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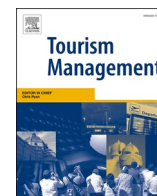
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How do destination negative events trigger tourists' perceived betrayal and boycott? The moderating role of relationship quality

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ABSTRACT

This study presented and tested a conceptual model that examined how a negative event at a tourism destination influenced perceived betrayal and boycott among tourists. A mixed method approach with three studies was adopted to verify the proposed hypotheses. In Study 1, using Weibo microblogging platform data, we evaluated the impacts of a negative event on tourists' perception of betrayal and intentions to participate in a tourism boycott. In Study 2, an experimental study was conducted to investigate the relationships among the negative event, perceptions of betrayal, and propensity for a tourism boycott. In Study 3, an additional experimental study revealed that relationship quality would moderate the influences of negative events on perceptions of betrayal and intention to join a boycott. The findings of this study offer theoretical and managerial implications for destination management organizations' responses to negative events.

1. Introduction

In recent years, negative events at tourism destinations such as crowding, stampede incidents, animal abuse, and environmental pollution have received significant media coverage (Shaheer et al., 2021, pp. 1–12). Such events can result in tourism boycott of a destination (Yu et al., 2020). For example, nearly 80 percent of Icelandic whale watching tourists supported a tourism boycott of whale hunting countries such as Japan, as well as of Caribbean countries that support Japan's brutal slaughter of whales (Yu et al., 2020). Such boycotts can have significant impacts on tourism revenue (Luo & Zhai, 2017; Yu et al., 2020). These cases suggest that negative events could have significant impacts on destination development and call for more attention to destination crisis management (Javornik et al., 2020). Given the intangibility and mobility characteristics of tourism consumption, tourists who learn about negative events at a destination may perceive those destinations as higher risk and less appealing.

Previous studies of the impacts of negative events on tourist attitudes and behaviors have not addressed types of negative events or their influences on propensity to join a tourism boycott (Berbekova et al., 2021; Luo & Zhai, 2017). However, the marketing literature suggests that different types of negative events may have distinct impacts. For example, Kübler et al. (2020) found that whether corporate negative

events are performance-related or values-related predicts consumer response for particular product types. Thus, environmental pollution, congestion, bad service attitude, arbitrary price increases, and so on may have differing impacts (Hu et al., 2020).

When a negative event occurs in a tourism destination, tourists may feel the destination fails to meet their expectations for a destination experience, which could undermine their trust in the destination and activate a sense of betrayal (Tsai et al., 2014). Perceived betrayal is a key outcome of an organization's egregious actions and it has significant negative impact on consumer identification and purchase intention (Cai et al., 2018). According to the Awareness-Perceived Egregiousness-Boycott (AEB) model (Klein et al., 2004), perceived egregiousness mediates the relationship between individual awareness of corporate negative events and consumer boycott. Högrevé et al. (2017) also suggested that perceived betrayal mediates the relationship among negative event, negative purchase intention, and compensation expectation. However, tourism research has rarely investigated how perceived betrayal might explain the relationship between destination negative events and tourism boycotts (Cai et al., 2018; Shaheer et al., 2021, pp. 1–12).

Other questions arise from evidence that relationship quality between tourists and tourism destinations affects tourists' attitudes and behavior, although findings are inconsistent (He et al., 2018; Su &

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Huang, 2018). One set of studies indicated that high relationship quality may buffer the negative effects of corporate negative events on consumer attitudes and behaviors (Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014; Su & Huang, 2018). Another set indicates that consumers with higher relationship quality are more likely to express negative emotion and behavior when learning about corporate negative events (He et al., 2018; Ward & Ostrom, 2006). The role of tourist-destination relationship quality in shaping negative events and consumer responses remains unclear (He et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). The current study therefore examines the moderating effects of relationship quality on the relationship between destination negative events and tourism boycott.

This study applies the AEB framework to develop a conceptual model that investigates how types of destination negative events affect tourists' perceived betrayal and intentions of tourism boycott and whether tourist-destination relationship quality acts as a moderator. A mixed methods approach with three studies was adopted to investigate the proposed hypotheses. In Study 1, using Weibo microblogging platform data, we evaluated the impacts of a negative event on tourists' perception of betrayal and intentions to participate in a tourism boycott. In Study 2, an experimental study was conducted to investigate the relationships among the negative event, perceptions of betrayal, and propensity for a tourism boycott. In Study 3, an additional experimental study explored whether relationship quality moderates the influences of negative events on perceptions of betrayal and intention to join a boycott.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it distinguishes competence negative events from moral negative events and examines the relationship of each type with tourists' perceived betrayal and tourism boycott intentions. Second, this study examines the mediation effect of perceived betrayal between destination negative events and intentions to engage in a tourism boycott. Third, drawing on the construal level theory, this study revealed the interaction effect of relationship quality and destination negative events (i.e., competence/moral-based negative events) on tourists' perceived betrayal and boycott intentions. According to the construal level theory, a high-quality relationship between a tourist and a destination will lead to a lower construal level with a more detailed mental presentation, and a higher degree of personal involvement (Fujita et al., 2006). However, tourists who have a low-quality relationship with a destination will perceive it as a psychologically distant objective, which results in a higher construal level with an abstract mental presentation. These different construal levels associated with relationship quality would further impact how tourists respond to destination negative events. The findings of this study offer theoretical and managerial implications for destinations' marketing responses to negative events. The next section provides an overview of the AEB framework, the core concepts used in the study, and the development of hypotheses.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Awareness-Perceived Egregiousness-Boycott framework

Klein et al. (2004) first introduced the AEB framework based on a cost-reward model and social psychology research that explained the relationship between organization behavior and tourism boycott. The framework demonstrated that individuals have awareness about the behavior of enterprises (A), that they judge whether this behavior is egregious (E), and that this triggers their participation in a boycott (B). Perceived egregiousness and its effect can mediate the relationship between individual awareness and boycott. Specifically, boycott participation is primarily the result of the belief that enterprises have engaged in wrong behaviors and that these behaviors have negative and harmful consequences for others. Negative events can stimulate people's perception of the corporation's behavior as egregious and other negative emotions, and the resulting negative emotional response is the main trigger of boycott (Lee et al., 2011; Makarem & Jae, 2016). Many studies

have found the AEB model effective in exploring the formation of consumer boycott (He et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021). This study adopts the AEB model to examine the impacts of destination negative events on tourism boycott by tourists. We propose that, when a negative event occurs in a tourism destination, tourists first become aware of the event, then form a judgment that the event is egregious and a betrayal of their expectations, and that this can lead to a tourism boycott.

2.2. Negative event

The term "negative event" is widely used in marketing research to mean an event that has "a strong and extensive negative impact" that is caused by "the internal products or services of the enterprise, the entire enterprise or individual employees in the marketing process" (Geeta et al., 1999, p. 325). For example, Votolato and Unnava (2006) defined negative events as being based on a lack of competence or moral compass (see also Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). While negative events are often considered as a type of crisis event, the concept of crisis events is broader and includes events caused by external factors (e.g. natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or pandemics), which are beyond the control of marketers and thus distinct by negative events, which marketers may be able to control (Votolato & Unnava, 2006; Seabra et al., 2020). Grégoire et al. (2010) showed that negative events prompt tourists to perceive tourism destination actions as egregious, and Avraham (2015) found that negative events seriously disrupt the number of visitors and profit, reducing the competitiveness and undermining the sustainability of tourism destinations.

Recent research distinguishes different event types and finds that they have differing impacts on consumer responses (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Kübler et al., 2020). In the management and marketing literature, Coombs (2004) categorize negative events according to clusters based on attribution theory: the victim cluster, the accidental cluster, and the preventable cluster. Kim et al. (2006) provided two categories based on perceived causes of breach of consumer trust: competence-based trust violation and integrity-based trust violation. From the holistic perspective, Votolato and Unnava (2006) divided negative events into competence negative events and moral negative events. The former refers to failures in strategic planning, internal management, or learning ability that prevent an enterprise from fulfilling its commitment to the functional needs of stakeholders. The latter may involve a company's failure to meet quality standards (or consumers' perception of such standards). It reflects a lack of social responsibility and/or a violation of social norms. A competence negative event might include the use of sweatshop labor. Zou and Li (2016), and Kübler et al. (2020) applied this classification in their work. However, few studies explored the underlying psychological mechanisms that drive consumers to respond differently to different types of negative events.

