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Sustainable Tourism Marketing

Edited by
Eduard Cristobal-Fransi, Natalia Daries Ramón,
Berta Ferrer-Rosell, Estela Marine-Roig and Eva Martin-Fuentes

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Special Issue Editors
Eduard Cristobal-Fransi
Department of Business Management,
University of Lleida
Spain

Natalia Daries
Department of Business Management,
University of Lleida
Spain

Berta Ferrer-Rosell
Department of Business Management,
University of Lleida
Spain

Estela Marine-Roig
Department of Business Management,
University of Lleida
Spain

Eva Martin-Fuentes
Department of Business Management,
University of Lleida
Spain

Editorial Office
MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

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About the Special Issue Editors

Eduard Cristobal-Fransi holds a PhD in economics and a degree in business administration. He is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Tourism at the University of Lleida (Spain). His research focuses on e-commerce, social economy, and marketing management, mainly in tourism and quality and services companies. His work has been presented at national and international research conferences and has been published in several prestigious journals.

Natalia Daries-Ramón holds a PhD in business administration, an MSc in information and knowledge society, a BA in business administration; a BA in market research and techniques, and a BA in tourism. Currently, she is the Degree Coordinator for Tourism at the University of Lleida, Spain, and Assistant Professor of Hospitality and Gastronomy at the Open University of Catalonia. Her research focuses on the impact of new technologies in tourism. She has published several papers in prestigious journals and presented, at international research conferences, the contribution and impact of new technologies and social networking in tourism.

Berta Ferrer-Rosell holds an international PhD in tourism, an MSc in tourism management and planning and a BA in tourism. She is currently a Serra Húnter Fellow and an Academic Coordinator of the joint degree Business Management and Tourism at the University of Lleida. Her research interest is in e-marketing, social economy, gastronomy and air transportation. She has published in *Tourism Management*, the *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* and the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, among others. She is an Associate Editor of the *European Journal of Tourism Research*.

Estela Marine-Roig is a Senior Lecturer in tourism marketing at the University of Lleida (UdL), Catalonia, an Assistant Professor of Social Media and Smart Tourism (MSc) at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), a post-doctoral researcher in the research group (UdL) on Tourism and Social Knowledge Economy (TURESCO), and an Associate Editor of the *European Journal of Tourism Research*. She holds a European PhD in tourism and leisure, an MSc in tourism management and planning, a BA in humanities, and a BA in tourism. The Catalan Government awarded her the 2018 Medal of Tourism for the best knowledge and research project. Her research interests include the analysis of tourist destination images through online sources, especially traveler-generated content.

Eva Martin-Fuentes holds an international PhD in engineering and information technologies, along with the Thesis Excellence Award for a Doctoral Thesis awarded by the International Federation of IT & Tourism (IFITT). She is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Business Management at the University of Lleida (Spain), where she has been recognized with the Teaching Excellence Award for the areas of tourism management and social media. She was the Coordinator of Social Media Marketing (MSc) and, currently, is the Vice-Dean of Institutional Relations and Employability of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Tourism. Her research interests focus on e-tourism, especially in the hospitality industry, and she has published articles in the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Tourism Review*, and the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*.

Preface to "Sustainable Tourism Marketing"

Research on tourism marketing tends to place a greater focus on consumer behavior and its impact on destinations, as well as on the use of tourism services or products, than on sustainability. However, this field has a long tradition of research in aspects related to promoting tourism products and services that, from the perspective of both supply and demand, respect the environment and local communities. Sustainable tourism is a concept that demands more concreteness and action. It takes into account the economic, social, and environmental impacts of satisfying the current needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Raising consciousness, on the part of society in general and the tourist in particular, about respectful consumption in regard to the environment is affecting the tourist industry. This situation is triggering changes in tourism activity programs that, in turn, imply changes in the ways both companies and tourist destinations are managed. Moreover, it has generated marketing management committed to themes of sustainability and consumer behavior, marketing of sustainable products, product design and green brands, labeling, and advertising. The objective of this book is to analyze the main contributions made as a result of research related to sustainable tourism–marketing management and current trends in this field. Therefore, the book collects contributions about the marketing of destinations and the marketing management of companies and tourism organizations from a sustainable tourism perspective. The studies highlighted analyze the marketing strategies adopted by tourism companies and institutions or tourist destinations in order to manage visitors in a sustainable manner, promote the destination in marginal areas, promote territorial balance, or analyze the effect of tourism on the consumption of local products and the economic development of host communities. We consider this book to contribute to better management and the dissemination of sustainable tourism, thus helping destinations and the tourism industry commercialize products or services that respect the environment.

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Special Issue Editors

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Editorial

Sustainable Tourism Marketing

Eduard Cristobal-Fransi *, Natalia Daries, Berta Ferrer-Rosell, Estela Marine-Roig and Eva Martin-Fuentes

Department of Business Management, University of Lleida, 25001 Lleida, Catalonia, Spain; ndaries@aegern.udl.cat (N.D.); berta.ferrer@aegern.udl.cat (B.F.-R.); estela.marine@udl.cat (E.M.-R.); eva@aegern.udl.cat (E.M.-F.)

* Correspondence: ecristobal@aegern.udl.cat; Tel.: +34-97-370-3253

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Abstract: In this article, we introduce the themes and approaches covered in this special issue on Sustainable Tourism Marketing. Its objective has been to analyze the main contributions made as a result of research related to sustainable tourism-marketing management and current trends in this field. This issue has gathered articles about the marketing of destinations and the marketing and communication management of companies and tourism organizations from a sustainable tourism perspective. This editorial piece provides a useful introduction to the relationship between tourism and sustainable marketing management that can be used by researchers and practitioners to develop tourism marketing strategies from a sustainable perspective.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; tourism marketing; destination management; destination marketing organization; tourist behavior

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1. Introduction

Due to the great importance and influence of tourism in society, public institutions and companies have proposed to emphasize the positive impacts of tourism and reduce its negative impacts at the economic, social, and environmental levels [1]. Therefore, it is necessary to reach a balance between sustainability and tourism development of the destination. The sustainability of the tourist destination has become, in fact, a key element of differentiation to increase its competitiveness [2].

For the tourism industry, the environment and its conservation are vital aspects. Initiatives and proposals have emerged aimed at implementing a new concept related to tourism, called 'sustainable tourism'. This concept has been defined by the UNWTO [3] as 'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities' (p. 12). Tourist activity is inseparable from the surrounding environment; thereby, it necessary to raise awareness among tourists, residents, and managers of tourist establishments of making the tourism industry sustainable by adopting sustainable practices [4]. To do this, marketing management is essential.

Initially, it may seem that the concepts of marketing and sustainability are incompatible [5]. Marketing, in general, and advertising, in particular, have been criticized for spreading fraudulent messages in the promotion of sustainable products or services, personified in the practice of 'green washing', which involves deceiving consumers about a company's environmental performance in order to make a commercial profit [6,7]. However, marketing is essential for businesses and sustainable tourist destinations. Good marketing management is responsible for the numbers and types of tourists who visit a destination and for guaranteeing viable destinations that provide valuable contributions to economic development and growth [8]. While the roles of public administration and tourism businesses are key in the design and development of sustainable destinations, marketing has an important function in determining how successfully destinations achieve their goals and objectives, in both the short and medium term [9].

2. Structure and Contents of the Thematic Issue

The aim of this special issue is to add new and diverse knowledge to the existing body of literature on the relationship between marketing and sustainability in the specific field of tourism. All of the articles take different perspectives. Ten articles in the special issue, written by accredited researchers from various countries, present original studies that explore the implications of applying sustainable practices to tourism marketing.

The first of the articles is titled 'Visiting intangible cultural heritage tourism sites: From value cognition to attitude and intention', and is written by Qiu et al. The authors took TFTLC (the traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon) as a study case, investigating residents' value cognition and emotional attitudes in regard to a heritage site and nearby city in Zhejiang Province, China, and analyzing the formation path of tourism intention. Their research clarifies how intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism products can promote the sustainability of ICH in environmental, economic, and social aspects, and the authors confirm the potential to predict tourists' motivations and intentions by studying their value cognition and emotions, thus providing valuable insight into product development, marketing, and post-development evaluations of ICH tourism.

The second article is titled 'The effectiveness of marketing communication and importance of its evaluation in online environment', and is written by Krizanova et al. The article focuses on online marketing communication undertaken by hotels, and how to measure its effectiveness, which, according to authors, continues to be a challenge due to its complexity. Thus, in this article, the authors propose a methodology for implementing a suitable indicator for the evaluation of the effectiveness of online communication tools. They based their research on Slovakia's hotel industry, and on the current marketing communication activities hotels undertake by conducting a survey among the managers of Slovakian hotels. Their results suggest that hotels prefer financial metrics, because they represent a traditional approach towards investment evaluation. That is, return on investment (ROI) is the most common metric for assessing investments in online communication, and thus, the authors proposed ROI as the most-appropriate metric for evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication activities.

The third article, 'Measurement of satisfaction in sustainable tourism: a cultural heritage site in Spain' by Huete-Alcocer et al., analyzes sustainable tourism in a cultural context. The authors affirm that there are many factors that can influence the success of this type of tourism, but any action developed should be related to the satisfaction of the tourist. The work focuses on a heritage destination of an archaeological nature. The researchers studied the profile of the cultural tourist and his or her level of satisfaction after visiting the site. On one hand, the results show that tourists who visit heritage sites or archaeological parks seek a deeper cultural experience. Furthermore, they are well-informed and have planned their visit. On the other hand, they show that cultural tourism is based on a visitor profile that demands good infrastructure, informed guides, and clear information about the park or site, in addition to mid-level accommodation and catering services.

The fourth article also addresses an intangible cultural heritage, but in this case, in the south of Spain. The article is titled 'Flamenco tourism from the viewpoint of its protagonists: a sustainable vision using Lean Startup methodology', and was written by Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al. The authors explain the transition and evolution of flamenco from a form of popular music to an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Using the Lean Canvas model combined with a survey of a panel of flamenco experts, the necessity to retain their place-based identity is pointed out, as well as the need, as a regional culture, to establish links to export markets for their survival, emphasizing the importance of high-quality communication and promotion, considering that the respect and maintenance of flamenco's essence are fundamental for the creation of a sustainable tourism product of quality in the medium and long terms.

The fifth article, 'Perceived inconveniences and Muslim travelers' loyalty to non-Muslim destinations' by Han et al., identifies the process of generating loyalty for international Muslim travelers to non-Muslim destinations, taking into consideration the disadvantages these travelers may encounter when visiting a non-Muslim destination. Through qualitative interviews of Muslim travelers visiting South Korea and an analysis of the structural equation model, the results reveal that image, emotional experiences, and emotional desire play an important role in the loyalty of Muslim travelers. This research has several implications for non-Muslim destination management organizations (DMOs) aiming to attract and retain international Muslim travelers.

The sixth article is titled 'Exotic or home? Tourists' perception of guest houses, guest houses loyalty, and destination loyalty in remote tourist destinations', and was written by Shi et al. The article analyzes guest houses, a sustainable means of accommodation, and presents as a case study Kanas, a remote tourist destination in the autonomous region of Xinjiang, China. The conceptual model examines the cultural distance between residents and visitors in regard to the perceptions and loyalty of the guests. The results show that a large cultural distance increases the perception of an exotic culture and decreases the perception of a sense of home, as well as that both the perception of an exotic local culture and the sense of home have a positive effect on loyalty to the guest houses in this remote destination.

The seventh article, 'The development of loyalty to earthen defensive heritage as a key factor in sustainable preventive conservation' by Prados-Peña et al., examines whether the loyalty to a heritage site in Granada, Spain, emerges as a consequence of the perceived image visitors have of it and the level at which place attachment mediates the relationship between the effect of image and loyalty. Through a survey of 200 randomly selected respondents, the analyses confirm that the antecedent factors that determine loyalty are place attachment and its perceived image, which make it more likely that the site will be visited and recommended.

In the eighth article, 'The influence of Islamic religiosity on the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development in Pakistan: a Structural Equation Modeling approach', written by Aman et al., the authors analyze the influence of religion on the perception of the impact of the development of sustainable tourism based on the results of a survey of more than 500 residents of Pakistan. The findings show that respondents with a high level of Islamic religiosity have a positive attitude towards the development of sustainable tourism, as well as perceptions of communities, behaviors, and cultural aspects that affect sustainable tourism.

The ninth article of this special issue dedicated to sustainable tourism marketing is titled 'Tourism development, environment and policies: Differences between domestic and international tourists', and was written by Liu et al. The authors reveal that domestic and international visitors react differently to the air (environmental) quality of the destination. The authors used panel data (2005–2015) from 17 underdeveloped provinces in China, as well as an econometric model analysis, to explore the differences in the impact of air quality between domestic and international visitors, and how these differences may help local governments to establish tourism development policies.

The final article, 'The impact of disaster of a national airline on the nation's tourism: An empirical investigation' by Fan et al., addresses the issue of sustainable tourism marketing from a totally different perspective, analyzing the impact of an air disaster on travelers' attitudes and intentions to travel to a specific country. The authors apply authors apply this concept to Chinese tourists' intention to travel to Malaysia after the Malaysia Airlines disaster. To do so, they use a hybrid methodology using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results show that intention to visit is positively affected by intention to fly on the specific airline and attitude toward visiting Malaysia. However, the effect of the perceived risk of flying this airline on attitudes about visiting the country is mediated by the perceived risk of visiting Malaysia and attitudes towards visiting it. The research concludes that knowledge about a country significantly reduces perceived risks about visiting it. Finally, public opinion reduces the perceived risk of using this airline.

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Article

Visiting Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Sites: From Value Cognition to Attitude and Intention

Qihang Qiu [1,2], Tianxiang Zheng [1,2], Zheng Xiang [3] and Mu Zhang [1,2,*]

1 Shenzhen Tourism College, Jinan University, Shenzhen 518053, China; queenie@stu2017.jnu.edu.cn (Q.Q.); zheng_tx@sz.jnu.edu.cn (T.Z.)
2 JNU-UF International Joint Laboratory on IT & T, Shenzhen 518053, China
3 Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA; philxz@vt.edu
* Correspondence: zhangmu@jnu.edu.cn; Tel: +86-755-26931865

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Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has recently become an important area of tourism development for many countries that are home to such cultural resources. Within this context, the value of an ICH site has often been used to guide tourism development and policy making. In addition, community residents' attitude and perception of ICH contribute to tourism development. In this study, we used the traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon in Zhejiang Province, China, as a case study to understand the relationships between value recognition and attitude along with the intention to visit the heritage site. We surveyed 368 residents and conducted path analysis to test such relationships. Findings revealed significant positive correlations between residents' cognition of ICH value, their attitudes and travel intentions. Among them, attitudes played a mediating role in the formation of value cognition to travel intention. These findings offer insights into ICH-related tourism development, particularly regarding tourism product design, marketing and post-development evaluation, as well as the conservation of ICH sites.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage; value cognition; attitude; tourism intention; path analysis

1. Introduction

An enduring lack of social exposure and scholarly attention to intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has resulted in losses of government and community property due to ICH destruction. However, the inclusion of cultural practices and expressions of intangible heritage on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) Convention's Lists has recently drastically improved the survival status of ICH, and associated tourism has begun to attract researchers' interest [1–10]. Tourism development has promoted the safeguarding and development of ICH to a certain extent, with some governments beginning to turn to ICH as a steady source of income. Many heritage sites have created tourism products in the name of restoring ICH, which may violate the authenticity of heritage itself, and poses a risk of over-commercialization. Academics are currently most interested in the preservation and safeguarding of ICH craftsmanship and aesthetics. Therefore, the question of how to vitalize ICH tourism warrants discussion. In terms of the sustainable development of ICH tourism, it is necessary to find a balance between ICH and non-heritage tourism development, where related tourism products reflect value while meeting tourists' emotional needs. ICH value can thus become a focus of product development [11]. Meanwhile, residents—who play essential roles in ICH promotion—can improve the quality of ICH products through their cognition, attitudes and tourism intentions.

Under this background, this paper examines the relationship between residents' value cognition around ICH tourism, and the formation of tourism intentions to promote sustainable ICH tourism development. Most research on tourist destinations has naturally focused on tourists; however, the invisibility, portability and complexity of ICH require visitors to spend more energy, money and time on understanding the connotations of ICH. Accordingly, to improve the accuracy of relevant research, residents from a local heritage city and neighboring areas with the same type of ICH were selected as respondents. This research project consists of two main steps: First, we reconstruct the ICH value system to study residents' ICH-related value cognition; and second, we delineate the formation mechanism behind residents' tourism intentions within a value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism intentional framework. Our findings contribute to tourism theory and practice. Theoretically, this study redefines the value cognition system and integrates it with tourism intention, offering a new starting point for the study of tourism behavior. Additionally, by applying problem-solving strategies on the basis of cognition [12] and the value–attitude–behavior model [13] to ICH tourism, the processes underlying tourism intention are clarified using established theories. From a practical standpoint, ICH tourism products based upon residents' value judgments are more connotative and aligned with residents' preferences. Combining such products with residents' attitudes and behavioral intentions can better promote the sustainable development of ICH tourism. Furthermore, ICH research can provide useful insight for tourism and other economic fields; such knowledge can then be translated into popular educational tools for residents, thus providing spiritual inspiration. We chose a form of ceramic art, namely the traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon (TFTLC), as our research object, and used questionnaires to gather relevant information from residents of the local city and a neighboring city that shared the same type of ICH.

2. Literature Review

The first ICH-related document was drafted in 1971, followed by the establishment of the first international normative instrument on the safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore in 1989, and a new program on 'Intangible Cultural Heritage'. UNESCO finally adopted the International Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (i.e., the Convention) in 2003 [14]. UNESCO offers a comprehensive definition of ICH that encompasses oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festival events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, or knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts inherited from one's ancestors and passed on to one's descendants. Consensus around the safeguarding of ICH has led to many studies regarding its identification, protection and inheritance [1–3,7–9]. Scholars have recently integrated ICH protection with the development of digital communications in an attempt to present ICH via social media or other network practices [6,10,15]. The sustainable development of ICH tourism has also gradually captured scholars' attention [4,5].

In the context of ICH tourism development, value can serve as a focal point in guiding decision making [11]. The World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO's) first study on tourism and ICH proposed that ICH assets can be developed as tourism products using several approaches. Examples include: Creating cultural spaces or purpose-built facilities as venues to exhibit cultural heritage, merging or bundling tourist attractions to create themed sets to enhance appeal, developing new tourism routes or heritage networks, using existing circuits or reviving heritage networks, such as pilgrimage routes, and/or using or reviving festivals and events [16]. These products imbue tangible objects with core cultural values, therefore benefiting host communities and meeting tourists' needs while offering education and entertainment. Some researchers have suggested that the outstanding universal value of heritage should be maintained in world heritage conservation planning [17]. Understanding the value of ICH in tourism development requires urgent attention, and inspired this study.

Much of the research on ICH tourism has taken community residents in heritage sites as the primary subjects [4,5]. Besides ICH, many scholars have emphasized interactions between local communities and heritage sites. According to these studies, residents' attitudes and perceptions are important for the sustainable development of heritage tourism; structural equation modeling (SEM) has often been adopted to identify correlations between these factors [18–22]. In terms of tourism development in heritage sites, residents seem to offer greater contributions than tourists. Community participation in heritage site governance can increase trust and public consensus, reveal tourism strategies to meet local needs, and contribute to destination sustainability [18]. Our study thus has a robust theoretical basis for taking residents as the research object.

In accordance with most ICH research, our literature review begins by exploring residents' cognition of ICH value, and next considers the relationship between ICH value and tourism intention, the impacts of emotional attitudes on behavior and the path of value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism intention. We then put forth our research hypotheses and design questionnaires to present a systematic study of the sustainable development of ICH tourism.

2.1. ICH Value and Tourism Intention

As ICH relies on tangible carriers to transform tourism resources into products, most scholars have focused on tangible places (e.g., heritage sites and museums) when studying heritage tourism. Similarly, products are closely related to 'places'. Existential tourism has made it possible to unveil identity sources dissociated with local places, which can link authenticity with the original spirit of a place [23]. Therefore it is logical to study tourism development by discussing the value of ICH.

Some scholars consider value the most abstract social cognition, which spurs attitude and behavior. Homer and Kahle [13] proposed the value–attitude–behavior (VAB) hierarchy and applied it to the study of natural foods' consumption. The value scale associated with the VAB hierarchy is divided into extrinsic and intrinsic value, derived from two schools of axiological thought in philosophy, which are, objectivity doctrines and subjectivity doctrines. Objectivity doctrines posit that the world exists in itself. Conversely, subjective theories hold that reality exists in knowers' perceptions and intellections, such that reality is relative rather than absolute. External values are hence based on the knowledge of an object, such as a goal experience or situation; internal values refer to expectation-oriented intentions that are internally directed. Internal and external values both exert significant positive effects on tourism intention [24]. Although VAB and corresponding value dimension theories have been widely used in research on behavioral patterns in ecological behavior, tourism destinations and other areas [25,26], the value of tourism products cannot be described solely on the basis of internal and external value.

Williams and Soutar's [27] view differs from the belief that value is analogous to social cognition in the VAB hierarchy; they contended that value is a personal perception, and perceived value has a significant positive influence on behavioral intention. According to Williams and Soutar's [27] study of value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in an adventure tourism context, identified value dimensions include functional value, value for money, emotional value, social value and novelty value. These propositions are more in line with the times than prior value dimensions, and hence more suitable for tourism research. Other scholars also agreed that value is based on personal perceptions under the influence of culture. Therefore, Williams and Soutar's [27] designed scales were also used in other research. Some scholars [28–30] continue to support the view that "value is social cognition", and their scales are more specific. For example, Kim and Thapa [29] incorporated quality, emotional, price and social value in a study of nature-based tourism. Hapsari [30] believed that value can explain consumer behavior such as purchase intention, and thus employed educational value to explore tourist loyalty in educational theme parks.

Conceptually, cognition refers to an information-processing view of an individual's psychological functions, of which perception is a part [31]. However, in research involving the 'value perception' perspective, the dimensions used to assess value are more specific than in work that focuses on 'value cognition'.

Overall, tourism researchers should consider value in a broader sense [27], and more accurate terms should be applied when discussing heritage-related values (e.g., beliefs and interests, ideas and ideologies) [9]. In this paper, we take tourists' cognition of the value of ICH as a starting point, and then summarize historical, social, economic, aesthetic, educational and other values of TFTLC based on a review of the literature to build a foundation for ongoing tourism development.

2.2. Effects of Emotion on Behavior

Many studies have confirmed that emotional experiences influence tourists' decisions in various ways [32,33]. For example, emotions can shape individuals' tourism motivations and chosen destinations or tourism products [34,35]. In the consumption stage, tourists' emotions often change over the course of a trip [36]. In later stages of consumption, visitors' emotions and affect can influence their tourism consumption satisfaction, destination attachment and loyalty [37–39]. Scholars have discussed diverse ways to evaluate emotions. For example, Prayag and et al. [40] noted that the psychology literature tends to espouse two main theoretical approaches: dimensional (valence-based) and categorical (emotion-specificity). The dimensional approach applies labels such as positive–negative and pleasure–awakening to conceptualize emotions, whereas the categorical approach frames emotions using various states, such as pleasure, happiness and excitement or fear, regret and disappointment. In a study of tourists' emotional experiences, Rahmani and colleagues [41] applied Plutchik's [42] theory of psychoevolutionary synthesis wherein emotions are divided into eight categories: anticipation, joy, sadness, anger, fear, trust, disgust and surprise. The concept of place attachment has also been used to examine how positive emotions and cognitive connections inform travelers' destination loyalty [39].

Attitude is generally understood as an evaluative judgment about a given object, which can be favorable, unfavorable, or neutral [43]. Judgments can change following an exposure to information and serve as a determinant of intention [44]. Scholars have also used numerous scales to measure attitudes. For example, Manca and Fornara [45] employed bipolar scales to measure respondents' attitudes based on the following adjectives: good–bad, appropriate–inappropriate, right–wrong, pleasant–unpleasant, boring–funny, harmful–beneficial and useful–useless. Prajitmutita and his co-authors [46] used satisfaction to measure customers' attitudes towards a product or service based on their degree of pleasure and fulfilment.

Although emotion and attitude have been defined uniquely in various studies, the correlation between these constructs is complex; no uniform classification or indicators thereof have been proposed to determine these constructs' influences upon tourists' behavior. Some authors [47] have found that people with greater emotional well-being are more likely to express positive attitudes towards purchasing sustainable products. Other researchers [48] have found that emotion has a positive influence on tourism attitude, whereas attitude has a partial mediating effect on emotion. Respondents may use a series of positive, negative, or mixed emotional words to express their attitudes towards value perceptions of tourism products during interviews [49]. Therefore, in this study, we combined emotion with attitude to create the notion of 'emotional attitude', which represents residents' attitudes towards ICH with respect to emotions. 'Emotional attitude' is measured using 'Unpleasant–Pleasant' and 'Boring–Arousing' as indicators, echoing the anchors used in previous studies to measure emotion and attitude.

2.3. The Path of Value Cognition–Emotional Attitude–Tourism Intention

The concept of cognition, as used in tourism research, refers to tourists' responses to mass information in the external tourism environment, and alludes to their future expectations to a certain extent [50]. Before Homer and Kahle [13] proposed the VAB hierarchy, Newell and Simon [12] characterized cognition in information processing in terms of how the human brain handles information, laying the foundation for the cognition–attitude–behavior model (CAB). Mehrabian and Russell [51] proposed the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model shortly thereafter, in which S denotes environmental stimuli, O denotes the emotional responses of arousal, pleasure and dominance and R denotes consumer behavior.

Later, Donovan and Rossiter [52] further validated and modified the SOR model, contending that consumers exhibit two primary emotional states (i.e., pleasure and arousal), which are significant mediators of intended shopping behaviors within a store.

Since then, many studies have confirmed the relationships between cognition, emotion and behavior, or between cognition, attitude and behavior. For instance, Smith and Sherman [53] conducted a study on store image and mood using the SOR framework, and identified associations between customers' cognition, attitudes and behavior. Eroglu, Machleit and Davis [54] identified atmospheric cues in online stores that can influence shoppers' emotions, cognitive states and ultimate shopping outcomes. Billiot and Rodriguez [55] noted that cognitive flexibility theory explained how, after consumers have acquired and transferred knowledge, they are inspired to put such knowledge into practice. The authors also used cognitive flexibility theory to study parents' cognition, attitudes and behavior under the influence of hypermedia and hypertext when allowing their children to participate in football games [55]. Kaplan and Prato [56] reviewed cognition, emotions and overt behavior associated with cyclists and motorists sharing the road. Given the similarity between emotion and attitude, in this study, we use the term 'emotional attitude' to represent residents' pleasure and arousal. The cognition–emotion–behavior hierarchy and CAB model have been widely applied in consumer behavior research, and are feasible for studies of tourism intention as well.

A discussion of the relationship between ICH value and tourism intention, the effects of emotional attitudes on behavior, and the path of value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism, ground our research framework. The preceding literature review confirms the potential of assessing ICH tourism intention by taking residents' value cognition as the starting point, and their attitudes as a supplement.

3. Research Design

3.1. Study Case and Research Object

Among the heritage domains defined by the Convention in 2003, performing arts, festival events and traditional craftsmanship possess high displayability and experiential value, showing promise to be developed into ICH tourism products. These ICH domains also comprise a large proportion of the Convention's "List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding". Therefore, it is of practical significance to promote such domains via sustainable tourism development. In terms of ICH case selection, TFTLC is the only ceramic project included in UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity", representative of a traditional form of ICH craftsmanship. The long history of TFTLC has resulted in valuable heritage sites and cultural relics. The practicality and artistic expression inherent to this craft demonstrate historical value, social and economic value and aesthetic value; TFTLC combines local cultural characteristics and national value cognition with educational and spiritual values. TFTLC also has high tourism development value. Under the backdrop of sustainable tourism development, this craft is therefore applicable to safeguarding ICH in the same domain.

TFTLC refers to the entire celadon production process, including all related tools (e.g., kilns), and a series of complex procedures such as clay mining, crushing, panning, wedging, shaping, casting, decorating, firing and glazing. Each stage requires precise control, and the unique color of the glaze reveals the ceramic's intricate craftsmanship. This complex production process exemplifies the challenges related to the cultural inheritance of celadon. The history and production of TFTLC also requires foreign tourists to devote great energy, money and time to understand its connotations. Because residents are already impressed by and familiar with this ICH, studying their reactions can inform ICH-related tourism development. The intangibility and portability of ICH can also reveal more about the social value, education and spiritual value of tourism development than simple measures of economic growth. A higher tourism conversion rate makes a study of the formation mechanism behind residents' and surrounding inhabitants' cognitive paths more realistic. Therefore, this study focuses on residents of Lishui, where the heritage site is located, and residents of Wenzhou, a neighboring city with the same type of ICH.

3.2. Questionnaire Design

A two-part questionnaire was designed to gather tourists' thoughts on TFTLC. The first section consisted of respondents' demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education level, occupation, monthly income and place of residence). In the second section, three types of measurement indicators (i.e., value cognition, emotional attitude and tourism intention) were constructed, as shown in Table 1. The questionnaire was mainly structured on the path of value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism intention, beginning with ICH values and then exploring the formation mechanism of ICH tourism intention on the basis of respondents' rational cognition and perceptions. When establishing the cognitive dimension, we refined multiple value cognition dimensions based on the value characteristics of TFTLC, adding emotional attitude as a mediator variable. Items were scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 3 = generally agree; 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1. Measurement indicators for elements of traditional firing technique for Longquan celadon.

Level 1 Indicator	Level 2 Indicator	Level 3 Indicator
Value cognition	Aesthetic value	Artistic appeal; regional uniqueness; art element integration; aesthetic characteristics; artistic authenticity; completeness of artistic forms
	Educational and spiritual value	Triggers spiritual resonance; reflects community or national spirit; offers inspirational and practical value; serves as political, cultural, and/or social institutional symbol
	Social and economic value	Employment opportunities; participation of community residents; commodity's added value; service value
	Historical value	Ruins and historical relics; historical reputation; particularity; historical heritage
Emotional attitude	Emotional attitude	Unpleasant–Pleasant; Boring–Arousing
Tourism intention	Tourism intention	Tourism intention

TFTLC is a well-known tourist brand in Longquan. Tourist destination brands have been found to follow an attributes–interests–value path [57], such that tourists are 'value-driven' as they seek experiences that can meet their needs, which are based on what they value and how they experienced such value before [58]. The value assessment system used in this study partially refers to Ji's [59] ICH scale. We labeled 'value cognition' as a Level 1 indicator, which included four Level 2 indicators: 'aesthetic value', 'educational and spiritual value', 'social and economic value', 'historical value', and 18 Level 3 indicators (e.g., 'artistic appeal'). We also labeled 'emotional attitude' and 'tourism intention' as Level 1 indicators, using the dimensions of Unpleasant–Pleasant and Boring–Arousing to measure 'emotional attitude' (Table 1). Indicator definitions are provided in Appendix A (Table A1).

3.3. Research Hypotheses

According to the literature review and research design, we postulated that residents' value cognition around TFTLC would positively influence their tourism intentions. Specifically, emotional attitude was expected to play a mediating role in the relationship between the four value cognition indicators and tourism intention. Hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 are proposed as follows, and depicted in Figure 1:

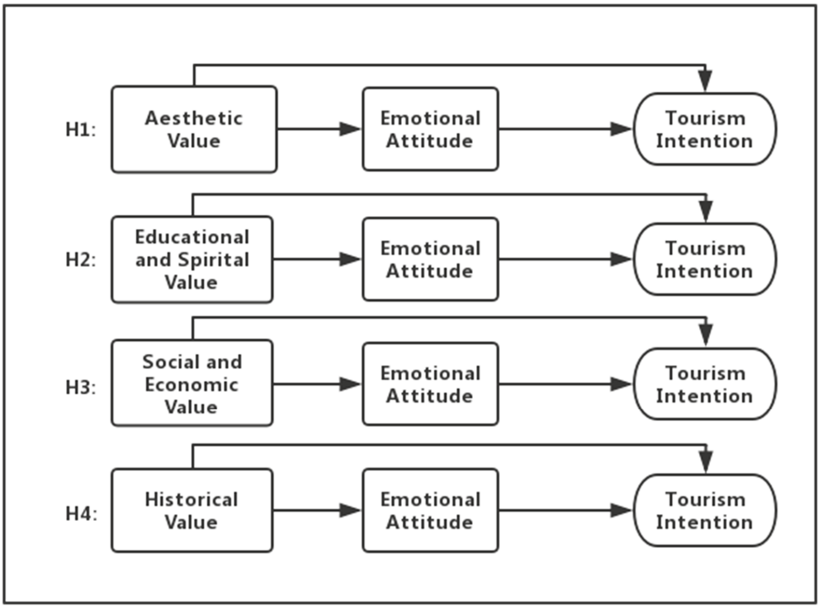

Figure 1. Hypotheses in the proposed value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism intention model.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Aesthetic value has a positive and significant effect on tourism intention; emotional attitude mediates the effect of aesthetic value on tourism intention.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Educational and spiritual value has a positive and significant effect on tourism intention; emotional attitude mediates the effect of educational and spiritual value on tourism intention.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Social and economic value has a positive and significant effect on tourism intention; emotional attitude mediates the effect of social and economic value on tourism intention.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Historical value has a positive and significant effect on tourism intention; emotional attitude mediates the effect of historical value on tourism intention.*

4. Results

4.1. Demographic and Statistical Analysis of Respondents

The study, which lasted more than one month, was conducted in December 2017 and October 2019 in Lishui and Wenzhou (i.e., the city where TFTLC originated and a neighboring city, respectively). The survey was performed in a region known for ICH to ensure that information about residents' visit intentions would be practical, while reducing the researchers' workload. In total, 467 questionnaires were collected during the survey period, 368 of which were valid (effective response rate: 78.8%). Of the 368 respondents (Table 2), 49.5% were permanent residents of Lishui, and 50.5% were permanent residents of Wenzhou. Slightly less than half (47.8%) of these respondents were men; the remaining respondents were women. Individuals between 18 and 25 years old dominated the sample, accounting for 33.2%. The same proportion had completed undergraduate education. The respondents' income level was rather low, with 36.4% of the sample earning a monthly income below 3000 yuan (ca 428 USD). Only one respondent crafted Longquan celadon.

Table 2. Respondents' demographic profile.

Item	Demographics	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Item	Demographics	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	176	47.8	Age	<18	59	16.0
	Female	192	52.2		18–25	122	33.2
Educational level	<College diploma	122	33.2		26–30	104	28.3
	College diploma	81	22.0		31–40	53	14.4
	bachelor degree	152	41.3		41–50	20	5.4
	≥Master degree	13	3.5		>50	10	2.7
Monthly Income (¥)	<3000	134	36.4	City	Lishui	182	49.5
	3000–5000	101	27.4		Wenzhou	186	50.5
	5001–10,000	93	25.3	Occupation	Craftsman of Longquan celadon	5	1.4
	>10,000	40	10.9		Other	363	98.6

4.2. Data Processing and Analysis

4.2.1. Item Analysis

We used IBM SPSS Statistics 25 to perform item analysis and test whether our proposed scale could be effective in distinguishing residents' extent of value cognition, emotional attitudes and tourism intentions around TFTLC. We chose two samples from 368 valid data points, classifying the highest 27% of scores as the high group, and the lowest 27% of scores as the low group. Within these groups, 27% of respondents scored below 84 points, and 27% scored above 99 points. Independent-sample t-test results showed that the distribution of average scores among the high and low groups was significantly different, with significance values at 0.00 (<0.05) (Table 3). Therefore, our scale was sufficiently valid in distinguishing differences in respondents' value cognition, emotional attitudes and tourism intentions. Our findings from item analysis were thus appropriate for subsequent investigation.

4.2.2. General Description and Factor Analysis

We also used SPSS 25 to measure scale reliability and validity. The total Cronbach's alpha value was 0.911, indicating high stability and internal consistency along with a small standard error. Among Cronbach's alpha values for each subscale, the score which was related to emotional attitude was only 0.639; this result may be due to a low number of questions [60], but it is acceptable for a subscale [61]. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score of the cognition scale was 0.903, indicating a level of sampling adequacy suitable for factor analysis.

We next used principal component analysis (PCA) and the maximum variance method to extract four common factors from the 18 value items: aesthetic value, educational and spiritual value, social and economic value and historical value. The total factor loading was 60.376%, being within an acceptable range and close to ideal. The results of factor analysis revealed that the factor loading of each item was above 0.5, meeting the initial research thresholds (see Tables 4 and 5).

4.2.3. Data Processing and Correlation Analysis

After examining the reliability and validity of the scale, to prepare for the correlation test and path analysis, six Level 3 indicators of aesthetic value (e.g., artistic appeal), four Level 3 indicators of educational and spiritual value (e.g., inspirational and practical value), four Level 3 indicators of social and economic value (e.g., added value of the commodity) and four Level 3 indicators of historical value (e.g., historical heritage) were averaged to serve as the scores for four Level 2 indicators. Respondents' scores on Unpleasant–Pleasant and Boring–Arousing were averaged to indicate emotional attitude.

To verify the internal consistency of variables, we first used Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine correlations between aesthetic value, educational and spiritual value, social and economic value, historical value, emotional attitude and tourism intention. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between each pair of indicators, with coefficients ranging between 0.383 and 0.580 (Table 6). No abnormal scores were observed between the means and standard deviations. Pearson correlation analysis also confirmed the stability and consistency of scale results. The significant positive correlations between value cognition, emotional attitude and tourism intention initially supported research hypotheses H1 to H4.

Table 3. Independent-sample *t*-test results for each item.

Item Name	Average Score of High Score Group (<84)	Average Score of Low Score Group (>99)	SE	Sig.
Artistic appeal	3.86	4.87	0.117	0.00
Regional uniqueness	3.97	4.97	0.106	0.00
Art element integration	3.87	4.93	0.104	0.00
Aesthetic characteristics	3.63	4.92	0.118	0.00
Artistic authenticity	3.38	4.95	0.107	0.00
Completeness of artistic forms	3.49	4.96	0.115	0.00
Triggers spiritual resonance	3.29	4.83	0.134	0.00
Reflects community or national spirit	3.63	4.95	0.120	0.00
Inspirational and practical value	3.21	4.85	0.130	0.00
Serves as political, cultural and/or social institutional symbol	2.84	4.79	0.141	0.00
Commodity's added value	2.95	4.83	0.136	0.00
Service value	3.64	4.94	0.117	0.00
Employment opportunities	3.32	4.85	0.124	0.00
Participation of community residents	3.24	4.85	0.130	0.00
Ruins and historical relics	3.33	4.90	0.125	0.00
Historical reputation	3.57	4.97	0.114	0.00
Particularity	3.80	4.96	0.116	0.00
Historical heritage	4.07	4.98	0.116	0.00
Unpleasant–Pleasant	3.40	4.87	0.118	0.00
Boring–Arousing	3.35	4.83	0.123	0.00
Tourism intention	3.86	4.87	0.113	0.00

Table 4. Validity and reliability of reflective constructs.

Level 2 indicator	Level 3 Indicator	Variance (%)	Accumulation (%)	KMO	Cronbach's Alpha	Total Cronbach's Alpha
Aesthetic value	Artistic appeal	18.284	18.284	0.903	0.848	0.911
	Regional uniqueness					
	Art element integration					
	Aesthetic characteristics					
	Artistic authenticity					
	Completeness of artistic forms					
Educational and spiritual value	Reflects community or national spirit	15.140	33.423		0.801	
	Offers inspirational and practical value					
	Serves as political, cultural and/or social institutional symbol					
	Triggers spiritual resonance					
Social and economic value	Commodity's added value	13.915	47.338		0.738	
	Service value					
	Employment opportunities					
	Participation of community residents					
Historical value	Particularity	13.038	60.376		0.782	
	Historical heritage					
	Historical reputation					
	Ruins and historical relics					
Emotional attitude	Unpleasant–Pleasant				0.639	
	Boring–Arousing					
Tourism intention	Tourism intention					

Table 5. Rotated factor loading matrix.

Level 3 Indicator	Factor loading (Aesthetic value)	Factor loading (Educational and spiritual value)	Factor loading (Social and economic value)	Factor loading (Historical value)
Artistic appeal	0.719			
Regional uniqueness	0.703			
Art element integration	0.714			
Aesthetic characteristics	0.770			
Artistic authenticity	0.641			
Completeness of artistic forms	0.513			
Triggers spiritual resonance		0.663		
Reflects community or national spirit		0.716		
Inspirational and practical value		0.772		
Serves as political, cultural and/or social institutional symbol		0.735		
Commodity's added value			0.713	
Service value			0.604	
Employment opportunities			0.673	
Participation of community residents			0.689	
Ruins and historical relics				0.611
Historical reputation				0.725
Particularity				0.736
Historical heritage				0.761

Extraction method: Main component. Rotation method: Orthogonal rotation with Kaiser standardization.

Table 6. Means, standard deviations and correlations between types of value.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Aesthetic Value	Educational and spiritual value	Social and Economic Value	Historical Value	Emotional attitude	Tourism intention
Aesthetic value	4.406	0.667	1					
Educational and spiritual value	4.116	0.855	0.580**	1				
Social and economic value	4.165	0.804	0.499**	0.543**	1			
Historical value	4.423	0.718	0.514**	0.455**	0.529**	1		
Emotional attitude	4.366	0.8815	0.549**	0.509**	0.483**	0.452**	1	
Tourism intention	4.15	0.982	0.406**	0.474**	0.471**	0.383**	0.495**	1

Significance test: Two-tailed; ** Significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (both sides).

4.3. Exploring the Mediating Role of Emotional Attitude

After completing the data processing and verification, we used Preacher and Hayes' Bootstrap plug-in to test the mediation effect. Following Wen and Ye's [62] method and mediation effect model, we used a sample size of 5000 with a 95% confidence interval (CI). If the CI of the mediation results did not contain 0, then emotional attitude could be said to mediate the effect of value cognition on tourism intention.

The score interval for the path of 'aesthetic value–emotional attitude–tourism intention' did not include 0 (CI: [0.21,0.43]), and emotional attitude significantly mediated the effect of aesthetic value on tourism intention, with a mediating effect score of 0.31. After controlling for emotional attitude, the influence of aesthetic value on tourism intention was also significant (CI: [0.13,0.44]), and demonstrated a direct effect score of 0.28. For the path of 'educational and spiritual value–emotional attitude–tourism intention', the score interval did not include 0 (CI: [0.12,0.29]), and emotional attitude significantly mediated the effect of educational and spiritual value on tourism intention with a mediating effect score of 0.20. After controlling for emotional attitude, the influence of educational and spiritual value on tourism intention was likewise significant (CI: [0.23,0.46]), with a direct effect whose value was 0.34. The score interval of 'social and economic value–emotional attitude–tourism intention' did not include 0 (CI: [0.13,0.30]), and emotional attitude significantly mediated the effect of social and economic value on tourism intention (mediating effect score: 0.21). After controlling for emotional attitude, the influence of social and economic value on tourism intention was significant (CI: [0.25,0.49]), with the direct effect of 0.37.

For the path of 'historical value–emotional attitude–tourism intention', the score interval did not include 0 (CI: [0.15,0.37]), and emotional attitude significantly mediated the effect of historical value on tourism intention with a mediating effect score of 0.25. After controlling for emotional attitude, the influence of historical value on tourism intention was significant (CI: [0.14,0.41]) with a direct effect of 0.27 (Table 7). Hypotheses H1 through H4 were thus supported; however, emotional attitude only played a partial mediating role in each path, and other mediator variables existed.

Table 7. Indirect effects of value cognition on intention.

Path	Effect	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI	Supported	Hypothesis
Direct effect of aesthetic value on tourism intention	0.28	0.08	[0.13,0.44]	√	H1
Aesthetic value→emotional attitude→tourism intention	0.31	0.06	[0.21,0.43]	√	
Direct effect of educational and spiritual value on tourism intention	0.34	0.06	[0.23,0.46]	√	H2
Educational and spiritual value→emotional attitude→tourism intention	0.20	0.04	[0.12,0.29]	√	
Direct effect of social and economic value on tourism intention	0.37	0.06	[0.25,0.49]	√	H3
Social and economic value→emotional attitude→tourism intention	0.21	0.04	[0.13,0.30]	√	
Direct effect of historical on tourism intention	0.27	0.07	[0.14,0.41]	√	H4
Historical value→emotional attitude→tourism intention	0.25	0.05	[0.15,0.37]	√	

5. Discussion and Implications

Tourism development is an essential means of vitalizing ICH. Although such development can improve the living status of ICH, many ICHs suffer from over-commercialization, which can compromise their authenticity and shift them away from their intended value. The design, marketing and evaluation of ICH products are essential to ICH sustainability. Therefore, TFTLC was taken as the focal ICH in this research, given its potential to be developed into popular tourism products, similar to other forms of traditional craftsmanship.

Value and value orientation are frequently mentioned in relation to sustainability. Understanding people's value orientations is crucial when organizing sustainable activities. Value orientation is also related to attitudes, describing dispositional weights and predicting behavioral intention [47,63,64]. Among value orientations, a set of linked propositions including value and existential elements can influence individuals' general patterns, decisions and belief intensity about outdoor recreation activities [65]. In particular, value cognition is an essential component of value orientation that evokes tourism intention. Heritage undoubtedly offers extensive value, and the development of heritage tourism holds great promise. However, preservation (i.e., non-use) values and use values [65], internal and external values [24,66], utilitarian and hedonic values [67] and experiential values [66] are insufficient in truly capturing the value of cultural heritage. It is more practical to consider residents' value cognition when seeking to develop corresponding tourism products that will meet tourists' expectations. As noted in the literature review, cognition includes perception, and value perception falls under the scope of value cognition. This conceptualization eliminates any potential redundancy of cognition and perception in our research framework.

We recruited residents from the TFTLC heritage site and a neighboring city as respondents to ensure a higher level of ICH value cognition and a more manageable workload. Residents' cognition of the ICH value was highly objective, thereby improving the accuracy of scale analysis. Our findings from residents can also be applied to tourists, because ICH tourism differs from other types of place-specific tourism. An intangible culture can be associated with numerous places, including museums, exhibitions, or heritage sites. With regard to ICH, residents offer greater contributions than tourists, but may also become tourists visiting local heritage sites. Our findings demonstrated a significant moderate correlation between aesthetic value, educational and spiritual value, social and economic value and historical value cognition, which should be helpful in translating our results in practice.

For example, celadon is renowned for its aesthetic value, long history, creation of economic value, spiritual sustenance and use as an educational tool. Four types of value cognition are closely related and indispensable in the ICH system. In terms of structure, the ICH tourism decision-making system based on the 'value cognition–emotional attitude–tourism intention' path is uniquely suited to ICH tourism intention research, representing an expansion on the 'cognition–emotion–behavior' and 'value–attitude–behavior' models. In addition to four value cognitions, we redefined the meaning of emotional attitude, which was found to partially mediate the influence of value cognition on tourism intention. In these paths, aesthetic value, educational and spiritual value, social and economic value and historical value appeared to directly affect residents' willingness to travel and indirectly influence the formation of tourism intention via emotional attitudes. These influences were positively correlated: an increase in value cognition evoked more positive emotions and thus strengthened residents' willingness to travel, consistent with our assumptions. Also, the mediation effect of emotional attitude was even larger than the direct effect of aesthetic value on tourism intention. Accordingly, emotional attitude appears to be an indispensable aspect of research on ICH tourism intention.

From a sustainability perspective, tourism development can provide an environment and living space for ICH, generate protection funds while improving national awareness and offer a foundation for ICH inheritance. At heritage sites, ICH tourism development can propagandize local brands, enrich the content of tourism products and improve the quality of such products. However, unsustainable ICH tourism development may destroy brand effects, eliciting fierce competition and potentially compromising the business environment. These activities also fail to emphasize value, lessening the educational significance for residents and tourists. The tourism industry has become increasingly competitive, and operators need functional strategies to sustain ICH tourism development and safeguard existing sites. It is therefore necessary to carefully consider residents' value cognition regarding ICH along with their emotional attitudes; doing so can promote a thorough evaluation of ICH resource endowments in terms of product design, marketing and tourism experience assessment. Based on our findings, we offer several recommendations to government agencies and relevant scenic areas and attractions.

ICH tourism products should be offered in a way that will satisfy visitors' desires, namely by considering heritage characteristics along with customers' value cognition and emotional experiences. Before creating relevant tourism products, decision makers should combine the aesthetic, historical and educational and spiritual value of ICH to construct exciting travel experiences for tourists. Tourists may express positive emotional attitudes towards value symbols and interactive areas that can inspire their imaginations around ICH, inspiring them to participate in ICH tourism. For example, when developing celadon tourism products, designers should seek to strengthen the emotional impact and integrate scientific and educational content into static and dynamic tourism products. Designers should also combine successor performance, teaching, live-action song and dance performances and museum explanations to enhance tourists' value cognition. Offering a variety of activities could improve tourists' perceived experiential value, boosting tourists' intentions to return to and recommend an ICH destination [68]. Therefore, it is essential to improve the construction of scenic spots, including physical products such as relics, sites and souvenirs to create a complete, diversified and accessible boutique ICH tourism route.

In terms of ICH tourism marketing, practitioners should highlight the spiritual connotations and inheritance-based significance of ICH. According to the tourism intention model, value is indispensable in the formation path of visitors' willingness to travel. Therefore, in the process of ICH image creation and brand propaganda, underscoring ICH value and fostering relevant value cognition are pivotal. For example, when promoting TFTLC, a museum could display pictures and posters of celadon embryos and decorations to convey profound information about celadon craftsmanship and inheritors to visitors, thus promoting the product's connotations. With respect to advertising design and target market research, practitioners should consider different groups' emotional responses and cognition to create pleasing, exciting advertisements [49].

These strategies should include factors that tourists care about, consider whether such factors can meet tourists' emotional needs, focus on core elements of ICH tourism products, and raise tourists' awareness of values.

As intangible assets, ICH tourism products should be evaluated after bringing them to market. Since related sites and cultural relics are nonreplicable, more empirical research is needed to improve the research model and propose suggestions to promote the sustainable development of ICH tourism. This assessment should include factors such as stakeholders, ICH value, carrying capacity, ecological sensitivity, economic transformation and tourist cognition. Tourists' needs and the protection of ICH should also be considered in sustainable tourism development. Most importantly, operators and managers should recognize that a good ICH tourism product must be closely tied to visitors' preferences, specifically their value cognition and emotional attitudes; doing so will help ICH tourism operators address related dilemmas by aligning relevant experiences with tourists' needs.

6. Conclusions and Future Research

Taking TFTLC as a study case, we investigated residents' value cognition and emotional attitudes in a heritage site and nearby city and analyzed the formation path of tourism intention. The significant effects of value cognition on ICH tourism intention forms the theoretical basis of the 'value cognition–attitude–tourism intention' framework in this study, which can be used to forecast residents' and tourists' behavior. Our research elaborates on how ICH tourism products can promote the sustainability of ICH in environmental, economic and social aspects. Our results confirm the potential to predict tourists' motivations and intentions by studying their value cognition and emotions. We also provide valuable insight into product development, marketing and post-development evaluations of ICH tourism.

Despite its revelations, our study has several limitations that may encourage future research. Theoretically, the lack of an existing theory related to value cognition did preclude a confirmatory factor analysis. In the mediation effect exploration step, emotional attitudes were found to partially mediate the effect of value cognition on tourism intention, implying that other factors could also play mediating roles. Additionally, from data analysis not included in this paper, emotional attitudes were found to moderate the effect of historical value on tourism intention; subsequent studies could thus seek to identify such factors. In terms of the study sample, we focused on residents rather than tourists in light of our preliminary research. Tourists from other provinces expressed poor understanding of ICH or had difficulty completing the questionnaire. We compiled a sample of completed questionnaires based on quality, and only about 368 were valid. In a follow-up study, we will survey various groups of people on a larger scale who exhibit diverse demographics. We also plan to further test our value cognition scale and unveil additional mediating factors to render the 'value cognition–attitude–tourism intention' framework more feasible for ICH tourism research.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Definitions of value cognition and emotional attitude indicators of traditional firing technique for Longquan celadon.

Level 2 Indicator	Level 3 Indicator	Definition of Level 3 Indicator
Aesthetic value	Artistic appeal	Celadon produced using this technique has artistic appeal
	Regional uniqueness	Celadon produced using this technique has unique Longquan characteristics and style
	Art element integration	Celadon produced using this technique perfectly blends artistic elements such as color and ornamentation
	Aesthetic characteristics	Celadon produced using this technique is elegant and smooth, with aesthetic features that are pleasing to the eye
	Artistic authenticity	Celadon produced using this technique satisfies social reality, aesthetic standards, and emotional impact
	Completeness of artistic forms	Celadon produced using this technique incorporates features of art, merchandise, and symbols, reflecting a complete concept
Educational and spiritual value	Triggering spiritual resonance	The technique can trigger spiritual resonance
	Reflecting community or national spirit	The technique reflects the traditional spirit of Longquan or the Chinese national spirit
	Inspirational and practical value	The technique encourages people to think critically and treat problems rationally, and inspires thinking and values
	Serving as political, cultural and social institutional symbols	The technique symbolizes the cultural, political, and social systems of Confucianism and Buddhism, such as Zhongyong, Zhonghe, and Renhou

Table A1. *Cont.*

Level 2 Indicator	Level 3 Indicator	Definition of Level 3 Indicator
Social and economic value	Service value	The local community can use this technique to operate services such as tourism and sightseeing, folk experiences, and so on
	Commodity's added value	The technique has trademark or brand value
	Current employment opportunities	The technique has created many job opportunities
	Current community residents' participation	The technique is conducive to depicting local residents' personal values
Historical value	Ruins and historical relics	The technique can produce ruins and artifacts
	Historical reputation	The technique is well known in history
	Particularity	The technique is an ICH unique to China
	Historical heritage	This technique is protected as an inheritance of history and culture
Emotional attitude	Unpleasant–Pleasant	People's feelings when learning about TFTLC, ranging from unpleasant to pleasant
	Boring–Arousing	People's feelings when learning about TFTLC, ranging from boring to arousing

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The Effectiveness of Marketing Communication and Importance of Its Evaluation in an Online Environment

Anna Krizanova [1], George Lăzăroiu [2], Lubica Gajanova [1,*], Jana Kliestikova [1], Margareta Nadanyiova [1] and Dominika Moravcikova [1]

1 Department of Economics, The Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, University of Zilina, Univerzitna 1, 010 26 Zilina, Slovakia; anna.krizanova@fpedas.uniza.sk (A.K.); jana.kliestikova@fpedas.uniza.sk (J.K.); margareta.nadanyiova@fpedas.uniza.sk (M.N.); dominika.moravcikova@gmail.com (D.M.)

