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A Cross Generational Exploration of Motivations for Traditional Ethnic Costume Photography Tourism in China

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the underlying motivations across generations to engage in the growing trend of Chinese people incorporating traditional Chinese ethnic clothing into their travel photography. As globalization continues to reshape cultural identities, individuals seek ways to connect with their heritage and express their cultural pride. This study delves into the factors that drive Chinese travelers to embrace traditional Chinese ethnic clothing as a means of self-expression and cultural representation. Data were collected through an online survey that was distributed to a diverse sample of Chinese travelers, capturing their perspectives on the significance of traditional Chinese ethnic clothing in travel photography. The findings indicate that there are differing motivations across generations and that a desire for cultural connectivity plays a moderating role in the relationship between different generations and their level of interest in traditional costume photo tourism. By understanding these motivations, travel agencies, photographers, and cultural organizations can better cater to the evolving needs and desires of Chinese travelers. Additionally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural identity and globalization, illustrating the ways in which individuals negotiate their sense of self in an interconnected world.

Keywords: Hanfu; intangible cultural heritage; cultural sustainability; photo tourism; ethnic costume photography



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1. Introduction

With the innovation of science and technology and the development of cultural concepts, photography has become an indispensable part of tourism. Mass tourism involves the use of photography, and the tourism experience itself is characterized by its visual aspects [1]. During their travels, tourists tend to capture pictures of diverse subjects, making tourism photography a prevalent practice among modern travelers. The high demand for aesthetically pleasing travel photos has given rise to a new service known as “travel photography”. Travel photography is a personalized service wherein tourists engage a professional team to create customized travel itineraries and capture portrait photography at various destinations during their journey [2]. In recent years, the field of travel photography has witnessed an array of styles and themes, capturing various elements of the travel experience. From iconic landmarks to natural wonders, travelers have developed a keen interest in photographing a multitude of subjects, making travel photography a prevalent and influential practice among modern-day explorers.

Amidst this ever-evolving landscape, a fascinating trend has emerged in China, where travelers are increasingly drawn to incorporating traditional ethnic costumes into their travel photography, transforming their visual narratives into reflections of cultural heritage and artistic expressions. This trend not only supports cultural sustainability by preserving and

promoting traditional customs and attire but also highlights the growing awareness of sustainable travel practices. In the context of tourism, sustainable practices often emphasize a balance between preserving local cultures and providing meaningful, authentic experiences for travelers. Traditional attire is not merely a decorative element; it serves as a vital medium through which tourists can connect with cultural identity. This interaction creates new value for both local communities and tourists. Ethnicity, in this context, transcends the simple preservation of culture to emerge as a central concept in forging deeper relationships between tourists and local communities. By linking traditional attire with modern reinterpretations, ethnicity provides tourists with opportunities to experience and understand ethnic identity while strengthening pride and cultural continuity within local communities [3,4]. Traditional attire photography contributes to this ethnic interaction by transforming tourism from a purely economic activity into a platform for cultural value exchange.

Unlike general travel services, travel photography falls under a distinct category of service with a dual focus on both experiential processes and desired outcomes [5]. Building on these cultural and ethnic values, travel photography services offer more than just a means of documentation. They aim to deliver tailored experiences that capture both visual beauty and a sense of identity through the integration of traditional attire. It places equal emphasis on curating an unforgettable travel experience and capturing visually compelling photographs that resonate with the traveler's cultural sensibilities. The demand for these personalized travel experiences is closely aligned with the broader trend toward sustainable tourism, which seeks to preserve and enhance cultural heritage while reducing the negative impacts of tourism on local communities and environments. Furthermore, social media serves as a vital tool for amplifying the popularity and appeal of traditional attire travel photography. Image sharing on platforms like Instagram connects traditional attire to global audiences and contributes to raising awareness of cultural diversity [6,7]. Recent studies have paid increasing attention to the motivation and influence of female tourists' tourism photography [8], Hanfu tourism [9], attitudes towards photography with local traditional dress [10], and co-creation experiences in travel photography service [11]. Carrico's *The Great Han* [12] examines how Hanfu goes beyond being a simple garment to act as a powerful medium for expressing ethnic identity and cultural pride. The book provides a detailed exploration of how traditional attire serves as a tool for fostering cultural continuity and reconstructing modern identity in contemporary China. This perspective underscores why the incorporation of traditional attire, such as Hanfu, into travel photography resonates strongly with travelers and contributes to its growing popularity. Much of the previous research on travel photography is based on wedding photos, such as travel with a wedding dress [13], a brief history of Chinese weddings, and bridal photography tourism [2]. However, little attention has been paid to the emerging traditional Chinese ethnic costume travel photography. This phenomenon cannot be ignored, as it holds significant implications for both the cultural and economic sustainability of tourism in China, making it worthy of further exploration. Understanding the motivations behind this growing phenomenon can help travel agencies, photographers, and cultural organizations by enabling them to better understand and cater to the evolving needs and desires of Chinese travelers.

The findings of this study hold the potential to contribute valuable knowledge to the understanding of the dynamic relationship between cultural identity, aesthetics, and contemporary travel practices in China. Furthermore, integrating a sustainable tourism perspective into the study of traditional ethnic costume photography can reveal how cultural preservation efforts align with the growing demand for sustainable and authentic travel experiences.

As photography continues to hold an indispensable position in shaping the tourism industry, this research endeavors to provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of contemporary travel photography in China. Also, understanding the motivations behind the growing trend of incorporating traditional Chinese ethnic clothing into travel photography is important for preserving cultural heritage, fostering cultural identity, driving economic development, promoting cultural exchange, and providing individuals

with platforms for self-expression. These elements of cultural sustainability are integral to creating a tourism industry that not only attracts travelers but also supports the long-term preservation of cultural practices and values.

