

# Tourists' Perceived Quality on History and Culture of Sheqi Ancient Town:

## *A Moderating Effect of Tourist Motivation*

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Received: November 15, 2019

Accepted: December 12, 2019

Online Published: December 18, 2019

doi:10.5539/ibr.v13n1p181

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v13n1p181>

### Abstract

Perceived quality was identified an important antecedent of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, however, few studies examine the factors influencing tourist's perception on the service quality of a destination. For historic and cultural tourists, tourist experience play an important role during their visits. The main purpose of this study was to investigate whether tourists' experience influenced perceived quality of the tourist as an antecedent and the moderating effect of tourists' motivation on the relationship between tourists' experience and perceived quality within historic and cultural tourism contexts. A survey of 1,389 tourists visited an ancient town in center part of China, Sheqi, was conducted as the basis for analysis. With SPSS 22.0 and data collected in Sheqi Ancient Town, the hypothetical model was tested by the method of hierarchical regression analysis. The empirical results indicated that, firstly, the tourists' experience positively influenced perceived quality significantly. Secondly, tourist motivation played a significant moderating role on the relationship between tourist's experience and perceived quality.

**Keywords:** moderating effect, perceived quality, Sheqi Ancient Town, tourists' experience, tourists' motivation

### 1. Introduction

Perceived quality was defined as the customer's perception on the overall quality of a product or service (Aaker, 2009). In tourism field, practitioners and experts also paid much attention to perceived quality and relevant concepts such as tourist satisfaction. The related literature can be dated back to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission reports of 1962 (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Generally, tourists' perception on the quality of an attraction is the determinant of their choice, evaluation and satisfaction on the specific attraction. Baker & Crompton (2000) suggested that high perceived quality and high tourist satisfaction result in tourist loyalty and revisit, more tolerance of price increasing and rising fame of the attraction. It is very helpful for the destination to attract both new tourists through positive word-of-mouth and new public tax investment and private investment to improve the development of the destination. Because of the contribution of perceived quality in destination marketing, a lot of researches have been done on this issue. However, most researches focused on the effect of perceived quality and took perceived quality as the antecedent of other variables such as perceived value (Song et al., 2011), tourist satisfaction (Li et al., 2012; Liu, Yi, & Xia, 2017), and tourist behavioral tendency (Wang & Mei, 2006). There has been relatively little discussion of the factors influencing perceived quality for tourists.

Tourist experience is a specific kind of service experience. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), besides consuming products and services, consumers seek unique and memorable experiences during their consumption process. Service experience is subjective personal feelings and reactions consumers have when they consume a service (Chen & Chen, 2010). For tourism service, most tourists travel to get experience different from daily life. Especially for cultural and historic tourism, it is basically an experiential consumption, and tourists come to seek, see, or feel the history and past, either glorious or painful. The quality of experience was proven to have direct impact on perceived value and satisfaction in heritage tourism (Chen & Chen, 2010). Because perceived quality of the historical and cultural destination is the tourist's perception on the overall quality of the attraction, it seems intuitively logical that there should be a causal link between tourist experience and perceived quality in historic

and cultural destination. The quality of the experience that tourist felt influences the tourist's perception on the quality of the destination.

Tourist motivation is the intrinsic and extrinsic power that directly promotes people's tourism behavior (Cini, Kruger, & Ellis, 2013). People choose to visit specific destination due to different motivations, for example, some people want to acquire new knowledge, others want to appreciate beautiful scenery, and another group may have other purpose. It was supported that tourist motivation had impact on perceived quality (Hsieh, et al., 2018) and tourist satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). For historic and cultural destination, the motivations that drive tourists to come and visit are of evident difference. Tourists may seek historical clues of the past, experience history, appreciate heritage and relics, or just have a special sightseeing. So unlike other kinds of destinations, based on very different motivation of visit, it is not strange that different tourists with similar experience may have very different perception on the quality of tourism services in the destination.

