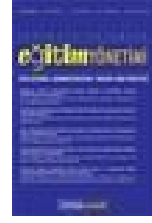




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Does The Classic of Mountains and Seas Knowledge Promote Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations? Critical Role of Place Familiarity and Attractiveness

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| <p>Article History</p> <p>Article Submission 12 November 2021</p> <p>Revised Submission 24 December 2021</p> <p>Article Accepted 4 February 2022</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>This study investigated the relationship between knowledge of the Classic of Mountains and Seas (or Shan Hai Jing), and educational tourism to mountain destinations, and explored the moderating effects of place familiarity and attractiveness on this relationship. The sample consisted of 309 students from Beijing and Shanghai, China, and PLS-SEM was used for analysis. The study found that knowledge of Shan Hai Jing significantly affected educational tourism to mountain destinations, supporting the first hypothesis. This suggests that promoting knowledge of Shan Hai Jing can be an effective strategy for encouraging educational tourism to mountain destinations. Additionally, the study found that place attractiveness significantly moderated the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations, supporting the second hypothesis. This highlights the importance of destination attractiveness in promoting educational tourism and suggests that destination marketers should focus on highlighting the attractiveness of mountain destinations. However, the third hypothesis, which proposed that place familiarity would significantly moderate the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism, was not supported. This suggests that familiarity with the destination may not be a key factor in influencing educational tourism. Overall, the findings suggest that promoting knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and emphasizing the attractiveness of mountain destinations can be effective strategies for encouraging educational tourism. This has important implications for tourism marketing and management and highlights the need to consider destination attributes when promoting educational tourism.</p> <p>Keywords: Classic Knowledge; Shan Hai Jing; Place Attractiveness; Place Familiarity; Educational Tourism</p> |
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Introduction

Educational tourism is recognized as a significant means of promoting understanding, respect, and tolerance, as well as facilitating personal and professional growth. As such, it plays an important role in creating a more interconnected, knowledgeable, and peaceful world (Santos et al., 2022; Subramaniam & Masron, 2022). Furthermore, educational tourism has been identified as a powerful tool for effecting sustainable development and increasing global awareness, thus positioning it as a crucial determinant of the world's future trajectory. Notably, the educational tourism sector is among the world's fastest-growing industries, serving as a primary source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing nations (Subramaniam & Masron, 2022). Because of this, academics have paid a lot of attention to finding and studying the most important parts of establishing tourism services and operating destinations. This has led to a much better understanding of how people act when they visit a place (Santos et al., 2022).

There are tight relationships between tourist expectations regarding destination qualities, type of destination management (Trelohan, François-Lecompte, & Gentric, 2022), and favourable image of the destination in this respect (Malik, Gangwani, & Kaur, 2022) as well as destination competitiveness (Tse & Tung, 2022). Efficient identification of attributes is crucial for tourism sectors to optimize their management strategies and enhance destination competitiveness in a given location. Nonetheless, as the components of destination competitiveness are context-dependent, prior research has sought to develop theoretical frameworks that elucidate the constructs of destination image and competitiveness (Moradi, Ehsani, Saffari, & Norouzi Seyed Hosseini, 2022). Crouch and Ritchie (1999) developed a conceptual model for enhancing destination competitiveness based on the "diamond of national competitiveness" framework. This model involved identifying the most important attributes or features within a lengthy list of tourism items to improve destination competitiveness. Various approaches, such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA), importance-performance analysis (IPA), analytic hierarchy process (AHP), and attribute ranking, are used to extract these attributes. Additionally, location-specific qualities and amenities play a significant role in tourists' destination choices. These destination-specific factors may include the climate, leisure facilities, sightseeing locations, and destination information. (Boqué Ciurana, Ménendez, Suárez Bilbao, & Aguilar, 2022).

