

**Role of Dispositional Aspects of Self-identity  
in the Process of Planned Behavior of Outbound Travel**

Suosheng Wang, Lingfei Wu, Soonhwan Lee

**Abstract**

Identity theorists suggest that one's self-identity affects his behavioral intent directly, while planned behavior researchers believe that one's attitude toward a specific behavior have a direct effect on his intention to perform the behavior. Few studies have ever examined how one's self-identity and situational attitude may interact on his behavioral intent. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the role of one's dispositional aspects of self-identity in the process of planned behavior in the context of outbound travel. Based on a survey on Chinese outbound travel, this study verifies that self-identity does not exert direct influence on outbound travel intents; instead, the effect of self-identity is mediated by the effect of the planned behavioral constructs. This study concludes that, in the context of outbound travel, the dispositional aspects of self-identity contribute to outbound travel intentions within the structure of the theory of planned behavior. Both theoretical contributions and practical implications are discussed.

**Introduction**

Tourism literature has taken on the issue of self-identity in better understanding the relationships between identity and tourism. Research on tourism and visitors' identity can date back to a special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research* guest edited by Keyes and Berghe (1984), with a focus on studying the impact of tourism on identity. Lanfant, Allcock and Bruner's 1995 edited volume "International Tourism, Identity and Change" examines the relationships between

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tourism and identity in more dynamic ways, for instance, looking at how identities of visitors and local people are mutually constructed.

Literature relating to tourism and identity tends to focus on identity issues, such as ‘finding yourself’ through travel. Noy’s (2004) study of Israeli backpackers’ narratives demonstrates how they used tourism to construct their identities; Thurlow and Jaworski’s (2006) study illustrate how visitors use travel to affirm identities. Research undertaken by Becken (2007) indicates that tourists see travel as part of their identity; their holidays have a great meaning to them and help them understand their positions in society.

While many tourism studies focus on how travel helps affirm visitors’ self-identities, relatively, few has ever examined the role of self-identity on one’s travel behavior. Desforges (2000) suggests that understanding identity can lead to an insight into tourism consumption, because by understanding the people and their needs and desires, it is possible to predict their future travel patterns. Hibbert et al. (2013) explored how a need for personal identity can influence one’s travel behavior and verified that identity plays a significant role in making a travel decision.

In contrast, the theories of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) are about attitude-behavior relationships. The literature indicates that attitudinal evaluations may be distinguishable from identity-related symbolic outcomes (e.g., McCracken, 1986). While researchers aligned with the TRA or TPB may consider one’s self-identity to be reflected in the person’s beliefs, values and attitudes (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992), there is a body of empirical studies indicating the importance of self-identity in the overall structure of the TRA and TPB (e.g., Stets & Biga, 2003; Strack & Deutsch, 2004; Hagger et al., 2007). Biddle, Bank, and Slavings (1987) suggest that one’s self-identity and other cognitions

(such as attitudes or preferences) may not always be consistent. Charng, Piliavin and Callero (1998) suggest that self-identity may influence one's behavioral intention independent of evaluative attitudes.

While attitude research and identity research have both attracted a big amount of research interest in the context of tourism research, the relationship between people's identities and attitudes toward travel behavioral intentions remains unclear, and empirical inquiries in this regard are rare. Drawing on the theories of self-identity and planned behavior, this study aims to fill this gap by testing how the aspects of self-identity are associated with people's evaluative attitudes toward travel behaviors, in the context of outbound travel.

Empirical inquiries are made in this study focusing on Chinese outbound visitors. According to China National Tourism Administration, the number of Chinese outbound tourists reached 109 million in 2014 and the overseas spending reached USD 129 billion in 2013. Since 2013, the number and spending of China's outbound tourists have both topped all the other travel markets in the world, and even with the slowdown of China's economy, the World Tourism Organization predicted that China would still be the largest outbound travel market in 2016 (CNTA, 2016). While China has rapidly become the world's top international tourist generating market, there has been a growing interest in studying China's outbound tourism. It is believed that information provided by this study will help people of interest better understand Chinese tourists' self-identity, attitude, and their interactions in the process of outbound travel planning.

## **Literature Review**

### *Attitude Behavior Relationships*

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985) has emerged as an influential social cognitive model widely applied to understand one's behavioral intention. The main concept of TPB is that most human behavior is under volitional control; people engage in actions because they want to act in a certain behavioral way, and their conscious motives trigger them to engage in that action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The TPB suggests that behavioral achievement depends on three types of beliefs - attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Among them, attitude toward a behavior is, at the most basic level, a function of behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes toward a specific behavior are theorized to have a direct effect on their intentions to perform the behaviors (Ajzen, 1988).

