Article

Connecting Perceived Service Quality, Value and Shopping Behavior: An Analysis on Chinese College Students Traveling Overseas

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Abstract: In recent years, tourist destinations around the world have witnessed an exponential growth in the number of Chinese tourists. With a view of understanding the consequences of their shopping activity in terms of behavioral response, this study inspects Chinese college students traveling overseas by analyzing 180 questionnaires. The reasoned action theory is applied to examine the impact of a number of factors influencing shopping behavior. The inquiry at hand makes use of methods, including factor analysis, regression analysis, and moderation analysis, to explore the relationship among perceived service quality, perceived value and shopping behavioral intention of tourists. The results show, inter alia, that service quality is a relevant dimension influencing the likelihood of tourists to share their shopping experience with friends and relatives, encouraging them to shop in the same destination, and to continue to shop in the same destination themselves in the future, regardless of the costs of visiting. Therefore, improving service quality may increase college students' consumption during travel as well as their word of mouth after returning home. The outcomes of this study may contribute to the existing tourism economics and management scholarship and the tourism industry.

Keywords: international tourism; foreign travelers; behavioral intention; behavioral response; tourist purchases; consumption preferences; factor analysis; moderation analysis; reasoned action theory; China

JEL Classification: C83; D91; O53; Z32

1. Introduction

In 2010, 57.4 million Chinese traveled abroad, spending about 55 billion US dollars overseas; in 2019, these figures increased to 154.6 million tourist departures and 255 billion dollars spent [1,2]. Indeed, in the last few years, given the huge size of the country and the rising disposable incomes of the Chinese population, China reached the leading position in the outbound tourism market worldwide [3,4]. The major contribution is given by mainland Chinese tourists, mostly coming from the largest cities in the country: in 2018, tourists coming from Shanghai and Beijing accounted for around 16.3 percent of all outbound tourists from China [5]. Shopping has been identified as a crucial component of Chinese tourists' domestic trips [6]. However, general knowledge of the shopping behavior of Chinese outbound tourists is still lacking, as most research only focuses on Chinese tourists visiting a specific outbound area or buying specific goods [7–14]. Currently, worldwide lifestyle and purchasing behaviors are being dramatically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic [15]. This aspect is foremost for the travel industry and above all in China [16–18].

Purchasing behavior has received scholarly attention. Previous studies have analyzed different dimensions impacting the phenomenon. Diao (2015) [19] based their study on the

online shopping behavior of higher education Chinese students. Siyal et al. (2021) [20] examined online shopping behavior for foreign students in China, whereas Yang et al. (2021) [21] expanded this focus on the environmental impact of students relocated to a remote campus. Islam (2021) [22] highlighted the online shopping behavior of regional international students, whilst Lim et al. (2016) [23] explored the factors determining online purchasing behavior. Service quality perception has also been investigated in other studies. Mummalaneni and Meng (2009) [24] investigated young Chinese customers' purchasing behavior. Su and Huang (2011) [25] assessed online shopping intention, focusing on undergraduate students in China, based on the theory of planned behavior. Xu and McGehee (2012) [14] scrutinized the shopping behavior of Chinese tourists in the US, whereas Xu et al. (2009) [26] compared travel and purchasing behavior of Chinese and UK travelers.

Students' shopping behavior has also been previously investigated. A number of scholars have examined this phenomenon, focusing on diverse subjects or locations. This is the case for online shopping behavior of Indian students [27,28], Indian engineering college students [29], Malaysian students [30,31], Taiwanese students [32], and Turkish college students [33].

Similarly, other studies have concentrated on tourist shopping behavior around the world. Kemperman et al. (2009) [34] have analyzed the case study of Southern Netherlands, whilst Fairhurst et al. (2007) [35] focused on Tennessee, US. Meng et al. (2019) [36] targeted China, whereas Xu and McGehee (2012) [14] examined Chinese tourists visiting the United States. Guo et al. (2012) [37] investigated Singapore, and Lu et al. (2015) [38] highlighted Taiwan as a case study. Meng and Xu (2012) [39] and Chang (2014) [40] have explored the hedonic and experiential dynamics of tourist purchasing attitude, whereas Abdulsalam and Dahana (2021) [41] studied product involvement in the touristic experience.

