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Community Participation and Residents' Support for Tourism Development in Ancient Villages: The Mediating Role of Perceptions of Conflicts in the Tourism Community

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Abstract: As increasing numbers of tourists have begun to visit ancient villages, conflicts between tourism development and residents have become one of the main challenges to the sustainable development of the tourism community. This research explores the relationship between community participation and residents' support for tourism development in an ancient village. This study surveyed 249 indigenous residents living in Whampoa Village, Guangzhou, China. The findings show that community participation in tourism development has a positive influence on residents' support for tourism development, and this relationship is mediated by the perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community. This study contributes a new theoretical perspective and practical implications for the sustainable development of ancient villages.



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Keywords: sustainable development; community participation; perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community; residents' support for tourism development; Whampoa Ancient Village

1. Introduction

Tourism has become a way of life for the general public, with an increasing number of people taking part in tourism activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that tourism has a positive impact on local communities' economy, society, culture, and environment, such as improvement of infrastructure [1], enhancement of residents' quality of life [2], and the protection and revival of culture [3]. However, the rapid and uncontrolled expansion of tourism also leads to the formation of mass tourism that could potentially cause significant impacts on certain areas [4]. A large number of studies have identified a range of negative impacts caused by tourism development. For example, Archer et al. (2005) [5] found that the environmental damage caused by tourism development can be greater than the economic benefits in some tourism destinations with fragile environments and community conditions. Saayman and Giampiccoli (2016) [6] emphasized that conventional/mass tourism did not work to redistribute resources in the tourism community. Moreover, mass tourism inevitably brings about crowds of tourists, which may cause noise and affect the daily life of residents [4]. Being one of the most important groups of stakeholders in a tourism destination, residents are closely related to and can be deeply influenced by tourism impacts, regardless of whether the impacts are positive or negative [7]. In addition to the positive and negative impacts of tourism development on the tourism community, residents' perceptions of those impacts can be salient factors affecting the sustainability of tourism development [8].

Residents' perceptions of the impacts are directly related to how the impacts act upon their routine lives and living environment, as well as how they react towards the disruptions caused by the rapid development of tourism [9]. Social exchange theory (SET) is a

theoretical framework used to explain the positive and negative perceptions of residents in the tourism community [10]. SET was originally proposed by Emerson (1976) [11] as a theory of sociology and refers to a two-sided rewarding process involving two or more social groups [12]. When applied to the field of tourism studies, SET describes a process of exchange between residents and other stakeholders in the tourism community [13]. Comparison is an important component of social exchange, and residents evaluate the positive and negative impacts of tourism development in their communities [14]. SET proposes that residents' attitudes towards tourism and their subsequent level of support for its development are influenced by their evaluations of the impacts of tourism development [14]. If residents perceive the negative impacts of tourism to outweigh its positive ones, they may withdraw their support for tourism development [15]. The excessive development of tourism has caused many negative impacts, which leads many residents to oppose tourism development, even provoking conflicts [16].

Despite the fact that a lot of tourism studies have delved into the negative impacts of tourism, few have directly addressed the conflicts caused by tourism development in ancient villages in China. Particularly, there is a lack of studies considering serious conflicts in the tourism community [17]. The contradictions between the tourism community and tourism development have triggered several conflicts that have generated serious public concerns [18]. Recently, some tourism scholars have started to focus on conflicts of the tourism community in ancient villages as one of their primary research themes. For example, Q' Brien and Li (2006) [19] pointed out that community unrest is a sensitive issue that makes tourism development difficult. To resolve different types of conflicts, Yang et al. (2013) [16] modeled a conflict-oriented tourism development system. Wang and Yotsumoto (2019) [17] analyzed conflicts in the tourism community in rural China systematically using the theory of social conflict. They suggest that conflicts in the tourism community include house demolition, land expropriation, vending rights, and ticket revenue distribution.

