



An Investigative Study On The Problems Of Sustainability In A Historic Chinese Water Town As A Cultural Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT

This Article examines sustainability challenges in the context of one Chinese cultural tourism destination, Wuzhen, a historic water town, by looking at traveler reviews on the travel website TripAdvisor. Chinese tourist locations still face several issues in sustainable development. Tourists' viewpoints are rarely taken into account in previous research on Chinese tourism difficulties, which instead focus on the perspectives of locals, tourism organisations, and governments. Given the lack of attention given to sustainability concerns in the academic literature and China's rapidly expanding tourist sector, research into China's cultural tourism destinations is more important than ever. Wuzhen was selected as the study location because it is a well-known example of a traditional Chinese town. Sustainable tourism in Wuzhen has been shown to be successful through an examination of TripAdvisor reviews. Tourists had nothing but good things to say about their time in Wuzhen, and everyone involved reaped their fair share of the rewards. This research provides strong evidence that other cultural heritage sites can take a lot of lessons from" Wuzhen.

Keyword: Sustainable Tourism Development; Community Empowerment; Community Support; Community-Based Tourism

1.1 Introduction:

Modern tourists have greater expectations than previous generations due to rising disposable incomes and better standards in the service sector. On the contrary, vacationers are looking to bring back more than simply fond memories. This is particularly noteworthy in China, where customers now have more disposable income to spend on high-end products compared to a decade ago. One reason China's domestic tourist business is so large is the country's enormous population. Recent years have seen a shift in China's emphasis towards the growth of the tourism industry and the development of experiential tourism goods and services. Businesses in the travel and tourist industry are increasingly under pressure to adopt more eco-friendly policies and procedures as a result of the widespread impact these industries have on local communities and the environment. Sustainable development aims to improve the lives of both current and future generations while simultaneously protecting the environment and advancing society. (Park, 2019) The researchers may anticipate both positive and bad outcomes. One way in which the tourism industry might be useful is by generating income for businesses in the field and the individuals who work for them. Both governments and tourism may influence environmental changes. One possible negative consequence of having a high volume of tourists to one area is an ecological imbalance. The residents may experience disruptions as a result of the visitors' activities. Local streets would take a hit and garbage collectors' workloads would skyrocket if tourists littered heavily. The expansion of the tourism industry may bring about both positive and negative outcomes, and these are just a few examples. There are growing worries regarding the sustainability of China's tourist industry as it undergoes further expansion (Bakir, 2017).

1.2 Background of the Study:

"Development must meet the needs of contemporary generations without jeopardizing the ability of future decades to meet their own needs," according to the Brundtland Commission's 1987 most popular formulation of sustainable development. Protection and management of cultural property are integral parts of sustainable cultural tourism, which is itself an integral part of sustainable use of cultural heritage. When it comes to cultural preservation, tourist management, social demands, and economic growth, Buckley maintains that "sustainable tourism" is the best approach to find a middle ground. The foundation of sustainable tourism ought to include a harmony between the natural world, the market, and people's cultural practices and beliefs. Briassoulis provided an alternative, more comprehensive definition of sustainable tourism, focusing on sustainable cultural tourism as a method of managing cultural heritage and tourist attractions. The basic requirements of encouraging local development, ensuring their self-sufficiency, and meeting the demands of visitors must be satisfied. (Lee, 2020).

1.3 Purpose of the Research:

The focus in recent years has shifted away from traditional rainwater gathering techniques. Even if it has positive effects on society, the economy, and the environment, sustainable usage in the present day is not without its risks. The case study approach allows the authors to examine the viability of water basements in traditional communities (Halike, 2020) after the installation of dependable piped water. The objective is to identify the elements and restoration techniques that impact the desire of locals to keep using those water tanks. Overall, the data demonstrate a low level of desire to utilise them. But very few locals would let them go to the dump regardless of how often or seldom they were used. The majority of the locals were curious in their remodel, particularly how they planned to streamline rainwater collection. Furthermore, there is a strong association between the management of the rainwater collection and heritage identity and the desire for sustainable usage. On the other hand, there is no significant correlation between a sense of the effects on the environment and this willingness. In light of these results, researchers advise a repair project that shifts the rainwater collecting surface to rooftops and raises awareness among locals that water tanks can only be considered historic if they are still in production.

