



## Determinants of Cultural Tourism Engagement: An In-depth Analysis of Tea Culture Tourism at Wuyi Mountain, Fujian Province, China

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**Abstract.** We aim to uncover factors affecting tourists' intention to visit Wuyi Mountain as a tea culture tourism destination. This study utilized a questionnaire survey method to collect 403 Generation Z tourists from Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen. Furthermore, this research conducts a structural equation model to process the data. The results indicate (1) Cultural identity has a direct positive impact on behavioral intentions, indicating that the stronger the sense of cultural identity, the stronger the tourists' behavioral intentions; (2) Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control also have direct positive impacts on the behavioral intentions of Generation Z tourists, suggesting that these factors play essential roles in the formation of behavioral intentions; (3) Cultural identity indirectly influences behavioral intentions through attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, with these factors serving as significant mediators between cultural identity and behavioral intentions.

**Keywords:** cultural identity, tea culture tourism, Generation Z, behavioral intentions

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries (Baloch et al., 2023). Many countries consider it an important economic pillar (Merli et al., 2019). In China, tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in the national economy (Zhao & Liu, 2020). Traditional sightseeing tourism gradually shifts towards more profound cultural experience tourism. Tourists' demand for travel experiences is increasingly moving towards depth and diversity (Zhao & Liu, 2020).

Tea is a globally cherished beverage with a long history (S.-Y. Pan et al., 2022), is highly valued for its health benefits, deep cultural significance, and social value. As an essential part of traditional Chinese culture, tea has a rich history and profound cultural heritage, giving it a unique appeal (Kuang et al., 2023). The development of tea culture tourism relies on the natural environment of tea plantations, the historical heritage of tea-producing regions, and cultural customs (Liang et al., 2024). Tea culture tourism combines tea cultivation, production, traditional culture, and tourism, providing visitors with opportunities to learn about tea culture, including tea tasting, tea making, and tea art performances (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021). Tea culture tourism can also promote the development of tea-related industries, create employment opportunities, and contribute to local poverty alleviation.

China is the world's largest tea producer, with its tea plantation area and tea production volume ranking first globally. China is renowned as the "land of tea" (S.-Y. Pan et al., 2022).

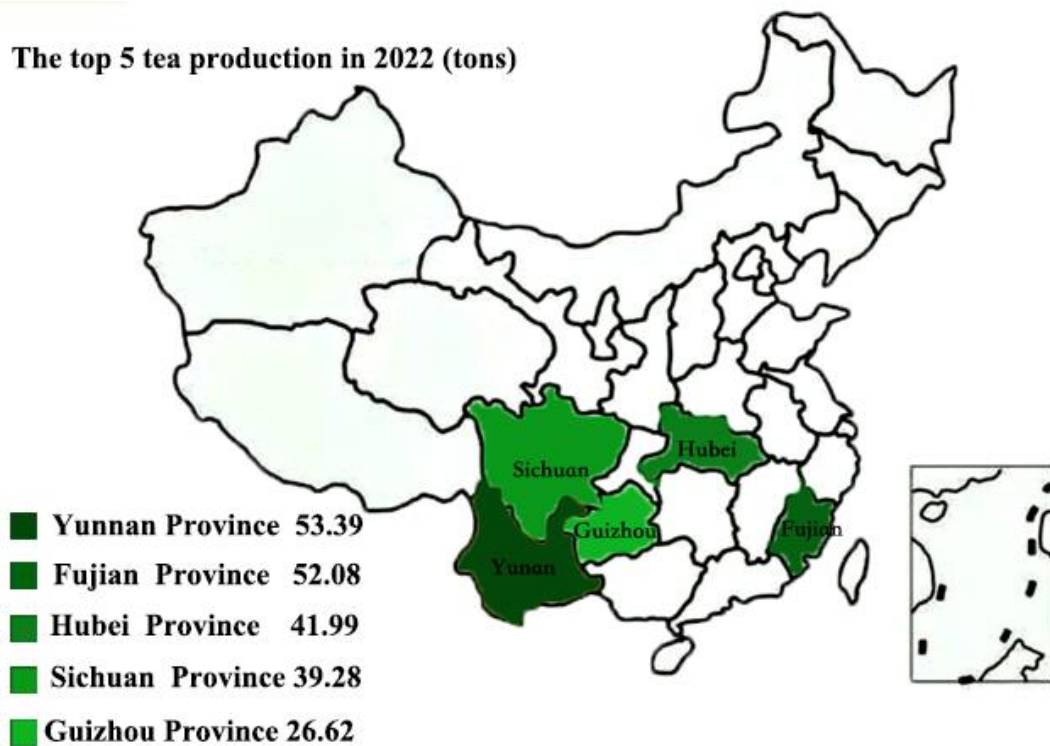
China's tea industry has made significant progress in recent years, with continuous growth in both tea plantations and tea production (Figure 1). This development has played a crucial role in advancing agriculture, improving the rural economy, and promoting ecological and socio-economic development (S. Y. Pan et al., 2022).



**Figure 1.** 2010-2022 China's tea garden area and tea production  
(Source : China Tea Circulation Association,2022 )

Although tea culture has a long history in China, the tourism market has gradually declined among the Z generation in contemporary Chinese cities.(Zheng, 2023). The Z generation accounts for 20% of China's population and represents the highest proportion of household spending. (Yang et al., 2020). Their consumption concepts and behavior patterns profoundly impact the future tourism market. However, the current tea culture tourism mainly attracts the Y generation and older groups, with the Z generation needing more understanding of its cultural connotations and showing a low willingness to participate. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors influencing the Z generation's willingness to engage in tea culture tourism and to identify effective ways to attract them by analyzing their lifestyles and consumption concepts.

Fujian Province is a critical tea-producing region in China (Figure 2), with its tea products being exported globally along the "Maritime Silk Road." Wuyi Mountain, known as the "hometown of tea ancestors," holds both world Cultural and Natural Heritage status, making it a center for tea research and cultural exchange. In recent years, the Fujian provincial government has implemented a series of policy measures to support expanding and strengthening the tea industry. However, despite the significant development potential of Wuyi Mountain's tea culture tourism, research on tourist behavioral intentions in this context remains insufficient.



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

**Figure 2.** The five tea production in 2022(tons)  
(Source : State Statistics Bureau,2022 )

Hence, this study aims to identify the key factors influencing the behavioral intentions of the Z generation.

