

# Co-Creating Engaging Experiences in the Chinese Restaurant Sector: A Cross-Regional Study

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy**

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# ABSTRACT

With the rise of the service-dominant logic paradigm, the notion of co-creation and its associated term customer engagement have attracted a great deal of attention. Although they are explored extensively in the Western context and being suggested as strategic tools that can bring higher value for both firm and its customers, only a few studies have examined them in a Chinese context. Existing studies on customer experience are mainly concerned with large companies and their customers, but not on restaurants and their customers. The notion that 'food is the first thing for people' is the most critical and essential idea in Chinese life. Restaurants play a significant role in Chinese social life. To help close the gap between what currently know about Chinese consumer behaviour and what don't know, especially in the specific context of co-creation behaviour in China full-service restaurant, five objectives along with six general hypotheses are set.

This research is from a post-positivist stance, utilising two kinds of methods in research. A qualitative strand is used to develop a set of scales /questionnaire, which represents relevant latent variables in respect of co-creation and customer engagement in the specific research context. In the quantitative strand, the questionnaire/scale is used for conducting a major consumer survey in China's economic regions and city tiers, with the intention of measuring the nature, direction and strength of relevant relationships between a range of latent variables. The objective here is to test the overall position that because of inherent regional and socio-economic variety in the strength of Chinese culture, customer disposition to co-create the restaurant experience will similarly vary. For the analysis, descriptive analysis was used initially (frequencies, percentages) to for primary data. Cronbach's alpha, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling are used to test a conceptual model. Hypothesis testing is employed in the analysis and the presentation of the findings of this study. This research confirms there is a positive relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour), irrespective of which city tier or geographical region they live in.

This research contributes to understandings of Chinese restaurant consumer behaviour in two main respects. For the theory, three additional variables have been added to expand the initial set of variables in order to capture all pertinent co-creational content in China full-restaurant context fully; Drawing on consumer

behaviour theory generally and consumer culture theory in particular, this research assesses their manifestations and fills the gap of the notions co-creation, customer engagement in less-developed country; this research is the first study to adopt the variables city tier and economic regions as moderator to explore co-creation/engagement behaviour under Chinese culture. For the practice, this research offers reviews and guidance for restaurant and service practitioners, suggests Chinese restaurant consumers are more willing to participate in the co-creation of their dining experiences than might have been expected and that neither expected variations in strength of Chinese culture across regions or city tiers, nor an associated variation in disposition to co-create in a restaurant context, are in evidence.

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## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
S-D Logic	Service Dominant Logic
G-D Logic	Good Dominant Logic
CBT	Consumer Behaviour Theory
CCT	Consumer Culture Theory
PB	Participation Behaviour
CB	Citizenship Behaviour
CC	Chinese Culture
CE	Customer Engagement

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

## 1.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter presents an outline of current research. It provides a brief description of the research background covering both theoretical and contextual issues. It then identifies the research gap to be addressed, which is followed by the research aims and objectives, methods to be pursued, and the structure of the thesis.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Background

Experiences have been analysed by various disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc. (Cetin and Dincer, 2013). From a marketing perspective, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) identify that the nature of customer experience is emphasising the relation between individuals and the surrounding objective, which means customer experience containing individual's cognition, affection, emotion, behaviour to the service offering. Consequently, for a firm, customer experience is not only based on the elements that it can determine (e.g. good/service price, environment, commodities), but also relies on some factors that beyond its control or regulating, for instance, positive customer comments, purchase intent.

Along with the evolution of marketing theory, the term 'service dominant logic' (S-D Logic) has aroused academics' attention after identified by Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2008), which makes the significance of interactions between customer and service firm get the great acknowledgement. According to Prahalad and Krishnan (2008), the S-D logic underlines that customer is a vital creator for the space of experience. The space of experience is theoretically different from the space of product and service: involving in this space, the individual customer is at the centre by means of interacting with the firm and other customers. Furthermore, this kind of interaction is the principal source of co-creation experience, which then decides the value of an individual customer. Likewise, Helkkula *et al.* (2012) state that experience co-creation is a two-way and cooperative process in which customer takes an active part in personalisation for satisfied experience with the related firm and other customers.

In the recent past, a great deal of attention has been drawn on an associated concept termed 'consumer engagement' (Bowden, 2009a; Hollebeek, 2011a; Brodie *et al.*, 2013). Prahalad (2004) identifies customer engagement as a form of customer/company relationship that is essentially co-creative. Hollebeek (2011a) suggests the notion customer engagement reflects an urgent strategic necessity for producing greater firm performance, such as upswing in sales, strong competitive advantage and high profit margins. The rationale of the claim is that customers play a crucial part in engagement with firms, and engaged customers often show loyalty, satisfaction, commitments and involvement by virtue of advocating positive comments, offering referrals on related commodities, services, and brands in addition to re-purchasing, themselves (Brodie *et al.*, 2013).

### **1.2.2 Contextual Background**

China is a large and enormously diverse country with several different types of languages, lifestyles, food, business manner. China has roughly the same land mass as the United States, but there's the fact that China's population is significantly greater than America's, which implies the significance of China being a consumer country. This is due to the large area and population base, and with the extended divergences in culture and economy among cities and (economic)regions; thus, China is one of developing consumer contexts that differences in consumption are likely (China Market Research, 2013; Veeck *et al.*, 2007).

Throughout history and Chinese culture, food has been an indispensable part (Lee *et al.*, 2013). The Chinese nation has been advocating the notion 'food is the first necessity of man', thousands of years to form its own peculiar cuisine system and eating habits, which distinguish from other countries. Indeed, each region of China has its traditions, exquisite cuisine and flavour of food that are difficult to duplicate. In Chinese culture, restaurant not only provides cuisine but also is deemed a common place for social and recreational activities. Some old adults might be more for business entertainment, intercourse between the upper and the lower in the restaurant, whereas young people might be in a dinner party for classmate reunion, birthday part. Consequently, restaurant not only provides a dining experience, but acts various kinds of roles in ordinary life, belief systems, and social economy (Xing *et al.*, 2015).

Besides, Chinese traditional culture has a deep effect on Chinese consumer dining behaviour (Chao *et al.*, 2012). Chinese people usually invite others to dinner with the purpose of creating or cultivating friends/some

kinds of relationships in social interaction. For example, the tradition of drinking morning tea (a type of breakfast) is the most distinct characteristic of Guangdong's culture, and is an essential part of daily life for many locals when they exchange information and do business. Moreover, in Chinese culture, different dishes/diets imply different ideas in order to express the close or distant relationship among the individuals. For instance, ordering rare and expensive dishes often presents paying respects to other individuals, or is a way to display wealth, success and social standing. Whereas, eating at street stalls/kiosks often represents friend relationships. A working relationship is usually described by box food, and lovers often have romantic dinners. As another example, saving or giving face is the first priority to the individuals when they are in dining party or the front of their friends or family members. Only in this way can Chinese customers enhance the relationships with restaurant, subsequently they get satisfied experience. Besides, in Chinese traditional dining culture, young children usually are told to eat slow and not scramble for food by their parents, which indicates an atmosphere for harmony. It is due to the Chinese traditional belief that maintaining balance deeply in their mind (Xing *et al.*, 2014).

### **1.3 RESEARCH GAP, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

In the academic area, although explored extensively in Western context, to date, only a few studies have explored the exact nature, or dimensionality, of customer co-creating behaviour and engagement in China, leaving its precise composition unclear (Zhang *et al.*, 2016; Jia, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2011). Existing studies on co-creation and customer engagement are mainly concerned with big companies (or other industries) and their customers - for example, Zhang *et al.* (2016) empirically explores the co-creation between Chinese manufacturers and customers; Luo *et al.* (2015) explore value co-creation practices in China's brand community; Han and Yuan (2013) focus on customer engagement and brand equity in China hotel - but not on the specific context between restaurants and their customers. Furthermore, these studies have largely neglected the conceptual richness of co-creation and customer engagement, and none of them appears to have explored the relationship between the overall construct (Zhang *et al.*, 2016), the influence of culture, and regional differences on customer co-creation and engagement activities (Yi and Gong, 2013).

Conventionally, firms created value through the recruitment of new customers. In the last several years, though, attention has focused through the retention of customers (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld and Sasser,

1990), or through many types of businesses which encourage their customers to collaborate with them (e.g. Nike, and Lego). Here, customers participate in the process of decision making, design and distribution of firm offering (product or service) to share their knowledge, and become active partners with firms to co-create value. Now, firms have noticed on the notion of 'customer engagement', a phenomenon that is both more complex than satisfaction, loyalty, commitment and where the boundaries with co-creation are less distinct; but it includes a variety of customers' behavioural expressions that have strong influences on firms, such as word-of-mouth activity, referrals and recommendations, voluntary assistance with other customers, web postings and blogging, participation in brand communities, and engagement in product development (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010).

However, the overall constructs' relationships are unclear in both China academic area and the restaurant business domain, so some questions arise: what kind of customer behaviour is likely to create value during co-creation process? How the engagement affects customer behaviour/performance facing restaurants? Further, because of the diversity of culture and population in China, the co-creation behaviour in different geographical and economic areas drawn in relation to one part may or may not apply in others. Hence, it is necessary to address these relevant issues and seek to help close the gap between what we currently know about Chinese consumer behaviour and what we don't know. This is especially relevant in the context of co-creation behaviour and customer engagement, and further understanding will help determine the extent to which Western notions of consumer behaviour can be generalised to the population, whilst also providing a reference for restaurant practitioners to socialize Chinese customer, and to help in establishing more refined and comprehensive understanding of Chinese consumer behaviour across Chinese culture and different city tiers.

Consequently, the overall aim of this study is to evaluate customer co-creation and engagement in China using the restaurant sector as a context for investigation. To assist the aim, the following objectives are pursued:

1. To identify the various practices that represent co-creational behaviour for customers in the Chinese restaurant sector.
2. To identify how key variables – customer experience, engagement and co-creation – can be

specified/operationalised for research into restaurant context.

3. To determine the extent to which demographic diversity impacts co-creation/engagement behaviour.
4. To investigate the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic and geographical regions.
5. To explore the extent to which Chinese restaurant customers are willing to participate in co-creation/engagement activity.

## **1.3 THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

In order to pursue the central objective of this research (Objective 4), six general hypotheses have been set. Objectives 1 and 2 allow the test parameters for the research to be established, while objectives 3 and 5 set the agenda for exploratory research that provides further insight into both contextual and conceptual concerns. The six hypotheses are developed based on the notion experience, value/value creation, co-creation behaviour and customer engagement. Please note that the formulation of these hypotheses is discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

### **H1: Chinese culture is likely to vary in strength according to city tier and geographical region**

- H1a: The less developed the city tier, the stronger will be Chinese culture characteristics.
- H1b: The less developed the geographical region, the stronger will be Chinese cultural characteristics.

### **H2: Customer co-creation is related to Chinese culture.**

- H2a: Chinese culture is negatively related to participation behaviours.
- H2b: Chinese culture is positively related to citizenship behaviours.

### **H3: Chinese restaurant customers to practice co-creation behaviours will vary according to the level of indigenous socio-economic development**

- H3a: The more developed the city tier, the more likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practice participation behaviour.

- H3b: The more developed the City tier, the less likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practice Citizenship behaviour.
- H3c: The more developed the geographical region, the more likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practice participation behaviour.
- H3d: The more developed the geographical region, the less likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practice citizenship behaviour.

**H4: City tier, geographical region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour**

- H4a: City tier moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.
- H4b: City tier moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.
- H4c: Region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.
- H4d: Region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.

**H5: Despite comprising discreet and individually distinct components, Chinese culture can be considered to have a holistic effect.**

**H6: Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviours**

- H6a: Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.
- H6b: Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

According to research context, this study primarily utilises quantitative approach for exploring causal relationships between latent variables, and for making inferences from the results generated from the sample to a broad population which the sample is selected (Blaikie, 2010). However, because there is not enough knowledge in both scales and frameworks, qualitative approach is also used for descriptions of the



abstracted restaurant customer experience, which is with the intention of theory development. Therefore, two research stage are included in current research - qualitative and quantitative stage.

For the qualitative stage, new scales derive from item pool generated via online focus group. Total twenty-four Chinese customers have invited from Dianping Restaurant Forum (it is one of the well-known review sites in China, which allows consumers to read and post comments on restaurants). Each focus group session with six consumers are conducted in Chinese with an open-ended format and lasted approximately one hour (Malhotra, 2012). The focus groups are audiotaped and transcribed, analysed and converted into items. Consequently, this research generated an initial pool of 99 items. After refining and confirming through experience review, 56 items are retained as the basis of forming questionnaire.

For the quantitative stage, the questionnaire is the main instrument to gather information. The target population is defined as any consumers who regularly (at least once per month) frequent full-service restaurants in China. Stratified sampling is done to obtain perspectives in four different regions/three different city tiers, and random sampling is done within each city. Two different statistical software tools are utilised to perform data analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used for preliminary data analysis, while Analysis of Moment Structures Software (AMOS) for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used for measurement model analysis and structural model to test the proposed hypothesised model. In the measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is conducted to assess the reliability and validity of latent construct. The structural model fit is determined by the indices, such as Normed Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), Comparative Fit index (CFI), Root mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardised regression weight (SRW), Squared multiple correlations (SMC), as suggested by Awang (2012) and Hair *et al.* (2010).

## 1.5 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The following section briefly summarises the structure of current research, which is presented in ten chapters.

### **Chapter 1. Introduction**

Chapter one (this chapter) includes five sections, which identifies theoretical background and research gap, research aims and objectives, research hypothesis, research method, along with the brief of current thesis structure.

### **Chapter 2. Research context**

Chapter two provides the context of current research, comprising China economic review, the potential of Chinese consumer market, the quadruplicity of China's region, city tiers of China, China's restaurant market overview, and restaurant customer characteristics and restaurant types in China.

### **Chapter 3. Theoretical domains**

Chapter three discusses in detail behaviourist and cognitive approaches of consumer behaviour theories, which have been used in explaining customer's attitude/behaviour and why people make the choices they make in general. In the meantime, consumer culture theory is critically reviewed to show how culture, history and social norms impact consumer behaviour. Moreover, current research domains are illustrated – China, culture, restaurant value creation, consumer behaviour.

### **Chapter 4. Chinese culture**

Consumer culture theory identifies the importance to understand different cultural structure within historical and marketplace contexts. According to this theory, chapter four critical reviews the definitions of culture, levels of culture, national culture to China, various types of Chinese indigenous cultures besides the relevant Chinese culture (*face*, *guanxi* and harmony) as this applies to consumer behaviour in a restaurant context.

### **Chapter 5. Value creation in consumer market**

Based on customer behaviour theory presented in chapter three, this chapter critically reviews the relevant conceptions that are likely to explain potentials of restaurant customer co-creation and engagement, the

potential conceptions identified in this chapter include customer experience, value and value creation, the goods and service dominant logics, value co-creation through experience, customer value co-creation behaviours and customer engagement.

### **Chapter 6. Conceptual framework**

Relying on literature review displayed in chapter three, four and five, chapter six presents two conceptual models – one that addresses the restaurant context and the key factors that impact attitude and behaviour in that context, and the other one that addresses relationships between those attitudes and behaviours within a cultural and geographic/economic context. The first is used as a point of departure for developing sets of scales that pertain to Chinese restaurant customer engagement and value co-creation, whilst the second illustrates and defines the hypotheses that are to be tested in pursuit of the final three research objectives - to determine the extent to which demographic diversity impacts co-creation behaviour intention; to investigate the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic and geographical regions; to explore the extent to which Chinese restaurant customers are willing to participate in co-creation/engagement activity.

### **Chapter 7. Research methodology**

This chapter displays research paradigms including positivist and interpretivist approaches, then research approach of the current study is identified, followed by research design that comprising qualitative phase and quantitative phase. Meanwhile, sampling, the instruments of online focus group and questionnaire, the measures of the questionnaire, data preparation for analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical consideration are presented.

### **Chapter 8. Data analysis**

Chapter eight reports the results of data analysis undertaken in this study using different data analysis tools, which are explained and justified in Chapter seven. The reported results comprise the sections of demographic characteristics, reliability and validity analysis, mean scores for factors after confirmatory factor analysis(CFA), the relationships between the respondents' demographic and constructs, and hypothesis testing.

## **Chapter 9. Discussion**

Chapter seven begins with the analysis of demographics characteristics, then reliability and validity of constructs are checked, followed with the mean scores for factors after confirmatory factory analysis, meanwhile, the relationships between the respondents' demographic and constructs are evaluated, last is hypotheses testing via SEM.

## **Chapter 10. Conclusion**

This chapter starts with a summary of research aims and objective and then is the summary of research design and findings, followed by potential theoretical and practical contributions which are generated based on the results of chapter eight and the discussions of chapter nine. Last, along with the contributions, limitations and future research direction are suggested.

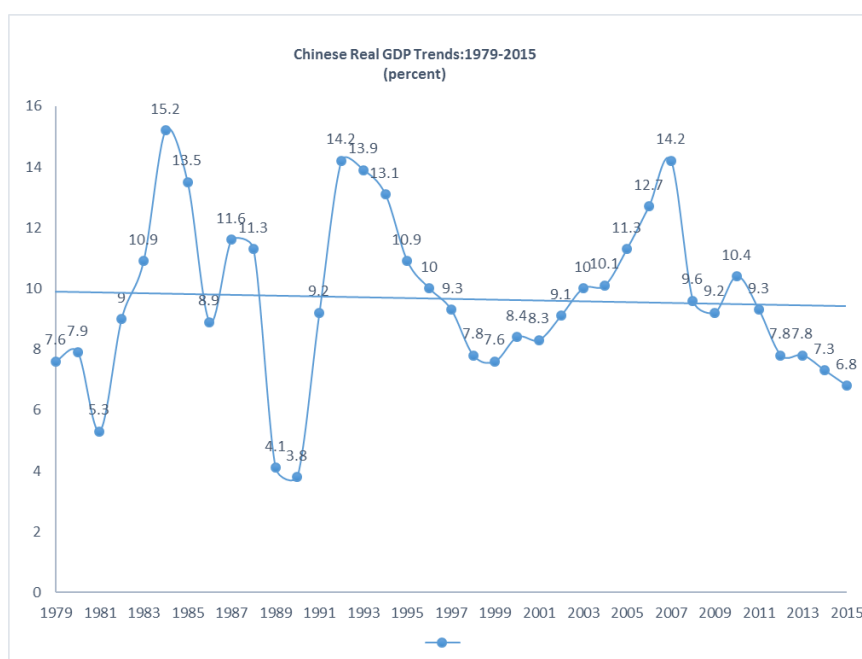
# CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify the field of current research – full-service restaurant, and contextualise it in term of section 2.2 China economic review, section 2.3 the potential of Chinese consumer market, section 2.4 the quadruplicity of China's region, section 2.5 city tier of China, section 2.6 china's restaurant market overview and section 2.7 restaurant customer in China and restaurant type for study.

## 2.2 CHINA ECONOMIC REVIEW

Since 1978, the policy of Chinese mainland applying reforming and opening, Chinese mainland economy has been developing dramatically at a continuously high rate and has gained outstanding economy achievements. Without the involvement of the reformation, Chinese capitalism could not have grown as it did (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). As of late 2012, China has overtaken Japan to become the world's second biggest economy after the United States in term of gross domestic product (GDP) scale (CNBC, 2014). Figure 2.1 below shows Chinese real GDP trends (International Monetary Fund, 2015), over 35 years (from 1979 to 2015), China's annualised real GDP growth to average almost 10 percent. Nonetheless, for China, the economy of slowdown period is currently decelerating. A noticeable slump in the world economy that began in 2008, which has influenced China's economic growth. In 2007, China's real GDP was 14.2%, but it was down to 9.6 % in 2008, and later became 9.2% in 2009. In response to rising concern about deceleration, the Chinese government has acted aggressively to provide major fiscal stimulus and monetary easing policies, which are helping promote consumption, infrastructure investment and prevent a significant economy shrinking. Though China's real GDP kept the average GDP around 9.6 percent from 2009 to 2011, China's economic growth was already slowing over recent years, which was down from 7.8% in 2012 to 7.3% in 2014%. According to the survey of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - 2015, China's real GDP numbers were with growth falling to 6.8% in 2015, and will be continued slowdown to 6.3% in 2016. However, Morrison (2015) argues that the slower economic growth could be a result of the mature development of market economy, which reflect China's economy transformation are pursuing the quality growth in the direction of developed country mode.



**Figure 2.1 Chinese real GDP trends: 1979-2015 (sources: International Monetary Fund, 2016)**

Along with China's current economy transition and development process, two structural changes are underway: one is from an industry economy to a service economy, and the other one is from investment and exports to consumer-led consumption driving (HSBC Global Asset Management, 2016). It is also emphasised by the report of China Minsheng Bank (2015) that subsequent China's economy slowdown is the normal results of economic transition from fast lopsided industrialised development to a more sophisticated structural economy growth, and switching the focus of manufacturing to service sectors. In the past, it was ubiquitous to see such manifestations of China's development pattern in the United State, Europe and other Asian developed counties; however, the only difference is the pace that is faster in current China (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The secondary industrial was the mainly largest contributor to China's economy in 2007, it accounted for about 47.4% of overall production and had been gradually declining since then (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Regarding growth, the tertiary industry(services) dramatically exceeds the secondary sector, and now has become the largest sector as far as production and employment situation are concerned (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). While the second change is encouraging Chinese consumer spending to shift away from heavy reliance on investment. Nevertheless, it also brings the economy slowing, as the growth of consumption cannot yet make up for the acceleration provided by investment (HSBC Global Asset Management, 2016). The share of investment to GDP has been continuing

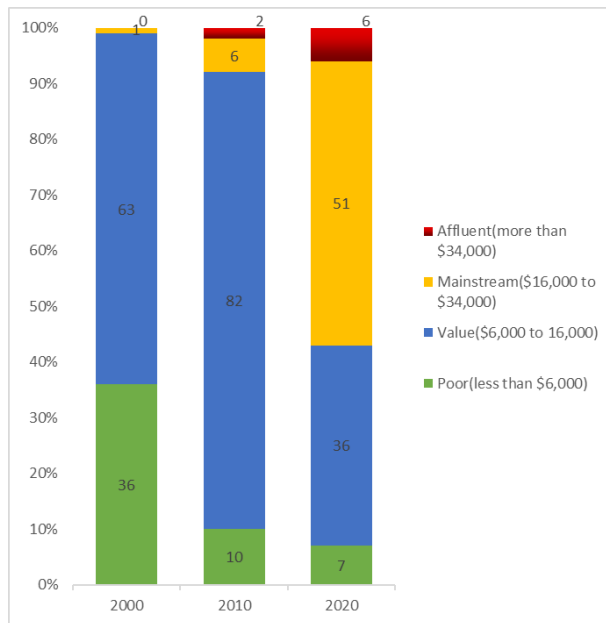
to fall, which was from 6.9% in 2009 to 3% in September 2015; whereas, the percentage of consumption mainly kept the same over that period (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

The economic restructure and change have already taken place and is continuous to be a trend that is shaping the market of the consumer, which is closely related to the income of urban people, modernisation, marketisation and consumer confidence (McKinsey, 2016). Thus, understanding the consumption structures and activities of different income levels is quite meaningful to grasp the levelled consumption activities and to direct the consumption and production.

## **2.3 THE POTENTIAL OF CHINESE CONSUMER MARKET**

The Chinese consumer spending deducting the price increase factor increased more than a half along with the economic development, based on the period from 1999 to 2011 (McKinsey, 2012). Currently, although the moderation in china's economy growth, it remains a crucial support for the growth of consumption (China Minsheng Bank, 2015). According the report of HSBC Global Asset Management (2016), the per capita disposable income( it could be utilised for ultimate consumption, non-discretionary spending and deposits) of China's urban consumers is expected to double from about \$4,000 in 2010 to about \$8,000 in 2020, which is not too far from the current living standard of South Korea, but still has a distance to achieve the level of developed countries, for example, the United States (the per capita disposable income is about \$35,000).

Considerable gaps in income levels will continue to exist, but the share of each income level is about to occur of significant change (McKinsey, 2016), as shown in figure 2.2, the 'value' consumers(can only guarantee the basic needs for life) whose annual disposable incomes are in the range from \$ 6,000 to \$16,000 (or about RMB41,000 to109,000 yuan), account for the vast majority proportion since 2010; the 'mainstream' consumers - a relatively wealthy group, represent a minor part with 6 percent in the proportion of urban households, whose annual disposable incomes are in the range from \$ 16,000 to \$34,000 (or about RMB109,000 to 233,000 yuan); while, the 'affluent' consumers are in a tiny minority containing 2 percent in the proportion of urban families, whose annual disposable incomes are more than \$34,000 (above RMB 233,000 yuan).



**Figure 2.2 Annual household income of urban households (sources: McKinsey, 2012,2016,2017)**

However, the circumstance is shifting; since it is a result of rapid rising in term of consumer wealth, more ‘value’ consumers will involve in the ‘mainstream’ group by 2020 (McKinsey, 2016). In fact, by that time the mainstream consumer will be 51 percent in the proportion of urban households, compared with the only 6 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, the group will include 400 million consumers (or about 167 million families). In spite of the lower absolute level of wealth, the ‘mainstream’ consumers still can afford to purchase automobile and luxury products and will become rule makers of consumption (HSBC Global Asset Management, 2016). Hence, firms should respond to the changes to offer higher-quality merchandise for the largest group of ‘mainstream’ consumers, and implement the diversification strategy in the fierce rivalry to finally realise greater profits. For the ‘value’ group, it will be from 82 percent of urban households in 2010 down to 36 percent in 2020, which will present a new market opportunity for relatively cheap goods – 307 million consumers (or about 116 million households). Moreover, the ‘affluent’ consumers are still the elite group, which the proportion will increase from 2 percent in 2010 to 6 percent in 2020; whereas, the United States, more than half of the population is the ‘affluent’ group in 2010. But the 6 percent of the urban population will cover about 21 million elite families (or approximately 60 million elite consumers) - McKinsey, 2016.

While the per capita disposable income would continually rise across China, the Chinese people in some



cities and regions are already much wealthier than ever (HSBC Global Asset Management, 2016). This variation will open plentiful opportunities, it should be critical for marketers to learn the trends in China, as China is not a single market, it is enormous and can be segmented culturally, geographically, socio-economically etc.

## **2.4 THE QUADRUPLETISM OF CHINA'S REGION**

Different from other countries of similar land size, China is a centralisation country that has a long history of the unitary system. China is composed of twenty-three provinces, four municipalities, five autonomous regions, and two special administrative areas. Besides the administration partitioning, there are other geographic, historical or cultural divisions, such as North and South China, cities and rural areas, and coast and inland (Zhou *et al.*, 2010; National Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

There is a classification in history that China comprises two parts – 'inner China' and 'outer China'. Inner China, it is inhabited by the distribution of Han nationality over 18 historic provinces. While the 'outer China' is an ethnic minority-based aggregation area, which are remote areas with semi-desert and desert (e.g. landlocked areas and national boundaries), and incorporated with the Nation (Bulag, 2010). Another great dividing line is based on a regional pattern of the economic developing level (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016), which encompasses East China, Central China, Northeast China and West China economic regions (see Appendix 1).

In aspects of total economic output, East China accounts for half of the total amount, Central and West China both around 20%, and Northwest China less than 10% during China's Twelve-Five (2012-2015) development plan period (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Moreover, the trend for East China already appears to have slowed own, even turning downwards; Central and Western Regions have shown the most significant development since 2011 with clear internal differentiation; Northeast China faces enormous challenges with its economic 'collapsing' (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016) - see table 2.1.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Region</b>				
East China	52.0	51.3	51.2	50.9
Central China	20.0	20.2	20.2	20.4
West China	19.2	19.8	20.0	20.3
Northeast China	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.4

**Table 2.1 the gross national product (GNP) proportion of China's four economic regions in Twelve-Five planning period (source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2016)**

In terms of quality of people's livelihood, a linear weighting summation method is adopted according to the level of income and consumption, lives and travel, health and education, employment and security, with the intention of learning with the quality of people's lives and the gap between four different regions. Sun (2015) indicate that the livelihood index is highest in East China, the Central and West China are relatively low, While Northeast China falls in between East China and Central, West China regions (please table 2.2). More interesting, a region with more restaurant varieties would rank higher in the livelihood index.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Region</b>			
East China	6.26	6.39	6.10
Central China	1.64	1.74	1.85
West China	1.29	1.85	1.82
Northeast China	5.12	4.94	4.86

**Table 2.2 the livelihood index of China's four economic regions between 2011 and 2013 (source: Sun, 2015)**

It can be said that such significant features and imbalance in the economic development of the various region in China is scarce among the developing countries in the world (Sun, 2015). Detailed regional definition, features and government development strategy are addressed as follows:

#### **East China economic region**

The East China region comprises Beijing city, Shanghai city, Tianjin city, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan Provinces (Oizumi, 2010). This region's area is 916,000 square kilometres, which covers about 9.5% of the total land area. Its population occupies around 38% of the total population and creates nearly half of China's GDP (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016; China Minsheng Bank, 2015).

The characteristics of this area are abundant human resources, comprehensive modern industrial systems,

and its level of opening up to the outside world is the highest (Sun, 2015). China central government has been executing the strategy to strengthen its leading role in the development of China. Namely, focusing on its capacity enhancement for independent regional innovation to improve industry structure; transforming growth from capital and resource-orientation to innovation-oriented model; promoting transitional development regarding social and economic aspects (Sun, 2015).

### **Central China economic region**

Central China economic region consists of 6 provinces - Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi and Anhui provinces (Oizumi, 2010). The region's area is about 1,028,000 square kilometres, which makes up 10.7% of China's entire territory; its population accounts for about 27.4% of the general population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016; China Minsheng Bank, 2015). The regional characteristics are; Its transportation networks are favourable; it is rich in natural resources; industrial systems are comparatively perfect; regional development gaps are evident (Sun, 2015). For this area, the State Council of China put forward the 'Rise of Central China' plan and set clear transition objectives for it to be a producing area for four industrial domains: grain production, energy and raw material, equipment production, and high-technology. Moreover, this strategy has the goal of developing the area to become a comprehensive transportation junction (Dunford and Bonschab, 2013).

### **West China economic region**

The West China economic region has the most area among the four regions, but its natural geographical and cultural environments are also the most complicated (Tian, 2016). It includes Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjing autonomous regions; Chongqing city; Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Shann'xi, Gansu, and Qinghai Provinces (Oizumi, 2010). The land area is around 6,867,000 square kilometres, which is 71.5% of the national land area. Its population is around 356 million, which accounts for 28.0% of the total population (National Bureau of Statistics 2016; China Minsheng Bank, 2015). The region is rich in natural resources, but development varies: imperfect basic industry system; poor transport infrastructure; multi-ethnic culture; economy dominated by agriculture but with low modernisation level; largest population with low cultural quality; poverty rate is relatively high (Tian, 2016).

The unique geographical location and above characteristics of this region have led to an imbalance in economic and social development, so city planning has generally lagged because of the areas' economic and social conditions (Sun, 2015). The Chinese central committee promulgated the implementation of the Great Western Development Strategy, which was the first development program directed by central government in 1999. This strategy advocated developing comprehensive infrastructure, using natural resources efficiently, upgrading economy toward market liberalisation, promoting regional economic development centres, developing specific industries, and speeding up urbanisation (Dunford and Bonschab, 2013). Furthermore, in China's Twelve-Five planning period (2012-2015), the central government emphasised strengthening protection of the environment and preventing geological disasters (Sun, 2015).

### **Northeast China economic region**

The northeast China economic region includes Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning Provinces. The land area is 787,900 square kilometres, which accounts for 8.2% of China's total land area. The population is 108 million, which occupies 8.4% of the total national population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016; China Minsheng Bank, 2015). The Northeast region is a significant base for China's old heavy industries in traditional institutions, formed by preferentially developing capital-intensive heavy industries in the context of capital scarcity and labour abundance. What is more, it has notable feature: bias towards heavy sector other than light industry; strong basic industry system (Sun, 2015). For the Northeast region, the China central government has put forward the strategy of 'rejuvenating the Northeast'. The aim of this strategy, in this situation, is to adjust city group' structures (especially resources cities), reform and upgrade technical skills, reduce pollution and be more resource efficient. During the Twelve-Five planning period, the China central government further stresses promoting mountain zones' economic renovation (Dunford and Bonschab, 2013).

To sum up, the regional dimension has been a crucial component of China's development policies. Understanding the segmentation of China's region could contribute to assessing customer in term purchasing power, attitudes, lifestyles, media use, consumption patterns, as well as allocating company resource. Nevertheless, according to Oizumi (2010), the quadruplicity division loses sight of internal hierarchy and heterogeneity, for example, cities with different social, economic, and cultural features. Thus,

for differentiated management, the term 'city tier' is increasingly mentioned by China media, not only is it convenient for national target and evaluation determination in aspects of policy, economy and culture, but for restaurant companies. It also implies different consumer behaviours, commercial opportunities, and competitive strategy, even though it does not have a uniform standard (Market Access Secretariat, 2014).

## **2.5 CHINA'S CITY TIERS**

In 2016, China had a total of 338 prefecture-level cities, of which 215 cities have a population over one million less than five million, 75 cities have a population over five million but less than ten million, and 13 cities have a population over ten million (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). In general, the classification and designation of China's city tiers are based on main attributes of cities, for example, social and economic level, infrastructure construction level, the significance of culture, gross population, policy impact from central government (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, although under the national planning system, the development of China's cities varies under different local government policies (Tan *et al.*, 2016). Hence, based on these features, the cities of China can be classified into different city tiers, which is in accordance with widespread common ground and hierarchy of China's cities.

Due to a relatively constant level of population mobility and the number of capital cities, the first tier cities are defined as direct-controlled municipality under central government or key cities, which are described as concentrating considerable high quality resources, such as educational resources, political resources and radiation capabilities to surrounding provinces (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). They also have unique city charm with an abundant economic basis, a sizeable middle-class population, strong buying power and convenient transportation (*ibid.*).

Second tier cities comprise provincial/sub-provincial level capitals or cities with a unique development programme granted by the China central government (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Compared with first city tier, second city tier market is not thriving, although there is more development potential. Also, many second tier cities have extensive, influential pillar industries, and appropriate traffic systems, which benefit from rapid urbanisation (Oizumi, 2010; Wong and Yu, 2003).

As regards the third tier cities, they are expressed as prefecture or county level city capitals with a population over 1 million (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). The economic level and market spending power of third tier cities are relatively low in comparison to first and second city tiers. Furthermore, third tier cities have their own comparative advantage industries, and have a certain appeal for some specific major companies; however, their overall urban competitiveness remains to be further improved (Oizumi, 2010).

On the whole, as Sinclair (2010) points out, China is a vast and complex society with hundreds of cities. It is vital for companies to develop better categories regarding Chinese consumers so that marketers can make decisions on which divisions to focus and in which level (Zhou *et al.*, 2010). City tier category can not only help realise administrative hierarchy but also help understand, to some extent, demographic and economic benchmarks (Sinclair, 2010).

## **2.6 CHINA'S RESTAURANT MARKET OVERVIEW**

From 1978 to 1984, the China restaurant sector was in its beginning stage, restaurants were primarily state-owned and collective forms, both areas in which market mechanism played less of a role and where food consumption demand exceeded supply; Soon after the China government lowered the barrier to entry to restaurant market and formulated self-employed investment qualification policies, China catering moved into a stage of rapid development (from 1985 to 1990), resulting in individual catering enterprises jumping to 1.358 million in 1990; with the proposed socialist market economy at the Chinese Communist Party's 14th congress, China catering entered a stage of steady development (from 1991 to 1997), the public sector share dropped considerably under the national macro-control - individual catering enterprises were from 1.445 million in 1991 to 2.687 million in 1997; Moreover, catering retail sales topped 1 trillion RMB (1.0345 trillion RMB) for the first time in 2006, with year-on-year growth of more than 16.4 percent. In 2009, with the affection of the global financial crisis, catering retail sales declined slightly, but gross social retail sales growth still increased by over 1.3 percentage points, which indicated China's catering sector is trending to the mature stage (Xing *et al.*, 2015, 2014). Further, the restaurant industry gained remarkable achievement over the last five years, which comprised 7.8 million branches and US\$560, 413 million in sales in 2014, which also is the largest restaurant market in the world (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). However, affected by the slowdown of China's economy and China government's opposing extravagance policy, the future growth

in the sales will remain robust, but the compound annual growth rate is slowing (Foodservice Profile, 2016).

Therefore, with the intention of lowering the external influence and maintaining market share, the restaurant operator ought to pursue new creative ways in respect of food health and nutrition, technology. Engaging with the customer through social media to create a comprehensive experience is becoming increasingly widespread in restaurant sector's daily operations, and will hopefully continuously expand in future (Xing *et al.*, 2015). For instance, some restaurants have cooperated with websites such as 'Mei Tuan'(www.meituan.com), 'Da Zhong Dian Ping' (www.dianping.com), which could show the restaurant location, introduce featured cuisine your customers, support customer to leave comments, and allow customer to order and ask for home delivery service from PCs/mobile devices. As another example, some restaurant (e.g. South Beauty restaurant) have released their own app or 'WeChat' public account, which also allow customers to book a place, make an electronic order for home delivery, and comment their experience. Currently, a successful and favorite way is to offer special deals, such as group-buying, new (community) members discounts, coupons for next visiting (Euromonitor International, 2015)

## **2.7 THE CHINESE CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS IN RESTAURANT AND RESTAURANT TYPES**

Along with the development of China's economy on a fast track, many Chinese have been making changes to the way they live, including dining out in the restaurant (China Minsheng Bank, 2015). In the past, the most Chinese consumers eat in restaurant only on quite occasions, but now, there are more factors that drive the Chinese consumers to dine out, for example, looking for experiences, the decreasing family size, the increasing family incomes, less time and energy for household affairs (Xing *et al.*, 2015). In addition, as regards the food distribution type of restaurant market (including eat in a restaurant, takeaway, food delivery and drive-through), eating in a restaurant is the mainstream lifestyle, which accounts for 88.4% percent of sales in 2015, and will remain more than 85 percent of sales in the next six years. Consistent with the above, based on the survey of Unilever Food Solutions, more than 85 percent Chinese consumers, at least once a week, are to eat in a restaurant (Euromonitor International, 2015). The trends imply that Chinese consumer is enjoying unique service and foods, and finding new experiences. The survey also suggests that white-collar workers make up most on the consumption of breakfast and lunch, and family gatherings, time for

leisure, maintaining social networks also are great consuming powers for eating in a restaurant (Euromonitor International, 2015).

There are several types/subsectors of restaurants in China including full-service restaurants, fast food restaurants, street-food stalls, buffet restaurant, home delivery and takeaway, which make profits in or through their places relying on the sales of various foods and beverages (IBIS world, 2012). According to the report of Euromonitor International (2015), full-service restaurants occupied a dominant position in restaurant market in China and will be strong in next five years (see table 2.3 below), with a compound annual growth rate of 7.5% from 2015 to 2019.

Sales and Trends of Restaurant by Types in China, US Millions										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Full-service restaurants	279,210.7	318,146.2	350,204.7	379,293.3	414,725.5	450,806.7	488,291.0	526,153.5	564,290.9	602,311.3
Fast food	88,364.4	99,261.5	108,685.8	116,743.2	124,760.2	134,819.9	145,459.5	156,496.8	167,961.2	179,809.4
Cafes/bars	6,871.4	8,091.5	9,346.7	10,721.3	11,934.4	13,443.4	15,006.6	16,651.5	18,392.1	20,208.2
Street stalls/kiosks	6,417.2	6,884.8	7,290.8	7,753.3	8,258.1	8,805.5	9,365.4	9,910.4	10,442.4	10,968.7
buffet restaurant	369.4	421.9	485.2	541.1	584.7	634.8	675.9	707.2	737.6	766.7
home delivery and takeaway	71.7	84.3	101.3	130.4	168.4	211.4	261.8	315.5	377.6	446.9
Total consumer foodservice	381,304.8	432,890.2	476,114.5	515,182.6	560,431.3	608,721.7	659,060.2	710,234.9	762,201.8	814,511.2

**Table 2.3 Value sales and trends of the restaurant by types (sources: Euromonitor International, 2015)**

In the current study, restaurant refers to a full-service restaurant, which is utilised to conduct fieldwork, since it has produced a significant influence on Chinese (food) culture (Xing *et al.*, 2015). According to Lee *et al.* (2013), and Jani and Han (2011), one special feature of full-service restaurant is setting apart on the process when consumers are eating in - waiters take foods and/or drinks order from consumers, waiters service the meals, consumer have the meal, make a payment, and leave the comments on the services or meals. Moreover, the full-service restaurant can not only bring tangible experience (e.g. food and beverages) and the intangible experience (e.g. service) to customers, but also can bring interactive actions between waiters and customer, or among customers (Han *et al.*, 2009; Yuksel and Yuksel, 2002). It is also suggested as one of best place to study consumer behaviour that the related concepts or theories could be explored, for example, motivation of consumer (Jeong and Jang, 2011), the influence of reference group (e.g. family or friends) on consumer behaviour (Lu *et al.*, 2013), the influence of culture on consumer behaviour (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Sriwongrat, 2008). In general, customers in full-service restaurant sector can assess both the functional outcomes of the service (e.g., the food itself) and detailed aspects of the service experience (Han



*et al.*, 2009; Ladhari *et al.*, 2008).

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides the research context by critical review Chinese real GDP trends, annual disposable income trend of Chinese households, China's regional divergence, China's city tier. These external factors affect the performance of China restaurant market and restaurant customer characteristics – although the economic slowdown, there still quite a lot of Chinese customers go out for dinner. Chapter 3 discusses theoretical domains - consumer behaviour theory and consumer culture theory, which is in order to provide an overall view of how belief or attitude culturally, historically impacts consumer behaviour.

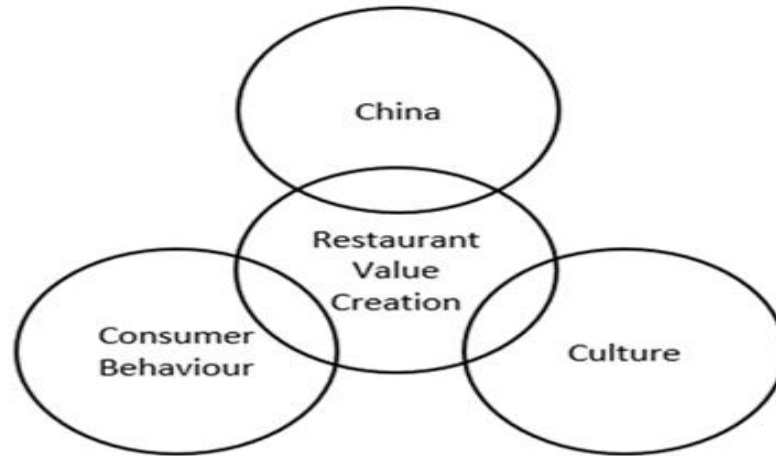
# CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL DOMAINS

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to show domains of theories and to explain how the research background links with theories. The primary contribution of the current thesis will be to enhance understanding of consumer behaviour in Chinese consumer markets generally and of the Chinese restaurant sector specifically. To pursue this, this research needs to move on from a review of the research context - China full-service restaurants, to address appropriate and relevant conceptual issues. The notions value creation and customer engagement have emerged recently as issues of especial marketing interest following Vargo and Lusch's (2004a) seminal journal article on service dominant logic (S-D Logic), and these will represent the key conceptual point of departure for empirical work of this research (as shown in figure 3.1, current research domains are China, culture, restaurant value creation, consumer behaviour). S-D Logic scholars have argued for understanding value as exclusively, located within contextual nature of value and socio-cultural ties that influence value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2011, 2012; Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011; Jaakkola *et al.*, 2015), which extends beyond the dyadic service provider-costumer relationship to include multidirectional resource integration (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). Before considering these in detail, however, the first thing needs to do is considering consumer behaviour more broadly – what it is and how/why current work fits into particular theoretical domains. The second thing needs to do is thinking about culture, given China is not merely a geographical region of the world but also a collection of individuals whose behaviours are determined by a combination of factors including history, religion and tradition.

As there have been little prior researches to integrate and employ consumer behaviour, Chinese culture and service dominant logic paradigm together to understand the role of customer in China restaurant value creation context; hence, current research will fill the gap and incorporate theories informed cultural perspective to service research offers a promising point of departure for understanding the experiential view of value and contextual social and cultural aspects that frame consumers' experiences and behaviours (Akaka *et al.*, 2015; Jaakkola *et al.*, 2015). In the following sections, a thorough and critical assessment is proceeded to inform the validity, pertinence and relevance of utilised theories to the research subject. In particular, a critical evaluation of the sources that have gathered and read surrounding the conceptions of

service dominant logic, value-creation, co-creation behaviour and engagement, which are elaborated in next chapter five. Figure 1, below, identifies the broad conceptual domain for this study.



**Figure 3.1 Current research domains.**

## **3.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR THEORY APPROACHES AND MODELS**

Consumer behaviour, which can be defined as a series of individual decisions by consequences (Khemchotigoon and Kaenmanee, 2015), has always generated considerable interest for marketing practitioners and academics. Understanding consumer behaviour can help marketing practitioners know how an individual evaluates, perceives and chooses commodities (e.g. goods and service) or brands; and how the individual is affected by his/her surrounding environments and structure reference group, like family members, friends and shop assistant (Becker, 2003). According to Khemchotigoon and Kaenmanee (2015), some uncontrollable elements (e.g. cultural, social, individual and emotional) impact the buying behaviour of the consumer, are beyond the control of marketing practitioners but should still be well thought out when trying to comprehend the complexities of consumer behaviour. Furthermore, as Englis and Solomon (1995) suggest, the study of consumers involves the processes that consumers consider: choosing, buying and using goods, service and ideas to fulfil wants and wishes. In the marketing domain, the notion 'consumer'

means not only the action of buying itself but also the entire purchase stages, namely from pre-purchase to post-purchase. Along with Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Tynan and McKechnie (2009) and Foxall (1987), each of these stages is influential in consumer purchasing and repurchasing, because the pre-purchase stage might embrace the increasing consciousness of wants or wishes, and the information searching and evaluation for the goods or services that might fulfil the consumer; the post-purchase stage might embrace the rating and assessment of the purchased commodities, lowering any concerns that accompany rarely-purchased commodities, inexperienced service, and extravagant items. Simple observation is not enough for fully understanding the complicated attributes of consumer behaviour; hence, marketing academics have to seek more complex concepts, methods or models of research provided by social sciences with the purpose of greater and more effective understanding, predicting and guiding consumer behaviour, as consumer behaviour is the engine of marketing development (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Khemchotigoon and Kaenmanee, 2015). In the following sections, consumer behaviour theory (CBT) and its models and approaches, as well as consumer culture theory and current research domains are illustrated.

Approaches	Main point
Economic man approach	According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), economic man approach contends that consumers would have to know all available or accessible manners for consumption; be able to accurately evaluate every substitute; be able to choose the optimal approach for the act. However, it seems that this approach is not realistic accounting for consumer decision making because consumers do not often have sufficient information, drives, energy for an ideal decision, and acting on based on the non-rational effect, for example, social relations and outside value orientation (Simon, 1997).
Psychodynamic approach	According to Arnold <i>et al.</i> (1991), The psychodynamic approach lies in psychology postulates customer behaviour is led by the biological effect through inner strength or motivation which is beyond the boundary of the conscious mind. That is to say, the point of the psychodynamic approach is that natural drive force is responsible for customer behaviour rather than the cognition of customer, or stimulation from the external environment.
Behaviourist approach	The essence of behaviourist approach is a kind of philosophies illustrating that behaviour is subject by external situation, what is more, all the matters that human does, such as minds, acts, emotional states could be identified as a kind of behaviours. According to Stewart (1994), the reason of behaviour is due to external situation/factor to the human, although the behaviourist approach still offers helpful mindset on the human knowledge to behaviour, the approach is now broadly treated as being the only way of any likely fully exploration. In alignment with this, Bray (2008) suggests that psychodynamic approach behaviourist approach seems not enough to give full reason or explanation for the varieties, such as a population or a group target within similar, or within same situation or stimuli.
Cognitive approach	According to Ribeaux and Poppleton (1978), the cognitive approach is very different with the essence of behaviourist approach. It deems observed behaviour is subject to human's internal cognition, and the human is deemed as a processor for the information. Although the intrapersonal matter issues a challenge to the position of the external situation(environment) stated in behaviourist approach, cognitive approach acknowledges the effect of the external environment and social influence. Moreover, cognitive approach admits customer proactively seeks ad revives the stimuli coming from environment and community, which is being a power affects consumer to make decisions (Stewart, 1994). Furedy and Riley (1987) suggest that cognitive approach has taken the place of behaviourist approach, and is being a mainstream and dominant approach to consumer decision making.
Humanistic approach	According to Stewart (1994), the humanistic approach can be suggested as to introspective relations to the human behaviour, rather than the cognitive approach that is to explain the general procedures/patterns. In detail, the humanistic approach is to explore and understand the interval between volitional stage and decision making, by identifying the gap between individual stated purchase intention and his/her actual final behaviour (Natarajan and Bagozzi, 1999).

**Table 3.1 Consumer behaviour theory approaches**

According to Bray (2008) and Foxall (1990), being inspired by different typological categories, five major approaches (see table 3.1) are categorised and utilized in the study of consumer behaviour and decision making, briefly speaking, they are (1) economic man approach (2) psychodynamic approach (3) behaviourist approach (4) cognitive approach (5) humanistic approach

In general, the above consumer behaviour approach table implies the complexity of consumer behaviour and identifies their main points in a specific area when exploring consumer behaviour. After evaluation these approaches, behavioural and cognitive approaches are more suitable and relevant to help achieve current research aim - exploring customers co-creating and engaging behaviours with restaurant in China, as the two approaches provide a widened social science perspective on the relatively full range of consumer behaviour from inside out.

For behavioural perspectives, it highlights the role of environmental factors to human behaviour. Behaviourist approach is mainly concerned with observable behaviour, although it often acknowledges the status of emotions and thoughts (Bray, 2008). However, the behaviourist approach tends to study external behaviours, as these kinds of behaviours can be quantitated in a scientific way (Wiedmann *et al.*, 2007). Thus, the approach deems that the internal behaviours, such as emotions and affections should be treated as behavioural elements (Eysenck and Keane, 2000). To a large extent, it also emphasises concentrating on 'learning' rather than the innate or inherited elements, which brings about experiences (Schiffman *et al.*, 2007). That is to say, behaviourist deems that the manners people act is related to experience.

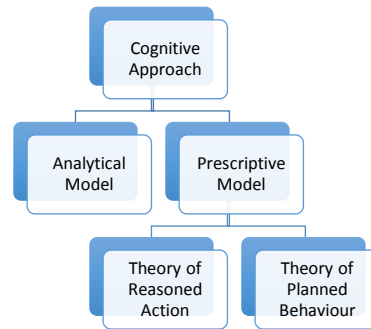
Behaviourist attempts to comprehend the environments/ prerequisites under which behaviours generates (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). For example, when does a specific behaviour generate? What elements originate the behaviour? What changes in situation lead to behaviour? In general, the factors of environment include colours, appearances, scent, voices and lots of other features. Apparently, for the researcher, it is not possible to test every factor of a particular environment. However, in the majority of cases, it is also not necessary, since lots of elements have no or limited effects. Nevertheless, behaviourists claim that in order to study the impacts of the environment on behaviours, researchers should be able to outline the environmental features that are in connection with their research (Bray, 2008). As described by Schiffman *et*

*al.* (2007), behaviourist approach believes that behaviour can be treated as a result of 'stimulus- response' no matter how complicated the situation it involved.

Behaviourist approach has a distinct advantage that it is capable of describing behaviour and to measure its changes in an efficiently manner. This is due to the principle of parsimony that prefers to seek the most straightforward illustration to any event and believes that the fewer assumptions a theory theorising, the more reliable it is. Also, behaviourist approach is a real-life application and emphasises objective measurement, since its illustration is heavily relied on logical positivism to study consumer behaviour (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). However, although behaviourist approach is meaningful to people's comprehension of human behaviour, it is now widely believed to be narrow and limited to provide explanations to behaviour, as it is of objective nature. Some significant factors, such as motivation, cognition, emotion and expectancy are not taken into consideration or described (Stewart, 1994).

Compared with the basic assumptions of behaviourist approach, the cognitive approach attributes observed behaviour/ extrinsic action to the immanent act of mind. In addition, this approach deems that individual is an information processor (Bray, 2008). Although cognitive approach produced a challenge to the previous predominance of environmental factors suggested by behaviourist approach, some significant roles of enteral variables, such as environment and conditioning are admitted, along with individual actively receive information and respond to the external stimuli to make decisions (Stewart, 1994).

According to Foxall (1990), cognitive approach is close to general knowledge descriptions of daily life, which makes it as natural manner to provide explanation for the daily behaviour, for example, buying and consumption; (2) cognitive approach makes sure descriptions of a consumer experience in terms of attitudes, desires, requirements and motivations to proceed in the same tunes as what consumer described; (3) cognitive approach provides a set of scale and a possibility to explore unexploited or young field; (4) cognitive approach has been extensively utilised by social science and humanities in term of cognitive explanations, which is conducive to theoretical development of consumer exploration by virtue of involving methodological approaches; (5) cognitive approach is capable of exploring complicated behavioural situation.



**Figure 3.2 Consumer behaviour theory cognitive approach models (source: Moital, 2007)**

Cognitive approach has emerged and become the mainstream and main to behaviour research (Cziko, 2000). Two major models of cognitive approach are identified by Bray (2008) – (see figure 3.2). One is the analytical model, which is tended to focus on consumer choice and are primarily designed to help determine why consumers buy on a brand other than another. It is based on consumer decision and theory of buyer behaviour models to understand what overt factors influence choices. While the other is the prescriptive model, which is more focused on attitude/behaviour and are more concerned with why individuals make the choices they make. Besides, according to Moital (2007), prescriptive model of cognitive approach offers guidance and framework to illustrate how individual behaviour is organised, comprises the order in which factor should be observed, and suggests the consequence that should be considered due to related causes. Thus, this model is claimed to be beneficial to marketers who can manage what the stimuli ought to be adapted or highlighted to lead to relevant consumer behaviour. For the prescriptive models, the most broadly and utilised sub-models are the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). The rationale of the two sub-models is based on two aspects – consumers are rational and systematically draw on information that is available to them; consumers think about the consequences of actions before they intend to act or not act in some kinds of behaviours (Gatch and Kendzierski, 1990).

There are lots of different approaches that can be utilised to model consumer behaviour, which is subject to the nature and insight of research. Although a broad existing range of variables has been theorised across approaches and models, making an attempt to rationalise human behaviour; however, it is difficult for one approach /model to contain all thoughts and elements to provide a comprehensive viewpoint on the consumer. Hence, combining with one of the pursued objectives of current study - exploring the extent of



restaurant customers' willingness of acting co-creation behaviour, this thesis draws upon behavioural and cognitive approaches of consumer behaviour theory as one of the theoretical basis of the research.

### **3.3 CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY (CCT)**

As one of the current research domains, the term culture has been conceptualised by consumer culture theory as the underlying structure of consumers' experience, meaning, and behaviour. According to Arnould and Thompson (2005), consumer culture theory is a multidisciplinary standpoint that interprets the relationships among consumer behaviour, cultural elements and market. The theory puts emphasis on the real world and that it is diversified and multiplied to any individual, suggesting that the lives of consumers are shaped around a reality focused on behaviours involved in the real world (Holt and Thompson, 2004). Consumer culture theory is inspired by the studies of Bourdieu (1984), Foucault (1974) and other academics to explore the context and ideologies in which behaviour occurs. Specifically, based on consumer culture theory, people are consuming within a cultural, economic and political framework that is shaping and impacting how they think, feel and behaviour in the modern market (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2002; Holt, 1997).

Prior research on consumption has been evolving from the aspects of productivity, utility or process, to focus on the correlation between individual and social surrounding. Consumer culture theory further explains consumption from its attributes including context, symbolistic meaning and experience, which also is deemed as an approach that could deeply promote research on consumer through explaining the effect of culture dimension on behaviour (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). As Fournier (1998) suggested, consumer culture constantly reminds that consumption is the social practice within the historical form, which appears in the dynamic market structure and ideology. Thus, consumer culture theory has a tendency to associate with the perspective of the consumer, since consumers actively engage with and transform meanings hidden in brands, retailing, advertising, service and commodities to show their unique personal and social surroundings and identity (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

Arnould and Thompson (2005) in their landmark paper claim that consumer culture theory has innovative consumer behaviour understanding involving in four research fields: First, consumer identity projects. In this field, consumer culture theory involves co-constitution and co-production of the relationship between consumer and the source market, which formats a sense of coherence. Second, marketplace cultures. Consumer culture theory concerns the manner in which consumption as main mankind practical activities reshape the cultural context for consumer feeling, behaviour, and so on (Kozinets, 2002). Third, the socio-historical patterning of consumption. In this field, consumer culture theory is interested in the structure of society and institutions that impact consumption, such as social class, gender, ethnic group and community, and how these have developed over time. Fourth, mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies. Consumer culture theory investigates and explores consumer ideology – what information does commercial media spread about consumption? How does consumer receive and respond to this information?

More recently, studies of consumer culture theory have focused on cultural significance, social and historical impacts, the dynamics of the society that shape experience, and the individual's daily life in complex contexts. For example, Chelekis and Figueiredo (2015) explored the mode by which regions are involved in marketing and consumer research, raising a discussion of the analytical scales and boundaries of regional cultures, considering regional interdependencies and common socio-historical contexts. Akaka *et al.* (2015) explored the nature of the cultural context that engages value creation and provides insight into the way in which value is collaboratively created, or co-created, in markets. Cappellini and Parsons (2012) identify works which investigate the role of gift giving (Ruskola, 2005), sharing (Belk, 2010) and sacrifice (Miller, 1998) in consumption to explore the collective responsibilities undertaken by the family for maintaining familial bonds through meal consumption. Finally, Emontspool and Kjeldgaard (2012) investigated consumption discourses in contexts of multiple cultures and intercultural contacts and sought to understand how the role of nostalgia changes contexts where consumers are perceived as decreasingly embedded agents. Although all the above applications of CCT research provides a series of unique lenses through which to study culture, it is likely that combining CCT with other disciplines/contexts could lead to a hybrid and complete understanding of consumer behaviour.

