

Effects of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, customer value and accessibility on intention to visit Haizhou Gulf in China

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry in China. In order to attract more tourists, the Chinese government is developing many tourist destinations especially along the coastal areas. Haizhou Gulf is one of the popular tourist destinations in the coastal areas in China. This area is strategically important for the development of tourism industry. This research aims to investigate factors that attract tourists' intention to visit Haizhou Gulf in China. Data is collected through self-administered questionnaire. Tourists visiting Haizhou Gulf are the target respondents. Data is analyzed using statistical correlational methods. The findings revealed that attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, customer value and accessibility have significant positive effect on tourists' intention to visit Haizhou Gulf.

Keywords: Attitude; Subjective Norms; Perceived Behavioral Control; Customer Value; Accessibility; Intention

INTRODUCTION

China, as a developing country, has the largest population in the world. Due to its large population, it has a huge market size of inbound tourists for its own tourism industry. Thus, China is developing its own tourism industry throughout the whole country especially in the coastal regions. As a result, many tourist destinations are emerging in the coastal areas in China such as Dalian in Liaoning Province, Qingdao in Shandong Province, Xiamen in Fujian Province and Sanya in Hainan Province.

In order to attract more tourists, the Chinese government is interested to understand consumer behaviour in order to form the right marketing strategies for the development of its tourism industry in the coastal region. According to Han and Kim (2010), understanding consumer buying behaviour is one of the most important things to do before determining the right marketing strategy especially for the tourism market. The development of a strategic tourism destination is always associated with the following consideration: How serious is the homogenization of the tourism destination? Whether the tourism facilities are out-dated? Is there a poor sanitary status in the tourism destination? Will it be under capacity during peak season? This consideration list will go on, but more importantly the government need to

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understand tourists' intention to visit a particular tourist destination before a strategic development plan is drawn.

A research is needed to investigate how consumers buying behaviour or visit intention of tourists to a particular tourist destination. The investigation of what, where, when, why and how is associated with the study of consumer behaviour (Anuten et al., 2015). Understanding consuming behaviour can help to discover the reasons why intention of tourists revisiting a tourist destination. According to the theory of planned behaviour, purchase intention is associated with attitude, social norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). As a result, these three factors were investigated in this research. Apart from these three factors, customer value and accessibility are also considered to have effect on tourists' intention. Customer value affects the tourists' intention to revisit a tourist destination. This relationship is supported by customer value theory (Teoman, 2002). Meanwhile, according to health belief model, perceived barriers appear to be a determinant of tourists' behaviour (Lie & Jia, 2018). As a result, accessibility will influence tourists' intention to visit a tourist destination.

This research has selected Haizhou Gulf as the tourist destination because it is one of the most rapid economic development regions in China. In addition, Haizhou Gulf has great potential for coastal tourism development for several reasons. Coastal tourism is a combination of tourism and marine lifestyle. Firstly, the coastal areas are dominated by traditional fishery industry with low to moderate development. As a result, coastal areas are less influenced by the development of modern industry. The fresh air and natural ecology system have maintained the original appearance of the scenic from the ancient time to present. The temperature variation is small as compared it with the inland destination due to the adjustment of the ocean. These environment, not only is it suitable for sightseeing but also for accommodation. Secondly, the fishing activities has more unpredictability outcomes than the farming activities, and thus it has the characteristics of multilevel and mystique (Huang & Zhou, 2007). The primitive landscape formed by the fishing-oriented industrial environment is significantly different from the inland economy. The combination of the unique geographical location and coastal resources, coastal destination has a great attraction to many tourists. Thirdly, the coastal custom culture is not a simple extension from the inland to the coastal area, but mainly formed in the value of orientation and the evaluation standard of the island where people live in the specific life and has strong cultural integration (Chen, 2013).

In addition, the coastal area of the East China Sea is affected by the monsoon in the whole year. The unique group-gathering mode of the coastal villages life with specific seaside resources form an extremely attractive ocean culture, such as fish culture, ship culture, sea salt culture, port culture and seafood diet culture. To conclude, the development of coastal tourism can realize tourists' desire and maintain good memories for a longer period of time. Many researchers have indicated that consumers' willingness to engage is the key to sustainable consumption (Peattie, 2010). As a result, coastal tourism can be better promoted in this way. The result of this research provides useful and constructive advices for the government in the development of coastal tourism not only in Haizhou Gulf but in the whole coastal areas in China.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intention of tourists visiting Haizhou Gulf is the dependence variable of this research. The behaviour intention indicates the motivation or tendency of an individual to perform a

particular act, which reflects how much effort the individual is willing to pay. In the course of studying behaviour intention formation mechanism, it is necessary to study the variables that influence the behaviour intention and the interaction relation among these variables. First of all, theory of planned behaviour explains this behaviour intention in detail (Ajzen, 1991). The behaviour attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are the three factors that have impact to an individual's behaviour intention (Arppinen H., 2005). The theory of planned behaviour is the main underpinning theory of this research. In addition to the theory of planned behaviour, customer value theory (Teoman, 2002) and health belief model (Lie and Jia, 2018) are also believed to play a role in effecting tourists' intention. Thus, customer value and accessibility will also be investigated in this research.

