

Social Influences in Tourist Destination Choice: An Empirical Informatics-Based Analysis Using SPSS

Zheng Chenghui ^{1,2,*}, Ali Khatibi ² and Jacqueline Tham ²

¹ Hefei Technology College, Hefei, China, 230012

² Postgraduate Centre, Management & Science University, Shah Alam (40100), Malaysia
115777001@qq.com; alik@msu.edu.my; jacqueline@msu.edu.my

Abstract. Understanding how social influences shape tourist destination selection has become increasingly important in the era of digital platforms and networked decision-making. This study develops a comprehensive framework integrating reference group influence, social media interaction, and socio-cultural environment factors, and empirically tests their effects on destination choice using SPSS-based statistical modeling. A structured questionnaire was distributed to tourists, and the collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. The results demonstrate that (1) reference groups, including family, friends, and tourism communities, exert a direct and significant impact on travel choices; (2) social media platforms amplify information dissemination and user-generated content, strongly guiding destination awareness and preference; and (3) cultural values, social trends, and major events significantly influence destination attractiveness and decision-making. Collectively, these findings confirm that social factors are key drivers of tourism logistics and service demand, with implications for data-driven destination marketing and tourism service management. The study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical strategies by offering evidence-based insights for tourism enterprises, social media platforms, and destination managers to enhance competitiveness through social-influence-informed decision support systems.

Keywords: social influence, tourism decision-making, reference groups, social media, cultural environment, SPSS

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the global economy and the significant improvement of people's living standards, tourism has transformed from a luxury enjoyed by a few to a widely participated leisure activity by the general public. Tourism is occupying an increasingly important position in the global economic landscape. Data from the World Tourism Organization shows that in recent years, the number of international tourists worldwide has been continuously rising, and the scale of the tourism consumption market has been continuously expanding. Against this backdrop, the selection of tourist destinations has become one of the core links in the development of the tourism industry, directly related to the operational efficiency of tourism enterprises and the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

In the process of tourism decision-making, social influencing factors play an extremely crucial role. Human beings are social animals. Tourism decisions are not isolated individual behaviors but are formed in a complex social network and cultural environment. Social factors such as recommendations from friends and family, travel sharing on social media, discussions in online travel communities, and evaluations by travel bloggers all influence tourists' perception, preference, and choice of travel destinations to varying degrees. For instance, when a tourist sees a friend sharing the beautiful scenery and unique experiences of a certain travel destination on social media, he may develop a strong interest in that destination and add it to the list of potential travel destinations (Barbu, F.S., Sanda, G., Rusu, C.M. & Balint, P.G., 2024).

From the perspective of the development of the tourism industry, it is of great practical significance to conduct an in-depth study on the influence mechanism of society on the choice of tourist destinations. Tourism enterprises can accurately identify customer groups based on research results, formulate more targeted and attractive marketing strategies, and enhance market share and operational efficiency. Tourism enterprises can collaborate with social media platforms to invite well-known travel bloggers to promote their destinations, leveraging their influence to attract more potential tourists. Tourism destination managers can also, based on research conclusions, optimize the allocation of tourism resources, strengthen the construction of tourism infrastructure, and improve the quality of tourism services, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of the tourism destination and achieving sustainable development of the tourism industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theories related to Tourist Destination Selection

Tourism decision-making theory holds an important position in the research of tourism destination selection. This theory holds that tourism decision-making is a complex process involving multiple stages and various factors. Mayo and other scholars classify tourism decision-making methods into conventional decision-making and broad decision-making. Conventional decision-making refers to the situation where decision-makers, based on established concepts and the knowledge stored in their minds, quickly determine the travel destination almost without thinking. For instance, some middle and lower-class Western tourists go on vacation to a certain seaside every year. Extensive decision-making, on the other hand, occurs when decision-makers believe they have a shallow understanding of effective choices and a strong demand for information, thus they are willing to spend more time collecting data to enhance their understanding of the travel destination. Modern tourism, especially medium and long-distance travel, is relatively expensive. People usually carefully choose their travel destinations, hoping to have an unforgettable travel experience and the greatest physical and mental satisfaction (Liu, X., Mehraliyev, F., Liu, C., & Schuckert, M., 2019). Therefore, for the majority of people, the choice of a tourist destination is a highly extensive decision-making process.

