



## From Ethnocentrism to Cosmopolitanism: Exploring Tourist Motivation through Cultural Intelligence and Global Literacy

Chunyu Zhao<sup>1</sup>; Urandelger Gantulga<sup>2</sup>; Chunyun Wang<sup>3</sup>; Enkh-Amgalan Byambajav<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Tourism Geography and History Culture, Hulunbuir University, Hulunbuir, China

<sup>2,4</sup>Business School, National University of Mongolia, Mongolia

<sup>3</sup>Tourism College of Changchun University, Jilin Changchun, China

<sup>2</sup>Correspondence Email: [urandelger@num.edu.mn](mailto:urandelger@num.edu.mn)

### Article Info

**Received:** October 6, 2025  
**Accepted:** February 15, 2026  
**Published:** May 30, 2026  
**Online First:** May 30, 2026

### Keywords

Ethnocentrism;  
 Cosmopolitanism;  
 Global Literacy;  
 Cultural Intelligence.

### Abstract

*International travel motivation is often explained through binary cultural orientations, with ethnocentrism viewed as a barrier and cosmopolitanism as a facilitator of global mobility. This study aims to reassess this assumption by examining international travel motivation through an integrated framework that combines cultural orientations and global competence perspectives. Adopting a quantitative approach, this study uses survey data collected from Chinese tourists and analyzes the data through moderated regression analysis to examine the direct effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on international travel motivation, as well as the moderating roles of global literacy and cultural intelligence. The findings reveal that both ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism positively influence international travel motivation. Global literacy significantly strengthens these relationships, indicating its role as a key cognitive mechanism enabling culturally rooted individuals to engage in global mobility. In contrast, cultural intelligence does not show a significant moderating effect, suggesting that its relevance lies primarily in post-travel adaptation rather than in the formation of travel intentions. This study contributes by reconceptualizing tourist ethnocentrism as a conditional motivational resource and by clarifying the distinct roles of global literacy and cultural intelligence within global competence research, with implications for tourism policy and international mobility in globalizing societies.*



## A. Introduction

Tourist travel motivation remains a foundational construct for understanding destination choice and patterns of international mobility in an increasingly globalized world (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Beyond facilitating economic integration and cross-border movement, globalization reshapes how individuals interpret culture, identity, and belonging when making travel decisions (Reisinger & Turner, 2012; Purba et al., 2024). As international interactions intensify, tourists do not respond uniformly to globalization. Instead, their motivation to engage in international travel is deeply conditioned by cultural orientations that shape openness to, or resistance against, global engagement (Cohen, 2012; Jafari, 2001). These orientations operate not merely as background values but as active lenses through which global mobility is evaluated and negotiated.

Among the cultural orientations most frequently examined in tourism research, ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism stand out as particularly influential yet often framed as mutually contradictory. Ethnocentrism refers to the belief in the centrality and relative superiority of one's own cultural group and has traditionally been associated with preferences for domestic consumption and support for local economies (Gantulga & Ganbold, 2022). Within tourism studies, ethnocentric individuals are commonly assumed to favor domestic destinations as expressions of national identity and loyalty, thereby limiting their inclination toward international travel (Bremser & Abraham, 2024; Lever et al., 2023; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015). By contrast, cosmopolitanism reflects openness to cultural difference, global awareness, and a willingness to engage with unfamiliar others and environments (Riefler et al., 2012; Lee & Levy, 2023). Cosmopolitan tourists often perceive themselves as global citizens and actively seek intercultural experiences through outbound travel (Lin et al., 2021; Skrbis & Woodward, 2013).

The dominant state of the art in tourism literature has largely treated these two orientations as oppositional and functionally deterministic. Ethnocentrism is typically conceptualized as a psychological barrier that suppresses international travel motivation, whereas cosmopolitanism is assumed to facilitate outbound mobility (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Kellerman, 2022). Accordingly, empirical research has tended to examine ethnocentrism in relation to domestic destination preference or destination loyalty, while cosmopolitanism has been linked to international travel



intention, novelty seeking, and intercultural engagement (Sharma et al., 2024; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015). Although this literature has generated valuable empirical insights, it remains theoretically fragmented and largely descriptive. By isolating cultural orientations and assigning them unidirectional behavioral outcomes, existing studies overlook the possibility that these orientations may operate in more complex, conditional, and relational ways.

