

Chinese rural residents' identity construction with tourism intervention

Zhikai Wu^{a,b,c,1}, Jing Ma^{a,1,*}

^a Department of Tourism Management, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou 510006, China

^b Key Laboratory of Digital Village and Sustainable Development of Culture and Tourism, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou 510006, China

^c Guangdong Tourism Strategy and Policy Research Center, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou 510006, China

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Rural tourism
Identity
Urban-rural relationship
Chinese rural

ABSTRACT

Tourism improves rural residents' livelihoods, partially narrowing the urban-rural economic gap. However, the extent of the identity gap reduction necessitates further research. Drawing on Identity Process Theory (IPT), this study explores the identity change among Shangliang village residents, triggered by tourism since 2015. Employing semi-structured interviews and participant observation, this study reveals the mechanism of rural residents' identity construction with tourism intervention and specific representations of rural identity changes following IPT's four principles. Results indicate that the developmental changes brought by rural tourism, encompassing space, livelihood, social relationships and culture, impact residents' identities, whose representations display dynamic and complex features. The emergence of a new hybrid identity among rural residents signifies a transformed urban-rural relationship in China. These findings deepen the understanding of how tourism-induced material changes influence rural identity, particularly the predominant role of self-esteem and self-efficacy principles of IPT in the process of rural identity construction.

1. Introduction

Against rural decline, rural revitalization has increasingly attracted attention worldwide (Kurnaz & Aniktar, 2023; Li, Zhang, Zhang, & Abrahams, 2019; Liu, Dai, Long, Woods, & Fois, 2022). Rural regions employ tourism development for revitalization, but rapid growth leads to significant material and lifestyle changes to accommodate tourists (Shucksmith, 2018; Yang & Xu, 2022), causing constructive and developmental disruptions. While the economic and social impacts of rural tourism development have been widely examined (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Zhang, 2023), the same level of attention has not been directed towards the cultural impacts (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Stokowski, Kuentzel, Derrien, & Jakobcic, 2021; Tang, Yang, Liu, & Xiao, 2023). Rural residents, primary stakeholders in a rural destination (Luo, Timothy, Zhong, & Zhang, 2022), intertwine their lives with tourists and consequently confront the potential cultural challenges arising from the influence of tourism on rural identity construction (Oakes, 1993; Winchenbach, Hanna, & Miller, 2022; Xue, Kerstetter, & Hunt, 2017). Tourism alters residents' livelihoods, lifestyles, social networks, and living environments, impacting their perceptions of rural identity (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Cassel & Petterson, 2015).

Residents' perceptions and attitudes influence local tourism's sustainability (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Wang, 2021; Wang & Chen, 2015). Therefore, enhancing residents' identity and fostering positive community engagement are vital for sustainable rural tourism.

China's profound urban-rural disparity perpetuates entrenched socioeconomic inequalities and a persistently negative rural image, providing an ideal backdrop for studying rural identity construction (Boffy-Ramirez & Moon, 2018; Xu & Tan, 2002; Zhu, Zhu, & Xiao, 2019). Notably, the household registration system stands out as the chief contributor to China's urban-rural income disparity (Chan & Buckingham, 2008; Pi & Zhang, 2016; Sun & Tu, 2023), explaining over 50% of this disparity (Sicular, Yue, Gustafsson, & Li, 2007). Before 1978, this system restricted rural hukou migration to urban areas, resulting in labor market discrimination (Cai & Wang, 2010; Pi & Zhang, 2016). This system also determined residents' eligibility for state-provided benefits (Liu, 2005). Urban hukou enjoyed superior benefits, including subsidized housing, health services, and education, while rural residents received such benefits from their communes or villages, often of lower quality and reliability (Afridi, Li, & Ren, 2015; Liu, 2005). Hukou status, typically inherited within households by the next generation, limited

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: zhcwu@scut.edu.cn (Z. Wu), melymajing@mail.scut.edu.cn (J. Ma).

¹ B9 Building, No. 382, Wai Huan Dong Road, Guangzhou, 510006, P. R. China

educational attainment and future employment opportunities from birth, aggravating economic inequality and driving rural-to-urban migration, which has resulted in rural challenges like left-behind children and the elderly, inadequate infrastructure and abandoned farmland (Biao, 2007; Chen, Ye, Cai, Xing, & Chen, 2014; Zhou, Wall, Zhang, & Cheng, 2021). Since the shift to a market-oriented economy in 1978, the government has optimized the household registration system to ensure fair treatment between the floating population and urban residents (Afridi et al., 2015). However, urban welfare resources for the floating population remain limited, and discriminatory effects persist (Chan, 1996; He & Zhang, 2022). This persisting economic imbalance has perpetuated unfavorable perceptions of rural residents (Afridi et al., 2015), evident in the derogatory term “peasant” used universally for all rural residents, irrespective of occupation (Anagnost, 2004). Moreover, urban areas are praised as the hub of civilization with modern infrastructures and advanced technology, while rural regions are portrayed as backward, unclean and hollow. The household registration system and its economic repercussions have thus left a lasting negative rural identity in modern China (Afridi et al., 2015).

China’s evolving economy has shifted rural policy from urban-biased development to integrated urban-rural development (He & Zhang, 2022). Notably, Chinese rural development gained heightened policy attention with the central government’s introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy in 2017 (Jiang et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021; Zhou, Li, & Xu, 2020). The National Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018–2022) outlines objectives encompassing ecological conservation, leisure and tourism, cultural enrichment and rural healthcare to promote rural development (He & Zhang, 2022). The central government has implemented measures to promote rural tourism, such as national agricultural tourism demonstration sites and beautiful leisure villages (Ma, Dai, & Fan, 2020). During implementation, certain impoverished rural areas have demonstrated improvement by transitioning from traditional agriculture to eco-tourism, boosting economic development (Tang et al., 2023; Wang, Chen, & Xu, 2019). Tourism has improved residents’ livelihoods and living standards, partially reducing the urban-rural economic gap (Hoefle, 2016). However, its impact on narrowing the identity gap necessitates further investigation. Negative rural impressions and farmer distress persist globally, despite China’s unique socio-economic and political landscape (Niska, Vesala, & Vesala, 2012; Oh, 2023; Paniagua, 2014). Moreover, in both developed and developing nations, diminishing agricultural income and declining traditional sectors have resulted in rural restructuring (Bruno, Fernández-Giménez, & Balgopal, 2022; Stokowski et al., 2021). Tourism, practiced for years to improve rural livelihoods, remains a major engine of rural economic regeneration (Fytopoulou, Tampakis, Galatsidas, Karasmanaki, & Tsantopoulos, 2021; Sharpley, 2002; Winchenbach et al., 2022). Therefore, Chinese experience in rural identity changes resulting from tourism intervention can provide valuable insights globally.

Despite the considerable attention devoted to the nexus of tourism and identity (Canovi, 2019; Winchenbach et al., 2022), existing literature mainly focuses on cultural factors leading to identity change, such as cultural commodification and host-guest interaction (Mayes, 2010; Rogers, 2002; York, Yan, & Ben, 2021), neglecting attention to developmental factors that might contribute to identity change. Given the historical association of rural identity with the lower economic status of rural residents, it is reasonable to explore whether recent tourism development, bringing new economic activities, has influenced changes in rural identity. To advance the research, this study emphasizes tourism development’s impact on spatial, economic, social, and cultural changes in the community, which provides a new insight into how tourism intervention may alter rural residents’ identities. Thus, it poses the research questions: How do tourism-induced rural spatial, economic, social, and cultural changes affect residents’ identity change? What are the underlying mechanisms and relationships? To address these, the study will enrich rural tourism research and offer decision-making

references in identity construction for sustainable rural tourism development.

