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Residents' Perceptions and Behaviors Regarding the Policy of Integrating Intangible Cultural Heritages into the Tourism Industry: Evidence from Dali, China

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Abstract: A policy of integrating China's intangible cultural heritage into its tourism industry has been proposed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Intangible cultural heritage assets offer unique opportunities in tourism development, yet during the integration process, residents' perspectives are often overlooked. From the perspective of social exchange, this study examines the relationships among residents' perceptions of, and their behaviors toward, local intangible cultural heritage and tourism. Survey data were collected from residents (N = 440) in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, China. This study showed that residents' positive perceptions of tourism impacts have a significant effect on residents' supportive behaviors. Residents' place attachment indirectly influences their behaviors. The results suggest that intergroup contact strengthens the relationship between residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism and behavior but weakens the relationship between place attachment and behavior. The findings provide a theoretical basis for exploring intangible cultural heritage tourism from the perspectives of residents, as well as offering insights for local authorities to use to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on residents and balance tourism development with residents' normal life.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage tourism; residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism; supportive behavior; place attachment; intergroup contact

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1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as associated instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces—that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage [1]. Intangible cultural heritage assets are now commonly being adopted by cultural tourism as significant attractions. The combination of intangible cultural heritage and tourism is conducive to transforming intangible cultural attributes into dynamic experiences that promote traditional culture and offer visitors a unique and authentic way to experience the cultural heritage of a destination [2]. In addition, the active development of intangible cultural heritage tourism can generate market demand and economic value for the destination, promoting its integration into modern social life [3]. Hence, intangible cultural heritage tourism constitutes a synthetic system for cultural protection and utilization, which is worthy of attention from scholars and governments. There have been studies into the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism and related issues involved in the specific development process, including the dialectical nexus of authenticity

versus alienation [4], tourists' perceptions and experiences [5], and behaviors [6] in intangible cultural heritage tourism. Prior investigations have centered on intangible cultural heritage's authenticity and protection and have explored this topic from the perspective of tourists. Nevertheless, in the realm of intangible cultural heritage tourism, the local community has received comparatively scant attention. In the process of the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism, in addition to the protection of the authenticity of intangible cultural heritage projects, residents in local communities should also be protected.

This has a close connection to the very definition of intangible cultural heritage. Namely, intangible cultural heritage can only be regarded as such when it is acknowledged by the communities, groups, or individuals who are responsible for its creation, upkeep, and dissemination [1]. Without residents' recognition, there is no consensus on what constitutes their heritage. Therefore, residents in local communities have frequently been discussed in studies on other types of tourism and are regarded as the key figures for promoting tourism development [7–11]. Hence, further research on residents is still needed in intangible cultural heritage tourism.

First, previous investigations regarding intangible cultural heritage tourism have underlined the necessity of achieving a balance between the advancement of tourism and the conservation of residents' original lifestyle [12,13]. Residents in intangible cultural heritage sites have lived in an authentic cultural and natural environment and maintained traditional livelihoods for a long time [14]. During the integration of intangible cultural heritage into tourism, tourism development can notably change residents' lives. Therefore, this study emphasizes residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism and advances the understanding of residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism. During the stage of the combination of intangible cultural heritage and tourism, the development of tourism can significantly transform residents' lives. Consequently, this research places emphasis on residents' viewpoints regarding the influence of tourism and further deepens the comprehension of how residents perceive the impact of tourism. It is proposed that residents' behaviors are the results of their perceptions regarding the impacts of tourism [15]. Residents' supportive behaviors can strengthen intangible cultural heritage tourism development, potentially promoting sustainable development [16].

Consequently, both residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism and their behaviors in relation to local tourism development constitute significant variables within this study. This research endeavored to take into account the influence of residents' perceptions and behaviors within the framework of social exchange theory. Second, residents' cultural identities and regional attachment emotions enrich the characteristics of intangible cultural heritage tourism [17,18]. Hence, this study aimed to investigate whether local attachment would have an impact on the correlation between residents' perception and behavior. Although research on residents' place attachment in other tourism destinations has flourished in recent years [19,20], few studies on intangible cultural heritage tourism have investigated place attachment. Third, due to tourism at intangible cultural heritage sites, residents exhibit contact behavior with tourists. Previous studies tended to compare groups of different genders, ethnicities, or religions [21]. The role of intergroup contact is occasionally used in tourism research [22,23], but there are few relevant studies in China.