Residents' perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community influence their support for and participation in tourism development [20], which, in turn, influences the sustainability of ancient villages. Therefore, this study investigates the interrelationships among community participation, perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community, and residents' support for tourism development in ancient villages. It aims to provide a reference for the sustainable development of ancient villages.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Development of Ancient Villages

As a traditional type of settlement, ancient villages have become an important tourism resource. Generally, an ancient village refers to a historic village that has a wealth of cultural and social assets, and these assets are usually fragile. In the modern society era, industrialization and urbanization have accelerated the disappearance of ancient villages in many areas around the world, especially in Asia [21]. Sustainable development is an effective way to protect ancient villages [22]. Culture and tourism have always been inextricably linked [23], and as an important cultural heritage, ancient villages have unique conditions for developing cultural tourism. With the growing inclusion of cultural heritage to the tourism system, the sustainability of ancient villages is generating new concerns [23]. Studies on the sustainable development of tourism in ancient villages, especially those focusing on the positive and negative impacts of tourism on local resources and community, are urgently needed [24].

Tourism development is usually regarded as an efficient way of protecting the cultural heritages in an ancient village and thus promoting its sustainable development [25]. Tourism development in ancient villages can be quite different from that in other tourism destinations, such as urban destinations or ecotourism destinations. During the process of tourism development, the heritage attributes of the ancient villages should be preserved and utilized at the same time. Moreover, the inheritance of traditional culture and the economic development of ancient villages should also be taken into account [26].

There is no doubt that sustainable development of ancient villages is a systematic project that requires a lot of consideration both in theoretical and practical perspectives. Researchers have conducted studies from different aspects, such as environmental carrying capacity [27], over-commercialization [28], and an imbalanced allocation of revenues [29]. The sustainable development of ancient villages is inextricably linked to different stakeholder groups, namely tourists visiting the ancient villages, external merchants, community residents, and companies that are responsible for tourism management [25]. The participation of community residents is one of the most salient factors for the sustainable development of an ancient village [30,31].

2.2. Community Participation (CP)

The public is entitled to participate in planning activities that impact their daily lives. Community participation (CP) is a categorical term that legitimizes various forms (direct, indirect, active, passive, etc.) of participation at different levels (local, regional, and national) under specific circumstances [32].

CP has been extensively debated in tourism literature in the area of sustainable tourism in ancient villages. It plays a major role in the recovery and sustainable development of ancient villages [33]. With the participation of community residents, tourism development could integrate the opinions of residents, thereby helping to satisfy residents' expectations [34]. Moreover, CP in tourism development and community management plays a significant role in improving the economic development of residents and their overall quality of life [35]. CP in tourism development is not only crucial for promoting the economic and social development of the local community [36] but also better meeting the needs of tourists [37]. Furthermore, if residents participate in the decision-making process, it helps to promote the local community's support for tourism development and strengthen residents' willingness to preserve their traditional lifestyle and values [38].

2.3. Perceptions of Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC)

Conflict is an interactive process between various parties that can be individuals or organizations [39]. In the process of interaction, different individuals or groups usually have different interests and goals, which can easily result in disagreements. If the disagreements cannot be resolved efficiently, then conflicts will occur [40]. Conflicts mainly originate from disputes caused by economic, political, and value differences within and outside the community [41]. Conflicts are an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence [42], especially in a tourism community. Tourism development involves different stakeholder groups, such as the government, residents, tourists, and tourism operators. When their interests and goals are incompatible or contradictory, then conflicts among them will probably become one of the challenges [43]. As aforementioned, tourism development not only results in positive impacts on the tourism community but also causes negative impacts. According to social exchange theory (SET), to resist and eliminate negative impacts, community residents may behave impulsively in response to tourism development, thereby resulting in conflicts [44].

Previous studies have proved that negative impacts on the tourism community can be divided into several aspects, namely the economy, society, and environment. These negative impacts include an increase in the cost of living [10], traffic congestion [45], and damage to the natural environment [46]. Correspondingly, tourism development can bring different types of conflicts to the tourism community, such as economic conflicts, social conflicts, and environmental conflicts. Perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC) may inevitably affect residents' support for tourism development [47]. Perceptions of economic conflicts tend to play an important role in residents' support for tourism development, especially in ancient villages [48]. For example, tourism revenue is usually earned based on the tourism community and residents' properties. If local government and tourism operators take most of the benefits, residents who perceive an unbalanced distribution may withdraw their support for tourism development, and even worse, they

may use some strategies to resist tourism development (e.g., closing gates or blockading traffic) [17].

Although some scholars have delved into the negative impacts of tourism development, few have focused on community conflicts and residents' perceptions of these conflicts in the tourism community in ancient villages in China [49]. The existing studies are mainly based on residents' perceptions of conflicts from economic, social, and environmental aspects, neglecting the importance of cultural protection and management in ancient villages. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the research gap by delving into the perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community from five aspects: economy, society, environment, culture, and administration.

