



Research on the Influence of Conformity Effect Based on Structural Equation Model

Rong Xiang, Yijun Zhou*

School of Business Administration Zhejiang Gongshang University, ZJGSU Zhejiang, Hangzhou 310018, China

**zyj19981125@163.com*

Abstract

With the expansion of tourism industry, tourism has become an economic growth point that cannot be ignored. This paper takes the local residents of Wanzhou District, Chongqing as the research object, and collects a total of 342 valid questionnaire data through the big data platform such as Questionnaire Star. In order to explore the influence of conformity effect on consumers' travel destination choice behavior, and to examine the mediating effect of self-congruity, this paper uses SPSS software for statistical analysis, and uses AMOS system to establish structural equation model for empirical verification. The results show that conformity effect has a positive and significant impact on consumers' travel destination choice behavior, and self-congruity plays a partial mediating role between conformity effect and consumers' travel destination choice behavior. This paper not only deepens the relevant research in marketing and economics, but also gives some enlightenment to tourism enterprises, consumers and government agencies in practice.

Keywords-*structural equation model; conformity; self-congruity; mediation effect*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the increase of per capita disposable income, the scale of the tourism industry has gradually expanded, and the product system has been gradually improved. Although the quality is uneven, the future of China's tourism industry is still showing high growth trend. Tourism has become an economic growth point that cannot be ignored, and various places are attracting tourists through various means. This paper holds that conformity effect is one of the most important factors that influence the choice of tourist destinations and the development of popular tourist attractions. It is pervasive and highly effective in human beings, who tend to conform to group opinions as a result of group influence. Then, how does conformity effect affect consumers' choice of travel destination? Based on the above problems, this study will take the consumers' travel destination choice behavior as the research object, and explore the mechanism of conformity effect on travel destination choice behavior. On this basis, the paper will further analyze the mediating effect of self-congruity on the relationship between them. In the following part, this paper will carry out corresponding theoretical analysis and put forward the hypothesis. At the same time, SPSS and Amos will be used to test the hypothesis, and then

obtain the empirical results. Finally, this paper summarizes this study and puts forward future prospects. Based on the understanding of conformity effect, the study of tourism behavior from the perspective of tourists' social psychology can not only enrich the existing theories of tourism destination choice behavior, but also further explore the psychological status of consumers, expand the existing tourism market, and encourage relevant enterprises or government to take reasonable measures to promote the rapid development of tourism economy.

2. REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

2.1. The Herd Effect and the Choice of Tourist Destinations

Conformity refers to the phenomenon in which the concept or behavior of individuals changes in the direction of the majority of people due to the direct or implicit pressure or guidance of the group^[1]. The conformity effect has always existed in human society. In terms of the relationship between conformity and tourism decision-making behavior, tourism is a special consumer product, and the consumption behavior generated around tourism is unconsciously guided by

more social and psychological factors. Some scholars pointed out that although tourists are a type of consumers, their needs belong to social needs, and they pay more attention to interpersonal relationship, belonging, status, and self-esteem in the process of consumption^[2]. Therefore, consumers' conformity behavior is more prominent in the whole process of tourism. Some scholars also pointed out that the higher the trust degree of individual tourists to their group, the more likely they are to be influenced by the group's opinions, which further affects the choice of tourist destinations^[3]. We thus hypothesize:

H1: Conformity has a significant positive impact on tourist destination choice behavior.

2.2. Destination choice behavior and self-congruity

For the influencing factors that affect the choice of tourist destinations, many experts have proposed different influencing factors from different dimensions. The influence of self-congruity on tourism choice in this paper refers to the influence before tourism decision-making, which is more concerned with the image and resources of tourism destination itself. Li believed that the concept of self-destination connection represented the feelings between consumers and tourist destinations, and examined the mediating effect of self-destination congruity^[4]. Hung proved that self-congruity has a significant impact on potential consumers' travel destination choice behavior, especially ideal self-congruity can best reflect the travel ideas of potential tourists^[5]. Self-congruity projects the tourists' personal image onto the tourism destination's image and personality, and the matching of cognitive degree between the two has considerable influence on the tourists. We thus hypothesize:

H2: Self-congruity has a significant positive impact on destination choice behavior.