However, within the scope of this study, the connections between residents and tourists in intangible cultural heritage sites fell into two distinct groups according to cultural background. Consequently, this study aimed (1) to investigate influencing relationships between residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, their supportive behavior, and place attachment in intangible cultural heritage tourism and (2) to explore the role of contact with tourists on these influencing paths. Furthermore, it endeavored to offer practical

suggestions for intangible cultural heritage tourism practitioners from the perspective of residents. This study was conducted in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, one of the areas with a high concentration of intangible cultural heritage in China.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Impacts and Residents' Behavior

Owing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the tourism sector, scholars have increasingly analyzed the impacts of tourism from a dialectical perspective, stressing that more attention should be given to the sustainable growth of tourism [24]. Consequently, a number of studies have investigated the adverse effects of tourism. For instance, Zhang and Zhang showed that night-time tourism increased the carbon footprint due to lighting and may negatively affect residents' quality of life, leading to conflicts between residents and organizers [25]. Additionally, tourism development increases visits from tourists, resulting in greater traffic and crowding and higher costs of living [26]. These tourism impacts can be analyzed using a cost–benefit approach [27,28], and studies following this approach have typically divided tourism impacts into two dimensions: positive and negative. In addition to measuring the positive and negative dimensions of tourism impacts, the triple-bottom-line approach has been used to explore their different effects [29]. Specifically, tourism has significant economic, social, and environmental effects, and studies on its economic impact have associated it with local economic development [30], employment opportunities [31], and infrastructure improvements [32]. However, tourism development may cause economic disruptions, such as increased land prices [33], seasonal economic markets [34], high transport costs [35], and higher costs of living [36,37]. In addition to tourism's economic effects, its social impacts have also been examined. Social impacts include community benefits [38], entertainment opportunities [39], and cultural exchanges [40]. Other studies have argued that tourism causes negative social impacts, such as violent crime, anti-social behavior [41], the erosion of cultural customs, and social upheaval [27]. Tourism can also be an innovative way of protecting the natural environment, but existing research has shown that during the tourism development process, tourism companies often engage in behavior that damages the environment [42,43], causing air pollution, traffic congestion, and noise [44]. In summary, the cost–benefit approach makes it easy to determine whether the impacts of tourism are positive or negative, while the triple-bottom-line approach allows its specific impact to be explored. Consequently, we integrated the cost–benefit approach into the triple-bottom-line approach to explore residents' perceptions regarding the positive and negative influences of tourism across the economic, social, and environmental spheres and to ascertain the principal cause of negative impacts.

An increasing amount of recent research has centered on the perception of tourism impacts, specifically highlighting the viewpoints of both local hosts and tourists [32,45,46]. Hosts generally comprise local governments and residents. Regarding local governments, previous studies have shown that tourism can be a policy instrument in solving the problems of financing foreign and domestic debt and enhancing regional employment opportunities. Thus, local governments can benefit from the impacts of tourism if they are appropriately managed. A sustainability policy that balances economic development, social stability, and ecological conservation can represent an ideal method for overcoming the adverse effects of tourism. Residents occupy a crucial position within local communities. They partake in tourism development and are regarded as the group that is most susceptible to the influence of the tourism market. Therefore, the previous literature has extensively examined the ways in which residents perceive the impacts of tourism [47–50]. Furthermore,

researchers have discovered that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts show a strong correlation with their attitudes and behaviors regarding local tourism development [51–54].

Hence, optimizing and augmenting residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism is conducive to cultivating favorable attitudes among residents towards local tourism development. At intangible cultural heritage sites, residents perform an essential function in constructing and preserving the original cultural ecology. However, tourism development inevitably affects traditional ways of living and the cultural environment, either consciously or unconsciously, which is not conducive to maintaining cultural ecology in the long term. Therefore, further research should take into account residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, alleviate the negative effects of tourism, enhance sustainability, and reduce damage to the environment and local communities as much as possible.