Recent interdisciplinary research increasingly challenges the assumption that cultural orientations toward the global are inherently antagonistic. Emerging evidence suggests that cosmopolitanism and even certain dimensions of ethnocentrism can coexist and be positively associated with broader global awareness and global literacy (Zhang & Takahashi, 2024). Conceptual advances further emphasize that cosmopolitanism should be understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing cultural, interpersonal, and political dimensions rather than solely as a travel-related disposition (Katz-Gerro et al., 2024). Bibliometric analyses also reveal a growing scholarly call for integrative frameworks that move beyond simplistic dichotomies in ethnocentrism research and account more systematically for global and cross-cultural dynamics (Yonfá-Medranda et al., 2024).

Despite these developments, a critical gap remains within tourism research. The field still lacks an integrated motivational framework that simultaneously examines ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism while accounting for the psychological competencies that enable individuals to translate these orientations into international travel motivation. In particular, the dominant assumption that ethnocentrism necessarily inhibits international travel has rarely been questioned empirically within tourism contexts. This leaves unexplored the possibility that ethnocentrism may, under certain conditions, stimulate international travel, for example, as a means of affirming, comparing, or symbolically expressing national identity in global settings.

Addressing this gap, the central novelty of the present study lies in its explicit reinterpretation of ethnocentrism not only as a barrier but also as a potential driver of international travel motivation. Drawing on social identity theory (Ashmore et al., 2004) and perspectives on reflexive globalization (Beck, 2006), this study argues that ethnocentrism may motivate international travel when it functions as an identity-expressive orientation. In such cases, international travel is perceived not as a threat to

national attachment but as an opportunity to evaluate, validate, or reinforce one's own cultural identity through engagement with other cultures.

To explain the conditions under which these dynamics emerge, this study integrates two key intercultural competencies: cultural intelligence and global literacy. Cultural intelligence captures individuals' capability to function effectively in culturally diverse contexts, encompassing cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2007). Prior research has demonstrated its relevance for intercultural adaptation and tourism-related outcomes (Rockstuhl et al., 2011; Ng et al., 2012). Global literacy, in contrast, reflects individuals' understanding of global systems, issues, and cultural diversity, as well as their capacity to interpret global experiences meaningfully (Richmond et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2018). Recent studies indicate that global literacy plays a critical role in shaping how cultural orientations are translated into global engagement and mobility intentions (Zhang & Takahashi, 2024).

Accordingly, this study pursues three research objectives: first, to examine the direct effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on international travel motivation; second, to investigate whether cultural intelligence and global literacy moderate these relationships; and third, to empirically reassess ethnocentrism by testing whether it may function as a potential driver, rather than solely a deterrent, of international travel motivation. By articulating its contribution explicitly from the outset, this study advances tourism research by offering an integrated framework linking cultural orientations and intercultural competencies, providing a theoretically grounded reconceptualization of ethnocentrism, and generating insights rooted in an Asian context with relevance for understanding international travel behavior in other globalized societies.

## **B. Method**

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the direct effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on international travel motivation, as well as the moderating roles of global literacy and cultural intelligence. A quantitative approach was appropriate for measuring latent psychological constructs and behavioral intentions across a relatively large sample and for testing structural relationships within a multivariate framework.

Data were collected from Chinese tourists who were traveling domestically but had previously undertaken at least one international trip. This criterion ensured that



respondents possessed relevant outbound travel experience necessary for evaluating international travel motivation. Participants were recruited through random sampling at tourism and leisure destinations across multiple provinces, including recreational sites and vacation areas. Screening questions were administered to verify prior international travel experience and to exclude ineligible respondents. The target age range was 25–55 years, representing economically active individuals with demonstrated participation in outbound tourism. Data collection was conducted between June and October 2024 and yielded 389 valid questionnaires. The sample size exceeded recommended minimum thresholds for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2014).

