

# Host-guest Interaction: A Study Based on Cognitions and Attitudes of Residents in Ethnic Tourism Regions on Tourism Impacts

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**Keywords:** ethnic tourism destination; residents; cognition; attitude; difference

**Abstract:** Through the investigation of ethnic tourism destinations in Yunnan and the application of SPSS11.5 software, this paper analyzes the cognitions and attitudes of local residents on the impacts of tourism, and describes the communication and interaction among residents, tourists and ethnic tourism development. The results show that local residents are more willing to accept the positive impacts of tourism; the effects of host-guest interaction vary by residents' characteristics. According to the differences in interaction effects, residents can be divided into four types: indifferent residents, rational supporters, optimistic supporters and blind supporters.

## 1. Introduction

Ethnic tourism is a type of tourism which attracts tourists with specific ethnic culture in specific areas. Due to the features of ethnic tourism, residents live in ethnic tourism areas should not be simply regarded as people who live "there" and provide services to tourists in order to meet tourists' needs; they are independent "symbols" and are "gazed" by tourists; they are also the "targets of tourism". In order to make profit, they change their behavior patterns according to the "interests of tourists". Interesting and complex interactions between residents and tourists happen consequently. Through the study of local residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism impacts, we can find out the development direction of these exchanges and interactions. Taking the residents lived in Yunnan ethnic tourism areas as the objects of field survey, this paper analyzes the differences in residents' cognitive attitudes toward the influences of ethnic tourism, and classifies residents' cognitions on tourism development. Through analyzing exchanges and interactions between residents, tourists and ethnic tourism development, suggestions on the sustainable development of host-guest interactions are put forward

## 2. Survey Background and Sample Situations

On the basis of interviews, 46 items were obtained through the Delphi method, including 42 items on residents' cognitions about tourism impacts, and 4 items on residents' attitudes toward tourism development. Measured data were collected in Dali, Lijiang and Shangri-La. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, and 325 valid questionnaires were collected. The effective rate was 92.9%.

Among the 325 valid questionnaires, 90.5% research subjects were between 18 to 49 years old; the proportion of subjects between 18 to 28 years old was 62.5%. 42.5% respondents had college degree, indicating that educated subjects have a certain representative. Especially in the study of cognition on tourism impact, residents of high educational background were more aware of the tourism impact. The relationship between respondents and tourists determines the depth of residents' perception on tourism impacts and the intensity of their personal experiences about tourism impacts; their attitudes towards tourism development are also different. The survey showed that 48.3% residents or their relatives were engaged in tourism; the residences of 69.8% respondents were less than two kilometers away from tourist attractions. 61.5% residents contacted with tourists for at least 2 times a week, of which 30% residents frequently contacted with tourists.

### 3. Questionnaire Analysis

#### 3.1 Factor analysis

The studies of Milman, Pizam and other scholars showed residents' perceptions on tourism impacts could be divided into two potential cognitive latitudes: positive impacts and negative impacts. Thus, in this study, the Likert scale with 46 indicators was used to simplify data through factor analysis. The 46 measured indicators were transformed into three common factors: positive impacts, negative impacts and attitudes toward tourism development. The reliability and validity of this scale were tested before conducting the formal analysis.

Statistics  $KMO=0.812$ ; KMO statistical magnitude was used to explore the partial correlation between variables. The closer that this value is to 1, the better effect of the factor analysis is. In 46 indicators of the questionnaire, information had a high load on three factors. Therefore, the three factors could be used to explain positive impacts of tourism, negative impacts of tourism and tourism development. "Tourism positive impacts factor" was highly related to 21 variables of the questionnaire; its variance contribution rate was 27.51%, indicating that it was an important factor with the highest proportion of information content. "Tourism negative impacts factor" was closely related to the 21 variables of the questionnaire; its variance contribution rate was 22.053%, indicating this factor also had high proportion of information content. The "tourism development attitude factor" was highly correlated with 4 variables of the questionnaire; its variance contribution rate was 9.587. Among the 3 common factors, respondents had a high degree of recognition on the positive impacts of tourism, with the average value of 3.73 points. The development of ethnic tourism had positive impacts; especially at present stage, residents had deep understanding on the positive impacts of ethnic tourism development. Residents' understanding on the negative impacts of ethnic tourism was low, with the mean value close to 3 points. The average value of residents' attitudes on ethnic tourism development was 3.51. In some variables, the attitudes of some residents were not positive. But in general, they hold affirmative and supportive positions.

