

How the Type of Media Used Affects Consumers' Willingness to Support Tourism Policies: A Study based on the Case of Hainan

Meng Wu^{1,2}, Mohamad Fazli Sabri², Anthony Ang Sang Nang², Chen Meng^{3,*}

¹Saxo Fintech Business School, University of Sanya, Sanya, 572000, China

²Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra, UPM Serdang, 43400, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

³Universiti Pengurusan dan Teknologi Tunku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Genting Kelang, Setapak, 53300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

* Corresponding author: Chen Meng (Email: mengc-wr24@student.tarc.edu.my)

Abstract: Public support for tourism policies is a crucial guarantee for their successful implementation, but current academic research on this topic still requires further exploration. This paper takes the policy of building Hainan into an international tourism and consumption hub as a case study, and based on the “stimulus-organism-response (SOR)” theoretical framework, integrates communication effectiveness theory, cognitive evaluation theory, social exchange theory, and the positive emotion expansion-construction theory to construct a research model with media usage types (official media and social media) as independent variables, tourism policy influence perception and positive emotions as mediating variables, government trust and local identity as moderating variables, and tourism policy support intention as the dependent variable. Through structural equation analysis using SPSS 22.0 and SmartPLS 4 on 1,099 valid questionnaires, the study found that residents generally hold a positive and supportive attitude toward the policy; the use of social media has a greater influence on support willingness than the use of official media; policy benefit perception and positive emotions both exhibit significant mediating and chain mediating effects between media use and policy support willingness; and government trust and local identity exert positive moderating effects on the perception and emotion pathways. This study enriches the research perspective on residents' tourism policy behavior and provides empirical references and practical insights for policy communication and public mobilization.

Keywords: Media Usage, Tourism Policy Impact on Cognition, Positive Emotions, Government Trust, Local Identity, Tourism Policy Support Intention.

1. Introduction

The construction of Hainan as an international tourism and consumption hub is a major strategic task entrusted to Hainan by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, holding significant national and regional developmental significance[1]. As key stakeholders in the implementation of tourism policies, residents' attitudes toward such policies directly influence their effectiveness. However, current academic research on the psychological and behavioral mechanisms underlying residents' willingness to support tourism policies remains insufficient. With the continuous expansion of official and social media channels, media has become the primary source of tourism policy information for residents. Different types of media may exert varying influences on residents' cognition and emotions during policy dissemination, thereby affecting their willingness to support such policies[2]. This study focuses on Hainan residents, examining the types of media they use. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework, it integrates communication effectiveness theory[3], social exchange theory, cognitive evaluation theory[4], and the positive emotion expansion-construction theory, this study systematically explores the influence pathways of media usage on residents' willingness to support tourism policies[5]. It also introduces two moderating variables-government trust and local identity-to reveal the formation mechanisms of residents' support willingness from cognitive, emotional, and social identity dimensions, providing theoretical support and practical suggestions for optimizing policy dissemination and

mobilizing public support[6].

2. Literature Review

This study adopts the “stimulus-organism-response” (SOR) theory as its core framework, emphasizing that individuals, under the influence of external stimuli (Stimulus), generate corresponding behaviors (Response) through cognitive and emotional responses within their internal organisms (Organism)[7]. As an important external stimulus, the media influences residents' understanding and attitudes toward policies through the content it disseminates. To further construct the research logic, this paper also incorporates communication effects theory, cognitive evaluation theory, social exchange theory, and the positive emotion expansion-construction theory[8]. Communication effects theory emphasizes that different media types have distinct influence pathways on individuals' psychology, attitudes, and behaviors. Residents' exposure to policy content through media can lead to psychological changes. Cognitive evaluation theory posits that individuals assess the benefits and drawbacks of policies based on their own circumstances after receiving information, thereby generating different emotions. Social exchange theory emphasizes that residents' weighing of the benefits and costs of policies determines their support attitudes. The positive emotion expansion-construction theory points out that positive emotions can expand individuals' cognitive and behavioral boundaries[9], enhancing their receptivity to external information and willingness to act.

In terms of specific variable construction, media use is divided into official media and social media. The perception

of tourism policy impacts is further subdivided into perceived policy benefits and perceived costs, used to measure residents' cognitive perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of policy implementation. Positive emotions are measured through dimensions such as satisfaction, happiness, and pride, reflecting residents' emotional responses[10]. Additionally, government trust and local identity are included as moderating variables, representing residents' confidence in government effectiveness and their emotional attachment to the local community, respectively. These may moderate the process of transforming cognition and emotions into behavioral willingness. In summary, this study constructs a multi-theoretical, multi-variable research framework, providing a solid foundation for in-depth exploration of the mechanisms underlying the influence of media use on support for tourism policies.