The first purpose of this study was to investigate whether tourist experience influence perceived quality of the tourist as an antecedent within historic and cultural tourism context. And the second purpose was to explore the differences between perceived quality for historic and cultural destination of tourists having different motivations, i.e., to assess the moderating effect of tourist motivation on the relationship between tourist experience and perceived quality. The proposed hypothetical model was depicted in Figure 1.

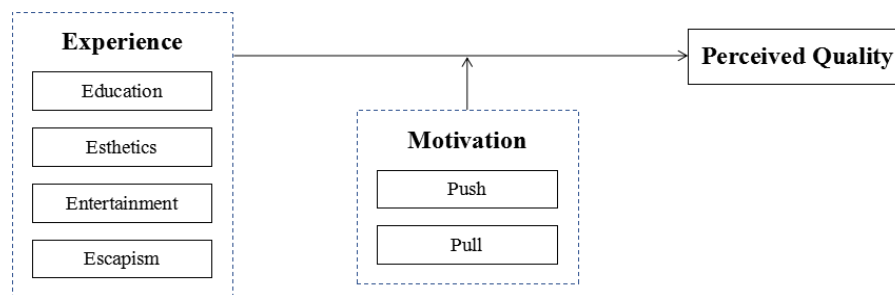


Figure 1. Proposed Hypothetical Model

## 2. Conceptual Background and Hypotheses

### 2.1 Tourist Experience

It was claimed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) that we were in an era of rapid development of experience economy, which was the fourth stage of human economic life development after agricultural economy, industrial economy and service economy. According to their opinion, "experience" involved that enterprises took services as the stage, commodities as props and consumers as the center to create activities that could make consumers participate in and worth recalling. The key to experience was to involve consumers in the production of products and services. Tourism is obviously one of the pioneer fields of the experience economy, since travel is an experience in itself, and experience economy has brought a new meaning of travel further. Tourist experience emerged even before the new era when people traveled to holy places and visited sacred objects, and became an important research issue in the 1960s and grew to be popular in the social science literature by the 1970s (Quan & Wang, 2004). However, at that time tourist experience was discussed fragmentarily. After 1990s, systematical research approaches, from qualitative studies to quantitative studies, were used to study tourist experience (Andereck et al., 2006).

In tourism researches, experiences were viewed as the emotional, physical, spiritual, or intellectual state of being when a person involved in an event or special place (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Noy, 2007). It was a complicated psychological process that was different from everyday experiences (Cohen, 2004). Though there are various definitions of the tourist experience, researchers had common opinion in that tourist experience was a subjective and personal concept (Li, 2000). Therefore, it can only be explained and understood regarding specific individuals involved and the specific environment where experiences grew out (Jennings, 2006). After discussing several cogent models of tourist experience formation, Prentice (2004) also argued that tourist experience and motivations were as diverse as the characteristics of destinations and tourists. Therefore, for historical and cultural destination, where individuals visit mainly to seek special experience, tourist experience and motivation may have unique characteristics and influence the overall perception of the service quality provided.

To provide the tourist special experience successfully, a destination should offer a combination of education

(“learning something new”), entertainment (“being entertained”), esthetics (“indulged in environments”), and escapism (“diverging to a new self”) (Apostolakis, 2003) to engage tourists. The four dimensions were operationalized and tested by tourists’ lodging experience (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007).

### 2.2 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is the real feeling and perception of customers on the quality of the product or service they purchased. Researchers attached great attention to perceived quality of service in the tourism context. A lot of studies have been done on tourists’ perceptions of service quality as they travel (Chen, Huang, & Petrick, 2016; Su, Swanson, & Chen, 2016), and perceived quality was identified as a critical determinant of tourist’s satisfaction (Wang, 2011).

A well-known conceptual model for service quality, SERVQUAL, was proposed initially by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985, and redefined in 1988 by subdividing it into five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility. Many other models were developed based on the SERVQUAL model. Wu and Li (2015) proposed the SERVPERF model to evaluate visitors’ perceptions of museum service. HISTOQUAL was established to investigate perceived quality in the cultural and heritage tourism context (Chen & Shi, 2008). And MUSEQUAL was developed to assess museum visitor’s experience of service and their satisfaction (Hsieh, Park, & Hitchcock, 2015).

