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Consumers' Behavioral Intentions for Rural Tourism in Sichuan Province

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Abstract

Rural tourism is of great significance to China's rural revitalization strategy. The purposes of this article are to (1) identify the current factors that influence consumers' behavioral intentions for rural tourism; (2) explore the interaction mechanism between each factor and consumers' behavioral intentions; and (3) provide suggestions to relevant managers and practitioners of rural tourism to promote China's rapid recovery and development of rural tourism. Random sampling was adopted, and an online questionnaire was constructed using Questionnaire Star software. Sichuan rural tourism consumers responded with 401 valid responses. The obtained data were analyzed for descriptive statistics, reliability test, validity test, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model analysis. The results revealed that (1) Rural tourism behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems, tourism resources, new media information, and epidemic risk are all factors that affect consumers' behavioral intentions for rural tourism in Sichuan; (2) Rural tourism behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems, and tourism resources can directly affect rural tourism behavioral intentions; policy systems, tourism resources, epidemic risk, and new media information can affect rural tourism behavioral intentions by affecting behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; (3) Sichuan rural tourism managers and related practitioners should strengthen the policy systems, stimulate investment to create unique tourism resources, avoid homogeneity, and improve adaptive epidemic response policies. They can encourage people's participation in Sichuan rural tourism by using new media to strengthen publicity, increase exposure and positive reviews, improve consumer awareness, and arouse tourists' interest and trust. This could lead to the future research scope on rural tourism in other regions in China.

Keywords: Sichuan, rural tourism, tourist behavioral intention, S-O-R model

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The tourism industry is currently the largest and fastest-growing industry. The "14th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development" proposed by the Chinese State Council emphasizes improving quality and expanding capacity, strengthening and optimizing the domestic tourism market, promoting tourism circulation within the country, and meeting the diverse needs of people at different levels (Wang, 2022). Rural tourism has developed rapidly in recent years with its scale continuously increasing. The identified rural issues are important problems in China today in solving them for comprehensiveness and compatibility of the industries concerned (Liu, 2017; Ge, 2019; Lou, Lu & Wang, 2019). The development of rural tourism has a huge impact on the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy and has received strong support and extensive attention from local governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the development of China's tourism industry. As China enters the post-pandemic era, the tourism industry is gradually recovering, but consumer demand for travel is also changing due to the impact of the pandemic. More tourists are now placing greater emphasis on health and hygiene conditions during their travels (Zhang & Peng, 2021). Rural tourism near cities has become people's preferred way of leisure and entertainment after the pandemic (Wang, 2022; Wang, Song & Xu, 2023) . Therefore, rural tourism provides new opportunities for the country’s economic development by attracting consumers as seen in the rapid growth of rural tourism. As known in the field of tourism, individual behavioral intention can indicate an individual's motivation to engage in a specific behavior and is a direct driving force behind that behavior. Therefore, it is a particularly important issue to investigate into the formation of behavioral intentions.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were: (1) identify the current factors that influence consumers’ behavioral intentions for rural tourism; (2) explore the interaction mechanism between each factor and consumers’ behavioral intentions; and (3) Provide suggestions to relevant managers and practitioners of rural tourism to promote China’s rapid recovery and development of rural tourism.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Rural Tourism in Sichuan

Rural tourism refers to tourism activities that take place in rural areas and have a "rural" character (Liu, 2017). It is a type of tourism activity that targets urban residents as the main market and utilizes rural environment, culture, and agricultural activities as resources (Zhou & Huang, 2004). Sichuan is a major agricultural province in China, with 27,020 villages accounting for 76.3% of the village-level units in the province (Sichuan Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The large scale of rural areas has also made Sichuan the birthplace of "farmhouse tourism" in China's early rural tourism industry. In recent years, rural tourism in Sichuan has developed well. In 2021, the total revenue from rural tourism in the province reached RMB 363.743 billion, an increase of 15% year-on-year. Therefore,

it is important for the researchers to explore the development of rural tourism in Sichuan during the post-pandemic era. As the capital city of Sichuan Province, Chengdu received 280 million rural tourists in the first three quarters of 2021 alone, an increase of 16.5% year-on-year and accounting for 60% of all visitors to the province. Therefore, the researchers focused on Chengdu and its rural tourist consumers as research subjects.

2.2 S-O-R Model

The S-O-R model was proposed by Mehrabian & Russell (1974). This theory suggests that internal and external stimuli can affect an individual's psychological activity and cognition, which in turn affects their behavior. "S" refers to the external factors that stimulate individuals to take action, "O" refers to the internal processing between external stimuli and final responses, and "R" refers to an individual's behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The S-O-R model has been widely used in studying individual behavior. Based on the S-O-R theory, Huang (2021) discovered that e-commerce platform construction and marketing can stimulate consumers' purchase attitudes and thus arouse their desire to buy. Peng (2021) established a model based on the S-O-R model using short video features as external stimuli, user internal states as personal psychological processes, tourism intentions as reactions. The finding pointed to tourism short video characteristics having a positive effect on tourist intentions with user internal states acting as mediators.

