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Research Paper

Cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior of outlying island residents: Taking Xiaoliuqiu as a case study

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ABSTRACT:The primary objective of this study was to explore the cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior of outlying island residents. The study participants were Xiaoliuqiu residents who were purposively sampled and completed a questionnaire survey. The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS 18.0 and confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.7, and the relationships between the research constructs were examined. Research results: 1. cultural identity has a significant positive influence on behavioral intentions; 2. and behavioral intentions have a significant positive influence on conservation behavior. The evaluation framework developed in this study could be used as a reference by relevant institutions and in future research on related topics.

Keywords- Cultural identity, Behavioral intentions, Conservation behavior

I.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research motivation and background

Located southwest off the coast of Pingtung County's Donggang Township, Liuqiu Island has a coastline of about 12 km and is just a 30-minute boat ride away from Donggang Township. Commonly called Xiaoliuqiu, the entire island is administered as a township under Pingtung County, Taiwan, and is entirely located off the southwest of Taiwan's main island. With a land area of roughly 6.8 km2, it is the smallest township in Pingtung County and one of Taiwan's offshore coral reef islands. The island benefits from abundant tourism resources, is unaffected by the northeast monsoon, and is suitable for tourism all year round; while its main industry was previously fishing, recent years have seen the emergence of a relatively developed tourism industry on the island (Wikipedia, 2020). As Pingtung County's sole offshore island, Liuqiu Township is rich in marine resources and cultural sights, and, having lived in relative isolation for many years, its residents have formed a unique culture which differs from those found on Taiwan's main island (Huang, 2008). Cultural identity has previously been considered something that is gradually formed by a collective group through the process of continuous learning and searching for meaning. However, the frequent cultural exchanges and interactions in today's pluralistic societies have inevitably reshaped traditional cultural value systems and transformed cultural identity formation from a stable and collective process to one shaped by specific interactions across multiple dimensions (Yu, 2004).

Baker and Cromton (2000) described behavioral intention as the tendency of an individual to exhibit affirmative or negative behavior toward an attitude object. Likewise, Cheng (2019) framed behavioral intention as the expectation and likelihood of an individual exhibiting a particular behavior while engaged in a specific process in the future. That study revealed that participants' cultural identities had a significant, positive, and direct influence on their behavioral intentions, and a significant, positive, but indirect influence on their conservation behavior.

Ecological conservation sometimes comes into conflict with human interests, hence it is necessary to effectively and properly manage ethnic groups and promote harmonious coexistence between man and nature (Wu, 1995). At present, the main problems facing efforts to conserve natural ecologies include the lack of understanding of conservation concepts and consensus, and the severe damage and changes affecting wildlife habitats (Hu, 2005). Xiaoliuqiu's unique geographical environment and natural ecological resources have, thus

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far, supported the rapid growth of tourism on the island. Nonetheless, the substantial economic benefits of tourism have been accompanied by environmental impacts that are difficult to reverse (Zhuang & Huang, 2019). With Xiaoliuqiu serving as the case study for our research, a questionnaire survey was conducted to examine the relationships between the cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior of its residents in light of the environmental impacts of tourism development on Xiaoliuqiu.

1.2 Research objectives

The primary objectives of the study are to 1) explore the factors that influence cultural identity; 2) explore the factors that affect behavioral intentions; 3) explore the factors that affect conservation behavior; and 4) verify the relationship between cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior.

