

# Slow Tourism in Lijiang Region, China

MSc Thesis Leisure, Tourism & Environment  
GEO-80436

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October 2014

# Acknowledgements

This thesis report was conducted within the framework of graduating from the Leisure, Tourism, and Environment master's programme at the Wageningen University and Research Centre (Wageningen, Netherlands). This research explores a "better" travel pattern referred to as "slow tourism," in China. The fieldwork took place from November to December 2013, in the Lijiang region of China, a region characterized by its slow life pace.

The topic of this thesis was inspired by Simon Milne, a visiting professor who instructs a Globalization course. Slow tourism is an approach that I have utilised during my travels. Furthermore, it is a research topic that interests me. Before starting my slow tourism study, I brainstormed what it means to be "slow" during a trip. However, I found that slow tourism content does not only refers to taking more time when reading tourism-related literature. Western scholars have presented arguments surrounding environmental concerns. In particular they argued in favour for low-carbon emitting, travel experiences and transportation modes. The traveller's experience at a destination is an integrated element of slow tourism, which generated the premise for this investigation that aims to reveal what slow tourism looks like in China. Finally, I chose the Lijiang area as my research location.

Before detailing the results from the study, I would like thank everyone who contributed their valuable knowledge and time with me. First, I would like to thank Henk de Haan, my thesis supervisor from Wageningen University, for guiding me throughout the process and providing me with valuable suggestions. They pointed me in the right direction when I was lost during the research period. Once more, his critical comments and feedback regarding this report eventually helped me to complete this thesis. Thanks to Yujie Zhu, a professional research scholar of Lijiang and its cultural authenticity, who spoke with me via Skype and offered valuable information about Lijiang. This information was useful when I began conducting my fieldwork. Also, thank you to the Bureau of Statistics and Tourism in Lijiang for providing data and materials related to Lijiang tourism.

Regarding my data, I would like to thank all the interviewees who gladly shared their opinions related to Lijiang tourism. Especially those participants travelled

with me to Yubeng, Shangri-La, Lugu Lake, Kunming, and the Old Town of Lijiang. I have maintained those memorable times with all of you. All of data provided by the respondents have functioned as a basis for this final thesis report. Special thanks to the owner of the inn where I stayed as well as her family for their hospitality.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for their financial and mental support during all of my years' of study, even though they sometimes were clueless about it. I would also like to my friends in Wageningen, Hangzhou, and Lijiang for all of the thoughtful gatherings and talks. Special thanks to Roy, Rui, and Ge for discussing my thesis with me, which made me feel like I was not alone. Lastly, thanks again to everyone I mentioned and did not mention, who have been supportive during my studies, both in the Netherlands and China. They made the last two years a lasting memory.

Huajie Wang

Wageningen, Netherlands October 2014

## Summary

People in modern cities live with pressure from work as well as a fast-paced life, which motivates them to escape away from their daily life. Travelling is a means for them to go to another place for relaxation and other objectives. As the initial type of tourism, mass tourism has received positive comments during the earlier phases of tourism development. However, in recent years, it has been criticized by a growing number of people. Tourists have complained that cursory travel within a packaged tour leads to fatigue after travel has been completed. In addition to this, tourists complained that the destination also suffers economically, environmentally, and socially from mass tourism. In this regard, slow tourism, is a “better” travel approach, adopting the core beliefs of the “Slow Food” and “Città Slow” movements. Former slow tourism researches were conducted by Western scholars. Conversely, no Chinese research has been undertaken to detail slow tourism and slow tourists in China.

This study was carried out in the Lijiang region of Yunnan, China, for exploring the characteristics of slow tourism in China through the investigation of tourist experience, behaviour, and, attitude. It was conducted in light of concepts and theories such as slow tourism, tourist experience, and consciousness to make sense of slow tourism’s impact on both of the tourists and the destination. It also attempted to identify the possible linkage between tourist experience, tourist behaviour, tourist attitude, and destination.

Interviews, observations, visual and literature discourse analyses, and simple time-space analyses served as research methods to be used for data collection and analysis. The results showed that slow Chinese tourists are mindful of being “slow” because they desire a richer experience so as to become attached to a particular destination. Also they are environmentally conscious of the local nature and culture and are aware of the importance of the conservation for the minorities living in that particular region. However, they are careless regarding low carbon elements during their travel and do not mind the high emission of greenhouse gases created by air travel. A slow tourist destination can affect the visitors’ moving pace. Furthermore, tourists that are aware of this slow pace will be able to advance their tourist experience, behaviour and attitude, which will subsequently exert a positive impact on the destination, in regards to natural and cultural conservation.

In addition, the difference between Chinese slow tourist and Western slow tourist was discussed. Also this research provided evidence to demonstrate that slow tourism is better than mass tourism because it positively affects the tourist and the destination.

Following the end of this research, future study can be expanded to widen the field. In particular, further research can lead to the creation of a slow space. Also, the research location can be an extremely slow city certified by Città Slow. The negative side of slow tourism can be explored as well.

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# 1. Introduction

Tourism has developed for several decades. Whether in developed countries or developing countries, we can see the trace of tourism development. The factors forcing the birth of tourism are various. In this era, people regard travel as a way of leisure. They want to relax during their spare time. Traveling is one of their choices. Besides, during their trip, people can gain knowledge of other places, experience different cultures, and accomplish their own pursuits. As for countries and regions, developing tourism is a method to advance local economy, or a way to advertise or preserve local tradition and culture. In addition, tourism as a “green” industry, produces relatively less pollution (T. Davies & Cahill, 2000). Therefore, tourism plays an important role in current and future developing blueprints in the majority of national and regional areas.

## 1.1 Background

With widespread modernization and globalization in the world, the speed of living becomes increasingly fast. In both developed and developing countries, you can see the common scene of people walking in a hurried pace. Another example showing the rapid pace of life is fast food restaurants like McDonalds seen everywhere. The McDonald’s culture could be one of the representatives for global culture, in which increasing “busy-ness” (being busy) in time is a central character (Parkins & Craig, 2006). As for the effects presented by the fast pace, it is difficult for people to diagnose its essence as positive or negative. We have to admit that fast speed enhances efficiency in various fields. However, would there be no evidence that can prove that the fast pace is abused? As a recognizable late modern malaise, “hurry sickness” is a response to the stress of today’s fast paced working and living (Gleick, 1999).

When people discovered fast living made them feel dizzy, a slower pace could be an alternative and even be the domain in life (Parkins & Craig, 2006). The concept of slow living not only gives rise to a hot topic, but also attracts much public attention. Some scholars discuss less and less available time because of increasing work pressure (Goodin, Rice, Bittman, & Saunders, 2005; Zuzanek, 2004). Since an anti-McDonald’s protest happened in Rome in 1986, Slow Food, as a movement, called for those who wanted to prevent the

invasion of Americanized fast food culture. Then, in 1989, the non-profit organization, the Slow Food movement was founded. It advocates local food and beverage traditions, and disapproves fast food and fast life (SlowFood, 2010). The Slow Food movement experienced several transformations, but its philosophical core – slowness – still remains essential to the organization. Furthermore, according to the results of a survey of 309 Slow Food members from 13 countries conducted by Nevison (2008), the valuation of slowness has gone beyond food, i.e. the valuation of slowness is not limited to the aspect of food. Slow Cities or Città Slow movement is to extend the central idea of the Slow Food to all aspects of urban life.

Regarding the tourism sector, the development of slow tourism is based on Slow Food movement and Città Slow movement. Slow tourism attempts to focus on the quality of experience on holiday, rather than the quantity of experience. There are many alternative tourism forms, such as sustainable tourism, ecotourism, responsibility tourism and ethic tourism, which have family relative links with slow tourism. They share some similar features with slow tourism. For example, ecotourism places high value on the conservation of nature environment, and one of characteristics within slow tourism is in tune with ecology and diversity (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

## **1.2 The Context of This Study**

This study focuses on slow tourism in China, which has not been studied within the slow tourism field. So, the tourism situation in China and Chinese tourists should be illustrated first.

China is a developing country and is going through the same period that developed countries experienced. Chinese grasp all opportunities that advance the growth of economy. Tourism, as an emerging service industry, has become increasingly popular in China. In Western countries, the development of tourism has lasted more than one hundred years (Towner, 1995). However, in China, it has taken place in three decades (Wei, 2003), which relates to the level of economy and social development directly. Nowadays, driven by the technology and China's rise, Chinese have more available time and money to spend. Time and money, are basic factors for the formation of a tour. Especially influenced by newly open thoughts, more and

more Chinese have become eager to see new things. And they believe travel is a decent way to enjoy beautiful scenes, contact new things, know strange places, and be affected by different cultures.

Therefore, tourism in China is facing a promising future. The current development situation already has impressive performance. According to The Annual Bulletin of Tourism Statistics of the People's Republic of China 2012 (TheChinaNationalTourismAdministrationInformationCenter, 2013), which has the best credibility from the China National Tourism Administration, data shows how impressive China's tourism is. The domestic tourism market expanded quickly. In 2012, the number of domestic tourists increased 12.0%, compared with the previous, reaching RMB2.957 billion with revenue of RMB2270.622 billion, or 280 billion euros. Domestic tourism itself takes up the majority of all tourism associated with China. However, the two other components of inbound foreign tourists and outbound Chinese tourists only account for approximately 132 million and 83 million passenger movements respectively. We have to say tourism in China is coming of age.

The above statistics show the sharp growth in China's tourism, which indicates that the number of Chinese tourists is in an increasing trend. Since the cultural background is totally different from Western tourists, it is interesting to understand the characteristics of Chinese tourists. In China, tourism is moving and tourists are evolving. Nyíri (2011) had described that Chinese tourists as a group are passive and unenlightened. He regarded Chinese tourists as a group *"which was poorly versed in the literati tradition beyond its superficial signs and had no code of travel behaviour at its disposal"*. In fact, Nyíri was biased when he evaluated Chinese tourists. Especially in current modern China, these impressions will not be applied to Chinese tourists any more. Influenced by the nature environment and social surroundings including policies, laws and regulations, ethical concepts, living styles and other social ideology, Chinese show a great deal of difference on tour activities. Some examples can illustrate the changes. When Chinese tourists travel to a destination, they prefer to visit many scenic spots and take pictures to record their visit, rather than be concerned with tour quality (X. Li & Xiang, 2009). On the contrary, Western tourists will travel to the same place and live in the same hotel. Another distinction is travel motivation. Chinese tourists travel for enjoyment. However, Westerners prefer adventure and are inclined to seek

self-identity during the tour. Also, travel methods are different (Zheng, 2006). Based on the thought of collectivism, Chinese visitors are willing to travel in groups. So, package tours become the preferred method of travel (Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Qu & Li, 1997). Western tourists dislike their plans being handled by others. Because they are keen to show themselves through their behaviour and living style, Western tourists love to choose independent tours.

China's tourism, as a newly upward industry, attracts more attention. Chinese tourists should be distinguished from Western tourists who are mainstream subjects of studies, when scholars investigate their work related to tourism in China.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

In cities, especially modern metropolises, it is common to see cars and pedestrians moving at a fast speed because of limited time. To a certain extent, this reveals heavy burdens on citizens' shoulders. In order to throw away the burden from work and life, escape from reality, and relax, more and more people choose going out for a long or short trip (Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Philip L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). Besides, from the first day of 2008, according to the regulation published by the China national government, staff members have paid holiday according to individual length of service. That means people have more flexible vacation time when using public holidays and festivals. More time can be arranged for planning their tour, and many Chinese prefer all-inclusive package tours.

Nowadays, mass tourism composes a large percentage of tourism. As the representative pattern of mass tourism, package tours are a convenient way to travel for visitors. An all-inclusive package tour is a trip planned by the travel agency, and a tour guide will be assigned to accompany tourists during the trip. The tourists pay a single price covering transportations, meals, tickets for sightseeing, experiences and so forth (Sheldon & Mak, 1987), after that they can just enjoy their trip. Choosing a package tour means there is no need for tourists to do a lot of preparation work, such as booking transportation tickets and accommodation, planning daily itinerary etc. and can save a lot of time. Besides, the large number of tourists brings economic development through their spending at the tourism destination (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008). However,

in recent decades, many problems have arisen because of mass tourism. At tourism destinations, damage is huge. Mass tourism has caused havoc in social, cultural, economic and environmental fields (Poon, 1993). Because of the large tourist population, the environmental carrying capacity and the local reception capacity face challenges. Trees and natural surroundings are destroyed (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008; Font, 2000; Newsome & Moore, 2012), rubbish can be seen everywhere (Yang, 2010), the local's lives are influenced (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988), culture heritage is ruined (M. Li, Wu, & Cai, 2008; Nuryanti, 1996), and noise, air pollution are severe (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008; Ghimire, 2013; Valenzuela, Williams, & Shaw, 1991).

Meanwhile, impact on tourists is obvious as well, especially the quality of travel. Most Chinese tourists are going to travel to escape their busy daily work and release themselves through viewing beautiful scenes. However, the travel speed accelerates in order to finish the planned itinerary and see as many sights as possible. It results in the sights flashing in front of tourists' eyes (Reid, Dewar, Fallon, Cossar, & Grist, 1980). After returning home, few things they saw during their travel are retained by their memory. Besides, they feel even more tired compared to their status before the trip (Waterhouse, Reilly, & Edwards, 2004). This goes against visitors' premier purpose - relaxation. Also, their tourist experience is limited. This indicates that mass tourism cannot satisfy tourists' demands.

Then how should we settle these matters? Many alternative travel modes have surfaced, with the aim of eliminating the negative effects stemming from mass tourism. For instance, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, green tourism, backpack tourism, pro-poor tourism and volunteer tourism. But these alternative tourism patterns are aimed in one direction. For example, ecotourism is focusing on protecting natural environment (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). And backpack tourism is based mostly on adventure spirit (Walsh & Tucker, 2009). Only volunteer tourism is beneficial for both the destination and tourists themselves, but it is limited by being a volunteer. Thus, a new tourism mode awakens. That is slow tourism, which benefits the destination and tourists.

Slow tourism, is not a new word in Western society. In China it becomes more and more frequent on people's lips as does slow life or slow living. Due to busy

work and living paces, people can become nervous, which will lead to mental disorders (Sokal et al., 2004). Increasingly, people have realized this problem, and they are urged by specialists to slow their living tempo. Experts argue that slow life is beneficial for both physical and mental health (Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Penedo & Dahn, 2005). Travel is an important part of modern-day life, and slowness also was applied to tourism. Tourists often complain about the quality of trips. Most attribute their dissatisfaction to the tight travelling schedules and cursory tours (Chang, 2006). Also, feeling exhausted after the trip, visitors are more willing to slow their travel speed. Therefore, slow tours have become prevalent recently in China. Besides, slow tourism can contribute to the destination management and preservation of nature and culture. When advocating slow tourism and importing slow tourists, destination income will not suffer, since the tourists spending will increase due to their longer stay, and the number of visitors will be controlled. Fewer tourists will relieve the burden of the destination's reception capacity. Additionally, slow tourists are aware of environmental problems and behave friendly to nature and culture, such as choosing low-carbon transportation modes (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson, Lumsdon, & Robbins, 2011; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

The idea of slow tourism emerged about 20 years ago in Western countries. Studies associated with slow tourism conducted previously were on the basis of Western travellers, while slow tourism in China has occurred in the past few years. Due to the different backgrounds and subjects, it is possible that slow tourism in China differs from Western slow tourism. It is certain that slow tourists are different as well. I chose the Lijiang region for my research location because in Chinese thinking, Lijiang is a Slow City. People travelling to Lijiang are attracted to its slow pace. It is valuable to study slow tourists and slow tourism in the Lijiang area to gauge whether slow tourism is a better travel approach beneficial for the destination and to tourists' needs.

## **1.4 Research Area**

If you ask Chinese people where is a suitable place to travel slowly, most answer Lijiang (Su & Teo, 2009). Lijiang is located in Yunnan Province, China. Detailed information about the Lijiang region will be presented in Chapter 4.2. Lijiang is famous for its slow pace. In Lijiang, there are a large numbers of slow

visitors. That is why I selected Lijiang as the centre of the research area. Certainly, Lijiang is not the only destination tourist visit. Many nearby cities and towns are also destinations including Kunming and Dali. So the research area is not limited to Lijiang. Nevertheless, Lijiang plays an important role in this study. Since Lijiang is a transfer point, tourists always set out from Lijiang and return, then journey to another destination. The research region is based on Lijiang and spreads to nearby districts frequented by tourists.

In Lijiang, many people will enter a slow mode unconsciously. A walk around the ancient city, or just stay in a cafe, pick up a book, have a cup of tea, and listen to music will enable people to spend a whole afternoon sitting here. Or they can chat with friends, and feel sunshine in the inn's yard. In Lijiang, small wooden signs with words "*bask in the sun, in a daze, chat, love affair*" can be seen everywhere. These words even became the image of Lijiang life. Many tourists choose to forget their life in the big cities, leave worries behind and just enjoy the slow pace of the city, giving them a nice holiday. Many residents were not born in Lijiang. They came to Lijiang as tourists, but eventually fell in love with Lijiang, and did not want to leave or return to their fast-paced life. They operate inns in the Old Town (the Old Town of Lijiang), or run shops, or become "wandering musicians" performing in Lijiang alleys. It is possible for them to pursue commercial income, but they stay in Lijiang, and become a part of Lijiang. Some people think that those migrants destroy original Naxi culture in Lijiang, since Han culture occupies a dominant position (Harrell, 2012). However, some people believe that they promote and advertise Lijiang's slow culture (Gordon, 2013). Indeed, in the Old Town, native people compose less than 10% of the total population (Su & Teo, 2009). It seems that minority culture is not bright any longer, but still many tourists come to Lijiang to slow down and experience slow life here. That is the primary reason why I chose Lijiang as the centre for this study.

## **1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions**

### **1.5.1 Research Objectives**

Work and life pressure, and a faster and faster pace of life lead to tourists travel for relaxation, but mass tourism could not enable tourists to have this

effect, or even opposite effects (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008). Would the emergence of slow tourism, as a new way of travel, enable tourists to achieve their travel goals? In Lijiang, many tourists experience slow life and slow tourism. Slow tourism is better than mass tourism (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012), which means it can bring advantages.

The main aim of this research is to explore slow tourism in China via a case study of Lijiang region. We also use this case study to demonstrate the effect on the destination and tourist experience, behaviour and attitude contributed to slow tourism in Lijiang region. Moreover, this study is dedicated to discover the influence on tourists' behaviours and experience when they travel at a slow tempo. Additionally, in my study I strived to prove whether slow tourism is a better travel pattern versus mass tourism by using empirical evidence. The last objective will be a part of the discussion chapter.

### **1.5.2 Research Questions**

In order to achieve objectives of this study, the main research questions were put forward from three aspects – slow tourists, the destination and tourists' attitude. Studying slow tourists, including tourists' behaviour and experience and attempting to investigate what slow tourism is and whether they are influenced with the slow approach. The destination is the setting of a slow location and the impact of slow tourism. Also, the exploration of tourists' attitude can show their transformation of mind, which is a part of slow tourists' study and we can see whether their mind-set is affected by slow tourism. From these aspects, we can justify whether slow tourism is a "better" travel form and if its influence is positive or negative.

Main Question 1: What are slow tourists like in Lijiang region?

Sub Questions:

1. How do slow tourists distribute their travel time?
2. How do slow tourists behave during their trip?
3. What do they experience during their trip?

Main Question 2: What is the slow destination like?

Sub Questions:

1. What does Lijiang region provide for slow tourists?
2. How does the destination attract tourists to slow their travel pace?

Main Question 3: What are tourists' attitudes in slow tourism?

Sub Questions:

1. Are slow tourists seeking knowledge about the destination and local experience?
2. Are they mindful of being slow?
3. Are they careful to preserve the culture and historical architecture and nature during their trip?
4. What do slow tourists think about conservation?

## **1.6 Relevance of This Study**

Studies of slow tourism in the Western countries have existed about 20 years. In later decades, most scholars shifted their research focus from destination experience to travel experience (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). In China, slow tourism or slow travel was just proposed in recent years. Chinese tourists do not have a clear idea of slow tourism. In the academic area, Chinese researchers still have not presented papers on this new topic. Therefore, my study is the first article specializing in slow tourism in China. It explores the concept of slow tourism towards Chinese tourists and explores theory on tourist experience with slow tourism. As for the study destination - Lijiang and its nearby region, my research is a reflection on the future of tourism development in this area. Also, I will offer some suggestions for improvement or future studies as reference.

## **1.7 Thesis Outline**

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first one is the current introduction chapter, followed by the concepts and approaches chapter. In this chapter, concepts of slow tourism, tourist experience, and mindfulness will be

discussed based on existing scientific literature and generate a conceptual model which will be explored in this research. Chapter 3 will give an insight in the methodology with methods used for data collection and analysis, as well as an elaboration of my positionality and limitation of this study. The following section portrays the results and analysis according to data collected to answer research questions placed forward above. As for Chapter 5, discusses the differences between the actual Chinese slow tourists in Lijiang and theoretical slow tourists studied by Western scholars, and whether slow tourism is a “better” travel pattern will be presented. The last chapter provides the conclusion of this study.

## 2. Concepts and Approaches

Slow tourism is a “better” alternative pattern of tourism, and some Western leading researchers (de la Barre, 2012; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar et al., 2012; Heitmann, Robinson, & Povey, 2011; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; TheMindfulWorld, 2013; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011) have done some studies to prove its bright future. However, in China, slow travel is only a tourism slogan. In the academic field, there is no detailed research concerning slow tourism based on China’s background. I attempt to introduce slow tourism in China, which means I must be familiar with slow tourism in Western countries and view how those slow tourism experts conducted their research. Tourist experience is still a heated topic discussed by various scholars. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) even argued that travel experience is an important part of the whole experience. In slow tourism, are the tourists satisfied with their experience during their trips and their different behaviours and experience from mass tourists are worthy of investigation. Additionally, the emergence of slow tourism is based on a destination, and the destination always is a Slow City (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Space, place and people are interconnected (Gieryn, 2000; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Massey, 1994; Mitchell, 1996). How do place and slow tourists create slow space, how does slow space influence slow tourists, and how do slow tourists give feedback to place are interesting to research. Beside the destination and tour experience, tourists’ attitudes deserve exploration. Depending on Fullagar and his colleagues (2012), slow tourists will be more caring about environmental problems and carbon emission. So, the question becomes whether using slow approach to visit changes tourists’ attitude towards conservation of nature and culture or not? I use mindfulness theory as a means to study, because the attitude is more about something related to mind. Tourist attitude is not only related to preservation, but also related to their experience. Are slow tourists mindful to seek more experience when they travel slowly. Due to these driving forces, the first paragraph of this chapter explains the concept of slow tourism on the basis of some researchers’ arguments. Following, three components will be discussed in my research, namely the destination, tourist experience and mindfulness. In the last paragraph, I will establish a conceptual model to research my study in order to answer the research questions and find the relationship among tourist

behaviour, tourist experience, the destination, and mindfulness in slow tourism.

