

Research on the Tourism Consumption Behavior of the Post-2000 Generation from the Perspective of Online Travel Notes

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Abstract: The integrated development of "Internet+ Tourism" has promoted the vigorous rise of online tourism websites. Young groups represented by Generation Z are the most Internet-thinking generation today. They are happy to use online tourism websites or pan-content platforms to search for tourism information. Furthermore, they upload their personal feelings and tendencies in the form of travel notes and comments for other netizens to browse and discuss. Research and analysis of their travel notes and comments can interpret the basic characteristics of tourism consumption of contemporary young groups, so as to provide reference and reference for tourism service providers to improve their products and services. This article studies the characteristics and patterns of tourism consumption among the new generation of young people based on theories such as tourism demand theory and tourist behavior theory. Through the use of content analysis and other research methods, a descriptive analysis of the current situation of tourism consumption among young people is conducted. The final research conclusion is as follows: the tourism consumption prospects of young people are broad and promising in the future. Young people's tourism consumption focuses on experience, is keen on following trends, and has high price sensitivity. Travel notes and comments have an impact on tourism consumption behavior. Therefore, we propose the following countermeasures and suggestions: conduct effective market segmentation to create personalized and unique products. Additionally, it is crucial to emphasize online platforms for promotion and communication, while deeply exploring the destination's unique symbols to create novel attractions.

Keywords: online travelogue, youth group, tourism consumption, tourism consumption behavior

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of industrial integration of "Internet plus", the new business of "Internet plus tourism" is thriving. "Internet+ Tourism" has promoted the rapid development of online travel booking. By 2025, the number of online travel booking users in China will reach 515 million, accounting for 45.8% of the total Internet users [1]. At the same time, new business models are also changing the way Chinese people make tourism decisions, with nearly 300 million user travelogue evaluations each year gradually becoming an important basis for tourists' consumption decisions.

As of December 2025, the number of Internet users in China will reach 1125 million, and the Internet penetration rate will reach 80.1%, of which 12.8% will be Internet users aged 20-29 [1]. They are called Generation Z or "Millennials" who grow up with the Internet. Distinctive personality, independence, openness, inclusiveness, rationality and sensibility are the labels and characteristics of this generation. As Generation Z focuses on tourism consumption, more diverse and unconstrained demands continue to emerge. Consequently, the vast amount of online travel commentary from different perspectives becomes a guide and touchstone for whether they translate their motivation into action.

According to macro data from the tourism industry, young people have great enthusiasm and motivation to participate in tourism activities. As shown in Figure 1, in the tourism consumption report released by Tuniu in 2023, the "post-2000s" group accounted for 16%, the "post-90s" group accounted for 31%, and the total proportion of young people born after 1990 reached 47%. According to the 2023 China Better Life Survey data, the top consumption ranking for young people aged 18-35 is tourism consumption, which accounts for 32.77% of total expenditure. The above data reflects that young people have become an important consumer group in the tourism market, and tourism has become a part of their lives, with tourism consumption gradually becoming younger.

