

A Study on the Hakka Culture Authenticity Perception in Chengdu Luodai town—From the Perspective of Hakka Residents

Baojiang Geng

College of Tourism, Sichuan Agricultural University, Dujiangyan Sichuan, 611830, China

Keywords: Hakka culture, Authenticity, Hakka residents, Luodai town.

Abstract: Issues of cultural authenticity is one of the hot topics of widespread concern in the tourism anthropology and sociology. However, study of perception of local residents on the authenticity of cultural items is still blank. The paper, taking Chengdu Luodai town as an example, discusses on Hakka residents of Hakka cultural authenticity. Research thinks, cultural authenticity in tourism is a dynamic process of adaptation and adjustment, the Hakka residents basic accreditation Hakka Tourism product of the existing stage, the perception of Hakka cultural authenticity by the distribution of interests, tourism service supply, Hakka culture cognition and other aspects, tourism participation, age and culture degree different large differences in the perception of authenticity.

1. Introduction

As carriers and interpreters of Hakka culture, Hakka residents are the most important and active factors in the inheritance and innovation of Hakka culture. In the tourism development process of Hakka culture, Hakka residents play a dominant role in the excavation and display of Hakka tourism culture in the settlements compared with other migrant residents. Cultural resources such as Hakka etiquette, folk customs and festivals have been artistically processed and brought onto the stage, and as hosts, Hakka residents have become the real “performers” on the stage in a certain sense. Their understanding of the authenticity in Hakka culture mainly focuses on two aspects: one is their attitude towards Hakka traditional culture, that is, what is the real Hakka culture; the other one is their attitude and degree of participation towards local tourism^[1]. Hakka residents’ perception and attitude towards the impact of tourism development may become an important factor for the successful development, marketing and operation of tourism projects, which directly affects the cognitive judgment of tourists towards the cultural authenticity in tourist destinations.

2. Elaboration of Studies on Cultural Authenticity

The theory of cultural authenticity mainly includes the Theory of “Staged Authenticity” proposed by MacCannell and Cohen’s Theory of “Tourist Space and Staging Suspicion”. In 1973, MacCannell firstly introduced the concept of authenticity in the sociological studies of tourist motive and tourist experience in *Staged Authenticity*. Aiming at the generation of authenticity pursuit, MacCannell believed that the purpose for modern tourists to go on tours is to get rid of a sense of alienation, seek a real and once-familiar world in their hearts from the outer world, and hunt for their spiritual homeland, as well as look for “authenticity”. According to different tourist experience, Cohen analyzed that tourists have different pursuit of authenticity due to different sense of alienation. Wang Ning further divided authenticity into objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. For the factors affecting tourism authenticity, current scholars mainly start from tourists, local communities and residents, tourism types and changes of cultural environment, among which the pursuit of tourists towards authenticity and the understanding and creation of people in tourist destinations towards authenticity are always the focus of tourism anthropological studies. Li Xudong considered that the key of tourism is not whether tourists have acquired the authenticity experience pursued by MacCannell, but the importance is how local residents and tourist

define authenticity. In exploring the problems related to authenticity in the intangible culture, Graburn pointed out that cultural activities of those cultural inheritors should be determined by themselves, and whether these activities belong to objective authenticity should be look upon by their own viewpoints rather than determined as outsiders, and shouldn't be determined by tourists or some authorities, so as to ensure that local people are the inheritors of authenticity. Only when local people normalize those ritual activities, can these traditions be continuously inherited. Cultural product in tourism in a certain sense is a kind of staged culture, while the performers on the stage are the local residents in tourist destinations. As carriers and interpreters of folk culture, the cognition of local residents towards local cultures plays an important role in cultural inheritance and development.

3. Investigation Plan

3.1 Case Background

Luodai Ancient Town is located in the eastern suburbs of Chengdu, the southern foothill of Longquan Mountain. It is formed by the immigration of Hakka people in "Hu-Guang Fills Sichuan" in the early years of the Qianlong Emperor in Qing Dynasty, and 86% of the residents in the town are Hakka people. It is an ancient town where the Hakka culture in western China is best preserved, and also the first Hakka ancient town honored as "Historic Towns of China". The ancient town has abundant Hakka cultural resources such as Hakka houses, customs and foods, and since 1999, the cultural tourism industry themed by Hakka culture has been developed, resulted in that the tourism development of Hakka culture has driven the local social and economic development, and improved the living standard of local residents. According to statistics, the business shops of Luodai Ancient Town in the past five years increased from 100 to more than 420, the number of employees increased from 570 to 2630, and the monthly industrial and commercial tax of the whole town increased from 68,000 yuan to 1,280,000 yuan. The price of houses in the old street has risen sharply with the rent of shop-front rising three to ten times, and local residents start running "agritainment" with their own farmhouse to provide catering and accommodation services for tourists. The rapid development of tourism has greatly improved the material living conditions of local residents, but the for-profit operation model of business certainly will cause the staginess, commercialization and even vulgarization of Hakka culture on the surface, so as to damage the primitiveness and authenticity of Hakka culture.

