

The Effect of Virtual Tour Experience on Actual Travel Intention —Focusing on the Moderating Effect of Happiness*

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This study is based on place attachment theory, explores how to transform tourists' virtual experience into on-site tourism willingness through virtual attachment, And explores the moderating role of happiness in it. A real travel intention model is constructed for people who work in tourism or have the ability to travel alone. Analyzed through analysis tools such as SPSS and AMOS, We hope to explore if the virtual experience can be transformed into a willingness to travel on the ground, and how happiness moderates virtual attachment to virtual tourism experiences. The result shows, the relationship between Virtual Travel Experience and Virtual Attachment is moderated by Happiness, Virtual Attachment is positively related to Place Attachment (Place dependence & Place identity), Place Attachment is positively related to Real Travel Intention. The relationship between tourists and tourist destinations is explored in depth through this study to provide references and suggestions for tourism development.

Keywords : Place Attachment, Virtual Attachment, Happiness, Real travel intention

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1. Introduction

Technological advances in various forms often have an immediate and lasting impact on tourism. With the development of technology, virtual reality (VR) technology is widely used in tourism planning and management, marketing, the entertainment industry, the education field, heritage conservation, etc. The explosion of COVID-19 has produced an unprecedented impact on the tourism industry, and also indirectly promoted the rapid development of

virtual museums, cloud tourism, virtual scenic spots, etc.

During the pandemic, more and more people used the Internet as their source of information gathering. With the application of digital technology in the tourism industry, tour guides can introduce the culture and cuisine of the destination through live video. And because virtual tourism can be conducted in a non-contact situation, tourists can experience virtual tourism under the condition of limiting the flow of people. Therefore, virtual

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tourism experience has received widespread attention from the society, and it provides ideas to explore the transformation of virtual tourism experience to real travel intention.

Theoretical research related to virtual tourism experience has started to develop gradually, along with the application of VR in tourism. Tourists can enter the virtual tourism experience environment through VR applications and wearable devices, and customize their own tourism activities to reach any tourist destination they want. Scholars have begun to worry that the virtual tourism experience will gradually replace field tourism in the future. Tourists' attitudes towards authenticity and motivations and constraints will determine whether such substitutes are accepted. Therefore, the virtual tourism experience cannot replace field tourism. Although the virtual tourism experience is in its early stages of development, it has greatly accelerated the development of tourism marketing due to its immersive and experiential nature, which can be used in various scenarios. For example, it is used for relic restoration and attraction renovation; or to provide sensory information to potential tourists, and through virtual tourism experience, it helps to stimulate the behavioral intention of tourists to undertake actual tourism.

Several studies have shown that browsing the museum's website can significantly increase the enthusiasm of visitors. Watching panoramic photos on the hotel's website can ease travel anxiety. VR technology preview allows the experiencer to have a good feeling, thus promoting the hotel's advance sale. Some scholars have also used the SOR model

(stimuli-organism-response, S-O-R) to analyze the behavior of virtual tourists, and confirmed that the real experience in virtual tourism experience activities can affect the tourists' cognitive response, emotional response and attachment, to enhance the behavioral intention of tourists to participate in the related field tourism. But tourist behavior research still needs to be advanced.

Based on the place attachment theory, this paper constructs the relationship model of virtual tourism experience, virtual attachment, and real travel intention, and discusses how virtual tourism experience influences real travel intention through affective transmission (happiness). This study aims to clarify the reasons for the formation of virtual attachment and elucidate how virtual attachment affects tourists' willingness to travel in the field by exploring tourists' willingness in the new era, and then deeper research on the relationship between tourists and tourist destinations in order to provide references and suggestions for the development of tourism.

2. Literature review

2.1. Virtual tourism experience and Virtual attachment

Virtual tourism is a way for tourists to experience scenery and sound effects through Internet media and achieve immersive tourism. The application of VR in the tourism industry can become the most convenient way for tourists to obtain information on tourist destinations. Tourists can make in-depth

evaluations without arriving at the destination, and then influence the decision-making of destination selection through virtual experience. The positive experience gained by tourists during tourism will make them immersed in the environment and obtain a high level of satisfaction, which will easily form their sense of identity and emotional attachment to the place and enhance their place attachment to the environment. When tourists establish a cognitive and emotional connection with a destination, they form place attachments as they deepen their familiarity with the destination. Therefore, only by deeply experiencing and understanding the events and activities related to the environment can form a place attachment to the environment.

