



An Exploratory Study On The Sustainability Issues In The Context Of Cultural Tourism Destination In An Ancient Water Town In China

1st Yu Xiangxian, 2nd Zurinawati Binti Mohi

Abstract

Some People Call The Ancient Water Towns Of China "Living Museums" Because They Have Many Cultural Relics. The Fact That They Have Kept Their Old Buildings, Bridges, And Canals In Good Shape Is A Strong Illustration Of How They Have Been Devoted To Keeping Their Way Of Life Alive Since Ancient Times. Over The Years, They Have Been Able To Keep Vital Parts Of Their Culture Alive. These Include Both Traditional Festivals And Unique Ways To Express Oneself, Both Of Which Have Been Passed Down From One Generation To The Next. The Goal Of This Study Is To Look At The Sustainability Problems That Chinese Water Towns Have Had To Deal With Throughout The Years In Order To Keep The Cultural Tourism Alive In These Places. Some Examples Of Things That Belong Within This Category Include Canals, Buildings That Have Been There For A Long Time, And Habits That Have Been Around For A Long Time. Also, Even While Their Rising Popularity As Tourist Spots Has Led To Huge Economic Gains And More Exposure To History, It Has Also Caused Problems That Threaten Their Long-Term Survival. Tourism Can Help Conservation Efforts, Boost Local Economies, And Encourage Behaviours That Help Protect Intangible Cultural Heritage, But It Can Also Turn Heritage Into A Business, Displace Local People, And Harm Ecosystems That Are Already Fragile. As The Current Arrangement Shows, Managing Cultural Tourism Is Vital For The Survival Of Historic Water Towns. The Researchers Who Conducted The Study Believe That Management Choices, Enforced Regulations, And The Level Of Community Participation May Significantly Influence Cultural Tourism, Either Positively Or Negatively. In Order To Make Sure That These Communities Will Still Be There In The Future, It Is Vitrally Important To Make Rules That Are Based On Being Responsible For The Environment. These Guidelines Should Include Things Like Controlling The Number Of Tourists, Protecting Water Resources, And Creating Real Cultural Experiences While Attending To Existing Sustainability Challenges.

Keywords: Chinese Water Towns, Cultural Tourism, Ancient Water Towns, Sustainability, China

1. Introduction

Cultural Tourists Go To China's Historic Water Villages Because They Have Beautiful Natural Scenery, A Dynamic Culture, And A Long History. These Amazing Structures Draw Millions Of People Every Year. They Come To See The Canals, Monuments, And Stone Bridges That Make Up The Panorama. Even Yet, Some Places Have Started To See Sustainability As A Big Problem That Might Hurt Their Capacity To Keep Running Well Today And In The Future. This Issue Is Making It Harder To Come Up With Ways That Are Better For The Environment. One Example Of How Mass Tourism Affects The Environment Is The Growth Of The Tourist Industry, Which Has Led To Problems With Waste Management, The Decline Of The Ecosystem, And The General Growth Of The Tourism Sector That Has Caused These Problems. The Socio-Cultural Challenges Linked To Achieving A Balance Between Tourist Demands And Heritage Preservation Include The Commercialisation Of Culture And The Erosion Of Traditional Lifestyles (Utama Et Al., 2024).

Cultural Tourism Can Help Repair Infrastructure And Promote Historic Sites, However, There Is Also A Possibility That Uncontrolled Growth Might Hurt What Makes These Communities



Unique In China (Wang, 2023). This Research Focuses On To Learn How The Growth Of Tourism Affects The Environmental, Cultural, And Social Problems That Are Typical In Ancient Water Towns. The Results Of The Study Has Revealed Possible Risks As Well As They Also Help Create Innovative Ideas That May Help People Become More Resilient When Things Are Tough. The Process Allowed Communities, Planners, And Politicians Who Want To Protect The Cultural And Ecological Health Of These Important Locations Well-Informed Thoughts And Proposals That Are In Line With The Guidelines.

