Multi-dimensional Issue of Tourists' Motivation and Perceived Value in Predicting Behavioral Intention: Satisfaction as a Mediator

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Abstract. Contradiction exists in the tourism literatures that significant positive impacts of motivation and perceived value on behavioral intention were inconsistent. To address this issue, this study tested the causal relationship between motivation, perceived value, and behavioral intention in an integrated model, using satisfaction as a mediator. The results indicated that multi-dimensional issue could be the main reason for the inconsistency. Significant positive influence of motivation on behavioral intention was supported, but only exist between certain dimensions of motivation and behavioral intention, which was fully mediated by satisfaction. Significant positive influence of perceived value on behavioral intention also got supported. Again satisfaction fully mediated the influences of some dimensions of perceived value on behavioral intention. The significant impacts of some motivation factors on certain factors of perceived value were proved, which offered supplemented information for interpreting the causal relationship of the proposed model. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Introduction

Human behavior is multi-determined; it develops as a result of many causes [1]. Recently in tourism literatures, motivation and perceived value had drawn extensive attention by scholars interested in tourists' behavior and related fields [2, 3], and were frequently be used as key antecedents in predicting tourists' behavioral intention, which was believed to be the best agent for future behavior. As research continues, a more integrated picture of tourists' behavioral characteristics becomes clear. Satisfaction, perceived image, past experience, and other factors that delineated from perceived value, such as perceived quality, were integrated into structured models for interpreting tourists' behavioral intention [4, 5, 6, 7]. Meanwhile, confusions emerged as the research findings accumulated. The positive direct impacts of motivation and perceived value on behavioral intention could either be significant or insignificant [2, 8], attributing to different research designs and contexts. As the predictive power of these antecedents varied, the reliability of previous research findings shall be challenged. This study is, therefore, aiming to resolve this contradiction within a structured model that uses motivation and perceived value as antecedents, behavioral intention as consequence, and satisfaction as mediator. The reason that satisfaction being integrated into the proposed model is, on the one hand, it has been suggested by researchers that motivation alone is not adequate in understanding tourists' consumption behavior, but on the other hand, when perceived value is considered simultaneously, research findings of studies on satisfaction would be more fruitful [9].

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Behavioral Intention, Motivation, Perceived Value and Satisfaction

Studies related to tourists' behavior has become an important part of tourism research [10]. Behavioral intention was considered as the most direct predictor of tourists' behavior among various influencing factors, which was referred to as individual's anticipation and plan of future behavior [11]. Motivation is considered as the most critical factor in understanding tourists' behavior; it has
been widely applied in studies concerning decision-making, market segmentation, and destination development [12]. Many researchers focused on the relationship between motivation and behavioral intention in their studies. Li et al. noted that motivation had no significant influence on behavioral intention after examining the relationship among motivation, image, and behavioral intention. However, the escape dimension of motivation influenced behavioral intention indirectly through affective image. By contrast, in examining the relationship between senior tourists' travel motivation and behavioral intention, Prayag revealed that escape and relaxation motivation had significant positive impact on revisit intention. Different measurement scales, either unidimensional, or push and pull dichotomy, were used in investigating the relationship between motivation and behavioral intention. The research findings of these studies all presented that motivation had significant positive influence on behavioral intention.

There is a large body of research devoted to studying the links between tourists' perceived value and behavioral intention. However, contradiction could be found in existing research findings. Lee et al. considered three dimensions of tourists' perceived value of Korean demilitarized zone, including functional value, overall value, and affective value. Overall value was found to have significant positive influence on behavioral intention. Similar studies concerning restaurant customers and heritage tourists both supported that perceived value affected behavioral intention positively. While these studies revealed that perceived value has positive influence on behavioral intention, Chen and Tsai and Phillips et al. noted that perceived value doesn't affect behavioral intention directly. They found that perceived value influenced satisfaction significantly, which in turn had significant influence on behavioral intention. It could be drawn from this that more research needs to be conducted in examining the relationship between tourists' perceived value and behavioral intention. The important role of satisfaction also needs to be paid much attention to. As Cronin et al. suggested, tourists’ perceived value is a useful predictor of satisfaction, which in turn influences behavioral intention. Considering the aforementioned review, we propose the following hypotheses: H1. Motivation has positive influence on behavioral intention. H2. Perceived value has positive influence on behavioral intention. H3. Motivation has positive influence on satisfaction. H4. Perceived value has positive influence on satisfaction. H5. Satisfaction has positive influence on behavioral intention. H6. Satisfaction is a mediator between motivation and behavioral intention. H7. Satisfaction is a mediator between perceived value and behavioral intention.

**Motivation and Perceived Value**

Studies incorporating motivation and perceived value at the same time are quite rare. Lo and Lee discussed motivation and perceived value of volunteer tourists from Hong Kong in their qualitative work [13]. While their study focused on the research gap in identifying volunteer tourists' motivation and perceived value, the relationship between motivation and perceived value remains uncovered. Prebensen et al.’s recent research gives credence to the idea that motivation has significant positive influence on perceived value. The results of their study of tourists from Norway revealed that two push motivation factors, relaxation and socialization, positively affect two factors of perceived value, including functional value and epistemic value [3]. This leads to the last hypothesis: H8. Motivation has positive influence on perceived value.

