From Savoring Past Trips to Craving Future Journeys: The Role of Destination Cultural Capital and Enjoyable Reminiscence

Abstract

What is destination cultural capital, and what is its role in tourism? The present inquiry addressed these questions by examining a mediated relationship among perceived destination cultural capital, impression in memory, brand love, enjoyable reminiscence, and revisit intention based on cultural capital theory and mental time travel perspective. It further draws on shattered assumptions theory to underscore the boundary conditions of COVID-19 worries and meaning in life. By undertaking three empirical studies, this investigation offers a mechanism that explains how reminiscences of past travel memories could galvanize interest in future voyages during the new normal. This inquiry broadens the scope of cultural capital in tourism scholarship and identifies its role in tourists' beliefs through a cognitive–affective moderated dyadic process. It enriches the literature by providing a theoretical synthesis of the shattered assumptions and cultural capital perspectives, one that links mental time and corporeal travel.

Keywords: cultural capital; mental time travel; destination brand love; impression in memory; enjoyable reminiscence

Introduction

According to recent statistics from UNWTO, international travel has resumed at about 80% of the pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023 (UNWTO, 2023). The recovery of the tourism industry can be attributed to tourists' craving for new life meaning, while seeking means to resavor pleasant moments from previous trips (Wong, Lin, et al., 2023). Reliving memories from past tourism experiences has long been recognized as an important part of the travel process (Goulding, 2001; Zhang et al., 2021). The term "episodic memory," or "autobiographic memory," is commonly used to reflect a collection of past events that took place at a specific time and location (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2008; Yu et al., 2018); while nostalgic feelings of these events render as travel motivation to resojourn to the place as a means to reexperience bittersweet emotions (Ali, 2015; Huang et al., 2016). Yet, there is a need to assess factors that influence people to develop nostalgic thoughts. Likewise, retelling stories of the past is often acknowledged as a mental time travel process commonly reported in the psychology literature (Lavallee & Persinger, 2010; Storm & Jobe, 2012; Suo & Wang, 2022). However, tourism studies rarely look into the antecedents and consequences of such a travel mechanism (Zhang et al., 2021). Accordingly, they fail to paint a clear picture explaining what factors may affect people's reminiscences and pleasant travel memories, and how retrospection of these past occasions at a specific place could transcend into future travel behaviors toward that place (Lin et al., 2022). Therefore, whether or not a destination's cultural assets, for example, could promote tourists' pleasant memories is still questionable. This limitation also calls for future investigations to assess a place's cultural resources and their ability to elicit favorable tourist behaviors (Zhang et al., 2015; Zhang, 2002; Zhao & Wang,

2009).

This study posits that past travel memories of a place's cultural resources can serve as a psychological buffer, allowing individuals to perceive a glimmer of positivity amid life trauma, thereby maintaining their revisit intention to culturally rich destinations they have visited. In other words, the present study strives to connect past and future travel activities under present conditions of adversity. It also differentiates prior studies through the lens of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), while investigating the nomological network of enjoyable reminiscence (Huang et al., 2016) in the tourism literature, as well as testing how shattered assumptions (de Jong et al., 2020) and pathogen worries (Yang & Wong, 2020) could play an intervening role in tourism.

In particular, the current research aims to address the aforementioned literature void by proposing an integrated model that takes destination cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and mental time travel (Suddendorf et al., 2011) into account. Destination cultural capital refers to the importance of resources of a place (e.g., culture, history, facilities, architecture, customs, lifestyles, etc.) (Kenny, 1995; McGehee et al., 2009; Savage et al., 2018; Zhang & Zhang, 2019), while mental time travel is defined as the cognitive ability to project oneself retrospectively to recollect past experiences or prospectively to envision future possibilities (Berg et al., 2021; Wheeler et al., 1997). This research seeks to answer the question of what is destination cultural capital, and its role in tourism. Could traveling mentally back in time impel people to partake in future journeys, and what are some conditioning factors?

By drawing results from three empirical studies, this inquiry articulates the role of perceived destination cultural capital (Kenny, 1995; Savage et al., 2018) on future travel

propensity through the mediations of impression in memory (Manthiou et al., 2018), brand love (Aro et al., 2018; Lv & Wu, 2021), and enjoyable reminiscence (Bryant, 2003; Huang et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2022) (AKA savoring belief or reminiscing enjoyment). The moderations of COVID-19 worries and motives in seeking meaning in life (or meaning in life for short) were further examined. On one hand, we ground the proposed model in cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Savage et al., 2018), which posits that a city's cultural assets could have a strategic role in improving the image and competitiveness of the place, to characterize the importance of cultural resources in inducing favorable memories and hence, pleasure in reminiscing about past episodes through developing an emotional bound with the city. On the other hand, we draw on the shattered assumptions theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), which posits that people's shattered worldview could be reconstructed through questing for new life meaning and virtues in the world, to highlight a dyadic boundary condition superimposed by COVID-19-related circumstances. Details about the inclusion of the variables and the proposed relationships are presented in the section that follows.

The contribution of this article rests on its ability to articulate how tourists' nostalgic thoughts could ultimately transcend into travel conations. It thus bridges the boundaries between mental time travel and actual journeying. Yet, this inquiry steers away from the traditional investigation of nostalgia, which centers on its travel motivational appeal while referring to the cherishing of cultural assets of the past (Goulding, 2001; Lin et al., 2022). Rather, the foci of this research rests on how a destination's cultural capital could engross tourists with nostalgic reminiscence of the place through both cognitively reviewing past episodes (i.e., via impression in memory) and emotionally connecting with the destination (i.e.,

via brand love). In particular, the impression in memory refers to "one's ability to consciously recollect past events, behaviors, and experiences" (Manthiou et al., 2018, p. 39; Schacter et al., 1993), while enjoyable reminiscence further denotes pleasure reaped from recalling a nostalgic experience (Huang et al., 2016).

This study advances the literature on cultural capital by acknowledging how this factor could reap valuable tourism resources and work as an incitement to promote future travel propensity through a mental time travel process delineated in the proposed model. It further underscores the theoretical nuances from the shattered assumptions lens to the notion of an intricate three-way interaction among impression in memory, COVID-19 worries, and meaning in life. To this end, this investigation adds to the mental time travel literature (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007; Storm & Jobe, 2012) that focuses on future travel outcomes. By using cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) in conjunction with shattered assumptions theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) as the overarching theoretical underpinning, the current research provides a synthesized mechanism that could foretell why savoring past travel events could facilitate the craving for future journeys during the COVID era. More importantly, this research takes a leap forward to develop the concept of perceived destination cultural capital from a tourist perspective. It thus steers away from a destination-level lens (Bourdieu, 1986; Vilachai, 2017; Zhang, 2002) to better understand how cultural resources of a place can be assessed and can serve as a conduit to induce favorable memories and revisit propensity. This inquiry further broadens the scope of cultural capital in tourism scholarship and identifies its role in tourists' savoring beliefs through a cognitive–affective moderated dyadic process.

Theoretical background

Memory as mental time travel and the proposed model

People often project themselves backward in time to recollect their memories or look forward to fantasizing about future prospects (Berg et al., 2021). This ability is known as mental time travel, and it reflects humans' ability to reexperience past occasions as well as to take a glimpse of anticipated future events through imagination (Wheeler et al., 1997). It is a function of the brain's episodic memory system, which represents an individual's ability to recall specific events in the past that are localized both spatially and temporally (Lavallee & Persinger, 2010). Episodic memory, as past-oriented mental time travel, highlights the what, where, and when object memory paradigm (Tulving, 2002). In contrast, as future-oriented mental time travel, episodic future thinking enables one to anticipate possible future consequences from current actions or to prepare for anticipated planned activities (Atance & O'Neill, 2001). It has been proposed that remembering the past acts as a mirror image of projecting the future, for there is extensive overlap between the two (Schacter, 2012; Schacter et al., 2007). Accordingly, mental time travel reflects episodic memory of the past and episodic future thinking (Suddendorf et al. (2011). Although prior studies on cultural capital theory offer some theoretical footing, they have yet to explain how nostalgic experience is conditioned by negative events such as a crisis milieu. The theory of shattered assumptions serves as a primary guiding framework in comprehending the psychological mechanisms activated during extenuating circumstances. Consequently, a more comprehensive understanding necessitates the integration of these two theoretical lenses.

