


Article

The Effects of Perceived Cultural and Tourism Public Services on Visitor Satisfaction and Quality of Life: A Multiple Mediation Model

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Abstract: The provision of cultural and tourism public services in tourism destinations exerts a substantial influence on visitor experience and their overall quality of life. The current study applied structural equation modeling to empirically investigate the relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their quality of life. Additionally, the mediating effects of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction in the above-mentioned influence relationship was also explored. In order to collect data, a field survey was conducted in a world heritage site located in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China. A total of 550 questionnaires were delivered, out of which 518 valid questionnaires were retained for subsequent analysis. The results demonstrate that perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors have significant and positive influence on their perceived value, and visitors' perceived value has a positive effect on their expectancy disconfirmation. Moreover, there is a strong and positive relationship between visitors' expectancy disconfirmation and their satisfaction and quality of life. Additionally, the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction exist, and these three mediating variables serve as full mediators. The present study addresses the theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and potential areas for further research.

Keywords: cultural and tourism public services; visitor satisfaction; quality of life; perceived value; expectancy disconfirmation



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1. Introduction

The intersection of cultural and tourism public services is of utmost importance in the facilitation of destination development and is widely recognized as a fundamental element in the progression of tourism industry [1–3]. The notion of cultural and tourism public service is a comprehensive concept that pertains to the delivery of goods and services by governmental entities or other societal collectives. The primary objective of these offers is to cater to the common need of both tourists and local residents, with a clear focus on promoting public welfare rather than pursuing profit-oriented initiatives [4–6]. The provision of high-quality public services in the domains of culture and tourism has the potential to significantly augment the overall visitor experience and satisfaction, thereby contributing to an improved quality of life for them [7].

An increasing number of studies are progressively considering citizen satisfaction as a significant criterion and foundation for evaluating cultural and tourism public services, with a focus on the ideas of customer orientation and result orientation [8]. Moreover, satisfaction also serves as a significant antecedent variable in determining the quality

of life [9]. Sirgy et al. (2000) provided an in-depth examination of the development of destination residents' quality of life and reached the conclusion that residents' quality of life is significantly influenced by their satisfaction with community life and other life domains. Community life satisfaction is influenced by various factors such as satisfaction with governmental public services, business services, and public welfare services. On the other hand, satisfaction in other life domains encompasses aspects such as work, family, and other relevant factors [10]. The preceding discourse indicates that the perceived cultural and tourism public services have a noteworthy influence on the satisfaction levels and overall quality of life experienced by visitors. However, there is a dearth of research that has delved into the underlying mechanisms of this impact.

In addition, it has been noted that the influence of perceived cultural and tourism public services on satisfaction necessitates a sequence of psychologically mediated processes [7,11]. Johnson et al. (2001) introduced a model termed the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB), wherein perceived values and customer expectations serve as the antecedent variables for customer satisfaction [11]. The customer satisfaction is derived from the customers' perceptions and expectations of public services. The perception of public service is influenced by personal experiences and interactions with the service, while the expectation of the service is shaped by external information received prior to engaging with the service. Furthermore, it is posited that enhancing the expectation of future service performance by the service provider can lead to an increase in customer satisfaction. In fact, this influence mechanism can be effectively explained using expectancy disconfirmation theory. Expectancy disconfirmation pertains to the discrepancy that arises between the expected level of service quality and the actual performance of the service [12]. However, there is a limited body of research that has thoroughly examined the mediating role of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction in the influence of the relationship of perceived cultural and tourism public services on visitors' quality of life.

Hence, the objective of this study is to fill the current research gaps. The study aims to achieve two specific objectives: (1) examining the relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their quality of life; and (2) exploring the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction in the above-mentioned influence relationship. The case site selected for this study was the Ming Tomb Scenic Area, situated in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. Theoretically, this study adds to the literature on culture and tourism by identifying and empirically validating the seven dimensions of perceived cultural and tourism public services, which can provide a solid foundation for future research. Furthermore, the present study represents an initial endeavor to employ the expectancy disconfirmation theory, a widely utilized framework in social psychology, marketing, and public administration, in the context of culture and tourism research. Additionally, this study investigates the potential mediating effects of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction, which can help reveal the influence mechanisms of perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors on their quality of life. Practically, this research offers significant contributions to the understanding of expectation management of visitors and the administration of public services related to culture and tourism.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

The notion of expectancy disconfirmation, initially introduced by Oliver in 1980 [13], emerged from the examination of consumer behavior and social psychology. It refers to the disparity between anticipated service quality and the actual performance of the service, which can manifest as either a positive deviation (where performance surpasses expectations) or a negative deviation (where performance falls below expectations) [12]. The idea of expectancy disconfirmation posits that consumers build varying expectations of service quality based on personal experiences, word-of-mouth communication, advertising,

and other sources. Consequently, individuals employ diverse criteria when evaluating and generating subjective ratings or assessments of satisfaction [12,14,15].

In the domain of tourism, researchers in the hospitality and tourism sector have utilized the expectancy disconfirmation theory in a multitude of studies aimed at evaluating the satisfaction levels of tourists with cultural and tourism services. For instance, within the framework of the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, Zehrer (2011) conducted a study to examine the influence of consumers who engage in travel blog posting on other blog users [16]. This was achieved by analyzing the reactions of users to 134 travel blog recommendations. The findings of the study demonstrated that the expectancy disconfirmation theory can serve as a valuable framework for comprehending how individuals seeking information respond to those who provide information within the web 2.0 environment. In addition, Pinem et al. (2018) employed the expectancy disconfirmation theory to examine the determinants of customers' negative behaviors [17]. They utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the collected data. The findings indicate that quality disconfirmation has a significant role in triggering unpleasant feelings among customers, therefore resulting in negative behaviors. In a more specific context, when there is a disconfirmation in the quality of information, it might potentially trigger feelings of regret among customers. Consequently, this regret can subsequently result in the generation of poor word-of-mouth communication.

