

Chapter 2

A Theoretical Inquiry Into Residents' Support for Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism in Qufu, China

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the theoretical foundations of residents' support (RS) for sustainable cultural heritage tourism (SCHT) in Qufu, China, the birthplace of Confucianism. It explores the economic, sociocultural, environmental, and political factors influencing residents' attitudes towards tourism. Integrating frameworks like social exchange theory, place attachment, and community participation, it discusses how local involvement drives the sustainability of heritage tourism. Key challenges such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, and rising living costs are addressed, highlighting residents as crucial stakeholders. Residents' support is essential for preserving cultural integrity and maximizing socio-economic benefits. A balanced approach aligning residents' needs with tourism goals can foster resilience, community involvement, and long-term sustainability. The chapter calls for ongoing research and policy development to enhance resident engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Heritage protection and tourism development have increasingly converged to form a unified model, where Cultural Heritage Tourism (CHT) utilises the historical and cultural value of sites to drive tourism activities. CHT, a rapidly expanding segment, involves visiting not only tangible sites like historical buildings and landscapes but also engaging

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with intangible elements such as traditional lifestyles, customs, and local cuisine. The integration of these tangible and intangible assets provides tourists with a variety of cultural experiences, promoting an immersive understanding of heritage sites' authenticity. This fusion has made CHT one of the fastest-growing segments of global tourism, driven by a rising interest in engaging with cultural heritage in a modern context (Mzembe et al., 2023). The evolving concept of cultural heritage, now encompassing historic buildings, cultural landscapes, living heritage, and community traditions, has significantly shaped CHT's trajectory. With more UNESCO World Heritage Site designations, countries are increasingly recognising the need to balance tourism development with cultural preservation (Zhang, 2022). This shift has stimulated worldwide interest in heritage tourism, which was valued at approximately \$556.96 billion in 2021, according to the UNWTO (Grand View Research, 2022). This growth is driven by changes in consumer preferences, new cultural expressions, and continuous innovations in digital technology, all of which have reinforced cultural tourism as a significant economic driver (Katsoni & Spyriadis, 2020). In the Asia-Pacific region, which includes China, India, and Japan, cultural heritage resources are particularly abundant. China, one of the four great ancient civilisations, is a key player in global heritage tourism, boasting 57 UNESCO-listed heritage sites as of September 2023, making it the second-largest globally in terms of the number of heritage sites (UNESCO, 2023b). While the integrated development of culture and tourism has driven economic growth, it has also led to several challenges, such as environmental degradation, overcrowding at popular sites, and the erosion of cultural landscapes due to over-commercialisation and unmanaged visitor flows (Zhang, 2022). The sustainable tourism development (STD) model offers a potential solution to these problems, shifting focus from mass tourism to quality-oriented tourism that prioritises preserving cultural heritage while fostering local economic development. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have provided a global framework for promoting sustainable cultural heritage tourism (SCHT) (Chin & Zhang, 2023). China's 14th Five-Year Plan for Culture and Tourism Development has been instrumental in integrating the preservation of intangible cultural heritage into tourism activities, encouraging traditional performances and local craft production to enhance cultural offerings (Li & Li, 2024). The SDGs, which emphasize environmental protection, social participation, and equitable development, are central to shaping a sustainable model for heritage tourism that benefits both residents and visitors (Sharma & Aulakh, 2023). For SCHAT to be effective, it must incorporate the perspectives and active participation of local communities. This is especially relevant in destinations like Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius, where heritage sites are deeply embedded in the community's social and cultural fabric. Community participation ensures that tourism development respects local traditions and contributes to residents' well-being, rather than merely catering to external economic interests (Lerario, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). When residents are engaged as active stakeholders, they are more likely to support sustainable tourism practices, ensuring the long-term preservation of both the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage (Sharma & Aulakh, 2023).