2.3. Self-congruity and the herd effect

Self-congruity emphasizes personal image or cognitive independence and is not easily influenced by others. According to the previous literature studies, the definition of self-congruity in this paper refers to the ideal self-congruity that matches the real self, ideal self, product image, user cognition, etc. There is little literature on the interaction between conformity and self-congruity, which is generally divided into two opposing perspectives in social psychology: individual and group. Scholars pointed out that when the issues closely related to oneself are different from group opinions, the need to maintain self-image and protect self-concept will exceed the need to obtain the approval of others^[6]. Self-congruity emphasizes the independence of self-cognition while conformity shows the deviation of group pressure

on self-cognition. The interaction between self-congruity and the feedback of reference group influences the change of consumers' attitude. We thus hypothesize:

H3: Self-congruity and conformity effect have significant negative effects.

2.4. The mediating role of self-congruity

Although conformity and self-congruity are two relative concepts in social psychology, Dai creatively introduced self-congruity as an intermediary variable. When teenagers' consumption behavior is influenced by conformity psychology, the strength of self-congruity determines the intensity of conformity psychology in consumption, we thus hypothesize:

H4: Self-congruity has a mediating role in conformity effect and tourist destination choice behavior.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design of the questionnaire can be said to be a good start for a successful investigation. A good questionnaire can fully satisfy the researchers' exploration of relevant professional issues. The questionnaire is finalized through the following five stages: literature review and induction-- questionnaire design -- pre-survey-- questionnaire modification -- formal finalization.

3.1. Sample selection and data sources

This paper uses the questionnaire star data platform to design the questionnaire, and uses the method of simple random sampling to distribute the questionnaire to the local residents in Wanzhou District through the Internet. At the 95% confidence level and the maximum error does not exceed 10%, the maximum sample size is 384 according to the formula:

$$N = \frac{t_{\alpha}^2 \cdot \delta^2}{E^2} = 384 \quad (1)$$

384 questionnaires were actually distributed and 342 valid questionnaires were actually collected, that is, the effective response rate was 89.1%.

3.2. Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire is mainly divided into three parts: introduction, subject of the questionnaire, and information of the respondents. The main purpose of the introduction is to make the respondents understand the source and purpose of the questionnaire survey. The main body of the questionnaire is mainly divided into three scales. The conformity scale describes the analysis of consumers' inner tendency according to their own experience and perception; the tourist destination

selection scale examines the consumers' emphasis on the original resources of tourist destinations; the self-congruity scale analyzes consumers' ideal self, so as to better connect with consumers' social psychology. These three scales correspond to independent variables, dependent variables and intermediate variables respectively, and they are all measured by Likert five-level scale. Respondent information is to investigate the basic information of the respondent.

3.3. Scale Definition and Measurement

According to the research results of previous studies, combined with their own research needs, this paper measures the model variables. As an independent variable, conformity effect is analyzed in two dimensions: normative conformity and informational conformity. This paper mainly investigates on the basis of consumers' perception of consumption experience. As a dependent variable, tourism destination choice behavior has four dimensions, which are tourism resources endowment, tourism time, tourism transportation accessibility and tourism service facilities, because the research topic of this paper is based on social psychology. The research topic of this paper is based on social psychology, so it focuses on tourists' choice of advantages of tourist destinations before selecting destinations. As a mediating variable, there are five dimensions of self-congruity: sincerity, excitement, ability, sophistication and ruggedness, this paper selects 15 items related to the ideal self.

3.4. Model

Structural equation model is a widely recognized important tool to study the relationship between observable variables and potential variables, as well as the relationship between potential variables. It generally includes measurement model and structural model. This paper mainly lists the latter. The structural model consists of structural variables and residual terms, and mainly analyzes the causal relationship between latent variables. Its expression is:

$$DC = \beta_1 CO + \beta_2 SC + e_i \tag{2}$$

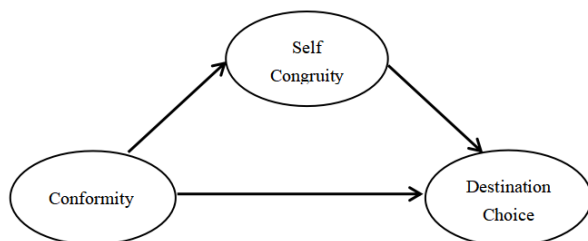


Figure 1. Hypothetical structural model

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Firstly, this paper uses SPSS software to test the reliability and validity of three different scales corresponding to three variables, and observes the fitting degree between the three variable models. The higher the fitting degree is, the higher the theoretical model is consistent with the actual data, and the closer it is to the completely true variable situation. Secondly, the correlation analysis is carried out on the variables. The correlation performance between the two variables reflects the correlation degree between the variables, which is used to test and analyze the three hypotheses proposed above. Finally, the AMOS system is used to draw the relationship between variables and obtain the standardized path coefficient between them, so as to test the relevant hypothesis.