## **2.1 Slowness and Slow Tourism**

Slow tourism is a new research topic developed in the last 20 years. However, the development of tourism in China appeared later than in Western countries, which resulted in slow tourism being in the beginning stage in China. Furthermore, Chinese slow tourists have different characteristics from Western slow tourists, because of the distinctive cultural background, economic level and history (X. R. Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline, & Wang, 2011). I must understand slow tourism as researched by Western scholars first. Then combined with my fieldwork, I am can uncover the features within Chinese slow tourism.

Advancing technology makes the time go faster. It is acknowledged that the length of life is limited. If you are willing to accomplish more things or get more fruits, you must pay more attention to them. It can be interpreted as hope to make use of limited time to do more things, unless speeding up efficiency, which requires people work, eat, move, and even react at a faster speed. Some people believe that speed is an escape from death (Honoré, 2004), therefore, they force themselves to be faster and faster. Businessmen regard time as money (Loft, 1995), and the sentence that time is money is often a slip of their tongues. These all show the importance of time in our lives. By being aware of the significance of time, people have invented many techniques and creations to accelerate efficiency. Internet is a marvellous invention. In this data-rich media era, those who grasp more information have more possibilities to gain success. And the Internet provides a super-excellent opportunity for people to acquire information richer and faster. Something can take place in one corner of the world, and it can be known over the world in several minutes. The speed of transferring messages is the power of the Internet. As an approach of media, other media are similar to the Internet. They spread news, videos, images, papers, and thoughts at the speed of light around the whole world. Thanks to advanced technology, people are able to have multiple recreational activities, such as browsing the Web, reading newspapers, listening to music, watching dramas, playing computer games, shopping online.

However, we also lost much because of technology. Mobile phones place us in a net. Others can easily find you in a minute, but you lost the pleasure of waiting to receive and reading letters. Jet travel will decrease the movement of time, but people will lose the nice view outside the window. Is doing everything in a fast speed really decent? I think facts will give you answers. The reformation of transportation can speed up the moving pace for sure, but the rapid moving has given rise to more than thousands of deaths (Tatem, Rogers, & Hay, 2006). More speed and long working hours will put a burden on health (Caruso et al., 2006; Spurgeon, Harrington, & Cooper, 1997). Although Steve Jobs invented brilliant Apple products, his working hours were too long and working intensity was high-level, which influenced his physical health negatively. If Jobs would have slowed his pace, it is possible that he would have lived longer and created more genius products for us.

Slowness is the antithesis of fast (Miele, 2008; Parkins, 2004). From the Industrial Revolution, people have been eager to speed in the social and economic spectrum, while slowness was left from the mind. However, when speed brings about more and more tension, pressure, harm, disease, it comes to the revival of slowness. Slowness can be an alternative way or values to live (Honoré, 2004).

Slowness is the central philosophy of slow movements (Germov, Williams, & Freij, 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011; Mayer & Knox, 2006). The first one is Slow Food, which is say no to the instant food culture and the global food industry. To save time, most office staffers prefer to choose convenient and fast food as their breakfast and lunch and the microwave offers people the best way to heat food in a short time. With the widespread use of microwaves and global restaurant chain stores scattered around the world, people rarely have fresh and healthy food. Since most fast food is oily and high in fat, consumption of this type of food in the long-term will increase the possibilities to get disease, such as obesity, mal-nutrition, hyperlipidaemia (Bowman, Gortmaker, Ebbeling, Pereira, & Ludwig, 2004; Rosenheck, 2008). Also, quick eating is not a healthy means, which will cause dyspepsia and tummy bug (G. J. Davies & Smith, 2004; Tack, Bisschops, & DeMarchi, 2001). To fight against global instant food chain restaurants including McDonalds, and protect local farmers, restaurants and produce, Slow Food emerged in the 1980s. Although this movement hopes to avoid standardized dishes, food products (Parkins & Craig, 2006),

the main recommended point is to eat slowly. The Non-Governmental Organization called Slow Food also aims to advertise the art of slow to the world. The Slow Cities or Città Slow movement is an extension of the slowness philosophy from food to all fields of living. Not only does Slow Cities advocate protecting local food and drinks, but also tries to create slow environment in urban construction and transportation planning. Parkins and Craig (2006) stated that Slow Cities are “*small cities or largish towns*”, rather than “*cosmopolitan metropolis*”. The level of globalization in small cities is lower than in modern big cities, so that it has less difficulty to transform to Slow Cities. However, it does not mean that it is impossible for metropolis to be “Slow Cities”. Nowadays, not many communities are attempting to be slow communities, which is based on the idea of Slow Cities (Yan, Lv, & Cao, 2012). Community, as the cell of a city, is the basic part for a city. If all communities of a city become slow communities, will it be far away from a “Slow City”.

The slowness philosophy has already expanded to daily living and traveling is inextricably linked with daily living, therefore, the slowness philosophy has a huge impact on travel. Just like standardized food, mass tourism received more and more criticism. Tourists complain that mass tourism just gives the opportunity to have a hurried and cursory glance at tourist destinations, inauthentic performance and commercialized culture and tourism attractions (Ghimire, 2013; Wagner, 1977). Meanwhile, scholars point out that mass tourism plays havoc with social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects (Boissevain, 1996; Font, 2000; Ghimire, 2013; Poon, 1993; Valenzuela et al., 1991; Wagner, 1977), especially in ecological range (Font, 2000; Macnaught, 1982). In order to solve the problems that mass tourism presents, the idea of “alternative tourism” was awakened. However, alternative tourism cannot reverse the situation engendered by conventional mass tourism (Erick Cohen, 1987). In fact, compared with conventional tourism, most types of alternative tourism are better, but not the best. Even though, some travel forms are still valuable, such as sustainable tourism, eco-friendly tourism, responsible tourism and so forth.

Slow tourism, as a “better” pattern of tourism, adopts the core philosophy idea – slowness, and advocates travelling slower and staying longer (Matos, 2004). In the academic field, slow travel is a complicated theme experiencing some transformation. One cannot find the origin of this term, but the first appearance

of this concept was in 2000, by Pauline Kenny, who was tentative to define slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2011). It is clear to notice that researchers were attempting to study the essential ingredients in slow tourism during the early period. Slow tourism has been used to take a tour with slow transportation and stay longer in destinations. French researchers Jean-Paul Ceron and Ghislain Dubois (2007) made a backcasting scenario for sustainable tourism mobility in 2050 for France, and emerged with the idea of “slow tourism” with respect to *“develop products which are less transport intensive”*. They predict that in 2050, French will travel by train, sailing and cruise ships and will stay more than a month in exotic destinations (Paul Ceron & Dubois, 2007). Moreover, both of them used the term “soft mobility” to describe cycling or walking around destinations, rather than travelling by car (Paul Ceron & Dubois, 2007). Those scholars have used “slow tourism” to refer to environmental concerns. Since aviation contributes to current climate changes, which has become an inevitable issue, environmental and ecological matters have attracted more attention. Travel accounts for 50–97.5% of the overall emissions of greenhouse gas (GHG) of most tourism trips (Dickinson et al., 2011). Choosing a slow and low-carbon transport mode is a great way to mitigate the impact. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) define slow travel as following:

*“Slow travel is an emerging conceptual framework which offers an alternative to air and car travel, where people travel to destinations more slowly overland, stay longer and travel less.”*

In addition, the study of slow tourism concerns the nature of tourism and tourist experience (Müller, 1999). Tourists are disappointed with mass tourism and expect to have a better experience, and different travel behaviour can satisfy their need (Müller, 1999). Krippendorf (2010) argued that the present tourism system could not improve the quality of urban living in late modern society, and purposed suggestions that having holidays at home or near home to those urban dwellers. Especially emphasizing on locality and diversity (Krippendorf, 2010), which meet the principles of slow tourism – attachment to the destination (Matos, 2004).

However, some experts such as Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) thought the tourist experience in destinations was not sufficient for slow tourism. Also, an inquiry for transport as a tourist experience in the academic field is rising (Halsall, 2001). Managers of tourism destinations are expecting that tourists

can spend longer time staying in one place and more money on indigenous products, contributing to the income of local economy. For accomplishing this intent, Downward and Lumsdon (2004) suggested that tourist destinations slow visitors' pace. It is possible that managers make use of transport as a means to manage visitors' mobility plans. Transport modes can attract visitors' attention as well. In cycling tourism, riding a bike is an attraction for tourists cutting speed (L. Lumsdon, Downward, & Rhoden, 2006). With the comfortable settings of cruises and the affordable prices, cruising shows a growth trend (Chin, 2009). Compared with air travel, the speed of ships is relatively slow. Those researchers argued that different choices for transport modes can make tourists have various experiences (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Molz, 2009). Besides, slow travel can provide more experiences for tourists because of landscape changing at a slow pace. Speakman (2005) states that *"the quality of the experience is not about speed"*. He believes that the real quality of the experience is the deeply involved in the environment on the trip (Speakman, 2005).

Therefore, environmental and experiential elements are principle in the definition of slow travel. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) include these two essential points:

*"The importance of the travel experience to, and within, a destination, engagement with the mode(s) of transport, associations with slow food and beverages, exploration of localities in relation to patrimony and culture at a slower pace and, what might best be described as, support for the environment."*

Similarly, the official definition in Australia's Macquarie Dictionary (2009) also encompasses these two elements:

*"noun 1. travel conducted at a slow pace to enjoy more fully the places visited and the people met. 2. such travel seen as environmentally friendly through its lack of reliance on air transport [modelled on slow food]."*

Some researchers such as Dickinson and Lumsdon, prefer to use "slow travel", as they emphasize the mobility of the journey from the departure to the destination and the movement at the destination, and the choice of the

transport mode. Some take a fancy to use “slow tourism”. Albeit the terms “slow travel” and “slow tourism” are used relatively instead of each other (Dickinson et al., 2011), “slow tourism” is the term adopted in this thesis. Since the term “slow tourism” does not show any tendency towards transport or tourist experience, it appears fair and contains all events taking place during trips.

Transport to the destination is a part of slow tourism, and it also can have high intrinsic value (Walton, 2009). Admittedly, transport to destination can be an enjoyable journey, especially when selecting train, bicycle or walking as modes of transport. Since it will take a long time on the way to the destination, these types of transport allow tourists to enjoy the scenery along the way. Moreover, those modes of transport are relatively environment-friendly, which benefits the conservation of environment, and even the historical architecture, causing less air pollution, less acid rain. However, transport mode is not the only principle to decide if slow tourism takes place. In modern society, some locations are not reachable by train or bus. If a trip to the destination reveals features of slow tourism, except for air travel to the destination, could we deny this trip as a slow trip? Indeed, many scholars argue that slow tourism takes place in holiday and the location is near home principle (Barr, Shaw, Coles, & Prillwitz, 2010; Dickinson, Robbins, & Lumsdon, 2010; Krippendorf, 2010). Short distances can be reached by train and bus easily and lower carbon emissions. This kind of slow tourism is limited to distance from home to the destination. Meanwhile, those destinations within short distance are in countryside, and can be viewed as rural tourism (Butler, Hall, & Jenkins, 1997). Although, Dickinson, Janet and Lumsdon (2010) claim that slow travel is not applicable to each tourism context, a remote destination still is worthy of investigation for slow tourism. China stretches 5026 kilometres across the East Asian landmass with an area of about 9.6 million km<sup>2</sup>. This massive land makes it inconvenient to travel from the north to the south or from the east to the west by train or bus, unless a person is unemployed as no company will allow its employees to take a vacation more than two months. So, most Chinese will not select a train for long distance travel. It does not meet the need for low-carbon emissions, but the process of travel from the departure to the destination is less important than on-site travel. It is inevitable to study the relationship between slow tourism in remote areas in the future (de la Barre, 2012). Regarding this study, the research aim is focusing on the travel at the

destination, rather than the journey to the destination. Therefore, travel experience mainly relates to the destination experience, which means the experience of transportation in Lijiang.

As Positano and Orvieto cite, some Slow Cities are famous tourist destinations (Parkins & Craig, 2006). There are many rules to evaluate whether a city is a Slow City or not (Miele, 2008; Pink, 2007). However, there is no organization to assess Slow Cities in China. In Chinese thinking, as long as the living pace of a city is not hurried and citizens' life is leisurely, they regard it as a "Slow City". Therefore, a defined Slow City will not appear in this study. Slow Cities here are causal with China's style. Such as Chengdu, Hangzhou, which are international big cities. The locals are living in an idyllic condition. Drinking tea, chatting, mah-jong (a popular game in China), and card games are their usual activities. Impressions of people in other cities towards Chengdunese and Hangzhounese are that they are moving slowly, unhurried. So, Chengdu and Hangzhou are Slow Cities and leisure cities in China. As well as my research area, Lijiang and nearby locations, especially in the Old Town of Lijiang, slowness is its main melody. Slow traveling is a part of slow living there. Under this condition, slow tourism has the possibility to develop.

## **2.2 Slow Tourism and Slow Destination**

In Italy, an international network of small towns called Città Slow was organized 15 years ago. Until now, there are more than 145 Città Slow towns around the world. This organization aims to use the philosophy of Slow Food into urban life in order to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors (Pink, 2007). This organization requires that a Città Slow member town *"comply with a list of criteria covering the six pillars of environmental policies, infrastructural policies, technologies and facilities for urban quality, safeguarding autochthonous production, hospitality and awareness"* (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011) and its population cannot exceed 50,000. Although the Old Town of Lijiang is not a real Città Slow town, it is still a slow destination as stated before.

I argue that it is not necessary that individual slow travel has taken place at a slow destination, but admittedly, a slow place will affect human behaviour. People living or visiting this type of city will be influenced by the surroundings

that cities create (Rose & Thompson, 2012). They will be slow in Città Slow towns and experience local products. Therefore, how to set infrastructures and construct slow circumstance are important. Città Slow thinks of a series of measures such as opening more parks, recovering old buildings, calling for choosing public transportation means, banning car alarms, neon signs and cell towers to decrease speed and enhance living life (Parkins & Craig, 2006). Those steps also can be used in slow destinations. Under slow conditions, visitors can travel slower and discover more. Besides being slow, they will have time to think and feel (Honoré, 2004). It is possible that after a slow experience, they will behave differently.

In addition, impacts on the destination exerted by tourists are also certain (Erik Cohen, 1978; Hillery, Nancarrow, Griffin, & Syme, 2001). People are a part of a place, which presents a sense of the place (Logan, 2012). If individuals move slowly, the sense of the destination will be a slow place. Varied tourist behaviours and attitudes will influence the destination differently (Moutinho, 1987). In sustainable tourism, tourists with the concept of sustainability will behave more environment-friendly and show concern about social and economic development (van der Knaap, 1999). We also can expect that slow tourists can have positive effects on the destination as well.

## **2.3 Slow Tourists and Tourist Experience**

Only few articles are discussing slow tourists, because there are no fixed standards to distinguish this group. This research aims to determine profile of Chinese slow tourists and their travel behaviours. So I selected Lijiang region as research area, even though it is not a Slow City obeying all principles defined by Città Slow statutes. However, it is the slow area acknowledged by Chinese and the Western slow rules do not fit all conditions of China's tourism.

With respect to slow tourist, the definition is ambiguous, because not many experts have researched slow tourists. Dickinson and his colleagues (2010) segmented slow tourists into two types according to tourists' environmental concerns about their trip. "Hard slow travellers" who take environmental benefits as the pivotal consideration when selecting slow travel. On the contrary, those people who choose slow travel because of some experiences that slow travel can bring about, while regarding environment as an

attachment with slow travel, are termed as “soft slow travellers”.

In 2011, Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) did an empirical research in Seferihisar which is the first Città Slow destination in Turkey. They aimed to discover what slow tourists are. They supposed that all tourists there were slow tourists and used quantitative methods to divide tourists into three groups - Dedicated Slow Tourists who are really into slow tourism based on Città Slow principles, Interested Slow Tourists who have moderate to high interest in slowness, Slow Food, and Città Slow, and Accidental Slow Tourists who regard slowness as a tourism attraction and behave like mass tourists (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Since this research was conducted with a quantitative approach, some points were not probed deeply, such as the real and detailed behaviours of those tourists in Seferihisar. These weaknesses can be advanced by qualitative research methods, which is my primary research method.

Experience plays a significant role in tourists' visit. What do tourists do, what do they feel, what do they think and those reasons are what tourists experience during their trips. But, it is difficult to give an exact definition for tourist experience as it can contain various ingredients (Jennings, 2006) and it is a complicated psychology process.

Some researchers, such as Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003), paid attention to the on-site experience. They regard the tourist experience as an interaction between tourists and destination. On-site experience accounts for a large portion of the tourist experience, because travelling at the destination is the primary aim for tourists. Larsen (2007) has a different argument that the tourist experience should be evaluated in the long-term after the travel-related event, which emphasizes the memory. Noy (2008) also states the contents provided by tourism include not only experience, but also memories and emotions with the respect to destination. According to Larsen (2007), from a psychology perspective, tourist experience comes from the expectation before traveling, online experience that related to the perception of the stay at the destination, and memory. However, much tourist experience research was conducted during tourists' stay at the destination. Some specific studies were conducted long after the trips. In addition, especially those “flashbulb” memories are not at all accurate (Talarico & Rubin, 2003). Therefore, exploring the online experience is more practical than investigating memory.

The tourist experience is highly subjective. No two people can have the same experience, because individuals use different ways to experience similar activities in similar settings (B. J. Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Individuals have different backgrounds, social status, and have distinctive ways to interpret an object, so the experience they gain varies as well. So, tourists experience mainly involves tourists. From Urry's (2011) *Tourist Gaze*, tourists as the active side to gaze the destination also shows the dominant role in the act of tourism. How about the passively gazed side – the destination? It also should be involved in tourist experience. O'Dell (2005) argues the tourism industries also run through the generation, staging and consumption of experience. Except for the experience related to the destination, the experience before the trip in planning and preparing period and after the trip in recollection and communication period also takes place (Clawson & Knetsch, 2013). Furthermore, travel experience stressing slow tourism also should be included (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

The development of tourist experience theory is divided into three periods. The planning of a trip until the departure is the first, includes collecting tour data, making choice of the destination, making a plan for the trip and other preparation work (Clawson & Knetsch, 2013). Mass tourists who purchase a package of tourism experience and services offered by travel agencies (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008; Cooper & Hall, 2008), they have tour guides to make the itinerary and tour companies to arrange the tour (Valenzuela et al., 1991), which contains booking tickets for transport and scenic spots. It is not necessary to learn much about the destination. Connecting to slow tourism, at this stage, slow tourists need to do more work for the upcoming trip. Slow tourism as an alternative travel approach, is accepted by few people, which means no travel agency provides this service for slow tourists. So, slow tourists should be independent in planning to and accomplish their tours.

With respect to the on-site experience, it is better to be changed to tour experience, when concerning slow tourism. Since the travel experience is also a type of tourists' experience in slow tourism (Dickinson et al., 2010). Given tourists choose slow transport modes, and they can enjoy the scenery along the way to the destination and back home. Besides, the on-site experience of slow tourists is richer. Transport mode itself is a kind of experience. In Lijiang, travel by car is not the only way to visit. Walking in the Old Town of Lijiang,

riding a horse on the Ancient Tea Horse Road – the road for transporting tea by horse in ancient ages, boating on the Lashi Lake – a lake close to Lijiang city, are all interesting experience for tourists. In addition, having a fast and hurried only allows visitors to see the superficial. No one can be certain about what happened and what it is, when something happens too fast (Kundera & Asher, 1996). When using high-speed transport, views change quickly, and cannot make a deep impression for visitors. However, being slow during the visit can make it possible that tourists see sites clearly and gains more knowledge from the destination (Speakman, 2005), which meets one of characteristics of slow tourism – engagement with the place (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). For example, seeking authenticity is a heated discussion topic in the academic area.

In the modern era, since society is commoditized and inauthentic, those individuals who desire to look for their authentic self and the society have the will to seek authentic life in other places (Erik Cohen, 1988). Until 1973, Dean MacCannell was the first person who used the concept of authenticity in tourism and leisure literature, and he argued that tourists are eager for involving the society and culture of destinations that they visit, and are concerned and in quest for the unique authenticity of the society (P. L. Pearce & Moscardo, 1986). MacCannell's statement is against the statement that tourists become more and more appreciative and satisfying the pseudo-event due to the increase of mass tourism, which is proposed by Boorsin (1961). However, under the force of money, tourism destinations create 'staged authenticity', which means these 'real' things and phenomena on the surface from tourists' gaze are totally set up in advance (MacCannell, 1973), in order to attract tourists and cater to the need of visitors. The staged authenticity has possibility to be pseudo to a large extent. Even though, tourists do not think so. Some tourists believe this 'staged authenticity' (Erik Cohen, 1979). Except for traditionally object-based authenticity, there is another type of authenticity that is difficult to distinguish real from inauthentic. That is the existential authenticity, which is referring to activities, proposed by Wang (1999). He suggests that even if the objects in tour are all inauthentic or staged authenticity, tourists still could be in quest of existential authenticity, since it can be activated by tourist experience. Additionally, the more important point is that tourists seek their own authentic selves and inter-subjective authenticity, rather than the toured objects. Glancing at any tour attractions or passing by the activities will not

present the authentic aspect. It is not helpful for the engagement with local communities, which is an integral part of the slow tourism experience (Fullagar et al., 2012). Only spending enough time at the destination, allows the possibility to talk with natives, experience the real local life and seek authenticity.

Besides, tourist vision is not limited by sight only (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Smelling, tasting, and hearing are senses that tourists can use when assessing the destination. Slow food is an important approach to experience slow tourism. Because of the emergence from Slow Food, the concept of slow tourism is referring to the context of gastronomy. It is acknowledged that food and beverage production are vital elements in a whole journey (Pitts & Woodside, 1986). Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food movement, presented to use local food to transfer personal values and practices. In slow tourism, it is also recommended that places local food and beverage as indispensable aspect to attract tourists' attention. For some tourists, food consumption is one of their motivations, and eating is a part of people's daily routine as well. Therefore, eating *"can become, under a certain condition, one of the ingredients of the peak touristic experience."* (Quan & Wang, 2004) During slow tourism, tasting local food and beverage, eating slowly and experiencing different food culture becomes belonging to on-site experience.

The final is memories after the trips. Human memory is miraculous. They will lose year after year, but something can be kept in the mind for a long time. Scientists have researched human memory and learned memory on the peak can last for longer time (Klein, Loftus, & Kihlstrom, 2002). Tourist experience will be evaluated by peak and end effect of affective experiences, namely the most affective moment (the peak experience) of the event and the affect experienced at the end of the event (the end experience) (Fredrickson, 2000). With respect to slow tourism, individuals spend more time at the destination, and deeper into the local culture, so they will have more opportunities to have peak experiences. In my study, memory part is not my research point, due to the limitation of occasions interviewing tourists.

In short, compared with mass tourists, slow tourists have different experiences and affects, because of their slow travel speed and own characteristics. My study will concentrate on on-site experiences based on my research data.

