



The Mediating Role of Experiential Quality between Tourism Motivation and Revisit Intention: Evidence from Tourists in Hainan, China

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Abstract

This study investigates tourists’ revisit intentions to Hainan Province by integrating the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) and the Push–Pull Theory into a unified analytical framework. Using a quantitative research design and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data from tourists who had visited or were visiting Hainan were analyzed to test the relationships among motivation, experiential quality, and revisit intention. The findings demonstrate that tourism motivation exerts a significant positive influence on both experiential quality and revisit intention, while experiential quality has a strong positive effect on revisit intention and mediates the relationship between motivation and behavioral loyalty. These results validate the dynamic process of “motivation→experience→behavior” proposed by TET and extend the Push–Pull Theory by explaining how internal psychological drives transform into revisit behavior through experiential mechanisms. Theoretically, this research enriches the understanding of tourist loyalty by linking motivational antecedents with experiential evaluations. Practically, it emphasizes the need for destination managers in Hainan to enhance motivational appeal and ensure high-quality, authentic tourism experiences that foster emotional attachment and repeat visitation. Overall, this study provides new insights into how motivational and experiential processes jointly determine tourists’ behavioral intentions in the context of wellness and experiential tourism.

Keywords: Experiential quality, Hainan Province, Push–pull theory, Revisit intention, Tourism experience theory, Tourism motivation.

1. Introduction

In the increasingly competitive global tourism industry, revisit intention has been widely recognized as a critical indicator of destination attractiveness and sustainable development (Zhang et al., 2014). Revisit tourists represent a vital segment of the tourism market, as they demonstrate higher destination loyalty and more stable consumption patterns (Chi & Qu, 2008; Um et al., 2006). However, recent data indicate a clear disparity between countries in terms of revisit rates Table 1. For instance, Tokyo Disney in Japan reports a revisit rate exceeding 80%, major theme parks in France achieve rates above 60%, and Universal Studios Florida in the United States reaches over 50% (Yiguo & Ahmad, 2024). In contrast, China continues to exhibit relatively low revisit rates. Large-scale theme parks such as Happy Valley, OCT, and Universal Studios Beijing record revisit rates of only 30%–35%, while natural, cultural, and historical scenic spots report rates below 1%. Traditional A-level tourist attractions perform even worse, with revisit rates falling below 10% (Yiguo & Ahmad, 2024). This situation is concerning, as the loss of repeat visitors may lead to revenue instability and threaten the long-term sustainability of destination development (Zhang et al., 2014).

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasized the experiential perspective in tourism research, recognizing that tourists’ behavioral intentions are not solely driven by cognitive evaluations but are also shaped by emotional and experiential processes (Bernaki & Marso, 2023). Within this perspective, tourism motivation serves as a fundamental psychological force that initiates travel behaviour and influences how tourists perceive and evaluate their destination experiences (Bayih et al., 2020). Motivated tourists actively seek experiences that fulfil intrinsic needs—such as relaxation, novelty seeking, social interaction, and self-development—which ultimately determine the quality of their tourism experience (Orden et al., 2025).

Experiential quality, in turn, reflects tourists’ overall assessment of the sensory, emotional, and authentic aspects of their travel experiences (Wang et al., 2023). When the perceived experiential quality meets or exceeds expectations, it elicits positive emotions, enhances satisfaction, and strengthens tourists’ attachment to the destination (Juliana et al., 2023). These positive experiences are critical in fostering revisit intention, which serves as a key indicator of destination loyalty and sustainable tourism growth (Zhang et al., 2014).

Building upon these theoretical perspectives, this study develops a conceptual framework linking tourism motivation, experiential quality, and revisit intention. The model posits that experiential quality mediates the relationship between motivation and behavioral intention, explaining how motivational forces translate into repeat visitation behaviour. Specifically, highly motivated tourists tend to pursue meaningful and memorable experiences, which in turn enhance their likelihood of revisiting the destination (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018).

Hainan Province, known as one of China’s most distinctive experiential and wellness tourism destinations, offers an ideal setting to test this framework. Its diverse tourism resources—ranging from tropical coastal resorts to wellness, ecological, and cultural tourism—enable a comprehensive assessment of how motivation-driven experiences influence tourists’ behavioral intentions. Drawing upon the Push–Pull Theory and Tourism Experience Theory (TET), this study explores the determinants of tourists’ revisit intention in Hainan Province. It aims to deepen the theoretical understanding of experience-based tourism motivation and provide practical insights for enhancing tourist loyalty and promoting the sustainable development of Hainan’s tourism industry.

Table 1. Comparison of reference data of tourists’ revisiting rate in theme parks and scenic spots at home and abroad (%).

Country	Theme parks and scenic spots	Revisiting rate
Japan	Tokyo Disney	≥80%
France	Madman country theme amusement park	≥60%
United States of America	Universal Studios Florida	≥50%
China	Happy Valley, OCT, Universal Studios	≥30%-35%
China	Natural ecological, cultural and historical scenic spots	<1%
China	Traditional A-level tourist attractions	<10%

Source: (Yiguo & Ahmad, 2024).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Push and Pull Theory

Research on tourist motivation emphasizes that tourism behavior is not only influenced by external environmental factors but also, more profoundly, derives from individuals’ psychological needs and intrinsic drives (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2020). People often choose to travel in order to escape the monotony and routine of daily life, to seek novel and different experiences (Pearce & Lee, 2005), and to relieve physical and psychological stress while restoring overall well-being (Crompton, 1979). In this process, motivation is regarded as the direct driver of behavior, generated both from internal drives—such as self-actualization, self-reward, and self-indulgence at a spiritual level—and from external stimuli (Dann, 1977; Dunn Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991).

Among the many theories of tourist motivation, the Push-Pull Theory has been widely applied to explain tourist behavior. Push factors mainly stem from individuals’ internal needs, including escaping reality, seeking novelty, reducing stress, or fulfilling personal desires; while pull factors arise from the attractiveness of the destination, such as unique natural scenery, cultural resources, well-developed infrastructure, and destination image (Page, 2011). The interaction between push and pull factors jointly shapes tourists’ travel decisions and consumption behavior. Since needs form the basis of motivation (Pearce, 2011), the Push-Pull Theory not only reveals the reasons behind travel behavior but also explains tourists’ preferences for particular destinations. Therefore, needs-based approaches and pull/push factor approaches are reviewed based on the purpose of this study.

The Push and Pull Theory was initially proposed by Dann (1977) to explain the motivation of tourists. He believes that the driving force of tourism behavior comes from two main motives: Push and Pull factors. Pushing factors refer to the internal needs or desires of individuals, which are the psychological motivation to make people want to tourism. The pulling factor is the external attraction from the destination, which attracts people to a specific destination by satisfying their psychological needs.

With the further development of push-pull theory, scholars began to explore the specific content of push and pull factors and applied them to different tourism situations. Crompton (1979) further expanded Dann’s work. He believed that the driving factors are closely related to the individual’s escape motivation and seeking motivation, while the pulling factors are reflected in the specific attraction of the destination, such as climate, scenic spots and cultural activities. The research of Uysal & Jurowski (1994) further refines the push-pull theory, indicating that the interaction of push and pull factors determines the choice and behavior of tourists. They suggest that the driving factor is more about “why people tourism”, while the pulling factor answers the question of “where to tourism”. With the passage of time, push-pull theory has been widely used in the study of tourism intention, especially in understanding tourists’ motivation and intention to revisit. During the development of push-pull theory, scholars further refined the push factors and pull factors into various types of motives, forming a more complex model structure. For example, the driving factors include escape motivation and consumption motivation, while the pulling factors can be subdivided into attraction motivation, natural environment motivation and interpersonal motivation (Gan et al., 2023).

