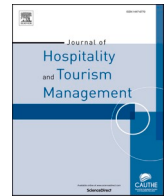


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How does national image affect tourists' civilized tourism behavior? The mediating role of psychological ownership

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ABSTRACT

Encouraging tourists to engage in civilized tourism behavior is paramount in destination environment and culture protection. However, the uncivilized behavior of Chinese tourists when traveling abroad has sparked concern that such behaviors might have caused environmental damage to the destination and tarnished the international image of China. Despite the seriousness of uncivilized behavior, quantitative research on this topic is scarce. Thus, we attempted to identify an optimal solution for tourism management authorities by investigating the mechanism underlying the formation of civilized tourism behavioral intention. We found that national image is a novel construct that drives tourists to adopt civilized behaviors, and proposed an integrated model to explain how national image influences civilized tourism behavioral intention. Participants were 468 Chinese tourists, who completed a survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), and the results revealed that national identity, patriotism, and psychological ownership played full mediating roles in the relationship between national image and civilized tourism behavioral intention. This study has implications for Chinese tourism management authorities, and could help to develop schemes to effectively advocate civilized tourism behavior.

1. Introduction

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), China is still the world's largest tourism market, accounting for one-fifth of international tourism spending and with around 140 million inhabitants traveling internationally (UNWTO, 2019). However, there are various problems surrounding the prosperity of outbound tourism, among which the uncivilized behavior of Chinese tourists has sparked concern. Using data derived from investigations into mainland Chinese tourists and Hong Kong residents, [Loi and Pearce \(2015\)](#) demonstrated that common uncivilized behaviors mainly manifest as a violation of social ethics, including jumping queues, littering, speaking loudly in public places, smoking anywhere, and spitting on the floor. It is also worth noting that, in addition to the basic ethics code, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" is also an important code of conduct for tourists ([Zhang et al., 2019](#)). Tourists who are not familiar with the local culture might also be considered uncivilized by the locals. This paper therefore defined uncivilized tourism behavior as tourist behavior that violates the socially recognized moral norms of the destination and disrespects the local culture and customs. Such uncivilized behaviors can drain local tourism

resources and have a negative effect on the cultural atmosphere, other tourists' mood, and the tourism experience. Friction between tourists and local people has also been escalating ([Loi & Pearce, 2015](#); [Zhang et al., 2019](#)), which has led to a resistance to welcome Chinese tourists. This has restricted the development of China's tourism industry, and has even blemished the national image of China ([Zhang et al., 2019](#)). The Chinese government has even issued policies to curb such uncivilized behavior. It is vital to explore the mechanism underlying the formation of civilized tourism behavior in Chinese tourists from a new perspective.

As a soft power, national image is a combination of a country's cognition of itself and that of other interacting subjects in the international system ([Boulding, 1959](#)). National image can be divided into self-image and the image held by people in other countries or regions ([Boulding, 1959](#)). Previous studies have been primarily concerned with the projection of a positive national image in the eyes of non-nationals ([Anholt, 2006](#); [Chaulagain et al., 2019](#); [Maher & Carter, 2011](#); [Nadeau et al., 2008](#)). It is worth noting that national image is projected not only to foreigners, but also to a country's own citizens, both of whom are equally important in shaping national image and a nation's branding ([Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010](#)). Compared with foreigners, citizens tend

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to assess their country more realistically (Anholt, 2006) and give more value to national image, as it is a status symbol that involves them directly. However, only a few studies have discussed citizens' perception of national image (Ketsba & Lasariya, 2020; Yu et al., 2015) and the influence of this perception on citizens' positive emotions (Che-Ha et al., 2016). The question still remains as to whether citizens' perception of national image affects their behavior, and, if so, what the influencing mechanism underlying this effect might be; these points have been somewhat overlooked in the literature. A country is one of the largest collective organizations that people are connected with, which is considered as the source of prestige, self-esteem, and pride (Druckman, 1994). Given the role of an organization's image in guiding the actions of its members (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), we explored whether the promotion of national image affects civilized tourism behavior to bridge the gap in the current research.