Despite the increasing popularity of consumer culture theory, there are always some critical opinions on it. For instance, Simonson *et al.* (2001) claim that the theorists of consumer theory contribute little to knowledge since they pay more attention to specific context as ends in themselves. In addition, due to the focus of consumer culture theory being on sociocultural and experiential variables of consumption, another criticism is that consumer culture research is always accompanying with qualitative data collection and analysis methods (Joy and Li, 2012; Askegaard and Linnet, 2011). However, it is not necessary that consumer culture theory fidelity automatically follows to any methodological orientation or demands a qualitative-quantitative divide. According to MacInnis and Folkes (2010), it is possible for researchers of consumer culture theory to embrace methodological pluralism whenever quantitative techniques are likely to make a contribution to knowledge development.

In this study, consumer culture theory is employed to assess its manifestation in China restaurant context, as the rationale of consumer culture theory suggests consumers are conditioned by their background (Bonsu and Belk, 2003). This study will involve the first and third fields of consumer culture theory. Namely, this study examines that China restaurants provide an important arena in which Chinese restaurant consumers present in relation to notions co-creation and engagement. In addition, this study also utilises consumer culture theory as a reference to examine whether co-creation/engagement behaviour should be studied as a culture-specific phenomenon tied to socio-economic and/or demographic factors and/or geographical factors, or that it is a universal phenomenon subject only to individual difference. Because there have been no studies concerning Chinese restaurant consumer cross China's geographic and economic regions to evaluate the co-creation/engagement, this research may also provide a contribution to consumer culture theory itself as applied in a developing country.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

Based on the research domains, two main theories- consumer behaviour theory and consumer culture theory are utilised as references to explore Chinese consumer co-creation/engagement behaviour in the specific China full-service restaurant context. In particular, the behaviourist and cognitive approaches of the consumer behaviour theory are employed to comprehend why customer make the choices they do, and to predict the extent customers co-create and engage with restaurants. In the meantime, consumer culture

theory provides an explanation of how culture, history and social norms impact consumer behaviour, which is useful to theorise the notions of co-creation in China context. The following two chapters (chapter four and chapter five) cover Chinese Culture and value creation in consumer markets respectively.

# CHAPTER 4. CHINESE CULTURE

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

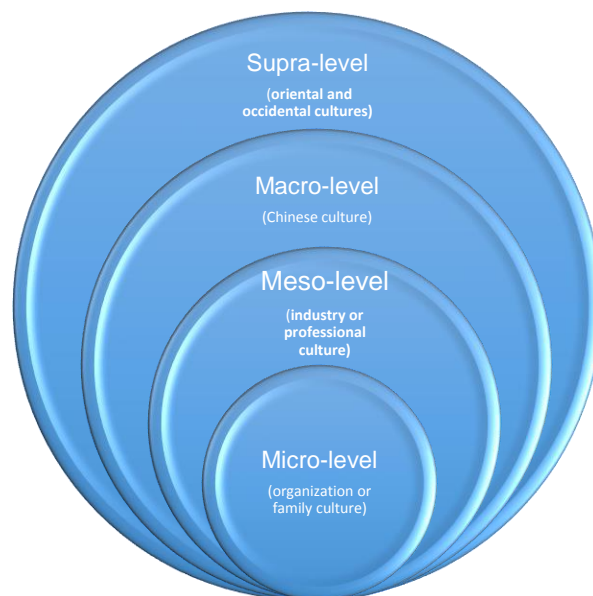
With the fast growth of Chinese economy and more and more Western companies trying to achieve successful business/ expanding restaurant services in China, the urge of understanding Chinese culture becomes more and more critical. This chapter consists of a review from the perspectives of Chinese culture. The literature review starts with the definitions of culture, levels of culture, and national culture to China. This chapter also elaborates various types of Chinese indigenous cultures. Last, the relevant Chinese cultures in restaurant sector are summarised – face, *guanxi* and harmony.

## 4.2 THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Culture originates from the Latin word '*cultura*', which implies 'tendency' or "continuing", and has been defined in various ways. Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945) propose that culture is the designs created in history for the existing, the obvious and implied, the logical and illogical, which lies in any time dimension of the past, now or future as a criterion for people's behaviours. Hoebel (1960) presents culture as the cumulative summation of behavioural characteristics which people of a society have in common. Williams (1968) defines culture is a shared value. Echoing this, Hofstede (1980) claims that culture is the shared programming of people's ideology which differentiates the fellows of one cluster from the others. At the same time, culture is dependent on values, symbols, idols, and ceremonies. Markus and Kitayama (1991) describe that culture as obvious and implied values on what is moral, correct, and required in social order, which are intergrade in the members of society through habitude, beliefs, standards, regulations, and laws. Later, Kao *et al.* (2004) propose culture is the outline or guide book for a large group's conscious and unconscious behaviours, or the 'tool cabinet' for daily life, problem solution, and decision-making. In general, according to the above descriptions, culture can be incorporated into the aspects of behaviours, values, beliefs, customs, attitudes and so on, which shape a society. As the summary of Tsang (2011), culture can be defined as an evolving system of concepts, values and symbols inherent in a society—a learned system of behaviour that involves experience, determines an individual's position within social structures and guides actions in a multitude of situations, both known or unknown.

Having understood what culture is, it is essential to realise how culture is structured. Srnka (2004) argues that culture can be divided into four groups according to their levels, although there is a variety of definitions for it (see figure 4.1):

- a) Supra-level culture - shaped among nations by the economy system, degree of development, ethnic and racial characteristics, beliefs, and so on (e.g. oriental and occidental cultures).
- b) Macro-level culture - shaped by persons of the same country, origin or country of residence, e.g. Chinese culture, national culture.
- c) Meso-level culture - shaped by social communities, e.g. industry or professional culture.
- d) Micro-level culture - shaped smallest social group, e.g. the organisation or family culture.



**Figure 4.1 Culture levels (source: Srnka, 2004).**

Besides Srnka (2004), other scholars (for example, Shi *et al.*, 2014; Yayeb, 2003; Fan, 2000) have revealed the different levels of culture when dealing with problems, are various. That is to say, individuals' awareness and behaviours differ along with the difference of circumstances in each level of culture (Chiang, 2005). After careful thought of the purpose in current research – exploring the Chinese restaurant customers' co-creation behaviours in China, this study finds current research is related to culture from the aspect of the macro level (Chinese culture) and micro level. Because Chinese diners', as a community of practice, can be seen to exist at the meso-level and Chinese diners (as with all communities of practice) behave in specific ways and share similar 'practices'. At the macro level, a certain national culture evolves with time and is the creation of the country's history, economic conditions, geographical conditions, eco-environment and demographic characteristics (Doole and Lowe, 2008; Olie, 1995), and individuals have common features, which are unique

and vary from other nations. As shown in the literature, marketing experts regularly treat the 'country of origin' as a proxy for 'culture' (Craig and Douglas, 2006), since it is the proxy that people grow by way of studying in the environment. That is, similar people's behaviour is shaped by similar national environments which offer them similar experiences and opportunities (Hofstede, 1994).

### **4.3 NATIONAL CULTURE**

Hofstede (2010) indicates that national culture is described as the sum of one group or sort of individual performance under the influence of the mind, which discriminates it from other categories. To some extent, national culture might equal the culture of the national scope (Hofstede, 2010, 1980), which describes people through a culture that form by norms and value systems (Dartey-Baah, 2013).

Zhang and Wu (2014) claim that national culture displays the features of specific clusters of individuals, who have similar backgrounds, education, experience, and understanding of the world. Further, Griffith *et al.* (2014) maintain national culture reflects the features that are representations of society, containing the rules, values, and hierarchy (system). Namely, national culture is the most common description within the national level in terms of people's behaviour, perceptions, and values (Kumar and Pansari, 2016).

Previous literature suggests that national culture influences the daily operations of companies; directly, by means of impacting company decision panels and their judgements, or indirectly, through regulating political and economic developing levels (Steenkamp *et al.*, 1999). For the direct role of national culture, there is a broad exploration in the literature about the influence of culture on human behaviour (Kwon, 2012). In alignment with this argument, recent scholars reveal that mainstream culture of people has a marked impact on company decision making (Graham *et al.*, 2013). For the indirect role of national culture, meanwhile, national culture is the social foundation. First of all, it regulates all lower level norms; for instance, rules, mechanisms, rights, and economic and financial developing levels (Aggarwal and Goodell, 2009; Guiso *et al.*, 2006; Licht *et al.*, 2005). Subsequently, all these informal and formal norms, and economic and financial developments play the part of chances or limitations for the companies and, accordingly, companies face relevant risk (Li *et al.*, 2013a; Mihet, 2013; Houston *et al.*, 2010).

Moreover, from the individual level, national culture moulds personal values and personalities, such as morality, thriftiness, hardworking, openness to foreigners, since the traits of group members are subject to the cultural background that they are involved in (Barro and McCleary, 2003). In sequence, an individual's characteristics such as those highlighted above impact the mind on decision making. Consequently, the culture represented by the accumulation of the individuals' values and personalities affect economic development (Hilary and Hui, 2009).

In the view of Tsang (2011), culture is one of the most abstract notions that affecting individual behaviour. Culture consists of difference levels such as family, organisation, nation, and is shaped by people's behaviour; however, culture is invisible and intangible owing to its subjective attributes. A variety of approaches have been used to address this culture issue. The most common one is to use culture as a representative, especially the researchers who emphasise the philosophy which accepts only things that can be seen or proved in real life (Tayeb, 2001). With the purpose of culture could be treated as research constructs/variables, it has been advised to use the way of behaviour observation and exploring attitudes and values in the study of culture, which is mainly because of the invisible attributes of culture (Sunderland and Denny, 2003). In this way, culture is considered as a manner of existing subjective notions that is accessible to researchers and could be measured and tested.

To verify the accessibility of culture in terms of measurement, several researchers have taken different methods to measure culture into different measures. Five cultural value measures (efficiency, self-oriented, universalism, attribution and features) are illustrated by Parsons and Shils (1951); a typical systematic classification has three types - relationship with authority, self-being and collision, which the methods of handling them is summarized by Inkeles and Levinson (1954); five culture-specific dimensions are suggested by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961); Hall (1976) suggests the concept of high versus low context as a manner to understand different cultural orientations; Hofstede (1980) categorises relevant values into four dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity; Schwartz (1992) notes ten motivationally distinct value patterns that might be recognized within and across cultures to sharp value priorities; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) identify seven cultural dimensions, which are somewhat similar to values in the Hofstede model. Moreover, for the models on Chinese culture, a sorting



of twelve Chinese culture aspects is developed by Yau (1994, 1988) basing on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), which has a better structure and is more related to the evolutions in the research of management and marketing; Chinese Culture Connection (1987) generates 71 Chinese culture values and categories them into eight groups: state characteristics, interpersonal relations, family /social positioning, work attitude, business beliefs, personal characteristics, time orientation and relationship with nature.

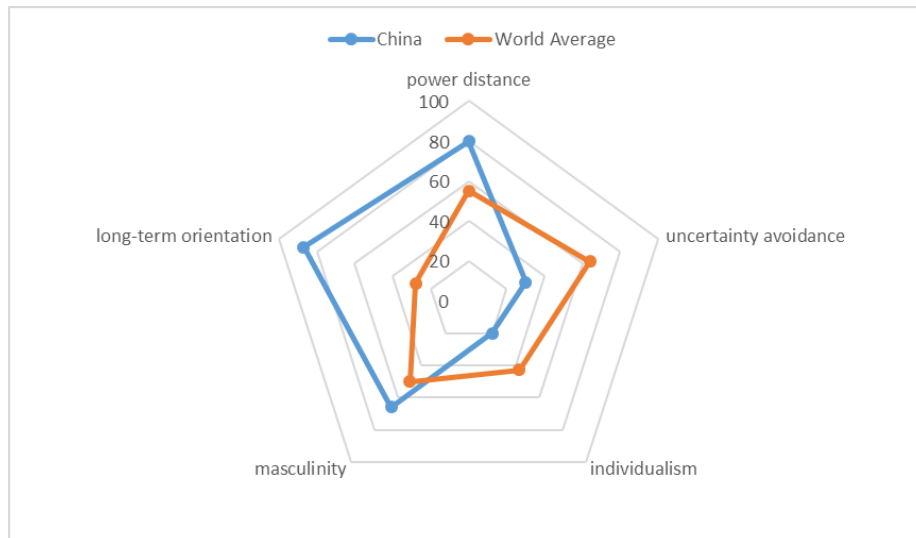
Due to there being many classifications of culture, it is vital to select a type that fits with the research theme. The above proposed categories are all useful in exploring Chinese culture values. They can analyse scopes of cultural values to be compared with the national cultures scopes. These proposed categories are not reciprocally repulsive, as they could be utilised to analyse the similarities and variance of culture with varied forms.

To better understand Chinese culture, it is possible to utilize Hofstede's model as a template against which to explore the Chinese consumers' value orientations, characteristics and behaviours for the following reasons: First of all, the features of Hofstede's model are more dominant, straightforward and easy-to-use, which are the foundation for quantitative research on examining culture and for exploring what culture is (Griffith *et al.*, 2014); Second, Hofstede's model is more general than specific, which could help understanding of the relationship between people's beliefs/values and a set of behaviours. Finally, besides the adoption in the subject of social science, there is stable development, accompanied by Hofstede's model, used in the subjects of business and psychology (Bell-Ross and Faulkner, 1998). It should be noted that this research itself does not use Hofstede's model, although it has been used in this literature review to explore the nature of Chinese culture. This study uses a 'face, harmony and guanxi' model, as will be illustrated later.

#### **4.4 HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL MODEL AND CHINA'S DIMENSIONS**

In the theory of Hofstede (1980), four cultural dimensions were initially identified for national culture study ('power distance', 'uncertainly avoidance', 'individualism/collectivism', and 'masculinity/femininity'). Later, Hofstede (2001) developed his research to include the dimension of 'Long-term orientation', which was evolved from Confucianism. Thus, the five dimensions' model has now been established that helps to

recognise national values. In the view of Zhang and Wu (2014), the model offers sufficient and beneficial knowledge for people's value systems, and the behaviour norms and basic assumptions of norms which constitute culture. Hofstede's model quantifies from the scale 0 to 100 (Hofstede, 1994) and, compared with the world average level, the dimensions of Chinese culture briefly manifest in such a description (see figure 4.2).



**Figure 4.2 Cultural dimensions between China and the world average level**

Power distance refers to the level to which members with less influence in a society accept the reality that power is unequally distributed (Hofstede, 1991, 1980). For people in low power distance culture, activities or behaviour are more open and decentralised, while there is the minor difference in status, respect, rights and wealth among social members. Moreover, in a low power distance culture, superiors encourage subordinates to engage, consult and express themselves. Therefore, the hierarchical influences are less apparent in decision making, suggestion providing, and group building. In contrast, people from China are in high power distance cultures, have more reliance on those superior to them and expect their superiors to show paternalistic patterns to make decisions. Chinese people are also more likely to obey, conform and express wishes to subordinate themselves to automated hierarchy (Hofstede, 2001). What is more, individuals in high distance culture have a tendency to include submissive and peaceful ways to communicate, which provide more opportunities for making concessions or cooperating with others, due to these people fearing being at variance with or holding different points of view to others (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Hofstede, 2001).

Uncertainty avoidance is expressed as the degree of tolerance of society to vagueness and ambiguity (Wennekers *et al.*, 2007), and is associated with the behaviour that people perceive in uncertain, vague and unpredictable situations or the future (Hofstede, 2010,1980). According to Hofstede (2001), Chinese people are in a low uncertainty avoidance culture which is accustomed to with unknown or different conditions and is marked by taking more risks, accepting not only known risks but also unknown risks, and tending to the work with indefinite results and expected risks. These individuals are also individuals who do not like regulations or rules except when they need them, as they feel caught in a bind by regulation and rule (Hancioglu *et al.*, 2014). Regarding high uncertainty avoidance culture, individuals in such backgrounds tend to face less risky situation and be far from possible trouble and are characterised by rejecting unfamiliarity, due to their being worried about failure, loss and mistakes (Albuloushi and Algharaballi, 2014; Hofstede, 2001). Usually, these people strictly follow the rules, regulations or standards, and make changes in sequential manner. From another perspective, new things and new circumstances are fearful for them (Hofstede, 1980).

The individualism/collectivism distinction has been conceptualised to describe the level to which people are positioned on acting as “I” identity versus acting as “we” identity (Hofstede, 1980). People with individualistic culture backgrounds sharply demarcate between themselves and a group. These people put emphasis on individual independence and self-fulfilment but not on group identity; personal intentions over group intentions, and on personal standpoints rather than a group’s (Naor *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, individualist cultures have the tendency to exhibit low-content communication norms in terms of personal centred perceptive through obvious and detailed information interactions (Thomas, 2008). In contrast, LeFebvre and Franke (2013) and Taras *et al.* (2010) state that Chinese people are in a collectivism culture dimension, which is strong and unified with group members, and their identity is defined by the group members on the basis of association. Since identify of ego comes from the group concept, Chinese people always give priority to the interests of group members over their own needs and thoughts. Moreover, people with collectivistic culture backgrounds are inclined to show high-content communication norms in terms of relational perspective to receive and comprehend information from others and to know and read what people are thinking (Finkelstein, 2011).

Masculinity refers to the level to which a society is oriented and driven by competition, achievement and success (Hofstede,1980). Chinese people in masculinity culture place emphasis on being the best, forceful, ambitious and rivalling for the purpose of material success and value embodiment. They are also more likely to give the greatest esteem and recognition to successful people in the community. Also, these kinds of people may sacrifice leisure time to work hard. They even are far from family and familiar environment with the purpose of achieving a better life or job. Individuals in femininity culture, in contrast, care about the quality of life and express compassion for others, rather than money. For this reason, such people are more sensitive to immoral and unsocial behaviours. Moreover, the nature of commercial relations is viewed more like collaboration than rivalry. Notwithstanding, there are some similarities between collectivism and femininity cultural elements, although the emphasis is a little different. That is to say, individualism and collectivism culture underlines the consistency and dependency between group and individuals, while feminine culture highlights the attitudes of success and money and is unrelated to group relationship (Zhang and Wu, 2014; Yao *et al.*, 2012)

Long-term orientation describes the time perspective of a society that cultivates good qualities specifically the tendency to persevere and save, which are action to the future., Chinese people are in a long-term orientation culture dimension and are educated to be thrifty, hardworking for the future, and persevering in the face of difficulty. Moreover, within this background, success results from hard work and failure comes from in exertion. In commerce, long-term culture emphasises the importance of long-term goals, gaining knowledge, maintaining improvements, encouraging mistakes and facing flexible situations. On the contrary, short-term orientation refers to a society that puts emphasis on anteriority and the present (e.g. reverence tradition even when facing difficulty), and the significance of fair social responsibilities (Hofstede,1980). Under short-term background, commercial performance lays stress on instantly improving through minimising mistakes and differences.

What is more, some researchers seem to argue with the Hofstede's theory. For instance, Yeh (1988), Roberts and Boyacigiller (1984) raised questions regarding the suitability of Hofstede's model in Asian countries. They also dispute that it is better to set other trials to check whether it is worthwhile to reference or refute the Hofstede's theory (e.g. Punnett and Withane, 1990; Shackleton and Ali, 1990). Moreover, Kwon (2012)

has been criticised that Hofstede's theory treats 'culture' and 'country' equally, meaning that the differences within the nation are overlooked. However, on the basis of subsequent replication studies, some researchers have given the backing to Hofstede's theory (e.g. Tang and Koveos, 2008; Shackleton and Ali, 1990). However, more recently, Zhang and Wu (2014) contend that the Hofstede's model suggests a view of a two-way fitting between culture and management related discipline, and for the purpose of conducting suitable strategies and doing business successfully in a nation, it is important to note both the national culture and its associated local culture. Likewise, Mooij (2004) claims that it is worth having a sense of the whole overall impression when researchers intend to study customer behaviour from a national perspective and they should discover how this kind of culture derives itself and how it orientates and what the characteristics are.

In this study, the Hofstede-type model included is as a means of either understanding or measuring cultural issues in China. Hofstede's model provides a view of culture that relies upon Western norms and that derive essentially from Christian values. However, it doesn't take account of historical and religious factors that are specific to China. Therefore, for this study, a different way of understanding Chinese culture might be more relevant that China is recognised philosophical underpinnings that derive from the teaching of Confucian values.

## **4.5 THE ROOT OF DOMINANT CHINESE CULTURE - CONFUCIANISM**

The teaching of Confucian values heavily influences the Chinese ways of thought (Lloyd, 1996). Although the Chinese also associate with values of Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism provides them with major guidance for their daily lives. Confucius (551-479 BC) was a man of master, who travelled to disseminate his philosophy, thoughts about legislation, morals, education and principles of people's behaviour among difference kingdoms in ancient China, notes of which were subsequently taken notes and collected into the Confucianism Classic- *the Analects* by his students and followers after his death.

Confucianism refers the theory of Confucius and his followers and is now usually presented as a value or beliefs about individuals' principles governing morality and acceptable conduct. Even if Western marketing/management theory has had a profound impact on China's commercial development, researchers

believe that Chinese society continues to be influenced by Confucian value, which impacts how Chinese people have interrelated and interconnected with others for two thousand years and still guides the thoughts of Chinese people today (Ding, 2006; Tsui *et al.*, 2004).

In Confucianism, virtues ('*ren*' - humaneness, '*yi*'- righteousness, '*li*'- formalities, '*zhi*' - wisdom, '*xin*' - sincerity, '*zhong*' - loyalty and '*xiao*' - filial piety) are emphasized as overall objectives and essential ways in society (Wang and Juslin, 2009). Besides the five virtues, Hofstede and Bond (1988) have also identified four primary ideologies in Confucianism to expound the Chinese culture: hierarchical and fundamental relationships, family orientation, moral behaviour for treating others and highlighting education. As Han (2013) states, Confucianism is one of the most precious and useful cultural legacies to be inherited

- 1) Confucianism advocates hierarchical and fundamental relationships among people, which is the basis of Chinese society. The term *Li* refers to formalities. It shows itself not only in terms of formal action or procedure that are carried out as part of a particular activity or event but also for appropriate behaviour and positions. *Li*, as a Confucian value, regularises people's behaviour with regards to relationships and involves five relation norms: higher authorities, parents, spouse, seniors and friends. Moreover, the five relations are on common, complementing responsibilities: subordinates are obligated to esteem and obey their superiors; the higher level is obligated to protect and consider the lower level subordinates.
- 2) Confucianism believes that family is the root form of all social systems. An individual is not purely an isolated unity, but rather is an element of the family. Children are advised to regulate their own behaviour norms to overcome personality so that the harmonious relations of the family are built. However, individuals' thoughts are not restrained. Moreover, based on the value of Confucianism, another priority for individuals is to ensure responsibility to their society, and the interests of the group are more important than the individuals. One viewpoint pointed out emphatically by Tu (1998), is that Confucianism value contributes enormously to maintaining every section of the Chinese community. He also identifies that everybody is regarded as being in the heart of human relations in Confucianism culture, rather than merely independent units. Every individual is under obligation

to his/her family and social members, which surpasses duty to themselves (Han, 2013). This value contributes to forming the thinking that lays more stress on collectivism, cooperation, family-orientated business norms and harmonisation (ibid).

- 3) The moral behaviour involves treating other people in same the manner as treating their oneself: it is a basic standard. Individuals are the basis of moral behaviour, which implies human nature (Dolor, 2001). Individual is through moral behaviour to perform his/her responsibilities to other individuals, which is deemed as 'benevolent' (Canda, 2002). According to the value of Confucian, the fundamental meaning of human being is to love others. Meanwhile, in the opinion of Confucian, though, high-minded moral and ideal do not make a living at the expense of people's mercy, people should make personal sacrifices to stand their ground for the moral (Wang and Juslin, 2009). As regards the modern commercial relationships, the moral behaviour could be as a reference: firm should consistently pursue excellence in practicing care for its employees, care for customers and care for business rivals in order to maintain harmony relations. On the whole, the firm should build the moral and love patterns in the business.
- 4) Education or leaning is a kind of moral in life, which lays stress on skill acquisition, hard-working, a pure heart and few desires, patience, and persistence. The purpose of these patterns is to a best man (Tan, 2003). Confucianism argues that individuals with a moral sense of good and evil are to produce wisdom, which is as the basis for moral. However, moral should also be possessed through learning and being educated – it implies that people should have larger goals and focus on study (Dolor, 2001).

## **4.6 RANGE OF CHINESE CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS**

There are a number of ways that are trying to conceptualise Chinese cultural elements, the more effective way is that placing the elements within the values-based framework to organise them. For instance, according to the framework of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Chinese people are deemed as the one pursuing harmonious life; respecting the past and admiring the tradition; having the humble and self-effacing beliefs; stressing on order, independent character, paying attention to the face in relationships (Yau, 1988).

Besides, Chinese academics generate lots of theories on the values of local cultural elements with the intention of interpreting them involved in Chinese history and social foundation. Such as, Hsu (1970) suggests that the value orientation of Chinese people is mainly displayed as the term '*renqing*' that emphasizes on the relations between individual and other around the individual. That is to say, the Chinese people are conceptualized within the associations of friendliness and social position; Wang *et al.* (2008), Wang (2007) and Hwang (1987) argue that the all the Chinese attach importance to interacting with others and are revealed in local cultural elements as the notion '*guanxi*', '*mianzi*', '*renqing*' and '*bao*'. Meanwhile, some other academics have pointed out that some cultural elements also bring about a high level of self-discipline for most of the Chinese people, for example, thriftiness, self-control (Kindel, 1985). With the intention of understanding the enduring force of Chinese culture elements and their effect on Chinese consumers and behavioural patterns, some prominent examples are expressed as follows.

### **Thriftiness**

Wang and Lin (2009) argue that the belief of thriftiness is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture. The mind of Chinese thriftiness can be traced back to Confucius' philosophy that the man who is frugal will have a guarantee in the future. What is more, the thrifty value proposition under collectivism culture that has been advocated and motivated by state-owned media and social ideology is inculcated towards an economical and simple way of life. Because of this, the thrifty mind has a profound influence on different aspects of people's everyday lives, especially, their manner of borrowing/ taking loans, savings and expenditure.

Although there has been a slight increase in the desire for wealth and material possessions, which has resulted in a rising number of loan acceptance, there are, however, a large number of Chinese people who keep their old-style negative attitude to loans (Wang and Lin, 2009). Echoing this, data from the World Bank shows China has one of highest saving rates in the world, occupying around 50% share of China's gross domestic product in 2013 (CNBC, 2015).



### ***Yuanfen (serendipity)***

According to Hsu and Hwang (2016), *Yuanfen* refers to requisite karma in relationships which hints that 'coincidence' and 'destinies' are linked; even when the coincidence or link is over. It is a person's intelligence for making decisions in order to mentally adapt or accept in a Chinese society which places so much emphasis on culture. Usually, relying on their experience of living, Chinese people are conditioned to apply *yuanfen* when they are in poor mood, discomfort and frustration. For example, such negative senses are translated into a kind of a faith that can be utilised to temper the anxiety. Besides, in agreement with the statement of Yang (2005), the instrument of *yuanfen* is symbolised and derived from God's will. As a result, these senses/beliefs convert hands-on experience or mental adaptation and adjustment to deal with personal issues.

In addition, Hwang (2012) suggests that Chinese people in indigenous *yuanfen* cultural contexts are used to taking a continuous point of view on personal matters instead of an intermittent view. They deem that the causal laws of the present, the future and the past might be tied together with forming and destroying all kinds of relations around the same time dimension.

### **Bao (Reciprocity)**

According to Tangpong *et al.* (2016), Song *et al.* (2011) and Perugini *et al.* (2003), reciprocity is denoted by a kind of expectancy that individuals show a favourable response after they receive a positive action, or a negative reaction when they are delivered with a negative action. As the following Chinese proverbs say, 'If one receives a plum, one must return a peach'; 'give kindness for kindness, give hatred for hatred'.

From a practical standpoint, Chinese reciprocity is a manner of interchanging satisfactorily or doing good things by means of the giving party looking forward to being rewarded from the accepting party later on, which is different from the manner of Western people (Tangpong and Pesek, 2007; Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005). Hence, Sacconi (2007) argues that the pattern of reciprocity helps bring about the satisfaction of both parties and encourages common benefits amongst people. For this reason, reciprocation is acknowledged as the ideal tactics that ensure the maximum returns in a long-term relationship (*ibid*). In the discipline of relationship marketing, reciprocity is a critical factor, which lays stress on developing a positive and

continuous connection with customers. Furthermore, Gustafsson *et al.* (2005) suggest that, from the point of marketing, the pattern of reciprocity that customers receive from a firm will affect the manners of repaying, such as repurchase behaviours, good reputation, and resisting the temptation from the rivals of the firm.

### ***Renqing(favour)***

From an English perspective, *renqing* is defined as owing someone a favour (Yen *et al.*, 2011). It usually involves giving something and accepting something in relationships (Wang, 2007). According to Wang *et al.* (2008), *renqing* is complimentary to some extent, and the direct ways of communicating *renqing*, in practice, includes helping and giving presents. *Renqing* follows the principle of mutuality, which is emphasised in Confucian philosophy (Fang, 2014).

If accepting part is helped, then this person owes *renqing* to the supporter, and ought to repay the *renqing* at some time in the future. Furthermore, if the accepting party does not desire in a rush to repay the *renqing* to the supporter, the accepting party should remember/keep the *renqing*, and return it when the supporter needs it on some circumstance. One of the most remarkable things about *renqing* is that the value of repaying is required to be no less than the giving party if it does not transcend the original value (Kipnis, 1997).

At the same time, it is believed that no-repaying is immoral (Luo, 2000). Such refusal may lead to bad emotions for the giving party along with losing face to him or her. Given that the Chinese are concerned about face-saving, losing face means psychological harm and, for that reason, non-repaying will 'kill' long-standing relationships and bring negative effects (MacInnis, 1993).

In the main, Confucianism established more norms, such as thriftiness, *yuanfen* (serendipity), *bao* (reciprocity) and *renqing* (favour). However, although there are many import Chinese cultural characteristics could affect Chinese customer behaviour represented in the literature, this article focuses on three, perhaps better known, characteristics – namely face, *guanxi* (relationship), and harmony (social cohesion), because when evaluating and justifying the impact of Chinese culture in the restaurant sector, the marketing literature mainly focuses on these three elements. (see table 4.1 for literature summary).

Main Chinese cultures in restaurant sector	Researchers
Face	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2013) Chao <i>et al.</i> (2012) Tsang (2011) Chan <i>et al.</i> (2007) Chang <i>et al.</i> (2010)
<i>Guanxi</i> (relationship)	Chang (2011); Tsang (2011); Yen <i>et al.</i> (2011); Gilbert and Tsao (2000); Chow <i>et al.</i> (2007);
Harmony (coherence)	Hoare <i>et al.</i> (2011) Tsang (2011) Ng (2010) Han and Zhang (2009) Hoare and Butcher (2007)

**Table 4.1 Literature summary of restaurant related Chinese cultures.**

### Face

Face, as one of the major components of Chinese culture; its notion can be tracked back through a long Chinese history spanning from the Shang Dynasty (1,000 BC) to the present (Du *et al.*, 2010). It plays a vital part in influencing how Chinese people interact with others in their social lives and has been researched by scholars throughout the world.

In Chinese culture, face is theorised from two meanings (Du *et al.*, 2010; Gao, 1996): by way of *lian* (cheek by literal meaning) and *mian* (image by literal meaning). *Lian* stands for a person's moral character through the review of society's confidence, while *mian* characterises the achievement of repute prestige via a person's ascent in life, via accomplishment or flashiness. Hence, to a certain degree, *lian* is an image of self-protection, whereas *mian* is related to an image of self-projection or self-claim (Shi *et al.*, 2010). In China, it is very common that one's family feels shame if an individual loses face in public, but the family feels honored if an individual gains face (Hofstede, 2001).

Some scholars view face from interactive aspects. Shi *et al.* (2010) and Gao (1996) argue the fact that the perception of face has penetrated all aspects of interpersonal correlations in China due to the interactive orientation of Chinese culture. As Cardon and Scott (2003) state, there is no doubt that every Chinese takes notice of face all the while in their daily life; Dong and Lee (2007) and Goffman (1955) propose an interactive description of face, which is a kind of acknowledgment that individual gains from other around them. Dong and Lee (2007) further expand that the existence of face does not rely on an individual or merely between persons; instead, it belongs to various features. These features of face have also been identified by Cardon (2009) who deems that a caring face can bring loyalty and increase reciprocity as long as an individual's face is cared, raised and confirmed. Furthermore, when studying the social interaction function of face through the high-profile Chinese family class, Stover (1962) finds that face has the formal and conventional features of personal interaction, and is the best illustration of an interaction

Some other scholars, meanwhile, clarify face from the aspects of prestige, status and pride. One of the Chinese sociologists, Zhai (2004) states that face is a person's status or personal façade presented in the public relations circle. Professional communication and business scholars have proposed their understanding of face as well. According to Cardon (2009), face can be defined as a result of an individual succeeding in accomplishing something, along with high opinion, pride and self-worth; it is a combination of an individual's self-esteem and self-assurance (Coggin and Coggin, 2001); It can be clarified as the appearance of an individual to the outside community (St. Amant, 2001); face can be described as a person's image to the public that everyone wants to demand for themselves (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Face is also in connection with the materialism aspect that inclines towards social prestige or the acceptability of society, by means of using a brand, a product or a service (Liao and Wang, 2009), which particularly the individuals who have a strong sense of face awareness probably to go for money and material wealth. Bao *et al.* (2003) claim that owing to face, Chinese consumers place more emphasis on extrinsic traits (e.g. prestige, status), compared with the inherent traits of products, or service (e.g. feature, enjoyment), which is in accordance with the attributes of materialists. Hence, up to this point, it could be said that face makes materialism noticeable. Furthermore, it should be noted that some researchers (Li and Su, 2007; Bao *et al.*, 2003) theorise face as a kind of consumption style (face consumption) instead of as individual characteristics. In some sense, Jackson (2004) argues that although there is a difference in the nature of national cultures,

the similar tendency of consumption for status applies to both developed and developing countries.

Oetzel *et al.* (2008) argue that face is a sensitive social commodity during interaction, since the resource can be vulnerable, boosted, continued and negotiated. Hence, face not only follows good consumption principles but also follows service consumption principles. Du *et al.* (2010) claim that the basis of social exchange theory is that all social activity involves satisfying the needs of an individual. In the service industry, the interaction between customers and service suppliers is an extension of social exchange theory. For example, customers may pay money to interchange some resources in order to fulfil the needs. It is known the nature of service is intangible, customers' needs are achieved by the pattern of experience and enjoyment (e.g. the restaurant servers understand the requirement of customers; have dinner with friends) (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). However, if customer need is not fulfilled during the service encounter, this may give rise to more concern regarding the customers' feelings, and they may then take into consideration self-esteem, self-image, and response to their surroundings in their next visit, all of which are related to face. So, based on the discussion above, this research speculates that face is one element of Chinese culture entity that affects customers' minds for future restaurant visits.

### ***Guanxi***

*Guanxi* refers to the particular personal relations or connecting between two persons, and is a unique characteristic in China (Chung, 2011). The notion *guanxi* is produced naturally from Chinese society, which gives prominence to harmony and maintains a perfect bond among Chinese people (Gold *et al.*, 2002; Hwang, 1998).

In ancient Chinese social order, there are five strong associations in the relationship, described as *wu lun* (prime human relationship): these are the relationship between a ruler and their courtiers, the relationship between a father and his son, the relations with brothers, the relationship between a husband and his wife, and the relationship with friends (Mencius, 2004). *Wu lun* suggests that social positions rely on proper relations and their corresponding roles along with interactions so as to maintain a good social relationship (Barbalet, 2014).

In fact, *guanxi* has several aspects as significant features in modern China (Barbalet, 2014). Two widespread ancient Chinese proverbs say: 'Rely on parents at home, go out with a friend'; 'more than a friend in more than one way'. These Chinese idioms imply that *guanxi* is closely associated with family, affinity, ethnic group as well as other associations and is not restricted to *wu lun* in Chinese society: it also includes the relationship between administrative personnel and workers, the relationship between lower level subordinates and the higher level, the relationship between service deliver and customers, the relations with colleagues, the relations with classmates and so on (Ying, 2002). All these associations are fairly formal and social, suggesting specific types and a principle or condition of communication/ interaction, even if only to a slight extent (Kriz *et al.*, 2014). For the sake of sustaining *guanxi*, both parties should implement stricter norms in line with any regulations that administer their behaviours so that their both their beliefs about the future can be met (Barbalet, 2014).

There are three scholars who have had a meaningful impact on *guanxi* research; for instance, Xiaotong Fei (1948) is best known for his theories of '*Chaxugeju*: the differential mode of association', Kwang-Kuo Hwang (1987) famously theorized *mianzi* and favor in China, and Kuo-Shu Yang (1995) put forward some remarkable context on members of family (*jiaren*), acquaintance (*shuren*), for instance, colleagues, classmates, friends, neighbors; strangers (*shengren*). Based on the theories of Yang (1995), Hwang (1987) and Fei (1948), Zhang and Zhang (2013) sum up the features of Chinese *guanxi*: Public interaction and interchange is the priority that Chinese base their judgement of *guanxi* on; the interaction manner among Chinese people is related to *guanxi* among them; the better the personal relationships (*guanxi*) are and the higher the frequency of interaction, the more the chance that particular treatment and attitudes will be offered; some strategies may be utilized by Chinese people in order to maintain or keep *guanxi*, for example, saving *mianzi* work; offering and getting profit through Chinese personal relations. From the aspect of the social network, Zhang and Zhang (2013) and Barbalet (2014) give emphasis to the composition of *guanxi*, which is comprised by individuals or parties who know each other and shaped by their social behaviour. In the same *guanxi* network, the individuals or parties would expect to understand what is truly going on around them and weigh the benefits of interaction in line with their social criterion. In restaurant context, dining with family members, friends and work partner is an effective way to establish and maintain *guanxi* (Han and Zhang, 2009), and the practices within the environment could extend the social relations with new persons

based on the criterion.

Clearly, from the elaboration above, it can be seen that *guanxi* mold persons' actions when they are engaging or interacting. Since individuals are the basis of commercial transactions from the starting points to the ending points, naturally, the engaging or interacting of persons will affect the relationship between customers and servicers (Wang and Chen, 2009). Wang and Chen (2009) also propose that for the long-term commercial relationship, both parties should understand each other and put themselves in the position of the persons involved, and should also have emotional communication and connection.

### **Harmony**

Based on the theory of Hofstede (1991), China is a high collectivist culture nation where people lay stress on group or 'we', other than the 'I' of an individualist culture nation. Chinese people are influenced by the "we" patterns and obligation and 'complied' with the group, to pay the utmost attention to the objectives or interests of the group (Fang, 2014), which brings about a Chinese native value: harmony.

Harmony has long been thought as a fundamental value in Chinese society. It is initially and generally shown by the theory of Ying-Yang and Eight Diagrams in the ancient book - *the Book of Changes*, which is also the fundamental of *Confucianism* (Han and Altman, 2010). According to the Philosophy of *I Ching*, the world is one organism in a continual process, which is the result of harmonious composition with full of the entity from inception through decommissioning. Above all, the entity has harmony as its ultimate goal at all times (Chin, 2014; Hofstede, 2010). In alliance with this, Zhang (2012) notes that Confucianism deems individuals to be surrounded by a social and complete network. That is, without relationships or connection, individuals cannot be valued. Furthermore, benefaction is the primary belief of Confucianism, which signifies that individuals should have good will and mutual understanding with others by means of harmony.

There are various old sayings about the value of harmony spread abroad among Chinese people. For instance, 'a harmonious family can lead to the success of everything', 'harmony is the driving force of economic development', 'harmonious and united'. The pursuit of harmony in Chinese society can be seen as a statement for peace and a positive person-to-person attitude in a literal sense, which is also the golden

rule when people face conflicts, because Confucianism is deep-rooted in every Chinese mind (Wang and Lin, 2009).

Like most culture cumulative processes, harmony was rooted and progressively evolved in the traditional Chinese agricultural value system, which represents the feature of a dense crowd and low fluidity of society. Because many Chinese families are survived to place in which they were raised, the agricultural manner of production enabled lots of people to obtain some limited resources. With the purpose of allocating resources among the individuals within the group, it is worthy to highlight the value of harmony (La Barre, 1945). The stability of relationship and harmony have played an essential role among agricultural Chinese, as lasting and harmonious relations for the family and society are indispensable. This kind of culture profoundly affects the lives of current people, such as, in order to maintain the harmony of groups, the choices of Chinese on food consumption, styles, and norms are usually influenced by his/her groups (e.g. the family members or friends). Meanwhile, they do not care about these choices if the harmony can be enhanced (Chang *et al.*, 2010).

The tendency that Chinese individuals give preference to avoiding conflict and maintaining harmony has been proposed in some cultural studies, such as Leung *et al.* (2011) who finds that the Chinese show higher scores in both diminishing dispute and enhancing harmony than those from individualism social patterns. What is more, Kavikondala *et al.* (2016) suggest that harmony is one of the most significant elements that promotes family relations and family members' physical and psychological health, and stresses understanding, friendliness, support and empathy; Chin (2014) finds that pursuing harmony could promote employees' organization citizenship behaviour and job satisfactions; Chen (2001) argues that Chinese people adopt different conflict handling manners compared with western societies, due to the harmony effect. Chinese people can be explained more as non-aggressive, heading off the confrontation, supportive and integrating. Gabrenya and Huang (1996) report that harmony, under Chinese culture, encourages individuals to be tolerant to difference, divergence and misbehaviour between human beings.

From the above academic researches, it can be concluded that Chinese culture puts emphasis on group harmony and social cohesiveness, which promotes mutual or reciprocal relations among people (Wang and



Lin, 2009). When Chinese make a decision, they may take into account many factors, not only according to the facts but also thinking about other factors such as, long-standing relations, pursuing harmony and collaboration with others (Tsang, 2011). Actually, in China, these factors are stressed as a sort of behaviour pattern (Zhang and Neelankavil, 1997). From a marketing standpoint, being willing to listen, respecting each other, mutual understanding in belief and difference, are essential to for realising harmoniousness, collaboration and mutual development, and also could be an interpretation of the pursuit of interpersonal relationship (Leung *et al.*, 2011).

## 4.7 CONCLUSION

Based on Hofstede's model, first, China is a high-power distance country, within which Chinese people widely accept the inequality degree of power (Hofstede, 2010). Since power distance has a marked impact on behaviours, Chinese people usually adhere to the hierarchy within groups and perform within their group's rank (Kats *et al.*, 2010). Second, China presents with low level uncertainty avoidance, which means that Chinese people are flexible to rules and situations and are comfortable with ambiguity (Hofstede, 2007). Third, China is a country with characteristics of collectivism (Hofstede, 2010) that highlight group orientation and maintaining harmony with group members. Particularly, family and *guanxi* are critical features of Chinese collectivism, and sometimes family weights more than other factors (Yao *et al.*, 2012). Then, China is also a more masculine country in which material achievement and success are more important (Briscoe *et al.*, 2012); Last, China focuses on long-term development and puts emphasis on future benefits (Hofstede, 2001).

The model of Hofstede provides an option to understand Chinese culture and peoples' behaviours. However, the Hofstede model does not take account of cultural factors; it assumes that the same criteria can be applied universally. Additionally, Hofstede (1980) also assumes that China is 'one thing', whereas culture can vary both within and across national borders and, also, up and down within apparently homogeneous social groups. Confucianism has such a strong hold over Chinese values and behaviours that this is likely to offer a better lens for evaluation. In the restaurant, Chinese consumers' performances are highly involved in the three Confucian values - face, *guanxi*, harmony. The three Chinese culture elements are identified to provide the theoretical support for closing the research gaps in respect of consumer behaviour in a restaurant context. In next chapter, the consumer behaviour on value creation is discussed.

# **CHAPTER 5. VALUE CREATION IN CONSUMER MARKET**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Consumers receive more information about the goods and services they use than ever before, therefore they become more flexible in making their decisions and have many choices to choose. Their choices are not static these days, but rather they can choose and test from a large variety of goods and services in order to achieve different experiences. Thus, it is vital for the management of service companies to understand that their customers are no longer passive in their buying behaviour. Service firms, in order to remain competitive in the market, should understand what customers want and what contributes most to the value that customers perceive from the goods/service (Walter *et al.*, 2010).

The follow-up paragraph explores a range of concepts that have been considered to explain, impact or derive from how customer perceived value, such as customer experience, value and value creation, the goods and service dominant logics, value co-creation through experience, customer value co-creation behaviours and customer engagement.

## **5.2 A DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN MARKETING**

The notion of customer experience, as one of most crucial elements, undoubtedly plays an important role in exploring customer behaviour, and emphasizes the role of the experience as regards customer buying behaviour, customer satisfaction and loyalty, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, and customer engagement (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Addis and Holbrook, 2001, Caru and Cova, 2003).

The concept of customer experience has been noticed, raised and conceptualised by researchers and professionals for the last thirty years. The scholars of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) first theorised the notion of customer experience in the literature of marketing and consumption, and suggest that factors of satisfaction, niceness, symbolic significance, creative power and affection can enhance and expand the connotation of customer experience.

Since then, customer experience has become more known and focused on by the studies of Carbone and Haeckel (1994), Pine and Gilmore (1999), and Schmitt (1999). Carbone and Haeckel (1994) suggest that experience is a kind of past-impression accompanied by the encounter between customer and products, service and employees, that is to say, an awareness generated when individuals combine perceptual information. Pine and Gilmore (1999) claim that it is vital to recognise that real experiences are different from services. In particular, Pine and Gilmore (1999) note that when individuals purchase a service, they purchase series of intangible actions implemented on their behalf. However, if individuals purchase experience, they take the time to have fun with a series of unforgettable activities that firm sets. These can be seen as theater scripts to involve customers in their own individual forms. Schmitt (1999) reveals five kinds of stimulations that firms can evoke to create an experience that comprising: sensory stimulation (sense), affective stimulation (feel), cognitive stimulation (think), physical activities stimulation (act) and social stimulation (relate). In addition, Schmitt (1999) contends that customers are affective creatures and pursue an enjoyable experience that generates from consumption. Thus, he proposes that firms ought to shift to being experience-driven companies.

However, Schmitt (2003) also argues that the exploration by the above scholars of the term customer experience is partial, tedious and within a small dimension, due to the notion of customer experience is being regarded mainly as an inseparable portion of satisfaction. Subsequently, Haeckel *et al.* (2003) deem that the notion experience is customers' feelings, which derive from a mutual or reciprocal action with a firm's commodities, services, and environmental stimuli. They propose that the mutual or reciprocal action generates clues to the meaning of emotion and rationality in different phases of the service delivery process, which eventually leads to experience. Haeckel *et al.* (2003), meanwhile, display three kinds of clues that finally result in customer experience - functional, personalised and mechanic. Later, customer experience was defined as subjective and internal replies to direct and indirect connecting with a firm (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). A direct connection may take place when customers purchase, enjoy and get services. While an indirect connection may occur in an unexpected manner through a firm's products, service, information advertisements, promotion, positive and negative comments, assessment and so on. Verhoef *et al.* (2009) clearly illustrate customer experience is a multidimensional conception generated in a retailing background. They particularly suggest that customer experience involves customer cognition, affection,

emotions, and socially related responding to a firm, which is comprehensive in nature. Subsequently, Andajani (2015) adds that customer experience refers to direct and indirect experience where the customer is involved with the service firm, the service process, the firm's atmosphere and how the customer interrelates with the firm's service, products and other customers. This is also deemed to take place in a business environment and is considered as being designed and provided by service firms/ providers that have a unique commercial drive. Likewise, DeKeyser *et al.* (2015) note that customer experience is cognition, emotion, sensation, spirit and physical and social components that involve direct and indirect interaction between the customer and the market actors, which finally results in a holistic experience.

In general, the notion of customer experience is in different disciplines, with different explanations and theorisation proposed by academics and researchers, which may provide various perspectives and models. However, despite these variations, scholars and professionals have reached agreement that the customer experience is marked by several dimensions that contains cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social elements (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) and is a customer's personal and subjective response to any direct or indirect connection with the service provider personnel (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Meyer and Schwager, 2007).

### **5.3 A DEFINITION OF VALUE AND VALUE CREATION**

The conception and meanings of value are still important domain in marketing research, but it causes a difficulty for understanding. Nonetheless, a few academics have been trying to understand it from some different viewpoints. Such as, value is an assessment of benefits and losses (Day, 1990); value is a pleasure for the enjoyment of the consumption (Holbrook, 1994); value is vague conception for recognition (Woodall, 2003); value is the term that makes people better (Gronroos, 2008); value is the term that contributes to benefits of customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2008); value is finance profit that generated through the stakeholders of company (Gronroos and Helle, 2010); value is an extended section of society (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011); value is recognized in the context of customer experiences (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2009).

From the general point of view, value is created through a process to boost happiness, for example, a

situation is ameliorated that make customer better or easier in some way (Nordin and Kowalkowski, 2010); however, the behaviour of service personnel might completely reverse the situation, which suggests the creation of value also make customer worse (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011). The conventional view is that service firm rules the process of creating value, for example, making life more satisfying for its consumers (Miller *et al.*, 2002); finding solutions for customers' issue (Sawhney *et al.*, 2006), helping customer gain more resources and chances (Brax and Jonsson, 2009), meeting the needs of customers (Tuli *et al.*, 2007), bearing relevant responsibilities (Strandvik *et al.*, 2012). Whereas, with the rise of supporting for the notion service (Gronroos and Voima, 2013; Gronroos, 2012, 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2008), the view is changing towards 'network' for creating value (Vargo and Lusch, 2016; Storbacka *et al.*, 2012). The 'network' perspective on value (Gummesson, 2008), offers the directions for capturing the meaning of value creation in a relationships context, particularly, proposing the role of individuals and the surroundings in society (Fuhse and Mutzel, 2011). The widely accepted interpretation for value creation is identified by Vargo and Lusch (2004a), who draw on the conception of labour that offered by Adam Smith (1776), and argue that value have two aspects: value-in-exchange and value-in-use. Further, they argue that value-in-exchange and value-in-use are primarily supported by goods-dominant logic and service dominant logic, respectively. In the following section, the two logics is further detailed.

## **5.4 THE GOODS DOMINANT AND SERVICE DOMINANT LOGICS**

According to the goods-dominant view of marketing, commercial interchange principally concentrates on valuable visible products – goods; 'service' is either a kind of invisible good (e.g. as units of products), or an accompaniment that strengthens the value of the goods (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). Moreover, from the goods dominant logic point of view, there is a distinguishing role between firm/producer and customer. The firm/producer seizes a dominant position to perform a set of actions in creating value, in both the temporal and spatial disconnection with the customer (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Specifically, G-D logic lays stress on the value being in a single way to deliver from firm/producer to customer relying on the notion value-in-exchange. As Vargo and Lusch (2004a) suggest, in value-in-exchange, the value is created by the firm through its products during the producing and distributing processes of the products where the final objective is benefited maximisation through increasing sales.

Service dominant(S-D) logic, which treats 'service' as procedure(s) and process(es) of presenting what to do for the other side – is irrelevant to goods, but by right of itself. It also believes that the focus of interchange activities is on 'service' (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). It is also expanded by Vargo and Lusch (2004b) as a new orientation to explore and comprehend the meaning/process of value creation, which is a radical change to the goods dominant logic. Moreover, S-D logic challenges the prevailing view and conventional wisdom about value creation through interchange (Chathoth *et al.*, 2016), and underlines that value is of experience, context, personal percipience (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). S-D logic also explains the relationship between customer and firm, in which the resources are integrated by customers, and firms provide the platform to allow and promote customers' value creating, mainly by virtue of the notion of value-in-use (Gronroos, 2008). In the view of Chathoth *et al.* (2013) and Payne *et al.* (2008), value-in-use can be seen as the value generated through the procedure of consuming rather than the ultimate service product. Namely, based on the opportunity of value creation, service dominant logic is that customer and service firm/supplier, together, co-create value. To illustrate, Vargo and Lusch (2004a) contend that under service dominant logic, all suppliers are, in essence, service suppliers that switch services with one another, since switching/exchanging is based on the service itself. Further, Vargo and Lusch (2008) address the notion of 'service' as utilising one entity's resources to benefit another one, which indicates that the creation of value in collaboration with the customer turns to a source of competition advantage for the service supplier/firm.

Eight comparisons between goods dominant logic and service dominant logic have been summarised by Vargo and Lusch (2008), representing a shift in mind. The features of good dominant logic and service dominant logic are also listed, respectively (see table 5.1 below). Subsequently, based on these comparisons, Vargo and Lusch (2008) argue that illustrating and analysing actuality suggests that the customer is active and has the knowledge and ability to play a resource integrator role instead of that of the passive character.

	<b>goods-dominant (G-D) logic</b>	<b>Service-dominant (S-D) logic</b>
Value meaning	Value-in-exchange	Value-in-use
Value generator	Firm, often with input from firms in a supply chain	Firm, customers, and other stakeholders
value creation process	Firms assign value to commodities or services, value is added through enhancing or increasing attributes	Firms provide value through market offerings, customers involve the value-creation process through use
Value purpose	making profits for the firm	Enhance flexibility, survival ability, and system profits through service of others
Value measurement	The amount of nominal value, price received in exchange	The flexibility, survival ability of the service system
Firm role	Providing and distributing value	providing and co-creating value, providing service

**Table 5.1. G-D logic vs S-D logic on value creation (source: Vargo and Lusch, 2008)**

Therefore, because of service dominant logic, value has the property of co-creating, being in context and experience; resource and service have hardly any value until they are involved in a particular context/environment or value mindset. The emergence of service dominant logic offers some novel visions to the comprehension of value in recognising that the experience of the customer is a dynamic process with extreme complexity that not limited to service offers and their offerings. Accordingly, consistent with service dominant logic, the service provider/firm is not an exclusive actor in creating value in the process, and the customer should have responsibility and obligation in the service generating process. Indeed, the previous literature on service creation process has suggested that for a pleasing, effective and positive service to happen, the customer has a very vital role in the value creating and service delivering progress along with the service offers/firm (Bowen *et al.*, 1989). Consequently, with the intention of having a clear understanding of the character of the customer in the service delivering process, the notion of value co-creation needs further explorations and is the next topic in the thesis to be addressed.

## 5.5 VALUE CO-CREATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE

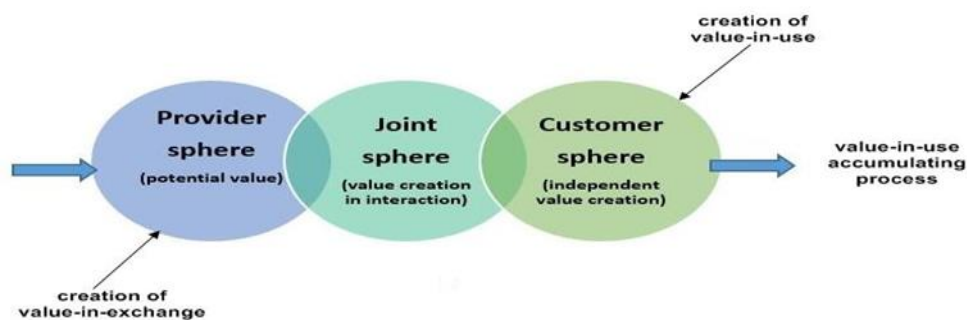
The value co-creation initially emerges as a notion in the business management area in the article of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a). Because of the raising of service dominant logic, the studies in the notion value co-creation have profoundly development, which highlights the essential elements of customer and the related agents (Williams and Aitken, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Moreover, based on the service dominant logic, some new viewpoints on value creation and theoretical perspective have been involving (Martinez-Canas *et al.*, 2016), such as management perspective (Ramaswamy and Gouillart, 2010; Ramaswamy, 2009; Payne *et al.*, 2008; Etgar, 2008; Jaworski and Kohli, 2006; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a); marketing perspective (Salloum *et al.*, 2014; Salloum and Azoury, 2012; Gronroos, 2011; Witell *et al.*, 2011; Hatch and Schultz, 2010; Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Ballantyne and Varey, 2008); innovation and new product development perspective (Galvagno and Dalli, 2014; Saarijarvi *et al.*, 2013; Bowonder *et al.*, 2010; Nambisan, 2009; Franke and Schreier, 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2003). Accordingly, these diverse approaches reveal that value co-creation is an all-encompassing conception that implies that value is not solely generated by a firm, but also by the interactions between and the joint activities carried out by different actors, including customers (Martinez-Canas *et al.*, 2016, Gronroos, 2012; Ramaswamy, 2011; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b). Furthermore, as Blasco-Arcas *et al.* (2014) suggest, two aspects are decisive in understanding co-creation of value: a). the relationships between different actors and b). customer experience.