Consumer behavior theory is also widely applied in the tourism decision-making process. When consumers choose a travel destination, they often go through a series of steps. First, they determine their own needs. Consumers will clarify their travel demands based on factors such as travel purposes,

interests, physical health, and economic capacity. For instance, a person who wants to relax might choose a seaside resort, while someone interested in history and culture might select an ancient city as their destination. Secondly, they collect information. Consumers can learn about the features, transportation conditions, accommodation and dining options, as well as other tourism activities of the destination through Internet search, consultation with friends and family, reading travel guides and travelogues, etc. Then, they evaluate various options. Consumers will comprehensively consider factors such as budget, time, safety and environment of different travel destinations, evaluate and rank them, and choose the most suitable travel destination according to their own preferences and constraints. Next, they made a decision. After determining the travel destination, they began to plan the specific details of the trip, such as booking air tickets, hotels and travel activities. Finally, they experience and evaluate (Băcilă, M. F., Ciornea, R., Souca, L. M., & Drule, A. M., 2022). During the journey, consumers experience the culture, scenery and entertainment activities of the destination and evaluate the entire trip. This evaluation result will influence their future choices of travel destinations. If the travel experience is good, they may recommend the destination to others and become loyal repeat customers.

2.2. Research on Social Impact

In the field of tourism, research on social impact involves multiple aspects. The rise of social media has brought profound changes to the dissemination of tourism information and tourism decision-making. A large number of studies have shown that social media has a significant impact on the shaping of the image of tourist destinations and the dissemination of word-of-mouth. When tourists share their travel experiences, post beautiful scenic photos and leave travel reviews on social media platforms, it can enhance the popularity and reputation of the travel destination and attract more potential tourists. The wonderful travel moments and unique experiences shared by tourists on social media may arouse the yearning of other users for the destination. On the contrary, negative comments on social media may also damage the image of a tourist destination. For instance, tourists' complaints about poor tour guide service or outdated facilities may damage the reputation of a tourist destination. Some celebrities, opinion leaders and Internet celebrities on social media may also guide a large number of fans and influence their views and choices of travel destinations.

Word-of-mouth communication, as an important social influencing factor, plays a crucial role in the selection of tourist destinations. Word-of-mouth communication refers to the process by which consumers, during their consumption, convey information about a product or service to others through their own personal experiences and feelings. In the tourism field, word-of-mouth communication mainly manifests as tourists introducing the advantages and disadvantages of tourist attractions and their experiences and feelings to others in oral, written or other forms during their travels. This information will not only influence the travel decisions of other tourists, but also may have a profound impact on the brand image of tourist attractions. Word-of-mouth communication has the characteristics of spontaneity, emotionality, sociality and infectivity. Tourists' evaluations and recommendations of tourist destinations are often based on personal preferences, values and other factors, with a strong emotional color. They spread in interpersonal networks, have high credibility and a fast dissemination speed. Positive word-of-mouth can enhance the popularity and reputation of a tourist destination, while negative word-of-mouth may damage the image of the tourist destination and even affect its survival and development (Gonzalez - Rodriguez, M. R., Martinez -Torres, R., & Toral, S, 2016).

The reference group theory is also widely applied in the research of tourism consumption behavior. The reference group refers to the individual or group that an individual uses as a reference or comparison object when making purchase or consumption decisions. The behaviors of tourists during their travels, including their manners, perceptions and consumption behaviors, are all profoundly influenced by the reference group. When choosing a travel destination, people may refer to the travel experiences and suggestions of family members, friends or colleagues, or be influenced by groups such as the travel community and travel bloggers. The degree and way in which different types of reference groups

influence the choice of tourist destinations vary. Close reference groups such as family and friends often have a more direct and significant influence, while non-close reference groups such as tourism communities and tourism bloggers influence tourists' cognition and preferences by providing information and role models (Jolanta Nalivaikė, 2025).

2.3.Limitations and Prospects of Existing Research

Although existing research has achieved certain results in the selection of tourist destinations and social impacts, there are still certain limitations. In terms of multi-factor comprehensive analysis, current research mostly focuses on the impact of a single social influencing factor on the choice of tourist destinations, lacking comprehensive consideration and systematic analysis of multiple social influencing factors. In fact, social media, word-of-mouth promotion, reference groups and other social influencing factors interact with each other and jointly affect the decision-making process of tourists. Therefore, future research needs to construct more comprehensive and systematic theoretical models to comprehensively analyze the interaction of various social influencing factors and their influence mechanisms on the choice of tourist destinations(Aurimas Morkvėnas, 2025).