The Push–Pull Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the underlying motivations that drive tourists’ behavioral intentions. In the context of Hainan tourism, push factors represent tourists’ internal psychological needs, such as the desire to escape daily routines, pursue relaxation, or maintain physical and mental well-being. These intrinsic motivations are particularly relevant to wellness tourism, where tourists often seek health preservation, stress relief, and emotional satisfaction. On the other hand, pull factors refer to the external attractions offered by Hainan as a destination, including its tropical climate, diverse natural landscapes, cultural resources, and high-quality medical and wellness services supported by the Free Trade Port and Boao Lecheng

policies. These external features provide tangible reasons for tourists to choose Hainan over alternative destinations.

By integrating push and pull dimensions, this study explores how the interaction between tourists' psychological needs and the destination's unique attractions influences their revisit intention. Specifically, push factors explain "why tourists are motivated to travel," while pull factors explain "why they choose Hainan as a destination." For instance, tourists may be pushed by the need for physical recovery or stress relief, and simultaneously pulled by Hainan's rich wellness resources such as hot spring therapy, seaside rehabilitation, or advanced medical treatments in the Lecheng Pioneer Zone.

Furthermore, the combination of Push–Pull Theory with the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) allows this study to investigate the psychological and experiential mechanisms underlying revisit intention. Push factors can be reflected in constructs such as attitude and travel motivation, while pull factors are embedded in experiential quality shaped by destination features. By examining both internal and external drivers, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' revisit intentions, offering theoretical contributions to tourism motivation research and practical implications for the sustainable development of Hainan's tourism industry.

2.2. *Tourism Experience Theory (TET)*

The Tourism Experience Theory (TET), developed by Gnoth and Matteucci (2014), bridges the gap between tourists' subjective experiences and their observable behaviors in tourism research. Early studies on tourism experience, such as those by MacCannell (1976) and Cohen (1979), primarily emphasized sociological perspectives, focusing on authenticity and typologies of tourist experiences. However, these approaches often lacked a behavioural dimension that could explain how motivations and actions interact to shape experiences.

Building on this limitation, Larsen (2007) argued that tourism experiences should be understood as behaviorally grounded and motivationally driven processes. He emphasized that tourism experiences are not merely the consumption of services, but rather emerge from the dynamic interplay between tourists' motivations, behaviors, and environmental stimuli. This perspective laid the conceptual foundation for the development of the Tourism Experience Theory (TET).

In the 2010s, Gnoth & Matteucci (2014) formally introduced the Tourism Experience Model, providing a structured framework that conceptualizes the experience as a dynamic and meaning-making process. The model highlights four interrelated dimensions: external stimuli (e.g., destination features, services, and environments), internal motivations and expectations, sensory–emotional–cognitive responses, and behavioural interaction. Through this chain, tourists co-create meanings and values that constitute the essence of the tourism experience.

More recently, TET has been extended and applied across diverse contexts, including cultural tourism, wellness tourism, and event tourism. It has also been integrated with frameworks such as the Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) construct (Kim et al., 2012) and the Experience Economy perspective (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), enabling researchers to better capture the long-term effects of experiences on satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intentions. In addition, TEM has been adapted to contemporary contexts such as digital and virtual tourism, reflecting its flexibility and growing relevance.

Overall, the development of TET can be characterized in three stages: theoretical grounding in motivational and behavioural research (1990s–2000s), formal model construction (2010s), and applied extensions and empirical validations (2020s). Today, TET is recognized as a valuable theoretical tool for explaining how motivations, behaviours, and contextual factors converge to generate meaningful tourism experiences and subsequent behavioural intentions.

Tourism Experience Theory (TET) provides a critical lens for understanding how tourists' psychological antecedents and external conditions are translated into behavioural outcomes through the quality of experiences. In this study research framework, TET is operationalized primarily through experiential quality (EQ), which serves as a central mediator linking motivational factors with revisit intention (RI).

First, EQ functions as the core construct of TET. Tourism is not merely the consumption of services but rather a holistic experience process involving cognition, emotions, senses, and meaning-making. In this study, EQ captures tourists' overall evaluation of destination services, facilities, and environments, and mediates the relationship between tourism motivation and behavioural outcomes. This is consistent with Chen and Chen (2010), who argued that experiential quality significantly influences satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

Second, EQ bridges tourism motivation (TM) and revisit intention. While motivations initiate travel behaviour, their translation into loyalty depends on the quality of the experience. The pathway TM→EQ→RI in this study framework illustrates this dynamic, consistent with the Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) perspective (Kim & McCormick, 2012), which highlights the role of meaningful experiences in sustaining long-term behavioural intentions.

In summary, integrating the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) with the Push–Pull Theory enhances the explanatory power of the model by positioning experiential quality as a process-oriented mediating variable. This integration allows the framework to move beyond static predictions of revisit intention, offering a dynamic understanding of how psychological drivers and external conditions are transformed into behavioral outcomes through the tourism experience process.

2.3. *Revisit Intention*

2.3.1. *Definition of Revisit Intention*

In the context of tourism, "revisit intention" is a key concept that refers to a tourist's intention to revisit to the same destination or engage in similar tourism activities after experiencing a particular tourism experience. This concept is central to understanding tourist behavior and is often closely linked to factors such as satisfaction and the quality of the experience. However, the definition and application of "revisit intention" can vary significantly across different studies, each contributing unique insights into the factors that influence a tourist's decision to revisit.

Suban (2024) defines “revisit intention” as the likelihood that a visitor will choose the same destination again for a wellness experience after experiencing specific emotions, such as “joy,” “love,” and “positive surprise.” The study highlights that tourists’ satisfaction with their overall experience plays a key role in determining their intention to revisit. This finding emphasize the importance of positive emotional experiences in enhancing tourists’ loyalty to a destination. Chen et al (2022) explore the concept of “revisit intention” by examining how the experience landscape in health tourism influences tourists’ intention to revisit through mediator variables such as authenticity, memory, and organizational identity. In this context, “revisit intention” is defined as the tourist’s intention to revisit the destination after a specific wellness experience. The study suggests that creating authentic and memorable experiences can significantly boost the likelihood of tourists revisiting to a destination. From a demand-side perspective, Ting et al (2021) analyze how push and pull motives affect the revisit intention of health and wellness tourists. In their study, “revisit intention” is defined as the intention of tourists to revisit a specific health and wellness destination, driven primarily by pull factors such as the attractiveness of the destination. This approach highlights the role of external attractions in shaping tourists’ decisions to revisit. Fengmin et al (2022) provide a unique perspective by focusing on medical tourists, they define “revisit intention” as the likelihood of medical tourists choosing the same destination again for medical or wellness tourism, depending on aspects like awareness of nutrition, perceptions of healthcare quality, and confidence in physicians. This study emphasizes the importance of medical quality and trust in healthcare providers in fostering revisit visits. Tebourbi & Neifar (2018) contribute to the understanding of “revisit intention” by examining the role of behavioral beliefs, subjective norms, and the attractiveness of the destination. Their study, using a structural equation model (SEM), demonstrates that these factors are critical in shaping consumers’ decisions to revisit a health destination. In the post-pandemic context, Abdul-Rahman et al (2023) define “revisit intention” as the intention of medical tourists to decide whether to revisit the same medical tourism destination, based on their clinical trust and personal well-being. The study suggests that enhancing clinical trust and promoting well-being are crucial strategies for attracting revisit medical tourists in a post-COVID-19 world. Finally, Vada et al (2019) define “revisit intention” as the behavioral intention driven by the hedonic well-being that tourists obtain during their travel experience.