Despite the growing interest in travel photography and Chinese ethnic clothing, little research has attempted to integrate these streams of research to examine the motivations of people choosing to include ethnic clothing in travel photography. More specifically, there appears to be a gap in the existing literature on why people choose ethnic clothing for travel photography and the different motivations of people of different ages when choosing ethnic clothing for their travel photography. Based on this gap, the following research questions are put forward:

RQ1: *What is the type (intrinsic–extrinsic) of motivation for people choosing traditional Chinese ethnic clothing as part of their travel photography?*

RQ2: *What are the different motivations between people of different generations choosing traditional Chinese ethnic clothing as part of their travel photography?*

2. Literature Review

2.1. Chinese Ethnic Dress

Traditional Chinese costumes can be divided into many different styles according to regions and ethnic groups. Although these costumes vary greatly in style, the contemporary attire worn by individuals from various ethnic backgrounds as well as the traditional clothing patterns specific to their ethnic heritage have both been linked to the expression of ethnic identity [14]. For a considerable period, ethnic attire in China has served as a significant and symbolically laden means for defining, showcasing, and, more recently, commercializing ethnicity within the country's ethnic politics. This is particularly evident in its role within the state's imaging and differentiation processes, as well as in mainstream society [15].

The use of traditional clothing patterns and contemporary attire by individuals from various ethnic backgrounds has historical roots. It has been a significant and meaningful way for people to connect with their heritage. Even in modern times, traditional clothing patterns continue to be a symbol of cultural identity. Traditional attire has not remained confined to ethnic enclaves but has also found a place in mainstream society. For instance, initiated by a small group of enthusiasts primarily for the enjoyment of a select group of connoisseurs, the cultural phenomenon of Hanfu is now gaining popularity among an increasingly larger number of young people in China [16]. This indicates its broader significance and acceptance beyond specific ethnic communities. It serves as a bridge between different cultural groups and contributes to the overall cultural mosaic of China.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend toward the commercialization of ethnic attire, with representative examples including countries such as China, Thailand, and India strategically leveraging ethnic tourism to promote economic growth and cultural development [17]. China has developed festivals and tourism products based on the traditional attire of ethnic minority regions, while Thailand showcases traditional dances and costumes to revitalize local economies. India focuses on ethnic clothing and traditional jewelry to attract international tourists. These three countries have all restructured their ethnic attire and culture into tourism products, contributing to regional economic growth and the promotion of ethnic identity. This suggests that traditional attire is not merely a form of cultural expression but also a marketable component of ethnic identity capable of drawing both domestic and international attention. Especially in light of the recent surge in ethnic tourism in contemporary minority regions such as Xishuangbanna, ethnic cultures are being transformed into marketable assets, carefully crafted into attractive products designed to cater to the desires and expectations of tourists [15]. Additionally, the state's involvement in promoting and preserving traditional attire contributes to imaging and differentiation processes. It helps distinguish various ethnic groups and their unique identities, contributing to a sense of cultural diversity and inclusion.

2.2. Influence of Photography Motivation on Tourists' Behaviors

Photography serves as a significant motivation for tourists and has become an integral part of modern travel experiences. Tourists often view photography as a means to document their journeys, share memories, and build personal or social media identities. Indeed, the travel photo serves as a crucial marker that enables tourists to share and convey their travel experiences, transforming intangible moments into tangible memories [18]. Travel photos are not merely images; they hold significant value as markers of travel experiences. These visual narratives enable tourists to share their adventures, communicate emotions, and convey the essence of a destination. Travelers use these photos to bridge the gap between their experiences and the understanding of others, making their journeys more relatable and accessible to a wider audience.

From a tourism marketing standpoint, conventional theories have long suggested that travelers' decisions and actions are influenced significantly by their self-concept [19]. Self-concept refers to an individual's understanding of themselves. It plays a pivotal role in shaping a person's motivations and emotions, and it serves as a framework for organizing their experiences and guiding their social interactions [20]. A tourist's self-concept, or their understanding of themselves, plays a substantial role in shaping their motivations and emotions during travel. Their self-concept can affect choices such as destination selection, travel activities, and the types of experiences they seek [21].

Photography serves as a means to preserve memories. Tourists take photos to ensure they can look back on their travels and recall specific moments. A tourist can shape their "ideal self" by editing photos to present a more enhanced or improved version of themselves. This practice allows individuals to portray an image that aligns with their desired self-representation in their travel experiences [22]. By carefully curating and editing their images, tourists can craft a visual representation of themselves that aligns with their desired self-concept.

Furthermore, the motivations for engaging in travel photography that includes traditional attire can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, aligning with Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory [23]. Intrinsic motivations stem from personal fulfillment, such as cultural immersion, heritage exploration, and connection to traditional values [24]. For instance, travelers wearing Hanfu often report a deeper understanding of and connection to Chinese traditions, reflecting an innate desire for cultural exploration [25]. In contrast, extrinsic motivations are related to social recognition and external validation. Platforms like Instagram amplify these motivations by encouraging tourists to seek "likes" and positive feedback through visually appealing travel [26,27].

Generational differences in motivations also play a significant role. Younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z) are more influenced by extrinsic factors, such as social media participation and peer recognition [26,28]. Conversely, older generations prioritize intrinsic motivations, including nostalgia, cultural preservation, and personal growth [21,29]. These differences underscore the interplay between self-concept, motivation, and generational preferences.

In conclusion, photography motivation, individual self-concept, and travel behavior are interconnected elements that comprehensively explain why tourists make specific choices. In the context of traditional attire photography, understanding the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and generational differences is essential to shaping tourists' preferences and actions. This knowledge can assist marketers and destination planners in designing experiences and campaigns that enhance tourists' satisfaction and engagement.

