

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Evaluation of AI, communication, and social behavior in ancient Chinese villages: A systematic review of tourism's role in resident adaptation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how artificial intelligence (AI) affects communication practices and social adaptation among residents in ancient Chinese villages, particularly through its role in tourism development and cultural heritage preservation. It seeks to understand the dual impact of AI as a driver of rural transformation and a disruptor of cultural continuity. A systematic literature review was conducted using five academic databases: JSTOR, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and ProQuest. Studies published between 2021 and 2024 were selected based on strict inclusion criteria focusing on rural tourism in China, AI technologies, and resident adaptation. Boolean logic was applied to combine keywords and refine search precision. AI supports tourism through smart management platforms, virtual reality heritage tours, and intelligent visitor services. These technologies enhance cultural engagement and economic development. Translation tools improve communication between locals and tourists, while AI-based hospitality systems strengthen rural infrastructure. However, findings also reveal that older residents struggle to adapt to AI, and overuse of AI marketing risks cultural commodification. Traditional storytelling practices shift due to generational differences in AI use. AI serves as a powerful force for rural economic and cultural advancement, but it also introduces risks of community disconnection and cultural erosion. Sustainable integration of AI requires balancing innovation with preservation of traditional values. The study recommends inclusive AI education programs, ethical frameworks for AI deployment, and culturally sensitive tourism governance policies. Efforts should focus on protecting intangible heritage while enabling digital growth. This study is original in its specific focus on the intersection of AI, tourism, and social adaptation in ancient Chinese villages a topic largely underrepresented in current literature. It addresses the gap in understanding rural responses to digital transformation. Academic contributions include theoretical insights on AI-driven cultural adaptation. Practically and politically, the research informs policymakers, tourism planners, and technology developers working at the intersection of heritage and innovation.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; cultural heritage; social adaptation; tourism; ancient Chinese villages

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) implementation in tourism has substantially changed how people communicate and behave and affects how residents adapt in traditional communities. Heritage sites use AI-

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enabled smart tourism applications and virtual guides as well as automated translation services to improve visitor experiences at the cost of reshaping local communities^[31]. AI-driven tourism within ancient Chinese villages previously known for their cultural heritage adversely impacts the communication behaviors of local residents^[19].

The modernization of tourism operations through AI has created innovative developments. AI applications including chatbots combined with machine learning-powered tourist recommendations as well as augmented reality experiences offer tourists new means to interact with local communities^[23]. Digitalization delivers advantages to tourism revenue and accessibility through technology but creates difficulties pertaining to changed communication patterns and cultural blend effects together with community member reluctance toward new systems^[16]. The sustainable transformation of local communities in tourism requires knowledge of how artificial intelligence influences their systems.

The traditional cultural connections and community bonds found among Chinese villages make them ideal research environments for studying these effects. The villages benefit from increased governmental alongside private-sector funding for AI tourist infrastructure that drives their quick digital changes according to^[7]. Little research exists which evaluates the degree to which technological incorporations affect how residents adjust combined with their communication approaches alongside social conduct. Tourism functions as a dual role which combines economic benefits with cultural exchanges so researchers need to conduct intensive analysis about how AI affects traditional community structures^[14]. The research investigates the systematic impact of AI technology on tourism service transformation and its resulting effects on social cohesion within traditional Chinese settlements.

1.1. Research objectives

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which AI technologies have been integrated into tourism activities in ancient Chinese villages.
2. To assess how AI-driven tourism influences communication practices among local residents.
3. To analyze the social and behavioral adaptations of residents in response to AI-powered tourism interactions.
4. To evaluate both the benefits and challenges posed by AI integration in tourism for resident communities.

