A Theoretical Model on Golfers’ Post-Purchase Behaviors: Based on the Place Attachment Theory

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Abstract: Place attachment is a common phenomenon in our lives. Individuals may have special emotions on certain places and they will spend more money and time here. This is very valuable to golf which highly relies on places. This research is on the relationships between place attachment and post-purchase behaviors in golf. Place attachment was divided into two basic dimensions of place dependence and place identity in this study. Empirical methods and SEM (structural equation modeling) analysis were used. The results showed that place dependence influenced post-purchase behaviors directly, while place identity had indirect impact on post-purchase behaviors through the intermediary effect of participation behaviors.

Keywords: Place attachment; post-purchase behaviors; golf

1 Introduction

With the development of economic, the Chinese living standards have been improving constantly. New changes in sports consumption structure is happening and the enthusiasm on golf have been rising among the Chinese citizens. Golf course is the basic supporter of golf, and its cultural and natural characteristics bring the unique charm of golf. So it is clear that golf highly depends on golf courses. As is well known, place attachment is a common objective phenomenon in our lives. Many people may have some complex and indescribable feelings on certain places where they have done certain activities for a long time. And then the feelings will become certain emotions, deriving from familiarity to sense of belonging, identity and trust, ending in inveteracy [1]. Therefore, as long as the managers can strengthen the level of place attachment, customers will spend more time and money on the place and generate the motivation for coming back again and again in the future. This article is about the relationship between place attachment and golfers’ post-purchase behaviors based on the place attachment theory.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Place Attachment Theory

The place attachment theory, which was proposed by Williams and Roggenbuck in 1989, is used to explain the objective phenomenon of the specific dependency relationships between people and certain places [2]. Because of the different research objects and research methods, the studies have different explanations on the dimensions of place attachment. Nonetheless, most scholars shared the similar viewpoint that place dependence (PD) and place identity (PI), as two basic dimensions, make up place attachment. The researches in domestic and overseas not only studied the factors that influenced place attachment [1][3-4], but also explored the influence power of the dimensions [5-8]. While most of the researches focused on the relationships between place attachment, satisfaction and loyalty. And they believed that the stronger the sense of place attachment was, the more beneficial for the formation of customers’ satisfaction and loyalty [7-8]. Moreover, some researchers studied the relationship between involvement behaviors and place attachment. They found that the behaviors were influenced by place attachment, and would reflect the sense of place attachment of one person. So Gross and Brown (2008) thought that the relationship could be applied into the research of tourism [9]. Yu Yong (2010) found that the influence place attachment acting on post-travel behaviors was not a direct effect. But place attachment had indirect impact on the formation and structure of the intention of post-travel behaviors through the intermediary effects of value perception and satisfied experiences [10]. Owing to that the research on place attachment was started relatively late, the research on how place attachment influences the post-purchase behaviors has not caused enough attention, especially in the application in golf research.

2.2 Golfers’ Participation Behavior

The studies on golfers’ participation behaviors were mainly about the golf players’ consciousness, the consuming characteristics, the motivation and experiences and so on. The results showed that the golf players had a strong sense of participation and high intention of social interaction. And they intended to experience different golf courses when they chose the places. The most common form of participation was playing golf with friends and the primary part of golf consumption was the participation consumption during the playing on course [11].
2.3 Post-purchase Behaviors

Customers’ post-purchase behaviors have direct influence on the achievement and fame of an enterprise. Post-purchase behaviors include not only the satisfaction, but also other factors that affect the repurchase. Therefore, more and more studies turn their attentions to customers’ post-purchase behaviors. Because the researches on consumers’ post-purchase behaviors can help the enterprises better understand the customers’ consumption psychology, their attitudes and evaluation on the products, the producers and sellers. In this way, enterprises can find out the potential problems in the products or services. Then they can try their best to provide the products and services that can really meet the consumers’ needs and realize the final goals of keeping consumers, developing loyal customers and enhancing the competitiveness. On the basis of previous achievements, Luo Xiaoguang defined the post-purchase behaviors as: All the customers’ explicit behaviors after the consuming which were related to the products and services the customers having purchased, or the enterprises and organizations that providing the products and services [12]. These behaviors include customers’ repeat-purchase behaviors or revisit intention, dissemination and recommendation behaviors, communication behaviors with the enterprises which cover complaining and claim, and the usage of the products (extend the service life such as joining the clubs or abandon the products).

