

Coffee can be “Serious”: A Study of Chinese Specialty
Coffee Enthusiasts

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Coffee can be “Serious”: A Study of Chinese Specialty Coffee Enthusiasts

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Presented as part of the requirement for the award of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure

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Thesis Examination Committee Signature Page

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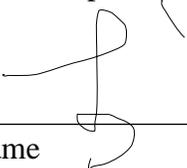
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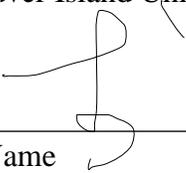
Declarations

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Abstract

Specialty coffee and the specialty coffee industry is not yet well-known by most people in China. Few studies have focused on specialty coffee enthusiasts and their leisure demands, motivations, and satisfaction with leisure participation. In addition, the eating and drinking activity was classified as casual leisure by Stebbins (2007), because it only can bring a fleeting and short-lived sensory stimulation to its participants and requires little effort or knowledge. However, compared to other types of coffee products, participation in specialty coffee involves considerable knowledge, lasting practice, and a sense of aesthetics. The purpose of this exploratory study was to discover whether specialty coffee participation is a kind of serious leisure or causal leisure. Also, gaining a better understanding of specialty coffee enthusiasts' leisure motivation, satisfaction, and the constraints they may encounter during their participation was another goal of this research. Using a deductive approach, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts (six male and six female). Serious leisure theory (SL), self-determination theory (SDT), and leisure constraints theory (LST) guided the framework of this research.

The finding of this study revealed that the core activity of specialty coffee participation met the six characteristics of the serious leisure framework (SLF): (a) Perseverance, (b) Career, (c) Personal effort, (d) Durable benefits, (e) Identity, (f) Unique ethos, which should be considered as *serious leisure*. In addition, *sensory preference* and *curiosity and exploration* were identified as intrinsic factors that motivated the participation; *emotional connection*, *self-gratification*, and *social attraction* were three main extrinsic motivations for the participants. Participants encountered three main types of constraints: intrapersonal constraints (i.e., negative psychological states, preconceived value, and a lack of confidence), interpersonal constraints

(i.e., the conflict with social responsibility, a lack of companion, and organizational constraints) and structural constraints (i.e., financial constraint and a lack of knowledge, skills, or competence) during their specialty coffee participation.

The findings of this study provide a new practical direction of serious leisure research and expand the theoretical evidence to support that the eating and drinking activity could also be considered as serious leisure. Meanwhile, the Chinese coffee industry, related organizations and coffee companies' management may develop measures to help these enthusiasts according to the results of this research. Finally, this study examined an originally Western leisure activities (i.e., specialty coffee) fit with three Western frameworks (i.e., SL, SDT, and LCT) in Chinese cultural context.

Keywords: Specialty coffee, serious leisure, eating and drinking

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Chapter One: Introduction

People are increasingly choosing to start the day with a cup of coffee in the morning to refresh themselves and adapt to the fast pace of work and life. Coffee is becoming one of the most popular drinks in the world and is a profitable commodity (Caprioli et al., 2015; Hattox, 2014, p.3; Samoggia & Riedel, 2018). For example, in 2009 alone, around 9,000 billion kilograms of coffee were consumed globally, and coffee consumption has been an increasing trend since 2013 (Shahbandeh, 2020). Although there are many coffee consumers, few consider coffee as their hobby or leisure pursuit. However, in recent years, specialty coffee has swept the globe with the spread of the third coffee movement. This has become an increasingly serious and complex leisure pursuit for many coffee enthusiasts worldwide. In particular, Chinese specialty coffee lovers have benefited from pursuing and participating in a range of leisure activities centered on specialty coffee. This group of people are enthusiastic about coffee and favor high quality, choice, and unique taste over mass-commercial alternatives.

Specialty Coffee

Specialty coffee, which may be an unfamiliar term for people who are not coffee lovers (Manzo, 2010), was first proposed by Erna Knutsen – a famous coffee roaster, who claimed that the coffee beans grown in “special micro-climates” have the best taste (Stack, 2018). Compared to other types of coffee, specialty coffee is famous for its “higher quality” (Van der Merwe & Maree, 2016), “unique” nature (De Waal & Pienaar, 2013), and “superior taste” (Lewin et al., 2004).

To define a uniform standard for specialty coffee, the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) has established a series of standards for water, green coffee beans, and coffee cupping. These standards include allowable defects in green beans, the coffee grading process, water standards,

and brew strength, even the best cup for coffee drinking, and a 100-point scale cupping evaluation system to assess the quality of each coffee (SCA, 1984). The SCA specifies 10 standards, and coffee scoring over is identified as specialty coffee.

The specific measurement standard is as follows:

90–100 – Outstanding

85–89.99 – Excellent

80–84.99 – Very Good

< 80.0 – Below Specialty Coffee Quality Standards

The process of brewing and appreciating specialty coffee is rigorous and interesting – the participants are involved in a designed experiment or art-creation process rather than simply drinking a beverage. The complicated and elaborated production and appreciation process gives specialty coffee activities a variety of possibilities and entertaining components. Jeff (2019) describes that “coffee appreciation requires artistic feelings, but making coffee requires rigorous scientific attitude and methods ... the expiration date of coffee beans ... the way and time of water injection ... one degree Celsius or a few seconds difference will affect a lot” (p.2). Therefore, more people are beginning to consider specialty coffee as a leisure pursuit.

Serious Leisure

Stebbins (1982, 1992, 2007) separates serious leisure from leisure. According to Stebbins (1982), serious leisure is a deep sense of satisfaction and presence when participants participate in one or multiple leisure activities. Although there are still some critical voices (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997, Gallant et al., 2013), a considerable number of leisure researchers have tested the applicability of the serious leisure framework (Yoder, 1997; Goff et al., 1997; Brown, 2007). From Stebbins’ perspective (2007), the reasons why participants are involved in certain leisure

activities depend on the core activity: “Engaging in the core activity ... is the main feature that attracts participants In short the core activity is a value in its own right...” (p.2). The audiences of specialty coffee demonstrate willingness to participate in a leisure activities related to specialty coffee. For instance, some like visiting independent specialty coffee houses in different cities or even visiting coffee origins and farms if they have sufficient time and money to enjoy the different “tastes of territories” (Benoit, 2007). Some enrich their theoretical knowledge about coffee or improve their practical skills through attending specialty coffee courses. Some participate in specialty coffee exhibitions or specialty coffee brewing, appreciation, and roasting competitions to get acquainted with more industry personalities (Sukiman, 2015). Individuals’ leisure needs can be satisfied by pursuing a wide range of specialty coffee-related activities. Therefore, specialty coffee itself can be considered as a core pursuit for those involved in the vast range of specialty-coffee-related activities.

Third Coffee Wave and Specialty Coffee Enthusiasts

Although the term specialty coffee has popularized during the third coffee wave, the purpose of this idea has actually separated the difference between the second coffee wave and the first one. Coffee wave generally refers to the growth and evolution trends (or movements) of the coffee industry in a certain period. The first coffee wave was related to the market competition of the “higher quantity” and the “lower quality” (Fischer, 2017). The first wave of coffee centered on popularity and convenience, and little attention was paid to origin countries, farms, or information about how the coffee had been processed, so it was more like a factory than a farm product. That may be the reason why “most people in the United States didn’t even know that coffee beans come from a real-life plant” (Oksnevad, 2019).

The second coffee wave was characterized by the creation of a coffee culture, rather than a

focus on the beverage. Big companies, such as Starbucks, Peet's, and Caribou, not only began to offer higher-quality coffee as well as information and knowledge of the producers, but also provided a new coffee culture experience and superior service for coffee lovers (Oksnevad, 2019). Since then, coffee has not only been a simple drink for people but also a fashionable leisure pursuit. For example, a loyal customer of Shanghai Starbucks expressed that although she may prefer the taste of the coffee from other coffee shops, she insists on going to Starbucks because its service resembles that of a five-star hotel and it provides a space where she feels relaxed and comfortable (Rosen, 2008). Furthermore, Starbucks' city mugs are adored by Starbucks fans and collectors; some people try to build a full collection of them (Haskova, 2015). Collecting Starbucks-related products has become a leisure pursuit for these people.

The core values of the third coffee wave can be summarized in three words: artisanship, aesthetics, and traceability (McIntyre, 2017). A coffee renaissance started with the customer's awareness of taste and flavour (Oksnevad, 2019). In response, the SCA (1995) created the flavour system – “flavour wheel” – and a set of sensory coffee vocabulary by collaborating with many professional sensory panelists, scientists, coffee buyers, and roasting companies. This wheel became the universal industry standard to assist coffee professionals and stakeholders to better describe the various flavours in coffees.

In the third wave, the entire coffee supply chain has received more attention. Customers have begun to care about “where and how the coffee was produced” (Guevara, 2017). McIntyre (2017) explains that the information printed on the coffee package is no longer simply the country name, but the specific farm, the variety of green beans, and the method of planting and processing. The third coffee wave represents the beginning of an era of truly specialty coffee. Nevertheless, the phrase “third wave” has been upstaged by the term “specialty coffee,” which is

becoming the predominant coffee market segment (Oksnevad, 2019).

Given that regular coffee customers may claim to be coffee lovers, it is necessary to recognize and define the term “specialty coffee enthusiast.” In this document, an enthusiast is someone with a serious, passionate, and eager attitude for specialty coffee. Therefore, “coffee lovers” must be differentiated from “specialty coffee lovers.” People who identify themselves as coffee lovers define specialty coffee as “good food paired with the high-priced single-origin coffee, diluted in a big cup of milk with beautiful latte art” (Sukiman, 2015). They like to spend a long time in cafes, taking small sips while working, regardless of the coffee’s aroma and flavour. Sukiman (2015) argues that these people cannot be considered as coffee lovers (the same as coffee enthusiasts); they only can be counted as café lovers. The literature has also identified that wide coffee audiences have many different drinking customs or preferences from coffee enthusiasts. Hoffmann (2019) found that most wide coffee audiences found sour coffee unpleasant and that those new to specialty coffee experienced “bitter sour confusion”—when they tasted that a cup of coffee was sour, they described it as bitter, believing it unusual to describe a cup of coffee as sour. Similarly, Sukiman (2015) found that some coffee regular drinkers found it difficult to accept light, floral, or acid tastes in coffee, insisting that coffee should be dark and bitter. These views are quite distinct from those of specialty coffee enthusiasts.

In this study, *specialty coffee* enthusiasts are a group of coffee enthusiasts who respect and accept the core values of the third wave; who are obsessed with coffee itself rather than cafés or the coffee experience; who enjoy the taste and flavour of light and medium coffee roasts, which is closer to the original fruity taste of coffee (Hoffmann, 2019; Oksnevad, 2019; Sukiman, 2015) Whether in the process of brewing or cupping (tasting coffee in an evaluative way) is, coffee enthusiasts seek for perfection in the details.

Research Purpose and research hypothesis

With the development of society, Chinese people are increasingly facing a fast pace of life and high work pressures. This has influenced individual's physical and mental health, particularly in the younger generation. According to Xiao (2015), two critical causes of suicide and sudden cardiac arrest in people under the age of 35 are high work pressure and a shortage of leisure time. However, due to the influence of traditional ideas, many Chinese people are unaware of the importance of leisure in people's lives. Serious leisure pursuits can improve a person's sense of self-achievement, self-enrichment, and self-satisfaction, offering a pathway to solve social issues and improve human well-being and the quality of life (Stebbins, 2007; Wang & Long, 2011). Yet, as it is a fairly new concept in Chinese culture, there is a shortage of studies on serious leisure from a Chinese perspective. In the existing literature, Chinese leisure scholars have primarily focused on the creation of leisure concepts in the Chinese context or the development of outdoor leisure activities; few have focused on indoor leisure pursuits or "eating or drinking" leisure activities.

This study focuses on specialty coffee enthusiasts in China. Applying the serious leisure framework explains the leisure demands and motivations of these enthusiasts, along with the benefits of participation for them. The purpose of this exploratory study is to discover whether specialty coffee participation is a kind of serious leisure or causal leisure. Also, gaining a better understanding of specialty coffee enthusiasts' leisure motivation, satisfaction, and the constraints they may encounter during their participation is another goal of this research. I propose the following hypothesis to address my first research question: specialty coffee leisure participation is a type of serious leisure.

Research Questions

To achieve the research goals, the research questions are as follows:

1. How does the serious leisure framework apply to Chinese specialty coffee as a leisure pursuit? Does the behaviour of Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts' fit within the six characteristics introduced by the serious leisure framework (SLF)?
2. What factors drive Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts to be involved in coffee-related activities?
3. What leisure constraints are faced when participating in activities related to specialty coffee?

These questions seek to clarify (1) how the SLF applies to specialty coffee enthusiasts' (a) perseverance, (b) careers, (c) personal efforts, (d) unique ethos, (e) benefits, and (f) identity; and (2) how motivational factors determine participation and what factors limit participation.

Thesis Structure

This research consists of five chapters to describe the whole research process. Chapter one introduces the research background and context, including the definition and interpretation of key concepts as used in this research and a brief review of the history of specialty coffee and its current status. The main goals of this research are also presented. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature and empirical studies to help validate the feasibility of this research. Leisure, serious leisure, and sustainability are discussed. Chapter three illustrates the research paradigm, methodology, and instruments employed in this research. It shares rationale behind the methodology, the process of research design and conduct, and the means of obtaining data from the research population. Chapter four shares the findings and results of this research. Chapter five discusses the results, limitations, and suggestions for future research directions.

Terms Definition

Specialty coffee: a term relating to the “high quality” of coffee typically used to describe a certain coffee which gets 80 scores (out of 100) under the SCAA assessment system.

Specialty coffee enthusiasts: be defined as a group of coffee lovers who deem specialty coffee as the core of leisure pursuit.

Leisure activity: an activity chosen freedom by people in their spare time for pleasure, relaxation, or other positive emotional satisfaction without any responsibility or mandatory paid.

Serious leisure: a term of “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling for the participant to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins, 1982).

Leisure motivation: be defined as “a need, reason, or satisfaction that stimulates involvement in a leisure activity” (Crandall, 1980).

Leisure constraints: the inhibition or negative factor existing in the leisure participation or affecting the leisure preference.

Coffee cupping: also known as coffee tasting is the practice of observing the tastes and aromas of brewed coffee.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is exploring how serious leisure framework applies in Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts to obtain a better understanding of their leisure participation and pursuit. The relevant literature of this research is divided into four topics including leisure, coffee-related leisure, serious leisure, and sustainable leisure. This chapter pursues three goals. First, it explores concepts and theories in leisure and leisure motivation relevant to the topic of this thesis. Then, the link between coffee and leisure in different forms are reviewed. Next, serious leisure theory and relevant studies are discussed. Finally, this chapter introduces the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability in the coffee industry.

Motivation to Engage in Specialty Coffee-Related Leisure and Consumption

Culture experience, symbol, and identification

Coffee as a product of the spread of colonialism plays a substantial role in many cultures (Ágoston et al., 2015; Grinshpun 2013). For instance, Grinshpun (2013) asserted that since coffee was introduced to Japanese culture in the 19th century, it has significantly influenced Japanese economic, political, and socio-cultural activity. A study of leisure time in Austria showed that customers ranked coffee-related activity/consumption first, even higher than vacations abroad (Schwarz et al., 1994). Tucker (2017) pointed out the reason coffee has become popular was that people deemed coffee as their own possession. For example, coffee is “a traditionally indispensable element” in Turkish family habits; it has also been considered as one kind of Turkish identity (Argan et al., 2015). Ágoston et al. (2017) noted that habit is one of the major factors motivating people to be involved in coffee-related activities. This supported the assertion by Sousa et al. (2016) that “tradition and habit” was the second essential reason that people drank coffee. Middle-class identity and the symbol connected to globalization are two

new motivational factors for coffee consumers in those countries. Grinshpun (2013) stated that consuming western products represented by coffee symbolized middle-class modernity in Japanese society. Also, Chinese scholars determined that coffee as a colonial product was a new way to identify the middle class and link it to western culture (Lin & Wang, 2010; Tian & Dong, 2011).

Hedonism

Hopkinson and Pujari (1999) defined hedonism as “the doctrine that pleasure is the highest good; the pursuit of pleasure; a life-style devoted to pleasure-seeking.” Tifferet and Herstein (2012) supposed that consumption-related hedonism had affected human’s well-being and happiness indirectly by satisfying people’s experience when they were involved in certain activities. In the context of coffee consumption, the pure pleasant “absolutely” derived from the sensorial pleasant based on tasting (Argan et al., 2015). Samoggia and Riedel (2018) noted that drinking coffee was not just consuming a drink; it was an experience of pleasure, lifestyle, and social status. Bhumiratana et al. (2014) found that coffee consumers expected to enjoy a positive tasting experience when they engaged in coffee drinking, which they associated with a kind of sensory enjoyment. According to Harith et al. (2014), taste was the predominant motivation for drinking coffee, and Van Loo et al. (2015) came to the same conclusion. Similarly, according to Labbe et al. (2015), consumers who drink coffee for sensual enjoyment pay more attention to the smell and taste of the coffee, and they are obsessed with that s kind of experience. In short, hedonism is a considerable factor underlying participation in coffee consumption under the lens of leisure science. People go to cafés with others not only to drink coffee but to link coffee with attributions of happiness, pleasantness, companionship, and other extended relationships (Richelieu & Korai, 2014). Therefore, hedonism could be seen as one of the motivational factors

in coffee leisure.