3.2 Investigation Respondent

The respondents selected in this paper are local Hakka residents in Luodai Ancient Town. With the further development of tourism in Ancient Town, a large number of foreign residents come to Ancient Town and settle down, so identifying Hakka people is an important link to directly affect the authenticity of the investigation. There are three main criteria for judging Hakka residents in the academic world: firstly, whether they can speak Hakka language; secondly, whether there are "Deceased great-great-grandparents Memorial Tablets in All Ages of the Family Name" written in their ancestral hall; thirdly, to see the cadaster, that is, whether the ancestral home or the birthplaces of parents is in the county, township and village gathered by Hakka people. As long as one of the above conditions is satisfied, they can be identified as Hakka people.

3.3 Investigation Method and Data Acquisition

In this paper, it adopts the method of combining random sampling and on-site interview, uses SPSS 17.0 statistical software, and adopts descriptive statistics, principal component factor analysis and regression analysis to analyze the perception of Hakka residents towards Hakka tourism culture. The questionnaire is divided into four categories and 32 items. The four categories are Hakka residents' basic background, Hakka residents' cognition towards Hakka tourism culture, Hakka residents' satisfaction towards tourism development, and their participation in tourism development. Among them, the Likert scale is adopted in the cognition (7 items) and the satisfaction (7 items),

which requires respondents to indicate their perceptions on the opinions listed in the questionnaire from level 5 to 1.

A total of 101 questionnaires were distributed in Luodai Ancient Town, and 98 questionnaires were recovered, of which 76 were valid questionnaires, with an effective recovery rate of 77.5%. The ages of respondents are mainly concentrated in young and middle-aged people, and most of them have experienced the whole process of tourism development, so their understandings on tourism development are more profound and more valuable. The basic information of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table1 Basic Information of Respondents

Gender Composed %	Male 55.26%	Female 44.74%			
Age Composed %	≤16 years old 5.26%	17-25 years old 18.42%	26-40 years old 32.89%	41-59 years old 34.21%	≥60 years old 9.21%
Educational Level Composed %	Primary school 18.42%	Junior high school 46.05%	Senior high school and technical secondary school 25.00%	Junior college or above 10.53%	
Monthly Income Composed %	≤1000 yuan 63.16%	1001-2500 yuan 28.95%	2501-4000 yuan 3.95%	≥4000 yuan 3.95%	

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is adopted in the reliability analysis of the scale in this paper as a measurement index to analyze the two indicator systems of cognition and satisfaction. If the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is between 0.00 and 1.00, the higher the coefficient, the stronger the internal consistency of the scale, and the more reliable the measurement result. It is generally considered that the acceptable reliability coefficient is less than 0.70. The data obtained from the investigation are input into SPSS software for statistical analysis, and the following results are obtained, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Reliability Coefficients and Results of One-way Analysis of Variance

Variable	Index No.	Mean Variance	F Value	P Value	Cronbach's Alpha
Cognition	7	96.421	247.318	0.000	0.843
Satisfaction	7	79.586	217.311	0.000	0.879

The alpha values of Hakka residents' cognition and satisfaction are respectively 0.843 and 0.879, which have reached the level of acceptable reliability, indicating that the internal consistency of this table is good; therefore, the data reliability of each scale in this study is acceptable. According to the F statistical value and probability P value (sig.) between each group of factors in each type of index, $P < 0.05$, and the mean value between each factor in the group has significant difference at the level of $\alpha=0.05$, indicating that the investigation result is effective.

4.2 Participation of Tourism for the Hakkas Residents

4.2.1 Employed Proportion of Tourism for Hakkas Residents

According to the investigation, 56.58% of the families have tourism practitioners, in which 1-2 members are tourism practitioners accounting for 35.53%, 3-4 members are tourism practitioners accounting for 17.11% and 5 or above 5 members are tourism practitioners accounting for 3.94%, indicating that the participation ratio of Hakka residents in tourism is relatively high.

