The Relationships Between Tourists' Perceptions of Cultural Authenticity and Authentic Happiness: Evidence from Ethnic Villages

Da-Wei Wu [1], Hira Batool [1*], Shi-Zheng Huang [2]

[1] College of Graduate Studies, Walailak University, 222 Thaiburi, Tha Sala, Nakhon Si Thammarat 80160, Thailand.

[2] College of Economics and Management, Nanning Normal University, Nanning, Guangxi, China.

Abstract

Cultural authenticity is the core resource of ethnic tourism destinations, and tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity affect their sense of authentic happiness. Based on cognitive appraisal theory, a research model of perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness was constructed to explore the relationships among perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness and to verify the moderating effect of perceived safety. Through a questionnaire survey, 408 valid questionnaires from tourists were collected from ethnic villages in border areas of China, and the bootstrap method and parameter estimation method were used to test the hypotheses. The results show that cultural authenticity perception positively affects authentic happiness and place attachment; place attachment has a direct positive correlation with authentic happiness; place attachment has a partial mediating effect on the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness; and perceived safety has a moderating effect on place attachment and authentic happiness. Attaching importance to the excavation and protection of the cultural authenticity of frontier ethnic villages and enhancing tourists' perceptions of the cultural authenticity of frontier ethnic villages are conducive to promoting their place attachment to frontier ethnic villages and, at the same time, can enhance tourists' sense of authentic happiness.

Keywords: Cultural Authenticity Perception; Authentic Happiness; Place Attachment; Perceived Safety.

1. Introduction

China's frontier ethnic areas play an important role in maintaining national security and preserving the country's territorial integrity. However, because of their complex geological conditions and fragile natural and ecological environments, these areas typify China's unbalanced and inadequate socioeconomic development. At the same time, because of the relatively closed natural geographic environment and lagging socioeconomic development, the traditional natural and humanistic features of China's border ethnic areas have been preserved; these areas have become rich in ethnic tourism resources and provide important conditions for the development of ethnic tourism. However, in the complicated international environment, China's border areas face traditional and nontraditional security problems, which have led to the stereotype among potential tourists that these areas are not safe. Addressing tourists' concerns and developing ethnic tourism in border areas is thus an urgent problem to be solved. However, the uniqueness of the culture of Chinese frontier ethnic areas is highly attractive to tourists, and place attachment, as an emotional link between tourists and places [1], can change cognition and promote understanding [2]. Additionally, tourist happiness has a positive impact on their willingness to revisit [3]. Therefore, the relationships among the four elements of cultural authenticity perception, place attachment, authentic happiness, and perceived safety in the tourism industry of frontier ethnic villages deserve in-depth exploration.

Cognitive appraisal theory has been widely used in the study of individual emotions [4] and serves as the theoretical basis for this study, which seeks to reveal the impact of perceptions of cultural authenticity on authentic happiness. The theory suggests that emotions are the result of tourists' comprehensive evaluation of the tourism experience [5], and meaningful or positive emotions are crucial to the generation of happiness [6]. By encoding their own experiences with personal values or interests, tourists can respond to the environment of a scenic location, form object-based authenticity perceptions [7], and further generate positive emotions and happiness. Indeed, both the perception of authenticity and the sense of happiness can impress visitors, and tourism creates an opportunity to connect the traveler's self and sense of happiness [8], helping them to experience pleasure or happiness through cultural perceptions, human interactions, or value interactions [9]. However, in previous studies on authenticity, the main focus has been on the identification of authenticity [10], authenticity from the perspective of heritage tourism [11], and tourism experience and authenticity [12]. Although the relationship between authenticity and behavioral intention, emotion, etc. has been studied [13], there is a lack of corresponding validation of whether there is an intrinsic connection between the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness. Therefore, it is necessary to verify the effect of perceptions of cultural authenticity on authentic happiness.

It has been proven that place attachment is influenced by authenticity [14]. Ma's (2020) [15] findings confirmed that cultural authenticity is an important factor influencing ethnic village residents' place attachment. Shang et al. (2020) [16] studied the relationship between tourists' authenticity perceptions and place attachment from the perspective of slow tourism, and the results showed that both dimensions of authenticity perception significantly affected place attachment. In addition, research has demonstrated that individuals' relationships with places affect their happiness [17]. Sawada & Toyosato (2021) [18] used 499 Japanese seniors over 65 years old as research objects to verify the relationships among place attachment, economic status, and happiness and found that place attachment has a significant interactive effect on the relationship between economic status and happiness and that improving place attachment is conducive to reducing the impact of declining economic status on the happiness of elderly people. In summary, the relationships between authenticity and place attachment and between place attachment and happiness have been confirmed. However, there is a lack of research on whether there is an intrinsic link among all three elements. In fact, the previous literature on the mediating role of place attachment has primarily focused on the relationship between place attachment and tourists' behavioral intentions [19], and studies on happiness have focused mainly on tourists' happiness [20], residents' happiness [21], and the subjective well-being of tourists [22]. Therefore, it is necessary to verify the interactions among the three factors of perception of authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness.

Tourism is an industry that is sensitive to safety factors [23]. Tourists' risk and safety perceptions play a vital role in their consumption decisions [24]. Cohen and Cohen (2012) [25] noted that perceived safety is paramount in any travel environment. Because of the importance of perceived safety in the development of tourism, this issue has received extensive attention from the academic community. Lubbe (1998) [26] studied the effect of perceived safety on the establishment of a destination tourism image. Moon et al. (2016) [27] verified the moderating effect of perceived safety on the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Woosnam et al. (2015) [28] observed that the emotional solidarity of tourists and residents at the Mexican and American border had a positive impact on perceived safety. Patwardhan et al. (2019) [29] found that perceived safety partially moderated the indirect impact of place attachment on destination loyalty. However, although perceived safety frequently appears in the tourism literature, there is still a lack of relevant empirical research on whether tourists can promote deep perceptions of and attachment to tourist attractions and the environment in the case of perceived safety, thus increasing their authentic happiness.

In summary, based on cognitive appraisal theory, a research model of the relationships among perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, perceived safety, and authentic happiness is constructed, and the causal relationships among these four factors are explored. In the context of ethnic village tourism in China's borderlands, the mechanism of the relationship between the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness is revealed. The remainder of this paper moves sequentially through the theoretical foundation and model construction, methodology, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Model Construction

2.1. Cognitive Appraisal Theory

The core of cognitive appraisal theory is that individuals evaluate events or stimuli around them according to phenomena and their correlation with the realization of personal goals. Individuals exhibit corresponding behavioral tendencies in the process of evaluating events or stimuli [30]. Strong behavioral tendencies evolve into emotions, and emotions change with the evaluation of events or stimuli [31].

The process of cognitive appraisal can be divided into two stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal focuses on the individual's interest in the outcome of an event and involves three aspects: goal relevance, goal congruence, and goal content. After primary appraisal, events can be divided into three categories:

irrelevant events, benign-positive events, and stressful events. When an event is evaluated as unrelated to the individual—that is, the event has no effect on the individual's value, interests, or feelings and will not cause harm or loss to the individual—it becomes an irrelevant event, and the evaluation ends immediately. If the result of an event is considered positive—that is, it can promote the acquisition of individual values, interests, or feelings—such events are benign-positive events that lead to positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and pleasure. When an event is a benign-positive event, there is no need for a secondary appraisal of the event. When an event harms an individual's values, interests, or feelings, it is a stressful event. Once an event is assessed as stressful, secondary appraisal is triggered.

In general, cognitive appraisal theory describes the process of emotions from their emergence to their development, which is specifically manifested in the cognitive appraisal of events or stimuli, which promotes the emergence and development of emotions [32]. Cognitive appraisal of events or stimuli is the process of interaction between the organism and the environment, i.e., the formation process of perception. In the tourism context of border ethnic villages, tourists can be seen as individuals who produce emotional reactions in response to external stimuli. Tourists obtain stimuli by feeling the objective environment of ethnic villages and experiencing the local ethnic culture, and then combine these stimuli with their previous experience and cognition to form a perception of cultural authenticity. Through their perceptions of cultural authenticity, tourists form attachments to tourist destinations. Moreover, place attachment can help tourists enjoy a positive and beautiful experience [33]. Tourists' positive experiences are a positive result and a benign-positive event that leads to positive emotions, that is, the acquisition of happiness. Perceived safety, as an external factor, affects an individual's evaluation of environments. Therefore, based on the above theoretical derivation, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

2.2. Research Hypothesis and Model Construction

The influence of perceptions of cultural authenticity on authentic happiness.

