



Residents' happiness of life in rural tourism development

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Life happiness
Self-development
Community participation
Support for tourism development
Wuyuan county

ABSTRACT

This paper explains the connotations and components of happiness and draws on a case study to explore the factors affecting residents' happiness and its effect on tourism development. A theoretical model linking community participation and residents' happiness with support for tourism development was developed. To test the model, questionnaires were administered to a sample of 376 residents in Wuyuan county, Jiangxi province, China. The results indicated three dimensions of residents' overall life happiness: material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. Community participation was identified as a significant predictor of residents' life happiness in all three dimensions, and residents' perceptions of their overall life happiness positively affected their attitudes towards tourism development. The study differentiates happiness from the similar terms (e.g. life satisfaction, quality of life) and contributes to the better understanding and measurement of happiness by highlighting the role of self-development.

1. Introduction

A state of happiness is one of the eternal pursuits of humanity. An abundance of the material goods needed to sustain life has increased people's appetite for a high quality of life and overall happiness. As an industry dedicated to happiness, tourism has practical significance for enhancing the sense of happiness enjoyed by both tourists and residents in tourist destinations (Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). Studies have shown that when a community starts to develop tourism, the residents' lives are changed economically, environmentally, culturally and socially (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Dyer, Aberdeen, & Schuler, 2003; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Huse, Gustavsen, & Almedal, 1998; Parlett, Fletcher, & Cooper, 1995; Pratt, 2015; Seetanah, 2011). Although tourism is widely believed to be an essential economic driver and can improve the living conditions of local residents, its effects on the broader perception of happiness among residents should also be considered of utmost importance (Chi,

Cai, & Li, 2017). The idea of the 'happy host' is fundamental to the long-term success of tourism (Snaith & Haley, 1999). When community residents believe that tourism development can make their lives happier, they are more willing to show their support for tourism (Prabhakaran, Nair, & Ramachandran, 2014; Tosun, 2006). If it is acknowledged that increasing the sense of happiness among local residents is vital to sustaining long-term tourism development, then the question of what factors influence residents' happiness becomes important for tourism developers.

Community participation is generally regarded as the most effective way for residents to benefit from tourism development (Lee, 2013). The greater the degree of residents' participation in tourism development, the stronger their perceptions of the benefits of tourism and the greater their support for tourism (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012; Lee & Jan 2019; Šegota, Mihalič, & Kuščer, 2017). However, two pertinent questions remain unanswered in the literature: Is community participation also a predictor of residents' happiness with life? Does the residents' overall

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happiness further affect the sustainability of tourism development? To fill these gaps in tourism research, this study fulfils three purposes: (a) to illustrate the connotations and components of happiness; (b) to explore how community participation influences residents' perceptions of their happiness; and (c) to delineate how residents' overall life happiness affects their levels of support for tourism development. Specifically, the study developed a theoretical model that links community participation and three dimensions of life happiness (material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development) with support for tourism and tested it using structural equation modelling (SEM) with data gathered from a sample of 376 residents in Wuyuan county, Jiangxi province, China. The innovation of this study lies in its identification of the three dimensions of happiness, namely material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development, and its exploration of the relationships between community participation, life happiness and support for further tourism development.

2. Literature review

2.1. Connotations and components of happiness

Happiness has become an academic buzzword in recent decades, with interest in the topic being propelled by a recognition that happiness does not necessarily equate to wealth. Academic research into happiness originates in both philosophy and psychology. Philosophers have examined and debated the meaning of happiness for millennia (Smith & Diekmann, 2017), whereas the psychological study of happiness aims to promote mental health and thus improve overall life satisfaction (Seligman, 2002; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). There is still no unanimous definition of happiness, but there are two broad perspectives on its meaning: the hedonic and eudaimonic views. The hedonic view insists that the goal of life is to seek enjoyment and avoid suffering (Carlisle, Henderson, & Hanlon, 2009) and that happiness is completely captured by the hedonic pleasure of an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2001). By contrast, the eudaimonic view focuses on the realisation of human potential rather than mere enjoyment (Cloninger, 2004). Eudaimonic happiness is therefore connected with personal growth, self-development or the exceptional achievement of meaningful behaviour (Boniwell, 2008, 2016).

Tourism studies have begun to focus on the happiness of residents in the context of a broad range of concepts, such as subjective well-being (Lipovcan, Brajsa-Zganec, & Poljanec-Boric, 2014; Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Suess, Baloglu, & Busser, 2018; Volo, 2017), life satisfaction (Bimonte & Faralla, 2016; Lin, Chen, & Filieri, 2017; Woo, Kim, & Uysal 2015), and quality of life (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Cecil, Fu, Wang, & Avgoustis, 2008; Croes, Ridderstaat, & Niekerk, 2018; Hanafiah, Azman, Jamaluddin, & Aminuddin, 2016; Jurowski & Brown, 2001), which are often used interchangeably. However, there are fundamental differences between happiness and these similar terms. Life satisfaction and quality of life aim to assess individuals' levels of satisfaction within specific life domains (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013), whereas happiness focuses on individuals' overall assessments of their lives, including satisfaction within different life domains and general self-fulfilment (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Therefore, these prior studies have based the happiness of residents in tourism destinations on their life satisfaction or quality of life. The connotation of happiness adopted in this study is closer to the eudaimonic view, which is related to personal satisfaction with life and self-fulfilment due to tourism development.

In relation to the components of happiness, researchers are divided in their support for the measurement scales of subjective and objective well-being. Subjectivists argue that individuals should be empowered to define their own happiness (Schueller, 2009), which tends to be broadly connected to such factors as perceived health condition, prosperity and interpersonal relationships (McCabe, Joldersma, & Li, 2010). In

contrast, objective happiness is mainly measured by indicators such as personal income, education, healthcare, the living environment and life expectancy (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016). Of particular relevance to this study are the findings of Kim et al. (2013), who determined that residents' life satisfaction was closely linked to their material and emotional well-being, and of Woo, Kim and Uysal (2015), who proposed that residents' quality of life consisted of their satisfaction with both material and non-material life. However, as discussed above, happiness also has the connotation of personal development. Therefore, the overall happiness of residents in tourism destinations comprises three dimensions in the present study: material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. Specifically, material well-being reflects the satisfaction with the economic income, living environment, recreation and healthcare facilities generated by tourism development; emotional well-being reflects the satisfaction with the family ties, social relations and community attachment arising from tourism development; and self-development captures the sense of personal achievement generated by tourism development.

