



The Impact of Social Innovation and Perceived Values Towards Cultural Tourism in Rural Villages in Anhui, China

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RECEIVED January 2, 2024

REVISE June 10, 2024

ACCEPTED June 14, 2024

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of social innovation and perceived values in creative tourism in China. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study focuses on travelers and community leaders in rural areas. The results show significant differences in social awareness and innovative collaboration. The study also evaluates the structural validity of a questionnaire using Pearson correlation coefficients and validated factor analyses. The findings have implications for tourism destination growth and policies in rural villages in Anhui, China. Primary contributors to a community's status as a creative tourism include social innovation, value perception, creative tourism, local management, responsible tourism practices, and collaboration with local businesses and stakeholders. Social innovations, involving cooperation and solutions to societal problems, can overcome tipping points in three phases, influencing tourism development by examining characteristics and actors' motivations. This can lead to environmental benefits like resource conservation and reduced carbon emissions. Integrated leadership development with environmentally responsible practices can align businesses with responsible tourism principles and contribute to the overall well-being of their locations. Implementing environmental initiatives can lead to resource conservation and reduced carbon emissions. Integrating leadership development programs with responsible tourism practices aligns operations with local well-being, enhancing reputation and customer loyalty, and attracting top talent. Future research should integrate research and development and operational research to explore creative tourism and agritourism, revealing potential synergies and impacts. This interdisciplinary approach could uncover sustainable development opportunities, community engagement in rural areas, and strategies for economic growth and cultural preservation. This could lead to innovative tourism products and experiences.

Keywords: social innovation, perceived values, creative tourism

Introduction

COVID-19 has significantly impacted businesses, particularly SMEs, by causing cultural and lifestyle changes. Value, availability, and convenience are key drivers for exploring new brands. Government support and sustainable innovation are crucial for SMEs' resilience. China's GDP surpassed one trillion yuan in 2020, with second-placed R&D spending and the world's largest patent applicant. Effective leadership drives organizational performance, and ecosystems determine SMEs' resilience. Therefore, businesses must adapt to these changes by focusing on meeting consumer demands and staying competitive in the market. Additionally, collaboration with other organizations and adapting to new technologies can also help SMEs thrive in the post-pandemic world (Albaz, A. et al. (2020); Madanchian, M.& Taherdoost.H. (2017); (Ratten, 2020a)

The OECD Oslo Manual (2018) highlights eight business innovation activities, including product, process, marketing, and organisational. This study explores creative tourism as an alternative to cultural tourism, focusing on aesthetic and social factors. Primary growth



factors include team leadership, innovation, and social innovation. The findings can inform policymakers and government agencies on attracting arts and culture tourists and sustaining creative tourism initiatives. Collaboration between sectors can create a more sustainable and profitable tourism industry. Innovation in tourism is crucial for businesses, destinations, and local development. However, traditional understanding overlooks the complexity of diverse actors and networks. Social innovation in tourism involves new cooperation between individuals or organizations to provide solutions. This paper analyzes case studies in China using survey and interviews. Successful innovations are characterized by strong community engagement, a clear value proposition, and adaptability to changing circumstances. Collaboration between stakeholders and local knowledge is also essential for sustainable tourism development.

The study investigates the influence of social innovation and perceived values towards creative tourism in rural villages in Anhui, China. It aims to understand the characteristics of these factors, their influence on rural villages, and whether social innovation mediates the link between these factors. The hypothesis suggests that perceived values significantly impact creative tourism development, while social innovation positively mediates these links. The research will use a mixed-methods approach to support sustainable growth in these communities. The research promotes rural community involvement in creative tourism practices, benefiting stakeholders at national and local levels. It refines existing theories and develops new ones, enhancing strategies and approaches for more effective and sustainable creative tourism experiences.

literature review

This article discusses innovative tourism, including creative tourism, which must incorporate sustainable development. It covers cultural tourism, evaluates research on creative tourism's origins, data collection, measurement, and methodologies, and discusses city-specific creative tourism destinations. The study uses China's Old Town for its small size and lower external factor complexity, providing a more precise conclusion for future research. The findings suggest that creative tourism can positively impact local communities by preserving cultural heritage and promoting economic growth. Future studies should further explore the potential of creative tourism in different contexts to enhance its understanding and implementation worldwide.

