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The Influencing Factors of Residents' Tourism Consumption in China

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Abstract. With the continuous recovery of China's tourism market, residents' tourism consumption has presented diversified, personalized, and digital characteristics. Based on consumer behavior theory and leisure consumption theory, this paper sorts out tourism-consumption-related statistical data and existing literature, and explores the influencing factors of residents' tourism consumption from three dimensions: individual characteristics, psychological cognition, as well as social and digital environment. The results show that tourism consumption is jointly driven by multiple factors. Economic income serves as the fundamental material foundation, while individual features including age, education level, and family structure produce group differences in tourism demand. Psychological factors such as travel motivation and consumption values determine consumers' willingness to spend. In addition, transportation conditions, tourism supporting facilities, and digital development also exert important influences on consumption decisions. This study supplements relevant research on tourism consumption and provides references for tourism enterprises to develop differentiated products and for authorities to formulate tourism-promotion policies. This paper employs literature review and statistical data analysis without empirical tests based on micro questionnaires. Subsequent research may adopt micro data to quantify the effect of each influencing factor and compare group level heterogeneity.

Keywords: tourism consumption, consumption behavior, influencing factors, digital environment

1. Introduction

As the social economy developed and living standards improved continuously, consumption concepts in various aspects gradually changed among people, especially tourism, which has gradually become an indispensable part of young people's life. As an important sector of the tertiary industry, tourism drives the coordinated development of upstream and downstream industries including catering. In recent years, China's tourism market has continued to recover and has maintained a relatively rapid growth rate. According to the sampling survey of domestic residents traveling According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, China's domestic tourist numbers reached 5.615 billion in 2024, marking a 14.8% rise from the equivalent period the previous year; In 2025, the number of domestic residents' trips reached 6.522 billion, representing a year-on-year

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increase of 16.2%, while domestic tourism expenditure hit 6.30 trillion yuan with a 9.5% year on year growth. These data indicate that residents' demand for tourism consumption keeps growing. At the same time, the structure of tourism consumption is also changing, from the previous scenic tourism consumption to diversified consumption modes, such as accommodation, catering, transportation, shopping, and local cultural experience. As per data from the National Bureau of Statistics, the per capita in 2025, the expenditure on education, culture, and entertainment for residents was 3489 yuan, up from 9.4% over the same period last year, higher than the growth rate of 4.4% in residents' per capita consumption expenditure. In this context, the factors affecting tourism consumption have gradually expanded from basic factors such as transportation and accommodation to subjective factors such as individual characteristics, psychological cognition and the social and digital environment. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the factors affecting residents' tourism consumption for understanding the changes in tourism consumption behavior. This paper mainly studies how different individual characteristics, psychological cognition, and social and digital environmental factors affect tourism consumption, and analyzes the possible impact of different factors.

In recent years, digital factors and changes in consumer demand have attracted more attention, but the comprehensive impact of different factors and the characteristics of tourism consumption in the new era are still worthy of further study [1]. Based on the existing research, this paper examines the influencing factors of tourism consumption from three aspects: individual characteristics, psychological cognition and social and digital environment, and analyzes them with statistical data and literature research [2]. Theoretically, this paper helps to further understand residents' tourism consumption behavior and its formation mechanism, and provides a supplement for the study of the factors affecting tourism consumption; In practice, it can provide reference for tourism enterprises to optimize products and services, improve the tourism consumption environment and for relevant departments to formulate policies to promote tourism consumption.

2. Related concepts and theoretical basis

Tourism consumption is comprehensive, including not only tickets to scenic spots, but also expenditure on transportation, food service, lodging, retail, and pleasure. With the improvement of residents' living standards, tourism consumption has gradually become an important part of residents' consumption, and its consumption content has also developed from the traditional basic tourism expenditure to a more diversified and personalized direction. Tourism consumption behavior is the whole process of tourists from generating tourism demand, choosing tourism destinations, to tourism consumption, including not only actual consumption behavior, but also consumption decision-making and selection behavior. Existing research demonstrates that tourists hold heterogeneous tourism consumption preferences, and personal characteristics shape their tourism consumption behaviors [3]. The influencing factors of tourism consumption refer to various factors affecting residents' tourism consumption level, Consumption Willingness and consumption structure. Studies have shown that residents' income, tourism prices, family demographics, education and transportation conditions may have an impact on tourism consumption. Family income, population structure and other factors will significantly affect family tourism consumption expenditure [4]. Residents' disposable income, network penetration, and transportation accessibility are important factors affecting residents' tourism and vacation consumption demand [5]. Therefore, tourism consumption is a consumption activity formed under the combined action of many factors, and the study of its influencing factors has strong practical significance.