2.2. Factors in residents' happiness and its effect on tourism development

Residents' subjective perceptions of the effects of tourism are generally regarded as among the main factors affecting their sense of happiness (Kim et al., 2013). Lin et al. (2017) and Woo, Kim and Uysal (2015) found that residents' perceptions of the economic, social, environmental and cultural value generated by tourism were significantly related to their happiness in four specific life domains (health, material life, emotional life and sense of community belonging). Meanwhile, the objective community environmental factors of cultural background and management policies (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Pratt, McCabe, & Movono, 2015), social issues and economic development conditions (Liang & Hui, 2016), basic service facilities (Kanwal, Rasheed, Pitafi, Pitafi, & Ren, 2020), social environment (Chi et al., 2017), responsible tourism and sustainability (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017) and community tourism and sustainability (Lee & Jan 2019) can also affect the happiness of residents. In addition, studies have shown that demographic characteristics (Nunkoo & So, 2016), economic status and social relations (Chi et al., 2017), satisfaction with community and healthcare services (Suess et al., 2018) and trust in institutions and power of decision-making (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012) are among the other factors bound up with the overall happiness of residents.

Regarding the influence of residents' happiness on tourism development, most scholars have considered residents' support for tourism as an important outcome variable (e.g. Chi et al., 2017; Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2018; Liang & Hui, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez, Porras-Bueno, & Plaza-Mejía, 2011). Scholars have also explored the effects of residents' happiness on their willingness to pay tax (Suess et al., 2018) and to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour (Su, Huang, & Pearce 2018) and on resident-tourist value co-creation (Lin et al., 2017). Ridderstaat, Croes, and Nijkamp (2014, 2016) explored the relationships between residents' happiness and tourism development and found that tourism development can promote happiness among local residents, which in turn can further promote the development of tourism. To summarise, although studies have examined the factors behind and the effects of residents' happiness, few studies have analysed the connotations and components of happiness. In particular, studies of how to effectively enhance residents' sense of happiness in tourism destinations are scarce.

In research on the connection between residents' happiness and tourism development, scholars generally believe that it is difficult to separate the influence of tourism on residents' happiness from other factors (Pratt et al., 2015). This is particularly evident when using macro-economic indicators to evaluate the happiness of residents in tourism destinations. Croes (2012) put forward the human development index (HDI) as a measure of the impact of tourism development on residents' happiness. He believed that tourism could promote objective aspects of human development, such as the per capita GDP, adult

literacy, mean years of schooling and life expectancy, and that this boost to human development would in turn promote tourism development. However, it is much more common for scholars to conduct micro-level surveys based on individual questionnaires to explore the impact of tourism on residents' happiness. These studies have found that tourism development does affect residents' happiness, which further affects their attitude towards tourism development (e.g. Chi et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2013; Liang & Hui, 2016; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). To exclude the influence of non-tourism factors on residents' subjective responses, the present study adopts the micro-level approach in exploring the connection between tourism development and residents' happiness through questionnaire surveys.

2.3. Community participation and its connection with residents' happiness and support for tourism development

Community participation, as the basic embodiment of the spirit of autonomy in a democratic society, originates from the interests or power demands of residents (Sewell & Coppock, 1977). Murphy (1985) first introduced community participation into tourism research in response to the increasing emphasis on sustainable tourism and community development. Initially, community participation in tourism destinations was mainly connected to tourism planning (Gunn, 1994; Inskip, 1991); community residents were considered important stakeholders in the process and emphasis was placed on the need to seriously take their opinions and attitudes on tourism development into account (Prabhakaran et al., 2014; Tang, Zhong, & Cheng, 2012; Tosun, 2006). Over recent decades, the concept of community participation has gradually penetrated the whole process of tourism destination development, as mainly reflected in two aspects: participating in decision-making and benefit sharing (Tosun, 2000). The former is the central element that guarantees successful community participation, and the latter is the main purpose for residents to participate in tourism development.

Community participation has been identified as one of the determinants of the perception of tourism impact and the extent of tourism support among residents (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Lee, 2013). First, residents' perceptions of tourism impacts depend largely on their engagement with tourism (Keogh, 1990; Nicholas, Thapa, & Ko, 2009). During the process of participating in the benefit distribution and decision-making, community residents not only obtain additional material resources and economic benefits to improve their material well-being, they also enhance their sense of community attachment and strengthen their skills to achieve self-development via emotional interaction or knowledge sharing with other community members and tourism stakeholders (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012; Sebele, 2010). Residents who are more engaged in tourism are more probably to move forward with their lives by managing their finances and maintaining an optimistic outlook on life, and thus achieve financial security and an improved psychological well-being (Baniya, Shrestha, & Karn, 2018). Second, the perception of tourism benefits, such as economic gains, emotional connections and self-development skills, further determines the attitudes of community residents towards tourism (Gursoy, Jurovski, & Uysal, 2002; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). In other words, residents' perceptions of the economic, social and cultural benefits of tourism (Lee, 2013) and of an enhanced sense of personal distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy from tourism (Wang & Xu, 2015) play significant roles in affecting their attitudes toward tourism.

Therefore, this study took community participation as an antecedent of the various dimensions of residents' happiness and explored the relationships among community participation, overall happiness of life and support for tourism development.