All constructs were measured using previously validated scales adapted from established literature (Bremser & Abraham, 2024; Zhang & Takahashi, 2024; Lee & Levy, 2023). The questionnaire included measures of ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, global literacy, cultural intelligence, and international travel motivation. All items were rated on a Likert-type scale. The instrument was translated and back-translated to ensure linguistic equivalence and reviewed by experts in tourism and cross-cultural psychology to assess content validity. A pilot test was conducted to ensure clarity, comprehensibility, and cultural appropriateness.

Data analysis proceeded in two stages using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 and Smart-PLS 4.1. SPSS was employed for preliminary data screening, including missing value analysis, descriptive statistics, and demographic profiling. Structural relationships were subsequently tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in Smart-PLS 4.1. PLS-SEM was selected due to its suitability for predictive research, its capacity to estimate complex models involving multiple latent constructs and interaction effects, and its robustness under conditions of non-normal data distributions and moderate sample sizes (Hair et al., 2014; Reinartz et al., 2009). The measurement model was assessed in terms of reliability and validity, followed by evaluation of the structural model and moderation effects through interaction terms.

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. No personally identifiable information was collected. The study complied with institutional research ethics standards and the Declaration of Helsinki, and ethical approval was obtained from the authors' university ethics committee before data collection.

Figure 1 presents the proposed structural model and corresponding hypotheses.

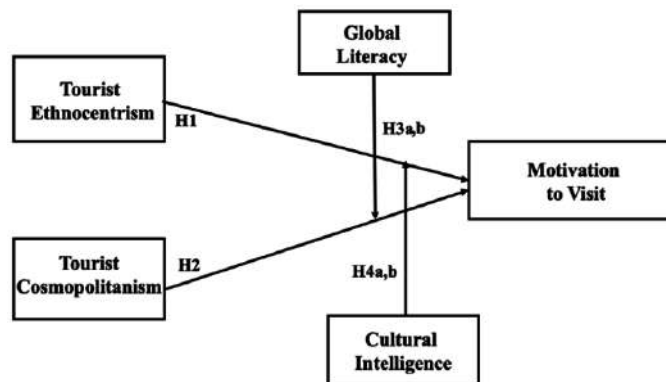


Figure 1. Presents the proposed structural model and corresponding hypotheses

### C. Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings of the study and offers a comprehensive discussion of the results in relation to the research objectives. The analysis focuses on the direct effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on travel motivation, as well as the indirect and moderating roles of global literacy and cultural intelligence. The results are derived from Smart PLS analysis, including hypothesis testing, model evaluation, and the interpretation of statistical outputs such as T-statistics, p-values, and R-squared values. In addition, the findings are systematically compared with prior tourism and consumer behavior literature to highlight both theoretical contributions and practical implications. By integrating empirical evidence with relevant theoretical frameworks, this section aims to deepen the understanding of how cultural orientation and global competencies jointly shape tourist motivation in an increasingly globalized context.

#### 1. Results

##### a. Demographic characteristics

Prior to testing the proposed structural relationships, the demographic profile of the respondents was examined to provide contextual understanding of the sample. The analysis is based on 389 valid responses obtained from individuals who met the screening criteria of prior international travel experience. The composition of the sample reflects economically active adults within the targeted age range of 25–55 years, consistent with the study's focus on outbound travel behavior.



As presented in Table 1, the gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 51.5% female and 48.5% male participants. The largest age group consisted of respondents aged 46–55 years (41.5%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (35.7%) and 25–35 years (22.8%). In terms of educational attainment, 46.0% held a bachelor’s degree, 27.5% possessed a master’s degree, and 26.5% reported high school education as their highest qualification. Regarding monthly household income, 55.2% reported earnings between 40,000 and 70,000 RMB, 38.6% between 70,000 and 100,000 RMB, and 6.2% below 40,000 RMB. Overall, the sample characteristics indicate a relatively well-educated and financially capable group of travelers, aligning with the study’s objective of examining international travel motivation among experienced outbound tourists.

