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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Tourists' Intention to Visit Dark Sites in China: Integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior with Constraint Negotiation

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This Study aims to investigate the factors influencing the intention toward visiting dark sites by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Constraint Negotiation Theory (CNT). This study integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Constraint Negotiation Theory (CNT) to investigate the factors influencing tourists' visit intentions to dark sites. TPB emphasizes motivational factors such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, while CNT highlights the role of constraints and negotiation strategies, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding behavioral intentions in dark tourism. A total of 481 usable questionnaires were collected in China. To evaluate the proposed framework, this investigation used PLS-SEM. The findings reveal that attitude and perceived behavioral control have significant effects on visit intention, whereas subjective norms do not show any significant result. Apart from this, it is observed that there is a negative relationship between travel constraints, especially intrapersonal travel constraints, and visit intentions. The study also found that cognitive negotiation strategies mediate the negative influence of travel constraints on tourists' intentions to visit dark sites. This study makes a contribution to the theory and practice of dark tourism. It is the first combined application of TPB and CNT in the dark tourism context, and it may be of importance for understanding the visit intentions of tourists. The discussion has implications at both conceptual and practical levels.

INTRODUCTION

Modern society has transitioned from mass tourism to specialized tourism, driven by travelers' desire for unique and meaningful experiences (Proos & Hattingh, 2022). Tourists increasingly seek distinctive sights, activities, and sensory experiences (Hwang et al., 2023). Dark tourism, characterized by visits to sites associated with death, suffering, disasters, and atrocities (Yan et al., 2016), exemplifies this trend and has experienced substantial growth in recent years (Boateng et al., 2018). For example, the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York draws approximately 3.5 million visitors annually (Wang et al., 2023). Similarly, the Memorial of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre, according to the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, welcomed 8 million annual visitors before the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to attract over 1 million visitors post-pandemic (Wang, Hao & Wu, 2021). This growing interest has sparked

significant academic attention, leading to a surge in studies published in databases like Web of Science and Scopus (Iliev, 2021). As dark tourism gains global traction, its societal importance is increasingly recognized. By directly engaging with themes of death, dark tourism provides opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual well-being (Oren et al., 2021). Additionally, it contributes to disaster recovery (Wang et al., 2023) and the development of cultural and national identity (Chen & Xu, 2023).

Despite its growing prominence, dark tourism sites are often less appealing to visitors compared to traditional attractions. This is partly because dark tourism remains a relatively new and niche concept, lacking widespread public acceptance (Sarkar et al., 2022). Many visitors to such sites resist being labeled as "dark tourists" (Isaac & Cakmak, 2016) and are often hesitant to return (Zhang et al., 2016). This reluctance poses a risk of erasing the painful histories these sites represent from collective memory, leaving them unwritten for future generations (Wang et al., 2021). Consequently, understanding the reasons behind tourists' hesitation and the factors shaping their visit intentions is critical. Research has explored both motivators and deterrents for visiting dark sites, identifying various constraints such as cultural taboos, competing attractions (Zhang et al., 2016), disinterest (Dancausa et al., 2020), fear (Bhati et al., 2021), unpleasant emotions (Wang, 2017), and traumatic memories (Zheng et al., 2017).

Some studies have examined strategies to mitigate these constraints. According to Constraint Negotiation Theory (CNT), proposed by Jackson et al. (1993), encountering constraints does not necessarily lead to disengagement. Instead, individuals often develop strategies to overcome these barriers, referred to as constraint negotiation (Mei & Lantai, 2018). Empirical support for CNT has been demonstrated across leisure and general tourism contexts (Xue & Gao, 2021; Lee et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2022). However, limited research has addressed how negotiation strategies influence the relationship between travel constraints and visit intentions in dark tourism (Zheng et al., 2017), leaving the psychological tension between constraints and the desire to visit dark sites unresolved.