2.1. Cultural identity

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural identity refers to the sense of identity that an individual develops with his or her group or culture due to its influence, as well as the identity that arises from that group or culture (Rao, 2014). Lin, Hsieh, and Eng (2017) defined cultural identity as an individual's self-awareness and commitment to a culture, which includes elements such as language, values, and lifestyle. Wu and Tsai (2017) suggested that cultural identity consists of three elements: cultural investment, cultural belonging, and cultural integration. Similarly, a study by Ke (2016) considered cultural identity as a construct comprising three dimensions, namely cultural integration, cultural investment, and cultural cognition. Meanwhile, Jameson (2007) argued that cultural identity is the personal self-awareness that is formed through the transmission of knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and lifestyles by the formal or informal members of a group. Concerning whether an individual would adopt a given behavior, Wu and Pao (2016) indicated that in addition to an individual's own positive evaluation of a behavior and the recognition of that behavior by an important third party, the individual would also consider whether they had sufficient resources or opportunities to adopt the behavior. Thus, these factors affect their behavioral intentions. In that study, behavioral intention was divided into the four dimensions of loyalty, transfer, premium, and complaint. Moreover, the results of Cheng's (2019) empirical research indicated that the cultural identity of the research participants had a significant, positive, and direct influence on their behavioral intentions, and a significant, positive, but indirect influence on their conservation behavior. Based on the aforementioned studies, the present study has categorized cultural identity into three observed variables, namely cultural cognition, cultural participation, and cultural affection.

2.2. Behavioral intention

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined behavioral intention as an individual's expression of attitude during the process of deciding whether to adopt a particular behavior. It has also been defined as the decision made prior to the emergence of a behavior, as well as the action tendency of an individual to adopt a specific behavior. Ajzen's (1991) research revealed that the behavior of an individual is determined by the presence or absence of behavioral intention, which in turn is influenced by factors such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Lin and Fang (2018), meanwhile, referred to behavioral intention as the likelihood of an individual to adopt certain behaviors, proposing that behavioral intention can predict an individual's subsequent behaviors and reflect their willingness to adopt a certain behavior. Furthermore, they defined it as comprising certain dimensions such as loyalty preservation, recommendation to others, environmental behavior, and emotional preference. Behavioral intention is influenced by the willingness to re-participate, the recommendations to others to participate, the assistance given to promote something, and preferred destination. Kao and Lin (2019) examined behavioral intention using four factor variables, namely the willingness to re-participate, the recommendations to others to participate, the assistance given to promote something, and preferred destination. Based on the above studies, the current study designated loyalty preservation, recommendation to others, environmental behavior, and preferred destination as the four observed variables of behavioral intention.

2.3. Conservation behavior

Zhou (2005) defined conservation behavior as an approach through which tourists individually or collectively prevent or solve environmental problems or issues faced by national parks. In this context, several strategies are often applied, including ecomanagement, consumer/economic behavior, persuasion, political action, and legal action. Hungerford and Volk (1985) stated that conservation behavior can be divided into five categories: eco-management, persuasion, consumerism or consumer action, political action, and law enforcement. Similarly, Shang (2005) felt that a conservation behavior tendency is guided by four variables: eco-management, persuasion, emphasis on conservation, and political action. Meanwhile, Lang, Lei, and Chang (2011) developed a conservation behavior scale that included the five dimensions of eco-management, consumer/economic behavior, persuasion, political action, and law enforcement. Based on the above literature review, this study selected eco-management, law enforcement, persuasion, and political action to be the four observed variables of conservation behavior.

2.4. Research hypotheses

This study sought to explore the relationship between the cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior of outlying island residents. Guided by the literature and our research motivation and objectives, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

Hypothesis 1: Cultural identity has a significant influence on behavioral intention.

Hypothesis 2: Behavioral intention has a significant influence on conservation behavior.

3.1. Research framework

III. Research methods

Figure 1 presents this study's conceptual framework, in which it is assumed that cultural identity influences behavioral intention factors, and behavioral intention influences conservation behavior factors.



Figure 1. Research framework

3.2. Research participants

The questionnaire respondents were residents of Xiaoliuqiu. A total of 500 questionnaires were administered from July 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, and 329 questionnaires were subsequently collected, of which 298 were determined to be valid, indicating a recovery rate of 59%. The invalid questionnaires were excluded from the analysis.