2.4. Theoretical background and hypotheses development

2.4.1. Theoretical background

As described by Ap (1992), social exchange theory (SET) provides an

effective conceptual framework to understand the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction. People tend to engage in an interaction when they believe they can gain something of value, be it material, social or psychological (Andereck et al., 2005; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009; Wang & Pfister, 2008). In the tourism literature, SET has been widely used to postulate the connections among community participation, residents' perceptions of tourism benefits and attitude toward tourism (Látková & Vogt, 2011; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012; Suess et al., 2018). For example, Baniya et al. (2018) used SET as a framework and found that residents who participated in tourism development had higher levels of financial well-being, community attachment, fulfilment of psychological needs and life satisfaction. Lee (2013) used SET to investigate how community involvement affects residents' attitudes to tourism, with the results indicating that residents' engagement in tourism directly affected their perceived tourism benefits and indirectly affected their support for tourism. However, SET mainly focuses on explaining the exchange outcomes between different subjects, lacks the discussion on the emotions of the exchange subjects, and cannot well interpret the interaction between different actors. The affect theory of social exchange aims to theoretically explain the emotional connection and behavioral interaction between different exchange subjects (Lawler, 2001). Therefore, this study intends to further proceed from Lawler's affect theory of social exchange on the basis of SET, and proposes that community residents who participate in the decision-making or business processes related to tourism are more likely to have an enhanced sense of happiness and to support for further tourism development.

2.4.2. Hypotheses development

The involvement of local residents in aspects of the tourism business such as catering, accommodation, and souvenir sales can provide employment and increase economic gains for the community (Johnson, 2010; Wang, Yang, Chen, Yang, & Li, 2010; Šegota et al., 2017), thus improving their overall living conditions. The study of Nicholas et al. (2009) showed that the residents' integration into tourism management could enhance their environmental awareness and promote local ecological protection. Community participation also requires collaboration between community members to achieve common goals (McCloskey et al., 2011), which is important for local residents to establish close bonds and engage in favourable interactions (Hwang, Stewart, & Ko, 2012). Evidence suggests that those who have been involved in aspects of tourism management, such as programmes for the conservation of history and culture, are more likely to be proud of their traditions and indigenous culture (Lee, 2013). This can help strengthen their sense of community identity and belonging. The integration of community into tourism development can effectively mediate the conflicting needs of various interest groups and promote healthy community relationships overall (Sirisrisak, 2009; Su & Wall, 2014).

Tosun (2000) suggested that community participation is a powerful tool that can not only educate residents to identify their own needs and assess the decisions of developers or governments, but also empower the community to make decisions and exert a certain degree of control over development. Thereby, community members can act as the real hosts and solve problems from the local perspective. Residents who are more engaged in tourism development usually perceive tourism as a critical engine for self-fulfillment (Volo, 2017). Community participation also provides opportunities for residents to meet interesting people, encounter different cultures and expose themselves to new perspectives (Walter, 2009). In other words, if residents have the opportunity to become involved in tourism development, it will be easier for them to make up their own minds on the relevant issues, to enhance their cultural literacy and to realise their personal values. Overall, this review of the previous literature suggests a significant correlation between community participation and different dimensions of residents' life happiness. Hence, the study hypothesised that:

H1. Community participation will positively affect residents' perception of material well-being.

H2. Community participation will positively affect residents' perception of emotional well-being.

H3. Community participation will positively affect residents' self-development.

According to Pratt et al. (2015), the overall happiness of residents in tourist destinations is highly dependent on their satisfaction in various life domains. Economics, education, public and medical services, recreation and social opportunities, and living standards are the main dimensions of community satisfaction (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Specifically, Baniya et al. (2018) used the dimensions of financial well-being, community satisfaction and attachment, meaning of life, and psychological need to measure the individual well-being of residents in tourism destinations. Lee and Jan (2019) performed an empirical study and showed that residents' life satisfaction was mainly reflected in their living standards, leisure opportunities, social relationships and cultural and spiritual life. Further studies into the components of residents' happiness include that of Kim et al. (2013), who indicated that residents' overall life satisfaction is significantly affected by their sense of well-being in both the material and emotional aspects of their lives. Mathew and Sreejesh (2017) also proposed that residents' life satisfaction was mainly a product of their sense of material, emotional, community and health and safety well-being. Suess et al. (2018) found that residents' satisfaction with healthcare services and economic benefits had a great effect on their community well-being. Chi et al. (2017) performed an empirical study and showed that residents' subjective well-being was closely linked to their economic state, social environment and sense of community belonging. In their study, Woo, Kim and Uysal (2015) arrived at the similar finding that residents' quality of life was greatly associated with their satisfaction of material (financial circumstances and living standards) and non-material life (health status, emotional and community life). Moreover, studies have also provided evidence that the contribution of tourism to residents' happiness comes not only from the material and emotional life domains, but also from employment and business opportunities, education, and personal skill development (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Based on the previous literature, we can conclude that residents' overall happiness of life is mainly determined by their perceived material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. Thus, the following hypotheses were derived:

H4. Residents' perceived material well-being will positively affect their overall happiness of life.

H5. Residents' perceived emotional well-being will positively affect their overall happiness of life.

H6. Residents' perceived self-development will positively affect their overall happiness of life.

It is commonly acknowledged that local residents' perceptions of tourism benefits have a positive effect on their support for tourism development (e.g. Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Lepp, 2007; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nicholas et al., 2009; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990; Sheldon & Var, 1984). Studies have also begun to focus on the relationship between residents' perceived life happiness and their attitudes towards tourism. For instance, Park, Nunkoo, and Yoon (2015) found that residents' satisfaction with the community's living and leisure environment, and with tourism overall, directly predicted their support for tourism. An empirical study in China demonstrated that residents were more friendly and welcoming to visitors and more likely to interact with and respect visitors if they felt happy with their lives as a whole (Lin et al., 2017). The results of Chi et al. (2017) and of Suess, Baloglu and Busse (2018) also suggested that residents who perceived a greater sense of well-being (desirability, enjoyment and life quality) were more

likely to back tourism. Furthermore, residents' social or family status (Snaith & Haley, 1999), self-esteem and self-efficacy (Wang & Xu, 2015) have also been recognised as significant predictors of their attitudes to tourism development. The literature discussed above provides evidence that residents' overall happiness can have a positive impact on their attitudes towards future tourism development. Therefore, we proposed that:

H7. The overall happiness of residents will positively affect their attitudes towards further tourism development.