Moreover, a significant gap exists in the theoretical understanding of visit intentions to dark sites. Most prior studies have focused on isolated factors influencing behavioral intention, without constructing a comprehensive predictive framework. Only a few researchers, such as Juan et al. (2020), Lewis et al. (2022), and Allman (2017), have applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore dark tourists' visit intentions. While these studies provide valuable insights, they remain limited in scope, with findings that lack broad applicability. Consequently, further empirical research is needed to validate the use of TPB in the context of dark tourism.

To address these gaps, this study integrates the psycho-social constructs of TPB and CNT to develop a holistic framework for understanding visit intentions to dark sites. It examines variables such as travel constraints, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, while also exploring how negotiation strategies mediate the relationship between constraints and visit intentions. Additionally, this study aims to provide actionable insights for industry stakeholders and dark tourism practitioners to inform effective marketing and management strategies.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Background

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) focuses on the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) in shaping human behavior, while Constraint Negotiation Theory (CNT) emphasizes the role of constraints and negotiation strategies. Although these theories have distinct emphases, they share complementary elements and have demonstrated efficacy in explaining travel behaviors and intentions. Tourists often encounter constraints when visiting sites associated with death, suffering, or disasters, making these two frameworks particularly relevant in the context of dark tourism. Scholars such as Shin et al. (2022), Park et al. (2017), and Moghimehfar

et al. (2018) have explored the integration of constraints into the TPB model. For instance, Moghimehfar et al. (2018) combined TPB with constraints and negotiation to analyze hikers' behavioral intentions, explaining 44% of the variance in their eco-friendly hiking intentions. This study adopts a hybrid model that incorporates elements from both TPB and CNT to analyze relationships among travel constraints, negotiation strategies, attitude, subjective norms, PBC, and visit intentions in the context of dark tourism..

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

The TPB is a widely recognized framework for predicting behavioral intentions in tourism studies. It comprises three core components:

Attitude: A person's evaluation of performing a target behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective Norms: Perceived social pressure from significant others regarding the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC): The perceived ease or difficulty of engaging in a behavior, influenced by individual and external factors (Ajzen, 1991).

These three components collectively serve as predictors of behavioral intention, a relationship validated across various tourism contexts (Osiako & Szente, 2024; Plantania et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2017). In the domain of dark tourism, researchers (e.g., Juan et al., 2020) have identified positive correlations between these predictors and visit intentions. To further validate these findings, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Attitude positively influences tourists' intention to visit dark sites.

H2: Subjective norms positively influence tourists' intention to visit dark sites.

H3: Perceived behavioral control positively influences tourists' intention to visit dark sites.

2.3 Travel Constraints and Constraint Negotiation Theory

Travel constraints, as conceptualized in leisure studies, refer to factors that deter individuals from visiting specific destinations (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Crawford and Godbey's (1987) hierarchical model categorizes constraints into three dimensions:

Intrapersonal Constraints: Psychological barriers such as disinterest, emotional concerns, or personal beliefs.

Interpersonal Constraints: Social obstacles, including lack of travel companions.

Structural Constraints: Practical barriers such as time limitations, budget constraints, or insufficient information.

Research has consistently shown that travel constraints negatively impact visit intentions (Dale & Ritchie, 2020; Karl et al., 2022). In dark tourism, similar findings have been reported, demonstrating a deterrent effect of constraints on visit intentions (Zheng et al., 2018). Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Travel constraints negatively influence tourists' intention to visit dark sites.

H4a: Intrapersonal travel constraints negatively influence visit intentions.

H4b: Interpersonal travel constraints negatively influence visit intentions.

H4c: Structural travel constraints negatively influence visit intentions.

Building on this framework, Jackson et al. (1993) developed the CNT, which posits that constraints can motivate individuals to employ negotiation strategies to mitigate their impact. Negotiation strategies can be categorized into:

Behavioral Strategies: Concrete actions taken to overcome barriers.

Cognitive Strategies: Psychological reframing to minimize the perceived impact of constraints.

The mediating role of negotiation strategies in overcoming travel constraints has been substantiated in various tourism settings (Chung et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2019; Wan et al., 2022). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Negotiation strategies mediate the negative effect of travel constraints on visit intentions.

H5a: Cognitive negotiation strategies mediate the negative impact of travel constraints on visit intentions.

