

Article

Sustaining Cultural Memory: The Role of Family Historical Communication in the Sustainable Development of Heritage Tourism

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Abstract

The socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism depends in part on how historical memories and cultural meanings are communicated, interpreted, and passed on over time. However, the family's role as a key socialization agent in shaping tourists' interpretations of nationally significant heritage remains underexplored. This study examines the relationships among family historical communication (FHC), tourists' subjective interpretation of heritage, and behavioral intentions. Using the case of sustainable heritage tourism in Dandong, China, the study conceptualizes tourists' subjective heritage interpretation in terms of three dimensions: educational experience (cognitive), historical identity (affective), and inheritance value (evaluative). The study contributes by treating family historical communication as a pre-trip interpretive context that shapes heritage meaning-making and by proposing a multidimensional framework linking prior social experiences, subjective interpretation, and behavioral intentions. Survey data from 611 heritage tourists were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships and age-cohort moderation effects. The results show that FHC is positively associated with all three meaning-making dimensions as well as with behavioral intentions. The mediation analysis further indicates that the indirect effects of FHC on behavioral intentions are stronger through historical identity and inheritance value than through educational experience. In addition, significant age-cohort moderation is found only in the relationship between FHC and educational experience. By highlighting the family as an important bridge between national narratives and personal meaning, this study offers implications for the tourism-supportive and socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable heritage management and inclusive destination governance.

Keywords: sustainable heritage tourism; family historical communication; cultural heritage; heritage meaning-making; cultural memory; intergenerational transmission; sense of place; behavioral intentions



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1. Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of protecting the world's heritage [1]. However, achieving the long-term sustainability of heritage remains a complex and multifaceted challenge. Recent research on the sustainability of heritage tourism has focused on the perception and recognition of heritage significance, community participation and empowerment, spatial resilience, and the role of narrative and digital media [2–5]. At the same time, understandings of heritage tourism

sustainability are undergoing an important shift: from a traditional emphasis on maintaining heritage infrastructure and pursuing economic benefits toward greater attention to how people reinterpret, negotiate, and transmit the historical memories, identities, and values embedded in heritage. Therefore, the sustainability of heritage tourism needs to be redefined. It extends beyond the protection of tangible resources and is better understood as a continuous socio-cultural process through which heritage meanings are interpreted, negotiated, and transmitted across generations [6,7]. Such intergenerational transmission of heritage meanings often takes place within family contexts, where family narratives and historical discussions provide a social setting for the circulation of historical memories and cultural values. Before arriving at heritage destinations, visitors typically bring with them historical narratives, emotional orientations, and interpretive frameworks shaped by family-based intergenerational communication and storytelling. However, current research on heritage tourism still focuses on destination attributes, memorable experiences, and emotional responses that occur during the visit [8,9]. The broader social contexts that shape how visitors interpret and internalize heritage meanings before their visit, particularly family-based contexts, remain underexplored.

The family acts as a primary socialization agent and an important “pre-trip filter” for heritage interpretation [10]. Drawing on theories of collective memory and family socialization, this study conceptualizes family historical communication as an intergenerational transmission process through which historical narratives, memories, and associated values are shared, discussed, and passed down through everyday family interactions, thereby providing interpretive resources for heritage meaning-making [11–14]. Family members share information and collectively construct understandings of the past, integrating national history into family narratives and transforming individual experiences into shared intergenerational memories [15,16]. Despite this, quantitative research on heritage tourism has rarely examined the relationships among family-based interpretive resources, tourists’ subjective heritage experiences, and behavioral intentions.

Importantly, family historical communication is not treated here as a proxy for prior historical knowledge, general cultural learning, patriotic attitudes, or general heritage interest. Rather, it refers to an intergenerational and relational communication process through which historical narratives are discussed, emotionally framed, and made meaningful within everyday family interaction. This distinction is important because the present study is concerned not simply with what tourists know or feel about national history in general, but with how family-based communication provides interpretive resources that shape heritage meaning-making before the visit.

Intergenerational transmission processes are particularly evident in heritage tourism settings associated with war memory, political commemoration, and national remembrance, where meanings of the past are often sustained through the interaction between family memories and broader institutional narratives. In the Chinese context, “red tourism” refers to a form of heritage tourism centered on sites, memorials, museums, and landscapes associated with revolutionary history, wartime memory, political commemoration, and nation-building narratives [17]. In this study, the term is used as an empirical and analytical category to describe a specific type of heritage tourism in China, rather than as a normative or political endorsement. Within this context, Dandong, a border city between China and North Korea, provides a relevant setting for examining how family-based memories interact with institutionalized heritage narratives. The city is closely associated with the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (hereafter WRUAK), the official Chinese designation for China’s participation in the Korean War, and contains several commemorative sites, museums, and landscapes related to this historical period [18]. Sites such as the Yalu River Broken Bridge and the WRUAK Memorial Hall are closely connected with

national, military, borderland, and collective-memory narratives. For visitors, educational and commemorative engagements with these heritage sites can be understood in relation to both on-site interpretation and prior family-based exposure to historical narratives associated with WRUAK [15,16]. These historical, geographical, and symbolic features make Dandong a distinctive empirical setting for exploring how family historical communication is associated with tourists' interpretive frameworks for heritage narratives.

This study employs partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships among family historical communication, tourists' subjective meaning-making, and behavioral intentions. The following research questions are proposed: (1) What is the relationship between family historical communication and the three dimensions of tourists' subjective heritage meaning-making (educational experience, historical identity, and heritage inheritance value)? (2) How are the three dimensions of subjective meaning-making associated with tourists' behavioral intentions, and what role do they play in the relationship between family historical communication and behavioral intentions? (3) Do the associations of family historical communication with educational experience and inheritance value vary across age cohorts? Rather than treating family as a contextual background factor, family historical communication is conceptualized as part of the pre-tour social context associated with tourists' engagement in heritage meaning-making. In doing so, the study contributes to heritage tourism research by positioning family historical communication as a pre-trip interpretive context through which prior social experiences are associated with heritage meaning-making. It also advances a multi-dimensional framework that connects cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of subjective meaning-making with behavioral intentions. The framework further considers age-cohort differences in selected relationships between family historical communication and subjective meaning-making. In this study, behavioral intentions are specifically conceptualized as tourism-supportive intentions, including revisit intention, recommendation intention, and positive word-of-mouth intention. These are treated as practical but partial behavioral outcomes relevant to the socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism. The analysis reveals a relational configuration in which family historical communication, meaning-making processes, and behavioral tendencies are closely connected within the proposed framework.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Family Historical Communication and Heritage Interpretation

Heritage meaning is socially constructed, complex, and multifaceted [19]. Tilden [20] argued that visitors ultimately interpret heritage through the lens of their own intimate knowledge and experience. Similarly, Smith [21] argued that visitors' decoding of heritage experiences may be connected to their broader social experiences and values tied to processes of remembering. In heritage tourism, tourists' interpretive frameworks may begin to take shape before the visit in relation to everyday communicative practices and intergenerational memory transmission. However, existing heritage tourism research has primarily focused on destination-based interpretation and on-site experiences [8,9], while paying less attention to the role of pre-trip social and familial experiences in heritage meaning-making. Moreover, a tension remains in the literature between perspectives that conceptualize heritage meaning-making mainly as a product of on-site interpretation [8,9] and those suggesting that tourists' interpretations are already shaped prior to the visit through socialization processes such as family communication [22].