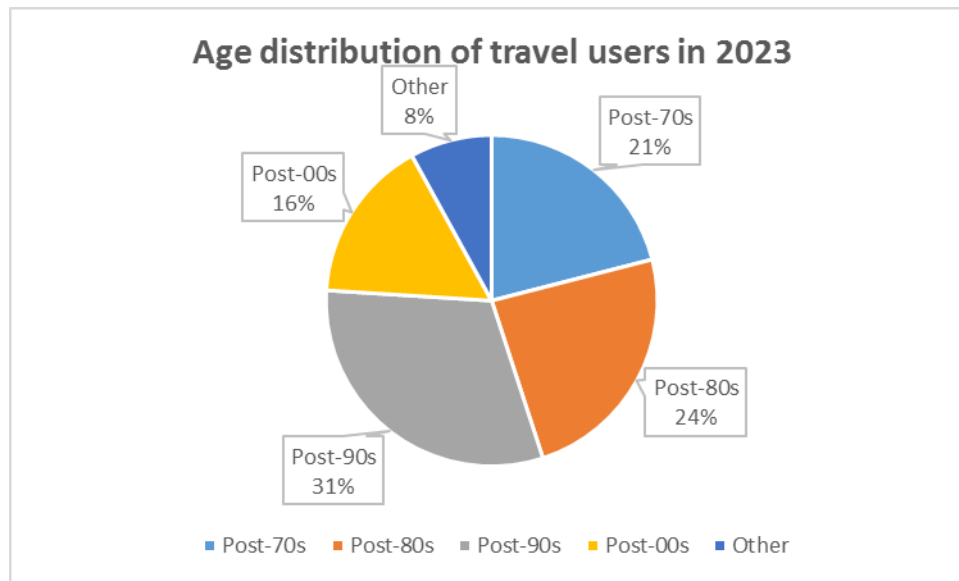


Figure 1 Age Distribution of Travel Users in 2023

(Tuniu's 2023 Tourism Consumption Report will be released in January 2024)

Through the previous review and sorting of relevant literature, it is found that the research on the impact of online reviews on tourism consumption behavior is still relatively blank. This study combines online reviews, electronic word-of-mouth, and user-generated content within the tourism industry to explore their connection with the consumption behavior of young groups. The ultimate goal is to provide valuable references for tourism service providers to improve their products and services.

Through the research and analysis of online reviews such as travel notes, we can deeply explore the real needs and brand attitudes of different consumer groups, especially the youth. This allows tourism service providers to customize their products and marketing strategies for different market segments. Consequently, each consumer group can obtain offerings that meet their specific needs, leading to a more satisfactory travel experience. Ultimately, this enables tourism operators to generate better profits and maintain long-term, healthy, and sustainable development.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 Tourism demand

Tourism demand refers to the quantity of tourism products that consumers with tourism motivation and sufficient leisure time are willing and able to purchase at various possible prices within a specific time [2]. The formation of tourism demand is influenced by the combined effects of tourism motivation, payment ability, and leisure time, and has strong time orientation, regional orientation, economic sensitivity, and social sensitivity, often fluctuating dynamically.

Tourism motivation is the intrinsic driving force that drives individuals to engage in tourism behavior, it is an autonomous and proactive subjective desire, and the primary condition for forming tourism demand [2]. Psychologist Maslow proposed Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to study human motivation and needs, which consists of five levels from low to high: physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs [3]. According to this theory, tourism demand belongs to higher-level spiritual needs. These include both the basic demands of relaxing the body and mind and maintaining good health, as well as advanced needs such as culture, social communication, and status. The formation of tourism motivation varies due to subjective factors such as individual gender, age, knowledge structure, personality and aesthetics, environmental background, etc. The transformation of tourism motivation into tourism demand is also influenced by historical and social conditions, political and economic conditions, living environment, tourism information, and other factors between the source and destination.

The level of payment ability will directly affect the choice of destination, tourism mode, tourism level, etc. Leisure time is also an important factor affecting tourism demand. Weekend leisure creates a demand for short distance suburban tourism, while statutory holidays or paid holidays create a demand for

medium to long distance tourism. However, daily leisure time is difficult to have an impact on tourism demand.

2.2 Tourist Behavior Theory

The theory of tourist behavior refers to the selection characteristics of tourist destinations, tourist seasons, travel purposes, tourism products, and travel modes based on their actual situation and needs [4]. The study of tourist behavior is an important research content in behavioral science [5]. It takes dynamic tourists as the research object, and focuses on tourists' travel motivations, preferences, perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and decisions. By summarizing the behavioral characteristics of tourists, the internal behavioral patterns of tourists can be obtained, and future tourism behavior can be predicted to a certain extent [6].

Tourism behavior is the most basic characteristic of tourists, which can be divided into broad and narrow senses. Broad tourism behavior refers to the spatial movement, recreational activities, and related life behaviors of tourists during an entire tourism process. This includes a complete spatial movement loop from the origin to the destination and back, as well as specific tourism and lifestyle activities at the destination. Narrowly defined tourism behavior refers to the recreational activities of tourists in the destination area, which are closely related to the characteristics of the tourism geographical environment [7]. Tourism behavior is influenced by external stimuli, but the psychological factors of tourists themselves have a decisive impact on their tourism behavior [8].

