

## THE IMPACT OF NOVELTY- SEEKING AND PERCEIVED COOLNESS ON TOURIST BEHAVIORAL INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CREATIVE TOURISM EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract:** Research on tourist behavioral intention is a very important part of the tourism industry, especially for tourism professionals, travel agencies, tourism management agencies, as well as destinations. Specifically, research on tourist behavioral intention is the basis for predicting demand, understanding tourists' psychology and behavior, and providing an important source of information in supporting the development of marketing strategies for tourist destinations. Therefore, tourist behavioral intention is an important variable that destination managers are always interested in in attracting tourists and developing local tourism. This study aims to examine the impact of factors on tourist behavioral intention. In particular, the focus is on studying the impact of novelty-seeking and perceived coolness on travel behavior intention because these are factors that most tourists are interested in in today's tourism context, especially when the similarity of tourism products of tourist destinations is increasing. To conduct the study, the author conducted direct interviews with 356 tourists to some provinces of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam (Dong Thap, Can Tho, An Giang and Kien Giang) using a convenient sampling method. In addition, the structural equation model analysis method based on the partial least squares method (PLS-SEM) was used to evaluate the measurement model and test the structural model with the support of the SmartPLS 3.2 software tool. The research results show that: First, both novelty-seeking and perceived coolness have a direct impact on creative tourism experience, which means that when tourists perceive a tourist destination as more novel and cool than other tourist destinations, it will promote tourists' desire to experience creative tourism at that destination. Second, creative tourism experience has a direct impact on tourism behavioral intention, this result explains that when tourists have a desire to experience creative tourism at a tourist destination, it will promote tourists' tourism behavioral intention. In addition, the research results also show that novelty-seeking and perceived coolness have an indirect impact on tourism behavioral intention through creative tourism experience.

**Keywords:** creative tourism experience, Mekong delta, novelty-seeking, tourist behavioral intention, perceived coolness

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### INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has recently undergone changes in consumer preferences and behaviors (Pung et al., 2020), driven by economic development and fragmented consumer needs in the postmodern era (Richards, 2011). In the past, most tourists focused on tangible cultural resources, such as visiting famous landmarks and participating in excursions. However, modern tourists increasingly seek immersive experiences that emphasize local culture, adventure activities, thrilling experiences, and unique destinations (Fraiz et al., 2020). The tourism industry has adapted to changing expectations by offering diverse experiences that meet the growing demand for authentic travel. Modern tourists are increasingly interested in engaging with indigenous cultures, community traditions, and local customs, as well as observing and participating in everyday activities that are different from their own (Jebbouri et al., 2021; Ramos-García et al., 2023). This shift reflects a shift from conventional exploration to a focus on destination value, where tourists actively seek personal growth, environmental exploration, and social interaction (Xue et al., 2022). This development has given rise to the concept of creative tourism, a reimagining of traditional cultural tourism (Ababneh & Masadeh, 2019). Creative tourism is therefore seen as an extension of cultural tourism, offering a more immersive and experiential approach.

Creative tourism is defined as authentic experiences involving art, cultural heritage or unique local elements, allowing tourists to actively participate in local communities and cultures (Baixinho et al., 2020). This concept not only enhances the tourist experience but also boosts the economy and increases the attractiveness of destinations. The increasing availability of creative tourism services in many countries plays an important role in shaping the destination preferences of both domestic and international tourists. Tourists participate in a variety of creative tourism experiences (CTE), such as cooking classes, craft workshops and art or cultural tours. These experiences have been shown to have a strong influence on tourists' preferences when visiting specific destinations (Qian et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022; Tran, 2022). Therefore, tourism managers are encouraged to provide CTE to stimulate behavioral intentions, such as revisiting and recommending to others (Ali et al., 2016; Dean & Suhartanto, 2019).