2. Literature review

2.1. Rural tourism and identity

Rural development is a globally significant concern, extensively documented in literature covering rural social structure, economic evolution, and community transformation, transitioning from primary to service industries (Bruno et al., 2022; Stokowski et al., 2021). Residents in rural destinations are important research subjects, with scholars broadly recognizing tourism’s twofold impact on community-level identity change. Tourism is acknowledged for its role in both enabling identity (re)construction (Ohe, 2021; Stronza, 2008) and potentially undermining it (Canovi, 2019). Some researchers emphasize the importance of tourism in conserving and modifying place identity (Rogers, 2002; Tang et al., 2023), which is used to manage, represent, and reconstruct identity (Winchenbach et al., 2022). Tourism, through the creation of tourist attractions and goods, helps shape residents’ sense of identity, belonging, and collective memory in such contexts (Cole, 2007). In rural Illinois, U.S.A, for example, tourism encourages active resident engagement, fostering expressions of well-being, empowerment, and a sense of belonging, thereby preserving place identities (Soulard, Park, & Zou, 2023). Furthermore, Butler, Szili, and Huang (2022) found that destination residents reaffirm their own culture’s importance by observing tourists’ interest in their community, leading to increased pride and cultural enrichment during tourism interactions, ultimately enhancing their indigenous identity.

However, residents’ influence over their identity is not absolute, as tourists and external perceptions can (re)shape it. The interaction between hosts and guests poses a substantial challenge to the sustainability of local culture and identity, resulting in cultural adaptation through tourist emulation, described as the “demonstration effect” (Xue et al., 2017). As tourists integrated into the community, rural residents gradually shifted reference groups for life and consumption from acquaintances to newcomers, identifying with their cultural qualities and imitating their tastes. This trend risks diluting distinctiveness in increasingly homogenized modern identity landscapes (Stronza, 2001; Wang & Sun, 2023). Studies on Chinese ethnic minorities reveal that contact with tourists motivates them to change their identity and adopt tastes that mismatch their relatively low status (Wang & Sun, 2023).

While these studies primarily emphasize cultural factors as catalysts for identity change, they often overlook the multifaceted impact of tourism development. New identity formation often relies on the presentation of local cultures, traditions, and heritage, which appears to be divorced from the socioeconomic situations of destinations. However, this viewpoint is shallow, as the effects of tourism development extend beyond culture alone, encompassing material changes that profoundly affect rural residents’ perceptions of identity. For instance, the rising allocation of spaces for leisure, recreation, and tourism activities in rural areas challenges traditional rural perceptions and identities (Floysand & Jakobsen, 2007; Stokowski et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2019). The line between rural and urban landscapes is blurred by tourism-driven rural gentrification (Yang & Xu, 2022). Moreover, as a livelihood source, tourism shapes rural residents’ practices, social networks, and mental frameworks, influencing their perspectives on rural life (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Hoefle, 2016; Wang & Sun, 2023). For instance, some farmers perceive their role as the “food provider for the nation” (Sharpley & Vass, 2006) and diversification of tourism activities may be viewed as an intrusion into their occupational identity (Canovi, 2019).

Therefore, to comprehensively grasp tourism’s impact on identity construction, both cultural and socio-economic influences should be considered. Rural identity construction has continuously been affected by social structure, landscapes, livelihoods, and living standards. Despite extensive research on tourism’s effects on identity, scant

attention has been given to the social, environmental, and economic factors driving identity changes. As these elements are inextricably linked to rural tourism, it is required to explore how and what kind of effects they have on rural residents' identity construction.

2.2. A theoretical framework for analyzing identity construction

Rapid globalization and increased mobility have triggered changes in our self-perceptions, interaction strategies, and relationships with various places, thus inspiring human geographers to rethink the meaning of place at the individual level (Tuan, 1977). They believe that place is more than a physical object, it is a way of life to which individuals attach personal meaning, intention, or value to it (Hay, 1998). This emotional connection between individuals and places helps navigate identity crises and maintain stability in the ever-changing world (Hay, 1998). The above view regards placeness as a central element in identity construction (Wester-Herber, 2004), which gives rise to the concept of place identity construction: By integrating the significance of place into socialization, individuals or groups perpetuate their concepts, values, dignity, eventually developing an identity for the place and distinguishing between self and others (Harner, 2001). In essence, place identity construction differs from other perspectives on identity research, as it focuses on the connections and meanings that arise through the dynamic interaction of people and place.

However, the place is the result of construction, and the place identity can vary over time and context (Martin, 2005). Therefore, understanding diverse identity values associated with a place requires a higher ethical framework. Fortunately, some researchers have performed thorough investigations into this matter. Notably, Identity Process Theory (IPT), introduced by Breakwell in 1986, has been widely used in studying place identity construction. However, it was only in the early 21st century that it was introduced to tourism studies. Nunkoo and Gursoy investigated the relationship between place identity factors, including occupation, environment, tourism attitudes and behaviors (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Wang and Xu (2015) examined the impacts of IPT's four place identity principles on residents' attitudes towards tourism. Similarly, Luo, Ding, and Pan (2018) used IPT to conduct a comparative analysis of how foreign food culture affected the identity construction of different generations of Guangzhou residents. Additionally, Canovi, Mordue, and Lyon (2020) applied IPT to examine wine tourism's impact on the identity construction of wine estate owners in Langhe, Italy. Besides, Wang, Lan and Chen (2023) employed IPT to study the relationship between identity and community involvement. It is clear that IPT offers an effective framework for understanding the complex elements of identity construction and serves as a useful tool for analyzing the relationship between individuals and places in tourism contexts (Luo et al., 2018). However, its application in rural tourism, particularly in constructing identity among rural residents, remains underexplored.

This study employs IPT to explore how tourism intervention challenges rural residents' identity. IPT, an integrative model combining social representation theory and traditional identity theory, focuses on how people construct their sense of identity, how their identity develops over time and space, and, crucially, how people maintain a stable sense of identity in the face of events and situations that can challenge it (Breakwell, 2021; Breakwell, Fino, & Jaspal, 2022; Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022). IPT posits identity as the result of two processes: assimilation-accommodation and evaluation (Breakwell, 1986). Assimilation-accommodation absorbs new elements into the identity structure and accommodates them, while evaluation assigns significance to existing and new identity elements. Both processes are continuous and dynamic, with external influences such as social representations and normative constraints. This has been especially visible with tourism intervention when physical/environmental context, sources of social influence, and developing social representations have caused rural communities to reconsider their identity. Personal agency also shapes identity changes,

being involved in the assimilation-accommodation and evaluation processes. Individuals are motivated to construct identities that satisfy four principles: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Breakwell, 1986). These principles are detailed below.

- (1) Distinctiveness refers to the sensation of good separation from others. Generally, social identity is built on the prominence of distinguishing features that draw attention (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998). According to the principle of distinctiveness, residents in a (physically or culturally) distinctive place will have stronger place identification than other areas equivalent to the current one (Vignoles, Chrysochoou, & Breakwell, 2000).
- (2) Continuity involves perceiving one's past, present, and future as meaningfully linked. Rural tourism often generates a sense of continuity by invoking, through the protection and utilization of rural resources, positive memories of the past, connecting to the self, or cherished group memberships in the present (Li et al., 2019). Therefore, people who are more committed to a place will be more attached in ways that maintain continuity (Gu & Ryan, 2008).
- (3) Self-esteem is the degree to which one values oneself and believes one is valued by others. It represents a positive self-evaluation created via social comparison (Luo et al., 2018). Among rural residents, personal interest in the place, self-perception of tourism abilities, and support from others all contribute to self-esteem (Uzzell, 1996). Unlike simply evaluating a place positively, self-esteem implies that the place's attributes increase a person's self-esteem.
- (4) Self-efficacy is a sense of personal control and competence. People feel more self-efficacious in environments that promote, rather than hinder their daily life. Self-efficacy, in particular, has been shown to increase enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and pleasant physiological and affective states (Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022).

IPT uniquely contributes to the existing literature on the four identity principles by focusing on individuals' responses to events and situations that challenge these principles. According to IPT, identity threat occurs when any of the four principles are compromised, revealing how individuals construct their identities in changing social contexts by utilizing symbols, concepts, and language (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). Furthermore, IPT emphasizes individuals' agency in identity management. Through social interactions, individuals construct a system of meanings encompassing their lives, experiences, and identities. This viewpoint departs from traditional sociology's structural functionalism and corresponds with the theoretical foundations of physiological and emotional geography, particularly regarding subjectivity, human perception, and emotional responses to the environment. Thus, it allows for a more thorough investigation of the mechanisms influencing human perceptions and emotions about the environment and the dynamic relationship between conscious human practices and places.