Family historical communication (FHC) refers specifically to family-based discussions, storytelling, and intergenerational communication about history before the visit [11–14]. This concept differs from general historical interest, school-based history education, me-

dia exposure, and general favorable attitudes toward red tourism. More specifically, prior knowledge refers to what individuals already know about history, whereas FHC emphasizes how historical narratives are communicated and interpreted within family relationships. Similarly, school-based education and media exposure may provide historical information, but they do not necessarily capture the emotionally embedded, relational, and intergenerational nature of family discussion. FHC is also distinct from patriotic attitudes or general heritage interest because it focuses on a communicative process rather than a broad attitudinal orientation. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in examining family-based historical communication as a pre-visit interpretive resource that connects collective narratives with personal heritage meaning-making. It is particularly relevant to how individuals understand and emotionally engage with the past. The influence of national narratives depends profoundly on everyday negotiation [23]. Through daily storytelling, family narratives attribute significance and moral interpretation to collective experiences [24], situating individual memories within broader collective or national frameworks [25]. The intergenerational transmission of collective memory heavily relies on this communicative family memory [26,27]. As Fivush and Merrill [28] emphasized, intergenerational narratives actively weave national history into everyday conversations, helping individuals construct their identity. Long-term intergenerational transmission provides a crucial “pre-trip” framework for understanding and interpreting heritage meanings.

This interpretive role of the family is particularly important in heritage contexts related to national war memories and historical conflicts. These heritage sites have particular agency, serving as an effective means of establishing narrative connections between people, their past, and their surrounding environment [29]. Family memory bridges official state narratives and individual recollections, providing a foundational interpretive framework [30]. Family memories and narratives, as important pre-trip interpretive resources, are linked to the historical significance of heritage sites, allowing visitors to experience symbolic meaning and emotional connection during their visit.

Existing research has mainly examined family narratives and communication in relation to collective memory maintenance and personal identity construction. Despite their recognized role in these processes, their interpretive function in heritage tourism remains underexplored [22]. Specifically, it remains insufficiently understood how family historical communication functions as a pre-trip interpretive context in heritage tourism. Its relationship with tourists’ subjective heritage meaning-making and behavioral intentions also requires further examination. To address this gap, this study conceptualizes family historical communication as a pre-trip social context associated with tourists’ interpretation of heritage experiences. Family historical communication is examined in relation to the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of heritage meaning-making. Visitors who frequently engage in family historical discussions may report higher levels of educational experience, historical identity, and perceived inheritance value of heritage. Prior exposure to intergenerational narratives may be associated with stronger perceived personal and familial relevance of heritage sites, as well as stronger behavioral intentions [31]. This study moves beyond an on-site interpretation perspective and situates family historical communication within a relational framework linking prior social experiences, subjective meaning-making, and behavioral intentions.

H1a. *Family historical communication is positively associated with educational experience.*

H1b. *Family historical communication is positively associated with historical identity.*

H1c. *Family historical communication is positively associated with inheritance value.*

H1d. *Family historical communication is positively associated with behavioral intentions.*

2.2. Subjective Heritage Meaning-Making and Behavioral Intentions

Visitors' willingness to revisit and recommend heritage destinations has long been regarded as an important behavioral outcome in tourism research [32,33]. Contemporary heritage tourism research has extended beyond experience-based explanations to examine how tourists' interpretation and internalization of heritage meanings are associated with such behavioral intentions [34–36].

Behavioral intentions in heritage settings are associated not only with the material attributes of heritage sites, but also with visitors' subjective perceptions, interpretations, and emotional engagement with heritage and identity-related experiences [37]. Heritage visitors actively interpret, engage with, and reshape information, offering their own interpretations [38] and incorporating heritage into their personal life stories. In this study, behavioral intentions are conceptually distinguished from subjective heritage meaning-making.

Behavioral intentions refer to tourists' stated willingness to revisit and recommend the destination and share positive comments about it, representing a conative tendency toward future heritage-related behavior. In the present study, these intentions are interpreted as tourism-supportive behavioral outcomes because they reflect visitors' willingness to sustain engagement with and socially endorse the heritage destination. However, they do not directly measure conservation-related actions or the full process of intergenerational heritage transmission. They should therefore be understood as practical but partial behavioral outcomes related to heritage sustainability rather than a comprehensive measure of sustainable heritage behavior. By contrast, subjective heritage meaning-making refers to tourists' internal interpretation and evaluation of the heritage experience.

Drawing on anthropological understandings, subjectivity refers to the shared inner life and experiences shaped by social formations [39,40]. As a conceptual lens, subjectivity helps explain how tourists internally interpret heritage and derive personal meaning from it. Marmion [41] argued that heritage is constituted through individuals' lived identification and attached values. Based on this perspective, the current study conceptualizes three interrelated but distinct dimensions of subjective heritage meaning-making.

First, educational experience refers to the cognitive dimension of heritage meaning-making. It concerns visitors' perceived learning, knowledge acquisition, and reflective thought during the visit [42]. Second, historical identity refers to the affective and self-related dimension. It captures the extent to which visitors perceive historical narratives as personally meaningful and connected to their sense of identity [43], reflecting emotional resonance with heritage [44]. Third, inheritance value refers to the evaluative and normative dimension. It reflects a heritage-specific manifestation of intergenerational equity. Weiss [45] argued that intergenerational equity is a foundational principle of sustainability. This principle holds that each generation has a responsibility to preserve and transmit valuable legacies in ways that support equitable access for future generations. In this sense, this kind of inheritance value reflects individuals' assessment that heritage should be preserved and passed on to future generations. It embodies a sense of responsibility toward protecting the historical meanings embedded in heritage and supporting their continuity across generations. This evaluative orientation is especially relevant to the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability, although the present study does not directly measure concrete conservation actions. These distinctions are important because the three dimensions share a common focus on heritage meaning but refer to different aspects of subjective interpretation. Together, these dimensions form a multi-layered structure of subjective heritage meaning-making and provide a basis for understanding its association with behavioral intentions.

H2. *Educational experience is positively associated with behavioral intentions.*

H3. *Historical identity is positively associated with behavioral intentions.*

H4. *Inheritance value is positively associated with behavioral intentions.*

2.3. Subjective Heritage Meaning-Making in the Relationship Between Family Historical Communication and Behavioral Intentions

Heritage tourism sites associated with revolutionary history provide a distinctive environment where personal and national narratives intersect. Memory, emotional orientation, and everyday historical knowledge developed before the visit may be associated with how tourists interpret the meaning of heritage. Recent heritage tourism research emphasizes that visitors engage in across-site, multi-temporal learning and draw on their past to frame on-site experiences [46]. Through “communicated narrative sense-making” [47], family-based intergenerational narratives may provide an important interpretive frame for how individuals make sense of experiences beyond the family setting. When tourists connect inherited narratives with personal understanding, emotional attachment, and evaluation of heritage significance, these subjective interpretations may align with subsequent behavioral intentions [37,38,48]. Therefore, subjective heritage meaning-making can be positioned as a mediating process between what is communicated at home and tourists’ post-visit behavioral intentions.