2.3. The Effects of Social Media

Social media has revolutionized the way people share and consume travel experiences. It has become a significant platform for travelers to showcase their journeys, including their encounters with traditional dress and cultural experiences. Sharing photos online while on a trip and even after returning home is considered an integral aspect of the travel adventure, and it has the potential to boost their overall sense of happiness and satisfaction [27]. Online photo sharing has evolved into a meaningful extension of the travel experience itself. It allows tourists to extend the joy and fulfillment they derive from their journeys by reliving

and sharing those experiences with a broader audience. Through photo sharing, tourists can revisit the emotions, excitement, and beauty of their travels long after they return home, thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

Various social media platforms also empower travelers with mobile devices to promptly create, communicate, and distribute their travel insights and encounters, which encompass travel selfies and images [28]. Social media is fundamentally altering the way people search for travel information and choose their destinations [30]. Travelers are increasingly depending on the content generated by users, such as photos and reviews, to guide their travel decisions. Social media offers a dynamic and interactive platform where travelers can find inspiration, uncover hidden treasures, and receive tailored suggestions from their peers, influencers, and experts.

For instance, in the context of tourism destinations, Instagram provides a plethora of advantages, particularly when financial and marketing resources are constrained [31]. Destinations can leverage the visual storytelling capabilities of social media to showcase their unique attractions, culture, and traditions. Compelling visuals, including images of traditional dress and cultural experiences, can capture the attention of potential tourists and influence their travel decisions. Consequently, influencer marketing can be seen as an exceptionally effective destination marketing tool not only for cities, regions, or countries but also for National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), travel agencies, venues, or hotels [32].

In addition, in the post-pandemic era, traditional offline marketing no longer suffices to meet the demands of both the tourism industry and tourists, and this underscores the pressing necessity to adapt marketing strategies [33]. Social media offers a dynamic and flexible platform that can adapt to the evolving needs of the industry in the post-pandemic era. In the era of new media, consumers are transitioning from obtaining information primarily offline to predominantly online sources [33]. New media, encompassing social media, online publications, blogs, and user-generated content platforms, have made a plethora of information easily accessible to consumers. This wealth of online resources offers comprehensive insights, reviews, and recommendations, making it invaluable for travelers seeking information about destinations, accommodations, activities, and cultural experiences.

In this contemporary age, the landscape of marketing communication has undergone a profound transformation, primarily due to the advent of social media. The act of sharing content on social media platforms has ushered in a new era of marketing communication across various industries, including the field of tourism [34]. Its rise in popularity can be largely attributed to the ever-changing and dynamic nature of the social media landscape. Information about various destinations has become plentiful and easily accessible through a wide range of social media platforms [35].

It is widely believed that the images and messages shared on social media platforms regarding previous tourism experiences have a significant impact on shaping the perception of a destination and influencing travel choices [35]. However, the importance of social media goes beyond just sharing information. It is widely recognized that the images and messages posted on these platforms, documenting previous tourism experiences, have a profound impact on molding the perceptions of a destination and, most importantly, on directing the travel decisions of individuals. Research has shown that narratives about vacation experiences exert a substantial influence on the travel choices of peers, particularly among student populations [36].

The utilization of communication technology holds particular significance in the tourism industry, where the primary concern for tourist destinations is the fierce competition to attract visitors [37]. In order to make destinations more competitive, it is necessary to boost the visibility of the destination by establishing a robust online and social media presence [38]. In addition, people tend to browse social media before they choose their desired destination, since social media plays an important role in the delivery of information, especially when traditional resources are limited or unavailable. Social media can be regarded as a substantial and extensively examined source that reinforces and enhances information traditionally

obtained from friends, acquaintances, commercial agents, vendors, destination marketing organizations, advertising, mass media, guidebooks, or documentaries [39]

2.4. Ethnic Tourism

Ethnic tourism plays a vital role in showcasing and preserving the cultural identities of minority groups while contributing to local economic development [40,41]. This type of tourism provides opportunities for tourists to engage with traditional customs, attire, and practices, creating immersive cultural experiences. A notable example is ethnic costume travel photography, which allows travelers to connect deeply with cultural heritage by participating as active participants rather than mere observers [42]. Through this engagement, tourists often develop emotional connections to the culture, fostering an appreciation and understanding of minority traditions [43].

However, ethnic tourism also brings challenges, particularly concerning the commodification of cultural identity. Traditional attire and practices are often modified or adapted to meet the expectations of tourists, which may dilute their original meanings and significance [41]. Despite these concerns, the commodification of cultural elements is not entirely negative. It can enhance the visibility of minority cultures and provide sustainable economic opportunities for local communities [44]. For instance, in regions like Yunnan, China, the integration of ethnic attire into tourism products has successfully boosted local economies while maintaining a sense of cultural pride and identity [45].

Ethnic tourism serves as a bridge between tradition and modernity, offering opportunities for cultural preservation while addressing contemporary demands. By participating in activities such as ethnic costume photography, tourists not only gain a deeper understanding of cultural heritage but also contribute to the economic stability and cultural visibility of the host communities. These dynamic highlights the potential of ethnic tourism to support sustainable cultural development and foster mutual appreciation between tourists and local cultures [40,42].

2.5. Hypothesis Development

Generational differences in interest and motivation for traditional costume photography arise from distinct cultural values, societal influences, and technological contexts. Baby Boomers, valuing tradition and heritage, often exhibit interest rooted in their early exposure to cultural customs and a desire to preserve their legacy [46]. Generation X, situated between traditional and modern values, shows polarized interest, with some drawn to reconnect with their cultural roots and others leaning toward practicality or indifference [47]. Generation Y, divided into Y-1 and Y-2, reflects the impacts of globalization and creative expression, with Y-2 favoring contemporary and innovative aesthetics. Generation Z, immersed in technology and social media, engages with traditional costumes primarily as unique digital content or a tool for social media storytelling [48] (H1).

