themes, including economic, film, wine, and supply, are unique to this field. Other themes such as destination, perception, and market are also related more closely to the tourism domain than to hospitality. Conducted in the restaurant, airline service, and gaming contexts, hospitality research tends to focus on aspects such as market, tourist characteristics, quality, and performance issues and examine how trust and loyalty are established and maintained. The emerging topics identified and differentiated between the tourism and hospitality domains suggest research directions. For instance, tourism scholars are addressing increasing market diversification with studies investigating various special interest segments. This direction has implications

for various hospitality sectors at the destinations. Future research into special-interest tourist groups' hospitality-related needs and behaviors (e.g., accommodation preferences) would contribute to research advancement and business strategy development. Similarly, demand and supply are relevant but neglected topics in hospitality research, calling for demand, pricing, and supply chain analysis at the sector or individual establishment level. Key issues within tourism and hospitality studies, generic economic, psychological, and social-cultural studies (e.g., sustainability) that have not appeared on the maps, are also avenues for future research.

Please insert Figure 2 about here

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

This paper has identified current patterns and future trends in Chinese outbound tourism research. Research efforts manifested in several areas, such as travel motivation, expectations, travel barriers, destination image and preference, market segmentation, and business management issues. Leximancer analyses of the key words largely confirm the chief topical areas and present a thematic network of topical areas by time series and domain. Much literature focuses on one domain of sustainability: economic, reflecting an initial excitement about the development potential of this market and promoting it as an ideal source for economic growth at the destinations. Few studies take a platform beyond advocacy to dialectically evaluate Chinese outbound tourism phenomena and its impacts, and they generally offer no significant breakthrough beyond Western models. Methodologically, these studies applied existing theories to the Chinese market informed by an etic perspective. In other words, they explore the applicability of existing Western theories to a culturally distinct and fast-evolving Chinese market, generating knowledge that is to some extent fragmented and context-confined—an observation shared by a recent review of Chinese outbound

tourism research (Tse 2014). Classifying 80 papers reviewed as destination, tourist, and source market related studies, Tse (2014) commented that research in general tends to be circumstantial, time-specific, and similar in design, and thus has not contributed much to the understanding of Chinese outbound tourism per se. General tourism scholarship focuses on marketing, business management and psychology issues but also increasingly extends to a broader range of disciplines (Crouch & Perdue, 2014). China outbound tourism research needs to reflect a broader prospect of tourism development. In particular, research needs to address global tourism challenges such as environmental issues, adaptive marketing, changing consumer demographics, and use of technology (van Bergner & Lahmann, 2014).

Chinese outbound tourism has been dominated by mass tourism. Given the sheer size of the market, Cai et al. (2008) legitimately raised the concern of the revival of mass tourism at destinations. This review notes little attempt by the academic world to address this issue, and future research needs to take up the challenges inherent in the scale and rapid growth of Chinese outbound tourism and investigate not only economic but also social, cultural, and ecological sustainability. Weaver's (2012) call for convergence toward sustainable mass tourism development suggests potential directions. In the past 15 years, the Chinese market has been fast-diversifying and becoming sophisticated, experience-seeking group of travellers. Its development may be viewed as a condensed, time-lapse version of global tourism development. This phenomenon enables researchers to test the validity of various sustainable development theories based on Western experience. Given the youth of Chinese outbound tourism, there is an opportunity for longitudinal studies to observe how a market matures and how a destination progresses through its lifecycle within a relatively short period of time. Such studies overcome shortcomings of the current impact research that is case studies based on after-facts, and could potentially test the effectiveness of various preventative, mitigating, and adaptive strategies.

Studying Chinese outbound tourism without referring to China's unique social, cultural, historical, and political contexts may result in misinterpretation. Chinese society has been under the mixed influence of traditional schools of philosophical and religious thought (e.g., Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, indigenous customs) and the more recent ideologies (e.g., socialism, materialism, and nationalism). Despite this complexity, core cultural values—for example, balance between *yin* and *yang*, family ties, respect for authority, interpersonal relationships, and worship of superpowers—would still serve as key influencers in decision-making and behaviors. Recent systematic re-instillation of Confucianism by the government will reinforce these values. Nonetheless, few articles have approached Chinese outbound tourism from the unique socio-cultural reality of the country. Studies tend to use interchangeably terms such as culture, country, nation, and society, which assume homogeneity of national and ethnic groups and fail to capture the richness of the cultural concept. Many so-called "cross-cultural" studies are really cross-country in nature, with a few exceptions that examine deeply rooted cultural values that affect tourist phenomena (Kwek and Lee 2010; Li and Cai 2012; Turner, Reisinger, and McQuilken 2002; Ye, Zhang and Yuen 2013).

