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Should I Travel? Moral Motivation During Crises

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ABSTRACT

While our travel decisions involve many decisions related to the right or wrong way to behave, our understanding of morality in tourism is largely underdeveloped. Currently, we are hoping for a more responsible and sustainable future after the pandemic. However, we still lack understanding of how moral motivations influence people's travel behavior during a crisis for better crisis management. Against the background of COVID-19, this study develops the moral motivation of travel amid public health crisis (MMTPHC) scale and tests its influence on travel behavior to advance our understanding of morality in tourism. Specifically, two moral motivations (compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling and shame) discourage people's travel intentions. However, concern about public denunciations and empathy toward others encourage travel intention. We also found shame and concern for public denunciations mediate the relationships between face concerns and travel intentions. Practical implications are suggested.

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关键词
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我应该旅行吗？危机中的道德动机

摘要

虽然我们的旅行决策涉及许多与行为方式的正确或错误相关的决策, 但我们对旅游道德的理解在很大程度上还不成熟。目前, 我们希望在疫情之后有一个更加负责任和可持续的未来。然而, 为了更好地管理危机, 我们仍然缺乏对道德动机如何影响人们在危机期间的旅行行为的理解。因此, 本研究侧重于开发公共卫生危机下旅行的道德动机（MMTPHC）量表, 并测试其对旅行行为的影响, 以增进我们对旅游道德的理解。具体来说, 两种道德动机（'遵守政策'和'羞耻感'）阻碍了人们的旅行意愿。然而, '对公众谴责的忧虑'和'对他人的同情'鼓励了旅行意愿。我们还发现, '羞耻感'和'对公众谴责的担忧'可以调节'面子担忧'和'旅行意图'之间的关系。文章讨论了对现实的影响。

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has extensively transformed our social experience. Our sensitivities toward threat, harm, or risk that are embedded within social interactions

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have increased due to the high transmission rate of the virus. At the heart of tourism is social interactions between people. However, as the concept of 'protecting yourself and others,' 'staycation,' and 'avoid travel' have increasingly become embedded in our lives and travel decisions, the right and wrong way to behave, our moral behaviors (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010), are being altered. Moral decisions and behaviors indeed hinged largely upon harm, risk, and threat in the pandemic (Rosenfeld et al., 2020). Indeed, any attempt to manage crisis has to consider ethics and morality (Alpaslan & Mitroff, 2021). Surprisingly, recent review articles of the COVID-19 tourism research reveal that while many studies have focused on psychological understanding of risk and harm in the pandemic, a significant amount of them stay at the describing level; more importantly, moral decisions and behaviors are largely absent (e.g. Yang et al., 2021). The words moral or morality only occasionally appear in theoretical discussion of hopeful tourism (e.g. Pernecky, 2020). Thus, this paper is an urgent response to the absence of moral behavior understandings in and beyond the COVID-19 tourism research.

While morality is becoming an important aspect of tourism operation, understanding of morality in tourism is still in a developing stage, and Caton (2012) calls for a moral turn in tourism studies. Some researchers integrate critical theory to understand emerging issues in moral tourism encounters (Hannam & Mostafanezhad, 2014); others approach morality through responsible or sustainable tourism (e.g. Cui et al., 2020) Morality could also be understood as part of social norms, identity, and obligation, which influence travel behavior (e.g. Gössling, 2019). Within the psychology literature, moral principles would inherently motivate moral actions, many investigate how moral motivations influence human behavior (e.g. Ellemers et al., 2019; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Within the tourism studies, the absence of understanding moral motivations leads to incomplete knowledge about its impact on travel behavior.

In order to examine the moral behavior in COVID-19 tourism, this paper focuses on moral motivations of Chinese tourists who traveled during public health crisis. While 'quarantine,' 'lockdown,' and 'social distancing' measures were implemented in the pandemic, travel was also possible as the pandemic spread from the latter part of 2019. With the aim of targeting zero confirmed cases, China's COVID-19 strict measures have been considered as the toughest (B.B.C., 2023). For example, one confirmed case could lead to community lockdown. Those who brought the virus back through traveling often soon attracted community denouncement (Pengpai News, 2022). At the same time, the government was promoting domestic travel to support areas that were deeply affected by the pandemic (e.g. Wuhan). Here, the moral considerations might motivate or constraint tourists' travel intention, but we know so little about them. The current study aims to study moral motivations and their effects on moral-related travel intention in the pandemic.

Focusing on Chinese tourists' moral motivations in COVID-19 tourism, this study makes three contributions. Firstly, it enriches understanding of morality in tourism through investigating moral motivations and their effects on travel decisions. In particular, the study aims to develop the moral motivations scale within tourism to advance our understanding of morality in tourism. Secondly, through focusing on moral-related behaviors in COVID-19 tourism, the study provides theoretical and empirical understanding of morality and crisis management. It thus also increases our understanding about people's

psychological reflections during public health crisis. Finally, through the analysis of Chinese tourists' moral motivations, we enhance the diversity of understanding morality in tourism, which traditionally focuses on the Western context (Caton, 2012).

2. Literature review

2.1. Moral motivations in tourism

The term morality means the right or wrong way to behave; it indicates what everyone ought to or should do (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). Based on this understanding, morality is an important concept to understand social behaviors as people who live in social environments would expect others to behave in certain ways (Ellemers et al., 2019). As social interactions are at the heart of tourism, understanding its morality has become important (Caton, 2012). Within COVID-19 tourism, as social interactions were restricted, any moral judgment around socially – culturally embedded rules and norms may have motivated or constrained travel decisions. This study focuses on tourists' moral motivations.

