

Article

Built Environmental Stimuli, Psychological Experience, and Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Historic Districts: Integrating Scene Theory and the SOR Model

Gaojie Zhang and Sunjung Lee *

Department of Space and Culture Design, Graduate School of Techno Design (TED), Kookmin University, Seoul 02707, Republic of Korea; zgj202209@163.com

* Correspondence: sunjunglee@kookmin.ac.kr

Abstract

Understanding how the built environments of historic districts shape tourist experiences and behavioral intentions is important for their sustainable development. Drawing on scene theory and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, this study employs structural equation modeling (SEM) and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to empirically analyze 498 valid questionnaire responses collected in Pingjiang Historic District, Suzhou, China. The study examines the relationships among built environmental stimuli, psychological experience, and tourist behavioral intentions. The findings show that: (1) Tourist behavioral intentions are associated with multiple interacting conditions rather than a single linear factor; (2) A distinctive cultural atmosphere and sustained cultural knowledge experiences may provide conditions that support tourists' attachment to the district and are associated with intentions to revisit, recommend, and share their experiences. Rich sensory experiences and locally distinctive activities may contribute to hedonic experience, place attachment, and cultural identity, thereby supporting positive behavioral intentions. In addition, integrating cultural knowledge into interactions among tourists and between tourists and local groups may provide a context in which hedonic experience and positive behavioral intentions are more likely to emerge. (3) Among the psychological experience variables, strengthening tourists' identification with local culture can provide a relatively stable psychological basis for revisiting, recommending, and sharing historic-district experiences.

Keywords: built environmental stimuli; psychological experience; historic district; behavioral intention; scene theory

Academic Editor: Chi Yan Tso

Received: 21 June 2026

Revised: 14 July 2026

Accepted: 23 July 2026

Published: 24 July 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

1. Introduction

Historic districts are important urban spaces where collective memory, local culture, and everyday life intersect. In recent years, historic districts have shown increasing appeal as cultural tourism destinations. In 2025, China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism noted that district-scale cultural tourism spaces, represented by historic districts, have become major attractions for urban cultural tourism consumption. Against this background, a key question arises: how can historic districts sustain their tourist appeal by improving the quality of cultural tourism experiences?

Improving the quality of cultural tourism experiences requires close attention to tourists' post-visit behavioral intention [1]. Behavioral intention refers to tourists' overall attitudinal evaluation and behavioral decision-making formed after psychological experience is triggered by built environmental stimuli [2]. Examining behavioral intention helps identify tourists' satisfaction with their tourism experience and the factors associated with it, thereby providing a basis for clarifying directions for improving the quality of tourism experiences in historic districts [3]. Therefore, explaining how built environmental stimuli and psychological experience in historic districts are associated with tourists' behavioral intention is essential for improving tourist experience quality and promoting the sustainable development of historic districts.

Current research on built environmental stimuli in historic districts has mainly focused on the planning and design of objective spatial elements, such as visual environments, architectural environments, and spatial functions [4,5], as well as cultural governance issues such as intangible cultural heritage activities [6]. Although these studies provide an important basis for improving the external environment of historic districts, they generally adopt a supply-side perspective centered on planners and managers. Insufficient attention has been paid to tourists' experiential needs, particularly to the systematic analysis of built environmental stimuli from the perspective of tourists' subjective perception. Scene theory proposes a subjective perceptual evaluation system consisting of authenticity, theatricality, and legitimacy, thereby providing a theoretical framework for analyzing tourists' subjective perceptions of spatial and cultural value [7]. Some scholars have applied scene theory to explain tourists' subjective perceptions of external environments and to analyze tourist–environment interactions from the perspectives of functional facilities [8] and urban scene elements [9]. These studies provide a basis for understanding the relationship between environmental perception and tourist behavior, but their analytical focus has mainly been limited to spatial dimensions. In fact, tourists' concerns regarding the built environment of historic districts are not limited to the spatial environment itself, but also include cultural communication, spatial atmosphere, distinctive activities, and other perceptual dimensions [10]. Therefore, existing scene theory research in the context of historic districts still lacks an integrated interpretation of multiple dimensions such as space and culture.

Beyond built environmental stimuli, tourists' behavioral intention is also closely associated with their psychological experience during tourism. Previous studies have shown that positive psychological experience is usually associated with higher revisit intention [11] and recommendation intention [12]. Related studies have examined the relationship between psychological experience and behavioral intention from the perspectives of tourist satisfaction and place attachment, and have gradually begun to focus on how external environments stimulate tourists' psychological experience and are further associated with behavioral intention [13]. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model provides a theoretical basis for explaining the relationship among external environmental stimuli, individual psychological experience, and behavioral responses [14], and has been widely applied in cultural heritage tourism settings [15]. Methodologically, previous studies have commonly used regression analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine linear path relationships among variables [16]. SEM helps explain whether built environmental stimuli are significantly associated with specific psychological experiences or behavioral intention. However, tourism experiences in historic districts are often not formed by a single factor in a linear manner, but by the joint presence of multiple conditions, such as spatial atmosphere and cultural experience. Relying solely on linear models makes it difficult to reveal the combined relationships among different conditions and their complex connections with tourists' behavioral intention. In recent years, tourism and cultural heritage research has begun to combine

SEM with fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to examine both linear path relationships and multi-condition configurational pathways. For example, Zheng et al. [17] combined SEM with fsQCA to examine the formation mechanism of tourists' resource-saving behavioral intention in rural tourism, indicating that SEM can test linear relationships among variables, while fsQCA can identify combinations of multiple antecedent conditions. Song et al. [18] applied SEM and fsQCA to agricultural heritage creative tourism and examined the value creation mechanism of tourists' willingness to co-create value, further demonstrating the usefulness of combining linear analysis with configurational analysis in heritage tourism research. However, such studies have mainly focused on emerging heritage tourism spaces, while relatively limited attention has been paid to tourists' perceived built environment in historic districts. The built environment perceived by tourists in historic districts has multidimensional characteristics, including spatial form and cultural expression. Scene theory can provide a theoretical tool for identifying these multidimensional built environmental characteristics, while the SOR model can incorporate built environmental characteristics, psychological experience, and behavioral intention into a unified analytical framework. Accordingly, it remains necessary to combine scene theory with the SOR model and introduce SEM–fsQCA to systematically examine the linear relationships and configurational pathways among built environmental stimuli, tourists' psychological experience, and behavioral intention in historic districts.

Therefore, the limitations of existing research can be summarized in two aspects. First, applications of scene theory in historic district research have mainly focused on spatial dimensions, while the integrated interpretation of multiple dimensions such as space and culture remains insufficient. Second, although SEM–fsQCA has been increasingly applied in tourism and heritage research, relatively few studies have combined scene theory, the SOR framework, and SEM–fsQCA in the specific context of historic district tourism to examine both the linear path relationships and configurational pathways among tourists' perceived built environmental stimuli, psychological experience, and behavioral intention.

This study aims to address two research questions: (1) How are visitor-perceived built environmental stimuli in historic districts associated with tourists' psychological experience, and how is psychological experience associated with tourists' behavioral intention? (2) How do built environmental stimuli and psychological experience combine and jointly relate to tourists' positive behavioral intention?

The contributions of this study are twofold. First, by integrating a visitor-oriented interpretation of scene theory with the SOR model, this study constructs the tourism stimulus layer from the spatial, cultural, and social dimensions perceived by visitors in historic districts. In doing so, it extends the application of scene theory from a primarily spatial-perception perspective toward a more integrated understanding of space, culture, and activities in historic districts. Second, although tourist experience and behavioral intention have been widely examined in tourism and heritage research, the integration of scene theory, the SOR framework, and SEM–fsQCA in the specific context of historic districts may provide an incremental contribution to this mature research stream. This study may provide a reference for historic districts to coordinate built environmental elements and enhance tourists' positive behavioral intention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Scene Theory

In the late 1990s, Terry Clark and his team at the University of Chicago first proposed scene theory in *Scenes: How Spatial Quality Shapes Social Life*. They argued that the appeal of a space derives not only from the physical construction of the external

environment, but also from the latent cultural values embedded within it. They further suggested that cultural values embedded in the external environment can shape individuals' subjective perceptions, thereby influencing their attitudes and behaviors [19]. To examine how the external environment affects individual subjective perception, scene theory proposes an analytical framework consisting of authenticity, theatricality, and legitimacy. In the early 21st century, Wu Jun reinterpreted authenticity, theatricality, and legitimacy in the Chinese context (as shown in Table 1) [20], and this localized framework has since been widely applied in cultural space research [21]. Given that scene theory was originally developed to explain the relationship between urban scenes and social life, its application to historic-district tourism requires a visitor-oriented interpretation. Accordingly, based on Wu Jun's Chinese-localized interpretation of authenticity, theatricality, and legitimacy, and considering the spatial, cultural, and interactional cues perceived by visitors during short-term visits, this study interprets the three dimensions as spatial expression, cultural expression, and social expression, respectively, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Visitor-oriented interpretation of scene theory in historic district.

Dimension	Localized Interpretation	Visitor-Oriented Interpretation	Analytical Dimension
Authenticity	Focuses on whether the spatial expression of the external environment corresponds to individual identity and is perceived as "authentic."	Refers to whether architectural features, spatial fabric, materials, and streetscape cues convey local character and historical continuity to visitors	Spatial expression
Theatricality	Focuses on whether the cultural values embedded in the external environment are effectively expressed and can generate experiential appeal.	Refers to whether cultural content is made perceptible, understandable, and experienceable through activities, exhibitions, interpretation, and participatory forms	Cultural expression
Legitimacy	Focuses on whether forms of expression in the external environment help reduce social distance and strengthen mutual identification in interaction.	Refers to whether spatial and activity settings provide accessible opportunities for interaction among visitors and between visitors and local actors, such as residents, merchants, and service providers.	Social expression

Within the visitor-oriented adaptation, authenticity concerns whether the spatial setting is perceived by visitors as authentic, historically continuous, and locally distinctive. In historic districts, tourists' judgment of Authenticity is mainly based on perceptible spatial elements, such as street patterns, architectural styles, materials, colors, and landscape settings [22]. Therefore, this study translates Authenticity into spatial expression to explain how historic districts convey local characteristics and historical continuity through physical spatial forms. Theatricality emphasizes how cultural values are presented, interpreted, and experienced by visitors during their visits. Historical information, local memory, and cultural values need to be transformed into perceivable, understandable, and participatory experiential content through exhibitions, activities, intangible cultural heritage displays, guided interpretation, and participatory experiences. Therefore, this study translates Theatricality into cultural expression to explain how historical and cultural content can be transformed into attractive tourism experiences. Legitimacy focuses on the perceived openness of the scene and the opportunities it provides for interaction during visitors' short-term experiences. In historic district tourism, tourists interact with residents, merchants, service providers, and other tourists

[23], while open and friendly spatial facilities and cultural expression can further facilitate such interactions. Therefore, this study translates Legitimacy into social expression to explain how historic districts form relational connections and identification with the scene through social interaction. Accordingly, spatial expression provides the material basis for scene perception, cultural expression gives the scene understandable and participatory cultural meanings, and social expression further promotes relational connections. Together, these three dimensions constitute the basic logic through which scene value is generated in historic districts, as shown in Figure 1.

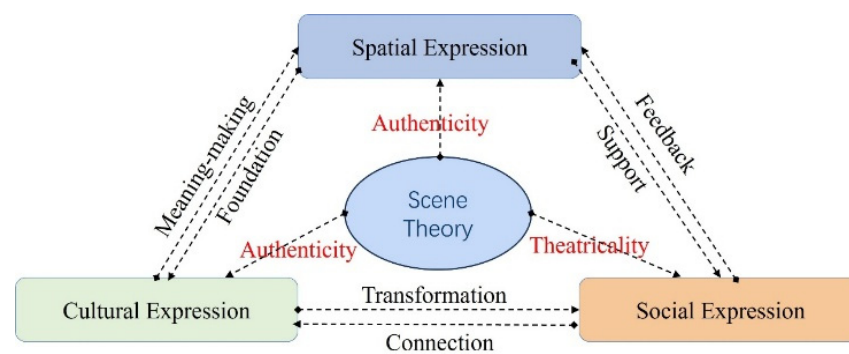


Figure 1. Three dimensions of scene theory.