The Influence of Attitude on Tourists' Intention

Attitude means an individual's positive or negative view of a particular behaviour. It is concerned with judging the possible consequences of performing the behaviour and will lead to different decisions based on different evaluations of the behaviour. In view of tourists' own way of thinking and value orientation, tourists will form an attitude on a tourism place or tourism environment in the consciousness of ideology, then form the intention of travel behaviour.

Many scholars have suggested the close correlation between people's behavioural intentions and their attitudes. One of the first authors interested in the topic is Campbell (1947), who defined attitude as a sort of behavioural coherence of individuals with respect to social objects. Similarly, Allport (1967) considered attitude as a state of mind capable of exercising a direct or indirect influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is associated. Additionally, Bostrom and Tucke (1969) tried to understand the consequences derived from attitudes, arriving at a very broad definition, similar to that done by Rokeach (1968), according to whom attitude also includes the concept of beliefs. Fishbein (1963), on the other hand, reduced the conceptual scope of attitude, defining it as the predisposition to interface with an object or a class of objects in a favourable or unfavourable way. Based on the above discussion, hypothesis 1 is proposed as follow:

H1: *Attitude has a significant positive impact on tourists' intention of visiting Haizhou Gulf in China*

The Influence of Subjective Norms on Tourists' Intention

Subjective norm refers to people's cognition of the external stress over whether to perform a particular behaviour or not (Aiken L H, 2002). The stress mostly comes from individuals who matter a lot (Fishbein, Ajzen, I., 1980). Here, subjective norm is related to external comments and opinions (Kaushik, Rahman, 2015). When an individual is taking a certain act, the approval or objection of certain important person or groups will affect him or her to a great extent. Subjective norm denotes the perceived social stress that an individual has adhered to or not in order to perform a particular behaviour. Subjective norm could be normative beliefs or perceived social norms from important reference groups as well as impetus for tourists to act in accordance with those important referents.

People will get information and evaluations from neighbours, relatives, and other intimate or prestigious people. According to the theory of reasoned action, people will tend to conform to

social or general behavioural standards and regard pressure or expectations as part of the code of conduct. When people express views or choose actions, they can encounter pressure and judgment from the surroundings, especially from people who are important to them. In other words, individual behaviour is related to the perception of social stress and reacted in a corresponding way. Park (2000) pointed out that social pressure, such as subjective norm, was even more noticeable in the context of Chinese culture. When confronted with new things, Chinese consumers are more easily affected by others' words and actions and may change their initial attitude. Based on the above, hypothesis 2 is proposed.

H2: *Subjective norms have a significant positive impact on tourists' intention of visiting Haizhou Gulf in China*

The Influence of Perceived Behavioural Control on Tourists' Intention

Perceived behavioural control is also directly affects behaviour intention (Ajzen I., 2001). The meaning of perceived behavioural control can be expressed that a person makes judgement on the degree of difficulty in carrying out a particular action. In most cases, it depends on the availability of resources, such as the economic cost, effort, and time that individuals think they need to spend in the process of purchasing.

It is initially manifested in the evaluation of objective factors, and then some scholars introduce self-efficacy as an important dimension into perceived behaviour control construction (Rodgers W M, Conner, Murray, 2007; Bandura, 1999) emphasizing that individual behaviour in the real environment is often affected by internal and external uncertainties. This is especially true when this goes beyond the boundaries of a circle of trust such as family and friends.

At the same time, some scholars have confirmed that perceived behavioural control is affected by control belief and perceived intensity, and is significantly positively correlated with behavioural intention (Hale, Householder, Greene, 2002). Based on this, this paper speculates that when the confidence and competency of supply and demand in consumption are enhanced, the willingness and attitude of visiting will be further increased. In addition, big data, cloud computing, mobile terminals and other Internet information technology, which promote and support the destination will affect tourism attitude and willingness. When the control belief and attitude of these internal and external factors are beneficial to the occurrence of tourism behaviour, the willingness to participate in tourism will be enhanced; on the contrary, it will weaken. Based on the above, hypothesis 3 is proposed.

