How to Catch Family-oriented Cruise Tourists’ Hearts? Exploring Motivation and Demand via Three-stage Travel Experience

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Research Article

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Abstract

With declining birthrates, family travel has considerable potential in the cruise market. This study explores the motivation for joining family cruise travel, the needs of passengers, and the three stages of cruise travel experience (the expected, experience, and recall stages). This study adopts qualitative research and an in-depth survey method for investigation. Results reveal that “new experience,” “desire for cruise travel,” “convenience,” and “generating social topics/publicity” are the motivations to join family cruise travel. The results can serve as reference in the planning process of family cruise travel.

1. Introduction

According to the UNWTO Tourism Highlights, the global tourism market is booming. The total number of international tourists was approximately 1.326 billion in 2017, an increase of 7% from 2016. The total number of tourists in the Asia-Pacific region was approximately 306 million (UNWTO, 2018). The cruise industry, known as the gold industry floating on the sea, has not only brought huge tourism value to the tourism market but also promoted the development of logistics business (Executive Yuan, 2017).

According to Cruise Lines International Association, approximately 28.5 million travelers took cruises worldwide in 2018. The number of cruise travelers in Asia increased from 1.51 million in 2013 to 4.24 million in 2018, with a growth rate of 23%, making it the third-largest source market in the world, behind North America and Europe (CLIA, 2018).

The development and prosperity of port cities in the Asia-Pacific region have driven the rapid growth of the Asian cruise market (Chen, 2016). Taiwan is located on the southeast coast of the Asian continent, with the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Taiwan Strait and Mainland China to the west, South Korea and Japan to the north, and the Philippines to the south. It is the center of the East Asian Island Arc, and its unique geographical advantages make Taiwan among the top 10 cruise source markets in Asia (CLIA, 2019) and an important transportation hub in the Asia-Pacific region (Tourism Bureau, 2019). A total of 390,000 cruise passengers boarded in Taiwan in 2018, an increase of 4.7% from 2017. In addition, Taiwan’s three major ports, namely, Keelung, Kaohsiung, and Hualien, had a total of 346 cruises calling in 2018, including 67 ports of call, 274 home port operations, and 5 overnight cruises, an increase of 17% compared with 295 cruises in 2017 (CLIA, 2018).

In 2014, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau and the Hong Kong Tourism Board organized the Asia Cruise Cooperation and gathered the Philippines, Hainan, Xiamen, and South Korea to expand the Asian market through partnerships (Ministry of Transportation and Communications, 2017). The Association for Cruise Development of Taiwan was established in 2019 for the cruise industry (Maritime Port Bureau, 2019), showing Taiwan’s ambition and emphasis on the cruise market (Chen, 2016). However, the world and the cruise market were seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Countries implemented strict measures, such as border control, flight restrictions, cruise ship bans, travel bans, quarantine policies, social distancing, and mask wearing (Abboah-Offei, Salifu, Adewale, Bayuo, Ofosu-Poku, & Opare-Lokko, 2021), resulting in a global economic impact on different sectors, including tourism, aviation, cruises,
accommodations, catering, festivals, and conferences. All forms of travel reached a new low within weeks (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; Seyfi, Hall, & Shabani, 2020). Due to the pandemic, the number of global tourists was only about 400 million in 2020, which is a 73% decrease compared with the total in 2019 (UNWTO, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic exerted a huge negative effect on the cruise industry, with many countries closing their ports to prevent the entry or spread of the virus (Liu & Chang, 2020; Yuen, Saidi, Bai, & Wang, 2021). A cruise is generally a relaxing form of travel, but due to close contact among people on cruises, the virus can spread easily on a cruise ship (Choquet & Sam-Lefebvre, 2020). Therefore, the cruise tourism market was severely affected in 2020. The number of cruise ships in the world was only about 5.7 million, which dropped by 80.6%; the number of passengers in Asia was only about 490,000; and the number of cruise ships that sailed also decreased from 79 to 34 (CLIA, 2020).