Research on negative events in service industries such as tourism and hospitality is nascent (Rahimi & Kozak, 2016) yet growing in perceived importance in line with growing understanding of the impact of internal issues of tourism destinations (Berbekova et al., 2021). According to the image-imagery duality-model (Josiassen et al., 2016), individuals can draw all the associations connected to a destination from their memory to form destination imagery, which positively influences destination image, satisfaction, and intentions to visit the destination. Destination imagery includes diverse cognitions and feelings connected with individuals' previous experiences, opinions, and knowledge relating to a destination (Kock et al., 2016). When a negative event occurs in a tourism destination, this may become a part of individuals' destination imagery. The advance of social media and communication technology has increased the speed of exposure and thus the likelihood of a tourism boycott (Luo & Zhai, 2017). Therefore, in this study, we regarded perceptions of negative events as a kind of negative destination imagery, which in turn could influence tourists' emotions and behavioral intentions towards a destination.

Following Votolato and Unnava (2006), we distinguish competence

negative events from moral negative events. In the former, service providers in a tourism destination are unable to fulfill their functional commitment to the reception of tourists due to functional product defects or lack of management capabilities. A competence negative event might include problems with hygiene, facilities, etc., or congestion and slow service (Rahimi & Kozak, 2016). A moral negative event occurs when a service provider violates moral norms and social standards. For example, they might spread false advertising, implement an arbitrary price increase, or sell fraudulent products (Hills & Cairncross, 2011).

2.3. Perceived betrayal

Grégoire and Fisher (2008) conceptualized perceived betrayal as “a customer’s belief that a firm has intentionally violated what is normative in the context of their relationship” (pp. 250). Perceived betrayal can arise from service provider lacking the ability to complete the contract and therefore violating the relationship specification; it may also be due to the service provider undermining the trust among customers by deceiving and lying (Lee et al., 2021). In either condition, betrayal comes from people’s perception and evaluation of organizational egregious behavior, and when organizations engage in egregious behavior such as breach of contract, people are likely to perceive that betrayal has occurred (Moors, 2010, pp. 11–47). It has a negative impact on consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intention (Lee et al., 2013).

In the tourism context, Cai et al. (2018) defined perceived betrayal as tourists’ perceptions that the destructive behavior of service providers in a tourism destination conflicts with their preexisting expectations or tourism objectives. Tourists spend time and money travelling to an unfamiliar destination, anticipating that they will receive good services (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016) and have a positive emotional experience (Su et al., 2020). A failure of expectations represents a breach of psychological contract and may create a perception of egregiousness and a sense of betrayal (Tsai et al., 2014). Based on this line of research, we defined perceived betrayal in this study as tourists’ perceptions that the service providers in a tourism destination cannot keep their promises to tourists, which conflict with the contractual relationship between the tourist and the service providers.

2.4. Tourism boycott

Friedman (1985) defined boycott as “an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected purchases in the marketplace” (pp. 79). The widespread use of social media has made such urging vastly easier, such that one in five consumers have participated in boycotting a brand after learning about a negative event (Yu et al., 2020). Boycotting is seen as an individual or collective nonviolent action that can force an organization to change its unjust behavior; it has been examined in diverse disciplines (Yang & Rhee, 2019). Generally, internal or external factors may lead to boycotts (Zeng et al., 2021). Internal factors include psychological variables such as attitude, animosity, or betrayal (Yu et al., 2020). External factors include evidence that the organization engaged in wrongdoing in ways that caused harm to others (Klein et al., 2004). Cultural factors can play a role in boycott behaviors. For example, in a collectivism context, people tend to work together to support a common cause, which could further result in group cohesion affecting consumers’ boycott behavior (Hoffmann, 2014; Yu et al., 2020).

There is no clear definition of a tourism boycott. Researchers suggest they can be broadly understood as refusal to take part in a tourism destination, a tourism activity, or a form of tourism development, and that tourists, organizations, or governments may initiate them (Luo & Zhai, 2017). Tourism boycotts typically target a destination rather than a brand or a company (Castañeda & Burner, 2010). In this study, we focus on individual tourists’ decision to boycott a tourism destination. We define tourism boycott as a behavioral intention that tourists stop travelling to a tourism destination and cease communication with the

suppliers of tourism products and services they would otherwise have purchased.

Shaheer et al. (2018) identified 146 tourism boycotts that occurred between 1948 and 2015, of which more than 90% occurred after 2003 (pp. 129). As tourism boycotts become more common, they may have a significant impact on destinations (Shaheer et al., 2018). Nevertheless, studies of tourism boycotts remain scarce (Yu et al., 2020).

2.5. Relationship quality

Kim and Cha (2002) defined relationship quality as consumer perception and evaluation of an organization or a service person’s communication and behavior, such as respect, courtesy, and helpfulness. Dorsch et al. (1998) describe relationship quality as “a higher-order construct consisting of several distinct, although related dimensions” (p. 130). Trust, satisfaction, identification, and commitment are four important dimensions of relationship quality widely recognized by scholars (Kim & Cha, 2002; Lee et al., 2021; Su et al., 2017). A positive relationship between employees and enterprises can reduce negative emotions and conflicts at work, increase employee productivity and satisfaction, and improve overall efficiency (Walsh et al., 2010).

Su et al. (2016) defined the quality of relationships between tourists and tourism destinations as an overall measure of the strength of the relationship between tourists and the destination. They identify four dimensions of this relationship—trust, satisfaction, identification, commitment—which appear in other research as well (He et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021; Su et al., 2016; Su & Huang, 2018). Su et al. (2016) note that establishing, maintaining, developing, and improving relationship quality between tourism destinations and tourists has great impact. Trust is tourists’ overall perception of the destination’s competence, benevolence, and credibility (Su et al., 2020). Satisfaction is contentment with a destination’s provided service experience (Su & Huang, 2018). Identification is considered an active, selective, and voluntary behavior motivated by the need to meet one or more self-defining needs (Su et al., 2016). Commitment is an important relationship between tourists’ perception of destination experience and their behavior in the tourism destination (He et al., 2018). Based on these four components, this study defines relationship quality as tourists’ overall evaluation of tourism destinations reflected in perceptions of service quality, travel experience, and the price paid for the value received.

3. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

3.1. The relationship between negative events and perceived betrayal

According to the AEB model (Klein et al., 2004), a tourism destination may have problems due to lack of ability or lack of ethics in the course of management, and have negative and harmful consequences for all stakeholders. In response, tourists will form a negative awareness of the wrong behavior that occurred in a tourism destination, and judge the egregiousness of destination behavior based on possible consequence, which leads to a negative change of emotion. If the destination cannot meet its promises to the tourist in service or experience, tourists will feel the failure is egregious, and will experience a sense of betrayal (Tsai et al., 2014; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Moreover, the image-imagery duality-model (Josiasen et al., 2016) suggests individuals could associate negative events to a destination in their memory to form negative destination imagery, which further impacts destination image and tourists’ emotional and cognitive responses (e.g., perceived betrayal).

The perceived egregiousness of different destination negative event types and the emotion stimulated by different destination negative event types may differ. Consistent with this view, Kähr et al. (2016) argued that researchers should explore the differences in individual impact between different negative event types, and pointed out that individual awareness and reactions to different negative event types differ

significantly. Specifically, moral negative events often trigger more intense negative emotion and more serious consequences than competence negative events. In the context of tourism destinations, since the production and consumption of tourism products occur at the same time, destination marketers must ensure the delivery of the services that they promise in advertising and promotions. A competence negative event arises when tourism destinations do not meet their expected commitments due to lack of capacity. Such events threaten the individual tourist's judgment of ability and service quality at the tourism destination, and create a sense of insecurity (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). Competence negative events force tourists to lower their personal expectations, breaking tourist's trust. This will cause tourists to make a judgment about the egregiousness of the destination negative event, and thus have an impact on the perceived betrayal. In contrast, a moral negative event arises when destinations do not meet expectations due to moral failures of actors in the destination. In such cases the actors violate the beliefs and social norms tourists hold dear and, often, that they believe society in general shares. On the basis of the above theories, we propose the research hypothesis as follows:

H1. Compared with competence negative events, moral negative events have a stronger negative impact on perceived betrayal.

3.2. The relationship between negative events and tourism boycotts

Previous studies have shown that misbehavior within an organization will directly affect the attitude and behavior of the consumers it serves (Luo & Zhai, 2017; Zhai et al., 2019), and that it can inspire retaliation such as boycotts from consumers (Grégoire et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2020). According to the AEB framework, the people's boycott behaviors are largely related to the severity of organizational wrongdoing, and more serious negative events trigger more extreme negative behavior, including boycotts (Klein et al., 2004). As a modern form of protest, boycott is seen as an extreme action that can correct organizational injustices (Yang & Rhee, 2019). Delistavrou et al. (2020) found that consumers may participate in boycotts because retailers fail to carry out their corporate social responsibility commitments, or because they perceive unethical behavior by supermarket product retailers. They further suggest that different negative event types can have a direct impact on consumer boycott. However, consumers have different sensitivity to different types of brand negative events. Kübler et al. (2020) divided corporate crisis events into performance-related and values-related. Incompetence or unintentional errors cause performance-related events, and thus they are less likely to provoke moral outrage (Kübler et al., 2020). Values-related crises will not only cause consumers to question the product itself, but also question the values of enterprises and even general behavior, and thus are more likely to stimulate consumer boycott.