However, to the best of our knowledge, no available research focuses on the shopping behavior of Chinese higher education students traveling abroad, especially as regards their behavioral response after returning home, denoting a substantial research gap. To fulfil such a gap, this work aims to expand previous research results about Chinese tourists and increase the existing knowledge system of their shopping behavior and its consequences in terms of behavioral response, focusing on the actual purchases performed by Chinese college students during their overseas journeys.

Shopping behavior among Chinese tourists shows large differences across generations and travel segments. Among the younger generations, Chinese college students constitute an important part of China's consumer groups, being wealthy and with a more international vision. Their consumption preferences and orientation may have a relevant impact on cross-border consumption when they travel abroad. Nevertheless, the shopping behavior of college students traveling is still under-researched.

The results of this study may contribute to the development of the tourism industry by analyzing the specific influence of perceived service quality and perceived value on the shopping behavioral response of a particular segment of the Chinese tourist population. Enhancing tourists' experience will be conducive to an increase in tourism, building a destination's brand and expanding its popularity. In addition, tourist destinations need to develop special competitive advantages to stand out from other competitors. As shopping is a significant component of the tourism value chain and one of the major categories of tourists' expenditure [42,43], it is of great relevance to understand the shopping behavior of tourists, with the aim of formulating sustainable development strategies for the tourism industry and creating competitive advantages, eventually affecting tourists' loyalty towards the target destination [44].

The reasoned action theory [45] is an appropriate theoretical perspective to reach this work's aims. Product attributes are judged by consumers based on their own evaluative criteria, which results in the formation of an attitude toward the attributes of a product that ultimately influences consumer intention and purchase behavior. Consequently, the theory helps to understand the process that leads tourists to the choice of a specific destination and to purchase products according to their intention. For this reason, through tourists' choice

of products and services in tourism, we can better understand the relationship among perceived service quality, perceived value, and behavioral intention with regard to their overseas purchases.

In this study, a survey on the shopping behavior of Chinese college students traveling abroad is performed. Specifically, survey respondents are asked a number of questions including gender, age, grade, monthly income, and number of abroad travels, and with reference to their shopping activity abroad, information about perceived service quality, perceived value, and post-purchase behavioral response is collected.

For destinations with a reputation of being "shopping paradises", which attract tourists for shopping purposes, strategies to enhance tourists' shopping experience are of utmost importance in creating competitive advantages to compete more effectively with rival destinations. It is important to understand what aspects of the shopping experience will enhance the satisfaction of tourists and their perceptions of the quality of shopping. This may lead to a threefold goal: (i) getting positive word-of-mouth comments; (ii) willingness to pay additional premia for the quality of the products, services, and experiences that they receive; and (iii) continued returns to the destination.

Factor analysis, regression analysis, and moderation analysis are used to understand the extent to which perceived service quality and value may affect their behavioral intention.

To address the aforementioned problems, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the relationship between shopping behavior of Chinese college students and perceived service quality?
2. How do shopping behavior of Chinese college students and perceived value connect?

This study observes the following structure: Section 2 presents a literature review which discusses service quality and shopping behavior of Chinese college students and the moderating role played by perceived value in this respect. Section 3 discusses the research strategy, unit of analysis, data collection method, sampling strategy, research instruments, and analytical methods used. Then, Section 4 sketches the results, covering the sample characteristics, checking for validity and reliability, checking for normality, and testing the hypotheses. Finally, Section 5 concludes by highlighting possible discussions on the outcomes and launching some theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Relationship between Service Quality and Shopping Behavior of Chinese College Students

Consumer behavior involves certain decisions, activities, ideas, or experiences that satisfy consumer needs and wishes [46]. Shopping is considered to be one of the most important motivations for travel [47,48], and shopping satisfaction represents one of the most important aspects influencing tourism expenditure [49–51].

Previous studies in consumer behavior theory suggest that service quality is one of the most important factors affecting tourists' shopping behavior and satisfaction [52–54]. Tourists' perceived service quality can be seen as a post-purchase construct, defined as a relativistic and cognitive discrepancy between customers' expectation of a product, service, or brand and their perception of performance [55]. It refers to consumers' evaluations based on their consumption experience [56]. Chinese tourists evaluate their perception of service quality based on the services and products available, employee service quality, and service differentiation and convenience [57]. In addition, shopping is a hedonic and leisure activity that is often closely associated with the tourists' experiences of the "consumption of place" [53].

