

# A Study of the Effect of Online Reviews on Cruise Travel Purchase Intentions

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**Abstract:** The Internet has accelerated the development of e-commerce, and online reviews have become an important data resource for companies to analyze their product competitiveness. By verifying the empirical analysis of the relevant characteristics of online reviews affecting purchase intentions, the service and quality of cruise products can be optimized. Based on information adoption theory and SOR theory, the survey data were collected through scenario simulation, and structural equation empirical tests were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software. The validation results show that the review quality, Comment valence, Commenter credibility and product involvement have significant effects on purchase intention among online review-related features, and online reviews have significant effects on perceived usefulness and perceived risk through the mediating role of consumer perception. Cruise lines can analyze consumers' cruise experience through online reviews and give reference suggestions for cruise lines to improve their own brands.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the latest 48th Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China released by the China Internet Network Information Center, as of November 2021, 99.7% of China's Internet users used cell phones to access the Internet and 782 million online shoppers, accounting for 79.1% of all Internet users (Information on: China Internet Network Information Center, 2021). The rapid development of the Internet has provided a convenient way for consumers to communicate with other consumers through the Internet, and most online shoppers rely heavily on online reviews when making purchase decisions when they are more concerned or unfamiliar with the products they buy, giving consumers more ways to understand the products and make better understanding and selection of their target products.

Cruise tourism attracts the experience of travel enthusiasts and promotes the generation of cruise tourism consumption behavior. In recent years, the world cruise market has experienced a period of rapid growth and significant changes, and in 2020, the new

crown epidemic caused the cruise tourism industry to suffer an unprecedented blow, but the relevant experts said that after the epidemic, the long-term positive development trend of the Chinese cruise market has not changed, and tourists are greatly eager for the resumption of cruises, and the enthusiasm for cruise tourism has only increased. Due to the late start of China's cruise industry, a more mature cruise culture has not been formed in China, and domestic tourists have a biased perception of cruise products, relying on online websites and travel agencies to sell tickets. Tourists can pre-judge the product and consider their own purchase decisions through online evaluations on ticketing websites. See-To, E.W.K et al. (2013) mentioned that when potential consumers are exposed to a large number of negative online reviews, they form negative expectations about the product.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

From the available research papers, the existing literature mainly focuses on studies that demonstrate

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the comprehensive study of factors influencing visitors' purchase intentions or behaviors, the number of comments, comment quality, product involvement, consumer's level of expertise on it, review tone, and Comment valence. Online reviews are used by consumers as a form of word-of-mouth communication to reduce uncertainty about the quality of a service or product and to guide consumer attitudes and behaviors. The impact of online reviews on cruise travel purchases on ticketing websites has been less addressed in numerous studies. Based on information adoption theory and SOR theory, this paper analyzes how online review features influence potential cruise consumers' purchase intentions through the mediating effect of consumer perceptions, using major ticketing websites as a perspective.

Both word-of-mouth online reviews and online reviews are part of information, and consumers tend to make certain changes in their purchases of products and services as a result of the influence of this information, which is a form of information adoption. The change in purchase behavior adopted by consumers after being influenced by word-of-mouth information is also a manifestation of information adoption. The process of information adoption is actually a process in which users subconsciously seek and use relevant information, in which Xueyan Song (Song, 2010) mentioned that the act of information adoption is essentially a kind of decision making, and in the process of making adoption decisions, in order to make the right decision, information users inevitably have to carry out further information seeking, retrieval, selection, evaluation and other activities, and the final result of information adoption behavior is reflected in the absorption and utilization of information (Song, 2010).

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory explains the influence of the environment on individual behavior from a psychological perspective, arguing that the environment stimulates individual emotions and ultimately influences individual behavioral responses. In the online shopping environment, the interaction between consumers and the website, the seller and the consumer (extrinsic stimulation) affects their sense of presence (intrinsic perception) and ultimately affects consumers' trust in the merchant (consumer behavior). Therefore, in this paper, the comment quality, comment valence, commenter credibility and consumer product involvement of online review features are considered as the influence signals of external information on potential cruise consumers,

and when consumers receive external stimulus signals, they judge them through self-perception and then react with purchase intention. Based on the information adoption theory and SOR theory, this paper will use structural equations to demonstrate that the characteristics related to online reviews affect the purchase intention of potential cruise consumers through the mediating role of consumer perception.