Moral motivation is an important concept within psychology as it reflects the nature of moral judgment, a process of determining whether a particular action is right or wrong (Shafer-Landau, 1998). Moral motivation can be understood as a willingness to do what one knows to be right and sometimes might entail personal costs; moral motivations might motivate certain actions while also discouraging others (Nunner-Winkler, 2007). When people are motivated to comply with moral requirements, moral motivations acknowledge the normative force and significance of the moral judgments that apply to certain situations (Wallace, 2006). Theoretically speaking, there are two competing views within the understanding of moral motivation and its relations with moral judgment, namely internalist and externalist. For the internalists, people's moral judgments are partly constituted by motivation or else they would be if they were rational. Here, internalists insist that there is a necessary connection between moral judgment and moral motivation (Shafer-Landau, 1998). In contrast, externalists view moral judgments as having no motivational efficacy in themselves, and when they motivate us, the source of motivation lies outside the moral judgment. This indicates moral judgment and moral motivation can be independent of each other (Francén, 2010; Zangwill, 2003). As there is no single conceptual truth about the connection between moral judgments and motivations, Francén (2010) argued the possibility of moral motivation pluralism. For him, both the internalist and externalist view could be right or wrong depending on people's understanding of moral judgments. Additionally, Haidt (2001) adds that moral judgment is not necessarily caused by rational reasoning but heavily influenced by social and cultural contexts. Hence, in this study, the focus is not on distinctions between these two competing views, but on moral-related views defined by people and their understanding of moral judgments.

A large amount of research has demonstrated that moral cognition and moral emotions play significant roles in moral motivation but differ in their stance on what is primary in the process of motivating moral actions (e.g. Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Kollerová et al., 2015). Moral cognition often believes that understandings guide the action and determine its specific meaning. Knowing of and reasoning regarding moral

rules and norms could motivate moral actions (Blasi, 1983). Many also recognize that moral cognition and moral emotion are interlinked as primary sources of moral motivation as it is often difficult to separate moral cognition and emotion (Hardy, 2006). Moral understandings often involve moral emotions (e.g. sympathy, empathy, guilt, and altruism) toward self and others' behaviors; emotions are seen as having motivational properties, and unconsciously or consciously emotions produce action tendencies (Blasi, 2001).

While motivations have been studied extensively within the tourism literature due to their significant power in influencing travel behavior (e.g. McCabe, 2000), we have very limited knowledge about moral motivations in tourism. This is mainly because we tend to study factors that motivate people to travel or engage in certain tourism activities (McCabe, 2000). In contrast, moral motivation can be called normative motivation, which involves motivating force; the motivating force of normative judgments is the key feature that marks this type of motivations as normative, thereby distinguishing moral motivations from many other motivational theories (Brink, 1997) we are used to in tourism. Occasionally, tourism studies used the term moral motives to examine moral-related motivations for pursuing corporate social responsibility initiatives (e.g. Hu et al., 2021). Again, as moral motives have only been implicitly investigated without considering the normative feature of moral motivations, we still have very limited knowledge of moral motivations and their influence on tourist behavior.

Morality and tourism are still in a developing stage, and more research is needed to create a better future for tourism (Caton, 2012; Cohen & Cohen, 2019). Increasingly, researchers have started to understand various moral issues existing around tourism encounters as we constantly decide what is the right or wrong way to do things (Hannam & Mostafanezhad, 2014). Occasionally, we can see recent studies on moral emotions emerging on how emotional factors influence travel behaviors and decisions (e.g. He & Harris, 2014). On the other hand, The rise of sustainable and responsible discussion of tourism before the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to moral issues as morality is highly associated with ethics and responsibility (e.g. Farmaki et al., 2022; Tolkach et al., 2017). While the complex relationship between ethics and morality is still under debate, many tourism researchers believe that morality is an important sub-component to understand ethics and ethical behavior. For them, ethics is a study of rules based on moral values (e.g. Tolkach et al., 2017). However, some argue that such an approach might undermine the importance of morality as morality indicates what is a 'good,' 'right' or 'ethical' way of believing and behaving from a subjective individual perspective (e.g. Ellemers et al., 2019; Haidt, 2001). The literature review of the COVID-19 research indeed acknowledges these trends regarding sustainability and ethics; however, morality discussion is still in a developing stage (Yang et al., 2021). This paper believes there is a need to go beyond the way of treating morality as purely a sub-component of ethics. While our travel behaviors and decisions are frequently influenced by questions around what is right or wrong, there is still a lack of holistic understanding of morality and its effects on travel behaviors. This study aims to highlight moral motivations and their effects on travel decisions and identify their content.

Arguably, this will contribute to our post-Covid-19 hope of living in a more sustainable and responsible society.

2.2. Chinese tourists' moral behaviors in covid-19 tourism

The vast majority of moral motivations research has been carried out in Western contexts. However, as morality indicates what is a 'good,' 'right,' 'virtuous' way for humans to behave, its fundamental nature is socially – culturally defined (Ellemers et al., 2019). It is thus important to understand how the Chinese conceptualize morality.

In China, social relations and interactions are largely influenced by Confucianism and its moral principles: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, intellect, and trust (in Chinese: *仁, 义, 礼, 智, 信* in pinyin: *ren, yi, li, zhi, xin*). In relation to these principles, being a person is determined by his/her fulfillment of relational codes of conduct in the eyes of others. The Confucian claims that our moral sense often develops in relation to the social groups and communities we live in (Ivanhoe, 2000). It is the interdependent nature of being Chinese in contrast with the independent individual in the Western contexts that provides different meanings to morality and guides the everyday moral-related behaviors of the Chinese (Hwang, 1998; Ivanhoe, 2000).

To understand morality and its normative powers on behaviors for the Chinese, face is often the key concept. Face highlights that behaviors are based on perceptions and interactions with self and others (Ho, 1976). Face concern is often regarded to have great implications regarding the morality of Chinese people (Hwang, 2012). Face not only reflects the fundamental virtue of fulfilling obligations and being a decent Chinese person but also refers to a general enactment of social norms and morals. It is also strongly related to one's perceived or recognized social reputation and status. Face has both individual and group indications as the Chinese are interdependent individuals. 'Gaining' or 'losing' individual or collective face has become an important element in the judgment of individuals' moral behavior (Ho, 1976; Hwang, 2012). As face is governed by Confucian moral principles, many believe that protecting or avoiding one's own face or group face influences all kinds of Chinese behavior (e.g. Jin, 2006).