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A recent study by Li & Kovacs (2024) on creative tourism & tourist motivations in three creative cities in China found that diverse travel experiences, educational intentions, & relationship enhancement were key drivers of repeat visits. In addition, the study identified new locations, creative atmospheres, & unique experiences as important drivers of destination choice. The findings indicated that creative tourists visited these destinations for self-development, to explore new trends, to enhance their creative potential, & to be motivated to learn. The opportunity to appreciate, participate, & interact in creative tourism experiences (CTE) was central to educational intentions influencing destination choice. Furthermore, the ability to engage in co-creation activities with family & friends fosters stronger relationships, encouraging additional tourist visits (Li & Kovacs, 2024). Research by Zhang et al. (2025), this study highlights the importance of a brand's perceived coolness in enhancing its appeal and driving its success.

Using the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB) as a framework, the research examines how Airbnb's perceived coolness influences consumers' behavioral intentions toward the platform. The hypotheses were tested through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with data collected from 557 U.S. travelers who had stayed in an Airbnb within the past six months. Additionally, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) was employed to identify the causal configurations behind consumers' desires and behavioral intentions toward Airbnb. The PLS-SEM results underscored the significant impact of perceived coolness on shaping consumers' desires and behavioral intentions. Meanwhile, the fsQCA findings revealed different causal pathways influencing behavioral intentions across generational groups, with anticipated emotions playing a consistent role across all configurations. By integrating perceived coolness into the MGB framework within the context of Airbnb, this study adds to the existing body of literature.

It also provides valuable insights by uncovering causal configurations using fsQCA. For Airbnb providers, the findings emphasize the importance of developing and enhancing the four dimensions of perceived coolness. Moreover, segmenting the consumer market by generation is recommended to tailor strategies effectively. Lastly, the critical influence of anticipated emotions should not be overlooked in shaping consumer behavior. Like any research, this study has several limitations. While we carefully controlled the sample selection and derived meaningful insights using PLS-SEM and fsQCA, we did not consider participant demographics such as gender, occupation, education level, or income.

Additionally, the sample consisted of well-educated individuals, which could have influenced the findings. Furthermore, the study focused exclusively on Airbnb users in the United States, limiting the generalizability of the results. Future research could compare Airbnb listings across different regions, cultures, and economies to validate our findings and draw more robust conclusions, this study explores how perceived "destination coolness" impacts Generation Z tourists, drawing on self-identity theory and the belief–desire–intention model.

A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed to Generation Z tourists, yielding 539 valid responses. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 23 and SmartPLS 4.0. The results reveal that destination coolness significantly enhances Generation Z tourists' sense of novelty, destination-self connection, self-identity, and destination advocacy. This research provides a theoretical framework for understanding perceived destination coolness and contributes to empirical studies on its underlying mechanisms. It highlights the emotional and identity-driven connections between destinations and tourists, illustrating how self-identity plays a key role in motivating destination advocacy behaviors. Based on these findings, the study offers practical recommendations for destination marketing and development, emphasizing strategies that cater to tourists, destination managers, and other stakeholders. This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged.

First, all participants were members of Generation Z in China, meaning the findings are specific to this geographic and sociocultural context, which may limit their applicability to other regions or cultures. Second, data were collected through an online platform using a self-report questionnaire, which could introduce potential biases in the sample. Future research should consider employing more objective measurement methods. For instance, longitudinal studies could be conducted to explore the long-term development of destination coolness. Additionally, experimental methods might be used to investigate how different types of destinations—such as urban, rural, or natural—elicit varying perceptions of coolness.

These approaches could provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the concept. Research by Pratminingsih et al. (2025) examining the influence of novelty-seeking, perceived coolness and servicescape on hedonic well-being and behavioral intention of tourists in creative tourism context. The results revealed that novelty-seeking, perceived coolness, and servicescape significantly enhanced CTE, which, in turn, positively influenced both hedonic well-being and behavioral intention. Additionally, gender was found to moderate the relationship between novelty-seeking and CTE. These findings provide a deeper understanding of the role of CTE in shaping well-being and behavioral intention, offering valuable theoretical insights into the field of creative tourism. Practical strategies were also proposed for destination managers to enhance tourists' experiences, encouraging repeat visits and promoting positive word-of-mouth for creative tourism destinations. However, the limitations of this research include the following: The exploration was conducted in only three major cities, which restricts the geographical scope of the findings. Future studies could expand the coverage to include broader and more diverse locations. The study primarily focused on creative tourism. This indicates the need for future research to explore other tourism types, such as dark tourism, smart tourism, or selfie tourism.

