

The Participation Path Analysis of Local Community in Ethnic Tourism Destination*

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Community participation of tourism development in ethnic tourism destinations has great significance to promote the evolution of national tourism. Based on the empowerment theory, this study constructs a theoretical model between tourism empowerment, social capital, tourism impact, and residents' willingness to participate tourism development. Taking Dong Village of Zhaoxing County in Southeast Guizhou Province of China as the case, structural equation model is applied to test the hypothetical relationships. Results show that economic, psychological, and social empowerment is related to residents' perception of tourism positive influence and their willingness to participate tourism development. In addition, positive tourism impact and social capital are also significant driving forces to enhance residents' initiative in tourism development. The higher social capital mainly comes from residents' perceived social empowerment. This study provides theoretical guidance for encouraging residents of ethnic tourism destinations to participate tourism and then promote local tourism development.

Keywords: empowerment theory, social capital, tourism participation willingness, Zhaoxing Dong Village

Introduction

As a nation with various ethnicities, China has found it important to promote tourism development as an effective way to enhance economic, cultural, and social development in ethnic tourism destinations as well as to promote cultural identification of local community. Noteworthy, community participation and support is the necessary step to improve life quality of local community in ethnic tourism destinations and to upgrade local

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industrial transformation (Wall & Yang, 2014). Hence, exploration of community participation in ethnic tourism destinations and revealing factors that influence tourism participation willingness would contribute to the inheritance of unique ethnic culture and improve the economic, cultural, and social progress of ethnic tourism destinations.

As an important research topic, tourism participation has seen quite a few research endeavors. However, there are following shortcomings concerning these researches. Firstly, managerial policies and experiences to promote community participation in one destination could not be applied to another. Different ethnic tourism destinations undergo different economic, social, and cultural development and might very possibly be in different stage of tourism development. Consequently, various destinations are coupled with different degrees of community participation (Wang, Long, & Zheng, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the driving factors of community participation based on the development stage and regional characteristics of specific ethnic tourism destinations. Secondly, most of recent studies focused on the impact of community participation upon local tourism industry (Wang, Xie, & Zhang, 2020). However, what confronts ethnic tourism destinations is either deficient or excessive community participation (Zhou, Yang, & Zhang, 2013). It is yet to know their community perception of empowerment and its impact upon tourism participation willingness. What calls for special academic attention is the dynamic qualities of empowerment (Hu & He, 2019), the target, path, and priority difference during different stages of empowerment (Wang, 2013). Based on the residents' perception, with Zhaoxing Dong Village as an example, the present state of local residents' empowerment of perception and driving mechanism of tourism participation are explored, which is beneficial to managers more precisely on empowerment management work, stimulate initiatives of residents to participate in tourism business, and promote the sustainable development of regional tourism.

Literature Review

Community Participation

Murphy (1988) initiated discussion on antecedents and consequences of community participation in the scenario of tourism planning. He discovered that community participation in tourism development contributed to community identification and hence community cohesion. On the one hand, the host community could gain benefits. On the other hand, the community would have to shoulder cost risks concerning labor, goods, and natural resources (Taylor, 1995; Zinda, Yang, Xue, & Cheng, 2014). Community participation is open to influences from internal and external factors. So far as external factors are concerned, there could be complicated ethnic interrelationships and social conflict, tourism market environment, and tourism-relevant policies (Yang, Ryan, & Zhang, 2013). So far as internal factors are concerned, there could be the impact of residents' perceived on tourism, tourism product quality, attitude towards tourism development, and role identity (Yang & Wall, 2009; Wu et al., 2021). All these factors are correlated with community participation. This research starts from empowerment theory by discussing the impact of tourism empowerment upon community participation in tourism development. Instead of external factors, it explores the internal factors to reveal key variables that contribute to community participation.

Social Capital

Social capital was first proposed by Hanifan (1916) to explore social cohesiveness of community college in rural areas and individual investment. This research adopts proposals by Bourdieu (1986) who defined social

capital as an aggregate of actual and potential resources in a particular social setting which is composed of three elements of trust, norms, and network (Putnam, 1993). Trust refers to shared values which are formed from shared ethic rules and behaviors (Fukuyama, 1995). Norm refers to morals, social contract ethics and politics and it is manifested by social practice of mutual benefiality (Coleman, 1988). Network refers to social networks in which individuals promote mutual trust through mutually beneficial norms (Putnam, 2000). The essence of social capital is to form a new social structure by connecting individuals or organizations with different interests and targets (Adler & Kwon, 2002), and ultimately promote individuals' access to opportunities to reduce uncertainty (Wellman & Wortley, 1990). Among all social networks, family, friends, and colleagues are the most important ones to accumulate bridge-pattern and glue-pattern social capital (Araten-Bergman & Stein, 2014). As an unofficial insurance institution (He & Bai, 2021), social capital is applied as an important tool to explore community participation, regional development, corporate management, and strategic innovation (Hoarau & Kline, 2014).