H3: *Perceived behavioural control has a significant positive impact on tourists' intention of visiting Haizhou Gulf in China*

The Influence of Customer Value on Tourists' Intention

Ajzen (1991) proposed that products (services) provide customers with five kinds of values: functional value, social value, cognitive value, emotional value and situational value. At present, customer value theory has been widely used to study consumer psychology and behaviour. A large number of empirical studies show that the higher the customer value that consumers can feel, the higher the satisfaction with the consumption process will be got, and

then form the customer loyalty behaviour such as consumption stickiness, repeated purchase and so on (Teoman, 2002; Kleijnen, Ruyter, Wetzel, 2007).

In experiential tourism, consumers will weigh the benefits they get and the cost they pay in order to achieve the maximum overall utility, which will be subjected to the quality of service, food at the tourist destination, traffic, experience items and reception facilities (Zhu, Lu, Wang, 2016). The greater the perceived utility is, more advanced subjective and positive evaluation of behaviour intention will form. Meanwhile, the better characteristics, more reasonable the price, the higher service quality and convenient transportation will increase the consumers' preference for coastal agricultural tourist destination together, and will make them be more willing to spread this higher value experience to the surrounding people. At the same time, the resource endowment owned by consumers will also directly affect their perceived value. The difference of perceived behaviour control will bring different customer value, thus forming different behaviour intention and consumption attitude. Based on this, this study brings customer value into the theoretical framework of extended theory of planned behaviour. Based on the above, hypothesis 4 is proposed.

H4: *Customer value has a significant positive impact on tourists' intention of visiting Haizhou Gulf in China*

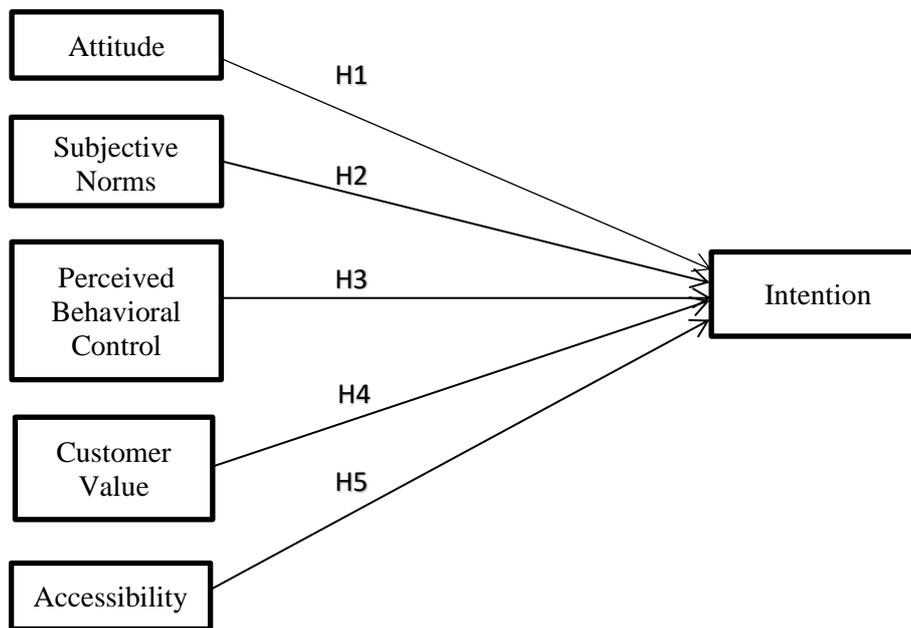
The Influence of Accessibility on Tourists' Intention

Previous research has also investigated tourists' knowledge and perceptions of coastal tourism and found out that many tourists, especially those from inland areas, are interested in the seaside visiting. However, these inland tourists usually find it difficult to access to their desire destination because they perceive there are many barriers exist (Liu and Jia, 2018). According to the Health Belief Model, perceived barriers are an individual's opinion of the tangible costs of an action or behaviour (Liu and Jia, 2018). Since perceived barriers appear to be a determinant of tourism behaviour, and may also indirectly affect attitude, this study also includes accessibility as an independent variable.

Accessibility in this study refers to the barriers perceived by tourists to participate in tourism, which reflects tourists' judgment on the physical and mental quality, economic base, professional skills, information channels and other conditions and opportunities of participating in tourism (Liu and Jia, 2018). Only when tourists feel that they have the conditions and abilities to participate in coastal tourism, will they have the behaviour intention and attitude to participate (Liu and Jia, 2018). Base on the above, hypothesis 5 is proposed.