It is now more than two years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The strict control in handling COVID-19 in China allowed its tourism industry to boom, especially its domestic travel. While many did enjoy traveling, those who brought the virus back often attracted community denouncement and lead to community lockdown and intensive COVID-19 tests. While traveling used to be an individual choice, Covid-19-related messages including 'avoid travel' and 'care for others' have emerged to pose a moral question for us: self or others? While there is a general absence of understanding morality in the COVID-19 tourism literature (Yang et al., 2021), we can see many empirical studies have noticed its importance. For example, in studying Chinese tourists who traveled in the early stage of the pandemic, researchers found non-interactions with those who are perceived to be associated with the virus have moral implications and need to be addressed in future studies (Zhang et al., 2021). This study particularly focused on the moral behavior of travel in the public health crisis to fill these gaps.

3. Methodology and results

This research adopted a sequential mixed-method approach with a qualitative phase (Phase 1) followed by a quantitative phase (Phase 2) (Creswell et al., 2003). According to the literature review, moral motivation of travel amid public health crisis (MMTPHC) has not been proposed before. This study explores and validates the dimensions of the construct by following the standard scale development procedures, which include item generation and content validation, scale validation, and scale application (Churchill, 1979). Hence, the qualitative phase generates MMTPHC items. The scale applicability of the generated dimensions is then tested by formulating hypotheses pertinent to their antecedent and effects on the dependent variables including cross-province travel intention and intention to travel abroad. The qualitative approach of study 1 also provides a contextual understanding of the role that MMTPHC plays in the mechanism that leads to travel behavior, which facilitates the design of a testable conceptual framework in Phase 2.

3.1. Item generation and content validation

The measurement items of MMTPHC are produced based on relevant literature and in-depth interviews with 25 mainland Chinese tourists who used to travel before the pandemic to provide rich information. Two authors solicited interviewees through their personal networks, while the solicitation process continued until data saturation was achieved. The interviews were completed in early 2022. Interviewees include 12 males and 13 females from different age and educational backgrounds to provide heterogeneous sampling. The interviews generated 22 items (in Chinese) – see Appendix A.

These items were evaluated by five independent Chinese researchers. They were given our definition of MMTPHC and asked to indicate how well the items represent the construct (a 4-point scale with 1: not at all representative, 2: minimally representative, 3: moderately representative, and 4: highly representative) (Fong et al., 2023; Taheri et al., 2018). Seven items received a rating below 3 because they are not relevant to morality according to the independent researchers. After a thorough discussion, the authors agreed to remove the items. Fifteen items were left for validation in the survey.

3.2. Scale validation

3.2.1. Pilot test and measures

A pilot test was conducted by surveying mainland Chinese tourists who were recruited through WJX.com. This survey platform manages a pool of mainland Chinese respondents and has a sophisticated sampling service. Its suitability for collecting Chinese tourists' opinions has been repeatedly asserted in prior tourism and hospitality research (Fong et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Only mainland Chinese tourists who were 18 years old or above were qualified to be respondents, and hence two screening questions were asked at the outset of the survey. Then, the 15 items of MMTPHC, measured by a 7-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree), were presented. Attention check

items (e.g. 'Please choose "Neither agree nor disagree" for this item') were randomly added for the purpose of quality assurance.

As noted earlier, the applicability of the MMTPHC scale would be tested by examining its relationships with antecedent and consequences. The qualitative phase identified face concern as a potential antecedent and intention to travel as possible consequence (the conceptual rationale will be discussed in Section 3.3.1 Formulation of Hypotheses). So, the survey also measures face concern and two travel intention consequences including cross-province travel intention and intention to travel abroad. The items of face concern were borrowed from the ten 7-point Likert scale items of Mak et al. (2009). To measure cross-province travel intention, we asked respondents to respond to an item 'If the government allows, I will travel to other provinces in my country' based on three 7-point bipolar scales (unlikely[1] ... likely[7]; definitely do not intend[1] ... definitely intend[7]; probably not[1] ... probably[7]). Similarly, these three items were used to measure intention to travel abroad, while respondents were asked 'If the government allows, I will travel abroad.' By the end of the survey, respondents' average leisure travel frequency per year (a covariate on the two travel intention variables) as well as their demographic profiles including gender, age, education, and monthly household income (Chinese Yuan), were asked for. All questions, except those related to MMTPHC, were translated into Chinese and then translated back into English to ensure semantic equivalence. MMTPHC items that had been developed in Chinese were translated into English and then back-translated into Chinese. The pilot test collected 56 responses. At the end of the survey, the respondents were asked if they had found any difficulties in understanding the questions. None of the respondents expressed problems in comprehending the survey questions. The main survey was then initiated.

3.2.2. Main survey and respondents

The main survey data were also collected using the sampling service provided by WJX between March and April 2022. Like the pilot test, only mainland Chinese tourists who were 18 years old or above were qualified to be respondents. The two screening questions were asked accordingly. Moreover, respondents who had participated in the pilot test were not allowed to undertake this main survey. This screening criterion is automatically implemented by WJX. This study aimed to receive over 600 useable responses because the MMTPHC data were split into two sets. One set of data was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which needs a dataset of at least 300 responses (Field, 2014). This main survey collected 621 useable responses.

Among these responses, 10 outliers were identified and removed because they had variable(s) with a standardized value outside the range of -4 and 4. In the remaining 611 responses, the respondents tended to be female (54.7%), in the age range of 25–34 (65.6%), holding a Bachelor's degree or above (93.3%), and having a monthly household income of 10,000–29,999 Chinese Yuan (62.0%) (see Table 1).

The online survey lasted for about a week. We assessed whether the late responses were systematically different from the early responses (i.e. non-response bias). Multiple comparison approaches were adopted to provide a solid conclusion. The early one-third responses were compared with the late one-third responses for each question (including the demographic questions). The same attempt was made for early/late one-quarter

Table 1. Profile of respondents ($n = 611$).