### 3 RESEARCH MODEL

#### 3.1 The Relationship between Online Review Features and Perceived Usefulness

The quality of online reviews is reflected on the performance, price, and self-perception of the product, and high-quality reviews are comprehensive, objective, detailed, and persuasive. If a review contains understandable and objective comments with specific reasons for recommendation, it is relatively more persuasive than a review expressing feelings and recommendations without specific reasons (Park, Lee, Han 2007), making consumers feel helpful, but the quality of negative reviews can make consumers feel risky with suspicion. Chen, Li-Mei et al. (2019) verified that online comment quality positively affects consumer attitudes and that consumers are more strongly motivated to evaluate information when online reviews are of higher quality (Chen, Huang, Chen 2019). The higher the quality of review content, the greater the impact on consumer purchase decisions.

The validity of reviews refers to the direction of the reviews, which can be positive, negative and neutral, with neutral reviews only providing consumers with descriptive information about the target object, but without any evaluative guidance, negative reviews have a higher perceived usefulness than positive reviews.

The source of information is an important factor affecting the usefulness and credibility of information, and the quality and competence of online reviewers can largely affect consumers' perception of review information, being that online reviews do not have the interpersonal factors of traditional word-of-mouth and the weak connectivity of the internet, which can prevent consumers from assessing the real situation of reviewers. Ji (Ji, 2016) argues that whether a reviewer has credibility mainly examines the number of online purchases made by the reviewer on that e-commerce website, is

registration and real name authentication, credit rating level, and the reviewer's knowledge related to the product (Ji, 2016). With higher professionalism and greater activity and influence of reviewers, reviews of consumers with high credit rating are considered to have higher credibility, their reliability is higher, and the quality of published reviews is higher, and reliable and high-quality information can have a significant impact on consumers' attitudes.

Numerous studies related to product involvement confirm that it plays a crucial role in consumer behavior and that the level of consumer involvement in online products directly affects attitudes and affective tendencies. Wang Wei's (2014) study on product involvement shows that consumers with high product involvement invest more time and effort in evaluating their chosen products, which leads to a more complex purchase decision process (Wang, 2014). In the information processing and comprehension stage, consumers with a high involvement level evaluate the content of information reviews thoroughly and thus obtain information of practical value. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

- H1a: Online comment quality positively affects perceived usefulness.
- H2a: Online comment valence positively affects perceived usefulness.
- H3a: Commenter credibility positively affects perceived usefulness.
- H4a: Product involvement positively affects perceived usefulness.

### 3.2 The Relationship between Online Review Features and Perceived Risk

When the consumers who intend to purchase cruise tourism products have generated the perceived risk, they will browse other tourists' reviews through the website in order to avoid the perceived risk, so online reviews have a great influence on consumers. In the big data environment, online reviews about cruise tourism are consequently visible in major online platforms, consumers' access to tourism information is very easy, and a large number of online reviews will generate information overload, and consumers will then pay attention to the evaluation of information. In a study of cruise tourists' intention to revisit based on perceived value and risk, consumers' perceived risk is their uncertainty about the outcome of cruise tourism product selection implicit in the process of choosing and understanding cruise tourism. When consumers browse to review

information posted by reviewers with high credibility, the higher their trust in them, which in turn reduces the perceived risk. Based on the fine-grained processing likelihood model, Chen, Li-Mei et al. showed that consumers use Comment valence as an important cue for edge paths to influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Chen, Huang, Chen 2019). In general, the first thing that consumers focus on when browsing a travel product is the overall rating of that product. When tourists consider cruise tourism, considering the characteristics of cruise tourism can cause financial, functional, and other perceived risks to the tourists' psyche, and tourists will do everything possible to gather information to reduce these risks to reduce uncertainty. Based on the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed.

- H1b: Online comment quality negatively affects perceived risk.
- H2b: Online comment valence negatively affects perceived risk.
- H3b: Commenter credibility negatively affects perceived risk.
- H4b: Product involvement negatively affects the perceived risk.