*Table 1. Participant’s information*

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Classifications</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>	25-35	89	22.8
	36-45	139	35.7
	46-55	161	41.5
<b>Gender</b>	Male	189	48.5
	Female	200	51.5
<b>Education</b>	High school	103	26.5
	Bachelor	179	46
	Master	107	27.5
<b>Household income</b>	~40.000	24	6.2
	40.000-70.000	215	55.2
	70.000-100.000	150	38.6

NOTE: RMB-Chinese currency, 1USD=7.3 RMB, 2025.07.10

The demographic distribution presented in Table 1 indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of middle-aged, economically active individuals with relatively stable educational and income backgrounds. The balanced gender composition reduces potential bias related to gendered travel behavior, while the concentration of respondents within higher education and middle-to-upper income brackets reflects a profile commonly associated with outbound tourism participation. Overall, the characteristics of the respondents align with the study’s focus on individuals who possess both the financial capacity and experiential background necessary to meaningfully evaluate international travel motivation.

The demographic profile of the respondents also suggests that the sample represents a segment of travelers who are likely to engage in more deliberate and

informed travel decision-making processes. Individuals within the middle-aged category generally possess greater financial stability, accumulated travel experience, and stronger purchasing power compared to younger travelers, enabling them to consider a wider range of motivational factors when planning international trips. Furthermore, the predominance of respondents with tertiary education may contribute to higher levels of information-seeking behavior, destination awareness, and sensitivity to service quality and cultural experiences. Consequently, the composition of the sample provides a suitable empirical foundation for investigating the complex interplay of psychological, social, and experiential factors that shape international travel motivation among outbound tourists.

### b. Measurement model assessment

The measurement model was assessed in terms of internal consistency, reliability and convergent validity. As reported in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.737 to 0.908, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.800 to 0.918, indicating satisfactory internal consistency across all constructs. Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE). All AVE values exceeded the recommended cutoff of 0.50, with values ranging from 0.560 to 0.844, indicating adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. As shown in Table 2, the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity.

Table 2. Measurement model results

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AAVE	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Cosmopolitanism	0.908	0.910	0.844					
(2) Cultural int	0.737	0.824	0.643	0.301				
(3) Ethnocentrism	0.773	0.800	0.560	0.512	0.598			
(4) Literacy	0.844	0.850	0.762	0.547	0.195	0.360		
(5) Motivation	0.852	0.862	0.770	0.517	0.187	0.380	0.65	

The measurement model results indicate that all constructs satisfied the recommended thresholds for reliability and validity assessment. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the minimum recommended level of 0.70, while all AVE values were above 0.50. In addition, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was



fulfilled, as the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. These findings suggest that the measurement model met the statistical requirements for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