2 Department of Economic Sciences, Spiru Haret University, Bucharest 030045, Romania; phd_lazaroiu@yahoo.com

* Correspondence: lubica.gajanova@fpedas.uniza.sk; Tel.: +421-41-513-3237

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Abstract: Online marketing communication covers a wide area and thus promotes an extensive reach of advertising to a broad audience. Hotels can achieve certain goals through online communication, mainly an increase of hotel awareness; an improvement of their image; and an increase in the level of customer satisfaction and trust, or brand loyalty. Measurement of the effectiveness of communication tools in the online environment is still a challenge, whether in the academic world or in the business world, mainly due to the complexity of this process. The main objective of this paper is to propose a methodology for implementing an indicator suitable for the evaluation of the effectiveness of online communication activities in the Slovak hotel industry. It uses analysis of the current usage of online marketing communication activities from the perspective of hotel service providers. The methodology should be applicable to support decision-making and actively support the sustainable development of hotels. In order to achieve the objective of the paper, the authors conducted a marketing survey focused on online marketing communication by Slovakian hotels to determine their use and to map the current state or methods of evaluating their effectiveness. Results of the research suggest that hotels in Slovakia perceive evaluating marketing communications online as being important, regardless of the size, length of operation, budget, and class of the hotel. They prefer financial metrics because they are a de facto manifestation of the traditional approach towards investment evaluation. The results also showed that return on investment is the most common metric for evaluating the investments of online communication activities, and that respondents expressed the highest level of confidence in this metric as well. In line with the results, we have proposed return on investment (ROI) as the most appropriate metric applicable in evaluation of the effectiveness of online communication tools.

Keywords: online marketing; effectiveness; return on investments; hotel industry; Slovakia

1. Introduction

Competitive pressures on hotels and additional problems caused by the slow pace of economic growth are triggering a push for greater efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, marketing activities have become an integral part of business operations, as they have an impact on the current and future success of hotels. Their use is a continuous process in which the key task is to follow new trends and respond flexibly to surrounding changes [1]. This also applies to marketing communication, in which using an adequately selected combination of communication tools leads to long-term customer relationships and the sustainable development of hotels.

The unprecedented growth of online marketing has not only changed the way people interact, it has also changed the way in which businesses attract and retain their consumers. The Internet has become an innovative marketing tool by providing travel information and a place to conduct online transactions [2]. The informational nature of tourism products means that the Internet, which offers a global reach and multimedia capabilities, is an increasingly important tool for promoting and distributing tourism services [3]. The increasing number of new communication channels has increased the need for hotels to pay attention to the effectiveness of these activities. Therefore, they must determine whether they wish to use communication tools efficiently or to merely take advantage of their benefits [4].

Classic forms of marketing media are becoming a thing of the past [5]. Online marketing communication and its new forms provide a wider coverage area that promotes a better reach of advertising to a wider audience. The forms of marketing communication available online are much faster to use than offline communication tools, as the advertiser has more space online to provide more information to a potential customer at a relatively low cost. The effectiveness of new forms of online marketing communication is enhanced by the continuous development of ads in the online environment, which can be created using the many analytic tools available [6]. Therefore, measuring the effectiveness of these communication tools in an online environment is a very complex process, especially in a constantly changing environment where new marketing resources are being developed every day. However, determining the effectiveness of different forms of online marketing communication is still a major challenge for the academic and business worlds. Since online marketing is completely different from traditional marketing approaches, traditional marketing theories and practices may not be applicable to these types of communication tools.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, we have analysed the current usage of online marketing communication activities by hotel service providers. Based on the results, the main objective was to identify or propose a suitable methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of online communication activities that would be specific to the Slovak hotel industry and would be useful to support decision-making relating to the sustainable development of hotels.

2. The Current State of the Slovak Hotel Industry

Despite minor oscillations, European and global tourism have been experiencing significant growth overall. European tourists currently have high purchasing power, as well as a tendency to travel frequently, which is why Europe continues to be the leader in global tourism flows [7]. The hotel industry in Central and Eastern Europe has been registering growth in all key indicators. The number of tourists as well as the occupancy rates have returned to pre-global financial crisis conditions or have even surpassed them [8].

Slovakia has all of the necessary prerequisites for the development of tourism—natural environments, a convenient geographical location, historical monuments, a strong cultural heritage, etc. However, it currently does not make sufficient use of these assets. The trend towards the development of active tourism and the need for a hotel industry catering for it has been a challenge for Slovakia. Slovakia in recent years has been receiving a lower share of tourists from Western European countries and an increasing share of visitors from former socialist countries. Most tourists come to Slovakia from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Ukraine. In terms of visitor composition, tourists visiting Slovakia are most commonly 35–45 years of age and have a lower middle class income. The most common reasons to visit Slovakia are transit, business or study trips, visits to family, shopping tourism, vacation stays, cultural/sightseeing trips, skiing and spa trips. The average number of overnight stays is three nights [9]. The share of tourism in the Slovak GDP is approx. 2.5% and does not reach the EU countries average (more than 5%). The low percentage is the result of several factors such as incomplete and unrelated services, unsatisfactory infrastructure (mainly transport), lack of qualified staff in services (insufficient level of foreign language skills), a low level of services that is inconsistent with price levels, and low awareness and promotion [10].

A positive phenomenon in the context of tourism and hotel industry promotion in Slovakia is the adoption of the official logo *"Good Idea Slovakia"* in 2016, which is focused not only on represent Slovakia but also on supporting domestic tourism, accommodation facilities, restaurants, organizations, and providers of tourism services. The Act No. 415/2013 Coll. on Promotion of Tourism as amendment is also considered a challenge to support Slovak tourism, as well as new forms of online marketing strategies [11]. It aims to motivate tourism entities to ensure the coordination of activities, i.e., destination management in regions and areas of tourism, in other words, a system element that is significantly absent in Slovakia.

In Slovakia, 38 tourism organizations have been established since 1 January 2011. The aim of these organizations is to create and implement the concept of tourism development; to create and implement marketing and promotion of tourism for the members at home and abroad; to promote the common interests of the members; to promote cultural, social, and sporting life; and to preserve natural and cultural heritage [10]. A major challenge in the field of marketing communication for the development of domestic tourism and hotel industry is the financial contribution to the recreation of employees. Employers have provided contributions to employees since 01/2019, in accordance with the Article 152a of the Act No. 311/2001 Coll. on Labour Code as amendment [12].

As the primary role of marketing communication is to influence the consumer to purchase a product or service, this marketing mix tool is under considerable pressure to achieve demonstrable business results in forms such as influencing sales of products and services, increasing brand awareness, or getting customer information. In order to reduce this pressure, hotels are looking for new solutions. Marketing communication is a tool of marketing mix, which is characterized by constantly emerging new trends. The enormous boom of the online environment gives hotels multiple options to communicate with existing or potential customers [13]. Because of a large number of communication tools available in the online environment, hotel managers need to find the most effective ones.

3. Literature Review

Businesses in all sectors pay close attention to the concept of effectiveness. The evaluation of effectiveness in the field of Slovak and foreign literature is being scientifically researched from several points of view depending on the scientific focus of authors. The advancement and importance of communication technologies in recent decades have led to the growth and development of the business environment and intensified competition [14–16]. Businesses have been forced to seek new ways to meet customer demands. As a result, there is a growing awareness among businesses about the need for effectiveness of heterogeneous business activities [17]. To explain this, a marketing perspective is taken to explain the fact that companies achieve their objectives by satisfying their customers with greater effectiveness than their competitors [4]. Consequently, measures designed to assess the effectiveness of business activities should reflect the specific activities and types of products and services offered [18]. It is also important to determine theoretical knowledge of effectiveness and its evaluation, which would be most suitable for its implementation in marketing communication.

In economic theory, it is possible to determine two basic terms in connection with any investment appraisal—effectiveness and efficiency. These terms have a semantic base, mainly in English scientific sources. Efficiency is defined as the ratio between input and output, or between the achieved results and the incurred costs [19]. It follows that the efficiency refers to the economic aspect of heterogeneous means invested in business activities, i.e., is interpreted as economy. Economy for marketing communication is defined as the minimization of costs incurred in order to achieve the stated communication goal, i.e., efficiency is the degree of achievement of the relevant goal of marketing communication activity [20]. In terms of the number of input and output variables, efficiency is expressed as the ratio of inputs and outputs that are achieved in a conversion per production unit with a result equal to or greater than one [21].

The definitions of effectiveness are determined differently. The concept of effectiveness is based on the word effect, that is, the effect of providing outputs in the form of products and services resulting from the consumption of production factors (inputs) to the target audience [22]. It can be stated that it is the ability to produce the desired outputs with a rational usage of available inputs. The importance of effectiveness in terms of the number of input and output variables lies in a production system based on either maximizing outputs (output-oriented effectiveness) or minimizing inputs (input-oriented effectiveness) [21]. In the marketing and communication field, the interpretations of this meaning could include the relationship between the given communication goals and real impacts on business results, i.e., the ratio of desired and achieved.

In connection with the issue of marketing communication, it is also necessary to define its modern forms—creative, emotional, innovative, and integrated communication [23]. This means that effectiveness is an intellectual effort, as well as an attitude based on that effort, which must be constantly measured to ensure commercial success [24]. However, it is important to note that effectiveness is not only a measure of market success, but also a measure of operational excellence or productivity. This involves minimizing costs and improving operating margins. On the other hand, effectiveness is linked to the ability of a company to design a unique model of accepting business opportunities through the exchange of relationships. Focusing on efficiency and neglecting effectiveness can lead to a temporary profitability. Otherwise, focusing on effectiveness and lack of efficiency can lead to unprofitable growth [25–27]. The company should therefore maintain an optimal level of efficiency and effectiveness (the indicators that will lead to sustainable profitability and business growth [28,29]).

3.1. Marketing Effectiveness and Importance of Its Evaluation

The essence of marketing effectiveness is particularly useful in any business, as it assumes better business stability, long-term profit growth, increased customer satisfaction, competitive advantage, and business sustainability [21,30–35]. A study on the evaluation of marketing effectiveness has shown that businesses with higher marketing effectiveness also achieve higher overall business effectiveness compared to competitors in the market where marketing effectiveness is not a priority [36]. The assessment of marketing effectiveness is an integral part of a comprehensive business performance evaluation that helps companies to implement a marketing strategy by providing a general view of business performance [37,38]. The aim of evaluating marketing effectiveness is to analyse the interrelationships between marketing activities and overall business performance [39]. It is very important that the concept of marketing and its effectiveness contribute to the overall functioning of the business and are not an isolated function. This means that the objectives of evaluating marketing effectiveness and business objectives should be mutually supportive, especially in the areas of meeting customer needs; stimulating, developing, and increasing sales; and assessing the impact on overall business effectiveness.

There are several conceptual measures defining marketing effectiveness that are based on academic research. Drucker, as the first author dealing with the issue of marketing effectiveness, states that the basis for the success of marketing activities and processes is to do the right things, which means, to do things in an effective way [40]. Marketing effectiveness, as reported by Walker and Ruekert, refers to the results of business programs in relation to the resources used to implement them [41]. More specifically, Clark states this. According to him, effectiveness refers to the relationship between marketing results (marketing outcomes) and efforts or means introduced into marketing (marketing inputs) [42]. Measuring effectiveness is a matter of increasing importance in developing strategic plans, evaluating the achievement of marketing goals, and rewarding managers [43–45].

Other authors also discussed the issue of marketing effectiveness. According to them, the effectiveness in terms of marketing represents a comparison of marketing outputs and marketing inputs, i.e., efforts in relation to the outcomes of business programs and the resources used, i.e., the suitability of marketing communication programs with existing business structures. This means that they have investigated the extent to which marketing activities can meet the business goals [46].

This scientific study was extended by Mavondo, who examined marketing effectiveness only in the short term. He presented the positive impact of marketing effectiveness on the financial performance of a company, which resulted in increased market share, sales, gross margin, and even successful launch of new products on the market [34].

Other authors have built on previous studies and even expanded them and presented marketing effectiveness as a measure of how a company can gain a higher market share over competition in advertising and promotion field. They dilated their research to optimize marketing spending through marketing effectiveness to achieve even better results for both short- and long-term goals [31]. Gao's study was based on the basic formulation of effectiveness, doing the right thing by comparing marketing effectiveness with the goals formulated in the market strategy of the business [47]. Another study also examined marketing efficiency, but the outcome was to define marketing effectiveness as a long-term process that was aiming to create value based on business resources for marketing activities and competitive advantage [32]. In Slovakia, the authors, who addressed the issue of marketing effectiveness, defined in their studies the concept of marketing effectiveness as the quality with which managers optimize expenditures in order to achieve better results for companies in the short- and long-term, i.e., optimize the quality of marketing spending so that businesses achieve their goals in any time period analysed [33].

There are various reasons to carry out regular measurements of the effectiveness of a business. These reasons may include, especially in the marketing environment, as follows:

- If something cannot be changed, it cannot be understood;
- If something cannot be understood, it cannot be checked;
- If something cannot be checked, it cannot be improved;
- If results cannot be measured, success cannot be distinguished from failure;
- If success cannot be seen, it cannot be evaluated;
- If success cannot be evaluated, failure is likely to be evaluated;
- If failures are not recognized, old errors will be repeated and resources wasted [48].

3.2. Effectiveness and Evaluation of Marketing Communication in the Online Environment

The use of Internet technologies in marketing communication is gaining in importance [49]. It is also a fact that the most revenues are generated through online marketing communications by using personalization, multimedia integration, and real-time interactions [50–52].

The importance of effectiveness of marketing communication in the online environment is also multiplied by the number of scientific publications dealing with this issue in the renowned databases, namely, Web of Science (1990) and Scopus (2059), for the period from 2004 to 2018 (Figure 1). However, it should be noted that the number of scientific articles and studies includes all synonyms of online marketing, i.e., digital marketing, internet marketing, and e-marketing.

The effectiveness of the evaluation of any marketing tools is also assumed by the fact that only a comprehensive evaluation can move companies into further development of marketing activities [53]. Thus, the effectiveness of marketing tools becomes the basic dimension of a company's performance and the basic pillar for its sustainable development [30].

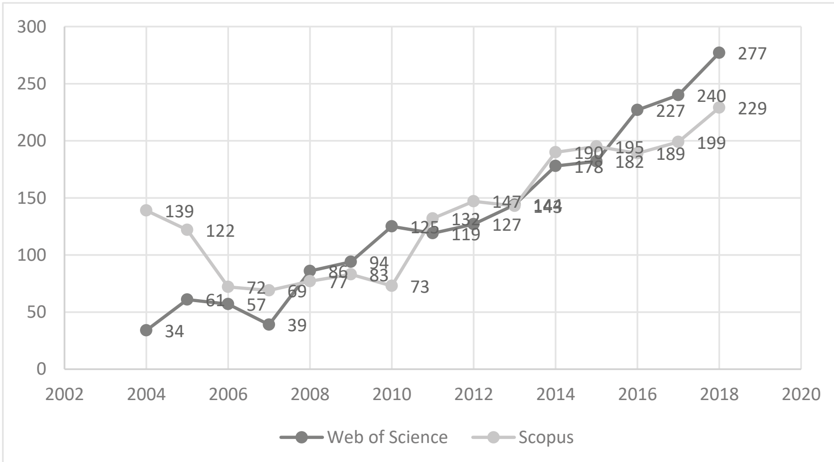

Figure 1. Number of scientific articles and studies from the Web of Science and Scopus databases on the effectiveness of online marketing communication.

4. Materials and Methods

Demonstrating effectiveness in marketing has never been so difficult. There are many factors to consider: pressure on marketing budgets, transforming media environments and channels, the impact of technology, changing consumer behavior, and so on. Such a dynamic environment is both a challenge and an opportunity. Demonstrating the tangible effectiveness of communication campaigns is becoming increasingly important for marketers. Measuring of effectiveness has become a key issue in the marketing departments of many companies over the last decade [54]. In his study, IBM identified the measurability of marketing activities as one of the three key areas for future development. The findings of the study show that the ability to evaluate marketing investments could be one of the main ways to restore credibility to the marketing department [55].

Another report showed that the evaluation of the effectiveness of communication activities is perceived as significant by the contracting authorities. However, it was surprising to find that 43% of marketers do not measure the return on investment in their communication activities. Rather, the results of the study confirmed the use of standard evaluation methods. More than 90% of respondents evaluate the effectiveness of communication campaigns, and 53% of respondents usually use the return on investment (ROI) indicator for evaluation. So, most marketing professionals track campaign results, but only half of them in financial terms. The 47% of marketers do not monitor the financial impact of their campaigns. The study showed that typically large companies with long-term existence and higher budgets for communication activity of the company implement the evaluation of effectiveness. Only 41% of respondents are evaluating all campaigns, more than half of the respondents focus on criteria of effectiveness for selected campaigns only, and 7% of respondents report that they evaluate their campaigns only exceptionally [56].

IBM study also identified increasing pressure on marketing departments based on qualitative research. IBM considers the ability to quantify and analyse the financial results of marketing investments and, above all, to present the conclusions of marketing department activities throughout the organization as a key task [55]. The measuring of effectiveness is also expected to be a challenge in studies of Reglix [57,58].

Another survey also revealed a significant need for improving data use, measuring online marketing, and evaluating marketing return on investment. In addition, the survey also focused on the degree of business satisfaction regarding ability to measure return on marketing investments. Up to 41% of businesses in the US are satisfied with their ability to measure marketing ROI through proper leadership and perseverance. Their knowledge of their marketing return on investment allows them to manage marketing spending decisions. Only 43% of organizations make their marketing budgets based on an analysis of marketing return on investment. In contrast, 68% of businesses base their marketing budgets partly on historical spending and 28% on their own instincts. When making decisions about specific marketing expenses, up to 21% of businesses make all or most of those spending decisions without metrics. Instead of marketing return on investment, executives continue to use many traditional metrics, such as brand preference, shopping intent, and willingness to recommend [59].

These facts together with the theoretical background form the basis of our research. We assumed that hotel management feels pressure in the form of the ability to quantify the return on investment spent on the online form of communication even in the conditions of the Slovak Republic. That is why we asked in the realized research whether hotels evaluate the effectiveness of all forms of online marketing communication used. Additionally, we asked whether there is a certain type of hotel (based on size, life time, budget size, and hotel class) that would perform that assessment to a greater extent. Another focus of the research was on the benefits and metrics of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communications. In the end, we asked whether hotels were generating an interest in new methodology to assess the effectiveness of online marketing activities, the creation of which is the main objective of this paper.

Based on the theoretical research and analysis of secondary data and with a view to achieving the objective of the paper, following research questions and hypotheses were formulated:

- *Research question 1:* Do hotels assess the effectiveness of all forms of online marketing communication that they apply?

Hypothesis 1a. *The effectiveness of the applied forms of online marketing communication is insufficiently monitored by lower-class hotels.*

Hypothesis 1b. *The effectiveness of the applied forms of online marketing communication is insufficiently monitored by hotels with a lower budget in this field.*

Hypothesis 1c. *The effectiveness of the applied forms of online marketing communication is insufficiently monitored by hotels with a shorter existing (lifetime).*

Hypothesis 1d. *The effectiveness of the applied forms of online marketing communication is insufficiently monitored by hotels of a smaller size.*

- *Research question 2:* Do hotels perceive the benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication?

Hypothesis 2. *There is no statistical dependence between the perception of the benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication and the evaluation itself.*

- *Research question 3:* What metrics do hotels use to evaluate the effectiveness of online marketing activities?
- *Research question 4:* Is the level of metrics used to assess the effectiveness of online hotel marketing activities sufficient?

Hypothesis 3. *There is no statistical dependence between the types of metrics for assessing the effectiveness of online hotel marketing activities and their sufficient level.*

- *Research question 5:* Are hotels interested in implementing a new methodology to assess the effectiveness of online marketing activities?

In order to meet the main objective of the paper, the conceptual scheme of research elaboration shown in Figure 2 was used. The scheme is based on theoretical knowledge from secondary research and data obtained from primary research, and illustrates the connection of the research questions and hypotheses to individual factors.

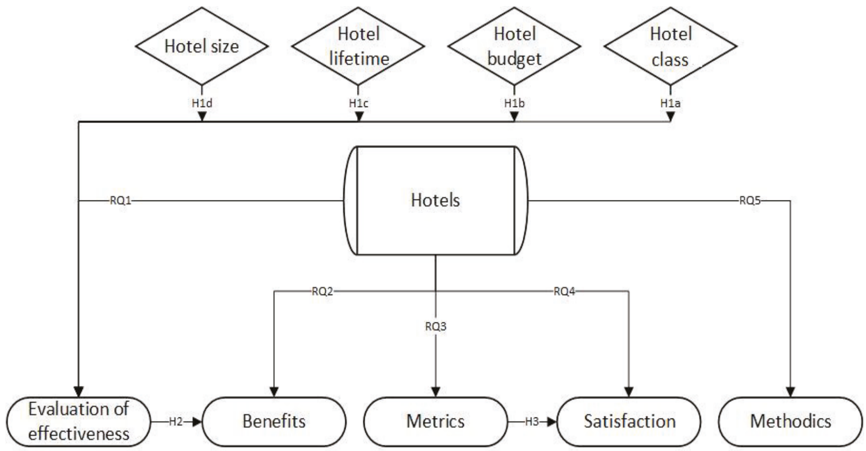

Figure 2. Conceptual scheme of research elaboration.

In order to meet the objective of the paper, the authors conducted a marketing survey focused on online hotel marketing communication in the conditions of Slovakia to determine the level of its use in the practice and to map the current state or methods of evaluating of its effectiveness. According the results, the authors proposed ROI as the most appropriate metric applicable in the evaluation of effectiveness of online communication tools.

In the survey, the size of the population was determined based on data obtained from the organizational statistics of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. The population consists of economic units classified according to their primary economic activity—based on the SK NACE, group "*55.10.0 Hotels and Similar Accommodation*". For the purposes of the paper, we dealt with accommodation facilities of a hotel type, as these facilities are divided into classes according to the quality of services and technical equipment. Pursuant to Decree of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic no. 277/2008, a class is determined as meeting the minimum requirements for accommodation facilities, quality, and scope of services adequate to the class, which is marked with stars from the lowest class (*) to the highest class (*****). The size of the base population is 803 economic units, respectively, hotels (December 2017). As 313 hotels participated in the marketing survey, the minimum sample size (260 hotels) was met. The answers of respondents to the questions based on the determined confidence level (95%) and confidence interval (5%) can be considered as relevant. In the case of a marketing survey, the questionnaire method was chosen; the questionnaires were distributed by e-mail.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is focused on the importance, benefits, and use of online marketing communication. The second part deals with the investments into online marketing communication and perception of the effectiveness of online marketing communication. The objective was to find out whether hotels were evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication tools, and whether they would be interested in the proposed methodology of effectiveness evaluation. The last part concerns the general profile of the respondent, i.e., class of the hotel, its size, lifetime, annual turnover, etc.

The method of statistical hypothesis testing was chosen for the research. It is one of the most important statistical inference procedures. The role of statistical inference is to decide on the basis of information on the available choices whether to accept or reject certain hypotheses with respect to the basic sample set. In order to do so, we proceeded in accordance with the methodology of statistical hypothesis testing [60]. Because the primary data in this research is of a nominal nature, the test statistic is the Chi-square test of independence. To calculate the test statistic for the hypothesis, IBM SPSS Statistics software was used. This software also calculates the correlation coefficient. In this case, because the nominal variables are being examined in the number of 3+ × 2+, it was appropriate to investigate the strength of the dependence between the variables using the Cramer's V measure of association [51,60,61].

The correspondence analysis is a multivariate graphical technique designed to explore relationships among categorical variables. When the study variables of interest are categorical, correspondence analysis is an appropriate technique to explore the relationships amongst variable response categories and can play a complementary role in data analysis [62]. The use of correspondence analysis must therefore be preceded by the testing of hypotheses on the independence of observed characters [63]. Correspondence analysis is conducted using the IBM SPSS Statistics software, too. The essence of this analysis is the transformation of points of the multidimensional space, which represent the examined categories, into a space of lower dimension, most often in the plane (2 dimensions). This transformation is unambiguous and allows us to focus on revealing a certain type of relationship between categories (variables). We evaluate the transformation quality based on the rates derived from the total inertia.

5. Results

Mostly small businesses (74.4%) were involved in the survey to determine the level of use of online marketing communication activities and to map the level of the evaluation of the effectiveness of these activities. In addition, 21.1% of medium-sized enterprises, 4.2% of micro-enterprises, and 0.3% of large enterprises participated in the survey. In terms of classifying the hotel, four-star hotels formed the largest group (44.1%), followed by three-star hotels and motels (39%), two-star hotels and motels (10.9%), and five-star hotels (4.4%). Hotels and motels with one star (1.6%) had the smallest representation (1.6%). In terms of the period of existence of hotels, most hotels and motels exist from 11–15 years (46%) and 16–20 years (39%).

To answer the first research question, we asked the respondents whether they evaluated the effectiveness of all forms of online marketing communication, which they used in the practice. The effectiveness of all online forms is regularly evaluated by 17.3% of hotels, often in 27.1%, sometimes 20.8%, and rarely 4.1%. Up to 30.7% of hotels do not evaluate the effectiveness at all.

The subject of research was also the reason for not monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness. Respondents stated reasons as high evaluation costs, current situation is sufficient, lack of resources (employees, funds, and process data), and evaluation of effectiveness only in some forms of online marketing communication. Subsequently, we used the primary data from this question to test the statistical hypotheses H1a to H1d. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Chi-square test of independence of hypotheses 1a–1d.

Hypothesis	*p*-Value	Significance Level	Reliability Interval	Acceptance/Rejection of the Hypothesis
H1a	0.3456	0.01	99%	Rejection
		0.05	95%	Rejection
		0.10	90%	Rejection
H1b	0.1172	0.01	99%	Rejection
		0.05	95%	Rejection
		0.10	90%	Rejection
H1c	0.1766	0.01	99%	Rejection
		0.05	95%	Rejection
		0.10	90%	Rejection
H1d	0.0793	0.01	99%	Rejection
		0.05	95%	Rejection
		0.10	90%	Acceptance

The test proved there is no significant variable that would reveal the descriptive factor of the hotel, which more often performs an evaluation of the effectiveness of all forms of online marketing communication used. Only in the case of the size factor was the existence of the dependence of the examined variables confirmed, but only at a low level of reliability interval, which indicates a very low dependence.

Another explored aspect of the survey was to point out the benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication. Respondets perceive monitoring of effectiveness positively, as 59.1% of respondents perceive the significance of this activity, 24.3% are in favour of the fact that monitoring of the performance and effectiveness is rather meaningless, and only 16.6% do not see it as meaningful.

The resulting further aspect of the research was to find out the existence/absence of statistical dependence between the perception of the benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication and the evaluation itself. The test statistics are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Chi-Square Tests—Hypothesis 2.

	Value	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance**
Pearson Chi-Square	177.391a	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	201.996	12	0.000
N of Valid Cases	313		

Table 3. Symmetric Measures—Hypothesis 2.

		Value	**Approximate Significance**
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.753	0.000
	Cramer's V	0.435	0.000
N of Valid Cases		313	

A significance level was determined at 0.05 and corresponded to a 95% confidence interval. Based on the comparison of the significance level with the *p*-value (Asymptotic Significance), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis confirmed, i.e., there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables examined. The intensity of the dependence of the variables according to Cramer's V (0.435) indicates a moderate dependency. Therefore, we can say that hotels that evaluate the effectiveness of online marketing communication have proven to be more aware of the benefits of doing so.

To answer other research questions, respondents were asked for information on their own evaluation method. Only those who stated that they were using a metric responded to the level of adequacy of its results. The most commonly used metric is ROI 26.2%. Other metrics are Google Analytics (20.1%), customer satisfaction survey (8.9%), monitoring statistics (8.6%), and an analysis of demand for tourism products (6.7%). Up to 23.3% of hotels reported missing the form (procedure) to assess the effectiveness of online marketing communications, and 6.2% did not monitor the effectiveness of any online communication form. Subsequently, we used the primary data from these questions to test statistical hypothesis 3. The calculated test statistics are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests—Hypothesis 3.

	Value	**Df**	**Asymptotic Significance**
Pearson Chi-Square	44.014a	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	42.837	12	0.000
N of Valid Cases	217		

Table 5. Symmetric Measures—Hypothesis 3.

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.450	0.000
	Cramer's V	0.260	0.000
N of Valid Cases		217	

A significance level was determined at 0.05 and corresponded to a 95% confidence interval. Based on the comparison of the significance level with the *P*-value (Asymptotic Significance), the null hypothesis was rejected and we can confirm an alternative hypothesis, so there is a statistical dependence between the variables examined (types of metrics to assess the effectiveness of online marketing activities of hotels and their sufficient level). The intensity of the interdependence of variables by the Cramer's V measure of association (0.260) indicates low dependence. Based on the existence of dependence between the variables, it makes sense to examine the internal structure of the contingency table by the correspondence analysis. The results are shown in Figure 3.

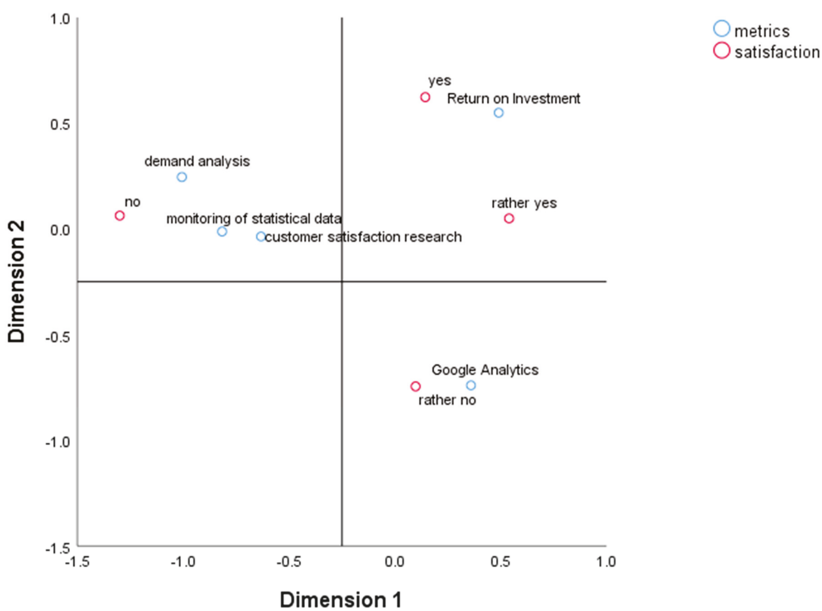

Figure 3. Correspondence map.

To visualize the correspondence map, it is necessary to reduce the extracted dimensions to only two, so that the map can be displayed in a two-dimensional view. Interpretation of the correspondence map that we have obtained in this way is relatively simple. The position of the line and column categories indicates which categories are related (corresponding) to each other. The metrics, namely, the Questionnaire Survey of Customer Satisfaction, Monitoring of Statistical Data, and Analysis of Demand for Tourism Products are very similar in terms of satisfaction assessment. The metrics ROI and Google analytics are specific in this case. They are sufficiently distant from other metrics, so they do not show common characteristics in terms of satisfaction. As for the individual levels of satisfaction, only two of them are similar (Yes and Rather Yes), as they are in a common quadrant of the map. Google analytics is captured on the map closest to the satisfaction category Rather No Strongly Disagree. The ROI is assigned to the category of satisfaction assessment at the level Yes. The vertical axis shows the distinction between the ROI and Google analytics from other metrics. This axis captures the distinction of expressing total dissatisfaction with metrics from other levels of satisfaction. The most important result of the correspondence map is that the ROI metric clearly shows the highest satisfaction rate.

In another question, respondents were asked whether they could imagine applying a particular procedure or form to assess the effectiveness of online marketing communication in their activities if it existed. Up to 89.8% expressed interest.

6. Discussion

In evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication, hotels identify and then examine results and explore opportunities for improving and modifying this effectiveness.

6.1. Benefits of Evaluating the Effectiveness of Online Marketing Communication

Observing and evaluating the effectiveness of online communication tools leads to identification of how well hotels are implementing communication tools, and if something is wrong, it determines the barriers and possibilities to overcome this deficiency in the future [64].

Such information helps any hotel to understand whether online marketing communication is achieving its goals and whether the implementation of online communication strategy is moving in the right direction. The goals that a hotel can achieve through its online communication, e.g., are increasing hotel awareness; improving its image, awareness, and trust; increasing the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty; and differentiating itself from the competition or increasing the number of hotel guests [65–67].

Many hotels consider forms of online marketing communication only as a pro-forma promotion without a return on funds. The survey conducted in conditions of Slovakia has showed that up to 30.7% of hotels do not evaluate the effectiveness of all used forms of online communication at all. This is contrary to studies and surveys that have showed that a thoroughly refined marketing strategy and an interest in innovations in marketing communications can bring hotels and other businesses a favourable financial outcome, long-term growth, and a stable position in the hotel product market.

Most (59.1%) of the hotels surveyed are aware of the benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication, namely,

- It contributes to a more exhaustive redesign of the marketing communication strategy and leads to increased trust among marketing staff;
- It leads to the integration of communication between a hotel and its customers (since elaborated effectiveness assessment procedures lead to easier communication and create a clearer picture of a business strategy), more effective communication with customers, and better targeting of online communication tools;
- It increases alignment with not only marketing goals but also business goals, marketing strategy, and employee loyalty;
- It increases the share of successfully implemented changes—revised feedback will not only increase the likelihood of success, but will also speed up the process of making the necessary changes;
- It leads to better problem prediction and optimization of online communication portfolios;
- It makes it easier for marketing staff to continuously perceive the impact of introduced changes on individual marketing processes, increasing the effectiveness of processes and working time.

Based on the results of the survey, it can even be argued that hotels that evaluate the effectiveness of online marketing communication are demonstrably more aware of the benefits of doing so. The objective of the contribution was justified by the demonstration of these benefits. The hotels also showed an enormous interest (89.8%) in implementing this kind of methodology in their activities.

6.2. Identifying the Most Appropriate Metric for the Effectiveness Evaluation

Return on investment can be used as the most appropriate metric to measure the effectiveness of marketing activities, because it simply refers to the idea that something of value has resulted from an investment of time, energy, or money [68]. In the financial approach, ROI is usually reduced to a formula, which is calculated simply by subtracting the cost of an investment from the income received from the investment, divided by the same investment cost. ROI as a return on funds invested in marketing activities can be considered as one of the most important methods of measuring marketing effectiveness. It can be assumed that businesses still prefer financial appreciation of return to non-financial appreciation [53,69]. Justifying the value of the intervention of companies in online environment and knowing what the usefulness or benefits are of marketing in this area have been priorities over the years [70]. As this trend has increased, sellers have had to make the right decisions about key aspects of new forms of online marketing communication and determine how to measure their effectiveness through return on investment [71,72]. Due to the particularities of the tourism sector, ROI is constituted as suitable for the measurement of the effectiveness of online marketing actions, since the subjectivity that runs through the entire tourism process encourages the inclusion of measurement tools that take this fact into account [73].

We have identified ROI as the most appropriate metric for developing a methodology based on the attitude of several authors dealing with this issue [49,52,56,59,74,75], as this method is the most suitable for measuring the success of communication activities. ROI should also be used as an optimization method [52]. Based on the survey, we have found that the most frequent response of respondents regarding the choice of method by which they assess the success and subsequent optimization of forms of online marketing communication is ROI (26.2%). Moreover, the assumption that the use of ROI clearly shows the highest hotel satisfaction is also confirmed.

6.3. Methodology of Implementing ROI for the Effectiveness Evaluation

The proposed methodology uses the basic functions of Microsoft Excel to eliminate barriers to performance monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of online marketing activities reported by hotels in the Slovak Republic, namely, high evaluation costs, lack of resources (employees, funds, and process data), and evaluation of effectiveness only in some forms of online marketing communication. Based on the non-confirmed hypotheses 1a–1d, this methodology is generally applicable in all hotels in Slovakia. The methodology is able to track all hotel-determined online marketing communication metrics and other data points in one visual, central location—dashboard. In this way, it provides a high-level view of working in the online environment, helping the hotel management to make quick decisions and keep up-to-date information on all online forms of communication used.

The visual nature of the dashboard simplifies work and complicated data. It provides an immediate view of current status or performance in real time, as it is made up of tables, metrics, and numbers. Using a dashboard, hotel management can understand what works and what does not work, and proactively seeks to optimize every form of online marketing communications. The calculation model has a relatively simple structure (see Figure 4), as it consists of only one sheet. This sheet titled "ROI Calculation" includes not only a partial return on investment of each online form of marketing communication, but also an overall return on investment for a hotel online marketing campaign. In addition, this sheet is the only sheet in which hotel management can make changes and adjustments to the inputs and calculation items used in each form of online marketing communication. Dashboard is divided into three parts: basic information; data about forms of online marketing communication; and input and output characteristics, including numeric data.

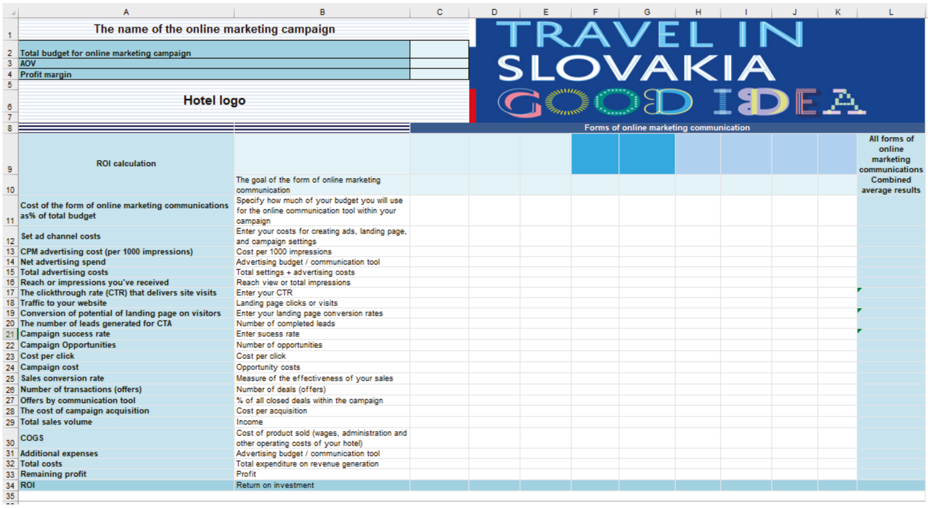

Figure 4. Methodology of implementing return on investment (ROI) for the effectiveness evaluation.

The first part of the ROI calculation of the online marketing campaign contains information about the name of the online marketing campaign, respectively, about the goal that the evaluated forms of online marketing communication should achieve. In addition, the hotel management needs to fill in the data about the total budget for the online marketing campaign (cell C2), the average order value (AOV) (average amount of value generated by each online activity by an average customer (cell C3)), and the profit margin expressed as a percentage of a hotel´s profit from sales of its products and services (cell C4). Among other things, hotels can insert their own logo in this calculation, which will be placed to the left of the wording "Travel in Slovakia Good Idea" (a project funded by the European Union for the promotion of tourism in the Slovak Republic and the brand Slovakia). The second part of the ROI calculation concerns the determination of the various forms of online marketing communication that are identified by a hotel´s management (line 9, columns C to L). In line 10, management will indicate the specific goal of each form of online marketing communication used. Inserting the input and output characteristics of selected forms of online marketing communication, including their numerical data, relates to the calculation of ROI for individual selected forms of online marketing communication overall. Column A (ROI calculation) lists the names of input and output characteristics, which were selected on the basis of several professional foreign studies dealing with the issue of online marketing communication effectiveness [30,43,46,47,50,56,59,76]. In addition, in the column B, the user can identify the specific input and output characteristics of the forms of online marketing communication. The columns C to L (quantity depends on the number of the forms of online marketing communication used) contain numerical values of each input and output characteristic, including the relationships needed to quantify the ROI of these communication tools and overall.

7. Conclusions

During the 21st century, the issue of measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of online marketing communication has become very topical and significant. Indeed, the harsh competitive environment of the hotel industry tends to influence hotels to use redundant marketing communication tools. It is increasingly necessary to reassess their effectiveness. The evaluation of marketing communication tools, especially their online forms, is no longer an option but a necessity. Since the phenomenon of the effectiveness of marketing communication tools is undoubtedly considered as a ratio of return on marketing revenues to marketing costs, the guidelines for their measurement are insufficient and fall short of the requirements of the modern hotel industry.

In the light of the above, the main objective of the contribution was to propose a methodology suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of online communication activities in the Slovak hotel industry that would be a sufficient element supporting the decision-making process in the context of the sustainable development of hotels. In order to meet the objective of the paper, a marketing survey was conducted in which hotels in the Slovak Republic were the object of research, and its purpose was to determine the level of use of online marketing communication activities and to map the status of evaluating their effectiveness. Results of the research suggest that hotels in Slovakia perceive the importance of evaluating marketing communications in the online environment, regardless of hotel size, lifetime, budget, and class. They prefer financial metrics de facto, as they are a manifestation of the traditional approach to investment evaluation. The results also showed that ROI is the most common metric for evaluating investments of online communication activities, and respondents expressed the greatest confidence in this metric as well. The results thus confirm that theories that emphasize financial appreciation and rank ROI as the most appropriate metric to measure the effectiveness of marketing activities are also applicable in the Slovak Republic. Additionally, from the perspective of the particularities of the tourism sector, ROI is constituted as suitable for measuring the effectiveness of online marketing actions, since the subjectivity that runs through the entire tourism process encourages the inclusion of measurement tools that take this fact into account.

According to the above, the suggested methodology takes a form of the proposed Excel dashboard, and as the most appropriate metric, ROI was identified. The performance of ROI calculation in the field of online marketing communications is beneficial not only for hotels but also for other business entities for two primary reasons. Firstly, ROI is very well known among the management staff of various companies; secondly, the assessment of ROI in online marketing communication helps to determine not only partial returns but also overall marketing returns. ROI ensures the measurement of the results of online communication activities in a participatory way, thus extending the goals of hotel marketing communication. It is calculated in a way that includes heterogeneous types of data, depending on the specific form of online marketing communication. It helps to increase the relevance and effectiveness of the work of any hotel management, as it allows one to consider how particular online communication activities contribute to achieving communication goals of hotels.

Time and geographical constraints can be considered as the main limits of the suggested methodology. These restrictions were especially reflected in the selection of respondents—only enterprises operating in Slovakia were chosen in the statistical sample. This limitation can be removed if the results of the research are considered as a relevant solution and the results achieved are subject to subsequent verification in the international environment. If these barriers were removed, results that are more accurate could be achieved. Another limitation of the research is the established scale in some issues. There may be some distortions in the responses to whether they are using defined financial and non-financial metrics. Therefore, it could be appropriate to apply the Likert scale. Other research in the field of measuring the effectiveness of marketing activities would be interesting to compare the relevance of solutions and the verification of the results achieved in the international environment. In addition to the international comparison, further research could be focused on another sector industry and thus find out information on evaluating the effectiveness of marketing communication in other industries in Slovakia as well.

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sustainability

Article

Measurement of Satisfaction in Sustainable Tourism: A Cultural Heritage Site in Spain

Nuria Huete-Alcocer [1], Víctor Raúl López-Ruiz [1] and Adriana Grigorescu [2,*]

1 Faculty of Economics and Business, Plaza de la Universidad Nº 1, University of Castilla-La Mancha, 02071 Albacete, Spain; Nuria.Huete@uclm.es (N.H.-A.); Victor.Lopez@uclm.es (V.R.L.-R.)
2 Valahia University from Targoviste, Institute of Economic Forecasting—Romanian Academy, 012244 Bucharest, Romania
* Correspondence: adriana.grigorescu@snspa.ro

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism, in the cultural context, is a fundamental element for the economic development of some local communities. There are many factors that can influence the success of this type of tourism, but any action or strategy adopted should be closely related to the satisfaction of the tourist. This research focuses on a heritage destination of an archaeological nature, and is aimed at analyzing the profile of the cultural tourist and his/her level of satisfaction after visiting the site. Information was collected using a closed questionnaire given to tourists. An ANOVA analysis has been used to determine the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and satisfaction, with significant results found in relation to gender and income level. This study has helped to highlight what underlies the differences in tourists' post-visit satisfaction. These analyses have provided information that can be used in the planning of future sustainable tourism marketing strategies; thus, this study provides some recommendations on how to improve the provision of services and the management of these types of heritage elements.

Keywords: cultural tourism; cultural tourist; cultural heritage; satisfaction

1. Introduction

The importance of tourism in Spain is reflected in the number of tourist arrivals to this country in 2018. According to data collected from [1], the number of foreign visitor arrivals in 2018 was over 82.6 million, which represents an increase of 1.1% over the previous year. As a result, Spain has become the second-ranked country in the world in terms of foreign visitor arrivals [2,3]. However, the influx of tourists is not only due to traditional sun and beach tourism offers, but other types such as cultural tourism.

Nowadays, this type of heritage tourism, which is viewed as sustainable, is being very successfully developed in this country [4]. In this regard, the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) reports that tourism focusing on natural and cultural heritage is the area that has experienced the greatest growth in the tourism industry [5]. Moreover, heritage tourism has been largely considered as a form of experiential consumption in recent years [6].

An essential element that can be enjoyed as part of a tourist activity is the experiences that result from the tourist coming into contact with the culture of a specific place, more specifically with the local heritage [7]; in many cases, this refers to the local archeology [8]. To a great extent, the success of a tourist destination depends on the interactions between visitors and local residents [9]. In this sense, an especially important contribution of local residents is when they offer a cultural interchange with visitors who are eager to learn about the heritage of the place. This has been shown in a number of studies [10] that suggest support should be provided to help tourists develop emotional bonds with places, and connections with those residing in the destination. These ties to places and the feeling of solidarity with local residents can positively influence visitors' sense of loyalty to the destination. Thus, such connections can be considered a way of ensuring the sustainability of tourism within a particular community [11].

Since the end of the 20th century, heritage destinations have been receiving substantial numbers of visitors, as the cultural heritage of a place is a large part of what attracts tourists to a particular location, as well as being representative of the identity of the local society [12]. Currently, the consumption of cultural products, such as historical and artistic heritage and monuments, is attracting growing attention from academics and researchers due to the complexity of this type of tourism [13]. Indeed, the demand for cultural products is continuously evolving in terms of tourists' consumption habits, sociodemographic characteristics, motivations and expectations, among other aspects [14,15]. In this regard, cultural tourism can be understood as the "visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region or institution" [16].

As a model of cultural tourism, the city of Segóbriga is the focus of analysis in this research. Located in the province of Cuenca (Spain), it is a Roman site listed as an archaeological park. This study focuses on sustainable tourism, in the cultural context, with the main objective being to determine how elements of the visitor profile affect the satisfaction of the tourist who visits the archaeological park of Segóbriga. The results reveal the relationships between certain sociodemographic variables that define the profile of the visitor to this site—namely, age, gender, income level, educational level, employment status—and the degree of tourist satisfaction. The sample consists of 408 tourists visiting the park in the spring of 2017. For the data collection, a questionnaire was used that included satisfaction scales previously used by several authors in their research (e.g., [17–20]).

This study helps to determine what kind of tourists visit this archaeological site, what their profile looks like and how best to reach them. The results of the study also offer information that may be helpful when it comes to improving the tourism product or designing better marketing, which in turn will support the socioeconomic development of the local area.

Regarding tourist satisfaction, the literature on this subject highlights the importance of this variable as a strong indicator of tourists' intentions to come back to visit a destination or recommend it [21,22].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Development

The strong growth of the tourism sector in recent years has led to the sustainability of this industry being widely addressed in the literature [23–25]. Some authors [26,27] consider sustainable development in tourism to be closely related to environmentally-responsible tourism. In this sense, it is clear that ensuring the sustainability of tourism can be considered as one of the most effective ways to achieve the development of communities in tourist destinations, with local populations playing a key role in this regard. Local residents may even be able to bring about changes in the pattern of visitor arrivals, or foster innovations by taking advantage of the natural and cultural resources of the area [28]. In this way, it is not only the culture itself that is important, but also the local residents who can offer a cultural exchange with tourists interested in learning about the heritage of the place [10].

Cultural curiosity has traditionally been the basis for tourism development and the increase in mobility among tourist consumers [13]. In recent years, this type of sustainable tourism has become one of the largest segments of the tourism market, reflecting the notable growth in the level of demand for tourism products centering on cultural values [29]. Therefore, today heritage is considered as an economic resource and is valued as a key development factor in the context of a new approach to tourism.

The complexity of the concept of cultural tourism has led to multiple definitions and perspectives, depending on the author or researcher [30]. Some of them (e.g., [31]) describe it as people traveling to places of cultural interest, with the aim of obtaining information and new experiences to meet their cultural needs. More generally, [32] defines it as a type of trip for personal enrichment. However, other researchers opt for a much tighter concept and focus on cultural services or products consumed by the tourist, regardless of the motivation for the trip [33,34]. Others such as [30] claim that a tourist who consumes a cultural product is a cultural tourist by definition. This product thus incorporates the components that attract tourists of a particular nature and with specific personal characteristics (each of them comprises a different subgroup with different needs in terms of experiencing the culture). This' also allows for the satisfaction of needs related to traveling to and staying in a certain place, that is, the set of goods and services that enable trips made for cultural purposes.

A common aspect stands out in all these definitions: the cultural tourist's interest in finding out about diverse cultural elements; that is, elements of cultural heritage [35], understood as the set of tangible elements such as museums and historical and archaeological sites, as well as intangible elements such as traditions, ways of life, and language, which constitute the identity of a place [36]. This gives rise to the interest in studying the profile of the cultural tourist seeking to learn about the culture of a place.

2.2. The Profile of the Cultural Tourist

A review of the related literature shows a great variety of characteristics that can be identified within the profile of the cultural tourist [12]. Some studies (e.g., [37,38]) suggest that some tourists may be more motivated than others to engage in a cultural experience, and their degree of involvement in the historical-cultural experience may vary. As such, [34] identify five types of cultural tourists, classified according to their motivation for travel (Table 1):

Table 1. Types of cultural tourists.

Type of Tourist	Definition
Complete cultural tourist	One who seeks a much deeper cultural experience, with cultural tourism being the main motivation for the visit.
Cultural visitor	Although the main motive for visiting a destination is cultural tourism, they are not seeking such a profound experience.
Cultural discoverer	This tourist does not travel for cultural reasons but ends up having a deep cultural experience.
Cultural casual	Seeks some cultural activity on their trip, although this is not the main reason for it
Cultural accidentally	This tourist's main motive for travel is not cultural, but by chance they end up participating in this activity, albeit not in a profound way.

Source: own elaboration based on [34].

From the above, it can be seen that there are two main types of cultural tourists in terms of motivation: those motivated by culture and those motivated by leisure. One type of cultural tourist is motivated by culture; that is, they view the trip as an opportunity for personal development and experiences that allow the achievement of that objective. Conversely, occasional cultural tourists, or cultural tourists by chance, are not motivated by culture, but rather see the trip as a leisure experience [37]. Other authors (e.g., [39]) have also analyzed tourists' motivations for making a cultural visit, contributing to a profile of this type of visitor characterized by high income level and motivated by other cultural initiatives such as attending a festival, visiting monuments or meeting people from cultures and places, with determining factors including origin, age or educational level. Other relevant features of the cultural tourist include his/her openness to encounters with local residents [10], higher level of education [40], higher income level [30], as well as certain sociodemographic characteristics that are the subject of this research. Some authors claim that the profile of the cultural tourist in Spain is of average age (between 25 and 44 years old), without a significant difference between the sexes, and demanding very short stays [35]. The main objective of this research is to determine the profile of the tourist that travels to these areas of heritage interest in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics, but regardless of the reason for the trip.

2.3. Tourist Satisfaction and Sociodemographic Characteristics of Cultural Tourists

Cultural tourism is a popular target of tourism policymakers because it supposedly attracts high-quality, high-value tourists while providing economic support for the local culture. This growing interest in tourists visiting cultural attractions is partly out of necessity, and also due to the fact that cultural tourism is seen as an important growing market [41]. The positive trends observed in the increase in cultural tourism together with the profile of tourists interested in cultural heritage are linked to a need to revitalize the cultural heritage sector [42]. In this sense, it is important to take into account the profile of the tourist, as it has been shown that their sociodemographic characteristics can define not only cognitive and affective responses, but also behavioral responses [9]. For example, gender is known to influence information processing strategies [43], while the image of the destination is influenced by age, income, gender, race, nationality and education [44–47]. Another example is the study by [48], who finds gender differences in expectations regarding sustainable practices, while in a subsequent study [49] she reports similar differences in consumer-based brand equity.

On the other hand, the review of the relevant literature shows that tourism researchers have carried out extensive studies to analyze the dependence of tourist satisfaction on their sociodemographic characteristics [50]. It has been assumed that culture influences tourism behavior, but due to the difficulty of measuring cultural values directly at the individual level, the relationship between the tourist's cultural profile, taking into account some sociodemographic variables, and their satisfaction after the visit has not yet been tested empirically.

The concept of satisfaction in tourism, or tourist satisfaction can be understood as the difference derived from the comparison between the individual's expectations and his/her actual tourist experience [22,51,52]. In this study, satisfaction is defined as the overall satisfaction of a tourist with the visit experience in a cultural heritage site [6]. Furthermore, satisfaction positively affects behavioral intentions. This can be interpreted as satisfied tourists being more likely to have behavioral intentions to make a return visit or return to the heritage site. However, some studies (e.g., [53]) have suggested that not all the attributes of the products or services are equally relevant when it comes to interpreting customer satisfaction. Other authors (e.g., [18]) conclude that the level of satisfaction depends on the human factor and the assessment of the accessibility of the services provided, with the former being where satisfaction is most evident. Therefore, in cultural tourism, quality and the provision of resources plays an extremely important role in determining tourist satisfaction. Previous studies show how the level of satisfaction with visiting a place is the result of different factors evaluated by the comparison between the tourist's perceptions of the product or service received during the visit and their expectations prior to the visit, and influenced by their sociodemographic characteristics [54,55]. In short, the tourist can have different levels of satisfaction [22], depending in part on the characteristics of the visitor; hence the interest in this study in analyzing this relationship.

