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Road Trip in China: The Mediation Effect of Perceived Value and Tourist Satisfaction on the Relationship between Destination Image and Loyalty

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Abstract: This study aims to test a model linking destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Based on a sample of 300 tourists travelling by car from the World Natural Heritage Site of Tianchi, China, a new model of destination image was explored and data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that perceived value and satisfaction are the direct antecedents of destination loyalty. Above all, perceived value and tourist satisfaction mediate the relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty. Finally, this study discusses the theoretical and management implications to boost the tourism industry in the car trip context.

Keywords: Road trip; Destination image; Perceived value; Tourist satisfaction; Destination loyalty; China

1. Introduction

Automobiles create recreational and leisure opportunities [1]. Owning a car plays a significant role in daily lives [2]. In China, car tourism has increased with society development and has become a key driver of the country's economic development. The number of tourists travelling by car has reached 2.35 billion, accounting for 58.5 % of the total number of domestic tourists in China in 2015. Furthermore, tourists travelling by car are the largest tourist group within the background of the sustainable growth of China's tourism industry according to China's Driving Tourism Development: Analysis and Forecast (2015-2016).

Xinjiang, the western province of China, is equivalent to one-sixth of the total area of the country. Xinjiang is close to Europe, at the heart of Silk Roads, the Routes Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor. The area has abundant natural resources (snow mountains, forest, desert, and meadow) and cultural attractions (ruins, beacon towers, ancient graves) [3]. For example, Tianshan was listed on the World Nature Heritage Site List by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Heritage Centre, in 2013 [4], for the spectacular snow-capped mountains and glacier-capped peaks, beautiful forests and meadows, clear river and lakes, and grand red bed canyons. This confirms that this region possesses vast land resources, crucial location, and unique tourist resources in the world. Therefore, drive tourism is highly developed in this area.

Car trips are becoming increasingly popular. The area offers not only scenic spots and byways, and high-quality roads, but also tourist distribution centers, campgrounds, and service stations. In addition, the slogan of "Xinjiang in Great Beauty, Paradise for Car Trip" has been introduced to establish the destination image. These features suggest that car tour has the most promising growth prospects and potential in the tourism industry.

Current research on car trip has discussed the concept and classification, the behavioral characteristics of tourists, travel routes characteristics, impacts and management of the phenomenon, and tourist satisfaction.

Many studies focused on the relationship among destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty from different perspectives [5, 6]. However, very few studies explain these relationships from a different perspective, specifically focusing on car trip. Therefore, to fill the gap in the existing literature, this study focuses on the relationship among destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty in the drive tourism context. In addition, the mediation effect of perceived value and satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty are tested by targeting tourists travelling by car.

1.1 Destination image

Destination image can be defined as the series of impressions or perceptions of a tourist destination. It is a significant concept that plays an important role in a tourist's decisions. Previous studies have shown that destination image has been a significantly important topic in the field of travel studies, and scholars have tried to develop a conceptual framework for destination image through different methods. According to the study of Echtner and Ritchie, destination image is composed of attribute and holistic aspects [7]. For example, Gallarza and Saura evaluated destination image by using cognitive and affective aspects [8]. However, there was no agreement on the conception of destination image.

Sanz, Blas, and Carvajal-Trujillo showed that destination image was estimated along four dimensions: tourist resources, urban environment, infrastructure and atmosphere of the city, and socioeconomic environment [9]. In addition, Toudert and Bringas-Rábago used three dimensions: tourism resources, urban environment, and infrastructure and atmosphere [10]. According to the tourism system model, transport system is an important component in the functional tourism system model. Accessibility has a great influence on the tourism industry. This study suggests that the main elements considered by tourists travelling by car include tourist resources, accessibility, infrastructure, and travel environment [11].

As universally acknowledged, subjective perception, tourist experience, and destination familiarity are affected by destination image. In turn, destination image will affect tourists in the process of choosing a destination, in their subsequent evaluation, and future visit intentions. Destination image also has a significant impact on perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty [12].