2.2. *The Relationship between Different Variables*

Cultural and tourism public services play a crucial role in the process of destination development and are considered an essential component in the advancement of contemporary tourism. According to the prevailing consensus among researchers, cultural and tourism public service is a broad concept encompassing the provision of products and services by governmental bodies or other social groups. These offerings are intended to address the shared needs of both tourists and local inhabitants, with a distinct emphasis on public welfare rather than profit-seeking endeavors [4–6]. According to Yang (2022) [3], the cultural and tourism public service system consists of seven aspects, including tourism safety and security services, tourism convenience and benefit services, tourism administrative services, tourism transportation services, tourism public information services, tourism public cultural services, and tourism element services. Within this set of seven dimensions, tourism public cultural services encompass the provision of public cultural facilities, cultural products, cultural activities, and associated services. These services are initiated by the government and involve the engagement of social capital. Their primary objective is to fulfill the fundamental cultural requirements of citizens. Tourism element services refer to the services provided by tourist attractions, including, but not limited to, catering, guided tours, shopping, and other components inherent to the tourism sector.

Perceived value refers to the assessment made by visitors on the products or services they encounter during their visits to tourism destinations and is based on the study of Stevens (1992) [18]. The product or service experienced by the visitor will have a significant impact on the formation and assessment of perceived value [19–21]. There is a widely held belief that cultural and tourism public services exert a substantial influence on the overall evaluation made by visitors on their visit [22,23]. Before embarking on their journeys, visitors naturally have expectations regarding the cultural and tourism public services of a destination, hoping for impeccable service in all aspects. During their travels, visitors assess these services based on their experiences, leading to either positive or negative disconfirmations. In accordance with the expectancy disconfirmation theory, positive disconfirmation is observed when the perceived cultural and tourism public services exceeds initial expectations, while negative disconfirmation happens when the perceived cultural and tourism public services fail to meet initial expectations [24]. The establishment of a robust cultural and tourism public service system has the potential to elevate the quality of service provided, hence contributing to an improved perception of value, and

ultimately lead to positive disconfirmation. On the basis of previous discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors significantly and positively influence their perceived value.*

H2: *Perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors significantly and positively influence their positive disconfirmation.*

H3: *Visitors' perceived values significantly and positively influence their positive disconfirmation.*

Satisfaction is one of the key concepts in the field of tourism research. It refers to the perception and subjective evaluation of visitors on the cultural and tourism public services provided by the destinations (Geng et al., 2023) [25]. Governments across the globe frequently employ citizen surveys as a means to gauge public satisfaction with public services, so enabling an evaluation of governmental performance. Hence, the measurement of public service satisfaction has been deemed a significant gauge of public service quality and has been employed in public management methodologies, including the evaluation and oversight of government agencies [26–28].

The concept of quality of life pertains to an individual's personal evaluation and subjective assessment of the significance of different facets of life compared to their personal requirements and expectations (Taylor and Bogdan, 1996) [29]. Tourism has the potential to improve the quality of life for tourists through the provision of well-equipped facilities and thoughtful cultural and tourism public services, so contributing to the development of a more favorable tourism environment. According to the study conducted by Andereck et al. (2007), tourism is recognized as a progressively significant sector that offers several components capable of improving the overall quality of life [30,31]. These components include festivals, restaurants, natural and cultural attractions, as well as outdoor recreational possibilities that are accessible to both tourists and local people. Consequently, the provision of comprehensive public services in the domains of culture and tourism has the potential to garner favorable ratings and assessments, ultimately contributing to an enhanced quality of life.

The expectancy disconfirmation theory posits that the level of satisfaction experienced by visitors is contingent upon the comparison between their initial expectations and the actual outcomes they encounter during a travel experience. When the observed performance of a destination surpasses the initial expectations of visitors, it leads to positive disconfirmation. This, in turn, generates a psychological state of satisfaction and contributes to an enhancement in the overall quality of life [32]. In addition, the increased levels of tourist satisfaction will also have positive impacts on the quality of life. The following hypotheses are hereby proposed, derived from the aforementioned discussion:

H4: *Perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors significantly and positively influence their quality of life.*

H5: *Visitors' positive disconfirmation significantly and positively influences their satisfaction.*

H6: *Visitors' positive disconfirmation significantly and positively influences their quality of life.*

H7: *Visitors' satisfaction significantly and positively influences their quality of life.*

2.3. The Mediating Effects

There are numerous factors that exert an influence on the quality of life experienced by visitors [9]. Su and Tang (2020) provide a comprehensive overview of the factors that influence quality of life, which can be categorized into three main areas. The first area is

tourism influences, which encompass objective stimuli such as economic, cultural, social, and environmental factors. The second area pertains to individual factors, which include residents' expectations, perceived value, satisfaction, and other relevant aspects. Lastly, the third area focuses on the community environment, which encompasses community conditions, community interactions, and the social responsibility of the destination [33–37]. This study posits that the perceived cultural and tourism public services may have the potential to directly influence individuals' quality of life. Additionally, it is suggested that this influence on quality of life may occur indirectly, mediated by certain variables. The study selected three individual factors as mediating variables, namely perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction. The psychological emotions of visitors are the central focus of individual tourism experiences, whereas tourism satisfaction arises from the comparison between the perceived values of public services and visitors' expectations (Ma, 2019) [38]. When tourists discover that the perceived value of public services exceeds their previous expectations, a feeling of happiness naturally emerges. The aforementioned contentment significantly impacts their entire quality of life. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed based on the above discussion.