2.4. Residents' Support for Tourism Development (RSTD)

Residents' support for tourism development (RSTD) is the basis for promoting sustainability in ancient villages. However, residents may display different attitudes towards tourism development [50]. The impacts of tourism development on ancient villages and the perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community are critical predictors of RSTD.

According to SET, if residents perceive less cost of tourism development from PCTC, they will support tourism development and participate in planning or other tourism activities [51]. Some studies have indicated that CP is crucial for RSTD [35] and plays a significant role in the relationship between residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism development and RSTD [47]. Despite the fact that some studies have proved that the perceptions of positive impacts on the tourism community motivate residents to support tourism development [15], few studies have discussed the interrelationships among CP, PCTC, and RSTD.

3. Research Method

3.1. Research Structure

The authors of this study developed a research structure according to SET. This theory is a sociological theory that studies the gains and losses caused by interaction between different individuals or organizations [52]. Since the study mainly focuses on community residents' attitudes toward ancient villages tourism, SET was adopted in our research. The research structure is shown in Figure 1. Hypotheses were constructed based on the literature review and are shown as follows:

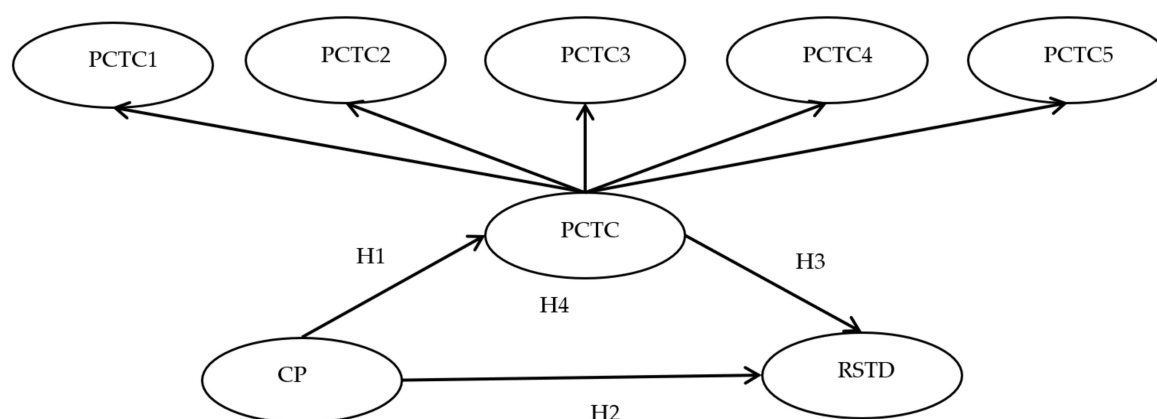


Figure 1. Research framework. Note: CP = community participation; RSTD = residents' support for tourism development; PCTC = perception of conflicts in the tourism community; PCTC 1–PCTC 5 = five dimensions of perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Community participation in tourism development negatively affects perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Community participation in tourism development positively affects residents' support for tourism development.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community negatively affect residents' support for tourism development.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community have a mediation effect between community participation in tourism development and residents' support for tourism development.*

3.2. Research Subjects and Data Collection

Whampoa Ancient Village (WAV) is located in the east of Haizhu District, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China, close to the Pearl River (see Figure 2). It is one of the originating ports of the China Maritime Silk Road and plays an important role in the history of China's shipping.



Figure 2. Whampoa Ancient Village.

WAV was built in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127). During the process of the development, WAV has formed and retained special Lingnan culture with traditional historical culture and folk culture. The culture here is an outstanding representative of Cantonese culture within the Pearl River Delta area. WAV is rich in material and intangible cultural heritages. For example, there are a lot of ancestral temples and religious temples, and the historical commercial and residential sites are well preserved.

WAV was listed as one of “The Most Beautiful Ancient Villages” in Guangdong. In 2009, the government of Haizhu district officially launched WAV Historical and Cultural Scenic Area Protection Project and carried out a comprehensive planning and design for WAV. However, with the development of tourism, a lot of challenges started to emerge, including land disputes, destruction of historical buildings, pollution of the environment, etc. Moreover, there is also a growing need for establishing rational tourism policies and upgrading tourism products. China is now implementing the “One Belt, One Road”

strategy. Being one of the originating ports of the Maritime Silk Road, tourism development in WAV plays a crucial part in promoting this strategy and facilitating its sustainability.

