

Perceived Value Influencing Satisfaction of Urban Slow Travel Tourists-A Case Study of Lhasa City

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Abstract: In the new era with global and full-time tourism development, tourists are not merely satisfied with traditional sightseeing tours, but value “deep tourism experience” more. In particular, the pressure of fast-paced life makes “slow travel” favor more and more tourists, becoming a new fashion for tourism consumption. This study proceeds from the perspective of slow travel tourists, observes slow travel approach of Lhasa tourists and conducts questionnaire survey on some slow travel tourists. SPSS22.0 software is used to analyze the impact of five slow travel tourists’ perceived value dimensions on the overall satisfaction, including cultural cognitive value, emotional value, social value, cost value, service value. It is concluded that different perceived value dimensions exert varying degrees of influence on the satisfaction of slow travel tourists in Lhasa, among which cultural cognitive value has the highest influence. The research conclusion will provide practical value for cultural tourism cities to develop slow travel economy, and also provide theoretical reference for the extension of perceived value theory to the scenario of urban slow travel.

Keywords: city brand; Lhasa; slow travel; perceived value; satisfaction

1. Introduction

“The travel distance was very long and the delivery of correspondence was very slow in the past”

“Time was slower in the past” poetically expresses the urban nostalgia brought by alienation of life in the fast urban pace and people’s yearning for slow life [1]. Such alienation is essentially the loss of urban cultural tradition and uniqueness caused by globalization and commercialization, which reflects perceived place lessness of urban space experiencers [2].

In the past decade, the tourism research community has deeply reflected on the negative effects of globalization, commodification, mediaization and informatization on urban local authenticity and city branding, inspiring thought of postmodern tourism [3]. Postmodern tourism as a low-carbon, local-affinity, non-institutional embedded and localized community-participating sustainable tourism form has transformed the traditional urban tourism space

utilization mode [4]. The most representative ones are creative tourism and slow city. This type of tourism aims to direct tourists to creatively discover the city “backstage”, thoroughly explore the city spirit, and shape the city’s personality, which considers urban rebranding as wide-area identity of space [5]. In particular, urban slow travel as an “optional” alternative travel mode for tourists facilitates creative production of urban space based on local practice of tourists [6].

The essence of urban slow travel is to focus on authentic, original, and diverse urban culture, reflect on self-concepts and reshape self-identity by pursuing slow lifestyle [7]. Previous research has defined urban slow travel from two aspects. On the one hand, it is a top-down slow city movement. That is, relying on urban space, city managers shape urban brand image of “slow city” via top-down urban spirit and urban space remodeling, thereby attracting urban tourists who pursue “slow pace” [8]. On the other hand, it is bottom-up pursuit of slow life. That is, urban space consumers (including local residents as internal consumers and tourists as external consumers) pursue local meaningful production through bottom-up spatial practice [9]. The two are not independent of each other, but constitute key elements for building sustainable slow travel brand via top-down slow city spatial planning in a way that utilizes the opportunity of bottom-up local production [10]. Therefore, the core of urban slow travel is to meet tourists’ demand for slow city lifestyle (originating in Italian: “cittaslow”), increase the satisfaction of slow travel tourists by maximizing their perceived value. On the one hand, it satisfies tourists’ pursuit of high quality lifestyles and sense of gain. On the other hand, it affects action loyalty (revisit intention and word of mouth intention) by increasing tourists’ satisfaction, which in turn affects city brand equity [11]. However, the existing research has not made an in-depth analysis on perceived value dimensions that affect the satisfaction of slow travel tourists [12].

Lhasa, as an important minority frontier city, features differentiated authentic culture and attractive urban atmosphere which provides a natural development space for slow city travel tourism [13]. Its lazy and slow-paced city life, intertwining urban space distribution, interactive tourism space shared by local residents and tourists [14] provide opportunities for tourists to deeply experience the city spirit of Lhasa and observe the slow-paced local

residents' attitude for life (such as teahouse leisure, praying, pilgrimage, etc.). Speaking from this perspective, Lhasa can be defined as a natural "slow city" in total sense, and tourists who pursue essential Lhasa city spirit can be defined as "comrades" of Lhasa local residents who pursue slow-paced lifestyle [15]. Therefore, taking Lhasa as a case study to investigate the influence dimensions of Lhasa slow travel tourists' perceived value on their satisfaction will mean important representative significance.