Through engagement with heritage sites, tourists translate the foundational meanings provided by intergenerational narratives into personally meaningful interpretations of heritage. Because family narratives are often repeated over time and embedded in emotionally significant relationships, their influence may extend beyond information acquisition to deeper forms of identity construction and value orientation. This suggests that family communication may be more closely associated with affective and evaluative meaning-making than with cognitive learning during the visit. This process can be understood through three interrelated dimensions: educational experience, historical identity, and inheritance value. Educational experience enables tourists to connect family-based knowledge with newly encountered historical facts [49], thereby deepening their understanding of heritage. Historical identity is reconstructed as tourists find tangible connections between their family’s past and the nation’s symbols [50]. Simultaneously, inheritance value reflects tourists’ perceived responsibility for protecting and passing on heritage and may be aligned with their behavioral intentions [51]. These cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions position family historical communication in relation to tourists’ behavioral intentions.

H5. *Family historical communication is indirectly associated with behavioral intentions through educational experience.*

H6. *Family historical communication is indirectly associated with behavioral intentions through historical identity.*

H7. *Family historical communication is indirectly associated with behavioral intentions through inheritance value.*

2.4. Age-Cohort Differences

In recent years, scholars have increasingly used generational theory to examine differences in travel behavior among different age groups [52,53]. Generational theory posits that shared socio-historical conditions form unique interpretive frameworks [54]. The formation of generations depends on people’s upbringing, which in turn directly affects

that generation's values and attitudes [55]. Visitors from different age cohorts may use distinct cognitive frameworks when engaging with cultural heritage [56,57]. In this study, age-cohort differences refer to variations across age groups that may reflect both life-course positions and shared socio-historical experiences rather than direct intergenerational transmission within the same family. Accordingly, this study uses the term "age-cohort differences" in the following analysis to describe these age-based variations.

Moreover, collective meanings are transmitted and negotiated through intergenerational communication [58]. Through storytelling and shared reflection, families provide members with pre-existing frames. However, because age cohorts differ in their historically shaped interpretive orientations, the same family narratives may resonate differently across age cohorts. Therefore, the association between family historical communication and subjective heritage meaning-making may not be uniform across age cohorts.

Life transitions and changes in family roles are also related to how individuals interpret and engage with tourism experiences [59,60]. Older tourists may use heritage sites to reinforce existing values, while younger tourists may rely on them to develop new educational experiences and heritage values [61,62]. Different age cohorts have experienced distinct historical and social events, with possible differences in how they interpret family narratives. Consequently, age-cohort differences may moderate the associations of family historical communication with educational experience and inheritance value. These dimensions concern learning orientations and value transmission. One plausible mechanism is that younger and middle-aged tourists may rely more heavily on family narratives as an interpretive lens when processing on-site educational content, whereas judgments about inheritance value may also be shaped by broader institutions such as schooling, media, and public commemoration. This possibility provides a basis for expecting age-cohort variation in some, but not necessarily all, pathways from family historical communication to subjective meaning-making.

H8a. *Age-cohort differences (middle-aged vs. older cohorts) moderate the relationship between family historical communication and educational experience.*

H8b. *Age-cohort differences (younger vs. older cohorts) moderate the relationship between family historical communication and educational experience.*

H9a. *Age-cohort differences (middle-aged vs. older cohorts) moderate the relationship between family historical communication and inheritance value.*

H9b. *Age-cohort differences (younger vs. older cohorts) moderate the relationship between family historical communication and inheritance value.*

Based on the formulated hypotheses, Figure 1 illustrates the proposed theoretical framework. Family historical communication (FHC) is positioned as a key pre-visit social context in the model. Educational experience (EE), historical identity (HI), and inheritance value (IV) are modeled as mediating variables and represent three dimensions of subjective heritage meaning-making. Behavioral intentions (BI) are included as the outcome variable. Furthermore, age cohorts are incorporated as moderators to examine age-cohort differences in the associations between family historical communication and the cognitive and evaluative dimensions of tourists' subjective meaning-making.

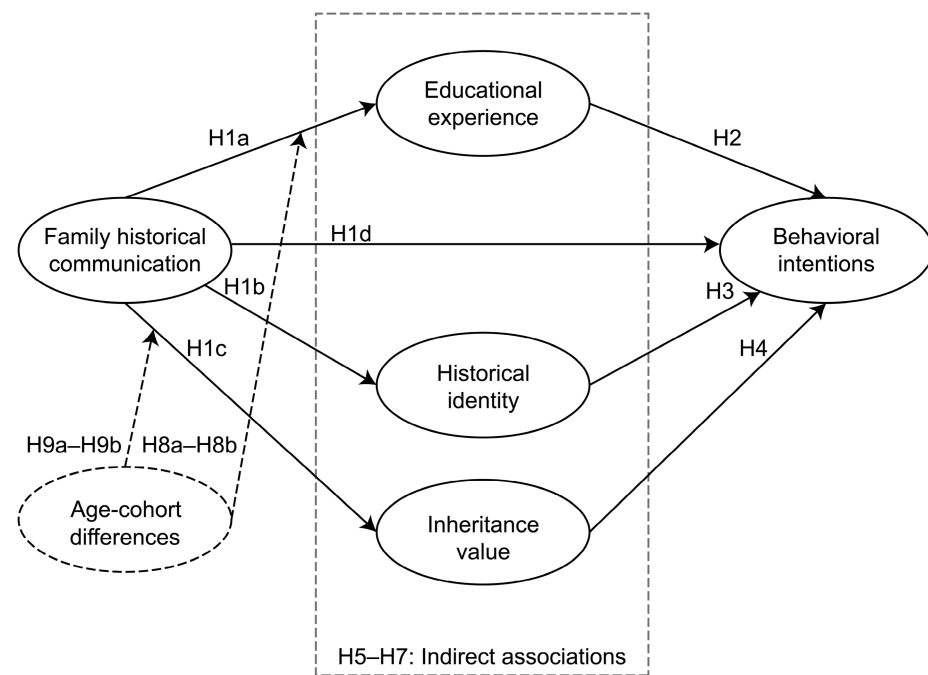


Figure 1. Theoretical framework. Note: BI refers to tourism-supportive behavioral intentions (revisit, recommendation, and positive word-of-mouth).

3. Methodology

Existing heritage tourism research uses diverse methodological approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method designs, to examine tourists' motivations and behavioral intentions [63]. This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the direct and indirect relationships among family historical communication, subjective heritage meaning-making, and behavioral intentions. This quantitative approach is appropriate for examining aggregate relational patterns and comparing age-cohort differences, rather than focusing on individual interpretive cases.