4.1. Reliability and Validity Testing of the Scale

This paper uses the AMOS tool in IBM SPSS to analyze the reliability and validity of the above three scales. It can be seen from the TABLE I that the Cronbach's α value and CR value of each factor are both greater than 0.7, indicating that the measurement item has good reliability. The average extraction variance (AVE) of each factor is above 0.5, indicating that the measurement item has ideal convergence validity.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed on each dimension of the three variables through SPSS tools, as shown in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1. RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Scale	item	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Mean	S.D.			
Conformity (CO)	CO1	0.891	0.891	0.622	3.73	1.15			
	CO2				3.89	1.08			
	CO3				3.72	1.14			
	CO4				3.8	1.01			
	CO5	0.920	0.921	0.700	3.72	1.11			
	CO6				3.82	1.02			
	CO7				3.69	1.16			
	CO8				3.68	1.13			
	CO9				3.85	1.04			
	CO10				3.74	1.04			
Self-congruity (SC)	SC1	0.915	0.916	0.732	3.98	1.05			
	SC2				4.03	1.03			
	SC3				4.16	1.05			
	SC4				4.12	1.01			
	SC5	0.896	0.895	0.681	3.98	1.07			
	SC6				4.06	0.97			
	SC7				4.03	1.07			
	SC8				4.01	1.08			
	SC9				0.880	0.881	0.711	4.12	1.05
	SC10							4.06	1.06

	SC11				4.05	1.11
	SC12	0.780	0.781	0.640	4.08	1.04
	SC13				4.01	1.04
	SC14	0.784	0.781	0.640	4.00	1.08
	SC15				4.10	1.05
DC1	0.903				0.902	0.698
DC2		3.76	1.08			
DC3		3.72	1.11			
DC4		3.78	1.08			
DC5		0.761	0.769	0.625		
DC6	3.89				1.05	
Destination Choice (DC)	DC7	0.860	0.862	0.757	3.87	1.14
	DC8				3.83	1.11
	DC9				0.845	0.850
	DC10	3.77	1.09			

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis between variables was obtained by two-tailed analysis according to SPSS. It can be seen from the table below, conformity effect has a low positive correlation with self-congruity, the positive correlation between conformity effect and self-congruity is low, the correlation between conformity effect and destination choice behavior is high, and the correlation between self-congruity and destination choice behavior is high. Therefore, there is a significant correlation between the three variables, which is suitable for further analysis.

TABLE 2. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

	Conformity	Self-congruity	Destination Choice
Conformity	1		
Self-congruity	0.117*	1	
Destination Choice	0.768**	0.648**	1

*P<0.05;**P<0.01(Double Tail Test), Significant correlation

4.4. Model fitting and hypothesis testing

In order to verify the fit degree between the hypothesis model and empirical data, this paper uses several indicators to judge the fitness of the model. The absolute fit index χ^2 / df is 1.75, less than 3, which meets the standard; RMSEA=0.047 meets the standard of less than 0.08; and GFI=0.857, which is slightly lower than the standard of 0.9, but greater than the relaxed standard of 0.8, so this result is acceptable. The value added suitability indexes, CFI=0.961, NFI=0.914, TLI=0.959, all reaching the standard of greater than 0.9. Therefore, on the basis of comprehensive consideration, it can be considered that the model fitting degree among the three variables is relatively good. The following table shows the relevant measurement results of the overall fit degree of the model.

TABLE 3. TEST TABLE FOR OVERALL FITNESS OF MODEL

Fit Index	χ^2 / df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	TLI	CFI
Operation result	1.75	0.05	0.86	0.91	0.96	0.96

Finally, a structural equation model is established to test the mediating effect of self-congruity. The standardized path coefficient between conformity effect and consumers' choice behavior of travel destination is 0.648, which has a significant positive effect, assuming that H1 is valid. The standardized path coefficient between self-congruity and consumers' choice behavior of travel destination is 0.594, which has a significant positive effect, assuming that H2 is valid. The standardized path coefficient of conformity effect and self-congruity is 0.193, which is positive correlation, but not significant, assuming that H3 is not valid.