In this study, the classification of visitor-perceived built environmental stimuli is based on the primary analytical orientation of each variable rather than on mutually exclusive attributes. Some dimensions, especially cultural atmosphere, may contain both spatial and cultural meanings; however, they are classified according to the main way in which visitors perceive and evaluate them. Based on this principle, this study identifies five specific dimensions of built environmental stimuli: sensory perception, cultural atmosphere, distinctive experience, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction (Table 2). Spatial expression mainly refers to tourists' perceptions of the physical environment of historic districts and its authenticity. It is further reflected in two dimensions: sensory perception and cultural atmosphere. Sensory perception refers to the specific environmental cues directly perceived by tourists through multiple senses, including vision, hearing, taste, and smell, such as architectural features, street landscapes, local food, sounds, and smells. In contrast, cultural atmosphere refers to the overall place atmosphere formed through the integration of spatially embedded sensory cues, reflecting visitors' immediate holistic perception of the historical ambience, local cultural cues, and lived street scenes encountered during a visit. Although cultural atmosphere contains cultural meanings, it is classified under spatial expression in this study because this construct focuses primarily on the holistic atmosphere generated by physical and spatial cues, such as architectural style, street layout, colors, decorations, and visible street-life scenes. It is therefore distinguished from cultural expression, which emphasizes the explicit presentation, participation, interpretation, and learning of cultural content. In other words, sensory perception focuses on specific environmental cues directly perceived by visitors, whereas cultural atmosphere focuses on the overall atmospheric effect generated by these spatially embedded cues. Cultural expression, by contrast, concerns how cultural content is explicitly displayed, communicated, participated in, and understood by visitors, and is therefore represented by distinctive experience and knowledge acquisition. Distinctive experience emphasizes participatory and performative content, including festival activities, performances, intangible cultural heritage experiences, and interactive projects. Knowledge acquisition emphasizes tourists' comprehension and acquisition of local history and cultural meanings through guided

interpretation, exhibition narratives, cultural displays, and related forms. Social expression focuses on whether consumption and leisure activities within the scene can facilitate tourists' social interaction. Accordingly, it is represented by social interaction, which is reflected in visitors' perceived opportunities to interact with residents, merchants, and other local stakeholders during their visits. In this study, social interaction refers to visitors' perceived opportunities for interaction during their visit, rather than to residents' long-term social networks or community-based social integration.

Table 2. Classification of visitor-perceived built environmental stimuli.

Dimension	Classification Basis	Built Environmental Stimuli
Spatial expression	Physical and spatial cues, and the holistic atmosphere generated by these cues	Sensory perception
		Cultural atmosphere
Cultural expression	Explicit cultural presentation, participation, interpretation, and learning	Distinctive experience
		Knowledge acquisition
Social expression	Public, commercial, and leisure settings that provide perceived opportunities for interaction	Social interaction

2.2. Psychological Experience

Psychological experience refers to tourists' direct or indirect affective, cognitive, and attachment-related responses during tourism encounters, which arise from their interactions with the spatial environment, cultural content, and service providers. In the context of historic district tourism, psychological experience denotes tourists' internal responses to the cultural content of historic districts and the ways in which such content is communicated, including emotional feelings, cognitive evaluations, place-related attachment, and physiological arousal. From the perspectives of cognitive appraisal, action tendency, and physiological change, Richard Lazarus [24] emphasized that different environmental stimuli can shape different types of psychological experience. Psychological experience is generally classified using two theoretical approaches: the categorical approach and the dimensional approach. The categorical approach conceptualizes emotions as distinct affective states based on their specificity, such as joy, sadness, disappointment, anger, and surprise [25]. The dimensional approach, in contrast, conceptualizes emotions along several dimensions, such as positive and negative emotions, pleasure, and arousal [26].

In historic district tourism, tourists' psychological experience is commonly examined through a dimensional approach, mainly including three dimensions: cultural identity, hedonic experience, and place attachment [27,28]. In terms of cultural identity, the diverse historical and cultural resources embedded in historic districts shape cultural characteristics with regional and local distinctiveness. Through their perceptions of culturally distinctive environmental features, tourists may develop cultural resonance and further form cultural identity [29]. In terms of hedonic experience, different tourism settings, such as rural areas [30], and commercial complexes [31], present distinct experiential characteristics. These differentiated experiential features are important factors influencing tourists' sense of pleasure and novelty [32]. In terms of place attachment, historic districts provide important settings for shared activities and psychological communication between tourists and residents, as well as among tourists themselves. The shared memories and sense of belonging accumulated through these processes can encourage tourists to develop place attachment to the destination. These studies provide a basis for identifying the main dimensions of tourists' psychological experience. However, in the context of historic district tourism, it remains insufficiently explained how these three types of psychological experience jointly constitute tourists' psychological experience, which built environmental stimuli affect them respectively, and

how they further influence behavioral intentions among tourists. Therefore, this study takes cultural identity, hedonic experience, and place attachment as the three core dimensions of tourists' psychological experience in historic district tourism, and analyzes their relationships with built environmental stimuli and behavioral intention.

2.3. Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory

In the 1960s, Arnold argued from the perspective of cognitive appraisal that individuals' appraisal of environmental stimuli can elicit psychological experiences, while cognition and emotion jointly influence individual motivation and behavioral tendencies, which are ultimately reflected in concrete behaviors [33]. In 1974, Mehrabian and Russell introduced the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework into environmental psychology, explaining how environmental stimuli affect individuals' emotions, cognition, and behavior. In this framework, "S" refers to the broad concept of built environmental stimuli, which elicit individuals' psychological experience. "O" represents the internal organismic state formed under built environmental stimuli. In this study, psychological experience includes affective, cognitive, and attachment-related responses, represented by place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity. "R" refers to the behavioral responses expressed by individuals after these internal states are formed.

This study adopts the SOR model to analyze how built environmental stimuli and psychological experience are associated with behavioral intentions among tourists in historic district tourism for two main reasons. First, the model is highly flexible and extensible, and can comprehensively represent individuals' internal affective and cognitive states, making it suitable for capturing complex and multidimensional psychological experience among tourists [34]. For example, in the context of historic districts, tourists exposed to multiple built environmental stimuli, such as spatial appearance and cultural displays, are unlikely to generate only a single psychological response. Instead, they may simultaneously develop composite internal experiences, such as hedonic experience and cultural identity. Second, the model provides a clear analytical framework for understanding how built environmental stimuli in historic district tourism are associated with tourists' psychological and cognitive states and their behavioral intention [35]. For example, cultural identity is not only tourists' cognition and value judgment of local cultural meanings, but also a Psychological state gradually formed and strengthened through built environmental stimuli such as architectural styles, decorative patterns, and cultural activities. This state may further enhance tourists' pleasure and perceived gains, and ultimately be reflected in behavioral intentions such as staying longer, revisiting, and recommending.

This study integrates the SOR model with scene theory. Scene theory emphasizes the influence of built environmental stimuli on tourists' psychological experience, but provides limited explanation of how such stimuli are associated with tourists' psychological states and further form their behavioral intention. The SOR model addresses this limitation by providing an analytical framework for distinguishing built environmental stimuli (S), tourists' psychological experience (O), and behavioral intention (R), and for examining the path relationships from S to O and from O to R. Integrating these two theoretical perspectives can therefore provide a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the relationship structure of behavioral intentions among tourists in historic districts.

3. Research Model and Hypotheses

In the context of historic district tourism, the stimulus (S) refers to visitor-perceived characteristics of the built environment. Building on the visitor-oriented interpretation of scene theory outlined in Section 2.1, the present study represents this stimulus component

through five dimensions: sensory perception, distinctive experience, cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction. These dimensions capture the spatial, cultural, and interactional cues encountered by visitors during their visits. The organism (O) represents the internal psychological state formed by tourists under the influence of these built environmental stimuli and is manifested in three dimensions: cultural identity, hedonic experience, and place attachment. The response (R) refers to tourists' behavioral intentions, including revisit intention [36], recommendation intention [37], positive review intention [38], and sharing intention [39].

Based on previous studies, we propose relevant hypotheses to explain the relationships among stimulus (sensory perception, distinctive experience, cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction), organism (place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity), and response (behavioral intention) in historic district tourism. The hypothetical model used to test these relationships is shown in Figure 2.

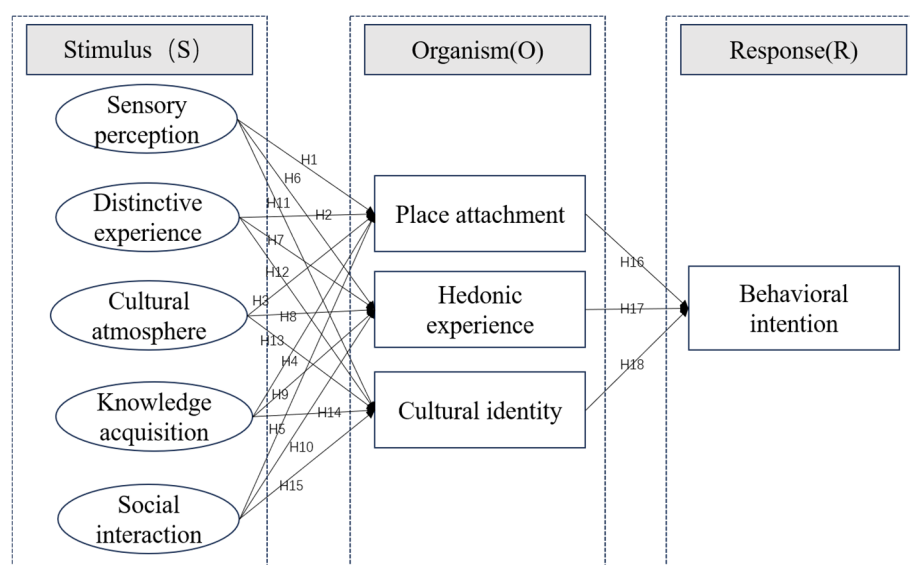


Figure 2. Conceptual model.

3.1. Stimulus (S)

(1) Sensory Perception

Sensory perception refers to the sensory impressions formed when individuals enter a particular space, including vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch [40]. In historic district tourism, sensory perception can translate abstract cultural meanings into concrete experiential cues, enabling tourists to directly perceive the cultural characteristics of historic districts and enhancing their recognition of local cultural distinctiveness. Studies in cognitive psychology have shown that perceptual stimuli can activate attention and memory processing, thereby influencing subsequent attitudes and behaviors [41]. Existing research has also confirmed that rich sensory perception helps improve tourists' initial understanding of and positive impressions toward historic districts [42].

(2) Distinctive Experience

Distinctive experience refers to tourists' interactive experiences associated with unique local culture. According to Ma, Scott, and other scholars, distinctive experience in tourism activities can create memorable and positive experiences for tourists [43]. Industry and policy reports indicate that "distinctive experience" has become a high-frequency keyword among young tourists when searching for and selecting destinations.

This suggests that distinctive experience has become a key component of built environmental stimuli influencing tourists [44].

(3) Cultural Atmosphere

Cultural atmosphere refers to the distinctive environment perceived by tourists, which is shaped by both the physical attributes and the cultural-spiritual meanings of a tourism destination [45]. From a marketing perspective, cultural atmosphere can enhance the sensory and emotional appeal of culture to tourists, encouraging them to engage in behaviors such as staying longer and consuming [46]. Previous studies have confirmed that tourists' perception of cultural atmosphere can enhance their self-efficacy, thereby influencing their psychological states and behavioral tendencies [47].

(4) Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge acquisition refers to the process through which tourists improve their understanding of local history, culture, and social context through formal or informal learning during their visit to a destination. Knowledge acquisition can enhance tourists' awareness of cultural diversity and inclusiveness, thereby strengthening their sense of cultural identity [48]. From the perspective of perceived value, knowledge acquisition is often regarded as a core component of "cultural cognitive value" or "learning value", and directly influences tourists' evaluations of whether a tourism experience is "worthwhile" and "rewarding" [49].

(5) Social Interaction

Social interaction generally refers to face-to-face or online interactions between tourists and their companions, guides, and local residents during a visit [50]. Social interaction can facilitate information sharing and communication among tourists. From the perspective of social capital, social interaction helps establish emotional memories between tourists and destinations, thereby encouraging tourists to actively contribute their own resources (e.g., time and money) to support destination-related activities or benefits, such as sharing on social media and participating in cultural consumption [51].