In summary, the concept of “revisit intention” in tourism is multifaceted and influenced by a variety of factors, including emotional experiences, destination attractiveness, medical quality, and psychological and social beliefs. Understanding these different dimensions provides valuable insights into how destinations can enhance tourist loyalty and encourage revisit. Building on the context of this study and Vada’s definition of revisit intention, the definition of revisit intention in this study is hedonic well-being obtained by tourists in the travel experience drives their decision to visit the destination again. The following Table 2 provides a clear summary of the different definitions of “revisit intention” in tourism as presented in various studies.

Table 2. The definition and development of revisit intention.

Definition and development	Authors
Defined as the likelihood that a visitor will choose the same destination again for a wellness experience after experiencing certain emotions, such as “joy,” “love,” and “positive surprise.” The study shows that tourists’ satisfaction significantly affects their revisit intention.	(Suban, 2024)
Defined as a visitor’s intention to revisit the destination after a specific wellness experience, influenced by mediator variables such as authenticity, memory, and organizational identity.	(Chen et al., 2022)
Defined as the intention of tourists to visit a specific health destination again, driven by pull motives, from a demand-side perspective.	(Ting et al., 2021)
Defined as the likelihood of medical tourists choosing the same destination again for medical or tourism based on nutritional knowledge, perceived medical quality, and trust in doctors.	(Fengmin et al., 2022)
Defined as consumers’ intention to decide whether to visit a health destination again based on factors such as behavioral beliefs, subjective norms, and the attractiveness of the destination.	(Tebourbi & Neifar, 2018)
Defined as the intention of medical tourists to decide whether to visit the same medical tourism destination again based on their clinical trust and personal well-being in the post-epidemic era.	(Abdul-Rahman et al., 2023)
Defined as the behavioral intention that the hedonic well-being obtained by tourists in the travel experience drives their decision to visit the destination again.	(Vada et al., 2019)

2.3.2. Past studies of Revisit Intention

Revisit intention refers to the psychological tendency of tourists to consume a specific tourism product or service within a certain period, following a cognitive and emotional evaluation. It reflects tourists’ intention to re-consume or re-experience. While revisit intention is not synonymous with actual tourism behavior or the number of trips, there is often a strong correlation between the two.

Kozak & Rimmington (2000) pointed out that tourists’ intention to revisit the same destination or explore other attractions within the same country is influenced by various factors, including their previous tourism experiences, destination transportation, recreational activities, local price levels, the friendliness of local people, and satisfaction with tourism products or services. Moreover, economic and political factors can also influence tourists’ intention to revisit. In terms of the significance of tourists returning to a destination, when they are satisfied with the destination, it plays a significant role in tourism operations, management, and in identifying and meeting tourists’ needs. In revisiting the intention related research, Kozak (2003) found that the intention of revisiting is affected by many factors, and the intention of revisiting is different among different types of tourists and different destinations. Sampol (1996) believes that a positive impression of a destination helps increase the intention of a visitor to revisit. Satisfaction has been widely used as an evaluation index to measure revisited intention, and many scholars have confirmed that revisited intention is related to recreation experience satisfaction. Beeho & Prentice (1997) believe that if the tourist experience is satisfactory, they will recommend the destination to their friends and relatives. Oppermann (2000) compared the effectiveness of two customer loyalty research methods in evaluating New Zealand residents’ travel, and concluded that loyalty, including oral recommendation and revisit, can effectively predict tourists’ needs and behaviors. Cole & Scott (2004) attempt to deepen and expand the research on visitor experience by revealing the mechanism of influence between overall satisfaction and revisit intention. The findings not only confirm the significant influence of overall satisfaction on revisit intention, but also reveal that

experiential quality fully mediates the relationship between service quality and overall satisfaction. Kim (2021) survey shows that the main influencing factors of tourists' revisiting intention are psychological and behavioral factors, especially satisfaction and motivation, which will seriously affect tourists' revisiting intention.

To sum up, tourists' intention to revisit is influenced by various factors, including satisfaction, motivation, tourism experience, and the quality of transportation and services at the destination. Studies indicate that overall tourist satisfaction significantly influences revisit intention, with experiential quality acting as a mediator between service quality and satisfaction (Siregar et al., 2021). At the same time, tourists' positive impression and satisfactory experience of the destination can also enhance their recommendation behavior and intention to revisit. Therefore, improving the quality of destination experience and enhancing tourists' satisfaction is very important for promoting tourists to revisit.

2.4. Tourism Motivation

2.4.1. Definition of Tourism Motivation

Motivation is a multidimensional and complex concept, which has many definitions and explanations in different fields and scholars' research. Generally speaking, motivation can be summarized as internal and external forces that drive individual behavior, and its core lies in explaining why people choose certain behaviors and under what circumstances they will continue to do so. Motivation is regarded as a force driven by basic human needs. For example, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory points out that individual behavior is driven by a series of needs from physiological needs to self-realization. McClelland (1961) further emphasized the importance of needs such as achievement, power and affinity. Generally speaking, this view holds that motivation is rooted in individual's pursuit of various needs, and whether the needs are met or not directly affects the generation and persistence of behavior (Potter, 1962). Motivation can be divided into internal and external types. Deci & Ryan (1985) emphasized that intrinsic motivation means that individuals actively participate in activities because of interest and pleasure, while extrinsic motivation is related to external rewards or punishments. This distinction is of great significance in explaining individual independent participation and externally driven behavior. Generally, intrinsic motivation is considered to stimulate lasting behavioral engagement more than extrinsic motivation.

The concept of motivation originates from the idea of stimulating individuals to act, and it is closely associated with encouragement, which serves as an external factor that influences action. The concept connotation of tourism motivation depends on the explanation of psychology and sociology. Crompton (1979) believes that the psychological motivation of tourism is a kind of demand, which is created by the social environment and image of the individual and restricted by factors such as time, economic situation and tourism ability. Therefore, Crompton & McKay (1997) define tourism motivation as a dynamic process, in which individuals will have unbalanced or nervous psychological factors due to the satisfaction of their needs. However, this study only considers the internal factors such as tourists' psychological needs, and does not consider the external factors that can attract tourists in tourist destinations. Dann (1977) defined tourism motivation as an important inner state that urges individuals or groups to travel, including both the thrust of psychological needs and the pull of tourist destinations that stimulate tourists' desire to travel. This view that tourism motivation is stimulated by internal and external factors has been widely recognized by scholars.

To sum up, combined with Dann's definition of motivation, this study believes that tourism motivation is the motivation that individuals are driven by internal factors and pulled by external factors to promote individuals or groups to carry out certain tourism activities, and it is the reflection of individuals' needs.

