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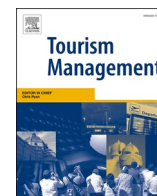
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# In-group favoritism or black sheep effect? The moderating role of norm strength on destination residents' responses towards deviant behaviors

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## ABSTRACT

Drawing on social identity theory and focus theory of norms, this study investigated differences in how destination residents respond to deviant behaviors by other residents—members of their in-group—and similar behavior by tourists, who they see as the out-group. We proposed and tested a conceptual model of the transition between in-group favoritism and the black sheep effect under the moderating effect of norm strength. A mixed-method approach, including a secondary data study and three scenario-based experiments, was applied. Findings of this study revealed that focal residents showed in-group favoritism for other residents' deviant behavior compared with tourists. The contagion effect of deviant behavior was stronger among in-groups than out-groups. However, with respect to behaviors about which norms are tight, the black sheep effect comes into play, as focal residents hold a higher desire to punish in-groups' deviant behavior than the out-group. This study has theoretical and practical implications for destination marketing organizations.

## 1. Introduction

Deviant behaviors by both tourists and local residents in tourism destinations have elicited increasing concern in recent years (Chien & Ritchie, 2018; Li & Chen, 2022; Su, Cheng, Wen, Kozak, & Teo, 2022). Such behaviors include smoking in public, spitting, graffiti, disrespecting the natural landscape, and littering (Volgger & Huang, 2019; Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). These behaviors could damage the environment and contribute to negative media coverage, which further harms the sustainable development of a destination (Peng, Wang, Huang, & Wang, 2022; Tsaour et al., 2019; Zhang, Pearce, & Chen, 2019). Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) must implement effective coping strategies to reduce such behaviors.

The existing literature suggests that observers' evaluations of deviant behavior, to some degree, depend on whether a member of their in-group or the out-group committed it (Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020; Karlaia & Keck, 2013). Research also suggests that residents in tourism destinations see themselves as members of an in-group that excludes tourists, and therefore they have different attitudes and behavioral responses to residents than to tourists (Tung, 2019) and refer to residents as "we" and tourists as "they" (Giles, Ota, & Foley, 2013). Differences in language, social norms, cultural customs, and behavioral habits between

tourists and local residents affirm the in- and out-group distinction (Gelfand et al., 2021; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Ribeiro, Pinto, Silva, & Woosnam, 2017). However, how the in-group or out-group membership of an individual committing deviant behaviors may influence destination residents' responses and their own deviant behaviors remains unclear.

One strain of research on the impact of in-group and out-group membership relies on social identity theory, which suggests that people are motivated to differentiate their own group from other groups, and that they internalize the in-group membership to some extent as a part of meaningful self-concept, which increases their emotional attachment to the in-group (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Such attachment motivates in-group favoritism, in which people view and evaluate their in-group members positively and perceive in-group members as more warm, competent, and moral than out-group members (Abele et al., 2016). In psychology and sociology fields, studies have found that evaluation of people who deviate from social norms reflects in-group favoritism, in that people are inclined to respond more leniently to deviant behavior by members of their in-group than of out-groups (Forbes & Stellar, 2021). Those with this type of leniency report higher own deviant behavioral intention than those without it (Bernhard, Fischbacher, & Fehr, 2006; Jetten & Hornsey, 2014). While

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there is evidence that deviant behavior has a contagion effect in tourism settings, few studies examine the mechanisms by which people choose to tolerate or punish and the mediating mechanisms also have been largely ignored (Aguiar, Campos, Pinto, & Marques, 2017; Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). Hence, according to social identity theory, under the influence of in-group favoritism, residents of a tourism destination may be more tolerant of deviance by members of their in-group than the out-group, and this tolerance may mediate the impact of the type of group committing the deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention.

A second strain of research on the impact of in-group and out-group membership relies on focus theory of norms (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991; McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). This strain of research suggests a "black sheep effect" (Sun, Chien, Ritchie, & Pappu, 2022; Wang, Zheng, Meng, Lu, & Ma, 2016). The term "black sheep effect" depicts that people may penalize members of the in-group who violate group norms more severely than they penalize out-groupers who commit the same behaviors (Marques & Paez, 1994; Sun et al., 2022). According to the focus theory of norms, the black sheep effect results from a motivational strategy of group norm preservation and social identity protection (Kutlaca, Becker, & Radke, 2020). When a member of the in-group fails to comply with the group norms, this threatens the group's positivity and the social identity of group members (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003). Therefore, other group members tend to evaluate the case of in-group deviance more harshly to indicate differentiation and protect their group norms (Bernhard et al., 2006; McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). Empirical research demonstrates that the black sheep effect exists (Hewig et al., 2011; Kutlaca et al., 2020), and some researchers have pointed out that the stronger punishment it imposes may be a strong deterrent for in-group deviance (Bhati & Pearce, 2016; Li & Chen, 2022). In this study, we explore whether the harsh evaluations the black sheep effect predicts hold when tourism destination residents evaluate deviant behaviors.

While the forementioned in-group favoritism and black sheep effect seems contradictory to each other, the previous research indicates that those effects are salient in different conditions (Aguiar et al., 2017). For example, some studies have proposed that the strength of social norms affects people's attitudes about deviant behavior and intention to commit it themselves (Gelfand et al., 2011). Loose social norms prompt people to take "affection" as the core of behavioral norms, which makes in-group favoritism more likely to dictate their evaluation of deviant behavior, in line with social identity theory (Qu, Zhao, & Zhao, 2021). However, a tight norms society emphasizes the rules and regulations that dictate social interactions (Gelfand et al., 2021). In such societies people may prioritize "norms" over "affection" in their behavior toward deviant behavior by in-group members. Focus theory of norms suggests residents may more severely punish other residents' deviant behavior than tourists because in-group members' compliance with local norms is likely to improve in-group cooperation (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). Hence, this study explores whether the level of norm strength influences which effects (in-group favoritism vs. black sheep effect) come into play among residents.

Through distinguishing local residents and tourists as an in-group and an out-group, this study defines in-group favoritism as focal residents' tendency to have higher tolerance for other residents' deviant behavior than tourists, and the black sheep effect as present when focal residents punish other residents for deviance more than tourists. We explore the differences in how destination residents respond to deviant behaviors by other residents—members of their in-group—and similar behavior by tourists, who they see as the out-group. This study contributes to the literature on deviant behavior in several ways. First, we reveal whether in- and out-group deviance cause in-group favoritism or the black sheep effect in general tourism situations and examine the contagion effect of deviant behavior. Second, we verify the joint mediation effects of desire to tolerate and desire to punish between in- and out-group deviance and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention.

Third, we advance the literature by identifying the moderating role of norm strength between group type of deviant behavior and focal resident's desires, which further explains the boundary conditions of applying social identity theory and focus theory of norms in a tourism context. Furthermore, this study provides useful practical implications for DMOs and policymakers seeking to discourage deviant behaviors by tourists and residents. Social norm invention strategies are offered for DMOs to reduce deviant behaviors under different norm conditions.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Social identity theory

Social identity is a part of "an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). Social identity theory was proposed to understand and explain when and why people may think, feel, and act in terms of such social (rather than personal) identities (Ellemers, 2012). It proposes that individuals categorize themselves and others who are similar on a dimension that is salient in their context into an in-group, while categorizing those who differ on that dimension into the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). To the extent that individuals internalize group membership as a meaningful aspect of their self-concept, they will tend to view and evaluate their in-group members positively in order to achieve or maintain a positive group interaction and social relations (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Hence, a core prediction of the theory is in-group favoritism (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012), that is, viewing and evaluating in-group members in a more positive light than out-group members (Tajfel, 1974). Specifically, people will show more tolerance to the deviance of in-group than out-group due to in-group favoritism (Aguiar et al., 2017; Chattopadhyay, George, Li, & Gupta, 2020).

In line with the framework of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the context of the tourism destination will prompt residents to attribute other residents to the in-group and tourists to the out-group according to whether they are locals or not (Tung, 2019). When there is deviant behavior by in-group or out-group members, as the theory proposed, local residents are inclined to maintain and protect the positive in-group interactions and social relations (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). In particular, local residents who lived in a destination together for a long time (Su, Chen, & Huang, 2022) take a more permissive view towards the deviant behavior of the in-group than the out-group, which is good for subsequent in-group interactions and cooperation. In this vein, we propose that in-group favoritism would also exist in the tourism context. This study integrates the group type of deviant behavior, desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and residents' deviant behavioral intention into a theoretical model to explore the application of in-group favoritism in tourism situations according to social identity theory.

### 2.2. Focus theory of norms

Group norms are the necessary conditions for the formation, operation, and maintenance of groups, and are also the code of conduct recognized, followed, and internalized by group members (Bernhard et al., 2006). The focus theory of norms was proposed to highlight the guiding, constraining, and corrective role of group norms on individual behavioral performance (Cialdini et al., 1991). Group norms improve the predictability of in-group members' behaviors and thus promote the smoothness and convenience of group interaction (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). Furthermore, scholars have proposed that focus theory of norms could be a good explanation of the black sheep effect from the two aspects of expectancy violations and norm-maintenance motivation (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016; Wang et al., 2016).

