

Local Stakeholders' Perspectives of WHS Status:

A Case Study

by

Jiayun Du

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
of

MASTER OF ARTS

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2012 by Jiayun Du

ABSTRACT

It is recognized that the World Heritage Site (WHS) status is a strong brand with exceptional quality and excellent reputation that attracts tourists to visit. This study applies and adapts the brand knowledge model to examine local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status as a brand.

A case study approach was applied and a WHS in China was selected as the case. In total, 13 interviewees from local government, private business owners and residents participated in the study.

The study showed that the three local stakeholders were familiar with the WHS status and shared the importance of the WHS status as intended by the WHS program to tourists. However, local stakeholders over emphasized the economic importance of the WHS status, and conservation became a tool to fulfill economic benefits.

The results challenged the standpoint of the WHS program and showed that the WHS status was not a strong brand.

Keywords: World Heritage Site status, brand equity, local stakeholders

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

6,770 miles is the distance between my hometown (Shanghai, China) and Winnipeg. 1,185 days is the length I have stayed in Winnipeg. During these days, I gradually expanded my knowledge, designed my research, collected data and wrote final reports. Finally, I completed the thesis.

Greatest appreciation goes to my advisor – Dr. Christine Van Winkle who devoted considerable time and efforts to my progress and continuously encouraged me to the whole process. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Kelly Mackay and Dr. Susan E. Frohlick, my committee members. Your encouragement and assistance are greatly appreciated.

I also would like to acknowledge Mrs. Huijun Du, my aunt, who helped me to build connections to Yi County (China); Mr. Cheng-cheng Wong, Director of Yi County Bureau of Finance Supervision, who facilitated me to collect data in Xidi and Hongcun; Miss. Xiaojin Gu, my research assistant, who helped me to transcribe, code and translate the data; and 13 interviewees who participated in the study.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmothers, Ai-nan Mu and Xinbao Sun, who passed away and could not witness my success.

Also, this thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Huizhong Du and Lanzhen Hu. You always encourage me and support me. I love you.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
DEDICATION	III
LIST of TABLES & FIGURES	VII
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	- 1 -
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	- 4 -
Heritage, World Heritage Sites and tourism	- 4 -
Heritage and World Heritage Site	- 4 -
Heritage and tourism	- 8 -
World Heritage Sites and tourism	- 10 -
World Heritage Sites in China	- 12 -
Branding and World Heritage Sites	- 13 -
The WHS status as a brand	- 13 -
The image of the WHS status	- 14 -
Branding management and internal stakeholders	- 15 -
Brand equity and the WHS status	- 17 -
<i>Brand awareness</i>	- 19 -
<i>Brand image</i>	- 19 -
<i>Interpretation</i>	- 20 -
<i>Commitment</i>	- 20 -
Stakeholders and World Heritage Sites	- 21 -
Definition of stakeholders	- 21 -
Stakeholders in tourism	- 22 -
World Heritage Site stakeholders	- 23 -
Theoretical framework	- 25 -
Chapter III: RESEARCH DESIGN	- 28 -
Method	- 28 -
Case study selection	- 28 -
Site selection	- 28 -
Site background	- 29 -
Participant selection	- 31 -
Data collection	- 33 -
Recruiting process	- 34 -
Interviews	- 36 -
Review of documents	- 38 -
Data analysis	- 39 -
The role of a research assistant	- 39 -
Transcription	- 40 -
Coding	- 40 -
Interpretation	- 41 -
Review of documents and interpretation	- 42 -

Chapter IV: FINDINGS.....	- 43 -
Overview of impacts of the designation in Xidi and Hongcun.....	- 43 -
Management system in Yi County after the designation	- 43 -
Number of tourists after the designation	- 44 -
Overview of themes and categories	- 45 -
Description of local government’s knowledge of the WHS status.....	- 47 -
Overview of participants	- 47 -
Theme one: awareness of the WHS status.....	- 48 -
Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status	- 49 -
Theme three: commitment to the WHS status	- 51 -
<i>Fame</i>	<i>- 51 -</i>
<i>Economic benefits</i>	<i>- 53 -</i>
<i>Development opportunities</i>	<i>- 56 -</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>- 57 -</i>
<i>Conservation.....</i>	<i>- 58 -</i>
<i>Responsibility.</i>	<i>- 59 -</i>
<i>Just a name.....</i>	<i>- 60 -</i>
Description of private business owners’ perspectives of the WHS status	- 60 -
Overview of participants	- 60 -
Theme one: awareness of the WHS status.....	- 61 -
Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status	- 63 -
Theme three: commitment to the WHS status.....	- 65 -
<i>Fame</i>	<i>- 65 -</i>
<i>Business opportunities</i>	<i>- 66 -</i>
<i>Economic benefits.....</i>	<i>- 67 -</i>
<i>Conservation:</i>	<i>- 68 -</i>
Description of residents’ perspectives of the WHS status.....	- 69 -
Overview of participants	- 69 -
Theme one: awareness of the WHS status.....	- 70 -
Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status	- 71 -
Theme three: commitment to the WHS status.....	- 73 -
<i>Economic benefits</i>	<i>- 73 -</i>
<i>Fame</i>	<i>- 74 -</i>
<i>Conservation.....</i>	<i>- 74 -</i>
Cross-group analysis.....	- 76 -
Different goals and interests among the three local stakeholder groups.....	- 78 -
Different economic benefits among the three local stakeholder groups	- 82 -
Different power among the three local stakeholder groups.....	- 84 -
Chapter V : DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS.....	- 89 -
Discussion.....	- 89 -
Awareness of the WHS status	- 90 -
Image of the WHS status.....	- 91 -
<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>- 91 -</i>
<i>Commitment.</i>	<i>- 94 -</i>
Implications	- 97 -

Theoretical implications	- 97 -
Practical implications	- 99 -
Limitations	- 101 -
Translation	- 101 -
Procedure in the fieldwork	- 102 -
Chapter VI: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH	- 104 -
Conclusion	- 104 -
Future Research	- 106 -
References	- 108 -
Appendix A-1 (original): Application of Request	- 123 -
Appendix A-2(translation) : 申请	- 125 -
Appendix B-1(original): Letter to Supervisor of Government Agency	- 127 -
Appendix B-2(translation): 关于在贵单位进行调研的申请	- 128 -
Appendix C-1(original): Informed Consent	- 129 -
Appendix C-2(translation): 知情同意书	- 131 -
Appendix D-1(original): Participants' Request for Transcription & Summary of Results	- 133 -
Appendix D-2(translation): 受访者对于录音文字稿和研究报告总结的申请	- 134 -
Appendix E-1(original): Research Instrument	- 135 -
Appendix E-2(translation): 采访大纲	- 142 -

LIST of TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1: Inscription criteria of cultural heritage sites	- 6 -
Table 2: Inscription criteria for Xidi and Hongcun	- 31 -
Table 3: Example questions related to interpretation of the WHS status	- 37 -
Table 4: Summary of themes and categories in the study	- 46 -
Table 5: Overview of participants in the local government.....	- 47 -
Table 6: Overview of participants in private business owners	- 61 -
Table 7: Overview of participants in the residents group.....	- 69 -
Table 8: Summary of responses from the three local stakeholders regarding the WHS status	- 76 -
Table 9: Summary of main sources of income after the designation.....	- 83 -
Figure 1: The Nomination Processes of a WHS	- 7 -
Figure 2: Relation among the WHS status, local stakeholders and tourists	- 16 -
Figure 3: Brand knowledge model from internal stakeholders' perspectives.....	- 18 -
Figure 4: Theoretical framework of the study	- 26 -
Figure 5: Map of Xidi and Hongcun.....	- 29 -
Figure 6: WHS supply-side Stakeholders from different levels in China	- 32 -
Figure 7: Management System in Yi County after the designation.....	- 44 -
Figure 8: Number of Tourists in Xidi and Hongcun (2004 – 2010)	- 44 -
Figure 9: Revenue from entrance fee in Xidi and Hongcun (2004-2010)	- 45 -
Figure 10: Meanings of the WHS status from local stakeholders' perspectives	- 95 -
Figure 11: Local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status meanings	- 96 -

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Adopted in 1972, the World Heritage Convention aims to identify, protect, conserve assets with “outstanding universal value”, not only for the current generation, but also for future generations (UNESCO, 2010a). Under the Convention, the idea of World Heritage Site (WHS) program was established and any site titled as a WHS is considered to have cultural or natural significance to the nation and the whole world. Since the WHS program was established, countries across the world have been devoting efforts to gain this global recognition. The number of WHSs has increased from 12 to 936 in the last four decades (UNESCO, 2011a).

Many countries put a great deal of effort into trying to have a site designated as a WHS. The WHS designation is a means of conserving and preserving sites by attracting financial and technical supports (Smith, 2002; Yang, Lin & Han, 2009), raising public awareness of respect and appreciation (Drost, 1996; Smith, 2002), enhancing national identity and image (Smith, 2002), and contributing to cultural (re)generation and prosperity (Grunewald, 2002; Richards & Wilson, 2006).

At the same time, WHSs are also widely used in marketing campaigns to promote tourism (Yang, Lin & Han, 2009). Indeed, tourism can generate cash for WHSs which is beneficial for conservation (Drost, 1996; Yang, Lin & Han, 2009); tourism may also cause considerable costs to WHSs, such as overcrowding due to increasing number of tourists (Li, Wu & Cai, 2008), and destruction of environmental or cultural significance (Yang, Lin & Han, 2009). At many WHSs, tourism becomes a concern for site managers and increasingly researchers are examining these issues (Buckley, 2004; Das,

unpublished paper; Hall & Piggin, 2002; Hazen, 2009; Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006; Nicholas, Thapa & Jae Ko, 2009).

In order to manage WHSs, involvement of stakeholders is encouraged by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 2010b). Stakeholders can be divided into supply-side stakeholders who provide services/products, and demand-side stakeholders who purchase services/products. In the field of tourism, the main supply-side (local) stakeholders include governments, private business owners, and residents. Tourists are the main demand-side stakeholders. These stakeholders may have diverse expectations and varying experiences with WHSs, which lead them to have different perceptions of the WHS status. For example, tourists view the WHS status as a brand with exceptional quality and excellent reputation, and local stakeholders may influence the quality of the WHS status through their communication with tourists and their attitudes toward the WHS status (e.g. Buckley, 2004; Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006; Yan & Morrison, 2007). Hence, the concern is how to keep the credibility of the WHS status. Brand equity theory is an indicator used to measure the effectiveness of a brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998), and brand knowledge model, in terms of brand awareness (recognition and recall) and brand image (interpretation and commitment), has been applied and adapted to guide this study.

In the current tourism literature, some studies have been conducted to understand the role of stakeholders (Akis, Peristianis & Warner, 1996; Andriotis & Vaughn, 2003; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Easterling, 2005; Nicholas, Thapa & Ko, 2009; Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele & Beaumont, 2010). However, few studies have examined local stakeholders (e.g. local government, private business

owners and tourists) in tourism (Akis, Peristianis & Warner, 1996; Andriotis & Vaughn, 2003; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Easterling, 2005; Hall & Piggin, 2002; Nicholas, Thapa & Ko, 2009). Limited studies exist that focus on different perceptions of WHS stakeholders (Buckley, 2004; Das, unpublished paper; Hall & Piggin, 2002; Hazen, 2009; Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006; Nicholas, Thapa & Jae Ko, 2009). Currently, there is limited published research that examines multiple WHS stakeholders or local stakeholders simultaneously.

Given the apparent gaps in current literature regarding local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status, **the overall purpose of this study is to understand local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status as a brand.** Three key research questions are addressed:

- 1) How did local stakeholders become aware of the WHS status? How did they gain that information?
- 2) Do local stakeholders use the WHS status? If so, how do they interpret it? Why do they interpret it in that way?
- 3) How is the WHS status understood by local stakeholders? What is the most important meaning of the WHS status from their perspectives and why?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage, World Heritage Sites and tourism

Heritage and World Heritage Site

The word “heritage” refers to past resources chosen and consumed by contemporary society (Baram & Rowan, 2004; Park, 2010). It can be employed to describe both tangible (e.g. archaeological sites, monuments, forts, and historical buildings) and intangible (e.g. cultural traditions, arts, ceremonies, and customs) assets (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Graham et al., 2000; Harrison, 2010; Howard, 2003; Nuryanti, 1996; Park, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Nowadays, heritage is used to achieve many purposes. It (re)constructs national, religious, ethical identities (Bandyopadhyay, Morais & Chick, 2008; Cheung, 1999; Goulding & Domic, 2009; Palmer, 1999), increases public nostalgia (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Park, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2003), stimulates economic development (Graham et al., 2000; Howard, 2003), and revives the heritage industry (Richards & Wilson, 2006).

Different countries have different centralized authorities to plan and manage heritage resources. For example, Parks Canada is responsible for managing national historical sites across Canada; whereas in China, the P.R.C National Bureau of Culture Heritage is responsible for tangible heritage management. The establishment of various national historical sites, monuments, and memorials represents a significant part of how countries commemorate their heritage and share their identity. For instance, Lower Fort Garry National Historical Site (Canada), once was the oldest stone fur trading post in the 19th century fur trade (Parks Canada, 2011), and the site of the First National Congress of

the Chinese Communist Party was the cornerstone of the Peoples' Republic of China. Both sites are inherited from the past, conserved by the current generation, and preserved to further generations. As Harrison (2010) noted, the nature of heritage has two key components – that is, conservation and preservation. Conservation emphasizes protecting roots of the past, and preservation focuses on sustaining treasures from the past for future generations. In other words, heritage includes protecting national and regional identities, and letting people in the nation and regions discover and appreciate them (Smith, Messenger & Soderland, 2010).

The WHS program, on the other hand, is an international movement to conserve and preserve heritage resources beyond national territories. It raises international interests and responsibilities to conserve and preserve heritage resources that belong to the whole world. In other words, each WHS not only belongs to the nation in which it exists, but also is significant to people around the world. For instance, the L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site (Canada) is listed as a WHS because it is the only proof of Vikings' settlement in the North America (Parks Canada, 2011). This settlement changed modern world history and can be remembered and appreciated by people all over the world. The significance of the site, then, is its "unique milestone in the history of human migration and discovery" (UNESCO, 2011a).

In 1972, the World Heritage Convention was adopted. The mission of the Convention is to "ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value" (UNESCO, 2010a) and this led to the establishment of the WHS program. During the Convention's first 20 years, sites were classified into cultural

heritage and natural heritage. In order to gain an inclusive approach to inscription, mixed (cultural landscapes) category was added to WHS list in 1996. In total, three categories exist under the WHS program: cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites and mixed heritage sites. Although the WHS program has existed for only 39 years, the quest for gaining the WHS status has become a global phenomenon (Smith, 2002). Countries worldwide invest financial and human resources in order to nominate sites every year, the number of WHSs has risen from 12 in 1978 to 936 in 2011 (UNESCO, 2011a), and the list continues to increase. The list of WHSs is varied and includes 725 cultural heritage sites, 183 sites represent natural heritage sites and 28 sites are mixed or cultural landscape heritage sites (UNESCO, 2011a).

In order to be titled as a cultural WHS, each site must meet at least one of the six inscription criteria that refer to cultural heritage, which also reflects cultural significance of the site (see Table 1).

Table 1:

Inscription criteria of cultural heritage sites

-
- i. to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
 - ii. to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
 - iii. to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
 - iv. to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
-

-
- v. to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- vi. to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.
-

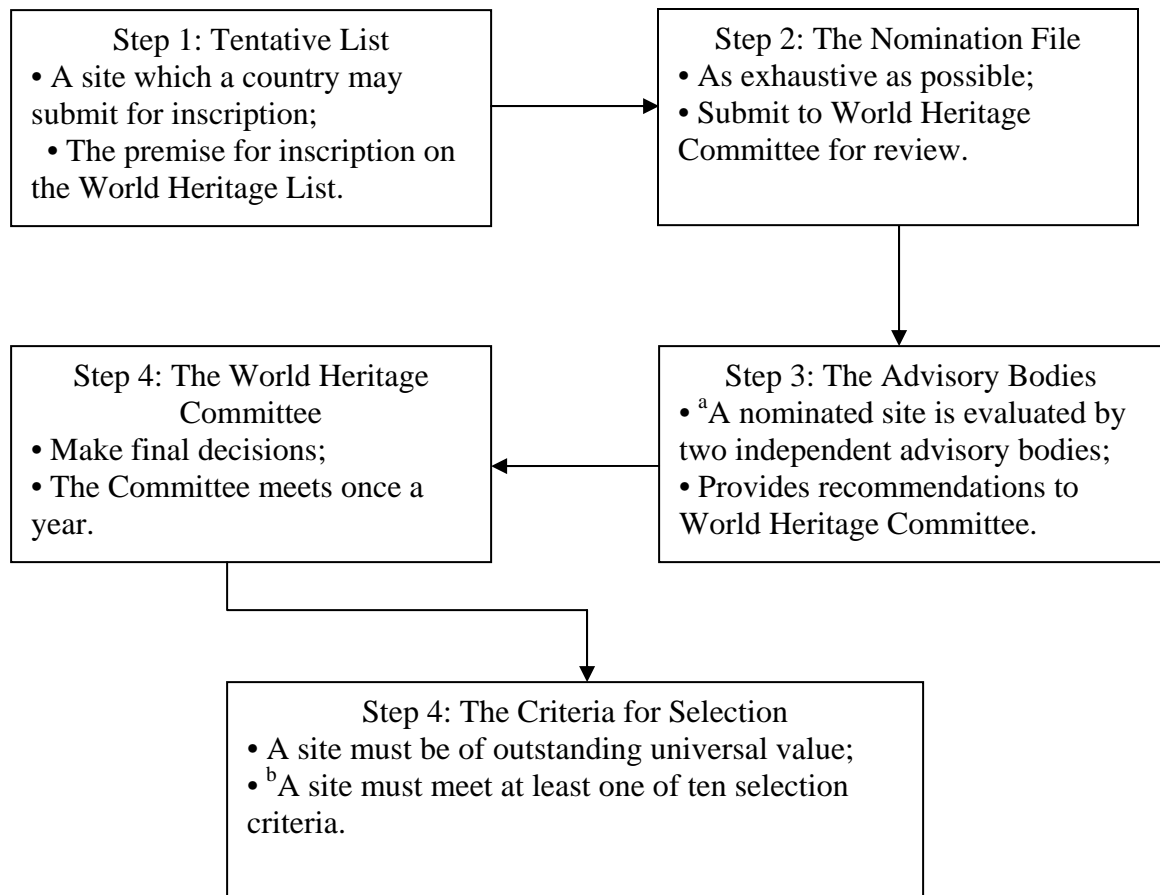
Source: UNESCO, 2011b.

According to *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2010b), outstanding universal value means “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole” (Article 49, p.14). For example, Old Town of Lunenburg (Canada) was listed as a WHS in 1995, as it represents the architectural significance of the British colonial urban planning in the 18th century (UNESCO, 2011a). Angkor (Cambodia) has been on the WHS list since 1992. The reason for its inscription is its exceptional archaeological importance (UNESCO, 2011a).

If a cultural heritage site meets at least one of these six inscription criteria and has global significance, the site can be nominated as a WHS. Figure 1 shows the nomination processes of a WHS.

Figure 1:

The Nomination Processes of a WHS



Note: 1. From UNESCO, 2011a, b;

2. ^a Two independent advisory bodies include the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural properties and World Conservation Union (IUCN) for natural properties. The mixed properties will be evaluated by ICOMOS and IUCN together;

3. ^b Ten selection criteria include six cultural heritage site criteria and four natural heritage site criteria.

Heritage and tourism

Heritage in contemporary society can be considered as an element of establishing national identities, and how a nation, a region and citizens see themselves (Smith, 2002). At the same time, heritage resources have the potential to contribute to tourism development, and as a result, heritage resources are more frequently becoming attractions (Baram & Rowan, 2004). Heritage tourism is recognized as one of the fastest growing and oldest forms of tourism (Boyd, 2008; Chen & Chen, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2003;

2006), and has been viewed as a core component of tourism (Graham et al., 2000; Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). In the past, heritage tourism was related to high-culture and special interest tourism, those who visited heritage attractions were highly educated, had high income and were knowledgeable (Nuryanti, 1996; Richards, 1996). Nowadays, the difference between high culture and low culture, special interest tourism and mass tourism has become blurred (Richards, 1996; Smith, 2003). Thousands of tourists visit internationally and nationally well-known heritage sites such as the British Museum in London (England), Lower Fort Garry National Historical Site in Manitoba (Canada), and Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C (U.S.A). Visitors are also drawn to less famous attractions, like Parc Joseph Royal in Winnipeg (Canada), Chi Lin Nunnery in Hong Kong (China), and Buddhist temples in Chiang Mai (Thailand).

The definition of heritage tourism has been approached in two ways based on either site attributions or tourist motivation (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Poria, Bulter & Airey, 2003). Current literature discussion of heritage tourism has shifted and emphasized the later approach. For some tourists, visiting heritage attractions is the main purpose of their trips, and they want to learn about cultural importance of these sites. While, for other tourists, visiting heritage attractions is just one of the many components of their trips (Marcotte & Bourdeau, 2006; McKercher & du Cros, 2002; McKercher & Ho, 2006; Nuryanti, 1996; Orbasli & Woodward, 2009).

Tourism is seen as a vehicle for economic development, especially in developing countries (Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006; Jimura, 2010; Nuryanti, 1996), thus, more destinations are trying to develop tourism to gain a share of the market. In some cases, destinations have searched for, developed, and (re)packaged heritage assets into tourism

products. There is no doubt that tourism has positive impacts on destinations and attractions, such as, contributing to conservation (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Leask, Fyall & Garrod, 2002), providing financial support (e.g. admission fee) (Bushell & McCool, 2007; Orbasli & Woodward, 2009), increasing public attachments (Bandyopadhyay, Morais & Chick, 2008; Baram & Rowan, 2004; Bushell & McCool, 2007; Palmer, 1999; Poria, Bulter & Airey, 2003; Park, 2010), encouraging partnership in heritage management (Bushell & McCool, 2007; Garrod & Fyall, 2000), and improving economic development in local communities (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). At the same time, tourism has negative consequences for heritage resources, such as wear and tear, deterioration, and degradation (Peter, 2009; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Compared to other tourism products such as culinary tourism and wine tourism, tangible heritage resources are fragile and can not be replaced (Peter, 2009; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Therefore, they need appropriate conservation and management. For many sites, the main challenge becomes the balance between conservation and public access (Boyd, 2001; Leask, Fyall & Garrod, 2002; Pomeroy, 2005). For example, in order to preserve heritage treasures and attract visitors, the Forks National Historic Sites (Canada) has released a Management Plan, which emphasizes the significance of the Forks in Canadian history and its importance to future Canadians. Meanwhile, it creates opportunities for visitors' to have meaningful experiences at the Forks (Parks Canada, 2007).

World Heritage Sites and tourism

If heritage tourism raises national and regional interests in a destination, the WHS program amplifies the interest and significance of a site on a global stage. The World

Heritage Convention is widely regarded as one of the most significant and successful international heritage agreements (Leask, 2006). In total, 187 countries have ratified the World Heritage Convention. There are many reasons for countries to nominate sites for inscription, like an increasing prestige and international recognition (Leask, 2006; Magness-Gardiner, 2004; Shckley, 1998; Smith, 2002), an attraction of international partnership, cooperation and funding (Yang, Lin & Han, 2009; Leask, 2006; UNESCO, 2010b; Williams, 2004), an opportunity to educate the public, help them to learn, share and respect diverse heritage (Leask, 2006; Smith, 2002; Williams, 2004), and a strategy for tourism development which brings economic, social and cultural benefits (Drost, 1996; Leask, 2006; Smith, 2002; Williams, 2004).