1.2 Perceived value

Perceived value is described as the overall assessment made by tourists on the basis of their comparison between the utilities or benefits and the perceived costs or sacrifices associated with a destination. From the utilitarian perspective, value scales embody both monetary costs [13] and non-monetary costs (such as effort or time) [14]. Duman and Mattila found that perceived quality and monetary value are two main antecedents of perceived value [15]. Chen and Tsai measured perceived value using a three-item scale (money, time, and effort) [16]. Clemes and Brush used a single item for perceived value [17]. Sun and Geng-Qing Chi proposed a two-item scale for perceived value, including functional value and overall value [11].

Perceived value is an important antecedent to satisfaction and loyalty. Some researchers have shown that perceived value influences loyalty both directly and indirectly [18]. The relationship among perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty has been examined by researchers who focused on the relating paths between perceived value and satisfaction [6], and between perceived value and loyalty [19].

1.3 Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as an overall judgment on products and services in a destination, and it is one of the most significant concepts of modern marketing competitiveness. Tourist satisfaction has been extensively researched in the tourism field [20]. There is a wide consensus on the fact that tourists' satisfaction has a crucial influence on tourists' loyalty or future behavioral intentions [21]. For example, satisfied tourists may give positive feedback about the destination, recommend it to relatives and friends, and revisit the same destination in the future. On the contrary, dissatisfied tourists may not recommend the destination to others, and may not return. In addition, dissatisfied tourists may demolish the brand image of a destination, so that its market suffers an adverse impact [22].

In contrast with past studies that included a single item, "overall satisfaction," to analyse the links described above [13], more recent researches used a combination of items [23]. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has looked into the relationships between satisfaction and loyalty in the context of Chinese drive tourism.

1.4 Loyalty

Loyalty is described as a key element to acquire success in marketing and in tourism. Oliver defined loyalty as the highest level of commitment [24]. In the most recent literature, scholars proposed that loyalty is more complex and may include both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty [25].

In the literature on marketing and tourism, tourist loyalty is fully interchangeable with behavioral intentions. Loyalty, or behavioral intention, has been measured by positive word-of-mouth, recommendation to others, and purchase or revisit intention [26].

Therefore, more recent studies focus on the antecedents of loyalty, such as image, value, quality, trust, and satisfaction. For the theoretical framework, three antecedents are chosen as crucial factors in this study, including destination image, perceived value and tourist satisfaction.

According to this theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were proposed in the context of drive tourism:

H1: The higher destination image, the higher perceived value;

H2: The higher destination image, the higher tourist satisfaction;

H3: The higher destination image, the higher tourist loyalty;

H4: The higher perceived value, the higher tourist satisfaction;

H5: The higher perceived value, the higher tourist loyalty;

H6: The higher tourist satisfaction, the higher tourist loyalty;

H7: Perceived value and tourist satisfaction mediate the relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty.
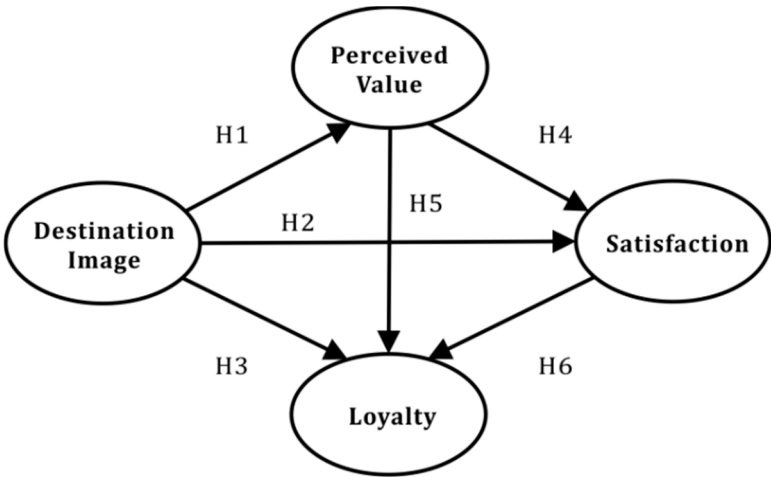
Figure 1. Conceptual model and research hypotheses

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Questionnaire design

A self-administered questionnaire survey was designed to collect empirical data on drive tourism (See **Table 1**). The questionnaire was pre-tested using 89 respondents' information and it has been constantly revised to ensure content validity. In addition, several irrelevant or ambiguous items were cancelled to ensure clarity. The questionnaire consisted of five parts. Part 1 measured the destination image, with 20 items. Part 2 assessed the perceived value using 2 items. Part 3 evaluated the satisfaction measurement, with 3 items. Part 4 dealt, with the measurement of tourist loyalty, with 3 items. The first four parts were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale: from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Finally, Part 5 collected respondent information, with 6 items including gender, age, monthly income, education level, place of origin, and marital status.

