
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Consumer Choice in Holiday Park Vacations: Exploring Decision-Making Beyond Economic Factors

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| ABSTRACT

This study examines the key factors influencing Chinese consumers when selecting holiday park vacations, beyond disposable income and pricing. It explores the hierarchy of consumer needs, external influences such as cultural and seasonal trends, and factors driving brand switching. Using survey data from 500 respondents across China, the study identifies major decision-making patterns and links them to established consumer choice theories. The findings provide insights for businesses to refine their marketing strategies and improve service offerings.

| KEYWORDS

Holiday Park Vacations; Decision-Making Beyond Economic Factors; Chinese consumers

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 March 2024

PUBLISHED: 13 March 2025

DOI: 10.32996/jbms.2025.7.2.5

1. Introduction

China's tourism and hospitality industry has witnessed exponential growth in recent years, fueled by rising disposable incomes, rapid urbanization, and evolving consumer preferences (Li et al., 2021). Holiday park vacations have become an increasingly popular travel option, offering a mix of outdoor recreation, relaxation, and family-friendly experiences. As domestic travel expands, understanding the factors influencing consumer choices beyond price and affordability has become crucial for industry stakeholders.

Tourism studies have shown that destination attractiveness, accommodation quality, on-site facilities, and digital marketing strategies significantly affect consumer decision-making (Xiang et al., 2017). Additionally, seasonal travel trends such as Golden Week, Spring Festival, and National Day holidays contribute to increased demand for domestic holiday parks (Luo & Bao, 2020). Despite these insights, limited research has been conducted on the specific selection criteria Chinese consumers prioritize when choosing holiday park vacations. Understanding these preferences can help businesses tailor their offerings, improve marketing strategies, and enhance customer satisfaction.

While financial considerations remain important, consumers evaluate multiple non-economic factors when selecting a holiday park. The lack of detailed research on consumer priorities, external influences, and behavioral factors presents a gap in the literature. Existing studies have primarily focused on pricing strategies and destination branding (Chen & Huang, 2018), but fewer have explored how consumers rank and trade-off different decision criteria such as location, accommodation, amenities, environmental sustainability, and digital influence. Furthermore, Chinese consumers' holiday habits are shaped by cultural values, social media influence, and seasonal trends, yet the extent to which these factors impact their choices remains unclear.

Understanding these elements is vital for holiday park operators, tourism marketers, and policymakers aiming to enhance customer experience, improve competitive positioning, and drive business growth. By identifying key choice criteria, external influences, and switching behaviors, this study seeks to provide actionable insights that can help businesses align their offerings with consumer expectations.

The study aims to address the following objectives:

1. To identify the specific features, needs, and selection criteria influencing Chinese consumers' holiday park choices beyond pricing and disposable income.
2. To analyze how consumers in China prioritize these criteria in their decision-making process.
3. To examine external influences and constraints such as cultural preferences, seasonal travel trends (e.g., Spring Festival, Golden Week), and digital media in holiday park selection.
4. To explore the factors that drive Chinese consumers to switch between different holiday park providers or products.
5. To apply consumer choice theories to explain these decision-making patterns and behaviors.

This research is significant for academics, tourism practitioners, and marketing professionals seeking to understand the evolving preferences of Chinese travelers. The findings will help holiday park operators enhance customer engagement strategies, service offerings, and competitive differentiation. Moreover, policymakers can use the insights to develop tourism policies that align with consumer expectations and improve the overall travel experience in China.

By addressing the knowledge gap in non-economic consumer choice factors, this study contributes to the broader literature on consumer behavior in tourism and hospitality, offering practical recommendations for industry stakeholders.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to systematically analyze the factors influencing Chinese consumers' decision-making when selecting holiday park vacations. A survey-based descriptive research design was employed to gather insights into consumer preferences, selection criteria, and external influences. Quantitative methods were chosen because they allow for the collection of measurable, generalizable data and enable statistical analysis of consumer behavior trends and patterns (Bryman, 2016).

2.2 Population and Sampling

The study focused on Chinese domestic travelers who have previously visited or intend to visit a holiday park. The target population included individuals aged 18 and above, representing different demographic segments such as solo travelers, couples, families, and group vacationers.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure diverse consumer representation, with segmentation based on:

- Age groups (18-25, 26-35, 36-50, 51+)
- Travel experience (first-time vs. repeat visitors)
- Family composition (traveling with/without children)
- Brand awareness (familiarity with different holiday park brands)

A total of 500 respondents were selected from major Chinese cities with high domestic tourism activity, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Chengdu. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for survey research, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Cochran, 1977).