Therefore, providing high-quality products and services can enhance tourists' experience, helping to gain a competitive advantage over other destinations by attracting a higher number of tourists and enhancing their loyalty towards a destination. In this regard, the most concerned tourist destinations are those that are famous for their rich shopping opportunities. For instance, in the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea are commonly regarded as the most popular shopping destinations [58–62]. Whether a destination can become an ideal place for tourists to consume high-quality products and

services is a decisive factor to attract tourists to go to that specific destination for shopping and eventually come back, resulting in customer loyalty both in terms of tourism and associated purchases [44,63,64].

Based on the above, we hypothesize that, for Chinese college students traveling abroad, simply enjoying the scenery and culture may not fully meet their needs; thus, destinations providing high-quality products and services would represent the most satisfying choices. On this main assumption, this paper proposes the following first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *Service quality is positively related to the shopping behavioral response of Chinese college students traveling overseas.*

2.2. Behavioral Intention and the Moderating Role of Perceived Value

In addition to service quality, perceived value has been identified as an important indicator of the intention to repurchase products [65–67]. Perceived value is posited to be affected by service quality [65]. After using the product or enjoying the service, the cognitive judgment of perceived value may have a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction and post-purchase behavioral intentions [68], such as intentions to use and word-of-mouth intentions [69]. Indeed, consumers' perceptions of service quality and value may produce behavioral intentions, defined as the motivational component that spurs consumers to engage in purchasing behavior [70]. According to the theory of planned behavior, individuals' behaviors are directly affected by behavioral intention [71]. Consumers measure the expected performance of the actual received product or service, and a high-quality level is the premise of a high perceived value level [52]. At least four definitions of perceived value may be adopted [72], each of which may be more appropriate than another in a specific context. Here, we consider value from an experiential perspective, so that a product or service indicates value when it accomplishes a goal and/or provides enjoyment: therefore, perceived value may be seen as a construct divided into a utilitarian and a hedonic dimension [73].

Perceived value acts as a moderating character in the relationship between service quality and shopping behavior of tourists. Indeed, as shown by Cronin et al. (1997) [74] and Dlačić et al. (2014) [65], this relationship is regulated by perceived value. High perceived value can promote the generation of positive emotions in consumers, thus tourists (as consumers) will have a positive perceived value if they receive high-quality products and services that match or overcome expectations. On the contrary, if they get inferior products and services that are not in line with their expectations, their perceived value will mostly be negative. As a moderating variable between service quality and the shopping behavior of tourists, perceived value may also have a significant influence on tourists' shopping behavioral response. Consequently, the second hypothesis is as follows.

Hypothesis 2. *The perceived value strengthens the positive relationship between service quality and shopping behavioral response of college students.*

The theoretical framework is depicted in Figure 1.
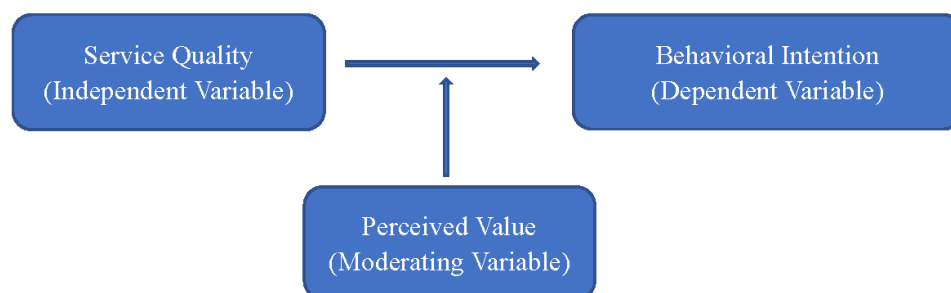
Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

3. Methods

3.1. Data Collection Strategy

We administered a questionnaire to Chinese college students who have experienced cross-border travels and shopping or have a tendency for cross-border shopping. Six cities with high consumption levels are selected among the first- and second-tier cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Wenzhou, Harbin, and Daqing. The reason for selecting these cities is that Chinese college students in cities with higher consumption levels are supposed to be more likely to travel abroad for shopping.

Data are collected through an online questionnaire shared through WeChat and QQ, two instant messaging and social media applications that are widely used in China—differently from other competing apps mostly used in the rest of the world [75]. The survey was administered in the months of March and April 2021, whereas the potential respondents were contacted by sharing the questionnaire in different WeChat and QQ groups, describing the purpose of the research. Responses were collected non-randomly, from all college students willing to participate in the survey.

