Tourist Experience in Traditional Villages: an Empirical Study of Three Typical Villages in China

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Abstract. This research aimed to conduct field surveys in 3 traditional villages, including Xidi, Chengkan and Zhukou with questionnaire to explore the type and the object of tourist experience in traditional villages, and the relationship between tourist experience, satisfaction, and behavior intention, hoping to provide valuable reference for marketing and development of tourism products, etc. Findings show that there are 4 types of tourist experience, including landscape, tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service, and 19 specific experience items. Different tourist origins have a very significant influence on 4 types of tourist experience; different village destinations have a very significant influence on tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service; different annual household income has a very significant influence on landscape. The use of tourist experience data can effectively predict tourist satisfaction and positive tourist behavior intention, but cannot predict negative tourist behavior intention. Tourist Satisfaction has a significant negative correlation with negative tourist behavior intention, but a significant positive correlation with positive tourist behavior intention.

Keywords: Huangshan; traditional villages; tourist experience; tourist satisfaction; behavior intention

1 Introduction

Traditional villages refer to the villages that have both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and have high historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social and economic value. Traditional villages are typical of ancient villages, bearing the essence of traditional Chinese culture, and are non-renewable cultural heritage of agricultural civilization[1]. But with rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, the phenomenon that traditional villages decline or even disappear becomes worse. According to statistics, as the representative of traditional villages, the number of ancient villages, especially natural villages, was 3.63 million in 2000, and dropped to 2.3 million by the year 2015, On average, 237 natural villages disappear every day[2]. From 2012 to 2023, Ministry of Housing Construction released six batches of Chinese traditional villages,

and a total of 8155 villages were included in the scope of protection. In practice, developing tourism is chosen by many traditional villages to promote the sustainable development of economy, culture, society. Moreover, studies show that tourism development plays an important role in the protection of the cultural heritage of traditional villages[3,4]. This research aimed to explore the type and the object of tourist experience in traditional villages, and the relationship between tourist experience, satisfaction, and behavior intention in the method of questionnaires and field surveys, hoping to provide valuable reference for marketing and development of tourism products, etc.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Tourist Experience

The study of tourists experience began in the 1960s. Boorstin defined it as a type of popular consumer behavior, as well as a type of non-spontaneous pre-experience in mass tourism[5]. Yanjun Xie determined that tourist experience is a special process to perceive pleasure, and a psychological pleasure including relaxation, change, experience and novelty that can be experienced by tourists in travel by enjoying, associating, imitating and consuming. There are many factors that affect tourist experience[6]. For example, Tian Ma suggested that the quality of tourist experience depends not only on various properties of tourist destinations and service quality of reception staff in tourism enterprises, but also on various factors of tourists themselves. These factors play roles in different time and place, to different people, as well as in completely different ways, thus affecting the quality of tourist experience[7]. Jacinto found that the interaction between tourism and different cultures influences satisfaction of tourist experience and attitudes towards the destination[8]. Items of tourist experience include core products, additional facilities, services, tourism commodities and so on[9]. In recent years, as tourism resources that can better meet contemporary aesthetics, education, escape, entertainment and so on, ancient villages have attracted a large number of tourists[10]. However, tourism in some traditional villages, such as in Xidi and Hongcun, is still concerned on sightseeing rather than tourist experience. So their sightseeing-type tourism products should be transited to experience-based cultural products[11], Tourist experience is the result of multi-agent interaction and co-construction in tourism activities, mixed with the cognitive process of feeling, perception, memory and imagination, which is not only the object of tourism activities, but also can have a feedback effect on the behavior of tourists[12]. Tourism is an activity with experience as the core, and experience is one of the most important characteristics of tourism[13].