4.2.2 Occupational Types of Hakkas Residents Engaged in Tourism

Among the tourism practitioners in Hakka residents, 22% are engaged in stores of featured products and restaurants, and few of them are engaged in tour guides and commentators in scenic spots (9%) or hotel industry (2%), while most of them are engaged in other service industries related to tourism, accounting for 45%. The interview found that Hakka people engaged in the industries related to tourism were mainly engaged in physical labor in tourist areas, such as cleaners, and pushing the handcart with a wheel, etc.

4.2.3 Participation of Folk Activities

Water Dragon Festival and Fire Dragon Festival are two branded festivals in Luodai Ancient Town, and are successful cases of grafting traditional cultures and modern elements. The investigation indicates that 97.37% of Hakka residents have heard about the two folk activities, of which 68.42% have participated in Fire Dragon Festival or Water Dragon Festival, indicating that the Hakka folk activities represented by Fire Dragon Festival and Water Dragon Festival are highly recognized.

4.3 Principal Component Factor Analysis

In order to simplify the data and extract the factors with high interpretation, the principal component factor analysis on 14 indicators is conducted by the author. After inspection, the three indicators of “tourism souvenirs”, “Hakka art” and “historical culture” are eliminated, and a total of 11 indicators are involved in the factor model, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Principal Component Factor Analysis (N=76)

Indicator	Tourism Service	Cultural Cognition	Mean Value of Indicator	Standard Deviation
X1 Featured foods	0.050	0.732	4.20	0.817
X2 Hakka buildings	-0.019	0.813	4.16	0.834
X3 Hakka folkways	-0.048	0.742	3.76	0.922
X4 Hakka language	-0.066	0.748	4.33	0.737
X5 Tourist service personnel	0.736	-0.217	3.82	0.828
X6 Infrastructure	0.734	-0.005	3.75	0.881
X7 Heritage protection	0.781	0.250	3.86	0.761
X8 Benefit distribution	0.822	-0.090	3.41	0.882
X9 Tourists	0.669	-0.215	3.78	0.888
X10 Management department in scenic areas	0.782	-0.009	3.63	0.950
X11 Tourism enterprises	0.770	0.158	3.63	0.964
Eigenvalue	4.028	2.495		
Contribution rate	36.6%	22.7%		
Accumulative contribution rate			59.3%	
Cronbach's alpha coefficient			0.766	
KMO			0.812	

Explanation:

- The principal component factor analysis adopts the varimax orthogonal rotation method;
- Options 1 to 5 in the mean value of indicator represent complete non-conformity (satisfaction), non-conformity (satisfaction), unclear, conformity (satisfaction), complete conformity (satisfaction);
- In order to make the table clear, some data without affecting the analysis are omitted.

From Table 3, it is resulted that the statistical value KMO=0.812 after eliminating the indicator, showing that the effect of principal component analysis is acceptable. The information of indicators X_1 to X_4 has higher loads on the second factor, and X_1 to X_4 reflect the cognition of residents towards the various aspects of Hakka tourism culture, so the second factor is interpreted as cultural cognition factor, representing the cognition of Hakka residents towards tourism culture. Indicators X_5 to X_{11} have higher loads on the first factor, and X_5 to X_{11} reflect the evaluation of Hakka residents towards

the various aspects of tourism development status in scenic areas, so the first factor is interpreted as tourism service factor, representing the satisfaction of Hakka residents towards the development status of tourism in the ancient town. After eliminating three indicators, the reliability coefficient drops to 0.766, but the reliability coefficient alpha values of the two factors are respectively 0.763 and 0.874; therefore, the reliability of the whole component scale is reliable. The accumulative variance contribution of cultural cognition factor and tourism service factor is 59.3%, of which the variance contribution of tourism service factor is slightly higher, reaching 36.6%, while the variance contribution of cultural cognition factor is lower, which is 22.7%. To sum up, the variance contributions of the two factors are relatively average without big difference, and they represent the two main ways for Hakka residents to perceive Hakka tourism culture. The regression method is adopted to calculate the coefficient of the factor score function (as shown in Table 4), and accordingly the expression of factor function is written as follows:

$$F_1=0.222X_1+0.006X_2-0.002X_3-0.006X_4+0.18X_5+0.183X_6+0.198X_7+0.203X_8+0.164X_9+0.194X_{10}+0.194X_{11}$$

$$F_2=0.295X_1+0.326X_2+0.297X_3+0.299X_4-0.077X_5+0.008X_6+0.111X_7-0.025X_8-0.077X_9+0.007X_{10}+0.074X_{11}$$

Table 4 Coefficient of Factor Score Function

Indicator	Tourism Service Factor	Cultural Cognition Factor
X1 Featured foods	0.022	0.295
X2 Hakka buildings	0.006	0.326
X3 Hakka folkways	-0.002	0.297
X4 Hakka language	-0.006	0.299
X5 Tourist service personnel	0.180	-0.077
X6 Infrastructure	0.183	0.008
X7 Heritage protection	0.198	0.111
X8 Benefit distribution	0.203	-0.025
X9 Tourists	0.164	-0.077
X10 Management department in scenic areas	0.194	0.007
X11 Tourism enterprises	0.194	0.074

The mean scores of Hakka residents in different types are respectively imported into two expressions for comparison (as shown in Table 5).