2. Overview

Tourist perceived value originates from the theory of customer perceived value, which is uniformly defined as "customer's overall evaluation based on the gains and losses of products or services" [16]. That is, assume that customer's evaluation of products or services is entirely based on his rational judgment of the consumption, then the perceived value is the overall customer perception as a result of the gap between the gained utility and the effort taken [17]. Customer perceived value is initially defined as a single dimension of the gap between gain and loss. With the investigation into the concepts of perceived service value and perceived experience value, customer perceived value is divided into a combination of perceived utility value and perceived happiness value [18]. In the context of tourism, due to the experience characteristics of tourism, the synchronicity of tourism product production and consumption, etc., tourists' perceived value exhibits a variety of perceived value structures, such as cultural value, monetary value, social value, emotional value, functional value, knowledge value, personal growth value and other different dimensions [19]. In fact, from the perspective of resource trading theory, if tourists' perceived value is regarded as a result of balanced gain and loss in resource transactions [20], then the perceived value can be seen as a result of exchange between money resources, social status resources, information resources, service resources, goods resources and emotion resources [21]. Seen from this perspective, tourists' perceived value is indeed a multi-dimensional concept.

Past research has confirmed the positive impact of tourist perceived value on overall tourist satisfaction [22], and has proved that tourist perceived value dimensions in different tourism contexts produce varying degrees of impact on tourist satisfaction. For instance, the perceptual value dimensions that affect festive tourists' satisfaction include functional value, social value, happiness value, knowledge value, monetary value and convenience value [23]; the perceptual value dimensions that affect winter tourism tourists' satisfaction include quality value, economic value, novelty value, emotional value, social value and knowledge value [24], while the perceived value dimensions that affect slow travel tourists' satisfaction have not been clearly clarified. Therefore, the research hypothesis of this study is proposed:

H1: The perceived value of slow travel tourists has a significant positive (+) effect on their satisfaction, as shown in Figure 1:

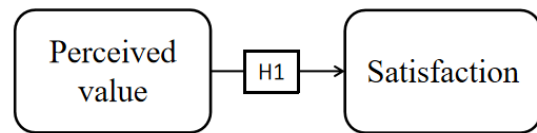


Figure 1. Research model.

The concept of tourist satisfaction can be divided into two types: inconsistent expectation-based satisfaction and attitude-based satisfaction [25]. Inconsistent expectation-based satisfaction defines satisfaction as the difference between tourists' expectation for the tourist destination and post-experience perception. If more is perceived than expected, tourists are generally satisfactory, if less is perceived than expected, tourists are generally dissatisfied [26]. However, according to the flow theory, if the tourists' perception significantly exceeds expectations, then tourists will be more moved than satisfied. That is, moved mindset is a high-level reflection of satisfaction [27]. Attitude-based satisfaction defines satisfaction as tourist's attitude towards the destination or destination landscape [28], which can be divided into cognitive satisfaction, emotional satisfaction and behavioral satisfaction [29]. Cognitive satisfaction is manifested as inconsistency with expectation. Emotional satisfaction, as the dependent variable of cognitive satisfaction, is manifested as tourists' positive or negative emotions. Behavioral satisfaction, as the dependent variable of cognitive and emotional satisfaction [30], is manifested as tourists' positive or negative behaviors. Positive behaviors include word-of-mouth or revisit; negative behaviors may include tourists' slander against and evasion from tourist destinations [31]. Based on Oliver's research (1992), satisfaction should be viewed as a synthesis of the overall results of tourists' expectations or attitudes towards specific travel products, including behavioral attitude intentions [32].

3. Research Methods

3.1. Scale Design

By sorting the existing theories of tourist perceived value, its connotation and dimensions are mastered thoroughly, and the perceived value dimensions of Lhasa slow travel tourists are initially set as seven dimensions of service value, economic value, innovation value, emotional value, social value, cognitive value, and culture value. Preliminary design questionnaire was then designed. Before the formal investigation, the proposed questionnaire was tested on a small scale, 30 questionnaires were distributed, and 28 valid questionnaires were recovered. SPSS22.0 was used to analyze the questionnaire data, sort and revise the questionnaire. In addition, by consulting the opinions and suggestions of Lhasa slow travel tourists, tourism practitioners, experts and scholars on the questionnaire contents, the perceived value dimensions of Lhasa slow travel tourists are finally set as service value, cost value, emotional value, social value, cultural cognitive value (the specific content of each dimension and the source of the indicators are shown in Table 1). Measurement

questions and expression form of the questionnaire are further adjusted to make it easy for tourists to understand

so that the questionnaire can be completed more effectively.

