The solo female Asian tourist

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the travel motivations and experiences of solo female Asian tourists. Data were collected from ten in-depth interviews with a focus on Asian women's travel motivations, experiences and constraints. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Resistance was found to be an important factor as in order to travel solo, the participants had to resist sociocultural expectations for Asian women's behaviour. Sexualized male attention was also found to be an important constraint. Suffering harassment from men in the destinations they visited, the women became fearful of attack or abuse, and this limited their use of the leisure space offered at the destination. Being Asian was felt to further increase their vulnerability. None of these factors however deterred the women from future solo travel plans.

Key words

Introduction

An increasingly important segment of the fast-growing international tourism market is the solo traveller (Dempsey, 2015). This significant change in travel trends is influenced by a rising aging population of singles, an increasing number of single-person households, and, particularly in individualist cultures, a rise in delayed marriages and in childless couples (Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger, 2009). Jordan and Atkinson (2008) note in particular a substantial growth in women travelling independently. More recently, studies on solo female travellers have emerged (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Wilson & Little, 2005;2008). Research has shown that solo female travellers are interested in a life-changing experience, identity and self-empowerment (Wilson & Harris, 2006). However, they also show that women have to deal with undesired male attention, sexual harassment and violence (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore & Arcodia, 2015; Wilson & Little, 2005; 2008). The growing phenomenon of all-women travel groups has also been studied to understand travel motivations and activities (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2016; Gibson, Berdychevsky, & Bell, 2012; Khoo-Lattimore & Gibson, 2015; Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015).

Since the mid-1990s, gender has been widely discussed in the tourism literature. There has been a focus on the experiences of women in the tourism industry as producers and gendered hosts (Gibson, 2001), on their role in the tourism and hospitality industry as employees (Duffy, Kline, Mowatt, & Chancellor, 2015; Kan, Shi, Kung, & Zhou, 2014), and as providers in sex tourism (Bauer, 2014; Matos et al., 2013; Robertson et al., 2014; Ryan & Hall, 2001). The empowerment of women through their employment in the tourism industry has also received attention (Annes & Wright, 2015; Chugh, 2012; Doran, 2016; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Mrema,2014; Qureshi & Ahmed, 2012; Tamandanil, Bostani & Miri, 2015).

This study focuses on the solo female Asian tourist. Asia is gaining significance both as a tourism destination and a generating continent. It is predicted that more than 50% of the growth in global travel traffic will come from the Asia-Pacific region by 2030 (Budde et al., 2013). The majority of travellers come from China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, with China being the main contributor (Zhou, 2010). China leads global outbound travel, showing US$ 292 billion in tourism expenditure, an increase of 25%, in 2015 (UNWTO, 2016). For this reason Dioko (2016) calls for more research on the Asian travel

market.

A number of studies have addressed gender differences in leisure activities (Jönsson & Devonish, 2008; Lin, Wong, & Ho, 2015; Omar, Abooali, Mohamed & Mohamad, 2014; Richter & Theobald, 1995; Ryan, Henley, & Soutar, 1998; Zhou, 2010). However, most focus on the experiences of western tourists: there are few studies on Asian tourists despite the size of the market. This study therefore makes an important original contribution to the literature on both the solo female tourist experience and the Asian solo female tourist experience in particular. Through in depth interviews and the use of thematic analysis, this research aims to understand the travel motivations and experiences of and the constraints faced by female Asian solo travellers.

Literature Review

The theory that informs this study and aids data illumination is rooted in gender studies as applied to the tourism and leisure context. The literature review will thus focus on the leisure constraints faced by female tourists in general and by Asian female tourists in particular. There are commonalities in the female tourist experience but as this review and the findings show, there are circumstances that are unique to the Asian female travel experience that are tied to the Asian sociocultural context.

Leisure constraints

Historically, women have had to face gender-related obstacles in their journey to pursue leisure experiences. To varying degrees in different parts of the world, a stigma remains, and women are still constrained by cultural norms for gendered behaviour (Brown & Osman 2017).

The earliest known female travellers were pilgrims to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. However, history shows that travel was predominantly undertaken by men as it was said to 'augment a man's prestige but it diminished a women's reputation' (Khan, 2011, p. 108). During the height of the world exploration boom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travellers labelled as adventurers and explorers were generally male (Little & Wilson, 2005; Wilson & Harris, 2006). Only a minority of women were able to afford the privilege, funds and the social status to travel

(Robinson, 1990). Travelling, especially travelling solo, was deemed to show a lack of modesty (Khan, 2011). Nevertheless, women did find ways to travel, particularly in the 19th century, which was considered the golden age of travel (Robinson, 1994). Towards the 1970s, the changing role of women had a significant impact on the travel market, though their potential went unrecognised by marketers (Bartos, 1982), and public leisure remained largely a male domain (Rybczynski, 1991).

Tourism is a socio-cultural phenomenon in that the experiences of the traveller are influenced by cultural forces, including gender (Gibson, Jordan & Berdychevsky, 2013). According to the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (2016), gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women.

Leisure opportunities have long been divided along gender lines as gender can act as a limitation in making travel arrangements and decisions (Wilson & Little 2005). Leisure constraints refer to the factors that hinder a person's ability to participate, spend time and attain desired levels of satisfaction in leisure activities (Jackson & Henderson, 1995). Gendered differences in travel constraints are conceptualised as a representation of the underlying unequal distribution of power relations in a patriarchal society (Wilson & Little, 2008). For example, Khan's (2011) comparative study of gender and travel in India reveals that women are more restricted in terms of familial responsibilities and are obliged to adhere to strict social norms.

Violence towards women is a further constraint, though clearly not limited to the tourism industry. Generally, the primary targets of gender-based violence are women and adolescent girls (United Nations Population Funds, 2008). Wilson and Little (2008) used Valentine's (1989) concept of the 'geography of women's fear' to understand how women perceive certain travel destinations to be limiting and risky. Some areas are deemed unsafe for female travellers due to the reaction and attitudes of the locals towards solo female travellers. Furthermore when women travel solo, it is almost impossible to escape the risk of being objectified in the form of staring and sexual harassment, and this applies to many destinations (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008). In response to harassment, Jordan and Aitchison (2008) observe the female tourist tendency

towards self-surveillance. To avoid the sexualised gaze, women frequently remove themselves from public view, thus curtailing their opportunities for walking around the streets alone, for meeting members of the host community and other travellers.

Leisure Constraints on Asian Women

In the Eastern part of the world, the history of women's travels has been excluded from the social history of leisure and travel, even though Chinese women's participation in leisure activities in the form of gardening extends back to the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) (Guo, 2014). The idea that leisure was related to a woman's identity was elaborated by Shan Shili (1856-1943), the first Chinese female traveller who published a travelogue of her overseas adventures. The travelogue promoted female empowerment and encouraged other Chinese women to pursue education and independent travel (Widmer, 2006).