Table 1. Constructs, items, labels, and sources

Constructs	Items & Labels	Sources
Destination image（**DEI**）		
Infrastructure（INF）	Convenient wireless network（INF1）	
	Good mobile phone communication（INF2）	
	Excellent travel websites（INF3）	
	Tidy restrooms（INF4）	
	High-class information centers（INF5）	[10, 19]
	Standardized servicing stations（INF6）	
	Wide variety of shop facilities（INF7）	
	Wide choice of accommodations（INF8）	
	Variety of entertainment（INF9）	

Environment（ENV）	Orderly administration（ENV1）	
	Good service（ENV2）	
	Clean and unpolluted environment（ENV3）	
	Tranquil and restful atmosphere（ENV4）	
Accessibility（ACC）	Moderate traffic flow（ACC1）	
	Spacious freeways（ACC2）	
	Identified road signs and indicators（ACC3）	
	Ample parking spaces（ACC4）	
Attractions（ATT）	Unique ethnic culture（ATT1）	
	Fabulous scenic drive（ATT2）	
	Historic landmarks and sites（ATT3）	
***Perceived Value*（PEV）**	Value for time（PEV1）	[6, 14]
	Value for money（PEV2）	
***Satisfaction*（SAT）**	Overall satisfaction（SAT1）	
	Expectancy-Satisfaction（SAT2）	[11, 27]
	Right decision（SAT3）	
***Loyalty*（LOY）**	Positive comment（LOY1）	
	Recommendations（LOY2）	[23, 28]
	Revisit intention（LOY3）	

2.2 Data collection

Data were collected from Tianchi, Xinjiang Tianshan, which is a World Natural Heritage Site in China, using an intercept approach. Investigators submitted a questionnaire to tourists travelling by car, individual travelers, or community residents until the sampling goal was achieved. Data from 300 respondents were tested with the proposed model.

2.3 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and distributions, were used to represent the demographic profile of the respondents. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was performed for the underlying dimensions of destination image. In the present study, structural models were analyzed with the use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), rather than the Covariance-Based Structural Equation Model (CB-SEM), since PLS-SEM has runs computations more efficiently and faster than CB-SEM [29]. Both the measurement and structural models were tested using the *SmartPLS 3.0* in this study.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive analysis

The respondents' profile shows an equal distribution in terms of gender: male (49.7%) and female (50.3%). There were two dominant age groups: between 31 and 50 years old (51.3%) and 30 years old or younger (46%). Nearly half of the respondents (47.0%) had a monthly income between 3001 and 6000 China Yuan (CNY) and approximately one third of the respondents (31.3%) had a monthly income of less than 3000 CNY. With the only exception of 4.7% of respondents, almost everybody in the sample held a high school degree, or higher. The majority of tourists concentrated within the Xinjiang Province (68.7%). Last, more than half of all respondents is married (60.3%) (See **Table 2**).

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents (n = 300)

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	149	49.7
Female	151	50.3
Age		
Under 31	138	46.0
31-40	73	24.3
41-50	81	27.0
Over 50	8	2.7
Income (Monthly)		
Under CNY 3001	94	31.3
CNY 3001-6000	141	47.0
CNY 6001-9000	42	14.0
CNY 9001 or over	23	7.7
Education		
Middle school or below	14	4.7
High school	87	29.0
Undergraduate	142	47.3
Postgraduate	57	19.0

Province		
Within the province	206	68.7
Outside the province	94	31.3
Marital status		
Single	119	39.7
Married	181	60.3

3.2 Exploratory factor analysis

To explore the underlying dimensions of destination image, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried on with the use of SPSS 19.0 for windows. Four factors, with a cut-off factor loading of 0.5 and an eigenvalue greater than one, explained 67.173 % of the variance of the destination image scale through a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The Cronbach's alpha was above the threshold value of 0.7, confirming the high reliability of the results [29]. **Table 3** presents the four factors mentioned above, labeled as infrastructure, environment, accessibility, and attractions.