Table 1. Indicator Variable Scale and Literature Sources of Various Dimensions of Tourist Perceived Value.

Measurement Dimension	Measurement Item	Indicator Source
Service value	The staff in Lhasa have good service attitude (enthusiasm and courtesy).	Refer to Li Jiayi [33], Tao Min [34] and Zeithaml [35]
	The services provided by the staff in Lhasa are timely and effective	
	Completeness degree of various basic service facilities in Lhasa	
	The tourism environment in Lhasa is safe, tidy and in good order	
Cost value	The overall travel cost is not high.	Refer to Su Junyi [36], Sweeney and Soutar [37]
	The time spent on this tour is worthwhile	
	The physical energy consumed in this tour is worthwhile	
Emotional value	This tour is fun and enjoyable.	Partly refer to Lin Yi et al. [38] and Woodruff [39]; based on pre-surveys and interviews
	This tour relieves me of stress and relaxes the mood	
	This tour satisfies my curiosity about Tibetan Lhasa folk culture	
	This tour lets me experience some special new things	
Social value	Traveling with relatives and friends can deepen the relationship and feelings with them.	Partly refer to He Lin et al. [40] and Sheth [41]; based on pre-surveys
	The tour makes me associate with peers and meet new friends	
	The tour makes me feel that I highly agree with Tibet and I have gained social identity therefrom	
Cultural Cognitive Value	I have good experience of the unique culture in the minority environment	Partly refer to Lin Yi [38] and Woodruff [39]; based on pre-surveys and interviews
	The scenic buildings in Lhasa are still intact (Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Barkhor Street)	
	I can understand history and learn knowledge	
	This tour allows me appreciate Lhasa buildings and facilities, such as streets, stores, etc.	
	This tour allows me to experience the traditional folk festival performances and folk entertainment activities of the ethnic minorities in Lhasa, such as weddings and funerals, singing and dancing performances, etc.	
	This tour allows me to personally participate in folk experience activities (interaction), such as participating in Guozhuang dance, trying on Tibetan costumes, etc.	
	This tour allows me to taste the special flavors of Lhasa	
	This tour allows me to experience pure humanities and folk customs	

3.2. Research Subject Filtration

In this study, when issuing questionnaires, to accurately target slow travel tourists, a self-discriminatory random sampling method was taken. That is, on the premise that the research subject fully understands the concept of slow travel, let tourists self-evaluate whether they are slow travel tourists. Then finalize the research sample group through a series of simple interview questions (“Are you eager to experience Lhasa culture in depth?” “Do you think you are longing for slow-paced life in Lhasa?” etc.).

3.3. Data Collection

In this study, slow travel tourists in Lhasa were selected as the target research group. From five scenic areas with large crowds, including Potala Palace Square, Zongjiao Lukang Park, Medicine Mountain Observation Deck, Gongde Lintian Street, and Barkhor Street, slow travel tourists were invited to fill out the questionnaire, and the questionnaire was collected immediately after

completion. This method can accomplish preliminary filtration of slow travel tourists through communication with tourists, and guarantee reliability and validity of the questionnaire at the same time. In this study, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, and a total of 288 questionnaires were recovered. Excluding questionnaires with incomplete answers, incomplete fillings, and other invalid ones, there were 281 valid questionnaires, with questionnaire recovery rate of 96% and questionnaire validity rate of 97.5%.

3.4. Data Analysis

The questionnaire contents consist of three parts. The first part is about general characteristics of the respondents, including demographic characteristics (gender, age, education level, occupation, income level) and general tourism characteristics (number of visits to Tibet, mode of travel, purpose of visit, days of stay, means of transportation to Tibet). The second part is about tourists’ perceived value in the travel process. This

part has 22 questions. The third part is about tourists' tourism satisfaction with a total of 6 questions.

In this study, EXCLE was used to electronically process the questionnaire data and establish the database, and SPSS 22.0 software was used to perform descriptive statistical analysis, reliability, validity analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis.

