

Community Participation in Tourism at a World Heritage Site: Mutianyu Great Wall, Beijing, China

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ABSTRACT

Community participation is crucial for successful heritage tourism and community development. Levels and ways of participation vary, depending on nature and context of heritage sites. This paper explores community participation in tourism at Mutianyu Great Wall, China. General positive perceptions toward World Heritage, tourism development and tourism impacts are held by different groups of the local community. Between-group differences indicate that local opinions are influenced by different levels of impacts from and participation in tourism. Community members receive benefits with minimal participation in decision making. This study provokes reflections on community participation theory and management practices in the Chinese context. Copyright © 2012 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is inevitable at most World Heritage Sites due to their cultural and natural significance. Relationships between heritage preservation and tourism development are characterized by symbioses and tension (Nuryanti, 1999; Tunbridge, 2007). Heritage serves as the attraction for tourism, and tourism has the potential to generate public and financial support for heritage preservation if planned properly (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Peters, 1999). Thus, heritage tourism has been valued as a key development opportunity at many World Heritage sites. Although as the custodians of the heritage (Nuryanti, 1996; Aas *et al.*, 2005) and usually the most affected by heritage tourism, local communities are often neglected despite the common acknowledgement of their importance in heritage tourism with their rich local knowledge and experience of the site (Tosun, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to engage local communities in heritage tourism (Timothy and Tosun, 2003) to minimize negative impacts and ensure proper distribution of benefits from tourism. In this context, there is a need to explore further how such communities are impacted and how they can participate in and benefit from heritage tourism, especially at World Heritage sites where tensions between preservation and tourism are prominent.

As a symbol of Chinese nationality and identity, the Great Wall was designated as a World Heritage site in 1987 and is renowned as a tourism attraction. Mutianyu Great Wall is among the most popular Great Wall World Heritage sites in Beijing with tourism developed since 1988. Located adjacent to the Mutianyu Great Wall tourist area, Mutianyu village has been involved in tourism since then. With Mutianyu and the adjacent Great Wall as a study site, this research examines tourism impacts on and benefits to the community through

different forms of community participation. Local perceptions of World Heritage, tourism development and impacts of tourism are assessed from the perspectives of different groups in the community. Although not directly involved in the decision-making process nor properly informed of the plans for the site, community members actively and extensively participate in tourism business. Although initiated from the bottom up, participation in the tourism business is supported by the local government and the management agency through preferential policies and management mechanisms. This ensures a wide distribution of opportunities and benefits throughout the Mutianyu community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As an important leisure activity and area of scholarly research, heritage tourism has experienced rapid growth internationally as a result of increased education and income, technological improvements, the growing awareness of the world (Timothy and Boyd, 2003), and the increasing tourist interest in sites with cultural and natural significance (Aas and Ladkin, 2005). The interdependent relationship of heritage preservation and tourism has been well documented as being characterized by both symbioses and tension (Nuryanti, 1999; Tunbridge, 2007). Although excessive tourism may threaten heritage preservation, a symbiotic relationship between heritage preservation and tourism is achievable because heritage can supply attractions for tourists, whereas tourism can generate income and public support for heritage preservation (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Peters, 1999). The capability of tourism to finance heritage preservation and support the well-being of local communities, if planned and managed properly, is also acknowledged in both developing and developed countries (Nuryanti, 1999; Tunbridge, 2007: 149). Optimizing the benefits from tourism for both site preservation and community development is a critical issue for heritage tourism (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Peters, 1999).

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World Heritage has attracted significant academic attention and become one of the major topics in heritage tourism research internationally (Rakic and Chambers, 2007). Although World Heritage nomination is based primarily on preservation criteria, tourism is inevitably involved (Bandarin, 2004). World Heritage status has significant implications for tourism by recognizing the value of preservation, drawing attention to the site, raising its profile and in many cases, stimulating demand (Bandarin, 2004). Therefore, especially for new sites, the designation is considered to be analogous to a brand that guarantees the attractiveness of the area, ensures a special and valuable visitor experience that attracts visitors, and instills pride in residents (Li *et al.*, 2008; Shackley, 1998; Van der Aa *et al.*, 2004). However, impacts of World Heritage status on tourism vary: internationally renowned sites with a long history of tourism may expect little increase in visitor numbers, whereas less established sites may experience a surge in tourism (Bandarin, 2004). Also, the site's intrinsic qualities may be the major factor influencing tourist visitation, and World Heritage status may have only a marginal effect on visitor numbers and attractiveness, particularly if the place is remote and difficult to access (Hall and Piggin, 2002). In financial terms, although UNESCO only assigns funding to World Heritage Sites in Danger, World Heritage status improves the ability of a country or site to access conservation funding from governments or other sources (Shackley, 1998). In addition, based on a comparative case study in Australia and New Zealand, Hede (2007) found that the prospect of World Heritage status accelerated the speed of decision making concerning heritage and tourism and encouraged networking among stakeholders.

The dilemma between heritage preservation and tourism development is especially evident in World Heritage sites, where international organizations are directly involved in the identification and preservation of heritage with global values and unique and special attributes (Black and Wall, 2001). However, the global values attached to World Heritage sites sometimes differs from local interpretations, and such difference should be understood, appreciated and where possible, reconciled (Black and Wall, 2001). Furthermore, World Heritage designation implies changes at the site (Fielden and Jokilehto, 1993), such as the creation of a new management plan and use of heritage resources.

