Two birds with one stone: Goal conflict handling and its effect on well-being

Abstract

A tourist's journey is often shaped by the pursuit of diverse and sometimes conflicting goals. In this study, we investigate how tourists handle conflicting goals during their travels. Drawing upon life history theory, we have developed and tested a conceptual model that examines how life history strategies (LHS, fast vs. slow) influence goal management approaches (highlighting vs. balancing) and their subsequent impact on tourist well-being. Through a combination of surveys, field and lab experiments, and a meta-analysis, our research reveals that when confronted with goal conflicts, tourists with a fast LHS tend to prefer a highlighting approach, while those with a slow LHS gravitate towards a balancing approach, with perceived deservingness serving as a mediator in this relationship. Moreover, matching (vs. mismatching) LHS with goal management enhances overall well-being. These findings offer valuable insights for both theoretical advancement and practical management in tourism.

1. Introduction

Tourists often find themselves at the crossroads of decision-making, facing a delicate balancing act between their aspirations and constraints (Li et al., 2019), where dilemmas arise between luxurious services and budget-friendly alternatives, as well as between time constraints and the allure of leisurely exploration. Importantly, the stakes are high, as the pursuit of incompatible goals, trying to "hit two birds with one stone", can cast a long shadow over tourists' satisfaction and overall well-being (Hu et al., 2023). While researchers have examined the impact of tourists' internal goal conflicts on their travel intentions (Li & Yu, 2020), future travel decisions (Ye, 2015), the choice of aesthetic design (Chen et al., 2023), as well as the effect work and leisure conflict on well-being (Tsaur & Yen, 2018). There is a notable gap in the existing literature regarding how tourists solve the goal conflict in traveling with appropriate approaches and the subsequent effects on their well-being (Chang et al., 2022; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Uysal et al., 2016; Vada et al., 2020).

The two common approaches to managing competing goals are balancing, where individuals seek a compromise to partially fulfill both goals, and highlighting, where they pursue one goal at a time (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Orehek et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2023). This study argues that tourists' preference for goal management approaches can be predicted by their life history strategy. According to life history theory, life history strategies are relatively stable personality traits formed by a person's continuous evaluation and selection during development and reproduction tasks (Griskevicius et al., 2011). Life history strategies play a crucial role in determining how humans allocate limited resources for survival and reproduction (Figueredo et al., 2014). Specifically, individuals who grow up in resource-poor

environments are prone to develop fast life history strategies. When faced with choices, they prefer to prioritize immediate gratification, take more risks, lack a future-oriented mentality, and exhibit impulsive decision-making behavior (Wang et al., 2009). In contrast, individuals who grow up in a resource-rich environment are more likely to develop a slow life strategy. Faced with different choices, they tend to show more logical thinking and prioritize long-term planning (Wang et al., 2023). When an individual faces multiple conflicting goals, the act of weighing how to allocate limited resources or time to achieve different goals is precisely a reflection of tourists' unique LHS. Prior research has explored factors influencing LHS development and associated behaviors, primarily in biological and psychological fields, examining how environmental factors like mortality rates, resource scarcity, environmental severity, socioeconomic inequality, and childhood socioeconomic status affect LHS choices (Griskevicius, 2011; Laran & Salerno, 2013; Xu & Sun, 2019). Limited studies have examined how LHS influences individuals' preferences for goal management approaches. Based on this, this study takes LHS as an important influencing factor of tourists' goal management methods to explore how LHS predicts tourists' goal management preferences.

Furthermore, extensive research shows that goal conflict has significant effects on well-being (Lu et al., 2023; Riediger & Freund, 2004). Experiencing goal conflicts can cause negative emotions such as anxiety and irritability, thereby reducing an individual's subjective well-being. Focusing on the tourism field, previous researches have examined how travel frequency, duration, and active involvement influence well-being (Dolnicar et al., 2013; Kyle & Chick, 2002) and how well-being evolves across tourism stages: pre-trip anticipation, in-the-moment enjoyment, and post-vacation reflections (Pagán, 2015; Su et al., 2020; Yu et al.,

2021). Few studies have focused on the relationship between tourists' LHS, goal management approaches and tourists' well-being. Based on this, this study takes tourists' well-being as the outcome variable to further explore whether and how the interaction between tourists' LHS and goal conflict affects tourists' well-being.

Furthermore, extensive research has shown that tourism significantly impacts well-being (Bimonte & Faralla, 2015; Huang et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2017). Studies have examined how travel frequency, duration, and active involvement influence well-being (Dolnicar et al., 2013; Kyle & Chick, 2002) and how well-being evolves across tourism stages: pre-trip anticipation, in-the-moment enjoyment, and post-vacation reflections (Pagán, 2015; Su et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). While goal conflict has been linked to negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, which can negatively impact overall well-being (Lu et al., 2023; Riediger & Freund, 2004), limited research has explored how tourists' LHS interacts with goal conflict management approach to influence well-being.

The study aims to examine how tourists' LHS influences their selection of goal management approach, considering the mediating role of perceived deservingness, and to evaluate the consequences of aligning LHS with goal management approach on tourist well-being. In this study, we argue that tourists with a fast LHS may be more likely to a highlighting approach, as they may be more likely to believe they deserve immediate rewards and benefits. Conversely, slow LHS tourists prefer a balancing approach, they may believe they deserve rewards and benefits that align with their long-term goals and well-being. The matching of the conflict managing approach (highlighting vs. balancing) with LHS (fast vs. slow) leads to satisfaction and well-being. We adopt a diverse research methodology,

including surveys, field and lab experiments, as well as meta-analysis to test our hypotheses.

Our work contributes to tourism research in several ways. First, our study extends the application of life history theory to the field of tourism goal conflict management (Griskevicius, Delton et al., 2011). By incorporating the concept of LHS, this study enhances our understanding of the factors that influence goal management preferences and enriches the existing literature on goal conflict (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Orehek et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2023). Second, we uncover perceived deservingness as a mediating factor in understanding goal conflict management, shedding light on the psychological mechanisms that underlie the relationship between LHSs and preferences in goal management. Finally, our study expands the research on tourist well-being (McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Vada et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) by exploring the matching effects of LHSs and goal management methods on tourists' well-being, uncovering additional significant factors influencing tourists' well-being.

2. Literature review

2.1. Goal conflict and goal management approaches

Goal conflict arises when tourists are confronted with multiple conflicting goals during purchasing or product/service usage, necessitating the prioritization of one goal over others (Liu et al., 2015). Early research on goal conflict examined various factors influencing consumer goal management preferences, including goal attributes (Dhar & Simonson, 1999), self-regulatory mode (Orehek, 2012), mindset abstraction (Lu et al., 2023), the impact of perceived goal progress (Fishbach & Dhar, 2005), and the role of power (Schmid, 2018).

In the tourism-related context, Ye (2015) studied how retirees manage conflicting goals in travel decision-making for retirement. Li & Yu (2020) explored goal conflict attribution's impact on travel intentions, revealing that when tourists attribute conflicts to themselves, time constraints have a weaker effect on travel intentions. Tsaur, & Yen (2018) further found that work and leisure conflict hurts leisure satisfaction and overall well-being. Etkin & Memmi (2021) further investigated goal conflict's influence on work and leisure time allocation, finding that greater conflict leads to less leisure time allocation. Recently, Chen, Ahlstrom, and Xiao (2023) investigated how tourists' goal conflict influences preference for simple versus complex aesthetics in design. Table 1 summarizes the major studies.

Table 1. Previous research on goal conflict.

Author (year)	Independent variable	Dependent variable
Dhar & Simonson, (1999)	Goal conflict (goal/resource)	Complementary choices (highlighting vs. balancing)
Fishbach & Dhar, (2005)	Perceived goal progress	Pursuit of focus goals
Laran & Janiszewski, (2009)	Passive guidance system	Behavioral consistency
Orehek et al., (2012)	Self-regulatory mode	Means evaluation (single goal vs. multi-goal)
Liu et al., (2015)	Goal conflict	The proportions of vice in bundles
Ye, (2015)	Goal conflict	Goal Pursuit in Retirement Travel
Berrios et al., (2017)	Mixed emotions	Life purpose
Schmid (2018)	Power	Experience of conflict
Tsaur & Yen, (2018)	Work-to-leisure conflict	leisure satisfaction well-being
Li & Yu, (2020)	Goal conflict attribution	Travel motivation
Etkin & Memmi, (2021)	Goal conflict	Work vs. Leisure
Tezer & Sobol, (2021)	Overstating the severity of life problems	Choice satisfaction
Yang & Jin, (2021)	Consumption sequences of vices and virtues	Enjoyment
Lu et al., (2023)	Mindset abstraction	Approaches (mixed vs. extreme)

Chen et al., (2023)	Goal conflict	Aesthetics (simple vs. complex)

The existing literature in fields such as marketing and psychology has provided valuable insights into goal conflicts and their resolution (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Laran & Janiszewski, 2009; Lu et al., 2023). When faced with competing goals, people often employ two approaches to manage their goals and consumption decisions (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Orehek et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2023). The first, referred to as the balancing approach, entails seeking a compromise to partially fulfill both goals. For example, when faced with the goals of quality experience and resource conservation, an individual will consider two goals comprehensively. That is, consumers may purchase a expensive Ferris wheel ticket to enjoy a superior view while simultaneously buying a less costly domestic beer to save money (a vice-virtue bundles), and later switch to the less expensive tour bus ticket and delicious beer (a vice-virtue bundles), thereby balancing pleasure and thrift. The second approach, known as highlighting, involves pursuing one goal at a time. Individuals may opt to prioritize the experience goal by first purchasing a expensive Ferris wheel ticket and delicious beer (a pure-vice bundle), and later switch to the less expensive tour bus ticket and regular domestic beer (a pure-virtue bundle) in separate transactions to save money. Previous research mainly explored product attributes (Dhar & Simonson, 1999), self-regulatory modes (Orehek et al., 2012), bundle proportions (Liu et al., 2015), mindset abstraction (Lu et al. , 2023) on consumers' goal management preferences (balancing vs. highlighting). And found that desirable goal management methods can significantly improve consumer satisfaction and positive emotions (Lu et al., 2023).