This profound interaction and connection between people and places has a positive impact on the formation of virtual attachment. Especially when visitors have a positive experience using devices such as VR, this experience translates into highly valuable and memorable memories and may positively influence their sense of identity and belonging to the destination.

H1 : virtual tourism experience is positively related to virtual attachment

2.2. Virtual attachment and place attachment

The concept of place attachment originated in the 1970s. In 1983, Shumaker et al. clearly defined the concept of place attachment, and believed that place attachment refers to the emotional connection between people and their place of residence. This study argues that place attachment refers to the

special emotions that tourists develop toward tourist destinations. Williams and Vaske divided place attachment into place dependence and place identity from the perspective of leisure. Place dependence refers to the psychological needs of tourists for the infrastructure, service facilities, and natural scenery of tourist destinations. Place identity is a tourist's emotional identification with the destination, reflected in tourist attitudes, intentions and preferences. According to previous research, this paper divides place attachment into two variables, place dependence and place identity.

With the rapid development of information technology, the relationship between tourists and tourist destinations has been extended to a tri-space, and a new cross-form of the relationship between tourists and tourist destinations has emerged, that is, (real) people and (virtual) people, (virtual) people and (virtual) land, (real) land and (virtual) land. The cognition, emotion and behavior of virtual space and real space interact with each other. Ren et al. (2012) confirmed that attachment to virtual communities affects the frequency with which individuals visit virtual communities. Kim et al. (2020) also found that VR tourism users' intention to visit realistic attractions was influenced by their attachment to VR.

Based on the above literature, this study believes that the user's consciousness and behavior in the virtual world are to some extent the projection of the real world consciousness and behavior. Virtual attachment will enhance place attachment in the real world, and virtual attachment will stimulate the willingness to travel in the field.

H2 : Virtual attachment is positively related to Place dependence

H3 : Virtual attachment is positively related to Place identity

2.3. Local attachment and Real travel intention

As a basic need of people, attachment has a great influence on tourists' destination choice and behavior intention. Past research has shown that place attachment significantly affects visitors' behavioral intentions. When tourists form a functional dependence and emotional connection to the destination, it indicates that the tourists have a good overall impression of the destination, and they are likely to have the willingness to travel on the spot. Lee and Shen (2013) found that the place attachment of urban park visitors significantly influenced their behavioral intentions. Xu and Zhang (2016) also suggested that place identity plays an important role in the behavioral intention of tourists visiting Hangzhou. The stronger the place attachment, the more travelers tend to devote more time, energy, money and other resources.

H4 : Place dependence is positively related to Real travel intention

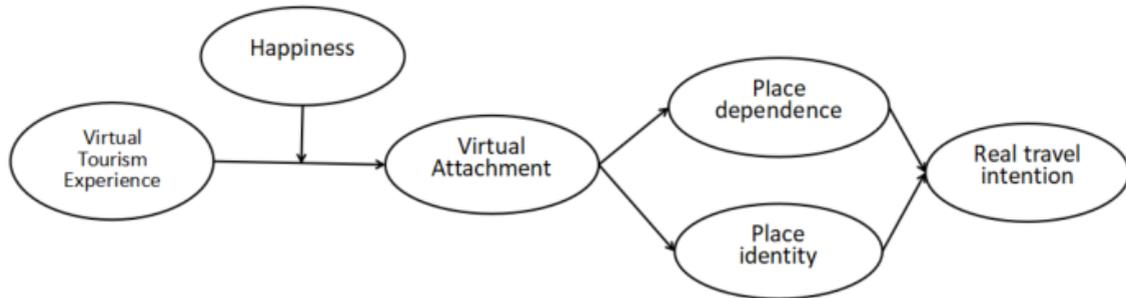
H5 : Place identity is positively related to Real travel intention

2.4. The moderating effect of happiness

Happiness refers to people's overall evaluation of their quality of life and the resulting positive emotion-driven psychological state, which is somewhat subjective, stable and holistic in nature. As a kind

of emotional orientation, it was introduced into tourism research in the 1980s after the precipitation in the fields of philosophy and psychology. For tourists, it includes both hedonic happiness that expresses positive emotions, and realization happiness that represents individual meaning and deep value. As an emotional representation, well-being is usually studied as a mediating variable in empirical research. For example, Fang et al. (2017) argue that there is a mediating effect of users' perceived hedonic well-being in the path of performance and appearance of travel APPs on users' intention to use them. In addition to studying the mediating effects of happiness, there is also a part of the study that involves moderating effects. In daily life, the stronger the happiness of an individual, the more outgoing and cheerful his or her personality tends to be, and the stronger his or her willingness to participate in social interaction activities. It is evident that the stronger the perceived well-being of an individual when subjected to external influences, the stronger his or her positive behavior. That is, virtual travel experience and virtual attachment are influenced by happiness, and the direction and strength of the relationship between them are influenced by happiness.

