

THE INFLUENCE OF DESTINATION IMAGE AND SERVICE INNOVATION ON TOURIST LOYALTY: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED VALUE

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most important service industries in the world today. It is not only the pillar industry of the national economy, but also has important economic, social, cultural and Environmental Values. Due to the increasingly fierce competition among tourist destinations, the demand for tourists is becoming more diverse. Loyal tourists help stabilize market share, reduce marketing costs and improve Customer lifetime value. This study applies relevant theories and adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore the impact mechanism of destination image, service innovation, and perceived value on tourist loyalty. The research results indicate that the image of tourist destinations, service innovation, and perceived value have a positive impact on tourist loyalty, while the image of tourist destinations and service innovation mediate tourist loyalty through perceived value. The results of this study contribute to providing reference and inspiration for tourism destinations and tourism enterprises, and provide new ideas and methods for theoretical research and practical applications in the tourism discipline.

Keywords: Tourism destination image, Service innovation, Perceived value, Tourist loyalty

Introduction

Research background

Tourism is one of the most important service industries in the world today. It is not only the pillar industry of the national economy, but also has important economic, social, cultural and Environmental Values. Due to the increasingly fierce competition among tourist destinations, the demand for tourists is becoming more diverse. Loyal tourists help stabilize market share, reduce marketing costs and improve Customer lifetime value (Bowen&Chen, 2001). Therefore, how to enhance tourists' loyalty to tourist destinations is an important issue. Previous studies have shown that the image of tourist destinations, service innovation, and perceived value of tourists are important factors affecting tourist loyalty. The destination image is closely related to tourists' decision-making process, destination selection, evaluation experience, and future travel willingness (Baloglu&McCleary, 1999), and it also has a significant impact on tourists' loyalty. Service innovation can meet the diverse needs and experiences of tourists. Through continuous innovation and improvement of products or services, tourism enterprises can improve the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists. Perceived value is becoming the primary focus of destination marketers, as the competitive advantage of a destination depends on its ability to create and disseminate its core values (Sánchez et al., 2006). Therefore, by conducting in-depth research on the impact mechanisms of tourism destination image, service innovation, and tourist perceived value on tourist loyalty, we can provide sustainable development strategies and directions for the tourism industry, and provide new ideas and methods for theoretical research and practical application of the tourism discipline.

Problem statement

The image of a tourist destination is the overall impression of the destination by tourists, which is the sum of their beliefs, ideals, and impressions of a certain place (Assaker&Hallak, 2013). Therefore, how to create a distinct and unique destination image,enhance tourists' overall impression of the tourist destination, and thereby enhance tourists'loyalty to the tourist destination has become a crucial issue.

The tourism industry promotes further improvement of service quality through serviceinnovation, improves service processes, creates value for customers, and ultimately transforms this behavior into a competitive advantage activity for enterprises (Lai Ran, 2014).Therefore, how to continuously innovate tourism services to meet the personalized needs and customization requirements of tourists, thereby improving the service quality and level of the tourism industry, and enhancing tourist loyalty has become a key issue.

Perceived value can enhance tourist loyalty by increasing tourist satisfaction, therebyincreasing the revenue of tourism enterprises. Therefore, it is important to explore the role oftourist perceived value in the study of tourist loyalty, and whether perceived value plays a mediating role before service innovation, destination image, and tourist loyalty.

Research questions

Researchers are committed to studying the variables that affect tourist loyalty. This article uses various theories to study how the image, service innovation, and perceived valueof tourist destinations affect tourist loyalty. The five main exploration contents of this articleare as follows:

1. How does the terrain of tourist destinations affect tourist loyalty?
2. How does service innovation affect tourist loyalty?
3. How does tourist perceived value affect tourist loyalty?
4. Does tourist perceived value play a mediating role between destination image,service innovation, and tourist loyalty?
5. How do tourism professionals, officials, and tourists view the impact of destinationimage and service innovation on tourist loyalty through perceived value?

Research objectives

1. Study the direct impact of destination image and service innovation on touristloyalty.
2. Study the direct impact of destination image and service innovation on tourists'perceived value.
3. Study the direct impact of tourist perceived value on tourist loyalty.
4. Analyze the role of tourist perceived value in the destination image, serviceinnovation, and tourist loyalty of Guilin's tourism industry.
5. Through in-depth interviews with tourism professionals, officials, and tourists, a qualitative analysis was conducted on the impact of destination image and service innovationon tourist loyalty through perceived value.

