

# Influencing Factors of Perceived Value of Rural Tourism Based on Consumer Characteristic

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## Abstract

According to the service quality model (SERVQUAL), the framework of this study designs a tourism service quality model based on the perceived value of tourists based on consumer characteristics. This study uses SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 22.0 software to conduct in-depth interviews and questionnaires to explore its impact mechanism. Data were collected from 552 Chinese respondents who had experienced rural tourism in Taiyuan, Shanxi in the past year. The results show that there is a significant relationship between tourist perceived value and tourist satisfaction. The five dimensions of perceived value, namely, landscape value, emotional value, cost value, social value, product and service value, are significantly related to tourist satisfaction. The four dimensions of perceived value, namely, landscape value, emotional value, cost value, and product and service value, are significantly related to tourist loyalty, but not to social value. The analysis shows that tourists' perceived value affects tourists' loyalty and satisfaction to rural tourism destinations. This study can not only guide the further development of rural tourism, but also effectively improve the influence and marketing effect of tourism products.

**Keywords:** Rural Tourism, Perceived Value, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Loyalty.

## Introduction

The evolution of the global tourist business has started to change after the Second World War, moving away from traditional sightseeing tours and toward vacations, special tourism, and other diverse directions. Tourism products have placed more emphasis on experience, culture and leisure. The rural tourism began to flourish in Europe (He, 2004). In the 1970s, rural tourism began to flourish in the United States and Canada. Urbanization increased during the 1990s as a result of the Chinese economy's fast rise. Rural tourism has steadily evolved into a novel approach for people to experience nature and unwind as a result of the level's ongoing improvement. People are now even more in need of customized, high-value-added, high-quality tourist goods due to China's national economy's rapid growth; yet, China's rural tourism is facing a significant challenge from advanced tourism demand and primary tourism products. Consequently, the challenge for China's rural tourist growth is to change and upgrade as quickly as feasible.

This study investigates the perceived worth of rural visitors in Taiyuan City in order to offer guidance for the local targeted improvement of the development level and



service quality of rural tourism, enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty, and support the long-term growth of local rural tourism. It also analyzes the factors that affect visitor satisfaction and loyalty to local rural tourism. From the theoretical point of view, it has the following significance: First, based on previous studies, this paper proposes a measurement model that affects the perceived value of tourists in rural tourism destinations, which is an extension and supplement to the content of rural tourism research, and can provide some reference for future research. Secondly, the study of tourist satisfaction and loyalty in this paper is carried out from a richer perspective. It is no longer a study of a single factor, but a comprehensive consideration of many factors that can affect tourist satisfaction according to the objective reality of rural tourism development. From the perspective of practice, it has the following significance: Firstly, in order to better understand the relevant elements, this article examines how visitors assess the value of visiting rural tourism areas. The study's conclusions can help managers and business owners of rural tourism gain a better understanding of tourist expectations, enabling them to expand rural tourism at all levels and consistently create and provide goods and services for rural tourism that can better meet visitors' needs. The quality of the services offered and the level of local rural tourism development may also improve as a result, increasing the competitiveness of the rural tourist destination in the market. Secondly, while encouraging the growth of rural tourism, it also contributes in certain ways to enhancing the traveler experience. When the management level of rural tourism rises, and more attention is paid to the needs and experience of tourists, it is bound to be able to provide tourists with rural tourism products and services that are more in line with their needs and better tourism experience.

## Research Objectives

Discuss the influencing factors of rural tourism perceived value based on consumer characteristics, including the dimensions of rural tourism perceived value; The impact of perceived value of rural tourism on tourist satisfaction; The impact of perceived value of rural tourism on tourist loyalty; The relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

## Literature Review

Perceived value originates from customer-perceived value (CPV). Domestic and foreign scholars have different opinions on the concept of customer perceived value, but most of them are defined from the perspective of exchange. Customer perceived value is the internal perception of customers in the process of exchanging goods or services with money, time and other costs. Philip (2012) proposed that customer perceived value is the difference between the overall benefits and the costs paid by potential customers when evaluating a product or service or other options. Dong (1999) believed that it was a comparison between the utility gained by customers and the cost paid by customers in the whole process of purchasing and using products. At present,



people's research on perceived value focuses on "gain and loss theory" and "multiple factor theory".