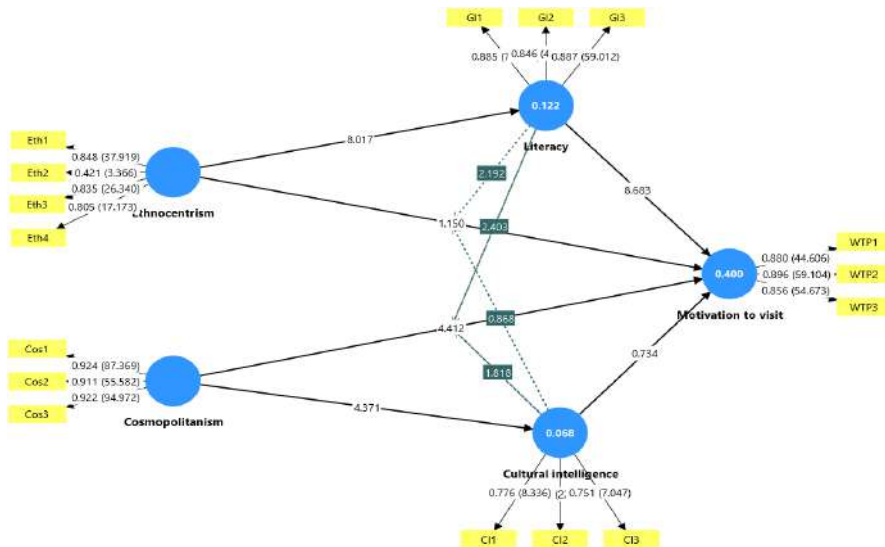


Figure 2. Smart-PLS test results

### c. Structural model and hypothesis testing

The results of the structural model and hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 3. The path coefficient from ethnocentrism to international travel motivation was positive and statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.215$ ,  $t = 3.548$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher levels of ethnocentrism were associated with higher levels of travel motivation. Thus, H1 was supported.

Similarly, cosmopolitanism exhibited a significant positive effect on international travel motivation ( $\beta = 0.233$ ,  $t = 4.011$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), providing support for H2. Both direct effects exceeded the conventional significance threshold and demonstrated stable estimates across bootstrap samples.

With respect to moderation effects, global literacy significantly moderated the relationship between cosmopolitanism and travel motivation ( $\beta = 0.144$ ,  $t = 2.403$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ), as well as the relationship between ethnocentrism and travel motivation ( $\beta = 0.120$ ,  $t = 2.192$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ). These interaction effects were positive and statistically significant, supporting H3a and H3b.

In contrast, the moderating effects of cultural intelligence on the relationships between cosmopolitanism and travel motivation ( $p = 0.069$ ) and between ethnocentrism and travel motivation ( $p = 0.385$ ) were not statistically significant. Accordingly, H4a and H4b were not supported.

Table 3. Results of hypotheses

Factors	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Ethnocentrism -> Motivation to visit	0.215	0.222	0.061	3.548	0.000
Cosmopolitanism -> Motivation to visit	0.233	0.231	0.058	4.011	0.000
Literacy x Cosmopolitanism -> Motivation to visit	0.144	0.141	0.060	2.403	0.016
Literacy x Ethnocentrism -> Motivation to visit	0.120	-0.114	0.055	2.192	0.028
Cultural intelligence x Cosmopolitanism -> Motivation to visit	-0.113	-0.105	0.062	1.818	0.069
Cultural intelligence x Ethnocentrism -> Motivation to visit.	0.049	0.035	0.057	0.868	0.385

#### d. Coefficient of determination

Following the assessment of the structural paths, the explanatory power of the model was evaluated through the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The  $R^2$  statistic indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct that is accounted for by the predictor variables included in the structural model. In the context of this study,  $R^2$  was used to assess the extent to which ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism jointly explain variation in international travel motivation.

Table 4 reports the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and adjusted  $R^2$  values for the structural model. The magnitude of the direct effects of the examined variables on tourists' motivation to visit can be evaluated using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and the adjusted  $R^2$  statistics. The  $R^2$  value of 0.400 indicates that approximately 40.0% of the variance in motivation to visit is explained jointly by ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism. This level of explained variance can be considered moderate, suggesting that the proposed model captures a meaningful proportion of the underlying relationship between these sociocultural orientations and tourists' motivational tendencies. Accordingly, the findings provide empirical support for the relevance of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism as important explanatory factors in understanding motivation to visit.

Nevertheless, while the  $R^2$  value demonstrates the substantive contribution of the included predictors, it also implies that a considerable proportion of variance



remains unexplained. This emphasizes the necessity of interpreting the results within a broader contextual framework and considering the potential influence of omitted variables. Factors such as individual economic conditions, destination image, perceived risk, prior travel experience, and social influence may also play a significant role in shaping tourists' motivation and warrant further empirical investigation. Moreover, a more granular examination of the unique contribution of each independent variable would enhance the interpretability and theoretical richness of the model.