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	276	45.2%
Female	335	54.7%
Age		
18–19	8	1.3%
20–24	50	8.2%
25–29	202	33.1%
30–34	199	32.6%
35–39	79	12.9%
40–44	46	7.5%
45–49	13	2.1%
50–54	6	1.0%
55–59	5	0.8%
65 or above	3	0.5%
Education		
Secondary school	8	1.3%
Technical school	11	1.8%
College	20	3.3%
Bachelor's degree	521	85.3%
Postgraduate	49	8.0%
Others	2	0.3%
Monthly household income (Chinese Yuan)		
1,999 or below	1	0.2%
2,000–3,999	13	2.1%
4,000–6,999	44	7.2%
7,000–9,999	63	10.3%
10,000–19,999	226	37.0%
20,000–29,999	153	25.0%
30,000–39,999	58	9.5%
40,000–49,999	26	4.3%
50,000 or above	27	4.4%

responses, first/second half responses, early/late 50 responses, and early 75% (versus late 25%) responses (Porter & Whitcomb, 2005; Xu & Schrier, 2019). The results consistently showed that a majority of differences are not statistically significant (83%—97%) and none of the variable exhibits significant differences across all approaches. Therefore, the issue of non-response bias can be deemed minimal.

3.2.3. Exploration of factor structure

As noted earlier, the MMTPHC data were randomly split into half with 306 responses for EFA and the remaining 305 responses for confirmatory analysis. EFA generated four factors (eigenvalue >1). One of the items (*If I am infected during the trip, I will be disliked and blamed by neighbors when back home*) has a factor loading below 0.4 and is supposed to be eliminated. To check the robustness of this result, we randomly picked 400 responses and 500 responses out of the 611 responses and analyzed them using EFA. The results consistently showed a factor loading below 0.4 for that particular item. Therefore, we removed it and performed EFA again using the 305 responses.

Four factors were generated (eigenvalue >1; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value = 0.746; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2 (91) = 980.734, $p = 0.000$). All factor loadings were greater than 0.4. The cumulative variance explained is 58.58%. We performed the EFA again using the aforementioned 400 and 500 randomly picked samples. The same factor

Table 2. Outer loadings and cross loadings ($n = 611$).

		Mean (*SD*)	FACE	GOVNT	SHAME	DENUN	EMP	CROSS	ABROAD	LEI
FACE1	During a discussion, I try not to ask questions because I may appear ignorant to others	2.58 (*1.067*)	**0.687**	-0.111	0.174	0.185	-0.061	-0.111	0.047	-0.002
FACE2	I maintain a low profile because I do not want to make mistakes in front of other people	3.01 (*1.188*)	**0.697**	-0.097	0.115	0.139	-0.055	-0.141	-0.061	-0.041
FACE3	I downplay my abilities and achievements so that others do not have unrealistically high expectations of me	3.10 (*1.164*)	**0.729**	-0.004	0.182	0.175	0.043	-0.075	-0.061	-0.034
FACE4	When I meet other people, I am concerned about their expectations of me	2.94 (*1.149*)	**0.750**	-0.014	0.199	0.214	0.093	-0.135	-0.026	-0.057
FACE5	I hesitate asking for help because I think my request will be an inconvenience to others	3.50 (*1.123*)	**0.686**	0.058	0.133	0.229	0.105	-0.125	-0.112	-0.055
FACE6	I try not to do things which call attention to myself	2.98 (*1.113*)	**0.764**	-0.022	0.195	0.201	0.055	-0.128	-0.077	-0.043
GOVNT1	When the government appeals not to travel, I should follow	6.36 (*0.874*)	0.001	**0.658**	0.152	0.165	0.248	0.047	-0.083	-0.048
GOVNT2	I make sure I follow anti-epidemic policy related to traveling	6.24 (*0.844*)	-0.040	**0.821**	0.099	0.138	0.333	0.109	-0.052	0.051
GOVNT3	When I finish my trips, I should follow government's isolation policy	6.39 (*0.839*)	-0.041	**0.784**	0.043	0.150	0.243	0.100	-0.045	0.014
SHAME1	It is shame to travel during epidemic	3.62 (*1.784*)	0.090	-0.062	**0.662**	0.292	-0.019	-0.020	0.046	0.086
SHAME2	I feel guilty to travel during epidemic	4.37 (*1.632*)	0.144	0.147	**0.747**	0.419	0.026	-0.062	-0.087	0.029
SHAME3	I feel constantly nervous when travelling during epidemic	4.82 (*1.482*)	0.238	0.124	**0.826**	0.411	0.117	-0.078	-0.051	0.082
SHAME4	I feel shamed if others know I am travelling to destinations with confirmed cases	4.45 (*1.662*)	0.167	0.067	**0.748**	0.475	0.000	-0.014	-0.049	0.085
DENUN1	I am afraid of the exposure of my identity and trip details on social media	4.92 (*1.644*)	0.251	0.032	0.381	**0.766**	0.142	0.013	0.014	-0.060
DENUN2	I am afraid of neighbors' condemnation if breaking the anti-epidemic rules because of travel	5.44 (*1.278*)	0.116	0.183	0.473	**0.710**	0.133	0.089	-0.004	0.024
DENUN3	I am afraid of strangers' cyberbullying about my trips	5.17 (*1.436*)	0.243	0.157	0.446	**0.810**	0.083	-0.007	-0.032	0.032

