

## Face it? Or Avoid it? Traveler's Cognitions of Tourism Hassles, Responsiveness and Attitude Tendencies

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### Abstract

The rapid rise of the tourism industry in Taiwan in recent years has led to tourism hassles owing to differences in cultures and customs. Tourism hassles refer to unpleasant experience in the process of traveling. Through the perspective of Taiwanese outbound travellers, this study explores the negative emotions that may arise in multiple aspects of the tourism process to affect the perception of the tourism hassles, shape the attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles among Taiwanese outbound travellers, and conduce to their responsiveness and revisit intention. This study collected 530 valid questionnaires to analyze the perceptions, responsiveness and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles among Taiwan's outbound travellers. The research results find that: (1) Overall, the perceptions of tourism hassles among tourists are consistent; (2) It is verified that different responses can influence the attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles among tourists; (3) Taiwan's outbound travelers are divided into four categories and it is found that Taiwan's tourists are negatively evasive and unwilling to revisit in the face of tourism hassles, which belongs to the cluster of "low revisit intention low action efficacy." Through the results, it is hoped that they can lay the basis for relevant industries to adjust service models in the future and improve the quality of destination tourism.

**Keywords:** Tourism hassles; Responsiveness; Attitude tendency; Outbound traveler

### Introduction

With the rapid changes in the global tourism industry and increased competition, the issues of tourism hassles have gradually received attention in recent years. Sightseeing activities are regarded as an interaction between tourists and destinations. The relationship between the two will affect the travel experience and the follow-up revisit intentions [1,2]. According to study on the tripartite relationship between tourists, service providers and local residents, it is believed that different social backgrounds and cultures will have direct or indirect effects after they come in contact with each other [3,4].

In the process of tourism, eating, accommodation, transportation, guidance, purchase, and travel are considered to be the most important activities and are also listed as important sources of income by most statistical data. Tourism hassles are negative emotions perceived by tourists in the tourism process [5]. And if the negative impression of the tourist destination is serious, it will have a wide impact. If passengers are hassled at sightseeing destinations, which results in a decline in the quality of tourism, it will likely affect their will of revisit in the future [6]. Therefore, when it comes to the problems at tourism destinations, important issues such as the halo effect or the domino effect are the important factors affecting tourists' future choices of travel destinations, or the so-called "Revisit Intention" [7]. It is therefore necessary to conduct more in-depth discussions and research on the effects of tourism hassles on responsiveness and attitude tendencies among travelers. The government must effectively control and reduce problems related to hassles and must comprehensively promote and improve the tourism environment [8].

This study will in depth examine the psychologies, attitudes, and responses of the subjects towards tourism hassles. Through the categories of tourism hassles that have been sorted out, we will learn from the viewpoints of the subjects and understand their attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles and their choices of responses after they encounter such hassles. The results of the study will enable relevant units to effectively make improvement to tourism hassles, thereby

enhancing the environment of the tourist destination, creating good service quality, and shape the image of a beautiful tourist destination.

### Literature Review

#### Tourism hassles

The concept of hassles is derived from Lazarus's Stress Assessment Theory. Personally, it is bothersome to think that what happens daily will cause harms, losses and threats to personal psychologies [9]. Tourism hassles refer to the situation where the tourist encounters frustrating experience in their travels. Tourism hassles can range from subtle disturbances to considerable oppression, problems or difficulties [10]. Therefore, in the process of tourism that covers accommodation, travel, guidance, purchase, and travel, travel hassles can be the garbage, noisy campers, heavy backpacks or the crowds. Other hassles may be minor events, such as the bad weather, loss of personal belongings, inconvenient transportation, disappointments and contentions [11,12].

#### Attitude tendency

The attitude tendency is a psychological phenomenon, which refers to people's inner experience and behavioral tendency. The attitude tendencies of tourists tend to arise from whether or not unsatisfied emotions are generated in their cognition of the tourism scenario, or whether negative emotions are caused by tourism hassles [13]. In general, the attitudes of tourists who have experienced hassles in tourism can be classified into two types, namely, based on their "responses." When

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individuals react and show certain behaviors, such as venting emotions to the service provider, finding and enforcing appeal procedures, or looking for third-party support, they can be categorized as “actively engaged” in terms of their attitudes. And the other type concerns the adjustment of inner emotions. They shift focuses and show passive attitudes, or they try to forget about unpleasant events through pleasant experiences. They are the “negatively evasive” in terms of attitudes [14-16]. From the above, we can see that in the face of different tourism hassles, tourists will have different attitudes. Therefore hypothesis 1 is proposed,

H1: The cognition of tourism hassles has an influence on attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles.