Having theoretically analyzed satisfaction as a dependent variable in this research, the sociodemographic factors of tourists that can influence their level of satisfaction are examined, and specifically the items used to measure each factor. To this end, a total of five hypotheses are proposed, based on the theoretical framework detailed below.

Gender, employment status, level of education, income and age are individual-level variables that play a specific role in the perception of tourist destinations [45,56–58]. Numerous studies (e.g., [46,58]) have suggested how these variables significantly influence tourists' perceptions and can be considered a filter, such that the perception varies according to the person or tourist [58]. For example, some authors, such as [59], have found significant differences in tourist satisfaction with respect to gender. Others such as [39] argue that women are more attracted to tourism resources than men, which is why they tend to have a higher level of satisfaction [21]. Regarding age, tourists' degree of satisfaction also differs in relation to this characteristic. For example, [21] suggest that older people have a higher level of satisfaction than younger people. Others such as [20] reach the conclusion that age has an influence on certain variables relating to satisfaction, especially in tourists aged over 45. In general, numerous researchers (e.g., [57]) have shown that the age of the tourist affects their perception of a destination and their post-visit satisfaction. Nevertheless, others, such as [44], confirmed that the characteristics of the gender and income level have no such influence. Conversely, [58] show that tourists' income level and employment status are the factors that can most influence perceptions of a place, which may in turn be reflected in tourists' level of satisfaction.

Regarding the latter arguments, the literature review reveals that there has been little tourism research to date that demonstrates how other sociodemographic characteristics influence tourist satisfaction. Some of the few examples include the study by [20], investigating the influence of gender, age and nationality on satisfaction; or that of [19], who examine the role played by age, gender, income level of or salary, origin and employment status of the visitor in their degree of satisfaction. Apart from age and gender, this study analyzes educational level, employment status and income level. Thus, in light of the above, this research proposes the following hypotheses aimed at testing whether the profile of the tourist makes a difference to the satisfaction of their visit:

Hypothesis 1. *There are differences in the satisfaction of the cultural tourist with respect to gender.*

Hypothesis 2. *There are differences in the satisfaction of the cultural tourist with respect to age.*

Hypothesis 3. *There are differences in the satisfaction of the cultural tourist with respect to the highest level of education.*

Hypothesis 4. *There are differences in the satisfaction of the cultural tourist with respect to employment status.*

Hypothesis 5. *There are differences in the satisfaction of the cultural tourist with respect to income level.*

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Description of the Site

The city of Segóbriga is the most important archaeological site on the southern plateau in Spain, and one of the best preserved Roman cities from the western Roman Empire. This archaeological park is highly appreciated as a sustainable tourist destination. There are also many other attractions located not only in the Cuenca capital, but also in the surrounding area (Uclés, Ercávica, Valeria, etc.). The findings of the archaeological excavations that have been carried out over time have helped to illustrate the history of this site. The enclave stands out not only due to its archaeological interest but also the surrounding landscape, because the landscape physiognomy remains essentially the same as it was in Roman times. Visitors can thus enjoy the walk through the archaeological remains and at the same time admire a natural environment of remarkable beauty.

3.2. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The review of the literature on satisfaction has provided theoretical guidance on how to measure this variable, and this study has subsequently used indicators and factors drawn from previous research (e.g., [17–20]. The measurement of this variable is based on a number of factors, which in turn are made up of several items. The first factor, overall satisfaction (factor 1), was taken from the study by [60], where tourists had to "indicate their overall satisfaction with the experience in this archaeological destination". This factor could be considered the most relevant. Together with the assessment of overall satisfaction, a more specific, individual scale was constructed to analyze visitor satisfaction with all the services provided by the park, such that the tourist evaluated their experience by indicating their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with 24 items, giving rise to a total of five more factors: (2) road infrastructure, (3) the hotel infrastructure, (4) restoration infrastructure, (5) conservation of the site and (6) the information received and the treatment from the staff. This scale was constructed by selecting some of the items used by [17,18] in their research. To measure both overall satisfaction and these last five factors, a five-point scale was used, ranging from 1 for "very unsatisfied" to 5 for "very satisfied".

All the questions that were used to measure these factors were included in a questionnaire written based on an exhaustive review of the literature and the specific characteristics of the destination under study. The questionnaire was used to gather information from site visitors after their visit. The data was collected over four consecutive weekends during the months of April and May 2017. A total of 408 questionnaires were given out to tourists aged 18 and over, Previously, a pilot test was conducted in order to refine the questionnaire and make the necessary changes.

3.3. Data Analysis

The analyses in this research were carried out with SPSS Statistics 24.0 software. First, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out using the Varimax rotation method, the aim of which was to validate the scale for each variable or factor that measures satisfaction.

After validating these scales, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, which reveals the differences between the means of a continuous dependent variable and categorical independent variables. In this case, the sociodemographic variables have been taken as independent variables, while the dependent variables are each of the items comprising the factors that measure satisfaction; that is, the dependent variable is the tourist's post-visit satisfaction. See supplementary materials.

4. Empirical Results

Based on the results obtained from the EFA (through Varimax rotation), the scale for each variable or factor measuring satisfaction can be validated. Of the six factors mentioned above, this analysis validated only three (Table 2): (1) the overall satisfaction with the visit (measured with only one item), (2) satisfaction with the road, hospitality, restoration and conservation infrastructure (measured with 12 items) and (3) satisfaction with the accessibility of tourist information and treatment received (measured with 12 items).

The analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaires answered by the 408 tourists surveyed after their visit to Segóbriga, revealed that 55.4% were women and 44.6% were men. As for the most common place of origin of the respondents, 50.7% were from the Madrid region, 15% from Castilla-La Mancha and 13.5% from the Valencian Community. Most visitors were aged between 40 and 59 years, 67.9% of the total sample, with the youngest age range—between 18 and 25 years old— accounting for 3.4% of the total. Regarding respondents' level of education, most had higher education, with more than half of the sample, 63%, holding a university degree and 5.1% also holding a doctorate. Tourists who do not have any type of studies represents only 0.5%. These figures confirm that almost all visitors have the highest level of education. Regarding the employment status of visitors, salaried workers are in first place (32.6%), followed by the group of public officials (18.6%), workers with titling (15.7%) and self-employed workers (11%). Of all the respondents, 29.2% have a gross annual income in the range of €15,000 to €30,000, while 56.4% exceed €30,000 per year. Those that report an annual income of less than € 15,000 represent 14.5% of the total. In conclusion, the profile of the tourist visiting Segóbriga can be described as usually a female, between 40 and 59 years old, who works, with a fairly high income and highest level of education.

The ANOVA analysis has been used to accept or reject the null hypothesis (H0) of independence between the variables. In parallel, the Chi-square test was also performed (bilateral asymptotic significance) to corroborate the differences between the mean scores of these factors.

Table 2. Factors for measuring satisfaction and individual items.

Factors	Item	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach α [1]	KMO [2]	Sig. (Significance)
Overall satisfaction	Overall visit satisfaction	1.000	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Satisfaction with road, hotel, restoration and conservation infrastructure.	Area where it is located	0.320	40.75	0.710	0.714	0.00
	Public transport	0.506				
	Private transport	0.712				
	Internal Accesses	0.387				
	Restaurants	0.814				
	Accommodation and hotels	0.781				
	Structures of the site	0.639				
	Museum	0.657				
	Historical buildings	0.595				
	Maintenance	0.712				
	Cleanliness	0.759				
	Security service of the site	0.442				
Satisfaction with access to tourist information tourist and treatment received	Park information	0.625	74.73	0.829	0.838	0.00
	Information on leisure activities in the area	0.485				
	Information on local customs	0.409				
	Information about local cuisine	0.658				
	Festival Information	0.794				
	Concert Information	0.850				
	Information on crafts	0.707				
	Folklore information	0.795				
	Guided tours	0.564				
	Personal treatment received	0.707				
	Quality of life in the area	0.696				
	Park access price	0.563				

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA analysis of the independence of the satisfaction variable, measured through three factors composed of a total of 25 items regarding the sociodemographic characteristics under study. These results also allow an evaluation of tourists' average overall satisfaction with their experience of visiting the archaeological park, which is 4.4 out of 5.

Table 3. Results of the ANOVA analysis: sociodemographic characteristics—satisfaction.

Factors	Item	Gender		Age		Studies		Employment		Income	
		F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
(1) Overall satisfaction	Overall satisfaction with the visit	3.13	0.077	0.598	0.616	0.557	0.764	0.984	0.453	0.554	0.696
(2) Satisfaction with road, hotel, restoration and conservation infrastructure.	Area where it is located	2.51	0.113	0.422	0.737	1.72	0.113	0.842	0.578	1.83	0.121
	Public transport	0.799	0.372	0.539	0.656	1.06	0.381	0.729	0.682	1.01	0.402
	Private transport	0.279	0.598	1.26	0.286	3.49	**0.002**	2.48	**0.009**	3.02	**0.018**
	Internal accesses	0.201	0.654	1.74	0.156	1.52	0.170	1.23	0.270	0.598	0.664
	Restaurants	0.072	0.789	1.71	0.163	1.15	0.329	1.96	**0.042**	2.67	**0.032**
	Accommodation and hotels	0.085	0.771	3.48	**0.016**	1.88	0.083	1.81	0.064	2.39	**0.050**
	Structures of the site	0.357	0.551	2.24	0.083	0.67	0.999	1.28	0.242	0.431	0.786
	Museum	2.36	0.125	0.492	0.688	0.167	0.985	0.774	0.641	2.32	0.056
	Historical buildings	1.49	0.222	2.37	0.070	1.19	0.308	1.93	**0.046**	0.645	0.631
	Maintenance	3.42	0.065	1.72	0.162	0.360	0.904	0.607	0.791	0.419	0.795
	Cleanliness	2.06	0.151	0.249	0.862	0.927	0.475	1.19	0.296	5.78	**0.000**
	Site security service	0.001	0.976	0.569	0.636	1.58	0.150	1.72	0.081	1.33	0.256
(3) Satisfaction with access to tourist information tourist and treatment received.	Park information	1.20	0.273	0.938	0.422	1.37	0.225	1.34	0.212	3.55	**0.007**
	Information on leisure activities in the area	1.93	0.165	3.80	**0.010**	0.712	0.640	0.751	0.662	0.583	0.675
	Information on local customs	2.45	0.118	0.737	0.531	1.23	0.287	1.84	0.059	1.59	0.175
	Information about local cuisine	0.077	0.781	3.23	**0.022**	2.33	**0.032**	2.45	**0.010**	8.31	**0.000**
	Festival Information	2.02	0.156	3.57	**0.014**	2.27	**0.036**	1.64	0.098	8.13	**0.000**
	Concert Information	3.35	0.068	2.65	**0.048**	1.02	0.410	0.816	0.602	5.31	**0.000**
	Information on crafts	0.266	0.607	0.844	0.471	0.293	0.940	0.915	0.512	3.00	**0.018**
	Folklore information	6.83	**0.009**	1.16	0.322	2.52	0.958	0.978	0.461	3.07	**0.016**
	Guided tours	0.05	0.822	0.939	0.422	0.382	0.890	0.816	0.601	0.998	0.409
	Personal treatment received	0.000	0.986	1.82	0.142	0.969	0.446	0.846	0.574	0.163	0.957
	Quality of life in the area	1.80	0.180	1.67	0.172	1.29	0.260	1.31	0.230	2.37	**0.051**
	Park access price	0.800	0.371	4.81	**0.003**	0.837	0.542	3.75	**0.000**	5.81	**0.000**

Source: authors' own elaboration. Bold values are showing significant differences.

On the other hand, the Chi-square test reveals the following points in relation to the results of the ANOVA analysis presented in Table 3:

(a) Gender: of all the tourists surveyed in the archaeological park, women report a greater degree of satisfaction than men. The results of the ANOVA show that there are significant differences between men and women for only a single item of the 25 considered to assess satisfaction; namely, the satisfaction of the tourist regarding access to information on local folklore (an item corresponding to factor 3). Therefore, said analysis reveals that the rest of the factors of satisfaction (road, hospitality, restoration and conservation infrastructure and overall satisfaction) do not present differences with respect to gender. However, the results of the Chi-square statistic show significant differences with respect to gender for two of the items corresponding to factor 3. These are access to information on theater festivals (sig 0.02) and the concerts held in the park (sig 0.05). This finding partly coincides with the study by [20] on the city of Madrid as a tourist destination, where the only significant differences found between men and women were in the satisfaction in the access to tourist information about said destination. Regarding the tourists' overall satisfaction (factor 1), this statistic does show differences with respect to gender (sig 0.025). Therefore, it can be confirmed that research hypothesis H1 is accepted; even though it is measured with only one factor, it refers to the overall satisfaction with the visit to the park, and so it can be confirmed that gender influences the satisfaction of the tourist.

(b) Age: the analysis of the influence of age on satisfaction reveals significant differences in the following items: accommodation and hotels (items corresponding to factor 2), access to information on cuisine, leisure activities in the area, concerts, festivals and the price of the entrance to the park (items corresponding to factor 3). These results were also checked with the Chi-square test, corroborating that all of these are dependent on age. The latter test also adds others not identified by the ANOVA analysis: accommodations and hotels (sig 0.003) site structures (sig 0.001) and historical buildings (sig 0.001) (corresponding with factor 2); and access to information on local customs (sig 0.02), cuisine (sig 0.002), festivals (sig 0.004), concerts (0.019), crafts (sig 0.008), guided tours through the park (sig 0.029), personal treatment received (sig 0.000) and the price of access to the site (sig 0.005) (all corresponding to factor 3). Regarding factor 1, the overall satisfaction of the tourist, the ANOVA analysis did not find a substantial difference. The latter finding was also corroborated with the Chi-square statistic (sig 0.673). Based on these results, research hypothesis H2 cannot be accepted. Therefore, age does not influence the degree of satisfaction. The results were similar in the related study by [20], as these authors came to the conclusion that the degree of satisfaction with access to tourism information and accessibility does not present differences in relation to age. This result was also confirmed by the study by [19], who indicate that the tourist's age does not affect their level of satisfaction.

(c) The highest level of education (studies): as shown in the ANOVA results in Table 3, this characteristic of tourists has an influence on three elements used to measure satisfaction with the visit to the archaeological park of Segóbriga. These items are the access to the site via private transport (item corresponding to factor 2 of satisfaction), access to information on local cuisine and on festivals (factor 3). Regarding factor 1, overall satisfaction, this analysis does not confirm a relationship between this variable and the tourist's educational level. This finding is corroborated by the Chi-square statistic (sig 0.212). After applying the Chi-square test to check the ANOVA for factors 2 and 3 according to the tourist's level of education, the results confirmed a relationship between this sociodemographic characteristic and the following items: internal access (sig 0.000) and cleanliness (sig 0.024) (factor 2); and access to park information (sig 0.44), cuisine (sig 003), festivals (sig. 0.003), crafts (sig 0.04) and quality of life in the area (sig 0.02) (factor 3). Based on these results, H3 is not accepted. The findings related to this hypothesis could not be compared with other studies, since to date there have been no such studies; namely, analyzing whether the tourist having the highest level of education influences their level of satisfaction.

(d) Employment status: Regarding factor 1, the overall satisfaction of the tourist, the ANOVA analysis does not present independence regarding the work situation of the tourist. This was verified with the Chi-square test, which corroborated that there are no significant differences (sig 0.422). As for the other two factors that measure satisfaction, of the 24 items used, the ANOVA finds significant differences for only for 5 items with respect to the employment status of the tourist. Regarding factor 2, differences are found regarding access to the park via private transport, restaurants and historical buildings. Regarding factor 3, there are differences in the access to information on local cuisine and the price of the entrance. These findings were checked with the Chi-square test, which ultimately only corroborated the access to the park by private transport (sig 0.00), historical buildings (sig 0.48), the security service (0.028) and the accesses inside the park (sig 0.002) (factor 2); access to information on local cuisine (sig 0.000), access to information on local customs (sig 0.028), festival information (sig 0.013), and the quality of life in the area (sig 0.004) (factor 3). In view of the results, it can be said that H4 is not accepted; that is, the tourist's employment status does not influence their satisfaction. These are quite the opposite of the results obtained by [58], who showed that the tourist's level of income and employment status are the factors that most influence their perception of a place, which in turn could be reflected in the level of tourist satisfaction. Others such as [19], showed that the tourist's employment status or job situation can have a negative impact on their level of satisfaction; for example, if they are a student or unemployed.

(e) Income level: unlike the characteristics addressed above, the ANOVA analysis finds that the tourist's level of income has the greatest influence on their degree of satisfaction with the items measured in factors 2 and 3; indeed, the ANOVA does not find any dependence between the overall satisfaction of the tourist (factor 1) and level of income. The relevant items in factor 2 are: access to the park via private transport, restaurants, accommodation and hotels and cleanliness of the facilities. The items in factor 3 are: access to park information, access to information on local cuisine, concerts, festivals, folklore, craftsmanship, the quality of the area in which it is located and the price of admission to the enclosure. These results were corroborated with the Chi-square test, which confirmed that factor 1 does not show a significant difference with respect to the level of income (sig 0.323), but does with respect to some items of factors 2 and 3. This test confirmed that there is dependence between income level and the following items corresponding to factor 2: accesses inside the park (sig 0.019), structures of the site (sig 0.000), museum (sig 0.000), historical buildings (sig 0.000), maintenance (0.049), cleanliness (sig 0.000) and the security service on the premises (sig 0.019). The Chi-square test also showed dependence between income level and the following items from factor 3: the access to information on the park (sig 0.025), local customs (sig 0.000), cuisine (sig 0.000), theater festivals (sig 0.000), concerts (sig 0.001), crafts (sig 0.013), folklore (sig 0.003), guided tours of the site (sig 0.000); as well as the personal treatment received (sig 0.000), the quality of life in the area (sig 0.000) and the price of the entrance to the site (sig 0.000). In view of these results, that is, since most of the items are found to be dependent on this variable—although it is not the case regarding the overall satisfaction of the tourist (factor 1)—it could be claimed that tourists' income level influences their level of satisfaction; thus, H5 can be accepted.

5. Discussion

The results obtained indicate which sociodemographic variables affect the satisfaction of the cultural tourist, and contradict some of the research carried out so far. The results on gender obtained in this study are contrary to those of [19], who reported that gender has no effect on tourists' level of satisfaction. However, the results obtained regarding age confirmed the study by [19], who indicated that the tourist's age does not have any effect on their level of satisfaction.

On the other hand, it was found that having the highest level of education does not influence tourists' level of satisfaction. However, this finding could not be compared with other studies, since no other analyses to date have focused on this element.

Regarding the results obtained on employment status, they contradict the study by [58], who showed that tourists' level of income and employment status are the factors that most influence the perception of a place, which in turn may be reflected in the level of tourist satisfaction. Others such as [19] showed that the tourist's employment status or job situation of the tourist can have a negative impact on their level of satisfaction, for example, in the case of being a student or being unemployed.

Likewise it was found that tourists' income level influences their level of satisfaction. The same finding was reported in the investigation carried out by [19], where the level of income was found to have a positive influence on tourist satisfaction. This could confirm the hypothesis that a more positive degree of satisfaction is associated with a higher salary. As commented above, the study by [58] showed that income level and employment status are the characteristics of the tourist that can most influence their level of satisfaction.

Finally, the results show a relationship between certain variables (sociodemographic characteristics-satisfaction), in line with those reported in other studies (e.g., [22,61]). In this case, important differences in overall satisfaction (factor 1) are only found with respect to gender (H1): women are more satisfied with the visit than men. On the other hand, the level of income is the variable that most influences satisfaction with the items corresponding to the other two factors used to measure satisfaction (H5): (2) satisfaction with road, hotel, restaurant and restoration infrastructure; and (3) satisfaction with information accessibility tourist and received treatment). Very different and contrary results have been obtained with the rest of the sociodemographic characteristics, such as age, employment status and the highest level of education, which have hardly influenced any item. Therefore, are not accepted of H2, H3 and H4.

At the same time, the investigation also identified the Segóbriga tourist (complete cultural tourist) as a middle-aged person (between 40 and 59 years), usually a woman, with higher education, a fairly high income level and a salaried employee. Thus, the results from this study enable a definition of the tourist who visits Segóbriga, the profile coincides with the first type of cultural tourist in the classification proposed by [34].

6. Conclusions

The data obtained on tourism in Spain reflects the fundamental role played by cultural tourism in the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Therefore, an important part of the tourism product is culture, which can increase the competitiveness of a destination. Culture should thus be appreciated as an element of major importance when creating a tourism product that reinforces sustainable tourism development.

The review of the literature provided some theoretical inferences about the places that have a rich heritage and cultural wealth, and how these become sustainable tourist resources for the area in which they are located. Cultural tourism offers an alternative to the traditional "sun and sand" tourism, which has been hugely popular but is currently losing ground to other types of travel activity that address other interests. The need thus arose to study a heritage site such as the archaeological park of Segóbriga.

The objective was to analyze tourists' satisfaction with the services provided in the park, assessing the degree to which sociodemographic characteristics influence that satisfaction. That is, the objective was to identify the relationships between tourist satisfaction and sociodemographic variables, in particular age, gender, level of education, employment status and income level.

The results show that profile of the typical tourist visiting Segóbriga is a complete cultural tourist. Thus, it can be seen that the tourist who visits this archeological park is one who seeks a much deeper cultural experience, with culture being the main reason for his/her visit. Indeed, the location of Segóbriga means that it is a place where tourists would only visit if they had specifically planned to go there; that is, the tourist knows perfectly well what they are looking for with a visit to this park—culture. On the other hand, the results shown that cultural tourism rests on a visitor profile that demands good infrastructure, a good provision of guides and information (panels, reenactments, museums) on the park, and mid-level accommodation and catering services. It is worth taking all these characteristics of the tourist profile into account, in order to ensure the loyalty and satisfaction of tourists to the archaeological park, and thus support the sustainable economic development of the area.

Some practical implications can thus be offered. Tourists are becoming increasingly well-informed, more demanding and with a more multimotivational profile. Their loyalty is not guaranteed and there is growing competition aimed at capturing that loyalty; as such, the management of any destination should strive to meet the multiple motivations and interests of tourists. The cultural tourist may have a special responsiveness to the place he/she visits, however the underlying motivation is driven by leisure or free time. Thus, as far as services are concerned, the implementation of more complete interpretation centers along with the application of new technologies would be a worthwhile initiative for these types of cultural destinations.

Based on the results obtained, a revitalization plan can be proposed for the Segóbriga archaeological park, involving specific action plans for improvement, both in the services offered and in the image, and aimed at the creation of a high-quality sustainable tourism product. In short, in order to positively influence the tourists' behavioral intentions, heritage managers should make it a priority to ensure high experiential quality that creates satisfactory experiences for tourists, meaning that they perceive the visit as good value and leave with a good impression of the cultural heritage site.

Regarding future lines of research, this research is only a first step towards a complete analysis of sociodemographic factors and satisfaction. Future research should develop complementary indicators to analyze the effects of different socioeconomic and demographic factors of the tourist on their satisfaction, as well as other variables such as the motivation for their visit. Regarding the socioeconomic and demographic variables, studies could examine the tourist's culture, place of origin, whether they are a resident in the areas near the site, whether they are staying overnight in the area, etc. In this way, a more complete profile of the cultural tourist could be defined. Such a study could also shed new light on problems to be addressed in order to improve tourism in the area where this archaeological park is located. It could also be worth studying other archaeological sites with the same characteristics located in different countries, thus enabling a comparison between them, and providing valuable information on the competitiveness of heritage sites. Another interesting aspect is the analysis of the role that local residents play in the satisfaction of visitors to Segóbriga.

The limitations of this study relate to the selection of variables; it would have been interesting to study the role of the cultural tourist's motivations and emotions that set them apart from other types of tourist. There are many such variables, as well as the relationships between them, which have not been included in this study; some of these may represent future lines of research.

Supplementary Materials: The following are available online at http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/23/6774/s1, questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). Table 1. Types of cultural tourists, Table 2. Factors for measuring satisfaction and individual items, Table 3. Results of the ANOVA analysis: sociodemographic characteristics—satisfaction.

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Flamenco Tourism from the Viewpoint of Its Protagonists: A Sustainable Vision Using Lean Startup Methodology

Maria Genoveva Millán Vázquez de la Torre [1,*], Salud Millán Lara [2] and Juan Manuel Arjona-Fuentes [1]

[1] Department of Quantitative Methods, Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences, Universidad Loyola Andalucía, Escritor Castilla Aguayo 4, 14004 Córdoba, Spain; jmarjona@uloyola.es

[2] Department of Economic, Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences, Universidad Loyola Andalucía, Escritor Castilla Aguayo 4, 14004 Córdoba, Spain; smillan@uloyola.es

* Correspondence: gmillan@uloyola.es; Tel.: +34957222155; Fax: +34 957222100

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Abstract: Flamenco is an art born in and inextricably associated with Andalusia in the south of Spain. The purity, the feelings it transmits, and the originality of its expression have made it known worldwide and it has been declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO. This declaration, combined with the Spain's tourist boom in the last years, has transformed this exclusive art into an important tourist industry with all the entailing perils for its survival. By means of the Lean Canvas model, combined with a survey of a panel of flamenco experts (especially artists), this study analyzed the fundamental factors that are key to developing a tourism product that, while respectful of its essence, offers tourists a genuine and quality product.

Keywords: Flamenco art; Cultural tourism; flamenco tourism; lean canvas; lean startup

JEL Classification: A12; D19; O01; R10

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1. Introduction

The public interest in art, history, and culture in general has led the tourism industry to recognize the potential market niche of cultural tourism. However, cultural tourism cannot compete with Spain's sun and beach tourism. In 2016, for instance, 64.5 million of Spain's 75 million foreign tourists were attracted by the sun and beach, while 9 million were drawn by cultural tourism [1]. Spain, nevertheless, offers varied cultural tourism of quantity and quality, with tangible and intangible resources including historical, artistic and architectural heritage, museums, gastronomy, handicrafts, folklore, etc. Moreover, cultural tourism also fosters encounters between different customs and populations, giving rise to cultural contact [2].

Tourism is an essential industry for certain countries [3]. In Spain alone, it generates 11.4% of all jobs and 11% of the gross domestic product [1]. Spain's expected growth for tourism in 2019 is 1.2%, higher than the average of other sectors. Hence, cultural tourism in recent years has tended towards a more selective tourism that, properly managed, avoids damaging the environment or the image of the destination.

The greatest growth in cultural tourism derives from new market niches. Its expansion results in a differentiation of submarkets that develop articulated and sustainable offerings, generating benefits for local communities while driving the market as a whole. The offers relate to architecture [4], gastronomy [5], literature [6], creativity [7], film [8], wine [9], industry [10], urbanism [11], shopping [12], science [13], language [14], religion [15], and flamenco [16]. All of these categories have been the object of research by different authors [17].

The development of Spanish cultural tourism dates to the late 1990s when the Secretary of State for Tourism proposed the incorporation of cultural resources to diversify and deseasonalize tourism. Although Spain's cultural wealth places it at the global forefront, it only captures a small share of the market and does not enjoy an image in accordance with its reality in foreign countries [18]. A basic factor explaining this weakness is the lack of conversion of its cultural resources into products fit for consumption, and it is affected by complications in cultural management, accessibility, advance planning, promotion, and lack of introduction into commercial channels.

New cultural tourism focuses on integrating production and consumption and increasing links between suppliers and consumers. Instead of passive consumption, cultural tourists demonstrate a proactive approach by actively participating in creating travel experiences. On the other hand, suppliers focus on close interaction with consumers and the co-creation of high-quality experiences [19], with flamenco as one of the segments where the international tourist is not merely a passive consumer, but an active player in Spanish culture in general, and in Andalusia in particular [20].

Our work aimed principally to obtain the opinion of a group of experts from the world of flamenco on the current situation of this art and on how to achieve sustainable development of flamenco tourism that reconciles the essence of the art form and the necessary economic development. The opinions of these experts are not usually heard by the public institutions responsible for the promotion of flamenco tourism. We sought to compile their improvement proposals and apply the Lean Canvas tool based on the Lean Startup methodology. The Lean Canvas divides its modules into two clearly differentiated blocks: one focused on the client, which in this particular case would be both national and international flamenco recipients, and another one focused on the product, where characteristics of the product as well as logistical requirements of its management, creation, and communication are incorporated, which in this case is about defining the requirements that flamenco art must meet in order to reach potential customers, as well as management requirements to achieve the greatest success.

2. Popular Musical Expressions as Modes of Cultural Tourism

There are many definitions of cultural tourism, yet a review of the many studies defining it and its significance is not the objective of this paper. We simply based this study of tourism and flamenco on the definition of cultural tourism by Richards and Munsters [21]:

> "*All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence*".

Broadening this definition, the European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures (ECTARC) offers eight potential focal points of cultural tourism [22]:

(a) archaeological sites and museums;
(b) architecture (ruins, famous buildings, whole towns);
(c) art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events;
(d) music and dance (classical, folk, contemporary);
(e) drama (theatre, films, dramatists);
(f) language and literature, tours, events;
(g) religious festivals, pilgrimages;
(h) complete (folk or primitive) cultures and sub-cultures.

As noted in Point (d), music and dance, in their classical or contemporary form in popular folklore, are elements available for tourists as fundamental elements of the local heritage [23,24]. Hence, certain destinations are unequivocally associated with popular music and dance (e.g., Cuba with salsa, Buenos Aires with tango, Bali with Balinese dance, and Rio de Janeiro with samba) [25]. However, unlike other cultural assets, music and dance are not mere elements of contemplation but are first-level resources that arouse emotions, allowing the tourist to actively and inclusively experience the local culture [24,26].

Additionally, in an era where the internet allows immediate worldwide access to music and dance, the offer of live music emotion is an important resource for managers of tourist heritage, as well as for private promoters of festivals, performances, hotels, etc. [26,27].

A broad debate, therefore, ensues regarding the authenticity of the tourist offerings and their representativeness of the local musical culture. This issue takes on more weight as folklore represents the patrimony and cultural heritage of a people where idiosyncratic historical, religious, and social elements of the culture are arcane to foreigners. Tourists will, therefore, hardly be able to feel emotions when partaking something for which they are not prepared [28]. This leads to suspicion as to the product's authenticity, and to what degree the performance is adulterated and geared toward tourism [27–29].

The ability of the visitor to distinguish the authentic from the adulterated product designed specifically for the unwitting depends basically on the motivation leading to attendance. This paper based its classification of this type of motivation according to Bywater [29] and McKercher and Du Cros [30] as follows:

1. Intentional Musical Tourist: deliberately attends a specific event and is usually knowledgeable of the culture from previous visits.
2. Cultural–Musical Tourist: motivated to learn about a local culture through music and dance. Attendance probably is based on previously acquired information.
3. Casual Musical Tourist: motivated in the broad sense, open to music and dance but lacking information or prior knowledge of events.
4. Accidental Musical Tourist: motivation is not cultural and event attendance, often organized by a tour operator, takes place in hotels or restaurants.

Hence, the degree of emotional implication, understanding of the event, and appreciation of the product will vary greatly as a function of the tourist type. Many innovative offers exist, as can be seen in Figure 1.

The debate of authenticity has also been addressed from the perspective of the artists and researchers who report that economic dependence by local artists on tourism provokes a loss of the art's essence. Moreover, it is obvious that offering an artistic style geared toward the uninitiated perverts its natural evolution, resulting in a less "pure" style driven by marketing [28]. Furthermore, initiatives of preservation, such as that of UNESCO declaring the dance Intangible Cultural Heritage, involve two serious dangers. The first is declaring a set of binding typological rules following criteria deriving from tangible cultural heritage [23,31]. The second is assigning responsibility for its protection to local, regional, or national authorities, following political criteria and not the needs of artists and promoting culture from marketing criteria instead of its intrinsic growth [27].

Figure 1. Avant-garde offer of flamenco. Source: Desirée Rodríguez, promoter.

3. Flamenco: From Popular Music to Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Although the origins of flamenco are obscure, there is a consensus that its source is in Andalusia, a land that for centuries was a crossroads of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths and different ethnicities, in particular the gypsy Stating that flamenco has an exclusively gypsy source is risky, especially considering that gypsies elsewhere did not develop this expression. Thus, interpreting flamenco as an expression of the cultural fusion in Andalusia is closer to reality [32].

Flamenco is a music and dance form transmitting emotions of love and heartbreak, joy and sorrow, struggle, reproach, vindication, and many others. It hails from farms, sierras, the countryside and sea, from miners and blacksmiths, and many other groups and places. It did not emerge to spawn a way of life, and much less to attract visitors. Hence, tourism has no link to its origins.

Its first artists date to the 18th century, with performances limited to private fiestas or celebrations [33]. "Cafés cantantes" where local artists sang, danced, and played the guitar emerged in the second half of the 19th century and ushered flamenco out of its isolation toward the masses. Artists dedicated themselves exclusively to their art for the first time without needing to practice other professions, and entrepreneurs beginning to focus on the flamenco.

The first years of the 20th century saw this art cross borders and reach a worldwide audience [34]. However, its real international emergence occurred in the 1960s, when tourists attracted to Spain's sun and beaches (Andalusia, in particular), enthusiastically attended flamenco venues offering an authentic neo-romantic view of gypsies [35]. It must be noted that flamenco, at that time, was considered a marginal "low-life" art for a large sector of Spanish society.

It is not until the 1980s that the form was professionalized. An important factor was the creation of autonomous communities throughout Spain seeking to mark their own territorial identity after the fall of the Franco dictatorship [36].

Flamenco in Andalusia was institutionalized by Article 68 of its statutes:

> "*The Autonomous Community has the exclusive competence in the field of knowledge, conservation, research, instruction, promotion and diffusion of flamenco as a singular element of the Andalusian cultural heritage*."

This guaranteed its protection as any other tangible cultural asset, but also launched a debate as to the criteria defining it [37,38].

Within the 2004 strategy to institutionalize flamenco, Andalusian authorities presented several nominations to UNESCO, culminating in its being awarded in 2010 as Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Reception of this award, nevertheless, brought to light two serious problems. The first is the authority's arrogation as its guarantor, as well as its means of preservation and diffusion [39]. This led to a struggle for hegemony between national and Andalusian authorities, as well as between artists and representatives of private companies [40].

Secondly, its award placed an even stronger international focus on the art, resulting in the emergence of public–private interests developing a distinctive flamenco brand as a symbol of tourism in both inside and outside Andalusia, where a link can be justified between the art and territory and culture [40].

Flamenco is an exponent of Andalusia's cultural and historical essence, and has a strong appeal to the cultural tourist seeking a genuine emotional experience [20,41–43].

A tourist product is, in fact, an economic product, implying that a specific patrimonial or artistic resource is promoted to generate economic benefits for the local population and, potentially, for the country. There have been, however, few studies of the economic effects of flamenco tourism. The only institutional report carried out so far is that of the Junta de Andalucía in 2004, prior to the UNESCO award. Even so, that study evidenced impressive numbers: 625,000 flamenco tourists generating 542.96 million Euros. The growth in Andalusia, bolstered by the UNESCO award, likely led to a multiplication of these figures in recent years.

A great debate arises as to the negative effects that massive tourism has on an attraction and its environment, whether they be material (natural or architectural) or immaterial (like music), where the main risk when converted into tourist product is adulteration. This has led to concept of viable tourism.

This study intended to develop a business model through the Lean startup methodology to administer the marketing, logistics, costs, income, and contribution of value, and simultaneously balance the natural desire of promoters (public administrations, private promoters, artists, etc.) to develop flamenco tourism without distorting its purity. In this case, we aimed for the development of a product supported by the opinions of experts of the flamenco world, especially artists, with a final product aligned with the characteristics of sustainable tourism.

4. Materials and Methods

Osterwalder in *The Business Model Generation* [44], put forward the Business Model C anvas for startups as a means to outline hypotheses to initiate new enterprises or projects in the framework of an existing business. However, some experts have argued that the BMC fails to take into account certain critical aspects. Eric Ries [45] followed with the Lean Startup methodology for rapidly identifying conditions and attaining solutions with a minimized reaction time.

The Lean Startup methodology is based on the "build–measure–learn" or "action–reaction–adjustment" cycle, which eliminates all accessory elements from the process to quickly detect if the path is correct and, if not, to rectify it. In light of this methodology, and in response to this need, Ash Maurya [46] proposed the Lean Canvas tool.

Figure 2; Figure 3 reveal the similarities and contrasts between the two canvases. The first, and most important, is that the BMC focuses on the market and business, while the Lean Canvas focuses on the market and the product.

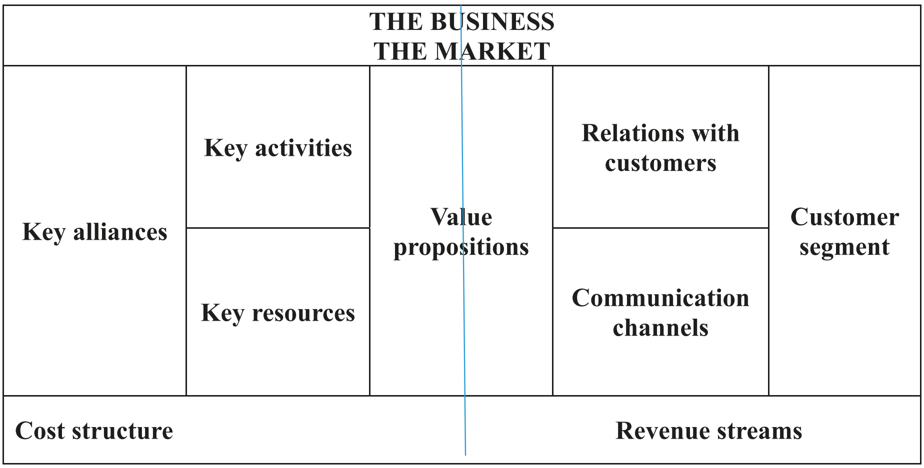

Figure 2. Business model canvas. Source: Javier Megias [47].

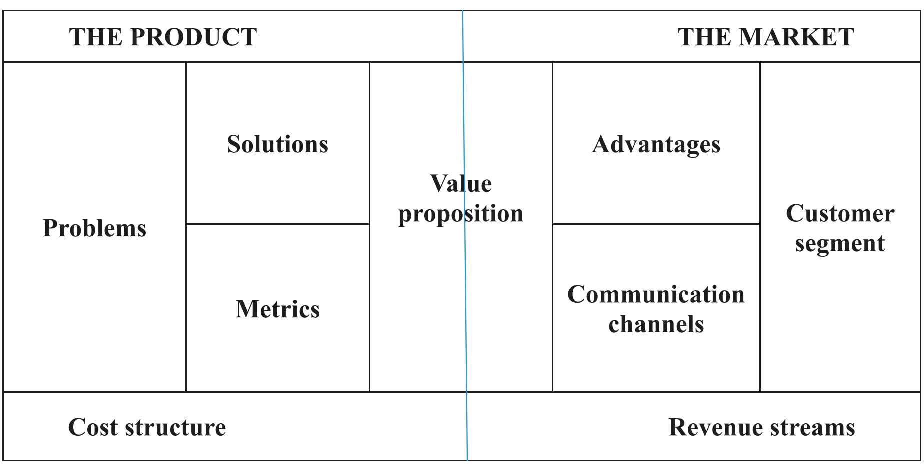

Figure 3. Lean Canvas. Source: Javier Megias [48].

The modules common to both canvases are:

- the value proposition, indicating what is provided to the consumer;
- the customer, i.e., the segment to which the value is allocated;
- channels allowing communication with the customer;
- definition of revenues and cost structure.

The contrasting modules of the Lean Canvas are:

- in the market block, channels and customer relations are merged and a module is opened to define the advantages that are different from those of the competition;

- in the product block, the following modules are observed:
  - ➢ problems that the client presents replace the key alliances that are irrelevant in most startups,
  - ➢ solutions to the problems replace key activities,
  - ➢ metrics that validate hypotheses and eliminates key resources.

In order to minimize the build–measure–learn cycle, it is possible to dispense with the identification of key activities and resources, even if at a certain time it will be necessary to return to these tasks.

The current study was the first attempt to determine the perspectives of flamenco practitioners on the effects, benefits, and harms of its tourist value, especially since its Intangible Heritage of Humanity award, in order to develop a tourist product directed to public or private managers that is respectful of the art's essence through a Lean Canvas model.

The genuine characteristics of the flamenco world and its practitioners, as well as the type of information obtained, indicated that a qualitative methodology was the most suitable means by which to attain the objectives of this research.

This therefore led to the choice of a survey of experts from the flamenco world. After selection, personalized interviews were carried out with a defined script open to non-directed comments. The interviews, most often face-to-face, were conducted by the researchers themselves. Some were also conducted via telephone or online questionnaire. The interviews were halted when the sampling attained 30, the saturation point of the data.

The experts were from different spheres of flamenco: public and private entrepreneurs, managers, writers, and artists. Some, such as the guitarist Vicente Amigo or the bailaora (dancer)/businesswoman Blanca del Rey, were recognized artists, while others were influential personalities.

The majority of respondents were men. It is certainly true that in the area of flamenco, men's performance still predominates over that women. We might add that the association network itself, the flamenco rocks, were originally restricted-access and only men could enter.

Some of the interviewees belonged to several of the fields under study; for example, it is very common to find artists who in turn are entrepreneurs or representatives of other artists. With this premise in mind, we disaggregated the sample's composition: the largest number of respondents were researchers, writers, or journalists, followed by artists; an important response was obtained from flamenco managers in public administration, located mainly in the Andalusian Institute of Flamenco; and finally, presidents of clubs, private entrepreneurs, and representatives of artists were also interviewed.

In general, data were obtained through a face-to-face interview, although some respondents were reached by telephone or through a survey via the Internet. However, live conversation had taken place previously with each of them.

The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions grouped into five blocks. Block 1: the respondent sociological profile; Block 2: personal opinions of flamenco and venues in general; Block 3: assessments of flamenco; Block 4: opinions on flamenco and tourism; Block 5: open questions regarding the key factors of the development of flamenco and flamenco tourism.

5. Results and Fashioning the Lean Canvas Tool

Flamenco, despite its relevance in cultural tourism, has not been scrutinized by the scientific community. Few researchers in Spain—or in Andalusia, defender of the art as its own—consider flamenco to be a dynamic element of cultural tourism [36,42]. The few existing studies have examined it from a panoramic perspective or from the point of view of the tourist [20,35,37,41,49]. Furthermore, the authors of the current paper did not identify any study that addressed the question of the vision, the positioning, and the propositions of action of flamenco as a phenomenon of cultural tourism from the art's practitioners: artists and representatives who live from or for flamenco.

The sample comprised 30 participants, mostly men (76%), broken down into artists (23%), media professionals (13%), and peña (club) managers (40%) (about half from the public sector). The remaining 23% were researchers, scholars, and writers. Age ranged from 26 to 73 (average about 30), with about 30% between 40 and 49 and the same proportion older than 60. Participants up to 40 represented 20%, and the same proportion was between 50 and 59. Finally, 77% held university qualifications.

Applying the Lean Canvas Tool to Flamenco and Tourism

The product was flamenco and the customer was the tourist. The particularity is that the product is managed by both public and private institutions with the common goal of promoting flamenco. However, the means and channels are very different, and the product sometimes does not respond to what is really expected.

In the following section, we present the more outstanding elements of this business model in each of the Lean Canvas modules following the opinions of the experts. Given that the value proposition is in line with the market and the product, we first present the market values.

1. Value Propositions

Flamenco is an exclusive form of artistic expression involving the spectator through positive and negative passion.

The intentional musical tourist will gain more in-depth knowledge of the flamenco culture and instruction, and will develop a capacity of criticism.

The cultural musical tourist will learn about flamenco and differentiate it from other musical styles.

The casual musical tourist, although interested in culture in general, is not necessarily attracted to music and dance. Flamenco to these tourists can be a pleasant surprise, and witnessing an event can provoke emotions and development of a future bond with the art.

Finally, the accidental musical tourist will not particularly seek out culture, but will aspire to amusement through flamenco. Strategies targeted at this group require refinement due to the potential of capturing a new flamenco tourist.

2. Market

The clients defined above are:

- intentional musical tourist,
- cultural musical tourist,
- casual musical tourist,
- accidental musical tourist.

3. Channels

The tourist should receive quality information at the source/destination, along with an affordable and quality product from the standpoint of entertainment and instruction.

The Barometer of the Image of Spain by the Elcano Royal Institute [49] indicated that many countries, especially Japan, identify flamenco as a cultural image of Spain. In fact, when foreigners are asked to state a word evoking Spain, one of the most common is flamenco, preceded, generally, by bulls, sun, cities, and football. Hence, since foreigners possess an idea of flamenco, it is convenient to define the effective channels of communication.

Almost all collaborators, barring two, agreed on flamenco's great presence on the Internet and especially in social networks. This is a fundamental factor for its diffusion among tourists for two reasons: First, because it allows an initial contact with the art without having to leave their country, and, secondly, once at the tourist destination, it allows them to identify where flamenco events are commonly offered and to have access to criticism of the events.

Communication with tourists, interested in flamenco or not, can therefore take place through the Internet. However, in the case of the uninterested tourist, it is essential to reinforce a personal relationship through agencies, hotels, and tourist offices that facilitate, encourage motivation, and promote the art in their own country.

Communication channels are fundamental to defining strategies that allow increasing tourism. It is thus necessary to contemplate, on one hand, the channels of diffusion, and on the other, the channels of supply.

It is also fundamental for the channels to define a joint marketing plan across all entities, following certain guidelines. There are, for example, private websites with agendas of flamenco events, websites often fed by the occasional arrival of information, or websites of clubs promoting their own shows.

Some interesting websites include the ones presented below, noting that none covers all of the flamenco experiences on offer, that the information largely comes from particular initiatives that want to publicize their events, and that shows in which the publishing institution is involved are included.

Junta de Andalucía website: this access does not include flamenco events in general, but does mention specific events [50].

Andalusian Institute of Flamenco website: this link leads to the website belonging to the Junta de Andalucía, mainly focused on events in which the institution itself participates [51].

Deflamenco website: open nationally and internationally, including large events that occur in main locations [52].

Guiaflama website: shows most representative national events and some from France [53].

Cordobaflamenca website: website that collects all the flamenco events that are communicated to it, focusing mainly on local events [54].

Large events of great prestige usually, in turn, have their own wide-ranging marketing plans. In the dissemination of flamenco events, the following channels are used, but it is important to make a coordination effort and, in all of them, the entire offer appears regardless of whether it is a public or private offer:

- social networks,
- specialized websites,
- travel agencies (essential to planning a flamenco trip),
- hotels (very important for making contact with undecided tourists),
- tourist offices.

The events are mainly located in theatres, prestigious cultural public spaces such as courtyards in Córdoba, flamenco clubs, and private premises.

4. Advantages

Flamenco tourism offers the following advantages:

a) Regarding the general tourism on offer in Spain:
    - Flamenco has a competitive advantage over the classic bull and sun offers, as it is not linked to any particular season.
    - Tourism marketing for representative cities can combine with flamenco. This notion is bolstered by the fact that many tourist cities are in Andalusia, and that most Spanish capitals maintain an outstanding flamenco culture.

b) Regarding the tourist experience:
    - Flamenco is an unlimited experience—the more one delves into this world, the more one becomes involved.
    - Flamenco exists in harmony with other tourist attractions such as gastronomy and wine. Flamenco events can even take place at emblematic sites.

5. Revenue

Their main drawback regarding revenue is that many events are not advertised along rigorous lines. In private premises, entrance fees are collected, and are often linked to a minimal consumption. Venues can also be organized free of charge, in pre-paid venues or in theatres after purchasing a ticket.

However, given the lack of regulations and accreditation certificates, how can a venue's quality be confirmed? Is it based on whether there is an entrance fee or not? Given to the general consensus that a venue's value is measured according to the curriculum or trajectory of the artist, just under half of the respondents believed that purchasing a ticket is not a guarantee of quality. There are, in fact, many high-level venues free of charge organized by peñas and public entities. However, 41% indicated that there is a link between an entrance fee and the value of the event.

At times, tourists cannot be certain of the quality of a performance. In these cases, it is advisable to establish quality certificates offering information as to whether the artists are new or experienced, and whether they are relevant or not in the artistic world. Moreover, the experts concurred that "free flamenco" venues are counterproductive and depreciate the art.

On other occasions, flamenco is offered as a complementary service without an entrance fee or other cost (Figure 4). This has given rise, in certain hotels, to events of unacceptable quality targeting uninitiated tourists. These "flamenco" events that are in fact not flamenco, but another dance genre present the unwitting tourist with an erroneous notion of the art.

Figure 4. Flamenco in a restaurant. Source: Francisco de Dios, promoter.

On many occasions, a tourist's first flamenco contact will be through shows offered by hotels. Currently there is also a proliferation of pubs offering small flamenco samples and traditional tablaos that attract larger scale tourism.

There is a wide range of opinion among experts over whether flamenco in hotels promotes flamenco and flamenco tourism. The opinion of its inclusion in pubs is even more negative. The expression "el flamenquito" has emerged in reference to a low-quality flamenco designed to entertain tourists. Promoters, obviously, are not in favor of lowering the quality of the form, which is not at odds with offering a show capable of reaching people with little expertise.

Nevertheless, 45% defended flamenco in hotels, whereas the same proportion were against it in pubs. These views reflect an eagerness to care for the quality of the art, as well as using hotels as a bridge to raise the level of demand for the aficionados. Along this line, 62% of the sample (vs. almost 30%) considered that the same rigor should be applied to free hotel venues as to those with an entrance fee.

In the case of theatres, the prices are set according to the level of the event.

Another obstacle is that artist earnings are often within the submerged economy, where it is much more difficult to control quality. These cases also reduce flamenco's impact on economic statistics. The participants in general noted that this is detrimental to the sector. The artists themselves, nonetheless, differed in opinion, as working illegally leads to greater earnings.

There are also free venues organized by public entities that do not directly affect the income of the area, but indirectly attract tourism by increasing revenues of restaurants, shops, and hotels.

There are also subsidies explicitly earmarked for flamenco activities.

The fact that tax deductions have recently been changed to favor patronage has facilitated access to funding from both private and business patrons.

The global flamenco industry is made up of a wide, complex, and interrelated range of goods and services from different sectors (textiles, footwear, accessories, musical instruments, magazines and books, venues, instruction, and tourism) [55]. Flamenco, therefore, represents an important economic asset in terms of both industry and services. In the tourist sector, it attracts many tourists every year looking for exclusive venues and instruction (mainly dance and guitar), while others, although it is not their main target, desire to experience flamenco first-hand.

This paper therefore examined the opinions of experts on these subjects. Apart from three, all agreed that tourism is a pillar of flamenco's economic development—even more so in Andalusia, flamenco's source, and from where it has transcended internationally.

After describing the Lean Canvas modules associated with the market, the study completed the product's modules.

6. Problems

If there is not a problem to solve or a necessity being met, a product has no use. Many businesses start by creating a product, and only when it is on the market do they detect that its demand is not what was expected. The product is then initiates its own end. So, why offer flamenco if no one needs it?

The Lean Startup methodology strives to avoid the fall of a project and accelerates recognition of the need to change course or swing the project's initial idea.

The flamenco aficionado needs to increase his/her flamenco instruction and experience it in its place of origin.

The aficionado of music recognizes flamenco and has the need to distinguish its different styles.

The tourist who attends a venue feels the need to increase knowledge of everything typical of the area.

The debate of flamenco's purity and authenticity is wide and not exclusively linked to tourist venues. Some experts favor preservation, while others back evolution and fusion with other styles. Around 70%, in fact, defended that its assimilation of elements of other cultures opens doors promoting flamenco tourism, yet there are still those that reject fusion and insist on protecting a pure line at all costs.

The tourist presents his/her problem or need, and the product has to respect the art, while its origin is not at odds with evolution and fusion.

7. Solutions

According to the experts, the following actions promote flamenco tourism while simultaneously attending to its needs:

a) Offering a closed program from the country of origin.

Tourists should only travel after contracting a closed flamenco program.

The debate is how to assure sufficient quality so as to dissipate the debate of authenticity.

Therefore, a need exists to regulate the use of the expression "espectáculo flamenco" and limit it exclusively to quality venues. Although most experts favored this notion, about a third objected to it. If this regulation were implemented, it is essential to determine the entity responsible for defining flamenco. An alternative is a quality certificate serving as a guarantee, especially for the uninitiated, of an unadulterated event offered by professionals. However, among the survey's artists there was no clear consensus as to the method and the entity that should be responsible for managing the certificate.

Public managers, on the other hand, tended to favor adopting quality certificates. Their support and the diffusion of flamenco at an international level could encourage future visitors to experience the art and lead private institutions to sign contracts in the country of origin. Along these lines, Andalucia's governing body created the Andalusian Institute of Flamenco, dedicated exclusively to this art and its dissemination, and to publicly and privately promoting it beyond Spanish borders. Examples are the festivals of Nîmes, Mont-de-Marsan, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, the "Viva España" festival in Moscow, and others in London, Miami, and New York.

b) Offering theoretical and/or practical instruction to bolster the experience.

In order for the flamenco on offer to be of lasting quality, it is fundamental that the young engage with this art through three of its aspects: song, dance, and guitar. The schools of dance and guitar have a youthful following, but cante (singing) is particular, as it is generally considered to be a gift at birth. However, more and more cante teachers are emerging, albeit most often devoid of a teaching methodology. Sixty-six percent of the respondents believed that young people today are less fond of flamenco than older generations. Opposing this notion is the resurgence of peñas and gatherings led by young people, whose events attract the 20 to 40 age range.

Music instruction with flamenco for children would bolster the permanence of this art. Trusting that flamenco will survive simply by transmission from parent to child is very optimistic. Flamenco as a base of Andalusian culture, as an expression of a way of life, and even as a literary culture, deserves to be part of the music curriculum of the educational system. It is logical that pupils learn their regional music, and the recognition by UNESCO of flamenco as Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2010 supports this notion. Although flamenco possesses many peculiarities and many areas of study, Andalusians should at least recognize its different styles. However, although about 50% of the survey believed that flamenco should be a school requirement, 38% said it should be a complementary course.