Scholars have explored residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism and their behaviors within tourism settings from the standpoint of social exchange [55–58], which can be used to explain exchanges between residents and other participants in tourism development, which affect residents' perceived benefits and attitudes. It can also be used to investigate residents' tangible and intangible social interactions, particularly in terms of rewards and costs [59]. For instance, Ozel and Kozak demonstrated that among the inhabitants of Cappadocian, those who perceived that there were economic advantages were inclined to advocate for tourism and harbored a more preferable outlook regarding it compared to those who perceived that there were sociocultural and environmental advantages [60]. Analyses based on social exchange theory can show how rewards and costs affect behavior [61]. In light of the preceding observations, we investigated the correlations between residents' perceived impacts of tourism and their behaviors from the perspective of social exchange. The following hypotheses were formulated based on the preceding discussion:

H1. *Residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism have a significant effect on their behavior.*

H2. *Residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism have a significant effect on their behavior.*

2.2. Role of Place Attachment

Place attachment can be defined as the emotional bond that exists between an individual and a particular place [62], which emerged from psychology and psychoanalysis as a way to explain close (e.g., parent–child and infant–mother) relationships [63,64]. Since the role of place attachment is commonly used to explain how humans form affective bonds with others, this idea has been applied to marketing and tourism research, with scholars extending beyond person–person relationships to encompass consumer–enterprise, consumer–brand, and person–place relationships [65–68]. In the domain of tourism research, academics have concentrated on place attachment with the aim of probing into the emotional connections between individuals and specific locations [62,69,70]. Place attachment has been analyzed as a multifaceted concept involving place dependence [71,72], place identity [73,74], affective attachment [75,76], and social bonds [77,78]. Tourism scholars have centered their attention on the formations and correlations of place attachments within diverse settings and have distinguished three categories of place attachment.

Firstly, when regarded as a dependent variable, place attachment can be used as an antecedent variable to verify the influence of other variables. Gu and Ryan stated that residents' place attachment was strongly connected with residents' perceptions of tourism impacts [79]. It has been asserted that place attachment assumes a positive nature when residents become aware of the positive impacts brought about by tourism. Conversely, residents' perceptions of negative impacts tend to result in a negative place attachment [80–82]. Prayag, Suntikul, and Agyeiwaah discovered that in the context of dark tourism, the levels of place attachment were influenced by both positive and negative perceptions of tourism

impacts. Notably, the negative impacts of such attachment made residents feel that the site carried greater significance [46]. However, studies on the relationship between perceptions of tourism impacts and place attachment have been inconclusive due to the different tourism contexts and destination types investigated. In line with this consideration, Hypotheses 2 and 3 were proposed, as follows:

H3. *Residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism have a significant effect on their place attachment.*

H4. *Residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism have a significant effect on their place attachment.*

Second, scholars have suggested that residents' behaviors are closely related to their place attachment and have attempted to provide management guidance for fostering supportive behaviors in residents based on the concept of place attachment [83–85]. Specifically, behaviors include word-of-mouth behavior [75,86], supportive behavior [87,88], and environmentally responsible behavior [89]. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was proposed, as follows:

H5. *Residents' place attachment has a significant effect on their behaviors.*

Third, place attachment is frequently regarded as a mediating factor between antecedents and outcomes. This is of great importance in dissecting the impacts of residents' perceptions and behaviors [86,89]. In previous studies, for example, Liu and Huang revealed that the attributes of natural capital exerted an indirect influence on perceptions of destination image with mediation from place attachment. They also demonstrated that place attachment influenced the impact of destination image on potential behavior [90]. In addition, Kil, Holland, Stein, and Ko discovered that place attachment played a mediating role in the relationship between desired and attained benefits and future intentions [91]. Lee, Kyle, and Scott contended that place identity and place dependence had an indirect impact on visitors' satisfaction and behavior within the context of festival tourism [92]. Additionally, scholars have taken into account the mediating function of place attachment with regard to perceptions or attitudes.

In intangible cultural heritages areas, residents are likely to become emotionally attached to their hometown.

It remains uncertain whether such an attachment can strengthen the connection between the advantages that resident perceive as stemming from local tourism development and their consequent behavior, such as providing support and actively participating in local tourism development [93,94]. Similarly, place attachment exerts an influence on the correlation between residents' perceptions of the adverse impacts caused by tourism and their consequent behaviors. In the context of intangible cultural heritages tourism, these questions need to be answered. Thus, Hypotheses 6a and 6b were proposed, as follows:

H6a. *Residents' place attachment mediates the relationship between residents' perceptions of positive impacts of tourism and their behaviors.*

H6b. *Residents' place attachment mediates the relationship between residents' perceptions of negative impacts of tourism and their behaviors.*

2.3. Effects of Intergroup Contact

Intergroup contact is defined as the encounters that occur between individuals from diverse sociodemographic groups [95], for example, in relation to ethnicity, religion, and social status [96–98]. However, the application of intergroup contact goes beyond these

elements. In a larger sense, one's own group is often called an ingroup, while individuals in a different group are considered members of an outgroup [99]. The distinctions between ingroups and outgroups must be determined according to different situations.