3.2. *Organism (O)*

(1) Place Attachment

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond or psychological connection formed between individuals and a specific place. According to Seamon (1979), place attachment can be understood as an overall affective bond through which tourists establish a strong relational connection with a tourism destination [52]. A substantial body of research has shown that such attachment can be developed through tourists' lived experiences [53]. For example, tourism postcards and creative performances provide visual and auditory stimuli that can enhance tourists' sense of belonging and foster place attachment [54]. In tourism research, sensory perception has been shown to promote tourists' place attachment to destinations through perceived usefulness and attractiveness. The novelty, uniqueness, and participatory qualities associated with distinctive experience have also been found to strengthen tourists' emotional connection with destinations [55]. Meanwhile, the cultural atmosphere created by historic districts, together with the authenticity, traditional values, and lifestyles they embody, can deepen tourists' understanding of and identification with local meanings, thereby enhancing their place attachment [56]. With regard to knowledge acquisition, heritage interpretation, cultural learning, and knowledge acquisition help tourists deepen their understanding of local cultural meanings and social structures, further contributing to deeper emotional connections [57]. Social interaction is also an important source of place attachment. When tourists accumulate interactive experiences, shared memories, and familiarity at a

destination, they are more likely to develop social ties and emotional belonging, which in turn strengthens their place attachment [58]. Based on these arguments, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1. *Sensory perception positively influences tourists' place attachment.*

H2. *Distinctive experience positively influences tourists' place attachment.*

H3. *Cultural atmosphere positively influences tourists' place attachment.*

H4. *Knowledge acquisition positively influences tourists' place attachment.*

H5. *Social interaction positively influences tourists' place attachment.*

(2) Hedonic Experience

Hedonic experience refers to individuals' tendency to pursue immediate pleasure and comfort through physiological, psychological, or social activities, with an emphasis on positive emotional states such as happiness and enjoyment [59,60]. Extensive research has shown that sensory stimuli in the built environment are important sources of hedonic experience. Attractive visual environments can help relieve stress, improve mental health, and facilitate recovery from fatigue. Soundscape stimuli can evoke tourists' positive affective responses, while the overall atmosphere created by multisensory stimuli may further satisfy their hedonic needs for pleasure and relaxation [61]. Liu et al. examined the influence of cultural atmosphere on tourists' hedonic experience and found that its positive effect on hedonic value was significantly stronger than its effect on utilitarian value [62], supporting the important role of cultural atmosphere in eliciting hedonic experience. From the perspective of experiential content, hedonic experience is also reflected in the pursuit of novelty and uniqueness. Some studies on destination attractiveness have shown that friendliness and uniqueness are significantly and positively associated with tourists' positive emotions [63], suggesting that tourism experiences with distinctive characteristics are more likely to evoke pleasure and positive evaluations. For destinations with distinctive historical and cultural characteristics, related studies further emphasize that knowledge environments containing engaging historical narratives can stimulate tourists' reflective thinking, allow them to feel a sense of tranquility, and generate a sense of enrichment and well-being [64]. In addition, tourism destinations themselves are important spaces for leisure and social interaction. People travel for hedonic motives not only to obtain pleasure and relaxation, but also to maintain family relationships and expand or consolidate social networks, thereby further strengthening their subjective well-being and hedonic experience through social interaction [65]. Based on the above literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H6. *Sensory perception positively influences tourists' hedonic experience.*

H7. *Distinctive experience positively influences tourists' hedonic experience.*

H8. *Cultural atmosphere positively influences tourists' hedonic experience.*

H9. *Knowledge acquisition positively influences tourists' hedonic experience.*

H10. *Social interaction positively influences tourists' hedonic experience.*

(3) Cultural Identity

Cultural identity has two layers of meaning: individuals' cognition of material cultural symbols and their acceptance of group social norms and cultural values. In this study, cultural identity refers to tourists' understanding, acceptance, and emotional identification with the local cultural content, cultural symbols, traditional lifestyles, and cultural values and meanings embedded in historic districts. Tourists' sensory perception of historical heritage plays a crucial role in cultivating cultural identity. Xia et al. argued that, compared with traditional forms, the unique ways in which tourists experience cultural products are more likely to evoke emotional resonance, and such emotional experience helps strengthen tourists' cultural identity [66]. Yang et al. found that the destination cultural atmosphere formed by natural and cultural environments can significantly enhance tourists' cultural identity by stimulating positive emotional experiences [13]. During tourism experiences, tourists may acquire new skills or knowledge, enhance their abilities and understanding, and deepen their comprehension of local cultural meanings as well as their identification with local ways of life. Xiong et al. argued that interaction between residents and tourists is a key channel for cultural exchange. Positive interaction helps improve tourists' understanding of and favorable attitudes toward destination culture, whereas imbalanced interaction may weaken cultural identity [67]. Based on the above literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H11. *Sensory perception positively influences tourists' cultural identity.*

H12. *Distinctive experience positively influences tourists' cultural identity.*

H13. *Cultural atmosphere positively influences tourists' cultural identity.*

H14. *Knowledge acquisition positively influences tourists' cultural identity.*

H15. *Social interaction positively influences tourists' cultural identity.*

3.3. Response (R)

Extensive research has shown that behavioral intention represents a key response formed by tourists after their tourism experience, driven by psychological experience [68–70]. Existing studies generally define behavioral intention from two dimensions. The first is an internal response, which is mainly reflected in revisit intention (i.e., willingness to visit again) and loyalty-related responses, such as positive reviews [71]. The second is an external response, referring to tourists' willingness to recommend the destination to others [72] and share their experiences [73].

In this study, revisit intention, recommendation intention, sharing intention, and positive review intention were treated as observed indicators of the broader latent construct of behavioral intention. Although these items represent different behavioral expressions, they all reflect tourists' favorable post-visit responses to the historic district. Since the purpose of this study is to examine tourists' overall positive behavioral tendency within the SOR framework rather than to compare different behavioral outcomes, these four items were combined into a single behavioral intention construct.

According to environmental psychology, human behavioral intention is influenced by underlying psychological responses to the environment, such as place attachment and place identity [74]. Previous studies have confirmed that place attachment and place identity exert significant positive effects on behavioral intentions among tourists, including revisiting and word-of-mouth communication [75,76]. In addition, related

studies have found that multidimensional service environments can significantly enhance tourists' hedonic experience (e.g., pleasure and enjoyment), while higher levels of hedonic experience can further strengthen behavioral intentions such as revisit intention and word-of-mouth communication. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H16. *Place attachment positively influences behavioral intentions among tourists.*

H17. *Hedonic experience positively influences behavioral intentions among tourists.*

H18. *Cultural identity positively influences behavioral intentions among tourists.*

4. Research Methods

4.1. Case Selection

Pingjiang Historic District is located in the northeastern part of Suzhou Ancient City, covering approximately 116.5 hectares. As a core conservation control area of Suzhou Ancient City, the district has largely preserved the street-and-alley pattern formed since the Tang and Song dynasties and is characterized by the typical spatial pattern of "waterways and land routes running in parallel, with rivers and streets closely adjacent," as shown in Figure 3. Many of its streets, waterways, and bridges can still be matched with those recorded in the Southern Song dynasty Pingjiang Map, indicating strong historical continuity and spatial integrity. The selection of Pingjiang Historic District as the case study is mainly based on its representativeness in terms of policy status, spatial type, and tourism development. First, the district is a formally managed historic and cultural district. The Management Measures for Pingjiang Historic and Cultural District were issued by the Suzhou National Historical and Cultural City Protection Area Administrative Committee and the Gusu District People's Government, providing an institutional basis for its conservation and management. It can therefore represent a policy-recognized conservation-oriented historic district. Second, Pingjiang Historic District is one of the most complete and representative historic areas within Suzhou Ancient City. It has relatively well preserved the traditional street-and-alley system, waterway network, and historic building pattern, reflecting the typical spatial form of a Jiangnan water-town historic district. Third, the district has been recognized as a national-level tourism and leisure block, indicating its policy-recognized role as an important carrier integrating heritage conservation, cultural display, tourism consumption, and leisure experience [77]. This also reflects the current renewal trend of historic districts shifting from protection-oriented spaces toward cultural-experience and tourism-leisure spaces. Based on these three aspects, this study considers Pingjiang Historic District to be a suitable case for examining tourism experience in historic districts.

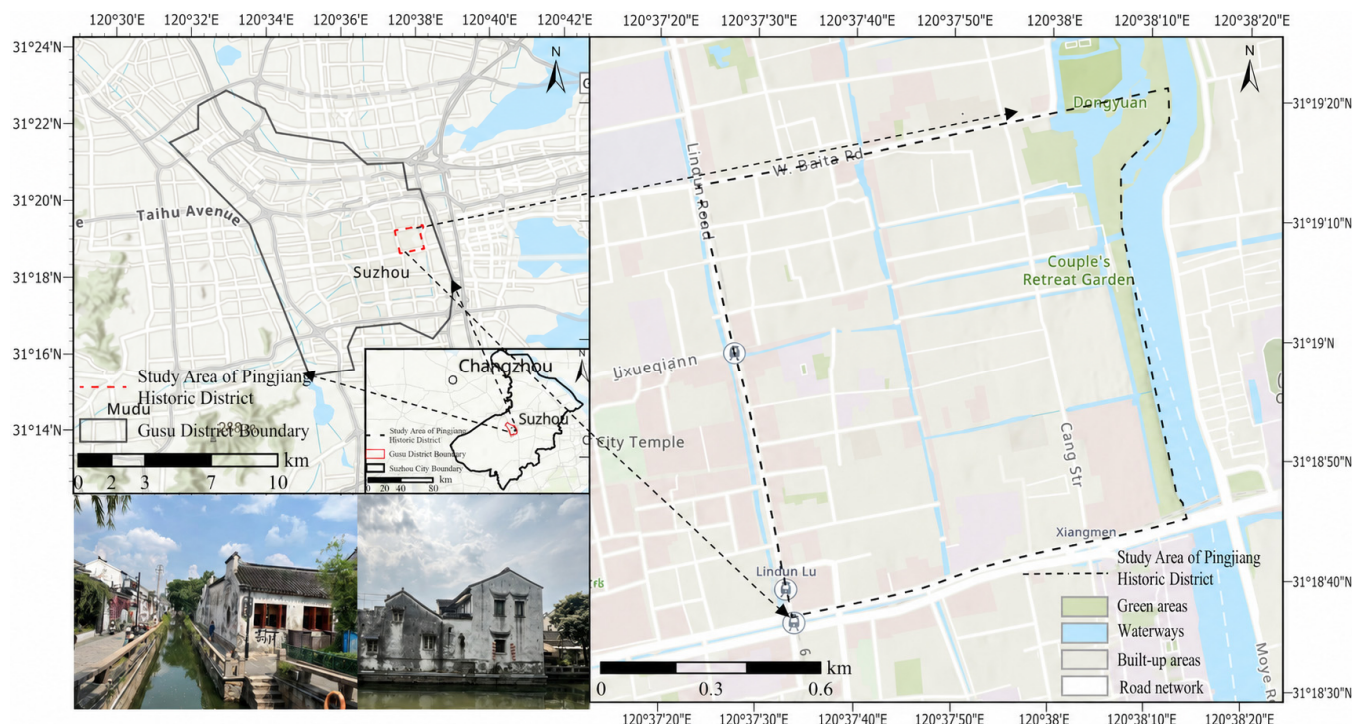


Figure 3. Spatial context and field scenes of Pingjiang Historic District.

4.2. Questionnaire Design

This study developed the measurement variables and indicators for the questionnaire by referring to established measurement scales and adapting them to the research context. Subsequently, experts in the field of environmental design were invited to review and discuss the scale items. Based on their feedback, targeted revisions were made to the wording of the questionnaire to improve scale validity and methodological rigor. Targeted revisions were then made to the wording of the questionnaire to enhance the validity and methodological rigor of the scale. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part collected respondents' demographic and visit-related information, including gender, age, education level, self-reported geographic origin, and visit frequency to Pingjiang Historic District. The second part included 28 items covering nine measurement variables: Sensory perception (SP), Distinctive experience (DE), Cultural atmosphere (CA), Knowledge acquisition (KA), Social interaction (SI), Place attachment (PA), Hedonic experience (HE), Cultural identity (CI), and Behavioral intention (BI). All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), and the specific items are presented in Table 3. Before the formal survey, a pilot survey was conducted with 60 visitors to Pingjiang Historic District. The results showed that the questionnaire had good reliability (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7) and validity (standardized factor loading > 0.5) [78], indicating that it was suitable for the subsequent formal survey.

Table 3. Measurement items and references.

Construct	Code	Measurement Item	References
Sensory perception	SP1	The local food, sounds, and other sensory elements here provide me with a positive sensory experience.	[79–81]
	SP2	I think the visiting environment here provides me with a positive sensory experience.	
	SP3	I think the architectural style here is visually distinctive and locally recognizable.	

Distinctive experience	DE1	The traditional handicrafts, local food, and cultural activities I encountered here are novel and distinctive, which aroused my curiosity.	[82,83]
	DE2	This place is attractive because of its distinctive local cultural characteristics, which stimulated my interest.	
	DE3	I think the folk customs, intangible cultural heritage activities, and performances here are different from my previous travel experiences.	
Cultural atmosphere	CA1	The cultural buildings and natural landscapes here together create a distinctive cultural atmosphere.	[84]
	CA2	The spatial layout, colors, and decorations of the shops in the district convey local cultural characteristics.	
	CA3	The overall atmosphere here makes me feel the natural integration of traditional culture and everyday life.	
Knowledge acquisition	KA1	I learned a great deal of new knowledge about local history and culture here.	[85–87]
	KA2	Through the exhibitions and activities here, I gained a better understanding of local culture and ways of life.	
	KA3	I regard this experience as a rewarding learning process that deepened my understanding of this place.	
Social interaction	SI1	The visiting programs here created opportunities for me to spend time and interact with my companions.	[88]
	SI2	During the visit, I was able to communicate with people who shared similar cultural interests.	
	SI3	The visiting experience here made me feel open and friendly interpersonal interaction.	
Place attachment	PA1	I have developed a deep emotional connection with this place, which strengthens my sense of belonging.	[89]
	PA2	This place has personal meaning to me.	
	PA3	The visit and experience evoked my personal memories and feelings of nostalgia.	
Hedonic experience	HE1	This place gave me positive emotions such as pleasure, excitement, and relaxation.	[90]
	HE2	The diverse experiences exceeded my expectations and made me feel happy.	
	HE3	I felt very comfortable during the experience, which made it easy for me to become immersed and enjoy myself.	
Cultural identity	CI1	I think the historical culture and local way of life presented here are worth recognizing and identifying with.	[91]
	CI2	I think the traditional buildings, ways of life, and local customs preserved here are worth cherishing.	
	CI3	I feel close to the historical culture and local way of life presented here.	
Behavioral intention	BI1	I would recommend this place to others.	[92,93]
	BI2	If I have the opportunity, I would like to visit this place again.	
	BI3	I am willing to share this experience with others.	
	BI4	I would give this historic district a positive review.	