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

		Mean (*SD*)	FACE	GOVNT	SHAME	DENUN	EMP	CROSS	ABROAD	LEI
DENUN4	I am afraid of penalty if breaking the anti-epidemic rules related to travel	5.65 (*1.213*)	0.130	0.287	0.327	**0.665**	0.199	0.122	-0.009	-0.001
EMP1	I am sympathetic to those who are infected during travel	5.15 (*1.371*)	0.072	0.157	0.055	0.144	**0.661**	0.110	0.078	-0.106
EMP2	Do not discriminate those who are infected during travel but follow the rules	5.88 (*1.153*)	-0.022	0.412	0.066	0.121	**0.762**	0.188	-0.020	0.018
EMP3	I am sympathetic to those who suffer from cyberbullying about their trips	5.44 (*1.174*)	0.074	0.238	0.029	0.147	**0.847**	0.190	0.053	-0.097
CROSS1	If the government allows, I will travel to other provinces in my country (unlikely … likely)	5.47 (*1.389*)	-0.146	0.119	-0.101	0.037	0.185	**0.905**	0.315	0.038
CROSS2	Definitely do not intend … Definitely intend	5.05 (*1.449*)	-0.156	0.090	-0.040	0.035	0.211	**0.910**	0.388	0.023
CROSS3	Probably not … Probably	5.33 (*1.602*)	-0.155	0.112	-0.043	0.078	0.209	**0.938**	0.357	-0.002
ABROAD1	If the government allows, I will travel abroad (unlikely … likely)	3.09 (*1.790*)	-0.089	-0.064	-0.079	-0.031	0.057	0.382	**0.960**	0.012
ABROAD2	Definitely do not intend … Definitely intend	2.92 (*1.689*)	-0.066	-0.054	-0.054	0.003	0.036	0.382	**0.959**	0.031
ABROAD3	Probably not … Probably	2.97 (*1.887*)	-0.043	-0.100	-0.048	0.001	0.027	0.345	**0.963**	0.037
LEI	Average leisure travel frequency per year	4.17 (*3.864*)	-0.055	0.015	0.091	-0.007	-0.075	0.021	0.027	1.000

Values in boldface are outer loadings, whereas others are cross-loadings; FACE: Face concern, GOVNT: Compliance with Anti-epidemic Policy related to Traveling, SHAME: Shame, DENUN: Concern for Public Denunciation, EMP: Empathy, CROSS: Cross-province Travel Intention, ABROAD: Intention to Travel Abroad, LEI (covariate): Average leisure travel frequency per year.

The following four face concern items are removed due to their low outer loadings and poor AVE (<0.5).

– I try not criticize others because this may embarrass them.
– When someone criticizes me, I try to avoid that person.
– When I make a mistake in front of others, I try to prevent them from noticing it.
– Even when I know another person is at fault, I am careful not to criticize that person.

structure was produced, and all factor loadings were above 0.4. We labeled the factors by synthesizing the common meanings of their items. The four factors were Compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling (GOVNT, 3 items), Shame (SHAME, 4 items), Concern for public denunciation (DENUN, 4 items), and Empathy (EMP, 3 items) (see Table 2). Their Cronbach's alpha values were above 0.6, which is the threshold of exploratory study (GOVNT = 0.617; SHAME = 0.738; DENUN = 0.754; EMP = 0.655).

3.2.4. Confirmation of factor structure

The 14-item factor structure was validated using the second dataset ($n = 305$). Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA), rather than Confirmatory Factor Analysis

(CFA), was adopted because the former performs better in content coverage and construct validity (Fong et al., 2023). Following the procedures specified in Hair et al. (2020), CCA was performed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Four factors with their corresponding items derived from EFA were specified. Together with face concern and leisure travel frequency (covariate), the four factors were set to predict the two dependent variables so that the largest number of structural paths pointing toward a construct was 6. The minimum sample size was 10 times the paths (i.e. 60). Therefore, 305 samples were sufficient for conducting PLS-SEM.

The PLS-SEM results show that all outer loadings are greater than 0.4 and statistically significant. Internal consistency is achieved as their Cronbach's Alpha (0.626—0.776), Composite Reliability (0.796—0.850), and rho_A (0.656—0.814) are greater than 0.6. Convergent validity is demonstrated as their Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.5 (0.505—0.588). Their discriminant validity is verified based on three criteria. First, the outer loadings of items are greater than the absolute value of their cross-loadings. Second, the square-rooted AVE of a construct is greater than the absolute value of its correlations with other constructs (Fornell-Larcker). Third, all Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values are lower than 0.85 while their $HTMT_{inference}$ criteria are supported (not including 1 in the range of confidence interval bias corrected). As expected, their positive correlations are significant (GOVNT: $r = 0.275$, $t = 3.972$, $p < 0.001$; SHAME: $r = 0.110$, $t = 2.156$, $p < 0.05$; DENUN: $r = 0.155$, $t = 2.392$, $p < 0.05$; EMP: $r = 0.190$, $t = 2.625$, $p < 0.01$).

While the four factors conceptually represent MMTPHC, we do not know if they can be analyzed as dimensions of MMTPHC. Therefore, we specified a reflective-reflective Hierarchical Component Model in PLS-SEM and performed the measurement model testing. The results show that many outer loadings at the higher-order construct need to be deleted because of their poor value (lower than 0.4). Therefore, higher-order construct modeling is not suitable for MMTPHC. In other words, the four factors should be separately examined.

3.3. Scale applicability

3.3.1. Formulation of hypotheses

Scale application was assessed by examining the antecedent and consequences of MMTPHC factors. In Phase 1, the result revealed that the tough policy and its associated social impacts do have some effect on people's behavior that is worth testing in the later stage. For example, a man in his 30s said '*I think the government does not encourage any travel behavior at the moment. If you do not obey the order you will be in trouble. I will also feel shamed.*' Similarly, a woman in her 40s commented using her personal experience '*my neighbors were positive, the government have to send us all to hotels for quarantine. My husband was very angry why they can be positive? Shame on them. We have a WeChat group my neighbors constantly apologize in the group. I cancelled our trips to the nearby city after all these happened.*' While many did travel especially to nearby cities, many do feel they were very alert about changing policies and trying to be very careful during trips to avoid any possibility of getting infected. Hence, many do rationalize their traveling decisions in showing

empathy toward others. For example, a man in his 60s said '*it has been a while we have been locked into rooms; we want to go out but are scared. You want to be a good citizen in your society. Many do say we need to support Wuhan due to its sufferings, so we went there to support.*' In addition, as moral motivations acknowledge the normative force and significance of the moral judgments, moral motivations often encourage and discourage certain behaviors in certain situations (Wallace, 2006). Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: *Compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling negatively predicts cross-province travel intention (H1a)/intention to travel abroad (H1b)*

H2: *Shame negatively predicts cross-province travel intention (H2a)/intention to travel abroad (H2b)*