The "Gain and Loss Theory" is mainly manifested as a measure of gains and losses during the period of customer consumption. Zeithaml (1988) proposed that customer value should be individual in fact, because it focuses more on the subjective feelings of people, which are mainly divided into gains and losses. Gronroos (1996) began to realize the dynamic research of customer value, He held the opinion that customer value (CPV) is equal to the core price plus additional value, or customer value (CPV) is equal to the core price plus added service. Woodruff (1997) believed that customer perceived value was the evaluation of customer preferences and results of products or services in the process of use, Monroe (1998), on the basis of Zeithaml's research, believed that perceived value is the ratio between gain and loss. Bai (2001) summarized customer value as the perception of the trade-off between the quality obtained and the price paid. It can be seen that customer value is actually regarded as a kind of perceived value, and perceived gain and loss are the core of perceived value.

The adoption model of online word-of-mouth information is to apply perceived value to the tourism industry (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The perceived value of word-of-mouth is affected by factors including the reliability of the source and the quality of online word-of-mouth. Xu (2016) designed a tourism service quality model based on the perceived value of tourists (rural, tangible, reliable, corresponding, guaranteed and empathic) according to SERVQUAL model.

## Concept and Theories

**Rural Tourism:** It states that "rural-tourism" is the core of the entire marketing of rural tourism and defines rural tourism as "tourist activities that occur in the countryside (EU & OECD, 1994)".

**Perceived Value:** It is the worth that people receive from material possessions or intangible services, which includes the advantages they experience and the expenses they incur (Zeithaml, 1988). It has several different dimensions (Sheth et al.;1991).

**Tourist Satisfaction:** it compares tourists' travel expectations and feelings after travel with tourists' satisfaction. If equal, it means satisfied, otherwise, it means dissatisfied (Pizam, Neumann & Reichel , 1978).

**Tourist Loyalty:** It describes how frequently tourists engage in an activity or use services, which is the behavior of travelers who engage in the same activity again. (Backman & Crompton, 1991)

## Research Hypothesis



The theory will be further explored in this section, and research hypotheses will be put out based on the pertinent research findings of prior researchers.

Tourist perceived value, expected expectation, emotion, product pricing, destination image, perceived quality, tourism service, etc. are the primary aspects that influence visitor satisfaction. An impact mechanism model of tourist satisfaction is built, with the tourist perceived value considered the pre-variable of tourist satisfaction. As a result, in the context of rural tourism, visitor perception of value influences visitors' happiness with the rural experience. The perceived value of rural tourism is determined by passengers' perceptions and assessments of the scenic value, emotional value, financial value, social value, and product and service value of the vacation destination. As a result, the research raises the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant positive impact between tourists' perceived value factor and tourists' satisfaction.

Landscape value is tourists' experience and perception of the functionality, practicality and other attributes of rural tourism products (Sheth & Cross, 1991). Tourists will compare the landscape value of rural tourism sites with their own expectations to form a satisfaction evaluation. When tourists experience the higher value of the cultural and natural landscape of rural tourism, tourists tend to have a higher degree of satisfaction. This study therefore suggests that landscape value may have a direct favorable effect on tourists' satisfaction. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>1a</sub>:** Landscape value has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

Emotional value is the tourists' perception and evaluation of whether the emotional experience is satisfied or improved (Sheth & Cross, 1991). The tourists will compare the attraction of the tourist destination and the sense of happiness, comfort, seclusion, intimacy and integration they bring to themselves with the expected results, and form a satisfaction evaluation. When tourists experience higher emotional values such as happiness, comfort, seclusion, intimacy and integration, the satisfaction of tourists is often higher. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>1b</sub>:** Emotional value has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

Cost value is the tourists' perception and evaluation of travel costs and investment returns (Mathwick, 2001). Tourists will compare whether the travel costs are reasonable, whether the travel costs are low, and whether the value for money with the expected results, and form a satisfaction evaluation. When tourists experience the higher economic values such as reasonable travel costs, lower travel costs and value for money, tourists tend to have a higher degree of satisfaction. On the contrary, tourists have a lower degree of satisfaction. Therefore, this study infers that economic value may have a direct positive impact on tourist satisfaction. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>1c</sub>:** Cost value has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction.



