

A Research on Tourists' Cultural Capital: Motivation, Form and Construction

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ABSTRACT

The research on the tourists' consumer behavior is being a research hotspot gradually. Most of the existing research, which comes from the perspective of economics and psychology, focuses on the process of consumption, but ignores the social and cultural significance of tourism activities. As the reflection and result of social stratification, tourism consumption has the function of the segment in social status. From the paradigm of consumer culture, this research concentrates on tourists' cultural capital, which is significant for understanding tourism activities in the role of taste distinction and social stratification. Distinction triggers the construction of cultural capital by tourists. Affected by time-space compression, body attachment and cultural identity, tourists have constructed cultural capital. This research provides a cultural sociological perspective for the understanding of Chinese tourists in the transition period and also provides some new ideas for tourism operators.

Keywords: *Tourists, Cultural Capital, Distinction*

1. INTRODUCTION

In tourism research, psychological and economical perspective on tourist behavior research mainly focuses on the individual psychological state and behavior, such as tourists' emotions, attitudes, decisions, behavioral intentions, etc. On the other hand, sociological research places people in social network, understanding tourist behavior through connected and interactive perspectives. Different research perspectives also lead to different research objectives, contents and meanings. The research from the perspective of economics and psychology focuses on the antecedents and processes of consumption, while the research from the perspective of sociology not only focuses on the social structural factors that influence and restrict consumption, but also focuses on consumption's social significance. The social meaning of consumption is built on the basis of symbolic coding, that is, with the end of the journey, what social meaning does the tourist get from?

Tourism, as an essential cultural consumption activity, plays a role in distinguishing class tastes and status. Existing studies have paid more attention to the process of tourism consumption while ignoring the social and cultural significance of tourism, which is incomplete for the understanding of Chinese tourists in

the transitional period. In this case, it is necessary to introduce the "consumption culture" paradigm, which emphasizes the symbolic meaning, cultural construction and psychological feelings of consumption. Applying this paradigm to the study of tourism activities can make up for the deficiency of theoretical perspective and enhance understanding of the social significance of current tourism activities. The "cultural capital" theory, put forward by Bourdieu, is an important theoretical support for the "consumer culture" paradigm. In this paper, the tourist's cultural capital refers to the sum of all kinds of tangible and intangible cultural resources possessed by the tourist. This cultural resource can add value to tourists.

Existing research on cultural capital and tourism mainly focuses on the use of cultural capital in tourist destinations. Wu and Wang (2011) applied the cultural capabilities, cultural products, and cultural systems of cultural capital theory to the analysis of "Lijiang Model"^[1]. Song and Li (2011) analyzed the formation mechanism of urban cultural capital^[2]. Zhang (2009) analyzed the reproduction mechanism of Dazhai cultural capital in the tourism field from the four dimensions of economic structure transformation, power intervention, intergenerational transmission of capital, and capital transformation^[3]. Taking a folk artist in Xinhua Village

of Heqing in Dali as an example, Zhang (2009) discussed how culture could be commercialized through the transformation of economic capital, cultural capital and social capital^[4]. However, throughout these studies, there is little involvement in tourists. Why do tourists pursue cultural capital, and what are the characteristics of tourists' cultural capital? How do tourists construct cultural capital? This series of issues has not yet received full attention. In the process of moving towards a consumer society, tourism is becoming an important cultural consumption activity. When this consumption activity forms social stratification and distinction in the form of culture, it is urgent and necessary to pay attention to the study of tourists' cultural capital. This paper will analyze this issue from the aspects of the motivation, form and construction of tourists' cultural capital.

2. DISTINCTION: THE MOTIVATION OF TOURISTS' CULTURAL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

2.1. Tourism and Cultural Capital Construction

In Bourdieu's capital theory (1986), cultural capital is regarded as a kind of accumulative labor, which is a form of accumulative, value-added, and convertible capital^[5]. The concept of cultural capital and its theoretical system originated from Bourdieu's research on the French education system. He proposed that the distribution of cultural capital in different classes caused differences in children's academic performance, because different backgrounds lead to different educational environments and even whole life. Therefore, education as an important methods of cultural capital accumulation has been widely valued.

Tourism is one of the crucial methods of constructing cultural capital. Our ancestors have already expanded their horizons and increased knowledge in the way of "Study tour". In Xunzi's *Quest for Learning*, it is said, "You do not know how high the sky is until you climb a high mountain; Not near the deep stream, I do not know how thick the earth is." So it is necessary to "read thousands of books and travel thousands of miles". From reading to traveling, from increasing knowledge to forging the will, our ancestors had a deep understanding of traveling. It not only expanded person's knowledge, but also built his character. This form of traveling is also called "Great Tour".