2. Background Of The Study

More Specifically, China Has Some Of The Most Famous Archaeological Sites In The World, Such As Ancient Water Towns. This Set Of Places Is One Of The Most Famous In The World. People Know That The Canals, Bridges, And Buildings In These Settlements Have Been Very Well Cared For, And They Are Famous For Being Able To Hold Hundreds Of Years' Worth Of History And Culture. People Think That They Are Living Legacies Because They Retain The Cultural Identity Of The People Who Lived In Them. This Might Be Because They Mix Things That Are Real With Those That Are More Abstract. This Happens When They Mix Tasks That Are More Abstract With Behaviours That Entail Big Structures. The Towns Have Changed A Lot In The More Than Thirty Years Since Then, And Today They Are Popular Places For Travellers Who Want To Learn About Other Cultures. This Is Largely Because A Lot Of People From All Around The Globe Want To Witness A Culture That Is Different From Their Own. This Is The Reason For This Result: The Towns Have Become Great Sites For Cultural Tourism Because Of This. Tourism Has Brought In Much-Needed Money, Fixed Up Infrastructure, And Made People More Mindful Of Their Past Lives (Nag & Mishra, 2024). Because Of This, Some Have Asked Whether They Would Be Able To Remain In Place For A Long Time. Environmental Problems Including Polluted Water Supplies, Too Many People, And Bad Waste Management Might Affect The Delicate Ecosystems That May Be Found In The Ancient Water Cities. These Ecosystems Need To Be Carefully Cared For In Order To Stay Alive. At The Same Time, There Has Been More Attention Paid To Socio-Cultural Issues Including The Sale Of Traditions, The Loss Of Authenticity, And The Disruption Of Community Life. The General Public Is Now Aware That The Difficulties In Concern Have Been Brought Together. Cultural Tourism Sites Have To Find A Way To Preserve Their Heritage While Also Helping The Economy Flourish. They Are In A Tough Position. Because Of The Situation We Are In Right Now, There Is Extensive Testing The Notion Of Sustainability (Hong & Zinda, 2024). This Research Aims To Tackle The Sustainability Challenges Posed By Cultural Tourism In Historic Water Towns And Propose Solutions That Allow These Areas To Maintain Their Unique Character While Benefiting From Modern Infrastructure.

3. The Purpose Of The Research

This Study Aims To Examine The Problems And Complexities Faced By Traditional Water Villages In China To Ensure Their Ongoing Survival. Some Of The Primary Issues That Will Be Looked At Include The Selling Of Culture, The Disruption Of Communities, And The Harm To The Environment. There Is No Way To Change The Reality That This Is The Case, Even If Tourism Clearly Has Financial Benefits. The Purpose Of This Research Is To Elucidate The Interconnections Among The Cultural, Ecological, And Social Dimensions Of These Communities To Enhance The Evaluation Of Their Resilience. To Achieve This Goal, This Study Investigated The Subject Via The Lens Of Sustainability In Relation To Tourism. This Also Critically Examined The Potential Contributions Of Cultural Tourism To Sustainability, Contingent Upon Careful Management, While Also Highlighting The Risks Of Prioritising Commercial Interests Above These Considerations.



4. Literature Review

Ancient Towns, Particularly Those With Fragile Ecosystems And Heritage Value, Are Often Vulnerable To Tourism-Induced Pressures. Environmental Literature Points To Issues Such As Water Contamination, Noise Pollution, And Overcrowding, All Of Which Strain Natural Resources And Disrupt Ecological Balance. In Ancient Water Towns, Where Waterways Are Central To Identity, Environmental Sustainability Is Particularly Critical (Cao Et Al., 2023). On Socio-Cultural Grounds, Research Points To Worries About Authenticity And Commodification. As Tourism Levels Swell, Local Cultures And Heritage Sites Tend To Be Restructured To Suit Visitor Expectations. Though It Boosts Tourist Appeal, It May Sacrifice Heritage To Simulated Shows Instead Of Everyday Praxis. In Chinese Water Towns, Conventional Dwellings Often Turned Into Commercial Sites Are A Case In Point. Though These Changes Accrue Revenue, They Might Water Down Cultural Integrity And Destroy Community Values (Li, 2021).