Social value is perceived by the connection between tourists and community residents or tourist groups (Williams, 2000). Tourists form a sense of identity and good memories of the tourist destination based on their life experience and cultural feelings in the rural tourist destination and their interaction with community residents or tourists. Tourists will compare it with the expected results to form a satisfaction evaluation. When tourists experience higher social values such as life, culture, interactive communication and good memories in rural tourism areas, tourists tend to have a higher degree of satisfaction. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>1d</sub>:** Social value has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

A subjective psychological experience of visitors is the discrepancy between their assessment of the tourism goods and services offered by the rural tourism location and their pre-travel psychological expectations for engaging in rural tourism activities (Li, 2020). Tourists will have a good psychological experience, meaning they are happy with the tourism activities in the destination, when their real experience of tourism products and services at a rural tourism destination exceeds their psychological expectations before visiting. As a result, this study suggests that the quality of goods and services may directly enhance visitor pleasure. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>1e</sub>:** The value of products and services has a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

The majority of academics have repeatedly proved via empirical study that the perception of a tourism site affects visitors' pleasure and loyalty. According to Hunt (1971) and Crompton (1979), tourist locations may influence how loyal visitors become, but they do so indirectly by how well visitors are treated. In their empirical investigation of Penseilae and Torrevieja, two popular tourist locations in Spain, Bigne and Saerneze (2001) discovered a strong correlation between visitor pleasure and repeat business. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Tourist satisfaction has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.

Tourists' satisfaction is the overall assessment of visitors based on their behavior throughout their tourism experience, whereas tourists' perceived value is based on their view of the process of their tourism experience (Bolton, 1991). Consequently, a key factor in determining visitors' pleasure and loyalty is their perception of the value of their visit. The construction of visitors' loyalty may be directly and demonstrably impacted by their perceived worth, in addition to indirectly through their enjoyment. The perceived worth of the visitor has a clear impact on their loyalty and is a necessary precondition for it (Sirohi, 1998). The likelihood that visitors will return increases with their perceived worth. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:



**H<sub>3</sub>: Tourists' perceived value has a significant positive impact on tourists' loyalty.**

The natural environment and people landscape of tourist destinations are among the crucial tourist destination aspects, according to pertinent research. The attractiveness of tourism places is directly influenced by the landscape characteristics of the resources and the wealth of the resource kinds. Tourist loyalty will be directly correlated to the value of the natural and cultural resources of the tourist destination, therefore this is a crucial aspect in satisfying visitors' desires for ecotourism and has a large beneficial influence. The more tourists enjoy participating in a landscape, the more valuable it is. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>3a</sub>: Landscape value has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.**

When a tourist has emotional dependence on a rural tourism destination, he usually repeats his tourism behavior to maintain his current emotion. Especially when a tourist gains a strong sense of belonging in a rural tourism destination, he will take the initiative to maintain the evaluation of the destination, and even recommend it to others. Consequently, emotional value can influence both the perceived worth of rural tourism and ultimately consumer loyalty. It can also directly boost customer loyalty. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>3b</sub>: Emotional value has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.**

Cost value refers to tourists' perception and evaluation of travel costs and travel expenses. The level of overall travel costs and whether the tourism consumption is worth the money will also affect tourists' satisfaction and behavior attitude. The lower the price of the tourism destination or the value for the money, the more positive the tourists' behavior attitude will be (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The perceived functional value plays an important role in predicting consumer emotional outcomes (such as loyalty and satisfaction) (Hsu & Lin, 2017). In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>3c</sub>: Cost value has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.**

While engaging in rural tourism, visitors satisfy their informational demands while also satisfying their emotional needs for joy and a sense of belonging. Hence, social value may influence perceived value, which in turn influences consumer loyalty, in addition to directly enhancing customer loyalty. In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>3d</sub>: Social value has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.**

The sign of the establishment of tourist loyalty is that tourists have a preference for the satisfaction of products or services, thus establishing a positive emotional relationship with the destination, and then taking the behavior of re-traveling. At the same time, they also think that the destination can provide better product and service



value, and bring more profits to the destination (Johnson, 2002). In view of this, the research recommends the following presumptions:

**H<sub>3c</sub>:** The value of products and services has a significant positive impact on tourist loyalty.

## Conceptual Framework

Studying the influences on the perceived value of rural tourism in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, is the goal of this investigation. The author summarizes and suggests the following conceptual framework after sorting through the available material and analyzing the theoretical background (Figure 1):