Table 3. EFA Results on destination image

Factor/ Item	Factor Loading	Variance explained (%)	Eigenvalue	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Infrastructure（INF）		49.762	9.952	0.928
INF1	0.824			
INF2	0.790			
INF3	0.714			
INF4	0.659			
INF5	0.641			
INF6	0.610			
INF7	0.549			
INF8	0.548			
INF9	0.515			
Factor 2: Environment（ENV）		6.733	1.347	0.836
ENV1	0.776			

ENV2	0.742			
ENV3	0.727			
ENV4	0.607			
Factor 3: Accessibility（ACC）		5.524	1.105	0.820
ACC1	0.770			
ACC2	0.748			
ACC3	0.699			
ACC4	0.559			
Factor 4: Attractions（ATT）		5.154	1.031	0.724
ATT1	0.815			
ATT2	0.721			
ATT3	0.575			

Note: Total explained variance = 67.173%; KMO = 0.945.

3.3 Measurement model

To estimate the constructs, the reliability and construct validity of the conceptual model were tested using PLS. The internal consistency was examined using Composite Reliability (CR), whose recommended criterion should be above 0.70 [30]. All CRs of the measurement models range from 0.844 to 0.951. Convergent and discriminant validity were utilized to examine the construct validity [31]. Convergent validity required a factor loading of at least 0.50 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.50 [30], implying that more than half of the average variance of the indicators of a latent variable were explained. All factor loadings of the items were larger than 0.50, and the AVE of destination image was 0.498, close to 0.50, and was considered as acceptable [28]. **Table 4** reports the factor loadings, t-values, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR), and it indicates an appropriate internal consistency.

Discriminant validity was essentially estimated by testing the correlations among the measures of potentially overlapping constructs. The square root of AVE from a construct needs to be higher than the variance shared between the construct and other constructs [29]. **Table 5** shows all the correlations and square roots of AVEs. The results indicate an adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4. Reliability coefficients for the constructs

Constructs and items	**Factor loadings**	**T-value**	**AVE**	**CR**
First-order				
Infrastructure			0.644	0.942
IN1	0.799	35.267		

IN2	0.803	35.615		
IN3	0.809	39.798		
IN4	0.770	27.844		
IN5	0.785	27.622		
IN6	0.834	35.978		
IN7	0.791	32.003		
IN8	0.836	47.984		
IN9	0.792	30.738		
Environment			0.673	0.891
EN1	0.865	45.734		
EN2	0.867	60.270		
EN3	0.772	26.684		
EN4	0.772	28.426		
Accessibility			0.651	0.882
AC1	0.827	25.727		
AC2	0.842	38.718		
AC3	0.774	26.456		
AC4	0.782	30.034		
Attractions			0.644	0.844
AT1	0.778	14.730		
AT2	0.769	26.227		
AT3	0.856	48.004		
Perceived Value			0.829	0.907
P1	0.903	71.355		
P2	0.918	85.223		
Satisfaction			0.805	0.925

S1	0.868	28.929		
S2	0.921	90.852		
S3	0.901	54.740		
Loyalty			0.815	0.930
L1	0.903	70.249		
L2	0.925	90.852		
L3	0.879	39.152		
Second-order				
Destination Image			0.498	0.951
Infrastructure	0.911	159.834		
Environment	0.708	41.246		
Accessibility	0.690	42.480		
Attractions	0.510	24.694		

Note: All loadings are significant at the 1% level (p < 0.001) with a 2000 sample bootstrapping.

Table 5. Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4
Destination Image	**0.848**			
Loyalty	0.633	**0.903**		
Satisfaction	0.701	0.759	**0.897**	
Perceived Value	0.608	0.618	0.645	**0.911**

Note: The square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) is shown on the diagonal in bold.

3.4 Structure model and hypothesis testing

Standardized path coefficients (β), significance level (t-statistic), and R^2 estimates were utilized to estimate the structural model.