2.4.2. Past studies of Tourism Motivation

Crompton (1979) identified nine kinds of tourism motivations, and determined the motivations of happy vacationers who influenced the choice of destination. He also tried to establish a conceptual framework that can contain these motives. Seven are classified as social psychology, namely: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The two remaining motives, novelty and education, formed the alternate cultural category. In contrast, socio-psychological motivation is found to have nothing to do with destination attributes. Here, the focus shifts from the destination itself to its function as a medium, through which social psychological needs can be met. The research findings suggest that tourism practitioners may benefit from placing greater emphasis on social-psychological motivation when developing products and formulating promotional strategies. By investigating tourists' motivations of destination experience, Pizam et al. (1979) identified the main factors that affect tourism behavior, including culture, entertainment, exploration and other motivations, and analyzed the influence of these motivations on tourism behavior. Iso-Ahola (1982) puts forward a social psychological model of tourism motivation, and emphasizes the influence of two basic motivations, escape and seeking, on tourism behavior. Empirical research shows that the main motivation for tourists to participate in tourism activities is to escape the pressure of daily life and seek new experiences. Ryan & Glendon (1998) discussed the tourism motivation of different age groups, and revealed the moderating role of age in tourism motivation through empirical analysis. The results show that tourism motivation changes with age, and different opportunities affect tourists' behavior choices. Yoon & Uysal (2005) constructed a structural model between tourism motivation, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Another study discusses the relationship between memories of tourism experience and tourism motivation. Empirical analysis shows that unique tourism experience and positive memories can enhance tourists' intention to revisit (Kim et al., 2012). When studying the push-pull motivation of religious tourism, Battour et al. (2017) also found that the push-pull motivation of religious tourism significantly affects tourists' satisfaction, and religious belief has a moderating effect on the relationship between the pull motivation and tourists' satisfaction.

In conclusion, although the research on tourism motivation has been rich, it is difficult to unify the motivations of tourists under different tourism forms, so only by conducting in-depth empirical research on specific tourism forms can we identify special tourism motives. Motivation is one of the important bases of product development. It is of great significance to study the tourism motivation of tourists in tourist destinations under the

dual demand to promote product development in tourist areas, and to some extent, it can also enrich the research on tourism motivation.

2.5. Experiential Quality

2.5.1. Definition of Experiential Quality

As a multi-dimensional concept, the experiential quality has gained extensive research attention in the fields of consumer behavior and tourism management. Its development process has undergone a multi-stage evolution, progressing from perception and emotion to participation and immersion. By sorting out the definition of experiential quality, we can better understand its core position in the tourism field and its influence on tourists' behavior.

Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) linked the experiential quality with consumption behavior for the first time in their early studies, emphasizing that experience is the pleasure, emotional satisfaction and imagination that consumers get in the process of consumption. They pointed out that consumption is not only the satisfaction of functional needs, but also a process of emotion and perception. This view emphasizes the subjectivity of experience and holds that the quality of experience comes from the emotional state and psychological reaction experience by individuals in the process of consumption. This definition lays the foundation for later experience research and highlights the importance of consumers' inner perception.

Pine & Gilmore (1988) elevated the experiential quality to an economic value when introducing the concept of the experience economy. They believe that the experience itself can become a product, and consumers are willing to pay for a unique and unforgettable experience. Under this framework, experiential quality involves not only consumers' perceptions of service outcomes but also their sense of engagement and immersion during the experience. This theory guides enterprises to pay attention to how to create consumers' active participation by designing rich experience scenes, so as to improve the quality of experience.

Otto & Ritchie (1996) first introduced the variable of experiential quality into the field of tourism research, and put forward four key dimensions of tourism experience: stimulation, reliability, interaction and recovery. They believe that every dimension in tourism will affect the overall experiential quality of tourists. This view expands the definition of experiential quality and applies it to more complex and diverse tourism environments.

Subsequently, Tung & Ritchie (2011) further explored the connotation of tourism experience, put forward the concept of "unforgettable tourism experiential", and emphasized the important role of emotional and psychological experiences in enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Based on the above, this study defines the experiential quality as: tourists' comprehensive perception and evaluation of environment, service, interaction and emotion in the process of participating in tourism activities. This definition not only includes the perception of tourism service and environment, but also emphasizes the emotional and psychological state produced in the process of experience. The experiential quality is regarded as a key factor affecting tourists' satisfaction, loyalty and intention to revisit.

2.5.2. Past studies of Experiential Quality

In recent years, experiential quality has been regarded as a key mediator variable in tourism research, connecting service quality, tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention. The research of Ali et al. (2016) shows that experiential quality has a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction and revisit intention by influencing tourists' emotional response in the context of theme parks. This mediation shows that experiential quality not only affects the direct service perception, but also plays a regulatory role between service and behavior intention. Through the mediator role of experiential quality, service providers can gain a deeper understanding of tourists' needs, allowing them to design more appealing experiential products.

Cole & Scott (2004) research shows that experiential quality plays an important mediator role between tourists' experiential and their satisfaction and loyalty. In other words, the quality of tourists' experiential in tourism activities directly affects their evaluation of the whole tourism experiential, covering their satisfaction and future revisit intentions. High-quality experiential will not only improve tourists' satisfaction, but also strengthen their intention to revisit and their positive reputation for their destinations.

Suhartanto et al. (2020) research further put forward that experiential quality directly affects the loyalty of tourists, and high-quality experience makes tourists get higher satisfaction in tourism activities, thus enhancing their loyalty to tourist destinations. Experiential quality not only impacts tourist satisfaction but also plays a significant role in shaping their likelihood to revisit and engage in word-of-mouth sharing by improving their perceived value and overall satisfaction.

A survey on port wine cellars shows that the quality of experiential not only mediates between various experience components and satisfaction, but also affects tourists' future behavior intention. High-quality experience can enhance tourists' intention to revisit Potter wine cellar and recommend this experience to others. This discovery emphasizes the importance of managing and strengthening all aspects of tourism experiential to cultivate loyalty and positive word of mouth (Fernandes & Cruz, 2016). The latest research found that when participants perceived the quality of the recreational experience to be high, it positively impacted their overall satisfaction and intention to revisit the location (He & Luo, 2020; Yayla et al., 2023).

Experiential quality serves as a key mediator variable in tourism, linking service quality, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Studies have shown that high-quality experiential not only enhance tourists' satisfaction and perceived value but also strengthen their loyalty, intention to revisit, and positive word-of-mouth. By mediating the relationship between various experiential components and tourist satisfaction, experiential quality plays a crucial role in shaping future behavior.

2.6. Hypotheses Development

Tourism motivation refers to the internal psychological drives that encourage tourists to choose a destination and engage in travel behaviors. Revisit intention, on the other hand, reflects tourists' intention or desire to revisit to a destination after their initial experience. In the context of Hainan Province, a popular destination known for its wellness tourism, motivation may significantly influence tourists' likelihood of revisiting. Motivations such as health benefits, relaxation, unique local culture, and natural attractions could enhance the overall tourism experience, leading to a stronger intention to revisit.

Push-Pull theory explains that internal (push) factors like the desire for wellness or relaxation and external (pull) factors such as the attractiveness of Hainan's environment both contribute to forming the desire to revisit. Assaker et al. (2011) provided evidence that motivation is one of the key factors influencing destination loyalty, which includes the intention to revisit. In a Chinese tourism context, Wu & Li (2017) found that tourists' motivations for seeking cultural experience positively impacted their loyalty, and thus their intention to revisit. In the research of Prayag (2012), it is found that the elderly tourists' escape and relaxation can predict their intention to revisit. In the research on the motivation of spiritual retreat tourism, real experience, natural environment, quiet atmosphere and other stimulating opportunities affect tourists' intention to revisit (Ashton, 2018). According to Wang et al. (2021), the study needs to consider different types of motivation related to revisiting intention, including push-pull motivation. Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H₁: Tourism motivation has a significant positive impact on tourists' revisit intention.

Tourism motivation is an important psychological factor that drives tourists' behavior, and affects tourists' decision-making on tourism experience and behavior intention (Crompton, 1979). Motivation usually includes leisure, escape, exploration, social and cultural experience and so on. According to the theory of tourism motivation, tourists' motivation not only directly affects their behavior intention, but also plays an indirect role through the quality of experience. High-level tourism motivation urges tourists to pursue positive experiences at their destinations and obtain high-quality experiences, thus enhancing their intention to revisit (Iso-Ahola, 1982).