What cannot be denied is that flamenco serves as a gateway to tourism—could an increase in instruction in schools directly influence an increase in tourism? In principle, it would only affect the inhabitants of the zone. Nevertheless, 80% of those interviewed considered that its effects on tourism, although not short-term, would have direct and long-term repercussions. Every flamenco aficionado of an area would be versed in the standard of this art.

c) Offering routes linked to emblematic sites and gastronomy.

As indicated in the first pages of this paper, musical expression is one of many elements of culture. Although musical expression is valued per se, there is no doubt that music reaches its full meaning when framed within its own cultural environment. In this sense, offering a show in a hotel is not the same as one in the courtyard of an emblematic building or in a historical tablao. Gastronomy falls into the same line as flamenco, and has always been associated, among others, with Jerez or Montilla wines and tapas. Consuming such products in the correct environment generates a life experience completely different from witnessing an isolated venue [56].

This cultural symbiosis allows the defense of the flamenco brand from Andalusia, its place of origin, where all the above elements make real sense. Given the importance of this art today beyond Andalusia, and even beyond Spain, it was compelling to examine whether experts perceived a danger of Andalusia losing its place in the defense of this part of its own culture. The opinion was divided as to whether flamenco can be used outside its origin, as well as the risk that the form be used for purposes of tourism beyond its origin without concern for quality.

d) Offering flamenco in peñas open to tourism.

Peñas or clubs are cultural associations whose members maintain and promote flamenco's three features. They organize scantly advertised periodical celebrations inviting a guest artist (singer, dancer, or guitarist) to events witnessed solely by the club's partners.

Although some, at times, offer special events to a greater public accompanied by lectures and/or training workshops, most simply focus on the local public. It is also customary for these events to be financed in part by local municipalities or by larger public institutions such as the Junta de Andalucía.

These type of venues, in fact, would benefit from greater advertising and openness to tourism that could serve to finance the association/club. However, peña members are usually purists that fear tourism as intrusive with negative repercussions. This attitude, however, is annulled as the great flamenco events are attracting more and more tourists who respect, learn, and admire the art.

e) Offering great events with intensive periodic presence (e.g., festivals of "La Noche Blanca de Flamenco" of Córdoba, "La Bienal" of Seville, etc.)

This type of offer is already taking place, with a great tourist presence echoed even by the media.

Great events are an offer well known to the intentional musical tourist, as this group, as seen from statistics, returns year to year. Informing the other types of tourists identified in this article will require more effort through advertising.

There are also prestigious events with a long tradition such as the National Contest of Flamenco Art of Córdoba, the prize-winners of which received top-ratings. However, the managers of this event have not relaunched it wholeheartedly, so it currently does not have the bearing it deserves.

When the Córdoba contest was initiated, flamenco artists were still considered "low-life". Fortunately, this tag no longer remains, as 62% of those surveyed disagreed with it. Professional flamenco artists are in fact resentful of the wealthy class, which throughout history abused their services for their private parties.

All major flamenco events must have an impact proportional to what they offer, as it is a great opportunity for the art and, consequently, for the host area.

8. Metrics

Metrics allow the extent to which tourists are attracted to flamenco and what they pay for it to be determined. Megías [57] defined 10 fundamental metrics applicable to both private and public projects that ultimately serve to estimate flamenco's macroeconomic level—that is, its total impact on the country's economy.

The metrics are as follows:

1. AQUISITION BY SOURCE: identifies the origin of potential tourists;
2. ACTIVATION: measures the number of tourists interested in flamenco through a web that makes an offer compared to the number of tourists actually registered;
3. RETENTION/ENGAGEMENT: quantifies how many times a tourist asks for a flamenco product;
4. CHURN: measures the percentage of tourists interested in a flamenco offer that ultimately did not contract it (lost customers / initial customers) $\times$ 100;
5. CONVERSION measures the percentage of potential flamenco clients (ACQUISITION) that purchased the product (MONETISATION);
6. CUSTOMER ACQUISITION COST (CAC): relationship between the cost of acquiring, which includes all the expenses associated with making the product and reaching the client, and the number of tourists who purchased the offer;
7. CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE (CLTV): gross benefit obtained from tourists during the time of consuming the product;
8. QUOTIENT OF PROFITABILITY CAPTURE: CLTV (customer life cycle) / CAC (customer acquisition cost);
9. CASH BURN RATE (CBR) refers to fixed monthly costs;

10. REFERENCE: measures the relationship between the number of flamenco tourists attracted by other flamenco tourists and the number of new flamenco tourists.

9. The main costs are the following:

The cost of artists: it would be positive to clearly define artist earnings according to categories and avoid the current situation where some are paid undeclared gratifications well below a standard value, or, by contrast, paid from public resources amounts far beyond what certain artists routinely receive.

- The cost of setting up the venue,
- The cost of advertising,
- Taxes.

Both artists and venues are subject to the general tax rate. Natural and juridical persons are levied a tax rate similar to that of any professional or profession. The increase of the value added tax (VAT) from 10 to 21% had a negative influence on all cultural activities. Fortunately, this tax returned to 10% in the 2017 budget.

It is clear that flamenco promotion requires quality control not only of the venues, but of instruction from infancy. It is also essential to encourage flamenco among young people, as well as to eliminate its links to the submerged economy. Granting tax benefits to entrepreneurs and companies financing flamenco is also essential. Around 50% of the experts responded negatively to this issue, while only 40% agreed.

Each of the modules cited above requires more detailed future study.

6. Conclusions

Cultural tourism is probably the oldest and most established form of tourism. Furthermore, it is so extensive that it continues to develop new niches. Musical tourism in the form of folklore is one of its most attractive forms, as it allows the tourist to take part in a culture that, until recently, was restricted to a small segment and inaccessible to tourists. Globalization has, in most cases, broken these barriers with a 180° shift, and this expression of folklore is now another element of the tourist attraction, which yields an increase of revenue for the local economy and artists.

As a result of this new dynamic, a wide debate has emerged regarding the authenticity of the flamenco venues offered to tourists, and the question of the adulteration the essence of the art for an uninitiated audience.

Flamenco has no clear origin. There is, however, no doubt of its roots in Andalusia, a region in southern Spain with a history of different cultures and ethnicities. As in the case of other arts, flamenco's development as a tourist product was late and strongly linked to Spain's tourist boom. A debate has nonetheless emerged questioning whether everything that is offered as flamenco is truly flamenco art, in particular when the venues are offered in hotels or pubs.

It is clear, therefore, that since the conversion of flamenco into a tourism product is unstoppable, the design of its offer must be sustainable: that is, driven by its artists as well as by those who live by and safeguard it, and that its future not remain exclusively in the hands of public or private managers guided exclusively by economic factors.

Since flamenco is a product with very particular characteristics and a great part of its demand comes from tourism, it is possible to frame it under a Lean Startup methodology which implies the launching of this product with a practical approach so as to detect errors that can serve to improve new releases. This ambitious approach requires sharing and coordination on the part of public and private organizers, striving toward a joint strategic plan.

From the public point of view, the most representative institution is the Andalusian Institute of Flamenco; therefore, it is considered that this body should lead the coordination and empowerment of all events and initiatives. We would recommend the existence of a strategic planning commission, in which the councilors of culture of the capitals of the Andalusian province, and the departments of culture of the most active Spanish towns in this area, Madrid, and Barcelona, as well as representatives of the following private groups: flamenco clubs, associations of flamenco artists, flamenco events with the greatest impact in each area, and the tourism sector.

Following consultations with experts, 250 suggestions for improvement were received, which, grouped and summarized according to Lean Canvas modules, could be classified as customer- or product-oriented improvements. On one hand, proposals were made for the improvement of flamenco as an artistic product in general, and on the other hand, suggestions were made for the improvement of flamenco as a tourist product.

The following is the plan based on the proposals that, according to the group of experts, should be coordinated by the strategic planning commission:

1. Proposals by experts regarding flamenco as an artistic product:

a. Customer-oriented (according to Lean Canvas)

- Support of public administrations;
- Development of the strategic plan and marketing plan of flamenco, online, offline, and presence in social networks;
- Professional management in the planning and execution of shows;
- Rewarding private initiatives to support flamenco;
- External projection, internationalization.

b. Product-oriented (according to Lean Canvas)

- Promotion of the flamenco brand. Presence in artistic entities (conservatories, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Instituto Cervantes, etc.);
- Promotion of study and research;
- Quality control;
- Systematic training in all aspects of the form;
- Support for flamenco clubs and artists' associations; support for young flamenco artists.

Following the modules of the Lean Canvas and the opinions of flamenco experts, we conclude that it is essential to segment flamenco tourism to adjust to its needs, that communication using online channels is fundamental for attracting tourism, that it is important to offer packages including other regional cultural aspects, and that flamenco promotion must be of a high quality that will, in turn, progress as the instruction of those who offer and receive it improves.

If artists, public and private managers, journalists, and researchers participate in promoting flamenco, they will best be served by jointly developing a project based on a strategy from the perspective of collaboration, and the creation of a sustainable tourism product of quality in the medium and long term.

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Perceived Inconveniences and Muslim Travelers' Loyalty to Non-Muslim Destinations

Heesup Han [1], Amr Al-Ansi [1] and Hyeon-Cheol Kim [2,*]

1 College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Sejong University, 98 Gunja-Dong, Gwangjin-Gu, Seoul 143–747, Korea
2 School of Business Administration, Chung-Ang University, 84 HeukSeok-Ro, DongJak-Gu, Seoul 06974, Korea
* Correspondence: hckim@cau.ac.kr

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Abstract: Muslim travelers' growth is an emerging sector of the global tourism industry. Yet, little has been discovered about their behaviors and perceived inconveniences in a non-Muslim destination. The present research was an attempt to identify international Muslim travelers' loyalty generation process for the non-Muslim destination by considering the effect of inconveniences that they possibly perceive while traveling to the non-Muslim destination. An empirical approach comprising a field survey method was used to collect the Muslim travelers' views in a non-Muslim destination (Korea). Our result revealed that halal-friendly image, emotional experiences, and desire played a significant role in building Muslim travelers' loyalty. In addition, a moderator test result of Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences at the non-Muslim destination significantly weakened the effect of desire and halal-friendly image on loyalty. The comparative importance of emotional experiences at a destination was identified. Our findings help non-Muslim destination marketers to develop effective attraction and retention strategies for international Muslim travelers.

Keywords: Muslim tourism; perceived inconveniences; halal-friendly image; emotional experiences; loyalty; non-Muslim destination

1. Introduction

Global tourism growth has proven the large-scale development of its exclusive services and products to cover a wide range of global markets during the past decade [1]. An emerging Muslim market that outstrips the present advancement of halal tourism in certain global destinations substantiated its high profitability and accessibility to several sub-Muslim markets (i.e., South East Asian, Middle Eastern) [2]. Halal tourism or Islamic hospitality notions established the basis of this niche market for previous scholars [1,2]. Several studies have deeply described such principles of Islam to be practiced by Muslims as their daily guides and instructions extracted from Islamic sources (i.e., Holy Qur'an), classified in two main terms: halal (permitted) and haram (prohibited). For example, Islamic teachings prohibiting the consumption of haram foods (e.g., pork), gambling activities, drinking or selling alcoholic beverages, having any physical contact (i.e., shaking hands) with individuals of the opposite sex, dressing inadequately, sharing lodgings and private rooms by unmarried couples, showing affection in public, adultery, and breaking fast during the holy month of Ramadan daylight (Sharia principles) are recognized to evaluate the value of hospitality and tourism products/services for international Muslim tourists [1–4]. In a similar vein, Islamic teachings instruct consuming only halal meals, which include a wide range of foods and beverages (i.e., fruits, vegetables, seafood, grains, beans, etc.) or meats/poultry strictly slaughtered according to Islamic principles [1,2]. These practices strongly explain the important interests and needs of Muslim markets globally, which are required to be considered by tourism destination developers and policy makers. Since Muslim travelers' decisions and behaviors are based on these principles (Sharia principles) [3], providing tourism environments by minimizing the Muslim unfriendly aspects of any tourism product is fundamental to boost their favorable experiences in any destination [2,5].

According to many recent studies, Muslim travelers strongly prefer to choose a tourism destination where Islamic attributes are highly available, which allow for tourism activities that fall within their religious norms and practices comprising facilities for prayer and worship, no liquor, Halal foods, and Islamic dress codes [6–8]. The availability of these Islamic attributes is part of Muslim tourists' strong traveling needs, which directly and indirectly attract their attention to visiting such developed destinations [2,5]. Hence, Islamic attributes are regarded to be major motivators of Muslim tourists' selection of a tourist destination [3]. If such Islamic attributes are not available, Muslim travelers often experience and perceive inconveniences while traveling to the tourist destination [8,9].

A fast increase in the Muslim global population, such as Southeast Asian and Middle-Eastern, is evident, and the total population is expected to grow even more [2,5,10]. Despite this rapid growth, the diverse inconveniences that international Muslim travelers are likely to experience and perceive when traveling to non-Muslim destinations known as non-OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) (e.g., foods, transportation, lodging accommodations, social environment) have been rarely examined and uncovered. The possible negative influence of Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences while traveling on their loyalty formation for non-OIC tourist destinations has also hardly been researched. In addition, while the importance of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes in explicating traveler post-purchase behaviors has long been identified [11–14], how the halal-friendly image of the non-Muslim (OIC) destination, emotional experiences, and desire toward a destination contribute to generating Muslim travelers' loyalty has not been unearthed.

The present research was designed to fill these gaps. In particular, the objectives of this study were:

(1) To uncover international Muslim travelers' loyalty formation for non-Muslim (OIC) destinations by taking the impact of their perceived inconveniences at diverse tourist places of a destination (e.g., restaurants, hotels, hospitals, resorts, shopping places, cultural sites) into account;
(2) To examine the role of halal-friendly image of non-Muslim destinations, emotional destination experiences, and desire to travel to a destination in building loyalty;
(3) To unearth the relative cruciality of these indicators in predicting loyalty;
(4) To test the mediating effect role of study constructs.

The research conducted a thorough review of the previous related literature, which is presented in the following section. The research methodology procedures and outcomes are then provided. Finally, a discussion of the findings is conducted, and the implications of the research are addressed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Image of a Destination and Its Role

The image of a place/product/brand is undoubtedly a key variable in explaining travelers' post-purchase decision formation and behaviors [14,15]. In tourism and destination studies, overall image is often described as the sum of tourists' belief/impression about a destination and its attributes [8,16]. This description of the overall image is in line with Kotler's [17] definition that image is the total set of patrons' thoughts/ideas toward a particular product/brand. In line with these studies, in the current research, image refers to international Muslim tourists' overall perceptions/impressions toward a specific non-Muslim destination and its halal-friendly attributes/performances. A limited number of previous scholars have discussed the role of a halal-friendly destination image on Muslim tourist's decision making. In this sense, A study by Al-Ansi and Han [1] identified how Muslim travelers' behaviors and loyalty were affected by such a concept pertaining to their necessary interests and beliefs. They also provided empirical evidence on halal-friendly destination image functionality in drawing more Muslim tourists toward non-Muslim destinations. Muslim customers, they found, would perceive high emotional experiences while visiting such destinations if it was possible for halal tourism practices to be properly performed in all the necessary dimensions [8]. For successful customer retention management, a company (i.e., hotel, travel services, restaurant) must create and keep a favorable image of its brand/product [15,18]. Likewise, to be competitive, it is undeniable that tourism practitioners should generate a positive image of a destination and its attributes [11,16].

As the impact of image on customer behaviors is considerable, image has long been an essential agenda in the extant tourism and marketing literature [11,18,19]. Specifically, in the tourism sector, the favorable image generation for a company/destination is broadly considered to be a vital driver of tourists/travelers' decision-making process and post-purchase behaviors [11,14,16]. For instance, Lee et al. [19] found that image is a critical trigger of travelers' emotional experiences and intentions to be loyal to a tourism product. In their investigation of the destination loyalty generation process, Kim et al. [11] uncovered that image played a significant role in generating travelers' attachment to the festival destination and loyalty to a destination. In the casino tourism sector, Hwang and Park [14] examined travelers' evaluation process and consumption behaviors. Their empirical finding indicated that casino travelers' overall image about the firm exerts a critical impact on affective experiences and loyalty intentions. In their research, travelers' willingness/intentions to revisit and recommend were critical constituents of loyalty. The evidence of these studies supported the notion that positive destination image enhances tourists' emotional experiences with a destination and loyalty to it. Hence, we constructed the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. *A halal-friendly image has a significant impact on emotional destination experiences.*

Hypothesis 2. *A halal-friendly image has a significant impact on loyalty.*

2.2. Emotional Destination Experiences and Its Role

Consumers' emotional experiences, which are not often processed in a conscious manner, are associated with affective responses/reactions to a place/product/service and its attributes [18,20]. Emotional experiences in consumer behavior and marketing are therefore distinct from cognitive experiences. In tourism, travelers' emotional experiences comprise applying their affective feelings when appraising their perceptions of a destination and its diverse attributes [8,21,22]. Due to its criticality, the use of this concept in explicating the formation of travelers' destination loyalty and post-purchase decision is prevalent in tourism and hospitality studies [1,10]. Oliver [18] and Perugini and Bagozzi [23] indicated that the emotional dimension of customers' decision-making process is likely to increase desire toward a certain behavior and behavioral intention for the behavior. Similarly, Jani and Han [21] demonstrated that patrons' emotional experiences trigger overall satisfaction, desire, and loyalty in the hospitality context. In tourism, Chiu et al. [24] consistently verified that travelers' emotion is a significant and important contributor to eliciting post-purchase behaviors that are positive for a destination. Recently, Han et al. [8] explored the role of emotional experiences for Muslim travelers while visiting tourist attractions in South Korea. The study highly indicated the significant role between Muslim travelers' behaviors and emotional experiences in constructing their future desires and loyalty. Based on this evidence discussed above, in this research, it can be assumed that Muslim visitors' emotional experiences at non-Muslim destinations significantly influence their desire to travel to a destination and loyalty to a destination.

Hypothesis 3. *Emotional destination experiences have a significant impact on desire.*

Hypothesis 4. *Emotional destination experiences have a significant impact on loyalty.*

2.3. Desire to Travel to a Destination and Its Role

The term "desire toward the behavior" indicates the motivational status of an individual's mind where a reason for the action is transformed into the motivation to practice it [23]. While intention is now-oriented in terms of time frame, desire toward the behavior is time-indefinite [25,26]. Hence, desire toward the behavior has a conceptual difference from behavioral intention [23,27]. In the present research, desire indicates Muslim tourists' sturdy motivational state of mind in which their reason to travel to non-Muslims destination is converted into motivation to do so. Hunter [27] and Perugini and Bagozzi [23,26] asserted that individuals' desire can be a motivational force of their decision/behavior, mediating the influence of its predictors on such a decision/behavior. That is, individuals' desire apparently triggers their particular intention/action [26].

Due to the criticality of this concept, many empirical studies in different disciplines such as psychology, marketing, consumer behavior, and tourism have examined the role of desire and supported the positive desire–intention/loyalty relationship [12,27,28]. For instance, in the shopping context, Hunter [27] identified that desire, which is a positive function of shopping mall image, significantly increased patrons' loyalty intention. Perugini and Bagozzi's [23,26] robust findings in the sociopsychology field consistently demonstrated that one's desire toward the behavior is the most proximal trigger of their intention for the particular behavior, and this relationship is significant and positive. In hospitality studies, Han and Yoon [12] also empirically addressed that desire toward the behavior leads to customers' increased intention to repurchase the product, which is a significant loyalty constituent. However, Muslim tourists' future intention was discussed in some earlier literatures, while their desire to visit non-Muslim destination has still not widely been discovered [1–3]. Given this evidence, it can be posited that Muslim travelers' strong desire to travel to a destination is likely to result in loyalty enhancement for a destination.

Hypothesis 5. *Desire has a significant impact on loyalty.*

2.4. Loyalty to non-Muslim (OIC) Destinations

Increasing international travelers' level of loyalty is of utmost criticality for every destination researcher and practitioner [11,29–31]. Due to its substantial positive impact, traveler loyalty to a specific destination is regarded to be one of the most crucial constructs in destination studies [32,33]. According to Oliver [20], loyalty is a strong level of commitment to repeatedly patronize/consume the particular product that a patron prefers, regardless of situational effects and marketing efforts of rival competitors. This definition of loyalty is in widespread use in various contexts (e.g., destination research, consumer behavior study, and marketing research). According to Wu [33] and Olya and Al-Ansi [2], along with repeat patronage, travelers' willingness to visit a destination, recommend it, choose it over alternatives, and engage in positive word-of-mouth behaviors is all important in composing destination loyalty. Similarly, Sirakaya-Turk et al. [34] utilized destination repatronage intention and word-of-mouth intention to evaluate shopping travelers' loyalty to a destination. Accordingly, loyalty in the present study encompasses international Muslim tourists' deeply held commitment to revisit a non-Muslim destination willingly and to engage in word-of-mouth behaviors consistently as its constituents.

2.5. Muslim Travelers' Perceived Inconveniences at Non-Muslim (OIC) Destinations and Their Role

Although it has not sufficiently and completely been discussed in the extant research and literature, individuals' perceived inconveniences when using a particular tourism/hospitality product are important in their decision-making process and their post-purchase behaviors [25]. Perception of inconveniences is regarded to be a cognitive process in consumer behavior [18]. In tourism, travelers' perceived inconveniences can be described as individuals' cognitive assessment about the harshness of the possible difficulties that have arisen while traveling to a particular destination or when consuming a specific tourism product [25]. In the tourism sector, Han and Hwang [35] indicated that international travelers possibly experience diverse benefits from the tourism product and its features, and in turn, they also experience many types of difficulties when consuming the product, which deteriorate their pleasant tourism experiences. Such difficulties are the main aspect of travelers' perceived inconveniences [25].

The importance of travelers' perceived level of inconveniences and its significant impact on their decision formation are evident in tourism [2,35]. The degree of the inconveniences that Muslim travelers possibly experience, particularly in non-Muslim countries, is even greater than that of other types of traveler groups [9,36]. Mostly, a non-Islamic country/destination is not well prepared for international Muslim tourists [1,9]. It is therefore likely that Muslim tourists' perceived level of inconveniences while traveling to diverse places in a non-Muslim destination (e.g., restaurants, hotels, shopping places, tourist sites) is severe, negatively influencing their overall tourist experiences in a destination [2].

According to Jung et al. [37] and Oliver [18], customers' cognitive evaluation regarding the conveniences/inconveniences of a specific product/service use affects their post-purchase decision-making process for the product/service. That is, customers' post-purchase decision formation is under the significant influence of cognitive perception of conveniences/inconveniences. In the medical tourism context, Han and Hwang [35] examined international tourists' loyalty intention formation process. Their results demonstrated that the relationships among international travelers' attitude toward behavior, desire, and loyalty intentions are significantly affected by their perceived inconveniences. Consistently, Jung et al. [37] developed the push–pull–mooring framework in the tourism sector. Their findings revealed that perceived inconveniences as a component of a mooring characteristic moderates the push/pull factor associations with behavioral intentions. Olya and Al-Ansi [2] investigated Muslim travelers' risks and consumption behaviors. They result showed that the inconveniences that Muslim travelers possibly perceive while consuming a product is a critical facet of tourism risk, which affects the travelers' recommendation and repurchase intention formation. The evidence described above indicated the important role of perceived inconveniences as a moderator. Given this, in the present research, it was assumed that international Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences exert a significant impact on the associations among study variables.

Hypothesis 6a. *Perceived inconveniences significantly moderate the effect of image on loyalty.*

Hypothesis 6b. *Perceived inconveniences significantly moderate the effect of emotional destination experiences on loyalty.*

Hypothesis 6c. *Perceived inconveniences significantly moderate the effect of desire on loyalty.*

3. Research Methods

3.1. Qualitative Process for Uncovering the Measurement Items of Perceived Inconveniences

Numerous qualitative interviews with Muslim travelers managed to uncover the measurement items for Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences at non-Muslim destinations. The interviewees were Muslim visitors traveling to Korea for diverse purposes (e.g., cultural/Hallyu tourism, education tourism, medical tourism, convention/event tourism). In addition, we also conducted a relevant literature search [2,8,9,36]. This process contributed to identifying seven major items of possible inconveniences that Muslim tourists are likely to experience when traveling to non-Muslim countries (i.e., (a) halal foods, (b) halal-friendly accommodations, (c) halal facilities, (d) halal services/information, (e) halal-friendly attire, (f) halal-friendly locals and social environment, and (g) halal-friendly staff). These items were used to measure Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences at non-Muslim destinations (e.g., "My overall experiences with halal foods offered in tourist places are uncomfortable").

3.2. Measures for Other Study Constructs

The measurement items for the image of a destination, emotional destination experiences, desire, and loyalty to a destination were drawn from previous research in the extant tourism and destination literature [18,19,23,38,39]. Specifically, the halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination was measured with three items (e.g., *"My overall image of Korea as a halal-friendly tourist destination is positive"*). Emotional destination experiences were evaluated with three items (e.g., "*My overall experiences while traveling to Korea are enjoyable*"). Desire to travel to a destination was measured with three items (e.g., "*My desire for traveling to Korea in the future is high*"). In addition, loyalty to a non-Muslim destination was evaluated with three items (e.g., *"I will make an effort to travel to Korea again in the future"*). Multiple items and a seven-point scale for the assessment of all research constructs were used.

3.3. Survey Questionnaire Development and Data Collection

The survey questionnaire included the measures described above, introductory letter, and questions for Muslim respondents' sociodemographic background. The initial survey questionnaire version was pretested with academics whose major is international tourism. A minor improvement of the questionnaire items' concepts and terms was made based on their feedback. A visitor's survey was conducted. Well-trained surveyors (i.e., graduate students) were educated to conduct proper data collection with random Muslim travelers. The trained surveyors distributed the developed survey questionnaires to Muslim travelers while visiting various tourist places in metropolitan cities in Korea. The surveyors approached Muslim tourists and inquired about their willingness to participate and answer the survey questionnaire. A brief explanation of the survey objectives and its purpose was given to those who agreed to survey participation. The respondents were then invited to fully read and answer the questions. The filled questionnaire was returned to the surveyors onsite. Through this process, we collected 305 usable responses. These responses were then used for the process of data analysis.

3.4. Sample Characteristics

Of 305 respondents, 53.4% (n = 163) were female Muslim travelers, and 46.6% (n = 142) were male Muslim travelers. The participants' average age was 31.7 years old. Regarding the purpose of travel, about 70.2% reported pleasure, followed by education (25.6%), business (1.0%), and other (3.3%). When the participants' education level was asked, about 39.1% reported that they had a 4-year college degree, followed by graduate degree holders (30.1%), high-school graduates or less (25.4%), and 2-year college graduates (5.4%). Regarding the visit frequency, the majority of the participants reported that it was their first time visiting Korea (78.4%), followed by 2–3 times (15.1%), 4–5 times (3.0%), 10 times or more (2.3%), and 6–9 times (1.3%).

4. Results

4.1. Assessment of Measurement Quality (Reliability and Validity)

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using Amos 22. As reported in Table 1, the model included a satisfactory level of goodness-of-fit statistics (χ^2 = 366.171, df = 140, χ^2/df = 2.616, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.073, CFI = 0.955, IFI = 0.955, TLI = 0.945). All observed items were significantly loaded to their relevant latent factors ($p < 0.01$). The results of the composite reliability calculation revealed that all values (halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination = 0.938, emotional destination experience = 0.948, desire to travel to a destination = 0.951, Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences = 0.903, and loyalty to a non-Muslim destination = 0.857) were greater than the cutoff of 0.70 suggested by Hair et al. [40]. In addition, our assessment of AVE values revealed that all values were greater than Hair et al.'s [40] recommend threshold of 0.50 (halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination = 0.834, emotional destination experience = 0.859, desire to travel to a destination = 0.867, Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences = 0.571, and loyalty to a non-Muslim destination = 0.670).

As shown in Table 1, these AVE values were also greater than the between-construct correlations (squared). Hence, convergent and discriminant validity of the construct measures were evident.

Table 1. Measurement model assessment results.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	SD	CR
(1) Halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination	1.000					4.292	1.425	0.938
(2) Emotional destination experiences	0.302 [a] (0.308) [b]	1.000				5.425	1.179	0.948
(3) Desire to travel to a destination	0.320 (0.102)	0.606 (0.367)	1.000			5.379	1.293	0.951
(4) Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences	0.012 (0.001)	−0.270 (0.073)	−0.291 (0.085)	1.000		3.619	1.256	0.903
(5) Loyalty to a non-Muslim destination	0.448 (0.201)	0.632 (0.399)	0.717 (0.514)	−0.128 (0.016)	1.000	1.256	1.217	0.857
AVE	0.834	0.859	0.867	0.571	0.670			

Note: Goodness-of-fit statistics for the measurement model: χ^2 = 366.171, *df* = 140, χ^2/df = 2.616, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.073, CFI = 0.955, IFI = 0.955, TLI = 0.945. [a] Correlations between variables. [b] Squared correlations.

4.2. Assessment of the Proposed Theoretical Framework

In order to test the proposed developed theoretical framework, structural equation modeling (SEM) was estimated. Amos 22 was utilized as an analysis tool. SEM is an effective analytical approach widely used in business and management studies to predict multivariate and complex models. Our result showed that the model contained an adequate level of goodness-of-fit statistics (χ^2 = 144.016, *df* = 48, $p < 0.001$, χ^2/df = 3.000, RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.974, IFI = 0.974, TLI = 0.964). Overall, the model included a sufficient level of demonstrating power for loyalty in that it justified about 72.8% of loyalty total variance in the non-Muslim destination. The model also explained about 41.1% of the total variance in desire to travel to a destination, and 10.9% of the variance in emotional destination experiences. The details regarding the structural equation modeling results are exhibited in Table 2 and Figure 1.

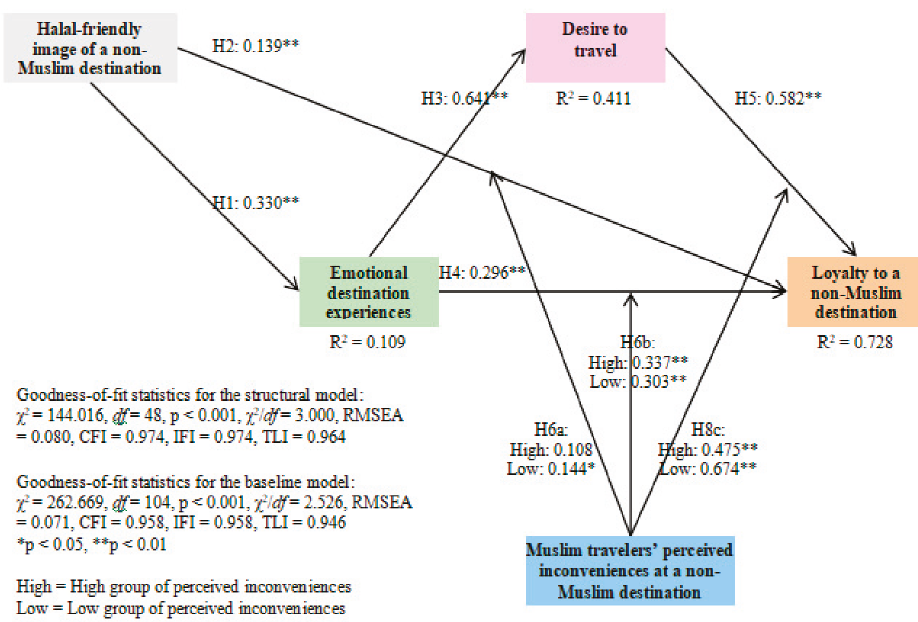

Figure 1. Results of the structural equation modeling (*n* = 305).

The hypothesized effect of a halal-friendly image on emotional destination experiences and loyalty was tested. Our result showed that the halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination exerted a significant influence on emotional destination experiences (β = 0.330, $p < 0.01$) and loyalty to the non-Muslim destination (β = 0.139, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. The proposed impact of emotional destination experiences on its outcome variables was assessed. Our findings indicated that emotional destination experiences had a significant influence on desire to travel to a destination (β = 0.641, $p < 0.01$) and loyalty to the non-Muslim destination (β = 0.296, $p < 0.01$). Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported. The hypothesized effect of desire on loyalty was tested. Our result indicated that desire to travel to a destination included a significant influence on loyalty to the non-Muslim destination (β = 0.582, $p < 0.01$). Hence, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Subsequently, the assessment of the indirect effect of the research variables showed that a halal-friendly image included a significant indirect influence on desire (β image − emotional experiences − desire = 0.212, $p < 0.01$) and loyalty (image − emotional experiences − desire − loyalty = 0.221, $p < 0.01$). In addition, emotional destination experiences contained a significant indirect effect on loyalty (β emotional destination experiences − desire − loyalty = 0.373, $p < 0.01$). This result indicated that desire along with emotional destination experiences played a significant mediating role within the developed theoretical framework. The total effect of research factors was estimated. Our result showed that emotional destination experiences had the greatest total effect on loyalty (β = 0.669, $p < 0.01$), followed by desire (β = 0.582, $p < 0.01$), and a halal-friendly image (β = 0.360, $p < 0.01$). The details about the indirect and total impact assessment results are exhibited in Figure 2.

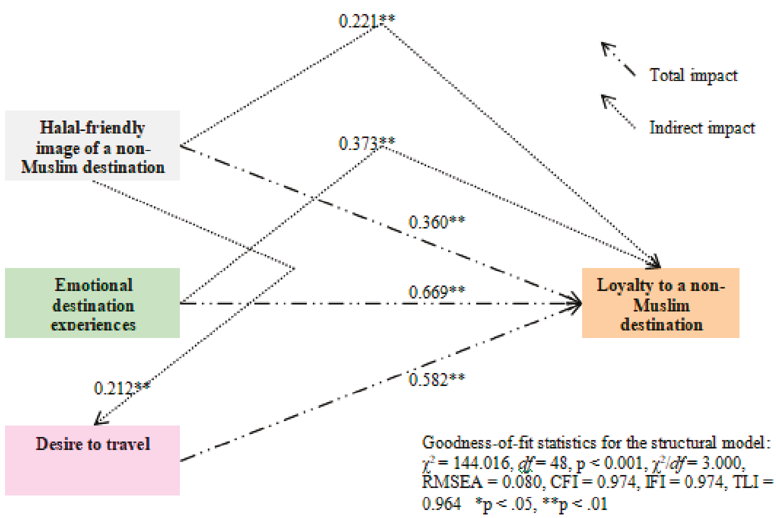

Figure 2. Total and indirect effect ($n = 305$).

4.3. Assessment of the Baseline Model and Test for Metric Invariance

In order to test the moderating influence of Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences at a non-Muslim destination, a comprehensive evaluation for metric invariance was utilized. All completed responses were categorized into high and low groups of perceived inconveniences. The high group included total of 134 valid responses, and the low group included total of 171 valid responses. A baseline model comprising these two groups (high and low) was generated. All loadings were constrained to be equivalent across groups within this model. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, our results showed that the model included an adequate level of goodness-of-fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 262.669$, $df = 104$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.526$, RMSEA = 0.071, CFI = 0.958, IFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.946). The model was then completely compared with nested models. In every nested model, one specific path is equally restricted.

Table 2. Structural equation modeling results (n = 305).

	Proposed Paths			Coefficients	t-Values
H1	Halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination	→	Emotional destination experiences	0.330	5.642 **
H2	Halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination	→	Loyalty to a non-Muslim destination	0.139	2.842 **
H3	Emotional destination experiences	→	Desire to travel to a destination	0.641	12.203 **
H4	Emotional destination experiences	→	Loyalty to a non-Muslim destination	0.296	5.189 **
H5	Desire to travel to a destination	→	Loyalty to a non-Muslim destination	0.582	8.747 **

Total variance explained:
R^2 for loyalty to a non-Muslim destination = 0.728
R^2 for desire to travel to a destination = 0.411
R^2 for emotional destination experiences = 0.109

Goodness-of-fit statistics for the structural model: χ^2 = 144.016, df = 48, p < 0.001, χ^2/df = 3.000, RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.974, IFI = 0.974, TLI = 0.964
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

Total impact on loyalty:
β Halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination = 0.360**
β emotional destination experiences = 0.669**
β desire to travel to a destination = 0.582**
Indirect impact:
β image − emotional experiences − desire − loyalty = 0.221 **
β image − emotional experiences − desire = 0.212 **
β emotional destination experiences − desire − loyalty = 0.373 **

Table 3. Structural invariance model results.

Paths	High Group of Perceived Inconveniences (n = 134)		Low Group of Perceived Inconveniences (n = 171)		Baseline Model (Freely Estimated)	Nested Model (Equally Constrained)
	β	t-Values	β	t-Values		
Halal-friendly Image → Loyalty	0.108	1.847	0.144	1.970 *	χ^2 (104) = 262.669	χ^2 (105) = 262.679 [a]
Emotional destination experiences → Loyalty	0.337	4.251 **	0.303	4.054 **	χ^2 (104) = 262.669	χ^2 (105) = 263.400 [b]
Desire to travel to a destination → Loyalty	0.475	7.280 **	0.674	8.743 **	χ^2 (104) = 262.669	χ^2 (105) = 266.982 [c]

Chi-square difference test:
[a] $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 0.001, p > 0.05 (H6a—Not supported) ❖
[b] $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 0.731, p > 0.05 (H6b—Not supported)
[c] $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.313, p < 0.05 (H6c—Supported)

Goodness-of-fit statistics for the baseline model:
χ^2 = 262.669, df = 104, p < 0.001, χ^2/df = 2.526, RMSEA = 0.071, CFI = 0.958, IFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.946
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

❖ While the link for the low group of perceived inconvenience was significant, the path for the high group was not significant. Thus, although the chi-square difference across groups was not significant, the group difference on the linkage should be meaningfully interpreted.

Our empirical comparison revealed that the link from halal-friendly image to loyalty to the non-Muslim destination was totally insignificant difference between both groups (high and low) ($\Delta\chi^2$ [1] = 0.001, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 6a was not supported. While the linkage for the low group was significant, the link for the high group was not significant. Our result also showed that the relationship between emotional destination experiences and loyalty to a non-Muslim destination was not significantly different ($\Delta\chi^2$ [1] = 0.731, $p > 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 6b was not supported. However, our findings indicated that the path from desire to loyalty to the non-Muslim destination was significantly different between high and low groups. Accordingly, Hypothesis 6c was supported.

5. Discussion and Implications

This research provided the sturdy theorization related to international Muslim tourists' perceived inconveniences in elucidating their post-purchase decision-making process and behavior. To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to develop a research framework by involving Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences as a key moderator variable and considering its roles in the formation of their loyalty to a non-Muslim destination. In addition, the conceptual framework comprising s halal-friendly destination image, emotional experiences, and desire to travel to a destination was wholly supported as it satisfactorily accounted for the total variance in Muslim traveler loyalty to a non-Muslim destination. Overall, our results will contribute to moving one further step toward (1) comprehending the role of inconvenience factors regarding how badly such inconveniences weaken Muslim tourists' loyalty formation better, (2) understanding the role of a halal-friendly destination image in driving emotional experiences, desire, and loyalty, and (3) recognizing the role of emotional experiences and desire in maximizing the influence of a halal-friendly destination image on loyalty. These results are significant in that such findings help non-Muslim destination practitioners (e.g., destination marketers, hospitality/tourism operators, tourism policy makers) to reduce Muslim visitors' difficulties while traveling as well as develop ways to increase their emotional experiences, desire, and loyalty/attachment to a non-Muslim tourism destination.

The present study illustrated the comparative importance of emotional destination experiences in boosting international Muslim travelers' destination loyalty. Results of the Fisher Z-test clarified that the total effect of this variable on loyalty was significant and higher than other study variables ($p < 0.01$). Our finding supported tourism (or consumer behavior) researchers' previous assertion regarding the salient role of patrons' emotional/affective experiences in their post-purchase decision-making process [18,21,22]. In addition, the findings of this study inform researchers that the concept of emotional experiences should be included in building any theoretical framework explicating Muslim travelers' destination loyalty generation process and tourism behaviors at a destination in an active manner. Our findings also inform destination practitioners that efficiently managing and enhancing international Muslim travelers' emotional experiences is the key constituent of eliciting their positive post-purchase behaviors for a destination. Han et al. [8] have reported similar findings on how emotional experiences (i.e., affective) play a significant role in building Muslim travelers' intentions and loyalty in a non-Muslim destination. To do so, as our result indicated, increasing the overall halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination is of utmost importance. Making a destination's image and social environment friendly for Muslim travelers would help their tourist experiences to be pleasant, enjoyable, and interesting, which eventually leads to increased loyalty to a destination.

Results from the test for the metric invariance demonstrated that the linkage from desire to loyalty was significantly moderated by Muslim travelers' perceived inconveniences at a non-Muslim destination. The strength of the relationship was significantly greater for the low group of perceived inconveniences ($\beta = 0.674$, $p < 0.01$) than the high group ($\beta = 0.475$, $p < 0.01$). This result implies that at a similar level of desire to travel to a destination, international Muslim tourists who perceive a low level of inconveniences while traveling build a more robust level of loyalty to a non-Muslim destination than those who perceive high inconveniences. From a theoretical perspective, our finding informs that the concept of desire to travel to a destination is more evocative in destination loyalty formation for Muslim tourists who perceive low inconveniences at a destination. Thus, this finding is highly in line with earlier scholars' discussions who confirm that poor management of halal tourism infrastructure in non-Islamic destinations leads to a decrease in Muslim visitors' satisfaction and future intention to revisit a destination [1,36]. The utilization of the perceived inconveniences concept as a moderator seems to be crucial in explaining international Muslim travelers' post-purchase decision-making process.

From a practical point of view, the final outcomes of this study also provided useful insights. Despite a fast increase in the Muslim population in the world, which has reached around thirty percent [9], the proportion of Muslim travelers in many non-Muslim destinations, such as Korea, is relatively low. An increase in this proportion is highly in need for the enhancement of competitiveness in terms of inbound tourism of such destinations. Our findings provided important information that minimizing Muslim tourists' inconveniences is one of the strong approaches to making the desire and loyalty relationship stronger. This result notifies that destination practitioners need to make every endeavor in reducing any inconvenience/difficulty possibly experienced by international Muslim tourists in various places in a non-Muslim destination (e.g., restaurants, hotels, hospitals, resorts, shopping places, cultural sites, transportation (airplane, taxi, subway, KTX, and bus), museums, parks) for the maximum increase of loyalty.

In the present research, our proposition regarding the dissimilarity of the associations between the halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination and loyalty to a destination was not supported. Nonetheless, the finding from the metric invariance test revealed that the association was interestingly only significant in the low group of perceived inconveniences ($\beta = 0.144$, $p < 0.05$) but not in the high group ($\beta = 0.108$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, despite the insignificant chi-square difference, the dissimilarity on this linkage across groups can be interpreted meaningfully. Our findings offer destination practitioners and researchers critical knowledge that the halal-friendly image that international Muslim tourists have about a non-Muslim destination triggers their loyalty only when these tourists barely perceive inconveniences while traveling to a destination. This result partially supports an earlier study by Al-Ansi and Han [1], who emphasized the essential role of a halal-friendly destination image in generating loyalty in a non-Islamic destination, which required high concern by tourism developers to mitigate the poor and low halal-friendly service practices. In closing, future tourism planning is focused on sustainability to achieve a high level of economic growth and nature conservation, and thus, the global Muslim segment is a future market to be leveraged by tourism destinations and developers, which they should carefully consider. To do so, sustainable marketing strategies must be enforced based on deeply understanding Muslim behaviors and inconvenience experiences perceived while traveling abroad, as discussed in the present study.

6. Conclusions

Our study provided the underlying procedure of generating a halal-friendly image of a non-Muslim destination, emotional destination experiences, desire to travel to a destination, and destination loyalty. The findings of the present research demonstrated the vital mediating role of emotional experiences and desire within the hypothesized conceptual framework. This research theorized these constructs as a bridge mediating the relationship between a halal-friendly destination image and loyalty in a successful manner. Researchers in tourism and destination management need to recognize that the associations between Muslim traveler loyalty and its predictors are hardly significant when emotional experiences and desire are not involved. While emotional experiences and desire toward the behavior are regarded as crucial concepts in consumer behavior [41,42], the integrative role of these factors as vital mediators is rarely unearthed in destination management literature. Our finding, which offered a clear view concerning the obvious mediation function of emotional experiences and desire in the loyalty generation process, thus has a critical theoretical and practical meaning.

Despite its theoretically and practically meaningful implications, this study contained a few limitations. The first limitation is about the generalizability of the findings. The proposed framework was evaluated in the Muslim tourism setting. Hence, generalizing our results to other types of tourism/consumption contexts should be done cautiously. The applicability of the hypothesized framework in other sectors is recommended for future research. Additionally, this study was focused on general financial budgeting of Muslim travelers, which highly recommends that future scholars specify different aspects of Muslim travelers' financial segment, including luxury or low budget. The second limitation is related to high correlation. While the measures for research variables in the present study included an acceptable level of discriminant validity and internal consistency, some correlations (e.g., 0.717) were fairly high. The correlation did not exceed the problematic level of 0.800 [40]. Yet, our results are not totally free from the issue of multicollinearity. A stronger and more sufficient measurement design is highly recommended for future research.

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Article

Exotic or Home? Tourists' Perception of Guest Houses, Guest Houses Loyalty, and Destination Loyalty in Remote Tourist Destinations

Tiantian (Tiana) Shi [1], Biao He [2] and Jun (Justin) Li [1,*]

[1] School of Tourism Management, South China Normal University, Higher Education Mega Center, Guangzhou 510006, China
[2] School of Tourism, Hainan University, Haikou 570228, China
* Correspondence: justinli83@scnu.edu.cn

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Abstract: Guest houses offer an environmentally sustainable way to travel. The guest house serves not only to accommodate but also attract tourists to experience local culture when they visit remote destinations. This study was designed to explore how tourists' multiple perceptions of guest houses in remote destinations affect their behavioral intention toward guest houses and destinations. Results demonstrated that both tourists' perception of exotic local culture and sense of home had a significant positive effect on tourists' loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations. In addition, tourists with high cultural distance staying in guest houses perceived a higher level of exotic local culture but lower level of sense of home compared with those with lower cultural distance. Managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations for future studies are also provided.

Keywords: guest house; sense of home; exotic local culture; cultural distance

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1. Introduction

The binary structure of "home" and "away" has a long history in tourism research [1]. However, the boundary between the two sides of the structure is blurring [2,3]. Tourists not only leave and return home but seek the sense of home on the move, as well as otherness [4]. Thus, the consumption and embracing of home exists along with tourists' pursuit of exotic and extraordinary experiences in tourist destinations [5]. Guest houses in remote destinations (GHRDs) around the world are a typical space to fulfill tourists' ambivalent pursuits of both exotic local culture and a home-like shelter similar to home when they visit remote places [6]. GHRDs across different countries are usually converted from original, local, traditional residences, providing tourists a space for temporary accommodation during their visit to remote tourist destinations. Staying in guest houses provides tourists not only a chance to experience the exotic culture but also seek a place of comfort, privacy, and homeliness. To sustain the success of GHRDs, it is important to assess how tourists' perceptions of the exotic local culture and sense of home influence their visitor loyalty. To the best of our knowledge, limited attention has been paid to these issues. Thus, the first objective of this study was to investigate how tourists' perceptions of two vital and ambivalent dimensions (local culture and sense of home) of the guest house affect their loyalty to guest houses in remote tourist destinations.

A steady flow of tourists is important for the sustainable development of remote tourist destinations [7–10]. Identifying the factors that significantly influence destination loyalty in remote areas will assist remote destinations in obtaining regular tourists and sustainability. Recently, the crucial role of destination loyalty in remote areas has been scrutinized. Tourists' perception of memorable experiences tends to have a positive effect on their destination loyalty [11]. GHRDs are usually recognized as a place for tourists to gain memorable experiences [12], not only for exotic local culture [13] but also for a sense of home [2]. Thus, tourists' perception of the exotic local culture and sense of home in guest houses may have further effects on their loyalty to the destination. Based on the above-mentioned factors, the second objective of this study was to examine the effect of tourists' perception of the guest house on their loyalty to the remote destination.

Cultural distance has received increasing attention from scholars, as cultural differences usually cause different outcomes in tourists' perceptions, preferences, and behaviors [14]. Various theories have been proposed to explain the complex phenomenon of cultural distance. For example, social identity theory provides a perspective for explaining the cultural distance or cultural diversity. Social identity theory posits that people are pleased when they attach themselves to groups that have positive standings, since the belonging helps reinforce their self-concept with regards to their association with the group. Social identity theory is an important theory in understanding diversity and it provides a cultural perspective on intergroup relations. Existing research on cultural distance in tourism study has mainly focused on the cultural distance between the origin and destination countries and its effect on destination selections [15]. However, few studies have paid attention to the cultural distance of different areas within one country and its effect on tourist perceptions and experience. For example, for countries with a large size and multiple ethnic groups, such as China, the cultural distance between different areas can be significant. Groups in different areas are usually different in language (or dialect), food, architecture, and clothing styles, among other aspects. Tourists visiting the same destination are usually from different areas with different cultural distances, and this may affect their perception of exotic local culture or sense of home in guest houses. Base on the above mentioned, the third objective of the study was to explore whether the effect of tourists' perception of exotic local culture and sense of home on tourist behavioral intentions regarding guest houses would be significantly different between tourists with a different cultural distance from remote destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Guest House in Remote Tourist Destination

The guest house is a space where local residents share rooms of their private houses with tourists for temporary lodging [16]. It is normally recognized as a type of small-scale or specialist accommodation that is different from standard hotels [17,18]. Guest houses have been extended to all small-scale accommodation offered by hosts to provide tourists a chance to experience local cultures and lifestyles. Bed and breakfasts (B&Bs), homestay inns, and Airbnb, which provides local accommodation services through an emerging online system, are prominent guest house platforms. Differing from regular hotels, guest houses offer tourists not only food and services but also a place for additional experiences, such as interaction with local people [19,20], experience of local culture [21], and a sense of home [2,18]. For example, GHRDs are a typical space for tourists experiencing the exotic local culture of remote destinations, in which remote destinations are usually linked with descriptions of "wildness" or of being "exotic" and have consumption value for tourists owing to their geographical and cultural distance from tourists' areas of origin [22–24].

2.2. Relationship between Tourist Perception of Exotic Local Culture, Sense of Home, and Loyalty in Guest Houses

Guest houses present an alternative to the traditional hotels and are gaining increasing attention in tourism studies. Existing literature has identified some main characteristics of guest houses, focused on two types: the first type is on the traditional salient attributes, including comfort of bed, privacy, cleanliness [20], economic value [25], location [18], efficiency [26], facilities, and employees' empathy [13,26]; the second type contains items concerned with tourists' engagement with remote destinations, such as the unique characteristics of guest houses compared with regular hotels (e.g., the sense of home and exotic local culture) [20].

Exotic local culture is one significant indicator affecting tourists' pursuit and experience in guest houses in remote destinations [21]. GHRDs are mainly converted from local traditional houses, and thus they are a part of local heritage, as well as a place for tourists to experience local exotic culture. Existing empirical studies on heritage destinations have identified the positive relation between tourists' perception of authentic culture of heritage and behavioral intention [11]. Thus, tourists' perception of local exotic culture in guest houses might have a positive influence on their loyalty to the guest house.

Sense of home has been identified as one of the most distinctive factors of guest houses in contrast with regular hotels [18]. The sense of home is the feeling of home, which is an intangible quality of a place with a strong, invisible, attractive pull for consumers in the service industry. Sense of home is not only about the physical environment but also related with human interactions. In societies marked with increasing mobility, sense of home is constructed and perceived not only in their own homes but also during the trip and in remote destinations [2]. A positive relation has been found between tourists' perception of sense of home and their behavioral intentions in their utilization of guest houses in remote destinations [18]. Based on the above argument, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1. *Perceptions of exotic local culture has a positive relation with tourist loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations.*

H2. *Perceptions of sense of home has a positive relation with tourist loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations.*

2.3. Relationship between Tourists' Perception of Exotic Local Culture, Sense of Home, Loyalty to Guest House, and Loyalty of Tourist Destinations

Destination loyalty is one of the central issues for academics and professionals in tourism destination marketing and management [27], as it affects tourists' tendency to revisit or recommend destinations [28] and further affects the profit generation in those destinations. Antecedents of tourists' destination loyalty have been identified, including not only the traditional salient attributes, such as service quality, but also new emerging items, such as perception of culture [11] and sense of home [2].

Experiencing exotic local culture is a main motivation for tourists staying in guest houses in remote destinations [21]. Indeed, tourists' perception of authentic culture has a positive effect on tourist behavioral intentions regarding the destination [11]. Thus, tourists' perception of exotic local culture may have a positive effect on tourist loyalty to remote destinations. Sense of home is another unique trait of guest houses that could affect tourist behavioral intentions for remote destinations [18]. Thus, tourists' perception of sense of home in guest houses may have a positive influence on destination loyalty. In addition, staying in a guest house is an important component for a memorable experience in remote destinations, as the guest house is considered a place for tourists to gain cultural experience and a sense of home [13]. Thus, tourists' perception of staying in guest houses may have an effect on their further consumption intention regarding the overall tourism product, or the entire experience of the tourist in the destination. Therefore, tourist behavioral intention regarding guest houses may affect their behavioral intention toward the overall destination. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H3. *Perceptions of exotic local culture in guest houses has a positive relation with tourist loyalty to remote destination.*

H4. *Perceptions of sense of home in guest houses has a positive relation with tourist loyalty to remote destination.*

H5. *Guest house loyalty has a positive relation with destination loyalty.*

2.4. Moderating Effect of Cultural Distance

Cultural distance is recognized as the cultural difference between the areas of origin and tourist destinations. For tourists coming from areas far from their destinations, the remote destination represents a large distance, not only geographically but also culturally. Pursuing exotic culture is one of the main motivations for tourists visiting remote destinations [21,23]. Exotic local culture in remote tourist destinations usually means the difference between the destination and the tourists' area of origin [24]. Cultural difference is considered an important attraction for tourists to visit destinations [21]. Larger cultural distance means higher level of being "different" and "exotic," and might be an attractive element for tourists. Guest houses in remote tourist destinations of one country serve a place that provides exoticism and uniqueness with respect to the areas of origin of tourists that are far from the destinations [21]; the larger the cultural distance between the origin and the remote destination, the more attractiveness to tourists. Thus, the cultural distance between the remote destination and the areas of origin may have a positive effect on tourist preference of the destination. This effect may not only occur during destination selection but continue during tourist experiences in remote destinations.