According to the S-O-R theory and previous research conclusions, external stimuli affect an individual's inner emotions which then influence their behavioral response. In the present study, the researchers constructed a research model based on the S-O-R model to explore the mechanism of various factors that could affect rural tourism behavioral intention among consumers in Sichuan Province.

2.3 Plan Behavior Theory

The Theory of Planned Behavior, proposed by Ajzen, suggests that behavioral intention is influenced by attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory has been widely applied to tourism research in that attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly affect rural tourism intentions. As reported in Ge’s work (2019), the research results indicate that three factors have a positive impact on residents' intentions for rural leisure tourism. Similarly, Zhang, Sun & Mei (2021) found that those three factors have a significant influence on college students' intentions in low-carbon forest park tourism. These findings clearly value of the Theory of Planned Behavior in rural tourism research. Based on those previous studies and background analyses, this present study investigated the impact of attitudes toward rural tourism, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control as internal factors on rural tourism intentions.

2.4 Social Support

Social support refers to the spiritual or material assistance and support provided by various aspects of society to individuals. Scholars have different definitions of social support. Hong (2013) defined it as the degree of support for leisure tourism from economic, social, cultural, and legal policies, and Wang (2019) confined it to help agricultural

operators receive from external society, including economic, policy, and resource conditions. Research has shown that social support has an impact on individual behavioral intentions as shown in the study by Wang, Song & Xu (2023) that the COVID-19 pandemic has stimulated tourists' self-protection motivation and changed their behavior tendencies. Wang (2019) asserted that positive external social help can significantly promote agricultural operators' participation in rural tourism.

Based on previous research, the researchers in the present study specified "social support" as *the degree to which individuals perceive support from national policies, rural tourism development, tourist resources, infrastructure construction and epidemic prevention policies when participating in rural tourism activities.* This type of social support carries three dimensions: (1) Policy system dimension, (2) Tourist resource dimension，and (3) Epidemic risk dimension.

2.5 New Media News

New media has a significant impact on people's lives, and their reliance on new media technology is also increasing (Guo, Cai, Zhu & Huang, 2022). Scholars have studied the influence of new media on individual behavioral intentions. Zeng (2020) reported that online word-of-mouth has a positive effect on tourism behavior intention, while Han & Ming (2021) found that social media can influence consumers' tourism behavior intention.

Based on previous research, this present study treats new media as an information carrier with an impact on individuals, stimulating their behavioral intentions and triggering actual behavior. Especially for new media information about rural tourism destinations, particularly marketing promotion and travel information, it can stimulate consumers' rural tourism behavior intention. This present study treats new media information as one of the external stimulus factors affecting rural tourism behavior intention.

2.6 Related Research

Some scholars have studied the factors influencing rural tourism behavioral intentions. Qi et al., 2020) used the theory of planned behavior and cited attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms as independent variables to explore the influencing factors of rural tourism behavioral intention in Shandong Province. The results showed that the three independent variables all have a positive effect on individual rural tourism behavioral intention. Qi et al. (2022) studied rural tourism in Xinhui area, Guangdong based on the push-pull theory, using personal psychological factors as an internal push and destination resource conditions as an external pull. The results show that attitude does not directly affect rural tourism behavioral intention; instead, internal psychological factors, such as subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, as well as external destination resource conditions of scenic spots, can have a positive effect on rural tourism behavioral intention.

Tian (2016) and Li (2020) studied the influencing factors of Hangzhou/ Changsha residents' rural tourism behavioral intentions on the basis of the theory of planned behavior and destination image dimensions. Both studies revealed behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, destination tourism attractions, destination facilities, and destination cultural heritage and other factors having positive impacts on rural tourism