3. Research Process

The research process was designed based on the research questions and variables identified in this study, including questionnaire design and survey, measurement model analysis and structural model analysis, and moderation effect testing.

First of all, during the questionnaire design phase, the research was based on a review of prior literature and theoretical framework to develop the questionnaire content, which covered an 8-variable theoretical model: official media usage, social media usage, perceived benefits of tourism policies, perceived costs of tourism policies, positive emotions, government trust, local identity, and willingness to support tourism policies. All measurement items use a 7-point Likert scale, where "1" for official and social media use variables represents "never," and "7" represents "always"; for other variables, "1" represents "strongly disagree," and "7" represents "strongly agree."

Besides, the study distributed the questionnaire on a large scale through the online Questionnaire Star platform and supplemented it with offline channels to collect data. The survey targets were permanent residents of Hainan Province, with the sample covering different genders, ages, occupations, and educational levels[11]. A total of 1,345 questionnaires were collected, and after cleaning, 1,099 valid questionnaires were obtained, meeting the minimum sample size requirement for structural equation modeling analysis. In the data processing phase, descriptive statistical analysis of the basic demographic characteristics of the sample was conducted using SPSS software. Among the respondents, 48.5% were female and 51.5% were male; ages were primarily concentrated between 19 and 50 years old, accounting for 74.4%; occupations were predominantly company employees, civil servants, and students.

This study conducted reliability analysis of the data by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.842, with all indicators exceeding the standard, indicating that the scale has high reliability. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using SPSS software and the principal component analysis method and maximum variance method. Through exploratory factor analysis, eight factors were extracted. All measurement items of the constructs had factor loadings higher than 0.7, explaining 77.544% of the total variance, indicating that the explanatory power of these eight factors is very high. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using SmartPLS4 software to test the convergent validity and

discriminant validity of the scale. The standardized factor loadings of all latent variables ranged from 0.843 to 0.918, all exceeding the recommended value of 0.7; the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.719 to 0.826, all exceeding the recommended value of 0.5; the composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.805 to 0.916, all above the recommended value of 0.8; thus indicating that the latent variables have good convergent validity. Additionally, the square roots of the AVE values for each latent variable are greater than the correlation coefficients between that variable and other variables, indicating good discriminant validity among the latent variables[12].

Furthermore, the structural model was tested using SmartPLS4 software to examine the impact of media usage types (official media and social media) on support for tourism policies. The results showed that social media had a stronger influence on support for tourism policies ($\beta = 0.182$, $p < 0.001$) than official media ($\beta = 0.153$, $p < 0.001$).

Furthermore, this study examined moderating effects, including the moderating role of government trust and the moderating role of local identity.

First, we examined the moderating effect of government trust on the path from perceived benefits of tourism policies to positive emotions. Before adding the moderating effect (government trust \times perceived benefits of tourism policies), the R^2 for positive emotions was 0.196. After adding the moderating effect, the R^2 for positive emotions increased to 0.226, indicating that the explanatory power of the model was enhanced after adding the moderating effect. Further testing the significance of the moderating effect revealed that government trust has a significant positive moderating effect on the influence of perceived benefits of tourism policies on positive emotions ($\beta = 0.145$, $t = 4.429$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size of f^2 in this study is 0.031. According to literature [13]: f^2 values between 0.005 and 0.01 are considered low effects, between 0.01 and 0.025 are medium effects, and above 0.025 are high effects. This indicates that the moderating effect significantly enhances the explanatory power of perceived benefits of tourism policies on positive emotions. To more intuitively illustrate the positive moderating role of government trust in the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions, this study used Excel to divide government trust into high and low groups and further analyzed the data using the simple slope method. As shown in Figure 1, under high government trust, the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions is strongly positive, while under low government trust, the relationship is weakly positive[14]. This further demonstrates that government trust strengthens the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions.