Existing research has focused on cultural distance between countries and its effect on international tourist destination selection [29,30]. However, cultural distance within one country can be significant, especially for countries with a large size and multiple ethnic groups. Tourists visiting remote tourist destination and staying in guest houses are usually from different areas of origin in one country, which means they usually have varied geographical and cultural distances from the remote destinations. Thus, the cultural distance between different areas within the same country may have an effect on tourists' preferences and attitudes toward the tourism product. For example, tourists from areas of origin with higher cultural distances from the remote destination may be more attracted by the exotic local culture of the guest house. In contrast, tourists from areas of origin with lower cultural distances from the remote destination are more familiar with the culture, and thus, the exotic local culture of the guest house seems not so attractive for these tourists. Therefore, tourists from different cultural backgrounds may gain different perceptions of the exotic local culture of the guest house, which may further lead to varied behavioral intentions to guest houses in remote destinations. Based on these, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H6. *The effect of tourists' perception of exotic local culture in guest houses on tourist behavioral intentions regarding guest houses in remote destinations would be significantly different between tourists with a different cultural distance from the remote destinations.*

Sense of home is the feeling of home, and usually encompasses the feeling of warmth and safety [31,32]. Tourists from different origins with varied cultural distances from remote destinations may form different perceptions of the sense of home. Cultural distance is also regarded as barriers for tourists visiting destinations with different cultures, religions, customs, or languages [29], and different cultural distances lead to varied perceptions of risk and safety by tourists [33]. This tendency has a further influence on the perception of sense of home. For instance, tourists with lower cultural distance are usually more familiar with the languages, diet, customs, and habits of their destination [34]. They perceive fewer barriers and risks, and thus, they feel safer and more familiar, which contributes to a higher perception of sense of home in guest house [21]. In contrast, tourists with higher cultural distance usually perceive more barriers and risks and feel unsafe in a guest house in a remote destination, which may further influence their perception of sense of home in the guest house. Therefore, tourists originating from different cultural distances in the remote destination may hold varied perceptions of sense of home of the guest house, which may further lead to verified behavioral intentions toward specific guest houses in the remote destinations. Based on the rationale provided above, this study proposed the following hypotheses (see Figure 1):

H7. *The effect of tourists' perception of sense of home in guest houses on tourist behavioral intentions regarding guest houses in remote destinations would be significantly different between tourists with different cultural distances from the remote destinations.*

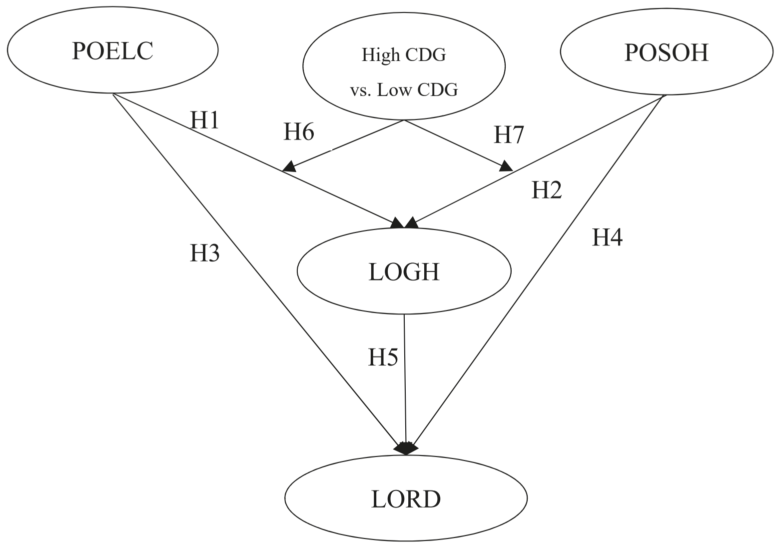

Figure 1. Theoretical model. Note: High CDG = high cultural distance group; Low CDG = low cultural distance group; POELC = perceptions of exotic local culture; POSOH = perceptions of sense of home; LOGH = loyalty of guest houses; LORD = loyalty of remote destination.

3. Methodology

3.1. Samples

China is one of the largest countries in terms of size and population; it has a total of 56 ethnic groups. The cultural differences across areas are significant, especially between the capital and some remote provinces where the timing system, ethnic composition, and natural environment are quite distinctive. For example, Xinjiang is the largest autonomous region in China, equivalent to one-sixth of the total area of the country, located in arid and semi-arid areas covered by mountains, forests, deserts, and meadows. Xinjiang is recognized as a distinctive cultural area in China that has significant differences in terms of regional characteristics from other provinces and regions in China, such as regional environment, culture, and timing system. For this reason, Xinjiang was chosen as the subject of this study.

A mixed method was applied in this study. First, a pilot study was conducted to identify the key items of tourists' perception of guest houses in remote tourist destination. Second, data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaire approach within guest houses in Kanas, a remote tourist destination in Xinjiang autonomous region, China. Kanas Scenic Area is one of the most popular tourist sites in Xinjiang, China, and receives the highest attention in terms of tourist site investment and sustainable development (See Figures 2 and 3). It is a typical remote tourist destination. Chinese tourists from and outside the Xinjiang autonomous region are the primary tourists of Kanas Scenic Area. According to Kanas Scenic Area's tourist statistics, in the last 10 years (2009–2018), tourists from Xinjiang comprised 28.97% of all tourists, and those from provinces out of Xinjiang comprised 70.72%; international tourists accounted for only 0.31%. When visiting Kanas Scenic Area, tourists from Xinjiang usually encounter a different cultural and geographical perception, compared with tourists from origins outside Xinjiang.

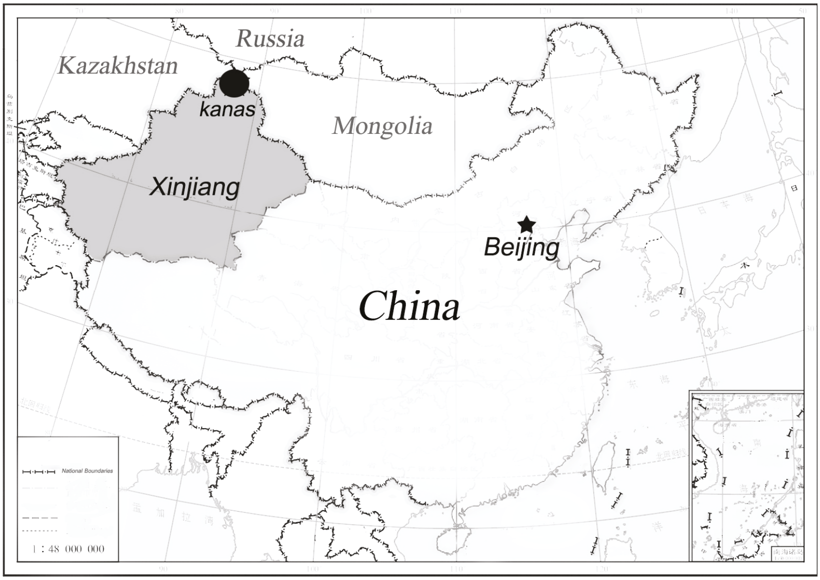

Figure 2. Location of remote destination of Kanas in Xinjiang, China.

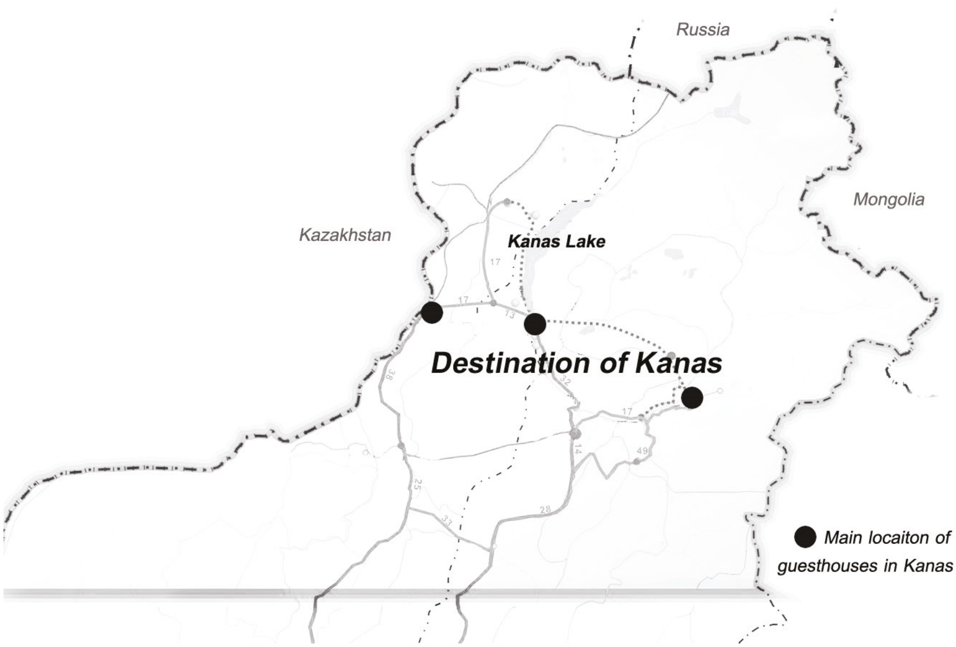

Figure 3. Location of guest houses in Kanas.

The primary data was obtained by face-to-face interviews by using a self-administered questionnaire with a convenience sampling procedure. Questionnaires were distributed by a research team to two groups of tourists from origins with different cultural distances from the remote destination of Kanas: tourists from Xinjiang, and from outside of Xinjiang. Most of the questionnaires were completed in public spaces at the guest houses, such as the yard and dining room. A total of 288 respondents were retained for research after removing cases that had missing values—139 respondents were from Xinjiang (48%), and 149 respondents were from areas outside Xinjiang (52%). Xinjiang is considered as one of the most diverse linguistic and cultural communities in China, with a number of ethnic groups. Natural scenery and ethnic culture attract numerous domestic tourists to Xinjiang.

3.2. Measures

Direct measures were used in the assessment of these five latent constructs: perception on exotic local culture in guest houses, perception on sense of home in guest houses, loyalty to guest houses, destination loyalty, and demographic profile (including items of gender, age, education level, past experience, and length of stay in the guest house).

Perception on exotic local culture in guest houses. Four items were drawn from relevant prior research to better fit it within the context of guest house in remote destinations. These four items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree. Items included the following: "I perceived the exotic local culture in the guest house from its local exterior architecture," "I perceived the exotic local culture in the guest house from its local interior decorations," "I perceived the exotic local culture in the guest house from the clothing of its reception staff," and "I perceived the exotic local culture in the guest house from the accents of its reception staff."

Perception on sense of home in guest houses. Four items were modified from prior relevant research to make the questionnaire fit the context of guest houses in remote destinations. Tourists' perceptions of sense of home was assessed using seven-point response scales. The scales used anchors of 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree. Items included the following: "I perceived the sense of home in the guest house from the time spent eating," "I perceived the sense of home in the guest house from time spent chatting with other tourists in the guest house," "I perceived the sense of home in the guest house from the familiar environment," and "I perceived the sense of home in the guest house from my feeling of being safe while staying there."

Loyalty of guest house. Four items were taken from prior studies. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement in terms of their own degree of agreement or disagreement based on a seven-point Likert scale (i.e.., 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree). Items included the following: "I will stay in this guest house again next time when visiting this destination," "I will speak positively about the guest house," "I will recommend this guest house to my friends and relatives," and "I am satisfied with my stay in this guest house."

Loyalty of the remote destination. Four items were taken from prior studies. A seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) was used to indicate responses. Items included the following: "I will visit this destination again next time," "I will speak positively about the destination," "I will recommend this tourist destination to my friends and relatives," and "I am satisfied with my visit to this destination."

4. Results

4.1. Comparison the Profile Distribution of High and Low Cultural Distance Tourists

Table 1 presents the basic information of the respondents. Apart from sex, a significant difference was observed between the two types of cultural distance tourists in terms of demographic characteristics. Low cultural distance tourists' age was concentrated in the 19–29 years range (37.1%), whereas high cultural distance tourists' age was in the range of 30–39 years (29.5%). Most of the high cultural distance tourists had a college or higher education. For almost all of the high cultural distance tourists, it was their first time to travel in Kanas area (90.7%), compared with the low cultural distance tourists (62.9%). In terms of the length of stay, 80% of low cultural distance tourists' visits lasted for less than one night or one night, whereas 20% of them stayed for two nights. For high cultural distance tourists, 68.1% stayed less than one night or for a one night stay, and 19.6% of them stayed for two night stays.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents.

	Low Distance Cultural Tourist (N = 139)		High Distance Cultural Tourist (N = 149)	
	Frequencies	**%**	**Frequencies**	**%**
Gender				
Male	67	48.4	72	48.2
Female	72	51.6	77	51.8
Age				
<19	7	4.8	17	11.6
19–29	52	37.1	35	23.7
30–39	29	21	44	29.5
40–49	40	29	38	25.4
50–59	7	4.8	13	8.9
60 or over	4	3.2	1	0.9
Education level				
Pre-high school	11	8.1	7	4.9
High school	25	17.7	15	10.2
Vocational training	38	27.4	29	19.6
University	60	43.5	74	49.8
Postgraduate or over	4	3.2	23	15.6
Past experience				
First-time visit	87	62.9	135	90.7
Repeated visit	52	37.1	14	9.3
Length of stay (nights)				
Less than 1 night or 1 night	111	80	101	68.1
2 Nights	28	20	29	19.6
3–4 Nights	0	0	16	10.6
5 Nights or over	0	0	3	1.7

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was implemented to validate the internal and external consistency of the study's constructs. Four competing measurement models were directly compared to estimate the appropriate model. The results of the four model comparison are given in Table 2. The proposed measurement model with a four-dimensional structure was first specified (Model 1: $\chi 2$ = 129.05; df = 98; GFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.03; CFI = 0.99) and compared with alternative models. Incorporating POELC and POSOH into one single factor, a three-factor model was specified (Model 2: $\chi 2$ = 1232.70; df = 101; GFI =0.62; RMSEA = 0.20; CFI = 0.81). A two-factor model, where POELC, POSOH, and LOGH statements were constrained on a single construct was then specified (Model 3: $\chi 2$ = 2333.55; df = 103; RMSEA = 0.27; CFI = 0.46; GFI = 0.63). The four-factor model with a one-factor model, in which all attributes were joined together (Model 4: $\chi 2$ = 3285.99; df = 104; GFI = 0.48; RMSEA = 0.33; CFI = 0.38), was finally identified. Compared with the other competing models, the proposed four-factor model provided a good fit to the given data and indicated clear superiority.

The results of the measurement model are shown in detail in Table 3. The model provided an adequate fit to the data ($\chi 2$ = 129.05, df = 98, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.98). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03, less than the recommended 0.08 threshold. The item loadings were also examined to estimate convergent validity. The item loadings in our proposed model were significant and surpassed 0.50. Discriminant validity was further validated as the average variance extracted (AVE) for each factor exceeded the squared correlation between any pair of factors (e.g., ranging from 0.83 to 0.92).

Table 2. Model comparisons.

Models	Factors	χ^2	df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	Comparison	Δ^2	Δdf
Model 1	Four factors	129.05	98	0.99	0.95	0.03			
Model 2	Three factors, based on Model 1, POELC. and POSOH, were combined into one factor	1232.70	101	0.81	0.62	0.20	1 vs. 2	1103.65 **	3
Model 3	Two factors, based on model 1, POELC, POSOH, and LOGH, were combined into one factor	2333.55	103	0.46	0.63	0.27	1 vs. 3	1100.85 **	2
Model 4	One factor; all four factors were combined into one factor.	3285.99	104	0.38	0.48	0.33	1 vs. 4	952.44 **	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Measurement model.

Paths	Loadings (t-Value)	Reliability	Skewness; Kurtosis	Error Variance	Item R-Square
loyalty of guest houses		CR = 0.98, AVE = 0.92			
LOGH→LOGH1	0.98 ***		−0.58; −0.48	0.04	0.96
LOGH→LOGH2	0.98 ***(56.40)		−0.64; −0.30	0.04	0.96
LOGH→LOGH3	0.97 ***(51.96)		−0.64; −0.43	0.06	0.94
LOGH→LOGH4	0.90 ***(32.35)		−0.67; −0.35	0.19	0.82
perceptions of sense of home		CR = 0.96, AVE = 0.86			
POSOH→POSOH1	0.89 ***		−0.46; −0.53	0.21	0.79
POSOH→POSOH2	0.97 ***(28.32)		−0.57; −0.32	0.07	0.94
POSOH→POSOH3	0.93 ***(25.20)		−0.68; −0.27	0.14	0.86
POSOH→POSOH4	0.93 ***(25.75)		−0.45; −0.54	0.13	0.87
perceptions of exotic local culture		CR = 0.95, AVE = 0.84			
POELC→POELC1	0.90 ***		−0.47; −0.64	0.20	0.80
POELC→POELC2	0.90 ***(23.92)		−0.38; −0.46	0.19	0.81
POELC→POELC3	0.89 ***(23.12)		−0.40; −0.46	0.21	0.79
POELC→POELC4	0.98 ***(29.54)		−0.41; −0.53	0.05	0.95
loyalty of remote destination		CR = 0.95, AVE = 0.83			
LORD→LORD1	0.90 ***		−0.56; −0.33	0.19	0.81
LORD→LORD2	0.90 ***(24.19)		−0.43; −0.42	0.19	0.81
LORD→LORD3	0.89 ***(23.09)		−0.49; −0.39	0.22	0.78
LORD→LORD4	0.96 ***(28.77)		−0.59; −0.25	0.08	0.93
Fit indices of the reflective measurement model: χ2(d.f.) = 129.05 (98), $p < 0.00$ (χ2/d.f. = 1.32); CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.95; NFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.03; SRMR = 0.03					

Note. *** $p < 0.00$. The average variance extracted (AVE) and the composite reliability (CR) appear in the reflective scales to evidence reliability.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Maximum likelihood estimation of the structural equation model (SEM) was adopted to test the proposed conceptual model in Figure 1. SEM provides appropriate measures that allow the statistical evaluation of overall model fit. The model indicated acceptable fit, except for the chi-square values, owing to the sample size. Other fit indices for the proposed model were above the criterion levels. Tourists' perceptions of exotic local culture and sense of home significantly influenced tourists' loyalty to guest houses in remote tourist destinations ($\gamma = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$; $\gamma = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$, respectively), thus supporting H1 and H2. The results indicated that tourists' perceptions of exotic local culture would have a significantly positive effect on their loyalty to the remote destination ($\gamma = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H3. However, tourists' perceptions of sense of home did not have a significant relation with loyalty to remote destination ($\gamma = 0.07$, $p > 0.05$); H4 was not supported. Intuitively, if a place invokes a sense of belonging to a home, tourists could derive more loyalty from that travel experience. However, additional factors, such as overall satisfaction, place attachment, and personality traits, may intervene in this path, providing an adequate explanation for this non-significant finding. Finally, tourist's loyalty to guest houses was also positively correlated with loyalty to remote destinations, and H5 was significantly supported ($\gamma = 0.51$, $p < 0.01$) (See Figure 4).

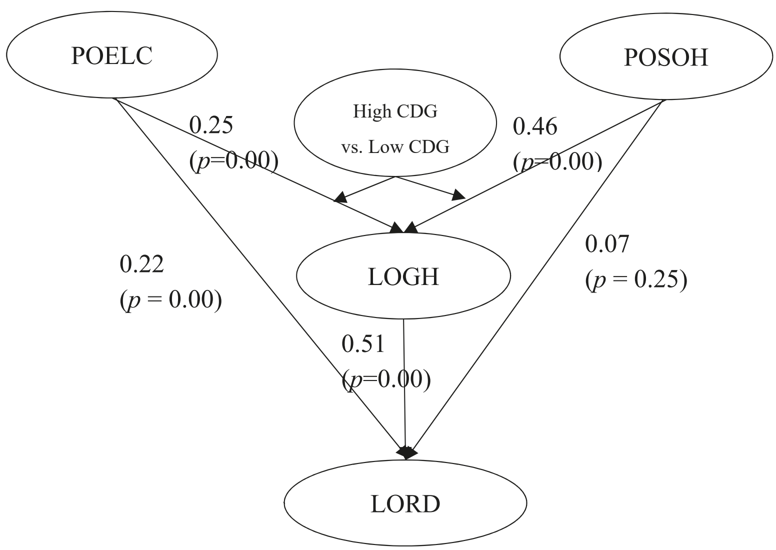

Figure 4. Results of SEM.

4.4. Invariance Test of Measurement Model

The respondents were divided into two groups according to cultural distance. The high and low cultural distance groups included 149 and 139 participants, respectively. The equality constraints for item loadings across two groups were examined (see Table 4). The unconstrained model was identified by conducting CFA for these two groups without loadings. A full metric invariance model was then specified by conducting CFA for the two groups with fixed loadings. The unconstrained model and full-metric invariance model were subsequently compared. The results showed no statistically significant difference between the two models ($\chi 2$ (12) = 12.98, $p = 0.370$). Thus, the measurement structure was unaffected by changes in different cultural distance groups.

Table 4. Measurement invariance test.

Group	Models	χ^2	*df*	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	$\Delta\chi 2$	Full-Metric Invariance
Cultural	Non-restricted mode	147.04	102	0.04	0.99	0.97	$\Delta\chi 2$ (12) = 12.98 $p = 0.370$ (insignificant)	Supported
	Full-metric invariance	160.02	114	0.04	0.99	0.97		

4.5. Invariance Test of Structural Model

Table 5 shows the results of the invariance test. The baseline models for the two cultural distance groups were consistent with the data ($\chi 2 = 147.0$, CFI = 0.991; GFI = 0.922, IFI = 0.991, RMSEA = 0.039). Parameters were estimated as sequentially equal to evaluate the equality of the specific paths of these two groups. The baseline and other nested models were compared by a chi-square difference test. A certain parameter constraint in the different cultural distance groups was first specified. The results indicated statistically significant differences between the two groups. The relation between perceptions of exotic local culture and tourists' loyalty to guest houses was significantly affected by cultural distance ($\chi 2$ (1) = 9.8; $p = 0.0017$). Perceptions of exotic local culture had a larger impact on high cultural distance tourists' loyalty to guest houses ($\gamma = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$) compared with low cultural distance tourists ($\gamma = 0.19$, $p > 0.05$); thus, H6 was supported. Regarding the relation between tourists' perceptions of sense of home and their loyalty to guest houses, the relations in the high and low cultural distance groups were significantly different ($\chi 2$ (1) = 5.4, $p = 0.0201$) for low cultural distance tourists; their perceptions of sense of home had a greater impact on their loyalty to guest houses ($\gamma = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$) compared with high cultural distance tourists ($\gamma = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, H7 was supported.

Table 5. Invariance tests of the structural models for cultural distance groups.

Paths	Low CDG		High CDG		Baseline Model (Freely Estimated)	Nested Model (Constrained to Be Equal)
	Coefficients	t Value	Coefficients	t Value		
POELC→LOGH	0.19	2.12	0.45	5.76	$\Delta\chi 2$ (102) = 147.0	$\Delta\chi 2$ (103) = 156.8 [a]
POSOH→LOGH	0.54	6.47	0.33	4.38	$\Delta\chi 2$ (102) = 147.0	$\Delta\chi 2$ (103) = 152.4 [b]
Baseline model fit: $\chi 2(102) = 147.037$ ($p < 0.01$); CFI = 0.991; GFI = 0.922, IFI = 0.991, RMSEA = 0.039						

a: $\Delta\chi 2$ (1) = 9.8; $p = 0.0017 < 0.01$(significant); b: $\Delta\chi 2$ (1) = 5.4; $p = 0.0201 < 0.05$(significant).

5. Discussion

Guest houses receive increasing attention both in the academe and industry. Although tourists' complicated demands for both exotic culture and sense of home in tourist destinations have been reported by prior research, there is limited research on tourists' perception of exotic local culture and sense of home in guest houses. Using guest houses as the research context, this study attempted to develop and test empirically an integrated model of the relation among tourists' perception of exotic local culture, tourists' perception of sense of home, guest house loyalty, and destination loyalty. Results demonstrated that both tourists' perception of exotic local culture and sense of home had a significant positive effect on tourists' loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations. The current study also aimed to contribute to and extend prior research by conceptualizing and empirically testing the moderating effect of cultural distance between tourists' perceptions of exotic local culture, sense of home, and guest house loyalty. Results indicated that tourists with high cultural distance staying in guest houses perceived a higher level of exotic local culture but lower level of sense of home compared with those with lower cultural distance (See Table 6).

Table 6. The results of hypothesis testing.

Paths			Proposed Direction	Results
Exotic local culture	→	Loyalty to guest houses	+	Supported
Sense of home	→	Loyalty to guest houses	+	Supported
Exotic local culture	→	Loyalty to remote destinations	+	Supported
Sense of home	→	Loyalty to remote destinations	+	Not supported
Exotic local culture	→	Loyalty to remote destinations	+	Supported
Exotic local culture	→	Loyalty to guest houses (High vs. Low)	n.a.	Supported
Sense of home	→	Loyalty to guest houses (High vs. Low)	n.a.	Supported

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

The current research makes three major contributions to the body of research in tourism. First, our results documented that tourists' perception of exotic local culture and sense of home during their stay in guest houses in remote destinations have a significant positive effect on their guest house loyalty. Although research has identified tourists' demand and motivation for cultural experience in guest houses and their pursuit of sense of home, which are important attributes for the successful operation of guest houses, few efforts have been directed toward measuring the effect of cultural experience and sense of home in guest houses on willingness to re-consume the experience offered at guest houses in remote destinations. This study contributes to this gap by measuring tourist perception of exotic local culture and sense of home in guest houses and examining their relation to loyalty to guest houses. This study confirmed that experiences of exotic local culture and sense of home are important attributes for guest houses to attract tourists to re-consume the guest house or recommend it to others. In addition, this study also contributes to existing literature for advancing the understanding of the ambivalence of modernity in tourism by conducting empirical studies of tourist behaviors in guest houses in remote destinations. Although research has suggested that tourists' imagination of remote destination as "exotic" is an advantage for remote tourist destinations [35], and the positive effect of tourist perception of exotic local culture on guest house loyalty echoes this, the current study also revealed the positive effect of tourist perception of sense of home on guest house loyalty. This other side sheds light on tourists' preference of sense of home also existing during their stay in guest houses in remote destinations. The results of this study implied that "home" and "away" are not strictly two separate sides; tourists staying in guest houses in remote destinations pursue both sense of "home" and the "destination far away".

Second, this study reported that tourists' perception of exotic local culture in guest houses has a significant positive effect on their behavioral intention with respect to the remote destination. Destination loyalty is an important issue for tourism destination marketing and management. Research has identified the positive effects of tourists' cultural experience and perception of cultural items on destination loyalty. Although the guest house is identified as a place to experience local culture, and thus, the guest house in a remote destination provides tourist cultural experience, to our knowledge, very few studies have paid attention to the relation between tourists' perception of cultural experiences in guest houses and their loyalty to the destination. This study has been one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine the relation between tourists' perception of exotic local culture in guest houses in remote destinations and destination loyalty. The results showed the positive effect of tourists' perception of exotic local culture of guest houses on their loyalty to the remote destination. The results also demonstrated that tourists' loyalty to guest houses significantly and positively affect their loyalty to the destination. These results imply the role of guest houses as a cultural attraction to remote destinations. Based on the outcomes, tourism and destination administration institutions should pay more attention to the regulation and sustainable development of guest houses in remote destinations. Besides, this finding also underlines the importance of tourists' perception of "exotic" culture in remote tourist destinations, which is in line with the previous literature's position that tourists visiting remote destinations are motivated by the pursuit of the "unfamiliar" and "exotic."

Third, this study investigated the moderating effect of culture distance on the relation between tourist perception of exotic local culture or sense of home and loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations. This study extended the theories of social identity in a tourism context. Cultural distance has been reported to affect micro tourist international destination selection behaviors and macro international tourist flows. The present study contributes to knowledge of cultural distance by investigating the effect of cultural distance between tourists from areas within the same country. Indeed, cultural distance affects tourist behavior not only during transnational travel but also in domestic travel. Our results documented that domestic tourists' cultural distance has a moderating effect on both the relation of tourists' perception of exotic local culture, sense of home, and loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations. For example, for tourists with higher cultural distance from a remote destination, their perception of exotic local culture would have a greater impact on their loyalty to guest houses. For tourists originating from lower cultural distance from the destination, their perception of sense of home would have a greater effect on their loyalty to guest houses. The current work also advances our understanding of cultural distance by examining its effect on broader tourist behaviors, extending beyond destination selection, given that it moderates the relation between tourist perception and loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations.

5.2. Managerial Implications

As guest houses are becoming hot spots for investment, competition is becoming increasingly fierce, especially after the boom of various online reservation platforms for guest houses, such as Airbnb and Booking.com. The findings of the current study offer three suggestions for destination marketers and operators to develop properly effective promotion and operation strategies.

First, according to the finding on the positive effect of tourist perception of exotic local culture and sense of home on loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations, many interesting and managerial implications of high utility can be derived. For example, guest house operators should reproduce the space of the guest house to maintain the exotic local culture through various methods, such as maintaining exotic local-style architecture, embedding more local symbols in decorations, inspiring the wearing of local traditional dress or hair, making local food, and living the local life style in guest houses. Guest house operators should construct an environment with a sense of home through providing more home-like interactions, comforts, relaxation, and convenience to tourists. For instance, operators should provide various food and rooms for different tourists, such as providing local snacks or rooms with local-style decorations of the remote destination, food with similar flavors from origin home, and room decorations and facilities that provide a sense of modern similarity to home (e.g., sheets with popular drawings and design). Further, the complementary toiletries should be replaced by reusable items with more modern design, similar to those used at home, which also embraces the idea of environmental protection in many tourists' ordinary lives.

Second, this study found that tourists' perceptions of local exotic culture has a positive effect on loyalty to the destination where the guest house is located. This finding confirmed that staying in guest houses is an important component of the tourism product of remote destinations; thus, tourism and destination administration institutions should pay more attention to the regulation and sustainable development of guest houses in remote destinations. Our finding also underlines the importance of tourists' perception of the "exotic" culture in remote tourist destinations. These findings provide notable information for tourist administrations in remote destinations, highlighting the significance of tourists' experience and perception of the local exotic culture in guest houses. For instance, pictures and positive comments of the guest houses with local-style decorations should be added in tourist destination marketing materials; more pictures of destinations could be hung in the sitting room or reception of guest houses to strengthen ties between the guest house and the destination.

Third, this study identified the moderating role of cultural distance in the relation between tourists' perception of exotic culture, sense of home, and loyalty to guest houses in remote destinations. According to these findings, several important implications are provided, both for the marketing and operation of guest houses in remote destinations. For instance, customized marketing materials of guest houses in remote destinations should be made according to the groups' cultural distance from the destination. Marketing materials distributed to potential tourists with higher cultural distance from the destination (such as provinces out of Xinjiang in this study) should leave more space for the introduction of the exotic local culture of guest houses, such as the local building, local food, and local attire. Meanwhile, the marketing materials distributed to tourists with lower cultural distances from the destination should pay more attention to the narration of the guest houses' sense of home, such as providing more pictures to demonstrate the comfort, decorations, and environment of the guest house resembling a home. Guest house can also provide alternative types of rooms according to tourists with different cultural distances. Higher cultural distance tourists can be allocated rooms with more sense of home, in terms of decorations and facilities that may be similar to their ordinary lifestyle. Lower cultural distance tourists may appreciate rooms with more decoration and furniture that represent the exotic local culture of remote destinations.

6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Several limitations to this study need to be recognized, as they point to future research directions. First, the targeted respondents of this study were Chinese tourists. Tourists from different countries may have different behaviors, characteristics, and preferences. For instance, tourists from the United States, who would have cultural practices or values different to those in China, may behave in different ways and have varied preferences and perception of exotic local culture and sense of home when staying in guest houses in remote destinations. The moderating effect of cultural distance for tourists from other countries staying in guest houses may evoke a different result if studied in the context of other countries. Future studies could include Westerners and explore the potential difference of their perceptions on guest houses in remote destinations.

Second, there is a lack of generalizability in the sample of this study. The data were collected from only one typical remote tourist area in northwest China during summer, which may have led to non-response bias and posed a potential risk to the interpretation of study outcomes. For instance, there are more cultural festivals in winter, which may attract tourists with more sensibility to exotic cultures and those who are from areas with low and high cultural distances. Therefore, participants may have reported different attitudes if the research was conducted in a different season. Future studies could take into consideration the seasonal changes and collect more reliable data across different time periods to further validate the current conclusive model.

Third, we only included cultural distance as the moderating variable. However, there are numerous variables, such as age, education, and sex, which might also affect the relation between tourists' perception of exotic local culture, sense of home, and loyalty to guest houses. Future studies could use them to validate further the relation between tourists' perception of exotic local culture, sense of home, and guest house loyalty.

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The Development of Loyalty to Earthen Defensive Heritage as a Key Factor in Sustainable Preventive Conservation

M. Belén Prados-Peña [1,*], M. Lourdes Gutiérrez-Carrillo [2] and Salvador Del Barrio-García [1]

1 Marketing and Market Research, University of Granada, 18071 Granada, Spain
2 Architectural Constructions, University of Granada, 18071 Granada, Spain
* Correspondence: bprados@ugr.es; Tel.: +34958240666

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Abstract: One of the main risks to the preservation of Spanish defensive heritage is anthropic in origin and is associated with local society's lack of cultural identification with these cultural assets. Consequently, there is a dearth of conservation strategies. In this paper, the current situation is examined, then a management model is proposed, with the Torre de Romilla in the Granada province (Spain) as its focus. The model is constructed on the basis of research regarding the antecedents to loyalty towards this heritage landmark, in order to enhance its value. To accomplish this, survey data from 200 randomly selected subjects was collected and analysed. The results indicate that the antecedent factors which determine loyalty are place attachment and its perceived image, which lead to an increased probability that the site will be visited and recommended. The direct consequence of this is that contributions to the economy from tourism would allow for the sustainable conservation of these assets.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; preventive conservation; cultural heritage; brand loyalty; brand image; attachment to place

1. Introduction

The earthen defensive heritage of southeast Spain is recognised for its heritage value. As a result, it has been granted the maximum level of protection available under national legislation. However, the fact that these assets are currently in a poor state of conservation is incoherent with this position. The methodological approaches currently being researched centre on proposals for the sustainable preventive conservation of these structures. As part of this approach, and in order to enhance the value of this Cultural Heritage, different perspectives should be considered and how these positions interact should be examined. Specifically, aspects relating to preventive conservation and those associated with the socioeconomic management of the heritage asset need to be considered. Sustainable preventive conservation means that the heritage landmark becomes viewed as a resource which contributes to the socioeconomic growth of the surrounding area. It could be used and developed, it would undoubtedly act as an agent of economic growth, wealth, and employment but it might also be the key factor in the social and economic development of an area (quality of life, feeling of belonging, identity, etc.), which would be of particular importance to areas with limited economic activity. By combining adequate economic management with sustainable management, a portion of the profits generated by the asset could be reinvested into preventive conservation activities.

The design of heritage conservation strategies considers heritage as a resource for economic development, but when it does not receive this attention, the corollary is that it becomes marginalised and destroyed [1].

According to [2], public interest or lack of interest in heritage sites is greatly dependent on their state of conservation. It is scientifically accepted that Cultural Heritage assets can contribute as capital goods to socioeconomic development [3], as they have the inherent potential to become tourist attractions, thus contributing to local development [4].

Therefore, leveraging these heritage resources in a sustainable and responsible manner presents an excellent opportunity to improve people´s lives, both in terms of material gain (wealth, employment, innovation, entrepreneurship) as well as in nonmaterial ways (identity, participation, training, satisfaction, enjoyment, etc.) [3].

In order to achieve this, most modern societies are committed to and concerned with their heritage worth [2]; as a result, there has been an increase in research in the last few years which approaches heritage appraisal from different perspectives and using different methods [2,5–10]. One perspective that has gained particular attention and relevance is that of consumer-based brand equity, that is, the consumer's appraisal of the brand heritage as regards heritage landmarks.

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as the "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from those of other sellers." Brand management is the consequent effort "to create, maintain, protect and improve" [11] a specific brand to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. As with any brand, those responsible for managing it have an inherent obligation to preserve and improve its reputation and prestige.

In the field of heritage tourism, this translates as guaranteeing the authenticity, integrity, and preservation of the sites and making them available for tourists to visit and enjoy [12], whilst simultaneously taking into account the sustainable development agenda outlined by the World Tourism Organization in 2017 [13]. In fact, the United Nations declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development due to its potential for development worldwide. In the context of brand strategy, heritage landmark, brand management could contribute to tourism growth in a sustainable manner, yet also guarantee conservation of the asset and the best possible outcomes for the local community [13].

Although "brand" has become a buzzword in academia as well as in commercial settings in the last few years, knowledge has concentrated on assets and commercial services and less so on locations and specific tourist destinations [14]. However, in recent years, the strategic needs of destination managers as well as the need to broaden knowledge about the brand´s effects have led to the emergence of research on the destination as a brand [15,16].

In the context of tourist destinations, visitor loyalty is considered to be an important factor in the successful development of a destination. Numerous studies carried out in different settings (country, states, city) examine the antecedents to tourist loyalty, including motivation, destination image, quality of travel, perceived value, and satisfaction [17–20]. Place attachment and tourist engagement have also been considered to be predictors of loyalty to the destination [21–23]. More specifically, these predictors have been widely examined in the contexts of leisure and recreational destinations [24] and heritage sites which are established and well-known tourist destinations [25]. According to [4], such heritage resources have the potential to become attractions and contribute to the sustainable development of the area. However, to date, and as far as we know, no studies have been carried out which examine the antecedents of loyalty to heritage sites which are not already established destinations.

Therefore, the main objective of this article is to examine if loyalty to a heritage site arises as a result of the perceived image that individuals have of it, as well as to what degree place attachment mediates the relationship between the effect of image and loyalty. This main objective is supplemented by an analysis of the moderating effect of knowledge about how the heritage site affects these associations.

By so doing, this paper seeks to contribute to the literature on heritage landmark (Goods of Cultural Interest) brand management in several ways. Firstly, further what is currently known about which factors determine loyalty to heritage sites. Secondly, assess the role that perceived image and place attachment plays in developing loyalty to this brand type. Thirdly, examine the degree of knowledge about the heritage site as a moderating factor associated with the antecedents to loyalty. As proper management of the brand leads to increased loyalty to the heritage site, it becomes more likely that it will be visited and recommended. The resultant increased income to local communities, especially those with scarce economic resources, in turn facilitates the sustainable management of the heritage asset. All of these factors in turn help to protect and preserve the heritage landmark for future generations.

2. Background

2.1. Heritage Value and Sustainability

As indicated in [9], cultural economy is being consolidated as a significant discipline within economic analysis, due to both its rich theoretical offering and because it provides an opportunity to gather empirical evidence regarding people´s and institutions´ behaviour towards modern and accumulated culture. Within the broad analytic spectrum of this new discipline, one aspect making significant contributions to the theory and catalysing its application is the appraisal of cultural assets in general and, in particular, those which are also historical heritage. These authors [9] argue that cultural heritage assets are difficult to appraise for diverse reasons: they are unique and nonreproducible; they are usually public or quasi-public assets; thus, they do not adhere to preconceptions of consumer competition or exclusive offers; finally, the consumer believes that culture is comprised of a collection of necessary assets which the state should maintain, independent of any voluntary contributions.

Along the same lines, the number of studies that estimate the economic value of heritage sites is growing [26]. These authors identify a need for additional academic studies which approach heritage appraisal from an interdisciplinary position, the purpose being to increase what is known about its composition and about the factors which enhance heritage value.

The seminal work of [27] was fundamental in arguing for the importance of cultural heritage due to its effects on employment and productivity. Subsequently, several authors writing in the academic literature have demonstrated that cultural heritage has the capacity to act as a development tool, an engine of economic growth, and to create jobs [2,9,10,28–31], with the caveat that the public´s interest in the heritage landmark will depend on its state of conservation [2].

However, recent academic studies suggest that cultural value cannot be solely expressed in terms of economic value, although they are closely correlated [32,33]. The difference is that economic value is commonly defined as individuals´ willingness to pay, whereas cultural value refers to additional dimensions such as social value or other nonquantifiable values, such as spiritual, historical, or symbolic. In this sense, the seminal work of [34] provide a novel perspective on cultural heritage as cultural capital, considering it as a vehicle for cultural and economic values. Taking as a premise that cultural heritage can boost development in an area, these authors identify and assess the tools used by the local governments to regulate and support the use of cultural heritage in local development.

According to [35], local communities often conflict over the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural values versus the commercialising of heritage in order to meet consumer demand; consequently, there is no unanimous position on how to strengthen development via cultural heritage preservation. These differences can become polemical if the economic benefits of preserving them are not well understood [26]. In order to avoid these situations, these authors suggest that cultural heritage management is a transversal subject, which should seek a balance between environmental and landscape protection, the marketing of social and cultural elements, and local, sustainable economic development.

It has been argued that tourism has significantly increased economic and social activity and affected the geography of many cities. It provides an opportunity to improve employment and the quality of life in the local community [13]. The International Year of Sustainable Tourism agenda clearly demonstrates its importance to the international community. This agenda has concentrated on five areas: (1) Inclusive and sustainable economic growth; (2) Social inclusiveness, employment, and poverty reduction; (3) Resource efficiency, environmental protection, and climate change; (4) Cultural values, diversity, and heritage; (5) Mutual understanding, peace, and security. Within this framework, the following aspects should be highlighted: the need to develop a relationship between tourism and cultural interests which conserves both tangible and intangible cultural heritage; cultural values; pursuing creativity; the provision of social, educational, and economic opportunities. Also important is the development of innovative business models which guarantee sustainable growth in line with market forces.

Therefore, a transversal examination of cultural heritage management requires that heritage managers consider consumer behaviour towards the heritage asset [36]. According to this author, knowing what the client wants and delivering it lies at the core of the cultural heritage marketing process, although prevailing restrictions may need to be taken into account, such as the need to protect parts of a cultural heritage site due to increased wear from higher numbers of visitors responding to marketing promotions. The visitor needs to be satisfied, but not to the detriment of the heritage asset. This must be preserved for future generations, so it is incumbent on heritage managers to seek a balance between commercialising cultural heritage, tourist management, and sustainable practices that will allow heritage to be cared for and conserved [36].

2.2. Loyalty to the Cultural Heritage

Brand loyalty can be defined as a client´s attachment or commitment to the brand [37]. The academic literature highlights two basic ways to understand consumer loyalty: As an attitude and as a behaviour [38–41]. As an attitude, loyalty is a subjective dimension with cognitive, affective, and conative aspects, since it is these aspects which comprise attitudes [39,40]. As a behaviour, loyalty can be understood as a concrete behaviour which is the repeated purchase of the same product or brand or from the same provider, irrespective of whether the consumer has declared any intention to purchase in the future [42–44].

These two approaches therefore consider loyalty to contain two aspects; the consumer´s commitment to the brand and repeated brand purchasing behaviour. These approaches are distinct yet compatible, as loyalty is not formed of only either repeat purchase behaviour or commitment, but both, given that loyalty transmutes into a psychological commitment demonstrated by a positive attitude and a genuine intention to purchase again [39,45].

According to [40], loyalty progresses through different stages. These stages are (1) preference (belief) for one brand over another, (2) affective preference (attitude) towards the product, and (3) an increased intention (conation) to purchase one product rather than the competing one. In other words, this progression consists of consumers first becoming loyal in a cognitive manner, with the affective "I like" or "I don't like" coming second, before reaching the final conative stage [46,47].

Loyalty to tourist destinations has been widely studied in the contexts of the aforementioned perspectives. Although [48] has argued that in the context of tourism, studies into loyalty should place a stronger emphasis on behaviour, it has also been argued that researchers in this field have in fact mostly used this approach [49]. Ultimately, however, the benefits that a tourist brings to the tourist destination are simply associated with their return visit behaviour [50]. Their loyalty to the destination is demonstrated as their intention to visit and how likely they are to recommend it [19,48,51–56].

2.3. Place Attachment

Research into place attachment across various disciplines has resulted in considerable development of the theory and empirical inquiry. Most conceptualizations of the construct have described it as the range of feelings that individuals associate with specific places [57–59]. Although various terms have been employed to describe it (for example, sense of place, rootedness), most conceptualizations posit affect, emotion, and feeling as fundamental to the concept [60]. However, these authors indicate that emotional aspects are additionally attended by cognitive (thought, knowledge, and belief) and conative (action and behaviour) aspects. Therefore, place attachment implies an interaction between affect and emotion, knowledge and belief, and action and behaviour [57].

Aligning with this notion, according to [23], place attachment as a process by which people form emotional bonds with certain sites or places. So, the sense of being physically present and "in place" could be indicative that an individual has formed an emotional bond to a place [23].

Tourism research has extensively addressed the significance and the effect of place attachment [61]. The concept is linked to the process by which an individual´s experience of both the physical and social characteristics of a place leads to strong emotional attachments to that place [62] and, as such, is analysed as a multidimensional construct which incorporates two or more dimensions [62–64]. According to [61], the first dimension, place identity, refers to the cognitive link between oneself and a place, reflected as the tourist´s identification with a specific place or its symbolic value. The second, place dependence, relates to the functional aspects of place attachment and refers to how a particular place provides for the specific needs and activities of tourists. The third, affective attachment, refers to tourists' feelings about a place. The fourth, social attachment, refers to the social ties reinforced by a specific place. However, for [65], the question of whether place attachment is better described by two or by more components remains to be resolved.

According to [21–23,66–70], place attachment is a significant predictor of tourist loyalty, asserting a direct and positive relationship between attachment to a destination and loyalty towards it.

2.4. Image of the Cultural Heritage as a Destination

According to [71] brand image as being the consumer´s brand perception, which is held as a memory association. The destination image is widely acknowledged for playing a significant role in tourist behaviour towards it, in particular, when it comes to evaluating, selecting [72–74], deciding to return in future [75,76], thus linking motivation to destination selection [77]. According to [78], tourist perception is of crucial importance as they often select destinations which have the most positive image. If the tourist has constructed a positive image of the destination in their mind, it is likely that they will want to visit [79,80]). The seminal work of [81,82] suggest that the perceived image of the destination is the main predictor of the intention to choose a destination. Destination image is defined as the mental representation of knowledge (belief), feelings, and overall perception that an individual has regarding a specific destination [83].

Various researchers [83,84] suggest that any particular destination can be thought of in terms of three image types: organic image, induced image, and complex image. These three image types are based on individuals´ experience of a specific destination. An organic image evolves out of nontourist information sources, such as geography books, television reports, or magazine articles. An induced image arises from destination-specific tourist information, such as a brochure or a website; ultimately, it is due to marketing of the destination. The main difference between the organic image and the induced image is in the intention or the motivation to visit. In other words, anyone can have an organic image of a particular destination without intending to visit, whereas those who intentionally seek out information from marketing materials thereby acquire an induced image [84] and do have an intention to visit. Complex image could be the result of the direct experience of a destination [83]. Other authors, such as [85], suggest that destination image developed out of various fields and disciplines concerned with economic, social, or psychological factors, and is a combination of the perceptions or impressions of a tourist destination.

2.5. Proposed Hypotheses

Of the different antecedents to the development of loyalty to a destination which are considered by the academic literature, one´s own image of the destination should be highlighted. Many studies have found this to be relevant [17,49,55,86–88]. The destination image has two significant functions in tourist behaviour: (1) it influences the decision-making process regarding the destination and (2) it conditions subsequent behaviour, including tourists´ experience of the place, their assessment of it, and their future behaviour (intention to return and how likely they are to recommend) [17,81]. According to [81], a positive destination image leads to greater satisfaction, an increased intention to return, and greater likelihood to recommend. As indicate by [49], the effect that destination image has on tourist loyalty is significant to varying degrees. Specifically, these authors state that the overall image exerts a greater effect on tourist loyalty, followed by affective image and cognitive image.

Taking this into consideration, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1. *The greater the perceived image of the heritage site, the greater its loyalty.*

On the other hand, place attachment or destination attachment is linked to visitors´ loyalty to the place [23] and to their behavioural intent [89]. In the field of tourism study, place attachment is often described as "destination attachment" [23,63]. In the context of rural tourism specifically [89], a significant relationship is found between the tourist's experience, place attachment, and the intention to revisit and recommend. According to [90] individuals´ specific place attachment generally begins to develop following one or more visits, although it is possible to develop a strong feeling towards places that they have never visited [91]. In the study of [92], she argues that even tourists who are visiting a place for the first time may already have an attachment to it. This place attachment could possibly be due to having heard stories about the place from friends, family or in the media.

As a result, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. *The greater the degree of place attachment to the heritage site, the greater its loyalty.*

The seminal work of [93] underscore the importance of attachment to the destination and the destination image in order to predict tourists´ future intentions and behaviour. According to [69], the academic literature suggests that the conceptual bases for place attachment and destination image are similar, since both are constructs with cognitive and affective components that influence behaviour. For these authors, place attachment is an emotional reaction to a physical and social environment, whereas destination image represents the cognitive and affective components connected to a place. On the basis of these assertions, these authors suggest and argue for the idea that destination image is antecedent to place attachment. [94] citing [56] argue that, given that the destination image is a determining factor in tourist attitudes towards the destination, the destination image is antecedent to destination attachment. As show by [94], a more favourable destination image leads to greater attachment to a destination. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. *The greater the perceived image of the heritage site, the greater the place attachment to a heritage site.*

Alternatively, as defined by [95], consumers´ brand knowledge is all the descriptive and evaluative information associated with the brand, as recorded in the consumer´s memory. A consumer´s knowledge about a product has been considered to be an element that influences all stages of the decision-making process [96], and the academic literature shows that it is considered to have a significant moderating effect on the subject's response [97,98]. Consumers with different levels of knowledge about a product also differ in their perceptions of the product [98,99]. Consumers who know more about a product have more developed and complex schemas, with well-developed decision-making criteria [100]. In this instance, when consumers process information, it requires less cognitive effort as their knowledge structures are automatically activated and can process more information [101].

In the field of tourism, knowledge about a destination is understood as it being present in people´s minds when they are considering it as a travel destination [102]. Assessing awareness of a destination brand is done in terms of examining the selection process by which a specific image is created, and its quality assumed [103,104]. On the basis of antecedent theories regarding the consumer purchase process, including those regarding knowledge about a product, the seminal work of [105] demonstrates that the degree of consumer knowledge about a holiday destination affects the consumer's image of the destination and the probability that they will visit. Similarly, according to [106], by considering familiarity with a destination as much as the degree of knowledge that the tourist has about a destination demonstrates that, in line with [107] and [105], the degree of knowledge influences tourists' perceptions of how attractive the destination is, resulting in a positive effect on place image as well as influencing their level of interest and likelihood of visiting again.

As a result, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4. *Prior knowledge of the heritage site will positively moderate the associations between the antecedents to loyalty*.

The proposed hypotheses are summarised in Figure 1.

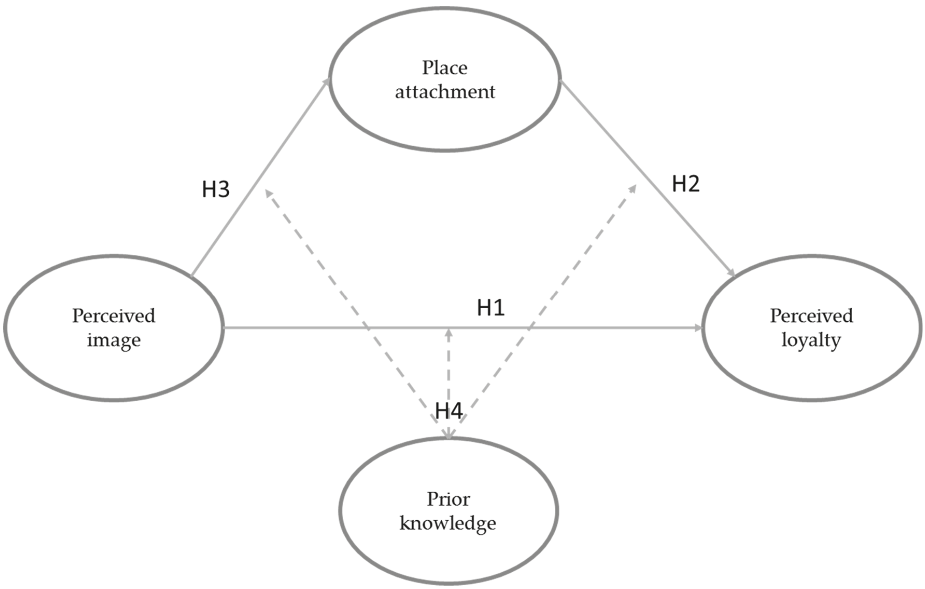

Figure 1. Model for developing loyalty towards the heritage site.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context of Study

The Torre de Roma heritage site has been chosen for the purposes of this study. This is a tower in a farmstead dating from the Nazari period (fifteenth century), located in the Vega de Granada on irrigated lands, 500 m from the left bank of the Genil River and next to the town of Romilla in the Chauchina (Granada) municipality.

Its typology is that of a rectangular tower, with base dimensions of 9.45 m × 7.10 m, which gradually narrow as it increases to its current height of 14 m. Currently, access is via the east side, although it is considerably damaged. It has an underground cistern beneath the lower level, which can be accessed via a gap in the northeast corner; however, due to the accumulation of rubble, its depth is not known. It is covered by a half-barrel vault [108] (p. 376).

The lower level was made up of a rectangular room which would have been covered by a barrel vault, of which only the innermost backfill remains. The stairs, no longer present, were located at the north corner and would have provided access to the upper levels. The first floor was made up of a square room next to a corridor and the stairs. The room was covered by a cloister vault. It had loophole windows on the east, west, and south sides, with the main access being on the north side. The last floor contained a rectangular room and a stairwell and was covered by a vaulted ceiling similar to the other rooms. There are also significant openings on the east, west, and southern faces. The tower had a terraced roof on top of the upper vaulted ceiling. Although none remain, the tower might have had a coat of arms and battlements [109].