In summary, while fairly extensive, existing literature of primarily focuses on fields like

marketing and psychology (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Laran & Janiszewski, 2009; Lu et al., 2023). There's relatively limited research on tourist goal conflicts in tourism contexts, particularly regarding how tourists' LHSs influence their preference for goal management approaches in resolving travel-related goal conflicts.

2.2. Life history strategy (LHS)

LHS originates from the life history theory, a framework devised by biologists and ecologists to understand the allocation of resources to various life goals among organisms, including humans (Figueredo et al., 2014). LHSs describe how organisms prioritize growth, reproduction, and survival based on environmental factors (Kaplan & Gangestad, 2005), with the two poles of a continuum: fast LHS prioritizes early reproduction and risk-taking, while slow LHS delays reproduction and emphasizes care and education (Griskevicius et al., 2011). These strategies result from both genetic and environmental influences (Mittal & Griskevicius, 2014), with fast LHS traits linked to resource-poor, unpredictable environments, and impulsivity, while slow LHS traits relate to resource-rich settings and long-term focus and self-regulation (Griskevicius et al., 2011).

The literature has focused on two main areas: identifying factors that shape LHS selection and exploring behavioral variations among strategies. Studies have shown that factors such as mortality, resource scarcity, environmental severity, socioeconomic inequality, and childhood socioeconomic status significantly influence LHS choices (Griskevicius, 2011; Laran & Salerno, 2013; Xu & Sun, 2019). In environments with resource scarcity, individuals with fast LHS tend to consume more high-calorie, satiety food due to increased perceived scarcity (Laran & Salerno, 2013). Griskevicius et al. (2013) demonstrated that fast LHS

individuals are more impulsive, risk-taking, and susceptible to temptation, while slow LHS individuals exhibit greater self-control. Although prior research has highlighted LHS's role in predicting behavior, it has primarily focused on biological and psychological fields, with limited applications in tourism.

In the context of tourism and travel, where tourists often encounter conflicts between goals such as maximizing enjoyment and adhering to a budget, the choice of goal management approach becomes crucial. Following the line of research in psychology related to life history theory (Figueredo et al., 2006; Figueredo et al., 2014; Griskevicius et al., 2011; Kaplan & Gangestad, 2005; Mittal & Griskevicius, 2014), we argue that tourists with fast LHS are more likely to prefer the highlighting approach in managing goal conflicts during travel, as this approach resonates with their inherent drive for immediate rewards and gratification. Conversely, those with slow LHS are expected to favor the balancing approach, given their proclivity for long-term planning and consideration of future benefits. Hence, we proposed:

H1a: In situations involving conflicts between multiple goals, tourists with fast LHS prefer a highlighting goal management approach.

H1b: In situations involving conflicts between multiple goals, tourists with slow LHS prefer a balancing goal management approach.

2.3. Perceived deservingness

Deservingness, the sense of entitlement to desired rewards or indulgences, is emerging as an important factor influencing various aspects of behavior, particularly indulgent

consumption (Cavanaugh, 2014; Li & Yu, 2020). This sense of deservingness can be triggered by various factors, including experiences of hardship in life, unfair treatment, or attributing failures to external circumstances (Zitek et al., 2010). As suggested by life history theory, individuals with fast LHS are likely to have experienced more turbulent early life circumstances; therefore, they may exhibit a stronger sense of deservingness for indulgence (Tezer & Sobol, 2021). In contrast, individuals with slow LHS who had relatively more favorable early life experiences may not have the same degree of deservingness. When managing goal conflict, those who feel deserving are more likely to seek quick rewards as a form of self-reward (Bishop & Lane, 2000), consistent with the highlighting approach. Conversely, individuals with a reduced sense of deservingness of instant gratification, and tend to choose self-control and avoidance of indulgence (Fries & Parra, 2021), they may feel they deserve rewards that are in harmony with their long-term goals, leading them to favor a balancing approach. Therefore, we propose:

H2: The perception of deservingness mediates the relationship between LHSs and goal management approaches. tourists with fast LHS may exhibit a high degree of deservingness, leading them to adopt the highlighting approach, while those with slow LHS may not experience the same level of deservingness, driving them to prefer the balancing approach.

2.4. Tourist well-being

Well-being is a holistic concept that encompasses a tourist's overall life satisfaction, contentment in various life domains, subjective emotional and social well-being, and evaluations of psychological resources (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). It is associated with numerous benefits, including improved socialization, enhanced creativity, higher life

satisfaction (Ivlevs, 2017; Lin et al., 2017), overall health, and increased longevity (Nawijn & Mitas, 2012). It has gained recognition as a significant goal among tourists, organizations, and governments (Chen et al., 2020; Holm et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2022).

Tourism, often hailed as the epitome of experiential indulgence (Zheng et al., 2022), not only offers a gateway to building social connections, reveling in positive emotions, and expanding one's knowledge horizons but also plays a pivotal role in enriching overall well-being, encompassing both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects (Bimonte & Faralla, 2015; Huang et al., 2023). Hedonic benefits arise from relaxation activities, while eudaimonic well-being emerges from meaningful and effortful experiences (Knobloch et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020).

The impact of tourism on well-being is a nuanced interplay influenced by factors such as the level of engagement in tourism, travel frequency, and the duration of getaways (Dolnicar et al., 2013). Activities that actively engage tourists in the experience (Kyle & Chick, 2002), hold particular promise for enhancing well-being. The journey of well-being unfolds across the stages of a tourism experience, spanning from pre-trip anticipation to the in-the-moment ecstasy and the post-vacation reflections (Pagán, 2015; Su et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). It is imperative to note that goal conflict, a phenomenon known to elicit negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, bears a substantial impact on overall well-being (Lu et al., 2023; Riediger & Freund, 2004). However, there is a notable gap in our understanding of how tourists' LHS and their approaches to managing goal conflicts interact to influence their well-being during tourism experiences.

The choice of goal management approach can have a direct impact on an tourist's well-being. For fast LHS tourists, the highlighting approach may lead to immediate pleasure and

satisfaction by quickly achieving a single goal (Laran & Salerno, 2013; Mittal &

Griskevicius, 2014). However, the balancing approach may exacerbate their ambivalence and

reduce their overall well-being because it does not provide immediate benefits (Kelly et al.,

2015). In contrast, slow LHS tourists may find the balancing approach more appropriate, as it

is consistent with their long-term orientation. The gradual pursuit of multiple goals can

reduce the ambivalence caused by conflicting goals (Lu et al., 2023) and contribute to their

overall well-being. The highlighting approach, which emphasizes achieving one goal first,

may prevent slow LHS tourists from pursuing other goals, potentially reducing their

satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, we proposed:

H3: There is a significant interaction effect between LHS and goal management

approach on tourists' well-being. Specifically, tourists with slow (fast) LHS will experience

higher levels of well-being when paired with a balancing (highlighting) goal management
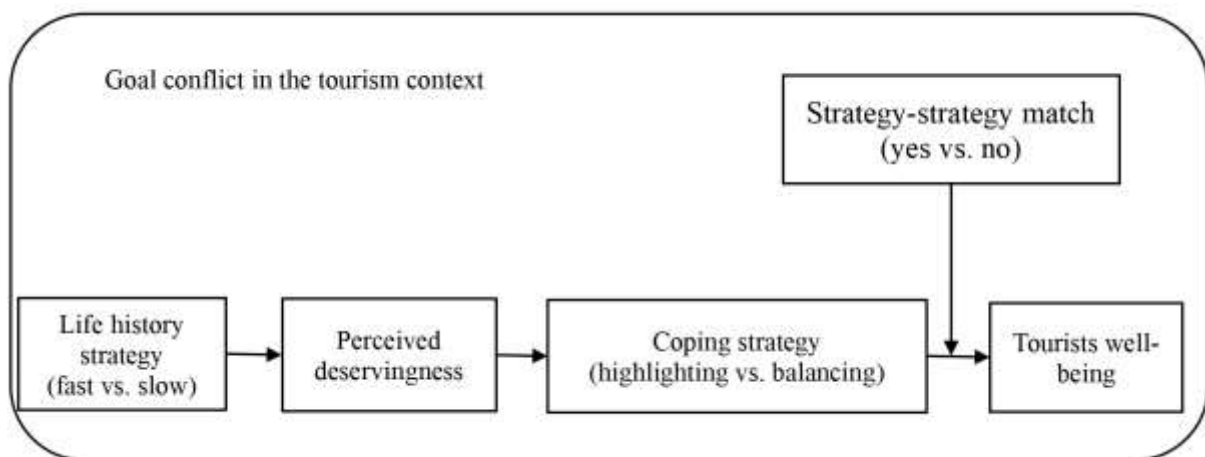
approach.