## LITERATURE

### Theoretical basis

Cultural Identity Theory emphasizes the importance of identity construction, especially when different cultures interact. Critical components of cultural identity include a sense of belonging and psychological commitment to a particular culture (Karjalainen, 2020). In tourism research, Cultural Identity Theory analyses how tourists identify with a destination's culture and the factors influencing their travel choices. (Genc & Gulertekin Genc, 2023). Cultural identity reflects an individual's integration into social groups and their value judgments on tourism experiences. (Tian et al., 2020). Shared cultural backgrounds shape it and emphasize recognition and value.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) expanded into areas such as sustainable tourism, where it predicts preferences for low-carbon tourism. (Joo et al., 2020). And slow tourism (Meng & Choi, 2016) Despite its success, TPB's limitations include its focus on perceived behavioral control as a self-efficacy concept without detailed mechanisms on how attitudes, norms, and control influence intentions. Rare research has not combined the extended TPB model with cultural identity theory. This study proposes a TPB-based model to advance theory and practice to explore factors influencing tourism intentions in China's tea culture tourism industry.

### Related concept

#### Overview of Tourist Behavior Intention

Consumer psychology and behavior are among the most attractive research fields (Wanke, 2008). Understanding how consumers think, feel, and behave is crucial for all tourism stakeholders because it helps describe, analyze, predict, control, or influence consumers, consumer systems, and the consumption environment (Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020). Multiple variables often influence tourists' behavioral intentions, including visiting and recommending. Among these, converting

perceived attractiveness into actual destination attributes is crucial. Additionally, destination image, perceived quality, motivation, and visitor satisfaction are potential predictors of future tourist behavior (Bayih & Singh, 2020). Good behavioral intentions typically represent customer intentional loyalty, which is one of the critical goals in consumer marketing (Haudi et al., 2022).

Understanding how consumers think, feel, and behave is vital for tourism research. This understanding helps describe, analyze, predict, control, or influence consumers, consumer systems, and the consumption environment, leading to more effective marketing strategies and higher-quality customer experiences.

### Cultural Tourism Concept

Culture is everything learned, shared, and transmitted among human groups across generations. All tourism is a form of culture, highlighting the inseparable relationship between tourism and culture. Cultural tourism, one of the oldest forms of special interest tourism, encompasses all tourism activities, as each can be viewed as a cultural experience.

Cultural tourism relies on the cultural heritage assets of a destination, transforming them into products for visitor consumption. (Du Cros & McKercher, 2020). Cultural tourism includes folklore, traditions, popular culture, and creative activities. Therefore, cultural tourism is now a common and isolated field of tourism consumption. Tourism activities are cultural experiences. Thus, all tourism can be considered cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is when tourists gain cultural perception, understanding, and experience through travel. This includes appreciating different cultures, seeking cultural relics, and participating in various cultural tourism activities.

This paper defines cultural tourism as relying on a destination's cultural heritage and transforming it into a form of tourism consumption for visitors. Cultural tourism includes elements of folklore, traditions, and popular culture, allowing tourists to gain a deep understanding of the destination's cultural characteristics, thereby promoting cultural dissemination and exchange.

### Overview of Tea Culture Tourism Development in Wuyi Mountain

Figure 3 shows the location of Wuyi Mountain. Wuyi Mountain is situated at the border between Jiangxi and the northwest part of Fujian. It is a renowned scenic tourist area and summer resort in China. As a World Cultural and Natural Heritage site, Wuyi Mountain boasts natural landscapes such as Tianyou Peak, Nine-Bend Stream, and Water Curtain Cave, as well as cultural attractions like the famous Ancient Han City ruins, Wuyi Palace, and Taoist Heaven Cave.



**Figure 3.** The location of the target study area.

Wuyi Mountain's tea culture tourism resources are diverse, encompassing tangible and intangible resources. The tangible resources include the China Wuyi Tea Expo Garden, Wuyi Jing She, Pang Gong's Tea Spot, Cliffside Tea Poems, Xiamei Ancient Tea Village, Wuyi Rock Tea Grand View Garden, Tianxin Yongle Zen Temple, Tea Wuyi Mountain Museum, Wuyi mountain Jiuqu Stream Bamboo Raft Dock, the birthplace of world black tea, Yulin Pavilion Kiln Site, Imperial Tea Garden Ruins, and Wuyi mountain Xiangjiang Tea Garden, among others. The intangible resources include Wuyi tea art, the "Impression Dahongpao" performance, folk Tea King competitions, the Shouting Mountain Tea Sacrifice Ceremony, and the Wuyi Rock Tea (Dahongpao) production techniques.

### **Research hypothesis**

#### **The relationship between cultural identity and tourists' behavior attitude, supervisor norm and perceived behavior control**

Cultural values are the force that shapes attitudes and influences whether people accept or reject certain products or services (Huang et al., 2022). Consumer attitudes are influenced by individual collectivism, long-term orientation, and the degree of political participation (Zhang et al., 2020). There is a positive correlation between cultural identity and attitude. When a product contains ethnic and cultural symbols, consumers with a high level of cultural identity are likely to develop a genuine positive purchasing intention (He & Wang, 2015). Cultural respect also positively correlates with consumer attitudes (Guo et al., 2019). Additionally, the recognition of different symbolic meanings by Chinese consumers, combined with China's automobile consumption patterns, clarifies the mechanism of self-identity influence (Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes.

*H1: Tourist cultural identity positively influences tourist behavior and attitude.*

Collectivist societies have a strong connection with individual subjective norms (Cho & Lee, 2015). In collectivist cultures, the likelihood of whistleblowing is not necessarily higher or lower than in individualist cultures; instead, it is determined by the reference cultural norms and attitudes towards reporting misconduct. For individuals who embrace feminine and high uncertainty avoidance cultural values, social norms are a more vital determinant of their expected behavior. Environmentally conscious behavior is important for consumers who value group norms (Ahmad et al., 2020). When individuals establish themselves through interdependence, they are more likely to follow the goals of social norms (Columbus et al., 2021). Those with a long-term orientation, if there is a lack of clear understanding of future benefits before making purchasing decisions, typically seek the opinions and advice of others. Social cohesion provides confidence and motivates individuals to believe that society supports their decisions, enabling them to make decisions that benefit society. When people identify with their national culture, they think and act according to group norms and values (Constantino et al., 2022). Therefore, this study proposes.

*H2: Tourists' cultural identity positively influences tourists' subjective norms.*

When individuals can actively manipulate the outcomes of their behavior, their behavior manifests as a perception of simplicity or difficulty. In collectivist societies, consumers tend to pay extra to purchase products perceived as beneficial to society (Sun et al., 2022). Individuals in collectivist societies have higher levels of affective behavior control when purchasing socially beneficial products. When individuals have a strong sense of identification and belonging to the cultural symbols and ethnic characteristics embodied in intangible cultural heritage, they possess the objective conditions necessary to deeply understand intangible cultural heritage (Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, this study proposes.