### Responsiveness

When travelers encounter problems that affect the quality of their travels, they will make psychological or behavioral choices to adapt to the current situation [9]. When faced with tourism hassles, the individual's coping strategies include external behavior or internal cognition. The choices mainly include “Emotion Regulation”, “Privately Grumbling” and “Problem-Solving” based on action. This behavior can be divided into two attitudes tendencies: (1) Emotional Tendency: including denial, evasion, refusal, and renunciation, so as to reduce psychological harm and reduce the threat posed by the facts. (2) Problem Solving Tendency: Choosing beneficial methods to solve problems, including following professional instructions, seeking support, familiarizing with new skills, etc. [17]. These two aspects may exist at the same time or influence one another. Those who adapt well will maintain a balanced mood and maintain a good interaction with others [18-20]. This study believes that when the tourist encounters different types of tourism hassles, different responses will influence their attitude tendencies. Based on the results of the comprehensive literature review, hypothesis 2 is proposed, where: Cognition and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles will be influenced by responsiveness [21].

H2-1: Cognition and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles will be affected by Emotion Regulation.

H2-2: Cognition and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles will be affected by Privately Grumbling.

H2-3: Cognition and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles will be affected by Problem-Solving.

## Research Methods

### Research framework

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions, responsiveness and attitudes of Taiwanese outbound travelers towards tourism hassles, and to explore the psychological aspects of the outbound travelers from Taiwan in terms of the research topics. The research framework are three parts: To explore Taiwan's tourist perceptions of tourism hassles in the process of tourism; To explore the attitude of tourists after they encounter tourism hassles; To analyze the mediating effects caused by their responsiveness (Figure 1).

### Research design

The research questionnaire adopts the content analysis method, where questionnaires are distributed in the field and the main source of data is Taiwan's outbound travelers. The content of the questionnaire is divided into five parts, including “Tourism Characteristics among Tourists,” “Perceptions of Tourism Hassles,” “Attitude Tendencies towards Tourism Hassles,” “Responsiveness toward Tourism Hassles” and “Basic Data of

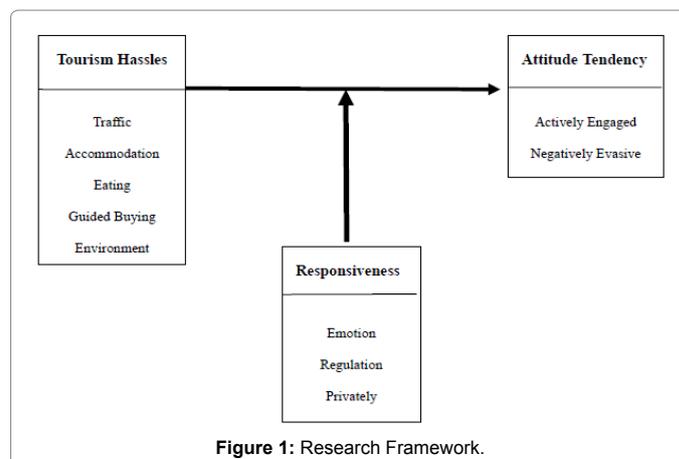


Figure 1: Research Framework.

Tourists,” and measured by using the Likert's five-point scale that ranges from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree.”

### Sampling survey

Regarding the Questionnaire Collection Sites, the three most important international airports in Taiwan were selected: Kaohsiung International Airport in Xiaogang, Taipei Songshan Airport, and Taoyuan CKS Airport. Questionnaires were issued for outbound travelers from Taiwan. It was collected from May of 2015, where holidays and weekdays are included. A total of 600 questionnaires were issued and 530 valid questionnaires were retrieved. The effective recovery rate was 88%.