Push-pull theory is an important framework to explain tourism motivation. Push factors are the internal needs of tourists, such as leisure, escape, exploration and other internal motives, which drive tourists to travel; Pull factors are external attraction, such as scenic spots, services, culture and so on, which make tourists choose a specific destination (Dann, 1977). The push factor is often related to the tourists' internal needs and motivations, while the pull factor is closely related to the quality of experience provided by the destination. Experiential quality plays a connecting role between thrust and tension, and realizes the transformation from motivation to revisiting intention through tension factor.

Lee et al. (2004) found that tourism motivation indirectly affects revisiting intention through experiential quality. Their research shows that the stronger the tourists' motivation, the higher their evaluation of the quality of their destination experiential, and this positive quality of experience further enhances their intention to revisit. Kim et al. (2012) pointed out that the quality of experience plays a significant mediator role between motivation and revisiting intention. The cultural motivation of tourists enhances their intention of revisiting by improving the quality of their experience at the destination. The research of Prayag & Ryan (2012) shows that there is a significant positive correlation between tourism motivation and revisiting intention, and this relationship is mediated by the quality of experience. Through the investigation of tourists in the resort, they found that the higher the tourists' motivation, the higher the quality of their experience, which in turn enhanced their intention to revisit.

The research results of Chen & Tsai (2007) support the view that motivation affects revisiting intention through experiential quality. They found that tourists' motivation has a significant impact on the experiential quality and revisiting intention, and the experiential quality plays a partial mediator role between them. Yoon & Uysal (2005) studied the influence of push-pull motivation on tourism behavior, and found that experiential quality plays a mediator role between motivation and behavioral intention. The results show that strong thrust motivation will lead to high-quality experience and enhance tourists' intention to revisit their destinations. The relationship between motivation and revisiting intention is not only direct, but also realized through the mediator role of experiential quality. Strong tourism motivation urges tourists to actively participate in tourism activities and pursue high-quality tourism experience. This high-quality experience further enhanced their intention to revisit. Empirical research also supports this view, proving that the quality of experience has a significant mediator role between motivation and revisiting intention. Therefore, the following assumptions are made:

H₂: Experiential Quality mediates the relationship between tourism motivation and tourists' revisit intention.

Building on Tourism Experience Theory (TET), Experiential quality in tourism can be understood as the extent to which a destination meets or exceeds the expectations of tourists in terms of activities, amenities, and environmental conditions. When tourists in Hainan have a high-quality experience, they are likely to have their expectations confirmed or even exceeded, which fosters higher levels of satisfaction and influences their revisit intention. In the field of tourism, experiential quality refers to tourists' perceptions of the overall quality of services and experiences they receive during their visit, including accommodations, activities, and environment. When tourists perceive high experiential quality, it positively confirms their expectations, leading to higher satisfaction, and thus, increases their intention to revisit the destination.

Chen & Chen (2010) found that experiential quality significantly influences tourists' behavioral intentions, including their intention to revisit cultural heritage sites. This study supports the idea that higher levels of experiential quality lead to increased tourist satisfaction, which is a key driver of revisit intention. A study on tourism in Lombok, Indonesia, demonstrated that high experiential quality positively influenced tourists' satisfaction and increased their intention to revisit the destination (Juliana et al., 2023). Similarly, a study on cultural heritage tourism also found that tourists who perceived high-quality experiences were more likely to plan future visits due to increased satisfaction (Sari et al., 2021). Preceding research approves the relationship between memorable tourism experience, satisfaction, and revisit intention in destination-marketing (Chen & Rahman, 2018; J.-H. Kim, 2018). Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that tourists' memorable experiences are positively associated with overall satisfaction and revisit intention (Cifci, 2022). Therefore, the following assumptions are made:

H₃: *Experiential Quality has a significant positive impact on tourists’ revisit intention.*

2.7. Research Framework

Building on the growing recognition of the experience-based perspective in tourism behavior research, this study proposes a research framework that links tourism motivation, experiential quality, and revisit intention. As shown in Figure 1, tourism motivation serves as the fundamental driving force that encourages individuals to participate in tourism activities and shapes their expectations of destination experiences. Experiential quality, in turn, reflects tourists’ overall evaluation of the experiential elements encountered during their visit, such as service performance, emotional fulfillment, and sense of authenticity. When tourists perceive their experiences as highly satisfying and meaningful, their intention to revisit the destination is likely to strengthen. Therefore, this study posits that experiential quality acts as a mediating variable through which tourism motivation exerts its influence on revisit intention. By testing this mediation mechanism within the context of Hainan Province—a leading experiential and wellness tourism destination in China—this study aims to deepen the understanding of how motivational factors are transformed into behavioral intentions through experiential perceptions.



Figure 1. Research Framework.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire Development and Measurements

To collect the data, a structured questionnaire was developed and validated. The final instrument consisted of two main sections. The first section gathered respondents’ demographic information, including gender, age, education level, occupation, monthly income, and family structure. The second section measured the key research constructs using established or previously validated scales adapted from prior studies (Table 3). Minor wording adjustments were made to ensure contextual relevance to the present research setting.

All items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The constructs included tourism motivation (17 items), experiential quality (12 items), and revisit intention (5 items).

Table 3. Constructs and sources for measurement scales.

Variables	Items	Source
Tourism motivation (17 items)	Push Motivation:	(Gan et al., 2023)
	1)Escape motivation	
	TM1: I am there to feel the slow pace of life.	
	TM 2: I am there to relieve stress.	
	TM 3: I am trying to escape the worries of real life for a while.	
	2)Consumption motivation	
	TM4: It is easy to get around here.	
	TM5: The cost of transportation is within acceptable limits.	
	TM6: The local consumption level is appropriate.	
	Pull Motivation:	
	1)Attractive motivation	
	TM7: I get word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family.	
	TM8: I am attracted by the promotion of online travel platforms, advertisements, etc.	
	TM9: I am attracted by the sharing of other people’s tour experiences on social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and short videos.	
	2)Natural environmental motivation	
	TM10: The local climate is good and the temperature is comfortable.	
	TM11: The air is fresh here.	
	TM12: This place can be relaxing for the mind and body.	
	3)Interpersonal motivation	
	TM13: I am here to spend time with my family.	
	TM14: I am here to visit friends and family in the neighborhood.	
	TM15: I come here to improve my relationship with my companions.	
	TM16: I am here to share my travel experiences with others and gain social acceptance after my trip.	
	TM17: I am here to make new friends and expand my social circle.	
Variables	Items	Source
Experiential quality (12 items)	Involvement	(Suhartanto et al., 2020)
	EQ1: Get a new experience.	
	EQ2: Feel involved with the activity.	
	EQ3: Can choose any activities which are suitable for me.	
	Peace of mind	
	EQ4: The attraction environment is comfortable.	
	EQ5: The attraction situation is relaxing.	
	Recognition	
	EQ6: The staff treated me wholeheartedly.	