*H3: Tourist cultural identity positively influences tourist perceived behavior control.*

Much research has detailed how cultural identity influences consumer behavior (Ma et al., 2021). The purchase decision-making process is influenced by relevant groups, social class culture, etc. Cultural values shape individual attitudes and behaviors (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2022). The core characteristic of intangible cultural heritage products lies in their cultural identity, which constitutes their essential attributes and becomes a key indicator for predicting consumer responses (Zhang et al., 2020).

In studies of consumer willingness to consume Chinese elements, it has been found that consumer cultural identity towards modern design with Chinese elements can affect consumer consumption intentions by influencing their beliefs in creativity, perceptions of quality beliefs, as well as differential value and congruent value estimates. Additionally, consumer purchasing behavioral analysis models based on cultural values and motivation have been constructed, and empirical analysis has been conducted on purchasing behavior for luxury goods (Shahid & Paul, 2021). Based on these findings, this study proposes.

*H4: There is a positive influence relationship between tourist cultural identity and tourist behavioral intentions.*

**The Relationship between Tourists' Behavioral Attitudes, Normative Influences, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Tourists' Behavioral Intentions.**

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, the intention of tea culture tourism consumption behavior is mainly influenced by behavioral attitudes, normative influences, and perceived behavioral control. Individuals form rational evaluations of tea culture consumption behavior or visiting experiences. The more positive the evaluation, the more active the intention for tea culture tourism consumption (Zhou et al., 2023). Perception of external pressure can influence individuals' tea culture consumption behavior. When individuals are influenced by significant others (family, friends, teachers, etc.) and society, the intention for tea culture tourism consumption becomes more positive. Consumption intention is also influenced by implementation conditions (such as convenience, difficulty, etc.). The more favorable the perceived objective conditions, the higher the consumption intention for tea culture tourism (Tiwari et al., 2023). The applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior to consumer behavioral intentions has been widely verified (Ajzen, 2020). Therefore, this study proposes that

*H5: Tourists' attitudes positively influence tourists' behavioral intentions.*

*H6: Normative influences positively influence tourists' behavioral intentions.*

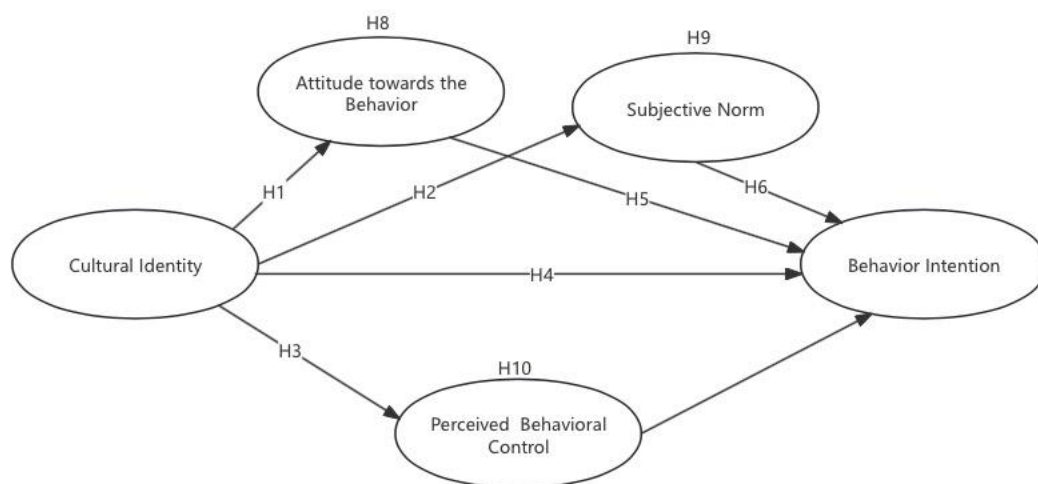
*H7: Tourists' perceived behavioral control positively influences tourists' behavioral intentions.*

*H8: Cultural identity indirectly influences behavioral intentions by affecting behavioral attitudes.*

*H9: Cultural identity indirectly influences behavioral intentions by affecting subjective norms.*

*H10: Cultural identity indirectly influences behavioral intentions by affecting perceived behavioral control.*

Based on the above hypothesis, the main dimensions of this study include cultural identity, behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions.



**Figure 4. Research Model**

## **METHOD**

### **Data collection**

This study selected Generation Z populations from Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen in China as the research subjects and used online questionnaires to collect data. A total of 420 questionnaires were collected, and after rigorous screening, 403 valid questionnaires were retained, achieving an efficiency rate of 95%. The questionnaires were distributed through social media platforms such as WeChat and QQ, and the collection process lasted for one month, from July 19, 2024, to August 18, 2024. We used internationally recognized and extensively validated scales to develop the Chinese questionnaire, which was then translated into Chinese by two professional English teachers. The questionnaire development process underwent strict translation and review, and the Index of Content Validity (IOC) was evaluated to ensure consistency and accuracy across different language versions of the questionnaire.

### **Measurement**

This questionnaire consists of two parts: The first part collects demographic information, such as gender, age, education level, and monthly income. The second part uses a 5-point Likert scale (with one indicating "strongly disagree" and five indicating "strongly agree") to measure 20 items. Specifically, it covers five variables: Cultural identity, measured by four items, is defined as the recognition and sense of belonging of an individual or group to specific cultural traits. Attitude toward behavior consists of four items, reflecting an individual's preference for a specific behavior. Three items represent subjective norms, indicating an individual's social pressure when engaging in a specific behavior. Perceived behavioral control includes four items describing the individual's perception of control over the resources and opportunities required to engage in a specific behavior (Ajzen, 2020). Behavioral intention is composed of 5 items, representing the individual's tendency and degree of willingness to engage in a specific behavior (Lim & Weissmann, 2023).

## **DISCUSSION**

A total of 420 questionnaires were collected, and after a rigorous screening process, incomplete questionnaires with unreasonable answers or exhibited obvious patterns were excluded. In the end, 403 valid questionnaires were retained, achieving an effective rate of 95%, providing a solid foundation for subsequent data analysis.

### **Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

The survey data shows that among the 403 respondents who participated in Wuyi Mountain tea culture tourism, the majority were female (58.56%), with males accounting for 41.44%. The participants were primarily young people aged 19-29 (85.36%), with the 19-22 age group making up 50.37%. Over half of the participants (56.33%) had attended Wuyi Mountain tea culture tourism at least once.