Although the primary purpose of the WHS program is to conserve and protect those sites with “outstanding universal value” (UNESCO, 2010a), WHSs are widely used in marketing campaigns to promote tourism (Cellini, 2010; Li, Wu & Cai, 2008; Roders & van Oers, 2011; Smith, 2002; Yang, Lin & Han, 2009). Some WHSs were popular attractions before receiving the WHS status, such as Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks (Canada), Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (England), and Taj Mahal (India). However, many WHSs are becoming famous attractions after receiving the WHS status and tourism becomes a common and popular phenomenon at many WHSs (Hall & Piggin, 2002; Leask & Fyall, 2006). For instance, VanBlarcom and Kayahan (2011) conducted a cost benefit analysis at WHSs in Nova Scotia (Canada), and results showed that after its designation in 1995, visitation in Old Town of Lunenburg (Canada) had increased by 6.2% and annual economic benefits in the site had increased by \$ 3.7 million (CAD) in 2009. This example shows a positive influence of tourism at WHSs; yet, tourism can cause

negative consequences to WHSs, especially for sites that are not prepared for the boom of tourism development. Some studies have discussed negative impacts of tourism at WHSs, including issues related to carrying capacity due to high visitation (Li, Wu & Cai, 2008) and concerns of balancing conservation and development (Drost, 1996; Leask, Fyall & Garrod, 2002; Magness-Gardiner, 2004; Roders & van Oerds, 2011; Yan, Lin & Han, 2009). At some WHSs, tourism challenges the initial purpose of the WHS program and becomes a concern. For instance, Old Town of Lijiang (China) received the WHS designation in 1997 because of its urban landscape and harmony of different cultures (UNESCO, 2011a). Since then, Lijiang has attracted numerous domestic and international tourists. After years' exploitation and development, the old town has become an example of an over-commoditized WHS with bars, karaoke, souvenir stores, speciality stores and discos (Zan, 2011).

World Heritage Sites in China

China has joined international tourism markets in the past 40 years and has become a popular destination for tourists across the world. According to World Tourism Organization (2011), China has been the third most popular destinations in the worldwide in 2010. China National Tourism Administration also showed that China has become a fast growing destination in the international tourism market. In 2010, China received more than 26 million inbound visitors from the global (CNTA, 2011).

In 1985, China joined the World Heritage Convention. Since then, Chinese government has devoted efforts to nominating properties based on criteria under the Convention. So far, 41 sites have been listed as WHSs, including 29 cultural heritage sites, 8 natural heritage sites and 4 mixed heritage sites (UNESCO, 2011a). Although

benefits of the designation have been well documented, more WHSs are facing challenges posed by tourism and conservation. Ancient City of Pingyao, for instance, was listed as a WHS in 1997. After the designation, the boom of tourism development served as both a blessing and blight to this WHS. On the one hand, the revenue from entrance fee is 71 times greater than the number before the designation. On the other hand, the ancient city is facing on-going issues, such as the site is overcrowded, the local government has to balance conservation and development, and residents show their increasingly negative attitude towards tourism (Xiao, 2010).

Branding and World Heritage Sites

The WHS status as a brand

As discussed, the mission of the WHS program is to conserve sites with “outstanding universal value” (UNESCO, 2010a), the designation is often accompanied by incredible economic return to local governments and communities. Thus, local governments are willing to use the WHS status in marketing activities (Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Li, Wu & Cai, 2008; Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2010).

Aaker (1996) suggested that a brand is to identify and differentiate products from other competitors' products. In other words, a brand emphasizes the uniqueness of the product. In the field of tourism, a brand is applied to identify attractions, help attractions to gain an advantage over competitors (Cai, 2002; Qu, Kim & Im, 2010), and to build an emotional link between attractions and tourists (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003; Murphy et al., 2007). Some studies have discussed that the WHS status is a ‘top’, ‘iconic’ and ‘global’ attraction brand which represents the quality to attract tourists and to promote tourism development (Boyd, 2008; Buckely, 2004; Cellini, 2010; Hall & Piggitt,

2002; Peter, 2009; Rakic & Chambers, 2007; Roders & van Oers, 2011; Ryan & Silvanto, 2009; 2010; Smith, 2002; Yan & Morrison, 2007). The Rebanks Consulting Ltd and Trends Research Ltd (2009) conducted 14 case studies at WHSs and also suggested that the WHS status has become a brand in tourism marketing.

Compared to other brands, the WHS status has considerable prestige in the tourism market since each WHS is carefully selected because of its unique cultural or natural significance. According to the World Heritage Convention, the importance of the WHS status can be understood from cultural, social and economic aspects. Culturally, the WHS program conserves and preserves sites with cultural or natural importance (Shen, 2010). In addition, each WHS provides the public opportunities to learn about and understand diverse heritage leading to greater respect and appreciation. From an economic perspective, each WHS may receive international or national funding and assistance; at the same time, tourism at WHSs can generate economic benefits (Donnachie, 2010; Shen, 2010). In other words, the core meaning of the WHS status intended by WHS program is conservation and preservation, and education and economic benefits result from the conservation and preservation efforts.

The image of the WHS status

The purpose of image in tourism is to influence tourist behaviour and decision-making (Aaker, 1996; Cai, 2002; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Qu, Kim & Im, 2010). Gunn (1972) proposed a two-dimensional model of image: organic image and induced image. Organic image refers to information (e.g. newspapers, magazines) not developed by destinations, and induced image is created directly by destinations (advertisements, posters, websites). In order to promote attractions and persuade tourists

to visit, destinations are willing to highlight unique qualities of attractions and create induced image. For example, when visiting the official website of Town of Churchill (Manitoba, Canada), tourists will find rich information about the place (e.g. history, attractions and events) and the slogan “Polar Bear Capital of the World” delivers an image of Churchill to potential tourists (Town of Churchill, 2010). In particular, each WHS experienced intensive and rigorous investigation before the WHS designation. Moreover, each WHS has its own unique cultural or natural significance, which implies that the WHS status represents exceptional quality and excellent reputation (Byod & Timothy, 2006; Rakic & Chambers, 2007).

Branding management and internal stakeholders

Branding has been used in the business industry for quite a long time and is a powerful marketing tool in the field of tourism (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Cai, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2002; 2003; Murphy et al., 2007; Pike, 2009; Qu, Kim & Im, 2010). When branding relates to the WHS status, the concern becomes how to maintain the exceptional quality and excellent reputation, and how to keep its position as a leading brand among heritage attractions.

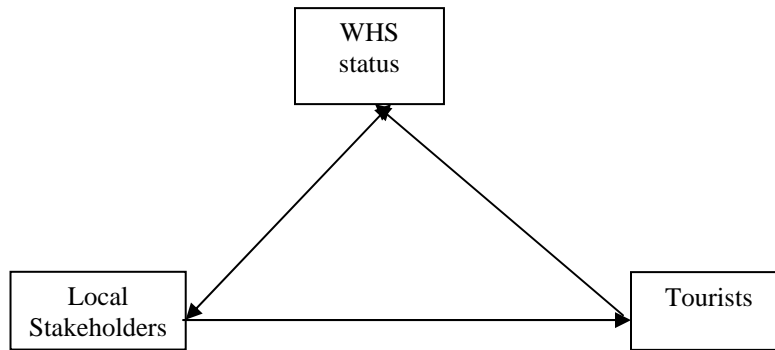
In the current branding literature, the role of consumers is dominant. This is problematic because consumers are not the only stakeholder involved in branding. As Freeman (1984, p.46) suggested, a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives”. From a marketing perspective, stakeholders can be divided into external stakeholders (e.g. consumers) and internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, suppliers, shareholders, and distributors). Besides consumers, internal stakeholders should also be taken into account, especially in the

service industry (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010; Miles & Mangold, 2004; Woodard, 1999). Tourism is seen as a service industry, which emphasizes tourist experience (Otto & Richie, 1996). Blain et al. (2005) claimed that a strong brand involves the assurance of the quality, that is, what tourists expect to experience is actually experienced. Two components may influence the quality of a tourism brand: the attraction itself (e.g. architecture, appearance and environment) and tourist experience (e.g. services provided at the site, the way to contact to residents).

Some scholars recognized the importance of understanding internal stakeholders in branding (Frampton, 2009; Hankinson, 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2007; Jones, 2005; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). They suggested that internal stakeholders recreate their own perceptions of the brand, deliver (in)consistent messages to consumers which influence consumer satisfaction and the credibility of the brand (Frampton, 2009; Hankinson, 2009; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Jones, 2005; Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Murphy et al., 2005). Frampton (2009) proposed that a successful brand tries to deliver a desirable value to consumers, to persuade their purchase and to build their loyalty. If internal stakeholders deliver messages that are consistent with promises that the organization desires, this will have positive impacts on consumers' loyalty and maintain the credibility of the brand. On the other hand, if internal stakeholders transmit messages not consistent with the brand promises, internal stakeholders will cause consumer dissatisfaction and damage the reputation of the brand. Figure 2 illustrated the relation among the WHS status, local stakeholders and tourists.

Figure 2:

Relation among the WHS status, local stakeholders and tourists



As shown, local stakeholders are affected by the WHS status (e.g. their behaviour, opportunities, and normal life), at the same time, they re-establish perceptions of the WHS status by themselves based on what they have heard (e.g. media, word-of-mouth, conferences) and what they have experienced. Through interaction and communication, local stakeholders interpret the WHS status and deliver their understanding of the WHS status to tourists. Commitment to the WHS status implied local stakeholders' level of support for the WHS status and the degree to which they use the WHS status in a way that is (in)consistent with its intended meaning by the WHS program (Freeman & Reed, 1983; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Jones, 2005; Urde, 2007). In addition, the WHS status is not only transparent to tourists via existing image (exceptional quality and excellent reputation), but also is influenced by tourist actual experience at the site (contacts with the site, services and local stakeholders).

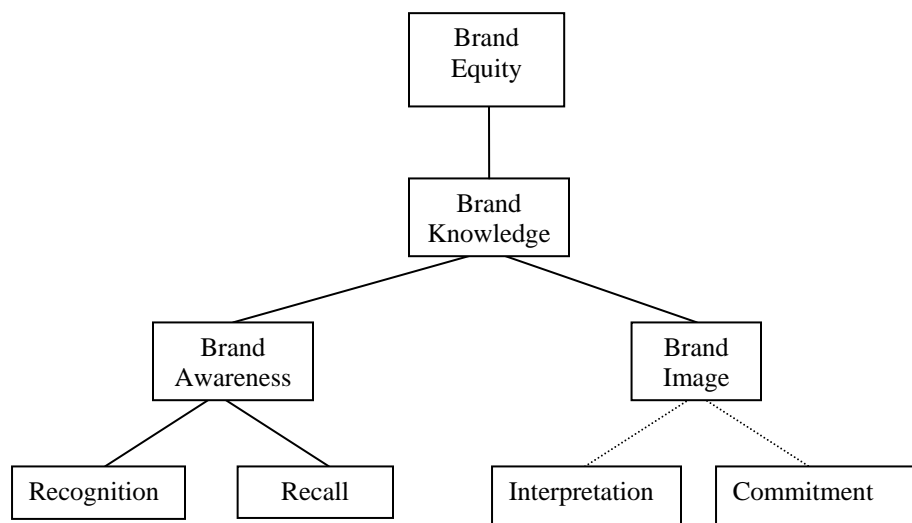
Brand equity and the WHS status

Brand equity refers to “a set of assets linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers” (Aaker 1996, p.7-8). It is an indicator used to measure the value of the brand (Aaker, 1996), and a useful tool to examine the performance of a brand over time (Pike, 2009). Brand equity is largely applied to describe how consumers perceive the brand, and the

degree of their satisfaction (Keller, 1998; Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2010; Peter, 2009). Keller (1998) proposed a brand knowledge model, in terms of brand awareness and brand image, which contributes to understand consumer-based brand equity. For instance, if a brand has positive brand equity, consumers will have high brand awareness and positive image of the brand, and they are likely to purchase the products, to show their loyalty to the brand, and to change their behaviour related to the brand. Torres and Tribo (2011) suggested that brand equity can be applied to understand internal stakeholders' perceptions of the brand. In particular, Pike (2009) implied that it is urgent to understand local stakeholders' perceived brand equity as they influence tourist behaviour and the quality of the brand. Hence, in this study, the researcher adapted the brand knowledge model from past research to be relevant to internal stakeholders. In the present study, brand knowledge is made up of two components: brand awareness (recognition and recall) and brand image (interpretation and commitment). Figure 3 is the model from the internal stakeholders' perspectives.

Figure 3:

Brand knowledge model from internal stakeholders' perspectives



- Note:* 1. Adapted from Keller (1998, p.94);
2. Solid lines represent original brand knowledge model;
3. Square lines represent new components of the brand knowledge model.

Brand awareness. Awareness refers to internal stakeholders' knowledge of the brand, which reflects their ability to recognize the brand under different categories, their familiarity with the brand, and their emotional feelings toward the brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998; Pike, 2009). Aaker (1996) suggested that brand awareness has two components: recognition and recall. Recognition occurs when internal stakeholders need some clues to retrieve the brand name. Recall, on the other hand, refers to an un-aided memory. In other words, recognition shows' internal stakeholders' familiarity of the brand, and recall reflects their emotional links to the brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998). In the case of the WHS status, brand awareness examines local stakeholders' current knowledge of the WHS status, and high awareness of the WHS status happens when local stakeholders can not only recognize the WHS status among various tourism brands, but also recall the WHS status by mentioning it without being prompted.

Brand image. A brand is shaped by consumers when they communicate with it (Frampton, 2009; Peter, 2009). As discussed, in the service industry, consumers perceive the brand not only based on products, but also as services they receive and staff they talk to. A positive image leads to consumers' favourable links to the brand (Keller, 1998). Thus, internal stakeholders can ensure the quality of the brand is transferred to consumers. In tourism particularly, local stakeholders re-establish the brand value, interpret and deliver it to tourists when they communicate with them. It seems reasonable to expect that a strong WHS status brand exists when local stakeholders reinforce the importance of the WHS status, interpret it and deliver messages consistent with the WHS program to

tourists. In other words, for the WHS brand to be strong, local stakeholder must not only understand the core meaning of the WHS status intended by the WHS program, but also support the WHS status and consistently delivery the core element of the WHS status to tourists. As demonstrated, the image of the WHS status is exceptional quality and excellent reputation. In order to maintain such prestige, there are two elements need to be considered from local stakeholders' perspectives: their interpretation of the meaning of the WHS status and their commitment to the WHS program intention.

Interpretation. As shown, consumers' view of the brand is gained through interaction with internal stakeholders. The way internal stakeholders interpret the brand will influence consumer satisfaction and the credibility of the brand. In particular, interpretation is widely used in tourism as a tool of managing attractions (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The role of interpretation is to improve tourist experience, to provide opportunities for tourists to learn and respect the attraction, to achieve management goals of the attraction (e.g. sustainability, conservation, and entrainment), and to communicate between tourists and attractions (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). From local stakeholders' perspective, a strong WHS status occurs when they interpret the importance of the WHS status intended by the WHS program to tourists.

Commitment. From local stakeholders' perspective, commitment refers to their degree of supporting the brand and their consistency of brand use (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). According to the Frampton (2009), a high level of commitment to the brand by internal stakeholders can help customers to have greater brand loyalty, and "those who live the brand will deliver the brand" (p.64). Furthermore, Hankinson (2009) suggested that high commitment can lead to consumers' proper behaviour and enhance the brand

value. In other words, internal stakeholders' degree of commitment is critical to determining whether they can deliver consistent messages that organization desires to consumers, and influence the credibility of the brand in the long-term. If internal stakeholders show their high level of commitment of the brand, they will reinforce the brand value and help to keep consumer loyalty. If internal stakeholders hold low level of commitment of the brand, they may cause consumer dissatisfaction and damage the quality of the brand (Frampton, 2009). In the WHS status specifically, a strong WHS status happens when local stakeholders have high level of commitment of the WHS status, show their respect and appreciation of the WHS status, and consistently deliver the core element of the WHS status intended by the WHS program to tourists.

To summarize, the success of the WHS status and positive brand equity of the WHS status occurs when local stakeholders recall the site has the WHS status, interpret the importance of the WHS status, deliver consistent messages intended by the WHS program to tourists, and show their support and respect to the core meaning of the WHS status.

Stakeholders and World Heritage Sites

Definition of stakeholders

The term "stakeholder" was developed in the 1960s. Since then it has been widely applied in business management. In the book, *Stakeholders: Theory and Practice*, the authors Friedman and Miles (2006) summarize 55 descriptions of stakeholders. Regardless of inconsistencies in defining stakeholders, their importance is clear. A better understanding of stakeholders can help an organization achieves their objective with less expense, satisfy consumers' need, and establish a mechanism to assist different

stakeholders to work together better (Freeman & Reed, 1983).

Stakeholders in tourism

In the field of tourism, stakeholder theory has been widely used in planning, consultation and management (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Haukeland, 2011; Lee, Riley & Hampton, 2010; Li & Dewar, 2003; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele & Beaumont, 2010; Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999). Generally, the tourism system can be classified into two categories: supply-side which offers tourism services and products, and demand-side that receives tourism services and products (Ryan, 2003). Based on this segmentation, four major stakeholders can be identified, including local government (e.g. site manager, staff, and officials), private business owners (e.g. tour operators, owners of restaurants and hotels), residents and tourists (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Teo & Yeoh, 1997).

The nature of stakeholders in the tourism system is heterogeneous, because they are involved in tourism spontaneously and control is minimized (Vasudevan, 2008). For example, tourists hope to have diverse experiences during their trips (McKercher & du Cros, 2002), local governments have the will to promote the site, to create the image that the place is worthy of visiting (Garrod & Fyall, 2000), entrepreneurs want to satisfy tourists' needs and maximize profits (Byrd, et al., 2000; Hall & Piggin, 2002), and residents hope to maintain their rights to the site, maximize positive impacts from tourism and minimize its negative impacts (Nicholas, Thapa & Ko, 2009). A complex relationship exists among different stakeholders in tourism and roles of various stakeholders in tourism have been discussed in the tourism literature. Some authors

emphasized collaboration among different stakeholders (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Lee, Riley & Hampton, 2010; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Woodland & Acott, 2007). Some researchers examined individual stakeholder in tourism, such as tourists (Hazen, 2009; Marcotte & Bourdeau, 2006; Martin-Ruiz et al., 2010); residents (Akis & Warner, 1996; Andriotis & Vaughn, 2003; Easterling, 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Lorde, Greenidge & Devonish, 2011; Nicholas, Thapa & Ko, 2009; Williams & Lawson, 2001) and private business owners (Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Hall & Piggin, 2002; Haukeland, 2011; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Tkaczynski et al, 2010). Some authors compared multiple stakeholders: Byrd et al. (2009) examined different perceptions of tourism impacts on a rural community among residents, entrepreneurs, government officials and tourists, and indicated that perception of these stakeholders had significant difference; Li and Dewar (2003) examined local stakeholders (government, business owners and residents) in a destination to provide their understanding of current and potential tourism products in the destination; and Lee, Riley and Hampton (2010) analyzed multiple stakeholders' influence on a heritage site in Korea. The last study indicated that interactions among heritage site stakeholders could result in conflict and inertia over time due to various interests and power of stakeholders.

World Heritage Site stakeholders

In the context of WHSs, stakeholder participation is encouraged by the World Heritage Convention. The *Operational Guidelines for Implementation of World Heritage Sites Convention* (UNESCO, 2010b) provides requirements for the inscription of WHSs, and gives suggestions about visitor management. The *Operational Guidelines* encourages stakeholders to be involved in the process of nomination, management, monitoring and

protection of World Heritage properties, and stakeholders can be local communities, governmental, non-governmental and private organizations, and heritage owners who have an interest and involvement in the conservation and management of a World Heritage property (UNESCO, 2010b). Therefore, in order to appropriately manage the WHS status, it is necessary to understand different stakeholders' perceptions of the WHS status.

Published studies examining WHSs have emphasized the role of governments; however, the role of other stakeholders, such as local communities, local residents and local tourism business owners has been under-recognized (Millar, 2006). Thus, there are not many studies that examine these stakeholders (Buckley, 2004; Das, unpublished paper; Hall & Piggin, 2002; Hazen, 2009; Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006; Nicholas, Thapa & Jae Ko, 2009). Some studies explored attitudes and perceptions of individual stakeholder group, such as local residents (Nicholas, Thapa & Jae Ko, 2009), local communities (Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006), tourism business industry (Das, unpublished paper; Hall & Piggin, 2002) and tourists (Buckley, 2004; Hazen, 2009; Poria, Reichal & Cohen, 2010; Pike, 2009; Yan & Morrison, 2007). Limited research discussed various stakeholders' perspectives of WHS status. Landorf (2009) examined six cultural WHSs in England, and suggested the involvement of multiple stakeholders in planning WHSs was one of the principles to make these sites sustainable. Jimura (2010) conducted a study at one WHS in Japan and focused on local communities' viewpoints of changes before and after the WHS designation. The study compared two different groups (local specialists, who are familiar with the WHS, tourism and conservation; and local people who live in/around the WHS) and examined their understanding of the WHS designation. The author

concluded that the WHS designation brought both positive and negative impacts upon local communities in/around WHS area and that a tourism management plan should be considered. The Landorf (2009) and Jimura (2010) studies emphasized the importance of multiple stakeholders in a broader scope of the WHS designation and management. However, neither study thoroughly explored a variety of local stakeholders' viewpoints, nor did they examine local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status as a brand.

Theoretical framework

As the literature review demonstrated, some researchers have looked at stakeholders' perceptions of the WHS status, but there have been limited studies examining multiple stakeholders. Generally, there are two main reasons why it is necessary to understand local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status as a brand.

Firstly, the World Heritage Committee is the headquarter of WHSs management, which has released the criteria of inscription, instructions of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of WHSs, and has used marketing campaigns to create the image the WHS status, and deliver it to the public. In other words, an ideal reputation of the WHS status brand is created by the World Heritage Committee and is spread to the public. On the other hand, at a site level, local stakeholders re-establish their understanding of the WHS status, interpret and convey it to tourists through interactions and communication. In other words, the actual reputation of the WHS status is controlled and delivered by local stakeholders. However, their perceptions of the WHS status are insufficient in the current literature.