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Process

This study first consulted and sorted out relevant literature to grasp the current research status and achievements. Based on a comprehensive understanding of theories related to online travelogues, tourism demand, and tourist behavior, this study analyzed the current landscape of online reviews and youth tourism consumption. The objective was to explore the specific ways in which these online contents influence tourism consumption behavior. Afterwards, content analysis and other methods were used to study and analyze the tourism consumption behavior of young people in online travelogues and comments from multiple perspectives such as "food, accommodation, transportation, travel, shopping, and entertainment" in user generated data. Finally, research conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made to tourism service providers.

3.2 Research Object

This study focuses on online travelogues and comments. Online travelogue is a record of the travel process posted by tourists on online platforms such as travel booking websites, forums, communities, self-media platforms, and social media after their travel behavior [9]. It can present key aspects such as before, during, and after the trip, as well as memories and emotional expressions after the trip [10]. It is also one of the sources for potential tourists to obtain destination information [9]. Online comment, also known as online comment, is a positive or negative comment made by consumers on products and services through the Internet platform [11], including text, pictures, audio and video. Through online comments, netizens can express their attitudes, experiences, opinions, and suggestions towards the products and services they consume, providing reference and inspiration for other potential consumers.

3.3 Research Methods

The research method adopts content analysis. This study selected, classified, and statistically analyzed travelogues and comments from various online platforms to extract high-frequency positive and negative topics. By analyzing tourists' feelings and feedback regarding local services and experiences, the research revealed the consumption behavior characteristics embedded in these reviews.

4. Current situation analysis

4.1 Characteristics of tourism consumption among young people

4.1.1 There are various ways of traveling, with a preference for freedom and freedom

Having grown up during China's rapid transformation into an economic powerhouse, the younger generation exhibits a strong inclination towards consumerism and hedonism. Compared to the previous generation of citizens, they are more self-centered, open-minded, and have unique personalities, with more modern consumption patterns and more imaginative and imaginative demands [12]. In terms of travel forms, it is more inclined to choose self-guided tours, self-driving tours, backpack tours and other independent and controllable travel methods. Based on one's own interests and knowledge of ideal travel, one can arrange their own unique travel plan and flexibly adjust it during the travel process to meet constantly changing interests. However, in situations where the accessibility of tourist destinations is low and the environmental situation is complex, group tours may also be chosen for convenience and safety considerations.

4.1.2 Travel companions prefer to choose friends, and it is also common to travel alone

Young people have just grown up and left their parents' families, and most of them have not yet formed their own families. Therefore, when planning a trip, they tend to invite friends, classmates, colleagues, lovers, and other peers of the same age to travel together. Peers have similar values and lifestyle habits, as well as more common language, making it easier to break in relationships and maintain a harmonious atmosphere during the trip. At the same time, many young tourists choose to travel alone in order to divert their attention from interpersonal relationships and fully immerse themselves in the experience of the local customs and culture during their journey. Alternatively, they may choose to travel with new acquaintances, injecting a sense of novelty and fostering new friendships along the journey.

4.1.3 Careful planning of travel expenses and polarization of travel days

Young people are in the early stages of their careers and have not yet gained sufficient savings and wealth. According to survey data, the younger the consumer group, the lower their travel expenses. Therefore, when traveling, young people seek low-cost consumption such as staying in youth hostels, tasting local snacks, taking public transportation, and visiting free or low-priced scenic spots, striving to achieve a cost-effective travel experience through careful budgeting. Many young tourists choose to shorten their travel time to reduce costs, giving rise to the so-called 'special forces' tourism. Relying heavily on efficient intercity transport, these travelers aim to check off as many tourist attractions as possible in the shortest amount of time. Conversely, a segment of young tourists opts for long-term journeys lasting months or even years, often through backpacking or working holidays. By covering vast distances, they aim to explore numerous destinations and broaden their horizons while they are still young.

4.1.4 Passionate about checking in as an internet celebrity and enthusiastic about sharing on the internet

Young Generation Z tourists are highly dependent on social media, willing to express themselves, and enjoy sharing their experiences and feelings with others online at any time, checking in to popular internet celebrities and viewing spots. They no longer consider a must visit guide as a golden rule when making travel plans, but instead are enthusiastic about searching for popular internet celebrity holy sites on social media platforms. They sort the list of all the places they want to visit as their travel plan, and promote each item by taking photos and checking in during the trip. They also share their travel experiences on social media or self-media platforms at any time.