## 2.4 Slow Tourism and Mindfulness

When it comes to time, God treats the whole world fairly. Everyone has 24 hours a day. How to use time, is a personal choice. Some prefer to concentrate on working and some love to spend more time on leisure activities. Most people always think working is done at a fast pace, as well as leisure being connected to slowness and stillness. In fact, these associations in the mind are not related to the speed of activity, but the status of spirit. Time-sickness, which was brought up by an American physician, is used to define the belief that *“time is getting away, that there is not enough of it, and that you must pedal faster and faster to keep up* (Dossey, 1982).” It is more about mental aspect that pushes people to get increasingly faster. Some people will work at a fast speed unconsciously, and think it is a normal speed to work, because they like it. They have not realized the drawback of speediness and the fragrance of slowness. They are mindless to slow down. However, to slow down is a subjective action based on individual’s attitude.

One of reasons why tourists slow down their travel pace is to improve the quality of tourism experience (L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). The quality of the experience is significant for tourists. Lane (1991) states that:

*“The visitor will gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the area, its landscape and peoples. The tourist will become concerned and, therefore, protective of the host area.”*

In order to improve the quality of tourist experience, many studies have suggested using mindfulness as a tool to manage tourist experiences at a destination (Frauman & Norman, 2004). Mindfulness is *“a state of mind that results from drawing novel distinctions, examining information from new perspectives, and being sensitive to context”* (E. J. Langer, 1993). When mindful, people can recognize that *“there is not a single optimal perspective, but many possible perspectives on the same situation”* (E. J. Langer, 1993).

Its contrast is mindlessness. People can be either mindful or mindless in any given situation, and they are often with mindlessness (E. Langer, Hatem, Joss, & Howell, 1989).

*“Mindless behavior is behavior that is over determined by the past. ...when mindless, one relies on categories and distinctions derived in the past. Mindlessness is a single-minded reliance on information without an active awareness of alternative perspectives or alternative uses to which the information could be put. When mindless, the individual rely on structures that have been appropriated from another source.”*

Familiarity and/or repetition situations, as well as premature cognitive commitment are two basic ways to mindlessness (E. Langer et al., 1989). In order to avoid these two types of mindlessness, Moscardo (1996) proposed using mindfulness theory with interpretation to create a mindfulness model of interpretation. This model puts forward setting factors and visitor factors that make an effect on tourists at built heritage sites. They use mindfulness and mindlessness as the indicators in understanding how interpretation influences cognitive stage and how visitors respond to interpretation at built heritage sites (See Figure i).

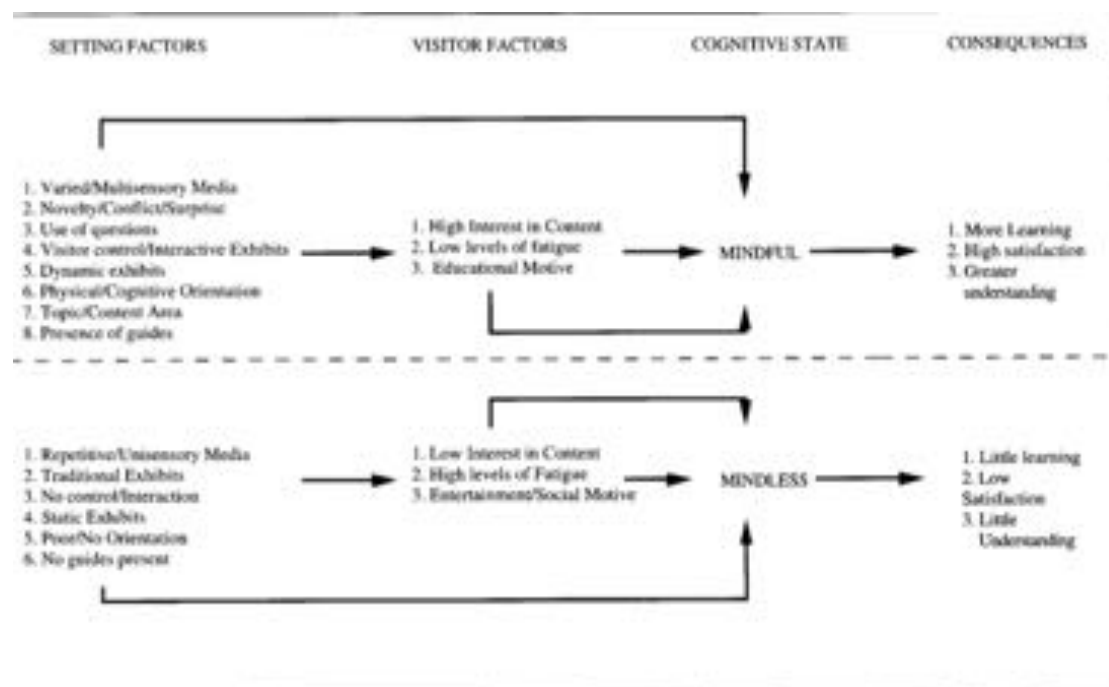


Figure i Mindfulness Model of Visitor Behavior and Cognition at Built Heritage Sites (Moscardo, 1996)

The above pertains to the management department of tourism spots. For tourists, the effect is mutual. Travelling with mindfulness can foster their learning, and feeling about the experience of the trip (Moscardo, 1996).

Additionally, touring with mindfulness needs longer time in order to make sense of the interpretation and know more about the destination. So, tourists will have mindfulness when being slow at their travel speed.

Many people like to use of meditation to relax. Also, scientific research data indicates that meditation can make people become happy (Choi, Karremans, & Barendregt, 2012; Jianwei, 2010). Carl Honoré has participated in a meditation course, and through learning how to meditate he found his mental attitude became peaceful and felt less hurried, and more mindful of everything - his body, its movements, the food he eats, the smell of the grass outside, the colour of the sky. Besides mindfulness, meditation is making people more able to be slower to enjoy the moment (Honoré, 2004). During the travel, visitors can use meditation as a resort to slow down, either for the body or the spirit.

Slow tourists have enough time to stay at the destination and explore what they want from the destination. At least they are mindful to be slow. Having time means tourists can think much more during their trips, instead of passing by without any thoughts. Traveling slowly, allows time to observe the details surrounding us – colourful flowers, green trees, clear rivers, blue sky, singing birds, various shops, and other people (Honoré, 2004). Walking will be the best choice to slow the pace. Walking can be meditative, improving a slow mind as well (Honoré, 2004). Traveling on foot takes longer and makes the world much bigger and therefore more interesting (Abbey, 1991). People are able to think during observation by walking. As a result, tourists will be more interested in the destination and more mindful during the trip. There is a circle that slowness can foster being mindful and mindfulness also will make tourists slow. Environmental concern is an ingredient of slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). With respect of the conservation of nature and culture, slow tourists also should be mindful to be aware of these.

## **2.5 Conceptual Model**

In recent years, heritage tourism has gained increasing attention (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2001) and the market for heritage tourism has expanded to a large extent. Cultural heritage means aspects of culture that we have received from our ancestors or past generations by the present generation. International Commission on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) defined culture heritage as a

board concept (ICOMOS, 1999). Culture heritage has two main types, one is tangible, such as natural and cultural environments, encompassing landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments as well as intangible, such as collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences (ICOMOS, 1999). Although my research area, Lijiang region, offers not only cultural sites, but also many natural venues, the Old Town of Lijiang is a very renowned cultural heritage, which has tangible assets, such as architecture, as well as intangible assets, such as Dongba culture of Naxi minority, including language, music, festival and so forth. However, the conservation of a heritage is still a problem posed by mass tourism.

Combined with the previous discussion, slow tourism requires tourist to stay at the destination longer so they might spend more time traveling in-depth (Honoré, 2004). Slow tourists have the conscious to slow their travel pace, which makes them more mindful of the travel itself (Elsrud, 1998; TheMindfulWorld, 2013). A slow place can produce slow atmosphere for people against fast (Miele, 2008). The destination locale not only slows tourists pace, but also increases their mindfulness, which is beneficial for tourist experience. Parkins and Craig (2006) listed some opposing values within “fast” and “slow”. They believe that “slow” can bring about real culture, true progress and taste. However, inauthentic, false progress, and absence of taste are the accessories of “fast”. Slowing the pace means tourists are able to have more time to spend on sightseeing, experiencing culture, thinking and reflection (Honoré, 2004; Kundera & Asher, 1996). Being slow makes tourists mindful to discover detailed things (Honoré, 2004). And within slow tourism, tourists long for engagement with the place (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). They will seek local experience through their active behaviours. The more and deeper attachment to the destination and local people, the more experience they can gain. For example, food is an important part of the tourist experience, as well as the vehicle for transferring local food culture, is a direct approach to present authenticity for tourists. An important attribute of heritage tourism is authenticity (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Taylor, 2001) and many scholars argue that authenticity can enhance the quality of cultural heritage (Erik Cohen, 1988). In culture heritage tourism, the authenticity can be related to the historical buildings. Local culture can be experienced by the existential authenticity. In the Old Town of Lijiang, the culture of Naxi minority is an important part of travel which can be presented with various activities. So, it is

useful to explore the existential authenticity in tourist experience.

One of the recognized goals of cultural tourism is to increase awareness of the destination's cultural or heritage values (Green & Webb, 1999; ICOMOS, 1999). The mind-set for slow tourist includes not only the mindfulness of slowness, but also the mindfulness of conservation. Tourists with mindfulness of slow have the interest and consciousness to seek different experience at a cultural heritage site. Additionally, one of the elements in slow tourism is related to environmental conservation and low-carbon (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). In this context, it could be stretched to the conservation of the destination's culture and historic heritage and mindful visitors also have the consciousness of preservation. Therefore, slow tourists with mindfulness will be conducive to the preservation of local cultural heritage and the sustainable development of local tourism.

Depending on those, I assumed the conceptual model (*see Figure ii*) among tourist behaviour, tourist experience, the destination and mindfulness in slow tourism. I suppose that these four components influence each other. Although there is no direct literature evidence to prove their connections, I will search empirical data collected in the Lijiang region. To answer those research questions and investigate the conceptual model, I will design the research strategy and methods, which will be presented in the next chapter – Methodology.

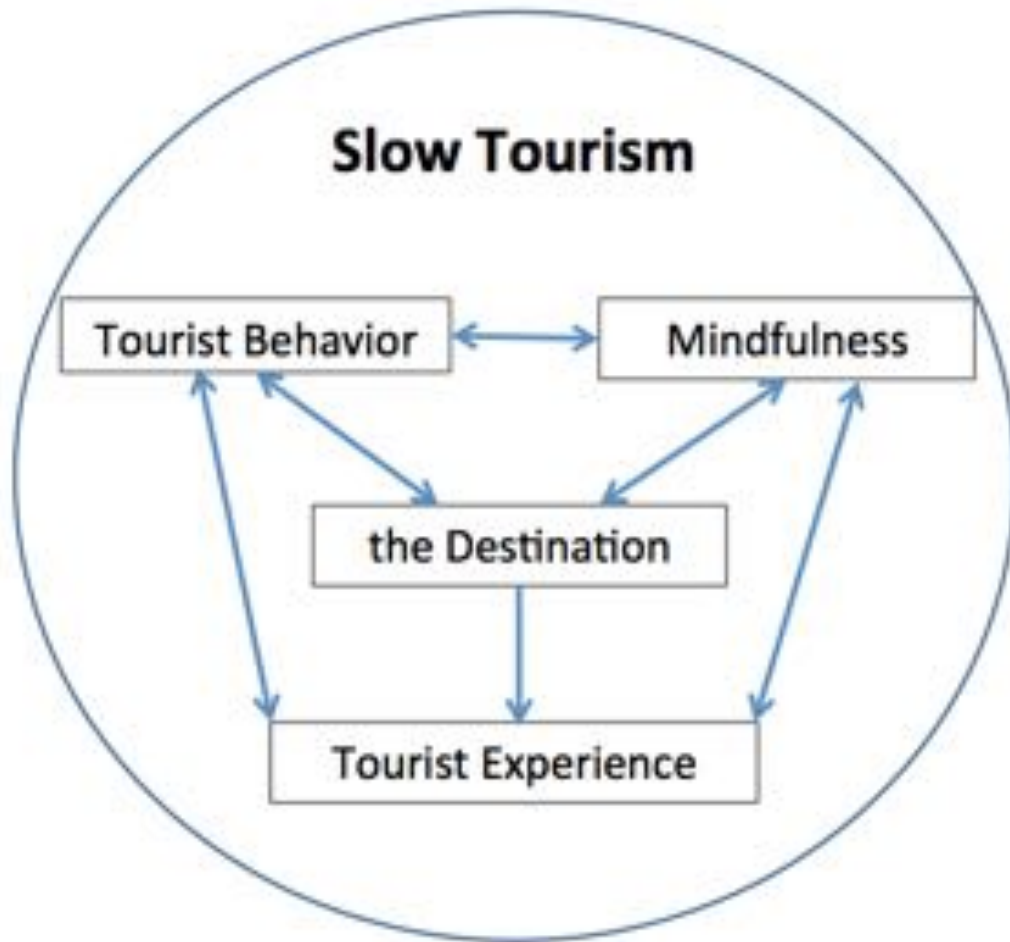


Figure ii Conceptual Model

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used several concepts and theories for this research, including slow tourism, tourist experience and mindfulness. The development of slow tourism is founded on Slow Food and Città Slow (Heitmann et al., 2011). It mainly absorbs the philosophy of slowness. Therefore, taking time to travel is an obvious feature in slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010), which is important to determine the length tourists stay at a destination. Besides, according to the elements of slow tourism, attachment to the destination is of significance. It indicates that slow tourists are perusing more experience from the interactions with the destination and participation in local activities. Local products like local food and beverage are part of local experience, which is the centre idea of Slow Food (SlowFood, 2010). I placed tourist experience and behaviour together to research, because I think that

behaviour is a part of experience and tourists gain experience through their actions (Pizam, Reichel, & Uriely, 2001). Researchers (Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar et al., 2012; Matos, 2004; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011) also regard tourist experience as an integrated part of slow tourism, and some of them (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010) count travel experience into the entire on-site experience range. That inspires me to study tourist experience, and travel experience referring to the transportation modes is also involved. The last one is mindfulness and I understand it as tourist attitude. Combined with ingredients of slow tourism, environmental consciousness can be tested whether or not tourists are mindful to protect environment and low-carbon (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Because Lijiang Old Town is a culture heritage, this mindfulness can be expanded to the tourists' attitude towards cultural conservation and whether tourists are mindful to be slow is another side to investigate slow tourists' attitude towards slowness when they take part in slow tourism. In addition to these three concepts and theories, the destination should be studied, because slow tourism takes place there. A slow place can influence people's pace (Pink, 2007). And the mutual impacts between tourist and the destination within slow tourism are part of research objectives as well.

### 3. Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to explore slow tourism, based on China's context. Guided by the main objective, I explored the impact on tourists and the destination exerted by slow tourism in Lijiang region through investigating tourists' behaviours, experience and attitudes. Also, the possible link with the destination, tourist behaviour, tourist experience and mindfulness theory, which forms the conceptual model in the conclusion of the last chapter, will be examined within slow tourism. Referring back to research questions, the conceptual model is linked with study questions. The first main research is linked with tourist behaviour and experience, which aims to find what slow tourists' experience and their actions during the trip and how tourists affect the destination, therefore, I need data related to tourists' time and space distribution, what activities they participated in at the destination, their perspectives on various experiences. The second main question probes the destination in order to investigate what the slow destination can provide for tourists, and how the destination influences tourists. Some information referring to the Lijiang region is needed, such as the tourism resources there. Tourists' opinion on experiencing slowness is required as well. With respect to the last question, I utilized mindfulness theory to explore slow tourists' attitude for seeing whether slow tourists are mindful to be slow and natural and cultural conservation, and their attitude toward being slow and slow tourism. Data from tourist behaviour and thought on these three aspects are necessary.

To reach these goals so as to utilize an explorative approach with a case study that is characterized by a qualitative research paradigm. Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) studied slow tourists by using quantitative paradigm to categorize three types of slow tourists, which is a bit superficial in my view. Quantitative research method has its limitation to prefixed questions and categories and needs a great amount of data. In spite of this, it is still many positivists' selection (Finn, 2000). However, concerning my research, I attempted to understand the phenomenon of slow tourism and qualitative research paradigm in an investigative process fit to this aim (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The data collected by qualitative methods can offer detailed and rich information that result in in-depth insight of a given phenomenon in the social world (Boeije, 2009). Linked to my research, tourist behaviour, experience and

attitude are important study points, using qualitative methods will be more sufficient and further understanding of slow tourism by participations' accounts of words (Melkert & Vos, 2010). Also, analysis of data is interlinked with data collection and sampling (Boeije, 2009), and results will be presented in words rather than number and statistical analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In the end, those results will be connected with the literature or theory that is discussed in Chapter 2 to see the possible link. The demonstration of what Chinese slow tourists look like in Lijiang region will be presented in Chapter 4. In this chapter, the limitation of this study and reflexivity are an important part as well. Those two sections will show that the weakness of the research, my position as a researcher, and the validity and creditability of this research.

### **3.1 Data Collection Methods**

A variety of methods within qualitative research paradigm can be used to interpret human behaviour, experience (Boeije, 2009). And choosing qualitative research approach means researcher will be involved in the data collection part (Melkert & Vos, 2010). I participated in slow tourism and looked for respondents for this study. Because I played an active role in the research progress, I should be aware of my own positionality as suggested by Ateljevic and his co-researchers (2005). I attempted to be critical and I will portray my reflection as a researcher in the later report. Additionally, to guarantee the research validity as well as strengthen reliability, triangulation (Boeije, 2009) or multiple methods of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1988) should be used. Therefore, in this section, I will elaborate on the collection of data.

#### **3.1.1 Semi-standardized Interview**

To gain more detailed experience of tourists in slow tourism settings, I used semi-standardized interview as data collection technique. This type of interview is an approach of studying subjective theories as a special model for studying everyday knowledge, which has been developed from semi-structure interview by Scheele and Groeben (Flick, 2009). All the interviews were conducted between the interviewer and the respondent individually and were face to face (Jennings, 2001). Semi-standardized interview is a type of interview in between formal and informal interviews (Boeije, 2009). It is not like

structured interview where the interviewer takes control of the interview, whereas interviewees are powerless, which can exert stress on interviewees and result in biased answers (Gideon & Moskos, 2012). Semi-standardized interview is more a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee and is *“fluid in nature and follow the thinking process of the interviewee”* (Jennings, 2001). Due to the nature atmosphere, the interviewer can get higher quality of information (Gideon & Moskos, 2012).

To conduct the interviews, I visited Lijiang district from November to December 2013, during tourist off-season. During this period, inns provide rooms for those tourists who stay more than half a month because of the low occupancy rate. The first thing I did upon arriving at Lijiang was to walk around the Old Town of Lijiang and talk with the owner of the inn where I stayed for his understanding of the general situation. Then I revised my interview guide (see *Appendix 1*).

The interview began with an open question to describe respondents' whole trip from the beginning of the travel as detailed as possible. With this question, the interviewee told his/her own experience and itinerary to me. This was the primary question in the interview and its aim was to have the insight of tourist experience and the distribution of their travel time. Concerning the time-space movement, it is important to make sense of when and where they have been. I intend to understand behaviour, motivation and experience of slow tourists (Barten & Isaac, 2010). To explore how slow tourists distribute their travel time and their travel preference, I required interviewees to narrate their arrangement of journeys and I will do an analysis of the average of their tour routine in the next chapter, which is a simple way to show their time-space distribution. It uses non-observational method to record human activity in time and space, over a limited time period, usually between a day and a week (Shoval & Isaacson, 2009). This is a way to recall interviewees' memory. It is totally based on subjunctives' collaboration, something that undoubtedly affects the quality of the data gathered (Shoval & Isaacson, 2009). But in my study, what I needed was a general idea of slow tourists' time-space distribution, rather than exact numbers to do the analysis. Therefore, I could apply this method into my research. We can see participants' time and space distribution in Lijiang region from the time-space map and where will they go and how long will they stay in each destination of Lijiang district. Then, I will

compare the respondents' distribution of time and space with mass tourists. For the information of mass tourists, I received their scheduling from travel agents. From that data, we can get the idea whether slow tourists spend more time at destinations.

The first open question was not only referring to time and space distribution, but also included respondents' experience. Interviewees described their daily travel life. The content included what they did daily, what they experienced and their feelings. They discussed topics of their own choosing and gave their opinions about their experience. During their accounts, I probed some questions for having deeper understanding of their thoughts. When conducting semi-standardized interview, the interviewer *"is not locked to a specific question or topic order and can change the order of questions according to the interview development and relevancy of the conservation"* (Gideon & Moskos, 2012). So, I asked probing questions when interviewees talked about specific aspects. In the light of Città Slow principles, slow tourists should be open to slow experiences and discover new and different cultures and identities, educated, and have a good cultural knowledge and slow philosophy, be independent traveller, have high expectation with regard to the region they are visiting, and enjoy eco-gastronomy (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). These principles used on Western slow tourists do not mean they are still suited for Chinese slow tourists. For instance, as for the local food, I chose local gastronomy and local restaurants as a reference point, rather than eco-gastronomy, since it was difficult to test whether the food was eco or not in the Old Town of Lijiang. Then, followed the rules of being independent visitor, having slow philosophy, being mindful to discover new-fangled things, enjoying local gastronomy as references to ask participants to see whether they had these features. Hence, combined with research questions, these probing questions were related to four aspects.

- Tourist characteristics. I intended to learn the profile of Chinese slow tourists, so their characteristics were interesting to explore. Using some principles of Città Slow as a reference, I uncovered their motivations and whether they were independent travellers.
- The destination. This destination mainly focused on the Old Town of Lijiang, because of its slow tempo. According to interviewees' accounts

combined with photos I had taken, we are able to know what kind of setting prompts tourists to slow down and what the destination provides pertaining to slow tourism. Besides, I preferred to explore whether slow tourists were mindful to gain knowledge about the destination.

- Tourist experience and behaviour. When interviewees responded to the first open question, I offered some detailed questions related to their experience. Such as where they went, how long they spent on each destination, their choices of transportation modes (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011), the reason why they tried a specific or new experience, the opinion towards the specific experience, interaction with the local, local products including food, specialties (Heitmann et al., 2011), local culture etc. Those questions were not asked in a given order and changed with the topic the respondent discussed. I attempted to understand whether tourist experiences were richer within slow tourism and how they sought a richer experience. This information also showed illustrated slow tourists were mindful to chase the local experience.
- Tourists' attitude. Questions about this topic referred more to their attitude to conservation of culture and nature and what they thought about their own slow tourism. Questions included the awareness of the environmental problem and the perspective of it (Dickinson et al., 2011; TheMindfulWorld, 2013), over-commercialized culture, staged authenticity (Su, 2010; Yamamura & Hall, 2004) and so on. I also asked them their opinion about slow tourism and slow philosophy to discover whether they were open to being slow.

Other than interviews conducted with tourists, there were few interviews with local residents. Therefore, the interview was more causal, and the topic was about what tourists generally did in Lijiang, how long they stayed, whether they talked with locals and what they discussed. This section did not take large portion in the study, nevertheless, it is still used to reflect slow tourists from the indigenous' behalf.