H3: *Concern for public denunciation negatively predicts cross-province travel intention (H3a)/intention to travel abroad (H3b)*

H4: *Empathy positively predicts cross-province travel intention (H4a)/intention to travel abroad (H4b)*

Interestingly, the word face was frequently mentioned by most interviewees as face is often the key concept when considering moral-related normative powers for Chinese people (Ho, 1976). Face is also regarded as one of the most important virtues of being a decent Chinese person, and losing one's face in public is consider morally unacceptable (Jin, 2006). These indicate that the relationship between face concern and morality is rooted in shameful feeling and perception of oneself in other people's eyes. These two fundamental components echo with shame and concern about public denunciation in MMTPHC. Our interviewees provide similar explanations. A man in his 50s said '*I cancelled all my trips now. I just afraid if I get positive, everyone will know who I am. Then I lose the face of my family, my community, and my city. It would be a real shame.*' Additionally, a woman in her 20s said '*I used to travel everywhere. Travel is your individual activity, very personal. My parents told me not to travel recently and ask me to think about all the consequences. Public denunciation is scary. All people will look down you. So I did not travel.*' Many studies also believe face has simultaneous affective effect which is associated with feelings of shame and therefore influences individuals' behavior (Oetzel et al., 2008).

Hence, the face concern possibly hinders the travel intention regardless of cross-province or cross-country travel. This mechanism is plausibly constituted by shame and concern for public denunciation, according to our discussions above. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5: *Face concern positively predicts shame*

H6: *Face concern positively predicts concern for public denunciation*

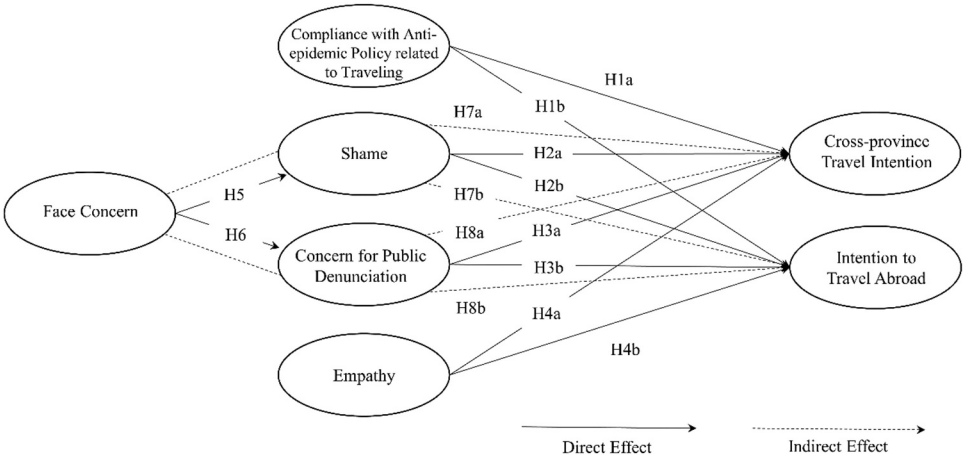

Figure 1. The conceptual model.

H7: *Shame mediates the negative predicting relationship between face concern and cross-province travel intention (H7a)/intention to travel abroad (H7b)*

H8: *Concern for public denunciation mediates the negative predicting relationship between face concern and cross-province travel intention (H8a)/intention to travel abroad (H8b)*

The conceptual model illustrates the hypotheses (see Figure 1).

3.3.2. Assessment of measurement model

The full data set ($n = 611$) was used to test the hypotheses. First, the internal consistency and validity of measures were assessed. The AVE of face concern was below 0.5 so the items with low outer loadings were eliminated one by one until the AVE value reached the threshold. Four items were removed and six were retained. For the other constructs, all of their measurement model indicators pass. Specifically, as shown in Table 2, all outer loadings exceed 0.4 and are statistically significant. Internal consistency is demonstrated

Table 3. Assessment of reliability and validity of constructs.

Correlations and √AVE	GOVNT	SHAME	DENUN	EMP	FACE	CROSS	ABROAD
GOVNT	**0.758**						
SHAME	0.123	**0.748**					
DENUN	0.196	0.542	**0.740**				
EMP	0.365	0.063	0.178	**0.760**			
FACE	-0.038	0.234	0.269	0.050	**0.719**		
CROSS	0.116	-0.067	0.055	0.220	-0.166	**0.918**	
ABROAD	-0.076	-0.063	-0.010	0.042	-0.069	0.385	**0.961**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.628	0.757	0.733	0.638	0.814	0.907	0.958
Composite Reliability	0.800	0.835	0.828	0.803	0.865	0.941	0.973
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.574	0.559	0.548	0.578	0.518	0.843	0.923

Values in boldface are square-root of AVE; FACE: Face concern, GOVNT: Compliance with Anti-epidemic Policy related to Traveling, SHAME: Shame, DENUN: Concern for Public Denunciation, EMP: Empathy, CROSS: Cross-province Travel Intention, ABROAD: Intention to Travel Abroad.

in the satisfactory values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and rho_A (>0.6) as shown in Table 3. All AVE values are above 0.5. The three criteria of discriminant validity are met (outer loading > |cross-loading|, Fornell-Larcker, and HTMT) (see section 3.2.4 for details about these criteria).

3.3.3. Common method bias

Harman's single-factor approach and the Unmeasured Latent Marker Construct (ULMC) approach were employed to assess if common method bias is a major issue for this study. First, the factor analysis generates more than one factors (seven factors) while the first factor accounts for 16.21% of variance, which is far below 50%. Second, the ULMC results show that most method factor loadings are not significant. The ratio of average indicators' substantive variance to average method variance is 119:1, which is far greater than 42:1 (Liang et al., 2007). Both approaches consistently show that common method bias is not an issue for this study.

3.3.4. Testing of hypotheses

The structural model tests show that multi-collinearity is not an issue as all VIF values are below 5. Table 4 exhibits the results of hypothesis testing. Cross-province travel intention is negatively predicted by shame, and positively predicted by concern for public denunciation and empathy, but not predicted by compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling. Intention to travel abroad is negatively predicted by compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling and shame, and positively predicted by empathy, but not predicted by concern for public denunciation. Face concern positively predicts

Table 4. Hypotheses testing results ($n = 611$).