Based on the literature reviewed, the first hypothesis of this study was proposed as follows.

H1: tourist experience has a significant impact on perceived quality.

H1a: education (ED) has a significant impact on perceived quality.

H1b: esthetics (ES) has a significant impact on perceived quality.

H1c: entertainment (EN) has a significant impact on perceived quality.

H1d: escapism (EC) has a significant impact on perceived quality.

### 2.3 Tourist Motivation as a Moderator

Motivation is defined as psychological/biological needs and wants which arouse, direct, and integrate a person’s behavior and activity (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Tourist motivation is the intrinsic power that directly promotes people’s tourism behavior (Wang & Mei, 2006). Researchers have highlighted the significance of visitors’ motivations in selection of attractions, perception of quality of attractions, satisfaction level of attractions and behavioral tendency after visiting the attractions, based on intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Cini, Kruger, & Ellis, 2013). An intrinsic motive was one’s desire to search out new things to gain knowledge (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For tourists, the intrinsic motive was the psychological or social motive that drive the visitors to travel (Crompton, 1979), such as escaping reality, relaxation, exercising, adventure and exploration, which was named as push motivation by some researchers nowadays. Extrinsic motive, also called pull motivation, involved the performance of an activity to attain a desired outcome, in the context of tourism, for motivations related to the attributes of the tourism destination or the activities provided by the destination which attract the tourists, for example, natural scenery, leisure facility, cultural atmosphere, events and catering (Crompton, 1979).

Tourists visit different tourism attractions because of different motivations, even for the same destination, visitors come for different reasons, which often results in different feelings and perceptions. Therefore, it is not surprising that tourist motivation has been proven an important antecedent of perceived service quality, satisfaction and behavioral tendency after visit (Hsieh, et al., 2018; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Wang & Mei, 2006; Cini, Kruger, & Ellis, 2013). However, tourist motivation may play more roles in tourist behavior throughout the process of pre-tour, tour, and post tour. In a research about tourist behavior in another ancient town in China, Xitang, Shou et al (2017) suggested that push motivation (novelty-seeking) could significantly moderate the relationship between destination image and revisit intention in different period, and it had a negative moderating effect on the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention in different periods, so it was expected that historical cultural destination may group tourists according to their motivations and tailor tourism services for different groups to enhance their experience. For historical and cultural destinations, because there are no universal beauty everyone appreciates, tourists may have very different, even opposite, feeling and perception on the same destination owing to their different motivations to visit. To investigate whether tourists with similar travelling experience and different travelling motivation have different perception of the tourism service quality in the specific destination, this study proposed a hypothesis to test the moderating effect of motivation on the relationship between tourist experience and perceived quality.

H2: Motivation moderates the impact of tourists' experience on perceived quality.

H2a: Push motivation moderates the impact of tourists' experience on perceived quality.

H2b: Pull motivation moderates the impact of tourists' experience on perceived quality.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Questionnaire Design and Operationalization of Constructs

The three variables in this study are latent variables that cannot be measured directly, hence, observed variables were designed in the questionnaire as the survey instrument based on thorough literature reviewed and in-depth interview with experts with the peculiarities of the destination taken into account. The questionnaire included two parts. Part A contained three sets of questions to measure tourist's experience, motivation, and perceived quality with 49 items using five-point Likert's scale as the response format. Part B consisted of 11 questions reflecting the respondents' demographic information and travel behaviors.

##### 3.1.1 Operationlization of Tourist Experience

There were no uniform measurement for tourist experience. In the past, several empirical researches about tourist experience, the construct was measured in different ways. Wang and Mei (2006) used perceived quality of services received by tourists as the measurement of tourist experience. Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed a four-factor experience scale including hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. From different point of view, Kao, Huang, and Wu (2008) suggested the other four dimensions of tourist experience- i.e. immersion, surprise, participation and fun.