Tourism Impact

Tourism development usually results in certain impact upon local economy, culture, society, and environment. Its impact could be either positive or negative (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013). The degree and direction of tourism impact upon the destination is vital to the willingness and corresponding behavioral practices of community participation in the tourism development (Daldeniz & Hampton, 2013). The relationship between community participation and tourism impact with different direction and magnitude has attracted academic attention from home and abroad. Jia and Wang (2015) and Jaffar, Rasoolimanesh, and Ismail (2017) discovered that positive impact of tourism promoted residents' attitude and participation enthusiasm, while the negative impact of tourism inhibited residents' participation in tourism affairs. Eshliki and Kaboudi (2011) further explored the magnitude difference of positive impact and negative impact. They discovered that compared to negative impact, positive impact of tourism development showed a greater magnitude of correlation with community participation. However, A. X. Guo, Wang, Li, and Y. Z. Guo (2020) discovered that direct effect of either positive or negative impact upon residents' attitude towards tourism development could not be verified.

Theoretical Background and Research Hypothesis

Empowerment Theory

Solomon (1976) proposed empowerment theory to explain underpowered groups' ability to execute, communicate, and control their own life as well as to expand their assets. Empowerment is not only the objective fact that people gain power in social life, but also the process that people influence and control their daily life after acquiring knowledge and skills (Basford & Slevin, 2003). This research builds upon proposals from Scheyvens (1999) and He, Chen, Guo, and Zhang (2019) and defines tourism empowerment as host community's upgrading of both their actual ability and their cognition concerning empowerment. Empowerment here is composed of four dimensions such as economic empowerment, psychological empowerment, social empowerment, and political empowerment (Wang et al., 2021). To specify them, economic empowerment means that the host community could reap continual economic benefits such as employment and infrastructure. Psychological empowerment means that host community could be open to opportunities of education and training relevant to local ecological resources and tourism development and thus enhance cognition concerning preservation of traditional culture. Social empowerment means that tourism

development would guarantee and safeguard social equality, promote social cohesion, and promote social interaction. Political empowerment refers to organizational support and institutions to guarantee host community to participate tourism development fairly. Empowerment is closely related to community participation and development. When host community is encouraged to take part in tourism development, empathy and emotional involvement, as catalyst of empowerment, could lay foundation for host community to take a part in tourism relevant business (Barnes, 2016).

Research Hypothesis

Relationship between tourism impact and tourism participation willingness. In usual cases, tourism development will exert impact on host community's economy, culture, social structure and environment. For example, tourism development would contribute to employment, resource development, capital investment, and so on so that it helps the local community perceive aggregate value of tourism development (Su & Wall, 2014). Positive impact from tourism will promote local community's participation willingness. Conversely, when tourism development exerts extra pressure upon local economy and environment or destructive force upon local life, negative emotions or more seriously confrontational behavior will be bred against tourism development (Yang & Jiang, 2020). Hence the following hypotheses: H1a: Positive impact of tourism exerts significant positive effect to tourism participation willingness. H1b: Negative impact of tourism exerts significant negative effect to tourism participation willingness.

Relationship between economic empowerment, tourism impact, and participation willingness. Economic empowerment is concerned with local residents' income, employment, and distribution of tourism revenue (Scheyvens, 1999). Economic empowerment can manifest benefits from tourism development due to data transparency. Among it, economic income is usually regarded as an important basis for ethnic tourism destinations to protect the environment and historical sites, inherit traditional culture, and improve residents' income and life quality. Economic empowerment is especially significant to under-developed areas. When the local community perceives high economic empowerment, it indicates that the life quality and happiness is improved, which will help reinforce local residents' perception of the positive impact of tourism development (Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014). To sum up, the higher the economic empowerment, the higher the local residents' perception of the positive impact of tourism development. Likewise, the lower the economic empowerment, the higher the local residents' perception of the negative impact of tourism development.

Besides, the economic effect of economic empowerment is obvious in the way that local residents might not necessarily share the direct economic benefits of tourism development, and rather they will perceive increase of job opportunities as well as of income, improvement of local infrastructure, and upgrade of living standard. All this will improve local residents' attitude toward tourism development and spark their participation passion and willingness (Yang & Jiang, 2020). To sum up, economic empowerment helps with residents' perception of economic improvement brought about by tourism development and consequently stimulates local residents to take part in tourism affairs as hosts (Ma, 2015). Hence the following hypotheses: H2a: Economic empowerment has a significant and negative effect on the negative impact of tourism. H2b: Economic empowerment has a significant and positive effect on the positive impact of tourism. H2c: Economic empowerment has a significant and positive effect on tourism participation willingness.