4.3. Data Collection

This study employed a cross-sectional and non-probability mixed-channel survey design. Data were collected in December 2025 through QR-code questionnaires distributed via WeChat group chats, WeChat Moments, and field-based channels. The sampling procedure aimed to recruit respondents with relevant visiting experience, rather than to generate population-representative proportions of local residents, day-trippers, and overnight visitors. The survey therefore captured visitors' perceived experiences during the December survey period rather than an annual average of visitor perceptions.

Seasonal factors, including vegetation conditions, waterside environmental characteristics, cultural programming, and visitor composition, were not modeled as control or grouping variables. Accordingly, the empirical results should be interpreted as cross-sectional associations within the December survey context, rather than as season-invariant estimates of visitor experience throughout the year. A total of 567 questionnaires were collected. After excluding 69 questionnaires with incomplete, repetitive, or patterned responses, 498 valid responses were retained, yielding a valid response rate of 87.8%. The final sample size met the requirements for structural equation modeling (SEM) [94] and was also suitable for fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), for which no universally accepted minimum sample size threshold has been established [95].

As shown in Table 4, female respondents accounted for 58.8% of the sample, whereas male respondents accounted for 41.2%. In terms of age distribution, 16.7% of the respondents were aged 18–25 years, 46.8% were aged 26–35 years, 26.3% were aged 36–45 years, and 10.2% were aged 46 years and above. With respect to educational attainment, 8.6% of the respondents had junior high school education or below, 20.7% had high school or secondary vocational school education, 57.8% had junior college or undergraduate education, and 12.9% had a master’s degree or above. Regarding respondents’ self-reported geographic origin, 47.2% were from Suzhou City, 27.5% were from other cities within Jiangsu Province, and 25.3% were from outside Jiangsu Province. In terms of visit frequency, 51.2% of the respondents were first-time visitors, 40.4% had visited 2–5 times, and 8.4% had visited more than 5 times. Overall, the 498 valid responses provide an acceptable empirical basis for the subsequent SEM and fsQCA analyses in this study.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of participants (N = 498).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	293	58.8
	Male	205	41.2
Age	18–25 years	83	16.7
	26–35 years	233	46.8
	36–45 years	131	26.3
	46 years or above	51	10.2
	Junior high school or below	43	8.6
Education level	High school/technical secondary school	103	20.7
	Junior college/bachelor’s degree	288	57.8
	Master’s degree or above	64	12.9
Geographic origin (self-reported)	Within Suzhou City	235	47.2
	Other cities within Jiangsu Province	137	27.5
	Outside Jiangsu Province	126	25.3
Visit frequency	First visit	255	51.2
	2–5 visits	201	40.4
	More than 5 visits	42	8.4

4.4. Data Analysis Methods

This study employs both structural equation modeling (SEM) and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the complex relationships among multiple variables in historic district tourism experiences. SEM is a multivariate statistical technique widely used in social science and management research. It is mainly applied to test hypothesized path relationships among latent variables and to reveal linear associations between variables [96]. In contrast, fsQCA focuses on the configurational relationships of conditions, emphasizing how different

combinations of conditions are associated with outcome variables and highlighting multiple configurational pathways as well as their sufficiency and necessity [97].

By combining SEM's strength in testing hypothesized path relationships with fsQCA's strength in identifying configurational pathways, this study examines both the path relationships among the main constructs and the configurational patterns associated with behavioral intentions among tourists. Since the data were collected through a cross-sectional questionnaire survey, the SEM paths and fsQCA configurations are interpreted as theory-guided associations and configurational patterns within the sample, rather than as evidence of strict causality.

5. Results

5.1. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results

5.1.1. Measurement Model Results

The reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed using standardized factor loadings, Cronbach's α coefficient, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) [98]. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS 28. Cronbach's α and KMO values were used to assess internal consistency and sampling adequacy, while CR and AVE were calculated based on the standardized factor loadings. Specifically, CR was calculated using the ratio of the squared sum of standardized factor loadings to the squared sum of standardized factor loadings plus the sum of error variances, and AVE was calculated as the average of the squared standardized factor loadings. In general, a scale is considered to demonstrate acceptable reliability and convergent validity when the standardized factor loading exceeds 0.6, Cronbach's α coefficient exceeds 0.7, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value exceeds 0.6, CR exceeds 0.7, and AVE exceeds 0.5. Under these conditions, the observed indicators can be regarded as reliably representing their corresponding latent variables. As shown in Table 5, the standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.651 to 0.875, and all values exceeded 0.60. Cronbach's α coefficients ranged from 0.741 to 0.889, KMO values ranged from 0.686 to 0.836, CR values ranged from 0.743 to 0.890, and AVE values ranged from 0.492 to 0.729. Except for Social Interaction (SI), whose AVE value was slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50, the AVE values of all other constructs exceeded 0.50. Since the CR value of SI was above 0.70, Cronbach's α was above 0.70, and all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.60, the SI construct was retained in the subsequent analysis. Overall, the measurement model showed acceptable reliability and convergent validity.

Table 5. Convergent validity and composite reliability tests.

Variable	Measurement Item	Factor Loading	α	KMO	CR	AVE
SP	SP3	0.651	0.756	0.686	0.758	0.512
	SP2	0.797				
	SP1	0.691				
DE	DE3	0.875	0.889	0.746	0.890	0.729
	DE2	0.854				
	DE1	0.832				
CA	CA3	0.701	0.762	0.697	0.762	0.516
	CA2	0.726				
	CA1	0.728				
KA	KA3	0.782	0.773	0.699	0.774	0.533
	KA2	0.724				
	KA1	0.681				

SI	SI3	0.687				
	SI2	0.761	0.741	0.688	0.743	0.492
	SI1	0.651				
PA	PA1	0.703				
	PA2	0.748	0.787	0.705	0.787	0.552
	PA3	0.777				
HE	HE3	0.737				
	HE2	0.771	0.808	0.715	0.807	0.583
	HE1	0.782				
CI	CI3	0.788				
	CI2	0.768	0.832	0.723	0.833	0.624
	CI1	0.813				
BI	BI1	0.831				
	BI2	0.754	0.876	0.836	0.876	0.640
	BI3	0.806				
	BI4	0.806				

The discriminant validity of all variables was further examined. As shown in Table 6, the diagonal values represent the square roots of AVE, and the off-diagonal values represent inter-construct correlations. The diagonal values of all constructs remained greater than their corresponding inter-construct correlations. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was considered acceptable [99].

After confirming the reliability and validity of the scale, model fit was evaluated. As shown in Table 7, all fit indices met the recommended criteria [94]: $\chi^2/df = 1.039$, RMSEA = 0.009, SRMR = 0.042, IFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.998, and CFI = 0.998. These results indicate that the model had a satisfactory overall fit. No additional error covariance paths were added based on modification indices during model fitting.

Common method bias (CMB) refers to systematic errors caused by similarities in data sources or measurement methods. To ensure the rigor and reliability of the research findings, this study assessed CMB by adding a common method factor to the original model and comparing changes in model fit before and after its inclusion. If the absolute changes in TLI and CFI are less than 0.1, and the absolute changes in RMSEA and SRMR are less than 0.05, CMB can be considered insignificant [94]. As shown in Table 8, after adding a common method factor, RMSEA changed by 0.001 (<0.05), SRMR changed by 0.000 (<0.05), TLI changed by 0.001 (<0.1), and CFI changed by 0.000 (<0.1). The changes in all fit indices were below the recommended thresholds. These results indicate that the sample data in this study did not suffer from serious common method bias.

Table 6. Discriminant validity analysis.

	BI	CI	HE	PA	SI	KA	CA	DE	SP
BI	0.800								
CI	0.716	0.790							
HE	0.629	0.648	0.764						
PA	0.632	0.625	0.465	0.743					
SI	0.514	0.526	0.502	0.507	0.701				
KA	0.468	0.648	0.389	0.511	0.315	0.730			
CA	0.474	0.558	0.621	0.401	0.395	0.359	0.718		
DE	0.503	0.616	0.513	0.541	0.341	0.340	0.389	0.854	
SP	0.460	0.553	0.444	0.549	0.297	0.325	0.422	0.328	0.716

Table 7. Reference and actual values of fit indices.

Indicator	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR	IFI	TLI	CFI
value	334.681	322	1.039	0.009	0.042	0.998	0.998	0.998
Reference value	-	-	1~3	<0.06	<0.05	>0.95	>0.95	>0.95

Table 8. Common method bias (CMB) analysis.

Indicator	RMSEA			SRMR			TLI			CFI		
	OM	MFM	DV	OM	MFM	DV	OM	MFM	DV	OM	MFM	DV
Value	0.009	0.010	0.001	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.998	0.997	0.001	0.998	0.998	0.000
Reference value			<0.05			<0.05			<0.1			<0.1

5.1.2. Hypothesis Testing

In Table 9, unstandardized estimates, S.E., and C.R. are reported based on the unstandardized estimates generated by AMOS, while standardized path coefficients are reported as β . For the place attachment dimension, tourists' sensory perception ($\beta = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$), distinctive experience ($\beta = 0.277$, $p < 0.001$), knowledge acquisition ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.001$), and social interaction ($\beta = 0.259$, $p < 0.001$) significantly and positively predicted place attachment as a component of tourists' psychological experience. Thus, hypotheses H1, H2, H4, and H5 were supported. By contrast, cultural atmosphere had no significant effect on place attachment ($\beta = -0.033$, $p = 0.565$), indicating that hypothesis H3 was not supported.

For the hedonic experience dimension, tourists' sensory perception ($\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.022$), distinctive experience ($\beta = 0.227$, $p < 0.001$), cultural atmosphere ($\beta = 0.369$, $p < 0.001$), and social interaction ($\beta = 0.228$, $p < 0.001$) all exerted significant positive effects on hedonic experience. Accordingly, H6, H7, H8, and H10 were supported. Among these factors, cultural atmosphere had the strongest effect on hedonic experience. However, knowledge acquisition did not significantly affect hedonic experience ($\beta = 0.075$, $p = 0.148$), and hypothesis H9 was therefore not supported.

For the cultural identity dimension, tourists' sensory perception ($\beta = 0.217$, $p < 0.001$), distinctive experience ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.001$), cultural atmosphere ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.002$), knowledge acquisition ($\beta = 0.359$, $p < 0.001$), and social interaction ($\beta = 0.201$, $p < 0.001$) all had significant positive effects on cultural identity. Therefore, hypotheses H11 to H15 were all supported.

With regard to behavioral intention, place attachment ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < 0.001$), hedonic experience ($\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.001$), and cultural identity ($\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$) significantly and positively predicted behavioral intentions among tourists. These findings support hypotheses H16 to H18.

Table 9. Path analysis.

Hypothesis	Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized β	S.E.	C.R.	p-Value	Results
H1	SP→PA	0.334	0.314	0.063	5.300	***	Supported
H2	DE→PA	0.220	0.277	0.041	5.372	***	Supported
H3	CA→PA	−0.033	−0.033	0.059	−0.561	0.565	Not Supported
H4	KA→PA	0.216	0.243	0.048	4.500	***	Supported
H5	SI→PA	0.246	0.259	0.054	4.549	***	Supported
H6	SP→HE	0.144	0.125	0.063	2.289	0.022	Supported
H7	DE→HE	0.199	0.227	0.044	4.521	***	Supported
H8	CA→HE	0.407	0.369	0.069	5.901	***	Supported
H9	KA→HE	0.072	0.075	0.050	1.447	0.148	Not Supported
H10	SI→HE	0.234	0.228	0.058	4.036	***	Supported
H11	SP→CI	0.262	0.217	0.058	4.516	***	Supported

H12	DE→CI	0.273	0.296	0.04	6.817	***	Supported
H13	CA→CI	0.176	0.153	0.058	3.041	0.002	Supported
H14	KA→CI	0.368	0.359	0.049	7.514	***	Supported
H15	SI→CI	0.219	0.201	0.052	4.203	***	Supported
H16	PA→BI	0.321	0.271	0.068	4.715	***	Supported
H17	HE→BI	0.292	0.266	0.061	4.780	***	Supported
H18	CI→BI	0.393	0.378	0.068	5.774	***	Supported

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$. Unstandardized Estimate, S.E., and C.R. are based on the unstandardized estimates generated by AMOS. Standardized β denotes the standardized path coefficient.

5.1.3. Supplementary Indirect Effect Analysis

After SEM path testing, a supplementary bootstrap analysis was conducted to examine the indirect links implied by the SOR framework. This analysis was not intended to reposition the study as a mediation-centered investigation, but to provide an additional check of whether the tested S-O and O-R paths were consistent with the S-O-R logic. SP, DE, CA, KA, and SI were specified as antecedents; PA, HE, and CI as parallel mediators; and BI as the outcome. The analysis used 5000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

As shown in Table 10, all standardized indirect effects were significant, ranging from 0.187 to 0.265, and none of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals included zero. These results provide supplementary support for the indirect links from S to R through O, while the main analytical focus of this study remains on the SEM-based S-O and O-R path testing and the fsQCA-based configurational interpretation.