Secondly, although research has examined both tourists and local stakeholders at WHSs, studies of tourists are dominated. Scholars have discussed and conducted studies

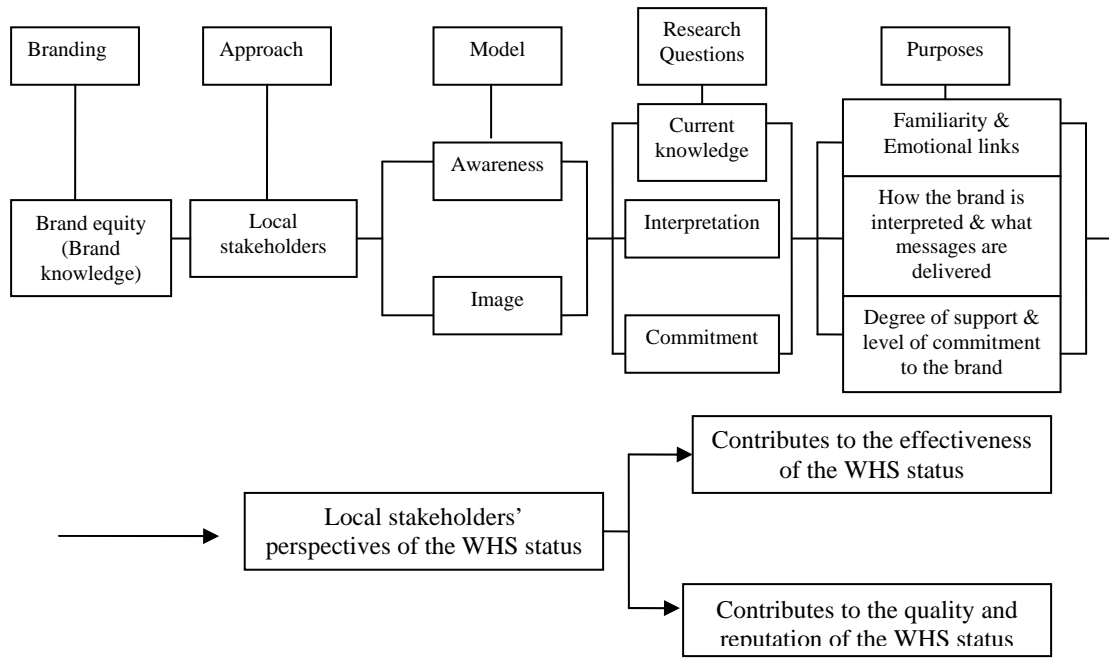
related to tourist motivation to visit WHSs, their experiences at WHSs and their perceptions of the WHS status theoretically and practically (Buckley, 2004; Hazen, 2009; Poria, Reichal & Cohen, 2010; Pike, 2009; Yan & Morrison, 2007). Studies of local stakeholders at WHSs are less common, especially multiple local stakeholders' viewpoints at WHSs (Jimura, 2010; Millar, 2006). This is problematic because local stakeholders are vital to the brand's long-term success; however, how they create their understanding of the WHS status is unclear, and whether they deliver consistent messages of the WHS status to tourists is unknown. Thus, local stakeholders' perspectives need to be understood.

Therefore, the study applied brand equity theory in general and brand knowledge model particularly, in terms of brand awareness and brand image, to explore local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status as a brand. Three research questions were addressed and the theoretical framework was drawn in Figure 4:

- 1) How did local stakeholders become aware of the WHS status? How did they gain that information?
- 2) Do local stakeholders use the WHS status? If so, how do they interpret it? Why do they interpret it in that way?
- 3) How is the WHS status understood by local stakeholders? What is the most important meaning of the WHS status from their perspectives and why?

Figure 4:

Theoretical framework of the study



Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Method

The purpose of this study was to gain a comprehensive picture of the WHS status used as a brand from local stakeholders' perspectives. By exploring their viewpoints of the WHS status, the research gave local stakeholders a chance to express their thoughts. Mainly, a case study approach is used to answer "how" and "why" questions, which allows the researcher to deeply explore the data by examining participants' perspectives and uncovering their viewpoints (Creswell, 1998; Gerring, 2007; Soy, 1997; Thomas, 2009; Yin, 2009). The research aimed at examining how local stakeholders understood the WHS status and explored why they understood the WHS status that way. Therefore, the case study approach was applied in the present study.

Case study selection

Purposive sampling is useful when conducting qualitative research. According to Coyne (1997), Devers and Frankel (2000), and Miles and Huberman (1994), purposive sampling can help the researcher to select cases useful for achieving the purpose of the study. Considering the purpose, scope, budget, time and other practical limitations, purposive sampling was employed to select both the site and the individual participants.

Site selection

The study was conducted at a WHS in China. Currently, there are 41 WHSs in China, among them 29 are cultural heritage sites, 8 are natural heritage sites, and 4 are mixed heritage sites (UNESCO, 2011a). Given the nature of the study, a site where local stakeholders could be easily identified and addressed was needed. In total, five cultural

heritage sites were considered, including Ancient City of Pingyao (1997), Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun (2000), Fujian Toulou (2008), Kaiping Diaolou and Villages (2007), and Town of Lijiang (1997).

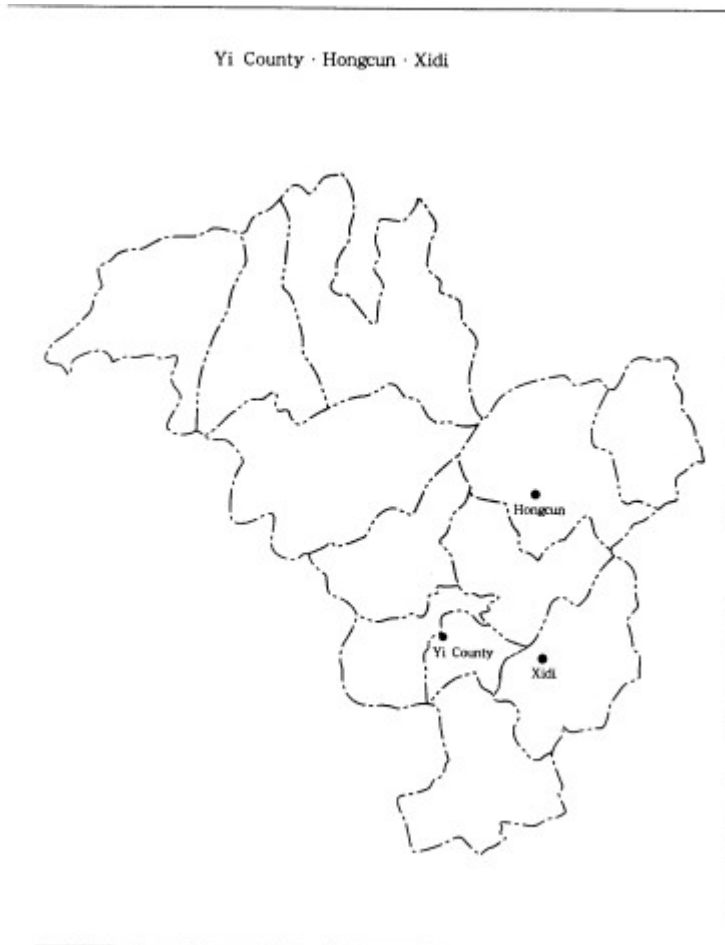
After consideration, Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui (2000) was selected as the case study location. The site involves two villages: Xidi and Hongcun. There were two main reasons that the site was selected. Firstly, the two villages have been listed as WHSs for 11 years, the researcher anticipated that the local community might have experienced changes before and after the designation, and sources of data would be extensive and rich. Secondly, the researcher has personal connections in the province where Xidi and Hongcun are located which facilitated access to the community allowing the research project to be conducted.

Site background

Located in Yi County, Anhui Province, Xidi and Hongcun are two traditional Chinese villages representing centuries of rural settlement. Both villages were founded around 1,000 years ago and both of them were started by single families. Currently, most buildings, roads and structures in Xidi and Hongcun were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. Xidi has 124 preserved dwelling houses and three clan halls, and it is called “museum of Hui ancient residences”. Hongcun is famous for its water supply system. The creek through the village has brought water to residences in the village for centuries.

Figure 5:

Map of Xidi and Hongcun



Note: from Yi County.

In order to be titled as a WHS, the two villages went through the nomination processes, and were evaluated by ICOMOS. The World Heritage Committee thought that the two villages “preserve to a remarkable extent the appearance of non-urban settlements of a type that have largely disappeared or have been transformed in the past century. Their street patterns, their architecture and decoration, and the integration of houses with comprehensive water systems are unique survivals” (UNESCO, 2011). Because of this, Xidi and Hongcun have been on WHS list since 2000. Table 2 shows the inscription criteria.

Table 2:

Inscription criteria for Xidi and Hongcun

Property: Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun
State Party: China
Criteria: (iii), (iv) and (v)
<p>Criterion iii: The two villages are graphic illustrations of a type of human settlement created during a feudal period and based on a prosperous trading economy.</p> <p>Criterion iv: In their buildings and their street patterns, the two villages of southern Anhui reflect the socio-economic structure of long-lived settled period of Chinese history.</p> <p>Criterion v: The traditional non-urban settlements of China, which have to a very large extent disappeared during the past century, are exceptionally well preserved in the two villages of Xidi and Hongcun.</p>

Note: from UNESCO, 2011b.

Based on these selection criteria, the importance of the two villages can be understood as unique Hui ancient residences and architecture. In particular, the core meaning of the WHS status as intended by the WHS program is then to conserve and preserve Hui ancient residences and architecture in the two villages of Xidi and Hongcun.

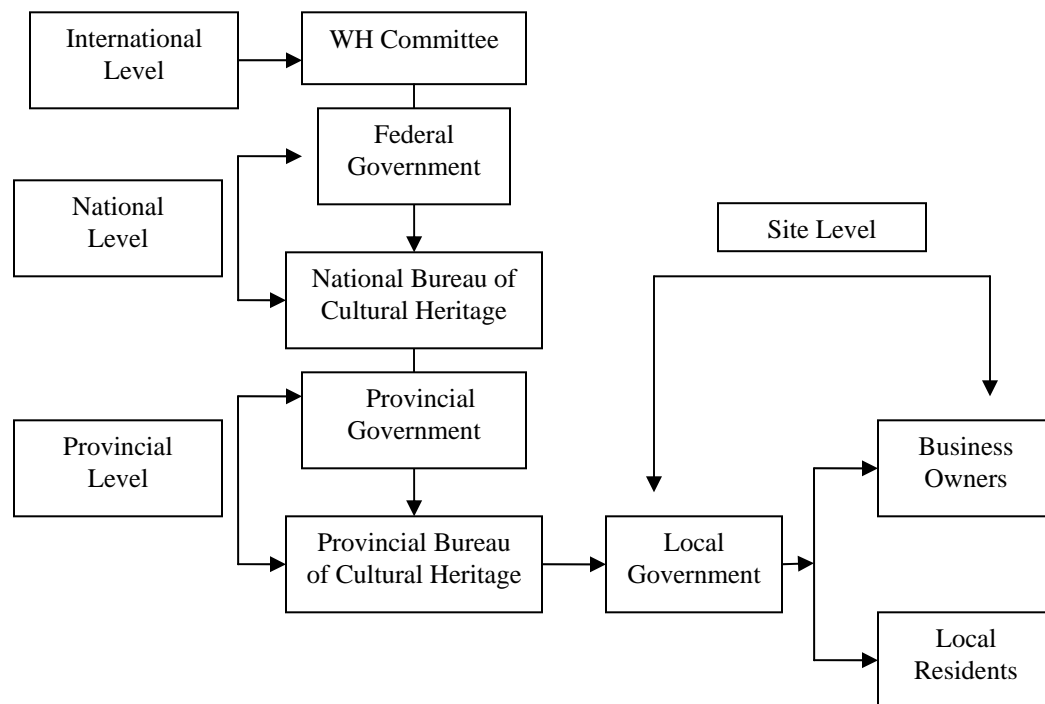
Participant selection

The literature review revealed four major stakeholder groups in the tourism system: local government, private business owners, residents and tourists (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Teo & Yeoh, 1997). As discussed, the challenge of managing the WHS status is that a variety of stakeholders need to be taken into account (Frampton, 2009; Hankinson, 2007; 2009;

Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Jones, 2005; Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Murphy et al., 2007). Ryan and Silvanto (2009) suggested that when examining WHSs, three levels of stakeholders should be considered: the international level, the national level and the site level. Figure 6 shows different supply-side stakeholders at WHSs within the Chinese political structures.

Figure 6:

WHS supply-side Stakeholders from different levels in China



This case study was undertaken at the site level. Thus, three local stakeholder groups were included: local government (People's Government of Yi County) who is responsible for the daily management of the site (Xidi and Hongcun), private business owners who depend on tourism in WHS area for their income, and residents who live within the site.

The nature of the case study approach often results in a small sample size and in

some cases a single subject is enough (Gerring, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Kuzel (1999) suggested that the sample size should be based on 'appropriateness', selecting subjects best suited to address the research questions; and 'adequacy', selecting subjects who can make the interpretation deeper and broader. Stake (1995) also pointed out that sample size is not the primary consideration of a case study; instead, the selection of sample size should be based on 'balance' and 'variety'. In other words, the selection of the sample is determined by sampling techniques and the purpose of the study. Saturation is the point where no new information is obtained from additional interviews (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). In total, 13 participants from the three local stakeholder groups were invited to join in the study. They were local government representatives (4), private business owners (3) and residents (6). The selection of these participants was based on following criteria: local government representatives were required to be full-time employees who worked in the WHS and represented a range of positions in the local government. For private business owners, their businesses had to be located in the WHS area, and be related to the tourism industry. Residents must have lived in Xidi or Hongcun for more than 10 years, and this was to ensure that residents had experiences before and after the designation.

Data collection

According to Yin (2009), various resources should be considered in case study to allow for 'data triangulation' (Denzin, 1978). Case study data may include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. In this study, interviews and review of documents were included as data.

Recruiting process

The study involved two weeks of fieldwork in Xidi and Hongcun, Yi County, Anhui Province, China. The Chinese Government has policies for research conducted in China by foreigners or by foreign organizations (in this case, University of Manitoba is considered to be a foreign organization). As such, an application of request (see *Appendix A*) was submitted to Yi County administration department two weeks before data collection. The application included an introduction of the researcher (as a student from the University of Manitoba conducting research for her M.A.), an introduction of the research topic, and a request for permission to access the site and conduct the study. At the same time, an insider in the Yi County was personally contacted to facilitate the data collection. After receiving the approval from Yi County administration department, the researcher went to the site.

On the first day, the researcher went to Yi County Tourism Bureau accompanied by the insider, introduced herself to the supervisor of the Yi County Tourism Bureau and briefly described the study. A letter was given to the supervisor (see *Appendix B*), which indicated that the researcher would invite officials in the Bureau to participate in the study. Prior to collecting data, the researcher spent three days visiting Xidi and Hongcun.

To gather local government representatives' perspectives, the site manager, an administration supervisor and interpreters in Xidi and Hongcun were invited to be a part of the study. Prior to recruiting site interpreters, a request for permission was made to the site supervisor (Xidi Tourism Service Co., Ltd and Hongcun Tourism Development Co., Ltd). Then, the researcher approached the site interpreters at their workplaces. All participants in the local government group were provided the Informed Consent Form (in

Chinese) (See *Appendix C*) to read, and then appointments for interviews were arranged if they agreed to participate in the study. They were clearly informed that their participation was voluntary and that no negative consequences would result if they decided not to participate. Two interviews (site manager and administrative supervisor) happened in work offices. The two interpreters shared open offices with others. Therefore, interviews were arranged in the conference rooms in their workplaces.

To gain insight from private business owners, owners of accommodation, restaurants and retail stores were approached. Various businesses were occupied in the two villages, including hostels (similar to Bed and Breakfast businesses), restaurants, crafts or handicraft stores, grocery stores and antique stores. In most cases, owners had run more than one business. The researcher walked around the two villages during the day, visited various business places, talked to business owners occasionally. If the business was privately operated and the owner had run the business for more than a year, the researcher introduced herself and briefly described the study, and asked if he/she would be willing to participate in the study. After reading the Informed Consent Form, an appointment for an interview was made. Three participants were selected: owner of a handicraft store, owner of a hostel & restaurant, and owner of a grocery store & hostel. Two interviews occurred in the participants' business places, and one interview was arranged in one participant's house (the participant invited the researcher to visit her house) which was behind her business place.

To better uncover residents' perceptions, residents who had a connection with tourism and those that had no relation with tourism were included in the study. After the designation, the local government designed tourist routes to show tourists where Hui

ancient residences, worthy of visiting, were located. When conducting interviews, participants distinguished the village they lived in as being within the tourist area or the non-tourist area. Where the tourist routes were located was called the tourist area and this was where residents could run various businesses or rent properties to others (residents, outside business owners). The area where there was no path to connect tourist routes was considered the non-tourist area, where residents mainly farmed, worked for private business owners in the two villages, and worked in non-tourism industry outside the two villages for a living. Therefore, the researcher visited the tourist area to approach participants who had connections with tourism and went to the non-tourist area to talk to potential participants who had no relation to tourism. Normally, the researcher walked around the two villages, approached homes both during the day and evening to ensure people who work during the day could be included in the study. If a resident was at home, the researcher introduced herself, described the study topic, and asked simple screening questions like whether he/she owned private business, whether he/she had connection with tourism, and how long he/she had lived in Xidi or Hongcun. If the resident was interested in participating in the study, the Informed Consent Form was provided to him/her to read, and an interview was then arranged. Six participants were chosen: four of them were involved in tourism but not as private business owners, and two of them had no relation to tourism. Four interviews were held in residents' houses, one was conducted at a work place, and the last one took place in a tea house (cafeteria) at the participant request.

Interviews

The study was conducted by semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Questions

were open-ended in order to gain in-depth responses. The questions for the interviews were based on the purpose of the paper which was to better understand local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status. A range of questions were designed to encourage participants to talk about the WHS status in-depth. While questions did not lead participants to talk directly about the three themes discussed in the literature (awareness, interpretation and commitment), these questions encouraged participants to talk in great depth about their perceptions of the WHS status.

All participants were asked "Please tell me any recognition Xidi and Hongcun have received. Do you know that Xidi and Hongcun have been titled as a WHS? When did you hear it? How did you learn about the designation?" Each stakeholder group was also asked a somewhat different set of questions based on their relation to the site (see Table 3).

Table 3:

Example questions related to interpretation of the WHS status

Stakeholder Groups	Questions
Local Government	Please describe any program or activity the government provides. How does the WHS status relate to these activities and programs? Why is or why isn't the WHS status used in promoting these activities and programs?
Private Business	Do you try to attract tourists? If so, how? Does the WHS status appear in these materials? Why is or why isn't the WHS status included? What is your opinion about the relation between your business and the WHS status?
Residents	If you have the chance to talk to people who live elsewhere and people visiting the village, do you mention the village where you live is titled as a WHS? Why or why don't you mention it?

Additionally the following questions were asked to all participants. First of all, the researcher encouraged participants to express their opinions of the WHS status generally such as “Please tell me benefits/costs the WHS status brings. How do you view these benefits/costs? What is the most important benefit/cost that the WHS status brings?” After discussing their thoughts about the designation, the researcher asked about how the WHS status is understood “From your understanding and own experiences in the WHS area, how do you understand the WHS status? When I mention the WHS status, what are meanings of it? Which meaning do you think is the core element of the WHS status? Why do you think that is the most important element of the WHS status?”

All interviews were tape-recorded. As noted earlier, before participants were interviewed, they were provided with Informed Consent Forms, the researcher asked permission to audio record the interview, the topic of the study was described, and the procedure for the interview was discussed. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to discuss the topic in detail until they had nothing more to say about the topic. The interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to 65 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese.

Review of documents

Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggested that four categories of documents should be taken into account when conducting case study, including information on the websites, private and public records, physical evidence and other information created by the researcher. Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher conducted the interviews, at the same time, various materials were collected. Mainly, the researcher focused on whether the WHS status was used and how the WHS status was used by local stakeholders. In

particular, articles and reports extracted from websites, newspapers and magazines, promotional materials (i.e. posters, brochures, booklets) provided by local government and private businesses and other publications were collected. In addition, pictures shot by the researcher during the fieldwork were also collected. Except Yi County internal reports and pictures, other information could be accessed or taken by the public.

Data analysis

Following the completion of data collection, the process of analysis was undertaken and was data-based. As Psathas & Anderson (1990) suggested, in basic research that employs language as data, current accepted practices involve an audio- or videotaping communicative interaction followed by verbatim transcription and analysis, which includes some forms of coding process, to make sense of the data. Therefore, the researcher analysed data in three stages, transcribe-code-interpretation (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

The role of a research assistant

In order to increase the reliability of the study and decrease bias, a research assistant was hired to assist with data analysis. The research assistant is Chinese and had studied in an English speaking country. The research assistant understands both English and Chinese, and is familiar with Western culture and Chinese culture. In particular, there are two main reasons to ask a research assistant to join the study.

This study involved translation from English to Chinese and from Chinese to English. Although the researcher understands both languages, translating language can be difficult and improper translation can affect the meaning of what is being said. In order to

reflect participants' intended meaning as accurately as possible and to make quotes understandable, the research assistant reviewed and confirmed all translations.

Secondly, Patton (1990) suggested that research assistants can provide useful insights and achieve analytical triangulation. In this study, the research assistant was involved in transcription and coding which helped the researcher to decrease bias and provided some new and important ideas driven from data.

Transcription

Transcription was the first step of data analysis, as it helped the researcher to have a general picture of the case. Although participants were provided a form to indicate whether or not they wanted to receive copies of transcriptions, results and a final report (see *Appendix D*), none of them wanted to review these materials. In order to have external reliability, after the researcher finished transcriptions, the research assistant re-listened to tape-recorded interviews to make sure contents were accurate. Transcriptions were in Chinese.

Coding

In order to reduce researcher bias, 'investigator triangulation' (Denzin, 1978) was employed, where the researcher and the research assistant coded the raw data independently and then met or used email to discuss results throughout the data analysis. Before starting, the researcher had an initial meeting with the research assistant to introduce the research purpose and to discuss the major points the researcher wanted to examine. Discrepancies between the two coders were discussed in detail until both the researcher and research assistant agreed on coding processes.

According to Creswell (1998) and Merriam (1988), case study analysis should

describe the case in detail, sort descriptive data into categories, and involve direct interpretation. The intention of the study was to gain an understanding of each stakeholder group and examine similarities or differences among the three groups. On the one hand, the researcher wanted to find clues in collected data to understand the three research themes driven from the research questions as discussed (awareness, interpretation and commitment). On the other hand, the researcher did not want to miss any other useful information in the data. Thus, structure coding (MacQueen et al., 2008; Namey et al., 2008) and open-coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) were applied in the study. Structure coding is used in multi-cases study, which allows the researcher to code data under the consideration of research questions with intensive collected data (Saldana, 2009), and open-coding involves categories to emerge based on collected data, and it identified central concepts presented by the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

The researcher and the research assistant proceeded independently with coding. After coding, the researcher and the research assistant met to discuss findings, like whether information was highlighted into categories and grouped into existing themes, and whether new themes should be developed. The coding was conducted in English.

Interpretation

After coding the data, the researcher moved to the final stage of data analysis. The researcher presented the results based on coding and review of documents. Firstly, the researcher used categorical aggregation (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009) to directly describe local government participants, private business owners and residents, these three stakeholder groups' awareness of the WHS status, interpretation of the WHS status, and commitment of the WHS status individually. Then, the researcher applied cross-group

technique to pull local government, private business owners and residents together, and explore the relation (similarity and difference) among the three groups regarding their perspectives of the WHS status.

Review of documents and interpretation

Review of documents was applied as secondary sources to enrich the data. During the fieldwork, the researcher asked participants to provide any promotional material they used, browsed Yi County Tourism Bureau website, and searched for reports, articles and publications from internet, newspapers and magazines. In addition, the researchers took pictures at the site to see whether the WHS status symbol was presented or not. Information collected was compared to responses from the interviews. By comparing interview responses with these materials, the researcher explored how the WHS status was used and interpreted by local stakeholders.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

Brand knowledge model, the framework underlying the research questions addressed in the present study, identifies three themes: awareness, interpretation and commitment. In order to examine how local stakeholders understand the WHS status as a brand and explore the complexity of the WHS status from local stakeholders' perspectives, three research questions were addressed in this study:

1) How did local stakeholders become aware of the WHS status? How did they gain that information?