In this research, we seek to improvise a model that places mental time travel at center stage to underscore how savoring past travel experiences could bring enjoyable reminiscence

and future travel inclinations. In particular, we draw on cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) to highlight how the cultural capital of a place could evoke favorable episodic memory of the past in the form of enjoyable reminiscence through the mediation of impression in memory and destination brand love. Although Bourdieu's (1986) original thesis on cultural capital focuses on individual's social assets (e.g., knowledge, qualifications, experiences, and skills), the theory has been extended to the notion of the importance of resources of a place (e.g., facilities, architectures, customs, lifestyles, etc.) as seen through the human geography and urban development lens (Kenny, 1995; Moulaert et al., 2004; Savage et al., 2018).

Because travel often brings pleasure to tourists (Goossens, 2000), recollecting memories from pleasant events in the past certainly induces enjoyment in the mental time travel process (Suddendorf et al., 2011). More importantly, tourist perceptions of a destination that offers plentiful tourism resources (e.g., cultural capital) should enhance the creation of joyful memories (Vale et al., 2012; Zhang, 2002). We further argue that there are two variables mediating the perceived destination cultural capital – reminiscence enjoyment relationship, with the first referring to impression in memory. Given that travel is a pleasurable activity, having a positive perception of a destination's resources should galvanize tourists with a positive impression of a place (Kenny, 1995; Zhang, 2002); and hence, retrospection of such favorable past experience should bring enjoyment when reminiscing about it (Christou, 2020). Likewise, favorable destination cultural capital along with favorable impression in memory should improve tourists' emotional connection to the place (i.e., destination brand love), given that brand love is often a result of gratified evaluations and perceptions of the place (Aro et al., 2018). This contention is in line with cultural capital theory and notions of the importance of

destination resources in inducing passionate feelings for the place of the beholders (Kenny, 1995; Zhang & Zhang, 2019).

Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic has superimposed tremendous hardship and adversity on the tourism industry. It has also overwhelmed tourists with worries and dismay – not only about virus infection and health issues, but also pandemic measures that could restrict mobility and freedom (Xiong et al., 2021; Yang & Wong, 2020). In sum, the pandemic has shattered previous worldviews and the common notions that traveling is safe and free from pathogens and mobility hazards (de Jong et al., 2020; Seyfi et al., 2020). To this end, we draw on the shattered assumptions theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) to acknowledge the boundary conditions of COVID-19 worries and meaning in life. The theory posits that experience with a traumatic event (e.g., the COVID outbreak), challenges worldviews and induces worries and apprehension about the existing world (Edmondson et al., 2011). This situation creates a need for the individual to search for life meaning by exploring the new world through travel for example (de Jong et al., 2020; Miao et al., 2022). Nevertheless, pursuing new existential meanings can act as a safeguard, providing resilience against worries arising from a disrupted worldview. Consequently, we integrate COVID worry and the search for meaning in life as two pivotal elements to elucidate the boundaries between impression in memory and reminiscence enjoyment. On the one hand, COVID-19 worries should reduce the effect of favorable impression of a place on one's enjoyment of remembering past or projecting future travel episodes (Zenker et al., 2021). On the other hand, craving new life meaning should mitigate COVID-19 worries as one hopes to relearn and rebuild their assumptive world (de Jong et al., 2020). Detailed narratives of the proposed relationships are presented below and in

Figure 1.

In summary, this research initially uses the theory of cultural capital to suggest that a city's cultural assets greatly influence people's travel experiences, impression, and emotional orientation. The theory alone, however, is limited to explicitly addressing how nostalgic experiences may change in a crisis environment and which key factors influence these changes. Therefore, we introduce the shattered assumptions theory, which primarily guides us in understanding the psychological mechanisms during crisis events. Based on this theory, the impact of COVID-19 worries on enjoyable reminiscence may diminish the positive effect of impression stored in memory. Heightened worry levels can undermine our belief system and existing worldview. However, the quest for new life meaning serves as a coping mechanism or buffer against worries stemming from a tarnished worldview. Thus, we incorporate worry and the search for meaning as two crucial factors to explore the boundaries of nostalgic pleasure. Ultimately, by combining cultural capital theory and shattered assumptions theory as the overarching theoretical framework, this research provides a synthesized mechanism that explains why savoring past travel experiences can foster a desire for future journeys during the COVID era.

Insert Figure 1 here

Destination cultural capital, impression in memory, brand love, and enjoyable reminiscence

Rooted in the sociology field of study, Bourdieu's (1986) seminal theory of cultural capital puts forward the idea that an individual's cultural literacy can serve as a critical noneconomic asset that could help them climb the social ladder by empowering their social mobility. Generally, people endowed with a high level of cultural capital also reap greater

career and social opportunities with a higher level of life satisfaction than those lacking such capital. Despite its significance, cultural capital is frequently overshadowed by a more economical approach (Macbeth et al., 2004).

Extending the concept beyond human beings, the concept of cultural capital has been applied in human geography and urban development domains to delineate how a city could possess specific resources, such as noneconomic capital, that could help promote a place with an elevated level of destination image and competitiveness (Kenny, 1995; Savage et al., 2018). Cultural capital encompasses intangible and tangible cultural elements, such as knowledge systems, language, customs and behaviors, local history preservation, and cultural activities (Flora, 2004; Zhang & Zhang, 2019). It provides insights into the interplay between taste, artistic production, and valuation in social and spatial settings (De Bruin, 1998). Cultural capital plays a vital role in revitalizing historic urban areas (Lak et al., 2020), improving building capacity (Flora, 2004), developing regional tourism (McGehee et al., 2009; Ratten et al., 2019), and thus prompting economic and social wellbeing. Destination cultural assets also warrant quality experience and revisit intention (Kladou & Kehagias, 2014).

Bourdieu's delineation of cultural capital has provided researchers with a means to assess cultural resources for destinations (Johnson, 2006). These cultural resources encompass landscape and architectural wonders to customs, lifestyle, food, events, and other activities that represent the cultural and historical significance of a place (Kenny, 1995; McGehee et al., 2009). For example, Kenny (1995) describes how cultural capital could rejuvenate a place – for example, "making Milwaukee famous" (p. 440). Kenny further refers to cultural motifs, acknowledging the salient role of cultural resources in cultivating people's impression and

memories of a place, leading them to conjure a better image of the urban landscape. It thus differs from prior concepts that focus on the cultural heritage of a tourism product or site (Poria et al., 2011; Yi et al., 2022) to accentuate the overall importance of cultural resources of a destination.

Kenny's contention regarding the linkage between the cultural capital of a city and tourists' impression is supported by other scholars (Vilachai, 2017; Zhang & Zhang, 2019). Here, the impression in memory is defined as "one's ability to consciously recollect past events, behaviors, and experiences" (Manthiou et al., 2018, p. 39). Zhang (2002), for instance, supports the notion that a city's cultural capital could effectively help develop the place's image and be able to attract tourists (Zhang & Zhang, 2019). That is to say, a destination's cultural capital can help people construct and recollect memories of the place, for it offers resources that could promote remembering of past episodes (Kenny, 1995). Accordingly, these resources could fortify a stronger impression of the place for mental time travel (Manning, 2021).