H8: *Perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction mediate the influence of perceived cultural and tourism public services on visitors' quality of life.*

The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1 as follows:

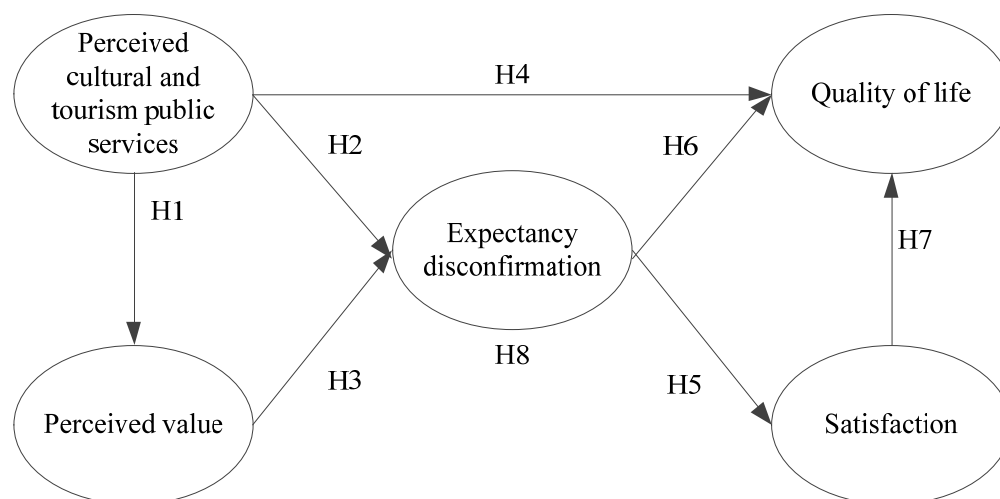


Figure 1. The research framework of the present study.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Description of the Research Case

The case site selected for this study was the Ming Tomb Scenic Area, situated in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China (see Figure 2). It is not only the largest of its kind, but also boasts exceptional preservation, making it a significant historical site with a remarkable lifespan of over six centuries. The Ming Tomb Scenic Area was officially inscribed on the World Heritage List in July 2003. Additionally, it received a national AAAAA rating from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in China. It has garnered acclaim due to its distinctive architectural style, historical importance, enduring cultural significance, comprehensive arrangement, and aesthetically pleasing environment, establishing itself as a thriving world heritage site in contemporary times. The Ming Tomb Scenic Area provides a range of public services for visitors, including amenities such as restroom facilities, ticket counters, and tourist information centers, which are equipped with modern facilities. The provided services encompass multimedia information, consultation, complaint reception, and storage. In addition, amenities such as wheelchair accessibility, umbrella provision, and mobile charging facilities are available. In particular, the Ming Tomb Scenic Area is easily accessible

by public transport services, and can be reached by bus and subway. Simultaneously, the scenic region is additionally facilitated by the provision of electric sightseeing buses, hence enhancing accessibility for visitors to explore the entirety of the picturesque area. The Ming Tomb Scenic Area has experienced significant growth and has become a popular tourism destination, attracting an annual influx of over 3 million visitors and generating a substantial revenue of more than 2.1 billion yuan.

