



# Foreign tourists' intentions in visiting leisure farms<sup>☆</sup>

Chih-Wen Wu<sup>\*</sup>

National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan



## ARTICLE INFO

Available online 17 December 2014

### Keywords:

Brand image  
Functional attachment  
Motivation  
Experiential activities  
Agriculture product attitude  
Visit intention

## ABSTRACT

This study examines antecedents of visit intention for foreign tourists. The article explores the relationship of visit intention with brand image, functional attachment, motivation, experiential activities, and agriculture product sales in the leisure farm context. The study identifies five key antecedents of visit intention. Drawing on online survey and personal interview data from 1227 foreign tourists, empirical analysis tests predicted relationships. The conceptual model explores relationships among research constructs by using structural equation modeling (SEM) and fsQCA. Findings support the hypotheses that brand image, functional attachment, motivation, experiential activities, and agriculture product attitude are key drivers of visit intention. The paper also presents a discussion of theoretical and managerial implications of the research findings for the marketing of leisure farms. Results provide unique insights to help tourist farm entrepreneurs develop businesses capable of attracting foreign visitors.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of antecedents of foreign travelers' behavioral intentions in the leisure farm context. Understanding travelers' behavioral intention is an important goal for leisure farm entrepreneurs when making marketing decisions. In the leisure farm context, foreign visitor intention remains an important indicator of successful management. Many studies investigate antecedents of tourists' intention, including motivation, brand image, trip quality, perceived value, and satisfaction in different destination contexts (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Prayag, 2008). Nevertheless, little research develops such theory in the leisure farm context.

An essential goal of tourism studies is to understand why tourists visit a specific destination and why they choose a particular destination over others (Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Woodside, Hsu, & Marshall, 2011; Woodside & Lysonski, 2005). Successful prediction of tourism choice provides strategic knowledge for destination marketers and destination management organizations (Oppermann, 1999). Tourists' choice of destination undergoes an influence from psychological and functional variables (Capriello, Mason, Davis, & Crotts, 2013; Perdue, 2002). Although leisure farms receive great attention in the management

literature, few studies apply the concept and conceptualization to leisure farm tourism.

The literature on visit intention for leisure farms is incomplete in several important aspects. To fill this research gap, this study attempts to explain foreign travelers' visit intention by developing a conceptual model. This article advances leisure farm research in several ways. First, farm tourism is a crucial issue. Practitioners and academics must conduct more studies to gain greater knowledge of this concept. The literature demonstrates the existence of major controversy in the definition and measurement of attitudinal or behavioral intention. To bridge the gap in the business and marketing literature, this study proposes an integrated approach to examine theoretical and empirical evidence of interactions among brand image, functional attachment, motivation, experiential activities, agriculture product attitude, and visit intention in the leisure farm context. Identifying the relative importance of these factors in determining foreign tourist visit intention can enable leisure farm managers to allocate better their scarce resources.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Visit intention

Visit intention refers to the likelihood that a tourist will actually visit a destination (Ahn, Ekinci, & Li, 2013; Baker & Crompton, 2000). Visit intention is a combination of consumers' interest in and possibility of visiting a place. As in many studies, visit intention strongly relates to attitude and preference toward a brand or a product (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen, Yeh, & Huan, 2014). Several researchers recognize that cognitive and affective states influence purchase behavior (Cases, Fournier, Dubois, & Tanner, 2010; Li, 2000; Yuan & Wu, 2008). The literature

<sup>☆</sup> The authors acknowledge and are grateful for financial support from the National Agriculture Council, Taiwan (ROC) under grant 102AS-5.2.3-FS-#1. The authors would also like to thank Arch Woodside, Professor of Boston College (USA), and reviewers of the Journal of Business Research for valuable suggestions on how to construct the empirical models and analyses. The author is responsible for any remaining errors.

<sup>\*</sup> Department of Marketing, National Chung Hsing University, 250 Kuo-Kuang Road, Taichung 402, Taiwan. Tel.: +886 4 22840392x752; fax: +886 4 202860993.

E-mail address: [chihwwu@dragon.nchu.edu.tw](mailto:chihwwu@dragon.nchu.edu.tw).

reveals a scarcity of studies on the concept of visit intention and its applications to tourism products and services.