The second TPB component is subjective norm, which refers to one's perceived social pressure from important others (such as relatives, friends, colleagues, etc.) to perform or not to perform a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). It is believed that people are more likely to perform a behavior when they receive support from their referents than when they do not (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In the context of tourism, if your close friends or relatives all think that a certain destination is more attractive or worth visiting than other destinations, it is more likely for your intention of visiting this destination to arise as compared to visiting other destinations. The third TPB component is perceived behavioral control, which is the degree to which an individual feels that the performance or nonperformance of a behavior in question is under his or her volitional control (Ajzen, 1985, 1988), which, in the context of tourism, is about one's

perception of travel constraints or inhibitors, such as physical mobility, disposable income, leisure time, etc.

Despite its effectiveness in explaining people's behavior intentions, Ajzen (1985) suggests that the TPB model be viewed as a flexible theoretical framework to explain the psychological influence on intentional behavior, and other independent variables can be encompassed provided they increase the predictive validity of the theory. That said, the TPB model does not account for all the variance in predicted behavior and considerable variance may remain unexplained. As such, the TPB model may not be able to provide a complete view as to why people perform a certain behavior, and researchers should look for other important variables which contribute to the predicting power of the model. In this vein, recent research has highlighted the importance of integrating the role of trait-like, dispositional aspects of self-identity in predicting people's behavioral intentions within the structure of TPB (e.g., Hagger, Anderson, Kyriakaki & Darkings, 2007).

### *Self-identity Behavior Relationships*

According to Stets and Biga (2003), a self-identity is "a set of meanings attached to the self that serves as a standard or reference that guides behavior in situations" (p.401). Self-identity refers to salient and enduring aspects of one's self-perception (Rise, Sheeran & Hukkelberg, 2010). Self-identity is how individuals see and describe themselves with reference to others in society (Hibbert et al., 2013). 'Self' represents more than just a collection of individualized attributes that remain constant over time and across contexts (Niedenthal & Beike, 1997). In terms of the aspects of self-identity, Cheek and Briggs (1982) suggest that people's self-representations tend to be either associated with their private conceptions of self or their social roles. In other words, one's self-identity can be understood from the two aspects of personal

identity and social identity. In contrast to people's planned behavior, given that these aspects of identity are dispositional constructs, they are more likely to represent people's more impulsive, unplanned routes to behavioral engagement (Strack & Deutsch, 2004).

Self-identity perceptions may affect individuals' intentional behaviors by serving as a source of information when people make plans to act (Hagger et al., 2007). For example, a person who claims to be a "green tourist" may be more likely to choose green-friendly destinations, accommodations and/or travel programs. It is considered that a person with a sense of personal identity tend to develop personal beliefs of control over a given behavior. Hagger et al. (2007) suggest personal identity and social identity both affect behavioral intentions directly. In terms of travel behavior, Bond and Falk (2012) suggest that a tourist's travel experience can be wholly motivated by his self-perceived identity related needs.

#### *Interactive Role of Self-identity and Evaluative Attitude*

In terms of the relationship between self-identity and evaluative attitudes, Sparks and Shepherd (1992) argue that the affirmation of a particular self-identity may be considered justifiably to be a behavioral outcome, that such outcome may not be especially salient when respondents rate behaviors on the evaluative scales used to assess attitudes toward the act (p.397). Stets and Biga (2003) suggest that previous research does not take the role of identity into account, arguing that psychology-based attitude theory only demonstrates how individuals make choices based specifically on the object or situation they are in. The 'symbolic' role of self-identity has rarely been considered within the TPB assessment model. Hagger et al. (2007) report that self-identity should be considered to be a set of enduring characteristics that people ascribe to themselves and exert independent effects on behavioral intentions above the components of

the TPB. The different foci of self-identity and evaluative attitude indicate that the two types of predictive variables can complement each other in explaining one's behavioral intention.