Perceptions of authenticity and happiness are closely related to tourists' experiences and have received extensive attention [34]. Seeking authenticity is recognized as an important motivation for tourism [35]. In the 1970s, the perception of authenticity in tourism was considered to occur in the interaction between tourists' evaluations of the environment, architecture, and performance and their personal evaluations of tourist destinations [36]. Since then, the perception of authenticity has been regarded as a "gradual reality" [37] that is closely related to tourists' interpretations, values [38], and cognition [39].

Happiness can be defined as an individual's own evaluation and description of his or her living conditions [40]. However, happiness is not limited to satisfaction with family life, employment, social relations, health, and financial status but also includes different aspects of the relationship between people and the environment. In fact, there is a close relationship between perceptions of authenticity and happiness and the desire for happiness, value, and self-realization.

As a positive emotion, happiness increases when needs are met [41]. Studies have shown that tourists can obtain more positive emotions when they are on vacation than when they are involved in daily family life, and tourists have more positive emotions when they travel during a specific time of year [42]. In fact, happiness in tourism research is closely related to positive mental states and pleasant travel experiences [43]. When tourists are away from the hustle and bustle of urban life and experience the rare authentic culture that is not found in the city, this authentic cultural experience can help tourists understand the value and meaning of their actions, thus enhancing their happiness [44]. Happiness in tourism is influenced by tourists' perceptions of a destination's image. In the process of traveling, tourists' perceptions of destination images are formed through authentic experiences [45]. Previous literature has shown that perceptions of authenticity can predict various happiness indices [46]. Therefore, perceptions of cultural authenticity are related to authentic happiness, and research Hypothesis 1 (H1) is proposed:

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness.

The influence of perceptions of cultural authenticity on place attachment.

Authenticity is not only the core visible attraction of tourist destinations but also an important symbol on which tourist destinations can build their local images. Place attachment is often described as a connection with a particular destination [47]. This phenomenon involves complex emotional factors, including multiple aspects of the relationship between individuals and destinations, such as destination-related knowledge, beliefs, emotions, and interactions between behaviors and actions [48].

Research on authenticity and place attachment has shown that authenticity is related to tourists' place attachment [49]. Authenticity is considered an important antecedent variable of place attachment, and there is a high correlation between these factors [50]. In the process of tourism, tourists' authentic perception of tourism objects may affect tourists' place attachment to tourism destinations [51]. In the context of festivals, place attachment stems from an

individual's emotional involvement with the festive atmosphere related to the authenticity of their activities [52]. In addition, the authentic experience tourists have at the tourist destination will also affect place attachment [53]. Therefore, the perception of cultural authenticity is correlated with place attachment, and research Hypothesis 2 (H2) is proposed:

H2: Perceptions of cultural authenticity have a positive and significant relationship with place attachment.

The influence of place attachment on authentic happiness.

In the person-destination relationship, individual happiness reflects a preference for a particular place [54]. People can experience cognitive and emotional recovery when they are in a place they like [55]. In fact, attachment to and identification with a particular place increases one's sense of belonging and meaning in life [56] and generates positive emotions [57].

Place attachment has been identified as a strong predictor of happiness [58]. Studies have shown that resettled refugees soothe their psychological trauma and improve their happiness by becoming attached to their new place of settlement [59]. Residents' attachment to a city is one of the factors that predicts their social happiness [60], and place identification and attachment are also important factors that are powerful predictors of happiness for children [61] and adolescents [62], the elderly [63], immigrants [64], and the mentally ill [65] in specific populations. In addition, Maricchiolo et al. (2021) [66] confirmed that place identity is positively correlated with social relationships and happiness. Wiles et al. (2009) [67] found that a sense of belonging or attachment to a place can help elderly people maintain their sense of identity and improve their happiness. Therefore, place attachment is correlated with authentic happiness, and research Hypothesis 3 (H3) is proposed:

H3: Place attachment has a positive and significant relationship with authentic happiness.

The mediating effect of place attachment on the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness.

In recent years, research has revealed the mediating effect of place attachment on different variables, primarily the relationship between place attachment and behavioral intention. For example, Lu et al. (2022) [68] verified the mediating effect of place attachment between tourists' previous travel experience and their intention to visit again. Similarly, Kil et al. (2012) [69], Hosany et al. (2017) [70], and Song et al. (2017) [71] also revealed the mediating effect of place attachment. The relationship between place attachment and emotion, especially positive emotion, has been less frequently verified. Place attachment contributes to physical and mental health [72]. However, as a positive emotion, happiness is a multidimensional concept that is closely related to all aspects of life, such as psychology, physiology, and the environment [73].

In addition, studies have demonstrated that place attachment is directly affected by the perception of authenticity [74]. The results of Debenedetti et al.'s (2014) in-depth interviews and self-reports with French consumers [75] suggest that place attachment can develop through the perception of authenticity. The perception of human authenticity is the main factor promoting potential tourists formation of place attachments [76]. In the context of ethnic tourism, improving the perception of cultural authenticity among local residents in ethnic tourism destinations is conducive to promoting residents' place dependence and place identity [77]. Therefore, place attachment is correlated with the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness, and research Hypothesis 4 (H4) is proposed:

H4: Place attachment has a mediating effect on perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness.

The moderating effect of perceived safety on the relationship between place attachment and authentic happiness and the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness.

Tourists' perceived safety plays a fundamental role in tourism activities. Tourists form a comprehensive judgment of the social order and personal and property safety of tourist destinations. This judgment is a combination of positive elements that reflect the social stability of tourist destinations, friendly residents, ecological balance, and reliable activities that are conducive to promoting the normal conduct of tourist activities. The uncertainty and strangeness caused by differences in culture and environment between tourists' permanent residences and their destinations affect tourists' trust and dependence on tourist destinations [78]. This feeling will directly generate negative views of destinations, especially when tourists feel that their personal and property safety is threatened. In contrast, when tourists feel safe in a tourist destination, they have a positive view of the destination, which is conceptualized to form their perception of the safety of the tourist destination [79]. This perception of tourism safety affects tourists' travel plans and travel experiences [80]. Yang & Xie (2019) [81] showed that providing an environment of perceived safety for tourists is the basis for the sustainable development of tourist destinations. If tourists feel unsafe about tourist destinations, they will not travel to them.

Place attachment is an important construct related to perceived safety. Empirical studies play a crucial role in understanding the relationship between individuals and places and have shown that place attachment is closely related

to perceived safety [82]. Given the strong connection between safety and happiness, people with a high sense of safety also experience a greater level of happiness [83]. When individuals perceive that there is a "loss" or a risk of loss along with their "gain," the effect of happiness changes accordingly [84]. However, research on the role of perceived safety in the context of perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness is very limited. Therefore, this study aims to verify whether perceived safety moderates the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness, and research Hypothesis 5 (H5) is proposed:

H5a: Perceived safety has a moderating effect on place attachment and authentic happiness.

H5b: Perceived safety has a moderating effect on perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness.

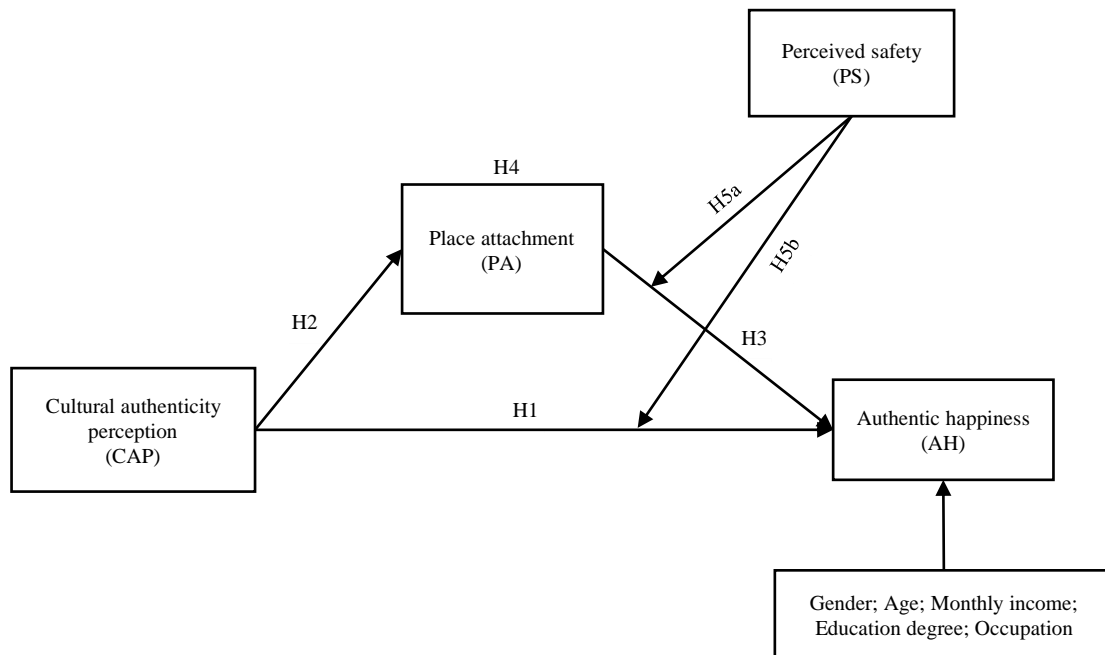The research model and research hypotheses are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research model of cultural authenticity perception, place attachment, and authentic happiness

