Assessing Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination: Role of Perceived Value and Destination Image of Sports Events

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Abstract

The study investigates the factors influencing decision-making intentions for sports tourism destinations, employing the theoretical frameworks of perceived value and destination image. Utilizing an online survey and purposive sampling methodology, researchers obtained 417 valid questionnaires from tourists with experience in sports tourism in Chengdu. The collected data were subsequently analysed employing structural equation modelling techniques. Functional value, social value, and emotional value—representing the three dimensions of perceived value—positively impact attitudes and intentions toward sports tourism in Chengdu. Furthermore, the perceived destination image of sports events, encompassing both cognitive and affective aspects, exerts a comparable influence. Additionally, attitude toward sports tourism functions as a significant mediator in this relationship. This research contributes to the theoretical development of perceived value and perceived destination image within the context of sports tourism decision-making. The results provide crucial recommendations for Chengdu to bolster its sports tourism sector.

Keywords: Sports Tourism, Sports Events, Perceived Value, Perceived Value, Tourism Intention, Chengdu.

Introduction

Sports tourism is increasingly gaining traction and is recognized as a burgeoning niche market within the travel industry (Aicher et al., 2020). Sports events play a multifaceted role in sports tourism by attracting a substantial number of visitors through various channels and enhancing the city's image. These events contribute significantly to local economic growth and improve the overall perception of a city as vibrant and progressive, thereby serving as a crucial element in broader tourism and economic development frameworks. Chengdu, China, exemplifies how sports tourism can drive developmental progress and economic growth (Lu & Zhang, 2022). As a prominent focus of China's tourism development, sports tourism has emerged as a key symbol for Chengdu, enhancing its reputation as a hub for sporting events and fostering diverse urban economic and social advancement. In 2019, the Chengdu Marathon achieved a notable milestone, with 30,000 participants and over 100,000 registrations, generating an estimated economic impact of nearly 200 million RMB. Jintang County, within Chengdu, has strategically positioned itself as a national sports tourism destination by emphasizing "landscape sports." It has implemented projects that promote sports tourism, integrate tourism development, and support emerging trendy sports activities. The city of Dujiangyan, also part of Chengdu, has emerged as a new focal point for sports tourism, drawing over two million visitors annually through various sports events. Chengdu, recognized as a "park city," capitalizes on its distinctive athletic appeal and burgeoning sports consumption to rapidly gain popularity, evolving into a "natural sports arena" for its population exceeding 20 million (Gong et al., 2023). In 2023, Chengdu hosted the Universiade, attracting international attention and significant investment. Over the past three years, the city has allocated over 18 billion RMB, funded by the Chengdu municipal government, to fulfil the requirements of the Universiade. This investment included the construction of 13 new sports venues and the renovation of nearly 40 existing ones, many of which have become prominent tourist attractions, further solidifying Chengdu's status as a leading destination for sports tourism.

Despite its progress, Chengdu faces several challenges in comparison to world-class sports tourism destinations

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such as London, Barcelona, and Sydney. These challenges include service quality, the influence of events, and the integration of sports within the broader tourism infrastructure. Addressing these areas could enhance Chengdu's appeal to global events and tourists, thereby enriching its economic and cultural landscape. While significant advancements have been made in sports tourism research—particularly regarding sustainable tourism practices, economic impact assessments, and community engagement—there remains a paucity of focus on tourists' perceptions of value and destination image in the context of sports events. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) investigate how the perceived value of sports events influences tourists' intentions to choose Chengdu as a sports tourism destination; (2) assess the effect of the perceived destination image of sports events on the intention to select Chengdu for sports tourism; and (3) clarify the mediating roles of attitudes towards sports tourism.

To advance this research, a comprehensive literature review is essential. The third section details the research methodology, the fourth interprets the findings, and the final section presents the results, discusses limitations, and offers recommendations for future studies. This structured approach refines the research framework and provides a clear roadmap for further investigations in sports tourism.

Literature Review

Perceived value theory has been extensively applied across various disciplines, including marketing, tourism, and sports management, to elucidate how perceived value affects consumer behaviour. Sharma and Klein (2020) provide a theoretical framework that defines functional, emotional, and social values as key factors influencing consumer behaviour. Destination image theory, a well-established concept in tourism research, explores the range of emotions, beliefs, and perceptions individuals hold about a specific destination (Thi Khanh & Phong, 2020; Wangyanwen et al., 2023).

Hypothesis Development

Perceived value is defined as the value assigned to an experience relative to the perceived costs associated with it. It reflects how valuable a participant considers attending a specific sports event based on its benefits and costs. Functional value pertains to the quality of facilities and organizational aspects, which influence participants' satisfaction and their intention to revisit (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Muthuswamy & Bayomei, 2022). Additionally, perceived emotional value, which encompasses the enjoyment and entertainment derived from the event,

enhances the overall perceived value and influences future behavioural intentions. Social value refers to the potential for social interactions and the opportunity to form new relationships. Individuals who perceive higher value from the quality and overall experience of events such as the Winter Olympics are more likely to hold favourable attitudes towards attending similar events and visiting the host destinations (Ahmad et al., 2023; Park et al., 2020). Therefore, this study proposes:

H1. Perceived value of sport tourism has a positive impact attitude towards sports tourism.