Table 10. Supplementary bootstrap test of indirect effects.

Path	Standardized Indirect Effect	Lower	Upper	p
SP → PA/HE/CI → BI	0.265	0.119	0.326	<0.001
DE → PA/HE/CI → BI	0.245	0.160	0.378	<0.001
CA → PA/HE/CI → BI	0.187	0.072	0.261	<0.001
KA → PA/HE/CI → BI	0.253	0.139	0.361	0.001
SI → PA/HE/CI → BI	0.234	0.123	0.320	<0.001

Note: Standardized indirect effects are reported. Bootstrap tests were conducted with 5000 resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals.

To further clarify the mediation structure, an expanded mediation model including direct paths from SP, DE, CA, KA, and SI to BI was additionally tested. The results are provided in Supplementary Table S1. The supplementary analysis showed that the direct effects from the five built environmental stimuli to BI were not significant, whereas the indirect effects through psychological experience remained significant.

5.2. fsQCA Analysis Results

5.2.1. Data Calibration and Necessity Analysis

Data calibration aims to transform the variables used in fsQCA into fuzzy-set membership scores ranging from 0 to 1 [100]. In fsQCA, calibration generally requires three qualitative anchors: full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership. Following previous fsQCA studies, this study adopted the direct calibration method and used a percentile-based calibration strategy. Specifically, for each condition variable, the anchors for full membership, crossover point, and full non-membership were determined based on the empirical distribution of the composite scores, mainly using the 75th percentile, median, and 25th percentile, respectively. Since the data were collected using a five-point Likert scale and the response distributions were not fully uniform, the

percentile-based calibration was used to capture the relative degree of set membership within the sample. Therefore, the calibrated results should be interpreted as relative configurational patterns within this sample rather than as absolute membership standards. The anchors were derived from the sample distribution and rounded to two decimal places where necessary. Because the composite scores of sensory perception (SP) and distinctive experience (DE) were slightly lower and their empirical medians were 2.7, their crossover points were set at 2.7. For the other condition variables, the empirical medians were approximately 3.0, so their crossover points were set at 3.0. This calibration strategy reflects the relative position of each case within the observed sample distribution rather than assuming an identical theoretical midpoint for all constructs. The specific anchors for the condition variables are reported in Table 11, corresponding to fuzzy-set membership scores of 0.95, 0.50, and 0.05 after calibration [101]. Since cases with a membership score of exactly 0.5 are excluded from truth table analysis, all values equal to 0.5 were adjusted to 0.501 to avoid automatic exclusion and ensure analytical completeness [102].

Table 11. Data calibration.

Variable	Full Membership	Crossover Point	Full Non-Membership
SP	3.67	2.7	2
DE	3.67	2.7	2
CA	3.67	3	2
KA	3.67	3	2
SI	3.67	3	2
PA	3.67	3	2
HE	3.67	3	2
CI	3.67	3	2

Based on the causal logic of set theory, if condition X is always present whenever outcome Y occurs, X can be regarded as a necessary condition for Y. In fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), consistency is commonly used as the criterion for assessing necessity, and a consistency threshold of 0.90 is generally adopted. In this study, fsQCA 3.0 software was used to conduct a necessity analysis of the conditions associated with behavioral intentions among tourists.

As shown in Table 12, the consistency values of all conditions were below 0.90, indicating that none of these conditions constituted a necessary condition for behavioral intentions among tourists. Therefore, further configurational analysis was required to examine how different conditions jointly shape behavioral intentions among tourists and to identify their configurational patterns of influence.

Table 12. Necessity analysis of behavioral intentions.

Condition	Consistency	Coverage	Condition	Consistency	Coverage
SP	0.682	0.625	~SP	0.440	0.445
DE	0.684	0.631	~DE	0.418	0.419
CA	0.641	0.639	~CA	0.466	0.432
KA	0.649	0.644	~KA	0.462	0.431
SI	0.639	0.650	~SI	0.471	0.429
PA	0.702	0.688	~PA	0.413	0.390
HE	0.698	0.691	~HE	0.411	0.383
CI	0.727	0.707	~CI	0.384	0.365

Notes: “~” indicates the absence of a condition.

5.2.2. Configurational Analysis

This section further examines the configurational pathways through which built environmental stimuli contribute to positive behavioral intentions under different configurations of psychological experience. In the analysis, the case frequency threshold was set to 3, and the consistency threshold for retaining sufficient configurations was set to 0.85. This threshold was used to identify configurations with adequate empirical consistency while retaining theoretically meaningful pathways. The intermediate and parsimonious solutions were obtained using the truth table algorithm. After minimization, all retained configurations exceeded the consistency threshold, with the lowest configuration consistency being 0.863. A higher frequency threshold of 5 was also tested as a robustness check. Since the threshold of 3 retained broader empirical coverage while maintaining high solution consistency, it was adopted for the main analysis.

As shown in Table 13, the model exhibited relatively high overall explanatory power and consistency. In Table 13, the consistency values of the seven configurations all exceeded 0.86, with an overall consistency of 0.874 and an overall coverage of 0.425. These results indicate that the model has acceptable consistency and moderate explanatory coverage for high behavioral intention among tourists in historic districts. Config. 5 was retained for completeness but interpreted only as a supplementary low-coverage pathway because of its limited raw coverage (0.046) and unique coverage (0.008). Following Fiss [103] and Greckhamer et al. [104], this study classifies the configurations primarily according to the patterns of core conditions. Configurations 1–3 share the same three core conditions, namely cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and place attachment, and are therefore grouped into Model A. Configuration 4 represents the main form of Model B. Configuration 5 shows a similar configurational logic, but its raw coverage is relatively low. Therefore, it is retained as a supplementary low-coverage pathway and is not treated as a representative pathway in the main interpretation. Although Configurations 6–7 differ in some additional conditions, they share a consistent configurational core composed of knowledge acquisition, social interaction, and hedonic experience; therefore, they are grouped into Model C.

In terms of the condition characteristics of each model, Model A is mainly characterized by cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and place attachment. Model B is primarily characterized by sensory perception, place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity, while distinctive experience serves as a peripheral supporting condition. Model C is mainly characterized by the joint presence of knowledge acquisition, social interaction, and hedonic experience.

Table 13. Configurational pathways associated with positive behavioral intentions.

Condition	Model A			Model B		Model C	
	Config. 1	Config. 2	Config. 3	Config. 4	Config. 5	Config. 6	Config. 7
SP	(•)		(•)	•	•		(•)
DE	(•)	(•)		(•)	(•)	(•)	
CA	•	•	•	(•)	⊗		(•)
KA	•	•	•		(⊗)	•	•
SI			(•)		(⊗)	•	•
PA	•	•	•	•	•	(•)	
HE		(•)	(•)	•	•	•	•
CI	(•)	(•)		•	•	(•)	(•)
Raw coverage	0.243	0.253	0.191	0.246	0.046	0.257	0.203
Unique coverage	0.026	0.010	0.008	0.059	0.008	0.042	0.020
Consistency	0.887	0.863	0.889	0.884	0.870	0.881	0.895
Overall coverage				0.425			
Overall consistency				0.874			

Notes: ● and ⊗ indicate the presence and absence of core conditions, respectively; (●) indicates the presence of a peripheral condition, and (⊗) indicates the absence of a peripheral condition.

5.2.3. Complementarity Between SEM Path Relationships and fsQCA Configurations

The SEM and fsQCA results address different analytical questions and should therefore not be interpreted as interchangeable evidence. SEM examines the linear path relationships among variables in the model, whereas fsQCA examines whether particular combinations of conditions are sufficient for high behavioral intention. Accordingly, a significant SEM path does not necessarily imply that a condition must appear as a core condition in every fsQCA configuration, and a core condition in a configuration does not necessarily indicate an independent direct effect on another variable.

In Model A, the direct path from cultural atmosphere to place attachment was not statistically significant, indicating that the linear path relationship between cultural atmosphere and place attachment was not significant after the effects of sensory perception, distinctive experience, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction were considered. Model A does not indicate that cultural atmosphere directly produces place attachment. Rather, it shows that the simultaneous presence of high cultural atmosphere, high knowledge acquisition, and high place attachment constitutes a recurrent sufficient configuration associated with high behavioral intention. In this configuration, cultural atmosphere functions as a conditional contextual component whose relevance depends on its combination with cultural learning and place attachment.

Model B shows another pathway to high behavioral intention. In the SEM results, sensory perception was significantly associated with place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity, while these three psychological-experience dimensions significantly predicted behavioral intention. The fsQCA result further indicates that the simultaneous presence of high sensory perception, high place attachment, high hedonic experience, and high cultural identity forms a sufficient configuration associated with high behavioral intention. Distinctive experience appeared as a peripheral rather than a core condition in this model. This does not imply that distinctive experience is unimportant, because it showed significant linear path relationships with the three psychological-experience dimensions in the SEM analysis. Rather, it suggests that, within this particular configuration, distinctive experience reinforces the pathway but is not the defining condition that distinguishes the configuration.

Model C presents another conditional pattern. In the SEM analysis, the linear path relationship between knowledge acquisition and hedonic experience was not significant after the other built environmental stimuli were controlled. However, Model C does not imply that knowledge acquisition directly generates hedonic experience. Instead, it indicates that the joint presence of high knowledge acquisition, high social interaction, and high hedonic experience constitutes a sufficient configuration associated with high behavioral intention. Thus, knowledge acquisition should be interpreted as a condition whose relevance to high behavioral intention emerges when it is combined with social interaction and hedonic experience, rather than as a universal direct antecedent of hedonic experience.

This interpretation is also consistent with the necessity analysis. None of the individual conditions reached the conventional consistency threshold for a necessary condition for high behavioral intention. Therefore, the configurational results should not be interpreted as evidence that any single condition independently or universally determines behavioral intention. Rather, they complement the SEM results by revealing how different built environmental stimuli and psychological experiences can jointly contribute to high behavioral intention under alternative configurational conditions.

5.3. Case-Based Interpretation of Configurational Pathways in Pingjiang Historic District

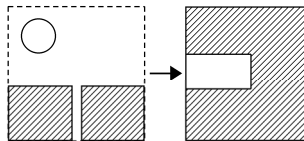
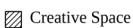
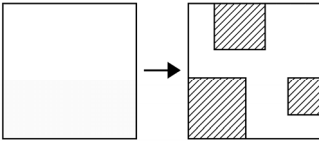
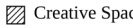
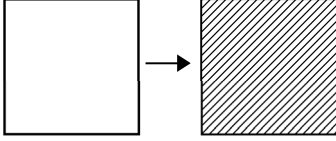
Based on the fsQCA results, this study identifies three typical configurational pathways associated with tourists' positive behavioral intentions. This section interprets these pathways by referring to documented conservation-renewal practices and cultural experience cases in Pingjiang Historic District. The purpose is not to propose or verify detailed engineering-level spatial optimization plans, but to contextualize the configurational results through case-based visual and textual evidence.

5.3.1. Model A—Cultural Atmosphere–Knowledge Acquisition-Driven Pathway

Model A identifies a configuration in which cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and place attachment jointly relate to high behavioral intention. In this pathway, cultural atmosphere and knowledge acquisition are interpreted as contextual and experiential conditions that coexist with place attachment. When a historic district creates a stable and distinctive cultural atmosphere through its spatial environment and provides sustained and diverse opportunities for knowledge acquisition through multiple channels, tourists are more likely to develop a systematic understanding of the district's history and culture. This cognitive understanding can then evolve into emotional attachment, thereby generating positive behavioral intentions such as staying longer, consumption, and revisiting.

In recent years, Gusu District has followed the overall approach of “restoration—linear renovation—area-based conservation”. On the one hand, it has prepared professional documents such as the Conservation Plan for Pingjiang Historic and Cultural District and carried out refined restoration of traditional dwellings, the street-and-alley fabric, and historic buildings. These efforts aim to preserve “Authenticity” to the greatest extent, stabilize and strengthen the overall historical and cultural atmosphere of the district, and transform everyday lifestyles and street memories into perceivable scenes. To provide visual support for the case-based interpretation of Model A, Table 14 presents selected before-and-after examples of historic building conservation and renewal in Pingjiang Historic District based on previous research [105].

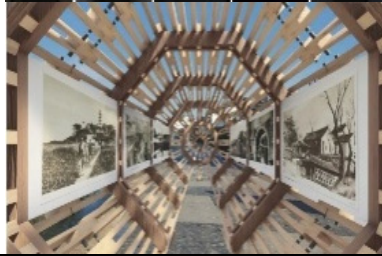
Table 14. Cases of conservation and renovation of historic building features.

Type	Renovation	Upgrading	Conservation and Restoration
Before Renewal			
After Renewal			
Schematic Diagram	 	 	 

Pingjiang Historic District also integrates cultural exhibitions, art installations, and other cultural-creative functions into historic former residences, creating composite spaces that combine restoration with adaptive reuse. For example, the “B-Side Pingjiang

Project” of Suzhou International Design Week 2021 used art installations to reconstruct traditional everyday life scenes within historic residential spaces (Table 15). This enabled local lifestyles, historic spaces, and contemporary artistic expression to interact, promoting the creative transformation of traditional culture. Overall, through the preservation of historic features, the revitalization of cultural heritage, and the introduction of cultural activities, Pingjiang Historic District has strengthened its cultural atmosphere while providing tourists with multiple opportunities for knowledge acquisition, thereby supporting cognition-oriented place attachment.