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research method

Qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and combinations of these methods are commonly used in research. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages, and no method is perfect, with each suitable only for specific research. The purpose of this study is to test the relationships within the research model using quantitative data. A mature measurement scale is available in the literature for each variable in the research model has, so this study adopts a quantitative research method.

In the academic world, there are two different opinions about the connotation of quantitative research: the first emphasizes the mathematical methods used in quantitative research, and the second emphasizes the focus on amounts or quantities. According to the first opinion, quantitative research is the statistical analysis of observational data, experimental data, and other data, and it is a general term for a series of mathematical and statistical methods used in testing theoretical hypotheses [85], which emphasizes measuring, calculating, and analyzing the interconnections between entities to explore the essence of these relationships [86]. The second opinion is that any research that presents, explains, and analyzes the research problem or object in terms of amounts or quantities is quantitative research, and the essence of quantitative research is to use mathematical language, mathematical symbols, etc., to elaborate and explain the problem [87]. Additionally, numbers and measurements are the language used in quantitative research. In conclusion, quantitative research methods provide managers with a powerful method of analysis that helps them achieve their intended goals. A questionnaire survey, as a quantitative research method, is an important tool for tourism research [88]. Driven by the popularity of quantitative social sciences, survey research is growing rapidly.

3.2. Questionnaire Design and Variable Measurement

The measurement of relevant variables in this study refers to existing maturity scales and follows a strict translation-back translation procedure to ensure the semantic integrity and accuracy of the items. Experts with relevant research experience were invited to provide amendments to the content of the questionnaire and modify or delete items

that were discriminatory or inappropriate for the research situation. After the completion of the questionnaire, to ensure the accuracy, adaptability, and convenience of the questionnaire items, three professors were invited to read the questionnaire, and the wording of the questionnaire was modified according to their feedback. Finally, the formal questionnaire was created. The questionnaire was measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1, meaning "completely disagree," to 7, meaning "completely agree." The questionnaire included three parts. The first part aimed to determine whether the respondents had visited borderline ethnic villages. The second part considered demographic characteristics, including the respondents' gender, age, monthly income, education level, occupation, and other information. The third part was the measurement of model-related variables.

The independent variable in the measurement variable was the perception of cultural authenticity; the dependent variable was authentic happiness; the mediating variable was place attachment; and the moderating variable was perceived safety. The perception of cultural authenticity was defined as in the study of Kolar & Zabkar (2010) [35], which used seven items for measurement. Authentic happiness was as defined by Peterson et al. (2005) [89], who used eight items for measurement. According Aleshinloye et al. (2019) [90], place attachment was measured using 8 items. Perceived safety referred to the research of Woosnam et al. (2015) [28] and used four items for measurement. In addition, variables such as gender, age, monthly income, education level, and occupation were included in the model as control variables. Because gender, age, monthly income, education level, and occupation have different effects on tourists' happiness [91], control variables affect tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity, authentic happiness, place attachment, and perceived safety.

3.3. Data Collection

The subjects of this study are tourists who have visited ethnic villages in border areas of China. The questionnaire survey was conducted online using the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a simple and effective sampling method challenging survey conditions, as when the study is conducted on hidden or sensitive populations and sample collection is often unsatisfactory. The snowball sampling method, on the other hand, allows researchers to collect data from hidden populations [92] by targeting, interviewing, and engaging specific populations in situations where the researcher anticipates difficulty in creating a representative sample of the study population [93]. We designed an electronic questionnaire called "Research on the Perception and Behavior of Tourists in Border Ethnic Villages" on the Chinese professional questionnaire distribution platform Questionnaire Star and generated a link to the website, which was then sent by the researcher to the respondents who had visited the border ethnic villages. At the same time, we encouraged recipients to forward the link to other colleagues, friends, family members, etc., who met the requirements of the study. A total of 468 questionnaires were collected, of which 408 were valid, for a validity rate of 87%.

According to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) [94], the sample size should be at least 10 times the number of variables. As there are 27 questions in this study, more than 270 valid questionnaires were obtained. A total of 408 valid questionnaires were obtained in this study, which met the basic requirements for using valid questionnaires for empirical research.

3.4. Measure

In this study, the data were analyzed through structural equation modeling using MPLUS 7.0 statistical software and the PROCESS macro plug-in. Following the recommendations of Anderson & Gerbing (1988) [95], the measurement model was first assessed through correlation analysis, common-method bias detection, reliability and validity tests, and model fit tests, followed by validation of the structural model through path analysis, mediation, and moderated effects checks.

3.5. Analysis and Inspection

Demographic Characteristics:

The basic information of the respondents is shown in Table 1. In terms of gender, males accounted for 33.58% of the sample, and females accounted for 66.42%. In terms of age, 1.72% of respondents were under 18 years old, 85.78% were between 18 and 44 years old, 11.03% were between 45 and 59 years old, and 1.47% were over 60 years old. In terms of monthly income, 21.57% of the respondents earned 3000 yuan or less, 36.76% earned 3001 to 5000 yuan, 24.26% earned 5001 to 8000 yuan, and 17.41% earned more than 8000 yuan. In terms of education, those with a high school education or below (including secondary school and technical school) accounted for 4.41% of the respondents, those with a college education or undergraduate education accounted for 68.87%, and those with a postgraduate education or above accounted for 26.72%. In terms of occupation, government agencies or public institutions accounted for 19.12% of the respondents, teachers accounted for 24.26%, enterprise employees accounted for 22.30%, students accounted for 12.25%, individual businesses accounted for 2.95%, farmers accounted for 0.25%, freelancers accounted for 3.92%, and other occupations accounted for 14.95%. Xie & Zhong (2009) [96] showed that

tourists with higher educational backgrounds (junior college and above) as well as people aged 25 to 44 years are more interested in frontier tourism products. Zhong (2012) [97], Zhao et al. (2014) [98], and Wen et al. (2016) [99] found similar results regarding the age bracket most interested in these tourism products. Therefore, the sample characteristics described above correspond to the characteristics of the study population.

Table 1. Basic information on the respondents (N = 408)

Variable	Index	Percentage %	Variable	Index	Percentage %
Gender	Male	33.58	Age	Under 18 years old	1.72
	Female	66.42		18-44 years old	85.78
Occupation	Government agencies or public institution	19.12		45-59 years old	11.03
				Over 60 years old	1.47
	Teacher	24.26	Monthly income	3000 yuan and below	21.57
	Enterprise employee	22.30		3001-5000 yuan	36.76
	Student	12.25		5001-8000 yuan	24.26
	Individual business	2.95		Above 8000 yuan	17.41
	Farmer	0.25	Education degree	High school and below (including secondary school and technical school)	4.41
	Freelancer	3.92		College or undergraduate	68.87
	Other occupation	14.95		Postgraduate and above	26.72

Descriptive Statistics:

The average value, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient of all variables in this study are shown in Table 2. The correlation coefficients between the four variables of cultural authenticity perception, place attachment, authentic happiness, and perceived safety were between 0.43 and 0.83, all of which are significant. This finding shows that there is a moderate correlation between cultural authenticity perception, place attachment, authentic happiness, and perceived safety. The t test was further used to verify the influence of gender, age, monthly income, education level, and occupation on each variable. The results showed that gender, age, and monthly income had no significant effect on any of the variables. However, the education level of tourists had a significant impact on place attachment (F = 6.61, P = 0.002), authentic happiness (F = 9.41, P = 0.000), and perceived safety (F = 5.94, P = 0.003). Tourist occupation had a significant impact on perceptions of cultural authenticity (F = 2.58, P = 0.013), place attachment (F = 3.59, P = 0.001), authenticity (F = 2.25, P = 0.03), and perceived safety (F = 4.04, P = 0.000). Therefore, in the subsequent analysis, gender, age, monthly income, education level, and occupation were included in the model as control variables.