4.2 The manifestation of the influence of online travelogues and comments on tourism consumption behavior

4.2.1 The relationship between the number of travelogues and comments and the degree of heat in the destination

The number of online travelogues and comments reflects and affects the tourism popularity of the destination. In today's Internet era, people are keen to use social media to record and share their experiences in real time. If there are a lot of travel notes and comments about a destination on the Internet, it reflects that the destination is receiving or has received many visitors, and the destination has a high popularity and traffic heat. Potential tourism consumers will also have more opportunities or higher frequency to browse these travelogues and comments. Upon observing the vast volume of travelogues

and comments about a destination, potential consumers often experience social normative pressure driven by the group effect. This psychological shift subtly enhances their identification with the destination, thereby significantly increasing their motivation to travel.

4.2.2 Travel notes and comments promote tourists to actively search for information

The emergence of online travelogues and comments has increased the enthusiasm of tourists to actively search for information. Some studies suggest that the professionalism of information receivers is negatively correlated with their willingness to search for information. For example, when a comment appears, receivers with high professionalism will directly measure the authenticity and objectivity of the comment based on their existing knowledge and experience reserves. However, receivers with low professionalism are limited by insufficient reserves and need to search for more relevant information externally to assist their inner measurement and judgment. Because tourism consumption is intangible and irreproducible, a new destination usually feels like uncharted territory for most visitors. When certain travelogues or reviews spark their interest, these potential consumers will actively search for detailed information to better understand the destination. By doing so, they hope to reduce perceived purchasing risks and secure a satisfactory travel experience.

4.2.3 The impact of travel notes and comments on destination perception expectations

The content of online travelogues and comments on the internet affects tourists' perceived expectations before visiting their destination. As shown in Figure 2, according to Baloglu's "cognitive emotional" model, perceived image is composed of cognitive image, emotional image, and overall image. Through the interaction and fusion of these three images, tourists' perception of the destination image is generated [13]. Potential consumers browse online travelogues and comments, and through the combined effect of text, images, and their own imagination, construct their initial impression of the destination. Positive travelogues and comments will enhance perceived expectations and increase the possibility of turning travel motivation into travel demand, while negative travelogues and comments will reduce tourists' favorability and even lead to the cancellation of travel plans.

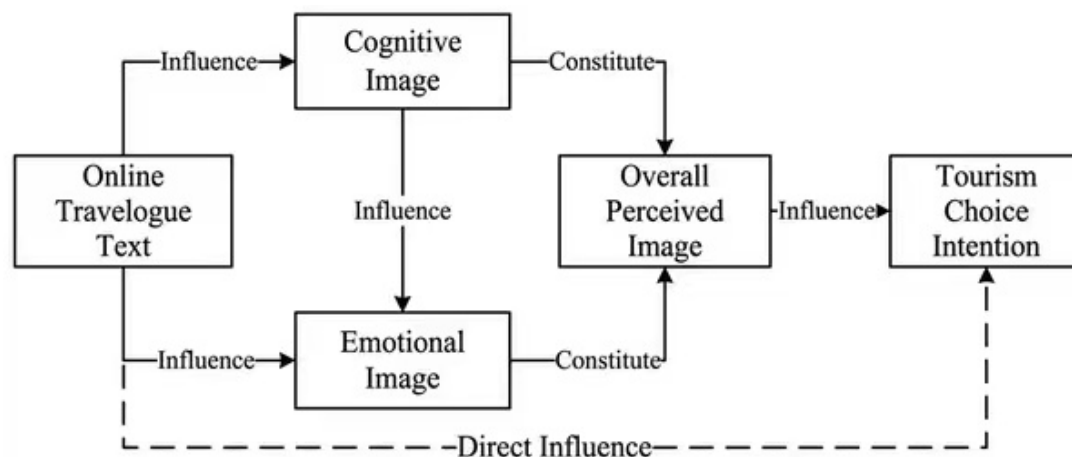


Figure 2: Mechanism of Action of Cognitive Emotional Model Reference [14]

5. Research Findings

5.1 The prospect of young people's tourism consumption is broad

From the perspective of online travelogues, the prospects for young people's tourism consumption are broad and promising. This study analyzes the current landscape of online travelogues and evaluations, alongside the scale of youth tourism consumption. The findings reveal that young people account for a considerable share of the user base on various online travel websites. Additionally, these users have published a vast amount of travelogues and reviews based on their personal travel experiences. Consequently, this active participation indicates that young people have emerged as a crucial consumer group in the tourism market. Tourism has become a part of many young people's lives, and tourism consumption is becoming more youthful. Young people are worthy of the expectations of the tourism market.

