Analyzing Sustainability Challenges in a Traditional Chinese Water Town as a Hub for Cultural Tourism

YU XIANGXIAN[1], DR ZURINAWATI BINTI MOHI[2a], DR. ABHIJIT GHOSH [3b]

[1]Phd. Research Scholar in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lincoln University College, Malaysia.
[2, 3,] Professor in Lincoln University College, Malaysia.
Contact details: zurinawati@lincoln.edu.my, [b] abhijit@lincoln.edu.my

Abstract

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) founded the Indicators for Sustainable Tourism Workshop in China in 2005. (Bao, 2012). To maintain their competitive advantage, the companies involved were urged to plan ahead of time. In 2012, Bao investigated Yangshuo, a popular Chinese tourist destination for sightseeing and cultural tourism, and discovered several issues, including negative impacts on animals and the environment, an abundance of visitors, and negative attitudes toward foreigners (Bao, 2012).

In recent years, several studies have focused on the hospitality and dining industries (Liu et al., 2014; Song and Zhang, 2014; Targeted News Service, 2016). (Fabinyi and Liu, 2014). There have been few studies on tourist sites, particularly those with a cultural focus. Therefore, there has to be more. A study on the long-term viability of China's cultural tourist hotspots. Given the importance of China's cultural attractions to the country's economy, it is critical to investigate ways to promote cultural tourism in a sustainable manner. Cultural tourism accounts for three-sevenths of all international travel and is growing at a 15% annual rate, according to the World Trade Organization (Solimar International, 2015). Sustainable development issues in China's cultural tourism hotspots were also mentioned as future research topics. If the report is to be believed, this is accurate. According to Bao (2012), more tourism destinations could benefit from the UNWTO Indicators for Sustainable Tourism Workshop study, and more academic research on sustainable development in China is needed.

The rapid growth of China's tourism industry made it critical to assess the long-term viability of China's cultural tourist attractions. Previous research on Chinese tourism difficulties rarely sought out or examined visitors' and tourists' perspectives (Bao, 2012; Fabinyi & Liu, 2014; Liu et al., 2014; Song & Zhang, 2014; Targeted News Service, 2016). Ballantyne, Packer, and Sutherland (2011) argue that organizations can learn about current and future issues by assessing their visitors' experiences and happiness.

The best strategy for investigating issues related to sustainability in cultural tourism is to collect and analyse data on visitors' experiences and levels of satisfaction after their visits. The findings

of this type of study would be beneficial to both the tourism industry and municipal authorities. The purpose of This study looked at sustainability issues from the perspective of vacationers. **Keywords**: Cultural Tourism, Level Of Satisfaction, Cultural Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The number of people traveling abroad has skyrocketed in the last decade (World Bank, 2016). 1.186 billion people visited the world in 2016 (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2016), up 5% from 2015. (WTO, 2016). Western media has extensively covered over-commercialization, the erosion of historical and cultural assets, a loss of authenticity, and the potentially negative impact on local populations (Chen, Huang, & Cai, 2014). France, the United States, Spain, China, and Italy were the world's top five most popular tourist destinations in 2015. (WTO, 2016). Over the last decade, China's tourist development ranked second only to that of the United States. (As determined by international tourism receipts).

International visitors are no longer satisfied with simply sightseeing in Twenty-first century, as family incomes rise and tourists' service quality expectations rise (Alegre & Garau, 2010). Rather, experiential tourism aims to enhance travelers' experiences and memories (Yan & Hu, 2015). This is especially true in China, where people now have more disposable income to spend on leisure goods and services than they did ten years ago. China's large population also contributes to the high number of domestic visitors (Statista, 2014). People in China are also more concerned with the expansion of the tourist industry and the design of experience tourism products and services (Wu & Zhang, 2003). Given the significant impact that travel and tourism organizations have on society and the environment, stakeholders are Increasing their focus on sustainable development in the tourism industry. Sustainable development is a strategy that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations, while maintaining a balance of economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social well-being (Wang, 2006). There are positive and negative consequences. One positive outcome, for example, is that tourism organizations and industry personnel may benefit financially. Tourist behavior, as well as government environmental preservation efforts, can have an effect on the environment (Hammond, 2013). A large number of tourists in one location, for example, can have a negative impact on the destination's ecology. The tourists' actions may disturb the peaceful lives of the locals. If tourists litter, they will have a negative impact on the local streets, and refuse collectors will have a lot more work to do. These are some examples of how the expansion of the tourism industry can have an impact on a variety of factors, both positively and negatively. The number of tourists in China has increased year after year, raising concerns about the sector's viability (Hammond, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003), experiential tourism refers to preplanned travel. This type of tourism required both time and effort on the part of the visitors. Experiential tourism enhances visitors' vacations by offering emotional, psychological, and physical benefits to those who participate. Psychologically, people want to achieve their goals and be acknowledged by others when they do. As a result, they will feel proud, happy, and satisfied. Experiential activities in tourism can help visitors learn about themselves through exploration, demonstration, and understanding. As a result, tourists view visiting these locations as a success, and they feel good about themselves for achieving a tourist goal. Li & Li, 2006). According to Curtin (2005), participating in experiential activities may cause people to reconsider their previous beliefs about the relationship between humans and nature. Walking through wildlife areas, for example, enables visitors to observe how animals live in the wild.