In the black sheep effect, in-group members punish atypical in-group members who undermine the legitimacy of norms more severely than they punish out-group member who exhibit the same behaviors

(Marques & Paez, 1994). For example, people denounce immoral group members more harshly and enthusiastically than immoral outgroup members (Ashokkumar, Galaif, & Swann, 2019). This is for two reasons. On the one hand, the deviance of the in-group would lead to stronger expectancy violations. The group members would severely punish “black sheep” to maintain and protect group cohesion and norms (Wang et al., 2016). On the other hand, the deviance of the in-group would prompt strong motivation of group norm-maintaining; group members would also impose severe sanctions on selfish in-group members (Bernhard et al., 2006; Shinada, Yamagishi, & Ohmura, 2004).

Norms have become increasingly important in the tourism context, and many tourism destinations have established their own local regulations to limit the deviant behavior and intentions of tourists and local residents (Li & Chen, 2019). In the tourism context, according to focus theory of norms, the driver of the black sheep effect may be a desire to maintain the group norm or protect the reputation of the resident group. Hence, in this study, the focal residents may show stronger desire to prevent or punish the in-group’s deviant behavior than out-group’s. However, research related to the black sheep effect in the tourism field is scarce. To address this gap, this paper will use the focus theory of norms as a framework to explore whether there is a black sheep effect in the tourism context when highlighting the group norms on individual behavioral performance.

### 2.3. Deviant behavior

Some scholars have applied the terms deviant behavior or uncivilized behavior to common destructive behaviors (Li & Chen, 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). Others use the term deviant behavior to refer to the violation of laws or ethics, which contradicts general social norms (Karelaia & Keck, 2013). This paper adopts the more broadly defined term of deviant behavior in the tourism field, which states that it is any behavior that violates norms in the destination (Harris & Magrizos, 2021; Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). Tourists often commit such violations, due to their high degree of anonymity in tourism settings (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). These violations have a social contagion effect as well: deviant tourist behavior tends to prompt deviant behavior by other tourists, tourism practitioners, and local residents, which may cause lasting damage to the sustainable development of the destination (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022; Tsaour et al., 2019). This study explores these dynamics by examining focal residents’ responses to deviate when they see the deviant behavior of in-group (other residents) and out-group members (tourists).

### 2.4. Group type of deviant behavior

Prior research has demonstrated that in evaluating deviant behavior, the group type of deviances can significantly affect the observers (Karelaia & Keck, 2013). Group types are usually divided according to subjective or objective criteria, mainly including virtual clues (e.g., minimal group paradigm), natural clues (e.g., gender, age) and social clues (e.g., nationality, alumnus; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wang et al., 2016; Weisman, Johnson, & Shutts, 2015). Compared with virtual clues and natural clues, social clues tend to provide more social information and meaning, thus effectively inducing group identity (Wang et al., 2016). This study uses the social cue of residence to distinguish people in tourism destinations, defines residents living in tourism destinations as the in-group, and people who travel to the destination from other regions as the out-group. Similarly, the study by Tung (2019) also defined residents as part of the in-group, and foreign tourists as out-group in the tourism destination.

## 3. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

### 3.1. Group type of deviant behavior and resident’s deviant behavioral intention

A large number of studies have proved that deviance has a contagion effect. That is, people imitate others’ deviant behavior if they observe it (Plé & Demangeot, 2020). Further, shared personal characteristics, especially shared group membership, increases the contagion effect of deviant behavior (Karelaia & Keck, 2013; Kerr, Hymes, Anderson, & Weathers, 1995). A reason for this is that people’s deviant behavioral intention is enhanced by their tendency to perceive the deviant behavior of in-group members as more moral than that of out-group members (Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020).

Research on deviant behavior in the tourism context also finds a contagion effect among tourists (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022; Tsaour et al., 2019). Moreover, the effect of deviant behavior on social contagion appears to vary with group membership. Thus, the contagion mechanism may differ with respect to deviant behavior by a member of the in-group or the out-group (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). According to the social identity theory, individuals internalize in-group membership to some extent as a part of self-concept (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012), and therefore view the deviant behavior of the in-group as more moral and common than that of the out-group (Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020), which may mean deviant behavior of the in-group has a stronger contagion effect than deviant behavior by the out-group. Applying this to residents as the in-group and tourists as the out-group, we hypothesize:

**H1.** Compared with the out-group, deviant behavior of in-group will be more likely to increase focal residents’ deviant behavioral intention.

### 3.2. Group type of deviant behavior and focal resident’s response

Different people have different attitudes in the face of deviant behavior, and the different identities of deviants will also affect the judgment of deviant behavior (Karelaia & Keck, 2013). When people see deviant behavior, people usually have two attitudes, punishment or tolerance (Ashokkumar et al., 2019). When faced with deviance of different group types in the context of intimate bonds, individuals will respond more leniently and evoke a lower desire to punish close others’ deviance than strangers’ (Forbes & Stellar, 2021). Moreover, negative violations of in-group members will be offset by positive evaluations induced by group membership, thereby effectively reducing the possibility and intensity of punishment (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). Abrams, Randsley de Moura, and Travaglino (2013) also demonstrated that in-group members punish less and may even forgive serious transgressions by in-group leaders compared with similar conduct by out-group leaders. In other words, in-group and out-group membership significantly affects whether individuals tolerate or punish deviant behaviors. However, few studies provide insight into the mechanisms determining which response people opt for (Aguir et al., 2017).

In the tourism context, tourists are natural out-groups for residents (Tung, 2019). According to social identity theory, an individual may attach strong emotions to his or her identity as a local resident at a tourism destination (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Hence, residents may view the in-group as more positive than the out-group, showing in-group favoritism (Chattopadhyay et al., 2020). In this situation, other focal residents will extend more tolerance and less punishment to residents’ deviant behavior than tourists. Su et al.’s (2022) research on tourists supported the above conclusion and found that tourists may form favorable evaluations of in-groups’ (e.g., travel companions) deviant behaviors relative to out-groups (e.g., other tourists). However, to the best of our knowledge, existing studies have not explored local residents’ responses to deviant behavior and its negative contagion effects, which may significantly influence the sustainable development of a tourism destination (Li & Chen, 2022). Hence, this study will explore the



focal residents' responses to different group types of deviant behaviors. The following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2.** The response of focal residents differs across different group types of deviant behavior.

**H2a.** Focal residents will have a stronger desire to tolerate the deviant behavior of in-group members than of out-group members.

**H2b.** Focal residents will have a stronger desire to punish deviant behavior of out-group members than of in-group members.

### 3.3. *The mediating roles of desire to tolerate and desire to punish*

The most common responses to deviant behaviors are tolerance or the desire to punish (Ashokkumar et al., 2019). Which of these an individual feels predicts their own deviant behavior intention (Forbes & Stellar, 2021; Lugosi, 2019). A stream of studies have confirmed that people tolerate deviance of and have less desire to punish members of their in-groups compared to deviance of members of out-groups (Aguilar et al., 2017; Bernhard et al., 2006; Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020; McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). And tolerance for deviance would lead to deviant behavioral intention (Bernhard et al., 2006; Jetten & Hornsey, 2014), while the desire to punish deviance correlates with lower deviant behavioral intention (Bhati & Pearce, 2016; Li & Chen, 2022). Deviant behavior, both within the in-group and in the out-group, nonetheless has a social contagion effect, but existing research does not reveal how this mechanism operates (Plé & Demangeot, 2020). Therefore, we proposed that responses to deviant behavior (desire to tolerate/punish) may play a mediating role between others' deviant behaviors and deviant behavioral intention.

According to social identity theory, the process of categorization resulting from environmental stimuli influences individuals' judgement and further shapes their behavior (Chattopadhyay et al., 2020). Tourists' destinations categorize people according to whether they are residents (in-group) or tourists, and these categories influence residents' behaviors (Tung, 2019). Hence, we infer based on the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) that in the face of deviant behavior by members of their in-group, focal residents may have a stronger desire to tolerate and weaker desire to punish the behavior than in the face of deviant behavior by members of the out-group, and therefore deviance by in-group members will have a social contagion effect to enhance other residents' deviant behavioral intention but deviance by out-group members will not cause such effect. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

**H3.** The focal resident's desire to tolerate and desire to punish jointly mediate the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and focal resident's deviant behavioral intention.