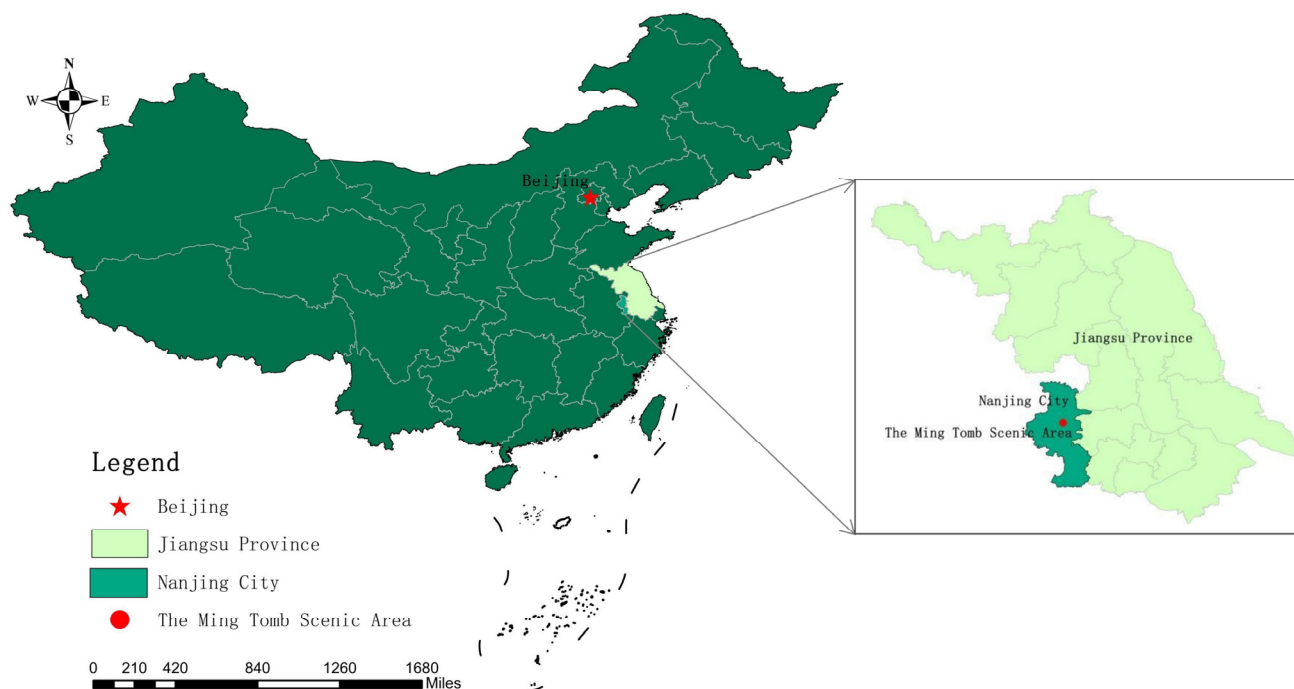


Figure 2. Location of the Ming Tomb Scenic Area in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China.

3.2. Questionnaire Design and Measurement

A survey instrument was developed to collect data with the aim of enhancing understanding of the relationships between perceived cultural and tourism public services, perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, satisfaction, and quality of life. The questionnaire was partitioned into two distinct sections. The initial component of the questionnaire encompasses the assessment of five distinct constructs. The second component of the questionnaire is dedicated to examining the demographic features of the participants, such as their gender, age, occupation, and other relevant factors.

The components of each construct are derived from prior research. The seven-item scale utilized to measure perceived cultural and tourism public services was developed from the academic publications of Heggie (2008), Park, Yoon, and Kwon (2012) [8,39], and Yang (2022) [40]. One example of a question derived from the instrument is “This place has a high level of tourist safety and security services.” Perceived value was measured through a three-item scale adapted from the studies of Gallarza and Saura (2006) and Lee, Yoon, and Lee (2007) [41,42]. A sample question from the instrument is “Visiting this place is valuable and worth it.” The assessment of expectancy disconfirmation included seven items and was based on the studies of Van (2006), James (2009), and Gao (2022) [24,43,44]. “I think the tourist safety and security services in this place exceeded my expectations.” is an example of the test question. The measurement of satisfaction was derived from the investigations of Lu, Chi, and Liu (2015) and Ryu, Han, and Kim (2008) [45,46]. An example of a question on the assessment is “I feel satisfied with the cultural and tourism public services”. The five-item scale used to evaluate quality of life was adapted from the research of Wang, Liu, and Liu (2022) and Uysal et al. (2016) [31,47]. An example query from the instrument is “I got what I wanted in life that mattered”.

The assessments used a five-point Likert scale with a numerical value of 1–5, with the points ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The survey was originally written in English and then translated into Chinese. To guarantee the accuracy of the translation, a round of back-translation was employed [22,48,49]. Additionally, a pilot study was undertaken involving a sample of 60 participants to ascertain the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. The participants in the pilot study were instructed to fill out the assessment questionnaire and provide their thoughts and suggestions regarding the measuring scales and wording. Based on the feedback received, certain items that were initially ambiguous were revised in order to enhance clarity in relation to the research context.

3.3. Data Collection

During September and October of 2022, a formal field survey was conducted within the Ming Tomb Scenic Area in order to collect data. Questionnaires were distributed to visitors at the end of their tour near the exit of Gate 1 of the scenic area. A team of five highly skilled research assistants was hired to gather the data. This study, similar to previous research, employed convenience sampling as a method to select participants, based on the accessibility and availability of visitors to complete the questionnaires [50–54]. In order to ascertain the similarity between the sample and the population, the present study considered the representativeness of the visitor population. First, the data collection process for this study incorporated considerations of gender ratio and age distribution, ensuring that questionnaires were obtained from individuals across various age groups. Second, the survey was distributed on different days and at different times to reduce bias in convenience sampling. Third, the survey was conducted to a significant extent, targeting the visitor groups that exhibited the highest levels of presence in the destination. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, the research assistants provided each participant with relevant information regarding the research items. The participants were then asked to designate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements presented in the questionnaire. After the respondents finished answering the questionnaire, they were each provided with a small token of appreciation as a gesture of gratitude for their valuable contribution. A total of 550 questionnaires were disseminated to the participants, and 546 of them were effectively retrieved. Among the collected questionnaires, a total of 28 were deemed incomplete, leaving 518 valid surveys available for analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis in the current study was conducted using SPSS 20.0 and Amos 21.0. The primary objective behind the implementation of reliability and validity tests was to analyze the accuracy and robustness of the measuring scales. Subsequently, the measurement model underwent testing through the utilization of the results obtained from confirmation factor analysis (CFA). The research hypotheses were assessed by employing hypothesis testing and analyzing the potential mediating effects.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Description

Table 1 displays information on the sample profile. Out of the total sample size of 518 participants, it was found that 54.4% ($n = 282$) were identified as male, while 45.6% ($n = 236$) were identified as female. More than one-third of respondents (36.9%) were between 18 and 35 years old. Over half of the participants (51.7%) in the study hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Moreover, a significant proportion of the participants (55.6%, $n = 288$) are engaged in diverse employment activities, encompassing roles such as workers inside organizations, self-employment, or managing their own entrepreneurial ventures. More than half of the participants (54.6%) reported monthly earnings falling within the range of RMB 3000 to RMB 6000. Additionally, close to 25% of the respondents indicated monthly incomes exceeding RMB 10,000.