Tourism development in WAV has aroused some issues between residents and other stakeholders. For example, several newly built houses were demolished, which intensified the tensions between local residents and local government. Local residents complained that they did not enjoy the dividends brought by tourism development, and the arrival of a large number of tourists affected their daily life. Therefore, it is important to study the tourism development in WAV from the perspective of community residents.

In this study, we distributed 270 questionnaires to the residents from 1 July to 30 September 2020 and retrieved 249 valid samples with a valid return rate of 92.2%. Ethical review and consent were waived for this study for the following reasons: the questionnaire was anonymous, the consent of the respondents was fully provided before the survey, and the content of the questionnaire did not involve privacy issues. Of the total responses, there were 139 males (55.8%) and 110 females (44.2%). As for age, most of the respondents were 30–39 years old (32.1%), followed by 18–29 years old (30.1%), 40–49 years old (15.3%), 50–59 years old (14.1%), above 60 years old (5.6%), and below 18 years old (2.8%). Regarding the educational background, most of the respondents graduated from high school and vocational school (38.6%), followed by university (37.3%), junior high school (22.9%), and graduate school (1.2%). The occupations of the respondents were industry (26.5%), followed by self-employed (18.1%), agriculture (15.7%), housewife (6.8%), commerce (6.8%), official servant (7.6%), student (5.2%), teacher (3.6%), and other (9.6%). Most of the respondents earned a monthly income of RMB 1001–3000 (27.7%), followed by RMB 5001–8000 (25.7%), RMB 3001–5000 (24.5%), RMB 8001–10,000 (11.2%), less than RMB 1000 (6.0%), RMB 10,001–15,000 (3.6%), and more than RMB 15,000 (1.2%) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics.

Variable		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	139	55.8
	Female	110	44.2
Age	Below 18 years old	7	2.8
	18–29 years old	75	30.1
	30–39 years old	80	32.1
	40–49 years old	38	15.3
	50–59 years old	35	14.1
	Above 60 years old	14	5.6
Educational Background	Junior high school	57	22.9
	High school/vocational school	96	38.6
	University	93	37.3
	Graduate school	3	1.2
Occupations	Official servant	19	7.6
	Self-employed	45	18.1
	Housewife	17	6.8
	Agriculture	39	15.7
	Local industry	43	17.3
	Commerce	17	6.8
	Foreign industry	23	9.2
	Teacher	9	3.6
	Student	13	5.2
	Retiree	11	4.4
	Other	13	5.2
Monthly income	Below RMB 1000	15	6.0
	RMB 1001–3000	69	27.7
	RMB 3001–5000	61	24.5
	RMB 5001–8000	64	25.7
	RMB 8001–10,000	28	11.2
	RMB 10,001–15,000	9	3.6
	Above RMB 15,000	3	1.2

3.3. Instruments

This study developed a questionnaire with four sections. The first section is community participation (CP). The second section is perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC). There are five dimensions of PCTS: perceptions of economic conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC1, three items), perceptions of environmental conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC2, three items), perceptions of social conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC3, three items), perceptions of cultural conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC4, three items), and perceptions of administrative conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC5, three items). The third section is residents' support for tourism development (RSTD). The fourth section investigates tourists demographic traits (e.g., gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income). The scales are designed according to research objectives and existing research literature. Respectively, the scale of CP was developed by Jia and Wang [53], the scale of PCTC was developed by Lankford [54] and Crompton [55], and the scale of RSTD was developed by Wang [56] and Dai [57]. A total of 26 items were scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4. Data Analysis

The analysis was based on the structural equation model (SEM). SEM allows independent variables and dependent variables to contain measurement errors, and these errors can be eliminated through the measurement equation between the explicit and implicit variables [58]. SEM combines two statistical techniques, factor analysis and path analysis, which integrate factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and can simultaneously measure and analyze multiple independent relationships. Therefore, SEM was used to test the relationships in the study. The assessment of a model using SEM generally follows a two-step process, namely, assessments of the measurement model and the structural model [59]. Assessment of the measurement model entails the evaluation of the validity and reliability centered on the model's latent variables (LVs). This evaluation involves the assessment of the relationships between the LVs and their associated items. The assessment of the structural model is concerned with the relationships between LVs [60]. Additionally, this study adopts a bootstrapping method [61] to verify the mediating role of PCTC.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model involves an evaluation of reliability and validity. Validity in turn comprises two main types: convergent and discriminant. Convergent validity is often assessed by way of two key coefficients [59]: the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). In assessing a model's convergent validity, the loading of each indicator on its associated LV must be calculated and compared to a threshold. Generally, the loading should be higher than 0.7 for validity to be considered acceptable [59].