Tourists undertake boycotting as a tool of punishment and change (Lee, 2012; Palacios Florencio et al., 2019). A moral negative event can be extremely likely to lead to tourists' negative behavior, as the tourist feels that to travel to the destination would contradict their own moral code and conflict with general values and moral rules. Tourists are less likely to generate moral anger when they perceive a competence negative event than a moral negative event. Competence negative events may be result of insufficient capacity, management experience, or unintentional behavior (Cleeren et al., 2017). Psychology research indicates that tourists are better able to forgive competence negative events than moral negative events (Wojciszke et al., 1993). Based on the AEB framework and previous empirical findings, we hypothesize the following:

H2. Compared with competence negative events, moral negative events are more likely to lead to a tourism boycott.

3.3. The mediating effect of perceived betrayal

Based on the AEB model, individuals often develop an awareness of enterprise behavior, on the basis of which they determine whether the behavior of the enterprise is egregious and then engage in boycott. Perceived egregiousness and its effect can mediate between individual awareness and boycott (Klein et al., 2004). Significant research has confirmed the importance of perceived betrayal and further explored its mediating role (Chiu, 2016; Duman & Özgen, 2018). Romani et al. (2013) explored the relationship between corporate misconduct and consumer behavior, which holds that consumers will be angry, disappointed, and betrayed when they face corporate misconduct, and will further take different punishment measures against corporations. Trump's (2014) study divided corporate wrongdoing into product failure and negative ethical action, finding that either type of corporate wrongdoing can trigger strong negative emotional reactions (disappointment and betrayal) among consumers and have a serious negative impact on consumer future purchase behavior.

Evidently, both negative event types can trigger negative cognitive emotions such as perceived betrayal and therefore consumer retaliation designed to compel the organization to take action to correct the errors (Strizhakova et al., 2012). Tourism consumption has the characteristics of intangibility and variability, which makes tourism consumption higher risk than other kinds of consumption. Therefore, whether it is due to the lack of management capacity of tourism destination leading to competence negative event, or due to moral failure, a moral negative event means that the tourism destination did not meet the expectations of tourists. The contract and trust between tourists and destinations is destroyed, increasing tourists' perception of risk, and tourists will feel the behavior is egregious, resulting in a sense of betrayal. Perceived betrayal, as an extreme cognition, will stimulate tourists not to travel to a particular tourism destination and to initiate tourism boycotts. Therefore, based on the AEB model and extant literature, we reasonably predict the mediating effect of perceived betrayal in negative events and tourism boycotts, and develop the following hypothesis:

H3. Perceived betrayal mediates the relationship between negative event and tourism boycott.

3.4. The moderating effect of relationship quality

Previous studies show that relationship quality is crucial to the development and maintenance of consumer-business relationships and to ensure sustainable business development (Su & Swanson, 2017). The quality of a relationship between consumers and a brand directly affects the emotional attitude of the consumers and their perception of brand (Valta, 2013). Trump (2014) pointed out that consumers with a high-quality relationship will see brands as part of themselves, considering any doubts or negative publicity of the brand from the outside to be doubts about themselves, and try to weaken and reduce the negative impact. However, studies have also found that if negative events directly harm consumers, for example if a firm should have been able to correct its mistakes before they caused harm and did not, or it treated consumers unfairly, compared with consumers with low relationship quality, consumers with high relationship quality are likely to feel betrayed and have extreme negative behavior (Lee et al., 2021).

Consistent with the above views, tourists visit tourism destinations to have a good physical and psychological experience (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). According to construal level theory, relationship quality between tourists and tourism destinations is high in that it implies a lower construal level. Thus, the closer the relationship between tourists and tourism destinations, the higher the overall evaluation of tourism destinations, the more detailed information the tourist will obtain, the higher the degree of personal participation, and the higher the expectations for tourism destinations (Fujita et al., 2006). However, negative events lead tourists to feel that service providers at tourism destinations

have broken their promises to them and directly undermined their opportunities to have a good tourism experience. Compared with a competence negative event, a moral negative event will cause tourists to have more negative cognition, as they will feel that the tourism destination not only violated their personal expectations, but also violated societal values. This perception of egregious behavior causes travelers to feel that expectations were violated and may lead to more intense perceived betrayal (Bundy & Pfarrer, 2015). When relationship quality between tourists and tourism destinations is low, construal level is high. When the relationship between tourists and tourism destinations is distant, tourists have a general evaluation of the tourism destinations, information about tourism destination is more abstract, and personal involvement is low (Dhar & Kim, 2007). As such, tourists are more likely to have a general impression that the destination fails to keep its promise to tourists, rather than paying attention what type of negative events has occurred (Han & Hyun, 2013). In this case, negative event types won't result in significant difference on perceived betrayal. Therefore, in this study, relationship quality is proposed as a moderator between negative event and perceived betrayal. We propose the following hypotheses:

H4a. When relationship quality is high, moral-based (vs. competence-based) negative event has a stronger negative influence on perceived betrayal.

H4b. When relationship quality is low, there is no significant difference between the impacts of moral-based and competence-based negative events on perceived betrayal.

Grégoire et al. (2009) found that when a company's internal problems directly affect consumers' feelings and interests, causing direct harm to consumers, consumers who have a good relationship with brands will show a stronger negative response. Compared to consumers with low relationship quality, consumers with high relationship quality will amplify their response to the service failure, greatly reducing their likelihood of repurchase. If the firm has a negative impact on the consumer's self-interest due to internal mistakes, high relationship quality consumers are more likely to take extreme actions (Lee et al., 2021). Thus, we predict that the relationship quality also moderates the main effect of negative event on tourism boycott. According to construal level theory, relationship quality between tourists and tourism destinations is high, which implies a lower construal level. The relationship between tourists and tourism destinations is close, and the tourist expects that the destination will provide a good travel experience (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). Therefore, when negative events occur in tourism destinations that directly affect the tourist experience, this is a kind of egregious behavior, which is likely to have negative consequences. Compared with a competence negative event, a moral negative event not only means that tourists have doubts about the tourism destination itself, but also that tourists have doubts about the value of the tourism destination. Tourists are more likely to decide not to return to the tourism destination and to create a boycott in the hope that they can force the tourism destination to make changes. When relationship quality between tourists and tourism destinations is low, that implies a higher construal level. Tourists are alienated from tourism destinations, which they have only evaluated in a general way, do not have good relationships, and have low levels of personal involvement (Dhar & Kim, 2007). Tourists who do not know much about a given tourism destination are likely to undertake a tourism boycott regardless of which type of negative events occurs. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5a. When relationship quality is high, moral-based negative events are more likely to produce a tourism boycott than competence-based negative events.

H5b. When relationship quality is low, there is no significant difference between the impacts of moral and competence negative events on the likelihood of a tourism boycott.

4. Overview of the three studies

To test hypotheses H1-H5b, we followed Hardemana, Fontb, and Nawijnc's (2017) mixed-method approach to conduct a secondary data study and two scenario-based experiments. The different methods and different data sources employed here improve the robustness of research results, avoiding the inherent weaknesses of a single method or data source (Su et al., 2022). Therefore, our multi-method research design offers a highly rigorous test of the proposed hypotheses.

In Study 1, using the secondary data collected from a microblogging platform, we conducted content analysis to examine the effects of different types of negative events (competence vs. moral) on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott intentions, testing H1 and H2. In Study 2, a scenario-based experiment was conducted to investigate the mediating role of perceived betrayal between negative events and tourists' boycott intentions, testing H3. Using a different data source from a Chinese online survey platform (<https://www.vjx.cn/>), Study 2 also re-tested the H1 and H2, verifying the generalizability of the results of Study 1. In Study 3, a 2 × 2 factorial between-subjects design was employed to investigate the moderating role of relationship quality between negative events and perceived betrayal, testing H4a and H4b. In addition, Study 3 further explored how relationship quality moderates the impacts of negative events on tourism boycott (H5a, H5b). Fig. 1 summarized the key constructs and relationships discussed in this study.