The increasing importance of community participation in heritage planning and management is well recognized (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Nuryanti, 1996; Peters, 1999), especially at World Heritage Sites, where local interests and international authorities are both involved in preservation and development. Although as the 'owner' and custodian of heritage (Nuryanti, 1996; Aas *et al.*, 2005) and usually directly impacted by tourism development, local communities seldom have genuine control over the nature and direction of tourism development (Scheyvens, 2003). Wall (1996) argued that local communities support tourism development mainly because they want positive changes, such as higher incomes and job opportunities. However, they may not be aware of other often inevitable modifications to their lives, such as changes to the environment, social structure and distribution of power (Wall, 1996).

Community participation in tourism development should ensure that community members are informed of the development process, potential opportunities to participate, and potential positive and negative impacts on their lives (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Timothy and Tosun, 2003). Then, they will be better positioned to make appropriate decisions to reduce potential environmental or socio-cultural conflicts between tourists and local aspirations (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Bramwell and Lane, 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999; Timothy and Tosun, 2003). Through local involvement, a higher satisfaction with tourism development and a higher tolerance for tourists can be achieved (Timothy and Boyd, 2003; Timothy and Tosun, 2003). Local knowledge and experience, combined with an understanding of tourism development, can be used to empower local people to participate in tourism effectively (Tosun, 2000). However, possessing different objectives, roles and power in tourism development, different stakeholders may expect different types of community participation, ranging from non-participation to spontaneous participation and may conflict with each other (Tosun, 2006). Thus, more research is required to understand how to involve people with different expectations effectively to generate policy recommendations to foster a participatory tourism development approach (Tosun, 2006).

Community participation in decision making is often emphasized and considered as a precondition for the acquisition of benefits, particularly in Western context (Li, 2006). However, it is rarely found in developing countries due to various constraints (Li, 2006). Developing countries usually take a top-down, passive and indirect community participation approach in tourism development, where decisions are made for the communities, not by them, and participation occurs in implementation and sharing of benefits rather than in decision making about what will be done (Tosun, 1999; Tosun, 2006). In a study of Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve, China, Li (2006) found that local communities are benefitting from tourism sufficiently with almost no participation in the planning process. Thus, Li (2006) argued that modes of community participation can be affected by institutional arrangements and different stages of tourism development, and participation in decision making is only one of many ways to ensure local benefits from tourism. Benefits distribution does not necessarily require community involvement in the determination of rights, tenure or control of tourism projects (Li, 2006; Simpson, 2008). At the same time, involvement in decision making alone does not ensure their acquisition of benefits (Simpson, 2008). In addition, community involvement in decision making may cause problems in achieving benefit delivery, creating or aggravating internal conflicts and giving rise to unrealistic expectations (Simpson, 2008). Thus, Simpson (2008) introduced the concept of Community Benefit Tourism Initiative that emphasized the transfer of benefits to local people in contrast to the traditional emphasis on participation in decision making.

China, with its rich cultural and natural heritage resources, joined the World Heritage Convention on 12 December 1985. As of 2011, China had 29 cultural, 8 natural and 4 mixed designated sites (WHL, 2011). Research on World Heritage tourism in China is a recent phenomenon compared with many developed countries. However, World Heritage Sites in China

experience great pressure from China's large population with its rapidly expanding tourism demand (Li *et al.*, 2008). In recent years, considerable research has been undertaken to identify and analyze major issues in World Heritage tourism in China, including the management structure, financial resources, tourism impacts and policy making (Su and Wall, 2011). In comparison, insufficient attention has been given to the well-being of residents in and adjacent to World Heritage Sites (Deng, 2004; Huang, 2006; Zhang and Ma, 2006), which is only now starting to draw academic attention in China. Zhou and Huang (2004) argued that improvements in living standards of local residents and the functionality of their community should be incorporated into the goals for tourism development at World Heritage Sites. Government support in policy and management to promote local engagement in tourism-related business and the construction of effective participation and benefit-sharing mechanisms have been identified as among the keys to facilitation of local development through tourism at World Heritage Sites (Zhang and Ma, 2006; Su and Wall, 2011).

Due to China's economic, socio-cultural and political circumstances, community participation in China has special features, which give rise to questions concerning the relevance of Western theories and approached to the Chinese context. The property rights arrangement is considered to be an important factor for the different community participation patterns that are adopted in China (Li, 2006). People in China only usually have the right to use the land and natural resources; these are owned by the state or the collective. This may limit the incentive to participate in decision making (Li, 2006). The lack of community participation mechanisms in China that have state support also contributes to difficulties in effective community participation in heritage tourism.

Thus, it is suggested that Chinese research on World Heritage should focus more on creative conceptual development suitable for the Chinese context and the integration of theories and empirical case studies (Zhang and Bao, 2004; Zuo and Bao, 2008). Importantly, more research is required to understand local participation and enhance local benefits through tourism at World Heritage Sites (Deng, 2004; Huang, 2006). Considering the current research emphasis on economic impacts, social and cultural implications of heritage tourism on local communities should be stressed (Su and Wall, 2011).

MUTIANYU GREAT WALL AND MUTIANYU VILLAGE

As the most visible symbol of Chinese nationality and culture, the Great Wall is one of the most appealing attractions globally owing to its architectural grandeur and historical significance. In 1987, the Great Wall was among the first places in China inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hosting several Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) Great Wall sites and advantaged by its international reputation and accessibility, Beijing is well positioned as the place from which to experience the Great Wall.

Situated in Huairou District, about 75 km northeast of the center of Beijing, Mutianyu Great Wall has developed tourism officially since 1988 and is among the most popular Great Wall sites in Beijing. Mutianyu village, with its residents engaged in tourism in different ways, is directly linked with Mutianyu Great Wall both geographically and financially. Access to the Great Wall is provided by a single road that terminates in the village. Mutianyu Great Wall was chosen as a suitable site for this study on the basis of its substantial tourism development and the presence of community participation.

