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Community Resident and Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism Development: A Systematic Literature Review Using PRISMA

Abstract

Residents are key stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and play an essential role in tourism growth. While previous studies have explored residents' support for tourism from economic and environmental perspectives, the unique relationship between cultural heritage preservation and community empowerment has not been sufficiently explored. Cultural heritage tourism naturally generates conflicts between commodification and preservation, yet current frameworks often overlook residents' cultural identity and empowerment as crucial factors for sustainable outcomes. This omission is particularly significant in the post-pandemic recovery context, where heritage sites face increased risks of over-tourism and community marginalization. To address this gap, the study conducted a systematic literature review of 53 articles published through January 2025. Using the PRISMA methodology, it identified relevant theories and examined direct, mediating, and moderating factors. Additionally, this research developed a conceptual framework to support the sustainable development of cultural heritage tourism, offering new insights and guiding future studies. The findings provide valuable knowledge for tourism researchers, destination managers, and policymakers, while the framework serves as a practical tool for destinations seeking to balance tourism growth with heritage preservation and community well-being.

Keywords: community empowerment, cultural attitudes, post-pandemic tourism, hybrid theoretical framework, heritage sustainability, PRISMA

1. Introduction

Tourism, a significant economic driver, significantly influences culture, environment, and society (Latip et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Fuchs et al., 2025). Beyond economic benefits, its development aims to improve stakeholder welfare, protect resources, and promote sustainable use of resources (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017; Eslami et al., 2018). Guided by sustainable development, tourism has attracted researchers' interest (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Eslami et al., 2019; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). Especially after

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COVID-19, tourism promotes sustainability in areas such as environmental preservation, cultural conservation, and long-term socio-economic benefits (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Conversely, cultural heritage tourism is often seen as a means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Labadi et al., 2021). However, new digital innovations, such as virtual heritage platforms and AI-driven storytelling, are changing how residents interact with cultural assets. Unlike traditional tourism, digital participation may boost residents' cultural pride or increase concerns about cultural dilution (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023). Still, current research neglects how these technological changes impact residents' support for sustainability (Fuchs & Konar, 2025), revealing an important gap in understanding the complexities of digital stewardship in heritage settings. Community support for site tourism is vital for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (Olya et al., 2018). However, cultural heritage is often employed as a powerful marketing tool to boost tourism revenue, which can have unintended negative effects on heritage communities (Yang et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2025). Since residents' cooperation is essential for developing sustainable cultural heritage tourism, it is important to explore the mechanisms behind their supportive behaviors.

Previous research highlighted residents' awareness of community tourism's effects as a key factor in their support (Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Styliadis et al., 2014). Tourism development provides economic benefits, improves residents' quality of life, and enhances infrastructure and cultural preservation (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Strzelecka et al., 2023). However, rapid tourism growth can lead to adverse outcomes, including higher living costs, traffic congestion, crime, and pollution (Lee, 2013; Wang & Luan, 2021). The impact of tourism development on residents' work and daily lives is closely interconnected. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is commonly used to examine residents' support for tourism development (Kitnuntaviwat & Tang, 2008; Lee, 2013; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Styliadis, 2017; Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Khalid et al., 2019; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Ngan et al., 2022; Yoopetch, 2022). Nonetheless, some scholar's question SET's capacity to fully explain the link between residents' perceptions and their behaviours. Woosnam et al. (2009) criticised SET for concentrating solely on the economic relationship between residents and tourism development, overlooking other important factors. No single theory can explain the variety of test results. Most studies have looked at tourism broadly, with few focusing specifically on cultural heritage tourism (Olya, 2020; Olya et al., 2017; Pramanik & Rahman, 2024; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Vieira et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2020). Cultural heritage tourism is unique because of its historical and cultural significance. The emergence of digital cultural heritage (such as 3D reconstructions of archaeological sites and virtual museum tours) brings new challenges. While these innovations can expand access to heritage, they may also commodify intangible traditions or overshadow local stories (Fauzan, 2025). Existing models do not adequately address how digital mediation influences residents' support, highlighting the need to incorporate technological dynamics into sustainability frameworks. To address the identified gaps and conduct a thorough review of the factors influencing sustainable tourism development, this study examined relevant articles published through January 2025. Therefore, it aimed to pursue the following research objectives:

- (1) To summarise the application and development of relevant theories.
- (2) To identify factors that influence community residents' support for sustainable tourism development.
- (3) To build a theoretical and conceptual framework that can be applied to the influencing factors of cultural heritage tourism.

This research offers a new conceptual framework based on previous research to promote sustainable cultural heritage tourism development. It addresses the shortcomings of previous frameworks and provides more precise target factors for site management, enabling more precise policies and treaties for sustainable tourism development.