3.2. Research Instrument

The survey consists of a short sociodemographic section, gathering information on gender, age, grade, monthly income, and number of abroad travels, followed by three sets of Likert-scale questions investigating perceived service quality, perceived value, and post-purchase behavioral response, which are reported in Appendix A (Tables A1–A3).

3.2.1. Service Quality

Service quality has a great influence on consumers' (tourists') behavioral intention. Parasuraman et al. (1985) [66] developed the SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality. The instrument was initially composed of ten dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access. Then, a few years later, as some dimensions were found to be overlapping, the authors developed a new version of the instrument [76], made of 22 items organized into 5 dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). The instrument was further refined three years later, when the authors also offered directions for future research and applications [77]. As demonstrated by empirical research over the years, the general SERVQUAL model needs to be adapted to each particular service being measured to get valid results in specific scenarios [78]. Thus, taking a cue from such an instrument, we here measure the performance of the services by employing a set of 12 Likert-scale questions concerning the staff, the products, and the environment, tailored to our specific setting concerning tourist shopping.

3.2.2. Perceived Value

In addition to service quality, perceived value is regarded as an important criterion for consumers to return to the destination and purchase products again. Perceived value includes hedonic value and utilitarian value [73]. We investigate hedonic and utilitarian value through a set of six questions, measured through a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

3.2.3. Behavioral Intention

Here, we evaluate the respondents' likelihood to share their experience with other potential travelers, encouraging them to shop in the same destination, and to continue to shop in the same destination themselves in the future, through a set of four Likert-scale questions, with the possible responses ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).

3.3. Analytical Methods Used

The collected data were analyzed by means of IBM SPSS Statistics v28. We first performed a factor analysis in order to determine the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Then, to test our hypotheses, we made use of an OLS regression analysis for the first hypothesis. Then, to test the second hypothesis, we ran hierarchical moderated regression models, considering perceived value as a moderating variable to determine whether it moderates the relationship between the other two variables. The moderator effect was analyzed by including an interaction between the two predictors, created by multiplying service quality by perceived value.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Characteristics

A total of 180 survey responses were collected from Chinese college students. Looking at the frequency table (Table 1), we notice that women account for about three quarters of the sample. Secondly, about nine respondents out of ten were aged between 18 and 21 years. Thirdly, slightly more than half of participants were sophomores. Monthly income was also investigated: the income declared by about nine out of ten students was below 5000 RMB (Chinese Yuan). Furthermore, 82 percent of participants declared that they traveled abroad only once, while 18 percent of them traveled abroad at least twice.

Table 1. Frequencies.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	44	24.4	24.4
	Female	136	75.6	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	
Age	<18	8	4.4	4.4
	18–21	161	89.4	93.9
	22–25	11	6.2	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	
Grade	Freshman	31	17.2	17.2
	Sophomore	92	51.1	68.3
	Junior	34	18.9	87.2
	Senior	18	10.0	97.2
	Graduate student	5	2.8	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	
Monthly income in RMB (Chinese Yuan)	<3000	105	58.3	58.3
	3001–5000	56	31.1	89.4
	5001–7000	12	6.7	96.1
	7001–9000	4	2.2	98.3
	>9000	3	1.7	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	
Number of abroad travels	1 time	148	82.2	82.2
	2 times	25	13.9	96.1
	3 or more times	7	3.9	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	

4.2. Checking for Validity and Reliability

Service Quality (SQ): All questions measuring service quality were loaded separately. One question which was found to possess validity issues was removed. This is the case for the question "Clean and tidy shopping environment affects the shopping behavior of tourists". In addition, the total variance explained by this variable is 40.515%, and the reliability of this factor is found to be adequate, with a reliability coefficient of 0.946.

Perceived Value (PV): All questions measuring perceived value were loaded separately. Three questions which were found to be affected by validity issues were removed: "I enjoyed the exposure to new products during the shopping experience"; "I found the item(s) I was looking for"; and "I accomplished what I wanted to do in this shop". The total variance explained by this variable is 13.407%, and its reliability is found to be adequate, with a reliability coefficient of 0.786.