Only three factors were considered as antecedents of CTE. Future investigations should examine additional factors, such as tourist engagement and the adoption of VR technology. While the moderating role of gender was evaluated, other characteristics, such as differences between domestic and foreign tourists, should also be considered in future research. The role of hedonic well-being in shaping behavioral intention was addressed. However, there is a need to further examine the relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in the context of CTE.

Although creative tourism has received considerable attention in the literature, the analysis of CTE and their impact on tourist behavior remains unexplored. Previous studies have examined factors influencing behavioral intentions, such as

destination image, personality, motivation, trust, price promotion, and involvement (Chiu et al., 2016; Hultman et al., 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2020). In addition, a few recent studies have also addressed factors influencing behavioral intentions, such as: Tourism Motivation, Perceived Value (Zhao et al., 2024); perceived landscape value (Du & Wang, 2023); Experience Quality and Destination Image (Dakhi, 2025). However, the specific determinants of tourists' experiences in creative tourism and their influence on behavioral intentions still need further investigation (Wei et al., 2019).

Findings regarding the factors influencing tourists' behavioral intentions are inconsistent. Some studies have identified a potential positive effect of novelty seeking on behavioral intentions (Albaity & Melhem, 2017; Huyen & Nghi, 2019), while others have observed a negative effect (Assaker et al., 2011), & some have found no significant relationship at all (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017). Additionally, novelty seeking and servicescape have been found to be partially related to behavioral intentions (Chang et al., 2018; Xu & Gursoy, 2020). However, the mediating factors for this relationship in the context of creative tourism remain unclear. These inconsistencies highlight a research gap, emphasizing the need for further studies to clarify the relationships between these variables. Based on a review of previous studies, the author found research gaps when examining the impact of factors influencing behavioral intention. In particular, the importance of novelty-seeking and perceived coolness for tourist destinations. From there, it activates the need for creative tourism experiences and promotes behavioral intentions. Therefore, in order to have information to support stakeholders (especially for tourism professionals, travel agencies, tourism management agencies, as well as destinations) in building strategies to attract tourists to tourist destinations, it is appropriate and meaningful to conduct research on the impact of novelty-seeking and perceived coolness on tourist behavioral intention: the mediating role of creative tourism experience.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Stimulus–organism–response theory

The theoretical foundation of this inquiry is predicated upon the stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) paradigm as articulated by Mehrabian & Russell (1974). The S–O–R framework, fundamentally anchored in the discipline of environmental psychology, evolved from the stimulus–response (S–R) theory prevalent in behaviorism by integrating the mediating function of the organism or the individual's internal conditions that exist between stimulus and response. The S–O–R theory has been employed to investigate the interplay among input (stimulus), process (organism), and output (response) (Kim et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). This elucidates that the existence of specific stimuli (S) influences the emotional state of an individual (O), thereby precipitating a range of consumer behavioral responses (R).

The S–O–R theory functions as a conceptual framework extensively utilized within the realms of tourism and consumer behavior studies to comprehend the interrelationships among external stimuli, internal cognitive processes, and the resultant behavioral responses. In accordance with Chang et al. (2014), the S–O–R model represents the most appropriate framework for comprehending tourist behavior, particularly in light of the intangible and experiential characteristics of tourism. The model underscores the emotions elicited by the environment and the corresponding mental responses, which are significantly aligned with the examination of tourist experiences.