"Great Tour" was popular in Europe in the 16th-17th century and even became a compulsory course for aristocratic families. They believed that the five interwoven cultural ideals -- warrior's ideal, politician's ideal, scholar's ideal, knight's ideal and connoisseur's ideal -- could only be realized through study tour, thus inspiring the British aristocracy and gentry to study abroad.

Today, mass tourism which aimed at leisure and pleasure is different from the study tours in the past. However, it still has the function of constructing cultural capital. Just like many things grow in the garden that were never sown there, education function is gradually revealed and valued.

2.2. Cultural Capital and Taste Distinction

The amount of cultural capital is related to personal taste, and thus forms the taste distinction between different groups and classes. The taste of the elite class is often distinct from daily life, and only by this, can it highlight the elegance of this class and effectively distinguish it from the masses. In Veblen's works (2007), the leisure class, in order to show their superiority and honor, not only engaged in wasteful consumption by themselves but also hired a lot of idlers for agent leisure and agent consumption^[6]. The aesthetics they pursued is a kind of information extraction ability that transcends the practicality of life, where the form is more important than the content, and the cultural connotation is more important than the functional utility. This ability is often monopolized by those who have the advantage of cultural capital. By contrast, the general people who limited by the material conditions pay more attention to cost effective in consumption, thus forming a popular aesthetics with vulgar taste and obvious goals. This aesthetic taste is obviously more in line with the market needs, so that the cultural industry can be mass production.

In tourism activities, cultural capital also plays a role in distinguishing taste. The dominant one of cultural capital always highlights their tastes intentionally or unconsciously, leading and influencing the aesthetic of the public. Refer to the research of Wu (2010), the traveling of scholar-officials in the late Ming Dynasty reflected the refined taste of this class in the selection of scenic spots, travel time, and tourist equipment, which distinguished them from the general people^[7]. In the selection of scenic spots, the popular tourist spots were often located around towns. In order to avoid the hustle and bustle, scholar-officials deliberately visited some scenic spots which were not very popular. On the travel time, scholar-officials staggered the public to visit famous scenic spots near the south of the Yangtze River. They also went on a trip in best times for best sightseeing. Kong Shangren believed that "luxury ladies went out in spring and the poets in autumn, because the scenery of autumn is more in line with the taste of poets^[8]."

In the mass tourism era, when, where and how to travel is still an important criterion for distinguishing the tastes of classes. In order to make one's own taste unconventional, the transcendence and adaptation of tastes among classes is increasingly intensified.

2.3. Cultural Capital and Status Distinction

The consumption patterns of different classes are restricted by economic capital, and at the same time subtly affected by cultural capital. The aesthetic taste embodied by cultural capital has even greater effect and significance on status distinction than economic capital. So the amount of cultural capital could cause the status distinction. In his book "Style", Fussell (2011) said, "As soon as you open your mouth, your social status is revealed ^[9]."

For the sake of status advancement or transformation, people are struggling to imitate the lifestyle, pastimes, accent and tone of voice of the upper-class. The middle class, whose economic status has been risen, has a stronger incentive to upgrade. And the development of modern social culture and education industry also makes it possible. Under the condition of industrialization, a large number of cultural products are produced. The middle class can accumulate cultural capital by consuming. After long-term accumulation, their speech, manners, and taste will become closer to the ideal upper-class society.

Traveling, as a kind of cultural consumption, is very suitable for status distinction, which is in line with the fashionable social generation mechanism described by Simmel. The upper-class create and lead the fashion. When their destinations and consumption styles are imitated by the middle and lower classes, they will turn to seek new fashions. In Ming-Qing era, the scholar-official class had unique expectations and emotions in travelling to separate from the masses. That was a countermeasure against mass tourism. And the same is true abroad. In the 18th century, most of the people who visited British spa hotels were royalty and upper-class. However, with the growth of industry, urbanization and rising wealth, the middle-class were flocking to spa hotels. The social elite began to travel to a new tourist destination, while the lower and middle class taking their place in the old resorts ^[10].

3. THE FORM AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISTS' CULTURAL CAPITAL

3.1. The Form of Tourists' Cultural Capital

In Bourdieu's capital theory (1986), cultural capital existed in three forms: in the embodied state, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, etc.); in the institutionalized state, in the form of legally recognized titles and qualifications^[5]. The "dispositions of the body" refers to embodied cultural capital. Through long-term practice, people's internalized practical logic is embodied in the body movement, language, temperament and habits. In this process, the "dispositions of the body" can distinguish

the social class and status and determine their practical logic.