Positive national image contributes to citizens' national attachment (Jankeviciute, 2010), which involves national identity and patriotism (Smith & Tryce, 2019). National identity is a subjective sense of belonging to a certain nation, while patriotism refers to a deep emotional attachment to the nation, both of which can guide individual actions (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Marinovic, 2017; Smith & Tryce, 2019). Individuals have been reported to increase their self-esteem through patriotism and national identity, which helps them to establish a close bond with their country (Druckman, 1994; Zou & Zuo, 2018). However, few studies have discussed whether forming a close bond to one's own country can prompt citizens to act in a way that maintains their country's positive image. This paper proposes that when individuals realize that they represent these larger entities (nations), they are more aware of how their actions could affect national image. Furthermore, when individuals are closely connected to their country, they will incorporate the nation into their self-concept, thus creating psychological ownership (PO) towards the nation. PO is a psychological state in which an individual feels that a target object belongs to them, which can motivate the individual to adopt a positive behavior towards the target object (Pierce et al., 2003). PO theory argues that the self-identity and emotional involvement with the target object will stimulate PO (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). In the present context, national identity impels people to view their country as an extension of themselves and patriotism enables them to establish emotional contact with their nation, and thus PO emerges. PO towards one's homeland may encourage citizens to behave more morally when traveling abroad, which is a novel perspective from which to study the mechanism underlying the formation of civilized tourism behavior.

The research framework of this paper follows the attitude theory proposed by Bagozzi (1992) (i.e., the cognitive-affective-behavioral framework). Meanwhile, we applied PO theory to the context of tourism, and explored the mechanism underlying the formation of civilized tourism behavior using quantitative research methods to bridge the gap in the literature. In the next section, we outline the core concepts investigated in this study and the eight proposed hypotheses. In the subsequent sections, we present the research methods and data analysis. The last section discusses the results and describes the implications, as well as the limitations of this research and future research directions.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

2.1. The relationship between national image and civilized tourism behavioral intention

Since the mid-1960s, national image has gradually become a popular topic in international marketing, communication disciplines, and public relations research. National image is the overall, unified image of country and nation (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015), and is shaped by various elements, such as a country's culture, history, economy, politics, and technology (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). National image is composed of an affective part and a cognitive part (Buhmann &

Ingenhoff, 2015). The cognitive component of national image refers to the beliefs and knowledge people hold about a nation, while the affective component is people's emotional response to a country (Maher & Carter, 2011). This research focused on the national cognitive image because of its descriptiveness and measurability (Walmsley & Young, 1998), and also because it can describe citizens' perception of a country's situation, characteristics, and capabilities more objectively than the emotional component (Knight et al., 2003). Thus, this study took the cognitive national image as the research object to conceptualize the cognitive stage of attitude theory.

National image has been found to affect behavior. In international marketing, consumers' perception of national image is an important cue when considering whether to buy products (Anholt, 2006; Maher & Carter, 2011). In the context of tourism, national image influences tourists' future travel intentions (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Kani et al., 2017). The existing literature has studied a country's image of the other (Anholt, 2006; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Maher & Carter, 2011; Nadeau et al., 2008), and there is still a lack of research on national self-image. Druckman (1994) believes that organizational image plays a unique role in shaping its members' actions, and that it can explain individual behavior. Since a country is a large collective organization, we hypothesized that national image as perceived by citizens can also influence their behavior when traveling abroad. The hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Positive national image has a positive effect on tourists' civilized tourism behavioral intention.

2.2. The relationship between national image and national identity

One's country is an important object through which self-identity and self-concept are defined. As a collective identity, national identity describes a sense of connection between oneself and the country, and the subjective sense of belonging to a certain country (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Based on the research of Smith (1994) and Li and Liu (2018), we defined national identity as a sense of belonging, honor, and responsibility to a country. Identity is shaped and modified by how individuals feel about other people's understanding of their own social groups (Dao & Heidt, 2018). As an changeable force, image often plays a role in shaping identity, and requires members to reconstruct their organizational self-consciousness (Gioia et al., 2000). The change of image is likely to affect and alter the subsequent concept of identity and members' perception of their identity (Gioia et al., 2000). National self-image is a reflection of citizens' national identity (Pettersson, 2001). More recently, the definition of national identity has included the representation of significant historical, cultural, or technological achievements using representative symbols to convey a positive country image (Georgescu & Botescu, 2004). When these symbols resonate with people at the cultural level, they will identify and establish a strong connection with their motherland, feeding into their sense of belonging (Kwok, 2015). Thus, this paper proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Positive national image has a positive effect on tourists' national identity.