3. Analysis of social influencing factors

3.1.Reference Group influence

3.1.1 Suggestions from family and friends

As the closest reference group to tourists, the advice of family and friends plays a crucial role in the process of choosing a travel destination. According to relevant research and actual survey data, over 65% of tourists will proactively consult their family and friends about the information of their travel destinations when making travel plans (Murphy, L. Mascardo, G., & Benckendorff, P., 2007), and take their suggestions as important decision-making references.

In many families, traveling is an important way to enhance family relationships and share happy times. The close relationship and mutual trust among family members make the travel experiences and suggestions shared by them more persuasive. Travel recommendations among friends should not be ignored either. Groups of friends usually share similar interests, lifestyles and consumption concepts. The travel experiences they share are more likely to resonate and arouse interest. In social activities, friends often share their travel stories and photos. These vivid descriptions and wonderful moments often inspire others' yearning for a certain travel destination(Giedrius Čyras, Jolanta Nalivaikė, 2024).

3.1.2 The Role of Tourism Communities and Opinion Leaders

With the rapid development of Internet technology, a large number of tourism communities have emerged, becoming an important platform for tourists to obtain tourism information and exchange tourism experiences. Tourist communities are usually composed of a group of people who share a common interest and passion for traveling. They gather together through online platforms to share travel guides, travel notes, photos and videos, and discuss the pros and cons of travel destinations and travel experiences (Wang, Y., Yu, Q., & Fesenmaier, D. R., 2002). In a tourism community, members interact and communicate frequently, and information spreads rapidly, which can form a strong community influence.

Tourism community opinion leaders refer to those who have a high reputation, professional knowledge and rich experience in the tourism field. They have a large number of fans and followers in the community, and their words and deeds can have a significant impact on other members. Opinion leaders usually attract the attention and trust of community members by writing high-quality travel guides and sharing unique travel experiences and insights.

In the selection of tourist destinations, tourism communities and opinion leaders play an important guiding role. When a certain tourist destination becomes a hot topic in the tourism community, it often attracts the attention and participation of a large number of members, thereby enhancing the popularity

and heat of the tourist destination. The suggestions and evaluations of opinion leaders can directly influence community members' perception and attitude towards tourist destinations. If a well-known travel blogger recommends a certain travel destination on their social media and gives it a very high evaluation, it is very likely to arouse the interest and yearning of fans for this destination, and even prompt them to include this destination in their travel plans (Martynas Rajunčius, Algita Miečinskienė, 2024).

3.2.Social Media Impact

3.2.1 Information Dissemination and Exposure

The speed and breadth of information dissemination on social media are astonishing, and it has become a powerful engine for enhancing the popularity of tourist destinations. Social media platforms represented by Weibo, wechat and Douyin have a huge user base, and information can spread to every corner of the world in an instant. The beautiful scenery, delicious food, cultural activities and other information of tourist destinations can be quickly spread through users' sharing, forwarding, liking and other means, attracting the attention of a large number of potential tourists.

The algorithmic recommendation mechanism of social media platforms has further enhanced the dissemination effect of information on tourist destinations (Ghosh, P., & Mukherjee, S., 2023). These algorithms will precisely push relevant travel content based on users' interests, behaviors and preferences, enabling travel destination information to reach the target audience more effectively. For users who are interested in natural scenery, the platform will push travel information, such as the unique mountains of Zhangjiajie and the colorful forests of Jiuzhaigou. For users who are passionate about history and culture, it will recommend introductions to historical sites such as the Forbidden City and the Terracotta Army. This kind of precise push has greatly increased the exposure and appeal of information about tourist destinations, and raised the possibility of potential tourists choosing their destinations.

The immediacy and interactivity of social media are also conducive to the promotion of tourist destinations. Tourist destinations can release the latest tourism information, promotional activities, and special experience projects in real time, interact with users in real time, answer their questions, and enhance users' understanding and trust in the destinations. Before the peak tourist season arrives, tourist destinations release travel guides, transportation guides and hotel reservation information in advance through social media to help tourists better plan their trips (Krishna Bahadur Thapa, 2025). Meanwhile, users' questions and feedback on social media can also prompt tourist destinations to improve services in a timely manner and enhance tourists' satisfaction.