All interviews were recorded after receiving permission from participants and were conducted in a café, homestay or just walking around the Old Town. It

proved easy to talk freely in a casual surrounding (Schlaisich & Egenhofer, 2001). I did not want to break participants' leisurely atmosphere with a formal interview and the sessions lasted about 30 minutes. I thought the length of interview was adequate to gain needful information and would not needlessly disturb the participants.

### **3.1.2 Participation Observation**

Observation can be understood as a valuable method used in the daily research routine and combined with other methods at the same time in order to ingest additional data that can be related with the other information gathered (Boeije, 2009; Melkert & Vos, 2010; Punch, 2013). I utilized two means of observation in this study.

I used non-participation as a way to research tourists' visit in the Old Town of Lijiang. This means as its literal meaning, is observing without involvement (Blundell, Chiappori, Magnac, & Meghir, 2007). Due to understanding how tourists behaved during their trip and slow settings in the destination, I preferred to utilize non-participation observation to view visitors who were observed.

Also, participation observation was utilized when travelling other spots near Lijiang. Participant observation is *"the process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association"* (Boeije, 2009; Lofland, 1995). It is useful to get direct information about meanings, feelings and experience (Boeije, 2009). Distances to other tour destinations near the Old Town of Lijiang range from half an hour to five hours by car. Tourists preferred to choose car-pooling with others, and it was possible to travel with new friends met in Lijiang. I followed this path as well. I travelled with others, and those "others" became my observable targets, and most became my interview subjects. I observed their behaviours and interactions with the locals and destinations after receiving their permission at the beginning of the trip.

Tourist behaviour I observed was related to nature, culture and the locals, and were designed to investigate whether slow tourists have concern to

environment and culture protection and have been involved in the place, and how they do that. As for the setting in the Old Town of Lijiang, combined with interviews, I intended to uncover what ideas created by the destination can slow tourists' pace. All the observations were recorded by notes and photos, which could be used in data analysis.

In summary, these research methods I used were aimed at understanding how Chinese slow tourists look and demonstrating slow tourism is a "better" pattern of tourism because of its positive impacts on both of the destination and tourists.

### **3.1.3 Documents and Visual Materials Collection**

In order to understand what the destination can offer, it is necessary to collect data from the Internet, literature, books and some documents from official bureaus in Lijiang. I visited the Tourism Bureau and Statistical Bureau of Lijiang to collect some statistical data about the number of tourists and citizens, local climate, economy, and specific tourism information. This data gave me a background of the research area. Furthermore, I took some images related to the settings of the Old Town of Lijiang, which will be analysed with interviewees' responses to discover what slow tourists' pace. This information aims to see the relationship between the destination and tourist experience and behaviour, as well as their attitude, which consists of the conceptual model.

### **3.1.4 Sampling**

According to Boeije (2009), the sample is intentionally selected in accordance with the needs of the research in a qualitative study. The target group was tourists visiting Lijiang Old Town. Despite research area covering the Lijiang region, the Old Town of Lijiang is the centre of the whole research area and its status is the most significant. Since the town is a representative slow place and tourists are possibly not traveling to other destinations near Lijiang, but they must visit the Old Town. During the fieldwork, I selected fifty-three tourists as my respondents and five natives for interviews (*see Table i & ii*). Qualitative approach places emphasis on content instead of amount (Punch, 2013). I thought the data collected was sufficient to analyse. Most interviewees were

independent tourists, and they had high potential to be a slow tourist (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). These interviewees were selected by random and at least half of them had travelled with me. Having a good relationship with respondents is a more favourable way to collect richer and more veritable information (Boeije, 2009). Regarding the anonymity and privacy of research participants, number and age range is used in this research. For the tourist interviewee, I used “T” as the initiative with number, and “L” for the local interviewee as well.

Table i Profile of the tourist interviewees

<b>Number of Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Province of Residence</b>	<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
<b>T1</b>	Female	> 30	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Secretary
<b>T2</b>	Male	> 40	Shanxi	High School	Firemen
<b>T3</b>	Female	> 20	Liaoning	Bachelor	Clerk
<b>T4</b>	Female	> 20	Sichuan	Bachelor	Sales
<b>T5</b>	Female	> 20	Ningxia	Bachelor	Student
<b>T6</b>	Male	> 30	Shenzhen	Bachelor	Manager
<b>T7</b>	Female	> 30	Beijing	Master	Scenarist
<b>T8</b>	Male	> 30	Beijing	Master	Director
<b>T9</b>	Male	> 20	Shenzhen	Bachelor	Student
<b>T10</b>	Female	> 20	Shenzhen	Associate	Administrator
<b>T11</b>	Female	> 30	Sichuan	Associate	Freelance

<b>T12</b>	Male	> 30	Shanghai	Bachelor	Finance
<b>T13</b>	Female	> 20	Guangdong	High School	Baker
<b>T14</b>	Male	> 20	Shanghai	Associate	Sales
<b>T15</b>	Male	> 20	Beijing	Master	Finance
<b>T16</b>	Female	> 20	Beijing	Bachelor	Service
<b>T17</b>	Male	> 20	Beijing	Associate	Electrommunication
<b>T18</b>	Female	> 20	Shanghai	Bachelor	IT
<b>T19</b>	Male	> 30	Shanghai	Bachelor	IT
<b>T20</b>	Male	> 20	Shanghai	Bachelor	IT
<b>T21</b>	Female	> 30	Fujian	Bachelor	IT
<b>T22</b>	Female	> 30	Guangdong	Bachelor	Finance
<b>T23</b>	Female	> 30	Guangdong	Master	Designer
<b>T24</b>	Male	> 30	Guangdong	Master	Doctor
<b>T25</b>	Male	> 50	Fujian	Bachelor	Doctor
<b>T26</b>	Female	> 50	Fujian	High School	Self-employed
<b>T27</b>	Female	> 40	Guangdong	Master	Lecturer
<b>T28</b>	Female	> 50	Guangdong	Associate	Clerk
<b>T29</b>	Female	> 40	Hainan	Associate	Clerk

<b>T30</b>	Female	> 20	Shanghai	Bachelor	Manager
<b>T31</b>	Female	> 20	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Designer
<b>T32</b>	Male	> 50	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Manager
<b>T33</b>	Female	> 20	Beijing	Bachelor	Freelance
<b>T34</b>	Male	> 60	Beijing	Doctor	Lecturer
<b>T35</b>	Female	> 20	Jiangxi	Associate	Student
<b>T36</b>	Male	> 20	Shandong	Associate	Freelance
<b>T37</b>	Female	> 20	Sichuan	Bachelor	Hospitality
<b>T38</b>	Female	> 30	Liaoning	Associate	Self-employed
<b>T39</b>	Male	> 20	Sichuan	Bachelor	Architect
<b>T40</b>	Female	> 30	Shenzhen	Bachelor	Inspector
<b>T41</b>	Male	> 30	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Finance
<b>T42</b>	Female	> 40	Tianjin	Master	Technician
<b>T43</b>	Female	>30	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Clerk
<b>T44</b>	Male	> 20	Tianjin	Bachelor	Secretary
<b>T45</b>	Male	> 30	Shandong	Master	Manager
<b>T46</b>	Female	> 20	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Self-employed
<b>T47</b>	Male	> 30	Sichuan	Master	Lecturer
<b>T48</b>	Male	> 20	Sichuan	Bachelor	Sales

<b>T49</b>	Female	> 20	Guangdong	Bachelor	Finance
<b>T50</b>	Male	> 40	Hunan	Associate	Accountant
<b>T51</b>	Female	> 40	Shanghai	Bachelor	Consultant
<b>T52</b>	Male	> 20	Zhejiang	Bachelor	Finance
<b>T53</b>	Female	> 20	Beijing	Master	IT

Table ii Profile of the local interviewees

<b>Number of Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
<b>L1</b>	Male	> 30	Self-employed
<b>L2</b>	Female	> 40	Hospitality
<b>L3</b>	Female	> 30	Self-employed
<b>L4</b>	Female	> 20	Sales
<b>L5</b>	Male	> 20	Self-employed

## 3.2 Data Analysis Methods

Since I explored slow tourism in China and investigated Chinese slow tourists, all the interviewees were conducted in Chinese. It was inevitable that interviews would be carried out in Chinese. After the interviews, the transcripts also were written in Chinese, since it was convenient and accurate to analyse data using my linguistic stock. In this report, I have translated the results into English. I was aware that the work of translation had to be attentive and every word used had to be precise to express the original meaning of participants. So I composed sentences carefully when I did the translation.

Thematic analysis was used to approach the data, which is regarded as the most common method to analyse data in the social science (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Roulston, 2001). It is an approach to search for themes and patterns that derive to become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). With respect to the emerging process of the identifiable themes, it needs researchers to read and re-read data carefully (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008; Rice & Ezzy, 1999).

Although Roulston (2001) argued that thematic analysis does not take the theoretical notion of reflexivity into account, in my paper, I still insisted on applying this method. I mainly focused on the content of the communication with interviewees, rather than how those participants communicated. I acquired information connected to my research aims. However, in the interviews, probably, there were some contents that had nothing to do with my study. Thus, using thematic analysis could help me preserve what I needed and ignore what I did not need. Moreover, this approach complemented the research questions by allowing the principles of social phenomenology and grounded theory to be partial to the process of deductive thematic analysis while allowing for themes to emerge direct from the data using inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). Likewise, these emerged themes and coding could be linked with the data from the observation, namely, written notes and memos, to find similar content and sum up different opinions.

Documents and texts referring to Lijiang and its nearby localities, and visual materials were analysed by discourse analysis. Discourse as *“a particular form of language with its own rules and conventions and the institutions within which the discourse is produced and circulated (Nead, 1988)”*, contains a verity of forms, including texts, visual details and so forth (Brown, 1983). Visual materials like photos can be explored by discourse analysis. When using discourse analysis to investigate how the image constructs specific view of the social world, it is necessary to pay attention to the image itself (Martin & Rose, 2003). Concerning my study, some documents about the introduction of destinations were presented in text, which can be analysed by using discourse approach. Also, I expressed images for tourists' behaviours and the surrounding of the Old Town of Lijiang, which needed description and explanation of what transpired in the image. Those photographs were evidence to support my analysis.

Coding is the main approach to deal with those raw materials collected. Due to prior knowledge generated from literature and research objectives and questions, a priori codes (Gibson & Brown, 2009), like “tourists’ profile”, “motivation”, “the destination”, “tourist experience and behaviour” and “attitude”, were emerged during open-coding process (Cope, 2010). Other codes came from the empirical data. Parts of codes are “descriptive”, which are in vivo codes that appear in the text and interview transcript, and others are analytic codes generated from the descriptive codes combined with the theoretical literature (Cope, 2010).

Through these analysis processes, I believed that I could answer my research questions and explore the possible link based on the conceptual model.

### **3.3 Limitation of the Study**

All research has its limitations, and this research does as well. First of all, there is a lack of literature on slow tourism written by Chinese researchers, so there was no general idea of slow tourism in China before doing this research. This study has mainly placed its realm on tourists’ behaviours, experience and mind. It has focused on the advantages of slow tourism. Therefore, the negative impacts within this research might be limited. As for the whole slow tourism system, it is still lacking information for research. Secondly, limited by individual effort and without funding, the research equipment such as camera or GPS, which could be used as recording tourists’ time-space analysis, were not provided. This might have influenced the precision, but it did not affect the validity of the collected data, since there is no need to know the accuracy of time to a second. Thirdly, the size and representativeness of the sample might be not sufficient. The fifty-three interviewee as representative of tourists have not warranted adequate representation of the extensive numbers of slow tourists in Lijiang region. Though the population number of tourists in Lijiang is large, it has been not easy to ask tourists to be an interviewed and willing to share his or her travel story with me. Limited by time, fifty-three was the maximum number of participants I could choose. Last but not least, interviews have been conducted in Chinese instead of English, which might have caused the loss of some small pieces of information during translation. The meaning after translation might have been a bit different from the original, because some Chinese words could not be expressed with the same overtones in

English. However, I have made great efforts to keep its proper meaning while translating.

On all accounts, this research can function as a beginning point for future research on slow tourism in China to begin growth.

### **3.4 Reflexivity**

In consideration of involving myself into the research, it is necessary to reflect on my own role as a researcher. This section just gives some insight into my positionality, reflects some experience during my research and items related to the validity and credibility of this study.

This research was conducted using qualitative research approach, therefore, I assume myself as a constructionist. I believe that social phenomena should be understood in constructionism paradigm (Harel & Papert, 1991). And due to individual's different background, his or her understanding about a specific thing is varied (Burr, 2003; Papert & Harel, 1991). Western scholars' perspective on slow tourism is possibly different from China, because of the Chinese social backgrounds and various tourists have their own experiences that are also constructed according to their own perceptions.

As a Chinese researcher, it is convenient to communicate with Chinese visitors without any language problem. Therefore, stories they shared with me could be comprehended correctly. There were some problems when translating the transcript, I minimized the occurrence of the misunderstandings though reading again and again and consulting with my friend who is a Chinese-English translator. Besides, I am a student that has received Chinese and Western education on tourism studies, which is beneficial for me to understand the tourism phenomena from both sides. I am not a Lijiang local, and my knowledge about destinations in Lijiang district and local culture are superficial and stereotyped to some extent. Therefore, some tour locations were not included in this study, such as Xishuangbanna, Yading, which are additional locales slow tourists are interested in. However, the coincidence was that only few interviewees had travelled to those locations. Being non-local also has its advantage in communication with interviewees without any biased opinion.

It is possible that there are limitations in this study, but the issues connecting to validity and creditability have been minimized. For example, interviews were not only conducted with tourists, but also with residents, which proved results from the host side to reflect tourist behaviour, and made this research more creditable. Besides, applying notes and photos to record the observation that could use the information of images to support explored facts. Additionally, the selection of sampling was random. I was involved in parts of the research, however I placed my role in neutral position and had not influenced tourist opinion. Because of my participation in travelling with interviewees, they were willing to express more information about their real thoughts to me, making the results more dependable.

Hence, here I am a Chinese, non-Lijiangnese, studying tourism at a university. These characteristics brought both positive and negative effects to my research, but this study was successful and meets the criteria of academic research.

## **4. Results and Analysis**

Within this chapter, research results are presented on the basis of analysing field interviews and observations. The objective was to answer the research questions proposed in Chapter 1. According to the research questions and concepts used, results mainly resulted from these four aspects: the destination, tourist experience and behaviour, and attitude. It provided a better understanding of the destination offered to tourists, the activities tourists do and the experience in the Lijiang area, and their attitudes toward slow tourism and slow destinations. This chapter begins with an overview of the demographic of the participating tourists.

The following destination part is analysed depending on the documents and discourse from the interviews combined with some photographs. In the end, it will shed light on the tourist experience and behaviour during a trip to explore whether slow tourists gained more experience and behaved in a manner that meets the requirements of “slow tourists”. Once more their attitude toward the experience, environment and heritage conservation, and slow tourism will also be elaborated. All of these aspects influenced each other within the area of slow tourism. The relationship among tourist experience, tourist behaviour, mindfulness, and destination, namely the conceptual model is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

### **4.1 Demographics**

The total number of interviewees was fifty-eight. Fifty-three were tourists, and the other five respondents were local people. The tourist interviewees came from other cities in the Yunnan province. As for the local participants, they all worked or lived in the Old Town of Lijiang.

Fifty-three tourists, in total, participated in the interviews, with thirty of them being women and twenty-three of them being men. The age range was mostly between 20 and 40 years old, with only ten respondents aged 40 years old or above. It indicated that the tourist group coming to Lijiang is relatively younger, which is possibly attributed to Lijiang’s high elevation. Since it is common that people take on altitude stress when the altitude is above 2700 km, especially

the elderly and unhealthy (McGrath, Prochazka, Pelouch, & Ostadal, 1973). Concerning this health issue and individual physical strength, not so many elderly choose Lijiang as their tourist destination.

Forty out of fifty-three respondents had a bachelor's or higher education degree. Bachelor's degree holders accounted for twenty-nine of the respondents, including two students enrolled bachelor's degree programs. Ten interviewees held master's degrees, with one participant holding PhD degree. Only three people were at the high school level. Besides of their education level, the interviewees' occupations proved that their working status is 'busy'. These busy jobs included finance, sales, medicine, IT, and management, all high-intensive jobs requiring one's daily life to be regularly scheduled.

*"My work is quite busy at ordinary times, from the first second keeping busy working to the last second. Every day I go to work on time. Life is home, work, home, again and again." (T40, Female, Inspector, Shenzhen)*

Among these fifty-three interviewees, forty-two were from eastern coastal cities and provinces. Eastern areas, on average, are much more developed than western areas in China. Some international metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen are all located in the eastern, costal region of China. Eight tourists were from Beijing, the capital of China is. Shanghai, Zhejiang province, and Guangdong province, each had seven respondents. Thirteen interviewees dwelled in other coastal regions. Also there were interviewees from the neighbouring province. Five participants came from the Sichuan province, which is near Yunnan.

Residents in big cities live in a fast-paced environment and are under heavy stress (Honoré, 2004). In addition to work pressure, the burden of living a "happy" life forces people to concentrate on making money, rather than slowing down to enjoy life.

*"Working pressure is extremely high in my hometown, and people around me has been maintained a fast pace of life, work. Naturally I am forced to speed up the pace. And because of the high level of consumption, working hard to make more money becomes a common sense. Pressure from both work and life is heavy." (T6, Male, Manager, Shenzhen)*

Only two of all of the respondents travelled by using a tour package. All of the other respondents were independent tourists, which indicated that fifty-one interviewees travelled depending on their own choices. The two visitors who utilized a tour package belonged to the group of mass tourism. As previously mentioned all-inclusive tour packages represent mass tourism (Sheldon & Mak, 1987).

Interviews were not only conducted with tourists, but also with five local people. Three natives were female, and three worked for themselves. Two of them ran inns in the Old Town of Lijiang, while the others owned shops to sell local products. One of the remaining two participants worked in an inn. The last one was a silverware salesman. All five of the persons are dwelled in the Old Town of Lijiang.

From the collected data, it is obvious that the age of the interviewees mainly ranged from 20 to 40 years old, with a good physical condition. Also, more than 75% of them came from a good educational background. Additionally, since most of them were from eastern, coastal, big cities and held high-intensive jobs. They were living and working under stress, and leading fast-paced, schedules life.

## **4.2 The Destination – Lijiang Region**

The research took place in Lijiang and some nearby localities, such as Lugu Lake, Kunming, Dali, Shangri-La, and Yubeng. The following is a general introduction of the study area for a further understanding of what the destination can provide tourists, especially slow tourists.

The city of Lijiang, formerly called Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, is located in the north western part of the Yunnan Province. It connects the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau to the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, with a total land area of around 20,600 square kilometres (see *Figure iii*). Its population is over 1.2 million, 57 percent of which is made up by 12 minority groups, including the Naxi (233,700), the Yi (201,400), and the Lisu (106,200). (Figures are provide online <http://en.ljta.gov.cn//plus/view.php?aid=1>)

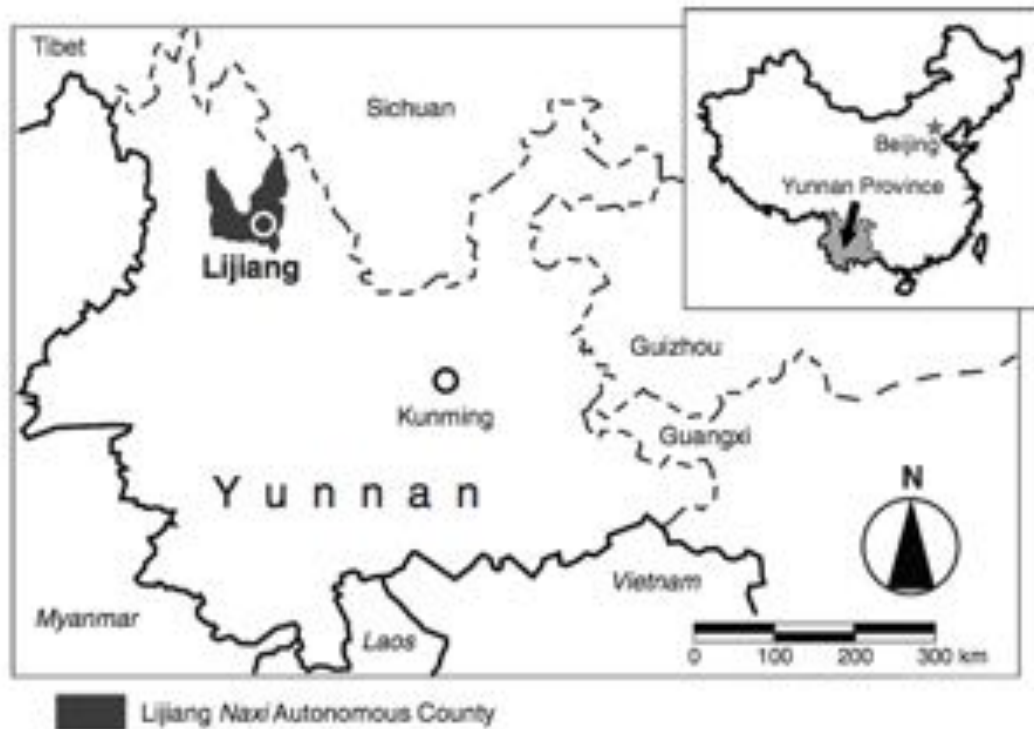


Figure iii Location of Lijiang (Yamamura & Hall, 2004)

The Old Town of Lijiang ( $100^{\circ} 14' 4.53''$  E,  $26^{\circ} 52' 27.99''$  N) is situated in the central part of the city. The Old Town of Lijiang includes the Dayan old town, the Baisha housing cluster, and the Shuhe housing cluster. It is Lijiang's most famous tourist attraction. Regarding the Old Town of Lijiang, the largest and the most important is old town Dayan, in which a majority of tourists choose to stay. It is situated approximately 2,400 meters above sea level, at the foot of the Yulong Mountain, and is surrounded by the Lion Mountain in the west, the Elephant and Jinhong Mountains in the north, and a wide and flat piece of land in the south (see *Figure iv*). Its total area is about 1.6 square kilometres. According to the 5th demographic census in 2000, the population of old town Dayan is 93,606, over 70% of which belong to the Naxi ethnic group, a culturally Tibetan group (Figures are provided online by the Lijiang government [http://www.lijiang.com.cn/gcq\\_zwgg/gcq\\_gcqgl/gcq\\_lsyg/20101010/030117.shtml](http://www.lijiang.com.cn/gcq_zwgg/gcq_gcqgl/gcq_lsyg/20101010/030117.shtml)).

In the Ming Dynasty, the old town Dayan was called Dayanxiang. In 1913, it was changed to Dayan Zhen. Dayan is derived from "Daye ground", a ground built by Mu chieftains at the end of the Song Dynasty. Also the shape of the Old Town of Lijiang can be dated back about eight to nine hundred years ago

to the Southern Song Dynasty, since at that time, ancestors of the Naxi ethnic group moved there. Although the nature scenery surrounding the old town is a distinctive tourism attraction, the architecture of housing and the historical townscape have garnered much more appreciation from tourists. Because of this, as one of the historically and culturally famous cities of China, in December of 1997, the Old Town of Lijiang became a World Heritage Site, listed by UNESO. The Baisha housing cluster and the Shuhe housing cluster are similar to the towns such the old town of Dayan. Both of these two towns are located in Lijiang city. They are not far away from the old town of Dayan. Compared with the old town of Dayan, the scale and population of the Baisha housing cluster and the Shuhe housing cluster are much less and the tourist arrivals are lower. Hence, the surroundings in these two housing clusters are quieter and more peaceful.