Located on the side of the mountain hosting Mutianyu Great Wall with the tourist area steps away, Mutianyu village (as shown in Figure 1) is under direct supervision of Mutianyu Tourist Area Agency, the management agency of Mutianyu Great Wall and a County-level government administration. According to 2006 statistics, the village has a total of 188 families with around 510 people and 128 Mu (15 Mu = 1 hectare) of arable land. Fruit trees were the only economic resource before the start of Great Wall tourism in 1988, a turning point for the village. Since then, tourism has developed gradually, with more tourists arriving, more facilities constructed and improvement of public infrastructure. Mutianyu village is now consistently ranked high economically in Huairou District due to tourism development. The annual income per person was RMB 14 445 (\$2200) in 2006. According to the village mayor, tourism business has become the major income source for most village residents with 86% of village income derived from tourism.

One special characteristic of Mutianyu village is the presence of international residents living and investing in the village. As of 2008, 22 houses were under long-term rental to international residents from 12 nations, mostly as weekend residences. According to a policy in China, rural residents cannot sell houses on their land. Therefore, houses are on long-term lease, usually for 30 years, which is a significant income source for some village residents. International residents participate directly in tourism business by investing and managing 'the Schoolhouse at Mutianyu Great Wall' on the site of the abandoned village primary school, featuring 'the Schoolhouse Canteen', a western style restaurant, and 'the Schoolhouse Glass', a glass work studio. The Schoolhouse business also induced village entrepreneurship in maintenance and cleaning businesses. In addition, international residents

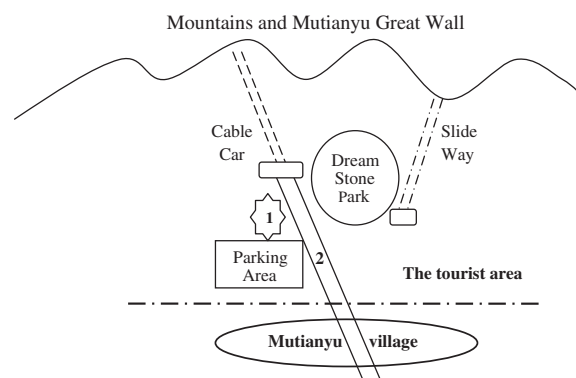


Figure 1. Mutianyu Great Wall and Mutianyu village (1: Visitor Center; 2: Road to the entrance of the Great Wall).

participated in village development by initiating 'the international sister village' program with the village of Shelburne Falls in Massachusetts, USA. The project aims to share experiences in rural development as both villages have undergone depopulation and economic revival through tourism development. The presence of international residents in the village brings novel perspectives and international experiences into tourism development at the local level, which is an asset for Mutianyu that is rarely available elsewhere.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection and analysis. Questionnaire surveys and key informant interviews were used as the major primary data collection methods. Researchers' field observations and the collection of secondary data, including government documents and tourism statistics facilitated the effective execution of the surveys and interviews and complemented results of the primary data analysis.

Representatives both from the management agency and the local community were contacted and interviewed, including the Office Director of Beijing Mutianyu Great Wall tourist area agency, Mutianyu Village Mayor and the Mayor's assistant. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted in November and December 2008. Interview questions include the current status of tourism development, aspects of tourism impacts, management structure of the site and the village, and ways and levels of community participation in tourism. Specific questions concerning the status and prospects of village development were posed to the Village Mayor. Questions on the making and implementation of the site plan and the responsibilities of key stakeholders were answered by the Office Director.

Questionnaire surveys of small business operators, village residents and site employees at Mutianyu Great Wall were used to understand ways and levels of participation and local perceptions toward World Heritage and tourism among different groups of the local community. The questionnaire to small business operators was designed with four major sections. Section 1 differentiates factors such as business type and residency of the owner. Section 2 was designed with yes-no and open-ended questions to acquire basic information about their business operation, such as their initial investment, monthly income and number of visitors served per day. Section 3 measures respondents' perceptions of the impacts of World Heritage designation and elicits general evaluations of tourism

development and evaluations of the economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism. Three-point rather than five-point Likert scale questions were employed in this section to ensure understanding of the scale questions based on results of a pilot test in Mutianyu. The last part records the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents. Questionnaires directed to village residents and site employees consisted of only the last two parts of the questionnaire and were used to assess their perceptions of the impacts of World Heritage designation, tourism development, and the costs and benefits to the local community.

To achieve a higher participation rate, weekdays in December 2008, which were identified as the least busy days during the off-peak season, were chosen as the survey time. A total of 52 questionnaires from small business operators, 23 from other village residents and 10 from site employees were completed.

RESULTS

Different forms of local participation in tourism at Mutianyu are summarized in Table 1 based on interviews and observations. The predominant way of participation is through operating small business outlets. According to both the Office Director and the Village Mayor, this opportunity is reserved exclusively for Mutianyu village residents with rental fees waived as compensation for their loss of land to the development of the tourist area. Both the village and the tourist area are responsible for the management of business outlet operation through the Market Division of Mutianyu Great Wall Tourist Area Agency. According to the Village Mayor, the number of business outlets has remained stable for years in line with the capacity of the site. Changes of outlet ownership are through natural replacement, the younger generation picking up the opportunity when older villagers retire. To balance the impacts of outlet position on business performance and maintain equal opportunities of using better positioned outlets, a daily rotation among outlets of the same business type is adopted. The starting outlet position is decided by an annual ballot among all outlet owners of the same business type. This procedure is welcomed by outlet owners for its fairness.