3.3. Research tools and variables

The survey tool adopted in this study was a questionnaire. Three latent variables and 11 observed variables for the behavioral intention and conservation behavior scales were derived from existing studies (Hungerford and Volk, 1985; Ajzen, 1991; Zhou, 2005; Shang, 2005; Jameson, 2007; Lang et al., 2011; Rao, 2014; Ke, 2016; Wu and Pao, 2016; Lin et al. 2017; Wu and Tsai, 2017; Lin

and Fang, 2018; Cheng, 2019; Kao and Lin, 2019). The questionnaire was revised to meet the needs of our research and, based on the conceptual model of this study, relevant items in the questionnaire were examined as research variables.

3.3.1. Exogenous variables

In structural equation modeling (SEM), latent variables that are assumed to be causes are referred to as exogenous latent variables. In our research, new environmental paradigms served as exogenous latent variables. These were reflected by the four observed variables of limits of growth, the relationship between man and nature, environmental knowledge, and general care.

3.3.2. Endogenous variables

Latent variables that are assumed to be effects are referred to as endogenous latent variables. These were categorized into intervening variables and outcome variables based on the relevant causeand-effect relationships (Huang, 2006).

3.3.2.1. Intervening variables

The intervening variable of this study was behavioral intention (i.e., the influence of new environmental paradigms on green consumption was reflected through the latent variable of corporate social responsibility), which was reflected by the four observed variables of community relations, consumer rights, corporate governance, and environmental protection.

3.3.2.2. Outcome variables

The outcome variable of this study was conservation behavior, which comprised the four observed variables of environmental concern, social influence, personal values, and self-image. A seven-point Likert scale was applied to the variables in the questionnaire (7 = "very strongly agree", 6 = "strongly agree", 5 = "agree", 4 = "neutral", 3 = "disagree", 2 = "strongly disagree", and 1 = "very strongly disagree"). The scores of the composite variables were calculated by summing the scores of the items and dividing the total by the number of items.

IV. Results and discussion

4.1. Basic data analysis

Questionnaire responses from 143 female (47.99%) and 155 male (52.01%) respondents were analyzed. Of these, 161 (54.03%) respondents were between the ages of 26 and 45; 213 (71.48%) had obtained at least a general or vocational high school education, up to university education; and 82 (27.52%) were students, comprising the largest segment of the sample in terms of occupation.

4.2. Selection of estimation method

The maximum likelihood method, a structural equation model, is strongly affected by the nature of variable allocation. According to Kline (1998), if the absolute value of a variable's skewness coefficient is greater than three, this indicates extreme skewness. Furthermore, an absolute value greater than 10 for the kurtosis coefficient is considered problematic, while a value greater than 20 is regarded as extreme kurtosis. Table 1 shows that in our study, the skewness values ranged from - 1.507 to 0.443, with all absolute values less than three, while the kurtosis values were between -0.989 and 1.394, with absolute values less than 10. These results indicate that the observed variables' skewness and kurtosis values were not large, thus the maximum likelihood method was deemed to be a suitable model for this study.

Table 1 The mean, standard deviation, coefficient of skewness, and coefficient of kurtosis of the

observed variables Coefficient Coefficient Construct Mean SD of skewness of kurtosis Cultural identity cultural cognition 5.9720 .90809 -0.889 0.345 **ARJHSS Journal** www.arjhss.com Page | 53

| cultural participation | 5.9766 | .62100 | -0.930 | 0.250 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| cultural affection | 5.8392 | .73475 | -1.507 | 2.573 |
| Behavioral intention | | | | |
| loyalty preservation | 6.1186 | .50489 | -0.782 | 0.131 |
| recommendation to others | 6.2173 | .54071 | -1.275 | 1.394 |
| environmental behavior | 6.1457 | .55588 | -0.884 | 0.036 |
| preferred destination | 6.2664 | .61530 | -0.717 | 0.101 |
| Conservation behavior | | | | |
| eco-management | 5.2494 | .66852 | -0.147 | -0.874 |
| law enforcement | 5.2802 | .68893 | -0.038 | -0.989 |
| persuasion | 5.1338 | .67426 | 0.065 | -0.507 |
| political action | 4.9072 | .77726 | 0.443 | -0.761 |