To prepare for post-pandemic operations, the cruise industry could work to understand their tourists, including their motivation and demand through previous experience to win back their purchasing intention and higher corporate reputation (Pan, Shu, Kitterlin-Lynch, & Beckman, 2021). Family travel is a way to positively improve family life quality and family functioning, which is recognized, targeted, and segmented by the tourism market (Wu, Kirillova, & Lehto 2021). To reveal significant market niches and provide attractive themes, this study bases on the revenge travel phenomenon (Shadel, 2020) and explores the motivation and demand of tourists via three-stage travel experience. Family travel aims to maintain family connections, promote a sense of unity, increase interaction time, enhance a sense of identity, strengthen family values, and maintain a sense of belonging (Wang, Yi, Wu, Pearce, & Huang, 2018). Family travel can also enhance the relationship between parents and children through interaction (Wu, Wall, Zu, & Ying, 2019). Family travel needs to combine the needs and expectations of different family members (Wang et al., 2018), especially children (Wu & Wall, 2016).

Family travel can be nuclear families, three generations, or single parents with children. The cruise can satisfy experiences such as dining, shopping, activity performance, entertainment, and relaxation. Furthermore, in cruises, arranging itineraries, rushing to change transportation, and booking local accommodation are unnecessary (Polat, 2015). Travel experience is a subjective and different feeling from person to person, and experience is often affected by various factors, such as personal factors, situational factors, and interpersonal interaction (Zatori, Smith, & Puczko, 2018). Experience is formed through different activities, facilities, and products. However, travelers’ thoughts and memories of the journey at different stages may change over time (Lyu, Mao, & Hu, 2018). A complete travel experience, comprising the three consecutive stages before, during, and after the journey, are important in obtaining meaningful experience, self-discovery, and exploration from it (Matson-Barkat & Robert-Demontrond, 2018).

In the development of cruise tourism, Western countries began as early as 1965. Given the increasingly saturated European and American routes, the cruise industry has gradually expanded the market to the eastern Asian market (Polat, 2015). According to Radic's (2019) study on cruise experience, the
interviewees were all Western children, and “family and children cruise travel experience” and “Eastern cruise market” are relatively less discussed topics (Wondirad, 2019). In family cruise travel, children play an important role in different stages (Radic, 2019). Given the differences in cultural and family relationships, this study not only explores children's ideas and experiences but also considers the thoughts and opinions of parents and grandparents.

Clawson and Knetsch (1966) proposed that the recreational experience includes five stages: anticipation, outbound journey, on-site experience, return journey, and recall stage. Cruise travel is different from general air travel. In addition to shore sightseeing, most time is spent on the cruise (Najafipour, Marzi, & Foroozanfar, 2014). Radic (2019) used three stages, namely, pre-travel planning and decision making, cruise participation, and reinterpretation and evaluation, to explore children's experience on cruises. The outbound and return stages of cruise travel involve various experiences, which are also the essence of cruise travel (Castillo-Manzano & López-Valpuesta, 2018). Therefore, this study combines outbound journey, on-site experience stage, and return journey into the cruise experience stage. This study divides family cruise travel into three stages: the anticipation stage before boarding, the cruise experience stage, and the recall stage.

This research further explores the expected stage, from choosing cruise travel to family members’ thoughts and expectations for cruise aspects, such as equipment, meals, activities, and facilities (Jamal, Aminudin, & Kausar, 2019). The most important stage is the experience stage, from experiencing cruise facilities and activities, shore sightseeing itineraries, and customized arrangement, to various hardware implementations (Radic, 2019). In the recall stage, did the cruise vacation meet expectations? What type of experience is the most impressive? Is taking a cruise for the next family travel possible (Chen & Rahman, 2018)? Therefore, this study also aims to explore family cruise travel in three stages: expected, experience, and recall stages.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Revenge travel and cruise travel