3.2.2 The Impact of User-generated Content

User-generated content, such as travelogues, photos and videos, plays a crucial role in the travel decision-making process of potential tourists. These contents are vivid presentations of users' real travel experiences, with high credibility and reference value. They can provide potential tourists with first-hand information about the travel destination and help them understand the actual situation of the destination more comprehensively and deeply.

A detailed travel note can describe the unique charm of a tourist destination to potential visitors, including the features of scenic spots, local customs, food recommendations and precautions during the trip (Topler, J.P., 2018). Photos and videos present the beautiful scenery and unique experiences of tourist destinations in an intuitive and vivid way, which can evoke emotional resonance among potential tourists and inspire their yearning for travel. On social platforms like Xiaohongshu, a large number of exquisite travel photos and short videos are attracting users' attention.

3.3.Social and Cultural Environment Impact

3.3.1 Cultural Values and Travel Preferences

Cultural values, as the core elements of the social and cultural environment, profoundly influence people's travel preferences and thus play a significant role in the selection of travel destinations. People from different cultural backgrounds have different values and life concepts, and these differences are fully reflected in travel behaviors.

In cultures that emphasize family values, such as China, South Korea and other Asian countries, family travel is very popular. People tend to choose travel destinations and activities that are suitable for the whole family to participate in, in order to enhance the bonds among family members. Theme parks, seaside resorts and historical and cultural cities have become popular choices for family trips due to their rich entertainment facilities, pleasant environment and profound cultural heritage. During holidays, many Chinese families choose to visit Shanghai Disneyland, allowing children to spend happy times in a cheerful atmosphere and also providing opportunities for family members to participate and interact. Or visit historical sites such as the Forbidden City and the Great Wall in Beijing to let children understand the history and culture of the country and enhance their sense of national pride (Tautvydas Lanauskas, 2024).

In Western cultures that emphasize individualism and free exploration, traveling alone or with friends is more common (Meng, F., 2010). Travelers are more in pursuit of unique travel experiences and personal growth, enjoying challenging the unknown and exploring remote areas and off-the-beaten-path scenic spots. Backpackers are passionate about going to the African savannah to track wild animals and experience the original charm of nature. Or venture deep into the tropical rainforests of South America to explore the mysterious ancient civilization sites and satisfy their curiosity about the unknown world.

3.3.2 The impact of social trends and hot events

Social trends and hot events are like a powerful magnet that can quickly trigger a tourism boom and profoundly influence the choice of tourist destinations. With the development of society and the change of people's lifestyles, various popular trends keep emerging, such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, and food tourism, guiding people's travel interests and choices (Saravanan, D., & Nithyaprakash, V., 2016).

Hot events can attract global attention in a short period of time and trigger a tourism boom. Major sports events, cultural festivals, popular film and television works, etc. may all become tourist hotspots. For instance, hosting international sports events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup will attract a large number of sports enthusiasts and tourists to the host cities to experience the passion and vitality of sports events, and at the same time drive the development of local tourism. The successful hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics attracted tourists from all over the world. While watching the Olympic Games, they also visited scenic spots in Beijing, such as the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, which greatly enhanced Beijing's popularity and influence as a tourist destination (Ruizan Mekvabidze, 2024).

4. Research Design

4.1. Research Hypotheses

Based on the analysis of social influencing factors in the previous section, this study proposes the following hypotheses to explore the impact of various social influencing factors on tourists' choice of travel destinations:

Hypothesis H1: The reference group influence has a significant positive impact on tourists' choice of travel destinations.

Among them, the suggestions from friends and family (H1a) and the role of the tourism community and opinion leaders (H1b) will have a positive impact on tourists' choices of travel destinations. As close individuals in a tourist's life, family members and friends often share travel experiences and suggestions based on their understanding and trust in the tourist, which can easily resonate with and arouse the tourist's interest. When family and friends recommend a certain tourist destination, tourists

will think that the destination has a certain appeal and reliability, thereby increasing the possibility of choosing it. Tourism communities and opinion leaders influence tourists' cognition and decision-making by providing professional tourism information, unique tourism perspectives and rich tourism experiences. The genuine travel experiences shared by members of the tourism community can enable tourists to have a more intuitive understanding of the situation of the travel destination. The suggestions and evaluations of opinion leaders are authoritative and influential, and can guide tourists' travel preferences and choices (Jurgita Vijūnė, 2023).

Hypothesis H2: The influence of social media has a significant positive impact on tourists' choice of travel destinations.