2.2   Tourist Satisfaction

Since the 1960s, Cardozo and Miller began a study of customer satisfaction, including Expectation Diversity Theory and the role product performance plays in the formation of customer satisfaction, which laid theoretical foundation for tourist satisfaction later[14,15]. Many factors affect tourist satisfaction, including tourists on the catering, accommodation, transportation, entertainment, shopping, experience of overall

environment and so on[16]. Feng and Sha found that authenticity of ancient buildings is the most important factor that can affect tourist satisfaction in ancient village tourism via empirical studies[17]. Tourists are satisfied with "integrity, wisdom and elegance" an unsatisfied with "peace and trendy" of scenic spots in ancient villages[18]. Customer satisfaction is generally evaluated from the aspects of product quality, service, and price [19]. A high level of visitor satisfaction can motivate tourists to make purchases, recommendations, and repeat visits[20].

2.3   Behavior Intention

Behavior intention is personal behavior consciousness about future[21]. Tourist behavior intention is an attitude that is formed by tourists after the visit of a tourist destination, and it can be divided into positive behavior intention and negative behavior intention. Positive behavior intention includes recommendation intention, revisit intention, etc. Negative behavior intention includes grumbles, complaints, etc[22]. Tourist behavior intention can be affected by many factors, such as quality of food and service[23], tourism motivation[22] and perceived attractiveness, satisfaction and perceived value of tourist destinations[24]. Inhabitants in ancient villages are friendly, simple and sincere, which can most influence tourist revisit intention. While design of scenic spot is authoritative and professional, which can least influence tourist revisit intention[25]. Tourism consumers' behavior intentions mainly include tourism consumers' revisit intentions, word-of-mouth communication, recommendation intentions, price sensitivity and other dimensions[26]. A loyal group of travel consumers is crucial for a destination, not only as a continuous source of income for the destination, but also as a new source of travel consumers through word-of-mouth, positive recommendations, etc., thereby saving the destination a lot of marketing costs[27].

2.4   Evaluation of Literature Review

First, in terms of research content, there are less empirical study on tourist experience, satisfaction, behavior intention and their relationship of traditional village, especially the research results about the type and object of tourist experience, which are very different from each other. Therefore, research content should be further expanded and deepened in this area. Second, in terms of methodology, quantitative research should be put emphasis on. A variety of research tools have been used to collect data in most studies, and statistical analysis has been conducted, so the research results are quite objective and clear. However, when the specific variables are conducted with operational definition, there are many places that are not enough strict.

3   Methodology

3.1   Respondents

In the method of stratified random sampling, taking tourists in 3 traditional villages (Chengkan, Xidi and Zhukou in Huangshan City) as respondents, we distributed 350 questionnaires, and collected 317 valid questionnaires, representing a 90.57% response. Among the valid questionnaires, 106 are from Chengkan, 152 are from Xidi, and 59 are from Zhukou.

3.2   Questionnaire

Based on previous studies and combined with field surveys, we developed a "question-naire about tourist experience in traditional villages". The questionnaire contains 3 aspects of questions including tourist experience, tourist satisfaction and tourist behavior intention. There are 22 items for tourist experience, 1 item for tourist satisfaction and 4 items for tourist behavior intention. Respondents answered the questionnaire in a way of single-choice so that we could inspect the degree in which respondents agreed each item. The responses to all questions were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale(1=strongly disagree, 3=neutral, and 5=strongly agree; if an item is a negative statement, the scoring way is contrary). In addition, there are 5 items on demographic characteristics in the questionnaire, and they are gender, age, education level, annual household income and tourist origins. And also there is 1 item on village destinations. Finally, data of questionnaires were statistically analyzed in the tool of by SPSS20.0.