The S–O–R model context elucidates the manner in which distinctive elements, such as the pursuit of novelty and the perception of coolness, exert influence over the internal states of tourists and subsequently guide their behaviors. This comprehension is of paramount importance in the domain of creative tourism, wherein the stimulation of unique perceptions and emotions is imperative for satisfying the aspirations for unforgettable and innovative experiences. The designation "stimuli" pertains to external variables that impact the internal state of an individual and facilitate engagement (Chen et al., 2022). Stimuli can encompass environmental, social, or psychological factors that shape the way in which an individual perceives or conducts themselves within a specific context (Nian et al., 2023). This interaction can engender cognitive and affective conditions that significantly influence decision-making processes and behavioral inclinations (Asyraf et al., 2023). Within the framework of creative tourism research, stimuli are articulated through constructs such as novelty-seeking and perceived coolness. Novelty-seeking embodies the pursuit of unique, diverse, and stimulating experiences that diverge from habitual routines, thereby promoting engagement in unconventional activities (Aydin et al., 2022). Traditionally characterized as the quest for new experiences (Tsai, 2016), novelty-seeking in this context pertains to the search for culturally rich, innovative, and diverse activities that deviate from the norm. Moreover, it constitutes a construct evaluated through the measurement of tourists' curiosity, exploration, and engagement in non-routine activities.

The second stimulus, Perceived Coolness, refers to the appealing qualities of a trendy and culturally relevant destination (Chen & Chou, 2019; Munawar et al., 2021). In the context of creative tourism, perceived coolness includes attributes such as originality, subcultural appeal, and trendiness, which align with the desire for culturally engaging and "cool" environments. This enhances emotional engagement by fostering excitement and a sense of belonging and is measured through perceptions of uniqueness, cultural value, and alignment with current trends (Loureiro & Blanco, 2023).

The "organism" component of the S–O–R theory acts as an intermediary element, representing the internal processes and states that mediate between external stimuli and subsequent behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). It encompasses the emotional and cognitive states of individuals. Numerous empirical studies in the hospitality and tourism sectors have utilized factors such as emotions (Xiong et al., 2022), memories (Fan et al., 2023), and experiences (Sthapit et al., 2024) to represent the organism in understanding consumer responses. In this study, Creative Tourism Experience (CTE) is used to represent the internal state of the organism, capturing how tourists process and respond to the environment both cognitively and emotionally. The "response" component refers to the reaction of the organism to stimuli (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which includes behaviors characterized by approach or avoidance. These responses result from the decision-making process when individuals encounter new stimuli. In tourism research,

responses are often measured using constructs such as revisit intention (Rodrigues et al., 2023) and destination loyalty (Zhang et al., 2018). On the other hand, behavioral intention reflects tourists' desire to revisit and recommend a destination, serving as an indicator of loyalty driven by satisfaction and engagement (Peng et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2018).

