



Emotional responses toward Tourism Performing Arts Development: A comparison of urban and rural residents in China

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ABSTRACT

In contrast to the substantial work on resident perceptions toward tourism development, relatively little is known about residents' emotional responses. By applying cognitive appraisal theory, this study aims to identify the causes and consequences of resident emotions toward Tourism Performing Arts (TPA) developments across urban and rural communities. Based on a quota sampling method, surveys of 438 and 435 residents were undertaken in two typical urban (Hangzhou) and rural (Yangshuo) TPA destinations in China. Results revealed that rural residents reported a higher intensity of positive emotions and were more supportive towards TPA development. Positive emotions (i.e., happy, loving and grateful) for rural and urban residents were elicited by outcome desirability, fairness, and coping potential whereas negative emotions were generated differently. Complex emotions, rather than specific emotions were found to be related behavioral intentions towards TPA development. Findings suggest targeted strategies such as promoting TPA in urban communities and offering preferential local access for rural communities.

1. Introduction

Tourism performing arts (TPA) combine artistic performance and entertainment through original, indigenous or innovative forms of cultural expression that are primarily intended for a tourist audience. Due in part to the tremendous growth of tourism to China and the Chinese government's goal to use cultural tourism as a development strategy (China Ministry of Culture, 2009), TPAs have become key attractions in many tourism destinations in China over the last decade. TPAs are responsible for 47.1 million visitors and contribute over 3.57 billion yuan each year to the Chinese economy (Daolue Performing Arts Research Center, 2016). TPA developments have spread across 200 rural and urban destinations in China and are now considered to be an effective strategy for enriching tourist experience and enhancing destination competitiveness (Kim, Chung, Petrick, & Park, 2018). One of the original TPAs, *The Romance of The Song Dynasty* in Hangzhou attracted approximately 50 million visitors every year, and is regarded as largest attended show in the world (Songcheng Group, 2018). China's first TPA, *Impression Liusanjie* in Yangshuo has had a major economic impact on the community by attracting more than 900,000 attendees per year (Mingyu, Yan, & Dongmei, 2014). However, the lack of academic studies on TPA developments is surprising given their popularity and significant contribution to many tourism destinations in China.

TPA brings economic benefits and intangible values such as cultural promotion and community pride, yet the influx of tourists to residential areas disrupts residents' daily lives, leading to social disharmony in tourism destinations (Lin, Chen, & Filieri, 2017). When personal interests toward TPA development are at odds with the collective benefits of the community residents' responses might be more complex than previous literature assumed. For instance, residents may feel gratitude or pride if they believe that TPA has preserved and promoted their local culture. In the other hand, the imbalanced distribution of profits between TPA providers and residents may generate emotions such as worry and anger. Moreover, considering the different lifestyle and disposable income between urban and rural residents, distinct emphases on the evaluation of TPA development are inevitable due to its nature of art and entertainment. Since a sustainable TPA development requires a high level of participation and support from local residents, it is important to understand residents' responses by exploring their psychological responses towards TPA development.

Although resident responses to tourism development have been a major topic since the emergence of tourism impact studies in the 1960s, the role of emotion in resident perceptions of tourism development has seldom been explored. Dominant approaches, such as *Social Exchange Theory*, assume that residents' perceptions are influenced by a tradeoff between the benefits and costs of tourism development (Ramkissoon &

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Nunkoo, 2012). However, these approaches have been criticized because they assume that individuals are isolated and respond rationally (e.g., Chhabra, 2007; Monterrubio & Andriotis, 2014; Sharpley, 2014). Alternatively, it could be argued that residents do not follow rational-choice principles when judging tourism developments. Perceptions or behaviors may be biased by emotional states or emotional attachments to the subject, event or object. Emotions are an intense feeling elicited by a particular referent (Barsade & Gibson, 2007) and offer another lens of understanding residents responses and behaviors toward specific types of tourism development.

While several studies have examined community responses to tourism in China (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Wang, Yang, Chen, Yang, & Li, 2010; Zhou, Chan, & Song, 2017), the distinction between rural and urban China is rarely appreciated. The education, culture and entertainment expenditure of urban residents is on average 2.59 times higher than that of rural residents (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2017), which suggests significant differences in lifestyles. Literature has confirmed significant differences in consumption pattern and tourism demand between urban and rural residents in China (Sun & Wu, 2004; Yang, Liu, & Qi, 2014). Although various perceptions and behaviors toward tourism development have been found between rural and urban residents in Malaysia (Rasoolimanesh, Roldán, Jaafar, & Ramayah, 2017), few studies have examined the Chinese context, particularly in relation to specific types of tourism development. This research addresses the shortcoming by analyzing and comparing residents' responses toward TPA development in two typical urban and rural tourism communities in China.