The cultural capital of tourists exists in the forms of physicalization, objectification and institutionalization. Physical cultural capital present itself in "dispositions of the body", such as tourists' broad insight, unique aesthetic and extraordinary character. It can be a unique insight into local conditions and customs; it can be a firm and indomitable ability to deal with emergencies; it can also be a life attitude of facing honor and disgrace calmly. Objectified cultural capital exists in the form of materialization, such as tourist souvenirs, photos, travel notes, which carry memories about the journey. In order to retain memories in the form of objectification, people take photos of the local customs and bring back some tourist handicrafts. The institutionalized culture is not as outstanding as the title of honor. It exists in a more secret and profound way, forming cultural norms of tourism in different classes. It is recognized and followed in a group which separated from the others.

3.2. The Characteristics of Tourists' Cultural Capital

Among the three forms of cultural capital, physical cultural capital is the most important and is the foundation of the others. Most characteristics of cultural capital are related to the body, and its accumulation is in the body state. Physical cultural capital is the most critical form of tourist cultural capital, which has the characteristics of physicality, unconsciousness and uniqueness.

The first is physicality. The acquisition of physical cultural capital must be through practice and feelings, internalizing the externalized world into one's own spiritual temperament and becoming the organic component of the body. The tourists' cultural physical cultural also has this trait. Extensive experience, unique aesthetic, and perseverance and courageous character must rely on the physical actions of tourists.

The second is unconsciousness, which means that the acquisition of the physical cultural capital is obtained unconsciously. The acquisition and accumulation of tourists' physical cultural capital is also unconscious.

People travel for leisure and pleasure in the era of mass tourism, while increasing knowledge and shaping character are not deliberately done. From our survey, in terms of travel motivation, 76.0% of them are for leisure and relaxation, 47.8% are for pleasure, 47.2% are for expanding their horizon and 39.8% are for improving their relationship with friends. In terms of the effect of tourism, 63.3% of them felt relaxation, 45.3% of them had a happy time, 50.9% of them expanded their horizon, and 45.5% of them strengthen their bond with friends ^[11]. From the results of the comparison, the main

motivation of travel is to relax, but it has not achieved as expected. This shows that traveling has indeed expanded horizon and cultivated taste. Physical cultural capital has been accumulated, although it does not start from the tourists' careful planning.

Finally, there is uniqueness. The tourists' physical capital is significantly different from those of others. The tourists' physical capital originates from their own experience. The difference in natural endowments and the social capital they owned determines the characteristics of physical cultural capital.

4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

4.1. Structural Elements: Time-Space Compression

With the development of industrial science and technology, the space-time boundaries have been gradually broken, and time has accelerated, spatial barriers has been surpassed. Just as Harvey (2004) said, "The world sometimes seems to collapse internally towards us ^[12]". Harvey pointed to the compression in the time dimension brought about by technological progress, which in turn produces the compression in space. Jing (2012) reinterpreted the concept of space-time compression according to the social situation in China at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. He believed that China has facing an unprecedented convergence and collision of tradition, modernity and postmodernism, and things of three different ages are compressed into the same space-time ^[13].

"Space-time compression" provides rationality for tourism to become a popular mass activity since modern times. And it has become a structural element of the construction of tourists' cultural capital. Firstly, the changes in transportation have shortened the travel time and cost, allowing people to travel more conveniently. And the psychical distance is also shortened because of the time compression.

Secondly, things of different times are compressed and presented at the same time as well as space, providing various elements for the construction of tourists' cultural capital. The fusion of traditional, modern, and post-modern elements has become a resource that attracts tourists. Those who want to explore the post-modern literary and artistic, those who want to see modern skyscrapers, or those who desire to return to traditional rural society can all be satisfied in different spaces. Finally, modern tourism operators use simulation and implosion technology to enhance the characteristics of space-time compression, as a re-enchantment after the disenchanted consumption.

4.2. Main Elements: Individual Attachment, Spatial Flow, Periodic Continuation

The construction of tourists' cultural capital is mainly through the construction of their physical cultural capital, so the dependence of individuality must be mentioned. In addition, tourists needs to leave local and to go to other places while traveling, that makes the cultural capital construct by flowing. This is also the difference between the construction of tourists' cultural capital and other forms.