Golf highly relies on the places. But few researches on the satisfaction of golf pay attention to the relationship between the places and inner feelings of the customers. However, place attachment influences the post-purchase behaviors of the customers. Because of this, this paper manages to find how place attachment acts on the post-purchase behaviors based on the researches above by establishing a hypothesis model on the relationship in golf between place attachment and post-purchase behaviors according to the literatures, and using the empirical analysis method to validate the hypothesis model.

3 Hypotheses and Model Development

3.1 Measured Indicators

Williams thought that place attachment consisted of two dimensions named place dependence and place identity, and he designed the measurement scale which has been being used today [13-14]. Place dependence is associated with the potential of a place to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual; however, place identity is more about the emotions. This article will divide place attachment into two basic dimensions of place dependence and place identity based on the previous results. In consideration of the fact of this case, we formulate the measurement scale of 18 measured indicators by selecting indicators from the existed measurement scale and using statement conversion (Table 1).

3.2 Hypotheses

Scale design and model development are very important in place attachment research. Williams designed the measurement scale of place attachment which is still often used today, and he used empirical analysis to validate the effectiveness and universality of this method in the measurement of attitude and psychology. Designing a SEM with cause-effect relationship is a widely used way in place attachment. The outstanding advantage of SEM method is the use of simultaneous equations. It can not only allow the existence of measurement errors and residuals in the model, but also analyze the structure and relationship between latent variables.

Based on the former study, this paper proposed 7 hypotheses as the following:

H1: Place dependence has significant positive impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors;
H1a: Place dependence has significant positive impact on golfers’ participation behaviors;
H1b: Place dependence has significant positive impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors through the intermediary effect of golfers’ participation behaviors;
H2: Place identity has significant positive impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors;
H2a: Place identity has significant positive impact on golfers’ participation behaviors;
H2b: Place identity has significant positive impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors through the intermediary effect of golfers’ participation behaviors;
H3: Golfers’ participation behaviors have significant positive impact on their post-purchase behaviors.

Figure 1. Hypothetical Model

4 Methods

4.1 Data Collection and Sample

The questionnaire survey of this research was conducted on city dwellers in Shenzhen, China. The
questionnaires were handed out in three golf clubs in Shenzhen, during the August and September in 2011. 270 questionnaires were given out and 219 effective ones were taken back. The valid response rate was 81.11%. In this sample, female occupied 37.0%, which coincided with the fact that male golfers are more than female golfers in China. 90.0% of the respondents aged between 18 and 50. 89% of the respondents have played golf for more than one year. 75.9% of the respondents had university degrees, so most respondents could understand the questions correctly.

4.2 Measurement of the Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variables</th>
<th>Measured Indicators</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Dependence</td>
<td>Service Facility</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment and Atmosphere</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairway Challenging</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Speed</td>
<td>Zhang Chunhui &amp; Bai Kai, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Caddie Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Identity</td>
<td>Course Preference</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity of Other Golfers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of Achievement</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Williams &amp; Roggenbuck, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Meaning</td>
<td>Brocato E. D., 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Behavior</td>
<td>Repurchase Frequency</td>
<td>Tian Yanfu &amp; Fu Yeqin, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Forms</td>
<td>Tian Yanfu &amp; Fu Yeqin, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service and Commodity Consumption</td>
<td>Tian Yanfu &amp; Fu Yeqin, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Purchase Behavior</td>
<td>Repurchase Intention</td>
<td>Zhang Yanqing, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership Intention</td>
<td>Luo Xiaoguang, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendation Intention</td>
<td>Zhang Yanqing, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complaint Intention</td>
<td>Fornell (ACSI Model)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A seven-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree) was used in the measurement of the observed variables. 18 related questions were designed in the questionnaire according to the 4 latent variables. Six measured indicators including service facilities, course’s environment and atmosphere, fairway challenging, green speed, professional service of caddies and location were used to measure place dependence. And for the psychological part of place identity (ξ2), the indicators were course preference, identity of other golfers, sense of achievement, sense of belonging and special meaning. As the mediating variable, participation behaviors (η1) had three indicators: the frequency, the form and the situation of service and commodity consumption. The last four indicators were about post-purchase behaviors (η2), including repurchase intention, membership intention, recommendation intention and complaint intention.