Intrinsic motivations for traditional costume photography also vary across generations. Baby Boomers are driven by a strong sense of cultural identity and legacy preservation, while Generation X focuses on personal growth and connecting with the past. Generation Y emphasizes creativity and self-expression, treating traditional costume photography as a platform for showcasing individuality, with Y-2 particularly embracing modern interpretations. Generation Z, on the other hand, views this activity as a fun, experiential pursuit (H2a). Extrinsically, Baby Boomers are motivated by social recognition within family or community settings, while Generation X finds motivation in potential career or networking benefits. Younger generations, especially Generations Y and Z, are influenced by digital platforms, where sharing traditional costume photography garners likes, comments, and social validation, making it an attractive activity (H2b). These distinctions underscore how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are shaped by generational contexts.

Interest in traditional costume photography is closely tied to these motivations. Intrinsic factors, such as cultural identity, creativity, or personal growth, significantly influence individuals' engagement by imbuing the activity with personal meaning and satisfaction

(H3a). Similarly, extrinsic factors, such as social recognition, digital validation, or tangible rewards, drive interest by providing external incentives, particularly in the digital era, where social media plays a pivotal role (H3b). Together, these motivations illustrate the interplay between personal values and external rewards in shaping generational engagement with traditional costume photography.

Cultural connection also moderates generational interest in traditional costume photography. Baby Boomers, with strong ties to their heritage, are more likely to engage with traditional costumes to preserve cultural identity. For younger generations, a weaker cultural connection can reduce interest unless re-engaged through family traditions or media exposure. The strength of cultural connection influences how each generation interacts with this photography, acting as a moderator (H4a).

Intrinsic motivation, such as self-expression, cultural identity, and personal growth, moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. Baby Boomers are motivated by a desire to preserve cultural heritage, while Generation Y seeks creativity and individuality through self-expression. As intrinsic motivation increases, interest in traditional costume photography rises, making intrinsic motivation a key moderator in generational engagement (H4b).

Memory moderates generational interest through recollections of cultural heritage. Baby Boomers and Generation X, with vivid memories of traditional attire, are more likely to reconnect with the past through photography. For younger generations, fewer memories can reduce interest, making memory a moderating factor that either strengthens or weakens generational engagement (H4c).

Social media influence moderates the relationship between generation and interest. For younger generations, sharing traditional costume photography on platforms like Instagram and TikTok boosts engagement through self-expression and digital validation. In contrast, older generations may not be as influenced by social media trends but may engage for personal or cultural reasons. Social media serves as a powerful moderator, amplifying engagement, particularly among digitally savvy cohorts (H5a).

Extrinsic motivation, such as social recognition or material rewards, also influences engagement. Baby Boomers may seek social recognition within family or community, while younger generations, especially Generations Y and Z, are driven by social media rewards like likes and comments. Extrinsic motivation, thus, moderates generational interest based on external incentives (H5b).

Finally, aesthetics play a critical moderating role, as Baby Boomers value the historical significance of traditional costumes, while younger generations, particularly Generations Y and Z, are drawn to modern interpretations. The aesthetic appeal of costumes influences how each generation engages with traditional costume photography, making aesthetics a moderating factor (H5c). Figure 1 presents the hypothesis development diagram.

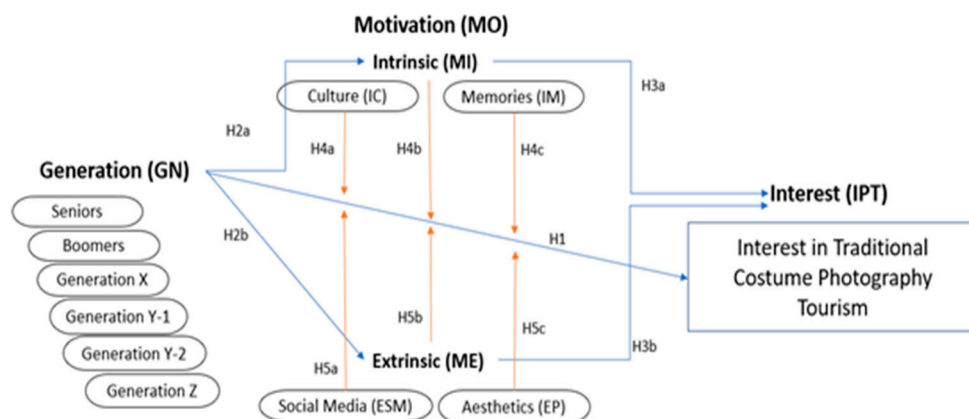


Figure 1. Hypothesis development diagram.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This research analyzed quantitative data from an online survey to explore the re-search question, investigating the cross-generational motivations for traditional ethnic costume photography tourism in China. The survey link was distributed via the popular social media platform WeChat, which is the most widely used social networking application in China. The survey was conducted using the website <https://www.wjx.cn/>, Wen Juan Xing, where the collected data were organized and downloaded.

The subjects of this online survey spanned six generations. They are seniors (1939–1949), Baby Boomers (1950–1964), Generation X (1965–1979), Generation Y-2 (1980–1989), Generation Y-1 (1990–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2010). A total of 440 respondents completed the online survey.