H5b: Behavioral negotiation strategies mediate the negative impact of travel constraints on visit intentions.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study proposes a model integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Constraint Negotiation Theory (CNT), as illustrated in Figure 1. A quantitative cross-sectional approach was adopted, utilizing an interviewer-administered survey questionnaire. The research focused on domestic tourists in China who planned to visit two prominent dark tourism sites: the Memorial of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre (MVNM) and the Beichuan Earthquake Relics (BER). Survey items were adapted from established scales in prior studies: TPB-related items from Han et al. (2017) and Juan et al. (2020), CNT-related items from Zhang et al. (2016), Zheng et al. (2018), Xie and Ritchie (2019), Ying et al. (2021), Lyu and Oh (2014), and Karl et al. (2022), and visit intention items from Han et al. (2017). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was employed for responses.

Since most items were derived from English-language scales, an iterative back-translation process involving three independent bilinguals was used to ensure the Chinese translation accurately reflected the original content. The finalized questionnaire comprised 36 items: 13 on travel constraints, 9 on negotiation strategies, 9 on attitude, subjective norms, and PBC, and 5 on visit intention. Reliability testing through a pilot study of 50 participants showed all dimensions exceeded the Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.7.

Data were collected using purposive sampling, targeting domestic visitors intending to visit the MVNM and BER. These sites were chosen for their international recognition as dark tourism destinations, representing man-made (MVNM) and natural (BER) experiences associated with large-scale death (Zheng et al., 2016). Given the unknown number of potential visitors, the sample size was calculated at 360, based on a 10-to-1 item-to-sample ratio (Hatcher, 1994), and increased to 500 to account for potential non-responses. Systematic sampling was used, with every 10th visitor at each site entrance invited to participate, ensuring an equal distribution of respondents between the two locations.
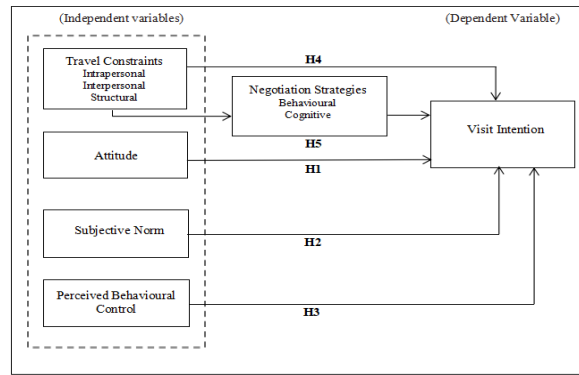
Figure 1: *Research conceptual framework.*

Source: From Authors of This Study.

The survey was conducted over one month, from March to April 2024. Four trained interviewers—two from Nanjing University and two from Chengdu University—administered the questionnaire. Respondents accessed the survey via a QR code on their mobile devices and received a souvenir keychain as an incentive. Of the 550 tourists approached, 481 valid responses were collected, with 248 from MVNM and 233 from BER.

To address potential common method bias (CMB) arising from using the same data collection method for multiple variables, a full collinearity test was performed based on variance inflation factors (VIF), as recommended by Kock and Lynn (2012). VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 2.871, indicating no significant concerns with CMB. To test the study's hypotheses, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied. PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to handle complex conceptual models and non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2013).

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Profiles

Table 1 indicates that more than half of the 481 respondents were male (53.6%), and 71% were younger than 40. A significant majority (69.4%) held a vocational or higher degree. Nearly one-third (27.9%) of respondents were government employees, followed by professionals (18.5%), enterprise staff (14.6%), business owners (11.4%), and students (10.2%). More than half (55.5%) reported monthly income exceeding RMB 5000, while 8.7% earned less than RMB 3000, reflecting a relatively high-income distribution consistent with occupation. A substantial majority (86.3%) were first-time visitors.