2. Methodology

To ensure methodological rigour, we aligned our protocol with the updated 2020 PRISMA guidelines, including a dual-reviewer conflict-resolution process for article screening (Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2019). Additionally, we conducted backwards and forward citation tracing of seminal papers (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015) to identify niche studies overlooked by database algorithms. This triangulation mitigates selection bias inherent in keyword-based searches. It summarises the research status on this theme by searching, identifying, screening, evaluating, and analysing the literature on residents' support for sustainable tourism development. Compared with traditional literature review methods, PRISMA improves the accuracy of systematic reviews and is regarded as a high-quality method (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019).

2.1. Search strategy

Scopus, a comprehensive and widely used search engine across disciplines, covers peer-reviewed scientific data and literature. It provides indicators and analytical tools to support analysis. A keyword search was conducted for the scope of the review in Scopus by title, abstract, and keywords. The most relevant search terms, "community, resident, support, sustainable, and tourism," were identified through analysis of relevant literature and testing of search term combinations. Boolean operators were used to improve results, with "community" and "resident" combined using "OR" and the other terms linked with "AND." The search was conducted in January 2025, yielding 1210 results.

2.2. Study selection

The process of selecting reference articles involves four stages: (1) database selection, (2) article information extraction, (3) abstract review, and (4) full-text review (Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2019). The screening criteria are shown in Table 1. First, unfinished studies, such as preprints, are naturally excluded through the "published" criterion to ensure conclusions are based on mature results. As an international academic lingua franca, English can cover most high-quality research while avoiding semantic bias caused by translation errors. Non-peer-reviewed literature, like conference papers and dissertations, is excluded, and research verified for academic quality can be preferentially selected (Grant & Booth, 2009). The title, abstract, or keywords must include search terms to ensure the literature directly relates to the research topic (Chigbu et al., 2023). The abstract should explicitly mention the "influencing factors of residents' support for sustainable tourism development" to effectively exclude the following: (1) research that only describes cultural heritage protection technologies; (2) literature focusing solely on tourist experiences or government policies; and (3) theoretical discussions of causal relationships without establishing them. Finally, limiting to literature with available full texts helps prevent analysis interruptions due to lack of access, aligning with realistic research conditions (Bramer et al., 2017).

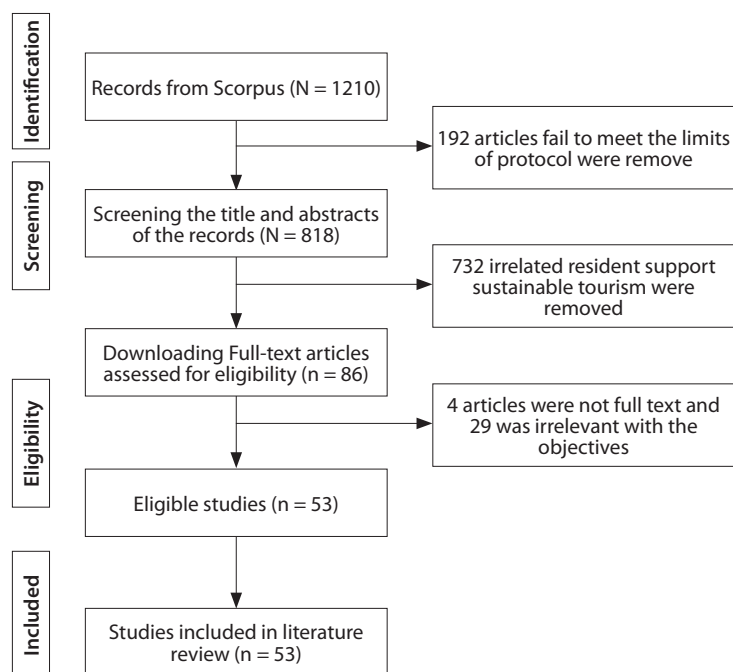
Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
• Published	• To be published
• English	• Non-English
• Journal articles	• Conference paper; thesis; dissertation; discussion paper; report; book chapter; edited book; book review; editorial
• With the keywords in the title, abstract, or keywords	• Without the keywords in the title, abstract, or keywords
• Mention the influencing factors of residents' support for sustainable tourism development in the abstract	• Did not mention the influencing factors of residents' support for sustainable tourism development in the abstract
• Full text available	• Full text not available

Figure 1 illustrates the PRISMA-based flowchart for literature retrieval and selection, which includes four steps: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. After searching 1210 articles related to the search

terms published before January 2025, 392 articles were excluded due to publication status, language, and source type. The remaining 818 articles were downloaded into a spreadsheet and sorted by publication date. A secondary screening of titles and abstracts led to the exclusion of 732 articles that discussed residents or tourism, and most did not address influencing factors but merely analysed residents' attitudes. After further screening, 86 articles were downloaded for full-text review. By assessing the completeness of the complete texts, journal quality, and the research's purpose and results, 53 records were deemed qualified and included in the analysis.