## Research Results and Discussions

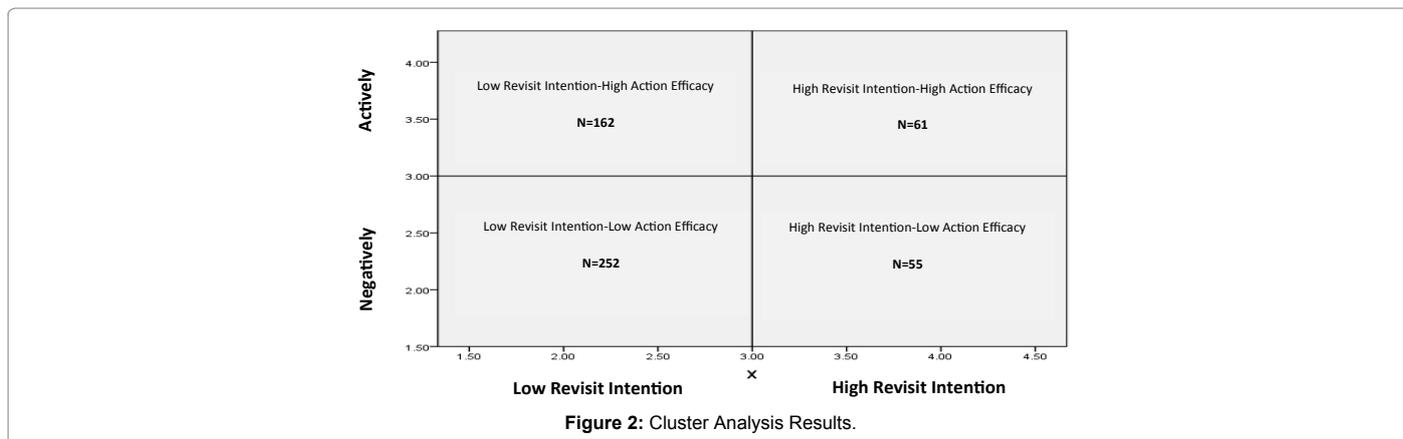
### Structural analysis of samples

According to statistical results, 56.8% of the respondents are “female”, and 43.2% are “male”, so the number of female respondents is slightly higher than number of males respondents. The age group between “21-30 years old” is the majority, accounting for 41.5% of the total respondents, while the age group between “31-40 years old” accounts for 21.7%. As for the level of education, “college/university” is the majority, accounting for 60.0%, and “research institution (above)” account for 22.8%. As for the marital status, most are “unmarried”, accounting for 66.2%. Their residences are mostly located in “Northern Taiwan”, accounting for 53.0%. As for their “profession”, most are students, accounting for 28.1%, which is followed by “industry and commerce” and “service industry”, each accounting for 26.4%. Most of their “personal monthly income” is between “700-1400 US dollars”, accounting for 32.6%.

### Analysis of tourist features

Statistics show that the annual number of trips to foreign countries is mostly “1-3 times”, accounting for 87.9%. The number of days spent abroad is mostly “5 days”, accounting for 36.8%, followed by “7 days or more” accounting for 32.8%. As for the tourism patterns, most are the self-guided tour, accounting for 51.9%, followed by the “group travel”, accounting for 44.5%. As for the purpose of tourism, most are “sightseeing tours”, accounting for 85.7%. Travel companions are mostly “family members and relatives”, accounting for 42.5%, followed by “friends and classmates”, accounting for 27.5%. There are a total of 1592 entries of data for the areas that have been visited. Among them, “Japan and South Korea” are the majority, accounting for 24.3%, followed by “Southeast Asia” accounting for 16.1%.