Research Hypothesis

H1: Destination image has a significant effect on tourist loyalty.

H2: Destination image has a significant effect on tourist perceived value. H3: Service innovation has a significant effect on tourist loyalty.

H4: Service innovation has a significant effect on tourist perceived value. H5: Tourist perceived value has a significant effect on tourist loyalty.

H6: Destination image has a significant effect on tourist loyalty through tourist perceived value.

H7: Service innovation has a significant effect on tourist loyalty through tourist perceived value.

significance of the study

This study aims to explore the impact of destination image, service innovation, and perceived value on tourist loyalty, as well as the mediating role of perceived value between destination image, service innovation, and tourist loyalty. The following will elaborate on both academic and policy significance.

Academic benefits

This study has academic significance in the following aspects:

1. Enriching the theory of tourism destination imagery: By analyzing the impact of tourism destination imagery on tourist loyalty, it helps to deepen the understanding of the concept of tourism destination imagery and its impact on the tourism market. This will help expand theoretical research related to tourism destination topography and enrich existing academic literature.
2. Exploring the relationship between service innovation and tourist loyalty: This study focuses on how service innovation affects tourist loyalty and further elaborates on the importance of service innovation in the tourism industry. This helps to enhance the understanding of service innovation strategies among tourism service providers, thereby increasing tourist satisfaction and loyalty.
3. Emphasizing the role of perceived value in tourism decision-making: This study focuses on the mediating role of perceived value in the image of tourism destinations, service innovation, and tourist loyalty, which helps to reveal the impact of perceived value on tourist behavior and the tourism market. This will help to have a more comprehensive understanding of the decision-making process of tourists when facing different tourism products and services, thereby providing more accurate marketing strategies for the tourism industry.
4. Inspiration for tourism industry practice: This study will provide empirical research on the impact of destination image, service innovation, and perceived value on tourist loyalty for tourism industry practitioners. This will help tourism industry practitioners better understand the needs and behaviors of tourists, optimize products and services, and improve tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Policy benefits

This study has four policy implications.

- 1 Provide strategic guidance for tourism destination management: This study will help policy makers better understand the impact of destination image, service innovation, and perceived value on tourist loyalty, thereby providing strong strategic guidance for tourism destination management. Policy makers can draw on research findings and formulate corresponding policies to enhance the attractiveness and loyalty of tourist destinations.
- 2 Promoting sustainable development of the tourism industry: This study focuses on improving tourist loyalty, which helps policy makers develop corresponding measures to improve tourist satisfaction and loyalty, thereby providing a stable source of tourists for tourism destinations. This will be conducive to achieving sustainable development of the tourism industry and bringing long-term stable benefits to the social economy.
- 3 Improving the quality of tourism services: This study emphasizes the key role of service innovation in improving tourist loyalty, providing policy makers with a basis for improving the quality of tourism services. Government departments can formulate corresponding policies to encourage and support tourism enterprises in service innovation, in order to improve tourist satisfaction and loyalty.
- 4 Cultivating Tourism Destination Brands: This study reveals the important role of tourism destination imagery in tourist loyalty. Policy makers can draw inspiration from the results of this study and invest resources in cultivating and promoting the brand of tourism destinations, enhancing the awareness and reputation of destination brands, and attracting more tourists.

Definition of key term

1 Tourist Loyalty

Tourist loyalty refers to the degree to which tourists enjoy a specific tourist destination, visit it multiple times, and actively promote and recommend it to others.

2 Destination Image

The definition of tourism destination image is constantly improving and expanding, gradually forming some commonalities and characteristics:

- Tourism destination image is the sum of tourists' impressions of tourism destinations, which reflects tourists' perception and understanding of non residential areas.
- The image of a tourist destination is a subjective perception, and the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of tourists can all affect its formation and development.
- The image of a tourist destination is a dynamic concept that changes with the experiences, sources of information, social and cultural factors of tourists.
- The image of a tourist destination is multidimensional, including various attributes and characteristics of the destination, such as natural environment, cultural heritage, service quality, safety, price, and so on.