The Concept of Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism has faced negative outcomes, such as overcrowding and resource degradation, leading to culturalization. Creative tourism, on the other hand, showcases innovation and expands visitor experiences, enhancing economic, social, and environmental tourism. Successful creative tourism management depends on local participation, collaboration with tourism business groups, and interesting tourist activities. DASTA has guidelines for developing creative tourism activities and assessing its potential. Creative tourism aims to meet personalized tourism needs and strengthen linkages with other industries.

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism where visitors are motivated to learn, discover, experience, and consume cultural attractions and products offered by a tourist destination. This includes arts, architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries, and living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs, and traditions (Timothy, Dallen J., 2021). It includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities, and in remote, indigenous regions. Some subcategories of cultural tourism include heritage tourism, arts tourism, and creative tourism. These tourism activities can have



positive effects on local residents, such as economic stability, pollution, and environmental problems. However, they also pose risks to local communities and can disrupt their social fabric. Urban cultural tourism involves visiting cultural sites with historical and recreational attractions, often listed in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Rural cultural tourism includes village, farm, or agro-tourism, eco-museums, national parks, and wine trails. Indigenous cultural tourism involves indigenous groups' services and products, while popular cultural tourism includes modern attractions like amusement parks and sporting events. However, the environmental impacts of cultural tourism include increased litter and pollution, which can damage cultural landscapes and heritage sites (UNESCO, 2016). On the other hand, tourism can bring economic growth to communities through job creation and tax revenues, which can help preserve cultural sites and protect their built environment.

Concept of Perceived Value

Perceived value is regarded as a new source of competitive advantage. Perceived value offers a competitive advantage for companies, enabling them to differentiate themselves, build brand loyalty, and increase customer satisfaction. This customer-centric approach leads to increased profits, repeat business, and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Perceived value is considered a new source of competitive advantage. Value perception is an important aspect in customer satisfaction and pleasure, as it influences service quality, satisfaction, and readiness to take action. It's a complicated phenomenon that reflects life's intricacies. More research is needed to better comprehend its multidimensionality, interaction with constituent elements, dynamic nature, and link to other criteria like as satisfaction, comparative value, commitment, and loyalty.

Academics and practitioners have long researched social innovation (Kaletka, H. et al (2018). Challenges in society can boost productivity. This multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder strategy involves locals, consumers, and users. With strategic ties and equity, social companies succeed outside of the for-profit and governmental sectors. Social innovation involves creativity and agility to change society (Kaletka, H. et al (2018). Social innovations include open-source, activism, virtual volunteering, microcredit, and remote learning. Social entrepreneurs and companies solve social and environmental concerns by innovating for communities, consumers, and users. By working outside of the for-profit and public sectors, these players can prioritise social good over profit. Their success comes from strategic partnerships that employ resources, knowledge, and networks. Social innovation includes open-source, activism, virtual volunteering, and microcredit. These innovations improve education, health, employment, community well-being, and civic life. Actor interaction, social aims, and social effects influence social innovation (Malek A.& Costa.C. (2015). The social revolution changes problem-causing institutions and transforms society. Systemic entrepreneurship also has an impact. To preserve innovations, systemic entrepreneurs prioritize system-level actors. The urge to address significant social challenges and promote community well-being drives social innovation. It involves creating and executing novel strategies, solutions, and ideas for society.

Social entrepreneurship involves individuals, groups, startups, and investors, benefiting firms of all sizes, missions, and beliefs. Success for for-profit entrepreneurs is defined by profit, revenue, and stock price gains. Social entrepreneurs often support social, cultural, and environmental goals through volunteering. Identifying social entrepreneurs can be challenging due to factors such as founders, social work, community development, and environmental research. Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in tourism development, creating new items to attract visitors and supporting destination growth through networks. They shape destinations by setting long-term goals, encouraging innovation, and identifying untapped opportunities.