Economically, Cultural Tourism Is Credited With Bringing Life To Heritage Towns, Creating Jobs, And Financing Restoration Efforts. However, A Heavy Reliance On Tourism Income Exposes The Locations To Global Or National Setbacks, Including Health Epidemics Or Economic Recessions In Ancient Water Towns Of China (Liu Et Al., 2022). Such Dependence Can Threaten Local Economies, So Sustainable Diversification Becomes An Immediate Priority. Integrated Management Approaches Are The Focus Of Recent Studies As A Means Of Counteracting These Challenges. Interventions Like Participatory Governance, Heritage Education, And Environmentally Friendly Visitor Practices Are Advocated To Mitigate Sustainability Risks. As Much As Insights In Global Heritage Destinations Are Valuable, Research On Ancient Chinese Water Towns Is Still In Its Infancy (Wen Et Al., 2023). There Is A Necessity For Exploratory Studies Contextualising Issues Of Sustainability Within Cultural Tourism Destinations In Recognition Of Both The Opportunities And Threats. This Research Helps To Fill That Gap By Exploring How Sustainability Concerns Appear And Develop In The Cultural Tourist Environment Of China's Ancient Water Towns.

5. Research Question

- What Is The Effect Of Cultural Tourism On Ancient Water Town In China?

6. Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The Quantitative Data Analysis Was Conducted Using Spss Version 25. The Researcher Assessed The Strength And Direction Of The Statistical Link By Calculating The Odds Ratio And The 95% Confidence Interval. The Researchers Established A P-Value Cut-Off Below 0.05 For Statistical Significance. A Descriptive Method Was Used To Examine The Data And Identify Its Most Significant Aspects. Quantitative Methods Are Often Used To Assess Data Enhanced By Computational Statistical Analysis Tools. This Include Data Acquired Via Polls, Surveys, And Questionnaires.

6.2 Sampling

Participants Were Requested To Complete Questionnaires As Part Of The Research. Six Hundred Fifty Questionnaires Were Delivered After The Selection Of 530 Individuals For The Research With The Rao-Soft Approach. A Total Of 634 Questionnaires Were Collected; However, After Eliminating 45 Incomplete Submissions, The Final Sample Size Was 589 Responses.

6.3 Data And Measurement:



The Research Used A Questionnaire Survey As The Main Data Gathering Instrument. Part A Of The Survey Solicited Fundamental Demographic Information, Whilst Part B Used A Five-Point Likert Scale To Gather Feedback On The Attributes Of Both Online And Physical Channels. A Multitude Of Ancillary Resources, Including Internet Databases, Supplied The Secondary Data.

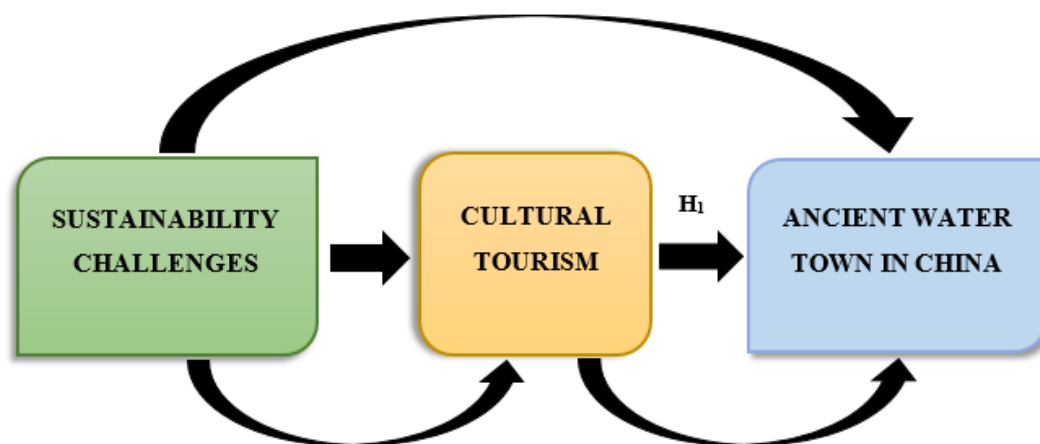
6.4 Statistical Software:

The Statistical Analysis Was Carried Out By The Researcher Using Spss 25 And Ms-Excel.