4. Analysis Results

4.1. General Characteristics of Tourists

Frequency analysis of demographic characteristics of the tourists shows that (Table 2), male respondents account for 51.6%, which exceeds female respondents (48.4%). In terms of age, young and middle-aged respondents aged 20-30 account for the vast majority, about 39.1%. In terms of educational level, there are 219

tourists with university education or as university learners, accounting for 77.9% of all respondents. In terms of income level, the vast majority of tourists earn an income of 3,000 yuan or less, accounting for about 30.2%. In terms of occupation, the respondent's occupations are corporate/company employees, students, government agency/institution employees, other and self-employed worker in order of frequency from high to low.

Frequency analysis results of general characteristics of the tourists reveal that most tourists visit Tibet for the first time, accounting for about 70.8%, while individual tourist account for 88.3% of the absolute part. In terms of visit purpose, pure tourists account for 63.7%. As for the means of transportation to Tibet, airplanes and trains are the main means of transportation (80.8%). Regarding days of stay, about 68.3% tourists stay less than a week.

Table 2. Basic situation of the samples.

	Item	Frequency	Proportion (%)
Means of Transportation	Train	116	41.3
	Airplane	111	39.5
	Self-driving tour	38	13.5
	Other	16	5.7
Number of visits to Tibet	first time	199	70.8
	Revisit	82	29.2
Visit Purpose	Visit relatives and friends	15	5.3
	business	25	8.9
	Pure tourism	179	63.7
	Other	62	22.1
Travel mode	Package tour	33	11.7
	Individual tourist	248	88.3
Days of stay	1-7 days	192	68.3
	7-20 days	89	31.7
Gender	Male	145	51.6
	Female	136	48.4
Age	under 20 years old	68	24.2
	20-30 years old	110	39.1
	31-40 years old	56	19.9
	41-50 years old	32	11.4
	51-60 years old	12	4.3
	61 years old and above	3	1.1
Education level	High school and below	41	14.6
	University	219	77.9
	Graduate	21	7.5
Occupation	government agency/institution employee	47	16.7
	corporate/company employee	75	26.7
	Student	74	26.3
	Self-employed worker	39	13.9
	Other	46	16.4
Income level	3000 yuan and below	85	30.2
	3001 yuan-5000 yuan	44	15.7
	5001 yuan-7000 yuan	52	18.5
	7001 yuan-9000 yuan	46	16.4
	9001 yuan and above	54	19.2

4.2. Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Questionnaire

The purpose of exploratory factor analysis is to find potential structure of the scale, reduce the number of items, and turn it into a set of variables in smaller number but greatly correlated to each other. To analyze the load

of each item on each common factor based on rotating element matrix, usually 0.4 is taken as the factor load intercept point to delete the measurement items with factor load less than 0.4 or load greater than 0.4 on multiple factors. Cross-factor load items should also be deleted. A total of 3 non-compliant items were deleted in this study, respectively X8-This tour is fun and enjoyable,

X14-I can understand history and learn knowledge; X17-The tour makes me feel that I highly agree with Tibet and I have gained social identity therefrom. Through exploratory factor analysis on 19 measurement items of perceived value, the results are shown in Table 3. KMO = 0.914, Bartlett’s sphere test chi-square value is 2976.836, P <0.01, indicating that the perceived value measurement scale is very suitable for factor analysis. Factor analysis derives five common factors of perceived value, and the cumulative variance exceeds 60%. Question factor in

each dimension has a load greater than 0.5, which confirms that the perceived value scale consisting of 19 question items has high validity. Based on generality, the measurement items are respectively named as service value, cost value, emotional value, social value, and cultural cognitive value.

Afterwards, the reliability analysis results of the Perceived Value Scale indicate that (Table 3) the reliability chi-square is greater than 0.7, which confirms high reliability of the scale.

Table 3. Reliability and validity analysis on perceived value of slow travel tourists.