### 3.3 The Impact of Online Reviews on Cruise Tourism Purchase Intentions

Due to the intangible nature of cruise products and services and the simultaneous nature of production and consumption, consumers search for information about a large number of tourism products in order to reduce uncertainty and risk when making cruise travel decisions. sparks (2011) et al. verified that characteristics such as the number of online travel reviews, review quality, comment valence, and review timeliness had a significant effect on consumers' intention to order<sup>0</sup> (Sparks, Browning 2011). Based on the above analysis, the following hypotheses are proposed.

- H1c: Online comment quality positively affects cruise travel purchase intention.
- H2c: Online comment validity positively influences cruise travel purchase intention.
- H3c: Commenter credibility positively affects the willingness to purchase cruise tourism.
- H4c: Product involvement positively influences cruise purchase intention.

### 3.4 The Impact of Online Reviews on Cruise Tourism Purchase Intentions

When reviews are perceived as useful, it is the recall of positive and negative review information that influences the formation of consumer attitudes and intentions through the impressions it creates on the object. When information about a cruise tourism product's reviews and recommendations is positive, then consumers will have a positive attitude towards the cruise tourism product, and conversely, when information about a cruise tourism product's reviews and recommendations is negative, then a negative attitude will follow. From the perspective of perceived usefulness, consumers' attitudes and perceived usefulness will jointly influence their behavioral intentions. The perceived usefulness of online reviews of service-oriented products has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, hypothesis H5 is proposed.

- H5: Perceived usefulness positively affects cruise tourism purchase intention.

### 3.5 The Influence of Perceived Risk on Cruise Tourism Purchase Intention

Potential consumers, as rational economic agents, consider the existence of risks before purchasing a product and then effectively avoid them during the purchase process. Several scholars have identified factors that influence the perceived usefulness of individual consumer reviews, including source credibility, product type, argumentation, validity and ratings (Park, Lee, Han 2007). Therefore, online reviews provide such opportunities for faster access to information.

- H6: Perceived risk negatively affects cruise travel purchase intentions.

Based on the above research hypotheses H1 to H6, the hypothesis framework model shown in Figure 1 is proposed. The interpretation of this model is that the relevant features of online reviews of cruise related product websites have an impact on the willingness of potential cruise consumers by influencing their psychological perceptions.

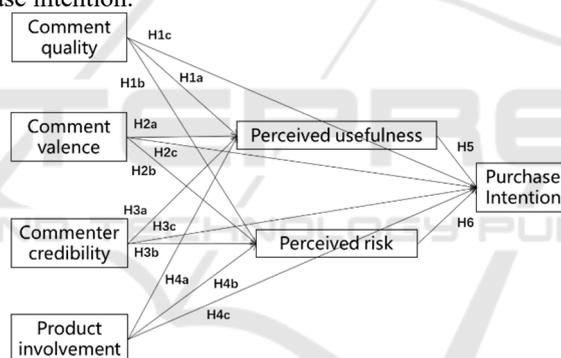


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the impact of online reviews on cruise travel purchase intentions.

## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Measuring Scale

This research is carried out by designing scenario simulations. It is assumed that the choice of cruise travel will affect consumers' perceptions through the characteristics of online reviews. Afterwards, data were collected through questionnaire stars, WeChat, and interviewees filling in on-site. In order to ensure the authenticity and validity of the answers to the questionnaire, the questionnaire will be screened for a certain period of time, and the questionnaire will be eliminated if the time is too short. According to the

set of questions, this research will distribute as much as possible more than the number of questions X10 questionnaires. Before conducting a full-scale survey, the questionnaire data collected in the pre-survey should be tested with the software SPSS25. After passing the preliminary investigation, a large sample collection is carried out. A total of 440 questionnaires were collected online and On site, of which 423 were valid questionnaires. The questionnaire effective rate reached 96.1%. The occupations are mainly 62% of white-collar workers and 16% of students. In terms of gender characteristics, 221 males and 202 females accounted for 52.2% and 47.83% of the total sample, respectively. The gender ratio of the sample subjects is very close, and the age ratio meets the requirements of this study. The seven latent variables in this study