Based on Pine and Gilmore's four realms of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011), Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007) developed a questionnaire to measure tourist experience and the consequence variables following Churchill's (1979) procedure for developing a measurement scale. The experience scales were proven empirically reliable and valid (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007). The scenario of their research was similar to this study, therefore, this study adopted the measurement scale of tourist experience with minimal changes to reflect the specific offerings and situations of the specific ancient town.

There were four main sections to identify the four dimensions of the tourists' experience of the attraction, namely education, aesthetics, entertainment, and escapism, with each dimension including four items. Respondents were required to determine the degree to which each statement reflects their experience of visiting the ancient town along a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree). The total Cronbach  $\alpha$  for the measurement was .973, which indicated good internal consistency of the construct.

##### 3.1.2 Operationlization of Perceived Quality

To measure the perception of the tourists on the quality of the attraction and the services provided, questions were adapted from SERVQUAL Battery (Parasuraman, 1994). The instrument of SERVQUAL were widely employed in service quality researches (Kang, Jame & Alexandris, 2002) and the reliability and validity of the instrument were proven by numerous studies (Lam & Woo, 1997; Randheer et al., 2011). According to the Evaluation and Measurement System of Tourism Attractions in China released by China's National Tourism Administration, 25 items were developed to measure the perceived quality of the specific historical and cultural destination, an ancient town in China.

There were five main sections to explore the five dimensions of the perceived quality of the attraction with each dimension including 5 items. Respondents were required to determine the degree to which each statement reflects their perception on the attraction and the services provided. All items used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= never to 5= always. The total Cronbach  $\alpha$  for the measurement was .984, which indicated good internal consistency of the construct.

##### 3.1.3 Operationlization of Motivation

From perspective of anthropologist, tourists travelled to escape the routine of daily life and seek authentic experiences (Yooh & Uysal, 2005). From socio-psychological point of view, tourist motivation involved seeking and avoidance dimensions (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Several studies used push forces such as the desire for escape, health and fitness, rest and relaxation, family togetherness, and adventure, and pull forces such as cultural attractions, beaches, recreation facilities, entertainment, natural scenery, park and shopping, to measure tourist motivation (Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Based on these researches, considering the reality of the research object and part of the results of interview with some tourists of historical and cultural attraction, eight items including both push and pull forces were developed to measure tourist motivation. All items used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= not important at all to 5= very important. The total

Cronbach  $\alpha$  for the measurement was .904, which indicated good internal consistency of the construct.

### 3.2 Sample Design and Data Collection

Semi-constructed survey questionnaire was used to collect data at an ancient town, namely Sheqi, located in Henan province, middle part of China, that is a historical and cultural site during May, 2019. A convenience sampling method was adopted because of limited time and manpower. The questionnaire was distributed at the exit and the service center of the attraction. Visitors who finished their visitation of the ancient town were asked about their willingness to participate the questionnaire survey. If they were willing to, they were asked to complete the questionnaire either on paper or on the cellphone by scanning the QR code. A total number of 1,500 questionnaires were distributed and 1,389 were completed. Thus, the response rate was 92.6 per cent.

### 3.3 Factor Analysis and Testing of Reliability and Validity

Table 1. Results of Efa and Testing of Reliability and Validity

Variable	KMO	Variance extracted	Factors	Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Experience	0.973	85.603%	Education(ED)	4	0.971
			Esthetics(ES)	4	0.968
			Entertainment(EN)	4	0.860
			Escapism(EC)	4	0.945
Motivation	0.904	76.708%	Push(PS)	4	0.809
			Pull(PL)	4	0.919
Perceived Quality	0.984	64.693%	Perceived Quality(PQ)	25	0.992

A pilot test was employed to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument before empirical analysis. And to delineate underlying factors, an exploration factor analysis (EFA) using principle component method with orthogonal rotation was conducted simultaneously. As shown in Table 1, four factors were extracted from the variable of tourist's experience, which were named education, esthetics, entertainment, and escapism, based on the underlying items. And two factors were extracted from the variable of tourist's motivation and named push and pull motivations. The results of the reliability test showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all variables were above the minimum of 70 (Nunnally, 1978) indicating that all the constructs were reliable.