Table 1: *Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	258	53.6
	Female	223	46.4
Age	Under 18 years	37	7.7
	18 to 25 years	92	19.1
	26 to 30 years	107	22.2
	31 to 40 years	106	22.0
	41 to 50 years	78	16.2
	51 to 60 years	40	8.3
	Over 60 years	21	4.4

Education Level	Secondary	38	7.9
	Higher Secondary	109	22.7
	Vocational or bachelor	308	64
	Post Graduate	26	5.4
Occupation	Government Officer	134	27.9
	Enterprise staff	70	14.6
	Professional	89	18.5
	Student	49	10.2
	Business owner	55	11.4
	Retiree	21	4.4
	Unemployed	48	10.0
	Other	15	3.1
Monthly Income	Less than RMB 3000	42	8.7
	RMB 3001-5000	172	35.8
	RMB 5001-10000	138	28.7
	RMB 10001-15000	70	14.6
	RMB 15001-20000	31	6.4
	Above RMB 20001	28	5.8
Visit Frequency	Not yet	415	86.3
	Once	54	11.2
	Twice	10	2.1
	Three times or more	2	0.4
Types of Tour	Independent tour	184	38.3
	Package tour	222	46.2
	School-organized filed trip	25	5.2
	Company-organized trip	50	10.4
Source of Information	Travel websites	154	32.0
	Recommendations of friends and family	102	21.2
	Social media platforms	125	26.0
	Travel agencies and professionals	29	6.0
	Printed travel guides and books	20	4.2
	Movies or documentaries	51	10.6
Preferred Transportation Mode	Airplane	80	16.6
	Train	212	44.1
	Car	121	25.2
	Bus	59	12.3
	Other	9	1.9

Almost half (46.2%) purchased package tours, while 38.3% planned their trips independently. The primary source of travel information was websites (32%), followed by social media (26%), and recommendations from family or friends (21.2%). In terms of transportation mode, 44.1% favored train travel, followed by 25.2% opting for self-driving and 16.6% choosing air travel.

4.2 Measurement Model

This study performed an evaluation of reflective measurement, which included evaluations of internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. To establish the first three types of reliability and validity, individual indicators should have an outer loading above 0.7, composite reliability value exceeding 0.7, and an average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). As shown in Table 2, all AVEs exceeded 0.5, and the composite reliability values were all above 0.9. The outer loading was generally adequate, with only Cons6 removed because of its low value of 0.292. To assess the discriminant validity, two methods were used: the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The Fornell-

Larcker criterion states that the square root of each construct's AVE should exceed its correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and all of the constructs in this study met this criterion. On the other hand, the HTMT should be less than 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015), and Table 3 indicates that there are no issues with discriminant validity in the data.

Table 2: *Individual item reliability and construct validity*

Construct	First Order	Items	Loading	α	CR	AVE
Travel Constraints (TC)	Intrapersonal travel constraints (IntraCons)	Cons1: I have seen several distressing films and historical materials which makes me hesitant to visit.	0.888	0.941	0.949	0.607
		Cons2: I am apprehensive about visiting such a location.	0.865			
		Cons3: I am concerned about feeling uneasy after the visit.	0.853			
		Cons4: I worry about encountering unsettling scenes during the visit.	0.881			
		Cons5: I would prefer to go to a more relaxing and enjoyable location instead.	0.846			
	Interpersonal travel constraints (InterCons)	Cons6: I have no companion to visit the place.	0.898			
		Cons7: My family and friends are not interested and can't accompany me.	0.888			
		Cons8: My family and friends don't have time to accompany me.	0.910			
	Structural travel constraints (StrucCons)	Cons9: I have no money to visit.	0.840			
		Cons10: It is difficult to find time to visit.	0.862			
		Cons11: The location is too distant, making it inconvenient for me to go there.	0.888			
		Cons12: There is not enough information for me to visit.	0.897			
Negotiation Strategies (negos)	Cognitive negotiation strategies (Cognegos)	Negos1: I encourage myself to visit.	0.930	0.944	0.953	0.692
		Negos2: I reassure myself that the situation isn't as bad as it appears.	0.911			
		Negos3: I try to ignore the cultural taboo.	0.907			
		Negos4: I concentrate on the positive aspects of the visit and think it is educative.	0.908			
	Behavioral negotiation Strategies (Behanegos)	Negos5: I arrange trips with my own group.	0.893			
		Negos6: I seek out others who share similar interests for traveling together.	0.903			
		Negos7: I attempt to arrange my timetable.	0.910			
		negos8: I gather information about the site.	0.888			
		negos9: I make an effort to manage my finances.	0.897			