Table 1. Demographic analysis of the visitors.

		Frequency (n = 518)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	282	54.4
	Female	236	45.6
Age	18 to 35 years	191	36.9
	36 to 45 years	134	25.9
	46 to 55 years	96	18.5
	56 to 65 years	53	10.2
	Over 65 years	44	8.5
Education	High school or below	97	18.7
	Associate degree	153	29.5
	Bachelor's degree	203	39.2
	Master's degree or above	65	12.5
Occupation	Enterprise employee	193	37.3
	Self-employment or owner	95	18.3
	Student	88	17.0
	Government officials	32	6.2
	Professionals, teacher or technical	86	16.6
	Other	24	4.6
Personal monthly Income (RMB)	Less than 3000	116	22.4
	3001–6000	152	29.3
	6001–10,000	131	25.3
	10,001–15,000	84	16.2
	More than 15,000	35	6.8

4.2. The Results of Measurement Model Testing

4.2.1. Reliability Test and CFA

The purpose of the reliability test is to determine the degree of internal consistency exhibited by a measurement instrument [55,56]. Generally speaking, a Cronbach's coefficient exceeding 0.7 is indicative of favorable reliability for the scale [57,58]. Table 2 displays the outcomes of the reliability tests. The Cronbach's α coefficients for the constructs of perceived cultural and tourism public services, perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, satisfaction, and quality of life are 0.933, 0.864, 0.894, 0.822, and 0.908, respectively. The coefficients obtained from the analysis indicate that the measurement utilized in this study demonstrates a substantial degree of reliability.

Table 2. The results of the reliability test and CFA.

Variables	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Perceived cultural and tourism public services			0.933	0.666	0.933
This place has a high level of tourist safety and security services	3.67 (1.140)	0.806			
This place has a convenient tourist-friendly service	3.62 (1.170)	0.849			
The tourism administrative services in this place are effective	3.52 (1.060)	0.792			
The tourism transportation services in this place are convenient	3.63 (1.134)	0.837			
The tourism public information service in this place is convenient	3.62 (1.094)	0.818			
This place has a high level of tourism public cultural services	3.57 (1.122)	0.805			
This place has a high quality of service for tourism elements	3.59 (1.129)	0.806			
Perceived value			0.865	0.681	0.864
The choice of visiting this place is a good decision	3.77 (0.929)	0.816			
I had good results from visiting this place	3.71 (0.910)	0.867			
Visiting this place is valuable and worth it	3.75 (0.923)	0.791			
Expectancy disconfirmation			0.895	0.550	0.894
I think the tourist safety and security services in this place exceeded my expectations	3.82 (0.954)	0.805			
I think the tourism convenience and benefit services in this place exceeded my expectations	3.81 (0.918)	0.750			
I think the tourism administrative services in this place exceeded my expectations	3.90 (0.932)	0.736			

Table 2. Cont.

Variables	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
I think the tourism transportation services in this place exceeded my expectations	3.84 (0.935)	0.712			
I think the tourism public information service in this place exceeded my expectations	3.75 (0.989)	0.694			
I think the tourism public cultural services in this place exceeded my expectations	3.84 (0.974)	0.751			
I think the service for tourism elements in this place exceeded my expectations	3.82 (0.900)	0.736			
Satisfaction			0.822	0.697	0.822
I feel pleased with the cultural and tourism public services	3.92 (0.820)	0.846			
I feel satisfied with the cultural and tourism public services	3.86 (0.839)	0.824			
Quality of life			0.909	0.666	0.908
This travel experience has improved my life satisfaction	4.06 (1.123)	0.836			
I got what I wanted in life that mattered	3.71 (1.084)	0.770			
Life has its ups and downs, but I'm still hopeful	3.70 (1.026)	0.777			
This tour enriched my spiritual life	3.94 (1.077)	0.886			
I feel that my life is meaningful and fulfilling	3.77 (1.061)	0.805			

Note: all of the factor loadings have values more than 0.5, and the p -values associated with these loadings are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

The measurement model was evaluated using CFA in the current study. Table 2 shows that the model fit indices satisfy the predetermined threshold values ($\chi^2/df = 1.924$, NFI = 0.943, CFI = 0.972, GFI = 0.930, AGFI = 0.913, RMSEA = 0.042) [48,59]. These findings offer validation that the measurement model adequately aligns with the observed data.

4.2.2. The Results of Validity Test

The evaluation of validity tests primarily involves the assessment of convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity pertains to the degree of association detected among distinct items that evaluate the identical latent construct [60,61]. According to the criteria outlined by Hair et al. (2006), it is evident that all factor loadings in the current study exceed the threshold of 0.5, and the associated p values show statistical significance [25,62]. Additionally, an examination of the data shown in Table 2 reveals that the AVE exceeds the established criterion of 0.5, while the composite reliability (CR) is above the minimal requirement of 0.6 [59]. This suggests that the latent variables exhibit strong convergence validity.

Discriminant validity pertains to the ability to discern and distinguish between separate variables [59]. Hu and Bentler (1999) propose that discriminant validity can be considered acceptable when the square root of AVE exceeds the correlation coefficient with other variables [63]. The correlation coefficients for each variable, as presented in Table 3, demonstrate a range of values ranging from 0.196 to 0.540. The discriminant validity of the variables is demonstrated by the observation that the square root of the AVE for each variable surpasses its correlation coefficient with other variables.

