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The effect of consumption emotions on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions

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ABSTRACT

Tourist loyalty is a critical factor which ensures the invincible position of an enterprise in fierce market competition. In this paper, we conducted research about the relationships among the consumption emotion, tourist satisfaction and loyalty of a total of 320 tourists in rural areas of Changsha City. The results show that positive emotion has a significantly positive impact on tourist satisfaction, but insignificant direct impact on the three dimensions, and thus is an intermediary factor. Negative emotion has a significant direct negative impact on tourist satisfaction, and a positive impact on search for alternatives. Tourist satisfaction has a significant direct positive impact on revisit intentions and word-of-mouth directly, and a significant direct negative impact on search for alternatives. All these findings indicate that tourist satisfaction fully mediates the effect of consumption emotions on revisit intentions and word of mouth, and partially mediate the effect of consumption emotions on search for alternatives.

KEYWORDS

Consumption emotions; Tourist satisfaction; Behavioral intentions; Mediating effect.



INTRODUCTION

With the acceleration of the world economic integration, the market competition is increasingly fierce, so how to remain invincible in fierce market competition is one of the most concerns of enterprise. As a kind of critical asset of enterprise, customer loyalty is widely recognized^[1]. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) think that customer loyalty can lead to active comments recommend to other customers; remain loyalty (such as repetitive purchase); be willing to spend more; and pay more premiums^[2]. According to relationship marketing approach, customers contact enterprises by information collection, on-site experience and accepting correspondent services during the consumption process, and have emotional experience while purchasing and consuming goods, namely they will have recognition about enterprises and relevant services, which has impact on psychology and thus results in corresponding emotion, and the emotion will affect their behaviors in turn. The word “emotion” derives from Latin language “e” (meaning external) and mover (meaning moving), referring to the outward movement from one place to another. The original meaning of this word is activity, stir, commotion or disturbance; and was later used to describe portray people’s mental state, meaning intense disturbance. Concepts concerning emotion include mood, affection and feelings, etc., which have common characteristics: different from awareness activities, specific subjective experience and explicit performance, and are related to people’s particular needs. Campos (1983) thinks that emotion is a psychological phenomenon between individuals and environmental event^[3]. This description defines the relationships between consumers and environment, thinking that psychological phenomenon is not only determined by environment, but actively responds to environment, and accurately reveals the connotation of emotion in the consumption field. Lu and Wei Qing (2002) think that from the perspective of psychology, emotion is the attitude experience of people about objectivity and a kind of activity of brain. Emotion is a kind of inner feeling of people about whether or not objective things can satisfy their own needs. If people have smooth activities, beautiful environment, and the external things satisfy their own needs, people will have pleasant positive emotion; on the contrary, they will have unpleasant negative emotion.

As to the attribute of emotion, there is no common understanding at present. Typical understandings are the four-dimension attributes proposed by Izard (1974, 1977), they suggest that emotion has the four dimensions of happiness, intension, impulse and assurance, which include positive emotions, negative emotions and neutral emotions. Among the three emotions, the positive emotions consist of interest and pleasure; negative emotions consist of anger, disguise, contempt, pain, terror, shyness and guilt; and neutral emotion is composed of surprise and other emotions, and he proposed that there are about 8-11 kinds of basic human emotions, which are respectively described by certain adjectives^[4,5]. Russel (1980) thinks that human emotions consist of the two independent dimensions of pleasure dimension and awareness dimension, which constitute four quadrants^[6]. Later, marketing scholars apply emotion to the studies of consumer behaviors, Izard (1977) pointed out that consumption emotion refers to the emotional response induced during the uses and consumption experiences of goods, which can be described by discrete emotions such as anger, happiness or fear, etc.^[5], or different emotional dimensions such as pleasant—unpleasant, calm and exciting^[6]. Edwardson (1998) pointed out that customer consumption emotion is an important factor that determines the relationships between enterprises and customer relationships^[7].

THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Consumption emotions and tourist satisfaction

The expression desires of customer consumption emotions are different according to different types of emotions: customers with positive emotions usually have the desire to share with service providers and others, and customers with negative emotions just want to avoid this^[8]. Westbrook (1987) conducted a survey of vehicles and limited TV buyers, and discussed the impacts of customers’ emotions on their satisfaction during the consumption process, the result of which shows that customer’s

positive emotions have a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction, and customer's negative consumption emotions have a significant negative impact on customer satisfaction^[9]. Price, Arnould and Tierney (1995) studied the relationships between the consumption emotions of tourists in the tourism enterprises and their satisfaction, the research result of which shows that the positive emotions and negative emotions experienced by tourists during the tourism process have significant impacts on their satisfaction^[10]. After studying the relationships between consumption emotions and customer satisfaction, other scholars also draw the similar conclusions, thinking that there is equivalent positive relationship between consumption emotion and customer satisfaction, namely positive emotions can enhance customer satisfaction and negative emotions can reduce customer satisfaction^[11-14]. Based on these results, we propose the following research hypotheses:

H1a: Positive emotion has a significant direct positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

H2a: Negative emotion has a significant direct negative impact on tourist satisfaction.

Consumption emotion and customer loyalty

Schneider and Bowen (1990) suggested in their empirical studies that enterprises should try their best to provide customers with outstanding services and bring customers with best surprise^[15]. While according to the emotion category of Russel (1980), surprise is the expression of the emotion attribute of high awake and high joy^[6], and customers will have customer loyalty during their surprise service experience^[16]. Bloemer and Ruyter (1999) found in customer loyalty of high participation and service industries of low participation that there is a significant relationship between positive emotion and loyalty, and there are no a significant influence between positive emotion and loyalty of low participation services^[17]. Nyer (1997) suggested in his empirical study that customer consumption emotion has a significant positive impact on customer's word-of-mouth^[18]. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) think that customers experiencing positive emotions will purchase products of the enterprise again in future, and will speak highly of the enterprise services to their relations and friends, because people are born to seek for happiness, and are resistant against alternatives^[19]. On the contrary, when customers experience negative emotions, they will not buy products of the enterprise any more in future, and will convey negative information to their relatives and friends, and will seek for alternatives at the same time. Positive consumption emotion has a significant positive impact on the revisit intentions and word-of-mouth, and a significant negative impact on the search of alternatives. Therefore, we propose the following research hypotheses:

H1b: Positive emotion has a significant direct positive impact on revisit intentions.

H1c: Positive emotion has a significant direct positive impact on word-of-mouth.

H1d: Positive emotion has a significant direct negative impact on the search of alternatives.

H2b: Negative emotion has a significant direct negative impact on revisit intentions.

H2c: Negative emotion has a significant direct negative impact on word-of-mouth.

H2d: Negative emotion has a significant direct positive impact on the search of alternatives.

Tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions

It can be seen from the "expectation-difference" pattern (Churchill & Surpenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980) of customer satisfaction that customer satisfaction means that customers have certain understanding of enterprise's service capacity according to previous purchase or consumption experience. In general, the perceived risk of choosing familiar suppliers is lower than the risk of choosing unfamiliar supplier^[20,21]. It can be seen from the consistency theory of "attitude-behavior" that people's behavioral intention is consistent with their existing knowledge structure, recognition, mental model and memory, and people will try to keep the consistency between attitude and behaviors^[22]. Most studies have proved that customer satisfaction is an important antecedent of customer loyalty^[23]. Babin, etc. (2005) conducted a research on restaurant consumers and the research result suggested that customer satisfaction has a significant direct positive impact on word-of-mouth^[24]. Customers satisfying with their service experiences will be motivated to make active word-of-mouth to others, and recommend the same experience^[25]. And, the more active the word-of-mouth is, the bigger is the

possibility that consumers buy recommended products^[26,27]. Based on these findings, we propose the following research hypotheses:

H3a: Tourist satisfaction has a significant direct positive impact on revisit intentions.

H3b: Tourist satisfaction has a significant direct positive impact on the word-of-mouth.