Destination image encompasses the information retained in a tourist's memory and their behavioural intentions (Du, 2024; Lai et al., 2019). In terms of tourists' pre-visit perceptions and evaluations, the perceived destination image can be defined as a combination of cognitive and affective assessments (Guo & Pesonen, 2022). The perceived quality of facilities and infrastructural development significantly impacts tourists' willingness to attend sporting events (Rudianto, 2023; Stylidis, 2020). This is further supported by the image concept, which includes the destination's appeal and ambiance and is crucial for customer satisfaction and repeat visitation (Kim et al., 2019). Additionally, the affective image involves emotions such as pleasure, excitement, and relaxation, which profoundly influence attitudes. Positive feelings toward a destination lead to more favorable orientations and higher probabilities of revisits. Social image, which pertains to the perceived social status and prestige associated with visiting a destination, also contributes to forming positive attitudes. For example, tourists are more likely to develop positive attitudes if they believe others will value their decision to visit a particular place. Thus, we posit:

H2: Perceived destination image of sports events significantly impacts attitudes toward sports tourism.

Enhancing perceived value, such as enjoyment, is a key strategy to increase future earnings through user retention and decrease the monetization of freemium services. Perceived image shapes tourists' intentions (Al Thuwaini et al., 2022; Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022). Destination and event image exhibit a positive relationship with both satisfaction and the intention to revisit, as evidenced by the favourable inclination to return to a specific destination (Evren et al., 2020). It is essential to assess how the physical environment and service quality influence memorable tourism experiences and intentions to revisit. Marathon events, engagement in sports, and the perceived quality of these events positively affect the likelihood of repeated visits and contribute to the evolving perception of sports as a promising category within tourism. Therefore, we

hypothesize that:

H3. Perceived value of sports events positively impacts the intention to visit Chengdu as a sports tourism destination.

H4: The perceived destination image of sports events positively influences the intention to choose Chengdu as a sports tourism destination.

Attitude toward sports tourism encompasses the overall evaluation and disposition individuals hold toward engaging in sports-related travel activities. Tourists who maintain a positive attitude toward sports tourism are likely to perceive the experience as valuable and worthwhile, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Parasocial relationships and celebrity endorsements significantly influence tourists' attitudes toward destinations and their intentions to visit; interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing these attitudes (Soltani et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Additionally, the mediating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between tourism motivations and satisfaction underscores the

importance of attitude in determining tourists' intentions (AlAli, 2023; Biswas et al., 2021). Tourists' perceptions of a unique and satisfying sports tourism experience can significantly influence their intentions (Jeong et al., 2020). For instance, positive perceptions of traditional Chinese medical tourism among foreign students have notably impacted their intention to participate in such tourism (Creapeau & Hansen, 2022; Liu et al., 2021). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H5. Attitude towards sports tourism constructively affects intentions to visit Chengdu as a destination.

H6. Attitude towards sports tourism influences the connection between perceived value of sports events and intentions to choose Chengdu for sports tourism.

H7. Attitude towards sports tourism facilitates the role of perceived destination image of sports events and intentions to select Chengdu as a sports tourism destination.