In Table 1, an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents reveals several noteworthy findings. Firstly, there is a slight bias towards females in the gender distribution, indicating that the study sample comprises a slightly higher proportion of women. Secondly, when examining the breakdown by generation, it becomes evident that Generation Z, consisting of individuals born in the mid-1990s to early 2010s, represents the largest cohort, accounting for 27.3% of the respondents. This highlights a significant presence of younger participants in the study. Closely following are Generation X respondents, suggesting that the study also includes a substantial proportion of individuals born between the early 1960s and early 1980s. Lastly, the observation that a majority of respondents possess higher education qualifications implies that a significant portion of the sample has completed at least a bachelor's degree or higher. This emphasizes the diversity of educational backgrounds among the study's participants.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for demographic variables.

Variable	Subcategory	Frequency (Percent)
Gender	Male	210 (47.7)
	Female	230 (52.3)
	Not disclosed	0 (0)
Generation	Seniors	59 (13.4)
	Baby Boomers	70 (15.9)
	Generation X	80 (18.2)
	Generation Y-2	55 (12.5)
	Generation Y-1	56 (12.7)
	Generation Z	120 (27.3)
Level of education	Under middle school degree	0 (0)
	Middle school diploma degree	0 (0)
	High school diploma degree	0 (0)
	2–3 years vocational college	161 (36.6)
	4-year college degree	126 (28.6)
	Graduate college degree	153 (34.8)

3.2. Instrumentation

The construct questions used in the survey were adapted from previous research. The survey items on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were adapted from the work of Bear et al. and Vallerand and Ratelle [49,50]. The survey items aiming to measure interest in traditional costume photography tourism were adapted from the survey used by Mehmetoglu [51] and Yoo et al. [52] to measure interest in tourism. The demographic items were previously used and validated by Marjerison [53].

All construct questions in the survey were presented using a 7-point Likert scale response format. For the instrument weighing variables, a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “7” (strongly agree) was used. In this study, the participants were offered assurances regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

They were explicitly informed that their participation in the survey was entirely voluntary. This approach was implemented to ensure that the respondents felt at ease and secure when sharing their opinions and experiences.

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis began with checking the reliability of the construct measurements by applying Cronbach's alpha and averaging the respective items for each scale to calculate the composite scores. The next step was a set of three one-way, between-group ANOVAs. In these three ANOVAs, the generations were compared with respect to their interest in traditional costume photography, intrinsic motivation in traditional costume photography, and extrinsic motivation in traditional costume photography. Then, a set of two simple linear regression analyses was conducted to investigate the effect of intrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography and the effect of extrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography. Finally, a set of six moderation analyses was conducted to assess the moderating effects of intrinsic motivation, cultural connection, memory, extrinsic motivation, aesthetics, and social media influence on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis conducted for the constructs in the study, using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, showed consistently high values, all exceeding 0.9 (Table 2). This indicates an exceptional level of internal consistency among the scale items for each construct, reinforcing the reliability of the measurements. Specifically, the constructs demonstrated the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: interest (0.922, 5 items), intrinsic motivation (0.948, 11 items), cultural connection (0.902, 5 items), memory (0.905, 6 items), extrinsic motivation (0.957, 12 items), aesthetics (0.914, 5 items), and social media influence (0.926, 7 items). These strong reliability coefficients confirm that the survey questions within each construct consistently and accurately capture the intended dimensions, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data for analysis and conclusions.

Table 2. Reliability analysis of constructs using Cronbach's alpha.

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Interest	0.922	5
Intrinsic motivation	0.948	11
Culture connection	0.902	5
Memory	0.905	6
Extrinsic motivation	0.957	12
Aesthetics	0.914	5
Social media influence	0.926	7

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore potential variations in the level of interest in traditional costume photography among different generations. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in interest levels across generational groups, as indicated by $F(5, 434) = 693.19$, where $p < 0.001$, and Welch (5, 172.58) = 722.34, where $p < 0.001$. The effect size, represented by eta squared ($\eta^2 = 0.89$), was substantial, indicating that the generational factor had a noteworthy impact on interest in traditional costume photography.

Subsequent post hoc comparisons using the Games–Howell test provided further insights into these distinctions. Both seniors and Generation Z exhibited significantly higher levels of interest in traditional costume photography compared to Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y-2, and Generation Y-1. Importantly, there was no significant difference in the interest levels between seniors and Generation Z.

In contrast, Generation Y-1 displayed significantly lower interest levels than both seniors and Generation Z but showed notably higher interest when compared to Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y-2. Notably, there were no significant differences in the interest levels among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y-2 regarding traditional costume photography.

These findings support the research hypothesis (H1), which posited that different generations exhibit varying levels of interest in traditional costume photography. This is substantiated by the substantial and statistically significant differences observed in the interest levels across generational groups, as confirmed by ANOVA and post hoc comparisons. The descriptive statistics in Table 3 further illustrate these differences, presenting the means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for each generational group, providing a clear depiction of the varying degrees of interest in traditional costume photography across age cohorts.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics showing the level of interest in traditional costume photography across generations.

Generation	Mean	SD	N
Seniors	6.40	0.30	59
Baby Boomers	3.55	0.56	70
Generation X	3.48	0.55	80
Generation Y-2	3.70	0.80	55
Generation Y-1	6.05	0.39	56
Generation Z	6.38	0.28	120

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to explore potential differences in the level of intrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography across different generations. The results revealed a highly significant difference in the intrinsic motivation levels among generational groups, as indicated by $F(5, 434) = 1268.79$, where $p < 0.001$, and Welch $(5, 176.26) = 1278.22$, where $p < 0.001$. The effect size, represented by eta squared ($\eta^2 = 0.94$), was notably large, underscoring the substantial influence of generational factors on intrinsic motivation.

Post hoc comparisons conducted using the Games–Howell test revealed that seniors, Generation Y-1, and Generation Z exhibited significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography compared to Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y-2. However, there were no significant differences in the intrinsic motivation levels among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y-2.