Besides these old towns, the Black Dragon Pool Park, as another tourist destination, nears the old town of Dayan. There's a park around the Black Dragon Pool, which is situated at the foot of Elephant Mountain and is the main water source for the old town of Dayan. If tourists have enough time, they will go to the park for walking. People often call the old town “old city”, and the areas outside of the old town as “new city”.

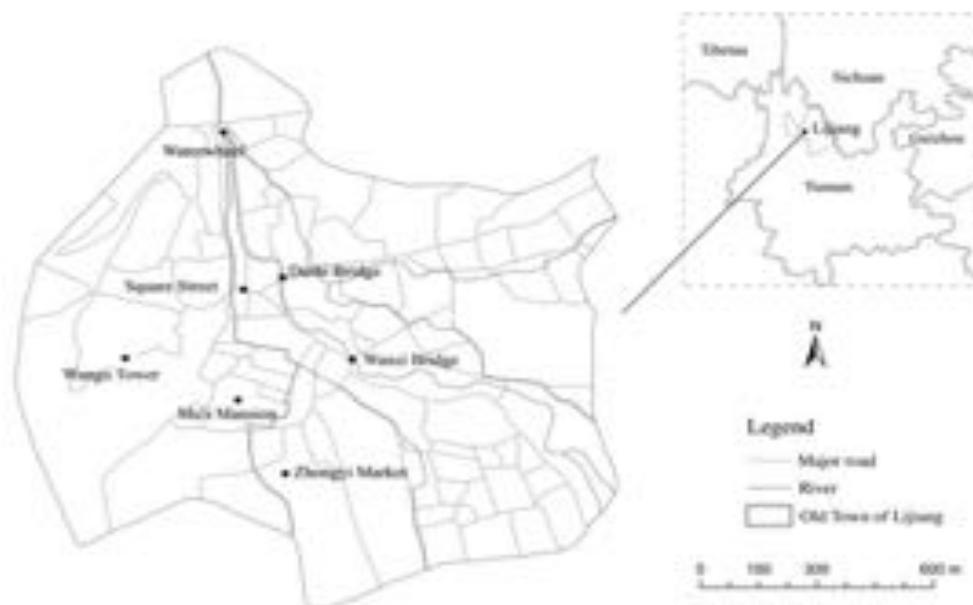


Figure iv the Old Town of Dayan (C. Li et al., 2011)

In Lijiang, besides the cultural heritage of the Old Town, there is a natural scene - Yulong Mountain. It is a national 4A tourism attraction, according to "*Standard of rating for quality of tourist attractions of the People's Republic of China, GB/T 17775-1999*". Tourist attraction quality is rated according to four grades in descending order: 4A, 3A, 2A and A. Yulong Mountain's highest elevation is 5,596 meters. Visitors climb in order to experience the felling created by the high elevation and the view of the glacier. Usually, tourists travel to the Yulong Mountain via the Blue Moon Valley and Dongba Stockade Village. The Dongba Stockade Village is a place for the Naxi ethnic group to exhibit their Dongba culture, including music performances, custom exhibitions, clothes, and so forth. It is a good place to see what Dongba culture actually is.

The Lugu Lake (see *Image 1*) is a neighbour of Lijiang. It is the cultural cradle of the "matriarchy" of the Mosuo people. The Mosuo people are part of the Naxi minority group. A great deal of visitors travel around the Lugu Lake in order to understand how Mosuo people live as well as to discover walking marriage. Walking marriage differs from normal marriage in current society. It is also called "male-leaving" marriage. At night, the male leaves home for search for a wife, staying in her own bedroom. Up until morning, the male goes back to his home alone. If the couple has a baby, the female raises the baby. A Mosuo proverb exists that says that Mosuo people only know their mother. This traditional custom is attributed to the matriarchal society. Nowadays, this custom is on the verge of disappearing due to the impact of modern marriage. Still many tourists travel to this region due to their curiosity regarding walking marriage.



Image i A full view of Lugu Lake.

In Lijiang and its nearby districts, the minority culture is highlighted, since there are 25 minority groups in the Yunnan Province. Once more, the province has the most areas of distribution of ethnic minorities in China. As mentioned before, the Naxi minority group is Lijiang's main residents. While, Dali, is a place where the Bai minority group resides, it also has an old town like Lijiang. But the architecture style is different and the size is smaller.

The Tibetan minority group also has an important position in the Yunnan Province. Shangri-La is a Tibetan autonomous region and in 1933, James Hilton released the most influential novel of his entire life. It is entitled *Lost Horizon* (Hilton, 1960). The book is set during the twentieth century. Four westerners travel to the mysterious Tibetan region in China, and experience a series of unbelievable events. The book eventually creates a 'land of idyllic beauty' in even a western world. There are mountains capped with snow, deep canyons, flying waterfalls, lakes surrounded by forests, flocks of sheep strolling in the beautiful prairie, blue skies, and temples with beautiful decorations that bring out breath-taking beauty. Hospitable people warmly welcome guests from afar. The legend of the Shangri-La considers it to be a holy religious land of that is like heaven on earth. With the success of Hilton's

novel, an innumerable amount of tourists travelled to Shangri-La to feel the “land of idyllic beauty.” Besides the arcadia, Tibetan culture is another attraction for visitors. Tourists favour experiencing the ethnic clothing and food.

Near Shangri-La, is Meili Snow Mountain, which Tibetan Buddhism considers as a sacred mountain range. Kawa Karpo is its main peak with an altitude of 6740 metres. It is not only a place that Tibetans worship, but also a place that tourists cannot miss. Especially the moment when the sun rises up to shine atop Kawa Karpo. People refer to this as ‘Sunshine on Jinshan’.

At a distance not too far from Meili Snow Mountain, there is a village called Yubeng (see *Image ii*). It is a village that is closest in Yunnan. Visitors have to cross a mountain to reach here. This village is kind of “isolated” from the rest of the world because of the inconvenient transportation conditions. Residents living in the village depend on delivery mules. Since not so many people come to this village, its natural scene has been conserved well. Walking the mountain paths instead of the roads allows travellers to view the nature in Yubeng.



Image ii A full view of Yubeng village.

As the provincial capital city, Kunming is not only a tourist attraction, but also a

political and economic hot-spot. Every year, the number of tourists travelling to Kunming for travel is not small. Cuihu Lake, Dianchi Lake, and the University of Yunnan are popular sites in Kunming.

In this part, the general situation referring to this research is introduced. The interviewees travel destinations are stated in the following tourist behaviour and experience section. It is possible that some tourists will travel to other destinations. But these destinations are not main stream.

#### **4.2.1 Tourism in Lijiang Region**

Since 1994, the development of tourism in Lijiang has exhibited a rapidly growing trend. According to the data from the Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2013), tourist arrivals increased from 217,000 in 1994 to 15,991,000 in 2012. Among this increase, inbound tourist arrivals accounted for 15,144,000, which occupied a great mass of the total arrival sum. Also, these inbound tourists generated tourist income of around 19.2 billion RMB, approximately 2.3 billion euros (theMunicipalBureauofStatistics, 2013). With the increase of tourism, the number of shops in the town has also expanded at an explosive speed. Although the tourist arrival number is large due to China's population, the traditional atmosphere is becoming commercial.

Despite this, I still insisted on choosing the Lijiang region as my research area. Firstly, according to the average Chinese perspective, Lijiang is by far the best choice for people who wish to spend a long period of time visiting cultural sites, due to its eclectic cultures, nearby natural attractions, and peaceful surroundings. Secondly, according Su and Teo's 8-year research (2009), many visitors from Beijing, Shanghai prefer to travel the Old Town of Lijiang in order to pursue pleasure and relaxation, in order to escape the pressures of busy business and fast living. This quality fit to my targeted theoretical research group. Thirdly, the contradiction between the development of tourism and the conservation of cultural heritage sites is outstanding in Lijiang. I attempted to uncover a better travelling means to hinder or even eliminate this contradiction. The last and the most important point was that Lijiang is a slow city. At least, most Chinese regard Lijiang as a city for a slow life.

When you go to Lijiang, you can easily feel the pace of life slow down. People

wander around the Old Town of Lijiang and walk across the streets and alleyways. If you look into the shops on both sides of streets (see *Image iii*), you'll see that they sell all kinds of handicrafts, handmade Mosuo scarves, ethnic clothing, Dongba paper, etc. Tourists prefer to view the scenery of the ancient city because Lijiang is located in the southwest. Lijiang is situated at a high altitude, so the sunshine is a main feature that attracts tourists. Even during winter, it is easy to see colourful flowers, which have also become bright scenery.



Image iii Shops along the street.

Buildings in the Old Town are modelled into wooden houses that were previously inhabited. These are different from the buildings with reinforced concrete structure in the new town. When you enter the Old Town, the ancient history can be felt from those wooden houses. The majority of tourists coming to Lijiang choose to live in the old town of Dayan. The hotel rental fee is more expensive than it in the new city, but tourists are more willing to live in a house made of wood since they are not a part of their daily experience. Once more, Lijiang inns allow travellers to feel the charm of Lijiang.

In Lijiang, accommodation is referred to as an “inn” rather than a “hotel”. The word “inn” is more in line with the ancient Chinese word for hotel, and is in line

with Lijiang's wooden structural characteristics. Although there are more than 2000 inns in the small town, each of them has their own characteristics. Some inns emphasize a comfortable living environment, provide high-quality residential products, ethnic customs, or some inns are merely youth hostels that only offer a bed. Almost every inn has a yard with a table and a few stools. The yard's garden and trees make it an ideal place for drinking tea and chatting under the sun.

Besides the inns, there is a travel attraction called "Mufu". Mufu was originally the local chief executive's office. The size and style of its buildings are more grand and official. Mufu reflects not only the local Naxi culture, but also the social system and the bureaucratic class of the Ming Dynasty. Many visitors of the Old Town of Lijiang went to Mufu in order to view the buildings; similar to tourists going to Paris to visit the Eiffel Tower.

In 2011, a TV series called *Mufu* was set in this place. Some visitors have seen the *Mufu* drama before, so they expected to see real scenery while traveling in Lijiang. There are many settings that were used for dramas and films in the old town of Dayan, and in the old town of Shuhe Old Town. For instance, *Beijing Youth*, a very popular drama among young people, was shot in some bars and restaurants in Lijiang. Visitors favour going to these bars and restaurants in order to feel the environment that the actors experienced.

Speaking of bars, they are completely representative of Lijiang's nightlife. Every night, many small bars open on the sides of the main road, with some even being located on the corners and remote trails. Some bars feature dance performances or singing. Some are noisy, while some are quiet pubs. Most tourists staying in the Old Town will go to a bar to drink the local beer, listen to music, or find a friend with which to chat. They are able to choose a bar from the variety of different bars every day thus allowing their nightlife to become rich and colourful.

#### **4.2.2 Slowness in Lijiang Region**

Slowness is synonymous with Lijiang. All interviewees expressed their interest in the Old Town of Lijiang's slow environment. Finally, Lijiang offered them an opportunity and a place to be slow.

A book entitled *The Soft Time in Lijiang* has been popular in China. The book accounts the idyllic life in Lijiang, which increased a great number of people's interest in travelling to Lijiang to experience the life described in the book. In 2013, another book entitled *Slow Life in Lijiang* became a best seller after being published. It introduces the slow life of Lijiang, systematically ranging from slow city, slow travel, slow life, slow lane, slow food and slow love. Lijiang did not join in Città Slow until now, but in the mind of Chinese, it is a place to enjoy slowness. This slowness expands to the nearby areas, rather than being only restricted to Lijiang city. The slowness is favourable in the Lijiang region because it is diversified.

***“Enjoy the sunshine, and blue sky”***

Weather can be used as a selling point to attract tourists (Becken, 2010). Some tourist attractions are reliable in regard the quality of weather. And some tourist destination and attractions are created based on climate resources (Becken, 2010). For example, skiing requires ice and snow in mountainous areas. Some features like precipitation, wind strength, and temperature all negatively or positively influence on the destination (Andrade, Alcoforado, & Oliveira, 2011). Once more, whether the weather is good or not affects the tourists' choice of destination (Hamilton & Lau, 2005). In Lijiang, the weather's high quality attracts tourists. In 2012, the average temperature of the whole year was 13.8°C (theMunicipalBureauofStatistics, 2013). May had the highest temperature out of all of the twelve months with a temperature of 19.4°C, while the month with the lowest temperature was January with 6.8°C (theMunicipalBureauofStatistics, 2013).

The temperature in Lijiang is comfortable, neither too high nor too low, even during the warmest and coldest months. Besides, according to data from the *2012 Lijiang Statistical Yearbook* (theMunicipalBureauofStatistics, 2013), the total hours of sunshine was 2410.9. People had plenty of sunshine to enjoy that year. Furthermore, few industries are established in Lijiang, which indicates that the air quality is really good. Thus, Lijiang is a better place to stay due to its excellent weather. Few respondents complained the poor air quality. When talking about the weather in Lijiang, they were all in high spirits, which was evident by their smile.

*“I am fond of the beautiful sunshine and blue sky. In Guangzhou, air pollution is so serious with all haze weather, and I haven’t seen the blue and clear sky for a long time. In Lijiang, I like to have a walk after the sun rises. The old town is very good when the sun is visiting the city, very comfortable.” (T23, Female, Designer, Guangdong)*

Thanks to sunshine, people are easy to be lazy and do not want to move. They are slowing their mobility when they enjoy the sunshine. Sunshine brings about warmth and happy for tourists.

***“This city is slow, people are slow here”***

Slow life is a feature of Lijiang, and the city’s image is slow as well. In the Old Town of Lijiang, walking is the only mode of transportation that can be used. It is common to see people wandering the streets and lanes at a slow tempo. Also, the local people are also living slowly. Visitors travelling to the Old Town of Lijiang are influenced by the slow atmosphere, causing them to be unconsciously slow. The architectural style in the Old Town of Lijiang is totally different from the styles in modern cities. Buildings in the Old Town are made from wood with two levels, which creates an ancient setting. People staying there can experience living ten decades ago and feel detached from modern society.

*“In the ancient town, buildings are wooden structures, which is not the same as those with steel and concrete in modern cities. Besides the local, there are only tourists, without those people rapidly passing by under work pressure. I will slow down my pace like people around me and wander in the old town.” (T16, Female, Service, Beijing)*

The locals live at a slow pace, which is a factor that affects tourists. While travelling, slow tourists prefer to be involved in the destination (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). They will behave like local people. For instance, they will wear local clothing (see *Image iv*). Similarly, their lifestyle begins to follow same rate.

*“This whole city is very slow. Here people live in particularly relaxed condition, are not hurry to go to work and anything, Either walking or other things will be quiet easy. I will unconsciously follow them and slow down.” (T52, Male, Finance, Zhejiang)*

A local person also states that local people's life in Lijiang is really easy.

*“Generally we go to sleep till the midnight, and wake up naturally. And the whole city of Lijiang is still sleeping at 8 o'clock in the morning. The opening hour of my shop depends on my waken time. Tourists behave like local people. They like to lie on the bed in the morning. Till the noon, the number of people is increasing on the street. At that moment, tourists are awoken and hanging around the town, or looking for food.” (L5, Male, Self-employed)*



Image iv A tourist is wearing Mosuo people's dress.

The development of tourism in the Lijiang area is mature. The tourism resources are rich there, including cultural attractions like the Old Town of Lijiang, the ethnic minority cultures, and the natural landscape of Meri Snow Mountain and Yulong Snow Mountain. The atmosphere in the Old Town of Lijiang is full of slowness. Interviewees slowed down their pace due to the comfortable weather and the slow tempo of the town. These factors increased the tourists' slow consciousness and provided various tourist destinations to enrich their natural and cultural experience, which led them to be involved with the destination.

## 4.3 Tourist Experience and Behavior

In this section, tourist experience and tourist behaviour are analysed together. Tourist experience is a subjective construction of experiences within a trip, including personal motivations and meanings (Uriely, 2005). Yet, how do tourists gain experience? Tourist must act and their behaviour serves as a means to acquire experience. Once more, tourists behave in order to seek more experience (Pizam et al., 2001). Therefore, an overlap exists between tourist experience and tourist behaviour. Concerning this study, the research objective was to explore how slow Chinese tourists behave, and discover what they experience when they travel in the Lijiang region. It was better to conduct the analysis of experience and behaviour together.

Volo (2010) shares two types of tourist experiences. One is experience as offerings, which concentrates on the interaction that tourist have with products provided by the industry. The other, proposed by Larsen (2007), is called experience as essence, which states that tourist experiences are formed in the mind of visitors based on their expectations, events, and memories. The last factor one is divided into the following categories: pre-travel experience, on-site experience, and post-visit experience. As discussed in Chapter 2, this study emphasizes on-site experience, but refers to content related to pre-travel experience.

### 4.3.1 Tourist Motivation

Motivation is the main driving force for tourist to make a travel decision (Moutinho, 1987), and it influences the choice of travel destination (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Also, the analysis of tourist motivation helps to identify types of tourists (Dann, 1981) and to have a basic understanding of what visitors expect and demand (Fodness, 1994). Tourist behaviour differs according to their motivation (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, & Cox, 1970). Tourism resources are abundant in the Lijiang region, and visitors hold diverse motivations and reasons for travelling to Lijiang.

Respondents' motivations are categorized into several aspects, with three perspectives that were outstanding. The first was to relieve the pressure from daily life. Secondly, they expected to see diversity. Lastly, more than 20% of

the interviewees mentioned scenes from movies, dramas, and pictures that appealed to them. Participants' motivation was not singular. Instead they held at least two driving forces, like relieve from tension and enjoy beautiful views. But the majority of them travelled to the Lijiang region for relief and to experience the distinct, natural views and minority cultures. Also, some other motivations also existed, such as *"visiting friends"* and *"conducting business"*.

### ***"Find relief from tensions"***

As previously mentioned, people living in modern cities, feel stress from their daily life. After a long period, they are both physically and spiritually tired, and need to find a place to escape away from their taxing lifestyle. Lijiang, as a slow place, immediately comes to many people's mind. When being asked about why they chose Lijiang as their travel destination, almost half of the interviewees mentioned the word *"relief"*. Some respondents were so tired of their daily life, filled with work, that the idea of escaping from reality seemed reasonable.

*"Daily work is extremely tired, left home in the early morning and back at the late night from Monday to Friday, even on Saturday I could not have a rest. Under such high pressure, I need a vacation so much that I am in Lijiang now."* (T22, Female, Finance, Guangdong)

A monotonous and stressful life increased people's awareness of the importance of releasing stress. Also interviewees hoped to have a gap period after completing a heavy workload. Both of the two participants, who worked in the IT field in Shanghai, resigned before going to Lijiang. They wished to travel without any work. Besides, some respondents had time to travel since they had completed a mission.

*"I just completed an important project. Recently I lived a life that without any difference between day and night, working all day with little break, even things like having lunch or brushing teeth also need to be done in seconds. Now I finally finished the task and could come here spending a vacation to recover my sprit and energy."* (T51, Female, Consultant, Shanghai)

Interviewees were attracted by the slowness of Lijiang. They longed to find a place to rest. Lijiang was a good option for them, because it has tourism

resources and provides a perfect place to stay when one has nothing to do.

*“Nowadays, the pace of life and work is so fast that people easily feel nervous and tired under pressure. Lijiang gives us atmospheres of relaxation, so it’s a nice place to release pressure. I almost come here once a year.” (T1, Female, Secretary, Zhejiang)*

Visitors come for the slow life of Lijiang. They cannot experience a slow living speed in their residence, thus they travel in to the Lijiang region in order to enjoy the slowness. They are satisfied with the relaxed environment of the Old Town of Lijiang.

***“To be have not been, and to see have not seen before”***

Tourists take the initiative to seek differences and diversities during their trip (Erik Cohen, 1979). From the Demographics section, forty-two out of respondents came from eastern coastal areas. From the geographical angle, the eastern lands of China are plains. While the south western areas, where Lijiang is situated, are plateaus and mountains. The physiognomies are completely different. People live in the eastern parts and cannot see the Alps in the neighbouring zones. They are curious of the diverse scenery in the Lijiang region. In the Lijiang region, the Snow Mountains are a tourist attraction for many tourists, which is not common in other places. People favour seeing those distinctions.

*“I always live in the plain area, but Yunnan is with high altitude. I would like to seek for the different feelings between that.” (T49, Female, Finance, Guangdong)*

In addition of natural scenes, some tourists travel in order to see how minorities live. Lijiang is Naxi’s residence. Tibetans inhabit Shangri-La and Yubeng. Lugu Lake breeds the Mosuo. Minorities have their own cultures and traditional characteristics. Information regarding these traditions can be discovered via media or books. But people cannot obtain a real sense of ethnic minorities and their lives by reading and listening. They must travel to the place where the minorities reside in order to see for themselves. As interviewee T53 stated:

*“Walking marriage of Mosuo people is very special. I have heard their*

*stories, but I prefer to have a further understanding of it. So I want to go to Lugu Lake and get to know about that, also want to see the matriarchal clan's life here.” (T53, Female, IT, Beijing)*

For the Han nationality, ethnic cultures are mysterious with a multitude of customs. They are curious about minority traditions, such as clothing and accessories, which are female favourites.

*“A lot ethnic minorities live in Yunnan, and I think their living habits, languages, music, and clothing are not the same as the Han. So I want to have a look at those differences by myself.” (T11, Female, Freelance, Sichuan)*

### **“Following the dramas, pictures and text”**

Over the years, many fashionable Chinese movies and TV series were shot in Lijiang, Dali, and Kunming. Especially for the young generation, Youth from Beijing, Love Story in Beijing and Longmen Company are all popular. The Mufu Saga is a historical drama that is welcomed by people of all ages and ranks, who like history. Therefore, some tourists visit a specific spot in order to experience the views found in their favourite drama or movie (see *Image v*). One respondent was a university student fond of a certain drama series. She travelled to Dali and Lijiang to find particular scenes that were used in the drama series. She said:

*“I like the TV series ‘Beijing Youth’ so much, of which many plots were taken in Dali and Lijiang, especially the last episode taken on Yulong Snow Mountain impressed me a lot. It’s amazingly beautiful. So I decided to come to Lijiang and review all the spots.” (T9, Male, Student, Shenzhen)*



Image v The restaurant is a shooting place of the drama "Youth from Beijing".

Besides television dramas, images and literature are driving forces for tourists. Thanks to advanced technology, it is convenient to view various pictures of the Lijiang region online. Some tourists prefer to write travel blogs after their visit. People who view these blogs are moved by the images and words, and then decide to travel to Lijiang. Many interviewees already viewed the picture of Meri Snow Mountain and Yulong Snow Mountain. They were shocked by the splendid view in the images and inspired to view the real Snow Mountains.