6.5 Statistical Tools:

In Order To Have A Basic Understanding Of The Data, The Researcher Used Descriptive Analysis. Additionally, Anova Data Analysis Is Required Of The Researcher.

7. Conceptual Framework



8. Result

• Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis (Fa) Is Often Used To Deconstruct A Set Of Measurement Items Into Their Fundamental Components. In Theory, Factors That Are Not Immediately Evident May Nonetheless Influence The Outcomes Of Quantifiable Variables. The Fa Approach Is A Model-Driven Technique. The Primary Objective Of This Research Is To Comprehend The Links Among Observed Events, Their Origins, And Measurement Errors.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Kmo) Method Is Used To Assess The Appropriateness Of Data For Factor Analysis. The Researcher Verifies Whether The Sample Size Is Sufficient To Accurately Represent The Whole Model And All Its Variables. Statistical Metrics Evaluate The Presence Of Common Variance Among Many Variables. Employing Factor Analysis, Even With Less Hierarchical Data, May Provide Superior Outcomes.

The Set Of Integers Generated By Kmo Spans From 0 To 1. Sampling Is Deemed Suitable When The Kmo Score Ranges From 0.8 To 1.

If The Kmo Is Below 0.6, It Indicates Insufficient Sampling. Most Writers Often Choose 0.5 For This, Resulting In A Usual Range Of 0.5 To 0.6. Formulate An Informed Hypothesis.

At Or Around Zero, Partial Correlations Constitute A Significant Portion Of The Overall Correlations. The Presence Of Significant Correlations Severely Impedes Component Analysis.

The Criteria Established By Kaiser For Approval Are As Follows:

Results Ranging From 0.050 To 0.059 Did Not Meet Expectations.

Significantly Below The Industry Standard (0.60-0.69).

The Range For A Mediocre Grade Often Falls Between 0.70 And 0.79.

A Value Ranging From 0.80 To 0.89 Signifies A Quality Designation.



The Interval From 0.90 To 1.00 Is Markedly Distinct.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | 0.867 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 3252.968 |
| | df | 190 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

This Substantiates The Assertions On The Execution Of The Sample. The Researchers Used Bartlett's Test Of Sphericity To Ascertain The Statistical Significance Of The Correlation Matrices. If The Result Exceeds 0.867, The Sample Is Considered Adequate According To The Kmo Standard. Bartlett's Sphericity Test Yields A P-Value Of 0.00. Bartlett's Sphericity Test Demonstrates The Statistically Significant Departure Of The Correlation Matrix From An Identity Matrix.

❖ **Mediating Variable** **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural Tourism Has Both Good And Bad Consequences On China's Ancient Water Towns. Every Year, Millions Of People Visit These Places Because They Want To See The Different Cultural, Historical, And Architectural History Of These Areas. Tourism Can Help Local Crafts, Festivals, And Traditions Make Money. Tourism May Also Help Towns Come Back To Life And Provide Money For Conservation Projects. Cultural Tourism, On The Other Hand, Might Cause Problems If People Don't Think About How It Would Affect The Environment. People Are Using Commercialisation Too Much, Which Might Turn Historic Places Into Goods. This Might Change The Culture's Authenticity And Make It Less Valuable. Converting Old Homes Into Businesses Or Event Venues Might Lead To The Loss Of Old Customs And Traditions. Tourism Is A Part Of The Economy That Is Noted For Its Inconsistencies. The Growing Number Of Tourists Is Putting A Strain On The Local Water Systems, Infrastructure, And The Daily Lives Of Those Who Live There. Cultural Tourism Connects Concerns About Sustainability With The Daily Life Of Ancient Water Towns, Determining Whether Tourism Is A Saviour Or Destroyer Of Them (Candia, 2024).