Regarding education and income, 74.44% of the respondents held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 43.67% had an income between 5,001 and 10,000 RMB. The data indicates that Wuyi Mountain tea culture tourism is beautiful to individuals with higher education and middle to high income, especially young women. This demographic's interest in cultural experiences and a high-quality lifestyle provides a strong foundation for developing the tea culture tourism market.

Based on the Cronbach's Alpha results for each dimension shown in the table, we can observe that all items' Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) values are more significant than 0.5. This indicates that most of the items in the questionnaire have a strong correlation with the total score, and the variables designed in the questionnaire have an excellent level of discrimination.

The Cronbach's Alpha for the five scale dimensions are 0.895, 0.901, 0.817, 0.849, and 0.872, respectively, all greater than 0.7. This suggests that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is good, indicating excellent reliability for the results of this survey.

**Table 1.** Demographic information of participants

Items	Categories	N	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	167	41.44
	Female	236	58.56
Age	15-18 years old	59	14.64
	19-22 years old	203	50.37
	23-29 years old	141	34.99
City	Beijing	99	24.57
	Shanghai	173	42.93
	Shenzhen	131	32.51
Number of times participated in Wuyi Mountain Tea Culture Tourism (online and offline)	0 times	122	30.27
	1 time	227	56.33
	2-4 times	39	9.68
	More than 5 times	15	3.72
Education Level	High School (Technical School) or Below	29	7.2
	Associate Degree	74	18.36
	Bachelor's Degree	178	44.17
	Master's Degree or Above	122	30.27
Monthly Income Level	Below 2000 yuan	83	20.6
	2000-5000 yuan	48	11.91
	5001-10000 yuan	176	43.67
	10001-20000 yuan	65	16.13
	Above 20000 yuan	31	7.69

**Reliability Analysis**

**Table 2.** Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)

	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC) $\square$	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$
Cultural Identity	CI1	0.802	0.853	0.895
	CI2	0.771	0.865	
	CI3	0.773	0.863	
	CI4	0.732	0.878	
Attitude towards the Behavior	ATTB1	0.792	0.872	0.901
	ATTB2	0.773	0.875	
	ATTB3	0.724	0.891	
	ATTB4	0.844	0.848	
Subjective Norm	SN1	0.744	0.676	0.817
	SN2	0.647	0.771	
	SN3	0.643	0.777	
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.779	0.768	0.849
	PBC2	0.637	0.828	
	PBC3	0.693	0.806	
	PBC4	0.656	0.821	
Behavioral Intention	BI1	0.826	0.811	0.872
	BI2	0.768	0.828	
	BI3	0.68	0.85	
	BI4	0.614	0.865	
	BI5	0.614	0.864	

At this point, the Cronbach's Alpha values after the deletion of each item are all lower than the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the corresponding dimension. Based on this result, we can conclude that all items measure the same concept, and no need to delete any items.

In summary, the data results in this study have passed the reliability test.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

**Table 3.** KMO and Bartlett's spheres test analysis table

	KMO	0.910
	Approx. Chi-Square	4791.990
Bartlett test	df	190
	p-value	0.000

The table 3 shows that the KMO value is 0.910, which is greater than 0.6, thus meeting the prerequisite for factor analysis. This indicates that the data is suitable for conducting factor analysis. Additionally, the data passed Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that the research data is appropriate for factor analysis.

**Table 4.** Total variance explanation table

Factor	Eigen values			% of variance (Initial)			% of variance (Rotated)		
	Eigen	% of Variance	Cum. % of Variance	Eigen	% of Variance	Cum. % of Variance	Eigen	% of Variance	Cum. % of Variance
1	7.949	39.747	39.747	7.949	39.747	39.747	3.175	15.875	15.875
2	2.027	10.136	49.883	2.027	10.136	49.883	3.150	15.752	31.627
3	1.837	9.183	59.066	1.837	9.183	59.066	3.074	15.368	46.995
4	1.638	8.190	67.257	1.638	8.190	67.257	2.869	14.344	61.339
5	1.094	5.468	72.725	1.094	5.468	72.725	2.277	11.386	72.725

From the table 4, it can be seen that the factor analysis extracted a total of 5 factors, each with eigenvalues greater than 1. The variance explained by these five factors after rotation is 15.875%, 15.752%, 15.368%, 14.344%, and 11.386%, respectively, with a cumulative variance explained rate of 72.725% after rotation.

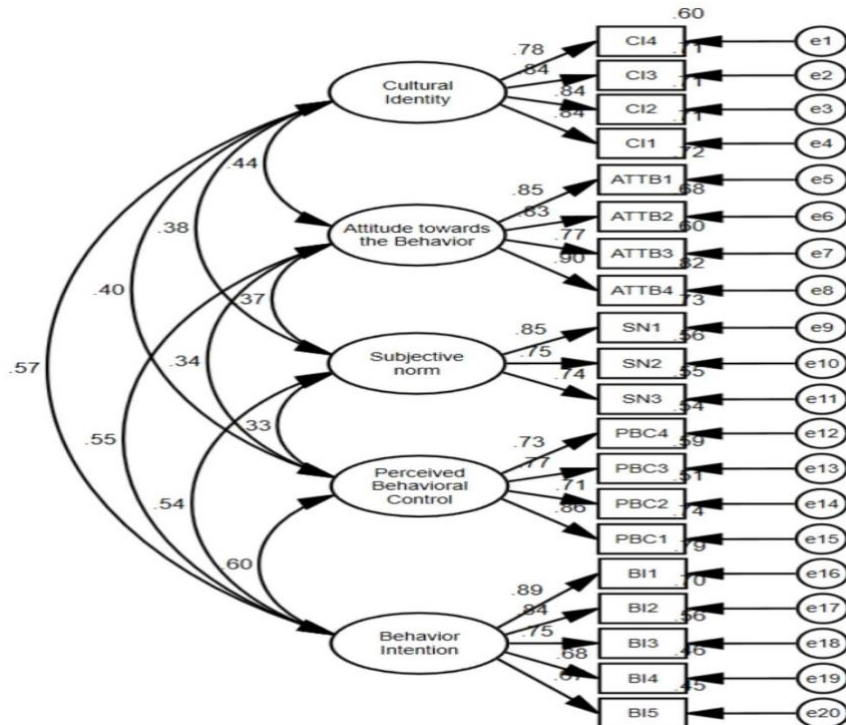
Overall, the results obtained from the factor loadings in the rotated component matrix of this study's questionnaire data are consistent with the scales and dimensions defined in the research design. Additionally, we can see that the loadings of the items corresponding to each dimension are all greater than 0.5, indicating that the validity of this questionnaire is high. Therefore, the questionnaire is valid and suitable for further research analysis.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate the measurement model's structural, convergent, and discriminant validity. After constructing the measurement model, the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied to estimate the model parameters, including factor loadings, error terms, and covariances. The most direct parameter for evaluating the rationality of the structural model is the goodness-of-fit, primarily measured through a series of model fit indices. Based on the content of the scale, the confirmatory factor model for this study is constructed as shown in the figure below (Figure 5) :