Cronbach's α values for all scales exceeded the minimum threshold level of 0.70, namely 0.750, 0.874, 0.926, thus indicating the reliability of all scales used in this study [59]. Table 2 indicated that the CRs for all of the LVs in the measurement model exceeded 0.7, namely 0.7535, 0.7705, 0.7543, 0.7553, 0.8058, 0.8233, 0.9251, which shows that the measurement model presents acceptable reliability. In addition to the previously discussed criteria for convergent validity, the AVEs of the LVs should also be higher than 0.5 for their convergent validity to be considered acceptable [59]. Table 2 reveals that AVE [62] for all factors exceeded the minimum threshold value of 0.50, namely 0.5054, 0.5282, 0.5074, 0.5012, 0.5825, 0.6115, 0.8048, which is an indication of the convergent validity of all scales.

Table 2. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

No.	Item	Mean	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Community Participation (CP)			3.54		
X1	I have participated in tourism-related activities in WAV(Whampoa Ancient Village).	3.84	0.7535	0.5054	0.750
X2	I can keep abreast of the trends and information of tourism development in WAV.	4.04			
X3	I have participated in tourism decision-making process in WAV.	2.75			
Perceptions of Economic Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC1)			3.79		
X4	Tourism development deepens the gap between the rich and the poor among local residents.	4.13	0.7705	0.5282	
X5	Tourism development increases the cost of living.	3.41			
X6	Tourism development occupies a lot of land and damages the interests of residents.	3.83			
Perceptions of Environmental Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC2)			3.81		
X7	Tourism development leads to a rise in domestic waste.	4.03	0.7543	0.5074	
X8	Tourism development destroys local tranquil atmosphere.	3.86			
X9	Tourism development reduces the quality of the local environment.	3.55			
Perceptions of Social Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC3)			3.64		
X10	Tourism development interferes with the daily life of local residents.	3.90	0.7553	0.5012	0.874
X11	Tourism development increases crime and undesirable phenomena.	3.41			
X12	Tourism development leads to a deterioration of relations between neighbors and friends.	3.60			
Perceptions of Cultural Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC4)			3.90		
X13	Tourism development destroys local traditional culture.	3.95	0.8058	0.5825	
X14	Tourism development changes and reduces the local dialect.	3.63			
X15	Tourism development destroys local traditional architecture.	4.12			
Perceptions of Administrative Conflicts in the Tourism Community (PCTC5)			3.98		
X16	The profit distribution of tourism development is not reasonable.	3.89	0.8233	0.6115	
X17	Tourism management activities are highly centralized.	4.05			
X18	There is no reasonable plan for local tourism development.	4.00			
Residents' Support for Tourism Development (RSTD)			4.24		
X19	I think that tourism development in WAV has more advantages than disadvantages in general.	4.23	0.9251	0.8048	0.926
X20	I think tourism will play an important role in the development of WAV.	4.24			
X21	I am full of confidence in the tourism development prospects of WAV.	4.24			

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted value; PCTC 1–PCTC 5 = five dimensions of perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community.

4.2. Structural Model

Some previous studies recommended some indices to evaluate the overall model fit, including CMIN/DF (chi-square/df), RMSEA, IFI, TLI, CFI, GFI [61]. Among them, when the CMIN/DF value is between 1 and 3, the model has a simple adaptation degree. The standard of the GFI value, IFI value, TLI value and CFI value is above 0.9, and the standard of RMSEA value is lower than 0.05 (good fit) and less than 0.08 (suitable) [62]. Table 3 shows the indexes of this study's model fitness: CMIN/DF = 1.165, RMSEA = 0.062, GFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.995, IFI = 0.995, TLI = 0.993. From these results, it can be observed clearly that the structural model of this study has a good degree of fitness [59].

Table 3. Fitness Index.

χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI	TLI
45.423	39	1.165	0.026	0.968	0.995	0.995	0.993

To test the hypotheses, SEM was conducted using the on-site collected data. Path coefficients of different dimensions were significant, revealing the significant meaning of endogenous constructs in the model structure of this study in terms of statistics [63]. The significance of path coefficients was tested using bootstrap sampling. All path coefficients were significant, indicating all variables had predicted power. Table 4 describes the results of the hypothesis test. The hypothesized negative relationship between CP and PCTC (H1) was supported ($\beta = -0.22$, $t = -2.638$, $p < 0.01$). H2, which hypothesized a positive relationship between CP and RSTD, was also supported ($\beta = 0.66$, $t = 8.082$, $p < 0.001$). As predicted by H3, PCTC negatively affected RSTD ($\beta = -0.15$, $t = -2.429$, $p < 0.01$), providing support for H3.

Table 4. Hypothesis test.

Hypothesis Relationship	β	S.E.	C.R. (t)	P	Results
Hypothesis 1	−0.22	0.073	−2.638	**	Supported
Hypothesis 2	0.66	0.099	8.082	***	Supported
Hypothesis 3	−0.15	0.086	−2.429	**	Supported

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4.3. Mediation Test

We used the bootstrap method to test the mediating effect [64]. The results show that the indirect effect of CP on RSTD is 0.033, and the confidence interval is 0.003–0.071, which does not straddle 0 [65]. Thus, the indirect effect is significant, which means that Hypothesis 4 in this study is supported.

4.4. Mean Analysis

The residents in WAV were asked to express their opinions and feelings on their participation in tourism development and attitude towards tourism development. The residents' answers were examined based on the mean scores (M) of the variables from the lowest to the highest (see Table 2). Among the seven factors (CP, PCTC1–5, RSTD) listed in Table 2, RSTD was found to have the highest mean ($M = 4.24$), whereas CP gained the lowest mean ($M = 3.54$). Among PCTC1–5, PCTC5—perceptions of administrative conflicts in the tourism community—was observed to have the highest mean ($M = 3.98$). As described by the tourist area life cycle model (TALC) [66], the development of a tourism destination can be divided into six stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and rejuvenation/decline. According to the current situation of tourism development in WAV, it can be observed that WAV is now at the stage of involvement and development. At this stage, although the development of tourism had aroused the disgust of residents in WAV, the economic benefits brought by tourism development outweighed the costs, which encouraged them to support the development of tourism.

5. Discussion

5.1. Relationships between CP and RSTD

This study reveals that community participation (CP) in tourism development positively affects residents' support for tourism development (RSTD). The findings are consistent with SET [13], which points out that CP in tourism development, such as obtaining tourism information and participating in tourism decision-making activities, plays an important role in RSTD. In previous research, many studies have indicated that community participation is a key driver in tourism development [2,10,17,22,33,44,47]. For example, Wang and Yotsumoto asserted (2019) [17] that CP in tourism development was an effective way to resolve conflicts in the tourism community, which may further increase RSTD. Khalid et al. (2019) [22] pointed out that residents in the tourism community should participate in the process of sustainable tourism development, and community-based tourism had been regarded as a vital means of achieving sustainable development in the tourism community. Lee (2013) [67] also found that the more residents involved in tourism development, the more benefits they may encounter from tourism development, thus exerting a supportive attitude towards tourism development to sustain such benefits. On the contrary, if residents are kept away from the process of tourism development, they are likely to perceive fewer benefits but more costs, and, as a result, they may oppose tourism development.

The results of the questionnaire showed that the residents in WAV did not consider themselves to be involved in the decision-making process for tourism development ($M = 2.75$). Since they had not received professional training, they only participated in tourism development superficially, such as selling simple snacks and local products. What residents in WAV could do is to obtain more tourism information ($M = 4.04$) and gradually understand and participate in tourism development ($M = 3.84$), which is consistent with

the stage of tourism development in WAV. Interviews with residents in WAV showed that most of them participated in tourism development spontaneously and supported tourism development ($M = 4.24$).