H3c: Tourist satisfaction has a significant negative impact on the search of alternatives.

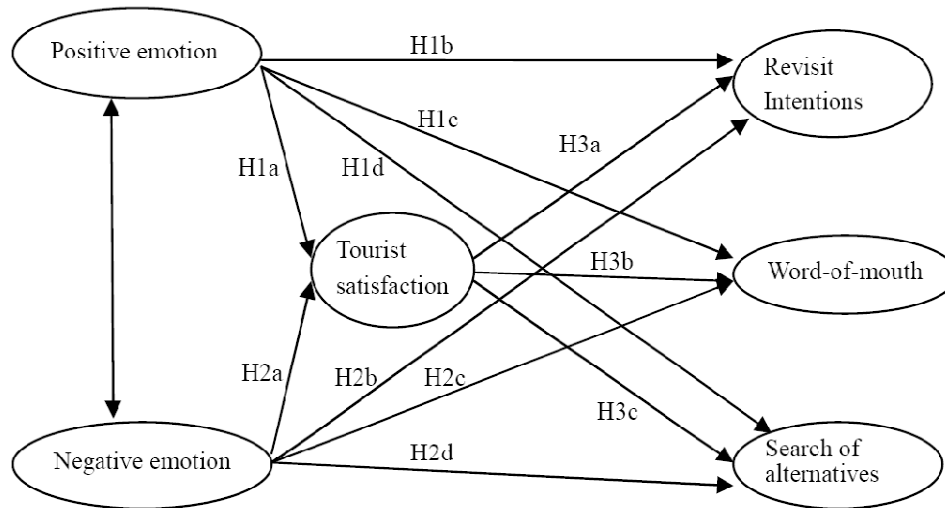


Figure 1 : Theoretical Model

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample

We conducted a survey of all the representative rural tourism enterprises in Changsha city, a total of 600 questionnaires were distributed and 398 of which were collected, with the recovery of 66.33%. Except for invalid questionnaires caused by incomplete information, there were altogether 320 effective questionnaires, with the effectiveness rate of being 80.40%. The gender structure: 156 respondents were males, taking up 48.75%; and 164 respondents were females, taking up 51.25%. The age structure was: 15 people were below the age of 14, accounting for 4.96%; 78 people were at the age of 15-24, accounting for 24.38%; 143 respondents were at the age of 25-44, accounting for 44.69%; 62 respondents were 45-64, accounting for 19.38%; and 22 were over the age of 65, accounting for 6.68%. The education structure was: 27 respondents had the education degree of junior high school diploma, taking up 8.44%; 124 respondents had the education degree of senior high school and technical secondary school, taking up 38.75%; 142 respondents had the education degree of junior college or college degree, taking up 44.36%; and 27 respondents had graduate degree, taking up 8.44%. The structure of family monthly income per capita: 90 respondents had the income of above 1999 RMB, taking up 28.13%; 82 respondents had the monthly income of 2000-2999 RMB, taking up 25.63%; 74 respondents had the monthly income of 3000-3999 RMB, taking up 23.13%; and 37 respondents had the monthly income of 4000-4999 RMB, taking up 11.56%; and over 37 respondents had the monthly income of above 5000 RMB, taking up 11.56%.

Measurement of constructs and statistical methods

The consumption emotion scale adopted the questionnaire prepared by Russell (1980)^[6], Izard (1977)^[4], and Lee et al. (2008)^[28]. The questionnaire adopted Likert 5-score scale, including positive consumption emotion and negative consumption emotion, with 8 items in total. The customer satisfaction scale adopted the MSQ scale proposed by Smith, Kendall and Hullin (1969), which adopted Likert 5-score scale, with 3 items in total^[29]. And the scale of tourists' loyalty adopted the scale designed by Hutchinson, etc. (2009)^[30]. This questionnaire included revisit intentions, word-of-mouth

publicity, and search of alternatives, which adopted Likert 5-score scale, with 9 items in total. In this research, we adopted SPSS15.0 software and Amos7.0 software as our analysis tool.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Reliability test