Table 2. Table of means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
AH	5.83	0.83	1								
CAP	5.98	0.73	0.80***	1							
PA	5.63	0.93	0.83***	0.79***	1						
PS	5.34	1.33	0.56***	0.43***	0.57***	1					
Gender			0.002	0.05	0.004	-0.07	1				
Age			0.03	0.06	0.01	-0.03	-0.27***	1			
Monthly income			0.02	0.06	0.01	0.05	-0.22***	0.25***	1		
Education degree			-0.22***	-0.12*	-0.17*	-0.17***	0.02	0.02	0.23***	1	
Occupation			0.01	-0.01	-0.005	-0.03	0.13**	-0.13**	-0.13**	-0.28***	1

Note: N = 408; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001. AH = authentic happiness; CAP = cultural authenticity perception; PA = place attachment; PS = perceived safety.

Common-Method Bias Test:

The data collected from a single questionnaire may produce common-method bias and affect internal validity. To estimate common-method variance (CMV), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed according to the recommendations of Baldauf et al. (2009) [100]. CFA was used to evaluate a single common factor containing all 27 items. The results showed the following for the single-factor model: $\chi^2 = 1571.99$, df = 324; and $\chi^2 = 664.50$, df = 318 for the measurement model. After calculation, there was a significant difference between the chi-square values of the measurement model and the single-factor model (P = 0.000). Therefore, the model constructed in this study performed better than the single-factor model, and CMV had no serious impact on the data validity [101].

Confirmatory Factor Analysis:

To test the normality assumptions underlying the maximum likelihood procedure, we used the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to examine whether the data were normally distributed. The results indicated that the data were normal (p value > 0.05).

This study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the questionnaire. First, the completely standardized factor loadings all reached the level of significance. Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) were used to measure the internal consistency of each variable in the research model. The higher the reliability of the scale was, the more stable it was. When the Cronbach α and combination reliability values are greater than 0.7, the level is acceptable [94]. The Cronbach α and combination reliability coefficients of the scale were above 0.7. In addition, the standardized factor loading of all items ranged from 0.68 to 0.94, which was higher than the acceptable level of 0.5 or greater proposed by scholars [95]. All the differences were significant, indicating that the measurement scale had good convergent validity. The results can be seen in Table 3. Second, discriminant validity was assessed using the confidence interval test method. The test results showed that after adding and subtracting two standard errors, the correlation coefficient between the variables did not equal 1, which met the standard for good discriminant validity [102]. Finally, the model fit was tested to determine whether the hypothesis model was consistent with the observed data. The CFA results were as follows: χ^2 = 664.50, df = 318, χ^2/df = 2.09 < 3, P = 0.000; CFI = 0.93 >0.90; TLI = 0.92 > 0.90; RMSEA = 0.05 < 0.08; SRMR = 0.06 < 0.08 [103]. The fitness index of the overall measurement model reached the standard recommended by scholars and showed a good fit. Therefore, the scale used in the study had good measurement quality.

Table 3. Factor loading, convergent validity and reliability analysis

Construct	Item	Standardized factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Authentic happiness (AH)	AH1	0.714***	0.930	0.630	0.929
	AH2	0.798***			
	AH3	0.777***			
	AH4	0.846***			
	AH5	0.818***			
	AH6	0.840***			
	AH7	0.740***			
	AH8	0.807***			
Cultural authenticity perception (CAP)	CAP1	0.676***	0.880	0.510	0.878
	CAP2	0.688***			
	CAP3	0.729***			
	CAP4	0.693***			
	CAP5	0.716***			
	CAP6	0.778***			
	CAP7	0.709***			
Place attachment (PA)	PA1	0.756***	0.920	0.580	0.914
	PA2	0.771***			
	PA3	0.813***			
	PA4	0.775***			
	PA5	0.687***			
	PA6	0.750***			
	PA7	0.806***			
	PA8	0.753***			
Perceived safety (PS)	PS1	0.906***	0.930	0.770	0.925
	PS2	0.942***			
	PS3	0.843***			
	PS4	0.815***			

Hypothesis Testing:

Direct Effect Test: The PROCESS macro plug-in was used to select 15 models for hypothesis testing, and the analysis results are shown in Table 4. The perception of cultural authenticity had a direct positive impact on authentic happiness (β = 0.35***, t = 7.09). Therefore, H1 was supported. Cultural authenticity perception had a direct positive impact on place attachment (β = 0.89***, t = 19.71). Therefore, H2 was supported. Place attachment had a direct positive impact on authentic happiness (β = 0.41***, t = 9.85). Therefore, H3 was supported.

Table 4. Regression model parameters

Variable	PA	AH
	β	β
Control Variable		
Gender	-0.08	-0.004
Age	-0.10	0.02
Monthly income	-0.005	0.000
Education degree	-0.17*	-0.11*
Occupation	-0.005	-0.001
Independent Variable		
CAP	0.89***	0.35***
PA		0.41***
PS		0.11***
CAP × PS		-0.04
PA × PS		0.05*
R^2	0.51	0.69
ΔR^2	0.50	0.68
F	69.37	87.74

Note: N=408; †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<.001. AH = authentic happiness; CAP = cultural authenticity perception; PA = place attachment; PS = perceived safety.

Mediating effect test: The mediating effect test used the nonparametric bootstrap method. The bootstrap sample extraction was set to 5000, and the test was performed under the 95% confidence interval. The results are shown in Table 5. Due to the mediating effect of place attachment on cultural authenticity perception and authentic happiness, at a lower level of place attachment, there was an indirect effect = 0.30, 95% CI = [0.17, 0.43]. At the moderate place attachment level, the indirect effect = 0.36, 95% CI = [0.27, 0.46]. At a higher level of place attachment, the indirect effect = 0.42, 95% CI = [0.30, 0.56], the confidence interval did not include zero, and H4 was supported.

Table 5. Bootstrap results (n = 5000)

Path	PA	Indirect influence	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
	Low	0.30	0.07	0.17	0.43
CAP → PA → AH	Middle	0.36	0.05	0.27	0.46
	High	0.42	0.07	0.30	0.56

Note: CAP = perceived cultural authenticity; PA = place attachment; AH = authentic happiness.

Moderating effect test: According to Table 4, the interaction between place attachment and perceived safety had a direct positive impact on authentic happiness (β = 0.05*, t = 2.07). H5 was supported, indicating that perceived safety had a moderating effect on place attachment and authentic happiness. The moderating effect is shown in Figure 2. The interaction effect between perceived cultural authenticity and perceived safety was not significant for authentic happiness (β = -0.04, t = -1.23). H5b was not supported.
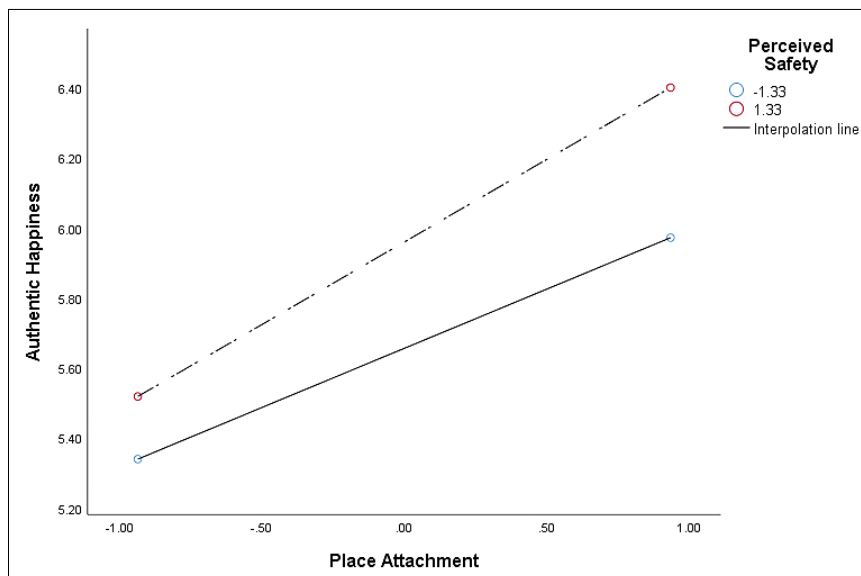

Figure 2. Moderating effects of perceived safety on place attachment and authentic happiness

4. Discussion

This study analyzed the relationships among perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness and examined the mediating effect of place attachment and the moderating effect of perceived safety on the relationships among perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness.