2. Theoretical framework

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory which Everett Rogers (1962) established provides foundational principles to study how tourism-oriented Chinese ancient villages embrace artificial intelligence (AI) adoption. Various technologies spread throughout social networks as per this theory because it helps drive population behavioral modification alongside economic expansion^[26]. Strategic applications based on artificial intelligence along with automated digital payment platforms and talk bots are transforming how tourist groups connect with residents in local communities. China requires thorough investigation of technology adoption because the country combines swift digital advancements with smart tourism policies. The adoption timeline for AI technology features a distinctive pattern which separates exploratory adopters from the rest who adopt AI at their individual rates. However, people who resist belong to the late majority and laggards category because of cultural and financial and educational limitations as explained in^[11]. The

integration of AI leads to major changes in communication because visitors now interact through AI systems which affects both social unity and economic involvement.

The adoption of technology in ancient villages depends on various environmental elements. The acceptance of AI-tourism tools as an improved alternative to basic tour guiding is what determines how quickly they will be accepted^[1]. Digital platforms together with word-of-mouth and government initiatives along with communication channels determine how well people become aware about something^[21]. The adoption rates are influenced by the way residents belong to the community through their ranks in hierarchical structures and leadership system. The passage of time affects the diffusion process because some residents begin implementing new technology before others who remain unconvinced or lack digital skill^[12]. The adoption process contains five stages according to Rogers (2003): knowledge followed by persuasion and then decision building towards implementation and ending with confirmation. Three components determine which villages adopt AI speedily and which ones show resistance to technological improvements^[24].

AI reshapes communication and social behavior in rural tourism. Tourists benefit from AI translation tools with virtual reality tours and chatbots yet this technology minimizes human interaction which challenges authenticity in the experience^[20]. All organizations implementing AI-based customer service alongside smart payment solutions and data analytics tools need digital-savvy employees leading to organizational adaptation^[15]. A generational gap exists between residents because younger members show higher acceptance of digital solutions compared to an older demographic which encounters challenges when transitioning between technologies. AI tools for cultural preservation which consist of augmented reality (AR) and digital storytelling systems transform documentation and tradition sharing practices but everything comes with both potential gains and obstacles^[3].

Tourism escalates the adoption of AI technologies in ancient Chinese villages because it stimulates development of digital solutions that optimize visitor experiences^[27]. In order to attract technology-oriented tourists businesses and cultural establishments use AI-based navigation systems and intelligent recommendation engines and face-recognition ticket scanners. Major economic advantages drive local residents to adopt digital tools because they see AI as a way to optimize operations and boost their revenue. Smart tourism initiatives combined with digital infrastructure support which the government promotes lead to quicker adoption of AI in rural tourism locations^[7]. AI technology has transformed how these villages handle tourism and at the same time, it influences local social adjustments while ensuring economic sustainability.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to examine how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping communication patterns and social attitudes among residents in ancient Chinese villages, specifically through the lens of tourism-driven adaptation. To ensure comprehensive coverage, five major academic databases Google Scholar, JSTOR, Web of Science, Scopus, and ProQuest were selected due to their wide repository of peer-reviewed studies across tourism, cultural heritage, digital transformation, and social adaptation. A structured search strategy was applied using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to refine keyword combinations and generate targeted results. Key search phrases included:

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria with keyword strategy.

Aspect	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Time Frame	Studies published between 2021 and 2024	Studies published before 2021 or not yet peer-reviewed
Language	English-language publications	Publications in other languages
Geographic Focus	Rural tourism or ancient villages located in China	Studies focusing on urban tourism or countries other than China
Topical Focus	AI's role in tourism, local resident communication, social adaptation, and cultural heritage	Studies on general AI applications without connection to tourism or cultural heritage
Academic Quality	Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings	Non-peer-reviewed content or grey literature
Research Type	Empirical or case-based studies providing analytical or applied insights	Purely conceptual or theoretical studies without contextual application
Keyword Combinations	"AI in tourism", "Artificial intelligence and cultural heritage", "Social adaptation in ancient Chinese villages", "Digital transformation in heritage tourism"	Irrelevant topics filtered out using Boolean logic (e.g., "AI AND rural China AND tourism" NOT "urban tourism")

The initial search yielded 437 records, which were screened for relevance by reading titles and abstracts. After removing duplicates and unrelated studies, 64 articles underwent full-text review. From these, 26 studies were selected for final inclusion based on their direct relevance to AI's influence on rural Chinese tourism and resident dynamics.