Reliability means whether or not the measurement result is consistent with actual value, which is usually reflected by Cronbach alpha value. The reliability analysis result by the statistical software SPSS15.0 shows that the overall reliability of this survey questionnaire is 0.940, much higher than the standard that Cronbach alpha value is bigger than 0.7, which means strong consistency of the measurement indicator. The Cronbach alpha value of the 6 latent variables is respectively 0.852, 0.767, 0.772, 0.798, 0.774 and 0.820, all of which are much bigger than the standard of 0.7, which means that the items have good and stable homogeneity reliability, and the scale has a high reliability.

Correlation analysis

Relevant analysis result shows that positive emotion, negative emotion and tourist satisfaction have positive relationships with the three dimensions of behavioral intentions. It can be known from TABLE 1 that positive emotion is significantly relevant to tourist satisfaction, revisit intentions and word-of-mouth, with correlation coefficients of being 0.828, 0.649 and 0.793 respectively; while it has a significant negative correlation with negative emotion and search of alternatives respectively, with the correlation coefficients being -0.494 and -0.330, the negative emotion has a significant positive correlation with the search of alternatives, with correlation coefficients being 0.570; while it has a significant negative correlation with tourist satisfaction, revisit intentions and world-of-mouth, with the correlation coefficients being -0.483, -0.406 and -0.446; tourist satisfaction has a significant positive correlation with revisit intentions and word-of-mouth, with correlation coefficient of being 0.799 and 0.864 respectively; and it has a significant negative correlation with search of alternatives, with the correlation coefficient being -0.432.

Confirmatory factor analysis

In order to further verify the indicator measurement validity of positive emotion, negative emotion, tourist satisfaction, revisit intentions, word-of-mouth and search of alternatives and other latent variables as well as the differences among them, we conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). We adopted Amos7.0 software to construct measurement model A, and various fit indexes of model A are shown in TABLE 2.

Model testing goodness of fit: It can be known from the fit indicators of model A that the value of χ^2 / df is 1.419, smaller than 2; the value of RMSEA is 0.036, smaller than 0.05; and the value of GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, IFI and TLI is bigger than 0.9, which means that model A has a good model fit and thus is an acceptable model.

Reliability test: In general, when the composite reliability is bigger than 0.7, it means that the questions have high reliability of their construct measurement (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It can be known from TABLE 3 that the composite reliability of all latent variables is 0.763-0.861, bigger than the standard of 0.7. Meanwhile, Cronbach alpha value of all latent variables is 0.772-0.852, meaning that this survey has high reliability.

Convergent validity test: Convergent validity mainly examines the contribution of each question to its construct measurement. It is generally acknowledged that the load is bigger than 0.4, the T test value is bigger, P value is significant below the level of 0.01; and when the AVE is bigger than 0.5, the convergent validity is good (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). It can be seen from TABLE 3 that the load of questions is 0.669-0.895, much bigger than the standard of 0.4, and T value is 12.179-19.577, and in the situation of $P < 0.001$, it is significant. What's more, the AVE is 0.518-0.674, bigger than the standard of 0.5, meaning that each variable of this study has adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity test: Discriminant validity mainly examines the differences among different constructs. In general, when AVE is bigger than 0.5, and the square of correlation coefficients among latent variables is smaller than AVE, the discriminant validity meets requirement (Chin, 1998). It can be known from TABLE 1 that correlation coefficients of all latent variables in Model A is -0.494-0.864, AVE is 0.518-0.674, bigger than the standard of 0.5, and the square of correlation coefficients of most latent variables is smaller than AVE, which means that there is good discriminant validity among latent variables.

TABLE 1 : Correlation Coefficient and AVE

	PE	NE	TS	RI	WOM	SAL
PE	0.674					
NE	-0.494	0.518				
TS	0.828	-0.483	0.538			
RI	0.649	-0.406	0.799	0.586		
WOM	0.793	-0.446	0.864	0.861	0.539	
SAL	-0.330	0.570	-0.432	-0.333	-0.360	0.627

Note: PE: positive emotion, NE: negative emotion, TS: tourist satisfaction, RI: revisit intentions, WOM: word-of-mouth, SAL: search for alternatives. The AVE of each latent variable is above diagonal, and correlation coefficient of each latent variable is below the diagonal.