3.3   Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows respondents' demographic characteristics.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics (N = 317)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154	48.58%
	Female	163	51.42%
Age (years)	18-25	108	34.07%
	26-35	74	23.34%
	36-45	75	23.66%
	46-55	40	12.62%
	56-65	15	4.73%
	Over 66	5	1.58%
Education Level	Senior high school (technical secondary school) and below	89	28.08%
	Tertiary College/Univeristy education	204	64.35%
	Postgraduate	21	6.62%

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Annual House-hold Income (RMB)	Below 99,999	169	53.31%
	100,000-199,999	108	34.07%
	200,000-299,999	19	5.99%
	Over 300,000	21	6.62%
Tourist Origins	Local and surrounding region	197	62.15%
	Pearl river delta region	22	6.94%
	Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region	53	16.72%
	Other domestic regions	45	14.20%

4   Results Analysis

4.1   Tourist Experience and Specific items

First, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to measure the sampling adequacy and appropriateness of the variables for factor analysis. KMO value is .901, and the result of Bartlett spherical test is as followings, the Chi-square: 2375.077, df: 171, p:.000, which indicates that the questionnaire has good construct validity, and be appropriate for factor analysis. Second, Cronbach test was used to the date of the questionnaire, and as a result that Alpha value is .899 and p: .000, which indicates that the questionnaire has good reliability. The method of principal component analysis and maximum orthogonal rotation were used to conduct the factor analysis of the data. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. EFA of tourist experience

Item	Before Rotation			After Rotation		
	Eigenvalue	Variance Contribution	Cumulative	Eigen-value	Variance Con-tribution	Cumulative
1	6.992	36.799	36.799	2.862	15.066	15.066
2	1.543	8.122	44.921	2.845	14.972	30.038
3	1.373	7.224	52.144	2.743	14.439	44.477
4	1.122	5.906	58.050	2.579	13.573	58.050

4 factors whose initial eigenvalue were greater than 1.1 were extracted in the method of screen test, and 4 factors' cumulative contribution of variance accounted to 58.05%. Each factor is constituted with different number of items. Factors, items and their loadings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Items constitute factors and their loadings

Item*	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
1	.708			
5	.653			
2	.625			
3	.575			
6	.512			
4	.444			
9		.763		
8		.621		
7		.543		
18		.533		
15			.777	
16			.762	
11			.637	
19			.624	
10			.571	
13				.778
14				.769
22				.590
12				.535

Table 3 shows that 6 items constitute Factor 1: 1. Scenic spots here including ancient houses, ancestral halls and so on are with significant local characteristics. 2. Buildings here have harmonious relations with the surroundings. 3. Buildings here seem to have a long history and are well preserved. 4. I can experience authentic folk customs of traditional villages here. 5. This place is very different from where I live. 6. Tourism landscape here are very different from where I have been before. According to the main content of the items above, Factor 1 can be named as landscape.

4 items constitute Factor 2: 7. Natural environment around the village is beautiful. 8. Streets in the village and courtyards in dwellings are very clean and tidy. 9. Living atmosphere of the village is peaceful and harmonious. 18. Tourist sites here are well managed, and there has no problems about parking, overcrowding, quarrels between hosts and guest, etc. According to the main content of the items above, Factor 2 can be named as tourism environment.

5 items constitute Factor 3: 10. It's convenient to take external traffic to get here. 11. Tourism facilities here are well-equipped. 15. Tourist souvenirs sold here are with significant local characteristics. 16. There are a variety of leisure and entertainment activities here and are with significant local characteristics. 19. Tourist information released here has a complete category, and updates in time. According to the main content of the items above, Factor 3 can be named as basic tourism service.

4 items constitute Factor 4: 12. Folk custom here is simple, and residents are hospitable. 13. Food here is delicious, and the dining environment clean and tidy. 14. Accommodation environment here is clean and comfortable, which let me stay at ease. 22. There is no cheating behavior to tourists by guided tours, restaurants, hotels or souvenir shops. According to the main content of the items above, Factor 4 can be named as

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*Number in this column is the sequence number in the questionnaire.

catering and accommodation service.

Thus, there are 4 types of tourist experience in traditional villages, including landscape, tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service, and 19 specific experience items. The result of factor analysis shows that tourists are most concerned about landscape among 4 factors, followed by tourism environment, and the third is the basic tourism service, and the fourth is catering and accommodation service. Coincidence between this result and Cheng & Guo's[28] is that they find when tourists select and evaluate ancient villages, tourists are most concerned about characteristic landscape, followed by tourism infrastructure and service; differences is that we find tourists are very concerned about the tourism environment in traditional villages. Wang & Zhao (2009) divided tourist experience of ancient villages into 7 types, including ecological, physical and cultural landscape, emotional display ways of landscape, tour guide system, coordination of facilities and landscape, modern way of guide explanation, traditional way of guide explanation, pastoral scenery. This has a great difference with our findings, and there is some degree of consistency only in terms of the landscape.