This chapter explores how residents' support can be leveraged to ensure the sustainability of CHT in Qufu, integrating theoretical frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory, Place Attachment, and Community Participation to examine the factors influencing residents' perceptions and willingness to support tourism initiatives. By considering residents as active agents rather than passive recipients of tourism development, the chapter argues that fostering a deeper understanding of communities' roles in SCHAT is essential. It emphasizes the importance of aligning tourism policies with local needs to create a resilient model of heritage tourism that preserves the cultural and historical essence of sites like Qufu while contributing to regional socio-economic development. This chapter aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable tourism by offering insights into how resident engagement can be a cornerstone for achieving sustainable outcomes in heritage-rich destinations (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). By adopting an inclusive approach, Qufu can serve as a model for other cultural heritage sites striving to balance economic development with the preservation of cultural values for future generations (Lerario, 2022).

CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM IN CHINA

As one of the four ancient civilisations, China's long history, vast land, and multi-ethnic distribution pattern have provided the world with heritage resources with different cultural connotations, styles and characteristics of the times. Among these countless heritage resources, 57 of them in China have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage

List. As one of the branches of heritage tourism, CHT is mainly for the tourism experience of cultural relics, architectural complexes, and heritage sites (Zhang, 2017). Through CHT, visitors can engage with tangible or intangible heritage resources, thereby fostering connections with the people, things, and places of the region.

At a time when China is proposing cultural power and cultural self-confidence, CHT has become a widely accepted tourism model. At the same time, it has also led more and more scholars to study CHT (Chen et al., 2022; Huibin et al., 2012; Ma & Mohame, 2023; Qiu et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2023; Weng et al., 2019; Yang & Wall, 2022). Its profound historical accumulation and extensive cultural distribution make cultural heritage resources diverse for China. The research on CHT in China has been divided into different stages by different scholars, according to its origin and stage events, and the research results of Xiang (2009) and (Zhang et al., 2023) have been combined to obtain the following six phases. The first phase is the foundation phase (1985-1991), during which the focus was on the characteristics of specific sites through the study of tangible heritage, aesthetics, historical and scientific values, as well as the packaging and development of tourism. Next is the transitional stage (1993-1996) (Xiang, 2009). In 1992, the World Heritage Headquarters was established in Paris, and the implementation of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* and the urgent action taken against threatened heritage raised awareness among scholars about heritage conservation (Gfeller, 2013). Therefore, the protection and detection of heritage sites began, based on tourism development and research into the value of heritage sites, with the emphasis on tourism development and research into the value of environmental science (Zhang et al., 2023). The third stage is the development stage (1997-2001), where attention began to be paid to the integrity of heritage protection. The research hotspots included tourism development, heritage value, and sustainable heritage development (Tao, 2000; Zhao, 1997). *The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* promoted the protection of cultural heritage and received more attention in the comprehensive improvement stage (2002-2006). In 2006, China designated the second Saturday of June as Cultural Heritage Day. With such increased concentration, Chinese academicians finally reached a consensus on cultural inheritance and sustainable development. A comprehensive development phase was carried out from 2007 to 2013. In the face of increasingly serious environmental problems (e.g., global warming), researchers began to explore the green development of CHT (Bixia & Zhenmian, 2013; Huibin et al., 2012; Wang & Bramwell, 2012) and pursue economic, social and ecological values and the unity of the three. In addition, their focus on communities led to new ways of managing cultural heritage. The last phase is from 2014 to the present. The research on heritage tourism has shown a significant development trend. The research on heritage tourism in China is increasingly in line with the progress of international research, and the research content and form tend to deepen and diversify.

Although China is known for its rich historical and cultural heritages, with many breath-taking historical sites, artistic treasures, and folk customs, it has to face the reality that the per capita heritage resources are still relatively poor (Sun & Zhou, 2015) due to its large population base. This situation not only reflects the tension between the Chinese population and resources but also highlights the challenges faced in protecting cultural heritage and tourism development. As the number of visitors increases, so does the pressure on cultural heritage (Zhang et al., 2023). The influx of tourists often leads to overcrowding of scenic spots, which makes it very difficult to protect the cultural heritage. At the same time, the actions of tourists, such as graffiti, random touching, etc., may also cause unintentional damage to the cultural heritage and present considerable challenges when it comes to protecting that cultural heritage. To meet these challenges, the development of CHT requires a lot of in-depth and systematic research (Zhang, 2022).