Table 15. Artistic installation forms representing traditional lifestyles in historic districts. Source: Compiled by the authors based on the official website of 2021 Suzhou Design Week.

Type	Historic Residence and “Su Tower”	Alleyway and “Su Boat”
Architectural Appearance		
Art Installation Display		 

5.3.2. Model B—Sensory Perception—Distinctive Experience Synergistic Pathway

Model B identifies a pathway in which sensory perception, place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity serve as core conditions, while distinctive experience plays a peripheral reinforcing role. This pathway suggests that the combination of sensory perception and distinctive cultural activities may help visitors develop place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity, and may further be associated with positive behavioral intention. When historic districts create a comfortable and distinctive multisensory environment through visual, auditory, and other sensory cues, and further provide distinctive experiential activities such as creative markets and performing arts events, tourists can develop vivid and pleasant hedonic experience. At the same time, through learning about and communicating local culture during these experiences, tourists can deepen their understanding of and identification with local culture. This process further strengthens their place attachment and ultimately is positively associated with behavioral intentions among tourists.

Within the broader conservation framework, Pingjiang Historic District has promoted refined renewal of street-facing historic buildings. While preserving traditional features such as whitewashed walls, black-tiled roofs, and brick-and-timber textures, it has introduced lighting focal points, small-scale streetscape elements, and pedestrian-friendly interfaces, creating a warm and visually layered district landscape. Meanwhile, creative markets, intangible cultural heritage workshops, themed exhibition halls, and other cultural-commercial formats provide tourists with diversified distinctive experience activities. The field photographs in Figure 4 provide on-site visual support for the distinctive cultural experience settings observed in Pingjiang Historic District, including Chinese opera performance, Suzhou Pingtan, Suzhou folding fans, and Suzhou

embroidery-related scenes. For example, Weidaoguan Commercial Street (Figure 4) integrates film and television IP with Suzhou local culture and has become a cultural tourism consumption space combining immersive performance, workshop experience, and themed consumption. Through strolling, tasting, and participation, tourists can gain enjoyable hedonic experience, while immersive experiences of Suzhou-style lifestyles and traditional techniques help connect local culture with personal memories and emotions. This further strengthens tourists' place attachment and cultural identity, thereby supporting positive intentions to stay, revisit, and recommend.

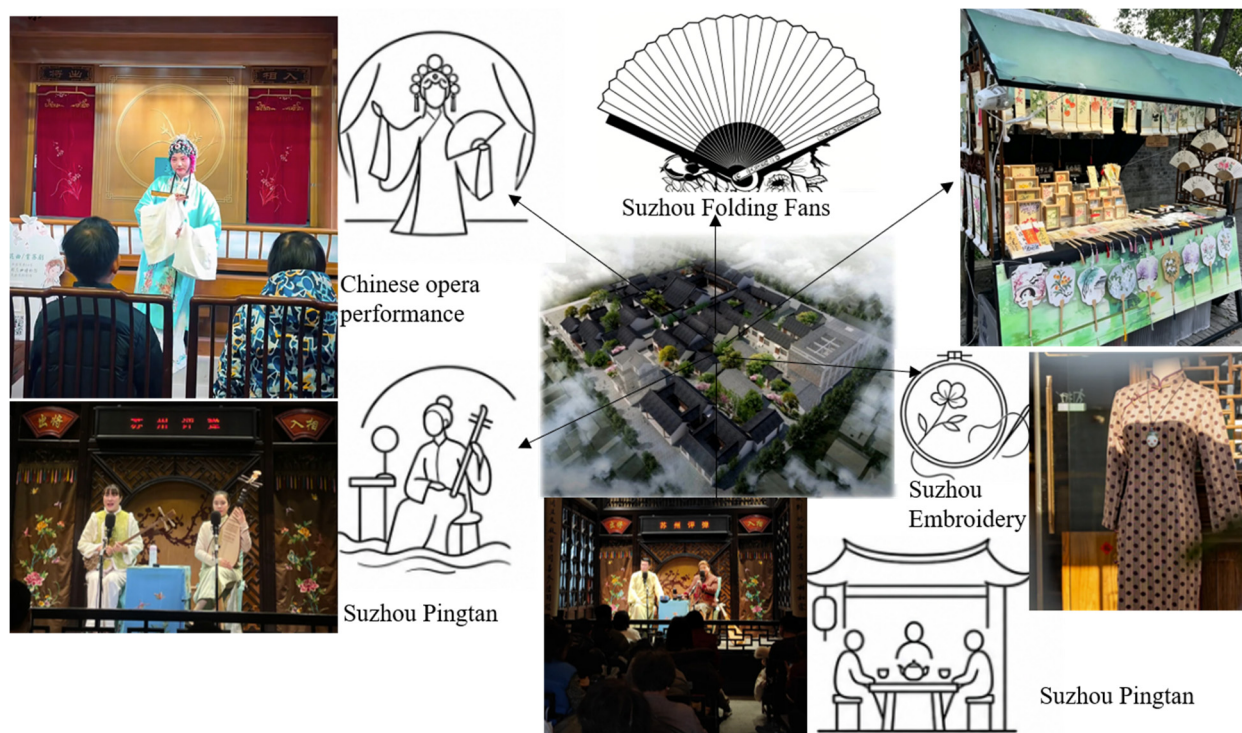


Figure 4. Distinctive experiential projects of traditional culture in historic districts. Source: Field photographs by the authors; schematic elements drawn by the authors.

5.3.3. Model C—Knowledge Acquisition–Social Interaction Activating Pathway

Model C identifies a configurational pathway in which knowledge acquisition, social interaction, and hedonic experience are jointly associated with high behavioral intention. This pathway indicates that the combination of cultural knowledge communication and interactive experience may help visitors form a pleasant experiential feeling and may further be associated with positive behavioral intention. Historic districts can provide local knowledge through guided interpretation, educational programs, exhibitions, and experiential activities, while also creating public spaces and cultural projects that encourage communication among tourists, companions, merchants, and residents.

In recent years, Pingjiang Historic District has revitalized historic buildings into exhibition and experiential spaces through approaches such as “historic buildings + new cultural and commercial formats” and “intangible cultural heritage + new experiences.” For example, Qing-dynasty residences have been renewed into the Taohuawu Woodblock New Year Painting Experience Hall and the Yituan Heqi Hall, where tourists can learn about Suzhou’s traditional crafts and everyday lifestyles through handcrafting, workshops, and thematic exhibitions. The China Kunqu Opera Museum and the Pingtan Museum also offer programs such as “Kunqu Open Classes” and “Pingtan Afternoon Tea,” transforming local cultural knowledge into continuous educational and experiential content. In addition, commemorative stamp-collecting games and intangible cultural

heritage markets create interactive settings for tourists, merchants, interpreters, and companions. For example, the “Pingjiang Nine Alleys Commemorative Stamp” project transforms local cultural elements, such as alley names, Kunqu Opera, Pingtan, Suzhou cuisine, and classical gardens, into themed stamps distributed across exhibition halls and experiential sites. Tourists need to visit specific locations, learn related cultural content, and interact with staff to obtain the stamps. In this way, knowledge acquisition, participatory experience, and social interaction are integrated into a coherent experiential chain, helping tourists gain hedonic experience, strengthen their connection with Pingjiang, and support positive behavioral intentions. Table 16 summarizes representative knowledge dissemination and social interaction experience items in Pingjiang Historic District.

Table 16. Historic district knowledge dissemination and social interaction experience items. Source: Compiled by the authors based on public materials from Gusu District People’s Government and Suzhou Daily.

Type	Knowledge Acquisition	Social Interaction
Exhibition Narrative		Cultural exchange between tourists and performers 
Educational Study Program		Cultural exchange between tourists and guides/interpreters 
Stamp-collecting Game		Cultural exchange among tourists, merchants, and travel companions 

6. Discussion

The combined results of the structural equation model and fsQCA indicate that behavioral intentions among tourists in historic districts are not explained by a single factor. Rather, they are associated with both the direct path relationships among key constructs and the configurational effects of multiple conditions. The SEM results reveal the net effects of individual relationships among built environmental stimuli, psychological experience, and behavioral intention, whereas the fsQCA results further show how different combinations of conditions are associated with high behavioral intention. The supplementary indirect effect analysis was used only to check the continuity of the S-O-R linkage, rather than to shift the focus of the study toward mediation effects themselves.

The SEM results show that sensory perception, distinctive experience, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction all exert significant positive effects on tourists' place attachment. This finding is generally consistent with previous studies on historic districts and heritage tourism, which have shown that authenticity, tourist involvement, and diverse cultural experiences can strengthen tourists' emotional connection to the destination [106]. However, this study also found that the direct effect of cultural atmosphere on place attachment was not significant (H3 was not supported). One possible explanation is that, for tourists, an overall atmosphere alone is difficult to develop into stable emotional attachment to a district if it lacks specific experiential touchpoints and interactive contexts. Instead, cultural atmosphere needs to be supported by perceptible and interpretable experiences, such as sensory experience. In addition, sensory perception, distinctive experience, cultural atmosphere, and social interaction all significantly enhanced tourists' hedonic experience. This result echoes existing research, which suggests that experiential landscapes, value co-creation, tourist education, and local authenticity are core components in constructing positive and memorable heritage tourism experiences [107]. Nevertheless, knowledge acquisition did not have a direct effect on hedonic experience (H9 was not supported). This suggests that, in historic districts, knowledge-based learning is unlikely to be directly transformed into pleasurable experience unless it is supported by gamified, contextualized, and interactive design. Meanwhile, sensory perception, distinctive experience, cultural atmosphere, knowledge acquisition, and social interaction all significantly promoted cultural identity. This finding is consistent with heritage tourism research showing that authenticity, cultural knowledge, visitor involvement, and experience co-creation help tourists interpret local cultural meanings and develop stronger identification with historic places [108]. Regarding behavioral intention, place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity all had significant positive effects, with cultural identity showing the strongest effect. This indicates that in historic districts, which combine everyday life with cultural meanings, positive behavioral intentions among tourists are not only associated with pleasurable experience, but also closely associated with their identification with local culture.

The fsQCA results further complement the SEM analysis by showing that the role of cultural atmosphere in historic district tourism is context-dependent. While the SEM results indicate that the linear path relationship between cultural atmosphere and place attachment is not significant, the fsQCA results reveal that cultural atmosphere can form a configuration associated with high behavioral intention when it coexists with knowledge acquisition and place attachment. This suggests that cultural atmosphere does not operate in isolation, but becomes more meaningful when combined with interpretive learning and emotional bonds with place. This finding is consistent with research on historical and cultural blocks showing that tourists' perceptions of historical-cultural and leisure values may be translated into positive behavioral responses through place identity [109]. In Model B, sensory perception, place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity serve as core conditions, while distinctive experience plays a peripheral reinforcing role. Sensory experience provides a direct sensory basis for shaping tourists' psychological experience, which is consistent with findings in historic district studies that landscape perception is closely related to place attachment [110]. Moreover, unlike some studies that focus primarily on hedonic experience, this study shows that hedonic experience in historic districts is not merely entertainment detached from cultural context. Rather, it is an emotional experience generated together with cultural identity and place attachment. Notably, although distinctive experience is not a core condition in Model B, it appears as a peripheral reinforcing condition. This suggests that distinctive activities may enrich the overall experiential context, but they are not the defining condition of this

particular pathway to high behavioral intention. Model C shows that knowledge acquisition, social interaction, and hedonic experience jointly form a core configuration associated with high behavioral intention. This result suggests that when cultural learning is combined with social interaction, tourists are more likely to develop enjoyable experiences and positive behavioral intentions. Previous research on historic cultural districts has explained tourists' affective and experiential responses from the perspectives of street-space quality, cultural atmosphere perception, and interactive settings [111]. Building on this perspective, the present study further suggests that knowledge acquisition and social interaction may serve as important combined conditions for understanding tourists' hedonic experience and behavioral intention in historic districts.

7. Conclusions

This study integrates the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model with scene theory and proposes an analytical framework based on multiple dimensions of tourists' perceptions. Through an empirical study of Pingjiang Historic District, this study identifies the key factors and configurational pathways associated with behavioral intentions among tourists. The main conclusions are as follows:

First, the formation of behavioral intentions among tourists in historic districts exhibits clear multiple-pathway characteristics. By combining the results of structural equation modeling and fsQCA, this study identifies three major pathways: the cultural atmosphere–knowledge acquisition–driven pathway, the sensory perception–distinctive experience synergistic pathway, and the knowledge acquisition–social interaction activating pathway. This indicates that behavioral intentions among tourists are not linearly explained by a single factor, but are jointly formed by multiple antecedent conditions under different configurations. Second, cultural atmosphere is more likely to be associated with high behavioral intention when it is combined with knowledge acquisition and place attachment. Cultural atmosphere alone is insufficient to directly form stable place attachment; however, when it works together with knowledge acquisition and is linked to emotional attachment, it can become an important basis for supporting positive behavioral intentions among tourists. Third, knowledge acquisition is not a direct source of immediate hedonic experience. Its role is more evident in the experiential transformation generated through its combination with cultural atmosphere and social interaction. In the context of historic districts, knowledge acquisition is more likely to be associated with hedonic experience when it is contextualized and translated into experiential forms through educational study programs, gamified tasks, and similar approaches, which may be associated with stronger behavioral intention. Fourth, cultural identity is associated with multiple built environmental stimuli, among which sensory perception and distinctive experience play particularly prominent roles. Fifth, strengthening sensory perception and distinctive experience helps simultaneously promote place attachment, hedonic experience, and cultural identity, thereby contributing to behavioral intention. Sixth, hedonic experience and cultural identity both play important roles in shaping tourists' overall behavioral intention. In particular, tourists' cognition of local culture may provide a more stable psychological basis for positive behavioral responses.