*"Previously I had seen pictures of Yulong Snow Mountain. They are very attractive, so I want to experience it by myself." (T2, Male, Fireman, Shanxi)*

*"Photos of sunshine on Jinshan (see Image vi) are so beautiful that make me yearn for Meri Snow Mountain so much, as well as the story of Shangri-La. That's why I come here." (T21, Female, IT, Fujian)*



Image vi “Sunshine on Jinshan” at Meri Snow Mountain.

Yubeng is known for its isolated location and splendid, undeveloped beauty. More than a thousand blogs and comments exist online describing the beautiful sceneries and peaceful nature. Those words are attractive for people who dream of finding a land of idyllic beauty. More than half of the participants, who had been Yubeng, admitted that those rhetorical flourishes and impressive pictures drove them to travel to the Lijiang region.

*“Yubeng in the photos is just like a fairyland, and there are a lot of netizens describing it as an arcadia, and a paradise of the soul. I am moved by those words, and just want to go to have a look.” (T17, Male, Electrommunication, Beijing)*

Concluding the tourists’ motivation, major interviewees visited the Lijiang area for a relief from their fast and busy lives in modern cities, which indicated they were eager to slow down and relax during their trip. This type of motivation influenced their attitude toward slow tourism. Another type of motivation was seeking diversity and distinctions, which made them mindful of various local activities. It helped them learn more about the place. Some respondents were attracted by videos, images and literature. It is certain that there were other motivations, but not all were covered.

### **4.3.2 On-site Experience and Behavior**

According to the argument of Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010), slow tourism emphasis on the aspect of experience, including travel experience. In order to explore what slow tourists experience and how they behave when they travel to Lijiang region, this part analysed four parts. The first was to understand how do they distribute their travel time and where do they go. Secondly, was the interviewees' experience with the natural scenery. Similarly, the next section is linked to the cultural landscape. Ethnic cultures are local features in the Lijiang area and attached to the destination is another characteristic of slow tourism (L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Therefore, culture is an important bridge that connects tourists with their destinations. The last section states the experience with the locals, which is also related to local culture.

#### **4.3.2.1 Time-space Distribution**

Rich tourism resources are products of the Lijiang region. Detailed in section 4.2, most tourists choose to visit, but the distribution of time varies depending on tourists' arrangement. Some outstanding destinations that interviewees visited frequently are discussed here, like Lijiang, Lugu Lake, Shangri-La, Yubeng, Kunming, Dali, and so forth. In any case, Lijiang stands at the centre of those destinations with convenient transit hubs that include trains, coaches, and airplanes. Thus, tourists travel to Lijiang to transfer or to only travel in Lijiang.

Through the analysis of interviewees' responses, the average length of stay in Lijiang was 4.3 days. Forty-seven respondents spent three to seven days in Lijiang, three respondents stayed in Lijiang for seven days, and twenty-five for three days. Among the total of fifty-three tourist interviewees, four people spent more than seven days, while one stayed for twenty days. Only two interviewees stayed for less than three days. The two interviewees that took part in a tour package, did not consider themselves to be slow tourists. It is obvious to see that slow tourists spent more time visiting Lijiang. Travelling in one place for four days is not a short time. Also, a local person who runs an inn in the Old Town of Lijiang has proved that tourists were willing to spend a long period of time in the Old Town:

*“Normally people stay here for three days, or a week longer, but someone also choose to stay longer for a month.” (L1, Male, Self-employed)*

In other destinations, the visitors' time distribution is also distinctive. Twenty-nine participants visited Lugu Lake. Nineteen of the people stayed for three days, while two people stayed for four days. Other respondents spent two days in the Mosuo people's homeland. Considering the length of time spent at Lugu Lake, interviewees who only stayed two days did not belong to the slow travel category. In fact, it takes around six hours to travel to Lugu Lake from Lijiang. Only two days is not enough time to travel around the lake. One of the respondents thought that two days was too short and expressed her desire for more time to be spent on travelling around Lugu Lake:

*“My two days were basically all on the road and little time were left to visit half the lake. That's so pity because actually I would like to have a full circle around the lake, because the lake is so beautiful with nice scenery existing everywhere. And there was no time to chat with the locals about their customs and culture. I am sure to come back next time and stay longer.” (T38, Female, Self-employed, Liaoning)*

Tiger Leaping Gorge is two hours (by coach) away from Lijiang. Travellers spend nearly three to four hours on hiking there, which met the results of thirty-four interview responses. Since Tiger Leaping Gorge is on the way to Shangri-La, and Shangri-La is on the way to Yubeng, each of the interviewees who had visited Shangri-La or Yubeng also visited Tiger Leaping Gorge.

Shangri-La in spring with fully bloomed flowers and is so beautiful that it attracts a number of tourists. Twenty-five respondents had travelled to Shangri-La, a site of the legendary Shambhala Kingdom, and stayed there for more than two nights. They spent at least one day in Pudacuo National Forest Park and Napa Lake. The remaining time was spent in the Old Town of Dukezong, which is situated in the centre of Shangri-La.

Yubeng is not every tourist's choice destination. Owing to the inconvenience created by transportation, visitors must walk across a mountain in order to reach Yubeng. Yubeng village is the village that's nearest village to Meri Snow Mountain and isolated from the outside, making it a land of idyllic beauty. Nine of the interviewees came to Yubeng for its organic view and Tibetan culture.

They spent three days in the village and it took them twelve hours to completely travel around the village by foot. Nine respondents praised Yubeng with complimentary words like “*amazing*”, “*so beautiful*”, “*wonderful*”, and “*awesome*”. They considered the trip to Yubeng as being “*worthy*”.

Kunming and Dali also are major cities in the Yunnan Province. Nonetheless, tourists have not spent much time on these two cities. The numbers of respondents who had travelled to Kunming and Dali was twenty-nine and eighteen, respectively. The lengths they had stayed were not long. They all only spent one day in each of these two destinations. Depending on their statement, Kunming was viewed as a transit position between Lijiang and their departure cities. They had visited some iconic places, like Cuihu Lake and Dianchi Lake.

*“Because flying to Lijiang directly is too expensive, I chose to fly to Kunming first then transferred to Lijiang by train. I stayed in Kunming for a day and visited Cuihu Lake and Yunnan University.” (T8, Male, Director, Shenzhen)*

As for Dali, it was also considered to be a transient place to stay. All of them put their travel emphasis on Lijiang.

*“On my way to Lijiang, I stayed in Dali for one day. Because the time is limited, I prefer to go to Lijiang, rather than hanging out in Dali.” (T25, Male, Doctor, Guangdong)*

Lashi Lake and Yulong Snow Mountain are two tourism attractions near Lijiang. It only takes an hour, by coach, to travel to these two places. Therefore, generally tourists decide to go back to Lijiang after their trip. Depending on the participants’ narratives, they left their inns in the morning and returned between 5 to 6 o’clock. Also, they considered that the length of their visit was “*sufficient*” for them to enjoy the splendid sights.

From the analysis of tourist time-space distribution, Lijiang was a place that interviewees had to pass, and it took them an average of 4.3 days to completely experience Lijiang. Most interviewees, who travelled Lugu Lake, spent three days there. Less than three days is not enough time to have a good visit at Lugu Lake. Shangri-La and Yubeng are two destinations welcomed by respondents. As for Kunming and Dali, they were not

interviewees' main destination, so they did not stay at those locations very long. Lashi Lake and Yulong Snow Mountain are two tourist attractions close to the Old Town of Lijiang so tourists spending one day there is enough.

No standard length of time exists to justify whether a location belongs to slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). An analysis of tourist's time-space distribution is unable to decide whether they travel at a slow pace. However, at least it shows that some tourists are not travelling in a rush, visiting a destination in one day. A few interviewees only stayed in Lijiang less than three days, which was shorter than the average length of stay. Also, they have travelled by using tour packages. I can say, without any doubt that they did not travel at a slow pace. More information is required to understand what they did during their travel, which is presented in subsequent sections. However, this simple time-space analysis suggests how tourists distribute their travel time and where they devote more time. Making sense of this helps me to know whether slow tourists are mindful of spending more time on travelling in one place.

#### **4.3.2.2 Natural Scenery Experience**

A portion of tourists travel to the Lijiang district to take in the splendid natural sceneries stated in section 4.3.1. The most common means of experiencing natural sights is to look at them, which is mainly from, but not limited by, the visual aspect (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Concerning slow tourism, slow tourists view sceneries slowly, which enables them to have a more detailed and richer experience during their travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). Since fifty-one participants were independent travellers, they were free to arrange their time. They were *“able to stay longer if interested or leave soon if not interested”* (T15, Male, Finance, Beijing).

In the Lijiang area, natural scenes are mainly in Lashi Lake, Yulong Snow Mountain, Lugu Lake, Pudacuo National Forest Park, Napa Lake, Yubeng, and Meri Snow Mountain. As for natural beauty, interviewees expressed various feelings. Some were addicted to views and lost track of time while being mesmerized by the scenes. They took a great deal of photos but such images cannot compare to the actual view they enjoyed with their own eyes. Other interviewees complained that the glacier on Yulong Snow Mountain is

disappearing, even though they were still impressed by the natural view.

*“Even the snow covered on Yulong Snow Mountain was thin, after climbing to the peak and seeing the scenery forward, I still felt so relaxed and abandoned all the troubles behind. The Blue Mountain impressed me the most. The lake is originated from peak of the snow mountain. It looked so clear and blue, and presented a pure beauty that barely could be seen in the modern cities. I stayed here for a longtime, taking so many pictures and not willing to leave.” (T5, Female, Student, Ningxia)*

Some beautiful scenes can only be seen during a specific moment. For instance, the sunrise atop Jinshan only occurs during a sunny morning. While the Lugu Lake’s steam can only be seen during an autumn morning.

*“Lugu Lake in the morning before the sunrise is covered by steam (see Image vii). I could not see the view clearly, but it created a sense of fairyland.” (T28, Female, Clerk, Guangdong)*

Views of a place change according to the season. Different seasons bring about various sceneries. Flowers bloom during the spring and summer. During autumn and winter, it is uncommon to see flowerbeds, but the scenery maintains its aesthetic beauty.

*“Now is the winter. Pudacuo is covered by yellow grass everywhere, quiet different from the view in spring when all sorts of flowers blossom together, resulting in the different feelings. Even if the style of landscape was single, it still looked nice and great, and made my mind clear and open.” (T50, Male, Accountant, Hunan)*



Image vii A morning view of Lugu Lake.

Not only do tourists visually enjoy the natural scenes, but also they experience a spiritual relief, which reaches the goal of relaxing and reducing pressure. Nature has a magical power that allows people to feel peaceful.

*“I wake up early in the morning, sit in the balcony before the sunrise, and face to the view of Meri Snow Mountain, with moon still hanging up in the sky. At that moment I felt the mountain was so close to the moon, and wanted to take a photo for them, but that picture was hard to be recorded by camera. So I put the camera aside and sit there peacefully. All the previous annoying feelings totally disappeared at that time.” (T20, Male, IT, Shanghai)*

Nine of fifty-three interviewees travelled to Yubeng. They experienced nature using all of their five senses. Urry (2011) argued that tourists experience a place, not only from the perspective of their gaze, but also from the perspectives of smell, hear, taste, and touch. This is also applied to a natural destination.

*“In the front of the God Waterfall we stood so close to the snow mountain, with snow all around us. I laid on the snowy ground, closing my eyes to feel the precious peace at this moment.” (T14,*

*Male, Sales, Shanghai)*

*“We saw the rainbow when we arrived at the God Waterfall. Rainbow is a symbol of luck for the Tibetan people, so all of us were very happy to see it. After the guide told us water from the fall was very holy, and can clean all the dirty things from our body, we all drank it and felt its taste of sweet and clear.” (T16, Female, Service, Beijing)*

Additionally, there is another means to completely engage nature; this is a hot, spring bath. Taking a hot, spring bath is an awesome way to enjoy the natural resources and to inspire reflection.

*“I enjoyed the inner hot spring spa there, a single spring in a wooden house, with beautiful sceneries outside. Having a spring spa was so comfortable here, after that I felt so relaxed.” (T31, Female, Designer, Zhejiang)*

However, for mass tourists, they lack sufficient time to travel a long distance to take in the beautiful views. The tour guide takes them to each tourist attraction and limits the length of time for tourists to visit. They only have time to roughly glance at the attractions.

*“Generally, our tour guide gives us two hours to three hours for each tourism attraction. I only can view around the spot cursorily. Once there was not enough time for me to enjoy Yulong Snow Mountain. What I can do is to take as many pictures as possible.” (T3, Female, Clerk, Liaoning)*

Feelings and experiences are diverse, but slow tourists find satisfaction in similar things. They have available time to experience different the aspects of natural views. They are able to use all of their sense to experience. Since they travel slowly and spend more time in one place, slow tourists experience more. Whereas, mass tourists do not have the freedom to experience all of the more natural elements their destination has to offer.

#### **4.3.2.3 Cultural Experience**

Rafael Matos, the first scholar to propose the slow approach to tourism in the academic field, argued that *“taking time”* and *“attachment to place”* are two principles of slow tourism (Matos, 2004). Also, Lumsdon and his colleagues

researched slow tourism further to view the engagement with the destination as an ingredient of slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Cultures can serve as a means to connect tourists and places. Culture is a broad concept consisting of all values, beliefs, behaviours (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), activities (Shuman, 1993), and material productions (Eliot, 2010) related to a certain place.

Lijiang area is an original place for the Naxi nationality. Once more, other Tibetan minorities, like the Lisu nationality, remain active. Therefore, ethnic minority cultures are plentiful. These cultures are displayed in various forms. Interviewees experienced different cultural aspects, such as traditional buildings, performances, and religions. They mainly experienced culture through viewing attractions, participating in activities, communicating with local people, and reading literature related to the place.

### ***“Buildings are really existing”***

A building is a recording of architectural history. Through the viewing of buildings, tourists are able to learn about the kinds of houses in which local people live. The Old Town of Lijiang displays the cultural heritage of the Naxi people's architecture. Tourists are able to see it and even live in a Naxi style inn. In the Old Town of Lijiang, Mufu was originally the local chief executive's office. Now, it is a tourist attraction. Tourists love to visit Mufu because of its historical background and architectural style. Also they believe that buildings truly reflect a specific culture. For instance, Mufu reflects the social system and the bureaucratic class of the Ming Dynasty. They believe these buildings were built by ancient people, as cultural heritage recordings of historical time periods.

*“The Mufu is like a smaller size of the Forbidden City. You can see the characteristics of traditional hierarchy from its structure. There is a garden inside, which is exquisite for design and construction, and surrounded by beautiful sceneries. This kind of house is traditional style. Although it had been renovated, it still keeps its traditional features.” (T34, Male, Lecturer, Beijing)*

Another case, the house of Mosuo people is named “Grandmother House”, which reflects the status of female in a family. Interviewees have thought that

visiting construction can make sense of local people's living situation. Furthermore, architecture does not lie to them. They have understood what the buildings look like and the differences between modern buildings and houses that traditional Naxi nationality and Mosuo people live in.

Religious structures are also tourism attractions that reflect religious culture. Respondents were glad to visit monasteries to view the structures and sculptures to gain a better understanding of the style of architecture and arts influenced by religion. Visitors believed that the object-related constructions were authentic.

### ***“Commercialized culture performance”***

Culture performance is a brilliant way to exhibit a local minority's manners and customs, including music, dance, clothing, accessories, language, and so forth. Dongba culture is the Naxi people's culture. Dongba Valley is a place where its culture is on display through singing and dancing performances and clothing exhibitions. Theoretically speaking, tourists can gain a lot of knowledge regarding the Dongba culture. However, respondents were not satisfied with their visit because those performances had vast modern elements. Shows involving fashion characteristics did not provide tourists with an impression of minority culture. They thought that this type of show could be seen in every city in China, making it unnecessary to come to Lijiang to watch it.

*“Those singing and dancing shows were boring, which were just performed by many people with nothing special. Many modern actions were included, not related with Naxi culture. What's more, the language couldn't be understood, and the way of show was quiet simple.” (T37, Female, Hospitality, Sichuan)*

Activities that tourists can be involved in are brilliant ways to make emotional attachments and feel the cultural authenticity of a place (Wang, 1999). In order to meet the tourists' taste, a handful of performances adopt non-local features, which generates an inauthentic affect. It seems as if audiences are favour the chic elements. However, cultural performances that lack traditional elements have trouble easily attracting the tourists' attention and leads to tourist discontent. They regard this kind of performance as a normal show, instead of an ethnic, cultural display.

*“Campfire party was very happy. At first, the local began to singing and dancing, we just stood by and watched them, and then we joined their singing and dancing, quite exciting. They had their own traditional dance, but also mixed with some popular songs. It felt strange, and did not match to each other.” (T21, Female, IT, Fujian)*

Within the process of globalization, influenced by the movements of people, increasing capital, information and commodities are transferring across the territorial boundaries of places (Meethan, 2003; Munar, 2007; Yeung, 1998). The development of tourism pushes mobile velocity (Munar, 2007; Sheller & Urry, 2004). During this process, cultures are viewed as beneficial property used for economic growth and regional development. Minority people have also exploited their traditional culture as a unique selling point for increasing incomes. Some cultural forms, driven by the economic benefit, are commercialized. This influences the tourists’ opinion of local people; tourists have complained about specific expenses during certain performances.

*“When I stayed at the Tibetan home, I saw the local dancing show. It’s pretty good, but some of them charged for money when took a picture with the dancer. I think it’s all about making money, and could not feel the original honesty of local people.” (T4, Female, Sales, Sichuan)*

### **“Devout religious beliefs”**

Religion is a branch of culture, encompassing people’s value and belief in a particular place. Once more, minorities’ attitude toward nature, and their life can be known through their religious culture. In the Lijiang region, various minorities have their own beliefs; Tibetans in Shangri-La practice Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, some religious constructions, especially temples have become tourist attraction for travellers interested in religious expression. In Tibetan areas around Lijiang, Dongzhulin Monastery, and Songzanlin Lamasery there are two famous Tibetan temples. Visitors frequent these two places to see what Tibetan Buddhist temples look. They also seek knowledge about that religion, which is similar to tourists who go to churches when travelling in Christian countries. Tibetan Buddhism and Buddhism in central China are not the same. Interviewees were very curious about the differences. For example, they wanted *“to see which kind of Buddha Tibetans worship”*. Acknowledged by the taboos of any religion, some respondents expressed

their worries. For the sake of their own safety, they were interested in religious locality.

*“Tibetan beliefs are not the same like ours. Traveling here you need to know about some religious taboos, in case of some frictions. So I went to the temple to have a look and make sense of it.” (T13, Female, Baker, Guangdong)*

Most visitors do not believe in Tibetan Buddhism, but they show their respect toward the local peoples' faith. They have *“kept quiet and not touched anything when visiting around Dongzhulin Monastery”*. Besides this, they have a new perception regarding religious belief. They understand local people's faith in Tibetan Buddhism and are moved by believers' sincere belief.

*“I do not have religious belief, but after going to the Dongzhulin Temple, I found having belief was something nice. You could have something to entrust no matter what you met in your life. I saw the sincere attitudes when the local people worshiped the Buddha. They knelt down, bowed praying, chanting, and looked very serious. You could see that the Buddha was on a respect for the supremacy of faith. Even I am not a Buddhist, also could feel touched.” (T15, Male, Finance, Beijing)*

Temples are sacred places where people should not easily kowtow if they do not share the faith's beliefs. Tourists are welcomed to engage in activities associated with praying for health and wellness. Visitors are willing to take part in some activities, with respect to local religion. In the Old Town of Shangri-La, Asia's largest prayer wheel is established atop a hill. This wheel is so huge that it requires more than fifteen people to rotate it. A great deal of tourists travel there to rotate it in three times or more according to Tibetan tradition. Almost all interviewees had been there and had spun the prayer wheel.

*“I played the prayer wheel together with other travellers, which is the biggest prayer wheel in Asia. We turned seven laps, because the local said it's good to turn an odd number. Turning it successfully implies all wishes will come true. Working together to turn the wheel was so good, and we also appreciated what it felt like to turn the prayer.” (T39, Male, Architect, Sichuan)*

Many natural spots are carrying religious connotations for Tibetans and people

who practice Tibetan Buddhism. Natural spots include the Meri Snow Mountain and the God Waterfall. Tibetans perform specific actions when they see these natural spots. For example, they run three circles around the God Waterfall, and make Nima heaps when they reach the God waterfall. Tourists also follow the actions of local people (see *Image viii*). This type of behaviour is known as “do in Rome as the Romans do”.

*“The God Waterfall to Yubeng is a very sacred place for Tibetans. Cannot speak loudly there. Like the local, we talked as gentle as possible on the day after we arrived in the morning and also ran three circles around the God fall with the local to show respect for the God waterfall.” (T18, Female, IT, Shanghai)*



Image viii A tourist is praying in the front of the God waterfall.

Tourists also behave like a local person when visiting in a religious place. When coming across Tibetans, they say, “Za xi de le”, which means “hello” to tourists. Respondents also said this to Tibetans and felt that the locals welcomed them.

### **“Experience slowness”**

In addition of ethnic minority cultures, slow culture is another culture that tourists desire to experience in Lijiang. As mentioned before, slow lifestyle is Lijiang's main feature, and a source that attracts tourists to travel to Lijiang for a visit. *"The living status is slow in the Old Town of Lijiang,"* said one interviewee (T31), a female designer from Zhejiang province. According to the description of participants, life in Lijiang started from 'a lie-in' (wake up later in the morning).

*"I woke up in naturally in the morning all these days. After washing up I strolled in the old town. Along the street are small shops. I went to see some interesting ones, and very casually wandered in the town(see Image ix). When I was hungry, I would find a restaurant or buy some snacks, eating and strolling on the street."* (T12, Male, Finance, Shanghai)



Image ix Visitors are slowly wandering around the old town and enjoying the sunshine.

Cafés and teahouse are good choices for a tourist to *"kill time"*. In the Old Town, cafes can be seen in every corner (see Image x). Visitors can spend an afternoon in a café or the yard of an inn to enjoy coffee, tea, a book or chat with others. It is certain that participants loved these types of activities. They

have stated that their café experience was a cosy moment. Finally, some interviewees thought it was a way to feel how the time passes by.

*“If not hanging around in the town, I would stay in a coffee bar or in the inn I live, have a cup of tea, chat with the inn owner or other travellers, enjoy the warm sunshine and surfing the internet. You don’t have to do anything here, just relax and feel the time slowly passing by.” (T46, Female, Self-employed, Zhejiang)*



Image x A cafe in the old town.

However, mass tourists do not have time to spare. Due to their time restrictions, visiting the Old Town of Lijiang only involves walking around the ancient town. They also wish to have a seat in various cafés in order to take a breath during the tight travel schedule.

*“I saw a great deal of restaurants and cafés in the Old Town of Lijiang. They looked pretty nice because of warm and sweet layout. But I only had two hours to visit the town. The length of time was not enough to walk around it. So I hadn’t been any café to enjoy leisure hour.” (T3, Female, Clerk, Liaoning)*

A board, hanging on the door with the phrase *“Enjoying sunshine, chatting,*

*having some tea, and surfing online” (see Image xi) can often be seen in the Old Town of Lijiang. That is the life in Lijiang. A phrase that claims that the aim of coming to Lijiang is “to do nothing” is very popular on the Internet; it perfectly describes the lifestyle in Lijiang. All interviewees agreed with this description.*



Image xi A board with words.