H6 : The relationship between virtual travel experience and virtual attachment is moderated by Happiness, and the happiness for virtual travel experience to be positively related to virtual attachment will be significantly more pronounced when happiness is high rather than low.



〈Figure 1〉 Conceptual model and proposed hypotheses.

3. Methods

3.1. Sampling and data collection procedures

In this study, Chinese people over 18 years of age were the target population. This was done in an attempt to target those who either work in the tourism industry or have experience interacting with tourists. To reach this population, The questionnaires were collected both online and offline, 800 questionnaires were distributed from September 20, 2022 to October 28, 2022, 772 were returned, the response rate was 96.5%. After removing false and incomplete questionnaires, we got a total of 759 valid questionnaires, the effective questionnaire return rate is 94.8%.

3.2. Measures and data analysis

All items used to measure constructs within the theoretical model were either adapted or adopted from existing measures in the literature. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 was used to measure these 21 items (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Following initial data screening (i.e., excluding those that

finished the questionnaire too quickly or who did not fully finish the instrument), A two-step structural modeling approach (i.e., confirmatory factor analysis or CFA followed by structural equation modelling or SEM) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was then employed in the analysis so as to ultimately examine the 6 proposed hypotheses. CFA assisted us in examining psychometric properties of each scale as well as factor structure of the measurement model. SEM then was used to carefully examine each proposed hypothesis. Amos v24.0 was used for both CFA and SEM.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. The Statistical Characteristics of the Sample Population

This study uses SPSS24.0 to conduct statistics on the characteristics of the sample population for the questionnaires recovered in this empirical investigation. In the 759 valid questionnaires, male respondents accounted for 43.7%, and female respondents accounted for 56.3%. Students accounted for 56.1%, ranking first among the respondent

groups. And the Government workers accounted for 25.9%, which is the second. The third is staff of enterprises, accounting for 15.3%.

3.3.2. Reliability Analysis and Validity Analysis

Reliability Analysis: Reliability refers to the reliability of the scale, including stability and consistency. In general, the Cronbach's α value is preferably between 0.6 and 0.8, and greater than 0.8 indicates that the internal consistency is excellent. The Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the entire questionnaire is 0.885, which means the reliability and stability of the questionnaire is excellent. At the same time, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each variable is more than 0.8, shows that the internal consistency is good.

Validity Analysis: Validity testing is to confirm whether the collected data can get the expected conclusions and reflect the research problems, mainly involving content validity and construct validity. For content validity, the questionnaire in this study was based on reference to relevant literature, and some measurement scales were used repeatedly by different researchers, and trial investigation was conducted before the release of the questionnaire, and the questionnaire was released to modify and improved. Therefore, content validity is high. At the same time, the research sample is five times larger than the number of items in the questionnaire ($759 > 21 * 5 = 105$), meeting the conditions for sample size analysis. In addition, this study selected the results of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measurement and

Bartlett's sphericity test to confirm whether the data are suitable for factor analysis. Table 1 shows that the KMO value of the entire questionnaire is 0.891, greater than 0.7, which is suitable for factor analysis. The KMO value of each variable is greater than 0.7, and the corresponding Bartlett test significance probability is 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.05, indicating that the sufficiency of the sample and the suitability of the factor analysis are high. Therefore, the construct validity of the questionnaire and factor components is appropriate.