### 3.4. *The moderating effect of norm strength*

Norm strength is defined as the degree of tolerance for norm deviance across different human groups (Gelfand et al., 2011). Gelfand et al. (2021) divided norm strength into two types: tight and loose. Specifically, in a tight norm context, there are strong norms and punishments for deviance, while in loose norm context, locals have weaker norms and are more permissive (Gelfand et al., 2021). Indeed, different tourism destinations have their own norm strength, which in turn shapes local residents' attitudes towards deviant behavior (Li, Gordon, & Gelfand, 2017). According to the focus theory of norms, people have a higher motivation to punish norm violations by the in-group when norms are tight (vs. loose; McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). In-group members hold higher expectations of reciprocity and motivation of norm-maintenance under tight norms and a greater desire to ensure that other group members comply with the norms that help make cooperation profitable (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). Hence, higher expectancy violations would arise in the case of deviant behavior of the in-group, which would prompt harsher punishment than the out-group's

deviance, thus forming a means of group protection for long-term sustainable development (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003). A marketing study found that advertising puts more emphasis on permissiveness and norm deviance in loose societies, while advertising themes in tight environments put greater emphasis on uniformity and norm abundance (Li et al., 2017).

When dealing with in-group deviance, individuals have to make a judgment based on both human affection and morality (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016). Loose social norms allow people to prioritize "affection" rather than "reason" as the core of behavioral norms in face-to-face interactions (Qu et al., 2021). Hence, according to the social identity theory, people seek positive group interactions and social relations under loose norms (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Focal residents are more likely to have a higher tolerance and to punish residents' deviant behaviors than tourists' deviant behaviors. However, tight social norms emphasize the use of rules and regulations to manage and maintain social operations (Gelfand et al., 2021). In this situation, based on the focus theory of norms, compared with out-groups' deviance, deviant behaviors of an in-group may arouse stronger expectancy violations and motivations of maintaining the group norm (Abrams et al., 2013). Hence, focal residents may punish deviant behavior by a member of their in-group more harshly than deviant behavior by a member of the out-group in order to maintain group norms and cohesion. Therefore, we proposed that norm strength may moderate the relationship between the group type of the person behaving in a deviant way and focal residents' responses to their behavior. Thus we hypothesize:

**H4.** Norm strength moderates the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and focal resident's desires.

**H4a.** When norms are tight, focal residents may have a weaker desire to tolerate and stronger desire to punish the deviant behavior of members of the in-group (vs. of the out-group).

**H4b.** When norms are loose, focal residents may have a stronger desire to tolerate and weaker desire to punish the deviant behavior of members of the in-group (vs. of the out-group).

The importance of social norms strength in social governance has received intense attention (Gelfand et al., 2021). Specifically, compared with nations with high levels of cultural looseness, nations with high levels of cultural tightness can effectively reduce locals' deviant behavioral intentions and make public groups strictly abide by social norms (Gelfand et al., 2021). Moreover, in psychology and sociology fields, Gelfand, Nishii, and Raver (2006) revealed norm strength plays a moderating role in the relationship between individual characteristics and individual deviant behavior. Tight and loose societies differ in terms of individuals' willingness to conform to norms versus act in socially deviant ways (Gelfand et al., 2006). According to social identity theory, focal residents have a more positive view of the in-group's deviant behavior than that of the out-group. Under a loose-norms society, they may consider the deviant behavior of the in-group as more moral and common than that of the out-group, thus increasing the in-group contagion effect, and the focal residents' deviant behavioral intention may significantly increase when they see other residents' deviance rather than that of tourists. By contrast the tight norms society increased residents' normative awareness and self-control (Gelfand et al., 2021). Hence, local residents may urge others and themselves to have a higher motivation to maintain group norms for group interaction and reputation (Bernhard et al., 2006; Hewig et al., 2011). According to the focus theory of norms, when other residents deviated rather than tourists, focal resident experience stronger expectancy violations, and thus have higher motivation to maintain norms, decreasing the contagion effect of deviant behavior. Hence, focal residents may hold lower deviant behavioral intention when they see other residents' deviant behavior than tourists'. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H5.** Norm strength moderates the relationship between group type of

deviant behavior and focal resident’s deviant behavioral intention.

**H5a.** When norms are tight, focal residents will have lower deviant behavioral intention when they see in-group (vs. out-group) deviance.

**H5b.** When norms are loose, focal residents will have higher deviant behavioral intention when they see in-group (vs. out-group) deviance.

3.5. Overview of theoretical framework and studies

Based on the above hypotheses, we proposed a theoretical model (Fig. 1) and tested it using a mixed-method approach. A secondary data study and three scenario-based experiments adapted from Hardemana, Fontb, and Nawijn (2017) were conducted. The different methods and data sources used here improve the robustness of research results, avoiding the inherent weaknesses of a single method or data source (Su, Jia, & Huang, 2022). First, Study 1 collected secondary data from the micro-video sharing platform Douyin to report the responses of focal residents in several real tourism destinations towards other residents or tourists’ deviant behaviors, testing H1 and H2. Second, Study 2 adopted a one-factor between-subjects design to explore the main effects and jointly mediating effects of desire to tolerate and desire to punish between group type of deviant behavior and focal residents’ deviant behavioral intention, testing H1, H2, and H3. Third, Study 3 employed a 2 × 2 factorial between-subjects design to investigate the moderating effect of norm strength on the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and focal residents’ desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention (testing H4 and H5). In Study 4, we replicated Study 3 with real residents in a tourism destination to further expand the external validity of the results, verifying H4 and H5 again.

4. Study 1

In order to gain a preliminary understanding of the specific attitudes and behavioral responses of real residents in the tourism destination towards different group type of deviant behaviors, we carried out a secondary data study, which has the advantages of large sample size and high degree of objectivity (Lee & James, 2007). The micro-video sharing platform Douyin provided the context for Study 1. Douyin is one of the most popular apps in China. Its enormous number of travel-related micro-videos (Economic information daily, 2022), can easily attract a huge number of related comments, and thus Douyin data is well-suited to testing H1 and H2.

4.1. Method

**Data collection procedure.** Given the research objectives of this study, we adopted purposive sampling method to collect micro-video samples relevant to deviant behavior or uncivilized behaviors on the Douyin platform. We used keywords, including “越轨行为 + 居民

(deviant behavior + resident),” “越轨行为 + 游客 (deviant behavior + tourist),” “不文明行为 + 居民 (uncivilized behavior + resident),” and “不文明行为 + 游客 (uncivilized behavior + tourist),” to search for relevant micro-videos. This process yielded 1032 Douyin micro-videos posted within half a year (from December 5, 2021 to June 5, 2022). We screened the micro-videos using the following criteria: a) they disclosed the deviant behavior of a person readily recognizable as either a resident or tourist; b) they clearly indicate where the incident occurred; c) they are original, d) they do not advertise any product or service, and e) at least one person has posted a comment on the video. After we applied these criteria, 28 valid micro-videos remained. Then, a web crawler was used to collect the comments, and the IP address tagged to each comment. These types of data are considered as public information because any user of the Douyin platform can see them. This process produced 2652 comments on the 28 micro-videos.

**Coding.** We began by encrypting the commenters’ usernames and aggregating the comments under each micro-video to make sure that our dataset is anonymized. Then, in line with the procedure performed by Su, Jia, and Huang (2022), we invited two PhD students studying tourism management to manually code the 2652 comments for residents’ desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention. Both had been trained to code comments in strict accordance with the dimensions given by Guchait, Abbott, Lee, Back, and Manoharan (2019), Karelaia and Keck (2013), and Su, Jia, and Huang (2022). In this process, irrelevant comments were discarded, based on a) the core meaning of the comment had nothing to do with the deviant behavior or b) the statement did not make sense and the meaning was undecipherable. This left 1038 valid comments for coding. For the code “desire to tolerate,” presence was encoded as 1 and absence as 0. For example a comment that said, “Can’t we climb trees?” was coded as 1. Similarly, presence of “desire to punish” was encoded as 1 and absence as 0. For example, a comment that said “Direct fines are most effective” was coded as 1. The presence of “deviant behavioral intention” was coded as 1 and its absence as 0. For example “There are so many wild-flowers on the mountain that I would pick them, too” was coded as 1. The coding consistency of the two coders was above 95% (Makarem & Jae, 2016; Perreault & Leigh, 1989). Then, a professor of tourism management coded the comments that had been coded inconsistently.