In the tourism context, intergroup contact usually occurs between hosts and guests (i.e., between residents, visitors, and the government). Scholars have explored intergroup contact mainly in terms of quality and quantity. Specifically, studies have measured the quality of intergroup contact as the relationship established during an interaction [100] and have commonly used the frequency of contact and interaction to measure intergroup contact quantity [101,102]. In addition, the existing literature has shown that two aspects of intergroup contact are capable of influencing the development of behavioral intentions: emotional solidarity and place attachment [101–104]. Previous studies have examined these moderating effects of intergroup contact in different situations. Luo, Brown, and Huang discovered that the quality of the connection established between hosts and tourists had an impact on hosts' perceptions of tourism impact. In contrast, the quantity of contact did not exert any influence [23]. Hence, the effect of intergroup contact is still unclear and merits further attention in intangible cultural heritage tourism contexts.

Consequently, the following hypotheses were put forward:

H7a. *Intergroup contact functions as a moderator in the relationship between residents' perceptions of the favorable impacts brought about by tourism and their corresponding behaviors.*

H7b. *Intergroup contact plays a moderating role in the relationship between residents' perceptions of the unfavorable impacts caused by tourism and their resultant behaviors.*

H7c. *Intergroup contact serves as a moderator in the relationship between residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism and their place attachment.*

H7d. *Intergroup contact acts as a moderator in the relationship between residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism and their place attachment.*

H7e. *Intergroup contact has a moderating effect on the relationship between residents' place attachment and their behaviors.*

Based on the above, we postulate a theoretical model (Figure 1).

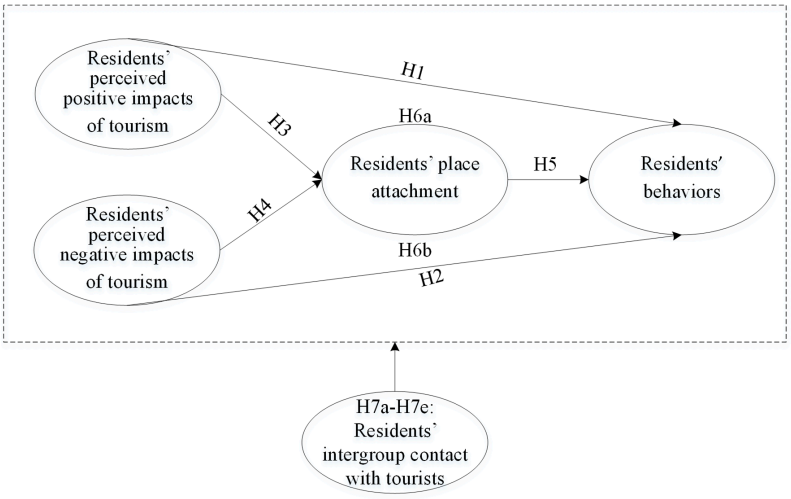

Figure 1. Research model.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Study Site

This study was conducted in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in northwestern Yunnan Province, Southwest China. There were two key reasons why we chose Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture as the study site. First, Dali Prefecture has always been a popular tourism destination in China and could be a tourism destination worthy of further study due to its stable tourist flow. According to the 2023 statistical yearbook of Yunnan province, there were 56.94 million domestic tourists in Dali Prefecture in 2022, which is one of the highest tourist numbers in Yunnan Province. Second, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, which has a rich intangible cultural heritage and maintains a traditional cultural environment, was selected as one of the Eco-cultural Protection Zones. Eco-cultural Protection Zones were established for the integrated preservation of intangible cultural heritage assets and living environments, which depend heavily on residents' traditional livelihood activities and behaviors. Thus, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture is a typical site with a strong tourism market and valuable cultural resources. When tourism experiences rapid development, it unavoidably directly exerts both positive and negative influences, which must be explored more deeply in tourism within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.2. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed with five sections.

The first section centers around residents' awareness of the effects brought about by tourism. Before measuring the impact of residents' perceptions of tourism, in-depth interviews with residents in the community of Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture were used to understand the community norms regarding residents' perceptions of tourism's positive and negative impacts (e.g., "Do you think tourism development improves your quality of life?" "Does your family or neighborhood support local tourism development?"). After the in-depth interviews with local residents, 19 items related to residents' perceived tourism impacts were measured based on the results of interviews conducted in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, and previous studies on residents' perceptions of tourism impacts were considered [105–108], as well as the broader literature on the impacts of tourism [109–111].