It is argued that the artistic glamour of TPA may generate complex emotional responses among residents. While previous literature has explored resident perceptions based on rational cost-benefit trade-offs, this paper aims to fill a research gap by studying resident responses from an emotional perspective. Emotion provides specific information for understanding behavior (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). Therefore, this study provides insights into residents' behaviors toward specific types of tourism development by identifying emotional responses and their causes. Furthermore, the study makes a theoretical contribution by exploring differences in urban and rural residents' emotions, appraisals and behavioral intentions towards TPA development in China. Moreover, considering the rapid expansion of TPAs in China, the study examines practical implications by analyzing residents' responses in a way that has been seldomly explored in literature.

2. Literature review

2.1. Residents' response to tourism development

Although a significant body of literature has developed to examine the factors affecting resident perceptions of tourism, research on the role of resident emotions is largely absent. Some studies categorize the attributes or factors into an extrinsic and intrinsic dichotomy (e.g., Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Sharpley, 2014), while others partition the factors based on the consequences emerging from tourism development, such as socioeconomic, special and economic dependency factors (Smith, 1998; Xu, Barbieri, Anderson, Leung, & Rozier-Rich, 2016). Nevertheless, a majority of scholars use unidimensional factors to test hypotheses about resident attitudes towards tourism (e.g., Fletcher, Pforr, & Brueckner, 2016; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000).

At a macro and extrinsic level, theoretical models such as Doxey's 'Irridex' and Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Model have been established to explain changes in residents' attitudes during different phases of tourism development (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1975). Other extrinsic variables assume that resident responses to tourism are based on the influx of tourists, such as seasonality (e.g., Bimonte & Faralla, 2016), density of tourists (e.g., Vargas-Sánchez, Porras-Bueno, & Plaza-Mejía, 2011), cultural differences (e.g., Tosun, 2002) and the degree of economic development at the destination (e.g., Lepp, 2007).

At an individual and intrinsic level, attribution theory (Pearce, 1989), dependency theory (Preister, 1989), social representation theory (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003), and social exchange theory (Ap, 1992a) have been used to understand residents' perceptions of the value associated with tourism developments. Sociodemographic variables are also widely applied to distinguish different perceptions of residents. Although some studies have argued that most demographic factors are irrelevant to resident attitudes (Milman, 1988; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990), the majority of studies have suggested that sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, age, education and income do influence character perceptions (McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Sharma & Gursoy, 2015). Moreover, the extent to which residents rely economically on the tourism industry is an important factor which may affect their attitudes and support for tourism. It is widely accepted that those who are employed or gain revenue from the tourism industry are more satisfied and therefore more supportive towards tourism (Ap, 1992a; Wang & Pfister, 2008). In addition, situational differences such as the length of residence (Khoshkam, Marzuki, & Al-Mulali, 2016), proximity of residence to tourist developments (Long, Perdue, & Allen, 1990), and knowledge about tourism (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005) also influence resident perceptions toward tourism.

More recently, the resident perceptions literature has moved beyond cognitive evaluations of tourism development to examine other psychological factors. For example, the role of trust (Ouyang, Gursoy, & Sharma, 2017), emotional solidarity (Moghavvemi, Woosnam, Paramanathan, Musa, & Hamzah, 2017) and commitment (Chien, Ritchie, Shipway, & Henderson, 2012; Moghavvemi et al., 2017) have been linked to positive resident perceptions. Nevertheless, studies of residents' emotional responses to tourism developments are conspicuously absent from the tourism literature. While some studies have focused on residents' subjective wellbeing (Naidoo, Pearce, & Sharpley, 2017, pp. 179–188; Theodori, 2001) and quality of life (e.g., Jeon, Kang, & Desmarais, 2016; Yu, Charles Chancellor, & Tian Cole, 2011), most are concerned with general well-being rather than emotional responses to specific types of tourism development.

In parallel with recent work on tourist emotions, it is argued that residents have specific emotional responses toward tourism and that these responses influence their intentional behaviors regarding tourism developments (e.g., Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Caušević, & Odeh, 2014; Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017). While some residents feel happy, proud or satisfied when new developments boost the vitality of the local culture and economy, the inequity of benefits or investment risks may generate anger, frustration or stress (e.g., Jordan, Vogt, & DeShon, 2015). Rather than assuming residents are homogenous and rational (e.g., Chhabra, 2007; Monterrubio & Andriotis, 2014; Sharpley, 2014), the study of residents' emotional responses identifies differences among individuals living in the same community (Zhang, Inbakaran, & Jackson, 2006).

2.2. Approaches to studying emotions

Emotion represents a personal experience manifested through psychological and physiological mechanisms, and is a means of social communication influenced by society and cultural frameworks (Stearns, 2009). Emotions are differentiated and can be elicited by a wide range of triggers (e.g., an object, a person or an event), therefore they may provide more attitude- and behavior-specific information than cognitive processes (Cohen, Pham, & Andrade, 2008). In psychology, three dominant approaches (i.e., categories, dimensions and cognitive appraisals) have been applied to investigate emotions in tourism and marketing contexts (Watson & Spence, 2007). The category approach is based on the notion that emotions are distinct events that contain several underlying emotions (Ekman, 1999), which groups emotions based on their similarities (e.g., Consumption Emotion Set, Destination Emotional Scale) (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Richins, 1997). The dimension approach indicates that emotions lie along a continuum, which

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