Most studies on the constraints faced by female travellers have focused on the experiences of western women. Teo and Leong (2006) and Yang et al. (2016) suggest that risks are intensified for Asian women because of the different gender ideology projected on them. For example, Green and Singleton's (2006) study on the leisure experiences of young white and South Asian women in England showed that Asian women were more concerned about risking their family's reputation when using public leisure spaces whilst white respondents did not share the same perception. Studies have suggested that Asian women are commonly projected as fearful and dependent, therefore they are not suitable (Teo & Leong 2006) nor are they inclined (Cai & Combrink 2000) to travel independently. However, Gou (2014) in her research on Chinese women's travel history reveals that Chinese women have been defying the odds since the end of the Ming Dynasty.

Asia women in general face oppression from the patriarchal ideologies that influence behaviour in the region. In this study, the women interviewed were East Asian. In East Asia, due to the widespread influence of the Confucian ideology, society used to be regulated around patriarchal power (Tsai, 2006) with men at the head of the family. A woman's role was confined to the house and limited to household matters. They were to cater to the needs of male relatives, relying on their fathers when they young, husbands when married and sons if they became widowed. In traditional Asian society, women generally did not participate in society as men did. From a

young age, women were taught the virtues of submission and endurance while carrying out their duties in the household. A leading female figure who strongly supported women's position in the Confucian ideology was Ban Zhao (c.a. 45-120) (Swann 1932) who wrote that ideal womanhood is defined by a woman obeying her husband just as a slave obeys her master. Although Asian women were deprived of any involvement in political matters, at an individual level, women could exploit their role as mothers, wives, daughters or sexual partners (Andaya, 2006).

Even in the age of modernity, many Asian women still willingly accept their subordination to men as it is thought to lead to a harmonious society. Their subordination while culturally inclined, deprives these Asian women from fully indulging in leisure activities. For example in Taiwan, women believe that their 'duty' is to their family and that leisure activities undermines traditional teachings (Tsai, 2006). According to Asian tradition, women who defy this norm are considered immoral and scandalous (Asia Sentinel, 2006). However, research has recognised that the societal oppression of Asian women has had many negative effects particularly in the area of mental health among women (see Zhang and Liu 2012). Despite societal oppression, Yang et al. (2016) found that Asian solo female travellers showed resistance against Asian gender norms through solo travelling, requiring them to transform themselves and be tough in the face of risk.

Solo female tourist motivations

Solo female travel is rising and more research is needed to understand this phenomenon (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013). Women travel for various reasons, and this applies to women travelling solo or in all-female groups. It is also important to note that motivations evolve across the life cycle (Gibson et al., 2012). Escape is a common push factor for solo female tourists (Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Butler, 1995; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; Poria, 2006; Stone and Nichol 1999; Wilson & Harris 2006). Junek, Binney and Winn (2006) also found that the benefits of an all-female travel party included a relaxed atmosphere, time for self-indulgence and increased feelings of safety. Wilson and Harris (2006) found that a search for self-identity, self-empowerment, an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem were important, while McNamara and Prideaux (2010) revealed that solo female travellers aim to challenge themselves and extend their comfort zone. In Yang et al.'s (2016) study of risk perception in Asian solo female travellers, travelling solo is cast as a transformative experience. Meanwhile, Chiang and Jogaratnam (2005) reveal that the most influential motivating factor for travelling solo to be an adventurous experience. Researchers have attempted to provide tourism marketers and suppliers

with tips for product development and service enhancement for this market segment (Khoo-Lattimore & Gibson, 2015; Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015).

Solo female Asian tourist motivations

The experiences of Asian travellers have been given minimal scholarly attention. Investigations into the experiences of solo female travellers have adopted a western-centric viewpoint by focusing on Western women. Studies have mostly focused on western guests as travellers in Asia (Winter, Teo, & Chang, 2008). Examples include a study on tourists' risk perceptions in Sabah, Malaysia (Yang, Sharif, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015), and the risks of travelling to Asia during the influenza outbreak (Aro, Vartti, Schreck, Turtiainen, & Uutela, 2009).

Studies on the motivations of Asian travellers in general, are limited, though there is acknowledgement of differences in motivations among male and female Asian travellers (Bui, Wilkins, & Lee, 2014; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002). Cai and Combrink's (2000) study found that Japanese female travellers prioritised lifelong learning, relaxation and escape while Japanese male tourists placed more emphasis on safety, art, environment history and cultural uniqueness. Asian women are commonly projected as fearful and dependent (Teo & Leong, 2006) and disinclined to travel independently (Cai & Combrink, 2000). However, Li, Wen and Leung's (2011) study of the travel motivations of Chinese outbound female travellers to Hong Kong showed that Chinese women are happy to travel independently for shopping. Clearly there is more scope for investigations into Asian tourist motivations and experiences, particularly in the light of growing tourism demand from Asia (Choi & Chu, 2000; Dioko 2016; Qu & Im 2002) . This study is unusual in that it does not adopt a western-centric perspective; it also adds to the growing literature on the solo female tourist by focusing on the Asian dimension.

Methodology

As feminist tourism researchers, we understand that an analysis of female tourism experiences must include a consideration of gender and power relations, given their influence on women's leisure decisions and practices (Scraton and Watson 1998; Wilson & Little 2008). As Pritchard and Morgan (2000) and Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2015) note, women and men are involved

differently in the consumption and construction of tourism, and a feminist analysis of tourism must bear this in mind. We categorise this as a feminist study because our participants are female tourists who were encouraged by us, the female researchers, to reflect on how gender impacted on their holiday experiences and motivations. Furthermore, the Malaysian author of the paper offers a privileged insider perspective on the findings, through a feminist understanding of the role of women in Asian society, and as an experienced solo traveller, of the constraints faced by Asian women wishing to travel independently.

Data Collection

Our feminist epistemological stance meant that only a qualitative approach could give access to data on a sensitive research topic (see Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). Feminist researchers commonly advocate qualitative methods for the voice they give to female participants, as well as for the importance attached in qualitative research to the rapport established between researchers and participants (Flick, 2014). This was particularly important in this study, given that the interviewer (the lead author) is herself Asian and an experienced solo female traveller. She has faced challenges while travelling alone in relation to her physical appearance which has led to an uncomfortable feeling of standing out from the crowd. This experience gave her empathy with the participants she interviewed.

In-depth one-to-one semi structured interviews were used as they allowed participants to express themselves freely on a potentially sensitive topic. Rubin and Rubin (2012) note that in-depth semi structured interviews permit the exploration of differing perspectives, experiences and opinions. A flexible approach was taken allowing participants to lead discussion; this is particularly important in an exploratory study on a topic on which relatively little is known. Thus each interview proceeded differently, depending on the interviewees' reflections on their experiences. The following topics guided the interviews: solo travel history, motivations for travelling solo, travel experiences, and constraints related to being a woman and being Asian. Interviews were conducted in English as the lingua franca of the participants and interviewer.