The second section examined residents' place attachment, which was measured with five items adopted from previous studies [66,68,84,91,112,113]. The third section included five questions to measure residents' behaviors [19,114–118]. In the fourth section, intergroup contact was measured using two items for quantity and quality [23,119]. The fifth section comprised five inquiries regarding participants' demographic details, namely, gender, age, educational attainment, and monthly earnings. These questions served the purpose of characterizing the respondents involved in this study.

To assess the questionnaire's credibility and relevance, we asked 15 Dali residents to check whether the expression of each item was clear and accurate. The respondents were asked to provide feedback on the clarity and adequacy of the items and to suggest any critical issues that might have been omitted. Factor analysis revealed that the Cronbach's alphas were above 0.70, indicating that the internal consistency of the constructs was satisfactory. Therefore, all items were included in the survey. The questionnaire was written in Mandarin, but most Dali residents were of Bai ethnicity. Consequently, we volunteered to speak the Bai language so that the respondents clearly understood the questionnaire content and could respond quickly.

3.3. Data Collection

The survey was conducted in July 2022, and data were collected via convenience sampling. In total, 510 residents' questionnaires were collected. Out of these, 462 were successfully completed (response rate: 90.59%). After excluding invalid questionnaires (e.g., those with incomplete answers or the same answer for all questions), 440 valid questionnaires remained (effective response rate: 95.24%).

The demographic traits of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Of the total respondents (N = 440), 47.0% were male and 53.0% were female. In terms of age, the largest group was aged 19–30 years (74.1%), followed by 31–40 years (16.8%) and 41–60 years (8.4%). Regarding education, the highest percentage (39.8%) of the respondents had completed junior college and undergraduate education, followed by junior high school and below (29.5%) and secondary high school (29.5%). In terms of income, over half of the participants reported monthly earnings of RMB 1501–8000.

Table 1. Sample profile.

Characteristics	Items	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	207	47.0
	Female	233	53.0
Age group	19–30	326	74.1
	31–40	74	16.8
	41–60	37	8.4
	≥61	3	0.7
Education	Junior high school and below	130	29.5
	Secondary and high school	130	29.5
	Junior college and undergraduate	175	39.8
	Postgraduate and above	5	1.1
Monthly income (RMB)	Less than 1500	162	36.8
	1501–3500	139	31.6
	3501–5000	83	18.9
	5001–8000	32	7.3
	8001 and above	24	5.5

3.4. Data Analysis

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to examine the collected questionnaire data with Smart PLS version 4.0 software. PLS-SEM is widely used in the field of tourism research. The reason why we chose PLS-SEM for the data analysis method is that compared to covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM requires less information about measurement scales and sample sizes. And PLS-SEM is suitable for investigating the complex research models that are proposed in an estimation framework incorporating related theories and empirical data [120].

In line with Kineber's research [121], the present study was carried out in four sequential steps. First, we tested the measurement model to determine its reliability and validity regarding residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, place attachment, and behaviors. Second, we estimated the path model to determine the significance among these variables. Third, we used the nonparametric bootstrapping method with 5000 resamples to test the model. Finally, we tested the mediating model using the bootstrapping approach.

4. Results, Data Analysis, and Discussion

4.1. Assessment of the Measurement Model

We tested the reliability and validity of all the constructs used in the conceptual model (Table 2). The factor loadings of the constructs surpassed the recommended threshold of

0.60 for their corresponding constructs and exhibited significance. All the constructs had satisfactory convergent validity, with an average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.50. The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of these constructs surpassed the benchmark value of 0.70 (Table 2), which signified a satisfactory level of internal consistency.

Table 2. Reliability and validity of the constructs.