Local social factors and contexts may affect business approaches, and entrepreneurs are typically strongly linked to rural economies and communities. Entrepreneurs in rural areas often face unique challenges, such as limited access to resources and markets, but they also have the opportunity to make a significant impact on local economies. By collaborating with other stakeholders and leveraging their networks, social entrepreneurs can drive sustainable development and positive change in their communities (Banerjee, S., & Shabam, A. (2019); They also shape destinations by setting long-term goals, encouraging innovation, and identifying untapped opportunities. Local social factors and contexts may affect business approaches, and entrepreneurs are typically strongly linked in rural economies and communities. Key success factors for a vibrant and sustainable tourism industry include a supportive policy environment, investment in cultural infrastructure, fostering creativity and innovation, and active community participation, benefiting both the economy and residents' quality of life. By creating opportunities for local businesses to thrive and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of a destination, tourism can contribute to long-term economic growth and social well-being. Additionally, promoting responsible tourism practices and engaging in sustainable development initiatives are essential for ensuring the industry's continued success.

Cultural tourism in a city thrives when the private and public sectors collaborate, tourism policies are supported, infrastructure and finances are adequate, and strong collaboration between government agencies and private businesses is strong. Involving city planners and stakeholders in creative tourism initiatives creates a sustainable approach. This study uses quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyse a phenomenon involving tourists, the local economy, and cultural exchange. It provides a comprehensive understanding of patterns and trends, offering recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders in the tourism industry. Social entrepreneurs play a crucial role in developing rural destinations and rural tourism, contributing to rural revitalization. They play a significant role in social transformation and the development of tourism policies. The tourism industry also plays a significant role in sustainable development, with the perceived value and sense of social responsibility of tourists playing a significant role. Social innovation is a driving factor in addressing social concerns, and in China, social organizations have made progress in developing social organizations.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research employs both theoretical and empirical methods to investigate related theories. Data was collected through questionnaires and tested using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and SEM. The study proposes an improved method by combining quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data was gathered through interviews and focus groups, while the quantitative data was collected through surveys. This approach enhances the validity of the results.

Population and Sample

The study focuses on social innovation and perceived values towards cultural tourism in rural villages in Anhui, China. The study explores the relationship between social innovation and cultural tourism values in Anhui, China, focusing on cultural spaces, architecture, arts, crafts, and performing arts. The research, involving 400 travellers and community leaders, uses mixed-methods methods and data analysis to provide insights into how social innovation can enhance cultural tourism experiences and contribute to sustainable development.



Research Collection and Research Analysis

The study tested the content validity of a questionnaire on social innovation, perceived value, and cultural tourism. Five experts assessed questionnaires for content validity, using descriptive statistics and quantitative data analysis. Data from 400 individuals in designated cultural cities was analyzed using statistical software, correlation coefficients. The questionnaire showed good content validity, accurately measuring social innovation. The study used Cronbach and CITC methods to refine scale measurement terms, resulting in high internal consistency. The questionnaire had good reliability, with an average value of 1. The study used semi-structured and in-depth interviews to collect data on social innovation, perceived value, and cultural tourism. The study used structural equation modelling (SEM) software to investigate structural relationships and orientations among variables. The findings suggest a strong positive relationship between social innovation in the context of cultural tourism.

Research Results

Quantitative Research

The study analysed data from 400 creative cities in China, revealing that men outnumbered women 52.6% to 47.4%, and the age distribution was 34.35% to 33.9%. The study highlighted the importance of service innovation and creative service concepts in fostering innovation. It also examined characteristics of cultural tourism, including heritage dimension, facilities attribute, supporting attribute, local management, and authentic experience. The study found that value perception and scope of service innovation are critical factors driving innovation. The study evaluated the structural validity of a questionnaire using exploratory and validation factor analyses. The results indicated that collaboration enhances the value perception of cultural tourism, and the model fits well and supports the relationship between collaboration and enhancing value perception in cultural tourism. Overall, the findings suggest that collaboration plays a significant role in enhancing the overall value perception of cultural tourism experiences. This highlights the importance of fostering partnerships and cooperation within the industry to drive innovation and improve visitor satisfaction. The parameter estimate for SI and CT shows a value of .031 and .027, respectively, with a PV of .049 and .034, respectively. These values indicate a positive relationship between SI and CT, with SI having a slightly stronger impact. The p-values suggest that both estimates are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a strong relationship between the variables. The study found a strong correlation between social innovation and cultural tourism, with a second-order model demonstrating high convergent validity. It also confirmed the perceived value of creative tourism destinations. The findings suggest that these concepts are closely related and can be reliably measured using a proposed model. Future research could explore their impact on economic and social development, and the potential for leveraging social innovation in cultural tourism destinations for positive outcomes.