For selecting a tourist site, Zeraib, Kouba, and Berghout (2022) have identified criteria for tourism development such as road quality, private and public transportation amenities, and communications. Tourists evaluate social influences when travelling, according to Roman et al. (2022). In this regard, Shen and Chou (2022) discovered that, although nature-based tourism is quickly developing throughout the globe, two important economic nations, China and Japan, are having problems recruiting visitors for this business. Due to the detrimental consequences of tourism on the environmental, economic, and cultural well-being of locals, as well as on their entire way of life, a great deal of study has been conducted on how locals feel about tourists (Li, Nijkamp, Xie, & Liu, 2020). Residents' expectations of tourism's future viability have grown in relevance in the tourism equation (Garcia-Buades, Garcia-Sastre, & Alemany-Hormaeche, 2022). While the beneficial effects of tourism are appreciated, it is the negative effects that have primarily drawn scholars to this area to give policymakers avenues to limit and eliminate the negative effects of tourism (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020).

Tourism, on the other hand, is a multidimensional and complex business that includes a wide range of industries, sub-sectors, participants, and organizations (Yiannakou, Apostolou, Birou-Athanasidou, Papagiannakis, & Vitopoulou, 2022). In addition, there are several forms of tourism, each of which has its structure and description based on the various kinds of tourists, services, commodities, travel patterns, markets, and expectations. Moreover, there are a variety of tourist destinations (Y. Wang, Xi, Chen, & Lu, 2022). A kind of tourism known as "edu-tourism" involves a particular tourist activity where learning, education, and knowledge gain are the main objectives of the trip (Živković, Jovanović, Đorđević, & Janković, 2022). Saeroji, Agfianto, Wijaya, Priyo, and Marimin (2020), say that to participate in educational activities in the destination country, which is different from their place of origin, edu-tourists must physically cross an international boundary between the two nations. Additionally, edu-tourists are obliged to enroll in all courses provided and are enrolled as regular students in any semester or term of a program taught in the

destination country with the intention of graduating from it there.

Edu-tourism is also affected by globalisation, which "brings more mobility, not just of people, but of all living things, resulting in a shifting, biosocial globe" (Antiado, Castillo, & Tawadrous, 2017). Few studies have been done on edu-tourism, and almost nothing has been written about how people feel about this kind of tourism. This could be because there are so many different tourism-related courses and edu-tourism takes place in many different places. But it is clear that "academic research on educational tourism has lagged behind commercial expansion" (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017) This is due to a lack of knowledge about educational tourism frameworks and a lack of research into the many intellectual tourism industry sectors (Abubakar, Shneikat, & Oday, 2014).

Edu-tourism is seen as an alternative kind of tourism because of its product, approach, and function; it has a small market, is governed locally, and operates within the area's environmental, social, and economic carrying capacities (Chaabane, Nassour, Bartnik, Bünemann, & Nelles, 2019). Due to its regulated scale and purpose-specific character, edu-tourism has also been defined as a kind of alternative tourism. Nonetheless, it has remained an understudied area of alternative tourism (Wells, 2016).

This study aims to investigate the relationship between Shan Hai Jing knowledge and educational tourism to mountain destinations while considering the role of place familiarity and attractiveness. The study aims to determine the influence of Shan Hai Jing's knowledge on educational tourism and whether place familiarity and attractiveness can moderate this relationship. The study aims to provide insights into the factors that influence educational tourism and suggest effective promotion strategies. It also contributes to the literature on destination competitiveness and image. The findings can help destination marketers and managers design effective tourism promotion strategies and improve the competitiveness of mountain destinations.

Literature Review

Classic Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing

Shan Hai Jing (Classic of Mountains and Seas) was an ancient Chinese geography classic (Michael, 2001). This version has 18 volumes, 5 of which are the Shan Jing (Classic of Mountains), 8 of which are the Hai Jing (Classic of Seas), 4 of which are the Da Huang Jing (Classic of Big Land), and 1 of which is the Hainei Jing [Classic of Mainland] (An, 2021). The Shan Hai Jing details the continent's noteworthy mountains and rivers, as well as its flora and minerals. This portion of the book was likely written during the early to middle Warring States period [475-221 BC] (Murowchick, 1989).