**Methods**

**Data Collection and Sample**

Ten resorts on Moganshan, a bamboo clad mountain in China, were chosen as sample collecting sites. Considering the integrity and accuracy of measurement scale, face-to-face interviews with 13 managers of these resorts and pilot test with 30 tourists were conducted prior to final questionnaire distributed. In total, 560 tourists were participated in the survey, resulted in 497 valid samples. These
collected samples were split randomly; half (n = 250) was used to conduct exploratory factor analysis, while the other (n = 247) was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis.

Respondents were mainly tourists aged between 18-45, accounted for 90.3% of the total samples. Females (56.7%) were slightly more than males (43.3%). Most of the respondents were well educated, only 9.7% didn't reach a bachelor's degree. The monthly income of these tourists was quite high, with more than one third (37.2%) above 15000 RMB.

**Measurement Development**

The original measurement scales of motivation, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention were adopted from literatures [14]. The final research instrument consists of five parts. Part 1 includes 12 items to measure tourists' escaping and seeking motivation. Part 2 includes 18 items to measure perceived value towards vacation experience. Part 3 includes 4 items to measure satisfaction. Part 4 includes 6 items to measure behavioral intention. These four parts were assessed in a 5-point scale anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). The last part is for collecting demographic information.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to delineate underlying factors of motivation, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. The factor scores of each delineated factor were calculated and used for hypotheses tests. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each factor were between 0.602 and 0.872.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test convergent and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 1, the model fit indices indicated that the factor structures of these four constructs were all stable. In addition, all factor loadings had t-values greater than 2.0, and all factor loadings were higher than 0.50, which confirmed the convergent validity of the measurement instrument.

**Table 1. Fit Indices for the CFA Models.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CMIN/DF</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RMR</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>IIF</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>1.330</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.922</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>1.039</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
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<td>.024</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>.988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
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<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
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Note: MO means motivation; PV means perceived value; SAT means satisfaction; BI means behavioral intention.

**Figure 1. Model with Results.**

Note: *P < .05; **P < .01; ***P < .001
Findings

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to estimate the relationships between the constructs by AMOS 20 with the maximum likelihood estimation method. The fit indices for our model were $\chi^2/df = 1.202$, $p = 0.270$, GFI = 0.985, NFI = 0.962, IFI = 0.993, CFI = 0.993, and RMR = 0.034, suggesting that the model is acceptable. On the basis of SEM results, we tested the 33 hypotheses (Apart from hypotheses 6 and 7, and those delineated ones), the results are shown in Fig. 1.

To further investigate the robustness of the model and the mediating role of satisfaction between motivation and behavioral intention, and between perceived value and behavioral intention, several multiple linear regression analyses were performed. The results showed that one motivation factor and all four factors of perceived value have significant influences on behavioral intention, satisfaction fully mediated the effects of escaping non-personal environment, functional value, and uniqueness, and partly mediated those of conspicuous and extended self. These were in consistency with SEM results; the mediating role of satisfaction was supported. More specifically, five out of eight delineated hypotheses of hypotheses 6 and 7 were proved.

Discussions and Implications

The main objective of this study in addressing the multi-dimensional issue of motivation and perceived value in predicting tourists' behavioral intention was achieved. Results of multi-dimensional factor structures of motivation and perceived value demonstrate that either significant or insignificant impacts on satisfaction and behavioral intention exist among different dimensions of motivation and perceived value.

The extracted four dimensions of tourists' motivation are in consistency with the empirically tested theoretical structure of escaping and seeking motivation. While escaping non-personal environment and seeking personal rewards have significant influences on satisfaction, only escaping non-personal environment has indirect impact on behavioral intention, which is fully mediated by satisfaction. This suggests that motivation, as a critical construct in predicting tourists' behavioral intention, should be used cautiously due to its multi-dimensional structure. Firstly, besides the importance of motivation in understanding tourists' needs and wants, other constructs, such as satisfaction, need to be considered simultaneously towards certain tourism destinations to reveal the difference between different dimensions. Secondly, the inconsistent influences on behavioral intention of the concept of motivation can be better understood. Valuable evidence is offered to reaffirm that tourist motivation as a single latent variable could be inferior while contrasting to four dimensional escaping and seeking motivation.

In addition to motivation that initiated tourists' travel actions, value perception derived from previous or immediate experience that making tourists' vacation meaningful was proved to be very important in gaining comprehensive understanding of tourists' future behavioral intention towards certain destinations in this study. Four dimensions of perceived value all have significant impacts on satisfaction and behavioral intention, with the effects of functional value and uniqueness fully mediated by satisfaction. The dimensional issue of perceived value was addressed as well. Different treatments of perceived value may result in various conclusions. While insignificant direct influence of functional value on behavioral intention revealed part of the impacts on behavioral intention of perceived value, the effects of other dimensions of perceived value, either directly or indirectly, remained unknown if uni-dimensional scale was applied.

Two implications could be drawn from this study. First and the most important one is that multi-dimensional scale should be preferred for studies concerning tourists' motivation and perceived value. Due to the complexity of human needs and wants, and rich experience that tourism products and services could provide, single notion of motivation or perceived value could neither reflect comprehensive characteristics of tourists or destinations, nor be used to effectively predict tourists' future behavior or make destination development strategy. Secondly, while motivation and perceived value are considered as antecedents of tourists' future behavioral intention, other constructs,
especially satisfaction, need to be incorporated simultaneously. In this study, extended information was revealed by the mediating role of satisfaction.

References