Relaxation and Escape

Many people attempt to seek a sense of relaxation and escape during participating in leisure activities. Argan et al. (2015) asserted that one essential instrumental driver of Turkish coffee was relaxation and escape on both the physical and mental levels. In fact, coffee as a beverage itself could not function that way. Relaxation and escape here are mostly associated with the room or space where consumers drink coffee or engage in coffee-related activities. Oldenburg (2000) developed the concept of the “third place” which was “non-domestic and non-work-related.” The urban coffee house is an excellent example of a “third place.”(Oldenburg, 2000) In the 1920s and 1930s, coffee houses in Japan had already provided “an accessible space accommodating various public expressions of modernity,” and the functionality of coffee shops also changed with the times to meet social demands (Grinshpun, 2013).

Socialization

A comparative study of the motivation to consume coffee showed that socializing was a value when people came together at a coffee house (Samoggia & Riedel, 2018). As Richelieu and Korai (2014) suggested, café had created a social environment where people were encouraged to approach others. This facilitated communication and companionship between individuals, and it gradually became part of people’s daily lives. Coffee played the role of an “excuse” (Heise, 2001) or a “social ritual” (Spinelli et al. 2017) in social environments, in particular in the business world. Furthermore, coffee itself was also deemed as a topic of sociability that focused on the coffee connoisseurs’ subculture.

Gaps in the literature

When scholars were concerned about the motivation of coffee-related consumption or

participation, coffee itself always had “secondary significance” (Grinshpun, 2013). Likewise, Kucukkomur & Ozgen (2009) believed that the reasons that coffee houses existed was because of the need for chatting rather than for drinking coffee. They noted, “I feel like neither coffee nor coffeehouse, what I need is just a chat and coffee is only a reason for it (p.1697).” Samoggia and Riedel (2018) pointed out that “even in the case of Milligan’s study, coffee per se has always been epiphenomenal, and merely the comestible extant in the real focus of research, which has been public customers’ behavior and sociability” (p.74). What is missing in these studies is that the importance of coffee itself must be studied. One goal of this research was to fill this gap in the literature by examining the motivations of participants who are interested in coffee as a beverage itself rather than the other instrumental functions that surround coffee drinking.

Leisure Motivation Theories

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) defined motivation as the research relates to the reason that people act. They focused on the reasons for people’s engagement in activities by combining many motivation theories. Ryan and Deci (1985) assumed that motivation research was the core of awareness and social adjustment. The value of motivation research was to identify what incentives lead people to participate, guide their behaviors, and encourage them to take an action. In this study, a few motivation frameworks were briefly discussed to provide an understanding of how coffee enthusiasts are motivated. Maslow’s hierarchy theory has been challenged on various grounds by many leisure scholars (Porter et al., 2003; Wahba & Bridwell, 1984; Cramer 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Maslow formed a model for needs that guided motivation research (Kleiber et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2019). Maslow’s hierarchy (Maslow, 1968) comprises physiological, safety and security, belongingness and love, ego and esteem, and self-actualization as five levels of needs, which follow an order from a human’s

basic physical needs to the highest psychological needs. Like everyone else, specialty coffee enthusiasts also could reasonably be expected to have a range of needs, from low levels of physical needs to high levels of self-fulfilment. Chen et al. (2018) observed that leisure motivation can be described as an intermediary factor such that it creates a demand, reason, or satisfaction, which stimulates participation in leisure activities. Motivation plays an essential role in encouraging people to be involved in a leisure activity.

Neulinger's paradigm

Neulinger (1974) proposed a leisure paradigm that had two attributes: 1) perceived freedom and 2) motivation. He divided motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic segments. The purpose for building this paradigm was to identify the nature of activities. Neulinger (1974, 1981) proposed four basic types of activity: pure job, pure work, leisure job, pure leisure. The activities related to leisure had as a prerequisite perceived freedom. The main difference between these two activities was the type of motivation; leisure job activity was defined something that people were involved in for extrinsic incentives such as money, health, or compliments, while people chose pure leisure activity from intrinsic motivation. That meant that the reward came from the activity itself.

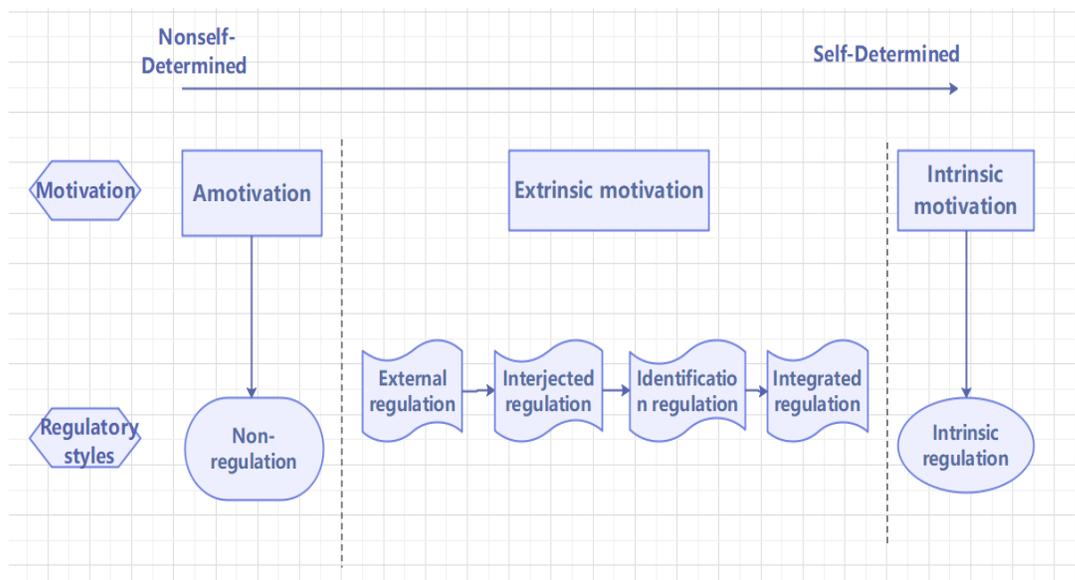
Self-determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) explored the relationship between participants' motivation and personality. SDT focused on the choices people made without external impact, and the degree of involvement depended on people's innate psychological needs for self-determination (Figure 2.1). As the figure shows, SDT considers all action as a unified continuum, from left to right, according to the degree to which motivation derives from human's self, namely self-determination (Figure 2.1). On the far left of the continuum is amotivation,

which is the lack of any intention to act. People either do not act at all or they act aimlessly. Amotivation comes from devaluing an activity (Ryan, 1995), lacking the competence to do it (Bandura, 1986), or failing to expect it to produce the desired result (Seligman, 1975). On the far right of the continuum is the state of intrinsic motivation. It shows that an activity is performed only to satisfy intrinsic needs. Such an act is highly autonomous and is a typical example of self-determination. Extrinsic motivation, by contrast, encompasses a continuum between motivation and intrinsic motivation, with varying degrees of autonomy in regulation.

Figure 1

Self-determination continuum theory



Note. This figure is adapted from *Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*, by Deci, E. L., and Ryan, R. M., 2018, Guilford Publications.

Intrinsic Motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) asserted that intrinsic motivation was a natural tendency that referred to the nature of human's potential, such as seeking novelty and challenges (curiosity), extending and exercising their capacities (competence), and investigating and learning knowledge (exploration). Similarly, based on the developmentalist's perspective, healthy children have shown similar characteristics, such as being active, inquisitive, curious,

and playful from the day of birth, even with no external rewards (Harter, 1978). This natural tendency has been considered one of the central sources of happiness and dynamics in one's life (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993). Research on intrinsic motivation seeks to identify the supportive factors that trigger and maintain this tendency rather than what factors result from it, because it has been assumed that this tendency could easily be damaged by various non-supportive conditions (Ryan, 1995).

As a sub-theory of SDT, cognitive evaluation theory (CET) explains the factors that contribute to changes in intrinsic motivation. Focused on basic needs (i.e., relatedness, competence, and autonomy), CET aims to explore the influence of rewards on intrinsic motivation, feedback, and other external events (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

According to CET, a sense of competence was produced by a series of social-contextual events, such as feedback, rewards, and communication, which enhanced intrinsic motivation. However, Fisher (1978) pointed out that the sense of competence failed to enhance intrinsic motivation directly without the feeling of autonomy. This means that people's intrinsic motivation appeared only when they experienced competence or efficacy and enjoyed complete self-determination.

Explorative behavior has been confirmed by several studies as the third factor that enhances intrinsic motivation (Frodi et al., 1985; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). For example, in a study that investigated the relationship between mothers and infants, Frodi et al. (1985) discovered children engaged in more exploratory behaviors when they felt secure and supported by their mothers.

Overall, the CET framework has determined that human's intrinsic motivation can be enhanced or reduced when the social environment supports or inhibits their psychological needs. However, Ryan and Deci (1985) also emphasized that human's intrinsic motivation was

produced only when people were involved in activities that were novel, challenging, or aesthetically valuable, or that were naturally interesting to them; Otherwise, CET may fail to apply to activities that were not attractive to participants because the participants had no intrinsic interests at first.

Extrinsic motivation. Many investigations have shown that intrinsic motivation was not the only self-determined motivation. For example, people may become involved in activities or events because of stress or the responsibilities that come from different social roles that people must play. Therefore, Ryan and Deci (2018) divided extrinsic motivation into four segments based on the level of autonomy (self-determination) from which people get different values (see Figure 2).

Specifically, the most involuntary extrinsically motivated behaviors were called *external regulatory*. They satisfied the contingency of external needs or rewards. DeCharms (1968) stated that individuals usually experience *external regulatory* behavior when they were being controlled or alienated, and their behavior had an external causal relationship.

The second type of extrinsic motivation was called *interjected regulation*. It involved accepting a rule, but not fully accepting it for one's own sake. It is a relatively controlled form of regulation in which actions are taken to avoid guilt or anxiety or to achieve self-improvement, such as pride. Ryan and Deci (1995) observed that *interjected regulation* was a kind of occasional regulation of self-esteem. In that case, people were motivated to show their abilities (or avoid failure) to maintain their sense of value. Even though it might drive intrinsically, *introverted behavior*, it still has an external causal relationship, so that interjected regulation is not really experienced as one's intrinsic motivation (Williams et al., 1996). *Identification regulation* is a more autonomous kind of regulation. Identity reflects a conscious emphasis on the

goals or rules of the individual's behavior. In that case, the behavior is considered an important part of a person (Ryan & Deci, 1995). *Integrated regulation* is the most autonomous external regulation. It occurs when established rules are fully assimilated by the person. This means that the rules have been evaluated and aligned with other values and needs. Behaviors characterized by synthetic motives have many of the same qualities as intrinsic motives, but they are still considered extrinsic because they are intended to achieve separable results, not internal pleasure (Dillard & Bates, 2011).

In the context of this study, *external regulation* had less autonomy because the value of participation was entirely dependent on an external party. For instance, *external regulation* could happen when a barista is driven to participate in a barista competition with the hope of getting a good result or a reward. *Introjected regulation* is derived from the individual's internal motivation, but it affects external parties by "enhancing self-esteem or avoiding embarrassment" (Dillard & Bates, 2011). When coffee newcomers are merely engaged in coffee-brewing or coffee-making activities, they may prefer that the coffee they made would be tasted by friends or family rather than strangers. Identification means that participants have realized the need for a long-term value for the activity, and they are motivated to pursue that value. In this context, most coffee enthusiasts are constantly willing to learn new skills or acquire new knowledge to improve their performance in activities related to coffee. The latter form is called *integrated regulation*, a conscious motivation in which the participants have the most self-determination and would like to repeat their engagement because they gained the instrumental results from their previous experience. An example would be a participant who does a lot of coffee-related training before a coffee competition, thereby seeking a higher ranking.

Serious Leisure

Stebbins (1997) suggested serious leisure was an independent form of leisure, distinct from general leisure based on Parker's (1982) five classifications of leisure. Stebbins (2007) defined serious leisure as:

...the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge and experience (p. 5)

Raisborough (1999) commented that the concept of serious leisure broke up the stereotype of leisure, which was pure hedonism. Leisure study was no longer the only link to "enjoyment" or "freedom." It also involved long-term effort, commitment, even a career.

In this study, serious leisure has been used as the main theoretical framework to explore the motivation and behavior of coffee enthusiasts, so this part is to provide basic knowledge about serious leisure and to describe the connection between serious leisure and coffee-related leisure by reviewing the extended literature.

Serious Leisure Framework (SFL)

Parker et al. (1993) asserted that leisure activity could be divided into three types: serious, casual, and moderately serious. They conducted a systematic study of 30 Australians about their leisure life. Then, based on the degree of investment in participation, Stebbins (2007) categorized leisure activity into three main forms: serious leisure, casual leisure (CL), and project-based leisure. Stebbins (2001) pointed out that the features that distinguished serious leisure from other forms were sincerity, importance, earnestness, and carefulness. These are what differentiated serious leisure from casual leisure or unserious leisure, which were related to less substantial rewards and offered no career. The latter were "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable core activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (p. 53).

Stebbins (1992) asserted that the point that distinguished serious leisure from other forms

was whether a certain activity included “systematic pursuit, acquisition of skills, knowledge, and experience” or if it “requires little or no special training” (Stebbins, 1997, p.3). Furthermore, he claimed that satisfaction and rewardingness were the distinctive results of serious leisure participation, while “enjoyment and pleasure were the more appropriate descriptors of the rewards of casual leisure” (Stebbins, 2007, p. 13). When SLF was proposed, it had wide acceptance and application as an “established theory” (Elkington & Stebbins, 2004, p. 197) to provide categorization and interpretation of all leisure activities and experiences. Shen and Yarnal (2010) confirmed that SLF theory was a foundational development in the serious leisure field. Blackshaw (2010) proposed that, compared with traditional leisure theories, SL theory made great progress and provided a new pathway to the theoretical studies of leisure. However, some opposing voices have insisted that SLF lacks depth and richness and that it is a descriptive rather than a theoretical method (Smith, 1993; Puddephatt, 2007; Breeze, 2013). Nevertheless, SLF has been used in a large number of empirical and exploratory studies as their theory, framework, or foundation (Frew, 2006; Heley & Jones, 2013; Kane & Zink, 2004).

Six Characteristics

To distinguish from other leisure forms, Stebbins (2001) elaborated six exclusive qualities which were only found in serious leisure.

According to Stebbins (2001), *perseverance* is the “occasional need to persist” (p. 6) when participants were under adverse situations or during challenging periods such as stage fright (e.g., while the participants were doing performance or sports competition, Stebbins, 1981), embarrassment (e.g. community volunteers, Arai, 1997), or injury (e.g. women climbing, Dilley & Scraton, 2010). A long-distance hike may bring participants physical and mental stress and exhaustion, and perseverance was the distinctive feature that separated serious participants from

common players (Lum, 2015). Similarly, faithful video game players have been found to always want the opportunity to acquire or maintain gaming skills (Delamare & Shaw, 2006). However, some argued that the focus should be on whether the need to persevere was occasional or ongoing. Lamont et al. (2014) noted that the costs participants encountered may be infinite, so people had continue their participation from constant perseverance rather than occasional activity. In this study, coffee enthusiasts also may meet a variety of difficulties when they are involved in coffee activities. For instance, a tasting course requires trainees to taste large amounts of coffee at a time to describe the different flavours from the different sources of coffee. Participants may feel physically and mentally uncomfortable because of the high caffeine intake. That is the point when they need to persevere.

Career is recognized as an individual's developmental path marked by "special contingencies, turning points, and stages of achievement or involvement" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 9). Scott and Shafer (2001) found that the dimension of progression in a recreational specialty was a notion similar to career in serious leisure, since a career "entails progression in behavior, skill, and personal commitment." As an example, Heuser (2005) described the entire process of amateurs' participation in lawn bowling in a way that resembled a professional career: At first, they were beginners. Then they got hooked on this sport and became involved in organizations. Eventually they retired from bowling. In addition, volunteers who were involved in firefighting in a community should be viewed as having a career. They were engaged in voluntary firefighting several times a week for several years in a row, and they insisted on working even if they encountered setbacks (Yarnal & Dowler, 2002). Similarly, Bartram (2001) noted that kayaking hobbyists felt pure pleasure and happiness in the process where they made detailed training plans over a long period to improve their skills and performance.