Figure 1
Flowchart about the selection process of systematic literature review



3. Results and discussion

Eventually, 53 articles passed the screening process and were retained for further systematic review. They were imported into NVivo (Version 12) and coded according to the parameters established for this review. NVivo is a data analysis software primarily used for qualitative data. The review was divided into two parts: first, a bibliometric analysis examining the literature's timeline, geographic distribution, journals, tourism types, and research methods; and second, a content analysis focusing on applied theories, influencing factors, and the development of conceptual frameworks.

3.1. Bibliometric analysis

3.1.1. Time, geographical, and journal distribution

Research on community residents and tourism development increasingly emphasises sustainability. Figure 2 illustrates the number of yearly articles on residents' support for sustainable tourism studies. From 2009 to 2018, research in this area increased steadily. Due to COVID-19's impact on the tourism industry, focus on this topic was lower in 2019 and 2021. However, since 2022, the number of published papers has surged, with 24 papers published in the past two years, accounting for 45.3%. This indicates that researchers have

paid much more attention to the sustainable growth of tourism and communities after COVID-19. Overall, Figure 2 suggests that sustainable tourism and resident support will remain a key focus of future research.

The geographical distribution of publications (Figure 3) shows that both developed and developing countries have successively conducted research in this field. Analysing articles by country or region provides researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of regional differences and the research landscape. Overall, extensive research has emerged across the European, American, and Asia-Pacific regions. Among them, China has the largest number of articles (16.98%), with 9 publications, followed by Malaysia (6 articles, 11.32%), and Iran (N=5) and India (N=5), each with 9.43%. This differs from previous findings, where research from European and American countries made up the majority. Furthermore, the number of publications from the Asia Pacific region was exceptionally high. As a result, most empirical studies have been conducted in Asia. This indicates that, as the concept of sustainable development expands, the tourism industry in Asia is increasingly focusing on sustainability, especially in developing countries where tourism is the primary industry.

Figure 2
Annual number of published articles

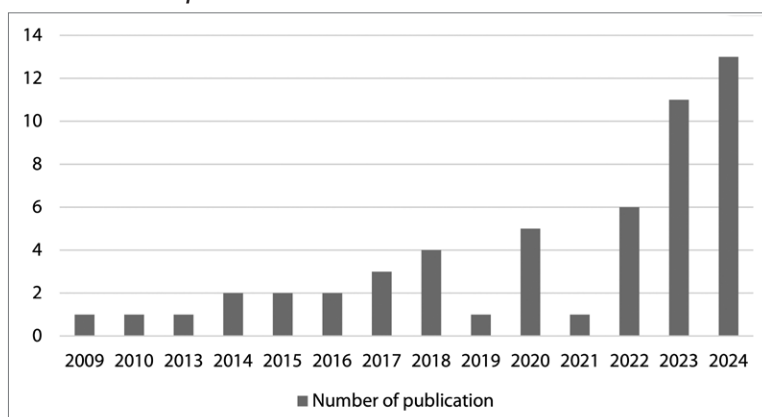
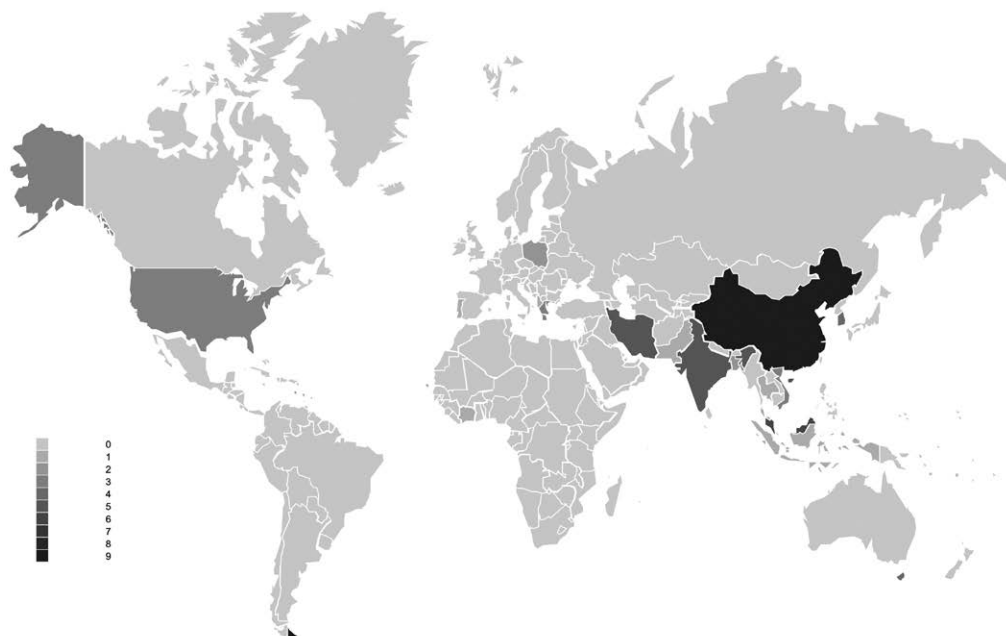


Figure 3
The geographical distribution of publications



The article analysed various types of tourism, including island tourism, rural tourism, medical tourism, festival tourism, ecotourism, and cultural heritage tourism. Cultural/heritage tourism accounted for 26.41% (N=14). Figure 4 displays how frequently "World Heritage Site" appears as an important keyword, highlighting the significance of this type of tourism. To analyse the influencing factors, empirical studies were conducted across all articles, and the Structural Equation Model was the most common research method.