Table 6 illustrates standardized path coefficients, t-value, and the test results. The estimates of the structural coefficients provide the foundation for testing. H1 and H2 predict that destination image has a significant and positive effect on perceived value and tourist satisfaction (β1 = 0.618, t-value = 17.840, p < 0.001 and β2 = 0.496, t-value = 9.162, p < 0.001, respectively). Hence, H1 and H2 are supported. H3 predicts that destination image has no effect on tourist loyalty (β3 = 0.090, t-value = 1.739, p > 0.05); therefore, H3 is not supported. H4 and H5 predict that perceived value has a direct and positive effect on satisfaction and loyalty (β4 = 0.339, t-value = 5.764, p < 0.001 and β5 = 0.194, t-

value = 3.106, p < 0.05, respectively). Therefore, H4 and H5 are supported. H6 predicts that satisfaction has a direct and positive effect on loyalty ($\beta6$ = 0.571, t-value = 9.118, p < 0.001). Therefore, H6 is strongly supported.

R^2 value is used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model. R^2 values are larger than the recommended criterion of 0.1 [28]. The R^2s of destination image, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty were 0.498, 0.829, 0.801 and 0.815, respectively, which indicate that the exogenous variable of each construct explained 49.8%, 82.9%, 80.1% and 81.5% of the variance of each construct, approximately.

Q^2 value is described as an indicator of the model's predictive relevance. Q^2 values larger than zero mean that the model has sufficient predictive relevance in relation to the endogenous variables. The cross-validated redundancy approach, as a measure of Q^2, was recommended by Hair, using blindfolding procedures [29]. Q^2 values for perceived value (0.307), satisfaction (0.430), and loyalty (0.489) were larger than zero, indicating substantial predictive relevance and explaining the endogenous latent variables. In addition, Q^2 values for the first-order destination image indicators were all above 0.320, suggesting the predictive relevance of the model to explain the first-order destination image variables.

Table 6. Results for the hypothesis model using PLS

Hypothesis		Path coefficient	t-value	Support ?
Destination Image	Perceived Value	0.618	17.840***	Yes
Destination Image	Satisfaction	0.496	9.162***	Yes
Destination Image	Loyalty	0.090	1.739	No
Perceived Value	Satisfaction	0.339	5.764***	Yes
Perceived Value	Loyalty	0.194	3.106**	Yes
Satisfaction	Loyalty	0.571	9.118***	Yes

*Note: A 2000 samples bootstrapping procedure was used. ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001*

3.5 Direct, indirect, and total effects

Table 7 indicates the direct, indirect, and total effects among destination image, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. The effect of destination image on perceived value was entirely direct (0.618). The destination image construct had the largest and positive effect on satisfaction (0.706), followed by perceived value (0.339). Moreover, the positive effect of destination image on satisfaction was more direct (0.496) than indirect (0.210), through perceived value. However, the effect of perceived value on satisfaction was entirely direct (0.339). The effect of satisfaction on loyalty was also entirely direct (0.571). In addition, the direct effect of perceived value on loyalty (0.194) was equivalent to its indirect effect (0.193). The path coefficient between destination image and loyalty was not significant, but the total and indirect effects were found using a bootstrapping procedure. These results provide evidence of a sound predictive ability for the estimated endogenous latent variables and their underlying indicators. The mediating effects were tested through the Sober test.

Table 7. Direct, indirect, and total effects

	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects

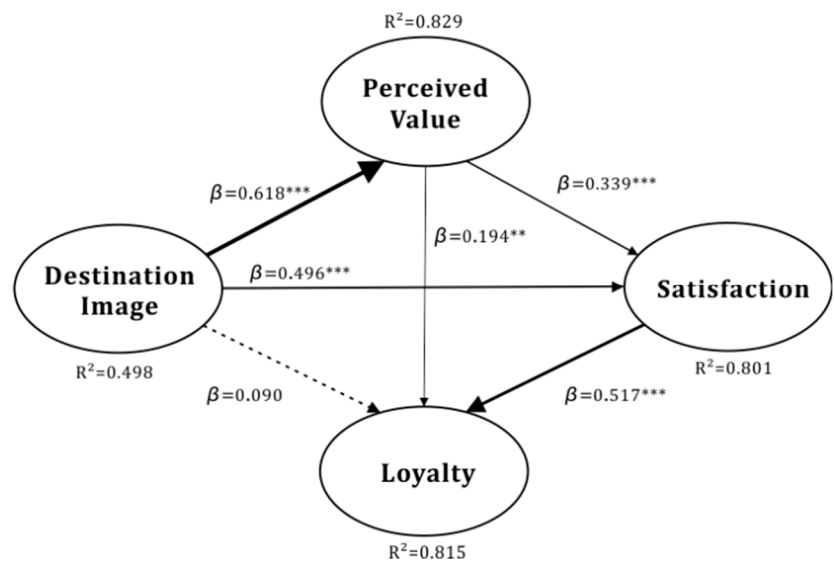|				
Destination Image	Perceived Value	0.618	0.000	0.618
Destination Image	Satisfaction	0.496	0.210*	0.706
Destination Image	Loyalty	0.090	0.522*	0.612
Perceived Value	Satisfaction	0.339	0.000	0.339
Perceived Value	Loyalty	0.194	0.193*	0.387
Satisfaction	Loyalty	0.571	0.000	0.571