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN QUFU, CHINA

Qufu is a city located in the central part of China's Shandong province. It is not only the hometown of Confucius but also the birthplace of Confucian culture, carrying the 5000-year history of Chinese civilisation (Li, 2014). Due to its profound historical and cultural heritage, it is very rich in tourism resources (Li, 2021), among which the United Nations (UN) have included the Confucius Mansion, Confucius Temple, and Confucius Cemetery in Qufu in the Cultural World Heritage List in 1994 (UNESCO, 2023a). In recent years, Qufu City has focused on strategically deploying "the Powerful Cultural Tourism City." It has built a new highland for the development of cultural tourism through innovation and guidance, showing its unique cultural charm to the world. Relying on the geographical advantages of Confucius'

hometown, Qufu City promotes cultural consumption based on the excellent traditional Chinese culture (Zhang, 2018). It has taken the primary measures of condensing the intangible cultural heritage industry chain, building education museums, and building a cultural and tourism agglomeration area to promote a more extensive and stronger cultural industry (Xie & Li, 2021). Among them, the Confucian Sites in Qufu, representing the ancient city of the Ming Dynasty, show the profound heritage of Confucian culture (Zhang, 2018). The three significant buildings, namely, the Confucius Temple, Confucius Mansion, and Confucius Forest, are treasures of ancient Chinese architecture and important carriers of Confucian culture. Visitors can appreciate the exquisite skills of ancient architecture and feel the profundity of Confucian culture (Li, 2014; Wei, 2014). While tourism products have been upgraded, much of the infrastructure has also been improved. The protection of heritage sites, the restoration of scenic spots, the renovation of fire protection, the construction of public toilets, and the increase of transportation routes not only meet the travel needs of tourists but also provide conveniences for other service industries and local community residents (Li, 2021). By optimising the guarantee of tourism services and enriching the supply of cultural and tourism products, Qufu City provides a safe, stable and orderly tourism environment for tourists. With the rapid development of tourism, the community residents of Qufu City have become increasingly prominent in tourism development and have become a vital force in promoting sustainable and healthy tourism development. Qufu's community residents are the direct beneficiaries of tourism development, significant inheritors of culture, and maintainers of the tourism environment (Wang, 2010). However, although Qufu's community residents play an important role in tourism development, they face some challenges and problems (Yue, 2014). The residents receive far less attention from the community than other stakeholders in tourism development. Due to the significant overlap between tourist attractions and residential communities in Qufu, problems such as traffic congestion, population congestion, and environmental damage caused by tourism directly affect residents' living standards (Wang, 2010). Some residents have indicated that the schools and residents distributed in the 5A scenic area of Qufu have impacted the integrity of the city. While tourism development has brought more job opportunities, the rising cost of living is pressuring the community to survive. The negative economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism are becoming increasingly evident and cannot be ignored (Wang, 2010). At the same time, these positive or negative influences are affecting the residents in some way and are not conducive to STD.