*Table 4. Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the structural model*

<b>R square</b>	<b>R square adjust</b>
0.400	0.401

## **2. Discussion**

The present study advances tourism and mobility scholarship by offering a theoretically integrated and empirically grounded re-examination of international travel motivation through the combined effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism, alongside the moderating roles of global literacy and cultural intelligence. Rather than reproducing dominant binary frameworks that position national attachment and global openness as inherently antagonistic, the findings demonstrate that international travel motivation emerges from a complex and conditional configuration of identity orientations and cognitive global resources (Cleveland et al., 2011; Riefler et al., 2012; Skrbis & Woodward, 2007). This perspective resonates with broader globalization scholarship emphasizing reflexive identity formation under conditions of intensified global interconnectedness (Beck, 2002; Urry, 2007).

Rather than conceptualizing globalization as a linear process of cultural homogenization, contemporary research increasingly highlights the coexistence of local attachment and transnational engagement (Cleveland et al., 2013; Vertovec, 2007). This reconceptualization is particularly salient in rapidly globalizing Asian societies, where strong national identification coexists with expanding outbound mobility and intensified exposure to global flows (Cleveland et al., 2011; Riefler et al., 2012).

The positive association between cosmopolitanism and international travel motivation confirms and strengthens an established line of scholarship conceptualizing cosmopolitanism as an orientation characterized by openness to cultural diversity, transnational curiosity, and engagement with global interconnectedness (Cleveland et al.,

2011; Riefler et al., 2012). Within consumer and tourism research, cosmopolitan individuals have consistently been shown to display greater receptivity toward international products, destinations, and intercultural experiences (Cleveland et al., 2013; Sheller & Urry, 2016). From this perspective, international travel is not simply a leisure decision but an enactment of a global self-concept. Travel becomes a performative space in which individuals express values of openness, pluralism, and cross-cultural curiosity. The present findings reaffirm this theoretical orientation while extending it in a temporally significant way. Rather than conceptualizing cosmopolitanism primarily as an outcome of prior international exposure, the results position it as a robust antecedent of travel motivation. This temporal clarification shifts analytical focus from post-travel attitudinal change to pre-travel motivational formation, thereby refining theoretical sequencing within mobility research.

However, the most theoretically consequential contribution of this study lies in its reinterpretation of ethnocentrism. Traditional consumer ethnocentrism theory frames ethnocentrism as a protective orientation favoring domestic goods and resisting foreign alternatives (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Vertovec, 2007). Within tourism studies, ethnocentrism has frequently been interpreted as a psychological barrier, associated with domestic destination preference and reluctance toward outbound travel (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015; Lever et al., 2023; Bremser & Abraham, 2024). Such interpretations implicitly assume a linear logic: the stronger the national attachment, the weaker the international orientation (Sheller & Urry, 2016; Muhlizar et al., 2025). The present findings disrupt this deterministic narrative. Empirical evidence indicates that ethnocentrism can positively influence international travel motivation, suggesting that national attachment does not necessarily equate to global withdrawal.

To understand this dynamic, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a critical interpretive lens. Social identity theory posits that individuals derive self-concept from group membership and that identity salience intensifies in intergroup comparison contexts. International travel can thus function as a stage for identity negotiation rather than identity erosion. In global encounters, ethnocentric individuals may seek opportunities to affirm, compare, and symbolically represent their national identity. Exposure to cultural difference does not automatically threaten in-group attachment; instead, it can heighten awareness of cultural distinctiveness and strengthen in-group pride. This interpretation resonates strongly with reflexive globalization perspectives (Appadurai, 1996; Robertson,

1995), which argue that globalization often intensifies identity reflexivity rather than dissolving cultural rootedness. Global flows generate conditions in which local and national identities are actively rearticulated and performed.

By empirically demonstrating this identity-expressive mechanism, the present study reconceptualizes tourist ethnocentrism as a conditional motivational resource. This reframing carries substantive theoretical implications. First, it challenges deficit-based interpretations that pathologize ethnocentrism as uniformly restrictive. Second, it situates ethnocentrism within a more nuanced understanding of identity negotiation under globalization. Third, it aligns tourism research with broader sociological debates on reflexivity and glocalization (Robertson, 1995), where global engagement and local attachment are dynamically intertwined rather than oppositional.