TABLE 2 : Model Fit Index

	χ^2 / df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI
Model A	1.419	0.036	0.946	0.920	0.983	0.945	0.983	0.977
Model B	1.833	0.051	0.928	0.900	0.964	0.924	0.964	0.955
Model C	1.668	0.046	0.932	0.908	0.970	0.929	0.970	0.964

TABLE 3 : Results of CFA

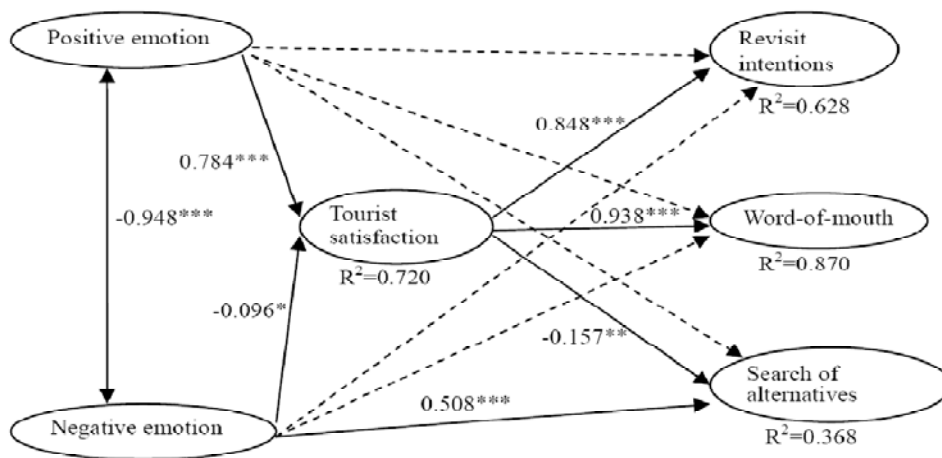
Latent variables	Observed variables	Standardized load	T value	Composite reliability	Alpha
PE	PE1: Excited	0.775	15.829	0.861	0.852
	PE2: Happy	0.895	19.577		
	PE3: Relaxed	0.788	16.291		
NE	NE1: Angry	0.721	13.180	0.763	0.767
	NE2: Bored	0.766	14.045		
	NE3: Annoyed	0.669	12.179		
TS	TS1: In general, you are quite satisfied with this rural tourism.	0.711	13.769	0.777	0.772
	TS2: In comparison with your expectation, you are satisfied with this rural tourism.	0.736	14.428		
	TS3: In comparison with ideal situation, you are satisfied with this rural tourism.	0.740	14.534		
RI	RI1: You'd like to visit this rural tourism destination again.	0.702	13.597	0.808	0.798
	RI2: It's quite probable that you will visit this rural tourism destination next time.	0.879	18.483		
	RI3: It's quite probable that you will visit other rural tourism destinations again.	0.702	13.602		
WOM	WOM1: You will recommend this rural tourism destination to other people.	0.684	13.131	0.778	0.774
	WOM2: You are quite willing to recommend this rural tourism destination to other rural tourists.	0.777	15.584		
	WOM3: You will recommend this rural tourism destination to people who have tourism plan.	0.740	14.620		
SAL	SAL1: You will try to find an alternative rural tourism destination.	0.832	16.716	0.833	0.820
	SAL2: You will continue to find alternative rural tourism destination.	0.856	17.246		
	SAL3: You will continue to learn from others about other rural tourism destinations.	0.675	12.666		

Structural equation analysis

After confirming the reliability and validity of the variables, in order to verify the relationships between consumption emotion, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, we constructed a structural equation analysis on the basis of the relationships between the variables analyzed by the above literature review. We input the latent variables and questions into the structural equation model, adopt maximum likelihood method to estimate the model, get the fit index of the structural equation model, coefficient value of all routes and T testing value. The fit indexes of the structural equation model are shown in the values of model B in TABLE 2. It is known from the fit index of model B that all indexes have reached the excellent level. The route from positive emotion to the three dimensions of behavioral intentions is insignificant, and so is the route from negative emotion to the revisit intentions and word-of-mouth. This illustrates that the structural model requires modification so as to reach better fitness with the data and find out the optimal model.