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	*t*-values	*p*-value	Bias Corrected C.I.	Results
H1a: GOVNT → CROSS	0.022	0.475	0.317	[-0.062, 0.096]	Not supported
H1b: GOVNT → ABROAD	-0.113	2.165	0.015*	[-0.193, -0.022]	Supported
H2a: SHAME → CROSS	-0.110	2.254	0.012*	[-0.186, -0.027]	Supported
H2b: SHAME → ABROAD	-0.071	1.339	0.090^	[-0.159, 0.014]	Marginally supported
H3a: DENUN → CROSS	0.122	2.149	0.016*	[0.030, 0.216]	Opposite direction is supported
H3b: DENUN → ABROAD	0.055	1.058	0.145	[-0.032, 0.139]	Not supported
H4a: EMP → CROSS	0.209	4.753	0.000***	[0.133, 0.279]	Supported
H4b: EMP → ABROAD	0.084	1.823	0.034*	[0.006, 0.156]	Supported
H5: FACE → SHAME	0.234	5.791	0.000***	[0.159, 0.292]	Supported
H6: FACE → DENUN	0.269	6.841	0.000***	[0.195, 0.324]	Supported
H7a: FACE → SHAME → CROSS	-0.026	2.085	0.019*	[-0.046, -0.006]	Supported
H7b: FACE → SHAME → ABROAD	-0.017	1.309	0.095^	[-0.038, 0.004]	Marginally supported
H8a: FACE → DENUN → CROSS	0.033	2.109	0.017*	[0.008, 0.059]	Opposite direction is supported
H8b: FACE → DENUN → ABROAD	0.015	1.035	0.150	[-0.009, 0.038]	Not supported

FACE: Face concern, GOVNT: Compliance with Anti-Epidemic Policy related to Traveling, SHAME: Shame, DENUN: Concern for Public Denunciation, EMP: Empathy, CROSS: Cross-province Travel Intention, ABROAD: Intention to Travel Abroad; LEI: Leisure Travel Frequency.

Other direct effects: FACE → CROSS (path coefficient = -0.181, $t = 4.700$, $p = 0.000$); FACE → ABROAD (path coefficient = -0.074, $t = 1.578$, $p = 0.057$); LEI → CROSS (path coefficient = 0.037, $t = 1.102$, $p = 0.135$); LEI → ABROAD (path coefficient = 0.038, $t = 0.525$, $p = 0.300$)

Total indirect effect: FACE → CROSS (path coefficient = 0.007, $t = 0.497$, $p = 0.310$); FACE → ABROAD (path coefficient = -0.002, $t = 0.120$, $p = 0.452$)

shame, which mediates the negative relationships between face concern and cross-province or cross-country travel intention. Face concern also positively predicts concern for public denunciation. However, the unexpected positive relationship between concern for public denunciation and cross-province travel intention causes the indirect effect of face concern on cross-province travel intention positive. Concern for public denunciation does not mediate the relationship between face concern and intention to travel abroad. It is noteworthy that the total indirect effect of face concern on cross-province travel intention is not significant, which is probably due to the negative mediating effect of shame being offset by the positive mediating effect of concern for public denunciation. The insignificant total indirect effect of face concern on cross-country travel intention is not surprising given the marginally mediating effect of shame and insignificant mediating effect of concern for public denunciation.

The predictive relevance of the structural model is assessed by the blindfolding procedures. All Q^2 values are above zero so that predictive relevance is satisfactory. The PLS-predict procedure results in positive $Q^2_{predict}$ values. A majority of Linear Model (LM) values are greater than PLS-SEM values, based on the Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) approach (Shmueli et al., 2019). Therefore, the predictive power is medium. In sum, the structural model testing results demonstrate the applicability of MMTPHC.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The new terms 'protecting yourself and others,' 'staycation,' and 'avoid travel' are increasingly becoming embedded in our lives and travel decisions. The right and wrong way to behave, our moral behaviors (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010), are being altered in and beyond Covid-19. The findings of this study contribute to the further development of a theoretical understanding of morality in tourism. Using a mixed-methods approach with two phases, this paper captures a comprehensive set of moral motivations factors facing Chinese tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic and builds a theoretical framework to validate face concern as an antecedent of these factors and their predictive power on Chinese tourists' behavioral responses. The qualitative data help to generate items for MMTPHC and also provide contextual explanations for relationships between notions. The paper contributes to the formation of a holistic framework for analyzing the moral motivations as a crucial psychological mechanism that shapes tourists' behavior and decisions. Specifically, the study has three main theoretical contributions.

First, through developing the moral motivation of travel amid public health crisis (MMTPHC), the study enriches understanding of morality in tourism. While our travel decisions are influenced by the right or wrong way to behave (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010), understanding of morality in tourism is surprisingly limited (Caton, 2012). We do have many travel-related motivations studies within the tourism literature; however, we still have very limited knowledge about moral-related motivations and their effect in tourism. Unlike general travel motivation studies, moral motivations are powerful due to their normative nature (Brink, 1997). To tackle this gap, this study developed MMTPHC, which includes items related to compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling, shame, concern for public denunciation, and empathy. These factors are in line with general psychology studies, where they often believe moral motivations contain moral cognition and moral emotions (e.g. Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Kollerová et al., 2015). In

developing the scale, the qualitative data also show that face concern is an important variable influencing the Chinese tourists' moral motivations and behaviors. The study developed a conceptual model that implies relationship between face concern, compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling, shame, concern for public denunciation, empathy and travel intentions (cross-province and travel aboard). In particular, the result shows that two moral motivations (compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling, and shame) discourage people's intention to travel abroad. However, empathy toward others encourages both cross-province travel intention and intention to travel abroad. Interestingly, public denunciation induces cross-province travel intention which implies psychological reactance against the judgment of one's peers (or similar) (Steindl et al., 2015). Furthermore, we found shame and concern for public denunciation mediate the relationship between face concern and cross-province travel intention. This indicates face is an important concept influencing the Chinese moral behaviors (Jin, 2006) here through stimulating shame and concerns for public denunciation emotions.