Shan Hai Jing, which includes many stories and fables, is very important for historical study, notably on primitive society in China, as well as on early surnames, tribes, and understanding of the world, nature, and social development (Yang, An, & Turner, 2005). According to Shan Hai Jing, the Yellow Ruler is the west's heavenly ruler. He was the grandfather of Guan and the great-grandfather of the legendary ancient king Zhuan Xu (Gesterkamp, 2021). In addition, he was the parent of several tribes inside and outside of China. Di Jun, who is not mentioned in the San Huang Wu Di (Three Emperors and Five Gods) and has no record in other writings, is the only heavenly emperor of the Shan Hai Jing.

Education experience may influence travel motivation (He, Liu, & Li, 2021). To enhance consumption-related decision-making, tourists seek novel means of acquiring information about tourist locations (Goossens, 2000). Participation and retention are two elements of the educational experience (Zhang, Fiore, Zhang, & Liu, 2021). From a tourism viewpoint, the education experience enables visitors to learn new information and skills to recognize new and better opportunities, stimulates tourist imagination, and develops new ideas pertinent to tourist consumption of destination goods and services (Xu, Buhalis, & Weber, 2017). Since the inspired-by state is an epistemological activation process, reflecting invocation and transcending of tourist inspirations (Xue, Zhou, Majeed, Chen, & Zhou, 2022), visitors who gain new knowledge and skills as part of an educational experience at a place may be inspired, activate innovative consumption-related concepts in tourists, and capture tourists' attention (Xue et al., 2022). The realization of

the quality of new ideas and a feeling of self-transcendence resulting from the discovery of new and better opportunities at a tourist location displays the transcendence features of tourist inspiration (R. Chen, Joya, Choi, & Choi, 2017). We suggest the following hypothesis as a result.

Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations

Over the last four decades, it has become clear that mass tourism is not a neutral phenomenon but rather has both good and negative effects on the whole socio-ecological system. As a consequence, the idea of using educational tourism to preserve sites has been studied and debated (Polukhina et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that is created and maintained in a location (community, environment) in a way that ensures its viability indefinitely and doesn't harm or alter the natural environment (both human and physical) to the point where it prevents the growth and well-being of other activities and processes (Saarinen, Lubbe, & Moswete, 2022).

Due to their fragility, limited landmass, lack of resources, and dependence on tourism, the problem of educational tourism to mountain destinations in tiny island governments is intriguing (Sheller, 2021). Sustainably managing tourism is a tough problem for tiny island governments since they are particularly susceptible to the effects of mass tourism and their socio-ecological systems are highly reliant on it. Extensive research on the detrimental effects of mass tourism in numerous island nations has been found (Leka, Lagarias, Panagiotopoulou, & Stratigea, 2022).

As a result, in many island nations, including Northern Cyprus, edu-tourism has emerged as a viable replacement for traditional forms of tourism and a novel strategy for promoting sustainable tourist growth (Alipour, Olya, Abdalla, & Hesarakı, 2022). And as the unfavourable effects of mass tourism were more well-known, a shift toward "soft" and alternative types of tourism, especially on relatively undeveloped islands, became more popular (Weaver, 2001). Nonetheless, edu-tourism, along with rural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural heritage tourism (to name a few), has arisen as a separate part of the tourism industry committed to ethical practices (Tomasi, Paviotti, & Cavicchi, 2020).

Our research, however, focuses on the most important stakeholder-the locals who make up edu-tourist hotspots-to determine whether or not this kind of tourism can be maintained in the long-term. Since locals and edu-tourists occupy the same physical location and time, this strategy is reasonable. Edu-tourists and locals form bonds via prolonged exposure to one another and frequent conversation in public areas.