4. Ancient Chinese villages

Chinese villages from earlier times remain as rural communities where China has maintained its cultural heritage for multiple centuries ^[13]. Each one of these settlements contains ancient buildings alongside preserved practices and heritage elements that preserve Chinese heritage. Rural life in ancient China persists in four particular villages: Hongcun, Xidi, Zhouzhuang, and Wuzhen. The main characteristic of these villages consists of architectural structures that have been carefully preserved from the Ming and Qing dynastic periods. The architectural structures built using wood and brick materials display unique handmade designs which include courtyards and residential complexes that promote family harmony^[22]. The ancient Chinese villages follow specific building standards based on Feng Shui principles which ensure a peaceful coexistence between human settlements and natural, environmental elements.

These cultural landmark settlements serve as important sites which display China's historical and social progression. These sites preserve local customs together with indigenous farming practices which coexist with age-old religious practices from previous generations. During the last centuries villagers used waterway systems as essential elements for irrigation and transportation while deepening their connection with natural surroundings. Cultural tourists come to see authentic Chinese heritage through ancient villages which modern people acknowledge for their regional tourism worth. Maintaining these settlements remains difficult nowadays because modern society offers population decline together with substandard community infrastructure. The historic Chinese communities thrive as cultural preservation agents while maintaining bridges to past times^[32].

5. AI integration in ancient Chinese villages

AI technology combines with modern technological development to create new growth paths in heritage Chinese villages through cultural preservation trends. Traditional Chinese historical heritage villages utilize AI technology to prevent population decline and structural deficiencies

while maintaining their traditional culture during the present era of technological progress. The modernization of tourism operations, economic revitalization of nearby areas, improved heritage preservation methods enable AI to breathe new life into such communities^[25].

Traditional Chinese architectural knowledge needed villages to apply complicated procedures for designing their building techniques and partition layouts according to Feng Shui principles to sustain harmonious residential spaces. The communities have managed to maintain Ming and Qing dynasty historical buildings unchanged for numerous centuries. A declining rural population combined with increasing modern infrastructure needs makes it difficult for villages to maintain cultural heritage against contemporary social requirements^[30]. AI technology enables new solutions for problem-solving by generating modern conservation techniques.

The main AI application within rural areas exists in tourism promotion activities. The AI-based VR heritage tours allow virtual visitors to explore historical sites safely from these villages by eliminating any danger to their fragile architectural features. Through virtual tours, remote tourists can virtually visit ancient villages even though these experiences assist in protecting historical sites from damage caused by visitor overloads. AI-driven smart tourism platforms gather visitor data which enables them to develop personalized experiences and optimize visitor flow thus improving local resource management^[25]. These technologies allow for better crowd control, improved visitor engagement, and the creation of customized itineraries that highlight the cultural significance of different sites, thus fostering a deeper connection between visitors and the villages.

Artificial Intelligence plays an important role in maintaining local cultural customs and traditional practices that define these village communities. AI translation tools dissolve communication obstacles between visitors and local residents so international tourists can receive an effective transmission of village history and customs and stories^[30]. These tools enable cultural transfer and support sustainable local traditions since they expand accessibility to worldwide tourists which makes the village more attractive for cultural tourism visitors.

Artificial Intelligence enhances agricultural procedures thus improving efficiency in rural farming operations. The traditional approaches used by rural farmers in ancient towns find it difficult to transform and keep up with contemporary requirements. Artificial intelligence systems combine sensor networks and machine learning algorithms to optimize resource allocations especially for water use and crop management thus establishing more sustainable and efficient farming approaches^[13]. Soil moisture sensors and weather prediction tools linked with AI enable agriculture professionals to generate informed decisions about irrigation and crop changing practices. These technologies deliver maximum value to regions whose economy depends on agriculture because they boost agricultural output.