Specifically, the information dissemination and exposure (H2a) on social media and the influence of user-generated content (H2b) will have a positive impact on tourists' choices of travel destinations. Social media platforms have powerful dissemination capabilities and can quickly convey information about tourist destinations to a large number of potential visitors, increasing the popularity and exposure of the destinations. When tourists frequently see information about a certain tourist destination on social media, they will pay more attention and be more interested. User-generated content such as travelogues, photos and videos is a presentation of tourists' real travel experiences and has high credibility and reference value. These contents can help potential tourists have a more comprehensive understanding of the features and charm of the tourist destination, and stimulate their desire to travel.

Hypothesis H3: The social and cultural environment has a significant positive impact on tourists' choice of travel destinations.

Among them, cultural values and tourism preferences (H3a) as well as the influence of social trends and hot events (H3b) will have a positive impact on tourists' choices of travel destinations. Cultural values are the viewpoints and evaluation criteria formed by people in their long-term social life, which profoundly influence people's travel preferences. Tourists from different cultural backgrounds have different choices of travel destinations due to the differences in cultural values. For instance, in cultures that emphasize family values, family travel is more popular, and tourists tend to choose travel destinations that are suitable for the whole family to participate in. In cultures that emphasize individualism and free exploration, traveling alone or with friends is more common. Tourists are more in pursuit of unique travel experiences and personal growth, and they tend to choose challenging and innovative travel destinations. Social trends and hot events have strong timeliness and appeal, and can quickly trigger a tourism boom. When a tourist destination becomes the focus of a social trend or a hot event, it will attract a large number of tourists to visit (Saravanan, D., & Nithyaprakash, V., 2016).

The conceptual framework can be seen clearly in Figure 1

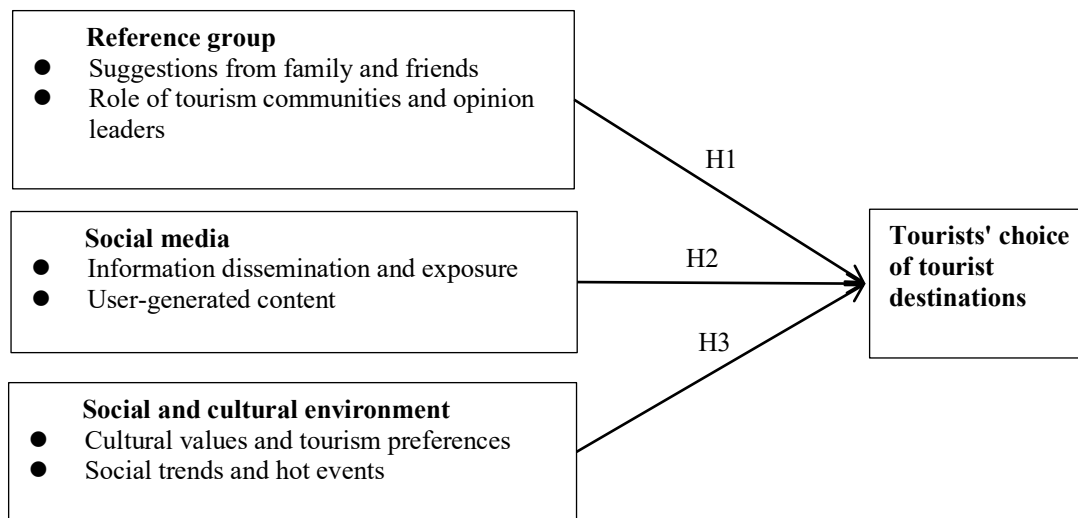


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework

H1a: Suggestions from family and friends → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

H1b: Role of tourism communities and opinion leaders → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

H2a: Information dissemination and exposure → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

H2b: User-generated content → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

H3a: Cultural values and tourism preferences → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

H3b: Social trends and hot events → Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

4.2. Questionnaire Design

Independent variables: The independent variables of this study are social influencing factors, specifically including reference group influence, social media influence, and social and cultural environment influence. The influence of the reference group is measured by the extent to which suggestions from family and friends are influenced and the role of the tourism community and opinion leaders in tourists' choice of travel destinations. Social media influence is measured from two aspects: the dissemination and exposure of information and the influence of user-generated content. The impact of the social and cultural environment is measured from two aspects: cultural values and travel preferences, as well as the influence of social trends and hot events. For instance, understand how tourists' cultural values influence their preferences for travel destinations and whether their choices of travel destinations will change due to social trends or hot events. All measurements were conducted using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "no effect at all" and 5 indicates "a very significant effect".