Place Attractiveness

Literature on destination competitiveness indicates that several management measures are necessary to boost destination competitiveness (Islam, Hossain, & Noor, 2017; Wilde & Cox, 2008). Developing more tourist-friendly destination services at this time necessitates methods with characteristics that are unique to a tourism business at a particular moment and degree of destination development (Risteskia, Kocevskia, & Arnaudov, 2012). Thus, the focus of such tactics should be on fostering a positive image of the place, which would reflect tourists' preferences based on crucial criteria. A set of characteristics is used to quantify this destination picture (Liao & Chuang, 2020). In addition, based on past research, there is widespread agreement about the importance of image in the decision-making process and, by extension, the selection of visitors (Polas, Imtiaz, Mahbub, & Khan, 2019). In parallel to the decision-making method and choice, visitor impression of a place is also significant, with an emphasis on a set of characteristics generated based on information sources. To decide on certain locations, information sources and a variety of other variables are presented as persuasive elements (Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schuckert, 2020). When travelling to any tourist site, a visitor considers several crucial variables that are usually referred to as destination image. Destination image is the total of a person's beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions about a location (Ramadhani, Kurniawati, & Nata, 2019). Some experts link the necessity of good image-building to a destination's overall tourist performance (Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2020).

Place Familiarity

A fundamental notion in marketing, familiarity with a product or brand refers to customer knowledge and experience regarding a brand or product that may influence consumer decision-

making about a product or brand (Wen, Lin, Liu, Xiao, & Li, 2021). According to an earlier study (Luan, Shan, Wang, & Xiao, 2019), customer familiarity with brand products or services, including first-time and repeat purchases, influences positive consumer decision-making and behaviour similar to customer ignorance of brand goods or services. Destination familiarity is the subjective judgement of a person's destination knowledge and facts (Szubert, Warcholik, & Żemła, 2021). The subjective familiarity evaluation of location characteristics influences travellers' behavioural intentions (Xue et al., 2022). When travellers have a sense of familiarity with a tourist site, they are more confident in their choice to go there.

According to existing research, travellers' information-seeking behaviour is significantly influenced by how acquainted they are with the area (Shi, Liu, Kumail, & Pan, 2022). Tourists search their recollections and prior experiences for vital knowledge. Visitors who recall the pertinent details try to make educated selections without consulting further sources. Visitors who are unable to get the essential knowledge from memory and experience look for information from other sources to make logical travel-related judgements (H. Wang & Yan, 2022). Evocation, a distinctive characteristic of tourist inspiration, demonstrates that inspiration for tourists is innately sparked by an outside stimulus (Xue et al., 2022). Visitors who are less acquainted with the area are more likely to be inspired than those who are more familiar with it since this may help them acquire new information, make discoveries, and get new insights, all of which contribute to increased visitor inspiration (Kallionpää, 2003). High-familiar visitors make decisions based on memory and experience, which in the absence of external novelty may not completely inspire tourist imagination (Jeong & Shin, 2020). Travellers who are acquainted with a place have more favourable assessments of the location's features and constructive behavioural intentions than those who are not (Y.-C. Chen, Shang, & Li, 2014). Traveler t will get less exposed to novel experiences and discoveries as their familiarity with a location grows, which will cause them to become less motivated.

Based on these arguments and theoretical underpinning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing significantly affect educational tourism to mountain destinations.

H2: Place attractiveness significantly moderates the relationship of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations.

H3: Place familiarity significantly moderates the relationship of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of this study.