4.2. Results and discussion

In the 550 comments responding to deviant behavior of residents (in-group), 384 (69.82%) reflected desire to tolerate, 166 (30.18%) reflected desire to punish, and 43 (7.82%) reflected the intention to deviate. Among the 488 comments responding to deviant behavior of tourists (out-group), the coding indicated that 99 (20.29%) reflected desire to tolerate, 389 (79.71%) reflected desire to punish, and 7 (1.43%) reflected the intention to deviate. Chi-square test results showed that there were significant differences in the influence of deviant

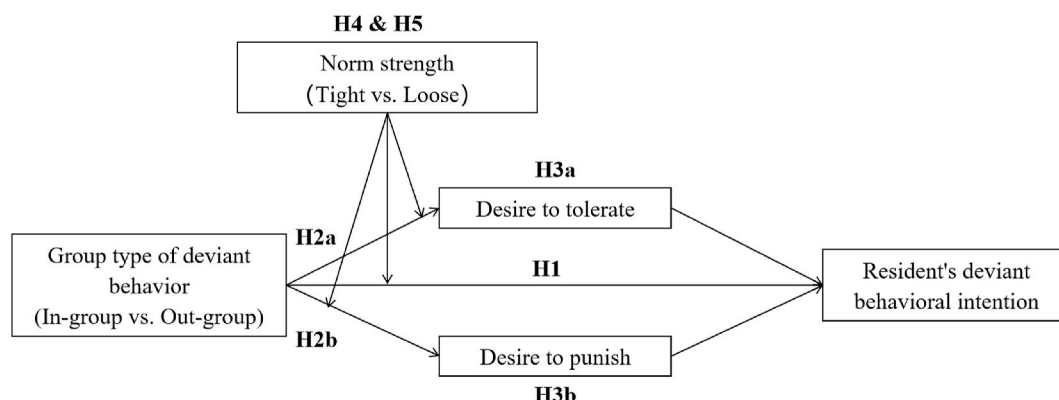


Fig. 1. The theoretical model.

behavior by the different groups on residents desire to tolerate ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 254.976, p < 0.001$ ), desire to punish ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 254.976, p < 0.001$ ), and deviant behavioral intention ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 22.983, p < 0.001$ ) (see Fig. 2).

#### 4.3. Discussion

The results provide preliminary evidence for hypotheses H1 and H2, i.e., preliminary evidence that residents of in-group favoritism among residents of tourism destinations. The results revealed that, compared with the deviance of tourists, when facing deviant behavior of other residents, focal residents hold a stronger desire to tolerate, weaker desire to punish, and greater intention to engage in their own deviant behavior. These results support H1 and H2.

### 5. Study 2

In order to further test H1 and H2 and also to test H3, Study 2 examined the main effects and the mediating role of residents' desire to tolerate and desire to punish between group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention using a scenario-based experiment. Study 2 adopted a one-factor between-subjects (in-group vs. out-group) design. The experiment was conducted online to address the challenges and ethics of manipulating deviant behavior in a field setting (Miao, Mattila, & Mount, 2011), thus reducing the face-to-face interaction and weakening the social desirability effect (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022).

#### 5.1. Pretest

We conducted a pretest to check whether participants distinguished the conditions of in-group and out-group members in the situational experiment materials. To reduce evaluation apprehension and social desirability biases, we reassured respondents that there were no right or wrong answers and explicitly asked them to answer questions honestly (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022).

##### 5.1.1. Materials

To control for social desirability, Li and Chen (2017) and Su, Jia, and Huang (2022) used the third person in their scenario design. We created

Mei, a fictitious character to serve this purpose in our stimulation materials. Meanwhile, according to the research conclusion of Balliet, Wu, and De Dreu (2014), the concepts of in-group and out-group are generated by comparison. That is, the difference between in-group and out-group is evident when prominent in-group and out-groups exist at the same time. Therefore, in the experimental material, we presented deviant behavior among both in-group and out-group members occurring in the same situation. The material read as follows:

The following is a piece of situational material. Please follow the situational guide to imagine:

When spring is blooming, city A, as a popular tourist city, attracts a large number of tourists to visit. One day, Mei, a resident of city A, went out to walk her dog and saw her neighbor Li's family as well as a group of tourists visiting the park, both of whom trampled on the lawns and threw garbage carelessly. Appendix A provides more details.

##### 5.1.2. Pretest procedure

A preliminary survey was conducted on an online survey platform known as Credamo.com, which is a well-known online survey service provider in China (Su, Chen, & Huang, 2022; Gai & Puntoni, 2021). The survey platform helped us to randomly sample users from their user database and send out email invitations for recruit participants for the study. Once Credamo users clicked the link for participating in the survey in the email, they were assigned randomly to one of the experimental conditions (in-group vs. out-group). Sixty participants (80.0% females, 20.0% males, and 43.3% were 18–25) were recruited for our pretest. Participants were asked to read the assigned scenario carefully first. Then they answered questions about scenario authenticity and evaluated scales of key variables. Questions about the scenario authenticity were adapted from Yi, Gong, and Lee (2013), including "1. In real life such a scene could happen" and "2. For me, there is no difficulty in understanding the given situation of the material" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). For manipulation checks, participants were asked to evaluate to what extent they agree with two statements: "Compared with tourists, Li's family belongs to Mei's in-group/out-group" and "Compared with Li's family, tourists belong to Mei's out-group/in-group" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Then, participants were asked to answer basic demographic questions. Finally, participants who completed the questionnaire received a small compensation through Credamo.

##### 5.1.3. Results and discussion

The results of the scenario authenticity test indicated that most participants believed that the scenario was realistic and they could understand the scenario well ( $M_{\text{real}} = 5.82, SD = 0.81, t = 17.31, p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{understand}} = 6.18, SD = 0.97, t = 17.52, p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, most of the participants believed that Mei was a local resident ( $M = 6.53, SD = 0.54, t = 36.63, p < 0.001$ ) and could correctly understand the relationship between Mei and Li's family and tourists ( $M = 5.93, SD = 0.63, t = 23.61, p < 0.001$ ). Most also passed the reverse item ( $M = 2.15, SD = 0.80, t = -17.94, p < 0.001$ ). Thus, these findings suggest that participants could categorize the in-groups and out-groups of the scenario materials, which indicates that the experimental scenarios successfully manipulated group type of deviant behavior.

#### 5.2. Main experiment

##### 5.2.1. Participants and procedure

A hundred respondents participated in the main experiment through Credamo.com in May 2022. The questionnaire distribution and collection procedure was the same as in the pretest. Each participant would only take the survey once, so that those who participated in the previous pretest were excluded from the main experiment. After removing incomplete questionnaires, 88 valid responses were collected ( $N_{\text{in-group}} = 45$  vs.  $N_{\text{out-group}} = 43$ ). Among the 88 participants, 53.4% were females and 46.6 were males, 45.5% were aged 26–35 (details in Table 1).

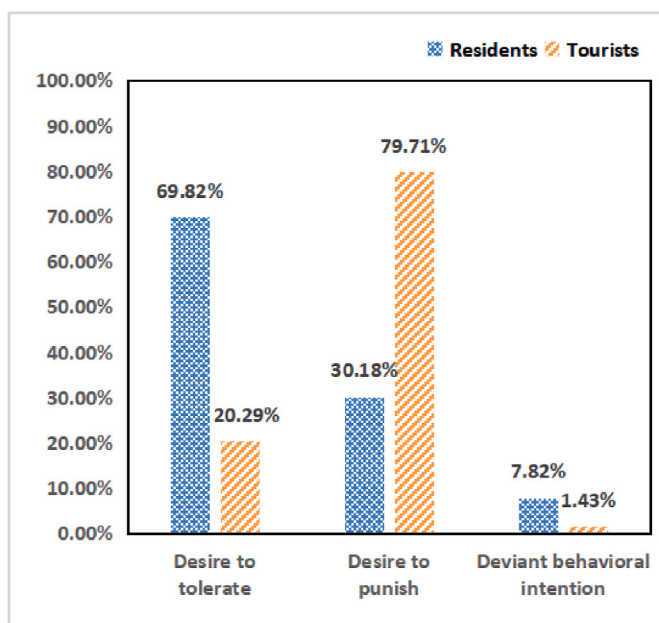


Fig. 2. The impact of group type of deviant behavior on focal residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention.



**Table 1**  
Characteristics of participants in Study 2.

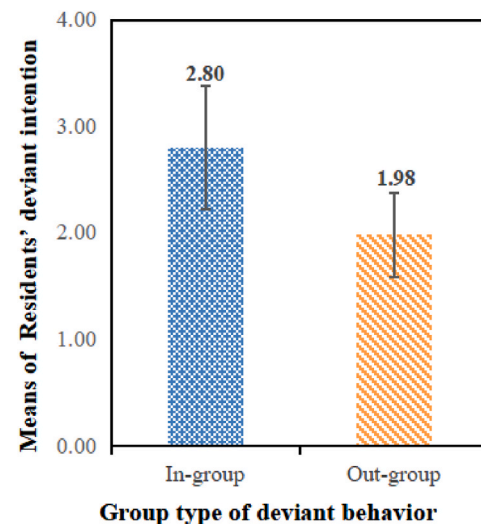
	n	%		n	%
Gender			Age		
Female	47	53.4	18 to 25	39	44.3
Male	41	46.6	26 to 35	40	45.5
			36 to 45	6	6.8
			46 and older	3	3.4
<b>Monthly Income</b>			<b>Level of Education</b>		
<¥2000	26	29.5	Less than High School	0	0.0
¥2000 to 4999	20	22.7	High School/Technical School	4	4.6
¥5000 to 7999	10	11.4	Undergraduate/Associate Degree	69	78.4
¥8000 to 9999	27	30.7	Postgraduate Degree	15	17.0
≥¥10,000	5	5.7			