RESIDENTS' SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Residents' support for tourism development can promote competitiveness and sustainable development in a city (Boukas, 2019). Murphy (1985) emphasised that the community is central to tourism decision-making and support, so tourism planning and development need to be integrated into the social fabric of the destination. The community residents at tourist destinations are essential to tourism as they are both the creators of the local social culture and the main participants and beneficiaries of the local tourism industry (Konar, et al., 2025; Soares et al., 2021). While communities have been stakeholders in tourism development, they are primarily marginalised and excluded from the development of these areas (Sher et al., 2015). However, without the support and involvement of the local communities, STD can be complicated (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016). Community participation (CP) is critical in STD because communities are better informed of local conditions and can effectively implement, monitor, and validate the best solutions to problems (Sher et al., 2015). Support is a subjective psychological activity. It is the corresponding view formed by people based on their perception of objective things and is an essential factor in the occurrence of subsequent behaviours (Konar et al., 2024). Support plays a pivotal role in the field of tourism. Support for tourism refers to the positive RAs and RBs that are closely related to loyalty to tourism development after a comprehensive consideration of the pros and cons of tourism development. This is not just a simple approval or disapproval, but also a kind of recognition and expectation that goes deep into the bone marrow. As pointed out by Nunkoo and So (2016), tourism support is a comprehensive reflection of RP of tourism development, which indicates the confidence of residents in tourism and their expectations for future development. Woosnam et al. (2019) further emphasised that RS for tourism is an important aspect for the long-term growth and sustainability of tourism activities. When residents have a positive attitude towards tourism, they are more willing to participate in tourism activities and contribute to the development of tourism. At the same time, their support will also attract more tourists to travel, thus promoting the prosperity and development of the tourism

industry. In addition, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2016) also pointed out that support for tourism development is essential for the long-term sustainable development of tourism. Only with the support and recognition of residents can the tourism industry achieve coordinated development in social, economic and environmental aspects, and achieve actual sustainable development. Therefore, in the process of tourism development, the support and attitude of residents need to be valued and the healthy, stable and sustainable development of tourism be promoted by actively guiding and cultivating RS and recognition for tourism.

Sustainable tourism is a hot topic, and much research has been conducted. However, as sustainable development is still in its development stage, sustainable tourism has different meanings for different interest groups in destinations, and these meanings have yet to be uniformly defined by individual and collective characteristics. According to Edward Inskeep, an adviser to the WTO, sustainable tourism is “the protection of the natural, cultural and other resources on which tourism depends so that they can be used for the benefit of society today and the future.” (Inskeep, 1992). In its book *Tourism and the Environment*, the WTO defined sustainable tourism as “meeting people's needs” while maintaining cultural integrity, protecting the ecological environment, and meeting economic, social and aesthetic requirements. It provides livelihoods for today's hosts and guests while safeguarding and promoting the interests of future generations and providing them with the same opportunities. Although the definition is described differently, the essence of its expression is the same. The 1995 Study on Sustainable Tourism pointed to this essence, “The essence of STD requires tourism to be integrated with nature, culture and human living environment.” Thus, according to the WTO (2003), “STD meets the needs of current visitors and host areas while protecting and increasing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged to manage all resources in such a way as to meet economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, basic ecological processes, biodiversity and life support systems.” In 2001, the UN held that STD is a mode of tourism development in which a tourism destination can meet the needs of tourists and destinations in a continuous development process without destroying the local cultural and ecological environment. According to Sutawa (2012), tourism should be used as a protection against the adverse effects of local culture, values, traditions, and history. Only when the cultural and ecological environment of tourist destinations are protected from destruction, and the spiritual and material needs of the residents at tourist destinations are satisfied can their sustainable development be achieved. The sustainable development of tourism provides a better tourism experience and living environment for tourists and residents while maintaining the local ecological environment and environmental carrying capacity. Therefore, to meet the needs of citizens, communities that develop their economies through tourism must establish sustainable tourism (Gautam, 2022). Eslami et al. (2019) showed a positive correlation between the quality of life of residents and their support for long-term tourism development. There is limited empirical research on the correlation between the quality of life of residents and their support for STD (Gautam, 2022). From the previous definition of STD, it can be concluded that the three pillars of STD are the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects (UNWTO, 2004). A report by the International Labour Organization (2017) also showed that sustainable tourism has three pillars: social justice, economic development, and environmental integrity. As such, tourism development needs to maximise the contribution of the community to the economy based on the environmental sustainability of protecting the environment, improving the landscape, reducing air, water and waste pollution, reducing the destruction of green spaces, and raising ecological awareness (Fuchs et al., 2024; Andereck et al., 2005). The living standards of community residents and the financial well-being of communities can be improved by increasing employment, investments, and incomes (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). During this period, it is also necessary to maintain socio-cultural sustainability. This includes the preservation of indigenous cultures, protection against the destruction of historical sites by excessive commercialisation of tourism and preservation of the unique way of life, local customs, traditions, and customs of the community. In addition, various negative effects (traffic congestion, crime, etc.) must be mitigated by tourism development (Nguyen et al., 2021). The economic, sociocultural, and environmental pillars are indispensable in achieving STD within communities, and there must be a balance between these three pillars (UNWTO, 2004). The concept of the political environment was proposed with an in-depth study of sustainable tourism, further expanding the framework for STD (Mihalič et al., 2016; Nugroho & Numata, 2020). The political environment focuses on how tourism destinations guide and govern the process of planning, implementing, and controlling STD (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Mihalič et al., 2016; Konar et al., 2016). Political participation enables coordination and cooperation among stakeholders in tourism development to achieve effective destination governance and STD (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). For community residents, the role of the political environment is to keep residents