4.3 Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques were used in this study to test the goodness of fit for the model with the sample data as well as provide information about the relationship between place attachment and post-purchase behaviors in golf. In this study, the software of SPSS 17.0 and AMOS 17.0 would be employed to analyze the model. First, the data was input to the Excel. Second, SPSS software was used to conduct descriptive statistic analysis of the data and internal consistent reliability analysis of measurement scales. Finally, AMOS software was used to conduct structural equation modeling analysis. The verification of the goodness of fit for the model and data could help find out the relationships between different indicators and the parameter values of factor loading and path coefficient. Based on the results above, the model could be evaluated and the hypotheses could be verified. In addition, the analysis used multiple goodness-of-fit indices in order to give a comprehensive and objective evaluation of the model.

5 Results

5.1 Reliability

Reliability analysis is used to evaluate the consistency, stability and reliability of the measurement scale. Generally, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to measure internal consistency of the obtained factors. If Cronbach’s α≥0.70, it means the measurement scale is acceptable. In this case, each variable in this study is above 0.7 (table 2), which shows that the measurement scale is reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variables</th>
<th>Cronbach (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Dependence</td>
<td>0.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Identity</td>
<td>0.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation behaviors</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-purchase behaviors</td>
<td>0.813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Measurement and Structural Model Fit Analysis

The sample data was put into the structural equation model in figure 1. The results of the multiple goodness-of-fit indices were calculated based on the maximum likelihood method by using the AMOS software. The values of the indices in this research are shown in table 3.

The measurement model is accepted (Table 2). The normed chi-square (1.837) indicates a favorable fit to the data. The RMSEA value of 0.0722 indicates a reasonable
fit. The values for the CFI (0.885)>0.8 indicates good fit and values for GFI (0.883), AGFI (0.869), TLI (0.874) are very close to 0.9, therefore, the measurement model is acceptable (Bentler & Chou, 1987). With the measurement model accepted, the analysis proceeded to the structural equation model. Also, the goodness-of-fit indices indicated an acceptable fit for the structural model. The normed chi-square value (1.901) demonstrates a favorable fit to the sample data. The RMSEA value of 0.072 indicates a good fit. The values for the CFI (0.806), GFI (0.850), AGFI (0.817) and TLI (0.854) indicate an acceptable structural model.

5.3 Standardized Structural Path Estimates

Covariance structural equation model was used to verify the correlations between all the latent variables. Figure 2 shows the standardized coefficients for the paths between the exogenous latent factors and the endogenous latent factors. The results showed that the data supported all the hypotheses. Place dependence had positive impact on golfers’ participation behaviors and post-purchase behaviors as well as place identity. And golfers’ participation behaviors had positive impact on their post-purchase behaviors.

6 Conclusion

The model had a good fit with the sample data, so it had certain general value and can be modified and used in further study. All the hypotheses were verified in this study. Each of them showed a relationship differed from the others.

Table 4. Path Analysis of Covariance Structural Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Paths</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients for the Paths</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\xi_1 \rightarrow \eta_1$</td>
<td>$\gamma=0.41$</td>
<td>6.210</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\xi_1 \rightarrow \eta_1$</td>
<td>$\gamma=0.26$</td>
<td>7.439</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\xi_2 \rightarrow \eta_2$</td>
<td>$\gamma=0.01$</td>
<td>6.035</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\xi_3 \rightarrow \eta_1$</td>
<td>$\gamma=0.81$</td>
<td>6.747</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\eta_1 \rightarrow \eta_2$</td>
<td>$\beta=0.54$</td>
<td>6.981</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H1: Place dependence has significant positive impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors, which means that how well the golf course has satisfied the golfers in playing golf will influence the post-purchase behaviors of the players directly. If the golfers enjoy the process of playing golf on the course, generally, they will probably be very satisfied, tend to come again and join the club to be a member as well as recommend it to their relatives and friends. With the strengthening of place dependence, the intentions of repurchase, joining the club and recommendation will also be strengthened. On the contrary, the complaint intention and dissatisfaction will be weakened in some way.