	EQ7: The staff treated me like I was an important person. Learning EQ8: Increased my knowledge about the attraction. EQ9: Increased my skill. EQ10: Made me understand something new. Escape EQ11: I feel escaped from my daily routine activity. EQ12: I can forget my daily activity.	
Variables	Items	Source
Revisit Intention (5 items)	RI1: I would like to revisit Hainan in the near future. RI2: If had to decide again I would choose Hainan again. RI3: I would come back to Hainan in the future. RI4: I would more frequently visit Hainan. RI5: Hainan would be my first choice over other destinations.	(Tosun et al. 2015)

Prior to the pilot test, the questionnaire was reviewed by an expert panel comprising three scholars in tourism studies to evaluate its content validity and face validity. Based on their feedback, a small-scale pilot survey was recommended. Considering the large number of tourists visiting Hainan, China during the study period, a mixed translation validation procedure was adopted following the guidelines of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009).

The questionnaire was initially developed in English and then translated into Chinese by a bilingual expert. The Chinese version was subsequently back-translated into English by another bilingual specialist. The two English versions were compared to ensure semantic and conceptual equivalence, and a Chinese language expert further refined the final version for linguistic clarity and cultural appropriateness.

A pilot test was then conducted with 51 tourists selected through convenience sampling. As shown in Table 4, the “Questionnaire on Hainan Tourists’ Revisit Intention” demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, confirming its feasibility and consistency as a quantitative instrument. Consequently, no reduction in the number of items or structural modification of the questionnaire was deemed necessary.

Table 4. Results of the Pilot Study.

Variables	Scale Construct	Cronbach’s α	KMO	
Tourism motivation (17 items)	Push Motivation: 1)Escape motivation TM1: I am there to feel the slow pace of life. TM 2: I am there to relieve stress. TM 3: I am trying to escape the worries of real life for a while. 2)Consumption motivation TM4: It is easy to get around here. TM5: The cost of transportation is within acceptable limits. TM6: The local consumption level is appropriate. Pull Motivation: 1)Attractive motivation TM7: I get word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family. TM8: I am attracted by the promotion of online travel platforms, advertisements, etc. TM9: I am attracted by the sharing of other people’s tour experiences on social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and short videos. 2)Natural environmental motivation TM10: The local climate is good and the temperature is comfortable. TM11: The air is fresh here. TM12: This place can be relaxing for the mind and body. 3)Interpersonal motivation TM13: I am here to spend time with my family. TM14: I am here to visit friends and family in the neighborhood. TM15: I come here to improve my relationship with my companions. TM16: I am here to share my travel experiences with others and gain social acceptance after my tourism. TM17: I am here to make new friends and expand my social circle.	0.96	0.91	Sig. < 0.001

Experiential quality (12 items)	Involvement EQ1: Get a new experience. EQ2: Feel involved with the activity. EQ3: Can choose any activities which are suitable for me. Peace of mind EQ4: The attraction environment is comfortable. EQ5: The attraction situation is relaxing. Recognition EQ6: The staff treated me wholeheartedly. EQ7: The staff treated me like I was an important person. Learning EQ8: Increased my knowledge about the attraction. EQ9: Increased my skill EQ10: Made me understand something new. Escape EQ11: I feel escaped from my daily routine activity. EQ12: I can forget my daily activity.	0.97	0.93	Sig. < 0.001
Revisit Intention (5 items)	RI1: I would like to revisit Hainan in the near future. RI2: If had to decide again I would choose Hainan again. RI3: I would come back to Hainan in the future. RI4: I would more frequently visit Hainan. RI5: Hainan would be my first choice over other destinations.	0.93	0.86	Sig. < 0.001

3.2. Sampling and Data Gathering

The target population of this study consisted of tourists who visited Hainan Province between April and May 2025 and had previously traveled to the island. Given the absence of accurate data regarding the population size and distribution, a non-probability convenience sampling approach was employed. Data were collected at several major tourist attractions, including Holiday Beach Scenic Spot in Haikou, Nanshan Cultural Tourism Zone, and Tianya Haijiao Scenic Spot in Sanya. These sites were purposefully selected due to their popularity and high tourist visitation rates.

Eligible respondents were first screened based on the study criteria and, upon obtaining their consent, were invited to complete the questionnaire on-site. In total, 547 tourists were approached during the data collection period, resulting in 487 returned questionnaires, representing a response rate of 89%. After excluding incomplete and invalid responses, 481 valid questionnaires were retained for subsequent statistical analysis.

Table 5 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the 481 valid participants, 58.6% were female and 41.4% were male, indicating a slightly higher proportion of female tourists in the sample. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were aged 25–34 years (26.2%) and 35–44 years (27.4%), suggesting that middle-aged adults constituted the majority of tourists visiting Hainan. Regarding education level, 39.7% held a bachelor’s degree, followed by 22.5% with an associate degree and 16.8% with a graduate degree or above, reflecting a relatively well-educated sample. In terms of occupation, self-employed individuals (39.1%) and enterprise staff (30.1%) formed the largest groups, followed by institution staff (21.0%) and civil servants (5.8%). Monthly income levels varied, with the largest proportion earning 3,001–6,000 yuan (32.6%), followed by 6,001–9,000 yuan (30.4%), indicating that the majority of respondents belonged to the middle-income category. As for family structure, 39.7% were married with one or more children, 34.3% were single, and 13.9% were married without children.

Overall, the demographic composition of the respondents suggests that the sample predominantly consisted of educated, economically active, and family-oriented adults, which aligns with the general profile of domestic leisure travelers in China.

Table 5. Respondents' Demographic Profile.

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	199	41.4%
	Female	282	58.6%
Age	18-24	84	17.5%
	25-34	126	26.2%
	35-44	132	27.4%
	45-54	91	18.9%
	55-64	48	10.0%
	65 more than	0	0
Education level	Junior middle school or below	31	6.4%
	High school/vocational school	70	14.6%
	Associate degree	108	22.5%
	Bachelor's degree	191	39.7%
	Graduate degree and above	81	16.8%
Occupation	Civil servant	28	5.8%
	Institution staff	101	21.0%
	Enterprise staff	145	30.1%
	Self-employed	188	39.1%
	Other	19	4.0%
Monthly Income	Below 3,000 yuan	64	13.3%
	3,001-6,000 yuan	157	32.6%
	6,001-9,000 yuan	146	30.4%
	Above 9,001 yuan	114	23.7%
Family structure	Single	165	34.3%
	Married, but no children	67	13.9%
	Married, with one or more children	191	39.7%
	Other	58	12.1%

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1. Data Analysis and Findings

For data analysis, this study employed the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, which allows for the simultaneous assessment of both the measurement model and the structural model (Marcoulides & Saunders, 2006). Moreover, PLS is particularly suitable for studies involving relatively small sample sizes (Chin, 1998).

To evaluate the proposed research framework and assess its model fit, analyses were conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 and SPSS 27.0. Following the two-step approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the first step involved assessing the measurement (outer) model to examine the reliability and validity of the constructs. The second step entailed evaluating the structural (inner) model, which tested the hypothesized causal relationships among the latent variables within the research framework.

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment

To assess the internal consistency reliability of the measurement items, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were first examined. As shown in Table 6, which reports 34 indicators across three constructs, all Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). In addition, the composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs were above the acceptable level of 0.70, further confirming reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As composite reliability is considered a more appropriate indicator than Cronbach's alpha in PLS-SEM (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011), these results suggest that all constructs exhibit adequate internal consistency.

The standardized factor loadings of all items exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), supporting the indicator reliability of the measurement model. Construct validity was then examined through convergent and discriminant validity tests. Convergent validity, which reflects the degree to which indicators of a construct share a high proportion of variance, was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 6, all AVE values were greater than 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity, which assesses the extent to which constructs are distinct from one another, was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. According to this criterion, the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than its correlations with other constructs. The results presented in Table 7 show that this condition was satisfied in all cases, confirming discriminant validity (Kock, 2015).