5.2. PCTC Analysis

Perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC) partially mediate the effect of community participation (CP) on residents' support for tourism development (RSTD). The findings support previous studies' results [44,68,69]. Wang and Yotsumot (2019) [17] analyzed various conflicts of the tourism community, such as land expropriation and revenue distribution, and found that PCTC played an important role in the relationship between CP and RSTD. Nunkoo and Rankissoon (2012) [68] stated that as residents participate more in tourism development, they will perceive fewer conflicts originated from tourism development, and then their support for tourism development will increase. According to TALC [66], with the development of tourism, the extent of residents' participation in tourism development will gradually be enhanced, and then residents' perception of conflicts in the tourism community will gradually be reduced.

5.2.1. PCTC1

The results show that residents in WAV were aware of the economic conflicts caused by tourism development. The findings support social exchange theory, which postulates that residents may resist tourism development when they perceive that the costs outweigh the benefits [14]. The exchange of economic interests is frequently the first to occur, which may easily result in perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community [16]. Most of them thought that tourism development had deepened the gap between the rich and the poor ($M = 4.13$). According to TALC, the tourism development of WAV is in its primary phase (involvement and development), and only a few residents in WAV have participated in tourism development and benefited from it. More importantly, it is difficult for most residents to participate in tourism activities, e.g., selling local goods, at this stage, since applying for a formal business license needs a series of procedures and takes a long time to obtain one.

In the process of tourism development, a large amount of land was expropriated and used. However, the compensation was low and unreasonable, seriously damaging the interests of residents in WAV ($M = 3.83$). Such measures of tourism development destroy the daily life and livelihood of residents [16,17,25,28,41]. Similarly, Wang and Yotsumot (2019) [17] pointed out that land expropriation is a major problem in rural China, especially in ancient villages. By contrast, residents' perceptions of the increasing living cost were relatively low ($M = 3.41$). Although tourism development increased the price of property, goods, and other products in WAV, residents believed that the increase is acceptable for them considering the fact that more job opportunities were provided.

5.2.2. PCTC2

Tourism development in ancient villages is different from other forms of tourism, and the natural environment should be paid more attention to [46]. Any destination has a certain environmental carrying capacity, and some places are more vulnerable than others, such as ancient villages vs. urban areas [47]. With the increase in tourists in ancient villages, environmental damage, e.g., air and water pollution, is inevitable [18,26,28,47]. Rhama (2019) [70] suggested that tourism development may bring many environment problems to the community, such as noise, vandalism, and queues. With the development of tourism, an increasing number of tourists have begun to visit WAV. Most residents thought that tourism development destroyed the local tranquil atmosphere ($M = 3.86$). More seriously, the existing tourist infrastructure, e.g., tourist toilets and rubbish bins, was unable to meet the needs of high-quality tourism service ($M = 4.03$). Previous studies have proven that environmental pollution due to increased tourism, such as littering and noise, is a significant impact that affects PCTC2 [17,48,70]. Rising environment costs have

significantly increased pressure on residents [70], which may cause further resentment among them.

5.2.3. PCTC3

Some prior studies have indicated that tourism development may cause some negative social changes in the tourism community, such as changes in daily life, changes in neighborly relations [71], increased crimes, and abuse of drugs [72]. The results of this study showed that residents in WAV had perceived medium level of social conflicts ($M = 3.41$). Although the social conflicts now are not severe, destination managers should be aware of the fact that conflict is not a static but dynamic process that evolves over time [73]. Researchers have shown that social change is a gradual process [16,48], and PCTC3, in the early stages of tourism development, is often relatively lower, making it the easiest to ignore [14,72]. As is suggested by Yang et al. (2013) [16], social conflict is inherent in tourism development and needs to be viewed objectively.

5.2.4. PCTC4

Culture is the key attractiveness of an ancient village. According to Yang et al. (2013) [16], culture conflicts occur regularly at different levels and between different interest groups in tourism destinations. In WAV, residents perceived a relatively high level of negative impacts of tourism development on local culture ($M = 3.95$). Local traditional architectures are important parts of the cultural heritages in WAV and attract a considerable number of tourists every year. However, compared with modern brick and concrete buildings, the traditional architectures in WAV are easily destroyed due to the fragility and non-durability [74]. In WAV, many traditional buildings have been re-designed and developed as tourist attractions. Some buildings were dirty and messy because of the lack of effective supervision and protection. Such situation aroused an opposing attitude of residents in WAV ($M = 4.12$). Previous studies have considered that cultural collision is inevitable in the process of tourism development [75], especially in ancient villages [25,28,76]. Some studies showed that the cultural heritage of ancient villages was fragile [26,31,33], whether tangible or intangible, and was easily impacted by tourists [23,77]. Cultural heritage is the core attraction of cultural tourism [21,23,33]. However, many traditional cultural heritages have been over-consumed [18,29], which has aroused local residents' resistance to the development of tourism [8].