are all measured using the American psychologist Likert's five-level scale and designed in conjunction with relevant research results at home and abroad. A total of 24 items are involved, involving the four characteristics of online reviews and the perceived usefulness of tourists. Three aspects: gender, perceived risk and willingness to buy. Among them, the characteristic variables of online reviews: the measurement items of review quality are based on Chatterjee (Chatterjee 2001) on the quality of reviews (Chatterjee 2001), the measurement items of comment valence and commenter credibility mainly refer to Cheung and Sia (2009) based on the research of online review valence affecting consumers' purchasing decision and purchasing behavior intention, the credibility of the reviewer is measured from two dimensions of the professional ability and reliability of the reviewer (Cheung, Luo, Sia, et al, 2009). The measurement items of product involvement are mainly based on the literature of these scholars such as Antil (Antil 1984) and Zaichkowsky (Zaichkowsky 1985) (Antil 1984), (Zaichkowsky 1985), second, the intermediary variables include perceived usefulness and perceived risk, and the measurement of perceived usefulness The items refer to the maturity scale of Park et al. (2007), and three measurement items are obtained through improvement (Park, Lee, Han 2007), the

items of the perceived risk measurement items refer to the research results of Jacoby (Jacoby 1972) on consumer perception risks (Park, Lee, Han 2007), (Cheung, Luo, Sia, et al, 2009). Third, with regard to the measurement items of cruise travel purchase intention, mainly refer to the scale developed by Kassem et al. (2003), which was formed on the basis of minor modifications (Nada, Kassem, Jerry, 2003).

## 4.2 Figures and Tables

### 4.2.1 Reliability Test

This paper uses SPSS25.0 and Amos26.0 software to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model. First, perform reliability test analysis on the above seven main variables, using reliability test indicators: Cronbach (reliability) coefficient, average variance extraction value and combined reliability. Table I shows that the KMO value of each latent variable is basically above 0.7, except for the perceived usefulness of the 7 main test variables, the combined reliability (CR) of the remaining variables is all above 0.8, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient except for the perceived usefulness All others are greater than 0.8, and AVE is greater than 0.5. This shows that the survey data has good reliability.

Table 1: Model reliability and convergence validity test results.

Latent variable	Measured Variables	Normalized factor loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE	KMO value	Sig
Comment quality (Cq)	QA1	0.811	0.881	0.885	0.658	0.827	0
	QA2	0.742					
	QA3	0.832					
	QA4	0.855					
Comment valence (Cv)	QB1	0.741	0.806	0.807	0.582	0.714	0
	QB2	0.775					
	QB3	0.772					
Commenter credibility (Cc)	QC1	0.839	0.834	0.839	0.635	0.713	0
	QC2	0.720					
	QC3	0.826					
Product involvement (Pi)	QD1	0.826	0.85	0.855	0.596	0.813	0
	QD2	0.731					
	QD3	0.79					
	QD4	0.736					
Perceived usefulness (Pu)	QE1	0.809	0.789	0.798	0.569	0.697	0
	QE2	0.713					
	QE3	0.737					
Perceived risk (Pr)	QF1	0.802	0.828	0.829	0.618	0.721	0
	QF2	0.766					
	QF3	0.789					
Purchase intention (Gy)	QG1	0.807	0.875	0.879	0.645	0.82	0
	QG2	0.789					
	QG3	0.745					
	QG4	0.866					

### 4.2.2 Validity Test

Table 2 shows that the AVE of each factor is greater than 0.5 and the arithmetic square root of the AVE is

greater than the correlation coefficient of the other factors, which indicates that the scale has good convergent and discriminant validity (see Table II).

Table 2: Convergent and discriminant validity tests.

	Comment quality	Comment valence	Commenter credibility	Product involvement	Perceived usefulness	Perceived risk	Purchase Intention
Comment quality	0.811						
Comment valence	.355**	0.763					
Commenter credibility	.335**	.306**	0.797				
Product involvement	.317**	.302**	.337**	0.772			
Perceived usefulness	.377**	.314**	.441**	.387**	0.754		
Perceived risk	-.448**	-.449**	-.387**	-.483**	-.311**	0.786	
Purchase Intention	.611**	.564**	.622**	.625**	.592**	-.646**	0.803

### 4.3 Model Fitness Test

Through the reliability test, this study was suitable for analysis using the structural equation model. The results of the analysis with the help of Amos 26.0 software are as follows: the combined reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha are greater than 0.7 and the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5 as seen in Table I, which indicates that the scale has good internal consistency and convergent validity.