Cross-cultural studies shall explore socio-cultural constructs. For example, while in the early stage of Chinese outbound tourism tourists searched for modernity elsewhere (e.g., Chan 2006), the second wave of tourists is more likely to value modernity at home as well as appreciating what an industrialized China does not possess (e.g., unspoiled natural environment). This perspective relates to the broader issue of the tourist gaze. Western literature highlights the desire for authenticity and experiencing of "otherness" in the gaze. What constitutes the other, how the Chinese experiences the other, and what underpins the Chinese perspective of otherness are questions remain to be answered. Future research should also extend to performativity, embodiment and affect, host and guest relationships, and

medicalization, informed by Chinese epistemology, and incorporate the aspect of the self from both guest and host perspectives. This extension would resonate with Cohen and Cohen's (2012) call to research the changing nature of contemporary tourism and sociological approaches to its study. The ethical stance of researchers in exploring these topics can inform and enrich the formation of new theories.

The heterogeneity of the Chinese market has become increasingly evident, requiring corresponding product development, experience design and adaptive marketing. Tourism is an experience economy, and recent research has identified theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and constituting concepts of experience design (Tussyadiah, 2013). Such designs require an understanding of tourists as human beings, not simply as customers, reflecting the complex interaction between designing attributes and social cultural contexts where meanings and values are derived, and needs and expectations are formed. Experience/experience-design related studies in the Chinese outbound tourism setting are almost non-existent. Do Chinese tourists appreciate the same core and peripheral experiences? Do Chinese interpret the interactions in the same way? What triggers their deep experience and interactions, resulting in behaviors desired by designers? These questions apply to both intra-cultural and cross-cultural contexts. Since the contemporary conceptualization of the tourist experience acknowledges its multi-faceted, complex, and highly subjective nature, an emic approach may better delineate how individual tourists negotiate and derive meanings from their visitation (Jennings 2010; Wearing and Wearing 1996; Uriely 2005).

Similarly, future marketing studies should address the issue of heterogeneity by exploring a wider spectrum of tourism, such as adventure, cruise, and heritage tourism. These studies require a multi-disciplinary approach, assisted by not only conventional research methods of interviews, focus group discussions, field observations, but also innovative and technology-assisted methods such as mobile ethnography, role-playing, body-storming,

simulation exercise, and user-shadowing. Such studies would provide invaluable insights for product and destination development and benefit both tourists and service providers.

As technologies will continue to revolutionize the interaction between tourism service providers and travelers, another interesting topic for cross-cultural studies is how the Chinese make use of technologies. China's substantial difference from Western markets in terms of technological development, cultural orientation to technologies, and political governance may influence Chinese travelers' interaction with technologies such as websites, social media platforms, and mobile devices. Topics of e-marketing, e-distribution, e-satisfaction, and e-WOM, including their determinants and moderators, present opportunities for theory building.

Keating, Huang, Kriz & Heung (2015) denotes that Chinese outbound tourism can contribute to theory building within the tourism domain. Existing research commonly imposes Western paradigm onto Chinese settings. This 'academic neo-colonialism' could result in lost opportunities for developing new theoretical perspectives based on Asian cultural traditions (Pearce, 2014). Research practice treats non-Western scenarios as a field of theory extension rather than a source for theory generation. There is an unawareness of knowledge produced in languages other than English (Dann, 2011, p15), and investigators have called for research from within a non-Western framework (Li 2012; Cai et al. 2008). However, no prior investigations have explicitly addressed what constitutes non-Western paradigms, how these paradigms may guide research, and to what extent non-Western tourism phenomena could be investigated under such paradigms. A fundamental issue is the need for a more general and genuine recognition of non-Western perspectives in knowledge development. At a practical level, this requires journals and reviewers to be open to and capable of evaluating studies that might not conform to Western traditions of research. The development and dissemination of non-Western paradigms request long-term, strenuous, and collective effort from tourism academics. Collaboration is important in this

internationalization of knowledge (Pearce, 2014). Trilogues among bilingual scholars, Western academics, and Chinese indigenous researchers is critical, as the latter group is adept in Chinese philosophy, culture, and linguistics, calling for.