2) Do local stakeholders use the WHS status? If so, how do they interpret it? Why do they interpret it in that way?

3) How is the WHS status understood by local stakeholders? What is the most important meaning of the WHS status from their perspectives and why?

Data are reported in the following order: overview of impacts of the designation in the two villages of Xidi and Hongcun, overview of themes and categories, description of participants, description of responses (awareness, interpretation, and commitment), and relation among the three local stakeholder groups regarding the WHS status.

Overview of impacts of the designation in Xidi and Hongcun

Prior to presenting the results, a brief overview of the WHS status is noted.

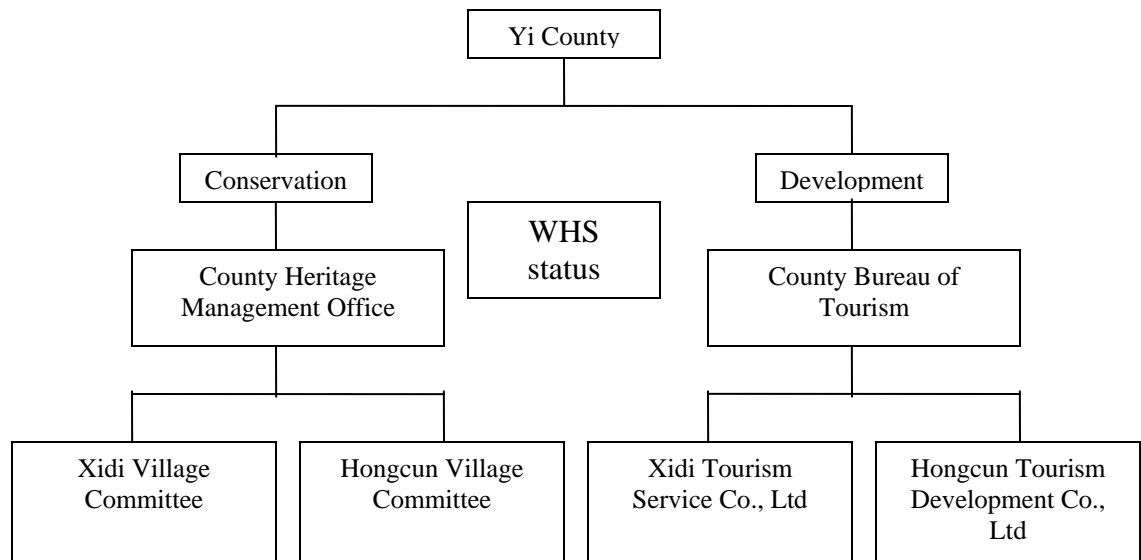
Management system in Yi County after the designation

People's Government of Yi County (Yi County) is responsible for the management of Xidi and Hongcun. After the designation, Yi County established a management system and released various policies and regulations under the framework

of “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention”, which emphasized dual roles of the site: conservation and development. Figure 7 represents the management system that was put in place after the WHS designation.

Figure 7:

Management System in Yi County after the designation



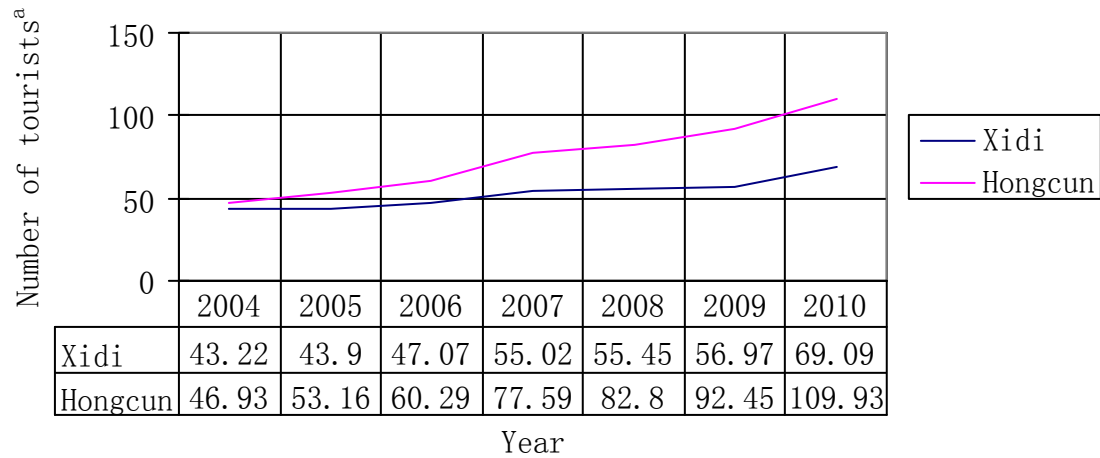
Note: from participants’ responses.

Number of tourists after the designation

Tourism is seen as a stimulator to improve regional economic development (Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2006; Jimura, 2010; Nuryanti, 1996). After the designation, Xidi and Hongcun had experienced tremendous changes in the number of tourists (see Figure 8) and this resulted in revenue generated from site entrance fees (see Figure 9).

Figure 8:

Number of Tourists in Xidi and Hongcun (2004 – 2010)

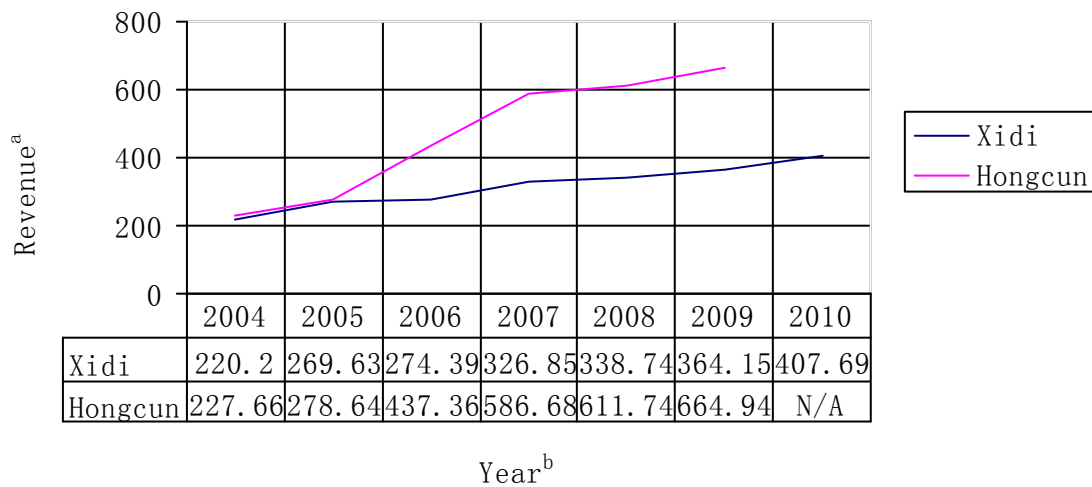


Note: 1. ^a Represents the number unit = 10 thousand visitors;

2. From Yi County internal report (2010).

Figure 9:

Revenue from entrance fee in Xidi and Hongcun (2004-2010)



Note: 1. ^a Represent the monetary unit = 10 thousand Canadian dollars, the currency between Canadian dollars and Chinese yuan is 1 dollar = 6.5 yuan;

2. ^b The revenue of Hongcun in 2010 is unavailable;

3. From Yi County internal report (2010).

Overview of themes and categories

Three themes, related to brand knowledge model, were examined in the study: awareness, interpretation and commitment. Under each theme, different categories were

identified. Some categories were common to all the three local stakeholder groups, but, some were fit only a particular local stakeholder group.

Interviews revealed local stakeholders' awareness of the WHS status. This appeared to affect the degree of the WHS status in their memory, including whether or not they knew that the two villages had received the WHS status, how they come up the WHS status among other recognitions the two villages had, and how they found out about the designation. The awareness of the WHS status had two components: recognition and recall.

The second theme to address the purpose of the study was to ask local stakeholders about their practical use of the WHS status, like whether they used the WHS status to promote their activities or not. If so, how they interpreted it and why they used it, and if not, why they did not use the WHS status. Review of documents helped responses to be trustful and were seen as supplementary materials. Categories included present programs/activities, current promotional strategies, interpretation and motivation.

The third theme was to explore how the WHS status was understood by the three local stakeholders, which influenced local stakeholders' levels of commitment to the WHS status. Two categories were included: perceptions and core element. Table 4 summarizes the three themes and categories in the study.

Table 4:

Summary of themes and categories in the study

Themes	Categories	Local Stakeholder Groups(s)
Awareness	Recognition: Familiarity of the WHS status among other titles	Local government, private business owners, residents
	Recall: emotional links related	Local government, private business owners, residents

	to past experiences	
Interpretation	Current programs/activities	Local government
	Current promotional strategies	Private business owners
	Interpretation: how the WHS status was introduced	Local government, private business owners, residents
	Motivation: why or why not the WHS status was introduced	Local government, private business owners, residents
Commitment	Perceptions: meanings of the WHS status	Local government, private business owners, residents
	Core element: core meaning	Local government, private business owners, residents

Description of local government's knowledge of the WHS status

Overview of participants

Four participants worked for the local government, including the site manager, an administration supervisor and two interpreters at the site (one worked in Xidi and the other worked in Hongcun) were participated in the study. Their information is drawn in Table 5.

Table 5:

Overview of participants in the local government

Participant	Working length	Working places	Duties
Site manager	15 Years	Yi County Government	Be responsible for tourism in Yi County and WHS
Administration supervisor	8 Months	Yi County Bureau of Tourism	Be responsible for daily management in Hongcun
Interpreter	18 Years	Xidi Tourism Service Co., Ltd	Interpreter in Xidi

Interpreter	4 Years	Hongcun Tourism Development Co., Ltd	Interpreter in Hongcun
-------------	---------	--------------------------------------	------------------------

Theme one: awareness of the WHS status

All participants told the researcher that the two villages of Xidi and Hongcun were titled as a WHS at the beginning of interviews. All participants remembered that the designation was in 2000. In particular, the site manager knew about the World Heritage Convention and was familiar with other WHSs in China.

After greeting, the researcher encouraged participants to introduce Xidi and Hongcun. In discussion, all participants mentioned the WHS status. For example, the interpreter in Hongcun commented that "... Tourism has been developed in Hongcun for a long time since 1986. On November 30th, 2000, it was on the list of WHSs" (Participant 4, p.1).

The site manager and the interpreter in Xidi had worked in tourism related jobs for more than 15 years, so they knew about the WHS status and were involved in the nomination of the two villages. One participant mentioned that "in 1997 or 1998, the government began to prepare for the nomination. So, I had already known [about the designation], before the two villages got the title" (Participant 3, p.3).

The administration supervisor and the interpreter in Hongcun were students at that of time. Hence, they heard the news from their teachers. One participant said:

I was in Grade seven [when Hongcun got the WHS status]. [I knew that] the designation was a big hit of the season. A small village hidden in mountains can be listed as a WHS, it was an honour. Teachers at school told us.

Participant 4, p.2

Specifically, the site manager was not only familiar with Xidi and Hongcun, but also other WHSs in China. He commented on the WHS status:

For years, we [local government] have followed the principle that [the local government] puts unknown or unsure issues aside. Because if we [the local government] develop [heritage resources] without planning, we [the local government] will pay for it sooner or later. The WHS status is not permanent, [because] it [UNESCO] applies dynamic management. It can give us [the site] a yellow card, just like soccer games. If it [UNESCO] feels Xidi and Hongcun are destroyed, it will give you [the site] an alarm, like Town of Lijiang, and Forbidden City. If we [the site] get the yellow card, we [the local government] have to rectify it.

Participant 1, p.9

The interpreter in Hongcun heard of the WHS status when she was at school, she did not know about the WHS program or WHSs. After working as an interpreter, she began to learn about the WHS program.

I did not know what the WHS status was when I first heard of it, teachers told us that this [the WHS status] represents rare and unique resources. ... Now, I know that WHSs can be divided into tangible and intangible heritage. Hongcun is a WHS, it is not a natural heritage site, and it is a cultural heritage site. It [Hongcun] has a lot of Hui ancient residences, not a single house. ... [After working as an interpreter in Hongcun], I begin to know the detail of the WHS status.

Participant 4, p.3

Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status

According to participants' responses, the local government widely used the WHS status in communicating with tourists. It used the WHS status as a logo to attract tourists, to satisfy tourists' demands, to stimulate potential investment, and to create business opportunities. One participant pointed out that "because they [Xidi and Hongcun] are listed as a WHS, it [the site] is doomed to be a tourism product. ... We [the local government] try to use the brand to develop other products, like film tourism"(Participant 1, p.5-6).

The site manager and the administration supervisor thought that the WHS status was the symbol of the WHS program, and that by using it they could maximize impacts of the designation, attract tourists and increase public awareness of protection.

[We use the WHS status] because it is the brand of WHSs, it can let those who visit the two villages know that here is a WHS. If I can recall, the WHS status is appeared in newspapers, TV programs, and signs [in the two villages]. Moreover, it has been printed on garbage cans in the two villages. The purpose of doing so is to embody the meaning of it and to promote that the two villages have been titled as a WHS, and that tourists need to protect it instead of doing something improperly.

Participant 2, p.10

When tourists visit Xidi and Hongcun, interpreters take them on a walk around the two villages, to introduce the two villages' histories, legacies, classic or special spots they think tourists should see. The two interpreters felt that they were proud of mentioning the WHS status to tourists, even if it was not included in interpretation manuals.

It is for sure that it [the WHS status] is included in our interpretation materials. [We] have to mention it ... not because supervisors require us to do so, nor it is in the interpretation manual. After the designation, the WHS status has naturally become a part of interpretation materials. I feel that I am so proud of introducing it to tourists. It promotes the two villages as well.

Participant 3, p.4-5

Throughout the interviews, the researcher asked participants in the group to provide any material they had. At the same time, the researcher browsed the official website of the Yi County Tourism Bureau, checked signs and maps in the two villages, and joined interpretation services in the two villages. These documents and records confirmed that the local government relied on the WHS status to attract tourists and promote the two villages.

Theme three: commitment to the WHS status

Representatives indicated that the WHS status meant fame, economic benefits, development opportunities, education, conservation, responsibility and just a name.

Fame. All participants claimed that the WHS status resulted in representation of unique features of the two villages. They showed their pride regarding the designation, and expressed that Xidi and Hongcun did not only belong to the local community, but also belong to China and the whole world. One participant commented:

My understanding of the WHS status is that it is the recognition of authenticity of a place. ... In addition, Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS because of its unique Hui architecture in the whole world. It [the designation] may focus on the authenticity and integrity [of the two villages which]. History, culture, customs

and habits are conserved [in the two villages].

Participant 2, p. 4-5

The other participant showed that the WHS status made Xidi and Hongcun well-known. She stated:

I think the title makes the village and the County well-known and widely promoted. ... Before 2000, Xidi and Hongcun were not so popular, those who came to the province or the town were mainly because of Huang Mount [Another mixed world heritage in the Province]. They might know Xidi and Hongcun, [but they did not come]. After the designation, Xidi and Hongcun is one of the two WHSs in the province. Some tourists come to the province or the town because of the two villages. I think that the impacts [of the WHS status] are huge.

Participant 4, p.3

Moreover, the fame attracted tourists. Participants had strong feelings about changes in number of tourists after the designation.

During the last National Holiday [seven-days long], on Oct.4th, we [Hongcun] had received 15,000 tourists [the maximization of the carrying capacity in Xidi and Hongcun is 10,000 tourists per day]. Cars had to be parked 500 metres away from the parking lot, cars were everywhere. ... Xidi had received 590,000 tourists in 2009 and 690,000 last year, and the growth rate is about 8% to 15%. Hongcun had received 900,000 tourists in 2009 and 1,060,000 last year, and the growth rate is around 15% to 17%.

Participant 2, p14

The interpreter in Xidi shared her working experience regarding changes before

and after the designation. She stated:

[I have been working as an interpreter for 17 years]. Before the designation, there were not a lot of tourists came [to Xidi]. In that period of time, we [Xidi tourism service Co., Ltd] only hired seven or eight interpreters. Now, we have 30 to 40 interpreters. Sometimes [in tourist peak season], we have to be on call all day. Even doing so, tourists have to visit the village by themselves in some cases.

Participant 3, p.2

Economic benefits. All participants agreed that the WHS status meant economic benefits to themselves, residents, and the local government.

The monthly income for an interpreter came from two sources: basic salary and performance bonus based on the number of tourists they received in a month. The interpreter in Hongcun commented:

We have three levels of performance bonus. The bonus differs in each level. If I have higher level of interpretation, which is level one, I can get \$ 1.54 (CAD) for receiving one group. If I am a level two interpreter, I can receive \$1.38 (CAD) for a group. I can earn \$1.23(CAD) if I am a level three interpreter. It [performance bonus] depends on levels. When I joined the company, I was a level three interpreter for sure. I remembered that my first performance bonus was \$ 0.46(CAD) per group, I only got \$ 46.00 (CAD) for receiving 100 groups of tourists. Of course, it was performance bonus. [I am a level one interpreter now], and my monthly income has been raised year by year.

Participant 4, p.3-4

In addition, participants claimed that the WHS status helped residents to improve

their quality of life, enhanced employment rate in the two villages and stimulated economic development in the County. One participant listed series of economic indicators after the designation.

Since we have got the title, we have to think about how to use it, the WHS status is also a brand. We have to think about how to apply this brand to motivate other development. So, we have widely promoted the two villages In 2010, the total revenue of tourism industry in Yi County was around 430 million (CAD), five times larger than the revenue before the designation. Xidi, for example, in the year of the designation, revenue from entrance fee was 1.2 million (CAD); the revenue was 4 million (CAD) in 2010, more than three-folds. For Hongcun, the revenue has been increased from 0.77 million (CAD) to 7.7 million (CAD), almost 10 times.

Participant 1, p.3-4

One participant insisted that the WHS status did improve residents' quality of life, and she tried to explain the connection between tourism and residents' income. She said:

[After the designation], the number of tourists has been rapidly increased, which brings revenue from entrance fees. More entrance fees mean higher allowance back to residents [the local government distributes portions of entrance fees to residents in the two villages]. ... Wherever residents live in, each resident receives allowance. The amount of allowance given to each resident is estimated by the number of householders and the size of houses. ... The economic benefits that tourism brings can motivate residents' involvement in tourism, such as running hostels, restaurants, grocery stores and other businesses. When tourists visit the

village, they have places to eat, to stay over-night and to shop, their demands are met. Of course, tourists will satisfy with their trips. After their visitation, they will promote the village, and more tourists will come to Xidi. This is an opportunity. Because of the WHS status, these things [allowance return to residents, residents are involved in tourism, improve villages' services and attract more tourists] are connected.

Participant 3, p.6-7

The interpreter in Hongcun was glad to see changes in the village because of the designation, she commented:

I think the WHS status brings fame and fortune to Hongcun. It makes Hongcun famous, lets people around the world know the place, right? It also brings fortune. That is, it [Hongcun] is well-known, the number of tourists is increasing, and their coming improves the economy in the village, including residents' annual allowance, right? [When providing interpretation service], we will visit some Hui ancient residences in the village, they [owners of these houses] will receive annual bonus ..., just like admission fees [to visit their houses]. In addition, for example, not all the residences in the village are open to the public. Do owners of these houses receive allowance? Yes, they receive allowance, too. ... Nowadays, many residents are getting involved in tourism, some of them own hostels, receive tourists for eating and staying over-nights. Of course, they can farm in the [tourist] off season, and sell some featured arts and crafts in the [tourist] peak season. What I mean is that tourism brings a lot of economic benefits to them [residents], and increases employment rate. The employment rate of local staff is around

90% ..., local means residents in the County as a whole.

Participant 4, p.4

Development opportunities. All participants in the group insisted that the WHS status represented development opportunities for the two villages and Yi County. On the one hand, after the designation, tourism development helped to improve the two villages' infrastructure and appearances. One participant provided an example:

I will give [you] an obvious example. Our ticket office was made by wood ten years ago, it was simple and crude. As you can see, we are using computers to print entrance tickets in the current office. [The similar improvement can be found] in the ticket entrance, we relied on staff to check tickets before. Nowadays, we are using automated machines to check tickets. These changes are accompanied by the tourism development.

Participant 3, p.5

The other participant expressed her feelings about infrastructure improvement in one of the two villages. What she cared about was the parking lot and public toilets. She commented:

Here [Hongcun] is an attraction, but at the same time, around 1,300 to 1,400 residents are still living in the village. You [the local government] have to consider infrastructure and superstructure. Ten years ago, there was no such a big, eco-friendly parking lot. There was no such a decent tourist centre, nor a shopping centre, nor enough public toilets. ... Before I worked in the company, there was a parking lot, but it was not good. ... It should be, I can not remember the detail, around seven or eight years ago, we [Hongcun Tourism Development Co., Ltd]

spent money to putting telephone lines, television cables, and electric wires under the ground, so we can not see any electric wire in the village. ... In addition, the company invested money to build a big and eco-friendly parking lot as we can see now. Furthermore, the company built a three-star rating public toilet that is close to the entrance and the parking lot. ... There are a lot of public toilets on the site.

Participant 4, p.9-10

In addition, the designation helped Yi County to develop and grow rapidly. One participant stated that “the WHS status has a radial effect, before [the designation], people knew Xidi and Hongcun only. Now, it [the WHS status] drives to develop other tourism products, like film, culture, religion, and nature tourism in the County” (Participant 2, p.15).

The other participant continued this topic and explained:

We can not rely on Xidi and Hongcun all the time. Because they are titled as a WHS, definitely, they become tourism products. We try to use the two villages [the WHS status] as a brand to promote other attractions in the County. ... Xidi and Hongcun can not be considered as destinations, only Yi County can be seen as a destination. We have 12 attractions in the County, and eight of them have 3A or 4A. We need to promote the County.

Participant 1, p.6-7

Education. All participants in the group stated that the WHS status provided chances for residents to improve their awareness of protecting and maintaining their houses, and (re)discovering Hui culture. One participant served as the chairman of one of the villages, he experienced residents' different attitude toward their houses. He said:

[Before I was promoted as the site manager], I was the chairman of Xidi. Why? In that period of time, experts thought that these ancient residences were treasures, but residents thought that they [houses] were old and worthless. Of course, this happened before [the designation]. Now, they [residents] begin to know [the importance of these ancient residences], and they have improved their awareness of protection. When I went there [Xidi], it was quite common for residents to reconstruct their houses, including the village chief. I pulled down many houses in my term in the village, the first house I pulled down belonged to the village chief.

Participant 1, p.11

The other participant, on the other hand, gave an example of how the local government and residents tried to recover heritage in the two villages. She said:

There was a traditional dance called phoenix dance that was created for women only, which belongs to Yi County. We [the local government] are trying to apply it as intangible heritage. We did not abandon [the tradition] or forgot it. We are trying to revive it. Because of the WHS status, the local government and residents begin to know the importance of heritage, we hope to protect and preserve various heritage.

Participant 4, p.11

Conservation. Three of four participants in the group thought that the WHS status meant conservation and preservation, and they insisted that conservation was the core meaning of the WHS status. After the designation, the local government faced the issue of balancing conservation and development. One participant insisted:

Yi County is very small. The population is only 10 thousands, but we own Xidi

and Hongcun this WHS. As locals [residents in the County], we feel so proud. We need to conserve it, preserve it, and let the WHS status this brand be sustainable to our future generations, let them have it, let them get profits from it. That is the most important thing.