Furthermore, to investigate the discriminating validity of the three variables: experience, perceived quality and motivation, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to compare the fitting degree between different models. Considering that there were many measuring items corresponding to the variable of tourist experience and perceived quality, to improve the fitting degree of the model, the corresponding items of latent variable of tourist experience were parceled to four observed entries and the corresponding items of perceived quality were parceled to five observed entries (Wu & Wen, 2011). The result of confirmatory factor analysis in Table 2 showed that compared with other models, the three-factor model had the best fitting effect. It suggested that the three latent variables used in this study were highly discriminated, and the validity of the survey instrument was desirable.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Three-factor model: EX;MO;PQ	1094.446	116	9.435	0.939	0.929	0.031
Two-factor model: EX+MO;PQ	4912.72	118	41.633	0.852	0.830	0.068
Two-factor model: EX;MO+PQ	5346.050	118	45.305	0.839	0.814	0.085
Single factor model: EX+MO+PQ	6620.509	119	55.634	0.800	0.771	0.084

Note: EX means experience; MO means motivation; PQ means perceived quality.

#### 4. Results

The results from this research found there were a slightly more female respondents (51.6%) than male. The majority of respondents were between ages of 18 to 49 (91.6%) coming from Nanyang district and other districts of Henan province (70.8%), and had at least three year of college education (82.5%) with monthly income less than 5,000 Yuan (72.5%). Majority of respondents knew about the ancient town by recommendation of family and friends (46.2%) and visited with friends and family members (64.9%).

##### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficients, means and standard deviations of each variable were shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Efficient for Variables (n=1,389)

Variable	1	2	3	5	6	7
PQ	—					
PS	0.676 <sup>***</sup>	—				
PL	0.750 <sup>***</sup>	0.803 <sup>**</sup>	—			
ED	0.876 <sup>**</sup>	0.647 <sup>***</sup>	0.730 <sup>**</sup>	—		
ES	0.895 <sup>***</sup>	0.656 <sup>***</sup>	0.758 <sup>***</sup>	—		
EN	0.848 <sup>***</sup>	0.658 <sup>***</sup>	0.688 <sup>***</sup>	0.894 <sup>***</sup>	—	
EC	0.791 <sup>***</sup>	0.633 <sup>***</sup>	0.652 <sup>***</sup>	0.840 <sup>***</sup>	0.893 <sup>***</sup>	—
Mean	3.994	3.616	3.930	4.045	3.925	3.878
S.D.	0.898	0.930	0.931	0.914	0.880	0.968

Note: \* indicates  $P < 0.05$ , \*\* indicates  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $P < 0.001$ . PS means push motivation; PL means pull motivation; ED means the experience of education; ES means the experience of esthetics; EN means the experience of entertainment; EC means the experience of escapism.

The results of the correlation analysis indicated that there were significant positive relationships among perceived quality and education (ED), esthetics (ES), entertainment (EN), and escapism (EC) with the correlation coefficients of .876 ( $P < 0.01$ ), .895 ( $P < 0.001$ ), .848 ( $P < 0.001$ ) and .791 ( $P < 0.001$ ) respectively, which was consistent with the hypotheses. And tourists' motivation (both push and pull) had positive relationships with tourists' experience (ED, ES, EN and EC) and perceived quality.

##### 4.2 Regression Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

To eliminate the influence of individual characteristics of tourists, age, monthly income and region coming from were used as control variables. Hierarchical linear regression was employed to test the theoretical hypotheses, and multiple interactions were introduced to test the moderating effects among variables.

Table 4 illustrated the analysis results of moderating effect of motivation on perceived quality. Model 1 was a regression model of control variables on Perceived Quality. In Model 2, on the basis of the control variables, four independent variables, i.e. Education (ED), Esthetics (ES), Entertainment (EN) and Escapism (EC), were added to test the influence on perceived quality. Model 3 and Model 4 were main effect models including control variables, independent variables and moderating variables (push motivation and pull motivation).