2.3. The relationship between national image and patriotism

Patriotism is the emotional attachment to one's own country (Berns, 1997), and represents the degree of love and pride for the country. Based on the research of Schatz et al. (1999) and Smith and Tryce (2019), patriotism can be divided into three different but related varieties, that is, symbolic patriotism, uncritical patriotism, and constructive patriotism. Symbolic patriotism is analogous to national pride and is associated with feelings of genuine pride and joy that stem from a country's achievements (Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003). Constructive patriotism is a critique based on love for the state (Rajman et al., 2008). In this case, criticisms of the state's actions are driven by the desire for a better

development of the nation (Parker, 2010). Uncritical patriotism is an unchanging attachment to the country, and includes an intolerance of criticism of the country, unquestionable positive evaluations of the country, and unswerving loyalty (Schatz et al., 1999). These three varieties of patriotism are not exclusive of each other. A key difference between them lies in how citizens view their relationship with the state, and is not reliant on whether an individual is patriotic or not (Schatz et al., 1999). Thus, we considered it appropriate to measure and analyze these three dimensions of patriotism.

Patriotism is derived from cultural heritage, tradition, and national symbols (Berns, 1997; Marinkovic, 2017), and appears when personal values are consistent with national ones (Marinkovic, 2017). To a certain extent, national image reflects the values that a country wishes to convey, which can be represented by numerous national symbols. Thus, people's evaluation of the national image is directly related to their feelings towards the country, which can range from indifference and alienation to closeness and devotion, as well as to the depth of their patriotic feelings. It has been proposed that a positive national image helps to awaken citizens' sentimental attachment to the country (Jankeviciūtė, 2010). Thus, this paper made the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Positive national image has a positive effect on tourists' patriotism.

2.4. The relationship between national identity and psychological ownership

PO is a state in which an individual feels that an object (tangible or intangible) is "mine" or "ours" (Pierce et al., 2001) and is by nature a possessive feeling. The "target object" of PO can be as small as a seat, and as large as a destination or even a country (Brylka et al., 2015; Kumar & Nayak, 2019; Zhang & Xu, 2019). In this paper, the concept of PO refers to how much people feel that their country belongs to them or to internal groups (Brylka et al., 2015). Self-concept is closely associated with PO, and stems from an individual's feelings about being a member of a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identification with an object may lead to the object being perceived as an extension of oneself, which extends self-concept. There is already evidence that individuals' self-concept can include destinations or places (Belk, 1988). Furthermore, the tourism literature has indicated that destination identification can increase the emotional connection tourists have with a destination, which contributes to tourists' PO of a destination (Kumar & Nayak, 2019). Moreover, identification with larger social units, such as a country, can help individuals get a better sense of who they are and how they feel about themselves (Markus et al., 1996, pp. 857–913). PO towards a country develops when individual considers themselves as a member of the country (Brylka et al., 2015). National identity provides an avenue through which to psychologically connect with a state; thus the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 4. Tourists' national identity has a positive effect on their psychological ownership.

2.5. The relationship between patriotism and psychological ownership

PO can develop through investment of, for example, time, energy, money, and emotion, in the target object (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). This investment means that individuals will associate the target with themselves and consider it as an extension of themselves, thus promoting the emergence of PO. Research has found that consumers can develop a sense of attachment and possession towards online music streaming services through creative activities, such as creating playlists (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017). The host's attachment to the Airbnb platform and peer hosts can also lead to PO towards Airbnb (Lee et al., 2019). Attachment has been found to play an essential role in developing emotionally driven possession of an object (Pierce et al., 2003). Patriotism is an expression of love and deep attachment to one's own country (Berns,

1997), which may facilitate incorporation of the country into an individual's self-concept and, consequently, encourage the development of PO. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5. Tourists' patriotism has a positive effect on their psychological ownership.

2.6. The relationship between national identity and civilized tourism behavioral intention

Identification with a social unit motivates individuals to act in a specific way at a specific time (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). The normative values, characteristics, and status of a social group to which individuals belong make them feel obliged to fulfill their obligations within this social unit (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Hence, national identity is often used to predict or affect collective behavior (Chen et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). As a specific form of collective identity, national identity has been shown to influence individual consumption behavior. For example, national identity is positively related to consumers' willingness to buy domestic products (Verlegh, 2007). In the context of tourism, social identity has also been shown to significantly affect the collective behavior and attitudes of residents (Chen et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). For instance, the group identity of Chinese tourists may lead them to restrain from behaving in an uncivilized manner for fear of "losing collective face" (Zhang et al., 2019). Thus, this paper argues that national identity strengthens the connection between individuals and their country, which compels citizens to reflect on and avoid their uncivilized behaviors in the context of outbound tourism. The proposed hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 6. Tourists' national identity has a positive effect on their civilized tourism behavioral intention.