According to Village Mayor, family-style accommodation services are available in the village with a total capacity of 400–500 people. However, business is limited because most tourists are day-visitors. The operation of a small number of restaurants on the site is also contracted to village residents. In addition, around 100 village residents have

Table 1. Different forms of local participation in tourism at Mutianyu Great Wall

	Official	Unofficial
Within the tourist area	- Operating small business outlets - Operating restaurants - Employed by Mutianyu tourist area	- Providing transportation services to downtown Huairou
Outside the tourist area	- Running family hotels and restaurants - Running agricultural tourism programs, e.g. local produce picking and selling, fishing and dining.	- Providing transportation services, which are shared with local people in Huairou district

been employed by the site management office since its opening in 1988, which is roughly one-third of its total employees. As observed, providing transportation services for tourists to downtown Huairou is also an unofficial way of local participation.

Small business operators

The fifty-two small business operators surveyed are broken down into the following business categories: souvenirs, food and beverages, local produce, snack food, restaurants and family hotels (Table 2), and compared with the total number on site as observed by the first author. Souvenir outlets are the major business type at Mutianyu, comprising 70% of the total outlets. Food and beverage and local produce rank second with around 10% of all businesses. A small number of restaurants and snack food outlets are available, and about 10 family hotels are scattered throughout the village.

All 52 small business operators surveyed are residents of Mutianyu village (Table 3). There are slightly more female subjects (56%) than male subjects (44%) with a wide age span. Long residence predominates with 88% having lived in the village for more than 10 years. Respondents generally have high school education and no-one with university education was found in the sample.

To further understand the characteristics of small business operators in each business type, relationships between business type and the basic demographic factors were examined using chi-squared tests (Table 4). People engaged in different

Table 2. Types of small business outlets at Mutianyu Great Wall

	Number of questionnaires	Approximate total number on site
Small business operators	52	200
Souvenirs	30	140
Food and beverage	6	20
Business type	Local produce	14
	Snack food	2
	Restaurant	3
	Family hotel	3

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of small business operators

		Small business operators	
		Number	Percentage
Sample size		52	100
Gender	Female	29	56
	Male	23	44
Age	Young (18–34)	6	12
	Middle age (35–54)	32	62
	Elder (≥ 55)	14	27
Years of residence	1–9	6	12
	≥ 10	44	88
Education	Primary school	16	31
	Junior high school	23	44
	Senior high school	13	25
	University or above		

Table 4. Relationship between business type and demographic characteristics

Chi-squared test	Business type		
	Value	d.f.	Significance (two-sided)
Age	22.520	8	0.004*
Gender	12.318	4	0.015*
Education	22.963	8	0.003*
Years of residence	5.556	4	0.235

*Statistically significant difference at 0.05 level.

business types demonstrate distinctive demographic features, such as of age, gender and education, reflecting the different requirements for running different types of business. Souvenirs outlets, as the most prevalent business type, equally engage male and female subjects of a wide range of educations and ages. The majority are middle aged (59%) with a junior high school education (56%). Local produce outlets are operated predominantly by middle-aged female subjects mostly with high school education. Food and beverage business are operated by elderly people aged 55 years and above with a lower level of education. The three respondents engaged in restaurants and family hotels are all middle-aged men, mostly with a high school education. Snack food outlets are the smallest number of businesses on the site; two of the three outlets surveyed are run by middle-aged women with junior high school education.

Basic business information and satisfaction with the businesses operation will now be examined. The majority (90%) of respondents agreed that their income increased after starting their business, and most (75%) were satisfied with their current business. In addition, the majority (86%) used their personal savings instead of receiving help from the government to start their business. Almost all (92%) indicated that they benefit from the government policy restricting on-site business to Mutianyu village residents with no rental fee for the outlet and an annual management fee of only several hundred RMB (less than \$100) for basic outlet maintenance. Therefore, nearly all income from tourism business goes to outlet operators. Casual conversations with survey participants revealed that the monthly business income ranged from about RMB 500 to 3000 (\$80–500) depending on business type, individual operator and seasonality. In general, of the different types of business, food and beverage outlets experienced more seasonal fluctuations and received comparatively lower income; souvenirs outlets demonstrate bigger income variety among different outlets, and snacks and local produce outlets were more stable with a middle level of income. Also, high competition was mentioned especially by souvenir outlet operators.

Small business operators are identified as having positive perceptions of the impacts of World Heritage designation. World Heritage designation is recognized by most respondents as helping tourism development (85%), Great Wall protection (85%) and local business development (85%). Still higher recognitions were observed on the enhancement of international reputation (94%) and attracting more tourists to the site (94%).

Evaluations of tourism development are generally positive: 81% respondents agreed that more benefits have been received through tourism development, 94% support further tourism development by the local government and 71% expressed their satisfaction with current tourism development. More government attention to tourism impacts on local residents is favored by 79% respondents.

Impacts of tourism are examined from economic, social and cultural, environmental perspectives (Table 5). Agreements are found with most items within each category, except that more varied opinions are observed regarding environmental impacts.

For economic impacts, the majority agreed with the improvements in local economic development (85%), local living standard (83%), local income (81%), local services standard (86%) and local job opportunity (58%) through tourism. Most (81%) respondents agreed that local people benefit from tourism. The importance of tourism in the local economy is recognized by 81% of respondents. Greater divergence of opinions is identified for changes in local prices, which are further analyzed using chi-squared tests. A statistically significant difference is identified at the 0.05 level among age groups ($d.f. = 4$; $p = 0.002$): 93% of older people (aged 55 or above) agreed that tourism results in local price increases. Opinions are more diverse among middle-aged and young people. Almost half (47%) of middle-aged (aged 35–54) people disagreed that price increase has occurred, and a similar proportion (46%) agreed with the statement. Somewhat similarly, half (50%) of young people (aged 18–34) disagreed with the statement, and 33% agreed with it. This indicates that the younger the respondents, the lower the recognition of price increases, perhaps because older people are more sensitive or have more concerns about price changes and have had longer to observe them.