#### 3.2 Variance analysis

The data showed the results of variance analysis. In analysis, the significant level was 0.05; the Sig value less than 0.05 represents significant difference. The results of analysis showed that, in residents with different characteristics, significant differences existed in their cognition on tourism development.

Variation analysis on the gender of residents. There was a significant difference in the "attitudes toward tourism development" among residents with different genders ( $P<0.05$ ). The comparison between men and women showed that women are more supportive of ethnic tourism development. Women held more positive and optimistic attitudes toward tourism development.

Variation analysis on the age of residents showed that there was a significant difference in the "negative impacts on ethnic tourism" among residents with different ages. Through statistic analysis, it was found that residents above 50 years old were much more sensitive to the negative impacts of ethnic tourism than other people. Generally speaking, the degree of recognition rose with the increase of age.

Variation analysis on the education degree of residents showed that there were significant differences in the "attitudes toward tourism development" and "negative impacts on ethnic tourism" among residents with different education degrees ( $P<0.05$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), which indicated that education degree was an important factor which led to the difference in residents' cognitions and attitudes on the impacts of tourism. Residents with higher education levels held stronger attitudes toward tourism development, and were more sensitive to the negative impacts of tourism. This result was in line with the research fruit achieved by Teye and his colleagues.

Variation analysis on residents' engagement in tourism activities, which indicated the relationship between residents and tourism. There was a significant difference in the "negative impacts" factor of ethnic tourism ( $p<0.01$ ). From mean value comparison, it was found that the close relationship between residents and tourism could reduce residents' perceptions of negative impacts.

Variation analysis on the residence time of dwellers. Faulkner believed that there was a relationship between residence time and residents' perception on the impacts of tourism; residents who lived for a long time had different perception on tourism impacts from residents who recently moved here. There was a significant difference in the "negative impacts" factor among residents who lived for different time periods ( $p < 0.05$ ). From the mean analysis, it was found that residents who lived for more than 20 years were much more sensitive to the negative impacts of tourism than other residents. This result was in line with Faulkner's research findings.

Variation analysis on the distances between dwellers' residences and scenic spots. Lin Lu found that the distance between dwellers' residences and scenic spots was one of the main factors affecting residents' perception of tourism. There was a significant difference in the "negative impacts" of ethnic tourism between residents who lived near and away from scenic spots ( $p < 0.05$ ). Further analysis showed that the close distance could increase residents' perception on the negative impacts of ethnic tourism.

Variation analysis on residents' contacts with tourists. Through data analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference on the perception of negative impacts of ethnic tourism ( $p < 0.05$ ). Through the mean comparison, it was found that the close contact between residents and tourists would lead to strong perceptions on the negative cultural impacts of ethnic tourism.

### 3.3 Cluster analysis

In the cognitive analysis of ethnic tourism impacts, differences were found in the interactions and interactive effects between tourists and residents. According to the differences in residents' cognitions on the influence of tourism, residents could be divided into different groups; they held different positions on the development of ethnic tourism. Software with cluster analysis functions was used in this process. According to the interaction between hosts and guests, the residents were divided into four types shown in the table.

Table: Cluster analysis (n=325)

index	Mean values of cluster analysis				
	Type 1 (n=72)	Type 2 (n=71)	Type 3 (n=110)	Type 4 (n=72)	Total n=325
F1 positive impacts	3.130	3.667	3.854	3.999	3.683
F2 negative impacts	2.987	3.675	3.271	2.509	3.140
F3 attitudes toward tourism development	2.910	3.545	3.924	4.0847	3.654

Note: 1. Bold figures indicated that the mean value was the largest among the four groups; figures with underlines indicated that the mean value was the smallest among the four groups.

Option 1-5 stood for: very opposed; objection; no feeling; agreement; total agreement.

Type 1: the value of positive impacts of tourism was 3.13; the value of negative impacts was 2.99; the mean value of attitudes toward ethnic tourism development was 2.91. The three variables were basically "no feeling". Among all the 46 indicators, 28 mean values of this group were the lowest among the four groups. These residents did not concern the impacts of tourism; their positions towards the positive impacts of tourism were slightly supportive. They admitted that "tourism promotes local economic development", but remained relatively indifferent on other aspects. Basically they did not know the negative impacts of tourism, and paid little attention to the development of the whole ethnic tourism industry. In particular, they did not concern questions like "the competition becomes fiercer for local residents", "tourism destructs the peaceful local lifestyle and the original atmosphere", "tourism changes and reduces local dialects" and "the merits of tourism outweigh its demerits". These people could be called as "indifferent residents".