The proposed research is constructed upon the hypothesis, and the conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.
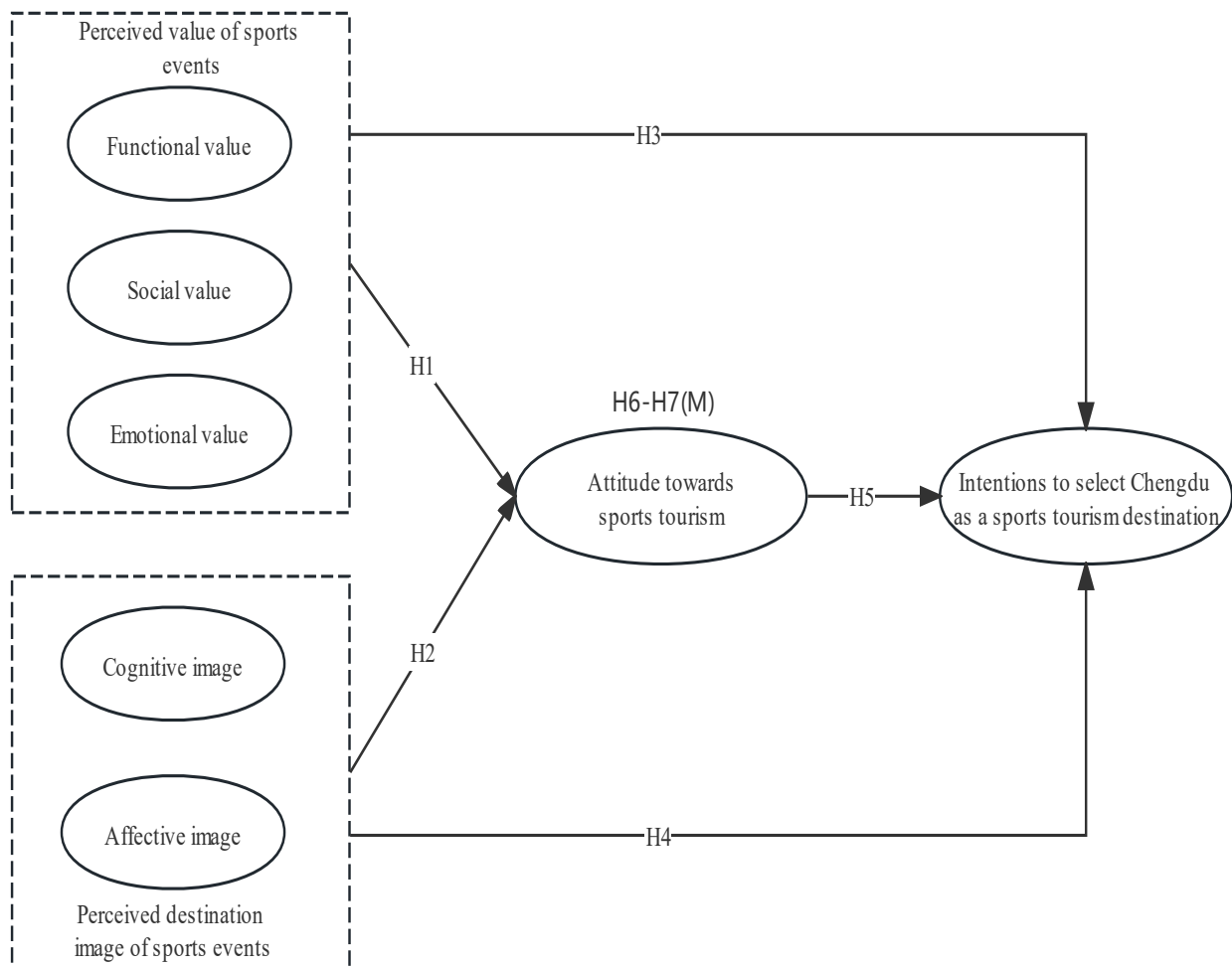

Figure 1: Theoretical Model of Study.

Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

This study employs an online survey to examine the factors influencing tourists' selection of Chengdu as a sports tourism destination. Data were collected from March to May 2024. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) also assessed the questionnaire to confirm its content validity. The research utilizes purposive sampling to target individuals with prior experience visiting Chengdu, thereby ensuring the relevance of the responses. A total of 417 valid responses were obtained, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

Essential Information

Information of Participants		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	191	45.8
	Female	226	54.2
Age	18-25	149	35.7
	26-40	186	44.6
	41-60	53	12.7
	>60	29	7.0
Area	Eastern China	93	22.3
	Southern China	112	26.9
	Western China	105	25.2
	Northern China	107	25.7
Education Level	Under bachelor's degree	41	9.8
	Undergraduate	280	67.1
	Postgraduate	76	18.2
	Doctor Degree	20	4.8
Family Income/ Year	＜100000￥	27	6.5
	100000￥-200000￥	85	20.4
	200000￥-300000￥	198	47.5
	>300000￥	107	25.7

Table 1 reveals that the gender distribution is slightly skewed towards females, with 54.2% of respondents identifying as female and 45.8% as male, indicating a relatively balanced representation of both genders. In terms of age, the majority of respondents are between 18-25 years (35.7%) and 26-40 years (44.6%), reflecting a predominance of younger to middle-aged individuals, with fewer respondents aged 41-60 years (12.7%) and over 60 years (7.0%). Geographically, respondents are distributed across various regions of China, with a fairly even representation from Eastern (22.3%), Southern (26.9%), Western (25.2%), and Northern China (25.7%). This distribution ensures a broad range of regional perspectives. Regarding educational attainment, 67.1% of respondents are undergraduates, 18.2% are postgraduates, and 4.8% have completed doctoral studies. Concerning annual family income, nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) earn between 200,000￥ and 300,000￥, with significant portions earning over 300,000￥ (25.7%) and between 100,000￥ and 200,000￥ (20.4%). A smaller segment reports earnings below 100,000￥ (6.5%). These income brackets indicate substantial economic diversity within the sample, representing a range of financial backgrounds.

Instrument

The questionnaire comprises items designed to evaluate perceived value, destination image, attitudes toward sports tourism, and intentions to select Chengdu as a sports tourism destination. Perceived value is categorized into functional, social, and emotional dimensions (Sharma et al., 2020). Functional value encompasses the overall quality, organization, and perceived economic value associated with the sports event (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). Four items developed by Soltani et al. (2021) were used to assess functional value. Perceived utility, or the utilitarian benefit of attending the event, is evaluated through four items based on Trail and James (2001). Social value, assessed by four items adapted from Wann (1995), involves the affective responses elicited by the event, including the enjoyment and memories created.