AI technology system implementation faces multiple obstacles as traditional Chinese villages continue their development. Artificial intelligence systems risk damaging traditional cultural experiences of the village through alterations that harm their original characteristics. The combination of virtual tours enabled by automated guides in visitor encounters creates an internal conflict for these villages because it removes core human contact from their cultural center^[25].

Digital inequality represents another major problem in the worldwide society. AI provides various advantages yet senior citizens in rural regions face major obstacles when trying to comprehend contemporary technological devices. The technology gap between those who use AI tools and those who do not could establish interaction differences that might create feelings of social distancing between native and visitor groups^[9]. EI needs complete integration within these communities when education systems and technology reach all generations simultaneously.

AI technology when used in ancient Chinese villages creates simultaneous benefits which protect cultural heritage together with economic development. The deployment of AI technology supports both tourism development and sustainable agriculture and service improvements which revitalize historic towns with their heritage preserved. AI implementation design requires precise planning to preserve cultural customs and deliver equal advantages across the community.

6. Communication dynamics and social behavior

The Ancient Chinese villages based their communication system on personal exchanges that existed within their tightly-knit social network^[17]. Villagers used oral traditions together with communal gatherings as well as local rituals to preserve their communal way of life throughout their passage of knowledge. Older community members held essential positions in both societal policing and traditional teaching responsibilities to younger members of the community. An oral tradition served as a vital method to maintain the preservation and dissemination of governance systems together with agricultural practices alongside cultural traditions. The people in these communities used seasonal festivals along with ancestral worship rituals as their main communication tools where they would gather for discussions and social bonding^[22]. The gatherings maintained community values by teaching successive generations about their position in the social framework. These communication methods served as the main methods before modern technology emerged because they maintained social relationships within communities.

AI technology integration brings significant changes to the communication processes occurring in these rural settlements. AI-powered tools these days have replaced numerous conventional communication styles through mobile apps while smart messaging systems and virtual platforms also connect people without delay. These technological solutions enable villagers to connect rapidly with people who are located outside their immediate borders of time and location. Through AI translation service villagers can interact with multilingual tourists who in the past limited their interactions^[30]. The use of digital communication tools by villagers results in expanded knowledge sharing platforms where they can exchange agricultural and social content with people throughout extensive connected networks. Thanks to recent technological developments villagers can now participate in worldwide relations along with broadening their reach to large information networks^[33].

AI-based communication systems generate complex impacts on social interaction that transforms both human conduct and societal traditions^[10]. Modern interpersonal communication demonstrates a shift toward digital platforms since various types of digital tools continue to escalate in popularity throughout contemporary society. Electronic communication methods face obstacles which make it difficult to maintain past community bonds that were essential to small towns in earlier times. Younger citizens who demonstrate excellent tech abilities have improved digital adoption rates yet cut down face-to-face interaction between senior citizens and youth members. This new technology system introduces generation-gap disagreements that transform both social power structures at community and individual levels. The modern-day inhabitants of villages divide themselves against their younger counterparts due to their fundamental disagreement about

favoring traditional oral expression against emerging technological communication methods. Modern AI tool adoption has caused humans to face rising doubts about authentic human contact as it confronts various social traditions^[4]. AI technologies embedded into communities enable new social exchanges that create adjustments to fundamental social principles and social organization dynamics. Through digital platforms younger community members now lead group discussions as well as hold leadership roles for decision-making processes during this period of social transition^[5].

Digital community groups together with social media and online forums allow people to share messages whenever suitable for shifting community decision-making processes. When elderly people migrated to digital communication platforms they developed social disconnection issues that separated them from current communication technology ^[6]. AI technology adoption will convert traditional group-based decision processes in the village into independent and speedy decision-making systems which function outside traditional group structures that have upheld village culture.