Based on the above analysis, this study proposes a research framework (Fig. 1) to explore the impact of tourism intervention on rural residents' identity construction. Drawing on relevant studies (Wang et al., 2023; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Stokowski et al., 2021; Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015), it emphasizes the importance of tourism intervention in shaping rural residents' identity. Tourism impacts have previously been categorized into economy, society, and environment (Confente & Scarpi, 2021; Dai, Fan, Wang, Ou, & Ma, 2023; Lyon, Hunter-Jones, & Warnaby, 2017). By merging field surveys and rural tourism characteristics, this research refines the three impacts into four aspects: spatial reconstruction, economic transformation, social reshaping, and cultural transmutation. Through the assimilation-accommodation and evaluation of these dimensions, rural residents regulate the continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy and self-esteem of the place identity. Concurrently, internal psychological

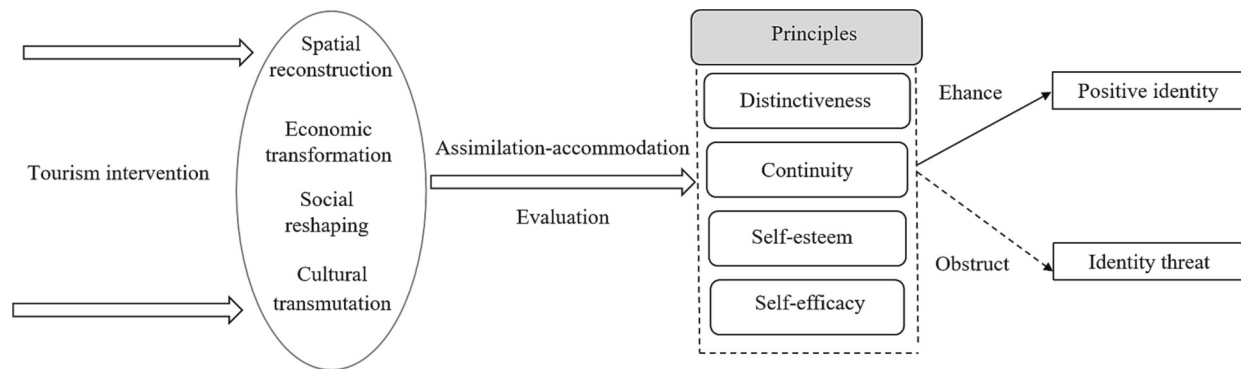


Fig. 1. Theoretical analysis framework

factors can enhance or obstruct this process, leading to either a positive identity or an identity threat. Given the possibility that changes in the above four aspects have cross-influence on the principles of IPT, this study aims to elucidate and deeply describe the meaning representation of rural residents' place identity construction through the changes after tourism intervention. By applying IPT in rural tourism research, this study expands the understanding of human-place relationships in tourism communities and provides deeper insights into the psychology of rural residents facing complex tourism practices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Case study setting: Shangliang village, China

Shangliang village, located in Henghe Town, Boluo County, Huizhou, Guangdong, China (Fig. 2), is a popular rural tourism destination in Eastern China, hosting 28 households. Before tourism development, rural residents lived near Xiangang Reservoir and relocated in the 1960s, relying on farming and logging for livelihood. However, this traditional lifestyle led to persistent poverty, and the relocation houses remained incomplete for years. In 2015, Shangliang Rural Tourism Company initiated a village-enterprise partnership to develop rural tourism in collaboration with the local government and cooperative. The company

acquired villagers' second and third floors, while the first floor was kept for residents. The upper floors were transformed into rough houses for rent to the company, forming homestays. The company managed these homestays, paying each household an annual rent of 28,000 yuan for 15 years. Among 28 households, 14 signed village-enterprise contracts, and others independently operated homestays and restaurants. In 2019, Shangliang village achieved a 3A tourist attraction status, receiving 320,000 visitors and earning a total income of 10.09 million yuan, with 7.94 million yuan from tourism. This success also spurred the development of other rural tourism, especially homestay businesses, in Henghe Town and Boluo County. Currently, over 95% of rural residents in Shangliang village engage in tourism, and 90% of families own or run rural homestays, making tourism their primary livelihood and income source.

Shangliang village is an appropriate study setting for two reasons. Firstly, it has been selected as one of China's national models of rural tourism by the central government, rendering it a representative example of a typical rural tourist destination. Indeed, government officials from various rural areas have visited Shangliang village to gain insights from its developmental experiences. Secondly, with the rapid tourism growth and supports from the company and government, Shangliang village has transformed from once being a marginalized hollow village into a mid-to-high-end tourist destination with various

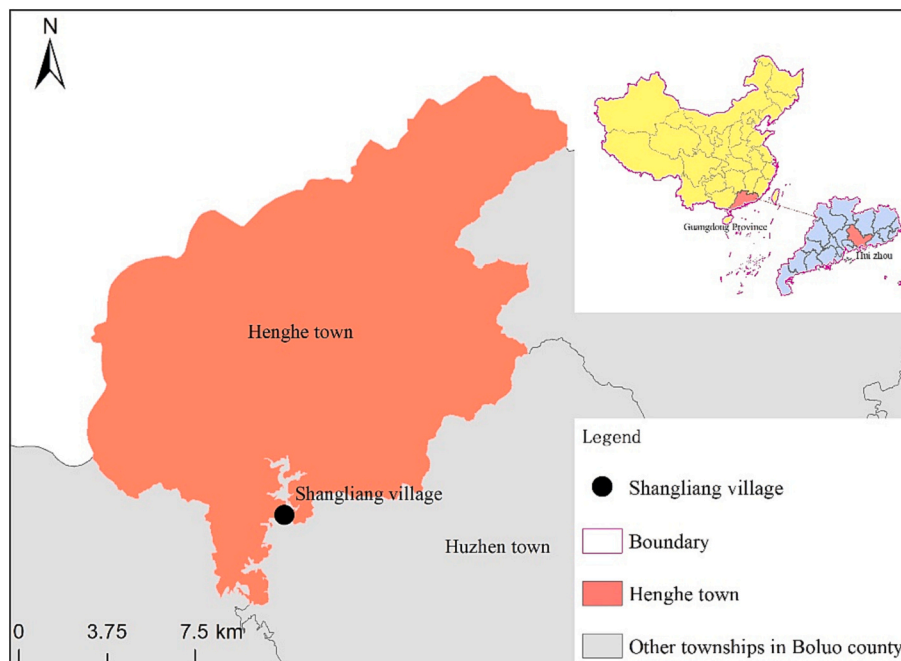


Fig. 2. The location of Shangliang village.

societal, economic, and environmental changes (Fig. 3). Consequently, Shangliang village presents an ideal scenario for investigating whether and how these alterations have influenced the residents' perception of their rural identity and way of life.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

Recent qualitative tourism research underscores reflexivity's role in knowledge generation and representation (Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to position researchers before data collection and analysis. The first author has conducted a long-term research project on the anthropology of tourism in Shangliang village since December 2019, fostering strong connections with the village chief and a key investor. The second author conducted 65 days of fieldwork in Shangliang village. The second author is a strange acquaintance and receives extra care from residents due to her dual identity as a solo female and a resident's friend. Her discrete position with the locals facilitated a deeper understanding of rural residents' daily practices, collecting participant observation data. Focusing on six guesthouses where she stayed, the second author engaged in activities like dining and sightseeing to better observe rural residents' interactions with guests and understand potential factors underlying rural identity change. Detailed accounts of observations and personal reflections were recorded in field notes to enhance reflexivity.

Data collection occurred in November 2021, January 2022, April 2023, and June 2023, spanning a total of 65 days. First, aligning with local contexts and following the principle of theoretical saturation (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Winchenbach et al., 2022), 18 residents from diverse families were purposively sampled to participate semi-

structured interviews, coded as R-X. The participants were chosen purposively, focusing on those who could meaningfully answer research questions (Bryman, 2016). These interviews gathered the following information: (1) Families and their trajectories before and after tourism occurred; (2) Their perceptions of differences between rural and urban areas before and after tourism development; (3) Any ways in which their perceptions of being a rural resident and living a rural life have changed since tourism intervention. Additionally, 5 key informant interviews were conducted with non-local residents working in Shangliang village to get an outsider's perspective on tourism and identity change. Coded as E-X, key informants were asked about their experiences working in Shangliang village and their perceptions of tourism and changes in the community. Interviews lasted approximately 1.5 h. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the samples. Contrasting larger-scale study designs, this study prioritizes detailed personal participant accounts by drawing on a small but relevant number of participants (Sedgley, Pritchard, Morgan, & Hanna, 2017; Winchenbach et al., 2022).