Destination image assessment incorporates psychological perceptions related to mental imagery and feelings about the destination. The framework includes evaluating facilities, accessibility, and safety of

Chengdu as a sports tourism destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Cognitive image is measured through four items reflecting tourists' perceptions of tangible attributes. The affective image, reflecting feelings such as pleasure and excitement about Chengdu as a sports tourism destination, is assessed using four items based on the positive emotions associated with the destination (Hosany et al., 2006). Attitudes toward sports tourism, which involve evaluations of its impact on cultural enhancement, enjoyment, value, or worth (Funk et al., 2009), are crucial in influencing visitor behaviour. Based on Funk et al. (2009), four action-based items were developed to measure these attitudes. For the measurement of intentions to select Chengdu, four variables are retained: the likelihood of visiting, recommending the destination to others, and planning future visits to Chengdu for sports events (Ajzen, 1991).

Table 2

Results

Reliability and Validity

As shown in Table 2, all constructs had Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7, indicating strong reliability. The perceived value scale for sports events, consisting of 12 items, had an alpha coefficient of 0. undefined, while the perceived destination image scale, with eight items, also had a high alpha coefficient of 0. undefined. Additionally, the constructs for attitude towards sports tourism and the intention to choose Chengdu as a destination, each with four items, showed alpha values of 0. undefined, exceeding the acceptable threshold and confirming satisfactory internal consistency.

Reliability Statistics

Variables Studied	Questions in (N)	Cronbach's α
Perceived Value of Sports Events	12	0.944
Perceived Destination Image of Sports Events	8	0.912
Attitude Towards Sports Tourism	4	0.842
Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination	4	0.844

Note: N denotes number

To evaluate the data's suitability for factor analysis, both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied. The KMO value for this study was 0.966, as detailed in Table 3. Generally, KMO values above 0.9 are deemed excellent, indicating high sampling adequacy, while values below 0.2 or above 0.8 are

considered noteworthy for factor analysis. This high KMO value indicates that the data are well-suited for factor analysis due to strong correlations among variables. Chi-square was 6945.475 for 378 df with a significance of 0.000, $p < 0.05$, which means the null hypothesis was rejected and confirmed that the data were appropriate for factor analysis.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.966
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6945.475
	df	378
	Sig.	.000

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a method used to assess whether a proposed model accurately represents the relationships between observed and latent variables (Arora, 2023). In this study, CFA was utilized to test the convergent validity of latent variables using Composite Reliability (C.R.) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results showed that the perceived value of sports events had strong convergent validity, with factor loadings between 0.935 and 0.944 (well above the 0.7 threshold) and an AVE of 0.586

(exceeding the 0.50 benchmark), indicating robust internal consistency. The perceived destination image of sports events also demonstrated good convergent validity, with factor loadings ranging from 0.732 to 0.775, a C.R. of 0.912, and an AVE of 0.563, all meeting the criteria for strong convergent validity. Furthermore, attitudes toward sports tourism and intentions to choose Chengdu as a destination had C.R. values of 0.843 and 0.844 and AVE values of 0.574 and 0.576, respectively, confirming the reliability and validity of the study's constructs.

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Convergence Validity

Latent Variables	Observation Indicators	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Perceived Value of Sports Events	FV1	0.766	0.944	0.586
	FV2	0.763		
	FV3	0.795		
	FV4	0.761		
	SV1	0.754		
	SV2	0.746		
	SV3	0.754		
	SV4	0.754		
	EV1	0.771		
	EV2	0.787		
	EV3	0.774		
	EV4	0.760		
Perceived Destination Image of Sports Events	CI1	0.732	0.912	0.563
	CI2	0.752		
	CI3	0.737		
	CI4	0.775		
	AI1	0.735		
	AI2	0.754		
	AI3	0.745		
	AI4	0.772		
Attitude towards Sports Tourism	ATST1	0.758	0.843	0.574
	ATST2	0.752		
	ATST3	0.750		
	ATST4	0.770		
Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination	ISC1	0.758	0.844	0.576
	ISC2	0.757		
	ISC3	0.750		
	ISC4	0.770		

As shown in Table 5, the square root of the AVE, displayed along the diagonal, must be greater than the correlations between constructs to confirm discriminant validity. For the perceived value of sports events, the square root of the AVE is 0.766, which exceeds its correlations with the perceived destination image of sports events (0.560), attitudes toward sports tourism (0.634), and intentions to select Chengdu as a sports tourism destination (0.587). Similarly, the square root of the AVE for the perceived destination image of sports events is 0.750, surpassing its correlations with other constructs, indicating adequate discriminant validity. The constructs of attitudes toward sports tourism and intentions to choose Chengdu as a destination also show discriminant validity, with square roots of AVE of 0.758 and 0.759, respectively, exceeding their inter-construct correlations.

Table 5

Distinguish between Validity Tests

Latent Variables	1	2	3	4
Perceived Value of Sports Events	0.766			
Perceived Destination Image of Sports Events	0.560	0.750		
Attitude towards Sports Tourism	0.634	0.521	0.758	
Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism destination	0.587	0.622	0.594	0.759

Table 6 indicates that the model fits the data well, as shown by the following indices: $\chi^2/df = 0.955$ (below the threshold

of 3), RMSEA = 0.000 (below 0.08), GFI = 0.947, and AGFI = 0.938. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) also reflect a strong model fit, with values of 0.954 and 1.000, respectively, both surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.9. Figure 2 presents the measurement model used to examine the relationships between perceived value, destination image, attitudes towards sports tourism, and intentions to choose Chengdu as a sports tourism destination.