Participant 1, p.9

The other participant indicated that the priority task for the local government was to balance conservation and development. He commented:

The meaning of the WHS status is its uniqueness ..., what I mean is that Hui ancient residences and Hui culture are closely connected, and authentic life exists in the two villages. I think these should be protected, [and the local government] should balance conservation and development. The local government should exploit heritage resources after seriously consideration. At the same time, the local government needs to conserve heritage resources when conducting development plans.

Participant 2, p.12

Responsibility. According to the participants, the WHS status created opportunities and brought challenges. Three of four participants felt that the WHS status meant responsibility, and one participant claimed that responsibility was the essence of the WHS status from local government's perspective. Being local government employees, they had the responsibility to conserve this WHS. One participant admitted that "the biggest challenge is that [the local government] has more responsibilities. ... The WHS status needs our [the local government's] hands to preserve and sustain. This is a great responsibility" (Participant 1, p.9).

The other participant thought that the WHS status was an honour and a responsibility. He commented:

...it is an honour because it [the designation] helps the two villages and Yi County to be well-known by others, and it brings economic benefits later on. Because of the brand [WHS status], tourism has been widely promoted, and it becomes a responsibility. Although residents are still living in the two villages, they [the two villages] do not only belong to them, to the Yi County, to the province, but also belong to China and the whole world. As a resident in the village, he/she has the obligation and responsibility to protect it, so it is an honour and a responsibility.

Participant 2, p.4-5

Just a name. One participant felt that the WHS status was just a name that those who came to Xidi and Hongcun to visit might not understand or misunderstood it. She stated:

The WHS status, the title is too shinning. ... According to the feedback from tourists, especially younger tourists, they did not know Hui culture. [They] came here for sight viewing, so they treated it [the trip] casually. Once I received one tourist and brought him to visit the village [Hongcun]. In the middle, he said that oh, there is nothing to see in this ugly village, how come it can be titled as a WHS? I was really hurt when I heard of it, really. Hongcun only has the fame outside.

Participant 4, p.12

Description of private business owners' perspectives of the WHS status

Overview of participants

Three participants in the group were interviewed. All of their businesses were located in one of the two villages. One owner had been running a handicraft store in Xidi for approximately 18 years. One owner started to run a hostel & restaurant in Xidi three years ago. The last one had a grocery store & hostel in Hongcun since 2002 (see Table 6).

Table 6:

Overview of participants in private business owners

Participant	Running length	Business location	Background
Handicraft store owner	18 Years	Xidi	Born in Xidi
Hostel & Restaurant owner	3 Years	Xidi	Moved to Xidi 25 years ago
Grocery store & Hostel owner	10 Years	Hongcun	Born in Hongcun, and moved back in 2002

Theme one: awareness of the WHS status

All three participants in the group knew that the two villages were designated as a WHS, and two owners mentioned the designation when the researcher asked them whether or not they knew of any recognition that Xidi or Hongcun received.

R (researcher): Now, Xidi is famous in China. Do you know any outside recognition that Xidi have received?

P (participant): It seems to be the one of ten fascinating villages in China ...

R: Have you heard that Xidi is a WHS?

P: I know that.

Participant 6, p.3-4

The other participant talked about the status when she introduced her house, she said that “later on, I reconstructed the kitchen of the house into the business place, and

added a door facing to the street. I did the reconstruction before Xidi got the WHS status, since the management of the village was loose” (Participant 5, p.2).

However, none of them remembered the year of the designation. One participant insisted that the designation was in 2002. She claimed that “the designation was 2002. Chairman visited the village in 2001. After his coming, the village got the title in 2002” (Participant 7, p.6). One participant, on the other hand, was not sure when the designation was. She commented:

Was that [the designation] in 2001 or 2000? ... After experts' investigation, Xidi and Hongcun could have the chance to be titled as a WHS, verbal or written applications were useless. ... It seemed that Xidi got the WHS status at the end of the year when experts came, I mean Chinese year. I knew experts came to [Xidi to] investigate. If they agreed with [the nomination], Xidi could have the title.

Participant 6, p.4

There were two ways that participants found out the designation: media and word-of-mouth. Participants watched TV programs or read newspapers about the designation or they heard the information from others. One participant said that “I knew this [the designation] by TV programs and newspapers. ... Weekly magazines also mentioned that. ... If there are things happen in the Yi County, we will know [them] very quickly” (Participant 5, p4). The other participant insisted that “[I knew the designation] before it was officially confirmed. Leaders [chief of the village] told us [the news]” (Participant 6, p.5).

In particular, the owner of a hostel & restaurant stated that the WHS status was not permanent. She said:

Here [Xidi] is a WHS, people come here to visit Hui ancient residences, if we pull down old houses and build new ones, tourists will not come, and the title of WHS will be cancelled. ... I wanted to scale up my business, I wanted to build new houses, but I think management regulations are right. They [government staff] told us that too many new houses have been built in the village might cross the line, and the site might get a yellow card. The WHS status is not permanent, and it may be cancelled by the UNESCO.

Participant 6, p.10

Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status

Private business owners seized the tourism opportunity to develop their businesses and improve their quality of life. However, owners claimed that they did not use any special strategy to attract tourists, and their promotional strategies mainly involved in personal communicating with consumers and providing their business cards to any customer who visited their business. All of them claimed that they did not use the WHS status to promote their businesses. One business owner stated that “our Xidi has been titled as a WHS, those who come to here have been aware of it. If I put another sign or logo, ... I never thought about it” (Participant 5, p. 6). The other owner commented:

I never thought about this [use the WHS status to promote my business], I designed my store's signage years ago, but it was after the designation. I am a farmer, and I am not like educated people who may come up the idea to use it.

Participant 6, p.8

When asking their reasons why they did not use the WHS status, their responses were similar. Owners claimed that there was no need to use the WHS status on their store

signage or other materials, and they were likely to focus on their reputation and services they provided to tourists. One owner provided an example:

In [tourist] peak season, my hostel is always fully booked. During the last National Holiday [seven-days long], one customer booked three rooms in advance, the price was \$ 30.77 (CAD) per room, and they did not come until 9:00 p.m. Before their coming, others tried to book one room for \$ 40.00 (CAD) or \$ 43.08 (CAD), I did not receive them. I had promised to the customer, I preferred to earn less. If I gave the three rooms to others, if the customer came eventually, what should I suppose to do? I could not earn that money. ... Although I do not know how to surf the internet, and the price for the room is not high, I am fine with these. I know that if I promise to consumers, I have to keep my words. ... I will be very happy, if tourists come to my hostel, and are satisfied with the service.

Participant 6, p.7-8

The other owner shared her stories:

Xiechen [Internet-based travel agency] contacted me once. They [staff] proposed that I could put my hostel on the website, and raised the room price from \$18.46 (CAD) to \$23.08(CAD), Xiechen received the price difference as advertisement fees. I refused it. I am telling you that their proposal would destroy my reputation, right? Why should I do that? If the room price is \$18.46 (CAD), that is the real price. ... I only raise the room price in the National Holiday [seven-days long], I do not raise it in weekends. I hope that my business can last in long terms, and I am not the owners who only focus on short-term profits, right?

Participant 7, p.8

Although private business owners claimed that they did not use the WHS status as a promotional strategy, all of them believed that there was a positive connection between their business opportunities and the WHS status. One owner mentioned:

I rely on making stone-carvings for a living, there is a connection between tangible and intangible heritage, and both of them emphasize conservation. ... I hope that the status can help Xidi to be maintained like this way or better. Without the title, the number of tourists would be decreased, and my business would turn down.

Participant 5, p.14

During the fieldwork, the researcher asked participants to provide any promotional materials and browsed websites to see whether they had a website or not. The results showed that although all the participants insisted that they did not use the WHS status, the WHS status was included on their business cards provided to anyone who came to their business place, and that none of them have a website to promote their businesses.

Theme three: commitment to the WHS status

Private business representatives demonstrated their interests in profits they could earn from tourism. Thus, to them, the WHS status meant fame, business opportunities, economic benefits, and conservation.

Fame. All participants in the group agreed that the designation made Xidi and Hongcn well-known, which attracted tourists, especially foreign tourists. One participant provided an example of increasing number of foreign tourists after the designation, she said:

For example, we [Xidi] have received more foreign tourists. Many tourists visit our village because of the WHS status. ... The number of tourists has been increased for sure. Before [the designation], there were not many tourists, especially foreign tourists. ... After 1990 [the village has been opened to the public since 1986], it was quite rare for residents to see a foreign tourist, especially if he/she came from Africa. As you know, the feeling was very strange, we never saw foreigners before. Nowadays, it is usual for residents to see foreign tourists. We [residents] can see tourists from all continents. ... I know many tourists, some of them come from the States, some of them come from Canada, and some of them come from Singapore.

Participant 5, p.6

The other owner believed that the WHS status attracted tourists. She stated:

It is [Xidi and Hongcun were] famous cross the country, and this is for sure. People have known the two villages. I tell you, if the two villages did not have the WHS status, and fewer tourists would come. Because of it [the WHS status], the two villages are famous, which brings tourists.

Participant 7, p.6

Business opportunities. All participants cared about profits and business potential.

They felt that the WHS status brought business opportunities. One owner pointed out:

Before the designation, we [Xidi and Hongcun] were not allowed to receive foreign tourists to stay over-nights, if they wanted to stay, they had to stay in the County. ... Now, we [the two villages] can receive foreign tourists. ... As far as I know, there are three hostels in the village [Xidi] foreign tourists can choose. I

helped them [foreign tourists] to find a hostel [in the village] once.

Participant 5, p.6-7

The other owner stated that the WHS status not only brought business opportunities, but also created job opportunities in the two villages. She said:

Since the number of tourists has been increased these years, Xidi is better than other places [villages nearby]. ... For example, residents in other villages have to work outside [the villages], but we can run hostels, restaurants or small businesses. Residents in the village can also find part-time jobs in restaurants, like waiters and waitresses. In the peak season, some restaurants need seven to eight waiters/waitresses.

Participant 6, p.3

Economic benefits. The business opportunities raised participants' income and improved their quality of life. All participants stated that the WHS status meant economic benefits.

One participant owned a house in the village inherited from the last generation. At the same time, after years' hard working, she owned a car and brought an apartment in the County. She said:

Because more tourists come, our economy has been improved, then our income has been raised, and of course our quality of life has been improved. We have a new apartment in the County, and we purchased a car, it is very convenient.

Participant 5, p.9

The other owner's thought was straightforward:

When I heard of it [the WHS status], I thought that it can help me to sell more

stuff, make more profits. At least, we can receive more allowance [from the local government] at the end of a year, we have more money then. We are famers, our thoughts are straightforward.

Participant 6, p.5

Conservation. These participants recognized that their quality of life has been improved because of the WHS status which required them to protect and maintain their residences in good conditions. All of them believed that conservation was the core element of the WHS status. One participant shared her understanding of the WHS status straightforward, she said that “I tell you that the WHS status is a brand. We should conserve it and develop it” (Participant 7, p.14). Another owner emphasized the importance of integrity, she commented:

I think the WHS status means culture conservation. ... If I want to improve my quality of life, I can pull down my house, [and build a new one], but our culture will disappear forever. In total, there are 124 Hui ancient residences like my house in Xidi. If all of us [residents] want to improve our quality of life, we would damage the WHS, and we would not have the WHS status, since all of them [Hui ancient residences] had pulled down.

Participant 5, p.12

The other owner tried to explain the connection between conservation and profits, she stated:

My house is inherited from ancestors. I am not allowed to reconstruct my house. For example, I am not allowed to add an extra floor of the house [even I own the house and land]. It may relate to the WHS status, which emphasizes conservation.

Currently, our Xidi is a WHS, so [we] receive allowance from the local government. No matter how much we get, we receive some at least. For example, I raised pigs before, I only earned a little, and I had to raise them for 11 month. [Nowadays, I run the business], more tourists come, [we need to] protect it [houses], and the business will be getting better, and the amount of allowance will be raised.

Participant 6, p.11

Description of residents' perspectives of the WHS status

Overview of participants

In total, six participants were invited to join in the study. They were residents of the villages, but were neither private business owners nor local government employees. Four of them were somehow connected to the tourism industry. One served as a waitress in a hostel & cafeteria in Xidi, one owned a house that was close to tourist routes in Xidi, one was a part-time tour guide after retirement in Hongcun, and one moved to Hongcun 12 years ago with her son who run a tea house (similar to cafeteria). The other two participants had no relation with tourism, they were farmers and were born in one of the two villages (See Table 7).

Table 7:

Overview of participants in the residents group

Participant	Living length	Living location	Background
Waitress	N/A	Xidi	Moved to Xidi around 8 years ago
House owner	>40 Years	Xidi	Born in Xidi, and moved back around 6 years ago
Part-time tour guide	> 60 Years	Hongcun	Born in Hongcun

Old lady	12 Years	Hongcun	Moved to Hongcun in 2001
Farmer	> 50 Years	Xidi	Born in Xidi, no relation with tourism
Farmer	> 50 Years	Hongcun	Born in Hongcun, no relation with tourism

Theme one: awareness of the WHS status

All of these participants knew that the village where they lived was designated a WHS. Those who had been involved in the tourism industry remembered that the designation was in 2000, and those who had no relation to the tourism industry did not remember the designation, nor did they care about it.

Three participants mentioned that the village where they lived was a WHS when introducing the village. For instance, one participant said that “Xidi, I have lived here [the participant moved to the village because of marriage] for years. Fairly to say, after 2002, because we [Xidi] were titled as a WHS in 2000, tourism has grown rapidly” (Participant 8, p1). On the other hand, the other three participants mentioned the designation after being reminded by the researcher.

R: You mentioned that Hongcun is a good place, do you know any outside recognition that Hongcun received?

P: This? Like one of the fascinating villages in China, 4A [AAAA tourist attraction], we are applying [5A] now.

R: Ok, do you know that the village got the WHS status?

P: The designation of WHS was on November 30th, 2000. Since then [the designation], all [the village became a WHS].

Participant 11, p.2

Residents were aware of the designation through personal experiences and

word-of-mouth. One participant still remembered the celebration ceremony organized by the local government. He said that “we had a celebration ceremony [after the designation], residents in the village were gathered by the government, they [the government] and resident representatives promised to protect and maintain this WHS. Everyone committed (Participant 9, p.2).

Those who had no relation to tourism were not interested in the designation, but they heard the news from others. One participant stated that “I don’t care about it [the designation]. I don’t rely on it, why should I care about it? ... [However], I knew about it from others, they discussed and talked about it a lot, so I knew it (Participant 12, p. 1).

Among residents, one participant pointed out that the WHS status is a brand, he commented “I think the biggest challenge is how to maintain the brand [the WHS status]? I heard that they [experts from UNESCO] will visit [the village] without notice. In some worse cases, the brand will be cancelled” (Participant 9, p4-5).

Theme two: interpretation of the WHS status

Residents felt very connected to the village where they lived, not only did they own their properties (houses and lands), but also some of them had lived in Xidi or Hongcun for generations. After the designation, residents had more chances to meet and talk to tourists. Their way of introducing the village where they lived to tourists had been influenced by the WHS status. Generally, residents who lived in the tourist area or had connections with tourism were glad to introduce the WHS status to tourists, and those who had no relation to tourism were likely to ignore the WHS status.

For example, after retirement, one participant served as a part-time tour guide. He introduced the village was a WHS when he was hired as a tour guide. The other

participant lived in the non-tourist area and worked as a waitress in a hostel & cafeteria also would like to introduce the WHS status to consumers and tourists. She said that “this is for sure [to introduce the WHS status], it is not because of you, and I will introduce the village and the WHS status to other customers [come to the hostel & cafeteria]. Some customers ask me where to visit in the village, if that is the case, I will say that Xidi received the title [the WHS status] because it represents Hui culture and Hui ancient residences” (Participant 8, p.4).

Moreover, these residents shared their reasons why they introduced the WHS status to others. One participant stated:

I am proud that I am living in Hongcun. It is daytime, because of tourists, the village is noisy. In the evening, without tourists, the village is so quite. I saw you last night, right? [R: yes.] It is quite different at night, right? I fell that living in Hongcun, as a local, I should spread Hui culture and preserve Hui architecture to future generations. ... I hope tourists can understand Hui ancient residences, Hui culture and Hui architecture. [I] want to let them know the WHS status is not only a title, but also the awareness of conservation.

Participant 10, p.6-7

However, residents who lived in the non-tourist area and had no relation to tourism seemed not to care about the designation. One participant complained that “there is no benefit after the designation, why do you [tourists] always think that we are so lucky to live in a village titled as a WHS” (Participant 13, p.2)? The other resident expressed the similar thought. He said that “why should I care about [the WHS status]? Like my house, I only receive a little allowance [from the local government], and the

amount is limited” (Participant 12, p.1).

Theme three: commitment to the WHS status

Residents were living in different geographic locations in Xidi and Hongcun, and they had various occupations. Therefore, they shared diverse understanding of the WHS status that included economic benefits, fame and conservation.

Economic benefits. All participants claimed that the WHS status brought economic benefits to them. After the designation, tourists’ visitation stimulated economic development in Xidi and Hongcun. Residents had more chances to work in the two villages, received allowance from the local government, and improved their quality of life. One resident shared her experience of living in Xidi, she said:

Like me, I live in the upper village [of Xidi], there is no tourism resource. My husband finds a job outside the village, and I planned to do so as well. Since tourism has been developed, at least, I can be a waitress here [she worked in a hostel & cafeteria], and earn some money. I can stay in the village, and take care of my child and parents, not so bad. Without tourism, my life would be harder.

Participant 8, p.4

The other participant caught the opportunity of tourism development and persuaded his brother to come back. He mentioned:

The restaurant you [the researcher] went to belongs to my younger brother. ... He came back [to the village] last year, I asked him to do so. He has his own house, and he is a good cook, so it is good for him to open a restaurant. Working outside the village is harder, right?

Participant 9, p.1-2

Those who lived in the non-tourist area and had no relation to tourism might not care about the designation nor tourism development in the two villages, but they admitted that the WHS status brought cash to them. One resident said that “like my family, we [still] receive allowance from the local government every year, although the amount of the money is limited. ... Since tourism is getting better, he [the local government] gives us some money.

Participant 12, p.1

Fame. After the designation, the WHS status changed residents' life in Xidi and Hongcun. Five out of the six participants thought that the WHS status promoted the two villages and attracted tourists. One participant mentioned that “before 2000, not many tourists came here [Xidi]. After 2000, situation has been improved. Tourism development is better than before” (Participant 8, p.2). Another participant shared his pride, he stated that “after the designation, we become so famous that not only people cross China know us, foreign tourists know us, too. We are well-known” (Participant 11, p.6). The other participant, on the other hand, talked about the recognition from different angle, he stated:

The designation helps the two villages and the County to be well-known by the whole world. It is an honour to get the WHS status. I am so proud. ... It is not exaggerated to say that men want to marry with women who are registered permanent residents in Xidi or Hongcun, and rich people want to come to the two villages to purchase old residences.

Participant 9, p.5

Conservation. To most participants, the WHS status meant conservation, which

was the most important meaning. The designation helped Xidi and Hongcun to develop tourism, in order to sustain such benefits, the two villages needed to be conserved and preserved. One participant insisted that “I think conservation is necessary, and residents’ awareness needs to be improved. Because of the WHS status, our Xidi has developed so fast” (Participant 9, p.6). Another participant compared the WHS status to live rivers, she commented:

It [the WHS status] relates to heritage. Heritage is the resources inherited from ancestors, it is not modern construction, right? ... Firstly, we should not forget our history, and try to preserve it. ... Secondly, everyone should have the awareness of conserving the heritage. Heritage needs everyone’s effort to protect, preserve and maintain, right? ... [The WHS status] represents harmony between human and nature, harmony between human and culture, just like live rivers.

Participant 10, p.2

The other resident directly pointed out that the WHS status need to take future generations into account. He stated:

[I think] first of all, economic benefits can last longer if we conserve the two villages. Secondly, Hui ancient residences are tangible properties ... we should maintain these residences, keep them in good conditions, and preserve them to our future generations. ... We are getting rich because of the title, if we over develop or over exploit it [these resources], what do we leave to our future generations? I think the two villages do not [only] belong to the current generation, because heritage [in the two villages] is unique and un-renewable resource, we need to conserve it rather than to destroying it, right?

Participant 11, p.7-8

Cross-group analysis

In the last section, the researcher described the three local stakeholder groups' perspectives of the WHS status individually. Table 8 illustrates responses from the three local stakeholders regarding the WHS status.

Table 8:***Summary of responses from the three local stakeholders regarding the WHS status***

	Themes		
Local government	Awareness	Interpretation	Commitment
Finding 1	All of them come up the brand top-of-memory	The brand was widely interpreted in various activities and programs	Fame: well-known and lead to increasing number of tourists
Finding 2	All of them recalled the brand	The brand could maximize impacts of the designation and attract tourists	Economic factor: development opportunity and economic benefits
Finding 3	Two had past experiences related to the brand	The brand could increase the public awareness of conversation	Conservation: core element, essence of keeping the brand and stimulate other development
Finding 4			Education: improve residents' awareness of conservation
Finding 5			Responsibility: balance conservation and development
Private business owners	Awareness	Interpretation	Commitment
Finding 1	All of them could	None of them used	Fame: well-known and lead to

	recognize the brand among other titles	particular strategies to promote businesses	increasing number of tourists
Finding 2	One could recall the brand without reminding	The brand was shown on their business cards.	Economic factor: economic benefits and business opportunity
Finding 3	One had past experiences related to the brand	No need to use the brand, focused on services and reputation	Conservation: core element, essence to keep the brand and maximize profits
Finding 4		The positive connection between the brand and business	
Residents	Awareness	Interpretation	Commitment
Finding 1	Half could recognized the brand among other titles	Those who had connections with tourism would likely to introduce the brand	Economic factor: economic benefits and improving quality of life
Finding 2	Half could recall the brand without reminding	Those who had no relation to tourism would likely to ignore the brand	Fame: promote the two villages and attract tourists
Finding 3	Half had past experiences related to the brand	Shared the brand because of personal pride and try to help tourists to learn and respect the brand	Conservation: core to sustain economic benefits
Finding 4		Did not use it because the brand did not bring economic benefits	

Note: from responses and review of documents.

As shown, the three local stakeholder groups shared common understanding of

the WHS status, at the same time, they showed some differences. In the following part, the researcher tried to explore factors which influenced on their perceptions regarding the WHS status.

Different goals and interests among the three local stakeholder groups

The interviews illustrated that the three local stakeholder groups pursued different goals and interests regarding the WHS status. The local government had the pressure of conserving the two villages. At the same time, it showed interests in taking advantage of the WHS status as a tool of development. Private business owners tried to maximize their profits. Residents wanted to improve their quality of life and kept their normal life in the two villages. These different goals and interests led to their different perceptions of the WHS status.

Participants in the local government claimed that they had the responsibility to conserve and preserve the two villages (Participant 1, 2, 3). All the participants emphasizes that conservation was the priority for the local government. One participant commented:

Fairly to say, within these years, we Yi County government always emphasize that conservation is the priority task. ... We had made the Protection Plans of Xidi and Hongcun before the designation. With rapid tourism development, the Protection Plans of Xidi and Hongcun had been revised in 2003. We are trying to focus on conservation. [The local government] has to strictly follow the Protection Plans, including infrastructure and superstructure in the two villages.