The simultaneous positive effects of ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism further undermine binary models of globalization. Prior research acknowledges that individuals may hold both strong national identities and cosmopolitan orientations, especially in societies undergoing rapid globalization (Cleveland et al., 2011; Riefler et al., 2012; Aitbayeva et al., 2024). Yet empirical frameworks often continue to treat these constructs as opposing poles. The present findings empirically substantiate their coexistence as complementary motivational forces. This suggests that identity configurations are layered and context-dependent rather than dichotomous. Individuals may engage globally not despite national attachment, but partly because of it. Such hybridity challenges essentialist models of cosmopolitanism and invites more flexible conceptualizations of identity within tourism research.

The moderating role of global literacy provides critical insight into the cognitive mechanisms enabling these identity orientations to translate into motivational intention. Global literacy, conceptualized as knowledge of global systems, cultural interdependence, and international issues (Richmond et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2018), significantly strengthens the relationships between both ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism and travel motivation. This finding resonates with global competence frameworks advanced by international institutions (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2015), which emphasize cognitive understanding as foundational to meaningful global engagement. Global literacy appears to function as an interpretive schema that frames international travel as purposeful and intelligible within a broader global context.

The theoretical importance of this moderation effect lies in its upstream positioning. Much existing scholarship treats global competence as an outcome of

international mobility, focusing on how travel enhances intercultural sensitivity and awareness. The present findings invert this temporal logic by demonstrating that global literacy operates prior to travel, shaping the translation of identity orientations into intention. For cosmopolitan individuals, global literacy amplifies intrinsic curiosity by deepening awareness of interconnectedness. For ethnocentric individuals, global literacy mitigates defensive identity responses by reframing travel as informed comparison rather than cultural threat (Jauhari et al., 2024). In this sense, global literacy functions as a cognitive bridge that transforms identity attachment into outward engagement. This insight broadens theoretical understanding of global competence by positioning it not solely as an experiential outcome but as an antecedent cognitive condition.

In contrast, cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003) does not significantly moderate travel motivation. This finding is theoretically meaningful rather than incidental. Cultural intelligence has been conceptualized as a capability enabling effective functioning in culturally diverse environments, encompassing metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. Its relevance is strongest in interactional and adaptation contexts (Rockstuhl et al., 2011; Ng et al., 2012). The absence of moderation at the motivational stage supports a stage-based interpretation of international mobility (Sugirman et al., 2024). Different competencies exert influence at different phases: identity orientations and cognitive global literacy shape intention formation, whereas cultural intelligence shapes experiential outcomes such as adaptation and satisfaction. By empirically distinguishing these stage-specific roles, the study enhances theoretical precision and reduces conceptual overlap within global competence research.

Collectively, these findings generate several contributions with global resonance. Conceptually, the study advances an integrative framework linking cultural orientations—ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism—with cognitive global resources in the form of global literacy. This framework moves beyond dichotomous globalization narratives (Riefler et al., 2012; Cleveland et al., 2016) and recognizes identity hybridity as a normal rather than exceptional condition in globalized societies. The model is transferable beyond tourism to related domains such as study-abroad participation, migration intention, cross-border professional mobility, and global consumer behavior, where identity attachment and global engagement frequently intersect.

From a policy perspective, the findings challenge zero-sum assumptions that international mobility weakens national cohesion. Reflexive globalization perspectives (Sugirman et al., 2024; Appadurai, 1996; Robertson, 1995) suggest that identity is negotiated rather than replaced. The positive role of ethnocentrism indicates that outbound mobility initiatives may coexist with strong cultural rootedness. Policies investing in global literacy through education, media exposure, and cultural diplomacy can foster outward engagement while maintaining social cohesion. This has particular relevance for Asian societies balancing globalization with national identity consolidation.