Table 6

Illustrates the Metrics of Confirmatory Factor Model (CFM) Analysis

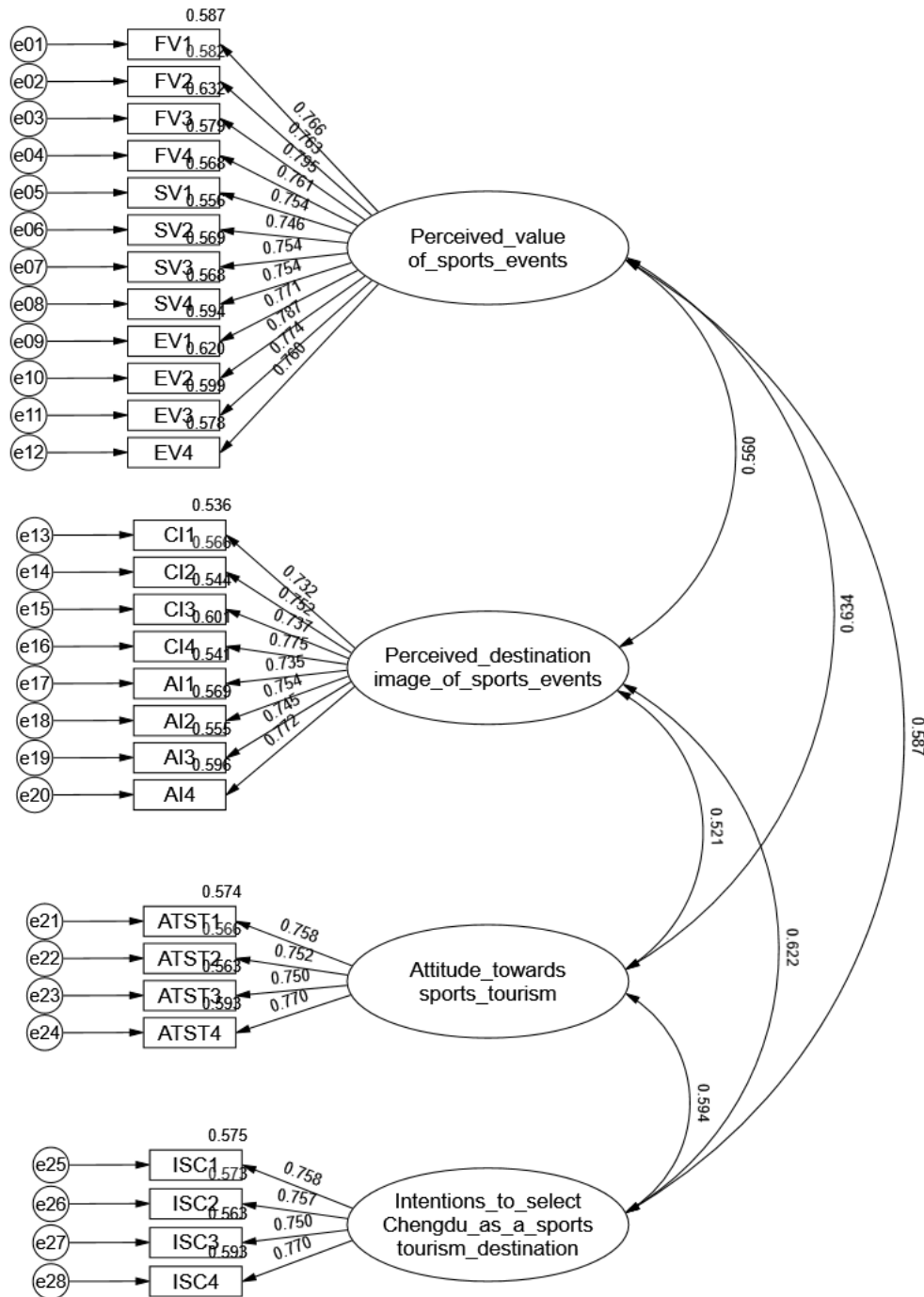| Fit Index	χ2/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
Normative Standard	<3	<0.082	>0.09	>0.09	>0.09	>0.09
Result	0.953	0.001	0.949	0.937	0.953	1.001

Figure 2*: Measurement Model Diagram.*

Path Analysis

Table 7 shows that the structural equation model fits the data excellently: the χ²/df ratio is 0.955 (<3), the RMSEA is 0.000 (<0.08), and both GFI and AGFI are above 0.90

(0.947 and 0.938, respectively). Additionally, the NFI and CFI values are 0.954 and 1.000, exceeding the 0.90 threshold. Overall, these indices indicate a very good model fit and high accuracy in representing the data.