### **a). The relationships between different actors.**

From the relationship aspect, the notion value co-creation is deemed involving in the interacting process, facilitated by the resources of all stakeholders that finally can contribute to the integration (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). What is more, the notion value co-creation lays stress on cooperative efforts through service providers, customers and other agents. Thus, mutual benefit and interdependence are especially vital in determining the roles as well as service production and value creating (Vargo *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, the customers not only play a role in the resource through offering information on their wants and requires for the service providers, and also is co-creator that participating in the activities of firms. In other words, service dominant logic defines a dual role for customer – one is resource provider, the other is enjoying the experience (Yi and Gong, 2013; Baron and Harris, 2008). However, the meaning of service for the service



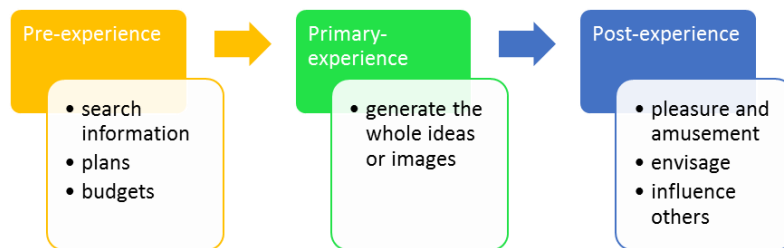
providers could imply supporting their customer's practices with resources and interactive processes so that their customers are able to create value for themselves. So, the service providers must aim to facilitate value creation process by providing support with the firm's resources and processes (Gronroos, 2011). Therefore, a service provider's primary focus should be to develop these interactive processes and integrate the goods resource or resources in such interactive processes in which customers are involved (Gronroos, 2011). Vargo and Akaka (2009) noted that customers do incorporate the offerings that service providers offer to the customers into their lives, otherwise value cannot be created. As already determined by the service logic, it is the customers who create, experience and determine what value is created. Firms, however, act as a facilitator of value providing support of resources and processes through which customers can make use of the offerings provided to them (Gronroos, 2011). To provide a direct and precise description on the above statement, the role of each agent in value creating spheres is shown as below figure 5.1 (Gronroos and Voima, 2013) - the provide sphere, the customer sphere and the joint sphere. In the provider sphere, the provider is value promoter. In the customer sphere, customer independently generates value without any intervention. Whereas, in the joint sphere, the value is co-created in the interaction that customer is the core and actively invites the provider to join in the process. Consequently, the value-in-use, plus increasing sales, strengthened market performance and mutually learning could satisfy the needs of both agents. Such as, for the service provider, the needs are trust, involvement, high loyalty, reducing risks, etc. For the customer, the needs are experience, empowering, fulfilment, etc.



**Figure 5.1. Value co-creation spheres (source: Gronroos and Voima, 2013)**

#### **b). Customer experience perspective: co-create values in experience touch points**

As stated in the previous section, the term customer experience is evidently described as an edge in the competition of a constantly evolving area (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Johnston and Kong, 2011). Compared with the previous perspective contended by academics and practitioners, which underline that internal, hedonic and extraordinary customer experience should be offered by a firm through commodities or services (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Schmitt, 1999), the viewpoint that a memorable experience is gained through customers seeking co-creation value has been proposed in recent studies (Hwang and Seo, 2016). Particularly, it is argued by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) that value is created by the interaction between firm and customer rather than provided by the firm, which is a vital cognitive change that being away from the company – leading tailored customer experience. Further, service dominant logic elevates and enhances the significance of experience by laying stress on the experiential character of value (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). In line with this perspective, Chathoth *et al.* (2016) , and Caru and Cova (2003, 2007) note that the experience provided by the firm is not a critical factor in value creation for customer and firm. On the contrary, the exclusive experience is co-created by a customer who is involved in the course of designing, delivering and consuming the service. The conception of co-creation is nicely clarified by Caru and Cova (2007) in their study ‘consuming experience’, in which the academics contend that the truly immersive experience marketing methods and strategies comprise a co-creation stage during which customers create their own particular products and services through the platform offered by the firm whilst gaining an extraordinary experience. Further, in consort with the more holistic, collective, co-created, experiential perspective, Tynan and McKechnie (2009) propose a theoretical model on the consumption in which an experience over time is categorised as a process comprising three stages - pre-experience, core customer experience and post-experience. An advantage of this experience model is that it adopts a value-in-exchange viewpoint and underlines where value can be created at all touch points of three stages in the process of consumption.



**Figure 5.2 The customer's holistic experience (source: Tyan and McKechnie, 2009)**

Figure 5.2 displays the holistic characteristics of how customers are involved in their experience with a restaurant, which starts before the visit takes place (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). In the first phase, the customer begins with looking for information on satisfying a specific need, and then he/she envisions how the experience will be, schedules and budgets accordingly with the intention that he/she can finally obtain the expected experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). For instance, looking for/at the restaurant's website; asking friends/family about the restaurant; contacting the restaurant's front desk in advance to book a room/ask about special needs. In the second phase, the primary experience takes place (real experience), which coincides with the restaurant visit itself. If customers can see, smell, taste or hear these elements, this can incite interest and can motivate consumers to relate to the product (food)/service or place (restaurant) and thus develop an ideas/images and as an actual consequence experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). For instance, asking the waiter for recommendations; engaging with the restaurant music or other restaurant sounds; chatting with other customers on shared tables. The final phase that occurs after the restaurant visit, which suggests different outcomes from the consumer's perspective. More specifically, the experience may have brought pleasure and amusement, or the consumers may have gotten something novel. They might also gain affection experience from calling forth something familiar. Additionally, consumers might engage in envisaging a perfect experience, thus enhancing advocacy behaviours (e.g. positive conversation) and influencing other potential customers to engage with the firm (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009) such as sharing with friends on Facebook if a pleasant experience, sharing with friends/family/colleagues if a bad restaurant experience via conversation, being determined to re-order the same dishes next time.

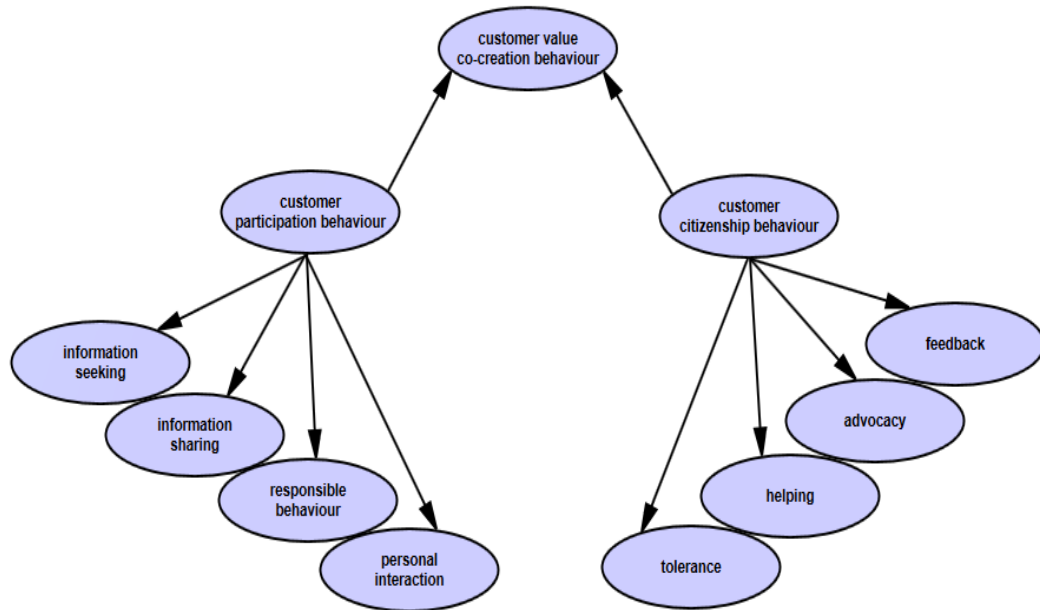
To elaborate further, Zomerdijk and Voss (2010) , Tynan and McKechnie (2009), and Meyer and Schwager

(2007) argue that customer experience generates through all touch points during service encounter; however, touch points might not need directly to connect with a firm, indicating that indirect connection might also occur between customer and customers (e.g. offer suggestions, discussion, help, etc.); customer and a firm's representative (e.g. commodities, services, brands, news, others' positive and negative comments, evaluations). What is more, from this viewpoint, touch points take place at all three experience phases and exist in different channels (e.g. face to face; online and offline), as explained by Martin *et al.* (2015) and Verhoef *et al.* (2009). Previous studies have revealed that cues, stimuli and service encounters are the main reasons behind both the customer experience and responses to special events (Juttner *et al.*, 2013; Brocato *et al.*, 2012; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Bitner, 1992). Subsequently, Zomerdijk and Voss (2010) expanded on this point by identifying that cues, stimuli and service encounters are the theatre scripts that firm designs for customers, while touch points reflect what really occurs from the perspective of customers. Hence, it is wise, from a subjective customer perspective, to thoroughly understand the co-creation value in experience touch points (Lemke *et al.*, 2011).

## **5.6 CUSTOMER VALUE CO-CREATION BEHAVIOURS**

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), the market is deemed as a commercial scope where the value is co-created by the customer through acting as an active and cooperative role. From the point of view of service dominant logic, the role of the customer has shifted to an active contributor rather than, as previously, a passive participator in the process of co-creating experience (Lusch *et al.*, 2007). Further, the value is mainly extracted from customers through interaction with the firm (Ramaswamy, 2011), as is contended by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), the companies ought to provide platforms for individualised collaborations as the place to create and extract value. As a matter of fact, the investments of the customer and the firm are both crucial for a positive co-creation experience; on the one hand, the customer might integrate with his/her knowledge, intelligence, will and ability to probe and study when he/she is involved in dynamic activities with service providers/firms and/or other customers; on the other hand, the firm might allow customers to be close to vital resources and shape service experience based on the customer's value (Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2013).

The service marketing has come to realise that customers are an integral part and a human resource of great importance for corporate surroundings, which implies that consumer behaviours affect the performance of corporation (Yi and Gong, 2008). In alignment with this argument, Yi *et al.* (2011) note that the interaction between customers and service firm/ forefront service providers is significant, because service delivery heavily depends on this interaction and determines the productivity of the service firm personnel. Thus, expanding on this view, Xie *et al.* (2008) propose that it is essential for the firm to concentrate on consumer behaviour in the value creation process. With the purpose of understanding customer behaviour in value co-creation process and incorporating it with previous theoretical efforts, this relevant behaviour is conceptualised by Yi and Gong (2013), who generate a scale to measure the term of customer value co-creation behaviours. The scale proposed by these authors is the first which tries to understand all the aspects associated with the value co-creation behaviour from the customer's perspective. As these researchers themselves point out, the study of the customer's behaviour in value co-creation is in its initial phase. Currently, customer co-creation has been theorised as a construct consisting of two differentiated types of customer behaviours: participation behaviour (information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour and personal interaction) and citizenship behaviour (feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance). This study will utilise these sub-behaviour categories to identify Chinese customer behaviour in a restaurant setting (see figure 5.3, below), since Yi and Gong's (2013) scale dimensions cover the whole customer experience (e.g. restaurant experience pre-stage until the post stage), which could help demonstrate the broader image of the customer interacting with restaurant provision.



**Figure 5.3 Customer value co-creation behaviour (source: Yi and Gong, 2013)**

### 5.6.1 Customer Participation Behaviour

Customer participation behaviour is defined as containing all kinds of formats that involve and engage with the value creation route. In a narrow sense, customer participation behaviour is conceptualised by Yi and Gong (2013) as consisting of four dimensions (information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour and personal interaction) and is a kind of indispensable and expected action for the achievement of value co-creation or specific missions, acting as in-role in essence. Payne *et al.* (2009) note the customer participation in the process of service could build a closer relationship with service providers. This is because customers utilise their resources (e.g. experience, expertise) to strengthen their ties in service value co-creation, which is consistent with their in-role position and interaction (Amorim *et al.*, 2014). As Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) claim, customers could enable service process to accomplish, as a result of their compulsory roles.

The participation of customer in service could also make service firm/providers increase efficiency, improve flexibility and help lower costs, due to customers actively taking part in service creation and delivery process, making it possible for the firm to input fewer resources (Heinonen *et al.*, 2013; Ojasalo, 2003) such as the following: in most supermarkets, where customers use trolleys (shopping cart) to place the items they want to, and then proceed to the checkout counter; or at buffet-style restaurants, where customers fill their plates with what they want from a large, central selection; or automatic teller machines (ATM), which allow

customers to withdraw or deposit currency and engage in other convenient services (e.g. top-up mobile phone). Consistent with this view, Yang *et al.* (2014) suggest that when the customer is involved in the service process, service providers might correspondingly bring customers benefits that they expect such as, for instance, customised offers, strengthened experience and lower-priced products/services. Hence, engaging customers in the service process not only contributes to service providers, but also benefits customers themselves and, eventually, a form of mutually beneficial and double-win situation could be achieved and the relationship enhanced. (Revilla-Camacho *et al.*, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2014).

### **5.6.1.1 Dimensions of Customer Participation Behaviour**

**Information seeking** clarifies customer inclination to search for information correlated to a service's features and requirements that customer prefers (Yi and Gong, 2013). The customer has two main objectives for seeking information in the process of value co-creation. First of all, customers want to diminish uncertainties and understand the service encounter environment well. Second, searching for information can make customers understand their role, express their needs and learn how to carry out their task (Yi and Gong, 2013). Eventually, all these kinds of information promote customers being better involved in value co-creation. According to Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2010), the high-speed development of network technology and digital multimedia technology has thoroughly changed the ways in which customers gather and absorb input on service providers' personnel. As a result, customers have more choices and become active participants in the process of obtaining information. At the same time, they are no longer passive knowledge receivers. In other words, customers not only acquire information in formal ways, for example, official websites/ service providers' twitter; but also hunt for information in informal ways, for instance, from their friends, family or other customers (Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2013; Yi *et al.*, 2011)

**Information sharing** refers to customers being actively involved in service process to offer necessary information to the service firm/ provider so that their needs/requirements can be satisfied by service firm/ provider fulfilling their obligations (Yi and Gong, 2013). It is crucial to the achievement of value co-creation, as only when customers have a share in thoughts/ views with service provider personnel can the obligations of the service provider personnel be carried out. For instance, restaurant staff expects customers to provide truthful and critical information with the intention of being advised on how their service could be better delivered to meet expectations and preferences. As stated by Alavi and Leidner (2001), personal information

occurs in the will of the people and is related to realities, actions, conceptions, understandings, thoughts, comments and decisions. Davenport and Prusak (1998) note information sharing as procedures that contains individual interchange of ideas and thoughts with group members. They also claim that an individual conveys his/her comprehension, knowledge, and perception to others so that receivers might possess and utilise the information to generate more values (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). Information sharing is the critical element for sustaining improvement and is essential in the aspects of translating a person's information/knowledge into actual effect (Chuang and Chen, 2015). Undoubtedly, information sharing needs the willingness of an individual to actively offer 'assistance' to the receiver (Yi and Gong, 2013).

**Responsible behaviour** refers to customers following the service firm/ provider's requirement and keeping rules, policies and guidelines (Yi and Gong, 2013). For example, customers follow the rules or conventions of the restaurant by acting out the role that restaurants expected such as sharing a table with others who are old, sick or pregnant. In the view of Ennew and Binks (1999), in the service encounter context, customers might be required to act as a partial employee, and service providers might need to have to play a role as partial customers; thus, this kind of behaviour confers duties and obligations to customers. The term 'co-operative' is used by Bettencourt (1997) to express the extent to which service providers expect customers to follow because, as this scholar argues, it is necessary for customers and service firm to collaborate together so as to ensure the achievement of value co-creation. In line with this argument, Yi and Gong (2013) suggest that value co-creation between customer and service provider cannot be realised without customers fulfilling responsible behaviours.

**Personal interaction** is defined by Yi and Gong (2013) as interrelationships and interaction between customers and service providers which is crucial for effective service delivery. The service encounter takes place during a social occasion, so the term 'personal interaction' involves a wide-range of components that set the tone of the relationships, for instance, collaboration, innovation, integrity, trust, compassion, respect, approachability and pleasantness (Yi and Gong, 2013; Ennew and Binks, 1999; Kelley *et al.*, 1990). To illustrate, the customer is courteous/kind to the employee, and the customer is happy for service providers to introduce new, or novel experiences that he/she has not encountered before. The importance of the notion of 'personal interaction' lies in Barnes's (1994) view that relations with employees might be, in general, as



vital as the relations with the firm. Therefore, the more pleasurable, friendly, and positive the social atmosphere, the more the possibilities that the customer would like to be engaged in the process of value co-creation (Yi and Gong, 2013; Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2000)

## **5.6.2 Customer Citizenship Behaviour**

Compared with customer participation that is performed in-role behaviour to achieve service value co-creation, customer citizenship behaviour is a kind of a spontaneous actions (e.g. feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance) that a customer presents in extra-role, which might affect the interests and actions of service provider personnel (Yi and Gong, 2013). For this reason, Yi *et al.* (2011) contend that customer citizenship behaviour could provide extra benefits and greater added value. From this perspective, Revilla-Camacho *et al.* (2015) claim that customer citizenship behaviour does not have to be exhibited in the process for the achievement of service value co-creation (as it is not compulsory).

Further, in service marketing studies, citizenship behaviour has been widely explored, since its potential impacts on the accomplishment of the company giving results that exceed what service providers expect (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007; Groth, 2005; Woo and Fock, 2004; Bettencourt, 1997). Nevertheless, the benefits of the exact results of customer behaviour performed are not obvious in literature (Yi and Gong, 2008). However, Yi *et al.* (2011), Bove *et al.* (2009) and Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2000) have revealed that citizenship behaviour might generate these values, for instance, positive fame, polite behaviour and manners, collaboration, positive experience and customer engagement, favourable service environment and effectiveness. In the next section, the dimensions of customer citizenship behaviour based on the scale of Yi and Gong (2013) will be illustrated.

### **5.6.2.1 Dimensions of Customer Citizenship Behaviour**

**Feedback** refers to customers actively or passively (usually be inquired) providing information to service offer personnel, which thereafter might contribute to the service firm and the employee improving service during the value co-creation process in order to generate positive results for long-term growth and success (Yi and Gong, 2013). Meanwhile, Yi and Gong (2013) note the information relies on the experience, knowledge and memory of customers to play a role in the service encounter. In addition, in the study of

organisational citizenship behaviour the notion of 'feedback', from Podsakoff *et al.*'s (2000) point of view, is theorised as public morality, for example, spontaneous actions in which organisational members involved to make helpful advice for the benefit of firm's developments. Thus, as Yi and Gong (2013) state, service firms rely on the information that customer has generated from experience, knowledge and memory during the service encounter. Examples in restaurant service include making a point of posting a comment on official websites or advising the restaurant proprietor with the aim of helping the restaurant.

**Advocacy** refers to the customer positively suggesting the firm or its business activities, or its staffs, to family members, friends or strangers (Yi and Gong, 2013). For example, restaurant customers speak positively to friends and family members, post favourable comments on the online forum about the restaurant (Mazen *et al.*, 2008), or recommend others to visit the restaurant that the customers concerned (Brown and Mazzarol, 2009). Equally, in the literature of organisational citizenship behaviour, Podsakoff *et al.* (2000) propose that advocacy can be extended to and labelled as loyalty, and includes behaviours such as promoting the firm to externals, recognition, supportive behaviour and protecting the firm's reputation. In addition, Groth *et al.* (2004) propose that word-of-mouth (WOM) is a kind of advocating behaviour. Further, it is indicated by Groth *et al.* (2004) and Bettencourt (1997) that positive WOM is usually generated by loyal customers, which uphold the good reputation of a company to boost its commodities and expands the customer base accordingly. The significance of WOM has been underscored both in academic and practical areas for several reasons: it has a great influence on the customer buying decision making process and the assessment of customer post-buying (Bone, 1995); it has been advised that it is a more effective way of marketing than traditional methods (e.g. advertisement, individual selling); it has been suggested that it has high reliability, responsiveness and dependency for customers (Bickart and Schindler, 2001).

**Helping** refers to the customer expressing a desire to provide advice/assistance or offer information to other customers so as to improve service without employees being involved, which means it has the purpose of supporting others (Yi and Gong, 2013). For example, in a restaurant scenario, this kind of behaviour may include customers providing advice to other customers on ordering dishes; making recommendations to other customers via the restaurant's message board; telling friends or family members to avoid the restaurants where the customers had terrible experiences. Furthermore, Groth *et al.* (2004) suggest that

customer will engage in helping behaviour towards other customers rather than employees in a service co-creation process, since other customers might need assistance from those in accord with their role expectat. Additionally, compared with the defined role of employees, the role of customers is less scripted, therefore, placing the customer in spontaneity which would be valuable to other customers (Groth *et al.*, 2004; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). Likewise, Rosenbaum and Massiah (2007) indicate that when other customers meet with difficulties, some customers tend to elicit their unpleasant memories/experiences and show their sympathy through helping other customers.

**Tolerance** means that the customer shows patience, open-mindedness and acceptance when service provision does not fulfil their expectations or in the event that service slows down and is in short supply during the service delivery process (Yi and Gong, 2013; Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2000). For instance, customers show tolerance behaviour in restaurants, such as putting up with the service if it is not as good as the customer thought; giving a second try if the service of restaurant providers does not satisfy original needs; willing to pay for the order and not complaining if restaurant prices are higher than they first appeared to be (Revilla-Camacho *et al.*, 2015). Hence, these signify that the level of tolerance has an effect on the behaviours of customers in the value co-creation process. Moreover, in the studies of organisational citizenship behaviour, Organ (1990) conceptualises this term 'tolerance' as a crucial component of the sense of sportsmanship, which means an intention of enduring and not complaining about unavoidable, inconvenient or unfair things. Similarly, Revilla-Camacho *et al.* (2015) advocate that tolerance is one of the key elements of citizenship behaviour and is associated with esteem, morals, being fair and the state of being with service employees. Yi and Gong (2013) treat the term 'tolerance' as a reason for customers altering their behaviour and personality, as it has attributes of intrinsic worth such as, for example, self-regulation, perseverance, being kind and being nice to others.

In general, the behaviour of co-creation involves two different kinds of behaviour. One of them – vital for the success of the service provision- is customer behaviour aimed at taking part in the servicer encounter by being an active part of it. The second, which is voluntary, is the so-called citizen behaviour. This involves the customer's willingness to participate in the long-term improvement of the service. Based on such kinds of consumer behaviour evaluation and business strategies, companies could arrange their resources to create

direct values (Walter *et al.*, 2001), for example, super-profit, sales increasing, and sense of safety; indirect values such as moving into new market since the recommendations coming from loyal customers, receiving useful information from virtual community, and most important of all is to enhance the commercial relationships between customers and organizations (Piligrimiene *et al.*, 2015; Yi and Gong, 2013).

The sustainability of competitive edge relying on the ability of service provider to improve their customer retention and base (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). The relationship with the customer has drawn a lot attention in the marketing area, along with the importance has been emphasising by many academics and marketing practitioners. Vargo (2009) suggests that the notion customer engagement (CE) has a wider standpoint, which is exceeding the transaction and is an effective guider to strengthen the relationship between the firm and customer (Brodie *et al.*, 2013). What is more, the term engagement suggests deeply to involve, thus, it offers a significant contribution to interaction with the customer (Bowden, 2009a). Correspondingly, the next section the notion 'customer engagement' is explored.

## **5.7 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND ITS THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

The concept of 'engagement' is not new in a range of academic subject and was first theorised by Kahn (1990), who focused it on the psychological perspective. However, recent years have seen its emergence in the marketing field. As Brodie *et al.* (2011) state, there has been a few academic literature in the marketing discipline since 2005 which has involved the notion 'engagement'. In 2010, the Marketing Science Institute highlighted its priority for further exploration of the engagement's sub-form - customer engagement (Marketing Science Institute, 2010). Within the priority of exploring engagement in terms of experience and behaviours', the MSI suggests 'customer engagement' as a critical field, is beneficial for providing insight into the area of customer behaviour within complicated co-creation value and its associations (Marketing Science Institute, 2010).

Several scholars, from different logic perspectives, have already tried to acknowledge theoretical foundation of customer engagement in the academic literature. Brodie *et al.* (2013, 2011) suggest that the notion of

customer engagement is the basis on the theory of relationship marketing. Palmatier (2008) presents that the main objective of relationship marketing is to establish and maintain a lasting relationship. Meanwhile, Relationship marketing, meanwhile, emphasises that the target of relationship marketing activities are customers (individual and groups) and firms; interest/benefit origins from both parties are involved; engaging actions within the relationship lifecycle (Sonkova and Grabowska, 2015). Vivek *et al.* (2012) lying in the extended relationship marketing perspective reveal that establishing and developing long-standing exchange relation with existing/potential customers, organisations and/or other stakeholders via value co-creation is critical for companies. Moreover, Ashley *et al.* (2011) maintain that the theory of relationship marketing is by means of the broad sense of acting out the role of 'engaging'.

From the underlying service dominant logic perspective, the term 'customer engagement' is viewed as going beyond relationship scopes, which compares with viewing traditional marketing relationships from good dominant mindset (Vargo, 2009). Brodie *et al.* (2011) identify four service dominant logic foundation: the customer is always a value co-creator; the customer is central in the mind of service dominant view; resource integrators include all related social and economic factors; the beneficiary decides the unique appearance of value, which is especially related to exploring the notion customer engagement. Moreover, under this service centric view, customer behaviour is viewed as revolving around the customer's and the stakeholder's experience in co-creation networks. In this vein, Vivek *et al.* (2012) argue that customer engagement lies in the marketing discipline, which is especially concentrated on interactional customer experience. Correspondingly, Brodie *et al.* (2013) claim that the performance of 'engaging' is by virtue of the co-creation experience between the customer, service firm and other stakeholders.

Besides exploration from relationship marketing and service dominant logic, the notion 'customer engagement' is also revealed through social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) by Hollebeek (2011b). The rationale is based on the premise that once the customer reaps favors from relevant relationships, he/she is estimated to yield returns in the forms of positive mind, emotions and actions towards the supporter, for example, service firm (Pervan *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, a vague obligation is imposed by the exchange parties on one side (e.g. company) which provides some benefits (e.g. service/technical support) for the other side (e.g. consumer) and look forward to the return (e.g. trust, involvement, loyalty) in the future. The exchange

parties, at the same time, are deemed to struggle for a balance in the relationship (Hollebeek, 2011b). Similarly, Bove *et al.* (2009) emphasize on positive relationship between customer and service firm in regard to 'benefit and return' which encompasses a sort of behaviours where the service firm provides more extraordinary and enduring experience/service to the customer; while, the customer establishes bonding through positive word of mouth and flexible and tolerant actions. In alignment with this, Vivek *et al.* (2012) propose that customer behaviour is a sort of moderator between the 'cost' and 'reward' in the customer engagement relationship.

Hence, from relationship marketing, service dominant logic and social exchange theory perspectives, customer and service related engagement involve the interactional nature of exchange value creation environment, which might generate a range of benefits for both parties, instead of being limited to an independent encounter. That is to say, it goes beyond purchasing (Vivek *et al.*, 2012). The dimensional disparity of customer engagement is also revealed in the academic literature. The acknowledged conceptual meanings of customer engagement in the field of marketing indicate that most scholars have claimed the customer engagement is a multidimensional notion containing emotional, cognitional and behavioural dimensions (for example, Islam and Rahman, 2016; Baldus *et al.*, 2015; Dwivedi, 2015; Brodie *et al.*, 2013, 2011; Vivek *et al.*, 2012) , though minority of scholars ( for instance, van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Verhoef *et al.*, 2010) treat it as a unidimensional conception (see table 5.2).

Engagement Dimension	Concept	Interpretation	Authors
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement as the willingness of a customer 's participation and interaction with the focal target (e.g. brand/organization/community/website/ organisational activity), which differs in direction (positive/negative) and level (high/low) and lies in the characteristics of a customer's interaction with all touch points (physical/virtual).	Islam and Rahman (2016)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Engagement	Engagement is the provoking, inherent incentive to enduringly interact with an online brand community.	Baldus <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Cognitive/Behavioural	Engagement	Engagement is based on how well the consumer knows a company's social media activities (e.g. cognition) and how well the consumer involves with these activities (e.g. behaviour).	Dijkmans <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Consumer brand engagement	Consumer's positive, enjoyable, brand related state of mind is with vigorous, dedicative and absorbing characteristics.	Dwivedi (2015)
Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is the representation of customer commitment through relations toward activities of a brand, product or firm.	Angeles Oviedo-Garcia <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Behavioural	Customer engagement behaviour	Behaviours manifest that the customer voluntarily contributes to a firm/brand, which is beyond the scope of basic transaction and takes place in a large scope interaction.	Jakkola and Alexander (2014)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is a multidimensional notion covering cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural dimensions.	Brodie <i>et al.</i> (2013)
Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is a set of customer behaviours that maintain their relationship towards a firm.	Gummerus <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is a state of affection that lies in interactional, co-creative customer experiences around a central agent in service relationships.	Brodie <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is a multidimensional notion with vigorous dedicative and absorbed characteristics.	Cheung <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer brand engagement	Engagement is symbolised by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activity in brand interactions.	Hollebeek (2011a)
Cognitive/Emotional	Online brand engagement	Customer's commitment as regards emotion and affection towards an active relationship with the brand.	Mollen and Wilson (2010)

Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement stresses customer and firm relationship in the behaviour dimension.	van Doorn <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is a behavioural display for the brand or firm, which is beyond the scope of transactions.	Verhoef <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is the strength of an individual's participation and connection with an organisation and is associated with its offerings and activities, which are led either by the customer or by the firm.	Vivek <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement Process	Customer engagement is highlighted by "a psychological process", stresses customer loyalty, which might be maintained for customer repeat purchasing towards a service brand.	Bowden (2009a)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Engagement	Engagement is a condition of being involved, fully deep in thought or pre-occupied by something (i.e. attention), resulting in consequence of specific attraction or repugnance.	Higgins and Scholer (2009)
Cognitive and behaviour	Engagement behaviour	engagement seems to be deduced from a series of acts or illustrating in regard to a target body.	Pham and Avnet (2009)
Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural	Customer engagement	Customer engagement is the extent to which customer behaviour, cognition and emotion are involved in connection with the service firm.	Patterson <i>et al.</i> (2006)

**Table 5.2 The notion customer engagement in Marketing (source: Islam and Rahman, 2016; Brodie *et al.*, 2011)**



According to Fernandes and Esteves (2016), the definition conceptualised by Brodie *et al.* (2011) can be deemed as the most complete customer engagement concept in the literature. Brodie *et al.* (2011) have derived and developed five essential propositions that are the basis for the subsequent widespread recognition. (1) customer engagement is of psychology that lies in interactional, co-creative customer experiences with a central agent in service relations; (2) the different occurrence of the conditions will produce different customer engagement levels; (3) customer engagement involves a dynamic, reduplicative process which combines with service relations to generate values; (4) customer engagement is critical in relation to net mediating service relations of which some relevant conceptions (for instance, involvement and loyalty) create cause and effect for each other and complement each other; (5) customer engagement subjects to related emotional, cognitive and behavioural domains. Fernandes and Esteves (2016) suggest that the definition of Brodie *et al.* (2011) is as the general conception containing the (emotional, cognitive and behavioural) engagement dimensions to create possibility or provide opportunity for it to be incorporated in any context-specific presentation. A detailed description of the three dimensions of customer engagement are given in the following sections.

### **5.7.1 Emotional Engagement**

It is not surprising that human beings are creatures with emotions. Marketers have long been well acquainted with the reality that the customer's emotion plays an important part when he/she mentions a purchase, as the customer's decision is made based on his/her feelings/affect towards the object (Woodruff and Gardial, 1996). It may seem as if there is nothing new or of value for further discovery. However, scholars now appear to be re-exploring the effect of customer emotion (McEwen, 2005). Suddenly, it seems that all consumer research has shifted the emphasis of singular cognitive decision making to emotionally related components (Zambardino and Goodfellow, 2007; Da Silva and Alwi, 2006).

In the world of brands, based on affect-as-information theory (where individuals utilise their feeling as a foundation for their response/judgement to related issues), Yeung and Wyer (2005) note that the emotion of the customer is utilised in the post-purchase and decision to evaluate a brand. The benefits of this hedonic are revealed as an emotion infusing into the customer's mind towards the brand evaluation, which ultimately promotes brand evolution (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2009). In addition, Bowden (2009b) illustrates that it is

essential to involve customer emotion, as it can maintain good relations between customer and brand and is also the antecedent of advocacy behaviour in brand engagement. In the view of Hollebeek *et al.* (2014), positive sense to a particular brand within their customer-brand relationship is a sort of 'customer attachment' that can be deemed as customer engagement's emotional dimension. Thus, each of the researchers highlighted above indicates that customer emotion or its related element has a crucial role in customer behaviour or a firm's branding strategy.

In practical terms, intense competition undermines customer loyalty, which makes the work of firms more complicated. Plus, consumers have become less interested in the growing flood of marketing information. Consequently, marketing should seek out an efficient way for establishing relationships with customers (Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2002). Based on this, several studies offer perspectives on engaging customers through emotion. Patterson *et al.* (2006) argue that the construct of 'dedication' is a kind of customer belonging in the emotion, meaning that customer is quite satisfied with himself/herself as a consumer of the frequented firm and is excited and fervent about the role he/she played; Heath (2007) puts forward view that engagement as an emotional dimension could be defined as feelings to any sort of stimulus, which is also portrayed as an unconscious emotional construct. Similarly, Kuvykaite and Tarute (2015) argue that emotional dimension is a form of emotional action, which is also called 'feeling of enthusiasm' or 'motivation to an engagement object'; Vivek (2009) proposes three constructs – 'enthusiasm', 'conscious participation' and 'social interaction' as the dimensions of customer engagement, where 'enthusiasm' is viewed as a representation of emotional component. The construct of 'enthusiasm' means feeling arousal or passion for an engaging object, which motivates people to be adventurous and overcome difficulties when they are engaging. It has also been suggested by Glassman and McAfee (1990) that individuals with enthusiasm are willing to take risks. Hence customers with enthusiasm may be willing to be involved with a firm's activities, services, products and experience moments. Abdul-Ghani *et al.* (2011) assert that the construct of 'hedonic' is a presentation format of emotional engagement, which can be explained as a delightful experience during customer browses through online auction sites. This implies that customers involved in such related online activities experience a more intense range of emotions, such as a happy mood. Cheung *et al.* (2011) and Patterson *et al.* (2006) indicate that when the object of engaging is of particular interest to the scientific research, the emotional construct can be a kind of 'dedication' or 'affection'. Brodie *et al.* (2011) suggest that

the emotional dimension of customer engagement can be illustrated as the customer's general satisfaction, which results from affective bonding or relation with companies, products, services and other customers. Furthermore, the pre-condition for affective bonding lies in the connections between service firms and customers, which can be established by the traditional offline service encounter (e.g. customer and waiter) and new online networks such as social media which particularly promotes a wide range of connections establishing (Brodie *et al.*, 2013).

In general, based on the above statements, it can be concluded that emotional engagement is feeling, attachment, dedication, enthusiasm, hedonics, dedication/ affection and emotional bonding of being involved with a firm or its associations that derive from satisfaction, appreciation, trust, belonging. Its effect can be expressed as being committed to a brand, developing attitudinal loyalty and welcome non-commercial contact (Hollebeek, 2011b). As Matzler *et al.* (2008) note, the responses of customer emotions are expected to be generated after a certain time to meet the cognitive need to a specific object.

### **5.7.2 Cognitive Engagement**

Previous studies have identified that customers will experience a feeling towards an object (e.g. brand, firm) when they are involved in cognitive state; in other words, the emotions of individuals towards the brand or firm are not produced at the initial engagement stage, especially if the individual is a new potential customer for a brand or firm (Shang *et al.*, 2006). From marketing and cognitive mental philosophy perspectives, it is suggested that the patterns in which customers handle information are in line with the degree of their positive and negative experiences and evaluations of an attitude object such as brand, product, service, and firm (Wirtz and Mattila, 2003; Mattila and Wirtz 2002). According to Altschwager *et al.* (2014), the cognition to experience involves customers' mind showing in an active way and/or has the purpose of forming a specific set of interests or information. The cognitive experience will accomplish the customer's needs regards an object (e.g. service, product), when customers actively obtain knowledge and/or information or when the activities/events of companies offer enough information to arouse the customer's broad interest. The information sharing or providing can help customers gain more knowledge and build mutual value-creating relationships with between brands/firms and consumers. Thus, this kind of stimulus can bring a cognitive experience which will motivate customers to engage in more interaction with the brand /firm and create a

higher level of engagement.

As regards recent studies, Higgins and Scholer (2009) present engagement's cognitive dimension as the state of customer's cognition towards an item that has appeal (e.g. enjoyment) or rejection (e.g. dislike) with the engaging object (e.g. brand, product, service, and firm). Hollebeek (2011a) illustrates that customer cognition might include obtaining cognitive abilities in several different ways to learn (e.g. browse related website to seek information/read information from social media), generate evaluation/judgement of objects (e.g. expressing satisfaction or dissatisfactions of a shopping experience), and settle specific matter (e.g. sharing knowledge to help other customers) as put forward by Matzler *et al.* (2008). Further, Hollebeek (2011b) notes that cognitive actions reflect the degree of devoting one's mind or concentrating with respect to an object, while emotional and behavioural actions together with cognition show the extent of a customer's stimulation and the extent of vigour released interrelating with the object, respectively. A customer's cognitive engagement dimension is also suggested by Hollebeek (2011b) using the example of brand activities, for instance, where the customer concentrates on or generates a strong interest in the brand. Subsequently, Hollebeek *et al.* (2014) expand the dimension of cognitive engagement, which refers to the degree of a consumer's engagement towards an object (e.g. service firm, brand, online community, social media) and which is connected to thinking processes, absorption and interest.

Other elements also reflect cognitive engagement dimension. From the consumer-to-consumer (C2C) perspective, Abdul-Ghani *et al.* (2011) present three engagement dimensions - utilitarian, hedonic and social. Among them, the dimension of 'utilitarian' is illustrated as cognitive related dimension, since it puts emphasis on assessment towards the practicality and the level of benefits on a website; Mollen and Wilson (2010) also illustrate the constructs of online brand engagement - interactivity, flow and telepresence, in which the dimension of 'flow' is viewed as related to cognitive state. It stresses that once people allow themselves to melt into action, this lets him/her forget everything else. Patterson *et al.* (2006) identify 'absorption' factor in their customer engagement study. This is defined as the degree of customers concentrating on a central engaging object such as, for example, a brand, service, firm or other customers. They find the time goes by quickly and it is difficult to separate when they interrelate with the object, thus the 'absorption' factor can also be approached as a cognitive aspect of customer engagement.

In the cognitive (dissonance) theory of Wicklund and Brehm (1976), Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), and Festinger (1957), if a customer has conscious mind that he/she will have a set of voluntary behaviours to be performed in accordance with former shaped attitudes that they experienced satisfactory /dissatisfactory. Consequently, the customer tries to adjust his/her attitudinal behaviours to engage in it. Consistent with this view, Urban (2004) suggests that if a firm gains recognition from the customer, he/she will respond it with the trustiness, long commitment, loyalty and repurchase in future. That is to say, in turn, the customer will support the firm which they have a wide variety of contact, interaction and communication. Finally, customer and service firm are expecting to take care of each other's concerns and interests, their mutual values will exceed the interests of the individuals (Nordin, 2009).

### **5.7.3 Behavioural Engagement**

While customer engagement is deemed as a multidimensional notion, it seems that the behavioural dimension of customer engagement is in dominant tone in the literature (Brodie *et al.*, 2011) and also, is widely accepted and adopted (Javornik and Mandelli, 2013). van Doorn *et al.*, (2010) illustrate that behavioural engagement is closely connected with the term 'engage'. The core of the term 'engage' is based on verb properties that have many senses; however, all variations lay stress on actions.

In the study of the engagement between customer and service industries, Patterson *et al.* (2006) propose the construct 'interaction', which is commensurate with the behavioural dimension of customer engagement and refers to various types of connections, such as, the customer's connection with other customers, front-line staffs, brands and service firms. For authors such as Nambisan and Baron (2009), Pham and Avnet (2009), and Schau *et al.* (2009), behavioural engagement is mainly denoted by particular types or forms of activity in which customers devote their properties (e.g. time and energy) to networks to act far beyond the single service offer-customer relations. Likewise, van Doorn *et al.* (2010) claim that the manifestations of customer behavioural engagement go beyond purchase, and are caused by motivational elements, which emphasise that customers should actively participate in networks and passive manners have already begun to go out of fashion. Meanwhile, based on their conceptual model (*ibid*), they also argue that the behavioural dimension of customer engagement is influenced by three factors: the characteristics of customers, the enthusiasm of firms and relevant contextual situations. On the basis of van Doorn *et al.* (2010), Verhoef *et*

*al.* (2010) maintain customer engagement as the manifestation of customer behaviour towards a major object, such as a brand or a firm, which is not confined to purchasing. Further, Vivek *et al.* (2014) and Gambetti *et al.* (2012) note that the behavioural dimension of customer engagement implies customers are actively involved, share value and exchange resources within the customer-service firm context that shapes the initiative and interactive features of customer engagement. Consistent with this view, Jakkola and Alexander (2014) provide that the notion of customer engagement is the aggregation of various customer behavioural patterns that are not limited to commercial activities, which might affect the firm. In particular, they note that customer behavioural engagement has an effect on the service value co-creation process, since customers actively contribute their various resources (e.g. money, time) to the target service firm and/or stakeholders by adjusting the offerings they provided. Meanwhile, customers influence the insights, judgement, hopes, favourites and behaviours of other stakeholders to the target service firm (Jakkola and Alexander, 2014).

In addition to the above, although there is no detailed unitary sorting of customer engagement behaviours in the marketing literature, some scholars have mentioned that behavioural engagement contains a range of actions from voice (e.g. word-of-mouth, recommending/complaining) to continuous/discontinuous consumption. In detail, Bijmolt *et al.* (2010) propose that customer behavioural engagement includes word of mouth, customer co-creation and complaints. Roberts and Alpert (2010) suggest that engaged customers are the ones who have loyalty, may recommend the brand/product/ service to others and generate good word-of-mouth (WOM) for a firm. The basis of this is that when customers experience a positive service or product, they like to keep/maintain the relationship with that firm and its associations. Similarly, Gummerus *et al.* (2012) claim that customer behavioural engagement is incorporated into a small number of behaviours, such as WOM, cross purchase and criticism, with the intention of establishing closer ties with product/service, brand and firm. While the study of Brodie *et al.* (2013) is the first comprehensive analysis showing the wider picture of the behavioural dimension of customer engagement, the authors argue that customer engagement behaviours are customer enunciation towards firms and include, but are not limited to, WOM actions, referrals and recommendations, volunteering themselves to other stakeholders, leaving comments on the web and blogging, joining communities to support the brand, being involved in research and development, as well as other actions which might affect the firms and brands.

On the whole, many definitions and conceptions of behavioural engagement have evolved to explore the intricacy of customer engagement. Common features of these explorations/definitions are that the active role of the customer engaging in the process of transaction is emphasized and admitted; the influence of customer on the focal firm goes beyond purchasing process; the state of behavioural engagement is related the experience he/she perceived; behavioural engagement contains a range of actions that influence firms and/or other stakeholders.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

When involving in the 'experience economy' (Pine and Gilmore, 1998), not only the goods and services but also the experience that could be touched by the consumer, which enhance the interaction between customer and firms, finally, achieving higher experiences (Etgar, 2008). Given the role of customer experiences in value creation in services industries, more research has been undertaken that purports the importance of co-creation, S-D Logic and customer engagement. While Sashi (2012) indicates that practitioners have different interpretations of the concept of customer engagement leads to differing definitions of the concept, customer engagement refers to the behavioural cognitive and emotional connection of the customer with the firm (Brodie *et al.*, 2013; Patterson *et al.*, 2006). Engaging customers requires firms to have access to customers from behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects, to a larger degree, and with a higher level of dialogue, access and transparency on the part of both firms and customers alike (Chathoth *et al.*, 2014; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). Engaging customers in the process of value co-creation is necessary for its success, as failure to do so might result in co-created value being low (Yi and Gong, 2013). However, the following questions still remain: Are customers willing to engage with firms to a larger degree? How can customer behaviours be influenced to get them to engage with firms? Consumers do not interact with service providers unless they are persuaded that service providers are happy to engage with them in generating good experiences and higher value (Ashley *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, without a higher degree of engagement, customer experiences cannot be maximised. These notions of customer value, experience, co-creation and engagement require careful consideration and management for success.

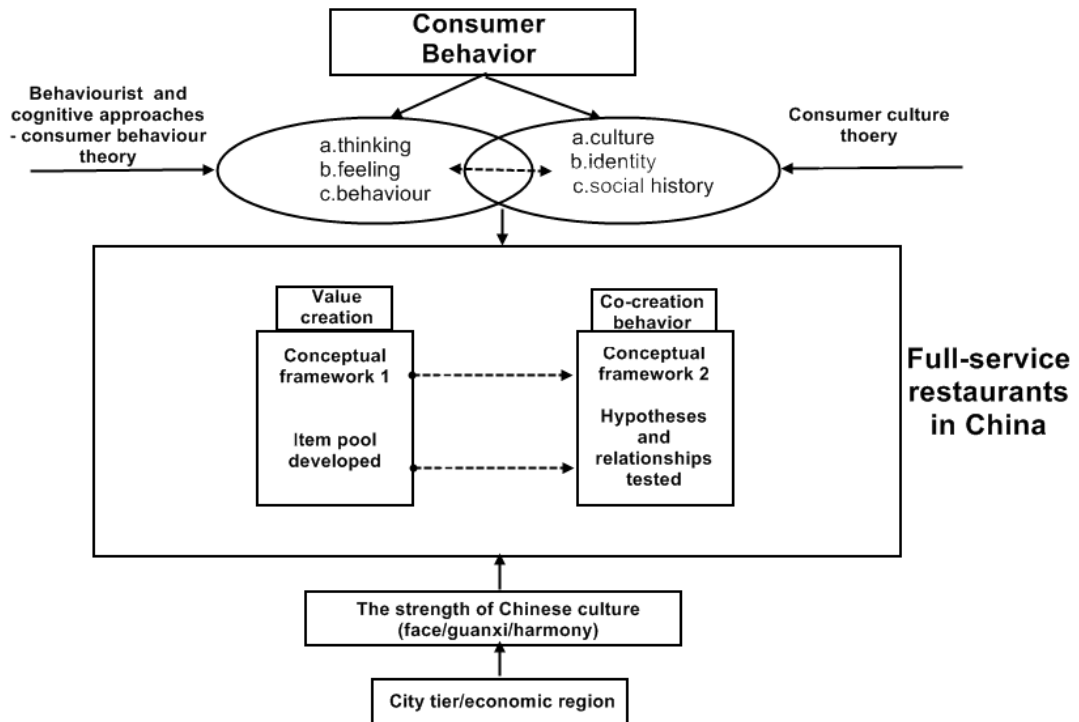
# CHAPTER 6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

With the evaluation of consumer behaviour theory, nowadays consumers are deemed as a rational people and being influenced by a serious of elements. Their consumption activities are not merely limited in purchasing stage, which normally comprise: needs are identified, searching information, evaluating the options, purchasing intention, purchasing action, consumption, and finally disposing (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007; Zinkhan, 1992). Moreover, according to consumer culture theory, culture is widely recognised on the effect of consumer behaviour. Culture is a value system that includes an individual's traits, languages, thoughts along with the patterns dealing with the problem (Kim *et al.*, 2002). With the development of environments, the cultural members interact with it and have to re-construct themselves with the purpose of accommodating the changed circumstances (Lai *et al.*, 2010). In China, Confucian values heavily affect the mind of Chinese customers. Hence, based on literature review, in this research context - full-service restaurants in China, the construct 'Chinese culture' (face, *guanxi* and harmony) might be a variable affects the level restaurant customer to present co-creation behaviours. As mentioned in the above chapter 2, China has vast area consisting of four economic regions and three main city tiers, with the unbalance of economy developing level and evolving people's value, Chinese customer from different economic regions and city tiers have significant difference on the behaviours (Zhang *et al.*, 2008; Cui and Liu, 2000). So, the Chinese market is very dynamic and challenging for those who have especial interest from outside China who are looking both to expand into Chinese markets and to import operational/marketing practices that may have proved successful in other cultures.

Therefore, this chapter presents a structure (figure 6.1) that how the general relevant concepts can hold and support the theories and how these notions can develop as the basis for data analysis. According to Bryman (2012), Viswanathan and Dickson (2007), Chandran and Morwitz (2005), conceptual framework is set to be a guider for preparing research plan using in conducting research, consequently, the purpose of the following conceptual frameworks is to clarify related factors and their interrelationships employed in two different filed work (see figure 6.2 and figure 6.3).





**Figure 6.1 General Conceptual Framework**

## 6.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 1 – VALUE CREATION

Along with the technical progress, especially the digital explosion in the real-time interactive communications, the consumer could access to information easier. It also makes the possibility that customers exchange opinions with the service provider at any time and any places if they are not satisfied with service (Ghiselli and Ma, 2015). Online platforms or social media offer an alternative for restaurant personnel to engage with its customers (Nambisan and Baron, 2007) with the intention of co-creating values (Zwass, 2010), because online platforms or social media could communicate through virtual communities to influence consumers' cognition (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, Online platforms or social media could also enhance and push forward the interactions within virtual communities that customer shares the good/ bad experience/value with the restaurant manager and other customers (Ghiselli and Ma, 2015).

According to Juttner *et al.* (2013), and Frow and Payne (2007), in service sector, customer experience occurs all touch points and encounters during service delivery process which might exist in pre-experience, primary-experience, and post-experience phases (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009) or different channels (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, online and offline space are both vital for restaurant

personnel to interact with customers, since they collectively affect the co-creation process (Zwass, 2010). Successful and effective co-creation can make customers' value maximised (Payne and Frow, 2005), help restaurant identify the needs and wants of the customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a), and reinforce the relationship between the restaurant and its customers (Fernandes and Remelhe, 2016).

Furthermore, besides getting experience value, customers need to be involved in the creating of services (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a). This tendency brings the attention on the notion customer engagement which is an associated conception of co-creation (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). In this study, customer engagement refers to the level of customers' behaviour, cognition, and affect involves in the relations with service firm, which relies on the interaction and co-creation experience between customer and restaurant personnel to occur (Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). For this study, customer behavioural engagement is that customer interacts with restaurant at each experience phases which go beyond mere visiting restaurant, e.g. information seeking, recommendation, etc.; customer affective engagement is a mental process related to primarily concerned with restaurant and development of relationships; customer cognitive engagement will lead to the results of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with experience that customer towards restaurant. Furthermore, it is suggested (Brodie *et al.*, 2013, 2011) the relational dimensions/conceptions of customer engagement could act as causes and effect in value co-creation process.

The conceptual framework below (figure 6.2) addresses factors of restaurant engagement in a Chinese context including experience stage (Pre-experience, Primary-experience, Post-experience); engagement partnering (customer/customer and customer/organisation); engagement channel (face/face and online/offline) and is used as a point of departure for developing an item pool in qualitative stage. Once the item pool has been developed, it is used to generate scales representing behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement and affective engagement. Due to co-creation behaviour and behavioural engagement are considered to be analogous (essentially the same thing) on value creation; hence, this study projects Yi and Gong's (2013) co-creation behaviour model on to it. Meanwhile, because the model's dimensions are within the whole co-creation experience, which offers a broader picture of the customer co-creation experience inside and outside the restaurant (see figure 5.3. in chapter 5 further above), this study utilises the model as a sorting tool to create a set of co-creation behaviour scales specific to the context of research interest – full

service restaurants located in various regions within China. In addition, this study would develop a context-specific scale for cognitive engagement and also looks to model Chinese culture in the context of restaurant experience (representing the affective element of restaurant diner engagement). In general, conceptual framework 1 plus the co-creation behaviour model of Yi and Gong (2013) would be deployed in pursuit of research objectives 1 and 2, and form the basis of qualitative analysis designed to specify scales for the various latent variables relevant to this study.

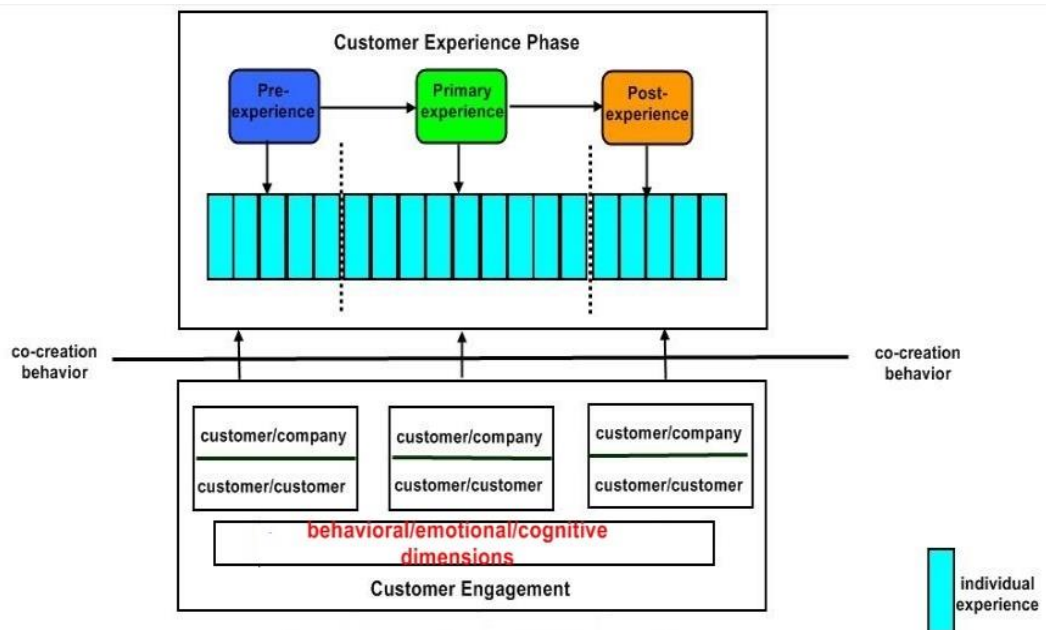


Figure 6.2 Conceptual framework 1 – value creation in restaurant sector

## 6.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 2 – HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The section below provides theoretical support for the interrelationship between all constructs and, based on the interrelationships found, identifies the hypotheses. The conceptual framework 2 (figure 6.2) is developed specifically in pursuit of objective 4 - investigating the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic and geographical regions, but also to address

some issues that directly impact the pursuit of objective 4.

### **Hypothesis 1**

It is stated by Schlevogt (2001) that Chinese people from Northern and Southern regions have diverse attitudes towards people relationships and business activities, largely as a result of the differences of in Chinese culture associated with regions, whereby Northern people lay more emphasis on the values of Confucianism such as, for example, harmonies, thriftiness, respecting the elderly, good-mannered, kind-heartedness, faithfulness and family orientation, etc. In addition, Chan and Wu (2005) argue that the consumption pattern across Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern regions varies quite distinctly. Especially when compared with people from Eastern and Southern China, those from Western China are relatively more conventional and conservative. Consistent with these arguments, Zhou *et al.* (2010) advocate that, from the perspective of cultural materialism, a society's cultural values and attitudes are largely dependent on its regional structure.

Chan and Wu (2005) also suggest that the economy in developed areas (e.g. coastal region) has been dominating China's development for several centuries with large higher-level industrial departments, whereas the economy in China's developing areas has been mainly dominated by the agricultural industry. Consequently, the developed areas in China might accept more western lifestyles and tend to be more individualist; people from developing areas, in contrast, might reserve more traditional Chinese culture values (Zhou *et al.*, 2010; Ralston *et al.*, 1993).

Hence, based on the above literature reviews, it can be argued that Chinese culture is likely to have a greater influence in less well-developed cities (e.g. Tier 3) than it in larger, more well-developed cities (e.g. Tier 1). This is due to larger/more-well developed cities being more cosmopolitan and more Western-oriented, and the influence of Chinese culture therefore, being less pronounced (Ralston *et al.*, 1996). This also applies to economic regions. Correspondingly, this current research proposes the following hypothesis,

**H1: Chinese culture is likely to vary in strength according to city tier and geographical region.**

- **H1a: The less developed the city tier, the stronger the key Chinese culture characteristics will be**
- **H1b: The less developed the economic region, the stronger the Chinese cultural characteristics will be.**

## **Hypothesis 2**

Wang and Lin (2009) contend that traditional norms, ideas and the mode of thinking are still persistent and universal in Chinese people's everyday life, even though Western culture has infiltrated into China. Some scholars have verified that the indigenous Chinese cultural values can affect consumer behaviour (Lai *et al.*, 2010; Hoare and Butcher, 2007). From the customer perspective, Yi and Gong (2013) develop and validate two kinds of behaviours in the value co-creation process: citizenship behaviour and participation behaviour, and this research assumes that these behaviours can be applied to any geographical and/or cultural context, including China.

For citizenship behaviour, Ebrahimpour *et al.* (2011) utilise 16 variables to achieve a model for enhancing organisational citizenship behaviour and prove that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational culture and organizational citizenship behaviour. Similarly, Snell and Tseng (2003) have investigated Chinese socialism as values in mainland China have affected employees' organisational citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, Han and Altman (2010) suggest that the values of Confucianism, such as harmonies, group orientated principles, *guanxi*, conscientiousness, self-learning and thriftiness, greatly affect the indigenous forms of organisation citizenship behaviour in China. According to Srnka's (2004) culture level categories, organisational culture is a kind of micro-level culture, which is based on a macro-level cultural value and moral pursuit such as, for example, national culture/Chinese culture. In addition, from the perspective of value co-creation, the customer can be viewed as 'partial employee' engaged in service creation process, just like the employee in the firm (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a; Keh and Teo, 2001), and customers who engage in behaviours such as feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance (Yi and Gong, 2013). Thus, there are two corresponding parties - organisational culture and Chinese culture, and employee and customer. In this sense, it could be argued that Chinese culture might positively affect customer

citizenship behaviour.