Participants

Ten East Asian women were interviewed over a two-week period in mid July 2016. Five of the interviews were undertaken face to face in the UK which consisted of international students and travellers visiting the UK. However, to achieve a broader age range and a variety in nationalities, the other interviews were carried using social media applications such as Skype. Each interview lasted an average of 45 minutes. Purposive and convenience sampling was employed in order to select information-rich individuals (Jones, Brown & Holloway, 2013). The participants had to be female, Asian, with experience of solo travel for leisure, one of which had to be international. Participants were also identified through snowball sampling, which utilizes the network of initial participants to nominate other participants who meet the eligible criteria for the study. As this could produce similarities in terms of age range, social status and ethnic background, an attempt was made to broaden the sample and to seek women with wider travelling experiences, ethnic background, and a broader age range, which ranged from 24 to 60. It was felt that data saturation was reached after conducting 10 interviews. Ethical considerations were paramount: for example pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. A participant information sheet and a consent letter were given to participants and all interviews were recorded with permission from participants. Finally, participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the project, including during the interview itself.

Participant Profile

NAME	AGE	NATIONALITY	TRAVELLED SOLO	COUNTRIES TRAVELLED
Ting	27	Taiwanese	Multiple	Paris, Budapest, Slovakia, Ireland, England, Hong Kong
Song	34	Korean	Multiple	Hong Kong, Melbourne
Phan	25	Vietnamese	Multiple	Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Finland
Leng	27	Vietnamese	Multiple	Germany, England, Scotland, Belgium, Italy,
Ailin	25	Taiwanese	Multiple	Australia (Sydney

				Melbourne),Japan, Austria, Germany
Suling	40	Malaysian-Australian	Multiple	Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, Thailand, S Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, India, China, Indonesia, Chile, Peru, Argentina, New Zealand, England, France, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Czech, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, UAE, America
Kai	24	Taiwanese	Once	Germany, Austria, Czech, England, Scotland
Rong	26	Chinese	Multiple	China, New Zealand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos
Vicky	32	Indonesian	Multiple	China, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, France
Lee	60	Malaysia	Multiple	St Antonio Texas USA, Paris, London, Sydney Australia

Data Analysis

The process of analysis was completed by the lead researcher. This study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which involved the processes of familiarisation, coding and categorising the data. The interviews were firstly transcribed, and then read and re-read several times to note initial ideas. During subsequent coding, a total of 145 codes were created and grouped to form the following themes: solo travel motivations, testing inner resources and travel fears. These are reflected in the structure of the findings section.

Findings and discussion

Motivations for travelling solo

Freedom and flexibility

In this study, all ten women interviewed cited freedom and flexibility as the main reasons why they chose to travel solo. Rong for example spoke about how travelling solo allowed her to prioritise her own needs:

'It is so flexible to just cater to your own needs rather than try to satisfy everybody when you travel in a group.'

The participants' itinerary was often unfixed and evolved en route. Ting considered herself a *'lazy traveller'* who preferred to *'follow my own pace'*. Travelling alone meant that participants were in control of their days, as Ailin notes:

'It's really, really convenient to travel by myself, I love that. I can make all the decisions by myself, I don't have to discuss with anyone.'

This study finds an echo in the literature: Bianchi (2016) also noted freedom as a primary travel motivation for solo travellers (though her participants were both male and female). Meanwhile, Hyde and Lawson (2003) identified three characteristics of independent travel, which are found in this study: the traveller experiences an evolving itinerary, is willing to take risks and is spontaneous.

Where this study differs however is in the notion that participants resisted Asian social norms for women's behaviour through their decision to travel solo. The concept of solo travel is still foreign in Asian culture, due to conservative Asian values and social norms (Teo & Leong 2006). Yang et al. (2016) state that female Asian tourists resist cultural expectations of women simply by travelling solo. As Wearing (1998) notes, it is in their leisure space that women can challenge and resist dominant discourses of subordination. Suling observed that her friends and family tried to subvert her travel plans through tales of danger, which she had to ignore, whilst Rong told of surmounting obstacles placed in her way by her family:

'I guess the one thing that people always say to me is, 'don't travel alone', but I'm doing it anyway. Sometimes people find it strange, females travelling alone. They ask me why aren't I with my friends. I think the most important thing is that I need to convince my family before I do any solo travelling and that was the most challenging part.'

This study shows that Asian women have to resist disapprobation in order to go ahead with their solo travel plans. Resistance towards cultural norms is important in their solo travel decisions. Jordan and Gibson (2005) state that tourism is an arena where women can practise resistance to gendered stereotypes, resulting in feelings of empowerment. This study offers support for this statement, but reveals that much effort has to be put into overcoming others' reservations.

Escape

For several participants, the desire to travel alone was linked to moments of identity crisis. Two participants for example felt the need to travel when their relationship broke up.

'I broke up with my ex and I purposely force myself to travel because I wanted to keep my mind busy.' Suling

'I broke up with my ex-boyfriend, so I was brave! I was so sad but I think, it's ok, a lot of beauty around me and I felt good. They actually comfort me, I think its healing for me.' Kai

Travelling enabled these participants to emerge from a state of unhappiness. Meanwhile, Ting decided to travel when she was between jobs:

'I think travelling alone would be best for me because that time I just quit my job and I think I have a lot of thinking to do, so I just decided to go travelling by myself. I think I will travel solo again, because I'm thinking of quitting my job.'

For the above participants, the decision to travel arose from awareness that a significant phase in their life had ended; there was a disconnection from personal and/or professional demands. Such times in a person's life are described by Giddens (1991, p. 112) as "fateful moments", times of transition points in people's lives. These can lead to decisions that have transformative power, and as many studies have noted, tourism has transformative potential (see O'Reilly 2006; Brown 2009).

Several participants saw solo travelling as a means of escape from daily routine and domestic demands. As mothers, partners, students and employees, participants saw their trip as a time to be free and to reflect on life. Solo travel provided a greater focus on self where a new identity could be formed and they could afford to place more importance on their own well-being, as Rong observed:

'I just need to be with myself, be with where I am. When I dine alone and travel alone, that's the time where I feel like I am just in touch with myself, in touch with what I am given, just being with myself and 100% focused on myself. I really need the alone time to reconnect, which is why I kind of need me-time. I think it's a nice way to explore the world, not being interrupted, not being disturbed and not distracted. If I'm admiring a mountain, then I'm admiring a mountain, nothing else. My mind is blank; all I have is the mountain itself.'

Vicky travelled solo regularly in order to access her inner world:

'Solo travelling gives me time to think about my life again, it just feels like I have contact with myself and that's why I still travel alone from time to time.'