**Table 5.**Factor loading (Rotated)

Items	Factor loading				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
CI1	0.102	0.121	<b>0.893</b>	0.049	0.1
CI2	0.27	0.191	<b>0.784</b>	0.15	0.112
CI3	0.248	0.161	<b>0.784</b>	0.217	0.135
CI4	0.158	0.123	<b>0.812</b>	0.126	0.101
ATTB1	0.18	<b>0.873</b>	0.083	0.061	0.058
ATTB2	0.224	<b>0.802</b>	0.176	0.137	0.139
ATTB3	0.224	<b>0.766</b>	0.18	0.122	0.129
ATTB4	0.168	<b>0.877</b>	0.149	0.108	0.126
SN1	0.18	0.109	0.062	0.075	<b>0.875</b>
SN2	0.254	0.125	0.124	0.092	<b>0.768</b>
SN3	0.123	0.131	0.18	0.133	<b>0.79</b>
PBC1	0.207	0.057	0.073	<b>0.864</b>	0.077
PBC2	0.193	0.076	0.149	<b>0.746</b>	0.077
PBC3	0.15	0.111	0.142	<b>0.799</b>	0.093
PBC4	0.274	0.159	0.113	<b>0.721</b>	0.1
BI1	<b>0.81</b>	0.188	0.191	0.24	0.177
BI2	<b>0.761</b>	0.163	0.235	0.215	0.222
BI3	<b>0.69</b>	0.191	0.195	0.188	0.236
BI4	<b>0.646</b>	0.262	0.209	0.182	0.065
BI5	<b>0.654</b>	0.197	0.1	0.258	0.143



**Figure 5.**Confirmatory Factor Model

Convergent Validity:

**Table 6.** Table of the factor load coefficient

Factor	Items	Coef.	Std. Error	CR.	p	Std. Estimate	AVE	CR
Cultural Identity	CI1	1	-	-	-	0.841	0.683	0.896
	CI2	0.875	0.044	20.089	***	0.845		
	CI3	0.944	0.047	20.057	***	0.844		
	CI4	0.832	0.047	17.796	***	0.775		
Attitude towards the Behavior	ATTB1	1	-	-	-	0.846	0.705	0.905
	ATTB2	0.787	0.039	20.169	***	0.827		
	ATTB3	0.761	0.042	18.249	***	0.774		
	ATTB4	0.913	0.04	22.959	***	0.905		
Subjective Norm	SN1	1	-	-	-	0.853	0.612	0.825
	SN2	0.724	0.049	14.761	***	0.75		
	SN3	0.682	0.047	14.567	***	0.738		
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	1	-	-	-	0.861	0.593	0.853
	PBC2	0.681	0.044	15.308	***	0.711		
	PBC3	0.741	0.044	16.862	***	0.768		
	PBC4	0.684	0.043	15.919	***	0.733		
Behavior Intention	BI1	1	-	-	-	0.888	0.591	0.877
	BI2	0.811	0.037	21.805	***	0.839		
	BI3	0.732	0.041	17.967	***	0.745		
	BI4	0.655	0.042	15.621	***	0.679		
	BI5	0.619	0.04	15.295	***	0.669		

From Table 6, it can be seen that, regarding the measurement relationships, the absolute values of the standardized loadings are all greater than 0.6 and are significant, indicating a good measurement relationship. The AVE values for all five factors are more significant than 0.5, and the CR values are all above 0.7, indicating that the data in this analysis has good convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity:

**Table 7.** Distinguishing validity: Pearson correlation with AVE square root value

	Cultural Identity	Attitude towards the Behavior	Subjective Norm	Perceived Behavioral Control	Behavior Intention
Cultural Identity	0.827				
Attitude towards the Behavior	0.397	0.839			
Subjective Norm	0.338	0.335	0.782		
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.364	0.315	0.295	0.770	
Behavior Intention	0.516	0.523	0.482	0.550	0.769

The discriminant validity analysis in Table 7 shows that each construct has good discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE for each construct—Cultural Identity (0.827), Attitude towards the Behavior (0.839), Subjective Norm (0.782), Perceived Behavioral Control (0.770), and Behavioral Intention (0.769)—is greater than the maximum absolute value of the inter-factor correlation coefficients, indicating that each construct is distinct from the others.

**Table 8.** Structural Equation Model Fitting Index

Fitting the index	Standard of judgment	Actual value	Fits the results
Absolute fit index			
CMIN/DF	<3	1.715	Good
GFI	>0.8	0.938	Good
AGFI	>0.8	0.919	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.042	Good
Value-added fit index			
NFI	>0.8	0.944	Good
IFI	>0.8	0.976	Good
TLI	>0.8	0.971	Good
CFI	>0.8	0.976	Good
Simple fit index			
PNFI	>0.5	0.795	Good
PCFI	>0.5	0.822	Good

As shown in Table 8, the analysis model's absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices all meet the expected standards. Overall, the model fit is high, indicating that the model is reliable.

**Correlation Analysis**

**Table 9.** Pearson Correlation

	Cultural Identity	Attitude towards the Behavior	Subjective Norm	Perceived Behavioral Control	Behavior Intention
Cultural Identity	1				
Attitude towards the Behavior	0.397**	1			
Subjective Norm	0.338**	0.335**	1		
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.364**	0.315**	0.295**	1	
Behavior Intention	0.516**	0.523**	0.482**	0.550**	1

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 9 shows significant positive correlations between cultural identity and behavioral attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention, with correlation coefficients of 0.397, 0.338, 0.364, and 0.516, respectively. Additionally, there are significant positive correlations between behavioral attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention, with correlation coefficients of 0.523, 0.482, and 0.550, respectively.

**Structural Equation Modeling Analysis**

This study comprehensively evaluated the model's fit, including absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices. Based on the actual values and evaluation criteria, the results indicate that the model is a good fit.