A comparison of the main fitness indicators obtained from the structural model test in Table III with the recommended values shows that the fitted values of the data in this paper are all within the range of the recommended values, the fit is relatively good and the model fit is at a superior level. This shows that the setting of the present theoretical model is acceptable.

Table 3: Values of the fit indicators for the structural equation model.

Fit index	Recommended value	fitted value	Goodness of fit
X2/df	<3.0	2.038	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.914	Good
AGFI	>0.8	0.891	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.05	Reasonable
NNFI	>0.9	0.916	Good
IFI	>0.9	0.956	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.955	Good

### 4.4 Model Parameter Estimation

Through the Amos26.0 software, the overall path fitting results of the model are shown in Table IV. From this, the following conclusions can be drawn: using the Bootstrap method to estimate the structural equation model parameters, test the significance of the path coefficients of the impact of comment quality, comment valence, commenter credibility and product involvement on purchase intention. (See Table IV)

Table 4: Parameter estimation results of structural equation model.

	Hypothesis	Standardization factor	S.E.	C.R.	P	conclusion
Perceived usefulness	<----- Comment quality	0.177	0.055	2.975	**	support
Perceived usefulness	<----- Comment valence	0.109	0.066	1.742	0.082	Not supported
Perceived usefulness	<----- Commenter credibility	0.32	0.056	5.144	***	support
Perceived usefulness	<----- Product involvement	0.221	0.055	3.706	***	support
Perceived risk	<----- Comment quality	-0.232	0.058	-4.296	***	support
Perceived risk	<----- Comment valence	-0.278	0.07	-4.776	***	support
Perceived risk	<----- Commenter credibility	-0.138	0.056	-2.524	0.012	support
Perceived risk	<----- Product involvement	-0.331	0.059	-6.008	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Comment quality	0.217	0.038	6.189	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Comment valence	0.215	0.046	5.622	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Commenter credibility	0.262	0.039	7.009	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Product involvement	0.253	0.041	6.658	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Perceived usefulness	0.201	0.045	5.153	***	support
Purchase Intention	<----- Perceived risk	-0.177	0.045	-3.923	***	support

comment quality, commenter credibility and product involvement all have a significant positive effect on perceived usefulness, supporting hypotheses H1a, H3a and H4a. The effect of comment valence on perceived usefulness does not pass the significance test and hypothesis H2a is rejected, indicating that its effect on perceived usefulness is relatively weak. This paper concludes that the perceived usefulness of online reviews can be improved if the content of the reviews is sufficiently detailed, truthful and diverse in its presentation. The higher the rating, the more trust consumers will have. Cruise tourists express their satisfaction through online reviews, and the higher their satisfaction, the higher the rating. At the same time, the degree of involvement of the consumer in the cruise product can be used as a measure of the importance of cruise tourism to the consumer, with higher involvement indicating greater importance.

From Table IV, it is concluded that comment quality, comment valence, commenter credibility and

product involvement all have a significant negative effect on perceived riskiness, so the hypotheses H1b, H2b, H3b and H4b are supported.

Both perceived usefulness and perceived risk have a significant effect on cruise ship purchase intention, so hypotheses H5 and H6 are supported.

#### 4.5 Analysis of Model Mediation Effects

From the above analysis, it can be seen that perceived usefulness and perceived risk play a mediating role between review quality, Comment valence, commenter credibility, product involvement and cruise ship purchase intention, and the determination of whether this is a full or partial mediating effect needs to be further explored. In this study, the mediation effect was tested using bootstrap confidence interval estimation and the results are shown in Table V.

Table 5: Parameter estimation results of structural equation model.