Escaping their everyday routine gave participants the opportunity to reassess and find meaning in their lives, as Rong noted:

'Sometimes people need to take a step back and look introspectively as well. I think it's a good thing to do for oneself. I think it's a good thing to do for all people to just reconnect with yourself and the surroundings. You can really focus: you are feeling the place, feeling where you are rather than feeling you and your friends. You are really into the place, in the present moment and you are in touch with it.'

This study therefore echoes other studies, such as those by Hottola (2004), O'Reilly (2006) and Tucker (2005), who state that tourism offers an opportunity not only for pleasure but also for self-exploration, as the removal from the home environment allows tourists to develop a stronger sense of self.

The lack of a companion

Some participants travelled solo because no one else could go with them, as Bianchi (2016) and Mehmetoglu, Dann and Larsen (2001) also found. However, this finding only seemed relevant to their first solo trip.

'Travelling solo wasn't a choice, I couldn't find anyone who could be my appropriate travel companion.' Leng

'I only travelled alone at first because I couldn't find a good time to travel with my friends.' Song

Solo travel may not appeal at first to many Asian women travellers because of the expectations placed on women in Asian society. However, this study notes in addition that the cultural norms for collectivist society may be influential. The participants were all from countries that score low

(below 20) on individualism (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), and they all acknowledged the influence of collectivist culture, as Ting reflected: *'I think in Asia, people really cannot be without friends.'* Pan also referred to a common desire to be in a group:

'I think because they are very Asian-minded, my friends, they think we always need to be in a group, they don't want to be separated because of individual interest.'

Once they had undertaken their first solo trip, however, participants found that they enjoyed being alone:

'I went to Germany with my friend and she met a cute guy there, so I ended up travelling by myself. At that time I really really liked travelling alone, so afterwards, I planned to travel alone by myself.' Ting

Subsequently, they chose to undertake multiple solo trips, confounding sociocultural expectations and confirming that travel motivations are influenced by previous travel experiences (see Pearce and Lee 2005).

Testing inner resources

Participants found that solo travel increased their independence. They had to learn to manage their arrangements themselves and to be in charge of their own destiny, knowing they only had themselves to rely on.

'When things go wrong I tend to panic more, because you are in a situation, you're doing it by yourself, you can't leave it to somebody else. When things are right, I really enjoy myself, I'm really proud of myself. There is a sense of achievement and success when things go according to plan, or when you've enjoyed yourself, or when you found the place without any difficulties, there's a sense of achievement you feel, that you would not get if you travelled with somebody else.' Lee

Participants found an inner strength that they were not aware of, they experienced a sense of accomplishment if they managed to overcome an obstacle, as Kai commented:

'I felt I can do what I want and I can overcome all the difficulties because I travelled alone, I believed in myself. I have learned how to get along with myself well and I have found how brave I have never been before.'

As Milstein (2005) notes, tourists undergo a journey of self-discovery as removal from the comfort of the familiar forces them to test and stretch their resourcefulness and to revise their self-understanding. A connection between travel and improved self-confidence is also supported in studies of the impact of the gap year (Inkson and Myers 2003). In this study, self-efficacy was cast as the product of the confrontation with hardship, and the ensuing increase in self-confidence can be said to be further prized because participants managed to confound the stereotype of the weak woman that Asian culture projects on them.

Participants also spoke of increased confidence in making social contacts. Indeed, the opportunity for social interaction was valued:

'There are always people in my life. When I'm visiting a new place there is always people there that I will meet. There is always a friend that I will make.' Suling

Furthermore, Suling stated that opportunities to meet people, to share experiences and exchange stories are greater during a solo trip than when travelling in groups:

'You tend to experience a whole wider range of things, like your experiences are wider. You definitely talk to more people and from there you start to learn and share things with different types of people, with different perspectives.'

Rong encountered some difficulties during her trip and it was the kindness of strangers that helped her, which she found touching:

'I met a lot of very kind-hearted people, total strangers, people who will take me to the good food places and even paid for my bill. Those are moments that I really cherish. It's like in your day to day life, it's sometimes, you forget to appreciate all these. When solo travelling, when you really need help and these help are rendered to you, it feels like, wow, you know this world is really beautiful! That's another thing I love about solo travelling.'

Lee felt similarly:

'I was lost a lot and I was alone and I didn't have my partner, I ended up having to ask people, so I ended up finding out more about a country because I asked more questions and make more friends than if I travelled with somebody else.'

It is important to stress that in this study, however, meeting new friends was not a primary motivation for the solo trip, as Wilson and Harris (2006) and Bianchi (2016) suggest, but rather an unanticipated benefit acquired from the solo adventure.

Conversely, women sometimes, as in McArthur's (1999)'s study, acknowledged that they experienced moments where they would like to share their experience with a companion, as Leng noted:

'At some point, I did feel a bit lonely. I felt like I wanted to share this experience with some other people, that's why I said in future, I would not specifically choose to travel alone it's just something we have to do if we have no other option.'

For Suling, taking photographs was challenging:

'The one thing I don't like about travelling alone is the photos; I'm never in the fucking photos! I always like to take photos of places and people there, and animals and plants and scenery or whatever it is, and then I realise, 'oh shit, I don't have photos of myself!"

Eating meals alone was discomfiting, as Pan commented:

'I felt quite sad and lonely, like eating alone, nobody to go with me to enjoy beer or enjoy dinner especially in Venice, I see all the couples around. Nobody went alone except for me. I wished I had somebody with me at that time.'

As Jordan and Gibson (2005) found, dining is often conceptualised as 'couple space', thus solo dining can however be a fraught experience (Meiselman, 2000) Wilson and Little (2005) and Bianchi (2016) found loneliness to be a constraint in their studies of solo travel, but the women in this study were not overly impacted by their solo status despite their occasional discomfort. Instead they felt gratified by the resilience they developed when their solo trips were tested and enhanced.