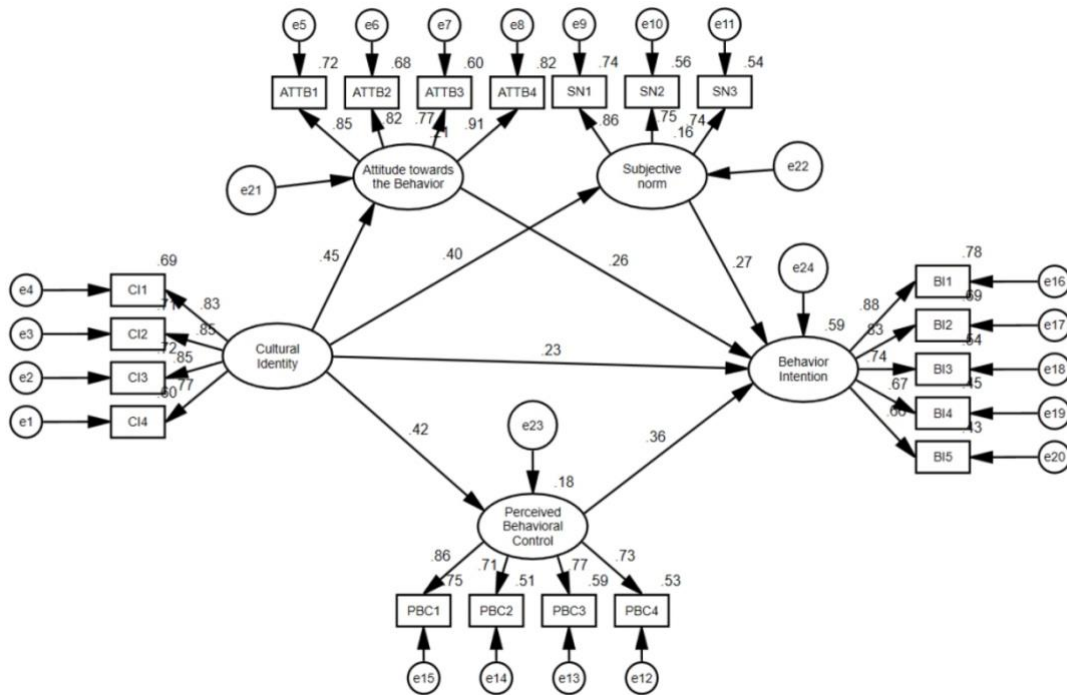


Figure 6. Path Analysis of the Model

Table 4.10 Model Fit Indices

Fitting the index	Standard of judgment	Actual value	Fits the results
Absolute fit index			
CMIN/DF	<3	1.903	Good
GFI	>0.8	0.929	Good
AGFI	>0.8	0.909	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.047	Good
Value-added fit index			
NFI	>0.8	0.936	Good
IFI	>0.8	0.969	Good
TLI	>0.8	0.963	Good
CFI	>0.8	0.969	Good
Simple fit index			
PNFI	>0.5	0.803	Good
PCFI	>0.5	0.831	Good

Firstly, the absolute fit indices show (Table 10) that the CMIN/DF is 1.903, which is below 3, the GFI is 0.929, and the AGFI is 0.909, both exceeding 0.8, and the RMSEA is 0.047, all meeting the excellent standards.

Secondly, regarding incremental fit indices, the NFI reaches 0.936, the IFI is 0.969, the TLI is 0.963, and the CFI is 0.969, all above 0.8, indicating good model fit.

Finally, the economical fit indices show that the PNFI is 0.803 and the PCFI is 0.831, both greater than 0.5, indicating that the model maintains a good fit while preserving simplicity.

The standardized path coefficients indicate significant positive effects in the following paths, all at  $P < 0.05$ : "Cultural Identity → Behavioral Attitude" (0.454), "Cultural Identity → Subjective Norm" (0.396), "Cultural Identity → Perceived Behavioral Control" (0.42), "Cultural Identity → Behavioral Intention" (0.232), "Behavioral Attitude → Behavioral Intention" (0.255), "Subjective Norm → Behavioral Intention" (0.268), and "Perceived Behavioral Control → Behavioral Intention" (0.362).

**Table 11.**Path coefficient table

Path	$\beta$	B	SE.	CR.	P
Cultural Identity→Attitude towards the Behavior	0.454	0.578	0.07	8.242	***
Cultural Identity→Subjective Norm	0.396	0.518	0.075	6.921	***
Cultural Identity→Perceived Behavioral Control	0.42	0.362	0.051	7.152	***
Cultural Identity→Behavior Intention	0.232	0.275	0.066	4.162	***
Attitude towards the Behavior→Behavior Intention	0.255	0.238	0.043	5.505	***
Subjective Norm→Behavior Intention	0.268	0.242	0.043	5.627	***
Perceived Behavioral Control→Behavior Intention	0.362	0.498	0.068	7.288	***

**Mediation Testing**

There are several approaches to studying the effects of mediation. Two standard methods are:

**Stepwise Regression Method:** This method uses hierarchical regression to conduct the study. It is relatively simple and easy to understand, which has led to its widespread use. However, its testing power is relatively low.

**Product of Coefficients Method:** This approach can be divided into the Sobel test and the Bootstrap sampling method. While the first method is straightforward and widely used, its testing efficiency is relatively low. Therefore, the more appropriate approach is to use the second method, the product of coefficients method, with the Bootstrap sampling method employed for mediation testing.

**Table 12.** Mediation Path Analysis

Path	Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Cultural Identity→Attitude towards the Behavior→Behavior Intention	Direct effect	0.232	0.113	0.326	0.006
	Indirect effect	0.116	0.075	0.171	0.003
	Total effect	0.348	0.243	0.437	0.005
Cultural Identity→Subjective Norm→Behavior Intention	Direct effect	0.232	0.113	0.326	0.006
	Indirect effect	0.106	0.063	0.16	0.003
	Total effect	0.338	0.246	0.426	0.005
Cultural Identity→Perceived Behavioral Control→Behavior Intention	Direct effect	0.232	0.113	0.326	0.006
	Indirect effect	0.152	0.105	0.212	0.002
	Total effect	0.384	0.283	0.483	0.003

This study used path analysis to examine the impact of cultural identity on behavioral intention, focusing on the mediating roles of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The analysis found that cultural identity has significant positive direct effects on attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, with standardized path coefficients of 0.232 for each, all reaching significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, cultural identity influences behavioral intention indirectly through these mediators, with total effects ranging from 0.338 to 0.384, all significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Overall, cultural identity exerts significant direct and indirect effects on behavioral intention through these three mediating variables.

**Discussion on Issue One: How does cultural identity influence tourists' behavioral intentions in tea culture tourism?**

This study found that cultural identity has a significant positive impact on tourists' behavioral intentions, consistent with the findings of Ma et al. (2021). They pointed out that cultural identity is an essential psychological factor driving participation in cultural tourism. When tourists have a deep sense of identification with a specific culture, they are more likely to engage in activities related to that culture. Similarly, Yang et al. (2022). emphasized that cultural identity influences individuals' cultural attitudes and enhances their interest in cultural experiences, thereby increasing

their behavioral intentions to engage in tourism. Thus, the high participation of Generation Z tourists in Wuyi Mountain tea culture tourism can be seen as a concrete expression of their identification with traditional Chinese culture.