	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Residents' perceptions of positive impacts of tourism (PP)		0.504	0.861	0.859
The development of tourism can...				
- increase income	0.616 ***			
- provide a new market for agricultural products/characteristic national products	0.753 ***			
- provide new public infrastructure	0.726 ***			
- improve traffic conditions	0.667 ***			
- increase understanding of local culture	0.743 ***			
- promote the protection and dissemination of local culture	0.744 ***			
Residents' perceptions of negative impacts of tourism (PN)		0.530	0.900	0.879
Tourism into the local area may...				
- destroy local culture (i.e., via tourism projects)	0.696 ***			
- cause the immediate area to become crowded	0.737 ***			
- cause noise pollution	0.774 ***			
- undermine the protection of local water bodies and vegetation	0.749 ***			
- increase local household waste	0.760 ***			
- affect the local ecological environment	0.765 ***			
- affect the use of the local language	0.649 ***			
- affect the existing culture in the area	0.683 ***			
Residents' place attachment (PA)		0.542	0.855	0.855
The local ecological environment is excellent.	0.730 ***			
I am proud that my hometown/residence is rated as an NCEPA.	0.666 ***			
I am well aware of the local development of tourism.	0.733 ***			
I agree with this form of tourism development.	0.729 ***			
I think it is necessary to combine the local culture with tourism.	0.815 ***			
Residents' behaviors (RBs)		0.575	0.850	0.871
I support the transformation of traditional tourist accommodation into characteristic homestays.	0.692 ***			
I am willing to participate appropriately in tourism work.	0.760 ***			
Tourism development is enhancing my awareness of local environmental protection.	0.723 ***			
I support ecological/environmental protection.	0.819 ***			
I support the protection and dissemination of local culture.	0.791 ***			
Residents' intergroup contact with tourists (IC)		0.560	0.847	0.869
Contact frequency with tourists	0.873 ***			
With tourists., I feel at ease and on an equal level.	0.719 ***			

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$.

As shown in Table 3, the discriminant validity was verified through the application of the Fornell–Larcker methodology. It was observed that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent construct exceeded the maximum correlation that the particular construct shared with any other constructs.

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker criterion analysis for discriminant validity.

	PN	PA	PP	RB
PN	0.529			
PA	0.373	0.941		
PP	0.433	0.914	0.904	
RB	0.352	0.831	0.811	0.675

PN, residents' perceptions of negative impacts of tourism; PA, residents' place attachment; PP, residents' perceptions of positive impacts of tourism; RB, residents' behavior.

The square roots of the AVEs are presented in bold diagonally. The maximum likelihood method was used to evaluate the theoretical model for each hypothesis, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was utilized to evaluate the model fit. According to the Smart PLS instructions, an SRMR value < 0.10 was considered a good fit. The results of the present study (SRMR = 0.089) confirmed an adequate model fit. In addition, the chi-squared value for the model was 1392.927. Furthermore, it was observed that all R^2 values surpassed the 0.10 threshold recommended by Falk and Miller [122].

As shown in Table 4, the results aligned with the TRA, showing that the residents were rational. When residents perceived that tourism has positive impacts, it induced positive attitudes in terms of residents' behaviors and place attachment. Conversely, when residents perceived negative impacts, the influence path was insignificant. The research findings further elucidated the critical role played by perceptions of tourism impacts, particularly negative facets, which exerted a profound influence on residents' behaviors. Additionally, a robust association was identified between place attachment and residents' behaviors, increasing the significance of place attachment.

Table 4. Main path estimates for the conceptual model.

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	t-Value	Result
H1	PP→RB	0.514	10.839 ***	Supported
H2	PN→RB	0.036	0.957	Not supported
H3	PP→PA	0.696	16.523 ***	Supported
H4	PN→PA	0.07	1.617	Not supported
H5	PA→RB	0.37	7.081 ***	Supported

Note: PP, residents' perceptions of positive impacts of tourism; PN, residents' perceptions of negative impacts of tourism; RB, residents' behavior; PA, residents' place attachment; *** $p < 0.001$.

4.2. Assessment of the Mediating Model

The outcomes regarding the mediation effects are showcased in Table 5. It was revealed that residents' perceptions of favorable impacts from tourism exerted an indirect influence on residents' behaviors via place attachment (coefficient = 0.292, 95% CI [0.218, 0.360]). The indirect effect was statistically significant, as there were no zero values in any of the confidence intervals. This indicated that residents' perceptions of positive impacts from tourism indirectly influenced residents' behaviors by strengthening their place attachment, which was consistent with H6a. The direct effect of residents' perceptions of positive impacts from tourism on their behaviors through place attachment was statistically significant (coefficient = 0.453, 95% CI [0.370, 0.545]), indicating that place attachment partially mediated residents' perceptions of positive impacts from tourism and their behaviors. However, the indirect effect between residents' perceptions of negative impacts from tourism and their behaviors through place attachment was not significant (coefficient = 0.031, 95% CI [−0.004, 0.071]). In addition, the direct result for residents' perceptions of negative impacts of tourism on residents' behaviors was not statistically significant (coefficient = 0.012, 95% [−0.057,0.096]; thus, H6b was not supported.