1.4 Literature Review:

Experience tourism, sustainable destination development, consumer knowledge, and the visitor/tourist experience are the four key concepts introduced in this chapter. Although the experiential tourism group's discussions focused on cultural tourism, they did take into consideration the happiness of tourists and visitors in their more general assessments of the experience. Aside from environmental considerations, sustainable development also addresses social, cultural, and economic factors. Responsible (Liu, 2018) management of the interconnections among cultural tourism, tourist consumption, and the promotion of leisure goods may have positive effects on the economy, society, and the environment. There has been explosive growth in China's cultural tourism industry in the last few years. Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic surge in the number of visitors from across the world. This is mostly due to the fact that an increasing number of people are travelling in search of authentic cultural immersion. Important to the field of sustainable leisure management, this research looked at the future possibilities of cultural tourist centers. For leisure management to be successful, all three indicators must be met. Thus, the results of this research agree with what is already known regarding eco-friendly recreation planning (Mody, 2020).

1.5 Research Objective:

- To understand the sustainability of tourism in China.
- To determine the problems with cultural tourism.

1.6 Research Methodology:

An outline of the study's design, methods, sample, data collection process, ethical considerations, and suggestions for improvement are all included in this section. To learn about visitors' impressions of Wuzhen and their thoughts on the city's sustainability, the researcher read online reviews. A methodology to study known as content analysis was implemented to examine the comments. This method included compiling subject word counts. Due to the variety of visitors' evaluations on TripAdvisor.com handling these subjects from multiple aspects, content analysis was shown to be the most efficient way of data analysis for uncovering underlying information, especially with sustainability concerns. Research The researcher in this thesis utilised content analysis as a research approach because it enabled them to detect patterns in the reviewers'

word choice, the frequency of specific terms, and their arrangement within larger texts, in addition to reading and analyzing. In order to better understand consumer behaviour and vacation experience, researchers have made heavy use of content analysis. According to Berg, who drew on the work of Kolbe and Burnett, content examination is a method of observation that may be used to uncover themes and patterns in recorded communications by delving into their symbolic content.

- **Setting and Population:**

Tourists are invited to provide their thoughts on different points of interest on the TripAdvisor platform. Wuzhen is a lake town in China. Researchers wanted to know how tourists felt about the location and what they would do next, so they focused on reviews and assessments of Wuzhen. Through the coding technique, they were able to reveal both the reviewers' hidden biases and the most often used terms. In order to determine how effective the town's rehabilitation initiative was, the records maintained by the Wuzhen government were compared with the study's conclusions. The data analysis made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Griesheim and Lundman, content analysis may be approached in two ways: qualitatively, by asking participants "who said what, when, and to whom?" and quantitatively, by counting the frequency of important themes in participants' evaluations. The main site of the investigation was chosen to be Wuzhen, an ancient city in China.