Cultural identity, as the internalization and acceptance of the values, traditions, customs, and other aspects of a cultural group to which an individual belongs, is not only an emotional attachment but also a deep driving force behind behavioral choices (Jensen et al., 2011). In the context of Wuyi Mountain tea culture tourism, Generation Z tourists' identification with tea culture is reflected not only in their appreciation of tea ceremonies and understanding of tea ware making but also in their willingness to actively learn tea rituals, experience the tea-making process, and even participate in the promotion and preservation of tea culture. This deep cultural identity motivates them to view tea culture tourism as a spiritual pursuit rather than a mere leisure activity.

In this study, cultural identity significantly enhanced tourists' behavioral intentions through three pathways: strengthening attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Zhang et al. (2020) showed that cultural identity could influence behavioral intentions by reinforcing individuals' attitudes and subjective norms.

When Generation Z tourists are strongly identified with tea culture, they tend to have a positive attitude towards related tourism activities, perceiving them as meaningful and valuable, enhancing their willingness to participate. This positive attitude becomes the primary factor driving their behavioral intentions. Cultural identity influences tourists' behavioral intentions through social pressure and expectations. In tea culture tourism, tourists may feel the expectations from peers, family, or the broader social group, believing that participating in tea culture tourism is consistent with social norms and cultural traditions. These subjective norms further strengthen their motivation to participate.

Cultural identity enhances tourists' perception of their ability to engage in these activities. They believe they can overcome various barriers to participating in tea culture tourism (such as time, money, language, etc.), making them more confident in participating. This increased sense of perceived behavioral control makes the impact of cultural identity on behavioral intentions even more significant.

This study confirms the positive impact of cultural identity on tourists' behavioral intentions and reveals the mediating roles of behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in this process. Future research could further explore the differences and commonalities between tourists of different cultural backgrounds and age groups regarding the relationship between cultural identity and tourism behavioral intentions. Additionally, it could examine how the design of cultural tourism projects can more effectively promote the integration of cultural identity and tourism behavior, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of the cultural tourism industry. The deep sense of identification that Generation Z tourists have with Chinese tea culture motivates them to participate in related tourism activities, validating the applicability of this theory.

### **Discussion on Issue Two: The Influence of Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control on Tourists' Behavioral Intentions in Tea Culture Tourism?**

The significant impact of behavioral attitudes on tourists' behavioral intentions has been supported by recent research. Lee et al. (2021) pointed out that a positive behavioral attitude plays a crucial role in cultural tourism decision-making. When tourists hold a positive attitude towards a particular tourism activity, they are more likely to put it into practice. The positive behavioral attitudes of Generation Z tourists stem not only from their interest in and love for traditional culture but also from their desire for new experiences and enthusiasm for exploring the unknown. This positive attitude drives them to engage more deeply in tea culture experiences, such as personally making tea or participating in tea ceremonies, rather than just taking a superficial tour. Additionally, Generation Z's focus on sustainable development makes them more inclined to choose tourism activities that promote cultural preservation and environmental protection, further reinforcing their tourism decisions.

Regarding subjective norms, the study by Altnay et al. (2017) demonstrated that the social environment strongly influences young tourists' tourism decisions, mainly through disseminating

group opinions and behavioral patterns via social media, which significantly affect individual tourism choices. This study found that subjective norms play a crucial role in shaping the behavioral intentions of Generation Z tourists, whose tourism decisions are often influenced by social networks and the opinions of friends and family, consistent with recent research.

In terms of perceived behavioral control, Zhang et al. (2020) noted that perceived behavioral control plays a vital role in cultural tourism, especially in the context of widespread technological applications. Tourists' ability to access tourism resources and confidence in their tourism skills directly impact their behavioral intentions. This study found that Generation Z tourists' familiarity with tea culture tourism and proficiency with tourism facilities enhanced their perceived behavioral control, thereby increasing their behavioral intentions.

### **Discussion on Question Three: Implications and Recommendations for Stakeholders**

This section delves into the implications and provides recommendations for stakeholders to effectively promote the sustainable development of Wuyi mountain tea culture tourism. These suggestions target tea farmers, local governments, tourism enterprises, cultural promotion agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

A multi-faceted approach is essential to comprehensively enhance the attractiveness and influence of Wuyi Mountain's tea culture tourism. First, deepening cultural identity cultivation can be achieved through customized experience programs such as family tea-picking activities, one-on-one tea ceremony lessons, and tea culture-themed photography contests. These tailored experiences allow tourists to engage deeply with Wuyi Mountain's unique tea culture. Additionally, cultural storytelling, utilizing AR technology to recreate tea history and tea-making processes, offers immersive experiences that strengthen emotional resonance and cultural identity. Community participation is also crucial; by involving local tea farmers and merchants in tourism services, tourists can directly connect with the authenticity and warmth of the local culture.

Optimizing tourists' perceived behavioral control is vital for improving their overall experience. Implementing intelligent navigation and information services through user-friendly travel apps or mini-programs can enhance decision-making efficiency by providing real-time traffic updates, queue times at attractions, and personalized route planning. Promoting green tourism by setting up waste sorting and recycling stations, encouraging public transportation or electric vehicles, and raising environmental awareness contribute to a more sustainable tourism model. Continuous improvement of service quality, facilitated by regular feedback mechanisms, ensures that tourists receive high-quality services, including multilingual tour guides and better dining and accommodation options.

Lastly, enhancing the influence of social media and word-of-mouth is critical to expanding Wuyi Mountain's tourism reach. Collaborating with influencers such as well-known travel bloggers, tea culture enthusiasts, and online personalities can attract more potential tourists. Establishing incentive mechanisms, such as awards or discounts for tourists who share their tea culture experiences on social media, can further amplify positive word-of-mouth. Together, these strategies will drive the sustainable development of Wuyi Mountain's tea culture tourism, contributing to the local economy's prosperity and the preservation of cultural heritage.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

#### **Theoretical Implications**

This study is an innovative extension of the classic Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and a profound and forward-looking exploration of cultural tourism research. By integrating the multidimensional and deep-rooted social-psychological construct of cultural identity into the traditional TPB framework, we have successfully constructed a more comprehensive and realistic theoretical model to analyze and predict tourists' behavioral intentions and formation mechanisms within a specific cultural context. This approach challenges the traditional model's limitations, which focus solely on rational cognition, emotional attitudes, and social-environmental factors, and it reveals the potential influence of cultural identity, a non-material factor, on individual decision-making processes. As a result, it significantly expands the applicability and explanatory depth of the TPB.