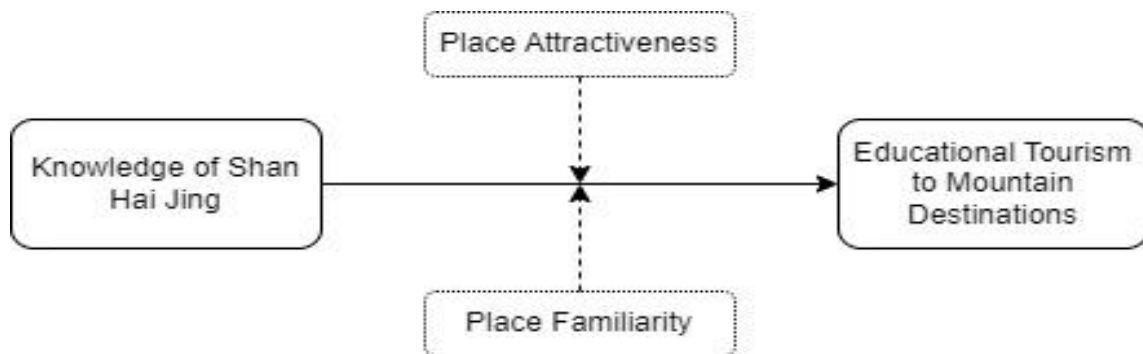


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Methodology

Study Population, Sampling and Procedure

In this study, researchers examined the influence of Shan Hai Jing's knowledge on educational tourism to mountain areas in China's tourist business from a range of angles. The

samples for this investigation were chosen using a non-probability judgement sampling method. In this research, a questionnaire with closed-ended questions was employed to obtain data from real respondents. A four-month survey was undertaken to gather data for this research. Paper-pencil questionnaires were utilised to gather data for this quantitative investigation in the Chinese cities of Beijing and Shanghai. Because acquiring information on tourism destinations was so challenging, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted. When there is no sampling frame, non-probability sampling may be utilized (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). We explained to the participants' families what the research was about and why it was vital before we began collecting data.

Measures

There are scales for a variety of factors, including knowledge of Shan Hai Jing, place attractiveness, place familiarity, and educational tourism to mountain destinations. Except for the control variables, participants' responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (strongly agree 1, to 5 strongly disagree). A five-item scale was employed in this research to assess the place attractiveness of Islam et al. (2017). To measure educational tourism to mountain destinations a nine-item scale has been used, which is adapted from the study of Alipour, Fatemi, and Malazizi (2020). A four items scale of (Xue, Zhou, Majeed, Chen, & Zhou, 2022) was used to collect data on the knowledge of Shan Hai Jing, while for place familiarity a three-item scale from the study of (Xue et al., 2022) was adopted.

Results

Statistical Procedure and Data Screening

To collect data for this quantitative investigation on the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations, paper-pencil questionnaires were administered to college and university students in the Chinese cities of Beijing and Shanghai. A non-probability sampling approach was used due to the difficulty in obtaining information on tourism destinations. The inclusion criteria for participants were being a college or university student in Beijing or Shanghai, and exclusion criteria included respondents who did not provide informed consent or who provided incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires. Respondents were not compensated for their participation in the study, and the participation was voluntary. Of the 312 questionnaires collected, three were excluded as they were deemed unsuitable. The final sample size was 309, with 178 men (57.60%) and 151 women (42.39%) providing accurate responses. The response rate was 87.88%. Furthermore, Harman's single factor with a single factor for common method bias was applied to the CBM data. A factor analysis is performed using this approach, which integrates all of the components. If the first component explains more than half of the overall variance, the data has a CBM issue. The factor analysis findings suggest that the first component accounts for just 34.52% of the total variation [less than 50%] (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As a result, there was no need to be concerned about common method bias in the data.

Partially Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed in this work. PLS-SEM is a causal-predictive SEM approach that focuses on creating structural predictions using statistical models (Ringle et al., 2015). The spread, shape, and bias of the population sampling distribution were discovered using 5000 iterations of the Bootstrapping technique (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). For estimating our model, PLS outperforms the classic covariance-based SEM (CBSEM) since it can deal with multivariate normality, measurement level, sample size, model complexity, and uncertain factors. The study's purpose is to develop and evaluate a theoretical model (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012).