informed about tourism development within the community, to involve them further in the planning process, to make decisions on specific requests for development permits and to ensure that the quality of life of the community is fairly represented in the tourism development strategy (Mihalič et al., 2016). All in all, the approach to STD in the abovementioned sustainable development aspects shows that greater attention should be paid to the environmental, sociocultural, economic and political environment when developing sustainable tourism activities.

Scholars have begun to measure tourism support in conjunction with RAs. With the deepening of supporting research, scholars have found that this staged model does not pay attention to the differences in tourist destinations, and hence, they have begun to use social research methods to conduct their research. Lankford and Howard (1994) established the Tourism Influence Attitude Scale, which is comprised of two categories and 27 variable indicators to provide directions for future research into tourism support. Based on this achievement, the measurement scale for RS of tourism has been continuously developed and constructed. Nicholas et al. (2009) established a tourism support measurement scale with two categories and nine variable indicators to study the perception and support among residents of heritage tourism destinations toward the impact of tourism. Wang and Lu (2014) analysed the influencing factors that cause the difference in tourism support by constructing a measurement model of community tourism support, and verified and analysed the paths of seven variables in the model. Bai et al. (2018) took 12 villages around a typical nature reserve in Beijing as samples to measure the degree of RS of tourism from two aspects: supporting the management of tourism activities in nature reserves and supporting community management of tourism activities.

Based on the various objects and content of studies, many factors have been mentioned as affecting STD. Jovanovič and Ivana (2016) believed that the general infrastructure, especially tourism infrastructure, is a factor that determines the success or failure of regional economic growth in many cases. Ashley et al. (2007) argued that tourism is one of the financial sectors that requires the active participation of tourism enterprises to diversify tourism products and services to meet the growing demand for new types of tourism. Brokaj (2014) argued that local governments or agencies should be more responsible for planning and developing tourist destinations. Mohammad and Som (2010) also noted that the complex political systems and power structures in society are essential for designing and implementing sustainable tourism policies. As shown in Table 2.3, the influencing factors of RS for tourism development have been extensively studied. Lee (2013) showed that the close connection and participation of the community are crucial factors affecting the level of support for STD. Factors, such as attitudes, perceptual effects, community attachment, CP, and perceived benefits, may affect RS for STD. Nunkoo and So (2016) examined several antecedents of RS. Positive tourism gains, a sense of control and power over tourism, and positive economic impact have a positive effect on RS. Boley et al. (2014) examined the effects of three types of empowerments on RS, where financial benefits and psychological empowerment have a positive impact on RS, while political empowerment has a negative impact. Movono and Dahles (2017) found that empowering women entrepreneurs in tourism had a positive impact on their communities. Megeirhi et al. (2020) pointed out that the values, beliefs and norms of residents are essential to support tourism activities. In addition, support for tourism can be linked to action, long-term expectations, and a willingness to participate and engage with communities as destination hosts. Dyer et al. (2007) studied the perception and support of tourism impacts by residents of Australia's Sunshine Coast. They explored how the perception of these influences, such as economic and cultural benefits, affected their support for tourism development. In addition, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2016) argued that the sociodemographic characteristics and cultural structure of residents may affect their support for tourism development.