As was shown by the results of Model 2, after adding the four variables of education (ED), esthetics (ES), entertainment (EN), and escapism (EC) to the control variables, the explanatory power of the models increased significantly ( $\Delta R^2 = .810$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The three factors of experience- education ( $\beta = .285$ ,  $p < .001$ ), esthetics ( $\beta = .438$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and entertainment ( $\beta = .190$ ,  $p < .001$ ), had significant positive relationships with perceived quality respectively. Therefore, the hypotheses of H1a, H1b and H1c were verified. However, escapism had no significant impact on perceived quality in this study. The possible reason maybe that escapism was a special kind of experience for tourists that could not be evaluated immediately, therefore, it did not contribute to the formation of perceived quality just after the visit finished. However, in this study, the questionnaires were distributed at the exits and service center of the destination to visitors who just finished their visits. Thus, the respondents may do not have the feeling of escapism at that time. It could be concluded that the results of Model 2 provided initial support for Hypothesis 1.

Table 4. Results of Moderating Influence of Motivation (N=1,389)

Variable	Perceived Quality(PQ)			
	M <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	M <sub>4</sub>
Age	0.053*	-0.016	-0.009	-0.007
Monthly Income	-0.094**	-0.027*	-0.019	-0.020
Region Coming from	-0.098***	-0.008	-0.015	-0.013***
Education(ED)		0.285***	0.250***	0.231***
Esthetics(ES)		0.438***	0.408***	0.387***
Entertainment(EN)		0.190***	0.159***	0.172***
Escapism(EC)		0.009	0.002	0.004
Push(PS)			0.112***	
ED*PS			0.040*	
ES*PS			0.122**	
EN*PS			0.036**	
EC*PS			0.027	
ED*ES*EN*EC*PS			0.016*	
Pull(PL)				0.148***
ED*PL				0.031**
ES*PL				0.012***
EN*PL				0.040**
EC*PL				0.054
ED*ES*EN*EC*PL				0.011**
F	7.929***	94.989***	53.897***	54.518***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.017	0.827	0.836	0.838
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.015	0.826	0.834	0.837

The results of Model 3 showed that push motivation moderated the relationship between tourists' experience and perceived quality positively ( $\beta = .112$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The influencing coefficients of the three interactive effects, i.e. push\*education, push\*esthetics, and push\*entertainment, on perceived quality were .040 ( $p < .05$ ), .122 ( $p < .001$ ), and .036 ( $p < .001$ ) respectively, except push\*escapism which was not a significant interaction. Push motivation positively moderated the influence of tourists' experience on perceived quality significantly ( $\beta = .016$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Hypothesis of H2a was verified then. The results of Model 4 showed that pull motivation had positive effect on the relationship between tourists' experience and perceived quality as a moderator ( $\beta = .148$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The influencing coefficients of the three interactive effects-pull\*education, pull\*esthetics, and pull\*entertainment-on perceived quality were .031 ( $p < .001$ ), .012 ( $p < .01$ ), and .040 ( $p < .001$ ) respectively. Pull\*escapism had no significant influence either. And pull motivation also positively moderated the influence of tourists' experience on perceived quality significantly ( $\beta = .011$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, hypothesis of H2b was verified.

However, to ensure the reliability of the above conclusions, it was necessary to further examine whether the variables were multicollinearity. Therefore, tolerance (TOL) and variance-inflating factor (VIF) were used for multicollinearity diagnosis. The results were shown in Table 5. From model 2 to model 4, the tolerances of each dimension ranged from .121 to .969, and the variance-inflating factors ranged from 1.032 to 8.894, which were within the acceptable range. Therefore, it could be concluded that there were no multicollinearity in all dimensions, and the regression results of each model were reliable. All of the hypotheses-H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a and H2b-had been verified.