Table 1. Loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted

| | Item | Loading | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability | Average variance extracted |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Educational Tourism to Mountain | ETMD2 | 0.836 | 0.920 | 0.935 | 0.647 |
| | ETMD3 | 0.851 | | | |
| | ETMD4 | 0.667 | | | |

| | Item | Loading | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability | Average variance extracted |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Destinations | ETMD5 | 0.667 | | | |
| | ETMD6 | 0.846 | | | |
| | ETMD7 | 0.854 | | | |
| | ETMD8 | 0.808 | | | |
| | ETMD9 | 0.873 | | | |
| Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing | KSH1 | 0.813 | 0.832 | 0.888 | 0.664 |
| | KSH2 | 0.825 | | | |
| | KSH3 | 0.812 | | | |
| | KSH4 | 0.810 | | | |
| Place Attractiveness | PA1 | 0.873 | 0.881 | 0.913 | 0.679 |
| | PA2 | 0.867 | | | |
| | PA3 | 0.821 | | | |
| | PA4 | 0.830 | | | |
| | PA5 | 0.718 | | | |
| Place Familiarity | PF1 | 0.814 | 0.797 | 0.881 | 0.711 |
| | PF2 | 0.861 | | | |
| | PF3 | 0.854 | | | |

This study also considers the convergent validity requirements. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to determine the efficacy of the criteria (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Thiele, 2017). In Table 1, Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.920 to 0.797. Furthermore, all variables in this study showed high fitness, indicating that the variables in this measurement method had high convergent validity. For the variables in this study, the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values range from 0.881 to 0.935 and 0.647 to 0.711, respectively. Because when the square root of the extracted average variance (AVE) is greater than the values of other coefficients connected to the correlation coefficients of this dimension, discriminant validity can be demonstrated. The findings show that no other coefficient in the same column of the correlation coefficient table has a square root greater than the average variance discovered, which is greater than the absolute value of any other coefficient. This demonstrates the dependability and validity of the research. Figure 2 demonstrates the structural model of this study. The HTMT method was used to discover the correlation, and the results are shown in Table 2.

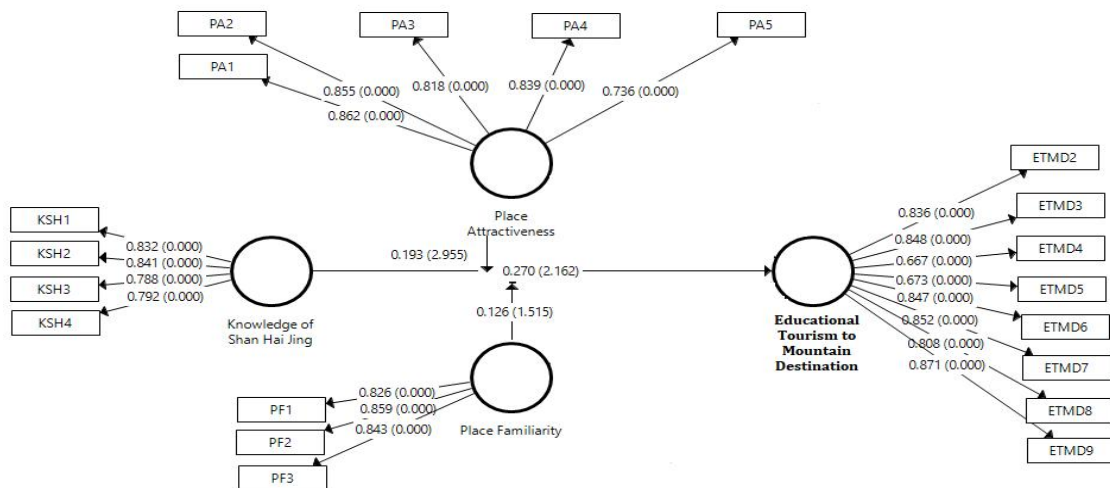


Figure 2. Structural Model

Table 2. HTMT Discriminant Validity

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations | | | | |
| Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing | 0.558 | | | |
| Place Attractiveness | 0.221 | 0.329 | | |
| Place Familiarity | 0.465 | 0.477 | 0.390 | |

The model fitness results for the analysis of Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations are as follows: Q²predict = 0.251, RMSE = 0.079, MAE = 0.395, R-square = 0.295. The Q²predict value indicates the predictive relevance of the model, and a value of 0.251 indicates that the model has moderate predictive relevance. The RMSE value represents the average difference between the predicted values and actual values, with a value of 0.079 indicating that the model's predictions are reasonably accurate. The MAE value represents the average absolute difference between the predicted values and actual values, with a value of 0.395 indicating that the model's predictions are in acceptable range. Finally, the R-square value represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (educational tourism to mountain destinations) explained by the independent variables (knowledge of Shan Hai Jing, place attractiveness, and place familiarity), with a value of 0.295 indicating that the model explains a good amount of the variance in educational tourism to mountain destinations (Table 3).