Dependent variable: The dependent variable is the choice of travel destination, which is measured by asking tourists about their travel destinations in the past year, their planned travel destinations in the future, as well as the factors and decision-making processes they considered when choosing a travel destination. For the selection of tourist destinations, open-ended questions are adopted, allowing tourists to fill in freely. For the factors to be considered and the decision-making process, a combination of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions is adopted to comprehensively understand the tourism decision-making behavior of tourists. All measurements were conducted using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "no effect at all" and 5 indicates "a very significant effect" (Ilze Brante, Biruta Sloka, 2023).

5. Data analysis based on SPSS

5.1.Descriptive Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the collected valid questionnaire data using SPSS software, aiming to present the basic statistical information of the sample data, including mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, etc., thereby initially understanding the central tendency, dispersion degree and distribution characteristics of each variable. The results of descriptive statistical analysis are as follows:

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Reference group	3.3619	.04173	.82628	.683	.152	.123	-.921	.246
Suggestions from family and friends	3.4031	.04943	.97860	.958	-.106	.123	-.934	.246
Role of tourism communities and opinion leaders	3.3208	.04932	.97651	.954	-.002	.123	-1.033	.246
Social media	3.2962	.04165	.82456	.680	.059	.123	-.961	.246
Information dissemination and exposure	3.2698	.05200	1.02950	1.060	-.036	.123	-1.180	.246
User-generated content	3.3173	.04721	.93475	.874	-.038	.123	-.974	.246
Social and cultural environment	3.3326	.04172	.82611	.682	.030	.123	-.833	.246
Cultural values and tourism preferences	3.3469	.04747	.93994	.883	-.043	.123	-.899	.246
Social trends and hot events	3.3182	.05275	1.04439	1.091	-.143	.123	-1.069	.246
Tourists' choice of tourist destinations	3.3814	.04876	.96533	.932	-.075	.123	-1.050	.246

Through descriptive statistical analysis, some correlations and trends between social influencing factors and the choice of tourist destinations were initially revealed, providing a basis and direction for subsequent in-depth analysis, and also enabling us to have a more intuitive understanding of tourists' tourism decision-making behaviors.

5.2.Correlation Analysis

To deeply explore the intrinsic relationship between various social influencing factors and the choice of tourist destinations, SPSS software was used for correlation analysis to determine whether there was a significant linear correlation among these factors and to clarify the direction and intensity of the correlation. The results are shown in the following table 2:

Table 2 Correlations analysis

	Reference group	Suggestions from family and friends	Role of tourism communities and opinion leaders	Information dissemination and exposure	User-generated content	Social and cultural environment	Cultural values and tourism preferences	Social trends and hot events	Tourists' choice of tourist destinations
Reference group	1								
Suggestions from family and friends	.846**	1							
Role of tourism communities and opinion leaders	.845**	.429**	1						
Social media	.570**	.476**	.488**	1					
Information dissemination and exposure	.503**	.436**	.415**	.821**	1				
User-generated content	.461**	.371**	.408**	.864**	.423**	1			
Social and cultural environment	.529**	.427**	.468**	.520**	.421**	.455**	1		
Cultural values and tourism preferences	.378**	.311**	.328**	.405**	.332**	.350**	.812**	1	
Social trends and hot events	.497**	.395**	.445**	.459**	.367**	.405**	.851**	.385**	1
Tourists' choice of tourist destinations	.481**	.401**	.413**	.473**	.407**	.393**	.468**	.360**	.417**

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis results show that there is a significant positive correlation between the influence of the reference group and the choice of tourist destinations, with a correlation coefficient of 0.481**, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This fully demonstrates that the greater the influence of the reference group, the higher the possibility that tourists will choose the tourist destinations recommended or influenced by it.

Among them, the correlation coefficient between suggestions from relatives and friends and the choice of tourist destinations is 0.401**, and the correlation coefficient between the role of tourist communities and opinion leaders and the choice of tourist destinations is 0.413**. The two show a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level. This further indicates that as the closest reference group for tourists, the suggestions of family and friends have a direct and significant impact on the choice of travel destinations. And tourism communities and opinion leaders, with their professional information and unique perspectives, also largely guide tourists' choices. For instance, when family members and friends enthusiastically recommend a certain tourist destination and share their wonderful experiences there, tourists are often influenced and include that destination in their choice range. The heated discussions in the tourism community about a certain destination and the positive recommendations of opinion leaders will also attract the attention and interest of many members, thereby increasing the probability of choosing that destination.