Attitude (Att)		Att1: Visiting the place is a positive experience	0.917	0.901	0.938	0.835
		Att2: Visiting the place is a valuable experience	0.924			
		Att3: Visiting the place is a meaningful experience.	0.900			
Subjective Norms (SN)		SN1: The majority of those close to me support my choice to visit the location.	0.902	0.897	0.936	0.830
		SN2: If the people around me go to visit this place, I will go too.	0.911			
		SN3: The media strongly advocates visiting such places.	0.920			
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)		PBC1: I have enough time to visit this place.	0.914	0.908	0.942	0.844
		PBC2: I have money to visit this place.	0.928			
		PBC3: My city has very convenient transportation to reach this place.	0.914			
Visit Intention (VI)		VI1: I am planning to visit the place within one year.	0.915	0.947	0.959	0.825
		VI2: I will save time and money within one year to visit the place.	0.915			
		VI3: I am willing to visit the place in the near future.	0.908			
		VI4: I will recommend others to visit this place.	0.912			
		VI5: I will give a positive review of this visit.	0.892			

Table 3: *Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)*

	Att	Behanegos	Cognegos	InterCons	IntraCons	PBC	SN	StrucCons
Att								
Behanegos	0.714							
Cognegos	0.692	0.732						
InterCons	0.686	0.708	0.647					
IntraCons	0.672	0.643	0.633	0.768				
PBC	0.738	0.633	0.666	0.670	0.668			
SN	0.715	0.643	0.657	0.629	0.646	0.690		
StrucCons	0.656	0.656	0.673	0.744	0.754	0.682	0.638	
VI	0.698	0.656	0.678	0.664	0.682	0.688	0.648	0.681

4.3 Structural Model

A bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples from the SmartPLS algorithm was used to assess the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2013). The path analysis results are presented in Table 4 and Figure 2. The analysis revealed that five hypotheses were supported, and one was not. Specifically, Att (β=0.143, p<0.05) and PBC (β=0.150, p<0.05) had positive effects on visit intention and thus confirmed H1 and H3. In contrast, SN (β=0.085) was found to be insignificant, resulting in the rejection of hypothesis 2. H4 suggested a negative relationship between travel constraints and

visit intention, which was supported by the results (β=-0.286, p<0.001). However, only intrapersonal travel constraint had a significant negative effect on visit intention (β=-0.147, p<0.05), while the other two sub dimensions of travel constraints did not show significance, hence supporting H4a and rejecting H4b and H4c.

This research further investigated the mediating role of negotiation strategies. A bootstrapping approach was considered the most suitable for accessing the mediating effects in this study because the data was not normally distributed (Zhao et al., 2010). H5, which proposed that negotiation strategies mediate the negative relationship between travel constraints and visit intentions, was supported. This is evidenced by significant indirect (β=-0.162, t=3.577, p<0.01), direct (β=-0.286, t=5.511, p<0.01), and total effects (β=-0.447, t=8.569, p<0.01). Specifically, the indirect effect of travel constraints on visit intention through cognitive negotiation strategies was significant (β=-0.105, t=2.598, p<0.05), whereas the indirect effect through behavioral negotiation strategies was not (β=-0.057, t=1.376, p>0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that cognitive negotiation strategies act as complementary mediators in the relationship between travel constraints and visit intentions, whereas behavioral negotiation strategies do not. This supports H5a and leads to H5b rejection.