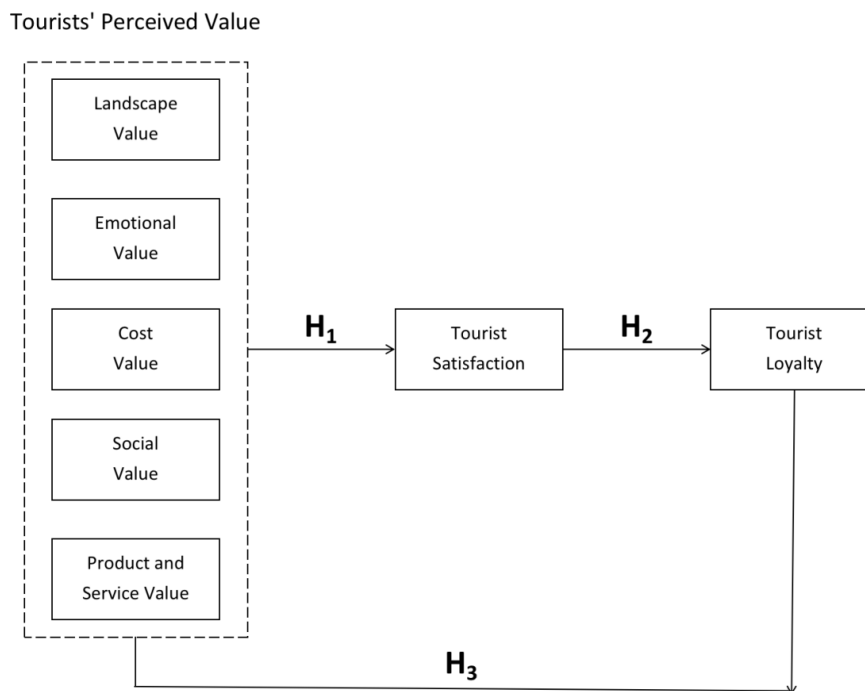


Figure 1 The Path Model of Tourists' Perceived Value, Satisfaction and Loyalty in Rural Tourism

Source:Zeithaml (1988), Sussman & Siegal (2003), Xu (2016), author (2003)

## Research Methodology

### Qualitative Study





Invite 20 people from rural tourism management departments in various regions of Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province to conduct in-depth interviews, collect and summarize their answers through content analysis, and build The Rural Tourism Perceived Value Scale.

## **Quantitative Study**

### **Population and sampling**

The researchers selected Shang'an Village, Huangzhai Town, Yangqu County, Chiqiao Village, Jinci Town, Jinyuan District, Dongjiazhuang Village, Haozhuang Town, Yingze District, Yuwen Village, Baiban Township, Jiancaoping District and Dianzidi Village, Houcun Village, Yangqu County, who had rural tourism experience in the past two years to fill in the questionnaire. However, the author did not find the specific number of rural tourism tourists in Taiyuan. Therefore, the population is considered unknown. The author uses W.G. Cochran formula to determine the sample size of the population survey by calculating the population corresponding to the sample size location.

As the required level of confidence is 95%, the method developed by Berenson, Stephan, Krehbiel, and Levine (2011) is used to calculate the sample size:  $n = z^2 * p * (1 - p) / e^2$ . If 50% of respondents answer "yes" and 50% answer "no," the standard deviation, which gauges the degree of response variety, is 0.5, which is considered acceptable. Although the confidence level was originally stated to be 95%, a 5% margin of error will be allowed. As a consequence, this study had a sample of about 385 people.

The sample of over 385 tourists should be enough to give a confidence level. The author sent 600 questionnaires to tourists in order to assure more reliable statistics. In order to find the reliability of the questionnaire, a small-scale distribution was carried out in the circle of friends around the author.

### *Data collection and Sampling Procedure*

This study selects offline and online survey methods to collect data. The online survey uses "questionnaire star" to design the questionnaire, and then sends it to WeChat friends circle and travel WeChat group, inviting people who have experienced rural tourism in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province to fill in the questionnaire. The online survey lasts for 3 days from July 1 to July 3, 2022. The field survey was completed from July 2022 to October 2022, and five centralized surveys were carried out successively.

600 surveys were provided, comprising 300 physically and 300 online, and 569 questionnaires were ultimately gathered. 17 of them contained faulty questionnaires, leaving 552 that were legitimate after removal, with a recovery rate of 95% and an effective rate of 92%.

