

The Influence of Mobile Travel Application Attributes on Chinese Consumer Loyalty

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Abstract

This paper comprehensively examines the diverse factors that shape Chinese consumers' loyalty towards mobile tourism applications. We delve into crucial attributes like user experience, trust, satisfaction, social interaction, price competitiveness, and privacy safeguards, which collectively play a pivotal role in determining consumer loyalty. The advent of 5G technology and the seamless integration of social media platforms have elevated the significance of these factors, making them vital in cultivating enduring relationships between consumers and tourism-related mobile applications. Our exploration aims to provide valuable insights for application developers and marketers to enhance user engagement, foster trust, and ultimately, solidify consumer loyalty in the competitive tourism industry.

Keywords

Consumers' Loyalty; Trust; Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

In the digital era, mobile tourism applications have become an integral part of the travel experience for Chinese consumers. However, maintaining consumer loyalty in the face of a vast array of choices and competition in the tourism market is a significant challenge. This loyalty is influenced by a complex web of interrelated factors, each playing a critical role in shaping users' preferences, attitudes, and ultimately, their commitment to a specific application. Understanding and addressing these factors is paramount for mobile tourism applications seeking to maintain and enhance user engagement in today's dynamic and highly competitive market (Mu & Yi, 2024).

This paper thoroughly examines the multifaceted impact of key application attributes on consumer loyalty. We explore how aspects such as user experience, trust, satisfaction, social interaction, price competitiveness, and privacy protections collectively influence consumer behavior and attitudes. As technology continually evolves and social media becomes increasingly integrated into our daily lives, these elements have gained profound significance in shaping the long-term relationships between consumers and mobile tourism platforms. By providing insights into these critical factors, this study aims to assist application developers and marketers in crafting strategies that foster enduring consumer loyalty (Zhang et al., 2023).

2. Literature View

The impact of mobile travel app attributes on Chinese consumer loyalty is a complex and multidimensional issue. This influence is not only reflected in a single factor, but also the result

of multiple factors working together. Firstly, in terms of user experience, its importance in shaping consumer loyalty is self-evident. In the fiercely competitive tourism market, an excellent user experience can often make a travel app stand out. The aesthetics of the platform interface, the simplicity of the operation process, and the smoothness of the transaction experience are all elements that constitute a quality user experience. Especially with the support of 5G technology, travel apps can provide a richer, high-definition visual experience. For example, through virtual reality technology, consumers can preview the actual scene of the tourist destination at home. This unprecedented interactivity and immersion will undoubtedly greatly increase consumer stickiness and loyalty (Khan & DePaoli, 2023). Secondly, trust plays a crucial role in establishing long-term relationships between consumers and travel apps. In the context of increasingly prominent network security issues, consumers are becoming more aware of protecting their personal information. Therefore, travel apps must ensure the security of user data through strict real-name authentication and information filling authentication to win the trust of consumers. This trust not only helps to promote repeated purchase behavior among consumers but also brings word-of-mouth promotion to travel apps, further expanding the user base (Jang & Kim, 2023).

Furthermore, satisfaction is one of the important indicators to measure consumer loyalty. Consumer satisfaction is affected by multiple factors, including consumer integration behavior, contributory integration behavior, and social integration behavior. These integration behaviors can enhance consumers' sense of belonging and participation in travel apps, thereby improving satisfaction and loyalty. At the same time, various feelings consumers experience during the use of travel apps, such as a sense of security, identity, novelty, and comfort, can also significantly affect satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, travel apps need to constantly pay attention to consumer needs and feedback, continuously optimize service quality and user experience to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Cruz-Milán, 2023).

In addition, social interaction plays an increasingly important role in modern travel apps. With the popularization and development of social media, information dissemination and sharing among consumers have become more convenient. Travel apps can take advantage of this trend to establish closer connections and interactions with consumers through social media platforms. For example, travel information, promotional activities, and other information can be released through social platforms such as WeChat to attract consumers' attention and participation. At the same time, the good experience of consumers in using travel apps will also be spread through social media, attracting more potential users. This kind of social interaction not only helps to enhance consumer loyalty but also brings greater brand exposure and market share to travel apps (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Last but not least, the impact of price discounts and privacy protection measures on consumer loyalty is also important. In a price-sensitive market environment, competitive price discounts can attract more consumer attention and choices. At the same time, perfect privacy protection measures are also one of the important considerations for consumers when choosing travel apps. Travel apps need to focus on protecting consumers' personal privacy information from being leaked and abused to win consumers' trust and loyalty (Yi et al., 2022).

In summary, the impact of mobile travel app attributes on Chinese consumer loyalty is multifaceted and interrelated. By optimizing the user experience, enhancing trust, improving satisfaction, strengthening social interaction, and providing competitive price discounts and comprehensive privacy protection measures, travel apps can comprehensively enhance consumer loyalty and consolidate their market position (Li et al., 2022).