In the context of cultural tourism, this study focuses on the unique and captivating niche market of tea culture tourism, particularly analyzing the Generation Z tourist group, which is increasingly becoming the leading force in tourism consumption. Generation Z, growing up in the digital and globalized era, exhibits unprecedented diversity and individuality in their cultural perceptions, consumption habits, and value pursuits. Through empirical research, this study clarifies the critical role of cultural identity in stimulating Generation Z tourists' interest in tea culture tourism, shaping their tourism motivations, and ultimately influencing their behavioral intentions and loyalty. This provides a new theoretical lens for understanding the cultural tourism behavior of contemporary young tourists and offers valuable empirical evidence for precision marketing in the tea culture tourism market, innovative design of cultural experience products, and the formulation of sustainable development strategies for tourist destinations.

Moreover, this study contributes to cultural tourism research's theoretical deepening and paradigm shift. It emphasizes the irreplaceable role of cultural identity as a bridge connecting the past and present, the local and global, in promoting the integrated development of cultural tourism and fostering the protection and dissemination of cultural diversity in a globalized context. By deeply exploring the complex connotations of cultural identity and its intrinsic logic with tourism behavior, this study enriches the theoretical toolkit of cultural tourism research and opens up broad avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-cultural comparative research. It injects new vitality and momentum into the development of cultural tourism as an academic discipline.

### **Practical Implications**

In exploring how to attract Generation Z tourists and increase their interest and participation in tea culture tourism, this study proposes a series of specific and innovative strategies. Firstly, to enhance cultural identity, it is recommended that tea culture tourism destinations, such as Wuyi Mountain, should deeply explore and showcase the unique charm of tea culture. By organizing tea culture festivals, tea ceremonies, and tea culture lectures, tourists can experience tea culture's rich heritage and historical legacy firsthand, strengthening their sense of cultural identity and belonging. Additionally, utilizing digital technology and social media platforms to develop interactive and content-rich online tea culture experiences is an effective way to attract Generation Z tourists. These novel approaches allow them to access and learn about tea culture quickly.

To enhance perceived behavioral control, tourism destinations should optimize the design of tourism products and services by offering diverse participation methods and flexible itineraries to meet Generation Z tourists' personalized and accessible travel needs, for example, developing customized tea culture travel routes where tourists can freely choose activities such as visiting tea plantations, experiencing the tea-making process, and tasting specialty teas based on their interests and time availability. Furthermore, improving the convenience and comfort of tourism facilities, such as better transportation connections, more rest areas, and multilingual guided tours, can reduce uncertainty and perceived obstacles during the travel experience, enhancing their sense of perceived behavioral control.

The findings of this study provide essential guidance for the government in formulating policies to promote the development of tea culture tourism. Firstly, the government should increase investment in promoting tea culture through various channels, such as mainstream media and online platforms, to disseminate knowledge and values associated with tea culture, thereby enhancing public awareness and interest. Additionally, the government should encourage and support tea culture tourism destinations in conducting cultural innovation activities, such as tea culture-themed tourism festivals and creative design competitions, to stimulate market vitality and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of tea culture.

In terms of optimizing tourism facilities, the government should provide necessary policy and financial support to tea culture tourism destinations to help improve infrastructure, such as transportation, accommodation, and dining, thereby enhancing the quality and level of tourism services. It is particularly important to focus on the preferences and needs of Generation Z tourists, incorporating more technological elements and environmental concepts to create tea culture tourism products and services that align with contemporary trends.

Moreover, the government should introduce favorable policies and lower participation barriers to encourage more tourists to engage in tea culture tourism activities. For example, offering ticket discounts or exemptions for youth and student groups, providing tax reductions and interest subsidies for tourism enterprises, and promoting the establishment of tea culture tourism cooperation mechanisms to facilitate the sharing and coordinated development of tourism resources across regions. These measures will strongly promote the prosperity and development of the tea culture tourism market, ensuring the effective transmission of tea culture and sustainable tourism development.

### **Research Limitations and Future Research Directions**

#### **Research Limitations**

The data collection for this study was limited to three cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen. The Generation Z population in these cities may have specific behavioral characteristics that do not necessarily represent Generation Z tourists across the country. Therefore, future research should expand the sample scope to include more regions and different backgrounds within the Generation Z population to enhance the generalizability of the findings. This study primarily employed quantitative research methods, which may not fully capture the complex motivations and deeper reasons behind tourists' behavior. Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and focus groups to explore tourists' intrinsic motivations and emotional experiences in greater depth.

#### **Future Research Directions**

Researchers can focus on the differences in the perception of tea culture among various countries, regions, or ethnic groups, such as the differences between Asian and Western countries regarding tea culture heritage, consumption habits, and values. Additionally, they can examine how these differences influence tourists' motivations, experience preferences, and decision-making processes. Through comparative analysis, it is possible to identify the common patterns and unique characteristics of cultural identity's impact on the attractiveness, satisfaction, and loyalty in tea culture tourism across different cultural contexts. This can provide a scientific basis for the global promotion and localized development of tea culture tourism.

The integration of tea culture tourism with ecotourism is a direction worth exploring. By incorporating tea culture experiences into natural settings, such as tea mountain hiking and ecological tea garden tours, tourists can enjoy the charm of tea culture while experiencing harmonious coexistence with the natural environment, thereby achieving both physical and mental relaxation and pleasure. This integration not only helps to enhance the added value of tourism products but also promotes the protection and sustainable development of the local ecological environment.

Moreover, combining tea culture tourism with health tourism also holds great potential. Tea culture inherently contains rich health concepts, such as health preservation through tea drinking and mindfulness through tea ceremonies. Combining the health elements of tea culture with wellness tourism and medical tourism, and developing tourism products with health benefits, such as tea therapy experiences and tea ceremony yoga, can attract more tourists who pursue a healthy lifestyle. This integration can satisfy tourists' health-related needs while promoting the dissemination and popularization of tea culture, achieving a win-win development for both cultural tourism and the health industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, this study combines cultural identity with the Theory of Planned Behavior to deeply explore Generation Z tourists' behavioral intentions and influencing factors in tea culture tourism. The research found that cultural identity plays a crucial role in enhancing tourists' behavioral intentions, and that behavioral attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence tourists' willingness to participate. This study not only enriches the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior but also provides valuable recommendations for the practice of cultural tourism. However, this study has certain limitations. Future research can deepen

the understanding of this field by expanding the sample range, adopting multi-methodological designs, and conducting cross-cultural comparisons.

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