With regards to the role of self-identity in the structure of the TPB model, Sparks and Shepherd (1992) expressed suspicion about the theoretical rationale for expecting an independent effect of self-identity on behavioral intentions. They hypothesized that self-identity would influence attitudes but would not show an independent effect on behavioral intentions in a study on green consumerism. Contrary to their postulation, results of the study showed an independent effect for self-identity, leading to a conclusion that a person's self-identity may be distinct from his evaluative attitudes. It is noted, however, that only the direct effects of the self-identities were measured in Sparks and Shepherd's study, the measurement of the interactive role between self-identity and TPB attitudinal constructs was not investigated. Sparks and Shepherd (1992) acknowledged that a more sophisticated modeling technique (e.g., structural equation modeling) will be helpful in identifying other effects such as the mediating effects of the attitudinal factors.

A person may have a great variety of behavioral engagements, such as exercise, dieting and binge drinking which are health-related as investigated in a study by Hagger et al. (2007). In comparison, international travel is a type of behavior different from these activities, which, for instance, might involve an adventurous tour away from home, or an experiential visit to an exotic destination. The type of tour and expected outcome from the tour may more likely reflect and affirm one's personal identity or social identity. Given that more empirical inquiries are needed to examine the relationship between self-identity and evaluative attitude in guiding one's behavior, and no such studies have ever been conducted in the field of tourism, this study is designed to examine how the dispositional aspects of self-identity and the TPB components interact to influence one's outbound travel intention. Based on the literature review, a conceptual

research framework about people's outbound travel intentions is developed based on the posited relationships between the aspects of self-identity and the TPB components (see Figure 1).

<Insert Fig. 1 here>

As shown in Figure 1, eleven hypothetical relations are developed as shown below which are tested in this study:

H<sub>1&2</sub>: Personal identity and social identity significantly influence attitude on one's behavioral intentions, respectively;

H<sub>3&4</sub>: Personal identity and social identity significantly influence subjective norm on one's behavioral intentions, respectively;

H<sub>5&6</sub>: Personal identity and social identity significantly influence perceived behavioral control on one's behavioral intentions, respectively;

H<sub>7,8&9</sub>: The TPB's attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence international travel behavioral intentions, respectively;

H<sub>10&11</sub>: Personal and social identities have significant direct impacts on international travel behavioral intentions, respectively.



## **Research Methods**

### *Place of Study and Data Collection*

To better understand how one's self-identity may affect his or her outbound travel intention, a self-administered survey was conducted in China's mega city Shenzhen, located in the southern province of Guangdong. Shenzhen is one of China's top four outbound tourist generating cities with the highest growing rate, about 1.21 million residents traveling overseas in 2013 (Shenzhen-HK, 2014). The research assistants who are students from a tourism college in Shenzhen helped collect the data from May 20, 1995 to July 20, 2015. A convenience sampling technique was used for data collection. The data collection sites include the metro stations along Line No. 1 and Line No. 3, and the streets around Bai Shi Zhou and High-tech Park. On average, the response rate is reported to be about 20% on the sites around the metro stations, and 12.5% at Bai Shi Zhou and Hi-tech Park. As a result, a total of 547 usable surveys were collected.

### *Questionnaire Design*

The survey instrument is a cross-sectional questionnaire, consisting of three sections. The first section contains items measuring the TPB constructs of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control; the second section includes the measures of the two dispositional aspects of self-identity - personal identity and social identity; and the third section asks questions about respondents' demographic characteristics.

Semantic scaling questions anchored with bipolar adjectives are used to measure the construct of 'attitude,' as are typically used in tourism studies (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001). The bipolar adjectives are unfavorable/favorable, unpleasant/ pleasant, boring/exciting, and foolish/fun. It is noted that previous studies used one single item (e.g., Song, Lee, Norman &

Han, 2002) to measure 'subjective norm.' According to Armitage and Conner (2001), a single-item measure of 'subjective norm' may become a weak predictor of behavioral intentions, hence three items are used to measure the construct of 'subjective norm', which are 'it is popular among my friends or family,' 'People who are important to me would probably think that it would be good to take a holiday abroad,' and 'Friends or family have recommended I take a holiday abroad.' The items used to measure 'perceived behavioral control' are adopted from Song et al. (2012), which are 'I feel I have enough time to take a holiday abroad,' 'I feel I have enough money to take a holiday abroad,' and 'I feel there is nothing that prevents me from taking a holiday abroad if I want to.' Besides, two items are used to measure the construct of 'behavioral intentions' which are 'I intend to take a holiday abroad in the next 1-2 years' and 'How likely would you take a holiday abroad in the next 1-2 years.'