5.2 Young people's tourism consumption focuses on experience and price sensitivity

Young people's tourism consumption focuses on experience, is keen on following trends, and has high price sensitivity. By describing the characteristics of youth tourism consumption and analyzing travelogue content in case studies, we can summarize the common behavioral traits of most young tourists. These shared characteristics typically include a preference for casual travel experiences, sensitivity to travel costs, and a tendency to visit internet-famous attractions.

5.3 Travel notes and comments have an impact on tourism consumption behavior

This study analyzes several ways in which online travelogues and comments influence tourism consumption behavior. The findings indicate that a greater number of reviews can effectively capture consumers' attention, increase their active search for information, and thereby boost the destination's popularity. At the same time, the content of travelogues and comments affects tourists' perceived expectations of the destination before the trip. Positive content will enhance perceived expectations and increase the likelihood of travel, while negative content will lower perceived expectations and even cancel travel plans.

6. Suggestions for countermeasures

6.1 Conduct market segmentation and create personalized and unique products

The current generation of young people—those born after 1995, 2000, and even 2005—are gradually acquiring independent purchasing power. No longer reliant on the decisions of their parents and elders, they are actively entering the tourism market to choose travel products autonomously. This group of Generation Z young people is more open, inclusive, optimistic, confident, and unique in personality, with a variety of interests and hobbies, and a diverse lifestyle. They pay special attention to participation, experience, and sense of achievement in tourism consumption, and are willing to venture into novel fields. Therefore, tourism suppliers should begin product development by dividing young consumers into more specific target groups. Specifically, they can categorize the market by gender, hobbies, customer origin, travel purpose, and the size and relationships of the travel group. Then, they can position their own strengths in segmented market areas and create a suitable tourism product portfolio based on the characteristics and specific needs of these consumers. At the same time, they should pay attention to integrating interactive experience elements, bringing a sense of participation, immersion, novelty, and sufficient gains to young tourists, so that they can have a satisfactory journey and unforgettable memories.

6.2 Emphasize the use of online websites as a platform for promotion and communication

Today's young people have been living in the era of rapid development and popularization of the Internet since childhood. They are digital natives who have grown up with the internet and have a genuine understanding of the digital world. Their daily lives and consumption choices revolve entirely around the internet. They are accustomed to sharing their lives on social media, and using e-commerce and review platforms to help them make consumption decisions. Tourism suppliers can use the Internet platform as a channel and link to communicate with potential young consumer groups. Younger consumers generally have lower brand loyalty and are eager to spend money on trying new things. Therefore, launching targeted marketing campaigns on digital platforms can effectively boost the popularity and sales of tourism products. At the same time, attention should also be paid to building the image and reputation of tourist destinations among young consumers on social media platforms. By providing rewards and discounts, visitors can be incentivized to share their true travel experiences on social media platforms, allowing potential consumer groups to obtain relatively authentic and objective travel records and evaluations from a consumer perspective. When negative comments about tourism products are found online, it is also necessary to promptly contact the publisher privately to clarify the specific reasons and process of the problem or dissatisfaction. If the problem is indeed caused by the supplier's fault, it should be improved in a timely manner and consumers should be compensated to demonstrate the responsible image of the enterprise.

6.3 Deeply explore the unique symbols of the destination and create novel and attractive points

Contemporary young people tend to be unconventional and novel in their consumption decisions, in

order to showcase their uniqueness. Regarding tourism consumption, many young people have grown tired of the packed itineraries and superficial sightseeing they experienced on childhood family or group tours. Instead, they now prefer to explore new destinations from a local perspective, wandering at a relaxed pace to truly experience authentic local culture. So destination tourism suppliers can take advantage of the situation, actively explore local niche scenic spots, cuisine, customs, entertainment, specialty products and other symbols, package and integrate them, and promote them with the help of network traffic popularity. For example, recently, Zibo in Shandong Province has spread its unique barbecue eating method to attract young tourists from all over the world. By developing and promoting roaming itineraries with destination characteristic symbols, it can not only help promote the local traditional culture of the destination, but also promote the development of related industries and global tourism.

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