5. Study 1

The greater impact of social media in negative events compared to traditional media has been recognized as a topic of widespread concern (Cheng et al., 2016). Social media can potentially influence an individual's thoughts, behaviors, and reactions (Schroeder & Pennings-Gray, 2015). In Study 1, we used the data obtained from Sina Weibo (hereinafter Weibo) to test H1 and H2. Weibo is the most popular microblogging website in China, with 297 million active users and 132 million daily users (Su et al., 2019). Consumers of travel and hospitality products are increasingly using the platform to report their experiences, express dissatisfaction, and call for protection for tourists and consumers (Su et al., 2019).

5.1. Data collection

In choosing negative event types, we follow Votolato and Unnava (2006) to preliminarily screen the Weibo trending topics about destination negative events in recent years (Su et al., 2019). After that, a team of five graduate students in tourism management, three management managers of tour operation companies and two scholars selected and reviewed eight typically Weibo trending hashtags (four competence-based negative events and four moral-based negative events). All eight events align with the definitions of competence negative event and moral negative event in Votolato and Unnava (2006). The occurrence time of these events ranges from 2018 to 2021. The hashtags employed were all trending on Weibo and triggered wide

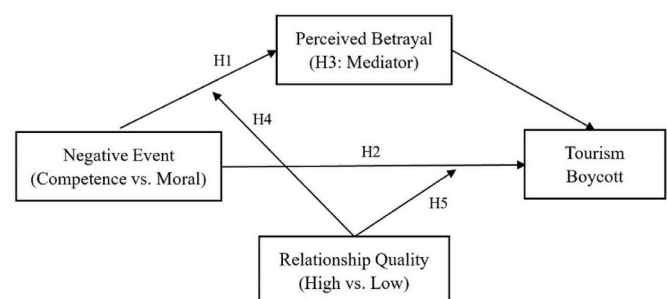


Fig. 1. Theoretical model.

discussion by the public in a short period of time (Du et al., 2020). The hashtags used are shown in Table 1.

The blog posts were collected using a custom web scraping code, which automatically captured messages with the eight hashtags. This created a corpus of 8,028 Weibo posts and around 30,000 threads of comments related to those posts. The data cleaning process eliminated messages that fell into the following categories: a) the core meaning of the content has nothing to do with the negative event (even if it contains the exact word in the hashtag); b) the message treats the negative event as irrelevant and contains unrelated news that is the focus of the message; c) the core meaning of the messages is not related to travel experiences. After data cleaning, 7,614 posts and 28,311 relevant comments remained.

5.2. Coding

In line with the procedure performed by Makarem and Jae (2016), we first invited three PhD students in tourism management to manually code the comments for the 7,614 Weibo posts for consumer opinions and emotion. Irrelevant comments were discarded, if they were in any of the following categories: a) there is no new content, such as in a message that just forwards another; b) the comments have nothing to do with negative events, such as advertisements; c) the statement does not make sense and the meaning is undecipherable; d) the comment contains only multiple hashtags side by side and no other content. After the data cleaning, 19,076 comments remained for competence negative events and 9,235 comments remained for moral negative events. Three PhD students were trained to code all reviews in strict accordance with the dimensions given by Grégoire and Fisher (2008), Yu et al. (2020), and Cissé-Depardon and N'Goala (2009). Perceived betrayal was coded as 1, for example in a message that said, "This is clearly deceiving other tourists." Tourism boycott was coded as 2, for example in a message that said, "I will never go to Shanghai Disneyland again and will resolutely resist it." The "triangulating analysts" method was used to allow investigator triangulation, whereby multiple investigators analyzed the same data independently and compared their findings, which can increase the validity of qualitative research results (Makarem & Jae, 2016). The coding consistency of the three PhD students reached 95% (Perreault & Leigh, 1989). Finally, a marketing professor was invited to final encode content for sharing content with inconsistent coding results for three PhD students.

Table 1
The list of hashtags used.

Year	Event	Hashtag	Type	Number of Views	Number of Discussion Threads
2021	The management, security, and staff of a JI HOTEL in Shanghai neglected the safety management of the hotel, which led to a naked man rushing into a guest's room in the middle of the night.	# A naked man rushing into a JI HOTEL guest's room in the middle of the night #	Competence	1.43 billion	391,000
2020	The scenic spot Mount Huangshan severely exceeded its maximum carrying capacity due to overestimation of capacity and the underestimation of the number of visitors that would come.	# The scene of Mount Huangshan is crowded #	Competence	280 million	30,000
2020	A staff member in a tambourine shop in Shuanglang Town, Dali City, Yunnan Province, abused tourists. A live video of the abuse was uploaded to the Internet.	# Female tambourine staff in Dali, Yunnan abused tourists #	Moral	180 million	6742
2019	Without its guests' knowledge, the Huazhu Group hotels collected personal information about them, seriously violating personal privacy.	# Huazhu Group hotels violated personal privacy #	Moral	56.152 million	2443
2019	Shanghai Disneyland has imposed bag checks on Asian tourists but not tourists from other regions. This is not only discriminatory but illegal.	# Shanghai Disneyland imposed bag check #	Moral	710 million	81,000
2019	The travel website "Trip.com" is accused of using big-data analysis to price tour products to the disadvantage of existing customers.	# "Trip.com" ticket re-search is nearly 1500 yuan more expensive #	Moral	110 million	5924
2018	Thailand's "Phoenix" cruise ship owner did not carry out timely maintenance of the cruise ship, which led to a number of violations, resulting in capsizing.	# Cruise ship capsizing accident in Phuket, Thailand #	Competence	320 million	128,000
2018	Several top hotels in China have cut costs by not providing systematic training or internal supervision of cleaning staff, which has resulted in problems with hotel sanitation.	# Top hotels sanitation chaos #	Competence	970 million	703,000

5.3. Data analysis and results

Coding 18,157 comments left for competence negative events identified 58 comments related to perceived betrayal and 241 comments related to tourism boycott. Coding 8,839 comments about moral negative events identified 115 related to perceived betrayal and 323 related to tourism boycott. In order to control the number of comments and the impact of negative event scenarios on results, Logistic was used to examine the impact of negative event on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott (Jordan et al., 2019). We coded the competence negative event as 0, and the moral negative event as 1. The results showed that there were significant differences in the influence of different negative event types on perceived betrayal ($b = 1.419$, $Wald = 77.194$, $p < 0.001$, $OR = 4.135$) and tourism boycott ($b = 3.335$, $Wald = 178.844$, $p < 0.001$, $OR = 28.089$). Therefore, H1 and H2 are supported.

5.4. Discussion

Study 1 examined the differential effects of destinations negative events types on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott. The moral negative event has a greater negative impact on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott than competence negative events. Thus H1 and H2 were confirmed. However, Li et al. (2016) pointed out that secondhand data is more appropriate for establishing the correlation between variables. In order to ensure the validity of the conclusion, the data can be re-verified by quantitative analysis. Therefore, Study 2 used a scenario-based experiment to replicate the results of Study 1, and to test H1, H2, and H3.

6. Study 2

The main objective of Study 2 is to investigate the mediating role of perceived betrayal between negative events and tourists' boycott intentions, testing H3. In addition, Study 2 tested H1 and H2 again using the scenario-based experimental design method. A one-factor (competence vs. moral negative event) between-subjects experimental design was employed in Study 2. Using a different data source from a Chinese online survey platform (<https://www.wjx.cn/>), Study 2 further verified the findings of Study 1 and improved the robustness of testing of H1 and H2.

6.1. Pretest

6.1.1. Participants and procedure

A pretest assessed whether the participants would classify the negative event in the experimental stimuli in the way we expected. We designed the experimental scenario materials based on real incidents reported in newspapers (cf. Li et al., 2021). The competence negative event was adapted from the 4-5 Mount Huangshan Tourist Stranded Incident; and the moral negative event is adapted from 12-29 Snow Town Tourist Rip-offs Incident (see Appendix 1). Both experimental scenarios were designed to enhance internal research validity and facilitate the investigation of causal relationships between the variables (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020).

Sixty participants ($M_{age} = 30.8$, Male 48.3%, Female 51.7%) were randomly assigned into two groups. To avoid the potential confounding effect of existing destination images, a fictitious tourism destination A was used in the experimental stimuli. Then, participants were introduced to the definitions of competence negative event and moral negative event. Then, they were asked to rate two manipulation check questions adapted from Votolato and Unnava (2006), including “Do you agree that the event of destination A is a competence negative event?” and “Do you agree that the event of destination A is a moral negative event?” (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Lastly, respondents answered demographic questions.