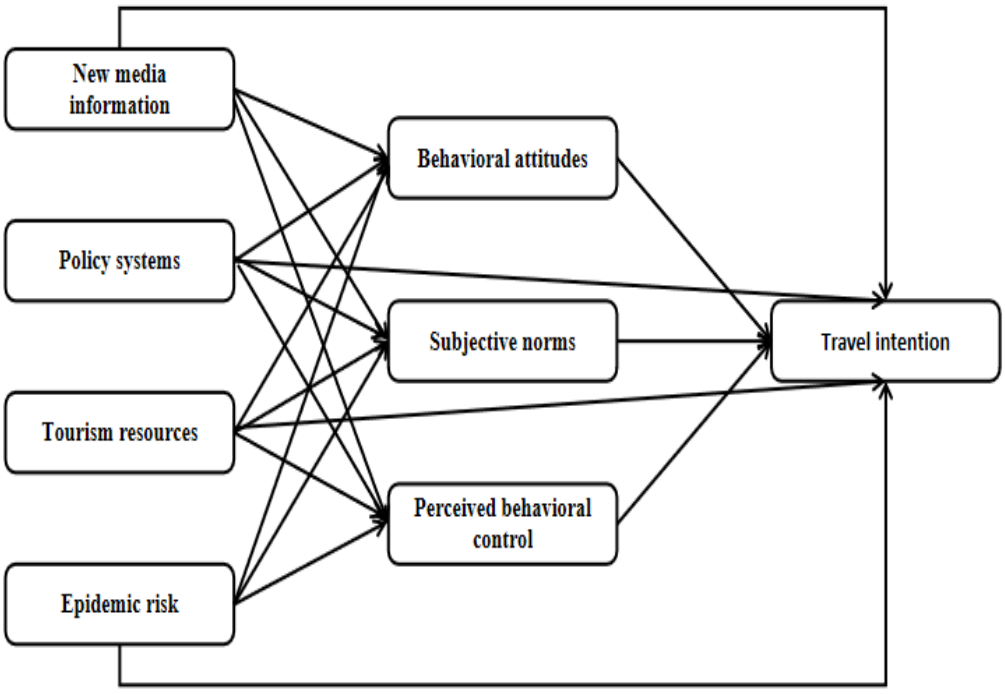
behavioral intentions.

According to the previous studies, the influencing factors of residents' rural tourism behavior intention in a certain area from the perspective of destination resource conditions and individual psychology appeared to vary by regional differences. The researchers of the present study therefore felt the need to investigate the impact of external environmental factors on individual psychology.

2.7 Research Model and Research Hypotheses.

Based on the S-O-R model and the elements of the planned behavior theory as intrinsic behavioral perception factors for individuals, the researchers incorporated *social support and information stimulus factors as external stimuli* to construct a research model. *Seven independent variables* include (1) behavioral attitudes, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral control, (4) policy systems, (5) tourism resources, (6) epidemic risk and (7) new media information. Behavioral attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are *three intrinsic perceptual factors* for individual behavior, while policy system, tourism resources, epidemic risk and new media information serve as *four external stimulus factors*. The conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure1: Conceptual Framework of Study



The research hypotheses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Hypotheses

H1	Individual attitudes toward rural tourism have a positive impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H2	Individual subjective norms toward rural tourism have a positive impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H3	Individual perceived behavioral control toward rural tourism has a positive impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H4	Policy systems have a positive impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H5	Tourism resources have a positive impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H6	Epidemic risk has a negative impact on tourists' intention to participate in rural tourism activities.
H7	New media information about countryside travel has a positive impact on tourists' intentions of participating in countryside travel behavior.
H4a	Policy systems have a positive effect on individual attitude toward rural tourism.
H4b	Policy systems have a positive effect on individual subjective norms toward rural tourism.
H4c	Policy systems have a positive effect on individual perceived behavioral control toward rural tourism.
H5a	Tourism resources positively affect individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward countryside travel behavior.
H5b	Epidemic risk negatively affects individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward countryside travel behavior
H5c	New media information about countryside travel has a positive effect on individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward countryside travel behavior.
H6a	Epidemic risk negatively affects individual attitudes toward countryside travel behavior
H6b	Epidemic risk negatively affects individual subjective norms toward countryside travel behavior
H6c	Epidemic risk negatively affects individual perceived behavioral control toward countryside travel behavior
H7a	New media information about countryside travel has a positive effect on individual attitudes toward countryside travel behavior.
H7b	New media information about countryside travel has a positive effect on individual subjective norms toward countryside travel behavior.
H7c	New media information about countryside travel has a positive effect on individual perceived behavioral control toward countryside travel behavior.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Survey Questionnaire Design

The design of this survey questionnaire is in three parts. The first part is a screening question aimed at selecting people who have participated in rural tourism in Sichuan as the target of the survey. The second part collects basic information about the respondents, including gender, age, family situation, occupation, income, and education level. The third part uses a seven-level Likert scale to measure seven variables that affect rural tourism behavior intention: (1) behavioral attitude, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral control, (4) policy systems, (5) tourism resources, (6) epidemic risk and (7) new media information.