As a result of this encounter, they may consider the value of biodiversity and humanity's interdependence with nature. For example, Smith (2005) claims that experiential tourism is linked to an experience economy, and that developers now provide experiences as goods within tourism rather than just services in order to more precisely define experiential tourism. Experiential tourism is a customised and distinct type of tourism that encourages visitors to participate in tourism activities and allows them to experience local culture. Both Tourists and developers strive for a unique and unforgettable experience. Tourists pay for their experiences under this framework, whereas developers provide visitors with specific experience goods to engage them in the local community and culture (Smith, 2005).

According to Yan and Hu (2015), several tourism producers have attempted to create more experiential goods for visitors in order to increase the number and quality of memorable experiences that travelers can have during a single trip or vacation. Wu and Zhang (2003) define experiential tourism as entertainment, education, and aesthetic appreciation, and tourists benefit from this stimulation on both a physical and cerebral level, as well as long-lasting memories. Experiential tourism, defined by these principles, differs from the conventional tourist model, which focuses s on all tourism items offered by individual operators and businesses, including food, souvenirs, and lodging (Li, 2007). Experiential tourism has grown in popularity due to the positive emotional and psychological bonds it fosters between tourists and the destinations they visit (Yan & Hu, 2015). Tourists travel to different cities and countries because they want a unique vacation experience. Such adventures are the most important aspect of their trip (Li and Sun, 2009). Experiential tourism is a basic commodity with significant social value as a focus for tourist resources. This type of tourism has a lower environmental impact because it requires fewer resources (Tang & Wang, 2009). For example, a dinner spiced up with local spices Although it is reasonably priced and produced sustainably, tourists may have strong emotional reactions to it. According to Yan and Hu (2015), tourism companies should completely develop their products

and services so that tourists can easily reach their destinations, have a good time, and have long-lasting memories of their trips. Beyond memories, a more desirable outcome is for travelers to have a more holistic view of their destinations, taking into account both physical and spiritual aspects (Yan and Hu, 2015).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sustainable development is a major concern for Chinese tourist destinations (Chen et al., 2014). According to Song and Zhang's (2014) findings, Chinese tourism companies can meet international sustainability standards. However, Liu, Xie, and Zhao (2014) found inconsistencies in the sustainable development methods of Chinese tourist and hospitality firms. According to Liu et al. (2014), many Chinese tourist destinations are experiencing a lack of accommodations due to high demand and limited availability. To determine whether visitors were satisfied with their trips, researchers listened to what they had to say about their experiences.

THE STUDY AIMS

To analyze the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impact of a cultural tourism destination based on personal experiences.

Research Questions: • What are the dimensions of cultural tourism destinations based on visitor experiences?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section covers the study design, methodology, sample, and data collection procedures. Ethical concerns and possible changes to the research design are also addressed. The researcher conducted online reviews to assess visitors' perceptions of Wuzhen's sustainability concerns. Strijbos, Martens, and Prins (2006) used content analysis as a study approach, with theme word counts "in order to analyse comments" (p. 2). Because of the variety of traveler reviews on TripAdvisor.com that address various topics from various perspectives, content analysis was the most efficient way to examine this data in order to uncover underlying information.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

For this study, we recommend using content analysis, which allows us to not only examine texts but also see trends in the phrases people use in reviews. , how frequently they use such expressions, and the communication structure and discourses they employ. Content analysis can be used to study customer behaviour, allowing academics to better understand the trip experience. Berg (2009) and Kolbe and Burnett (1991) have argued that content analysis should be used to identify patterns and themes in recorded conversations.

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Isaac and Budryte-Ausiejiene (2015), tourist reviews provide a unique insight into their minds and hearts. Furthermore, according to Ballantyne et al. (2011), collecting tourist feedback can help improve tourism products and services. The inclusion of comments and photographs posted by participants on TripAdvisor enabled the researcher to examine their emotions and perspectives.

Following either Following translation or transcription of the participant evaluations, we used a coding system to extract the most important points raised by the reviewers. The most important ideas, events, or emotions shared by participants were identified using content analysis, and connections between them were investigated.