Interviews and observations, directly available to the author, underwent triangulation with various information sources (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013), cross-referenced with field notes to ensure credibility and confirmability. Following the initial collation of firsthand data, qualitative interpretation unfolded across transcribed texts, observational notes, and field research memos. Subsequent analysis and interpretation were guided by Braun and Clarke's (2019) reflexive thematic analysis, and followed Walters's (2016) three-level coding approach to create a systematic route from description to interpretation. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the quality of thematic analysis involves the "reflexive and thoughtful" engagement with the data as



Fig. 3. Photos of Shangliang village before and after tourism intervention. Note: A typical rural house before tourism intervention (upper left, courtesy of Mr. LAI), a new style rural house after tourism intervention (upper right), a village road before tourism intervention (lower left, courtesy of Mr. LAI), a village road after tourism intervention (lower right).

Table 1
Samples of in-depth interviews.

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Occupation before tourism intervention	Occupation after tourism intervention
R1	M	60	Farmer	B&B operator
R2	F	59	Farmer	B&B operator
R3	F	54	Farmer	Rural farmstay owner
R4	F	49	Farmer	Retail store operator
R5	M	62	Farmer	Rural farmstay owner
R6	M	48	Farmer	B&B operator and rural farmstay owner
R7	M	37	Farmer	Rural farmstay owner
R8	F	45	Farmer	B&B operator
R9	F	65	Farmer	Local speciality operator
R10	F	55	Farmer	B&B and retail store operator
R11	F	58	Farmer	Rural farmstay owner
R12	F	63	Farmer	Farmer
R13	M	56	Farmer	B&B operator
R14	M	29	Farmer	Network anchor
R15	F	52	Farmer	Rural farmstay owner
R16	M	31	Farmer	Driver
R17	F	49	Farmer	Staff of the tourism company
R18	M	42	Farmer	B&B operator
E1	F	47	Preschool director	Investor of the tourism company
E2	F	43	Farmer	Housekeeping staff
E3	F	39	Housewife	Pizzeria shop owner
E4	M	38	Interior designer	Cafe owner
E5	M	45	Carpenter	Tour guide

well as the analytic process. The quality of thematic analysis celebrates subjectivity rather than aiming for ‘accuracy’ or ‘reliability’, or ‘consensus between coders’. Nonetheless, the analysis and interpretations were discussed among the writing team. Additionally, the manuscript was reviewed and verified by two key informants.

4. Results

Drawing on prior research (Wang et al., 2023; Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013; Stokowski et al., 2021; Xue et al., 2017; Zhang, Sun, & Li, 2023) and the field survey data, this paper presents a four-dimensional representation of tourism impacts: spatial reconstruction, economic transformation, social reshaping and cultural transmutation. Guided by the analytical framework in Fig. 1, three core themes are synthesized: rural residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts, rural residents’ participations and attitudes towards tourism development and rural residents’ cognitive changes in place identity construction and their representations of meaning. Specifically, this exploration focuses on how rural residents’ identity evolves within the tourism-changing context and manifests through four principles of the IPT.

4.1. Intertwining landscape and residence change identity

With tourism development, Shangliang village has experienced changes in spatial form, functions, and symbolic significance. Presently, the village’s landscape is predominantly characterized by unified homestays, showcasing a cohesive spatial structure. Consequently, tourism has primarily reshaped the village’s external appearance and symbolic meanings. However, this process has also decreased residents’ sense of control over their living spaces, diminishing their self-efficacy. Nonetheless, tourism’s intervention continues to reconstruct their local identity, emphasizing the distinctiveness of identity construction among the community.

On the one hand, from the perspective of space users, residents have transformed from former absolute subjects to investors and cohabitants with tourists. This shift has converted village spaces from single residential functions to a blend of residential and leisure functions. For

instance, during interviews, some residents expressed nostalgia when they were free to hang clothes and park motorcycles in their yards. These activities are now restricted to enhance the scenic environment, contributing to a perceived loss of autonomy. As R9 said, “*They always have so many regulations, thinking this is not good, that is not good... restricting us everywhere.*” Residents’ private homes and public spaces have become tourist attractions, subject to supervision and management by the investment enterprise and the government. As a consequence, adapting to these changes within a short time has proven challenging, further impacting residents’ self-efficacy and sense of control over their lives and community. Despite these challenges, the ongoing transformation of spatial functions and its intersection with daily life and business have enabled tourism to evoke a sense of nostalgia for the residents. Nevertheless, this evokes a certain level of dissatisfaction and diminished self-efficacy among community members. However, amidst these complexities, tourism’s influence remains active, actively shaping and redefining the identities of residents in a unique and multifaceted manner.

On the other hand, with the economic benefits brought by tourism and the increasing interaction between tourists and residents, both parties have shown differences in their understanding of spatial meaning. Residents have gradually embraced the tourists’ imagination and perception of rural spaces. As an external discourse introducing economic resources, tourists dominate the subject-object relationship concerning rural spaces. To ensure a continuous inflow of external resources, the community residents often adjust their imagination of rural spaces through emotional assimilation, adaptation, and evaluation processes. R9 expressed the local community’s perception before tourism development: “*In the past, our houses were not well-built, and it was only after the government introduced investment from enterprises that we developed tourism.*” Additionally, many officials from other villages come to the village every year for learning, and the government has affirmed the utilization of local ecological resources. With the ongoing tourism activities, residents gradually adapt to and accept external discourse, actively participating in tourism reception services and business activities. Meanwhile, through the intervention of external discourse, the community residents gradually realize the unique meaning and commercial value of the village space created by the investment enterprise. R7 proudly said, “*Shangliang village is unique... Our houses here are beautiful, and neighboring villages envy us for being able to develop tourism.*” Thus, tourism’s reconstruction of spatial symbolic meaning enhances the identification of residents with the distinctiveness of village.

In conclusion, tourism’s remaking of local spaces mainly manifests in functionality and symbolic meaning. The former transforms the traditional production and living space solely enjoyed by residents into a host-guest shared space for living and tourism, endowing their original private space with a particular public attribute, and partially reducing their sense of self-efficacy in spatial disposal. Through external discourse, the latter helps residents recognize the precious value and meaning of rural spaces, enhancing their positive cognition of the distinctiveness of the place.

4.2. Varied livelihoods and increased leisure time foster self-efficacy

Elderly residents often mention the poverty and hardships they experienced before tourism’s rise. Taking the farmland around the reservoir as an example, residents had to expand their cultivation to the surrounding mountains to meet self-sufficiency needs, relying on unpredictable weather for income. Typically, the best outcome residents could hope for was to sustain their livelihoods, save some money for their children’s education, and create a small economic buffer for family emergencies during fortunate years. However, the intensity of agricultural labor led to many rural residents suffering from various chronic illnesses and persistent physical pain, and it also forced young people to leave rural areas and move to cities. Rural tourism has transformed livelihoods. Since the inception of tourism planning, most have

embraced it, opening homestays, agri-tourism, and selling specialties. In this process, many residents have transitioned from the singular identity of farmers to diverse roles as entrepreneurs and service providers, and the continuity of their traditional inherent identity has experienced an unprecedented impact. Compared to agricultural work, food provision and guest services labor is much less physically demanding. Engaging in tourism-related work allows residents to enjoy a better quality of life while requiring less physical exertion. Several interviewees acknowledged the positive role of tourism and expressed a degree of satisfaction and recognition for improving their family's economic status and quality of life. The distinctive and traditional identity of rural residents gradually fades away with the introduction of tourism, becoming an outdated and less fitting label.