6.1.2. Pretest results

The results of the pretest revealed that the scale event novelty of event strength has a Cronbach’s α value of 0.919, the scale event criticality of event strength has a Cronbach’s α value of 0.969, and the scale event disruption of event strength has a Cronbach’s α value of 0.901, which indicated a good internal consistency of the measurement scale. The event strength between two negative events did not have a significant difference ($M_{competence\ novelty} = 3.17$, $M_{moral\ novelty} = 3.15$, $F(1,58) = 0.004$, $p = 0.95$; $M_{competence\ criticality} = 3.91$, $M_{moral\ criticality} = 3.99$, $F(1,58) = 0.039$, $p = 0.845$; $M_{competence\ disruption} = 4.53$, $M_{moral\ disruption} = 4.65$, $F(1,58) = 0.077$, $p = 0.783$).

To check the manipulation effectiveness, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Participants in the competence negative event condition indicated a higher level of agreement that the event described in the scenario is competence-based ($M_{competence} = 5.83$, $M_{moral} = 1.63$, $F(1,58) = 355.799$, $p < 0.05$), while participants in the moral negative event condition agreed that the scenario describe a moral-based negative event ($M_{competence} = 1.9$, $M_{moral} = 6.1$, $F(1,58) = 298.576$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the manipulation of the negative event was successful and the stimuli were effective and could be adopted in the subsequent main experiment.

6.2. Main experiment

6.2.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 95 tourists volunteered to take part in Study 2 (55 males and 40 females) on an online survey platform. They were randomly assigned to read about a competence negative event ($n = 47$) or a moral negative event ($n = 48$). Table 2 provides a detailed description of the participants’ profiles.

First, the participants were asked to read this lead-in: “Imagine that you are now looking for a suitable tourism destination for the upcoming weekend. At this time, you happen to see a negative event report about destination A.” The description of the negative event in destination A followed. Next, subjects rated perceived betrayal and tourism boycott related to the destination site. Perceived betrayal was measured with five items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) adapted from Grégoire and Fisher (2008). Sample items include “I feel cheated by the destination” and “I feel that the tourism destination betrayed me.” Tourism boycott was measured with six items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) adapted

Table 2
Study 2 respondents’ demographic profiles.

	n	%		n	%
Gender			Age in years		
Male	55	57.9	Under 18	2	2.1
Female	40	42.1	19 to 24	28	29.5
Level of education			25 to 40	39	41.1
Less than high school	2	2.1	41 to 60	22	23.1
High school/technical school	22	23.2	61 or older	4	4.2
Undergraduate	47	49.5	Monthly income		
Postgraduate degree	24	25.2	Less than ¥3000	8	8.4
Occupation			¥3000 to 4999	24	25.3
Governmental organizations	16	16.8	¥5000 to 6999	32	33.7
Company manager	11	11.6	¥7000 to 10,000	23	24.2
Students	12	12.6	¥10,000 or more	8	8.4
General staff	20	21.1	Perceived Outside interference		
Freelancer	13	13.7	Yes	33	34.7
Retailing	9	9.5	No	62	65.3
Retiree	4	4.2			
Other	10	10.5			

from Cissé-Depardon and N’Goala (2009). Sample items include “I will temporarily stop going to Destination A,” “I will never again go to Destination A,” and “I will take part in the boycott of Destination A.” We also included two control variables: individualism-collectivism and perceived outside interference. The former was measured with three items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) adapted from Ilies et al. (2007), and the latter was measured by a question “Do you think your decision of joining the boycott is affected by outside interference? (1 = Yes, 2 = No).” Last, participants were asked to answer some demographic questions.

6.2.2. Measurement reliability

Multi-item scales had results showing high reliability (perceived betrayal $\alpha = 0.889$; tourism boycott $\alpha = 0.852$; individualism-collectivism $\alpha = 0.827$), greater than the critical value 0.700.

6.2.3. Control variable check

We choose individualism-collectivism and outside interference as control variables. This is because previous studies show that top-down manipulation or external intervention may aggravate the tendency to boycott in response to a negative event (Yu et al., 2020). People with a greater sense of collectivism tend to work together to support a common cause and group cohesion would influence their boycott behaviors (Hoffmann, 2014). However, we found that the two control variables did not cause significant difference in the two negative event groups ($p > 0.05$).

6.2.4. Main effects

To test hypotheses H1 and H2, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. As expected the two groups showed a significant difference in perceived betrayal ($F(1,91) = 141.8$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.609$; see Fig. 2): participants had a higher level of perceived betrayal ($M_{moral} = 3.94$, S.D. = 0.67) than those in the competence negative group ($M_{competence} = 2.20$, S.D. = 0.74). Likewise, participants in the moral negative event group were more likely to say they would boycott the destination ($M_{moral} = 4.8$, S.D. = 0.33) than those in the competence negative event group ($M_{competence} = 3.22$, S.D. = 0.57). This difference was significant ($F(1,91) = 271.672$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.749$; see Fig. 2). These results confirmed H1 and H2.

6.2.5. Mediation analysis

Bootstrapping (Model 4 shown in Hayes, 2013) was used to test the perceived betrayal construct regarding its mediating role in the conceptual model. A 95% confidence interval (CI) of the parameter

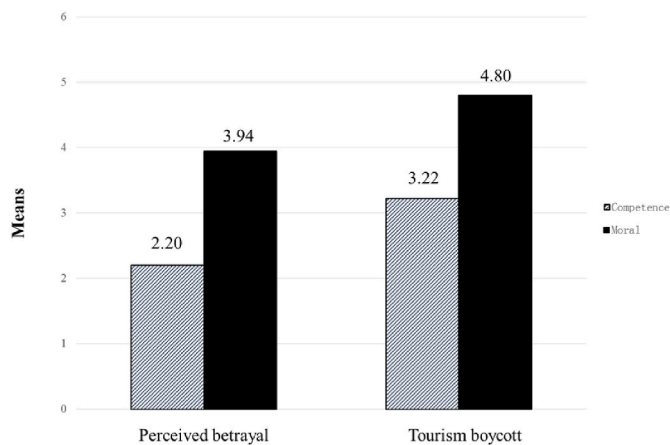


Fig. 2. The influence of negative event on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott.

estimates was obtained by bootstrapping (n = 5,000). The independent variable, negative event, was coded as 1 = competence negative event and 2 = moral negative event. Perceived betrayal was set as the mediating variable and tourism boycott was the dependent variable. The mediation relationship was statistically significant based on the bootstrapping results: $b = 0.2581$, not including zero at the 95% CI, with the lower limit CI (LLCI) = 0.0768 and the upper limit CI (ULCI) = 0.4934. Additionally, the direct relationship of negative event on tourism boycott was statistically significant: $b = 1.3208$, not including zero at 95% CI, LLCI = 1.0227, ULCI = 1.6190 (Hayes, 2013). The results supported the idea that perceived betrayal plays a part in the mediating role between negative event on tourism boycott. This provides support for H3. The details of the results can be found in Fig. 3.

6.3. Discussion

Complementing Study 1, Study 2 further verified the effect of a negative event on tourists’ perceived betrayal and tourism boycott through scenario experiments (H1, H2). At the same time, Study 2 verified the mediating role of perceived betrayal (H3), filling a gap in Study 1. However, Study 2 has a shortcoming in that it used only one type of negative event for each type (see Appendix) and thus Study 3 was designed to verify the conceptual model across different incident scenarios to increase the generalizability of the findings (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016).

7. Study 3

Based on Study 2, we pursued two objectives with Study 3 through 240 participants from the Chinese online survey platform (<https://www.wjx.cn/>). We utilized 2 (competence negative event vs. moral negative event) × 2 (high relationship quality vs. low relationship quality) factorial between-subjects design to examine how high or low relationship quality may moderate the effect of the negative event on perceived betrayal or tourism boycott with different event experimental scenarios (H4a, H4b, H5a, H5b).

7.1. Pretest

7.1.1. Participants and procedure

We designed four versions of experimental scenarios. Each scenario included a stimulus material for relationship quality and a description of a negative event. The stimuli materials of relationship quality were adopted from Lee et al. (2021), which describe tourists’ trust, satisfaction, commitment, and identification with a fictitious destination A. The stimuli for negative events were based on real incidents reported in newspapers. To improve this study’s generalizability, Study 3 adopted two negative events not used in Study 2: a competence negative event adapted from the 6·10 Guilin Mount Yao Power Outage Incident and a moral negative event scenario adapted the from 2·23 Yunnan Forced Shopping Incident (see Appendix 1).

Sixty participants (Male 43.3%, Female 56.7%, $M_{age} = 30.5$) were randomly assigned into two groups (competence negative event vs. moral negative event). Participants read the definitions of competence negative event and moral negative event and then asked to read one of the scenarios and rate whether they considered the scenario to be a competence negative event or a moral negative event using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) adapted from Votolato and Unnava (2006).