Constrained by fear

Participants spoke of fear as a factor that limited their enjoyment of their trip. Their fear derived from their status as lone female travellers and their perception of their own vulnerability as Asian women. Participants offered details of harassment, such as being groped and attempted robbery, as shown in the examples below:

'I remember one night when I took a bus in London, and there is a man sitting beside me. He start touching me sometimes. And at that moment I just really panicked, because this was my first time meeting this kind of situation. I wanted to shout but sometimes I felt 'oh maybe I can wait, I

will take off very soon'. At that moment I just felt that no one can help me because no one knows me there and I'm just traveller there. I just felt scared.' Kai

'I was at a bar, a police officer come over and said that I was doing illegal money trading and wanted to examine my purse and to show him my money, and I was really in bad mood so I said I don't have any money, back off and I ran back to my hostel. The hostel staff told me it was a fake police officer, if I showed him my money, he will grab it and run away. It's a very bad experience, with all the threat around you, they just see you like a "fat meat".' Ting

In all of the women's stories, there were accounts of unwanted sexual comments and harassment. They felt uncomfortable and helpless under the sexualised scrutiny of men, uncomfortably aware of the male gaze. As Francombe (2014, p. 595) notes, "bodies are lived and experienced in a sense that impacts on everyday life". This was found in our study, where the uncomfortable impact of the gaze on the embodied experience of the trip was pronounced. Participants reported being seen as the 'weaker' sex, especially when they travelled alone:

'You are always seen to be weak, immediately. Physically, even in people's eyes, the unconscious biasness is you are weak and if there are people who want to target you, you're targeted. There are a lot of restrictions and constraints being a female.' Suling

Awareness of being physically weaker than most men increased during their solo trip, and instilled a feeling of vulnerability. There was a constant sense of fear, which was physically and emotionally draining, particularly of being sexually assaulted, as Suling explained:

'Being raped is the biggest thing that scares you really, you think not twice, a lot of times, because that is the only thing that differs between you and a guy.'

Participants saw it as their responsibility to avoid potential danger, and strategized accordingly. This was a form of self-surveillance that would help to keep them safe. This meant that they were frequently constrained in the nature of their leisure activities. Suling for example mentioned being constantly vigilant, not taking food or beverages from unknown sources for fear of being drugged:

'I do take care of what I drink and what I eat, and who I accept or don't accept. And I'll say 100%, of the time that I'm travelling I never take food or drinks from anyone other than the one that I buy for myself.'

Participants were so risk-averse that when they encountered sexual harassment, they blamed themselves for not being more alert. Rather than placing responsibility on perpetrators, women

often blame themselves for placing themselves in vulnerable situations (Wilson & Little, 2008). As Wilson and Little (2008, p. 182) state, women need to do "what's safe, right and sensible to keep themselves out of harm's way".

Night time in an unfamiliar country was regarded as dangerous for the solo female traveller: it was agreed to be the primary constraint and this confined participants to their accommodation as they did not want to compromise their safety.

'I just was just afraid of the darkness, because when it's dark, after midnight, I think it's not safe to be alone at night as a girl. Crimes and stuff...' Song

'Because I am a girl and I travel alone, we shouldn't be outside when it was very dark. I didn't dare go out after 6, and even when it was nice, like the weather was nice like that I had to go back to the hostel very early. And I just stayed in the room, I felt really unsafe to be outside.' Pan

Participants restricted themselves to a time they considered safe; each had their own perception of a safe time. Vicky for example *'kept track of time outside the hotel. Maybe I don't go out anywhere after 10 pm alone, because it would be more dangerous. I don't go to dark places, late night alone.'* In their study of the racism experienced by international students in the UK, Brown and Jones (2013) similarly found that night time was considered dangerous by Asian students whose external appearance (i.e. physical stature, skin colour) made them stand out made them a target of drunk men in particular.

Their status as Asian women was indeed a constraint, making them stand out from the predominantly Caucasian crowd, as Rong observed:

'Male drivers will just roll down the window and just whistle at you because I'm an Asian young girl; they would do that to me quite frequently.'

Song also felt that she received more attention in European countries:

'I felt people were looking at me differently, and sometimes I felt offended by it, if I travel to places where there are no Asians, like Malta.'

This study highlights that being an Asian solo female traveller in a western environment further intensified the feeling of vulnerability. This has been noted in studies on international students (see Brown and Jones 2013), but it has not received attention in the tourism literature to date.

Even though fear was cited as a constraint, it was not a deterrent, as eight out of the ten participants were eager to continue to travel alone and would recommend other women do so at least once in their life:

'It's an amazing feeling, it's an amazing experience: it's very important to have me time, to be in your solitude.' Suling

'Yes I would do it again, I really recommend it to everyone, if you have the time and the chance you must go travelling alone once in your lifetime. Kai

Finally, Vicky, with much enthusiasm cried, *'of course! Still doing it!* Resistance was therefore again found to be important, in this instance, it manifests in a determination to travel solo despite the perceived risks that the women had to manage and negotiate. Having said that, a country's attitudes towards and treatment of women determined whether a destination was worth travelling to. India was often mentioned as a country where participants would not travel solo:

'Had it been India, I wouldn't have done it, travelling alone.' Lee

Suling was the only participant who had travelled alone to India. However, she observed that:

'India was a place with the highest rape count: the value of a female in India is very low. The odds were stacked against me.'

In their qualitative study of solo female tourists, Wilson and Little (2008) use Valentine's (1989) concept of the 'geography of women's fear' to reveal that women perceive access to certain tourist destinations and places to be restricted due to local attitudes toward solo female tourists. Entire countries and regions are perceived as 'unsafe' or 'off-limits'.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to and expands on the literature on the female tourist experience by focusing on the experiences of Asian women travelling solo. This study focused on the motivations for women to travel alone and on their travel experiences. Travel motivations were multifaceted, ranging from a desire to be alone, to reflect on life or to escape from mundane

responsibilities. In this, our study is confirmatory of previous studies on solo female tourists (see Stone and Nichol (1999). A further reason to travel alone was due to the lack of a travel companion. This was also documented as a motivation in Bianchi's (2016) study; however, unlike Bianchi's (2016) study, our study shows that this applied only to the participants' first solo experience. Once they had experienced a solo trip, they were determined to travel alone again. Solo travel had a great effect on self-development, however, our findings suggests that this was not the primary motivation. This finding contradicts previous studies on the travel motivation of solo female travellers, which cited this as a push factor (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2005; 2008). Whilst the solo trip provoked a sense of independence and accomplishment, these were post-travel benefits rather motivations for travelling alone.

This study highlights the importance of resistance in Asian women's decision to travel solo. The sociocultural background of participants in this study was an important factor in their experiences. Participants had to challenge and resist societal constraints and gender expectations in order to undertake their trip. In their decision to travel solo, they defied sociocultural expectations of them as Asian women. Previous research on Asian tourists by Teo and Leong (2006), Cai and Combrink (2000) and Yang et al. (2015) notes that Asian women are less inclined to travel alone due to social constraints linked to the cultural, societal and gender context. Our participants faced similar constraints but were determined to resist the pressure put on them to travel in company. In addition, participants were also therefore deviating from and resisting the norm for togetherness that is typical of a collectivist culture, in which people are socialized into cohesive, protective in-groups that offer a lifetime of security and companionship (Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985).