Psychological empowerment, tourism impact, and tourism participation willingness. Psychological empowerment will exert influence upon residents' acceptance of their own local value (Aleshinloye, Woosnam,

Tasci, & Ramkissoon, 2021). With the development of tourism, local residents grow in awareness of the unique value of local resources and culture, which will enhance pride in their own community. This will in turn promote local residents' perception of benefits from tourism development to local progress. Participation in relevant education and training, particularly, will enhance confidence of residents to take part in tourism affairs and thus be open to perception of the positive impact of tourism development. Otherwise, the residents will perceive more of the negative impact from tourism development rather than positive impact.

Besides, psychological empowerment could contribute to higher work morale and hence higher sense of achievement from work (Fan, Zheng, Liu, & Li, 2016). This will lead to cognition of positive impact from work. Psychological empowerment can help alleviate perception of negative impact from tourism (Boley et al., 2014). In some circumstances, in order to reduce loss from tourism development, they will boycott tourism business and therefore willingness to participate tourism affairs will be lowered. Hence the following hypotheses: H3a: Psychological empowerment exerts significant negative effect on negative impact of tourism. H3b: Psychological empowerment exerts significant positive impact on positive impact of tourism. H3c: Psychological empowerment exerts significant positive impact on tourism participation willingness.

Social empowerment, tourism impact, tourism participation willingness, and social capital. Social empowerment refers to the act of relying on good resources for opportunity acquisition and personal choice so as to gain personal control of social environment (Kirst-Ashman, 2007). Social empowerment is beneficial to community cohesion, belonging, and cooperation, which will exert influence upon cognition of tourism impact and hence consequent feedback (Boley et al., 2014). Social empowerment is closely related with residents' perception of tourism impact. The higher the perceived social empowerment, the more positive their recognition of tourism impact, and vice versa. In order to make into full play the positive impact of tourism development, residents will cope with stronger desire to participate tourism development.

Besides, social cohesion, resident cognition, social network, social structure and cognition, relationship and structure of social capital are logically coherent (Scheyvens, 1999). Social capital usually relies on the social relationship among community members and among communities to be effective (Zhang, Zhou, & Niu, 2020). According to Ansari, Munir, and Gregg (2012), perceived empowerment of the residents is associated with their socializing, relationship maintenance, and community belonging. Social empowerment will contribute to accumulation of social capital, which lays foundation for network establishment and maintenance (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Hence the following hypotheses: H4a: Social empowerment exerts significant negative effect on the negative impact of tourism. H4b: Social empowerment exerts significant negative effect on the positive impact of tourism. H4c: Social empowerment exerts significant positive effect on social capital. H4d: Social empowerment exerts significant positive effect on tourism participation.

Political empowerment, tourism impact, and tourism participation willingness. Political empowerment refers to the institutional guarantee for residents to take part in tourism development. Among it, the most important is the voting power from the residents concerning tourism decision. Under institutional guarantee, community participation of tourism decision could be officialized to guarantee residents' passion and opportunity to take part in tourism affairs (Wang & Huang, 2013). Laws and regulations enacted by government, for example, could guarantee the political right of residents to take part in tourism affairs (Goltz, Buche, & Pathak, 2015). To sum up, political empowerment could contribute to residents' participation of tourism development decisions. Acquisition of relevant political power will exert influence upon their recognition of the positive impact of tourism. In order to protect their own political rights, residents will

support and take an active part in tourism affairs (Boley et al., 2014). Hence the following hypotheses: H5a: Political empowerment exerts a significant negative effect on the negative impact of tourism. H5b: Political empowerment exerts a significant positive effect on the positive impact of tourism. H5c: Political empowerment exerts a significant negative effect on tourism participation willingness.

Social capital and tourism participation willingness. Social capital refers to the resources acquired by individual or organization in a certain social structure with purposeful behaviors (Zhang, 2003). Good social capital means the individuals has advantage in social trust, social network, neighbor interaction, and friendship exchange (Yang, 2021), which will play an important role in personal cognition and behavior. According to Zhu and Fu (2017), norms, network association, identification which belongs to social capital could promote residents' cognition of shared space and thus individual behavior to take part in public affairs will be influenced. Social capital exerts influence upon the form and degree of community participation (Palmer, Perkins, & Xu, 2011). Social capital during the cycle of accumulation has an enduring influence upon community participation, which is manifested by the community's growing passion and willingness to take part in public affairs (Saegert & Winkel, 2004). Hence the following hypothesis: H6: Social capital exerts a significant positive impact on tourism participation willingness.

Based upon these theoretical developments, theoretical model of community participation in ethnic tourism destination is proposed by Figure 1.