Next, a different group of 60 participants (Male 51.7%, Female 48.3%, $M_{age} = 28.9$) recruited from an online survey platform were randomly assigned to one of the two scenarios (relationship quality: high vs. low). To check the manipulation of relationship quality, we used a four-item scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) adapted from Lee et al. (2021). Sample items include “The relationship with Destination A is something I am very committed to” and “I feel a sense of belonging to Destination A.” Lastly, respondents answered demographic questions.

7.1.2. Pretest results

The results of the pretest for Study 3 revealed that the scale event novelty of event strength has a Cronbach’s α value of 0.953, the scale

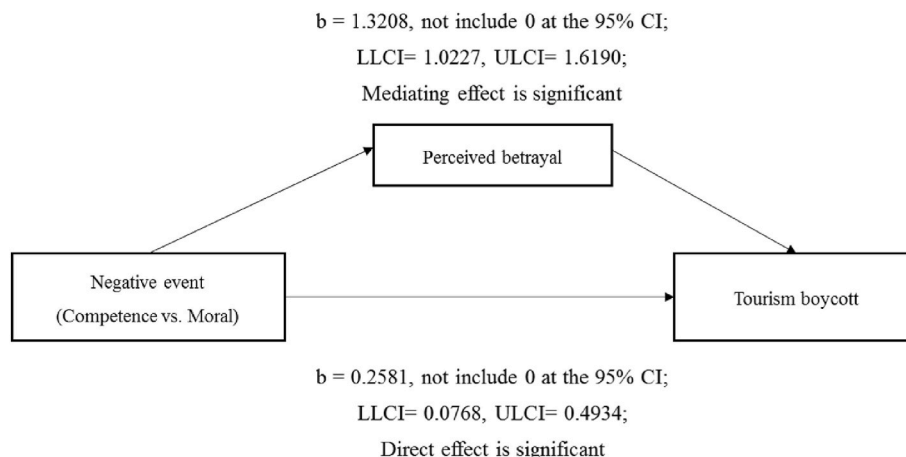


Fig. 3. Mediation effect of perceived betrayal between negative event and tourism boycott.

event criticality of event strength has a Cronbach's α value of 0.962, and the scale event disruption of event strength has a Cronbach's α value of 0.939, which indicated a good internal consistency of the measurement scale. There is no significant difference in event strength between the two negative events ($M_{\text{competence novelty}} = 2.70$, $M_{\text{moral novelty}} = 2.83$, $F(1,58) = 0.091$, $p = 0.763$; $M_{\text{competence criticality}} = 2.82$, $M_{\text{moral criticality}} = 2.90$, $F(1,58) = 0.048$, $p = 0.828$; $M_{\text{competence disruption}} = 4.85$, $M_{\text{moral disruption}} = 4.91$, $F(1,58) = 0.019$, $p = 0.891$).

To check the manipulation effectiveness, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Participants in the competence negative event condition indicated a higher level of agreement that the event described in the scenario is competence-based ($M_{\text{competence}} = 6.03$, $M_{\text{moral}} = 1.77$, $F(1,58) = 413.162$, $p < 0.05$), while participants in the moral negative event condition expressed that the scenario describe a moral-based negative event ($M_{\text{competence}} = 2.03$, $M_{\text{moral}} = 5.77$, $F(1,58) = 200.981$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the manipulation of the negative event was successful and the stimuli were effective and could be adopted in the subsequent main experiment. Further, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine the effectiveness of relationship quality. The result showed that high relationship quality ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.57$) had a higher score than low relationship quality ($M_{\text{low}} = 2.09$), and two groups had a significant difference in their evaluation results of relationship quality ($F(1,58) = 782.433$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the results suggested the control of the negative event and relationship quality in the pretest was successful.

7.2. Main experiment

7.2.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 240 participants (53.3% females, 46.7% males, see Table 3) were recruited from an online survey platform (<https://www.wjx.cn/>). First, they were randomly assigned to one of four scenarios (see Appendix 2). Participants were presented a stimulus material about relationship quality, followed by a report about a negative event occurring in destination A. Next, participants completed the scales related to perceived betrayal and tourism boycott, and answered questions about demographics and control variables (i.e., individualism-collectivism and outside interference).

7.2.2. Measurement reliability

Multi-item scales had results showing high reliability (perceived betrayal $\alpha = 0.711$; tourism boycott $\alpha = 0.724$; individualism-collectivism $\alpha = 0.859$), greater than the critical value 0.700.

Table 3 Study 3 respondents' demographic profiles.

	n	%		n	%
Gender			Age in years		
Male	128	53.3	Under 18	3	1.2
Female	112	46.7	19 to 24	67	27.9
Level of education			25 to 40	94	39.2
Less than high school	2	0.8	41 to 60	71	29.6
High school/technical school	59	24.6	61 or older	5	2.1
Undergraduate	103	42.9	Monthly income		
Postgraduate degree	76	31.7	Less than ¥3000	18	7.5
Occupation			¥3000 to ¥4999	78	32.5
Governmental organizations	63	26.3	¥5000 to ¥6999	91	37.9
Company manager	16	6.7	¥7000 to ¥10,000	25	10.4
Students	28	11.6	¥10,000 or more	28	11.7
General staff	54	22.5	Perceived Outside interference		
Freelancer	21	8.7	Yes	105	43.7
Retailing	24	10.0	No	135	56.3
Retiree	5	2.1			
Other	29	12.1			

7.2.3. Control variable check

As in Study 2, individualism-collectivism and outside interference were used as control variables (Yu et al., 2020). Neither was significantly different in the groups of two negative event types ($p > 0.05$).

7.2.4. Moderating effect

The results of the two-way ANOVA test revealed a significant interaction effect between negative event and relationship quality on perceived betrayal with two control variables as the covariates ($F(1,234) = 182.656$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.438$). As shown in Fig. 4, for the high relationship quality group, the subgroup exposed to the condition of moral negative event had a significantly higher perceived betrayal than the subgroup exposed to the condition of competence negative event ($M_{\text{competence}} = 3.42$ vs. $M_{\text{moral}} = 5.29$, $F(1,116) = 358.318$, $p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.755$). For the group in the condition of low relationship quality, the results were different. There was no significant difference between competence negative event ($M_{\text{competence}} = 5.04$) and moral negative event for perceived betrayal ($M_{\text{moral}} = 5.18$, $F(1,116) = 2.465$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$). Hence, H4a and H4b were supported.

A two-way ANCOVA with negative event and relationship quality as independent variables, tourism boycott as the dependent variable, and two control variables as the covariates. As expected, the results showed a significant effect on tourism boycott ($F(1,234) = 197.249$, $p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.457$). The results of the planned contrasts demonstrated that when reading a moral negative event under the situation of a high relationship quality, the participants were more likely to engage in a tourism boycott ($M_{\text{competence}} = 3.49$ vs. $M_{\text{moral}} = 5.30$, $F(1,116) = 324.822$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.737$, see Fig. 5). However, if relationship quality was low, there was no significant difference in tourism boycott between competence and moral negative events ($M_{\text{competence}} = 5.17$ vs. $M_{\text{moral}} = 5.18$, $F(1,116) = 0.978$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0$, see Fig. 5). This illustrated that relationship quality plays a moderating role in the relationship between negative event and tourism boycott. These data analyses confirmed H5a and H5b.

7.3. Discussion

Complementing Study 2, Study 3 adopted new experimental scenarios to represent the competence or moral negative event to reveal the moderating role of relationship quality (high vs. low) on the relationships between negative event and tourists' responses. Results supported hypotheses 4a, 4 b, 5a, 5 b and provided enhanced generalizability and validity of the study's conceptual model across more representative incident scenarios.

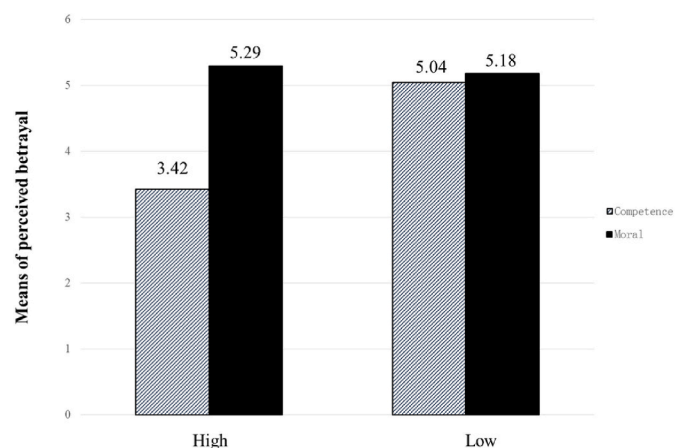


Fig. 4. Moderation effect of relationship quality between negative event and perceived betrayal.