Table 3. Model Fit Predictive Relevance of Model

| | Q²predict | RMSE | MAE | R-square |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations | 0.251 | 0.079 | 0.395 | 0.295 |

Path Coefficients Results

The path analysis results for the study indicate that knowledge of Shan Hai Jing has a significant positive effect on educational tourism to mountain destinations (t = 2.126, p = 0.017). Moreover, place attractiveness moderates the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations, with a significant positive effect (t = 3.020, p = 0.001). In contrast, the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations is not significantly moderated by place familiarity (t = 1.484, p = 0.069). Overall, the results suggest that knowledge of Shan Hai Jing can influence educational tourism to mountain destinations, and that destination marketers and managers should consider promoting the cultural and historical significance of mountain destinations to attract tourists.

To determine how much moderating effect "place attractiveness" and "place familiarity" have in structural models, the bootstrapping method was used. Table 4 demonstrates that the findings support the hypothesis that place attractiveness significantly moderates the relationship of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations, whereas place familiarity has no moderating effect on the path of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations relationship. It demonstrates the significance of the structural model's moderating effect setting in establishing a meaningful link between the knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations.

Table 4. SEM Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

| | Original Sample | Standard Deviation | t-statistics | p-values |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing -> Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations | 0.270 | 0.127 | 2.126 | 0.017 |
| Place Attractiveness * Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing -> Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations | 0.193 | 0.064 | 3.020 | 0.001 |
| Place Familiarity * Knowledge of Shan Hai Jing -> Educational Tourism to Mountain Destinations | 0.126 | 0.085 | 1.484 | 0.069 |

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations, as well as the moderating roles of place familiarity and attractiveness. The results showed that the knowledge of Shan Hai Jing significantly influenced educational tourism to mountain destinations, supporting H1. This suggests that tourists who are knowledgeable about Shan Hai Jing are more likely to visit mountain destinations for educational purposes.

Moreover, H2 was also supported as the results indicated that place attractiveness significantly moderated the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations. This suggests that tourists who are knowledgeable about Shan Hai Jing and perceive the mountain destinations as attractive are more likely to engage in educational tourism.

However, H3 was not supported, indicating that place familiarity does not play a significant role in moderating the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations. This suggests that tourists do not necessarily need to be familiar with the destination to be motivated to visit it for educational purposes.

Overall, the present study highlights the importance of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and place attractiveness in promoting educational tourism to mountain destinations. These findings have practical implications for destination marketers and managers who can use the knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and the attractiveness of the destination to promote educational tourism. For example, marketing campaigns can be designed to educate tourists about Shan Hai Jing and the destination's unique features to attract educational tourists.

Moreover, the present study contributes to the existing literature on educational tourism by identifying the factors that influence tourists' decisions to visit mountain destinations for educational purposes. This information can be used to design educational programs and activities that cater to the needs and interests of educational tourists.

However, the present study has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the study used a convenience sampling approach, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should use more representative samples to enhance the external validity of the findings. Second, the study focused only on the Chinese cities of Beijing and Shanghai. Future studies should include a more diverse sample from other regions to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the study only focused on the influence of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and place familiarity and attractiveness on educational tourism to mountain destinations. Future research should investigate other factors that may influence educational tourism, such as cultural factors and personal characteristics of tourists.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between knowledge of the Classic of Mountains and Seas, or Shan Hai Jing, and educational tourism to mountain destinations, while considering the critical role of place familiarity and attractiveness in this relationship. The study collected data from 309 students in the Chinese cities of Beijing and Shanghai and used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for analysis. The hypotheses were tested, and the results showed that knowledge of Shan Hai Jing significantly affects educational tourism to mountain destinations (H1: supported). The study also found that place attractiveness significantly moderates the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations (H2: supported). However, the results showed that place familiarity did not significantly moderate the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing and educational tourism to mountain destinations (H3: rejected). The findings of this study provide insights into the factors that influence educational tourism to mountain destinations, which can be helpful for destination marketers and managers to design effective tourism promotion strategies and improve the competitiveness of mountain destinations.