The results of the study showed that there was a direct positive correlation between the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness ($\beta = 0.35^{***}$, $t = 7.09$). This result is consistent with the conclusions of previous studies [104]. Cognitive appraisal theory posits that individuals generate positive emotions when events are consistent with and relevant to their goals and motivations [105]. The search for authenticity has been recognized as an important travel motivation [35]. As a positive emotion, happiness is the psychological state that tourists expect to achieve when they participate in tourism activities [106]. Therefore, the influence of tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of ethnic village culture on their authentic happiness is not only in line with the existing research results but also in line with the view of cognitive appraisal theory. The research findings strongly support the applicability of cognitive appraisal theory.

Kyle et al. (2004) [107] argued that place attachment is conceptually related to authenticity, which is a connection formed between the individual and the local environment. The results of the study showed that the perception of cultural authenticity has a positive effect on place attachment ($\beta = 0.89^{***}$, $t = 19.71$). Ma (2020) [15] confirmed that cultural authenticity is a significant factor influencing the place attachment of residents of ethnic villages. Shang et al.'s (2020) [16] findings showed that both dimensions of the perception of authenticity significantly affect place attachment. The findings of the present study support the findings of Ma (2020) and Shang et al. (2020). However, Ram et al. (2016) [108] concluded just the opposite, that is, place attachment contributes to authenticity; therefore, it is possible that there is a reciprocal antecedent variable between both authenticity and place attachment, but of course, this needs to be further verified.

As a psychological state during leisure experiences [109], place attachment is often used to explain travelers' emotions toward a specific tourist destination. The results of the study showed that place attachment was positively correlated with authentic happiness ($\beta = 0.41^{***}$, $t = 9.85$). In contrast, Vada et al. (2019) [110], in examining the relationship between place attachment and happiness, concluded that happiness is the antecedent variable of place attachment. In fact, Rollero & Piccoli (2010) [60] indicated that residents' attachment to the city is one of the influences predicting their social happiness. Maricchiolo et al. (2021) [66] also confirmed that place identity is positively associated with social relationships and happiness. The results obtained in the present study are consistent with the findings of Rollero & Piccoli (2010) and Maricchiolo et al. (2021). More empirical evidence is needed to support whether happiness and place attachment are causal to each other.

Existing studies have focused on the role of place attachment in tourists' behavioral intentions [68]. The present study takes an alternative perspective by using place attachment as a mediating variable between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness. Tourists' perception of the authenticity of a destination increases their attachment to the place, which in turn enhances tourists' intention to return [111]. However, the findings of this study indicate that the effect of cultural authenticity perception on authentic happiness is influenced by the degree of a tourist's attachment to the destination place. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how tourists' perceptions of the cultural authenticity of a destination affect their authentic happiness through their degree of attachment to the destination in the context of ethnic village tourism in the borderlands.

The findings obtained in this study combine the perceived safety of tourists with the perception of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness. This study investigated whether there is a moderating effect of perceived safety for tourists. While perceived safety had no significant moderating effect on perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness ($\beta = -0.04$, $t = -1.23$), perceived safety had a moderating effect on place attachment and authentic happiness ($\beta = 0.05^{*}$, $t = 2.07$). Ribeiro et al. (2018) [112], Sohn et al. (2016) [113], Woosnam et al. (2015) [28], and other scholars have suggested that perceived safety should be included in the field of tourism research, which is practiced in the present study. The present study enriches the literature on the formation of tourists' happiness by including tourists' perceived safety as a moderating variable of the effect of place attachment on authentic happiness, which has largely been ignored in previous studies [114]. In addition, it is confirmed that tourists' perceived safety in the context of border ethnic village tourism affects their authentic happiness.

5. Conclusion

Under the framework of cognitive appraisal theory, this study examined the relationships among perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, perceived safety, and authentic happiness; revealed the respective roles of perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and perceived safety in the formation of authentic happiness; and established the influence model of "perception of cultural authenticity-place attachment-perceived safety-authentic happiness," which provides empirical evidence and a theoretical basis for the scientific understanding of the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness. Through the above research and analysis, the main conclusions of this paper are as follows:

Cultural authenticity perception has a positive and significant relationship with authentic happiness, and hypothesis H1 is supported. Cultural authenticity perception has a positive and significant relationship with place attachment, and

hypothesis H2 is supported. Place attachment has a positive and significant relationship with authentic happiness, and hypothesis H3 is supported. Place attachment has a mediating effect on perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness, and hypothesis H4 is supported. Perceived safety has a moderating effect on place attachment and authentic happiness, and hypothesis H5a is supported. Perceived safety has a nonsignificant moderating effect on perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness, and hypothesis H5b is not supported.

5.1. Academic Implications

Based on the results of previous research, this study verifies the intrinsic connection between the perception of the cultural authenticity of tourism in frontier ethnic villages and tourists' sense of authentic happiness. First, tourists' perceptions of the cultural authenticity of frontier ethnic villages can promote place attachment to the tourist destination, thus enhancing tourists' authentic happiness. Second, perceived safety plays a positive moderating role between place attachment and authentic happiness. Overall, the greater the perceived safety of tourists is, the greater the impact of place attachment on their authentic happiness. Therefore, through the interpretation of the intrinsic connection between the perception of the authenticity of tourism culture in frontier ethnic villages and tourists' sense of authentic happiness, the relationship between the two is clearly revealed. This finding is an expansion of the concept that tourism makes life happier and provides different research ideas for the study of the perception of the authenticity of tourism culture in frontier ethnic villages and tourists' sense of authentic happiness.

In addition, the mediating effect between the perception of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness was verified in the context of Chinese frontier ethnic village tourism, which further expands the use of cognitive appraisal theory in tourism research. The results of the study indicate that place attachment has a mediating effect on the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity and authentic happiness in the context of Chinese frontier ethnic village tourism. This finding shows that the perception of cultural authenticity not only positively and significantly affects place attachment but also further affects tourists' authentic happiness. This provides theoretical support for understanding the relationship between perceptions of cultural authenticity, place attachment, and authentic happiness.

5.2. Management Implications

Cultural authenticity is the core attraction of frontier ethnic village tourist destinations and affects the tourist experience and authentic happiness of tourists. Therefore, for managers of frontier ethnic village tourist destinations, paying attention to the authenticity of tourist objects and allowing tourists to recognize the authenticity of tourist destinations is the key to their sustainable development. At the same time, we also need to recognize that culture, with the development of society, is constantly changing. Cultural authenticity is always influenced by the present, so in interpreting cultural connotations, we also need to take into account both historical traditions and modern-day practices. The local folk traditions and lifestyle of the residents of border ethnic village tourist destinations are often regarded as tourist attractions, which affects the authenticity perceptions of tourists and therefore must receive increased attention.

In addition, it is necessary to pay attention to the authentic experience of tourists as the main body of tourism and improve their authenticity perception. As a kind of experiential product, tourism activities must satisfy the psychological needs of tourists for authenticity, novelty, and difference. However, the current types of tourism destinations in China are mostly resource oriented and rarely consider the psychological needs of tourists in pursuit of authenticity. Authenticity emphasizes the real state of tourists in tourism activities, so the tourism destinations of frontier ethnic villages should encourage the participation of tourists to improve the quality of their experience, enabling them to be immersed in tourism activities and feel real happiness and freedom.

5.3. Research Limitations and Future Directions

This research shows that perceptions of cultural authenticity are important contributors to tourists' place attachment and directly and indirectly affect their authentic happiness. Although this study contributes to both theory and practice, it also has limitations. First, the sample of this study consisted of only Chinese tourists. Future research should expand the scope and collect information from tourists from different countries. Second, considering the impact of perceptions of cultural authenticity on authentic happiness, in addition to the mediating effect of place attachment and the moderating effect of perceived safety, other factors, such as emotional solidarity and a sense of gain, may have mediating and moderating effects but are not included in this paper and can be studied in the future.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, D.W.W., H.B., and S.Z.H.; methodology, D.W.W., H.B., and S.Z.H.; software, D.W.W., H.B., and S.Z.H.; validation, D.W.W., H.B., and S.Z.H.; formal analysis, D.W.W.; investigation, D.W.W.; resources, S.Z.H.; data curation, H.B.; writing—original draft preparation, D.W.W.; writing—review and editing, H.B.; visualization, S.Z.H.; supervision, H.B.; project administration, H.B.; funding acquisition, D.W.W. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available in the article.