While Yi and Gong (2013) conceptualise participation behaviour as a multidimensional notion made up of four measurements: information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour, and personal interaction. In the dialogue with firm, participation behaviour means customers are more actively to participate and create personalised offers (Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2013; Yi and Gong, 2013). Furthermore, Zhou *et al.* (2010) and Zhang *et al.* (2008) demonstrate that the developed areas in China might accept more western lifestyles and tend to be more individualistic and retain less traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, it may be that the less the traditional Chinese culture, the more likely it is that customers become 'fully engaged' (or 'proactively participatory') in the sense that is understood in the West. That is to say, the less traditional Chinese culture influences the customer to show more 'individualist' engagement with firms. Consequently, by extending the above line of thinking, this study proposes the following hypotheses,

**H2: Customer co-creation is related to Chinese culture.**

- **H2a 'Chinese culture' is negatively related to participation behaviours.**
- **H2b Chinese culture is positively related to citizenship behaviours.**

**Hypothesis 3**

Mai and Zhao (2004) state that the characteristics of Chinese customers are distinct from those customers from Western cultural backgrounds and, to some extent, the unique behaviours of Chinese customers limit the chances of success for foreign companies in China. Additionally, China consists of a few regional markets (Tsang *et al.*, 2003). Owing to constantly changing social environments such as the evolving personal values and the unbalanced economic developing levels among regions, there are very obviously differences on consumer behaviour among Chinese people from different regions (Davis, 2012). Moreover, Zhang *et al.* (2008) utilise coastal–inland dichotomy to research Chinese customer behaviours and claim that people from coastal regions (developed areas) pay more attention to their own the experience, pleasure and desire and are seldom carefully and sensitively to others' views, feelings and comments. In contrast, people from inland regions (less well-developed areas), whose consumer behaviours are more affected by other people views, feelings and comments and who engage in more collectivism, always give priority to the interests of

group members (Hofstede, 2001, 1980). As mentioned above, customer value co-creation behaviour has been categorised as participation behaviour and customer citizenship behaviour. Participation behaviour focuses more on in-role or personalised behaviour, while citizenship behaviour underlines extra-role and achieves higher level engagement.

Hence, if both hypotheses 1 and hypotheses 2 apply, then it would be reasonable to argue that the more developed the city tier (or region), the more likely are Chinese restaurant customers to engage in participation behaviours. By contrast, the less likely they will be to engage in citizenship behaviours (and vice versa in less well-developed city tiers and regions). It is important to know whether this applies, as it can help restaurant brands from other parts of the world understand how they need to manage service provision for local customers when they move into different parts of China. Thus, this research proposes the following hypothesis,

**H3: Chinese restaurant customers to practise co-creation behaviours will vary according to the level of indigenous socio-economic development**

- **H3a: The more developed the city tier, the more likely the Chinese restaurant customers are to practise participation behaviour.**
- **H3b: The more developed the city tier, the less likely the Chinese restaurant customers are to practise citizenship behaviour.**
- **H3c: The more developed the geographical region, the more likely the Chinese restaurant customers are to practise participation behaviour.**
- **H3d: The more developed the geographical region, the less likely the Chinese restaurant customers are to practise citizenship behaviour.**

**Hypothesis 4**

In the analysis of the relationship between economic region/city tier and behaviour, two aspects need to be considered: whether the economic region/city tier play a main or subordinate role and whether economic region/city tier have a direct or an indirect effect on the dependent variables, which could decide the role of economic region/city tier in behavioural research.

Firstly, culture can be viewed as the primarily significant determinant of human issues. In this category, this

current research can treat economic region/city tier as the independent variable which performs direct influence (hypothesis 1 - economic region/city tier and Chinese culture) or view economic region/city tier as a contextual variable and compare specific behaviour across economic region/city tier (hypothesis 4 - economic region/city tier and co-creation behaviour). Secondly, economic region/city tier can be measured as an intervening antecedent variable (subordinate role) when some other variables (e.g. Chinese culture) are assumed to be more substantial, due to the relationship of culture having a vital influence on people's mind and behaviour, as widely agreed by scholars (Elliott and Tam, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2002; Chung and Pysarchik, 2000) - hypothesis 2. Thus, in this case, economic region/city tier is mostly treated as a moderator intervening in the relationship between 'Chinese culture' and 'co-creation behaviour'. This study will test dual roles of 'economic region/city tier', which are independent variable and moderator, separately.

Based on the proposition of hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3, if all three hypotheses are applied, then this research can argue that city tier and/or economic region actually moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour. It would be useful to test, therefore, whether a truly symbiotic relationship exists between these three variables- Chinese culture, economic region/city tier, and co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour). This leads to the following hypothesis,

**H4: City tier, geographical region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour.**

- **H4a: City tier moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.**
- **H4b: City tier moderates the relationship between 'Chinese culture' and citizenship behaviour.**
- **H4c: Economic region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.**
- **H4d: Economic region moderates the relationship between 'Chinese culture' and citizenship behaviour.**



### **Hypothesis 5**

Wong *et al.* (2010) maintain that the Confucianism is probably the most significant backbone, which contributes excellent interpretations and portrays the moral principles for Chinese people on how to conduct or comport oneself, consider problems, understand and perform in both public and private domains. In particular, Confucius vigorously highlights the significance of human relations, the matter of one's face, and preventing conflict to uphold a sense of harmony (Flynn *et al.*, 2007).

Many scholars have identified that the three Chinese indigenous culture of face, *guanxi*, harmony is related to each other and, to some extent, they are overlapped. For example, Knutson *et al.*(2000), Huang (2008) suggest that *guanxi* is correlative to face and harmony; Tsang *et al.* (2013), King (2006) and Zhai (1995) confirm that *guanxi* is positively related to face; Dunning and Kim (2007) state that *guanxi* is steeped in China's national culture in terms of power distance, uncertainty avoidance and collectivism. It also affects, meanwhile, the Chinese traditional culture value of harmony. Luk *et al.* (1999), furthermore, stress the importance of face as a vital element of *guanxi*; face and *guanxi* engage together and develop each other within harmony.

For the purposes of exploring these relationships (e.g. economic region/city tier and culture; culture and co-creation behaviour), it is necessary to understand the way that Chinese culture (CC) impacts cognition and behaviour. Thus, this study needs to know whether it should represent Chinese culture as a distinct set of different characteristics, or whether it can view Chinese Culture as a holistic entity. On the basis of the above statements, although key Chinese culture characteristics are distinct, there are common aspects in each and, in addition, they are intertwined. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is set as follows,

**H5: Despite comprising discreet and individually distinct components, Chinese culture can be considered to have a holistic effect.**

### **Hypothesis 6**

Customer experience has been known to be an inherent and subjective response that customers have towards a firm when they are engaging with each other (Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). The internal and subjective nature of customer experience is identified by Pine and

Gilmore (1998) who suggest that experience only exists in the awareness of a person who engages with a firm through intelligence, emotion, affection behaviour, and so on. Associated with experience, Yuksel and Yuksel (2001) and Engel *et al.* (1995) claim that satisfaction is post-evaluation of the expected outcome or process of whether individual experience achieves or surpasses the predefined expectations; while dissatisfaction is the result of undesirable experience or expectations. Furthermore, the results of satisfaction and dissatisfaction affect the future assessment of customer cognition. Hence, a satisfying experience would strengthen the future engagement between customer and firm. In contrast, a dissatisfying experience would weaken future engagement (Yuksel and Yuksel, 2001; Pizam and Ellis, 1999). Echoing this, Cambra-Fierro *et al.* (2013) and van Doorn *et al.* (2010) support that satisfaction is a precursor of engagement.

From empirical aspects, Fredrickson *et al.* (2003) suggest that an individual' positive experience of can lead to cognitive improvement in an individual's mind, emotions, learning and behaviour. Choi *et al.* (2013) show that customer experience positively affects customer satisfaction and, consequently, satisfaction affects the customer' s future visiting frequency. Therefore, Brodie *et al.* (2013) deem that satisfaction is the association between customer and service firm and is two-way: firm engagement behaviour promotes more satisfaction and loyalty and, in turn, if the service firm is accepted by the customer, he/she will reciprocate the firm with his/her beneficial actions (e.g. trust, repurchasing, positive word-of-mouth) in the future.

Finally, as the current research has collected data from a broadly representative sample of Chinese restaurant customers, it is useful to understand and explore some of the factors (e.g. cognition) that underlie their behaviour in terms of both citizenship and participation. Furthermore, there is also the possibility that the variation in co-creation behaviours may not be impacted by Chinese culture alone, whereas it may be that the quality of recent restaurant experiences will have an impact on this relationship. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is set,

**H6. Cognitive Engagement mediates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviours**

- **H6a. Cognitive engagement mediates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.**
- **H6b. Cognitive engagement mediates the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.**

In general, the Conceptual framework 2 (figure 6.3) below reveals the direct and indirect relationships between the constructs. In detail, CC represents the construct 'Chinese culture'; CE represents construct 'cognitive engagement'; PB represents construct 'participation behaviour' and CB represents construct 'citizenship behaviour'. There are four direct relationships, economic regions/city tier has a direct influence on Chinese culture (economic region → CC; city tier → CC); Chinese culture has a direct effect on co-creation behaviour (CC → PB; CC → CB). While the indirect relationship is that economic region/city tier moderate the relations between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviours (economic region moderates CC → PB; economic region moderates CC → CB; city tier moderates CC → PB; city tier moderates CC → CB), and cognitive engagement mediates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour (cognitive engagement mediates CC → PB; cognitive engagement mediates CC → CB).

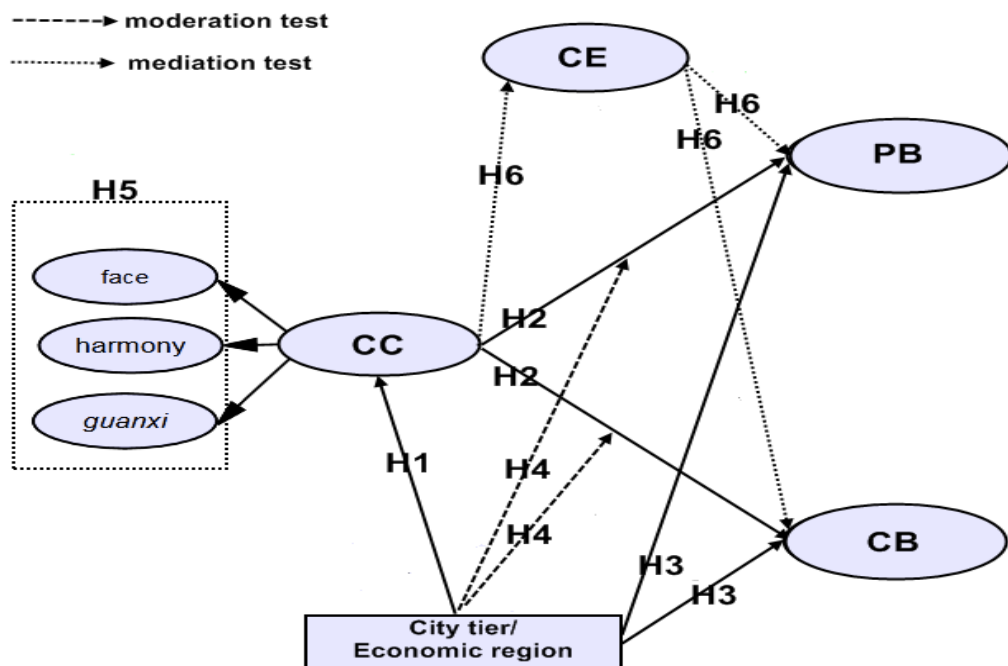


Figure 6.3 Conceptual framework 2 – Hypotheses development

## **6.4 CONCLUSION**

The above conceptual frameworks provide a comprehensive structure for the whole study based on the literature in terms of constructs 'co-creation behaviour', 'Chinese culture', and 'customer engagement'. In addition, it explains how research aims and objectives to be achieved and how the interrelations among constructs are to be operationalised. Accordingly, conceptual framework 1 guides the development of an item pool that will be used, in conjunction with Yi and Gong's (2013) model of co-creation behaviour, as the basis for developing scales that will ultimately be used for testing conceptual framework 2; Conceptual framework 2 represents the hypotheses that will be tested (see data analysis chapter) in this study. In the following chapter, the methodological views utilised in the current study will be represented via discourse the qualitative and quantitative research procedures involved in the item pool and the questionnaire.

# CHAPTER 7. METHODOLOGY CHAPTER

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the appropriate methodology for achieving the research study aims and objectives. The overall purpose of this research study is based on the conceptual terms of experience, co-creation and customer engagement, utilising restaurant as a vehicle to explore and evaluate customer experience co-creation/engagement in China.

This study utilises quantitative research to measure the nature, direction and strength of relevant relationships, but as there is scarce knowledge in both the frameworks and the scales, this study also employs qualitative method to undertake initial theory-development work. Therefore, the study comprises two stages – an inductive qualitative stage and a subsequent deductive quantitative stage.

Using online focus groups to engage with indigenous consumers, the inductive approach used in this study develops a new set of scales that represent relevant latent variables in respect of co-creation and engagement in the specific context of customer restaurant experience. New scales focus on experience stages (i.e. Pre-experience, Primary-experience, Post-experience) to address categories of customer engagement in a Chinese context, including engagement partnering (customer/customer and customer/organisation); engagement channel (face-to-face and online/offline); and effects of key cultural characteristics (*guanxi*, face, and harmony) on behaviour.

Scales are used for undertaking a major consumer survey (quantitative stage). Target populations are China's four economic regions. Further, in each economic region, three different cities are selected according to city tiers category (Tier 1 cities - key cities; Tier 2 cities - provincial/ sub-provincial level capitals; Tier 3 cities - prefecture or county level cities) to additionally refine/describe the sample. Objectives were for a sample of 150 from each of the four regions, each of three city tier types (target sample size, 600 in total). Ultimately, a total of 840 questionnaires are collected from which 657 cases were deemed usable.

Data is to be subjected to a multi-stage analysis process intended both for establishing reliability and validity and for testing a range of hypotheses derived from the literature. Structural equation modelling (SEM), using IBM's AMOS statistical software is used both for path analysis and moderator testing, with ANOVA used, too, for further inferential testing.

Details of the methodology used in this research study are described in the following sections: Section 7.2 provides a philosophical perspective about this study; Section 7.3 describes qualitative research procedures; Section 7.4 explains quantitative phase procedures; Section 7.5 gives an account of data preparation for analysis, including refine data, reliability, validity, SEM, and confirmatory factor analysis. Section 7.6 reports the ethical consideration relevant to this study; Section 7.7 concludes this chapter.

## **7.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

According to Henn *et al.* (2009), research paradigm provides an outline or structure for the field of research. Hence, the outline of for the researchers or academics is deemed as the system of fundamental beliefs, values, thought patterns, and world views. Though researcher and academics might employ any kinds of research paradigm, consciously or not; however, they have to comply with the formed or founded guidelines and standard rules (Bryman, 2012). Based on Henn *et al.* (2009), the ontology and epistemology are the foundation of research paradigms. The ontology is highly abstract and relevant to the nature of being and existence, while the epistemology is associated with the philosophical theory that involving how the knowledge is being in reality (Sekaran, 2003). Similarly, Bryman (2012) and Scott (2000) claim that the ontology concentrates on seeking realities, whereas the epistemology is relevant to how to do with knowledge.

Henn *et al.* (2009) argue that the methodology in every research is the section of a paradigm. As stated by Sekaran (2003), the design of methodology is a total formation of an investigation or a research. Further, Bryman (2012) argue that the choice of research design is influenced by a few elements. The elements might comprise the type of a studying problem, the essential reason of these phenomena, the control extent of researcher in the field of research, the philosophical position of researcher or academics (Saunders *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, two main research approaches are involved in the methodology aspects; one is the positivist research in a positivism epistemological position, the other is interpretivist approach that in a contrasting epistemological position – interpretivism (Bryman, 2012). According to Saunder *et al.* (2015), the nature of positivist approach is quantitative, whereas the nature of interpretivist approach is qualitative. Nevertheless, the both two approaches of philosophy will generate positive and negative effect under different the research background or context in a certain way (Bryman, 2012). In the next section, the positivist and interpretivist approaches will be critical reviewed respectively, as well as the philosophical stance, selection of research method for current research.

### **7.2.1 Positivist Approach**

According to Saunder *et al.* (2015) and Gall *et al.* (2007), positivist approach is the adherents of the method in pursuit the natural science to focus on social reality. The approach shares a general view that the reality matter is objective, which could be measured and disclosed by a researcher that having no personal preference. Lichtman (2006) maintain that the positivist approach is by virtue of a large number of scientific methods to acquire numerical data or alphanumeric characters. In this kind of approach, researchers or academics usually utilise a system of words in term of theory, variable and hypothesis (Bryman, 2012). Meanwhile, being an approach of science, positivist approach works with numbers with an objectivity and is in the statistical means to conduct data analysis. That is to say, the approach has such characteristics, collecting data, conveying the data into measureable variable, estimating population parameters based upon sample data, controlling and overcoming the external interference (Gall *et al.*, 2007).

According to the researchers who insists on great precision and correctness in quantitative aspect, the observation in the research ought to carry out in the manner which is similar with physicist or something of that nature dealing with the phenomena of physics (Babbie, 2010; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Furthermore, they contend that the researcher should make a separation between himself/herself and objects (e.g. the participants of research) in the way of keeping distance. In the way, the researcher could generalise what they are conducting, the essence for this kind of manner is that social science should be undistorted by emotion or personal bias; what is more, the variability and the reliability of research outcome under the true causes should be maintained by researcher (Babbie, 2010).

Hence, in a traditional manner, researchers or academics who utilise positivist approach encompass a neutral voice and specialised technical vocabularies in writing style (Henn *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, according to Malhotra (2012), the quantitative research usually adopts such kinds of methods like surveys, experiments and structured observation, etc. The basis of quantitative research is under the deduction, which is from theory to observations or finding (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). In other words, quantitative research is in a proposition that is accepted as true in order to provide a basis for logical reasoning, along with data collection to check the validity of this premise or hypothesis.

### **7.2.2 Interpretivist Approach**

According to Bryman (2012), the epistemology interpretivism is apparent to be against to the positivism paradigm. That is to say, the interpretivist is to study social phenomenon from the other logic – basing on the view that respecting the difference between human and its surrounding objective world. Hence, it deems the world is subjective reality and needs researchers to utilise the subjective understating or experience to grasp meaning.

Based on the researchers who pursue the great perfection in qualitative aspect, the existence of multidimensional realities suggests that it is not possible to totally distinguish the causes from the effect in a generalisation relationship (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). The adherents of interpretivism advocates that with the purpose of completely comprehend the nature of reality, researcher should be in a subjective interpreting and intervening manner (Babbie, 2010). What is more, the interpretivist believes that the reality is determined and constructed subjectively by human in a social manner. This kind of belief is associated with supposition that placing people in a specific environment, and there will be more chances to understand their action or perception (Henn *et al.*, 2009). Thus, regarding the nature of interpretivist approach, it accelerates the knowledge development under the qualitative data (Bryman, 2012).

Accordingly, the supporters of qualitative are in pursuit of the writing style that comprising sufficient information and going into detail describing. Because the approaches of qualitative study are generated from the field of social science, the researchers or academics usually focuses on sociocultural phenomenon. The frequently used methods of the qualitative study are in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation (Malhotra, 2012). Besides, the basis of qualitative research is under the induction, which is from



observations or findings to theory (Saunders *et al.*, 2015).

### **7.2.3 Post-positivist Approach**

The post-positivism paradigm appears in consort with the criticism on positivists who utilise the procedures of statistics to abstract the phenomenon, which may not sufficiently uncover the truth in the reality (Henn *et al.*, 2009). It is because of the viewpoint of positivist on the ontology, which deems the reality could be quantified and is measurable (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011). For the post-positivism paradigm, it has the similar ontology with positivism on the reality; however, it admits the point that the reality would not be completely understood (Bryman, 2012).

Differentiating from positivist, the post-positivist deems the reality is challengeable and conjecturable (Henn *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, in the view of the post-positivist, researchers or academics could have a strong scientific underpinning for declaring what they judge, regard and speculate. Alternatively, the declaration could be revised or abolished based on the consequences of further research, which is also acknowledged by the post-positivist. According to Saunders *et al.* (2015), post-positivist believes in the potential of a strong theory that is able to offer reasoning and forecast how human would act but might or might not be truth-based. Also, as regards the epistemology, like the positivism, the post-positivism has the similar view that the reality is objective; however, they look more critically at the result of investigation and claims of the knowledge. In this sense, the post-positivist contends that the reliability of investigation is supported by the neutral evidence, which is also able to fend off the criticism.

In the methodology aspects, the post-positivist suggests an investigation should include multiple methods to uncover the truth rather than merely involve in the statistical analysis. Therefore, the post-positivist approach should also involve qualitative methods in the research for making up for the deficiency of quantitative methods, and thus to make the results more scientific and reasonable (Saunders *et al.*, 2015).

### **7.2.4 Research Approach of This Study**

This research is conducted to evaluate customer co-creation and engagement in China's restaurant context. Based on consumer behaviour theory, consumer culture theory, and models in the field of co-creation value behaviour (Yi and Gong, 2013), a hypothesised model about Chinese restaurant customer co-creation

behaviour is generated.

With the intention of testing and validating the hypothesised model in an empirical manner, current study utilises the quantitative method, since it is in line the theme. What 's more, the hypotheses formations are based on widely literature review in interested context. Then, these hypotheses would be checked through questionnaire with the target of Chinese full-service restaurant consumers. Meanwhile, the researcher is undistorted by emotion, bias and makes a separation with problem realm. The standpoint of research is objective. Besides, statistical tools are utilised in this research to provide data analysis. According to Hussey and Hussey (1997), the usual steps in the view of positivist approach is to base on the literatures to set up relevant theories, and then form hypotheses. However, as mentioned in theoretical and contextual backgrounds that co-creation behaviour model and the notion customer engagement explored extensively in Western context rather than the specific context between restaurants and their customers, plus the overall construct relationship and dimensions are unclear. Therefore, because these is not enough knowledge in both scales and frameworks, qualitative approach is also used for descriptions of the abstracted restaurant customer experience, which is with intention of theory development.

In general, first of all, this research is in a broadly positivist stance, but it should be noted that even the view that positivists construct understanding of the world might be sub-consciously. Thus, because there is an element of interpretation, even the most basic of positivist endeavor, then the empirical results are likely to imperfect. Although this study takes steps to be as rigorous as it can, it must always recognise and acknowledge the constraints that apply. This doesn't invalidate the results, but does leave room for reconsideration - should this research face any subsequent and conflicting evidence? What the research is trying the best, and it presents this honestly and with conviction, but without making any absolute claims to infallibility. Therefore, this research is from a post-positivistic understanding to invest the potential of Chinese full-service restaurant customers. In the following section, qualitative phase and quantitative phase designs are described, respectively.

## 7.3 QUALITATIVE PHASE

### 7.3.1 General Qualitative Research Procedures

On the basis of whether respondents know the true purpose of project, qualitative research procedures can be classified as either direct or indirect approach (Malhotra, 2012, see figure 7.1). The distinction between direct and indirect approach is that the former's research purpose is disclosed to respondents and the nature of interview is apparent, while the latter's research purpose is disguised from respondents. As all participants are fully informed why the project is being conducted and what their participation will involve before the project begins, thus this qualitative procedure of this research is in line with direct approach. In this section that the purpose of the qualitative phase is to generate items for use in a questionnaire.

Malhotra (2012) states focus group and depth interview both are personal interviewing for research to gain insight and understanding for generating item pools, but the group interactions produces a wider range of information and ideas than do individual interviews, and the comments of one person can trigger unexpected reactions from others, leading to snowballing with participants responding to each other's comments (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, because the researcher wished to obtain the widest possible range of views, and not necessarily just the individual opinions of the respondents, focus group are chosen as the instrument of the qualitative stage.

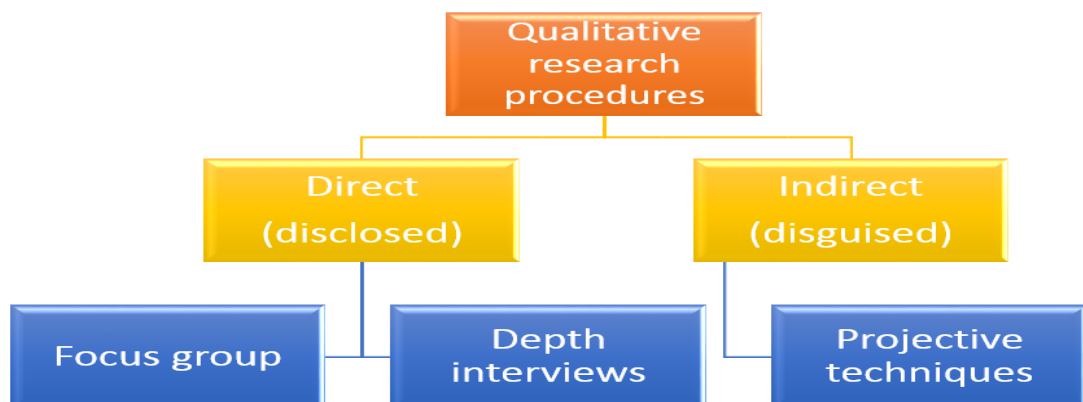


Figure 7.1 Classification of qualitative research procedures

This project will follow Punch's (2014) advice (three aspects – six steps) to conduct a focus group.

- Interview respondents
  - a. Design the focus group environment
  - b. Select the focus group respondents
- Managing the interview
  - c. Moderator communication and listening skills
  - d. Prepare interview schedule
  - e. Conduct the group interview – the sequence and types of questions
- Recording
  - f. Recording technique, report expressions – most participants thought or participants are controversial on issues

### **7.3.2 Sampling in Qualitative Phase**

Miles and Huberman (1994) highlight that people cannot engage with everyone everywhere doing everything. Sampling selection is important not only about which research participant to interview or which events to focus, but also about plan and procedure. Qualitative research would often utilise some kind of considered sampling – in the term of 'purposive sampling', but rather probability sampling, that is to say, sampling selection is in a deliberate manner, with some drive or concentration in mind.

Malhotra (2012) suggest that a focus group engages qualitative techniques that are typically based on small samples (see table below). Across the various sample size requirement, there is a clear principle involved, which concerns the overall validity of the research design, and which emphasis that the sample must fit in with the other components of the study. For this study, it focuses upon ideas relating to customer experience derived from Tynan and McKechnie (2009) and is used to generate an initial pool of items via the use of consumer focus groups. The purpose of the focus group is to explore specific activities related to pre-experience, primary experience, and post-experience stages of restaurant visits. It was decided, therefore,

to utilise four online focus groups (because it exceeds minimum size two, see following table 7.1) with six restaurant customers in each.

Type of study	Minimum size
Problem-identification research (e.g. market potential)	500
Problem-solving research (e.g. pricing)	200
Products tests	200
Test –marketing studies	200
Test-market audits	10 stores
Focus group	2 groups

**Table 7.1 Samples size used in Marketing Research studies (sources: Malhotra, 2012)**

### 7.3.3 Develop Item Pool/Scale Structure

To develop measures suiting for China context, this research began with a review of the co-creation behaviour, engagement, Chinese culture literature as mentioned in previous chapters, followed by a grounded theory approach to establish dimensions/scales of co-creation behaviour, cognitive engagement and Chinese culture through online restaurant forum and then proceeded with a modified scale development processes.

Based on the scale development steps that Hinkin *et al.* (1997) mentioned in their study - *Scale Construction: developing reliable and valid measurement instrument*, table 7.2 provides an overview of the entire process, which entailed qualitative data collections, item generation, item deduction, refine and initially confirm scale structure, and the steps of reliability and validities presented in data analysis chapter. Note that items were initially generated in the form of experience characteristic statements and subsequently converted to questionnaire items. In the following sections, this research provides details on the entire process of item development (See Table 2).

	Step in process	in	Details
<b>Methodology chapter</b>	Online focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four online focus groups</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis of online focus group transcripts to identify constructs of participation behaviour, citizenship behaviour, face, harmony, guanxi, cognitive engagement</li> <li>• 99 original items generated</li> </ul>
	Statement reduction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reject those items that were either duplicated or spurious</li> <li>• six judges were invited to the content of six constructs</li> <li>• a revised pool with 72 items</li> </ul>
	Refine and initially confirm scale structure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• four English reviewers representing the first panel were asked to rate the relevance of the items</li> <li>• 56 items remained</li> </ul>

**Table 7.2 Items generating process**

### 7.3.3.1 Online Focus Group

As mentioned above, China is with an area of 9.6 million square kilometres, which is divided into 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities under the direct jurisdiction of the Central Government, and two special administrative regions. So, when potential participants are such scattered and located at a distance from the researcher and each other, conducting focus group becomes both expensive and time consuming. Besides, many participants are busy with work and maybe a little harder to agree the meeting time. However, using internet technologies to conduct focus group, marketing research can remove geographical constrains, lessen time limits and enable the researcher to invite people from all over world who might be interested in research topic (Punch, 2014). Moreover, it also can remove the delays of asynchronous exchange, making it more like the traditional face-to-face interaction. These can be provided by online focus group.

Skype and QQ (Chinese favoured communication software) are two types of internet-based telephone/instant messaging softwares that this research adopted, since both of the softwares enable individuals to conduct videoconference (with webcams), and/or type and post in forum from computer to computer. Next, some of participants may prefer to join via smart phone (where video and type functions are also available) rather than through their computer; these two softwares will also enable this research to accommodate their preference. Furthermore, researchers might also be able to carry on side conversation with individual respondents, probing deeper into interesting areas they would not wish to discuss in a collective context. People are more likely to fully express their thoughts online without any worry (Malhotra, 2012).

For this research, the target population of online focus group will be defined as any consumers who regularly (at least once per month) frequent restaurants in China. Following approval by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) about qualitative stage work, this research began to online focus groups and continued over the following three days. This study invited twenty-four customers from Dianping Restaurant Forum (it is one of well-known review sites in China, which allows consumers to read and post comments on restaurant) with six customers in each. Each focus group session was conducted in Chinese with an open-ended format and lasted approximately one hour (Malhotra, 2012).

With respect to online focus group, the researcher conducted four focus groups through Chinese's instant messaging software to explore specific activities related to pre-experience, primary experience, and post-experience stages of restaurant visits, including engagement partnering (customer/customer and customer/organisation); engagement channel (face/face and online/offline); and effects of key cultural characteristics (*guanxi*, face, harmony). All of them have a positive engagement and reaction when the researcher asked questions, which helped the researcher to generated two kind of restaurant customer co-creation behaviours, those are, participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour. The focus groups were audiotaped, transcriptions were analysed and converted into items. This research generated an initial pool of 99 items from addressing all aspect of the research framework identified (see Appendix 1).

### **7.3.3.2 Statement Reduction**

In order to statements are being categorised/sorted against the various constructs I am working with in my research and to reject those statements that were either duplicated or spurious and to reduce the total number of items down to something more manageable, five marketing practitioners and one PhD student were then invited as judges in an evaluation of the content of the key research variables (submit for allocating items). In this analysis, six judges were given the definition of each dimension, a related explanation, and an example item. The judges were then asked to allocate the statements to each dimension or a 'not applicable' category. After eliminating items that did not receive the appropriate categorization by at least four of the six judges, resulting in a revised pool from 99 original statement to 72 (pre-experience stage statement, from 27 to 16; primary –experience stage statement, from 48 to 37; post-experience stage statement, from 24 to 19). Yi and Gong's (2013) dimension 'personal interaction' wasn't fully recognised by the reviewers, and there was also a surplus of experience characteristic statements that couldn't be allocated to any of Yi and Gong's original structure. Consequently, 'personal interaction' was dropped, and after further researchers analysis it was determined that surplus items could be categorised to create three new dimensions, these are , interest interaction (customers want to engage with, and know more about, the restaurant), novel interaction (customer are happy or enthusiastic to try new and/or novel restaurant experiences) and communication interaction (customers interact with restaurant staff to help improve their enjoyment of the service). Further, at this point statement were just expressed as experience characteristics rather than in a form suitable for generating scales. Consequently, the next step was to convert all retained experience characteristic statements into questions that could subsequently be incorporated into a survey questionnaire.

### **7.3.3.3 Refine and Initially Confirm Scale Structure**

According to Hardesty and Bearden's statement (2004), some authors used more than one phase of judging for item retention, as simply judging items may not guarantee the selection of the most appropriate items for a scale. Hence, in order to ensure further validity and reliability of construct and content, two further review stages have to be performed (Holbrook *et al.*, 2007; Jansen and Hak, 2005; Theis *et al.*, 2002; Willis *et al.*, 1999), to check whether the items appear to measure the whole engagement activities and whether the items cover the range of the concept.



Firstly, four English reviewers representing the first panel were asked to rate how relevant they thought each newly constructed questionnaire item was to what I intend to measure (phase 1 'English expert review'), which is similar to the procedure used by Zaichkowsky (1985), Bearden *et al.* (2001) and Tian *et al.* (2001). The first panel was provided with scale items, the definition for each dimension, and each expert was asked to rate how well each of the remaining items reflected the different dimensions, using the following scale; 1 = completely representative judgement, 2 = somewhat representative judgement, and 3 = not representative judgement. Only items evaluated as completely representative judgement by three experts and as no worse than somewhat representative by a fourth judge were retained. Finally, 56 items remained. The benefit of this step is reviewers can help evaluate the items' clarity, conciseness and coherence (DeVellis, 2003). Sometimes, the content of an item may be relevant to the construct, but its wording may be problematic; if so, reviewers could point out awkward or confusing items and suggest alternative wordings to reduce their impact to item reliability. Also, reviewers can help point out some parts that may fail to include to maximise the content validity of scale (DeVellis, 2003). For instance, this study has included many items referring to 'personal interaction' concerned with 'participation behaviour', but failed to consider 'customer's willing' as another relevant departure from 'participation behaviour'.

Now English expert review in the qualitative phase is finished, and that necessary adjustments have been made to scale content and structure. When all the scales are confirmed, a major consumer survey is conducted. Questionnaire items is determined by the results of the above qualitative/inductive stage. Next part, the process of quantitative phase will be presented.

## **7.4 QUANTITATIVE PHASE**

### **7.4.1 The Design of Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is as one of main instruments for gathering information from respondents in social research. The application of questionnaire is especially suitable in a situation where the scholars understand exactly what intend to enquire and how to evaluate the items of interest with the intention of achieving relevance and correctness (Sekaran, 2000). It has the following advantages (Bryman, 2012; Malhotra, 2012): 1. it is practical; 2. large amounts of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way; 3. it could be carried out by the researcher or by any number

of people with limited affect to its validity and reliability; 4. the results of the questionnaires can usually be quickly and easily quantified by either a researcher or through the use of a software package; 5. it can be analysed more 'scientifically' and objectively than other forms of research; 6. positivists believe that quantitative data can be used to create new theories and/or test existing hypotheses.

According to suggestion of Zikmund (2003) and Sekaran (2003), the following steps should be noticed when design a questionnaire,

- **Setting precise aims and objectives:** The aims and objectives of this research are set and defined as clear as possible. Moreover, they cover essential information for responding research question, assessing the hypotheses, and so on. Current research aims and objectives has already been stated in the earlier chapter.
- **Integrating variables from former researches:** Integrating and checking the related variables or items in published articles, which could be conducive to find out the accurate words and the viewpoints of Chinese restaurant customers. This process is contained in the process of developing item pool.
- **Comparing the design of similar questionnaire:** After reviewing the similar questionnaire from published article, the design of current research questionnaire is adjusted and amended.
- **Use high-level items:** According to Churchill (1979), single item might not be sufficient to offer an ideal meaning of the concept. Hence, the multi items are adopted to cover the meaning of each construct (e.g. participation behaviours, citizenship behaviours, Chinese culture, cognitive engagement)
- **The comments from experts:** Comments from experts, for example, those people who often doing research on the behaviour of service industries or doing research on engagement/co-creation association, are invited to make comments on this research questionnaire.
- **Pilot study:** A pilot study is conducted to evaluate the properties of the measures.

At this quantitative research phase, the questionnaire is focused on the three aspects of engagement – behavioural (co-creation behaviour); affective (Chinese culture); and cognitive (quality of most recent restaurant experience). The structured items were set to collect information about customers' experience and behaviours with restaurants in three stages (Pre, Primary and Post), which is categorised and questioned using the prefixes: 'before visiting a restaurant', 'most recent restaurant experience', 'usual/and/or likely behaviours', and 'any future restaurant visit'. Especially, multiple-choice questions are used for respondents' demographic information and understanding respondents' use of restaurants; A 5-point Likert scales question is used for latent variable measurement (participation behaviours, citizenship behaviours, Chinese culture, cognitive engagement). Whereas, unstructured questions are also adopted in some parts in order to collect information of respondents' living length in current city and occupation status.

## **7.4.2 The Measures of Questionnaire**

The Chinese restaurant customer survey is to hand out through questionnaire to collect the customers' opinions on the constructs which are assessed in this research. Moreover, the layout of evaluated measure of constructs in current questionnaire are described as listed below. All measures/scales are restaurant specific.

### **7.4.2.1 The measure of Participation Behaviour**

#### **Information seeking**

The construct of information seeking is measured by seven questions shown in Appendix 2, is based on Likert 5-points scale ('disagree completely' to 'agree completely'). Under the prefix, 'before a visiting a restaurant never been to', the customers are asked about the information source from online platform (website, Twitter/Weibo), colleagues/friends/family, newspaper/magazine, and are asked about the perception on location, prices, dishes and atmosphere (Yi and Gong, 2013; Revilla-Camacho *et al.*, 2015).

#### **Information sharing**

The construct of information sharing that is suggested and developed by Yi and Gong (2013). According to Yi and Gong (2013), and Chan and Li (2010) social members' information sharing behaviours are dominated by references to the reciprocity, which the norm of reciprocity reflects embedded obligations created by exchanges of benefits or favours. The information sharing is measured through three questions shown in

Appendix 2. It is also scored on Likert 5-point scale ('disagree completely' to 'agree completely'). Respondents are asked about how the restaurant staff might serve better, how service should be delivered, and their service expectations and preferences.

### **Responsible behaviour**

The construct of responsible behaviour is measured by four questions. Customers are asked about behaviour intention of future restaurant visit in terms of following restaurant employees' recommendation, sharing a table with other diners, clearing their own table under restaurant convention/rule and waiting for their turn, which reflect customers as partial service providers contributing the service value co-creation (Vega-Vazquez *et al.*, 2013). The questions are shown in Appendix 2 and scored on Likert 5-point scale, being 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely' respectively.

### **Novel interaction**

The broad logic for this measure can be found in Yi and Gong (2013). According to Kim and Mauborgne (1999), novel is described as a strategic approach to business growth, involving a shift away from a focus on the existing competition to one of trying to create entirely new markets. Berghman *et al.* (2006) also saw 'novel interaction' in strategic terms as the creation of customer value/experience with a view to gaining a competitive advantage and rejuvenating the firms. Its relevance was confirmed via thematic analysis of the item pool developed for this research which, for the purposes of restaurant experience has been re-specified to asked respondents whether they happy with more online interactivity, whether they are happy for a new way in service, whether they are happy for novel restaurant experience, whether they are happy for food prepared inside the restaurant and whether they are happy for involving more restaurant experience. They are scored on Likert 5-points scale ('disagree completely' to 'agree completely'). The questions are shown in Appendix 2

### **Communication interaction**

This measure was not found in the model of Yi and Gong (2013) but has been added to reflect an additional category via thematic analysis of the item pool developed for this research. In restaurant, communication interaction is seen that mutual conveying information between customer and service provider in a courteous,

friendliness and respectful manner, which could be simple as saying hello to customers (Basri *et al.*, 2015). Communication interaction also could be considered as communication on goods and services. It is an influential credible way, especially in customer unsatisfactory situation about foods. As the statements of Taghizadeh *et al.* (2013), communication is mainly essential to service providers whose offerings are mostly intangible experience or acceptance based on. Echoing this, Ryu and Han (2011) claim many customers are pursuing an unforgettable meal experience that eating out from home, so the effective communication interaction with customers could contribute the frequencies of future restaurant visiting.

The construct 'communication interaction' is measured by four items with Likert 5-points scale ('disagree completely' to 'agree completely'), shown in Appendix 2. Chinese restaurant respondents are asked about future restaurant visit, in terms of communication to meals preparation, to authority, to chef about good meal taste, and interaction with servicer for extra sauce.

### **Interest interaction**

This measure was also not found in Yi and Gong (2013) but has been added to reflect an additional category via thematic analysis of the item pool developed for this research. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) claim that interaction between service provider and customer has become the site of creating and extracting value. Customer interest is vital to the interaction process. The attention of customer could be attracted in the preliminary step; however, customer interest in the service/product should be kept up via interaction (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). For restaurant, it should establish a lasting channel of communication with customers, making use of knowledge or interest shared with customers, and then expand the extent and range of interaction among with customers to reach with potential customers (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). Thus, customers could engage with, and know more about, the restaurant.

The construct 'interest interaction' is measured through four items, which is shown in Appendix 2. The items are scored on Likert 5-points scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely'. Chinese restaurant interviewees are asked about usual and /or likely behaviour when visiting restaurant in terms of paying attention to restaurant sector, pay attention to music, touching/feeling artefacts, and knowing the source, preparation of food/drink.

### **7.4.2.2 The Measure of Citizenship Behaviour**

#### **Feedback**

Feedback is measured through three questions, which are based on Yi and Gong (2013), and Homburg and Furst (2005) that hospitality firms encouraging their customers to provide feedback on service performance have several benefits to the firm - leading to enhanced loyalty, positive word-of-mouth behaviour and is an opportunity to recover from a failure. Moreover, the respondents are asked about complaints to restaurant proprietor that if they are not satisfied with service/food; one other hand, they are asked about constructive suggestions on improvement whether they would contact restaurant proprietor to advise him/her, and whether they will post comments on appropriate website.

#### **Advocacy**

The construct of advocacy is assessed through three questions, which is in line with the statement of yi and Gong (2013), and Chelminski and Coulter (2011) that some consumers proactively aid others to promote positive experiences in their marketplace activities, closely linked to the altruistic tendencies of individuals. Moreover, all three questions are related to assist in the purchase decisions and grounded in the consumer information exchange about marketplace activities to promote positive marketplace experiences (Lerman, 2006). Specifically, the respondents are asked about advising friends/ family, posting favourable comments on social media/ online forum after a pleasant dining experience (see Appendix 2). The questions are also based on Likert 5-points scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely'.

#### **Helping**

Helping behaviour has received the most attention (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). Helping behaviours are individual voluntary actions directed at another individual and are consistent with Yi and Gong's (2013) model. Previous chapter has mention that the construct help is performed in the marketplace that benefit others in their purchases and consumption (Johnson and Rapp, 2010).

The construct of expresses helping in terms of measures of actively involving in helping others to navigate the marketplace (Sargeant and Lee, 2004), spreading positive word of mouth (Brown *et al.*, 2005), sharing market information to warn consumers so they can avoid negative marketplace experiences (Bodey and

Grace, 2006). The three aspects are shown in Appendix 2, and are founded on Likert 5-points scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely'.

### **Tolerance**

According to Yi and Gong (2013), customer tolerance to service suppliers is seen as showing kindness, appreciate and forgiveness when it came to negative events. Yi and Gong (2013, 2011) generate measures of co-creation value behaviour and said that tolerance, which is as one of components of customer citizenship behaviour, facilitates customer to solve unexpected problems positively (e.g. servicers make a mistake during service delivery, customers are still willing to come to terms with this situation), to endure or have patience to failure of service encounter, and to accommodate himself/herself to circumstances out of control, which makes the running of service firms efficiently.

The construct 'tolerance' is measured by three items shown in Appendix 2, which also is based on Likert 5-points scale ('disagree completely' to 'agree completely'). The three items are used to identify the aspects of higher prices, unexpected service, and a second try on unsatisfied situation.

## **7.4.2.3 The Measure of Chinese Culture**

### **Face**

Research on cross-cultural psychology, sociology, and anthropology suggests that the influence of face on social interactions is both pervasive and powerful in Asia (Kim and Nam, 1998). Face is an important Chinese cultural concept that has penetrated every aspect of Chinese life. It is also a cultural concept that has been influencing Chinese life for thousands of years (Dong and Lee, 2007). In China, face has to do with the image or credibility of the person that people are dealing with. People should never insult, embarrass, shame, yell at or otherwise demean a person (Kim and Nam, 1998). Applying the Chinese use of face, if someone is able to save his/her own face while giving face to his/her partners, she/he gains credibility and will build a harmonious relationship in future interaction or communication (Dong and Lee, 2007).

The construct of face is measured by three questions and shown in Appendix 2 with on Likert 5-points scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely'. Face shows up in many ways, in this study, the respondents

are asked about searching a restaurant with luxury atmosphere, never returning a restaurant where losing face, going a restaurant where staffs understand the needs, going a restaurant that reflects and acknowledges social status.

### **Harmony**

China is a highly collectivist nation (Hofstede, 2010). This culture emphasises 'we-identity' instead of 'I - identity' in individualist culture, which leads to an indigenous value – harmony which refers to the concept of avoiding extreme behaviour or conflict to maintain and achieve harmonious relationship with other people (Chin, 2014). Chinese harmony rooted in ancient book - *The Book of Changes*, which encompasses a broader spectrum of content and elements, including all relevant values, tradition and practice such as reciprocation of social favours, group orientation, personal connections, solidarity with others, face and so on (Han and Altman, 2010).

The measuring harmony are through three questions, based on 5-point scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely', which displayed in Appendix 2. Furthermore, the three questions identify three aspects of harmony in terms of enjoying a peaceful and restful environment, maintaining group relationships, and understanding appreciate restaurant's aim and objectives.

### **Guanxi**

*Guanxi* is known to be an essential feature of Chinese society establishing interpersonal relationship through formal or informal exchange and developing mutual trust network with consensus of mutual restraint and benefit (Hsiung, 2013). Within *guanxi*, scholars approach this notion of inquiry from different perspectives and suggest that it appears to be a contradiction. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that *guanxi* has three features: first of all, it represents the human relations in society, which are beyond the family relations; secondly, *guanxi* is on the base of emotional trust and special caring; thirdly, it acts as double role as emotion health and utility aims, for example, building up business at the same time (Barbalet, 2014). Also, in analysing the features of Chinese *guanxi*, psychologist Hwang (2003) has made further exploration on correlated conceptions, such as face, favour, and loyalty, etc.



In measuring *guanxi*, five items are mentioned and displayed in Appendix 2. they are also scored 5-point scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely'. Among the five items, Chinese restaurant customers are asked about social experience of visiting restaurant, caring with family members and/or friends, restaurant experience sharing manners with family and friends, the level of social intercourse in restaurant, and double role between utilitarian purpose and emotion care, which are on the premise that 'the future visiting on restaurant'.

#### **7.4.2.4 The Measure of Cognitive Engagement**

Brodie *et al.* (2011) show that customer engagement is a reflection of mental state, which usually take place by right of special service associations between customer experience and an object/agent. This statement shows that the unique interactive customer experience is the main symbol of customer engagement. Therefore, as a difference with respect to customer involvement, customer engagement represents a particular degree of person's interests and/or individual's relations with regards to a specified object, the attribution of customer engagement drives the tasks of centrally interacting between a specific engagement subject (such as, customers) and a certain object (for example, a feeling/ a brand) and 'others'. The themes of customer engagement back up the view of cooperative experiences, which contains the stretch of cooperative, for instance, 'interaction', 'the dialogue between two parties' in the business to business relations; 'the interactions between organisation and customers' and 'interactive state' in the business to customer relations (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). In addition, the term of 'others', such as the collaboration between employee and customer, and /or the touchpoints between customer and firm represents the significant character of customer experience in explaining the conception of customer engagement.

Cognitive engagement, which is as a component of customer engagement in respect of customers' most recent restaurant experience is measured by the phrase shown in Appendix 2; Chinese restaurants customers are asked about variety of restaurants' menu, the level of tasting desired food, the satisfaction to restaurant interface, such as the offered hygiene and cleanliness, willing of the revisiting the restaurant, and the professional service level of the restaurant. The measuring of cognitive engagements is based on 5-point scale from 'disagree completely' to 'agree completely', which displayed in Appendix 2.

### **7.4.3 English and Chinese Bilingual Translation**

Because the first language of the respondents taking part in this survey is not English, questionnaire was translated into Chinese. The translation procedure in this study followed the guidelines described by Beaton *et al.* (2000).

#### **Step 1: Forward Translation**

Two translators translated the English version questionnaire into Chinese version. Beaton *et al.* (2000) state that at least two translators should be involved in the forward translations from the source language to the target language. Because in this manner, the translations can be compared, differences in the translation can be identified, and unclear wording in the original can be reflected. In line with this recommendation, I invited one research assistant to work with me to complete initial questionnaire translation. These research assistants are known to me, is university educated (holds University Master Degree) and bilingual with Chinese as their mother language, but has no marketing background. Thus, this research assist used common language in translation (T1), while my translation (T2) has a consideration from a marketing perspective, which consequently highlighted the puzzling words after comparing.

#### **Step 2: Integrating the Translations**

Integrating of these two initial questionnaire translations. Discussion from the English version questionnaire as well as the research assist 's and my translation's Chinese versions, integration of these translations is conducted - generating one common translation (T3), with a short report documenting the integration process, each of the issues addressed. It is important that consensus rather than one person's compromising her or his feelings resolve issues. The critical point in this step is integration is not compromising one's feeling to resolve issues on ambiguous wording (Beaton *et al.*, 2000).

#### **Step 3: Back Translation**

Additional four research assistants were invited to translate this common Chinese version (T3) back to English. The purpose of this step is to assure content consentience and highlight conceptual errors and then further ensure validity. They were asked to blind the original English version and identify unclear wording in the translations. Therefore, the discrepancies in translation could be further magnified.

#### Step 4: Expert panel check

Birbili (2000) claims that social researchers who have to translate data from one language to another to be explicit in describing their choices and decisions, translation procedures and the resources used. Otherwise, it will have a direct impact on the validity of the research and the report. Hence, second panel (four English/Chinese bi-lingual experts) was design to invite to identify the bilingual issues of translated items in order to achieve cross-cultural equivalence, for example, words which exist in one language but not in another, concepts which are not equivalent in different cultures, idiomatic expressions and/or differences among languages in grammatical and syntactical structures (Birbili, 2000). For this, a panel of four Chinese/English bi-lingual academics had been invited to undertake a final review before the questionnaire in piloted prior to full survey administration. Finally, the second pre-pilot Chinese version was confirmed.

#### Step 5: Check of the Pre-final Chinese version (Pilot Study)

Twenty volunteers (volunteers confined with any consumers who regularly at least once per month frequent popular restaurants in China) were invited to test the pre-final Chinese version questionnaire, there were asked to finish the options of the Chinese questionnaire is to examine the feasibility that is intended to be used in a larger scale study and to avoid time and money being wasted on an inadequately designed project. Further, after this process, the final Chinese version questionnaire is generated, and it concludes the inductive/qualitative stage of the project.

### 7.4.4 Sampling in Quantitative Phase

Sampling in quantitative research often means 'people sampling. The basic concept very often used is probability sampling directed at representativeness – measurements of variables are taken from a sample, which is chosen to be representative of some larger population. Due to the attribute of representativeness, results from the sample will then be deduced back to the population (see figure 7.2 below).

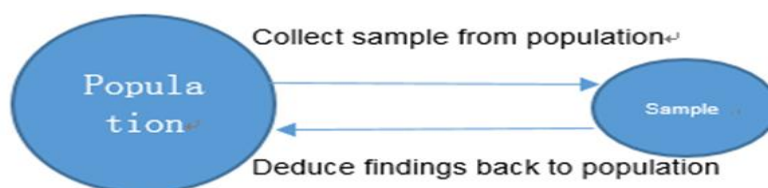


Figure 7.2 Population and Sample

From a statistical perspective, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) create an efficient method of determining the sample size, which is to be representative of target population, as follows,

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{E^2 NP(1 - P)}{D^2 (N - 1) + E^2 P(1 - P)}$$

E<sup>2</sup>= the value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level

N= population size

P=population proportion

D= degrees of accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

Sampling to achieves representativeness is usually called probability sampling, and the random selection is main one of it. Random selection is done to ensure representativeness, in which, each element in a population as an equal chance or equal probability of being chosen.

The population of China is estimated at 1,367,820,000 in 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). That is to say, if this study' s sample from this huge population, and with 4% margin of error at a 95% confidence level is appropriate, this research should expect to sample at least 601 people randomly. Actually, a larger sample 840 was collected. The smaller the margin of error is, the closer that having the exact answer at a given confidence level. However, after calculation with the 840 sample, the actual margin error is 3.4% (see the formula below).

$$z * \sqrt{\frac{p(1 - P)}{n}}$$

#### 7.4.5 Data Collection

In the process of fieldwork, the target population was selected from China's four economic regions. Meanwhile, in each economic region, three different cities were selected according to city tiers category (Tier 1 cities - key cities; Tier 2 cities - provincial / sub-provincial level capitals; Tier 3 cities - prefecture or county level city capitals, see National Bureau of Statistics, 2014; Appendix 3) to delivery questionnaires (see Appendix 6)

Although many researchers use their own categories criteria for data collection, it has more or less deficiencies and limitations in China's regional customer study. For current research, it cross combines between economic region and city tiers together, which can be complementary and help understand hierarchy and economic conditions (see Appendix 3) and also can assist as a foundation for accomplishing research objectives

For data collection, to overcome logistical difficulties of administering questionnaires over such a wide geographic area, the researcher was organised the personnel. Seven research assistants were invited to help deliver questionnaire on high streets. Those all research assistants are known to me, are all university educated (each of them at least holds Marketing Master Degree) and are all familiar with undertaking empirical research. Also, before collecting, that they were fully briefed on the project aims and objectives and were given instructions, both written and verbally, on required data collection protocols (see Appendix 4 – Data collection checklist: to be given to all research assistants). During the collecting process, with the purpose of encouraging higher customers' participation, a clear statement of the research objectives was provided; anonymity and confidentiality were assured; further, research assistants would check on respondent eligibility (regular – at least monthly – restaurant customers), and face-to-face administered so as to help ensure the interviewees understood the questions being asked. Although this is generally seen as being a costlier and time-consuming approach, it would ensure that respondents took part and answer to different questions more fully and accurately. Last, after data has been collected, research assistants were asked to de-brief so that any problems encountered and any differences in respondent reaction were identified.

With the purpose of higher customers' participation to achieve desired total sample size 600, a small bottle of water will be involved for rewarding their reply and help. The Chinese have a saying, 'courtesy demands reciprocity', and it plays an important role within the context of giving gifts (Hwang, 1987). The relationship between two Chinese people is to build by acts such as friendly gestures, giving gifts and offering favours; however, unlike some Western countries where the act of gift giving is more free spirited or casual, in China to maintain an equal and harmonious relationship a tally must be kept (Hwang, 1987). If this balance is not

kept among ordinary Chinese (e.g., one person constantly repays gifts with less expensive ones), then there is the potential for relations to sour (Hwang, 1987).

## **7.5 DATA PREPARATION FOR ANALYSIS**

With the intention of achieving research objectives, this thesis used two different statistical software tools. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for preliminary data analysis, explained in the following sub-section. The Analysis of Moment Structures Software (AMOS) for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used for measurement model analysis (through confirmatory factor analysis) and structural model to test the proposed hypothesised model. Following sub-sections describe and provide justification for using this statistical software and the techniques mentioned above.

### **7.5.1 Refine Data**

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0, is used to analyse the quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire. This software package is widely accepted and used by researchers in different disciplines including social sciences, business studies, and information systems research (Zikmund, 2003). Therefore, this tool has been used to screen the data of this research study in terms of data coding, identification of outliers and missing data. After discarded the cases that they were non-response through examining individual questionnaires for obvious evidence of response bias and, 'spoiling'; and also decided to reject the small number that were from respondents who had spent less than five years in the city concerned, also that removed any obvious outliers after data entry, this study resulted in 657 cases from an initial total of 840.

In addition, SPSS was also applied to perform descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. These analyses were performed for each variable separately and to summarise the demographic profile of the respondents in order to get preliminary information and the feel of the data (Sekaran, 2000). Furthermore, before applying CFA and SEM. In order to further check whether or not these data are significant and conform to the analysis standards, reliability analysis is conducted through SPSS, which showed that data is appropriate for subsequent analysis.

## 7.5.2 Reliability

Winter (2000) claim that reliability and validity are instruments of a principally positivist epistemology. Especially, the reliability and validity are essential and vital when dealing with scale generating issues (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). Although both reliability and validity focus on scales quality, they lay emphasis on diversified aspects.

Reliability is in connection with the consistency, steadiness and repeatability of measurement results (Sekaran, 2000). Reliability is defined as the level to which results are capable of being reproduced as time goes by and an exact interpretation of entire population is said to with reliability. What is more, if the results of a research are replicability on the similarity measure method, at that point the instrument of the study is referred to as being reliability (Joppe, 2000).

In quantitative research, there are three sorts of reliability are identified by Kirk and Miller (1986), which is regarding with (1) the level to which a measurement is still the same after repetition; (2) the quality of being free from change or variation over time; and (3) within a certain period, the quality of being similar for the measurements. Furthermore, Charles (1995) hold the ideas that the test-retest methods used within two different stages will come to a decision about the coherence of questionnaire items that being answered or the same of respondents' scores. The trait or attribute of the instrument is described as stability, for example, if a research takes in hand with a steady measure, in that way the results should show similarity. The higher level of reliability relies on a higher level of stability or coherence, which would have meant the repeatability of the result.