3.3. Applied theories

The application of the theory in the article is shown in Table 3. 60.38% of the 53 articles used Social Exchange Theory (SET) (N=32). Second, Bottom-up Spillover Theory was used in six publications, and Stakeholder Theory (N=5) and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality (WTFSR) (N=4) also appeared multiple times in the 53 articles. Place Attachment Theory and Social Capital Theory were also used twice, respectively. Other theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Emotional Solidarity Theory, Empowerment Theory, Involvement Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Social Identity Theory, were also utilized. 52.83% of the articles relied solely on SET or Stakeholder Theory as a single support theory (N=28), while 17 articles employed two to four support theories. Although SET has broad applicability to influencing factors, WTFSR demonstrates specificity in its support for empowerment. For classifying cultural heritage tourism, SET (N=7), Stakeholder Theory (N=4), and WTFSR (N=1) were respectively used as applied theories.

Table 3
Applied theories in publications

Theory	No.	Publication
Social Exchange Theory	32	(An et al., 2024; Boley et al., 2014; Choi & Murray, 2010; Darvishmotevali et al., 2024; Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2023; Gautam & Bhalla, 2024a, 2024b; Han et al., 2023; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Latip et al., 2018; Lee, 2013; Lokonon et al., 2023; Ng & Feng, 2020; Ngan et al., 2022; Olya et al., 2018; Park et al., 2014; Pramanik & Rahman, 2024; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Strzelecka et al., 2017; Stylidis, 2015, 2017; Stylidis et al., 2014; Tam et al., 2023; Viana-Lora et al., 2023; Vieira et al., 2024; Vieira et al., 2016; Wang & Luan, 2021; Wong et al., 2024; Yoopetch, 2022)
Bottom-up Spillover Theory	6	(Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2023; Gautam & Bhalla, 2023; Han et al., 2023; Tam et al., 2023)
Stakeholder Theory	5	(Aziz et al., 2020; Gengzhi et al., 2022; Nicholas et al., 2009; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Winton, 2024)
Weber's Theory of Formal Substantive Rationality	4	(Boley et al., 2014; Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024a; Strzelecka et al., 2017; Strzelecka et al., 2023)
Place Attachment Theory	2	(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Wong et al., 2024)
Social Capital Theory	2	(Park et al., 2015; Vieira et al., 2016)
Cognition-Affection-Attitude-Behaviour Model	1	(Gautam & Bhalla, 2024a)
Complexity Theory	1	(Olya, 2023)
Emotional Solidarity Theory	1	(Gautam, 2023)
Empowerment Theory	1	(Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024a)
Generativity Theory	1	(Han et al., 2024)
Grounded Theory	1	(Pezeshki et al., 2023)
Institutional Theory	1	(Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024b)
Involvement Theory	1	(Pramanik & Rahman, 2024)
Place Theory	1	(Darvishmotevali et al., 2024)
Placement Theory	1	(Pramanik & Rahman, 2024)
Planned Behaviour Theory	1	(Winton, 2024)
Social Cognitive Theory	1	(Darvishmotevali et al., 2024)
Social Dilemma Theory	1	(Zheng et al., 2020)
Social Identity Theory	1	(Olya et al., 2018)
The Norm Activation Model	1	(Darvishmotevali et al., 2024)
Top-down Theory	1	(Tam et al., 2023)

3.4. Influencing factors

This study thoroughly reviewed 53 articles, using 96 factors to cover various aspects of social life. Although many influencing factors were identified, some were similar or repetitive in content due to differences in naming conventions. Therefore, the influencing factors were grouped based on their definitions and characteristics. Table 4 lists the most common influencing factors, grouped into seven categories: perception, attachment, involvement/participation, attitude, empowerment, quality of life, and satisfaction. Table 5 shows the mediating variables validated in the articles, divided into four categories: perception, quality of life, satisfaction, and attitude.