Overall, we expected to find that the involvement of residents in tourism development would positively affect their perceived material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development, which further help to enhance their overall life happiness and support for further tourism development (Fig. 1).

3. Methods

3.1. Study site

Rural tourism has become an important way to meet people's growing needs for a better life and to enhance their happiness of life in China. Against the background of a high degree of democratisation, community participation in Western countries is just one of the forces that promote the development of local communities. As a developing country with a lower degree of democratisation, community participation is a significant force driving the development of rural tourism communities in China (Bao & Sun, 2006). Although community participation in rural tourism destinations in China was passive or spontaneous but disordered in the early 20th century (Sun & Bao, 2006), community residents' demands for participation in rural tourism development have gradually increased with the increasing awareness of social democracy, and there are greater calls for strengthening community participation and protecting community interests (Zuo & Bao, 2008). Therefore, this study selects China as the context and attempts to explore the relationship between community participation and residents' happiness of life associated with the practice of rural tourism in China, so as to draw general conclusions that are applicable to other developing countries.

With further consideration that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and attitudes towards tourism would vary with different stages of tourism development (Látková & Vogt, 2011; Madrigal, 1993), this study was carried out in the mature rural tourist destination of Wuyuan county. Wuyuan has a population of 360,000 and is located in Jiangxi province in eastern China (Fig. 2). It is known as the homeland of scholars and tea, and its history can be traced back to the Qin dynasty (221 BC). With its superior natural environment and rich cultural resources, Wuyuan began to develop rural tourism in 1999. Its unique terraces of rape flowers, exquisite ancient Hui-style architecture and characteristic agriculture-based lifestyle give it the most beautiful countryside in China, and make it the only county to be rated as a national 3A scenic spot. After more than 20 years of rural tourism development, there is one 5A and thirteen 4A national scenic spots in the county. Wuyuan received 24.63 million tourists and realised ¥24.43 billion (US\$3.57 billion) in tourism revenue in 2019, and its tourism industry employs more than 80,000 people. The county government has been actively encouraging residents to participate in rural tourism development and share the fruits of tourism (Ba & Xu, 2013). However, due to the differences in household location and personal abilities, residents in Wuyuan county have different levels of tourism engagement, and their sense of happiness and attitudes towards tourism also differ. It is therefore a typical and representative case for analysis of the status of residents' happiness and to explore the relationships between community participation, life happiness and support for tourism development.

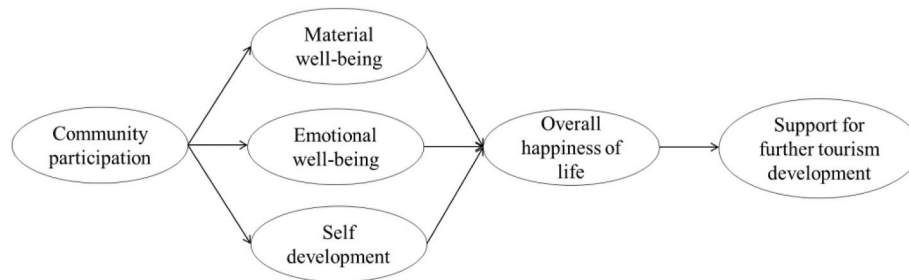


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

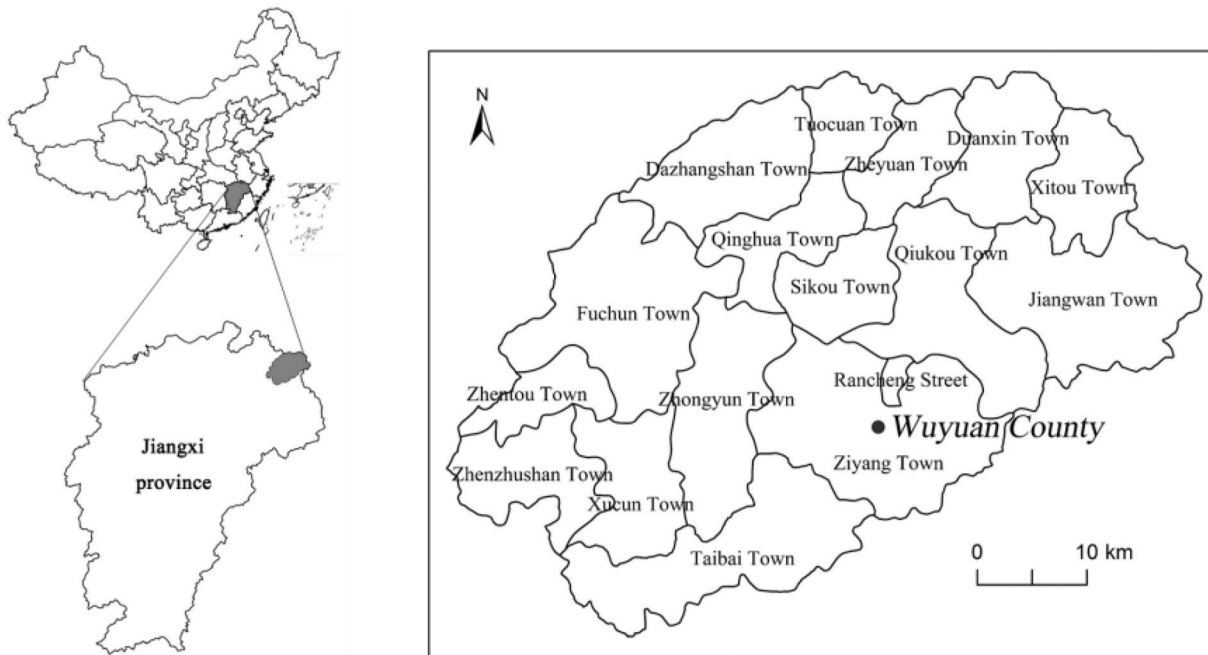


Fig. 2. Map of the study site.