The relationship between cultural tourism and time is intricate. Culture is not exclusively the result of accumulated time but rather a dynamic and evolving entity shaped by historical, social, and environmental influences (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Cultural tourism is often delineated by exploring a locale's historical and traditional facets, which may have progressively developed. In the view of Ross and Saxena (2019), the participatory cocreation of archaeological heritage for tourism initiatives capitalizes on the creative potential of tourists' memories, thereby drawing connections between historical landmarks and contemporary realities and metamorphosing these sites into resources pertinent to cultural tourism. They propose that tourists' engagement in cultural tourism not only cultivates

emotional ties to heritage sites but also functions as a conduit for reenvisioning local heritage within the framework of modern cultural activities. In other words, destinations that are rich in cultural capital (e.g., local lifestyle, rituals, customs, landscape, and cultural artifacts) render as strategic assets (Bridge, 2006) that could shape tourists' impression in memory of these locales (Kenny, 1995). Accordingly, the first hypothesis was posited as follows.

Hypothesis 1: *Perceived destination cultural capital is positively related to impression in memory.*

The term "brand love" is described as the level of emotional attachment with which consumers passionately connect to a particular product label (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). It could be acquired through different aspects of the brand, such as superior quality, positive emotions, self-identity, and emotional bonds (Batra et al., 2012). In regard to destination brand love, it is defined as the emotional connections by a tourist to a destination (Aro et al., 2018; Long Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). It highlights one's self-expression in terms of deep affection toward a place.

We argue that there is a relationship between impression in memory and destination brand love. This contention is consistent with the work of Lv and Wu (2021), who argue that brand love of a place is grounded in extraordinary experience. In turn, such an experience can evoke favorable retrospection or memory. As Manthiou et al. (2018) suggest, tourists who have pleasant experiences with a brand would generate positive feelings toward it. Accordingly, recalling memorable episodes of the past should help tourists attain enjoyment with a desire to passionately and emotionally connect with a place (Morgan & Xu, 2009). Ardyan and Susanti (2018) also acknowledge a relationship between impression in memory and brand love, by noting that a positive recollection of a place could turn into destination brand love. In summary, favorable episodic memories (i.e., impression in memory) of a destination could help arouse

tourists' affective response, such as brand love, toward the place (Lee & Hyun, 2016). This contention is also reflected in Manthiou et al.'s (2018, p. 40) work, as they suggest that "recollecting [favorable memories] makes visitors happy and influences their future travel aspirations." Thus, the next hypothesis was proposed as follows.

Hypothesis 2: *Impression in memory is positively related to destination brand love.*

What makes a destination loveable can also be influenced by tourists' direct interaction with the place. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) were among the first to identify that brand love of a product is a direct consequence of product appeals. Aro et al. (2018) echo this notion by acknowledging a series of antecedents of destination brand love, including direct experience with the locale. In essence, scholars commonly agree that in order to induce brand love, it is important that a place or product can engender hedonic feelings and arouse participants' emotions with a strong sense of passion for a focal product of interest (Long Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012; Lv & Wu, 2021).

A destination that has rich cultural capital thus renders the necessary conduit for delivering such an extraordinary experience, which should ultimately promote place love and emotional bonds with the city in tourists (Andriotis et al., 2020; Guachalla, 2021). This contention is consistent with the central tenet of cultural capital theory; as people who possess a high level of cultural capital often engage in favoritism, seeking a greater chance to be liked and loved by others (Sablan & Tierney, 2014). A city that has a strong reputation for cultural resources can take advantage of such a strategic asset to better promote itself by leveraging a stronger emotional connection to the place by the stakeholders (Bridge, 2006; Kenny, 1995).

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In fact, objectified cultural capital involves local heritage resources such as older buildings and artifacts that could attract visitors and be cast as resources for attaining a higher level of destination brand love (Andriotis et al., 2020). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived destination cultural capital is positively related to destination brand love.

According to shattered assumptions theory, people have cognitive baggage that is formed by their assumptions and expectations about themselves and the world (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983). They plan, set goals, and organize their actions in daily life based on these assumptions (Borwell et al., 2022). These assumptive views can broadly include the following: (1) the world is benevolent, involving kindness and virtue of human beings and the goodness of the impersonal world (e.g., humans do not harm each other by spreading virus around); (2) the world is meaningful, involving the belief that the world is predictable and things do make sense in a logical manner (e.g., travel is safe and free from pathogenic risk); (3) the self is worthy, pointing at decency of the self and self-controllability (e.g., one has the ability to control the outcomes). However, dramatic life events, specifically adverse ones, often change these world views (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2020). When people are victimized by traumatic events, such as the COVID-19 outbreak, those assumptions are challenged, resulting in lower levels of wellbeing and negative mental states. How do people cope with traumatic events and move on to rebuild their assumptions and resume their normal lives? Accordingly, people may quest for new meaning in the world through traveling, as it can help them build new beliefs (Edmondson et al., 2011).

A plausible way to rebuild one's assumptive world is through traveling. In fact, "mentally traveling into one's personal past and future connects the current self with self at different points in time" (Ozdes, 2021, p. 1), influencing one's perceptions, actions (Ozdes, 2021), and wellbeing (Binoy et al., 2017). Studies of personal recall repeatedly reveal that people's recollections of past events are influenced by present thoughts (Ross, 1989), and the emotional aspects of mental time travel could serve as a buffer for adverse feelings (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007; D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2008). Moreover, tourism entails transformative power that could promote wellbeing, optimism, and hope (Lin et al., 2021). That is, tourists often reminisce about prior travel experiences to seek pleasure and enjoyment (i.e., enjoyable reminiscence) through retelling stories from their episodic memories in the mental time travel process (Lin et al., 2022).

The term "reminiscence" is defined as the volitional or non-volitional act that recalls one's past memories (Westerhof et al., 2010). Bryant (2003), however, refers to nostalgic feelings of the past as "savoring beliefs." Prior research indicates that one of its crucial functions is to engender positive feelings (Wildschut et al., 2010), and hence, people's enjoyable reminiscence refers to the pleasure reaped from recalling a nostalgic experience (Huang et al., 2016). It is worth noting that impression in memory emphasizes the cognitive state, while enjoyable reminiscence focuses on the affective state. Accordingly, different measures for these two constructs are needed to assess both the cognitive and emotional appeals of travel memories. In this sense, reviewing stories from favorable impression in one's memories could certainly help to promote joyful moments when reminiscing about their past travel activities (Lin et al., 2022); as "the beneficial functions of nostalgic memories are

typically driven by the content of these memories" (Huang et al., 2016, p. 2). Reminiscence of the positive past is generally driven by memorable experiences recollected from pleasant occasions (i.e., impression in memory); hence, recalling these nostalgic events should promote enjoyment and personal fulfillment (Huang et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 4: *Impression in memory is positively related to enjoyable reminiscence.*

According to Juhl et al. (2010), reminiscence of joyful events can be engendered through favorable feelings toward an object (Zhou et al., 2008). We focus on enjoyable rather than negative reminiscence because the extant literature posits that retrospective hedonic editing, a process by which individuals amalgamate events to present a past experience in the most favorable light, is a common phenomenon (Cowley, 2008). When an object or event encompasses both positive and negative elements culminating in an overall adverse outcome, individuals often segregate the positive instances from the negative ones. This segregation facilitates concentrating on the more optimistic aspects of the experience, thereby maximizing their sense of contentment.

Research indicates that having a passionate connection toward an object can help an individual to regard the past and future more positively (Cheung et al., 2013), resulting in contented feelings about past events (Wildschut et al., 2006). In this regard, having a strong emotional connection to a destination (i.e., destination brand love) could facilitate reminiscence enjoyment when retelling stories about the place (Lin et al., 2022; Lo Gerfo, 1981). That is to say that people have an affinity to remember joyful moments of the past, especially for things that they love (Huang et al., 2016). This logic may explain why people crave mental travel, as

it plays a vital role in savoring the good old days (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 5: *Destination brand love is positively related to enjoyable reminiscence.*

Mental time travel literature often suggests that recalling stories of the past brings cognitive pleasure and emotional arousal (Zhang et al., 2021). As Suddendorf et al. (2011, p. 305) contend, traveling back in time could impel "different future needs." In fact, going beyond the boundary of memories and other mental activities, nostalgia for the past often serves as a motivational factor that intrinsically prompts people to reexperience a place (Christou, 2020; Goulding, 2001). Retrospection of the favorable past certainly stimulates interest in revisiting the very same destination (Zhang et al., 2021). As Lin et al. (2022, p. 320) pointed out, "reminiscences of such a cherished past… harness tourists' fascination and sense of symbolic ties," which ultimately leads them to long to revisit the locale. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed.