Participants were asked to read and imagine according to the scenarios and complete a four-part questionnaire. In order to ensure participants could accurately understand all scales, we used a formal back-translation process (Brislin, 1970; Tyupa, 2011). First, a scenario authenticity test showed that participants perceived the situation as realistic and comprehensible ( $M_{realistic} = 5.89, SD = 0.92, t = 19.34, p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{understand} = 6.33, SD = 1.16, t = 18.81, p < 0.001$ ). Second, the manipulation of the group type of deviant behavior (in-group vs. out-group) was successful. Specifically, the understanding of Mei's group type ( $M = 6.53, SD = 0.66, t = 36.02, p < 0.001$ ), and group relationship ( $M = 5.95, SD = 0.97, t = 18.91, p < 0.001$ ) had a higher score than the median value 4; while the reverse item had a lower score than the median value 4 ( $M = 2.09, SD = 1.23, t = -14.58, p < 0.001$ ). Third, participants' desire to tolerate (three items; Guchait et al., 2019; Lv, Liu, Luo, Liu, & Li, 2021; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.784$ ) and desire to punish (three items; Karelaia & Keck, 2013; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.707$ ) were measured using scales adapted from former studies. The dependent variable, deviant behavioral intention (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.887$ ), was measured with three items. Next, we controlled moral attitude (three items; Wang & Lin, 2018; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.741$ ). All measurements were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Last, respondents were asked to answer several demographic questions (see Appendix A).

**5.2.2. Results**

A one-way ANCOVA test was conducted to verify the main effects.

Before hypothesis testing, we calculated the required sample size for data analysis according to G\*Power 3.1 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). For an effect size (f) of 0.4, a significance level of 0.05, a statistical power value of 0.8, and number of groups of 2, the total sample size required is 52. Therefore, the sample size of this study had statistical testing power. Then, group type of deviant behavior was used as an independent variable (coded as in-group = 1, out-group = 0). Deviant behavioral intention, desire to tolerate or desire to punish were the dependent variables, respectively. And moral attitude, gender, and age as the control variables were included as covariates. The results indicates a significant difference in focal residents' deviant behavioral ( $F_{(1,87)} = 19.36, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.189$ ) intention between in-groups ( $M = 2.80, SD = 1.16$ ) and out-groups ( $M = 1.98, SD = 0.79$ ; see Fig. 4). Hence, H1 was verified. Moreover, focal residents' desire to tolerate in-groups' deviant behavior were higher than out-groups' ( $M_{in-group} = 3.27, SD = 0.91; M_{out-group} = 2.46, SD = 0.85; F_{(1,87)} = 21.72,$



**Fig. 4.** The influence of group type of deviant behavior on residents' deviant behavioral intention.



**Fig. 3.** Picture in the stimulus materials.



$p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.207$ ; see Fig. 3), and focal residents' have less desire to punish in-groups' deviant behavior than out-groups' ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ;  $F_{(1,87)} = 15.64$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.159$ ; see Fig. 5). Hence, the H2a and H2b were verified.

The mediating role of desire to tolerate and desire to punish employed SPSS PROCESS macro model 4 via bootstrapping with 5000 replications and a 95% confidence interval (CI) (Hayes, 2013). The group type of deviant behavior was set as the independent variable (coded as in-group = 1, out-group = 0). Desire to tolerate and desire to punish were set as the mediator, and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention was set as the dependent variable. Moral attitude, gender, and age were set as control variables. The direct effect of group type of deviant behavior on focal residents' deviant behavioral intention was not significant ( $b = 0.23$ ,  $SE = 0.18$ ; 95% CI: 0.12 to 0.58). The mediating effect of desire to tolerate ( $b = 0.44$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ; 95% CI: 0.19 to 0.77) and desire to punish ( $b = 0.20$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ; 95% CI: 0.14 to 0.46) were both significant. Moreover, as shown in Fig. 6, desire to tolerate played a positive mediating role in the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and residents' deviant behavioral intention ( $a_1 = 0.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $b_1 = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while desire to punish played a negative mediating role in the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and residents' deviant behavioral intention ( $a_2 = -0.72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $b_2 = -0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). That is, H3a and H3b were supported.

### 5.3. Discussion

Compared with Study 1, Study 2 again verified the main effects by scenario-based experiment, and further examined jointly mediating effects of desire to tolerate and desire to punish between the group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention (H1, H2, and H3). Study 2 demonstrated that residents of tourism destinations have in-group favoritism, and the stronger contagion effects of deviance among in-group than out-group. That is, Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were supported. Study 3 will explore the moderating effect of norm strength on the relationship between group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention in tourism contexts to explore the boundary conditions of in-group favoritism and black sheep effect (H4 and H5).

## 6. Study 3

Study 3 aims to evaluate the moderation of strength of norm on

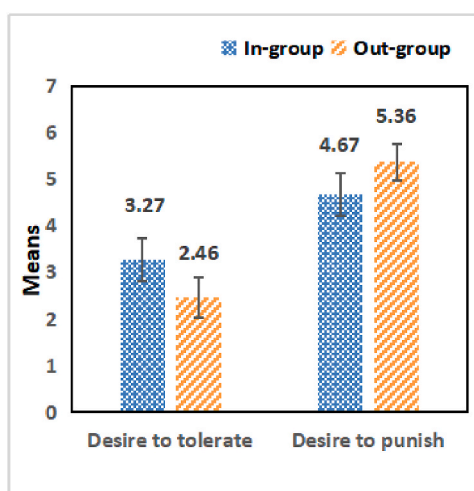


Fig. 5. The influence of group type of deviant behavior on residents' desire to tolerate and desire to punish.

residents' desire to tolerate/punish and deviant behavioral intention (testing H4 and H5). A 2 (in-group vs. out-group deviant behavior)  $\times$  2 (tight vs. loose norm) factorial between-subjects experimental design was employed.

### 6.1. Pretest

The pretest was conducted as to whether participants recognized the description about the norm strength.

#### 6.1.1. Materials

The stimulation material of Study 3 added the description indicating norm strength (adapted from Gelfand et al., 2021) on the basis of the materials of Study 2. We also used the third person (through Mei, a fictitious character) in stimulation materials to avoid the impact for social desirability. Appendix B provides more details.

#### 6.1.2. Procedure

The 40 participants (65.0% females, 35.0% males, 75.0% were 18–25) were recruited via a social media platform known as WeChat. An invitation message with the link to take the questionnaire was posted and shared on the WeChat platform. Participants who clicked the questionnaire link were randomly assigned to one of the two experiment conditions (tight vs. loose norm). After reading the scenarios, participants were asked to rate the scenario authenticity and norm strength in city A. The norm strength was measured with three items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) from Gelfand et al. (2021).

#### 6.1.3. Results and discussion

The results indicated that the most participants believed that the material was still authentic and comprehensible after adding the description about norm strength ( $M_{\text{real}} = 5.70$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ,  $t = 8.79$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{understand}} = 6.43$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ,  $t = 22.72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and that they could correctly distinguish different norm strength based on this material ( $M_{\text{tight}} = 5.87$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ;  $M_{\text{loose}} = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ;  $t = 7.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, the manipulation of norm strength was successful.

### 6.2. Main experiment

#### 6.2.1. Procedure

Under the same procedure employed in Study 2, 200 participants were recruited through Credamo.com in May 2022. In order to prevent potential carryover effect across experiments (Koschate-Fischer & Schandelmeier, 2014), those who participated in Study 2 were excluded from Study 3. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. After removing incomplete questionnaires, 184 valid responses were collected ( $N_{\text{in-group and tight}} = 44$  vs.  $N_{\text{in-group and loose}} = 45$  vs.  $N_{\text{out-group and tight}} = 50$  vs.  $N_{\text{out-group and loose}} = 45$ ; 70.1% females, 29.9% males, 45.6% aged 26–35 years; for details see Table 2). Firstly, participants were asked to read and imagine how they would feel in the scenario presented. Then they were asked to rate the authenticity and intelligibility of the material ( $M_{\text{realistic}} = 5.91$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ,  $t = 33.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{understand}} = 6.31$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ,  $t = 35.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; both are greater than the median value of 4). Second, the manipulation of the group type of deviant behavior (in-group vs. out-group) ( $M_{\text{group type}} = 6.42$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ,  $t = 45.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{group relationship}} = 5.95$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ,  $t = 33.16$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{reverse}} = 2.05$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ,  $t = -30.91$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , significant lower than the median value of 4) and norm strength (three items; adapted from Gelfand et al., 2021; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.825$ ) were both successful ( $M_{\text{tight}} = 5.94$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ;  $M_{\text{loose}} = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ;  $t = 19.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Third, participants' desire to tolerate (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.919$ ), desire to punish (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.878$ ), deviant behavioral intention (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.957$ ) and moral attitude (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.759$ ) were measured in the same way as in Study 2. Next, respondents were asked to answer several demographic

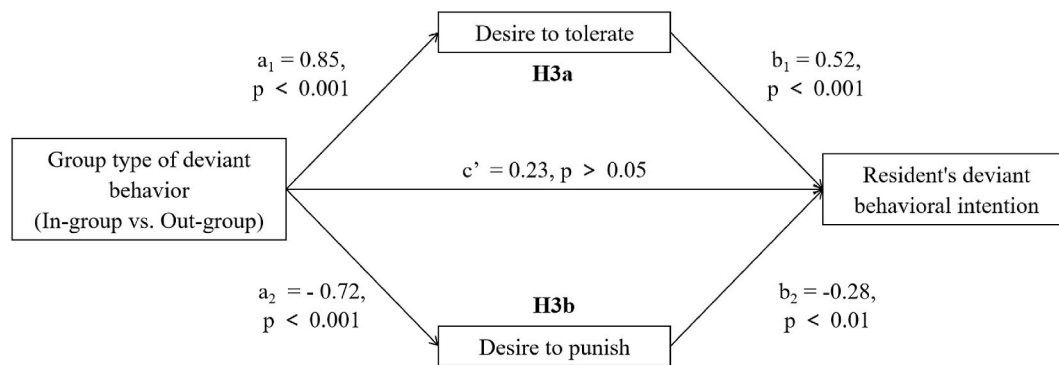


Fig. 6. Mediating role of desire to tolerate and desire to punish.