Second, in developing MMTPHC, this study provides a theoretical and empirical understanding of morality in crisis management in and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has brought a new normal to every society. New phrases such as 'protecting yourself and others,' 'staycation,' and 'avoid travel' define for us the right and wrong way to behave, our moral behavior (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). While the management of complex situations in crisis has to involve the consideration of various moral and ethical issues, morality and crisis management are largely underdeveloped (Alpaslan & Mitroff, 2021). Within tourism, morality was only occasionally discussed in hopeful tourism or sustainable tourism. Indeed, there is a lack of understanding of morality in COVID-19 pandemic tourism research (Yang et al., 2021). While there is a growing intention to develop more sustainable and responsible travel in and beyond Covid-19, the underdeveloped understanding of morality in tourism will certainly hinge this sustainable hope. The MMTPHC scale develops this understanding further, and the conceptual model provides insights on how people make travel decisions during a crisis and how different moral motivations influence their travel decisions.

Third, within the limited studies of morality and tourism, many of them were Western focused (Caton, 2012; Hannam & Mostafanezhad, 2014). While analyzing Chinese tourists' moral motivations, this study enhances the diversity of understanding morality in tourism. In particular, we found that Chinese tourists' moral motivations and their influence on travel decision is related to the idea of face. Here, the two moral motivations (shame and concerns about public denunciations) and their relations with travel intentions are rooted in the face concern. This is in line with general Chinese cultural-related studies, where face concern is often regarded to have fundamental implications for the Chinese morality (Hwang, 2012).

Practically speaking, as the study focuses on morality in a crisis, it provides practical implications for those to manage crisis and aware of morality. Specifically, as compliance with anti-epidemic policy related to traveling and shame discourage an individual's travel intention, the crisis management agent could pay attention to these elements when designing policies. Additionally, as face concern is very influential on moral behavior via shame, should adhere to government policy and avoid potential harm to their clients when traveling during a crisis. Empathy toward others plays a significant role in

encouraging travel, even during a crisis. Tour operators could utilize empathy to market tours to destinations that have suffered from crises, where they can stimulate empathy and travel intention. Also, when managing the recovery of tourism, empathy toward others could be useful to stimulate demand for certain areas.

The study limitations also provide suggestions for future research. When understanding moral motivations in tourism, this study specifically focuses on Chinese tourists. The Chinese context is arguably unique, and variables such as face concern are raised from this context. However, to enhance the MMTPHC scale, it would be great to use a different sample. Also, the MMTPHC scale is specifically designed under the crisis management scenario; future studies could potentially develop a more general moral motivations scale to enhance our understanding of morality in tourism for a more sustainable and responsible society. Further, our understanding of morality in tourism is still developing, future research could focus on how moral motivation is linked with other important concepts like moral development or moral intensity.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Appendix A.

	MMTPHC Items Originally Generated
1	When the government appeals not to travel, I should follow 当政府不建议旅游, 我应当遵守。
2	I make sure I follow anti-epidemic policy related to travel 我会确保自己遵守旅游相关的防疫政策。
3	When I finish my trips, I should follow government's isolation policy 当旅游结束, 我应该遵守政府的各项隔离政策。
4	It is shame to travel during epidemic 在疫情期间旅行是件耻辱的事情。
5	I feel guilty to travel during epidemic 如果我疫情出游, 我会有罪恶感。
6	I feel constantly nervous when traveling during epidemic 当我疫情期间旅游时, 我每每感到紧张。
7	I feel shamed if others know I am traveling to destinations with confirmed cases 如果被其他人知道我去了确诊地区旅游, 我会感到耻辱。
8	I am afraid of the exposure of my identity and trip details on social media 我害怕社交媒体曝光我的身份和旅行详情。
9	I am afraid of neighbors' condemnation if breaking the anti-epidemic rules because of travel 如果我因为出游违反了防疫规范, 我害怕邻居们的指責。
10	I am afraid of strangers' cyberbullying about my trips 我担心疫情出游的举动会让我受到来自陌生人的网络暴力。
11	I am afraid of penalty if breaking the anti-epidemic rules related to travel 如果我违反了旅游相关的防疫规范, 我会担心受到惩罚。
12	I am sympathetic to those who are infected during travel 我对那些出游并感染的人感到同情。
13	Do not discriminate those who are infected during travel but follow the rules 不要歧视那些遵守防疫政策, 但在旅途中不幸感染的人。
14	I am sympathetic to those who suffer from cyberbullying about their trips 我对那些因为疫情期间出游而被网络暴力的人感到同情。
15	If I am infected during the trip, I will be disliked and blamed by neighbors when back home 如果我旅行期间感染, 返回后我将会有遭到左邻右舍的嫌弃和埋怨。[a]
16	Travel domestically is important for our country's economy recovery 国内游有助于国家经济复苏。[b]
17	I feel proud to travel domestically and support areas that are severely affected by the epidemic 通过国内游支持受疫情影响严重的地区使我感到自豪。[b]
18	When the anti-epidemic policy allows, I tend to travel domestically to enjoy the beauty of our country 在防疫政策允许的情况下, 我更倾向于领略祖国大好风光。[b]
19	When the anti-epidemic policy allows, I tend to travel domestically to support our country's economic recovery 在防疫政策允许的情况下, 我更倾向于国内游, 以支持经济复苏。[b]
20	I try to travel within my province to support the development of local tourism industry 我会尽量省内旅游以促进当地旅游业发展。[b]
21	I try to travel to nearby destinations to minimize the epidemic risk that I will bring to the local community 我会尽量选择周边游从而减小给社区带来的疫情风险 。[b]
22	Travelling remains as my personal choice even during epidemic 即使在疫情期间, 旅游然应当是我个人的选择 。[b]

[a]Poor factor loading; [b]Not relevant to the concept according to the independent researcher(s).