4.3. Testing for offending estimates

General model parameter estimations should not have negative error variance, excessive standard errors, and standardized coefficients greater than 0.95 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Table 2 shows that the parameters' standard errors were positive and significant (the absolute values of the significance test t-values were all greater than 1.96) and none of the standardized parameter values were lower than 0.5 or greater than 0.95, all of which indicated the absence of offending estimates.

| Parameter | Non-standardized | Standard error | t volue | Standardized |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------|--------------|
| | parameter | Standard error | t-value | parameter |
| λ_1 | 1.00 | | | 0.78 |
| λ_2 | 0.69 | 0.05 | 14.40 | 0.79 |
| λ_3 | 0.95 | 0.06 | 15.38 | 0.92 |
| λ_4 | 1.00 | | | 0.90 |
| λ_5 | 1.02 | 0.05 | 21.19 | 0.86 |
| λ_6 | 1.13 | 0.05 | 24.50 | 0.92 |
| λ_7 | 1.01 | 0.06 | 16.30 | 0.75 |
| λ_8 | 1.00 | | | 0.80 |
| λ9 | 1.17 | 0.06 | 18.07 | 0.91 |
| λ_{10} | 1.00 | 0.07 | 15.19 | 0.79 |
| λ_{11} | 1.27 | 0.07 | 17.35 | 0.88 |
| γ_1 | 0.27 | 0.07 | 3.68 | 0.29 |
| β_1 | 0.19 | 0.04 | 4.70 | 0.23 |

Table 2 Model parameter estimates

Note: : t-value > 1.96 (*p<0.05); t-value > 2.58 (**p<0.010)

4.4. Reliability testing

As shown in Table 3, the R^2 values of the 11 observed variables ranged from 0.56 to 0.85, aligning with academic recommendations that the reliability R² values of individual observed variables must be greater than 0.20 (Bentler & Wu, 1993). The construct reliability values of the three latent variables were 0.87, 0.92, and 0.75, adhering to academic recommendations that these value should be greater than or equal to 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998).

| Table 5 K and constructed renability | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|--|
| Construct | R^2 | Constructed reliability | Average extracted | variance | | |
| Cultural identity | | 0.87 | 0.70 | | | |
| cultural cognition | 0.61 | | | | | |
| cultural participation | 0.63 | | | | | |
| cultural affection | 0.85 | | | | | |
| ARJHSS Journal | W | ww.arjhss.com | | Page 54 | | |

Table 3 \mathbb{R}^2 and constructed reliability

2021

| Behavioral intention | | 0.92 | 0.74 | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|--|
| loyalty preservation | 0.81 | | | |
| recommendation to others | 0.74 | | | |
| environmental behavior | 0.85 | | | |
| preferred destination | 0.56 | | | |
| Conservation behavior | | 0.75 | 0.72 | |
| eco-management | 0.64 | | | |
| law enforcement | 0.82 | | | |
| persuasion | 0.63 | | | |
| political action | 0.77 | | | |
| | | | | |

4.5. Validity testing

Table 2 shows that the observed variables' factor loading (λ) values were all between 0.75 and 0.92, statistically significant, and higher than the threshold value of 0.45, indicating that the observed variables sufficiently reflected the latent variables with which they are linked (Bentler & Wu, 1993). For the three latent variables, the contributions of the observed variables with which they are linked were greater than those of the measurement errors.

4.6. Goodness of fit test for the overall model

With respect to overall model indices, SEM scholars have proposed the use of at least the three following types of evaluation methods for goodness of fit (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

4.6.1. Absolute fit indices

- 1. Goodness of fit index (GFI): Scholars generally suggest that having a GFI greater than 0.9 indicates a good fit, which was achieved in our study with a theoretical model value of 0.96.
- 2. Root mean square residual (RMR): Having an RMR smaller than or equal to 0.05 indicates a good fit, which was achieved in our study with a theoretical model value of 0.031.
- 3. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA): Having an RMSEA smaller than or equal to 0.08 indicates a good fit, which was achieved in our study with a theoretical model value of 0.053.