### **Questionnaire Development**

The questionnaire approach is used in this work to gather sample data. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:





(1) Statistics on the basic information of tourists, including gender, age, education, occupation, tourism experience, etc;

(2) The survey on the perceived value of tourists has 15 items, using the 5-level Likert scale, and the five options range from very bad to very good;

(3) Survey of satisfaction and loyalty. According to the above concept, three indicators are selected for satisfaction. Three variables are chosen for visitor loyalty. The level of satisfaction is measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with the five possibilities ranging from highly dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. The 5-point Likert scale, with its five options ranging from strongly disagree to extremely agree, is used to assess loyalty.

Among them, Part 2 and Part 3 are the proportion of five scales that follow the concept of Likert scale (5= highly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral / neither agree or disagree, 2= disagree, 1= completely disagree).

## Research Findings

### Personal Profile of the Respondents

The Demographic Profile of a total 552 respondents described their characteristics as the following: Most of respondents are male (51%), age 26-40 years (52.5%), vocational school (35%), worker (21%), income is 6,001-8,000 RMB(27%), and the tourists have experienced rural tourism once(43.8%).

### Reliability Test and Validity Test

The reliability of each questionnaire variable is examined in this study using statistical techniques. Each item does not require deletion because its CITC value is larger than 0.6. Landscape value, emotional value, cost value, social value, product and service value, visitor satisfaction, and visitor loyalty Cronbach's coefficients The results, which are all larger than 0.8 and show that the scale has a high degree of dependability, are 0.893, 0.836, 0.872, 0.907, 0.878, 0.892, and 0.859, respectively. The survey's title may be retained. This study's KMO surpasses 0.7 and hits 0.854.

### Hypotheses Testing

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to investigate and explain the relationships among the predictor variables and dependent variables for hypothesis.

Chi-square freedom ratio  $\chi^2/ Df$  is less than 3, which indicates that the model is effective. The CMIN/DF value is 1.718, which means that the model is well adapted. The GFI value is 0.95, indicating a good fit. The AGFI value is 0.877, close to 0.9. The CFI value is 0.95, which is a reasonable fit. The TLI value is 0.943, which is the ideal fitness. The PNFI value is 0.778, and the overall model fitting is good.



The impact association between the model variables is determined by the significance test analysis (P is less than 0.05).

If there is significance, it means that there is a relationship of impact between the variables, and the standardized path coefficient may be used to thoroughly examine the effectiveness of the influence. (Table 1)

No.	Hypothesis	Standard coefficient	C.R.	P	Result
Landscape Value					
<b>H<sub>1a</sub></b>	→	0.131	2.823	0.005	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction					
Emotional Value					
<b>H<sub>1b</sub></b>	→	0.247	4.997	***	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction					
Cost Value					
<b>H<sub>1c</sub></b>	→	0.101	2.180	0.029	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction					
Social Value					
<b>H<sub>1d</sub></b>	→	0.176	3.775	***	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction					
Products and Services Value					
<b>H<sub>1e</sub></b>	→	0.216	4.655	***	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction					
Tourist Satisfaction					
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b>	→	0.216	4.010	***	Accepted
Tourist Loyalty					
Landscape Value					
<b>H<sub>3a</sub></b>	→	0.117	2.442	0.015	Accepted



	Tourist Loyalty				
	Emotional Value				
H <sub>3b</sub>	→	0.169	3.241	0.001	Accepted
	Tourist Loyalty				
	Cost Value				
H <sub>3c</sub>	→	0.122	2.547	0.011	Accepted
	Tourist Loyalty				
	Social Value				
H <sub>3d</sub>	→	0.063	1.309	0.190	Rejected
	Tourist Loyalty				
	Products and Services Value				
H <sub>3e</sub>	→	0.162	3.327	***	Accepted
	Tourist Loyalty				

Table 1 Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Test of The Model

Source: this study

## Discussion of Research Results

What are the dimensions of perceived value of rural tourism in Taiyuan, Shanxi?