Type 2: the mean value of positive impacts was 3.67; the mean value of negative impacts was 3.68; the mean value of overall attitudes toward ethnic tourism development was 3.55. The mean value of negative impacts of this group was the highest among the four types of residents, indicating they noticed the negative effects of ethnic tourism development. Therefore, they supported the development of ethnic tourism with caution. From the perspective of ethnic tourism development,

these residents were "rational supporters".

Type 3: the mean value of positive impacts was 3.85; the mean value of negative impacts was 3.27; the mean value of attitudes toward ethnic tourism development was 3.68. The data showed that these residents were relatively agreed with the positive impacts of tourism, but less concerned about the negative impacts. The value of overall national tourism development identification was relatively high, indicating that this group had a positive attitude toward the development of ethnic tourism. They noticed the positive and negative impacts of tourism development. But they were less aware of these negative effects such as "the competition becomes fiercer for the local residents", "tourism destructs the peaceful local lifestyle and the original atmosphere", "tourism affects local social atmosphere" and "destroys the happiness of local life". However, for the overall attitude toward tourism, these residents believed that the "merits of developing ethnic tourism outweigh its demerits"; they should "fully support the development of ethnic tourism", and they were "very satisfied with the development status of tourism". Their interaction with tourists was relatively good; they showed enthusiasm and friendliness during the interaction. Therefore, these residents were called "optimistic supporters".

Type 4: the mean value of positive impacts was 4.00; the mean value of negative impacts was 2.51; the mean value of attitudes toward ethnic tourism development was 4.09. The mean value of cognition on positive impacts of tourism was the highest, while the value of negative impacts was the lowest among the four groups. These residents supported the positive impacts, and basically did not agree with the negative effects of tourism; they held positive attitude towards the development of ethnic tourism. These residents believed that the advantages of ethnic tourism development outweighed their disadvantages; they fully supported the development of ethnic tourism, and were satisfied with the development situation. The interaction between hosts and guests was relatively good. But their supports were blind. They failed to notice the negative impacts brought by the development of ethnic tourism. Thus, these residents were called "blind supporters".

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on field survey data and social statistic methods, an empirical study on the perceptions and attitudes of residents in ethnic tourism destinations on the impacts of tourism was conducted. Specific conclusions were as follows.

##### **4.1 Residents lived in ethnic tourism destinations support the development of tourism**

Generally speaking, residents in ethnic tourism destinations support the development of tourism, have stronger perceptions on the positive impacts of tourism than negative impacts, and recognize the positive economic effects brought by tourism development. As ethnic tourism areas are relatively backward, ethnic tourism is the best choice to promote local social development. At this stage, residents are more sensitive to the positive impacts of tourism development. Although tourism has brought negative effects, its contribution to local economic is more obvious. Thus, the negative impacts are weakened by its positive influence.

##### **4.2 The sociological characteristics of residents and their relationships with tourism lead to differences in cognition of tourism impacts**

Residents with different sociological characteristics and relationships with tourism have significant different cognitions on the negative impacts of ethnic tourism development. It is an important factor which leads to cognitive differences. The influences of various characteristic variables are different. Among them, education level is the most influential feature, followed by tourism relation characteristics, residence time, as well as residents' ages and genders.

##### **4.3 Residents of ethnic tourism areas can be divided into four types: indifferent residents, rational supporters, optimistic supporters and blind supporters**

According to the differences in interaction effects, residents can be divided into four types: type 1, indifferent residents; type 2, rational supporters; type 3, optimistic supporters; type 4, blind supporters. Residents belonging to different types concern and support tourism impacts to different

degrees.

The development stage of ethnic tourism destinations determines the effects of interaction between hosts and guests in ethnic tourism regions. From another point of view, it shows that ethnic tourism still has a great development space. It also indicates that with the exchanges and interactions between the host and the guest in the course of ethnic tourism development, local residents' awareness will become more mature; their cognitions will be strengthened, while their attitudes toward tourism development will further differentiate. At present, the effect of the host-guest interaction is not too bad; but obvious attitude differentiation, as well as extreme attitudes and opposition must be prevented. It is necessary to build a sustainable development mode for the host-guest interaction in ethnic tourism regions, to cultivate residents' positive attitudes toward ethnic tourism development, and realize the sustainable development of ethnic tourism industry.

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