Stebbins (1992) asserted that career has always relied on the third feature of serious leisure, which is *personal effort*. Considerable effort was represented by seeking “knowledge, training, or skill... sometimes all three” (p. 6). Gravelle and Larocque (2005) pointed out that this dimension included perseverance, especially in adverse circumstances, which required significant effort to succeed. Scott and Shafer (2001) supposed that the participants made a commitment to a certain activity by investing substantial time and energy to acquire and develop specialized skills.

Likewise, specialty coffee enthusiasts have shown more professional skills and knowledge than regular coffee consumers. For example, they may pay more attention to the specific roasting date and the coffee’s origins while purchasing coffee, and then they brew it in a specific way (e.g. focusing on the temperature of the water, the ratio of water to coffee, etc.). Thus, compared to making other kinds of coffee (e.g. instant coffee), roasting or appreciating specialty coffee require a greater degree of skill and effort.

Durable benefits are described as positive results that stem from engagement in serious leisure activities. Eight individual benefits have been recognized and summarized by Stebbins, based on various serious leisure participants and their experiences: “self-actualization, self-enrichment, recreation or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, self-expression, social interaction, and belongingness” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 7). Compared to casual leisure, SLF has benefits that have been regarded as more profound and enduring, providing lasting well-being with participants at both the physical and psychological levels (Lee et al., 2019). Specifically, Stebbins (2007) explained that the process by which people usually improve their intellectual knowledge and enrich their inner world by engaging in valued experiences is deemed self-enrichment. The connotation of self-actualization is derived from the awareness of one’s natural gifts, ability, and competence (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991).

According to various SLF studies (Baldwin & Norris 1999; Stebbins, 1982; Hastings et al., 1995), self-actualization was embraced by pursuing and building skills, abilities, and knowledge in serious leisure participations. Self-gratification, according to Stebbins (1992, 2001, 2007) existed in pursuits of both serious leisure and casual leisure. It is a deep sense of pleasure and personal fulfillment. However, the initial purpose of participation in serious leisure activities is not to receive benefits or rewards; engaging in the activity itself is the greatest pleasure for those participants (Liu & Lou, 2019).

Unique ethos is the fifth characteristic that distinguishes serious leisure from non-serious leisure pursuits. It is defined as “the distinctive beliefs, values, or attitudes shared within the community of serious leisure participants” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 12). Scholars tried to introduce the concept of social world to explain the existence of groups in serious leisure pursuits (Unruh, 1980; Scott & Godbey, 1992, Green & Jones, 2005). Social world was first discussed by Shibutani (1955), who described it as being many dynamic groups which are not interdependent, but are connected loosely by a range of interests and a special communication system. In each social world, participants have access to their leisure pursuits, and they acquire and improve their skills. In a study of adult contract bridge players, Scott and Godbey (1992) combined the concept of social world and serious leisure and supposed that the members of a certain social world created specialized knowledge, language, and manners. Those players shared the special meaning of their activities and events, which distinguished their social world from others. Unique ethos can be regarded as a tool to identify specialty coffee enthusiasts and distinguish them from regular coffee consumers. For instance, flavours described on the coffee flavour wheel (e.g. chocolate, cherry) are a kind of exclusive language for coffee enthusiasts. Regular consumers may find it difficult to understand how someone can taste those flavours in a cup of

coffee, let alone separate them. However, coffee professionals and enthusiasts can recognize various flavours by systematic taste training.

Strong identification is the last distinguishing quality of serious leisure. According to Stebbins (1997), “Participants [are inclined] to speak proudly, excitedly, and frequently about them to other people, and to present themselves in terms of these pursuits when conversing with new acquaintances” (p. 7). Brown (2007) added, “These amateurs know they are too passionate to talk about their hobby, but they cannot stop it” (p.629).

Tajfel (1981) observed that people would link themselves to some emotional importance when they realized they had become a member of such a group, such as a football fan or an amateur dramatist. Researchers declared that, for participants, identification in SL was important, even more than other social identities (Baldwin & Norris, 1999; Brown, 2007). Therefore, Harrington and Bielby (1995) and Mannell and Kleiber (1997) asserted that the overall identity of individuals may derive from their participation in serious leisure. The consequence is similar to the assertion by (2000) that the participants’ identification was the one that determined the enduring character of serious leisure.

SLF and Motivation Theories

Researchers are keen to expose the relationship between SLF and the motivations of people to continue to take part in serious leisure activities, especially when the cost of participation exceeds the reward they get.

The profit hypothesis was proposed by Stebbins (1997) in an attempt to explain the reasons that people are constantly involved in serious leisure activities when the benefits of participation are overwhelmed by the estimated costs. This assertion was challenged by Jones (2000), who suggested that it failed to explain why amateur athletes continually played in or supported a

losing team, or why an amateur musician stubbornly continued to perform even though he or she always misconducted. Eventually, Jones (2000) concluded, strong group identification (as mentioned above) connected group cognition with participants' emotions, and it encouraged people to take part in activities when the cost was greater than the reward.

A reward is a sense of fulfillment from serious leisure activity, and it drives participants to lasting involvement in serious leisure (Stebbins, 1997; 2001; 2007). Compared to benefits (as noted in Section 2.2.2) which were more like outcomes for involvement in the activity, rewards can be considered as motivations for participation (Stebbins, 2007). Through years of continuous tracking and exploring different serious leisure activities, Stebbins (2007) summarized 10 types of personal or social rewards: personal enrichment, self-actualization, self-expression, self-image, self-gratification, re-creation, financial return, social attraction, group accomplishment, and contribution to the maintenance and development of the group.

Raisborough (1999) described cost as a not-fun facet of a leisure activity. This was similar to Stebbins (2007)'s definition of cost of leisure activity, namely the sense of "tensions, dislikes and disappointments." Although cost exploration has attracted less attention in SLF literature than other aspects (Stebbins, 2007), a few researchers have revealed the constraint factors in serious leisure. For instance, Dilley and Scraton (2010) asserted that women fell more easily into the dilemma of negotiating the responsibility of family and the persistence needed to pursuing careers than their male counterparts. They also found that climbing the career ladder was more demanding for women because of their inherent defects in physical power. In addition, social and moral pressure and value judgments also affect people's serious leisure pursuits. For instance, Spracklen (2013) found that excessive drinking in British society has been condemned. Coincidentally, drinking by college students (Maloney, 2011) and small-scale marijuana growers

(Boylstein, 2013) were considered “immoral” and their hobby was “unacceptable.” Baldwin and Norris (1999) stressed that if people paid more attention to their core pursuits, engagement in other activities would be reduced.

Zhou et al. (2020) assumed that people pursued serious leisure with the intention of gaining long-term, more thrilling, and full-grown benefits. A positive correlation has been found between the intrinsic motivation and the frequency and the amount of time that people engage in serious leisure activities (Frederick & Ryan, 1993). For example, Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith (2003) proposed that the intrinsic motivation of serious cycling participants was higher than that of common cyclists. Furthermore, Baldwin and Norris (1999) confirmed that the personal identification which developed in serious leisure pursuits has played multiple roles, including creating friendships, associating socially, and fulfilling commitments. The study of long-distance running summarized two laws of the relationship between the six independent qualities of SLF and leisure motivation (Zhou et al., 2020): 1. Intrinsic motivation was positively associated with all qualities of serious leisure except identity; 2. Identified regulation and integrated regulation of extrinsic motivation were positively related to SLF qualities. These two conclusions have confirmed that leisure motivation is strongly related to SLF.

SLF and Occupational Devotion

Stebbins (2004) indicated that the line between work and leisure can be eliminated by a strong, positive attachment of work which is called as occupational devotion. This devotion generates a sense of achievement and deep self-fulfillment during in occupational devotee’s work and embodying in their actions, lifestyle, and motivation. Stebbins (2009) introduced the process of transformation from the basic serious leisure participants (armatures, hobbyists, and volunteers) to a high level of commitment to serious leisure pursuit: they were initially obsessed

with the core activity, and then developed a profound devotion to it when they took a series of courses, or engaged in practical work, finally they hope to devote their whole time to do it.

Stebbins (1992) noted that serious leisure participants would experience five career stages during their participation, which were beginning, development, establishment, maintenance, and decline. The participants can obtain a sense of continuity as long as the interest in the activity taking root. Their pursuit becomes to show features such as routine and systematic. Most importantly, Stebbins (2009) emphasized that people can gain “a sense of career, of getting better and more experienced at one’s passion. And with this comes a growing feeling of deep fulfillment” (p.770)

Leisure Constraints

Based on the literature, Jackson (1993) defined the concept of leisure constraints as the limitation on people’s actions when they are involved in leisure activities. Their psychological states or their physical surroundings might somehow prevent participation, reduce it, or have negative impacts on the quality of leisure participations. Crawford et al. (1994) categorized leisure constraints into three types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural.

Interpersonal constraints always appear in social interaction (i.e., with family, spouses, and friends). Crawford and Godbey (1987) asserted that this kind barrier resulted from personal characteristics that accompanied spouses into their marital relationship. The interaction between spouses might influence their common leisure preference or affect both partner’s leisure preference and subsequent leisure participation. Moreover, interpersonal constraints are also generated by general relationships. For instance, one may face interpersonal barriers if he/she cannot find an appropriate partner (at the same skill level) for a specific sports activity. For example, in traditional Chinese society, women smoking has been seen as morally unacceptable,

so that opinion is an intrapersonal barrier that prohibits women from smoking.

Intrapersonal constraints are mainly determined by the psychological state of the participants, which directly affect their leisure preferences. Crawford and Godbey (1987) listed potential intrapersonal barriers as stress, group attitude, depression, anxiety, and prior socialization. As the example of women smoking, if a women believes smoking is a wrong activity, then it is the intrapersonal constraint.

Structural constraints refer to objective factors that intervene between leisure preference and leisure participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). For example, when people decided to engage in the coffee-related activity, time, equipment, and coffee knowledge may be the structural constraints to consider.

Chinese leisure perspective

The literature of leisure was dominated by western perspective (Iwasaki, 2007). Chick (2009) identified that the researcher could gain a better understanding of leisure behaviors when leisure in a specific cultural context has been appropriately defined, explained, and operationalized. The members of different cultural groups have the own value of their leisure preferences, structures, and processes because of the different worldviews (Walker et al., 2005).

Most western literature of Chinese leisure study still stays in a stereotype that leisure (xiu xian) is a negative word in Chinese culture (Walker et al., 2005, Wang & Stringer, 2000; Xiao, 1997). Wang and Stringer (2000) noted that fewer Chinese people considered that leisure is an important part of their life because of their strong work ethic. Ho and Card (2001) asserted that for Chinese American elderly women, the responsibility for their family is more important than leisure participation. Ho and Card (2001) emphasized that leisure was not important or dispensable for those Chinese people.

However, it is easy to misunderstand the Chinese people's attitude towards leisure from western ideas because of cultural differences (Mao et al., 2020). The traditional Chinese view of leisure is to obtain physical and mental relaxation and adjustment in various ways of play beyond working time (Liang & Brown, 2013). Compared to western leisure theories, this idea seems to be regarded as conventional and well-known; thus, no one specializes in researching and forming a theory system. The study of leisure slowly developed until the 1990s (Xiao, 1997). According to Liu and Zhang (2020), people have gradually paid attention to leisure and leisure activities and considered leisure in an objective view, which was deemed as an unworthy topic in the past. In practical, with the rapid improvement of living standards, Chinese people, especially the young generation has paid more attention to their leisure life, and being more options for their leisure choice than their parents. For example, Liang and Walker (2011) indicated that people in mainland China have both enough money and time to involve in leisure activities.

According to Fan et al. (2020), sports leisure and tourism leisure are the most studied topic in Chinese leisure academia. Because tourism can generate huge economic and social benefits, it has been strongly supported by the local government. This reason makes tourism to be a significant leisure activity for Chinese people. Even many people misunderstand that leisure is equivalent to traveling, which greatly narrows the scope of leisure (Liu & Zhang, 2020). In addition, Walker et al. (2020) proposed that compared to western people's more aggressive leisure motivation (e.g. challenge pursuing, self-improvement), seeking a sense of peace and harmony as a notable factor drives Chinese people involving in leisure participation. For example, Lu and Hu (2002) found that life enjoying not only as of the motivation factor but also a result of participation in leisure activity, based on a study of Chinese students.

The Leisure Ten Statements Test (LTST) has been developed to address the issue that cross-cultural participants may be unable to better comprehend and align with North American conceptualizations of the English term leisure (Ito & Walker, 2014). This study integrates the core values of LTST into the interview questions. For example, the question “Do you think what is leisure” and a series of subsequent questions help the researcher to gain a better understanding of participants’ attitudes towards leisure, what kind of time or setting they are willing to do their leisure activities, as well as to know what factors drive them engaging in leisure activities.

Chapter Conclusion

The scientific literature has elaborated the concept of leisure motivation to understand why people engage in certain leisure activities. Motivation is the initial purpose, momentum, and reason that lead people to participate in activities. Therefore, to analyze the motivation to participate in coffee-related activities is an essential step to getting a better understanding of coffee enthusiasts.

As a significant product today, coffee has existed as various forms in people’s daily lives. Besides drinking coffee at home that was purchased from the market, people like to go to coffee houses with their friends, family, or business partners to spend their spare time. Researchers have revealed several motivations of coffee consumers, including hedonism, seeking escape, symbolizing status and identity, or meeting social needs, by linking coffee consumption to participation in leisure activities. However, those studies failed to explain why participants were attracted by the coffee itself rather than by external factors, but it has been explored in this research. The serious leisure framework is the predominant theoretical position employed in this study to validate whether the participation of specialty coffee enthusiasts is a kind of serious leisure.

The serious leisure framework (SLF) explains that people become involved in a leisure activity to gain more than a sense of enjoyment or pleasantness. They also get several long-term benefits including satisfaction, self-achievement, and personal enrichment, by investing their effort and commitment and even developing a career.

Chapter Three: Methods

There has been a shortage of research on specialty coffee enthusiasts and only a few studies looked at the serious leisure framework (SLF) application in the context of drinking coffee. Although there are studies of the activity related to eating and drinking within the SLF realm, this study was explorative and it aimed to get new findings of serious leisure research. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the paradigm, methodology, and procedures employed in this study. The paradigm is introduced first, as it influences the direction of the study. That is followed by a treatment of the research instrument and the context of the study. Then, an examination of the research design reviews the procedures used in this study, including the methodology, how the population of the study was determined and the sample chosen, the pilot test, data collection, and analysis. The goal of this study will be achieved by a set of interview questions, which was guided by research questions.

Research Questions

1. How dose serious leisure framework (SLF) apply to Chinese specialty coffee as a leisure pursuit? Does Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts' behaviour fit within the six characteristics introduced by serious leisure framework?
2. What factors drive Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts to involve in specialty coffee-related activities?
3. What leisure constraints will be met in the participation in specialty coffee-related activities?

Research Paradigm

This study had two intentions, the predominant of which was to explore whether specialtycoffee-related activity, as a core activity, is a type of serious leisure. The secondary

objective was to identify what factors drive participants to be involved in specialty coffee or to limit their participation. Utilizing a postpositivist lens, three pre-existing leisure and social-psychology theories—serious leisure framework, self-determination theory, and leisure constraints theory—guided the framework of this study.

The core value of the postpositivist paradigm is retaining a skeptical attitude toward what knowledge is true (Creswell, 2014; Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Creswell (2014) proposed that from the postpositivist perspective, researchers can obtain a better understanding of the world by testing or verifying current existing theories or rules. A postpositivist researcher acknowledges that reality exists objectively but cannot be known entirely (Miller, 2007), which leads to a postpositivist always seeking the truth. Studying human behaviour is also an essential way to understand reality in the world (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, compared to positivists, postpositivist researchers agree that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are effective approaches (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) because both quantitative and qualitative methods can contribute to quality research results (Hyde, 2000).

This study began with the hypothesis that specialty-coffee-related activity as a leisure pursuit can be a type of serious leisure. This is contrary to one of Stebbins's (2007) assertions in the serious leisure framework—an eating or drinking activity is a type of causal leisure rather than serious leisure. In this study, the researcher has attempted to challenge or refine an established theory that fits the postpositivist characteristics. Therefore, the postpositivist paradigm used herein was appropriate.

Deductive Approach

This study utilized a deductive approach to address the research questions. A deductive method focuses on developing the hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on established theories or

phenomena that the researcher is studying and verifying the hypothesis by designing a research strategy (Wilson, 2010).

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), many people have a clear notion of the difference between qualitative and quantitative studies; conventionally, it is understood that quantitative data focuses on numbers, whereas qualitative data consists of participants' statements. Hyde (2000) proposed that this dichotomy could generate the misconception that quantitative research often subscribes to a postpositivist paradigm and employs a deductive method, while qualitative research commonly follows constructivism and uses the inductive method. However, Guba and Lincoln (1994) asserted that both qualitative and quantitative methods could be applied in any paradigm if it is appropriate.