Long-term strategic development requires recognition of the complexity of Chinese outbound tourism as well as a need for sustainable and responsible development. Researchers should refrain from being overly "scientific," and strive to understand the underlying values and philosophy of knowledge as well as the basis of ethical positions. Research needs to move toward the sustainable, knowledge-based, and ethics platforms that view tourism as an integrated and interdependent system, and should be theoretically rooted in China's philosophical and intellectual legacies.

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Table 1. Number of Articles by Journal and Time Period.

	Since 2010	2007–2009	2004–2006	2000–2003	Total
TM	20	5	4	0	28
JCTR	19	1	0	0	20
JTTM	13	1	2	1	17
APJTR	13	1	2	0	16
IJTR	6	5	3	0	14
JTR	9	2	2	0	13
JHMM	3	7	1	1	12
JHTR	6	1	1	0	8
CIT	6	1	0	0	7
TA	3	3	0	0	6
ATR	6	0	0	0	6
IJHM	4	1	0	0	5
IJCHM	1	1	1	1	4
TE	3	0	0	0	3
CHQ	1	0	0	0	1
JST	0	0	0	0	0
Total	113	29	16	3	161

Note: *Tourism Management (TM), Annals of Tourism Research (ATR), Journal of Travel Research (JTR), International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM), Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (JHTR), International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (IJCHM), Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing (JTTM), Journal of Sustainable Tourism (JST), Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (CHQ), Tourism Economics (TE), Asia-Pacific Journal of Tourism Research (APJTR), Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management (JHMM), International Journal of Tourism Research (IJTR), Current Issues in Tourism (CIT), Journal of Sustainable Tourism (JST), and Tourism Analysis (TA).*

Table 2. Most Productive Researchers with Number of Publications from 2000 to 2014.

Author	No. of Publications
Cathy H.C. Hsu	11
Hanqin Qiu Zhang	9
Samuel Seongseop Kim	9
Xiang (Robert) Li	7
Mimi Li	6
Liping A. Cai	5
Songshan (Sam) Huang	5
Yingzhi Guo	4
Haiyan Song	4
IpKin Anthony Wong	4

Note: Numbers do not add up to 161 or 100% because the table displays only the most productive researchers in the field and multiple authorship.

Table 3. Leading Institutions with the Most Publications from 2000 to 2014.

Institution	No. of Publications Involved
Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong, China)	105
Griffith University (Australia)	20
Sejong University (South Korea)	12
University of Queensland (Australia)	12
University of South Carolina (The U.S.)	12
Institute for Tourism Studies (Macau, China)	11
Purdue University (The U.S.)	8
University of South Australia (Australia)	8
Sun Yat-sen University (Mainland China)	7
University of Macau (Macau, China)	7
La Trobe University (Australia)	6
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (The U.S.)	6
University of Surrey (The UK)	6
James Cook University (Australia)	6
Fudan University (Mainland China)	5
University of Hawaii (The U.S.)	4
University of Waikato (New Zealand)	4
Victoria University (Australia)	4
Zhejiang University (Mainland China)	4

Note: Numbers do not add up to 161 because of multiple authorship. For instance, a university was counted twice if two authors of a paper were from the same university.

Table 4. Region of Interest Explored by the Studies Reviewed.

Region	2000–2003	2004–2006	2007–2009	Since 2010	Total
Asia	1	14	10	57	82
Oceania	1	1	11	17	30
Multiple/Non-specific destinations	0	1	4	23	28
North America	1	0	4	10	15
Europe	0	0	0	6	6
Total	3	16	29	113	161

Table 5. Research Methods and Sample Size Utilized in the Publications Reviewed.