6.3. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not Applicable.

6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

7. References

[1] Lebrusán, I., & Gómez, M. V. (2022). The Importance of Place Attachment in the Understanding of Ageing in Place: "The Stones Know Me." International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(24), 17052. doi:10.3390/ijerph192417052.

[2] Phuthong, T., Anuntavoranich, P., Chandrachai, A., & Piromsopa, K. (2023). Causal Modelling of the Key Competitiveness Assessment Factors of Wellness Tourism Destinations: A DEMATEL Approach. Journal of Human, Earth, and Future, 4(2), 121-152. doi:10.28991/HEF-2023-04-02-01.

[3] Pai, C. K., Liu, Y., Kang, S., & Dai, A. (2020). The role of perceived smart tourism technology experience for tourist satisfaction, happiness and revisit intention. Sustainability (Switzerland), 12(16), 6592. doi:10.3390/su12166592.

[4] Frijda, N. H., Kuipers, P., & ter Schure, E. (1989). Relations Among Emotion, Appraisal, and Emotional Action Readiness. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57(2), 212–228. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.57.2.212.

[5] Roseman, I. J. (2023). A Model of Appraisal in the Emotion System Integrating Theory, Research, and Applications. Appraisal Processes in Emotion: Oxford University Press, 68–91. doi:10.1093/oso/9780195130072.003.0004.

[6] Van Cappellen, P., Toth-Gauthier, M., Saroglou, V., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2016). Religion and Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Positive Emotions. Journal of Happiness Studies, 17(2), 485–505. doi:10.1007/s10902-014-9605-5.

[7] McIntosh, A. J., & Prentice, R. C. (1999). Affirming authenticity - Consuming cultural heritage. Annals of Tourism Research, 26(3), 589–612. doi:10.1016/s0160-7383(99)00010-9.

[8] Kay Smith, M., & Diekmann, A. (2017). Tourism and wellbeing. Annals of Tourism Research, 66, 1–13. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2017.05.006.

[9] Kim, H., & Jamal, T. (2007). Touristic quest for existential authenticity. Annals of Tourism Research, 34(1), 181–201. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.07.009.

[10] Bueddefeld, J. N. H., & Erickson, B. (2022). Wild bears, real bears and zoo bears: Authenticity and nature in Anthropocene tourism. Tourist Studies, 22(4), 373–392. doi:10.1177/14687976221131894.

[11] Jigyasu, N. (2022). Authentic versus staged identity – problematizing tourism interventions for authenticity and integrity in historic cities. Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development, 1-13. doi:10.1108/JCHMSD-07-2022-0116.

[12] Eck, T., Zhang, Y., & An, S. (2023). A Study on the Effect of Authenticity on Heritage Tourists' Mindful Tourism Experience: The Case of the Forbidden City. Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(10), 7756. doi:10.3390/su15107756.

[13] Zhou, G., Chen, W., & Wu, Y. (2022). Research on the Effect of Authenticity on Revisit Intention in Heritage Tourism. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 883380. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883380.

[14] Xiao, X., Zhang, J., Lu, J. Yu, Li, L., Xu, Y. Qing, Zhang, H. Lei, & Riungu, G. K. (2021). Distance decay of place attachment and perceived authenticity of mountain tourism destinations in China. Journal of Mountain Science, 18(1), 194–204. doi:10.1007/s11629-019-5837-5.

[15] Ma, D. Y. (2020). The relationship between cultural authenticity, place attachment and tourism support: An empirical study based on the perspective of ethnic tourism village residents. Social Scientist, 7(6), 51-56. doi:10.19863/j.cnki.issn.1002-3240.2020.07.008.

[16] Shang, W., Yuan, Q., & Chen, N. (2020). Examining structural relationships among brand experience, existential authenticity, and place attachment in slow tourism destinations. Sustainability (Switzerland), 12(7), 1–23. doi:10.3390/su12072784.

[17] Moser, G. (2009). Quality of life and sustainability: Toward person-environment congruity. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 29(3), 351–357. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.02.002.

[18] Sawada, S., & Toyosato, T. (2021). The moderating effect of place attachment on the relationship between economic status and well-being among the older adults in Japan. Geriatric Nursing, 42(3), 721–726. doi:10.1016/j.gerinurse.2021.03.003.

[19] Rather, A. H., & Bhat, A. A. (2023). Risk Perception and Behavioural Intention of Tourists Towards Risk-Prone Destinations: The Mediating Role of Place Attachment. Global Business Review, 097215092311581. doi:10.1177/09721509231158179.

[20] Huang, X., Wang, P., & Wu, L. (2024). Well-being Through Transformation: An Integrative Framework of Transformative Tourism Experiences and Hedonic Versus Eudaimonic Well-being. Journal of Travel Research, 63(4), 974–994. doi:10.1177/00472875231171670.

[21] Dwyer, L. (2023). Tourism Development to Enhance Resident Well-Being: A Strong Sustainability Perspective. Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(4), 3321. doi:10.3390/su15043321.

[22] Liang, Z., Luo, H., & Hui, T. (2023). Multiple measures of tourism-led migrants' subjective well-being. Tourism Management Perspectives, 45(1), 101047. doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2022.101047.

[23] George, R. (2003). Tourist's perceptions of safety and security while visiting Cape Town. Tourism Management, 24(5), 575–585. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00003-7.

[24] Lindqvist, L. J., & Bjork, P. (2000). Perceived safety as an important quality dimension among senior tourists. Tourism Economics, 6(2), 151–158. doi:10.5367/000000000101297541.

[25] Cohen, E., & Cohen, S. A. (2012). Current sociological theories and issues in tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 39(4), 2177–2202. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.07.009.

[26] Lubbe, B. (1998). Primary image as a dimension of destination image: An empirical assessment. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 7(4), 21–43. doi:10.1300/J073v07n04_02.

[27] Moon, H., Yoon, H. J., & Han, H. (2017). The effect of airport atmospherics on satisfaction and behavioral intentions: testing the moderating role of perceived safety. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 34(6), 749–763. doi:10.1080/10548408.2016.1223779.

[28] Woosnam, K. M., Shafer, C. S., Scott, D., & Timothy, D. J. (2015). Tourists' perceived safety through emotional solidarity with residents in two Mexico-United States border regions. Tourism Management, 46, 263–273. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2014.06.022.

[29] Patwardhan, V., Ribeiro, M. A., Payini, V., Woosnam, K. M., Mallya, J., & Gopalakrishnan, P. (2020). Visitors' Place Attachment and Destination Loyalty: Examining the Roles of Emotional Solidarity and Perceived Safety. Journal of Travel Research, 59(1), 3–21. doi:10.1177/0047287518824157.

[30] Oreg, S., Bartunek, J. M., Lee, G., & Do, B. (2018). An affect-based model of recipients' responses to organizational change events. Academy of Management Review, 43(1), 65–86. doi:10.5465/amr.2014.0335.

[31] Roseman, I. J., Antoniou, A. A., & Jose, P. E. (1996). Appraisal determinants of emotions: Constructing a more accurate and comprehensive theory. Cognition and Emotion, 10(3), 241–278. doi:10.1080/026999396380240.

[32] Bagchi, R., & Cheema, A. (2013). The effect of red background color on willingness-to-pay: The moderating role of selling mechanism. Journal of Consumer Research, 39(5), 947–960. doi:10.1086/666466.

[33] Sthapit, E., Björk, P., & Coudounaris, D. N. (2023). Memorable nature-based tourism experience, place attachment and tourists' environmentally responsible behaviour. Journal of Ecotourism, 22(4), 542–565. doi:10.1080/14724049.2022.2091581.

[34] Al-okaily, N. S., Alzboun, N., Alrawadieh, Z., & Slehat, M. (2023). The impact of eudaimonic well-being on experience and loyalty: a tourism context. Journal of Services Marketing, 37(2), 216–231. doi:10.1108/JSM-08-2021-0282.

[35] Kolar, T., & Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? Tourism Management, 31(5), 652–664. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2009.07.010.

[36] MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings. American Journal of Sociology, 79(3), 589–603. doi:10.1086/225585.