3.2. Measurement scales

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. It was developed in English and then translated into Chinese. The first section captured community participation in tourism development (4 items) (Látková & Vogt, 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar, & Ramayah, 2017). The second section gathered residents' assessments of the contribution of tourism initiatives to their personal happiness: material well-being (4 items) (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Liang & Hui, 2016), emotional well-being (4 items) (Chi et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2013), self-development (3 items) (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011), and overall happiness of life (3 items) (Lee & Jan 2019; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). The third section was devoted to collecting residents' attitudes towards further tourism development (3 items) (McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015), and the fourth section gathered demographic information. All items in the first three sections of the survey instrument were rated on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The items for the first three sections are shown in Table 2.

3.3. Pre-test and data collection

To ensure the objectivity and validity of the data, a pre-test of the measurement scales was conducted. First, the questionnaire was issued to several tourism researchers and Ph.D. students to obtain detailed

feedback. Second, a pre-survey of the questionnaire was administered to 30 residents randomly selected from Likeng village, a typical rural tourism destination in Wuyuan county, in July 2019. The respondents answered each item on the questionnaire and gave detailed feedback on the item wording and the design of the whole scale. All the comments and feedback were gathered and summarised to revise the measurement scales, and some items were modified to make the meaning clearer to the residents. In January 2020, a formal questionnaire survey by means of random sampling was administered to the residents of some typical rural tourism villages, such as Likeng, Wangkou, Jiangwan, Xiaoqi, Huangling, Sixi and Yan village, in Wuyuan county. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), p. 200 is the minimum sample size to ensure the appropriate use of SEM. To improve the response rate and achieve the targeted sample size, the research team was led by the cadres of the surveyed villages to residents one-by-one and distributed 400 self-administered questionnaires, of which 376 useable questionnaires (94%) were returned.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents and the mean scores for different variables are shown in Table 1. There were more female (57.2%) than male (42.8%) respondents. Although the level of

Table 1
Demographic profile of the respondents and mean scores for the variables.

Characteristic	f	%	Community participation	Material wellbeing	Emotional wellbeing	Self-development	Overall happiness of life	Support for tourism development	
Gender	Male	161	42.8	3.160	3.876	3.601	3.678	3.874	4.303
	Female	215	57.2	3.154	3.920	3.641	3.793	3.996	4.352
Age (years)	Under 18	2	0.5	2.750	3.500	3.250	3.330	3.165	4.000
	18–25	8	2.1	3.156	3.875	3.719	3.793	4.000	4.376
	26–35	66	17.6	3.030	3.796	3.439	3.753	3.778	4.187
	36–45	133	35.4	3.241	3.987	3.746	3.842	3.988	4.476
	46–60	117	31.1	3.143	3.923	3.583	3.670	4.040	4.322
	Older than 60	50	13.3	3.145	3.780	3.635	3.647	3.840	4.160
Education	Elementary school and below	126	33.5	3.175	3.859	3.667	3.781	3.926	4.310
	Middle school	155	41.2	3.129	3.960	3.602	3.738	3.972	4.336
	High school	70	18.6	3.168	3.825	3.554	3.625	3.914	4.357
	College or university	25	6.6	3.200	3.960	3.740	3.920	3.934	4.334
Income (monthly)	Less than ¥1500	24	6.4	3.146	3.656	3.573	3.570	3.875	4.098
	¥1500–3000	80	21.3	3.100	3.888	3.653	3.613	3.846	4.204
	¥3000–5000	89	23.7	3.169	3.829	3.520	3.671	3.738	4.195
	¥5000–8000	97	25.8	3.126	3.897	3.585	3.832	4.024	4.413
	More than ¥8000	86	22.9	3.233	4.061	3.762	3.887	4.175	4.562
Length of residence	Less than 3 years	10	2.7	2.900	3.750	3.600	3.667	3.532	4.233
	3–5 years	15	4.0	2.917	3.983	3.683	3.777	4.000	4.422
	6–10 years	43	11.4	3.111	3.936	3.535	4.024	4.086	4.419
	11–20 years	43	11.4	3.111	3.890	3.570	3.861	3.869	4.132
	21–30 years	36	9.6	3.194	4.007	3.736	3.759	3.991	4.491
More than 30 years	229	60.9	3.194	3.881	3.630	3.667	3.938	4.325	

community participation was slightly lower for women than for men, the women's overall happiness of life and support for tourism development were relatively high. Most respondents were middle aged or older (i.e., at least 35 years of age), with 35.4% of respondents aged between 36 and 45 and 31.1% aged between 46 and 60. Residents of different ages reported different levels of community participation, senses of life happiness and tourism support. Those aged 36–45 years old had the highest average scores on all variables, except for overall happiness of life, whereas residents under 18 years had the lowest average scores in all variables. The vast majority of respondents had only received a middle school or lower education (74.7%), and only 6.6% had graduated from a college or university. There were no significant differences in the average scores for the variables between residents with different education levels. Apart from the 6.4% of respondents who fell within the monthly income bracket of less than ¥1500, most were evenly distributed across the other four income brackets: ¥1500–3000 per month (21.3%), ¥3000–5000 per month (23.7%), ¥5000–8000 per month (25.8%), and more than ¥8000 per month (22.9%). Residents with higher income levels reported significantly higher levels of community participation, life happiness and tourism support. Regarding the length of residence, most respondents were born in Wuyuan county and had resided there for more than 30 years (60.9%), whereas only 2.7% had lived there for less than 3 years. Residents who had resided in Wuyuan for more than 20 but less than 30 years had the highest average scores in all variables except life happiness, whereas residents with less than 3 years of residence had relatively low average scores in all variables.