A deductive approach is usually employed in a study where the researcher hopes to re-apply the data in a new context (Catanzaro, 1988). Hyde (2000) noted that the deductive approach is a process of verifying or testing a theory, and this process starts with established data and attempts to determine if the theory applies to a specific group. However, Hyde (2000) emphasized that because of a lack of guidance in the literature, applying the deductive approach in a qualitative study should follow specific principles that determine appropriateness: (1) the concepts to be studied must be obvious from the outset, and (2) hypothesized relationships between these concepts can be stated before data gathering commences.

There were three reasons for utilizing a deductive approach in this study. First, this study's purpose was to apply established theories (i.e., serious leisure framework, self-determination theory, and leisure constraints theory) with a group of Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts and to see if these theories fit the specific context. Thus, these theories were existing framework and could be explained before the data collecting process, which fit Hyde's (2000) principles for

using the deductive method in a qualitative study. Finally, using the deductive method is consistent with the realist position taken throughout this study and subscribes to the postpositivist paradigm.

Methodology: Qualitative Evaluation

Methodology associates the body of methods and principles in the theoretical analysis with certain knowledge. Researchers must be aware of the differences between methodologies to ensure consistency among research questions, objectives and the researcher's standpoint. A methodology, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, will not offer a specific solution to social issues (Smith, 2002). Instead, it is an approach that influences the methods used in the research and the form of data collection.

Although there are many critical voices against applying the evaluation approach in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1995), it equally cannot assume that qualitative evaluation approach is unachievable or unavailable (Horsburgh, 2002). On the contrary, the qualitative evaluation researcher has been supported that it is able to focus on exploring people's experience, attitudes, and values during they participate in activities or events (Patton, 2003). Kelly (2006) noted that the qualitative evaluation research associates researchers to better comprehend the reason and meaning of participants' involvement. Popay et al., (1998) asserted that the evaluation of qualitative research is accessible if the academically rigorous criteria can be fulfilled.

This study aimed to evaluate the possibility of specialty coffee-related activity as a type of serious leisure for Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts. This study was informed by a deductive approach in a hypothesis — specialty-coffee-related activity is a type of serious leisure. Therefore, the validity of this hypothesis will be elucidated from the statements of those

participating in the specialty coffee activity.

Method: Semi-Structure Interview

This study used semi-structure interviews to explore whether specialty coffee participation is a type of serious leisure based on an interview guide with 42 open-ended questions (see details in Appendix D). The semi-structured interview is a research method used often in social science research (Altinay et al., 2016). In this study, researchers asked mostly open-end questions to obtain detailed answers and information from interviewees. Interviewees were asked to share their feelings and experiences participating in specialty coffee activities, and the commitments and difficulties of involvement in terms of how it affected their participation.

The semi-structured interview was used in this study because it allowed the researcher to obtain richer data from the interviewees. According to Fylan (2005), a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to have an in-depth conversation with the interviewee on important topics (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interviewees can present their real thinking, reflections, needs and opinions (Fontana & Frey, 1994), so the interview could produce rich and deep evidence rather than superficial data.

In addition, a semi-structured interview gives interviewees more space and a friendly atmosphere in which to answer the questions by expressing the free flow of their thoughts with less stress (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It also has the benefit of building individual connections between interviewers and interviewees. As Seidman (2006) noted that compared to a written survey, interviews were better for building an intimate relationship between interviewers and their interviewees. The research revealed that the interviewee was more willing to disclose their personal information to the interviewer and easily awaken important experiences and feelings when they are in a real-time and face-to-face setting.

Population and Sampling

Target Population

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) noted that qualitative research often used purposeful sampling because the goal of the research was to share the participants' experiences and knowledge about a certain research topic. Therefore, the participants were selected following the criteria set by the researcher. Although many coffee consumers claim that they are "coffee enthusiasts," a researcher must distinguish carefully between true enthusiasts (as a synonym for hobbyists) and coffee "lovers" or mere "customers" to meet the purposes of the study. Therefore, participants in this research had to satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) Be a specialty coffee lover.
- (2) Have invested money, time, or energy in activity related to specialty coffee.
- (3) Self-identify that coffee will be a long-term hobby in their life.

Sampling Design

Small-scaled sample size was used in this study. Manson (2010) noted that researchers can think about stopping their recruiting process when the sample size reaches saturation. Charmaz (2006) asserted that when the new interview no longer brings new insights or contributes to new ideas, the saturated situation is considered as reached. Dworkin (2012) suggested that qualitative research should "concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning" (p. 1320) rather than sample size.

This study focused on a specific group- Chinese specialty coffee lover- and had the specific criteria of participant recruiting. Participants assumed that their participation may share similar behaviors. Therefore, the quality of the data is more important than the numbers in this study. The researcher needs to obtain a better understanding of the similarities and differences in each

individual by in-depth inquiry. However, according to Dworkin (2012), many researchers have confirmed that the credibility of research would be affected if the sample size was too small. Five to fifty participants are considered as adequate by many published literature recommendations (Dworkin, 2012). This study aimed to recruit at least five participants and not impose the capping number. The researcher would stop the recruiting process when the sample size reached saturation.

Snowball Sampling Method

This study aimed to study the experience of a specific group of Chinese coffee lover. Denscombe (2014) indicated that a non-probability sampling method fits the situation when the researcher does not know the exact person or how many people comprise this target population. Altinay et al. (2016) suggested that non-probability sampling is more suitable for cases that explore the participants' ideas and thoughts. Therefore, accounting for this study's context, a non-probability sampling approach was more appropriate than a probability sampling technique for this study.

Snowballing is a non-probability sampling technique that allows researchers to approach more participants by accessing the initial or a few participants' networks (Browne, 2005). According to Denscombe (2014), there are several advantages to snowball sampling, especially for a small-scale qualitative study, such as rapidly identifying appropriate participants, using the reference (the introducer's network) to enhance the reliability and credibility of participants, and choosing participants based on the researcher's own criteria to ensure compatibility with purposive sampling. In addition, snowball sampling also presents many advantages in registering "hidden populations," which usually applies in the case of sociology (Yingling & McClain, 2015).

It is important to note that the entire process of participant recruitment was experienced during the COVID-19 outbreak, which made it difficult for the researcher to meet, contact, and invite adequate candidates to participate in this study for a limited period. Therefore, the snowball sampling method was the most convenient, cost-saving, and appropriate sampling technique for this study.

Participant Recruitment Process and Data Collection

The goal of a qualitative study is to obtain considerable and relevant information. Therefore participant recruitment was one of the key factors in the success of qualitative research (Patton, 1987). Because of the outbreak of COVID-19, I was unable to schedule the face-to-face meeting with my participants, research participants were recruited in the contactless setting of use and complete by online one-by-one meetings. The researcher initially approached several people who received coffee barista training with her many years ago, asked and invited them to attend the research. Additionally, the researcher also conducted a recruitment poster (see details in Appendix A) and sent it to the WeChat (i.e., the most popular social media in China) specialty coffee enthusiasts group to attract more people to know this research. Eventually, 16 people were reached, and 12 of them were selected based on the recruitment criteria and interviewed (Table 1). Five participants received coffee barista training with the researcher many years ago, and one participant was the instructor of that training. The rest of the participants were introduced by these participants. The researcher contacted all of them and demonstrated the purpose of the research and acquired their personal information by WeChat. The researcher explained the purpose of this study by an invitation letter to invite them to be involved in the online interviews (see details in Appendix B). The 12 interviews were conducted in June and July 2020 via Zoom online meeting platform. All participants were asked to read and sign the consent form, and they

were informed that their statements would be recorded (see details in Appendix C).

The 12 participants came from five different cities in China: six came from Changsha, Hunan; two from Yancheng, Jiangsu; one from Chengdu, Sichuan; one from Qingdao, Shandong, and the last two were in Nanjing, Jiangsu. The sample coincidentally was gender balanced. In terms of age distribution, nine interviewees were between 25 and 35 years old, one interviewee was over 40, and two were under 25. Except for the youngest interviewee (17 years old), who was a senior high school student, the rest of the interviewees held a bachelor's degree or will be graduated soon. Two of them had studied overseas. All but one of the interviewees was working at a coffee-related job.

All interviews were scheduled to be face to face at certain locations in China. However, because of the effects of COVID-19, all interviews conducted online. That situation could involve another potential limitation in that the researcher the ability was diminished to observe the interviewees' facial expressions, gestures and emotional states closely, and this may lead to bias in the results. The interviews were designed via Zoom online meeting platform to last between 60 and 90 minutes, and so the shortest one took 56 minutes (XH) and the longest one lasted 78 minutes (MD).

Table 1

Research Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Personal Portraits
KK	27	Female	She is the owner of a specialty coffee shop in Chengdu, Sichuan. She has involved specialty coffee since 2017. The mission of her coffee house is to share a high-quality coffee to customers
MD	30	Male	He has two failed experiences to run the coffee business. Now, he and two of his friends build a new coffee brand “dancing coffee” as well as a coffee house in Changsha, Hunan. He wants to popularize specialty coffee by combining with some fashion features such as hip-hop dancing.
XR	20	Female	She is a fresh student in business English at a certain university in Changsha. She had known nothing about coffee until works as a part-time barista for “Dancing coffee”. She feels that she is obsessed with specialty coffee and gradually seeks for progression in specialty coffee knowledge and skill.

XJ	31	Male	He is a regular customer of “Dancing Coffee”. He said that initially he likes specialty coffee because of his wife, a faithful specialty coffee customer.
XC	17	Female	She has drunk coffee since she’s in grand 5. Coffee is a traditional beverage in her family. Her uncle taught her lots of coffee knowledge when she was young. At the time of the interview, she was a senior about to graduate from high school but also was a part-time barista in “Dancing coffee”.
Lia	33	Female	She was a Korean interpreter in Qingdao when she graduated. But now she plays multiple roles in different coffee occasions. For XYZ coffee shop, she is one of the partners; for her students, she is an instructor who brings them into the coffee’s world; for the players who participate in the coffee competition, she is a certificated international coffee competition judge.
XY	30	Male	He majored in mechanical engineering at college. However, he has chosen coffee as his career pursuit in his hometown, Yancheng.
XH	29	Male	He is a shy Chinese boy who comes from Anhui. He is the kind of person who has few words in daily life, but he becomes wordy with high energy while he is talking about coffee
LH	43	Male	One of his life hobbies is to talk about coffee with others. Right now he builds his own business of coffee training institution, which provides his an opportunity to share his coffee knowledge with more people.
Qiu	32	Female	She is an English teacher in Changsha, Hunan; also, she has another identity – a partner of “Dancing coffee”. She regards the teacher work as financial support, which provides her with a rich payback, but “real life is starting while she is staying at the coffee shop”.
Cindy	33	Female	She is a strictly coffee business management, as well as an enthusiasm specialty coffee lover.
Bao	33	Male	Initially, he just sought for a cup of good-taste coffee. Later, he quit his previous stable job in order to have time to learn coffee brewing skills and start his own coffee shop in Nanjing.

Researcher position

The researcher worked as a research instrument in this study. Her experience with specialty coffee leisure participation merit further introduction as follows:

When I first approached specialty coffee, I was obsessed with its various and fantastic taste and interesting participatory process. I have been interested in specialty coffee and its related activities, ranging from coffee roasting to coffee tasting for more than 10 years. I manage to improve both my theoretical knowledge of coffee and practical skills to gain a better experience in specialty coffee participation by reading specialty coffee books, watching coffee-brewing videos, and even spending a lot of money to attend coffee professional training. I love to see how

other specialty coffee enthusiasts to create gourmet coffee by using different skills or recipes; I also enjoy applying those skills which I learned from them when I brew or taste coffee. Through reading the stories and experiences that specialty coffee enthusiasts sharing in the internet, I realized that for most participants, specialty coffee is not only defined by the quality of the product, whether green bean, roasted bean, or prepared beverage but seeking a quality of life. Participation in specialty coffee delivers people's love, passion, enthusiasm for their life. A coffee that delivers satisfaction on all counts and adds value to the lives and livelihoods of all involved is truly a specialty coffee.

I have been exposed to the topic of leisure and leisure theories more than ever since being a student of the Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management program at Vancouver Island University. I am interested in Stebbins' serious leisure theory because it is contrary to the traditional Chinese leisure perspective such as relax and cozy. The core value of the serious leisure framework is that leisure activity also can involve certain levels of skill, professionalism, and knowledge, as well as the investment of time, money, and effort from participants. However, Stebbins (2007) classifies coffee-drinking as casual leisure because it brings a sensory stimulation deemed to be "fleeting" and "short-term". However, this assertion cannot explain my own and other coffee enthusiasts' experience. I started to wonder if specialty coffee participation for coffee enthusiasts like me is a type of serious leisure because it seems to fit the central definition from the serious leisure perspective, and I wanted to explain this with academic evidence. I started to read the literature about specialty coffee and eating and drinking activities, and manage to find the theoretical evidence to support my hypothesis. Then, I realized that specialty coffee and its enthusiasts seldom attract the attention of leisure scholars and the public. Few pieces of literature on specialty coffee can be found related to the leisure field. I thought that

I could make full use of the opportunity to investigate specialty coffee enthusiasts' motivations and barriers to engage in specialty coffee leisure participation; testify if specialty coffee participation fits within the core characteristics of serious leisure; and make a contribution to the academic field on the topic of Chinese specialty coffee industry.

Ethical Considerations

All the information collected from the participants was kept confidential. No identifier linking the participants to this study was included in any report that might be published without their permission. Creswell (2014) noted that, to minimize ethical risk, a consent form should be distributed to the participants before starting an interview, which also could be regarded as a research guide for them. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants. Interviewees were allowed to choose an assumed name. According to Allen and Wiles (2016), participants might feel a sense of respect and perceived freedom if they have personally chosen their pseudonyms, so this was a beneficial way to increase the degree of their participation.

During the interview, no question asked for any private information. All the information collected from the participants would be kept private. Participants were informed that they may discontinue participation anytime they wished and that they had the right to withdraw their statement at any time, in any stage of the research. All the data was stored in a password-protected laptop. The researcher and the supervisor were the only people who had access to the information. All the data files including the recordings and transcription will be deleted and destroyed after the thesis has been written and the oral thesis defense has been conducted.

Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted to identify improper material in the question guide and to ensure consistency and reliability throughout the interview process. Furthermore, the pilot test allowed

the researcher to become familiar with the interview questions and to make adjustments promptly when improper topics arose (Creswell, 2014).

The pilot test was conducted with a friend of the researcher who had little experience in specialty coffee so was not a target of this research. The pilot interview process followed the procedure as it was designed for the formal interviews. All the processes were completed online in a zoom meeting room. First, a consent form was sent to the interviewee through email, and the researcher introduced the study and explained its purpose to the interviewee. Then, the interviewee was asked a series of questions in the next hour, and all the answers were recorded using audio-digital equipment (to minimize ethical risk, only the voices were recorded). Based on the feedback from the interviewee and the researcher, several points had to be adjusted or given more attention:

Firstly, several questions were too broad to answer. The interviewer was easily caught in the awkward situation when an answer was too short. The researcher should make the questions more detailed to inspire interviewees to talk more.

Secondly, some questions targeted similar issues. That made the interviewee loses interest and gives short answers.

Thirdly, some questions were not ordered logically. During the interview, the researcher found that some questions failed to appear in the place where they should be. When questions that were out of sequence were asked, both the interviewee and the researcher felt weird that the several parts of one topic were asked at different times.

Cultural differences were another issue with the interview process. Serious leisure is a concept that represents a western social value, but Chinese people may find it hard to understand why *play* could be a kind of science to be studied.

In short, the pilot test forced the researcher to realize that interviewees might never have thought about many questions in the interview guide. So, in the formal interview process, the researcher should avoid the mistakes that appeared in the pilot and use a more natural way of speaking to give the interviewees a better understanding of this research, thereby persuading them to speak more about their experiences and feelings.