Table 5. Regression coefficients for the estimated mediation models.

Model	Indirect Effect	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval		Direct Effect	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Boot Lower	Boot Upper			Boot Lower	Boot Upper
PP→PA→RB	0.292	0.290	0.218	0.360	0.453	0.045	0.370	0.545
PN→PA→RB	0.031	0.019	−0.004	0.071	0.012	0.040	−0.057	0.096

The confirmation of H6 aligned with attachment theory, strengthening the role of place attachment in explaining differences in residents' attitudes and behaviors [123,124].

When taken in conjunction with the preceding claim that residents are rational, it becomes evident that, despite their robust place cognition and pronounced dependence on their hometowns, it is challenging to mitigate the detrimental impacts that tourism has on residents.

4.3. Assessment of the Moderating Model

As depicted in Table 6, the estimated path coefficients for the moderating effect of intergroup contact on the association between residents' perceptions of adverse impacts from tourism and residents' behaviors ($\beta = 0.037$, $p < 0.05$) were significant, meaning that the relationships between residents' perceptions of negative impacts from tourism and their behaviors were more robust when residents' contact frequency was high.

Table 6. Path estimates for the moderating model.

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	t Value	*p* Value	Result
H7a	IC × PP→RB	0.170	3.747 *	0.000	Supported
H7b	IC × NP→RB	0.031	0.781	0.435	Not supported
H7c	IC × PP→PA	0.037	0.441	0.659	Not supported
H7d	IC × NP→PA	0.046	0.781	0.435	Not supported
H7e	IC × PA→RB	0.044	3.976 ***	0.000	Supported

* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

With the escalation of intergroup contact, residents' perceptions concerning the favorable impacts of tourism exert a significant influence on their behaviors. However, the moderating role that residents' perceptions of positive impacts from tourism play in relation to residents' behaviors was found to be insignificant. These results are inconsistent with the standard belief that people with a greater quantity and better quality of intergroup interactions tend to have greater perceptions of positive impacts from tourism and are more willing to engage in behaviors of participation and support [125,126].

In this context, as the moderating effect of intergroup contact increased, residents who perceived positive impacts from tourism preferred to participate in tourism activities, which supported H7a. However, intergroup contact did not moderate the relationship between residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism and their place attachment.

The estimated path coefficients for the moderating effect of intergroup contact on the connection between place attachment and residents' behaviors ($\beta = 0.044$, $p < 0.001$) were significant, which indicated that the relationships between place attachment and residents' behaviors were more robust when residents' contact frequency was high. Interestingly, when residents had a solid attachment to a place, the increase in intergroup contact made residents more willing to participate in tourism development, which supports H7e. H7b, H7c, and H7d were rejected based on the process analysis results.

Simple slope analysis was employed to depict the alterations in the associations, namely, those between residents' perceptions of favorable impacts from tourism and their behaviors and between place attachment and residents' behaviors (Figure 2). For a low level of intergroup contact, residents' positive perceptions had a significant positive effect

on their behaviors (simple slope = 0.368, $p < 0.001$). For a high level of intergroup contact, residents' positive perceptions of tourism impacts still influenced their behaviors (simple slope = 0.603, $p < 0.001$). H7a was supported.

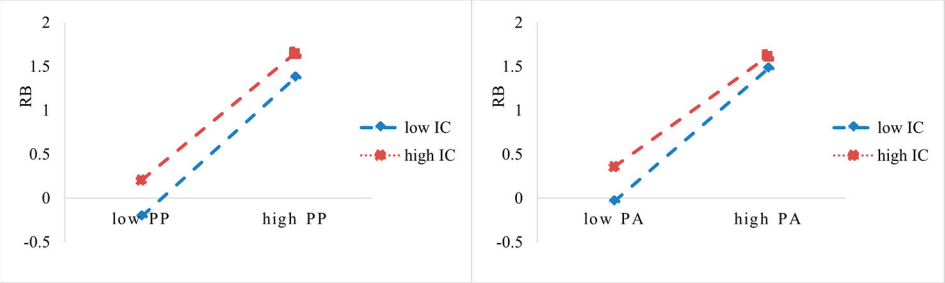

Figure 2. Simple slope analysis.

For a low level of intergroup contact, residents' place attachment positively and significantly affected their behaviors (simple slope = 0.529, $p < 0.001$). With a high level of intergroup contact, residents' place attachment can enhance their behaviors (simple slope = 0.215, $p < 0.001$). H7e was supported. Intergroup contact strengthened the effect of residents' perceptions of the positive impacts of tourism and residents' behaviors.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study has several theoretical implications.