3.1. Measurement Development

Alongside demographic and motivational data, the questionnaire assessed five core constructs using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Measurement items were adapted from established literature and contextually refined for sustainable heritage tourism in Dandong, while preserving their original conceptual meanings. In the questionnaire, "Dandong's red tourism sites" referred to heritage sites, memorials, museums, and commemorative landscapes associated with revolutionary and wartime memory in Dandong. The term was used as a context-specific descriptor commonly recognized in China, rather than as a normative or political category.

The questionnaire measured five constructs: (1) family historical communication, using three items adapted from Wang et al. [64]; (2) educational experience, using four items based on Chen and Gao [65] and Zhou [66]; (3) historical identity, using three items drawn from Sun et al. [67] and Yang et al. [68]; (4) perceived inheritance value, using three items based on Li et al. [69] and Chen and Cheng [70]; and (5) behavioral intentions, using three items adapted from Wang et al. [71] and He [72]. In this study, the behavioral intention items capture tourism-supportive behavioral intentions, specifically revisit intention, recommendation intention, and positive word-of-mouth intention, rather than direct conservation-related behavior. The measurement items were designed to assess construct-specific meanings rather than respondents' general favorable attitudes toward red tourism or national historical narratives.

Before the formal survey, three experts in heritage tourism and family sociology evaluated the questionnaire to ensure content validity. A pilot test with 30 tourists who had recently visited Dandong ($n = 30$) was conducted to assess item clarity, wording accuracy, and contextual appropriateness. Respondents completed the full questionnaire and were asked to report any difficulties in understanding the items. Minor revisions were made based on their feedback before final data collection. The finalized measurement items, including the full wording of the BI indicators, are provided in Table A1.

3.2. Data Collection

Because subjective meaning-making relies on post-visit reflection rather than immediate on-site reactions, an online survey was deemed appropriate for capturing these cognitive processes and reflective evaluations [73,74]. Participants were recruited through an online survey via SOJUMP (<http://www.sojump.com/>). The survey was distributed via travel-related social media platforms and online community networks between November 2024 and March 2025. Using a purposive sampling strategy, the study included two strict screening questions at the beginning of the survey. These questions were intended to reduce recall bias and improve the reliability of respondents' subjective reflections on intergenerational transmission and on-site experiences. Respondents were required to confirm: (1) that they had visited Dandong's red tourism sites, and (2) that their most recent visit occurred within the past 24 months. Only respondents who met both criteria were allowed to proceed.

To reduce potential common method bias and social desirability bias, the survey was completed anonymously, and the order of items was randomized. These procedures were intended to reduce evaluation pressure and limit respondents' ability to infer relationships among the items.

Following established age-based cohort divisions [75,76], respondents were categorized into three cohorts: the younger cohort (20–39 years), the middle-aged cohort (40–59 years), and the older cohort (60–79 years). From a life-course perspective, this classification reflects age-graded social roles and institutionalized transitions across the life span [77]. Quota sampling was used to obtain relatively balanced cohort sizes for comparative analysis [78]. To improve data quality, attention-check questions were embedded in the survey. Responses exhibiting abnormally short completion times were excluded. Of 643 collected responses, 32 invalid responses were removed, resulting in a final sample of 611 valid responses for structural analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis Process

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted using SmartPLS 4 to examine complex interpretive relationships in heritage tourism contexts. As a variance-based approach, PLS-SEM is highly suitable for complex predictive models, exploratory research, and non-normal data distributions [79]. The analysis followed a standard two-stage process: first, the measurement model was assessed for internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity; second, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships. Furthermore, the rule of thumb suggests that the sample size should be at least 10 times the maximum number of inner or outer model links pointing to any latent variable [80]. With 3–4 reflective indicators per construct and an effective sample size of 611, the data exceeded the minimum sample requirements for PLS-SEM analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 611 valid respondents. The sample comprised a slightly higher proportion of females (55.97%) than males (44.03%). In terms of age distribution, the data show a relatively balanced representation across age cohorts: the younger cohort (aged 20–39) constituted the largest group at 36.17%, followed closely by the middle-aged cohort (aged 40–59) at 32.73%, and the older cohort (aged 60–79) at 31.10%. This balanced distribution provides a useful basis for the subsequent comparative analyses.

Table 1. Demographic profiles ($n = 611$).

Demographic	N (%)
Gender	
Male	269 (44.03)
Female	342 (55.97)
Age	
Younger cohort (20–39)	221 (36.17)
Middle-aged cohort (40–59)	200 (32.73)
Older cohort (60–79)	190 (31.10)
Education	
High school or less	218 (35.68)
Undergraduate	334 (54.66)
Postgraduate	59 (9.66)
Occupation	
Student	110 (18.00)
Civil servant	39 (6.38)
Staff of companies and institutions	105 (17.19)
Self-employed	171 (27.99)
Retired	149 (24.39)
Unemployed	3 (0.49)
Other	34 (5.56)

Regarding educational attainment, most respondents had relatively high levels of education, with 64.32% holding an undergraduate degree or higher. The occupational backgrounds of the sample were diverse, mainly including self-employed individuals (27.99%), retirees (24.39%), students (18.00%), and employees of companies or institutions (17.19%). This diversity suggests that the sample includes a relatively broad occupational cross-section.

Furthermore, the survey assessed tourists' primary motivations for visiting Dandong (Figure 2). Nearly half of the respondents (49.92%) identified red tourism as their primary motivation. Other reported motivations included green tourism (14.89%), experiencing Chinese-Korean culture (13.58%), border tourism (11.46%), and culinary experiences (10.15%). These findings indicate that red tourism was the most frequently reported motivation for visiting Dandong, supporting the contextual relevance of the selected sample for this study.

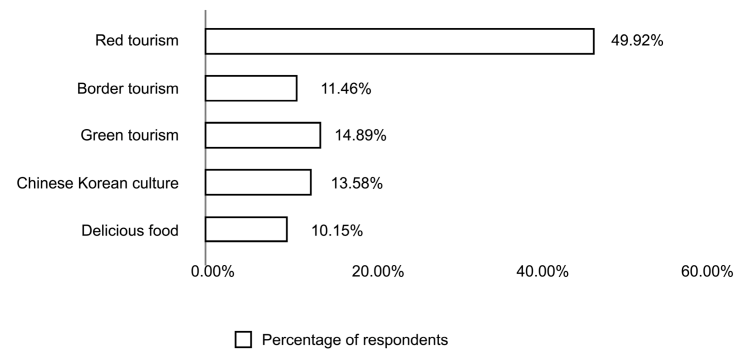


Figure 2. Tourist motivations.

4.2. Assessment of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated using SmartPLS 4. As noted by Hair et al. [81], SmartPLS 4 is an analytical tool based on partial least squares rather than covariance-based estimation, enabling the estimation of outer loadings through the PLS-SEM algorithm. As presented in Table 2, the measurement model shows satisfactory reliability and validity. First, all outer loadings in this study exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, supporting indicator reliability. Second, all composite reliability (CR) values are greater than 0.85, indicating good internal consistency across the measurement scales. Third, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients similarly exceed 0.70, further supporting the internal consistency of the constructs. Finally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all latent variables are above 0.60, indicating acceptable convergent validity for all constructs.

