



Analyzing Consumer Behavior And Decision-Making Patterns In Digital Travel Platforms: A Comparative Study Of Service Integration And User Preferences

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ABSTRACT

During the pandemic, there was a continuous drop in booking volume FD revenue of airlines and OTAs globally as travel restrictions were put in place. As personal and financial circumstances changed, some consumers retrieved their travel products and fully chose refunds. However, there was a short-lived boom of recovered booking volumes in airlines and OTAs within the third quarter and a thread of recovery for the large intercontinental markets from the fourth quarter of 2020 onward. Such market changes are strongly stock-market driven rather than actual performance-driven due to mass vaccination, rebounding domestic travel accessibility, and the formulations of worldwide travel bubbles throughout 2021. There is a lack of thorough, comprehensive, and continuous rendering of macro-level understanding concerning such phenomena in a quantifiable manner. Hence, this research attempts to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the stock market reactions to the recovering travel industry in different domains of airlines, online travel agents, and countries in terms of sentiment expressions and trends.

Last but not least, amidst the relentless competition from OTAs, airlines' product offers have shifted from almost pure traditional freight tickets to the considerable cross-selling of travel ancillary products with significance on how well non-flight products could supplement their revenue and buffer the loss of crashed passenger revenues.

Keywords: Travel platforms, decision-making, consumer behavior, Consumer Behavior, Decision-Making Patterns, Digital Travel Platforms, Service Integration, User Preferences, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), User Experience (UX), Platform Comparison, Travel Technology Adoption, Personalization in Travel Services.

1. Introduction

Traveling is a meaningful moment in people's lives to release work pressure, find inspiration, and experience ethnic culture and customs. With the improvement of disposable income, the tourism economy is growing rapidly in developing countries, and the diversified and enlarged consumption demand makes the travel behavior complex and changeable. The videotape on the travel, comments of bloggers, and informal interaction of multimodal travel mode have been widely adopted. The views on peer-generated social media information are generally consistent with the opinions posted by the platform user community. It follows that users posted and followed the same type of information and thus formed the community which tends to interact with each other. The rapid growth of video sharing platforms and Web3.0 not only changed the way and rules of tourism decision evolution but also challenged the information relevance recommendation algorithm model. The ability

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of users who have an impact on the video, comment, and poster to lead travel decision-making behaviors to produce a significant shift in travel behaviors is studied. The three-level layered information systems of the selection of a group of travel video influences are proposed, and the vibrant emergence skills of travel video selection pattern systems are analyzed under different mechanisms. The data set composed of comment information of tourism videos with a travel goal, video information assisting influencer information with travel destinations, and influencer information on poster time, floral style, and height of video rebutting texts is projected.

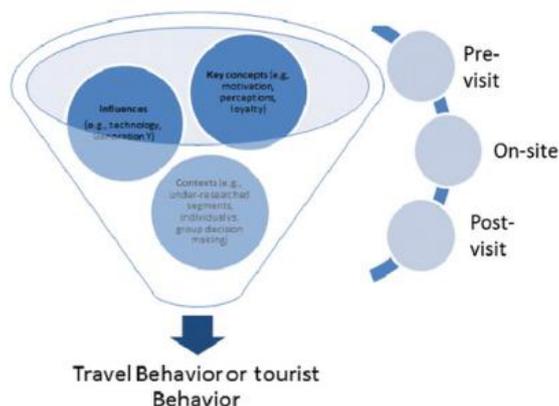


Fig 1: Consumer behaviour in tourism

1.1. Background and Significance

In the 21st century, with the rapid development of various Internet technology applications, the economic, social and cultural activities of people have fully entered the Internet space. The Internet embeds a series of normative mechanisms into human life and forms a new social context, which reconstructs the social relationships and social life world of human beings. The networking of daily activities is breaking away from their original physical space and being aggregated in the network space. As the network space is an emerging P2P communication mode that is non-linear, non-hierarchical, decentralized, dynamic, global and sustainable, a new media environment relatively different from the traditional media is formed. Therefore, an introduction to the media ecosystem and social ecology is necessary, as it is currently an important trend in mass communication research and the communication industry; as well as a popular topic among general public and academia.

Understanding consumer behavior is of the utmost importance for players in the travel industry, as it can help identify the travel planning process relevant to online product marketing strategies. Understanding consumer behavior has gained increased attention from online travel platforms worldwide because consumer behavior is crucial for the survival of these inescapably competitive platforms. Exploring how human behaviors influence the online product marketing strategies employed by these platforms is an important issue, though related research is still nascent. Given that the increased competition has become a challenge for these platforms, further exploration of the dynamics of consumer behavior in these platforms is necessary for the sake of the healthy and sustainable growth of this industry.

Equ 1: Regression Model for User Engagement

- Y_i : Engagement level (e.g., time spent, clicks, bookings)
- I_i : Service integration score
- R_i : Review score or sentiment
- D_i : Demographic variables (age, income, etc.)
- S_i : Platform-specific features (UX/UI, mobile app availability)
- η_i : Error term

$$Y_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 I_i + \gamma_2 R_i + \gamma_3 D_i + \gamma_4 S_i + \eta_i$$

2. Literature Review

Tourism consumer behavior has always attracted attention, and scholars at home and abroad have conducted a lot of research. However, existing research results usually lack an objective and comprehensive understanding of the behavioral characteristics and rules of tourists. To this end, the study relies on the rich and diverse user-generated content (UGC) data and analyzes the behavior characteristics of tourists from an overall perspective. In addition, using a multi-field perspective, exploratory deconstruction research is carried out on tourism consumer behavior.