The building technique was lime rammed-earth using formwork boxes with a total height of 82 cm. The building technique for the cistern vault and the bottom level were made without formwork, by plastering the rowlock bricks one on top of the other. This vault building technique required plaster to hold the bricks in place [110].

Its state of conservation is being affected by significant structural damage, which is in turn risking its stability, such as vertical cracks, volumetric loss, and internal stressors, causing a loss of cohesion. Its conservation has also been affected by humidity, occurring as a result of filtration and capillarity in its base. Rainwater splashes have caused significant erosion. On the interior, damage due to decohesion, loss of plastering, sanding, and impairments to supports are notable. Damage to the vaults, flooring, and coverings are also worth mentioning. Other than that which has already been mentioned, there is also damage resulting from inadequate conservation of the cultural asset.

3.2. Data Collection

Data was obtained from a survey which was given to a randomly selected sample by the governmental organization responsible for local development in the area where the Torre de Romilla is located. Fieldwork was carried out during January and February of 2018. The final sample was comprised of 200 subjects, with 103 men and 97 women (see Table 1). The age distribution is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Sample distribution by sex.

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	103	51.5
Female	97	48.5
Total	200	100

Table 2. Sample distribution by age.

	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25 years	50	25.0
Between 25 and 40 years	66	33.0
Between 41 and 55 years	62	31.0
More than 55 years	55	11.0
Total	112	100

3.3. Measures

The measures used to analyse the constructs have been adapted from existing validated scales (see Table 3). The perceived brand image was measured using a Likert scale with 5 points for 3 items (1, totally disagree; 5, totally agree) and adapted from other studies such as [111]: (1) My image of the Torre de Romilla is good; (2) My image of the Torre de Romilla is positive; (3) My image of the Torre de Romilla is favourable.

Table 3. Analysis of the psychometric properties of the multi-item scales.

Construct.	Items	Standardised Coefficients	R^2	CR	AVE
Perceived image	My image of the Torre de Romilla is positive.	0.87 ***	0.75	0.94	0.85
	My image of the Torre de Romilla is favourable.	0.95 ***	0.90		
Perceived loyalty	I intend to visit the Torre de Romilla again if I can.	0.92 ***	0.85	0.95	0.86
	I will recommend that friends and family visit the Torre de Romilla.	0.93 ***	0.87		
	They would be very likely to visit.	0.94 ***	0.87		
Place attachment	It is something that matters to me a lot.	0.86 ***	0.74	0.97	0.80
	It is of great relevance to me.	0.91 ***	0.82		
	It is of great value to me.	0.93 ***	0.87		
	It means a lot to me.	0.91 ***	0.82		
	It is very necessary for me.	0.85 ***	0.73		
	It is of great interest to me.	0.90 ***	0.82		
	It is something that attracts me a lot.	0.89 ***	0.79		
Prior knowledge	How knowledgeable do you consider yourself?	0.88 ***	0.77	0.89	0.74
	Compared to most people, how knowledgeable do you consider yourself?	0.87 ***	0.76		
	How much do you know about the cultural value of the asset?	0.82 ***	0.68		

Note: *** $p < 0.01$. CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted.

Loyalty was measured using a Likert scale with 5 points for 3 items (1, totally disagree; 5, totally agree) and adapted from the suggestion originally made by [112], and then used by other authors as [103,113]): (1) I intend to visit the Torre de Romilla again if I can; (2) I will recommend that friends and family visit the Torre de Romilla; (3) They would be very likely to visit.

For place attachment, a Likert scale of 5 points (1, totally disagree; 5, totally agree) was used for 7 items adapted from [59,114]: (1) It is something that matters to me a lot; (2) It is of great relevance to me; (3) It is of great value to me; (4) It means a lot to me; (5) It is very necessary for me; (6) It is of great interest to me; (7) It is something that attracts me a lot.

Finally, knowledge was measured using a Likert scale of 5 points (1, nothing; 5, a lot) for 3 items adapted from [115]: (1) How knowledgeable do you consider yourself? (2) Compared to most people, how knowledgeable do you consider yourself? (3) How much do you know about the cultural value of the asset? In both cases, the items were measured using the Likert scale of 5 points in which 1 indicates "Disagree strongly" and 5 indicates "Agree strongly."

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of the Psychometric Properties of the Scales

Prior to testing the hypotheses by analysing the data, the psychometric properties of the multi-item scales were examined in order to test for reliability and validity for the constructs they intend to measure. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out using LISREL 8.8 software, the results of which can be seen in Table 3. The overall goodness-of-fit indices were all within the recommended limits (S-B Chi-Square: 148.83; p-value: 0.00; RMSEA: 0.05; CFI: 0.99), all the loadings were significant ($p < 0.01$) with a high magnitude (>0.70), and the values for the individual reliability for each indicator

(R^2) were all above the threshold of 0.50 [116]. In addition, in both cases the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) indices were above the recommended limits of 0.80 and 0.50, respectively.

On the other hand, using the criterion of [117], we calculated the square root of the AVE and the correlations between the constructs in order to test the discriminant validity. Table 4 shows how, for all cases, the correlations do not exceed the values of the square root of the AVE, confirming its validity.

Table 4. Discriminant validity.

	Knowledge	Attachment	Image	Loyalty
Knowledge	**0.86**			
Attachment	0.67	**0.89**		
Image	0.48	0.44	**0.92**	
Loyalty	0.59	0.65	0.54	**0.93**

Note: The values of the diagonal (in bold) represent the root of the AVE; the values below the diagonal represent the correlations between the constructs.

These results guarantee the reliability and validity of the multi-item scales, which allowed us to construct an indicator variable, being the mean of the values of the different items of the scale, for each of these constructs.

4.2. Testing the Hypotheses

Testing the proposed hypotheses required the use of a moderated mediation regression model via PROCESS 3.1 ordinary least squares and bootstrap estimation (10,000 sub-samples) [118], in order to examine the direct and indirect effects presented in Figure 1. The dependent variable was loyalty to the heritage site, the independent variable was the perceived image of the heritage site, the mediating variable was attachment to the site, and the moderating variable was the tourist's degree of knowledge about the heritage site. The participants' age is included as a covariable

The analysis of direct effects (see Tables 5 and 6) shows that both the direct effect of the perceived image of the heritage site on attachment (βImage$_{\rightarrow}$Attachment: 0.20; CI: 0.07–0.33) and of image on loyalty (βImage$_{\rightarrow}$Loyalty: 0.29; CI: 0.15–0.42) were significant ($p < 0.01$). In addition, the direct effect of place attachment on loyalty was significant (βAttachment$_{\rightarrow}$Loyalty: 0.40; CI: 0.26–0.53) ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, these results confirm H1, H2, and H3.

Table 5. Moderated mediation analysis Output variable: Place attachment.

	Coef.	SE	*t*-Value	*p*-Value	95% CI	
Constant	−0.18	0.16	−1.13	0.26	−0.49	0.13
Perceived image (X)	0.20	0.07	2.99	0.00 *	0.07	0.33
Prior knowledge (W)	0.62	0.07	8.87	0.00 *	0.48	0.75
X x W	−0.01	0.06	−0.16	0.87	−0.13	0.11
Age	0.08	0.06	1.27	0,20	−0.04	0.20

* Coefficient significant at 5%; 95% confidence interval does not contain 0.

Table 6. Moderated mediation analysis Output variable: Perceived loyalty.

	Coef.	SE	*t*-Value	*p*-Value	95% CI	
Constant	3.00	0.15	19,6	0.00 *	2.70	3.30
Perceived image (X)	0.29	0.07	4.38	0.00 *	0.15	0.42
Place attachment (M)	0.40	0.07	5.73	0.00 *	0.26	0.53
Prior knowledge (W)	0.22	0.08	2.63	0.00 *	0.06	0.38
X x W	−0.17	0.07	−2.63	0.01*	−0.30	−0.04
M x W	0.02	0.06	0.32	0.75	−0.10	0.13
Age	0.18	0.06	3.12	0.02*	0.07	0.31

* Coefficient significant at 5%; 95% confidence interval does not contain 0.

H4 proposes a moderating effect of the tourist's degree of knowledge about the heritage site on the associations between the antecedents to loyalty. To test this, the corresponding interactions need to be examined (see Tables 5 and 6). The results show that, of the three possible interactions, only one is significant, the effect of knowledge on the association between image and loyalty (βImage × Knowledge→Loyalty: −0.17; CI: −0.30–0.04) (p = 0.01). Figure 2 illustrates the significant effect of this interaction. In this figure, it can be seen that as the subjects' perceived image of the heritage landmark improves, so their loyalty increases, although this effect is reduced as the subjects' degree of knowledge regarding it increases. When the degree of knowledge is small, the effect of image on loyalty is greatly amplified (steep curve), whereas when knowledge regarding the heritage is large, the curve is much flatter. These results only partially confirm H4 as only the moderating effect was observed to be significant.

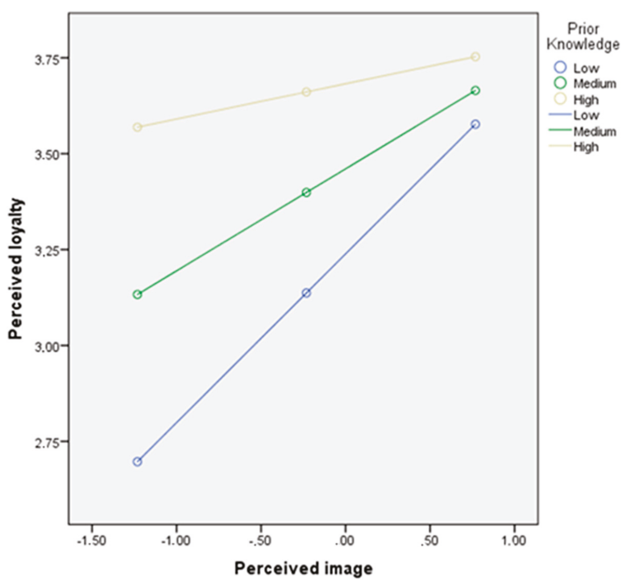

Figure 2. Image on loyalty by knowledge.

PROCESS allows for calculating the conditional indirect effects of the independent variable (image) on the dependent one (loyalty) through the mediating variable (attachment to the heritage site), taking into account the different levels of the moderating variable (knowledge) (see Table 7). The results are of interest as the direct effect of image on loyalty was found to be significant in terms of the conditioning mediating variable but, for the moderating variable, the effect decreases as the degree of knowledge about the heritage landmark increases, to the point that when the degree of knowledge is large this effect disappears, becoming nonsignificant ($p > 0.05$).

Table 7. Conditional direct and indirect effects of Image on Loyalty.

Conditional Direct Effects				
Knowledge	**Effect**	**SE**	**95% CI**	
Low	0.44 ***	0.09	0.27	0.61
Medium	0.26 ***	0.07	0.13	0.40
High	0.08	0.10	−0.11	0.29
Conditional Indirect Effects				
Knowledge	**Effect**	**SE**	**95% CI**	
Low	0.08 **	0.04	0.02	0.17
Medium	0.08 **	0.03	0.02	0.15
High	0.08 **	0.05	0.00	0.20

* Non-significant coefficient. 95% confidence interval includes 0 ** Significant coefficient at 5%; 95% confidence interval does not contain 0. *** Significant coefficient at 1%; 95% confidence interval does not contain 0.

On the other hand, the conditional indirect effects of the image on loyalty mediated by attachment to the patrimonial good are significant ($p < 0.05$) and positive regardless of the degree of knowledge.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper is to assess a theoretical model of the development of loyalty to a heritage landmark, on the basis of the perceived image of the heritage site and place attachment to the heritage site. Loyalty to a tourist destination is key to how the tourist behaves with regards to that destination, demonstrated as their intention to visit and how likely they are to recommend it [48,51,54,55]. Of the factors which contribute to the development of loyalty to the destination, destination image should be noted [17,23,49,55,86,88,89].

This paper contributes to current understandings of the factors which determine how loyalty to a heritage site is developed and the role played by the degree of knowledge.

In the first place, our findings show that the heritage landmark image has a direct, positive effect on the development of loyalty, and as such, is an antecedent to loyalty towards the destination, in line with the academic literature [49,55,81]. In addition, place attachment to the heritage site has a direct, positive effect on the development of loyalty, as has been found by other authors [23,66–70], being antecedent to loyalty. Therefore, increased loyalty is found where there is greater place attachment to the heritage site. Likewise, findings show that image has a direct and positive effect on place attachment to the heritage site, as has previously been asserted [69,94]; therefore, as the image of the heritage asset improves, so place attachment to it increases. An additional conclusion derived from these results and of equal relevance, the association between the perceived image of the Torre de Romilla and place attachment does not appear to be affected by the degree of subjects' prior knowledge about the heritage landmark, counter to what would be expected according to [97]. These results seem to indicate that the link between the heritage landmark and attachment is strong regardless of the degree of knowledge about the heritage site.

In the second place, our findings show that the degree of knowledge regarding the heritage site does in fact moderate the existing direct relationship between the perceived image and loyalty. This is demonstrated by the fact that when there is a small degree of knowledge about the heritage site, the image perceived to it is a greater determinant of loyalty towards it; in this case, loyalty increases as the perceived image of the asset improves. However, in the case of a large degree of knowledge about the heritage site, image is not the determining factor in the development of loyalty to it. The results indicate that those who know the Torre de Romilla (either because they have visited or from other sources of information) had a more positive image of the heritage site and were more likely to visit and/or recommend it, in line with [105]. However, counter to the predictions, the effect of place attachment on the association between the asset's perceived image and interest in or likelihood to visit the Torre de Romilla is influenced by the degree of knowledge, contrary to prediction.

6. Implications for Management

Our findings also have considerable implications for tourist destination heritage site managers. On the one hand, we have found that a positive perceived image of the heritage site can lead to strong attachment, which paves the way for greater loyalty [23,63]. On the other hand, the findings also suggest that, in order to maximally affect loyalty (intention to visit and recommend), managers should take proactive action to increase knowledge about a site, make investments to improve its conservation, and promote the site to a target audience.

Heritage managers should consider all aspects related to such heritage in an integrated manner. As note by [36] citing [119] notes that successful heritage tourism threatens the very heritage resources that are the basis of such tourism. Consequently, these managers' current task is to identify and appropriately respond to strategic opportunities to develop these sites. In line with [120,121], the participation and support of key stakeholders is recommended. Developing practices based on insight, and which are in line with the remit of those responsible for heritage conservation and protection, marketing, and administration, will simultaneously achieve a balance in communication directed towards cultural tourism and tourism in general. Applying marketing techniques and increasing knowledge about the visitors' profiles are essential components of this communication process and go towards ensuring that heritage is accessible and significant for both cultural and general tourism, in line with [120]. Along the same lines, and as is demonstrated by the results, knowledge regarding heritage assets also needs to be increased. As has been shown, greater knowledge leads to greater attachment, which increases the latter's effect on loyalty. These measures would allow the protection and appraisal of cultural heritage to act as a strategic engine for local development [122], without compromising the site's authenticity, as posited by [120].

Therefore, tourist destination planning and management should ensure that special consideration is given to the maintenance and conservation of the natural resources which the tourist offering represents [123]. Improved conservation of the heritage asset will improve its image, which in turn will lead to increased loyalty. This loyalty is demonstrated by the intention to visit and recommend.

This kind of initiative facilitates citizen awareness in a process of cultural identity, as a feeling of esteem for the site patrimonial that promotes its protection and appreciation, by both the local population and the occasional visitor; participants in the defense and maintenance of sites, as well as in compliance with the elementary principles of their conservation [124].

7. Limitations and Future Lines of Research

As is the case for any scientific research, the present study presents some limitations worthy of mention. Firstly, this study focuses on presenting a model of the development of loyalty to a specific heritage landmark with the particular characteristics of the "Torre de la Romilla": A heritage site located in the south of Spain, in the Vega de Granada region and not recognized as a tourist destination, but which is nevertheless a resource which has the potential to become one and contribute to local development, as indicated by [4].

The question of whether future studies could replicate the findings of this study for cultural assets with similar characteristics is an interesting one. The findings of this study could be extrapolated for analysis and would potentially have repercussions for assets of a similar nature, characterized by a defensive architecture, located in areas with a population of less than 10,000 inhabitants and disadvantaged from the perspective of the availability of human or material resources. If the potential benefits identified by the present study are taken into account, these considerations taken together could lead to improvements in cultural tourism management, general tourism, and the basic social economy of the municipalities and regions in which these heritage landmarks are found

Secondly, a larger simple size would have been preferable; therefore, it is recommended that future studies attempting to replicate this study use larger simple sizes with greater heterogeneity.

Thirdly, future studies should account for other moderating variables such as the subjects' usual residence, their degree of cultural tourism experience, the frequency of visits to these types of cultural landmarks or, as cultural values could be associated with a destination choice or with attachment [125], the visitors' nationality or culture in the case of using samples from other countries.

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sustainability

Article

The Influence of Islamic Religiosity on the Perceived Socio-Cultural Impact of Sustainable Tourism Development in Pakistan: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

Jaffar Aman [1,2,†], Jaffar Abbas [1,2,†,*], Shahid Mahmood [3,*], Mohammad Nurunnabi [4,5] and Shaher Bano [2]

1 School of Media and Communication (SMC), Antai College of Economics and Management (ACEM), Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), No. 800 Dongchuan Road Minhang District, Shanghai 200240, China
2 School of Sociology and Political Science, Shanghai University, No. 99 Shangda Road, Baoshan, Shanghai 200444, China; Jaffara@shu.edu.cn (J.A.); sbano@t.shu.edu.cn (S.B.)
3 College of Management, Shenzhen University, No. 3688 Nanhai Avenue, Nanshan District, Shenzhen 518060, China
4 Department of Accounting, Prince Sultan University, P.O. Box 66833, Riyadh 11586, Saudi Arabia; mnurunnabi@psu.edu.sa
5 St Antony's College, University of Oxford, 62 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6JF, UK
* Correspondence: Abbas512@sjtu.edu.cn (J.A.); shahidmsf@outlook.com (S.M.)
† Jaffar Abbas and Jaffar Aman equally contributed as a first author to this work.

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Abstract: Typically, residents play a role in developing strategies and innovations in tourism. However, few studies have sought to understand the role of Islamic religiosity on the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism development in Pakistan. Previous studies focusing on socio-cultural impacts as perceived by local communities have applied various techniques to explain the relationships between selected variables. Circumstantially, the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique has gained little attention for measuring the religiosity factors affecting the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism. This investigation aims to address such limitations in this area of scientific knowledge by applying Smart PLS-SEM, developing an empirical approach, and implementing Smart-PLS software V-3.2.8. The proposed tourism model predicts the effects of the religiosity level on the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism development. In this study, we examine the relationships among religious commitments, religious practice, and religious belief and the socio-cultural effects of sustainable tourism. Our research identifies influential factors through an extensive literature review on communities' religiosity and the socio-cultural impacts of developing sustainable tourism. We examine and analyze data based on 508 residents' responses. The findings reveal an R^2 value of 0.841, suggesting three exogenous latent constructs, which collectively elucidate 84.10% of the variance in the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism. The findings reveal that religious respondents with a higher religiosity level have a positive attitude towards developing sustainable tourism. These findings are helpful to understand the dynamics of communities' perceptions, behaviors, quality of life, cultural aspects, and religiosity factors affecting sustainable tourism in Pakistan. This study is novel in the context of Pakistani cultural and social norms, and this study's implications may provide further direction for researching and developing sustainable tourism in the northern regions of Pakistan.

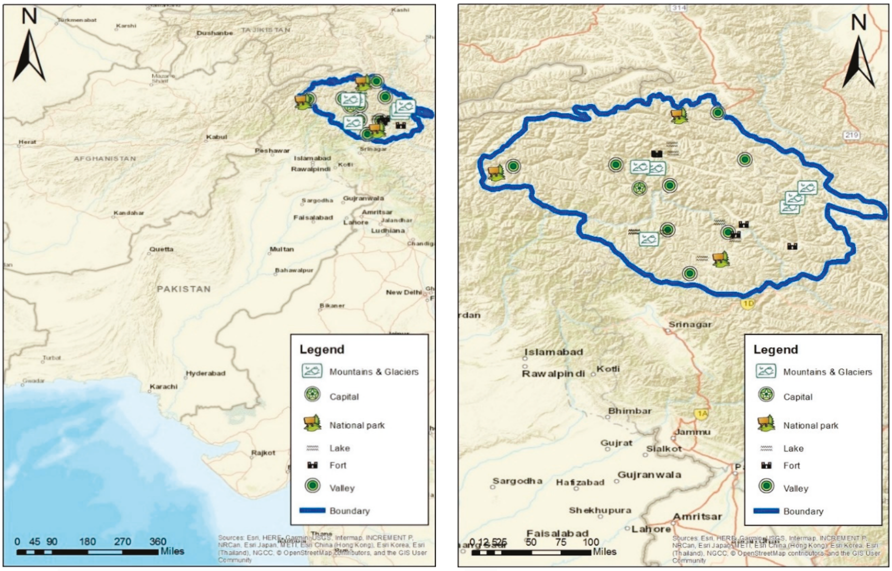
Keywords: sustainable tourism; socio-cultural factors; Islamic religiosity; social problems; Pakistan

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourism has gained increasing popularity, and currently it is one of the most important industries in several developing countries [1–4]. Many scholars have investigated and published relevant literature on the subject of sustainable tourism developments and host residents' behaviors and supportive attitudes in developing tourism in the modern era [2,5,6]. Moreover, several authors have investigated this subject, and a considerable number of studies have examined, modeled, and measured the effect of sustainable tourism development on the host residents' perceived impacts, perceptions, attitude, and behavior in supporting further sustainable tourism development [3,7,8]. Butler (2006) described the indispensable role that residents and their perceptions play in understanding the development mechanism and process of sustainable tourism [9,10]. Residents mostly point to the influence of sustainable tourism on their individual and communal living conditions [10,11]. Though sustainable tourism development appears to be profitable, its environmental impact and the socio-cultural perceptions of local inhabitants may refocus judgments on other issues [12]. Butler and various scholars have evaluated the relationship between the various processes of sustainable tourism development. Residents' reactions from different perspectives and these assessments emphasize adverse impacts, such as cultural corruption and capacity problems derived from cross-border movements [13–16]. Tourism development is considered to be a rural development mechanism concerning culture, communities' attitude, and socioeconomic contributions, generating rural income and employment opportunities, contributing to residents' services and amenities, and supporting the conservation of cultural resources [17].

All over the world, local societies, villages, and rural economies, whether in developing countries or the First World, have faced significant challenges and changes [18]. Sustainable incomes empower community development and culture and support community development at the grassroots level rather than just focusing on policy. New approaches to community development began between 1950 and 1970; however, there was no actual transfer of powers or resources [19]. Nevertheless, Phillips and Pittman (2014) remained focused on the economic development of communities and supported communities in innovative and new ways [20,21]. Tourism helps communities to generate economic opportunities, and it encourages progress and growth in these areas. Concerns associated with local knowledge have increased recently, leading to empowerment, local community participation, and participatory learning, and various approaches and methods have become grassroots-oriented, improving the confidence and skills available to upgrade communities starting at the local level [22,23]. Since the 1990s, scholars have made a determined effort to understand the income opportunities of rural communities more precisely as they relate to aspirations for rural development; as such, development attracts tourism to these sites. Typically, tourism development influences rural communities, and it makes a positive impact on their livelihoods. Thus, for some researchers, social constructionism theories present culture by reflecting rustic studies as far removed from the core concern of change in the socioeconomic situation of these communities. By focusing on cultural values and developments in the local community, this study adopts a perspective of livelihood based on cultural knowledge, traditions, culture, and sustainable livelihoods of the rural communities as a pragmatic approach. The host communities want to make tourists happy to generate an advantageous image of the destination, which ultimately creates a positive reputation.

The hosts/local communities ultimately affect visitor satisfaction, which encourages tourists to revisit [24]. Therefore, measuring the community's perception of the host society is very important for tourism sustainability in the northern regions of Pakistan. Local community attitudes towards sustainable tourism development vary in developed and underdeveloped countries. In some Islamic countries, the host residents of rural communities display a welcoming approach to domestic and international tourists, and their opinion is more favorable to Muslim tourists as they share similar cultural values. Understanding such perspectives supports sustainable tourism and helps to create positive impacts on local communities. Figure 1 below of the study area presents tourism sites.



(**a**). Map of Pakistan showing study area (**b**). Study Area, showing Northern areas of Pakistan

Figure 1. Study area showing Northern areas of Pakistan. K2 is the world's second highest mountain.

We have enriched the study area by incorporating the geographical identification of the study area Tourism locations by using ArcGIS software (Esri, Redland, CA, USA) to show sample study area points on the map, as shown in Figure 1 above [25,26].

In the context of Pakistani rural areas, host communities' residents have observed that tourists consume products and services, which creates income opportunities. Tourists in Islamic countries often practice similar religious traditions and share similar views of Islamic philosophy. Therefore, the response of local community residents and the intervention of their local government are different. Sustainable tourism is most likely to be achieved in an environment of natural beauty, where the community residents have a positive reputation, i.e., where both the natural environment and the social climate are perceived to be worthwhile. The natural environment includes animals, plants, and the inhabitants of these areas. The social climate includes social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. However, it is notable that the human and the natural environments are connected or interlinked, and human activities influence the natural environment by affecting the sustainability of the environment [27,28]. Therefore, sustainable tourism may have a positive social impact as a human activity, as its effects are evident in the destination areas, and tourists often come into contact with the local environment, culture, and society [29]. This paradigm is reflected on an international and domestic level in the study area—a beautiful, little-explored valley in Pakistan—where sustainable tourism development policies and implementation need the attention of the government to consider such factors [30–32], particularly in the context of the rural areas of northern Pakistan [33–35]. The study area includes important mountain ranges that have received attention from domestic and international travelers, who often choose to revisit the destination. Table 1 presents an overview of the sites included in the study area. Figure 2 below shows the study area.

The study area commands a spectacular view of the Karakoram mountain range, including K2, which is the second highest peak in the world. The natural beauty of the region appeals to many residents and international tourists each year, bringing a considerable amount of foreign currency into the country. Traditional communities are active in the promotion of cultural tourism, which improves economic growth, helps communities to create income opportunities, and provides an increase in local businesses.

Table 1. Mountain peaks in the northern areas of Pakistan (height in meters).

Sr. #	Peak Name	Altitude (Meters)	Range Name	World Ranking
1	K-2	8611	Karakoram	2nd
2	Nanga Parbat	8126	Himalayas	9th
3	Gasherbrum I	8068	Karakoram	11th
4	Broad Peak	8047	Karakoram	12th
5	Gasherbrum II	8035	Karakoram	14th
6	Gasherbrum III	7952	Karakoram	15th
7	Gasherbrum IV	7925	Karakoram	17th
8	Distaghil Sar	7885	Karakoram	20th
9	Kunyang Chhish	7852	Karakoram	24th
10	Gasherbrum NE	7821	Karakoram	25th
11	Rakaposhi	7788	Karakoram	27th
12	Batura	7785	Karakoram	28th
13	Kanjut Sar	7760	Karakoram	29th
14	Saltoro Kangri	7742	Karakoram	33th
15	Trivor	7720	Karakoram	36th

Figure 2. The study area presents Northern areas of Pakistan. K2 is the world's second highest mountain (Source: Wikipedia).

Similarly, cultural tourism helps to identify avenues of alternative tourism development that can help to maintain a genuinely enriching environment. Since the first Western tourist group visited this region at the end of the 19th century, more international tourists have begun to travel to the study area every year. The opening of the Karakorum (KKH) Expressway in 1978 promoted the development of new wave tourism. At present, the modern tourism industry in the northern region of Pakistan is now able to entertain four categories of tourists: (1) group tourists (using international travel services); (2) individual tourists (using temporary services); (3) high-altitude climbers and expeditions; and (4) domestic tourism services. Over the past two decades, tourism development has attracted visitors to the beautiful natural valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, and local communities have supported and encouraged tourists to visit these natural sites and places. The focus of the Pakistani government has been to promote climbing and hiking in the highlands, encouraging foreign exchange trading. Domestic visitors traveling to these areas have increased tremendously in number, including noninstitutional groups and families, especially in the summer. Several Arab tourists are regular travelers to these natural places, enjoying the supportive attitude of the local communities: the cultural and social experiences are remarkable and relatively cheap compared with European trips.

In this study, we focused on the northern part of Pakistan, named Gilgit-Baltistan, and investigated contemporary perspectives on local attitudes [36], culture, sustainable tourism development, and the religiosity effect as a conceptual framework for examining the rural tourism development process in the valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan [37]. Here, we propose a collaborative approach that emphasizes the role of social attitudes and the impact of religiosity, cultural, and other socioeconomic factors on developing sustainable tourism that benefits both tourists and local communities collectively [38]. We examined the residents' religious practices and their effect on the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism. The residents' religious beliefs have a positive and significant relationship with the socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cultural and Social Impacts of Tourism

Previous studies investigating local communities' support for sustainable tourism development typically relied on sociological and psychological perspectives and assumed that the communities' residents are not homogeneous individuals, who may or may not be willing to support tourism development [39]. Moreover, various studies debated the relationships between community residents' and the socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism [40]. Earlier studies documented the ongoing phenomena in the countryside, showing declining employment opportunities and local populations, as well as a deterioration of infrastructure and amenities [33,41–44]. In this context, scholars recognized sustainable tourism as an advantageous mechanism contributing to local communities [45–47]. Sustainable tourism creates opportunities for small, family-oriented businesses [48,49], which offer tourists cultural experiences and an enjoyable local environment that contributes to local community development [5,42,50]. More precisely and concretely, developing sustainable tourism contributes to rural areas by providing pleasant socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental experiences; it also creates employment and income, adds to local community amenities, and aids in the conservation of cultural resources [31,34]. This paradigm might depend upon the coexistence of a governance approach, feasibility, a community attitude, cultural enrichment, and an enjoyable environment for tourists in the northern areas of Pakistan [11,51]. Thus, sustainable tourism development in countryside localities relies upon encouraging policies, governmental and non-governmental collaboration, and streamlining the development practices that could promote local communities' attitudes, socioeconomic contribution, culture, and the effect of religiosity [52,53]. The socio-cultural impacts are affected by how local inhabitants perceive sustainable tourism [54,55]. Local culture also impacts tourism and attracts tourists, and innovations in sustainable tourism, tourists' cross-cultural vision, virtual visitors, museum and heritage management in the recent digital age, policy on digital tourism and culture, governance and tourism marketing, social media, e-tourism, and emerging technologies are also crucial in developing tourism [56]. Gursoy (2017) noted that the socio-cultural and socioeconomic impacts of sustainable tourism on local communities are typically not easy to assess, and quantifying tourism development is slow and unglamorous. Swarbrooke (1999) argued that sustainable tourism development has attracted enormous attention recently in countries of the developed and developing world [57,58].

Tourists' exposure to local communities' indigenous cultures, normally disparaged as performances and events, and the tour packages offered should be commercially feasible, attractive, and comprehensible for sustainable tourism to flourish [57,59]. Prior research suggests that the social and cultural phenomena of sustainable tourism do not present a clear picture, and it is not easy to draw a line between cultural or social marvels or events; various theorists categorize sociocultural and socioeconomic impacts of sustainable tourism in broader context [60]. Thus, different perceptions of the impact of tourism from various types of inhabitants may provide insight into these natural sites and the degree to which sustainable tourism affects tourists' destinations. As a result, it is unsurprising that research on local inhabitants' attitudes towards sustainable tourism development continues to be an exciting topic of substantial interest. Further, Hashimoto argued that the culture and mindset of host communities and their perception of sustainable tourism development and travelers vary unceasingly between positive and negative [61–64]. Specht (2014) wrote that the narrative on tourism demonstrates how various inhabitants might not only have different cultures and attitudes, but also that they might have ambivalent or dissimilar attitudes towards sustainable tourism [63,65]. Tourism development has several socio-cultural benefits and advantages, for instance, the host community's cultural development, cultural exchange, an improved image for host communities, social change, social amenity improvements, and better public health, education, attitudes, and conservation [66,67]. Many prior studies inspecting the socio-cultural impact of tourism development have listed several probable positive effects of the tourism industry. Prior studies extensively observed the perception of socio-cultural impact on geographic or socio-demographic influences. However, as stated above, there are no prior studies in the literature that have investigated the effect of residents' religiosity level on the perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism development. Table 2 presents some previous studies as given below;

Table 2. The sustainable management of natural resources.

Studies	Impacts
Smith (2012)	Deteriorating the cumulative impacts of host residents' attitudes toward tourists [68]
Chon, Pizam, & Mansfeld (2012), and Peter Gray & Peter Gray (1981)	Tourists' interaction may determine attitudes, values, and behaviors towards sustainable tourism. Type of contact with tourists might influence behavior and values towards sustainable tourism [69,70]
Newsome, (2017), G. Richards & Hall, (2003), Sroypetch (2016)	Tourism provides a revenue source for a church, perceived security, and safety might be affected [71–73]
Bricker, Black, & Cottrell (2013)	Tourist–host interaction seldom produce real communication or understanding [40]
Reisinger & Turner (2012)	Cross-cultural behaviors of hosts and residents coping strategies for interaction with tourists [74]
Sharpley & Telfer (2002)	In destination localities, tourism is a potential contributor to socioeconomic development [75]
Zamani-Farahani & Musa (2012)	Residents religiosity level and socio-cultural impacts contribute to sustainable tourism development [76]
Horner & Swarbrooke (2016)	Tourism nature and contemporary tourists behaviors in social, political, and socioeconomic context [77,78]
Smith (2012)	deteriorating the cumulative impacts of host residents' attitudes toward tourists [68]

The natural resources of the country are an essential aspect of development, as they provide raw materials for industry and have become a symbol of national pride. Managing sustainable natural resources refers to long-term land, water, environment, animal, and vegetation management. Figure 3 below of the study area presents tourist destinations.

Figure 3. Natural sites in northern areas. **Note:** Figure 2 & Figure 3 presents the study area. Natural tourists sites in northern areas (Source: Wikipedia).

2.2. The Dimension of Islamic Religiosity: Host Community Perception of the Socio-Cultural Impact of Sustainable Tourism

Tourism development affects communities in many urban destinations, as well as in coastal and rural areas. The socio-cultural implications in these destinations, however, are less well-documented in the literature concerning developing countries [79]. The development of world civilizations and human history is intertwined with religion, which is one of the main pillars of human societies worldwide [80]. Faith is a binding force in many human communities, and it describes a code of human ethics that is apparent in culture, societal setup, attitudes, and personal values [81]. These social values, beliefs, and religious norms determine institutional practices, as well as human behavior. In several Western societies and Asian countries, religion is not only a system of belief; it is also individuals' recognized faith in all aspects of human life. Religion has a social impact on consumer products and services in various industries, including hospitality and travel. Sociologists view religion as an ideology that applies to humans and members of a community bonded in a harmonious relationship [82,83]. Religion is among the most critical social and cultural forces and has a significant impact on human behavior [84]. Religion affects the interaction of people, and it helps individuals of different mindsets to create a better understanding. Social distance theory claims that people with similar social, cultural, and religious values are more vulnerable than other individuals [85]. Social distance determines the distance or gap between different people, groups, and social systems in human society, and the notion of this distance rests on social class, race, ethnic group, gender, and sexuality. However, it is a fact that social range is higher among dissimilar people or groups, while people with different mindsets mix more efficiently in social gatherings as the degree of intimacy or understanding is more elevated in their personal and social relations. Several earlier studies support social exchange theory, and the literature has suggested that the exchange system helps in evaluating sustainable tourism impacts. However, rare studies have considered host residents' cultural background.

Other studies focusing on residents' attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism identified various relationships. Accordingly, the proposition of research focusing on Islamic religiosity by covering religious belief, practice, and commitment has shown a negative association with socio-cultural impacts. Typically, researchers have assessed religious beliefs by adopting a multidimensional approach. In the literature, Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) applied a two-dimensional technique to calculate religious beliefs [86]. Chang and Downey (2011) also used a two-dimensional method to measure the effects of religiosity, considering individuals beliefs and practices [87]. One of the two dimensions includes internal and external religious practices, and the second is a visible expression of religious faith, for instance, the study of the Holy Quran, daily prayers, traditions, and rituals. Allport (1951) introduced a theological, ethical position named SCALA by narrating external and internal religious practices as the critical aspects of religious beliefs, and these two dimensions present different motives of religious believers [88]. Typically, individuals divide their religious structures via a two-dimensional approach to practicing religion: individually and collectively in groups [88,89]. Scholars have also considered a three-dimensional religious approach that is more appropriate for measuring religiosity among people [90–95]. These scholars have agreed that previous studies discussed only two dimensions of religiosity: one dimension is a religious belief and the other is an individual's spiritual practice [96,97]. The third dimension of religiosity is different from those as mentioned earlier in the literature, and it denotes an inverse relationship. The third dimension is 'community', 'organization', 'experience', 'spirituality', and 'experimental' [98–100]. In 2009, Tailoring and Begloomed attempted to assess the breadth of the Islamic religion, considering vital Islamic elements such as Islamic texts, the Holy Quran, and the Hadith (the actions and speeches of the Holy Prophet PBUH). They declared that there are four primary dimensions of Islam out of 60, namely religious beliefs, spiritual friendships, religious ceremonies (be kind to others), and spiritual enrichment (womb-to-tomb learning). The most common assessments of religion are the two-dimensional and three-dimensional methods, and there are many differences in the factors defining the dimensions as the elements used in the analyses are also different. Allport (1951) measured an individual's religiousness based on their motivation [88,101]. Scholars including Abdullah (2010) have claimed that the Quran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are crucial elements in measuring Islamic beliefs (faith) and individuals' Islamic practice [102–104].

Figure 4 here outlines the conceptual framework of the tourism model used in this research, which presents the effects of Islamic religiosity on the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism. Since the 1990s, scholars have focused on this area and have made a determined effort to understand whether the financial advantages of rural communities specifically were in line with aspirations for rural development as they attracted sustainable tourism development to such natural places. Thus, tourism development influenced rural communities' attitudes, which had a positive impact on their livelihoods. Therefore, their approach to a sustainable livelihood has revealed individual skills and the actions required to generate livelihoods. Such livelihoods are sustainable if residents can cope with and recuperate from stresses [105], shocks, and pressure and still maintain or enhance their assets and capabilities, balancing a sustainable livelihood (SL) environment, tradition, and the socio-culture impacts of tourism.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

This study designed a conceptual model and applied Partial Least Square Structural Partial Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), structural equation modeling, to evaluate the effect of residents' religiosity level on the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism. The PLS-SEM approach is the conventional method for conducting causal predictive analysis to examine both formative and reflective models, and it calculates the relationship among selected variables [106]; it is a nonparametric technique and it does not require any supposition regarding data distribution. The PLS-SEM is the commonly used technique for multivariate analysis to measure variance-based structural equation models in the fields of social sciences [49]. In this study, the model contains three groups of exogenous latent constructs, namely factors of religious commitment, religious belief, and religious practice, and one endogenous latent variable, called socio-cultural impacts, with eight observed variables. Figure 4 below displays the conceptual model of this study, and it shows the relationships among the selected variables (endogenous latent constructs and exogenous latent constructs).

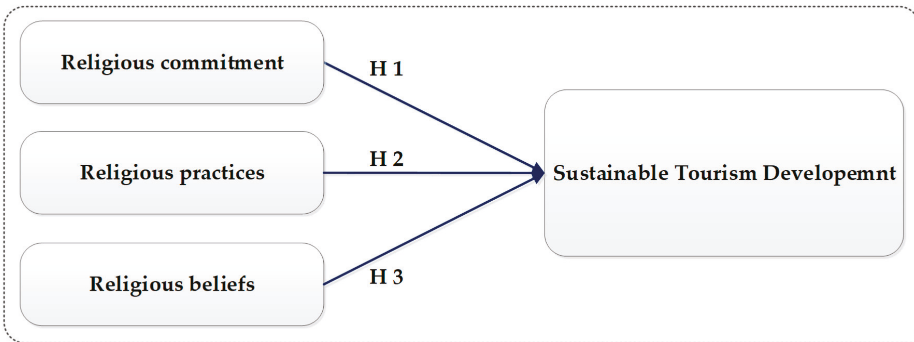


Figure 4. It demonstrates the conceptual framework of the proposed study.

2.4. Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis 1. *A community's religious commitment positively affects sustainable tourism development.*

Hypothesis 2. *A community's religious practices positively affect sustainable tourism development.*

Hypothesis 3. *A community's religious beliefs form a positively significant relationship with sustainable tourism development.*

3. Methods

Researchers typically use the smart PLS-SEM technique for developing a theory in exploratory research [49]. The smart PLS-SEM critical applications include confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis, regression models, factor analysis, covariance structure models, and correlation structure models [5]. Additionally, structural equation modeling (SEM) permits linear relationships analysis between manifest variables and latent constructs. Partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) refers to a multivariate statistical technique for evaluating the measurement model simultaneously, such as the relationship between the study constructs and its conforming indicators with a structural model to indicate relationships between the constructs [107]. It also can produce available parameter estimates to assess the associations between unobserved variables. Typically, the SEM method allows many relationships to be calculated and tested at once in the single proposed model with many links instead of investigating each relationship individually. This study has analyzed the hypothesized structural model of Figure 4 by using a smart PLS-SEM approach, and it is advantageous over other regression-based methods to evaluate different latent constructs with several manifest variables [5]. The PLS-SEM research approach is a robust, flexible, and superior tool to build an adequate statistical model, while the PLS-SEM feature helps in achieving the predicted objective [108–110]. Wan Afthanorhan [111], and Astrachan et al. [112] stress that reliable and valid confirmatory factor analysis is well achieved by using PLS-SEM path modeling. Consistent with the above arguments, PLS-SEM is a statistical tool that has been used by several researchers in various research areas in social sciences, including business research [108]. Moreover, PLS-SEM specifically permits the testing of complex models having multilevel effects; for instance, a mediating role and other complex models' variables relationships [110]. This study applied smart PLS -SEM V-3.2.8 for data analysis and to calculate loadings, path coefficients, and weights; the study incorporated the bootstrapping technique to determine significance levels [107].

Figure 5 displays the three steps of the data collection procedures. In the first phase, we selected the preliminary Islamic religiosity variables influencing the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development. In the second phase, we designed a pilot study to test and obtain a clear understanding of questionnaire items' reliability and modified it accordingly. In the third and final step, we executed the survey and received feedback from the respondents.

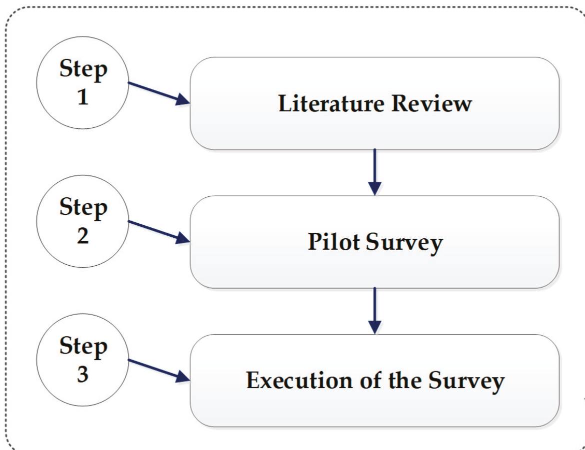


Figure 5. The procedure of data collection.

3.1. Preliminary List of Factors

Primarily, we identified over 30 influential factors affecting local perceptions of tourism development; we tested a pilot study by engaging 15 experts in the relevant field whose recommendations were incorporated into the questionnaire before starting the final phase by removing some unsuitable factors concerning the local conditions and the design of this single study. Factors affecting tourism development are shown in Table 3 below;

3.2. Designing a Questionnaire

We developed and distributed the revised version of the selected factors of the self-structured survey among the targeted population to receive the required data using a random sampling approach. We informed and trained the respondents about the purpose of this research, and we assured the respondents that all the data elicited is strictly confidential. The questionnaire had two sections on the respondents' perceptions of tourism development. The survey also obtained the respondents' general information, such as gender, age, education, profession, and location in the questionnaire's first section, while its second section addressed the critical and influencing religiosity factors. The study invited respondents from the rural communities of the selected study areas to answer questions on the impact of sustainable tourism on their daily lives. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert-scale requiring individuals to rate their agreement levels from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5 (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, neither agree nor disagree = 4, and strongly agree = 5).

Table 3. List of identified influencing factors for sustainable tourism development.

Code	Influencing Factors
Items	**Factors of Socio-Cultural impact**
SCF_1	Drugs Addictions [113]
SCF_2	Social Crime [114,115]
SCF_3	Community Image [116]
SCF_4	Infrastructure Development [116,117]
SCF_5	Cultural Activities [118]
SCF_6	Recreational opportunity [118,119]
SCF_7	Business opportunities [120]
SCF_8	Environmental damage or destruction [121,122]
	Factors of Religious commitment [123,124]
RCF_1	I financially contribute to religious organizations
RCF_2	I usually spend more time trying to understand my faith
RCF_3	Religious beliefs are my whole approach to a meaningful life
RCF_4	I enjoy spending time with people with the same religious affiliation as I have
RCF_5	Religious beliefs impact all dealings of my life
RCF_6	I enjoy working on my religious affiliation activities
	Factors of Religious Practices [123–125]
RPF_1	Performing Hajj is my priority to fulfill my necessary condition
RPF_2	I firmly believe that Allah always helps me
RPF_3	I always offer/make my prayer on time
RPF_4	I usually spend more time and try to understand my faith
	Factors of Religious beliefs [124–126]
RBF_1	Religious belief helps me to protect sustainable tourism development
RBF_2	Islam is a perfect code of life to lead a better life
RBF_3	I frequently read books/magazines on my faith
RBF_4	Religion Belief helps me to perform my social responsibilities well.

3.3. Size of the Targeted Population Sample

The sample size of the population comprised of 508 valid responses and focused strictly on rural communities in the area of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The respondents were required to be educated at least to a degree level. The researchers omitted uneducated people as they were hesitant to answer questions during the pilot test, and they were unaware of the survey's importance. We educated and trained the respondents about the survey's purpose, and the researchers gave the respondents 14 days to understand and fill out the survey.

3.4. Data Processing of the Questionnaire's Feedback

After receiving the input from the targeted respondents, the researchers checked and screened all the questionnaires. Based on the completed and accurate responses, the researchers collected 508 adequately filled out surveys and scrutinized them to confirm the data accuracy. This study processed the data received and analyzed it by applying the analytical tool Smart PLS 3.2.8. In the final step, the statistical analysis provided the interpreted results as a useful insight and valuable evidence for the evaluation of the underlying factors. Additionally, 15 experts on rural development who already contributed to the pilot study during screening the crucial elements were invited again to offer their valuable expertise and provide their opinion on the data results.

4. Results

This study measured mean scores (M), standard deviation, excess kurtosis, and skewness, and all items of the scale showed consistent reliability and satisfactory results. Table 4 below shows demographic analysis of the respondents.

Table 4. Demographic analysis of the respondents.

Demographic Analysis		
Gender of respondents	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Male	**291**	57.28%
Female	**217**	42.72%
	Area of Respondents	
Gilgit	130	25.29%
Hunza	74	14.56%
Nagar	110	21.56
Baltistan	100	19.68
Astore	54	10.62
	Age of Respondents	
20–24	260	51.18%
25–29	200	39.37%
30–34	23	4.25%
35–40	25	4.92%
	Educational Background	
Intermediate	110	21.65%
Bachelor	290	57.08%
Masters	108	21.25%

In Table 4, demographic analysis of the respondents showed that male participants (291) were in the majority (57.28%), while the number of female respondents was 217 (42.72%). The majority of participants (23.43%) came from Gilgit city, and a lower number was from Baltistan (17.91%). The majority of the respondents (51.18%) were within the 20 to 24 age range, whereas the 30 to 34 years age range showed the lowest participation.

Table 5 presents a comprehensive description of the descriptive statistical analysis showing the mean (M), standard deviation (SD) scores, and skewness and kurtosis values. The values of Table 5 revealed that the data presented satisfactory results and showed normal distribution.

Table 5. Mean (M), std. deviation (SD), kurtosis, and skewness values.

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
SCF_1	3.346	1.420	−1.262	−0.276
SCF_2	3.504	1.509	−1.195	−0.533
SCF_3	3.557	1.443	−1.177	−0.525
SCF_4	3.386	1.478	−1.385	−0.298
SCF_5	3.616	1.470	−1.148	−0.566
SCF_6	3.427	1.438	−1.295	−0.33
SCF_7	3.185	1.473	−1.367	−0.126
SCF_8	3.331	1.544	−1.451	−0.278
RCF_1	3.484	1.426	−1.216	−0.383
RCF_2	3.482	1.302	−0.998	−0.356
RCF_3	3.388	1.392	−1.260	−0.228
RCF_4	3.309	1.426	−1.339	−0.167
RCF_5	3.472	1.361	−1.164	−0.297
RCF_6	3.360	1.351	−1.203	−0.19
RBF_1	3.431	1.850	−1.595	6.388
RBF_2	3.476	1.433	−1.160	−0.432
RBF_3	3.341	1.712	−1.506	2.798
RBF_4	3.567	1.389	−1.088	−0.483
RPF-1	3.612	1.433	−1.077	−0.583
RPF-2	3.537	1.880	−1.940	6.616
RPF-3	3.354	1.477	−1.405	−0.25
RPF-4	3.433	1.441	−1.197	−0.386

4.1. Evaluation of Outer Measurement Model

This study evaluated the quality and merit of measurement goodness to confirm the validity and reliability of the analysis process output by using the PLS-SEM technique. Based on Hair et al. [107], this study assessed individual item reliability, discriminant validity, and the concurrent validity before test hypotheses of the designed model. This study used the smart PLS algorithm to ascertain each item's reliability and the model's measurement assessment as indicated in Figure 4. Hence, the indicator reliability examined the outer loadings of each measurement intended to measure a construct [107]. Composite reliability (CR) is the most common indicator to check the reliability of the internal consistency in the field of social sciences, and we applied this technique in this study [127]. Here, the composite reliability indicator showed that it was suitable to use PLS-SEM in this study [107]. Convergent validity presents the validity of constructs that measure how a specific measurement truly measures the construct that was intended to assess/measure, and it displays a positive correlation with other alternative measurements of the same construct. Hence, it shows the degree of correlation among the identical construct measures [107]. Hair et al. [128] recommended a comprehensive research method of average variance extracted (AVE) for verifying the convergent validity for construct levels. The loading values were set to 0.4 according to the recommendations of Hair et al. The AVE value was set to 0.5, whereas the composite reliability must display a value of 0.7 [107]. Accordingly, in this study, we followed the recommended PLS-SEM method based on the previous literature, which suggested the approach of using repeated indicators of the model. Table 6 below shows that the measurement model's results are exceeding the recommended values, which indicates that convergence validity is sufficient as presented in Table 6 below (see Figure 6).

Table 6. The measurement model displays a convergent validity, alpha (α), and reliability.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	CR	AVE
Socio-Cultural Factors	SCF_1	0.786	0.880	0.905	0.546
	SCF_2	0.785			
	SCF_3	0.718			
	SCF_4	0.809			
	SCF_5	0.668			
	SCF_6	0.637			
	SCF_7	0.715			
	SCF_8	0.775			
Religious Commitment Factors	RCF_1	0.837	0.861	0.896	0.590
	RCF_2	0.705			
	RCF_3	0.781			
	RCF_4	0.746			
	RCF_5	0.779			
	RCF_6	0.755			
Religious Belief Factors	RBF_1	0.666	0.755	0.845	0.579
	RBF_2	0.793			
	RBF_3	0.720			
	RBF_4	0.853			
Religious Practice Factors	RPF_1	0.846	0.835	0.890	0.672
	RPF_2	0.688			
	RPF_3	0.873			
	RPF_4	0.858			

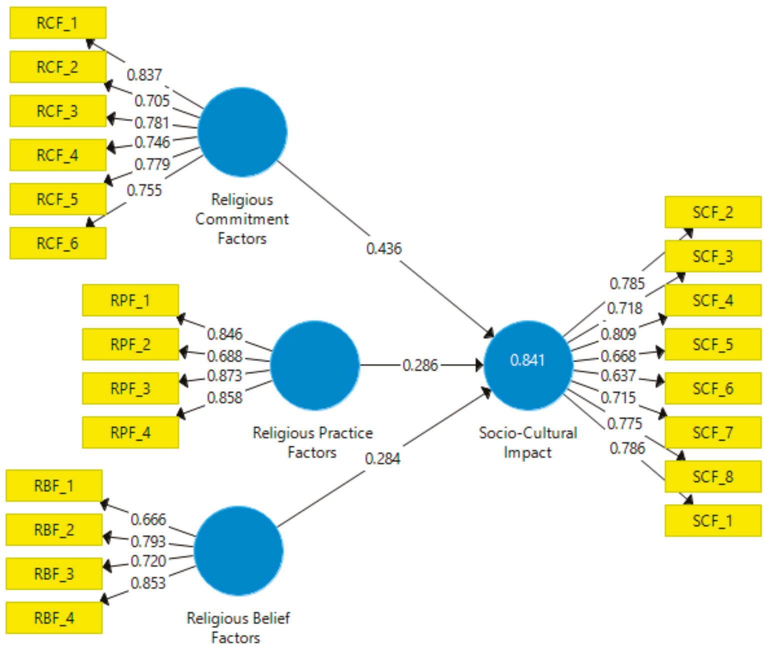


Figure 6. Measurement model (PLS-SEM algorithm). Note: Estimations of structural equations model.

4.2. Graphical Representation of Construct Validity and Reliability

Table 7 shows Fornell–Larcker criterion test as given below:

Table 7. Fornell–Larcker criterion test.

Factors	RBF_1	RCF_2	RPF_3	SCF_4
Religious Beliefs	**0.770**			
Religious Commitment	0.550	**0.768**		
Religious Practice	0.488	0.581	**0.750**	
Socio-Cultural	0.384	0.455	0.545	**0.740**

4.3. Inner Structural Model's Evaluation through Smart PLS

In this study, we evaluated and confirmed the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The next step in the evaluation process describes how to calculate inner structural model outcomes.