Factor	Question Item	Factor Load	Cumulative Variance%	Reliability
Service value	1 The staff in Lhasa have good service attitude (enthusiasm and courtesy)	.788	24.030	.850
	2 The services provided by the staff in Lhasa are timely and effective	.780		
	3 Completeness degree of various basic service facilities in Lhasa	.688		
	4 The tourism environment in Lhasa is safe, tidy and in good order	.750		
Cost value	5 The overall travel cost is not high	.785	38.880	.848
	6 The time spent on this tour is worthwhile	.786		
	7 The physical energy consumed in this tour is worthwhile	.850		
Emotional value	8 This tour relieves me of stress and relaxes the mood	.743	51.448	.817
	9 This tour satisfies my curiosity about Tibetan Lhasa folk culture	.769		
	10 This tour lets me experience some special new things	.796		
Social value	11 Traveling with relatives and friends can deepen the relationship and feelings with them.	.869	63.100	.725
	12 The tour makes me associate with peers and meet new friends	.733		
Cultural Cognitive Value	13 I have good experience of the unique culture in the minority environment	.716	71.443	.908
	14 The scenic buildings in Lhasa are still intact (Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Barkhor Street)	.763		
	15 This tour allows me appreciate Lhasa buildings and facilities, such as streets, stores, etc.	.819		
	16 This tour allows me to experience the traditional folk festival performances and folk entertainment activities of the ethnic minorities in Lhasa, such as weddings and funerals, singing and dancing performances, etc.	.793		
	17 This tour allows me to personally participate in folk experience activities (interaction), such as participating in Guozhuang dance, trying on Tibetan costumes, etc.	.812		
	18 This tour allows me to taste the special flavors of Lhasa	.622		
	19 This tour allows me to experience pure humanities and folk customs	.748		
KMO: .914 Bartlett’s sphericity test Approximate chi-square: 2976.836; df: 171; Sig.: .000 Factor extraction method: principal component analysis Rotation method: Kaiser standardized orthogonal rotation method				

The results of exploratory factor analysis on the satisfaction scale are shown in Table 4. Among the six question items, first, exploratory factor analysis has KMO value of 0.886, and Bartlett’s sphericity test result is significant at 0.01 level, indicating that the exploratory factor analysis results are valid. Second, factor analysis converges on one dimension, and the cumulative variance

exceeds 50%, which is within the acceptable range. The question item factor load is greater than 0.5 within the dimension, which confirms high validity of the satisfaction scale.

Afterwards, reliability analysis results of the satisfaction scale show that the reliability chi-square is greater than 0.7, confirming high reliability of the scale.

Table 4. Reliability and validity analysis of the satisfaction scale.

Factor	Question item	Factor load	Cumulative variance%	Reliability
Satisfaction	1 I am very satisfied with this tour	.770	61.809	.874
	2 This travel experience is exactly what I expected.	.868		
	3 It is wise to travel here.	.786		
	4 I am willing to recommend this tourist destination to others.	.829		
	5 I will convey positive information about this tourist destination to others	.721		
	6 If there is an opportunity, I would like to revisit this tourist destination	.734		
KMO: .886 Bartlett’s sphericity test Approximate chi-square: 772.476; df: 15; Sig.: .000 Factor extraction method: principal component analysis Rotation method: Kaiser standardized orthogonal rotation method				

There are 6 precipitation factors in this study. The correlation analysis results are shown in Table 5. The correlation coefficients are all less than 0.7, indicating good discriminative validity of the factors. Moreover,

satisfaction is positively and significantly correlated with other factors, proving that each factor has good content validity.

Table 5. Correlation analysis.

Factor	Average Satisfaction	Service Value	Cost Value	Emotional Value	Social Value	Cultural Cognitive Value
1	1					
2	.570**	1				
3	.574**	.511**	1			
4	.622**	.639**	.494**	1		
5	.618**	.550**	.531**	.571**	1	
6	.661**	.522**	.488**	.544**	.581**	1
**P < .001						

4.3. Hypothesis Verification

The results of multiple linear regression analysis based on the research model are shown in Table 6. First, the research model has an explanatory power of 58.9%, which is significant at the 0.01 level, confirming that the model is effective. Second, VIF value of each independent factor is between 1 and 3, confirming that there is no problem of multicollinearity. Third, cost value,

emotional value, and cultural cognitive value have a significant impact on satisfaction at the 0.01 level, all of which are positive impact. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study are all established. Fourth, seen from standard coefficients of service scenario factors that affect satisfaction, cultural cognitive value has the greatest impact on tourist satisfaction, followed by emotional value, cost value, service value, and social value.

Table 6. Multiple linear regression analysis.