This study uses online user-generated content (UGC) data extracts related to the researched tourism products from social media platforms, travel review websites, and etc.. Depending on the characteristics and contents of online UGC, this study analyzes the characteristics of tourism consumer behavior from the perspective of tourism motivation, decision-making, consumption preference, destination image perception, and satisfaction, so as to deepen the understanding of consumer behavior in the tourism field. First, the online UGC data is collected, including various tourism products, to analyze their design ideas, performances, tourist needs, benefits, and country of origin. Second, using programming language and natural language processing methods, the analyzed data is processed, including text cleaning, identity recognition, sentiment analysis, and text topic clustering. Third, topic cloud maps and topic correlation maps are drawn to present the results visually.

Aiming at the goal of achieving a comprehensive understanding of tourists' behavior characteristics, one of the focuses of this study is to analyze how tourists utilize online UGC, including travel information being queried and topics being focused on before and during the tourism process. Based on the comprehensive text/topic cloud map identification, the key topics of tourism decision-making behavior analysis can be acquired as follows.

2.1. Consumer Behavior Theories

Consumer behavior theories are an important aspect of consumer behavior research, and some classic theoretical models fundamentally influence the research framework of consumer behavior. Previous travel consumer behavior studies examined traditional theories, which provided a basis for research framework selection. Ticket purchasing based on travel planning is an important consumption behavior of travel consumers, and consumer behavior decision-making has received great attention from scholars.

Travel consumption behavior is defined as the behavior of desire, persuasion and judgment of travel consumers for purchasing travel products. In the process of travel consumption behavior, consumers show different behavioral features, which include need chain influence, stimulus environment influence, experience memory, external motivation and route information dimension. Consumer behavior is primarily individual and consequently different tourists may exhibit different behavior in the same environment. Individual differences extensively influence external and internal factors and ultimately emphasize distinct behavior. Thus the research of consumer behavior has to account for various individual differences such as demographics, travel experience, purpose of travel, socio-economic, different cultural context and applied psychology.

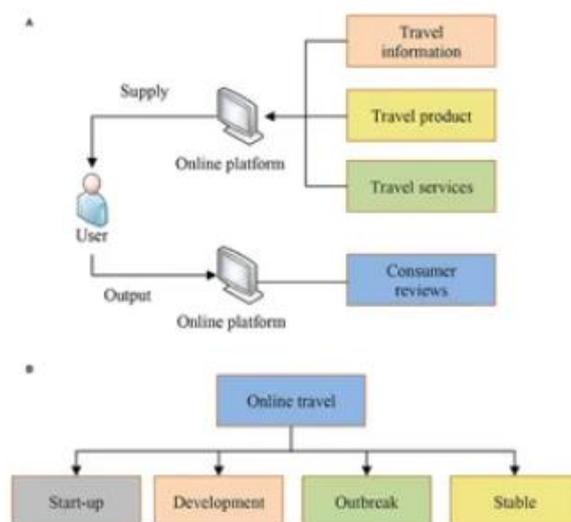


Fig 2: Consumer Behavior Theories

2.2. Digital Platforms in Travel Industry

The travel industry includes local, domestic, and international tourism. It is divided into four segments: leisure, business, adventure, and ecotourism. In recent years, the development of digital platforms has increased the proportion of online booking. Rapid developments in AI, big data, and cloud computing as well as the COVID-19 pandemic-led global quarantine have further driven the rise of online travel agencies. Since the advent of the internet era, online travel platforms have gathered a large number of tourism resources, allowing users to book online travel services anytime and anywhere.

The rapid growth of the travel economy has made the tourism industry one of the most popular and promising industries. The Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is a tool for collecting, analyzing, and presenting information about the economic impact of tourism, the interaction between tourism and the economy as a whole, and the contribution of its subsectors and supporting industries. Online booking and consuming tourism products in advance have become a trend. With the integration of mobility, the proportion of consumers' booking travel services through mobile devices has increased significantly, prompting travel service providers to respond accordingly.

Digital travel platforms have taken on a pivotal role in the digital ecosystem of travel by integrating various travel services and WeChat mini-programs. Social networks make it easier and more enjoyable to share travel experiences. By accessing digital travel platforms, consumers can co-create and share travel itineraries with friends. Therefore, it is important to analyze how consumers search for information, book travel services, and make decisions on digital travel platforms. Travel planning involves recognition and assessment of alternatives, which can be influenced by time constraints and risk perception. Companies concerned about brand loyalty and online purchase intention should take into account factors that can enhance trust in their website, competitiveness, and quality. Middle-aged consumers are increasingly concerned with the price and convenience of services, whereas younger consumers care most about safety.

2.3. Service Integration Models

Consumer needs and behaviors in mobile travel service booking contexts have influenced the design of mobile travel-related services, service integration methods or models, and a wide variety of applications that match heterogeneous tourist contexts. Online travel agencies (OTAs) offer a comprehensive set of travel services in order to fulfil heterogeneous consumer needs. Travel service providers (TSPs) offer a wide variety of travel-related equipment, for example, accommodation, restaurants, scenic spots, and car rental services. Under these circumstances, fulfilling the complete needs of tourists as a specific type of consumer of TSPs is an important strategy to enhance consumers' satisfaction and loyalty towards TSPs brand. An integrated platform for travel service has been adopted in the travel service market. It allows consumers to book a full set of travel-related services in one platform. This platform is called a 'one stop shop'. Service integration in the context of mobile travel services refers to the effort exerted by travel service providers to make mobile applications more integrated in order to facilitate consumers' mobile travel service seeking and booking.