An important travel constraint faced by participants once their trip was underway was unwanted sexualised male attention. Jordan and Gibson (2005) define sexual harassment as unwanted, uninvited and sexualised male attention. The sexualised male gaze has been documented in other studies of the female tourist experience. What distinguishes this study is that participants felt that their Asian heritage brought them more attention from men: their Asian appearance set them apart and made them more vulnerable. The women were subject to harassment on a regular basis, which impacted negatively on their experience. Their negative experiences fed their fears of being targets of harassment by men, which in turn curtailed their enjoyment of the trip, as they adapted their behaviour in order to protect themselves. As Vera-Grey (2017) observes, women commonly adopt coping strategies to ward off attention and danger. This study reveals that self-

surveillance impacts on the embodied experiences of solo female tourists, who use the tourist landscape differently from men. To keep themselves safe, participants limited their enjoyment of the destination to the daytime, as night time was deemed to be risky and even dangerous. As Jordan and Aitchison (2008) note, women's ability to enjoy a destination is challenged by their status as potential targets for unwanted male attention and harassment. It is important to stress however that despite their safety fears, all participants were determined to keep travelling alone, even though all cited harassment as a problematic factor that prevented them from fully enjoying their trip.

The unique contribution made by this paper to the literature on the solo female tourist lies in its emphasis on the cultural background of the participants. Being Asian affected the ease with which they decided to and were 'allowed' to travel solo, and it affected their embodied tourist experience, exacerbating the harassment that lone women are often subject to and the strategies adopted to ward off unwanted attention and possible danger.

Implications

This study provides some insights into Asian female travellers who prefer an independent form of travel. Since safety was identified as one of the main concerns of Asian solo female travellers, destination managers could promote a safer travel space for these Asian female travellers to ensure they feel secure and comfortable with their surroundings while undertaking their solo adventures.

The Asian international travel market is growing exponentially. By understanding the motivations of Asian solo female travellers, tourism providers will be able to focus their marketing strategies towards providing more comprehensive services towards this market segment. Industry players should place emphasis beyond developed markets such as China and Japan, and look towards other developing economies in Southeast Asia which have the potential to become future outbound markets.

The findings of this study also have practical implications. Women-only travel is a growing segment of the international travel market, and solo travel is also a market niche that has grown in popularity in recent years (Heimtun & Abelsen 2013). The single supplement is an issue and a possible deterrent for solo travellers (Rosenbloom 2013). If travel companies and hotels drop their surcharges, they might experience short term losses, but in the long run, they would gain the loyalty of solo travellers. Vargo and Lusch (2004) state the importance of understanding

customer experiences and developing new ways to co-create value with customers. Some hospitality providers have already taken the initiative to cater for this market niche. For example, the MGallery properties of Accord hotels has created a programme called 'inspired by her' to cater to the needs of solo female travellers, with various services such as priority in choosing the location and size of their room and special amenities (Long, 2014).

Future research

This study has indicated the importance of resistance in the travel behaviour of female Asian tourists as well as in the sense of heightened attention from men that being Asian brings. It is suggested that future research further examines these two areas to more fully understand the pre-trip experience and the constraints faced by female Asian tourists. The participants have articulated their discontentment on how Asian women were often stereotyped and stigmatised while on their travels. Future research should focus on the discrimination faced by participants and how these negative experiences effect their future travel decisions.

References

Andaya, B. W. (2006). *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia.* Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press.

Annes, A., & Wright, W. (2015). 'Creating a room of one's own': French farm women, agritourism and the pursuit of empowerment. *Women's Studies International Forum, 53*, 1-11. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2015.08.002

Aro, A. R., Vartti, A. M., Schreck, M., Turtiainen, P., & Uutela, A. (2009). Willingness to take travel-related health risks--a study among Finnish tourists in Asia during the avian influenza outbreak. *International Journal Of Behavioral Medicine, 16*(1), 68-73. doi:10.1007/s12529-008-9003-7

Asia Sentinel (2006). *The Changing Roles of Women in Asia — From Bedroom to Boardroom.* R etrieved from: http://www.asiasentinel.com/opinion/the-changing-roles-of-women-in-asia -from-bedroom-to-boardroom/

Bartos, R. (1982). Women and travel. *Journal of Travel Research 20*(4), 3-9

Bauer, I. L. (2014). Romance tourism or female sex tourism? *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease, 12*(1), 20-28. doi:10.1016/j.tmaid.2013.09.003

Berdychevsky, L., Gibson, H. J., & Bell, H. L. (2013). Girlfriend Getaways and Women's Well-

Being. *Journal of Leisure Research, 45*(5), 602-623.

Berdychevsky, L., Gibson, H. J., & Bell, H. L. (2016). "Girlfriend getaway" as a contested term: Discourse analysis. *Tourism Management, 55*, 106-122. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2016.02.001

Bianchi, C. (2016). Solo Holiday Travellers: Motivators and Drivers of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 18*(2), 197-208. doi:10.1002/jtr.2049

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3* (2), 77-101.

Brown, L. (2009) The transformative power of the international sojourn: an ethnographic study of the international student experience *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36, 3, 502-521

Brown, L. & Jones, I. (2013). Encounters with racism and the international student experience *Studies in Higher Education, 38* (7), 1004-1019

Brown, L. & Osman, H. (2017). The female tourist experience in Egypt as an Islamic destination *Annals of Tourism Research*, in press

Budde, F., ,Tranter, P., Fechtel, A., Wise, A., Liu, V., & Milunsky, T., (2013) *Winning the Next Billion Asian Travelers—Starting with China.* Retrieved from : https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/transportation_travel_tourism_globaliz ation_winning_billion_asian_travelers_starting_china

Bui, H. T., Wilkins, H., & Lee, Y. S. (2014). Liminal experience of East Asian backpackers. *TOURIST STUDIES, 14*(2), 126-143.

Butler, K. L. (1995). Independence for Western Women Through Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 22* (2), 487-489.

Cai, L. A., & Combrink, T. E. (2000). Japanese female - a unique outbound market. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 5*(1), 16-24.

Chiang, C.-Y., & Jogaratnam, G. (2006). Why do women travel solo for purposes of leisure? *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 12*(1), 59.

Choi, T. Y., & Chu, R. (2000). Levels of satisfaction among asian and western travellers. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management, 17*(2), 116-131. doi:10.1108/02656710010304537

Chugh, S. R. (2012). Empowering women through tourism: a study of Kullu Valley. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism, 1*(2), 215-227.

Dempsey, C. (2015). *Visa Global Travel Intentions Study 2015*. New Zealand: Visa

Dioko, L. A. N. (2016). What needs re-thinking in services management in the dawning age of Asian travellers? *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 8*(1), 97-104.

Doran, A. (2016). Empowerment and women in adventure tourism: a negotiated journey. *Journal of Sport & Tourism, 20*(1), 57-80.

Duffy, L. N., Kline, C. S., Mowatt, R. A., & Chancellor, H. C. (2015). Women in tourism: Shifting gender ideology in the DR. *Annals of Tourism Research, 52*, 72-86.