7. Tourism's influence on resident adaptation

Tourism continuously guides the evolutionary transformation of communities because it affects regions which depend on cultural heritage combined with their economic foundations. Modern Chinese ancient villages face both positive and negative effects from tourism growth enabled through AI technological solutions. Innovations fueled by artificial intelligence such as virtual reality tours, smart tourism apps and automated services have greatly transformed travel experiences in these villages thus making them convenient for tourists from both domestic and international markets^[18]. Modern technologies have increased the appeal of ancient villages through their capability to create interactive immersive and personalized visitor experiences which expand the visitor pool. The implementation of AI systems to direct tourists and enhance communication alongside managing visitor flows has brought enhanced operational effectiveness to tourism and supported the entire economic development of local communities. Through its creation of captivating and various tourism activities AI generates increased economic opportunities for community members in sectors like hotel services, retail establishments and cultural art preservation^[8]. AI technology integration established an active relationship between tourism and economic growth to spread tourism benefits across the entire community's sectors.

The rise of tourism in ancient villages led to substantial alterations in community social bonds together with local identity changes. Tourism brings about substantial external influences that affect the exposure of traditional native customs and local way of life. The technical advancements of AI systems have generated different social patterns between residents and their new multicultural tourist population^[29]. Digital platforms enable villagers to connect with multicultural tourists which creates friendly contacts across cultures.

The connection between villages and visitors results in worries about traditional customs disappearing while village cultural elements become more similar to each other. Tourism demand for genuine encounters between visitors and locals through digital platforms requires villagers to change their practices and sometimes adopt mass tourism strategies. The transformations in cultural practices between heritage conservation and modern tourism economic demands create significant conflicts according to^[18]. The implementation of technology by local artisans and farmers and elder people for tourism functions has modified traditional community organization while reshaping inter-community relationships. The rapid technological evolution has created social separation between generations since young people adopt new technologies but older individuals face challenges to keep their traditional roles in this modern environment ^[13]. The positive aspects of tourism enabled by AI do not diminish the challenges and ethical questions which have arisen from ancient Chinese villages adapting to this new situation. Artificial intelligence tools create

easier accessibility to historically important areas which leads to the primary challenge of excessive visitor traffic. Local resources face excessive strain while daily life of residents suffers and environmental damage occurs due to the large number of visitors. Commercial efforts to cater tourist needs by adapting local cultural heritage create difficulties regarding both genuine visitor experiences and enduring sustainable practices. Digital access and understanding of AI technologies remains unequal because some residents lack access to AI technologies or comprehend them properly. Existing social inequalities in the region become worsened because some residents obtain economic growth from tourism while other people remain cut off from these new opportunities^[2].

8. Conclusion and future research

The implementation of Artificial Intelligence technology in Chinese historic communities led to important developments in tradition preservation alongside economic growth and social customs as well as tourism because it supports improved administration systems and visitor quality as well as agricultural output improvement. Robotics-based attractions and smart tourism protocols and automatic translation devices make heritage sites more friendly for both visitors and the participants of preservation activities. The communities face integrity risks because their original nature weakens and their ancestral customs convert to digital formats during cultural generational transformations. The economic expansion through AI-driven tourism results in multiple effects on both culture and demands specialized protection of heritage sites due to commercial change. Leaders in public service must develop AI strategies jointly through policy creation methods to defend authenticity and develop enduring technological systems which drive community development. Training programs need to establish educational measures for bridging digital differences between generations so elderly citizens can participate in local municipal decisions. Multiple ethical governance systems with artificial intelligence need to be executed because their protective mechanism shields original local identity values from exploitation. The planned strategy indicates ancient Chinese villages should defend themselves through artificial intelligence which joins forces with interpretation experts for participatory governance development of sustainable adaptive tourism models.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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