The findings of this study may provide references for the renewal of other historic districts. First, cultural atmosphere can be strengthened through the coordinated management of streetscapes, building facades, shopfront colors, materials, lighting, and signage systems. More specifically, along major tourist streets, waterfront interfaces, bridge nodes, alley entrances, and traditional commercial interfaces, the scale of shop signs, facade colors, night lighting, street furniture, and wayfinding signage can be coordinated to avoid excessive commercial decoration that may interfere with the historic

character. In this way, cultural atmosphere can be transformed from a general spatial impression into a more integrated and recognizable place experience. Second, historical information and local cultural knowledge can be transformed into experiential activities rather than being presented only through static display boards. Guided interpretation, themed task-based routes, stamp-collecting activities, and craft workshops can be used to transform knowledge acquisition into participatory experience. For example, layered cultural interpretation nodes can be arranged in connection with historic buildings, bridges, waterways, former residences of notable figures, intangible cultural heritage display points, and traditional shops, enabling visitors to gain continuous cultural understanding through walking, viewing, interaction, and consumption. Third, sensory perception and distinctive experience can be enhanced through multisensory design. Local food, soundscapes, smells, handicrafts, performances, and night lighting can be integrated to create a more vivid and memorable experience. More specifically, small-scale performances, craft experiences, local food displays, night-tour lighting, and seasonal cultural activities can be organized along waterfront walkways, traditional streets and alleys, cultural exhibition spaces, and commercial–leisure nodes, so that visitors’ visual, auditory, gustatory, and participatory experiences can form a more complete scene perception. Fourth, social interaction design can be integrated into the operation of historic districts. Small staying spaces and participatory programs can be arranged to promote interactions among tourists, merchants, residents, interpreters, and companions. For example, appropriately scaled resting nodes, seating facilities, or small activity spaces can be placed near bridgeheads, alley entrances, street corners, and cultural experience sites to support visitors’ staying, communication, photography, and participation in activities.

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses on one representative historic district in a single city. Although Pingjiang Historic District provides a suitable empirical context, the applicability of the findings to historic districts with different types, climates, cultural backgrounds, and development stages requires further cross-city and cross-type comparisons. Second, the data were collected through a cross-sectional self-reported questionnaire survey and measured behavioral intentions rather than observed long-term behavior. Therefore, the SEM results and fsQCA configurations should be interpreted as theory-guided associations and intended behavioral relationships, rather than as evidence of strict causality. Future research should use longitudinal, experimental, observational, or behavioral data to examine causal direction, temporal stability, and the translation of stated intentions into actual behavior. Third, the questionnaire did not collect respondents’ residential status within Pingjiang Historic District, trip duration, or overnight-stay information, so the study could not distinguish among local residents, day-trippers, and overnight visitors. Future research could adopt stratified sampling based on residential status, travel mode, and length of stay. Fourth, the survey was conducted only in December 2025 and was not seasonally stratified. Seasonal changes in vegetation, waterside conditions, climate comfort, cultural events, and visitor composition may affect tourists’ perceived built environmental stimuli. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the December survey context, and future research should examine seasonal differences through repeated surveys, panel data, multi-group analysis, or season-specific fsQCA.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/buildings16152960/s1>, Table S1: Standardized direct, indirect, and total effects in the expanded mediation model.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, G.Z. and S.L.; methodology, G.Z.; software, G.Z.; validation, G.Z. and S.L.; formal analysis, G.Z.; investigation, G.Z.; resources, S.L.; data curation,

<https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings16152960>

G.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, G.Z.; writing—review and editing, G.Z. and S.L.; visualization, G.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study involved no clinical or psychological intervention, collected no sensitive personal data, and gathered no personally identifiable information about any participant. Under the framework established in China’s Ethical Review Measures for Life Science and Medical Research Involving Humans (jointly issued by the National Health Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, and State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine in February 2023), Article 32 of which exempts from formal ethics review research that uses anonymous information data and does not involve sensitive personal information, formal ethics committee approval was not required for this study, and a formal approval code was therefore not issued. While the cited regulation was issued primarily for life sciences and medical research, its anonymous-data exemption principle is widely applied by Chinese institutional review boards as the standard reference framework for human-subjects research generally, including social and management surveys. The research was conducted under the direct academic supervision of the corresponding author, in full accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (revised 2013).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. The study consisted solely of an anonymous questionnaire survey of visitors to Pingjiang Historic District in Suzhou, China, designed to collect perceptions of tourism experiences in historic districts. Because the study was designed as a fully anonymous questionnaire survey with no collection of names, signatures, or any personally identifiable information, consent was obtained on an implied basis: respondents were presented with a Participant Information and Consent Notice at the start of the questionnaire and indicated their consent by voluntarily proceeding to complete and submit the questionnaire. A blank copy of the Participant Information and Consent Notice is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available in the Baidu Cloud, <https://pan.baidu.com/s/1uUvJ2L6QTZTiDIt3xzttfA?pwd=f33i>. (accessed on 22 July 2026).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Acharya, S.; Mekker, M.; De Vos, J. Linking travel behavior and tourism literature: Investigating the impacts of travel satisfaction on destination satisfaction and revisit intention. *Transp. Res. Interdiscip. Perspect.* **2023**, *17*, 100745.
2. Vieira, V.A. Stimuli–organism–response framework: A meta-analytic review in the store environment. *J. Bus. Res.* **2013**, *66*, 1420–1426.
3. Ma, Y.; Wang, S.; Wang, Z.; Chen, G. Contemporary demands of scenes in urban historic conservation areas: A case study of subjective evaluations from Foshan, China. *Buildings* **2024**, *14*, 2837.
4. Li, M.; Liu, J.; Lin, Y.; Xiao, L.; Zhou, J. Revitalizing historic districts: Identifying built environment predictors for street vibrancy based on urban sensor data. *Cities* **2021**, *117*, 103305.
5. Bernabeu-Bautista, A.; Serrano-Estrada, L.; Martí, P. The role of successful public spaces in historic centres: Insights from social media data. *Cities* **2023**, *137*, 104337.
6. Fang, K.; Wu, Y. The importance of integrating historic context and activities into heritage district: Enhancing attraction and vitality. *npj Herit. Sci.* **2025**, *13*, 434.
7. Silver, D.; Clark, T.N.; Rothfield, L. *A Theory of Scenes*; University of Chicago: Chicago, IL, USA, 2007.
8. Chen, Y.-C.; Chen, S.-X. Protection and renewal of red brick district from the perspective of scene theory: A case study of Quanzhou West Street historical and cultural district. *J. Nat. Resour.* **2025**, *40*, 1523–1540.
9. Chu, H.; Wang, H.; Chen, Y. Tourist satisfaction evaluation of historical and cultural neighborhoods based on Scene Theory. In Proceedings of the 2023 International Conference on Culture-Oriented Science and Technology (CoST), Xi’an, China, 11–14 October 2023; pp. 391–396.

10. Pourzakarya, M.; Bahramjerdi, S.F.N. Towards developing a cultural and creative quarter: Culture-led regeneration of the historical district of Rasht Great Bazaar, Iran. *Land Use Policy* **2019**, *89*, 104218.
11. Jang, S.S.; Feng, R. Temporal destination revisit intention: The effects of novelty seeking and satisfaction. *Tour. Manag.* **2007**, *28*, 580–590.
12. Hosany, S.; Prayag, G.; Van Der Veen, R.; Huang, S.; Deesilatham, S. Mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction on the relationship between tourists' emotions and intention to recommend. *J. Travel Res.* **2017**, *56*, 1079–1093.
13. Yang, Y.; Wang, Z.; Shen, H.; Jiang, N. The impact of emotional experience on tourists' cultural identity and behavior in the cultural heritage tourism context: An empirical study on Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes. *Sustainability* **2023**, *15*, 8823.
14. Mehrabian, A.; Russell, J.A. *An Approach to Environmental Psychology*; MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 1974.
15. Nian, S.; Li, D.; Zhang, J.; Lu, S.; Zhang, X. Stimulus–Organism–Response framework: Is the perceived outstanding universal value attractiveness of tourists beneficial to World Heritage Site conservation? *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2023**, *20*, 1189.
16. Anderson, J.C.; Gerbing, D.W. Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychol. Bull.* **1988**, *103*, 411–423.
17. Zheng, W.; Qiu, H.; Morrison, A.M. Applying a combination of SEM and fsQCA to predict tourist resource-saving behavioral intentions in rural tourism: An extension of the theory of planned behavior. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2023**, *20*, 1349.
18. Song, H.; Sheng, J.; Chen, P.; Chen, Y.; Wang, S. Exploring the value creation mechanism of agricultural heritage creative tourism based on SEM and fsQCA. *npj Herit. Sci.* **2025**, *13*, 147. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s40494-025-01744-5>.
19. Silver, D.A.; Clark, T.N. *Scenescapes: How Qualities of Place Shape Social Life*; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 2016.
20. Wu, J. The latest theoretical paradigm of urban sociology: The theory of scenes. *Sociol. Rev. China* **2014**, *2*, 90–95.
21. Peng, H. Research on Tianjin Citizen Participation in Public Culture from the Perspective of the Theory of Scenes. Master's Thesis, Tianjin University of Commerce, Tianjin, China, 2021.
22. Hu, Y.; Meng, Q.; Li, M.; Yang, D. Enhancing authenticity in historic districts via soundscape design. *Herit. Sci.* **2024**, *12*, 396.
23. Chan, S.H.G.; Lee, W.H.H.; Tang, B.M.; Chen, Z. Legacy of culture heritage building revitalization: Place attachment and culture identity. *Front. Psychol.* **2024**, *14*, 1314223.
24. Lazarus, R. Cognition and motivation in emotion. *Am. Psychol.* **1991**, *46*, 352–367.
25. Su, L.; Cheng, J.; Swanson, S.R. The impact of tourism activity type on emotion and storytelling: The moderating roles of travel companion presence and relative ability. *Tour. Manag.* **2020**, *81*, 104138.
26. Russell, J.A. A circumplex model of affect. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* **1980**, *39*, 1161–1178.
27. Zhu, X.; Chiou, S.-C. A study on the sustainable development of historic district landscapes based on place attachment among tourists: A case study of Taiping Old Street, Taiwan. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 11755.
28. Bender, A.C.; Guerreiro, M.; Sequeira, B.D.; Mendes, J. Hedonic experiences at heritage attractions: The visitor's perspective. *Int. J. Cult. Tour. Hosp. Res.* **2022**, *16*, 138–151.
29. Yang, W.; Chen, Q.; Huang, X.; Xie, M.; Guo, Q. How do aesthetics and tourist involvement influence cultural identity in heritage tourism? The mediating role of mental experience. *Front. Psychol.* **2022**, *13*, 990030.
30. Loureiro, S.M.C. The role of the rural tourism experience economy in place attachment and behavioral intentions. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **2014**, *40*, 1–9.
31. Muhammad, N.S.; Musa, R.; Ali, N.S. Unleashing the effect of store atmospherics on hedonic experience and store loyalty. *Procedia-Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2014**, *130*, 469–478.
32. Skavronskaya, L.; Moyle, B.; Scott, N. The experience of novelty and the novelty of experience. *Front. Psychol.* **2020**, *11*, 322.
33. Arnold, M.B. *Emotion and Personality*; Columbia University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1960.
34. Asyraff, M.A.; Hanafiah, M.H.; Aminuddin, N.; Mahdzar, M. Adoption of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model in hospitality and tourism research: Systematic literature review and future research directions. *Asia-Pac. J. Innov. Hosp. Tour.* **2023**, *12*, 19–48.
35. Liu, J.; Li, A.; Zhu, Y.; Zhang, L. How do external environmental stimuli and internal psychological cultural identity affect tourists' behavioral intentions in public cultural spaces? *BMC Psychol.* **2024**, *12*, 596.
36. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Seyfi, S.; Hall, C.M.; Hatamifar, P. Understanding memorable tourism experiences and behavioural intentions of heritage tourists. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2021**, *21*, 100621.
37. Humagain, P.; Singleton, P.A. Examining relationships between COVID-19 destination practices, value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for tourists' outdoor recreation trips. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2021**, *22*, 100665.
38. Hultman, M.; Skarmeas, D.; Oghazi, P.; Beheshti, H.M. Achieving tourist loyalty through destination personality, satisfaction, and identification. *J. Bus. Res.* **2015**, *68*, 2227–2231.

