

Place Identity of Heritage Tourism from Tourist Perspective: A Case Study of Quanzhou City

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Abstract: The place identity of heritage tourism has not been adequately explained. Based on the survey of Quanzhou, the research uses qualitative research methods to abstract data and encode it through grounded theory. From tourists' perspective, the study found that the place identity in heritage tourism includes two dimensions: soft power identity and emotional identity. Specifically, economic and educational identity is an essential manifestation of soft power identity. Emotional identity includes two levels: entertainment and culture. The study suggests that relevant departments can focus on these aspects to develop Quanzhou's cultural heritage tourism, actively cultivate tourists' place identity and promote the sustainable development of Quanzhou's cultural heritage tourism.

Keywords: Place Identity of Heritage Tourism; Quanzhou; Heritage Tourism Industry

1. Introduction

The significance and economic potential of cultural heritage tourism have been acknowledged worldwide, being at the forefront of the development strategies for many cities to enhance the tourists' experience (Liliana et al., 2020). Heritage contributes toward political identity (politicization) and supports tourism (commodification). Heritage tourism contributes toward the individual's appreciation of places and political identification. Similarly, Smith (2006) contends that heritage symbolically represents identity through a cultural process encompassing experience, memory, and remembrance.

Quanzhou is located in the southeast coastal area of China, which is rich in marine tourism resources. As a representative city of south Min region culture, Quanzhou plays a vital role in disseminating local culture. Through literature retrieval, since 1990, there have been 48 research results on Quanzhou tourism and only a few articles related to Quanzhou heritage tourism. Previous studies mainly focus on the tourism products, tourism industry, and other aspects of Quanzhou from the perspective of market promoters, government, and other subjects. There is no study on Quanzhou heritage tourism from tourists' perspective, and there is no study on the place identity of tourists through heritage tourism. This study contributes to developing the place identity of tourists by heritage tourism, and finally, we will clarify the importance of heritage tourism to place identity^[1].

Tourists from their sense of place identity by constructing a sense of belonging (Ye et al., 2020). As a city rich in heritage tourism resources, Quanzhou has certain representativeness in disseminating Chinese historical and cultural values. The study aims to enhance Quanzhou local people's understanding of heritage tourism resources, and make local people have a more in-depth understanding of the value of heritage tourism, and increase the local people's place identity. Moreover, the other district tourists be interested in Quanzhou's heritage tourism and enhance their interest and understanding of Quanzhou heritage tourism from identity.

2. Literature review

2.1 Heritage tourism

Much of today's heritage tourism product depends on staging or re-creating ethnic or cultural traditions (Deepak et al., 2013). In recent years, heritage tourism has gained increasing attention and has generated a growing body of literature (Herbert 2001;).

Hollinshead (1988) asserts that local traditions and community heritage can serve as attractions and that heritage tourism embraces folkloric traditions, arts and crafts, ethnic history, social customs, and cultural celebrations. Poria et al. (2001) define heritage tourism more narrowly as a phenomenon based on visitors' motivations and perceptions rather than specific site attributes. Zeppal and Hall (1991) also emphasize motivation, and view heritage tourism, as "based on nostalgia and the desire to experience diverse cultural landscapes and forms^[2]."

2.2 Quanzhou heritage tourism resource

Quanzhou is one of the first batches of the State Council's famous historical and cultural cities. It is also famous for the starting point of the "Maritime Silk Road". Quanzhou once became an international metropolis and "the largest port in the East" In the Tang, Song, and Yuan Dynasties. Moreover, as the world's first "world multicultural Exhibition Center" of UNESCO, it has a profound historical and cultural heritage and cultural relics. Among them, Nanyin, marionette, and four other projects have been listed in UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list^[3].

2.3 Place Identity

Groat (1995) established place-identity as a sensitizing construct, bringing to fruition earlier calls for an ecological conception of self and personality. Proshansky et al. (1983) described place-identity as a pot of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings. As a specific substructure of the self, they reasoned that place-identity might function to underwrite personal identities, render actions or activities intelligible, express tastes and preferences, and mediate change environments. Korpela (1989) states that place-identity is a psychological structure arising from individuals' attempts to regulate their environments. In this paper, place identity (in the psychological sense) will be understood as self-categorization in terms of place. Ginting (2017) and others believe that place identity has continuity, self-efficacy, and uniqueness. From tourists' psychology and emotion, Zheng (2012) proposed that space, symbol, and collective memory constitute place identity^[4].