Social and cultural impacts of tourism are examined through six factors (Table 5). Positive attitudes were expressed by most respondents. The great majority of respondents agree that the awareness of cultural heritage (85%) and the understanding of Great Wall culture (92%) have been improved among local people because of tourism development. It indicates that tourism development has helped to raise the awareness of cultural heritage, especially Great Wall culture. Almost all (90%) respondents agreed that tourism has positive impacts on their recognition of the attractiveness and characteristics of their hometown, and 76% acknowledged that more local people would like to work and live in their hometown due to tourism development. Most (81%) respondents also attributed a friendly community atmosphere to tourism. However, more varied opinions were observed concerning tourism impacts on the enrichment of local life. A statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level is identified with education ($d.f. = 6$; $p = 0.022$). Three-quarters (75%) of respondents with primary school education and 74% with junior high school education agreed that tourism enriches local life. In contrast, 46% respondents with senior high school education agreed and 38% disagreed with the statement. This difference indicates that those with higher education may possess higher expectations for local life, which lowers their satisfaction with the current situation.

Concerning environmental impacts, more divergent opinions are observed. Despite widespread agreement regarding tourism's positive impacts on the protection and maintenance of the Great Wall (85%) and the architecture of the local community (85%), other factors received less agreement and are analyzed using chi-squared tests to identify differences in association with age, gender, education and business type.

Business type ($d.f. = 8$) is identified as an important factor leading to divergence in opinion about beautifying the

Table 5. Small business operators' perceptions of tourism impacts ($n = 52$)

Economic impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Tourism development improved local economic development	2%	13%	85%	0.83	0.430
Tourism development provided more local job opportunity	15%	27%	58%	0.42	0.750
Tourism development improved local living standard	4%	13%	83%	0.79	0.498
Tourism development increased local income	6%	13%	81%	0.75	0.556
Tourism development lead to the increase of local prices *	33%	11%	56%	0.23	0.921
Most local people benefit from tourism development	4%	15%	81%	0.77	0.509
Tourism development improved local service standard	4%	10%	86%	0.83	0.474
Tourism is important in local economy	4%	15%	81%	0.77	0.509
Social and cultural impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Help build friendly community atmosphere	4%	15%	81%	0.77	0.509
Enrich local life *	16%	17%	67%	0.52	0.754
Improve the awareness of cultural heritage in local people	4%	11%	85%	0.81	0.487
Deepen the understanding of Great Wall culture of local people	2%	6%	92%	0.90	0.358
Make local people realize the attractiveness and characteristics of their home town	2%	8%	90%	0.88	0.385
Make local people like to work and live at their home town	10%	14%	76%	0.66	0.658
Environmental impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Help the protection and maintenance of the Great Wall	0%	15%	85%	0.85	0.364
Beautify architecture in local community	0%	15%	85%	0.85	0.364
Beautify the environment in local community *	31%	27%	42%	0.12	0.855
Bring negative impacts to surrounding environment *	64%	15%	21%	-0.42	0.825
Improve local public facilities *	27%	15%	58%	0.31	0.875
Bring more traffic jam, difficult to go out *	50%	15%	35%	-0.15	0.916
Bring more noise, destroy the local peaceful atmosphere *	60%	11%	29%	-0.31	0.897
Tourists causes crowding at site *	64%	17%	19%	-0.44	0.802

*Divergence of opinions is identified.

environment ($p=0.004$), more traffic jams ($p=0.001$) and more noise ($p=0.042$) in the village. Local produce sellers showed the highest agreement (79%) that tourism beautifies the environment. Two-thirds (67%) of restaurant and family hotel owners agreed with the statement. Disagreements with this statement are identified among snack food sellers (100% disagree) and food and beverages sellers (67% disagree). Again, the large group of souvenir sellers expressed diverse opinions toward this statement (26% agreed, 41% are neutral and 33% disagreed). Regarding more traffic jams resulting from tourism, all snack food sellers agreed and all food and beverage sellers disagreed with the statement. The majority of local produce sellers (86%) and restaurant and hotel operators (67%) disagreed. Similarly, diverse opinions are found among souvenir sellers concerning traffic jams (37% disagree and 33% agree). When asked whether the peaceful village environment is destroyed by more noise from tourism, the majority of respondents in business, other than souvenir outlets disagreed; whereas souvenir sellers expressed a wide range of opinions (44% agreed and 37% disagreed). Closely related with income and business competition, business type appears to be important in affecting respondents' tolerance of environmental impacts. Also, souvenir sellers demonstrate a larger within-group variation in opinions regarding the environmental impacts of tourism, possibly

because of larger variations in business performance between individual outlets due to higher competition among them.

Mutianyu village residents

Mutianyu villagers were surveyed randomly in the village during the field research, and all of them had family members or relatives either involved in doing tourism business or working on site or had done business on site themselves but were now retired. Therefore, although at the time of interview they were not participating in tourism business, they were indirectly involved in tourism business and directly impacted by tourism development while residing in the village. Compared with the sample of small business operators, similar education level and long residence in the village are noticed; but proportionately more older and more male respondents are included in the sample of 23 village residents. Their opinions on the impacts of World Heritage designation, tourism development and tourism impacts are examined in the same format as the survey for small business operators (Table 6).