4.2. Mean ratings and scale dimensionality

The mean scores for the respondents' tourism participation, the effects of tourism on their material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development, overall happiness of life, and support for tourism development are shown in Table 2. Generally, mean scores on a 5-point Likert scale are considered low in the range of 1–2.4, medium in the range of 2.5–3.4, and high in the range of 3.5–5 (Tosun, 2002). The average ratings of the indicators of 'community participation' were between 2.883 and 3.364, implying that the respondents' overall engagement in tourism development was at a medium level. The mean

score of the item 'My opinions and suggestions on tourism development have been respected' was the lowest, indicating that the majority of the respondents' opinions and suggestions about rural tourism development were not accepted by decision makers. The average rating of the indicators of 'material well-being', 'emotional well-being' and 'self-development' were between 3.819–4.035, 3.543–3.726 and 3.593–3.944, respectively, and the mean scores of the items measuring perceived overall happiness of life were between 3.872–4.037, which demonstrates that most of the surveyed respondents believed that the development of rural tourism had enhanced their sense of happiness, and particularly their material well-being. The average ratings of the items measuring 'Support for further tourism development' were relatively high between 4.325 and 4.338, which indicates that a majority of the surveyed residents supported continuing tourism development.

4.3. Reliability and validity analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the scale. Reliability is generally evaluated by examining the composite reliability (CR) of latent variables (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010), and it is believed that the value of CR for the latent variables should be higher than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results (Table 3) show that the CR values of all latent variables were above 0.8, representing the high reliability of the scale and good inner consistency among the items. Validity is mainly reflected by convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity, which is measured by the value and significance of standardised factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), represents whether different observation indicators of the same latent variable are related to each other (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Table 2 shows that the standardised factor loadings of all items were substantial (between 0.694 and 0.875, > .5) and significant ($p < .001$), and the AVE scores of all six factors were above the cut-off value of 0.5, indicating good convergent validity. Discriminative validity refers to the significant difference between constructs, which is evaluated by whether the square root of the AVE is greater than the correlation coefficients between constructs in the measurement model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All of the correlation coefficients between constructs were lower than the square root of the AVE, indicating sufficient discriminative validity.

Table 2
Survey items with descriptive statistics and results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Item	Mean	SD	Standardised factor loadings
Community participation (CP)			
I have engaged in tourism business	3.364	.838	.781***
I have participated in the tourism interest distribution	3.202	.791	.717***
I have been involved in the process of tourism planning and management	3.176	.735	.782***
My opinions and suggestions on tourism development have been respected	2.883	.771	.694***
Material well-being (MW)			
My personal income has increased	4.035	.674	.769***
The living environment is better than in the past	3.851	.467	.750***
There are better public service facilities (education, healthcare, transportation, etc.) in my community	3.899	.506	.832***
There are more leisure facilities in my community	3.819	.606	.757***
Emotional well-being (EW)			
My family relations are getting closer than before	3.726	.798	.798***
I enjoy a better relationship with other community members	3.543	.733	.737***
I have a closer relationship with the village committee and tourism developers	3.359	.690	.733***
I have a stronger sense of belonging and pride in my community	3.867	.802	.700***
Self-development (SD)			
There are more job opportunities in my community	3.944	.536	.807***
I have mastered more knowledge and professional skills	3.593	.595	.730***
I have a higher sense of personal achievement	3.692	.585	.733***
Overall happiness of life (HOL)			
The overall impact of rural tourism on my life is positive	3.872	.602	.822***
My village is the ideal place for living	3.920	.704	.875***
I feel very happy with my life	4.037	.688	.813***
Support for further tourism development (SFTD)			
I welcome tourists to visit our village	4.325	.629	.851***
I intend to support rural tourism development	4.338	.624	.812***
I intend to support the local government's tourism decisions	4.330	.647	.806***

NOTE: *** significant at $p < .001$.

Table 3
Construct reliability and validity.

	CP	MW	EW	SD	HOL	SFTD	CR	AVE
CP	.745						.832	.555
MW	.438	.778					.859	.605
EW	.351	.437	.743				.831	.552
SD	.225	.504	.462	.758			.801	.574
HOL	.215	.476	.385	.461	.837		.875	.701
SFTD	.238	.434	.277	.333	.623	.823	.863	.678

NOTE: CP = Community participation; MW = Material well-being; EW = Emotional well-being; SD = Self-development; HOL = Happiness of life; SFTD = Support for tourism development.

The square root of AVE is in bold on the diagonal; off diagonals are Pearson correlations of the constructs.

Therefore, the comprehensive measurement model exhibited sufficient reliability and validity, and SEM could be carried out without further modifications or adjustment.

4.4. Structural equation modelling and hypothesis testing

Based on the CFA, all the latent variables and observed indicators were introduced into the set theoretical model for SEM and hypothesis testing. The fit indices were: $\chi^2 = 436.036$; $df = 182$; $\chi^2/df = 2.396$ (ideal value 1–3); $p < .0001$; CFI = 0.93 (ideal value 0.9); GFI = 0.90 (ideal value 0.9); RMSEA = 0.06 (ideal value 0.05–0.08). Therefore, the measurement model demonstrated an acceptable fit for the data (Acock, 2013; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum, Brown, & Sugawara, 1996).