Table 3. The results of validity test.

Variables	Perceived Cultural and Tourism Public Services	Perceived Value	Expectancy Disconfirmation	Satisfaction	Quality of Life
Perceived cultural and tourism public services	0.816 *				
Perceived value	0.427	0.825 *			
Expectancy disconfirmation	0.196	0.355	0.742 *		
Satisfaction	0.476	0.540	0.380	0.835 *	
Quality of life	0.262	0.390	0.487	0.457	0.816 *

Note: * indicates that the data is the square root of each variable AVE, and the rest of the data are the correlation coefficients between the variables.

4.3. The Results of Hypotheses Testing

4.3.1. Goodness-of-Fit Test of Structural Model

To assess the normality of the data, tests for skewness and kurtosis were conducted. The data exhibited a range of skewness values from -1.196 to -0.231 and a range of kurtosis values from -0.789 to 0.972 . The results indicate that the data exhibited a normal distribution [57].

In addition, the structural model was subjected to a goodness-of-fit test to determine the adequacy of the fit between latent variables. The results indicated that the structural model exhibited a satisfactory fit to the data that was collected. The following fit indices support this conclusion: $\chi^2/df = 2.630$, NFI = 0.921, CFI = 0.949, GFI = 0.910, AGFI = 0.890, and RMSEA = 0.056 [57].

4.3.2. The Results of Hypothesis Testing

The study hypotheses described earlier were investigated using a structural equation model, and the findings are presented in Table 4 and Figure 3. H1 has a standardized path coefficient of 0.38 ($t = 9.635$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$), indicating that perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors have statistically significant positive influence on their perceived value. Thus, hypothesis H1 was supported. H2 has a standardized path coefficient of 0.033 ($t = 0.771$, $p = 0.441 > 0.05$), demonstrating that there is no statistically significant evidence to support a positive relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their expectancy disconfirmation. Therefore, hypothesis H2 was not supported. H3, which proposed the existence of a statistically significant and positive correlation between visitors' perceived value and their expectancy disconfirmation, has a standardized path coefficient of 0.421 ($t = 7.293$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$). Consequently, hypothesis H3 was supported.

Table 4. The results of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Paths	Estimate	S.E.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Results
H1: Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Perceived value	0.388	0.040	9.635	***	Support
H2: Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Expectancy disconfirmation	0.033	0.043	0.771	0.441	Not Support
H3: Perceived value → Expectancy disconfirmation	0.421	0.058	7.293	***	Support
H4: Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Quality of life	0.060	0.041	1.452	0.146	Not Support
H5: Expectancy disconfirmation → Satisfaction	0.433	0.047	9.146	***	Support
H6: Expectancy disconfirmation → Quality of life	0.475	0.062	7.626	***	Support
H7: Satisfaction → Quality of life	0.418	0.068	6.134	***	Support

Note: *** $p < 0.001$.

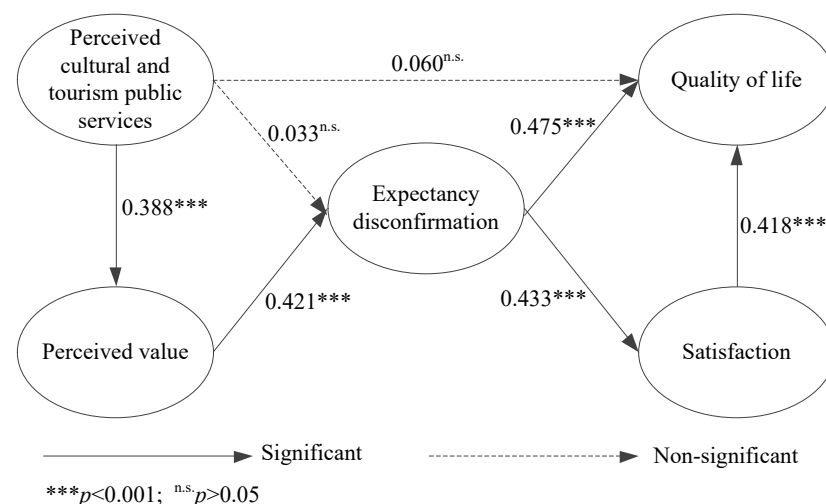


Figure 3. The hypothesis testing results.

H4 has a standardized path coefficient of 0.060 ($t = 1.452$, $p = 0.146 > 0.05$). The findings suggest that there is a lack of statistically meaningful evidence supporting a beneficial association between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their quality of life. Thus, hypothesis H4 was not supported. In addition, the standardized path coefficients for H5, H6, and H7 are, respectively, 0.433, 0.475, and 0.418, with corresponding t -values of 9.146 ($p < 0.001$), 7.626 ($p < 0.001$), and 6.134 ($p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between visitors' expectancy disconfirmation and their satisfaction and quality of life. Additionally, visitors' satisfaction has a considerable positive impact on their quality of life. Thus, the hypotheses H5, H6, and H7 were all supported.