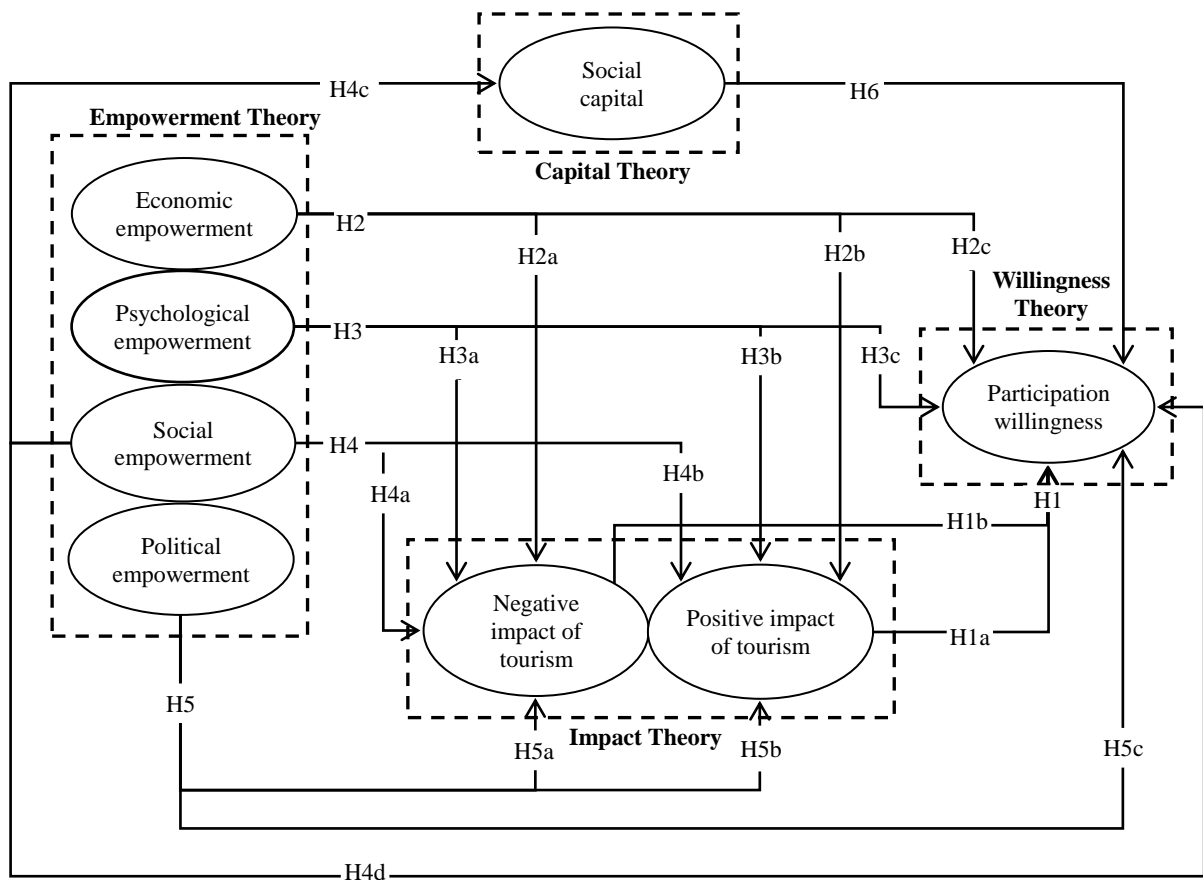


Figure 1. Theoretic model of the study.

Methodology

Destination Overview

Southeast Guizhou Miao-Dong Autonomous Prefecture in Guozhou of China, with an area of 30,300 square kilometer, has one subsidiary city and 15 subsidiary counties. Among all prefectures in Guizhou, it has the largest ethnic population (Editing Committee of the Yearbook of Southeast Guizhou, 2020). There are 33 nationalities, among which Miao, Dong, Han, Bouyei, and Shui nationalities have the largest population (Editing Committee of the Yearbook of Southeast Guizhou, 2020). Until now, tourism industry has become the dominant industry of Southeast Guizhou, with tourism revenue accounting for over 60% of its GDP (Wechat Official Account of Southeast Guizhou, 2017). Dong Village of Zhaoxing is renowned as “the First Dong Village of China” and is a national AAAA tourist attraction. As the most famous tourist destination in Liping County, Dong Village has witnessed accelerating tourism development in these years. More and more local residents transfer from traditional agriculture to tourism and relevant service industries. A “government + enterprise + community” model is implemented so that the government is responsible for integrated planning, the state-owned enterprises are in charge of operation, management, and service in the destination, private enterprises are in charge of tour motorcade, and the local residents take part in tourism service. 80% ticket revenue goes to facility maintenance and management. The rest 20% is disposed by the local residents.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire of this research was designed as the survey instrument. It was based on mature scale developed by relevant researches home and abroad. Pilot study was implemented at Dong Village of Zhaoxing from July 27th 2021 to August 3rd 2021. On the one hand, participant observation was applied to record the residents’ daily life, tourism participation, overall impact of tourism, and attitude towards tourism development of the stakeholders so that overview of local ethnic tourism development and community participation was obtained. On the other hand, interview and panel discussion were applied to tourism stakeholders including local residents, village committee, and tourism enterprises to develop understanding of local ethnic tourism development and community participation. Meanwhile, 100 questionnaires were distributed and 100 usable samples were obtained. Reliability and validity were tested by data obtained from this pilot study. Results showed that the items of the questionnaire were of good reliability and feasibility and thus could be applied to main study.