Furthermore, maximum likelihood estimation was used to evaluate the path coefficients in the structural model. The relationship between construct variables is shown in Fig. 3, and the path coefficients on each arrow are standardised data. Based on the SEM results, the hypotheses were tested and the model relationships were summarised (Table 4). The results show that all seven hypotheses were supported. According to Cohen's rule of thumb, the strength of the relationship is assessed by the coefficients ranging from weak (<0.30), moderate (0.3–0.5) to strong (>0.50) (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002). On this basis, the effect size of the path from community participation to material well-being (H1) was moderate ($\beta = 0.478$) and significant ($p < .001$). The path from community participation to emotional well-being was also moderate ($\beta = 0.405$) and significant ($p < .001$). However, the standardised coefficient of the path from community participation to self-development was slightly below 0.3 ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < .001$), implying that the impact of residents' participation in tourism on their self-development was weaker than on material well-being and emotional well-being. The path from material well-being to overall happiness was moderate ($\beta = 0.327$) and significant ($p < .001$). The path from emotional well-being to overall happiness was relatively weak ($\beta = 0.167$) and significant ($p < .005$), as was the path from self-development to overall happiness ($\beta = 0.270$, $p < .001$). This illustrates that material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development did affect residents' overall happiness of life, with the impact of material well-being being stronger. The effect size of the path from overall happiness to support for further tourism development was fairly strong ($\beta = 0.620$) and significant ($p < .001$). This indicates that residents' happiness made their attitudes towards tourism more positive. In sum, this study supported the proposition that community participation positively influences residents' overall happiness of life, which further influences their attitudes to tourism.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study involved the development of a working model and an empirical study in Wuyuan county, Jiangxi province, China, a mature rural tourism destination, which aimed to answer the following questions: What are the components of residents' happiness? Does residents' participation in tourism affect their perceived happiness in various dimensions? Does residents' overall life happiness further affect their support for future tourism development?

The results of the study suggest the following responses. First, residents' overall happiness of life was closely linked to their positive perception of the effects of tourism on their material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. Studies have shown that improvements in material life (e.g. public and healthcare services, leisure facilities, living environment and living standards), the enhancement of emotional connections (e.g. community attachment, social relations and psychological satisfaction) and the realisation of self-development (e.g. employment opportunities, professional skills and sense of personal achievement) are the crucial life domains that determine overall happiness (e.g. Ko & Stewart, 2002; Lee & Jan 2019; Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Suess et al., 2018). In particular, our study found that the effects of residents' material well-being and personal development on their perceived overall life happiness was more significant than their sense of emotional well-being. This is inconsistent with the finding of Kim et al. (2013) that residents' emotional well-being was

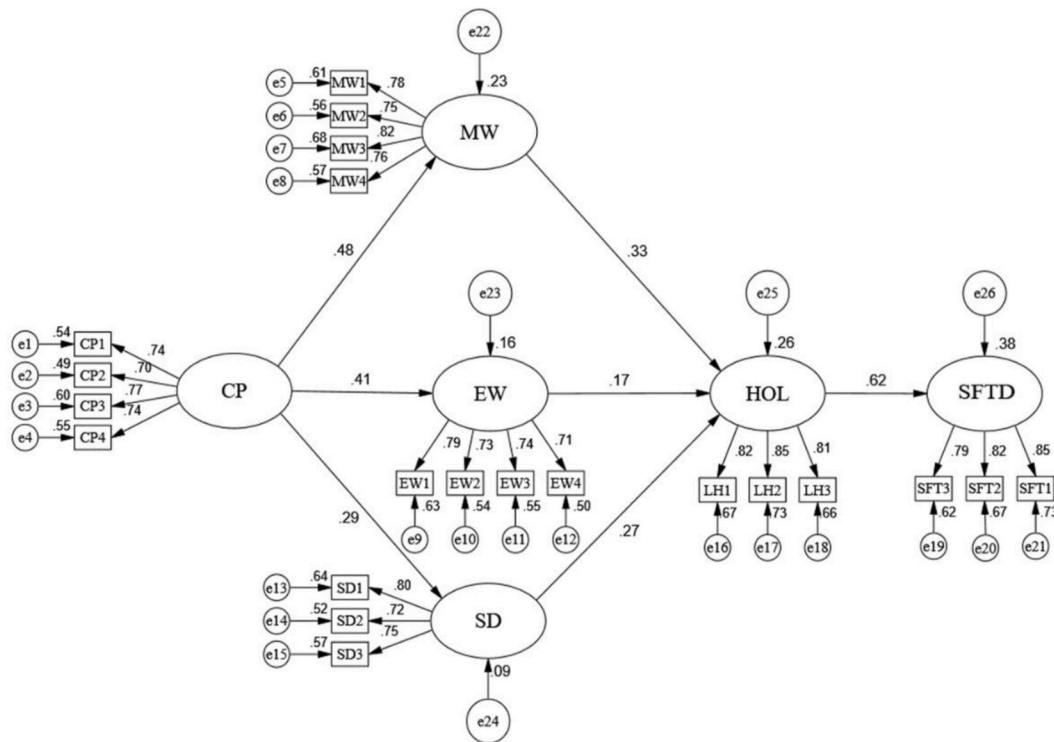


Fig. 3. Standardised parameter estimation of hypothetical model.

Table 4
Results of hypothesis testing.

Paths	Standardised Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses Testing
H1 Community participation → Material well-being	.478	7.741	***	Supported
H2 Community participation → Emotional well-being	.405	6.434	***	Supported
H3 Community participation → Self-development	.294	4.591	***	Supported
H4 Material well-being → Happiness of life	.327	5.695	***	Supported
H5 Emotional well-being → Happiness of life	.167	2.964	**	Supported
H6 Self-development → Happiness of life	.270	4.606	***	Supported
H7 Happiness of life → Support for tourism	.620	10.618	***	Supported

NOTE: ** significant at $p < .005$; ***significant at $p < .001$.

the most significant factor in their happiness. However, as Chi et al. (2017) argued, although the relationship between social relations and life happiness was not statistically significant, favourable relations with family, neighbours and friends are still important predictors of happiness. This is unsurprising in studies of China, where residents attach great importance to social relations (Ahuvia, 2002).

Second, a significantly positive correlation was seen between residents' tourism participation and their perceived life happiness in all three dimensions of material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. Residents with higher levels of involvement in tourism (e.g. operating businesses, distributing benefits and decision-making) were happier overall. This finding is in line with the proposition of Sebele (2010) that increased local engagement in tourism development could help residents to gain more benefits from tourism and to live happier

lives. Lee (2013) nominated community participation as an essential factor in residents' perception of the impacts of tourism on their material lives and personal development. Overall, community-based tourism is understood to satisfy residents' material well-being, help enhance their emotional well-being, and increase the opportunities to promote their personal development (e.g. Hwang et al., 2012; Nicholas et al., 2009; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012; Siririsak, 2009; Su & Wall, 2014).