The dependence of individuality embodies in two aspects. The first one is the dependence on the resource endowment of tourists, including both physical and psychological. Tourists' desire and ability to obtain cultural capital are closely related to their physical fitness, character, and hobbies. The resource endowment also includes economic and social. As a kind of consumption activity, tourism activity is determined by the tourists' income and time. The second is the dependence on tourists' personal experience. The construction of tourists' cultural capital is a direct activity of the body. It must be practiced by the individual, and it cannot be achieved through other alternative forms.

From the perspective of the spatial characteristics, tourists' cultural capital is constructed by spatial mobility. No matter what kind of activity, tourists have to leave their residence to go to another place, and then come back. Therefore, spatial mobility is the particularity of tourist cultural capital construction. In such a spatial two-way flow, tourists break away from daily life and enter the tourism field. The high concentration of time and the instant reversal of space make experiences inevitably different from daily life. Tourists put aside the nine-to-five routine and get rid of the everyday routine for a while. They experience the local customs of the tourist destination, and finally return with memories. This kind of spatial flow is a two-way consumption flow, not for the purpose of making a living or settling down in other places. Therefore, this flow form has the characteristics of temporary, hedonistic and repeated, and it also makes the culture capital be distinguished in taste and aesthetics.

In terms of the time characteristics of tourist cultural capital construction, it is also different from the conventional cultural capital construction. As a productive construction of cultural capital, education is characterized by time-consuming and large investments. Tourism, as a consumptive construction of cultural capital, obviously cannot be daily life. People have limited time for traveling. They usually travel during the weekend or vacations. Besides, the construction of tourists' cultural capital is a process of accumulation,

which makes the construction of tourists' cultural capital present the characteristics of phased continuity in time.

4.3. Cultural Elements: Value Recognition

Why did tourists attach importance to cultural capital in ancient and modern times? Why is this trend becoming more and more intense in modern society? From an individual's point of view, there is a motivation to pursue taste and status distinction. But considering that individuals will follow and reach a consensus, it is essentially derived from the recognition of certain value orientations and norms.

Jenkins regards that the word "identity" contains two meanings, namely identity and difference. That means "Identity" reveals the relationship between similarity and difference, but in fact it is a process of pursuing the unity of identity and differentiation ^[14]. People also seek identity of symbol and value in consumption. When the meaning of consumption is infinitely amplified, the identity of consumption will become more urgent. Showing cultural taste through consumption has obviously become a mainstream value identity. The emergence of this trend indicates the appearance of the characteristics of the consumer society in China. That is also evident from my study of the "Mianzi" of Chinese tourists (2015). In terms of the degree of identity of "Mianzi", the identity of cultural capital is the highest, while the identity of consumption-based is the lowest ^[15], indicating that people do not agree with the action of showing their status and taste purely from high consumption. Instead, they want to show that through cultural capital.

5. CONCLUSION

In terms of academic significance, understanding and grasping the connotation, construction, social influence and significance of tourists' cultural capital provides a new perspective for understanding tourism activities. Most of the existing studies on tourism consumer behavior follow the research thread of consumer behavior, with motivation -- decision -- purchase -- post-purchase as a consistent train of thought. The main purpose of the research is to serve marketing practice. However, as a social activity connecting economy and culture, consumption has not only economic significance, but also has social and cultural significance. It is not only a pursuit of the maximum profits in the sense of economics, but also a process of meaning construction, taste distinguish and reproduction of social relations among consumers in the sense of sociology. From the perspective of the consumer culture paradigm, that tourists' construction of cultural capital and the distinction between interest and status during tourism consumption, is the social and cultural significance of tourism as a consumption

activity. And this activity has caused a wide range of social recognition. With the progress of consumer society, this trend will continue to intensify.

For the managers of tourist destinations, this research also has some inspiration. Existing tourism services tend to satisfy tourists by improving their service quality. But now the pursuit of tourists has changed significantly. The managers of tourist destinations have to figure out how to make travelers seem literate and spread culture style widely. From showing off wealth to showing off cultural taste, the cultural factors need to be fully considered by the operation and management of tourist destinations, the design and marketing of tourist products. In order to spread their renown, tourism operators can consider how to create topics to chat in terms of cultural capital. Increasing the uniqueness and story of tourism, not only to distinguish from other tourist destinations, but also to cater to tourists' cultural pursuit. Secondly, tourists like to share pictures, information and feelings of travel. Those tourist souvenirs brought back are the presentation of objectified cultural capital. Tourism operators have to think about how to make tourists' cultural capital more interesting. From the perspective of increasing media interest, the sharing of short videos on WeChat and the thumb up of friends all increase the interest of information sharing.

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