Similar opinions exist between village residents and small business operators in most factors. In comparison, village residents demonstrate less recognition of the positive impacts of World Heritage designation (d.f. =2; $p=0.025$) and tourism development (d.f. =2; $p=0.005$) on heritage preservation

Table 6. Village residents' perceptions of World Heritage and tourism impacts ($n=23$)

Impacts of World Heritage designation	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
World Heritage designation helps tourism development at site	0	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
World Heritage designation improves the site international reputation	0	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
World Heritage designation brings more tourists	0	0	100%	1	0.000
World Heritage designation helps the protection of the Great Wall	13%	9%	78%	0.65	0.714
World Heritage designation has positive impacts on local business	0	0	100%	1	0.000
General evaluation of tourism development at site	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
I am satisfied with current tourism development	13%	17%	70%	0.57	0.728
There are more benefits through tourism development	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Local government should continue promote tourism development	0	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
Local government should pay more attention to tourism impacts on local residents	4%	9%	87%	0.83	0.491
Economic impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Tourism development improved local economic development	0	0	100%	1	0.00
Tourism development provided more local job opportunity	17%	9%	74%	0.57	0.788
Tourism development improved local living standard	0	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
Tourism development increased local income	0	13%	87%	0.87	0.344
Tourism development lead to the increase of local prices	22%	17%	61%	0.39	0.839
Most local people benefit from tourism development	4%	9%	87%	0.83	0.491
Tourism development improved local service standard	9%	35%	56%	0.48	0.665
Tourism is important in local economy	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Social and cultural impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Help build friendly community atmosphere	4%	9%	87%	0.83	0.491
Enrich local life	17%	31%	52%	0.35	0.775
Improve the awareness of cultural heritage in local people	4%	4%	92%	0.87	0.458
Deepen the understanding of Great Wall culture of local people	0%	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
Make local people realize the attractiveness and characteristics of their home town	0%	4%	96%	0.96	0.209
Make local people like to work and live at their home town	4%	9%	87%	0.83	0.491
Environmental impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Help the protection and maintenance of the Great Wall	18%	4%	78%	0.61	0.783
Beautify architecture in local community	9%	9%	82%	0.74	0.619
Beautify the environment in local community	30%	9%	61%	0.30	0.926
Bring negative impacts to surrounding environment	52%	13%	35%	-0.17	0.937
Improve local public facilities	22%	9%	69%	0.48	0.846
Bring more traffic jam, difficult to go out	65%	4%	31%	-0.35	0.935
Bring more noise, destroy the local peaceful atmosphere	61%	9%	30%	-0.30	0.926
Tourists causes crowding at site	39%	22%	39%	0.00	0.905

as indicated by chi-squared tests. For the economic impacts of tourism, village residents accorded lower recognition (56%) to tourism's contribution to improved local service standards, compared with small business operators (86%). These differences may be attributed to their different levels of involvement and experience in tourism business.

Site employees

Site employees are people hired by major tourism businesses in Mutianyu Great Wall Tourist Area, the state-owned site management office and the Schoolhouse at Mutianyu, a privately owned business. Because most employees are back-office staff, surveys were distributed only to a small number of respondents in selected positions requiring interactions with visitors, staff working at the museum, the tourist center, the Dream Stone Park, the Mutianyu Great Wall hotel and employees of the Schoolhouse. Although only a very small number of respondents were successfully surveyed, their opinions represent another perspective that is worth exploring.

A total of 10 questionnaires were collected. Higher education (60% with senior high school and 20% with university education) and younger ages were found compared with small business operators and village residents. Almost one-third (30%) of them were from Mutianyu village, 50% from

Huairou District center, and 20% from other villages in Buohai County of Huairou District. In terms of the department or company worked for, four were from the Schoolhouse, and six from departments of Mutianyu Tourist Area, including two from the Dream Stone Park, two from the tourist center and museum and two from Mutianyu Great Wall hotel.

Opinions on the impacts of World Heritage designation, tourism development and tourism impacts are examined in the same format as for the other two groups (Table 7). Consistency in opinions with small business operators and residents is observed among most factors related to impacts of World Heritage designation; general evaluation of tourism development; and the economic, social and cultural impacts of tourism. Differences in opinions are identified mostly with respect to the environmental impacts of tourism.

Small business operators and employees at Mutianyu are compared using chi-squared tests. No statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level were found in impacts of World Heritage designation, general evaluation of tourism, and social and cultural impacts of tourism. The only economic impact factor with a difference in opinion between small business operators and employees is the increase of local prices due to tourism, with 81% of small business operators agreeing, but no employee agreed with this and half (50%)

Table 7. Site employees' perceptions of World Heritage and tourism impacts ($n = 10$)