First, the findings widen the scope for measuring residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism by not only considering prior research on positive/negative impacts but also identifying the sources of residents' positive and negative perceptions in ICH tourism. According to the findings, residents are rational and prioritize their well-being over the negative aspects of tourism, even when considering place attachment.

Second, this study explored the influencing mechanism in the relationships between residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and place attachment. Some studies in the prior literature have assumed that no correlation exists between residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism and place attachment. This study delved into the influencing mechanism underlying the relationships between residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and place attachment. It is noteworthy that certain studies in the prior literature postulated that there was no correlation to be found between residents' perceptions of the adverse impacts of tourism and place attachment. However, by considering the traditional living environment and authentic cultural ecology in this study, the impact of residents' perceptions of the detrimental impacts of tourism on place attachment was examined, as well as whether residents' place attachment in ICH tourism differed from that of residents in other tourism contexts. Although the paths influencing residents' perceptions of negative tourism impacts and place attachment were not significant, researchers should fully consider this possibility. In addition, the previous literature had emphasized the importance of place attachment [123], but this was not significant in this study.

In previous studies, residents of tourism destinations had generally been regarded as altruistic, and their psychological identities had been overemphasized. In essence, residents of tourism destinations are ordinary people who need income to ensure their well-being. This is especially obvious in intangible cultural heritage tourism because most destinations of this type are rich in cultural resources but have a weak financial capacity. This conclusion provides new insights for cultural heritage (especially intangible cultural

heritage) tourism researchers: residents need to meet their most basic needs before they can seek psychological recognition.

Third, although previous studies have considered intergroup contact as a variable, more studies should be performed to theoretically examine this phenomenon. Based on intergroup contact theory, this study, via empirical methods, thoroughly examined the moderating role of residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism, along with residents' place attachment and their behaviors. Moreover, this study showed that the more intergroup contact there is, the better. The current study broadened the scope of research concerning residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on intangible cultural heritage tourism and provided a novel example in this area.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study offers crucial perspectives on practical administration in intangible cultural heritage tourism destinations. First, as verified in this study, intangible cultural heritage tourism practitioners should consider the effect of residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism on their attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, to improve residents' participation and support, practitioners in intangible cultural heritage tourism should be aware of the vital role of residents' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism and conduct individual interviews with residents to identify the causes of their dissatisfaction. The outcomes further showed that residents' perceptions of the favorable impacts of tourism exerted a significant influence on both their place attachment and behaviors. Thus, tourism practitioners should cooperate with this group of individuals who perceive positive impacts from tourism to prevent a shift from satisfaction to disappointment.

Second, the outcomes indicated that residents' place attachment constituted a stable factor that exerted an influence on their behaviors. Therefore, from the perspective of the tourism development goals for Eco-cultural Protection Zones, local governments in intangible cultural heritage areas should increase residents' awareness of intangible cultural heritage and further enhance their recognition of their hometowns and culture. Specifically, intangible cultural heritage and its cultural space need to be emphasized. Since the formation of place attachment is a long-term process, the government should create plans for promoting intangible cultural heritage and conducting publicity activities for different age groups (e.g., Courses on intangible cultural heritage theme).

Third, intergroup contact moderated the relationships among residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, residents' place attachment, and their behaviors. However, as the moderating effect intensified, the direct influence between place attachment and behavior diminished. In light of these findings, it is recommended that local governments encourage residents to engage in the tourism industry to a moderate degree. Moreover, local governments should supervise tourism companies and prioritize cultural protection.

5.3. Limitations and Further Research

This study had several limitations. The site selected in this study is in the category of Eco-cultural Protection Zones—a relatively new concept in intangible cultural heritage in China. Therefore, the study regarded residents as the core subjects of protection and sustainable development in this context. The conclusion of this article provides considerable insights for improving local communities' attitudes and behaviors regarding tourism development and cultural cognition. However, the role of visitors and other participating groups (e.g., tourism companies and official cultural preservation agencies) still needs to be investigated in Eco-cultural Protection Zones.

This research should be expanded to include more participants. Moreover, in the present study, the moderating function of intergroup contact was investigated. It is worth

noting that other variables, for instance, financial conditions and religious factors, could likewise have an impact on residents' perceptions and behaviors. Hence, it would be of considerable value to take these potential underlying elements into account when devising a future research model.

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