Additionally, seniors did not differ significantly in intrinsic motivation levels from either Generation Y-1 or Generation Z. Consequently, the research hypothesis (H2a) positing that different generations exhibit varying levels of intrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography is supported.

Table 4 provides additional context, presenting descriptive statistics that include the means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for each generational group. These statistics illustrate the disparities in intrinsic motivation levels across generational cohorts, further emphasizing the substantial influence of generational factors on intrinsic motivation in the context of traditional costume photography.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate whether there were any differences in the level of extrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography across generations (Table 5). The results indicated a significant difference in the extrinsic motivation levels between generations, with $F(5, 434) = 1943.34$, where $p < 0.001$, and Welch $(5, 182.15) = 3342.37$, where $p < 0.001$. The effect size, calculated using eta squared ($\eta^2 = 0.96$), was exceptionally large.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics showing the level of intrinsic motivation in traditional costume photography across generations.

Generation	Mean	SD	N
Seniors	5.94	0.38	59
Baby Boomers	3.49	0.36	70
Generation X	3.50	0.36	80
Generation Y-2	3.53	0.34	55
Generation Y-1	5.99	0.29	56
Generation Z	5.99	0.25	120

Table 5. Descriptive statistics showing the level of extrinsic motivation in traditional costume photography across generations.

Generation	Mean	SD	N
Seniors	3.53	0.36	59
Baby Boomers	3.44	0.31	70
Generation X	3.49	0.28	80
Generation Y-2	2.53	0.16	55
Generation Y-1	5.49	0.17	56
Generation Z	5.70	0.20	120

Post hoc comparisons using the Games–Howell test revealed that both Generation Y-1 and Generation Z exhibited significantly higher extrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography compared to all other generations. In contrast, Generation Y-2 demonstrated significantly lower extrinsic motivation than all other generations.

There was no significant difference in the extrinsic motivation levels between seniors, Baby Boomers, and Generation X regarding traditional costume photography.

Therefore, the hypothesis (H2b) suggesting that different generations exhibit varying levels of extrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography is accepted.

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of intrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography (Table 6). The results revealed a significant positive effect of intrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography, with intrinsic motivation accounting for 81.9% of the variation in interest, $R^2 = 0.819$, $F(1, 438) = 1983.48$, and $p < 0.001$. The coefficient for intrinsic motivation ($B = 1.03$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that for each 1-unit increase in intrinsic motivation, there is a corresponding 1.03-unit increase in interest in traditional costume photography. Therefore, the hypothesis (H3a) suggesting that intrinsic motivation affects interest in traditional costume photography is supported.

Table 6. The effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on interest in traditional costume photography.

Variables	DV: Interest in Traditional Costume Photography	DV: Interest in Traditional Costume Photography
Intrinsic motivation	1.03 ***	-
Extrinsic motivation	-	0.85 ***
Intercept	Included	Included
F(1, 438)	1983.48 ***	433.89 ***
R ²	81.9%	49.8%

Where *** < 0.01.

Another simple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of extrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography. The results showed a significant positive effect of extrinsic motivation on interest in traditional costume photography, with extrinsic motivation accounting for 49.8% of the variation in interest, $R^2 = 0.498$,

$F(1, 438) = 433.89$, and $p < 0.001$. The coefficient for extrinsic motivation ($B = 0.85$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that for each 1-unit increase in extrinsic motivation, there is a corresponding 0.85-unit increase in interest in traditional costume photography. Therefore, the hypothesis (H3b) suggesting that extrinsic motivation affects interest in traditional costume photography is supported.

A moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of cultural connection on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography (Table 7). The results revealed a significant interaction between cultural connection and Generation Y-2. This suggests that the effect of cultural connection on interest in traditional costume photography is stronger for the Generation Y-2 group compared to the senior group.

Table 7. The moderating effect of cultural connection on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variable	Coeff.	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−2.62	1.03	−2.54	0.011
Generation X	−3.10	1.02	−3.04	0.003
Generation Y-2	−4.47	1.04	−4.31	0.000
Generation Y-1	−0.67	1.38	−0.49	0.627
Generation Z	−0.77	1.16	−0.66	0.511
Cultural connection	−0.08	0.16	−0.53	0.510
Baby Boomers × cultural connection	−0.13	0.19	−0.67	0.500
Generation X × cultural connection	−0.01	0.19	−0.08	0.940
Generation Y-2 × cultural connection	0.44	0.19	2.29	0.022
Generation Y-1 × cultural connection	0.05	0.23	0.23	0.814
Generation Z × cultural connection	0.12	0.19	0.64	0.522

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

A moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. The interaction between generation and intrinsic motivation was not significant, as shown in Table 8. This suggests that intrinsic motivation did not influence any specific generation's interest in traditional costume photography.

Table 8. The moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variable	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−2.07	1.16	−1.79	0.074
Generation X	−2.43	1.14	−2.13	0.034
Generation Y-2	−4.25	1.22	−3.49	0.001
Generation Y-1	−0.74	1.71	−0.44	0.663
Generation Z	−0.09	1.47	−0.06	0.952
Intrinsic motivation	−0.04	0.17	−0.23	0.817
Baby Boomers × intrinsic motivation	−0.25	0.23	−1.07	0.286
Generation X × intrinsic motivation	−0.16	0.23	−0.74	0.458
Generation Y-2 × intrinsic motivation	0.42	0.26	1.61	0.108
Generation Y-1 × intrinsic motivation	0.07	0.29	0.23	0.815
Generation Z × intrinsic motivation	0.01	0.25	0.05	0.962

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

A moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of memories on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. The interaction between generation and memories was not significant, as shown in Table 9. This suggests that memories did not influence any specific generation's interest in traditional costume photography.