Fig. 1. Research model

3. Overview of studies

To validate the suggested conceptual framework, we carried out six studies. Study 1 looked into the relationship between LHSs and multi-goal management (H1) in the context of tourist food consumption using survey data. Study 2 manipulated LHSs to provide further support for the idea that adopting a fast (vs. slow) LHS leads to a preference for a highlighting (vs. balancing) goal management approach (H1). Study 3 expanded these findings to the context of tourist entertainment activity choices through a field study. Study 4a identified perceived deservingness as a mediator for the impact of LHSs (H2), while also ruling out alternative explanations related to impulsiveness and reward sensitivity. Study 4b tested H2 again and ruled out other explanations related to self-control ability, negative emotions, and mortality pressure. Study 5 examined the downstream effects of the match (vs. mismatch) between LHS and goal management approach on tourists' well-being. Finally, to strengthen the robustness of our findings, an internal meta-analysis was conducted across the experiments. Table 2 presents an overview of the empirical studies.

Table 2. Research design

Studies	Designs	Scenarios	Goals	Findings
1	Correlation study	Food consumption in the tourist destination	Tastiness & weight-management	Supported H1
2	Single factor (LHSs: fast vs. control vs.slow) between-subject design	Service choices in the tourist destination	Budget & service	Supported H1

3	Field experiment, single factor (LHSs: fast vs. slow) between-subject design	Entertainment in the tourist destination	Enjoyment & budget	Supported H1
4a	Single factor (LHSs: fast vs. slow) between-subject design	Entertainment and food choices in the tourist destination	Enjoyment & budget	Supported H2
4b	Single factor (LHSs: fast vs. slow) between-subject design	Entertainment and food choices in the tourist destination	Enjoyment & budget	Supported H2
5	2 (LHSs: fast vs. slow) x 2 (goal management approaches: highlighting vs. balancing) between-subject design	Entertainment and food choices in the tourist destination	Enjoyment & budget	Supported H3
6	Internal meta-analysis	NA	NA	Supported H1

4. Study 1

Tourists often face conflicting goals during their trips, such as wanting to savor local cuisines while staying health-conscious. We explored how tourists' LHS, shaped by their past decisions and life experiences, influences their approaches to cope with such conflicts. In Study 1, we identified taste and health goals in participants' food choices during travels, measured their LHS, and presented scenarios involving these goals to gauge their preference for balancing or highlighting approaches.

4.1. Pretests

We followed the approach of Lu et al., (2023) and conducted two pretests on the stimuli used in the main study. The purpose of pretest 1 was to explore the role of each bundle in

achieving two goals. Participants evaluated the four options (pure-vice bundle A: high-calorie steak + high-calorie blue cheese salad; pure-virtue bundle B: low-calorie chicken breast + low-calorie organic salad; balancing vice-virtue bundles C: high-calorie steak + low-calorie organic salad; balancing vice-virtue bundles D: low-calorie chicken breast + high-calorie blue cheese salad) in terms of taste and health. The results confirmed that options C and D could be used to reflect the balancing approach, as they helped simultaneously but partially achieve the goals of taste and health per meal, while options A and B could be used to reflect the highlighting approach, as they help fully achieve either a taste goal or a healthieness goal at each meal.

Pretest 2 was designed to test general preference for balancing and highlighting approaches and whether the preference depends on the order of options in the balancing or highlighting approaches. We changed the order of two combinations in the highlighting approach (A+B) and the balancing approach (C+D), forming four options (highlighting: W_1, W_2; balancing: Y_1, Y_2) (see Figure 2). We found that participants generally preferred balancing over highlighting approaches. No significant order effects were found in the two balancing or highlighting approaches. Therefore, we used a balancing and a highlighting approach in Study 1. Appendix B shows the details of the participants, designs, and results of the pretests.
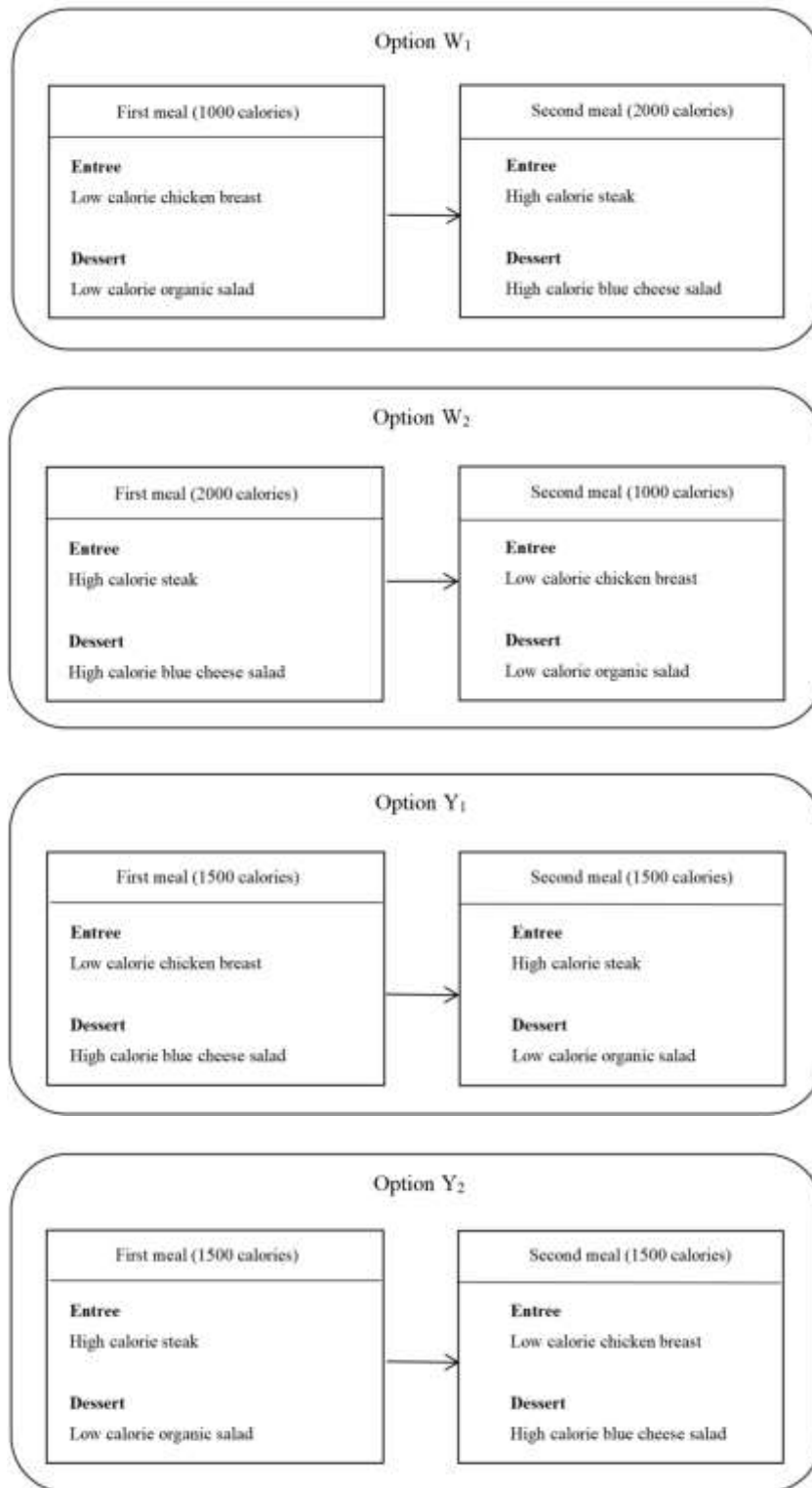
Fig. 2. Stimuli used in the pretest of Study 1

4.2. Main study

4.2.1. Participants and design

One hundred and seventy-three participants (35.8% male; M_{age}=29.59, SD=8.42) participants were recruited from Credamo, a reputable online crowdsourcing platform (Gai & Puntoni, 2021). We first measured and controlled for the inherent importance of taste and calories to participants when making food decisions (1=not at all, 7=very much). Then we activated participants' two competing dietary goals: tastiness goal and weight-control goal. Participants were instructed to list three benefits of having palatable foods and three benefits of having low-calorie foods (Köpetz et al., 2011). Next, we followed the design of Lu et al. (2023) to measure participants' preferences for a highlighting versus balancing goal management approach. Participants were presented with a scenario, "Please imagine that you are traveling at this time. You are going to two restaurants for the next two meals, and for each meal, you can be fully satisfied by ordering a combination of an entrée and a dessert". After reading the scenario, participants were given two options and asked to indicate their relative preference (1=option A, 2=option B). Option A represents a highlighting approach, which contains a pure-virtue bundle of entrée and dessert for the first meal and a pure-vice bundle for the second meal. Option B represents a balancing approach, which contains two vice-virtue bundles for the two meals (see Figure 3). After indicating their choice between the two options, participants completed a nineteen-item LHS scale adapted from Sai et al. (2022) (α=0.84, see Appendix A). Finally, participants reported whether they had any food restrictions and their demographic information such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income.
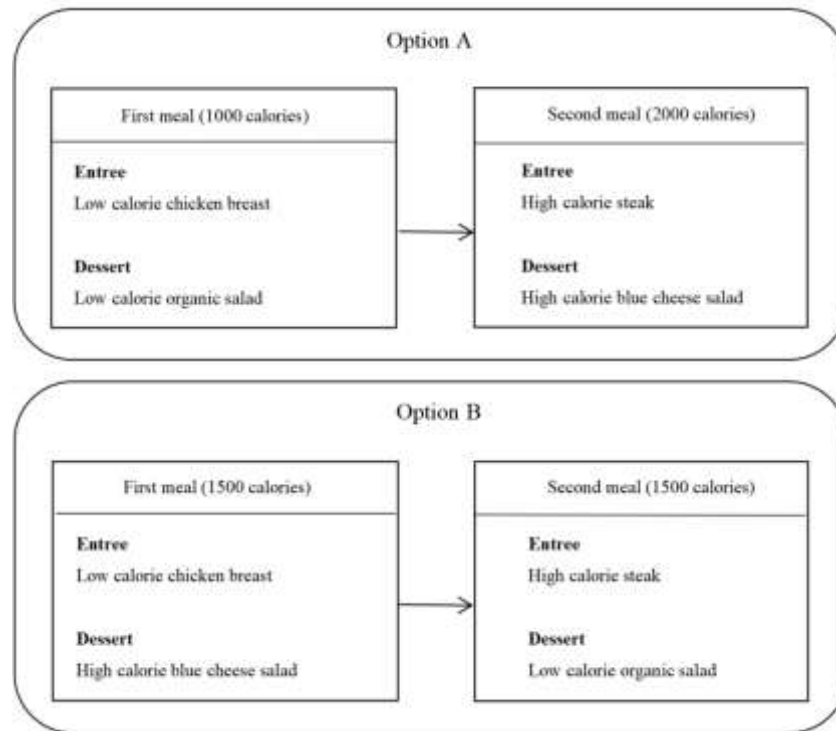
Option A

