REASERCH ARTICLE

Visitors' Preferences at Chinese Historical Sites

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Abstract

Traveling to diverse locations for leisure purposes is known as tourism, and it offers a variety of vacation experiences, including activities, healthcare, education, and religious, beachside, or rural getaways. People can escape their everyday life, learn new things, and enjoy the arts thanks to it. Tourism facilitates both personal growth and cross-cultural exchange. Nonetheless, diverse traveler tastes drive individuals to particular cities, nations, or areas. The goal of this study is to present a current typology of Chinese visitors based on experience and centrality, pinpointing their preferences and building a thorough profile. Prior research conducted in China has investigated the factors that influence this typology, including socio-demographic factors and tourism characteristics such as prior knowledge and on-site activities. It's interesting to note that this study found little difference in preferences between multi-day tourists from rural areas of China and local day-trippers.

Keywords: visitors' preferences, Chinese cultural tourists, heritage sites, tourism.

Submitted: 30 December 2023
Accepted: 7 January 2024
Published: 8 January 2024

Vol. 1, **No.** 1, 2024.
10.62762/JSSPA.2024.808485

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1 Introduction

The global economy is thought to be significantly driven by the substantial growth that international tourism is currently experiencing. Numerous causes, including growing affluence, the development of infrastructure, and the ease of access brought about by globalization, have all had an impact on this spread. Despite the fact that tourism has been around for centuries, most modern travelers are driven by their desire for business, pleasure, health, education, or food. As a result, tourism has grown to be a booming business with a wide range of opportunities and has become an essential aspect of modern civilization. Many nations now consider their tourism resources to be a vital asset, and in some cases, the foundation of their economies. The GDP is increased, unemployment is decreased, and investment is drawn in by tourism. The growth of transportation, buildings, and infrastructure is also aided by tourism. In general, tourism stimulates economic growth by pushing nations, towns, and areas to enhance their offerings and furnish visitors with a convenient and pleasant stay.

International tourism is currently growing especially quickly in East Asia and the Pacific, with China leading the way. Since the 1980s, China's economic growth has been significantly influenced by tourism. The growth of the global middle class and the removal of all travel restrictions were major factors in the surge in tourist numbers. China has thus become one of the most sought-after travel destinations worldwide.

Citation
Niu, R., Zhang, H., & Abdelhamid, J. (2024). Visitors' Preferences at Chinese Historical Sites. *Journal of Social Systems and Policy Analysis*, 1(1), 15–18.

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The China Tourism Research Institute reports that domestic visitor arrivals increased by 8.4% to over 6 billion trips in 2019, indicating that China's tourism business is still expanding quickly [1]. In 2019, the nation's tourist industry brought in a total of 6,630 billion yuan. This amount is 11% higher than in 2018. Furthermore, a sizeable portion of one nation's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from tourism. As a consequence, over 11% of the nation's GDP is derived from tourism. Significantly, tourism contributes to employment growth in China as well, accounting for approximately 10% of all occupations in the nation [1].

With a history spanning more than 5,000 years, China is recognized as one of the world's oldest civilizations. Today, China has made great strides in economic, social and industrial development. In particular, it has preserved its rich historical and cultural heritage, which is a major attraction for tourists from the whole world. China is also characterized by its regional diversity with different regions displaying unique cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics. In addition to cultural heritage sites, China has developed modern entertainment centers, theme parks and casinos, which have contributed to the tourism's development. In addition, China is endowed with rich, diverse and breathtaking natural landscapes, enhancing its appeal as a tourist destination. Natural monuments have so evolved into historical and cultural landmarks, the majority of which are UNESCO World Heritage landmarks [2]. China's tourist sector has undergone a significant transformation nowadays. Tourism has become more engaging and thrilling, as evidenced by statistics on the number of visitors, both domestic and foreign. Tourism will play an increasingly important role in the economic and social development of the nation, boosting its reputation and encouraging the growth of international collaboration.

Visitors' preferences for their trip to China can be distinguished into different classes. Using two primary categories of segmentation variables, all typology and segmentation investigations are categorized into two classes. The characteristic of the first class is that those studies using simply the segmentation component. It might contain background data, some knowledge about the destination (which can be found in the Institutional Commerce Organization for Organic Organizations), or even the motivation for the travel [2–5]. The only articles in the second class are those with several segmentation variables. McKercher's [6–10] study stands out among all of these others since it created a specific typology and divided the research into two main dimensions.

2 Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire design

To find the answers to the research questions, a quantitative technique was applied to the study's execution. It has been demonstrated by earlier research which this approach is the most precise and practical for studying tourism typology. Specifically, for the analysis, we employed the questionnaire method.

2.2 Data collection

The World Tourism Alliance (WTA) office carried out a field survey in order to collect primary data. In 2018, the group examined the features of foreign travel to China. Every piece of information gathered by the WTA pertains to any Chinese tourism destination. The tourist's gender, age, purpose of the trip and destination are the four categories into which all the data is separated for more thorough and effective analysis. We shall conduct analyses for every international visitor. The number of inbound (international) tourists to China reached 141.2 million in 2018, according to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the World Tourism Alliance (WTA) survey on foreign travel to China.