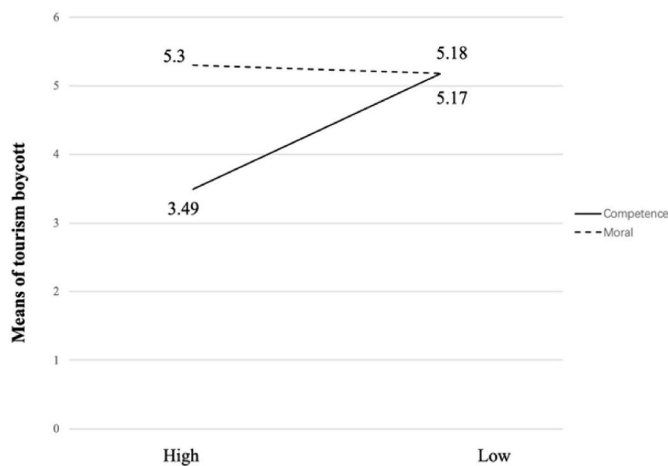


Fig. 5. Moderation effect of relationship quality between negative event and tourism boycott.

8. Conclusion and implications

8.1. Conclusion

Drawing from the AEB framework as well as construal level theory, a conceptual model was proposed and tested to study how tourism destination negative events affect perceived betrayal and tourism boycott. Specifically, Study 1 using Weibo data initially verified that moral negative events produced a stronger perceived betrayal and propensity for tourism boycott than competence negative events, laying a good foundation for subsequent studies. Study 2 used a scenario-based experiment. Findings supported the conclusion tourist perceived betrayal and tourism boycott is stronger in relation to a moral negative event than a competence negative event. Furthermore, we demonstrated that perceived betrayal is a partial mediator among negative event and tourism boycott. Study 3 complemented Study 2 by exploring the moderating role of relationship quality in negative events, perceived betrayal, and tourism boycott in relation to scenarios not included in Study 2. We found that the relationship between type of negative event and both perceived betrayal and tourism boycotts depended on high relationship quality. Under the condition of low relationship quality, there were no significant differences in the tourists' responses to the different negative event types. Below we discuss the significance of this study: both its theoretical contributions and its practical implications.

8.2. Theoretical contribution

This study contributed to the tourism literature by investigating how the type of negative event (competence vs. moral) affects tourism boycotts through perceived betrayal and how relationship quality may affect these relationships. The findings provided useful theoretical insights while heeding calls for more research on tourism boycotts as an increasingly important global phenomenon, to better explain the possible differential results of negative events and the formation mechanism of tourism boycotts (Yu et al., 2020). We propose a theoretical model based on the AEB framework and verify it through scenario experiments. The results show that negative events caused by lack of ability or moral deficiency often directly affect the tourists' experience and possibly further trigger tourism boycott. Perceived betrayal, as an extreme cognition formed by tourists after judging the behavior of service providers in a destination as egregious, have a mediating role in this process. Our results support the AEB model, but also suggest that relationships can be complicated, as the relationship quality between tourists and destinations may act to moderate this process. This study's exploration of the relationship between negative events and tourist

responses in tourism, by using the AEB framework, enriched the application of AEB framework in the tourism field and provided new insights into the cognitive assessment process of negative event and the formation of tourism boycotts.

Tourism destinations are a complex of many organizations, involving many stakeholders. When one of them have a negative event, it can have an impact on the sustainable development of the tourism destination (Su et al., 2020). Therefore, it is urgent to explore negative events that have occurred in tourism destinations compared to negative events that occur within an enterprise (Javornik et al., 2020). However, few studies have explored the differential impact of different negative event types on tourists' responses (Zenker & Kock, 2020). People have fundamentally different desires when obtaining functional products than when planning a vacation. Given their focus on the problem-solving capabilities of functional products, competence negative events may have a greater negative impact on consumers than moral negative events (Baghi & Gabrielli, 2019). Yet, when it comes to hedonic products (e.g., tourism vacations), it is not clear how the influences of negative events differ from the context of functional products (Sainaghi & Baggio, 2017). Through the lens of the AEB and image-imagery duality model, this study investigated how the types of negative events (competence vs. moral) influence tourists' perceived betrayal and intentions to boycott a destination. The findings of this study added to the body of knowledge by revealing that moral negative events will have greater impacts on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott than competence negative events.

Furthermore, the AEB model pointed out that perceived egregiousness and its impact can act as a mediator between corporate negative events and consumer boycott (Klein et al., 2004). The model focused on the mediating role of perceived egregiousness. Perceived betrayal, as consumers' cognition of the egregious behavior judgment of the service organizations, may also have a mediating role (Kähr et al., 2016). Through a scenario experimental approach this study proved that perceived betrayal, as a tourist's cognition of egregious behavior in tourism destination, can act as a mediator between a negative event and tourism boycott. Specifically, when there is moral negative event in the tourism destination, tourists will have a stronger sense of betrayal, which in turn will lead to greater tourism boycott. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Chiu, 2016; Duman & Özgen, 2018) that indicate that the mistakes caused by an organization often trigger negative cognitive emotions such as anger, disappointment, and betrayal that further trigger extreme behaviors such as retaliation and boycott by individuals. This study indicated the importance of perceived betrayal as a mediator, expanding the application of the AEB model, expanding the application of perceived betrayal in tourism research, and further validating the internal mechanism of negative event and tourism boycott. It also contributed to the literature of the negative event and tourism boycott.

Finally, we examined how relationship quality moderates the influence of negative events on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott, enriching the construal level theory. Previous studies, generally focused on functional products, pointed out that when a product or brand has a negative event that does not directly affect consumers' interest, high relationship quality can weaken consumers' negative attitudes and negative behaviors (Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014). When a negative event occurs that directly damages the interests of consumers, consumers with high relationship quality were more likely to express negative reactions (Lee et al., 2021). As a typical hedonic product, tourism is affected by negative events that occur in tourism destinations even if they only affect tourists' sense of morality. Thus, both competence and moral negative events directly harm tourists' interests (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). In line with the findings of Lee (2021), this study also suggests that high relationship quality is not an effective protection measure for tourism destinations, but rather that it promotes more extreme behaviors. When relationship quality was high, moral negative events increased the perceived betrayal and tourism boycott more than

competence negative events. These results enriched the literature of tourist-destination relationship quality by revealing the boundary effect of relationship quality among negative event and tourists' responses.

8.3. Managerial implications

The most important marketing implication of this study is that destination management organizations (DMOs) need to recognize that the mistakes of any service provider at a destination may cause a negative event at the destination (Reddy et al., 2020). Therefore, the tourism destinations have to be prepared to deal with negative events. At the same time, managers need to find an effective way to curb tourists' extreme reactions such as boycotts.

The second implication is that, it is worth taking measures, even costly ones, to avoid negative events. For example, regular inspections for food safety, equipment safety, carrying capacity, etc. are necessary and they should be improved in a timely manner. It is also necessary to supervise the service attitude and publicity methods of the many stakeholders involved in a destination. However, there are different types of negative events and such measures should include identification of the causes and nature of different negative events types (Hu et al., 2020). From the perspective of internal management of tourism destinations, they need to regularly train their staff and affiliated companies, strengthen the overall safety awareness of tourism destinations, establish a good image of tourism destinations, and enhance their own crisis awareness of various departments. From the perspective of external management, relevant departments should promptly promulgate and revise relevant practice norms, and conduct external supervision of the operation and development of tourism destinations through supervision and random inspections.

The third implication is that when negative events occur, targeted measures should be taken to mitigate the impact. For example, for competence negative events, service providers should admit the mistake promptly and offer the affected tourists discounts, coupons, free orders, and other compensation, so that tourists feel there is a sincere acknowledgement of error and have a lower sense of betrayal. DMOs can also help tourism destinations to achieve standardized operation through standardized training and irregular inspections, providing institutional guarantees of a proper tourist experience. Moral negative events are widely disseminated on the Internet. Thus, it is vital that mitigation activities be fast, active, sincere and that they appear online and offline, in traditional media and new media. At the same time, moral negative events will have a more negative impact on tourists' perceptions and emotions and future behavior. Sincere and timely apologies may be insufficient. Tourism-related administrative departments, news media, and government departments should take the initiative to assume corresponding law enforcement and supervision responsibilities, accept complaints from tourists, find out the truth about the negative event, calm tourists' emotions, regulate the tourism market order, and detect the trend of public opinion quickly to lower the likelihood of boycott and protect the development of the regional tourism industry.