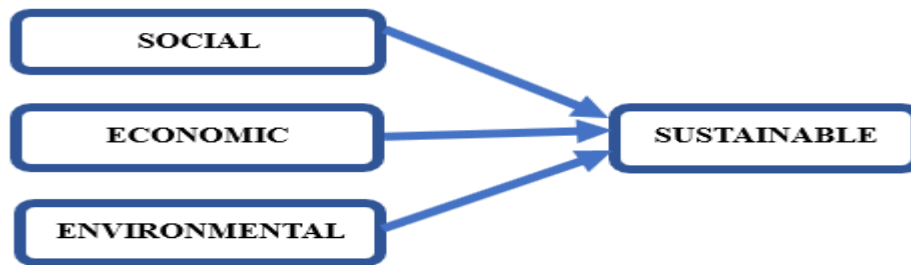
- **Data and Sampling:**

One example is the suggestion made by Kapilevich and Karvounis for Zagulova, according to which the Internet has created a new channel for identifying customer preferences and examining their assessments in the twenty-first century. They also knew that there are websites where travellers leave reviews, share their experiences, and provide guidance. In order to save time, the researcher concentrated on those who had visited Wuzhen and had made comments on TripAdvisor.com rather than reviewing the opinions of every user of the website. Since evaluating the suitability of the technique was the primary goal of the study, the convenience sample methodology was used by the researcher once the investigation's setting was established. Wuzhen is now a lot more appealing to tourists as a result of the city's renovations. They believed they had enough data to achieve our study goal—to correctly reflect visitors' experiences and to uncover any problems—because the change made it simple to sample TripAdvisor ratings and reviews. Since Pyo points out that it is difficult to separate the expert opinion from the study population, convenient sampling is the best course of action. In a similar vein, the researcher of this study similarly had difficulty finding an acceptable sample norm using publicly available data. To reduce time without compromising the goals of the study, the investigator gathered all evaluations and ratings that were published in both Chinese and English between August 2017 (the start of the inquiry) and January 2015 (the month the legislation amendments were put into effect). A total of 234 happy clients had their feedback documented. 32.9% of the assessed products include Chinese writing. This is a low proportion. The English reviews are exact translations of the originals from the original languages. Due to the volume of information provided, only assessments offered in Chinese and English were chosen to gauge customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

- **Data Analysis:**

According to Isaac and Budryte-Ausiejene, one of the best ways to find out how people feel and what they think about certain tourist-related topics is to look at their comments. Additionally, the tourism sector may learn a lot about the success or failure of new goods and services that it introduces by studying visitor comments. Researchers were able to glean individuals' feelings and thoughts from their TripAdvisor comments and photos. The researchers identified the primary reviewers' issues by translating or reproducing the participant assessments and then classifying them. They used content analysis to determine the participants' most prominent thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and then they sought for relationships between these elements. From what they can tell from the research, the four most crucial factors in determining a visitor's satisfaction with their experience are the following: setting, authenticity, educational opportunities, and service quality. Reviewers used these four broad themes and ten codes—"genuine local atmosphere," "historical architecture," "commercialization and modernization," "cost of hotels and inns," "crowdedness," "management of the scenic area," "convenience of transportation," "revisiting/recommendations," and "sanitation"—to classify the participants' experiences. The people's self-reported levels of happiness were also recorded and examined. To guarantee consistency in the analysis of the research data, the coding approach was used, as stated in the information analysis section of this study.

1.7 Conceptual Frameworks:



1.8 Result:

A total of 234 user reviews of Wuzhen on the travel review website TripAdvisor were gathered and examined for this research. This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of the participants' satisfaction levels and feedback. Their ratings and comments on TripAdvisor show how they felt about the assistance that they got. Analysing assessments and identifying common themes regarding Wuzhen allowed us to get a better understanding of the city's sustainable growth. The triple bottom line concept for sustainability was used. Finding out how happy the test participants were overall was the first priority. Following an examination of the main results from the participant assessments, they summed up the fundamental ideas related to each aspect of sustainability. The researcher attempted to reduce bias by using a theme analysis technique. From the evaluations of 234 participants, researchers collected keywords and important topics. A user's level is determined by the amount of work and time they put into TripAdvisor. Their level is highly correlated with the number of reviews they have written and the amount of time they have spent using TripAdvisor. Super users, or members of TripAdvisor with five years of activity or more, submitted nearly all of the reviews considered in this study. Reviewers' knowledge and experience bolstered the validity of this research; when they examined each site, they inadvertently compared it to another in its area. Ranked in the top three were seventy-four percent of the participants. categories on TripAdvisor, therefore it's reasonable to conclude that most of them have been using the site for over four years. This demonstrates a high level of reliability. The participants' names, levels, ranges of ages, genders, and localities are included below in the citations to their reviews on the site. They may also obtain this information based solely on their TripAdvisor profiles.

- **Participants Experience Findings**

Economics, society, and the environment were all examined independently. From the participant assessments, ten main categories emerged. In the sections that follow, they will describe the process of dissecting these 10 main ideas. There was a lot of foot traffic on weekends and holidays. The question of Wuzhen's density of population was raised by only 55 out of 234 respondents. Many residents endured lengthy lines for even the most basic services, like food and water, due to the high population density in the area. The overcrowding caused some to be somewhat unhappy and a few to be really unhappy. Nearly everyone said that if there were less people there, it would be much better. Some excerpts from the various remarks made by visitors on their encounters with Wuzhen's throngs of people are shown below. Intense, continual swarming. They never expected there to be so many people, but researchers do expect the landscape to be breathtaking. Because of how busy the city is, getting to the top attractions could be a challenge. (A woman in her 50s to 60s hailing from Orange Park, Florida; a TripAdvisor Level 6 contributor).