Data Analysis

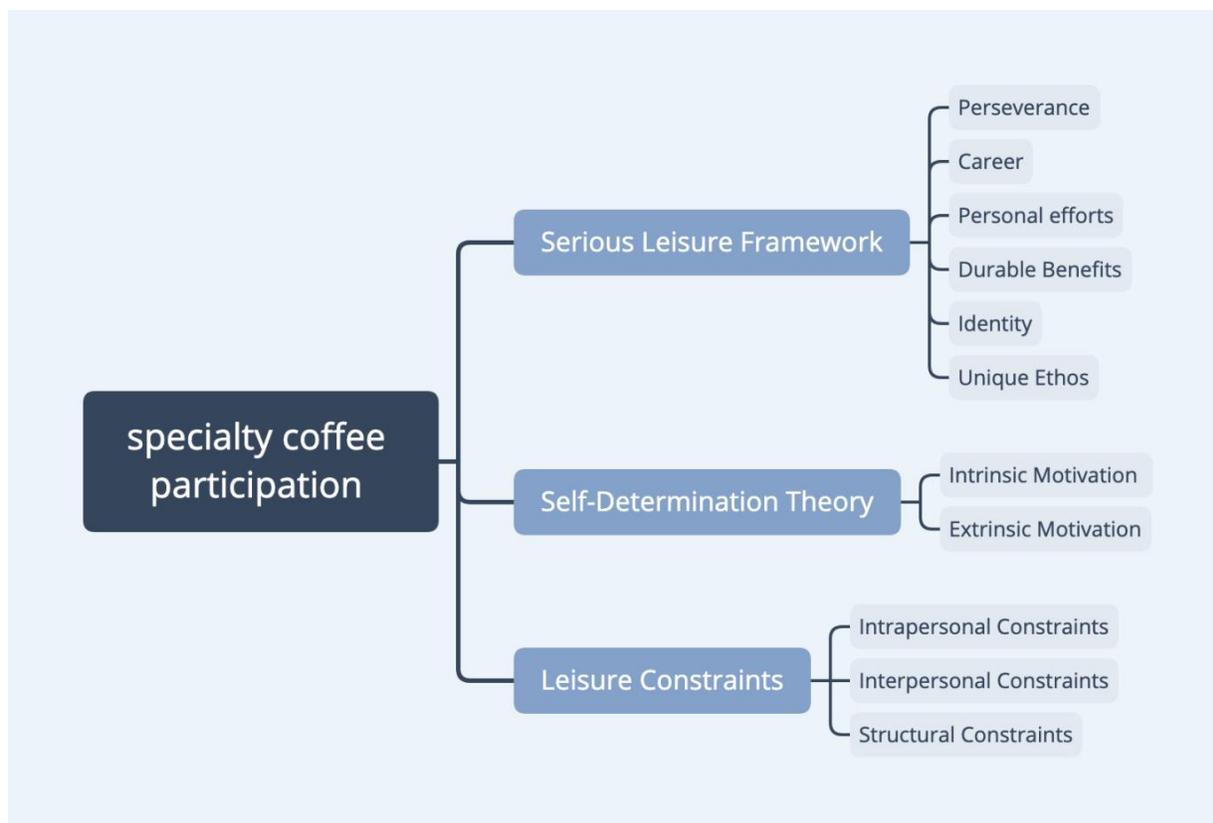
Data analysis is a significant part of research, as the process of summarizing the collected data and extracting the relevant information from the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Streubert and Carpenter (1995) suggested that the researcher should analyze the data in depth, create different themes, and finally categorize the data into themes.

The Process. In this study, the process of data analysis consisted of five steps. First, I conducted 12 interviews. Then, I transcribed the interviews using a transcribing service. The transcriptions were compared against the recordings by to ensure the quality of the transcriptions. Following this, I sent the transcriptions to the interviewees for member checking and allowed them to change or withdraw their statements, if they need. None of the participants changed or questioned the transcriptions in this process.

Next, I uploaded the data to NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. The researcher ensured all data was successfully uploaded with no omission or duplication. In a deductive study, a categorization matrix (e.g., theories, models, mind maps; Polit & Beck, 2004) is generated during the early work in the study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Following this, a categorization matrix was developed by the researcher. All themes in the categorization matrix were based on the established theories related to the literature review (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

The Theme Map



I processed the data after building the categorization matrix. All the statements were coded and classified into each theme in the correspondence. The data was only chosen when the aspects fit the categorization framework (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), while those that did not fit the framework were temporarily suspended. According to Wolcott (2002), researchers should be able to process, choose, or delete numerous original data points to finally synthesize the relevant data addressing the research questions. Some sub-categories emerged through the researcher reading and analysis of the data (see Figure 4). For example, the codes Competence Improvement and Personal Enrichment were classified under the same category, Durable Benefits. At the end of this stage, all codes were grouped into different categories distinctly and logically (see detail in Appendix E).

Figure 3

Coding book

First-class category	Third-class category		
Serious leisure	<i>level of participation</i>	<i>lifestyle</i>	<i>disappointment</i>
Motivation	<i>negative factors</i>	<i>gentle-pace of life</i>	<i>nervous</i>
Leisure constraint	<i>addiction</i>	<i>stress reduced</i>	<i>scared</i>
Leisure pursuit	<i>bad emotions</i>	<i>the quality of life</i>	<i>stress</i>
Second-class category	<i>anxiety</i>	<i>progression in career pursuit</i>	<i>conflict with others</i>
characteristic	<i>disappointment</i>	<i>attitude</i>	<i>ability</i>
benefits	<i>nervous</i>	<i>commitment</i>	<i>energy</i>
career	<i>scared</i>	<i>happiness and pleasure</i>	<i>money</i>
effort	<i>stress</i>	<i>relax and escape</i>	<i>space</i>
identity	<i>conflict with others</i>	<i>Sensory stimulation</i>	<i>time</i>
perseverance	<i>ability</i>	<i>goals achieved</i>	<i>needs unsatisfied</i>
unique ethos	<i>energy</i>	<i>recognition from others</i>	
challenge pursuit	<i>money</i>	<i>faith</i>	
curious	<i>space</i>	<i>well-being</i>	
functional	<i>time</i>	<i>competence improved</i>	
health benefit	<i>needs unsatisfied</i>	<i>creativity</i>	
hedonism	<i>The importance of commitment on persistence</i>	<i>level of participation</i>	
knowledge skill pursuit	<i>comfortable zone</i>	<i>negative factors</i>	
self-expression	<i>Sensory</i>	<i>addiction</i>	
Self-gratification	<i>meet mind-like people</i>	<i>bad emotions</i>	
social attraction	<i>knowledge obtained</i>	<i>anxiety</i>	

In step four, I reviewed all data once more to ensure that the suspended data should be deleted or to be classified under a relevant category. Then, I re-examined the reasonability and uniqueness of each category to make sure that none of the topics shared a similar notion. For example, the topics *knowledge obtained* and *creativity* could be classified under the topic *competence improvement*, and the topic *rewards* was grouped under the topic *benefit*. Furthermore, the researcher deleted several themes that did not connect to the research purpose, like the topics *addiction* and *needs unsatisfied*.

Finally, I carefully reviewed all the data one last time while listening to the recordings to confirm that the transcriptions and codes had been correctly matched by cross-checking in NVivo. After coding process completed, all codes and related transcriptions were translated into English as the interviews were completed in Chinese.

Methodological Integrity. Neergaard et al. (2009) noted that in the qualitative method, the researcher is considered as the analysis instrument that might become an issue based on the

researcher's perceptual bias. This would affect the objectivity of the findings of this research.

Rigor in qualitative research can be enhanced through authenticity, credibility, criticality and integrity (Neergaard et al., 2009). In this study, authenticity was represented in the data collection and analysis stages. For example, in the process of data collection, the interviewees could express their own thoughts and feelings with no intervention or induction. All the statements were precisely included and transcribed whether they were positive or negative. Furthermore, integrity was ensured when the researcher reflected on the roles she played in this study. To minimize any bias from the researcher's dual roles of being the interviewer as well as a faithful specialty coffee enthusiast, and to maintain integrity, the supervisor of this study performed a peer review of the codes and made suggestions.

Trustworthiness and credibility. Trustworthiness is one of the most essential criterion for a qualitative research (Patton, 1999). As one aspect of trustworthiness, the credibility of qualitative research has been often questioned by many scholars (Seale et al., 2007). According to Mills et al. (2010), "Credibility refers to the extent to which a research account is believable and appropriate, with particular reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher" (p.2). Also, Mills et al. (2010) indicated that credibility is the most important criterion of trustworthiness which must be established in a qualitative study.

I employed the following strategies to enhance the credibility of this study. The first strategy is *member-checking*. Cope (2013) noted that member-checking is a significant step to enhance the credibility of qualitative research because the data could be validated by checking from the participants. I sent the transcriptions to the interviewees after the interviews have been transcribed. In this study, none of the interviewees questioned the result of transcriptions in the member-checking process.

Another strategy was *analyst triangulation* (Mills et al, 2010; Cope, 2013). Analyst triangulation (Mills et al, 2010) refers to inviting other observers or analysts to review the findings of the research. Cope (2013) indicated that in qualitative research, the researcher is deemed as the research instrument, which will generate researcher bias inevitably. To address this issue, the collection materials can be reviewed by others to come to the same conclusions (Cope, 2013). In this study, as the interviews were completed in Chinese, I invited a Chinese student, who enrolls in the same master's program with me, to review all codes and related transcriptions I made and ensure the credibility of these materials. This process was anonymous to fulfill the principle of confidentiality.

Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, a detailed research plan has been introduced. To achieve the purpose of the study and discover the research questions, a deductive approach was used under the lens of the postpositivist paradigm. The overview explained why a qualitative evaluation methodology was designed for this study and how semi-structure interview was considered to be a method involved in the collection of the data. Next, the researcher provided the reasons and the process of choosing the research sample. In the sections on data collection and data analysis, ethics issues, and the Nvivo program were introduced, along with the roles they played in this study. Finally, at the last, the issue of methodological rigour was raised, and the researcher identified the strategies used to enhance the credibility, authenticity, and integrity of this study.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the results of the analysis described in Chapter three. The first section describes how six characteristics of serious leisure found in the literature match the experience of the coffee enthusiasts who participated in this study. Then, self-determination theory is used to seek the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for their involvement. In the final part of this chapter, leisure constraint theory is applied to clarify which factors limit participation in specialty coffee activities.

Specialty Coffee as a Leisure Activity

Specialty coffee enthusiasts gain a sense of happiness and satisfaction from their investments of commitment, time, money, and energy in specialty coffee activities. Their experiences demonstrate how the six characteristics of serious leisure are related to participation in those activities. Guided by Stebbins' serious leisure framework, this section elaborates on the research findings.

Specialty Coffee Activity Requires Perseverance.

Perseverance is an identifiable characteristic when participants show a high level of interest in the leisure pursuit of specialty coffee. Examples of activities demonstrating perseverance include discovering new coffee tastes, learning new brewing skills or recipes, and assuming a new role in the coffee industry to promote specialty coffee. LH, one of the participants of this study, compared his relationship with specialty coffee to long-term relationships.

I think that making coffee is like falling in love. “Why a couple can stay in a long-term relationship” is my answer to the question “why I have been stuck with specialty coffee for such a long time”, because of love! Whether it is staying in a relationship or sticking to a hobby, there may be difficult moments you have to face, but it can be overcome if you love it enough. (LH)

LH was a former businessman who had traveled between Singapore and China before

becoming a barista. At the time of the study, he was a barista instructor in Nanjing, China. He added, “The public acceptance of specialty coffee in China is still low. Most customers prefer to buy Starbucks coffee ... it is a tough time for specialty coffee businesses.”

Another participant, MD, also used marital relations to describe his relationship with specialty coffee:

It is difficult to fall in love with someone new when a person has already lived in your heart. I don't know how to quit coffee and coffee industry to do another job ... coffee-related work is the only thing I can do, and is all I want to do ... so whatever challenges I face, I will try my best to overcome. (MD)

Some participants named their personality as another reason for their perseverance when their interest levels were not high. One of the participants, KK, said, “For me, brewing specialty coffee is very challenging ... but I'm one of those who does not give up so easily.” Cindy, another participant, said, “I don't want to force myself to stick to [specialty coffee brewing] if I encounter too many challenges, but I'm used to be the best at everything, so I would try my best to overcome.” Lia, who had worked as a coffee competition judge and barista competitor trainer for over five years at the time of the study, could not distinguish various coffee flavours in the early days of her coffee career – her coffee tasting skills were not well developed. When she was asked how she eventually overcame this barrier, she said:

I felt very upset when I recognized that. I am a person who would not admit I am unable to do something. I believe I can overcome everything through more and more practice. The fact [that I am a coffee judge] has proven that I was right. (Lia)

Participants' responses indicated that they faced difficulties or challenges (e.g., a lack of competence, facing a negative coffee context) during their participation in specialty coffee. However, their high level of interest in specialty coffee and their personalities were two main reasons why participants were determined to overcome the adverse factors to continue

participating.

Specialty Coffee Activity Involves Voluntary Responsibility.

While the participants of this study were from various occupational backgrounds, an identifiable pattern of organizational roles – ranging from basic participation in specialty coffee-related activities to high levels of commitment to specialty coffee – emerged in the interviews. For most participants, involvement in specialty coffee was a long-term commitment and an essential part of their life. KK said, “I worked for a hospital as a therapist, but I didn’t like that job at all ... [due to the] bad work environment and poor atmosphere. Working at a coffee-related job, however, is my dream, so I resigned my previous job and decided to run a small coffee business.” XR expressed that to gain more experience in brewing coffee, she became a part-time barista. Qiu, another participant, was an English teacher at a secondary school at the time of this study. Partnering with her friends, she also ran a small specialty coffee company. She indicated,

I have almost 10 years of coffee drinking experience ... I think owning a coffee shop not only satisfies my coffee drinking need but also provides me with the opportunity to brew a high-quality specialty coffee for my friends and the community to show them what a cup of excellent coffee is. (Qiu)

XJ, another interviewee, said,

I like to try new coffee beans in the café where I regularly visit. The café owner invites me as their coffee quality tester because he believes that I have a very sensitive taste buds ... I felt very happy and proud of myself, even though, I was not paid. (XJ)

None of the participants in this study had a coffee-related educational background or job experience before their engagement in specialty coffee. This demonstrates that they had voluntarily undertaken some obligations and responsibilities in specialty coffee because of their strong commitment to it.

Specialty Coffee Activity Takes Effort and Time.

In the interviews, the participants demonstrated that they had made considerable personal effort, describing how they developed perseverance and increased their commitment to specialty coffee. Activities related to specialty coffee, such as brewing, roasting, and cupping, require significant effort – these activities necessitate learning about topics ranging from coffee planting to coffee tasting. For example, coffee cupping requires a person to learn the SCA’s specialty coffee standards to learn about the various coffee flavours and how to describe them. There is a considerable difference between what new coffee enthusiasts might know and the experience of more established hobbyists, who have rich knowledge of different coffee tastes from various territories and more mature coffee preferences informed by “understandings of quality, style, production process, and provenance” (Thurnell-Read, 2015, p. 73). The interviewees’ expressed their effort in improving their skills (i.e., cupping, brewing) through reading books, recording tasting notes, following coffee shop guides, and discussing coffee with specialty professionals. For instance, Qiu and Lia said,

I couldn’t recognize any coffee taste that others told me when I initially approached specialty coffee. For example, my coffee instructor told me this coffee has the smell of cranberry, that one has honey flavour ... but I didn’t get it ... I had to build my own coffee flavour profiles by keeping practice. (Qiu)

To be a coffee competition judge, I first had to learn how to evaluate a cup of coffee on a score sheet in a way that was understandable. During that time, I had to memorize rules and practice preparing score tables For example, many of the descriptions were in English, which made it so difficult for me ... or when I saw the Chinese translation of coffee tasting descriptions, I still didn’t know what it felt like, so I had to ask others or taste it by myself. I almost spent five or six years to build the coffee profiles in my mind ... as I mentioned, my taste buds are not sensitive, so I can only make up for the defects through constant practice to enhance different tastes in my memory. (Lia)

The considerable investment of time also cannot be ignored in specialty coffee participation.

Lia spent almost half a year preparing to become a coffee judge. Qiu, to improve her brewing skills, spent at least one hour of practice every day. As mentioned above, XR used her spare time to become a barista:

I sacrificed considerable time to learn almost everything about specialty coffee because my mentor said that if you want to make a successful career in coffee, you have to know everything about it ... so as long as I don't have a class to attend, I will go to the café even if not on my shift (XR)

Participants improved their coffee skills (e.g., brewing, cupping, roasting) and became more knowledgeable coffee experts in different ways. For example, Bao said that he read many coffee-related books to learn how to improve his coffee brewing skills, so he could provide the high-quality coffee consistently to his customers. KK also said,

I attended SCAA [Specialty Coffee Association of America] coffee training courses and took the test to get certified in specialty coffee ... I knew people who attend the course only for the certificate, but not me ... attending the course was an easier way to improve my skills in a short time ..., but it cost me a lot. (KK)

Several others said they enhanced their knowledge and skills systematically by attending coffee training courses. XR said, “Even just listening to my mentor explaining coffee to the guests, I learned a lot.” Similarly, XH described how he overcame problems during his coffee career through reading and consistently learning from senior baristas with whom he worked.

It can be seen that the participants in this study have put significant personal effort (e.g., time, energy, and money) into increasing their knowledge of specialty coffee and improving their skills to gain a better participation experience and fulfill their commitments to specialty coffee.

Specialty Coffee Activity Has Enduring and Lasting Benefits.

In this study, satisfaction (both sensory and psychological), socialization, competence improvement, and personal enrichment were identified as benefits from the participants' experiences.