The indirect effect of self-congruity on conformity effect and consumers' destination choice behavior is 0.115, which is statistically significant at the significance level of 0.05, assuming that H4 is valid. In conclusion, although self-congruity plays a mediating role in conformity effect and destination choice behavior, the direct effect is still significant, so self-congruity plays a part of the mediating role.

TABLE 4. STANDARD PATH COEFFICIENT TABLE FOR VARIABLE ADJUSTMENT

	Standardized estimation	S.E	P
Conformity--Self-congruity(a)	0.193	0.061	0.231
Self-congruity--Destination Choice(b)	0.594	0.059	0.000
Conformity--Destination Choice(c)	0.648	0.058	0.000
Indirect effect (a*b)	0.115		0.047
Direct effect (c)	0.648		0.000
Total effect(a*b+c)	0.763		

5. CONCLUSIONS

Structural equation model is a basic, scientific, deductive and systematic quantitative analysis tool^[7]. It is very meaningful to construct structural equation model to predict economic indicators and combine data analysis with economics and management.

5.1. Research conclusion

Based on the understanding of conformity effect and self-congruity, this paper explores the hypothesis of their effects on tourist destination choice behavior, and draws the following conclusions: Firstly, conformity effect has a positive and significant effect on consumers' destination choice behavior; in other words, the stronger the conformity effect is, the more easily tourists are influenced by others' suggestions when choosing a destination. Secondly, self-congruity has a positive and significant effect on consumers' choice behavior of tourist destination, which indicates that the stronger the self-congruity is, the less likely tourists are to be

influenced by others and the easier they are to make their own decisions when choosing a destination. Thirdly, the conformity effect has a positive effect on self-congruity, but it is not significant, which indicates that the conformity effect has a positive relationship with self-congruity to some extent, and future research can further explore this. Fourthly, self-congruity plays a partial mediating role between the conformity effect and consumers' destination choice behavior, and the mediating effect is significant.

5.2. Management Enlightenment

From the perspective of tourism enterprises, while improving the hardware facilities, they should also take into account the conformity effect of tourists and guide the public, so as to facilitate tourists to choose tourist destinations with strong conformity. For example, inviting influential public figures for publicity is conducive to strengthening the compliance of tourists. From the perspective of tourist cities, it is not only necessary to emphasize the characteristics of tourists themselves and create more distinctive tourist destinations, but also to increase publicity to amplify their own labels, form conformity effect, and attract more people with the same social psychology to travel. From the perspective of tourists, tourists should be aware of the impact of conformity effect, avoid blindly following the trend when choosing a tourist destination, and rationally proceed from their own needs.

5.3. Research limitations

Although some achievements have been made in this research, there are still many deficiencies. First of all, this paper does not obtain a larger number when selecting the relevant sample size, the scope is limited, and the representativeness of the research results is small, which may cause a certain degree of deviation to the research results. Secondly, limited by the reference literature, this paper does not further explore the operating mechanism of the conformity effect and the

specific operating process of self-congruity as an intermediary variable. Finally, this paper only studies the influence of conformity effect on consumers' tourism destination choice behavior. Due to the limitation of conditions, it is impossible to measure the influence of other psychological factors and external conditions on tourism decision-making. Future research can be further expanded on this basis.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 591-621.
- [2] Lin, G.W., & Bai, K. (2015). The influence of Internet word of mouth on the conformity behavior of potential tourists to Tibet. *Human Geography*, 30, 06: 138-145.
- [3] Chen, K. (2011). The application of herd mentality in tourism destination marketing. *Business*, 06: 153-154.
- [4] Li, Y. Q., & Guan, X. H. (2015). From People-Brand Relationships to People-Place Relationships: Self-Destination Connections. *Travel Journal*, 30, 09: 52-62.
- [5] Hung K, Petrick J F. (2011). The role of self-and functional congruity in cruising intentions. *Travel Journal*, 50, 01: 100-112.
- [6] Dai, Q., & Zhou, T. R. (2007). An Empirical Study on Conformity, Non-conformity and Anti-conformity of Urban Youth in my country. *Predict*, 04: 42-48.
- [7] Liu, T. (2022). Research on perception of red cultural landscape based on structural equation model. *Chinese Garden*, 38, 02:99-103

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