Constructs	Questions	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Traffic Hassles	I feel troubled by uncomfortable transportation in travel.	4.05	0.80
	I feel troubled by the complicated customs clearance process in travel.	3.97	0.81
	I feel troubled by delay in travel due to traffic congestion in travel.	4.11	0.83
	I feel troubled when I encounter a local driver who does not obey the traffic rules in travel.	3.86	0.88
	I feel troubled when I meet local drivers who charge unreasonable fares in travel.	4.45	0.76
Accommodation Hassles	I feel troubled by the poor service provided by the accommodation in travel.	4.02	0.78
	I feel troubled by the special (sex) service provided the accommodation in travel.	4.00	1.00
	I feel troubled by the noisy accommodation environment in travel.	4.32	0.81
	I feel troubled by poor hygiene in accommodation in travel.	4.55	0.75
Eating Hassles	I feel troubled by the unpalatable local food in travel.	3.27	0.88
	I feel troubled by the poor hygiene of local food in travel.	4.23	0.85
	I feel troubled by poor dining environment in travel.	3.97	0.89
	I feel troubled by the unreasonable price of food in travel.	3.77	0.86
	I feel troubled by the poor attitude of the waiter or waitress in travel.	4.04	0.85
Guided Buying Hassles	I feel troubled by the unattractive attractions in travel.	3.57	0.88
	I feel troubled by the bad attitude of the tour guide in travel.	4.44	0.76
	I feel troubled by the poor attitude of the park guide in travel.	4.26	0.82
	I feel troubled by the invisible pressure exerted by the local shops in travel.	4.28	0.82
	I feel troubled by too many shopping trips in travel.	4.14	0.94
	I feel troubled by local shops that force customers to spend in travel.	4.57	0.71
	I feel troubled by the flawed product quality in my purchase in travel.	4.25	0.76
	I feel troubled by differences in prices of the same goods purchased in travel.	4.02	0.83
	I feel troubled by the unclear price tags in travel.	3.97	0.87
Environment Hassles	I feel troubled by many crowds in travel.	3.85	0.96
	I feel troubled by encountering a police inspection in travel.	3.46	0.89
	I feel troubled by arbitrary cutting in the queue in travel.	4.47	0.71
	I feel troubled by disorder of other tourists in travel.	4.35	0.75
	I feel troubled by the turmoil caused by the local political situation in travel.	4.20	0.90

**Table 2:** Results of Cognitive Analysis of Tourism Hassles.

Note: The score of 1 means the subjects “strongly disagree” with the specified hassle under question. The score of 5 means the subjects “strongly agree” with the specified hassle under question.

The results show that Taiwan’s outbound travelers do not exhibit significant differences in different types of hassles. However, different responses significantly increase the explanatory power of the model, as different responses will have an impact on tourist attitude tendencies. This situation is especially reflected and obvious in the two responses: “Emotion Regulation” and “Privately Grumbling.” The attitude tendencies among Taiwan’s outbound travelers are affected by the two responses in particular, as shown in research hypotheses testing established: H1: Cognition of tourism hassles has an influence on attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles. H2-1: Cognition of tourism hassles and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles are

influenced by Emotion Regulation. H2-2: Cognition of tourism hassles and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles are influenced by Privately Grumbling. H2-3: Cognition of tourism hassles and attitude tendencies towards tourism hassles are influenced by Problem-Solving. The above four hypotheses are established.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

### Research conclusions

This study analyzes and recognizes 4 clusters among the attitude tendencies and revisit intentions among Taiwan’s outbound travelers

Questions		Average Score	Standard Deviation
When I encounter tourism hassles, my attitude is...			
Actively Engaged	I will definitely complain because this is my responsibility.	3.42	0.91
	I will definitely complain. Although my action is not friendly, I can make the service provider alerted.	3.63	0.90
	I will definitely complain because customers have the right to do so.	3.67	0.87
	I will definitely complain because it provides me with a solution to the problem.	3.61	0.91
Negatively Evasive	I do not necessarily complain because the complainant behavior makes me feel disgusted.	3.36	0.93
	I don't come complain because the subsequent complainant behavior only brings me more frustrations.	3.28	0.99
	I do not necessarily complain. Even if the situation bad, the complainant behavior has always made me feel embarrassed	3.45	0.98
	I do not necessarily complain because I do not often encounter tourism hassles.	2.96	1.02

Table 3: Results of Analysis of Attitude Tendencies towards Tourism Hassles.