First meal (1000 calories)	Second meal (2000 calories)
Entree	**Entree**
Low calorie chicken breast	High calorie steak
Dessert	**Dessert**
Low calorie organic salad	High calorie blue cheese salad

Option B

First meal (1500 calories)	Second meal (1500 calories)
Entree	**Entree**
Low calorie chicken breast	High calorie steak
Dessert	**Dessert**
High calorie blue cheese salad	Low calorie organic salad

Fig. 3. Photos used in Study 1

4.2.2. Results

We performed binary logistic regression analysis using LHS as the predictor variable (higher value indicated holding a slower LHS) and dining preferences as the dependent variable (0=Option A, highlighting option; 1=Option B, balancing option). Consistent with H1, the analysis revealed participants with a fast LHS showed higher preference for the highlighting option than participants with a slow LHS (b=0.90, SE=.31, $\chi^2(1)$=8.65, p=0.004<.01). To control for the heterogeneity in how participants perceive the importance of taste and caloric dietary goals, we performed the logistic regression with caloric content importance, taste importance and demographic variables as covariates. The findings displayed that the impact of LHS on the preference for a goal management approach was still significant (b=1.19, SE=.39, $\chi^2(1)$=26.17, p=0.002<.01).

4.2.3. Discussion

Study 1 provided initial evidence of the link between individuals' LHS and their choice of balancing or highlighting approaches to cope with goal conflicts. Those with a slow LHS preferred balanced food bundles addressing both goals simultaneously, while those with a fast LHS leaned towards handling the goals sequentially with "highlighting" food bundles in between. These results suggest that fast LHS tourists prioritize instant gratification, whereas those with a slow LHS tend to make holistic assessments and favor delayed gratification (Laran & Salerno, 2013).

5. Study 2

Study 2 was designed to validate the findings of Study 1 using an experimental approach involving LHS manipulation. Participants were given a conflict between two travel goals: the service experience goal and the budget goal. We then manipulated participants' LHS and assessed their preference for either the highlighting or balancing approach to resolve the goal conflict. To gauge participants' inherent inclinations toward these approaches, we included a baseline control condition without LHS manipulation. Building on the premise from Lu et al. (2023) that sacrificing one goal generally reduces choice satisfaction and triggers negative emotions in choices between two positive goals, we expected participants in the control group would favor the balancing approach over the highlighting approach.

5.1. Pretest

Replicating the design of Study 1, we first pretested four bundles (W: three-star ordinary hotel + cheap tour group; X: five-star luxury hotel + premium tour group; Y: three-star ordinary hotel + premium tour group; Z: five-star luxury hotel + cheap tour group) in terms

of service experience and budget. Results showed that Option Y and Option Z were found to be less helpful to budget goals than Option W. Likewise, option Y and Option Z were found to be less helpful to service experience goals compared to Option X.

Moreover, we changed the order of the two combinations in the highlighting approach (W+X) and the balancing approach (Y+Z), forming four options (highlighting: A_1, A_2; balancing: B_1, B_2). We tested and verified that the order of highlighting (balancing) bundles did not influence the participant's preference. See Appendix C for details.

5.2. Main experiment

5.1. Participants and design

Two hundred and seven valid participants (45.89% male; M_{age}=31.52, SD=0.66) were recruited from Credemo. This study adopted a single factor (LHS: fast vs. slow vs. control) between-subject design, and was preregistered (https://aspredicted.org/NJ1_2B1).

Replicating the design of Study 1, we first measured the intrinsic importance of service experience and adherence to budget to participants. We then activated participants' two conflicting goals: service experience and budget by asking them to list three benefits of experiencing good service and three benefits of adherence to budget. Next, we primed participants' LHSs by adopting the LHS manipulation from Laran & Salerno (2013). Participants were instructed to read six sentences. In the fast LHS condition, each sentence contained a word related to an unfavorable environment ("survival," "withstand," "persistence," "shortfall," "struggle," and "adversity"). In the slow LHS condition, each sentence contained a word related to a favorable environment ("vitality," "enjoyment," "freedom," "infinity," "harmony," "going well"). In the control group, each sentence

contained a neutral word ("mobile phone," "water," "season," "cloud," "teacher," "cup". See Appendix D). To test the manipulation of experimental material, participants expressed their perception of the severity of the environment (see measurements in Appendix A). To exclude the potential influence of negative emotions and stress caused by the experimental materials on the results, we asked participants to report their emotions (1=very negative, 9=very positive) and levels of stress (1=not at all, 7=very much) after reading the materials. After that, participants were instructed to read a scenario, "Imagine that you are planning a trip. You are going to two tourist destinations and in each destination, you will be provided with a one-day accommodation in a hotel and a sightseeing activity with a tour group". Then they were presented with two service options, one featuring a highlighting approach, and the other featuring a balancing approach, and were instructed to choose one of the options that they preferred (1=Option A, 9=Option B) (see figure 4). The presentation order of highlighting option and balancing option was counterbalanced. Finally, participants reported their demographic information.
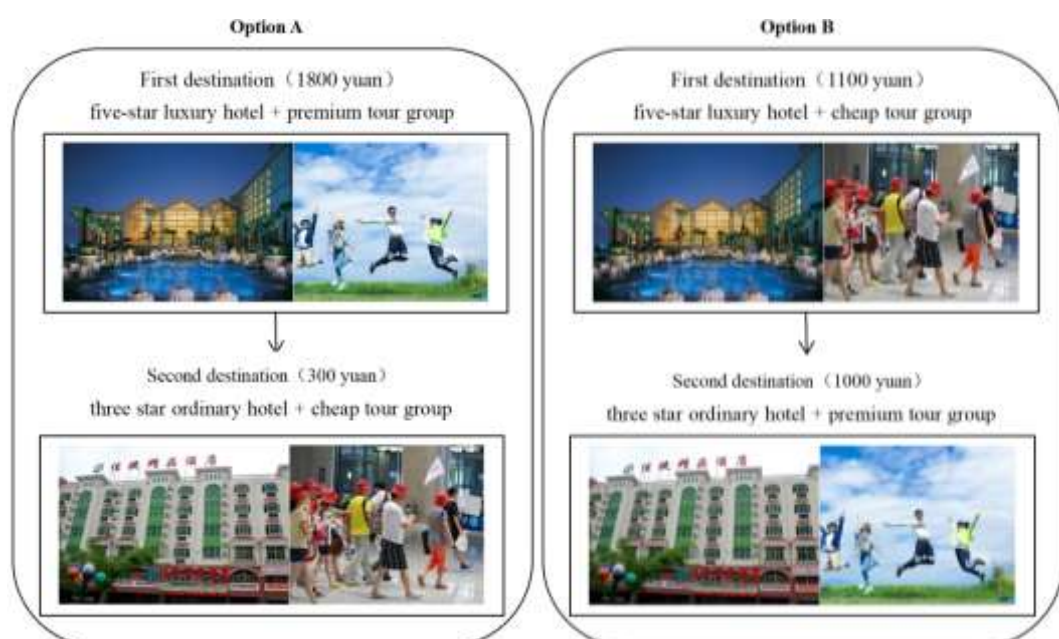

Option A

First destination （1800 yuan）
five-star luxury hotel + premium tour group

Second destination （300 yuan）
three star ordinary hotel + cheap tour group

Option B

First destination （1100 yuan）
five-star luxury hotel + cheap tour group

Second destination （1000 yuan）
three star ordinary hotel + premium tour group

Fig. 4. Photos used in Study 2

5.2. Results

The manipulation of LHS was successful: a one-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant difference in their perceived environmental harshness among participants in the fast LHS condition, control condition, and slow LHS condition $(F[2, 204]=28.87, p<.001, \eta_p^2 =0.22)$. More importantly, post-hoc comparison indicated that participants in the fast LHS condition (M_{fast}=5.16, SD=0.96) perceived the environment to be harsher than those in the slow LHS condition (M_{slow}=3.54, SD=1.55, $p<.001$) and the control condition ($M_{control}$=4.30, SD=1.17, $p<.001$), and participants in the slow LHS condition perceived the environment to be better than those in the control condition ($p<.001$). Priming the LHS did not impact participants' emotion (M_{fast}=6.73, SD=2.02, $M_{control}$=6.81, SD=1.77, M_{slow}=6.94, SD=1.73, $F[2, 204]=0.24$, $p=0.79>.05$) or stress (M_{fast}=4.43, SD=2.21, $M_{control}$=4.52, SD=2.31, M_{slow}=4.31, SD=2.28, $F[2, 204]=0.15$, $p=0.86>.05$).