Integration breadth is designed by clustering different types of mobile services together in order to strengthen their unity; integration depth is designed by integrating two or more types of mobile services to a more unified one to enhance information cooperation; and integration width is designed by incorporating other types of mobile services together in order to enhance the abundance of mobile services. In the context of mobile travel services, evidence of the degree of their integration is also needed to account for niche markets like outbound and domestic mobile travel services. According to research on mobile computing and service design, three alternative service integration methods were proposed along with the degree of service integration: Sewed-up service integration method, aggregated service integration method, and unified service integration method.

3. Research Methodology

The data source of this paper is the online travel notes text collected, and the time span is from January 1, 2011 to January 1, 2022. In this research, 443164 data pages are collected, and finally, 75087 valid travel notes with no nulls and duplications are obtained after the text pre-processing including completion of useful information and removal of invalid data. In order to facilitate the analysis of the research object, high-frequency words are extracted to remove stop words including punctuation marks, auxiliary verbs, numerals, symbols, and conjunctions. The indicator variable is used to detect the time and spatial change of concern in travel needs. The second is to calculate the frequency of high-frequency keyword appearances with the frequency analysis method. One of the new fronts in tourism consumer behavior research is the consideration of a different data

source: user-generated content data on social media platforms. An online search for travel information, purchase and evaluation of travel products, and sharing travel experiences have become one of the important behavioral characteristics of tourists. UGC data with other characteristics have also become one of the important data sources for tourism behavior research. In recent years, tourism consumer behavior researchers have turned their attention to UGC data on social media platforms and explored the characteristics of destination image perception, tourist satisfaction, tourism decision-making, tourism experience, and consumption preference. The consumptions in this research refer to the aspect of UGCs, and it aims to analyze the overall understanding of tourism consumer behavior from online travel notes. In the process of tourism consumption, tourists seek information for tourism decisions and product purchases, actively experience the consumption process, evaluate products, and share experiences through word-of-mouth.

Equ 2: Utility Function (Consumer Preference Modeling)

$$U_{ij} = \beta_1 P_{ij} + \beta_2 T_{ij} + \beta_3 Q_{ij} + \beta_4 I_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

- U_{ij} : Utility of consumer i for platform j
- P_{ij} : Price of the selected service on platform j
- T_{ij} : Travel time or effort involved
- Q_{ij} : Perceived quality (e.g., user rating, review scores)
- I_{ij} : Service integration level (e.g., bundling of hotel + flight)
- ϵ_{ij} : Random error term capturing unobserved factors
- β_k : Coefficients representing consumer sensitivity to each factor

3.1. Research Design

Conceptually, the research framework is divided into a three-stage model, four models on the motivation, decisions, preferences, perception, and feelings of travel behavior, and five models of the natural language processing methods. The tourist behavior analysis using data mining technology has realized an overall analysis of tourism behavior and filled the research gap of travel consumer behavior from a holistic perspective. Meanwhile, various detailed models have also provided new methodological tools for further tourism behavior research using other forms of UGC data. Empirically, this study crawled UGC travel notes as text data and used NLP methods such as text segmentation, emoticon feature extraction, TF-IDF value calculation, LDA topic modeling, and a random forest classification model to analyze important behavior characteristics such as travel motivation, decision-making, preference, evaluation, and sharing. This study utilized UGC text data from the travel notes to obtain description analysis of travel motivation, decision-making, and evaluation content, detailed analysis of the types of travel preferences, and feelings mapped by sentiment classification model, which systematically analyzed the behaviors, features, and types of tourism consumption behavior. The research findings initially revealed differences in the motivation amount and means as well as travel date and trip role among sexes, differences in travel theme reasons, sources of travel tips, tourism characteristics, and degree of construction difference amongst ages, and differences in tourist satisfaction labeled by objective scores of travel quality, and emotion polarity and travel feeling in post-tourism. The results practically provide references for the design scheme and marketing strategy about tourism product supply, destination management, and travel agency in the tourism industry. Travel notes offer a new data source and supplemental views for the research of tourism consumer behavior, and data mining techniques, such as text mining, provide a new method and tools for the research as well. The well-designed and estimation machine learning methods are highly generalizable, and could be applied to analyze various types of tourism UGC data, such as travel blogs and reviews. Along with the rapid development of the time and technology, the emergence of a big data era makes text big data an increasingly important factor in understanding human behavior.

3.2. Data Collection Techniques

The most direct approach to investigate C2B consumer behavior is data collection by survey, which is an effective way to measure travelers C2B behavior under various backgrounds and contexts. Accordingly, the questionnaire included four parts: demographic information, C2B behavior description, emotion+self-efficacy, and behavior perception + trust. The first section was clicked by all respondents while questions in other three sections were displayed contingent upon respondents' answer in C2B behavior description. The questionnaire was opted to be distributed to famous travel blogs since exploration and usage of social media are expected to be correlated across different platforms and places. All travelers were expressly invited to take the survey

voluntarily; no remuneration was offered. On completion, they were informed about the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty and the confidentiality of their data in the publication. Facial coding method, PLS-SEM-based online experiments, and mixed emotions experiments are conducted to verify whether the created price and experience targets are comparable cross C2B and C2A in attribution style, test whether the key results and causal process will be stable dependent on solving methods, and examine whether the travel and hotel services provided by the platform will promote perceived consumption effectiveness of C2B. In addition to genetic travel diaries, the other two tasks contain brief written descriptions and C2B attack screenshots provided by the platform. The size of the segmentation frame and map cannot be manipulated, which may affect the selection of particular candidates and comparative presentation across maps. These tasks are designed to last from 5 to 10 min and replies detailed instructions to complete each task; great attention in decision effort would be needed to avoid naïve picture selection. During each task, the monitor screen will be occluded and there are photos showing example frames and maps in decisionalyzer to avoid non-correspondence between conveyance and proposed maps.