Second, following the same steps as above, we further examined the moderating effect of government trust on the path from positive emotions to willingness to support tourism policies. Before adding the moderating effect (government trust \times positive emotions)[15], the R^2 of willingness to support tourism policies was 0.346. After adding the moderating effect, the R^2 of willingness to support tourism policies increased to 0.394, indicating that the explanatory power of the model was enhanced after adding the moderating effect. Further testing the significance of the moderating effect revealed that government trust has a significant positive moderating effect on the influence of positive emotions on willingness to support tourism policies ($\beta = 0.132$, $t = 5.202$,

$p < 0.001$). The effect size of f^2 in this study is 0.033, indicating that the moderating effect significantly enhances the explanatory power of positive emotions on willingness to support tourism policies. To more intuitively illustrate the positive moderating effect of government trust in the relationship between positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies[16], this study used Excel to divide government trust into high and low groups and further analyzed the data using the simple slope method. As shown in Figure 2, under high government trust, positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies exhibit a strong positive relationship, while under low government trust, positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies exhibit a weak positive relationship[17], further confirming that government trust strengthens the relationship between positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies.

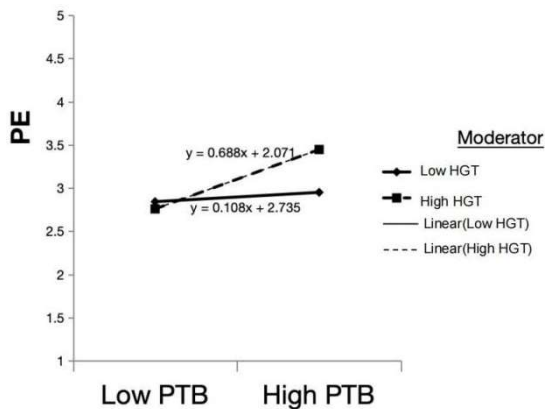


Figure 1. The impact of government trust and perceived benefits of tourism policy on positive emotions

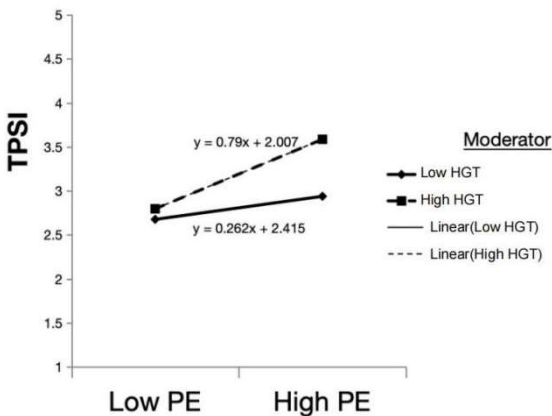


Figure 2. The impact of the interaction between government trust and positive emotions on willingness to support tourism policies

Third, we examined the moderating effect of local identity on the path from perceived benefits of tourism policies to positive emotions. Before adding the moderating effect (local identity \times perceived benefits of tourism policies)[18], the R^2 for positive emotions was 0.196. After adding the moderating effect, the R^2 for positive emotions increased to 0.235, indicating that the explanatory power of the model was enhanced after adding the moderating effect. Further testing the significance of the moderating effect revealed that local identity has a significant positive moderating effect on the influence of perceived benefits of tourism policies on positive emotions ($\beta = 0.176$, $t = 5.255$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size of f^2 in this study is 0.045, indicating that the moderating effect

significantly enhances the explanatory power of perceived benefits of tourism policies on positive emotions. To more intuitively illustrate the positive moderating effect of local identity in the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions, this study used Excel to divide local identity into high and low groups and further analyzed the data using the simple slope method. As shown in Figure 3, under high local identity traits, the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions exhibits a strong positive correlation, while under low local identity traits, the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions exhibits a weak positive correlation[19]. This further demonstrates that local identity strengthens the relationship between perceived benefits of tourism policies and positive emotions.

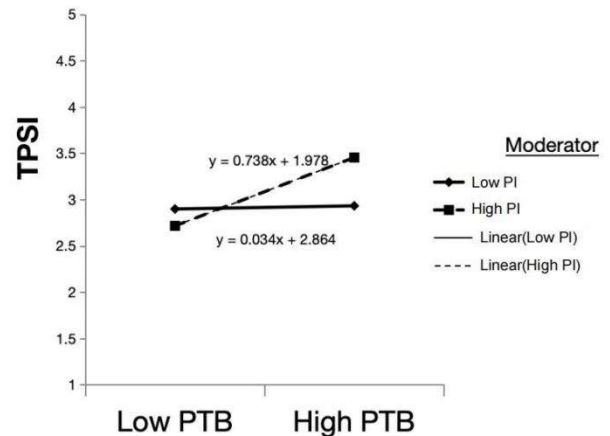


Figure 3. The influence of local identity and perceived benefits of tourism policy on positive emotions