3 Service innovation

Service innovation in the tourism industry refers to the improvement and enhancement of tourism services through the introduction of new technologies, concepts, and models in the tourism field, in order to meet the personalized needs of tourists, enhance the competitiveness and profitability of the tourism industry.

4 Tourist perceived value

Tourist perceived value refers to the overall evaluation by tourists of the degree to which tourism products or services meet their tourism needs, and the difference between the benefits obtained by tourists from tourism products or services and the costs paid.

Literature Review

The relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty

The relationship between tourism destination image and tourist loyalty has been extensively studied. Studies have found that there is a significant relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty. For example, Chi & Qu (2008) showed that the image of a tourist destination has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction, both for specific attributes and overall satisfaction. This implies that a destination that is attractive and has a good reputation is more likely to satisfy tourists. The more satisfied tourists are with a destination, the more likely they are to become loyal customers, willing to revisit the area and recommend it to others. In conclusion, destination image has a direct and positive effect on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty, thus increasing their willingness to revisit and recommend the destination. Zhang et al. (2014) explored three aspects of destination image: overall image, emotional image, and cognitive image, and their effects on tourists' loyalty through a multivariate analysis approach. It was found that the overall image had the most significant effect on tourist loyalty, followed by affective and cognitive images. This indicates that tourists' overall impressions and feelings about the destination have the greatest impact on their loyalty. In addition, they found that the degree of influence of destination image on tourist loyalty varied across different types of tourists. Among them, compound loyalty is most influenced by destination image, indicating that tourists tend to be loyal to the destination both mentally and behaviorally. This is followed by attitudinal loyalty, which indicates that tourists remain psychologically loyal to the destination, and finally behavioral loyalty, which is reflected in the actual revisiting and recommending of the destination by tourists. Lordanova (2017) measured tourists' behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in her study by creating a comprehensive loyalty index. The study found that the better the image of the destination, the higher the overall loyalty of visitors. This suggests that an appealing destination image has a positive impact on tourist loyalty. More specifically, the study shows that emotional image has a greater impact on tourist loyalty than perceived image. Therefore, emotional image creation and enhancement has higher priority in enhancing tourist loyalty. Kanwel et al. (2019) in their study explored the impact of destination image on tourist loyalty and tourists' willingness to revisit in Pakistan. They collected data from 780 Pakistani tourists and used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to conduct the analysis. It was found that there was a positive relationship between the image of a tourist destination, the e-word-of-mouth (online reviews and recommendations) of tourists about that destination, and the e-word-of-mouth with tourist loyalty and willingness to revisit. This implies that a destination with a positive image is more likely to receive positive reviews from tourists and that tourists are more likely to become loyal customers and have the desire to revisit. This further confirms the importance of destination image and electronic word-of-mouth on tourists' loyalty and willingness to revisit. Based on the above literature analysis, I propose the following hypothesis.

H1: Destination image Significantly Affect tourist loyalty.

The relationship between destination image and perceived value

Tourists' evaluation of the soft factors in destination image is ultimately expressed through the concept of perceived value, which is reflected as a trade-off between perceived gains and perceived losses (Li Man & Angusan, 2008). This means that the better the destination image, the higher the tourists' perception of its value, which leads to their satisfaction with the destination.

Regarding the effect of destination image on tourists' perceived value, studies have shown that this relationship is significant and positive. For example, a study by Cheng & Lu (2013) focused on tourists' experiences in island tourism and explored the association between destination image, novelty, enjoyment, perceived value, and tourists' willingness to revisit. The study found that the image of the destination had a significant positive effect on novelty, enjoyment and perceived value. Similarly, Jin et al. (2013) proposed a conceptual model in

order to investigate the effects of tourists' perceived value and destination image on the perceived quality of sporting events and tourists' behavioral intentions in the context of major sporting events. The findings indicated that tourists' perceived value had a direct impact on their behavioral intentions, while destination image played a decisive role in tourists' perception of value. Chen and Tsai (2007) constructed a structural model incorporating destination image, evaluation factors, and tourists' behavioral intentions by introducing the concepts of destination image and perceived value. The results of the study showed that tourism destination image had a significant positive impact on tourists' behavioral intention through their perceived value. Synthesizing the above literature analysis, we can propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Destination image Significantly Affect tourist Perceived Value.