3.2 Samples and Sampling

In 2021, the total number of tourists received in rural Sichuan was 466 million (Sichuan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2022). According to the calculation formula: n=N/(1+N*e2) (where e is taken as 0.05), the total number of survey questionnaires required for this study was calculated to be 399.99. Therefore, this study needs to collect a total of 400 survey questionnaires. Considering certain uncontrollable factors during the questionnaire collection process, the researchers planned to collect 450 survey questionnaires using random sampling method and distributed them through travel groups on tourism platforms of Ctrip and Fliggy in Chengdu area via Questionnaire Star APP.

4. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The distribution and collection of 450 survey questionnaires for this study began on 5 May 2023 and ended on 10 May 2023. A total of 401 valid questionnaires were obtained with an effective recovery rate of 89.1%. The obtained data were entered onto the computer statistical software for data processing and analysis.

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis was on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Project	Item	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	194	48.38
	Female	207	51.62
	18-30 years old	148	36.91
Age	31-50 years old	151	37.66
	Over 50 years old	102	25.44
	Single	38	9.48
Family situation	Married	320	79.80
	Other	43	10.72

Project	Item	N	Percentage
	Government agencies and institutions	134	33.42
	College students	38	9.48
Occupation	Private enterprise employees	84	20.95
	State-owned enterprise employees	82	20.45
	Self-employed individuals	63	15.71
	3000 yuan or less	111	27.68
	3000-5500 yuan	107	26.68
Monthly income	5500-7500 yuan	92	22.94
	7500-10000 yuan	47	11.72
	More than 10000 yuan	44	10.97
	Junior college and below	96	23.94
	Undergraduate	240	59.85
Educational level	Graduate	57	14.21
	Doctoral and above	8	2.00

Table 2 shows that the gender ratio of the respondents is relatively balanced. The age distribution is also relatively even, but overall, middle-aged and young people aged 18-50 are the main group. In terms of family situation, married people account for 79.80%, which is significantly higher than single and other individuals. This indicates that rural tourism in Sichuan Province may be more attractive to married tourists who prefer to travel with their families. In terms of occupation, government employees, private enterprise employees and state-owned enterprise employees are the main groups of tourists because they have stable work income and relatively fixed leisure time. In terms of monthly income level, a total of 310 people in the low-to-middle-income group with an income range between RMB 3,000-7,500 accounted for 77.31% of the research sample population; thus indicating that low-to-middle-income groups constitute the mainstream tourist group for rural tourism in Sichuan Province. As far as education level is concerned, those with undergraduate degrees or above accounted for 76.06% of the respondents--indicating a high educational level among them on the average.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is used to test the scientific and rationality of a questionnaire. Before analyzing the questionnaire data, the researchers conducted reliability testing on the obtained data through computer statistical software.

Reliability testing uses Cronbach's α coefficient as the standard for testing. When Cronbach's α is greater than 0.7, it indicates that the design reliability of the scale questions is high and that the data can be used for research and analysis.

Table 3: The Reliability Test

Title	Cronbach's alpha
Behavioral Attitude	0.826
Subjective Norms	0.826
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.848
Policy and System	0.820
Tourism Resources	0.869
Epidemic Risk	0.803
New Media Information	0.860
Rural Tourism Behavioral Intention	0.794

As shown in Table3, the Cronbach's α coefficient values of all variables measured in this study are greater than 0.7. This indicates that all items on the scale used in this study can reflect the actual situation of tourists participating in rural tourism in Sichuan Province, and that the scale and data have good reliability. The next step of data processing can be carried out.

Validity Analysis

Validity refers to the effectiveness of the sample data, which reflects the accuracy level of the research questions measured by the questionnaire. KMO value and Bartlett sphericity test are used to test the validity of sample data. The selection criteria for testing are KMO value greater than 0.8 and a significance index P value less than 0.05 for Bartlett sphericity test. When the sample data meets these standards, it indicates that they are suitable for information extraction purposes.

Table 4: KMO And Bartlett's Test

KMO Date		0.912
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Approximate Chi-Square	5288.794
	df	378
	p	0.000

In Table 4, the KMO value of the sample data is 0.912, which is greater than 0.8; and the significance index P value of Bartlett's sphericity test is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the sample data in this study is suitable for information extraction.