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As a kind of service consumption, tourism consumption is also affected by residents' income, tourism product prices, and personal preferences. Consumer behavior theory holds that consumers' actual consumption behavior is not only affected by economic conditions, but also by personal preferences, psychological factors, social environment, and information acquisition. In tourism activities, tourists will take into account factors such as destination attractiveness, tourism product quality, price and network information, so as to form different consumption choices [6]. Tourists' destination choice is affected by many factors, such as tourism price, consumer preference, tourism product quality, and information [7]. In addition, leisure consumption theory emphasizes the important role of time factor in consumption behavior [8]. Tourism activities need to occupy a certain amount of leisure time, so residents' leisure time will affect their tourism demand and tourism consumption level [9]. Income and leisure time together constitute important constraints on Residents' tourism consumption [10]. To sum up, consumer demand theory can explain tourism consumption from the perspective of income and price, consumer behavior theory can explain consumer preference and the decision-making process, while leisure consumption theory emphasizes the role of time factors. The three theories together provide a theoretical basis for this paper to study the factors affecting tourism consumption.

3. Current situation of tourism consumption

3.1. Tourism market scale and development trend

In recent years, the Chinese tourism market has exhibited a pattern of steady recovery and growth. By 2024, the domestic travel figure for residents had risen to 5.615 billion, up by 14.8% compared to the equivalent period in the previous year and the expenditure by domestic travelers amounted to 5.75 trillion yuan, marking a 17.1% rise compared to the equivalent period last year. In 2025, 6.522 billion yuan, an increase of 16.2% over the same period last year; 6.30 trillion yuan, an increase of 9.5% over the same period last year.

Urban residents spent 5.30 trillion yuan on travel, an increase of 7.5% over the same period last year; Rural residents spent 1.00 trillion yuan on travel, an increase of 21.4% over the same period last year.

In 2025, the domestic tourism market will continue to grow in terms of number of trips and amount of tourism compared with 2024. Among them, rural residents recorded a 22.6% year on year growth in trip volume, which was markedly greater than the value 14.3% which is the growth rate of urban residents. At the same time, Table 1 shows that the growth rate of travel frequency exceeds that of tourism expenditure, indicating that more residents pursue cost-effectiveness when travelling.

Table 1. Growth of domestic residents' tourism indicators

Index	2024	2025	Year-on-year growth in 2025
Number of trips by domestic residents	5 billion 615 million	6 billion 522 million	16.2%
Travel expenses for domestic tourists	5.75 trillion yuan	6.30 trillion yuan	9.5%
Trips by urban residents	4 billion 370 million	4 billion 996 million	14.3%
Trips by rural residents	1 billion 245 million	1 billion 526 million	22.6%

In the long run, tourism has gradually become an important part of China's service consumption. According to data from the Ministry of Culture and tourism, in 2024, there were 16541 A-class

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tourist attractions in China, receiving 6.76 billion tourists in the whole year. There are 64616 travel agencies in China, and the tourism supply system has been continuously improved. In 2025, the number of classes a tourist attraction will further increase to 16994, and the number of travel agencies will reach 70354. The improvement of the supply capacity of the tourism market provides more abundant choices for residents' tourism consumption.

3.2. Structure and characteristics of residents' tourism consumption

With the improvement of residents' income level and quality of life, the consumption structure of residents has gradually changed from basic life consumption to development and enjoyment consumption. In 2025, the per capita consumption expenditure of residents in China was 29476 yuan, of which 3489 yuan was spent on education, culture and entertainment, accounting for 11.8% of the per capita consumption expenditure, an increase of 9.4% over the same period last year; Transportation and communication expenditure was 4306-yuan, accounting for 14.6%, an increase of 8.3% over the same period last year. These consumption categories are strongly linked to tourism activities, reflecting the growing demand for cultural, leisure, entertainment and travel services.

From the perspective of tourism consumption composition, traditional tourism consumption mainly focuses on basic expenditure such as transportation, accommodation and catering, while tourism consumption in the new era pays more attention to experience and quality. For example, emerging tourism products such as cultural tourism, rural tourism, leisure vacations, theme based tourism and immersive experiences have gradually drawn consumers' attention. According to the statistical bulletin of the Ministry of Culture and tourism in 2025, China is cultivating new formats such as digital performing arts, online broadcasting, immersive experiences, and low-altitude tourism, and the tourism consumption scenarios are further enriched. At the same time, there are still differences in tourism consumption between urban and rural residents. In 2025, urban residents traveled 4.996 billion times in China, spending 5.30 trillion yuan on travel; Rural residents traveled 1.526 billion times, spending 1.00 trillion yuan. Although the tourism consumption scale of urban residents is still large, the number of trips by rural residents increased by 22.6% year-on-year, and the travel expenditure increased by 21.4% year-on-year, with a significantly faster growth rate. This shows that with the increase in rural residents' income and the improvement of transportation conditions, the potential of rural tourism consumption is gradually released.