Behavioral Intention (BI): All questions measuring behavioral intention were loaded separately, and one question which was found to possess validity issues was removed. This happened with the question "How likely are you to share your visiting and shopping experience in this destination". The total variance explained by this variable is 15.759%, and the reliability of this factor is found to be adequate, with a coefficient of 0.853.

In conclusion, the overall reliability of data is adequate, with an index of 0.930, and the total variance explained by our factor solution is 69.681%, which is found to be reasonable as well. The full list of factors and constructs, showing reliability indexes and explained variance, is reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor analysis.

Factor	Statements	Factor Loadings	Reliability	Variance Explained
	Service Quality		0.946	40.515%
SQ7	The quality of the products is high.	0.846		
SQ4	The staff provide a prompt service.	0.845		
SQ5	The destination has a quality/service guarantee.	0.837		
SQ2	The staff have a good service attitude.	0.835		
SQ11	There is a safe shopping environment.	0.819		
SQ12	The shopping environment has modern decorations.	0.811		
SQ10	There is a comfortable shopping environment.	0.786		
SQ1	The staff have a good product knowledge.	0.712		
SQ3	The staff have a good command of the language I speak.	0.691		
SQ8	There is a good variety of products/brands.	0.689		
SQ6	The products are of the latest style/model.	0.636		
	Behavioral Intention		0.853	15.759%
BI4	How likely are you to continue to visit and shop in this destination even if the costs of visiting are higher than in other destinations?	0.867		
BI3	How likely are you to encourage friends and relatives to visit and shop in this destination?	0.814		
BI2	How likely are you to visit and shop in this destination again in the future?	0.768		
	Perceived Value		0.786	13.407%
PV3	I had a good time because I was able to act on the spur of the moment.	0.863		
PV1	While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure.	0.845		
PV4	I enjoyed shopping in this shop for its own sake, not just for the items I might have purchased.	0.613		
			Overall Reliability = 0.930	Overall Variance = 69.681%

4.3. Checking for Normality

To check for normality, we inspect the values of skewness and kurtosis of all the factors (Table 3). The statistics of all the factors fall within the usual normality ranges: thus, we are able to treat our data as normal in our analyses.

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

4.4.1. Hypothesis 1

The model summary table (Table 4) shows that the R-square value is 0.233, which implies that 23.3% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by service quality (SQ). Thus, service quality (SQ) has a significant positive relationship with the shopping behavioral response of college students. The first hypothesis is not rejected, with a *p*-value of 0.000 (Table 5), and the sign of the coefficient for service quality shows the existence of a positive relationship with the dependent variable (Behavioral Intention).

Table 3. Skewness and kurtosis of the factors (N = 180).

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**
SQ1	−0.647	0.181	0.340	0.360
SQ2	−0.820	0.181	0.988	0.360
SQ3	−0.528	0.181	−0.319	0.360
SQ4	−0.591	0.181	0.148	0.360
SQ5	−0.780	0.181	0.159	0.360
SQ6	−0.564	0.181	−0.002	0.360
SQ7	−1.119	0.181	1.327	0.360
SQ8	−0.914	0.181	1.096	0.360
SQ10	−0.962	0.181	1.328	0.360
SQ11	−0.823	0.181	0.854	0.360
SQ12	−0.778	0.181	0.458	0.360
BI2	−0.183	0.181	−0.552	0.360
BI3	−0.189	0.181	−0.507	0.360
BI4	−0.331	0.181	−0.074	0.360
PV1	−0.043	0.181	−0.242	0.360
PV3	−0.337	0.181	−0.428	0.360
PV4	−0.361	0.181	−0.113	0.360

Table 4. Model summary.

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.233	0.229	0.79660

Dependent Variable: BI. Predictors: (Constant), SQ.

Table 5. Coefficients.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	1.470	0.349		4.213	0.000
	SQ	0.591	0.080	0.483	7.351	0.000

Dependent Variable: BI. Predictors: (Constant), SQ.

4.4.2. Hypothesis 2

As depicted in Table 6; Table 7, hierarchical moderation analysis was run to test the moderating effect of perceived value on the relationship between perceived service quality and behavioral intention of college students. We did not find significant evidence of the existence of moderation effects. In Model 1, no moderating variable is added to the model. Then, Model 2 includes service quality and perceived value as moderating variables, measuring their effect on the dependent variable. Finally, Model 3 includes an interaction effect given by multiplying the two factors. Both service quality and perceived value are found to have a significant positive effect on behavioral intention. However, we do not find evidence of an increase in the strength of the positive relationship between the independent and dependent variable due to a significant moderation effect of perceived value.