4.2   Demographic Characteristics of the Difference in Tourist Experience and Destination Villages Variance Analysis

There are 5 items on demographic characteristics in the questionnaire, and they are gender, age, education level, annual household income and tourist origins. And also there is 1 item on village destinations. Taking demographic characteristics and village destinations as independent variables, and taking tourist experience as dependent variables, we conducted analysis of variance and found that different tourist origins have a very significant influence on 4 types of tourist experience; different village destinations have a very significant influence on 3 types of tourist experience including tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service; different annual household income has a very significant influence on landscape of tourist experience. And the results are shown in Table 4. Other demographic characteristics have no significant influence on tourist experience (Related tables are omitted.). Thus, where tourists come from and where they go to are the major factors that affect tourist experience of traditional villages. Meanwhile, although annual household income is quite very important, it only affects landscape of tourist experience in traditional village tourism. In addition, although different village destinations have an influence on 3 types of tourist experience, it doesn't have an influence on landscape. It is probably because that the traditional villages we studied are in the same culture region, so the features of landscape are highly similar. Zhang found that income, age and gender have a significant influence on tourist experience in ancient towns, so research confirms the role of income, but not confirm the influence of gender and age on tourist experience[29].

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of the difference in tourist experience and village desti-
nations variance analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	df	F	p
Landscape	Tourist Origins	3	9.361	0.000
	Annual Household Income	3	4.522	0.004
Tourism Environment	Tourist Origins	3	6.375	0.000
	Village Destinations	2	11.918	0.000
Basic Tourism Service	Tourist Origins	3	4.383	0.005
	Village Destinations	2	4.012	0.019
Catering and Accommoda-	Tourist Origins	3	9.510	0.000
tion Service	Village Destinations	2	40.825	0.000

4.3 Relationship of Tourist Experience and Satisfaction

Taking 4 factors of tourist experience as independent variables, and taking tourist sat-
isfaction as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate regression analysis and
found that basic tourism service doesn't have a significant influence on tourist satisfac-
tion. Deleting this factor, taking the remaining 3 factors as independent variables, and
taking tourist satisfaction as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate regression
analysis again. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Multivariate Regression Analysis of Tourist Experience and Satisfaction

	Not Std. Regression Coefficient		Std. Regression Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.392	0.237		1.652	0.099
Landscape	0.397	0.067	0.299	5.670	0.000
Tourism Environment	0.169	0.062	0.152	2.727	0.007
Catering and Accommoda-tion Service	0.370	0.053	0.363	6.952	0.000

The significant test results of the regression equation are as followings, R^2: .475,
P: .000. This result suggests that the regression equation is of great significance. 47.5%
of the variance of tourist satisfaction can be explained with the data of landscape, envi-
ronmental tourism, catering and accommodation service, and these 3 types of tourist
experience can effectively predict tourist satisfaction in traditional village. The result
of this research is consistent with Yin & Zhou[30]. They believe that tourist experience
has a significant influence on tourist satisfaction in rural tourism.

4.4 Relationship of Tourist Experience and Behavior Intention

Taking 4 factors of tourist experience as independent variables, and separately taking 4
kind of behavior intention (formal complaints, informal complaints, revisit intention
and recommendation intention) as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate re-
gression analysis and found that the model constituted by 2 types of behavior intention
(formal complaints and informal complaints) and tourist experience didn't pass

reliability test, indicating that there is no significant correlation between tourist experience and negative behavior intention.