Relationship between service innovation and tourists' loyalty

Regarding the effect of service innovation on tourist loyalty, studies have shown that the relationship is significant and positive.

Seesaiprai (2016) study explored the role of service innovation and service quality in enhancing customer loyalty in small service businesses through a case study of the car care industry in Bangkok. The findings suggest that in order to improve customer loyalty, car care service providers should improve service quality by implementing service innovation. In other words, this study highlights the importance of service innovation and service quality for customer loyalty in small service businesses. By continuously introducing innovative services and ensuring high quality services, firms are able to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study by Liu Yuqing et al. (2018) explored the impact of customer perceived product innovation on brand loyalty. The results of the study showed that both customer-perceived product feature innovation and product appearance innovation had a positive impact on brand loyalty. This means that customers are more likely to remain loyal to a product when they perceive it to have unique features or added functionality, and when they perceive it to be unique and distinctive in appearance. In short, product innovation plays an important role in increasing customer loyalty to a brand in terms of functionality and appearance. A study by Xie Chunchang et al. (2009) empirically investigated the relationship between service innovation and service loyalty using a structural equation modeling approach in the restaurant industry. The study showed that in the F&B industry, the performance and tangible demonstration of employees in the service process is critical in increasing customer service loyalty. This highlights that the F&B industry should focus on training employees to ensure that they can provide quality service and thus increase customer loyalty.

Based on the above literature analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Service innovation significantly affects tourist loyalty.

Relationship between service innovation and tourists' perceived value

Perceived value refers to tourists' assessment of the value of a consumer product or service when weighing the balance between the cost invested and the experience gained during the trip. This value comes from tourists' objective analysis of costs and benefits, and they make judgments about the value of a travel product or service based on the resources spent and the level of satisfaction obtained. (Guo Anxi & Guo Yingzhi, 2018). Enhancing the level of innovation in service offerings can help increase customer satisfaction (Stock, 2011). Regarding the effect of service innovation on tourists' perceived value, studies have shown that this relationship is significant and positive. For example, Xu Hong et al. (2017) found that customer perception of hotel service innovation can be classified in four aspects: service process innovation, service facility innovation, participation system innovation, and service content innovation through a field study of budget hotel service innovation projects. The research results show that customers' perception of hotel service innovation has a positive impact on their perceived value and brand attitude. This implies that by continuously innovating in service processes, facilities, engagement systems and content, hotels can improve customers' perceived value and positive attitudes toward their brands, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, the study by Liu et al. (2019) aimed to explore the impact of innovations provided by different suppliers in the tourism value chain on the overall perceived value of the tourist experience. The study found that tourists may assess the value of

the overall travel experience by recalling intense, memorable moments (i.e., heuristic approach) or by evaluating the total benefits obtained throughout the trip (i.e., normative approach). In addition, innovations that are perceived to contribute to increased convenience and learning can increase the overall perceived value of the traveler through both normative and heuristic approaches, while those innovations that generate immersion can only increase the overall perceived value of the traveler through heuristic approaches. Based on the above literature analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Service innovation significantly affects tourist Perceived Value.

Relationship between Perceived Value and Loyalty

Regarding the effect of perceived value on tourist loyalty, studies have shown that this relationship is significant and positive. For example, a study by Wang et al. (2014) aimed to analyze the relationship between nostalgia, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. They found that nostalgia had a positive effect on the perceived value of cruise tourism. Perceived value, as a multidimensional construct, also had a positive effect on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, tourists' satisfaction also had a positive effect on their loyalty. Similarly, the objective of the study by Boonchunone et al. (2021) was to construct a framework on airport service quality, image, and perceived value to measure the effects of these factors on passenger loyalty, specifically for passengers at Suvarnabhumi Airport. The results of the study found that airport service quality, image, and perceived value had a positive effect on passenger loyalty, with airport service quality having the most significant effect on passenger loyalty. Harris et al. (2004) found that when customers perceive a higher value of a good sold online, they are more likely to continue browsing and purchasing that brand and are willing to recommend it to others. Therefore, customers' perceived value of goods can effectively increase brand loyalty.

Based on the above literature analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Tourist Perceived Value significantly affects tourist loyalty.