Methods	No. of Papers	Sample Size of Interview or Focus Group	No. of Papers	Sample Size of Field Survey	No. of Papers	Type of Respondents	No. of Papers
Conceptual/review	14	<10	5	<200	18	Actual visitors	92
Mixed	15	11-30	16	201-400	31	Potential visitors	38
						Service	11
Qualitative	36	31-40	5	401-600	22	providers/government	
						representatives	
Quantitative	96	> 41	9	>601	26	Students	6
						Residents	3
Total	161	Total	35	Total	97	Total	150

Note: Map is produced with 100% visibility, 33% theme size, and 90 degree of rotation. Theme *Destination* includes concepts of destination, attributes, choice, motivation, image, students, long-haul, activities, preferences, diner, experiences, knowledge, advertising, website, and cruise. Theme *Perception* includes concepts of perception, impact, social, media, diplomacy, peace, environments, economic, e-WOM, demand, intentions, policy, hosts, medical, and value.
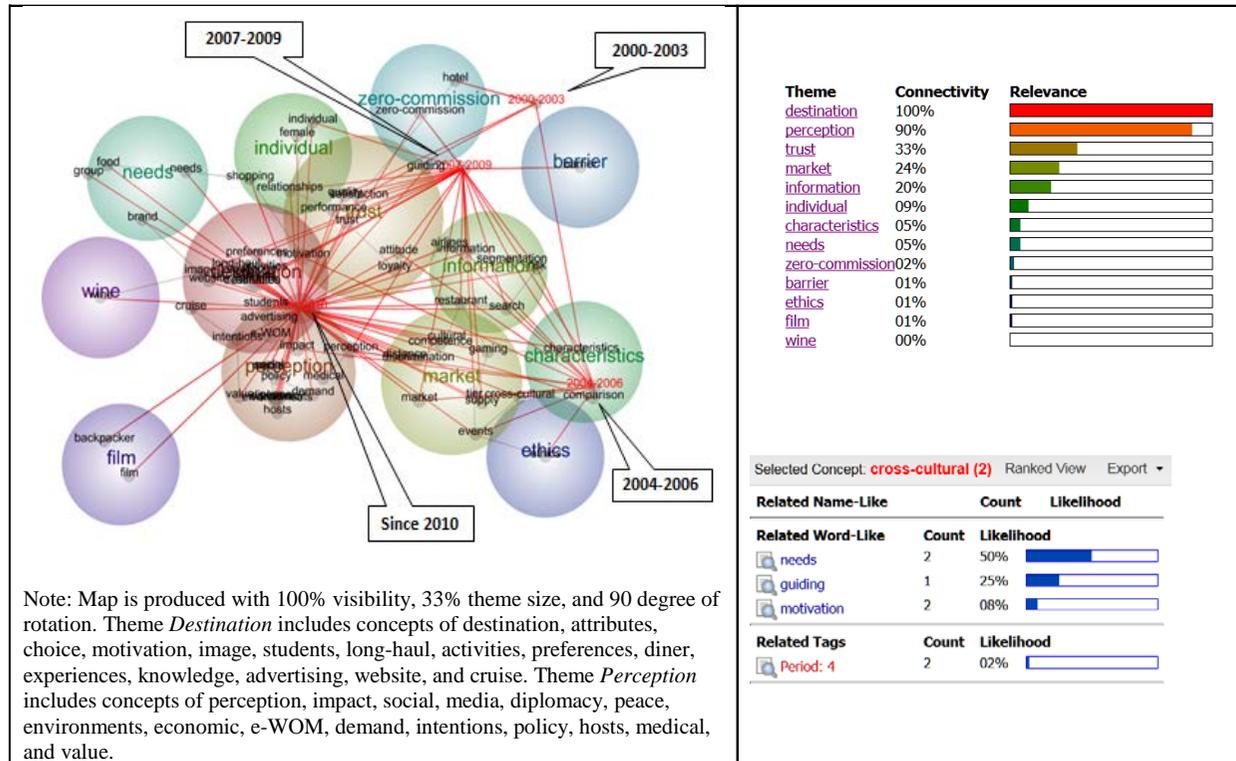
Figure 1[1]. Research topics by time period.