2.3 Data analysis

Data analysis proceeded with descriptive analysis. There are two primary categories of tourists' reasons for visiting particular cultural places. Those who examined the significance of the incentive to learn about the history, culture, and artwork displayed at these cultural venues comprise the first group. The second group's primary analysis focused on the value of learning more about history, culture, and the arts before choosing to visit a certain cultural location. Through an analysis of specific components and the level of understanding of the history, culture, and art on exhibit at these sites, the breadth of visitors' experiences to specific Chinese cultural sites was assessed.

3 Results and Discussion

The age distribution of those polled was the first thing the researchers looked at. They discovered that the age group of 25 to 44 accounted for 49.9% of all tourists, followed by 45 to 64 (28.4%), and the age group of under 14 and over 65 (4.6%), respectively (see Figure 1).

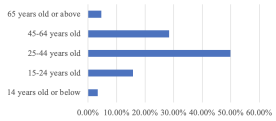

Figure 1. Visitors by age.

The majority of individuals polled either traveled for leisure and tourism (33.5%) or for other purposes (35.3%). Just 2.8% of people took a trip to see friends or family. Of those surveyed, 12.8% decided to travel to China for business and meetings (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Visitors by purpose.

The distribution of visits among China's cultural heritage sites is shown in Figure 3. The data reveal significant disparities in visitor numbers across different sites. Iconic destinations such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the Summer Palace consistently attract the highest volume of tourists, while many other culturally significant sites receive considerably fewer visitors. This concentration pattern suggests that promotional efforts could be strategically directed toward lesser-known heritage sites to achieve a more balanced distribution of tourist traffic and alleviate pressure on the most popular attractions.

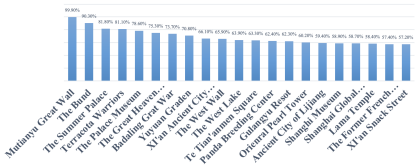

Figure 3. The 20 most visited cultural heritage sites in China.

Additionally, a number of China's most well-known tourist destinations and locations of cultural significance were mentioned by the respondents. These include The Palace Museum in Beijing, The Bund in Shanghai, Tian'anmen Square and The Summer Palace in Beijing, and Museum of Terracotta Warriors and Horses in Shaanxi. (see Table 1).

The most visited tourist destinations in 2018 according to Online Travel Agent (OTA) review, are the Great Wall in Beijing, the Bund in Shanghai, and the Summer Palace in Beijing. One of the terms most frequently used to characterize Chinese national pride is the Badaling Great Wall. But lately, foreign-based companies and online travel agencies (OTAs) have made the decision to highlight the Great Wall. The comparatively low cost and small number of visitors set this cultural heritage site apart from other tourist destinations. Consequently, this marketing strategy has increased visitor numbers and enhanced the perception of this cultural heritage site.

Table 1. Top 5 attractions by province in China.

NO.	Attractions	Province
1	The Palace Museum	Beijing
2	The Bund	Shanghai
3	Tian'an men Square	Beijing
4	The Summer Palace	Beijing
5	Museum of Terracotta	Shaanxi

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, there are three primary goals for this study. The primary goal is to present a clear, accurate, and uncomplicated typology of Chinese tourists based on a number of variables. The second goal is to analyze each visitor's unique set of features in order to construct a comprehensive profile of tourists. Comparing the goals and motives of local excursionists and non-tourists is the third goal. In the process of literature research, many scholars' paper have been studied carefully. Those studies were created by researchers such as McKercher et al. [6–10], Mühlbacher and Botschen [11], Nguyen et al. [12], Chen et al. [13] and so on. The categories of tourists are highlighted in this research. All tourists are divided into the following categories by the most often used and well-liked typology: casual tourists, sightseeing tourists, destination tourists, occasional tourists, and occasional tourists. Owing to the market's size, infrequent tourists predominate. Furthermore, the study examined sociodemographic variables in addition to the traits of visitors, as well as the causes and incentives behind their travels. The present paper's data, along with an examination of all prior peer-reviewed research, demonstrate that the distribution of tourists is not as balanced as McKercher's [6–10] typology would suggest.

When it comes to giving a general picture of the Chinese tourism market, this study is invaluable. It also provides a thorough profile of the different kinds and tastes of tourists. By using this data, China's tourism sector can be improved, and certain lesser-known cultural sites can gain more attention. To increase tourists' awareness of particular sites, all stakeholders in the tourism industry and cultural heritage sector should take targeted steps. While

visiting cultural heritage sites, tourists should enjoy a memorable experience and gain deeper knowledge of local life and history. It is also possible to deliberately create and improve some attractions so that any visitor can more easily comprehend and access complex cultural and historical knowledge. In this way, visitors to cultural heritage sites will have a richer experience. Professionals in the tourism and cultural industries, for instance, might consider unique, original, or creative ways to display cultural places. They may also design striking exhibits or attractions for specific historical periods or locations within cultural heritage sites. One excellent example is the Guangdong traditional arts displayed at the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall (Chen Jia Ci Temple). Furthermore, they can showcase historical events connected to a heritage site or attraction by utilizing modern technologies such as augmented reality or multimedia.

Data Availability Statement

Data will be made available on request.

Funding

This work was supported without any funding.

Conflicts of Interest

Jebbouri Abdelhamid served as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Social Systems and Policy Analysis* at the time of manuscript submission. To ensure the integrity of the peer-review process, Jebbouri Abdelhamid was not involved in the editorial handling, peer review, or decision-making process for this manuscript, which was handled independently by another editor. The remaining authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

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