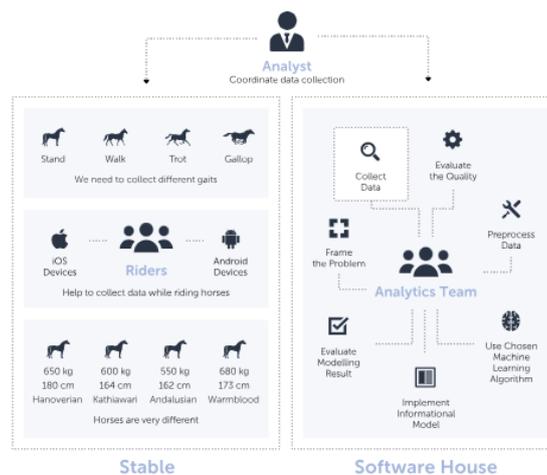


Fig 3: Data Collection Process

3.3. Sample Selection

The sample data used in this research are the "Travel Reviews" of the 19th China Graduate Tourism and Leisure Culture Forum at Xiamen University. A total of 221 travel reviews were collected. According to the requirements of data annotation, the data was independently annotated by two researchers in the same profession and through discussion. The data is then pre-processed, including eliminating inappropriate sentence structure and overlapping sentences, correcting typos, and converting Traditional Chinese into Simplified Chinese. The final sample data consist of 198 travel reviews, all of which have complete structure and content and comply with the manual tagging specification. Before the experiment, all the reviews are converted into the universally accepted TXT format and uniform encoding. In addition, there is a bounding box around the travel reviews, so during the segmentation process, attention is paid to whether the overlapping areas of the bounding box filter the travel reviews from being segmented.

The study attempts to conduct a theme analysis of tourists' travel reviews and extract tourist groups with similar behavioral characteristics through unsupervised grouping. The results of topic extraction and identification can be used to better understand the behavioral characteristics of tourists in specific fields. A theme extraction tool is chosen; it performs well in both file compatibility and automatic topic extraction measurement and has been widely used in many applied scenarios, such as news categorization, topic model evaluation, and sentiment analysis on social reviews. Compared with other topic extraction tools, this tool does not require conducting dependency analysis with part-of-speech data; it can conduct sentence segmentation and word processing directly based on TEXT files. Before extracting themes, the parameters need to be set, including retaining stop words, word frequency distribution, and setting up the model.

The hyperparameter LDA is selected for topic extraction; regarding the number of topics, the number of topics for theme extraction is preliminarily selected at four levels by manual setting: 3, 5, 7, and 9. In addition to this hyperparameter, the other parameters of the model remain unchanged. Considering that different degrees of randomization have a significant impact on the theme extraction results, both the number of iterations and the random seed are set inside the extraction tool, ensuring fairness in model training and comparisons. After

model extraction is completed, the themes are manually classified. Taking grouping model 9 as an example, the topics obtained are summarized. The main themes here refer to the common evaluation models automatically extracted. The summaries indicate that the tourist reviews in the corresponding cluster mainly cover specific themes.

4. Service Integration in Digital Travel Platforms

In recent years, several authoritative travel companies have established digital travel platforms to provide travel products (including transportation, accommodation, and other travel services) and travel-related products (such as travel guides and insurance) for consumers. During the coronavirus pandemic, the travel industry underwent a major adjustment, and the trend of digitalization and platformization accelerated. The effective handling of internal operational management and external environmental changes has become an important guarantee for the survival and development of digital travel platforms. Research on comparative efficiency promoting factors points to the importance of service integration as its representative.

Service integration refers to the fact that various services are integrated on the same platform by aggregating service resources, so that consumers can conveniently achieve one-stop and comprehensive services. Because of the gradual realization of the transportation and accommodation service integration, the further development of digital travel platforms relies on the exploration of other service integration. Currently, there is still a lack of literature studying the broadening of digital travel platforms focusing on service offering. More broadly, the comparison between service integration and comparative efficiency is often considered at the macro level, ignoring the micro-decision making behaviors of digital travel platforms. Specifically, under the service integration scenario, the behaviors of platforms in addressing consumer behavior and preference heterogeneity involved in the comparative efficiency promoting factors remain unaddressed.

Service integration has been regarded as a double-edged sword because of its inevitable sacrifice of service specialization. Exploring the comparison between original and integrated models of service integration in two-sided markets, a two-stage game model was built, in which a service platform first decides whether to adopt service integration or not before consumer visits. A new model of comparative efficiency between service integration and specialization of digital travel platforms offering broad services in one segment was theorized within a consumer asymmetry setting of service integration scalability.

A crucial and previously under-explored question whether consumers exhibit behavioral differences to integrate travel services in digital travel platforms is addressed in this research. Such understanding will contribute to a broader understanding of the relevance of service integration on competition between travel platforms.

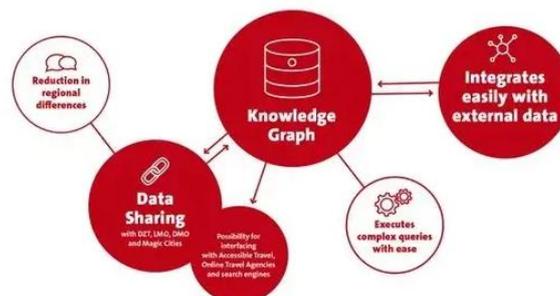


Fig 4: Service Integration in Digital Travel Platforms

4.1. Definition and Importance

Consumer Behavior refers to the buying behavior of final consumers, that is, individuals or households, who buy goods and services for personal consumption. It can be defined as the behavior of a person, group of people, or organization in identifying needs, evaluating alternatives and making purchases. Buyer Behavior is also regarded as an important area of study in marketing as it contributes to the solution of a number of important marketing problems. Institutions engaged in tourism and travel marketing are interested in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the travel-buying behavior of their customers. The travel-buying behavior of customers has been studied in areas such as motivations for travel, social and demographic differences in travel, types of travel, destination evaluation and selection, selection of travel mode and travel agency, and travel purchasing. Understanding customer travel-buying behavior, especially that of

mature customers, provides an effective means of better tailoring tourism products, services and marketing strategies to meet the increasing home tourism demands of this customer segment.