H1a: There is a relatively weak positive correlation between place dependence and golfers’ participation behaviors, which means that place dependence has very limited impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors. It is mainly because that generally the reinforcement of place dependence will neither change one’s consumption habits of other products, nor the form of participation. These factors have little effect on playing and enjoying golf in itself.

H1b: The intermediary effect of golfers’ participation behaviors in the relationship between place dependence and golfers’ post-purchase behaviors is relatively weak. Participation behaviors are not about the process of playing golf on the courses. So participation behaviors are influenced little by place dependence. Therefore, the key factor that influences the post-purchase behaviors is still the enjoyment on the courses and the intermediary effect is not significant.

H2: The correlationship between place identity and post-purchase behaviors is quite weak. So place identity has weak direct impact on golfers’ post-purchase behaviors. This is mainly because that place identity is more about individuals’ inner feelings. Good feelings about the place are not sure to be changed into real economic behaviors or recommendation behaviors. It is influenced by many other factors such as individuals' consumption habits, time, and the level of playing golf, etc.

H2a: Place identity has significant positive impact on golfers’ participation behaviors. So it means that the stronger the sense of place identity is, the more willing...
the golfers are to play on the courses and invite their relatives and friends to play together. Usually, it’s more common for them to consume other relevant products and services during playing. It may be mainly because that a strong sense of place identity will make people feel approachable more easily. So the mental defense will be low and they would like to share the happiness of playing golf here with their relatives and friends.

H2b: Compared with the intermediary effect in the relationship between place dependence and post-purchase behaviors, it’s more significant that the intermediary effect of participation behaviors is in the relationship between place identity and post-purchase behaviors. It shows that place identity influence the participation behaviors first and then act on post-purchase behaviors through the intermediary agency of participation behaviors. This is mainly because that place identity can influence post-purchase behaviors indeed, only when it is turned into real golf participation behaviors. No purchase, no post-purchase.

H3: Golfers’ participation behaviors have significant positive impact on their post-purchase behaviors. It is because most post-purchase decisions are made based on the previous purchase experiences. A positive experience of purchase and use will never bring negative post-purchase behaviors.

In summary, the results of the hypothesis tests provide substantial evidence to conclude that the data supported nearly all aspects of the structural model.

7 Discussion

The sense of place attachment on some place will make individuals will to spend more time, money and energy on it again and again. It is one of the key factors that generate the motivation of revisit. The intensification of place identity will ease the dislike of payment for using the resources. People may think it is worth and the supports for the cost of the place management will increase accordingly. In marketing management, place attachment will help the managers get high returns and customer loyalty in low cost. This is very important to the managers and operators in practice. And this is the basis of the application of the theory.

According to the analysis above, we found that the two dimensions of place attachment influence post-purchase behaviors in different ways. The effect of place dependence is direct, while the effect of place identity is indirect through the intermediary effect of participation behaviors. Therefore, golf clubs should consummate the facilities construction and improve the level of service to give golfers a perfect course and make them enjoy the golf in order to intensify the sense of place dependence. On the other hand, the managers should enlarge the marketing activities and increase the input on advertisements in order to create more opportunities and convenience for the golfers to play here. Good service will make the players feel like at home and they will relax sufficiently. In this way, place identity will come into play. It will help the formation of good value perception and high satisfaction, and then the loyalty will increase.

Place attachment has specific value for golf which highly relies on the places. Marketing and managing from the function of golf course and the psychology of customers will benefit for the display of the courses’ glamour and the realization of high economic profit and customer loyalty. It is helpful to set up a good corporation image as well as the long-term development of the club.

8 Limitations

The theory of place attachment is still immature because it is only a short time that from when it was proposed. So this research has some limitations in the indicators of measurement scale, the explanations to the results and the formation process of place attachment. Besides, the sample used in the study was small and taken only from one geographic area (Shenzhen). For these reasons, the results need to be further verified in the future.

References