Third, there was a significant effect of residents' overall happiness on their support for further tourism development. This finding from our sample implies that residents with a greater perceived happiness are more willing to show positive attitudes to tourism. The finding is basically consistent with those of Woo, Kim and Uysal (2015) and Suess et al. (2018), who argued that residents' perceived enhancement of the overall happiness generated by tourism has a strong explanatory power on their backing for tourism. In addition, the results of our study imply that residents' overall happiness connected community participation and the primary dimensions of overall happiness with their support for tourism. This suggests that residents' involvement in tourism development predicts various dimensions of happiness (e.g. Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2010; Lee, 2013). It also further supports the notion that residents' perception of improved overall happiness is a key antecedent variable affecting their attitudes towards tourism (e.g. Chi et al., 2017; Kanwal et al., 2020; Liang & Hui, 2016).

6. Implications and limitations

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study makes two major theoretical contributions to the tourism literature. On the one hand, this study clarifies the connotations and components of happiness. Although previous tourism studies have alluded to the concept of happiness using a broad range of terms, such as life satisfaction, quality of life and well-being (Smith & Diekmann, 2017), few studies have clearly illustrated the difference between happiness and the similar terms (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). This study differentiated the connotations of happiness and developed a

measurement scale for residents' overall happiness in three dimensions: material well-being, emotional well-being and self-development. The findings provide evidence that these three dimensions all have a positive effect on residents' overall happiness. Particularly, this study emphasised the role of self-development, and the results show that the effect of self-development on residents' perceived happiness was more significant than even emotional well-being. This implies that the factor of self-development is a crucial part of residents' happiness and thus points to the biggest difference between happiness and such terms as life satisfaction or quality of life. Overall, this paper thereby promotes the understanding of happiness, enriches the dimensions for measuring happiness, and provides theoretical support for factors that influence the happiness of residents in tourist destinations.

Moreover, this study notes the influence of happiness on tourism development. We have developed and examined a model that connects community participation, various dimension of happiness and support for tourism development. Taking community participation as the antecedent, we predicted the ways that residents' participation in tourism development affects their happiness and thereby influences their attitudes towards tourism. The results show that residents' participation in tourism development can effectively enhance their personal happiness in different dimensions and that residents' overall happiness can further promote their support for tourism. This finding will not only help us to better understand how community participation affects the happiness of residents in tourist destinations, but also further explain the impact of residents' happiness on the long-term development of tourism. Residents' involvement in tourism development might be fundamental to enhancing their sense of happiness, which in turn appears to be the key driving force for sustainable tourism development.

6.2. Practical implications

This study can offer several practical implications for policymakers and managers in the host community. First, this study provides effective guidance for improving residents' life happiness and further promoting their support for tourism through community participation. Tourism managers should try to provide residents with opportunities and channels to participate in tourism development as much as possible. A comprehensive community participation programme according to the rural tourism development plan should be formulated so that residents can choose from a variety of participation methods. Specifically, developers can promote residents' involvement in tourism-related businesses to increase their direct gains from tourism development, and improve the breadth and fairness of the mechanism for distributing tourism benefits to ensure the involvement of all residents in the process. Managers can also empower residents to be involved in the processes of management and decision-making and fully respect their opinions and suggestions on local tourism development. In addition, enhancing residents' ability to participate is an important aspect of effectively involving them in tourism development. Local governments and managers should provide tourism-related vocational skills training for residents to enhance community residents' effectiveness in tourism participation.

Second, the identification and examination of the three dimensions of happiness has practical implications for tourism development strategists who wish to enhance residents' happiness. Managers and developers should involve residents in rural tourism development to effectively improve their material well-being with respect to personal income, the living environment, education and healthcare conditions, and leisure and entertainment facilities. Residents also need to strengthen their emotional well-being through participation in tourism development; this specifically includes their family relationships, social interactions between community members, and sense of community belonging. More importantly, community residents need job opportunities through which they can promote their own professional skills and personal accomplishments while participating in tourism development.

Overall, in mature tourism destinations such as Wuyuan, tourism planners should take a long perspective in terms of bolstering residents' sense of happiness in its various dimensions through community participation.

6.3. Limitations and future research

There are two main limitations of this study. First, the sample comprised residents of Wuyuan county in Jiangxi province, China, a mature rural tourism destination. Data collected from tourism destinations at various development stages may reveal different relationships between residents' tourism participation, life happiness and support for tourism. According to the theory of the tourism area lifecycle (Butler, 1980), residents' views about the effects of tourism and their attitudes towards tourism may vary across development stages. Therefore, future studies could take the form of empirical studies in tourist destinations at different levels of development. This may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the relationships between the three variables.

In addition, the measurement indicators of community participation were relatively simple. Future studies should consider evaluating residents' involvement in tourism development in various dimensions, such as economic, environmental, social, and political participation. Participation in these different dimensions may have diverse effects on residents' happiness and on their attitudes towards tourism development.

Author statement

Rong Wang contributed to the original idea of the whole article, the whole framework of the article and the writing of introduction, literature review, discussion and conclusions. Meiling Dai was in charge of the original draft preparation and data analysis. She contributed to the writing of the results. Yanghong Ou contributed to the paper's data collection and methodology parts. Prof. Xiaolong Ma was the project leader and was in charge of the data collection process. He contributed to the paper's coherence and logic of the whole article and compose the implications and limitations parts. To work as a team, four authors discussed the research ideas, exchanged views and edited each other's parts on a regular basis.

Declarations of competing interest

None.

Acknowledgement

This research is supported by a grant from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (to Xiaolong Ma) (No.41471131), Hundred Young Subjects Leader at Nankai University (No. 91923111), the Construction of Provincial-Ministerial Joint Collaborative Innovation Center for Tourism Development (No. ZB200101) and Characteristic Scientific Research Team in Tourism Discipline (No. 92022220).

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