❖ **Dependent Variable** **Ancient Water Town In China**

There Are A Few Things That Make The Water Towns Of China, Which Date Back To The Middle Ages, Unique. These Include Little Streets That Are Frequently Called "Alley Homes," As Well As Stone Bridges And Canals. Also, These Places Stand Out Because Their Architecture Has Been Kept In Its Original Form. There Are No Other Landscapes That Can Match To These Ones When It Comes To How Important They Are To Culture. This Is Because They Are Completely Unique. The Significance Of Historical Water Town Sites Arises From Their Preservation Of Both Tangible Attributes And Elements Of Intangible Culture. There Are Many Different Things That Affect The Phenomena That Are Being Studied. Some Of These Things Include The Culture's Norms And Values, The Things That People Do Every Day, And The Customs That Have Been Around For A Long Time. This Is



Merely A Brief List Of The Things That Are Involved. These Cities Have Played A Big Role In The Expansion Of China's Cultural Tourist Sector. They Have Done This Because Many People, Both From The Us And Beyond, Recognise Them As Places To Go For Cultural Trips. Challenges Concerning Sustainability Will Persist Until They Are Addressed In Relation To The Growth Of The Tourist Sector. The Commercialisation Of Culture, The Destruction Of The Environment, And An Excessive Influx Of Visitors Are But A Few Of The Many Elements That Threaten The Natural Equilibrium And Authenticity Of A Location. Tourism Can Help Preserve Culture Across The World, And It Can Also Help The Economy Expand And Infrastructure Improve. On The Other Hand, These Kinds Of Hazards Happen Every Day In Ancient Water Communities. The Administration Of Cultural Tourism Has A Big Effect On How Well These Sites Do And How Well They Can Safeguard Cultural Treasures While Also Growing Tourism. It Also Influences Whether Or Not These Places Will Be Able To Keep The Things That Make Them Cultural Monuments, Which Is Another Issue That It Affects. The Ability Of These Businesses To Stay In Business In The Future Will Depend On Their Ability To Do Things That Connect The Tourist Industry With Ideas Related To Sustainable Development (Chen, 2023).

- **Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Ancient Water Town In China**

There Are Many Different Things That Connect Cultural Tourism To China's Historic Water Cities. Cultural Tourism Is The Main Source Of Income For These Villages. This Kind Of Tourism Helps The Local Community By Giving Money To Projects That Are In Charge Of Restoring Cultural Treasures, Creating New Jobs, And Protecting The Ways Of Life Of The People Who Live There. This Is A Good Way To Help Keep The Settlements Safe. It Makes It Easier To Share Knowledge About Cultural Heritage, Which Makes People More Respectful Of Cultural Objects And Puts More Pressure On Communities To Keep Them Up. But If Tourism Keeps Growing In An Uncontrolled And Unregulated Fashion, These Goals Might Be At Risk. Environmental Stress And Congestion Are Making People Uncomfortable And Damaging The Social And Physical Fabric Of Communities. Also, The Widespread Nature Of Consumerism Is Hurting The Authenticity Of Culture. This Duality Doesn't Make The Connection Between Cultural Tourism And Historic Water Towns Good Or Bad On Its Own. Instead, It Turns It Into A Way To Regulate Visitor Development. Cultural Tourism, Which Is Strongly Related To The Ideas Of Sustainability, Has The Potential To Greatly Increase The Resilience Of Communities And The Preservation Of History. There Is Little Doubt That Both The Culture And The Environment Will Go Worse Far More Quickly. Cultural Tourism Is A Double-Edged Sword; It May Help Protect Cultural Heritage, But It Can Also Destroy It. It Also Has A Big Effect On How Profitable Historic Water Towns Are, Which Have Lately Become Popular Tourist Spots That Draw A Lot Of People (Xia, 2024).