Qualitative Research

The study examines social innovation and perceived values towards cultural tourism in rural villages in Anhui, China, using qualitative data from travel blogs in UNESCO-designated cultural cities. The research highlights the importance of local destination management, responsible tourism practices, and collaboration with local businesses and stakeholders in fostering growth as cultural tourism destinations. The study suggests that investing in



leadership training programmes can contribute to the success and sustainability of these destinations, as effective leadership fosters collaboration and creativity, affecting organisational competitiveness and attracting tourists to China's creative tourism destinations. The study also underscores the significance of community involvement in decision-making processes for the long-term success of cultural tourism initiatives in rural areas. Empowering local leaders and fostering a sense of ownership among community members can help cultural tourism destinations thrive and provide unique experiences for visitors.

The research emphasises the importance of social innovation and perceived value in China's cultural tourism. Social entrepreneurs play a crucial role in developing rural destinations and promoting social value. Team leadership, learning about new cultures, and collaboration on innovative solutions are essential. Perceived value includes service and technological innovation, while creative tourism destinations involve heritage dimensions and support. Social responsibility promotes sustainability in tourism, and effective leadership training programmes can boost the success and sustainability of creative tourism destinations in rural villages. Policymakers should incorporate social innovation initiatives into development plans for economic growth and support local businesses.

Discussions

In this study highlights the importance of both quantitative and qualitative research in understanding creative cities. It highlights social innovation and perceived values towards cultural tourism in rural villages in Anhui, China. The study found significant differences in self-management, decision-making, and relationship skills among team leaders in UNESCO-designated creative cities in China. It also highlighted the importance of service innovation and creative service concepts in fostering innovation. These findings suggest that community leader in UNESCO-designated cultural cities in China possess varying levels of proficiency in self-management, decision-making, and relationship skills. This indicates the need for targeted training and development programs to enhance these competencies and promote effective leadership within the creative industries. Additionally, the emphasis on service innovation and creative service concepts underscores the role of customer-centric approaches in driving innovation and economic growth in these cities.

The study demonstrates that community leaders in cultural tourism destinations foster creativity, collaboration, and perceived value. This is consistent with the findings of Paskova, M. & Zelenka, J. (2019). study underscores the significance of corporate social responsibility in sustainable tourism operations. The results indicate that incorporating corporate social responsibility into sustainable tourism can enhance reputation, foster consumer loyalty, and boost financial performance. These findings offer vital insights to industry stakeholders, enabling them to assure the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of social responsibility in generating positive social and environmental effects in cultural tourism destinations. By placing sustainability and social responsibility as top priorities, firms have the capacity to make a positive impact on the overall welfare of local communities and ecosystems, thereby promoting a tourist industry that is characterised by ethical practices and accountability.

Suggestion



1. According to research findings, China's innovative tourism sites attract tourists and boost economic growth. Policymakers should invest in leadership development programs to improve tourist experiences, customer happiness, and long-term viability. This can lead to environmental benefits like resource conservation and reduced carbon emissions. Integrated leadership development with environmentally responsible practices can align businesses with responsible tourism principles and contribute to the overall well-being of their locations. Implementing environmental initiatives can lead to resource conservation and reduced carbon emissions. Integrating leadership development programs with responsible tourism practices aligns operations with local well-being, enhancing reputation and customer loyalty, and attracting top talent.

2. Effective team leadership is crucial for innovation and creativity in creative tourism destinations. Leaders should have good communication skills, empower team members, and promote a culture of experimentation and risk-taking. Creative cities with a higher percentage of men may benefit from targeted marketing strategies. Future research could explore the relationship between creative tourism and agritourism, revealing new opportunities for sustainable development and community engagement in rural areas.

3. Future research should integrate research and development and operational research to explore creative tourism and agritourism, revealing potential synergies and impacts. This interdisciplinary approach could uncover sustainable development opportunities, community engagement in rural areas, and strategies for economic growth and cultural preservation. This could lead to innovative tourism products and experiences.

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