Furthermore, the transformation of livelihoods has granted community residents more leisure time, fostering an appreciation for their resource's recreational and aesthetic value. They have started to enjoy the natural beauty of mountains, wetland parks, and rural landscapes. The rural environment's convenience and pristine nature contrast sharply with cities' severe food and air pollution. As R12 stated, *"Nowadays, even the wealthy want to live in the countryside. While cities offer convenience, they can not compare to rural areas. The air here is fresh, and the environment is top-notch. Many urban residents dream of owning a house here for retirement."* Community residents' change in identification with the place and attitude towards leisure stems from the proximity of entertainment activities. Leisure was once considered unproductive when life involved physical labor, but now it is essential to enjoying life in a slow-paced rural setting. In the survey, residents frequently engage in leisure fishing activities, benefitting from nature's closeness. Despite the improved quality of life in Shangliang village, some residents still perceive cities as better places to live. Most of them have already purchased or plan to buy a second property in the city, aiming for a lifestyle that combines rural charm with urban conveniences like high-quality medical services and transportation. Additionally, owning property in the city benefits their family's medical services, and children's education, and provides security measures if their children choose to live in the city when they grow up.

From an economic restructuring perspective, most residents have transitioned from farmers to service industry professionals. Compared to the long cycles and low returns of agricultural planting, this mode of production has increased rural residents' income and greatly enhanced their self-efficacy. With the change in income sources, rural residents have more leisure time, further strengthening their confidence in their abilities. However, when comparing the functions of cities and villages, the rural residents' yearning for cities leads to complex identity construction. When asked if they were nostalgic for their traditional identity as farmers, most respondents exhibited open and tolerant views. While tourism altered their mode of production, they mitigated the distinctiveness of their identity through self-regulation and eliminated some of the negative impacts on their self-efficacy under the overall increase in income.

4.3. New neighborhood and host-guest relationship differ in self-esteem

Tourism intervention reshapes rural social relations regarding internal neighborly connections and external host-guest interactions. First, new means of production (tourism resources) and modes of production (tourism industry) challenge traditional neighborly bonds, leading to a shift from cooperation to competition. Second, involving businesses and tourists adds complexity, transforming the local network into a coexistence of neighbors and hosts. These two forms of social reconstruction impact residents' identities differently.

Regarding neighborly relationships, some compare material aspects of rural life before and after tourism. R10 remarked, *"We were all the same, all equally poor. People used to help each other, and it was simpler to get along with. But now, that sense of community has faded. Those who have good relationships with the company naturally do well, and now they drive*

expensive cars... I would rather go back to how things were, when we were all poor... At least back then, no one envied anyone." Some praise tourism's economic benefits, while others question income fairness, reflecting China's egalitarian concept. This indicates that rural residents, unable to achieve common wealth, strive to avoid inequality and accept poverty as an acceptable choice. This creates a nostalgic sentiment and a feeling of powerlessness towards inequality and displacement (Li et al., 2019).

This shifts neighborly relations towards competition rather than cooperation. At the same time, the rural sharing system also faces challenges. Previously, due to limited labor and resources, residents established rules for labor and resource sharing, such as cooperative activities in farming, harvesting, and other areas, as well as mutual assistance in emergencies and celebrations. However, as community relations change, the sharing system gradually disappears, and people become more inclined to rely on themselves. As a result, the fundamental neighborly bonds weaken, and some residents express frustration over money-driven mindsets and declining morals, yearning for a simple, close-knit community. From this, it can be seen that unequal distribution of benefits leads to a sense of powerlessness among vulnerable residents. Simultaneously, the overall negative attitude of residents towards current neighborly relations weakens the continuity of identity recognition and self-esteem for traditional community relationships.

Under new political and economic conditions, interactions with urban investment enterprises and tourists become crucial in shaping rural identity. Frequent interactions deepen rural community residents' understanding of urban residents and themselves. In contrast, rural residents perceive themselves as warm-hearted, easygoing, and honest. R3 said, *"I feel rural people are easygoing, whereas urban people are relatively difficult to get close to. Besides, they often break their promises; they originally ordered free-range chickens, but after I prepared them, they said they did not want them anymore."* Residents are forming a collective perception of urban people's qualities, altering their previous self-deprecating and lacking self-esteem during interactions with urban residents. The emerging host-guest relationships further stimulate identification with identity among residents. Additionally, operating tourism businesses requires building social networks with investment enterprise and tourists. These business-related interactions influence the residents' mindset and behavior, making them more like entrepreneurs. In host-guest interactions, community residents develop a stronger sense of self-esteem, adapting better to the logic of the market economy through this positive identity.

However, to meet the demands of high-quality services from enterprises and tourists, some residents experience unprecedented pressure they have never encountered as farmers. R16 expressed, *"Nowadays, tourists have higher demands, and dealing with them is not as simple. Our product quality is good, but we still do not get many visitors. We do not know how to market ourselves. There is just too much to learn."* As interactions with guests deepen, tourists' demands for high-standard services trigger doubt and anxiety among rural residents about their service capabilities, to some extent, reducing their self-efficacy.

In conclusion, the residents display different characteristics in identity construction concerning neighborly and host-guest relationships. On the one hand, market intervention leads to income inequality among residents, weakening the self-efficacy of some relatively vulnerable individuals and intensifying competition in previously harmonious neighborly relations. This phenomenon reduces the overall continuity of residents' identity and their self-esteem. On the other hand, to better adapt to the enterprise's high-quality services and tourists' demands, residents establish a positive identity during host-guest interactions, manifested as a sense of pride in being hosts. However, they also realize their lack of knowledge and skills, somewhat reduces their self-efficacy.

4.4. Renascent culture through tourists' consumption activates identity

Tourism's intervention has led to a cultural disconnection in rural

residents' identities, causing negative impacts. Participants regarded their involvement in the traditional cultural activity Lantern Festival as representing strong community bonds. A 65-year-old elder (R9) described: "The lantern festival is our tradition. On this occasion, everyone in the village congratulated villagers with male babies born in the same year and participated in a village-wide procession... But now, not many people join anymore... It feels like we are no longer as united as before....." As tourism progresses, residents' perception of their surroundings subtly changes, causing the lantern festival to lose its original meaning. Undoubtedly, the temporal and spatial disconnection between residents and their place exacerbates the decline of traditional cultural customs, weakening their recognition of identity distinctiveness and continuity.

However, tourism fostered positive interaction and fusion between host and guest cultures. Initially, residents were skeptical about whether the agritourism activities, tasting farm-to-table cuisine, and the revival of endangered traditional customs by enterprises would attract tourists. When the tourism investment enterprise organized events like Shangliang Market Day and Long Street Banquet, R2 expressed skepticism: "Shangliang Market Day is just like a rural fair, but we have not had fairs for many years. Cities have big shopping malls, where you can find anything. Why would tourists like such activities?" However, these events crafted by the enterprise are popular among tourists, and residents have earned more by selling specialties. Moreover, tourists' appreciation for traditional agricultural activity fishing in the reservoir enhanced residents' sense of cultural pride. Tourists' interests in rural culture and lifestyle changed residents' perceptions of rural culture. Today, various cultures are packaged and presented to tourists. Residents have learned to show every aspect of their rural life to visitors. For instance, they display the food's freshness and local essence, attracting tourists to taste locally produced chickens and vegetables. Additionally, residents use traditional elements in house design and decoration, emphasizing wooden signs and traditional farmhouse styles. They have also learned to cook authentic rural dishes, highlighting local, simple, and organic characteristics. The cultural exchange through host-guest interactions boosts residents' pride in their culture and makes them realize the value of their local resources to the outside world. This sense of control over unique production materials fosters their recognition of rural distinctiveness, effectively enhancing their self-esteem and self-efficacy.