Table 2  
Characteristics of participants in Study 3.

	n	%		n	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Age</b>		
Female	129	70.1	18 to 25	66	35.9
Male	55	29.9	26 to 35	84	45.6
			36 to 45	22	12.0
<b>Monthly Income</b>			46 and older	12	6.5
<¥2000	51	27.7	<b>Level of Education</b>		
¥2000 to 4999	37	20.1	Less than High School	2	1.1
¥5000 to 7999	25	13.6	High School/Technical School	10	5.4
¥8000 to 9999	49	26.6	Undergraduate/Associate Degree	148	80.4
≥¥10,000	22	12.0	Postgraduate Degree	24	13.1

questions (see Appendix B).

6.2.2. Results

We conducted a 2 × 2 ANCOVA to verify the moderating effect of norm strength. We calculated the required sample size for data analysis according to G\*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al., 2009) and chose ANOVA. For an effect size (f) of 0.4, a significance level of 0.05, a statistical power value of 0.8, and number of groups of 4, the total sample size required is 73. Hence, the sample size (184) of this study had statistical testing power. Group type of deviant behavior (coded as in-group = 1, out-group = 0) and norm strength (coded as tight = 1, loose = 0) served as independent variables. Residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention served as dependent variables. Moral attitude, gender, and age were included as covariates. The results indicated significant interaction effect on desire to tolerate ( $F_{(1, 183)} = 14.17, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.074$ ), desire to punish ( $F_{(1, 183)} = 21.78, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.110$ ) and deviant behavioral intention ( $F_{(1, 183)} = 18.35, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.094$ ). Additionally, we conducted a one-way ANCOVA to confirm the direction of the moderating effect of norm strength. Under the loose norms in tourism destination, focal residents have stronger desire to tolerate the deviant behavior of members of their in-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 4.68, SD = 1.30$ ) than members of the out-group ( $M_{\text{out-group}} = 3.93, SD = 1.61; F_{(1, 89)} = 8.06, p = 0.006, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.087$ ). They also have a weaker desire to punish deviance by the in-group than the out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 3.21, SD = 1.19; M_{\text{out-group}} = 4.18, SD = 1.44; F_{(1, 89)} = 14.29, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.144$ ). The deviant behavior of the in-group increases respondents' deviant behavioral intention than the deviant behavior of the out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 4.59, SD = 1.44; M_{\text{out-group}} = 3.71, SD = 1.51; F_{(1, 89)} = 9.84, p = 0.002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.104$ ). When the tourism destination has tight norms, if focal residents have observed the deviant behavior of in-group instead of the out-group, they have weaker desire to tolerate the behavior ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 2.25, SD = 0.63; M_{\text{out-group}} = 2.75,$

$SD = 0.94; F_{(1, 93)} = 5.73, p = 0.019, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.060$ ) and stronger desire to punish it ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 5.59, SD = 0.69; M_{\text{out-group}} = 5.12, SD = 0.77; F_{(1, 93)} = 6.45, p = 0.013, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.068$ ), as well as less deviant behavioral intention ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 1.54, SD = 0.50; M_{\text{out-group}} = 2.07, SD = 0.89; F_{(1, 93)} = 8.89, p = 0.004, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.091$ ). Therefore, H4 (see Fig. 7) and H5 (see Fig. 8) were supported.

6.3. Discussion

Study 3 revealed the moderating role of norm strength (tight vs. loose) on the relationships between group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention, supporting Hypotheses 4 and 5. Study 3 probed the boundary condition of in-group favoritism and black sheep effect under the context of tourism deviance.

7. Study 4

As participants in Study 3 may not be real residents living in a tourism destination, there may be lack of sufficient understanding of the actual situation of the tourism destination, which may influence the results of studies. In order to overcome this deficiency, for Study 4 real residents of tourism destinations were recruited to replicate the procedures of Study 3 (testing H4 and H5), further improving the external validity of the research conclusions.

7.1. Procedure

The experiment took place in a popular tourism destination named Yichang in Hubei Province, China, in May 2022. The city of Yichang is famous as the starting point of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. It is also rich in natural and cultural tourism attractions. We recruited several local residents to be volunteer surveyors through personal social networks. These surveyors received training on recruiting other residents, then reached out to other local residents via their own connections. The surveyors informed other residents that their participation was anonymous and facilitated the entire questionnaire filling process by answering questions from the participants. The questionnaires were the same as in Study 3 and participants were asked to imagine themselves in the scenario presented in the questionnaire. At the end, a small compensation was provided to local residents who participated in the study as an incentive. The surveyors distributed and collected 150 questionnaires in total. After removing incomplete answers, we had 143 valid responses ( $N_{\text{in-group and tight}} = 32$  vs.  $N_{\text{in-group and loose}} = 38$  vs.  $N_{\text{out-group and tight}} = 34$  vs.  $N_{\text{out-group and loose}} = 39$ ). Among the 143 participants, 51.0% were females, 49.0% were males, and 33.6% were aged 26–35. Table 3 provides more details about the participants.

First, a scenario authenticity test showed that residents perceived the situation as realistic and comprehensible ( $M_{\text{realistic}} = 5.50, SD = 0.86, t = 21.03, p < 0.001; M_{\text{understand}} = 5.69, SD = 1.04, t = 19.30, p < 0.001$ ; both are greater than the median value of 4). Second, the manipulation

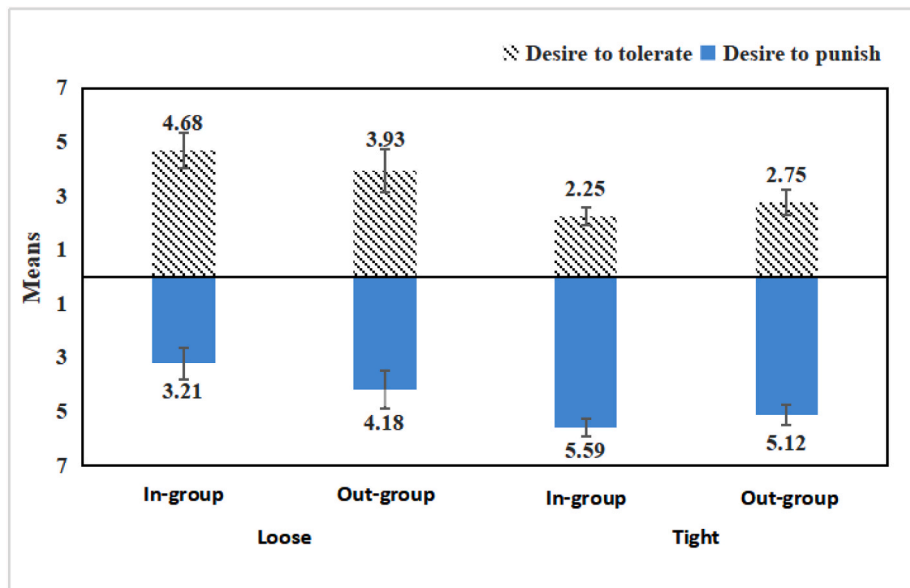


Fig. 7. Moderating effect of norm strength between group type of deviant behavior and residents' desire to tolerate and punish.