4.3 Structural Equation Model Test of Intention for Rural Tourism

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the sample data to analyze convergence validity and discriminant validity, in order to verify the authenticity and appropriateness of the construct validity of the scale construction in this study. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The Convergence Validity Test

Factor	Measurement Items	Std.Estimate	AVE	CR
Behavioral Attitudes	A1: I am very interested in rural tourism.	0.790	0.615	0.827
	A2: I believe that rural tourism can effectively relieve stress and make people feel relaxed.	0.796		
	A3: Rural tourism allows me to experience unique local culture and way of life.	0.765		
Subjective Norms	B1: My family and friends support me participating in rural tourism.	0.789	0.612	0.826
	B2: My family and friends often participate in rural tourism.	0.800		
	B3: I think many people nowadays often participate in rural tourism.	0.759		
Perceived Behavioral Control	C1: I can decide whether or not to participate in rural tourism myself.	0.768	0.583	0.848
	C2: I have the ability to deal with problems that may arise during the process of rural tourism.	0.763		
	C3: I have enough time and financial resources to participate in rural tourism.	0.769		
	C4: I can find sufficient information for my trip on rural tourism	0.754		
Policy Systems	D1: The country's statutory holidays policies are well implemented	0.798	0.605	0.821
	D2: Labor rights, such as work pressure, paid leave system, enterprise five insurances and one fund payment etc., are guaranteed	0.732		
	D3: Socio-economic security systems, such as "toll-free highways during statutory holidays" are effectively implemented	0.802		
Tourism Resources	E1: I think Sichuan has developed transportation infrastructure for travel industry	0.773	0.572	0.870
	E2: I think Sichuan's countryside environment is good for travel industry	0.743		
	E3: I think Sichuan's countryside tourist facilities are complete (such as accommodation, transportation tools)	0.733		
	E4: I think there is a wide range of products available for Sichuan’s countryside tourisms.	0.754		
	E5: Countryside service personnel provide high-quality services.	0.777		

Table 5: The Convergence Validity Test

Factor	Measurement Items	Std.Estimate	AVE	CR
Epidemic Risk	F1: I believe that government control policies regarding the epidemic will bring many restrictions on travel within the countryside.	0.751	0.576	0.803
	F2: I believe it is risky to go to areas where epidemic prevention measures are being taken while engaging in countryside tours.	0.763		
	F3: I believe it will be difficult to engage in countryside tours if you visit an area affected by an outbreak.	0.763		
New Media Information	G1：I frequently obtain information about rural tours through online media.	0.799	0.606	0.860
	G2：I am attracted by the information about rural tours on the media.	0.749		
	G3：My views on rural tourism may change due to information found online.	0.787		
	G4: Online promotions for rural tourism will encourage me to participate in it.	0.777		
Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	H1: Under current conditions, I am willing to engage in countryside tours.	0.782	0.563	0.794
	H2: I have already prepared myself for participating in a countryside tour.	0.716		
	H3: I would recommend rural tourism to others.	0.752		

Standardized factor loading coefficients, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR) are used to measure the convergence validity of the analysis. Generally, when the standardized factor loading coefficient is greater than 0.4, AVE output value is greater than 0.5, and CR output value is greater than 0.7 at the same time, it indicates that all items of this latent variable have good internal quality.

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on eight factors and twenty-eight analytical items. As shown in Table 5, according to the measurement relationship, all standard loading coefficients of twenty-eight analytical items were above 0.7 which is greater than 0.4; the AVE values corresponding to eight factors were between 0.563-0.615 which are all greater than 0.5; and their respective CR values were between 0.794-0.870 which are all greater than 0 .7. This indicates that the data analyzed in this study has good aggregation (convergence) validity.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity Test