Implications

Several implications for practice and management may be inferred from the findings. Educational tourism occurs within the framework of a community's social, political, and environmental sectors. Residents' quality of life in the settings of commerce, urban infrastructure, pleasure, and leisure activities that generate places for locals to interact is the most evident social impact, which is also the result of economic gains. This is due to the correlation between the quality of life of the inhabitants and the quality of life of the residents. The presence of educational tourists from a variety of nations has facilitated cross-cultural exchanges that have widened the perspectives of locals beyond the confines of their relatively tiny island. Residents have also developed a sense of communal pride as a result of the presence of edu-tourists because of their role as hosts to foreign students. However, the destination's administrators should also be mindful of the negative social consequences that might result from the presence of a big number of fellow students who dwell there for the course of their academic endeavors. These negative societal consequences include illicit drug usage, gambling, prostitution, disorderly conduct, and criminal activities. The quality of institutions, the expansion of the operations of non-governmental organizations, and shifts in political beliefs are all indicators of the political consequences of educational tourism. If tourism is seen as a social force, then it has the potential to foster a feeling of international understanding and collaboration, both of which may contribute to increased levels of peace.

On the other hand, this particular facet may be suggested as a subject for research in the future. It is possible that the long-term aims of a destination may suffer if local citizens are excluded from the development of sustainable educational tourism. Residents should play an essential part in tourist planning, destination management, and educational tourism to mountain destinations since these three aspects of tourism management are interconnected. The findings of this study provide useful insight for university education and national tourism organizations on Edu tourism for sustainable development. The results show that these organizations should not be oblivious to the detrimental social and ecological effects of this sort of tourism, but rather stay vigilant to its positive economic effects. The social, political, and environmental realms of a community are the settings for educational tourism, just as they are for any other industry. The most evident social aspect is the enhancement of the citizens' quality of life, a consequence of the good economic impact. This enhancement may be assessed by the availability of retail, urban infrastructure, entertainment, and leisure activities, all of which create environments where residents can engage. Residents' perspectives have been enlarged as a result of the intercultural exchanges that have been sparked by the presence of edu-tourists from nations other than the one on which they live. Residents' feelings of communal pride over their city's ability to accommodate foreign students have been bolstered by the presence of edu-tourists. However, the destination's administrators should also be mindful of the possibly negative social consequences that might result from the presence of a big number of college students who dwell there for the course of their studies. These consequences may include drug usage, gambling, prostitution, disorderly conduct, and criminal action. The quality of institutions, the expansion of the operations of non-governmental organizations, and shifts in political beliefs are all indicators of the political consequences of educational tourism. When tourism is considered a social force, it has the potential to foster a feeling of worldwide understanding.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Despite the significant findings in this study, there are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the sample only included college and university students from two cities in China, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations or regions. Additionally, the study used self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study only examined the direct and moderating effects of knowledge of Shan Hai Jing, place attractiveness, and familiarity on educational tourism to mountain destinations, without considering other potential factors that may influence the relationship.

Based on the limitations of this study, there are several future directions that could be pursued to further investigate the relationship between knowledge of Shan Hai Jing, place

attractiveness, familiarity, and educational tourism to mountain destinations. Firstly, future studies could consider a more diverse sample that includes different age groups and cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, future research could employ different methods of data collection, such as observations or experiments, to validate the self-reported findings. Thirdly, future research could consider other potential factors that may influence the relationship, such as motivation, travel purpose, and accessibility. Finally, future studies could examine the influence of other cultural heritage on educational tourism, such as literature, art, and religion, to broaden the scope of the investigation.

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