The aspects of identity questionnaire conceptualize the self as a dual identity structure comprised of both personal identity and social identity, which is designed to assess differences in the importance people assigned to both internal and external aspects of identity (Check, 1989). Social identity was operationalized as the tendency to categorize oneself in terms of one's aggregate group identifications, and personal identity as the tendency to individuate the self as distinct from in-group memberships. To measure the two dispositional aspects of identity constructs, this survey instrument adopts six-item personal identity and six-item social identity scales adapted from Nario-Redmond, Biernat, Eidelmann and Palenske (2004). One example of the items measuring personal identity is 'My feeling of being unique, distinct from others,' and one example of social identity items is 'The similarity I share with others in my groups.'

Prior to the survey, a pilot test was conducted in Shenzhen. Forty completed surveys were collected and analyzed; comments from the research assistants who conducting the survey were

also collected. As a result, the format of the survey and the wordings of some of the questions were amended. The survey instrument was originally developed in English and then translated into Chinese by the investigator who are proficient and fluent at both English and Chinese languages. All the items relative to the measurement of the TPB and self-identity constructs were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales, with “1” standing for the most negative perception and “7” standing for the most positive perception. The third part of the questionnaire contains the demographic variables such as employment, income, age, education, occupation, gender, etc.

#### *Data Analysis Techniques*

The data were screened for violations of underlying assumptions based on descriptive statistics, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23). Data were cleaned prior to data analyses. Each of the univariate distributions has skew and kurtosis within reasonable ranges ( $< 3$  and  $< 10$ , respectively), the values falling within the guidelines and being regarded fairly normal for further structural equation modeling analyses (Kline, 2005). The data were then analyzed with LISREL (8.80), which is a statistical analytic software, to run the covariance structure analysis. This approach advocates initially estimating a measurement model and then a structural equation model. The goodness of fit indicators demonstrating a good fit for the structural model was inspected, based on the indices of  $\chi^2/df$ , p-value, comparative fit index (CFI), normative fit index (NFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). This study hypothesized that the aspects of self-identity may not only exert direct effects, but also indirect effects on behavioral intentions mediated by TPB components, thus as for the two self-identity constructs, their direct, indirect and total effects are also examined. In addition, the Sobel test (Sobel, 1986) is conducted to assess how the effects of the aspects of self-identity on behavioral intentions are mediated by the TPB components.

## Results

Of the 547 participants, 53.6% are male and 46.4% are female. 52.7% of the respondents are 31 years old or younger, 33.7% are between 31 – 50 years old, and 13.6% are over 50 years old. Regarding marital status, 36% are singles under 35 years old, 29.3% are married and under 35 years old without kids, 26% of the respondents have kids, and the other 9% are over 35 years old who are either singles or empty nesters. About 67% are full-time employees, 9.1% are self-employed, 5.7% are part-time, 4.6% are job-waiting, and 4.2% are retired. In terms of their occupations, 26.9% are clerks or white-collars, 18.1 are businessmen, 16.5% are civil servants or teachers, and 11% are managers. About the respondents' monthly household income, about 16% are below CNY5,000 (approximately \$1 = CNY6.4), 50% are between CNY5,000 and CNY10,000, 14% are between CNY10,000 – 20,000, and the other 20% are above CNY20,000.

Based on the mean scores of the items, the summated mean scores of the constructs, from the highest to the lowest, were Attitude (6.09), Personal Identity (5.93), Social Identity (5.62), Outbound Travel Behavioral Intention (5.20), Subjective Norm (5.15), Perceived Behavioral Control (5.00). The results indicate that, generally, the respondents' perceptions of the TPB and self-identity constructs are positive, ranging from 5.0 – 6.09. Among the variables, Attitude received the highest mean score, and the two identity components received higher scores than all the other variables.

The goodness of fit tests of the posited measurement model and structural model were conducted with Lisrel 8.80. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the constructs - attitude toward international travel (ATT), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), and behavioral intention (BI) - was conducted. The fit indices were:  $(238) = 945.33, p < .001,$

NFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.95, and RMSEA = .074. Overall, the measurement model showed a good fit for the data (MacCallum, Brown, & Sugawara, 1996). Convergent validity was assessed by the significant loadings between the observed variables and each latent variable. All the observed variables were loaded above .40 on their delegated latent variables and were statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). As shown in Table 1, all the average variance extracted (AVE) values were .40 or higher, ranging from .432 to .604, which supported adequate internal consistency. Next, the composite reliabilities of all constructs exceeded the cutoff value of .70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs range from .798 to .940, thus the multiple item scales were acceptable for measuring each of the constructs. To compare the AVE with the squared correlations between constructs for discriminant validity testing (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the squared correlations between each pair of constructs were all less than the AVE values. Thus, discriminant validity was satisfied. Overall, the measurement model shows a good fit to the data.