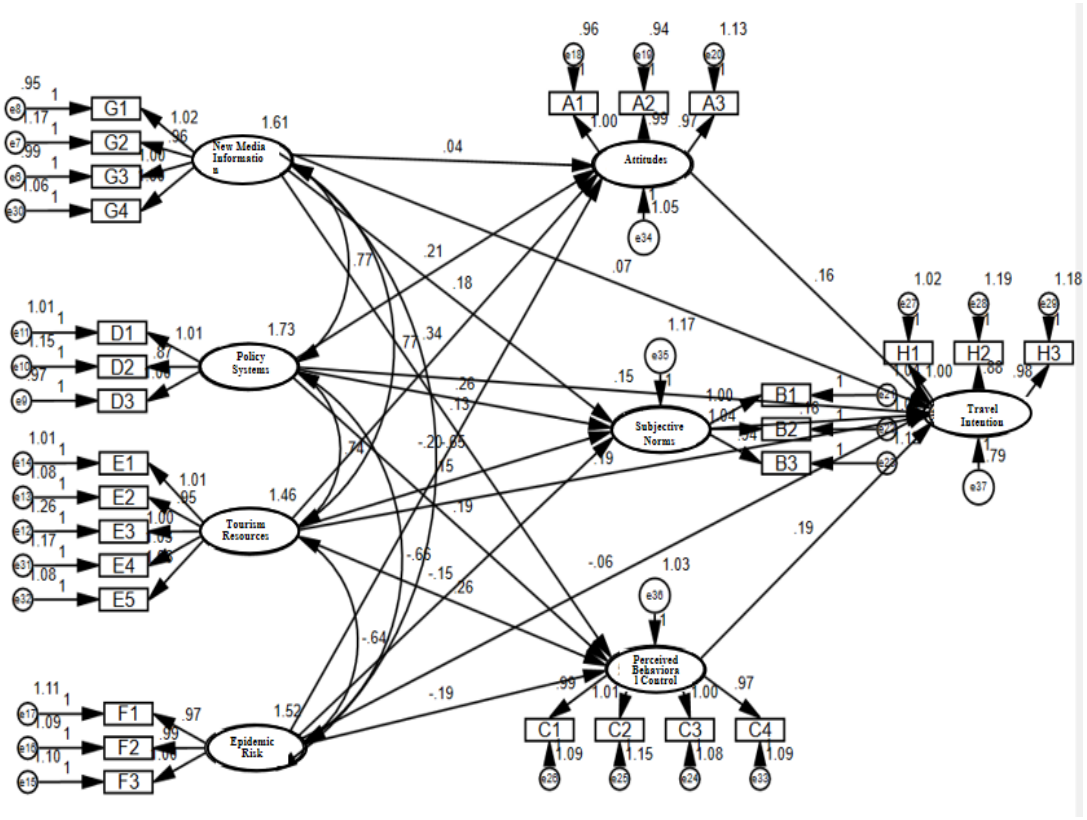
	Behavioral Attitudes	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control	Policy Systems	Tourism Resources	Epidemic Risk	New Media Information	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior
Behavioral Attitudes	0.784							
Subjective Norms	0.280	0.783						
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.412	0.373	0.764					
Policy Systems	0.377	0.376	0.360	0.778				
Tourism Resources	0.436	0.343	0.408	0.398	0.756			
Epidemic Risk	-0.345	-0.303	-0.341	-0.334	-0.357	0.759		
New Media Information	0.319	0.351	0.357	0.389	0.433	-0.342	0.778	
Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.427	0.400	0.446	0.425	0.464	-0.348	0.387	0.751

In the discriminant validity test, the diagonal values in the table are the square root of AVE, and other values are correlation coefficients between latent variables. As shown in Table 6, the corresponding AVE square roots for behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, policy systems, tourism resources, epidemic risk, new media information and rural tourism behavior intention are 0.784, 0.783, 0.764, 0.778, 0.756, 0.759, 0.778 and 0.751, respectively, which are all greater than their absolute values of correlation coefficients with other factors. This indicates that all eight factors have good discriminant validity.

Analysis of Model Fit

The researchers constructed a structural equation model through computer statistical software, as shown in Figure2. Referring to the research progress of previous scholars, X^2/df, GFI, RMSEA, CFI, NFI, TLI and IFI are used for testing. The fitting standard for X^2/df is less than 3; the fitting standard for RMSEA is less than 0.10; and the fitting standards for GFI, CFI, NFI, TLI and IFI are greater than 0.9.

Figure 2: Structural Equation Model Diagram.



According to Table 7, the various model fit indices of the structural equation model in this study are as follows: The output value of X^2/df is 1.018, which is less than 3; GFI, CFI, NFI, TLI and IFI output values are 0.948, 0.999, 0.939, 0.999 and 0.999, respectively, all greater than 0.9; RMSEA output value is 0.007 which is less than 0.10.The model fit indicators have reached the standard range indicating a good model fit and that the model can be accepted.

Table 7: Model Fitting Index

Indicators	$\chi 2$	*df*	$\chi 2/df$	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	TLI	IFI
Evaluation criteria	-	-	<3	>0.9	<0.10	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Values	330.955	325	1.018	0.948	0.007	0.999	0.939	0.999	0.999

Then, path analysis was conducted on the model for hypothesis testing. Generally, when the p-value of a path is less than 0.05 and the absolute value of critical ratio (CR) is greater than 1.96, it can be considered that the regression coefficient result of this path is significant, and the path exists, indicating that the null hypothesis holds.

Table 8: Summary of Model Regression Coefficients

X	→	Y	Unstandardized Path Coefficients	*SE*	CR	*p*	Standardized Path Coefficient
Behavioral Attitudes	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.161	0.045	3.109	0.002	0.164
Subjective Norms	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.162	0.043	3.071	0.002	0.163
Perceived Behavioral Control	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.193	0.047	3.440	0.001	0.192
Policy Systems	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.150	0.045	2.906	0.004	0.153
Tourism Resources	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.197	0.050	3.568	0.000	0.194
Epidemic Risk	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	-0.063	0.045	-1.442	0.149	-0.064
New Media Information	→	Intention of Rural Tourism Behavior	0.073	0.046	1.790	0.064	0.074
New Media Information	→	Behavioral Attitudes	0.045	0.051	1.475	0.140	0.044
Epidemic Risk	→	Behavioral Attitudes	-0.204	0.049	-3.353	0.001	-0.201
Tourism Resources	→	Behavioral Attitudes	0.351	0.054	5.429	0.000	0.343
Policy Systems	→	Behavioral Attitudes	0.210	0.049	3.805	0.000	0.210
New Media Information	→	Subjective Norms	0.190	0.054	3.174	0.002	0.183