## **HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **The relationship between Novelty-seeking and CTE**

Novelty-seeking is a widely recognized and fundamental construct associated with an array of positive affective states, including pleasure and enjoyment, thereby elucidating the manner in which cognitive and behavioral psychological frameworks can enhance the comprehension of tourism phenomena (Skavronskaya et al., 2020). Empirical investigations indicate that novelty-seeking within the tourism context is correlated with an inclination to pursue distinctive and memorable experiences that diverge from quotidian surroundings (Blomstervik et al., 2021). Novelty is conceptualized as an outcome stemming from exploration, relaxation, enjoyment, and a deviation from established routines. The recognition of novelty as a pivotal determinant of tourist attraction elucidates that the drive for unique experiences substantially shapes the exhibited behaviors. Novelty-seeking behavior, which exhibits a stable and enduring nature over time, signifies a proclivity for new experiences, frequently characterized by a sense of enthusiasm. Individuals exhibiting a propensity for novelty generally manifest traits such as independence, emotional receptivity, nonconformity, adventurousness, and a predilection for proactive engagement rather than dependence on others to optimize opportunities for self-fulfillment (López Bonilla et al., 2011). With respect to novelty-seeking in Culinary Tourism Experiences (CTE), Tsai (2016) posited that the allure of food consumption experiences for tourists is influenced by factors beyond mere gastronomic offerings. Additional elements, notably the pursuit of novelty, play a critical role in shaping these experiences. The drive for novelty serves as a catalyst for tourists and significantly impacts the perceived value of their experiences, thereby illuminating the functions it fulfills within the tourism paradigm. Chandralal et al. (2015), in their examination of travel blogs, established a robust correlation between novelty and tourism experiences. Tourists are predisposed to retain memories of unique and distinctive encounters to a greater extent than those associated with conventional tourist activities. CTE often encompasses an aspect of unpredictability, and individuals who are novelty seekers, comfortable with uncertainty, exhibit enhanced adaptability and resilience in the circumstances they face. Such individuals may derive substantial satisfaction from creative tourism initiatives, driven by a perception rooted in adventure and enthusiasm, which fosters increased engagement and the creation of memorable experiences (Wurzbarger et al., 2009); consequently, the ensuing hypothesis is formulated:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Novelty-seeking has a significant effect on CTE.

### **The relationship between Perceived coolness and CTE**

Perceived Coolness may be delineated into intrinsic and extrinsic categories, with the intrinsic coolness of an individual pertaining to their character and personality traits. Conversely, extrinsic coolness encompasses stylistic selections, including apparel, accessories, linguistic expression, posture, or overall appearance (Nuerbiya, 2015). Given the intimate interrelation between these categories, this study undertakes an examination of perceived coolness in its entirety, rather than executing discrete evaluations. The notion of 'coolness' pertains to the degree to which a product is regarded as fashionable, appealing, and captivating. Terminology associated with coolness elicits affirmative emotions such as pleasure and exhilaration, frequently linked to concepts of innovation and style (Im et al., 2015).

The concept of perceived coolness in the realm of creative tourism encapsulates the experiential attributes or the contemporary appeal, distinctiveness, and cultural significance of a particular destination (Munawar et al., 2021). Such characteristics augment the allure of a destination for individuals in pursuit of thrilling and modern experiences; consequently, creative tourism experiences regarded as cool by tourists are likely to result in enhanced overall experiences (Jamshidi et al., 2023). The perception of coolness frequently provokes emotional investment, invoking feelings of excitement and inspiration, along with amplifying enjoyment (Loureiro & Blanco, 2023). This aligns with individual preferences and values, resonating with a multifaceted array of tourists who possess common interests and facilitating the evolution of creative tourism experiences into more inclusive and pleasurable ventures (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2020). Thus, the subsequent hypothesis is formulated:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Perceived coolness has a significant effect on CTE

### **The relationship between CTE and behavioral intention**

Zhang et al. (2018) ascertained that tourism experiences significantly influenced behavioral intentions, thereby affecting the decision-making processes over time. Consequently, stimulating destinations are likely to draw a greater number of tourists and encourage repeat visits (Ali et al., 2016; Chang & Backman, 2016). Repeat tourists are typically regarded as the most desirable market segment for numerous destinations due to their propensity for extended stays, elevated satisfaction levels stemming from realistic expectations, and their tendency to disseminate positive word-of-mouth endorsements (Chi, 2012). These individuals exhibit heightened engagement in a variety of activities, which can be attained with diminished advertising expenditures compared to regular or first-time tourists (Zhang et al., 2018). Huang & Hsu (2009) underscored that experiences consistently exerted a positive influence on the attitudes towards a destination and the intention to revisit. Tourists who have previously engaged with a destination may articulate a sense of assurance regarding their return. According to Petrick et al. (2001), experiences exerted a substantial impact on revisit intentions, indicating that individuals were inclined to return to enjoyable activities. Therefore, the subsequent hypothesis was formulated:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** CTE has a significant influence on tourist behavioral intention.