Satisfaction. Tasting high-quality specialty coffee itself was the benefit most noted by the participants, since it brought them a great deal of pleasure. XC, a high school graduate, was under great academic pressure during the interview. She said,

Near entrance exam time, my teacher dragged me to a special coffee shop. The barista made a cup of special flavour coffee. They called it “Sweet-Scented Osmanthus” [the drink’s name], which was a kind of innovative drink. After drinking, I was surprised by the flavour of that coffee ... I can’t describe it ... it was a mix of sour and sweet plus a little bit of bitterness ... anyway, I was deeply attracted to it ... Even more amazing was that I felt those pressures produced by the university entrance exam quickly swept away when I drank the coffee. The taste of that coffee stuck constantly in my mind. I don’t know why, after that, when I went back to school, my studying state was getting better ... I know it was unbelievable ... it was amazing. (XC)

Lia admitted that one of the reasons that she obsesses with specialty coffee is the taste: “The unique flavour and taste of specialty coffee can calm me down when I am grumpy or upset. It [specialty coffee] cures me like medicine.” XH said, “The taste of specialty coffee makes me feel happy ... a sense of satisfaction.” Cindy said, “When you have the opportunity to savor a cup of gourmet coffee, you will feel great and more positive for the whole day.”

Sensory pleasure can be observed in most participants’ experiences – this is one of the predominant benefits they obtained from specialty coffee. Additionally, they felt relaxed, less stressed, and satisfied by participating in specialty coffee activities.

Socialization. Socialization is another benefit that participants can gain from specialty coffee participation. KK said:

I think I have a sense of belonging and deeply feel cordial when I talk to people who also like specialty coffee. We will have many common topics about specialty coffee and I can learn some new things from them. (KK)

XR also has made many friends by specialty coffee participation: “At my age [20s], it [involvement in specialty coffee activities] is really great opportunity to meet and know more people with different jobs and backgrounds ... which helps me to expand my social circles and it

benefits my future personal development.” In addition, MD believed that involvement in specialty coffee helped him to make friends with people with a more positive attitude towards life.

He also said:

People who like specialty coffee also have a good taste in life and demand a high-quality of life. Your quality of life will be improved if you have many friends like that. (MD)

According to past research, social connections generated by serious leisure pursuits are one of the most lasting and substantial benefits (Hunt 2004; Kyle and Chick, 2004). In this study, participants stated that they could develop friendships and expand their social network by participating in various specialty coffee activities. This benefited them by increase satisfaction and giving a sense of community.

Competence Improvement. Participants mentioned being able to improve coffee-related skills (e.g., brewing, appreciation) and increase specialty coffee knowledge by attending various specialty coffee activities (e.g., coffee exhibitions, coffee sharing sessions, coffee events). For instance, MD expressed that attending coffee exhibitions is his favorite leisure activity because he could get the latest information about the industry, taste the freshest and most unique coffee beans, and learn practical skills from professionals.

Participants also believed that involvement in specialty coffee also helped them improve their personality and well-being. For example, LH said:

I used to be a very hot tempered person. I was very impatient ... but I think specialty coffee has changed my life ... the process of making coffee requires a lot of patience and care at every step ... I felt that I became more peaceful and composed, and I am not so anxious when I face difficulties now. (LH)

Qiu conveyed that the ability to concentrate was the most important thing she had obtained from engagement in specialty coffee activities:

Concentrating ... I think the most important thing I learned from participating in coffee is how to focus on one thing ... making coffee can sharpen your personality and slow down your rhythm ... so I think the biggest improvement for me is that I'm more focused on whatever I do now, compared to before. (Qiu)

Personal Enrichment. The participants noted many enriching experiences gained from engagement with specialty coffee. For example, XC proudly expressed that participation in specialty coffee gave her more opportunities than her peers to increase her life experience: "Not everyone is as lucky as me to attend the [coffee] competition at the age of 17." Similarly, KK said that she had never considered running a café before approaching specialty coffee. Because of specialty coffee, I experienced a lot of things I never expected. One could say that specialty coffee changed the original trajectory of my life. XY also said, "The exhibitions give me an opportunity to access specialty coffee and the whole industry under a broader lens." XR said, "No matter whether I will continue to work in the field of specialty coffee after graduation, the experience of working in the café must be a valuable treasure in my life."

Based on the interviewees' responses, participation in specialty coffee activities provides a good opportunity to accumulate life experience (especially in coffee) and makes life richer and more meaningful.

Specialty Coffee Activity Builds a Strong Identity.

Participants in this study identified themselves as specialty coffee pursuers, and thought that there were notable differences between them and other coffee consumers. For instance, LH indicated,

There are definitely differences between specialty coffee drinkers and ordinary coffee consumers. First, drinking specialty coffee is more about appreciating the flavour of the coffee itself, which we call "flavour profile" On the other hand, regular coffee consumers have various consumption motives, such as showing their social and financial status or doing other things. So they're essentially different. (LH)

KK said,

One of my friends almost goes to Starbucks every day, but I don't think we have the same hobby. He doesn't care about the taste, flavour, or basic information about coffee. He goes there just for getting caffeine. (KK)

In addition, specialty coffee lovers may be more knowledgeable of coffee than ordinary consumers. As Bao said:

The barrier to entry for drinking specialty coffee itself is higher than other commercial coffee products. For example, if you want to drink instant coffee, you only need to prepare a cup and water. But if you want to try a type of specialty coffee, you have to know some basic information about it, such as the origin, the process method, and the roast level. You may say, "No, I don't need to know anything to drink it." Yes, you can, but you will miss the essence of specialty coffee. (Bao)

Furthermore, specialty coffee is a significant part of participants' lives and identities. MD said, "Specialty coffee is a significant part of my life that is so integrated into my life." As the youngest participant (aged 17) in this study, XC expressed that her peers and friends could not truly understand her and her hobby:

Few at my age are fascinated with drinking specialty coffee ... My peers tend to choose milk bubble tea or a soft drink when we hang out ... but I would insist on it [specialty coffee] because it is me! I also like to recommend some specialty coffees to my friends. (XC)

Participants in this study identified themselves as "real specialty coffee lovers" and distinguished them from other coffee consumers. They are recognizable by their different behaviors, attitude, or participation in specialty coffee activities, and they are satisfied with their identity.

Specialty Coffee Activity Has Special Patterns.

Different patterns of behavior, attitudes, and language distinguish the interviewees from mass coffee consumers, as noted in Chapter 2. For example, MD described that it is easy to separate specialty coffee lovers from others because they usually follow a specific routine that is

seldom followed by most coffee drinkers: asking for the basic information of coffee's supply, discussing with the barista, making the final selection, smelling the coffee before drinking the first sip, and mentally exploring and recording the taste of the coffee. In addition, Qiu illustrated that some words have different meanings in coffee subculture compared to in wider society:

We always attach a card with our coffee product to describe this coffee's flavour. Many customers, especially newcomers, would question it because they see the flavours – like chocolate, watermelon, or sugar – in the descriptive card, but they don't taste those flavours when they drink. One reason is that those flavours in coffee could present different tastes than the flavour in your mind. Another is that these flavours in coffee are too subtle to taste. People may need to accept specific guidance to successfully taste them. (Qiu)

The study also found that when participants meet people who have the same hobby as them, they feel closer and more intimate. As KK said, "I would be very happy if I meet someone who also likes specialty coffee. I may talk more than usual." LH and Bao both mentioned a sense that a boundary existed between specialty coffee enthusiasts and other coffee drinkers.

Although the participants in this study had diverse backgrounds, they shared distinctive patterns in specialty coffee culture (e.g., language, behavior, values), which positively influenced their leisure participation. Although they were often pursuing the specialty coffee activity alone, there was a collective ethos running through their participation. This unique ethos also helped the participants to enhance their personal and collective identity.

According to the interviewees, involvement with specialty coffee as a core leisure pursuit included the following factors: (a) involvement occasionally demands perseverance, (b) it is an identifiable career path, (c) it requires a great deal of personal effort, (d) it gives participants long-term benefits, (e) it provides a sense of belonging and identity, and (f) it shows that the group has a unique ethos.

Motivations for Specialty Coffee Participation

According to Crandall (1980), leisure motivation is a kind of stimulation that includes a need, a reason, or satisfaction to encourage people to be involved in a leisure activity. In this study, the following factors were identified by participants as motives to be involved in activities related to specialty coffee.

Intrinsic Motivation

This involves the impetus to act that comes from an individual's inner needs and values (e.g., being enjoyable or interesting) rather than from external factors (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In this study, sensory preference, curiosity and exploration, and self-actualization were intrinsic motives for participants' engagement.

Sensory Preference. Specialty coffee has a higher quality and greater taste than commodity coffee, as mentioned in Chapter 1. The bias towards taste was one of the most significant motivations for the research participants. They stated that they were deeply intrigued by the flavour and taste of specialty coffee because it was so different from the coffee they used to drink. For example, Qiu said that before she tried specialty coffee, she didn't like to drink coffee because of the poor taste. However, she changed her mind when she first tried a specialty coffee: "That coffee tasted very fresh, light, and juicy. I had never assumed that I could taste the sense of juice in a black coffee. That coffee brought a very positive sensory experience and a wonderful memory." KK also had a similar experience:

I was one who rarely drank coffee before I was introduced to specialty coffee ... I remember the barista passed me a specialty coffee, and I asked if it needed sugar or milk. He said no ... and then he asked me if I could taste the flavour of nuts in the coffee. Under his guidance, I was surprised that there was indeed a subtle taste of nuts in that coffee ... Since then, I have had a strong interest in specialty coffee. (KK)

XC indicated that participating in specialty coffee activities, especially coffee cupping, can maximize sensory enjoyment and pleasure because it allows people to taste various types of

specialty coffee in one sitting. That is why coffee cupping is her favorite leisure activity. XH was asked what prompted him to choose being a barista as his career. He gave a simple answer: “For the gourmet coffee.”

Intrinsic motivation implies that people participate in an activity without any external stimulus (e.g., reward, responsibility), and only participate because of enjoyment or personal interest. Based on the responses, participants were initially attracted by specialty coffee’s unique and gourmet taste, which brought enjoyment to them. This kind of enjoyment comes from specialty coffee itself rather than other external factors. One reason why people repeatedly participate in specialty coffee activities is to experience the good taste again. Therefore, sensory preference should be considered as an important inner motive for participation in specialty coffee.

Curiosity and Exploration. As mentioned in Chapter 1, many variables and uncertainties (e.g., water temperature, roast level, storage condition) affect the process of specialty coffee activities (e.g., cupping and brewing). However, these factors also increase the novelty and entertainment of specialty coffee participation:

Specialty coffee is a mysterious and magical thing. I am so curious about where the flavours come from and why they taste so good. The flavour of the same coffee presented by different baristas can vary greatly. I think every cup of specialty coffee has its own soul what gives me a sense of novelty. (Lia)

Cindy expressed a keen interest in specialty coffee because of the uncertainty of coffee brewing. She said, “[Uncertainty] leaves a space for me to imagine what the coffee taste is before the first sip.” LH also conveyed that novelty was one considerable factor that attracted people to specialty coffee: “My coffee trainees would be surprised that the coffee they taste in my class is totally different from the coffee in their memory. This sense of incredibility and novelty may encourage them to continuously learn about specialty coffee.” Moreover, MD’s experience

indicates that humans' exploratory nature (see Chapter two) stimulates participants' desire to devote themselves to specialty coffee:

It was eye-opening [as a spectator of World Coffee Competition] and made me realize that the knowledge I have about coffee was just the tip of the iceberg. I hope to learn everything related to specialty coffee, including coffee roasting, latte art, and improving my pour-over skills. (MD)

Past research has verified that curiosity (e.g., seeking novelty) and exploration – basic aspects of human nature – are two kinds of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The present study found that the entertainment and uncertainty of specialty coffee brought a sense of curiosity and novelty, motivating participants to subsequently explore and participate in the long term. Curiosity is generated by people's interest, which is not controlled by any external factor, as well as reflects participants' own sake. In addition, the act of exploring does not bring any external reward to drive people to do something. Therefore, curiosity and exploration are specialty coffee enthusiasts' intrinsic motivations for participation.

Self-actualization. Participants hoped to develop systematic specialty coffee knowledge and to continuously improve related skills by participating in various specialty coffee activities. For example, as a high school student, XC has little opportunity to approach specialty coffee in her daily life except by participating in some activities. She said that attending coffee sharing sessions or events provides a chance for learning from other professionals. XH is a very introverted participant and not good at communicating with others. Reading coffee-related books and watching videos occupied almost all his leisure time. He thought studying specialty coffee made him happier and made his life richer. Some participants had pursued specialty coffee training to obtain a certificate that qualified them to work in specialty coffee-related jobs (e.g., barista, coffee roaster). However, their motive for participation was not only to obtain the certificate, but also to improve themselves. As KK said, "I know some people went there

[attending coffee course] for the certificate, but I did not. I just wanted to learn more about specialty coffee.” MD was an experienced coffee barista who had worked as a barista for more than five years, but he still insisted on attending coffee courses every year. He explained, “Coffee knowledge – like any other knowledge – will be updated frequently; you need to continue to learn to keep it [latest coffee knowledge].”

In this study, the pursuit and search for knowledge for the participants’ own sake is recognized as self-actualization. According to Maslow’s hierarchy (1943), self-actualization refers to the realization and complete exploration of one’s potential, and the full development of one’s competence and ability. In this study, participation in specialty-coffee activities was purely motivated by participants’ inner willingness for personal improvement or enrichment. The participation in activities to improve skills or continuously learn was not assumed to bring any external reward, nor was it affected by obligations or pressures. Thus, self-actualization can be considered the third intrinsic motivation for specialty coffee participation.

Extrinsic Motivation

Emotional Connection. Psychologists have assumed that emotions always accompany motivation. Past experiences of specialty coffee participation may affect further involvement. For example, one participant conveyed that the great memory of coffee when he traveled post-graduation affected his feelings and attitude to coffee and the coffee industry, as well as being an important factor that shaped his career choice. In addition, some emotions that resulted from specific events also connected participants to specialty coffee participation. Two of the participants admitted that their initial participation in specialty coffee was because of their spouse rather than their own interest. LH said, “My wife really likes to drink coffee. I thought, instead of going out to buy coffee every day, I could make it for her at home. That was my initial

thought to learn how to brew the coffee.” XJ and his wife met in a café where his wife worked. To have more common topics with her and approach her, XJ read all the information he could find about specialty coffee. Eventually, he proposed successfully at that café. XJ said, “Although the purpose [learning coffee] was less pure at first [laughing], it was the important reason that motivated me to know and be involved in coffee.” Admiration for someone was also mentioned as a factor that drives participation in specialty coffee. Interestingly, women were far more affected by this factor than men in this study. Five out of six female participants noted that they hoped to be as professional as their mentors by participating in specialty coffee activities. Only one male participant mentioned this point.

According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 1995), emotional connection can be seen as a kind of integrated regulation, which is the most self-determined and conscious extrinsic motivation. Although emotional factors have many of the same features as intrinsic motives, the intended outcome is different – the initial purpose is for external relationship connections rather than for the participants’ own sake.

Self-Gratification. A sense of self-gratifications may contain achievement and recognition by others. As leisure pursuers, most participants in this study had definite goals in specialty coffee. Lia said she spent a lot of time and energy practicing coffee-related skills and improving her knowledge of specialty coffee to become a certificated coffee competition judge. MD hoped to become a coffee expert in his career and to represent China in a world-class competition: “To achieve that goal, I enforce myself to practice more and more.” As a coffee instructor, LH felt that he contributed to the spread of specialty coffee, which is the major reason why he persisted in the coffee industry, which he believed unprofitable:

My students come from all walks of life, including business owners, college students, policemen, and even soldiers [My aim is to] let people know

specialty coffee, especially those who were not familiar with coffee before. To spread the correct knowledge of coffee is where I find my value. (LH)

Gaining recognition from others also motivated participants' further participation in specialty coffee – it made them believe that their efforts were meaningful and not in vain. KK said, “I still feel happy even I think I am not [coffee expert] yet.” XY said that the happiest time was when he saw the coffee that he had roasted being praised. As a junior barista, receiving compliments from customers gave XR more motivation for brewing coffee. She used “happiness” and “a sense of achievement” to describe the feeling at that time. Participants confirmed that they felt very proud and satisfied when they were considered as “experts” by others.

The self-gratification of specialty coffee enthusiasts comes from a combination of pure pleasure by achieving progress in specialty coffee skills and deep satisfaction from being praised. Showing their ability and maintaining their self-esteem motivates coffee enthusiasts to participate in specialty coffee. Therefore, self-gratification can be classified as *interjected regulation*.

Social Attraction. Participants expressed that due to the low popularity of specialty coffee, the easiest way to meet people with the same hobby is to be involved in various specialty coffee activities. For example, as mentioned above, XH was an introvert who did not have many friends. However, at the time of the study, he was a popular coffee blogger on the internet:

Frankly, I felt lonely because I don't have too many common topics with people around me. So, I opened a blog account and occasionally I share some coffee notes or coffee brewing tips on it. I never expected there to be so many followers, and then I realized that these people probably face the same situation as me. The coffee blog for us is a community where we support and encourage each other. (XH)

Two participants noted that they felt a sense of belonging when many like-minded people gathered together. For example, XC said that although she was in the coffee competition, she felt

that she was in a barista party rather than a competition. Lia also said, “I like atmospheres where people talk about coffee. Working as a team makes me feel supported.” Three participants believed that participating in specialty coffee activities, particularly some large-scale coffee events (e.g., coffee exhibitions, coffee festivals), helped them to expand social circles.