Table 4
High-frequency influencing factors

Sorted factors	Original factors	No.	Publication
Perceptions	Perceived tourism impacts	17	(Baig et al., 2024; Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam & Bhalla, 2023; Gengzhi et al., 2022; Halim et al., 2022; Han et al., 2023; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Latip et al., 2018; Lokonon et al., 2023; Olya, 2023; Park et al., 2015; Styliadis, 2015, 2017; Styliadis et al., 2014; Vieira et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2024)
	Perceived benefits & perceived cost	10	(Aziz et al., 2020; Bhat et al., 2020; Lee, 2013; Ngan et al., 2022; Olya et al., 2018; Tam et al., 2023; Viana-Lora et al., 2023; Vieira et al., 2024; Wang & Luan, 2021; Yoopetch, 2022)
	Residents' perception	6	(Gengzhi et al., 2022; Lokonon et al., 2023; Nicholas et al., 2009; Pezeshki et al., 2023; Phuc & Nguyen, 2023; Styliadis, 2017)
	Positive perception & negative perception	5	(Boley et al., 2014; Choi & Murray, 2010; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015)
	Perceived risks	1	(Vieira et al., 2024)
	Perceived economic crisis	1	(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020)
	Perceived image	1	(Lokonon et al., 2023)
Attachment	Community attachment	16	(Choi & Murray, 2010; Darvishmotevali et al., 2024; Eslami et al., 2019; Latip et al., 2018; Lee, 2013; Nicholas et al., 2009; Olya, 2023; Olya et al., 2018; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Pezeshki et al., 2023; Pramanik & Rahman, 2024; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Viana-Lora et al., 2023; Vieira et al., 2024; Wang & Luan, 2021)
	Place attachment	5	(Gautam & Bhalla, 2024a; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Man Cheng et al., 2022; Styliadis, 2017; Winton, 2024)
Involvement / Participation	Community involvement	9	(An et al., 2024; Latip et al., 2018; Lee, 2013; Olya, 2023; Olya et al., 2018; Pramanik & Rahman, 2024; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Vieira et al., 2024; Wang & Luan, 2021)
	Community participation	4	(Baig et al., 2024; Choi & Murray, 2010; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Viana-Lora et al., 2023)
	Involvement	4	(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Ng & Feng, 2020; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015)
Attitudes	Environmental attitudes	4	(Draçi & Demi, 2023; Nicholas et al., 2009; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015)
	Tourism attitude	3	(Ng & Feng, 2020; Winton, 2024; Yoopetch, 2022)
	Community attitude	1	(Darvishmotevali et al., 2024)
	Cultural attitude	1	(Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017)
	Ecocentric attitudes	1	(Ngan et al., 2022)
Empowerment	Empowerment	5	(Boley et al., 2014; Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024a; Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024b; Strzelecka et al., 2017; Strzelecka et al., 2023)
Quality of life	Quality of life	7	(Baig et al., 2024; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2023; Gautam & Bhalla, 2023, 2024b; Han et al., 2023; Ngan et al., 2022)
Satisfaction	Life satisfaction	3	(Aziz et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2018; Olya, 2023)
	Community satisfaction	1	(Park et al., 2015)
	Residents satisfaction	1	(Gong et al., 2023)

3.4.1. Perceptions

Perception factors refer to how local people perceive the impacts of tourism development, including various effects, benefits, costs, risks, and crises. Tourism impacts can be further classified as positive or negative, covering economic, environmental, social, and cultural aspects. Of 40 studies on perception, 26 found a

direct link between perception and sustainable tourism development. PRISMA's research findings indicate that perception factors significantly influence residents' support for sustainable tourism. Therefore, in the following analysis, residents' perceptions will be divided into two categories: positive and negative perceptions.

According to SET, residents generally have more positive perceptions of tourism development than negative ones and are more likely to support it within the community (Boley et al., 2014; Darvishmotevali et al., 2024; Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2023; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Olya et al., 2018; Park et al., 2015; Pramanik & Rahman, 2024; Viana-Lora et al., 2023). Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar (2017) found that positive perceptions among residents at the World Heritage Site in Lenggong Valley, Malaysia, increased their support and participation in sustainable tourism development. Similarly, Kitnuntaviwat and Tang (2008) demonstrated that residents' positive perceptions of tourism development encouraged support for destination sustainability strategies, while negative perceptions were counterproductive to this support.

3.4.2. Attachment

PRISMA analysis revealed that factors supporting sustainable tourism development include local attachment and community attachment, both of which are emotional bonds to the residential area. Social scientists define residents' emotional connection to their community as community attachment (McCool & Martin, 1994). PRISMA analysis found that community attachment ranks second out of 96 influencing factors. Eslami et al. (2018) and Sher et al. (2015) found that community attachment and participation significantly influence resident support through tourists' perceptions of costs and benefits. Similarly, Khalid et al. (2019) and Orgaz-Agüera et al. (2020) highlighted the important link between community attachment and resident support. Compared with the broad concept of place, the community better reflects the attributes of the residential area. Therefore, this study will focus on community attachment in subsequent analysis.

3.4.3. Involvement / Participation

Community participation refers to residents' involvement in community issues directly affecting their lives (Lee, 2013). PRISMA affirms that resident participation in tourism development is a crucial component and standard for the sustainable growth of the tourism industry (Latip et al., 2018; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Wang & Luan, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). For instance, Sher et al. (2015) and Olya and Gavilyan (2017) confirmed that community participation significantly influences residents' support for sustainable tourism development. Community residents are willing to engage in conservation efforts to preserve heritage sites and promote tourism activities (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017). From the residents' perspective, community participation functions more effectively as an influencing factor to explore further than as mere participation.