Table 8: Summary of Model Regression Coefficients

X	→	Y	Unstandardized Path Coefficients	*SE*	CR	*p*	Standardized Path Coefficient
Epidemic Risk	→	Subjective Norms	-0.154	0.051	-2.539	0.011	-0.152
Tourism Resources	→	Subjective Norms	0.155	0.056	2.746	0.006	0.154
Policy System	→	Subjective Norms	0.269	0.051	4.251	0.000	0.265
New Media Consultation	→	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.150	0.050	2.826	0.005	0.152
Epidemic Risk	→	Perceived Behavioral Control	-0.196	0.048	-3.282	0.001	-0.198
Tourism Resources	→	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.271	0.052	4.436	0.000	0.265
Policy Systems	→	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.187	0.048	3.288	0.001	0.193

In Table 8, behavioral attitudes toward rural tourism (CR=3.109, P=0.002), subjective norms (CR=3.071, P=0.002), perceived behavioral control (CR=3.440, P=0.001), policy systems factors (CR=2.906, P=0.004) and tourism resources (CR = 3.568, P = 0.000) all significantly influence the intention of rural tourism behavior; while epidemic risk (CR = 1.442, P = 0 .149) and new media information (CR = 1.790, P = 0 .074) do not affect the intention of rural tourism behavior. Therefore, hypotheses H1-H5 are supported while H6-H7 are not.

The policy systems (CR=3.805, P=0.000), tourism resources (CR=5.429, P=0.000), and epidemic risk (CR=3.353, P=0.001) all have a significant impact on rural tourism attitudes, among which the standardized path coefficient of epidemic risk is negative, indicating a significant negative impact on behavioral attitudes caused by epidemic risk. However, new media information (CR=1.475, P=0.140) will not affect behavioral attitudes. Therefore, hypotheses H4a, H5a and H6a are established while hypothesis H7a is not supported by the data.

The policy systems (CR=4.251, P=0.05), tourism resources (CR=2.746, P=0.006), epidemic risk (CR=2.539, P=0.011) and new media information (CR=3.174, P=0.002) will all have a significant positive impact on subjective norms. Therefore, hypotheses H4b, H5b, H6b and H7b are established.

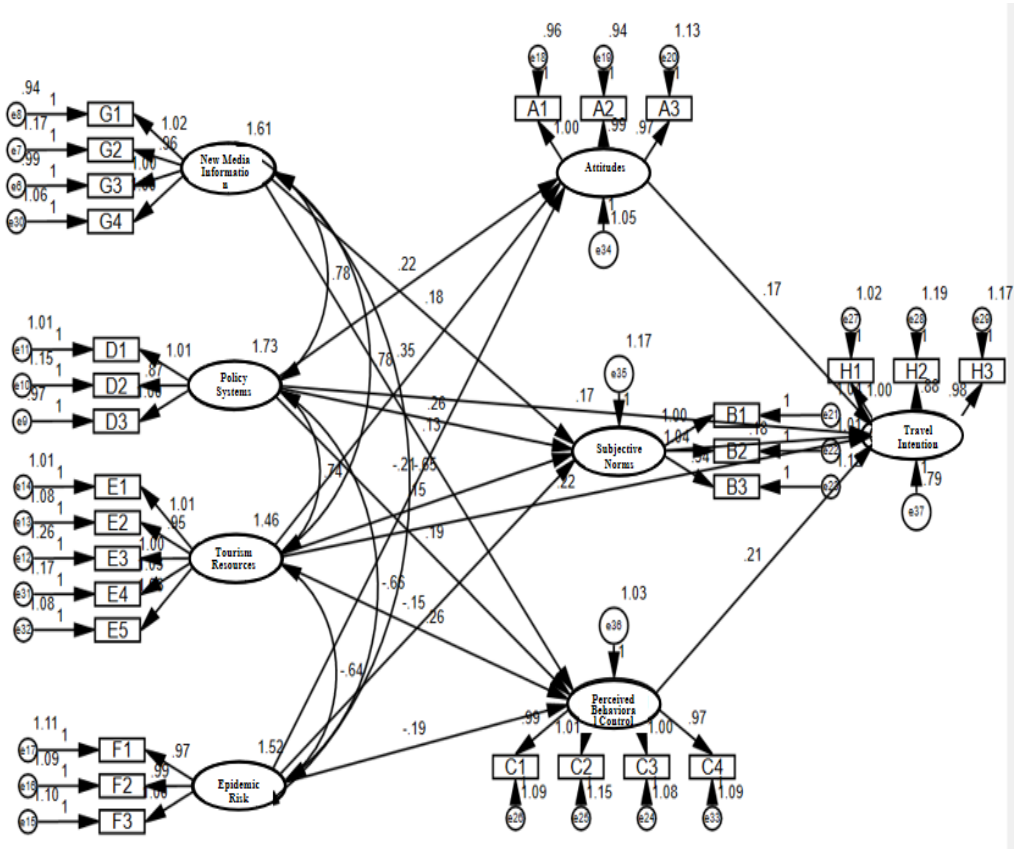
Policy systems (CR = 3.288, P = 0 .001), tourism resources (CR = 4 .436,P = 0 .000), epidemic risk (CR = 3 .282,P = 0 .001) and new media information (CR = 2 .826,P = 0 .005) will all have a significant positive impact on perceived behavioral control. Therefore, hypotheses H4c, H5c, H6c, and H7c are established as well.