2.7. The relationship between patriotism and civilized tourism behavioral intention

Patriotism, as a deep emotional attachment to one's perceived motherland, can result in a connectedness between individuals and their country (Marinkovic, 2017). People with strong patriotic feelings may even object to behaviors or expressions that draw attention to the shortcomings and weakness of the country (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Patriotism creates a pattern of behavior that is often self-sacrificing (Marinkovic, 2017), and can cause individuals to prioritize national interests over personal interests (Feshbach, 1990). Since uncivilized tourism behaviors may have a destructive influence on a national image, we can predict that people with strong patriotic feelings will pay more attention to their behaviors when traveling abroad. We therefore made the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7. Tourists' patriotism has a positive effect on their civilized tourism behavioral intention.

2.8. The relationship between psychological ownership and civilized tourism behavioral intention

Prior research has shown that, once PO has been established, there is an improvement in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. Chang et al. (2012) confirmed that employees who developed a sense of PO towards the hotel brand for which they worked were more inclined to take actions that would be beneficial to the hotel. In addition to employees, Airbnb hosts are also influenced by their PO towards the Airbnb platform, in that an increased PO was associated with more organizational citizenship behaviors (Lee et al., 2019). As far as tourist destinations are concerned, it has been found that tourists' PO can significantly affect their willingness to recommend and revisit a destination (Kumar & Nayak, 2019). Furthermore, tourists' willingness to pay for costs going towards protection of a tourist destination has also been found to

increase as a result of PO (Lee et al., 2013). Destination residents' PO also stimulates place citizenship behavior (Zhang & Xu, 2019) and environmentally responsible behavior (Liu et al., 2021). The above literature indicates that PO impels individuals to invest more effort to keep the “target object” in good condition. We can infer that individuals will exhibit civilized tourism behavior during travel abroad because of PO towards their own country. Accordingly, we made the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8. Tourists' psychological ownership has a positive effect on their civilized tourism behavioral intention.

The conceptual model is shown in Fig. 1.

3. Methods and results

3.1. Measurement

The constructs in this study were adapted from the previous literature. We modified and rephrased some items to make them more applicable to the Chinese context to develop a formal scale. A 7-point Likert scale was used to rate all the items, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). National image was assessed using 17 items taken from Nadeau et al. (2008), Knight et al. (2003), and Wang et al. (2012). To measure national identity, 5 items from Li and Liu (2018) were included. Patriotism was measured using 8 items adapted from Huddy and Khatib (2007) and Smith and Tryce (2019). Respondents were asked to assess their PO towards their homeland using 5 items adapted from Van Dyne and Pierce (2004). In addition, 6 items from China.com.cn. (2006) were used to assess civilized tourism behavioral intention.

3.2. Data collection

The data were collected from the largest questionnaire survey platform in China, named “Sojump”, which is a professional online questionnaire survey, evaluation, and voting platform with a wide range of users that has been widely used in academic research in China. We conducted the web-based online survey from March 19, 2020 to April 23, 2020. The respondents completed the online questionnaire about civilized tourism behavior according to their experience of traveling abroad. Given that our target group was Chinese outbound tourists, we first asked the following screening question: Have you traveled abroad in the past year? If the answer was “no”, the online survey automatically came to an end. We collected 533 responses. 468 responses were used for final analysis after eliminating invalid questionnaires.

Table 1 shows detailed demographic information of participants. Of the 468 respondents, 47.86% were male and 52.14% were female. Most respondents were aged from 19 to 25 years (56.41%) and 26–35 years (27.14%). More than 90% of respondents held a college or university degree. The characteristics of respondents in this study are in line with statistics published by the China Tourism Research Academy (CTRA, 2019) about China's outbound tourism population. Specifically, the majority of Chinese outbound travelers were of the post-80s and post-90s generation and most of them had received a college or higher education, reflecting the current situation of Chinese outbound tourism. The data also showed that the respondents' chosen tourist destinations were mainly in Asia (53.21%) and Europe (24.15%).