Figueroa-Domecq, C., Pritchard, A., Segovia-Perez, M., Morgan, N. & Villace-Moliero, T. (2015). Tourism gender research: a critical accounting. Annals of Tourism Research, 52, 87-103.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research*: Los Angeles : SAGE, 2014. Edition 5.

Francombe, J., 2014. Learning to leisure: femininity and practices of the body, *Leisure Studies*,

33(6): 580-597.

Gibson, H. J. (2001). Gender in tourism: theoretical perspectives. In Y. Apostolopoulos, S. Sönmez, & D. J. Timothy (Eds.), *Women as producers and consumers of tourism in developing regions*. Westport; USA: Praeger Publishers.

Gibson, H. J., Berdychevsky, L., & Bell, H. L. (2012). Girlfriend getaways over the life course: change and continuity. *Annals of Leisure Research, 15*(1), 38-54. doi:10.1080/11745398.2012.670963

Gibson, H. J., Jordan, F., & Berdychevsky. L. (2013). Women and Tourism. In: Freysinger, V., Shaw, S., Henderson, K., Bialeschki, D., eds *Leisure, women and gender*, 3rd edition, State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 229-244

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in Late-Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Green, E., & Singleton, C. (2006). Risky Bodies at Leisure: Young Women Negotiating Space and Place, *Sociology,* (5) 853.

Guo, Y. (2014). Chinese women and travel: historical and contemporary experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research, 46*, 179-181.

Harris, C., & Wilson, E. (2007). *Travelling beyond the boundaries of constraint: Women, travel and empowerment*: CABI Publishing.

Heimtun, B., & Abelsen, B. (2013). Singles and solo travel: gender and type of holiday. *Tourism Culture & Communication, 13*(3), 161-174.

Hofstede, G. H., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations : software of the mind : international cooperation and its importance for survival*: New York ; London : McGraw-Hill, c2010. Rev. and expanded 3rd ed. / Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov.

Hottola, P. (2004) Culture Confusion—Intercultural Adaptation in Tourism. A*nnals of Tourism Research 31*(2), 447–466.

Hyde, K. F., & Lawson, R. (2003). The Nature of Independent Travel. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*(1), 13.

Inkson, K. & Myers, B. (2003) ''The big OE'': Self-directed Travel and Career Development. *Career Development International, 8*(4), 170–181.

Jackson, E. L., & Henderson, K. A. (1995). Gender-based analysis of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences, 17*(1), 31-51. doi:10.1080/01490409509513241

Jones, I., Brown, L., & Holloway, I. (2013). *Qualitative research in sport and physical activity*. London: Sage.

Jönsson, C., & Devonish, D. (2008). Does nationality, gender, and age affect travel motivation? A case of visitors to the Caribbean Island of Barbados. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 25*(3-4), 398-408. doi:10.1080/10548400802508499

Jordan, F., & Gibson, H. (2005). "We're not stupid…but we'll not stay home either": Experiences of solo women travelers. *Tourism Review International, 9* (2), 195–211.

Jordan, F., & Aitchison, C. (2008). Tourism and the sexualisation of the gaze: Solo female tourists' experiences of gendered power, surveillance and embodiment. *Leisure Studies, 27*(3), 329-349. doi:10.1080/02614360802125080

Junek, O., Binney, W., & Winn, S. (2006). All-female travel: What do women really want? *Tourism (13327461), 54*(1), 53-62.

Kan, R., Shi, Y., Kung, H. T., & Zhou, Y. (2014). Women's changing social roles in ethnic heritage tourism sites: a case study of Three Gorges Bubusheng Culture Village. *Tourism Tribune, 29*(4), 19-27.

Khan, S. (2011). Gendered leisure: are women more constrained in travel for leisure? *Tourismos, 6*(1), 105-121.

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Gibson, H. J. (2015). Understanding women's accommodation experiences on girlfriend getaways: a pragmatic action research approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19p. doi:10.1080/13683500.2015.1068745

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Prayag, G. (2015). The girlfriend getaway market: Segmenting accommodation and service preferences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 45*, 99-108. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.12.003

Kim, K. Y., & Jogaratnam, G. (2002). Travel motivations: a comparative study of Asian international and domestic American college students. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 13*(4), 61-82.

Laesser, C., Beritelli, P., & Bieger, T. (2009). Solo travel: Explorative insights from a mature market (Switzerland). *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 15*(3), 217-227. doi:10.1177/1356766709104268

Li, M., Wen, T., & Leung, A. (2011). An Exploratory Study of the Travel Motivation of Chinese Female Outbound Tourists. *Journal of China Tourism Research, 7*(4), 411-424.

doi:10.1080/19388160.2011.627020

Lin, J. H., Wong, J. Y., & Ho, C. H. (2015). The role of work-to-leisure conflict in promoting frontline employees' leisure satisfaction: Examining the job demand-control-support model. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 27*(7), 1539-1555. doi:10.1108/IJCHM-03-2014-0155

Little, D. E., & Wilson, E. (2005). Adventure and the gender gap: acknowledging diversity of experience. *Loisir et Société, 28*(1), 185-208.

Long, F. (2014, October 22). Catering to the Solo Female Traveler. *Travel weekly*. Retrieved from: http://www.travelweekly.com/Europe-Travel/Insights/Catering-to-the-solo-female-traveler

Matos, M. A. d., Caetano, K. A. A., França, D. D. d. S., Pinheiro, R. S., Moraes, L. C. d., & Teles, S. A. (2013). Vulnerability to Sexually Transmitted Infections in women who sell sex on the route of prostitution and sex tourism in Central Brazil. *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem, 21*(4), 906-912.

Meiselman, H. L. (2000). *Dimensions of the meal : the science, culture, business, and art of eating.* Gaithersburg, Md :Aspen Publishers, Inc.

McNamara, K. E., & Prideaux, B. (2010). A typology of solo independent women travellers. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 12*(3), 253-264.

McArthur, M. (1999). *Out of place: Gender, identity, and the experiences of solo women travelers,* Thesis (MA). Trent University, Canada.

Mehmetoglu, M., Dann, G. M. S. & Larsen, S. (2001). Solitary Travellers in the Norwegian Lofoten Islands: Why Do People Travel On Their Own? *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*, *1* (1), 19-37.

Milstein, T. (2005) Transformation Abroad: Sojourning and the Perceived Enhancement of Self-efficacy. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations,* 29(2), 217–238.

Mrema. A. A. (2015). Tourism and women empowerment in Monduli District, Arusha Tanzania. African. *Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure.4* (2)

Omar, S.I., Abooali, G., Mohamed, B. and Mohamad, D. (2014). Gender Differences in Perceived Importance and Performance of Penang Island Attributes. In *SHS Web of Conferences, EDP Sciences. 12*

O'Reilly, C. (2006). From Drifter to Gap Year Tourist Mainstreaming Backpacker Travel. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *33*(4), 998–1017.