Crocker and Algina (1986) argue that the result or score obtained from a range of question items that answered by individual, which only stands for a partial sample of thoughts, behaviours, attitudes, etc. As a consequence, the result or score might shift because of some aspects of the individual, which might bring about some errors of measurement. Those types of errors will affect the accurateness and constancy of the instrument or the results /score of the test. Similar, Joppe (2000) debates that researcher cannot guarantee that there is invariable in all irrelevant impact conditions, for instance, the mind of individuals has changes, which could result in a variance of reply given by them. Therefore, reliability, the instrument itself might not always be effective or validity, though the researchers are capable of proving the research instrument

replicability and constancy (Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

In this research, all constructs/measurements comprise multiple items, such as twenty-seven items distributed across six measures are used to assess construct 'participation behaviours', twelve items distributed across four measures are used to assess construct 'citizenship behaviour', twelve items distributed across three measures are used to assess construct 'Chinese culture' and five items are used to assess construct 'cognitive engagement'. According to Nunnally (1978), the reliability of the items being measured is assessed by checking the consistency of individuals' answers to all the items within each measure in the current study. Moreover, the internal consistency of each factors/items to constructs is assessed via Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. Nunnally (1978) advocate that Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients great than or equal to 0.7 shows adequate reliability. Whereas, Hair *et al.* (2006) recommend the reliability coefficients of Cronbach's alpha more than or equal to 0.7 indicate adequate internal consistency.

### **7.5.3 Validity**

Whereas validity is concerned with the accuracy of measures (Sekaran, 2000). The conventional benchmarks of validity are based upon in a positivist belief, and to a certain degree, a methodical theory of validity will circumscribe positivism. Within the positivist term, validity is inherent in, and is the outcome and a final climactic stage of other empirical notions, such as general law, facts, objectivity, actuality, inference (Winter, 2000).

Hair *et al.* (2006) offer the following description of what validity is: validity regulates the extent to which the research accurately measures what it is intending to measure, or how actual the outcomes of the research are. That is to say, validity determines whether a construct and its accompanying measurement indicators are correlated, and degree to which these groups of items truly exhibit the construct they are going to measure (Zikmund, 2003).

In the literature of research field, the argument amongst validation types on which is most essential has been disputed and talked over for half part of a century. Although the sorts of validity are numerous, they are most



heavily relying on the inferences that gotten from the test (Crocker and Algina, 2008). In research literature, there are four major types of validity: face validity, content validity, and criterion validity, and construct validity,

Face validity is the level to which a test of appearance that covers the real purport of the measuring (Gravetter and Forzano, 2012). Usually, researchers will check the items and evaluate whether tests possess a proper measure of the conception being assessed just on face of it (Holden, 2010). In the current research, face validity is assessed via the review of experts, who help check whether per evaluating items correspond to any specified conceptual domain of notions.

Content validity refers to the representation or sample appropriateness of the content to an assessing implement. Content validity is usually based on the judging principle: the degree to which a measure displays all aspects of a given construct being evaluated (Kerlinger, 1986). Both the assessment of face validity and content validation is based on judgement; however, the standard for judgement is not the same. While the evaluation of face validity is to regulate the fittings of each item to the conception being assessed, namely, what is there; the evaluation of content validity is to decide whether any missing items should be contained in the assessment for the representation of the notion, that is, what is not there (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). For this research, the content validity is also assessed via the review of expert.

Criterion validity bases on time frames being tested, which could be classified into concurrent validity and predictive validity. Concurrent validity refers to the ability of the measurement to express the situation in the present, whereas predictive validity assesses the level to which the measurement will represent in the future (Drost, 2011). The concurrent validity and predictive validity are inappropriate in this research, as the nature of this study is generating new scale for Chinese customers' co-creation behaviours and as yet untested.

Hair *et al.* (2010) suggest construct validity is the extent to which a test assesses a proposed theoretical construct. According to Wainer and Braun (1998), construct is defined as the primary conception, view, issue or hypothesis that decides the target, direction of data collection and how the data should be collected. Neuman (2003) suggests that the more fitting between items being measured and latent constructs in theory, the higher validity could be found. In this research, construct's validity is to examine by assessing convergent

validity (convergent validity means the degree to which observed variables of a certain construct makes up a high ration of the variance in common - Hair *et al.*, 2006) and discriminant validity (discriminant validity means the level to which a latent variable differentiates from other latent variables - Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Validity types	Evidence	Evaluation	Current study
Pre-data			
Face validity	judgement	What is there	Expert review
Content validity	judgement	What is not there	Expert review
Post -data			
Criterion validity	empirical	Prediction	None
Construct validity	empirical	Convergent validity Discriminant validity	Expert review, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), Average variance extracted(AVE), composite reliability (CR), Discriminant validity

### 7.5.4 Structural Equation Modelling

Structural Equation Modelling(SEM) evaluates a set of separate, but interdependent variables. Usually, researchers are based upon the theory and previous experience to set proposed relationship model, and then put these variables into a set of structural equations for every dependent variable (Blunch, 2013).

Compared with other analyse, the differences and strength of SEM analysis, for instance, multiple regression analysis makes suggestions on improving model fitting with data by yielding Modification Indices (MI) value. After this, researchers can identify redundant items and make a correlation among the items, namely, covariance. What 's more, factor analysis, path analysis and regression are the special manners for SEM (Byrne, 2011). SEM is a mainly confirmatory, rather than exploratory technique; hence, this study uses SEM to check whether a hypothesised model is valid (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Hair *et al.* (2010) also suggest two steps in analysing data that based on SEM statistical analysis, which checks measurement model (a model on the relationship between a set of indicator variables /measurement items and their respective latent variables, which is checked through the technique confirmatory factory analysis) and structural model (a hypothesised model describing the relationship among the latent constructs, see conceptual framework 2). There are three valid criteria to be met to analyse SEM structure, which are convergent validity, discriminant validity (correlation between variables) and construct validity.

### **7.5.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is the normal way to examine construct validity and can enhance accuracy and precision of statistical analysis (Boelen *et al.*, 2008). It is also a tool with which a researcher can base commonalities of data to decrease the total number of observed variables into latent constructs (Brown, 2006). Also, it can be used to compare the factor structure of two or more groups with respect to statistics (Brown, 2006). Please note, it is recommended that confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) should be performed after exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in order to verify and confirm the scales (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Byrne, 2011). However, Suhr (2006) suggest that EFA and CFA should be used as alternative rather than complementary, because EFA would be used where there is no a priori factor structure, CFA would be used where confirmation of a pre-assumed factor structure is required. For this study, because the main constructs are utilised from Yi and Gong's model (2013) that is checked in China specific context; hence, the exploratory factor analysis has not been done.

In order to ensure that the measurement pass all the essential reliability and validity tests, this study performs CFA to examine whether the measurement model meets the acceptable criteria. It is completed by establishing an acceptable model fit for the measurement model. The good fit of the CFA measurement model is assessed based on the criteria of absolute measures, such as P-value, root mean square error of approximation. The coefficient of statistical significance (P-value) is evaluated in terms of the results above a significance level of 5%, while the value of root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is ideal if less than .08 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, there are other measuring tools such as Normed Fit index (NFI), Incremental Fit index (IFI) Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and Comparative Fit index (CFI), that are used to check construct or model fitness. The values of NFI, IFI, TLI, and CFI range between 0 and 1, and the higher the value, the better the fit. The minimum point for them is .90 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, the

standardised regression weight (SRW) is evaluated in terms of the minimum value of .4, and the squared multiple correlations (SMC) should be at least .2 (Awang, 2012). Moreover, as mentioned in the above section, validity decides the level to which a construct and its consistent measurement indicators are interrelated. It also decides the actual level to which these group of items indicate the construct they are proposed to measure (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In this research, besides CFA, constructs validity is also checked by testing convergent validity and discriminant validity.

According to Hair *et al.* (2006), convergent validity means measures of construct that should be related to each other in theory. In other words, research enables correspondence between similar constructs. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest convergent validity is usually assessed by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). In the current study, the values of Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are manually evaluated using Microsoft Excel 2013 through the formulae provided by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Average variance extracted(AVE) is one of methods for assessing construct and discriminate validity, which is employed amount of variance that captured by the construct in combination with the amount of variance due to the measurement error (Hair *et al.*, 2006). It measures the level of variance captured by a construct contrasted with the level due to measurement error. Moreover, the value of AVE is deemed very good if it is greater than 0.7, and the acceptable level is greater or equal to 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Generally speaking, the larger value of average variance extracted the better, as it means the more indicator variance can be interpreted by the latent variables and the smaller relative measured error is.

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2}{n}$$

AVE =Average variance extract;

$\lambda_i$  = The standardized factor loading

n = The number of items

**Figure 7.3 AVE formula (source: Fornell and Larcker, 1981)**

Composite reliability is a measure of the overall reliability of a group of heterogeneous but closely related items, which revealed internal consistency among all indices (Hair *et al.*, 2006). The higher value the reliability is, the more internal consistency among those indices. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the acceptable level of composite reliability value is greater or equal to 0.7.

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_{yi})^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_{yi})^2 + (\sum_{i=1}^p Var(\epsilon_i))}$$

CR = composite reliability

$\lambda_y$  = The standardized factor loading

Var( $\epsilon_i$ ) = The variance due to the measurement error

**Figure 7.4 CR formula (source: Fornell and Larcker, 1981)**

Whereas discriminant validity refers to factors comprising construct that ought not to be related to each other in theory, that is to say, research enables to distinguish dissimilar constructs (Henseler *et al.*, 2014). Discriminant validity is assessed by a method, suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010), in which the squared root of average variance extracted ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ ) – SRAVE for each construct is compared with the corresponding inter-construct correlations (ICC), and the SRAVE estimate consistently larger than the ICC estimates indicates support for discriminant validity of the construct.

Hence, the summary of all indices threshold is described as below (Table 7.3).

Indices	Threshold	References
<b>Normed Fit Index (NFI)</b>	≥ 0.90	Hair <i>et al.</i> (2010)
<b>Incremental Fit index (IFI)</b>	≥ 0.90	
<b>Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)</b>	≥ 0.90	
<b>Comparative Fit index (CFI)</b>	≥ 0.90	
<b>Root mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)</b>	≤ 0.08	
<b>Standardised regression weight (SRW)</b>	≥ 0.40	Awang (2012)
<b>Squared multiple correlations (SMC)</b>	≥ 0.20	
<b>P-value for CFA</b>	> 0.05	
<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>	≥ 0.50	Fornell and Larcker (1981); Hair <i>et al.</i> (2010)
<b>Composite Reliability (CR)</b>	≥ 0.60	

**Table 7.3 Model indices summary**

## 7.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

According to Busher and Clarke (1990), one of the most important things for researcher is to understand ethical issues in spite of the fact that it is a hard and tough course. Because researchers are human kind, they will still make mistakes openly, and they are not always effectively to identity all ethical matters (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Malhotra (2012) suggest that with the aim of avoiding making mistakes in figuring out ethical matters, researcher should possess two special abilities, those are, the sensitiveness ability to recognise ethical matters and the obligation to devote himself/herself to addressing properly in relation to such matters.

Additionally, Malhotra (2012) claims that there is difference for ethical codes between people to people, culture to culture and situation to situation, etc. Some appreciate codes in one background might not be

seen ethical or suitable in another. Busher (2002) assert the utilisation and consideration of ethics in research are positioning in and lie on how each case is interpreted to acknowledge requirements of all of the individuals in it, comprising the researchers and their sponsors.

Furthermore, the decision for ethical issues includes a complex and morally balancing that researcher could make a composition on it. As Cohen *et al.* (2000) claim that researcher should find a suitable trade-off between the needs as a proficient expert in his/her quest for truth, and the interests and worth of his/her subjects possible threats from the research. Hence, the equal exchange thought should be demonstrated in which a professional's interests and audiences' right to information have a duty to be assessed in contrast to the respondents' right for security, privacy and confidentiality (Henn *et al.*, 2009). That is to say, the importance of a best research cannot be more than hurt to a human being. Research professional is not master in the intimate space, which should not be infringed; on the contrary, the pattern of researchers should be gentle to strictly follow the rule of ethics (Punch, 2014). In the research, privacy comprises matters relating to the access of information that coming from people questioned in research, while confidentiality includes the subject of protecting the identity of the interviewee (Malhotra, 2012). In order to figure out the confidential issues, Kvale (1996) advise that the data related to identity of interviewee should not be included in research. Provided that the personal information, such as name, sex, address, etc. of the interviewee should be involved for publication intention by the researchers, it is indispensable to get the permission to show these personally recognisable information.

Also, interviewees ought to be informed such kind of information when researchers ask the consents to carry on the research. Consequently, it is a vital issue that protecting the privacy of subject by means of using code name and code remarkable character when doing report (Kvale, 1996). Similarly, Henn *et al.* (2009) maintain that the researcher should be disloyal to interviewees by publically disclosure personal details without the approval by them. Henn *et al.* (2009) also state that interviewee should have the right to involve, retract or even resist participating in the research. Therefore, it is certain ethical principles for researcher that getting consents for engaging the potential interviewee in advance of doing the research. Generally, it may not hard to get contents of admission for those professionals in the context where they are worked and be with a member of research; nevertheless, it is not easy to get admission contents in another context.

Furthermore, Eisner (1991) has an argument that people prefer to the opinion of informed consent, but people are not certain who is going to offer the consent, how much the consent is necessary, and how would notify participants in an attempt to get consents. Even getting the consents to involve, it is advised that the professional researcher should continually communicate with the research interviewee later on obtaining the contents so that the both parts (professionals and interviewees) could have mutual concern on the matters of research (Henn *et al.*, 2009).

For the current research, the matter of ethical issues is weighed seriously from beginning to end so as to make sure the truth and completeness of research. According to the rules of Nottingham Trent University that primary data collection can only begin until a favourable ethical opinion is approval by the College Research Ethics Committee. In accordance with guiding principle of the University, the researcher is essential to submit the ethical approval form for approval, which must be signed by the doctoral student and countersigned by the supervisors of the doctoral student. This research involves two stages (inductive stage and quantitative stage). With the purpose of being consistent with the requirements of ethics, on the inductive stage, participant information sheet and consent form would provide to participants, which introduces the purpose of the research, data, confidentiality, and participants' rights. While on the quantitative stage, informed consent information is addressed at the beginning of questionnaire hard copy (please find attached Appendix about questionnaire), participant information sheet is also provided, which introduces the purpose of the research, confidentiality, and participants' rights. Moreover, the name, address of the researcher and the supervisor, the University are also included in this sheet, which could help interviewees boost their confidence and make sure to know with whom/what they are involving. There will be a commitment that all questionnaires will be anonymous. No personal data will be collected in this questionnaire.

All data will be written up in the research thesis without any means of identifying the individuals involved, so any information cannot be tracked back with the respondents. Moreover, all data collected from this research will not be accessed and used for any government or commercial organisations. And again, due to the nature of the research, extracts from the focus group and questionnaire will only be used for this PhD study.



## 7.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the proper research paradigm that fitting for research topic, and to justify the appreciate research methods that fitting for fieldworks. This study takes post-positivist stance, involving qualitative and quantitative stages. The reason for the stance is because that any of positivist and interpretivist approach is not enough to support the research topic. What is more, because there is no existing engagement/co-creation theory pertains specifically to restaurant sector, a qualitative/interpretivist research is used to develop the measure scales used in this research. Positivist approach is utilised to measure the nature, direction and strength of latent constructs, such as co-creation behaviour, cognitive engagement and Chinese culture, and to test scales generated from qualitative stage.

In the qualitative stage, online focus group is used to generate item pool. Because China has vast land and the researcher is studying in UK, using internet technologies to conduct focus group, marketing researcher can remove geographical constrains, lessen time limits and enable the researcher to invite people from all over world who might be interested in research topic. In the quantitative stage, the instrument questionnaire is employed to collection data. It is due to this tool could help collection information from larger population easily and efficiently, and in turn, it helps draw conclusion from a sample to large population.

For the analysis, SPSS 22.0 is utilised to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. Moreover, SPSS is applied to perform initially data analysis, for example, frequencies percentages, mean values, Structural equation modelling (SEM) software package AMOS 22.0, is adopted to explore relationships in a statistical way among latent constructs (participation behaviours, citizenship behaviours, cognitive engagement, and Chinese culture).

This research study applies two steps in the SEM analysis. For the first step, the validity and reliability of latent constructs will be checked through confirmatory factor analysis to generate measurement model. For the second step, the structural model is tested to check the hypotheses shown in conceptual framework 2. All results and related steps generated from SPSS and AMOS will be presented in next chapter.

# CHAPTER 8. DATA ANALYSIS

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter proceeds the analysis of the data to present the information of empirical results in current research. The data analysis is the essential phase, which is associated between the generated hypotheses from literature review and findings in the fieldworks.

It has been mentioned in the methodology chapter that the data of this current research is collected from China restaurant customers through the instrument questionnaire, which is generated from item pools. After thinking about the research problem, the selection of research approach, and the design of research, which are addressed in the previous chapters. Hence, this chapter is focused on the and statistical techniques and analysis procedure, which enable further to help address the study objectives.

Accordingly, the following parts are presented in association with five main analytical themes concerned with demographics characteristics (section 8.2), reliability and validity analysis (section 8.3), mean scores for factors after CFA (section 8.4), the relationships between the respondents' demographic and constructs (section 8.5), hypotheses testing via SEM (section8.6). Last part is summary of hypotheses (section8.7).

## 8.2 DEMOGRAPHICS CHARACTERISTICS

After accounting for non-response, missing values and outliers, which can provide cumbersome information about the characteristics of sample population (Byrne, 2011), there remained 657 usable questionnaires from the 840 initially administered in China's twelve cities. In this study, the target Chinese consumers refer to the person who frequent popular restaurants at least once a month. Their sample characteristics of respondents are revealed in table 8.1.

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage%	Mean	SD
Gender			1.55	.498
<b>Male</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>45.1</b>		
<b>female</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>54.9</b>		
Age(years)			2.72	.938
<b>Below 20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4.0</b>		
<b>20-30</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>42.2</b>		
<b>31-40</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>37.7</b>		
<b>41-50</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>11.3</b>		
<b>51-60</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3.5</b>		
<b>More than 60</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1.4</b>		
Length in current city			3.63	.484
<b>More than 5 years</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>37.1</b>		
<b>Most, or all, of my life</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>62.9</b>		
Regularly online			1.06	.231
<b>Yes</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>94.4</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5.6</b>		
Occupation status			4.60	1.880
<b>Student</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>8.5</b>		
<b>Professional</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>13.4</b>		
<b>House wife/husband</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5.6</b>		
<b>Retired</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3.2</b>		
<b>Employed</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>52.7</b>		
<b>Self employed</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>15.4</b>		
<b>Other</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.2</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>100</b>		

**Table 8.1 Frequency distribution of respondents by gender, age, time lived in current city, regular online, education and occupation status**

Among the 657 respondents, the percentage of female (54.9%) is higher than male (45.1%). Regarding age, the respondents between 20 and 40 years make up a large majority (79.9%), and with the range 20-30 years and 31-40 years account for 42.2% and 37.7% respectively, followed by those aged 41-50 years comprising 11.3%.

When asked how long you have lived in current city, 62.9% of the respondents said they have lived in the current city most or all of their life. More than one third (37.1%) of the people have lived in the city for more

than 5 years. It should be noted that the respondents who lived in less than 5 years have been filtered from the original number 840 through the frequency analysis, which its number is 63, as it is considered that those living in a city for less than 5 years are unlikely to be culturally representative of that city. So far as online user is concerned, nearly all (94.4%) people were regularly online via phone, tablet or computer.

As regards the occupational status, majority of respondents (52.7%) are employed, in which company and government employed occupies 38.7% and 14% correspondingly; While self-employed, professional and students are following it, which account for 15.4%, 13.4% and 8.5%, respectively. That is to say, 81.5% of the samples are in work. Also, when it comes frequency of eating at restaurant, great majority of customers (65.6%) said they went to restaurant at least once a week, followed with once a month and once a day account for 25.1% and 9.3 %, respectively.

The remainder of this chapter addresses the various analyses undertaken on data derived from the 657 usable questionnaires. These are categorised as follows: reliability and validity analysis, mean scores for factors after CFA, the relationships between the sample characteristics and constructs, and hypotheses testing.

## **8.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ANALYSIS**

### **8.3.1 Initial Reliability Assessment via SPSS/Cronbach's Alpha**

In this study, the reliability of scales is initially assessed by Cronbach's alpha (coefficient) through SPSS, which indicates how well a series of manifest indicators measure the factor in a survey instrument (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). The range of coefficient value is from 0 to 1, and, to typically indicates low (unsatisfactory) to high (very satisfactory) internal consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

Construct	Factors	Reliability Statistics	
		Cronbach's Alpha	N. of Items
Participation behaviour	Information seeking	.75	7
	Interest interaction	.75	4
	Novel interaction	.71	5
	Information sharing	.82	3
	Responsible behaviour	.65	4
	Communication interaction	.65	4
Citizenship behaviour	Feedback	.60	3
	Advocacy	.73	3
	Helping	.60	3
	Tolerance	.62	3
Chinese culture	Face	.63	4
	Harmony	.60	3
	<i>Guanxi</i>	.64	5
Cognitive engagement		.84	5

**Table 8.2 Constructs Cronbach's Alpha Value**

In this research, all latent variables have no less than three indicators (which are utilised as the questionnaire items). Cronbach analysis for construct 'participation behaviour' yields six factors. These are: 'information seeking' (.75), 'interest interaction' (.75), 'novel interaction' (.71), 'information sharing' (.82), 'responsible behaviour' (.65) and 'communication interaction' (.65); for construct 'citizenship behaviour', the analysis produces four factors, which are 'feedback' (.60), 'advocacy' (.73), 'helping' (.60), and 'tolerance' (.62); for construct 'Chinese culture', three factors are checked, namely 'face' (.63), 'harmony' (.60), and '*guanxi*' (.64); and for the single construct 'cognitive engagement', the Cronbach alpha value is .84 (see table 8.2).

According to Hair *et al.* (2010), Churchill (1979) and Nunnally (1978), although a high Cronbach alpha value (factor loading) does not mean unidimensionality (e.g. when items measure one single construct - Bryman and Cramer, 2011), the factor loading is normally expected equal to 0.7 and above this should be considered good for more established scales. However, for the new scales, it seems fairly common (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978) that Cronbach's alpha values are described as follows,

- factor loading is greater or equal to 0.9 - **Excellent**
- factor loading is greater or equal to 0.7 and less than 0.9 - **Good**
- factor loading is greater or equal to 0.6 and less than 0.7 - **Acceptable**
- factor loading is greater or equal to 0.5 and less than 0.6 - **Poor**
- factor loading is less than 0.5 - **Unacceptable**

In summary, the reliability coefficients analysis (through Cronbach alpha) shows that the fourteen factors employed in the study satisfy the minimum threshold value of .6 suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010) and Nunnally (1978). Furthermore, for the construct of 'participation behaviour' for information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, and information sharing; the construct 'citizenship behaviour' for advocacy, and single construct 'cognitive engagement' the reliability coefficients are good according to the criteria. In the next section, the confirmatory factor analysis is identified and is utilised to both re-assess/confirm reliability and also test for validity.

### **8.3.2 Composite Reliability and Convergent/ Discriminant Validity via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

#### **8.3.2.1 Measurement Model**

The measurement models provide a number of "building blocks" that can be arranged in several meaningful ways, depending upon model purpose. If more relations are allowed in the model, model fit typically increase, but the model become harder to grasp (Blunch, 2013). This study first performed omnibus CFA comprising all the 14 constructs (information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, responsible behaviour, communication interaction, feedback, advocacy, helping, tolerance, face, harmony, *guanxi* and cognitive engagement) and their items, but the measurement model does not reach parsimony(i.e. the measurement model did not reach acceptable levels of goodness of fit, since the vastness of the research constructs that comprise second order factors, see figure 8.1) - Byrne, 2011.

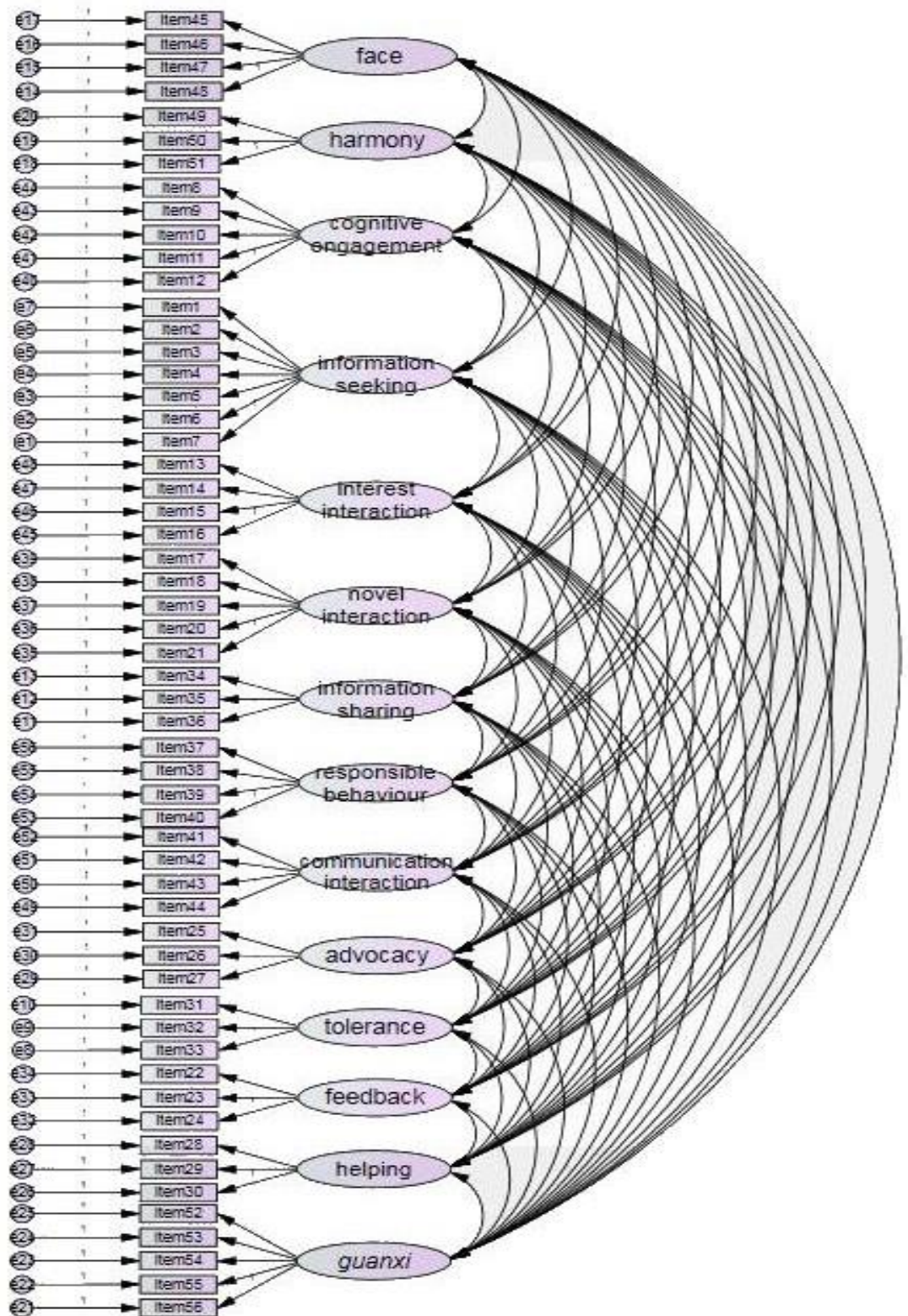


Figure 8.1 CFA model with all constructs and all items (see Appendix 2 for item wording)

Hoyle (2014) and Bentler (1992) suggest that the assessment of fit and parsimony may often best to be kept separate when fit indices are applied beyond CFA models to more complex models. Hence, given the above statement, the CFAs of constructs 'participation behaviour' (section 8.3.2.2 - information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, responsible behaviour, and communication interaction), 'citizenship behaviour' (section 8.3.2.3 - feedback, advocacy, helping, tolerance), 'Chinese culture' (section 8.3.2.4 - face, harmony, *guanxi*) and 'cognitive engagement' (section 8.3.2.5) are presented separately in consort with their measures and detailed criteria .

### 8.3.2.2 CFAs, Convergent and Discriminant Validity Estimates for Construct 'Participation Behaviour'

<b>Construct: participation behaviour</b>							
Measures			r-squared	SR W	C.R.	P	Composite reliability (average variance extracted)
Q1 platform	<---	Information seeking	.398	.631	10.005	***	Information seeking .713 (.335)
Q2 colleagues/friends	<---	Information seeking	.289	.538	10.223	***	
Q5 prices	<---	Information seeking	.239	.489	9.568	***	
Q6 dishes	<---	Information seeking	.443	.666	10.348	***	
Q7 atmosphere	<---	Information seeking	.304	.551			
Q13 decor	<---	Interest interaction	.527	.726	11.048	***	Interest interaction .803 (.508)
Q14 music	<---	Interest interaction	.708	.841	11.467	***	
Q15 artefacts	<---	Interest interaction	.394	.628	10.231	***	
Q16 source	<---	Interest interaction	.405	.636			
Q17 online interactivity	<---	Novel interaction	.364	.604	10.053	***	Novel interaction .708 (.380)
Q18 new way	<---	Novel interaction	.479	.692	10.703	***	
Q19 novel experience	<---	Novel interaction	.429	.655	10.461	***	
Q21 involving experience	<---	Novel interaction	.249	.499			
Q34 service better	<---	Information sharing	.667	.817	16.900	***	Information sharing .827 (.618)
Q35 service deliver	<---	Information sharing	.753	.868	17.189	***	
Q36 service expectations	<---	Information sharing	.432	.657			
Q37 following	<---	Responsible	.432	.658	9.457	***	Responsible behaviour



recommendation		behaviour					.634 (.306)
Q38 sharing table	<---	Responsible behaviour	.343	.586	9.055	***	
Q39 clearing table	<---	Responsible behaviour	.212	.461	8.938	***	
Q40 waiting for turn	<---	Responsible behaviour	.237	.486			
Q42 meals preparation	<---	Communication interaction	.365	.604	10.630	***	Communication interaction .676 (.414)
Q43 good taste	<---	Communication interaction	.563	.750	11.511	***	
Q44 extra sauce	<---	Communication interaction	.313	.560			
<b>Model fit:</b> NFI=.864, IFI=.908, TLI=.888, CFI=.907, RMSEA=.053							

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. r-squared = Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- d. C.R.=Critical ratio

**Table 8.3**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Responsible behaviour</b>	<b>Information seeking</b>	<b>Interest interaction</b>	<b>Novel interaction</b>	<b>Information sharing</b>	<b>Communication Interaction</b>
<b>Responsible behaviour</b>	<b>0.553</b>					
<b>Information seeking</b>	0.238	<b>0.579</b>				
<b>Interest interaction</b>	0.311	0.418	<b>0.713</b>			
<b>Novel interaction</b>	0.547	0.535	0.602	<b>0.617</b>		
<b>Information sharing</b>	0.601	0.209	0.354	0.407	<b>0.786</b>	
<b>Communication interaction</b>	0.666	0.323	0.391	0.456	0.583	<b>0.643</b>

Note: the square roots of average variance extracted is marked in the bold. The yellow mark means the square root of AVE value is smaller than one of inter-construct correlation value

**Table 8.3.1 square roots of average variance extracted (SRAVE) and Inter-construct correlations (ICC) matrix for construct participation behaviour**

The table (8.3) above shows the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results about construct participation behaviour as well as its six latent variables, comparing information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, communication interaction, information sharing and responsible behaviour.

From the results, an overall assessment is that the measurement model for participation behaviour is judged to have an acceptable fit. The model revealed good fit (IFI=.908, CFI=.907 RMSEA=.053) in accordance with the usual conventions, even though the value of NFI (.864) and TLI (.888) is a little lower (Byrne, 2011). Regarding the SMC, all measures for participation behaviours have an acceptable coefficient that are above .2. Meanwhile, the SRW of all measures for participation behaviours exceed the minimum requirement of .4. Moreover, all measures associated with the construct are statistically significant, that is to say, the regression weight for the six latent variables in the estimate of all measures differs from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed) in a statistically significant way.

For composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values of the 'construct' participation behaviour, four of all the six sub-constructs have the acceptable level of composite reliability in the range from 0.708 to 0.827 (information seeking=0.713; interest interaction=0.803; novel interaction=0.708; information sharing=0.827, see table 8.3). But two cases – communication interaction and responsible behaviour, CR comes close the minimum threshold (communication interaction=0.676; responsible behaviour=0.634). The values for average variance extracted of the sub-constructs 'interest interaction'(AVE=0.508), 'information sharing'(AVE=0.618) is more than 0.5, which indicates that the constructs have a highly reliability. The average variance extracted values which are below the threshold 0.5 are also shown in table 8.3 (information seeking=0.335, novel interaction=0.380, communication interaction=0.414 and responsible behaviour=0.306). However, according to Huang *et al.* (2013) and Fornell and Larcker (1981), if AVE value is lower than the threshold 0.5, and CR value is more than 0.6 then the construct convergent validity is still adequate (See table 8.3). Besides, although the value of AVE of four sub-constructs is relative low, high measurement errors and low factor loading items have been deleted in this study. The reason for low AVE values partly because all the items used are entirely new, and such test is mainly exploratory. Besides, there are other estimates (e.g. Cronbach Alpha coefficients) are satisfactory so this research deems them fit to use the constructs.

In Table 8.3.1, the diagonal elements in the bold refer to the square roots of the average variance extracted (SRAVE), that is  $\sqrt[2]{AVE}$ . According to the argument of Chin (1998), the discriminant validity is adequate when the SRAVE for each construct is greater than the inter-construct correlation. Based on this criterion, constructs of 'information seeking', 'interest interaction', 'novel interaction' and 'information sharing' is said to be adequate for discriminant validity. However, the square root of the average variance extracted for constructs of 'responsible behaviour'(SRAVE=0.553) and 'communication interaction'(SRAVE=0.643) are less than the absolute value of the correlations with another factor (e.g.0.553<0.601; 0.643<0.666). Although the two results are not perfect, it has been advised that if inter-construct correlations value is lower than .85, it still indicates discriminant validity (Brown, 2006).

Despite the construct 'participation behaviour" has shortcomings on some estimates, this research decides to take the measurement model and use it in the re-specification and analysis of the structural regression model (see hypotheses section), since other estimates are adequate (e.g. Cronbach alphas) or around the criteria (CR, AVE, DV) for this research.

### 8.3.2.3 CFAs, Convergent and Discriminant Validity Estimates for Construct ‘Citizenship Behaviour’

Construct: citizenship behaviour							
Measures			r-squared	SRW	C.R.	P	Composite reliability (average variance extracted)
Q22 unsatisfied	<---	feedback	.159	.399			feedback .650 (.406)
Q23 contact proprietor	<---	feedback	.302	.550	6.423	***	
Q24 post comments	<---	feedback	.758	.870	6.645	***	
Q25 advising friends	<---	advocacy	.189	.435			advocacy .777 (.557)
Q26 social media	<---	advocacy	.688	.829	9.966	***	
Q27 online forum	<---	advocacy	.794	.891	9.938	***	
Q28 ordering dishes	<---	helping	.295	.543			helping .619 (.456)
Q29 recommendations others	<---	helping	.618	.786	9.933	***	
Q31 higher prices	<---	tolerance	.253	.503			tolerance .697 (.465)
Q32 unexpected service	<---	tolerance	.942	.971	14.319	***	
Q33 second try	<---	tolerance	.200	.447	9.425	***	
<b>Model fit:</b> NFI=.927, IFI=.944, TLI=.911, CFI=.943 RMSEA=.070							

Note:

- a.\*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. r-squared = Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- d. C.R.=Critical ratio

**Table 8.4**

Construct	helping	feedback	advocacy	tolerance
helping	<b>0.676</b>			
feedback	0.574	<b>0.637</b>		
advocacy	0.683	0.691	<b>0.746</b>	
tolerance	0.188	0.140	0.080	<b>0.682</b>

Note: The square roots of average variance extracted is marked in the bold. The yellow mark means the square root of AVE value is smaller than one of inter-construct correlation value

**Table 8.4.1 square roots of average variance extracted (SRAVE) and Inter-construct correlations (ICC) matrix for construct citizenship behaviour**

The measures of model fit for construct 'citizenship behaviour' are described as NFI=.927, IFI=.944, TLI=.911, CFI=.943, RMSEA=.070, all of which satisfy the threshold stated above. Therefore, from this result, an overall assessment for the construct of 'citizenship behaviour' is acceptable (see table 8.4).

With respect to SMC, all measures for citizenship behaviours are greater than the minimum threshold of .2 except measures Q22 and Q25 (these two are near to .2). For SRW, apart from Q22, which is approximate to .4, all other measures associated with the construct are above .4. Furthermore, all measures associated with the construct are statistically significant, which differs from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed).

In terms of composite reliability (CR), all four measures in the 'citizenship behaviour' constructs reflect composite reliability in the range from 0.619 to 0.777 (feedback=0.650, advocacy=0.777, helping=0.619 and tolerance=0.697). Normally, the threshold of composite reliability should be greater or equal to 0.7, but Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that the acceptable level for composite reliability value is larger than 0.5. That is to say, the CR for the internal structural fit of the latent variables is acceptable as shown in table 8.4. As far as average variance extracted(AVE) is concerned, the value of sub-construct 'advocacy' is above 0.5, all the other three sub-constructs are generally close to the threshold (feedback=0.406, helping=0.456, and tolerance=0.465). In this study, the values of AVE for 'feedback', 'helping' and 'tolerance' are acceptable, as Huang *et al.* (2013) and Fornell and Larcker (1981) claim that convergent validity is still sufficient if AVE is less than 0.5, but composite reliability is higher than 0.6; plus Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the three constructs are acceptable.

Finally, this research assesses discriminant validity of construct 'citizenship behaviour' by comparing the values between the square root of AVE (SRAVE) and Inter-Construct Correlations(ICC). As shown in table 8.4.1, SRAVE is greater than any ICC, which demonstrates adequate discriminant validity, excluding the correlation between 'helping' (SRAVE=0.676) and 'advocacy' (ICC=0.683), and between 'feedback' (SRAVE=0.637) and 'advocacy' (ICC=0.691). Although the discriminant validity for constructs of 'helping' and 'feedback' cannot be limited to the validity of findings, based on Brown's (2006) suggestion, if the correlations between the constructs is lower than .85 indicates discriminant validity. Also, the coefficients of CR and Cronbach alphas for the two constructs reach accepted criteria. Thus, this research accepts them.

On the whole, from the above, this research accepts the measurement model and proceeds with further refinement of the structural regression model (see hypotheses section).

### 8.3.3.4 CFAs, Convergent and Discriminant Validity Estimates for Construct ‘Chinese Culture’(CC)

<b>Construct: Chinese culture</b>							
Measures			r-squared	SRW	C.R.	P	Composite reliability (average variance extracted)
Q48 social status	<---	face	.516	.719			face .666 (.403)
Q47 understand	<---	face	.303	.550	9.494	***	
Q45 luxury atmosphere	<---	face	.389	.623	10.378	***	
Q51 restaurant's aim	<---	harmony	.302	.550			harmony .521 (.267)
Q50 maintaining relationships	<---	harmony	.235	.484	8.496	***	
Q49 peaceful environment	<---	harmony	.264	.514	8.813	***	
Q56 utilitarian purpose	<---	guanxi	.356	.597			guanxi .647 (.319)
Q55 social intercourse	<---	guanxi	.213	.461	8.599	***	
Q53 caring with friends	<---	guanxi	.252	.502	8.253	***	
Q52 social experience	<---	guanxi	.455	.675	9.404	***	
<b>Model fit:</b> NFI=.889, IFI=.909, TLI=.847, CFI=.908 RMSEA=.078							

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. r-squared = Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- d. C.R.=Critical ratio

**Table 8.5**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>harmony</b>	<b>face</b>	<b>guanxi</b>
<b>harmony</b>	<b>0.517</b>		
<b>face</b>	0.607	<b>0.634</b>	
<b>guanxi</b>	0.819	0.646	<b>0.565</b>

Note: The square roots of average variance extracted is marked in the bold. The yellow mark means the square root of AVE value is smaller than one of inter-construct correlation value

**Table 8.5.1 square roots of average variance extracted (SRAVE) and Inter-construct correlations (ICC) matrix for construct Chinese culture**

For the construct of 'Chinese culture', the measures for IFI (.909), CFI (.908), and RMSEA (.708) are accepted, while the two measures NFI and TLI are close approximations to the .9 minimum threshold, so the measurement model is suitable (see table 8.5).

As regards SMC, all measures for 'Chinese culture' have a satisfactory figure, which is more than .2. As for the SRW, all measures for 'Chinese culture' are greater than .46, which surpass the bottom line of .4. What is more, all measures associated with the construct are statistically significant. For each measure, the null hypothesis that the true value of the coefficient is zero is rejected at the .001 level of significance.

As far as convergent reliability (CR) is concerned, all three sub-constructs of 'Chinese culture' have acceptable values, ranging from 0.521 to 0.666 (face= 0.666, harmony=0.521, *guanxi*=0.647), as Fornell and Larcker (1981) claim that value of CR above 0.5 should be acceptable, although normally the threshold of CR is above or equal to 0.7. It is known that average variance extracted (AVE) shows the proportion of inconsistency interpreted by the latent factors from measurement error. All three sub-constructs of 'Chinese culture' have a level AVE lower than the threshold (face=0.403, harmony=0.267, *guanxi*=0.319), but the convergent validity of the construct is still sufficient (Huang *et al.*, 2013; Fornell and Larcker, 1981), as their composite reliability (CR) values are above 0.6 (harmony=0.521, which is close to 0.6).

In table 8.5.1, the square roots of average variance extracted and inter-construct correlations matrix shows that discriminant validity is not adequate for each construct (harmony, face, and *guanxi*), as the square root of the AVE for each construct is less than its corresponding Inter-construct correlations, although all the values of inter-construct correlations are less than .85, which suggests that the value could be used (Brown, 2006).

The overall results indicate that the model for construct 'Chinese culture' is not ideal (AVE and DV are very low), but it could be conducted in structural regression model, as it is newly generated notion, where the items used to test this concept are slightly different from well-established items. Another reason is all the sub-constructs' Cronbach alpha values are acceptable.

### 8.3.3.5 CFA Estimate for Construct 'Cognitive Engagement'(CE)

Construct: cognitive engagement						
Measures			r-squared	SRW	C.R.	P
Q12 professional service	<---	cognitive engagement	.557	.746		
Q11 revisiting the restaurant	<---	cognitive engagement	.576	.759	17.909	***
Q10 hygiene and cleanliness	<---	cognitive engagement	.588	.767	18.079	***
Q9 tasting desired food	<---	cognitive engagement	.435	.660	15.683	***
Q8 restaurants' menu	<---	cognitive engagement	.443	.666	15.826	***
<b>Model fit:</b> NFI=.952, IFI=.955, TLI=.910, CFI=.955, RMSEA=.131						

Note:

- a.\*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. r-squared = Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- d. C.R.=Critical ratio

**Table 8.6**

The table (8.6) above shows results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) about construct of cognitive engagement. The measures of fit for cognitive engagement is summarised by the NFI (.952), the IFI (.955), the TLI (.910) and the CFI (.955). All these measures exceed the minimum threshold of .9. Hence the model is judged to have an acceptable fit. All measures associated with the construct are statistically significant. All measures have the positive signs. Concerning the SMC, all measures for cognitive engagement have an acceptable coefficient ranging from .4 to .5, which is more than the minimum threshold of .2. While the SRW, all measures for cognitive engagement have an acceptable coefficient, being greater than .4.

Thus, from the results, an overall assessment is that the measurement model for 'cognitive engagement' is acceptable. Please note because 'Chinese culture' is one single construct, the values for CR, AVE and DR are not shown.



## 8.4 MEAN SCORES FOR FACTORS AFTER CFA

In this section, mean scores (M) and Std. Deviation (SD) are displayed for the fourteen factors (sub constructs) associated with their items after confirmatory factor analysis, which has helped test and reduce measures (items) of construct that are inconsistent with the essential of that construct/factors (Brown, 2006).

Construct	Factors	M	SD	N. of Items After CFA/ original N.
<b>Participation behaviour</b>	Information seeking	3.74	.548	<b>5/7</b>
	Interest interaction	3.64	.594	<b>4/4</b>
	Novel interaction	3.54	.616	<b>4/5</b>
	Information sharing	3.42	.715	<b>3/3</b>
	Responsible behaviour	3.54	.631	<b>4/4</b>
	Communication interaction	3.47	.617	<b>3/4</b>
<b>Citizenship behaviour</b>	Feedback	3.34	.693	<b>3/3</b>
	Advocacy	3.63	.705	<b>3/3</b>
	Helping	3.65	.674	<b>2/3</b>
	Tolerance	3.03	.726	<b>3/3</b>
<b>Chinese culture</b>	Face	3.57	.661	<b>3/4</b>
	Harmony	3.67	.565	<b>3/3</b>
	<i>Guanxi</i>	3.63	.560	<b>4/5</b>
<b>Cognitive engagement</b>		3.78	.630	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Table 8.7 mean scores for factor after CFA</b>				

The table (8.7) above shows the strength/weight of each factor on their construct. The number in bold show the number of items for each factor after CFA test, which will give a comparison with the original number of items for each factor (see Appendix 1). In addition, tables 8.8 to 8.20 below contain details about individual items in each of the constructs after CFA in the model.

### 8.4.1 Information Seeking

Q	Information seeking	Level of agreement %					Mean (M)	Std. Deviation(SD)
		DC	LD	N	LA	AC		
1	Look at the restaurant's official online communication platform (e.g. website; Weibo/Twitter).	2.6	13.5	33.6	39.3	11	1.52	.500
2	Ask colleagues /friends/family about the restaurant.	0.9	5.9	21.2	53	19	3.42	.944
5	Check out prices in advance.	0.8	4.9	28	52.5	13.9	3.99	.767
6	Ensure that the restaurant served dishes I would definitely want to order.	0.6	2.7	20.9	53.1	22.7	3.74	.784
7	Make enquiries about the atmosphere of the restaurant.	0.3	4.4	30	49.3	16	3.95	.773

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.8**

In the case of information seeking (table 8.8), all the means are in excess of the scale mid-point (except Q1), which suggests that they are all very important items for the factor formation seeking. The most weight items in this respect are the participation behaviour measure "Check out prices in advance" (M=3.99, SD=.767), the participation behaviour measure "Make enquiries about the atmosphere of the restaurant." (M=3.95, SD=.773) and "Ensure that the restaurant served dishes I would definitely want to order." (M=3.74, SD=.784). Moreover, the item 5 suggests that people pay more attention on price (66.4% agreement).

## 8.4.2 Interest Interaction

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Interest interaction	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation(SD)
13	I normally pay close attention to the restaurant tableware and /or colour scheme and/or décor.	1.2	4.9	31.8	49.3	12.8	3.68	.804
14	I normally pay close attention to the music and/or other atmospheric sounds I encounter in a restaurant.	0.9	7.5	30.1	51.8	9.7	3.62	.797
15	I like to touch/feel artefacts and textures, which are part of the restaurant experience.	0.5	4.3	26.6	55.6	13.1	3.77	.745
16	I like to know/learn about how restaurants source and/or prepare and/or cook the food and drink they serve me.	0.6	9.1	37	44.7	8.5	3.51	.800

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.9**

In the case of participation behaviour measures of interest interaction (table 8.9), all four items have mean scores of at least 3.51, which suggests that they are of similar relevance to interest interaction. The highest scores are associated with the measure “I like to touch/feel artefacts and textures, which are part of the restaurant experience” (M=3.77 SD=.745), while the lowest score is for the item “I like to know/learn about how restaurants source and/or prepare and/or cook the food and drink they serve me” (M=3.51 SD=.800).

### 8.4.3 Novel Interaction

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Novel interaction	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean(M)	Std. Deviation(SD)
17	I like engaging with a restaurant's website and would be happy with more online interactivity.	3.3	15.1	45.4	29.4	6.8	3.21	.899
18	I am/would be happy for the restaurants to try new ways of sourcing and /or preparing and /or	0.8	8.1	33	45.8	12.3	3.61	.832
19	I am/would be happy for restaurants to introduce new, or novel, restaurant experiences I had not encountered before.	0.9	6.5	34.1	45.7	12.8	3.63	.822
21	The more a restaurant wants me to be involved in the "restaurant experience" the more I like it	0.9	5.5	33.5	43.2	16.9	3.70	.845

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.10**

For the factor of novel interaction (table 8.10), the most important items are "The more a restaurant wants me to be involved in the 'restaurant experience' the more I like it" (M=3.70, SD=.845), while "I like engaging with a restaurant's website and would be happy with more online interactivity." (M=3.21 SD=.899) is least importance. In addition, about the most import item, 43.2% respondents were largely agree on it.

#### 8.4.4 Information Sharing

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Information sharing	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
34	I would be happy to speak with restaurant staff and give them advice on how they might serve me better	1.2	10.5	41.6	40.2	6.5	3.40	.810
35	I would be happy to speak with waiting staff to find out their perspectives on how service should be delivered.	1.8	14.6	40.2	36.4	7	3.32	.872
36	I would be happy for restaurant staff to ask me about my service expectations and preferences.	0.9	10.8	30.6	49.8	7.9	3.53	.824

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.11**

It is evident from table 8.11 that all the mean scores are similar, which suggests that, on average, respondents are happy for information sharing. However, the highest mean is associated with the item “I would be happy for restaurant staff to ask me about my service expectations and preferences.” (M=3.53, SD=.824) with nearly a half samples argely agree on it. The lowest mean value for information sharing is associated with “I would be happy to speak with waiting staff to find out their perspectives on how service should be delivered” (M=3.32, SD=.872).

### 8.4.5 Responsible Behaviour

Q	Responsible behaviour	Level of agreement %					Mean	Std. Deviation
		DC	LD	N	LA	AC		
37	I would happily follow a restaurant employee's recommendation on a menu or wine list item.	0.8	15.8	28.5	46.3	8.7	3.46	.886
38	If there is a valid reason and if I am asked to do so, I would happily share a table with other diners.	7.8	17.5	21.8	47.2	5.8	3.26	1.060
39	If this was a restaurant rule or convention, I would happily clear my own table	0.6	7	24.7	51.6	16.1	3.76	.827
40	If I am asked politely by a restaurant employee, I don't mind waiting for my turn until a table is free.	1.2	7.5	25	55.7	10.7	3.67	.811

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.12**

The mean scores for responsible behaviour (table 8.12) indicates that the most important items are “If this were a restaurant rule or convention I would happily clear my own table” (M=3.85, SD=.827), in which more than half people are largely agree on it, while only 0.6% people completely disagree on it . The least important item is “If there is a valid reason and if I am asked to do so, I would happily share a table with other diners” (M=3.26, SD=1.06), which the level of agreement suggest that people are happy to share a table with responsibility.

### 8.4.6 Communication Interaction

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Communication interaction	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
42	If either my meal or the service is not to my liking, then I will ask to speak with someone in authority.	0.5	5.6	46.4	40	7.5	3.48	.735
43	If my meal is especially good, I would either ask to see the chef or ask for my thanks to be communicated to him/her	2	11.6	43.8	37.1	5.5	3.33	.825
44	If my meal is not quite to my liking, I would ask for extra sauce/more spice/etc to increase my enjoyment.	0.5	8.8	33.6	44.7	12.3	3.60	.832

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.13**

In the case of communication interaction (table 8.13), the most important item is “If my meal is not quite to my liking I would ask for extra sauce/more spice/etc. to increase my enjoyment” (M=3.60, SD=.832) and it is agreed by more than 50% respondents, while the item “If my meal is especially good I would either ask to see the chef or ask for my thanks to be communicated to him/her ” (M=3.60, SD=.832) is least important .

### 8.4.7 Feedback

Q	Feedback	Level of agreement %					Mean	Std. Deviation
		DC	LD	N	LA	AC		
22	If not satisfied with either food or service, I would make a point of speaking with the restaurant proprietor.	1.1	11.4	33.8	43.1	10.7	3.51	.870
23	I would happily contact the restaurant proprietor to advise him/her of the improvements that I think would be made to my restaurant experience	0.3	4.4	18.1	41.2	28.2	3.16	.977
24	If I think it will help the restaurant, I will make a point of posting a comment on social media or an appropriate website.	2.6	17	32.6	37.1	10.7	3.36	.970

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.14**

For the factor of feedback (table 8.14), the most important items are “If not satisfied with either food or service I would make a point of speaking with the restaurant proprietor” (M=3.51, SD=.870), while “I would happily contact the restaurant proprietor to advise him/her of the improvements that I think would be made to my restaurant experience” (M=3.16, SD=.977) is least importance. Although Q23 is least important, only 0.3% respondents completely disagree on it.



### 8.4.8 Advocacy

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Advocacy	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
25	Following a good dining experience, I am likely to advise my friends and/or family to visit the restaurant concerned.	0.5	3.5	19.3	55.4	21.3	3.94	.764
26	Following a good dining experience, I am likely to post a favourable comment on social media.	1.5	11.4	29.4	44.9	12.8	3.56	.907
27	Following a good dining experience, I am likely to post a favourable comment on a specialist online forum (e.g. Dianping, TripAdvisor).	2.3	14.5	34.9	37.7	10.7	3.40	.938

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.15**

The table (table 8.15 )displays that the mean of “Following a good dining experience I am likely to advise my friends and/or family to visit the restaurant concerned” is higher than the other two items, that is to say, it is most vital item for the factor advocacy. About level of agreement on item 25, 55.4% respondents is largely agree, followed by agree completely (21.3%), whereas merely 0.5% respondents completely disagree on this item.

### 8.4.9 Helping

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Helping	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
28	If another customer in that restaurant asked me for advice on ordering dishes I would happily provide this.	0	4.1	16.9	62.9	16.1	3.91	.698
29	If the restaurant had a message board I would be one of the first to make recommendations to other customers.	1.7	12.5	40	35.9	9.9	3.40	.888

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.16**

In the case of helping (table 8.16), the minima important item is "If the restaurant had a message board I would be one of the first to make recommendations to other customers" (M=3.40, SD=.888), in which 40% respondents hold the neutral attitudes.

### 8.4.10 Tolerance

Q	Tolerance	Level of agreement %					Mean	Std. Deviation
		DC	LD	N	LA	AC		
31	If restaurant prices appear higher than I feel they should be, I will normally place my order and not complain	2.3	16.1	36.5	40.6	4.4	3.29	.868
32	If restaurant service is not as good as I think it should be, I will normally make allowances and not complain.	4.1	22.1	40	28.8	5	3.09	.932
33	If a restaurant doesn't really satisfy my expectations, I will usually give it a second try.	14.8	27.1	33	21.3	3.8	2.72	1.073

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.17**

Based on the mean score, the item “If a restaurant doesn't really satisfy my expectations I will usually give it a second try” is least significant for factor tolerance, and only 25.1% people are agree on it. In contrast, the item “If restaurant prices appear higher than I feel they should be I will normally place my order and not complain” is most important item for tolerance with 45% level of agreement, verse 18.4% disagreement (see table 8.17).

Overall, the above tables 8.8- 8.17 indicate the level of co-creation behaviour (participation and citizenship behaviour) items, which appear to have most relevance to the constructs after CFA analysis. In total, there are 34 items being kept, compared with the 39 items before CFA analysis. In detail, factor ‘information seeking’ reduces 2 items, while factor ‘novel interaction’, ‘communication interaction’ and ‘helping’ reduces 1 item, respectively.

As regards the weight of ‘participation behaviour’, for the factor ‘information seeking’, the measure ‘check prices’ has most weight; for the factor ‘interest interaction’, respondents show the tendency to touch artefacts/textures as part of restaurant experience; for factor ‘novel interaction’, respondent are desired to involve in the restaurant experience from strategic aspects; for factor ‘information sharing’, people show willing to share service expectation and preference; for construct ‘responsible behaviour’, people are willing to

follow the rule to clean table;and people would like to increase enjoyment(e.g. extra sauce) through 'communication interaction'.

While, with regard to citizenship behaviour, for factor 'feedback', the most relevant item is that people make a point of speaking with restaurant proprietor; for factor 'advocacy', respondents show willing to advise friends to visit after good experience; for factor 'helping', people are willing to advise dishes to other customers; for factor 'tolerance', people are usually not to complain on higher price. The following table 8.18-8.20 will address the items of construct 'Chinese culture'.

### 8.4.11 Face

Q	Face	Level of agreement %					Mean	Std. Deviation
		DC	LD	N	LA	AC		
45	I would usually search for a restaurant with luxury atmosphere.	3.7	20.4	39.7	26.8	9.4	3.18	.982
47	I would prefer to go to a restaurant where I believed staff would understand me and my needs.	0	3.0	20.4	51.0	25.6	3.99	.763
48	I prefer to use a restaurant that reflects and acknowledges my social status.	1.4	9.6	37.6	36.7	14.8	3.54	.905

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.18**

As regards face factor, respondents prefer restaurant staff understand themselves and their needs ( M= 3.99, SD=.763), in which 51% of them largely agree on it, while no one completely disagree on it. Compared with understanding needs, respondent pay less attention on restaurant's luxury atmosphere, in which 39.7 percent were neutral about it (see table 8.18).

### 8.4.12 Harmony

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Harmony	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
49	I am happy in a restaurant that offers a peaceful and restful environment	0.3	3.8	22.7	50.4	22.8	3.92	.793
50	I would make the best of what I believed to be an unsatisfactory restaurant experience if I know my friends and family were enjoying	0.8	4.4	31.1	50.5	13.2	3.71	.778
51	I always try to understand and appreciate a restaurant's aims and objectives.	0.8	10.8	45.7	36.2	6.5	3.37	.792

Note: DC=disagree completely; LD=largely disagree; N=neither agree nor disagree; LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.19**

It is apparent from table 8.19 that the item "I am happy in a restaurant that offers a peaceful and restful environment" is most important for factor harmony, in which 73.2 percent agree on it compared with 0.35 completely disagreement. Furthermore, there is a slight possibility that Q51 is minimal important since 45.7 respondents hold the neutral attitude.