3.3. Measurement model

The theoretical properties of latent constructs were evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A five-factor measurement model was estimated, and the data fit model well ($\chi^2/df = 2.07$, CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.929, SRMR = 0.048, RMSEA = 0.048). All factor loadings exceeded 0.5, except for the two following items: “Chinese people are hard-working” and “People should work hard to move this country in a

Table 1
Demographic details of the sample (N = 468).

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	224	47.86
Female	244	52.14
<i>Age</i>		
18 and below	17	3.63
19–25	264	56.41
26–35	127	27.14
36–45	50	10.68
46 and above	10	2.14
<i>Education</i>		
High school	31	6.62
Associate degree	32	6.84
University degree	269	57.48
Master degree	103	22.01
Doctoral degree	33	7.05
<i>Distribution area of tourist destinations</i>		
Asia	249	53.21
Europe	113	24.15
South America	9	1.92
North America	65	13.89
Africa	2	0.43
Oceania	30	6.41

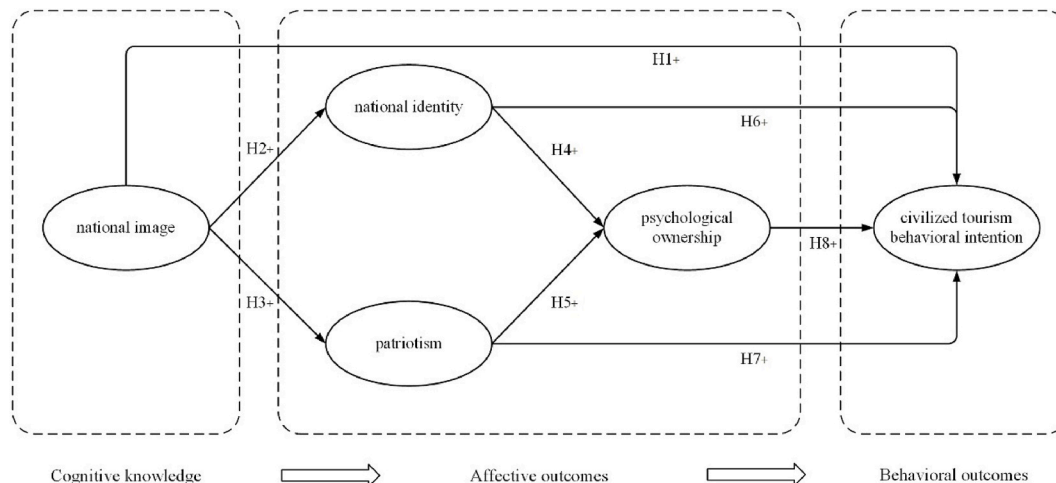


Fig. 1. The conceptual model.

positive direction". After eliminating these two items, the model provided a good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 1.99$, CFI = 0.944, TLI = 0.937, SRMR = 0.046, RMSEA = 0.046).

Then, we examined the two high-order measures of country image and patriotism. According to [Marsh and Hocevar \(1985\)](#), if the target coefficient of the first-order and second-order model is close to 1, then the second-order CFA can replace the first-order CFA, simplifying the model. The target coefficient of national image and patriotism both were 0.99 in this study, and so we re-estimated the overall second-order model. The index revealed a good fit with the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.05$, CFI

= 0.938, TLI = 0.933, SRMR = 0.058, RMSEA = 0.047). National image was significantly measured by national characteristics ($\beta = 0.694$, $p < 0.001$), national capacity ($\beta = 0.809$, $p < 0.001$), environmental conditions ($\beta = 0.837$, $p < 0.001$), and national relationship ($\beta = 0.602$, $p < 0.001$). Patriotism was significantly measured by symbolic patriotism ($\beta = 0.739$, $p < 0.001$), constructive patriotism ($\beta = 0.785$, $p < 0.001$), and uncritical patriotism ($\beta = 0.624$, $p < 0.001$).

[Tables 2 and 3](#) show the reliability and validity of the main constructs, which included National image (national characteristics, national capacity, environmental conditions, and national relationships),

Table 2
Confirmatory factor analysis (N = 468).