New tourism offerings like cultural experiences, rural getaways, outdoor activities, and themed vacations are continually being introduced. Tourists can select travel modes based on personal preferences, and tourism consumption demand presents a prominent personalized trend. Tourism consumption is more digital. The Internet has gone deep into all aspects of tourism consumption, from destination information search, tourism strategy acquisition, to hotel booking, transportation purchase, and tourism evaluation; digital platforms play an important role. Empirical studies show that the application of Internet technology can improve the probability of family travel and promote family tourism expenditure. In recent years, digital technology has further facilitated online and intelligent tourism consumption, and new business forms including digital performances and immersive experiences have continuously emerged. Tourism consumption pays more attention to quality and performance price ratio. In 2025, the number of domestic residents traveling increased by 16.2%, while the cost of traveling increased by 9.5%, and there is a certain gap between the two. This shows that while the tourism demand of residents is increasing rapidly, they are also paying more attention to consumption costs. Tourists no longer simply pursue high consumption, but pay more attention to the balance between tourism product quality, experience value and price.

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4. Factors affecting tourism consumption

Different age groups have different tourism needs and consumption capabilities. Young consumers are generally more likely to accept new forms of tourism, while older consumers may pay more attention to tourism safety, comfort, and service quality. More educated consumers typically have broader access to information and travel needs. Research shows that the education level of the household head and household population structure will significantly affect tourism consumption expenditure. In addition, different occupations also mean differences in income levels, working hours and leisure time, which further affect tourism consumption.

Consumers' tourism motivation, risk perception, and consumption concept will also affect tourism consumption. Tourism motivations include leisure and relaxation, sightseeing experience, cultural learning and socializing, and different motivations lead to different destination and consumption choices. At the same time, consumer values are shifting from the simple pursuit of material consumption to the emphasis on experience and spiritual needs. Accordingly, tourism consumption relies not only on sufficient disposable income, but also on consumers' willingness to spend and their perceived value of tourism expenditure.

Supply factors such as transportation conditions, tourism resources, and supporting facilities are also important conditions affecting tourism consumption. Convenient transportation can reduce travel time and travel costs, and improve residents' willingness to travel; Rich tourism resources and perfect accommodation, catering and other supporting facilities can enhance the attractiveness of destinations. Ms. Bian's research points out that tourism prices, product quality, information, and advertising all influence travelers' destination choices. In addition, the digital environment is becoming a new factor. The Internet can reduce the cost of tourism information search, make it easier for consumers to compare different destinations and tourism products, and promote tourism consumption decisions. Research has also proved that the application of Internet technology can improve the probability of family tourism and promote tourism expenditure.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the factors affecting residents' tourism consumption. The study found that residents' tourism consumption is not determined by a single factor, but by economic conditions, individual characteristics, consumer psychology, social and digital environment and other factors. First of all, the income level of residents is an important economic basis affecting tourism consumption, enhancing income levels could boost residents' capacity to fund tourism and stimulate growth in tourism consumption demand. Secondly, individual attributes like age, education, profession, and family composition will result in disparities in tourism demand and consumption levels among various residents. Thirdly, psychological factors such as tourism motivation, risk perception and consumption concepts will affect whether consumers are willing to travel and what kind of tourism products they choose. Finally, transportation convenience, tourism resources, supporting facilities and Internet development will also affect tourism consumption. Combined with the current development of the tourism market, tourism enterprises should offer varied products tailored to distinct consumer groups to enhance tourism offerings and services. Promote the integration of digital technology and tourism, and release the tourism consumption potential of residents through reasonable consumption policies.

The main contribution of this paper is to summarize the factors affecting tourism consumption from the perspectives of individual characteristics, psychological cognition and social and digital environment, and to combine traditional economic factors with digital factors in the new era. The

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results can provide a reference for tourism enterprises to subdivide the market, design tourism products and optimize marketing methods. This paper brings the development of Internet and digitalization into the influencing factors of tourism consumption, which helps to expand the analytical perspective of traditional tourism consumption research. There is a lack of empirical test based on personal questionnaire data, so it is impossible to accurately measure the specific impact of various factors on tourism consumption. Future research can establish regression models through questionnaires or micro data such as CFPS, incorporate variables such as age, income, education, occupation, tourism motivation, risk perception and Internet use into the models, and further compare the differences among different regions, age groups, and income groups, so as to improve the accuracy and reliability of research conclusions.

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