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Suh-hee Choi

Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau

Ying (Tracy) Lu

University of Kentucky

Liping A. Cai

Purdue University

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**A Closer Look at Conative Tourist Loyalty:
An Exploratory Examination of Contextual Variation**

Suh-hee Choi
Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau, China
suhhee@ift.edu.mo

Ying (Tracy) Lu
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506, USA
tracy.lu@uky.edu

Liping A. Cai
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2059, USA
liping@purdue.edu

Introduction

Conative loyalty in tourism has been considered as an important predictor of actual revisit. However, this component of loyalty has been adopted and measured in tourism without further consideration of different travel contexts. Furthermore, the attempt to operationalize conative loyalty has been limited to date. To fill in the research gap, the present study proposes determination and intention as two different indicators for conative loyalty, and it compares the salience of the two variables by testing them in two different travel contexts of long-haul and short-haul travel across three different temporal sequences of revisit.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Intention versus Determination

Traditionally, conative loyalty in tourism has been conceptualized as the dimension which focuses on the notion of behavioral intention. Drawn from the theory proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), behavioral intention has been considered as a significant predictor of actual behavior. However, recent studies acknowledge that actual revisit is not frequently found especially after a long-haul tourism experience. Recently, such an intentional-behavioral gap has been highlighted in studies including McKercher and Tse (2012). In fact, how well the intentions are formed affects the gap between intention and behavior. Intention certainty (i.e., my intention to do X is certain/uncertain) (Sheeran and Abraham 2003) has been acknowledged as a variable which can measure such intentional stability (Bassili 1996). As a term reflecting intentional stability and intentional certainty, the present study uses determination in addition to intention in measuring conative loyalty. The term determination can be found in consumer behavior studies in explaining the consumer buying process (e.g., Sonnenberg, Erasmus, and Schreuder 2014).

More effort and process are required for determination than for intention. As intention does not involve extensive commitment as much as determination, tourists can more confidently and positively react after a satisfactory tourism experience that they intend to revisit rather than that they will definitely revisit because determination involves further cognitive and affective process and commitment towards the destination. Therefore, the underlying assumption of the present study is that tourists show higher intention than determination to revisit after a satisfying tourism experience.

Intention versus Determination by Contextual Variation

The present study hypothesizes that the gap between determination and intention is different by two travel contexts of long-haul versus short-haul travel. In long-haul travel, where relatively a large amount of time and money investment with high risks is involved, tourists are not likely to determine to revisit easily without another round of extensive decision making (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005). In this context of travel, tourists are likely to spend much time for preparation and try to experience as much as possible to be worth the investment during the trip because they are likely to perceive that they would not visit the same destination in the near future (Hypothesis 1). For short-haul travel, on the other hand, the likelihood that a tourist would revisit the destination would be relatively high because they know, based on their own experience, that such a visit would yield high satisfaction with relatively low additional investment of money and time (Hypothesis 2). The study further hypothesizes the significance in the interaction between the two indicators of intention versus determination and the travel context, suggesting that the gaps between the level of intention and determination become significantly lower in short-haul than in long-haul travel (Hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 1: Intention is higher than determination in long-haul travel, and the gap between the two is significant.

Hypothesis 2: While intention is still higher than determination in short-haul travel, the gap between the two is insignificant.

Hypothesis 3: The gaps between the level of determination and that of intention become significantly lower in short-haul than in long-haul travel.

Methodology

Students attending a university in Guangzhou, China, participated in the self-administered paper-and-pencil survey which was based on two scenarios illustrating long-haul and short-haul travel situations. A three-week vacation to Australia with 5000 US Dollars being spent was used to describe the former while a weekend excursion to a neighboring city was shown for the latter. After reading the two scenarios, the participants were asked six questions about their conative loyalty--determination and intention to visit--in three different time frames (12 months, 5 years, and 10 years). A total of 137 long-haul and 137 short-haul travel cases (274 in total) were used for the final analyses.

Results

The paired sample t-test results reveal that intention was shown to be higher than determination across two different travel contexts of long-haul and short-haul travel. While in long-haul travel, the differences were significantly high, such difference was not significantly different in short-haul travel. In other words, the data showed a clear pattern that the gap between intention and determination is relatively minimal in short-haul travel compared to long-haul travel regardless of the temporal sequence while intention consistently is higher than determination (Table 1). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

Table 1. Significance in Mean Difference of Determination versus Intention by Travel Contexts in Three Temporal Sequences

		Long-haul				Short-haul			
		M	SD	Sig in Mean Diff.		M	SD	Sig in Mean Diff.	
				t	P			t	P
12 Months	Determination	2.88	1.69	-4.95	.00	4.35	1.84	-1.92	.06
	Intention	3.74	1.78			4.64	1.64		
5 Years	Determination	4.08	1.77	-4.73	.00	4.91	1.52	-.53	.60
	Intention	4.85	1.71			4.99	1.58		
10 Years	Determination	4.90	1.74	-2.68	.01	4.96	1.76	-1.60	.11
	Intention	5.33	1.72			5.19	1.70		

In addition, the interaction between the two travel contexts and the two measurements of determination versus intention was significant only for the 5-year temporal cycle (Table 2). The results suggest that, although the gap between determination and intention is smaller in the short-haul than in the long-haul travel context, such a difference is not significant when 12 months and 10 years of revisit sequences were used.

Table 2. Interaction Effect of Travel Context (Long-haul versus Short-haul) and Determination Versus Intention in Three Temporal Sequences

Variable	12 Months			5 Years			10 Years		
	SS (Type III)	F	P	SS (Type III)	F	P	SS (Type III)	F	P
Context	192.75	63.57	.00	32.28	11.91	.00	.221	.074	.79
Determination vs. Intention	44.98	14.84	.00	24.13	8.90	.00	15.111	5.063	.03
Interaction	10.82	3.57	.06	16.47	6.08	.01	1.330	.446	.51

Conclusion

The present study examined the variation of conative tourist loyalty by using two indicators—determination and intention—which reflect the concept and by two different travel contexts—long-haul and short-haul travel. This study adds to the extant knowledge in the area of tourist loyalty in that it shows the feasibility of the usage of determination and intention as two complementary indicators of conative loyalty. Based on the significance in difference tested in this study, the two indicators are likely to show less difference in measuring the concept in the short-haul travel context while the determination concept would yield significantly more conservative responses from the survey participants than intention when it is used in long-haul travel. Significance in the interaction between the two indicators of conative loyalty and the two travel contexts were irregular across different temporal cycles of revisit. Further testing with different travel situations and the examination of the relationship of conative loyalty with actual revisit and with cognitive and affective components of loyalty would facilitate more generalized application of conative loyalty and its two indicators proposed in this study.

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