Based On The Above Debate, The Researcher Established The Following Hypothesis To Evaluate The Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Ancient Water Town In China.

“H₀₁: There Is No Significant Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Ancient Water Town In China.”

“H₁: There Is A Significant Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Ancient Water Town In China.”



Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Sum | | | | | |
| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 39729.862 | 259 | 5728.826 | 964.124 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 594.928 | 329 | 5.942 | | |
| Total | 40324.79 | 588 | | | |

This Research Yields Remarkable Discoveries. $F = 964.124$ And A P-Value Of 0.000, Which Is Below The 0.05 Alpha Threshold, Suggest Statistical Significance. The Researcher Accept The Hypothesis "*H₁: There Is A Significant Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Ancient Water Town In China*" And Reject The Null Hypothesis.

9. Discussion

Cultural Tourism Plays A Vital But Opposing Role In The Preservation Of China's Ancient Water Towns. On The One Hand, Tourism Is A Lifeline, Revitalizing Such Towns By Stimulating Local Economies, Projecting International Prestige, And Infusing Desperately Needed Capital Into Preservation. The Reuse Of Historic Architecture For Museum Status, Guesthouses, And Performance Halls For Intangible Culture Is A Demonstration Of How Tourism Creates Value From Heritage Anew. Similarly, Intangible Heritage Such As Local Crafts, Dishes, And Festivals Also Acquire New Constituencies Due To Promotion Of Tourism, Ensuring Their Survival. However, It Also Brings Forth Underlying Problems. If A Culture Is Too Commercialised, Its Real History May Be Turned Into A Show Meant To Amuse An Audience. This Might Lead To The Culture Losing Its Identity. When Residential Neighbourhoods Are Turned Into Commercial Areas, Both The Social Fabric Of The Communities And The Homes Of The Individuals Who Live There Are Hurt. As More And More People Learn About The Idea Of Sustainability, It Is Becoming A More Essential Issue In This Field. The Area Is Already Having Trouble Dealing With The Growing Number Of Tourists That Have Come; This Is Particularly True For The Water Systems, Sewage Treatment Plants, And Other Sorts Of Infrastructure. If This Were To Occur, The Result May Be The Fragmentation And Disarray Of The Cultural Legacy That Tourism Is Striving To Protect. Cultural Tourism Is Becoming A More Important Middleman In The Ongoing Debate About How Much Uncontrolled Development Is Hurting The Natural Environment And Whether Or Not Managed Growth Can Help With Environmental Problems. To Make Sure That The Tourist Industry Is Run In A Way That Protects Cultural Artefacts While Also Helping The Economy And Society, It Is Important To Have Rules And Public Participation. Last But Not Least, For Old Water Towns To Be Successful, Cultural Tourism Has To Place Eco-Friendly Practices Ahead Of Making Money.

10. Conclusion

In Conclusion, Cultural Tourism Is Both A Danger And An Opportunity For The Long-Term Survival Of China's Traditional Water Villages. The Dangers Of Too Much Commercialisation, Traffic Jams, And Damage To The Environment Are Putting The Economic Benefits And Positive Image That The World Has Of The Legacy At Risk.



Governance, Planning, And How Much Local People Do These Things All Have A Big Impact On The Relationship Between Cultural Tourism And Historic Water Towns. For The Long-Term Success Of Efforts To Protect The Environment, The Rise Of Eco-Friendly Tourism Must Be The Top Goal. When It Comes To Conservation Efforts, It's Important To Think About The Number Of Tourists, The Availability Of Water, The Creation Of Real Cultural Exchanges, And The Utilisation Of Money Made From Tourism. It Is Very Important That Citizens Be Allowed To Continue Being Involved In The Development Of China's Historic Water Towns As Stakeholders. The Main Job Of Cultural Tourism Should Be To Connect Old Traditions With New Ideas. To Thrive As Living Historical Monuments, Ancient Water Towns Must Make Tourist Operations More Sustainable While Yet Retaining Their Unique Cultural And Ecological Features.

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