In summary, the results of the outer model assessment demonstrate that the measurement model achieved satisfactory levels of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, indicating that the constructs were measured with acceptable psychometric properties.

Table 6. Validity of the Outer Model.

Constructs/Indicators (Reflective)	Cronbach's Alpha Values	Composite Reliability(rho_a)	Composite Reliability(rho_c)	Outer Loadings	Average Variance Extracted
Tourism motivation (TM)	0.960	0.961	0.964		0.641
TM1				0.803	
TM2				0.797	
TM3				0.774	
TM4				0.787	
TM5				0.790	
TM6				0.774	
TM7				0.783	
TM8				0.773	
TM9				0.801	
TM10				0.803	
TM11				0.803	
TM12				0.794	
TM13				0.813	
TM14				0.810	
TM15				0.824	
TM16				0.823	
TM17				0.802	
Experiential quality (EQ)	0.952	0.952	0.958		0.655
EQ1				0.808	
EQ2				0.819	
EQ3				0.789	
EQ4				0.798	
EQ5				0.817	
EQ6				0.819	
EQ7				0.811	
EQ8				0.800	
EQ9				0.806	
EQ10				0.829	
EQ11				0.798	
EQ12				0.814	
Revisit intention (RI)	0.913	0.913	0.935		0.741
RI1				0.847	
RI2				0.849	
RI3				0.839	
RI4				0.878	
RI5				0.890	

Table 7. The Discriminant validity of Fonell-Lareker Criterion.

	1.Tourism motivation	2.Experiential quality	3.Revisit intention
1.Tourism motivation	(0.809)		
2.Experiential quality	0.610	(0.861)	
3.Revisit intention	0.331	0.505	(0.799)

Source: Numbers between brackets represent SQRT AVEs.

4.3. The Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among tourism motivation (TM), experiential quality (EQ), and revisit intention (RI). The evaluation focused on the significance and strength of the path coefficients, as well as the explanatory power of the endogenous constructs, measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2).

4.3.1. Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

Figure 2 shows the results of the PLS-SEM analysis. The path from tourism motivation to experiential quality is positive and significant ($\beta=0.331$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that tourists with higher travel motivation tend to perceive better experiential quality. The path from experiential quality to revisit intention is also positive and significant ($\beta=0.498$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher experiential quality enhances tourists' intention to revisit. Furthermore, the direct effect of tourism motivation on revisit intention remains significant ($\beta=0.340$, $p < 0.001$), implying a partial mediation effect through experiential quality. Table 8 presents the detailed results of the hypothesis testing.

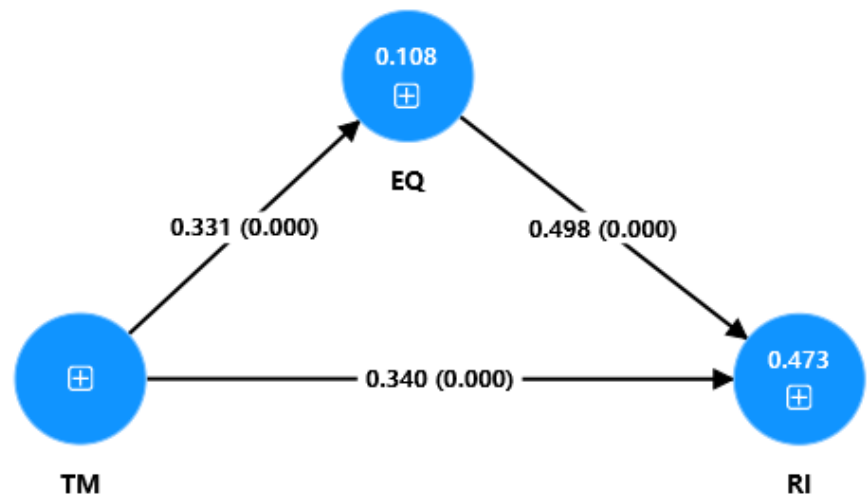


Figure 2. The Path coefficients of the Model.

Table 8. The Hypotheses Testing Results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	p-value	Result
H1	TM $\rightarrow$ RI	0.340	0.000	Supported
H2	TM $\rightarrow$ EQ	0.331	0.000	Supported
H3	EQ $\rightarrow$ RI	0.498	0.000	Supported

4.3.2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The model explains 10.8% of the variance in experiential quality ($R^2=0.108$) and 47.3% of the variance in revisit intention ($R^2=0.473$). According to Hair et al. (2014), these values indicate a moderate explanatory power for revisit intention and a weak-to-moderate explanatory power for experiential quality, suggesting that additional factors may also influence tourists’ perceived experience quality.

4.3.3. Mediation Analysis

To further examine the mediating role of experiential quality between tourism motivation and revisit intention, this study conducted a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples using SmartPLS. The results indicate that the indirect effect of tourism motivation on revisit intention through experiential quality is significant ($\beta= 0.165$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, the direct effect of tourism motivation on revisit intention remains significant ($\beta= 0.340$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that experiential quality serves as a partial mediator in this relationship.

Table 9. Indirect Effect Results.

Path Relationship	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	Total Effect	p-value	Mediation Type
TM $\rightarrow$ EQ $\rightarrow$ RI	0.165	0.340	0.505	0.000	Partial Mediation

These results are consistent with prior studies emphasizing that tourism motivation acts as a key driver of tourists’ experience evaluation and behavioral outcomes (e.g., Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Chen & Chen, 2010). The positive mediation effect of experiential quality further confirms that the quality of tourism experiences plays a crucial role in transforming tourists’ internal motivations into behavioral intentions, aligning with the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) and the push-pull theory framework.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Summary and Discussion of the Findings

This study aimed to examine tourists’ revisit intention to Hainan Province through an integrated model combining the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) and the Push–Pull Theory. Specifically, the proposed model incorporated tourism motivation (as the internal push factor), experiential quality (as the process-based evaluative factor), and revisit intention (as the behavioral outcome). The structural equation modeling results confirmed that the constructs were unidimensional and that the adapted measurement scales were reliable and valid indicators of their latent variables. The empirical findings revealed that tourism motivation exerts a significant and positive effect on experiential quality and revisit intention. In addition, experiential quality has a strong positive influence on tourists’ revisit intention, and it partially mediates the relationship between motivation and revisit intention.

The findings demonstrate that tourism motivation is one of the most critical determinants of tourists’ behavioral intention to revisit Hainan. This result aligns with the conceptual foundations of the Push–Pull Theory, which argues that internal motivations (push factors) stimulate the desire to travel, while external destination attributes (pull factors) determine actual behavioral outcomes (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). The significant effect of tourism motivation on revisit intention is consistent with Yoon and Uysal (2005), who found that motivation and satisfaction jointly influence destination loyalty. Similarly, Prayag and Ryan (2010) emphasized that the interaction between push and pull factors plays a key role in shaping revisit behavior. In the current study, the direct impact of motivation indicates that tourists driven by strong intrinsic needs—such as relaxation, novelty seeking, and escape—are more likely to revisit destinations that successfully fulfill these psychological expectations.

Moreover, the significant relationship between tourism motivation and experiential quality further supports the proposition of the Tourism Experience Theory, which conceptualizes tourism experience as a dynamic process shaped by anticipation, on-site engagement, and post-experience memory. Tourists with higher motivation tend to engage more deeply in destination experiences, perceive greater value from interactions, and consequently form more positive experiential evaluations. This result is also in line with Chen and Chen (2010), who argued that high

experiential quality strengthens tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The positive association between experiential quality and revisit intention found in this study reinforces the idea that memorable and emotionally engaging experiences are essential drivers of destination loyalty (Pine & Gilmore, 2001).