Participant 1, p1-2

The documents collected confirmed that the local government did release the Protection Plans of Xidi and Hongcun. During the fieldwork, the researcher also noticed that the local government used bulletin boards in the two villages to announce whose houses could be reconstructed and the reasons why.

Meanwhile, the local government was happy to see that the WHS status stimulated development in the two villages and Yi County. Some projects took residents' interests into account. For example, the local government maintained road systems and improved security in the two villages, which supported by the majority of residents in the two villages. Some projects, on the other hand, were questioned by private business owners and residents. For instance, the researcher found out that a free market was located in Hongcun. One participant in the local government group claimed that the free market was to relieve the commercialization in the village (Participant 4). However, participants in the residents group insisted that the free market attracted outside business owners, limited local residents' opportunities to run business, and increased living expenses (Participant 10, 13).

Private business owners cared about profits they could earn from tourism.

Although participants in the group admitted that the WHS status meant conservation, all of them tried to break Protection Plans of Xidi and Hongcun, to reconstruct their houses or enlarge their business places. For example, one participant stated:

The year before last year, I wanted to build a warehouse. I just finished it [the construction], they [the local government] pulled it down. I lost around \$ 1,500 (CAD). ... [What is the] biggest challenge? That is, I want to build a new house, but he [the local government] does not allow me to do so. Because of the status,

our life is somehow inconvenient.

Participant 5, p.11-12

Moreover, the researcher found out that many houses in Xidi and Hongcun were under constructions. It was unknown whether or not owners of these houses had received permission from the local government, and they reconstructed their houses based on satisfying their basic needs or trying to gain the tourism market. One participant in residents group worried about the trend:

He/She [residents] does not want to improve his/her quality of life, what he/she wants is to maximize profits that can be gained from the house. ... He/She wants to sell tourism products, build a hostel, or open a restaurant, nothing else. ... They do not want to improve their quality of life, they want you [tourists] come to the village to buy things, to stay in the village, or eat in the restaurant, right?

Participant 10,

p. 6

Residents' reaction to the WHS status was complicated. They were eager to improve their income and quality of life. At the same time, they did not want their normal life to be disturbed or ruined because of the WHS status. During the interviews, participants in the residents group had conflict about maintaining and reconstructing their houses. One participant said:

Why should culture be modernized? [The reality is that] we want to stay comfortable, so we can not live the way in old times, like we had to go outside to take a bath or use the washroom, right? I feel that reconstruction of these ancient residences were bad ideas. The question is about our daily life, and we have no

choice [to change the structure of the house]. On the one hand, I think culture should be protected. On the other hand, these ancient residences are easily collapsed if no one lives in. If someone is staying in the house, things have to be changed. We can not live like ancient people, right? ... Although the government has mentioned the planning of a new village for years, it has not started yet. ... I think development is nice, but culture here should be maintained. The government should implement its development projects outside the village, but not make Xidi over commercialized.

Participant 8, p.9

The statement was understandable, and one participant in the local government tried to explain for residents in the two villages. He mentioned:

[Located in rural areas, limited transportation and limited financial supports], there was no modern facility in the two ancient villages [before]. For example, there was no washroom in these old houses. Nowadays, he [residents] wants to have one in the house. ... Our [the local government's] mission is to slow down the process of modernization in Xidi and Hongcun. You [The local government] can not stop it [modernization], it is impossible. For instance, [although residents are living in these old residences], it is comfortable [for them] to sit in a sofa, [it is understandable, and] it is impossible to require residents to use wood chairs in the house.

Participant 1, p.5

In addition, although participants in the local government claimed that allowance helped residents to maintain their houses and promised to provide financial aids

(Participant, 1), residents did not think that it was enough. For example, one resident could not afford expenses to maintain his house which had more than 300 years history, and so sold it to others. He said:

Of course our life is better than before. My ancestor was so poor that they used sedge as cover when they slept. ... What should I say? Honestly, it is a good thing that I can receive \$ 246.15 (CAD) [a year from the local government]. Without tourism, we could get nothing. ... We had no benefit [from the WHS status], my house is inherited for several generations. My house is broken [it is leaking], but I have no money to fix it. ... We have to maintain our houses by our own. I have no money to fix it. So I had no choice but sold it. ... I sold my house, but I will not leave the village. Because Hongcun is my home, I want to stay, right? ... As you can see, the wall of the house is collapsed. I have submitted an application to the local government three times [as required by the local government]. They [staff in the local government] came here to look at it, and did nothing. ... Tell you the truth, the local government never helped to maintain my house.

Participant 13, p.2-3

Different economic benefits among the three local stakeholder groups

The designation changed the two villages tremendously, and each local stakeholder group received kinds of economic benefits. However, each local stakeholder group received different portions of the economic benefits. The unbalanced economic benefits played a vital role in local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status. Table 9 summarizes main sources of income for each group.

Table 9:

Summary of main sources of income after the designation

Group	Main Sources
Local government	Entrance fee, taxes, and multi-impacts of tourism (investments, transportation and others)
Private business owners	Selling tourism products/proving kinds of services, and allowance received from local government (if owners had registered permanent householder in two villages)
Residents	Salary/income from farming, allowance given by local government

Note: from responses in interviews and review of documents

As shown, the local government was the main body of receiving economic benefits, followed by private business owners, and residents were the least. The distribution of entrance fees, for example, reflected differences between the local government and residents (private business owners included) who held registered permanent householders in Xidi or Hongcun. After collecting entrance fees from the two villages, the local government distributed portions of it to residents to encourage them to maintain their houses. According to interviews and review of documents, residents who lived in Xidi received 18% of the entrance fees, and 8% of the entrance fees was given to residents in Hongcun (Yi County, 2010).

In addition, income the three local stakeholder groups earned was unbalanced. For instance, Yi County had received 430 million (CAD) from the tourism industry in 2010, five times larger than the income in 2000 (Participant 1). There was no specific figure to illustrate annual income for private business owners. The interviews showed that participants in the group were capable of investing in a new business within five years, building an extra warehouse, and expanding business places. Residents, on the other hand, in some extreme cases, could not afford the expense of maintaining their houses

(Participant 13).

Different power among the three local stakeholder groups

All participants in the local government, private business owners and residents were involved in the WHS somehow, like job duties, geographic living locations, and personal involvement. However, their power in the two villages was different. The differences caused tension among the three local stakeholder groups, which had impacts on their perceptions of the WHS status.

Given the nature of Chinese political structure, the local government served as a proctor and main developer in the two villages. On the one hand, the local government required residents to maintain their houses and released several regulations to limit residents' behaviour. For instance, since 2001, the local government had pulled down 51 un-authorized constructions in the two villages, 10 residents were taken into custody, and one resident was in jail. At the same time, the local government organized some development projects (e.g. free market, parking lot, and re-construct Hui residences) in the two villages. Because of its dual role, relations between the local government and residents (private business owners included) were deteriorated.

All participants in the local government insisted that the local government did everything it could to keep the WHS status. If residents (private business owners included) did not support the local government or the WHS status, the local government believed that it was because of the residents' personal qualities (Participant 3), and that it was residents' responsibility to improve their awareness of protection (Participant 1, 3). Regarding economic benefits, participants claimed that the designation did improve residents' quality of life, and residents should appreciate this improvement rather than

complaining about it (Participant 2, 3). Furthermore, participants in the local government implied that residents (private business owners included) were responsible for commercialization in the two villages (Participant 4). The private business owners and residents' comments were not in agreement with the local government perspectives stated above.

Participants in the private business owners group complained that the local government is responsible for commercialization in the two villages, as it largely attracted outside business owners and investment which exacerbated the business environment. One participant said that "I complained to the staff in the Yi County Bureau of Industry and Commerce [similar to Chamber of Commerce] once, he/she claimed that without these [outside investment], development in Xidi would be slow down. ... Too many businesses mean competition" (Participant 6, p.13). Another participant complained:

For example, as you can see, there is an empty space in my hostel. There was a room before, but it was pulled down by the local government. He [the local government] does not allow me to do so, as he [local government] claimed that it may damage the image of the WHS status. How come? ... Although I did not feel comfortable with this, I can do nothing. If I build a new house, he [local government] will pull it down. ... On the other hand, the company [Hongcun Tourism Development Co., Ltd] can construct projects wherever he [the company] wants, but not us. What should I say, right?

Participant 7, p.12

Residents' reactions were similar to private business owners. They admitted that

tourism did improve their quality of life, but they worried about the two villages' future. Residents had several concerns. Firstly, they were facing high commodity prices and reduced availability of private lands due to rapid development in the two villages. For example, one participant mentioned that he did not purchase fresh vegetables due to higher commodity price (Participant, 13). Another participant had a concern of framers without lands, she commented:

There are many outside business owners come to our village. What should I say? They have stolen our [local business owners'] opportunities. Moreover, they have raised rent prices in the village. ... Actually, I don't like outside business owners. They [the local government] should help residents in the village to get rich, right? They should put us in the priority. ... For example, there were many private lands in Xidi, they [the local government] recruited all these lands and developed kinds of projects. There was no empty land left.

Participant 8, p. 8

In addition, residents (private business owners included) complained that the local government did not encourage them to be involved in conservation, and the local government should be responsible for the exploitation and over-development in the two villages. One participant claimed:

The biggest issue is that the local government assigns [reconstructions of residences] design plans and maintaining projects to outside companies, [it did not consider to recruit residents to join these projects], we [residents] have craftsmen, too. We were born in the village, although we have no any degree nor qualification, we were born here, we love our village, right? ... There are some

projects in the village, such as constructions of old style houses and landscaping projects in the village. [The purpose of these projects is that] they [the local government] want to attract more tourists, but not protection. ... We hope that the local government develops or exploits these projects outside the village. The village should be protected, and conservation is the priority. We do not care about what the local government does outside the village, [but we do care about what it does in the village], right?

Participant 10, p. 5-7

Furthermore, residents (private business owners included) questioned the local government's performance in managing the WHS. One participant said:

The WHS opens to the public everyday; no matter it is a weekday or weekend. If an expert or a foreign tourist visits the village unannounced [does not inform the local government], it [the village] does not look good. ... I think the level of management is limited. ... If this is the case, WHS status, this brand, is losing its image.

Participant 9, p.5-6

Beyond these three main factors, some participants in the residents group began to question the importance of the WHS status. One participant moved to Xidi after the designation, when she first heard of the WHS status, she felt that "I heard it [the designation] from TV programs, I thought that the designation would stimulate tourism development, more tourists would visit the village, especially the number of foreign tourists would increase" (Participant 2, p.2). After years' staying in the village, her viewpoint had changed. She was no longer immersed expectations of the WHS status, she

had more concerns. She commented:

From outsiders' viewpoints, Xidi is a good place. They all claimed that tourism resources in Xidi are rich, and tourism development in the village is fast. ... I think that the rich become richer, and the poor will be poorer. ... Of course, without the WHS status and without tourism, development in Xidi would be slow. Nowadays, positive impacts [of the WHS status] are limited. ... Except it [the designation] helped to solve basic living requirements [e.g. have a job in the village], nothing else.

Participant 2, p.2-3

To summarize, three factors influenced local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status, including their different goals and interests, their unbalanced economic benefits, and unbalanced influencing power among the local stakeholder groups.

In this section, the researcher has described the local government, private business owners and residents' perspectives of the WHS status used as a brand. The responses derived from the three research questions have been described. In addition, the researcher used cross-group analysis technique to synthesise, analyse and compare responses among the three local stakeholder groups. In the next section, an in-depth discussion will demonstrate what the data reveals about brand equity in general and brand knowledge model in specific.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS

In the last section, data collected through interviews and review of documents were analysed. The results from the three local stakeholder groups (local government, private business owners and residents) revealed complex issues surrounding the WHS status in Xidi and Hongcun, a WHS in China.

In this section, the results from the study together with the theoretical framework are discussed to provide an in-depth understanding of local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status used as a brand.

Discussion

Brand knowledge model, in terms of brand awareness and brand image, contributes to brand equity theory (Keller, 1998). The researcher adapted the brand knowledge model to be relevant to this study and three main components were involved: awareness, interpretation and commitment. Participants in the three local stakeholder groups were asked questions related to the WHS status, including whether or not they were aware that Xidi and Hongcun were designated as a WHS, how they came to know about the designation, how they interpret the WHS status, how the WHS status is understood, what is the essential meaning of the WHS status, and why such meaning is so important.

The results indicated that local stakeholders showed differences regarding the WHS status, including different goals and interests, unbalanced economic benefits, and unbalanced power among the three local stakeholder groups. In the following discussion, the researcher will examine the effectiveness of the WHS status as a brand by discussing

awareness of the WHS status (recognition and recall) and image of the WHS status (interpretation and commitment).

Awareness of the WHS status

Brand awareness reflects local stakeholders' memory of the WHS status and their emotional links to it. As demonstrated in the literature review, brand awareness has two components: recognition and recall (Aaker, 1996).

Besides the WHS status, Xidi and Hongcun have received various titles across the province and China. The main recognitions include but not limit: National AAAAA Tourist Attraction (the highest level of attraction in China), National Fascinating Villages (ten in total), National Historic and Cultural Village, and National Cultural Relic Protection Unit. Among these titles, the WHS status was the first-named brand to the majority of the participants, and all the participants knew that Xidi and Hongcun received the designation.

Moreover, the majority of the participants remembered when the designation took place, 8 of 13 participants recalled the WHS status by themselves, and five participants shared their personal experiences regarded to the WHS status. It has been 11 years since the designation, thus it is understandable that some participants could not remember the date of the designation. In other words, local stakeholders not only recognized the WHS status among other titles the two villages received, but also were familiar with the WHS status and established personal links to this brand.

The findings are quite different from Hall and Pinggin's (2002) study conducted in New Zealand, where business owners were not aware of the WHS status and did not start their business because of the designation. Thus, Hall and Pinggin concluded that the

importance of the WHS status to local business owners is over stated. There are two reasons that can explain why the present participants were all familiar with the designation. Firstly, Hall and Pinggin's study was conducted in a natural heritage site, where participants did not actually live in the site. The current study was conducted in a site where business owners and residents lived in the two villages. Secondly, the site Hall and Pinggin's chose was a national park before the WHS designation, the study they conducted demonstrated that business owners were aware of the national park status and showed their interests in the national park. In the current study, Xidi and Hongcun had received the WHS designation before other recognitions. So, two studies showed different results.

As demonstrated in the literature review, the brand equity occurs when local stakeholders are familiar with the WHS status and hold favourable memory of it. The results showed that local stakeholders had high awareness of the WHS status.

Image of the WHS status

Although the study indicated that local stakeholders had high awareness of the WHS status, some scholars argued that high brand awareness does not result in high brand image or awareness of the brand is superficial to the brand equity (Woodward, 1999; Peter, 2009). As discussed in the literature review, the image of the WHS status was initially created by World Heritage Committee, but it is re-established, interpreted and delivered by local stakeholders to tourists. From local stakeholders' perspectives, the image of the WHS status has two components: interpretation and commitment.

Interpretation. Interpretation refers to how local stakeholders re-established the WHS status, and what they deliver to tourists. It influences on the quality of the WHS

status and tourist satisfaction. The results showed that the three local stakeholder groups had different ways of interpreting the WHS status. When introducing Xidi and Hongcun, the local government emphasized the unique Hui ancient residences which were worthy of visiting. At the same time, the WHS status was the central part of its promotional materials and activities. In addition, the local government delivered these to tourists through brochures, logos, slogans, interpretation services and official website of Yi County Tourism Bureau. More importantly, the local government claimed that the purpose of doing it is to let tourists know that the two villages were a WHS and to ask tourists to have proper behaviour at the site.

Although limited promotional strategies (business cards, word-of-mouth) were used by private business owners, they showed that the two villages were perfect attractions to visit because of its unique resources, and they were likely to introduce the WHS status and share their experiences to tourists. They felt that the WHS status had a strong positive influence on their business, and that it was an honour for them to promote the two villages to tourists. The results challenged Hall and Piggin's (2002) study mentioned earlier. They suggested that business owners did not like to use the WHS status in their marketing activities because they thought that there was not a strong link between the WHS status and their business. In the present study, private business owners did recognize that their business relied on the WHS status. In other words, the impacts of the WHS status are shown to be important in this study.

Residents' way of using the WHS status was different due to their relation with tourism. Those who had connections to tourism believed that the designation made them proud and the two villages deserved the title because of unique Hui ancient residences

and integrity. They were willing to introduce the two villages to tourists, let tourists know the two villages, and improve their awareness of protection. On the other hand, those who had no relation with tourism did not introduce the two villages or the WHS status positively, which could deliver a negative image of the WHS status to tourists. For example, some residents in Hongcun blocked main entrances to the village, stopped tourists from visiting and sued the local government for property infringement (Zhai, 2002). The result supports the argument that residents' perception of tourism is influenced by social and economic benefits (Jimura, 2010; Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002). Their studies showed that residents had negative attitude toward tourism due to insufficient economic benefits and other social or environmental costs. For instance, in Besculides, Lee and McCormick's study (2002), the authors found that there was difference between non-Hispanic and Hispanic residents regarding their attitudes toward tourism benefits. Non-Hispanic residents were concerned about the effect of current benefits affected on themselves and the community, and Hispanic residents worried about the effect of current and future benefits on themselves and the community, and culture was the main factor. In the current study, residents showed similar results. Residents, connected to tourism, had more concerns about the future of the two villages and how to sustain economic benefits. On the contrary, those who had no connection to tourism worried about how many benefits they could get from tourism development currently. In other words, economic benefits and tourism dependency seemed related to their different attitudes toward tourism development and the WHS status.

To summarize, according to participants' response, the local government representatives, private business owners and the majority of residents that participated in

the study shared their opinions about the importance of the WHS status to tourists, which assured the quality of the WHS status. The local government applied interpretation services, tourist centres, and brochures to emphasize that the two villages represented Hui ancient residences. Private business owners stated to the researcher that they emphasized that the two villages need to be maintained and protected to any customers who visit their business. The majority of residents felt that it was their honour to introduce the two villages titled as a WHS and they felt that residents need to maintain and preserve their houses. All participants, especially private business owners and residents insisted that they would introduce the WHS status of the villages not only to the researcher but also to tourists. In other words, the education role of the WHS status, that is, to increase public awareness of protection, was achieved by members of all local stakeholder groups.

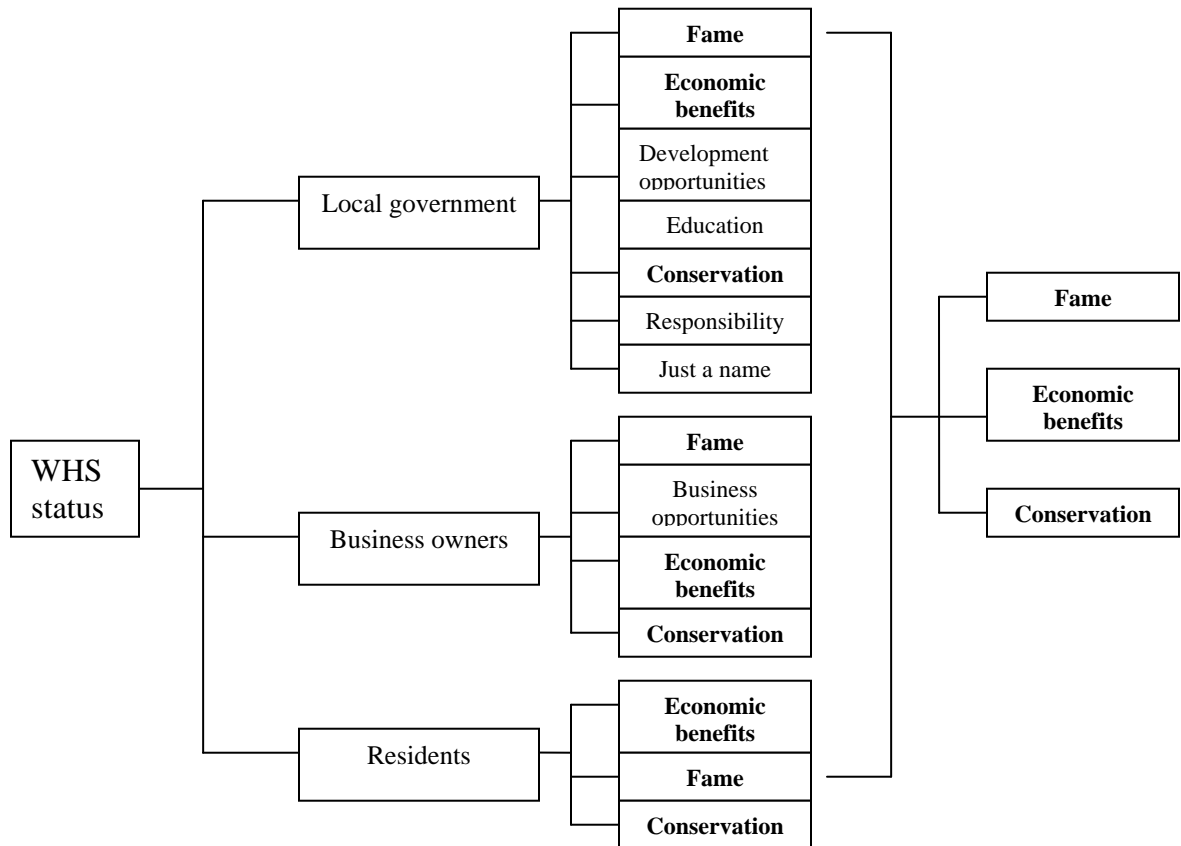
As discussed above, the three local stakeholders shared their opinions of the importance of the WHS status with tourists; however, the role of economic benefits was emphasized. When discussing the WHS status and the two villages, the three local stakeholder groups took economic factors into account. The local government implied the economic significance of the WHS status, private business owners showed their economic interests of the WHS status, and residents emphasized economic return of the WHS status.

Commitment. Commitment reflects local stakeholders' support of the WHS status in a long-term, and how they influence the reputation of the brand. As demonstrated, the three local stakeholder groups had showed the importance of the WHS status as described by the WHS program. However, whether they deliver this consistent message to tourists is so far unclear. In order to illustrate their level of support for the WHS status and

understand what messages they deliver to tourists, local stakeholders' commitment to the WHS status is examined. The result showed that the messages the three local stakeholders deliver to tourists were inconsistent, and their commitment to the WHS status was low and sometimes contradicted the standpoint of the WHS program.

Figure 10:

Meanings of the WHS status from local stakeholders' perspectives



Note: From responses from participants.