*Note: * $p < 0.05$ by Sober testing procedure*

Figure 2. Results of destination loyalty model

Note: Direct influence uses solid line, and line width indicates the degree of influence; no influence uses broken line.

3.6 Mediating effect of perceived value and satisfaction

Table 7 shows that the indirect effect of destination image on tourist loyalty is 0.522, which implies a mediating effect of perceived value and satisfaction. The analysis of classic causal step approach was employed to assess the mediation effect, as in Baron and Kenny (1986). Four conditions must be met to establish mediation: (1) a direct link between the independent variable and dependent variable; (2) the independent variable must be related to mediating variables; (3) the mediator should be significantly related to the dependent variable when both independent and mediating variables are predictors of the dependent variable; (4) the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable must be significantly reduced when the mediator is added.

Table 8 indicates that the relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty is significantly reduced when perceived value and satisfaction are controlled for, through the calculation of Step 4. The Bata coefficient between destination image and tourist loyalty was clearly reduced, from 0.612 ($p < 0.001$) in Step 1 to 0.032 ($p > 0.05$) in Step 4. Therefore, H7 is supported. Finally, the strength of this mediation needs to be determined by using the Variable Accounted For (VAF). VAF determines the size of the indirect effect with respect to the total effect. When VAF is above 80%, there is full mediation. A situation in which VAF is larger than 20% and less than 80% indicates a partial mediation. Otherwise, the mediation effect does not exist. As indicated in **Table 7**,

VAF is 85.3%. Therefore, the findings of the mediation tests support the full mediating effect of perceived value and tourist satisfaction between destination image and tourist loyalty.

Table 8. Mediation tests using PLS

Steps of mediating effect	Beta	T-value
Step 1: Independent variable to outcome variable		
Destination Image-Loyalty	0.612	17.374***
Step 2: Independent variable to mediators		
Destination Image-Perceived Value	0.619	17.929***
Destination Image-Satisfaction	0.707	19.603***
Step 3 and Step 4: Independent variable and mediators to outcome variable		
Destination Image-Loyalty	0.032	0.787
Perceived Value-Loyalty	0.193	3.088**
Satisfaction-Loyalty	0.574	8.748***

*** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

4. Discussion and conclusions

4.1 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the literature by investigating the factors that are likely to influence Chinese tourists' destination loyalty from a new perspective. The relationships among destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty are analyzed on the basis of practical experience. The results showed that perceived value, destination image, and satisfaction are all antecedents of destination loyalty. Most importantly, the mediating role of perceived value and satisfaction can not be ignored.

A significant relationship between destination image and perceived value was found in this study, in line with the findings of previous studies [19]. Moreover, destination image and satisfaction are examined, and a positive relationship is found between the two items [32]. However, a statistically not significant relationship between destination image and loyalty was found in this study.

A significant relationship between perceived value and satisfaction was found. Mixed results on this topic exist in the literature. For example, Kashyap and Bojanic found a significant relationship between perceived value and loyalty [33]. Chen found a significant direct relationship between perceived value and satisfaction for heritage tourists, which is consistent with our study's results [21]. Moreover, a significant relationship between perceived value and loyalty was found in our study. In contrast, Howat and Assaker did not find a significant direct relationship between perceived value and loyalty [34].

A significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty was tested. This study has demonstrated that satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty and the findings are consistent with past studies [34, 35].

The mediation effect of perceived value and tourist satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and loyalty was examined. For example, Wang and Zhang found that perceived value mediates the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction [36]. The findings of this study confirmed perceived value as a mediating variable between destination image and loyalty. In addition, the results of this study found that perceived value has both direct and indirect influences on tourist loyalty. Perceived value and tourist satisfaction mediate the relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty [21].