The formal questionnaire was composed of two parts. One was to measure four variables such as tourism empowerment, tourism impact, social capital, and community participation willingness. Among them, the items measuring tourism empowerment came from scales developed by Scheyvens (1999), Boley et al. (2014), and Boley and McGehee (2014). It was composed of four dimensions of economic empowerment, social empowerment, psychological empowerment, and political empowerment and altogether eight items were reserved. Items measuring tourism impact borrowed reference mainly from Su and Wall (2014), Boley et al. (2014), and Kim et al. (2013). 11 items were included to measure two dimensions of positive impact and negative impact. Items measuring social capital were based mainly on researches by Liu, Chen, and Xiao (2011), Liu et al. (2014), Wu, Tsang, and Ming (2014). Seven items were included to measure three dimensions of cognitive social capital, structural social capital, and relational social capital. Items measuring tourism participation willingness referred primarily to Zhang and Lei (2012), Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Ahmad, and Barghi (2017), and Zhu and Fu (2017). Seven items were included to measure three dimensions participation of

developmental decision, participation of industrial operation, and participation of planning. Five-point Likert scale was applied with one representing “strongly disagree” and five representing “strongly agree”. The second part of the questionnaire collected demographic data of the interviewers, including nationality, gender, marital status, age, education, income, and profession.

Data Collection

Zhaoxing Dong Village in Guizhou Province of China was selected as case study destination and 900 questionnaires were distributed to local residents from September 25th 2021 to October 19th 2021. 835 usable samples were obtained, when questionnaires with omitted and mindless answers were deleted, resulting in a response rate of 92.78%. Here was the respondent profile. The great majority of the respondents were of Dong nationality, accounting for 85.6%. What followed were Han nationality (7.7%) and Miao nationality (5.3%). 51.6% were males and 60.8% were married. 42.2% respondents aged between 19 to 29. 37.2% aged between 30 to 45. Nearly half of the respondents held a junior high school degree (41.9%) and 26.3% of the respondents held a senior high school degree and the equivalent. Respondents varied greatly in profession, with businessmen accounting for 29.2% and peasants accounting for 22.8%. The respondents were mainly of low income. 24.2% of them had a monthly income lower than 1,000 RMB. 23.2% of them had a monthly income between 1,001 and 2,000 Chinese RMB Yuan. 23.2% of them had a monthly income between 2,001 and 3,000. 58.7% of the respondents had taken part in tourism development affairs and 60.5% had an income source from tourism industry.

Results

Reliability and Validity

From Table 1, we can see R^2 of multivariate regression range from 0.502 to 0.868, all of which are larger than 0.5. This means errors of observable variables indicating corresponding latent variables are lower than 50%. Cronbach α of corresponding latent variables range from 0.647 to 0.867, which all fall into acceptable range. This means the scale has a good internal agreement. Moreover, economic empowerment shows a CR = 0.762 and AVE = 0.619. Social empowerment shows CR = 0.768 and AVE = 0.524. Psychological empowerment shows CR = 0.711 and AVE = 0.553. Political empowerment shows CR = 0.868 and AVE = 0.687. Social capital shows CR = 0.744 and AVE = 0.592. The negative impact of tourism shows CR = 0.899 and AVE = 0.817. The positive impact of tourism shows CR = 0.820 and AVE = 0.701. Tourism participation willingness shows CR = 0.833 and AVE = 0.714. All these variables have CR value over criteria 0.70 and AVE over criteria 0.50. This means this scale is reasonable so far as convergent validity is concerned.