Hypothesis 6: *Enjoyable reminiscence is positively related to revisit intention.*

The moderation of COVID-19 worries and life meaning

Worry is a cognitive state that reflects one's negative thoughts and image of a traumatic event (Borkovec et al., 1998), and it may threaten or traumatize one's assumptive world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Worries about the COVID pandemic and its aftermath (or COVID-19 worries, for short) remain a prevalent phenomenon (Zenker et al., 2021). Traveling in the COVID-19 era can be challenging. On one hand, the virus is highly contagious and could impose serious health consequences, including acute and long COVID symptoms (de Jong et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2021). At the same time, new COVID variants keep evolving that

maintain relevance in the current scenario. They still cast life to threatening circumstances, while long-COVID complexity remains a major concern (Lauring et al., 2022). In fact, the World Health Organization continues to insist that COVID-19 is still a major global threat that claims one life every three minutes (Geddes, 2023). Such a serious threat in the tourism encounter reflects a key structural constraint that could deter people from traveling at will and may even cause them to abort their travel plans, as travel risk and apprehension brought by COVID and related risks remain a reality (Agag et al., 2023).

As shattered assumptions theory acknowledges (Edmondson et al., 2011), traumatic instances, such as adversity brought by COVID, could tarnish people's assumptive world (Miao et al., 2022). It also creates a void in which people must rebuild their belief system and life meaning (de Jong et al., 2020). That is, experiencing traumatic events changes how people see themselves and the world (Edmondson et al., 2011). Although favorable impression of a place could induce enjoyment when reminiscing about those past travel experiences, shattered assumptions theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), posits that worries about our assumptive world could create negative thoughts about the past and future. In other words, COVID-19 worries could diminish the positive effect of impression in memory on enjoyable reminiscence, given that an elevated level of worry could undermine our belief system and existing worldview (Trzebiński et al., 2020). The result could be doubts that the world is still benevolent (e.g., visiting people and places has virtue) and meaningful (e.g., traveling is free from hazard), and questioning whether or not the self is worthy (e.g., the ability to control travel uncertainties and outcomes); leading to a weakened worldview and impression of the world (Edmondson et al., 2011).

However, traveling is still an excellent means to seek a new understanding of the world, as it can bring an array of transformative benefits to tourists (Sheldon, 2020). It is an important conduit to help people cope with worries and to seek new life meaning (i.e., meaning in life), which is "the sense made of, and significance felt regarding, the nature of one's being and existence" (Steger et al., 2006, p. 81), along with an improved worldview. This logic echoes the central tenet of shattered assumptions theory (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), which highlights the essence of seeking life meaning after one experiences traumatic events. Here, questing for new life meaning renders as a coping mechanism or buffer in regard to worries induced by a tarnished worldview (Trzebiński et al., 2020). In this sense, tourists' desire to seek meaning in life should weaken the negative moderation of COVID-19 worries on the relationship between impression in memory and enjoyable reminiscence, as craving life meanings is regarded as "an essential part of the healing process" (de Jong et al., 2020, p. 2). In other words, the effect of COVID-19 worries is moderated by meaning in life, creating a three-way interaction effect. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed.

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between impression in memory and enjoyable reminiscence is moderated by COVID-19 worries and meaning in life.

Methodology Overview

We conducted three empirical studies to examine the proposed framework. Study 1 explored the relationship among perceived cultural capital, impression in memory, and destination brand love, in the context of domestic tourism, through a survey. Resting on shattered assumptions theory, Study 2 further tested the relationship among perceived cultural capital, impression in memory, destination brand love, enjoyable reminiscence, and the

moderating effect of COVID-19 worries, and meaning in life in the context of outbound tourism. Study 3 assessed the causal relationship between enjoyable reminiscence and revisit intention through an experimental design.

Study 1

Data collection and sample

Study 1 first tested the validity and reliability of the cultural capital scale and then examined relationships proposed in Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. The data collection process lasted half a month between 2nd April and 14th April 2020. An online survey approach was employed. In particular, data were collected from the Wenjuanxing platform based on a snowball sampling approach via the WeChat social media platform. The population of interest was tourists who had domestic tourism experience in China before the COVID-19 outbreak. Filter questions were raised to ensure that respondents had domestic travel experience in the past 12 months. Respondents were first asked to indicate their most memorable domestic destination they visited in the last twelve months. Here, domestic tourism encompasses the activities of resident tourists within their native country as part of a domestic trip (UNWTO, 2008). Eligible interviewees were invited to acknowledge the objectives and instructions of the survey, and they completed the survey with the reward of a small token of appreciation. Each questionnaire was completed in less than 10 minutes. The involved social media platform included about 1,000 participants, while a total of 400 individuals participated in the study, yielding a response rate of 40%. Also, 333 successfully passed the attention check and were deemed valid

participants. Destinations, enumerated in accordance with the frequency of their mention by participants in our study, primarily included Shanghai (21.6%), Beijing (20.7%), Guangzhou (14.4%), Chengdu (11.1%), Shenzhen (8.4%), Xi'an (7.5%), Chongqing (5.4%), and Qingdao (4.8%).

Measures

The questionnaire was first developed in English, except for the scale of perceived cultural capital. It was then back-translated into Chinese by three bilinguals, as a means to diagnose any ambiguities in the translation process. The questionnaire involved three primary scales of interest in addition to demographic and other travel-related questions. *Perceived cultural capital* was a 6-item scale adapted from Zhang and Zhang (2019). We adopted the scale and then made the necessary revisions in the English version. Example statements included "There are unique customs in the destination" and "There are ample cultural attractions in the destination." *Impression in memory* was a 3-item scale adopted by Oh et al. (2007) with an example statement, "I have wonderful memories about the destination." *Destination brand love* was a 4-item scale adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) with example items including "The destination makes me feel good" and "I love the destination brand." All the items were evaluated using a 7-point Likert type anchor that ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Participants

A total of 161 males (48.3%) and 172 females (51.7%) participated in the study. Most

respondents were relatively young, with an age range between 18 and 29 (64.6%), followed by those with an age range between 30 and 45 (27.9%). In regard to their educational background, most of them received a bachelor's degree or higher education (61%). For types of accommodation, most of the participants preferred economical hotels (45.3%) followed by home-stay (25.2%). As for travel costs, half of the participants spent less than 2,000 RMB[1] (50.8%), followed by 2000-5000 RMB (39.3%). They mostly traveled with friends (53.2%), and other beloved companions (18.0%).

Data diagnostics and measurement model

A normality check was performed. Results showed that no item deviated from normality (skewness $\leq |1|$ and kurtosis $\leq |1|$). Next, the single-factor procedure was performed to diagnose common method bias, and results show that it is not a limitation, as chi-square $(\chi^2/df) = 5.42$, greater than the 2.0 threshold. Multicollinearity was diagnosed as not a problem by the variance inflation factor (VIF) values, which were less than 1.47, and the tolerance values, which were greater than .68. Following the practices recommended by the experts in the field (Churchill, 1979; Hair et al., 2010), we removed six items due to poor reliability measure (i.e., Cronbach's alpha < .7 with one item removed) as well as poor scale discriminant and convergent validities (i.e., high cross loadings > .4 [2 items removed] and primarily factor loadings < .4 [3 items removed]). Accordingly, only six items remained for further analysis.

The reliability and validity were evaluated. Across all of the scales, the Cronbach's alpha (α) values fell within the range from .80 to .87, suggesting acceptable internal consistency.