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD.	Standard Factor Loading (Sig.)	Item Reliability	Composite Reliability	Convergence Validity
					R-Square	CR	AVE
National characteristics	Chinese people are friendly	5.75	.797	0.662 ***	0.438	0.887	0.569
	Chinese people are helpful	5.82	.873	0.748 ***	0.560		
	Chinese people are polite	5.83	.909	0.766 ***	0.587		
	Chinese people are trustworthy	5.78	.875	0.799 ***	0.638		
	Chinese people are honest	5.82	.892	0.797 ***	0.635		
	Chinese people are dedicated	5.90	.838	0.744 ***	0.554		
National capacity	China plays an important role in world politics	6.17	.841	0.840 ***	0.706	0.903	0.653
	China has an advanced economy	6.18	.926	0.881 ***	0.776		
	China has achieved a high level of modernization	6.08	.961	0.819 ***	0.671		
	Chinese people have a high quality of life	6.07	.943	0.840 ***	0.706		
	China has advanced technology	6.10	.822	0.637 ***	0.406		
Environmental conditions	China pays attention to environmental issues	5.54	.883	0.866 ***	0.750	0.914	0.780
	China has an effective environmental protection scheme	5.46	.893	0.890 ***	0.792		
	China has strict controls over environmental pollution	5.38	.935	0.894 ***	0.799		
National relationships	China has a good relationship with the West	5.65	.892	0.804 ***	0.646	0.775	0.632
	China has a close tie with the West in terms of political/economic issues	5.78	.886	0.786 ***	0.618		
National identity	When others criticize Chinese people, I feel like they are criticizing me	5.53	1.227	0.863 ***	0.745	0.914	0.681
	I am very happy to be Chinese	5.87	1.235	0.871 ***	0.759		
	I am often ashamed of the existing problems in the country	5.57	1.242	0.733 ***	0.537		
	If there's life after this, I would like to be Chinese again	5.71	1.190	0.855 ***	0.731		
	No matter what happens in China, I will stay in China, even if there is a chance to leave	5.64	1.273	0.796 ***	0.634		
Symbolic patriotism	It makes me feel good when I see the Chinese flag flying	6.11	.819	0.885 ***	0.783	0.871	0.771
	It makes me feel good when the national anthem plays	6.24	.823	0.871 ***	0.759		
Constructive patriotism	If I criticize China, I do so out of love of country	5.62	.854	0.800 ***	0.640	0.791	0.655
	I express my attachment to China by supporting its efforts at positive change	5.48	.839	0.818 ***	0.669		
Uncritical patriotism	China is virtually always right	4.50	1.102	0.828 ***	0.686	0.886	0.722
	I support China's policies for the very reason that they are the policies of my country	4.32	1.126	0.830 ***	0.689		
	There is too much criticism of China in the world, and we as its citizens should not criticize it	4.54	1.054	0.890 ***	0.792		
Psychological ownership	China is my country	5.63	.837	0.792 ***	0.627	0.862	0.556
	China is our country	6.11	.849	0.761 ***	0.579		
	I feel a very high degree of personal ownership for China	5.97	.909	0.746 ***	0.557		
	Most Chinese people feel as though they own the country	6.07	.839	0.680 ***	0.462		
Civilized tourism behavioral intention	I feel that China is my country	5.93	.905	0.744 ***	0.554	0.909	0.626
	I keep the local environment clean when traveling abroad	6.05	.793	0.808 ***	0.653		
	I observe the local public order when traveling abroad	6.12	.828	0.784 ***	0.615		
	I protect the local environment when traveling abroad	6.13	.778	0.759 ***	0.576		
	I protect the local cultural relics and historic sites when traveling abroad	6.11	.824	0.809 ***	0.654		
	I have great respect for local customs, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs when traveling abroad	6.11	.829	0.807 ***	0.651		
	I am very polite to others when traveling abroad	6.11	.839	0.778 ***	0.605		

Table 3
Correlations between constructs (N = 468).

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	CTBI	PO	CI	PA	NI
CTBI	0.909	0.909	0.626	0.791				
PO	0.861	0.862	0.556	0.481	0.746			
NIM	0.921	0.828	0.550	0.486	0.534	0.742		
PA	0.845	0.761	0.517	0.519	0.502	0.616	0.719	
NI	0.913	0.914	0.681	0.385	0.425	0.462	0.368	0.825

Note: Diagonal elements in bold are the square roots of the average variance extracted. CTBI = Civilized tourism behavioral intention; PO = Psychological ownership; NIM = National image; PA = Patriotism; NI = National identity.

National identity, Patriotism (symbolic patriotism, constructive patriotism, and uncritical patriotism), PO, and Civilized tourism behavioral intention. All factor loadings were between 0.637 and 0.890. The composite reliability (CR) for all variables ranged from 0.761 to 0.909, which satisfied the recommendation of 0.7 (Bagozzi et al., 1991). The average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the required value of 0.5, which indicated an acceptable convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, the square roots of the AVE were significantly higher than the correlation coefficients between the latent variables, as shown in Table 3, which confirmed the discriminant validity of all constructs.