Table 4: *Path coefficients and hypothesis result*

Hypothesis	β-value	t-value	p-values	95% Confidence Intervals	Decision
H1: Att→VI	0.143**	2.293	0.022	[0.019, 0.267]	Supported
H2: SN→VI	0.085	1.619	0.106	[-0.018, 0.189]	Not supported
H3: PBC→VI	0.150**	2.511	0.012	[0.033, 0.267]	Supported
H4: TC→VI	-0.286***	5.511	0.000	[-0.386, -0.180]	Supported
H4a: IntraCons→VI	-0.147**	2.539	0.011	[-0.260, -0.030]	Supported
H4b: InterCons→VI	-0.058	0.925	0.355	[-0.178, 0.067]	Not supported
H4c: StrucCons→VI	-0.117	1.947	0.052	[-0.236, 0.002]	Not supported

Note(s): ***Significant at p< 0.001; **Significant at p< 0.05

Note(s): *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001
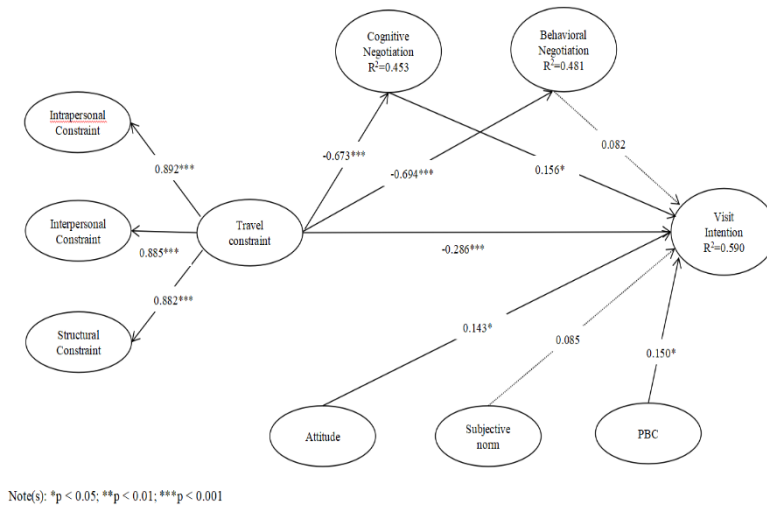
Figure 2: *Result of structural modelling*

Along with estimating path loading to determine the strength of relationships among variables, this research also analyzed the overall predictive ability of the structural model. The strength of this ability was assessed through the coefficient of determination, i.e., the R^2 value, which differs in

significance in different study areas. For instance, in consumer behavior research, an R^2 of 0.20 is typically regarded as high (Hair et al., 2017). In this study, the R^2 values for visit intention, cognitive negotiation strategies, and behavioral negotiation strategies were 0.590, 0.453, and 0.481, respectively. These high R^2 values indicate the model's predictive validity, which is further confirmed by Q^2 values reflecting predictive relevance. Following Hair et al. (2017)'s criterion, a Q^2 higher than 0 implies that the model has an acceptable predictive capacity for the dependent variable. After performing a blindfolding procedure with an omission distance of 7, the study obtained the endogenous constructs' Q^2 of 0.481, 0.376, and 0.385, respectively. These results significantly exceed zero, indicating that the model has predictive relevance. Furthermore, the model fit was also checked for an overall quality assessment of the model, and the measurement used in this regard was the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). According to Henseler et al. (2016), the acceptable value of SRMR should be less than 0.08. The complete bootstrap procedure performed in SmartPLS yielded an SRMR of 0.064. Hence, the model fit was considered adequate for this study.

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to a better understanding of tourists' visit intentions by combining TPB with other relevant theories. In the dark tourism context, the proposed model has higher predictive accuracy than the original TPB framework, with the explained variance increasing from 47% to 59%. This indicates that incorporating the factors of travel constraint and negotiation strategies boosts the predictive power of TPB, which aligns with the results of Moghimehfar et al. (2018). Such integration connects CNT to TPB and provides a robust theoretical foundation for future research in these fields.