Based on the literature review and the hypotheses set, the research model (Figure 1) depicting the influence of Novelty-seeking and perceived coolness on the creative tourism experience and behavioral intention is established as follows:

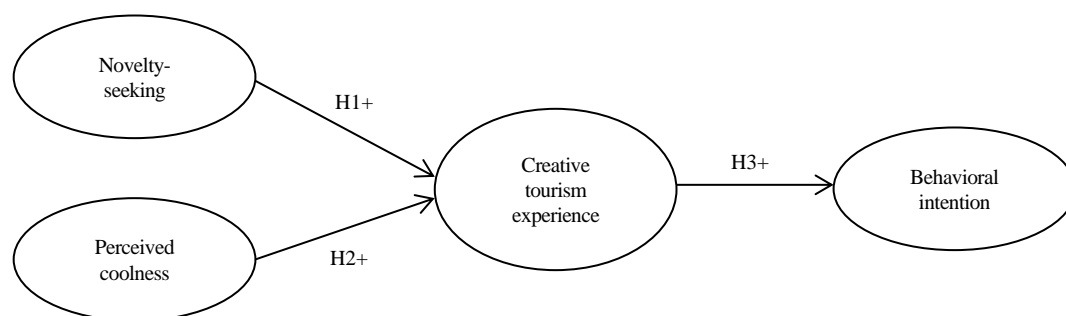


Figure 1. Proposed research model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Measurement scale

All measurement items were adapted from previous studies to ensure the validity of the scale. The content of the scale was slightly modified to align with the research context. Each measurement item was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. Refer to Table 1 for a detailed overview of all scales used in this study.

Table 1. Interpretation of observed variables in the research model

Construct	Code	Observed variables	Source
Novelty-seeking	NOS1	This creative tourism spot is novel compared to other attraction centers	Cheng et al. (2015), Chen & Yoon (2017), Mun et al. (2018)
	NOS2	This creative tourism spot has unique features not offered in other tourism attractions	
	NOS3	In my opinion, this creative tourism attraction is extraordinary	
Perceived coolness	PEC1	When I first heard about this attraction, I thought visiting would be cool	Kock (2021), Chen & Chou (2019), Bruun et al. (2016)
	PEC2	This attraction will make me look stylish and on-trend	
	PEC3	When I think of hip and happening locations, this attraction immediately comes to mind	
	PEC4	This creative tourism has some unique features This creative tourism is stylish and forward-thinking	
Creative tourism experience	CTE1	Creative tour left a lasting impression on me	Wang et al. (2020), Dean & Suhartanto (2019), Hung et al. (2016)
	CTE2	Creative tour offered new experiences	
	CTE3	Creative tour gave me experiences different from any other location	
Behavioral intention	BEI1	I would like to return to this creative tour in the future	Liu et al. (2017), Ali et al. (2016), Çelik & Dedeoğlu (2019)
	BEI2	I would recommend this creative tour to my family and acquaintances	
	BEI3	I recommend this creative tour to other individuals for a visit	
	BEI4	I want to tell other individuals positive things about this creative tour	

### Data collection

The survey was conducted from October 2024 to December 2024. Due to the difficulty in accessing the survey subjects, the study used the convenience sampling method. The direct interview method was used to collect information from respondents. The survey subjects were tourists visiting some famous tourist destinations in the Mekong Delta.

The total number of surveys was 400, the total number of survey responses received was 378, of which the number of responses that met the requirements and ensured reliability was 356, specifically: Dong Thap (115 tourists), Can Tho (85 tourists), An Giang (80 tourists), Kien Giang (76 tourists). Table 2 indicates 54.78% were males, 45.22% were females, and 4.21% were under 20; 28.37% were from 20 to under 30; 35.67% were from 30 to under 40; 25.00% were from 40 to under 50, and 6.74% were older than 50, and 3.37% were no income; 18.82% were under 3 mil; 32.30% were from 3 to under 6 mil; 35.11% were from 6 to under 9 mil and 10.39% were above 9 mil.