3.3.3. Structural Equation Analysis

We applied the structural equation of AMOS24.0 for processing to model, calculate the standardized regression coefficient (path coefficient) of each path and its statistical significance, in order to understand the causal relationship between each variable, and constructed the path diagram among each variable. The results are shown in Table 2. The study adopts AMOS 24.0 to test the goodness of fit between the structural equation model and the data after establishing the structural equation model. After analyzing the characteristics of the fitted index. In this study, the following six fitting indicators were selected to test the model:

Model Hypothesis Testing: Based on the analysis of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and the idea of referring to the conceptual model, this study uses AMOS 24.0 to estimate the structural equation and establish a model. In this study, we use the maximum likelihood parameter estimation

〈Table 1〉 Reliability and validity statistics

Construct	Code	Loadings	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's α
VA	VA2	0.818	0.6187	0.8664	0.901
	VA3	0.794			
	VA4	0.772			
	VA1	0.761			
VTE	VTE4	0.832	0.6638	0.8876	0.858
	VTE2	0.829			
	VTE1	0.817			
	VTE3	0.78			
Hap	Hap4	0.806	0.6142	0.8642	0.814
	Hap2	0.788			
	Hap1	0.786			
	Hap3	0.754			
RTI	RTI3	0.835	0.6764	0.8624	0.854
	RTI2	0.825			
	RTI1	0.807			
PD	PD3	0.83	0.6703	0.8591	0.829
	PD2	0.815			
	PD1	0.811			
PI	PI2	0.843	0.6556	0.8509	0.814
	PI1	0.795			
	PI3	0.79			
KMO and Bartlett's Test	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				0.891
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square		7955.812
			df		210
			Sig.		0
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					

〈Table 2〉 Comparison between Fitting Results and Ideal Results of Model and Data

The revised index	CMIN/DF	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI
Ideal results	<3,1<	>0.8	<0.08	>0.8	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
The fitting results	1.661	0.972	0.03	0.963	0.972	0.987	0.989

〈Table 3〉 Comparison between Fitting Results and Ideal Results of Model and Data

Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
VTE → VA	0.414	0.035	11.797	***
VA → PI	0.701	0.051	13.856	***
VA → PD	0.641	0.05	12.913	***
PD → RTI	0.434	0.043	10.12	***
PI → RTI	0.178	0.036	4.955	***

〈Table 4〉 Analysis of the moderating effect of happiness

Happiness			
	coeff	se	t
constant	3.863	0.021	180.530***
VTE	0.306	0.027	11.191***
VA	0.221	0.026	8.492***
VTE x VA	0.246	0.033	7.533***
R-sq	0.308		
F	111.9207***		

method. The path regression coefficients can be obtained to verify the six hypotheses proposed in this investigation, and the results are shown in Table 3.

From the data in the table, it can be obtained that six paths are significant in the structural equation, and significant resistance test of each path are content to the standard requirements ($P \leq 0.05$).

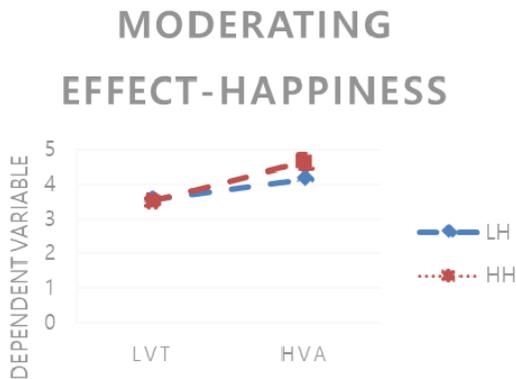
3.3.4. Moderating effect analysis

To explore the impact of the virtual tourism experience on tourists' virtual attachment under the moderating effect of happiness. This paper further

analyzes the differences in the effects of virtual attachment among consumers with different levels of well-being when they engage in virtual travel experiences, that is, the moderating effect test. Model 1 of the PROCESS program developed by Hayes (2012) to test for moderating effects. As shown in Table XX, the interaction term between virtual travel experience and happiness showed a significant relationship, which indicates that there is a positive moderating effect of happiness on the virtual travel experience and virtual attachment.

In order to reflect the moderating effect more intuitively, this study uses the slope method for testing. And analyze the impact of virtual travel experience on the virtual attachment under different

levels of happiness. As shown in Figure 4, there is a strong positive effect of virtual travel experience on the virtual attachment under high happiness, with a steeper slope.



〈Figure 2〉 moderating effect of happiness

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Research Conclusion

Based on place attachment theory, this study discusses the effects of virtual travel experience, virtual attachment, and place attachment on real travel intentions in the context of virtual tourism. It also explored how happiness moderates the relationship between the perception of experience and virtual attachment. The results showed that.

Virtual tourism experience has a significant positive impact on virtual attachment. During the virtual experience, tourists can feel the natural and humanistic environment of the tourist destination and experience the project in it. The beautiful experience generated during this period will make

the tourists have a virtual attachment to the tourist place.