### 8.4.13 Guanxi

		Level of agreement %						
Q	Guanxi	DC	LD	N	LA	AC	Mean	Std. Deviation
52	For me, visiting a restaurant is a largely social, rather than gastronomic, experience.	0.3	4.9	24.5	51.1	19.2	3.84	.797
53	Whenever I encounter good food or service, I like to ensure that my friends and/or family are aware of the restaurant concerned.	0.5	2.4	23.4	53.4	20.2	3.91	.753
55	I prefer to eat at restaurants where I am mostly likely to meet people who are important to me	3.7	14.5	46.7	27.9	7.3	3.21	.905
56	I prefer to eat at the restaurants that contact me personally with special day greetings or advice on offers and events.	2.7	7.8	32	44.3	13.2	3.58	.911

Note: DC=disagree completely;LD=largely disagree;N=neither agree nor disagree;LA=largely agree; AC=agree completely

**Table 8.20**

In the case of *guanxi* (table 8.20), the means of Q52 and Q53 seem to be similar, which suggests that they are quite essential items for the factor *guanxi*. However, the item Q55 that eating at restaurants to meet important people is not critical items for *guanxi*, people seem hesitant about this opinion (46.7% neither agree nor disagree).

In the main, the tables 8.18- 8.20 reveal the extent of 'Chinese culture ' items, which appear to have most relevance to the construct after CFA analysis. Compared with the original number (12 items) of 'Chinese culture ' items, there remains 10 items. For factor 'face', respondents are inclined to go to restaurant, which the staff understand them; for factor 'harmony', the item that restaurant offers a peaceful environment is most relevant; for factor '*guanxi*', respondents willing to maintain relationships with others through ensuring friends to know good food.

### 8.4.14 Cognitive Engagement

The number of construct 'cognitive engagement' item stays the same before and after the CFA analysis. The item 'find a desired dish' occupies most weight, while the item 'menu is varied' has least one. In next section, the relationships between respondents' demographic and different constructs will be explored.

## 8.5 THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND CONSTRUCTS

Because one of this research objectives is to gain insight to identify the extent to which demographic diversity impacts co-creation behaviour intention, as a result, significance tests between the mean values of the respondents' demographic and different constructs (participation behaviour, citizenship behaviour, Chinese culture and cognitive engagement) are conducted. Moreover, the method one-way ANOVA is adopted to examine the significances and the results, which are presented in the following tables (table 8.21, 8.22, 8.23, and 8.24).

### 8.5.1 The Relationships Between the Respondents' Demographic (RD) and Participation Behaviour (PB)

ANOVA						
RD \ PB	Information seeking	Interest interaction	Novel interaction	Information sharing	Responsible behaviour	Communication interaction
Gender	.122	.887	.595	<b>.000***</b>	.869	.726
Age	<b>.009**</b>	.371	<b>.033*</b>	.087	.071	.113
Time in city	.967	.555	.251	.572	<b>.006**</b>	<b>.004**</b>
Regularly online	<b>.000***</b>	<b>.000***</b>	<b>.001**</b>	<b>.045*</b>	.132	<b>.010*</b>
University degree	<b>.001**</b>	<b>.007**</b>	<b>.001**</b>	.789	.497	.449
Occupation	.308	.321	.622	<b>.035*</b>	<b>.050*</b>	.639

a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001

b. \*\* means significance less than 0.01

c. \* means significance less than 0.05

**Table 8.21 significance between respondents' demographic and the construct participation behaviour**



Table 8.21 above shows the effect of respondents' demographic of customer participation behaviour. Gender characteristic shows a significant difference with 'information sharing', as its p-value is .000. Meanwhile, statistical test shows that male participants (M=3.53) play a more important role when compared with female participants (M=3.33).

Overall there is significant effect between age and construct 'information seeking' (M=3.74, P=.009), and 'novel interaction' (M=3.54, P=.033). However, based on Scheffe Post Hoc test comparisons, all the significant levels are more than 0.05, so there is no difference in the means of the age groups for the two constructs.

The characteristic 'time in city' has a significant effect with 'responsible behaviour' (M=3.54, P=.006) and 'communication interaction' (M=3.47, P=.004). Moreover, for the construct 'responsible behaviour', the Post Hoc test reveals that the effect of respondents live in current city 'more than 5 years' (M= play less 3.45) plays more than those live in 'most of their lives' (M=3.59); for the construct 'communication interaction', Post Hoc tests show the same trend (more than 5 years, M=3.38; most of life, M= 3.52).

Omnibus analyses show that significant group differences between 'information seeking' (M=3.74, P=.000), 'interest interaction' (M=3.64, P=.000), 'novel interaction' (M=3.54, P=.001), 'information sharing' (M=3.42, P=.045), and 'communication interaction' (M=3.47, P=.010) by respondents' online activity.

Overall analysis reveals that the characteristic university degree has a significant effect on construct 'information seeking' (M=3.74, P=.001), 'interest interaction' (M=3.64, P=.007) and 'novel interaction' (M=3.54, P=.001). Furthermore, statistical test shows that respondents who hold university degrees have more effect than those who do not for the two constructs.

ANOVA also shows a significant effect of occupation on 'information sharing' (M=3.42, P=.035) and 'responsible behaviour' (M=3.54, P=.05). What is more, for 'information sharing', Post hoc test reveals that the mean for house wife/husband (M=3.23) has a stronger effect on the 'information sharing' than the mean for student (M=3.22), but there is not significant difference between the means of other groups. For

'responsible behaviour', the Scheffe Post Hoc test displays there is no difference in the means of occupation groups.

In general, participation behaviour constructs, to some degree, vary in accordance with respondents' demographic characteristics. As regards characteristics, the only one that has a significant effect across most constructs is 'regularly online'; by contrast, 'gender' only has an effect on 'information sharing'. In the next section, the relationships between the respondents' demographic and citizenship behaviour is given.

### 8.5.2 The Relationships Between the Respondents' Demographic (RD) and Citizenship Behaviour (CB)

ANOVA					
	CB	Feedback	Advocacy	Helping	Tolerance
RD					
	Gender	<b>.044*</b>	.451	.975	.982
	Age	.074	<b>.000***</b>	.398	<b>.001**</b>
	Time in city	<b>.047*</b>	.063	<b>.008**</b>	.347
	Regularly online	<b>.007**</b>	<b>.000***</b>	<b>.001**</b>	.057
	University degree	.056	<b>.012*</b>	.131	.211
	Occupation	.949	.199	.366	<b>.030*</b>

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. \*\* means significance less than 0.01
- c. \* means significance less than 0.05

**Table 8.22**

Table 8.22 shows that the effect of respondents' demographic on customer citizenship behaviour. Gender characteristic displays a significant difference between the mean value of male and female on construct 'feedback' (M=3.34, P=.044). Since group statistics reveals that the mean for the male respondents (M=3.40) is larger than the mean for female respondents (M=3.29), which implies that male participants are more likely to offer 'feedback' than female participants.

For age characteristic, there are significant effects on 'advocacy' (M=3.63) and 'tolerance' (M=3.03) where their P values both are < .05. At the same time, post hoc test reveals that the mean for age groups '31-40

years old' (M= 3.74) and 'more than 60 years old' (M=3.11) differ significantly on 'advocacy', but do not differ significantly from the mean of age groups 'below 20 years old', '20-30 years old', '41-50 years old' and '51-60 years old'. In the analysis of 'tolerance', post hoc test reveals that the mean for age groups 'below 20 years old', '31-40 years old', '41-50 years old' and '51-60 years old' do not differ significantly, while they do differ significantly from the mean of age groups '20-30 years old' (M = 2.94) and 'more than 60 years old' (M=3.67).

The characteristic 'time in city' has a substantial impact on the two types of citizenship behaviour of 'feedback' (M=3.34, P=.047) and 'helping' (M=3.65, P=.008). For 'feedback', the participants who 'live in current city most or all of their lives' (M=3.38) have more effect on 'feedback' than the ones who 'live in current city for more than five years' (M=3.27). For 'helping', there is a similar trend with 'feedback' (most of life, M=3.71; more than 5 years, M=3.56)

The characteristic 'regularly online' has a significant effect on the three types of citizenship behaviour, 'feedback' (M=3.34, P=.007), 'advocacy' (M=3.63, P=.000), and 'helping' (M=3.65, P=.001). Statistical test displays that regularly online respondents have more influence than those that are not regularly online respondents on the three constructs.

For the university degree characteristic, the difference is statistically significant between the mean number of holding and not holding participants on constructs 'advocacy' (M=3.63, P=.044). Since group statistics reveals that the mean for the participants (M=3.66) who are holding university degrees is greater than the mean for participants who are not (M=3.48), one could say that university degrees holding participants are more significant than participants not holding university degrees on construct 'feedback'.

The occupation characteristic has a significant effect on construct 'tolerance' (M=3.03, P=.030). The post hoc test reveals that the means for groups: student, professional, housewife/husband, company employee, government employee and self-employed do not differ significantly, while they differ significantly from the mean of retired (M=3.54) and other participants (M=2.71).

Overall, the four constructs of 'citizenship behaviour', to a certain degree, show a difference in line with respondents' demographic. The only characteristic that has a significant effect across three constructs is 'regularly online'; whereas 'gender' 'university degree' and 'occupation' only have an effect on one construct. In the next section, the significance between respondents' demographic and construct 'Chinese culture' is tested.

### 8.5.3 The Relationships Between the Respondents' Demographic (RD) and Chinese Culture (CC)

		ANOVA		
RD \ CC		Face	Harmony	<i>Guanxi</i>
gender		.634	.138	<b>.032*</b>
age		<b>.035*</b>	<b>.043*</b>	.270
Time in city		<b>.018*</b>	<b>.019*</b>	<b>.000***</b>
regularly online		<b>.001**</b>	.432	<b>.045*</b>
university degree		<b>.004**</b>	.610	.428
occupation		<b>.026*</b>	<b>.044*</b>	.396

a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001

b. \*\* means significance less than 0.01

c. \* means significance less than 0.05

**Table 8.23**

Table 8.23 presents that the significance of respondents' demographic on Chinese culture. Gender characteristic displays a significant difference between the mean number of males and females on construct *guanxi* (M=3.63, P=.032). Statistics reveals that the mean for the female respondents (M=3.67) is greater than the male respondents (M=3.58). Thus, it is reasonable to believe that female respondents are more reliant on *guanxi* than male respondents.

Age characteristic has a significant effect on constructs face (M=3.57, P=.035) and harmony (M=3.67, P=.043) where their P values are both < .05. However, the Scheffe multiple comparisons test does not show group means (P>.05) are significantly different from one another on the two constructs.

The characteristic 'time in city' has a significant effect on all three sub-constructs of 'Chinese culture', 'face'

( $M=3.57$ ,  $P=.018$ ), 'harmony' ( $M=3.67$ ,  $P=.019$ ), and '*guanxi*' ( $M=3.63$ ,  $P=.000$ ). For constructs 'face', 'harmony', and '*guanxi*', statistics reveal that the participants who 'live in current city most or all of their lives' have more effect on them than the ones who 'live in current city for more than five years'. That is to say, the more the time lived, the more the effect on the 'Chinese culture' construct.

The characteristic 'regularly online' has a significant effect on the two sub-constructs of 'Chinese culture', 'face' ( $M=3.57$ ,  $P=.001$ ) and '*guanxi*' ( $M=3.63$ ,  $P=.045$ ). For 'face', statistics show that participants who are regularly online ( $M=3.59$ ) have more effect on 'feedback' than those who are not regularly online ( $M=3.23$ ); Likewise, for construct '*guanxi*', participants who are regularly online ( $M=3.64$ ) also have more effect than those who are not regularly online ( $M=3.45$ ).

For the university degree characteristic, the difference between the mean number of holding and not holding participants on construct 'face' ( $M=3.57$ ,  $P=.004$ ) is statistically significant. When the means of 'holding' and 'not holding' participants are weighed, group statistics strongly indicate that university degree holding participants ( $M=3.60$ ) are more significant than participants not holding university degrees ( $M=3.40$ ) on construct 'face'.

The occupation characteristic has a significant effect on constructs 'face' ( $M=3.57$ ,  $P=.026$ ) and harmony ( $M=3.67$ ,  $P=.044$ ). However, the Post hoc test reveals that group means ( $P>.05$ ) are not significantly different from one another on constructs 'face' and 'harmony'.

On the whole, as regards Chinese culture constructs, none are especially sensitive to the sample characteristic diversity. The characteristic 'time in city' has a significant influence on all three constructs. In contrast, 'gender' and 'university degree' only affect one characteristic. In the next part, the significance between respondents' demographic and construct 'cognitive engagement' is illustrated.

### 8.5.4. The Relationships Between the Respondents' Demographic (RD) and Cognitive Engagement (CE)

ANOVA	
SC	Cognitive engagement
gender	.006**
age	.003**
Time in city	.595
regularly online	.256
university degree	.163
occupation	.189

a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001

b. \*\* means significance less than 0.01

c. \* means significance less than 0.05

**Table 8.24**

Table 8.24 exhibits that the characteristic of gender and age have a significant effect on the construct 'cognitive engagement'. Gender characteristic shows a significant difference between the mean number of male and female on constructs cognitive engagement ( $P=.006$ ). Statistics revealed that the mean for the female participants ( $M=3.84$ ) are greater than the mean for male participants ( $M=3.71$ ), the data supports that female participants are more significant than male participants on constructs cognitive engagement; for the characteristic age, there is a different significantly ( $P=.003$ ) from the mean of age groups '20-30 years old' ( $M=3.68$ ) and '31-40 years old' ( $M=3.87$ ).

In the main, the construct 'cognitive engagement', to some degree, shows a significance along the lines of respondents' demographic. As 'cognitive engagement' is single construct, some specific (construct/characteristic) relationships are worthy of particular consideration, and these will be addressed later in the discussion chapter.

## **8.6 HYPOTHESES TESTING---STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM)**

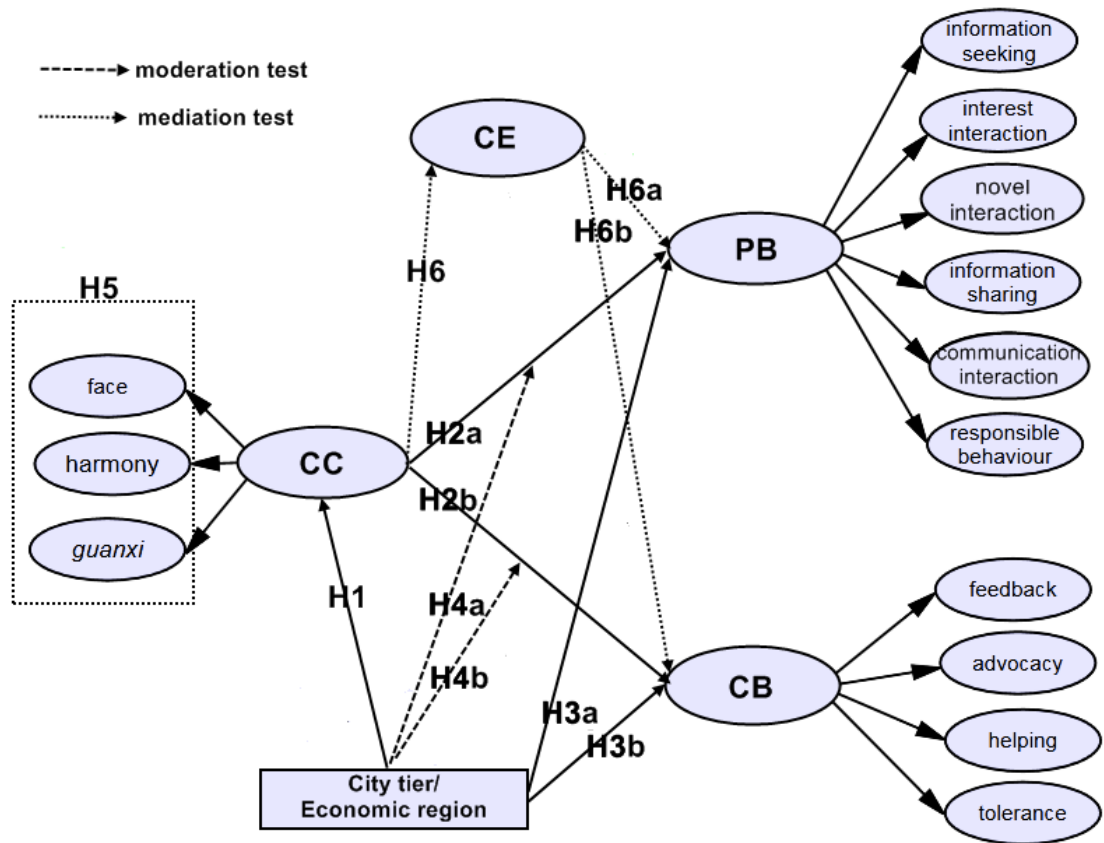
For current research, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 22.0 is utilized to ascertain correlation and regressions among the construct of Chinese culture, while AMOS 22.0 software is used to test the hypothesis whether there is significant possible fitting for indirect and direct variables, which allows this analysis to be performed via structural equation modelling (SEM) including 6 general hypotheses to be examined (see figure 8.3).

For the purpose of pursuing the objective 4 - to investigate the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic and geographical regions, and objective 5 - to explore the extent to which Chinese restaurant customers are willing to participate in co-creation/engagement activity, six general hypotheses (see below ) embodied by paths (H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d, H5, H6a and H6b, please see table 8.25) are used through Structural Equation Modelling (see figure 8.3) to test the relationships among the latent constructs. The latent constructs shown in the structural model (see chapter 6) is to identify direct and indirect relationship between exogenous variable (independent variable), moderator, mediator and endogenous variable (dependent variable). Exogenous constructs are 'Chinese culture', mediator is 'cognitive engagement', moderators are 'city tier and economic region', while endogenous constructs are 'participation behaviours' and 'citizenship behaviours'. The hypothesised structural models are assessed through fit indices (for example, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, RMSEA) and other parameters estimates.

Constructs	Codes	Hypothesis	path	Direction
Participation behaviour	PB	H1a	Tiers → Chinese culture	--
		H1b	Region → Chinese culture	--
		H2a	Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	--
		H2b	Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+
		H3a	City tier → Participation behaviour	+
		H3b	City tier → Citizenship behaviour	--
		H3c	Region → Participation behaviour	+
		H3d	Region → Citizenship behaviour	--
Citizenship behaviour	CB	H4a	City tier moderates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+
		H4b	City tier moderates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+
		H4c	Region moderates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+
Chinese culture	CC	H4d	Region moderates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+
		H5	guanxi ↔ face ↔ harmony	+
		H6a	Cognitive engagement mediates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+
Cognitive engagement	CE	H6b	Cognitive engagement mediates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+

**Table 8.25 Hypotheses paths**





Note: M= Moderation test

**Figure 8.3. Hypotheses model**

It should be note that the analysis order is different with the sets of hypotheses from literature review (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6), which H5 is at first place, as needing to know whether 'Chinese culture' as a distinct set of different three characteristics, or whether view it as a holistic entity. Followed by H1, it would be valuable to test development level of city tier and geographical region to 'Chinese culture'. Then H2 and H6 together, H2 could help test the strength of culturally directly influenced affective engagement characteristics to co-creation behaviours; H6 could help test whether a mediator (cognitive engagement) is providing an indirect effect in the relationship between culturally directly influenced affective engagement and co-creation behaviours. Meanwhile, the findings of H2 and H6 will provide some insight and impact any subsequent tests that draw on the relationship between 'Chinese culture' (CC) and co-creation behaviours (PB and CB), e.g. moderator test. Then H3, it is built on H1 and H2, which could help restaurant firms to manage service provision for local customers when they move into different parts of China. Last H4, it would be useful to test, whether a truly symbiotic relationship exists between these three variables (city tier/region, Chinese culture and participation/citizenship behaviour). That is to say, the hypothesis analysis order is H5, H1, H2 and H6,

H3, and H4. The following section provides details of the six hypotheses testing.

**H5: Despite comprising discreet and individually distinct components, Chinese culture can be considered to have a holistic effect.**

Correlations				
		face	harmony	guanxi
face	Pearson Correlation	1	.371**	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	657	657	657
harmony	Pearson Correlation	.371**	1	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	657	657	657
guanxi	Pearson Correlation	.465**	.481**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	657	657	657

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 8.26**

As mentioned above that the sub-constructs of participation and citizenship behaviours are inherently reflective, in order to check the holistic entity of 'Chinese culture' in this study, correlation testing is performed.

It is convention that if the P-value is less than .05, then the correlation is considered to be significant (meaning that there is 95% confident that the relationship between pairs of variables is not due to chance). In this case, since the all sig values are .000 (which is less than .05), it can say that there are strong correlations among the three variables (face, harmony and *guanxi*). Furthermore, Since the Pearson Correlation value are .371, 465 and 481 separately, the relationships between *guanxi* and face, between face and harmony, and between face and *guanxi* are positive (see table 8.26).

Further, three linear regression testings are conducted to prove the reflective order of construct 'Chinese culture' for its sub-constructs (face, harmony, and *guanxi*).

- **Guanxi is positively related to face.**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.465 <sup>a</sup>	.216	.215		1.757
a. Predictors: (Constant), guanxi					
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	556.992	1	556.992	180.387	.000b
Residual	2022.481	655	3.088		
Total	2579.473	656			
a. Dependent Variable: face					
b. Predictors: (Constant), guanxi					
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.737	.450		10.527	.000
guanxi	.411	.031	.465	13.431	.000
a. Dependent Variable: face					

**Table 8.27**

The model summary (see table 8.27) reveals the correlation value and value of determination (R square) in regression model. The value of .465 indicates there exists a positive correlation between *guanxi* and *face*, while R square value .216 notes that approximately 22% of the variance in construct *face* could be described by *guanxi*. The ANOVA suggests the model between *guanxi* and *face* is statistically significant. In addition, the coefficients table displays the values for the regression line that each standard mark increase in *guanxi* the model predicts an increase of 0.411 standard marks in *face*.

- face is positively related to harmony.

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.371a	.138	.136		1.576
a. Predictors: (Constant), face					
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	259.669	1	259.669	104.581	.000b
Residual	1626.325	655	2.483		
Total	1885.994	656			
a. Dependent Variable: harmony					
b. Predictors: (Constant), face					
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.599	.338		22.489	.000
face	.317	.031	.371	10.226	.000
a. Dependent Variable: harmony					

**Table 8.28**

The coefficient of .371 shows there is a positive relationship between face and harmony, while  $r^2 = .138$  reveals that about 14% of the variance in harmony can be explained by face. The ANOVA presents the model between face and harmony is statistically significant. As can be seen in the Coefficients table that the values for the regression line that everyone standard mark increase in face the model predicts an increase of 0.317 standard marks in harmony.

- **Harmony is positively related to Guanxi.**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.481a	.231	.230		1.967
a. Predictors: (Constant), harmony					
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	761.052	1	761.052	196.668	.000b
Residual	2534.677	655	3.870		
Total	3295.729	656			
a. Dependent Variable: guanxi					
b. Predictors: (Constant), harmony					
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.542	.504		14.965	.000
harmony	.635	.045	.481	14.024	.000
a. Dependent Variable: guanxi					

**Table 8. 29**

As revealed by Model summary, the coefficient of .481 shows there is a positive relationship between harmony and *guanxi*, and  $r^2 = .231$  reveals that around 23% of the variance in *guanxi* can be clarified by face. The ANOVA presents the model between harmony and *guanxi* is statistically significant. As shown in the Coefficients table that the values for the regression line that everyone standard mark increase in harmony the model predicts an increase of 0.635 standard marks in *guanxi*.

Overall, Hypothesis 5 is supported in the conceptual model and where the statistical significances of three pairs are less than 0.001 ( $p = .000$ ) and has expected positive sign, which means construct Chinese culture is unidimensional with no need to assess causality at individual construct level. What is more, this structure is in accordance with protocols given in Jarvis *et al.* (2003).

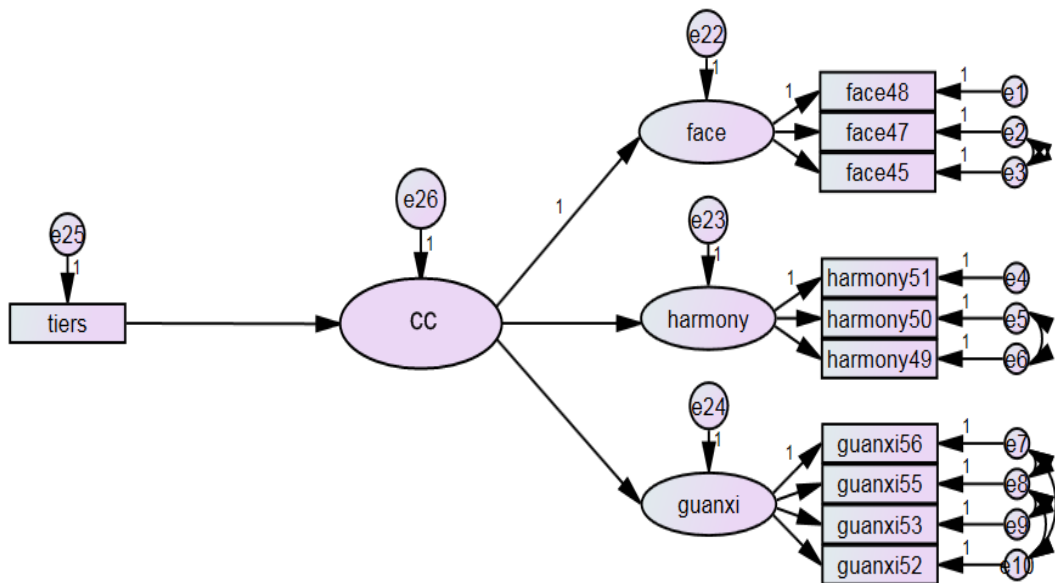
**H1: Chinese culture is likely to vary in strength according to city tier and geographical region**

**H1a: The less developed the city tier, the stronger will be Chinese culture characteristics**

Path: city tier → Chinese culture				
Model fit: IFI=.918, TLI=.869, CFI=.917, RMSEA=.065				
Constructs			SRW	P
Chinese culture	<---	city tier	-.011	.808

**Table 8.30**

Hypothesis 1a is represented by the coefficient of the path city tier → CC (see figure 8.4). This hypothesis is not supported, because the path coefficient of CC → tiers in the conceptual model is not significant at the 5% significance level ( $p = .808$ ), though it has a prior expectation of a negative sign (see table 8.30). So, this hypothesis is rejected.



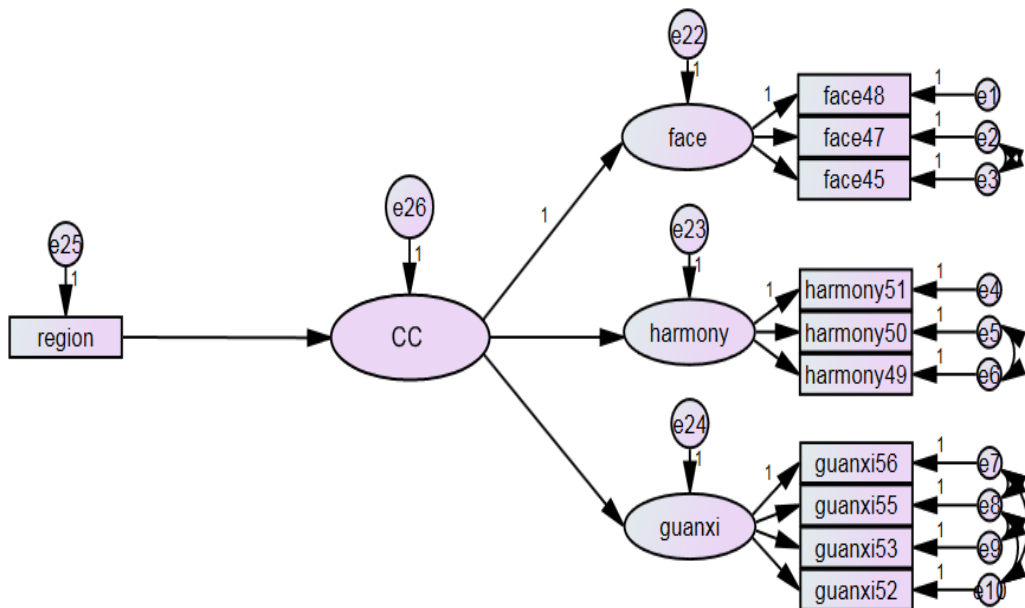
**Figure 8.4**

**H1b: The less developed the geographical region, the stronger will be Chinese cultural characteristics**

Path: region→Chinese culture				
Model fit: IFI=.930, TLI=.888, CFI=.928; RMSEA=.060				
Constructs			SRW	P
'Chinese culture'	<---	region	-.061	.171

**Table 8.31**

Hypothesis 1b is represented by the coefficient of the path region→CC (see figure 8.5). Despite Chinese culture has expected negative causal direction on region, the p value ( $p=.171$ ) suggests effect is not significant at significance level of 0.05 – see table 5.33. So, this hypothesis is not supported.



**Figure 8.5**

**H2: Customer co-creation is related to ‘Chinese culture’.**

**H2a ‘Chinese culture’ is negatively related to participation behaviours.**

Path: Chinese culture (CC) → participation behaviour (PB)						
Model fit: IFI=.849, TLI=.831, CFI=.848, RMSEA=.054						
Constructs			Estimate	SMC	SRW	P
participation behaviour	<---	Chinese culture	.546	.782	.884	***
face	<---	Chinese culture	1.000	.603	.777	
harmony	<---	Chinese culture	.836	.951	.975	***
guanxi	<---	‘Chinese culture	.961	.709	.842	***
information seeking	<---	participation behaviour	1.000	.248	.498	
interest interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.113	.331	.575	***
novel interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.277	.524	.724	***
information sharing	<---	participation behaviour	1.364	.390	.624	***
responsible behaviour	<---	participation behaviour	1.424	.610	.781	***
communication interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.182	.664	.815	***

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. SMC= Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.32**

With respect to the model: ‘Chinese culture’ → participation behaviour, the measures of fit are summarised by the IFI=.849, TLI=.831, CFI=.848, RMSEA=.054. Although measures of IFI, TLI and CFI are marginally lower than the minimum threshold value of .9, the model is judged to be acceptable based on RMSEA (.054). Also, all measures associated with the construct are statistically significant (table 8.32).

Hypothesis 2a is represented by the path Chinese culture→participation behaviour (see figure 8.6). Hypothesis 2a is not supported in the conceptual model. The causal effects of Chinese culture on participation behaviour are significant at the 0.001 significance level (p = .000), but it does not have the expected negative sign (.546). In contrast, the causal effects should be that the more strength of Chinese culture, the more participation behaviour occurs.



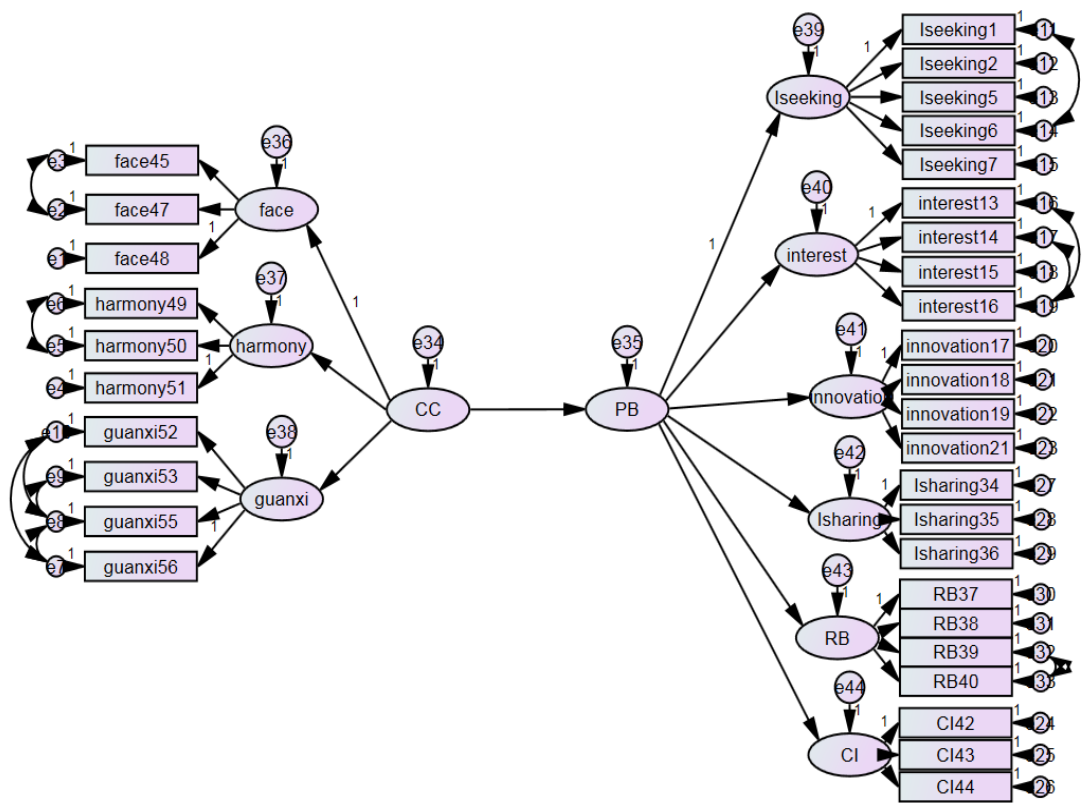


Figure 8.6

**H2b Chinese culture is positively related to citizenship behaviours.**

Path: Chinese culture (CC) → citizenship behaviour (CB)						
Model fit: IFI=.896, TLI=.863, CFI=.894, RMSEA=.065						
Constructs			Estimate	SMC	SRW	P
citizenship behaviour	<---	Chinese culture	.389	.377	.614	***
face	<---	Chinese culture	1.000	.503	.709	
harmony	<---	Chinese culture	.929	.991	.995	***
guanxi	<---	Chinese culture	1.095	.862	.929	***
feedback	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.000	.624	.790	
advocacy	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.017	.744	.863	***
helping	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.091	.658	.811	***

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. SMC= Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.33**

Hypothesis 2b is represented by the path 'Chinese culture' →Citizenship behaviour (see figure 9). The measures of fit are stated by IFI=.896, TLI=.863, CFI=.894, RMSEA=.065. IFI, TLI and CFI are a bit lower than the recommended minimum threshold of .9; nevertheless, the RMSEA lies comfortably within the maximum threshold of .08. Furthermore, all constructs and measures are statistically significant (see table 8.33).

Hypothesis 2b is supported in the conceptual model and where it is significant at the 0.001 significance level ( $p = .000$ ) and has the expected positive sign (.389).

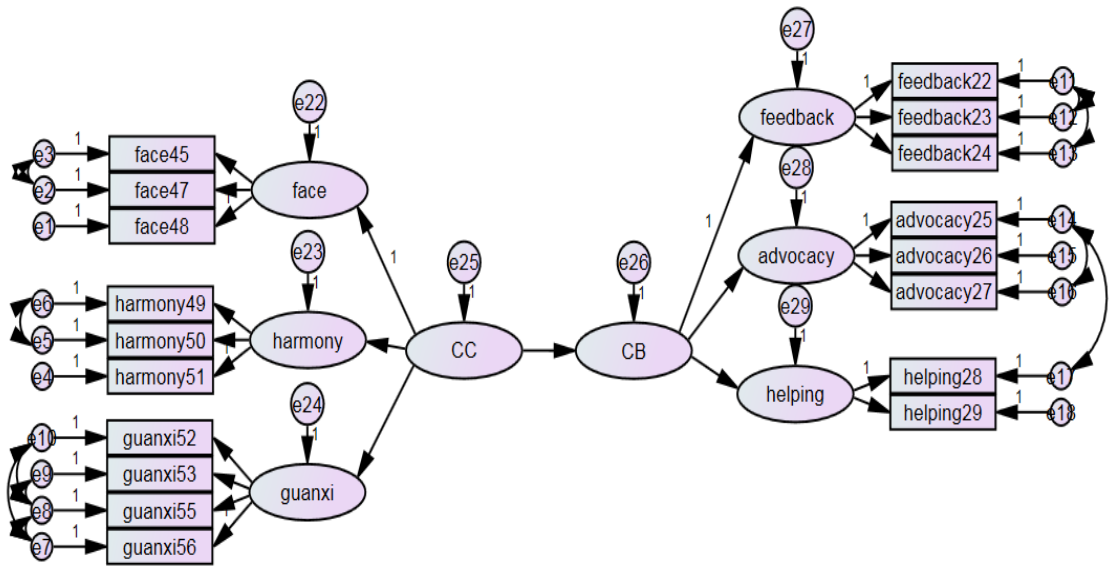
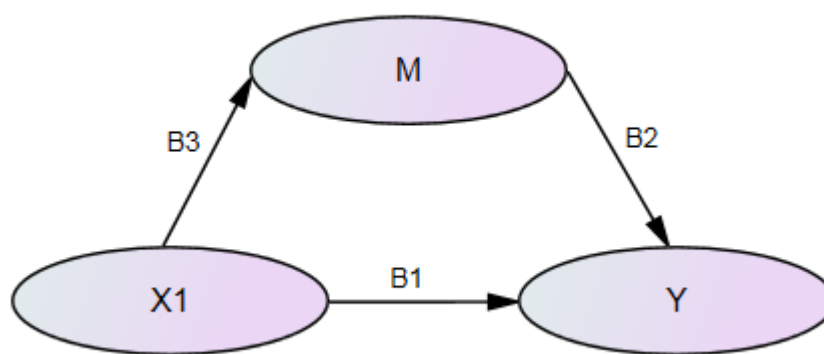


Figure 8.7

## H6 Cognitive Engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviours

Mediation effect can be called as an intervening effect. A mediator is a predictor link in the relationships between two other variables (see figure 8.8). By testing for mediational effects, a researcher can explore to examine the influences between these variables. According to (Awang, 2012) the mediation has three types mediator which is full mediation, partial mediation, and non-mediation.



**Figure 8.8 mediation relationship**

For full mediation:

- 1) The regression coefficient of X1 on Y (or B1) is not significant.
- 2) The regression coefficient of X1 on M (or B3) is significant.
- 3) The regression coefficient of M on Y (or B2) is significant.

For partial mediation:

- 1) The regression coefficient of X1 on Y (or B1) is significant.
- 2) The regression coefficient of X1 on M (or B3) is significant.
- 3) The regression coefficient of M on Y (or B2) is significant.
- 4) The value B1 is lower than the product of (B3 multiply B2)

For non-mediation:

- 1) The regression coefficient of X1 on Y (or B1) is not significant.
- 2) The regression coefficient of X1 on M (or B3) is not significant.
- 3) Both regression coefficient (B1 and B2) are significant, but B1 is higher than  $B3 \cdot B2$

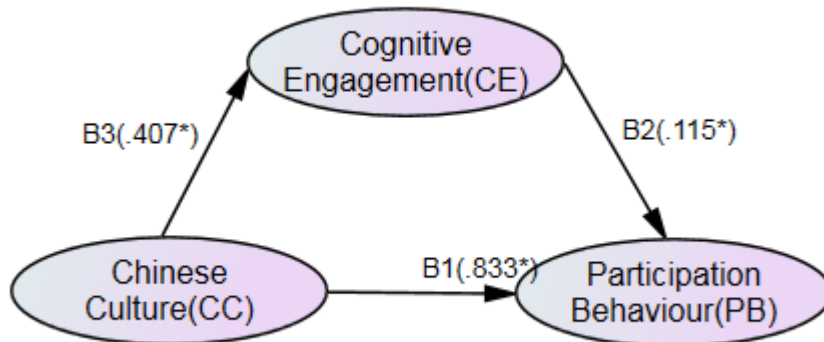
**H6a Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour.**

Path: Chinese culture →cognitive engagement→participation behaviour						
Model fit: IFI=.859, TLI=.844, CFI=.858, RMSEA=.050						
Constructs			Estimate	SMC	SRW	P
cognitive engagement	<---	Chinese culture	.466	.165	.407	***
participation behaviour	<---	cognitive engagement	.066	N/A	.115	.012
participation behaviour	<---	Chinese culture	.547	N/A	.833	***
face	<---	Chinese culture	1.000	.590	.768	
harmony	<---	Chinese culture	.852	.969	.984	***
guanxi	<---	Chinese culture	.976	.725	.851	***
information seeking	<---	participation behaviour	1.000	.273	.523	
interest interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.097	.350	.592	***
novel interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.235	.544	.737	***
information sharing	<---	participation behaviour	1.29	.383	.619	***
responsible behaviour	<---	participation behaviour	1.334	.588	.767	***
communication interaction	<---	participation behaviour	1.107	.630	.793	***

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- c. SMC= Squared Multiple Correlations

**Table 8.34**



**Figure 8.9**

The measuring model fits in SEM are summarised by IFI=.859, TLI=.844, CFI=.858, and RMSEA=.050. IFI, TLI and CFI are marginally lower than the recommended minimum threshold of .9. However, the RMSEA lies comfortably within the maximum threshold of .08.

The path coefficients for the model as illustrated in Table 8.34 are positive and significant (P value<0.001).

As expected, construct Chinese culture has positive effect on constructs participation behaviour and cognitive engagement. Correspondingly, construct cognitive engagement has positive effect on construct participation behaviour. In addition, standardised regression weight (SRW) value for direct relation between Chinese culture and participation behaviour, excluding cognitive engagement from the model is  $b_1 = .884$  (see table 8.32). The results in table 8.34 show that SRW value for the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour, with cognitive engagement as the mediator variable, is  $B_1 = .833$  (figure 8.9). According to Awang (2012), when the mediation variable (cognitive engagement) is entered into the model, the value of SRW for the direct relation between Chinese culture and participation behaviour is expected to be reduced (Awang, 2012). For this testing,  $b_1 > B_1$  and the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour is significant at  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the results reveal that cognitive engagement is the partial mediator in the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour. In the main, hypothesis 6a is supported in the conceptual model.

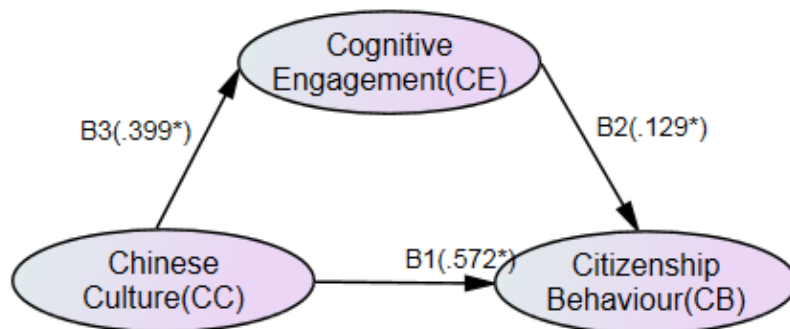
**H6b: Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.**

Path: Chinese culture →cognitive engagement→citizenship behaviour						
Model fit: IFI=.872, TLI=.848, CFI=.871, RMSEA=.060						
Constructs			Estimate	SMC	SRW	P
cognitive engagement	<---	Chinese culture	.481	.159	.399	***
citizenship behaviour	<---	cognitive engagement	.067	N/A	.129	.014
citizenship behaviour	<---	Chinese culture	.357	N/A	.572	***
Face	<---	Chinese culture	1.000	.500	.707	
harmony	<---	Chinese culture	.940	.785	.886	***
guanxi	<---	Chinese culture	1.104	.861	.928	***
feedback	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.000	.634	.796	
advocacy	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.027	.725	.852	***
helping	<---	citizenship behaviour	1.148	.683	.827	***
tolerance	<---	citizenship behaviour	.246	.026	.160	.002

Note:

- a.\*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights
- c. SMC= Squared Multiple Correlations

**Table 8.35**



**Figure 8.10**

The fit indices with IFI=.872, TLI=.848, CFI=.871, and RMSEA=.060 suggest that the fit of structural model is acceptable (table 8.35). The structural equation model as shown in figure 8.3 illustrates the relationship among Chinese culture, citizenship behaviour and cognitive engagement.

The relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour is mediated by cognitive engagement.

As Figure 8.10 above illustrates, the standardised regression coefficient (**B3**) between Chinese culture and

cognitive engagement is statistically significant, as is the standardised regression coefficient (**B2**) between cognitive engagement and citizenship behaviour, and standardised regression coefficient (**B1**) between the relationship Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour. Although absolute value of  $B3 \cdot B2$  ( $.339 \cdot .129 = .044$ ) is lower than the absolute value of  $B1$  (.572), the value (.614) of  $b1$  in the single model without variable of cognitive engagement is reduced (see table 8.35) when the mediator is included, that is  $b1 > B1$  (Awang, 2012). In other words, cognitive engagement is the partial mediator between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour. In the main, hypothesis 6b is supported in the conceptual model.



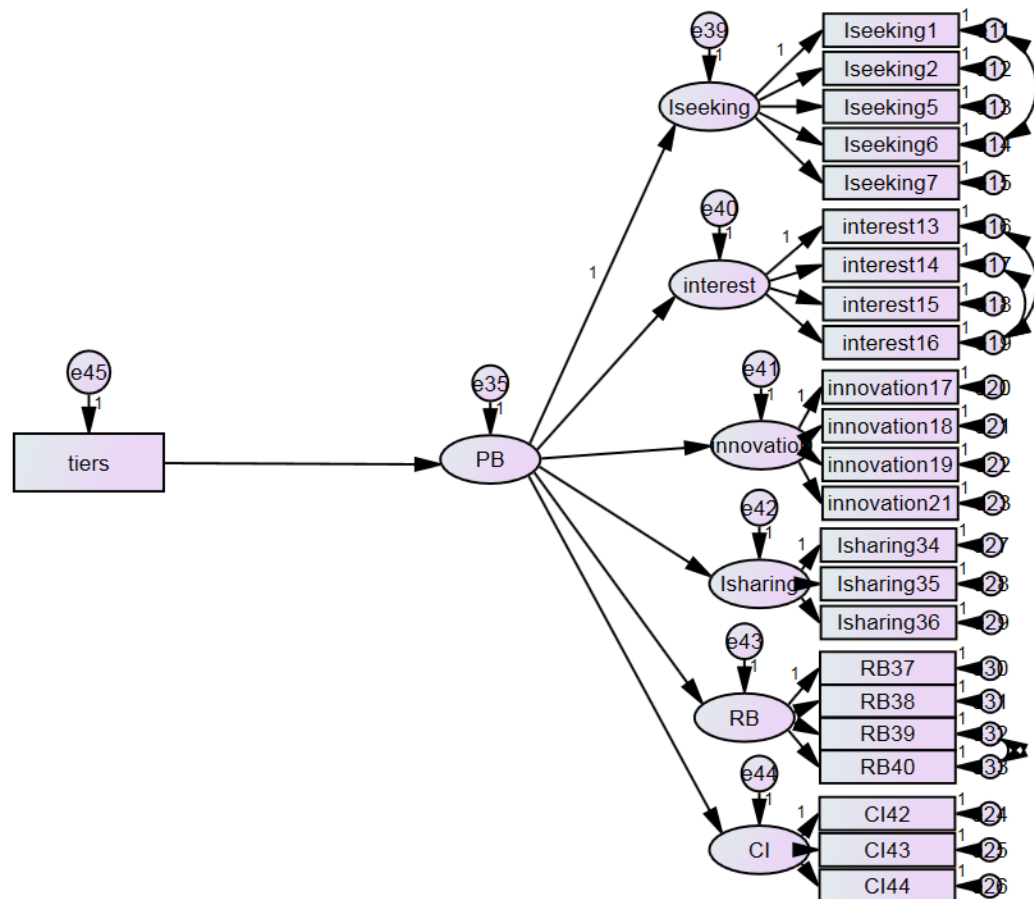
**H3: Chinese restaurant customers to practice co-creation behaviours will vary according to the level of indigenous socio-economic development.**

**H3a: The more developed the city tier, the more likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practise participation behaviour.**

<b>Path: city tier → participation behaviour(PB)</b>			
<b>Model fit: IFI=.873, TLI=.853, CFI=.872, RMSEA=.058</b>			
<b>Constructs</b>			<b>P</b>
Participation behaviour	<---	City tiers	.804

**Table 8.36**

Hypothesis 3a is represented by the path tier → PB (see figure 8.11). The path coefficient of tier → PB is not significant at the 5% significance level ( $p = .804$ ). So, this hypothesis is rejected



**Figure 8.11**

**H3b: The more developed the city tier, the less likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practise citizenship behaviour**

Path: city tier → citizenship behaviour						
Model fit: IFI=.929, TLI=.900, CFI=.928, RMSEA=.068						
Constructs			Estimate	SMC	SRW	P
CB	<---	tiers	-.053	.026	-.161	.001
feedback	<---	CB	1.000	.613	.783	
advocacy	<---	CB	1.050	.776	.881	***
helping	<---	CB	1.061	.588	.767	***
tolerance	<---	CB	0.233	.021	.145	.004

Note:

- a. \*\*\* means significance less than 0.001
- b. SMC= Squared Multiple Correlations
- c. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.37**

Hypothesis 3b is represented by the coefficient of the path city tier → citizenship behaviour (see figure 8.12).

The model is confident for the model fit tests in term of relationships between city tier and citizenship behaviour (IFI=.929, TLI=.900, CFI=.928, RMSEA=.068).

In this model, the hypothesis is supported, since the causal influence of city tier on construct citizenship behaviour is significant ( $p=.001$ ). What 's more, the standardised regression coefficient of city tier on citizenship behaviour is negative (-.161), which indicates the causal effects that the more developed the city tier, the less likely are Chinese restaurant customers to show the citizenship behaviour (see table 8.37).

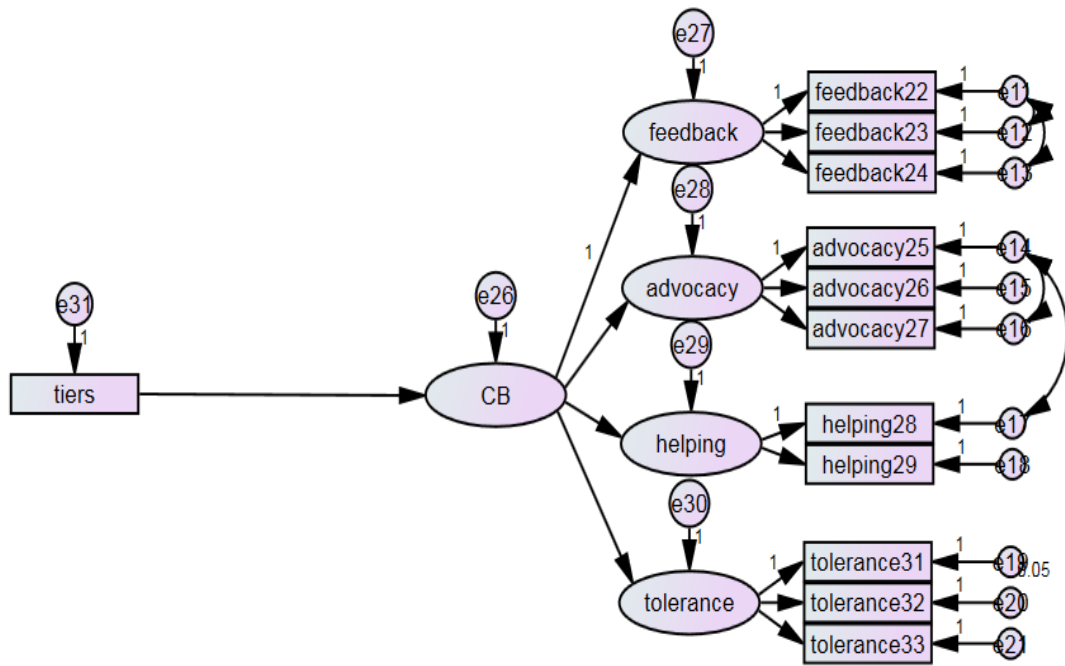


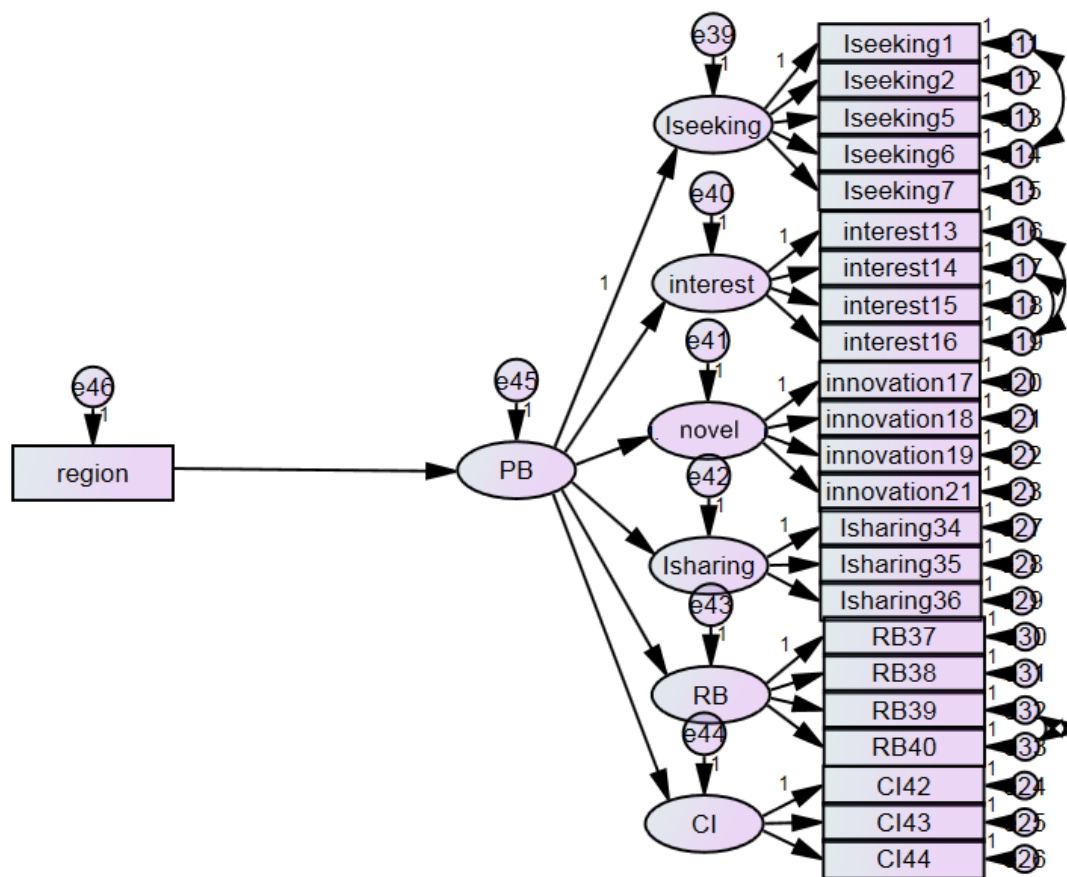
Figure 8.12

**H3c: The more developed the geographical region, the more likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practise participation behaviour**

Path: region → participation behaviour				
Model fit: IFI=.872, TLI=.853, CFI=.871, RMSEA=.059				
Constructs			SRW	P
Participation behaviour	<---	Region	-.140	.003

**Table 8.38**

The hypothesis 3c is represented by the path region → participation behaviour (see figure 8.13). The hypothesis is not supported in model. Although the path coefficient is statistically significant ( $p = .003$ ), it does not have the expected positive sign.



**Figure 8.13**

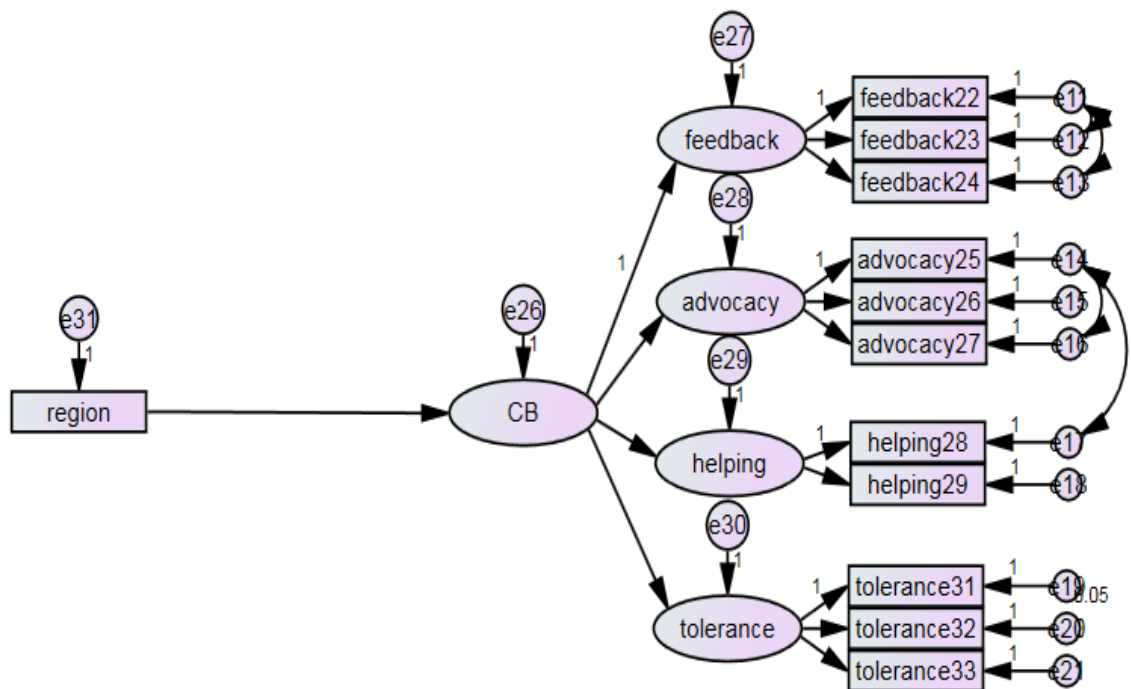
**H3d: The more developed the geographical region, the less likely are Chinese restaurant customers to practise citizenship behaviour**

Path: region → citizenship behaviour				
Model fit: IFI=.923, TLI=.891, CFI=.923, RMSEA=.071				
Constructs			SRW	P
Participation behaviour	<---	Region	-.061	.173

Note. a. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.39**

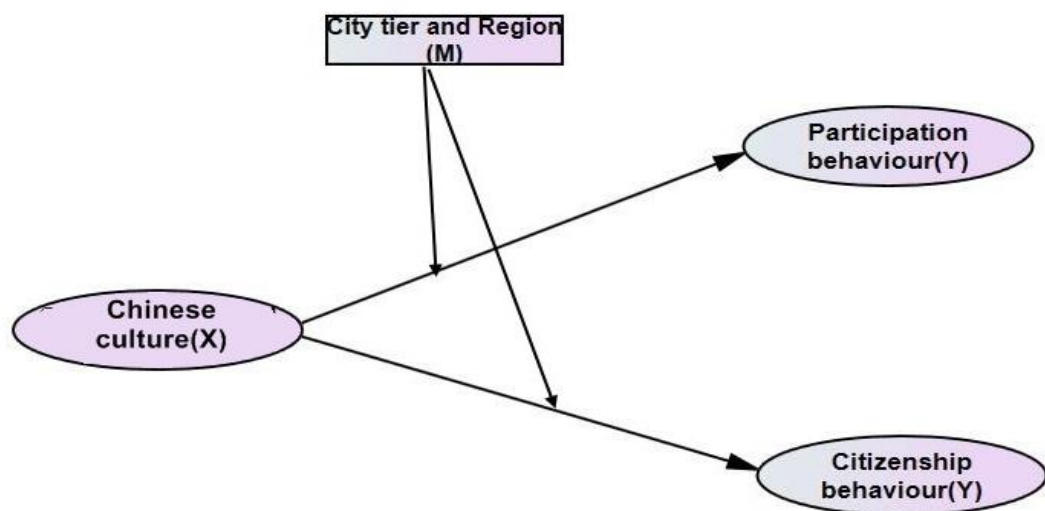
Hypothesis 3d is represented by the path region → citizenship behaviour (see figure 8.14). This path is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level ( $p = .173$ ), although it has the expected negative sign (standardised regression weight =  $-.061$ ).