4.6.2. Relative fit indices

- 1. Normed fit index (NFI): Generally, an NFI of 0.9 or greater is considered acceptable, thus our model was acceptable as its theoretical model value was 0.97.
- 2. Non-normed fit index (NNFI): Generally, an NNFI of 0.9 or greater is considered acceptable, thus our model was acceptable as its theoretical model value was 0.98.
- 3. Comparative fit index (CFI): Generally, a CFI of 0.9 or greater is considered acceptable, thus our model was acceptable as its theoretical model value was 0.99.

4.6.3. Parsimonious fit indices

- 1. Parsimony normed fit index (PNFI): Scholars suggest that a PNFI of 0.5 or greater should serve as the passing threshold for models. This criterion was met by our model with a theoretical model value of 0.69 (which is close to 0.5 and, therefore, acceptable).
- 2. Parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI): Generally, a PGFI greater than 0.5 is used as the passing threshold for models. This was achieved by our model with a theoretical model value of 0.57 (which is close to 0.5 and, therefore, acceptable).
- 3. Normed chi-square = χ^2/df_m : A model value less than three indicates a good fit. This was achieved in our study with a theoretical model value of 1.82.

The model's overall goodness of fit was tested to determine how well the observed data fit the theoretical hypothesis model. The above findings demonstrate that our model's overall goodness of fit was acceptable.

4.7. Testing of path relationship

ARJHSS Journal

2021

Figure 2 shows the empirical results of our research. The parameter estimations demonstrated two main results. Firstly, the influence of cultural identity on behavioral intention had a fully standardized coefficient of 0.29 (t = 3.68), indicating statistical significance and supporting Hypothesis 1. Secondly, the influence of behavioral intention on conservation behavior had a fully standardized coefficient of 0.23 (t = 4.70), indicating statistical significance and supporting Hypothesis 2. Therefore, both research hypotheses were supported and the empirical results met our expectations.



Figure 2. Standardized paths

V. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study sought to explore the relationships between the cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior of outlying island residents. Cause-and-effect relationships were established for the three latent variables of cultural identity, behavioral intention, and conservation behavior. SEM supported the hypotheses, thus the following conclusions were drawn.

The empirical findings indicated that the outlying island residents had a significant and positive influence on cultural identity and behavioral intention, which corresponds to the findings of Hao (2014), Li (2015), and Cheng (2019). In our study, cultural identity consisted of the three observed variables of cultural participation, cultural affection, and cultural cognition, which had factor loading values of 0.78, 0.79, and 0.92, respectively. This suggests that cultural cognition was the most important dimension of the residents' cultural identity, followed by cultural affection and cultural participation.

It was also confirmed that behavioral intention has a significant and positive influence on conservation behavior, a finding that echoes those of previous studies. (Lin & Chen, 2007; Cheng, 2019). In our study, behavioral intention consisted of the four observed variables of loyalty preservation, recommendation to others, environmental behavior, and preferred destination, which had factor loading values of 0.90, 0.86, 0.92, and 0.75, respectively. These results suggest that environmental behavior was the most important dimension of the residents' conservation behavior, followed by loyalty preservation, recommendation to others, and preferred destination. Similarly, conservation behavior also consisted of four observed variables (eco-management, law enforcement, persuasion, and political action), which had factor loading values of 0.80, 0.91, 0.79, and 0.88, respectively. Thus, law enforcement was found to be the most important dimension, followed by political action, eco-management, and persuasion. These findings show that law enforcement remains the most effective tool for inducing conservation behavior, while moral persuasion is considerably less effective as an alternative approach.

5.2. Recommendations

With the establishment of environmental protection and sustainable development policies and laws, public awareness of the importance of conservation behavior has gradually been expanding. Since this study only investigated the residents of Taiwan's Xiaoliuqiu Island and did not extend the questionnaire to other outlying islands, future studies could consider expanding the scope of this research to Taiwan as a whole, in order to develop a more comprehensive causal model for describing the relationship between cultural identity, behavioral intentions, and conservation behavior.

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