Table 2. Assessment of measurement model.

Construct	Item	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Family historical communication (FHC)	FHC1	0.819	0.771	0.868	0.686
	FHC2	0.866			
	FHC3	0.800			
Educational experience (EE)	EE1	0.738	0.796	0.867	0.621
	EE2	0.836			
	EE3	0.768			
	EE4	0.805			
Historical identity (HI)	HI1	0.819	0.787	0.875	0.701
	HI2	0.844			
	HI3	0.849			
Inheritance value (IV)	IV1	0.805	0.759	0.861	0.675
	IV2	0.828			
	IV3	0.831			
Behavioral intentions (BI)	BI1	0.860	0.784	0.874	0.698
	BI2	0.827			
	BI3	0.819			

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the discriminant validity assessment based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent construct (represented by the diagonal values) is strictly greater than its correlation coefficient.

cients with all other constructs (the off-diagonal values). This meets the Fornell-Larcker criterion, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model.

Table 3. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker).

	BI	EE	FHC	HI	IV
BI	0.836				
EE	0.650	0.788			
FHC	0.558	0.652	0.828		
HI	0.705	0.696	0.563	0.837	
IV	0.648	0.684	0.514	0.646	0.821

Note: Values on the diagonal represent the square root of AVE for a construct.

Table 4. Discriminant validity (HTMT ratio).

	BI	EE	FHC	HI	IV
BI					
EE	0.820				
FHC	0.719	0.830			
HI	0.897	0.881	0.718		
IV	0.838	0.878	0.667	0.836	

To provide an additional assessment, the HTMT ratio was also evaluated. While HTMT values approaching 1 indicate a lack of discriminant validity, Table 4 shows that all HTMT values in this study fall below the established threshold of 0.90 (with the highest value being 0.897). The bootstrapped HTMT confidence intervals did not include 1. The HTMT values approaching the 0.90 threshold may reflect the shared heritage-related research context of several constructs. At the theoretical level, however, the constructs are grounded in distinct conceptual domains within heritage tourism research. Consequently, both criteria support acceptable discriminant validity and the empirical distinctness of the constructs within the model.

4.3. Common Method Bias

Because the data were collected through a single self-reported survey instrument, common method bias (CMB) was systematically evaluated using three distinct statistical approaches. First, Harman's single-factor test was conducted using exploratory factor analysis. The unrotated principal component analysis showed that the largest single factor accounted for 47.72% of the total variance, which is below the recommended 50% threshold.

Second, following the procedure outlined by Liang et al. [82], an unmeasured latent method construct was introduced into the PLS model and linked to the items of all principal constructs. The results indicate that the average substantively explained variance is 0.673, whereas the average method-based variance is only 0.004 (see Table A2). Furthermore, the substantive factor loadings are statistically significant, while most method factor loadings are low and non-significant. Although the method factor loadings for FHC1, EE3, IV1, and IV3 were statistically significant, their explanatory power was very small compared with the corresponding substantive loadings. These results suggest that common method bias does not appear to constitute a dominant source of variance in the observed measures.

Finally, a full collinearity assessment was performed by examining the variance inflation factors (VIFs) for all latent constructs. The analysis shows that all VIF values range

from 1.000 to 2.778, which are below the conservative threshold of 3.3. Taken together, these results suggest that common method bias is unlikely to have materially biased the main findings, although its presence cannot be ruled out entirely.

4.4. Structural Model

Following the assessment of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among the core constructs (FHC, EE, HI, IV, and BI). In accordance with PLS-SEM guidelines [81], the structural model was assessed using R^2 (explained variance), Q^2 (predictive relevance), f^2 (effect size), and the statistical significance of the path coefficients.

In the structural model, the R^2 value for behavioral intentions (BI) was 59.1%, while the R^2 values for educational experience (EE), historical identity (HI), and inheritance value (IV) were 42.5%, 31.7%, and 26.5%, respectively. These results indicate that the model has acceptable explanatory power for the endogenous constructs. Furthermore, the Q^2 values for EE (0.422), HI (0.313), IV (0.261), and BI (0.307) were all strictly greater than zero, indicating the predictive relevance of the model. Regarding the effect sizes (f^2), FHC ($f^2 = 0.023$), HI ($f^2 = 0.160$), and IV ($f^2 = 0.064$) showed small to medium effects in relation to BI, whereas EE showed a comparatively smaller effect size ($f^2 = 0.014$). In addition, FHC showed large f^2 values in relation to EE (0.739), HI (0.463), and IV (0.360).

Tables 5–7 present the structural model and hypothesis-testing results obtained using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resamples [81].

Table 5. Direct path hypothesis testing results.

Hypotheses/Paths	Path Coefficient	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p-Values	Remarks
H1a: FHC → EE	0.652 ***	0.653	0.026	25.113	0.000	Supported
H1b: FHC → HI	0.563 ***	0.563	0.033	17.036	0.000	Supported
H1c: FHC → IV	0.514 ***	0.515	0.033	15.603	0.000	Supported
H1d: FHC → BI	0.131 **	0.131	0.042	3.112	0.002	Supported
H2: EE → BI	0.127 *	0.128	0.056	2.275	0.023	Supported
H3: HI → BI	0.382 ***	0.381	0.053	7.184	0.000	Supported
H4: IV → BI	0.237 ***	0.237	0.052	4.550	0.000	Supported
Control variables						
Gender	−0.009	−0.010	0.053	0.167	0.867	
Edu (High school or less)	0.120	0.119	0.093	1.292	0.196	
Edu (Undergraduate)	0.014	0.014	0.090	0.150	0.880	
Travel motivation	0.080	0.079	0.054	1.484	0.138	

Note: → denotes a hypothesized structural path; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

As detailed in Table 5, all hypothesized direct relationships were statistically significant, supporting the corresponding hypotheses. Specifically, FHC was positively associated with EE ($\beta = 0.652$, $p < 0.001$), HI ($\beta = 0.563$, $p < 0.001$), IV ($\beta = 0.514$, $p < 0.001$), and BI ($\beta = 0.131$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d. In addition, EE ($\beta = 0.127$, $p < 0.05$), HI ($\beta = 0.382$, $p < 0.001$), and IV ($\beta = 0.237$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated with BI, supporting H2, H3, and H4. Finally, the control variables included in the model (gender, education, and travel motivation) exhibited negligible and non-significant path coefficients, suggesting that the core relationships remained largely consistent after these variables were included.

To assess statistical mediation, the variance accounted for (VAF) was calculated to describe the relative magnitude of the indirect associations. As detailed in Table 6, statistically

significant indirect associations were observed between FHC and BI through historical identity (HI) ($\beta = 0.215$, $p < 0.001$) and inheritance value (IV) ($\beta = 0.122$, $p < 0.001$). The VAF values for these two paths were 39.09% and 22.18%, respectively. Since both values fell within the 20–80% range, HI and IV were categorized as showing partial mediation. Furthermore, the indirect association between FHC and BI through educational experience (EE) was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.083$, $p < 0.05$). However, its corresponding VAF value was 15.09%, which was below the 20% threshold, suggesting that EE shows a comparatively limited mediating role [81].