Table 9. The moderating effect of memories on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variable	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−2.69	0.91	−2.96	0.003
Generation X	−2.47	0.90	−2.73	0.007
Generation Y-2	−1.90	0.93	−2.04	0.042
Generation Y-1	−0.84	1.47	−0.57	0.567
Generation Z	0.60	1.14	0.53	0.599
Memories	0.01	0.13	0.06	0.952
Baby Boomers × memories	−0.04	0.19	−0.22	0.829
Generation X × memories	−0.12	0.18	−0.67	0.506
Generation Y-2 × memories	−0.22	0.19	−1.15	0.252
Generation Y-1 × memories	0.08	0.25	0.33	0.738
Generation Z × memories	−0.10	0.19	−0.54	0.587

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

A moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of social media influence on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. The interaction between generation and social media influence was not significant, as shown in Table 10. This suggests that social media influence did not influence any specific generation's interest in traditional costume photography.

Table 10. The moderating effect of social media on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variable	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−3.23	0.66	−4.88	0.000
Generation X	−3.02	0.71	−4.28	0.000
Generation Y-2	−3.58	1.13	−3.18	0.002
Generation Y-1	−1.40	1.85	−0.76	0.449
Generation Z	−0.17	1.47	−0.12	0.906
Social media	−0.07	0.13	−0.57	0.569
Baby Boomers × social media	0.11	0.19	0.57	0.569
Generation X × social media	0.03	0.20	0.13	0.893
Generation Y-2 × social media	0.32	0.43	0.75	0.453
Generation Y-1 × social media	0.22	0.35	0.62	0.534
Generation Z × social media	0.05	0.28	0.19	0.850

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

A moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of extrinsic motivation on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. The interaction between generation and extrinsic motivation was not significant, as shown in Table 11. This suggests that extrinsic motivation did not influence any specific generation's interest in traditional costume photography.

Table 11. The moderating effect of extrinsic motivation on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variables	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−3.12	0.92	−3.38	0.001
Generation X	−2.95	0.94	−3.14	0.002
Generation Y-2	−4.04	1.25	−3.22	0.001
Generation Y-1	−1.17	2.23	−0.52	0.601
Generation Z	−0.97	1.43	−0.68	0.498
Extrinsic motivation	−0.10	0.18	−0.57	0.569
Baby Boomers × extrinsic motivation	0.07	0.26	0.28	0.778

Table 11. *Cont.*

Variables	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Generation X $\times$ extrinsic motivation	0.01	0.27	0.03	0.974
Generation Y-2 $\times$ extrinsic motivation	0.49	0.46	1.07	0.287
Generation Y-1 $\times$ extrinsic motivation	0.19	0.43	0.43	0.664
Generation Z $\times$ extrinsic motivation	0.21	0.29	0.71	0.475

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

Another moderation analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of aesthetics on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. The interaction between generation and aesthetics was not significant, as shown in Table 12. This suggests that aesthetics did not influence any specific generation's interest in traditional costume photography.

Table 12. The moderating effect of aesthetics on the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.

Variable	Coeff	S.E.	t	p
Baby Boomers	−2.73	0.60	−4.56	0.000
Generation X	−2.86	0.62	−4.61	0.000
Generation Y-2	−3.08	0.67	−4.58	0.000
Generation Y-1	−0.18	1.60	−0.11	0.910
Generation Z	−0.53	0.83	−0.65	0.518
Aesthetics	−0.02	0.13	−0.18	0.855
Baby Boomers $\times$ aesthetics	−0.04	0.17	−0.21	0.836
Generation X $\times$ aesthetics	−0.02	0.18	−0.11	0.914
Generation Y-2 $\times$ aesthetics	0.14	0.23	0.61	0.544
Generation Y-1 $\times$ aesthetics	−0.02	0.31	−0.07	0.944
Generation Z $\times$ aesthetics	0.10	0.17	0.55	0.579

Note: S.E. means the standard errors. Seniors were used as the reference group for making the comparison.

4.3. Hypothesis Summary

In summary, as indicated in Table 13, H1, H2a, H2b, H3a, and H3b are supported by the data, suggesting that different generations exhibit varying levels of interest, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography and that these motivations significantly influence their interest in this activity. However, H4b, H4c, H5a, H5b, and H5c are not supported, indicating that intrinsic motivation, memory, extrinsic motivation, aesthetics, and social media influence do not moderate the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography. This may be due to the fact that the moderating role of cultural connection is likely driven by its strong, foundational impact on generational interest in traditional costume photography, which is more intrinsic and universal across generations. In contrast, factors like intrinsic motivation, memory, extrinsic motivation, aesthetics, and social media influence may have a more variable or less direct impact, not strongly interacting with generation in this specific context.

Table 13. Summary of the hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Different generations have a different level of interest in traditional costume photography.	Supported
H2a: Different generations have a different level of intrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography.	Supported
H2b: Different generations have a different level of extrinsic motivation for traditional costume photography.	Supported
H3a: Intrinsic motivation affects interest in traditional costume photography.	Supported
H3b: Extrinsic motivation affects interest in traditional costume photography.	Supported

Table 13. Cont.