Taking 4 factors of tourist experience as independent variables, and taking revisit intention as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate regression analysis and found that tourism environmental has no significant influence on revisit intention. Deleting this factor, taking the remaining three factors as independent variables, and taking revisit intention as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate regression analysis again. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Multivariate Regression Analysis of Tourist Experience and revisit intention

	Not Std. Regression Coefficient		Std. Regression Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.086	0.310		-0.279	0.780
Landscape	0.310	0.088	0.196	3.521	0.000
Basic Tourism Service	0.265	0.069	0.212	3.836	0.000
Catering and Accommodation Service	0.444	0.069	0.349	6.468	0.000

The significant test results of the regression equation are as followings, R^2: .396, P: .000, which suggests that the regression equation is very significant. 39.6% of the variance of revisit intention can be explained with the data of landscape, basic tourism service and catering and accommodation service, and these 3 types of tourist experience can effectively predict revisit intention in traditional village.

Taking 4 factors of tourist experience as independent variables, and taking recommendation intention as dependent variables, we conducted multivariate regression analysis and found that landscape and catering and accommodation service have a very significant influence on recommendation intention, and tourism environment and basic tourism service have a significant influence on recommendation intention analysis. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Multivariate Regression Analysis of Tourist Experience and Recommendation

	Not Std. Regression Coefficient		Std. Regression Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.150	0.324		-0.462	0.645
Landscape	0.338	0.095	0.213	3.541	0.000
Tourism Environment	0.197	0.087	0.141	2.273	0.024
Basic Tourism Service	0.154	0.072	0.123	2.140	0.033
Catering and Accommodation Service	0.346	0.075	0.272	4.638	0.000

The significant test results of the regression equation are as followings, R^2: .375, P: .000, which suggests that the regression equation is very significant. 37.5% of the variance of revisit intention can be explained with the data of landscape, tourism environment, basic tourism service and catering and accommodation service, and these 4 types of tourist experience can effectively predict recommendation intention in

traditional village.

The statistical analysis above shows that tourists experience doesn't have an influence on negative behavior intention, because tourists speak highly of tourist experience in Xidi, Chengkan and Zhukou, so there is no need to complain. Moreover, tourists need to pay the cost of physical power, energy and emotion for formal complaints or informal complaints, and they must withstand the pressure of discrimination from villages. Therefore, unless too bad tourist experience, tourists will not easily complain traditional village tourism. At the same time, landscape, basic tourism service and catering and accommodation service have a very significant influence on revisit intention. Landscape and catering and accommodation service have a very significant influence on recommendation intention. Tourism environment and basic tourism service have a significant influence on recommendation intention. These results are consistent with Shen's (2012), and he believed that tourist experience has a greater influence on positive behavior intention.

4.5 Relationship of Tourist Satisfaction and 4 Types of Behavior Intention

With Pearson correlation test, we did correlation analysis about tourist satisfaction and 4 types of behavior intention. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Pearson correlation test of tourist satisfaction and 4 types of behavior intention

Behavior Intention	Tourist Satisfaction	r	p
	Formal Complaints	-0.177	0.002
	Informal Complaints	-0.238	0.000
Revisit Intention		0.549	0.000
	Recommendation intention	0.602	0.000

AS result of statistical analysis shows, tourist satisfaction has a very significant negative correlation with formal complaints and informal complaints, and a very significant positive correlation with revisit intention and recommendation intention in traditional village tourism. This result is totally consistent with other related research on tourist attractions.

5 Conclusions

1. there are 4 types of tourist experience, including landscape, tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service, and 19 specific experience items.

2. In traditional village tourism, different tourist origins have a very significant influence on 4 types of tourist experience; different village destinations have a very significant influence on tourism environment, basic tourism service, and catering and accommodation service, but don't have a significant influence on landscape; different annual household income has a very significant influence on landscape.

3. The use of tourist experience data can effectively predict tourist satisfaction and

positive tourist behavior intention, but cannot predict negative tourist behavior intention.

4. Tourist Satisfaction has a significant negative correlation with negative tourist behavior intention, but a significant positive correlation with positive tourist behavior intention.

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