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[1] 1 USD = 7.0 RMB

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted for the entire measurement model. Across all items, the standardized factor loadings were above .60. Composite reliability (CR) values fell within the range between .80 and .87, higher than the .70 threshold. All of the average variance extracted (AVE) values were higher than the recommended critical values of .50. The square root of AVE exceeded all of the paired correlations of the constructs; thus discriminant validity was warranted. Model fit indices met the recommended thresholds: χ^2/df = 2.41, comparative fit index (CFI) = .96, incremental fit index (IFI) = .96, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06. In sum, results indicated scale reliability and validity, and the proposed measurement model fit the data reasonably well (see Tables 1 and 2 for more details).

Insert Table 1 and Table 2 here

Results

Structural equation modeling with LISREL 8.8 was employed to test the proposed relationships. Gender and age were controlled in the model to partial out their plausible effect on the endogenous variables. Model fit statistics in Table 3 show that the structural model had a satisfactory fit. Table 3 further provides evidence for the proposed hypotheses. A positive relationship was warranted between perceived cultural capital and impression in memory (β = .67, t = 9.28, p < .001), supporting Hypothesis 1. The relationship between perceived cultural capital is significantly related to destination brand love (β = .26, t = 2.82, p < .01), supporting Hypothesis 2. Finally, we also find a significant relationship between impression in memory and destination brand love (β = .75 t = 9.30, p < .001), supporting Hypothesis 3. The mediating

role of impression in memory was explored through the Hayes process procedure with a 5,000 bootstrapped sample (Hayes, 2017). The direct effect of perceived cultural capital on destination brand love (β = .37, CI = .28 to .46, p < .001), and the indirect effect of impression in memory (β = .38, CI = .30 to .47, p < .001) are warranted. Thus, impression in memory partially mediate the relationship between perceived cultural capital and destination brand love.

Insert Table 3 here

STUDY 2

Study 1 validated the cultural capital scale, while examining the relationships proposed in Hypotheses 1–3. However, Study 1 had several limitations because it employed convenience sampling and focused primarily on testing relationships among perceived cultural capital, impression in memory, and brand love. In Study 2, we cross-validated the cultural capital scale. We also assessed Hypotheses 1–6 in an omnibus structural model through a randomly selected sample from a large online cohort panel.

Data collection and sample

The data collection process lasted one and a half months between 7 June and 27 July 2021. We targeted those who had outbound tourism experience before the COVID-19 outbreak, because people were hard to engage in outbound travel due to government pandemic measures. The survey was randomly distributed to an enterprise version of Wenjuanxing, which comprised 2.6 million cohorts from diverse socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds. Filter questions were raised to ensure that respondents had outbound travel experience within

12 months prior to the pandemic. Respondents were also instructed to specify an international destination they remembered and preferred to visit again. After completing the online survey, which took less than 10 minutes on average, qualified subjects were given a prize that was worth US$2. The objectives of the study and instructions survey were also available, while anonymity and confidentiality were stated. A total of 428 people were approached, and 372 of them were considered valid (i.e., without outliers, and whose answers contained no more than 5% missing values). In Study 2, respondents mentioned an array of outbound regions, including Japan (33.1%), Singapore (19.1%), Australia (11.6%), Turkey (10.2%), Italy (7.0%), France (6.5%), Russia (4.3%), the United States (3.8%), and others.

Measures

A back-translation procedure was employed by two bilinguals for measuring items except for the scale of perceived cultural capital. Well-established measurements were adapted in this study, and each construct contained multiple items. Besides the three variables that were used in Study 1 (i.e., perceived cultural capital, impression in memory, and destination brand love), Study 2 also included three other constructs. *Meaning in life* was a scale adapted from Steger et al. (2006). An example item included, "I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful." *COVID-19 worries* were adapted from Yang and Wong (2020). An example item included "I feel that I will be infected by others." *Enjoyable reminiscence* was adapted by Huang et al. (2016). An example item included, "I enjoy looking back on happy times while traveling in this place." All items were evaluated using a 7-point Likert type anchor ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Participants

The sample included 48% males and 52% females. Most of them fell within the age range of 30 to 45 (63.5%). In regard to educational background, most held a bachelor's degree or above (79.3%). Approximately 71.8% of the respondents obtained an annual income ranging between RMB 50,000 and 200,000. In terms of travel frequency, 34.7% were first-time visitors to their most preferred outbound destination; 28.8% of them had visited the destination twice, and 36.5% had visited the place three times or more.

Data diagnostics and measurement model

We performed the single-factor procedure to diagnose CMB, with $\chi 2/df = 4.37$, showing it was not a limitation. The marker variable test was also performed by including a theoretically unrelated variable – word-of-mouth – in the model. The variable was a 4-item scale adopted from Reckmann and Teichert (2016). Results indicate that the inclusion of the variable did not affect the proposed relationships. In terms of multicollinearity, the VIF values were less than 3.34, suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue.

Next, we evaluated the reliability and validity of the scales of interest. All α values fell between the range of .80 and .90, while CR values fell between .81 and .90. Results warranted internal consistency. The standardized factor loading for each item was over .60, and the AVE values of each scale were higher than .50. The square root of AVE exceeded all of the paired correlations of the constructs of interest, suggesting discriminant validity is intact. CFA was then conducted to evaluate the measurement model. Model fit indices provide support to the fit between the data and the model: $\chi^2/df = 3.45$, CFI = .90, IFI = .90, and RMSEA = .08. In sum, results indicated scale reliability and validity, and the proposed model fits the data

reasonably well (see Tables 4 and 5 for more details).

Insert Table 4 and Table 5 here

Results

Structural equation modeling with LISREL 8.8 was employed to test the proposed relationships. Similar to Study 1, we controlled for gender and age. Model fit statistics in Table 6 show that the model has a satisfactory fit. Table 6 further provides unstandardized coefficients for the proposed hypotheses. A positive relationship between perceived cultural capital and impression in memory is evident ($\beta = .89$, $t = 13.43$, $p < .001$), in support of Hypothesis 1. The proposed relationship between perceived cultural capital and brand love is significant ($\beta = .43$, $t = 3.42$, $p < .001$), in support of Hypothesis 2. The relationship between impression in memory and destination brand love is also warranted ($\beta = .49$, $t = 3.81$, $p < .001$), in support of Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 posits a relationship between impression in memory and enjoyable reminiscence. The results were significant ($\beta = .26$, $t = 2.90$, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 5 proposes a relationship between destination brand love and enjoyable reminiscence. Results indicate a significant relationship between the two variables ($\beta = .40$, $t = 3.17$, $p < .01$), in support of Hypothesis 5. The mediating roles of impression in memory and destination brand love were examined through Haye's process macro using a 5,000 bootstrapped sample (Hayes, 2017). The direct effect of perceived cultural capital on enjoyable reminiscence was evident ($\beta = .32$, CI $= .20$ to $.44$, $p < .001$); however, the relationship vanished after accounting for the impression in memory, COVID-19 worries, and meaning in life moderation. Impression in memory mediated the relationship between perceived cultural capital and enjoyable

reminiscence (β = .19, CI = .10 to .28, p < .001), while destination brand love also mediated the relationship (β = .16, CI = .09 to .24, p < .001). Importantly, the serial mediation effect of perceived cultural capital→ impression in memory→ destination brand love→ enjoyable reminiscence was warranted (β = .09, CI = .06 to .15, p < .001).

To assess a 3-way moderating effect of COVID-19 worries and meaning in life, we followed Hair et al.'s (1998) two-stage approach. First, we created factor scores for each construct and then created 2-way interaction terms (i.e., impression in memory × meaning in life; COVID-19 worries × meaning in life) and a 3-way interaction term (i.e., impression in memory × COVID-19 worries × meaning in life). Results from Table 6 reveal that the 2-way interaction of impression in memory and COVID-19 worries on enjoyable reminiscence was not significant (impression in memory × COVID-19 worries: β = .05, t = 1.06, p > .05; impression in memory × meaning in life: β = -.06, t = -1.31, p > .05). However, the 3-way interaction term was significant (β = .24, t = 4.31, p < .001), in support of Hypothesis 7. Findings reveal that the effect of impression in memory is particularly acute in the low worry, low meaning in life condition, as well as in the high worry, high meaning in life condition.