Pearce, P. L. & Lee, U. (2005). Developing the travel career approach to tourist motivation. *Journal of Travel Research, 43* (3), 226-237.

Poria, Y. (2006). Tourism and spaces of anonymity: An Israeli lesbian woman's travel experience. *Tourism (13327461), 54*(1), 33-42.

Pritchard, A. & Morgan, N. J. (2000). Constructing tourism landscapes - Gender, sexuality and

space. *Tourism Geographies*, *2* (2), 115-139.

Qu, H. & Im, H. J. H. (2002). A study of Southeast Asia tourists' perceptions of service quality in the San Francisco Bay area. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *13* (3), 35-60.

Qureshi, D., & Ahmed, M. L. (2012). Strengthening women entrepreneurs through tourism employment and entrepreneurship of the rural women in Aurangabad. *Journal of Hospitality Application & Research, 7*(1), 54-66.

Richter, L. K., & Theobald, W. F. (1995). Exploring the political role of gender in tourism research. In W. F. Theobald (Ed.), *Global tourism: the next decade.* Oxford; UK: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd.

Robertson, A. M., Syvertsen, J. L., Amaro, H., Martinez, G., Rangel, M. G., Patterson, T. L., & Strathdee, S. A. (2014). Can't Buy My Love: A Typology of Female Sex Workers' Commercial Relationships in the Mexico–U.S. Border Region. *Journal of Sex Research, 51*(6), 711-720. doi:10.1080/00224499.2012.757283

Robinson, J. (1990). Wayward women: a guide to women travellers. In *Wayward women: a guide to women travellers.* Oxford; UK: Oxford University Press.

Robinson, J. (1994). *Unsuitable for ladies : an anthology of women travellers / selected by Jane Robinson*: Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1994.

Rosenbloom, S. (2013, March 8). Singled Out (for the Single Supplement), *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/travel/singled-out-for-the-single-supplement.html?_r=0

Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing : the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : SAGE

Ryan, C., & Hall, C. M. (2001). *Sex tourism : marginal people and liminalities*: London : Routledge, c2001.

Ryan, M., Henley, N. & Soutar, G. (1998). Gender Differences in Tourism Destination: Implications for Tourism Marketers. *Australian and New Zealand Marketing Conference,* Dunedin, New Zealand

Rybczynski, W. (1991). *Waiting for the weekend / Witold Rybczynski*: New York, N.Y., U.S.A. : Viking, 1991.

Scraton, S. & Watson, B. (1998). Gendered cities: women and public leisure space in the 'postmodern city', *Leisure Studies, 17*(2), 123-137.

Small, J. (2002). Good and bad holiday experiences: Women's and Girls' perspectives. In : Swain M.B.and. Momsen, J.H., (eds.) *Gender/tourism/fun?*. New York: Cognizant Communication 24-38

Stone, G. J., & Nichol, S. (1999). Older, single female holidaymakers in the United Kingdom - Who needs them? *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 5*(1), 7-17. doi:10.1177/135676679900500102

Swann, N. L. (1932) *Pan Chao, Foremost Woman Scholar of China, first century A.D. : background, ancestry, life, and writings of the most celebrated Chinese woman of letters,* New York: Century Co. 1932,

Tamandanil S., Bostani, M., and Miri, G., (2015). Women Empowerment through Tourism Case study: Zahedan City. *International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Applied Science (IJSEAS), 1*(7)

Teo, P., & Leong, S. (2006). A postcolonial analysis of backpacking. *Annals of Tourism Research, 33*, 109-131. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2005.05.001

Triandis, H., Leung, K., Villareal, M., & Clack, F. (1985). Allocentric versus idiocentric tendencies: Convergent and discriminant validation. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *19*, 395-415.

Tsai, C. T. L. (2006). The influence of Confucianism on women's leisure in Taiwan. *Leisure Studies, 25*(4), 469-476.

Tucker, H. (2005) Narratives of Place and Self Differing Experiences of Package Coach Tours in New Zealand. *Tourist Studies, 5*(3), 267–282.

UNFPA (2008). UNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action to Addressing Gender-based Violence 2008-201. Retrieved from https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2009_add_gen_vio.pdf

UN-INSTRAW (2016). Gender Equality Glossary Retrieved from: https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=

UNTWO (2016). International tourist arrivals up 4% reach a record 1.2 billion in 2015. Retrieved from: http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2016-01-18/international-touristarrivals-4-reach-record-12-billion-2015

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing, J*ournal Of Marketing, (1)*1.

Vera-Gray, F. (2017). *Men's intrusion, women's embodiment: a critical analysis of street harassment.* Abingdon: Routledge

Wearing, B. (1998). *Leisure and feminist theory*. London: Sage.

Widmer, E. (2006). Foreign travel through a woman's eyes: Shan Shili's Guimao luxing ji in local and global perspective. *JOURNAL OF ASIAN STUDIES, 65*(4), 763-791.

Wilson, E., & Harris, C. (2006). Meaningful travel: women, independent travel and the search for self and meaning. *Tourism (Zagreb), 54*(2), 161-172.

Wilson, E., & Little, D. (2003). Solo women travellers: What constrains their experience? *CAUTHE 2003: Riding The Wave Of Tourism And Hospitality Research,* 1601.

Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2005). A "relative escape"? The impact of constraints on women who travel solo. *Tourism Review International, 9*(2), 155-175.

Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2008). The Solo Female Travel Experience: Exploring the 'Geography of Women's Fear'. *Current Issues in Tourism, 11*(2), 167-186. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hjh&AN=31381136&site=eds-live&scope=site doi:10.2167/cit342.0

Winter, T., Teo, P., & Chang, T. C. (2008). *Introduction: Rethinking tourism in Asia*: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Yang, E., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2015). Asian women, solo travel: A conceptual framework of risk in the gendered and cultured tourism context. C*AUTHE 2015: Rising Tides And Sea Changes: Adaptation And Innovation In Tourism And Hospitality,* 781.

Yang, E. C. L., Sharif, S. P., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2015). Tourists' risk perception of risky destinations: The case of Sabah's eastern coast. *Tourism & Hospitality Research, 15*(3), 206-221. doi:10.1177/1467358415576085

Yang, E., Khoo-Lattimore, C. & Arcodia, C. (2016). "Are you crazy?" : Exploring the risk perceptions of Asian solo female travellers. In: S*cerri, M, Lee K. H. eds. CAUTHE 2016: The Changing Landscape of Tourism and Hospitality: The Impact of Emerging Markets and Emerging Destinations.* Sydney: Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School

Zhang, J. & Liu, E. Y. (2012). The Confucian Ethic of Female Subordination and Depression Among Young People in Rural China. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion, 8*(3), 1-12.

Zhou, J. (2010). Gender, Personality, and Benefits Sought: Examining Chinese Leisure Travelers. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences, 10*(3), 1.