A one-way ANOVA revealed that LHS had a significant effect on the preference of goal management approach ($F[2, 204]=8.01$, $p<.001$, $\eta_p^2 =0.07$; see Figure 5). Post-hoc multiple comparison analysis found that participants in the fast LHS condition (M=4.40, SD=3.20) displayed higher preferences for the highlighting option than those in the slow LHS condition (M=6.47, SD=2.08, $p<.001$) and the control condition (M=5.54, SD=0.18, $p=0.03<.05$), and there was no significant difference between participants in the slow LHS condition and those in the control condition ($p=0.76>.05$). Subsequently, we performed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with the perceived importance of budget, service experience, and demographic variables as covariates, and found that the effect of LHS remained significant (F[2,

197]=8.04, *p*<.001, η_p^2=0.08). Hypothesis H1 was supported again.
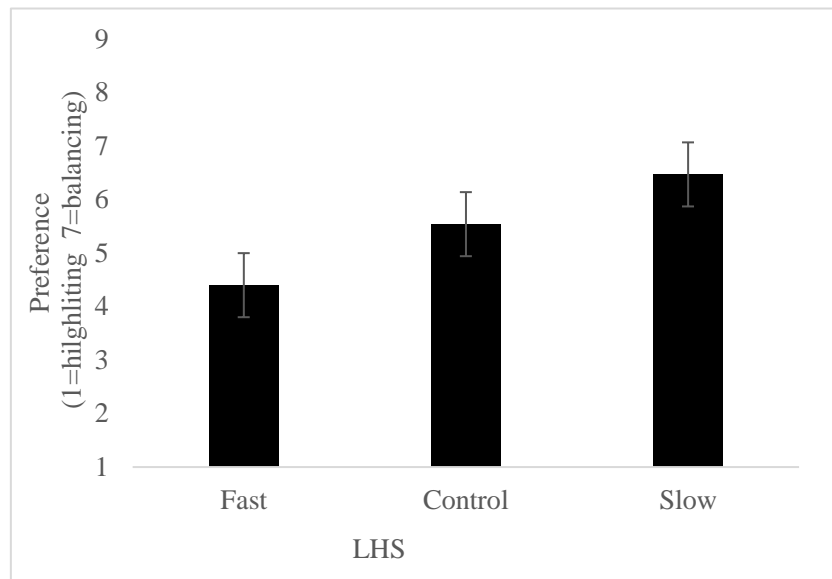

Fig. 5. The effect of LHS on the preference of goal management approach

5.3. Discussion

Study 2 offers further evidence in support of H1 using an experimental design. The study confirms our hypothesis that in response to a goal conflict, tourists adopting a fast LHS tend to prefer highlighting approaches to fulfill immediate needs, while tourists adopting a slow LHS lean towards a balancing approach to accommodate multiple goals. Given that tourists often face goal conflicts related to service, budget, hedonism, and resource limitations, Study 3 will extend the test of LHS's impact to a different tourism scenario.

6. Study 3

The objective of Study 3 was to enhance the external validity of our findings on the impact of LHS by expanding the scope of the investigation. We shifted our focus from service choices to itinerary planning, involving competing goals: enjoyment and financial

resource allocation. Enjoyment relates to tourists seeking more engaging activities for positive experiences, while financial resource allocation implies budgeting for long-term well-being beyond a single trip. We conducted a field study at Tianjin Railway Station in September 2023, specifically selecting Chinese passengers visiting Tianjin for sightseeing as our participants.

6.1. pretest

We pretested four bundles (A: low price drum music + low price tour bus; B: high price crosstalk + high price cruise tourism; C: low price drum music + high price cruise tourism; D: high price crosstalk + low price tour bus) in terms of realizing enjoyment and resource evaluation (see figure 6). The results showed that compared with Option A, Options C and D contributed less to a resource goal. Similarly, compared with Option B, Options C and D were found to contribute less to a enioyment goal.

Moreover, we changed the order of the two combinations in the highlighting approach (A+B) and the balancing approach (C+D), forming four options (highlighting: A_1, A_2; balancing: B_1, B_2). The order of bundles was tested and found no influence on participants' preferences. See Appendix E for details.
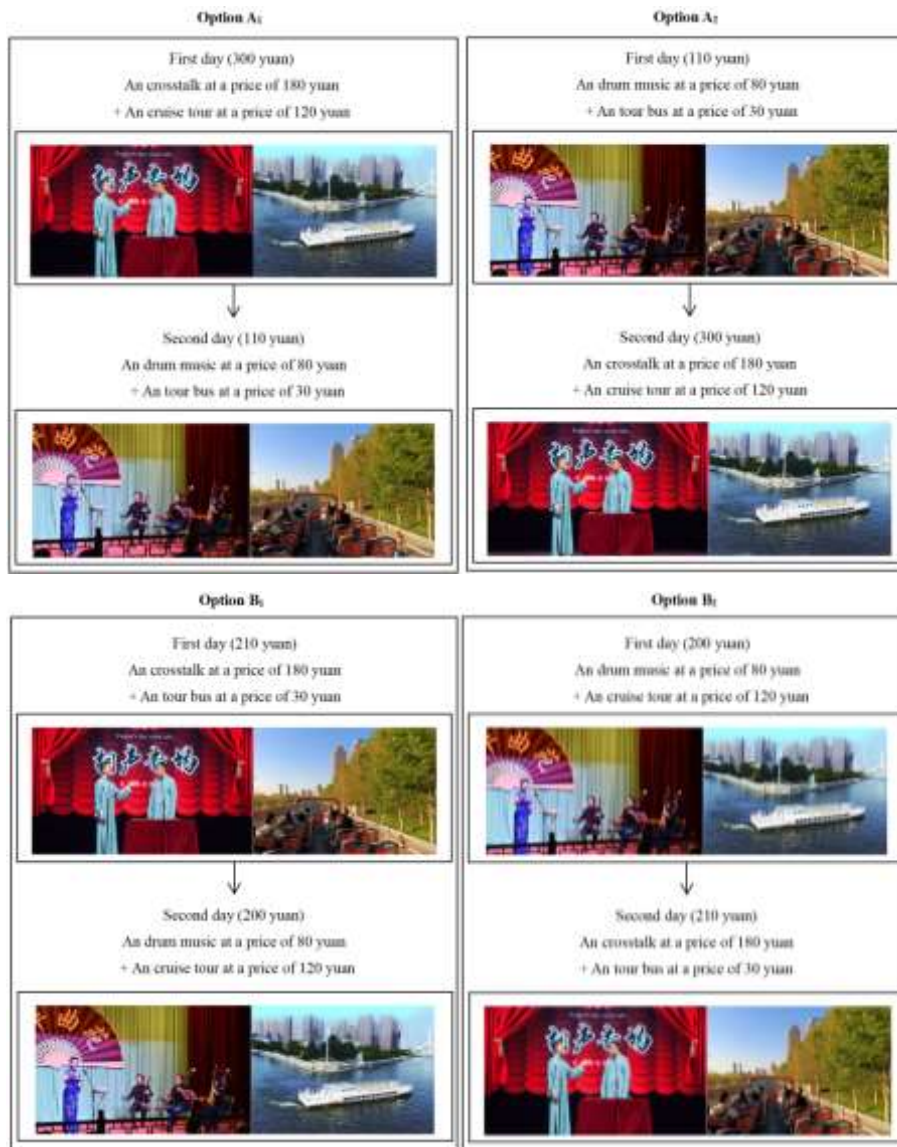
Fig. 6. Photos used in Study 3

6.2. Main experiment

6.2.1. Participants and design

One hundred and forty-eight tourists (35.8% males; M_{age}=30.34 (from 16 to 54), SD=8.61) completed the study at Tianjin Railway Station. Participants were assigned at random into a single factor (LHS: fast vs. slow) between-subject design. Two graduate students pretended to be travel agency staff to promote two newly launched travel packages to tourists upon their arrival and asked them if they were willing to help the travel agency

identify a more popular package. Participants were informed that in return for their participation, they would have a chance to win their chosen travel package (valued at RMB 410 yuan, about $51 US dollars) as a prize. This is a preregistered study (https://aspredicted.org/VZ1_G9Z).

After obtaining participants'consent, we activated their goals related to entertainment and resources drawing on the goal recognition procedure of Lu et al. (2023). Specifically, we asked participants two questions about the importance of enjoyment of entertainment activities on a trip ("Do you think that the enjoyment of the entertainment activities is important during a trip?" "How important is it to have fun when deciding the entertainment activities to participate in a trip?") and two questions about the importance of the costs involved in a trip ("Does the costs of a trip matter?" "How important is it to stick to a budget?"). We then randomly presented participants with one of the two sets of leaflets. One set of leaflets included messages that primed participants' fast LHS, while the other set of leaflets included messages that primed participants' slow LHS. The priming messages were the same as in Study 2 (see Figure 7). Each set of leaflets contained two trip packages, one package featuring a highlighting option, and the other one featuring a balancing one. The highlighting trip option included a pure-vice bundle (crosstalk and a cruise tour) for the first day and a pure-virtue bundle (a traditional local music show and a bus tour). The balancing trip option included two vice-virtue bundles. Participants were instructed to select the package they preferred if they were drawn as a winner (1=option A, 2=option B).