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously caused economic damage of tourism industry for 10.4% of GDP and 319 million jobs (Pan et al., 2021), and cruise travel is no exception. According to Shadel (2020) in The Washington Post, people do not want to be trapped and their desire to travel has only intensified. “The longer and more severe the impact of COVID, the greater the demand to get back to normal activities, such as travel” (The Harris Poll, 2020). Therefore, revenge travel is a new term to describe the phenomenon that could bring back tourism with a bang (Shadel, 2020) as more and more countries reopen the borders to eager tourists. Many people would like to travel to relieve pandemic fatigue and boredom after being trapped for too long by forced lockdowns and quarantine regulations. Revenge travel also means traveling to make up for lost time during a pandemic. It usually refers to people's frustration and anger that COVID-19 has canceled their plans and disrupted their lives (Mauran, 2022).
Revenge travel seems to be more about loving travel than expecting a particular destination to compensate. Many travelers are willing to spend more money on vacation than they used to (CNN, 2022). Among various forms of travel, cruise travel is one of the most profitable, popular, and rapidly growing tourism industries. Cruise travel combines accommodation, leisure, entertainment, dining, and sightseeing while generating significant revenue and jobs in various destinations (Han & Hyun, 2019). As the European and American markets become saturated, the cruise industry has gradually begun to develop into the Asian market (Chen, 2016). Asia has currently become the world’s third-largest cruise market, second to North America and Western Europe (CLIA, 2019). Cruises have evolved from traditional transportation to resorts floating on the sea (Wood, 2000), including attractive destinations, accommodation, various leisure and entertainment options, restaurants, shops, theaters, and swimming pools (Toh, Rivers, & Ling, 2011). Since the development of cruise tourism, diversified cruise products have evolved, such as new destinations, redesigning cruises, and building new cruises. Furthermore, innovations in services, facilities, shore tourism, and theme cruises cater to different holiday needs (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2013).

The 11 major trends in cruise travel are as follows (CLIA, 2018): 1) Instagrammable cruise travel: passengers upload shore sightseeing and cruise experiences to Instagram; 2) total restoration; 3) achievement over experiences: experiential travel is transformed into achievement travel; 4) on-board smart technology, which is used to provide a highly personalized travel experience; 5) conscious travel: passengers immerse deeply in local culture and important landmarks and reduce environmental damage; 6) access as the new luxury: unreachable destinations can only be visited by cruise; 7) Generation Z at sea: Generation Z prefers multiple destination journeys and unique experiences; 8) off-peak adventures: cruises provide once-in-a-lifetime special experiences, such as watching the northern lights and visiting penguin habitats; 9) working nomads: cruises combine work and leisure time; 10) female-centered cruising; and 11) going solo. Therefore, based on different experiences and customer segmentation, cruises will combine nature, history and culture, technology, and new experiences, thereby providing tourists with a richer travel experience (Chen, 2016). With the development of the Asian cruise industry, family groups are also listed as the development focus, providing an unforgettable cruise experience for all ages (Taiwan International Ports Corporation, Ltd., 2019).

With the vigorous development of cruise travel, an increasing number of families have chosen cruise as their first choice for family travel. Therefore, the cruise industry must respond to changes in the market and provide the needs of different customer groups (Radic, 2019) in the post-pandemic era. Among the cruise brands, Disney Cruises is a type with parent–child families as its main customer group. Since 2001, it has been awarded the title of “Best Family Cruise” in major competitions for years. Children’s programs and entertainment activities are the most popular (Disney Cruise Line, 2019). During the summer vacation, parents and children accounted for 50% of the total number of passengers, of which Asian tourists were the largest. Therefore, the cruise company began to focus on the optimization of parent–child activities and increase the entertainment experience. It also cooperated with Discovery to plan exploration camps and recreational games for different ages (Princess, 2018). Cruise companies
continue to change and innovate to meet the needs of the family travel market through the design and planning of different cruise travel products.

### 2.3 Family travel and motivations

In the tourism market, family travel is a huge and growing market. Family travel is moving toward a vacation mode with fewer days but more frequent trips (Agoda, 2018). Family travel no longer serves as a form of rest and relaxation but a type of family reunion (Brey & Lehto, 2008). In recent years, with changes in family structure, family travel may consist of three generations, large families, or single parents traveling with children (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). Traveling together is the way to create family memories, reunions, and connections (Shavanddasht, 2017). Family travel refers to travel where at least two family members participate and leave home for more than 24 hours to spend time together, enhance family cohesion, and create memories together (Kennedy-Eden & Gretzel, 2016). Family leisure is positively related to family cohesion and family satisfaction (Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). According to Zabriskie and McCormick (2001), family leisure is divided into two categories: core and balanced. Core leisure usually requires less expensive, low-cost, and relatively easy family activities. By contrast, balanced leisure usually requires more time, money, or planning. Therefore, the frequency of balanced leisure is lower, but the memories and experiences are often higher. Family travel is a balanced leisure can increase the intimacy and cohesion of family members (Lehto, Fu, Li, & Zhou, 2016).