Table 6. Moderation analysis—summary.

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
R^2	0.233	0.354	0.357
Adj. R^2	0.229	0.347	0.346
F statistic	54.040 ($p < 0.05$)	48.462 ($p < 0.05$)	32.599 ($p < 0.05$)

Table 7. Moderation analysis—coefficients.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.470	0.349		4.213	0.000
	SQ	0.591	0.080	0.483	7.351	0.000
2	(Constant)	0.755	0.344		2.191	0.030
	SQ	0.428	0.079	0.349	5.395	0.000
	PV	0.391	0.068	0.372	5.756	0.000
3	(Constant)	2.144	1.491		1.438	0.152
	SQ	0.129	0.322	0.105	0.401	0.689
	PV	−0.037	0.452	−0.036	−0.083	0.934
	Interaction term (SQ*PV)	0.092	0.096	0.548	0.958	0.339

Dependent Variable: BI.

5. Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Conclusions from This Study

More and more Chinese people choose to travel abroad for purchasing scopes. Amongst these, college students arise as a new consumer group, so it is quite necessary to explore the factors that influence the shopping behavior of Chinese college students who travel abroad, as well as its consequences in terms of word of mouth. Other studies have analyzed some of the drivers of foreign tourists' purchasing attitudes, students' shopping behavior around the world, and Chinese customers' purchasing behavior. Asian scholars—above all from East and Southeast Asia—have conducted most of the studies. The majority of publications focus on higher education and college students. Some studies investigate diverse shreds of evidence related to hedonic and tourism experience. Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, no work has investigated these socioeconomic and business components altogether. In this regard, we found the research corpus to be quite homogeneous in terms of research questions and explored topics, stemming the need for additional original explorations.

To fulfill this research gap, this inquiry is concentrated on finding out the relationship among the shopping behavioral response of Chinese college students, perceived service quality, and perceived value. When it comes to the methodology, this exercise made use of factor analysis, regression analysis, and moderation analysis. It was found that both service quality and perceived value are positively related to the shopping behavioral response of college students, albeit perceived value does not show a moderating role in the relationship between the other two components. As a result, understanding the factors that affect the shopping behavioral response of college students is beneficial for tourism to form unique competitive advantages and attract college students with cross-border traveling experience to go back to the destination to purchase products, achieving sustainable development goals in the longer term.

With the ever-increasing number of Chinese outbound tourists, it is necessary to understand their shopping behavior. This research considers Chinese college students, who represent an emerging consumer group, as a starting point to explore the relationships among perceived service quality, perceived value, and post-purchase behavioral response.

In testing Hypothesis 1—which is the most important hypothesis in this investigation—service quality was found to be positively related to the shopping behavioral response of college students. This means, in practice, that improving service quality can promote college students' consumption during travels and increase their word of mouth after returning home; therefore, measures aimed to improve product quality, service quality, and shopping environment can help the tourist destinations to attract more tourists for shopping and increase spending.

Moreover, as regards our second hypothesis, the perceived value is found to have a positive effect on shopping behavioral response, without, however, acting as a moderator on the positive relationship between service quality and shopping behavioral response

of college students. This finding is important because, when college students purchase goods while traveling, they may not be rational enough—they choose goods according to their perceived value. Indeed, they may select goods on impulse or simply because they like the store. Thus, the assessment of perceived value can contribute to learning the shopping behavior of tourists and their post-purchase behavioral response, with significant long-lasting benefits for the tourist industry.

Many consumer behavior studies suggest that service quality and satisfaction have the most influence on consumers' behavioral intention [49,51,66] thus, it is of great significance for tourist destinations to create positive perceived value with a view of promoting tourists' consumption in the long run.