Table 2. The demographic survey data

Demographic profile		Frequency (n = 356)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	195	54.78
	Female	161	45.22
Age	Under 20	15	4.21
	From 20 to under 30	101	28.37
	From 30 to under 40	127	35.67
	From 40 to under 50	89	25.00
	Above 50	24	6.74
	No income	12	3.37
Income	Under 3 mil	67	18.82
	From 3 to under 6 mil	115	32.30
	From 6 to under 9 mil	125	35.11
	Above 9 mil	37	10.39

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial stage, the measurement model was assessed and analyzed to confirm its quality before advancing to the second stage, which involved evaluating the structural model.

### Measuring model

Table 3 demonstrates that all measurement items achieved convergent validity. The table includes Cronbach's Alpha values, average variance extracted (AVE) statistics for each dimension, and factor loadings for each item. With only rare exceptions, the results indicate that the outer loadings of the items were approximately 0.708 or higher, supporting the proposed factor structure (Hair et al., 2021). The AVE values range from 0.680 to 0.762, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). Additionally, the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values, which ranged from 0.882 to 0.921, confirm construct reliability, exceeding the significance threshold of 0.7.

In this study, the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) criterion was applied to assess discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the square root of the AVE is higher than the correlations between all pairs of dimensions, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Code	CA	CR	AVE	OL
Novelty-seeking	NOS1	0.843	0.906	0.762	0.845
	NOS2				0.904
	NOS3				0.869
Perceived coolness	PEC1	0.843	0.894	0.680	0.841
	PEC2				0.820
	PEC3				0.749
	PEC4				0.882
Creative tourism experience	CTE1	0.799	0.882	0.713	0.857
	CTE2				0.813
	CTE3				0.863
Behavioral intention	BEI1	0.885	0.921	0.745	0.807
	BEI2				0.882
	BEI3				0.875
	BEI4				0.885

Notes: CA: Cronbach's Alpha; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; OL: Outer Loadings; NOS: Novelty-seeking; PEC: Perceived coolness; CTE: Creative tourism experience; BEI: Behavioral intention.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

Construct	Behavioral intention	Creative tourism experience	Novelty-seeking	Perceived coolness
Behavioral intention	<b>0.863</b>			
Creative tourism experience	0.451	<b>0.845</b>		
Novelty-seeking	0.837	0.490	<b>0.873</b>	
Perceived coolness	0.338	0.310	0.266	<b>0.825</b>

### Structural model

Path standardized coefficients ( $\beta$  values) and p-values were used to evaluate the relationships between the components. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, both factors novelty-seeking and perceived coolness exert a positive and statistically significant direct effect on creative tourism experience ( $\beta = 0.439$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\beta = 0.194$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This is evidenced by the positive estimate coefficients and t-values exceeding 1.96 at a 5% significance level, as suggested by Henseler et al. (2009). Among these factors, Novelty-seeking has the strongest influence on creative tourism experience. Additionally, these two factors collectively account for 27.5% of the variation in creative tourism experience.

Table 5. Hypothesis analysis results

Relationship	Path coefficients	P- values	Hypotheses	Decision
<b>Direct effects</b>				
NOS $\rightarrow$ CTE	0.439	0.000	H <sub>1</sub>	Accepted
PEC $\rightarrow$ CTE	0.194	0.000	H <sub>2</sub>	Accepted
CTE $\rightarrow$ BEI	0.451	0.000	H <sub>3</sub>	Accepted
<b>Indirect effects</b>				
NOS $\rightarrow$ CTE $\rightarrow$ BEI	0.198	0.000	H <sub>4</sub>	Accepted
PEC $\rightarrow$ CTE $\rightarrow$ BEI	0.087	0.001	H <sub>5</sub>	Accepted

Notes: NOS: Novelty-seeking; PEC: Perceived coolness; CTE: Creative tourism experience; BEI: Behavioral intention.