Many studies have been related to family tourism decision making. When planning a family trip, considering various aspects, such as destination, vacation time, budget, attractions, activities, or accommodation, is necessary. All of these aspects require family members to discuss together; such aspects are affected by family situation, age, and socioeconomic status (Kang & Hsu, 2004). Changing times has resulted in family decision making becoming more democratic among family members, and the decision-making power has been changed from the traditional parent-dominated or parental decision making to the child as the main influence role (Jamal, Aminudin, & Kausar, 2019). Although children may not be the final decision makers, they still influence the decision-making process (Curtale, 2018).

Previous studies have mainly focused on cruise travelers’ satisfaction, value, and trust (Wu, Cheng, & Ai, 2018); motivation and experience of participating in a cruise (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Han & Hyun, 2018); the environmental effect of the cruise economy (MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018); and the cruise experience of Western children (Radic, 2019). With the changes in lifestyle and travel patterns, an increasing number of people in Asia choose a cruise as their first choice for travel (Chen, 2016). However, few studies have been made on Eastern family cruise travel; a certain degree of difference exists between Western and Asian tourists (Wu et al., 2018). For example, in addition to participating in activities with their families, Western children also hope to arrange their own cruise experiences and meet new friends (Radic, 2019). In Asia, however, the most time is shared with family members to create memories (Wu et al., 2019).

Travel motivation is another important topic. The push–pull factor is the most commonly used theory. The push factor refers to people being driven by inner needs and desires, such as pressure, relaxation,
adventure, knowledge acquisition, and family reunion. The pull factor refers to being driven by the special attributes of the destination, such as scenery, beaches, recreational facilities, historical culture, and natural resources (Sung, Chang, & Sung, 2015). Many studies are related to travel motivation and loyalty of adventure tourism (Sato, Kim, Bunig, & Harada, 2016); motivation and satisfaction of wildlife tourism in national parks (Mutanga, Vengesayi, Chikuta, Muboko, & Gandiwa, 2017); and motivation of tourists through slow travel (Özdemir & Çelebi, 2018). Analysis of travel motives has also been conducted based on specific travelers, such as the elderly traveling abroad (Wijaya, Wahyudi, Kusuma, & Sugianto, 2018) and hearing-impaired backpackers (Ho & Peng, 2017). According to Li, Wang, Xu, and Mao (2017), five motivations for family travel are spending quality time with children, creating pleasant memories, learning and developing, self-compensation, and compensation for children. Four motivation dimensions are generalized in cruise tourism: self-esteem and social recognition; escape and relaxation; learning, discovery, and thrill; and bonding (Han & Hyun, 2019). The motivations for tourists to take a cruise include getting a worry-free and relaxing vacation and being able to stay away from everything (Mancini, 2010). Therefore, this study focuses on the motivations of family members to choose a cruise as family travel.

2.4 Experience

Experience directly affects the satisfaction of tourists and their willingness to revisit (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Kong and Chang (2016) mentioned the process of tourists from deciding to travel to the end of the tour, constructing travel experience through various activities. Campos and Scott (2015) stated that activity participation and interaction create travel experiences. The composition of travel experience is also diverse. Stamboulisa and Skayannisb (2003) stated that travel experience includes education, aesthetics, escape from reality, and entertainment. Travel experience is also affected by various factors, including personal experience and personal subjective evaluation. Given different backgrounds, values, attitudes, beliefs, and environments, everyone has different travel experiences (Seyfi, Hall, & Rasoolimanesh, 2020). Walls, Okumus, Wang, and Kwun (2011) posited that four factors affect travel experience: physical experience, human interaction, individual characteristics, and situational factors.

A travel often becomes unforgettable after experiencing certain events (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010). When tourists decide to revisit a specific destination, unforgettable memories may be the most valuable source of information (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). The main reason for this finding is that people believe that past experience is a valuable and reliable reference basis and has a considerable influence on future decisions (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Kim et al. (2010) developed a scale to measure memorable tourism experience with the seven dimensions of hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty. Zhang, Wu, and Buhalis (2017) adopted this scale to explore the perception image, memorable tourism experience, and willingness of Korean tourists to revisit China. Seyfi et al. (2020) also developed a scale for memorable cultural tourism experiences under the study of
Kim et al. (2010) with six dimensions: prior perceived significance of the experience, authenticity, engagement, cultural exchange, culinary attraction, and quality of service.