From an industry standpoint, destination marketing organizations should reconsider segmentation strategies that categorize ethnocentric individuals as resistant to international travel. Communication strategies emphasizing cultural familiarity, symbolic representation, and opportunities for identity expression may resonate strongly (Cleveland et al., 2011; Riefler et al., 2012). Tourism governance strategies can thus leverage identity-based motivations rather than attempting to suppress them.

Although the empirical data derive from Chinese tourists, the theoretical implications extend across Asia and other non-Western contexts characterized by strong national identity and rapid globalization. In societies such as South Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asian economies, outbound tourism often serves as a site of identity articulation rather than identity dilution (Cleveland et al., 2016; Appadurai, 1996). The present findings contribute to global debates by offering an Asia-centered empirical intervention that challenges Western-centric cosmopolitan models and highlights culturally grounded pathways to global engagement.

Despite these contributions, several limitations delineate the study's interpretive boundaries. The single-national context constrains generalizability, particularly given cross-cultural variation in identity meanings. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and self-reported measures introduce potential social desirability bias. These limitations invite cautious interpretation but do not undermine the central theoretical insights.

Taken together, the findings reposition international travel motivation as a negotiated outcome emerging from the dynamic interplay between cultural identity orientations and cognitive global resources. The empirical evidence demonstrates that ethnocentrism, rather than functioning solely as a restrictive disposition, can operate as a context-dependent motivational driver when supported by sufficient global literacy. By

clarifying this conditional mechanism and distinguishing it from the stage-specific role of cultural intelligence, the study refines theoretical understanding within tourism and mobility scholarship. More broadly, it advances a transferable integrative framework that contributes to global debates on identity, globalization, and international mobility, highlighting that contemporary mobility processes are shaped less by identity erosion than by reflexive identity reconstruction within interconnected global contexts.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that international travel motivation is best understood as a relational and reflexive process shaped by the interaction between cultural identity and global cognitive orientation, rather than as a linear outcome of either national attachment or global openness alone. The findings collectively indicate that global engagement through travel does not require the erosion of cultural rootedness but is instead enabled when identity orientations are mediated by broader global awareness. In this sense, international travel motivation emerges from how individuals interpret and position themselves within a global context, highlighting the central role of cognitive framing in linking identity to mobility.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes by challenging binary assumptions that position ethnocentrism and global engagement as mutually exclusive. The findings reconceptualize tourist ethnocentrism as a conditional motivational resource and advance an integrative framework linking cultural orientations with global literacy as a key antecedent of international travel motivation. By differentiating the motivational role of global literacy from the experiential function of cultural intelligence, the study enhances conceptual clarity in global competence research and supports stage-based interpretations of international mobility.

Beyond tourism studies, the findings suggest that international mobility can be promoted without undermining national identity. Policies and practices that strengthen global literacy can foster outward engagement while maintaining social cohesion, particularly in culturally rooted societies. The proposed framework also offers transferable relevance for fields such as international education, cross-border mobility, and global consumer behavior, where identity and global orientation intersect rather than compete.

Based on the limitations acknowledged earlier, several directions for future research can be proposed. Comparative studies across different national and cultural contexts are needed to examine whether the motivational roles of ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, and global literacy operate similarly in societies with varying historical, political, and cultural configurations. Longitudinal research designs would also allow scholars to better capture causal dynamics and trace how cultural orientations and global competencies evolve in shaping international mobility. In addition, future studies should extend the analytical scope of cultural intelligence beyond pre-travel intention by examining its role in post-travel adaptation, intercultural interaction, satisfaction, and subsequent behavioral outcomes. Employing mixed-method or experimental approaches may further reduce reliance on self-reported measures and deepen understanding of identity-related processes in global mobility.

Taken together, this study underscores that international mobility in contemporary global contexts is best understood not as a linear movement away from national identity, but as a reflexive process in which cultural rootedness and global awareness interact. International travel motivation emerges not from abandoning identity, but from reinterpreting it within a broader global horizon—a process in which global literacy plays a decisive enabling role.

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