The dimension model of rural tourism perceived value studied in this paper is based on the tourism service quality model of tourist perceived value (SERVQUAL). SERVQUAL model is applicable to the field of tourism services (Zeithaml, 1988). The benefits obtained by tourists include cost value, emotional value and social value. The benefits and losses of tourists, that is, the costs paid, are measured by cost value. The function value is the benefit evaluation generated on the basis of tourists' experience products. Rural tourism products are composed of rural landscape, products and service elements. So, it is suggested that the perceived value of rural tourism be described in terms of landscape value, product and service value, emotional value, cost value, and social value.

Perceived value positively affects satisfaction and loyalty in general, and affects loyalty through satisfaction (C.R.=3.327,  $p<0.01$ ).

To what extent does the perceived value of rural tourism affect tourist satisfaction?



Tourist satisfaction is significantly influenced by landscape value (C.R.=2.823,  $p<0.01$ ), emotional value (C.R.=4.997,  $p<0.01$ ), cost value (C.R.=2.180,  $p<0.01$ ), social value (C.R.=3.775,  $p<0.01$ ), and product and service value (C.R.=3.775,  $p<0.01$ ).

To what extent does visitor satisfaction affect visitor loyalty?

Tourist loyalty is significantly influenced by Tourist satisfaction (C.R.=4.010,  $p<0.01$ ).

To what extent does the perceived value of rural tourism affect tourist loyalty?

Landscape value significantly influences visitor loyalty (C.R.=2.442,  $p<0.01$ ), emotional value significantly influences visitor loyalty (C.R.=3.241,  $p<0.01$ ), cost value significantly influences visitor loyalty (C.R.=2.547,  $p<0.01$ ), and social value significantly influences visitor loyalty (C.R.=1.909,  $p>0.01$ ). Additionally, the value of goods and services significantly influences visitor loyalty (C.R.=3.327,  $p<0.01$ ). Considering the aforementioned analysis's findings, it is clear that social value has little impact on tourists' loyalty. The landscape value, emotional value, cost value, social value, and product and service value are the five categories of perceived value that have a substantial positive link with visitor satisfaction. Tourist fidelity is significantly positively correlated with the four aspects of landscape value, emotional value, social value, product value, and service value. From the perspective of path coefficient, the most important impact factors are landscape value and cost value.

The impact of each factor in the five dimensions of perceived value of rural tourists on satisfaction and loyalty is as follows:

Rural scenery and local architecture have a factor load of 0.908 among landscape values, which is lower than that of urban scenery and local architecture and suggests that the natural resources of rural places have a higher influence on visitor satisfaction.

Among the emotional values, the load of very excited factor is 0.83, followed by the experience of beauty, and finally the relaxation of body and mind. Emotional value refers to the pleasure and emotional satisfaction that tourists get from tourism experience. It mainly reflects the emotional value perceived by tourists from the aspects of excitement, good experience and relaxation.

In terms of cost value, the factor loads of accommodation price and catering price are higher, with factor loads of 0.834, 0.874 and 0.795. Rural tourism tourists are bound to care about the cost of their tourism in the process of tourism. Cost value not only plays an important role in the purchase decision stage, but also affects the overall evaluation of tourists' tourism experience after the end of the whole tourism activity.

In terms of social value, the factor load of improved interpersonal communication ability was 0.907, followed by broadening the scope of communication, and finally exchanging new information with others.

Among the value of products and services, the perception of the completeness of rural medical care and fire protection is the most significant factor load of 0.878,



followed by rural entertainment, rural local specialties, and finally the safety and convenience of rural accommodation.

## Suggestions and Future Study

Based on the grounded theoretical analysis approach, continuous comparison with previous research findings, and creation of a scale for assessing the perceived value of rural tourism, this study has generated a multi-dimensional structure of the value of the rural tourist experience. Due to the restricted number of interviewees, time, and substance, despite the research's scientific rigor, it may not accurately reflect how rural visitors are seen as adding value. Because of this, the measuring indicators don't fully reflect the value that rural tourism is regarded to have. In the future research, the dimension, scale and value structure system of rural tourism perceived value can be further supplemented and verified by adding interviews with rural tourists with different demographic characteristics and consumption behavior types, and adding corresponding interview content. The scale of rural tourism perceived value can be further used for the evaluation of rural tourism destination perceived value. In addition, this study did not analyze the impact of dissatisfaction behaviors such as complaints and complaints on loyalty.

By include visitor complaints regarding clothes, food, accommodation, and transportation as well as their actions, the link between perceived value of rural tourism and visitor loyalty may be investigated more thoroughly.

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