Impacts of World Heritage designation	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
World Heritage designation helps tourism development at site	0	0	100%	1	0.000
World Heritage designation improves the site international reputation	0	0	100%	1	0.000
World Heritage designation brings more tourists	0	0	100%	1	0.000
World Heritage designation helps the protection of the Great Wall	0	20%	80%	0.80	0.422
World Heritage designation has positive impacts on local business	0	0	100%	1	0.000
General evaluation of tourism development at site	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
I am satisfied with current tourism development	0	20%	80%	0.80	0.422
There are more benefits through tourism development	0	10%	90%	0.90	0.316
Local government should continue promote tourism development	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Local government should pay more attention to tourism impacts on local residents	0	40%	60%	0.60	0.516
Economic impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Tourism development improved local economic development	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Tourism development provided more local job opportunity	0	10%	90%	0.90	0.316
Tourism development improved local living standard	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Tourism development increased local income	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Tourism development lead to the increase of local prices	50%	50%	0	-0.50	0.527
Most local people benefit from tourism development	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Tourism development improved local service standard	0	20%	80%	0.80	0.422
Tourism is important in local economy	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Social and cultural impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	S.D.
Help build friendly community atmosphere	0	20%	80%	0.80	0.422
Enrich local life	0	30%	70%	0.70	0.483
Improve the awareness of cultural heritage in local people	0	10%	90%	0.90	0.316
Deepen the understanding of Great Wall culture of local people	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Make local people realize the attractiveness and characteristics of their home town	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Make local people like to work and live at their home town	0	11%	89%	0.89	0.333
Environmental impacts from tourism development	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
Help the protection and maintenance of the Great Wall	0	20%	80%	0.80	0.422
Beautify architecture in local community	0	0	100%	1	0.000
Beautify the environment in local community	0	70%	30%	0.30	0.483
Bring negative impacts to surrounding environment	50%	40%	10%	-0.40	0.699
Improve local public facilities	0	50%	50%	0.50	0.527
Bring more traffic jam, difficult to go out	60%	30%	10%	-0.50	0.707
Bring more noise, destroy the local peaceful atmosphere	30%	60%	10%	-0.20	0.632
Tourists causes crowding at site	50%	30%	20%	-0.30	0.823

of them voted for each of neutral and disagree. Major between-group differences exist in evaluation of environmental impacts of tourism, with statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level identified for three factors. The majority of employees select neutral for tourism impacts on beautifying the local community environment (70%), improving local public facilities (50%) and more noise from tourism (60%). Selection of neutral responses for the environmental impact factors by a higher proportion of employees may indicate that they lack information to evaluate them because the impacts from tourism on their daily lives are indirect.

Comparative discussion

At Mutianyu Great Wall, the local community is represented by three groups with different involvements in and impacts from heritage tourism as small business operators, village residents and site employees. Small business operators participate in and are most affected by heritage tourism, with direct economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts. Without direct involvement in tourism business, residents endure the environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism on their daily life, but they currently hold a general positive evaluation of tourism. Employees benefit economically from heritage tourism development, but they only experience impacts indirectly, leading to their different opinions of tourism development and its local impacts. Thus, the three groups are positioned in different cells in a two-dimensional framework (Figure 2) that illustrate different tourism impacts and involvement. The lower-left cell, representing those receiving indirect economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts, is empty due to its inapplicability for the three groups.

Involvement in tourism business (economic impact)

As discussed previously, all three groups agree on the positive impacts of World Heritage designation on site reputation and tourism development, Great Wall protection, and local business development at Mutianyu. Considering the impacts of World Heritage designation on local business, slightly more employees (mean = 1) and residents (mean = 1) agree on the positive repercussions than small business operators (mean = 0.83) who are directly engaged in such activities.

Overall positive evaluations of tourism development are identified in the three groups. However, residents, who are

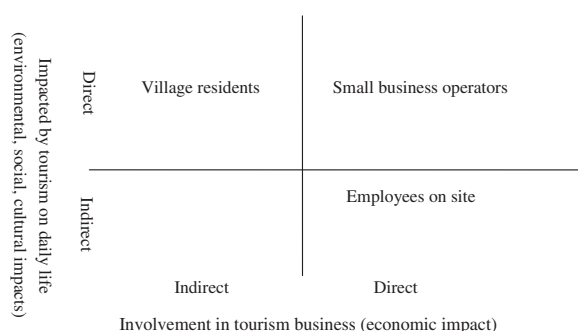


Figure 2. Two-dimensional framework based on tourism impacts and involvement.

enduring direct tourism impacts on their daily life without direct economic benefits, demonstrate higher support for more governmental attention to tourism impacts on the community than small business operators. The latter are impacted but, at the same time, receive direct economic benefits. Employees, who benefit economically from tourism without their daily life being directly exposed to tourism, are the least supportive of more governmental attention to impacts to the local.

The three groups all identified positive impacts from tourism on the local economy, local living standard and local income, and recognized the importance of tourism to the local economy. However, statistically significant differences in perceptions among the three groups are found with respect to perceptions of local job opportunities (90% employees, 74% of residents and 58% of small business operators agree), increase of local prices (61% of residents, 56% of small business operators and no employees agree) and improvement in local service standards (86% of small business operators, 80% of employees and 56% of residents agree). These differences probably reflect their different levels of participation in tourism and impacts from tourism as illustrated in Figure 2.

All three groups regard tourism as having positive social and cultural impacts, which is revealed in tourism's contribution to building a friendly community, improving the awareness of cultural heritage and Great Wall culture and promoting awareness of local attractiveness and willingness to stay in the community. Tourism is widely regarded as enriching local life but with some variation in opinions among the three groups: residents have the lowest positive evaluation (mean = 0.35), small business operators lie in the middle (mean = 0.52) and employees have the highest positive evaluations (mean = 0.70). Residents and business operators, who experience social and cultural changes, are least likely to consider that local life is enriched, whereas employees, who have less contact with tourists, perceive higher enrichment of local life with less actual interaction with tourists. This may indicate a gap between the perceived and actual impacts of tourism on the social and cultural life of the community.

The greatest divergence of opinions occurs with respect to environmental impacts. Nevertheless, high levels of agreement occur for all three groups regarding the positive environmental impacts of tourism in protecting of the Great Wall, beautifying village buildings and improving local facilities and infrastructure. Consistently, a slight majority of respondents in the three groups deny that tourism has caused more traffic jams, crowding and noise. However, some negative environmental impacts of tourism are recognized by a minority in all three groups.