The relationship between perceived value and destination image and tourist loyalty

In studying the relationship between destination image, perceived value and tourist loyalty, the literature has shown that perceived value has a significant mediating effect. For example, Wang et al. (2016) conducted a study on 300 self-driving tourists in Tianchi World Natural Heritage Site, China, and the results showed that perceived value and satisfaction directly influenced destination loyalty. More critically, they found that perceived value and visitor satisfaction mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty. Similarly, Ramseok-Munhurrin et al. (2015) examined the relationship between first-time visitors in terms of destination image, perceived value and destination loyalty and explored the mediating role of perceived value. They found that first-time visitors' positive perceptions of destination image significantly increased their perceived value and destination loyalty. In addition, perceived value partially mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty. In addition, Lu et al. (2023) conducted an empirical study on first-time visitors and analyzed the link between destination image, perceived value, and destination loyalty. It was found that first-time visitors' positive perceptions of destination image significantly increased their perceived value and destination loyalty. In addition, perceived value plays a mediating role between first-time visitors' perceptions of destination image and destination loyalty to some extent. Based on the above literature analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Destination image significantly affects tourist loyalty through tourist Perceived Value.

The relationship between perceived value and service innovation and loyalty

In studying the relationship between service innovation, service innovation and tourist loyalty, the literature has shown that perceived value has a significant mediating effect. Xie Chunchang et al. (2009) analyzed the relationship between service innovation and service loyalty by using structural equation modeling in an empirical study of the restaurant industry. The results of the study showed that personnel service process and tangible presentation played a key role in the establishment of service loyalty; the effect of service innovation

on service loyalty was achieved through service quality and perceived value. In the study of Liu, Yuqing et al. (2018) on the impact of customer perceived product innovation on brand loyalty, they found that customer perceived value has a mediating role between perceived product innovation and brand loyalty.

Based on the above literature analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

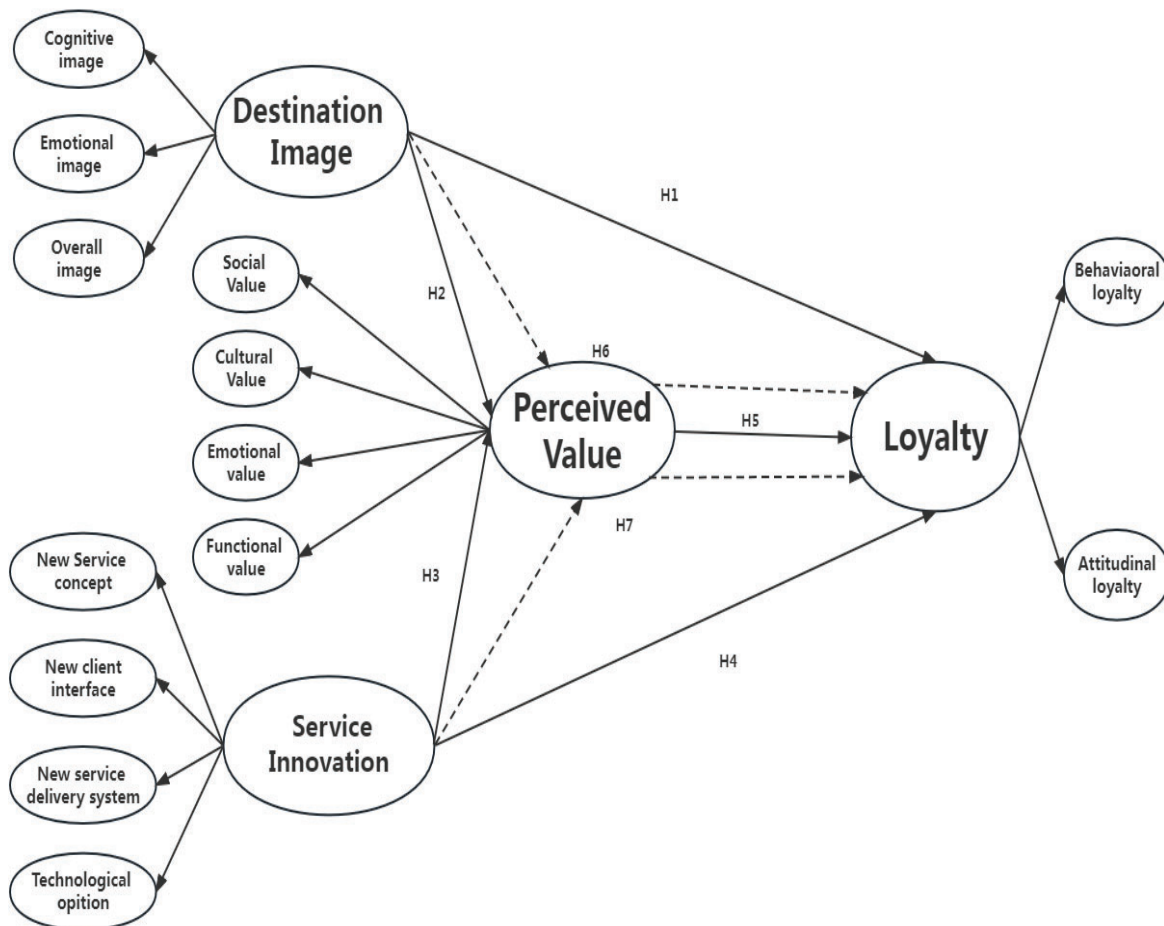
H7: Service innovation significantly affects tourist loyalty through tourist Perceived Value.