Hypothesis	Result
H4a: Cultural connection moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Supported
H4b: Intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Not supported
H4c: Memory moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Not supported
H5a: Social media influence moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Not supported
H5b: Extrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Not supported
H5c: Aesthetics moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography.	Not supported

5. Discussion

This study provides valuable insights into the motivations and interests of different generations regarding traditional costume photography tourism. By analyzing these differences, the study makes important theoretical and practical contributions to the fields of tourism and consumer behavior. Additionally, the findings highlight the role of cultural sustainability, as the growing interest in traditional costume photography supports the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage across generations. Furthermore, the limitations and suggestions for future research offer direction for further exploration in this expanding area of study.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes significantly to the understanding of tourism and consumer behavior by delving into generational differences in motivations and interests related to traditional costume photography tourism. First, the study addresses the gap in the literature concerning generational differences in motivations for traditional costume photography tourism. Through hypotheses H1, H2a, and H2b, the study confirms that different generations exhibit varying levels of interest, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation, highlighting the critical role of generational factors in shaping interest in traditional costume photography [8,49,50]. This contributes to a new theoretical understanding of generational tourism motivations and expands the knowledge of how specific generations interpret and express cultural heritage through traditional costumes [15,16].

Second, by testing hypotheses H3a and H3b, this research empirically demonstrates how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence interest in traditional costume photography [49,50]. Intrinsic motivation is driven by personal connections to culture and self-expression, while extrinsic motivation is linked to social and aesthetic factors, such as photography's visual appeal and external evaluations [19,51]. This adds to the theoretical foundation of how tourism motivations and cultural self-expression are interconnected and also highlights the role of cultural sustainability in fostering these motivations, ensuring that traditional practices are appreciated and sustained across generations.

Third, the study finds that cultural connection (H4b) moderates the relationship between generation and interest in traditional costume photography [9,15]. Specifically, cultural connection plays a stronger role in increasing interest for Generation Y-2, indicating that certain generations are more motivated by their desire to connect with cultural heritage. This offers an important theoretical framework for understanding how cultural identity and heritage consumption differ across generations [16,54]. Moreover, this connection reinforces the importance of cultural sustainability as certain generations actively seek to engage with and preserve their cultural heritage through traditional costume photography, contributing to the long-term survival and transmission of cultural values.

5.2. Practical Contribution

This study also provides practical implications for the traditional costume photography tourism industry. First, by identifying the different motivations and interests of various generations, tourism businesses can develop customized marketing strategies that meet the unique needs of each generational cohort. For instance, as Generation Z and the senior generation show higher levels of interest in traditional costume photography, businesses can develop tailored photography tourism products or cultural experience programs focused on these groups [2,13].

Second, the analysis of the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on traditional costume photography provides key insights for tourism marketing and service design. Strategies to stimulate intrinsic motivation could involve creating content that emphasizes the historical and cultural significance of traditional costumes, while extrinsic motivation can be enhanced by providing platforms and services that allow tourists to share their photography on social media [22,33].

Third, by confirming the influence of cultural connection on traditional costume photography, the study suggests that businesses should strengthen cultural storytelling and related programs for specific generations. Particularly, Generation Y-2 values the connection to cultural heritage, so promoting traditional costume photography as a means of cultural preservation could be highly effective [17,54]. This approach can help differentiate tourism products and better meet the needs of each generation. Not only does this approach differentiate tourism products, but it also supports cultural sustainability, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage through tourism.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, it relied on an online survey conducted in China, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader cultural contexts or other countries. Future research should explore traditional costume photography tourism across different nations and cultures to gain a more comprehensive understanding of generational differences [29].

Second, while this study focused on generational differences, other demographic factors, such as gender, occupation, and income level, were not considered. Future research should incorporate these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing traditional costume photography tourism [8].

Third, although this study utilized a quantitative approach, qualitative research could offer deeper insights into the personal motivations and emotional aspects of traditional costume photography. A qualitative approach would allow for a richer exploration of the meanings and emotional connections associated with traditional costume photography across generations [9,18].

Finally, further research is needed to delve into the complex influence of social media and extrinsic motivations on tourism behavior. While this study found that social media influence did not have a significant moderating effect, future studies should investigate the nuanced ways in which social media shapes tourism behavior and decision making [35,37]. Such research could provide a more nuanced understanding of how digital platforms impact tourism activities and consumer choices.

6. Conclusions

This study empirically analyzed generational differences in motivations and interest regarding traditional costume photography tourism, offering important insights into the ways different generations express and engage with their cultural identity through traditional costumes. Specifically, Generation Z and senior generations demonstrated a high level of interest in traditional costume photography, while Generation Y-2 was notably influenced by cultural connection. These findings suggest that traditional costume photography tourism is driven by different motivations and demands across generations.

One of the key contributions of this study is the identification of distinct generational differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation was closely linked to individuals' desires for cultural self-expression, whereas extrinsic motivation was more influenced by external evaluations, such as those related to social media. These insights provide important implications for the development of tourism marketing strategies and tailored products, especially in the context of promoting cultural sustainability. By recognizing and adapting to these motivations, the tourism industry can play a pivotal role in supporting sustainable practices that preserve cultural heritage while encouraging with traditional customs across generations.

Furthermore, the study revealed that cultural connection plays a significant moderating role in enhancing the interest of specific generations, particularly Generation Y-2, in traditional costume photography. This underscores the importance of fostering cultural sustainability through tourism by reinforcing cultural storytelling and offering engaging experiences that align with generational characteristics. By doing so, the tourism sector can actively contribute to the long-term preservation of cultural heritage while creating opportunities for tourists to engage deeply in the transmission of traditional values and practices.

In conclusion, this study offers valuable contributions to understanding generational differences in traditional costume photography tourism, providing practical guidelines that can be applied to both the tourism industry and cultural heritage preservation efforts. The findings also serve as a foundation for strategic planning in both the tourism sector and the traditional costume industry, emphasizing the need to integrate cultural sustainability into tourism strategies. This ensures that the cultural practices, values, and identities linked to traditional costumes can be preserved and promoted for future generations.

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