3. Methodology

A qualitative research method is more beneficial to describe the finding (Jiang & Pu, 2021). This study will use semi-structured in-depth interviews that last for over 30 minutes to collect the data. In this survey, the program arranges ten researchers who will play the role of tourists in Quanzhou. In the process of travel, researchers find appropriate opportunities to chat up with tourists, state their research intention, and make it clear that there will be an inevitable return after participating in the survey, and show the safety and anonymity of the survey, to gain the rapport of the interviewees^[5].

The focus group discussion in this study is a different research method based on in-depth interviews. Focus group discussion is to recruit experts to discuss the place identity of tourists in Quanzhou. Snowball and Gatekeepers are the main methods to recruit participants by introducing friends from the Quanzhou tourism department or the information of relevant experts, and then the researcher will contact the experts and inform them of the project information and related research with their consent. Researchers will try their best to find a way to cooperate with the Quanzhou tourism department and collect experts suitable for this study through the leaders of the tourism department as a gatekeeper. This study invites eight experts to finish the focus group discussion and last for 2 hours^[6].

4. Data analysis and results

Data analysis in grounded theory is the process of substantive coding. If the way of mind mapping is used to explain the place identity from tourists' perspective, as shown in figure 1, the study found that place identity includes soft power identity and emotional identity. Soft power identification identifies economy and education, that is, tourists' identification of Quanzhou's economic development and education. From these two perspectives, tourists can feel the regional advantages in heritage and cultural tourism. Emotional identity can be explained from two aspects: entertainment and culture. Therefore, place identity in heritage tourism is closely related to economy, education, entertainment, and culture. Specifically, economic prosperity, wealthy heritage protection institutions and tourism resources, and even stories about historical heritage are essential manifestations of place identity in heritage tourism^[7].

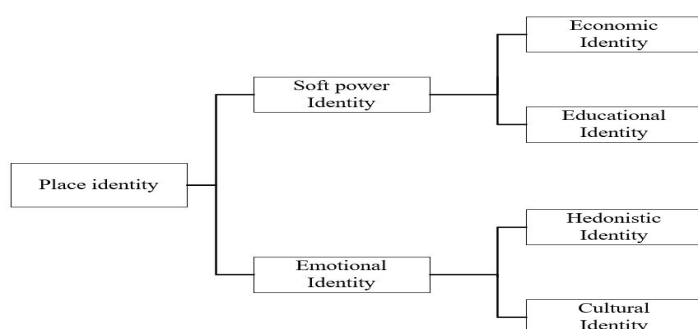


Figure 1. Dimension of place identity in heritage tourism
(Source: elaborated by this study)

5. Discussion and conclusion

As an important cultural heritage export destination, Quanzhou has rich resources. Although there are many discussions on Quanzhou cultural heritage, there are few studies on cultural heritage tourism from identity. This paper explores the place identity in cultural heritage tourism from tourists' perspective and reveals the dimensions of economy, education, culture. Specifically, suppose tourists want to form a good place identity in cultural heritage tourism^[8]. In that case, the Quanzhou tourism department should pay attention to the economic value of cultural heritage and carry out cultural heritage education in various educational fields to form the urban landscape atmosphere of heritage tourism and let tourists feel different cultural atmospheres in Quanzhou. The research inspired the Cultural Tourism Department of Quanzhou to promote cultural heritage tourism from multiple angles and actively cultivate tourists' place identity in Quanzhou's heritage tourism, to promote the development of local heritage tourism.

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Fund project:

The hot vocabulary of contemporary college student under the background of one belt, one road. No.:KY201931. Scientific research project of Pass College of Chongqing technology and business university.

"One belt, one road" Policy Guided the Construction of Jinke in Modern Chinese.Chongqing Higher Education Teaching Reform Research Project. No.: 203526.