Compared to other motivations, social attraction is one of the less autonomous factors – when seeking a sense of belonging or expanding social circles, the value of participation is entirely dependent on an external party. Therefore, it can be considered as external regulation of extrinsic motivation.

In summary, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors drive involvement in specialty coffee activities. The expectation of satisfaction and pleasure in both the psychological and physical realms, recognition from others, emotional sustenance, and social connections are the predominant motives for participation.

Constraints on Specialty Coffee Participation

Participants in this study encountered three main types of constraint during their specialty coffee participation: intrapersonal constraints, interpersonal constraints, and structural constraints. Intrapersonal constraints include negative psychological states (e.g., nervousness, anxiousness, stage fright), preconceived value, and a lack of confidence, which limited participants’ interest and involvement in specialty coffee. Interpersonal constraints involve conflict with family responsibility, a lack of companionship, and organizational constraints. These reduce the satisfaction gained from participation. Structural constraints mainly relate to objective factors, such as financial constraints; time, energy, and distance limitations; and the constraints of knowledge, skills or competence. These factors affect satisfaction gained from and motivation for specialty coffee participation.

Intrapersonal Constraints

Participants mentioned struggling with negative psychological states – such as nervousness, anxiousness, and stage fright – which limited their involvement in some public activities. For example, KK expressed her desire to attend the coffee competition, but she always failed to do. Other participants also faced similar issues. XR said, “I definitely feel very nervous when many people look at me.” Qiu, who had attended the competition once, believed that her performance was affected by being anxious: “Although I did plenty of psychological preparation, my performance was terrible, and I did not show my real skills because of nervousness.”

Participants’ preconceived values can reduce their interest in participating in specialty coffee. Participants might refuse to participate in a certain activity because its purpose may conflict with their values. For example, Bao thinks that it is imprudent to set standards for specialty coffee appreciation and to hold coffee competitions because doing so does not help promote specialty coffee, but rather increases the barriers to entry into specialty coffee, impeding ordinary people from participating. This is the reason why he would never attend a coffee competition. A few participants held the same opinion as Bao:

Taste is a very subtle thing. You can’t use standards to measure its quality because everyone is different. The most important thing is how to promote specialty coffee to let more people accept it, not to set some standards that I can’t understand. (Cindy)

The third intrapersonal constraint identified was a lack of confidence. Participants may refuse to show their skills due to fear of embarrassment. For example, KK shared her experience of being a new barista: “I don’t believe that I can brew a good-tasting coffee, so I always avoid brewing coffee when a guest comes in.” In addition, XY shared that during a coffee sharing session, the audience doubted his professional level, which made him very embarrassed. Since then, XY has rarely participated in such activities because he lost his confidence in showing

coffee-related skills. A lack of confidence has a negative impact and restricts subsequent participation in specialty coffee.

Interpersonal Constraints

Interpersonal constraints are barriers to leisure participation that come from social interaction. In this study, this category contains the following factors: personal and social responsibility, a lack of companionship, and organizational constraints. These factors made participants less motivated to participate in specialty coffee, thus affected their frequency of and satisfaction with participation.

Personal and social responsibility. In addition to the role they play in specialty coffee subculture, participants play various roles in their families and workplaces. Participants expressed that although they were willing to have more commitments to specialty coffee activities in their spare time, their family obligations and responsibilities did not allow them to do so. For example, LH admitted that he has reduced the time he spends participating in specialty coffee activities in his spare time due to the need to accompany his two children: “I have had to give up participating in some coffee activities at weekends because my children need their father’s company.” One participant shared that at one point, he gave up his coffee business in another city and returned to his hometown because his father was ill in hospital. He restarted his participation in specialty coffee when his father recovered.

The participants’ work also hindered their leisure participation in specialty coffee. Participation was inhibited or reduced if specialty coffee activities took place during participants’ working hours. For example, participants in this study conveyed that they had to abandon some participation plans because they didn’t have enough vacation. XH said, “I really want to go to the [week-long] annual coffee show in Shanghai, but my boss doesn’t allow me to take such a long

vacation.” Lia also said, “If the activity schedule conflicts with my work schedule, I may prioritize my work.” In addition, participants’ willingness and interest to participate in specialty coffee sometimes decreased after their daily work. As Cindy said, “I may not want to participate in any activities after work if I feel tired or exhausted.” Qiu said, “As an English teacher, I have my major job. It is definitely a limitation [to participating in specialty coffee].”

A Lack of Companionship. This factor involves two aspects: (a) a lack of understanding or support from others and (b) a lack of a participation partner.

In China, employment in the hospitality industry (including coffee) is still considered as a “low-grade” in the traditional perspective. Because of this bias, many of the participants faced a lack of understanding or support from their families. For example, XY said that many of his barista friends have had to quit or stop their pursuit of specialty coffee because they could not gain the support or approval of their family: “Parents always hope their children to do a decent or high-paid job rather than [being] a coffee server.” Lia had also encountered pressure from her family

My mom doesn’t like my current job. She always tries to persuade me to change my job. Our relationship often becomes strained by this. It makes me exhausted. Therefore, I avoid mentioning or doing things related to coffee at home in order to keep the peace. (Lia)

In addition, being overly enthusiastic or serious about specialty coffee can lead to people making negative statements about the specialty coffee lover. This may contribute to a low mood or low level of satisfaction with participation. Participants noted that they might be seen as “stubborn” based on their insistence on the technicalities of production, style, and taste when they participated in some coffee activities. For example, LH shared his negative experience during a café visit:

Once I went into a coffee shop and ordered a cup of coffee. At that time, I was learning the scoring system for specialty coffee, so I was drinking coffee while scoring the cup of coffee according to the scoring table. But my behavior aroused dissatisfaction from the barista of that coffee shop. He thought I was deliberately picking fault. Although I explained to him that I was just practicing how to evaluate a cup of coffee, he kicked me out of the coffee shop. (LH)

Participants also expressed that they sometimes had difficulties finding a partner with whom to participate in specialty coffee activities, which made them feel lonely and decreased their enjoyment from participation. Both KK and XC noted that they felt terrible when they tasted a good coffee but had no one to share with. This negative emotion would impede their subsequent participation. KK said, “If I want to go to a café but cannot find people to come with me, I prefer staying at home.”

Organizational Constraints. Participants sometimes had difficulty finding a place or an organization near them to satisfy their leisure demands. Barriers to service and information about specialty coffee were two organizational constraints on specialty coffee participation mentioned. Some interviewees said that it was hard to find a café near them that could provide specialty coffee products. For example, XH needed to spend more money and time to buy specialty coffee products:

In my city, coffee shops are basically monopolized by coffee chains like Starbucks. Small cafes struggle to survive. If I want to buy specialty coffee beans, I have to buy them online or go to a big city like Shanghai or Beijing (XH)

Cindy and XY were unsatisfied with the products and services from some cafés in their city:

Many big coffee events or good coffee shops are in big cities, People in small cities like ours have little access to specialty coffee events. (XY)

Baristas in most coffee shops don't really understand coffee; they just follow the process to brew ... however, you want to talk with them. (Cindy)

The participants also noted the dearth of information about specialty coffee. Because it is

less popular, they have fewer resources to consult.

Many books and video materials of specialty coffee are in English, which makes my study difficult. (XH)

I like to read some books about fine coffee, but they are either too expensive or unavailable in China. (XR)

Due to flaws in the industrial chain of fine coffee in China, only a few enterprises have direct access to the production areas of fine coffee, leading to the high price of our coffee beans. (MD)

As no participants in this study came from areas of China where specialty coffee is highly popular, they encountered organizational constraints in their daily participation. These constraints led to a sense of dissatisfaction with participation because their leisure demands were difficult to meet.

Structural Constraints

Objective factors that inhibit leisure preference and leisure participation are called structural constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Financial constraints and constraints of knowledge, skills, and competence were noted by the participants in this study.

Financial constraints. Most participants in this study noted that their participation in specialty coffee might be impeded by a lack of money. Because of financial constraints, they often needed to make compromises that restricted their involvement or reduced their commitments to specialty coffee. For example, KK said, “It is so difficult to run a specialty café. I have to make up the loss by doing other business such as running a B&B. It distracts me a lot, but I have to do it to keep the business going.” In addition, a lack of money may be an obstacle the participants’ progress in specialty coffee. XR said, “I don’t have enough money to attend the coffee training, while I know it’s the fast way to improve my skill.” Aside from coffee courses, upgrading coffee equipment is another way to improve coffee performance. However, the good equipment is expensive. XH said, “Owning a coffee machine can help me practice coffee skills at

home, but it is too expensive for me to afford.”

Financial constraints may lead to a conflict between basic living costs and leisure participation costs. This study found that participants would only spend money on their leisure pursuit (specialty coffee) when their basic costs of living were covered. They would reduce, cease, or stop their continuous investment and participation in specialty coffee when they were in financial trouble or did not have spare money. Therefore, financial constraints are among the most important structural constraints in specialty coffee participation, adversely impacting the participants’ motivation, satisfaction, and progress.

Knowledge, skills, and competence as constraints. The satisfaction gained from serious leisure participation may be affected by participants’ level of professional knowledge and skill. Participants may experience negative emotions (e.g., stress, anxiety, upset) because of constraints on their knowledge, skills, and competence. For example, XR said,

Despite working in a coffee shop for a while, I still don’t feel I’m up to the standard of a qualified barista. If friends come to the store and ask me to make coffee for them, I will be afraid that I won’t make a good coffee and become nervous. (XR)

Regarding an experience with a coffee competition, XC said that although she did not care much about her final position, she still felt upset and frustrated that she missed the championship because of a lack of skills.

Qiu expressed that she was satisfied most of the time, except when she failed to brew a coffee with good taste, which made her extremely anxious. MD also said, “I really enjoy the feeling I have when people think I am a coffee expert, but it also brings significant stress to me because I know my skill or competence hasn’t reached the level of professionalism.”

Participants were asked to rate the level of their skills or professional knowledge on a scale from 1 to 10. The results showed that the higher they rated themselves, the more comfortable and

happier they felt in their participation, and the more willing they were to take responsibility and make commitments. In contrast, participants who were felt they lacked knowledge, skills, or competence in specialty coffee showed less satisfaction and experienced negative emotions during participation.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts and their leisure pursuits, motivations, and constraints. A descriptive qualitative method guided the study. Twelve voluntary participants who met the requirements of the study were recruited using the snowball sampling method. These participants self-identified as specialty coffee enthusiasts and were interviewed on their experiences of participating in specialty coffee activities. NVivo software was used as the data analytics tool.

After coding, specialty coffee – the core of the leisure pursuit in this study – was deemed a serious leisure (SL) pursuit: it was found that involvement in specialty coffee-related activities can bring long-term benefits to the participants and requires perseverance and commitment. In addition, a notable phenomenon was observed during the interviews: from those who were new to specialty coffee to those who had been coffee enthusiasts for a long time, many followed an identical career path, some even changing careers to pursue a coffee-related job. Furthermore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were found when the participants expressed their reasons for choosing specialty coffee as their leisure pursuit. Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints were identified as the three predominant factors that limited their involvement with specialty coffee activities.

The findings in Chapter Four show that Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts commonly have deeper motivations for coffee drinking than mass coffee consumers. In addition, they perform and participate differently to mass coffee consumers when involved in specialty coffee activities. Although the motivation for their involvement resembles that of mass consumers in some superficial factors (e.g., sensory stimulation, social connection, pleasure-seeking), specialty coffee consumers were found to have higher psychological satisfaction (e.g., self-gratification,

personal enrichment, self-actualization) than mass consumers. Nevertheless, they still faced interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints during their participation. Based on the above findings, this section explains why participating in specialty coffee is a serious leisure pursuit.

Eating and Drinking Activity: Serious Leisure or Casual Leisure?

Stebbins (2001, 2007) categorized “eating and drinking” as “sensory stimulation” activities and thus a type of casual leisure, which also related to the “creature pleasures” that humans enjoy.

However, this assertion has been challenged by some leisure scholars. For example, in a study on high-risk drinking activity, Maloney (2011) found that the participants experienced an emotion stronger than that found in simple “creature pleasures.” Thurnell-Read’s (2015) investigation also confirmed that for beer-drinkers, drinking beer was more than just a simple sensual pleasure: it was a real “leisure career.” Similarly, studies on Scottish whiskey (Spracklen, 2011), gourmet coffee (Roseberry, 1996), wine tasting (Charters, 2006; Demossier, 2010), ethnic cuisine (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2005), and local and organic food (Johnston & Baumann, 2014) have determined that activities related to eating and drinking also involve certain levels of skill, professionalism, and knowledge, as well as investment of time, money and effort from participants. This shows that these activities are not purely for a sense of pleasure or enjoyment. Stebbins has documented comparisons between amateur cooks and cook hobbyists: He observed that amateur cooks constantly increase and renew their skills and knowledge to provide the best meals for their customers, while cook hobbyists obsess over acquiring ingredients, understanding history, practicing cooking methods, and improving their social status, but have little experience in either cooking practices or preparation (Stebbins, 2007). Therefore, whether a certain activity

can be considered as a SL pursuit depends on the motivation and behavior of the participants, as well as the rewards gained from the activity, not whether it is related to eating or drinking. My thesis findings supported this idea. I elaborated on these, below.

Specialty Coffee is a kind of Serious Leisure Activity

Coffee-drinking activity has been defined as a typical casual leisure pursuit (Stebbins, 1992), which brings a short sensory pleasure to the drinker. However, based on the participants' responses in this study, the core activities of specialty coffee are not only the act of drinking, but a series of activities, such as café visits, coffee cupping, and competition attendance. This involvement with specialty coffee activities is a long-term commitment in which the participants must regularly and consistently increase and update their knowledge of specialty coffee brewing, roasting, coffee planting, and new and unique coffee tastes. Whether specialty coffee participation is a serious or casual leisure pursuit depends on several aspects, as discussed below.

Firstly, participants shared that they encountered difficulties or challenges (e.g., a lack of competence, facing negative coffee contexts) during their participation in specialty coffee. However, their enthusiasm for specialty coffee helped them overcome these difficulties to show perseverance in their leisure pursuit. Stebbins (1992) notes that people tend to stop their casual leisure participation when they encounter difficulties. If specialty coffee participation is considered casual leisure, this study's findings cannot support Stebbins's assertion (2001), which emphasized that perseverance would only be showed "occasionally." In this study, participants showed perseverance constantly – some of the challenges they faced (e.g., negative coffee context or lacking coffee cupping competence) could exist in the long-term. This finding supports Jones's (2000) assertion that sometimes serious leisure participants would persist in an unsuccessful leisure activity even if they had free to stop. Personality has often been mentioned

as another factor helping lasting serious participation in cases where the participants' interest level is not particularly high or in the initial stages of participation. Whether this may imply that determined people can become serious leisure participants needs more evidence from further research.

Secondly, Stebbins (2007) classifies coffee-drinking as casual leisure because it brings a sensory stimulation deemed to be "fleeting" and "short-term" to the coffee drinker. Moreover, participation in casual leisure necessitates "little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins, 2001, p.53). However, although most participants noted that they were initially attracted by specialty coffee due to its unique flavour and taste, they gained a sense of happiness and satisfaction from their tasting. Participants explained that this sensory experience brought a more positive attitude towards their life and improved performance in their subsequent work and study. This should be considered as an enduring and lasting benefit rather than a short-lived one. Additionally, the experiences of participants demonstrated that they put considerable time and effort into participating in specialty coffee to increase their theoretical knowledge of coffee and improve their practical coffee skills, in order to obtain a better experience and fulfill their commitment to specialty coffee.

Stebbins (2007) noted that money as a benefit should be considered as the last benefit of serious leisure participation. This assertion is similar to the findings of this study. Financial return is an evidential benefit from specialty coffee activities, especially for those who work in the coffee industry, running a coffee business or serving as a barista or coffee mentor. Generally, financial return should be the prime or a significant consideration for people who decide to run a business or do a job. However, participants conveyed that financial return was taken into account but was not the primary motive. For instance, Lia said, "The only consideration for me was

whether the coffee-related job was enough attractive to me instead of how much money I could make in this job.” KK also confirmed that the financial return would be at the bottom of her list of reasons for participation if she did not need to consider the survival of her café. When Qiu was asked if she became a coffee shop owner for financial reasons, she smiled and replied, “Frankly, coffee is a completely unprofitable business, and the financial benefit is almost the last consideration.” Qiu’s business partner, MD, confirmed, “We have to do some other business to make up for the loss from the specialty coffee segment to make the coffee shop profitable.” Based on their responses, it is clear that enthusiasts are willing to continue their leisure participation with little or no financial return. This also implies that the career choices of study participants who do coffee-related jobs are dominated by their leisure pursuit.