In developed countries as well as in China, domestic tourism in the form of travel by adults over the age of 55 has become a fast and growing segment of the travel market. Many government authorities and travel industry sectors are paying close attention to this segment of the travel market. The study of internet travel buying behavior is oriented toward Chinese users of online travel e-commerce trading platforms. Therefore, this study focuses on the Chinese online travel market. The perspectives, psychographic, environmental and demographic, are typically employed to study customer travel-buying behavior. These three perspectives are typically studied separately. The multi-perspectives and adaptive study of customer travel-buying behavior is new. With the rapid development of online travel services, an increasing number of travel-seeking customers are using the internet for a wide variety of travel information, e-travel planning in travel decision-making, e-purchasing of travel products and services, on-line travel comments and complaints. The study of online travel buying behavior has drawn attention from researchers in respect to user group characteristics, environmental resources, or context determinants of online-travel-buying behavior for appropriate efforts and means to tap on line service capabilities in providing users with more successful and productive online travel use.

Equ 3: A/B Testing / Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Model

$$Y_{it} = \delta_0 + \delta_1 \text{Post}_t + \delta_2 \text{Treated}_i + \delta_3 (\text{Post}_t \times \text{Treated}_i) + \mu_{it}$$

- Measures the effect of a new feature on book
- δ_3 : Main coefficient of interest (effect of service)

4.2. Types of Service Integration

The digital traveltainment ecosystem is a supply-value chain where information, products and services, and payment flows can be integrated through potential intermediation services. Different types of intermediaries can operate platforms, through gated or open-system interfaces, and provide services based on the access revenue model or the recommendation one. In order to classify the systemic integrations of a platform, the analysis needs to take into account techniques that belong to different fields of research and studies. The subsequent classification reflects the possible integration of the represented services along the supply-value chain.

Next, the “pure” integrations are presented that apply to upstream or downstream services. The separate analysis of the current digital traveltainment platforms has indicated that nearly all of them can be placed either on the most upstream or on the most downstream service of the classification system. This means that many digital traveltainment platforms can be found on digital spaces, but there are only a few of them that try to cover the widest portion of the supply-value chain. These types of monitoring platforms and intermediation services can bring the greatest amount of benefits to both the consumers and the suppliers of the traveltainment services because they can easily control if the traveltainment services are valid and can meet the consumers’ needs and expectations.

The hybrid integrations consist of a combination of integrations belonging to different sides of the supply-value chain, but they always leave at least one side free from integrations. Most of the digital traveltainment website types can be placed in this category. Furthermore, there are only a few of them that can be classified as more serious and transparent types of intermediaries, as many of them are ranked rather to the consumer side.

4.3. Impact on Consumer Experience

With the advent of the Internet and mobile Internet, online travel platforms have gradually replaced traditional travel agencies and become the main development channel for tourism and the tourism economy. In addition, with the development of the status of regional units in China, the internet and online products have become increasingly important for consumers, especially for product recommendations. Analyzing the consumers of online travel platforms and their consumption behavior has become an indispensable part of the research on the impact of tourism platforms and tourism economy. The user group and consumption proportion of online travel products on online travel platforms are analyzed. By collecting data from Xiaohongshu, social dynamics and content are studied, and a user recommendation mechanism is established to assist in package product recommendation and travel planning. With the help of Xiaohongshu data, a crawler is established in Python

based on the research needs of the content recommendation model. The process includes data acquisition, data cleaning, and data storage into Mysql, which is easy for later read and analysis.

According to the research methods, indicators of user attributes, consumption basis, and platform are put forward. The user attributes include age, gender, and registered location. The consumption basis contains comments and the main types of services available on the platform. The platform includes Ctrip, Fliggy, TravelGo, and Qunar. The drawing methods are also given. After being drawn, histograms, multi-bar graphs, and pie charts are analyzed in detail. The analysis shows factors that have a significant impact on online travel platforms include comments, the main types of services available on the platform, the platform (special or general), the average price of the products, the average units of products, and the registration date of the users. The majority of comments on these platforms are “very good,” which mostly indicates that the online travel platforms have an important impact on consumers and often provide them with satisfactory products. On average, the most important basis for users to buy online travel products is the comments on the platform, receiving a score of 7.5 (1-10) on average. The mean and variance of the comments are 7.357-7.586 and 0.469-0.545, respectively.

5. User Preferences in Travel Decision-Making

People travel for a myriad of reasons ranging from pleasure and sight-seeing to visiting family or conducting business. Travel for pure entertainment has been the main driving force for the development of the tourism sector worldwide, which constitutes a mega-industry bringing in big profits. Research related to consumer behavior and the decision-making processes behind the consumption of products and services dates back to the 1950s. Academic research within similar domains focusing on travel, travel services or products, and the tourism sector in general is a more recent phenomenon dating back to only the mid-1980s. The early travel/consumer behavior related studies mainly adorned marketing journals but then shifted to more tourism or travel specific journals. Travel-related consumption behavior studies have utilized a variety of theoretical concepts, such as motivation and attitudes, as the foundation upon which various formal models have been built picturing the decision process of travelers.