Some studies have pointed out that travel experience is composed of multiple stages in chronological order. Clawson and Knetsch (1966) proposed that recreational experience comprises five stages: anticipation, outbound, on-site experience, return, and recall stages. Park and Santos (2016) used three stages of travel: before, during, and after travel to discuss tourist experience. Radic (2019) used the three stages of pre-travel planning and decision making, cruise participation, and reinterpretation and evaluation to study children’s experience with cruises. However, regardless of how many stages travel experience is divided into, an experience that is memorable, interesting, and attractive occurs in each stage. Therefore, this study focuses on travel experience and applies the three stages of travel experience to family cruise travel.

3. Methodology

This research adopts an in-depth interview to understand the memories, feelings, and opinions of the respondents about their own experiences. Obtaining more complete information through deeper understanding (Patton, 2005) and exploring the “why” through qualitative research (Milena, Dainora, & Alin, 2008) are necessary. In-depth interviews are used with content analysis to collect interviewees’ opinions, views, and attitudes about an incident to gain a deeper understanding of the issue (Tsaur & Huang, 2015). According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017), content analysis is divided into three steps: dividing and condensing, coding, and establishing category and theme. The purpose of content analysis is to improve the quality of inferences and provide an understanding of the knowledge and phenomena of the research (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Thus, the data collection process can obtain the required information efficiently. Content analysis is also suitable for more difficult, special, and sensitive fields (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009).

In this study, 13 families were interviewed about the motivations and experiences of cruise travel. This study explores the dimensions of cruise tourism services through the literature. The interviews were divided into before, during, and after cruise travel. The in-depth interview questions were revised after experts’ review. Four experts, namely, a cruise travel agent, an expert in the field of cruise tourism, and two scholars in tourism-related fields, were invited to assess the preliminary scale for content and face validity. The experts are all well-educated with master’s degrees or above, and three of them have experience in leading family groups.

Cruise is a means of transportation that combines travel and accommodation, providing various facilities, activities, and shore excursions (Sun, Feng, & Gauri, 2014). At present, more and more innovative facilities, routes, destinations, and exclusive experiences are provided (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2013). In recent years, cruise tourism has become popular in Asia with high potential (Chen, 2016). Theme cruises have gradually become a trend and can be divided into three types: specific themes with onboard activities and arrangements; specific groups, such as senior people and parent–child travelers;
and charter boats, in which the itinerary is planned by an enterprise or organization charter (Weaver, 2011). Therefore, this study defines cruise travel as using cruises as the main transportation, combined with accommodation, dining, entertainment, and shore excursions.

Family travel refers to a journey where at least two family members participate and leave home for more than one day (Kennedy-Eden & Gretzel, 2016). Gram (2005) suggested that the purpose of family travel is to participate in activities together, travel to new destinations, and create memories together. Parents devote time, energy, and money to a wonderful holiday with their children (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, & Havitz, 2008). However, with seriously low birth rates, most families have gradually become small families with only one child. As people live longer, the family structure is moving toward a vertical development; grandparents favor grandchildren more, gradually forming the trend of taking grandchildren to travel (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). Therefore, this study defines a family traveler as parents/single parents who take at least one child under the age of 18, with or without grandparents joining. Travel experience is composed of the experience of tourists at different stages (Radic, 2019). According to the nature of cruise travel, this study divides travel experience into three stages: the anticipation stage before boarding the cruise, the cruise experience stage, and the recall stage. Therefore, travel experience is defined as the three stages of travel experience, and different stage experiences are discussed.

The interview questions are based on Hung and Petrick's (2011) study. Motivation was divided into four categories: self-esteem and social recognition; escape and relaxation; learning, discovery, and thrill; and bonding. The three stages of cruise travel experience, namely, anticipation, experience, and memories, are discussed. It is mainly based on Juan and Chen (2011) discussing the behavior of Taiwanese cruise passengers at different experience stages, the factors affecting cruise vacations (Bahja, Cobanoglu, Berezina, & Lusby, 2018), and the research results of children's cruise experience (Radic, 2019).