The co-variance coefficients of the latent variables equal to one. When $\Delta\chi^2$, denoting the difference between χ^2 of the controlled model and that of the uncontrolled model, is greater than 3.841, it means the model shows a good discriminant validity on the criteria of p-value = 0.05. When $\Delta\chi^2$ equals to 10.827, it means the model does not show a good discriminant validity on the criteria of p-value = 0.001. As is shown in Table 2, $\Delta\chi^2$ of corresponding latent variables is greater than 10.827 and shows statistically significant on the criteria of 0.001 p-value. This means the model has an acceptable discriminant validity; the observable variables contained by the latent variables are independent from each other and meanwhile closely related to their respective latent variable.

Table 1

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Latent variable	Item	R ²	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
Economic empowerment	Income from tourism development has become increasingly important an economic source for me	0.644	0.751	0.762	0.619
	My family income will increasingly depend up local tourism development				
Social empowerment	I feel more closely connected with the community due to tourism development	0.502	0.730	0.768	0.524
	I wish to devote myself to community development due to tourism development				
Psychological empowerment	I begin to take a bigger share of tourism contribution due to tourism development	0.585	0.647	0.711	0.553
	Thanks to tourism development, I develop a deeper identification with unique culture of my nationality				
Political empowerment	My advice of tourism development is taken seriously by concerned bureaus	0.545	0.867	0.868	0.687
	My voice makes sense during tourism decision making of my community				
	My team work spirit				
	I am proper so far as ethic norms are concerned				
Social capital	I share tourism development information with my friends and relatives	0.532	0.764	0.744	0.592
	Female residents witness upgrade of their social status				
	Tourism volunteer organizations take part in community development				
	Residents who take part in community tourism are mutually supportive				
	Official organizations give due guidance and supervision to tourism development				
	Tourism development exerted an unfavorable impact on traditional local culture				
Negative impact	Tourism development disturbed my normal daily life	0.546	0.808	0.899	0.817
	Tourism development caused increasing crowding of the community				
	Tourism development disturbed calm living environment of the community				
	Tourism development caused income disparity of the community				
	Tourism development caused tense relationship among neighbors				
	Tourism development intruded my previous living space				
Positive impact	Tourism development improved my income significantly	0.642	0.748	0.820	0.701
	Tourism development significantly upgraded my living quality				
	Tourism development promoted protection of natural environment in the community				
	Tourism development opened up my mind and vision				
	I am willing to shoulder more responsibilities concerned with tourism development				
	I am willing to take part in the decision making of tourism development for my community				
Participation willingness	I am willing to engage in manufacturing and selling tourism souvenirs unique with ethnic culture	0.575	0.802	0.833	0.714
	I am willing to take part in traditional cultural performance				
	I am willing to get more tourism development information from the government and enterprises				
	I am willing to take part in the preservation and development of tourism resources				
	I am willing to follow a tourism environmental protection philosophy of “protection first and development second”				

Table 2

Discriminant Validity

Latent variables	Model statistics	Modified model (correlation coefficient is fixed at 1)		Unmodified model (correlation coefficient is of free estimation)		Difference of χ^2	Difference of df
		df	χ^2	df	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df
Political empowerment ↔ Tourism participation willingness		32	419.726	31	95.104	324.622***	1
Psychological empowerment ↔ Tourism participation willingness		32	392.430	31	39.861	352.569***	1
Social empowerment ↔ Tourism participation willingness		24	306.253	23	25.944	280.309***	1
Economic empowerment ↔ Tourism participation willingness		24	308.541	23	40.739	267.802***	1
Negative impact of tourism ↔ Tourism participation willingness		84	542.382	83	127.006	415.376***	1
Positive impact of tourism ↔ Tourism participation willingness		84	535.115	83	140.662	394.453***	1
Negative impact of tourism ↔ Positive impact of tourism		98	700.276	97	170.983	529.293***	1
Social capital ↔ Tourism participation willingness		71	490.848	70	76.535	414.313***	1
Social capital ↔ Negative impact of tourism		84	586.618	83	111.074	475.544***	1
Social capital ↔ Positive impact of tourism		84	574.499	83	135.683	438.816***	1
Political empowerment ↔ Negative impact of tourism		41	351.420	40	83.426	267.994***	1
Psychological empowerment ↔ Negative impact of tourism		41	486.426	40	56.131	430.295***	1
Social empowerment ↔ Negative impact of tourism		32	392.753	31	83.641	309.112***	1
Economic empowerment ↔ Negative impact of tourism		32	308.110	31	60.342	247.768***	1
Political empowerment ↔ Positive impact of tourism		41	398.041	40	78.597	319.444***	1
Psychological empowerment ↔ Positive impact of tourism		41	507.414	40	66.596	440.818***	1
Social empowerment ↔ Positive impact of tourism		32	383.584	31	44.077	339.507***	1
Economic empowerment ↔ Positive impact of tourism		32	375.939	31	51.346	324.593***	1
Political empowerment ↔ Social capital		32	420.140	31	56.250	363.890***	1
Psychological empowerment ↔ Social capital		32	456.632	31	52.213	404.419***	1
Social empowerment ↔ Social capital		24	376.788	23	32.829	343.959***	1
Economic empowerment ↔ Social capital		24	323.152	23	29.524	293.628***	1