3.4.4. Attitude

The content of these articles on residents' attitudes varies by type of tourism. Past research has confirmed the connection between environmental attitudes and sustainability in tourism across different destination types (Draçi & Demi, 2023; Nicholas et al., 2009; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015). Ng and Feng (2020), Winton (2024), and Yoopetch (2022) verified the correlation between residents' attitudes toward tourism and support for tourism development. For cultural heritage tourism, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) specifically suggested cultural attitudes to adapt to changes in attractions. Cultural attitudes greatly influence support for sustainable cultural heritage tourism by shaping positive perceptions among community residents. Therefore, cultural attitudes should be included as an additional factor to test the stability of variables in the research framework that affect support for sustainable cultural heritage tourism.

3.4.5. Empowerment

According to Holcombe (1995), empowerment is the ability to share control, participation, and influence decision-making. White (1981) states that empowerment arises from participatory thinking, planning, decision-making, action, and evaluation. The importance of community empowerment in sustainable tourism development has grown (Ahn & Bessiere, 2023; Boley et al., 2014; Khalid et al., 2019; Strzelecka et al., 2017). The study by Khalid et al. (2019) confirmed that community empowerment significantly influences residents' support for sustainable development. Empowerment has multiple dimensions; Strzelecka et al. (2017) argued that psychological and social empowerment are strongly linked to residents' support. In Ranasinghe and Pradeepamali (2019) study, the significant impact of social empowerment and the importance of political empowerment on resident support were highlighted. From the perspective of sustainable tourism development, community empowerment is a crucial element that cannot be overlooked.

3.4.6. Satisfaction and quality of life

Life satisfaction, defined as the perception of quality of life in various community areas such as physical, emotional, health, and safety, significantly influences residents' supportive attitudes toward tourism development (Abd Aziz, 2020; Eslami et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam, 2023). According to the PRISMA analysis, there is a partial overlap between community life satisfaction and quality of life. However, satisfaction with the current development of tourism pertains to perceptions of tourism progress. Therefore, this section primarily analyses residents' satisfaction with their quality of life. Gautam (2023) demonstrate that a higher quality of life under tourism development enhances support for its long-term growth. Abd Aziz (2020), Eslami et al. (2018), and Park et al. (2015) support this idea from the heritage tourism perspective. Eslami et al. (2019) further divided residents' lives into material and non-material areas, concluding that overall quality of life satisfaction influences support for sustainable tourism development.

3.5. Mediating factors

Based on SET, residents' positive and negative perceptions or perceived benefits and costs serve as mediating variables to explain the intrinsic mechanisms of other antecedent variables such as attachment, participation, and attitude on residents' support. As shown in Figure 5, the mediating effect of perceptual factors has been confirmed in multiple studies (An et al., 2024; Lee, 2013; Lokonon et al., 2023; Nicholas et al., 2009; Vieira et al., 2024). Unlike economic factors, which are measured based on SET to assess benefits and costs, quality of life and satisfaction are evaluated using bottom-up spillover theory to capture both economic and non-economic aspects of life. In the theoretical framework, these two are typically treated as intermediate variables, influenced by the factors mentioned earlier and directly affecting community residents' support. Eslami et al. (2019) and Gautam and Bhalla (2024a) validated the mediating effect of quality of life, and satisfaction was also confirmed as a mediating variable (Gong et al., 2023).

Table 5
Mediating factors

Sorted factors	Original factors	No.	Publication
Perceptions	Perceived tourism impacts	1	(An et al., 2024)
	Perceived benefits	1	(Lee, 2013)
	Perceived cost	1	(Vieira et al., 2024)
	Residents' perception	2	(Lokonon et al., 2023; Nicholas et al., 2009)
Quality of life	Quality of life	2	(Eslami et al., 2019; Gautam & Bhalla, 2023)
Satisfaction	Residents satisfaction	1	(Gong et al., 2023)
Attitudes	Community attitude	1	(Darvishmotevali et al., 2024)

3.5.1. Low-frequency factors

In addition to the high-frequency influencing factors mentioned earlier, the research also identified low-frequency factors that occurred only once and were not categorised. These include place image, age, gender, education, status consistency, tourism, economic dependence, distance from the attraction, positive social emotions, social capital, community identity, government management of tourism, and government trust. Although these factors appeared less frequently, within three occurrences, they should not be overlooked. Developing a theoretical framework involves adding, reducing, or modifying influential factors based on previously ignored research objects. For example, cultural attitudes are more relevant in cultural heritage tourism than in environmental contexts. Incorporating demographic factors has also opened new avenues for developing conceptual frameworks, such as examining whether residents' age, education level, and length of residence influence their willingness to support. Additionally, the government remains a crucial stakeholder in stakeholder theory that cannot be disregarded.