In the study of Juan and Chen (2011), price, trip duration, desires of companions, activities, and facilities are the determinants of cruise trip selection in the anticipation stage of planning a trip. Given that this study focuses on family travel, desires of companions was changed to desires of family members. Bahja et al. (2018) examined the relative importance of six influential factors in cruise customers’ decision-making process: cruise vacation price, cruise duration, distance from the cruise port, itineraries, environmental friendliness of cruise line, and course online reviews. Radic (2019) found that cruise brand, activities, and ports of call are important considerations for tourists. Following previous studies, considerations for cruise tourists in the study were price, number of days, cruise brand, activities, equipment, itinerary (port of call and destination), family members’ desires, and online reviews of cruise ships. The expected and recall stages are further discussed as the differences of family members’ considerations for cruise travel.

On the basis of studies of group package travel (Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000), the behavior of Taiwanese cruise travelers at different experience stages (Juan & Chen, 2011), cruise experience research (Hwang & Han, 2014), and the factors of Taiwanese women choosing cruise travel (Chen, Chung, Liu, & Chang, 2019), 11 aspects were raised as in-depth interview questions. These aspects are cruise characteristics,
cabin, restaurants, facilities, entertainment activities, tour guides, shopping, exclusive activities for children, work teams, self-financed activities, and others (Chen et al., 2019; Hwang & Han, 2014; Juan & Chen, 2011; Lu, 2019).

The modified questions by the experts are as follows.

The self-esteem and social recognition of the motivation dimension comprises the following aspects:

1. To impress others;
2. To be highly praised by others;
3. To be felt like a better person;
4. To acquire a high-quality vacation;
5. To increase the sense of self-worth;
6. To increase the sense of accomplishment;
7. To take exotic photos to show off to friends.

The escape and relaxation of the motivation dimension comprises the following aspects:

1. To have fun;
2. To be free to do whatever I want;
3. To escape from regular life;
4. To relax physically and mentally.

The learning/discovery and novelty/excitement of the motivation dimension comprises the following aspects:

1. To enjoy nature;
2. To gain knowledge;
3. To experience other cultures;
4. To enjoy exciting activities.

The socialization of the motivation dimension comprises the following aspects:

1. Making new friends;
2. Meeting different people.

The interpersonal connection of the motivation dimension comprises the following aspects:

1. My friends or family members would like to go on a cruise travel;
2. I can interact with my friends or family members.

In the expected and recall stages, the factors that affect customers’ choices were price, number of days of travel, cruise brand, activities, cruise equipment, cruise itinerary (port of call and destination), family members’ desire for cruise travel, and online reviews. On the basis of the experts’ suggestions for the expected stage, the factor of travel agency was also added. Online reviews were changed to cruise reviews, which included online, newspapers, magazines, and word of mouth. In the experience stage, the experts suggested increasing cruise tonnage as a reference criterion for cruise features. Court was added to facilities, cinema was added to entertainment, friendliness was added as an important consideration for tour leaders, and duty-free shopping was added to the shopping section. Service enthusiasm of service team was added to the criteria. Two types of briefing for tourists to make arrangements were supposed to be held. One is to participate in activities at their own expense, and the other is the introduction to tourist attractions and transportation from the pier to the tourist attractions. On these bases, the experts’ suggestions on the service dimensions for the experience stage were modified for the follow-up in-depth interviews.

4. Results

This study examined the interview items to establish expert validity. After in-depth interviews, this study used content analysis for analysis. Two graduate students in leisure-related majors were invited as judges. The two judges divided and condensed the manuscript verbatim, categorizing and naming similar meanings until they reached a consensus. After all classifications, reliability tests of intrajudge by the same judge were conducted at different time periods and of interjudge by two judges at the time. According to Keaveney (1995), intrajudge reliability should be larger than 0.80; interjudge’s reliability also needs to be > 0.80. After Judges A and B completed the first classification, one week later, the two judges were invited to classify again for the intrajudge reliability test. At the same time, Judge C, who has 11 years of experience as a project director in the travel agency industry, was invited to classify and conduct the interjudge reliability test. The reliability of intrajudge is 0.96, and that of interjudge is 0.97; therefore, the classification results of this study are reliable.