4.4. Calculating (R^2) Value

Coefficients of determination calculate the variance and overall effect size illustrated in the endogenous constructs for the structural tourism model by calculating the predictive accuracy of the model. The inner path model value was 0.841 for the Islamic religiosity endogenous latent construct. It indicates that the model's independent constructs significantly explained 84.10% of the variance regarding the perceived socio-cultural impact. The results reveal that the model's three independent variables caused 84.10% of the change in the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism. Hair et al. [108] and Henseler et al. [129] explained that R^2 is considered to be substantial at a value of 0.75, moderate at 0.50, and weak at 0.26, respectively. In this study, a significant value of R^2 at 0.841 was obtained.

4.5. Path Coefficients and t-Value Estimation

We tested the significance of the proposed hypothesis by calculating the standardized beta (β) value. The value of beta (β) denoted the probable variation of the dependent construct in the study for the unit variation in independent constructs. We calculated the beta (β) value for each path in this hypothesized model. There will be greater and significant substantial effects on the endogenous latent construct if the beta (β) value is also higher and significant. The *t*-test is a technique to verify the significance level of the beta (β) value. In this study, we used a bootstrapping method to evaluate and assess the significance of the proposed hypothesis as shown in Table 8 [107] (see Figure 7).

Table 8. Results of Hypotheses Testing.

Hypothesis Path	Standard Beta (β)	t-Values	*p*-Values	Decision
RCF -> SCIF	0.436	11.651	0.000	Supported
RPF -> SCIF	0.286	6.811	0.000	Supported
RBF -> SCIF	0.284	5.193	0.000	Supported

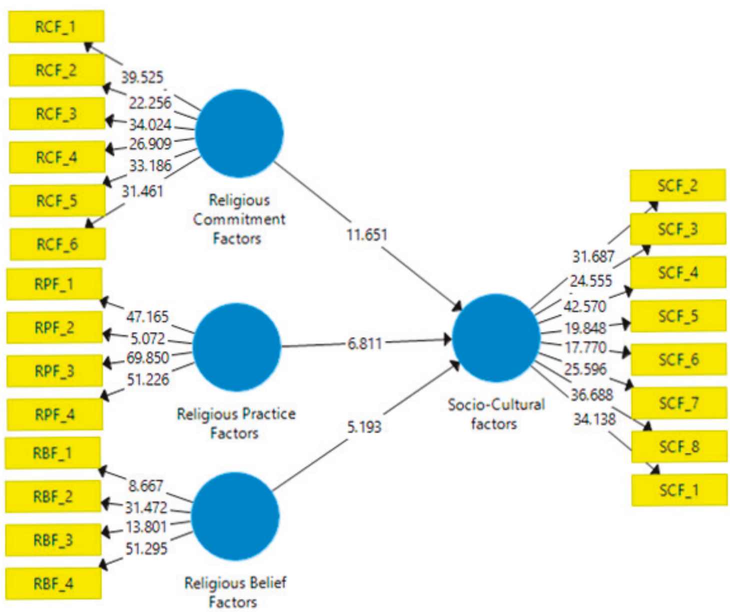


Figure 7. Structural model (PLS-SEM bootstrapping analysis).

Table 8 reveals the analysis of the structural model. The results reveal that the H1 outcome depicting religious commitment factors showed a positive impact on the overall socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development as perceived by local communities and was statically significant at the 5% level (β = 0.436; t = 11.651; p = 0.000). Thus the results supported Hypothesis 1, which stated, "The community's religious commitment positively affects the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development." Hypothesis 2 stated, "A community's religious practices positively affect the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development." The finding of Table 8 endorsed positive relationships (β = 0.286, t = 6.811, p < 0.000) and confirmed H2. Finally, Hypothesis 3 stated, "A community's religious beliefs form a positive relationship with the perceived socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism development." Religious belief factors positively and significantly influence the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development, and the results of this study support H3 as shown Table 8 (β = 0.284, t = 5.193, $p < 0.000$). Figure 7 below presents the results.

According to Cohen, the ($f2$) value has a strong effect at 0.35, a moderate effect at 0.15, and a weak effect at 0.02 [130]. Table 9 presents the values of ($f2$) calculated through the PLS-SEM technique [131]. The results, as shown in Table 9, reveal the effect size and the satisfactory relationships between religious commitment (high effect 0.486), religious practice, and religious belief and the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development as perceived by the local communities.

Table 9. Effect size: Measuring the effect size ($f2$).

Exogenous Latent Variables	($f2$)	Effect Size
Religious Commitment related factors	0.486	High effect
Religious Practice related factors	0.164	Moderate effect
Religious Belief related factors	0.189	Moderate effect

4.6. Model's Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The predictive relevance (Q^2) technique measures the smart PLS path model's quality, and it is estimated by using the procedure of blindfolding [132]. In this study, we performed the cross-validated redundancy. The predictive relevance model (Q^2) suggests that the proposed model might predict the study's endogenous latent constructs. The predictive relevance (Q^2) values calculated in the smart PLS-SEM must be (>0) greater than zero for the specific endogenous latent construct.

Figure 8 demonstrates the predictive relevance (Q^2) for this particular model and shows its value at 0.427, which is higher than its threshold limit. These results support the predictive relevance of the path model, which is suitable for the endogenous constructs.

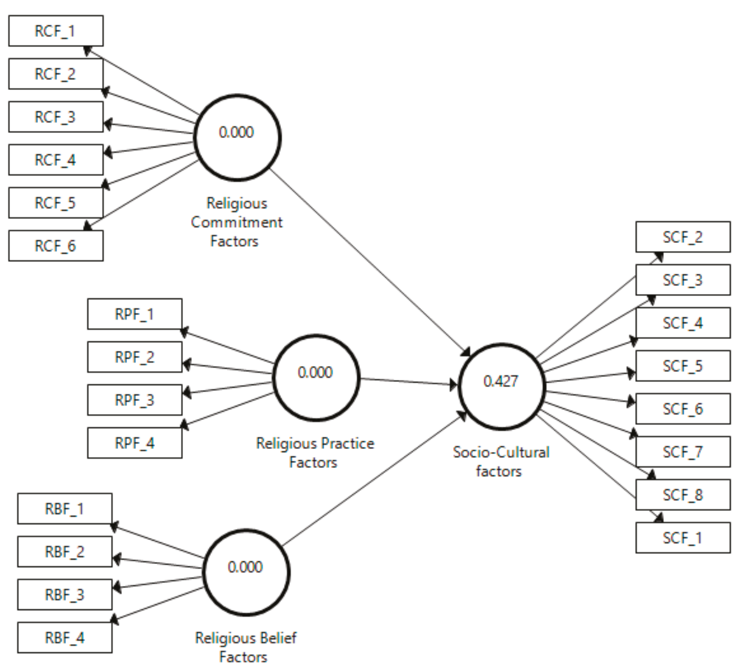


Figure 8. The model's predictive relevance (Q^2).

4.7. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is an index of the average of the standardized residuals between the hypothesized and observed covariance matrices [133]. It is the measurement of a projected and estimated designed model fit [134]. If the SRMR value is equal or less than 0.08 it indicates satisfactory performance, a good fit, and that the study model is acceptable. The results show an SRMR value of 0.073, which is a good fit for the model, as shown in Table 10. The Chi-Square (χ^2) value is 1665.878, and NFI shows the value of 0.772 in Table 10 [135].

Table 10. Model fit summary.

	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.073
d_ULS	0.332
d_G1	0.736
d_G2	0.616
Chi-Square (χ^2)	1665.878
NFI	0.772

5. Discussion

Tourists' spiritual, emotional, or physical needs determine their motivation for traveling [136]. Devesa, Laguna, and Palacios (2010) specified that visitors' determinant and satisfaction levels are the motivational source for tourism [137]. From a tourists point of view, tourism is a response of travelers to felt needs and acquired values within their particular spatial, temporal, social, and monetary parameters [136]. Once their values and requirements are applied to the tourism scenario, tourists' motivations for traveling constitute an essential parameter of their formation of expectations [138]. Tourists' expectations determine their perception of the performance of services and products in addition to their opinions on their travel experiences. Travelers' motivation subsequently influences their satisfaction [139]. Through our research, we attempted to recognize the major religious, socio-cultural, and economic impacts on local communities caused by sustainable tourism development in Pakistan. In this study, we applied the smart PLS-SEM method, and via a comprehensive analysis of the structural and measurement, model and results affirmed both models. We implemented an advanced technique using PLS-SEM software V-3.2.8, which is a commonly used multivariate analysis approach to calculate and assess the variance-based structural equations models by performing a statistical analysis [49]. It can test the relationships of a selected model's latent and manifest variables simultaneously. We selected this technique because of its assessment ability concerning the psychometric properties of each latent construct, determining which the most important construct is and how it affects the socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism. The residents' demographic profile indicated that the respondents were mostly male (291 = 57.28%; Female = 217, 42.72%). The findings of this study recognized the positive relationship of residents' religiosity on sustainable tourism development in Pakistan, and the study results supported the proposed hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that religious commitment factors revealed a positively impact ($\beta = 0.436$, $t = 11.651$, $p = 0.000$) on the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development. Hypothesis 2 claimed that community's religious practices had a positively significant impact on developing sustainable tourism development. The results of this study confirmed Hypothesis 2 ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 6.811$, $p < 0.000$), and the findings presented in Table 8 endorsed these positive relationships. In this study, Hypothesis 3 stated that residents' religious beliefs positively affect the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development, and the results confirmed H3 as indicated ($\beta = 0.284$, $t = 5.193$, $p < 0.000$). The results revealed that $R^2 = 0.841$, showing three exogenous latent constructs that jointly explained 84.10% of the variance related to the socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism development. The result regarding predictive relevance revealed that Q2 = 0.427, which confirmed that the PLS path model's quality is satisfactory concerning endogenous constructs. The results reveal that the entire proposed hypothesis is positive and statistically significant regarding acceptance. The findings show that the residents' religiosity level (religious commitment, practices, and beliefs) affected the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development. This study establishes new empirical findings on sustainable tourism development. In this study, we examined the implications of local culture, heritage, and socioeconomic and socio-cultural effects on local inhabitants. Tourism destinations can promote marketing campaigns to attract religious tourists, and these such strategies can improve sustainable tourism development. Sustainable tourism can also create opportunities for small, family-oriented businesses [48,49].

Typically, Gilgit-Baltistan's tumultuous past faces the left traces and enriches the domestic socio-cultural impacts, the gastronomy, and architecture; all these aspects are relevant factors that encourage the global tourists to visit these areas physically. However, previous studies evidence that heritage prevails in the rural northern regions as it usually better preserves heritages against external impacts, and the global tourists might avail the probable opportunity to experience the scenic beauty and original heritage time to time [140]. Scholars have highlighted the essential features that residents and their perceptions play to understand the development mechanism and process of sustainable tourism development [9,10]. Typically, residents influence sustainable tourism on their individual and collective living conditions [10,11]. Tourism development characteristically is perceived as an indispensable development opening for the local community in the view of the Government of Pakistan and the regional Government of Gilgit-Baltistan. The previous literature supports the primary purpose of this work as tourism destinations have become indispensable elements, and it has become increasingly essential in developing both economic and cultural factors to attract global tourists. Usually, tourism development is the source of development openings for the host communities because of its associated vital advantages such as building new parks, recreational opportunities in the areas, job opportunities, better health facilities, education, improved infrastructure, and residents' better living standard. The results of this specific research also confirmed the findings of earlier surveys showing that developing sustainable tourism leads to cultural and natural environment protection and it increases the economic prosperity and job opportunities [141–146].

Sustainable tourism development in the destination typically generates an additional income for local administration budgets that utilized and invests for developing future tourism marketing strategies and conservation of the sustainable tourism attractions by guaranteeing the sustainability of tourist areas. The findings of this proposed research are consistent and in line with earlier research studies [145,147,148]. According to the factual reality of residents, they perceive tourism development as playing an indispensable role credibly for social and economic benefits, and it is the common finding in the geographical areas. Because the host communities feel very proud to preserve their cultural heritage as it is amongst one of the global oldest civilizations. Concerning social problems, factors reporting the dimensions revealed positive feedback from the local communities, showing that residents with stronger religious beliefs perceived no damage: sustainable tourism development would not cause social problems in their regions. The results showed that more religiosity among local communities led to the perception that sustainable tourism development would be beneficial. The findings are similar to the results Harrill, (2004), Cavus and Tanrisevdi research [149–151].

The results supported the many researchers who support three main aspects of religiosity. It was interestingly essential to note that scholars have stated that Islamic religiosity for believers based on the Quran and Hadith (belief and practice) [152]. The results showed that religious beliefs and religious commitment were very high among local people, and this religiosity showed association with the welcoming behavior of local people [153–156]. This finding of the present study is consistent with the previous finding of Hassan (2007), who found the same result in his research [157,158]. Richerson and Christiansen (2013, p. 23) and Lewens (2015, p. 147) claimed that past regional culture acclaims religion and explains the observations [159,160]. There are several natural sites, vibrant local cultures and UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Pakistan hope to develop sustainable tourism [161]. In this study, we identified three key dimensions of religiosity: religious belief, religious commitment, religious practice, and these findings are consistent with those of preceding studies, suggesting the existence of these two fundamental dimensions of individuals' religiosity [88,89]. This study is novel and valuable, and it addresses monitoring and managing culturally, socially, and economically improved livelihoods and better health services, resulting from religiosity and socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism development, and it delivers original insights on the interaction between the religiosity of residents and tourism development.

6. Conclusions

This study was designed to examine the effect of Islamic religiosity of local Pakistani residents on socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism development in the northern regions of Pakistan, and it offers an insight into the local communities' support for sustainable tourism development. In this study, we summarized some critical investigations in the literature (Table 2). These studies used various methodologies to examine the effects of different factors on the socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism. This study proposed an original method to explore and analyze the selected key constructs of religiosity on socio-cultural implications for sustainable tourism. The main contribution of this research, from a theoretical perspective, is the analysis of the residents' socio-cultural impacts supporting tourism development, especially religiosity-related factors. Overall, northern Pakistani residents' perceived socio-cultural impacts positively affect sustainable tourism development, and they showed their support and inclination for future sustainable tourism development in their regions. Among the socio-cultural impacts, the analysis of the residents' religiosity revealed that tourism development leads to a greater acceptance of sustainable tourism in these areas. Moreover, this is the first study to investigate the effects of such religiosity-related factors on the perceived socio-cultural impact of tourism development in the Pakistani cultural context. The proposed tourism model of this research offers the most effective determinant of perceived socio-cultural benefits. The results of this study reveal that religious belief, religious commitment, and the spiritual practices of local communities show a significant and positive effect on the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism by Pakistani residents. It indicates that the residents' greater religiosity level showed a positive relationship with socio-cultural and economic effects.

Thus, Islamic religiosity influences the perception of residents regarding tourism development, and local communities understand that sustainable tourism development, infrastructure factors, and cultural activities play significant roles in community development. Tourism improves the community image and brings better facilities, health services, quality of life, education, improved infrastructure, and economic growth. This result confirms the statements of Butler and Suntikul (2017) and Raj and Griffin (2017), which explain that Islamic religiosity supports the development of the tourism industry [12,162]. The findings revealed that independent constructs of this tourism model explained 84.10% of the variance regarding the perceived socio-cultural impact and showed that three independent variables of the model caused 84.10% of the change in the socio-cultural effects caused by sustainable tourism. The findings indicate that residents' communities are not merely limited to economic advantages; however, it also proved the non-monetary advantages of sustainable tourism development. The residents of these northern Pakistani areas are Muslims, and the findings were consistent with the those of prior studies and in line with the study of Hassan [157], and in terms religiosity level, the residents have a firm commitment to their religion. By providing training and educating host communities residents with required skills, knowledge, and information, these residents can be trained and prepared to understand the advantages of tourism development. In response, they will actively be involved in tourism development and support the tourism industry naturally [163].

Most foreign tourists come from Muslim countries and they share similar religious values and culture. Social exchange theory may also explain observations that residents accept or tolerate people who are closer to their social standing and resemble them culturally. Additionally, local communities' have a positive perception of developing sustainable tourism in these rural areas with beautiful natural sites in Pakistan. Several scholars have conducted numerous studies on socio-cultural impacts, and social exchange theory has also explained this life cycle concept in tourism areas [10,12,164]. As for the contextual and theoretical contribution of this innovative work to scientific knowledge, it is the first such work to be conducted in the context of Pakistan, examining residents' religiosity level and the effect of religiosity on the perceived socio-cultural impact of tourism development. In this study, we explored the effects of residents' religiosity and their perceptions related to the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development [165–167], as well as social distance theory [1,2,168], and have supported sustainable tourism development since its earliest stages [12,169,170].

6.1. Limitations and Recommendation

Concerning the empirical and hypothesized constraints of this study, we have presented theories supporting tourism development solely from the perspective of socio-cultural impacts. This tourism model's findings were not identified and determined in the literature, and the results of this case study cannot be generalized to other Pakistani areas or other Muslim societies. This research study expands the body of knowledge regarding the residents' religiosity level, and understanding socio-cultural impacts are vital for sustainable tourism development. The findings of this research might be of considerable interest to sustainable tourism development policy-makers, the tourism industry, and the developers to influence more sustainable policies and strategies in line with the preferences of local communities. This study recommends that future research studies should attempt to assess the relationship between individuals' religiosity and the socio-cultural impacts on sustainable tourism development with large sample sizes in other regions of Pakistan. Ultimately, other Muslims societies, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Iran, and Indonesia, are also sites of significant ethnic and cultural importance, historically significant and natural beauty, and improving our understanding of religiosity and socio-cultural impacts in developing sustainable tourism in these areas is important.

6.2. Implications

The results of this research have refined the theoretical basis to explain the interplay of socio-cultural factors that influence the host residents' reaction to supporting tourism development. Additionally, these results have contributed to the existing body of scientific knowledge by developing, testing, and refining a tourism model that explained 84.10% of the variance in the host communities' residents' support for sustainable tourism development. Overall, this research expanded the existing body of scientific knowledge from a socio-cultural point of view to include the perspective of residents' religiosity level as a factor supporting sustainable tourism development. The proposed tourism model, constructs, and measurement approach might be applicable in different regions of Pakistan and other tourism destinations, particularly in other Islamic countries and community-based sustainable tourism development projects. In this research, we utilized several underpinning theories, such as social exchange theory, self-determination theory, attachment theory, social representation theory, and social distance theory. Accordingly, the results of this research could support the suitability of the use of such theories. The tested tourism model showed that residents' religiosity, community attachment, and knowledge on sustainable tourism development affects the local community's support for sustainable tourism development. Considering this context, tourism policy-makers, practitioners, and developers might examine the behavior of residents to support tourism development in certain destinations [118]. The implications of these findings may provide significant advantages not only to academic researchers, but they might also provide benefits to other industries, such as service practitioners, tourism planners, and managers.

Planning a sustainable tourism destination, it requires a deep understanding of all involved stakeholders preferences, and the host communities [171]. The support of host residents is necessary as the hospitable, friendly host residents play the leading role in tourists' destination satisfaction and it imrpoves the success of tourism development projects [163]. In the same context, findings showed that residents' support for sustainable tourism development projects have parallel relationships with residents' religiosity level and perceived socio-cultural impacts. Residents' higher positive perceptions of the socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development support in their living areas. The findings of this study might assist policy-makers and practitioners in predicting host communities attitude, and preferences toward tourism development [121]. Policy makers, tourism developers, and tourism planners should pay attention to have the actual knowledge as well as an understanding of local communities, the dynamics of the influential factors, and how local communities residents perceive it before launching new tourism projects [39]. Having proper information about the tourism destinations, specific preferences, and the demographic profiles of destination residents is exceptionally beneficial for future planning, particularly in the destination places that are new for tourism development projects [163,172,173].

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Tourism Development, Environment and Policies: Differences between Domestic and International Tourists

Jianjun Liu [1], Haili Pan [2,3,*] and Shiyong Zheng [1]

1 Economics and Management School, Wuhan University, Wuhan 430072, China; jianjunliu@whu.edu.cn (J.L.); 2016101050110@whu.edu.cn (S.Z.)
2 Business School, Guilin University of Technology, Guilin 541004, China
3 Research Institute of Modern Enterprise Management, Guilin University of Technology, Guilin 541004, China
* Correspondence: phl@glut.edu.cn

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Abstract: Using panel data from the 17 underdeveloped provinces of China for 2005–2015, the author explored the differential impact of air (environment) quality and government policies on domestic and international visitors. Through econometric model analysis, the authors corroborated that domestic and international visitors react differently to air (environment) quality. In addition, domestic and international tourists have different responses to urbanization and transportation. Marketization is conducive to the development of tourism. Moreover, foreign trade has a positive impact on international tourists. These findings aid local governments to provide additional appropriate tourism development policies.

Keywords: tourism; sustainability; marketization; urbanization; environment

1. Introduction

In recent years, local governments in China have regarded the development of tourism as a powerful economic policy to promote the sustainable development of the local economy and ecological environment. Tourism can not only bring considerable growth to the economy, but also play an active role in environmental protection. The development of tourism has great potential to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of various provinces [1]. Tourism is a promoter of change and an important economic development choice which makes narrowing the gap between the rich and poor possible [2]. Numerous studies have assessed the economic impact of tourism at the overall (national or regional) level [3,4]. These studies have corroborated that tourism growth led to growth in output and input from tourism-related industries [3]. Currently, many cities in the world attach importance to their tourism strategy [5]. For instance, China has successively promulgated a series of laws and policies to promote the accelerated development of tourism in recent years. The vigorous development of tourism has become a national will and strategy. We affirm that the local and central governments regard development tourism as an important strategy.

The academia has produced considerable research on tourism. However, the majority of these studies independently analyzed domestic and international tourists and found few differences in the natural environment, local government policies, and other factors that affect domestic and international tourists [6–14]. This paper argues that tourists are mainly categorized into two major groups, namely, domestic and international. From the perspective of globalization of the world economy, exchanges between tourists from various countries have become more frequent and numerous, and attracting international tourists is an important means of developing local tourism [10,15]. Compared with local tourists, international tourists come from countries and regions with different cultural backgrounds and economic development levels. These background differences may cause local tourists and international tourists to react differently to the perceptions and actions of tourism. Then, the background difference between domestic tourists and international tourists may have different attitudes towards some factors affecting tourism, which in turn will affect their willingness to travel and behavior. In this study, we mainly consider two major categories of factors, namely air (environment) quality factors such as carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and PM 2.5 concentrations; and government economic policies such as market-oriented, urbanization, foreign trade, and transportation construction policies. Research has been previously conducted on these factors [7–9,12–14,16]. Although these studies provide a basis for us to understand the impact of these factors on tourism, we aim to investigate whether these effects differ across domestic and foreign visitors. In the case of differences, what are the main differences? For example, air (environment) quality will affect travel for domestic or international tourists. Is it really like this? In addition, should the impact of government policies on domestic and international visitors differ? What factors reflect the difference in impact? To address these questions, we explore impact patterns through analysis of real-time data. This paper uses the macro data at the national level to construct an econometric model to explore the differential impact of the environment and policies on domestic and international tourists. The econometric model combines theory with observational data to provide a robust test for exploring the impact of environmental and policy factors on tourism. We hope that the results of this paper will provide a meaningful reference for local governments and enterprises to implement appropriate tourism policies or marketing strategies.

2. Theoretical Hypothesis

Local government economic policies have far-reaching effects on the development of tourism, where certain policies may be beneficial, whereas others may not. This paper mainly discusses the impact of urbanization, marketization, foreign trade, transportation construction, and other policies on domestic and international tourists. Additionally, we explore natural environmental factors, such as the impact of air (environment) quality on domestic and foreign tourists.

Air (*environment*) *quality.* The World Tourism Organization recognizes the two-way relationship between tourism and climate change; on the one hand, climate change exerts its impact on tourism destinations and flows. On the other hand, tourism is the main cause of climate change mainly due to the use of fossil fuels that cause greenhouse gas emissions [17–22]. Future tourism growth will increase carbon dioxide emissions, and the increase in carbon dioxide emissions in turn will have a lagging and negative impact on tourism development [6]. The empirical results reveal that as air quality deteriorates, the demand for local outbound tourism increases [10]. Hence, the deterioration of air (environment) quality has weakened people's desire to travel. Zhou et al. (2018) confirmed that air pollution has an adverse impact on the demand for inbound tourism, but this adverse effect varies with the degree of air pollution [14]. Chen et al. (2017) corroborated that during the peak period of tourism, the impact of air pollution on the number of visitors to scenic spots was pronounced [23]. Becken et al. (2017) analyzed self-reported views on the effect of Chinese air quality on tourism by questionnaires. Furthermore, they affirmed that potential travelers expressed negative views on the tourism risks of China, especially air quality. Importantly, the perception of air quality risks had a significant negative impact on the destination's image and intentions to visit China [15]. On the basis of previous research findings and general knowledge, we also argue that air (environment) pollution will have a negative impact on domestic or international visitors.

Urbanization. A country's level of urbanization is related to its level of economic development. Therefore, the higher the level of urbanization, the higher the economic level. Therefore, individuals have more money and ability to pay for travel. Mullins (1991) proposed the concept of tourism urbanization, which was the first study on tourism and urbanization. He believed that the coordinated development of urbanization and tourism could create consumption [24]. In the case of Digha in West Bengal, India, Manojit and Dandapath (2013) corroborated that the increase in road connectivity and transportation services led to the influx of tourists, which led to the development of hotels, holiday homes, and private hotels [12]. In addition, Palamalai and Kalaivani (2016) found a causal relationship between urbanization and tourism expansion in India [25]. Similarly, Shinde (2017) used Shirdi in India as an example to examine the urbanization process of religious tourism destinations. Although Shinde discussed tourism as promoting urbanization, Shinde also believed that if urbanization planning cannot be effectively implemented, then it will have an impact on the sustainable development of tourism [26]. Furthermore, Ashworth and Page (2011) affirmed that the global urbanization process will promote the development of leisure service industries including tourism [27]. Naidu (2017) used 30-year (1985–2015) time series data to examine the relationship between urbanization and tourism output. Moreover, he contended that an urbanization growth of 1% would increase tourism production by 132.87%in the long run [28]. Although urbanization in a few regions has had different effects on tourism, urbanization has promoted the development of tourism in general [29]. After examining the historical process of urbanization and tourism development, Luo et al. (2016) asserted that urbanization has improved the development of tourism based on a systematic analysis of the relationship between tourism development and urbanization [16]. Thus, this paper posits that urbanization can promote the development of tourism; however, distinguishing the impact of domestic and international tourism is necessary. For domestic tourists, the higher the urbanization, the higher the income level, which increases the possibility of tourism. However, increased urbanization for international tourists means that the locals lose a sense of the original city, culture, and lifestyle and will be inclined to experience the traditional, original style of tourism. Meanwhile, Cuadrado-Ciuraneta et al. (2017) contended that in the Catalonia region of Spain, where the level of urbanization is developed, a phenomenon of tourism suburbanization has emerged in recent years. Moreover, they also confirmed that future research should " ... shed light on latent suburbanization processes involving marginal European regions" [30]. Does this mean that tourists from some developed countries or regions in the world tend to return to quiet and leisure suburban life, but the preference for the prosperous areas with higher urbanization level is not so high?Therefore, this study puts forward that *urbanization has a positive impact on domestic tourism but a negative impact on international tourism.*

Marketization. The marketization process is the core of the functioning of markets [31]. Podedworna (2010) studied the marketization of the Polish economy. Marketization has led to a good development of the Polish economy, especially the rural economy. Further, Podedworna claimed that the third wave of global marketization has promoted the marketization of the natural environment, the commercialization of public goods, and even the marketization of the human body [32]. Marketization is valued by countries, especially those in planned economies. W.Belk and Güliz (1994) studied the marketization and consumer markets of Romania and Turkey in the 1990s. Although differences in culture and development levels exist between the two countries, the marketization process has made both countries show high consumption desires [33]. In the post-industrial era, the consumption symbolism, together with the marketization of the cultural sector, has become increasingly prominent in the service industry [34]. Similar to privatization and commodification, marketization reflects the new characteristics of ecotourism development under the neoliberal mechanism [35]. Andersson and Getz (2009) asserted that tourism is a "mixed industry" where private companies, public institutions, and non-profit associations create tourism products in competition and cooperation [6]. This open tourism development model is the product of the wave of marketization and promotes the development of tourism. One of the most striking changes in the economic reform of China is the non-nationalization of the economy. The increase in the employment share of non-state-owned units is caused by the non-nationalization of state-owned enterprises in urban areas and development of township enterprises in rural areas [36]. The development of township and village enterprises has effectively absorbed the surplus labor of agriculture, which is conducive to increasing the income of rural residents. The resource allocation efficiency of the urban labor market has improved in the process of employment reconstruction. This increase in competitive pressure in the labor market is also conducive to improving organizational efficiency, increasing the wage level of the urban labor market, and increasing the income of residents. Wang et al. (2018) claimed that institutional factors have a significant positive impact on the geographical diversity of tourism companies, such as the overall degree of marketization, relationship between local government and market, and degree of product and market development [37]. Therefore, we also agree that marketization can optimize the allocation of tourism resources and improve the efficiency of tourism operations, thereby promoting domestic and international tourism.

Foreign trade. Foreign trade is mainly characterized by frequent international exchanges. The trade structure of China has undergone major changes from its period of reform and opening up. The Chinese economy has become integrated into the international market mainly to promote the development of the manufacturing industry and trade-related financial trade and service industries of China. We validated that foreign trade has enhanced the exchanges between China and the international market, which is conducive for the promotion of the understanding international tourists of China or desires to travel. Hoa et al. (2018) verified that foreign trade and foreign direct investment have a positive impact on tourism [38]. Moreover, Tsui et al. (2018) deduced that bilateral trade volume has positive statistical significance in explaining certain changes in business travel flows [39]. Furthermore, Liu et al. (2018) obtained similar results after studying the tourism market in Thailand, that is, bilateral trade has become an important factor in the inbound tourism flow of the country [10]. Foreign trade is a bilateral development process. In addition to promoting economic interaction between foreign countries and host countries, it can also promote the income and economic development of its residents and may also promote the willingness of domestic residents to travel. However, this effect is more likely to be indirect. Therefore, this article mainly wants to explore the impact of foreign trade on the travel of international tourists to the host country because this impact may be direct. Therefore, we believe that foreign trade has a positive impact on international tourists.

Transportation. Transportation plays an important role in each experience component of travel [40]. As an important part of tourism travel, traffic construction at tourist destinations may have an important impact on tourism. For instance, a strong relationship was found between the development of rail transport and tourism. Railways are associated not only with services, such as hotels and reservations, but also with promoters of tourist destinations [9]. After studying the economic impact of the high-speed railway construction of China, Chang et al. (2018) inferred that railway construction has achieved positive results in terms of economic benefits, social impact, and development sustainability. Railways will bring long-term benefits in the fields of tourism, economy, and transportation [41]. However, Aratuo and Etienne (2019) found a relationship between US economic growth and six tourism-related sub-sectors(i.e., accommodation, air transportation, shopping, food and beverage, other transportation, entertainment, and entertainment).In addition to the accommodation and food and beverage industries, no long-term relationship was found between other tourism sub-sectors and economic growth [7]. We argue that, in contrast to developed countries, China as a developing country is relatively backward in terms of economic level and transportation facilities. Thus, improvement in transportation facilities will contribute to the development of the economy and tourism. In addition, with the development of the economy, the number of private cars owned by Chinese families is increasing. Coupled with the development of the highway, this greatly promotes domestic tourists to travel by car. For international tourists, they usually arrive at the first-tier cities and then transfer to various provincial and city destinations. This long-distance transfer to the railway is still a stable and safe way to travel. Therefore, we believe that transportation can promote the development of tourism. Particularly, compared with railways, highways have a greater impact on domestic tourists; compared with highways, railways have a greater impact on international tourists.

Time trend. In addition to the abovementioned factors, this study uses time trend items to control the possible trend changes in the process of tourism development.

3. Models, Methods and Data

3.1. Model Building

This paper takes the economic division of China as an example. The country is divided into Northeast, Central, Eastern, and Western regions according to regional economic development. Relatively speaking, the level of economic development in the eastern region is ahead of the three other regions, where tourism revenue in these regions is a minor component of economic income. Therefore, this study excluded the eastern region from the analysis. The remaining three regions have relatively weak economic levels (economically underdeveloped regions), and the economic levels between regions are only slightly different and rich in tourism resources. Data are lacking in these four regions (Jiangxi, Chongqing, Tibet, Ningxia).Therefore, this paper also excludes the four provinces and cities and the remaining 17 provinces (Northeast: Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang; Central Region: Shanxi, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, and Hunan; Western Region: Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and Xinjiang) as the research objects of this paper. The National Bureau of Statistics separately counts tourist arrivals into domestic and international tourists. Therefore, we divide tourists into two groups, namely, domestic and international. On the basis of the panel data of the 17 regions, we construct the following measurement models to explore the effects of air (environment) quality and other government policies on tourism:

$$V_{sit} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 E_{it} + \alpha G_{it} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where V_{sit} is the total number of domestic ($s = 0$) or international ($s = 1$) tourists of the i-th province in the t-th year. β_0 is a constant term and β_1 is a regression coefficient of air (environment). α is a regression coefficient of policy variables. Moreover, γ_t is a time-fixed effect, and ε_{it} is a disturbance term. E_{it} is an air (environment) explanatory variable that includes CO_2 emission and PM2.5 average concentration. Further, G_{it} refers to policy variables such as urbanization, marketization, foreign trade, highway mileage, and railway mileage.

3.2. Data, Variables, and Descriptive Statistics

This study focuses on the impact of air (environment) quality and other government policies on visitors and explores the differential impact of these factors or policies on domestic and international visitors in detail. Table 1 provides the detailed variable settings.

Table 1. Main variables and calculation methods.

Variables	Variable Connotation	Calculation Methods
lnDT	Domestic tourists.	Domestic tourists take logarithm
lnIT	International tourists.	International tourists take logarithm
lnCO2	Carbon dioxide emissions	Carbon dioxide emissions take logarithm
lnPM	PM 2.5 average concentration	PM 2.5 average concentration take logarithm
lnUrb	urbanization level	urbanization level take logarithm
lnMark	marketization index	marketization index take logarithm
lnFT	foreign trade	foreign trade take logarithm
lnRW	railway mileage	railway mileage take logarithm
lnHW	highway mileage	highway mileage take logarithm

Dependent variable. This study uses the number of tourists to measure the level of regional tourism development and is divided into domestic tourists and international visitors. This distinction helps in better understanding how regional government policies affect domestic and foreign tourists. We argue that domestic and foreign tourists may have different behavioral preferences or responses to tourism. In this study, the number of domestic tourists is denoted as log lnDT and the log for international tourists is denoted as log lnIT as explanatory variables. All data are derived from the China Tourism Statistics Yearbook.

Independent variable (*environment*). We measure air (environment) quality by CO_2 emissions and PM 2.5 concentrations. The higher the value of these two indicators, the worse the air (environment) quality. In the model, we use logarithm $lnCO_2$ to represent CO_2 emissions. The data on CO_2 emissions are derived from China Emission Accounts and Datasets. In addition, we use the logarithm lnPM to represent PM 2.5 concentration, which is derived from the Columbia University Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center [42].

Other independent variables (*policies*). We examine the impact of other factors on tourism.

Urbanization. The level of urbanization has a positive impact on the economic development of China. This study uses the proportion of the non-agricultural population to measure the level of urbanization. We use logarithm lnUrb to represent the level of urbanization. The data on urbanization level are derived the China Statistical Yearbook.

Marketization. Marketization can bring increased vitality to tourism and improve the efficiency of the industry. In the model, we use the logarithm lnMark to represent the level of marketization. These data are derived from Wang et al.'s (2016) marketization index report, namely, China's Provincial Marketization Index Report (2016) [43].

Foreign trade. This study believes that foreign trade emphasizes the economic exchanges between domestic and foreign companies. This type of economic exchange is conducive to promoting cooperation among parties in various fields, such as encouraging foreign tourists to travel to China. In this study, the total import and export volumes are used as a measure of total foreign trade. The model uses logarithm lnFT to represent total foreign trade. The data were derived from the China Statistical Yearbook.

Transportation mileage. Transportation is an important factor in the consideration of traveling because convenience during transportation is an important indicator of the level of development of tourism. Therefore, this study incorporates traffic into the model to test its impact on tourism. However, according to the actual situation, the National Bureau of Statistics data does not have specific statistics on the flight route mileage; hence, we do not include the flight mileage into the transportation mileage. The measurement of transportation mileage includes two aspects, namely, highway and railway mileage. In the model, we use the logarithms lnHW and lnRW to represent highway and railway mileages, respectively. Transportation mileage data are derived from the China Regional Economic Statistics Yearbook.

To understand the characteristics of the data, we conduct a descriptive statistical analysis of the various characteristics of the main variables of this study. The sample data for this paper include observations from 2005 to 2015 in 17 western provinces of China, with a total sample size of 187. The descriptive statistics in Table 2 shows a large variation between the observed values of the variables, which provides the possibility of the following econometric estimation.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Observations
lnDT	9.278493	1.020568	6.45047	10.97679	$n = 187$
lnIT	4.555244	1.160149	1.098612	6.345636	$n = 187$
lnCO2	5.385871	0.637381	2.99072	6.432297	$n = 187$
lnPM	3.100933	0.661995	1.568501	4.113909	$n = 187$
lnUrb	3.789561	0.246742	3.030823	4.209903	$n = 187$
lnMark	1.65028	0.258334	0.928219	2.075685	$n = 187$
lnFT	14.11975	1.083563	10.62936	16.25331	$n = 187$
lnRW	8.169016	0.391511	6.995766	9.400465	$n = 187$
lnHW	11.83169	0.440624	10.29958	12.66217	$n = 187$

Figure 1 illustrates the regional distribution of all variables. Domestic tourists are mainly concentrated in the central part of China, especially in the Yangtze River, whereas international tourists are distributed in various parts of China and are relatively scattered. The carbon dioxide emissions of the country mainly occur in the northeast, whereas high PM 2.5 concentrations mainly occur in the eastern and central regions. The marketization index of China mainly ranges between 4 and 8, and the marketization level in the central and eastern regions is relatively high, followed by the northern and southern regions. The level of foreign trade in the eastern region is relatively high, with little differences in other regions. In terms of internal transportation, the mileage of various expressways in the country is relatively high. That is, the expressway has been well developed, and the total mileage of most of the shares has reached more than 100,000 km. The average mileage of each railway mainly spans between 1500 and 4500 km, and the level of each development is even. The current level of urbanization in China generally ranges between 40% and 60%, with a relatively large space for the improvement of the development of urbanization.

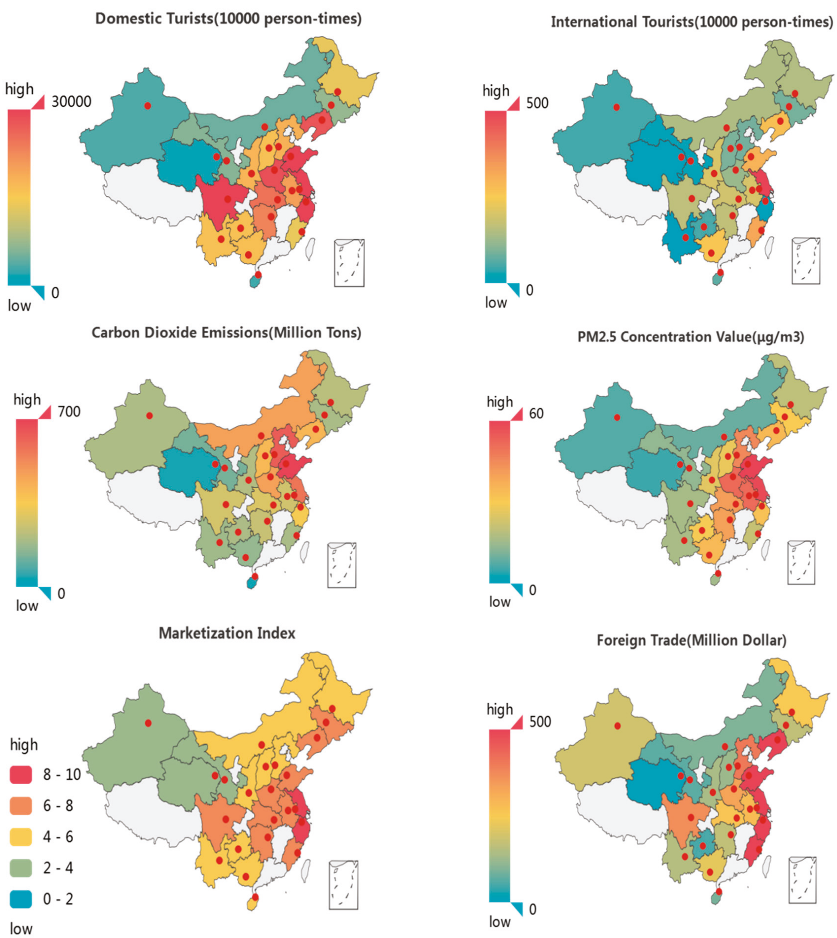


Figure 1. *Cont.*

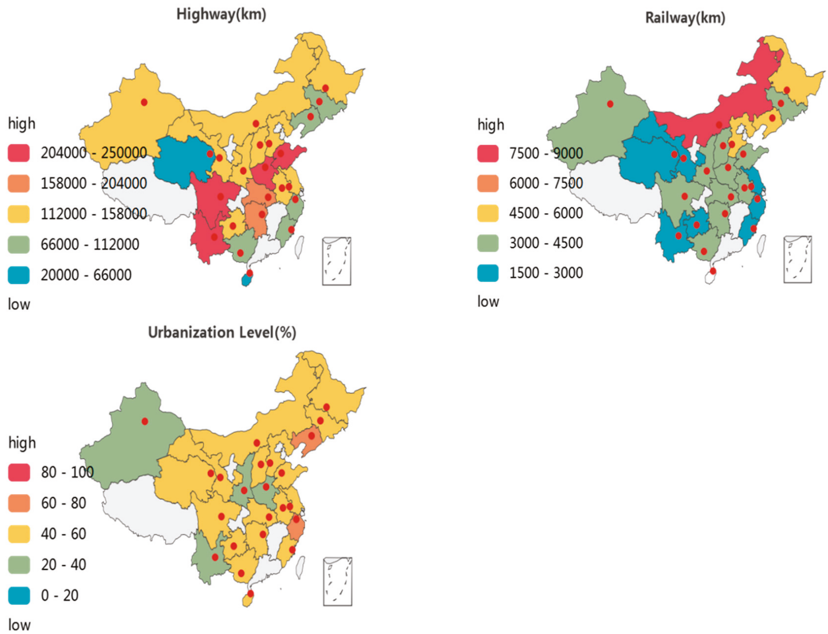


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of indicators.

In addition, from the perspective of growth rate trends (Figure 2), domestic tourists have displayed a positive growth trend, whereas the opposite is true for foreign tourists, which is basically a horizontal stable trend. In terms of air (environment), carbon dioxide emissions have decreased since 2011, and PM 2.5 concentrations generally have a downward trend. However, the decline is relative with significant increases in 2013 and 2015. We also depict a trend chart of tourism development in Figure 3. Figure 3a,b depicts that the vertical axis is the number of tourists. Moreover, the figures affirm that the number of tourists in almost all provinces shows a steady development trend regardless of the number of domestic tourists or the number of international tourists. However, we are unable to include the trend graphs of other indicators for brevity.

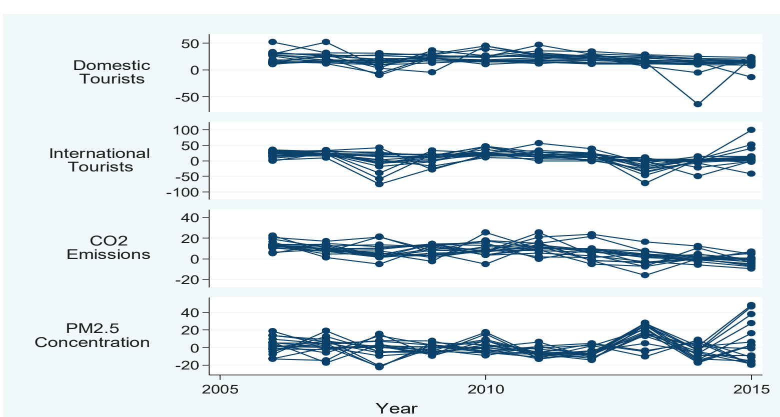
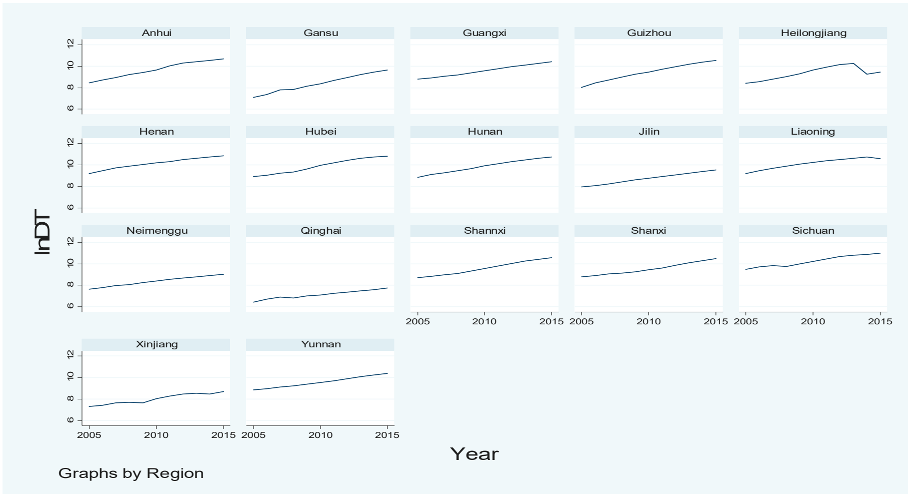
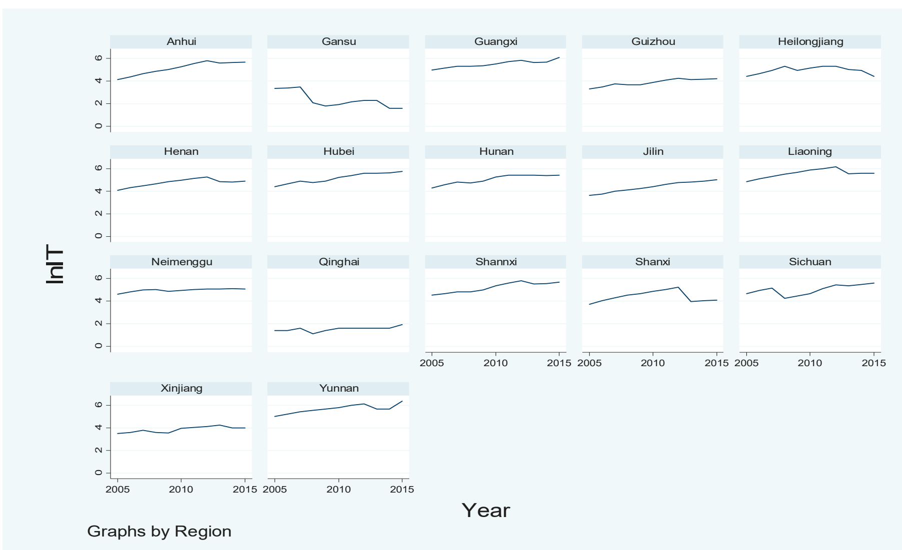


Figure 2. Change in the growth rate of each variable.



(**a**)



(**b**)

Figure 3. (**a**) Tourism development trend; (**b**) tourism development trend.

The scatter plot in Figure 4 reveals that CO_2/PM 2.5 and domestic/international tourists show an evident linear correlation. Support for statistical data was provided by the linear regression analysis in the next step of the study. We omit the individual relationship between other indicators and tourism for brevity. However, we will conduct an in-depth discussion in the following model test.

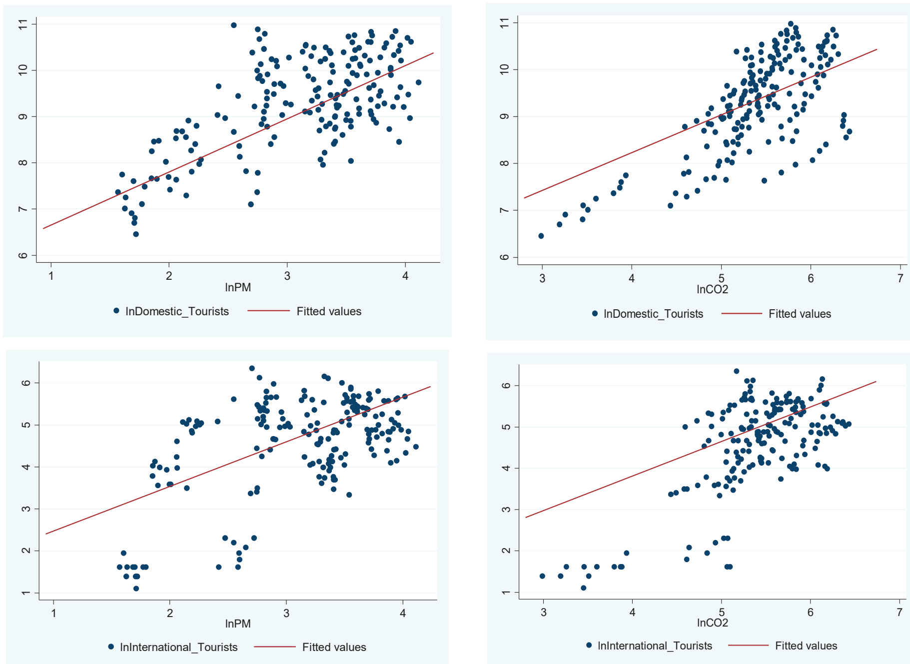


Figure 4. Linear fit of each variable.

4. Empirical Analysis

We analyze data from 17 of China's underdeveloped regions. The panel data model is typically estimated using a random or fixed effects model. The difference between the two methods is that the random effects model is relatively more efficient but requires that exogenous variables be unrelated to individual effects. However, although the fixed effects model has no requirements between exogenous variables and individual effects, it consumes more degrees of freedom; hence, both have advantages and disadvantages [44]. To this end, the study selects between the two estimation methods using the Hausman test. Through the model selection test, we corroborate that the random effects model (LM test: chibar2(01) = 375.02, p = 0.0000) and fixed effect model (F test that all u_i = 0: F(16, 154) = 49.63, Prob > F = 0.0000) are superior to the mixed effects model for the domestic tourist group. Thereafter, we perform the Hausmantest (chi2(16) = 83.03, p = 0.000) on the random and fixed effect models. Results affirm that the fixed effects model is better than the random effects model. Therefore, we mainly adopt the test results of the fixed effects model for the domestic group. For the international visitor group, the random effects model (LM test: chibar2(01) = 395.51, p = 0.0000) and fixed effects model (F test that all u_i = 0: F(16, 153) = 30.10, Prob > F = 0.0000) are superior to the mixed effects model. Thereafter, we perform the Hausmantest (chi2(17) = 9.00, p = 0.9403) on the random and fixed effects models. Results reveal that the random effects model is better than the fixed effects model. Therefore, we adopt the test results of the random effects model for the international group.

When using the above variables for estimation, all variables take the natural logarithm, such that the estimated coefficient of the variable can also be regarded as the elastic coefficient. The estimation results affirm that our previous theoretical judgments are supported by the data in general. For domestic tourism, we adopt a fixed effects estimate because the Hausman test rejects the random effects model. For international tourism, we adopt the estimation of random effects because the Hausman test cannot reject the random effects model. Table 3 illustrates the following estimation results. First, the impact of carbon dioxide (CO_2) on tourism is negative ($\beta = -0.234$, ns) for domestic tourism, but the significance level has not passed the test. The PM 2.5 concentration (β = −0.383, $p < 0.01$) significantly negatively affects domestic tourism. Urbanization (β = 0.780, $p < 0.05$) significantly promotes domestic tourism, which indicates that the level of urbanization is effective in promoting the travel of domestic residents. The level of marketization (β = 0.334, $p < 0.05$) also has a positive impact on domestic tourism. In terms of transportation, highway construction (β = 0.492, $p < 0.01$) has a significant effect on domestic tourism, and the impact of the railway on domestic travel is positive (β = 0.204, ns), but non-significant. This finding implies that the manner in which domestic residents travel to domestic tourism may be biased by road transportation (such as self-driving tour).Second, no significant effect was observed for carbon dioxide (β = −0.156, ns) or PM 2.5 (β = 0.289, ns) on international tourists. However, urbanization (β = −1.664, $p < 0.01$) displays a significant negative impact on international tourism, which indicates that international travelers are likely to travel to less urbanized areas due to the primitive and natural scenery. The level of marketization (β = 0.627, $p < 0.05$) also has a positive impact on international tourists. In terms of transportation, findings suggest that the impact of expressway construction (β = −0.222, ns) on international tourism is non-significant and that the impact of railways on international tourists is positive (β = 0.775, $p < 0.01$). This result confirms that the railways of China, especially the development of its high-speed railways in recent years, have made remarkable achievements internationally. International tourists are further inclined to ride and experience the high-speed rail travel of the country. Furthermore, the level of foreign trade (β = 0.775, $p < 0.01$) also has a significant positive impact on international tourism. As such, foreign trade promotes domestic and foreign exchanges and attracts more international travelers to China.

Table 3. Estimation results of econometric models.