<Insert Table 1 here>

The structural model was estimated to examine the hypothetical relations. The results showed that the goodness-of-fit indices (goodness-of-fit statistics:  $\chi^2 = 1324.12$ , (df = 241,  $p < .001$ ), RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.94) were all within their acceptable level, suggesting that the model is adequate. The constructs of Personal Identity and Social Identity explained 39%, 49%, and 12% of the variances in Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control, respectively, then the self-identity components and TPB components altogether explained 73% of the variance in the construct of Behavioral Intention, indicating a good fit of the proposed structural model.

Table 2 shows the paths' standardized coefficients and the corresponding  $t$  values. The significant paths include both the Gamma paths (relationships between exogenous constructs and endogenous constructs) and the Eta paths (relationships between endogenous constructs) in the model. Based on the  $t$  values, nine out of the eleven hypothetical paths showed to be significant. It is noted that the two insignificant paths were from Personal Identity to Perceived Behavioral Control and Behavioral Intentions, respectively. In addition, unlike all the other significant paths which are all positive, the direct effect from social identity to behavioral intentions is negative.

<Insert Table 2 here>

Both the indirect effects and total effects of personal identity and social identity were examined (see Table 3), which were compared to their direct effects as displayed in Table 2. Interestingly, it is found out that personal identity's indirect and total effects are both positive and significant despite its insignificant direct effects on behavioral intentions; in addition, the indirect and total effects of social identity show to be positive and significant, too, in spite of the negative direct effect on behavioral intentions. Social identity's effect on behavioral intentions is negative while its indirect effect is positive, then the two effects cancel each out and result in a suppressed total effect which is positive and significant. This result indicates that the direct effect of social identity has been suppressed by the stronger indirect effects. As a result, both personal identity and social identity are shown to have positive total effects on behavioral intentions.

<Insert Table 3 here>

Further, the Sobel test (Sobel, 1986) was utilized to test the significance of the mediating roles of TPB components to the relationships between the aspects of self-identity and outbound travel intentions. The results of the Sobel tests, based on the Sobel test statistics (STS) and two-tailed  $p$ -values are listed in Table 4. As shown in the table, both Attitude and Subjective Norm

play an important role in governing the relationships between Personal Identity and Behavioral Intention, and between Social Identity and Behavioral Intention; in contrast, Perceived Behavioral Control mediates the relationship between Social Identity and Behavioral Intention, not between Personal Identity and Behavioral Intention. On one hand, the results indicate that Personal Identity and Social Identity act as antecedents to TPB constructs' impacts on outbound travel behavioral intention; on the other hand, though no direct effect on visit intention was observed from Personal Identity and Social Identity's direct effect is suppressed by its strong indirect effect, they exert positive indirect influence on Behavioral Intention through the mediating variable of the TPB variables. Hence all the TPB and self-identity constructs, i.e., Personal Identity, Social Identity, Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control prove to be significant in influencing one's outbound travel behavioral intention, either directly or indirectly.

<Insert Table 4 here>

To further specify, the Sobel tests show that the two TPB components of 'Attitude' and 'Subjective Norm' are significant in mediating the associations between 'Personal Identity' and 'Travel Intention'; 'Behavioral Control' failed to mediate the relationship. Decomposition of effects indicates that 'Personal Identity' has no significant direct effect on 'Travel Intention' whereas its total effect on 'Travel Intention' is positive and significant. In other words, its total effect on 'Travel Intention' is mainly exerted by its indirect effects mediated by 'Attitude' and 'Subjective Norm.' In contrast, 'Social Identity' has both direct and indirect effects on 'Travel Intention,' the indirect effects mediated by all the three TPB components. As a result, it is found that both personal identity and social identity exert positive impacts on the three TPB components, the only exception is that there is no significant impact made by personal identity

on perceived behavioral control. The influence of Personal identity and social identity on travel intentions are mainly mediated by all the three TPB components, respectively; their direct impacts on travel intentions are either insignificant or suppressed by the indirect effects through the three TPB constructs.