In-depth interviews were conducted with family tourists from May 15 to May 31, 2020. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, this study used online video to conduct in-depth interviews, which lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews were recorded, and verbatim transcripts were made after obtaining consent. In-depth interviews were represented by one of the family members, who shared the thoughts and opinions of other members at the same time. A total of 13 families were interviewed. A–M are the pronouns for the respondents. The demographic data and motivations are provided as follows, as are the descriptions of
the three-stage service aspects of the cruise travel experience: anticipation, experience, and recall. Approximately 38.5% of the interviewees are male, whereas 61.5% are female. A total of 46.2% are 42–50 years of age. The age structure indicates that most interviewees are middle-aged parents, and they are shown to have the final say in cruise travel. Regarding family income, 69.2% are double-income families, and 30.8% are single-income families. A total of 76.9% of interviewees’ family incomes are more than TWD 140,001. Less than half (46.2%) work in the business industry. Half of the interviewees hold a bachelor’s degree (53.8%), followed by a master’s degree or above (30.8%). As for family types, nuclear family accounts for 69.2%, followed by extended family (23.1%) and single-parent families (7.7%). Regarding the number of travelers, the largest category is 4–6 people (46.2%). Among the accompanying children, the largest percentage has 1 accompanying child (53.8%), followed by 2 children (38.5%), and 3 children (7.7%), up to a maximum of 20 children. As for children’s age, nine children were 0–6 years old, followed by 7–12 years old (seven children), and 13–18 years old (four children). Regarding destination, Northeast Asia (69.2%) is the largest, followed by Europe (15.4%), Southeast Asia (7.7%), and Mexico (7.7%). In terms of travel days, the largest category is 2–7 days (84.6%). Regarding the frequency of cruise traveling, approximately 53.8% of the interviewees indicated one time, followed by four times (30.8%), and two times (15.4%).

Insert Table 1 here

Motivation of travel

In self-esteem and social recognition, most of the interviewees hoped to experience high-quality travel, which is affected by the characteristics, quality, and level of cruise ship. In escape and relaxation, the interviewees all stated that the purpose of taking a cruise for family travel is to relax the body, mind, and soul. Cruise travel can save transportation time and includes accommodation, food, and activities. In learning/discovery and novelty/stimulation, a cruise is a small international village. Through the servers and various activities, children can feel and learn about different cultures. A cruise is also a place for discovering something interesting. As for socialization, most families think that socialization is not a motivation. A cruise can increase relationships with old friends. For interpersonal connections, parents have more opportunities to interact with their children and increase family cohesion. In addition, this study found other motivations, including new experiences, desire for cruise travel, convenience, and generating social topics/publicity.

4.1 Expected stage

In the expected stage, factors that family members valued are listed in order (1 is the most valued, 9 is the least valued). The factors are as follows: itinerary (port of call, destination), price, travel days, brand, equipment, activities, reviews (online, newspapers and magazines, and word of mouth from relatives and friends), family members’ travel desire, and travel agencies. The mean is 4.00, and the standard deviation is 2.16 (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 here
4.2 Experience stage

Cruise features, tonnage, style, and age are considered by family tourists. In terms of cabins, all the interviewees mentioned that they would like a room with a balcony or an external window. Bed size was also a concern. As for restaurants, most family members hoped that the choices could be more diverse and that more Chinese dishes and kids' bars could be provided. As for facilities, many families said that water facilities, swimming pools, and courts are must-haves. As for entertainment, the importance of shows was mentioned by all interviewees. As for shopping, simple commemoratives souvenirs are used as gifts. Children's exclusive activities, spaces, and programs are factors that parents care about. As for service team, service is a feeling that varies from person to person, as long as the basic needs are met. As for activities at one's own expense, some families plan their own shore tourism activities. As for other aspects, security was mentioned by the interviewees.

4.3 Recall stage

In the recall stage, family members may have different considerations when planning their next cruise travel. The factors in order of importance (1 is the most important, 9 is the least important) are itinerary (port of call and destination), number of days, brands, price, facilities, desire of family members for cruise travel, activities, evaluation, and travel agencies. Food is also an important factor. The mean is 4.00, and the standard deviation is 1.00 (Table 3).