Insert Table 6 here

Insert Figure 2 here

STUDY 3

Study 3 aimed to address the void in the previous two studies by linking enjoyable reminiscence and revisit intention to a specific destination. It further sought to build a causal linkage between mental travel and corporeal travel by undertaking an experiment.

Data collection and participants

The data collection was conducted in November 2022. A total of 200 participants were recruited through Credamo, an online survey platform similar to Mturks. The platform has more than three million cohorts and has gained wide usage in tourism studies (e.g., Wong, Sun, et al., 2023). Using the Credamo platform has the advantage of allowing us to cover a broader population of interest, thereby improving the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings. Participants were randomly recruited with a cash incentive. The sample included 37% males and 63% females; 75% of them fell within the age range 21 to 40. In regard to educational background, most held a bachelor's degree or above (78.5%). Approximately 59% of the respondents obtained an annual income ranging between RMB 60,000 and 300,000.

Measures

Study 3 employed a one-factor between-subject design in which participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (enjoyable reminiscence vs. control). The experimental procedure started by asking participants to read a scenario that put them in the following situations. In the control condition, we followed Wildschut et al.'s (2006) procedure by asking participants to recall and write about some ordinary travel experience at a destination that they remember. While in the enjoyable reminiscence condition, they were asked to recall and write about past travel memories in a destination that made them feel happy (more details about both scenarios are presented in the Appendix). The scenario design was adapted from prior literature (Huang et al., 2016; Wildschut et al., 2006).

Participants were then asked to state the specific destination they recalled based on the scenario condition. They were then instructed to rate their revisit intention toward the place

using a two-item measure (e.g., How likely would you return to the same destination for pleasure travel?) ($\alpha = 0.70$), adapted from Um et al. (2006) and Wirtz et. al. (2003) on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) and 7 (very likely).

Next, participants completed a four-item scale for the manipulation check of enjoyable reminiscence (e.g., I enjoy looking back on happy times while traveling in this place) ($\alpha = 0.86$). Consistent with Study 2, the scale was also adopted from Huang et al. (2016). For the realism check, we used three items (e.g., I find the scenario for this experience to be realistic) ($\alpha = 0.71$) adopted from Gao, Zhang, and Mittal (2017). Each item was evaluated with a 7-point anchor ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The translation procedure followed a translation/back-translation process to ensure accuracy, and the following analyses were conducted using SPSS 24.0.

Results

Manipulation check

We conducted an independent-sample t test to diagnose the effectiveness of our experimental manipulation. Participants who were assigned to the enjoyable reminiscence group felt a stronger belief about savoring such memories than those of the control group ($M_{\text{enjoyable reminiscence}} = 6.18$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.75$), $t_{(198)} = 9.43$, $p < .001$. Therefore, our manipulation was effective. This result is consistent with our intended manipulation.

Realism check

One sample t test indicated that each of the conditions was more realistic than the scale's midpoint (enjoyable reminiscence: 6.13 vs. 4.0, $t_{[99]} = 38.71$, $p < .001$; control: 5.87 vs. 4.0, $t_{[99]} = 21.15$, $p < .001$). Thus, the realism of our scenario was acceptable.

Revisit intention

We find a main effect of enjoyable reminiscence on tourist's revisit intention. Participants from the enjoyable reminiscence group ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.01$) reported a stronger revisit intention than those in the control condition did ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.71$), $F_{(1, 198)} = 106.80$, $p < .001$, *cohen's d* = 1.47. Thus, H6 was supported. It is important to note there are neither direct nor interaction effects of age, gender, income, or education level on revisit intention.

Discussion

Could traveling mentally back in time impel people to partake in future journeys? This research provides an answer to this question by building a comprehensive model that takes perceived destination cultural capital, impression in memory, destination brand love, enjoyable reminiscence, and future travel intention into account. The model further takes the shattered assumptions thesis (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) into consideration by modeling COVID worries and meaning in life as two boundary conditions. Resting on three empirical studies, this inquiry offers new insights into mental time travel by synthesizing a mechanism in which tourists' savoring prior travel memories could subsequently bring nostalgic pleasure and hence, affinity in pursuing the next journey. Theoretical and practical implications are presented below.

Theoretical Implications

This research aimed to investigate a mechanism in which cultural capital can effectively mitigate the emotional consequences of catastrophic events by invoking individuals' enjoyable memories of prior travel encounters. Prior works have focused primarily on the influence of childhood experiences on an individual's development (Giroux et al., 2021) or the behavioral changes induced by traumatic events (Huang et al., 2021). This inquiry takes a different

direction to address the void in the literature. In particular, the implications of theory feature four different aspects, as presented below.

From the mental time travel perspective, this research enriches the literature by articulating a model that takes impression in memory and enjoyable reminiscence as mediators in the travel process. By linking these two constructs with perceived cultural capital, destination love, and revisit intention, this investigation goes beyond the existing literature (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007; Suddendorf et al., 2011; Suo & Wang, 2022) to embark on a process model of time travel. Here, mental time travel and future travel inclinations are dependent upon a series of mediators that are juxtaposed to celebrate nostalgic feelings taking shape for a specific destination.

In this sense, this research, on one hand, expands beyond the tradition of mental time travel, which commonly focuses on cognitive activities (e.g., recalling past episodic memory and imaging future events) (Manning, 2021; Storm & Jobe, 2012) as well as their emotional and wellbeing outcomes (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007; Suo & Wang, 2022). On the other hand, this inquiry lays the necessary foundation in tourism literature by developing scholarship on mental time travel that has been predominately reported in psychology journals. Our research, therefore, seeks to fill this void in the tourism body of work by demonstrating how mental time travel is not only a means for savoring past travel experience, but is a rather important conduit in galvanizing interest for future (re)visit propensity. This extension presents a leap forward to allow a better understanding of the boundary crossing between mental travel and corporeal travel, which has been neglected in the literature. That said, this inquiry creates new discourses about mental time travel, and how it could transcend into the physical travel

encounter.

From a cultural capital theoretical lens (Bourdieu, 1986; Savage et al., 2018), this inquiry extends the application of the theory in tourism scholarship. Going beyond economic capital and social capital, cultural capital serves as a vital set of resources that could differentiate a destination from others. Our research showcases that such cultural treasures, as a strategic asset, could facilitate reliving past memories and impel destination brand love. This inquiry thus steers away from the traditional view of cultural capital with its urban development and human geography lens, which puts emphasis on city planning and urban representation. Rather, our research focuses on tourists' perceptions of such capital, as well as its intended consequences on tourists' memories, place love, and travel intention. This new understanding certainly takes a leap forward from Bourdieu's (1986) original thesis, which focuses merely on the form of capital. It further extends the application of cultural capital from an urban development approach (Kenny, 1995; Savage et al., 2018) to center on how tourists rationalize a place's cultural resources to impel favorable remembered episodes toward future travel actions.

This research also enriches the literature by identifying a moderated relationship between enjoyable reminiscence and impression memory. On one hand, belief in savoring reflects an important stage in which tourists' nostalgic thoughts could foster future travel desire. This linkage creates new insight by bridging the gap between recalling past events, which is rooted in the mental time travel tradition (Lavallee & Persinger, 2010; Suddendorf et al., 2011), and nostalgia travel motivation, which gives shape to future behavioral intentions (Goulding, 2001; Leong et al., 2015). In this sense, enjoyable reminiscence serves as a salient mediator

joining the two domains of scholarship, with the first focusing on past experiences, while the second projects future ones. On the other hand, enjoyable reminiscence is further affected by destination brand love. This finding could help to enrich the brand love literature (Aro et al., 2018; Lv & Wu, 2021) by demonstrating its role in promoting nostalgic thoughts about travel. More importantly, these two forces (i.e., impression in memory and brand love) render as both cognitive and affective cues that combine to improve tourists' pleasure in savoring past travel episodes. We believe that the enjoyable reminiscence mediation mechanism takes a step forward in better explaining why retrospection of the past cognitively and emotionally could unfold into travel conations.