Fourth, following the same steps as above, we further examined the moderating effect of local identity on the path from positive emotions to willingness to support tourism policies[20]. Before incorporating the moderating effect (local identity \times positive emotions), the R^2 for willingness to support tourism policies was 0.346. After incorporating the moderating effect, the R^2 for willingness to support tourism policies increased to 0.379, indicating that the model's explanatory power was enhanced after incorporating the moderating effect. Further testing the significance of the moderating effect revealed that local identity has a significant positive moderating effect on the influence of positive emotions on willingness to support tourism policies ($\beta = 0.131$, $t = 4.912$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size of f^2 in this study is 0.032, indicating that the moderating effect significantly enhances the explanatory power of local identity on willingness to support tourism policies[21]. To more intuitively illustrate the positive moderating effect of local identity in the relationship between positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies, this study used Excel to divide local identity into high and low groups and further employed the simple slope method for analysis[22]. As shown in Figure 4, under high local identity traits, positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies exhibit a strong positive relationship, while under low local identity traits, positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies exhibit a weak positive relationship[23], further confirming that local identity strengthens the relationship between positive emotions and willingness to support tourism policies.

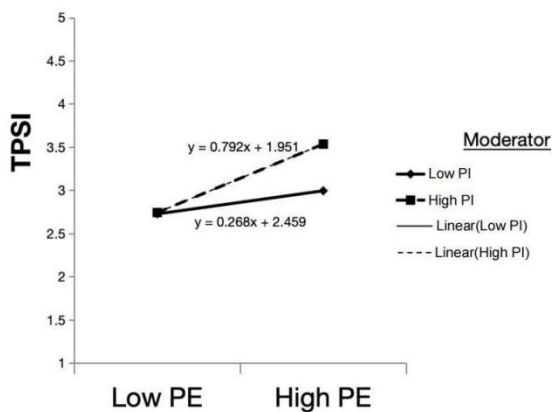


Figure 4. The influence of the interaction between local identity and positive emotions on willingness to support tourism policies

4. Conclusion

This study, based on Hainan's specific tourism policy of building an international tourism and consumption hub, constructed a theoretical model integrating variables such as media usage types, perceived influence of tourism policies, positive emotions, government trust, and local identity. Through empirical analysis of 1,099 questionnaire responses from Hainan residents, the study explored how media usage influences residents' willingness to support tourism policies. The findings reveal that residents' willingness to support tourism policies is significantly enhanced when they obtain policy information through both official media and social media, with social media exerting a more pronounced influence. This indicates that, in the process of policy dissemination, social media plays a stronger role in mobilizing residents' emotions and shaping their attitudes.

Additionally, perceptions of policy benefits and positive emotions exert a significant mediating effect between media use and willingness to support policies. When residents receive positive policy information, if they perceive the potential benefits of the policy for themselves and their community, they are more likely to experience positive emotions such as satisfaction, pride, and happiness, which then translate into willingness to support the policy. Further chain mediation analysis also validated the existence of the psychological pathway "perceived policy benefits-positive emotions-willingness to support the policy," emphasizing the continuity and coupling of cognition and emotion in the formation of behavior.

This study also validated the positive moderating role of government trust and local identity in the relevant pathways. Residents with high levels of trust and identity are more likely to experience positive emotions when perceiving policy benefits, and these positive emotions have a more significant impact on policy support intentions. This suggests that the effectiveness of policy communication depends not only on the content and medium of the information itself but is also profoundly influenced by residents' level of trust in the government and their emotional attachment to the local area.

Theoretically, this paper organically combines the media usage perspective from communication studies with resident support intention research from tourism studies, supplementing psychological mechanism research at the micro level of tourism policy and enriching the practical application of SOR theory in tourism policy support intention

research. Additionally, by introducing emotional variables and moderation mechanisms, it constructs an integrated analytical framework encompassing cognition, emotion, and behavior. Practically, the study recommends that government departments should simultaneously focus on coordinated communication strategies across official and social media to enhance the perceptibility and emotional appeal of policy benefit information. By strengthening residents' sense of belonging to the local area and their trust in the government, the study aims to reinforce the public foundation and social mobilization capacity for policy implementation.

This study also has certain limitations. The research subjects are limited to Hainan Province, and the policy context has regional specificity, so the external applicability of the research conclusions needs further testing. In addition, this study mainly uses cross-sectional data and cannot show the dynamic changes in the relationships between variables. Future research may consider introducing longitudinal tracking data or mixed research methods to further explore the causal paths and temporal evolution patterns between policy dissemination and public behavioral intentions, thereby expanding the scope of application and theoretical depth of the research.