In conclusion, tourism intervention has led to the loss of traditional customs and the fusion of host and guest cultures in rural destinations. First, the disappearance of traditional customs has weakened the continuity of residents' identities. However, tourism intervention has had a positive impact on residents' identity. Specifically, external investors, acting as cultural producers, integrate popular rural cultural forms and content with Shangliang village's natural and human resources, promoting cultural development and the regional economy. It is evident that tourism intervention positively influences the preservation and vibrancy of traditional culture in rural destinations and enhances the

residents' awareness of rural distinctiveness, ultimately boosting their self-esteem and self-efficacy.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Discussion

This study, rooted in identity process theory, investigates the influencing mechanism of tourism intervention on rural residents' identity construction (see Fig. 4). This study illuminates the impacts of tourism on the village changes, involving spatial integration of landscape and residence, economic transformation of livelihoods and leisure practices, social complexities in internal and external engagements, and cultural transmutation in traditional customs. Simultaneously, these changes have consistently shaped rural residents' identities. First, the loss of spatial control due to the convergence of residential and tourism spaces obstructs rural residents' perception of self-efficacy, while external discourses enhance their self-esteem and recognition of the distinctiveness of space. Second, the shift in livelihoods, with increased income, interrupts the construction of distinctive and continuous rural identity, and the expansion of leisure time mitigates potential identity threats. Moreover, the intense competition in tourism reshapes neighborhood relationships, obstructing self-esteem and continuity of identity. However, the new host-guest relationship strengthens rural identity. Furthermore, the dilution of local culture obstructs the sense of continuity and group self-esteem in identity, yet shared cultural interactions enhance the recognition of local distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Moreover, this study reveals the complexity of the process of rural identity construction, which also can be found in transitioning from fishing to tourism (Winchenbach et al., 2022) and in traditional villages (Wang et al., 2023). Notably, rural residents begin to appreciate rural life's positive aspects and privileges, which hold particular significance in China, given the historical prejudice against rural populations. Paradoxically, rural residents seek a second urban property for their children, aiming for a dual urban-rural lifestyle. As noted by Burton and Wilson (2006), rural residents maintain their rural identity even when engaging in non-farming activities. In Shangliang village, the emergency of a new hybrid identity breaks away from the traditional urban-rural binary opposition (He & Zhang, 2022), marking a new urban-rural relationship in China (Dai et al., 2023; He & Zhang, 2022).

Furthermore, our investigation highlights the predominant influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy principles on rural residents' perception of tourism. Remarkably, satisfying the above two principles leads them to disregard tourism's adverse effects, even if compromising the other two identity principles. For rural residents, tourism transformed perceived backward villages into lifestyles resembling nearby urban areas, which promotes their interactions with tourists based on equal

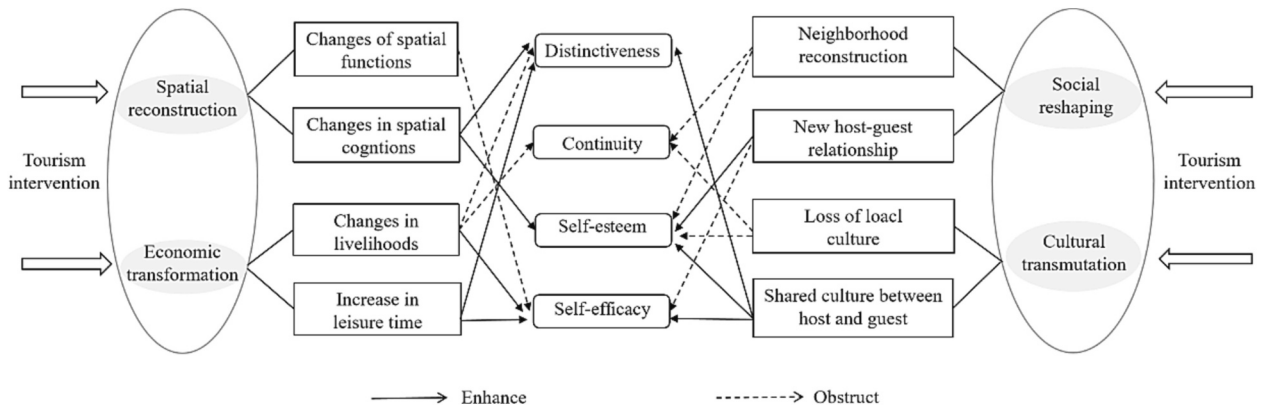


Fig. 4. The influence mechanism of tourism intervention on rural residents' identity.

social status, different from less confident and more ashamed after interacting with urban residents in previous studies (Zheng, 2003). Tourism has notably enhanced rural residents' self-esteem and self-efficacy, shaping their positive attitudes due to job opportunities, increased income, and alternate lifestyles (Wang et al., 2023). However, as tourism evolves, many prioritize immediate economic gains, overlooking the identity threat caused by tourism obstructing distinctiveness and continuity. Practical indifference persists despite certain regrets over cultural erosion and weakened community ties. However, compromising the authenticity inherent in a place's distinctiveness and continuity undermines the sustainable development of rural attractions (Ye, Xiao, & Zhou, 2018).

5.2. Theoretical implications

First, this study emphasizes how "developmental" changes brought by tourism impact identity, filling a gap in the existing literature that ignores the influences of material changes on identity. Aligning with research on Northeastern Colorado cattle owners (Bruno et al., 2022), the environmental, economic and social changes diversify rural identities (Canovi, 2019; Winchenbach et al., 2022). Historically, urban-rural disparities were significant (Knight & Song, 1999). Rural tourism emerged to drive economic growth, support rural development, and promote urban-rural integration (Xue et al., 2017). Shangliang's story illustrates tourism's role in promoting urban-rural interaction. Investors' tourism aesthetic increases the symbolic and commercial value of rural properties (Yang & Xu, 2022), which reshapes rural residents' attitudes and behaviors, challenging the continuity of rural identity. Rural residents' next issue is navigating their rural identity while adapting to growing urban developmental and cultural integrations (Stokowski et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023).

Second, this study offers a new perspective on how specific representations change and the complex relationships shaping rural residents' identities. Tourism's dual impacts on rural identity are not isolated but deeply intertwined. Different situations leading to varied combinations of identity representations, which highlights the complexity of rural identity. This challenges the conventional binary view of rural identity, typically classifying individuals into producer- or service-oriented identities (Canovi, 2019). Rural tourism fosters a dynamic interplay between the deconstruction and reconstruction of rural identity, where historical narratives intertwine with present experiences to form integrated life narratives. Therefore, rural identity can't be examined in isolation within tourism but should be seen as "the outcome of active processes of negotiation" (Winchenbach et al., 2022). Moreover, the emergence of hybrid identities signals a new rural-urban relationship in China, supporting the view that tourism development helps bridge the urban-rural gap (Liu, Nijkamp, & Lin, 2017).

Third, this study expands the theoretical boundaries of IPT by examining the nuanced interplay among the four principles in rural identity construction. We find that fulfilling self-esteem and self-efficacy principles will mitigate perceived identity threats from tourism intervention, even if the other two identity principles are compromised. This discovery challenges Jaspal and Breakwell's (2014) view that identity threat occurs when any of the four principles are compromised. Furthermore, our discovery responds to the call focusing on the role of self-esteem and self-efficacy in identity construction (Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022). The critical role of self-esteem and self-efficacy on rural residents' perception of tourism also illuminates detailed distinctions among the four principles (Breakwell, 1986, 2021; Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022), which offers robust backing for IPT development.

5.3. Practical implications

Our study also has important practical implications for improving rural tourism development quality. Rural residents should be cautious about the tourism business type to avoid homogenization, which risks

losing village authenticity and eroding place identity. They should deepen the understanding of the cultural significance inherent in self-employed businesses and collaborate with village committees to plan diverse experiences, enhance the village's tourism allure and reduce homogeneous competition. This improves economic efficiency and preserves distinctiveness.

Local government should focus on a more equitable distribution to bridge neighborhood conflicts caused by income disparities, thereby restoring respect for the continuity of community relations. The strict control measures of the government and investors to maintain the village's tourism environment could damage residents' sense of ownership and responsibility for local development. Therefore, local government, investors, and village committees should prioritize rural residents' participation and opinions in tourism decision-making through professional training, information sessions and regular engagement to enhance their sense of control.

5.4. Limitations and future research

Research invariably possesses limitations. First, this study adopts a qualitative approach to delineate the mechanism of tourism intervention on rural residents' identity construction. Future research could integrate various methodological approaches to significantly contribute to theoretical development, from the nonintrusive qualitative methods discussed in this article to quantitative and experimental methodologies with larger samples. Future research could focus on a nuanced analysis of alterations in identity components and assessments (particularly self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity, and positive distinctiveness) resulting from implementing precise coping strategies.