Note. *** $p < 0.001$.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The p-value of the original model is 0.000, lower than the criteria of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, which means the input data do not match the theoretical model proposed. Additionally, NFI = 0.894 and RFI = 0.883, lower than the criteria of goodness of fit indicates. We therefore proceed to modify the model. Error variables with covariant relations e1 and e2, are introduced into the model. P-value of the modified model is 0.132, greater than the criteria of 0.05. Meanwhile, goodness of fit indicates meet relevant criteria. It shows that data collected match well with the modified model.

Table 3

Goodness of Fit Indicators

Goodness of fit indices	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	χ^2 /df
Criteria	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08	<3
Indicators	0.968	0.958	0.949	0.937	0.996	0.995	0.996	0.010	1.077

Structural Equation Modeling

Software AMOS 21.0 and algorithm of maximum likelihood estimate are applied to run the model. Path coefficient is shown in Table 4. H1a, H2b, H2c, H3a, H3b, H3c, H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d, and H6 are supported, with positive impact of tourism tested statistically significant with participation willingness ($t = 4.136$, $p < 0.001$), economic empowerment tested statistically significant with positive impact of tourism ($t = 3.305$, $p < 0.01$), economic empowerment tested statistically significant with participation willingness ($t = 3.658$, $p < 0.05$), psychological empowerment tested statistically significant with negative impact of tourism ($t = -3.136$, $p < 0.01$), psychological empowerment tested statistically significant with negative impact of tourism ($t = 3.253$, $p < 0.01$), psychological empowerment tested statistically significant with participation willingness ($t = 2.289$, $p < 0.05$), social empowerment tested statistically significant with negative impact of tourism impact ($t = -4.921$, $p < 0.001$), social empowerment tested statistically significant with positive impact of tourism impact ($t = 7.179$, $p < 0.001$), social empowerment tested statistically significant with social capital ($t = 9.054$, $p < 0.001$), social empowerment tested statistically significant with participation willingness ($t = 4.389$, $p < 0.001$), social capital tested statistically significant with participation willingness ($t = 3.452$, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, H1b, H2a, H5a, H5b, and H5c are not supported by data. Tested results were shown by Table 4.

Table 4

Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	Testing results
H1a	Positive impact of tourism → Tourism participation willingness	0.277***	0.061	4.136	Supported
H1b	Negative impact of tourism → Tourism participation willingness	0.058	0.027	1.409	Rejected
H2a	Economic empowerment → Negative impact of tourism	-0.053	0.077	-0.652	Rejected
H2b	Economic empowerment → Positive impact of tourism	0.228**	0.261	3.305	Supported
H2c	Economic empowerment → Tourism participation willingness	0.305*	0.116	3.658	Supported
H3a	Psychological empowerment → Negative impact of tourism	-0.354**	0.138	-3.136	Supported
H3b	Psychological empowerment → Positive impact of tourism	0.407**	0.103	3.253	Supported
H3c	Psychological empowerment → Tourism participation willingness	0.297*	0.112	2.289	Supported
H4a	Social empowerment → Negative impact of tourism	-0.524***	0.127	-4.921	Supported
H4b	Social empowerment → Positive impact of tourism	0.916***	0.107	7.179	Supported
H4c	Social empowerment → Social capital	0.747***	0.054	9.054	Supported
H4d	Social empowerment → Tourism participation willingness	0.339***	0.120	4.389	Supported
H5a	Political empowerment → Negative impact of tourism	0.031	0.044	0.539	Rejected
H5b	Political empowerment → Positive impact of tourism	-0.094	0.033	-1.533	Rejected
H5c	Political empowerment → Tourism participation willingness	0.017	0.026	0.336	Rejected
H6	Social capital → Tourism participation willingness	0.408***	0.118	3.452	Supported

Notes. * indicated $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

Conclusions

Empowerment theory is applied to explore factors influencing community participation of tourism destinations. There are mainly the following three conclusions.

First, except for political empowerment, the higher the economic empowerment, psychological empowerment, and social empowerment, the stronger participation willingness of the local residents. Among them, social empowerment has the greatest size of influence upon participation willingness, with economic empowerment ranking the second. Besides, psychological empowerment and social empowerment are correlated with perception of tourism impact on the part of the residents. This result is in agreement with that of Wang et al. (2021)'s research result. That is to say, during the development of ethnic tourism destination, the local residents welcome more sense of pride and community cohesion brought about by tourism development. On the contrary, influence of political empowerment is not significant, indicating the residents are more concerned with upgrade of social empowerment, economic empowerment, and psychological empowerment rather than that of political empowerment.