39. Lin, Z.; Rasoolimanesh, S.M. Influencing factors on the intention of sharing heritage tourism experience in social media. *J. Hosp. Tour. Technol.* **2023**, *14*, 675–700.
40. Ai, J.; Yan, L.; Hu, Y.; Liu, Y. An investigation into the effects of destination sensory experiences at visitors' digital engagement: Empirical evidence from Sanya, China. *Front. Psychol.* **2022**, *13*, 942078.
41. Oberauer, K. Working memory and attention—A conceptual analysis and review. *J. Cogn.* **2019**, *2*, 36.
42. Lv, X.; McCabe, S.; Li, C. Expanding theory of tourists' destination loyalty: The role of sensory impressions. *Tour. Manag.* **2020**, *77*, 104026.
43. Ma, J.; Gao, J.; Scott, N.; Ding, P. Customer delight from theme park experiences: The antecedents of delight based on cognitive appraisal theory. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2013**, *42*, 359–381.
44. European Travel Commission. *Study on Generation Z Travellers*; European Travel Commission: Brussels, Belgium, 2020. Available online: <https://etc-corporate.org> (accessed on 26 May 2026).
45. Zhou, X.; Guo, Y.; Xie, X.; Liu, C.; Zhang, F. The influence of a destination's red cultural atmospherics on tourists' confidence in Chinese culture. *Front. Psychol.* **2022**, *13*, 992125.
46. Kotler, P. Atmospherics as a marketing tool. *J. Retail.* **1973**, *49*, 48–64.
47. Ling, C.; Shin, W.-J.; Brown, A.D. Tourism destination selection attributes, tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions of multicultural families in South Korea: Focusing on self-efficacy. *Glob. Bus. Financ. Rev.* **2024**, *29*, 174–188.
48. Wan, C.; Chew, P.Y.G. Cultural knowledge, category label, and social connections: Components of cultural identity in the global, multicultural context. *Asian J. Soc. Psychol.* **2013**, *16*, 247–259.
49. Zhang, H.; Jiang, J.; Zhu, J.J. The perceived value of local knowledge tourism: Dimension identification and scale development. *Front. Psychol.* **2023**, *14*, 1170651.
50. Fan, D.X.; Hsu, C.H.C.; Lin, B. Tourists' experiential value co-creation through online social contacts: Customer-dominant logic perspective. *J. Bus. Res.* **2020**, *108*, 163–173.
51. Zhou, G.; Hu, J.; Du, Q.; Xiang, M. Impact of sincere social interaction on tourist citizenship behavior—Perspective from “self” and “relationships”. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2024**, *61*, 1–10.
52. Seamon, D. *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest and Encounter*; Croom Helm: London, UK, 1979.
53. Tsai, S.-P. Place attachment and tourism marketing: Investigating international tourists in Singapore. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *14*, 139–152.
54. Kastenholz, E.; Marques, C.P.; Carneiro, M.J. Place attachment through sensory-rich, emotion-generating place experiences in rural tourism. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2020**, *17*, 100455.
55. Wang, G.; Huang, L.; Xu, C.; He, K.; Shen, K.; Liang, P. Analysis of the mediating role of place attachment in the link between tourists' authentic experiences of, involvement in, and loyalty to rural tourism. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 12795.
56. Lu, L.; Chi, C.G.; Liu, Y. Authenticity, involvement, and image: Evaluating tourist experiences at historic districts. *Tour. Manag.* **2015**, *50*, 85–96.
57. Huang, C.-C.; Lin, W.-R. How does tourist learning affect destination attachment in nature-based tourism: Multiple mediations comparison and distal mediation analysis. *J. Outdoor Recreat. Tour.* **2023**, *43*, 100665.
58. Rokni, L.; Choi, S.-H. Place attachment expressed by hosts and guests visiting friends and relatives and implications for sustainability. *Sustainability* **2024**, *16*, 7325.
59. Huta, V.; Waterman, A.S. Eudaimonia and its distinction from hedonia: Developing a classification and terminology for understanding conceptual and operational definitions. *J. Happiness Stud.* **2014**, *15*, 1425–1456.
60. Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, A.; Wooliscroft, B. Ethical holiday behavior, wellbeing and orientations to happiness. *Appl. Res. Qual. Life* **2016**, *11*, 83–103.
61. Jiang, J. The role of natural soundscape in nature-based tourism experience: An extension of the stimulus–organism–response model. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2022**, *25*, 707–726.
62. Liu, H.; Ma, L.; Park, K.-S. The effect of the red cultural atmosphere on tourists' subjective well-being: An application of the stimulus-organism-response model. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2025**, *29*, 2407–2426.
63. Cheng, T.-M.; Lu, C.-C. Destination image, novelty, hedonics, perceived value, and revisiting behavioral intention for island tourism. *Asia Pac. J. Tour. Res.* **2013**, *18*, 766–783.
64. Liu, J.; Zhu, Y.; Liu, J.; Wang, P. Unraveling tourist behavioral intentions in historic urban built environment: The mediating role of perceived value via SOR model in Macau's heritage sites. *Buildings* **2025**, *15*, 2316.
65. Fennell, D.A. The nature of pleasure in pleasure travel. *Tour. Recreat. Res.* **2009**, *34*, 123–134.

66. Xia, J.; Li, Y.; He, Y.; Ma, K. How museum-based creative-product experiences shape cultural confidence via cultural cognition and cultural identity. *Front. Psychol.* **2026**, *16*, 1742322.
67. Xiong, L.; Wang, H.; Yang, Y.; He, W. Promoting resident-tourist interaction quality when residents are expected to be hospitable hosts at destinations. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2021**, *46*, 183–192.
68. Beerli, A.; Martin, J.D. Factors influencing destination image. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2004**, *31*, 657–681.
69. Chi, C.G.; Qu, H. Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tour. Manag.* **2008**, *29*, 624–636.
70. Coban, S. The effects of the image of destination on tourist satisfaction and loyalty: The case of Cappadocia. *Eur. J. Soc. Sci.* **2012**, *29*, 222–232.
71. Jiang, S.; Zhang, Z.; Xu, H.; Pan, Y. What influences users' continuous behavioral intention in cultural heritage virtual tourism: Integrating experience economy theory and stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model. *Sustainability* **2024**, *16*, 10231.
72. Chen, C.-F.; Tsai, D. How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions? *Tour. Manag.* **2007**, *28*, 1115–1122.
73. Oliveira, T.; Araujo, B.; Tam, C. Why do people share their travel experiences on social media? *Tour. Manag.* **2020**, *78*, 104041.
74. Dang, L.; Weiss, J. Evidence on the relationship between place attachment and behavioral intentions between 2010 and 2021: A systematic literature review. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 13138.
75. Chen, N.; Dwyer, L. Residents' place satisfaction and place attachment on destination brand-building behaviors: Conceptual and empirical differentiation. *J. Travel Res.* **2018**, *57*, 1026–1041.
76. Williams, D.R.; Roggenbuck, J.W. Measuring place attachment: Some preliminary results. In Proceedings of the NRPA Symposium on Leisure Research, San Antonio, TX, USA, 20–22 October 1989.
77. Li, H. Study on the renewal mode and spatial effect of culture-oriented Pingjiang Road. *Front. Econ. Manag.* **2023**, *4*, 67–76.
78. Mardia, K.V.; Kent, J.T.; Taylor, C.C. *Multivariate Analysis*, 2nd ed.; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2024.
79. Lee, J.; Kyle, G.; Scott, D. The mediating effect of place attachment on the relationship between festival satisfaction and loyalty to the festival hosting destination. *J. Travel Res.* **2012**, *51*, 754–767.
80. Chen, C.-F.; Chen, F.-S. Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tour. Manag.* **2010**, *31*, 29–35.
81. Zhang, C.X.; Fong, L.H.N.; Li, S. Co-creation experience and place attachment: Festival evaluation. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **2019**, *81*, 193–204.
82. Hottola, P. Culture confusion: Intercultural adaptation in tourism. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2004**, *31*, 447–466.
83. Wertsch, J.V. Collective memory and narrative templates. *Soc. Res. Int. Q.* **2008**, *75*, 133–156.
84. Chang, Y.-L.; Wang, C.-Y.; Peng, Y.-H. Investigating the impacts of place atmosphere on place attachment and loyalty: The mediation effects of place image. *Contemp. Manag. Res.* **2024**, *20*, 121–135.
85. Kim, J.-H.; Ritchie, J.R.B.; McCormick, B. Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *J. Travel Res.* **2012**, *51*, 12–25.
86. Weng, L.; Liang, Z.; Bao, J. The effect of tour interpretation on perceived heritage values: A comparison of tourists with and without tour guiding interpretation at a heritage destination. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2020**, *16*, 100431.
87. Zhang, P.; Meng, F.; So, K.K.F. Cocreation experience in peer-to-peer accommodations: Conceptualization and scale development. *J. Travel Res.* **2021**, *60*, 1333–1351.
88. Chen, Z.; Zhang, Z.; Wang, X.; Furuya, N. Interactive contact interface elements and correlations with social behavior in historic commercial streets: A study of Qushuiting Street, Jinan. *J. Asian Archit. Build. Eng.* **2025**, *24*, 3654–3679.
89. Hung, K.-P.; Peng, N.; Chen, A. Incorporating on-site activity involvement and sense of belonging into the Mehrabian–Russell model: The experiential value of cultural tourism destinations. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2019**, *30*, 43–52.
90. Park, S.; Ahn, D. Seeking pleasure or meaning? The different impacts of hedonic and eudaimonic tourism happiness on tourists' life satisfaction. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2022**, *19*, 1162.
91. Fu, Y.; Luo, J.M. An empirical study on cultural identity measurement and its influence mechanism among heritage tourists. *Front. Psychol.* **2023**, *13*, 1032672.
92. Liu, Y.; Yi, X.; Liang, H. A study on experience renewal design of public space in ancient towns under the perspective of scene theory. *J. Asian Archit. Build. Eng.* **2025**, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13467581.2025.2526213>
93. Sigala, M.; Steriopoulos, E. Does emotional engagement matter in dark tourism? Implications drawn from a reflective approach. In *Dark Tourism Studies*; Routledge: London, UK, 2022; pp. 54–74.
94. Kline, R.B. *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling*, 5th ed.; Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 2023.

95. Ragin, C.C. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 2009.
96. Dash, G.; Paul, J. CB-SEM vs PLS-SEM methods for research in social sciences and technology forecasting. *Technol. Forecast. Soc. Change* **2021**, *173*, 121092.
97. Kraus, S.; Ribeiro-Soriano, D.; Schüssler, M. Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) in entrepreneurship and innovation research: The rise of a method. *Int. Entrep. Manag. J.* **2018**, *14*, 15–33.
98. Hair, J.F.; Black, W.C.; Babin, B.J.; Anderson, R.E. *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 8th ed.; Cengage Learning: Hampshire, UK, 2019.
99. Rönkkö, M.; Cho, E. An updated guideline for assessing discriminant validity. *Organ. Res. Methods* **2022**, *25*, 6–14.
100. Schneider, C.Q.; Wagemann, C. *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2012.
101. Pappas, I.O.; Woodside, A.G. Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA): Guidelines for research practice in information systems and marketing. *Int. J. Inf. Manag.* **2021**, *58*, 102310.
102. Campbell, J.T.; Sirmon, D.G.; Schijven, M. Fuzzy logic and the market: A configurational approach to investor perceptions of acquisition announcements. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2016**, *59*, 163–187.
103. Fiss, P.C. Building better causal theories: A fuzzy set approach to typologies in organization research. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2011**, *54*, 393–420.
104. Greckhamer, T.; Furnari, S.; Fiss, P.C.; Aguilera, R.V. Studying configurations with qualitative comparative analysis: Best practices in strategy and organization research. *Strateg. Organ.* **2018**, *16*, 482–495.
105. Gao, X.; Zheng, X.; Zhu, Y.; Sun, J. Research on the evaluation of the symbiotic effect of creative regeneration in historical and cultural district: Taking Pingjiang Historical and Cultural District of Suzhou as an example. *Planners* **2024**, *40*, 60–67.
106. Skotis, A.; Livas, C. A data-driven analysis of experience in urban historic districts. *Ann. Tour. Res. Empir. Insights* **2022**, *3*, 100052.
107. Cetin, G.; Bilgihan, A. Components of cultural tourists' experiences in destinations. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2016**, *19*, 137–154.
108. Zhao, S.; Marzuki, A.; Rong, W.; Ran, X. An empirical application of the consumer-based authenticity model in heritage tourism of the George Town historic district, Penang, Malaysia. *Heliyon* **2024**, *10*, e38254.
109. Du, J.; Wang, Y. The influence of perceived landscape value on tourists' behavioral intentions in historical and cultural blocks. *PLoS ONE* **2025**, *20*, e0312491.
110. Li, J.; Luo, J.; Deng, T.; Tian, J.; Wang, H. Exploring perceived restoration, landscape perception, and place attachment in historical districts: Insights from diverse visitors. *Front. Psychol.* **2023**, *14*, 1156207.
111. Huang, D.; Gong, W.; Wang, X.; Liu, S.; Zhang, J.; Li, Y. A cognition–affect–behavior framework for assessing street space quality in historic cultural districts and its impact on tourist experience. *Buildings* **2025**, *15*, 2739.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.