## **Discussions and Conclusion**

Results of this study verify that the aspects of self-identity have significant effects on people's outbound travel behavior, however, self-identities do not contribute to their behavioral intentions independently of their attitudinal evaluations. This result echoes the findings of Hagggar et al. (2007) who focused on the effects of self-identities on people's health behaviors. Hagggar et al. examined the effects of people's self-identities on their intentional exercise, dieting, and binge drinking and did not observe direct effects of self-identity on any of these health behavioral intentions. It is noted that early studies on the roles of self-identity (e.g., Biddle et al., 1987, in a study of college retention decisions; Charng et al., 1988, in studying blood donation intentions; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992, in green consumerism) claimed that self-identity contributed to the prediction of behavioral intentions independently of evaluative attitudes. Even so, some of them were also skeptical about the theoretical rationale for expecting an independent effect of self-identity on behavioral intentions, debating that a person's self-identity should be reflected in that person's beliefs, values, and attitudes (e.g., Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). According to Sparks and Shepherd (1992), using more sophisticated modeling techniques (e.g., structural equation modeling) might better demonstrate whether the independent effect of self-identities really exists.

This study is conducted partially in response to Sparks and Shepherd's query; SEM made it possible to examine not only the direct effects but also the indirect effects. Results of this study indicates that self-identities' direct effects may be overwhelmed by its interactive effects with the TPB components. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), one reason why self-identity may not predict intention after TPB components have been taken into account is that self-identity

concerns may not have been especially salient when people responded to the evaluative scales typically used to tap attitude toward behaviors. Thus, it is verified that, in the context of outbound travel behavior, empirical evidence of the independent effect of self-identities on people's outbound travel intentions is nuance.

In terms of the indirect effects of self-identities on international travel intentions, Findings of this study show that the personal aspect of self-identity impact the two TPB constructs - Attitude and Subjective Norm - which in turn influence Travel Intentions; the social aspect of self-identity make impacts on the three TPB constructs – Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control – which in turn affects Travel Intentions. Thus, the effects of the aspects of self-identity on travel intentions are mediated by the TPB components. In other words, the aspects of self-identity exert indirect effects on travel intentions within the structure of the theory of planned behavior. Results of the Sobel tests further proved that all these indirect effects mediated by the TPB constructs were significant.

Specifically, this study proved that both the effects of personal identity and social identity on travel intentions were mediated by Attitude. In other words, one's cognition of his or her personal self and social self can help form the attitude toward outbound travel intentions. For instance, a person who desires to be competent and unique (i.e., personal aspect of self-identity) will be more likely to adopt the idea of traveling abroad; a person who wants to become a better-recognizable social person (i.e., social aspect of self-identity) tends to like the idea of outbound travel more.

The effects of both personal identity and social identity on outbound travel were also found to be mediated by the variable of Subjective Norm. The old Chinese proverb of 'Read ten-thousand books, travel ten-thousand miles,' which is deeply embedded in Chinese people's mind

to become a person of wisdom, denotes that learning from books does not complement traveling for a person to become intelligent (a strong indicator of one's personal self-identity) and respectable (which is a strong indicator of one's social self-identity). A person's sense of self or self-concept is inextricably linked with the norms of the in-group which suggests that self-identity considerations are likely to influence normatively-endorsed behavior (Tajfel, 1981). On one hand, the association between the aspects of self-identity and Perceived Subjective Norm could be due to people's common cognition of international travel as one's most effective learning course to enhance knowledge; on the other hand, traveling abroad is commonly accepted in China as an effective approach to enhancing one's social communication and status. One example to illustrate how important traveling abroad is perceived by Chinese people is that, many Chinese parents are interested in having their teenage children join overseas-travel summer camps or stay abroad alone in foreigners' families for a summer break.

In comparison, this study indicates that one's Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) significantly mediated the effects of social identity, not personal identity, on people's outbound travel intentions, as the relationship between social identity and PBC is significant and the relationship between personal identity and PBC is not significant. In this regard, the Chinese term '*Mianzi*' or keeping face may well explain why one's sense of social identity, not personal identity, influences his or her PBC. For many Chinese people, not to lose face could be more important than not to lose a 'fortune.' It is construed that, a person with a strong sense of social identity will easily feel losing '*Mianzi*' by admitting that he or she cannot make an outbound travel while everyone else is doing so. When other friends or colleagues are planning or capable of participating in international travel, the person will tend to believe that he or she also has the same capability. In contrast, one's sense of personal identity (e.g., desire to become distinctive or

unique) did not show a significant impact on the perceived behavioral control. This result may imply that, people's private and social conceptions of self may not always be consistent – one can become salient over the other in different settings. As in the context of outbound travel for Chinese people, the impact of one's sense of social identity on PBC is more salient than the sense of personal identity.