Virtual attachment significantly and positively affects place attachment (place identity, place dependence). The consciousness and behavior of tourists in the virtual world are projections of the consciousness and behavior of the real world, so virtual attachment will enhance place attachment in the real world.

Place attachment (place identity, place dependence) has a significant positive impact on real travel intention. As a stable and long-lasting emotional variable between people and places, place attachment is also regarded as an important factor affecting tourists' behavioral intentions, and it has also been shown that tourists with stronger place attachment spend more time and money to tourism behavior.

Happiness positively modulates the relationship between virtual travel experience and virtual attachment. Many studies have examined the role of happiness as an independent or mediating variable to explore its influence on tourism. This study used well-being as a moderating variable and empirically conclusions are as follows. When tourists conduct virtual experiences, high-happiness tourists are more likely to generate virtual attachment, and the strength of happiness moderates the virtual attachment generated after tourists conduct virtual tourism experiences.

4.2. Implications and Limitations

This study deepens the relationship between tourists and tourist destinations, and provides

reference and suggestions for the development of tourism. Firstly, tourism-related enterprises need to integrate tourism resources to increase and optimize the virtual tourism experience of tourists. At the moment when tourism products are homogeneous, whether it can provide tourists with personalized and differentiated virtual tourism experience is the embodiment of the unique service of enterprises. Through virtual tourism, travel methods can be enriched, which can not only play a role in publicity, but also meet the travel needs of different tourists. Creating diversified virtual tourism experiences can increase the virtual attachment of tourists and thus motivate them to shift from online tourism experiences to offline real tourism. Specifically, there are the following virtual tourism promotion methods for tourism-related enterprises to learn from: 1. Virtual reality technology can be applied to tourism marketing and promotion, For example, customized development of some small virtual games to promote tourism destinations in the games. 2. It is possible and reasonable to use virtual reality technology to save time and cost. For example, by scanning the QR code, you can get the panoramic view of the scenic spot, and plan the tourist route through the virtual scenic spot. 3. In terms of tourism experience evaluation, the evaluation content is transformed into big data through virtual reality technology and presented on the virtual tourism platform. The evaluation is analyzed comprehensively through information technology, it can provide more intuitive opinions for the future development and planning of tourism enterprises. Secondly, we develop exclusive marketing plans for high-happiness

tourists and use various channels to enhance tourists' happiness with the tourist places.

There are still some shortcomings in this study. Firstly, the research object of this paper is only analyzed for people with independent tourism ability, without specific segmentation. In future research, experimental comparisons can be used to analyze the similarities and differences between different groups of people who experience virtual tourism and then convert them into on-site tourism behaviors. Secondly, the selection and division of variables and dimensions need to be further improved. For example, there are multiple dimensions of happiness, and which dimension plays a moderating role needs to be further explored. Finally, there is no analysis of demographic variables (gender, age, occupation, etc.) on behavioral intention. Further research can be expanded the respondents while expanding the sample size, and explore whether there are differences in behavioral intentions in their gender, age and other differences.

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국문요약

가상관광체험이 현장여행의도에 미치는 영향 —행복의 조절효과를 중심으로

이위가* · 왕악준* · 유자양**

본 연구는 지역 애착 이론을 기반으로 가상 애착을 통해 관광객의 가상 관광 경험을 현장 관광 의지로 전환하는 방법을 탐색하고 행복의 조절 역할을 탐구한다. 관광 능력이 있는 사람을 대상으로 현장 관광 의향 모델을 구축했다. SPSS 24.0 와 AMOS 24.0 등의 분석 도구를 통해 분석한다. 우리는 가상 경험이 지상 여행에 대한 의지로 전환될 수 있는지, 행복이 가상 관광 경험에 대한 가상 애착을 어떻게 조절하는지 탐구하기를 희망합니다. 그 결과 가상여행경험과 가상 애착의 관계는 행복감에 의해 조절되고, 가상 애착은 장소 애착(장소의존성 및 장소정체성)과 양(+)의 관계가 있으며, 장소 애착은 실제 여행의도와 양(+)의 관계가 있는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구를 통해 관광객과 관광지의 관계를 심층적으로 탐색하여 관광의 발전을 위한 참고 자료와 제언을 제시한다.

주제어 : 장소 애착, 가상 장소 애착, 행복, 현장 여행 의도

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