Table 5. Results of Multicollinearity Test

Variable	M <sub>2</sub>		M <sub>3</sub>		M <sub>4</sub>	
	TOL	VIF	TOL	VIF	TOL	VIF
Age	0.806	1.241	0.800	1.251	0.795	1.259
Monthly Income	0.969	1.032	0.949	1.054	0.955	1.047
Region Coming from	0.813	1.230	0.805	1.243	0.807	1.240
Education(ED)	0.145	6.899	0.139	7.175	0.137	7.308
Esthetics(ES)	0.126	8.428	0.104	9.639	0.121	8.894
Entertainment(EN)	0.130	7.698	0.124	8.062	0.127	7.873
Escapism(EC)	0.192	5.205	0.182	5.485	0.189	5.299
Push(PS)			0.471	2.123		
Pull(PL)					0.415	2.407

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study provided support for the positive effect of tourists' experience on perceived quality for historical and cultural destination. Furthermore, it was found that tourist motivation played a moderating role on the relationship between tourist's experience and perceived quality. These findings could provide managers of historic and cultural destinations with guidance for better understanding visitors' experience, their motivation, and how they influence visitors' perception of service quality provided, which will in turn affect tourist's satisfaction and their behavioral intentions regarding future visits (Hsieh, Park, & Hitchcock, 2015; Hsieh et al., 2018; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

### 5.1 Theoretical Implication

In previous researches, there were abundant findings about each construct of tourists' experience (Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007), motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Cini, Kruger, & Ellis, 2013; Hsieh, et al., 2018) and perceived quality (Aaker, 2009; Song et al., 2011; Liu, Yi, & Xia, 2017), as well as their impacts on tourist satisfaction and behavioral tendency after visit (Chen & Chen, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Song et al., 2006). However, few attention has been paid on the relationships among these variables, especially on the relationship between tourists' experience and their perception of service quality. In some cases, they were even used interchangeably (Wang & Mei, 2006). In this study, it was verified that tourists' experience and perceived quality were different constructs, and tourists' experience (education, entertainment, esthetics) had significant positive impact on perceived quality in historic and cultural context. This finding provides a new research perspective regarding the factor influencing tourist's perception on tourism service quality in historical cultural destinations. Furthermore, this study provided empirical evidence that tourists' motivation moderating the positive effect tourists' experience had on perceived quality significantly for historic and cultural tourists. It enriches the research of formation mechanism of perceived tourism service quality in historical cultural context. It was believed that this study had the capability and potential of developing more precise studies and applications of tourist behavior of historic cultural destinations.

### 5.2 Managerial Implication

The finding of testing of the proposed hypothetical model had managerial implications for the success of marketing of Sheqi ancient town and other historic cultural destinations. The findings of this study showed that in the specific historic and cultural destination, visitors had relatively stronger experience of EDUCATION (mean=4.036) and ESTHETICS (mean=4.045), which further had greater impact on perceived quality than other factors (EDUCATION,  $\beta = .285$ ,  $p < .001$ ; ESTHETICS,  $\beta = .438$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, in historic and cultural destinations, heritages should be carefully protected and preserved as well as fully exhibited and demonstrated to fulfill visitor's education, learning and appreciating demand (Hsieh, et al., 2018). Meanwhile, tourist motivation also had significant impact on perceived quality of the ancient town, which indicated that, to improve tourists' perceived quality, the historic and cultural attractions should be well designed and keep unique attractiveness as well as well communicated and marketed to be more appealing for tourists.

It was demonstrated by the results of the empirical analysis that push and pull motivation positively moderated the influence of tourists' experience on perceived quality significantly. Therefore, managers and marketers of



historic and cultural destinations were expected to take multiple reasons and motivations into consideration when making marketing plans and strategies (Hsieh, et al., 2018). Investment should be made not only in protection and decoration of the attraction but also in organizing enjoyable activities and events and launching publicity and propaganda by diverse platforms.

### 5.3 Limitations and Future Research

There were some issues associated with the limitations of this study. In terms of research samples, owing to the limitations of the research time and manpower, only tourists visiting the ancient town during May were surveyed using convenient sampling which may not be able to reflect the general conditions of all tourists visiting the ancient town. Limitations also existed in the historic and cultural destination typology, the selection of the moderators and the corresponding hypothetical framework. Future studies may be conducted towards different historical and cultural attractions in different areas of China, and different antecedents, consequences and moderators related to perceived quality of historic and cultural destinations.

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