**Figure 8.14**

#### H4: City tier, geographical region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour

Awang (2012) and Baron and Kenny (1986) describe that moderator variable is the variable that has the moderate function on an independent variable in regard to its dependent variable. In particular, the social science researchers, state moderator as the variable that “alter” in the association between predictor (independent variable) and its matching outcomes (dependent variable) (Baron and Kenny, 1986). For instance, M is moderator variable in the relationship between independent variable X and dependent variable Y, then the moderating role of M is to interfere the effects of X on Y. In this study, the relationship among X, Y and M could be explained as the following figure (figure 8.15).



**Figure 8.15**

According to Moore *et al.* (2011) and Lindley and Walker 1993, moderator could explain the occurrence that a weak or strong relationship between two variables. In literature, researchers have recognised the importance of exploring the effects of moderator; if researchers ignore to think about the likelihood of moderator occurrence, then the description for the outcome may not be sufficient and appropriate (Littleton *et al.*, 2007; Smith and Compas, 2002).

In keeping with the method of Awang (2012) and Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002), a moderating effect occurrence could be identified only when there is a significant variation in the Chi-square between the unconstrained model and fully constrained model. As Byrne (2011) suggests that a substantial enhancement in Chi-square value from unconstrained model (**model 1**) to the fully constrained model (**model 2**) means the causal effects by moderator variable between the independent variable and dependent variable

Furthermore, what's not so obvious is that a substantial enhancement in Chi-square value is usually on the basis of comparing the value of Chi-square difference between unconstrained and fully constrained models with that of Chi-square critical value, which is degree of freedom difference (between unconstrained and fully constrained models corresponding to Chi-square value. If the Chi-square difference is less than Chi-square critical value, it means the models are invariant, that is to say, there are not difference across moderator variable at the model level, while they may be difference at the path level (Gaskin, 2013); If the Chi-square difference is greater than Chi-square critical value, it means that the models are different across moderator variable (**Step 1**), and it should do next is to do path analysis that are interested (**Step 2**) (Gaskin, 2013).

For multiple groups moderator effect path testing (**step2**), according to the study of Awang (2012), there are eight steps involved, as follows,

1. According to moderator variable to be examined, two groups should be split
2. Make sure the path, which are interested to examine the moderator variable
3. Run two distinct AMOS models and name them as **model 1** and **model 3**
4. Constraint the path of interest with parameter u in model 3 and name it as constrained model.
5. Do not constrain the path of interest in **model 1** and name it as unconstrained model
6. Estimate and obtain Chi-square value of the constrained model (**model 3**)
7. Estimate and obtain Chi-square value of the unconstrained model (**model 1**)
8. Obtain the difference in Chi-square value between the constrained and the unconstrained model. If the value differs by more than 3.84, then the moderation occurs in that path.

**H4a: City tier moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour**

<b>A.City tier 1 and city tier 2</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	2074.070	954	.742	.708	.736	.052
Fully constrained model (model 2)	2123.612	986	.736	.713	.732	.051
Path constrained model (model 3)	2074.074	955	.743	.709	.736	.52
Chi-square/DF difference	49.542	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
<b>Step1:</b> Models variant, 49.542>46.194(32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); <b>step 2:</b> interested path not significant, 0.004<3.84						
City tier 1: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .872*						
City tier 2: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .830*						
<b>B.City tier 1 and city tier 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	2000.015	950	.786	.757	.781	.050
Fully constrained model (model 2)	2045.065	982	.782	.762	.778	.050
Path constrained model (model 3)	2001.190	951	.786	.757	.781	.050
Chi-square/DF difference	45.050	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
<b>Step1:</b> Models invariant, 45.050<46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); <b>step 2:</b> interested path not significant, 1.175<3.84						
City tier 1: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .851*						
City tier 3: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .879*						
<b>C.City tier 2 and city tier 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	2192.005	954	.743	.709	.737	.055
Fully constrained model (model 2)	2278.433	986	.730	.706	.726	.055
Path constrained model (model 3)	2192.840	955	.743	.710	.737	.055
Chi-square/DF difference	86.428	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
<b>Step1:</b> Models variant, 86.428>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); <b>step 2:</b> interested path not significant, 0.835<3.84						
City tier 2: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .830*						
City tier 3: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .873*						

Note:

a.\* means significance less than 0.05

b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.40**

With the purpose of detecting whether the moderator variable (city tier) moderates causal path, namely independent variable 'Chinese culture' to dependent variable participation behaviour, three multi-groups of



moderator testing were proceeded. For the test of the hypothesis for moderation, it has been found that the moderator variable city tier does not moderate the causal effects of 'Chinese culture' on participation behaviour (see table 8.40).

For group A, which is between city tier 1 and city tier 2, the measures of fit are summarised by IFI (.742), TLI (.708), CFI (.736) and RMSEA (.052). IFI, TLI and CFI are lower than the recommended minimum threshold of .9; however, RMSEA lies comfortably within the maximum threshold of .08. Hence, the model is judged to be acceptable (Kline, 2011). The difference between model 1 and model 2 in Degrees of Freedom is 32(986-952). According to Byrne (2011), the Chi-square difference (49.452) is greater than Chi-square critical value (a corresponding value for 32 DF is 46.194), it means that the models are different across moderator variable(step1); however, path analysis (step2) reveals that city tier 1 and city tier 2 are not difference along the path 'Chinese culture' to participation behaviour.

City tier 1 and city tier 3 are grouped under group B. The measures of fit are lower than the minimum threshold of .9, whereas the RMSEA is far below the maximum threshold value of .8, so the model is acceptable (Kline, 2011). The difference in Degrees of Freedom is 32 (986-954). As stated by Byrne (2011), the Chi-square difference (45.050) is less than Chi-square critical value (46.194), which means that the models are not different across moderator variable. Moreover, city tier 1 and city tier 3 are not difference along the path 'Chinese culture' to participation behaviour.

Group C is categorised by city tier 2 and city tier 3. It is similar to group A and group B in that the measures of fit are lower than the minimum threshold of .9, and RMSEA is acceptable coefficient. The difference in Chi-square value is 86.428 (2278.433 –2192.005), which is greater than Chi-square critical value (46.194). That is to say, the models are variant across the moderator variable. Nevertheless, city tier 2 and city tier 3 are not difference along the path 'Chinese culture' to participation behaviour, as the value of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 is less than 3.84.

In general, there is no difference between all regions, hypothesis 4a not supported. Please see figure 8.16 below.

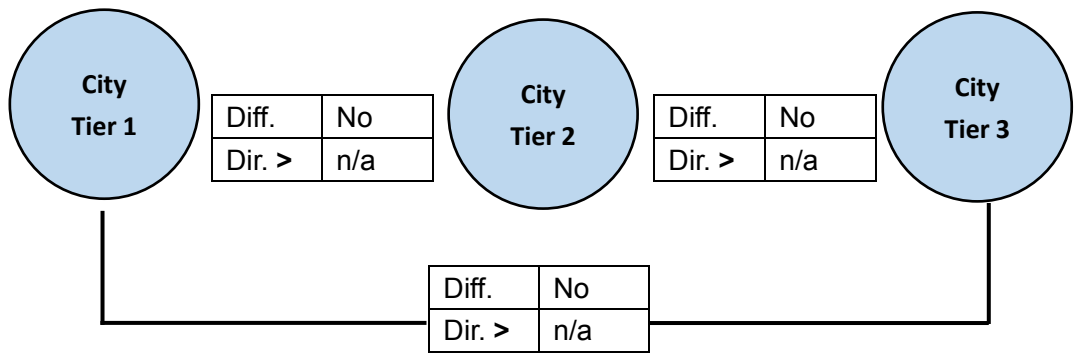


Figure 8.16 hypothesis 4a results

**H4b: City tier moderates the relationship between ‘Chinese culture’ and citizenship behaviour**

<b>A. City tier 1 and city tier 2</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	873.594	350	.805	.760	.800	.058
Fully constrained model (model 2)	959.636	370	.779	.744	.775	.060
Path constrained model (model 3)	876.049	351	.805	.760	.799	.058
Chi-square/DF difference	86.042	20				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant, 86.042>31.410 (20 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 2.455<3.84						
City tier 1: citizenship behaviour ←‘Chinese culture’, SRW .755*						
City tier 2: citizenship behaviour ←‘Chinese culture’, SRW .536*						
<b>B. City tier 1 and city tier 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	900.019	348	.810	.765	.805	.060
Fully constrained model (model 2)	939.811	368	.802	.769	.798	.059
Path constrained model (model 3)	902.520	349	.809	.765	.804	.060
Chi-square/DF difference	39.792	20				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,39.792>31.410 (20 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 2.501<3.84						
City tier 1: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .755*						
City tier 3: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .598*						
<b>C. City tier 2 and city tier 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	842.373	346	.803	.754	.798	.058
Fully constrained model (model 2)	879.611	366	.795	.760	.790	.057
Path constrained model (model 3)	842.378	347	.804	.755	.798	.058
Chi-square/DF difference	37.238	20				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,37.238>31.410 (20 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.005<3.84						
City tier 2: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .540*						
City tier 3: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .596*						

Note:

a.\* means significance less than 0.05

b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

**Table 8.41**

In order to determine whether the moderator variable (city tier) moderates causal path, namely independent variable ‘Chinese culture’ to dependent variable citizenship behaviour, three multi-groups moderator testing

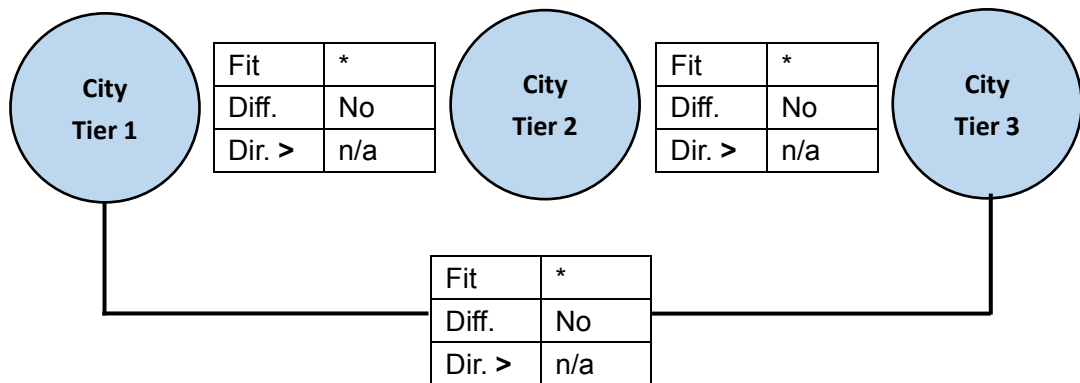
were proceeded. The test of the hypothesis for moderation reveals that the moderator variable city tier does not moderate the causal effects of the latent exogenous construct 'Chinese culture' on the latent endogenous construct citizenship behaviour (see table 8.41).

For group A, which is between city tier 1 and city tier 2, the measures of fit are indicated by IFI (.805), TLI (.760), CFI (.800) and RMSEA (.058). Although IFI, TLI and CFI are below the recommended minimum coefficient of .9, the measure for the RMSEA (.060) indicates an acceptable measure of fit for the model (Kline, 2011). The difference in Chi-Square value is 86.042(959.636–873.594), which is greater than the value of 20 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (31.410), so the test is significant. Moreover, due to the value of difference in Chi-Square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than 3.84, city tier 1 and city tier 2 are invariant along the path 'Chinese culture' to citizenship behaviour.

For group B (city tier 1 and city tier 3), the measures of fit are lower than the minimum threshold of .9, whereas the RMSEA is an acceptable coefficient that is below the maximum threshold value of .8. The difference in Degrees of Freedom is 20 (368-348). In line with Byrne (2011), the Chi-square difference (39.792) is greater than Chi-square critical value (31.410), which means that the models are different across moderator variable (step1). However, path analysis (step2) reveals that city tier 1 and city tier 3 are not difference along the path 'Chinese culture' to citizenship behaviour.

Group C is between city tier 2 and city tier 3. Its measures of fit are also lower than the minimum threshold of .9, but the RMSEA is a tolerable figure. The value of difference between model 1 and model 2 in Chi-square reveals that the models are different across variable city tiers. However, the value of difference between model 1 and model 3 in Chi-square does not differ significantly. So, city tier 2 and city tier 3 are not different along the path 'Chinese culture' to citizenship behaviour.

Overall, there is no difference between all regions, and hypothesis 4b not supported. (see figure 8.17 below).



**Figure 8.17 hypothesis 4b results**

**H4c: Region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour**

<b>A. Region 1 and region 2</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	1972.398	954	.698	.656	.689	.057
Fully constrained model (model 2)	2050.267	986	.682	.652	.675	.057
Path constrained model (model 3)	1972.416	955	.698	.656	.689	.057
Chi-square/DF difference	77.869	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,77.869>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.018<3.84						
region 1: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .771*						
region 2: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .900*						
<b>B. Region 1 and region 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	1682.642	952	.766	.731	.758	.048
Fully constrained model (model 2)	1773.594	984	.744	.719	.738	.049
Path constrained model (model 3)	1683.757	953	.766	.731	.758	.048
Chi-square/DF difference	90.952	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,90.952>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 1.115<3.84						
region 1: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .776*						
region 3: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .922*						
<b>C. Region 1 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	1792.042	952	.745	.708	.737	.052
Fully constrained model (model 2)	1860.641	984	.731	.705	.725	.052
Path constrained model (model 3)	1792.783	953	.745	.708	.737	.052
Chi-square/DF difference	68.599	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,68.599>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.741<3.84						
region 1: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .776*						
region 4: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .882*						
<b>D. Region 2 and region 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	1803.566	954	.774	.743	.768	.053
Fully constrained model (model 2)	1855.262	986	.767	.746	.763	.052
Path constrained model (model 3)	1804.817	955	.774	.743	.768	.052
Chi-square/DF difference	51.696	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						

Step1: Models variant,51.696>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 1.251<3.84						
region 2: participation behaviour ←‘Chinese culture, SRW .900*						
region 3: participation behaviour ←‘Chinese culture’, SRW .924*						
<b>E. Region 2 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
<b>Unconstrained model (model 1)</b>	1913.252	954	.756	.723	.750	.056
<b>Fully constrained model (model 2)</b>	1962.257	986	.750	.727	.745	.056
<b>Path constrained model (model 3)</b>	1914.122	955	.756	.724	.750	.056
<b>Chi-square/DF difference</b>	49.005	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant,49.005>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.87<3.84						
region 2: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .900*						
region 4: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .886*						
<b>F. Region 3 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
<b>Unconstrained model (model 1)</b>	1620.769	952	.818	.793	.813	.046
<b>Fully constrained model (model 2)</b>	1660.352	984	.815	.797	.811	.046
<b>Path constrained model (model 3)</b>	1620.795	953	.819	.793	.813	.046
<b>Chi-square/DF difference</b>	39.583	32				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models invariant,39.583>46.194 (32 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.026<3.84						
region 3: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .929*						
region 4: participation behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .902*						

Note:

a.\* means significance less than 0.05

b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

c. region 1=West China economic region, region 2=Central China economic region  
region3=Northeast China economic region, region 4=East China economic region

**Table 8.42**

With the purpose of examining the moderation effect of the variable ‘region’ in the relationship between independent variable Chinese culture and dependent variable participation behaviour, six multi-groups (A, B, C, D, E and F) of moderator testing were proceeded. The outcomes of hypothesis testing for moderation confirms that the moderator variable region does not have causal effects with the latent exogenous construct ‘Chinese culture’ on the latent endogenous construct ‘citizenship behaviour’, because all the values of difference in chi –square (model1 and model 3) are lower than the threshold (3.84) for moderation to occur (see table 8.42).

For group A, which is between region 1 and region 2, the measures of fit are displayed by IFI (.698), TLI (.656), CFI (.689) and RMSEA (.057). Despite IFI, TLI and CFI are far below the recommended minimum coefficient of .9, the measure for the RMSEA (.057) is situated comfortably within the maximum threshold of .08, which supports there being an acceptable measure of fit for the model (Kline, 2011). The difference in Chi-square value is 77.869 (model 1 and model2), which is greater than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194), so the test is significant between the models. However, as a result of the value (0.018) of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than threshold, region 1 and region 2 are invariant along the path Chinese culture to participation behaviour.

For group B (city tier 1 and city tier 3), the measures of fit are lower than minimum threshold of .9, whereas the RMSEA is an acceptable coefficient that is below the maximum threshold value of .8. The difference in Degrees of Freedom is 32(984-952). According to Byrne (2011), the Chi-square difference (45.050) between model 1 and model 2 is less than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194). In other words, moderator variable does not take effect at the model level. In addition, region 1 and region 3 are not different along the path Chinese culture to participation behaviour, as the value (1.115) of difference in Chi-square between model 1 and model 3 is less than 3.84.

Group C is specified by region 1 and region 4. Its measures of fit are displayed by IFI (.745), TLI (.708), CFI (.737), which are lower than the minimum threshold of .9. However, RMSEA (.052) is an allowable figure. The difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 2 is 68.599, which is greater than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194) and, consequently, groups are different at model level. Nevertheless, as a result of the value (0.741) of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than threshold, region 1 and region 4 are not different at the path level.

Regarding group D (region 2 and region 3), the measures of fit are lower than minimum requirement of .9. Nevertheless, RMSEA is an acceptable measurement. The value of difference between model 1 and model



2 in Chi-square is 51.696, which is greater than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194). Thus, moderator variable region takes effect at the model level. Nevertheless, as a result of the value (1.251) of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than threshold, region 2 and region 3 are invariant along the path Chinese culture to participation behaviour.

For group E (region 2 and region 4), although the measures of fit for are under the lowest requirement of .9, RMSEA is a tolerable measurement. The difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 2 is 49.005, which is greater than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194). Therefore, region2 and region 4 are different at model level. Nevertheless, as a result of the value (0.87) of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than threshold, region 2 and region 4 are not different at the path level.

In the case of group F (region 3 and region 4), the measures of fit are summarised by TLI (.818), CFI (.813) and RMSEA (.046). Both TLI and CFI are marginally lower than the recommended minimum threshold of .9. However, the RMSEA lies comfortably within the maximum threshold of .08. The value of difference between model 1 and model 2 in Chi-square is 39.583, which is less than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (46.194). Thus, there is no difference across moderator variable at the model level, although there may be difference at the path level (Gaskin, 2013). However, after comparing the value (1.251) of difference in Chi-square value between model 1 and model 3 with the threshold (3.84), it can be confirmed that region 3 and region 4 are invariant along the path 'Chinese culture' to participation behaviour.

In the main, there is no difference between all regions, and hypothesis 4c not supported (see figure 8.18 below).

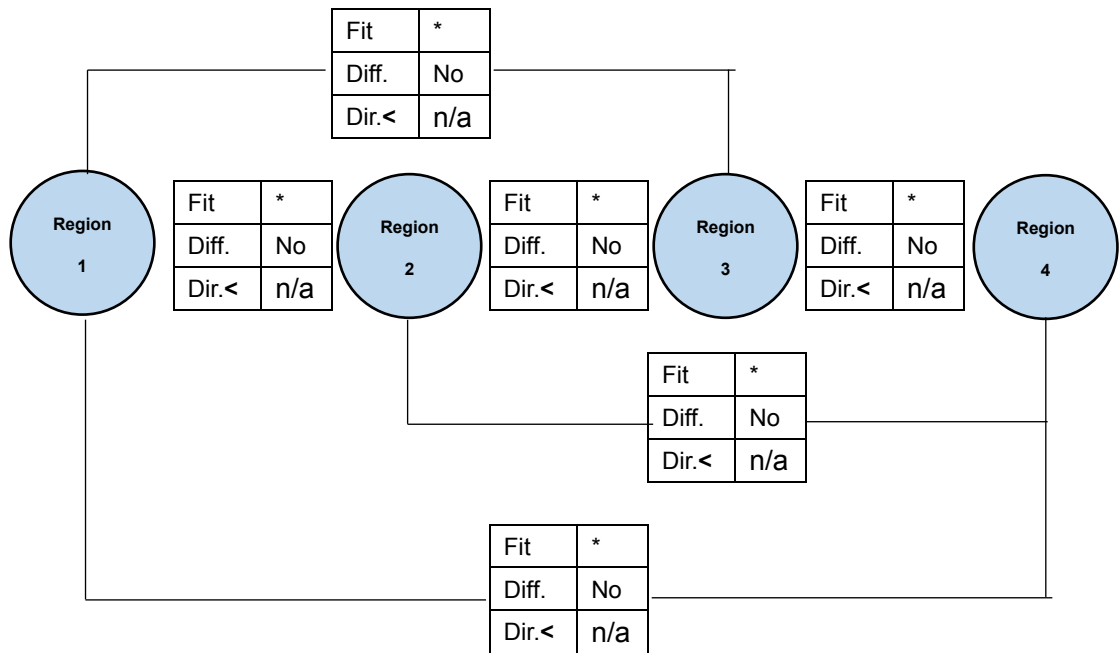


Figure 8.18 hypothesis 4c results

**H4d: Region moderates the relationship between ‘Chinese culture’ and citizenship behaviour**

<b>A. Region 1 and region 2</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	546.312	238	.791	.719	.781	.063
Fully constrained model (model 2)	566.646	255	.787	.735	.779	.061
Path constrained model (model 3)	546.312	239	.792	.721	.782	.063
Chi-square/DF difference	20.334	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models invariant, 20.334 < 27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0 < 3.84						
region 1: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .530, P (0.063, Not Significant at 0.05)						
region 2: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .496*						
<b>B. Region 1 and region 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	463.071	238	.858	.809	.851	.053
Fully constrained model (model 2)	496.358	255	.846	.808	.840	.053
Path constrained model (model 3)	464.284	239	.857	.809	.851	.053
Chi-square/DF difference	33.287	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant, 33.287 > 27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 1.213 < 3.84						
region 1: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .530, P (0.063, Not Significant at 0.05)						
region 3: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .599*						
<b>C. Region 1 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	454.643	240	.861	.815	.855	.052
Fully constrained model (model 2)	493.346	257	.845	.810	.840	.053
Path constrained model (model 3)	456.817	241	.860	.815	.854	.052
Chi-square/DF difference	38.703	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models variant, 38.703 > 27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 2.174 < 3.84						
region 1: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .535, P (0.063, Not Significant at 0.05)						
region 4: citizenship behaviour ← ‘Chinese culture’, SRW .730*						
<b>D. Region 2 and region 3</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Unconstrained model (model 1)	558.714	238	.832	.776	.826	.065
Fully constrained model (model 2)	572.245	255	.832	.793	.828	.062
Path constrained model (model 3)	560.301	239	.832	.777	.826	.065
Chi-square/DF difference	13.531	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						

Step1: Models invariant,13.531<27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 1.587<3.84						
region 2: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .496*						
region 3: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .599*						
<b>E. Region 2 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
<b>Unconstrained model (model 1)</b>	550.145	240	.834	.781	.828	.064
<b>Fully constrained model (model 2)</b>	576.795	257	.828	.789	.823	.063
<b>Path constrained model (model 3)</b>	553.063	241	.833	.781	.827	.064
<b>Chi-square/DF difference</b>	26.65	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models invariant,26.65<27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 2.918<3.84						
region 2: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .495*						
region 4: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .730*						
<b>F. Region 3 and region 4</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
<b>Unconstrained model (model 1)</b>	466.751	238	.884	.846	.880	.054
<b>Fully constrained model (model 2)</b>	490.290	255	.880	.852	.877	.053
<b>Path constrained model (model 3)</b>	466.920	239	.885	.847	.881	.054
<b>Chi-square/DF difference</b>	23.539	17				
<b>Result on moderation</b>						
Step1: Models invariant,23.539<27.587 (17 degree Chi-square critical value, 95% confidence); step 2: interested path not significant, 0.169<3.84						
region 3: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .602*						
region 4: citizenship behaviour ←Chinese culture, SRW .734*						

Note:

a. \* means significance less than 0.05

b. SRW=Standardised Regression Weights

c. region 1=West China economic region, region 2=Central China economic region

region3=Northeast China economic region, region 4=East China economic region

**Table 8.43**

To facilitate assessment of the moderation effect of a variable, namely region, in the relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour, six multi-groups (A, B, C, D, E, and F) of moderator tests are proceeded. The results of hypothesis testing for moderation suggest that the moderator variable region does not have the causal effects with the latent exogenous construct Chinese culture on the latent endogenous construct citizenship behaviour, since all the values of difference in Chi-square between model1 and model 3 are lower than the threshold (3.84) for moderation to occur (see table 8.43).

Group A is categorised by region 1 and region 2. The measures of fit are displayed by IFI (.791), TLI (.719), CFI (.781) and RMSEA (.063). Despite IFI, TLI and CFI falling short of the standard lowest measurement of .9, the measure for the RMSEA (.063) lies within the maximum edge of .08. The value of difference between the fully constrained model and the unconstrained model in Chi-square is 20.334, which is less than the value of 17 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Thus, there is no difference across moderator variables at the model level. Moreover, after comparing the value (1.251) of difference in Chi-square value between path constrained model and unconstrained model with the threshold (3.84), the evidence for this point leads to the view that region 1 and region 2 are not different along the path Chinese culture to citizenship behaviour.

Regarding group B (region 1 and region 3), the measures of fit are marginally lower than the minimum threshold of .9, while RMSEA (.053) is a fitting measurement under the maximum threshold value of .8. The difference in Chi-square value is 33.287(496.358-463.071), while the difference in Degrees of Freedom is 17 (255-238). The difference in Chi-square value between the fully constrained model and unconstrained model is 33.287, which is greater than the value of 17 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Therefore, region 1 and region 3 are different at model level. However, owing to the value (1.213) of difference in Chi-square value between path constrained model and unconstrained model is less than threshold (3.84), region 1 and region 3 are not different at the path level.

Group C is grouped by region 1 and region 4. Its measures of fit are comparable with those of group B, which are marginally below the minimum recommended edge of .9, but RMSEA (.052) is an acceptable number. The value of difference between the fully constrained model and the unconstrained model in Chi-square is 38.703, which is greater than the value of 17 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Thus, moderator variable 'region' takes effect at the model level. Nevertheless, because the value (2.174) of difference in Chi-square value between path constrained model and unconstrained model being less than threshold, region 1 and region 4 are invariant along the path Chinese culture to citizenship behaviour.

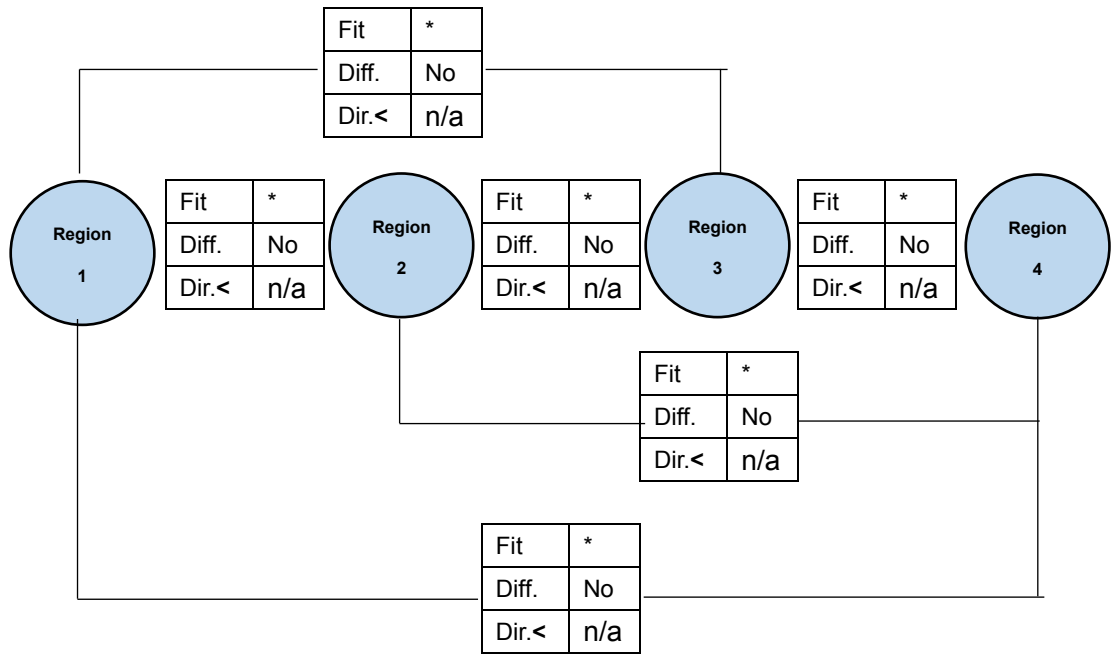
As far as group D (region 2 and region 3) is concerned, the measures of fit are lower than minimum threshold

of .9, but RMSEA lies within the maximum threshold of .08. The value of difference between model 1 and model 2 in Chi-Square is 13.531, which is less than the value of 17 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Thus, moderator variable 'region' does not take effect at the model level. Furthermore, as a result of the value (1.587) of difference in Chi-Square value between model 1 and model 3 being less than threshold, region 2 and region 3 are not different along the path Chinese culture to citizenship behaviour.

The measures of fit for group E (region 2 and region 4) are under the lowest threshold of .9, and RMSEA lies in the acceptable range of under .08. Its Chi-Square difference is 26.65 (576.795–550.145), while the difference in Degrees of Freedom is 17(257-240). The difference in Chi-square value between fully constrained model and unconstrained model is 26.65, which is less than the value of 17 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Therefore, region2 and region 4 are different at model level. However, region 2 and region 4 are not different at the path level, since the value (2.918) of difference in Chi-square value between path constrained model and unconstrained model is less than the threshold 3.84.

Group F is categorised by region 3 and region 4. The measures of fit are summarised by IFI (.884), TLI (.846), CFI (.880) and RMSEA (.046). Although IFI, TLI and CFI are marginally lower than the lowest threshold of .9, and the RMSEA (.054) is an acceptable coefficient. The value of difference between the fully constrained model and the unconstrained model in Chi-square is 23.539, which is less than the value of 32 Degree of Freedom corresponding to Chi-square critical coefficient (27.587). Thus, there is no difference across moderator variable at the model level. Furthermore, after comparing the value (0.169) of difference in Chi-square value between path constrained model and unconstrained model with the threshold (3.84), the conclusion can be reached that region 3 and region 4 are invariant along the path Chinese culture to citizenship behaviour.

In general, there is no difference between all regions, and hypothesis 4d not supported (see figure 8.19 below).



**Figure 8.19 hypothesis 4d results**

## 8.7 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	path	Direction	Results
H1a	Tiers→ Chinese culture	--	<b>NS</b>
H1b	Region→ Chinese culture	--	<b>NS</b>
H2a	Chinese culture →Participation behaviour	--	<b>NS (sig, but positive)</b>
H2b	Chinese culture →Citizenship behaviour	+	<b>S</b>
H3a	City tier→ Participation behaviour	+	<b>NS</b>
H3b	City tier→ Citizenship behaviour	--	<b>S</b>
H3c	Region→ Participation behaviour	+	<b>NS (sig, but negative)</b>
H3d	Region→Citizenship behaviour	--	<b>NS</b>
H4a	City tier moderates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+	<b>NS</b>
H4b	City tier moderates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+	<b>NS</b>
H4c	Region moderates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+	<b>NS</b>
H4d	Region moderates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+	<b>NS</b>
H5	Guanxi← →face← →Harmony	+	<b>S</b>
H6a	Cognitive engagement mediates Chinese culture → Participation behaviour	+	<b>PS</b>
H6b	Cognitive engagement mediates Chinese culture → Citizenship behaviour	+	<b>PS</b>

**Note:** Results of hypotheses are as follows: S=support, NS=not support, PS=partial support



# CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION CHAPTER

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in chapter 1, the overall aim of this research intended to evaluate customer co-creation and engagement in China's restaurant context. Around this intention, five objectives are set to pursue it. Because there is not enough knowledge in scales, objectives 1 and 2 are necessary precursors to this and are used to focus on the development of scales representing relevant latent variables in respect of co-creation and customer engagement that form the basis of data collection. Furthermore, this research adopted a primarily positivistic approach to conduct a major consumer survey to measure the nature, direction and strength of relevant relationships between a range of latent variables and based on academic literature to set a series of testable hypotheses in pursuit of objectives 4. The data obtained from the survey has also been used to conduct exploratory research in pursuit of objectives 3 and 5. The following sections will be explained in accordance with the order of objectives set.

## 9.2 ADDRESSING THE OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1. To identify the various practices that represent co-creational behaviour for customers in the Chinese restaurant sector.**

According to the consumer behaviour theory, the stimuli of environment will bring the individual response (Bray, 2008). In restaurant context, customer experience occurs at all touch points (customer and restaurant, customer and customer) comprising the experience stages from pre-visiting to post-visiting. The co-creation behaviour occurs in each points and the whole experience stages when customers actively interact with the restaurant to create value. Furthermore, the notion customer engagement is deemed as associated conception of co-creation, as it involves customer's behaviour, cognition and affection and focus on the relations with service firm (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, consumer culture theory suggests the effect of history, culture and social norm impact consumer behaviour (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Based on this theory, Chinese traditional culture is likely to affect co-creation behaviour and customer engagement.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 (see chapter 6 above) conceptually associate these ideas in diagrammatic form and provide a point of departure for further theory development work. In order to identify various practice that represent co-creation behaviour in Chinese restaurant sector, an item pool related Chinese restaurant consumer's experience and behaviour has generated. Using a panel of experienced diners, a set of statements were established identifying the various activities that comprised the totality of dining practice from pre-visiting to post-visiting phases in the Chinese context.

**Objective 2. To identify how key variables – customer experience, engagement and co-creation – can be specified/operationalised for research into restaurant context.**

After a panel of experience diners that producing items pool (99 items), it needs to generate scales representing behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement and affective engagement that fitting for specific research context – full-service restaurant located in various regions/city tier in China. Through two stage expert review, 56 items are remained out of the original 99 items, which are categorised into different constructs. As a result, three new constructs (interest interaction, novel interaction and communication interaction) are generated based on Yi and Gong's (2013) original construct, and the original construct personal interaction has been lost.

In addition, this research is based on the assumption that Chinese indigenous culture will impact the nature and strength of the co-creation behaviours likely to be practiced in Chinese restaurants, and that Chinese culture is likely to remain strong in less well-developed cities/regions but become relatively more suppressed as socio-economic development increases. According to literature review, the conceptual framework 2 (see chapter 6) is set, which includes constructs participation behaviour (information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, communication interaction and responsible behaviour), and citizenship behaviour (feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance), Chinese culture (face, *guanxi*, harmony), cognitive engagement and variables city tier/region.

Base on the above assumption and literature review, six general hypotheses are generated to provide a holistic view of customer value co-creation behaviour from Chinese restaurant context. There are four direct

relationships, economic regions/city tier has direct influence on Chinese culture (economic region/ city tier → CC); Chinese culture has direct effect on co-creation behaviour (CC→PB and CC→CB); While the indirect relationship is that economic region/city tier moderate the relations between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviours (economic region moderates CC→PB/CC→CB; city tier moderates CC→PB/CC→CB); cognitive engagement mediates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour (cognitive engagement mediates CC→PB/CC→CB).

### **Objective 3. To determine the extent to which demographic diversity impacts co-creation/engagement behaviour.**

With the intention of exploring the influence of demographic diversity, a significance test between the respondents' demographic and different constructs is conducted. Moreover, a one-way ANOVA method is adopted to examine the significances.

The results reveal characteristic gender has significant difference on construct information sharing, feedback, *guanxi*, and cognitive engagement. Meanwhile, the results reveal that female respondents have more effect on the four constructs than the male respondents, it suggests this might just be a sampling issue, as female occupies more than a half of total respondents.

Characteristic age has a significant effect information seeking, novel interaction, advocacy, tolerance, face, harmony, and cognitive engagement. Moreover, Scheffe multiple comparisons test suggests age group '31-40 years old' and 'more than 60 years old' differ significantly on construct advocacy, it implies the two-age group pays more attention to advocate positive comments on restaurants and is the potential loyal customers that uphold a better fame of restaurant. Meanwhile, the age group '20-30' years old and '31-40' years old both have a significant difference on construct cognitive engagement when conducting Scheffe multiple comparisons test, which the group '31-40' years old has more influence on construct cognitive engagement, as its mean value (M=3.87) is greater than value of group '20-30' years old (M=3.68). It might be that the group '31-40' years old has more experience on interaction with restaurants since the group have relatively stable job and income compared with the group '20-30' years old.

With regards to time in city characteristic, it has statistically significance on the constructs responsible behaviour, communication interaction, feedback, helping, face, harmony, and *guanxi*. For the seven constructs, statistical test reveals participants who live in current city most of their live have more effect than those who live in more than five years, which justifies the filtering of the sample to remove those who lived less than 5 years in the cities concerned.

For regular online characteristic, it shows significance on the constructs information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, communication interaction; feedback, advocacy, helping, face, and *guanxi*. This suggests that results from customers who are regular internet users are of more relevance than those customers who are not. However, it might have been useful for future research to re-evaluate hypotheses using only customers who are regular internet users.

As regards university degree characteristic, it has statistically significant difference with constructs information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, advocacy, and face. Moreover, the results indicate respondents with university degree are more likely to join in co-creation experience/ engagement process, it implies the likelihood to restaurant manager that they could take strategic decisions high education background consumer, as the quality of these group that may be easier for restaurants to co-create and engage with its consumers, such as, relying on virtual community, restaurants' own app, WeChat.

Last, for occupation characteristic, it has significant difference on constructs information sharing, responsible behaviour, tolerance, face, and harmony. Furthermore, Post Hoc test reveals that the group house wife/husband and the group student differs significantly on the construct information sharing, and the group house wife/husband has more effect on the construct. It implies the group house wife/husband is more inclined to exchange ideas and thoughts with restaurant staff or other customers. And other constructs do not show significant difference within group.

**Objective 4. To investigate the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic and geographical regions.**

This objective is core for this research, which is addressed by the following hypothesis discussion. The findings of the regressions support hypothesis 2b, hypothesis 3b, and hypothesis 5 and partially support H6a and H6b.

**H1. Chinese culture is likely to vary in strength according to city tier and geographical region**

Previous researchers see culture either implicitly or explicitly as a single constant when they explored in cross-cultural management and variety in culture, an increasing evidence documented that this approach is too narrow to think over the importance of regional differences (Li *et al.*, 2013b). Actually, culture should be treated not only as a constant variable from the dominant cross-cultural perspective (e.g. Hofstede, 1980) but also as a dependent variable that could be impacted by other elements over time, e.g. environment (Shi *et al.*, 2014). With the purpose of understanding the strength of Chinese culture varies according to economic regions, regressions tests were conducted between constructs Chinese culture and city tier, and between Chinese culture and economic region.

Tables 8.30 and 8.31 manifest that there is not significant difference between constructs Chinese culture and economic regions (city tier and region), as all p-values are above .05. So, hypothesis 1a and hypothesis 1b are both rejected. Thus, the results are in contrast to the study of Li *et al.* (2013b), it argued that a large national culture can be differences according region, such as the Chinese culture. Moreover, the authors claimed that some components of Chinese cultures have changed towards different directions, even though Chinese cities and regions are with similar historical and cultural heritage.

The findings suggest researchers need a more well-timed method to study national culture issues, which is on account of national culture may change fast in some regions. Besides, outdated data is another difficulty for national culture research, especially with vast area. For instance, the research data collected some time ago might become unconnected or old-fashioned due to the variation of culture or partial alteration of culture components. Moreover, there is growing engagement with people interaction in modern societies, and the

effect of ever-changing modern technology are increasing the extent to access various resources, which act and accelerate back on the national culture (Li *et al.*, 2013b).

## **H2. Customer co-creation is related to Chinese culture**

With the intention of exploring the extent to which Chinese restaurant customers are willing to participate in co-creation/engagement activity under the strength of perceived strength of Chinese culture on attitudes. The SEM path analysis were utilised to examined two pair of constructs – Chinese culture and participation behaviour, and Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.

The results indicate that Chinese culture is positively related to participation behaviour and citizenship behaviours, separately. That is to say, the more strength of Chinese culture on attitudes, the more participation behaviour is exhibiting in value co-creation; the more the strength of Chinese culture on attitudes, the more leading to customer citizenship behaviour in value co-creation. This is consistent with the studies undertaken by Lai *et al.* (2010) who derive from Briley and Williams (1998), Holland and Gentry (1999), and Kacen and Lee (2002) 's theory. According to those studies, culture plays a significant role in impacting consumers' behaviour from the marketing aspects, as culture accounts for the value systems that consumers surrounded, which regulates the interpretation of environment around the customers. Moreover, culture has the power to affect the interaction between customers and marketers.

As regards the hypothesis H2a - Chinese culture is negatively related to participation behaviours, it is rejected as it displays positive sign, though it indicates Chinese culture affects participation behaviour. Originally, the hypothesis was set negative, as the developed area in China might accept ore western lifestyle and tend to be individualism and reverse less traditional Chinese culture. However, this finding is unexpected result, which backs up the traditional Chinese culture is still essential and persists in service provision because of its effects on the ways customers evaluate and use services, and its influences on the way companies and their service interact with customers (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Moreover, it also implies the previous views that in service industries, a good relationship between service providers and customers in Chinese traditional culture that is embedded on a positive network of personal interactions, is identified

as a precondition for an effective business affiliation (for example, Prybutok and Peak, 2009; Laroche *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, for the hypothesis H2b - Chinese culture is positively related to citizenship behaviours, it is support. The implications of the findings for organizations can be clarified from management perspective, it might boost strategies to engage more customers for further value co-creation with organization and other ones (Yi *et al.*, 2011), for instance, under Chinese culture influence, a person has the tendency to set own feelings aside and acts in a socially appreciate manner to maintain group harmony and group preferences; as another example, because of the culture, Chinese people also emphasize the control and moderation of their emotions to reduce conflict. These suggest that rational use Chinese culture's influence might bring about more citizenship behaviour and subsequently add extra value to the firm.

The Chinese culture is evolving and undergoing rapid changes, since various dynamics such as globalization, economic development, social variance, cultural migration and population mobility (Elliott *et al.*, 2014). It might propose that the significance of cultural influences is not always the same due to different interaction between customer and service providers.

New entrants into the Chinese restaurant business generally would find its customers happy to engage/co-create from both a participation and a citizenship perspective. This is good news for those organisations that would wish to achieve a high level of organisation/customer interaction and gives a note of warning for those who wouldn't. However, the finding that customers are happy to participate in co-creational endeavours as well as citizenship behaviours is an interesting and unexpected finding. These results were obtained using the sample as a whole (i.e. assuming China to be culturally homogeneous) so the next hypothesis evaluates the likelihood of co-creation behaviour intent on a more selective basis by evaluating this in respect of both region and city tier.

### **H3. Chinese restaurant customers to practice co-creation behaviours will vary according to the level of indigenous socio-economic development**

As previous chapter mentioned, according to economic geography and Chinese central government economic policy on regional development, Mainland China roughly is categorised by four economic regions : East China economic region (including 2 municipality - Beijing, Tianjin and 9 provinces - Hebei, Hainan, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong and Hainan); Central China economic region (including 6 provinces - Shanxi, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan, Hubei and Hunan); Northeast China economic region (including 3 provinces -Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang) and West China economic region (including 1 municipality – Chongqing, 5 provinces - Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi ,Gansu, Qinghai, and 5 autonomous regions - Inner Mongolia , Guangxi ,Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjing). In order to the possibility of analysing sample on a regional, structural basis and comparing on the same benchmark in China, super cities (Beijing, Shanghai) and relative laggard region with substantial share of non-Han Chinese population (Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjing) are not considered in this study. Because including these cities would have given a more distinct contrast, and the research might then have been able to find significant differences that would have supported the hypotheses. Besides, these cities are not representative of the general lived experience in China and that you are more interested in exploring the generality of Chinese life as it emerges into the Twenty-first century rather than its extremes.

What' s more, in each economic region, three different cities will be selected according to city tiers category ( Tier 1 cities - key cities; Tier 2 cities - provincial/sub-provincial level capitals; Tier 3 cities - prefecture or county level city capitals, see National Bureau of Statistics, 2014 ) so as to obtain a sample in each region that addresses differing levels of urban development.

Then for the objective of investigating the extent/nature to which co-creation/engagement practice varies according to economic regions, this study use regression to assess the significance of four sets, city tier and participation behaviour (hypothesis 3a); city tier and citizenship behaviour (hypothesis 3b); economic region and participation behaviour (hypothesis 3c); economic region and citizenship behaviour (hypothesis 3d), separately.



For the hypothesis 3a (city tier and participation behaviour), the standardised regressions weight for city tier does not have a positive effect on participation behaviour, which is -.011. The reason for not supporting H3a is that standardised regressions weight is not significant at the  $p < .05$  level, which is .804. This finding is not in concert with Davis's viewpoints (2012), who based on the studies of Cui (1997), Cui and Liu (2000), and Zhang *et al.* (2008), suggested that as a result of a developing social environment, such as, unbalanced economic development, Chinese customers have very diverse behaviours on shopping and purchasing among different regional markets. The reason for unsupported hypothesis 3a might be that because of fast-developing of urbanisation and technology modernisation, the big flow of population is growing rapidly, which affects the significance of city tier difference on customer participation behaviour. For example, no matter customer lives in developed city tier or lived in less developed city tiers, customers could search restaurant information and sharing their information with friend based on internet.

The results reveal that the hypothesis 3b (city tier and citizenship behaviour) is fully supported, as there is causal relationship between city tier and citizenship behaviour in this study ( $P = .001$ ), and the standardised regressions weight for city tier has a negative effect on citizenship behaviour (SRW = -.161). This finding in line with the studies of Wei *et al.* (2012), and Chan and Wu (2005) that the regional differences of Chinese consumers resulting in unique food preferences, lifestyles, customer behaviours, and relationship building tactics. This finding is also in keeping with a recent study about restaurant and customers by Zhang *et al.* (2013), who suggest that there is an apparent difference in customer behaviour across regions.

As regards hypothesis 3c (economic region and participation behaviour), the standardised regressions weight for region have a significant effect on participation behaviour ( $P = .003$ ). However, this hypothesis is not support, which is due to negative standardised regressions coefficient (SRW = -.140), that means, the more developed the economic region, the less likely that Chinese restaurant customers present the participation behaviour. This finding doesn't square with previous researches, for instance, Zhang *et al.* (2008)'s empirical studies have confirmed this notion that consumers from developed region adopt more western values to behaviour than those from less development region in China. Western value could be expressed as individualism, such as individual's self-orientation, self-control, and self-accomplishment (e.g. Zhou *et al.*, 2010). Ralston *et al.* (1993) held similar views that customer in a more industrialised region are

very probable to have more Western-oriented values and individualism than others from agriculture region.

Along with results (table 8.39), there is no causal relationship between region and citizenship behaviour ( $p=.173$ ), so hypothesis 3d (economic region and citizenship behaviour) is rejected, even if it presents negative standardised regressions coefficient. It might be explained by that differences on region among Chinese consumers might become less significant, and its impact on consumer behaviour may turn to some other sub-cultural dimensions such as city tier (Liu *et al.*, 2011); citizenship behaviour could bring supplementary value to firm (Shamim and Ghazali, 2015; Yi *et al.*, 2011), but customers may be more likely to accompany by a reciprocate, which receive benefits from emotion appreciates from the relationships with restaurants (Palmatier *et al.*, 2009).

#### **H4. City tier, geographical region moderates the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour**

This study conduct researches from China's four economic regions along with city tiers: East China economic region (Tier 1 Tianjin, Tier 2 Shijiazhuang, Tier 3 Nantong); Central China economic region (Tier 1 Changsha, Tier 2 Taiyuan, Tier 3 Anyang); Northeast China economic region (Tier 1 Shenyang, Tier 2 Harbin, Tier 3 Dandong) and West China economic region (Tier 1 Chongqing, Tier 2 Hohhot, Tier 3 Liuzhou).

For the objective of predicting that economic regions interact with Chinese cultures resulting in different influences on co-creation behaviour, four sets tests were carried out , city tiers moderate the association between Chinese culture and participation behaviour (Hypothesis 4a); city tiers moderate the association between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour (Hypothesis 4b); regions moderate the association between Chinese culture and participation behaviour (Hypothesis 4c); regions moderate the association between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour (Hypothesis 4d).

The results of the regression analysis specify that the interaction term between economic regions (city tier, region) and Chinese culture is not significantly related to customer co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour, citizenship behaviour). These findings are inconsistent with the empirical research of Wei *et al.* (2012) where it explained that the region as a moderator affects the relationship between Chinese culture

and consumer behaviours. Moreover, it also does not support the points of views of Herrmann-Pillath *et al.* (2014) that regions must be accounted in the research so as to sufficiently explanations about the influence of Chinese culture on human behaviour.

About hypothesis 4a, the chi-square difference results between model 1 and model 3 reveal that this hypothesis is statistically not significant (all differences is less than 3.84). Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected. The results suggest that city tier does not affect the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour, which may imply that customers in fast-growing prefecture or county sized cities (city tier 3) with indigenous Chinese culture do not relate with the intention of customer showing participation behaviours. Although previous study (Wei *et al.*, 2012) have asserted that the economic region as a moderator has effect on the relationship between Chinese culture and consumer behaviours, the results of the present research suggest that city tier is not supported this statement. One plausible explanation for inconsistent results centring on recent social and economic reforms have transformed and reshaped the industrial, commercial, and regulatory landscapes of China's city tiers accompanied by the improvement of living standards and the business environment, less developed city tiers with highly enormous market potential have been reducing inequality with developed cities (Jia, 2012).

In the proposed model, it is hypothesised that the there is a moderating effect of city tier on the association between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour (H4b). The chi-square difference results between model 1 and model 3 reveal that this hypothesis is not statistically significant (all differences is less than 3.84), which may suggest that that customer in most developed area (city tier 1) with Chinese culture does not has difference on citizenship behaviour, compared with city tier 2 and city tier 3. It could be explained that consumers those residing in tier 2 and tier 3 cities are no longer traditional and conservative in their life style compared to those in developed area, and they tend to be no limited on functionality, for example, the taste in food. Whereas consumers in tier 2 and 3 cities are more mature and have more expectation on products and/or services, the basic function is not sufficient and satisfactory for them with restaurants, what they need is engaging with restaurants in service delivery.

Economic region in this research study was hypothesised to have a moderator effect on the relationship

between Chinese culture and participation behaviour (H4c). The chi-square difference results between model 1 and model 3 reveal that this hypothesis is not statistically significant (all differences is less than 3.84), which may imply that the different economic regions with indigenous Chinese culture do not affect the intention of customer showing participation behaviours. The plausible explanation is due to the gap narrowing of urban and region, which ensure that certain phenomena are not generalizable across regions in China (Liao and Wong, 2015).

Last, according to table 8.41, the findings confirm that region does not show moderator nature on the association between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour, as the chi-square difference results between model 1 and model 3 are not statistically significant (all differences are less than 3.84). Moreover, the results imply that there is not a tendency that consumers in developed region are more pronounced than less developed region for the association, which is consistent with the finding of hypothesis 4b.

### **H5. Despite comprising discreet and individually distinct components, Chinese culture can be considered to have a holistic effect**

The purpose of this hypothesis is to evaluate whether or not the construct Chinese culture could be considered unidimensional. As mentioned above, three components (*guanxi*, face and harmony) of Chinese culture are as reflective second-order construct rather than formative one in research model, in order to test the proposing that Chinese culture is 'one thing, three regressions were taken. The results show that *guanxi* is positively related to face; face is positively related to harmony; harmony is positively related to *guanxi*, as all p-values are lower than .05.

- ***Guanxi* is positively related to face.**

According to the research result, *guanxi* is positively related to face, which is completely supported. This result is confirmed by Zhai (1995), King (2006) and Tsang *et al.* (2013). In specific, face (the Chinese concept of mianzi) is an essential for *guanxi* development and maintenance (King, 2006; Zhai, 1995). Face implies one's morality, reputation, and social status (King, 2006), as Tsang *et al.* (2013) state face is a vital criterion to evaluate Chinese personal quality. A person's face should be respected or recognised, otherwise he or

she may be judged as a low personal quality, for example, immoral, bad reputation and low social status. Few people are willing to have a close relationship (the Chinese concept of *guanxi*) with such a low-quality person. Therefore, saving face is a matter of prime importance for Chinese in their lives. Furthermore, saving face is a kind of thing for both sides, which Chinese people not only require saving others' face but also their own to be maintained (Tsang *et al.*, 2013). In other words, saving others' face is a reciprocated action to some extent that the Chinese expected. In this sense, those Chinese people that treat face as a key element influencing *guanxi* might be more possibly to cater to the need of their social encounters (Tsang, 2009).

What is more, for service providers, it should be noticed that maintaining or giving "face" to customers in front of his/her family, friends, guests, etc. In this way, a customer feels that his/her status has been boosted, accordingly customer could get more pleasing experience. Consequently, it more likely that a long-term relationship is to be made so long as face exists in the service encounter.

- **Face is positively related to harmony.**

The findings (see table 8.28) manifest that face is statistically significant with harmony, which are in accord with the experimental studies of Tjosvold *et al.* (2004) that Chinese are sensitive to face and valuing it, which could promote the harmony and reduce concerns that the conflict challenges. As argued by social scientist Early (1997) and Ho (1994), caring the social face is particularly appreciated to encourage the harmony in Chinese society.

In practice, for Chinese people, harmony and face may not be literally bounded on strong relationship. Chinese cultural values on face and harmony may also implicitly include interaction and maintaining cooperative goals. To be in harmony means to care someone face and create a reciprocally beneficial relationship as well as to mutual recognition. Actually, when Chinese customers surround in a context where they have clear evidence of face being cared, they are more likely to move toward some cooperative goals with others, for instance, common needs consideration, common problem solution (Han and Altman, 2010).

- **Harmony is positively related to *guanxi*.**

This result is consistent with hospitality industry research of Zhang and Zhang (2013), who illustrate Chinese

people emphasise interpersonal harmony, especially when they interact with people who have good relationship (*guanxi*) with them. Moreover, it agrees on the opinions of Leung *et al.* (2005) and Su *et al.* (2005) that the *guanxi* refers to harmony in some kinds of relationship, which bring up respect for both sides and reducing conflict; In Confucian societies, “*guanxi cannot survive without harmony between two parties in a relationship*” (Wu and Yong 2005, p. 284) and buyers and seller should respect each other (Li and Su, 2007).

As another explanation by Bell (2000), families or groups harmony are the basis of *guanxi* linkages other than the individuals in China. Meanwhile, some principles are also being followed by the individual within the networks, for example, being nice to treat others with the intention of promoting harmony.

In general, although *guanxi*, harmony and face are distinct in definitions, they interact to the extent that they are mutually supportive.

## **H6. Cognitive engagement mediates of the relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour**

In order to provide fully understanding of Chinese restaurant consumers' behaviour under value co-creation and engagement, this hypothesis is set. As showed in table 8.34 and table 8.35, the research resulted are presented and summarised in accordance with research objectives. Hence, the following section, the main focus is to produce an interpretive frame between the relationships cognitive engagement and co-creation behaviour.

With the intention of finding out how the cognitive engagement mediates the relationship of Chinese culture with co-creation behaviour, two sets mediation tests were performed. Results reveal that cognitive engagement partially mediates Chinese culture with participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour when they are tested separately. It means that Chinese culture affects customer cognitive engagement towards customer participation behaviours in value co-creation as well as affects customer cognitive engagement towards customer citizenship behaviours in value co-creation. This finding is consistent with previous research where culture affects broad area of cognitive area which subsequently affect behaviours (Lai *et al.*, 2010; Briley and Williams, 1998).