Table 7

Demonstrates the Metrics of Model Fit

Fit Index	χ2/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
Normative Standards	<3	<0.008	>0.09	>0.09	>0.09	>0.09
Outcome	0.954	0.000	0.948	0.937	0.953	1.001

Table 8 presents the path analysis results for the structural equation model, highlighting the connections between latent variables. Each path coefficient was assessed with the critical ratio (C.R.) and significance level (P). A coefficient is considered significant at the 95% confidence level if the C.R. exceeds 1.96 and the P value is under 0.05, confirming the hypothesis's validity. All hypothesized paths in this study met these criteria. Specifically, the path from perceived value of sports events (P.V.) to attitudes towards sports tourism (ATST) shows an estimate of 0.507, a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.499, a standard error (S.E.) of 0.063, and a C.R. of 8.021 with P < 0.001, validating H1 and indicating a strong positive link. The

path from the perceived destination image of sports events (P.D.) to ATST has an estimate of 0.254, a β of 0.241, an S.E. of 0.061, and a C.R. of 4.170 with P < 0.001, supporting H2. Additionally, the path from P.V. to intentions to select Chengdu as a sports tourism destination (ISC) has an estimate of 0.214, a β of 0.214, an S.E. of 0.064, and a C.R. of 3.360 with P < 0.001, supporting H3. The path from P.D. to ISC shows an estimate of 0.375, a β of 0.362, an S.E. of 0.062, and a C.R. of 6.006 with P < 0.001, confirming H4. Finally, the path from ATST to ISC has an estimate of 0.267, a β of 0.270, an S.E. of 0.066, and a C.R. of 4.068 with P < 0.001, supporting H5.

Table 8

Demonstrates the Outcomes of SEM

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	β	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
H(1)	PV→ATST	0.507	0.499	0.063	8.021	***	Supported
H(2)	PD→ATST	0.254	0.241	0.061	4.170	***	Supported
H(3)	PV→ISC	0.214	0.214	0.064	3.360	***	Supported
H(4)	PD→ISC	0.375	0.362	0.062	6.006	***	Supported
H(5)	ATST→ISC	0.267	0.270	0.066	4.068	***	Supported

Note: P.V.: Perceived Value of Sports Events; P.D.: Perceived Destination Image of Sports Events; ATST: Attitude towards Sports Tourism; ISC: Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination.

***: p<0.001

Table 10 details the results of the mediation effect bootstrap tests. Hypothesis H7 suggests that ATST mediate the link between the P.D and intentions to select Chengdu as a ISC. The mediation effect size is 0.068 with a S.E of 0.029. The

bias-corrected 95% CI spans from 0.020 to 0.143, thereby supporting H7. This result highlights the mediating role of ATST in the relationship between P.D. and ISC.

Table 9

Shows the Mediation Effect Bootstrap Analysis

Hypothesis	Mediation path	Effect size	SE	Bias-Corrected 95%		Outcome
H6	PV→ATST→ISC	0.134	0.051	0.058	0.261	Supported
H7	PD→ATST→ISC	0.069	0.028	0.021	0.142	Supported

Note: P.V.: Perceived Value of Sports Events; P.D.: Perceived Destination Image of Sports Events; ATST: Attitude towards Sports Tourism; ISC: Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination.

Table 9 presents the results of the bootstrapping analysis

for mediation effects, detailing the hypotheses, direct and

indirect mediation paths, effect coefficients, standard errors, and bootstrapped estimates. The table includes both total and bias-corrected percentages, as well as 95% confidence intervals for the tested hypotheses. The analysis reveals that P.V and P.D exhibit a positive correlation with ATT towards sports tourism events. Furthermore, P.V.

and P.D. significantly influence intentions to select Chengdu as a ISC. The direct effect of attitudes towards sports tourism on the intention to choose Chengdu is also highlighted, reinforcing the pivotal role of tourists' attitudes in shaping their destination choices.

Table 10

Total Effects

Effect Path	Effect Size	SE	Bias-Corrected 95%CI	
PD→ATST	0.254	0.079	0.096	0.393
PV→ATST	0.507	0.078	0.357	0.660
PD→ISC	0.443	0.084	0.273	0.604
PV→ISC	0.349	0.082	0.180	0.512
ATST→ISC	0.267	0.090	0.099	0.451
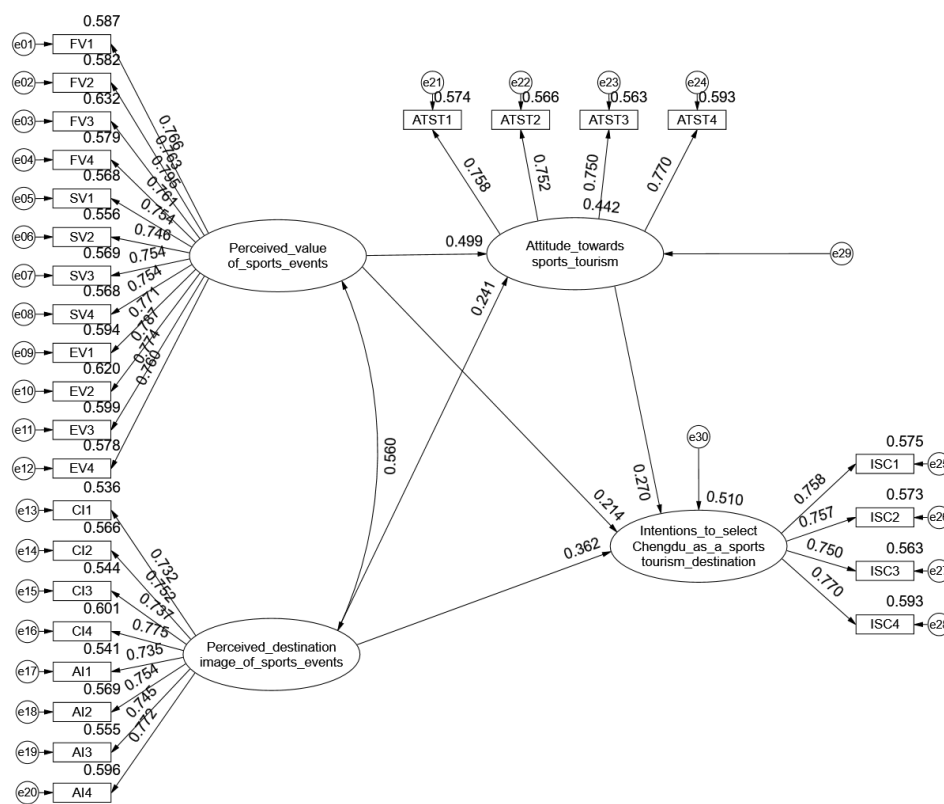
Figure 3: Path Diagram for the Structural Equation Model.