Furthermore, the mediation effect of experiential quality between tourism motivation and revisit intention reveals an important process mechanism. It indicates that motivation not only triggers the initial travel behavior but also influences how tourists evaluate their experiences during and after the visit. The higher the experiential quality perceived, the stronger the translation of motivation into behavioral loyalty. This finding echoes the core idea of both the TET and Push–Pull frameworks—that internal motives must be reinforced by positive destination experiences to sustain repeat visitation.

Taken together, the results provide a dynamic understanding of revisit intention formation: tourism motivation acts as a psychological antecedent that enhances tourists' experiential evaluations, which in turn foster their intention to revisit. Theoretically, this study contributes to the integration of motivational and experiential perspectives by linking the push factors of motivation with the experiential quality derived from pull factors, thereby enriching the behavioral explanation of tourist loyalty. Practically, destination managers in Hainan should emphasize not only stimulating tourists' internal motivations through effective marketing strategies but also delivering high-quality, memorable experiences that fulfill those motivations. By coordinating push and pull strategies, destinations can effectively transform initial travel motivation into long-term revisit behavior.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

5.2.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several important theoretical contributions to tourism behavior research by integrating the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) and the Push–Pull Theory into a unified explanatory framework of revisit intention. First, by linking tourism motivation (a psychological push factor) with experiential quality (a process-based evaluative factor) and revisit intention (a behavioral outcome), this research advances the understanding of how internal and external forces jointly shape tourists' behavioral loyalty. Previous applications of the Push–Pull Theory (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) primarily focused on explaining destination choice rather than repeat visitation. The current study extends this theoretical scope by demonstrating that push factors not only initiate travel behavior but also influence post-visit behavioral intentions through the mediating role of experiential quality.

Second, the empirical validation of experiential quality as a mediator contributes to the theoretical enrichment of the Tourism Experience Theory. TET emphasizes the dynamic and processual nature of the tourism experience, shaped by anticipation, engagement, and memory (Kim et al., 2012; Baniya et al., 2017). This study provides empirical support for that process by showing how motivation enhances experiential engagement and evaluation, which subsequently strengthens revisit intention. Thus, the research bridges motivational antecedents and experiential consequences, forming a dynamic model that captures both pre-travel expectations and post-travel evaluations within one explanatory structure.

Third, by integrating the Push–Pull Theory with TET, this study responds to recent scholarly calls for interdisciplinary models that explain the transformation of internal drives into behavioral loyalty through experiential mechanisms (Chen & Chen, 2010; Rice & Khanin, 2019). This synthesis deepens theoretical understanding of revisit intention formation by emphasizing that tourists' intrinsic motivations must be reinforced by high-quality destination experiences to sustain long-term loyalty. Therefore, the proposed model contributes to the theoretical advancement of tourism behavior literature by linking motivation, experience, and behavioral intention into a coherent, empirically tested framework.

5.2.2. Practical Contributions

This study also provides several practical insights for destination managers, policymakers, and tourism marketers, particularly in the context of Hainan Province's sustainable tourism development. First, the findings highlight the critical role of tourism motivation as a psychological driver of revisit intention. Destination managers should design marketing strategies that resonate with tourists' intrinsic needs—such as relaxation, novelty seeking, social interaction, and wellness. By tailoring destination branding and promotional campaigns to emphasize these motivational elements, Hainan can more effectively attract and retain high-value tourist segments.

Second, the strong mediating role of experiential quality underscores the necessity of delivering exceptional, memorable, and emotionally engaging tourism experiences. Destination stakeholders should prioritize quality management across the entire tourism value chain—from service delivery and environmental aesthetics to cultural authenticity and wellness offerings. Consistent with Pine and Gilmore's (2001) concept of the "experience economy," enhancing experiential quality transforms motivation into satisfaction and loyalty, fostering long-term competitive advantage.

Third, the findings suggest that motivation and experience must be strategically aligned. Tourism policy in Hainan should thus encourage innovation in experience design and promote experiential products (e.g., wellness retreats, eco-cultural tours, and climate-friendly activities) that satisfy both emotional and practical needs. By coordinating push-based marketing initiatives with pull-based experience design, Hainan can transform short-term tourist motivations into enduring revisit behavior, reinforcing its reputation as a premier wellness and leisure destination in China.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

5.3.1. Limitations

Although this study provides valuable insights into tourists' revisit intentions by integrating the Tourism Experience Theory (TET) and the Push–Pull Theory, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the data were collected exclusively from tourists who visited Hainan Province, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Hainan possesses unique tourism characteristics such as tropical climate, island geography, and wellness-oriented branding. These contextual factors may not fully represent other destinations

with different cultural, geographical, or economic settings. Thus, the results should be interpreted within the specific context of Hainan's tourism environment.

Second, this study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which captures tourists' perceptions and intentions at a single point in time. However, tourists' motivations, experiences, and behavioral intentions may evolve over time due to changes in personal circumstances, external conditions, or destination image. A longitudinal approach would provide a more dynamic understanding of how experiential quality mediates the relationship between motivation and revisit intention across different stages of the travel process.

Third, the study relied primarily on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects. Although reliability and validity tests confirmed the soundness of the measurement model, future studies should incorporate multiple data sources (e.g., behavioral tracking, online reviews, or qualitative interviews) to triangulate findings and enhance methodological robustness.

Fourth, the proposed model focused primarily on tourism motivation and experiential quality as predictors of revisit intention. While these constructs explain a substantial portion of behavioral intention, other potential factors—such as destination image, emotional attachment, perceived value, and post-travel satisfaction—might further enrich the theoretical framework. Integrating these additional variables could provide a more comprehensive understanding of revisit behavior.

Finally, although this study established experiential quality as a mediating variable, it did not empirically test potential moderating factors such as destination policy, climate conditions, or tourists' health perceptions, which may influence the strength of the relationships among constructs. Incorporating such contextual moderators could improve the explanatory power of the integrated TET–Push–Pull model.

5.3.2. Suggestions for Future Studies

Future research could build upon these findings in several directions. First, comparative studies across multiple destinations—both within and outside China—could be conducted to validate the general applicability of the integrated framework. Cross-cultural comparisons (e.g., between island, urban, and heritage destinations) would help determine whether the relationships among motivation, experiential quality, and revisit intention differ across diverse tourism contexts.

Second, researchers are encouraged to adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs. Longitudinal studies could track changes in tourists' motivations and revisit intentions over time, while qualitative interviews could uncover deeper psychological mechanisms underlying experiential evaluations. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches would enhance both theoretical depth and empirical richness.

Third, future work may incorporate technology-mediated experiences (e.g., social media engagement, virtual tourism, or influencer marketing) as new dimensions of experiential quality. Given the growing importance of digital interactions in shaping tourists' expectations and post-visit memories, integrating digital experience variables could modernize the TET framework and reflect contemporary tourism dynamics.

Fourth, subsequent studies could explore moderating roles of demographic or situational factors—such as age, travel frequency, income, or health consciousness—on the relationships among motivation, experience, and behavior. Identifying these conditional effects would provide more targeted implications for destination segmentation and marketing strategy.

Finally, future research might expand the integrated framework by incorporating emotional, cognitive, and affective dimensions of the tourism experience. Exploring how emotions and memory formation interact with motivation and experiential quality could yield a more comprehensive and psychologically grounded model of revisit intention formation.

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