The analysis of relevant literature revealed four factors that contribute to the quality of a visitor's experience: the environment, the authenticity of the event, the opportunities for learning and education, and the level of service. The participants' reviews were evaluated using these four major themes and ten codes (authentic local atmosphere, historical architecture, commercialization and modernization, cost of hotels and inns, crowdedness, experiential activity, management of the scenic area, convenience of Keep transportation, revisiting/recommendations, and sanitation in mind. In addition, the individuals' levels of contentment were tallied and examined for patterns or trends. The coding procedure, as discussed in the section of this study devoted to data analysis, was designed to ensure that the research data were analyzed consistently. The previously discussed codes, along with their respective definitions for the purposes of this investigation, are presented in the following table. This was done to reduce the possibility of confusion or misunderstandings.

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Table 1. Codes used to categorize the reviews based on the provided definitions

Codes	Definitions
Authentic local atmosphere	Sense of ancient southern Chinese culture
Historical architecture	Local buildings that represent traditional Chinese architecture
Commercialization and modernization	Non-culturally related travelling experience, especially in purchasing souvenirs and the convenience of living
Cost of hotels and inns	Experience of staying in local hotels and inns
Crowdedness	Number of visitors in the town
Experiential activity	Experience of tourist-involved activities
Management of the scenic area	Staff-related service and preparation on the site
Convince of transportation	Commuting within and outside the town
Revisiting/ recommendations	Level of recommendations to revisit again in a certain period
Sanitation	Environment and the tidiness of the town, the sites, and the hotels

The researcher began by categorizing the evaluations using the ten codes provided, and then examined those classifications in terms of the social, economic, and environmental aspects of tourism destination sustainability development.

The use of specific keywords by survey respondents was also examined. The 234 reviews gathered were organized into groups based on the terms used by the research participants. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), one method for assessing consumer interests is to examine how frequently they use topical terms in online comments. Readers place a high value on the frequency with which words are used, and keyword frequency provides information to Researchers focus on the specific perceptions that travelers have of a given location. Following an analysis of the reviews submitted by participants in their respective groups, the researcher distilled the information into ten key themes that represent the overall trip experience in Wuzhen. The number of tourism-related topics considered for this study was reduced to ten to facilitate the evaluation of sustainable development in the tourism industry. The summarised topics were cross-referenced with the framework of sustainability, which includes social, environmental, and economic dimensions. These factors included ambiance, architecture, commercialization and modernity, modes of transportation, cost, crowdedness, activities, local administration, recommended revisiting, and sanitation. By the end, able to organize the reviews into distinct categories using the coded labels and definitions generated as a result of the coding process, and then examine the primary themes that were common to all of the categories. Following that, the researcher assessed the evaluations in terms of the most pressing concerns about the development of sustainable tourism in Wuzhen.

Because assessing the participants' evaluations based solely on their superficial meaning was insufficient, the researcher used content analysis after determining the codes to examine the details included in each review (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2015). In addition, Kassarjian (1977) suggested that the content analysis process consider the possibility of systematisation. Additionally, the findings should include some theoretical bearing on the research objectives. In accordance with customer knowledge theory, the researcher used the reviews provided by participants as examples of their trip experiences to determine whether Wuzhen is capable of maintaining its current level of sustainable growth (Liao et al., 2010). The researcher analyzed the Wuzhen tourism site by comparing travel experiences to the fundamental components of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION
The proposed study examines sustainability issues in the context of one cultural tourist destination, Wuzhen, China's ancient water town, using TripAdvisor data. Many issues concerning sustainable development remain to be addressed by Chinese tourism destinations. Previous research on Chinese tourism issues has primarily focused on the perspectives of locals, tourism organisations, and governments, with little consideration given to the perspectives of actual tourists. Because of China's thriving tourism industry, there is an urgent need to investigate the sustainability issues that arise when visitors visit cultural tourism attractions. The researchers chose Wuzhen as a case study due to its status as a well-known tourist destination and excellent representation of a traditional Chinese town.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Participants' TripAdvisor reviews were analyzed for stakeholder perspectives, but their perceptions may differ from those of the stakeholders in this study. Collecting data directly from stakeholders such as employees, small business owners, locals, and tour guides may be a better long-term solution. Primary research in the future could better investigate stakeholders' satisfaction levels with Wuzhen's tourist growth.

The second disadvantage is a result of the study procedure. Only reviews written in English or Chinese will be considered for inclusion in this study, which seeks feedback from a single internet site.

To assess Wuzhen's authenticity, it is proposed that tourists' opinions be used rather than those of third-party organizations.

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