Acknowledgments

- 1) Result under Financial Innovation and Multi-Asset Intelligent Trading Laboratory, Key Laboratory of Philosophy and Social Science of Hainan Province.
- 2) Research of the Project on Educational Teaching Reform in Hainan Higher Education Institutions: Research on Optimizing Teaching Design of Civics and Politics in Finance Major Courses (Hnjg2023-118).
- 3) Research of Industry-Education Integration Project of University of Sanya: Smart Products Design Based on Generation Z's Collective Emotion and Personality Traits (USY-CJRH2318).
- 4) Course Cluster Pilot Construction Project at University of Sanya - Bilingual Course Cluster in International Finance (SYJKXK202309).

References

- [1] Xi Jinping attends the celebration conference marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Hainan Province and the Hainan Special Economic Zone and delivers an important speech. [EB/OL]. (2018-04-13) [2024-02-10]. https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-04/13/content_5282295.htm.
- [2] Notice of the National Development and Reform Commission on Issuing the Implementation Plan for Building Hainan Province into an International Tourism and Consumption Center. [EB/OL]. (2018-12-12) [https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2018-12/31/content_5435325.htm].
- [3] Doxey G V. A causation theory of visitor-resident irritants: Methodology and research inferences [C]// In the Sixth Annual Conference Proceedings. San Diego: The Travel Research Association, 1975:195-198.
- [4] Sethna R J, Richmond B O. US Virgin Islanders' perception of tourism [J]. Journal of Travel Research, 1978, 17(1):30-31.
- [5] Boissevain J. The impact of tourism on a dependent island: Gozo, Malta [J]. Annals of tourism research, 1979, 6(1):76-90.

- [6] Pizam A. Tourism's impacts: The social costs to the destination community as perceived by its residents [J]. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1978, 16(4): 8-12.
- [7] Brunt P, Courtney P. Host perceptions of sociocultural impacts [J]. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1999, 26(3): 493-515.
- [8] Sharpley R. Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research [J]. *Tourism Management*, 2014, 42(37-49).
- [9] Nunkoo R, Ramkissoon H. Developing a community support model for tourism [J]. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 2011, 38(3): 964-988.
- [10] Wang S, Chen J S. The influence of place identity on perceived tourism impacts [J]. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 2015, 52: 16-28.
- [11] Gu H, Ryan C. Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism—the case of a Beijing hutong [J]. *Tourism Management*, 2008, 29(4): 637-647.
- [12] McCool SF, Martin SR. Community attachment and attitudes toward tourism development [J]. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1994, 32(3): 29-34.
- [13] Moderator Variables: Introduction [EB/OL]. (2018-09-15) [2024-04-22]. <http://davidakenny.net/cm/moderation.htm>.
- [14] Moghavvemi S, Woosnam KM, Paramanathan T, et al. The effect of residents' personality, emotional solidarity, and community commitment on support for tourism development [J]. *Tourism Management*, 2017, 63: 242-254.
- [15] Wang Y, Shen H, Ye S, et al. Being rational and emotional: An integrated model of residents' support of ethnic tourism development [J]. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 2020, 44: 112-121.
- [16] Lazarus R S. *Psychological stress and the coping process* [M]. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966: 385-388.
- [17] Moghavvemi S, Woosnam KM, Paramanathan T, et al. The effect of residents' personality, emotional solidarity, and community commitment on support for tourism development [J]. *Tourism Management*, 2017, 63: 242-254.
- [18] Zheng D, Ritchie BW, Benckendorff PJ, et al. The role of cognitive appraisal, emotion and commitment in affecting resident support toward tourism performing arts development [J]. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 2019, 27(11): 1725-1744.
- [19] Nunkoo R, Smith S L J. Political economy of tourism: Trust in government actors, political support, and their determinants [J]. *Tourism Management*, 2013, 36: 120-132.
- [20] Cuba L, Hummon DM. A place to call home: Identification with dwelling, community, and region [J]. *Sociological Quarterly*, 1993, 34(1): 111-131.
- [21] Williams DR, McDonald CD, Riden CM, et al. Community attachment, regional identity and resident attitudes toward tourism [C] // Proceedings of the 26th annual travel and tourism research association conference proceedings. Wheat Ridge, CO: Travel and Tourism Research Association, 1995: 424-428.
- [22] Mehrabian A, Russell JA. *An approach to environmental psychology* [M]. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1974: 97-99.
- [23] Sultan P, Wong HY, Azam M S. How perceived communication source and food value stimulate purchase intention of organic food: An examination of the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model [J]. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 2021, 312: 127807.