4.2 Managerial implications

The results of this study have significant managerial implications. Firstly, this study found four underlying dimensions of destination image, which seem to be fundamental elements that contribute to tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. In particular, "Infrastructure" (factor 1) accounts for about 50 % of the variances explained in "destination image." The construction of infrastructure facilities (campgrounds, service stations, information centers) has been accelerated to elevate Xinjiang to a "world-class" international tourism destination. As the same time, environment (factor 2), accessibility (factor 3), and attractions (factor 4) are all important elements to develop tourism in China.

Secondly, tourism marketers and managers should develop promotional activities and events in order to appeal to domestic tourists. For example, the central government has hosted or sponsored various events for tourism promotion purposes. For example, it has successfully held "the self-driving car and recreational vehicle industrial development conference," "the international special tourism festival," "the international tourism festival," and "the western China ice and snow tourism festival." These promotional activities matched the goal to develop Xinjiang into a "tourist distribution center of the Silk Road Economic Zone."

With the country's rapidly growing economy, car trip in China has become a new trend. Meanwhile, China possesses abundant tourist resources in Xinjiang area, such as Tianshan (World Natural Heritage Site), Silk Road (World Cultural Heritage Site), Altai Mountains, and Taklimakan Desert. **Figure 3, Figure 4** and **Figure 5** show the beautiful scenery in Xinjiang. These are all important factors in the development of Tourism.

Tourism administrators need to accelerate infrastructure construction to enhance destination image, and focus on tourist satisfaction in order to establish tourist loyalty. At the same time, marketers should actively develop new markets and customers in the field of car trip. Finally, keeping a balance between developing tourism and conserving the unique natural and cultural heritage is key to achieve the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

4.3 Limitations and suggestions

Like other studies, this study has several limitations. Firstly, the data used in this study only cover a short period. Therefore, the findings of this study may not reflect seasonal variations. In addition, the small sample size does not allow the generalization of the results of this study. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Secondly, there may exist other factors affecting tourist loyalty, beyond "destination image," "perceived value," and "tourist satisfaction." Other potential antecedents should be explored in future studies. Last, the number of research questions should be increased (or decreased) in future studies. Therefore, destination image may include other constructs, which should be analyzed by Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Figure 3. Karajun - World Natural Heritage
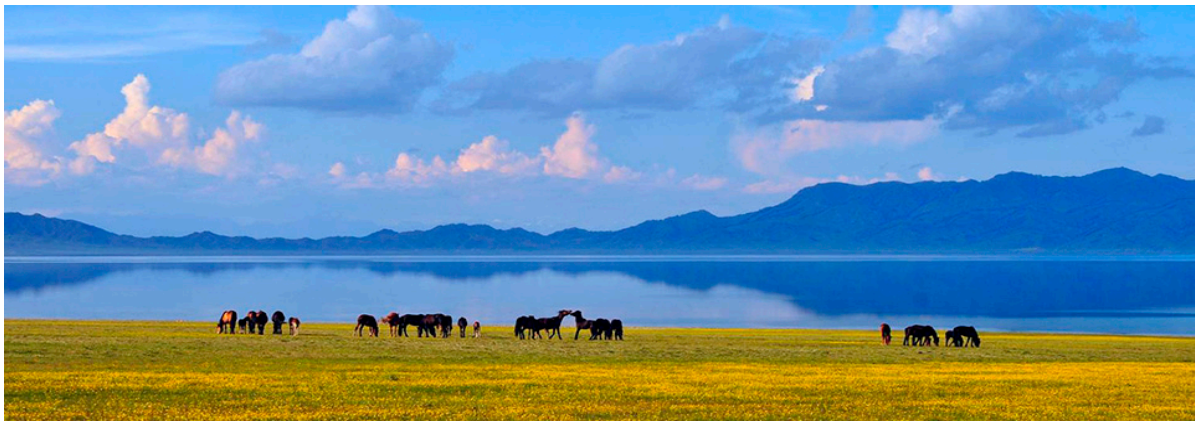

Figure 4. Luntai Populus Euphratica Forest

Figure 5. Koktokay

Note: The above photos are photographed by Zhangping Yang.

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