Yet, the aforementioned impression–reminiscence–intention mediated relationship should be considered in light of situational factors. To this end, this inquiry draws on shattered assumptions theory to underscore how traveling during the COVID era could impose worries on tourists. Weakened worldviews impel tourists to seek new life meaning. This research takes these two phases into account by testing a 3-way moderation on the impression–reminiscence relationship. Results indicate that the linkage is especially salient when tourists have a high desire for new life meaning in the high-worry condition. Findings improve the shattered assumptions scholarship (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) in terms of how the two processes (i.e., worries from traumatic events and seeking new life meaning) could combine to form boundary conditions of the impression in memory effect. They also highlight why retelling past travel experiences does not always lead tourists to feel joy; rather, this linkage is contingent on a series of intricate conditions based on travel worries and seeking life meaning. More importantly, by synthesizing the theories of shattered assumptions (Matthews & Marwit, 2006),

cultural capital (Kenny, 1995; Savage et al., 2018), and mental time travel (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2007; Ozdes, 2021), this inquiry presents a more complete picture about the antecedents and consequences of why people continue to relive past memories, especially when facing adversity during extenuating circumstances.

Practical Implications

From a practical point of view, this inquiry provides references to several implications for tourism practices. First, this research advances the perceived destination cultural capital scale. Although a similar scale was developed in a foreign language, revising it and then extending it to the tourism context allows both scholars and practitioners to assess a place's attractiveness from a cultural resource perspective. It differentiates from other constructs (e.g., destination image) to focus primarily on cultural treasures that set apart one territory from another. Making a place's cultural capital quantifiable affords comparisons among cities and benchmarking of places. Given that cultural capital can induce favorable impression and brand love, it follows that destinations that are rich in such resources could leverage them not only in promoting tourism, but also in improving city image and community pride. Having a means to disclose and compare destination cultural capital vividly can help tourists to make better travel decisions and hence, create better memory recollection and enjoyment through bittersweet marketing campaigns.

Tourism is a powerful means for the revitalization of dormant historical narratives. For example, Only Henan Drama Fantasy City is a popular cultural attraction that incorporates immersive theater arts and leverages a unique architectural ensemble as a narrative vehicle to convey stories related to land, food, and heritage of the local culture. This distinct space

features 21 diverse theaters and hosts over 900 professional actors who deliver non-repetitive performances, facilitating an experiential journey for tourists through a city that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries. The dynamic succession of dynasties in China, the resilience and sacrifice exhibited by individuals during periods of famine, and the original visions and associated tensions of heritage sites prior to their destruction, are all vividly reflected inside this metropolis rich in historical legacy. Observing these poignant historical realities allows tourists to vicariously understand the hardships people faced in ancient times. This process can induce a sense of resonance and fortitude, while inspiring personal renewal with reminiscences of the distant past.

Cultural capital of a place can also be transformed and presented through information technology. This approach could facilitate vividness of mental time travel and hence, impression and pleasure when savoring related travel episodes. In order words, reminiscence of the past can greatly be facilitated by the mediation of technology. Here, technology mediation is highly scalable, as it could be applied virtually on any social media platform through the internet. Given the prevalence of smartphone usage, this technology-mediated mental time travel approach could present itself as an extension of virtual tourism. The former approach focuses on retrospection of prior travel episodes, while the later focuses on new voyages. More importantly, empirics demonstrated in this inquiry further point to the boundary crossing between mental and physical travel domains. According to a recent news report (ANA, 2023), ANA GranWhale, a virtual travel platform, will be launched in Asia. This innovative platform offers users a safe and comfortable way to explore various destinations in Japan, such as Kyoto and Hokkaido, as well as other locations around the world, using gaming techniques

in the metaverse. Users can embark on exciting adventures and experience breathtaking views of historical buildings and stunning landscapes. This groundbreaking platform opens up new possibilities for users to immerse themselves in different cultures and destinations, providing a blend of real-world experiences and virtual exploration. By connecting these two domains, marketers can more confidently improvise products that could engage tourists through mental time travel in order to tout corporeal travel interests and actual behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This investigation is not without limitations. First, the population of interest is Chinese tourists, which limits the generalizability of the results. Given cultural differences among different populations, cultural comparisons among variables of interest could present new insights into mental time travel. Second, we proposed two mediators – impression in memory and brand love – that connect the relationship between perceived cultural capital and enjoyable reminiscence. Future investigations could incorporate other types of tourism, with broader socio-cultural, environmental, or economic elements that may sway the outcomes and mechanisms under scrutiny, such as destination image and travel satisfaction. Future research is also encouraged to assess how the cultural capital of a place could be leveraged to better develop a place's tourism products (e.g., film tourism, event tourism, and heritage tourism) based on cobranding and codevelopment strategic initiatives. Third, the definition of cultural capital focuses on tourist perceptions of a place's cultural resources. This definition could be broadened in future research to incorporate destination-level cultural aspects of the place or the meso-level aspect of the construct based on tourism operators' points of view. Likewise, we tested the proposed relationship at the individual level. Given that cultural capital varies among

different destinations, future research could conduct a multilevel analysis by taking destination-level cultural capital and other attributes into account. Furthermore, we only examined the relationship between enjoyable reminiscence and revisit intention; but it is plausible that other variables (e.g., place attachment and travel desire) could mediate the relationship. Future research could take these factors into account and expand the proposed model. Mental time travel involves both explicit and implicit cognitive processes (Gawronski et al., 2020; Kihlstrom, 1990; Liao et al., 2023). Reliance on self-report methods is limited as they mainly identify explicit cognitions while ignoring implicit biases. Future research should employ a variety of techniques, including neural measures (electroencephalography; EEG) (Li et al., 2023), the implicit association test (Greenwald et al., 1998), and evaluative priming task (Fazio et al., 1995), to better understand the cognitive continuum in mental time travel. Finally, this research adopts a multi-method approach to assess the proposed relationships. Yet, each study is cross-sectional in nature. Future research is advised to utilize a longitudinal design to assess the enduring impact of cultural capital on mental time travel across countries, while concurrently delineating a potential change trajectory resulting from the influence of impression in memory and enjoyable reminiscence on future travel propensity.

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Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability test for Study 1

Scale items	FL	α	CR	AVE
Perceived Cultural Capital		.87	.87	.53
The destination provides high-quality cultural services (i.e., services delivered by employees).	.70			
The destination has unique customs.	.71			
The destination has magnificent landscapes.	.75			
The destination has spectacular historical relics.	.82			
There is extensive historical significance ascribed/documented by the destination.	.71			
The destination has ample cultural attractions.	.70			
Impression in Memory		.80	.80	.58
I have wonderful memories of the destination.	.76			
I remember many positive things about the destination.	.75			
I won't forget my experience at the destination.	.77			
Destination Brand Love		.86	.86	.61
The destination brand makes me feel good.	.76			
The destination brand makes me very happy.	.82			
I am very attached to the destination brand.	.79			
I love the destination brand.	.75			

Note: All factor loadings were standardized and were significant at the .001 level.
FL = factor loadings; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.
Model fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.41$; CFI = .96; IFI = .96; RMSEA = .06

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and construct correlations for Study 1

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
1. Perceived Cultural Capital	5.03	0.86	*.73*		
2. Impression in Memory	5.50	0.94	.57**	*.76*	
3. Destination Brand Love	5.33	1.01	.64**	.75**	*.78*

Note: ** $p < .01$.
S.D. = standard deviation.
Square root of AVE is on the diagonal.
Squared of paired constructs' inter-correlation is on the off-diagonal.

Table 3. Results of paths estimates for Study 1

	Impression in Memory	Destination Brand Love
Main Effects		
Perceived Cultural Capital	.67***	.26**
Impression in Memory		.75***
Controlled variables		
Gender		.64[n.s.]
Age		-.04[n.s.]
R^2	.46	.86

Note: Paths estimates are standardized; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; *n.s.* denotes not significant.
Model fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.04$; CFI = .99, IFI = .99, and RMSEA = .06.