Second, this study used a single case of Shangliang village. While the case study approach does not claim the generalisability of the results, this paper offers a basis for further research on understanding the identity and urban-rural relations during the transition from traditional rural livelihoods to tourism. Future studies could involve multiple villages to compare if the current findings could apply to villages across types. Tourism's impact on rural residents' inner psychology is becoming a universal problem worldwide. Whether similar rural identity changes have occurred in other tourism-dependent rural communities in China or elsewhere is still being determined. Future research could adopt a cross-cultural perspective to examine.

Finally, the identity of rural residents is a promising field for tourism impact research. This study treated rural residents as a collective and did not explore distinct subgroups' experiences and perspectives, such as gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Future research could examine the differences in identity formation among diverse subgroups and the influencing factors. Furthermore, it is imperative to investigate the role of policies in shaping rural identity changes. As reported in this paper, tourism coincides with national rural revitalization policies, which foster the successful advancement of rural tourism and engender a new national discourse on rural residents, contributing significantly to rural identity construction. This warrants more scholarly attention as rural identity is embedded within broader social, economic, and political contexts.

Funding

This work was supported by the funding from Guangdong Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science (Grant No. GD22TWCXGC05) and (Grant No. GD21ZDZGL01).

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Zhicai Wu: Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing. **Jing Ma:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Visualization, Writing – original draft,

Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Afridi, F., Li, X., & Ren, Y. (2015). Social identity and inequality: The impact of China's hukou system. *Journal of Public Economics*, 123, 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.12.011>
- Anagnost, A. S. (2004). The corporeal politics of quality (Suzhi). *Public Culture*, 16(2), 189–208. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-2-189>
- Biao, X. (2007). How far are the left-behind left behind? A preliminary study in rural China. *Population, Space and Place*, 13(3), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.437>
- Boffy-Ramirez, E., & Moon, S. (2018). The role of China's household registration system in the urban-rural income differential. *China Economic Journal*, 11(2), 108–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17538963.2018.1453103>
- Brandth, B., & Haugen, M. S. (2011). Farm diversification into tourism—implications for social identity? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2010.09.002>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Breakwell, G. M. (1986). *Coping with threatened identities*. London.
- Breakwell, G. M. (2021). Identity resilience: Its origins in identity processes and its role in coping with threat. *Contemporary Social Science*, 16(5), 573–588. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2021.1999488>
- Breakwell, G. M., Fino, E., & Jaspal, R. (2022). The identity resilience index: Development and validation in two UK samples. *Identity*, 22(2), 166–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2021.1957895>
- Breakwell, G. M., & Jaspal, R. (2022). Identity processes and musicians during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Musicae Scientiae*, 26(4), 777–798. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10298649221102526>
- Bredvold, R., & Skålen, P. (2016). Lifestyle entrepreneurs and their identity construction: A study of the tourism industry. *Tourism Management*, 56, 96–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.03.023>
- Bruno, J. E., Fernández-Giménez, M. E., & Balgopal, M. M. (2022). Identity theory in agriculture: Understanding how social-ecological shifts affect livestock ranchers and farmers in northeastern Colorado. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 94, 204–217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.06.007>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Burton, R. J., & Wilson, G. A. (2006). Injecting social psychology theory into conceptualisations of agricultural agency: Towards a post-productivist farmer self-identity? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(1), 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2005.07.004>
- Butler, G., Szili, G., & Huang, H. (2022). Cultural heritage tourism development in Panyu District, Guangzhou: Community perspectives on pride and preservation, and concerns for the future. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 17(1), 56–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1881524>
- Cai, F., & Wang, M. (2010). Growth and structural changes in employment in transition China. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 38(1), 71–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2009.10.006>
- Canovi, M. (2019). Resistance to agritourism diversification: An analysis of winery owners' identities. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 32, Article 100566. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.100566>
- Canovi, M., Mordue, T., & Lyon, A. (2020). The impact of wine tourism involvement on winery owners' identity processes. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 17(5), 573–590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2020.1730945>
- Cassel, S. H., & Pettersson, K. (2015). Performing gender and rurality in Swedish farm tourism. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 15(1–2), 138–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2015.1005333>
- Cawley, M., & Gillmor, D. A. (2008). Integrated rural tourism: Concepts and practice. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 316–337. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.07.011>
- Chan, K. W. (1996). Post-Mao China: A two-class urban society in the making. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 20(1), 134–150. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1996.tb00305.x>
- Chan, K. W., & Buckingham, W. (2008). Is China abolishing the hukou system? *The China Quarterly*, 195, 582–606. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741008000787>
- Chen, R., Ye, C., Cai, Y., Xing, X., & Chen, Q. (2014). The impact of rural out-migration on land use transition in China: Past, present and trend. *Land Use Policy*, 40, 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2013.10.003>
- Cole, S. (2007). Beyond authenticity and commodification. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(4), 943–960. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.05.004>
- Confente, I., & Scarpi, D. (2021). Achieving environmentally responsible behavior for tourists and residents: A norm activation theory perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(6), 1196–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520938875>
- Dai, M., Fan, D., Wang, R., Ou, Y., & Ma, X. (2023). Does rural tourism revitalize the countryside? An exploration of the spatial reconstruction through the lens of cultural connotations of rurality. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 29, Article 100801. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100801>
- Floysand, A., & Jakobsen, S. (2007). Commodification of rural places: A narrative of social fields, rural development, and football. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23(2), 206–221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2006.09.012>
- Fytopoulou, E., Tampakis, S., Galatsidas, S., Karasmanaki, E., & Tzantopoulos, G. (2021). The role of events in local development: An analysis of residents' perspectives and visitor satisfaction. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 82, 54–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.01.018>
- Gu, H., & Ryan, C. (2008). Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism—The case of a Beijing hutong. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 637–647. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.06.006>
- Harner, J. (2001). Place identity and copper mining in Sonora, Mexico. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91(4), 660–680. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0004-5608.00264>
- Hay, R. (1998). Sense of place in developmental context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18(1), 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jevp.1997.0060>
- He, S., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Reconceptualising the rural through planetary thinking: A field experiment of sustainable approaches to rural revitalisation in China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 96, 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.10.008>
- Hoefle, S. W. (2016). Multi-functionality, juxtaposition and conflict in the Central Amazon: Will tourism contribute to rural livelihoods and save the rainforest? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44, 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.12.009>
- Jaspal, R., & Breakwell, G. M. (2014). *Identity process theory: Identity, social action and social change*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jiang, Y., Long, H., Ives, C. D., Deng, W., Chen, K., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Modes and practices of rural vitalisation promoted by land consolidation in a rapidly urbanising China: A perspective of multifunctionality. *Habitat International*, 121, Article 102514. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2022.102514>
- Kerstetter, D., & Bricker, K. (2009). Exploring Fijian's sense of place after exposure to tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(6), 691–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580902999196>
- Kim, K., Uysal, M., & Sirgy, M. J. (2013). How does tourism in a community impact the quality of life of community residents. *Tourism Management*, 36, 527–540. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.09.005>
- Knight, J., & Song, L. (1999). *The rural-urban divide: Economic disparities and interactions in China*. Oxford University Press.
- Kurnaz, A., & Anıktar, S. (2023). Examination of rural architecture that shapes sustainable tourism in emerging economies through stakeholder perspectives: Sile, Istanbul. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2223913>
- Li, Y., Zhang, H., Zhang, D., & Abrahams, R. (2019). Mediating urban transition through rural tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 152–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.01.001>
- Liu, J., Nijkamp, P., & Lin, D. (2017). Urban-rural imbalance and tourism-led growth in China. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 64, 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.02.005>
- Liu, Y., Dai, L., Long, H., Woods, M., & Fois, F. (2022). Rural vitalization promoted by industrial transformation under globalization: The case of Tengtou village in China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 95, 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.09.020>
- Liu, Z. (2005). Institution and inequality: The hukou system in China. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 33(1), 133–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2004.11.001>
- Luo, Q., Ding, S., & Pan, K. (2018). Generational differences in the influence of exotic gastronomic culture on local residents' place identity in Guangzhou. *Geographical Research*, 37(9), 1762–1774.
- Luo, W., Timothy, D. J., Zhong, C., & Zhang, X. (2022). Influential factors in agrarian households' engagement in rural tourism development. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 44, Article 101009. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.101009>
- Lyon, A., Hunter-Jones, P., & Warnaby, G. (2017). Are we any closer to sustainable development? Listening to active stakeholder discourses of tourism development in the Waterberg biosphere reserve, South Africa. *Tourism Management*, 61, 234–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.01.010>
- Ma, X., Dai, M., & Fan, D. (2020). Land expropriation in tourism development: Residents' attitudinal change and its influencing mechanism. *Tourism Management*, 76, Article 103957. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100801>
- Martin, G. P. (2005). Narratives great and small: Neighbourhood change, place and identity in Notting Hill. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(1), 67–88. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2005.00570.x>
- Mayer, R. (2010). Doing cultural work: Local postcard production and place identity in a rural shire. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 26(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2009.06.002>
- Mehra, A., Kilduff, M., & Brass, D. J. (1998). At the margins: A distinctiveness approach to the social identity and social networks of underrepresented groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(4), 441–452. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257083>
- Mura, P., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2018). Locating Asian research and selves in qualitative tourism research. In *Asian qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and methods* (pp. 1–20).
- Niska, M., Vesala, H. T., & Vesala, K. M. (2012). Peasantry and entrepreneurship as frames for farming: Reflections on farmers' values and agricultural policy discourses. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(4), 453–469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2012.00572.x>
- Nunkoo, R., & Gursoy, D. (2012). Residents' support for tourism: An identity perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 243–268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.05.006>
- Oakes, T. S. (1993). The cultural space of modernity: Ethnic tourism and place identity in China. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 11(1), 47–66. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d110047>