Once participants made their choices, we inquired whether they had noticed the sentences on the right side of the flyer. Not a single participant accurately inferred the study's

underlying purpose. Finally, participants were requested to provide their email addresses, after which we expressed our gratitude and shared additional information about the study. Following the data collection, two participants were randomly selected as the activity winners, and e-coupons for the activities listed in the travel package they selected were sent to their email addresses.

(a) fast LHS condition   (b) slow LHS condition

Fig. 7. Stimuli used in Study 3

6.2.2. Results

Consistent with H1, the results of logistic regression showed a significant effect of LHS on preferences (b=0.99, SE=.37, $\chi^2(1)$=7.29, *p*=0.008<.01), with more participants in the fast LHS condition (40.5%) chosing the highlighting (vs. balancing) option than participants in the slow LHS condition (20.2%) chosing the same option. To control for the heterogeneity in how tourists perceive the importance of enjoyment and resource goals, we performed the

logistic regression with enjoyment importance, budgeting importance, and their age as covariates. The effect of LHS remained significant (b=1.20, SE=.40, $\chi^2(1)$=19.51, p=0.003<.01).

6.2.3. Discussion

In Study 3, we confirmed the outcomes found in Studies 1 and 2, providing further support for H1, within a real-life context through a field experiment. The next study will investigate the psychological mechanism behind how LHSs influence the preference for goal management strategies.

7. Study 4a

Study 4a attempted to test the mediating effect of perceived deservingness in the relationship between LHSs and management approaches (highlighting vs. balancing) in the face of goal conflict (H2). To increase the validity of our research, Study 4a manipulated participants' LHSs in a different way. We predicted that tourists with a fast LHS prefer a highlighting approach to cope with goal conflict because they have a higher perception of deservingness, while those with slow LHS prefer a balancing strategy because they have a relatively lower perception of deservingness.

7.1. pretest

We pretested four bundles (pure virtue bundle A: low-priced boating + low-priced home cooking; pure vice bundle: high-priced solo surfing + high-priced campfire barbecue; balancing vice-virtue bundle C: low-priced water boating + high-priced campfire barbecue; balancing vice-virtue bundle D: high-priced solo surfing + low-priced home cooking) in terms of enjoyment and resources. Results showed that the pure-virtue (pure-vice) bundle

was highly effective in attaining the budget (enjoyment) goal, while the two balancing

bundles were only moderately effective in attaining either the budget or enjoyment goal.

Moreover, we changed the order of two combinations in the highlighting approach

(A+B) and the balancing approach (C+D), forming four options (highlighting: W_1, W_2;

balancing: Y_1, Y_2). The order of bundles was tested and showed no influence on participants'

preferences. See Appendix F for details.

7.2. Main experiment

7.2.1. Participants and design

Three hundred participants (66.4% females; M_{age}=31.2, SD=9.97) were recruited from

Credamo. Participants were assigned at random to a single factor (LHS: fast vs. slow)

between-subject design.

Participants' LHS was first manipulated, by following Griskevicius et al., (2011). All

participants were instructed to read a news report. Participants in the fast LHS condition read

a report entitled "Dangerous Times Are Coming: Life and Death in the 21st Century", and the

article describes the trend of mortality in China in recent years. Participants in the slow LHS

condition read a report "The Age of Happiness Has Arrived: Life and Death in the 21st

Century", and the article describes the growth trend of the average life expectancy of Chinese

citizens in recent decades. See Appendix G for details of the manipulation. Then, as a

manipulation check, they were instructed to answer the question "This is a society with a high

mortality rate".

After manipulating participants' LHS, we followed the procedure of Study 3 to activate

participants' goal conflict by asking them to indicate the inherent importance of enjoyment

and budgeting to them when they are traveling. Then participants' highlighting versus balancing approach to address goal conflict was measured. Participants were presented with a scenario in which they were planning for a two-day trip and came across two options for the activities and food on the two successive days. Option A reflected a highlighting approach: the first day involved a pure-vice bundle (solo surfing and campfire barbecue), and the second day involved a pure-virtue bundle (boating and home cooking). Option B reflected a balancing approach: the first day and the second day both involved a vice-virtue bundle (solo surfing and home cooking on the first day, and boating and campfire barbecue on the second day) (Figure 8). To facilitate the participants' scenario imagination, we showed them a short video containing the target activities and food choices (Figure 9). All participants reported a relative preference between the two alternatives (1=option A, 9=option B). To test the mechanism of perceived deservingness, participants reported their perceived deservingness (e.g., "I deserve to treat myself to nice things.", α=0.65) (Cavanaugh, 2014). As prior literature suggests that a fast (slow) LHS may lead to higher impulsiveness and higher sensitivity to instant reward (Griskevicius et al., 2013), to rule out these alternative explanations, we asked participants to indicate their decision basis (e.g., "my decision for the above choices was based on: 1=my prudent self, 7=my impulsive self", α=0.71) (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999), and their reward sensitivity (e.g., "I want to feel stimulated right now", α=0.69) (Shaddy & Lee, 2020). Finally, participants reported their health condition (that may potentially prevent them from participating in the target activities) and their demographic information.
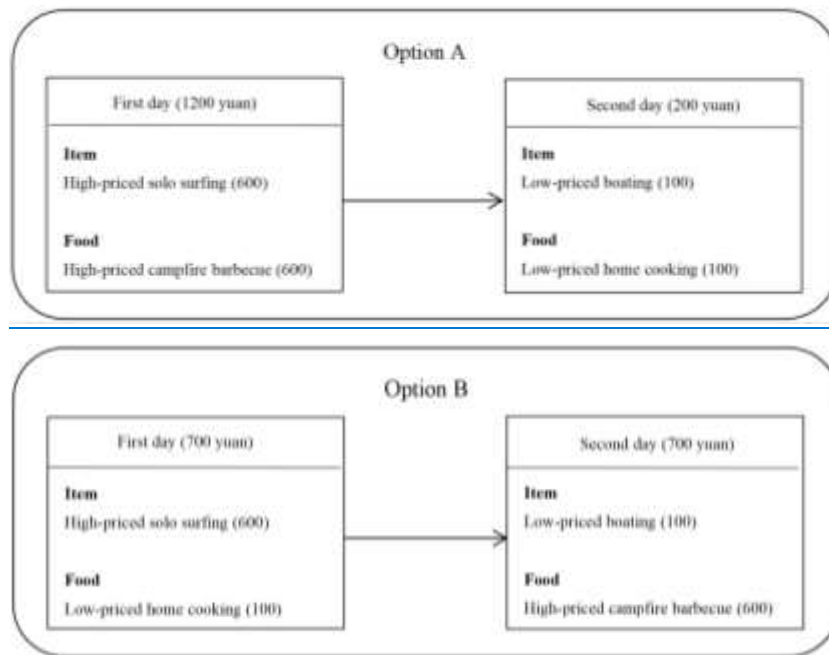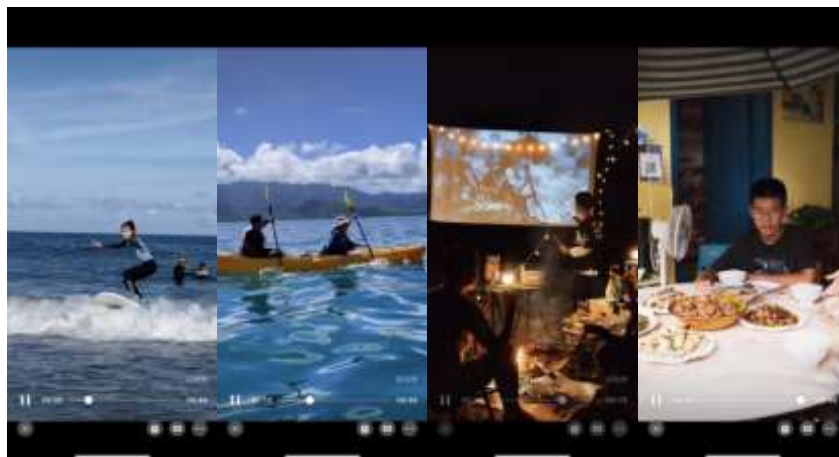
Fig. 8. Stimuli used in Study 4a

Fig. 9. Video images in Study 4a

7.2.2. Results

A t-test analysis showed a significant difference in mortality perception among participants in the fast LHS condition and slow LHS condition (M_{fast}=5.33, SD=1.09, M_{slow}=2.90, SD=1.55, t(298)=15.73, p<.001). Therefore, the manipulation of LHS was successful.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that LHS had a marginally significant effect (M_{fast}=5.86, SD=3.19, M_{slow}=6.51, SD=2.85, $F(1, 298)$=3.44, p=0.06<.1, η_p^2=0.11) on the preference of goal management approaches. To control for the heterogeneity in how tourists perceive the importance of enjoyment and resource goals, we performed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with enjoyment importance, budgeting importance, and demographic variables as covariates. The effect of LHS remained marginally significant ($F(1, 291)$=3.12, p=0.07<.1, η_p^2=0.11).