Second, to enhance the positive impact of tourism is an effective measure to activate residents to take part in tourism development. The greater the positive impact of tourism, the greater their initiative and passion to take part in tourism-related work and decision making. This further verifies the viewpoint of Eshliki and Kaboudi (2011) that positive tourism impact will, to a large degree, stimulate residents to take part in tourism affairs. Though the environment, natural resources, infrastructure, traditional culture and customs of the tourism destination are open to more or less damage from tourism development, control and management of negative impact of tourism on the part of the tourism administrators might counterbalance the weakening effect on the initiative of residents to take part in tourism affairs.

Third, social empowerment fosters social capital of the residents and therefore will influence residents' willingness to take part in tourism affairs. With the increase of community cohesion, interaction fairness, social harmoniousness and controllability, and social resources, perceived social capital increases as well. During the development of tourism industry, social capital could help residents to evade or alleviate serious consequences resulting from potential risks or negative impact from tourism (He & Bai, 2021). As a result, residents could obtain more benefits from tourism development. With the increase of obtained benefits, residents will grow in acceptance degree, support degree, and participation degree of tourism industry.

Managerial Implications

First, the management should enhance social empowerment, economic empowerment, and psychological empowerment of the residents of the ethnic tourism destinations. Firstly, there always is characterized social interaction mode in ethnic tourism destinations. In order to enhance perceived social empowerment of local residents, tourism managers should respect local traditional culture during tourism development while we launch projects to improve social network, verify interaction channels among residents, and enhance their emotional ties. Secondly, tourism managers should upgrade investment on infrastructure, maintenance of attraction resources, development of tourism products, and social affairs. Meanwhile, they should try to create more employment opportunities and training platforms via tourism development so as to increase residents' income and living standard which will in turn initiate more residents to engage in tourism affairs. Thirdly, tourism managers should try to attract attention from both tourists and media by authenticity of local resources, which will enhance residents' identification of their own ethnic culture, readiness to preserve and hand down traditional culture, and upgrade their culture confidence and pride. This will all contributes to positive effect of psychological empowerment on residents' tourism participation willingness.

Second, the management should pay due attention to differentiate divergence of positive and negative impact from tourism. On the one hand, positive impact from tourism in ethnic tourism destinations should be enhanced from three dimensions of social, economic, and psychological empowerment. Specifically, tourism managers should encourage residents to take part in tourism development to enhance community connection and cohesion so that social empowerment will be upgraded. Policies and other likewise institutional measures should be implemented to guarantee local residents to take an economic share of local tourism development. Relevant skill training courses and targeted poverty alleviation strategies should be made available to upgrade economic empowerment. Cultural measures should be taken to preserve, unravel, promote, and upstage local culture to upgrade the core competitiveness of ethnic tourism brand so as to improve local residents' cultural pride and confidence. On the other hand, social empowerment and psychological empowerment of ethnic tourism destinations should be enhanced so as to alleviate local residents' perception of the negative impact from tourism. For example, cultural tourism and ecotourism should be paid due respect to so that tourism development could contribute more to the inheritance of local cultural resources as well as environmental protection. Thus negative emotions due to weak social or psychological empowerment could be avoided.

Third, the management should try to improve local residents' perceived social capital. The development of ethnic tourism destinations is dependent on the coordination of government, tourism sectors, tourism enterprises, and local administrative organizations. Tourism managers should work on social network of tourism stakeholders by integrating advantaged tourism-relevant resources and connecting internal and external social resources so as to establish an integrated dynamics to stimulate local residents to participate tourism affairs. This will on one hand provide to the local residents information and resources necessary to take part in tourism-related tasks. On the other hand this could create a platform to support innovative ways for residents to take part in tourism planning and decision-making. Thus good community participation orders could be established and maintained for ethnic tourism destinations.

Limitations

There are following limitations of this research. First, panel data were used to estimate local residents' tourism participation willingness and its explanatory variables. However, tourism industry and local administrative policies are dynamic. Future research, therefore, could start from a dynamic perspective and apply longitudinal data to analyze and compare perceived empowerment and tourism participation willingness and factors leading to these two variables during different stages of tourism development. What's more, this research uses the case of Dong Village of Zhaoxing County. While different ethnic tourism destinations diverge greatly in social, economic, and cultural dimensions, future research could apply other typical ethnic tourism destinations to test the external validity of the theoretical model tested by Dong Village in this research. Besides, this research studied three explanatory variables of tourism empowerment, social capital, and tourism impact and estimated their effect size to residents' participation willingness. Future research is recommended to explore other explanatory variables such community trust, community identification, and perceived fairness to upgrade explanatory power of this theoretical model.

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