4.4. Multiple Mediation Effect Test

The present study utilizes perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction as the mediating variables. To examine the mediating effect, this study utilized the bootstrap method, which encompassed the execution of 5000 sample tests and the evaluation of the total, direct, and indirect effects. The findings are presented in Table 5. This study reveals that the bias-corrected 95% CI for the total effect of perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors on their quality of life is 0.061–0.304 ($p = 0.003 < 0.05$), and the percentile 95% CI is 0.056–0.302 ($p = 0.003 < 0.05$). These findings indicate that the total effect is statistically significant. In addition, it should be noted that the bias-corrected 95% CI for the direct effect ranged from -0.029 to 0.150 ($p = 0.179 > 0.05$), and the percentile 95% CI ranged from -0.032 to 0.147 ($p = 0.203 > 0.05$). This finding indicates that the direct effect does not exhibit statistical significance.

Table 5. The result of mediation effect analysis.

Hypothesis Paths	Path Effects	Standardized Effect Size	Bias-Corrected 95% CI		p	Percentile 95% CI		p
			Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper	
Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Quality of life	Total	0.186	0.061	0.304	0.003	0.056	0.302	0.003
Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Quality of life	Direct	0.059	-0.029	0.150	0.179	-0.032	0.147	0.203
Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Perceived value → Expectancy disconfirmation → Quality of life	Indirect (1)	0.076	0.045	0.116	0.000	0.043	0.114	0.000
Perceived cultural and tourism public services → Perceived value → Expectancy disconfirmation → Satisfaction → Quality of life	Indirect (2)	0.029	0.027	0.100	0.000	0.013	0.050	0.000

Note: A bootstrap test was used with 5000 samples.

The bias-corrected 95% CI for the indirect effect (1) ranged from 0.045 to 0.116 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), and the percentile 95% CI ranged from 0.043 to 0.114 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Moreover, the bias-corrected 95% CI for the indirect effect (2) ranged from 0.027 to 0.100 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), and the percentile 95% CI ranged from 0.013 to 0.050 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These findings indicated that the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction exist. In addition to this, these three mediating variables act as full mediators, meaning that the perceived cultural and tourism public services do not have a direct effect on quality of life. Instead, they must traverse through these three mediating variables to exert an impact on quality of life. Therefore, H8 was found to be supported.

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The present study makes numerous noteworthy contributions to the existing body of literature. First, this research investigates and validates the dimensions of perceived cultural and tourism public services. Cultural and tourism public services play a crucial

role in facilitating the connection between visitors and tourist attractions. Previous research has examined the various aspects of cultural and tourism public services [40]. However, these studies have primarily focused on theoretical discussion and have not undergone empirical validation. For example, Yang (2022) argued that the cultural and tourism public service system encompasses seven distinct dimensions, including tourism safety and security services, tourism convenience and benefit services, tourism administrative services, tourism transportation services, tourism public information services, tourism public cultural services, and tourism element services [40]. Based on the research of Yang, this study employed confirmation factor analysis to verify the validity of these seven dimensions. Results indicated that the composite reliability (CR) of the variable is 0.933, the average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.666, and the Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.933. The obtained results all exhibit statistical significance. Consequently, seven dimensions of perceived cultural and tourism public services were validated, and the results are consistent with the study of Yang [40]. This discovery establishes a robust basis for future investigations that employ this particular dimension.

Second, this study represents one of the first attempt to apply the expectancy disconfirmation theory, commonly utilized in the public management, social psychology, and marketing disciplines, to the field of culture and tourism studies. A discrepancy between the expectation and the perceived service quality leads to expectancy disconfirmation. Positive expectancy disconfirmation happens when the perceived service quality surpasses the initial expectation, while negative expectancy disconfirmation arises when the perceived service quality falls short of the initial expectation [12]. The findings of this study are in line with the expectancy disconfirmation theory [13]. Results indicated that the enhanced perception of value in cultural and tourism public services among visitors results in positive disconfirmation and subsequently contributes to increased levels of satisfaction. The utilization of expectancy disconfirmation theory within this study offers a valuable explanatory framework for the satisfaction of visitors' experiences. Moreover, it facilitates a clear understanding of the causal progression by which visitors evaluate the quality of public services in the domains of culture and tourism. This study will not only contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of the psychological aspects of visitors but also serve as a crucial reference for government managers in efficiently managing their interactions with the public.

Third, the current study empirically examines the relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services and quality of life and explores the potential mediating effects of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction. Previous studies have pointed out that there are various factors that affect quality of life, which may be roughly grouped into objective stimuli, individual factors, and community environment [33–37]. The goal of this study was to examine the impact of visitors' perceptions of cultural and tourism public services on quality of life from a micro perspective; thus, individual factors were chosen as mediating variables. The results reveal that perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors do not exert a substantial influence on their quality of life or their expectancy disconfirmation. One potential explanation for this phenomenon is that individuals who visit a particular destination may undergo a sequence of psychological assessments subsequent to forming perceptions of cultural and tourism public services. These evaluations, in turn, may influence their overall quality of life. Additionally, the findings indicate that the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction exist, and these factors serve as full mediators. The discovery presented in this study holds significant theoretical value in elucidating the underlying process via which the perception of cultural and tourism public services influences an individual's quality of life.

5.2. Practical Implications

This study offers significant practical insights pertaining to tourism destination management and the managing of visitors' expectations. First, it is imperative for destination

managers to emphasize and provide high-quality cultural and tourism public services in seven key domains. Cultural and tourism public services encompass aspects that are integral to visitors' travel experience and contribute significantly to their quality of life, while also holding considerable economic and social significance. The seven dimensions of culture and tourism public services were validated in this study. For destination managers, cultural and tourism public services can be enhanced from two aspects. On the one hand, tourism destinations need to improve their hardware infrastructure, encompassing tourism transportation and hardware services associated with various tourism components, such as catering and accommodation. On the other hand, it is recommended that tourism destinations enhance their soft services, including tourism safety and security services, tourism convenience and benefit services, tourism administrative services, tourism public information services, tourism public cultural services, etc. The enhancement of visitor satisfaction can be achieved through the effective improvement of cultural and tourism public services throughout these seven categories.