- **Analysis of Stakeholders in Wuzhen**

Upon reviewing the participant comments, it became apparent that many categories of individuals were brought up. Because they are essential to the idea of stakeholder analysis—the systematic evaluation of tourism destinations' long-term viability—many stakeholders were included in this study. Tourists may find a broad variety of services provided by the many Wuzhen natives who work in the tourism sector. There is a thriving tourist business here. Many small businesses, or "mum and pop," may be found in Wuzhen. A potentially lucrative sector of the economy is the provision of hotel services to passing visitors. In most cases, these people's houses include two levels, with the top floor outfitted like a hotel. As a side hustle for the building's long-term residents, hotels provide modest rooms that may fit a couple hundred paying customers or perhaps a small family. Guests who select to stay with natives had far better experiences, according to participant reviews. The locals were helpful and kind, answering their questions and guiding them through the process of making purchases and resolving problems. Thanks to these supplementary features, the guests enjoyed themselves more. It seems that the inhabitants in Wuzhen are pleased with the influx of tourists, according to the comments. Permitting them to make a greater profit from their labor. Locals who offered participants accommodation services described how the town welcomed the flood of visitors with open arms, citing the economic benefits they brought: As an additional fascinating experience, you may stay in the home of locals. They are very kind and kind; on many occasions, they have even asked us to dinner. They assured us that researchers would be served delectable regional dishes.

1.9 Discussion:

This research aims to critically examine sustainability challenges in Wuzhen, a popular cultural tourism destination in China, and to ask about visitors' perspectives on the city. Results were connected to the sustainability framework, and the research issue was answered using neither the triple bottom line nor the analysis of stakeholder's frameworks. According to the sustainable theory that was used, the sustainable development of this destination was based on a trifecta of economic, cultural, and environmental benefits. Since visitors' opinions matter greatly for the attraction's future, the researcher analysed their comments using the customer knowledge framework. The three benefits were evaluated by visitors to determine Wuzhen's sustainability. The next sections put the study's results in perspective by relating them to the concepts discussed in the literature review.

If the aim is for the locals to benefit from the development, the destination's local authorities should make sure of it. Training offered by tourist businesses and the local government would be beneficial for both employees and visitors. The outcome of this survey reveals how the inhabitants feel about the potential influx of more visitors to the location. Participants in the research said that many locals were pleased to see them, which enhanced their experience of engaging with them. Lang claims that residents usually welcome visitors with open arms if they bring in more money for the economy. As said, there is a correlation between the degree of sustainable development at a location and the mental and emotional well-being of the local people. Wuzhen is supposedly a peaceful and lovely place to live, according to tourists. People in the area really go out of their means to accommodate visitors, according to those who took the survey.

1.10 Conclusion:

In order to help Wuzhen's tourism industry expand efficiently and sustainably, the research found two challenges. The first problem is that many individuals were displeased due to the heavy traffic during holidays and weekends. Wuzhen needs to increase its ability to serve customers in order to reduce their wait times. Additionally, it is imperative that neighborhood tour guides get ongoing training from the appropriate government or non-profit groups. Tourists came to historic districts to take in the architecture and views, not to purchase, and to fully immerse themselves in the local culture and history. Local tour guides that care about their reputation should provide such a perk to their customers. Positive ratings given by TripAdvisor users would encourage more people to visit the location. There has been a lack of effective tourism development in several ancient towns in China. The following suggestions for old towns are made in light of this Wuzhen research. Old towns should preserve cultural and historical architecture and elements with great care since authenticity is a key factor in tourists' enjoyment. These elements are also the tourist destinations' most prized possessions. As part of their preservation efforts, ancient cities should enhance their transport options and other ancillary services. Customers in the current day have come to expect a certain degree of convenience and simplicity of service from the businesses that cater to them. Historic urban areas should plan for a future when environmental protection, economic growth, and social harmony are all met. Keeping this balance may be difficult, but it will aid tourism groups in considering many aspects and setting guidelines prior to making any changes to historic areas.

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