[37] Cheng, D., Fountain, J., Rosin, C., & Lucock, X. (2024). Interpreting Chinese concepts of authenticity: A constructivist epistemology. Tourism Management, 103, 104908. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2024.104908.

[38] Cho, M. H. (2012). A Study of Authenticity in Traditional Korean Folk Villages. International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration, 13(2), 145–171. doi:10.1080/15256480903200239.

[39] Steiner, C. J., & Reisinger, Y. (2006). Understanding existential authenticity. Annals of Tourism Research, 33(2), 299–318. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2005.08.002.

[40] McGillivray, M. (2007). Human Well-being: Concept and Measurement. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, London, United Kingdom. doi:10.1057/9780230625600.

[41] Veenhoven, R. (2009). How do we assess how happy we are? Tenets, implications and tenability of three theories. Happiness, Economics and Politics: Towards a Multi-Disciplinary Approach, 45–69. doi:10.4337/9781849801973.00009.

[42] Nawijn, J., Marchand, M. A., Veenhoven, R., & Vingerhoets, A. J. (2010). Vacationers happier, but most not happier after a holiday. Applied Research in Quality of Life, 5(1), 35–47. doi:10.1007/s11482-009-9091-9.

[43] Nawijn, J., & Filep, S. (2016). Two directions for future tourist well-being research. Annals of Tourism Research, 61, 221–223. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2016.07.007.

[44] Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M., & Daly, T. (2017). Customer engagement with tourism social media brands. Tourism Management, 59, 597–609. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2016.09.015.

[45] Chen, Y., & Li, X. (Robert). (2018). Does a happy destination bring you happiness? Evidence from Swiss inbound tourism. Tourism Management, 65, 256–266. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2017.10.009.

[46] Yu, J., Baah, N. G., Kim, S. (Sam), Moon, H., Chua, B. L., & Han, H. (2024). Effects of green authenticity on well-being, customer engagement and approach behavior toward green hospitality brands. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. doi:10.1108/IJCHM-02-2023-0194.

[47] Aleshinloye, K. D., Woosnam, K. M., & Joo, D. (2024). The influence of place attachment and emotional solidarity on residents' involvement in tourism: perspectives from Orlando, Florida. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights. doi:10.1108/JHTI-09-2023-0664.

[48] Chow, K., & Healey, M. (2008). Place attachment and place identity: First-year undergraduates making the transition from home to university. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 28(4), 362–372. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.02.011.

[49] Xu, Y., Xia, F., & Fu, X. (2024). The Mechanism of Stimulating Resident tourists' Place Attachment via Festivals. Journal of China Tourism Research, 1–22. doi:10.1080/19388160.2024.2326975.

[50] Park, E., Choi, B. K., & Lee, T. J. (2019). The role and dimensions of authenticity in heritage tourism. Tourism Management, 74, 99–109. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2019.03.001.

[51] Belhassen, Y., Caton, K., & Stewart, W. P. (2008). The search for authenticity in the pilgrim experience. Annals of Tourism Research, 35(3), 668–689. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2008.03.007.

[52] Davis, A. (2016). Experiential places or places of experience? Place identity and place attachment as mechanisms for creating festival environment. Tourism Management, 55, 49–61. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.006.

[53] Gross, M. J., & Brown, G. (2008). An empirical structural model of tourists and places: Progressing involvement and place attachment into tourism. Tourism Management, 29(6), 1141–1151. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2008.02.009.

[54] de Azevedo, A. J. A., Custódio, M. J. F., & Perna, F. P. A. (2013). "Are you happy here?": The relationship between quality of life and place attachment. Journal of Place Management and Development, 6(2), 102–119. doi:10.1108/JPMD-06-2012-0017.

[55] Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2017). Place Attachment Enhances Psychological Need Satisfaction. Environment and Behavior, 49(4), 359–389. doi:10.1177/0013916516637648.

[56] Aitken, R., & Campelo, A. (2011). The four RS of place branding. Journal of Marketing Management, 27(9–10), 913–933. doi:10.1080/0267257X.2011.560718.

[57] Scopelliti, M., & Vittoria Giuliani, M. (2004). Choosing restorative environments across the lifespan: A matter of place experience. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 24(4), 423–437. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2004.11.002.

[58] Darabaneanu, D., Maci, D., & Oprea, I. M. (2024). Influence of Environmental Perception on Place Attachment in Romanian Rural Areas. Sustainability (Switzerland), 16(3), 1106. doi:10.3390/su16031106.

[59] Albers, T., Ariccio, S., Weiss, L. A., Dessi, F., & Bonaiuto, M. (2021). The role of place attachment in promoting refugees' well-being and resettlement: A literature review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(21), 11021. doi:10.3390/ijerph182111021.

[60] Rollero, C., & De Piccoli, N. (2010). Does place attachment affect social well-being? Revue Europeenne de Psychologie Appliquee, 60(4), 233–238. doi:10.1016/j.erap.2010.05.001.

[61] Grimshaw, L., & Mates, L. (2022). 'It's part of our community, where we live': Urban heritage and children's sense of place. Urban Studies, 59(7), 1334–1352. doi:10.1177/00420980211019597.

[62] Magalhães, E., & Calheiros, M. M. (2020). Why Place Matters in Residential Care: The Mediating Role of Place Attachment in the Relation Between Adolescents' Rights and Psychological Well-Being. Child Indicators Research, 13(5), 1717–1737. doi:10.1007/s12187-019-09716-5.

[63] Sun, Y., Ng, M. K., Chao, T. Y. S., He, S., & Mok, S. H. (2024). The impact of place attachment on well-being for older people in high-density urban environment: a qualitative study. Journal of Aging and Social Policy, 36(2), 241–261. doi:10.1080/08959420.2022.2111168.

[64] Szaboova, L., Safra de Campos, R., Adger, W. N., Abu, M., Codjoe, S. N. A., Franco Gavonel, M., Das, S., Siddiqui, T., Rocky, M. H., & Hazra, S. (2022). Urban sustainability and the subjective well-being of migrants: The role of risks, place attachment, and aspirations. Population, Space and Place, 28(1), e2505. doi:10.1002/psp.2505.

[65] Marcheschi, E., Laike, T., Brunt, D., Hansson, L., & Johansson, M. (2015). Quality of life and place attachment among people with severe mental illness. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 41, 145–154. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2014.12.003.

[66] Maricchiolo, F., Mosca, O., Paolini, D., & Fornara, F. (2021). The Mediating Role of Place Attachment Dimensions in the Relationship Between Local Social Identity and Well-Being. Frontiers in Psychology, 12, 1–9. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.645648.

[67] Wiles, J. L., Allen, R. E. S., Palmer, A. J., Hayman, K. J., Keeling, S., & Kerse, N. (2009). Older people and their social spaces: A study of well-being and attachment to place in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social Science and Medicine, 68(4), 664–671. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.11.030.

[68] Lu, Y., Lai, I. K. W., Liu, X. Y., & Wang, X. (2022). Influence of memorability on revisit intention in welcome back tourism: The mediating role of nostalgia and destination attachment. Frontiers in Psychology, 13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1020467.

[69] Kil, N., Holland, S. M., Stein, T. V., & Ko, Y. J. (2012). Place attachment as a mediator of the relationship between nature-based recreation benefits and future visit intentions. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 20(4), 603–626. doi:10.1080/09669582.2011.610508.

[70] Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Van Der Veen, R., Huang, S. (Sam), & Deesilatham, S. (2017). Mediating Effects of Place Attachment and Satisfaction on the Relationship between Tourists' Emotions and Intention to Recommend. Journal of Travel Research, 56(8), 1079–1093. doi:10.1177/0047287516678088.

[71] Song, H. M., Kim, K. S., & Yim, B. H. (2017). The mediating effect of place attachment on the relationship between golf tourism destination image and revisit intention. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 22(11), 1182–1193. doi:10.1080/10941665.2017.1377740.

[72] Ariccio, S., Lema-Blanco, I., & Bonaiuto, M. (2021). Place attachment satisfies psychological needs in the context of environmental risk coping: Experimental evidence of a link between self-determination theory and person-place relationship effects. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 78, 101716. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2021.101716.

[73] Lee, S., Song, T., & Lim, U. (2022). How are happy and unhappy people differently affected by their local environments? The heterogeneous relationship between happiness and local environments in Seoul, Korea. Cities, 127, 103768. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2022.103768.