Research on consumer behavior focuses on the processes involved in choosing which services/products to consume and the factors behind those processes. More than half of the studies attempt to scrutinize these with the decision processes as their focal constructs, such as information seekers, predictors of planning, and so forth. The second largest sub-group adopted the foundation of factors affecting the stages, such as motivations, travel styles and characteristics, or constraints of decision making. Understanding the processes and factors behind the travel experiences/consumption is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, traveling constitutes a service experience characterized with the attributes of being intangibility, inhomogeneity, inseparability and inventiveness. As they cannot fully be experienced until they are actually consumed there is a lot of uncertainty prior to the actual consumption of services. Thus, understanding the decision processes or the stages can suggest means by which marketing strategies might be designed to develop consumers’ better understanding. Tickets, reservations, and tour guides are products/services seldom purchased or engaged prior to consumption by most travelers, which is contrary to the third type of products, such as books and cameras.

They are used with the purpose of not only getting information about the quality of the services, but also to share their own experience and opinions related to these services. The reviews written by other tourists are considered useful. On the other hand, it is difficult for them to process this kind of information and to judge which are the useful ones. Actors involved in the tourism industry have to accept the competition brought to them by the new Internet channels of communication. These sites cause a shift in the competitive landscape of tourism and hospitality business, changing the nature of power relations and the risk and opportunities associated with them.

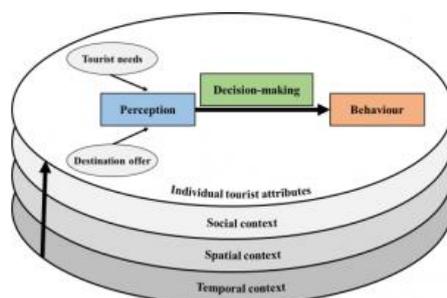


Fig 5: TRAVEL DECISION-MAKING

5.1. Factors Influencing Preferences

Understanding consumer behavior has been rated as the second most investigated topic, following only technology. Consumers are inconsistent in their attitude and investment. They show variability in their judgments and behavior across places, times, products, and even similar situations. The decisions and choices made by them regarding which product/service, brand, price, and timing have a direct impact on industry growth potential. Consumers' preferences are partly influenced by factors that mesh with their personal characteristics. Choices pertaining to individual preferences can be usefully viewed as arising from a dynamic interaction between the contextual and the individual. The purposes of this study are threefold—first to factor analysis and examine underlying factors influencing consumer choices, second is to analyze the impact of these factors along with demographic variables on preferences, and third is to provide segmentations based on preferences, and elaborate marketing programs. From the casual implementation of factor analysis, six factors emerge from 24 statements used in the questionnaire. These factors include: hosting place, base type, price structure, external information, delivery, and on/off circumstances. Along with demographic variables, these factors further explain consumer preferences. These six factors account for an explanation of 90 percent for the total variation of consumer preferences. As a subpart of the consumer generosity towards on-line travel agencies, some demographic characteristics show significance, mostly on education (willingness to pay), age (perceptions on base type), and region (attitude on hosting places). Further, three segments are revealed in the segment analysis. Special recommendations and suggestions are concluded for the first two segments that are of most marketing value in the explorative phase of on-line travel agents development.

5.2. Role of User Reviews

Online reviews have become an important source of information for the general public. At a click of a button consumers are able to look up detailed and trusted information, based on the fact that these are shared by average consumers. 87% of international tourists have used the Internet to plan their own trips. 43% have read reviews made by other tourists. Almost half of the Internet users have mentioned that they actively read and post reviews after completing their experience with certain products and/or services. They choose to read reviews that are written and provided by others in order to have an idea related to that services 'quality. Social media also enables conversations regarding the services offered, putting a constraint on service providers, and incentivizing them to be more responsive and aware of tourists' opinions. These reviews free consumers from their dependency upon service providers and offer, at least to some degree, a more balanced power relation between the two parties. On the other side, platforms that provide tourists' opinions have gained more and more popularity in the last few years. These platforms constitute other main sources of information besides the travel agents.

5.3. Personalization in Travel Platforms

Rising incomes, leisure time and the popularity of the internet have fueled the growth of the travel market in China. The rapid-growing business model for tourism products/services distribution using digital (online) platforms has attracted many start-up companies and umbrella travel portals. Early-stage companies include online travel agency (OTA), travel sharing platform, and local guide platform. The latter are platforms connecting tourists and local residents with the hope of spontaneous tourism. Owing to its openness and low entry threshold, many companies rush to develop platforms for service diffusion. Equipped with clear differentiation of segmentation and competitive advantage, large-scale travel platforms usually dominate the digital travel market with more than 60% share in terms of service categories. Travel portals make it possible to provide one-stop services for booking flights/hotels/vacancies, car rentals, restaurants, tickets, travel insurance and more under a single account. The online travel marketplace is now one of the largest industries in the travel and tourism sector. Digitalization has profoundly influenced the travel behavior and decision-making processes of tourists. User-generated contents (UGCs) of digital travel platforms lead to changes in the information search stage before travel. More importantly, the reviewing systems on these platforms have completely altered the booking behavior and decision-making processes of travelers and altered the hierarchy of influencer groups for choice evaluation. Hence one important question arises: How do these UGCs on digital travel platforms influence the decision-making processes of a user? Among the influencer group, users (the ones who have consumed travel products) mostly affect the decision-making processes of other users based on their reviews. Their reviews mostly contain complete information about service quality, price, preferable range of products, and customer contingencies. A comprehensive discussion about platform types, service types, and

review types helps unveil the influence on products' decision-making from various perspectives. Contingencies, characteristics and consequences of UGCs of the digital travel platform are also elaborated on to help travel product suppliers build a good environment for tourism product dissemination and marketing.