Discussion and Conclusion

The SEM analysis offers robust empirical evidence supporting the hypothesized relationships, illustrating the significant impact of perceived value and destination image on tourists' attitudes and their intentions to select Chengdu as a sports tourism destination. Hypotheses H1 ($\beta = 0.499$, $p < 0.001$) and H2 ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$) were substantiated, indicating that both perceived value and perceived destination image positively influence attitudes towards sports tourism. These findings underscore the importance of both the practical benefits and emotional

appeal of a destination in shaping tourist perceptions.

Further validation of H3 and H4 revealed that perceived value ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$) and destination image ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$) directly affect tourists' intentions to visit Chengdu. Additionally, H5 confirmed that favourable attitudes ($\beta = 0.270$, $p < 0.001$) significantly enhance these intentions. The mediation analysis, via bootstrap testing, confirmed the mediating role of attitudes towards sports tourism in the relationship between perceived value and intentions, as well as between destination image and intentions. Specifically, the path from perceived value to intentions through attitude (H6) was significant (effect size

= 0.135, 95% CI: 0.057 to 0.260), as was the path from destination image to intentions through attitude (H7) (effect size = 0.068, 95% CI: 0.020 to 0.143). These results offer new insights into the role of attitudes in sports tourism, extending prior research by demonstrating their critical mediating function in the relationship between perceived value, destination image, and behavioural intentions.

Implication of Theories

While previous research has extensively investigated perceived value within general tourism contexts, this study broadens the scope by examining its role within large-scale sports tourism. The study identifies functional, emotional, and social dimensions as pivotal factors shaping tourists' perceptions of value and their subsequent behaviours. In contrast to Stylidis (2020) conceptual discussion on the cognitive and affective aspects of destination image, this study advances theoretical knowledge by illustrating that attitudes towards sports tourism mediate the effects of positive destination image perceptions on actual travel behaviours. The insights gained from this study not only refine these theoretical concepts but also suggest directions for future research, encouraging exploration of similar phenomena in various tourism contexts and thereby enriching the tourism management knowledge base.

Implication to Practitioners

This research offers several managerial implications that can enhance Chengdu's appeal to sports tourism managers or any city aiming to establish itself as a premier destination in this niche market. A key finding emphasizes that functional value significantly influences tourists' attitudes and behavioural intentions. Sports event organizers must ensure high-quality events that offer value for money, well-organized logistics, and well-equipped venues. Enhancing functional aspects such as accessibility, seating arrangements, and overall event management will boost tourists' satisfaction and their likelihood of returning. Incorporating these elements into promotional strategies will underscore Chengdu's commitment to providing top-notch events that address practical needs. In addition to functional value, social value plays a crucial role in enriching the tourist experience. Chengdu should promote its sports events as opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. Initiatives such as fan zones, athlete meet-and-greets, and group activities can enhance social experiences, fostering greater satisfaction and encouraging positive word-of-mouth. Building relationships among event attendees is vital in sports tourism, where social value is a key factor. Emotional value also significantly affects tourists'