Second, tourism destination managers should strive to deliver public services that go beyond the anticipated levels of visitors, so fostering positive disconfirmation. In the contemporary era of digital connectivity, individuals embarking on tourism endeavors possess the ability to acquire knowledge pertaining to the destinations through a multitude of informational channels. When travelers acquire prior knowledge about the destinations, they subsequently form specific anticipations. The empirical results of this study suggest that the perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors have a significant and positive influence on their perceived value, and visitors' perceived value has a positive effect on their expectancy disconfirmation. Additionally, a robust positive relationship exists between visitors' expectancy disconfirmation and their satisfaction and quality of life. Thus, the provision of public services that surpass the anticipated standards of visitors can facilitate positive disconfirmation, while negative disconfirmation may occur when perceived public services fail to meet visitors' expectations. This discovery has the potential to offer valuable insights for destination managers who are tasked with delivering cultural and tourism public services that surpass the expectations of visitors.

Third, tourism destination managers must employ a strategy known as "expectation management," which involves regulating expectations to a specific threshold in order to enhance or maintain visitor satisfaction levels. Previous studies have shown that visitor expectations have significant impact on their satisfaction [32]. The appropriate level of expectations among visitors should strike a balance between being excessively high, which could pose challenges in meeting such expectations, and being excessively low, which may discourage them from engaging in vacation activities. Therefore, it is imperative to use effective "expectation management" strategies in order to ensure that visitors retain a relatively stable and rational level of expectation. On one hand, it is imperative to disseminate information regarding the commendable quality of public services through publicity and media reporting. This should encompass positive attributes such as the favorable demeanor of public service personnel, streamlining of service procedures, and enhancement of service infrastructure. On the other hand, it is equally important to exercise caution in elevating the publicity surrounding the quality of public services, so as to avoid creating misleading preconceptions among visitors. Additionally, it is crucial to strike a balance between positive and critical assessments in the reporting of public services. This entails moderately highlighting deficiencies and areas for improvement, emphasizing the challenges faced by the government in delivering public services, and acknowledging disparities in service capacity across different regions and departments. The maintenance of a reasonably high level of public expectation for the quality of public services, while simultaneously preventing the actual quality of services from consistently falling below those expectations, can only be achieved through effective expectation management.

6. Conclusions

The provision of cultural and tourism public services in tourism destinations has a notable influence on visitor satisfaction and their overall quality of life. This study empirically investigates the relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their quality of life. In addition, this study explored the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction in the previously described influence relationship. The Ming Tomb Scenic Area, situated in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, was selected as the research case for this study. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed, and 518 were deemed valid and were retained for analysis. The results of this study provided empirical support for all the research hypotheses, with the exception of H2 and H4. From this, we can conclude that the perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors have a notable and significant impact on their perceived value, and visitors' perceived value has a positive and significant effect on their expectancy disconfirmation. Furthermore, there is a strong and positive correlation between visitors' expectancy disconfirmation and their satisfaction and quality of life. In addition, the mediation effect test demonstrated that the mediating effect of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction exist, and these three mediating variables serve as full mediators. This suggests that perceived cultural and tourism public services do not exert a direct impact on the quality of life. Instead, they must traverse through these three mediating variables.

The novelties of this study are diverse. This research is among the first to empirically investigate and validate the seven dimensions of perceived cultural and tourism public services. Previous research has predominantly concentrated on theoretical discussion but has neglected to verify it empirically [41]. The validation of the dimensions of cultural and tourism public services can provide a solid foundation for future research. Moreover, the current study is an early attempt to apply the expectancy disconfirmation theory, which is widely employed in the fields of social psychology, marketing, and public administration, to the study of culture and tourism. In addition, this study explores the mediating roles of perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction, which contribute to revealing the mechanisms by which the perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors affect their quality of life. This study also provides valuable insights into the management of cultural and tourism public services, as well as expectation management. These findings are not only relevant to the Ming Tomb Scenic Area, but also applicable to a broader spectrum of tourist attractions.

The present study has laid a solid foundation for subsequent academic research. Yet, it is crucial to recognize the inherent limits of this study. First, the analysis of the structural relationship in this study was constrained to a solitary study site. It is recommended for future research to conduct similar investigations in additional case sites to validate the findings of this study. Second, there are concerns regarding the generalizability of the findings and potential sampling bias. To address these concerns, it is recommended that the findings be validated using samples from different countries, destinations, and time intervals. This validation process should employ random or systematic sampling procedures to ensure distribution invariance. Third, there are various mediating variables in the relationship between perceived cultural and tourism public services of visitors and their quality of life. This study selected three individual factors (perceived value, expectancy disconfirmation, and satisfaction) as mediating variables. It is advisable for future research endeavors to examine additional mediating variables, such as trust, in order to further investigate potential influence mechanisms. Fourth, researchers have suggested that expectations affecting customer satisfaction are mainly related to predictive expectation and normative expectation [64]. Subsequent investigations may undertake a more detailed categorization and comparative analysis of these two distinct categories, so facilitating a more comprehensive comprehension of the function and mechanisms of expectations in expectancy disconfirmation models.

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