H5: *Accessibility has a significant positive impact on tourists' intention of visiting Haizhou Gulf in China*

All the five hypotheses discussed above are shown in the conceptual framework as Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This research has clear problem statements, specific hypotheses to be tested and detailed body of literature. As a result, it has adopted a quantitative, deductive approach. Based on the previous sections, this research has identified five hypotheses to be tested. Thus, it has adopted a statistical correlational research design using a survey method. The research also uses cross-sectional design and descriptive method. The target population of the research is the tourists visiting Haizhou Gulf in China. Because there is no sampling frame is available, thus this research uses purposeful sampling in order to identify those qualified respondents in the research. Qualified respondents are tourists that are visiting or have visited Haizhou Gulf in China.

A self-administrated questionnaire was developed for data collection. There are six constructs in this questionnaire: attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, customer value, accessibility and intention. In the questionnaire design, attitude has four items, subjective norms have four items, perceived behavioral control has five items, customer value has seven items, accessibility has five items and intention has four items. Attitude and social norms measures are taken Ajzen et al. (2018). Perceived behavioural control measures are taken from Han and Kim (2010). Customer value and other measures are taken from Bramwell et al (2013). This research use Likert scale to measure the item in the questionnaire. This research uses 9-point Likert scale anchored by 1 as extremely disagreed and 9 as extremely agreed. Likert scale is a mean to measure the individual respondent's point of view with regards to their attitude, belief and behaviour intention (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, 2010; Zheng, 2010). The use of 9-point Likert scale is suitable for social investigation which generally adopted a scale of 5 to 10 (Fan, 2014). The questionnaire includes the tourists' demographic data as well as their personal opinions on the constructs of this research. The demographic

data of the tourists includes sex, age, incomes and education level. The sample size of this research is 446.

RESULTS

Based on the survey, male respondents represented 52.5% of the total respondents while female respondents represented 47.5% percentages. The difference between male and female tourists is quite small. In the age distribution, the majority of the tourists were between the ages of 25 to 34. In terms of income level, it was found that majority of the tourists' income level fall in the region between RMB 4000 to RMB 6000 per month. Almost half of the tourists interviewed came from the local county such as Linyi, Zaozhuang and Rizhao of Shandong Province. These places are within the range of 100 kilometres from Haizhou Gulf. The selection ratio of the four seasons are 12.6%, 50.2%, 22% and 15.2% respectively from the respondents. It can be concluded that more than half (50.2%) of the tourists choose to travel in the summer instead of other seasons. The choice of travelling during the Summer season to Haizhou Gulf has two main reasons. Firstly, it is mainly because of the characteristics of the coastal tourism, it is better to experience the beach swimming and fishing activities in the summer. Secondly, during the summer vacation, adults tend to take children to the seaside, such as catching crabs and playing sand, which are an important part of the coastal tourism. In the area of travel companion, 70.4% of the respondents were travelled with their family or friends. For accommodation, the main choice is to stay in hotel. However, many visitors living nearby have chosen to stay in at home.

Cronbach's alpha was used in the reliability test for all the six constructs. The result shows that the test score is 0.837. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.7 was used as a guideline in this research to ensure the stability and consistency of the adopted instruments (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Therefore, the research constructs can meet the reliability requirements for data analysis. In addition, the KMO is 0.763 (between 0.5 and 1.0) and the Bartlett test is significant at 0.000 (which is less than 0.005) indicates that the data is suitable for further data analysis.

The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the degree of linear association between two variables (Hair et al., 2010). It varies between -1.00 and 1.00, with 0.00 is representing no relationship between the two variables. Based on Table 1, all constructs are significant association with each other ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$).

The values of Pearson correlation coefficient is ranging from 0.114 to 0.637. All the association between the constructs have positive signs that indicate the positive direction of the association among all the constructed tested.

The absolute values of the correlation among the constructs tested in the hypotheses stated from the weakest one of 0.114 (between customer value and accessibility) to the strongest one of 0.637 (between attitude and accessibility).

Based on these results, all Pearson correlation data that had two asterisks, indicating correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. In addition, the Pearson correlation between the independent variables (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, customer value and accessibility) and dependent variable (tourists' intention) are 0.342, 0.228, 0.362, 0.382 and 0.358 respectively. As a result, all the hypotheses are supported.

