Revisiting Diaspora Tourists: Insights from Ancestral Hometown Visits in Quanzhou, China

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ABSTRACT

This review examines the perception and gaze of diaspora tourists during their visits to Quanzhou, China, their ancestral hometown. By analyzing the interrelationships between collective gaze, affective attributes, cognitive attributes, and the overall perceived image of the destination, the study offers valuable insights into destination image marketing and sustainable diaspora tourism. Qualitative analysis techniques and interview data from foreign-born Chinese diaspora participants with ancestral ties to Quanzhou were utilized. The findings emphasize the significance of managing tourists' experiences and considering emotional and cultural dimensions in destination marketing. Moreover, the study calls for further research on the tourist gaze within the context of diaspora tourism and Asian cultures.

Keywords: Perception; Diaspora tourists; Collective gaze; Affective attributes; Cognitive attributes

INTRODUCTION

This review critically evaluates the research article titled "perception and gaze of diaspora: analysis of affective, cognitive, and cultural factors in tourism" by Wang, Chnng, Xu, Wang, and Zhang, published in the journal of vacation marketing. The study investigates the cognitive and affective perception of diaspora tourists during their visits to Quanzhou, China, their ancestral hometown. By analyzing the interplay between collective gaze, affective attributes, cognitive attributes, and the overall perceived image of Quanzhou, the article provides valuable insights into destination image marketing and the sustainability of diaspora tourism.

The study utilizes a combination of fsQCA, NVivo, and NLP techniques to analyze interview data from 44 foreign-born Chinese diaspora participants. Participants were purposefully selected based on ancestral ties to Quanzhou, Hokkien descent, and prior trips to China. The methodology involves participant selection, semi-structured interviews, NVivo sentiment analysis, manual coding, and the integration of NVivo and fsQCA analysis. Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the research process.

The study reveals the importance of the initial perceived image in influencing the affective attributes of diaspora tourists, which significantly impact their overall perception. Findings underscore the need to effectively manage tourist experiences and consider emotional and cultural aspects in destination marketing. Further research is also needed on the tourist gaze, particularly in the context of diaspora tourism and Asian cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent literature highlights the significance of emotional experiences in shaping destination image, emphasizing the role of affective attributes in tourists' evaluations [1]. While previous studies on the Chinese tourist gaze have often overestimated the influence of "Chineseness" on the behavior of Chinese tourists, relying on cultural essentialism, more recent research has explored the tourist gaze and its impact on diaspora tourists, overcoming the Eurocentric limitations of John Urry's concept. This line of inquiry sheds light on power dynamics, cultural essentialism, and the role of social media in fostering an 'extended diaspora' [2]. Furthermore, scholars have explored the

intersection of the new mobilities paradigm with tourism, highlighting the dynamic relationship between places, people, and mobilities within the context of diaspora tourism [3].

This study employs a unique combination of fsQCA (fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis), NVivo (qualitative data analysis software), and NLP (Natural Language Processing) techniques to analyze interview transcripts of 44 foreign-born Chinese diaspora participants. Participants were purposively selected based on their ancestral ties to Quanzhou and having at least one Chinese parent of Hokkien descent, as well as prior trips to China. The methodology includes participant selection, data collection through semi-structured interviews, NVivo sentiment analysis for affective attributes, manual coding for cognitive attributes, and integration of NVivo and fsQCA analysis. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the research process [4].

The participant selection process involved purposefully selecting 44 participants from the foreign-born Chinese diaspora with ancestral ties to Quanzhou by snow sampling. The participants consisted of 29 men and 15 women, with a mean age of $\bar{x}$ =34. Semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or over the phone to gather participants' perceptions of Quanzhou and their experiences during their visits. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis [5].

NVivo sentiment analysis, utilizing NLP theories, was used to analyze affective attributes in the interview transcripts. A 6-point bipolar Likert scale ranging from "very negative" to "very positive" provided sentiment scores. The analysis focused on interpreting affective attributes. For the analysis of cognitive attributes, a manual coding process grounded in theory was employed. This process involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding; resulting in the construction of semantic networks with nodes and links [6].

Integration of NVivo and fsQCA analysis refined the outcomes of the NVivo sentiment analysis. A truth table of image descriptor occurrences was used, calculating and coding the frequencies of image descriptor occurrences for subsequent fsQCA analysis.

Ethical considerations were followed throughout the research process, including obtaining ethical approval and fully informing participants about the study's purpose and their rights prior to participating in the interviews [7].

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study emphasize the significance of the initial perceived image formed by diaspora tourists during their visits, which influences their affective attributes. These affective attributes, in turn, shape the collective gaze and overall perception of the tourists. The study highlights the importance of managing tourists' experiences and considering the emotional and cultural dimensions in destination marketing. This contribution enhances the existing literature on the tourist gaze in the context of diaspora tourism and Asian cultures.

To explore participants' perceptions of their ancestral hometown, Quanzhou, NVivo sentiment analysis was employed. The analysis revealed a range of emotions expressed by the participants. Positive sentiments were associated with sights, activities, and the environment, while negative sentiments were expressed towards transportation, infrastructure, facilities, and entertainment. Specifically, business visitors and VFR visitors voiced negative comments on tourism management and service standards [8].

The findings indicate that Hokkien Overseas Chinese diaspora visitors share a collective perception of Quanzhou as a destination abundant in opportunities and mobility capital, encompassing cultural, economic, social, and transnational mobility aspects. Quanzhou is primarily perceived as the birthplace of Minnan culture/heritage, representing a city with opportunities and emerging as a diaspora tourism destination.

Furthermore, the study identified variations in the primary image perceived by foreign-born Hokkien overseas Chinese diaspora visitors based on the purpose of their visit. Business visitors and VFR visitors placed greater emphasis on transnational mobility capital, focusing on the business environment and opportunities. In contrast, leisure and study visitors emphasized the cultural and heritage identity of Quanzhou as the "birthplace of minnan culture and arts" and "Hokkien heritage." These findings illustrate the diverse motivations and focuses among different types of visitors when reconnecting with their ancestral hometown [9].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the impact of the collective gaze of foreign-born Hokkien Overseas Chinese diaspora visitors on their perception of Quanzhou, their ancestral hometown. By addressing the relationship between affective and cognitive attributes of tourist perception and the tourist gaze, the study fills a significant gap in the literature. It underscores the role of the collective gaze in shaping transnational practices and emphasizes the need to consider both cognitive and affective dimensions when analyzing destination image. Additionally, the study calls for further research on the tourist gaze in the context of diaspora tourism and Asian cultures to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon and its implications for destination management strategies.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study primarily relied on the analysis of in-depth interview transcripts and did not include the analysis of user-generated content in cyberspace. Future research should incorporate this aspect and consider other sources such as observation and surveys to provide a more comprehensive understanding of diaspora tourists' perspectives. Furthermore, the generalizability of the findings may be limited to the specific Asian extended diaspora context studied, warranting further

exploration of diaspora tourism in diverse cultural contexts to enhance the applicability of the research. Additionally, while the employed methodologies offer valuable insights, they are not without limitations inherent in their application. Rigorous attention should be given to data selection, variable categorization, and algorithmic considerations to ensure the reliability and validity of the analysis results. Addressing these limitations will enable future research to advance our understanding of the tourist gaze and its implications for destination management strategies.

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