Table 5 Factor Scores of Hakka Residents in Different Types

		Tourism Service Factor	Cultural Cognition Factor
Employment	Tourism practitioner	4.996	5.172
	Non-tourism practitioner	4.872	4.985
Age	≤16 years old	5.729	5.551
	17-25 years old	4.948	4.935
	26-40 years old	4.799	5.294
	41-59 years old	4.845	4.829
	≥60 years old	4.335	4.356
Educational Level	Primary school	5.210	5.102
	Junior high school	4.817	4.997
	Senior high school	5.034	5.373
	Junior college or above	4.789	4.785

The scores of tourism service factor for non-tourist practitioners and tourist practitioners are 4.872 and 4.996 respectively, and their scores of cultural cognition factor are 4.985 and 5.172. It can be seen that the cognitions of tourist practitioners towards the two factors are both higher than that of non-tourist practitioners, but the authenticities of both towards cultural cognition factor are slightly higher, especially for tourism practitioners (5.172). From the perspective of age, the younger group

(less than 16 years old) generally has a higher cognition on the authenticity of the two factors (5.729 and 5.551), that is, they think that the current Hakka tourism culture is very authentic. The elderly group generally has a lower cognition on the authenticity of two factors, which are respectively 4.335 and 4.356. The young and middle-aged group has different levels of cognition on the authenticity of the two factors. From the perspective of educational level, the Hakka residents at the primary school and senior high school levels have a higher cognition on the authenticity of the two factors, but they have different degrees of bias. Residents at the primary school level are more concerned about the authenticity of tourism service, and residents at the senior high school level pay more attention to the authenticity of cultural cognition, while for the residents at the junior college or above level, their emphasis on the two factors is lower than other groups (4.789 and 4.785).

5. Enlightenment and Suggestions

Culture is not a static concept, and both internal and external changes in society will lead to adaptive changes in its cultural system, leading to new needs. The successful case of tourism development for Hakka culture in Luodai Ancient Town reflects that the staginess has protected local cultures and traditions to some extent, and tourism fully endows a new social function to Hakka culture to ensure the stable continuation of its authenticity. From the perspective of history, the culture in the tourist destination itself is a dynamic process of adaption and adjustment; therefore, tourism developers and relevant departments should not only consider the demands of tourists, but also combine with the local authenticity of culture in the re-development of tourism, so as to innovate together and keep pace with the times.

6. Summary

Among Hakka residents, tourism practitioners are more concerned about the issues of tourism development in the ancient town, have a relatively deep understanding on Hakka tourism culture, and pay more attention to the importance of Hakka culture besides focusing on tourism services, while non-tourism practitioners are concerned about tourism services in the ancient town. It can be seen that tourism practitioners pay more attention to the future development of the ancient town for personal interests, and gradually realize the core role of culture in tourism development; although non-tourism practitioners do not get profits from it, after all, the ancient town is the place where they live and grow up from the past, at present and in the future; therefore, from the perspective of their own living environment, they pay more attention to tourism services, that is, the impact of tourism development on their living conditions.

References

- [1] Zhang Jun. On the Authenticity of Tourism Folklore and the Reality of Folklore Tour, *Tourism Tribune*, 2005, 20(5): 38-42.
- [2] Chen Wenling, Su Qin. A Comparative Study of Authenticity in Tourism Home and Abroad Over the Past Fifteen Years, *Human Geography*, 2012 (3): 118-124.
- [3] Li Xudong. Subject and object Authenticity of Tourist Experience, *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 2008 (5).
- [4] Zeng Ping, Zhang Xiaoping. The Relation between Tourism Economy Development and Invisible Culture Protection – And Comments on Nelson Graburn's Intangible Heritage: How to Protect? Protect for Whom?, *Inquiry into Economic Issues*, 2007 (9).
- [5] Zhang Ming. Discussions on the Authenticity of Culture in Tourism Destination, *Academic Exploration*, 2006 (6): 133-136.