- Oh, S. (2023). Does identity affect labor supply? *American Economic Review*, 113(8), 2055–2083. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20211826>
- Ohe, Y. (2021). Investigating farmer's identity and efficiency of tourism-oriented farm diversification. *Tourism Economics*, 28(2), 535–558. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816620980185>
- Paniagua, A. (2014). Rurality, identity and morality in remote rural areas in northern Spain. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 35, 49–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.03.009>
- Pi, J., & Zhang, P. (2016). Hukou system reforms and skilled-unskilled wage inequality in China. *China Economic Review*, 41, 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chieco.2016.08.009>
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage.
- Rogers, S. C. (2002). Which heritage? Nature, culture, and identity in French rural tourism. *French Historical Studies*, 25(3), 475–503. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-25-3-475>
- Sedgley, D., Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Hanna, P. (2017). Tourism and autism: Journeys of mixed emotions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.05.009>
- Sharpley, R. (2002). Rural tourism and the challenge of tourism diversification: The case of Cyprus. *Tourism Management*, 23(3), 233–244. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(01\)00078-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00078-4)
- Sharpley, R., & Vass, A. (2006). Tourism, farming and diversification: An attitudinal study. *Tourism Management*, 27(5), 1040–1052. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.10.025>
- Shucksmith, M. (2018). Re-imagining the rural: From rural idyll to good countryside. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 59, 163–172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.07.019>
- Sicular, T., Yue, X., Gustafsson, B., & Li, S. (2007). The urban–rural income gap and inequality in China. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 53(1), 93–126. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4991.2007.00219.x>
- Soulard, J., Park, J., & Zou, S. (2023). Pride in transformation: A rural tourism stakeholder view. *Journal of Travel Research*, 63(1), 80–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875221143487>
- Stokowski, P. A., Kuentzel, W. F., Derrien, M. M., & Jakobcic, Y. L. (2021). Social, cultural and spatial imaginaries in rural tourism transitions. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 87, 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.09.011>
- Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of tourism: Forging new ground for ecotourism and other alternatives. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30(1), 261–283. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.30.1.261>
- Stronza, A. (2008). Through a new mirror: Reflections on tourism and identity in the Amazon. *Human Organization*, 67(3), 244–257. <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.67.3.a556044720353823>
- Sun, S., & Tu, Y. (2023). Impact of financial inclusion on the urban-rural income gap—Based on the spatial panel data model. *Finance Research Letters*, 53, Article 103659. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2023.103659>
- Tang, C., Yang, Y., Liu, Y., & Xiao, X. (2023). Comprehensive evaluation of the cultural inheritance level of tourism-oriented traditional villages: The example of Beijing. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 48, Article 101166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101166>
- Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Uzzell, D. L. (1996). Creating place identity through heritage interpretation. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 1(4), 219–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527259608722151>
- Vignoles, V. L., Chrysochoou, X., & Breakwell, G. M. (2000). The distinctiveness principle: Identity, meaning, and the bounds of cultural relativity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4(4), 337–354. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404_4
- Walters, T. (2016). Using thematic analysis in tourism research. *Tourism Analysis*, 21(1), 107–116. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354216X14537459509017>
- Wang, J., Lan, H., & Chen, J. (2023). Defend and remould—Residents' place identity construction in traditional villages in the rural tourism context: A case study of Cuandixia village, Beijing. *Tourism Tribune*, 38(5), 87–101.
- Wang, L. (2021). Causal analysis of conflict in tourism in rural China: The peasant perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 39, Article 100863. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100863>
- Wang, S., & Chen, J. S. (2015). The influence of place identity on perceived tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 52, 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.02.016>
- Wang, S., Chen, S., & Xu, H. (2019). Resident attitudes towards dark tourism, a perspective of place-based identity motives. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(13), 1601–1616. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1390553>
- Wang, S., & Sun, J. (2023). Taste pursuing in rural residents' consumption: A comparative study of tourism impact in Dali, China. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 48, Article 101158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101158>
- Wang, S., & Xu, H. (2015). Influence of place-based senses of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy on residents' attitudes toward tourism. *Tourism Management*, 47, 241–250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.10.007>
- Wester-Herber, M. (2004). Underlying concerns in land-use conflicts—The role of place-identity in risk perception. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 7(2), 109–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2003.12.001>
- Winchenbach, A., Hanna, P., & Miller, G. (2022). Constructing identity in marine tourism diversification. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 95, Article 103441. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2022.103441>
- Xu, W., & Tan, K. C. (2002). Impact of reform and economic restructuring on rural systems in China: A case study of Yuhang, Zhejiang. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18(1), 65–81. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(01\)00030-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(01)00030-4)
- Xue, L., Kerstetter, D., & Hunt, C. (2017). Tourism development and changing rural identity in China. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 170–182. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.07.016>
- Yang, X., & Xu, H. (2022). Producing an ideal village: Imagined rurality, tourism and rural gentrification in China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 96, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.10.005>
- Ye, S., Xiao, H., & Zhou, L. (2018). Commodification and perceived authenticity in commercial homes. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 71, 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.05.003>
- York, Q. Y., Yan, L., & Ben, H. Y. (2021). My life matters here: Assessing the adjusted identity of domestic migrant workers at intangible cultural heritage tourism businesses in China. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 39, Article 100856. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100856>
- Zhang, J. (2023). Tourism and rural income inequality: Empirical evidence for China. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(1), 153–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.2010674>
- Zhang, S., Sun, Y., & Li, W. (2023). Remaking the rural as a tourism place: How smallholder adapt to the new rural paradigm. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(12), 1991–2005. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2077176>
- Zheng, T. (2003). Consumption, body image, and rural–urban apartheid in contemporary China. *City & Society*, 15(2), 143–163. <https://doi.org/10.1525/city.2003.15.2.143>
- Zhou, L., Wall, G., Zhang, D., & Cheng, X. (2021). Tourism and the (re)making of rural places: The cases of two Chinese villages. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 40, Article 100910. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100910>
- Zhou, Y., Li, Y., & Xu, C. (2020). Land consolidation and rural revitalization in China: Mechanisms and paths. *Land Use Policy*, 91, Article 104379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104379>
- Zhu, J., Zhu, M., & Xiao, Y. (2019). Urbanization for rural development: Spatial paradigm shifts toward inclusive urban-rural integrated development in China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 71, 94–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.08.009>



Zhicai Wu is a professor in the Department of Tourism Management, South China University of Technology, China. His research interests include urban-rural integration and rural tourism.



Jing Ma is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Tourism Management, South China University of Technology, China. Her research interests focus on tourism impact, rural tourism, and destination management.