We used PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrapping samples for mediation analysis, with LHS as the predicting variable (0 = fast, 1 = slow), perceived deservingness as the mediator, and preferences for goal management approach as the dependent variable (higher values indicate higher preferences for a balancing approach). The mediating effect of perceptions of deservingness between LHS and goal management approaches was significant (ß=-0.457, 95%CI=[-0.791, -0.173]). After controlling the mediation of perceptions of deservingness, the direct effect of LHS on goal management approaches was significant (ß=1.1042, 95%CI=[0.462, 1.746]), which suggests that perceptions of deservingness partially mediated the effect of LHS on goal management approaches. Thus, H2 was supported. To further examine the potential mechanisms of impulsiveness and reward sensitivity, two separate mediation analyses were conducted. The results showed that the mediating effect of impulsiveness on the relationship between LHS and goal management approaches was insignificant (ß=-0.0028, 95%CI=[-0.069, 0.047]). The mediating effect of reward sensitivity was insignificant (ß=0.0618, 95%CI=[-0.060, 0.225]). Therefore, the alternative explanation of impulsiveness and reward sensitivity can be ruled out.

7.2.3. Discussion

Study 4a provided support for the hypothesis that the perceptions of deservingness potentially explain the effect of LHSs on goal management approaches (H2). However, prior research has suggested that mortality cues may affect a tourist's mortality stress and emotions, thereby affecting their behavior (Ferraro et al., 2005). Therefore, we carried out study 4b to further exclude these alternative explanations.

8. Study 4b

Study 4b was conducted to (1) re-verify the mediating role of perceived deservingness; and (2) exclude other mediating variables, namely, self-control, mortality salience, and negative emotions.

8.1. Participants and design

Three hundred participants (48.7% males; M_{age}=31.54, SD=10.24) were recruited from Credemo. Participants were assigned at random to a single factor (LHS: fast vs. slow) between-subject design. Preregistration was conducted for this study (https://aspredicted.org/248_WDD).

The goal activation procedure and LHS manipulation were the same as in Study 4a. Participants read the same scenario as in Study 4a. Then all participants reported a relative preference between the two alternatives (1=option A, 9=option B). The presentation order of the highlighting option and balancing option was counterbalanced. To test the mechanism of perceived deservingness, participants reported their perceived deservingness (α=0.80) (Cavanaugh, 2014), same as Study 4a. As prior literature suggests that mortality threats and

negative emotions lead to a lower sense of control and more indulgent behavior (Ferraro et al., 2005), to rule out these alternative explanations, we asked participants to indicate their negative emotions (e.g., "I'm afraid", $\alpha=0.85$) (Watson et al., 1988), their sense of control (e.g., "I can do anything I set my mind to" $\alpha=0.84$) (Mittal & Griskevicius, 2014), and their mortality pressure (e.g., "I'm very afraid of death" $\alpha=0.94$) (Ferraro et al., 2005). Finally, participants reported their health condition (that may potentially prevent them from participating in the target activities) and their demographic information.

8.2.2. Results

A t-test analysis showed a significant difference in their mortality perception among participants in the fast LHS condition and slow LHS condition ($M_{fast}=5.30$, SD=1.20, $M_{slow}=3.03$, SD=1.51, t(298)=14.41, $p<.001$). Therefore, the manipulation of LHS was successful.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that LHS had a significant effect ($M_{fast}=5.01$, SD=3.06, $M_{slow}=6.24$, SD=2.77, $F(1, 298)=13.38$, $p<.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.04$) on the preference of goal management approaches. We performed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with enjoyment importance, budgeting importance, and demographic variables as covariates. The effect of LHS remained significant ($F(1, 291)=9.78$, $p=0.002<.01$, $\eta_p^2=0.03$).

We ran mediation analysis using PROCESS model 4 with 5000 bootstrap samples, and the results showed that the mediating effect of perceptions of deservingness between LHS and goal management approaches was significant ($\beta=0.12$, 95%CI=[0.01, 0.30]). After controlling the mediation of perceptions of deservingness, the direct effect of LHS on goal

management approaches was significant (ß=1.12, 95%CI=[0.46, 1.77]), which suggests that perceptions of deservingness partially mediated the effect of LHS on goal management approaches. Thus, H2 was supported.

To further examine and rule out the alternative explanations of self-control, negative emotions, and mortality pressure, three separate mediation analyses were conducted. The mediating effect of self-control (ß=-0.03, 95%CI=[-0.14, 0.07]), negative emotions (ß=-0.01, 95%CI=[-0.10, 0.07]), or mortality pressure (ß=-0.05, 95%CI=[-0.18, 0.04]) was insignificant. Therefore, these mechanisms can be ruled out.

8.2.3. Discussion

Study 4b provided additional support that the perceptions of deservingness potentially explain the effect of LHSs on goal management approaches (H2). Subsequently, our next study aimed to explore how the match or mismatch between LHSs and goal management approaches impacts tourists' well-being (H3).

9. Study 5

Study 5 aimed to examine the impact of the match or mismatch between LHS and goal management approach on tourists' well-being (H3). To better understand the link between goal conflict approaches and tourists' well-being, we exclusively enrolled participants with prior experiences of goal conflicts during their travels (e.g., balancing fun and affordability). We screened out those without such experiences. Participants were primed with either a slow or fast LHS, activating their goal conflicts, and were randomly assigned a highlighting or balancing solution.

9.1. Participants and design

Two hundred eighty-one (40.57 % male, M_{age}=32.41, SD=10.23) were subsequently recruited from Credemo. Participants were assigned at random to a 2 (LHS: fast vs. slow) × 2 (goal management approach: balancing vs. highlighting) between-subject design. Preregistration was conducted for this study (https://aspredicted.org/CT2_DTG).

The procedure followed in Study 4a. Participants first reported the benefits of choosing enjoyable activities and low-priced activities during a trip to activate a conflict between an enjoyment goal and a financial resource goal. Next, participants' LHSs were manipulated, using the same reading materials as in Study 4a. Participants were then told that a travel agency offered them a travel package based on their needs. The travel packages were similar to Study 4. In the highlighting condition, the travel package involved a pure-vice bundle and a pure-virtue bundle. In the balancing condition, the travel package involved two vice-virtue bundles (Figure 10). After providing travel plans, participants reported their subjective well-being in accepting this travel arrangement (e.g., "In general, my current life is close to my ideal", "I'm happy", "I am dissatisfied (reverse coded)" α=0.782, see appendix A) (Yu et al., 2021). Finally, participants reported their health condition, the importance of enjoyment and budgeting in their travel experience, and their demographic information.
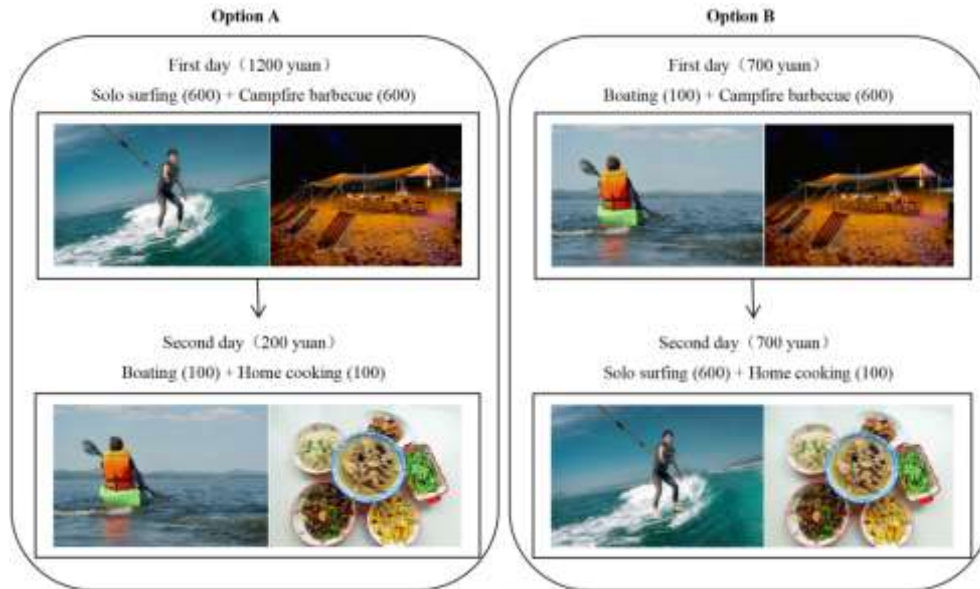
Fig. 10. Photos used in Study 5

9.2. Results

An independent-sample test revealed significant differences in death perception between fast and slow LHS groups (M_{fast}=5.57, SD=1.02, M_{slow}=2.20, SD=1.11, t(279)=26.44, p<.001). Therefore, the manipulation of LHS was successful.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted using the LHS and goal management approach as the predictors, and subjective well-being as the dependent variable. The results showed a significant interaction ($F[1, 277]$=86.85, p<.001, η_p^2=0.24) (Figure 11).