Research methodology

Conceptual framework

This study takes destination image and innovative services as independent variables, and tourist perceived value as intermediate variables to study tourist loyalty. Based on the established assumptions, a conceptual model is created for this study. The model is shown in the figure:

Figure 1: conceptual framework



Measurement scale

Measurement scale of tourist loyalty

Table 1 :tourist loyalty item table

Variable	Dimension	Items	Author and year
		I will the tourism destination to others.	
Attitudeloyalty		I am happy to share my experience of traveling to this destination with others.	
Touristloyalty		I will recommend those who plan their trip to this destination.	Zhang and Chen (2022)
		In the next three years, I may revisit this destination.	
Behavioralloyalty		If given the opportunity, I would be happy to come to this destination again.	
		Overall, I am happy to travel to this destination.	

3.1.1 Measurement scale of destination image

Table 2 :Destination Item Table

Variable	Dimension	ID	Item	Reference
		RZ1	This tourism destination has beautiful scenery of attractions.	
		RZ2	This tourism destination has an attractive variety of cuisines.	
	Cognitive image	RZ3	This tourism destination has convenient transportation within the city.	
		RZ4	This tourism destination is suitable for leisure travel.	
		RZ5	This tourism destination is a city with history.	Baloglu & McCleary(1999);
Destination Image		GQ1	This tourism destination is satisfying.	Chen (2007) ;
	Emotional image	GQ2	This tourism destination is fun.	SEYMA,(2022)
		GQ3	This tourism destination tourism is colourful.	
		GQ4	This tourism destination tourism is of high quality.	

Overall image	ZT1	Overall, I was very impressed with this tourism destination.
	ZT2	Overall, I am very positive about this tourism destination.
	ZT3	Overall, I really like this tourism destination.

3.1.2 Measurement scale of perceived value

Table 4: Tourist Perceived Value Item Table

Variable	Dimension	Question item
Tourist Perceived Value	Function Value	1. Convenient transportation to participate in tourism.
		2. The tour guide is professional and highly infectious.
		3. Through participation in the tour, I discovered many recommended and revisited sites.
		4. the cost of participation in the tour is reasonable;
		5. The supporting service facilities around the tourist attractions are more complete.
Tourist Perceived Value	Emotional Value	1. By participating in the tour makes me feel happy.
		2. Stress is relieved by participating in the tour and you are able to relax your body and mind.
		3. Fond memories are generated through participation in the tour.
		4. Feel a sense of belonging through participation in tourism.
Tourist Perceived Value	Culture Value	1. By participating in the tour, I have increased my insight.
		2. Deepen the understanding of the culture of tourism destinations.
		3. By participating in the tour, my curiosity was satisfied.
Tourist Perceived Value	Social Value	1. Through participation in the tour, I met and made some like-minded friends.
		2. I got recognition from others by participating in the tour.
		3. Enhance the relationship between colleagues and relatives and friends through participation in the tour.

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