Table 4. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability test for Study 2

Scale items	FL	α	CR	AVE
Perceived Cultural Capital		.90	.90	.61
The destination provides high-quality cultural services (i.e., services delivered by employees).	.68			
The destination has unique customs.	.83			
The destination has magnificent landscapes.	.77			
The destination has spectacular historical relics.	.90			
There is extensive historical significance ascribed/documented by the destination.	.76			
The destination has ample cultural attractions.	.71			
Impression in Memory		.82	.82	.61
I have wonderful memories of the destination.	.82			
I remember many positive things about the destination.	.74			
I won't forget my experience at the destination.	.77			
Destination Brand Love		.85	.85	.59
The destination brand makes me feel good.	.75			
The destination brand makes me very happy.	.78			
I am very attached to the destination brand.	.71			
I love the destination brand.	.81			
COVID-19 Worries		.87	.86	.56
I feel that I will be infected by others.	.78			
I feel very unsafe about myself.	.72			
I feel that life is threatening.	.88			
I feel that I have loss control of life.	.67			
I think about death-dying.	.69			
Meaning in Life		.80	.81	.59
I am searching for things that make my life significant.	.82			
I am looking for things that make my life feel meaningful.	.72			
I am searching for meaning in my life.	.66			
Enjoyable Reminiscence		.83	.83	.55
I enjoy looking back on happy times while traveling in this place.	.70			
I can feel good remembering the past trip.	.75			
I like to store travel memories for later recall.	.75			
It is easy to rekindle joy from happy memories while traveling to this place.	.76			

Note: All factor loadings were standardized and were significant at the 0.001 level.

FL = factor loadings; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE=average variance extracted.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and construct correlations for Study 2

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Perceived Cultural Capital	5.64	.78	*.78*					
2.Impression in Memory	5.81	.79	.77**	*.78*				
3.Destination Brand Love	5.74	.76	.76**	.75**	*.77*			
4.COVID-19 Worries	3.49	1.16	-.07	-.06	-.01	*.75*		
5.Meaning in Life	5.25	.86	.58**	.49**	.56**	-.13*	*.77*	
6.Enjoyable Reminiscence	5.79	.81	.72**	.70**	.72**	.01	.63**	*.74*

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

S.D. = standard deviation.

Square root of AVE is on the diagonal.

Squared of paired constructs' inter-correlation is on the off-diagonal.

Table 6. Results of paths estimates for Study 2

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Impression in Memory	Destination Brand Love	Enjoyable Reminiscence	Impression in Memory	Destination Brand Love	Enjoyable Reminiscence
Main Effects						
Perceived Cultural Capital	.89***	.43***	.26**	.89***	.45***	$-.06^{n.s}$
Impression in Memory		.49***	.26**		.47***	.32**
Destination Brand Love			.40**			.34**
Moderating Effects						
COVID-19 Worries						$-.02^{n.s.}$
Impression in Memory × COVID-19 Worries						$.05^{n.s.}$
Meaning in Life						.36***
Impression in Memory × Meaning in Life						$-.06^{n.s.}$
COVID-19 Worries × Meaning in Life						$.04^{n.s.}$
Impression in Memory × COVID-19 Worries × Meaning in Life						.24***
Controlled variables						
Gender			$.01^{n.s.}$			$.00^{n.s.}$
Age			$.02^{n.s.}$			$.05^{n.s.}$
R^2	.80	.81	.78	.80	.81	.88
χ^2 /df		3.34			3.21	
RMSEA		.08			.08	
CFI		.98			.96	

Note: Paths estimates are standardized; ***p < .001; **p < .01; *n.s.* denotes not significant.

<p style="text-align:center">**Appendix**</p>

1. Scenarios for Study 3

[Enjoyable reminiscence condition]

Please recall and write about some past travel memory in a destination that makes you feel

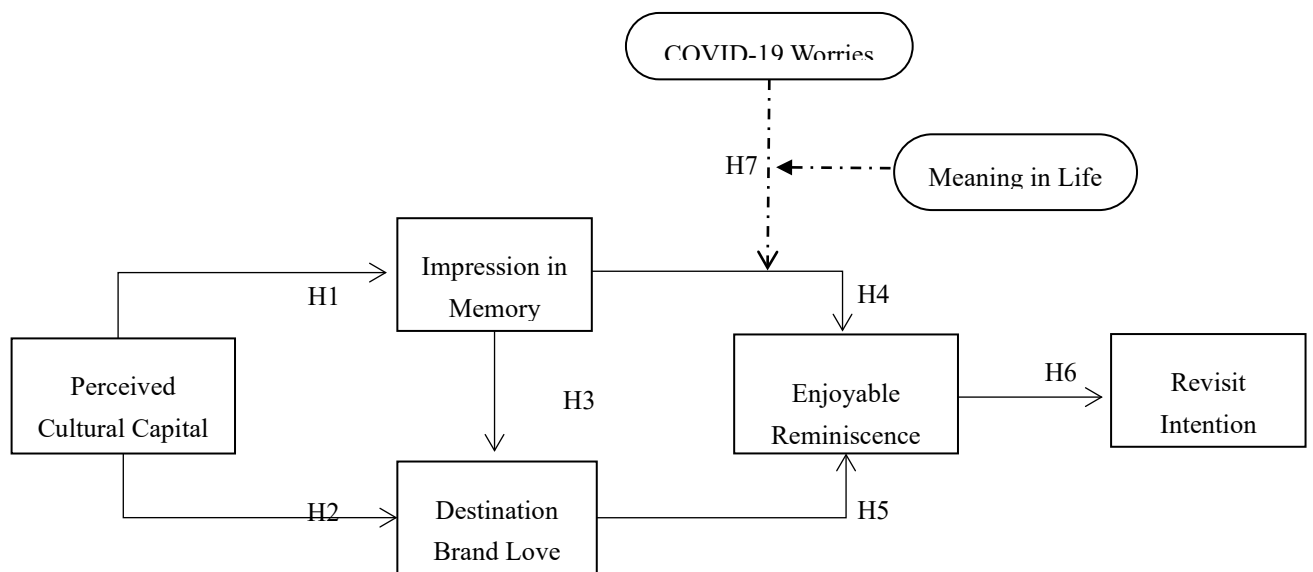enjoyment whenever you think about it.

[control condition]

Please recall and write about some ordinary travel experience in a destination that you

remember.

2. Overview of constructs

Construct	Definition	Reference
Mental time travel	The cognitive ability to project oneself retrospectively to recollect past experiences or prospectively to envision future possibilities.	Berg et al. (2021)
Destination cultural capital	Cultural resources encompass landscape, architectural wonders, customs, lifestyle, food, events, and other activities that represent the cultural and historical significance of a place.	Kenny (1995) McGehee et al. (2009)
Perceived cultural capital	Individuals' perceptions of the cultural capital possessed by a particular destination.	
Impression in memory	The capacity to consciously recall past events, behaviors, and experiences.	Manthiou et al. (2018)
Destination brand love	The level of emotional connection by a tourist to a destination.	Aro et al. (2018)
Enjoyable reminiscence	The pleasure reaped from recalling a nostalgic experience.	Huang et al. (2016)
COVID-19 worries	Worries about the COVID pandemic and its aftermath	Yang & Wong (2021)
Meaning in life	The sense made of and significance felt regarding the nature of one's being and existence	Steger et al. (2006)

Figure 1. Proposed Model

Figure 2. Moderating Effect

low Meaning in Life

Enjoyable Reminiscence

| 5.11 | 5.97 | 5.20 | 5.89 |

low Impression in Memory | high Impression in Memory | low Impression in Memory | high Impression in Memory

low COVID-19 Worries | high COVID-19 Worries

high Meaning in Life

Enjoyable Reminiscence

| 5.87 | 6.30 | 5.61 | 6.55 |

low Impression in Memory | high Impression in Memory | low Impression in Memory | high Impression in Memory

low COVID-19 Worries | high COVID-19 Worries