Table 6. Results of mediation analysis.

Hypotheses/Paths	Path Coefficient	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	<i>p</i> -Values	VAF
H5: FHC → EE → BI	0.083 *	0.083	0.036	2.285	0.022	15.09%
H6: FHC → HI → BI	0.215 ***	0.215	0.033	6.491	0.000	39.09%
H7: FHC → IV → BI	0.122 ***	0.122	0.027	4.457	0.000	22.18%

Note: → denotes a hypothesized structural path; * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 7. Results of moderation analysis.

Hypotheses/Paths	Path Coefficient				95% Confidence Interval (Bias-Corrected)	<i>p</i> -Values	Remarks
	Older	Middle-Aged	Younger	Difference			
H8a: FHC → EE	0.486	0.684	-	0.198	[0.006, 0.388]	0.044	Supported
H8b: FHC → EE	0.486	-	0.700	0.214	[0.039, 0.380]	0.014	Supported
H9a: FHC → IV	0.533	0.411	-	−0.122	[−0.304, 0.071]	0.201	Not supported
H9b: FHC → IV	0.533	-	0.574	0.041	[−0.156, 0.215]	0.662	Not supported

Note: → denotes a hypothesized structural path; The older cohort was used as the reference group. Confidence intervals and *p* values refer to the differences from the older cohort.

Prior to examining age-cohort moderation, the measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM) procedure was conducted using 5000 permutations. Table A3 presents the stage-by-stage MICOM results for each pairwise age-cohort comparison, including the conclusions for configurational invariance, compositional invariance, and the equality of means and variances where applicable. The results show that configurational invariance and compositional invariance were established across all pairwise age-cohort comparisons, indicating partial measurement invariance and supporting the subsequent age-cohort moderation analysis. To evaluate the moderating effects, two dummy variables—middle-aged and younger cohorts—were created, using the older cohort as the baseline reference group. Table 7 reports the age-cohort moderation results for the relationship between FHC and educational experience (EE). Compared with the older cohort, the FHC–EE association was more pronounced in both the middle-aged cohort (difference = 0.198, CI [0.006, 0.388], $p < 0.05$) and the younger cohort (difference = 0.214, CI [0.039, 0.380], $p < 0.05$), supporting hypotheses H8a and H8b. By contrast, age-cohort differences did not significantly moderate the relationship between FHC and inheritance value (IV). The differences for both the middle-aged cohort (difference = −0.122, CI [−0.304, 0.071], $p > 0.05$) and the younger cohort (difference = 0.041, CI [−0.156, 0.215], $p > 0.05$) were not statistically significant. Accordingly, H9a and H9b were not supported.

5. Discussion

Against the backdrop of growing attention to heritage sustainability, this study constructs an analytical framework to examine the relationships among family historical communication, tourists' subjective heritage meaning-making, and behavioral intentions,

while also accounting for age-cohort differences. More specifically, the findings support the view that family historical communication should be understood as a distinct communicative and intergenerational process, rather than as a mere proxy for prior knowledge or a general favorable orientation toward national history. This helps specify the study's theoretical contribution to heritage tourism research.

Rather than treating educational experience, historical identity, and inheritance value as isolated variables, this study conceptualizes them as interrelated yet theoretically distinct dimensions within a layered process of subjective heritage meaning-making. The findings help clarify the role of the family as an important socialization context in heritage tourism and offer a theoretical interpretation of why affective and evaluative dimensions are more closely aligned with behavioral intentions than purely cognitive engagement. They also provide insights for current discussions on heritage sustainability as emphasized in the SDGs.

The findings first show that family historical communication (FHC) is positively associated with educational experience (EE), historical identity (HI), inheritance value (IV), and behavioral intentions (BI). This suggests that the family can be understood as an important interpretive context for heritage meanings and tourists' continued engagement with heritage tourism. Through storytelling, value articulation, and intergenerational dialog, the family may provide a pre-visit interpretive orientation for how tourists perceive, evaluate, and emotionally internalize heritage meanings related to national history. Accordingly, the family's role in sustainable heritage tourism can be understood as an important bridge between national historical narratives and tourists' personal meaning construction. This finding extends prior research by suggesting that family narratives are closely related to historical consciousness [83], which may be reflected in everyday recreational choices such as heritage travel [84]. Tourists' interpretive frameworks for heritage sites may not be formed only during the visit but are also connected with family-based intergenerational transmission and memory practices prior to visitation.

The findings further show that EE, HI, and IV are positively associated with BI, reflecting distinct yet interrelated expressions of subjective meaning-making. Tourists are not merely passive recipients of national narratives presented by heritage sites; rather, they engage in an internal process of placing themselves within a historical context and assigning personal meaning. Specifically, EE reflects the cognitive dimension. While EE constitutes an important dimension of cultural tourism experiences [85], the relatively small effect size of EE suggests that cognition alone has a limited association with behavioral intentions. Familiarity with historical knowledge may reinforce understanding but does not necessarily correspond to stronger behavioral intentions [86]. HI represents the affective or self-referential dimension. By connecting national history with personal identity, heritage narratives may align with a stronger sense of historical belonging [87], which may correspond to behavioral intentions. Finally, IV captures the evaluative dimension, reflecting a forward-looking normative commitment. Viewing revolutionary history as a collective treasure may be accompanied by moral obligations, allowing heritage participation to be understood as a conscious form of cultural preservation [88]. These findings highlight that participation in heritage tourism is a layered process of subjective meaning-making, in which tourists interpret heritage significance through cognitive understanding, emotional identification, and evaluative judgments. At the same time, these behavioral outcomes should be interpreted as tourism-supportive intentions rather than direct evidence of conservation behavior.

The mediation findings indicate that HI and IV show partial mediation in the relationship between FHC and BI. The immersive heritage environment provides a space for reflecting on the past and constructing personal meaning. Within this framework, HI is associated with the connection between externally encountered family narratives and