In order to seek for optimal model, we base on the results and correction indexes of the structural equation model to correct and verify the model. On the basis of the model, we gradually eliminate routes without being tested, and increase or decrease routes according to MI indexes. Refer to the values of model C in TABLE 2 for the fit index of correction model, and the estimated value of routes in Figure 2. It can be seen from the fit index of model C that the fit index of correction model have reached the excellent level, and is not against theoretical foundation. It can be known from Figure 2 that our correction model has good prediction ability. Among which, the explained variance of the model about tourist satisfaction, revisit intentions and word-of-mouth are all above 60%, respectively being 72.0%, 62.8% and 87.0%; and the explained variance about the search of alternatives reaches 36.8%, which means that the variables have stable relationships and this is an excellent model.

It can be known from Figure 2 that positive emotion has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction, the route coefficient is 0.784, and has indirect impacts on the revisit intentions, word-of-mouth and search of alternatives, fully of mediated by tourist satisfaction. Negative emotion has a significant negative impact on tourist satisfaction, the route coefficient is -0.096, which has indirect impact on the revisit intentions and word-of-mouth, fully mediated by tourist satisfaction; and it has a direct positive impact on the search of alternatives, its route coefficient is 0.508. Meanwhile, it also has indirect impact on the search of alternatives through tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is the most direct and important antecedent of behavioral intentions, which has a significant direct positive impact on revisit intentions and word-of-mouth respectively, with the route coefficient being 0.848 and 0.938; and it also has a significant direct negative impact on the search of alternatives, the route coefficient of which is -0.157.



Note: The dotted line in Figure 2 means that the route is insignificant; * means being significant in the case of p<0.1; ** means being significant in the case of p<0.05; *** means being significant in the case of p<0.001.

Figure 2 : Final Correction Model

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we discussed the relationships between consumption emotion, tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions; divided consumption emotion into positive emotion and negative emotion; and classified behavioral intentions into the three dimensions of revisit intentions, word-of-mouth and search of alternatives. The relationships between consumption emotion, tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions have been tested by empirical studies. However, in the literature within the author's access, there is no study about the relationships between consumption emotion, tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions in rural context. Results show that positive emotion is related to negative consumption emotion, positive emotion has a direct positive impact on tourist satisfaction and has indirect impacts on behavioral intentions through tourist satisfaction; negative emotion has a direct negative impact on tourist satisfaction, and has indirect impacts on behavioral intentions through tourist satisfaction, and meanwhile has a significant direct positive impact on the search of alternatives. In previous relevant studies, some scholars think consumption emotion is only one dimension and there is no need to divide it into positive emotion and negative emotion^[31,32]. However, some scholars think that positive emotion and negative consumption emotion are two independent concepts, which should be measured and examined separately^[9]. In our study, we found that consumption emotion is a concept consisting of positive emotion and negative emotion. In the transaction marketing study approach, we are only concerned with the transaction process between customer and enterprise rather than the emotion factor of customers during the transaction process, we only take the transaction process as a "black box"; while relations marketing study approach thinks that the process that customers purchase products is not only a consumption process but an emotional experience process, so the emotion variable is incorporated into consumption behavior study, which opened the "black box" of the transaction process. Our research supports relation marketing study approach, which reflects the impact of consumption emotion on customer loyalty. Thus, rural tourism enterprises should adopt various approaches and channels to greatly improve tourist positive emotion and meanwhile eliminate tourist consumption emotion, and thus improve customer satisfaction and cultivate tourists' loyalty.

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