For hypothesis H6a, the results demonstrate that cognitive engagement partially mediates the relationship of Chinese culture and participation behaviour. This finding is distinct since cognitive engagement is verified that involving of customers in generating or delivering service (Dabholkar, 2015) in this value co-creation with Chinese culture influenced. However, it seems that the partially mediator effect is not very strong, as the difference between standardised regression weight ( $b_1=.884$ ) for direct relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour without cognitive engagement, and the standardised regression weight ( $B_1=.833$ ) for the relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour with cognitive engagement as the mediator variable, is not so obvious.

For hypothesis H6b, the results also support the hypothesis, and cognitive engagement performs in the role of partial mediator. This finding tends to support the idea that Chinese culture and cognitive engagement may combine to affect customers' citizenship behaviour to offer additional value to organisations (Yi *et al.*, 2011), which finally impact firm's profit and performance (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007).

In general, results (H3) suggest that the stronger is Chinese culture, the more likely it is that Chinese customers will be willing to practice co-creation behaviour. The fact that this relationship is partially mediated by cognitive engagement suggests that this intention is perhaps more likely to apply if recent restaurant experiences were good, and probably less likely if recent experiences were otherwise. Results did not allow a conclusion to be drawn that cognition engagement would definitely affect this relationship. This shows that when conducting research on similar issues researchers need to be aware of the potential for cognitive engagement impacting attitudes and intentions and take it into account when determining variables to be assessed. However, because it was only a partial mediator, it was not considered appropriate to take full account of this in moderation tests.

## **Objective 5. To explore the extent to which Chinese restaurant customers are willing to participate in co-creation/engagement activity.**

After check the consistence of all item with the essential of constructs through confirmatory factor analysis, mean score tests are proceeded on four constructs(participation behaviour, citizenship behaviour, Chinese culture, cognitive engagement) along with their sub-constructs in order to pursue this objective, which is based on that the principle the mean value is through the total value divided the total number of items to decide the weight of each item on the construct, or represent central tendency (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). The purpose of the tests is to find out which specific co-creation behaviour sub-constructs weigh most heavily on intention to co-create. That is, in which aspects of co-creation are Chinese customers most likely to contribute to.

### **Participation Behaviour**

For construct participation behaviour, it has six sub-constructs - information seeking (M=3.74), interest interaction (M=3.64), novel interaction (M=3.54), information sharing (M=3.42), responsible behaviour (M=3.54), communication interaction (M=3.47). According to the mean value, sub-construct information seeking has most weight on construct Participation behaviour., it implies that the inclination of Chinese consumer is to reduce the uncertainties to get more information, such as, price, restaurant location, the dishes, before visiting restaurant; however, it appears inconsistent with the model of Hofstede (2001, 1980) that Chinese people are in low uncertainty avoidance.

Furthermore, the mean values of items are checked on each sub-construct. The item 'check out prices in advice' has most weight on sub-construct information seeking, it suggests price still is a driving force on dining out in restaurant, though, the annual household income of Chinese households is continually rise (McKinsey, 2016). The item 'I like to touch/feel artefacts and textures, which are part of the restaurant experience' shares the biggest value on sub-construct interest interaction. It is in alignment with the argument of Brodie *et al.* (2011) that consumers' attention should be attracted, then restaurant could continually engage and interact with them. The item 'the more a restaurant wants me to be involved in the restaurant experience, the more I like it' has the most mean value on sub-construct novel interaction, which suggests Chinese consumers prefer to a superior experience/value, then more intention on visiting the



restaurant is likely. As regards sub-construct information sharing, the item 'I would be happy for restaurant staff to ask me about my service expectations and preferences' has the highest mean value. It reveals the potential that Chinese consumer with restaurant staff exchange information so as to get more benefits (Chan and Li, 2010). For sub-construct responsible behaviour, the item 'If this was a restaurant rule or convention I would happily clear my own table' has the most mean value, it displays people with collectivistic culture background incline to show high-content communication, such as accept suggestion or follow the rules, as suggested by Nishimura *et al.* (2009). Last, for sub-construct communication interaction, the most weighted item is 'If my meal is not quite to my liking I would ask for extra sauce/more spice/etc. to increase my enjoyment', it reveals that Chinese consumers tend to interchange thoughts or feelings with service provider so as to get better experience.

### **Citizenship Behaviour**

For construct participation behaviour, it has four sub-constructs – feedback (M=3.34), advocacy (M=3.63), helping (M=3.65), tolerance (M=3.03). From the mean value, it is clear that the sub-construct helping has most weight, which suggests the potential of Chinese consumer expressing the desire to provide assistance to other customers, and also implies the possibilities that restaurant co-creates with Chinese consumer through citizenship behaviour.

When checking the item weight on each sub-construct, the result suggests the item 'If not satisfied with either food or service I would make a point of speaking with the restaurant proprietor' has most value on sub-construct feedback, it is certain that the whole experience is the key for Chinese consumer to present positive comments for restaurant development. The item 'following a good dining experience I am likely to advise my friends and/or family to visit the restaurant concerned' is a most vital item for the sub-construct advocacy. It indicates the possibilities that based on the 'advocacy' behaviour to expand the size of the restaurant consumers. The term 'If restaurant prices appear higher than I feel they should be I will normally place my order and not complain' has most value on the sub-construct tolerance, it implies Chinese traditional culture affects consumer belief/behaviour in term of avoiding conflict, maintaining harmony and being tolerance to others' misbehaviour or difference. Last, the term 'If another customer in that restaurant asked me for advice on ordering dishes I would happily provide this' has most influence on sub-construct

helping.

### **Cognitive engagement**

The construct 'cognitive engagement' is a single construct, the item 'I was able to find a dish that I really want' has the most effect on the it. The finding implies the unique experience on foods is the premise of engagement between restaurant and its consumer (Brodie *et al.*, 2011), it also represents Chinese consumer's particular interest on the objective.

In general, the discussion above looks at the various sub-constructs and items in a relatively selective way and draws just tentative conclusions on what relative mean values might mean at the current time, in the context evaluated. However, the main value of assessing mean values from survey outputs would be for comparative purposes. That is, by comparing results between China and other countries to identify differences and similarities, and also longitudinally to determine whether patterns of co-creation intention in specific contexts change over time, and whether – for example - further Chinese socio-economic development is likely to affect intention to co-create. Clearly, individual restaurant managers could use this sort of data to profile their own customer base again, perhaps, on a comparative basis with other restaurants managers.

## **9.3 CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter aims to address how the research objectives are achieved. Based objective 1, conceptual framework 1 is generated, which is guide for item pool and also is the basis for qualitative analysis. Objective 2 is achieved through conceptual framework 2, the framework proposes in this study help operationalize notion customer experience, engagement and co-creation into restaurant behaviour, and help explain the relationships among the predictor variables (e.g. Chinese culture, city tier/regions, cognitive engagement) and the outcome variable, i.e. customer participation behaviours and citizenship behaviours). Objective 3 is realised through significance test between the respondents' demographic and constructs. Objective 4 is by hypothesis test to grasp. Finally, the objective 5 is achieved through mean value test.

The results of most tests (hypothesis test, significant test and mean value test) are not significant, this is

likely because China is evolving and changing at speed a fast pace that theory is not keeping up with the 'actual'. Moreover, because the various elements, such as globalization, economic development, social variance, cultural migration have an effect on China society (Elliott *et al.*, 2014), it might propose that the significance of cultural influences is not obvious, accompanied by the improvement of living standards and business environment, less developed areas with highly potential have been reducing the inequality with developed area. In particular, since 1980 millions of people from rural China migrated to cities for urban job, China is becoming one of the most rapidly urbanising country in the world. This unprecedented urban development in China is transforming China's economy, urban landscape, and culture (Department of Urban Surveys, 2017). In the pattern of population migration, the population of first-tier cities and some second-tier cities will continue to gather, and the trend of population concentration between cities and regions will be obvious. In the East China, large cities such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen will likely continue to have a large net migration of population. In the Central and West China regions, the population of Chongqing, Zhengzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, Shijiazhuang and Changsha will also grow rapidly (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). As China's urbanization is still in a period of rapid development, the relative income gap between urban and rural areas and between regions is still large, and thus the rural population will continue to enter the city in large numbers. Meanwhile, there are more employment opportunities, broad prospects for people development, strong cultural inclusion, and rich public service resources (e.g. education) in big cities, which attracting rural residents and residents of small and medium-sized cities. Besides, although 56 different ethnic groups are officially recognised in China, 91.51% of Chinese are Han Chinese. But because of the massive dominance of Han Chinese, the migration is not expected to dramatically alter China's ethnic composition (Department of Urban Surveys, 2016). Thus, given the thought upward, it might imply the situation that China appears to become a more homogenous society than the literature suggested.

In the following and final chapter, the major conclusions from the research aims and objectives are underlined, the research design is summarised, the theoretical and practical contributions are stated. Also, the limitation of this research along with directions for further research are identified.

# CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION CHAPTER

## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present concluding comments on the study. The chapter begins with a summary of the research aims and objectives and proceeds to provide a summary of the research design (section 10.2 – 10.3). Section 10.4 provides a summary of the key results. These are followed by a discussion of the contribution of the study (section 10.5), current study limitations and suggestions for future research are presented in section 10.6.

## 10.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

With the rise of service-dominant logic paradigm, co-creation and customer engagement have grown considerably in unprecedented fashion. Helkkula *et al.* (2012) state that co-creation is an interactive and collaborative process in which the customer actively participates in the configuration of a personalised experience with the firm and other customers. Several definitions have been put forth for customer engagement, focusing on attitudes, behaviours, and value. Overall, customer engagement attempts to differentiate customer attitudes and behaviours that go beyond re-purchase (Hoyer *et al.*, 2010; Libai *et al.*, 2010). Focusing on an attitudinal perspective, Brodie *et al.* (2011) suggest customer engagement is kind of mental state through interactive, co-creative customer experiences with service provider in service relations. This approach advocates that engagement is a dynamic state that makes customers to engage with service provider. Furthermore, being a stretched form of relationship marketing, customer engagement involves co-creation with customers (Prahalad, 2004), which suggests having a direct effect on the firm operations and performance (e.g. advertising effectiveness, reputation, higher sales and idea generation), and reflecting the customers' attitude (e.g. customer trust, satisfaction and involvement) and/or perception (e.g. perceived cost, perceived benefits, relationship) on the target firm (Brodie *et al.*, 2013; Hollebeek, 2011a; Bowden, 2009b).

Compared with the those undertaken previously previous study in this area which are mainly concerned with large companies and their customers, this research performs a different and more comprehensive study that targeting on full-service restaurants and their customers/customer behaviour. It bases on the conceptual terms of experience, co-creation and customer engagement, utilising restaurant as a vehicle to explore and

evaluate customer experience co-creation/engagement in China. By assessing customer co-creation and engagement in China restaurant sector, five main research questions are investigated.

### **10.3 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

It is frequently suggested (see Henn *et al.*, 2009) that there are two dominant and potentially irreconcilable approaches to what counts as knowledge within social sciences: positivist and interpretivist epistemologies. Positivist research is to identify processes of causes and effect to explain phenomena, and to test theory, whereas interpretive research is to explore or build up an understanding of something of which people have little or no knowledge, eventually build a theory through piecing together such an understanding. This research is in a post-positivist stance, utilising quantitative research to measure the nature, direction and strength of relevant relationships, but as there is scarce knowledge in both the frameworks and the scales, this study also employs qualitative method to undertake initial theory-development work. Therefore, the study comprises two stages – an inductive qualitative stage and a subsequent deductive quantitative stage.

Using online focus groups to engage with indigenous consumers, the inductive approach used in this study develops a new set of scales that represent relevant latent variables in respect of co-creation and engagement in the context of customer restaurant experience. New scales focus on experience stages (i.e. Pre-experience, Primary-experience, Post-experience) to address categories of customer engagement in a Chinese context, including engagement partnering (customer/customer and customer/organisation); engagement channel (face-to-face and online/offline); and effects of key cultural characteristics (guanxi, mianzi, and harmony) on behaviour. Each focus group session was conducted in Chinese with an open-ended format and lasted approximately one hour (Malhotra, 2012). The focus groups were audiotaped and transcribed, analysed and converted into items. This research generated an initial pool of 99 items from addressing all aspect of the conceptual framework one. After eliminating items that did not receive the appropriate categorisation by at least four of the six judges, resulting in a revised pool from 99 original items to 72.

Then, based on the retained 56 items after first English review panel, a major consumer survey (quantitative stage) was generated and consisted of three main part. The first part is related to use restaurant, for example,

influence on eating at a restaurant, frequency. The second part is set to collect information about customers' experience and behaviours with restaurants in three stages (Pre, Primary and Post). It consisted of fourteen constructs concerned with information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, responsible behaviour, communication interaction; feedback, advocacy, helping, tolerance; face, harmony, *guanxi* and cognitive engagement (Appendix 1). A five-point Likert scale was used in this part latent variable measurement (from disagree completely to agree completely). Finally, the third part is related with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. This section included nominal measures of gender, age, length in current city, regularly online, hold university degree and occupation status. For the target population - any consumers who regularly (at least once per month) frequent different full-service restaurants in China, would be selected from China's four economic regions. The total sample size was expected to be 600 and divided equally between the four regions. Meanwhile, in each economic region, three different cities would be selected according to city tiers category (Tier 1 cities - key cities; Tier 2 cities - provincial/sub-provincial level capitals; Tier 3 cities - prefecture or county level city capitals, see National Bureau of Statistics, 2014) so as to obtain a sample in each region that addresses differing levels of urban development. It would then be possible to analyse the sample on both a regional and structural basis. Ultimately, a total of 840 questionnaires were collected from which 657 cases were deemed usable.

For the statistical analysis of the primary data, descriptive analysis was used initially (frequencies, percentages). Cronbach's alpha, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling are used to test the conceptual model. Hypothesis testing is employed in the analysis and the presentation of the findings of this study.

## **10.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

For this study, the determinants of co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour) are defined as the constructs of Chinese culture (*face*, *guanxi* and harmony) and cognitive engagement. Measurement scales of constructs satisfied the minimum requirements of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The measurement models of the SEM constructs were evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), convergent and discriminant validity. They were accepted on the basis of measures of fit, and the statistical significance of coefficients.

Mean scores for factors after CFA revealed the importance/weight of different factor/sub-constructs on the constructs. The most weight factor of construct participation behaviour is information seeking, followed with interest interaction, novel interaction, responsible behaviour, communication interaction and information sharing. For the construct citizenship behaviour, the factor helping has most weight, then is advocacy, feedback and tolerance. Meanwhile, for the construct Chinese culture, the factor harmony has most effect followed by *guanxi* and face.

When check the relationship between the respondents' demographic and constructs, gender characteristic shows a significant difference with information sharing, feedback, *guanxi* and cognitive engagement; The characteristic age has a significant effect with information seeking, novel interaction, advocacy, face, harmony and cognitive engagement; The characteristic time in city has a significant effect on responsible behaviour, communication interaction, feedback, helping, face, harmony and *guanxi*; the characteristic regular online has a significant effect on information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, information sharing, communication interaction, feedback, advocacy, helping and face; for university degree characteristic, there is a statistically significant difference with constructs information seeking, interest interaction, novel interaction, advocacy and face; occupation characteristic has a significant effect on construct information sharing, responsible behaviour, tolerance, face and harmony.

CFA analysis led to the modification of the conceptual SEM. The SEM was accepted on the basis of measures of fit, statistical significance, composite reliability, variance extracted and squared multiple correlation coefficients and standardised regression weights. Tests of hypotheses, especially tests for moderation and mediation provided the analysis of effects on dependent constructs. The study establishes the relevance to co-creation constructs, such as Chinese culture, cognitive engagement, city tier and economic region. Results of hypothesis confirm that there is a positive relationship between Chinese culture and participation behaviour; there is a positive relationship between Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour; city tier has a negative effect on construct citizenship behaviour; region has a negative effect on construct participation behaviour; despite comprising discreet and individually distinct components – face, harmony and *guanxi*, construct Chinese culture can be considered to have a holistic effect; cognitive engagement is the partial mediator between Chinese culture and participation behaviour, and between

Chinese culture and citizenship behaviour.

## **10.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

### **10.5.1 Theoretical Contribution**

1). This research validates and improves Yi and Gong's (2013) model of value customer co-creation behaviour from customer perspective in Chinese restaurant sector context. Research findings suggest that the model of Yi and Gong (2013) is not sufficiently comprehensive for capturing all pertinent co-creational content, and the model needs to be customised to accommodate different/specific contexts. Three additional variables have been added to replace/expand the initial set of variables. In detail, the original model of Yi and Gong (2013) is made up of two reflective second order constructs (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour) and eight reflective first order constructs (information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour, personal interaction – participation behavior; feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance – citizenship behaviour). However, after generating item pool, this research produces three new constructs – 'interest interaction', 'novel interaction' and 'communication interaction in the base of first order construct 'personal interaction' through the assessment of expert's panel. Meanwhile, the reliability and validity of the three new constructs satisfy the relevant thresholds.

- Interest interaction is referring to customers could engage with, and know more about, the service provider.
- Novel interaction refers to customer is being happy or enthusiastic about trying new and/or novel experiences provided by service personnel.
- Communication interaction is seen that mutual conveying information between customer and service provider in a courteous, friendliness and respectful manner.

Therefore, participation behaviour is composed of six reflective order constructs – information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour, interest interaction, novel interaction and communication interaction. It seems to highlight that Chinese restaurant customers are more complex and aware of the need to adopt these behaviours when involving in the service encounter for the success of service process. While the citizenship behaviour holds the same with original constructs.



2). Consumers determine the sales and profits of a firm by their decisions. As such, the motives and behaviour of consumer influence the development of firm. To be a successful seller of products and services, firm should understand consumer needs and behaviour and draft the marketing strategies to incorporate such needs of consumers. Consumer behaviour theory has been broadly utilising in Western nations, though, it is not sure whether the theory could be well applied Eastern cultures (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). Based on the rationale of behaviourist and cognitive approach, this study examined the feasibility of consumer behaviour theory in developing country. Hence, the current research results help fill this the gap that the notion of co-creation behaviour and customer engagement in the context of developing economies – China restaurant setting. In detail, this research demonstrates Chinese restaurant customers are happy to engage in both citizenship-related, and participation-related, co-creation behaviours irrespective of which city tier or geographical region they live in; this research shows that the quality of recent restaurant experiences affects the propensity for adopting co-creation behaviours, and also influences overall perceived satisfaction and intentions for customer engagement.

Arnould and Thompson (2005) suggest the term consumer culture theory (CCT) is used to identify the dynamic relations between consumer behaviour, market, and cultural element. In order to assess the manifestations and fill the gap of consumer culture theory in less-developed countries or transitional economies (Bonsu and Belk 2003; Arnould, 1989), the current study shows the relationship between customers' Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour). Meanwhile, the current study presents cognitive engagement has indirect effects through the mediating effect of Chinese culture by co-creation behaviour (participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour). Besides, from the socio-historic patterning of consumption, consumer culture theory suggests the social structures that systematically affect consumption, for example, social class, community, ethnicity, and gender. Customer are regarded of as role-player of society and position (Otnes *et al.*, 1993). The study has developed structural equation models to check the relationships between city tier and co-creation behaviour; economic regions and co-creation behaviours. The model suggests the constructs/factors relevance between the city tier and citizenship behaviour; economic region and participation behaviour in China restaurant context.

3). This research is first study to utilise variables 'city tier' and 'economic region' as moderators to explore co-creation behaviour under Chinese culture background. From theoretical aspects, city tiers are categorised based on the cumulative effect of a range of characteristics – these are education resources, citizen mobility, exposure to foreign culture, industry development level, income level, population and impact of government policy. The literature suggests that these characteristics are likely to create a more cosmopolitan culture and, consequently, to depress/reduce indigenous and traditional national culture. Furthermore, it is note that China also can be understood in geographical terms, as its regions also tend to take on a character that is determined by similar social-economic profiles (e.g. education resources, citizen mobility, exposure to foreign culture, industry development level, income level, population and impact of government policy).

According to Awang (2012), deciding which variable is the moderator depends in large part on the researcher's interest. Current research interest lies on exploring the variation of co-creation/engagement practice on economic /geographical regions, which existing researches has not examined them. This study hypothesises that the higher the city tier rating/the more developed economic region, the lower impact of Chinese culture on behaviour. However, the moderator variables 'city tier' and 'economic region' does moderate the causal effects of 'Chinese culture' on co-creation behaviours.

4). Based on research findings, using the city tier/economic region as moderator has actually demonstrated that the diversity believed to be apparent across China is not reflected in Chinese consumers approaching to co-creation behaviour, nor in their adherence to the broader characteristics of Chinese culture. Despite the population of China is spread over vast geographical range that also covers many different dialects, ethnic origins and many different levels of economic development, Chinese consumers do not vary in their co-creation behaviours (actual or intended). This may be because China has developed so quickly and so extensively in such a short time that people are rapidly becoming more both more homogeneous and more cosmopolitan in nature.

### **10.5.2 Practical Contribution**

1). This research provides reference for those who have especial interest to expand into Chinese restaurant markets but currently are from outside, and those who are intended to import operational/marketing practices

that may have proved successful in other cultures. Because this study addresses the key factors that impact attitude and behaviour behaviours from the pre- to post-experience stages, and addresses relationships between those attitudes, belief, experience and within a cultural and geographic/economic context; hence, this study could help manager/ practitioner achieve an in-depth knowledge of Chinese restaurant consumers, their consumption values and willingness to participate in the co-creation process, that is, Chinese restaurant consumers being more willing to participate in the co-creation of their dining experiences than might have been expected.

2). The current research checks the stability of Yi and Gong's (2013) value co-creation behaviour model to some extent in Chinese cultural environment. What is more, the heterogeneity of Chinese consumer market has been involved to check to what extent there are varied with the two kinds of co-creation behaviours. This research has found out about the evolving Chinese consumer profile that China is perhaps becoming more homogeneous in its consumption habits and that the huge differences in distance and culture that may once have distinguished different people in different parts of China are now breaking down. Hence, utilising the scales in China, which can provide the managers of restaurant or service firms with a means of obtaining strategically relevant information and can be useful in the selection and socialisation of Chinese customers to facilitate value co-creation behaviours. As stated by Yi and Gong (2013), if firms were to measure and reward the customer's co-creation behaviour regularly, customer would be more inclined to adopt this kind of behavior. Likewise, managers must not neglect the fact that involving customers in the creation of new services or the improvement of existing ones brings about positive effects in business results (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2008).

## **10.6 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

1). Along with the development of urban and modern industries, and a very transient population in China (Liu *et al.*, 2011), differences in regions among Chinese people may not be significant, and its effect on customer behaviour might produce other subcultural categories, for example, tier 1 city and tier 1.5 city. Chinese market practitioner should be centred on new subculture categories generating from rapid industrial development, the Western way of life, and the middle-class people. Meanwhile, they need to change the marketing tactics to adopt the emergence (Redfern and Crawford, 2010). In addition, China's cities have

entered a new cycle of consolidation and smarter development. The hierarchy of cities is settling down, future studies could utilise an updated city category, such as China's Alpha cities (Shanghai and Beijing), Tier 1 cities, Tier 2 cities, Tier 3 growth cities, Tier 3 emerging cities and Tier 3 early adopter cities to compare differences.

2). Item pool limitation. The limitation is that the sample is limited to general customers who posted online comments. It might not offer a full picture of customer views as previous study suggested that young people, high incomes group, and married people have more influence on electronic word-of-mouth than other groups (Bronner and de Hoog, 2011). Nevertheless, because the many promotional activities aimed at encouraging people to join, restaurant experience review websites could be deemed to collect mass customer views and ideas. Still, future studies might recruit general population to check whether the findings are still consistence

3.) In this study, mean value is used to identify relative performance of the sub-construct. Regarding future research, path strength would be a useful comparator for determining how co-creation behaviour might be manifested in different contexts (e.g. Novel interaction has a major effect in China, but a lesser effect in the UK). Because path strength represents the effect of the sub-construct on the construct, this would allow researcher to see what co-creation behaviour looks like in different international contexts. Also, whether, in one context, the nature of co-creation behaviour changes over time. On the other hand, mean value would allow researcher to compare performance using a specified model between different contexts. Thus, if researcher have designated a specific model with defined path strengths, he/she can use this to compare different restaurants within a specific context. Besides, path strength can be used to compare different cities and regions, so this might be an alternative test to the moderation test.

4). As the findings suggest, there is a positive relationship between Chinese culture and co-creation behaviour. That is to say, the stronger strength of Chinese culture, the higher likely co-creation behaviours are; the less strength of Chinese culture, the less likely co-creation behaviours are. It means the more developed China becomes, the less likely of co-creation behaviour is to involve. The is because the developed area in China might accept more western lifestyle and tend to be less traditional Chinese culture. However, the problem is, as time goes on, that restaurant manager or researcher will find co-creation

behaviour is going down, and it will get worse and worse. It is due to theory suggests that the more co-creation behaviour, the better customer relationship. Thus, when China is going to become more and more westernise, it will have more difficulty to involve customer in co-creation behaviour.

According the analysis, in future, researchers should do comparative study over time between different locations to check whether the above hypothesis is support. It is very likely, Chinese culture is going down between city tier 2 and city tier 3 to match the level of Chinese culture in city tier 1 and now is becoming more and more homogenous. But people don't know the level is going down to equivalent to the west or going to down to below the west.

5). Future research might also study and expand the research model comprising supplementary elements. For instance, the notion of customer engagement has been explored and extended to a new dimension – social dimension, which is similar to behaviour dimension, but places emphasis on interacting and experiences sharing, as Islam and Rahman (2016) described, it signifies intensive participating, values and content sharing on customer and service provider associated social exchange. Further research might comprise social engagement in the model to develop and obtain a complete understanding on the nature of restaurant customer behaviour. In addition, in current study, the engagement concept is confined in positive aspect, it manifested through an intense interest in specific relationship (cognitive dimension); positive feelings, satisfaction, happiness and pride towards particular relationship (affective dimension); and engaging in behaviours associated with specific relationships, including positive discussion and recommendation. However, negative engagement is new side of engagement, which is defined as unfavorable thoughts, feelings and behaviour within a service relationship (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014), future studies could invest the negative engagement manifestations in service sector within a developing country.

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## 12. APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1. Item Pool

#### Pre- experience

1. Looking at the restaurant's website.
2. Looking at the restaurant's Weibo (Chinese Twitter).
3. Looking at reviews on Dianping Restaurant Forum (this is a well-known Chinese review site which allows consumers to read and post comments on restaurants).
4. Looking for information on the restaurant on group-buying websites (e.g. 55tuan--Chinese Groupon).
5. Asking friends about the restaurant.
6. Asking family about the restaurant.
7. Asking colleagues about the restaurant.
8. Looking at a friend's Weibo who has been to the restaurant recently.
9. Reading about the restaurant in a newspaper or magazine.
10. Noting radio or TV programmes featuring the restaurant.
11. Contacting the restaurant's front desk in advance to book a room/ask about special needs.
12. Looking for specialty restaurant (e.g. gluten free, vegan).
13. Looking at the restaurant's on-line menu.
14. Checking for convenience of car parking at the restaurant.
15. Searching for the address of the restaurant.
16. Checking restaurant prices.
17. Searching for a restaurant with a private room.
18. Searching for a restaurant serving particular dishes.
19. Searching for a restaurant with a particular atmosphere.
20. Searching for a restaurant in a particular location.
21. I deem the information on the restaurant's website is/is not accurate.
22. I deem the information on the restaurant's website is /is not adequate.
23. Searching for a restaurant which is suited for business occasions.
24. Searching for a restaurant which is suited for gatherings with friends/family.
25. Choosing a restaurant based on Dianping Restaurant Forum ranking.
26. Choosing a restaurant based on past experience.
27. Choosing a restaurant based on location.

#### Primary- experience

1. Asking to have cutlery replaced if dirty.
2. Asking the waiter to recommend a dish.
3. Asking the waiter for a wine recommendation.
4. Sending food back if cold or unpalatable.
5. Happy to try new ways of eating/enjoying food.
6. Happy to accept novel ways of serving or presenting food.

7. Encouraging new or novel restaurant experiences.
8. Asking to see the manager if dissatisfied.
9. Asking to see the chef to praise him/her for a good meal.
10. Sharing a table with other customers.
11. Chatting with other customers on shared table.
12. Preference for a polite waiter.
13. Preference for a friendly waiter.
14. Happy to chat with the waiter.
15. Engaging with self-service if appropriate.
16. Clearing own table after meal.
17. Enjoying watching food cooked in the restaurant.
18. Ordering a recommended course.
19. Waiting in a queue for my meal.
20. Noticing attention to the tableware, colour scheme and restaurant décor.
21. Engaging with the restaurant music or other restaurant sounds.
22. Touching or feeling aspects of the restaurant that attracts me.
23. The restaurant offers slow and rude service.
24. The restaurant offers no appetizing food.
25. The restaurant's toilets are unpleasant
26. I feel the restaurant creates a comfortable dining environment for me.
27. I feel happy to pay the prices charged.
28. I deem the prices of the restaurant to be reasonable.
29. Requesting changes to my meal, e.g. adding more spiciness.
30. The restaurant menu is sufficiently varied for me.
31. Service is quick.
32. Food is very fresh and delicious.
33. The food temperature is appropriate.
34. Portion size is adequate.
35. Service is very professional.
36. I get what I order.
37. The restaurant is clean and hygienic.
38. I feel that the restaurant has a caring and helpful approach towards me.
39. Learning new things about the food and drink served to me.
40. Restaurant staff recognise me and understand my needs.
41. Making comments on the restaurant's suggestion forum/wall, so these can be viewed by other customers.
42. Restaurant opening hours are convenient and suit my lifestyle.
43. I feel that can express my unique personality and taste at the restaurant.
44. I feel that using this restaurant reflects my social status.
45. I can pay for the meal in various ways.
46. Engaging with interactive restaurant services (e.g. buffet dinner).
47. Making a suggestion to the restaurant 's manager face to face.
48. Packaging the leftovers when I leave the restaurant.

**Post- experience**

1. Sharing with friends/family/colleagues a good restaurant experience via conversation
2. Sharing with friends/family/colleagues a good restaurant experience on-line (e.g. Facebook).
3. Sharing with friends/family/colleagues a bad restaurant experience via conversation.
4. Sharing with friends/family/colleagues a bad restaurant experience on-line (e.g. Facebook).
5. Posting comments on a specialist forum (e.g. Dianping) if good experience.
6. Posting comments on a specialist forum (e.g. Dianping) if bad experience.
7. Making a suggestion on the restaurant's website.
8. Making a suggestion on the restaurant's Weibo.
9. Complaining directly to the restaurant about problem(s) experienced.
10. Switching to a different restaurant.
11. Reflecting on food consumed and wanting the same dish(es) again.
12. On reflection, having a better understanding of the restaurant and what it is trying to achieve.
13. Wanting to return to the restaurant.
14. Being determined to re-order the same dishes next time.
15. I am able to quickly recall the restaurant's brand symbol or logo.
16. The restaurant easily springs to mind.
17. Feeling commitment to the restaurant brand.
18. For me, this restaurant has a good reputation.
19. I prefer this restaurant to other possible alternatives.
20. The dining experience was so good I would be happy to pay more for it next time.
21. Dining here increases my chances of interacting with preferred others.
22. Willing to try new dishes/experiences introduced by the restaurant.
23. Happy for the restaurant to contact me with offers and promotions.
24. Would welcome non-commercial contact (e.g. sending 'special day' messages to me; inviting me to restaurant events)

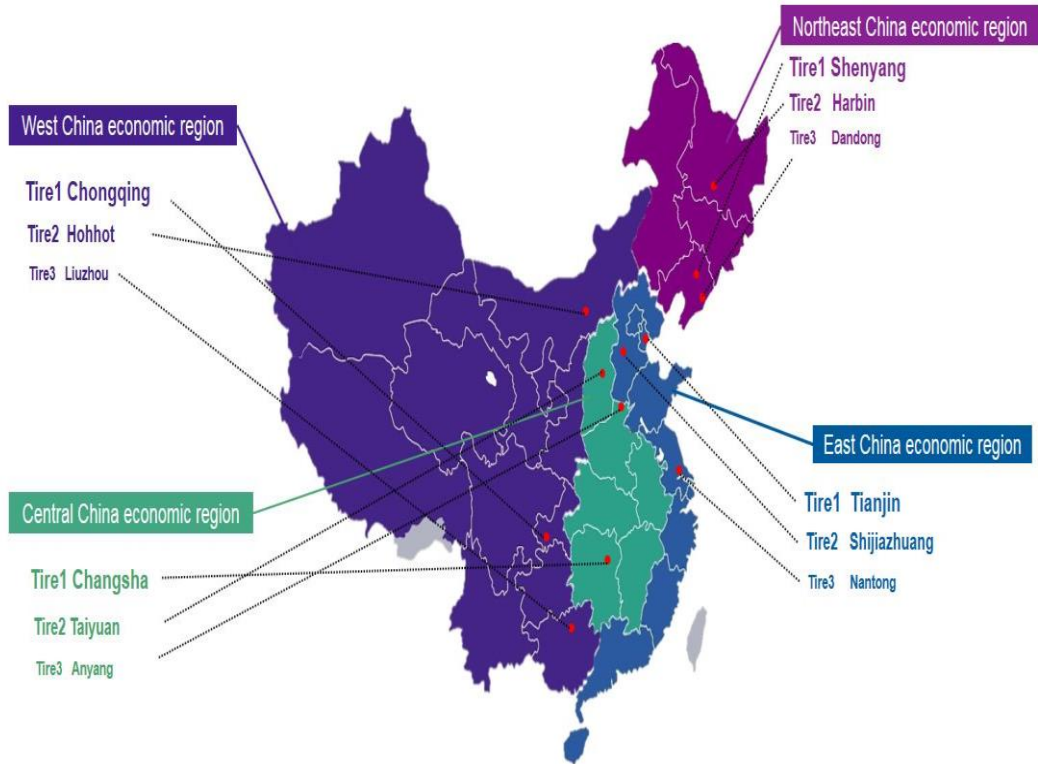


## Appendix 2

Factors	N.	Construct: participation behaviour
Information seeking	1	Look at the restaurant's official online communication platform (e.g. website;
	2	Ask colleagues /friends/family about the restaurant.
	3	Read about the restaurant in a newspaper or magazine.
	4	Make enquiries about the location/address of the restaurant.
	5	Check out prices in advance.
	6	Ensure that the restaurant served dishes I would definitely want to order.
	7	Make enquiries about the atmosphere of the restaurant.
Interest interaction	13	I normally pay close attention to the restaurant tableware and /or colour scheme and/or
	14	I normally pay close attention to the music and/or other atmospheric sounds I
	15	I like to touch/feel artefacts and textures, which are part of the restaurant experience.
	16	I like to know/learn about how restaurants source and/or prepare and/or cook the food
Novel interaction	17	I like engaging with a restaurant's website and would be happy with more online
	18	I am/would be happy for the restaurants to try new ways of sourcing and /or preparing
	19	I am/would be happy for restaurants to introduce new, or novel, restaurant experiences
	20	I enjoy seeing my food prepared inside the restaurant rather than behind kitchen doors
	21	The more a restaurant wants me to be involved in the "restaurant experience" the more
Information sharing	34	I would be happy to speak with restaurant staff and give them advice on how they
	35	I would be happy to speak with waiting staff to find out their perspectives on how
	36	I would be happy for restaurant staff to ask me about my service expectations and
Responsible behaviour	37	I would happily follow a restaurant employee's recommendation on a menu or wine list
	38	If there is a valid reason and If I am asked to do so, I would happily share a table with
	39	If this was a restaurant rule or convention I would happily clear my own table
	40	If I am asked politely by a restaurant employee I don't mind waiting for my turn until a
Communication interaction	41	If my meal is not prepared, cooked or served properly then I would ask for it to be
	42	If either my meal or the service is not to my liking then I will ask to speak with someone
	43	If my meal is especially good I would either ask to see the chef or ask for my thanks
	44	If my meal is not quite to my liking I would ask for extra sauce/more spice/etc. to
		<b>Construct: citizenship behaviour</b>
feedback	22	If not satisfied with either food or service I would make a point of speaking with the
	23	I would happily contact the restaurant proprietor to advise him/her of the improvements
	24	If I think it will help the restaurant I will make a point of posting a comment on social
advocacy	25	Following a good dining experience I am likely to advise my friends and/or family to
	26	Following a good dining experience I am likely to post a favourable comment on social
	27	Following a good dining experience I am likely to post a favourable comment on a
helping	28	If another customer in that restaurant asked me for advice on ordering dishes I would
	29	If the restaurant had a message board I would be one of the first to make
	30	If I had a bad dining experience I would feel compelled to tell friends and/ or family to
tolerance	31	If restaurant prices appear higher than I feel they should be I will normally place my
	32	If restaurant service is not as good as I think it should be I will normally make
	33	If a restaurant doesn't really satisfy my expectations I will usually give it a second try.
		<b>Construct: Chinese culture</b>
face	45	I would usually search for a restaurant with luxury atmosphere.
	46	I would never return to a restaurant where I had previously argued with staff or
	47	I would prefer to go to a restaurant where I believed staff would understand me and
	48	I prefer to use a restaurant that reflects and acknowledges my social status.
harmony	49	I am happy in a restaurant that offers a peaceful and restful environment
	50	I would make the best of what I believed to be an unsatisfactory restaurant experience

	<b>51</b>	I always try to understand and appreciate a restaurant's aims and objectives.
<b>guanxi</b>	<b>52</b>	For me, visiting a restaurant is a largely social, rather than gastronomic, experience.
	<b>53</b>	Whenever I encounter good food or service I like to ensure that my friends and/or
	<b>54</b>	I would rather speak to my friends and/or family face to face than post a restaurant
	<b>55</b>	I prefer to eat at restaurants where I am mostly likely to meet people who are important
	<b>56</b>	I prefer to eat at the restaurants that contact me personally with special day greetings
		<b>Construct: cognitive engagement</b>
	<b>8</b>	The restaurant menu was sufficiently varied.
	<b>9</b>	I was able to find a dish that I really wanted.
	<b>10</b>	I was satisfied with the standards of hygiene and cleanliness offered by the restaurant.
	<b>11</b>	I would be happy to return to the restaurant.
	<b>12</b>	The restaurant offered caring and professional service

### Appendix 3. China economic regions and City tiers



<i>Region</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Province</i>	<i>City Tier</i>	<i>Population (2014)</i>	<i>GDP/billion CNY (2014)</i>
<b>East China economic region</b>	Tianjin	Tianjin	tier 1	15,168,000	1572
	Shijiazhuang	Hebei	tier 2	10,616,000	510
	Nantong	Jiangsu	tier 3	7,300,000	565
<b>Central China economic region</b>	Changsha	Hunan	tier 1	7,310,000	782
	Taiyuan	Shanxi	tier 2	4,298,900	253
	Anyang	Henan	tier 3	5,760,000	179
<b>West China economic region</b>	Chongqing	Chongqing	tier 1	30,010,000	1427
	Hohhot	Inner Mongolia	tier 2	3,000,000	289
	Liuzhou	Guangxi	tier 3	3,750,000	212
<b>Northeast China economic region</b>	Shenyang	Liaoning	tier 1	8,280,000	710
	Harbin	Heilongjiang	tier 2	10,010,000	533
	Dandong	Liaoning	tier 3	2,460,000	102

## **Appendix 4 – Data collection checklist: to be given to all research assistants**

**Dear fellow researchers:**

**This survey is part of my PhD study, which seeks to collect information about Chinese customers' behaviour and experience in China restaurant sector. Questionnaire will be delivered at China's four economic regions (total 12 cities), in order to overcome logistical difficulties of administering questionnaires over such a wide geographic area, I cordially invite you to join this survey process to help me administer them.**

**There are some advice on administering questionnaires:**

- **Make sure you introduce yourself and explain what the aim of the questionnaire is.**
- **Make sure of the respondents' eligibility – only consumers who regularly (at least once per month) frequent popular restaurants in China.**
- **Ask the respondent to read the Participant Information Sheet before they complete the survey, and ensure they are aware that their responses are anonymous.**
- **Make sure people are free to give their own, honest, answer and that they are both physically and mentally comfortable.**
- **Please ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all time.**

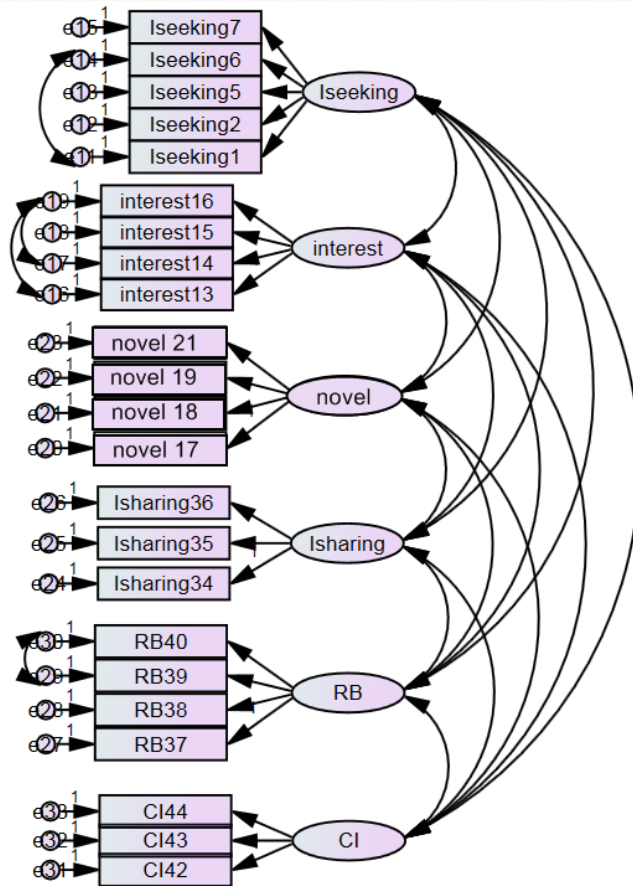
**Thank you very much for your help and time!**

**Please note: after you administer questionnaires, please copy all of them and post originals to the following address; once I have received your mail, I will inform you to destroy all the copies.**

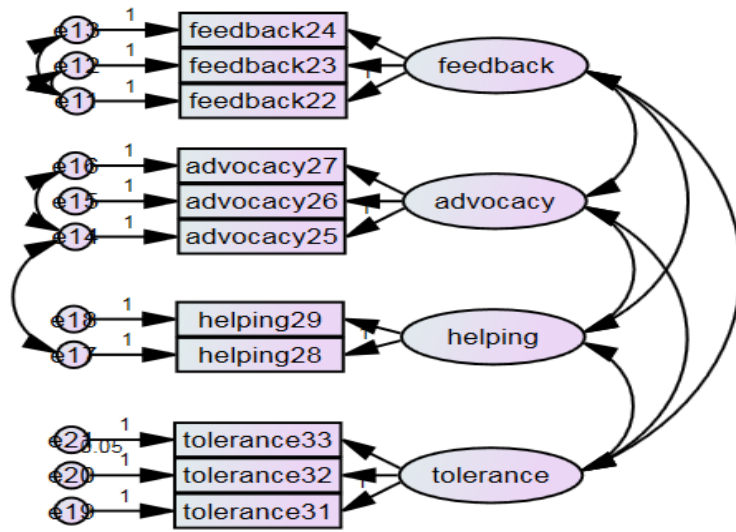
**My Delivery address: Room 1103, Yiqi Building, Wengfeng East Road, Anyang City, Henan Province, China, 455000**

## Appendix 5. CFA models

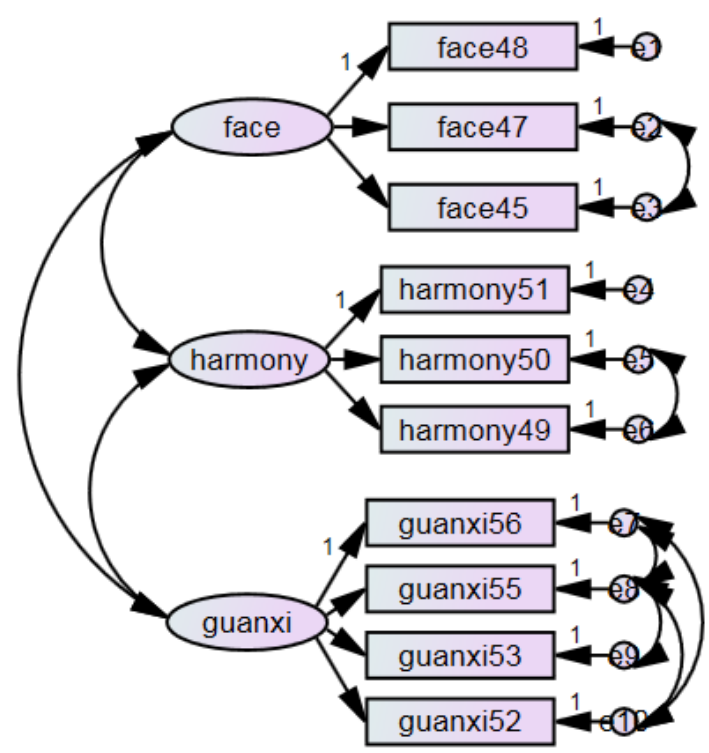
### Participation behaviour



## Citizenship behaviour



'Chinese culture'





# Appendix 6 Questionnaire English Version

Survey of customer experience in the Chinese restaurant sector

Ref:

## Part 1

In this part, I would like to ask you some questions about your use of restaurants.

Which three factors would most strongly influence on your decision of whether or not to eat at a restaurant? Food style  Variety of food  Service  Hygiene   
 Price  Convenience  Atmosphere  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately, how often do you eat at restaurant? Please choose one At least once a day  At least once a week  At least once a month

Who do you frequently go to a restaurant with? Please choose three with my family  With friends  With colleagues  With customers  With business partners  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick one box only to indicate your perception on each of the following statements, using the prefix, "Before visiting a restaurant I have never been to, and assuming it is possible for me to do so, I would":

		Disagree completely	Largely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Largely agree	Agree completely
1	Look at the restaurant's official online communication platform (e.g. website: Weibo/Twitter).					
2	Ask colleagues /friends/family about the restaurant.					
3	Read about the restaurant in a newspaper or magazine.					
4	Make enquiries about the location/address of the restaurant.					
5	Check out prices in advance.					
6	Ensure that the restaurant served dishes I would definitely want to order.					
7	Make enquiries about the atmosphere of the restaurant.					

## Part 2

Please respond to the following statements in respect of your most recent restaurant experience and tick one box only.

		Disagree completely	Largely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Largely agree	Agree completely
8	The restaurant menu was sufficiently varied.					
9	I was able to find a dish that I really wanted.					
10	I was satisfied with the standards of hygiene and cleanliness offered by the restaurant.					
11	I would be happy to return to the restaurant.					
12	The restaurant offered caring and professional service.					

Please respond to the following statements in respect of your usual and/or likely behaviour when visiting a restaurant, tick one box only.



		Disagree completely	Largely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Largely agree	Agree completely
13	I normally pay close attention to the restaurant tableware and /or colour scheme and/or décor.					
14	I normally pay close attention to the music and/or other atmospheric sounds I encounter in a restaurant.					
15	I like to touch/feel artefacts and textures, which are part of the restaurant experience.					
16	I like to know/learn about how restaurants source and/or prepare and/or cook the food and drink they serve me.					
17	I like engaging with a restaurant's website and would be happy with more online interactivity.					
18	I am/would be happy for the restaurants to try new ways of sourcing and /or preparing and /or cooking and/or serving the food.					
19	I am/would be happy for restaurants to introduce new, or novel, restaurant experiences I had not encountered before.					
20	I enjoy seeing my food prepared inside the restaurant rather than behind kitchen doors.					
21	The more a restaurant wants me to be involved in the "restaurant experience" the more I like it.					
22	If not satisfied with either food or service I would make a point of speaking with the restaurant proprietor.					
23	I would happily contact the restaurant proprietor to advise him/her of the improvements that I think would be made to my restaurant experience.					
24	If I think it will help the restaurant I will make a point of posting a comment on social media or an appropriate website.					
25	Following a good dining experience I am likely to advise my friends and/or family to visit the restaurant concerned.					
26	Following a good dining experience I am likely to post a favourable comment on social media.					
27	Following a good dining experience I am likely to post a favourable comment on a specialist online forum (e.g. Dianping, TripAdvisor).					
28	If another customer in that restaurant asked me for advice on ordering dishes I would happily provide this.					
29	If the restaurant had a message board I would be one of the first to make recommendations to other customers.					
30	If I had a bad dining experience I would feel compelled to tell friends and/ or family to avoid the restaurant concerned.					

Survey of customer experience in the Chinese restaurant sector

Ref:

31	If restaurant prices appear higher than I feel they should be I will normally place my order and not complain					
32	If restaurant service is not as good as I think it should be I will normally make allowances and not complain.					
33	If a restaurant doesn't really satisfy my expectations I will usually give it a second try					

Please respond to the following statements in respect of any future restaurant visit, tick one box only.

		Disagree completely	Largely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Largely agree	Agree completely
34	I would be happy to speak with restaurant staff and give them advice on how they might serve me better					
35	I would be happy to speak with waiting staff to find out their perspectives on how service should be delivered.					
36	I would be happy for restaurant staff to ask me about my service expectations and preferences.					
37	I would happily follow a restaurant employee's recommendation on a menu or wine list item.					
38	If there is a valid reason and if I am asked to do so, I would happily share a table with other diners.					
39	If this was a restaurant rule or convention I would happily clear my own table					
40	If I am asked politely by a restaurant employee I don't mind waiting for my turn until a table is free.					
41	If my meal is not prepared, cooked or served properly then I would ask for it to be replaced.					
42	If either my meal or the service is not to my liking then I will ask to speak with someone in authority.					
43	If my meal is especially good I would either ask to see the chef or ask for my thanks to be communicated to him/her					
44	If my meal is not quite to my liking I would ask for extra sauce/more spice/etc. to increase my enjoyment.					
45	I would usually search for a restaurant with luxury atmosphere.					
46	I would never return to a restaurant where I had previously argued with staff or complained about food or service.					
47	I would prefer to go to a restaurant where I believed staff would understand me and my needs.					
48	I prefer to use a restaurant that reflects and acknowledges my social status.					
49	I am happy in a restaurant that offers a peaceful and restful environment					
50	I would make the best of what I believed to be an unsatisfactory restaurant experience if I know my friends and family were enjoying themselves.					
51	I always try to understand and appreciate a restaurant's aims and objectives.					
52	For me, visiting a restaurant is a largely social, rather than gastronomic, experience.					
53	Whenever I encounter good food or service I like to ensure that my friends and/or family are aware of the restaurant concerned.					
54	I would rather speak to my friends and/or family face to face than post a restaurant comment on either a website or social media.					
55	I prefer to eat at restaurants where I am mostly likely to meet people who are important to me					
56	I prefer to eat at the restaurants that contact me personally with special day greetings or advice on offers and events.					

### Part 3

In this part, I would like to ask you some questions about yourself.

What is your gender? Male  Female

Please choose your appropriate age group box

Below 20 years old  20-30 years old  31-40 years old  41-50 years old  51-60 years old  More than 60 years old

How long have you lived in this City? Please choose one

1 year or less  between 1 year and 5 years  more than 5 years  Most, or all, of my life

If 5 years or less, please specify your native city \_\_\_\_\_

Are you regularly online (via phone, tablet or computer)? Yes  No

Do you hold university degree? Yes  No

What is your occupation status? Please choose one.

Student  Professional  House wife/husband  Retired  Company employee  Government employee  Self-employed  Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for your cooperation!**

## Questionnaire Chinese Version

### 中餐厅顾客体验调查

Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 一. 您光临餐厅的基本情况

以下哪三个因素会对您选择餐厅产生较大的影响?

食物风格  食物多样性  服务质量  卫生条件  价格  便利性  用餐环境(气氛)  其他(请注明) \_\_\_\_\_

你大概每隔多长时间去一次餐厅用餐? 每天至少一次  每周至少一次  每月至少一次

您经常和谁一起去餐厅?请选择三个选项 家人  朋友  同事  客户  商业伙伴  其他(请注明) \_\_\_\_\_

请以“一家我以前从未光临过,但有可能去的餐厅”为前提,思考您对以下每种说法的认同程度,并在表明您的最佳选择的方框中打勾(单选)

☑

		极不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
1	我会查看餐厅的官方在线交流平台(例如,网站,微博)					
2	我会向同事/朋友/家人询问这家餐厅					
3	我会在报纸或杂志上了解这家餐厅					
4	我会查询餐厅的位置或地址					
5	我会提前了解价格					
6	我会查询这家餐厅是否有我想品尝的菜品					
7	我会询问这家餐厅的气氛/氛围					

☐

## 中餐厅顾客体验调查

Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

### 二.

基于您最近一次的餐厅体验，请思考您对以下每种说法的认同程度，并在表明您的最佳选择的方框中打勾(单选)

		极不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
8	我认为这家餐厅的菜单丰富多样					
9	我能找到我想吃的东西					
10	我对这家餐厅的卫生和清洁标准很满意					
11	我很乐意再次光顾这家餐厅					
12	这家餐厅提供的服务很周到					

以下的问题是关于您在一家餐厅中通常或可能的行为，请思考您对以下每种说法的认同程度，并在表明您的最佳选择的方框中打勾(单选)

		极不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
13	我通常会关注餐厅餐具和/或色调搭配和/或装饰					
14	我通常会注意餐厅的一些细节，例如，音乐或其他背景声音					
15	餐厅内的摆设和/或用品的质感会影响我的体验					
16	我喜欢了解餐厅食物的来源、准备、烹饪和酒水服务					
17	我喜欢浏览餐厅的网站并且乐意参加更多的在线互动					
18	我非常愿意尝试餐厅向我推荐/或在广告上看到的新的菜品					
19	我很高兴餐厅向我介绍前所未有的新奇餐厅体验					
20	相对于直接上菜，我更喜欢看到食物准备的过程					
21	餐厅越能让我融入到餐厅体验中，我就越喜欢它					
22	如果对食物或服务不满意，我会向餐厅工作人员抱怨					
23	我会经常联系餐厅工作人员并向他/她提出餐厅体验的改进建议					
24	如果对餐厅有帮助，我会在餐厅的社交软件或相关网站上发表意见					
25	在良好的用餐体验后，我可能会建议我的朋友和/或家人光临这家餐厅					
26	在良好的用餐体验后，我可能会在社交软件上发表有利的评论					
27	在良好的用餐体验后，我可能会在一些专业的网络论坛上(例如，点评网，到到网)发表有利的评论					

### 中餐厅顾客体验调查

Ref:

28	如果有顾客向我询问好吃的菜品，我会很乐意提供意见					
29	如果餐厅有留言板的话，我将会很主动地向其他用户提出建议					
30	如果我有一个不好的用餐体验，我认为必须告诉朋友和/或家人以避免相关餐厅					
31	如果餐厅的价格比我预期的高，我通常会支付并且没有抱怨					
32	如果餐厅的服务不如我想象的好，我通常会体谅并且不抱怨					
33	如果餐厅未达到我的期望，我通常会再试一次					

以下的问题是关于您以后将要选择的餐厅，请思考您对以下每种说法的认同程度，并在表明您的最佳选择的方框中打勾(单选)

		极不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
34	如果时间允许的话，我很乐意向餐厅员工建议如何更好的服务					
35	我很乐意与服务员交谈为了了解他们对应该如何提供服务的看法					
36	如果方便的话，我很乐意餐厅员工询问我对服务的期望和偏好					
37	我很乐意接受服务员对菜单和/或酒水单上的推荐					
38	如果理由充分，而且服务员请求恰当，我会乐意与其他顾客拼桌					
39	如果餐厅有规定或惯例，我会乐意注重我的着装					
40	如果服务员有礼貌地请求，我不会介意等待餐位					
41	如果我的菜品没有准备好或没有煮熟，我将要求替换它					
42	如果菜品或服务不是我喜欢的，我将请求与餐厅主管沟通					
43	如果我的菜品特别的棒，我将要求见主厨或请员工代转对他/她的谢意					
44	如果菜品不合我口味的的话，我将会要求增加调料/佐料以改善味道					
45	我通常会选择豪华/高档的餐厅					
46	我绝不会再去一个我曾经与员工争吵过或抱怨过食物和服务的餐厅					
47	我更愿意去一个服务员可以理解我和我的需求的餐厅					
48	我更愿意选择一个可以反映和体现我社会地位的餐厅					
49	在一个安静的餐厅环境，我将会感觉快乐					
50	如果我的朋友和家人对餐厅满意的话，我也将会尽量配合，即使我个人对餐厅有不满意的地方					
51	我总是会试图理解一家餐厅的服务标准和目标。					
52	对我而言，在餐厅用餐不仅仅是一种美食体验，更是一种社交活动/体验					
53	当我碰到好吃的菜品或是服务，我都会告知我的亲朋好友					

### 中餐厅顾客体验调查

Ref:

54	比起在一个餐厅的网站或社交(网络)媒体上发帖子,我通常更喜欢当面告知我的亲朋好友					
55	我喜欢在一个可以遇见熟人的地方用餐					
56	我更喜欢在一个向我发送节日问候或推荐特价和其他活动信息的餐厅用餐					

### 三. 您的个人信息

性别: 男  女

年龄: 20岁以下  20-30岁  31-40岁  41-50岁  51-60岁  60岁以上

您在这个城市居住了多久?

少于1年  1-5年  5年以上  绝大部分人生

如果少于5年,请说明您的家乡\_\_\_\_\_

您是否经常上网(例如,通过手机,平板,电脑等) 是  否

您是否拥有大学学历? 是  否

请说明您的职业:

学生  专业人士  家庭主妇/家庭妇男  退休  公司就职  政府就职  私营者  其他,请说明\_\_\_\_\_

问卷到此结束,非常感谢您的合作!