self-relevant meanings, which may correspond to tourists' behavioral intentions [89]. Similarly, IV is involved in the FHC–BI relationship, reflecting a sense of responsibility toward preserving heritage for future generations [45,90], which may be aligned with revisit and recommendation intentions. In comparison, the modest mediating role of EE (VAF < 20%) further illustrates the layered nature of subjective meaning-making. Compared with the affective and evaluative dimensions of subjective meaning-making, the indirect association between family historical communication and behavioral intentions appears less evident through cognitive engagement with heritage. One plausible explanation is that family historical communication may be understood as a cumulative and emotionally embedded meaning system rather than merely as an informational input. Family narratives may be reinforced through repeated interaction, relational trust, and shared memory. When these narratives are connected with historical identity and inheritance value, they may be more closely related to personal relevance, belonging, and a sense of responsibility. These dimensions appear more closely aligned with revisit and recommendation intentions than cognitive learning alone. By contrast, educational experience mainly reflects cognitive learning during the visit, which may be associated with deeper understanding but does not necessarily correspond to the same degree of personal relevance or normative commitment. This interpretation is consistent with Su and Rahman [91], who suggested that cognitive or interpretive engagement alone may not necessarily correspond to behavioral advocacy because knowledge acquisition and interpretation primarily involve intellectual understanding rather than deeper psychological connection. By contrast, emotional resonance, psychological attachment, personal relevance, and identity-related processes may help explain why the indirect association between family historical communication and behavioral intentions is more evident through affective and evaluative dimensions. The mediation results are consistent with the view that heritage tourism increasingly emphasizes symbolic engagement rather than the mere acquisition of historical knowledge or the pursuit of authenticity [92]. These findings also point to a broader understanding of heritage sustainability. The enduring vitality of heritage destinations is closely related to emotional attachment and a sense of responsibility. These dimensions may be reflected in tourists' revisit and recommendation intentions and, in this sense, may indirectly support heritage preservation and the transmission of heritage meanings across generations. Accordingly, the implications for sustainability should be understood in terms of tourism-supportive engagement and socio-cultural continuity, rather than as direct evidence of conservation practice.

The moderation results show that the FHC–EE association appears more pronounced among the younger and middle-aged cohorts than among the older cohort. Age cohorts lacking direct experience of the revolutionary era rely heavily on mediated channels, with family narratives serving as a vital interpretive resource for on-site educational experiences [93,94]. A possible mechanism is that younger and middle-aged tourists may use family narratives as an interpretive lens for organizing and making sense of educational content encountered on-site. For these cohorts, family communication may be more closely associated with the perceived educational significance of the heritage experience. In contrast, older visitors may already possess more stable cognitive frameworks grounded in earlier life experiences and social memories [95]. For the older cohort, family discussions may be more closely connected with existing understandings than with new educational interpretations. Interestingly, age-cohort differences did not significantly moderate the relationship between FHC and IV. According to Schwartz [96], values serve as trans-situational guiding principles. The belief that revolutionary heritage should be preserved may therefore represent a shared collective responsibility rather than an age-specific attitude [97]. Accordingly, the perceived importance of heritage transmission remains relatively sta-

ble across age cohorts. Importantly, judgments about inheritance value may be shaped by a broader constellation of influences, including formal schooling, media discourse, public commemoration, and institutional interpretation. This may help explain why age-cohort moderation was observed for the educational experience pathway but not for the inheritance value pathway. Inheritance value may represent a relatively stable normative orientation associated with multiple social channels, which may limit the age-specific role of family communication in this relationship. These findings suggest that age-sensitive interpretation strategies may support more inclusive visitor engagement and contribute to the socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism.

This study is grounded in the context of red tourism in China, and its findings should be interpreted in relation to this culturally specific environment. In this context, family-based historical communication is closely linked to state-endorsed historical narratives and to tourists' heritage meaning-making. Accordingly, the generalizability of the findings to other forms of heritage tourism should be approached with caution, especially where heritage interpretation is embedded in different cultural, symbolic, institutional, or memory contexts. Despite this, the findings are relevant to heritage tourism settings associated with war memory, national narratives, historical commemoration, and identity construction, particularly where personal or family narratives interact with collective memory and heritage interpretation.

The findings respond to a key gap in heritage tourism research by suggesting that heritage sustainability involves not only destination attributes and on-site experiences but also the family as an important interpretive context bridging national macro-narratives and micro-level personal meaning. In this regard, the study is most directly related to the tourism-supportive and socio-cultural dimensions of heritage sustainability, rather than to broader forms of conservation or stewardship behavior. This study contributes to the understanding of the subjective construction of heritage meaning by conceptualizing it as a multidimensional internalization process. By identifying age-cohort differences, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the relationships between family communication and different dimensions of subjective heritage meaning-making, while highlighting the importance of age-group heterogeneity for inclusive heritage tourism strategies.

6. Conclusions

This study examined how family historical communication is associated with visitors' subjective interpretation of heritage and their tourism-supportive behavioral intentions in the context of sustainable heritage tourism. Using a quantitative approach, the study proposed a multidimensional framework of subjective heritage meaning-making, including cognitive understanding, emotional identification, and evaluative judgment. The study also considered age-cohort differences in the relationships between family historical communication and different dimensions of subjective heritage meaning-making.

The findings first show that family historical communication is positively associated with tourists' subjective heritage meaning-making and behavioral intentions. This suggests that the family may be understood as an important pre-visit social context closely related to both heritage interpretation and behavioral tendencies. Second, each dimension of subjective meaning-making is positively associated with behavioral intentions. This finding indicates that tourists' subjective meaning-making is closely connected with their willingness to revisit and recommend heritage destinations. However, these behavioral intentions should be interpreted as practical and partial indicators of tourism-supportive engagement, rather than as a comprehensive measure of conservation-related behavior. It also suggests that subjective interpretation is relevant to understanding the socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism. Third, the mediation results indicate that, in the rela-

tionship between family historical communication and behavioral intentions, the indirect associations through historical identity and inheritance value are more evident than the corresponding indirect association through educational experience. Lastly, the association between family historical communication and educational experience varies across age cohorts and appears more evident among younger and middle-aged tourists than among older tourists. This finding highlights the importance of recognizing age-cohort differences when designing inclusive and age-sensitive heritage interpretation strategies. Theoretically, this study contributes to heritage tourism research by positioning family historical communication as a pre-trip interpretive context associated with tourists' subjective heritage meaning-making, rather than merely as a background condition of memory transmission. It also advances a multidimensional framework linking prior social experiences with the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of meaning-making and behavioral intentions, while considering age-cohort variation in these associations. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of family-based historical communication and subjective heritage meaning-making for understanding the tourism-supportive and socio-cultural dimensions of heritage sustainability.

6.1. Practical Implications

First, destination management organizations (DMOs) should view the family as an important interpretive unit in sustainable heritage tourism. Heritage interpretation should not rely only on official narratives or one-way information transmission. Instead, heritage sites could design interpretation programs that encourage visitors to connect national history with personal and family memories. For example, exhibition spaces could include family memory-sharing areas, oral history corners, and parent–child dialog prompts that encourage visitors to discuss how historical events are remembered within families. Such practices could bring family narratives into heritage interpretation and make the meaning-making process more participatory.

Second, heritage managers should pay greater attention to the affective and evaluative dimensions of heritage interpretation. DMOs could create opportunities for visitors to perceive personal relevance, experience emotional resonance, and develop a sense of responsibility for heritage transmission. Practical strategies may include guided reflection questions, commemorative activities, and symbolic ritual experiences. These approaches may help visitors experience heritage as personally meaningful and socially significant.