	Standardized effect values	Bias-Corrected		Percentile	
		95%CI		95%CI	
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
<i>Total effects</i>					
Cq→Gy	0.233	0.167	0.293	0.168	0.294
Cv→Gy	0.239	0.168	0.301	0.170	0.305
Cc→Gy	0.291	0.207	0.367	0.209	0.369
Pi→Gy	0.291	0.210	0.366	0.211	0.368
<i>Indirect effects</i>					
Cq→Pu→Gy	0.03	0.008	0.066	0.007	0.063
Cv→Pu→Gy	0.019	-0.010	0.058	-0.012	0.055
Cc→Pu→Gy	0.058	0.017	0.128	0.015	0.123
Pi→Pu→Gy	0.038	0.008	0.087	0.007	0.085
Cq→Pr→Gy	0.035	0.011	0.077	0.008	0.072
Cv→Pr→Gy	0.046	0.015	0.101	0.012	0.095
Cc→Pr→Gy	0.017	-0.006	0.068	-0.01	0.058
Pi→Pr→Gy	0.051	0.016	0.115	0.013	0.106
<i>direct effects</i>					
Cq→Gy	0.127	0.06	0.191	0.056	0.188
Cv→Gy	0.165	0.087	0.233	0.091	0.236
Cc→Gy	0.151	0.049	0.240	0.046	0.239
Pi→Gy	0.143	0.039	0.224	0.041	0.225

The above table shows that the total effect does not include 0 in the interval between the values of Lower and Upper for Bias-Corrected and Percentile 95% CI, indicating the presence of a total effect.

In the indirect effect, neither Bias-Corrected nor Percentile 95% CI for Lower and Upper contain 0, indicating the existence of an indirect effect, from

Table 5, it can be seen that review quality, commenter credibility and product involvement play a mediating role in influencing purchase intentions through perceived usefulness. This indicates that the indirect effect exists, suggesting that not only does online review usefulness indirectly affect purchase intention, but also directly affects the latter. This suggests that

reviewers' attitudes towards online review information do not indirectly influence purchase intentions through perceived usefulness.

Similarly, comment quality, commenter credibility and product involvement play a mediating role in purchase intentions through perceived risk. Commenter credibility does not indirectly affect purchase intentions by affecting perceived risk.

Among the direct effects, the direct effects of comment quality, comment valence, commenter credibility and product involvement on purchase intentions can be judged from Table 5 to be present, directly affecting purchase intentions.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper further corroborates that the perceived usefulness and perceived risk of consumers' psychological perceptions play a mediating effect between online reviews and cruise tourism consumers' purchase intentions, enriching to some extent the research on the influence of online reviews on cruise tourism purchase intentions. The empirical test analysis shows that online reviews have an important influence on cruise tourists' purchase intention, and it is very necessary for cruise lines, travel agencies and online websites selling cruise tickets to keep abreast of consumer reviews on their own websites, understand consumers' cruise experience, and make timely service remedies to improve consumers' satisfaction. The findings of this study have important implications for cruise lines, online ticket selling websites and travel agents using website consumer reviews to market cruise tourism products.

Firstly, in the face of a complex and changing marketing environment characterized by mobile and virtualization, which is a major challenge for cruise companies, cruise companies should strengthen the use of the Internet for online marketing planning and management, and can open an online review section for their products on their official websites, invest amounts of money to track the effectiveness of the information content of cruise tourism online reviews, interact with them in a timely manner, understand consumers' psychological perceptions. This will enable them to understand consumers' psychological perceptions and purchase motivations, consciously develop their online marketing capabilities, provide effective information that will help them make

purchase decisions and ultimately increase their willingness to buy.

Secondly, we need to strengthen and enhance our own brand characteristics, the Chinese cruise market is huge, due to the cultural differences caused by the consumer's experience does not meet the psychological expectations, and this dissatisfaction through the company's website comments and cause brand loss, so cruise companies should use Chinese cultural elements to enhance their own brand recognition, and constantly improve the level of cruise tourism services, pay attention to listen to and appropriately adopt the tourists' suggestions, for example The cruise line should use Chinese cultural elements to enhance its own brand recognition and continuously improve its cruise tourism services by listening to and appropriately adopting tourists' suggestions, for example, increasing the time spent on shore visits to allow tourists to experience the customs and traditions of the destination, so that tourists have a high level of satisfaction with both the cruise experience and destination tourism.

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