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore whether the specialty coffee-related activities pursued by Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts qualify as serious leisure. The statements from the Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts who participated in this study reveal that there are six primary characteristics (perseverance, effort, identification, career, unique ethos, and lasting benefits) of their experience and passion for this leisure pursuit. In addition, a sense of self-achievement, personal enrichment and satisfaction are evident in their narratives. Therefore, although the core activities of specialty coffee are simple (coffee brewing and appreciation), the associated tasks and activities can be identified as serious leisure.

Sustainability and Specialty Coffee

Sustainability refers to the process of maintaining environmental balance and harmony in resource development, investment direction, technological development, and institutional change when businesses meet human needs and develop (Brecha, 2019). In general, sustainability can be a concept, a quality of life system, a method of production, or a way of life.

While the serious leisure framework has been employed in many leisure studies, few have targeted the relationship between serious leisure and sustainability. Serious leisure can be considered both a long-term and sustainable means of conducting leisure activities because of its characteristics. Therefore, the results are discussed with regards to studies in all fields, not just the field of specialty coffee. In addition, from economic, environmental, and social perspectives, specialty coffee embodies the concept of sustainability in terms of planting, marketing, and production methods. In this study, none of the interviewees mentioned sustainability, which should have been a significant feature of specialty coffee. Therefore, the relationship between the specialty coffee industry and sustainability is also discussed in this section.

What Defines a Sustainable Leisure Activity?

Sustainability depends on three integrated factors: ecological, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. In recent years, the principles of sustainability have attracted significant attention and have been applied to studies into leisure. While having an awareness of sustainability factors when building a leisure society benefits societal and economic growth, the damage a leisure activity can inflict on environmental resources is not something that the public can ignore. For example, data provided by a British study showed that 28% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in the UK came from leisure practices (BEIS, 2020).

There have been movements to counter this environmental impact, however. Butler (1991) defines the concept of sustainable recreation as an activity which did not destroy the environment but did bring economic benefits. McCool and Moisey (2008) emphasize that to achieve sustainability, it is essential to find a balance between the possible conflicts that arise in the connections between economic, environmental, and sociocultural targets. Therefore, the intersection between leisure activities and sustainability should meet the needs of leisure

participants without destroying future opportunities. In other words, it is necessary to satisfy human leisure demands while preserving environmental resources, cultural significance, biodiversity, and ecosystem stability.

Is Specialty Coffee participation a Sustainable activity?

According to the SCA (1984), sustainable coffee refers to planting in a way that does not destroy the environment and that provides a better livelihood for coffee farmers. However, due to coffee's planting and processing methods, production conditions, and trading types, ordinary commercial coffee consumption is deemed an unsustainable practice. (Kufa, 2010)

Compared with conventional coffee, specialty coffee is more sustainable with regards to environmental, social, and economic aspects. For instance, economically, the third wave of coffee advocates for a fair-trade approach to the coffee bean trade, providing green bean buyers with the opportunity to interact directly with coffee growers (Van der Merwe & Maree, 2016). The removal of middlemen means more direct profits for coffee farmers. Furthermore, specialty coffee takes a small-scale farming approach and maintains its high quality and diversity by minimizing deforestation and forest degradation (Vogt, 2020).

In addition, serious leisure could also be deemed to be sustainable leisure because it involves deep participation, which can bring long-term benefits to its participants, improving their satisfaction and well-being. In a study of serious leisure practices among the elderly, Heley and Jones (2013) indicated that participation in serious leisure played a significant role in building a sustainable society. Wu et al. (2014) also proposed that serious leisure participants always more focus on a sustainable way to engage in the activity than other parties. In summary, although the research participants did not mention the importance of sustainability as a reason for their involvement and leisure preference, both specialty coffee and serious leisure embody

sustainability in many ways. Therefore, participation in specialty coffee as serious leisure may lead to a more sustainable lifestyle that both protects the ecological environment, increases the well-being of participants, and results in a more meaningful life.

Research Implications

This study has determined that specialty coffee-related activities are a serious leisure pursuit for Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts. This finding provides a new practical direction for serious leisure research and expands the theoretical evidence to verify that activities related to eating and drinking can also be deemed as serious leisure, based on participants' motivation, behavior, and the benefits gained from the activity. This is in contrast to Stebbins' assertion that eating and drinking activities are casual leisure.

In addition, specialty coffee and the specialty coffee industry is not yet well-known by ordinary people in China. The findings of this study may attract more attention from people, in particular people who are involved in the coffee industry or who provide coffee products and services to Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts. This study has revealed the motivations and constraints for participation in specialty coffee: although participants have a strong motivation for specialty coffee, there are many constraints that hindered their participation and decreased satisfaction. The Chinese coffee industry, related organizations and practitioners may develop measures to help these enthusiasts according to the results of this research.

Limitation and Further Research

Despite the information generated through this research, there are some limitations. Firstly, the data was conducted in a relatively small cultural context and background. While 12 participants were recruited from different cities in China, the study does not explore the differences in leisure participation across different regions. In addition, due to the outbreak of

COVID-19, the method used for sample collection was forced to change from purposive sampling to snowball sampling. This change further limited the target populations that the researchers could approach, leading to a similar background and experience in specialty coffee among participants. This resulted in highly consistent responses, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, the result may not be widely representative. Secondly, cultural differences in the understanding of leisure may lead to biased or hesitant answers from the participants. In China, the word “leisure” always refers to “play” or “laziness,” so the participants may have underemphasized their sensory experiences or pleasure during leisure participation to avoid leaving a negative impression. Thirdly, due to the researcher’s limited research experience, some deviations may have occurred in the interview and data interpretation process, resulting in limitations in the results.

Further studies may employ a multi-cultural, diverse sample and use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to obtain a deeper understanding of the participation in specialty coffee activities in a wider context. This research has explored the impediments to participation in specialty coffee. However, when participants were involved in the same activity – a coffee brewing competition, for instance, stage fright may restrict one participant without affecting another. Therefore, further research could focus on identifying which constraints are personal, and which constraints are common in specialty coffee participation. Furthermore, which negotiation strategies can be employed to overcome those constraints is another possible future research direction

Conclusion

This research indicates that involvement in specialty coffee-related activities is one of an increasing number of examples that show that eating and drinking activities should be classed as

serious leisure rather than fleeting “sensory pleasure” under Stebbins’s (2001) classification.

By employing the serious leisure framework and drawing on qualitative research with Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts as research participants, this paper has shown how involvement in specialty coffee-related activities is a meaningful, long-term leisure pursuit. This pursuit demands considerable effort in the acquisition of knowledge, skill, and expertise, requiring participants to play more significant roles and undertake more commitments and responsibilities to obtain a substantial individual and group identity. This research has also analyzed the factors that drive participation by applying self-determination theory. Intrinsic motivations, such as sensory preference, self-actualization, novelty and exploration, as well as extrinsic motivations, including emotional connection, social attraction, and self-gratification, have been identified as the main drivers for participation. Furthermore, leisure constraints theory was applied to determine which factors influence participation and leisure preferences. Finally, several important topics that were not covered in the interviews were mentioned, such as the concept that financial profit is an essential component of serious leisure, the idea that serious leisure is sustainable, and the theory that helping people establishes a sustainable lifestyle.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

I am here to hear your voice

Need research participants

If you are obsessed with coffee and adored participating in coffee-related activities
If you have experience of attending coffee lectures or coffee training courses
If you view coffee as a life hobby and treat yourself as a faithful coffee enthusiast

**LET US
MAKE COFFEE
INDUSTRY BETTER!**

Chinny Li

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

Phone: (1)8198300615 (Canada); 18861996993 (China)

Email: Chinnylee615@gmail.com

Appendix B: Invitation Letter

Dear XX:

Thanks for your time to read this letter.

My name is Qian Li. I am a graduate student in Sustainable Leisure Management program at Vancouver Island University (VIU), Canada. I am conducting a study on specialty coffee enthusiasts in China being completed in partial fulfillment of my master's degree.

The purpose of this research is to explore both the social and individual aspects of specialty coffee enthusiasts in order to obtain a better understanding of their experience with specialty coffee programs. For the purpose of this research, I need to interview your customers to ask them about their experience and passion for coffee.

I heard you have always contributed to the improvement of the spread of specialty coffee in China. I'd be happy to meet with you via video call software to answer your questions about my research.

I was planning to meet you and express my idea in-person. However, since the outbreak of COVID-19, I am unlikely to be able to return to China during this research. I can only contact you by email.

Please find attached an information letter with more details regarding my research. Thanks again for your time and help. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Li, Qian, MA Candidate

Master of Sustainable Leisure Management

Vancouver Island University, Canada

Appendix C: Research Consent Letter



Coffee Could be ‘Serious’: An Exploratory Study of Chinese Specialty Coffee

Enthusiasts

Principal Investigator

Qian Li (Chinny), Graduate student
Master of Sustainable Leisure Management
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(86)18861996993(China)

Supervisor

Farhad Moghimehfar, PhD
Department of Recreation and Tourism
Management
Vancouver Island University
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Phone: 2507533245

Introduction

I am a graduate student in Sustainable Leisure Management (MASLM) at Vancouver Island University (VIU), Canada. I am conducting a study on specialty coffee enthusiasts entitled “Coffee could be ‘serious’: an exploratory study of Chinese specialty coffee enthusiasts” in China. The presented research is under the supervision of Dr. Farhad Moghimehfar from Vancouver Island University.

Purpose

The purpose of my research is to obtain a better understanding of inner and social world of serious coffee fans to fulfill the gaps in the academic literature of coffee as a leisure pursuit. I hope that hearing the voice of serious coffee enthusiasts provides us with a better understanding of their leisure participation. Also, I hope the results of this study help small cafe owners and their customers, particularly those in China, by providing a better understanding of customers’ needs and interests.

Research Procedures

I am inviting you to participate in a semi-structured online or telephone interview. If you agree, you will be asked questions concerning your experience with coffee-related leisure activities and your commitment toward specialty coffee as a leisure pursuit. It will take up to 90 minutes of your time to participate in the interview. The questions inquire about your understanding of coffee, past and current experience in coffee-related leisure activities, and the constraints or unexpected things you may have faced.

All conversations during the interview will be recorded under your permission to ensure the information is interpreted and recorded precisely and accurately in the final report. After each interview, I will transcribe the interview verbatim. The collected data will be stored on a password-protected laptop in a secure location. I will translate all the content from Chinese to

English. A copy will be stored in my password protected physical storage space in case of data loss.

Risks and Benefits

The information collected during the interview is likely to be uncontroversial, and thus the research poses only a very small risk of harm to participants (no greater than risks that would be encountered in everyday life). Depending on the information you provide, and whether you choose to participate anonymously, there is a possibility that the information you provide might cause loss of social status and/or embarrassment.

With the exception of sincere appreciation and a small gift, each of the value less \$5, from the researcher, the participants will not be paid.

Confidentiality

If you choose to participate, all records or your participation would be confidential and anonymous. The interviews will be conducted using Zoom online software due to risks associated with COVID-19 pandemic. With your permission, I will record the interview using Zoom recording device. To minimize the risk, only your voice will be record instead of an entire video.

The link as following as referred to Zoom's privacy policy:

https://zoom.us/docs/en-us/privacy-and-security.html?zcid=3736&creative=430738468990&keyword=%2Bzoom%20%2Bprivacy&matctype=b&network=g&device=c&gclid=CjwKCAjw8J32BRBCEiwApQEKgUQuepbDSGjrn0oT6cO6ciHPwMUgqOFenpxe7zMKUj6k31P9vubXVhoCe8QQA_vD_BwE.

Later recordings will be transcribed to words. The records of this study will be kept private. Pseudonyms will be used. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only my supervisor and I will be able to access data. At your request, you will be provided a copy of the transcript and invited to make changes to the transcript as you wish (e.g. if you would like withdraw a particular statement you made during an interview). All the recordings will be deleted after my thesis defense and the publication of my results, approximately August 30, 2021.

Use of Research Information

The results of this study will be published in my Master's thesis, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time where practicable, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone or email presented on the top of this letter.

You will be given a copy of this consent letter to keep your own records. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign your name and date below.

If you have concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the VIU's Research Ethics Board at via email (reb@viu.ca) or at 250-740-6631.

A brief report of the findings will be available to the public after completion of the research at VIURRSpace (<https://viurrspace.ca/>).

Consent and Conditions of Consent

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

I consent to the interview being audio recorded. Yes No

I consent to being quoted in the products of the research. Yes No

I have been informed with the risks, benefits and rights that I have. Yes No

Participant Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

I, Qian Li (Chinny), promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D: Interview Guide

This research is documenting patterns of specialty coffee enthusiasts (SCEs)' leisure participation in China. We are exploring how serious leisure framework apply to SCE that lead to why people love specialty coffee-related activities, stop participating, and their commitment to these activities.

Specialty coffee (SC) as a current culturally popular element in coffee social world itself could be deemed as a core pursuit and embodied by participants partaking in a vast range of coffee-related activities, such as visiting internet-famous coffee houses, even coffee planting farms, attending coffee tasting and making courses, participating in the commercial coffee exhibitions, and involving in coffee making, tasting, and roasting competitions. However, this kind of leisure pursuit has a lack of attention from previous literature. We need more information to obtain a better understanding of this leisure pursuit and the group of SCEs: Why participants are obsessed with SC and sticking with it and what can be done to make SCEs feel more satisfaction from their participation?

You are being asked to participate in this portion of the research to help me understand why people are obsessed with SC, how they sticking with SC do, and why some people were failed to preserve.

The objectives of the research study are to:

- (1) Understand how six independent characteristics of serious leisure framework apply to SCEs:
(a) perseverance, (b) careers, (c) personal efforts, (d) unique ethos, (e) benefits, and (f) strongly identify.
2. Examine what are constrains to participate in SC related activities, benefits as well.
3. Understand how the progress occurs when SCEs involving in SC related activities.

Use of information:

The interview will assist the researcher to:

- Obtain a better understanding of SCEs' daily leisure pursuit, social, and personal aspects
- Clarify the barriers to SCEs' participation and how they did overcome in order to continued participate in SC related activities
- Understand how SCEs fulfill their commitment in the leisure pursuit

**Exploring How Serious Leisure Framework Applies to the Specialty Coffee Enthusiasts in
China**

Interview Protocol for Active Specialty Coffee Enthusiasts

Date _____ **Start time** _____

End time _____

Notes:

(SC: Specialty Coffee)

Basic information of participants:

- 1) Would you like to introduce yourself first? How about your family? Or what's your career?
- 2) Do you consider yourself an enthusiast of specialty coffee?

Understanding your SC activities Participation

- 1) How did you know SC and how did you start to participate in SC activities?
- 2) What kind of coffee-related activities would you most like to involve in? Which is your favorite one and most frequently engagement? Why?
- 3) How often do you participate in coffee activities? How do you describe your skill in this/these activities?
- 4) What is your most memorable experience of SC?
- 4) How important is SC to you?
- 5) How do you describe the degree of your involving?

- 6) How about the area you grew up in? Is SC a popular element there?
- 7) Does coffee is the prime or a traditional drink in your family?
- 8) Is anyone you met in has changed your view of SC? And, how change happened?

Serious leisure pursuit

- 1) How did you think any differences between specialty coffee and other notions of coffee? (ex. Instant coffee, Starbucks coffee, etc.)
- 2) Can you simply explain the meaning or your understanding of SC?
- 3) What does SC mean to you?
- 4) If you are required to use one or a few words to describe your feelings when you involved in SC activities or talk about coffee to others, what are you willing to use?
- 6) Do you think you are the one of this movement supporters?
- 7) How does SC attract you into it? If others asked you why you like coffee, how would you like to explain?
- 8) Do you have any goal(s) in SC? What is/are your goal(s)?
- 9) Do you have a “commitment” in coffee? What kinds of commitment?
- 10) Do you have any form of learning to improve your knowledge or performance in SC activities?
- 11) Have you made any efforts when you engaged in SC related activities? Could you explain it?
- 12) Which group of the word is more accurate to describe your experience in SC related activities, “pleasure” and “enjoyment” or “rewardness” and “satisfaction”? Why?
- 13) Do you have any change in your life after you treated coffee as your hobby? Does coffee have any positive or adverse impact on your life? Have any lessons you learned from SC?
- 14) How do you describe the benefits you have obtained from SC?

- 15) Have you seen SC as a “career” in your life? What aspects can be reflected?
- 16) Do you desire to progress in which aspect of coffee? What do you do can help you achieve progress?
- 17) Have you ever thought that you should stop or cease your engagement in any coffee-related activity? If so, what made you insist in?
- 18) What are the important reasons encourage you chose SC as your leisure pursuit rather others?
- 19) Do you think obtaining the financial benefits is one of the most important reason to push you into participating in SC activities?
- 19) Do you have other hobbies in your leisure time? How do you describe the level you have involved in?
- 20) Do you think SC is a part of your life? Or involving SC activities is a part of who you are?

Barriers and constrains

Have you encountered anything that has constrained your participation in SC activities?

- Financial (e.g. daily cost, equipment, income)
- Social (pubic pressure)
- Personal (e.g. Skill, professional guide, interest)
- Interpersonal (e.g. family, friends, cohort)

Appendix E: Themes Categories Map