### ***“Meeting new people and making friends easily”***

Urry (2000) stated that sociability has become a significant characteristic of travel, while Dickinson (2008) also believed slow tourism consists of this feature as well. Most tourists in Lijiang are independent and single travellers. They easily make friends during the course of their trip. They are able to meet each other in a coach, inn, restaurant, or even on a street. It is possible for two strangers to become friends after similar experiences.

*“I met him in the inn of Dali, and he would go to Lijiang, too, so we travelled together. It was not the first time here, so he’s quite familiar with the culture and scenic spots here. I could learn a lot from him and it’s so nice to meet such a good friend on the way.” (T5, Female,*

*Student, Ningxia)*

It is common to see messages for finding travel partners on a blackboard hanging on the door of inns. Thirty-seven interviewees joined a group to travel if the group had the same destination. In their opinion, travelling in a group was a means of guaranteeing safety. Also it was an opportunity to meet new friends. Additionally, it was possible for group members, sharing similar habits, to chat about topics.

*“We walked within a team to Yubeng together. On the way we ate and played together and have become friends soon. Mutual support and assistance have created an intimate friendship between us (see Image xii). I like the feeling of a big family, you can’t imagine we haven’t met each other at all before this tour.” (T16, Female, Service, Beijing)*



Image xii A male tourist is supporting another female tourist for hiking.

This kind of sociability has been referred to as a sense of belonging to a group and cooperating (Arnould & Price, 1993)., This reflected that those interviewees were open to meeting new friends.

### ***“Information from the local, online and books”***

In order to be involved in a place and understand a place, first-hand experience is not enough. When tourists encounter unknown things, they need to find solutions to deal with them. Searching online is the most convenient way for modern people. Some respondents browsed for general information online before their trips to avoid unsafe factors. They had a rough idea of Lijiang as well as its nearby destinations.

*“I would like to search some information about Lijiang, Lugu Lake and Shangri-La on the Internet. To read strategies provided by previous tourists, and get to know some basic things about the local culture and taboos.” (T35, Female, Student, Jiangxi)*

During their travel, local people are their best options to ask. Also some tourists still will search for answers online. Some tourists are favour of communication with the local. They have thought that through communication they are able to get more decent information about the destination, the local lifestyle and knowledge of local cultures. Some tourists are interested in the local products and their own journey. Their questions cover food, transportation, tourist spots and so on.

*“I asked some natives for where to eat delicious food, to have fun, to buy specialties. It’s good to listen to their advices. Some questions were asked. For example, are there any better transportations to go to the Yulong Snow Mountain, what are the differences between different Tibetan Buddhist sects, what are eight kamiymas, whether Tibetans must go to walk around the mountain and so on.” (T14, Male, Sales, Shanghai)*

Some other respondents were intrigued by local culture, including music, traditional customs, language, handcrafted art, dance, clothing, etc. They communicated with local people and talked about these cultural aspects in order to obtain general ideas of the local culture.

*“I am particularly interested in music. After arriving in Lijiang, I encountered Xiaohei (a local person who is a singer). And we talked about music with pleasure, because he is persistent in his musical dreams. We usually boiled a pot of tea in his studio. He sang their songs of Lisu nationality to me, and we chatted about their ethnic*

*music.” (T39, Male, Architect, Sichuan)*

*“Walking marriage culture of Mosuo people has always been questioned. I had not known if it is true or not. This time I came across the local and asked about marriage culture, and the role women and men played in a family when I travelled in Lugu Lake.” (T45, Male, Manager, Shandong)*

It is interesting that many tourists exhibited a great amount of curiousness regarding the daily life of the locals. They were curious about the family situation, diet habit, and personal working situation. The most common question was *“what do you do every day”*.

*“I like talking with the local, asking bout their family situations, their daily life and ways of celebrating the festivals.” (T25, Male, Doctor, Fujian)*

*“We talked about their daily life, their jobs and eating habits. Also I asked whether they planted agricultural products or fed animals.” (T42, Female, Technician, Tianjin)*

The local respondents talked about their communications experiences with tourists. An owner of an inn (L3, Female, Self-employed) stated that conversation topics usually range from daily living habits, ethnic customs, and religious beliefs, to travel information.

Some religious topics were discussed by tourists and local people. However, Tibetan Buddhism is too profound to understand. Communication with Tibetans was one way to get information, but not sufficient enough to understand Tibetan Buddhism. Some interviewees decided to purchase some books in order to further understand Tibetan Buddhism.

*“Once I arrived in Lijiang, I went to the bookstore to buy two books about Tibetan Buddhism and want to know more related knowledge from that.” (T20, Male, IT, Shanghai)*

Travellers engaging in tour packages have different experiences when communicating with local people. They expressed that they communicated with the tour guide if they had any questions. They expressed that they had few opportunities to engage with natives, unless they were watching a

performance or shopping.

To conclude, the majority of interviewees paid attention to experiencing local cultures no matter if the culture from was material or non-material. Besides traditional culture, new culture like slow culture also appeals tourists, especially for slow tourists. One of the findings showed that slow tourists are willing to make friends with people they encounter during their travel. In order to make sense of some specific cultural features such as music, customs, living habits, religious beliefs, and to be attached to a place, they preferred to keep touch with local people, or to search for information online or in books. Slow tourists have richer cultural experiences and are further involved with the destination since they have enough time and are mindful of seeking opportunities.

#### **4.3.2.4 Travel Experience**

Within the academic context of slow tourism, some experts (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) suggested that the travel experience should be considered as an item to be studied (Fullagar et al., 2012). They, on the basis of the impact of tourism transportation, discuss the link connecting tourism, transportation, and environment to theoretical perspectives. They state that slow transportation modes provide other options for high-carbon travel means, which offers the tourist as much experience as the destination, during their mobility (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). In 2000, Kenny attempted to define slow travel on the website [slowtravel.com](http://slowtravel.com), but her definition only included the experience within the destination (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Slow movements in Lijiang and nearby localities allow the tourist to obtain more information and experience local culture. In the Old Town of Lijiang, all modes of transportation are forbidden, except for walking. Visitors wander the streets to view the architecture, the people and so on. , Since this Old Town is a tourism destination, rather than a workplace, everyone slowly stands or walks in the street (*see Image xiii*). Peer influence is obvious in the Old Town, which results in no one moving in a hurry. And notices, shops, and beautiful views along the lanes also attract visitors to slow their walking pace and stop to enjoy the attractions.

*“Everyone walks slowly in the old town. So do I, because no one is willing to quickly pass by in such a relaxed and comfortable town. I usually walk along the main streets, like Square Street, May Street, and see some shops located on the both sides. There are also some remote and unknown alleys. They are my favorite, because there will be fewer people, relatively quiet. I can walk slowly while enjoying the scenery, as well as the flowers stretching from resident’s balcony. Even losing direction is also amazing, because it is a process to discover a surprise. Sometimes the blooming flowers in the corner ahead might impress me.” (T7, Female, Scenarist, Beijing)*



Image xiii An alley with flagging in the old town.

In Yubeng, Pudacuo National Forest Park, Tiger Leaping Gorge, Lugu Lake, hiking is also an alternative to car travel, especially in Yubeng, where it is impossible to get into by car, due to having no roads for any vehicles. The

entire hiking path of Yubeng is approximately seventy km and the route is a highland mountain path. Thus, completely walking the route is difficult. Nevertheless, interviewees returning back from Yubeng were all excited with their journey, because hiking brought about a lot of happiness in them. The hiking not only provided beautiful scenery along the road, but also an adventurous experience, since it has a three km road with less than 1 m width along the edge of the mountain. Additionally, hiking was not boring. Participants had a pleasurable time talking with others, and taking photos during their walking.

*“Walking for a long distance was tired, but the sceneries I saw all on the way reduced my tired feelings. When we arrived at Yubeng, we saw the natural mountains and trees that barely could be seen in the modern city. We fed the squirrels when we went down the mountain. It's quiet distinct from feeding animals in the zoo. It's a direct contact to the nature. We also saw the Nima piles and the sincere worship of Tibetans to their own god. We stopped to take picture for memories.”*  
(T14, Male, Sales, Shanghai)

What walking can bring is not just fatigue, but also produce new experience. Also at these destinations, slow travel modes are not restricted to walk. Boating on Lashi Lake and Lugu Lake is an activity provided by the destinations. Interviewees said that the view on the lake was different from that on the shore side. The feeling of boating was also different from walking as well as any other transportation modes.

*“We rowed a boat on the Lashi Lake. In the boat we could see the scenery on the shore, as well as the beautiful things on the lake and in the water. We were not only just sitting on the boat, but also the rowing guy was singing their folk songs for us. That's the first time I experienced to boat on the lake and sing songs to the people on the shore. It's fascinating.”* (T34, Male, Lecturer, Beijing)

Tourists are able to rent bikes or electric motors for travelling around the lake. These are “green” vehicles that don't emit greenhouse gases (see *Image xiv*). Participants showed their approval for these low-carbon travel methods. They could stop at any time and at any location. Also the scenes along the road could be seen clearly while riding a bike. Some people viewed biking as being an environment friendly good approach for building a healthy body.

*“I rent a bike in the Lugu Lake, and rode a circle around the lake. Riding a bicycle is a way of environmental protection and also can exercise the body meanwhile. What’s more, I can ride while enjoying the nice view. It is bravo that I can stop and take pictures for those especially pretty views.” (T23, Female, Designer, Guangdong)*



Image xiv Two tourists are travelling by bike.

Additionally, respondents preferred to use public transportation to go to other old towns in Lijiang. They regarded it as a way to be immersed in the place. Taking a bus, like the natives do, provided a sense of the real life in Lijiang.

Walking, biking, and boating are normal transportation modes available in Lijiang. However, riding horses or mules is also possible. In Lashi Lake’s scenic region, the Ancient Tea Horse Road is a distinctive tourism attraction. The ancient people transfer goods by horse using the Ancient Tea Horse Road that traverses through Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet. Some respondents favoured riding a horse on the Ancient Tea Horse Road, to experience the ancient way of delivering goods. The horses are of the Yunnan breed and short but strong limbs. This type of horse can ride on mountain paths, which is

different from northern breeds that run on grasslands.

*“I am from the northern part of China. I had ridden a northern horse in the Inner Mongolia grassland. That horse ran so fast and I felt really exciting. But this time, I rode a Yunnan horse on the Ancient Tea Horse Road, the feeling was completely different, because the horse is walking in Yunnan and the horse in my city is running. For me it was a different kind of horse riding experience.” (T34, Male, Lecturer, Beijing)*

In the mountains of Yunnan, mules are also used as a transportation approach for pack goods and human beings. It was possible that they had experience riding a horse, but riding a mule is completely new “*interesting*” for tourists (see *Image xv*). Many participants were excited about the possibility of riding a mule.

*“I had never ridden a mule, and felt it as novelty. Riding a mule is an interesting experience. Because the mule is walking on the edge of the mountain, at the beginning I was very afraid, was afraid of falling down. But after the owner of the mules told me that pulling over on the edge road for mules it is easy to walk. In fact mules also are afraid of falling, they will go in a safe way, so there is no need to worry about it. After his explanation, I enjoyed the process of riding a mule, while watching them walking slowly behind the first mule. Sometimes they stopped to eat the leaves on the roadside. It’s pretty interesting.” (T29, Female, Clerk, Hainan)*



Image xv A tourist is riding a mule.

Travel experience does not only include the destination and nearby localities. It also includes the journey from the departure city to the destination city (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). For slow travel, Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) stated that choosing slow and low-carbon transportation such as a train or a bike are elements of slow travel. However, the majority of interviewees travelled to Lijiang by air. Only a few participants selected a train because of the lower price of a train ticket.

At the destination, slow tourists are willing to experience various slow transportation modes such as walking, riding, or boating. These allow them to experience totally different feelings regarding normal mobility approaches like travelling by car. Slow tourists enjoy the views and easily stop to take in the attractions. But mass tourists travel by coach. Even though they visit places that offer new, slow transportation modes, they have no time to experience them.

#### **4.3.2.5 Local Products**

Slow tourism is an extension of Slow Food and Città Slow (Fullagar et al., 2012; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Slow tourism encourages tourists to be involved in the local activities to experience native life (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). One of the best ways to engage a destination is to live like a native. Experiencing the destination is not limited by the visual approach. The smell and taste are two other methods for experiencing a place (Everett, 2008; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Slow food is an important part of the slow lifestyle, and also appears to be particularly significant in slow tourism.

A place has its own food culture. Local food and specialties are products of a place. Enjoying food is an alternative way to experience the destination. In light of Slow Food, indulging in local cuisines and drinks is the most important part of local life, because indigenous people cannot live without their local ingredients. (Heitmann et al., 2011). Food culture is an integrated part of local culture. Local cuisines are usually made of autochthonic materials. Due to the types of food, diet styles are also different. The cooking and eating methods are parts of food culture.

In Lijiang, alpine rainbow trout is a food specific to that region. An interviewee described the method of eating the rainbow trout as *“a fish that can be prepared in three ways. One is fried fish skin, and another is fish sashimi. The third is using the fishbone to make a hot pot. The whole fish can be eaten in three ways”*. (T21, Female, IT, Fujian) So foods differ in Lijiang, while some cuisines are specific, which shows the differences between the districts. Similar to the alpine rainbow trout, Yunnan rice noodles, Lijiang baba (a type of pancake), flower cake, hot pot with La ribs, hot pot with yak, wine and bread made of highland barley in Shangri-La, and Tibet butter tea are cuisines that can only be eaten in Yunnan and Tibetan areas. For tourists coming from eastern costal districts, they had never eaten these before. In addition, many respondents believed that Local food is *“the easiest and most direct way to understand the local culture”*. Therefore, almost all of respondents expressed great interest in the local food.

*“I am a fan of delicious food. When I go on a trip, I must taste the local delicacy. I have eaten local food of Lijiang every meal after I arrived here, specially the ribs hot pot. I have eaten it twice. And I have tasted different flower cakes. I think Jiahua’s flower cake is the best.”*  
(T3, Female, Clerk, Liaoning)

Besides the reflection of food types and dietary habits of local people, climate is embodied as well. In the Lijiang region, especially areas of higher elevation, the natives love to eat spicy food like yak and hot pot in order to generate body heat. Because of the lower temperature in a plateau, these cuisines keep people warm. From the interviewees' perspective, certain local food had a special function that fit the local climate. And they ate this type of food to get used to the low temperature.

*"We picked a restaurant and ate yak hot pot in Shangri-La. It smells good and is very delicious with plenty of meat, vegetables and so on. I think yak hot pot is very suitable to eat in the season of autumn and winter. It will make you warm and no longer be afraid of the cold air outside." (T20, Male, IT, Shanghai)*

Tourists are able to not only taste the local food, but also understand the creation process.

*"When I called on the Tibetans house, they provided us with barley wine and buttered tea, and made barley pies for us. We tasted it and learned about how to make it." (T31, Female, Designer, Zhejiang)*

It is certain that for some respondents, the food in the Lijiang region was not their cup of tea. But some of them still insisted on having a taste; they believed that it is normal that not every dish meets everyone's desired favour, but everything should be attempted during a trip.

*"Local food is spicy here, not my cup of tea. However, I think it is still worth trying, for the chance to get to know local people's eating habits. Other food can be seen and ate everywhere, but during the travel, local food should be on the list." (T13, Female, Baker, Guangdong)*

However, a few tourists did not want to taste local cuisine since they were not used to the local ingredients. A participant, who is a doctor and from Guangdong, was not satisfied with Lijiang's food. Once he arrived to the Old Town of Lijiang, the first thing he looked for was the location of McDonald's. He has stated:

*"Rice here is too hard, which is really worse than it in my hometown. And I really don't like the ingredients and the taste of local food. So I choose to eat other food instead." (T24, Male, Doctor, Guangdong)*

Also people from the northern area of China are used to eating staple food made from flour, like noodles, dumplings, but not rice. Those visitors also *“found restaurants with familiar northern-flavour”* (T38, Male, Self-employed, Liaoning).

It is common to see tourists with snacks to eat while walking on the street. This does not refer to etiquette. While witnessing a beautiful town through their vision, they can enjoy the food's taste as well.

In addition to food, local specialties are representative of a place. Some specific products can only be produced in Lijiang area. As one of Lijiang's specialties, maca is a kind of health care medicine that is only planted in the plateau region of China. Flower cake, Pu'er tea, and Yunnan Arabica coffee are also great alternative options as gifts for relatives and friends. Besides, tourists select products that have ethnic characteristics, such as handicrafts (see Image xvi).

*“I have bought several Mosuo people's hand-made scarfs. Every woman of my family can get one as a gift.”* (T37, Female, Hospitality, Sichuan)



Image xvi A Mosuo people is making a craft for sell.

With the development of advanced e-commerce, some goods can be bought online. Moreover, owing to the fast expansion of commercialization, most commodities sold in the Old Town of Lijiang are not local products any more. They are imported from other places, instead of being created locally. Almost all interviewees expressed that they have no wiliness to buy non-local products, because those products have no native characteristics and can be bought outside of Lijiang.

*“Things sold in the ancient towns are not special. Even if bringing them to home still cannot remind you anything of this trip. I bought local products here, like Yunnan Arabica Coffee, flower cakes and Dongba paper. Every thing represents the feature of Lijiang. As long as I see them, I can remember the trip in Lijiang.” (T25, Male, Doctor, Fujian)*

When the commerce triggered by tourism develops to some extent, the locality will be influenced to lose its authenticity (Erik Cohen, 1988). Due to the strong commercial atmosphere in the Old Town of Lijiang, the majority of local food and other products lose their original elements in order to meet tourists' demand (Zhu, 2012). Few respondents expressed their desire *“to eat cuisines that are eaten by the locals.”* They tried to find restaurants that local people frequent. They found decent local cuisines following the advice of local people and preferred to have meals at those restaurants where natives prefer to go.

*“The inn owner brought us to the local market, where they buy food and have snacks. We have eaten Lijiang's rice pancake, ribs and rice noodles here, all of which were very delicious and decent.” (T27, Female, Lecturer, Guangdong)*

According to interviewees, they preferred to search for decent local restaurants and stores by using online information or consulting local people. They trusted the suggestions from local people in many cases.

As for mass tourists, their meals are ordered by the tour guide. The location for eating one's meal is decided by the tour guide. They are not sure whether food they ate is decent local food or not.

*“The package tour includes breakfast, lunch and dinner for everyday. The tour guide took us to a restaurant to have a meal at a fixed moment. I am not sure what I have eaten are local food or not.” (T32, Male, Manager, Zhejiang)*

From this section, the majority of participants preferred to enjoy local food and beverages. Although some interviewees did not like the flavour of some local cuisines, they still tried them. There were a few respondents that did not eat the native food because they were unable to become accustomed to eating local ingredients. In addition of local food, tourists preferred to buy local specialties, rather than non-local products. In order to experience authentic local gourmet and buy local specialties, many participants consulted local people. On the contrary, mass tourists lack the experience of purchasing local products due to the arranged times within the tour package.

With respect to the tourist experience, most respondents considered they gained rich experiences by engaging in slow tourism. A few interviewees expressed their hope of obtaining a more authentic travel experience, but they lacked the information to realize this experience.

## **4.4 Attitude**

In fact, attitude is an integral part of the tourist experience. But one of the objectives of this study was to probe whether slow Chinese tourists are mindful when travelling to the Lijiang region. In light of the mindfulness theory, this research was aimed to investigate the slow tourists' mind and their attitude. It mainly analysed three aspects: slowness, environment and culture conservations, and authenticity. In the case of tourists' attitude toward experience, it was elaborated in the previous on-site experience and behaviour sector. In this part, some attitudes are reflected from visitors' behaviours. Therefore, parts of their attitudes are proved by their actions.

### **4.4.1 Attitude toward Slowness and Slow Tourism**

Travel experience is an element of slow tourism, and this type of experience

encompasses travelling from the departure place to the destination as well as travelling in the destination (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Depending on the above analysis of travel experience, tourists were willing to travel using slow transportation modes like walking, biking, riding a horse. They also stated, *“Travelling in the destination should be so slow that people are able to have more detailed and richer experiences”* (T22, Female, Finance, Guangdong). However, visitors held opposite perspectives regarding the option of transportation for reaching their destination. Due to the long distance between Lijiang and eastern coastal areas, travel by airplane was the tourists’ first choice. They hoped to shorten the length of time spent on the way in order to have a longer time at the destination.

*“I came to Lijiang by air, because I only have 7 days for vacation. If I took the train back and forth, at least four days would be spent on the way. I just hope to reach Lijiang as soon as possible, so that I can have enough time to play here and stay a bit longer.”* (T8, Male, Director, Beijing)

Some people travelled to Lijiang by train, but the reason was for a *“lower ticket price”*, rather than the slow travel experience. They preferred to spend more time at the destination and be slow.

A handful of tourists travelled to Lijiang with the intent to experience the slow lifestyle and experience relief from their busy and stressful work and life. They left their laptop and work behind and were *“lazy”*.

*“Stay in the old town without a computer and work. Relax myself and live like a local person. The life is filled with eating and having a rest, and enjoying the sunshine. That’s so comfortable.”* (T2, Male, Fireman, Shanxi)

Tourists’ mental state was different from that during their working hours. They felt *“free”* and *“relaxed”* during their travel. They decided all everything without restraint. Tourists travelled at their own ease, which did not include package tourism.

*“I have no special travel plans. Buy a ticket and go anywhere I like. I would stay in the old town if I don’t intend to go anywhere. The mood*

*is really relaxed.” (T38, Female, Self-employed, Liaoning)*

Almost all independent interviewees believed their trip belonged to slow tourism. In their opinion, slow tourism meant travelling slowly and freely. They thought that their mood was pleasurable and easy since they did not travel in a rush. Also, they discovered what they want from their trip to the Lijiang region and did not feel exhausted.

*“I think this travel is slow. I didn’t participate in the tour group so that I can travel slowly with my own plan, and spend more time on what I like, instead of giving a glimpse of every spot in a hurry, without memorizing anything when the tour is finished. I think travelling in Lijiang is slow and comfortable. I have not been exhausted, because I could take a break whenever I felt tired. And then continue travelling.” (T26, Female, Self-employed, Fujian)*

Mass tourists have an opposite status because of their tight schedule. The tour guide has arranged the schedules. They have to wake up early and travel from one place to another in the same day. They cannot rest because of their own demands. After their trip, the feeling of fatigue is more obvious.

Many interviewees travelled to the Lijiang region without a prepared plan. They did not want to be disturbed by their work. As for their transportation mode to the destination, they did not consider slow travel. They preferred to leave more time to experience the destination. Out of the fifty-three participants, two interviewees, followed tour packages and hoped to take part in slow tourism if they had time. Those respondents were mindful of being slow during their travel, at least prove that they were willing to take more time at the destination and live at a slow pace.