Independent factor	Non-standardized coefficient		Standard coefficient	t	Sig.	VIF
	B	standard error				
Constant	-.471	.213		-2.206	.028	
Service value	.122	.050	.124	2.420	.016	1.781
Cost value	.186	.045	.200	4.154	.000	1.571
Emotional value	.246	.054	.224	4.541	.000	1.662
Social value	.097	.043	.106	2.274	.024	1.490
Cultural Cognitive Value	.351	.051	.339	6.893	.000	1.646
R square: .596; adjusted R square: .589						

F: 81.185; Sig.: .000
Dependent variable: Satisfaction

This study establishes a structural equation model between perceived value dimensions such as service value, cost value, emotional value, social value, cultural cognitive value and tourist satisfaction, as shown in the slow travel tourist satisfaction model 2 (Figure 2). The figures are standard coefficients of variables.

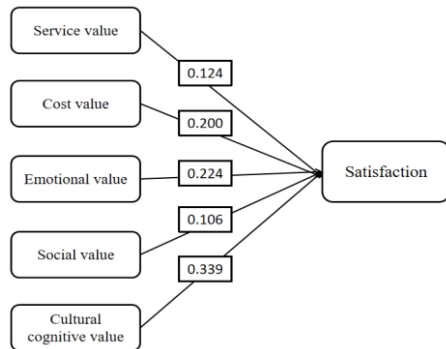


Figure 2. Slow travel tourist satisfaction model 2.

In summary, there is a significant positive correlation between service value, cost value, emotional value, social value, cultural cognitive value and satisfaction of slow travel tourists.

5. Suggestions and Conclusions

This study aims to construct perceived value dimension of slow travel tourists in Lhasa City, analyze perceived value of slow travel tourists in Lhasa City, and investigate the relative weight that affects slow travel tourists’ perceived value dimension. Through data analysis of related dimensions, the study found that: different perceived values exert varying degrees of impact on the satisfaction of slow travel tourists. Cultural cognitive value perceived by slow travel tourists has the most significant impact on satisfaction, followed by emotional value, cost value, then service value, and finally social value.

The results of this study firstly enrich the theories of perceived value in the context of slow travel, thereby providing a reference for future research on the current status of slow travel in China. Secondly, the exploration with typical minority cultural city (Lhasa) as the case study confirms the potential advantages of cultural tourism city in developing slow-travel economy.

Specifically, first, based on analysis results of this study, slow travel tourists’ perception of Lhasa’s cultural cognitive value has the highest influence on their satisfaction, which exactly confirms that the main motivation of slow travel tourists is to explore authenticity of the other culture [20]. Accordingly, in the future, local managers in Lhasa should explore how to adapt cultural depth to tourists’ value perception, rebuild local brand image of Lhasa. The most important thing is to explore how to balance internal and external local branding from bottom-up and top-down approaches by developing local identity of local residents, thereby maximally embedding local cultural values [10].

Second, the effect of slow travel tourists’ perception of emotional value on their satisfaction ranks second, confirming that escape motivation is also one of the core motivations of slow travel tourists [6]. Therefore, to build Slow City brand in Lhasa, it is important to train slow tour guides with high professional qualities and design slow travel routes for tourists, so that tourists can enjoy physical relaxation and spiritual pleasure.

Third, slow travel tourists’ perception of cost value has a moderate impact on their satisfaction, indicating that tourists to Lhasa do not pay particular attention to “cost performance”. On the one hand, it is because the characteristics of slow travel itself make tourists insensitive to the cost of time and money; on the other hand, it is because the cultural experience provided by Lhasa gives tourists a higher sense of “gain”. However, in recent years, Lhasa sacrifices cost performance in exchange for passenger traffic, which leads to a slight decline in the previous Lhasa brand characterized by high perception of deep cultural experience. In particular, despite short-term economic benefits in some ways, the implementation of policies such as winter travel to Tibet deteriorates the relationship between the host and the guest, downgrades service quality. In the future, Lhasa City need restore the brand image of high-end cultural experience in fostering slow travel brand.

At present, the domestic research on tourist perceived value is relatively mature, but the research on perceived value of domestic slow travel tourists is still immature. The results of this study mean certain theoretical and practical significance for understanding perceived value structure of slow travel tourists in the cultural context of ethnic minorities. However, the study also has some limitations. First, the field research period in this study is concentrated in a certain period of time, so seasonal data deviations are possible. Second, tourist perceived value represents a multi-dimensional concept, and this study may fail to fully reflect all perceived value dimensions of slow travel tourists in Lhasa. Third, this study is to perceived value of slow-travel tourists. In the future restricted, there is need to proceed from multiple perspectives such as slow travel tourists’ motivation and behavior intention to carry out further in-depth research, thereby providing better suggestions for the development of slow travel in Lhasa.

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