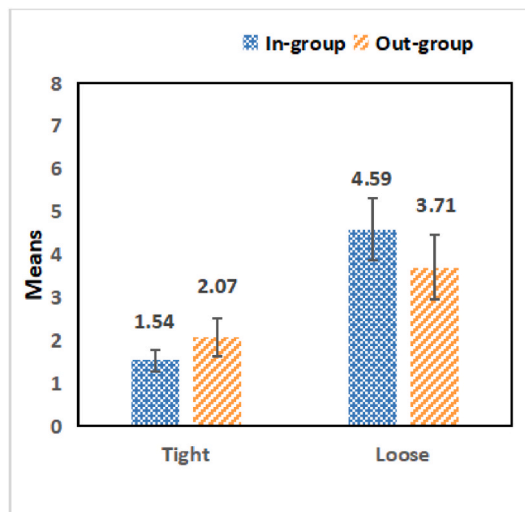


Fig. 8. Moderating effect of norm strength between group type of deviant behavior and residents' deviant behavioral intention.

Table 3  
Characteristics of participants in Study 4.

	n	%		n	%	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>					
	Female	73	51.0	18 to 25	19	13.3
Male	70	49.0	26 to 35	48	33.6	
			36 to 45	37	25.9	
			46 and older	39	27.3	
<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>					
	<¥2000	32	22.4	Less than High School	33	23.1
	¥2000 to 4999	44	30.8	High School/Technical School	45	31.5
	¥5000 to 7999	44	30.8	Undergraduate/Associate Degree	59	41.2
	¥8000 to 9999	19	13.3	Postgraduate Degree	6	4.2
≥¥10,000	4	2.8				

checks of group type of deviant behavior ( $M_{\text{group type}} = 5.91, SD = 0.96, t = 23.88, p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{group relationship}} = 5.45, SD = 1.05, t = 16.55, p < 0.001$ ;  $M_{\text{reverse}} = 2.50, SD = 1.12, t = -16.07, p < 0.001$ ) and norm strength (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.811$ ) were successful ( $M_{\text{tight}} = 5.87, SD =$

0.69;  $M_{\text{loose}} = 3.71, SD = 1.34; t = 12.16, p < 0.001$ ). Third, residents' desire to tolerate (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.887$ ), desire to punish (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.869$ ), deviant behavioral intention (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.927$ ) and moral attitude (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.777$ ) were measured in the same way as in Study 3. Last, several types of demographic information of residents were collected. The mean score of each scale was utilized in subsequent analysis.

### 7.2. Results

According to the calculation of sample size by G\*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al., 2009) in Study 3, the sample size (143>73) of this study had statistical testing power. A  $2 \times 2$  ANCOVA was performed with group type of deviant behavior (coded as in-group = 1, out-group = 0) and norm strength (coded as tight = 1, loose = 0) performed as independent variables, residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish and deviant behavioral intention as the dependent variable respectively, and moral attitude, gender, and age as covariates. The results indicated significant interaction effect on desire to tolerate ( $F_{(1, 142)} = 13.81, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.092$ ), desire to punish ( $F_{(1, 142)} = 18.95, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.122$ ), and deviant behavioral intention ( $F_{(1, 142)} = 25.47, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.158$ ). Additionally, we conducted a one-way ANCOVA test to confirm the direction of the moderating effect of norm strength. When the tourism destinations had loose norms, focal residents have a stronger desire to tolerate the deviant behavior of in-groups than the out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 4.60, SD = 1.47$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 3.58, SD = 1.61$ ;  $F_{(1, 76)} = 7.48, p = 0.008$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.094$ ), a weaker desire to punish the in-group than out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 3.39, SD = 1.27$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 4.52, SD = 1.33$ ;  $F_{(1, 76)} = 10.95, p = 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.132$ ), and seeing deviant behavior of the in-group increases their deviant behavioral intention more than deviant behavior of the out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 4.44, SD = 1.46$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 2.93, SD = 1.43$ ;  $F_{(1, 76)} = 16.70, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.188$ ). Results were quite different in tourism destinations with tight norms. In such cases focal residents had a weaker desire to tolerate in-group deviant behavior than out-group deviant behavior ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 2.44, SD = 0.80$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 2.98, SD = 0.84$ ;  $F_{(1, 65)} = 5.93, p = 0.018$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.089$ ), a stronger desire to punish such behavior in the in-group than the out-group ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 5.36, SD = 0.91$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 4.85, SD = 0.73$ ;  $F_{(1, 65)} = 5.55, p = 0.022$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.083$ ), and lower intention to deviate ( $M_{\text{in-group}} = 1.72, SD = 0.45$ ;  $M_{\text{out-group}} = 2.21, SD = 0.93$ ;  $F_{(1, 65)} = 6.55,$

$p = 0.013$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.097$ ). Therefore, H4 (see Fig. 9) and H5 (see Fig. 10) were supported again.

7.3. Discussion

Study 4 further tested H4 and H5. Real residents living in tourism destination were recruited as experimental participants, affirming the results of Study 3, further supporting Hypotheses 4 and 5, and improving the representativeness of the sample and the scientific and external validity of the results.

8. Conclusions and implications

8.1. Overall conclusion

Integrating social identity theory and focus theory of norms, this study used a mixed-method approach to investigate the effect of group type of deviant behavior on focal residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention. The results of Studies 1 and 2 imply that, in the situation of facing in-group (vs. out-group) deviant behaviors, focal residents hold stronger desire to tolerate, lower desire to punish, and higher deviant behavioral intention. These findings support H1 and H2. Furthermore, Study 3 showed that desire to tolerate and desire to punish jointly play a mediating role between the group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention, confirming H3. In Studies 3 and 4, we found that norm strength moderates the effects of group type of deviant behavior on focal residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention. Specifically, under the condition of tight norms, the black sheep effect will appear, and focal residents have a stronger desire to punish, weaker desire to tolerate, and lower deviant behavioral intention for an in-group's deviant behavior than deviant behavior by an out-group. Under the loose norm, in-group favoritism dominates, and when focal residents face the deviance of the in-group (vs. out-group), there will be lower desire to punish, higher desire to tolerate, and more deviant behavioral intention. Therefore, Hypotheses H4 and H5 were supported. Table 4 summarized the findings of hypothesis tests below.

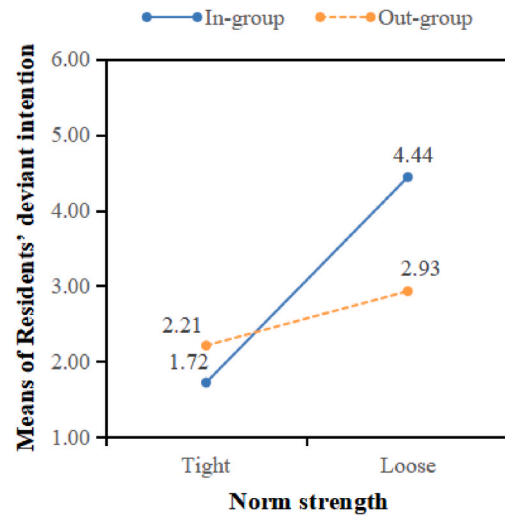


Fig. 10. Moderating effect of norm strength between group type of deviant behavior and real residents' deviant behavioral intention.

8.2. Theoretical contributions

Previous studies have shown that group type is a key variable that affects observers' evaluation of deviant behavior (Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020; Karelaia & Keck, 2013). However, some studies have found that people show in-group favoritism when assessing deviance (Bocian, Cichočka, & Wojciszke, 2021; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012), while others have found the black sheep effect (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003; Kutlaca et al., 2020). The conflicting conclusions in these sets of literature are worth exploring (Aguiar et al., 2017). This study performs such exploration, finding, in line with social identity theory, that group type of deviant behavior has an effect on the focal residents' desire to tolerate, desire to punish, and deviant behavioral intention under the general tourist context. Moreover, based on the focus theory of norms, the theoretical boundary between the in-group favoritism and black sheep effect has been discussed under the tourist deviant context. This study enriches the application of social identity theory in the field of

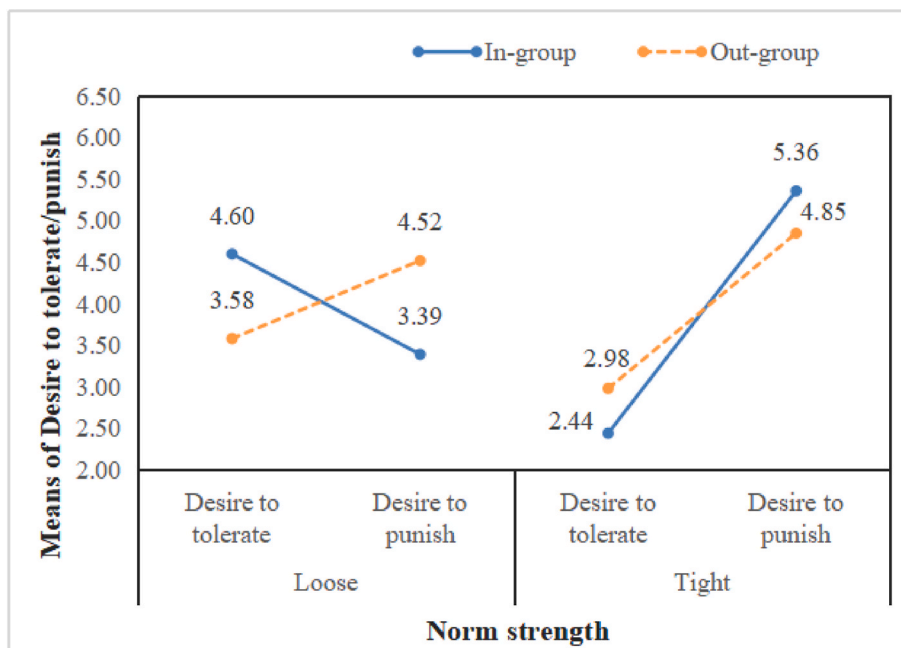


Fig. 9. Moderating effect of norm strength between group type of deviant behavior and real residents' desire to tolerate and punish.