	DV: lnDT		DV: lnIT	
IV	**Random Effects Model**	**Fixed Effects Model**	**Random Effects Model**	**Fixed Effects Model**
lnCO2	0.0130	−0.234	−0.156	−0.367
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.23)	(0.27)
lnPM	0.181	−0.383 ***	0.289	0.185
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.19)	(0.27)
lnMark	0.532 ***	0.334 **	0.627 **	0.460
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.28)	(0.30)
lnFT			0.687 ***	0.668 ***
			(0.11)	(0.13)
lnUrb	0.662 **	0.780 **	−1.664 ***	−1.853 ***
	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.48)	(0.69)
lnRW	0.144	0.204	0.775 ***	0.746 **
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.29)	(0.33)
lnHW	0.751 ***	0.492 ***	−0.222	−0.429
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.28)
Time effect	controlled	controlled	controlled	controlled
cons	−5.084 **	0.205	−3.819	1.297
	(2.26)	(2.61)	(3.64)	(5.10)
Hausman test (*p*)	chi2(16) = 83.03(0.000)		chi2(17) = 9.00(0.9403)	
N	187	187	187	187
r2		0.943		0.554
r2 a		0.931		0.457
F		158.308		11.159
Wald	chi2(16) = 1974.40		chi2(17) = 231.72	

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

We summarize the results of the hypothesis testing to help us more intuitively compare the differences in the impact of various factors on domestic and international visitors (see Table 4). We prove that government policies and basic transportation construction play a positive role in promoting domestic and international tourism for economically underdeveloped provinces. In sum, the impact of carbon dioxide on tourism is non-significant among the air (environment) quality factors whether for domestic or international tourists. However, PM 2.5 concentration has varied influences on domestic and international tourists. Domestic tourists are sensitive to changes in PM 2.5 concentration, whereas international tourists are less sensitive. Particularly, the PM 2.5 indicator has a strong inhibitory effect on the travel of domestic tourists. In addition, although the impact of CO_2 is non-significant, it remains negative. The reason for this result may be that the effect of PM 2.5 on air is intuitive. Thus, a high concentration of PM 2.5 indicates poor air quality. People can perceive the negative air quality through personal experience or observation, thereby directly affecting the travel plans of people. Although CO_2 negatively influences the air and environment, this effect is not intuitive. Therefore, materializing the impact of CO_2 on the air or environment through personal experience or observation is difficult. Hence, the impact of CO_2 emissions on tourists is relatively limited. Surprisingly, the simultaneous impact of CO_2 emissions and PM 2.5 concentrations on international visitors is non-significant. The reason for this finding may be that international passengers do not observe the air (environment) situation of China or have little or no information about this condition before traveling to the country. In other cases, they may not pay attention to this information. Therefore, the impact of CO_2 emissions or PM 2.5 concentration on international tourists is non-significant or fails to be an important consideration before tourists decide to travel to China. Another possible explanation is that the subjects we study in this paper are mainly the provinces with less developed economies in Western China. The air (environment) quality of these areas is not very bad compared with other regions; Figure 1 exhibits such differences. Therefore, whether it is from the air (environment) quality perceived by tourists or from the perspective of data model analysis, the overall air (environment) quality has no significant impact on tourists. Of course, this does not mean that the quality of air (environment) has little effect on tourism, but it just infers that the air (environment) quality of these areas is well controlled and that no serious impact on tourism development has emerged. The impact of marketization on domestic and international tourism is positive and significant, which also reveals that the degree of the openness of the government to the market has a positive impact on tourism and may even affect the entire economy. In addition, the impact of urbanization on domestic and international tourists differs. Specific performance suggests that urbanization has a significant positive impact on domestic tourists, whereas this impact is negative on international tourists. That is, the higher the level of urbanization, the weaker the ability to attract international tourists. In addition, foreign trade can further promote international travelers to travel to China. The impact of traffic construction on domestic and international tourists also differs. Specifically, the increase in highway mileage has a positive effect on the promotion of domestic tourism, whereas this impact is non-significant on international tourists. Conversely, the increase in railway mileage has no significant impact on domestic tourists, whereas this impact is positive on international tourists. Finally, the increase in railway mileage has a positive effect on the impact of international tourism.

Table 4. Summary of Research Hypothesis Test Results.

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Hypothesis Description</th><th rowspan="2">Independents</th><th colspan="2">Comparison</th></tr>
<tr><th>Domestic Set</th><th>International Set</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Air (environment) pollution will have a negative impact on domestic and international visitors.</td><td>CO_2</td><td>Not supported</td><td>Not supported</td></tr>
<tr><td>PM 2.5</td><td>Supported (−)</td><td>Not supported</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urbanization has a positive impact on domestic tourism but a negative impact on international tourism.</td><td>Urbanization</td><td>Supported (+)</td><td>Supported (−)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marketization promoting domestic and international tourism.</td><td>Marketization</td><td>Supported (+)</td><td>Supported (+)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Foreign trade has a positive impact on international tourists.</td><td>Foreign trade</td><td>——</td><td>Supported</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Transportation can promote the development of tourism. In particular, compared with railways, highways have a greater impact on domestic tourists; compared with highways, railways have a greater impact on international tourists.</td><td>Highway</td><td>Supported (+)</td><td>Not supported</td></tr>
<tr><td>Railway</td><td>Not supported</td><td>Supported (+)</td></tr>
</table>

Note: The symbols in parentheses represent the potency of the influence. For example, (−) represents a negative influence, (+) represents a positive influence.

5. Implications and Limitations

The results provide certain considerations and challenges for the sustainable development of tourism in underdeveloped areas in China. First, pursuing tourism development while paying attention to the negative impact of air (environment) quality should be prioritized. Particularly, we emphasize the notable impact of the PM 2.5 concentration on tourism because its impact on tourists is direct. Although, from the statistical point of view (Figure 2), the PM 2.5 concentration of these parts shows a downward trend annually. However, this decline is still relatively slow. Therefore, the government should continue or increase environmental protection policies, such as energy conservation and emission reduction. Otherwise, the sustainable development of tourism will become a big challenge. Second, the local government's economic policies have played an extremely positive role in promoting the development of tourism. Local governments should be further open to economic development. The analysis results reveal that local governments should implement open economic policies. That is, marketization has a positive impact on domestic and foreign tourists. In addition, the increase in foreign trade plays a positive role in promoting tourism. Specifically, we add foreign trade variables to the international tourism model and corroborate that its impact on the travel of international tourists to China remains largely significant. Therefore, in addition to the open domestic economic development policy for local governments, the more open foreign trade has played a positive role in promoting international tourists. After the reform and opening up, economic openness and non-nationalization have become the trends of the times. As such, reducing participation in economic activities and mobilizing the power of the market to bring vitality to the tourism market are necessary for local governments. Third, urban construction and basic transportation construction policies also have a positive impact on tourism. The improvement of the level of urbanization is conducive to promoting the income level of the entire population and narrowing the income gap between urban and rural areas. Currently, the urbanization level of China ranges between 40% and 60% (Figure 1). Hence, the level of urbanization still has a relatively large room for improvement. For the tourism industry, rural residents with increasing incomes are an attractive market. In addition, local governments should also consider the impact of urbanization on international tourists. For regions that rely on natural scenery as their main destination, maintaining a comprehensive and original social outlook may be attractive. In this respect, excessive urbanization may weaken the attractiveness of local attractions to international tourists.

One limitation of this study is that our results are based on the data analysis of Chinese single subjects. The results may only adapt to the Chinese context, but we also believe that some developing countries similar to China can learn from the experience of China and the results of this study to adjust their tourism development strategies. Future researchers can incorporate the situation of each country into a comparative model from a more macro perspective and explore whether the development of other countries is consistent with the results of this study or have different or even opposite trends. In addition, this study only analyzes the differences between domestic and international tourists through macro data. We cannot fundamentally understand why they have this difference. For instance, knowing precisely the difference in the impact of air (environment) quality factors on domestic and international visitors is difficult. We only know that such a difference exists. Therefore, future research can further explore the mechanisms behind these differences by combining some micro data such as interviews and questionnaires. In short, distinguishing domestic tourists from international tourists is reasonable because they should have different responses to tourism policies and corporate marketing strategies. Therefore, future research can comprehensively compare and analyze the differences between the two types of tourists from different angles, not just the factors mentioned in this paper.

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The Impact of Disaster of a National Airline on the Nation's Tourism: An Empirical Investigation

Ting Fan [1,*], Bo Pu [2], Samart Powpaka [3,*] and Liaogang Hao [1]

[1] School of Economics and Management, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu 610031, China; haoliaogang@126.com
[2] College of Tourism, Sichuan Agricultural University, Chengdu 611830, China; ppuubo@hotmail.com
[3] School of Management and Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen 518172, China
* Correspondence: tfan@swjtu.edu.cn (T.F.); powpaka@cuhk.edu.cn (S.P.)

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Abstract: This study contributes to the area of tourism research by investigating the process by which the air disaster of a national airline affects tourists' attitude and intention to fly the airline as well as attitude and intention to visit the country. A survey with potential Chinese tourists on visiting Malaysia and flying Malaysia Airlines was conducted. Results show that intention to visit Malaysia is positively affected by attitude toward visiting Malaysia and intention to fly Malaysia Airlines. Attitude toward visiting Malaysia is positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines and negatively by perceived risk of visiting Malaysia. Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia is, in turn, negatively affected by subjective knowledge about Malaysia and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines, and positively by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines. Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines, on the other hand, is positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines. Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines is negatively affected by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines, which is, in turn, positively affected by usefulness of (negative) public opinion. The theoretical contribution, managerial implications, limitations, and future research direction are also discussed.

Keywords: air disaster; subjective knowledge; usefulness of public opinion; perceived risk; attitude; purchase intention; Malaysia Airlines; Malaysia

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1. Introduction

According to Aviation Benefits beyond Borders [1], tourism makes a significant contribution to the global economy. According to the article, tourism contributed almost 10% to the world GDP (US$ 2.2 trillion) in 2015 and provided over 108 million jobs globally. It is estimated that by 2024, the direct employment in the tourism industry will reach more than 126 million globally. In Malaysia, tourism has become the country's 6th largest economic pillar, and attracting tourists from the Chinese market is one of the country's key focus [2].

Air travel plays a critical role in supporting tourism. It has become an integral part of international tourism. The connectivity provided by international air transport facilitates the fast-growing global tourism industry. Aviation Benefits beyond Borders [1] estimates that over half of international tourists travel to their destination by air.

When visiting a foreign tourist destination, consumers are likely to consider the national airline of the country of destination because of the likely shorter travel time and more convenience in connecting flights. An important issue is whether or not problems with the national airline, especially airline disasters, negatively affect the foreign tourists' intention to use the airline as well as intention to visit the country. Although this kind of incident is rare, the tremendous negative impact of such an incident on the airline and the country [3] warrants an investigation of this type of incident.

Malaysia Airlines is such a national airline that experienced air disasters. The mysterious disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 (from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014) and the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH317 (from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on July 17, 2014) significantly affected the perceived risks in flying the airline among Chinese passengers as well as many other passengers making bookings in Europe, and as such significantly affected Malaysia Airlines' business [4]. Malaysia, which was ranked the 9th most-visited country in the world in 2010, slid to 12th in 2016 [3].

It has been four years since the two Malaysian Airlines' disasters in 2014. The effect of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 still seems to linger in Chinse people's mind. An interesting question is whether or not this air disaster still affects Chinese tourists' willingness to visit Malaysia by Malaysia Airlines, and if yes, how visiting Malaysia and flying Malaysia Airlines relate to each other.

The objective of this study is to investigated the process by which the air disaster of a national airline (i.e., Malaysia Airlines) affects tourists' attitude and intention to fly the airline as well as attitude and intention to visit the country (i.e., Malaysia). Specifically, this study proposed and empirically tested factors affecting the attitude and intention toward flying Malaysia Airlines, and factors affecting attitude and intention toward visiting Malaysia. To achieve this objective, a qualitative research with potential Chinese passengers augmented by literature review was conducted to come up with the conceptual model for this study.

The next section discussed the conceptualization of the conceptual model and hypothesis. This is followed by research methodology. Section 4 discusses the results of the study. The final conclusion section discusses theoretical contribution, managerial implications, limitations, and future research direction.

2. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Review of literature reveals that, surprisingly, there is no study that directly addresses the issue of air disasters and their impacts on the willing to fly the airlines and visiting the countries of origin of the airlines. As such, a model conceptualization approach used by Zeithaml [5] was adopted to conceptualize the conceptual model for this study. The steps in the model conceptualization process are discussed in the next section.

2.1. Model Conceptualization Process

As suggested Zeithaml [5], insights from an exploratory study with potential Chinese tourists and review of relevant literature were combined into a conceptual model that conceptualizes the perceptions, attitudes, and intentions toward flying Malaysia Airlines and toward visiting Malaysia. Specifically, a focus group interview was conducted to generate qualitative data that served as the basis for model conceptualization and research hypothesis formulation. Based on the concepts and their relationships identified in the qualitative research, literature review was conducted to identify appropriate conceptual frameworks to conceptualize the phenomenon, and then to find literature to support the relationships among the constructs. The model conceptualization process is discussed in detail below.

2.1.1. The Exploratory Study

The focus group interview was based on an interview guideline, and the questions were semi-structured to allow additional insights. To guarantee the validity of the interview, the selection of interviewees was concentrated on candidates who have certain knowledge about aviation disaster, for example know or at least heard about the MH370 accident, fly often for business or vacation, and have the possibility to fly international airlines. In addition, the participants should be able to clearly and fluently express their opinions. Thus, a focus group interview of eight Chinese tourists with an education level of undergraduates and above who plan to visit foreign tourist destinations was conducted. The participants included four males and four females between the age of 25 and 55 and all had visited foreign tourist destination on individual visas. To control the process of the focus group interview, the location was situated in a place with minimum distraction (the office of the moderator or participant) to secure the continuity and fluency of the focus group interview. The discussion centered on Malaysia as the tourist destination and then Malaysia Airlines as the airline for visiting Malaysia. The moderator first expressed his gratitude for the interviewers to take part in the focus group interview, and then presented a brief introduction of the MH370 air disaster and the purpose of the interview. Questions covering such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of visiting Malaysia and flying Malaysia Airlines, the perceived risked of choosing airplanes as the transportation for business or vacation, and factors affecting the interviewers' choice of transportation and vacation destination were then discussed along the process.

The focus group interview revealed following findings:

- There was a perceived risk (i.e., physical risk) in visiting Malaysia because of news about a Chinese tourist being kidnapped in Sabah, Malaysia. This perceived risk negatively the subjects' affected attitude toward visiting Malaysia and intention to visit Malaysia.
- There was still a perceived risk (i.e., physical risk) in flying Malaysia Airlines because of the MH370 incident. This perceived risk negatively affected the subjects' attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines to Malaysia and intention to fly Malaysia Airlines.
- Favorable attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines seems to reduce perceived risk in visiting Malaysia and increase the subjects' positive attitude toward visiting Malaysia.
- The subjects' subjective knowledge about the aviation/airlines and subjective knowledge about Malaysia seem to reduce perceived risk in flying Malaysia Airlines and perceived risk in visiting Malaysia, respectively.
- Perceived usefulness of (negative) public opinions about the Malaysia Airlines seems to affect and increase perceived risk in flying Malaysia Airlines and perceived risk in visiting Malaysia.

Based on the findings from the focus group interview, a literature review was conducted to identify an appropriate conceptual framework as well as to find empirical support for the relationship among the constructs.

2.1.2. The Conceptual Frameworks

Based on the findings from the focus group interview, a conceptual framework is needed to link all the concepts/constructs identified from the focus interview together into a coherent scheme of relationships. Since beliefs and attitudes were identified in the focus group interview, attitudinal models were reviewed to identify the appropriate framework for conceptualizing the conceptual model for this study. The literature review identified the dual mediation model [6] as the appropriate conceptual framework to conceptualize the conceptual model for this study.

2.1.3. The Dual Mediation Model

MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch [6] derived the dual mediation model from the joint cognitive structure of communication effects [7] and the elaboration likelihood model [8] to explain the role of attitude toward the ad as the mediator of advertising effectiveness in their empirical study [9]. The dual mediation model posits that an attitude toward an attitudinal object can affect the cognition as well as the attitude of another attitudinal object [6,8]. Figure 1 shows the overview of the dual mediation model.

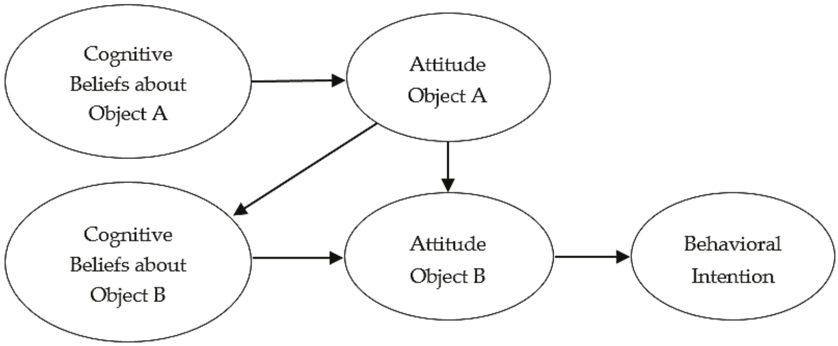

Figure 1. Dual mediation model.

The dual mediation hypothesis has been used as the conceptual framework in several empirical studies. These studies mainly concern the role of attitude toward the ad as the mediator between ad cognitions and brand cognitions and attitude toward the brand in the context of advertising. Some of the exemplar applications of the dual mediation model include the comparison of four competing models explaining the mediating role of attitude toward the ad [6], the replication and extension of MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch's [6] four competing models [10], the reexamination and extension of MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch's [6] four competing models in online advertising context [11], website effectiveness [12], and the impact of corporate credibility and celebrity credibility on consumer reaction to advertisements and brands [13].

2.2. Conceptual Model

Based on the findings from the focus interview and the conceptual framework (i.e., the dual mediation model), the conceptual model for this study is shown in Figure 2. According to the conceptual model, intention to fly Malaysia Airlines to Malaysia is positive affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines. Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines is negatively affected by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airline, which is, in turn, negatively affected by subjective knowledge about aviation and positively by usefulness of (negative) public opinion. Intention to visit Malaysia is positively affected by intention to fly Malaysia Airlines and attitude toward visiting Malaysia. Attitude toward visiting Malaysia is, in turn, negatively affected by perceived risk of visiting Malaysia and positively by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines. Finally, perceived risk of visiting Malaysia is negatively affected by subjective knowledge about Malaysia and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines, and positively by perceived usefulness of (negative) public opinion about Malaysia Airlines and perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines. Each of the proposed relationships is discussed below:

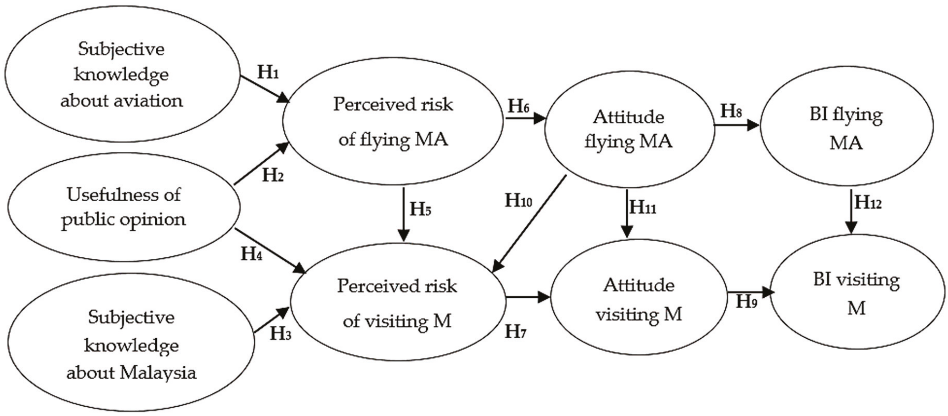

Figure 2. Conceptual model.

2.2.1. Subjective Knowledge, Usefulness of Public Opinion, and Perceived Risk

Subjective Knowledge

Consumer knowledge is defined as the extent of consumer experiences and familiarity towards a product before external search [14–17]. Past relevant studies stated that consumer knowledge is not only an primary influencer of consumer behavior but also of consumer risk perception [18–20]. There are two distinct components of consumer knowledge: subjective knowledge, a person's perception of the amount of a specific product information storied in his or her memory [15,21,22], and objective knowledge, which refers to the actual amount of accurate information stored in his or her memory [15,21]. This distinction is important as it indicates that each knowledge type has different effects on consumer information processing and subsequent consumer behaviors [18,22–24].

Past researchers have found that subjective knowledge is significantly related to decision making, more so than objective knowledge [24]. Similarly, compared to objective knowledge, subjective knowledge plays a more important role in purchase intentions' prediction [22] and in purchasing related behaviors' motivation [25]. This is due to the fact that consumers who have higher subjective knowledge level feel less confused about their choice, implying that subjective knowledge may lead to less perceived risk and more self-confidence in purchase decision making [26]. Previous research also showed that subjective knowledge as a predictor of consumer purchase satisfaction [24] and a motivator of consumer consumption [27,28]. Subjective knowledge has been concluded from empirical testing to play a more important role in the definition of knowledge because it may influence consumer's perception of their ability to process information [29]. Moreover, according to Perrouty, d'Hauteville, and Lockshin [30], subjective knowledge is critical in shaping consumers' behavior and is a suitable basic factor in the determination of whether a consumer is an expert or a novice.

In sum, past studies emphasized consumer subjective knowledge is a strong predictor of consumer behavior, thus plays an important role in shaping consumer behaviors, i.e., information search and information processing in particular [18,21,31]. As such, Chinese tourists' subjective knowledge about aviation should affect their information processing about flying Malaysia Airlines and consequently affects their beliefs and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines. Their subjective knowledge about Malaysia should affect their information processing about visiting Malaysia and consequently affects their beliefs and attitude toward visiting Malaysia.

Usefulness of Public Opinion

When consumers make high-involvement purchase decisions, they are likely to conduct external search from both marketer-controlled sources such as advertisements and non-marketer-controlled sources such as word of mouth and public opinion [32]. The additional information obtained from external search generally enables consumers to make purchase decisions easier.

Public opinion is a complex but common phenomenon. With the rapid development of information and communication technology, public opinion has become more active than ever, and the resultant upheavals of public opinion has become acknowledged and studied in the area of marketing [33,34]. It is reasonable to contend that consumers can find public opinions from the Internet in any issue or topic. The extent to which the consumers evaluate online review's helpfulness in the purchase decision process is defined as the usefulness of online review or public opinion [35]. Herrero et al. [36] proposed that review information generated by users is able to affect other users' behavior if the information is considered useful and the source is credible. Past studies stated perceived usefulness of public opinion as a key element in the use of technology, and the strength of belief in the usefulness leads to higher frequency of online communication [37–39].

From the focus group, a decision to choose a foreign tourist destination for vacation and an airline for the destination is likely to be a high-involvement decision making for Chinese. Chinese tourists generally consult their friends and relatives about the destination they plan to visit. They also browse for public opinion on the websites about the tourist destination. They tend to incorporate word of mouth and public opinion that they deem to be credible and as such useful in their decision making.

Browsing of public websites for Malaysia Airlines showed that public opinions about Malaysia Airlines are still mostly negative. Previous studies suggest that compared to positive online reviews negative ones have greater influence on consumer purchase decision making [35,40], and according to Davis et al. [37] perceived usefulness is likely to affect consumer purchase decision, potential travelers find negative online reviews to be more useful than positive ones [41]. As such, the extent or degree to which Chinese tourists believe that the (negative) public opinion about Malaysia Airlines is useful should significantly shapes their attitude and purchase decisions.

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is brought in to the consumer behavior context in the 1960s [42]. The literature defines perceived risk as a two-dimensional construct, i.e., uncertainty and negative consequences [42,43]. In other words, due to the unknown degree of accuracy in the consequences of use and probability of the consequences actually occurring, the concept of perceived risk in marketing (i.e., purchasing and consumption) correlates closely with partial ignorance [18,42].

Consumers normally decide to make their purchase after seeing, touching or trying out the product, but this is not be the case for tourism industry products due to the intangibility of the product characteristics, as a result, perceived risk is found to significantly affect consumer purchase decisions [44,45]. In marketing, several distinctive types of perceived risk associated with the acquisition and use of products have been identified, including financial risk, performance risk, physical (or safety) risk, psychological risk, and social risk [46]. Review of past literature shows that perceived risk does not have explanatory power in low-involvement purchases [32]. However, it is likely to be a key factor that determines consumer decisions in high-involvement purchases [18]. Since decisions to choose a tourist destination and an airline to the destination are likely to be high-involvement decisions for Chinese tourists, it is very likely that perceived risks regarding flying Malaysia Airlines and perceived risk regarding visiting Malaysia should affect their purchase decisions.

Results from the focus group interview indicated that subjective knowledge is likely to have negative on perceived risks while usefulness of public opinion is likely to have positive impact on perceived risks. Past studies supports the focus group result, Jin and Han [26] pointed out that consumers with higher subjective knowledge level usually feel less confused about their choice of product, which implies that higher subjective knowledge lead to less perceived risk. Casaló, et al. [41] suggests that potential travelers find negative online reviews to be more useful, which implies negative consumer perception may lead to doubt more about their choice. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Subjective knowledge about aviation negatively affects perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines.*

H2: *Usefulness of (negative) public opinion about Malaysia Airlines positively affects perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines.*

H3: *Subjective knowledge about Malaysia negatively affects perceived risk of visiting Malaysia.*

H4: *Usefulness of (negative) public opinion positively affects perceived risk of visiting Malaysia.*

H5: *Perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines positively affects perceived risk of visiting Malaysia.*

2.2.2. Perceived Risk, Attitude, and Purchase Intention

Attitude

Attitude is consumer's overall evaluate of an object [47]. Attitude toward an attitudinal object is defined as the overall evaluation, in a favorable or unfavorable way, toward the attitudinal objective [48,49]. According to Ajzen and Fishbein [48] and Fishbein and Ajzen [49], attitude toward an attitudinal object is a function of cognitive beliefs about the attitudinal object. Perceived risk of an attitudinal objective is a perception or belief about the attitudinal object, and as such, should shape attitude toward the attitudinal object.

Previous studies also suggest a positive attitude lead to consumer's continuous preference towards a brand, and significantly influences consumer's purchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price [50–52]. Based on the theory of reasoned action, Summers et al. [53] proposed attitude is one of the dominant predictors of consumer purchase intention, and the purchase intention is high when attitude is favorable. The above discussions show that attitude is the primary determinant of consumer purchase intention [54].

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is the propensity or likelihood to buy the product. Consumer's purchase intention is a primary factor in forecasting consumer behavior [55]. In marketing studies, attitude and purchase intention exhibit an inseparable relationship [56]. Shen [57] argues that a set of determinants, for example attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control tend to influence the purchase intention of customer. Duart and Amaro [58] also found that intention to purchase travel products is determined by attitude and percieved risk. According to Ajzen and Fishbein [48] and Fishbein and Ajzen [49], behavioral intention is a function of attitude toward the behavior. In marketing context, intention to buy a product or brand is a function of attitude toward the product or brand.

Since perceived risk is a belief held by consumers, the following hypotheses regarding the relationship between perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines and that between perceived risk of visiting Malaysia and attitude toward visiting Malaysia are proposed:

H6: *Perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines negatively affects attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines.*

H7: *Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia negatively affects attitude toward visiting Malaysia.*

The following hypotheses are proposed for the relationship between attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines and intention to fly Malaysia Airlines and that between attitude toward visiting Malaysia and intention to visit Malaysia:

H8: *Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines positively affects intention to fly Malaysia Airlines.*

H9: *Attitude toward visiting Malaysia positively affects intention to visit Malaysia.*

The focus group interview revealed that attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines seems to have impact on perceived risk of visiting Malaysia and attitude toward visiting Malaysia. Using the dual mediation model (i.e., an attitude toward an attitudinal object can affect the cognition as well as the attitude of another attitudinal object) as framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H10: *Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines negatively affects perceived risk of visiting Malaysia.*

H11: *Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines positively affects attitude toward visiting Malaysia*.

Finally, extending on the dual mediation model, the following hypothesis regarding the relationship between intention to fly Malaysia Airlines and intention to visit Malaysia is proposed:

H12: *Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines positively affects intention to visit Malaysia*.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research design used in this study is sample survey. The rationale for choosing sample survey as the research design, which is a correlational study, is based on the fact that all the constructs in the conceptual model are measurable and the hypothesized relationships among these constructs are to be tested. The study utilized a self-administered online survey to collect data. A professional internet research website (http://www.wjx.cn) is used for the data collection, the website randomly selects participants from its online panel to complete the questionnaire during the first two-year search for Flight MH370.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from Chinese subjects who were planning vacation overseas via self-administered questionnaire. According to Leohlin [59], the number of survey subject for the structural equation modeling approach should be no less than 200, thus a total of 313 useable questionnaires were obtained. In terms of gender, there were 170 males (54.3%) are 143 females (45.7%). In terms of age, 227 of them were 19-29 years old (72.5%), 71 were 30–39 years old (22.7%), 11 of them were 40–49 years old (3.5), and 3 of them were 50–59 years old (1.0%). In terms of marital status, 189 of them were single (60.4%), 95 of them were married (30.4%), and 29 of them were cohabit or other (9.3%). In terms of education, 2 of them were secondary school graduates (0.6%), 48 of them were currently college/university students (15.3%), 76 of them were college/university graduates (24.3%), and 187 of them were postgraduate or higher (59.7%). In terms of annual income, 131 of them earn below RMB 20,000 (41.9%), 20 of them earn between RMB 20,000 and 39,999 (6.4%), 20 of them earn between RMB 40,000 and 59,999 (6.4%), 34 of them earn between RMB 60,000 and 79,999 (10.9%), 29 of them earn between RMB 80,000 and 99,999 (9.3%), 79 of them earn over RMB 100,000 (25.2%). In terms of occupation, 134 of them were college and postgraduate students (42.8%), 51 of them were managers (16.3%), 37 of them were in education (11.8%), and the rest of them were professionals such as engineers, physicians, information technologists (29.1%). See Table 1 for demographic profile of the subjects.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents.

Demographic Categories	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	170	54.3
Female	143	45.7
Age		
Under 18 or 18	1	0.3
19-29	227	72.5
30-39	71	22.7
40-49	11	3.5
50-59	3	1.0
Marital status		
Single	189	60.4
Cohabit	25	8.0
Married	95	30.4
Other	4	1.3
Educational level		
Secondary school	2	0.6
College or university	48	15.3
University graduate	76	24.3
Postgraduate and above	187	59.7
Annual income (RMB)		
Under 20,000	131	41.9
20,000–39,999	20	6.4
40,000–59,999	20	6.4
60,000–79,999	34	10.9
80,000–99,999	29	9.3
100,000 or more	79	25.2
Occupation		
Student	134	42.8
Engineer	19	6.1
Business	51	16.3
Education	37	11.8
Medicine	10	3.2
Information technology	17	5.4
Design	4	1.3
Scientist	8	2.6
Executive	18	5.8
Self-employed	6	1.9
Other	9	2.9

3.3. Operationalization/Measures

There were nine constructs in the conceptual model and, as such, there were nine scales in the questionnaire: subjective knowledge about aviation, subjective knowledge about Malaysia, perceived usefulness of (negative) public opinion about Malaysia Airlines and Malaysia, perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines, perceived risk of visiting Malaysia, attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines, attitude toward visiting Malaysia, intention to fly Malaysia Airlines, and intention to visit Malaysia. Some of these scales were derived from the focus group interview while others were derived from past studies. Each of the scales is discussed below.

3.3.1. Subjective Knowledge about Aviation

Subjective knowledge about aviation is defined in this study as a person's perception of the amount of information regarding aviation stored in his or her memory. The scale is derived from Flynn and Goldsmith's [22] scale. Subjective knowledge about aviation is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I know pretty much about aviation "and" I do not feel very knowledgeable about aviation (reverse score)".

3.3.2. Subjective Knowledge about Malaysia

Subjective knowledge about Malaysia is defined in this study as a person's perception of the amount of information regarding Malaysia stored in his or her memory. The scale is derived from Flynn and Goldsmith's [22] scale. Subjective knowledge about Malaysia is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I know pretty much about Malaysia "and" I do not feel very knowledgeable about Malaysia (reverse score)".

3.3.3. Usefulness of Public Opinion about Malaysia Airlines

Usefulness of public opinion about Malaysia Airlines is defined in this study as the extent that a person perceives the public opinion about Malaysia Airlines to be useful for his or her decision. The scale is derived from Davis's [37] perceived usefulness scale. Usefulness of public opinion about Malaysia Airlines is measured by a four-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I think the public opinion about Malaysia Airlines is very useful" and "Public opinions about Malaysia Airlines can help me save time effectively in finding information".

3.3.4. Perceived Risk of Flying Malaysia Airlines

Perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines is defined in this study as a person's perception of the extent of risk incurred from flying Malaysia Airlines. The scale is derived from Forsythe and Shi's [60] scale. Perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines is measured by a two-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I do not trust that Malaysia Airlines will be safe" and "I do not trust that Malaysian airlines will provide me with a safe flight".

3.3.5. Perceived Risk of Visiting Malaysia

Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia Airlines is defined in this study as a person's perception of the extent of risk incurred from visiting Malaysia. The scale is derived from Forsythe and Shi's [60] scale. Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia is measured by a two-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I do not trust that Malaysia will be safe" and "I do not trust that Malaysia will provide me with a safe tourism environment".

3.3.6. Attitude toward Flying Malaysia Airlines

Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines is defined in this study as a person's overall favorability toward flying Malaysia Airlines. The scale is derived from Jang and Namkung's [61] emotional response scale. Attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "My emotion toward Malaysia Airline is anger" (reversed scale) and "My overall feeling toward flying Malaysia Airlines is distress" (reversed scale).

3.3.7. Attitude toward Visiting Malaysia

Attitude toward visiting Malaysia is defined in this study as a person's overall favorability toward visiting Malaysia Airlines. The scale is derived from Jang and Namkung's [61] emotional response scale. Attitude toward visiting Malaysia is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "My emotion toward visiting Malaysia is anger" (reversed scale) and "My overall feeling toward visiting Malaysia is distress" (reversed scale).

3.3.8. Intention to Fly Malaysia Airlines

Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines is defined in this study as a person's propensity to fly to Malaysia by Malaysia Airlines. The scale is derived from Jalilvand et al.'s [62] scale. Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I predict I will fly Malaysia Airlines in the future" and "I would fly Malaysia Airlines rather than any other airline".

3.3.9. Intention to Visit Malaysia

Intention to visit Malaysia is defined in this study as a person's propensity to visit Malaysia for vacation. The scale is derived from Jalilvand et al.'s [62] scale. Intention to visit Malaysia for vacation is measured by a three-item, seven-point Likert scale. The example sample items are "I predict I will visit Malaysia in the future" and "I would visit Malaysia rather than any other tourism destination".

For the complete measures, please see Appendix A.

3.4. Data Analysis

To test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs specified in the conceptual model, a structural equation modeling approach was employed. The data were input into PRELIS 2 [63], which generated the covariance matrix for the structural equation analysis. The matrix was then input into LISREL 8 [64] to examine the fitness of the model and to test the causal relationships specified in the conceptual model [65]. The structural equation model is shown in Figure 3.

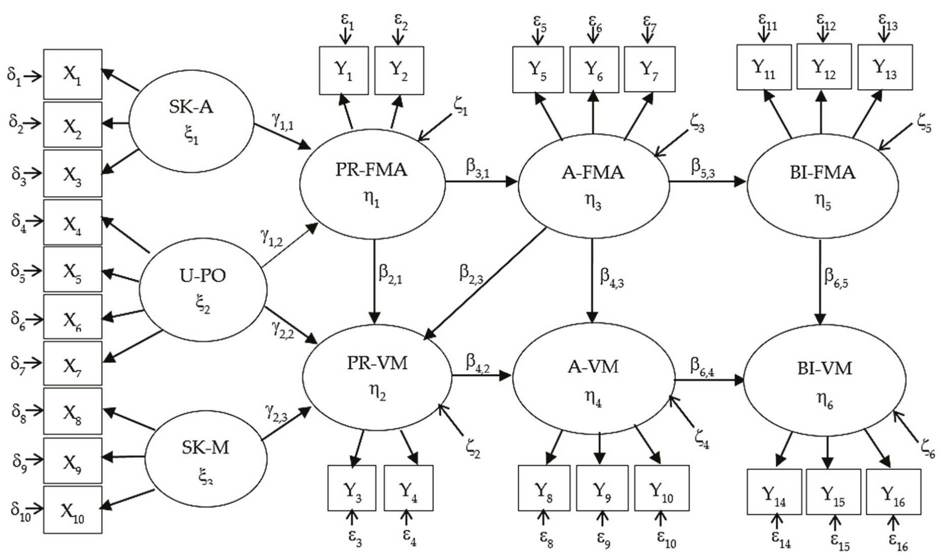

Figure 3. Structural equation model.

4. Results and Discussion

This section first reports the measurement model results. This is followed by the structural model results. Finally, the findings and unsupported hypotheses are discussed.

4.1. Measurement Model Results

The measurement model specifies how the latent variables are measured in terms of the observed variables. It also describes the measurement properties (reliabilities and validities) of the scales used. A good measurement model should have high reliabilities, high and statistically significant indicator coefficients (i.e., λxs and λys), and high construct validities (i.e., convergent validity and discriminant validity). Note that the construct validities are assessed by the methods suggested by Fornell and Larcker [66]. Table 2 shows the standardized indicator coefficients, reliabilities, and proportion-of-variance extracted of the constructs in the conceptual model. Each of the measurement properties is discussed in the following sections.

Table 2. Measurement model results.

Constructs and Indicators	Standardized Factor Loadings	Reliability/Item R^2	Proportion of Variance Extracted
Subjective Knowledge-Aviation (ξ_1)		0.815	0.6000
X1 (SUBJKNOWL-AVIATION 1)	0.71 [a,b]	0.51	
X2 (SUBJKNOWL-AVIATION 2)	0.83 [b]	0.69	
X3 (SUBJKNOWL-AVIATION 3)	0.77 [b]	0.60	
Usefulness of Public Opinion (ξ_2)		0.875	0.6375
X4 (USEFULNESS 1)	0.82 [a,b]	0.67	
X5 (USEFULNESS 2)	0.81 [b]	0.66	
X6 (USEFULNESS 3)	0.82 [b]	0.67	
X7 (USEFULNESS 4)	0.74 [b]	0.55	
Subjective Knowledge-Malaysia (ξ_3)		0.887	0.7333
X8 (SUBJKNOWL-MALAYSIA 1)	0.80 [a,b]	0.64	
X9 (SUBJKNOWL-MALAYSIA 2)	0.90 [b]	0.82	
X10 (SUBJKNOWL-MALAYSIA 3)	0.86 [b]	0.74	
Perceived Risk-Flying Malaysia Airlines (η_1)		0.899	0.8200
Y1 (RISK-FLYING MS 1)	0.86 [a,b]	0.74	
Y2 (RISK-FLYING MS 2)	0.95 [b]	0.90	
Perceived Risk-Visiting Malaysia (η_2)		0.851	0.7450
Y3 (RISK-VISTING MALAYSIA 1)	0.83 [a,b]	0.69	
Y4 (RISK-VISTING MALAYSIA 2)	0.89 [b]	0.80	
Attitude toward Flying Malaysia Airlines (η_3)		0.774	0.5500
Y5 (ATTITUDE-FLYING MS 1)	0.67 [a,b]	0.45	
Y6 (ATTITUDE-FLYING MS 2)	0.89 [b]	0.79	
Y7 (ATTITUDE-FLYING MS 3)	0.64 [b]	0.41	
Attitude toward Visiting Malaysia (η_4)		0.903	0.7533
Y8 (ATTIUTDE-VIST MALAYSIA 1)	0.83 [a,b]	0.68	
Y9 (ATTIUTDE-VIST MALAYSIA 2)	0.88 [b]	0.82	
Y10 (ATTIUTDE-VIST MALAYSIA 3)	0.89 [b]	0.78	
Intention-Flying Malaysia Airlines (η_5)		0.896	0.7400
Y11 (INTENTION-FLYING MS 1)	0.85 [a,b]	0.73	
Y12 (INTENTION-FLYING MS 2)	0.82 [b]	0.67	
Y13 (INTENTION-FLYING MS 3)	0.92 [b]	0.85	
Intention-Visiting Malaysia (η_6)		0.897	0.7633
Y14 (INTENTION-VISIT MALAYSIA 1)	0.90 [a,b]	0.83	
Y15 (INTENTION-VISIT MALAYSIA 2)	0.77 [b]	0.60	
Y16 (INTENTION-VISIT MALAYSIA 3)	0.93 [b]	0.87	

[a] Fixed at 1.00 in the non-standardized solution; [b] $p < 0.001$, 1-tailed t-test.

4.1.1. Reliability Analysis

The reliability (i.e., Cronbach Alpha) of all the constructs exceeded 0.7, which is the threshold that was recommended by Nunnally [67] for exploratory research. Specifically, the reliabilities of subjective knowledge about aviation, subjective knowledge about Malaysia, usefulness of public opinion, perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines, perceived risk of visiting Malaysia, attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines, attitude toward visiting Malaysia, intention to fly Malaysia Airlines, and intention to visit Malaysia are 0.815, 0.887, 0.875, 0.899, 0.851, 0.774, 0.903, 0.896, and 0.897, respectively.

4.1.2. Validity Analysis

All of the constructs have acceptable convergent validity as all of the standardized indicator coefficients except two ($\lambda y1,3 = 0.67$ and $\lambda y3,3 = 0.64$) exceeded the minimum level of 0.7, the threshold recommended by Fornell and Lacker [66]. The more conservative proportion-of-variance-extracted index [66], which indicated that the amount of variance that is captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance that is caused by the measurement error, also showed that all of the constructs had a high convergent validity (ranging from 0.5500 to 0.8200). All of the indices exceeded the minimal standard of 0.50 [66], which indicated that the variance captured by the construct exceeded the variance that was caused by the measurement error.

The discriminant validity among the nine scales was assessed by comparing the proportion-of-variance-extracted indices of the two constructs in each pair of constructs with the square of the correlation coefficient between the two constructs [66]. The result of this assessment supported the discriminant validity of all of the constructs in the conceptual model. Specifically, the proportion-of-variance-extracted indices of any pair of constructs were higher than the square of the correlation coefficient between the two constructs for every possible pair. The proportion-of-variance-extracted indices of the nine constructs and the correlation matrix of the nine constructs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation matrix of the latent variables.

Latent Variables	POVEI	RISK-A	RISK-M	A-FM	A-VM	BI-FM	BI-VM	SK-A	SK-M	U-PO
RISK-A	0.8200	1.00								
RISK-M	0.7450	0.58	1.00							
A-FM	0.5500	−0.69	−0.58	1.00						
A-VM	0.7533	−0.40	−0.55	0.47	1.00					
BI-FM	0.7400	−0.38	−0.32	0.55	0.25	1.00				
BI-VM	0.7633	−0.30	−0.32	0.40	0.43	0.54	1.00			
SK-A	0.6000	0.01	−0.09	−0.01	0.04	0.00	0.01	1.00		
SK-M	0.7333	0.00	−0.14	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.02	0.67	1.00	
U-PO	0.6375	0.28	0.21	−0.19	−0.13	−0.11	−0.09	0.00	−0.04	1.00

Note:

- RISK-A is Perceived Risk of Flying Malaysia Airlines
- RISK-M is Perceived Risk of Visiting Malaysia
- A-FM is Attitude towards Flying Malaysia Airlines
- A-VM is Attitude towards Visiting Malaysia
- BI-FM is Intention to Fly Malaysia Airlines
- BI-VM is Intention to Visit Malaysia
- SK-A is Subjective Knowledge about Aviation
- SK-M is Subjective Knowledge about Malaysia
- U-Op is Usefulness of Public Opinion

Based on the above results, it is reasonable to conclude that the measurement model is acceptable. The structural model results are discussed in the next part.

4.2. Structural Model Results

The structural model specifies the causal relations among the latent variables, and describes the causal effects and the amount of unexplained variance. The initial matter, however, is whether or not the maximum likelihood estimates for the conceptual model provide a satisfactory fit to the data.

4.2.1. Model Fit

The chi-square value ($\chi 2284 = 723.55$, $p = 0.0$) indicated that the conceptual model did not adequately account for the relationship between the observed sample covariance and the hypothetical population covariance. Since it is generally agreed that $\chi 2$ should be used as a guide rather than an absolute index of fit [66,68,69], other diagnostics are examined. Bentler and Bonett's [70] normed fit index (NFI), Bentler's [71] comparative fit index (CFI), and Bollen's [72] incremental fit index (IFI), which are fit indices measuring how much better the model fits compared to a baseline model, were used to assess the model fit.

According to Bentler and Bonett's [70] normed fit index, Bentler's [71] comparative fit index, and Bollen's [49] incremental fit index, the model had marginally acceptable fit. Specifically, the NFI, CFI, and IFI were 0.92, 0.95, and 0.95, respectively. Since the model fit can be considered as marginally adequate, the structural parameter estimates are discussed next.

4.2.2. Hypothesis Testing

The following hypotheses were proposed in this study: intention to visit Malaysia is positively affected by intention to fly Malaysia Airlines (H12) and attitude toward visiting Malaysia (H9), which is, in turn, negatively affected by perceived risk of visiting Malaysia (H7) and positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines (H11). Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines is positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines (H8), which is in turn, negatively affected by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines (H6). Perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines is negatively affected by subjective knowledge about aviation (H1) and positively affected by usefulness of public opinion (H2). Finally, perceived risk of visiting Malaysia is negatively affected by subjective knowledge about Malaysia (H3) and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines (H10), and positively by usefulness of public opinion (H4) and perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines (H5).

Results show that all of the hypotheses except H1 ($\gamma 1,1 = 0.015$, $p > 0.10$) and H4 ($\gamma 2,3 = 0.038$, $p > 0.10$) were supported. Specifically, it is found that Intention to visit Malaysia is positively affected by intention to fly Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 6,5 = 0.48$, $p = 0.00$) and attitude toward visiting Malaysia ($\beta 6,4 = 0.43$, $p = 0.00$), which is, in turn, negatively affected by perceived risk of visiting Malaysia ($\beta 4,2 = -0.41$, $p = 0.00$) and positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 4,3 = 0.25$, $p = 0.00$). Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia is negatively affected by subjective knowledge about Malaysia ($\gamma 2,2 = -0.12$, $p < 0.05$) and attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 2,3 = -0.43$, $p = 0.00$), and positively by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 2,1 = 0.28$, $p = 0.00$). Intention to fly Malaysia Airlines, on the other hand, is positively affected by attitude toward flying Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 5,3 = 0.85$, $p = 0.00$), which is in turn, negatively affected by perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines ($\beta 3,1 = -0.49$, $p = 0.00$). Finally, perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines is positively affected by usefulness of public opinion ($\gamma 1,3 = 0.34$, $p = 0.0$). Table 4 shows the structural model results.

Table 4. Structural model results.

Independent Construct	Dependent Construct					
	Perceived Risk of Flying Malaysia Airlines	Perceived Risk of Visiting Malaysia	Attitude toward Flying Malaysia Airlines	Attitude toward Visiting Malaysia	Intention to Fly Malaysia Airlines	Intention to Visit Malaysia
Subjective Knowledge about Aviation	$0.015^{n.s.}$	-	-	-	-	-
Subjective Knowledge about Malaysia	-	-0.12^{b}	-	-	-	-
Usefulness of Public Opinion	0.34^{a}	$0.052^{n.s.}$	-	-	-	-
Perceived Risk of Flying Malaysia Airlines	-	0.28^{a}	-0.49^{a}	-	-	-
Perceived Risk of Visiting Malaysia	-	-	-	-0.41^{a}	-	-
Attitude toward Flying Malaysia Airlines	-	-0.43^{a}	-	0.25^{b}	0.85^{a}	-
Attitude toward Visiting Malaysia	-	-	-	-	-	0.43^{a}
Intention to Fly Malaysia Airlines	-	-	-	-	-	0.48^{a}
R^2	0.079	0.42	0.48	0.34	0.3	0.38
Chi-square	723.55					
Degree of freedom	284					
p-value	0					
NFI	0.92					
CFI	0.95					
IFI	0.95					

[a] $p = 0.0$, one-tailed t-test; [b] $p < 0.01$, one tailed t-test.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study is an attempt to investigate the process by which the air disaster of a national airline affects tourists' attitude and intention to fly the airline as well as attitude and intention to visit the country by proposing and empirically testing factors affecting the attitude and intention toward flying the national airline that experienced air disaster as well as attitude and intention to visit the country of origin for vacation. The theoretical contribution and managerial implications, limitations, and concluding summary are discussed below.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution and Managerial Implications

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by demonstrating the process by which consumers use to determine if they would fly the airline in question to the country of origin. Specifically, intention to visit the country is positively affect by intention to fly the airline and attitude toward visiting the country. The effect of perceived risk of flying the airline on attitude toward visiting the country is mediated by perceived risk of visiting the country and attitude toward visiting the country. Subjective knowledge about the country significantly reduces perceived risk about visiting the country. Finally, usefulness of public opinion significantly reduces perceived risk of flying the airline.

Although the empirical findings in this study might be or might not be able to generalize to explain the effect of other types of disaster (e.g., earthquake, kidnapping of tourists) on tourists' willingness to visit a country, the conceptual framework used in this study (i.e., dual mediation model) might be useful in conceptualizing the effect of the disaster on tourists' willingness to visit country in question.

From this study, there are insights for managerial implications for both the airline with air disaster(s) and the country of origin. For the airline, attitude toward flying the airline is negatively affected by perceived risk of flying the airline, which is, in turn, positively affected by perceived usefulness of public opinion. Since most published public opinions on Malaysia Airline after the air disaster are negative, perceived usefulness of public opinion increases perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines. As such, the airline should try to create positive public opinions about the airlines, for example, by releasing public relations regarding the improved safety and other aspects of the airline to the public on a regular basis.

For the country, perceived risk of flying the airline indirectly affects attitude toward visiting the country via attitude toward flying the airline. In other words, higher perceived risk of flying the airline reduce attitude toward flying the airline, which in turn, reduce attitude toward visiting the country. As such, the tourism authority of the company may try to disengage itself from the airline. For example, Malaysia's Tourism Authority may form strategic partnership with Chinese airlines such as Southern Airlines for trips to Malaysia. Furthermore, subjective knowledge about the country significantly reduces perceived risk of visiting the country. As such, the tourism authority of the county may focus on improving the target customers' knowledge about the country. For example, Malaysia's Tourism Authority may produce and launch TV programs and publications in both traditional and social media about Malaysia country and culture.

5.2. Limitations

The contributions of this study must be viewed with light of its limitations. There are a few limitations in this study. First of all, the research design of this study is sample survey, which is a correlational study. Although this research design can establish if there are significant relationships among the constructs, it cannot actually establish the causal relationship among them. The directions in the hypotheses are presumed causes and presumed effects.

Second, perceived risks were the only determinant of attitudes in this study. There can be, however, several other potential determinants of attitude toward the airline (e.g., benefits of the airline, air travel experience) and attitude toward the country (e.g., benefits of visiting the country, tourist experience, country's frequency of natural disasters) that should be added into the model in the future research.

Third, although the subjects in this study seemed to fit the profile of the target customer for vacation overseas, the sampling method was essentially judgmental sampling (i.e., the exploratory study data were collected from subjects in a city in China, and survey data were collected from subjects in China). It is likely that the findings may not be able to generalize to the whole population of potential customers. As such, the findings from this study should be applied with care. Future research may use more representative subjects (i.e., from more cities in China or from different countries where tourists did not go through such a serious air disaster as MH370).

Finally, this study is a cross-sectional study. Purchase intention was used as the surrogate variable for future behavior. Purchase intention may or may not become purchase behavior. Future research should consider the use of longitudinal study to test if purchase intention is a good predictor of purchase behavior.

5.3. Summary

Results show that all except two hypotheses were supported. The lack of significant negative effect of subjective knowledge about aviation on perceived risk of flying Malaysia Airlines may be due to the fact that most Chinese consumers do not perceive themselves to have any knowledge about aviation. The lack of significant positive impact of usefulness of (negative) public opinion on perceived risk of visiting Malaysia may be due to the fact that most published public opinions are about Malaysia Airlines rather than Malaysia.

This study is an attempt to understand a rare but significant phenomenon of air disasters by investing the process by which the air disaster of a national airline affects foreign tourists' attitude and intention to fly the airline as well as their attitude and intention to visit the country. Data from Chinese potential tourists were used to empirically test a conceptual model derived from a qualitative research and literature review. Malaysia Airlines and Malaysia were used as the case for studying the phenomenon. Although there are limitations, this study offers some theoretical contribution and managerial implications to the area of the impact of air disasters on tourism.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Adapted scale of construct.

Construct	Adapted Scale	Scale Reference
Subjective knowledge about aviation	1. I know pretty much about aviation knowledge. 2. I do not feel very knowledgeable about aviation. * 3. Among my circle of friends, I'm one of the "experts" on aviation knowledge.	Flynn and Goldsmith (1999)
Subjective knowledge about Malaysia	1. I know pretty much about Malaysia. 2. I do not feel very knowledgeable about Malaysia. * 3. Among my circle of friends, I'm one of the "experts" on Malaysia.	Flynn and Goldsmith (1999)
Usefulness of public opinion	1. I think public opinion about Malaysia Airlines is useful. 2. Public opinions about Malaysia Airlines can help me save time effectively in finding information. 3. Public opinions about Malaysia Airlines can help me get useful information. 4. Public opinions about Malaysia Airlines can help me get information quickly.	Davis (1989)
Perceived risk of flying Malaysian airlines	1. I do not trust that Malaysian airlines will be secure. 2. I do not trust that Malaysian airlines will provide me with a safe flight.	Forsythe and Shi (2003)
Perceived risk of visiting Malaysia	1. I do not trust that Malaysia will be secure. 2. I do not trust that Malaysia will provide me with a safe tourism environment.	Forsythe and Shi (2003)
Attitude toward flying Malaysian Airlines	1. My overall feeling toward flying Malaysia Airlines is anger.* 2. My overall feeling toward flying Malaysia Airlines is distress.* 3. My overall feeling toward flying Malaysia Airlines is fear.*	Jang and Namkung (2009)
Attitude toward visiting Malaysia	1. My overall feeling toward visiting Malaysia is anger.* 2. My overall feeling toward visiting Malaysia is distress.* 3. My overall feeling toward visiting Malaysia is fear.*	Jang and Namkung (2009)

Table A1. *Cont.*

Construct	Adapted Scale	Scale Reference
Intention to fly Malaysian Airlines	1. I predict I will fly Malaysia Airlines in the future. 2. I would fly Malaysia Airlines rather than any other airline. 3. If everything goes as I think, I will plan to fly Malaysia Airlines in the future.	Jalilvand et al. (2012)
Intention to visit Malaysia	1. I predict I will visit Malaysia in the future. 2. I would visit Malaysia rather than any other tourism destination. 3. If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit Malaysia in the future.	Jalilvand et al. (2012)

Note: * is reversed score.

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