Novelty-seeking has a positive influence on creative tourism experience, a finding that is consistent with Tsai's (2016) study, which found that the allure of food consumption experiences for tourists is influenced by factors beyond mere

gastronomic offerings. Further reinforcing this relationship, Chandralal et al. (2015), in their examination of travel blogs, established a robust correlation between novelty and tourism experiences. In addition, perceived coolness positively affects creative tourism experience, a relationship also supported by previous studies (Jamshidi et al., 2023; Loureiro & Blanco, 2023; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2020). Furthermore, creative tourism experience is confirmed as a key predictor of behavioral intention ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), explaining 20.4% of the variance in Behavioral Intention. Using the bootstrapping method with 1,000 repetitions, the structural model was evaluated, and the results indicate that all three hypotheses were supported. This finding is consistent with previous studies. Specifically: Zhang et al. (2018) ascertained that tourism experiences significantly influenced behavioral intentions, thereby affecting the decision-making processes over time. Further strengthen this relationship, according to Petrick et al. (2001), experiences exerted a substantial impact on revisit intentions.

### Mediating effects

Besides the direct influence of Novelty-seeking and Perceived coolness on Creative tourism experience, the research results (Table 5 and Figure 2) also show that: Novelty-seeking has an indirect influence on Behavioral intention through Creative tourism experience ( $\beta = 0.198$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); Perceived coolness has an indirect influence on Behavioral intention through Creative tourism experience ( $\beta = 0.087$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

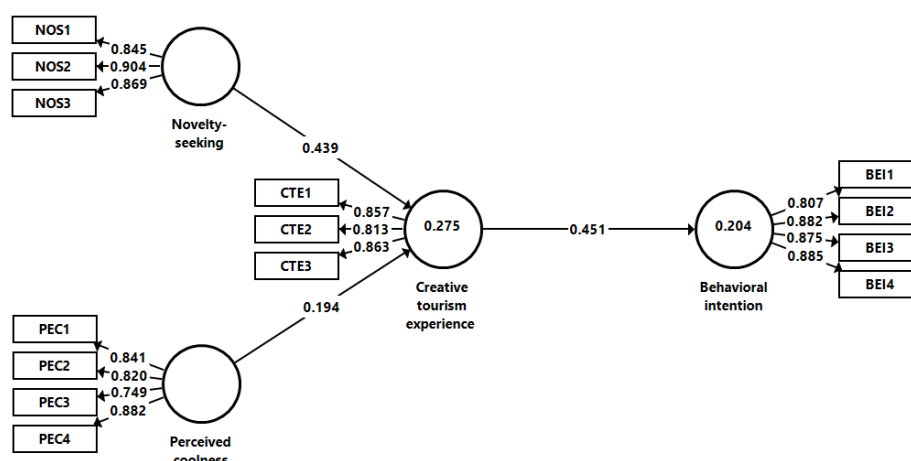


Figure 2. Structural model result

### CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The study demonstrated that novelty-seeking and perceived coolness have a positive impact on creative tourism experience. In addition, creative tourism experience also has a direct impact on tourist behavioral intention.

The research results contribute to suggesting policy implications to enhance novelty-seeking and perceived coolness, thereby promoting intention to revisit tourist destinations in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam. Although the study achieved its objectives, there are still limitations.

Firstly, this study only focused on surveying tourists to 04 provinces in the Mekong Delta region and ignored some other provinces. Therefore, further studies need to expand the scope of the survey so that the results can better represent the whole.

Secondly, the impact on tourist behavioral intention is not only due to creative tourism experience but also many other factors. However, this study could not mention all of them. Further studies need to pay attention to exploring new factors affecting creative tourism experience and tourist behavioral intention to provide adequate information for destination managers in promoting tourist behavioral intention.

Thirdly, this study has not considered the role of moderator variables (Gender, Age and Income) on the relationship between novelty-seeking and creative tourism experience, perceived coolness and creative tourism experience or the relationship between creative tourism experience and tourist behavioral intention. Therefore, further studies need to exploit this aspect.

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