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[1] The key themes are represented by the 13 circles on the map, each reflecting a group of conceptually related notes. The themes are ranked according to the frequencies of occurrence (connectivity), and relevance represents the proportionality of the concepts relative to each other (Sotiriadou et al. 2014). The positions of the themes and time periods and the lines connecting them indicate the closeness of their semantic relationship. Leximancer also provides information for each concept node in terms of connectivity to other nodes. For example, in Figure 1 the concept of cross-cultural is counted twice with reference to tag period 4 (i.e., Since 2010).
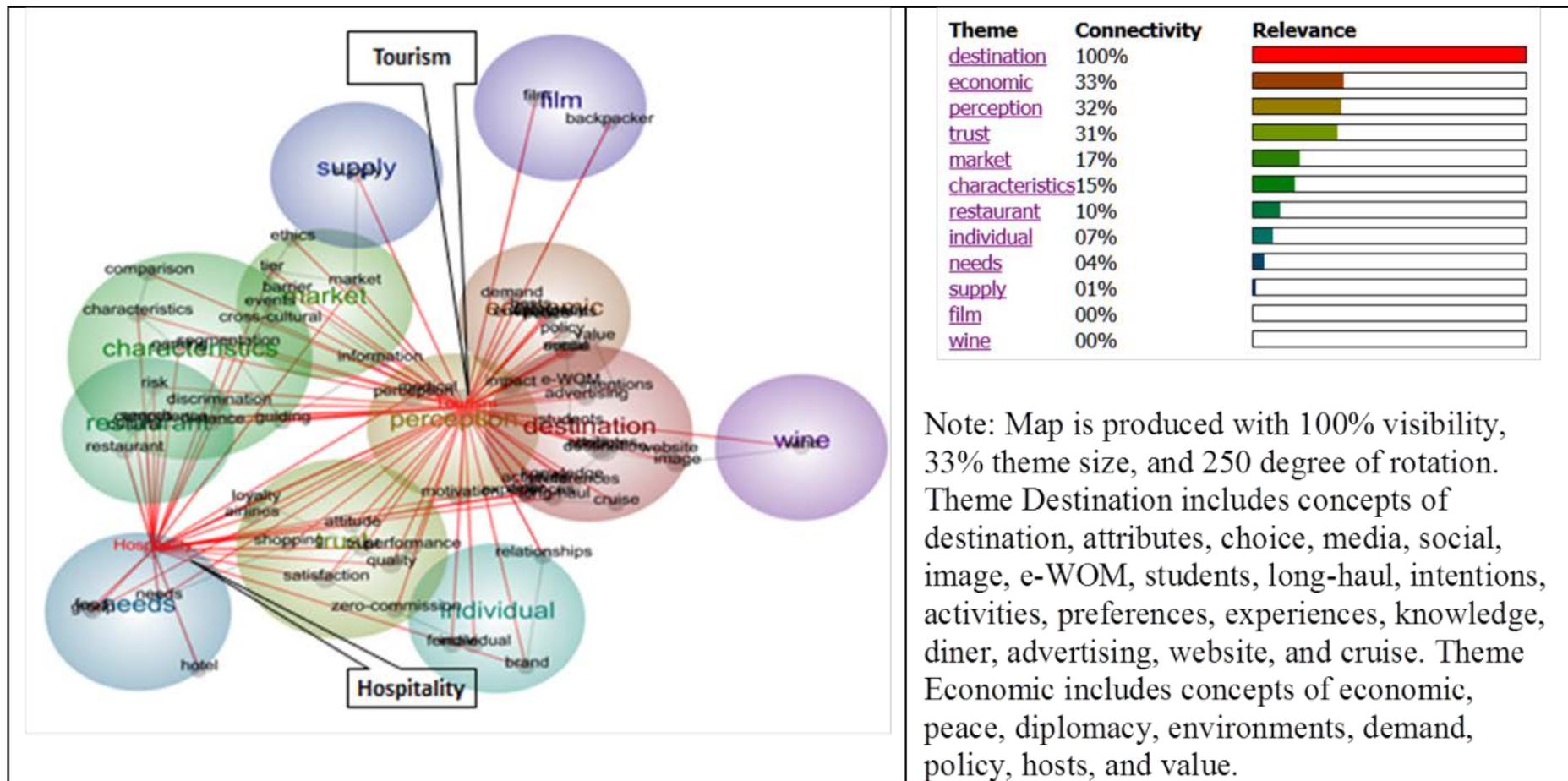
Tourism

Hospitality

Theme	Connectivity	Relevance
destination	100%	
economic	33%	
perception	32%	
trust	31%	
market	17%	
characteristics	15%	
restaurant	10%	
individual	07%	
needs	04%	
supply	01%	
film	00%	
wine	00%	

Note: Map is produced with 100% visibility, 33% theme size, and 250 degree of rotation. Theme Destination includes concepts of destination, attributes, choice, media, social, image, e-WOM, students, long-haul, intentions, activities, preferences, experiences, knowledge, diner, advertising, website, and cruise. Theme Economic includes concepts of economic, peace, diplomacy, environments, demand, policy, hosts, and value.

Figure 2. Research topics by domain.