The analysis found a significant negative relationship between travel constraints and the intention to visit dark sites. This result confirms those of previous studies conducted at the same sites (Zheng et al., 2018) and other dark sites, such as Concentration Camp Memorial Neuengamme (Nawijn & Fricke, 2015), dark sites in Southeast Asia (Bhati et al., 2021), and the ghost city of Cordoba (Dancausa et al., 2020). Notably, only intrapersonal travel constraints among the three dimensions had a significant negative impact on visit intention. These results contradict previous research on other tourism sectors. This can be justified by knowing that intrapersonal travel constraints in dark tourism are often caused by personal and psychological factors. When people visit sites associated with death and suffering, they experience feelings like sadness and discomfort (Zhang et al., 2016), leading to a higher perception of intrapersonal travel constraints for dark tourists than for leisure tourists. On the other hand, the effects of interpersonal and structural travel constraints on visit intention were not significant. One reason for this is that visiting the MVNM and BER is a common part of a tourist tour to Nanjing and Chengdu. This means that any interpersonal or structural limitations are likely addressed during the planning stages. Thus, even though limitations may exist regarding visits to these two dark sites, their influence on the intention is negligible.

Another insight from the findings is that negotiation strategies act as mediators in the relationship between travel constraints and visit intentions, helping to reduce the detrimental impacts of travel constraints. This is consistent with the constraints-effects-mitigation (CEM) model's assumption that constraints affect participation through negotiation strategies. The results also confirm previous studies on a variety of tourism scenarios, such as senior tourists (Chen et al., 2021), travelers with disabilities (Orakani et al., 2021), and solo female travelers (Seow & Brown, 2018). Among the two aspects of negotiation strategies analyzed, only cognitive negotiation strategies partially mediated the negative impact of travel constraints on visit intention, whereas behavioral negotiation strategies did not. This contradicts prior research that emphasized the importance of behavioral negotiation strategies rather than cognitive ones for increasing participation (Xie & Ritchie, 2019). One explanation for this inconsistency is that people tend to use different negotiation strategies based on the types of constraints they face. Jun and Kyle (2011) noted that behavioral negotiation strategies

are typically employed to address interpersonal and structural travel constraints. However, in dark tourism, where intrapersonal travel constraints are more prevalent, cognitive negotiation strategies are preferred over behavioral strategies. Therefore, the impact of behavioral negotiation strategies is less or not significant in this context.

Regarding the TPB domain, the study findings revealed that both attitude and PBC had significant positive effects on the intention to visit MVNM and BER. This result aligns with Juan et al. (2020) research within the same dark tourism context, as well as studies in other tourism sectors (Osiako & Szente, 2024; Fauzi et al., 2024; Pahrudin et al., 2021). It is noteworthy that PBC had the strongest effect on visit intention, which confirms earlier findings regarding dark tourists' behavioral intention (Lewis et al., 2022). However, the study did not find a significant correlation between subjective norm and visit intention, which is consistent with the results of Lewis et al (2022) and Allman (2017). Several factors may explain this lack of significance. First, most respondents were young and exhibited a strong sense of self-awareness, which made them somewhat immune to social pressure. Additionally, dark tourism is relatively new in China and tends to attract tourists who seek unique experiences. These individuals often act as innovators and early adopters, valuing their own opinions over those of others (Lam & Hsu, 2004). Moreover, many Chinese visitors view visiting MVNM and BER as a patriotic and moral obligation, given their status as national tragedies and shared social memories (Biran et al., 2014). This sense of duty to commemorate the deceased reduces the impact of perceived social conformity on their visit intentions.

5.2 Managerial Implications

This study offers several guidelines for dark tourism site managers. First, the identification of a significant negative correlation between travel constraints and visit intention means that addressing key constraints can help increase the likelihood of visit intention. Intrapersonal travel constraints, especially emotions like fear and depression, have a greater power to affect visit intentions than interpersonal or structural travel constraints. Thus, decision-makers should take measures to alleviate these fears. One possible solution is to improve advertising, site design, and site interpretation to promote hope rather than only displaying distressing images. For example, providing multiple visiting routes for tourists can encourage exploring paths that match their comfort levels, thereby reducing the chance of experiencing anxiety or discomfort from sensitive historical content like unburied bones in mass graves. To some extent, local governments and site managers face the challenge of uncovering historical truths while also providing an engaging visitor experience (Zhang et al., 2016). Moreover, the study identifies a niche market for solo travelers at dark sites that is less constrained by travel couples' paradigm when planning trips.