3.4. Structural model

The hypothesized dependent relationships between the constructs were tested in the structural model using Mplus 8.0. First, we input national image and civilized tourism behavioral intention into the model, and the data fit the model well ($\chi^2/df = 2.131$, CFI = 0.964, TLI = 0.960, RMSEA = 0.049, SRMR = 0.064). National image significantly influenced civilized tourism behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.488$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. Then, we further tested a five-factor structural model; the indices of the overall model were $\chi^2/df = 2.070$, CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932, RMSEA = 0.048, and SRMR = 0.063. National image had a significant positive influence on national identity ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$) and patriotism ($\beta = 0.671$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H2 and H3, respectively. National identity positively and significantly affected PO ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$) and civilized tourism behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.199$, $p < 0.001$), which supported H4 and H6, respectively. Similarly, patriotism was found to significantly influence PO ($\beta = 0.450$, $p < 0.001$) and civilized tourism behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.365$, $p < 0.001$), which supported H5 and H7, respectively. We also found that a sense of PO influenced civilized tourism behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.199$, $p < 0.05$), thus supporting H8.

3.5. Mediation analysis

Bootstrapping is a highly recommended method to examine mediation effects (Preacher et al., 2007). Mplus 8.0 was used to conduct a chain mediation test, and four separate paths were tested. The direct, indirect, and total effects are summarized in Table 4. The overall indirect effect of civilized tourism behavioral intention was estimated by examining the 95% CI around the total indirect effect using a bootstrapping procedure (using 1000 bootstrap samples; (Preacher & Hayes, 2008)). As shown in Table 4, we found that all the four relationship paths were significant, among which national image exerted the largest significant indirect effect (0.190**) on civilized tourism behavioral intention through patriotism. Additionally, national image had a significant total effect (0.472***) on civilized tourism behavioral intention; however, there was no significant direct effect, which indicates that national identity, patriotism, and psychological ownership completely mediated the effect of national image on civilized tourism behavioral intention.

4. Discussion

This study explored the effect of national image on citizens' civilized

Table 4
Direct, indirect, and total effects.

Effect	Relationship path	β	95% Confidence interval
Specific indirect effect	National image → patriotism → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.190**	(0.067, 0.361)
	National image → national identity → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.084**	(0.036, 0.144)
	National image → patriotism → psychological ownership → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.058**	(0.019, 0.112)
	National image → national identity → psychological ownership → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.026**	(0.007, 0.055)
Direct effect	National image → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.112	(-0.122, 0.334)
Total effect	National image → civilized tourism behavioral intention	0.472***	(0.345, 0.593)

Note: significant at ***, $p < 0.001$, significant at **, $p < 0.05$.

tourism behavioral intention. The results revealed that patriotism, national identity, and PO are the main factors driving civilized tourism behavioral intention, and they completely mediated the relationship between national image and civilized tourism behavioral intention.

This study had four main findings. First, national image had a positive effect on national identity, patriotism, and civilized tourism behavioral intention. This indicates that a strong sense of national identity and patriotism emerge when cultural symbols and values conveyed by the national image strike a chord with the public, which is consistent with previous work (Georgescu & Botescu, 2004; Kwok, 2015; Marinkovic, 2017). Moreover, although the influence of national image on individual behavior has been demonstrated in previous studies (Anholt, 2006; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Maher & Carter, 2011), this is the first study to report the effect of national self-image on citizens' civilized tourism behavioral intention. Second, we found that PO was consequence of national identity and patriotism, which has not been reported before. Previous studies have found that a sense of identity to a destination (Kumar & Nayak, 2019) or a feeling of attachment (Lee et al., 2019) can lead to PO of the destination. Our research further showed that a positive affective state and identity towards one's own country enabled citizens to incorporate the country into their self-concept. Third, civilized tourism behavioral intention was positively affected by national identity and patriotism. This supports the claims of Marinkovic (2017) and Kwok (2015) that both national identity and patriotism can bring individuals closer to their country, prompting them to put national interests before their own (Feshbach, 1990). Citizens' in-group identity and their love for their country may result in a greater awareness of the importance of tourists' behavior abroad in reinforcing and maintaining the national image. Finally, PO may be a key driving factor of tourists' civilized tourism behavioral intention. Tourists who consider their country as part of themselves may pay more attention to their behavior when traveling abroad, so as not to tarnish the national

image. This is also consistent with previous findings that individuals will make every effort to protect target objects and avoid damaging the image of the object (Lee et al., 2013; Zhang & Xu, 2019).

5. Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical implications

In this paper, we proposed an integrated framework to investigate the mechanism underlying civilized tourism behavioral intention when tourists travel abroad. This study serves as a supplement to the existing literature.

There have been many studies on pro-environmental behavior in the tourism literature. While this has been a hot topic in recent years, there has been scarce research into civilized tourism behavior, which is an important means by which to protect a destination's environment and culture (Jia et al., 2020; Qiu, 2017; Zhang et al., 2019). The existing work has adopted the TPB and NAM theoretical frameworks to explain civilized tourism behavioral intention (Jia et al., 2020; Qiu, 2017). The novelty of the present study is that it focused on the predictive effect of national image on civilized tourism behavioral intention in the context of traveling overseas; this has not been studied before and expands our knowledge about tourism civilized tourism behavior.

This study also explored the internal mechanism underlying the effect of national image on civilized tourism behavioral intention. Our results indicate that national image can affect civilized tourism behavior, and that patriotism, national identity, and psychological ownership played a mediating role in this relationship. Previous work has explored the effect of PO on residents' place citizenship behavior (Zhang & Xu, 2019) and tourists' word-of-mouth and revisit intention (Kumar & Nayak, 2019). For the first time, this paper considered PO as an important antecedent variable that can predict tourists' civilized tourism behavioral intention. Our findings could further popularize the application of PO in the context of tourism, which supplements the existing literature and offers a new perspective that could encourage civilized tourism behavior.

5.2. Managerial implications

This paper suggests that a strong national image has a positive effect on citizens' patriotism, national identity, and civilized tourism behavioral intention. A country can project a positive image to its citizens by developing its economy, improving the environment, forging good relationships with other countries, improving education, and publicizing the virtues of its citizens, much of which can be done by enhancing communication with the public. Hence, it would be possible to promote national events and create topics on social media platforms, such as Weibo and TikTok (both of which are popular in China); doing so would keep the public informed about positive national affairs and enable others to participate in discussions, both of which could help to construct a positive national image.

Although a county's officials can project a positive image, the current freedom of media coverage means that there will also be messages that are not conducive to the dissemination of a positive national image. According to the broken window theory, unresolved problems and chaotic phenomena in an environment can lead to worse behaviors (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2016). When we consider this theory in the context of tourism, an analogy can be made; that is, a negative national image may mean citizens are more oblivious to the destructive effect of uncivilized tourism behavior on national image. Therefore, tourism management authorities should deal with crisis events that may tarnish the national image in a timely manner so as to minimize the damage.

In addition, tourism management authorities should be aware that education is a good way to cultivate citizens' sense of national identity, patriotism, and morality. That said, it is worth noting that even people with a high level of education engage in uncivilized behavior without

understanding the culture of the tourist destination; therefore, related tourism agencies should encourage tourists to learn about the local culture in order to avoid unintentional indecency due to cultural differences. For example, brochures introducing the culture of the destination can be distributed to tourists before they travel abroad. Moreover, PO also deserves more attention from agencies and scholars. The idea of "my country, our country" should be communicated in patriotic education and promoted in the media. The government should also emphasize that the country's progress is made possible by the contribution of every citizen. By praising the efforts of citizens, people are more likely to consider their country as an extension of their self-concept. The PO of citizens towards their country protects the environment and culture of the destination while maintaining the national image, which is a win-win approach.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

Despite the contributions of this study, some limitations should be noted. First, all respondents were Chinese tourists, and the generalizability of the current results to non-Chinese tourists is therefore unclear. Considering that anyone can engage in uncivilized tourism behavior, future work can be discussed in other cultural contexts. Second, this paper proposes that some uncivilized tourism behaviors are generated without an understanding of the local culture and customs, so it is worth discussing in more detail how to avoid the occurrence of such uncivilized tourism behaviors. Third, this study explored the influence of national image on civilized tourism behavior in the context of outbound tourism. However, uncivilized tourism behavior also occurs in domestic tourism, so this situation should also be explored in future research.

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Declaration of competing interest

None.

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