Third, DMOs should consider age-cohort differences when designing interpretation and experiential programs. For younger and middle-aged tourists, more interactive formats, such as immersive storytelling and gamified interpretation, may support their engagement with heritage narratives. For older tourists, heritage sites may provide reflective spaces, commemorative symbols, and opportunities to share personal or family memories, as these forms may resonate more closely with lived experience and memory-based reflection. Such strategies may support more inclusive visitor engagement and contribute to the socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future longitudinal studies could examine how the relationships between family historical communication and heritage experiences evolve over time. Second, Dandong's distinctive geopolitical status as a border city may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could replicate this study in diverse heritage tourism contexts to assess whether similar relational patterns can be observed. Third, although this study examined age-cohort differences, this approach cannot capture

intergenerational differences in a strict sense. Future research could include family-based multi-generational samples, such as grandparents, parents, and children, to examine how historical narratives are interpreted, negotiated, and transmitted within families. Fourth, the operationalization of behavioral intentions in this study focuses on revisit intention, recommendation intention, and positive word-of-mouth intention. While these indicators capture tourism-supportive engagement, they do not directly measure conservation actions, heritage stewardship, or actual intergenerational transmission practices. Future research could incorporate broader sustainability-related outcomes, such as participation in heritage preservation, civic support for conservation, or family-based heritage teaching practices.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Measurement of scale items.

Construct	Item Code	Question
Family historical communication	FHC1	In my family, the history and memories of WRUAK are considered important and worthy of attention
	FHC2	Family members from different generations (such as parents, grandparents, and children) often talk about stories of WRUAK or heroic figures in daily conversations
	FHC3	I often watch, read or discuss about films or articles related to the history of WRUAK or Dandong's red tourism with my family
Educational experience	EE1	Visiting red tourism sites in Dandong (such as the WRUAK Memorial Hall and the Broken Bridge over the Yalu River) deepened my systematic understanding of the history of WRUAK
	EE2	Participating in Dandong red tourism has prompted me to be more proactive in learning relevant historical knowledge
	EE3	Tour guides or explanations in Dandong red tourism sites allow me to learn more about the core values of the red culture of WRUAK
	EE4	Compared to learning through books or classrooms, red tourism in Dandong has given me a more vivid and profound understanding of the history and significance of WRUAK

Table A1. *Cont.*

Construct	Item Code	Question
Historical identity	HI1	The history of WRUAK and the red culture have had a significant impact on the formation of my personal values
	HI2	Recognizing the significance of WRUAK helps me better understand the relationship between myself and the history of my country
	HI3	I have a strong sense of identification with the revolutionary history of WRUAK and the red cultural values it represents
Inheritance value	IV1	I believe that Dandong's red tourism helps to pass on the historical memory and spirit of WRUAK to future generations
	IV2	I believe that young people's participation in Dandong's red tourism is very important for understanding the history of WRUAK and red culture
	IV3	I believe that red tourism cities like Dandong can connect people of different generations through shared historical memories.
Behavioral intention	BI1	I will recommend Dandong's red tourism attractions to others
	BI2	I will visit Dandong's red tourism attractions again
	BI3	I will share positive comments of Dandong's red tourism sites with others

Note: BI refers to tourism-supportive behavioral intentions, including revisit intention, recommendation intention, and positive word-of-mouth intention, rather than conservation-related behavior.

Table A2. Common method bias analysis.

Construct	Item	Substantive Factor Loadings (R1)	R1 ²	Method Factor Loading (R2)	R2 ²
Family historical communication	FHC1	0.809 ***	0.654	0.086 *	0.007
	FHC2	0.871 ***	0.759	−0.059	0.003
	FHC3	0.804 ***	0.646	−0.026	0.001
Educational experience	EE1	0.743 ***	0.552	0.015	0.000
	EE2	0.832 ***	0.692	0.036	0.001
	EE3	0.772 ***	0.596	−0.143 *	0.020
	EE4	0.801 ***	0.642	0.084	0.007
Historical identity	HI1	0.826 ***	0.682	0.031	0.001
	HI2	0.837 ***	0.701	−0.009	0.000
	HI3	0.848 ***	0.719	−0.020	0.000
Inheritance value	IV1	0.814 ***	0.663	−0.090 *	0.008
	IV2	0.828 ***	0.686	−0.022	0.000
	IV3	0.823 ***	0.677	0.109 *	0.012
Behavioral intentions	BI1	0.862 ***	0.743	0.012	0.000
	BI2	0.831 ***	0.691	−0.034	0.001
	BI3	0.813 ***	0.661	0.022	0.000
Average		0.820	0.673	−0.001	0.004

Note: * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A3. Results of invariance measurement testing using permutation.

Age Groups	Constructs	Configurational Invariance (Step 1)	Compositional Invariance (Step 2)		Partial Measurement Invariance	Equal Mean Assessment (Step 3a)		Equal Variance Assessment (Step 3b)		Full Measurement Invariance
			Original Correlation	5.0%		Original Differences	Confidence Interval	Original Differences	Confidence Interval	
Older vs. Middle-aged	BI	Yes	0.999	0.997	Yes	0.126	[−0.201, 0.198]	−0.451	[−0.364, 0.373]	Yes/No
	EE	Yes	0.999	0.996	Yes	0.180	[−0.196, 0.197]	−0.585	[−0.441, 0.450]	Yes/No
	FHC	Yes	0.999	0.996	Yes	0.115	[−0.206, 0.200]	−0.408	[−0.308, 0.318]	Yes/No
	HI	Yes	1.000	0.995	Yes	0.069	[−0.198, 0.198]	−0.295	[−0.366, 0.372]	Yes/Yes
	IV	Yes	0.999	0.992	Yes	0.020	[−0.194, 0.198]	−0.130	[−0.372, 0.373]	Yes/Yes
Older vs. Younger	BI	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.354	[−0.200, 0.193]	−0.763	[−0.340, 0.335]	No/No
	EE	Yes	0.999	0.998	Yes	0.340	[−0.199, 0.187]	−0.672	[−0.312, 0.292]	No/No
	FHC	Yes	0.999	0.997	Yes	0.332	[−0.201, 0.192]	−0.477	[−0.263, 0.260]	No/No
	HI	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.293	[−0.200, 0.194]	−0.824	[−0.356, 0.344]	No/No
	IV	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.269	[−0.196, 0.191]	−0.589	[−0.354, 0.359]	No/No
Middle-aged vs. Younger	BI	Yes	0.999	0.999	Yes	0.225	[−0.187, 0.185]	−0.308	[−0.325, 0.340]	No/Yes
	EE	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.152	[−0.186, 0.187]	−0.098	[−0.335, 0.313]	Yes/Yes
	FHC	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.204	[−0.182, 0.192]	−0.067	[−0.259, 0.249]	No/Yes
	HI	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.224	[−0.194, 0.190]	−0.518	[−0.337, 0.326]	No/No
	IV	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.247	[−0.186, 0.188]	−0.457	[−0.351, 0.350]	No/No

Note: MICOM was conducted for all pairwise age-cohort comparisons to assess measurement invariance across the three age cohorts. The middle-aged versus younger comparison was included to provide a complete assessment of measurement invariance. In the subsequent moderation analysis, the older cohort was used as the reference group; therefore, the hypothesis tests focused on comparisons of the middle-aged and younger cohorts with the older cohort.

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