Considering the crucial roles of negotiation strategies in the extended model and their significant positive relationships with visit intention, it is essential to prioritize these elements. While negotiations are largely internal to individual tourists, managers can enhance cognitive negotiations by creating meaningful and memorable visitor experiences. These strategies should, therefore, emphasize actual tourists' positive experiences to stimulate potential tourists' confidence in exploring dark sites. Satisfied visitors are more inclined to share favorable feedback with their social circles, which can significantly impact prospective visitors' decisions over time.

This study also emphasizes the key implications of volitional factors on visit intentions to dark sites. It found that tourists' visit intention was positively affected by their attitude, which developed through favorable evaluations of dark tourism, particularly its educational and commemorative values. Therefore, promotional strategies should highlight these values to help individuals, especially those unfamiliar with dark tourism, form a more authentic and informed understanding of it. Educating younger generations to cultivate a sense of internal obligation could be an effective approach in this context (Zheng et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is essential for site managers to differentiate between dark tourism and hedonistic tourism (Yan et al., 2016). MVNM and BER should

not be marketed in the same way as leisure travel, as they bear witness to the Nanjing Massacre and Wenchuan earthquake. In addition to attitude, PBC is a significant predictor of visit intention among domestic tourists. This highlights the need to create conditions that facilitate dark tourism by addressing perceived barriers. For example, as potential tourists rely heavily on websites and social media for information, having a presence on popular platforms like Ctrip.com, Mafengwo.cn, Douyin, Weibo, and Wechat in China can help enhance communication and accessibility. Providing easily accessible information through these channels strengthens the connection between PBC and behavioral intention (Lewis et al., 2022). Additionally, as many tourists prefer traveling by train or car, the existence of information centers at train stations and the provision of additional car parking lots can make planning dark tourism tours easier.

6 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the predictive power of the TPB and CNT models in determining whether a tourist is likely to visit a dark site. This research introduced a novel combined framework that demonstrated its effectiveness in predicting this intention. Empirical findings indicated that travel constraints, attitude, and PBC are factors that determine an intention to visit, while the influence of subjective norms is rather insignificant. This study also demonstrated that intrapersonal travel constraints have a negative effect on visit intention, and PBC is the strongest predictor among the factors in the original TPB model. Furthermore, the research revealed that cognitive negotiation strategies mediate the negative impact of travel constraints on tourists' intention to visit dark sites. Overall, this study enhances theoretical understanding by integrating TPB and CNT, and provides practical recommendations for improving dark tourism practices.

While this research makes a contribution to the theory and practice of dark tourism, it has limitations that require further investigation. One limitation of this study is the sampling frame. The data were collected from only two dark sites; thus, the results may not be sufficient for generalization to other similar sites. Accordingly, to make the findings more applicable within the realm of dark tourism, it is important to consider including a wider range of less dark sites into the study in the future. In addition, social and cultural diversity is one aspect that may impact travel constraints (Wong & Kuo, 2021). Therefore, future research should focus on how psychological and behavioral differences occur within distinct cultures and regions. Furthermore, individuals' negotiation efforts and behavioral intentions are dynamic and vary over time (Zientara et al., 2024). The cross-sectional design of this study might restrict its ability to capture variations in tourists' perceptions of travel constraints and negotiation levels over different periods. To address this limitation, a longitudinal approach can be utilized to investigate tourists' choice-making procedures before, during, and after their trips.

In addition, this study is among the first to test the relationships among travel constraints, negotiation strategies, and TPB variables. While the findings support the combination of CNT and TPB, this is only an exploratory study, and additional research is needed to validate this connection. Meanwhile, although the extended model increased the explanatory power from 47% to 59%, 41% of the variance remained unexplained. One option for improving the model in the future is broadening the indicators included in the study. For instance, introducing constructs such as motivation (Zheng et al., 2017), destination image (Caber et al., 2020), and place attachment (Prayag et al., 2018) can enhance one's understanding of visit intentions to dark sites. Finally, this study did not account for individual differences among respondents. Future research should explore the moderating effects of socio-demographic factors on the formation of travel constraints and the development of negotiation strategies related to tourists' visit intentions.

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