The researchers deleted the three paths that did not pass the path detection, revised the structural equation model as shown in Figure 3, and conducted a model fit test on the revised structural equation model. As shown in Table 9, all of the model fit indices meet the standards, indicating good model fit and that the model is valid.

Table 9: Adjusted Model Fit Index

Indicators	$\chi 2$	*df*	$\chi 2/df$	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	TLI	IFI
Evaluation criteria	-	-	<3	>0.9	<0.10	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Values	333.901	328	1.018	0.947	0.007	0.999	0.939	0.999	0.999

Figure 3: Revised Structural Equation Model Diagram



5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

According to the results of this study, consumer attitudes toward rural tourism, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems, tourism resources, epidemic risk and new media information are all factors that influence consumers' intention to engage themselves in rural tourism. Among them, attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems and tourism resources directly affect their intention to participate in rural tourism; policy systems, tourism resources, epidemic risk and new media information indirectly affect the intention to participate in rural tourism by influencing attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

5.2 Discussion and Prospects

The research results of this study corresponded with the research conclusions of previous scholars, but in the context of Sichuan Province. Tian (2016) studied the factors influencing rural tourism behavioral intentions of Hangzhou residents, using behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems and tourism resources as variables. The results were that all five variables can directly affect rural tourism behavioral intention. Qi et al. (2020) also probed into the rural tourism behavioral intentions of residents in the main urban area of Shandong and found rural tourism behavioral attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control directly affecting rural tourism behavioral intentions. In this regard, this study has in fact supported the earlier findings that rural tourism *behavioral attitudes*, *subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, policy systems, tourism resources, epidemic risk* and *new media information* are all influencing factors of rural tourism behavioral intentions.

Rural tourism-related practitioners and managers should focus on these seven aspects to further attract consumers and promote the development of rural tourism. Since this study focused on inbound rural tourism tourists' experience in Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, the researchers noted that there could be differences in the development of rural tourism destinations in various regions of China. Therefore, future research could look at value added differentiation in rural tourism destinations in many places in China as the research objects. In addition, qualitative data could be obtained to shed light on uniqueness of services and rural tourism products that could be appealing as signature activities to potential customers in different regions in China.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, in order to quickly attract consumers and further develop rural tourism in the post-epidemic era, the researchers would like to give the following suggestions: (1) Strengthen policy systems, support rural tourism development and safeguard workers' rights. Rural revitalization is a current strategy for rural tourism. Relevant management agencies need to formulate stable and predictable policies and regulations, promote the development and construction of rural tourism, and enhance public awareness and guidance. (2) Government agencies should actively stimulate investment, develop unique characteristics, and improve tourist resource construction. Rural managers and practitioners need to attract investment to improve infrastructure (roads, scenic spots,

hotels), pay attention to protecting and developing unique rural tourism resources while delivering showcase traditional culture and tourists' travel experiences. (3) Improve adaptive epidemic response policies by establishing flexible measures for potential epidemic risk instead of one-size-fits-all policies. Health and safety management can be strengthened by providing clear information and guidance to ensure health and safety for both staff and visitors. (4) Follow trends closely and fully utilize new media platforms for accurate, timely, and useful information about rural tourism. Establish and maintain official social media accounts, tourism websites, and online platforms. Interact with tourists, answer their questions, cooperate with travel bloggers, influencers, media outlets, to increase exposure and obtain positive reviews. These are to prompt interest and trust among tourists toward rural tourism.

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