To summarize the findings of this study, on one hand, no direct effects of the aspects of self-identity on outbound travel intentions were observed: the effects of personal identity on people's behavioral intentions were found insignificant at the presence of the effects of the TPB constructs; the effects from the social identity were suppressed by the salient interactive effects of social identity with the TPB components. On the other hand, the positive effects of personal identity and social identity on outbound travel behavioral intentions were found to be exercised mainly through the mediating variables of the TPB components. This study empirically verifies that self-identities' indirect effects through TPB components are more distinctive than their direct effects. Overall, results of this study reinforce the cognition that the dispositional aspects of self-identity significantly contribute to people's outbound travel intentions within the structure of the theory of planned behavior.

The contributions of this study are both theoretical and practical. In terms of theoretical contributions, this study provides a different perspective in understanding the roles of self-identity by studying outbound travelers' evaluative attitudes and behavioral intentions. There have been various kinds of studies reporting the roles of self-identity in different disciplines or behaviors, noticeably some studies claimed to observe self-identity's direct effects on behavioral intentions and the others failed to identify the direct effects. Findings of this study indicate that, in the context of outbound travel behavior, the aspects of self-identity are closely related with

and can significantly influence people's attitudes, their perceptions of subjective norm and behavioral control abilities. Therefore, people's personal identity and social identity serve as important antecedents to the TPB constructs in predicting their outbound travel intentions. The evaluative attitudes in the TPB are formulated on the basis of situational evaluations or utilitarian outcomes, and self-identities are based on dispositional and/or symbolic behavioral outcomes (Sparks & Shepherd, 2007), which may lead to two different orientations. By identifying the relationships between the aspects of self-identity and TPB components, this study integrates these two orientations and stresses the importance of reflecting a person's self-identity in assessing one's beliefs, values, and attitudes toward outbound travel behavioral intentions.

This study shows that the aspects of self-identity exert no direct effects on behavioral intentions in the context of outbound travel, which echoes the findings of Hagggar et al. (2007) in studying health-related behaviors such as exercise, dieting, and binge drinking, but contradicts the results of earlier studies on the behaviors of blood donating, college retention, green consumerism, etc. (Biddle et al., 1987; Charng et al., 1988; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992), which announced the independent effects of self-identities on behavioral intentions. It is considered that this inconsistency may be due to the fact that the earlier studies on self-identities did not inquire or examine the interactive effects between self-identities and the TPB constructs on behavioral intentions; moreover, future studies of the same kind on behavioral intentions should apply more sophisticated modeling techniques.

With regards to the practical implications, results of this study show that people's outbound travel intentions can be better explained by a function of both the situational evaluative-attitudes and people's beliefs of their self-identities. It is believed that a destination which best meets visitors' personal-identity and social-identity needs will help augment their

evaluative attitudes, which in turn reinforce their visit intentions. Outbound travel operators and destination management organizations are always interested in speculating on how to make their tours/destinations more attractive, well-known, and/or good-for-value, in other words, on how to elevate potential visitors' evaluative attitudes; what could possibly be overlooked are visitors' prospects of symbolic outcomes from the trips. According to Sparks and Shepherd (1992), the expression of self-identity may entail affective components of evaluations which may be assessed insufficiently in many standard measures of attitude. Therefore, a successful marketing strategy for a tour product or destination should not only focus on how to best display the attractiveness of the product, but also how to satisfy visitors' self-identity needs. In this regard, experiential travel is a good example of how to integrate travelers' personal self-identity needs in tours, and a volunteer tour can be a good illustration of how to make a tour meet visitors' social self-identity needs. In addition to providing the most affordable, attractive and popular products, successful outbound tour operators ought to consider how consumers are driven by the desire to fulfill their personal and social self-identities.

One caution of this study is that it has focused on one's behavioral intentions, which is one step away from an actual behavior. Behavioral intention is an individual's decision or commitment to perform a given behavior which is the most proximal predictor of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Young and Kent (1985), however, although it is generally accepted that behavioral intention could predict actual behavior, a high connection between behavioral intention and actual behavior may not always be attained. Given the difference between behavioral intention and an actual behavior, it is recommended that, researchers and industry practitioners should be aware of the difference when applying the findings, and consider it necessary to make more marketing and management efforts in order to

convert people's behavioral intention to an actual behavior. If conditions are favorable, future studies should apply this conceptual framework to the measurement of visitor's actual travel behavior. Because this study was conducted with data collected from one of the most affluent populations in China, its findings may not generalize well across a wider range of demographics. In addition, further research should replicate this study in other countries, as converging evidence from these studies would not only consolidate the reliability and validity of the measures but also help create a more generalized theory on the link between people's self-identities and planned behaviors.