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Table 1. Continued

Table 1. The Factors Influencing RS of Tourism Development

Influencing Factor		Supporting Publications
Perceived benefits	18	(Abd Aziz et al., 2020; Bhat et al., 2020; Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Egresi et al., 2021; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Hsu et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2023; Latip et al., 2018; Lee, 2013; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Strzelecka et al., 2021; Vieira et al., 2016; Vinerean et al., 2021; B. Wang et al., 2021; Wang & Luan, 2021; Yoopetch, 2022; Zhu et al., 2017)
Perceived cost	11	(Bhat et al., 2020; Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Egresi et al., 2021; Hsu et al., 2019; Lee, 2013; Vieira et al., 2016; Vinerean et al., 2021; B. Wang et al., 2021; Wang & Luan, 2021; Yoopetch, 2022; Zhu et al., 2017)
Positive Perception & Negative Perception	11	(Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Kitnuntaviwat & Tang, 2008; Neuts et al., 2021; Ng & Feng, 2020; Nicholas et al., 2009; Park et al., 2014; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Stylidis, 2017; Yu et al., 2018; Yuan et al., 2019)
Perceived impacts of tourism	5	(Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Latip et al., 2018; Stylidis, 2017; Stylidis et al., 2014)
Perceived conflicts	1	(M. Wang et al., 2021)
Perceived risks	1	(Jiang et al., 2023)
Perceived economic crisis	1	(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020)
Perceived justice	1	(B. Wang et al., 2021)
Community Attachment	13	(Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2019; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Latip et al., 2018; Nicholas et al., 2009; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Stylidis, 2017; Vinerean et al., 2021; Wang & Luan, 2021)
Place attachment	2	(Man Cheng et al., 2022; Yuan et al., 2019)
Participation (Involvement)	8	(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Hsu et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2023; Ng & Feng, 2020; Nicholas et al., 2009; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Yuan et al., 2019)
Community participation (Community Involvement)	6	(Latip et al., 2018; Lee, 2013; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Wang & Luan, 2021; M. Wang et al., 2021)
Environmental attitude	4	(Hsu et al., 2019; Nicholas et al., 2009; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015)
Cultural Attitude	1	(Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016)
Attitudes toward tourism development	1	(Yoopetch, 2022)
Empowerment	6	(Ahn & Bessiere, 2022; Boley et al., 2014; Khalid et al., 2019; Neuts et al., 2021; Strzelecka et al., 2016; Strzelecka et al., 2021)
Quality of life	6	(Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2022; Vinerean et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2018) (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2022; Vinerean et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2018)
Sense of place (community)	6	(Kitnuntaviwat & Tang, 2008; Man Cheng et al., 2022; Ng & Feng, 2020; Stylidis, 2017; Yoopetch, 2022; Zhu et al., 2017)
Satisfaction with the current level of tourism development	1	(Egresi et al., 2021)

Developed countries have been conducting long-term and in-depth research on STD. In contrast, sustainable tourism research in China started late, peaking only after 2006. Although the research output has increased, the literature consists mainly of macro analyses of the tourism industry. After 2010, a detailed branch of sustainable tourism emerged, but the study was mainly for tourists. Most studies explored the influence of factors such as perception (Cui & Ryan, 2011; Dai et al., 2017), attachment (Xu & Zhang, 2016; Q. Yuan et al., 2019), local identity (Xue et al., 2017) and satisfaction (Wu et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2014) on RS for tourism. Research hotspots are mainly focused on ecological civilisation and rural low-carbon tourism (Cheng et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2020; Zha et al., 2019). It can be seen that the current research objectives and perspectives on sustainable heritage tourism in China are one-sided.