## 2.2. Brand image

Consuming a specific brand and endorsing an associated brand image allows consumers to create, transform, and express their self-identity (Bigne et al., 2001; Yagci, Biswas, & Dutta, 2009). Brand associations residing in consumers' memories reflect brand image (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Huber, Vollhardt, Matthes, & Vogel, 2010; Kwon & Lennon, 2009; Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2009; Zhan & He, 2012). Image research highlights the strengths and weaknesses of past and potential visitors' perceptions of a given destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2009). The consumer–brand relationship in travel has some unusual features. Marketing scholars acknowledge the importance of place branding and the applicability of general branding principles to cities, regions, and counties (Gartner, 1989; Jenkins, 1999; Nikolova & Hassan, 2013). Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy, and Coote (2007) suggest that countries, cities, and regions behave like product brands. Lee, Back, and Kim (2009), however, report that images influencing tourists' decisions originate elsewhere. Many publications use the terms destination and brand interchangeably. Most definitions of brand image relate to individual or group perceptions of a place (Jenkins, 1999) in the tourism context.

## 2.3. Functional attachment

This definition of functional attachment reflects the importance of a place in providing features and conditions that support specific goals or desired activities (Orth, Limon, & Rose, 2010; Trauer & Ryan, 2005). A common definition of functional attachment is how well a setting meets goal achievement (Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1996). The functional attachment model posits that consumers display three emotional states in response to environmental aspects: pleasure, arousal, and dominance (Mazaheri, Richard, & Laroche, 2011; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). In the recreation and leisure field, many studies explore the nature of people's emotional relationship with places, including their interactions with significant others (Orth et al., 2010). Hence, functional attachment shares strong links with the perception that a certain setting possesses unique qualities (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Tourists also evaluate functional attachment based on functional or utilitarian attributes such as service quality, price, location, and physical attractiveness (Schreyer, Lime, & Williams, 1984).

## 2.4. Motivation

Advocates of motivation in the decision-making process stress that tourists always choose the destination that they believe best satisfy their desires or needs (Schanzel & McIntosh, 2000). Some motivational research also explores benefits as a way of inferring travel motivations or desires (Qu & Ping, 1999; Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991). Arnould and Price (1993) attribute this phenomenon to an emotional memory effect. Researchers frequently conceptualize affect as pleasure and arousal (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007), and examine these reactions' impact on satisfaction (Whipple & Thach, 1988). Much research on consumer choice explores factors in decision making, which may concern how tourists respond to motivations to choose a destination from a number of alternatives (Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

## 2.5. Experiential activities

Experiential activities characterize the contemporary travel industry (Yuan & Wu, 2008). Increasingly, visitors are engaging in a growing number of experiential activities during one trip or vacation (Addis &

Holbrook, 2001; Bigne, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008). For example, today's travelers combine a relaxing sun and sand experience, an exciting visit to an ancient cultural heritage site, and a thrilling mountain-climbing adventure. Scholars often consider experience the most elusive area in tourism research (Celci, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Chang & Chieng, 2006). Experiential activities encompass experiential themes (Arnould & Price, 1993), affective experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), and quality of experience (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Overall, holiday vacations are rich in terms of experiential attributes, and their purpose is primarily hedonistic in nature (Girard & Dion, 2010; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Yuan & Wu, 2008). Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that companies should provide unforgettable and extraordinary experiences to their customers by adding value to their offerings (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002).

## 2.6. Agriculture product

Marketing research involves the analysis of consumer attitudes toward salient product or service attributes (Kumar, Lee, & Kim, 2009; Nambisan & Watt, 2011). Travelers essentially purchase an amalgam of products, services, and experiences (Millan & Esteban, 2004) through a network of providers. Product experiences occur when consumers search for products and evaluate them (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Surveys typically ask respondents to reflect on a combination of direct and indirect product experiences to investigate how this combination affects product judgments, attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005; Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998).

## 3. Research hypotheses

From a review of the marketing and tourism literature, and a preliminary in-depth interview with 30 foreign tourists, five groups of constructs emerge as influencers of visit intention: brand image, functional attachment, motivation, experiential activities, and agriculture product attitude. The following hypotheses capture the influence of these constructs.

- H1.** Brand image has a positive effect on visit intention.
- H2.** Functional attachment positively influences visit intention.
- H3.** Motivation positively influences tourists' purchase intention.
- H4.** Experiential activities positively influence visit intention.
- H5.** Agriculture product positively influence purchase intention.

## 4. Research methodology

### 4.1. Measures

In all, 23 items capture brand image, functional attachment, motivation, experiential activities, agriculture product attitude, and visit intention. Four-item scale adapted by Kwon and Lennon (2009), and Zhan and He (2012) measures brand image. A scale that builds on the five-item scale by Orth et al. (2010), and Trauer and Ryan (2005) measure functional attachment. The present study uses a three-item instrument by Ahn et al. (2013) to measure visit intention. Mazaheri et al. (2011) and Girard and Dion (2010) present a seven-item instrument that the current study employs to capture the dimensions of motivation and experiential activities. Table 1 displays item details together with their means and standard deviations. Previous studies report strong psychometric properties, and acceptable reliability and validity for the scales in this research.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1017072>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1017072>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)