**Table 4**  
Summary of hypothesis test results.

Hypothesis	Proposed Relationships	Finding
H1	Group type of deviant behavior→Resident's deviant behavioral intention	Supported by Studies 1 & 2
H2a	Group type of deviant behavior→Desire to tolerate	Supported by Studies 1 & 2
H2b	Group type of deviant behavior→Desire to punish	Supported by Studies 1 & 2
H3	Group type of deviant behavior→Desire to tolerate & Desire to punish→Resident's deviant behavioral intention	Supported by Study 2
H4a	Norm strength × Group type of deviant behavior→Desire to tolerate	Supported by Studies 3 & 4
H4b	Norm strength × Group type of deviant behavior→Desire to punish	Supported by Studies 3 & 4
H5	Norm strength × Group type of deviant behavior→Resident's deviant behavioral intention	Supported by Studies 3 & 4

evaluation of deviant behavior in the context of the tourism destination, examines the moderating role of norm strength on the relationships between the group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' responses, and reconciles the conflicting conclusions of existing research on in-group favoritism based on social identity theory and black sheep effect based on focus theory of norms.

Previous studies confirmed the contagion effect of group deviance among tourists (e.g., Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). This study further confirmed the differential contagion effect of in-group or out-group deviant behaviors on focal residents' own deviant behavior from the perspective of residents. Specifically, the study found that the contagion effect of deviant behavior would be stronger among in-group members than out-group members, which expanded applicable population and context for the social contagion effect of deviant behavior. At the same time, we verified the phenomenon of in-group favoritism in the general tourism context. Based on the most common responses that people have to deviants (Ashokkumar et al., 2019), we used desire to tolerate to reflect in-group favoritism, and desire to punish to reflect the black sheep effect. The results showed that, compared with an out-group's deviant behavior, focal residents hold higher desire to tolerate and lower desire to punish the in-group's deviant behaviors, thus showing significant in-group favoritism, which is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Bocian et al., 2021; Ellemers, 2012; Tung, 2019). Hence, this study discovered the differential contagion effect of deviance among the in-group and out-group, confirmed the existence of the in-group favoritism phenomenon in the tourism context, enriched the research literature on deviance behavior, and expanded the application context of social identity theory.

While previous research presented some evidence of in-group favoritism (Bocian et al., 2021; Huang & Wang, 2014), few studies have provided insight into the mechanisms determining people's response to different groups' deviance (Aguar et al., 2017). Hence, this paper explored the intermediate processes and influential mechanisms by which focal residents exhibit the phenomenon of in-group favoritism toward the deviant behavior of other residents and tourists in tourism contexts. Specifically, based on the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this study proposed desire to tolerate and desire to punish, which are the most common attitudes towards deviants (Ashokkumar et al., 2019), as the mediating variables between the group type of deviant behavior and focal residents' deviant behavioral intention in the tourism context, so as to verify the mediating effect of in-group favoritism. The findings are consistent with social identity theory that the in-group's deviance created focal residents' stronger desire for tolerance and weaker desire to punish than the out-group's deviant behaviors. Therefore, this study clarified the mediating mechanism of in-group and out-group deviant behaviors on focal residents' own deviant behavioral intentions, and enriched and expanded the

literature on in-group favoritism and deviant behaviors in the tourism context.

Finally, this study reconciled the mixed findings in the literature of in-group favoritism and black sheep effect by introducing norm strength as a moderator, and explained how social identity theory and focus theory of norms could supplement each other the tourism context. Specifically, according to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69), residents are likely to show in-group favoritism toward other residents in contrast to tourists, the out-group. However, based on focus theory of norms (McAuliffe & Dunham, 2016), residents are likely to show a black sheep effect and therefore more strongly condemn deviant behavior by the in-group. While these two theories suggest two contradictory effects, our findings revealed that the salience of in-group favoritism and black sheep effect depends on the condition of norm strength. Under the condition of loose norms, residents take "affection" rather than "reason" as the core of behavioral norms in the process of face-to-face interaction (Qu et al., 2021), showing in-group favoritism. By contrast, the condition of tight norms emphasizes rules and regulations to manage and maintain social operations (Gelfand et al., 2021), such that black sheep effect comes in to play and in-group members are punished more harshly than out-group members. Therefore, these findings indicate that the applications of social identity theory and focus theory of norms must consider the condition of norm strength in the research context. This deepens our understanding on the boundary conditions of applying social identity theory and focus theory of norms.

### 8.3. Practical implications

This study has practical implications for destination marketing organizations seeking to implement coping strategies to reduce focal residents' deviant behavior and achieve sustainable development of tourism destinations. Specifically, when social norms are loose, focal residents have a stronger desire to tolerate and weaker desire to punish the deviant behavior of the in-group member (vs. of the out-group member), which would increase their own deviant behavioral intention. To prevent this contagion effect of deviant behaviors among residents, DMOs and policymakers should strengthen social norms by implementing social norm intervention programs. For example, DMOs could host workshops, townhall meetings, and community camps to engage focal residents to explore and discuss social norms in their lives, and provide toolkits to help them regulate their behaviors in line with the norms. DMOs could also give out incentives and rewards to recognize those residents who exemplify positive norms and encourage others to follow suit (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022; Xinhua, 2021). At the same time, policymakers may reinforce the desired norms by introducing punishments for deviant behaviors such as fines or community service hours (Podder, Righi, & Pancotto, 2021; Xiao, 2018, pp. 155–173).

While norms are tight in the local community, focal residents have a weaker desire to tolerate and stronger desire to punish the deviant behavior of an in-group member (vs. of the out-group member) and have low deviant behavioral intention. However, focal residents show higher desire to tolerate the out-groups' deviant behavior. In this situation, DMOs should focus more on preventing deviant behaviors of out-groupers (i.e., tourists). DMOs may implement measures to educate tourists regarding local social norms at the destination. Both online and offline campaigns can be developed to enhance tourists' awareness of local social norms. For example, slogans, banners, digital signage, and text messages can be used to provide information about appropriate behaviors and etiquette, and remind tourists of the need to follow local norms (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022). Meanwhile, DMOs could recruit volunteers among local residents to educate tourists about local social norms and etiquette at the destination, empowering local residents to prevent tourists from behaving in a deviant manner.

## 9. Research limitations and future research directions

This study has some limitations that warrant future research. First, the participants recruited in this research are from China. Although deviant behavior is common in every society, the Chinese cultural context of this study could affect respondents' reactions to norm strength (Gelfand et al., 2021). Therefore, future studies should test our hypotheses with samples from other cultures. Second, based on the focus theory of norms, we verified the phenomenon of the black sheep effect among local residents. While the black sheep effect would tend to reduce residents' deviant behavioral intention, it might threaten group cohesion and quality of life among residents (Jetten & Hornsey, 2014; Su & Swanson, 2020; Yolal, Gursoy, Uysal, Kim, & Karacaoglu, 2016). We suggest future studies to assess other possible outcomes of black sheep effect (e.g., resident's group cohesion, quality of life). Finally, this paper is developed from the perspective of the residents of the tourism destination, and future research should consider the influence of in-group favoritism and the black sheep effect on tourists' deviant behavioral intention. This is vital to reduce tourists' deviant behavior, which is crucial to the sustainable development of tourism destinations (Su, Cheng, et al., 2022).

### Credit author statement

Authors Lujun Su, Huixuan Chen, Yinghua Huang, and Xiuqiong Chen, equally contributed to this study.

### Impact statement

This study investigated differences in how destination residents respond to deviant behaviors by other residents—members of their in-group—and similar behavior by tourists, who they see as the out-group. These findings provide several important implications for destination management organization (DMOs). As destination residents generally showed in-group favoritism for other residents' deviant behavior compared with tourists, we found the contagion effect of deviant behavior was stronger among in-groups than out-groups. Therefore, we recommend DMOs to educate residents that although more tolerance towards in-group deviance can maintain positive in-group relations, in the long run it is detrimental to group reputation. Also, we suggest DMOs to emphasize the local norms to residents, telling them that punishing in-group deviance is an important strategy for maintaining and promoting in-group favoritism at a higher level. DMOs should teach residents how to deal with those who deviated from the group norms in a more appropriate way.

### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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### Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104773>.

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