Insert Table 3 here

5. Conclusion And Discussion

The research results revealed that in the “self-esteem and social recognition” aspect of motivation, the goal is to improve the quality of tourism and gain a sense of accomplishment. “Escape and relax” emphasizes relaxing the body and mind. “Learning/discovering and novel/stimulating” is to experience various cultures and discover new things. “Socialization” refers to meeting people and making friends. “Interpersonal connection” is the interaction of family members and friends. The results of “escape and relax” and “learning/discovering and novel/stimulating” are similar to the findings of the study of Hung and Petrick (2011). However, family interaction is more important than socialization in the study. This study also derived some motivations, such as new experiences, desire for cruise travel, convenience, and generating social topics/publicity.

The participation and recall stages identify the cruise itinerary as the most important factor, followed by the number of travel days, cruise brand, travel agency, and meals. In summary, Taiwan cruises are mostly chartered. When planning the itinerary, additional different ports of call should be developed to strengthen tourists’ behavior intentions. Travel agencies should differentiate their marketing and services to attract consumers. In comparison with Westerners, Asians prefer to spend time together in activities (Chen, Neuts, Nijkamp, & Liu, 2016). The difference can be explained by the individualism in cultural dimension theory (Hofstede, 2001). More activities should be designed for parent–child participation. Parent–child
relationship can be enhanced through family travel (Wu et al., 2019). This study also shows that consumers attach considerable importance to the tonnage of cruise ships, because the larger the ship is, the more numerous the facilities and activities will be.

Learning, exploration, and excitement are also important motivations in cruise travel (Han & Hyun, 2019). Interesting facilities, such as waterslides and rock climbing, attract more children to participate. In the Internet age, Facebook groups, YouTube ads, game ads, and internet celebrities can be adopted for promotion. In previous cruise-related studies, tourists’ satisfaction, the impact of the cruise economy on the environment, and the effects of cruises on ports have been discussed. For example, Wu et al. (2018) studied the satisfaction and quality of experience of cruise tourists. Previous studies have also focused on the Western cruise market. Teye and Paris (2010) studied the motivations, activities, and destination preferences of the Caribbean cruise industry. Relatively few studies on family with children cruise travel experience and the Asian cruise market have been made (Wondirad, 2019). The experience stage is also rarely used to discuss cruise travel. Radic (2019) used three stages, namely, pre-tour planning and decision making, cruise participation stage, and reinterpretation and evaluation, to explore children's experience on cruises.

According to the results of this study, family members’ cruise travel motives are new experiences, a desire for cruise travel, convenience, and generating social topics/publicity. In the three stages of travel experience, tourists care about the cruise itinerary the most in the anticipation and recall stages. The experience stage focuses on aspects such as the size of cabin space, children's exclusive activities, and clubs, which are all important needs of family members.

Family travel can allow children to explore the world, cultivate interest and interpersonal interaction, and make family relationships closer. To attract more families to choose cruise travel, tourism operators and cruise companies must understand the motivations of tourists and formulate corresponding strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic may negatively influence consumers’ travel choice. The results of this study suggest that cruise companies will find benefit in luring new and repeat consumers based on their different motivations and demands. This study makes some practical suggestions. First, advertising exposure should be increased. Second, different cruise fleets or brands should be introduced. Third, arrangements for new destinations and short day trips should be made. Fourth, differentiated marketing by travel agencies should be conducted. Last, on-board activities, software, and hardware should be updated and adjusted.

In this study, 13 families were interviewed through a snowballing research method. One family member was used as the representative of the interview. Therefore, the opinions and thoughts of other members may not have been fully reflected. Taking cruises for family travel is relatively rare in Taiwan, and finding samples is not easy. In addition, children's travel memories are blurred and cannot be clearly expressed, or the interview questionnaires are difficult to understand. Therefore, in future research, a simple closed questionnaire may be used to facilitate children to express their thoughts on cruise travel. The in-depth
interview method used in this research may not fully explain the small sample. The research findings can be used as a reference for future questionnaire design.

Declarations

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References


Tables
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<th>Types of family income</th>
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Table 2 Factor rankings

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Table 3 Factor rankings

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