#### **4.4.2 Attitude toward Environmental Protection**

Slow tourism research argues that slow tourists travel with environmental consciousness (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Also, low-carbon tourism is an outcome of slow tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010), which is reflected by the minimization of greenhouse gas emissions from the aspects of transportation preference, accommodation, and activities. However,

interviewees did not mention their concern for the emission of low-carbon and greenhouse gases. Is the only conservation measures undertaken by them included turning off all of the lights and power when they weren't in room since they noticed the switches on the wall.

*"I turned off all electrical appliances when I went out, because the inn owner put up notices in the room, hoping we can turn off lights when leaving." (T25, Male, Doctor, Fujian)*

When it comes to the transportation, the greatest emission source of greenhouse gases, tourists showed their awareness of low-carbon emission and were pro-environment. The transportation modes they chose was based on personal benefit. As stated earlier, most of the interviewees travelled to Lijiang by plane. They did were unaware of the emission of greenhouse gases from an airplane. The only thing that concerned them was the travel time to the destination. There is no difference between slow Chinese tourists and mass tourists.

*"It took me two hours to fly to Kunming and then went to Lijiang by train, because it's cheaper than fly to Lijiang directly. My train departed in the evening so I could save the money for one night accommodation as well." (T40, Female, Inspector, Shenzhen)*

While at the destination choosing a bus tour instead of a car tour also attributes to the experience of the local life, rather than environmental concerns. This point is stated in the former travel experience section.

Although tourists do not care about carbon emission, they are conscious of environmental preservation created by small actions. Participants were mindful of the preservation slogans written on the walls and trees in the Old Town of Lijiang. They followed those notices by not littering or smoking during their trip. Moreover, they agreed on the impact that the destruction of trees has.

*"I didn't throw litter around. I held the warping paper in hand or put them in the pocket until find garbage to throw." (T16, Female, Service, Beijing)*

*"When I saw the local people cutting trees for building houses in Yubeng, I was little worried about the loss of soil and water, as well as*

*the damage of environment. But they told me that lumbering here is strictly obeying the law. The cutting of the young ones is forbidden and the total lumbering number is limited. They will also go to the mountain for planting every year, which relieves me a lot.” (T20, Male, IT, Shanghai)*

Travellers’ actions are small, but their awareness of environment-friendly behaviour is increasing. They also are aware that their individual ability is limited, and hope that everyone can preserve that environment of their destination, instead of damaging it.

*“As visitors, we can only require ourselves for no littering, no destroying the trees and protecting the environment. Especially seeing the holy Snow Mountain and the trees with lush growth, no one is willing to destroy the beautiful scenery. And when I come to Lijiang, although I am not a local, I think I should have the obligation to protect this place.” (T7, Female, Scenarist, Beijing)*

Interviewees’ attitude toward environmental protection did not reveal the choice of transportation mode to the destination as an area of concern, but instead they were curious about the conservation of nature as well as the environmental protection at the destination. They did not damage the environment during their travel and protected it from themselves. Due to their environmental concern, their actions helped the destination maintain an excellent environmental condition.

#### **4.4.3 Attitude toward Cultural Conservation and Authenticity**

Since the Old Town of Lijiang is a town of cultural and historical heritage, cultural conservation is as important as environmental preservation. As mentioned in the last part, tourists in the Old Town are mindful of observing environmental slogans on the walls and feel they are responsible for protecting the environment. Furthermore, due to the wooden structures in the Old Town, they pay close attention to fire protection. They do not leave power on and do not smoke in the Old Town.

*“I have noticed the fire prevention signs both in the ancient town and the inn I live, so I have paid great attention to the issue, and would cut off all power when was not in the room.” (T48, Male, Sales, Sichuan)*

The local inn owners in the Old Town of Lijiang also approve of this point.

*“According to the requirements of the management committee of the old town, I attached fire prevention notices at the front desk of the hostel, in the hall and in every room. And tenants are all cooperative, cutting off the power and turning off the lights when they leave. Some tourists have discussed fire prevention matters with me. One of them felt the street is too narrow, and fire engines are not convenient to come in once the bad accident happened. He thought it is best to put the fire out fundamentally.” (L3, Female, Self-employed)*

Cultural conservation is not only concerned with object-related preservation, but also includes non-material culture. In the cultural experience sector, travellers considered commercialization and inauthentic cultures. In addition, the commercial sense in Lijiang is so strong that some tourists did not like it. Some interviewees felt a loss of local peculiarities because of the development of commerce.

*“The Old Town of Lijiang has a serious level of commercialization. On both sides of the street are shops. Selling local products is okay, but most of the shops are selling similar goods that can be seen everywhere, and those duplications without any local characteristics.” (T26, Female, Self-employed, Fujian)*

The extent of commercialization is critical in the Old Town of Lijiang. Nevertheless, some respondents regarded it as a normal phenomenon that is a result of the development of tourism.

*“Commercialization in the Old Town of Lijiang is severe, but it is the result of the development of tourism. Shops and products they selling are not ones that attract travelers to come to Lijiang. However, tourism industry could not be prosperous neither, if without them.” (T20, Male, IT, Shanghai)*

As for the commercialization of ethnic minority cultures, participants were oblivious of it. They were aware of the commercial elements in the cultural performances and were not pleased by them. However, regarding the performances and excluding certain commercial features, a small portion of respondents believed them to be authentic. They considered the performances portrayed the current musical culture of minorities, even though

the performances did not resemble the minority cultures of that initial period.

*“Besides the modern elements that added into the singing and dancing show and cultural performances, the remaining parts were very authentic. They were local songs and local dance definitely. I can’t compare it with the original one because their local culture is changing at the same pace with the age we live.” (T13, Female, Baker, Guangdong)*

Others were suspicious of the performances’ authenticity. They questioned whether those performances were completely original. Tourists realized that cultures were transforming with the changing eras, but they doubted whether those performances were as traditional as the performances minorities held for themselves. They deemed that those shows were performed based on traditional and authentic play, but included non-original aspects.

*“I still could see something real in local singing and dancing show. The local features are re-edited and then present to tourists. No one would like to see, if a show without local features, that also clearly known by Ethnic minorities.” (T34, Male, Lecturer, Beijing)*

For “staged authenticity” (MacCannell, 1973) exhibitions, participants showed their magnanimousness. They cared very little about the authenticity. What they cared about was their happiness.

*“I have also once doubted about the authenticity of the local performance, however the most important thing is the pleasure mood when I watch the show.” (T37, Female, Hospitality, Sichuan)*

For this reason, some travellers showed their interest in “decent” ethnic cultures, but they lacked methods to become emotionally attached to a minority’s place without tourism’s exploitation.

A number of interviewees considered the development of tourism is a way to preserve culture, and agreed that exploitation is not good for conservation. The inauthenticity locals present as well as the loss of their own cultural identities attribute to the development of tourism. The invasion of tourists, bringing their own culture, has an effect on local cultures. Participants have proposed limiting the number of tourists as well as broadcasting better and

more sustainable travel means in order to minimize the negative impacts of tourism.

Respondents were mindful of the conservation of wooden structures in the Old Town of Lijiang. They did not want their carelessness to destroy those historical buildings. Interviewees held different opinions about culture commercialization. Some thought ethnic minorities are losing their traditional identities because of commercialization. While others viewed it as a normal part of the development of tourism.

The authenticity of ethnic cultures is also influenced to some extent. Some participants did not consider the authenticity of cultural performances, since those shows contained minority characteristics. However, others doubted the authenticity of performances. Also, the remaining respondents exhibited carelessness in regards to cultural authenticity. Instead they were only concerned with happiness. In order to conserve the culture at the destination, some interviewees suggested controlling the number of tourists and advertising more sustainable travel. Slow tourists, mindful of cultural conservation, are beneficial for destination.

From this study, most of interviewees were mindful of environmental and cultural conservation during their trip. These positive aspects allow for the tourist experience to be richer, and the destination benefits as well.

## **4.5 Relationship among Tourist Experience, Tourist Behavior, the Destination and Mindfulness**

The conceptual model was established in Chapter 2, Concepts and Approaches, and I assumed that the link between the tourist experience, behaviour, the destination and awareness exists, based the empirical data. Therefore, this connection is discussed in this sector.

The Lijiang region is a slow tourism destination area. The local people live a slow paced life, influenced by the location's fine weather. The region promotes its slow lifestyle philosophy by appealing to tourists who come for travel. Some settings in the Old Town of Lijiang create a slow atmosphere for the people

who visit. Walking lanes, stores along the streets, cafés, restaurants, inns, and beautiful views all appeal to tourists because of their slow qualities. This place offers people an opportunity to experience a slow lifestyle, as well as slow travel.

Tourists go to Lijiang in order to escape from the busy city life and to relax. A slow mind influences tourists to take their time. For example, they stay longer at their destination. Long stays decrease the travellers' carbon footprint leading to a less emission of greenhouse gases. Also, by staying longer and moving slowly, tourists have more time to notice things they may not be able to see if they take part in fast tourism. In particular, they join various local activities that enrich their travelling experience. These experiences, associated with the natural and cultural aspects, attach tourists to their tourist destination.

*“Because I walk so slowly that I can take a look carefully at everything. I remember that I was so glad to discover a beautiful flower in the corner once. And the flower had tenacious life power, which touched me so much. That is also the attitude of my life. Even if blooming in the corner, I should be blooming beautifully.” (T10, Female, Administrator, Shenzhen)*

Slow tourists have the mindfulness of seeking more experiences in order to fully engage their destinations. With this thought, they spend time tasting local food, participating in cultural performances, and chatting with local people. Also, they prefer to live like locals in order to enjoy the slow lifestyle of Old Town of Lijiang.

*“Staying in Lugu Lake for one more day was to get a further understanding about this place. I spent the whole day on talking to the local people and having lunch with them.” (T12, Male, Finance, Shanghai)*

*“Lijiang is a place that suits for a slow-down walking. When I go to the Old Town of Shuhe from the Old Town of Dayan, I borrowed a bicycle from the owner of inn. I was enjoying the feeling of free and doing exercise at the same time.” (T36, Male, Freelance, Shandong)*

In addition, slow tourists' consciousness of environmental and cultural conservation affects a place through their behaviours and experiences as well.

From my findings I discovered that tourists behaved in an environment-friendly manner during the trip, and they also showed their concern for the cultures in the Lijiang region.

*“Before boating in the Lugu Lake, I specifically asked what is the power of the boat. I think using coal or petroleum will cause pollution into the water, I don't want to take this kind of boat to pollute such a clear and beautiful lake. Learnt that it is electricity-driven and no damage to air or water, I got on the boat happily.” (T21, Female, IT, Fujian)*

*“Minority cultures are obviously influenced by the Han. I think if when tourists come here, they could pay more attention to ethnic minority culture, and I hope that the local show their traditional cultures and traditions for protecting their characteristics and diversities.” (T34, Male, Lecturer, Beijing)*

Also, because of their long stay and consumption of local products, slow tourists have contributed to the economic growth of the Lijiang region.

In conclusion, the destination influences the tourists' mind, their experiences, and behaviours. Also the tourists' experiences and with the slow philosophy effects the destination as well. In addition to these, the tourist experience, tourist behaviour and spirit are impacts exerted on each other.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis, we can see that Chinese slow tourists in Lijiang are relatively young and middle aged with high education background. They travel independently, rather than joining in a package tour. Most of them aim to escape from their busy and fast daily life in modern cities by traveling in Lijiang region. What is more, they want to see the different sceneries and experience various cultures at the destination. Through primary time-space analysis, it can be found that, compared with mass tourists, they spend longer time staying at each destination, which indicates that they meet one criteria of slow tourism – taking time (Honoré, 2004; Matos, 2004). Slow tourists in Lijiang prefer to take part in a number of activities both in natural and cultural aspects. For instance, they enjoy the splendid scenes of Meri Snow Mountain and try to figure out the

walking marriage of Mosuo people. They also favor the slowness in the Old Town of Lijiang. They are glad to be slow during their travel with an open mind of slowness. Additionally, they are willing to be attached to the destination through conversations with local people, searching information online and reading books so that they are able to experience decent local products and local culture. Even though some of them show less care about the authenticity of local culture and their understanding of commercialization in Lijiang area, they are still long to experience local characteristics. As for travel experience, which is an integrated part of slow travel proposed by Dickinson and his co-researchers (2010; 2011), Chinese slow tourists only select slow transportation modes at the destination rather than for the journey from the departure to the destination, because they do not regard low-carbon and environmental concern as their core driving forces. However, it does not mean that they do not care about environment. They insist on behaving environment-friendly and conserving cultural heritage during their visits at the destination. But what they can do is limited by their individual capability.

Furthermore, this empirical analysis gives evidence to demonstrate the connection among tourist experience, tourist behavior, the destination and mindfulness within slow tourism. These four aspects are interlinked and influenced by each other.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Tourism based on different backgrounds, behaviours, experiences, and perceptions is distinct. In this chapter, I discuss slow western tourists and slow Chinese tourists. In addition of this, whether slow tourism is a 'better' tourism form will be discussed later.

### **5.1 Discussion**

#### **5.1.1 Western and Chinese Tourists within Slow Tourism**

Western tourism research was conducted earlier than China's research and holds a leading place worldwide. As specific as slow tourism is, even until now, Chinese tourism researchers have only conducted literature reviews based on the western research results, but have not put forward their own concepts regarding Chinese tourists. Therefore, it is interesting to conduct this study to research slow Chinese tourists by collecting empirical data.

The features of slow tourism have evolved from remaining longer and taking time to explore local culture and life style, to emitting low-carbon, choosing a mode of transportation, experiencing travel and destination, and being aware environmental concerns (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). Slow tourists in both western countries and China are all willing to be involved in the destination through staying longer, travelling slowly, enjoying local food and beverages, actively participating in activities, living as a native, and chatting with the locals. All of these things helps them to obtain more knowledge and experience about the local people and the place.

Western tourists travel with environmental consciousness. They have the awareness to protect the nature and culture of the destination. However, slow Chinese tourists do not view the environmental element as a key consideration for their travel. Their environment-friendly behaviours are not influenced by their travel, but by their home-based behaviours (Barr et al., 2010). Such slow travellers like slow Chinese tourists are concerned about environment, but this concern is not the core motivation; they are categorized as 'soft slow travellers' by Dickinson and co-researchers (2010).

As for travel experiences and transportation modes, they are related to tourist experience. This tourist experience encompasses the experiences associated with the journey, from the departure to the arrival to the destination as well as the experiences at the destination. With respect to western "hard, slow travellers," they choose slow transportation modes like trains, bikes, and have slow travel experiences based on environmental concerns (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). While slow Chinese tourists are not as environmentally inclined. They choose their preferred type of transportation based on personal benefits such as economic advantage. Finally, the option of transportation, at their destination, depends mainly on their thoughts of gaining a richer travel experience and being immersed in a place.

When it comes to low-carbon emission, as discussed before, slow Chinese tourists do not treat environment concerns as a top priority. Therefore, they do not have the awareness of minimizing their carbon footprint. In China, low-carbon tourism has not been a result of slow tourism. Slow tourism is also not driven by low-carbon emission. This statement also can be proved by Chinese tourists' option for their destination. As Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon (2010) said, choosing a destination close to home is an eco-efficient way to reduce one's carbon footprint. The size of the carbon footprint is significant for tourists who travel over a long distance, by a slow transportation mode. It is certain that this footprint is smaller than that created by travelling the same distance by aircraft or car. However, for slow Chinese tourists, they do not have this idea in mind. Therefore, they do not care about the distance between their home and the destination. Instead, they are concerned with their preference, even if the destination is a mass tourism destination.

Slow Chinese tourists who travel to the Lijiang region are driven by the motivations of experiencing the slow lifestyle, experiencing relief from their busy work, and experiencing local nature and culture. Therefore, staying longer, using time to enjoy the slow lifestyle, and experiencing local culture, including the way local people live, and viewing natural sceneries, are currently what slow, "soft" Chinese tourists long for. Conversely, they are not motivated by environmental concerns.

### **5.1.2 Slow Tourism as A ‘Better’ Travel Pattern**

Compared with the rapid speed of mass tourism, slow tourism is based on slowness (Heitmann et al., 2011; Honoré, 2004). Being slow provides plenty of benefits for both of the destination and tourist.

For the destination, slow tourists contribute to the development of the local economy. Generally, the length of stay is longer during slow travel, which indicates that tourists spend more on accommodation and living demand. Moreover, slow tourists are willing to engage with the place. Slow Chinese tourists express their passion for having richer experiences related to nature, culture, and way of life at the destination. Thus, they actively participate in local activities, experiencing native life, taking local products, which also increase their consumption in the place. Furthermore, slow tourists travelling with environmental consciousness is beneficial for causing less damage on the destination, despite the natural or cultural aspects.

With regard to tourists, travelling at a slow pace helps them to discover new and interesting things. Due to their awareness of the slowness experience, they achieve deeper outcomes from their visit. Once more, most importantly, they reach their travel goals without mental and physical fatigue.

Therefore, slow tourism is a better approach for tourist destination and tourists themselves. It can be an alternative to mass tourism which generates a great deal of social, cultural, economic, and environmental destruction (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008).

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This section provides a short conclusion for this thesis’ research. Besides, recommendations for future related research of slow tourism in China is given.

### **5.2.1 Main Conclusion**

Since the first tour package was organized by Thomas Cook, the concept has developed more than during the last hundred years. However, as a classic mode of tourism, mass tourism integrated with tour packages has been

critiqued by the public and academic fields (Macnaught, 1982). Tourists cannot enjoy their visit because of the fast travel pace, resulting in their dissatisfaction and fatigue (Wagner, 1977). Moreover, a handful of dilemmas are generated by mass tourism in the specific destinations. The main aim of this tourism exploitation is to encourage the economic advancement of tourist destinations. And mass tourism is indeed boosting the economic development to some extent. Nevertheless, it also brings about more negative impacts on social, ecological, cultural, and even economic aspects (Altobelli & Kirstges, 2008). Recent years, many alternative tourism approaches have emerged. They are beneficial for the environment of tourism destinations and slow tourism is one of these better travel approaches. Slow tourism research has mainly been conducted by western scholars, but the World Tourism Organization predicted that by the end of 2012, China would become one of the largest tourist destinations and the origin country for tourist exporters around the world (R. Pine & Phillips, 2005).

It is necessary to attach importance to the development of tourism in China from an academic angle. I found that people are tired of living at a fast pace, in stressful living environment, motivating them, to be slow down during their travel in China. Lijiang, a city famous for its slow lifestyle, is where Chinese tourists prefer to travel. Therefore, I decided research slow Chinese tourism in the Lijiang region.

In the light of slow tourism literature about, the tourist experience and awareness, I set a conceptual model before conducting this study, in order to explore the linkage between these three concepts and theories concerning the destination. Combined with slow tourism research questions, slow destinations and their attitudes, a qualitative study was carried out in Lijiang region. According to the data collected in Lijiang, my results related the profile of slow Chinese tourists in Lijiang, the destination, tourist experience and behaviour, and their attitudes toward slowness, slow tourism, natural conservation and cultural conservation.

Slow Chinese tourists are independent travellers with good educational backgrounds. More than 90% of the respondents were from eastern, costal districts and had a strained, regularly scheduled life. The majority of them travelled to Lijiang to release burden and slow their pace of life. Also, seeing

the sites, experiencing the cultures different from their daily life, and viewing the same scenes from movies and other media form were their driving forces.

When it comes to the destination of Lijiang and its nearby localities, they all provide tourists with various natural sceneries and ethnic minority' cultures. The weather of Lijiang's areas is also allows people to enjoy the sunshine. Finally, flagging, shops along streets, cafes are all features that slow tourists pace in the Old Town of Lijiang.

Since they stay longer and travel slowly, tourists are able to discover more detailed experiences at their destination by participating in local activities. Such activities include taking various slow transportation modes and tasting local food and beverages. Also, slow tourists prefer to communicate with local people and behave them in order to enjoy the slow life, thus helping them be integrated into Lijiang. Not only do slow tourists appreciate natural views, but also minorities' cultural experiences. Also, they search online for information they are interested in or they buy books for further understanding about the culture of a place.

Additionally, slow Chinese tourists travelling with environmental concern and culture conservation in mind, are conscientious of the natural and cultural objects. And although they dislike Lijiang's commercialized cultures and atmospheres they show their understanding of the inevitable result of tourism exploitation.

Based on the empirical data analysis, the relationship between tourist experience, tourist behaviour, consciousness, and destination were obtained. Within slow tourism, the settings surrounding the destination can affect the tourists' mind, causing them to act "slow." Meanwhile, tourist behaviour and experience is influenced by their awareness of slow philosophy and conservational consciousness. And then, tourist behaviour and experience also exerts some positive impacts on the destination, such as boosting economic development, lessening pollution, and conserving culture.

Depending on western research studies of slow tourism, slow Chinese tourists are classified as "slow, soft tourists," because, from the slow Chinese tourists' perspective, environmental benefits are additional bonuses associated slow tourism. Low carbon emission and environmental concerns are core-driving

forces regarding the choice the destination and transportation mode for slow travel tourists (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar et al., 2012; L. M. Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Matos, 2004). But for slow Chinese tourists, they have not reached the level that involves travelling slowly and choosing a destination based on environmental concern. Also, they have not realized the importance of low-carbon emission during their trip. They even choose their transportation mode depending on their personal preferences, rather than their consideration of minimizing their carbon footprint.

No matter if slow Chinese tourists consider environmental protection as a key concern or not, at least they behave with environmental consciousness during their travel. Also, slow tourism is a better tour pattern for the tourist destination and tourists. So, why not choose a slow approach in order to have a relaxed trip?

### **5.2.2 Recommendations for Future Studies**

Because of the large population, the amount of tourists everywhere in China is large. There are a few destinations that can be selected as slow tourist destinations. Therefore, this research was conducted in a mass tourism destination with slow characteristics. If there were an actual slow destination that is certificated by Città Slow, research could be conducted at that destination. Also, this research was carried out individually, so it is restricted by individual ability and energy, thus data was not perfect. If it were possible, more information would be of better use for the analysis. In addition to this, research can be taken further; research themes related to the creation of the slow space, the type of slow Chinese tourists, and the use of the slow approach to develop tourism at a destination are all interesting things to research. Furthermore, since this study is mainly focused on the positive aspects of slow tourism, the negative impacts can be explored in the further studies.

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# Appendix 1. Interview Guide

## Topic list for tourists

### Main question

What was your itinerary of your travel including what have been experienced during your trip? Please describe as detailed as possible.

### Probing topics

#### Tourist characteristics

- Dependent or independent traveler
- Motivations

#### The destination

- Slow settings. Why
- Knowledge of the destination. How and why

#### Tourist Experience

- Transportation modes. Why
- New experience. Why and the opinion
- Interaction with the local. What and why
- Local products. What, why and opinion
- Local culture. What, how, why and opinion

#### Tourist Attitude

- Conservation of nature. Opinion and behavior

- Conservation of culture. Opinion and behavior
- Opinion about slow tourism
- Their own slow philosophy

### **Personal data**

- Name
- Age range
- Place of residence
- Education background
- Occupation

### **Topic list for the local**

- How long do tourists stay?
- What do they do?
- Do they communicate with you? If yes, what do they talk with you?