behavioural intentions. Organizers should focus on creating experiences that evoke enthusiasm, joy, and pleasure. Memorable activities, such as special performances, pre-game events, and cultural celebrations, can complement sports events and generate an emotional connection to the destination. Positive emotional experiences can strengthen tourists' bond with Chengdu, increasing the likelihood of repeat visits. Marketing campaigns should target consumers' emotional needs to build excitement about attending sports events in Chengdu. To enhance Chengdu's destination image, both cognitive and affective aspects need reinforcement. The cognitive image involves infrastructure, accessibility, and safety, which are crucial in shaping tourists' perceptions. Chengdu must highlight its capabilities as a host for large-scale sports events and demonstrate its competitive advantages in these areas. Concurrently, marketers should craft a compelling image that reflects the city's friendliness, comfort, and safety. Balancing these cognitive and affective elements will attract both first-time and returning visitors. Furthermore, fostering positive attitudes towards sports tourism can enhance tourists' behavioural intentions to revisit and recommend Chengdu. By emphasizing the city's cultural richness, diverse cuisine, event calendar, and historical significance, marketers can differentiate Chengdu from other sports tourism destinations. This approach will not only attract sports enthusiasts but also engage other potential tourists, reinforcing Chengdu's status as a world-class sports tourism hub. In summary, the study highlights the importance of cultivating favourable perceptions of sports events in Chengdu. This strategic focus on functional, social, and emotional elements is crucial for ensuring a memorable and satisfying tourist experience. These insights provide a basis for practical measures that will enhance Chengdu's appeal and contribute to its long-term success as a leading destination for sports tourism.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This study, focusing on Chengdu, presents several limitations that future research should address to build on these findings. Firstly, the study's geographical focus on Chengdu limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should consider examining multiple cities or regions to facilitate a comparative analysis, which could uncover regional differences in how perceived value and destination image influence tourist behaviour. Secondly, while this research concentrated on functional, social, and emotional value, future studies might explore the inclusion of experiential or cultural value as additional dimensions of perceived value. Given the unique cultural experiences associated with sports events at specific destinations,

incorporating these variables could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how tourists evaluate the utility of their experiences in culturally significant sports tourism destinations like Chengdu. Moreover, the current model does not incorporate the effects of digital engagement and social media on tourists' perceptions and intentions. Given the increasing role of these digital platforms in influencing travel behaviour, future studies should explore how online word-of-mouth, social media content, and other digital sources impact the perceived value and image of destinations. Investigating variables like social media influence and digital trust could provide valuable insights into how these elements shape tourist decision-making in today's digital age.

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Appendix

Table 1

Variables Measurements

Construct	Items	Source
Functional Value	FV1. The sports event in Chengdu provides good value for the money spent. FV2. The event in Chengdu meets my practical expectations for a sports tourism experience. FV3. The quality of facilities at the event in Chengdu matches my needs as a spectator. FV4. The event in Chengdu is well-organized.	Shonk et al. (2008)
Social Value	SV1. Attending the event in Chengdu gives me a chance to socialize with others. SV2. The event in Chengdu is a good opportunity to spend time with friends or family. SV3. I felt a sense of community when I attended the event in Chengdu. SV4. Attending the Chengdu event helped me connect with other fans who share my interests.	Trail et al. (2001)
Emotional Value	EV1. I experience excitement and thrill at the event in Chengdu. EV2. The event in Chengdu evokes strong emotions in me. EV3. Attending the event in Chengdu makes me feel happy. EV4. The event in Chengdu provides a memorable experience that I cherish.	Wann (1995)
Cognitive Image	CI1. Chengdu has adequate infrastructure to host international sports events. CI2. The city offers good accessibility to sports venues. CI3. Chengdu is safe for tourists. CI4. The local community in Chengdu is supportive of hosting sports events.	Baloglu et al. (1999)
Affective Image	AI1. I feel excited about the idea of visiting Chengdu for sports events. AI2. Chengdu has a welcoming atmosphere for sports tourists. AI3. I feel relaxed when considering Chengdu as a sports event destination. AI4. Visiting Chengdu for sports events would be enjoyable.	Hosany et al. (2006)
Attitudes Towards Sports Tourism	ATST1. I think that travelling to attend sports events is a worthwhile activity. ATST2. I believe that sports events offer unique cultural experiences. ATST3. I feel that attending sports events as a tourist is enjoyable. ATST4. Sports tourism is something I would recommend to others.	Funk et al. (2009)
Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination	ISC1. I intend to visit Chengdu in the future to attend sports events. ISC2. I will recommend Chengdu to friends and family as a great place for sports tourism. ISC3. If I have the opportunity, I will visit Chengdu specifically for its sports events. ISC4. Planning a trip to Chengdu for a sports event is on my to-do list.	Ajzen (1991)

Table 2

Operational definitions of related variables

Construct	Operational Definition	Source
Functional Value	The overall assessment evaluates the practical benefits provided by the sports event, including quality, organization, and value for money.	Shonk et al. (2008)
Social Value	The perceived social benefits of attending the sports event include opportunities for socializing, spending time with others, and feeling a sense of community.	Trail et al. (2001)
Emotional Value	The emotional responses and affective experiences evoked by the sports event include excitement, happiness, and creating memorable experiences.	Wann (1995)
Cognitive Image	The beliefs and knowledge about Chengdu's attributes as a sports tourism destination encompass its infrastructure, accessibility, safety, and community support for hosting sports events.	Baloglu et al. (1999)
Affective Image	The emotional responses or feelings towards Chengdu as a sports tourism destination include excitement, relaxation, and enjoyment when considering visiting for sports events.	Hosany et al. (2006)
Attitudes Towards Sports Tourism	The overall evaluation of sports tourism includes perceptions of its worth, cultural enrichment, enjoyment, and the likelihood of recommending it to others.	Funk et al. (2009)
Intentions to Select Chengdu as a Sports Tourism Destination	The likelihood of visiting Chengdu for sports events includes recommending Chengdu to others and planning future trips specifically for sports tourism.	Ajzen (1991)