5.2.5. PCTC5

It has been widely recognized that tourism brings economic benefits to tourism destinations. In China, the distribution of benefits is dominated by the government; however, unreasonable administration and backward planning of tourism development conducted by the local government may cause unbalanced distribution of benefits across different stakeholder groups and then become a main cause of conflicts [16]. In WAV, most residents considered that tourism management activities in WAV were highly centralized ($M = 4.05$), which led to unbalanced distribution of economic interests ($M = 3.89$) and unreasonable planning for tourism development ($M = 4.00$). Tourism development is inseparable from the support and planning of the government, especially in China. The government is the link between various stakeholders in ancient villages. The government is usually in charge of tourism development and management in WAV. Therefore, when the government did not formulate an effective plan of tourism development, residents in WAV expressed a lot of dissatisfaction. As many studies have suggested, administrative conflicts in the tourism community are most likely to occur, especially in the early stages of tourism development [16,17,74]. To meet the needs of tourists, large amounts of land and traditional buildings were expropriated by the government at a low compensation [5,9,17]. The draconian policies of local government, such as the no resettlement measure [8], restriction on building of new houses [17], and unreasonable planning [16] for tourism development, have worsened the administrative conflicts issue [8,74].

6. Conclusions

Tourism development is not only an economic process but also a psychological, social, and cultural event for the residents of the local tourism community [78]. This study proposed a model linking community participation (CP) and residents' support for tourism development (RSTD) in the context of sustainable tourism development in an ancient village and investigated the mediating role of perceptions of conflicts in the tourism community (PCTC) using data collected from 249 residents of Whampoa Ancient Village (WAV), China. This study concludes that PCTC could be a challenge to increase residents' support for tourism development. The theoretical contributions and practical implications are discussed below.

6.1. Theoretical Contribution

Despite the fact that many tourism scholars have investigated the negative impacts of tourism development, few of them have focused on residents' perceptions of the conflicts in the tourism community and its potential effect on the relationship between community participation and residents' support for tourism development. In addition, the conflicts in the tourism community in ancient villages in China are particularly neglected [49]. The findings of this study contribute to the tourism literature by elaborately establishing an empirical model linking CP, PCTC, and RSTD. It fills the literature gap regarding the need for quantitative research to measure PCTC and its role in influencing RSTD. This study also divides PCTC into five types: economic conflicts, environmental conflicts, social conflicts, cultural conflicts, and administrative conflicts. Such classification provides more comprehensive insight for future studies of tourism conflicts in ancient villages.

6.2. Practical Implications

In an ancient village, residents may only play a passive role as recipients of tourism development and environmental change. This is partly because, in most parts of rural China, residents are mainly farmers with low education backgrounds and lack economic capital. Through empowerment, residents' social resources can be optimized, and the possibility for them to contribute to tourism development will increase. When residents' participation competitiveness is enhanced, conflicts caused by tourism development will then be effectively alleviated [22]. To stimulate residents' participation in tourism development, some strategies can be implemented. First, it is necessary to empower the residents' abilities. For example, the government or destination managers should provide the residents with more training opportunities to enhance their ability to adapt to tourism development and claim their own interests. Second, the government and destination managers should create more jobs or various means for the residents to participate in tourism activities. For instance, the government should simplify the application procedures and shorten the application duration of obtaining a business license. Moreover, the government should encourage residents to participate in the decision-making process of tourism development in order to enhance residents' sense of being a host and in turn stimulate their supportive attitude towards tourism development. Third, the associations or organizations related to the residents in the tourism community should be empowered and become the channels and support for residents to express their suggestions and demands when conflicts occur in the process of tourism development.

7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is a primary exploration of the interrelationship among community participation, perceptions of conflicts, and residents' support for tourism development. Therefore, future research should further uncover more relevant factors influencing the sustainability of tourism development in ancient villages from more different perspectives. Additionally, this study only investigated the attitudes and perceptions of residents, excluding other stakeholder groups, such as local authorities and NGOs. The perspectives of these stakeholders should also be considered in future research.

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