In summary, general positive attitudes toward World Heritage and tourism with slight differences among the three groups are obtained from questionnaire surveys. The evaluations are in line with the comments of Village Mayor. However, Mutianyu Village is located adjacent to the tourist area, astride the only route connecting the Great Wall and the village to the outside world. In such a situation, direct impacts from tourism development on local life are inevitable. As indicated in questionnaire surveys, negative impacts

are emerging and are beginning to be noticed by community members. As a small place, Mutianyu has limited capacity and resources for further development. Thus, it is necessary to explore suitable opportunities for local participation in tourism, which could further enhance benefits and control the likely increasing costs to the community.

In terms of community participation in decision making, only 21% of small business operators, 26% villagers and 25% of employees in private business indicated their knowledge of the tourism site plan. In comparison, all employees of Mutianyu Tourist Area surveyed had knowledge of the plan. This suggests that the site plan is not effectively communicated to community members outside of offices and departments of Mutianyu Great Wall Tourist Area. On the other hand, few respondents indicated their interests in knowing the content of the plan. Thus, it can be concluded that local residents are not directly involved in planning and development decisions, nor are they effectively informed of these decisions which they have little interest in knowing. However, the large number of visitors brings business opportunities and encourages the development of local entrepreneurship. Local government and the management agency encourage and support the community's tourism participation through preferable policy and management mechanisms, such as giving village residents the exclusive right to run on-site business outlets, imposing no rental fees, and organizing complementary English training. As indicated by both the Office Director and the Village Mayor, Mutianyu Village Committee is also directly involved in the management of on-site business outlets along with the management agency of Mutianyu Great Wall, which ensures the expression of community interests in the operation and management of on-site tourism business, the key concern of community members. As a result, agriculture, the traditional means of subsistence in the village, has been substituted successfully by tourism-related business and employment opportunities. Tourism contributes 86% of the total village income and local living standards have been improved through the delivery of tourism benefits to community members.

CONCLUSIONS

To address important issue of local participation in China's World Heritage Sites, this study has explored ways and levels of local involvement, local costs and benefits, and local perceptions of World Heritage designation, tourism development and tourism impacts at Mutianyu Great Wall in Beijing. The study shows that Mutianyu village is highly dependent economically on tourism at Mutianyu Great Wall. Three groups with different levels of involvement in and impacts from tourism within the local community were identified. They are small business operators, village residents and site employees. Results from questionnaire surveys indicate that positive impacts of World Heritage designation and tourism development and the value of heritage are highly recognized by different groups of the local community. Consistently, positive economic, social and cultural impacts from tourism were acknowledged,

largely due to the direct economic benefits from tourism participation. On the other hand, environmental impacts of tourism are differently evaluated among community members, suggesting that environmental costs at Mutianyu have emerged and are being recognized as a price being paid for economic benefits. Differences between-group opinions were examined for some factors in the evaluation, indicating that local opinions toward World Heritage and tourism are influenced by different levels of tourism involvement and impacts. It was also found that the community's satisfaction with and support for heritage tourism, at least at Mutianyu, are largely dependent on the level of benefits acquired and the ways in which they are impacted. Therefore, how communities participate in and benefit from tourism should be examined when assessing local opinions toward tourism.

Community participation in tourism decision making and in the acquisition of benefits have also been compared and discussed. It is identified that, even with minimal participation in tourism decision making and little information about the site plan, the local community actively and extensively participates in tourism business at the initiation of the community itself and receives direct benefits facilitated by preferential policies and management mechanisms of the local government and the management agency. This supports the idea that community participation in tourism decision making is not a pre-condition of benefit acquisition (Li, 2006; Simpson, 2008). A community's acquisition of tourism benefits can occur without involvement in decision making. Conditions of a site, such as institutional arrangements, stage of tourism development (Li, 2006), geographical relationship between the community and the site, and landownership structure, can influence how and to what extent local communities take part in tourism and acquire benefits. Therefore, the evaluation of community participation should consider not only the decision-making process for, as in the case of Mutianyu, community members may not be very interested in this nor have the desire to be involved in this way. However, how benefits are acquired by and distributed within the community should be thoroughly assessed based on a contextual analysis of the site.

In this study, the local government and the management agency play an important role in facilitating community participation and in the distribution of benefits from heritage tourism. They also reconcile potential conflict of interests through policy making and operational management. As key players in heritage tourism, the local government and the management agency are responsible and have the capacity to enhance community participation through policy making and management. Their awareness of the importance of community participation and their actions and commitment to engage communities in site planning, management and operation are critical for effective community participation in heritage tourism. Moreover, the relationship between the community, the local government and the management agency of a heritage site should be examined from geographical, economical, social and political perspectives, when aspects of community participation are investigated.

The case study of Mutianyu Great Wall contributes to the understanding of heritage preservation, tourism development

and local participation at World Heritage Sites in China. Research findings should increase the awareness of the importance of local participation in tourism and the consequences of participation for the local community, as well as help in the development of policies and management strategies facilitating effective local participation in tourism development at World Heritage Sites in China. The research also provokes reflections on the practices and relevance of local participation theories in a developing country context and in countries with different social systems. Due to the large variety in characteristics and resources among World Heritage Sites, it might not be appropriate to standardize a set of recommendations, but research frameworks and methods successfully engaged in this study could be utilized in studies elsewhere, and research results could act as reference points for other sites. Future research should be conducted to further explore and compare the relationships between community participation in tourism decision making and in benefit acquisition in different economic and socio-cultural contexts. This will both enhance the conceptual and contextual understanding of community participation in heritage tourism and facilitate effective community participation practices for heritage tourism development.

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