5.2. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The sample chosen for this research is made of Chinese college students—a relatively unexplored target. The research contributes to analyzing the consumer behavior area and adds some new results and findings, which enrich the existing tourism economics and management, economic development, business economics, and behavioral science scholarship. This contribution also proposes a practical added value. First of all, this paper's results may be helpful for the tourist industry. More specifically, they may help tourist destinations known as "shopping paradises" to make tourists return to the destination and purchase goods again—hence stimulating consumption. Secondly, we find that retailers of a tourist destination can also benefit from Chinese college students traveling abroad by improving service quality and enhancing tourists' perceived value. Thirdly, new policy-makers' development strategies can be formulated according to the shopping behavior of Chinese college students. Fourthly, understanding the factors that influence shopping behavior, as well as its consequences in terms of word of mouth, is beneficial for managers to better organize tourism flows and provide services appreciated by tourists.

The analysis of behavioral and perceived value determinants for higher education students represents a fresh field of research which also has business and policy relevance. Indeed, this segment of research brings new scholarly perspectives, and recommendations for research, government, and industry have been further developed. This stream of research is particularly relevant for China, showing high shopping rates and propension among higher education students. In this sense, traveling students are included in the most profitable and economically relevant categories—especially those who decide to travel abroad. Understanding shopping perception, behavior, and value may be decisive to address upcoming business, management, economic, tourism, and behavioral research, driving oriented public policies and corporate strategies.

The findings of this research are affected by some flaws. First of all, the sampling strategy, as well as the relatively small sample size, makes the survey respondents not representative of the population. We adopted a convenience sampling method, by contacting potential participants through social media platforms, which implies that we could only access specific population members with the desired characteristics who were willing to participate in the survey. Secondly, our research results may only be applicable to China: hence, whether the results of this study can be generalized to other countries and groups needs further study. However, being this a case study, we do not presume to infer conclusions about the whole population of interest. Instead, our purpose was simply to showcase a relevant practice for tourism and behavioral research and business. Thirdly, within China, we only studied six first- and second-tier cities with high consumption levels. Further research may seek research subjects from more cities in China and abroad, which would also allow scholars to conduct cross-region or cross-country analyses.

This study adopts the "Reasoned Action Theory" [45]. The model proposed in this paper can be further verified to determine whether it is applicable to tourists from different countries so as to expand the influence of the inquiry continuously. If other researchers want to investigate similar topics, they may adopt more sophisticated sampling techniques to avoid the usual limitations of sample data—such as those caused by conve-

nience sampling. In addition, the research focuses on Chinese college students traveling abroad—thus, upcoming scholarships may also investigate different groups to reach more comprehensive conclusions.

The coronavirus outbreak has instilled panic in consumption, making several industries hard to forecast [79–81]. In 2022, the pandemic has yet to end and is still producing notable changes to consumer behavior, generating effects on both travel and purchase [82,83]. In this process, online shopping has taken a prominent role with respect to traditional shopping [84]. Future research may be interested in analyzing new trends and figures on the shopping behavior of Chinese students traveling abroad in light of COVID-19 restrictions and impact [85].

The commented results will have to take into account the ascending Chinese digitalization and technological innovation [86], as well as domestic and regional financial and economic development [87]. The outcomes sorting from this study may be used for additional field studies. Upcoming investigations will be dramatically affected by the country's and global evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak and its related economic policy response [88–90]. Future adaptation of shopping behavior will also have to take into account emerging social and ecological changes, business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability claims [91–94].

Appendix A Chinese Outbound Tourists Shopping Behavior Survey

Table A1. Please provide responses to the following questions with regard to service quality.

Staff	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The staff have a good product knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The staff have a good service attitude.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The staff have a good command of the language I speak.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The staff provide a prompt service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Products	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
The destination has a quality/service guarantee.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The products are of the latest style/model.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The quality of the products is high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a good variety of products/brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Environment	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
There is a clean and tidy shopping environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a comfortable shopping environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a safe shopping environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The shopping environment has modern decorations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table A2. Please provide responses to the following questions with regard to perceived value.

Hedonic Value	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoyed the exposure to new products during the shopping experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I had a good time because I was able to act on the spur of the moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoyed shopping in this shop for its own sake, not just for the items I might have purchased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Utilitarian value	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I found the item(s) I was looking for.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I accomplished what I wanted to do in this shop.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table A3. Please answer the following questions keeping in mind your behavioral response after you returned home.

Behavioral Intention	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
How likely are you to share your visiting and shopping experience in this destination?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How likely are you to visit and shop in this destination again in the future?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How likely are you to encourage friends and relatives to visit and shop in this destination?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How likely are you to continue to visit and shop in this destination even if the costs of visiting are higher than in other destinations?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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