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Table 1. Measure Correlations, the Squared Correlations, and Measurement Properties (N = 547)

Correlations between Latent Constructs (Squared)						
Measures	PI	SI	ATT	SN	PBC	BI
PI	1	.64 (.410)	.61 (.372)	.63 (.397)	.20 (.040)	.40 (.160)
SI	.64 (.410)	1	.52 (.270)	.65 (.423)	.34 (.116)	.41 (.168)
ATT	.61 (.372)	.52 (.270)	1	.43 (.185)	.17 (.029)	.38 (.144)
SN	.63 (.397)	.65 (.423)	.43 (.185)	1	.21 (.044)	.49 (.240)
PBC	.20 (.040)	.34 (.116)	.17 (.029)	.21 (.044)	1	.71 (.504)
BI	.40 (.160)	.41 (.168)	.38 (.144)	.49 (.240)	.71 (.504)	1
AVE	.566	.432	.604	.543	.525	.61
mean	5.93	5.62	6.09	5.15	5.00	5.20
Cronbach's $\alpha$	.858	.893	.879	.804	.798	.940

Note: PI=personal self-identity, SI=social self-identity, ATT=attitude, SN=subjective norm, PBC=perceived behavioral control, BI=outbound travel behavioral intentions, AVE = average variance extracted. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normative fit index. Model measurement fit:  $\chi^2=945.33$  (df = 238,  $p < .001$ ), RMSEA = 0.074, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.95.

Table 2. Standardized Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates (N= 547)

Paths			Standardized Coefficients	T Value	Results of hypothesis testing
PI	→	ATT	.47	7.36	H <sub>1</sub> : supported
SI	→	ATT	.20	3.20	H <sub>2</sub> : supported
PI	→	SN	.33	5.30	H <sub>3</sub> : supported
SI	→	SN	.42	6.28	H <sub>4</sub> : supported
PI	→	PBC	-.06	-.82	H <sub>5</sub> : not supported
SI	→	PBC	.39	4.78	H <sub>6</sub> : supported
PI	→	BI	.06	.92	H <sub>7</sub> : not supported
SI	→	BI	-.20	-2.65	H <sub>8</sub> : supported

ATT	→	BI	.18	3.40	H <sub>9</sub> : supported
SN	→	BI	.35	5.39	H <sub>10</sub> : supported
PBC	→	BI	.71	12.29	H <sub>11</sub> : supported

Note: PI=personal self-identity, SI=social self-identity, ATT=attitude, SN=subjective norm, PBC=perceived behavioral control, BI=outbound travel behavioral intentions, AVE = average variance extracted. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normative fit index. Goodness-of-fit statistics:  $\chi^2 = 1179.61$  (df = 241, p < 0.001), RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.94.

Table 3. Decomposition of Effects with Standardized Values

	Indirect Effect				Total Effect			
	ATT	SN	PBC	BI	ATT	SN	PBC	BI
PI	-	-	-	.17	.41	.38	-.06*	.24
SI	-	-	-	.54	.19	.52	.44	.31
ATT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.22
SN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.34
PBC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.74

Note: PI=personal self-identity, SI=social self-identity, ATT=attitude, SN=subjective norm, PBC=perceived behavioral control, BI=outbound travel behavioral intentions. Effect with the asterisk (\*) means not significant; all the other effects are significant.

Table 4. Results of Indirect-effect Tests (Sobel Test)

Independent V. → Mediator V. → Dependent V.	Sobel test statistics	Two-tailed P-value	Results
PI → ATT → INT	2.86	0.004	significant
PI → SN → INT	3.92	0.001	significant
PI → PBC → INT	-0.75	0.454	insignificant
SI → ATT → INT	2.23	0.025	significant
SI → SN → INT	4.27	0.001	significant
SI → PBC → INT	4.55	0.001	significant

Note: PI=personal self-identity, SI=social self-identity, ATT=attitude, SN=subjective norm, PBC=perceived behavioral control, BI=outbound travel behavioral intentions.