6. Comparative Analysis of Digital Travel Platforms

In the consumption of online travel products, different online travel platforms play an important role. The online travel platform is the main development channel to support the sales of online travel products. All aspects of the tourism economy are influenced by the tourism platform. What factors of the tourism platform have a significant impact on the tourism economy needs to be explored. The online travel platforms CJ TravelGo, Ctrip, Fliggy, Qunar, etc. are the most frequently used travel product trading platforms. Taking Ctrip's online platform as an example, and analyzing the impact of CJ's online travel platform on the tourism economy, compared to the analysis of tourism consumers, more research from the perspective of tourism platforms needs to be done.

The travelers' decision-making and the influencing factors they would tend to use applications to book travel products in various destinations based on their age, gender, tourist categories (individual, group, solo, and business), the travelled destinations (cities), and distances are investigated. The analysis of the comments on this platform is made as per region, type of travel product, and travel years to find out the gaps in the platform services, so that upstream companies can provide better services to sidestep the bad comments on the applications. Thus, by taking the travel platform analysis work, supportive suggestions for the development and design of these platforms are put forward to optimize their potentials of service and better end-rewards.

Based on the perspective of the consumption behavior of tourists, the differences of tourists in group recommendation and individual dissemination are further analyzed. In this section, the functions of the group recommendation module of the online travel platform and its service demand for group travel products are further discussed. The design and optimization of the aggregation function of the group recommendation engine, and how to improve users' satisfaction and loyalty are also examined. User-generated contents published by previous tourists on online travel platforms could have a strong impact on other users' planning and decision-making of tourist destinations in the traditional tourism industry. The types of user-generated contents are taken into account. Moreover, group heterogeneity on the impacts of user-generated contents on social media adoption is annotated, including group size, consensus, cliqueness, and numerical feature capabilities. The suggestions for online travel platforms are provided, regarding the user-generated contents design.

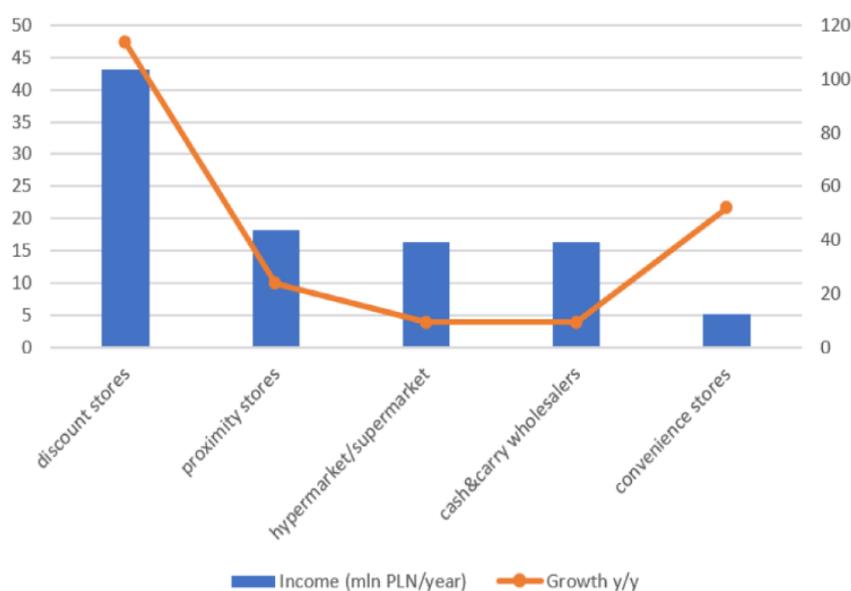


Fig : Analysis of Consumer Behaviour

6.1. Platform A Overview

Platform A is a global leader in online travel services with 200 sites in 41 languages, dedicated to users traveling online. With 391 million monthly unique visitors and annual revenue of \$9 billion, it offers hotel, flight and

travel planning products via mobile and web. However, its vast inventory makes price-sensitive consumers susceptible to the hassle of comparison shopping, booking errors and information overload. This research investigates consumer behavior and decision-making patterns in comparison environments on digital travel platforms using Platform A websites as the research context. This study focuses on traveler benchmarking behavior involving multiple economic and cognitive rationalities.

Consumers demonstrate different levels of engagement and cognitive capabilities when collecting information, with various information search strategies employed toward the same goal. In this study, consumers' search behaviors, focusing only on price and brand, have emerged as the most popular strategies. It means that consumers have less motivation to search extensively on comparison websites when they have low effort expectations. Price-bundled strategy consumers are noticing advantages listed on price-bundled websites. Canadian sites, for example, provide consumers with multiple options to examine bookings. Consumers with this strategy can accurately find the best deal if they continue comparing the best options on multiple platforms. Overall, consumers with high expectations for effort tend to compare bundled options listed on one platform and find deals on platform pricing.

The critical attributes tend to move across Web 2.0 to 3.0 for travelers' international choice behavior. Price, reputation and technical support are identified as the most important factors on Web 2.0 platforms. The main online travel service providers tend to occur as a background knowledge needed on Web 3.0. The information type tends to move online from static content-based newsletters/engines to two-way personalized travel deal alerts in travel/vacation apps.

Satisfaction and word of mouth intention are determined significantly by perceived reputation, follow-up, download and speed. As the confidence of an effective filter is built, satisfaction with information is then significantly affected by perceived usefulness/quality. The perceptions of fit are overall formed into the formation stage of this extended model, while satisfaction is taken as a key motivation to create positive post-performance behavioral outcomes based on satisfaction.