The influence of social media also shows a significant positive correlation with the choice of tourist destinations, with a correlation coefficient of 0.473**, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that social media plays a significant role in the dissemination of tourism information and the

process of tourism decision-making. Specifically, the correlation coefficient between information dissemination and exposure and tourists' destination selection is 0.407**, and the correlation coefficient between the influence of user-generated content and tourists' destination selection is 0.393**. The two show a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level. This means that the extensive dissemination and exposure of tourist destination information on social media platforms can enhance the destination's popularity and appeal, and increase the chances of being chosen by tourists. User-generated content such as travelogues, photos and videos, due to their authenticity and vividness, can provide valuable references for potential tourists and stimulate their desire to travel.

There is also a significant positive correlation between the influence of the social and cultural environment and the choice of tourist destinations, with a correlation coefficient of 0.468**, which is significant at the 0.01 level. It can be seen from this that social and cultural environmental factors play an undeniable role in the selection of tourist destinations. Among them, the correlation coefficient between cultural values and tourism preferences is 0.360**, and the correlation coefficient between the influence of social trends and hot events and the choice of tourism destinations is 0.417**. The two show a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level. This indicates that tourists' cultural values profoundly influence their travel preferences. Tourists from different cultural backgrounds will choose travel destinations that are consistent with their own values and interests. Social trends and hot events have strong timeliness and appeal, which can quickly trigger a tourism boom and prompt tourists to choose relevant travel destinations.

Through relevant analysis, it can be known that there is a significant positive correlation between various social influencing factors and the choice of tourist destinations, laying a solid foundation for further exploring its influence mechanism and constructing a regression model.

5.3. Regression Analysis

In order to deeply explore the influence degree and significance of social influencing factors on the choice of tourist destinations, a multiple linear regression model was constructed using SPSS software. The choice of tourist destinations was taken as the dependent variable, and the influence of the reference group, social media, and social and cultural environment was taken as the independent variables. When constructing a regression model, the first step is to conduct a multicollinearity test on the data to ensure that there is no severe linear correlation among the independent variables and to avoid bias in the regression results. Through the variance inflation factor (VIF) test, it was found that the VIF values of each variable were all less than 10, indicating that there was no problem of multicollinearity. The results are shown in the following table 3 and table 4:

Table 3. Values of R Square

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.570 ^a	.324	.319	.79647

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reference group, Social media, Social and cultural environment

Table 4. Regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.717	.199		3.598	.000		
	Reference group	.274	.063	.235	4.359	.000	.601	1.664
	Social media	.257	.063	.220	4.109	.000	.609	1.642

Social and cultural environment	.269	.061	.230	4.437	.000	.649	1.541
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Dependent Variable: Tourists' choice of tourist destinations

The results of the regression analysis show that the overall goodness of fit of the model is good, and the adjusted R^2 is 0.324, indicating that the independent variable can explain 32.4% of the variation in the dependent variable. The results of the F-test show that the model is significant at the 0.01 level, that is, the comprehensive influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is significant.

In terms of independent variables, the standardized regression coefficient of the reference group influence is 0.235, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the reference group influence has a significant positive impact on the choice of tourist destinations. That is, the greater the influence of the reference group, the higher the possibility that tourists will choose the tourist destinations affected by it. The standardized regression coefficient of the influence of social media is 0.22, which is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that the influence of social media also has a significant positive impact on the selection of tourist destinations. social media plays an important role in the process of tourism information dissemination and tourism decision-making. The standardized regression coefficient of the influence of the social and cultural environment is 0.23, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the influence of the social and cultural environment also has a significant positive impact on the selection of tourist destinations. The factors of the social and cultural environment play an undeniable role in the selection of tourist destinations.

Through regression analysis, the degree of influence of various social influencing factors on the selection of tourist destinations is quantified, and the important role of these factors in the tourism decision-making process is clarified, providing a scientific basis for tourism enterprises and tourism destination managers to formulate marketing strategies and development plans.