3. Method and Analysis

This study adopts a phenomenological qualitative research method to explore in depth how the various attributes of mobile travel applications affect the loyalty of Chinese consumers. In-depth interviews were conducted with frequent users of travel applications to understand the functions and experiences they care about during use. This study selected 15 Chinese consumers aged 18 to 45 who use mobile travel applications at least three times a year to ensure the richness and diversity of the data. The study collected data using semi-structured in-depth interviews, and the questions revolved around various attributes of the application, especially user interface design, personalized services, application reliability, customer service quality, etc. Participants were interviewed through an online platform for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then systematically analyzed using thematic analysis, with NVivo software to assist in organization and coding. The analysis results extracted key themes related to mobile application attributes and their impact on user loyalty.

The interview data revealed several key factors that affect consumer loyalty. First, the ease of use of the application was one of the attributes that respondents paid the most attention to. Most participants said that a simple and intuitive operating experience was one of the main reasons for choosing and continuing to use an application. One respondent explicitly stated, "If the app is too complicated to use, I won't continue to use it even if I get a great offer." This shows that the simplicity of the user interface and the smooth operation of the app are one of the basic elements of consumer loyalty. Secondly, personalized service is also an important factor affecting user loyalty. Participants generally believe that the app improves their experience through personalized recommendations and customized services. For example, one respondent mentioned, "When the app recommends a travel destination that happens to be a place I'm interested in, I feel that it really understands me and is willing to continue using it." Personalized services make users feel cared for and understood, thereby increasing their sense of dependence on the app.

The reliability of the app is also a key factor commonly mentioned by respondents, especially in terms of the accuracy of booking information and order confirmation. Several respondents shared their positive experiences, pointing out that some apps can provide reliable services at critical moments to ensure the success of bookings. For example, one respondent mentioned, "I have used this app for bookings many times and have never encountered any problems, which makes me very trustful of it." This shows that the stable and reliable services provided by the app can significantly enhance consumer loyalty. In addition, the integrated function of customer service is another important aspect of participants' loyalty. Respondents emphasized that when encountering problems, the quick response customer service function can greatly improve their experience. For example, one respondent described their flight cancellation experience, but the app's online customer service quickly resolved the problem, which greatly increased their trust in the app.

In addition to functional factors, the design aesthetics of the app also affected user loyalty to a certain extent. Several respondents said that visually appealing design and intuitive functional layout made them more willing to continue using an app. One respondent pointed out: "It's not just a matter of functionality. If the interface of the app is beautiful and easy to use, I will be more willing to use it all the time." This shows that beautiful design can not only improve user satisfaction, but also enhance their dependence on the app. At the same time, security and trust are also one of the key factors that determine user loyalty. Many participants mentioned that they have high requirements for the security of personal information and payment information. One respondent said: "I am very careful about where to enter my credit card information, and

the security features of this app make me feel very reassured." This shows that the security measures of the app directly affect users' willingness to use and long-term loyalty.

Social influence and evaluation were also considered by respondents as one of the important factors that influence their choice of an app. Many participants mentioned that they would be influenced by friends' recommendations or positive reviews on social media to choose an app. One respondent mentioned: "If my friends or some influencers on social media recommend a travel app, I will be more willing to try it and use it for a long time." This shows that word of mouth and social influence play an important role in the promotion of mobile travel applications. In addition, loyalty programs and reward mechanisms are also effective ways to attract users and maintain their loyalty. Many respondents said that they prefer to use applications that offer point programs or other rewards. One respondent mentioned: "I prefer to choose applications that can accumulate points and redeem discounts in the future because it gives me the motivation to use them for a long time."

4. Conclusion

In summary, this study reveals how multiple key attributes of mobile travel applications affect the loyalty of Chinese consumers. Ease of use, personalized services, reliability, customer service, security and trust, design aesthetics, social influence and loyalty programs are all important factors that drive users to continue using an application. These research findings provide important insights for mobile application developers and marketers, helping them to better meet consumer needs and improve user loyalty in future development and promotion processes. The findings of this paper, also, underscore the multifaceted and interconnected nature of the influence of mobile tourism app attributes on the loyalty of Chinese consumers. It is evident that a holistic approach, encompassing various aspects such as user experience, trust, satisfaction, social interaction, competitive pricing, and robust privacy measures, is essential to significantly boost consumer loyalty and solidify the market position of tourism applications (Jia et al., 2022). By continuously enhancing the user experience, applications can ensure that consumers enjoy using their platform, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat usage and recommendation to others. Fostering trust through transparent practices and reliable services is crucial to building long-term relationships with users. Increasing user satisfaction, not just with the core service but also with ancillary features and customer support, further cements loyalty (Górska-Warsewicz, 2022). Facilitating social interaction within the app creates a sense of community and belongingness, which are powerful motivators for continued engagement (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). Offering competitive pricing not only attracts new users but also retains existing ones by providing value for money. Lastly, robust privacy measures are critical in an era where data security is a top concern for consumers. As the tourism industry continues to evolve rapidly with technological advancements, it is imperative for mobile tourism applications to adapt and refine these strategies to not only maintain but also grow their user base (Razmus, 2021). Staying attuned to user needs and preferences, and incorporating feedback into product development and improvement cycles, will be key to maintaining consumer loyalty in the long run (Raj & Banaszak-Holl, 2021).

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