Questions		Average Score	Standard Deviation
When I encounter tourism hassles, my response is...			
Emotion Regulation	I will not be too serious about it.	2.87	0.99
	I will try to forget about it.	2.96	1.00
	I will not let this matter affect me.	3.40	1.02
	I try not to let negative experience affect my chances of visiting again.	3.38	1.06
	I will not let the people around me know how bad it is.	2.46	1.00
	I respect the local amenities or customs of my destination.	3.97	0.85
Privately Grumbling	The appeal will waste me too much time.	3.20	1.04
	The appeal will undermine the harmonious atmosphere of tourism.	3.24	1.04
	The appeal will make me spend more money.	3.03	0.96
	It will take too much time to find the channel for the appeal.	3.35	0.98
	The contention after the appeal is not what I want.	3.43	0.94
Problem-Solving	The remedy after the appeal is acceptable.	3.56	0.81
	I will immediately report to the relevant local unit or the person in charge.	3.42	0.86
	I will immediately express my emotions to the counter-party.	3.49	0.91
	I will try to communicate with the counter-party.	3.34	0.97
	I will avoid traveling to the same area again next time.	3.49	0.96
	I plan the confrontation and actually file the appeal.	3.39	0.88
	I will actively face and deal with it.	3.45	0.86

Table 4: Analysis Results of Responsiveness toward Tourism Hassles.

through the types of tourism hassles. The 4 clusters are “Low Revisit intention-High Action Efficacy,” “High Revisit Intention-High Action Efficacy,” “High Revisit Intention-Low Action Efficacy” and “Low Revisit Intention-Low Action Efficacy.” And they are used to understand the intensity of responsiveness and the level of Revisit Intention among different clusters. This study found that out of the sampled 530 outbound travelers in Taiwan, the “Low Revisit intention-Low Action Efficacy” cluster accounts for the majority, indicating that Taiwan’s outbound travelers are mostly negatively evasive tourists who would resort to the Emotion Regulation method. They tend to inform friends and relatives around them and they are less willing to return to the tourist destination after such hassles. Research results find that tourists overall show consistent cognition of tourism hassles. Through the hierarchical regression analysis, it is verified that the responsiveness has an impact on the tourism hassles and their attitude tendencies. In terms of responsiveness, Emotion Regulation and Privately Grumbling have a significant positive effect on the attitude tendencies. Research shows that among Taiwan’s outbound travelers, the Emotion Regulation method is more often adopted among younger groups.

### Academic contributions

This study has explored the possible causes of Taiwan’s outbound travelers to build constructs of tourism hassles through literature review and sample collection and analysis. Tourism hassles are precisely the unpleasant experience encountered in the tourism process. It has an important relationship with “eating, accommodation, transportation,

guidance, buying, and tourism.” In the tourism industry, all service providers must interact with the tourists. It is also possible for them to bring trouble to the tourists in a less tangible way. The descriptions of hassles concerning traffic, accommodation, eating, guided buying, and the environment can be used as a reference for future service providers to improve their business processes in the future. Thus, this study aims to help the government or industry to improve the tourism environment of destinations and establish a more friendly travel environment from the perspective of academic research.

### Practical implications

In the face of the current tourism environment, governments of various countries have already formulated relevant laws for tourism to protect the rights and interests of tourists. To prevent such occurrences, apart from clear regulations, the most important thing is to establish a sound and effective channel that will assist people in completing the process of appeal, and even simplify the appeal process. From an industrialist perspective, the problems caused by service failures at all levels should be avoided as much as possible. Tourism is a series of continuous experiences. For service providers, a good mechanism for management of customer relationships need to established to immediately identify and make up for the hassles caused by the service providers, and to reduce the subsequent transmission of negative word-of-mouth. According to this study matrix, it is found that the core issue lies in how to direct the “Low Revisit intention-Low Action Efficacy” cluster to the “High Revisit Intention-High Action Efficacy”

cluster, which is also the core meaning and the contribution of this study to management.

### Suggestions for the future research

This study summarizes hassles concerning eating, accommodation, transportation, guidance, purchase, and travel in the travel process and is biased towards the description of service mistakes. However, as tourism hassles take on a variety of forms, the difficulties encountered by different types of tourists are still to be followed in future research. This study attempts to showcase the hassles most likely to be caused by the service provider through the examination of the tourism hassles. However, as many complex factors can contribute to tourism hassles, people with different cultural backgrounds will necessarily have different views and responses. Thus, it is suggested that future research covers tourist of different nationalities and discusses about tourism characteristics in more details. Also, the appeal process and the views of the public sector can be referred to for a more complete analysis on tourism hassles.

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