Fourth, with the widespread use of social media, boycott is easier to organize and promote (Yu et al., 2020) and service providers need to take action to reduce tourists' perception of betrayal. On the one hand, the tourism destination needs to monitor the emotions of potential tourists effectively. For the negative events caused by misunderstanding or communication, the tourism destination should take timely action to prevent negative emotions from turning into betrayal and leading to a tourism boycott. On the other hand, tourism destinations should actively communicate a positive image through various platforms. Through expression of the enthusiasm and sincerity, weakening the negative cognitive emotions that tourists may have, conveying to tourists that a boycott is not a good solution to the problem, that they are willing to provide all tourists with a good travel experience, service providers may be able to avert boycotts.

Finally, relationship quality plays an important role for tourism

destinations to build trust, satisfaction, and identification with tourists (Lee et al., 2021). Tourism destinations should fully recognize the importance of maintaining relations with regular visitors while actively expanding new tourists and driving new economic growth points. Losing a regular visitor means losing a good word-of-mouth communicator, or losing a potential tourist group. Tourism destinations can actively build a social media community for tourists, and designate a person or team to establish, maintain, and develop the tourist community online, to provide tourists with an information- and experience-sharing channel. Destinations can also invite tourists to participate in the development of new products or priority experiences of new projects, increasing destination attractiveness through the sharing of real experiences, and also help to develop and maintain good relationships between tourism destinations and tourists. At the same time, in the face of tourists' customized needs for tourism products, tourism destinations can use big data and other methods to collect and analyze tourists' travel preferences, and provide personalized services to draw closer and maintain positive interactions between tourism destinations and tourists.

9. Research limitation and future research directions

This study validates the conceptual model through three studies, and obtains some important conclusions and implications. However, there are still some limitations that provide direction for future research. First, this study only examined the types of competence and moral negative events and its impacts on tourists' boycott intentions. Other types of crisis events such as the COVID-19 pandemic could impose negative impacts on tourists and warrant further investigation in the future. Second, our experiments focused on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott as outcome variables of a negative event. However, anger, disappointment, and animosity are also extreme reactions of tourists to negative events, and can also trigger extreme negative behavior by tourists (Yu et al., 2020). Future research should explore the interactive effects of a negative event and other variables, thus forming a more comprehensive theoretical framework of tourist responses to negative events. Finally, we used all Chinese samples for the study. As China is a country with a high collectivism, people tend to work together to support a common cause (Hoffmann, 2014). Hence, future studies could consider whether the impact of tourism boycott varies according to cultural background.

Author credit statement

Authors **Lujun Su**, **Bocong Jia**, and **Yinghua Huang** equally contributed to this study.

Impact statement

Negative events about a destination have not only elicited increasing concerns among the public, but can result in tourism boycott of a destination. Although previous studies have explored the impacts of negative events on tourist behaviors, these studies have not addressed types of negative events or their influences on propensity to join a tourism boycott. This study is the first attempt to classify destination negative events into competence and moral types and demonstrated that the event types have different effects on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott intentions. Using a qualitative study and two experiments, this study revealed that tourists' perceived betrayal and tourism boycott is stronger in relation to a moral negative event than a competence negative event. Relationship quality moderates the influences of negative events on perceived betrayal and intention to join a boycott. The findings of this study shed new lights on destination crisis management and tourist relationship marketing.

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Appendix 1. Experimental Conditions of Study 2 and Study 3

Study 2 Experiment conditions

Imagine you are thinking of visiting a tourism destination for the upcoming weekend. You have not decided which place to visit yet, so you are looking up tourism information about different destinations. Then, you come across a piece of news about a negative event the occurred in destination A, as follows. (One of the following two experimental conditions was randomly presented to participants.)

Competence-based negative event condition

Destination A is known for its beautiful scenery. However, when the number of tourists increased dramatically during the summer, its scenic spots failed to manage the reservation system and overestimated their carrying capacity. For example, a mountainous scenic area was completely packed with people and the roads to enter and exit the area were almost paralyzed. Many tourists were stranded in the bus stations insides the scenic area, while their buses and other private cars were stranded on the road. Besides the limited carrying capacity, those scenic spots also lacked adequate staff and volunteers to serve tourists. Tourists had no access to food and beverages. The incident has been widely talked about online through videos, texts, and pictures.

Moral-based negative event condition

Destination A is known for its beautiful scenery. However, when the number of tourists increase dramatically during the summer, many service providers increased the price significantly to increase profits. Price gouging can be seen everywhere in the destination. For example, a bottle of mineral water costs ¥20 RMB, while a tub of instant noodles is ¥68 RMB and an ice cream is ¥108 RMB. Some tourists even found three dishes cost nearly ¥800 RMB, and a dish of hot and sour potato is charged at ¥188 RMB. Some tourists argued with the vendors repeatedly about these prices, but they were verbally abused and threatened with physical attack. Then, those tourists were forced to pay unreasonable prices for the items. This price gouging practice in Destination A has been widely discussed online through videos, texts and pictures.

Study 3 Experiment conditions

Competence-based negative event condition

Destination A is known for its beautiful scenery. However, when the number of tourists increased dramatically during the summer, a large-scale power outage occurred in Destination A due to the problem of aging power supply equipment and poor maintenance. As a result, a large number of tourism service facilities could not operate normally. Meanwhile, the destination management administrators lacked knowledge of safety management and failed to repair the power supply system in a timely manner. Nearly 60 cable car passengers were stranded in the air for more than 30 min due to the power failure of the cable car system. The large-scale power failure incident of Destination A has been widely discussed online through videos, texts, and pictures.

Moral-based negative event condition

Destination A is known for its beautiful scenery. However, when the number of tourists increased dramatically during the summer, many service providers forced tourists to spend money so that the providers would profit. Some tour guides added shopping activities into a group travel itinerary without communication with the tourists, forcing tourists to spend money at some stores. Tour guides threatened that the travel group would have to stay for hours at the stores if they did not spend ¥10,000 RMB in the stores. Tourists who did not spend money at those stores were verbally abused by tour guides and some conflicts got physical. Finally, tourists were allowed to leave after 3 h in the store and spending ¥10,000 RMB. The compulsory shopping practice occurred at Destination A has been widely discussed online through videos, texts, and pictures.

High tourist-destination relationship quality condition

I haven't been to Destination A before. I feel that Destination A treats tourists very well. In my opinion, the destination is trustworthy and reliable. I have a sense of belonging in the destination. I like the place very much and I think it would be a satisfactory experience if I chose to visit destination A again in the future.

Low tourist-destination relationship quality condition

I have been to Destination A before. I feel Destination A does not treat tourists honestly. In my opinion, the destination is unreliable and not trustworthy. I don't have any sense of belonging in the destination. I don't like the place and I think it would be an unsatisfactory experience if I chose to visit destination A again in the future.

Appendix 2. Key Construct Operation Definitions and Measurement Items

Construct	Operational Definition	Measurement Items	Reference
Destination negative event	Competence negative event: A tourism service provider in a destination fails to fulfill the commitment to tourists due to functional product defects or lack of management capabilities.	Competence and moral negative events were manipulated using the scenarios in Appendix 1 . The following two items were used to check experiment manipulation:	Votolato and Unnava (2006)

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Construct	Operational Definition	Measurement Items	Reference
	Moral negative event: A tourism service provider in the destination violates moral norms and social standards.	Do you agree that the event of destination A is a competence negative event? (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) Do you agree with the event of destination A is a moral negative event? (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)	
Perceived betrayal	Tourists' perceptions that the service providers in a tourism destination cannot keep their promises to tourists, undermining the contractual relationship between the tourist and the service providers.	I feel cheated by the destination. I feel that the tourism destination betrayed me. I feel the tourism destination lied to me. I think the tourism destination is going to take advantage of me. I think the tourism destination abuses its power.	Grégoire and Fisher (2008)
Tourism boycott	A behavioral intention that tourists stop travelling to a tourism destination, ceasing communication with the suppliers of tourism products and services they would otherwise have purchased.	I will temporarily choose a different tourism destination. From now on, I will choose an alternative tourism destination. I will temporarily stop going to Destination A. I will never again go to Destination A. I will take part in the boycott of Destination A. It will be difficult for me to take part in the boycott of Destination A.	Cissé-Depardon and N'Goala (2009)
Relationship quality	Tourists' overall evaluation of tourism destinations reflected in perceptions of service quality, travel experience, and the price paid for the value received.	High and low tourist-destination relationship quality were manipulated using the scenarios in Appendix 1. The following 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) was used to check experiment manipulation: I feel that Destination A is very dependable. The relationship with Destination A is something I am very committed to. I feel a sense of belonging to Destination A. I am satisfied with the relationship I have with Destination A.	Lee et al. (2021)

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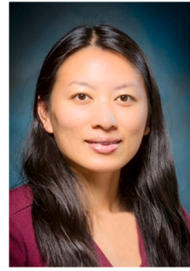
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