4. Proposed conceptual framework

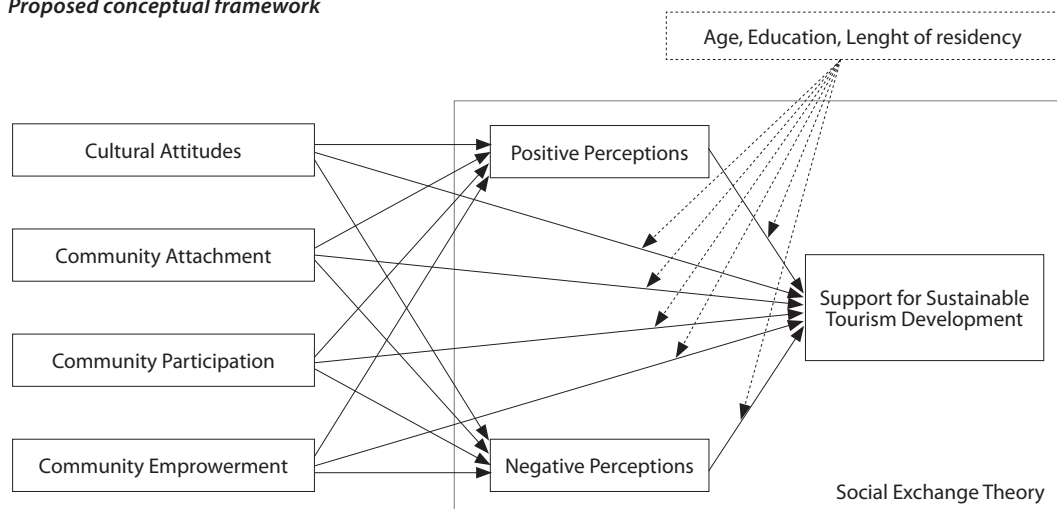
Building on the previous discussion, it is evident that the influencing factors have gradually impacted different aspects of residents' daily lives over time. Despite ongoing research, most studies still rely on established frameworks as the basis for their theories. However, as study categories become more specialised, the existing conceptual frameworks for cultural heritage tourism remain inadequate for fully understanding residents' motivations for supporting tourism.

Previous studies have shown that these factors can significantly influence residents' support for tourism, considering both benefits and costs, as well as economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. SET is seen as inadequate to explain residents' complex attitudes based solely on economic relations, whereas WTFSR is viewed as an extension of traditional SET (Strzelecka et al., 2017). This combined theoretical model offers a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding by addressing costs and benefits and the influence of non-economic factors such as beliefs, morals, values, and philosophies. Unlike earlier models that rely solely on SET's economic transaction framework, our integration of WTFSR provides a dual-axis structure. SET emphasises cost-benefit analysis, while WTFSR considers residents' moral and cultural values, including heritage stewardship and intergenerational equity. This combined approach responds to criticisms of SET's oversimplification and delivers a broader perspective on how residents support tourism.

For selecting influential factors, residents' perceptions based on SET are adopted. The perception of tourism impact is divided into positive and negative levels, covering economic, environmental, social, and cultural aspects, and also including the benefits and costs of tourism. This approach is more comprehensive and theoretically sound. Additionally, from the analysis of the influencing factors in Figure 4, although attachment and participation are common factors, they are insufficient to explore within the context of sustainable cultural heritage tourism. Previous studies have emphasised the importance of residents' empowerment in sustainable development (Boley et al., 2014; Moreira dos Santos et al., 2024a; Strzelecka et al., 2023), to highlight the importance of residents' rights and interests at cultural heritage sites, empowerment has been introduced as a key variable to address the gap in heritage tourism research. To meet the needs of community residents, three more specific variables, community attachment, community participation, and community empowerment, were selected based on the context. Moreover, the significance of cultural heritage sites, especially world cultural heritage sites, as major tourist attractions (Konar et al., 2024) has increased. For the community, the link between its cultural attitudes and support for sustainable tourism remains unverified. Therefore, cultural attitudes, such as residents' pride in their heritage, willingness to preserve traditions, and resistance to commodification, emerge as a new mediator within our framework. Unlike the broad concept of 'environmental attitudes' in earlier research, this variable uniquely links cultural identity with tourism support, responding to the need for context-specific elements in heritage settings (Labadi et al., 2021; Yanying et al., 2025) that

reflect the site's distinct cultural identity. Regenerative tourism extends beyond sustainability by emphasising the restoration of ecosystems and cultural systems, offering a transformative perspective for our framework. For instance, community support for regenerative initiatives, such as rewilding sacred sites or reviving traditional crafts, signifies not only economic benefits but also a sense of intergenerational responsibility, an aspect often absent in models based solely on SET. Furthermore, the low-frequency factor identified in previous studies suggests that demographic variables should be included as moderating factors in the proposed relationships. The proposed conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5
Proposed conceptual framework



Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality

5. Conclusion and implications

Sustainable development has become essential for the long-term success of tourism. Residents, as key stakeholders, play a critical role in supporting this process. This review article synthesises existing research, identifies gaps in the literature, and proposes a new theoretical model, which is crucial for advancing sustainable tourism development. The results of this systematic review indicate that SET, stakeholder theory, and WTFSR are commonly used theoretical foundations for exploring resident support factors. PRISMA analysis shows that the factors are diverse, mainly including residents' perceptions, attachment, participation, attitude, empowerment, satisfaction, and quality of life. Attachment, participation, and attitude influence residents' support for tourism by shaping their positive or negative perceptions of it. Empowerment directly or indirectly affects this support. Resident perceptions, quality of life, and satisfaction are often used as mediating variables influencing resident support. Additionally, some less frequently considered factors, such as demographics, cultural attitudes, and government policies, have significant guidance for research development. Finally, the results have organised a new conceptual framework for the sustainable development of cultural heritage tourism, exploring the supportive factors among the site's residents.

This study redefines resident support through the innovative combination of SET and WTFSR, framing it as a negotiation between economic rationality and cultural morality. Our framework critiques prevalent econometric paradigms in sustainable tourism, offering policymakers a transformative perspective on balancing heritage preservation with community well-being amid growing demands for ethical tourism. According to the purpose of this study, there are three main theoretical contributions. First, this study summarises the theoretical basis

of factors. Increasingly, scholars note that social exchange theory cannot fully explore the heterogeneity of complex factors. Therefore, extending WTFSR makes the coverage of influencing factors more comprehensive and strengthens the theoretical foundation. Second, organising the influencing factors can provide a clearer understanding of the key factors and development trends that support sustainable tourism development. In this paper, high-frequency factors are analysed in groups, and the necessity of direct influencing factors and mediating variables is summarised. The adaptive changes in factors across different research destinations and the inclusion of demographic factors offer new ideas for developing effective strategies. The most significant contribution is that researchers have proposed a fresh framework for sustainable cultural heritage tourism, based on analysing applied theories and influencing factors, thus providing a new perspective for future research.

This study thoroughly examines the factors influencing residents' support for sustainable tourism development, helping managers identify and meet the conditions necessary for this support, thereby offering practical contributions to stakeholders such as destination managers and policymakers. Our framework strengthens the 'Right to Tourism' concept by arguing that residents are not merely stakeholders but rights-holders with a claim to cultural sovereignty. This ethical transformation challenges exploitative tourism practices and advocates for treaties that prioritise the dignity of heritage over financial gain. Based on existing research, destination managers and governments can improve residents' satisfaction with their quality of life and positive views of tourism impacts by optimising local facilities, living conditions, cultural atmosphere, and environmental hygiene in the destination and surrounding communities—thereby encouraging residents to support tourism actively. This fosters greater local attachment and participation, promoting a sustainable tourism model. Using our framework, we propose a Resident Sentiment Index (RSI), a composite measure that combines empowerment levels, cultural attitude scores, and assessments of governance fairness. Tested in Bali's heritage villages, the RSI enables real-time monitoring of resident support, providing a valuable tool for adaptive policymaking. For governments, these findings can inform policies that enhance residents' empowerment and encourage community involvement, while promoting tourism plans that recognise and address potential negative impacts. Additionally, this approach can help improve government credibility. Applying this framework to Luang Prabang, Laos, a UNESCO site experiencing over-tourism, underscores the link between low community empowerment and negative cultural attitudes, such as resentment toward night-market commercialisation and resistance to tourism policies (UNESCO, 2023). Strategies for resolution based on our model could include participatory zoning and cultural education programs to rebuild trust. Our framework promotes the 'Right to Tourism' concept (Fuchs et al., 2025; United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2025), declaring that residents are not just stakeholders but rights-holders with a claim to cultural sovereignty. This ethical shift challenges exploitative tourism practices and advocates for agreements that prioritise the dignity of heritage over profit. Ultimately, implementing this model offers destination managers and policymakers a forward-looking understanding and proactive means to address current shortcomings.

6. Limitations and direction for future research

Research has limitations despite contributions. Using only Scopus during article search and selection limits the sample; cross-searching with other databases could expand it and reduce omissions. Analysis was imported into NVivo for coding, but biases may remain. The keyword is 'cultural heritage tourism,' but few articles and limited analysis reduce its relevance when combined with other tourism types. The study mainly uses quantitative methods to explore influencing factors. Future research should test the framework across different heritage sites, incorporate mixed methods such as ethnography to gain deeper insights, and expand databases and sources to improve paper retrieval. Adding more members for analysis can reduce personal bias. To better address sustainable development, research should define themes based on the quality of the literature for more accurate results. Using qualitative or mixed methods offers deeper insights. Including diverse regions can account for cultural differences.

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