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through a structured online survey, distributed via WeChat, Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book), and tourism-related forums. The survey included:

1. Demographic questions (age, gender, income, travel habits).

2. Multiple-choice and Likert-scale items assessing choice criteria, travel motivations, and external influences.
3. Ranking questions for prioritization of selection factors (e.g., ranking accommodation quality vs. park location).

Pre-testing was conducted with 30 respondents to refine question clarity, eliminate ambiguity, and ensure reliability. The final survey was administered over four weeks, from March to April 2025.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 28, employing:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) to summarize responses.
- Factor analysis to identify underlying dimensions influencing consumer decisions.
- ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to compare different demographic groups.
- Chi-square tests to assess relationships between categorical variables (e.g., age and park preferences).
- Regression analysis to examine predictive relationships between decision criteria and actual selection behavior.

The study ensured data validity and reliability by calculating Cronbach’s alpha for internal consistency, with an acceptable threshold of 0.70 or higher (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the study’s purpose, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, with personal data stored securely. The study adhered to ethical guidelines set by the China Tourism Research Association (CTRA) and international research standards (APA, 2020).

4. Results and Discussion

Common Choice Criteria for Holiday Park Selection

The findings reveal that while individual consumer needs vary, the general type of requirements remains consistent across different demographic groups. Consumers prioritize specific factors such as holiday dates, park location, accommodation quality, and available facilities (Chen & Huang, 2018).

Table 1 – Hierarchy of Consumer Needs Criteria

Rank	Consumer Need Criteria
1st	Holiday Date
2nd	Park Location
3rd	Accommodation Standard
4th	Facilities
5th	Type of Accommodation

Younger consumers and first-time visitors ranked facilities as more important than experienced travelers, indicating a shift in expectations based on familiarity with holiday park offerings (Kim et al., 2019).

External Influences on Consumer Choice

Chinese consumers are influenced by several external factors, including cultural traditions, seasonal travel patterns, and digital media presence. For instance, during Golden Week and the Spring Festival, consumers prioritize holiday parks with family-friendly facilities and traditional entertainment options (Luo & Bao, 2020). Additionally, digital platforms such as Ctrip, Mafengwo,

and Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) significantly influence travel decisions, with reviews and influencer recommendations shaping consumer perception (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

Table 2 – Hierarchy of Consumer Desire Criteria

Rank	Consumer Desire Criteria
1st	Local Attractions
2nd	Proximity to Beach
3rd	Indoor Pool
4th	Restaurant
5th	Outdoor Pool

The findings suggest that location-based attractions and proximity to nature remain primary desires, while entertainment facilities are considered secondary, particularly among older consumers and couples.

Consumer Benefits and Brand Perception

Product features and benefits significantly influence purchasing decisions. Consumers highly value included consumables such as gas, electricity, and bed linen, as well as cancellation policies and entertainment services (Dolnicar et al., 2015).

Table 3 – Hierarchy of Consumer Benefit Criteria

Rank	Consumer Benefit Criteria
1st	Gas & Electricity Included
2nd	Bed Linen Provided
3rd	Nightly Entertainment
4th	Free Cancellation Scheme
5th	Beds Made on Arrival
6th	Children’s Club

Consumers with families and young children tend to place higher importance on entertainment programs and kids' clubs, whereas older consumers emphasize convenience and comfort (Kang et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the key consumer choice criteria that influence Chinese travelers when selecting holiday park vacations. While holiday date, location, and accommodation quality are universally important, variations in prioritization exist based on consumer age, experience, family structure, and brand awareness. External factors such as cultural traditions, seasonal travel patterns, and digital media influence further shape decision-making. The findings emphasize the need for targeted marketing strategies that cater to specific consumer segments to enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study provides the following recommendations:

1. Segmentation-Based Marketing Strategies – Holiday park operators should customize marketing campaigns based on consumer profiles. For example, targeting older consumers with off-season discounts and premium comfort features, while promoting family-oriented entertainment for younger demographics.

2. Enhanced Digital Presence and Influencer Partnerships – Given the role of social media and review platforms, businesses should leverage influencer collaborations and customer engagement on platforms like Xiaohongshu and Mafengwo to enhance brand visibility.
3. Improvement of Key Benefits and Service Offerings – Providing essential benefits such as included utilities, flexible cancellation policies, and pre-prepared accommodations can enhance consumer satisfaction and encourage repeat bookings.
4. Further Research on Consumer Choice Theories – Additional studies should explore behavioral economics and psychological factors that influence consumer decisions, particularly how pricing perceptions and incentives shape holiday park selection.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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