6.2. Platform B Overview

As a cross-platform travel service, TravelB provides users with the ability to search and compare air tickets, hotels, car rentals, scenic spots, travel packages, and other comprehensive travel activities globally. TravelB's rise is due to the focus on precise market positioning, comprehensive overall design and functions, and a simple user interface. The site can be used on both PC and mobile terminals, achieving multimodal and omnichannel. TravelB partners with a variety of different companies to provide travel services in a more complete form. TravelB has an established user appeal and can provide information most suitable for users at different levels, thus increasing retention and the breadth of potential users. By continuously upgrading platform functions, TravelB improves the overall efficiency of early-oriented target users. Compared to travel application suspects, TravelB as a wide user background and can more precisely assist in nomadic services, thus improving user routing efficiency. TravelB greatly reduces time costs for service-oriented users of businesses to arrange travel. Before booking, tourists can assess user review reliability, certainty of travel destination, and honesty of price. Compared to price forecast difficulty, monitoring difficulty, and invasion of other businesses' prices, booking failure excursion window and unintentional user behavior are main concerns of businesses. User tasks assessed are booking a non-stop round-trip flight to New York for five people departing on July 14 and requiring price history data and newsletter alerts. Cities to fly at are carefully selected based on moderate trip time and city attractiveness. Purchases should occur quickly after receiving the news of a ticket drop. Response delays may increase personal costs or miss a good opportunity, so response wait time should be dropped at most 15 minutes. Arrival and return times close to noon are preferable due to flight price and traffic considerations. Commercial concerns are non-stop, budget airline flights. Non-stop flights reduce time loss on board and nighttime arrival troubles. TravelB helps users connect with all airline flight lines, thus fully aware of the market. Detecting suspicion for the use of engines, TravelB adopts detection-embedding strategies, such as slow click speed when swiping or reducing behaviors within a configurable distance range.

6.3. Key Comparisons

This section outlines comparisons of key elements of the research conducted by Guo et al. and Perrucci with this study. Overall, some comparisons may be made in terms of research weaknesses and difficulties. However, comparisons of geographical context and analysis of research method and topic validity will reveal a wide gap between the two studies and this research.

All three studies share similar limitations in terms of breadth of scope, data collection, and selection. For example, the platforms and hotels analyzed in this study could have been more diverse. The sampling process should not have been limited to only one type of platform due to concerns about a narrow scope. Regarding data collection, bot accounts potentially generate score reviews that need to be removed. Even after data collection, spot checks should be conducted on the collected reviews to ensure they make sense and are reasonable. In terms of selection, considering more hotels or other types of accommodations would have resulted in a better understanding of OA and how consumers utilize different OAs. Due to the restrictions above, this study mainly focuses on two types of platforms and one kind of accommodation. This is a major research weakness.

When considering comparisons relating to geographical context, the results may not be directly applied to destinations. First, the locations of the hotels accumulated from platform data would need to be verified. While the study focused only on hotels located in Beijing, China, the hotels included in the research would be more spread out and less relevant to Beijing if the location verification were ignored. Second, the selection of hotels may need to be verified. The hotels selected may have no apparent accommodation features that caused them to stick out in any of the three analyses conducted in this study. Thus, many of the hotels selected may need to be verified. Missing methodology descriptions may result in failure to extrapolate research results. The algorithms involved in triptype designation and typicality evaluation are not presented. In addition, justifications for some methodologies may be absent or need improvement.

7. Conclusion

Tourism is one of the important driving factors of social progress. Traditional travel products are mostly offline products. With the popularity of the Internet, online travel products gradually become the main development channel to support online travel product sales. However, data analysis of the influencing factors of online travel products on the tourism economy is an important part of this work. The original information entities of online travel products include travel comments, platform brands, product information, travel dates, the main types of services, the way of selecting products, and regional distribution. The factors that have a great impact on the analysis of the online travel platform extracted from the online travel products comment text are comments and the main types of services. Users selecting products according to the comments account for the largest proportion, closely followed by users selecting products by the main types of travel services. The way of selecting products according to the main types of service has an impact on the tourism economy, but its impact is relatively small.

The analysis of comments on online travel products indicates that the most important basis for users to buy online travel products is the comments on the platform. The users who buy online travel products according to the comments on the platform account for about 80%. The relatively smaller impact is the main types of services, where users select products according to the main types of service accounted for about 60%. Online travel products allow users to buy tourism comments, mark tourism priority and price information, but the effect is smaller than that of platform comments. As the main participants of online travel product consumption, users also have a great influence on the decision-making of the online travel products. Users' main divergence is regional distribution, age, and gender. Users aged 18–30 consume the most online travel products, while users aged 41–50 and over 50 are the least. In terms of gender consumption, females consume the online travel products most, and males consume the least. In terms of regional distribution, users in the east consume the online travel products the most, while users in the center consume the least.

7.1. Future Trends

The travel industry is one of the most affected industries due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This pandemic has led to a wide number of changes in terms of travel behaviors patterns of individuals. Different segments of society showed varying awareness by patterns which affected the travel industry drastically. This section highlights the background of the research topic and provides the rationale for the research topic. Compared to a pre-pandemic consumer behavior of travel, travel behavioral patterns were transformed to be changed after the pandemic. The point-of-interest type preferences of individuals have also been altered. Booking with the suppliers directly has increased notably due to the general knowledge and availability of information within the suppliers; however, travel agencies feel the pressure from suppliers to act as re-sellers. There is a fear that unaided travel agency website visitations by travelers would be abandoned and that agencies would become pure search engines or distribution channels. The majority of survey respondents do use agencies to search for suppliers,

especially for hotels and package tours. However, few of them book via agencies, indicating a discontent towards the service capability of the agency in discovering service suppliers. It is also suggested that a lack of sufficient knowledge of suppliers is an obstacle in booking directly with suppliers. Therefore, if agents do invest in a knowledge-based service to guide travelers, they are provided with an opportunity to hold onto their clients. Otherwise, agencies would still find it difficult to compete against the great convenience of online booking services.

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