The research on RS of tourism has become a key research direction in tourism. The research time of foreign scholars is slightly earlier than in China, and the research results are also more mature. The research mainly includes measuring RS of tourism, influencing factors, and paths. Most of the studies on RS of tourism are mainly case studies, and RS for tourism in different geographical locations, development scales, and stages of tourism development have been analysed by selecting different case locations. In the case of CHT, the attention of researchers on the community is still focused on attachment, participation and the impact of tourism development. Given the cultural nature of heritage, research on its

sustainable impact on communities remains insufficient. In addition, although China's tourism has changed from high-speed economic development to a high-quality development model, it also pays attention to cultural factors. However, the current development of heritage tourism is still more concerned with the economy, and researchers pay little attention to cultural factors. At the same time, SCHT also focuses more on protecting the ecological environment, and the level of concern of community residents is still at a disadvantage. For this research, the residents of Confucian Sites were taken as the research object and the multiple supporting factors affecting the sustainable development of CHT were explored.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing residents' support (RS) for Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism (SCHT) in Qufu, China. The city, renowned as the birthplace of Confucius, represents a unique confluence of cultural significance and tourism development, making it an ideal setting to explore the intricacies of resident attitudes towards tourism. Through the integration of various theoretical frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory, Place Attachment, and Community Participation, the chapter has offered valuable insights into the economic, sociocultural, environmental, and political dimensions that shape residents' perceptions and support for SCHT.

One of the primary findings is that residents are not merely passive recipients of tourism development but rather active stakeholders whose support is crucial for the sustainability of cultural heritage tourism. The involvement of residents in tourism planning and decision-making processes significantly influences their perceptions and willingness to support tourism initiatives. When local communities feel that they are benefiting from tourism—economically, socially, and culturally—they are more likely to support tourism development and contribute to its long-term sustainability. This chapter has argued that residents' support is not only essential for preserving the cultural and historical integrity of heritage sites but also for ensuring that tourism fosters socio-economic benefits that enhance the quality of life for local communities.

The research has also highlighted several challenges faced by Qufu in achieving sustainable tourism development. Issues such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, and rising living costs pose significant threats to both the heritage sites and the well-being of local residents. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of tourism, if not managed carefully, risks undermining the authenticity of cultural heritage, leading to the erosion of the unique cultural identity that makes Qufu a desirable tourist destination. These challenges underscore the need for a balanced approach that aligns the growth of tourism with the preservation of cultural values and the enhancement of residents' quality of life.

A critical contribution of this chapter is its emphasis on the role of community participation in sustainable tourism development (STD). Community participation goes beyond mere consultation to encompass active involvement in tourism planning, implementation, and benefit-sharing. By engaging local residents in the development process, tourism can become a tool for social empowerment, economic upliftment, and cultural preservation. The chapter has demonstrated that initiatives that foster a sense of ownership and attachment to heritage sites among residents are more likely to garner long-term support and achieve sustainable outcomes.

In terms of policy implications, the findings suggest that sustainable cultural heritage tourism in Qufu—and similar destinations—requires a multi-faceted approach that considers the diverse needs and aspirations of local communities. Policy-makers and tourism planners should prioritize strategies that integrate residents into the tourism value chain, promote community-based tourism models, and ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are equitably distributed. Moreover, environmental sustainability should be at the forefront of tourism planning to mitigate the adverse impacts of tourism on heritage sites and maintain the ecological balance of the destination.

From a theoretical perspective, this chapter has contributed to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism by expanding the understanding of RS in the context of cultural heritage tourism. It has highlighted the importance of incorporating residents' perceptions and attitudes into the theoretical models used to study sustainable tourism. The interplay of economic, sociocultural, environmental, and political factors provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in achieving resident support for sustainable tourism. This holistic approach can serve as a framework for future research on residents' support in other cultural heritage destinations.

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