Table 1: Correlations

	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control	Customer Value	Accessibility	Intention
Attitude	1	.508**	.502**	.433**	.637**	.342**
Subjective Norms		1	.140*	.182*	.156*	.228**
Perceived Behavioral Control			1	.203*	.184*	.362**
Customer Value				1	.114*	.382**
Accessibility					1	.358**
Intention						1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on table 1 above, it was also discovered that Pearson correlation coefficient between attitude and other independence variables are generally higher than between intention and these independence variables. In this situation, the attitude may play a role as a mediator between other independence variables and intention.

DISCUSSIONS

This research has conducted a correlational analysis on five factors from the literature and validated that attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, customer value and accessibility have significant positive effect on tourists' intention to visit Haizhou Gulf in China. Result of this research enriched the theoretical body of knowledge that is related to consumer behavior as well as tourism development in China.

It can be seen from the findings of this research that for the influence of the tourists visiting intention, the effect of customer value is the most significant factor, which is higher than accessibility. This finding support the notion that the customer value theory plays an important role here. The customer value theory is one of the most commonly used consumer behaviour theories at present in the consumption of tourists. The satisfaction of the tourist with respect to the products or services is derived from the comparative relationship between the value they have obtained and the value they expect. If the gap between what the tourists' expect and what they get is large, then it can be concluded that the tourists will have a higher satisfaction and intention to revisit. Therefore, the use of customer value theory in studying consumer behaviour and investigating customer value and tourists' intention is appropriate. In this way, the infrastructure of the tourist destinations, the price level of the consumer goods, the attraction and the sanitation status need further improvement in order to improve customer value. Accessibility is another important factor that have significant impact on intention. Thus, it support the use of Health Belief Model in consumer behaviour studies. This research has validated the conceptual framework and support the similar theoretical development by Ajzen (1985), Ajzen, 2018) and Liu Jia and Jia Nan (2018) in the previous literature. As a matter of fact, research on behavioural intention can also focus on many other variables and unit of analysis such as companies or the community (Ciasullo, Cardinali, Cosimato, 2017; 2018).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research provides valuable insights and useful feedback for the government in the development of the tourism industry in Haizhou Gulf. The government should thoroughly consider all these factors that affect tourists' intention to visit Haizhou Gulf. The government can also draft a development plan and managerial strategies on how to improve the relevant tourist destination not only in Haizhou Gulf but also in other coastal areas.

From this research, it was also discovered that attitude affects the tourists' self-understanding of the travel destination as well as its original performance value. For example, pressure regulation, rich experience, knowledge of friends, pleasure and mind are among the important factors and playing a decisive role for the tourists in making travel decisions. On top of that, subjective norm is also another practical factor to be considered. This factor includes various kinds of pressure and influence from the society such as the recommendations and evaluation of important people's around the world about the tourist destination has significant impact on tourists' intention to visit a tourist destination.

This research focuses on Haizhou Gulf provides many useful practical implication for tourism-related practitioners as well as the local government of Haizhou Gulf. Among the strategies to improve this tourist destination is to improve the infrastructure construction and improve the advertising strategies in promoting this tourist destination. The promotion may focus on the unique characteristics of coastal tourism, such as sea-fishing and sea-catching experiences as well as sand-carving experience in the beach. The advertising strategy is very important to inform the tourists so that they have a more clear understanding of the coastal tourism experience. The similar strategies can also be applied to other coastal tourist destination in the country.

In addition to the above, in a newly emerging communication environment, shared information and experiences become greater essential factors to influence tourists' decision-making process, and possibly more important than other traditional media—e.g., advertisements and brochures (Kang & Schuett, 2013). As a result, advertisement through social media is an effective communication tool (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This research is conducted during the autumn season in November. In this reason, the temperatures have dropped. Therefore, local tourists faced various difficulties to travel due to weather, time, distance and other problems. Furthermore, the number of tourists visiting Haizhou Gulf in this period is much lower than that of other seasons. As a result, future research should be conducted using a longitudinal study rather than a cross-sectional study. A longitudinal study can collect samples from all four seasons. A better sample can reflect a better and more comprehensive finding.

In this research, samples are taken from tourists visiting Haizhou Gulf only. Future research can focus on other tourists that have not visited the place before. In addition, the unit of analysis can also be non-tourists such as the local residents, governmental departments, tourism-related industries as well as not-for-profit organization such as environmental

pressure groups. Enlarging the unit of analysis can provide a more comprehensive investigation and accessible to information from different people. It enables a more complete understanding for a complete eco-tourism development.

For the theoretical development, future research may investigate the suspected mediating role of attitude on the relationships between other independence variables and intention. This investigation may provide more useful findings to extend the current body of knowledge.

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