[74] Wang, D., Shen, C. C., Tseng, T. A., & Lai, C. Y. (2024). What Is the Most Influential Authenticity of Beliefs, Places, or Actions on the Pilgrimage Tourism Destination Attachment? Sustainability (Switzerland), 16(1), 431. doi:10.3390/su16010431.

[75] Debenedetti, A., Oppewal, H., & Arsel, Z. (2014). Place attachment in commercial settings: A gift economy perspective. Journal of Consumer Research, 40(5), 904–923. doi:10.1086/673469.

[76] Cong, G., Zhang, H., & Chen, T. (2022). A Study on the Perception of Authenticity of Tourist Destinations and the Place Attachment of Potential Tourists—The Case of Ding Zhen's Endorsement of Ganzi, Sichuan. Sustainability (Switzerland), 14(12), 7151. doi:10.3390/su14127151.

[77] Yu, Y. F., Zhang, C. Y., Zeng, J. X., & Luo, J. (2017). Research on authenticity perception, place attachment and loyalty of tourists in ethnic tourism destinations: A case study of Enshi Prefecture in Hubei Province. Human Geography, 32(2), 145–151.

[78] Font, X. (1997). Managing the Tourist Destination's Image. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 3(2), 123–131. doi:10.1177/135676679700300203.

[79] Assaker, G., & Hallak, R. (2013). Moderating Effects of Tourists' Novelty-Seeking Tendencies on Destination Image, Visitor Satisfaction, and Short- and Long-Term Revisit Intentions. Journal of Travel Research, 52(5), 600–613. doi:10.1177/0047287513478497.

[80] Donaldson, R., & Ferreira, S. (2009). (Re-)creating urban destination image: Opinions of foreign visitors to South Africa on safety and security? Urban Forum, 20(1), 1–18. doi:10.1007/s12132-009-9053-1.

[81] Yang, Q. Q., & Xie, C. W. (2019). The mechanism of tourism safety perception in conflict situations: The antecedents of hospitality and the moderating effect of tourism experience. Nankai Management Review, 22(3), 11.

[82] Dallago, L., Perkins, D. D., Santinello, M., Boyce, W., Molcho, M., & Morgan, A. (2009). Adolescent place attachment, social capital, and perceived safety: A comparison of 13 countries. American Journal of Community Psychology, 44(1–2), 148–160. doi:10.1007/s10464-009-9250-z.

[83] Daemen, J. A. M. (2024). Being Sure and Living Well: How Security Affects Human Flourishing. Journal of Value Inquiry, 58(1), 93–110. doi:10.1007/s10790-021-09870-6.

[84] Zheng, J. J. (2020). Measurement and current situation of Chinese citizens' perception of a better life: The relationship between sense of gain, sense of safety and well-being. Political Research, 6, 17.

[85] Slevitch, L. (2011). Qualitative and quantitative methodologies compared: Ontological and epistemological perspectives. Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism, 12(1), 73–81. doi:10.1080/1528008X.2011.541810.

[86] Xiong, X. (2022). Critical Review of Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Proceedings of the 2022 3rd International Conference on Mental Health, Education and Human Development (MHEHD 2022), 670. doi:10.2991/assehr.k.220704.172.

[87] Mohajan, H. K. (2020). Quantitative Research: A Successful Investigation in Natural and Social Sciences. Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, 9(4), 50-79. doi:10.26458/jedep.v9i4.679.

[88] Dolnicar, S. (2020). Survey research in tourism: a perspective paper. Tourism Review, 75(1), 20–23. doi:10.1108/TR-05-2019-0198.

[89] Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. Journal of Happiness Studies, 6(1), 25–41. doi:10.1007/s10902-004-1278-z.

[90] Aleshinloye, K. D., Fu, X., Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., & Tasci, A. D. A. (2020). The Influence of Place Attachment on Social Distance: Examining Mediating Effects of Emotional Solidarity and the Moderating Role of Interaction. Journal of Travel Research, 59(5), 828–849. doi:10.1177/0047287519863883.

[91] Oshio, T., & Kobayashi, M. (2010). Income inequality, perceived happiness, and self-rated health: Evidence from nationwide surveys in Japan. Social Science and Medicine, 70(9), 1358–1366. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.01.010.

[92] Jackson, M. S., White, G. N., & Schmierer, C. L. (1996). Tourism experiences within an attributional framework. Annals of Tourism Research, 23(4), 798–810. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(96)00003-5.

[93] Valdez, A., & Kaplan, C. D. (1998). Reducing selection bias in the use of focus groups to investigate hidden populations: The case of Mexican-American gang members from South Texas. Drugs and Society, 14(1–2), 209–224. doi:10.1300/J023v14n01_15.

[94] Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). Psychometric Theory. McGraw-Hill, New York, United States.

[95] Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach. Psychological Bulletin, 103(3), 411–423. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.103.3.411.

[96] Xie, T., & Zhong, L. S. (2009). Characteristics and perception of domestic tourists in border tourism destinations: A case study of Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Resources and Industries, 11(6), 139-142. doi:10.3969/j.issn.1673-2464.2009.06.032.

[97] Zhong, J. (2012). Research on tourism product optimization of ethnic villages based on recreation experience quality: A case study of Dai Ethnic park in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province and Jiaju Tibetan Village in Sichuan Province. Tourism Tribune, 8, 9.

[98] Zhao, H. X., Zhang, X. Q., Song, F. R., & Tian, D. F. (2014). A preliminary study on the development of grassland tourism in Hulun-Buir City based on tourism market analysis. Arid Land Resources and Environment, 1, 6. doi:10.3969/j.issn.1003-7578.2014.01.032.

[99] Wen, B., Zhang, X. L., Yang, Z. P., & Xiong, H. G. (2016). Behavioral characteristics of tourists in Kanas National Forest Park, Xinjiang. Jiangsu Agricultural Sciences, 44(4), 527-531. doi:10.15889/j.issn.1002-1302.2016.04.145.

[100] Baldauf, A., Cravens, K. S., Diamantopoulos, A., & Zeugner-Roth, K. P. (2009). The Impact of Product-Country Image and Marketing Efforts on Retailer-Perceived Brand Equity: An Empirical Analysis. Journal of Retailing, 85(4), 437–452. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2009.04.004.

[101] Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies. Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(5), 879–903. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879.

[102] Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 16(1), 74–94. doi:10.1007/BF02723327.

[103] Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. Structural Equation Modeling, 6(1), 1–55. doi:10.1080/10705519909540118.

[104] Sutton, A. (2020). Living the good life: A meta-analysis of authenticity, well-being and engagement. Personality and Individual Differences, 153, 109645. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2019.109645.

[105] Scherer, K. R., Schorr, A., & Johnstone, T. (2001). Appraisal processes in emotion: Theory, Methods, Research. Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.

[106] Hartwell, H. (2014). Wellness tourism: A destination perspective. Tourism Management, 42, 305–306. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2014.01.004.

[107] Kyle, G. T., Mowen, A. J., & Tarrant, M. (2004). Linking place preferences with place meaning: An examination of the relationship between place motivation and place attachment. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 24(4), 439–454. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2004.11.001.

[108] Ram, Y., Björk, P., & Weidenfeld, A. (2016). Authenticity and place attachment of major visitor attractions. Tourism Management, 52, 110–122. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2015.06.010.

[109] Williams, D. R. (2002). Leisure identities, globalization, and the politics of place. Journal of Leisure Research, 34(4), 351–367. doi:10.1080/00222216.2002.11949976.

[110] Vada, S., Prentice, C., & Hsiao, A. (2019). The influence of tourism experience and well-being on place attachment. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 47, 322–330. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.12.007.

[111] Al-Azab, M., & Abulebda, M. (2023). Cultural heritage authenticity: Effects on place attachment and revisit intention through the mediating role of tourist experience. Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality, 24(1), 328–352. doi:10.21608/jaauth.2023.224575.1486.

[112] Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., Pinto, P., & Silva, J. A. (2018). Tourists' Destination Loyalty through Emotional Solidarity with Residents: An Integrative Moderated Mediation Model. Journal of Travel Research, 57(3), 279–295. doi:10.1177/0047287517699089.

[113] Sohn, H. K., Lee, T. J., & Yoon, Y. S. (2016). Relationship between Perceived Risk, Evaluation, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intention: A Case of Local-Festival Visitors. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 33(1), 28–45. doi:10.1080/10548408.2015.1024912.

[114] Ahn, J., Back, K. J., & Boger, C. (2019). Effects of Integrated Resort Experience on Customers' Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 43(8), 1225–1255. doi:10.1177/1096348019861740.