Pairwise comparison analysis showed that participants in the fast LHS condition reported higher levels of subjective well-being when they were provided with a highlighting travel plan (M=5.77, SD=0.07) than with a balancing travel plan (M=5.27, SD=0.08; $F[1, 277]$=27.43, p<.001, η_p^2=0.90). Conversely, participants in the slow LHS condition reported higher levels of well-being when they were provided with a balancing travel plan (M=5.02,

SD=0.07) than with a highlighting travel plan (M=5.78, SD=0.07; $F[1, 277]=63.30$, $p<.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.19$). Therefore, H3 was supported. The main effect of LHS ($F[1, 277]=3.11$, $p=.08>.05$) or goal management approach ($F[1, 277]=3.51$, $p=0.06>.05$) was insignificant.
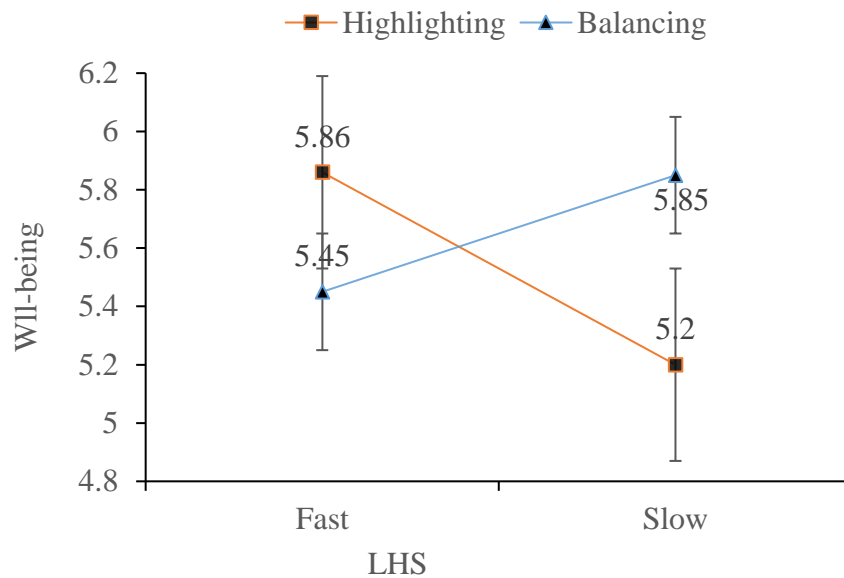

Fig. 11. The interaction effect between LHSs and goal management approaches on tourists' well-being

9.3. Discussion

Supporting H3, Study 5 found that tourists' well-being was higher when there was a match (vs. mismatch) between their LHSs and goal management approaches. This finding aligns with previous research that options that align with tourist goal pursuits can evoke positive emotions and enjoyable shopping experiences, leading to increased satisfaction and happiness (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Berrios et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2023).

10. Internal meta-analysis: robustness of the findings

Across the six studies, there was significant variation in how the LHS was

operationalized, including different manipulations and measurements. To further confirm the support for our main argument (H1), we conducted an internal meta-analysis to examine the effect of a fast versus a slow LHS on preferences for highlighting versus balancing solutions in the face of a goal conflict. Following the approach outlined by McShane and Böckenholt (2017), we analyzed the findings from studies using an experimental design and a continuous dependent variable, specifically Studies 2, 4a, and 4b. In Study 2, only the subsets related to fast and slow LHS were included, excluding the baseline subset.

Consistent with our hypotheses, the results of the internal meta-analysis showed that tourists with a fast LHS had a higher preference for highlighting approaches, while tourists with a slow LHS had a higher preference for balancing approaches (estimate effect=-0.47, 95%CI[-0.71 to -0.22], SE=0.12; Z=-3.77, p<.001). These findings demonstrate the robustness and generalizability of our results.

10. General discussion and conclusion

This research endeavors to investigate the resolution of goal conflicts in travel by examining the use of two different approaches (highlighting vs. balancing) based on tourists' LHSs through survey method (study 1), field (study 3) and lab (study 2, 4a, 4b, and 5) experiments, as well as meta-analysis. The results of Studies 1-4 consistently support H1. In addition, Studies 4a and 4b verified the mediating role of perceived deservingness (H2). Study 5 explored the matching effect of LHSs and goal management methods on tourist well-being, supporting H3. Finally, our meta-analysis further verified the robustness and generalizability of our findings.

10.1 Theoretical implications

Our work contributes to the tourism literature in several aspects.

First, this research advances our understanding of tourists' preferences when it comes to addressing conflicting goals in tourism. Previous studies have primarily delved into the tendencies to pursue either single or multiple goals and have explored the associated trade-offs (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Fishbach & Dhar, 2005; Laran & Janiszewski, 2009; Orehek et al., 2012). There is a scarcity of studies investigating how individual differences such as LHS influence the inclination towards a specific approach. By incorporating the concept of LHS in this research, we not only bridge this gap but also provide valuable theoretical insights into the individual differences that underlie the choice between highlighting and balancing approaches when managing conflicting goals in tourism. The research reveals that tourists' life history strategies significantly impact how they manage goal conflicts during their travels. Those with a fast LHS, characterized by a preference for immediate rewards and gratification, tend to favor the "highlighting" approach when dealing with conflicting goals. This means they prioritize one goal at a time. Conversely, tourists with a slow LHS, known for long-term planning and consideration of future benefits, tend to prefer the "balancing" approach, seeking compromises that satisfy multiple goals simultaneously.

Second, we incorporate perceived deservingness into the framework as a critical explanatory mechanism for understanding how LHSs influence tourist preferences in goal conflict resolution. While previous studies have mainly focused on preferences for resolution strategies, including prioritizing one goal over another or making trade-offs between competing goals (Köpetz et al., 2011; Orehek et al., 2012; Fishbach & Dhar, 2005; Laran &

Janiszewski, 2009), the underlying mechanisms that influence these preferences have remained relatively unexplored. By introducing perceived deservingness as a mediating factor, this research provides new insights into the psychological mechanism that link LHSs with goal management preferences. Our findings suggest that tourists with fast LHS prefer for highlighting approach, because they are more likely to believe they deserve immediate rewards. In contrast, tourists with slow LHS are less inclined to feel they deserve instant gratification and more inclined to feel the need for rewards that are aligned with their long-term objectives, which leads them to prefer a balancing approach.

Finally, our research advances the understanding of tourist well-being by revealing the matching effects of LHSs and goal management methods. Previous studies have primarily focused on areas such as the impact of memorable tourism experiences (Uysal et al., 2016), the influence of travel-sharing practices (Chen et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022), and changes in well-being during travel (Su et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). Few studies have ventured into investigating the matching effect of goal management methods and LHSs on tourist well-being. To the best of our knowledge, our study stands among the pioneering endeavors in this domain. Our research demonstrates that aligning one's LHS with a suitable goal conflict management approach enhances tourist well-being. When tourists consciously choose a goal management strategy that matches their LHS, they experience a sense of congruence and harmony in their decision-making. This alignment minimizes the internal conflict that arises when pursuing conflicting goals and reduces decision-making stress. As a result, tourists report higher levels of satisfaction with their choices and overall travel experience.

10.2 Practical implications

Our work has practical implications for the tourism business.

First, the research highlights that understanding tourist' LHS can help predict their preferences for goal management methods in situations of goal conflict. Managers can assess tourists' LHSs by inquiring about their perceptions of socioeconomic status (for details, see Appendix H). Armed with this knowledge, managers can tailor their tourism offerings to align with the diverse needs of tourists based on their goals, thereby enhancing their travel experience. For instance, fast LHS tourists may prefer highlighting approaches, so managers can provide options for quick, immediate rewards or experiences. Slow LHS tourists may appreciate balancing approaches, where they can pursue multiple goals simultaneously, so offering packages that cater to both short-term and long-term desires may be beneficial.

Second, incorporating the concept of perceived deservingness into tourism management strategies allows for a more nuanced understanding of customer behavior and preferences. Tourism managers can utilize this understanding to communicate marketing messages that resonate with tourists on a psychological level. For example, for fast LHS tourists, tourism organizations can create packages that underscore exclusive and rewarding experiences, which may include VIP treatments, special access, or personalized services. The messages can emphasize that certain offerings are designed exclusively for customers who "deserve the best" or have "earned special treatment." This approach allows for the offering of premium packages at higher price points, catering to customers' desire for recognition and special treatment.

Finally, tourism managers can actively promote the well-being benefits associated with their offerings, emphasizing how specific experiences align with tourists' LHSs and

contribute to their overall well-being. Destinations can brand themselves as ideal places for specific LHSs, emphasizing the well-being advantages of visiting. For example, a destination can position itself as a diverse, multifunctional, comprehensive experience venue. This can effectively satisfy the preferences of individuals with slow LHS considering all goals comprehensively, thereby improving their satisfaction and well-being. For fast LHS individuals, tourist destinations should highlight their advantages in specific experiences and create multiple characteristic areas to improve the overall well-being of tourists.

10.3 Limitations and future research

Our studies have limitations that should be considered in future research. First, the study focused on specific goal conflicts while neglecting other potential conflicts. Investigating a broader range of goal conflicts would generate more insights into the interaction between LHSs and goal management approaches. Second, the scenarios were limited to certain tourism contexts. Therefore, caution is necessary when generalizing the findings to wider contexts. Future studies could test the matching effects of LHSs and goal management approaches in different service industries to ensure broader relevance. Finally, future research could examine boundary conditions that could moderate the relationship between LHSs and goal management approaches. These could include special tourist groups (such as backpackers or volunteers), the level of environmental familiarity, or the emotional valence of the goal conflict.

Declaration of generative AI

The authors utilized ChatGPT during the preparation of this paper to enhance its readability. After using this service, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content, claiming complete responsibility for the publication's content.

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