5.4. Discussion on Data Analysis Results

The results of the data analysis fully verified the research hypothesis, indicating that various social influencing factors have a significant positive impact on tourists' choice of travel destinations. The influence of reference groups plays a key role in the selection of tourist destinations (Ruizan Mekvabidze, Roman Smiatanski, 2022). As the closest social circle of tourists, the advice from family and friends is often based on deep emotional trust and an understanding of the tourists' personal preferences, and is highly persuasive. Tourism communities and opinion leaders, with their professional knowledge and rich experience, provide tourists with comprehensive and in-depth tourism information, broaden their horizons and guide their travel preferences (Son Le Thai, 2025).

The influence of social media has become an important driving force for tourists when choosing destinations. The information dissemination and exposure functions of social media enable the information of tourist destinations to reach potential tourists around the world quickly, greatly enhancing the popularity of the destinations. User-generated content, with its authentic and vivid characteristics, provides potential tourists with intuitive references for travel experiences and stimulates their desire to travel. For instance, on Douyin, a short video showcasing the charming scenery of a tourist destination may receive millions of likes and shares in a short period of time, attracting a large number of tourists to visit. The detailed travel guides and exquisite photos shared by users on Xiaohongshu will also attract many fans to experience them (Yongqiang Jia, 2025).

The influence of the social and cultural environment cannot be ignored. Cultural values determine tourists' travel preferences, and there are obvious differences in the demands of tourists from different cultural backgrounds for travel destinations. Social trends and hot events have strong timeliness and appeal, and can trigger a tourism boom in a short period of time (Ishfaq Ahmed, 2024).

The influence mechanisms and differences of various social influencing factors are also quite obvious. The influence of the reference group mainly affects tourists' decisions through emotional trust

and information sharing, which is highly targeted and personalized. Social media influences tourists through the advantages of Internet dissemination. It has a large amount of information, extensive social interaction, fast dissemination speed and wide coverage. The influence of the social and cultural environment affects tourists' travel preferences and choices at both macro and micro levels through the cultural values formed over a long period of time and short-term social hot events(Soohyo Kim, 2024).

These research achievements have significant practical significance for the tourism industry. Tourism enterprises and destination managers should fully attach importance to social influencing factors, enhance interaction with reference groups, actively utilize social media for publicity and promotion, and at the same time pay attention to changes in the social and cultural environment, promptly adjust marketing strategies to meet the needs of tourists and enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

6. Conclusion

Tourist destinations should make full use of social media platforms for publicity and promotion to enhance their popularity and exposure. Choose social media platforms that suit your own positioning and target audience, such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu for young people, and wechat and Weibo for the general public, and formulate personalized social media marketing strategies. Create exquisite visual content such as pictures and videos to showcase the unique charm of the tourist destination and attract users' attention and sharing. Cooperate with social media platforms to place targeted advertisements and enhance the effectiveness of information dissemination(Kamarulzaman Ab. Aziz., 2023). Encourage tourists to share their travel experiences and photos on social media, and use user-generated content for word-of-mouth promotion to enhance potential tourists' sense of identification and yearning for the destination.

Tourist destinations should actively guide and encourage tourists to produce high-quality content to enhance the reputation and influence of the destinations. Provide high-quality travel experiences and offer tourists something worth sharing, such as unique travel programs and considerate services. Establish incentive mechanisms for user-generated content, such as holding photography contests and travelogue collection activities, to reward outstanding user-generated content and stimulate tourists' enthusiasm for sharing. Screen and organize user-generated content, and display high-quality content on official websites, social media platforms and other channels to attract more potential visitors. Collaborate with travel bloggers, Internet celebrities, etc., invite them to visit tourist destinations and create content, and leverage their influence to expand the popularity and influence of the destinations.

Tourist destinations should closely monitor social trends and hot events, and promptly adjust their marketing strategies to attract more tourists. When there are trends related to tourism such as eco-tourism and rural tourism in society, tourist destinations should, in light of their own resource characteristics, launch corresponding tourism products and activities to meet the needs of tourists. For hot events such as the Olympic Games, the World Cup and other major sports events, as well as the shooting locations of popular film and television works, tourist destinations should actively cooperate in carrying out relevant tourism marketing activities and utilize the influence of hot events to attract tourists. If we cooperate with film and television production companies to launch film and televine-themed tourism routes, allowing tourists to experience the scenes and plots in film and television works firsthand(YangSun Lee, 2022). Meanwhile, tourist destinations should also pay attention to social hot topics, respond promptly to tourists' concerns, and establish a good brand image.

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