As shown, meanings of the WHS status described by each local stakeholder group were highlighted, and three components were in common: fame, economic benefits and conservation. Moreover, each stakeholder group insisted that conservation is the core meaning of the WHS status. According to their responses, it seems that their perceptions reflected the importance of the WHS status intended by the WHS program discussed in

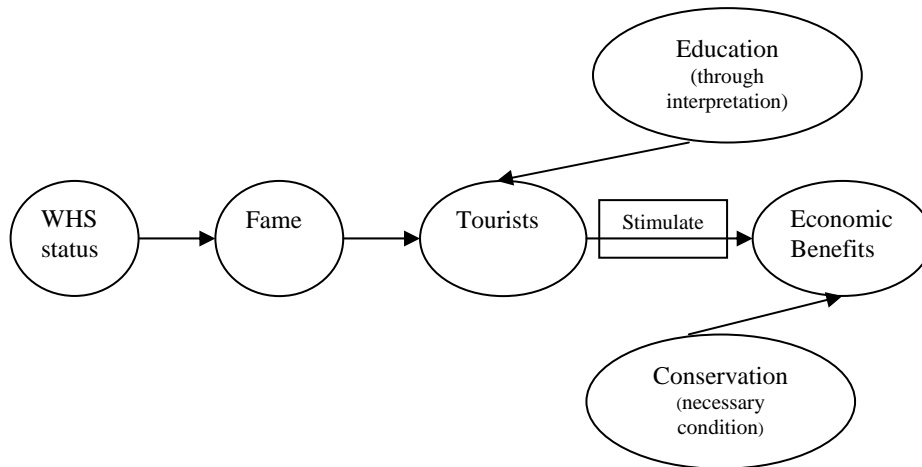
the literature review - conservation and economic importance, and conservation is the core element. However, reasons behind the three meanings and relations among them need to be explored.

The three local stakeholders recognized that Xidi and Hongcun represented unique Hui ancient residences, which made the two villages well-known and attracted tourists. With the development of tourism, economic benefits became the most important and direct influences of the WHS status. At the same time, the three local stakeholders realized that conservation could keep the quality of the WHS status and generate more economic benefits. In other words, from local stakeholders' perspectives, economic benefits were the main outcomes of the WHS status, and conservation was a necessary to achieve and sustain such economic benefits. The current study supports Fyall and Rakic's (2006) argument that commercialized heritage sites may challenge the significance of the WHS status.

As demonstrated in the literature review, the importance of the WHS status has three components: conservation (essence), education and economic benefits. Figure 11 shows local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status.

Figure 11:

Local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status



Note: From interviews responses and review of documents

Although the three local stakeholders showed their high awareness of the WHS status, and interpreted and delivered the importance of the WHS status to tourists as intended by the WHS program, they failed to deliver consistent messages to tourists. As demonstrated, the three local over emphasized the role of economic benefits and ignored the essential significance of conservation. Their perspectives could damage the reputation of the WHS status as exceptional quality and excellent reputation.

The study challenged Jimura's (2010) claim that because local people did not understand the importance of the WHS status, their level of conserving the WHS was low, so local people especially those who live in the WHS area need to understand the meaning of the WHS status. In the current study, local stakeholders did understand the importance of the WHS status, but they were economic led, and conservation served for economic benefits.

Implications

Theoretical implications

The main benefits resulting from brand equity theory increased consumer

satisfaction and have greater brand loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998). The brand knowledge model is the key to understanding and achieving brand equity (Keller, 1998). As demonstrated in the literature review, the original brand knowledge model proposed by Keller (1998) is consumer-based. This study applies and adapts this model from internal stakeholders' viewpoints in general and WHS local stakeholder in particular, and provides three main insights.

Firstly, the study explored original brand knowledge model from internal stakeholders' viewpoints. In the service industry, consumer satisfaction and loyalty to the brand are not only influenced by brand equity directly (e.g. quality of the products), but also affected by internal stakeholders' behaviour (e.g. interaction with staff, service quality they receive) (Torres & Tribo, 2011). Unfortunately, research about internal stakeholders' knowledge of the brand is less common in the current literature. This study focused on this missing part and adapts the consumer-based brand knowledge model. From internal stakeholders' perspectives, in order to keep the credibility of the brand and improve the image of the brand, internal stakeholders have to share the brand value with consumers through contact and communication, and they have to show their willingness to support the brand. This brand knowledge model can be further expanded and examined by scholars and marketing managers.

Secondly, this brand knowledge model is applied in the field of tourism. Tourism is a competitive market, destinations and attractions use branding to attract tourists and gain a competitive advantage in the tourism market. As shown in literature review, although the World Heritage Committee uses induced image to promote the WHS status as exceptional quality and excellent reputation, tourists will have their own complex

image after visitation which will influence their satisfaction, repeat visitation and their loyalty toward the WHS status (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Local stakeholders' understanding of the WHS status is one component affecting the tourist experience, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. Therefore, the model can be used by DMOs, marketing managers and scholars to examine local stakeholders' contributions to branding destinations and attractions.

Thirdly, the study applied the brand knowledge model to measure the effectiveness of the WHS status as a brand from local stakeholders' perspectives. Given the nature of the WHS status, local stakeholders should not only share the importance of the WHS program with tourists, but also need to show their support for the WHS status. WHS managers and scholars can apply this brand knowledge model to examine how local stakeholders look at the WHS status in particular and WHS program in general at other WHSs.

Practical implications

In particular, the WHS status is seen as a leading brand which needs to be taken care of and to keep its reputation. The researcher emphasized the need for WHS managers, policy makers and other scholars in tourism to recognize that local stakeholders are not only influenced by tourists and attractions, their perspectives of the brand also have crucial impacts on the quality and reputation of the brand, and influence on tourist satisfaction and loyalty toward the brand. In other words, local stakeholders are the first step to manage a strong brand.

The results provided the following three insights. Firstly, the results demonstrated that understanding local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status is urgent. Poria,

Reichel and Cohen (2010) claimed that the WHS status is widely known as an effective brand or has positive brand equity. The study challenges this claim from local stakeholder's perspective. As emphasized, the role of local stakeholders is pivotal. In order to keep the exceptional quality and excellent reputation of the WHS status, WHS managers, policies makers and other researchers need pay more attentions to these groups.

Secondly, the results revealed that local stakeholders' commitment of the WHS status is crucial. As Fyall and Raic (2006) suggested, tourists want to explore why a certain site is titled as a WHS, what they can expect to see in the site, and how the site has cultural or natural significance. In the current study, although local stakeholders shared the importance of the WHS status as intended by the WHS program, to tourists, messages they delivered emphasized economic benefits the WHS status brought, which was inconsistent to the intended meaning of the WHS status. More importantly, their degree of the commitment could damage the reputation of the WHS status, tourists may no longer think that the WHS status represents unique cultural or natural significance, or they may treat the WHS status as other normal brands. Furthermore, the results illustrated that local stakeholders' viewpoints of the WHS status had deviated from the core element of the WHS status and emphasized its economic importance. In order to improve local stakeholders' commitment of the WHS status, WHS managers need to have a system to understand local stakeholders' need, eliminate gaps among them, and try to find a balance to satisfy their needs.

Thirdly, the results demonstrated that communication among local stakeholders' is vital. Although the three local stakeholders illustrated their common interests of

economic benefits regarding the WHS status, their conflicts were obvious. As shown, the three local stakeholders disagreed about issues like the distribution of revenue from tourism, management plan of the two villages, and involvement in tourism. All of these conflicts aggravated concerns of the WHS status, and had negative impacts on the reputation of the WHS status. As Gilly and Woolfinbarger (1998) suggested, effective communication among internal stakeholders can fulfill their commitment of the brand. In addition, Hankinson (2009) insisted that a strong partnership among stakeholders can deliver a long-term promise to consumers. Therefore, WHS managers need to create an effective system for local stakeholders to share their goals and interests, and to decrease their conflicts through communication.

Limitations

There were two limitations in the current study: translation and data collection in the fieldwork.

Translation

The data (interviews and review of documents) collected in the study were in Chinese and results were presented in English. There are some issues that arise when translating from one language to another, including trustworthiness, language, and culture (Chen & Boore, 2009). In order to decrease the bias of translation, a researcher assistant was hired who understood both English and Chinese, and back-translation strategy was applied to check the accuracy of the translation.

The researcher was the main translator. The original documents (Informed Consent, interview guide, and application of request) were written in English. The researcher translated them into Chinese, and sent the Chinese version to researcher

assistant, asked her to translate into English. During this process, both researcher and research assistant found that it was difficult to translate “stakeholders” into Chinese. After discussion, we decided to use “local communities” to replace “stakeholders” in Chinese.

After data collection, the researcher translated one of the transcriptions from Chinese into English. Then, the researcher sent the translation to the research assistant and asked her to translate it from English into Chinese. Considering the case contained 13 interviews, the researcher decided to code data into English directly and to translate parts of transcriptions when interpreting data. The researcher sent original sentences/paragraphs (Chinese) and translation (English) to the research assistant, asked her to review them. In order to show participants intended thoughts, the researcher used direct translation from Chinese into English. Even doing so, some contexts of translation were hard to understand. Therefore, after discussion with the research assistant, the researcher decided to replace certain words or change structure of sentences to make them understandable in English.

Although the researcher applied back-translation technique, neither the research assistant nor the researcher were native English speaking and so it is possible that English translation does not entirely reflect original transcriptions due to language and cultural difference.

Procedure in the fieldwork

Wang and Zan (2011) suggested that it is hard to conduct personal research in China. In order to collect data in Xidi and Hongcun, the researcher used personal relations to find an insider in the County who served as a Director of Yi County Bureau

of Finance Supervision. He helped to the researcher to gain access to approach participants in the local government group. Meanwhile, he brought the researcher to Xidi and Hongcun to help the researcher familiarize herself with the two villages. Although the director had visited Xidi or Hongcun for only a couple of hours, some residents in the two villages recognized him. When the researcher tried to approach potential participants, some of them thought that the researcher was an official in the government. After providing Informed Consent Form, demonstrating the researcher was a student to conduct thesis research, some potential participants were willing to join the study. During the interviews, the researcher encouraged participants to provide as much information as they could and reassured participants that the researcher was not an official in the government or a reporter for newspapers. The researcher found that some participants were shy and some of them were afraid of expressing their real feelings.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusion

This study applied and adapts the brand knowledge model, based on brand equity theory, to examine local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status. It includes local stakeholders' awareness of the WHS status, how and why they interpret it, and how they understand the WHS status. The study was conducted in Ancient villages in southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun (China), which has been designed in WHSs since 2000. By exploring local stakeholders' viewpoints of the WHS status, a better understanding of the WHS status as a brand was possible.

In-depth interviews and review of documents allowed for insights into local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status as a brand. The literature review demonstrated that for a brand to be successful, local stakeholders' must be aware of the WHS status which shows they are familiar with the WHS status and have emotional links to the brand. In addition, to maintain the image of the brand, they must recreate their understanding of the WHS status properly, interpret it in a positive manner, and deliver the quality of the WHS status to tourists. Furthermore, for the brand, intended by the WHS program succeed they must support the WHS status, show their commitment to the WHS status which allows them to deliver the consistent promise to tourists, and keep the exceptional quality and excellent reputation of the WHS status in a long term. In this study, local government, private business owners, and residents showed their perceptions of the WHS status which contributed to the brand equity.

In short, after 11 years' post-designation, Xidi and Hongcun have experienced

dramatic changes, especially in economic improvement. From local stakeholders' perspective, the WHS status is not a strong brand based on results presented and discussion analysed. Although local stakeholders showed their familiarity of the WHS status, interpreted and said they delivered the importance of the WHS status intended by the WHS program to tourists, their understanding of the WHS status was not consistent with the importance of the WHS status described by the WHS program. Local stakeholders emphasized economic importance of the WHS status, but not conservation which is the reason for the designation and the core element of the WHS status. More importantly, their inconsistent messages may not only damage the quality and reputation of the WHS status, but also challenge the existing meaning of the WHS program in general.

The study also showed that local stakeholders held various interests and goals. Local government tried to balance conservation and development. Private business owners wanted to maximize their profits. Residents intended to improve their quality of life and keep their normal life in the WHS area. Because of these various interests and goals, the relation among the local stakeholders was complicated and sometimes difficult.

In conclusion, this case study suggested that the WHS status at the two villages did not have positive brand equity from local stakeholders' perspectives. As demonstrated in literature review, the core element of the WHS status intended by the WHS program is conservation. In this study, the three local stakeholders emphasized the economic importance of the WHS status, which, if this is the message conveyed to tourists, may damage the image of the WHS status as a conservation effort, and lead to tourist dissatisfaction, their lower willingness to visit WHSs, and their lower loyalty of

the WHS status. More specifically, although local government, private business owners, and the majority of residents claimed that conservation was the essential meaning of the WHS status, they believed that conservation was a necessary condition to allow for economic benefits in the long term. In other words, from local stakeholders' perspectives, conservation was the tool to fulfill economic benefits.

Future Research

The current study is exploratory in nature, but there are some contributions to the current literature which could lead to further studies.

Firstly, the researcher applied brand equity theory and adapted the original brand knowledge model from local stakeholders' perspectives to examine the WHS status as a brand. Although brand equity is focused on consumers (Keller, 1998), some scholars have applied it from local stakeholders' viewpoints. For example, Jones (2005) discussed the importance of developing a stakeholder model of brand equity, and others explored brand equity from employees' perspectives (e.g. Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). Future studies should pay more attention to other internal stakeholders (e.g. suppliers, competitors) or multiple stakeholders to examine their perceptions of the brand. In particular, brand equity has been applied in tourism (e.g. Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2010; Peter, 2009); however, there is limited published studies found to examine local stakeholders' perspective of the brand equity. Scholars can examine local stakeholder's perceptions of the brand equity in the future, since local stakeholders can help destinations and attractions to achieve its branding goals. Moreover, the study adapted the brand knowledge model proposed by Keller (1998), in terms of brand awareness (recognition and recall) and brand image (interpretation and commitment). The results

showed that local stakeholders highlighted the economic importance of the WHS status which challenges the essence of the WHS status as described by the WHS program. Although local stakeholders were familiar with the brand, interpreted it and delivered it as intended by the WHS program, the key meaning of the WHS status may get lost in transferring to tourists when there is such a strong focus on the development and economic benefits. In future studies, more elements in brand equity such as brand association, brand identity, and brand positioning can be added in the model to provide more rich understanding of local stakeholder based brand equity in general.

Secondly, the study illustrated local stakeholders' perspectives of the WHS status. As Leask and Fyall (2006) pointed out not many people really understand the meaning of the designation, this study showed this assertion from local stakeholders' perspectives. Future studies should conduct studies that involve in four major stakeholders in tourism (local government, private business owners, residents and tourists) to examine their understanding of the WHS status which will provide a big picture of how people involved in WHS area understand the designation. Moreover, by conducting such studies, the deliver process between local stakeholders and tourists can be better understood.

References

- Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building strong brands*. New York: The Free Press.
- Aas, C., Ladkin, A., & Fletcher, J. (2005). Stakeholder collaboration and heritage management. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(1), 28-48.
- Akis, S., N. Peristianis, & Warner, J. (1996). Residents' attitudes to tourism development: The case of Cyprus. *Tourism Management*, 17, 481-494.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Andriotis, K., & Vaughn, R. (2003). Urban residents' attitudes tourism development: The case of Crete. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(2):172-185.
- Ashworth, G. J & Tunbridge, J. E. (1990). *The tourist-historic city*. New York: Belhaven Press.
- Bandyopadhyay, R., Morais, D. B., & Chick, G. (2008). Religion and identity in India's heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 790-808.
- Baram, U., & Rowan, Y. (2004). Archaeology after Nationalism: Globalization and the consumption of the past. In Y. Rowan & U. Baram (Ed.), *Marketing heritage: Archaeology and the consumption of the pat* (pp. 3-26). Walnut Creek, Calif: AltaMira Press.
- Besculides, A., Lee. M. E., & McCormick, P. J. (2002). Residents' perceptions of the cultural benefits of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 303-319.
- Blain, C., Levy, S., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2005). Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43, 328-338.

- Bornhorst, T., Ritchie, J. R. B., & Sheehan, L. (2010). Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destination: An empirical examination of stakeholders' perspectives. *Tourism Management*, 31, 572-589.
- Boyd, S. W. (2008). Marketing challenges and opportunities for heritage tourism. In A. Fyall, B. Garrod, A. Leask and S. Wanhill (2nd Ed.), *Managing visitor attraction: New directions* (pp.283-294), Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Buckley, R. (2004). The effects of World Heritage Listing on tourism to Australian national parks. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 12(1), 70-84.
- Bushell, R., & McCool, S. F. (2007). Tourism as a tool for conservation and support of protected areas: Setting the agenda. In R. Bushell & P.E.J. Eagles (Ed.), *Tourism and protected areas: Benefits beyond boundaries* (pp. 12-26). UK: Wallingford.
- Byrd, E. T., Bosley, H. E., & Dronberger, M. G. (2009). Comparisons of stakeholder perceptions of tourism impacts in rural eastern North Carolina. *Tourism Management*, 30(5), 693-703.
- Cai, L. A. (2002). Cooperative branding for rural destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 720-742.
- Cellini, R. (2010). Is UNESCO recognition effective in fostering tourism? A comment on Yang, Lin and Han, *Tourism Management*, doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.018.
- Chen, H-Y., & Boore, J. PR. (2009). Translation and back-translation in qualitative nursing research: Methodological review. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 19, 234-239.
- Chen, C. F., & Chen, F.S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management*, 31, 29-35.
- Cheung, S. C. H. (1999). The meanings of a heritage trail in Hong Kong. *Annals of*

- Tourism Research*, 26(3), 570-588.
- Clifton, R. (2009). The future of brands. In R. Clifton (Ed.), *Brands and branding* (pp. 246-260). New York: Bloomberg Press.
- China National Tourism Administration (CNTA, 2011). 2010年1-12月入境旅游外国人人数（按目的分） [Inbound tourists in 2010]. Retrieved from <http://www.cnta.gov.cn/html/2011-3/2011-3-25-10-15-28226.html>.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.
- Coyne, I. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research, purposeful and theoretical sampling: Merging or dear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(3), 623 -630.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Das, M. The impact of World Heritage Site status on tourism: A preliminary analysis of World Heritage Sites in India. Unpublished paper.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Devers, K. J & Frankel, R. M. (2000). Study design in qualitative research – 2: Sampling and data collection strategies. *Education for Health*, 13(2), 263-271.
- Donnachie, I. (2010). World Heritage. In R. Harrison (Ed.), *Understanding the politics of heritage* (pp.115-153), Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Drost, A. (1996). Developing sustainable tourism for world heritage sites. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(2), 479-484.
- Easterling, D. (2005). Residents and tourism: what is really at stake? *Journal of Travel*

- and Tourism Marketing*, 18(4), 49-64.
- Fakeye, P. C. & Crompton, J. L. (1991). Image differences between prospective, first-time, and repeat visitors to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(2), 10-16.
- Frampton, J. (2009). What makes brands great. In R. Clifton (Ed.), *Brands and branding* (pp. 61-70). New York: Bloomberg Press.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A stakeholder approach*. Boston, MA: Pitman.
- Freeman, R. E & Reed, D. (1983). Stockholders and stakeholders: A new perspective on corporate governance. *California Management Review*, XXV(3), 88-106.
- Friedman, A. L., & Miles, S. (2006). *Stakeholders: Theory and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fyall, A. & Rakic, T. (2006). The future market for World Heritage Sites. In A. Leask & A. Fyall (Ed.), *Managing World Heritage Sites* (pp. 159-176). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Garrod, B., & Fyall, A. (2000). Managing heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 682-708.
- Gerring, J. (2007). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Giaoutzi, M., & Nijkamp, P. (2006). Emerging trends in tourism in an open world. In M. Giaoutzi & P. Nijkamp (Ed.), *Tourism and Regional Development: new pathways* (pp. 1-12). Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT : Ashgate.
- Gilly, M.C & Wolfenbarger, M. (1998). Advertising's internal audience. *Journal of*

- Marketing*, 62(1), 69-88.
- Goulding, C., & Domic, D. (2009). Heritage, identity and ideological manipulation: The case of Croatia. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(1), 85-102.
- Graham, B., Ashworth, G. J., & Tunbridge, J. E. (2000). *A geography of heritage: Power, culture and economy*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Grunewald, R. A. (2002). Tourism and cultural revival. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(4), 1004 -1021.
- Gu, H., & Ryan, C. (2008). Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism: The case of Beijing hutong. *Tourism Management*, 29, 637-647.
- Gunn, C. (1972). *Vacationscaper: Designing tourist regions*. Washington DC: Taylor and Francis.
- Hall, C. M., & Piggin, R. (2002). Tourism business knowledge of World Heritage Sites: A New Zealand case study. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4, 401-411.
- Hancock, D. R. & Algozzine, B. (2006). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hankinson, G. (2007). The management of destination brands: Five guiding principles based on recent developments in corporate branding theory. *Branding Management*, 14(3), 240-254.
- Hankinson, G. (2009). Managing destination brands: Establishing a theoretical foundation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(1-2), 97-115.
- Harris, F. & de Chernatony, L. (2001). Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4), 441-456.
- Harrison, R. (2010). What is heritage? In R. Harrison (Ed.), *Understanding the politics of*

- heritage* (pp.5-42), Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hatch, M. Jo., & Schultz, M. (2003). Bringing the corporation into corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 1041-1064.
- Hatch, M. Jo., & Schultz, M. (2007). Relations between organizational culture, identity and image, *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(5/6), 356-365.
- Haukeland, J. V. (2011). Tourism stakeholders' perceptions of national park management in Norway. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(2), 133-153.
- Hazen, H. (2009). Valuing natural heritage: Park visitors' values related to World Heritage Sites in the USA. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 12(2), 165-181.
- Howard, P. (2003). *Heritage: Management, interpretation, identity*. London; New York: Continuum.
- Kellar, K. L. (1998). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Kimpakorn, N. & Tocquer, G. (2010). Service brand equity and employee brand commitment. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24(5), 378-388.
- Koerber, A. & McMichael, L. (2008). Qualitative sampling methods: A primer for technical communicators. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(4), 454-473.
- Knox, S. & Bickerton, D. (2003). The six conventions of corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 998-1016.
- Kuzel, A. J. (1999). Sampling in qualitative inquiry. In B.F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (Eds.), *Doing Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)* (pp. 33-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jamal, T. B., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration theory and community tourism planning.

- Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 186-204.
- Jimura, T. (2010). The impact of world heritage site designation on local communities – A case study of Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Japan. *Tourism Management*, doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2010.02.005.
- Jones, R. (2005). Finding sources of brand value: Developing a stakeholder model of brand equity. *Brand Management*, 13(1), 10-32.
- Landorf, C. (2009). Managing for sustainable tourism: A review of six cultural World Heritage Sites, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(53-70).
- Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positioning. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(1), 64-86.
- Leask, A. (2006). World Heritage Site designation. In A. Leask & A. Fyall (Ed.), *Managing World Heritage Sites* (pp. 5-19). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Leask, A., Fyall, A. & Garrod, B. (2002). Heritage visitor attractions: Managing revenue in the new millennium. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 8(3), 247-265.
- Lee, T. J., Riley, M., & Hampton, M. P. (2010). Conflict and progress: Tourism development in Korea. *Annals of Tourism Research*.
doi:10.1016/j.annals.2009.10.001
- Li, W. M., & Dewar, K. (2003). Assessing tourism supply in Beihai, China. *Tourism Geographies*, 5(2), 151-167.
- Li, M., Wu, B. & Cai, L. (2008). Tourism development of World Heritage Sites in China: A geographic perspective. *Tourism Management*, 29, 308-319.
- Lorde, T., Greenidge, D., & Devonish, D. (2011). Local residents' perceptions of the

- impacts of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 on Barbados: Comparisons of pre- and post-games. *Tourism Management*, 32, 349-356.
- MacQueen, K. M., McLellan-Lemal, E., Bartholow, K., & Milstein, B. (2008). Team-based codebook development: Structure, process, and agreement. In G. Guest & K. M. MacQueen (Eds.), *Handbook for team-based qualitative research* (pp.119-35). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Magness-Gardiner, B. (2004). International conventions and cultural heritage protection. In Y. Rowan & U. Baram (Ed.), *Marketing heritage: Archaeology and the consumption of the past* (pp.27-40). Walnut Creek, Calif: AltaMira Press.
- Martín-Ruiz, D., Castellanos-Verdugo, M., & Oviedo-García, M. d. l. Á. (2010). A visitors' evaluation index for a visit to an archaeological site. *Tourism Management*, 31(5), 590-596.
- Marcotte, P., & Bourdeau, L. (2006). Tourists' knowledge of the UNESCO designation of World Heritage Sites: The case of visitors to Quebec City. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 8(2), 4-13.
- McKercher, B. & du Cros, H. (2002). The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- McKercher, B. & Ho, P. S. Y. (2006). Assessing the tourism potential of smaller cultural and heritage attractions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(5), 473-488.
- Merriam, B. S. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Miles, S. J. & Mangold, G. (2004). A conceptualization of the employee branding process. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 3(2-3), 65-87.
- Millar, S. (2006). Stakeholders and community participation. In A. Leask & A. Fyall (Ed.), *Managing World Heritage Sites* (pp. 37-54). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (1998). *Tourism promotion and power: Creating images, creating identities*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. & Piggott, R. (2002). New Zealand, 100% pure. The creation of a powerful niche destination brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4-5), 335-354.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. & Piggott, R. (2003). Destination branding and the role of the stakeholders: The case of New Zealand. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(3), 285-299.
- Moscardo, G., & Ballantyne, R. (2008). Interpretation and attractions. In A. Leask, B. Garrod, A. Leask & S. Wanhill (Ed.), *Managing visitor attractions: New directions (2nd Ed.)*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Murphy, L., Benckendorff, P., & Moscardo, G. (2007). Linking travel motivation, tourist self-image and destination brand personality. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 22(2), 45-59.
- Namey, E., Guest, G., Thairu, L., & Johnson, L. (2008). Data reduction techniques for large qualitative data sets. In G. Guest & K. M. MacQueen (Eds.), *Handbook for team-based qualitative research* (pp.137-61). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Nicholas, L. N., Thapa, B., & Jae Ko, Y. (2009). Residents' perspectives of a World Heritage Site: The Pitons management area, St. Lucia. *Annals of Tourism Research*,

- 36(3), 390-412.
- Nuryanti, W. (1996). Heritage and postmodern tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(2), 249-260.
- Orbasli, A., Woodward, S. (2009). Tourism and heritage conservation. In T. Jamal & M. Robinson (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of tourism studies* (pp.314-333). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Otto, J. E. & Ritchie, J R. B. (1996). The service experience in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 17(3), 165-174.
- Palmer, C. (1999). Tourism and the symbols of identity. *Tourism Management*, 20(3), 313-321.
- Park, H. Y. (2010). Heritage tourism: Emotional journeys into nationhood. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), 116-135.
- Parks Canada. (2007). The Forks National Historic Site of Canada: Management plan, Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication.
- Parks Canada. (2011). National Historic Sites of Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/mb/fortgarry/index.aspx>.
- Pedersen, A. (2002). Managing tourism at WHSs: A practical manual for WHS managers World Heritage Paper 1 2002. Retrieved from http://whc.unesco.org/documents/publi_wh_papers_01_en.pdf
- Peter, C. (2009). Fame is not always a positive asset for heritage quality! Some clues from buying intentions of national tourists. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 26, 1-18.

- Pike, S. (2009). Destination brand positions of a competitive set of near-home destinations. *Tourism Management*, 30, 857-866.
- Pomeroy, M. C. (2005). Assessing the cultural significance of World Heritage Sites: A case study from Averbury, Wiltshire, England. In C. Mathers, T. Darvill, J. L. Barbara (Ed.), *Heritage of value, archaeology of renown: Reshaping archaeological assessment and significance* (pp. 301-316). Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Poria, Y., Butler, R., & Airey, D. (2003). The core of heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(1), 238-254.
- Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Cohen, R. (2010). World Heritage Site – Is it an effective brand name? A case study of a religious heritage site. *Journal of Travel Research*, DOI: 10.1177/0047287510379158.
- Psathas, G., & Anderson, T. (1990). The “practices” of transcription in conversation analysis. *Semiotica*, 78, 75-99.
- Qu, H., Kim, L. H. & Icm, H. H. (2010). A model of destination branding: Integrating the concepts of the branding and destination image. *Tourism Management*, doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2010.03.014.
- Rakic, T. & Chambers, D. (2007). World heritage: Exploring the tension between the national and the ‘universal’. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 2(3), 145-155.
- Research Consulting Ltd & Trends Business Research Ltd (2009). World Heritage Status: Is there opportunity for economic gain? Retrieved from http://www.lakesWH.co.uk/documents/WH_TheEconomicGainFinalReport.pdf. Assessed July, 15, 2011.
- Richards, G. (1996) (Ed.). *Cultural tourism in Europe*. Wallingford: Cab International.

- Richards, G., & Wilson, J. (2006). Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture? *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1209-1223.
- Roders, A. P. & van Oers, R. (2011). World Heritage cities management. *Facilities*, 29(7/8), 276-285.
- Ryan, C. (2003). *Recreation tourism: Demand and impacts*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Ryan, J. & Silvanto, S. (2009). The World Heritage Site list: The marking and management of a brand. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(4), 290-300.
- Ryan, J. & Silvanto, S. (2010). World Heritage Sites: The purposes and politics of destination branding. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27, 533-545.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sautter, E. T., & Leisen, B. (1999). Managing stakeholders: A tourism planning model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 312-323.
- Sheehan, L. R., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2005). Destination stakeholders exploring identity and salience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(3), 711-734.
- Shackley, M. (1998) (Ed.). *Visitor management: Case studies from World Heritage Sites*. Oxford; Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Shen, C. (2010). Evaluating values of World Heritage Sites and cultural tourism in China. In G. S. Smith, P. M. Messenger, & H. A. Soderland (Ed.), *Heritage Values in Contemporary Society* (pp. 255-266). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Smith, G. S., Messenger, P. M. & Soderland, H. A. (2010). Introduction. In G. S. Smith,

- P. M. Messenger, & H. A. Soderland (Ed.), *Heritage Values in Contemporary Society* (pp.15-25). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Smith, M (2002). A critical evaluation of the Global accolade: The significance of World Heritage Site status for Maritime Greenwich. *International Journal of Heritage studies*, 8(2), 137-151.
- Smith, M.K. (2003). *Issues in cultural tourism studies*. Available from:
<http://lib.myilibrary.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/Open.aspx?id=7270&loc=&srch=undefined&src=0>
- Soy, S. K. (1997). The case study as a research method. Unpublished paper.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R.E. (2005). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York, London: The Guilford Press.
- Teo, P. & Yeoh, B. S. A. (1997). Remaking local heritage from tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 192-213.
- Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project: A guide for students in education and applied social sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Timothy, D. J & Boyd, S. W. (2003). *Heritage tourism*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.
- Timothy, D. J & Boyd, S. W. (2006). Heritage tourism in the 21st century: Valued traditions and new perspectives. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1(1):1-13.
- Tkaczynski, A., Rundle-Thiele, S., & Beaumont, N. (2010). Destination segmentation: A recommended two-step approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(2), 139-152.
- Torres, A. & Tribo, J. A. (2011). Customer satisfaction and brand equity. *Journal of Business Research*, 64, 1089-1096.
- Town of Churchill (2010). Website homepage. Retrieved from <http://www.churchill.ca/>.

- UNESCO. (2010a). World Heritage Convention text. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria>.
- UNESCO. (2010b). Operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>.
- UNESCO. (2011a). World Heritage list. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>.
- UNESCO. (2011b). World Heritage global strategy. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy>.
- Urde, M. (2007). Corporate brands with a heritage. *Brand Management*, 15(1), 4-19.
- VanBlarcom, B. L. & Kayahan, C. (2011). Grand Pre National Historic Site: An economic impact assessment of a UNESCO World Heritage Designation. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 6(2), 143-164.
- Vasudevan, S. (2008). The role of internal stakeholders in destination branding: Observations from Kerala Tourism. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 4(4), 331-335.
- Wang, T. & Zan, L. (2011). Management and presentation of Chinese sites for UNESCO World Heritage List (UWHL). *Facilities*, 29(7/8), 313-325.
- Williams, K. (2004). The meanings and effectiveness of World Heritage designation in the USA. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 7(4-5), 412-416.
- Williams, J. & Lawson, R. (2001). Community issues and resident opinions of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 269-290.
- Woodland, M. & Acott, T. G. (2007). Sustainability and local tourism branding in England's South Downs, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(6), 715 — 734.
- Woodard, T. (1999). Using brand awareness and brand image in tourism channels of

- distribution. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 6(2), 119-130.
- WTO (2011). International tourism: First results of 2011 confirm consolidation of growth. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/en/press-release/2011-05-11>.
- Xiao, H. H. (2010, December 15). 平遥古城申遗 13 年门票收入 70 倍 收不抵支再涨价 [Ancient City of Pingyao plans to jack up admission fees]. *Guangzhou Daily*. Retrieved from <http://culture.people.com.cn/GB/22219/13483069.html>.
- Yan, C. & Morrison, A. M. (2007). The influence of visitors' awareness of World Heritage Listings: A case study of Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun in Southern Anhui, China. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 2(3), 184-195.
- Yang, C., Lin, H., & Han, C. (2009). Analysis of international tourist arrivals in china: The role of world heritage sites. *Tourism Management*, doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.008.
- Yi County (2010). 西递宏村世界文化遗产管理体制情况汇报[Report of management system of the World Heritage Site – Xidi and Hongcun]. Internal report.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods (4th, Ed.)*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Yuksel, F., Bramwell, B., & Yuksel, A. (1999). Stakeholder interviews and tourism planning at Pamukkale, Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 20, 351-360.
- Zhai, M. L. (2002, March 22). 世界文化遗产宏村搞旅游为何屡遭挫折? [Tourism development faces difficulties in Hongcun, a World Heritage Site]. *Nanfang Weekly*, Retrieved from <http://news.sohu.com/59/15/news148231559.shtml>.
- Zan, L. (2011, Jan 12). Preservation and exploitation: Lijiang old town, China. [Video File]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnVYVzY6U3U>

Appendix A-1: original**Application of Request**

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Jiayun Du, a graduate student currently enrolled in Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba, Canada. In order to obtain a Master's degree in Arts (Kinesiology and Recreation Management), a written thesis is required. As an international student originally from China, I have been interested in issues related to tourism at World Heritage Sites as general, how World Heritage status is used as a brand from local stakeholders' perspectives in particular.

Xidi and Hongcun (ancient villages in southern Anhui) has been titled as a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 2000, thousands of tourists visit the place every year, and still it attracts tourists from domestic and international market. Local stakeholders can affect the success of the WHS; they have fewer opportunities to share their understandings of WHS status, their feelings of working, running business and living in the WHS area. In order to better understand their perspectives, I proposed a research study aimed at understanding the viewpoint of these stakeholders.

My research study, entitled *Local Stakeholders' Perspectives of World Heritage Site* will be conducted as a case study approach, where one-one in person interviews and a review of supporting documentation will help me to better understand how local stakeholders use WHS status.

There are three local stakeholders groups will be considered: government agency representatives, tourism business industry representatives and local residents. I intend to visit the site for one month (from March 8, 2011 to April 8, 2011). For the first couple of days, I will visit the site, talk to local people, and introduce myself as a student researcher. I will approach potential interviewees in person at work office (government employees), place of business (owners of tourism business industry) and at home (residents). At least, 12 individuals representing these stakeholder groups will be selected.

Interviews will focus on local stakeholders' understanding of WHS status, how they use it, why or why not they use it, and their attitude toward it. Questions such as 'what is your understanding of WHS status?', 'what is your opinion about Xidi and

Hongcun titled as a WHS?', and what is your opinion about benefits WHS status create?' will be asked. There are no sensitive questions, and participation is voluntary, interviewees are free to withdraw the study during the interview. If you want, I will send you the copy of interview guide before starting. This research study will offer local stakeholders an opportunity to share their perspectives, which, in some respects, are their reflections on changes since Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as a World Heritage Site.

This research study has obtained approval from my committee after my proposal defence, which demonstrates that it is theoretically feasible. Meanwhile, it has been approved by Research Ethics Board. No risk beyond activities of daily living is expected from participation of this research study.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that I could conduct interviews and review of supporting documentation in Xidi and Hongcun, and complete my research study. If you have any question or concern, please contact me with xxxx@xxxx.com

Yours,

Jiayun Du

Appendix A-2: translation

申 请

(本文件原始稿为英文，中文稿由本项目研究者诚实、真诚翻译而成)

尊敬的领导：

您好。我的名字叫杜佳韵，目前为加拿大曼尼托巴大学在读研究生。为了获得文学硕士（运动康复及休闲管理方向），撰写毕业论文是必须的。作为由中国前往加拿大读书的国际留学生，我对于世界文化遗产与旅游有着浓厚的兴趣。而作为一个商标，当地利益攸关者是怎么理解世界文化遗产称号则是我硕士毕业论文的主要课题。

中国安徽南部古村落——西递和宏村在2000年被列为世界文化遗产名录。自此，数以万计的游客慕名前来参观。10年过去了，西递和宏村依然吸引着国内外的众多游客。当地利益攸关者可以影响世界文化遗产景区的成功，但他们鲜少有机会分享他们对于世界文化遗产称号的看法，他们在景区工作的感受，以及他们在景区经营的心得和生活在景区的想法。为了更好地了解他们的认知，我的开题报告方向为倾听他们的声音。

我的毕业论文题为《当地利益攸关者对于世界文化遗产称号的看法》。本论文将采用案例分析法，主要形式为一对一的个人采访和文献资料查阅。这两种形式的结合将帮助我更好地了解当地利益攸关者对于世界文化遗产称号的看法。

当地利益攸关者主要分成三个组别：政府职能部门、旅游事业经营者以及当地居民。我预计自己将实地调研1个月左右（2011年3月8日至4月8日）。在抵达西递和宏村的前一周，我将参观景区，与当地居民交流，向他们介绍我自己是一门学生研究者。我会以不同的方式与潜在受访者进行联络：对于政府职员，我会拜访其工作场所；对于旅游事业经营者，我会拜访其经营场地；对于当地居民，我则拜访他/她的住处。至少12名来自这3个组别的当地利益攸关者将会被邀请参加本项目。

采访主要关注当地利益攸关者对于世界文化遗产称号的看法。“您是怎么理解世界文化遗产称号的？”，“您对于西递和宏村被列为世界文化遗产有什么看法？”，

遗迹 “您对于世界文化遗产称号所带来的利益有何看法？”等问题将涉及在采访大纲中。没有敏感性问题在采访中，参与本项目也是自愿行为，受访者可以在采访的任何阶段退出。如果您要求，我将向您提供在研究开始之前提供采访大纲。这个研究项目将会给当地利益攸关者一个机会分享他们的想法。在某种程度上，也可以了解当地利益攸关者在西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录后的变化。

这个项目已经通过了开题报告答辩，得到了我论文委员会的认可，说明此项目在理论层面上是可行的。与此同时，本项目也到了科研得到委员会的同意。参与本项目没有任何的潜在危险。

因此，我真心希望能在西递和宏村进行个人采访和文献资料查阅以完成我的学业。如果您有任何的疑问，请发邮件xxxx@xxxx.com给我。

谢谢。

杜佳韵

2011年2月

Appendix B-1: original

Letter to Supervisor of Government Agency

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Jiayun Du, a graduate student currently enrolled in Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba, Canada. I am doing my Master Degree thesis, entitled *Local Stakeholders' Perspectives of World Heritage Site Status*.

The study involves one-to-one in person interview about individuals persecutions of WHS status. No personal and sensitive questions are asked in the interview, and participation of the study is voluntary. If you have any concern, I will provide you interview guide.

The study has been approved by Research Ethics Board at University of Manitoba and Yi County Tourism Bureau. If you want, I will provide copies of approvals. In order to complete my study, I would like to interview at least three employees in your organization, including site manger, administration staff and interpreters.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that I could recruit participants in your organization by visiting your offices during the week of March 08, 2011 till March 18, 2011. If you have any concern, please contact me with xxxxx@ xxxx.com or call me at xxx-xxxx.

Attachment is a copy of the Informed Consent Form that will be provided to participants. This form will provide with additional information about this study.

Sincerely yours,

Jiayun Du

Appendix B-2: translation

关于在贵单位进行调研的申请

(本文件原始稿为英文，中文稿由本项目研究者诚实、真诚翻译)

尊敬的领导：

您好。我的名字叫杜佳韵，现为在读研究生，就读于加拿大曼尼托巴大学运动康复及休闲管理学院。目前，我正在撰写研究生毕业论文，题为《当地利益攸关者对于世界文化遗产称号的看法》。

这个项目的形式为一对一的个人采访，其主要内容为受访者对世界文化遗产称号的认知。在采访过程中没有个人或者敏感问题，参加本项目完全是自愿行为。如果您有任何的疑虑，我可以向您提供采访大纲。

这个项目得到了曼尼托巴大学科研道德委员会的审查并取得认同。同时，本项目也向黟县旅游委员会进行备案并得到允许。如果您要求，我可以向您提供相关同意书的复印件。为了完成这个项目，我希望能在贵单位采访至少 3 位职员，报告景区负责人、景区行政人员以及景区导游。

因此，我真心希望贵单位能批准我在 2011 年 3 月 8 日至 2011 年 3 月 18 日期间拜访贵单位并招募受访者。如果您有任何问题，可以通过邮件 (xxxx@xxxx.com) 或者电话 (xxx-xxxx) 联系。

附件是受访者将被提供的《知情同意书》，此文件会提供一些附加信息。

谢谢。

Appendix C-1: original**Informed Consent**

This document is originally written in English, a Chinese version will be directly and faithfully translated from English by the researcher.

Research Project Title: An investigation of local stakeholders' opinions toward World Heritage Site status

Researcher: Jiayun Du, M.A. student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba, Canada

Contact Information: 86-xxx-xxxx(China) or 1-204-xxx-xxxx (Canada).

Email address: xxxx@xxxx.com.cn (China) or xxxx@xxxx.com (Canada)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This study is partial fulfillment of the requirement for my Master's degree in Arts. The purpose of the research is to examine how local stakeholders use the Xidi and Hongcun (ancient villages in southern Anhui) brand. Since you work, run business or live in Xidi and Hongcun, your experiences will provide better understandings of the topic.

If you are interested in this study and decide to participate in it, you will join in an interview conducted by Jiayun Du, your involvement will last approximately an hour in which you will be asked several questions about your thoughts and opinions about WHS. With your permission, your interview will be tape-recorded and later transcribed. A research assistant, who will help me to better understand your responses, will be involved in the data analysis. All your responses will be translated into English by myself and the research assistant for future analysis. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study. There will be no risks or discomforts from

taking part in this study. By participating in this project, you will receive transcription after the interview, summary of preliminary analysis and final report of the study.

Any information provided in the interview will remain completely confidential, only the researcher in the study will see your individual responses. The transcription, interpretation, written analyses of interviews and final report of this study will be shared with the research assistant, researcher's advisor and two committee members at University of Manitoba, Canada. Your recorded interview responses and the transcription of the interview will be stored electronically on a password protected computer, and a second copy will be stored on a password protected USB key. After the transcriptions are made the recordings will be deleted (no later than June, 2011) and after the results are analyzed and you have received a copy of the results your contact information will be destroyed (no later than August, 2011).

After all the interviews are completed, analyzed, and final report is finished, I will send you a copy of the result of the study in Chinese, directly and faithfully translated from English by the researcher.

Taking part in the study is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a participant. If you have any concern after the study, you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You could reach the researcher, Jiayun Du at 86-xxx-xxxx(China); 1-204-xxx-xxxx (Canada), or email xxxx@xxxx.com.cn (China); xxxx@xxxx.com (Canada).

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board, University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or e-mail Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca.

(Participant's Signature)

(Date)

(Research's Signature)

(Date)

Appendix C-2: translation

知情同意书

(本文件原始稿为英文，此中文稿由研究者真实、真诚翻译而成)

研究课题：当地利益攸关者对于世界文化遗产称号看法的调查

研究者：杜佳韵，加拿大曼尼托巴大学运动康复与休闲管理学院硕士研究生

联系方式：86-xxx-xxxx（中国），1-204-xxx-xxxx（加拿大）

邮箱地址：xxxx@xxxx.com.cn（中国），xxxx@xxxx.com（加拿大）

作为授予您准许的一部分，您将会收到此知情同意书的复印件一份以备参考。此知情同意书旨在提供给您此次科学调查研究的相关基本内容，以及您参与方式的相关信息。如您需要更多更详细的信息，欢迎您提出疑问。请您仔细阅读此知情同意书，了解以下内容。

这个项目是我完成硕士学业的部分要求。此项目的主要目的是为了调查当地利益攸关者是怎么使用*中国安徽南部古村落——西递和宏村*这个商标。因为您在此或是工作、或是做生意、或是生活，您的宝贵经历将帮助我更好地理解这个主题。

如果您对此项目感兴趣并决定参加，您将被安排接受研究者杜佳韵的采访。采访时间大概为一个小时，主要内容是您对西递和宏村的看法和想法。在得到您的准许后，您的采访将会被录音，采访内容也会被转换成文字。一名研究助理将加入到项目的分析阶段来帮助我更好地了解您的回答。为了下一阶段的分析，您的所有回答将会被我和研究助理翻译成英文。如果您对采访中的某些问题感到不舒服，您可以选择不回答，或者要求我中止采访。参加本项目不会有危险的或者让你不舒服。在采访结束后，您会收到录音文字稿，初步分析报告和项目完整报告。

您在采访中所提供的任何信息将会被保密，只有研究者可以听到你的回答。采访的文字稿、翻译稿以及分析稿将会与研究助理（中国），我在曼尼托巴大学的导师和论文委员会成员（加拿大）所分享。您接受采访的录音和文字稿将会被储存在带有开机密码的电脑中，拷贝件将储存在有密码的移动闪盘中，在录音转化为文字

稿后，这些资料将被销毁（不晚于 2011 年 6 月）。在完成项目，您也得到了项目的完整报告后，您的联系方式也将被销毁（不晚于 2011 年 8 月）。

在完成采访、分析和撰写，我将会寄给您完整报告。报告由我真实从英文翻译成中文。

参加本项目是自愿行为，您可以在任何阶段退出。如果您不想参加此项目，您可以不用参加。您在此同意书上的签名代表您已完全了解调研的相关内容，并同意参加此次采访。在您接受采访后，如果您有任何疑问，可以直接向我提出疑问。我的联系方式如下：86-xxx-xxxx（中国），1-204-xxx-xxxx（加拿大）。邮箱地址为xxxx@xxxx.com.cn（中国），xxxx@xxxx.com（加拿大）。

此次调研以通过加拿大曼尼托巴大学教育及护理科研道德委员会的审查，并取得认同。如果您有任何疑问，或者不满意的地方，您可以与上述联系人取得联系，或者您可以致电秘书。她的电话是 474-7122，电子邮件地址是：

Mrgaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca。

(参与者签名)

(日期)

(调研者签名)

(日期)

Appendix D-1: original**Participants' Request for Transcripts & Summary of Results**

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for devoting time to participating in the study. Your response of the interview will be faithfully transcribed for future analysis.

Please check the following opinions:

I want to receive interview transcript to review;

I do not want to receive interview transcript to review;

I want to receive the summary of preliminary results of the study;

I do not want to receive the summary of preliminary results of the study;

I want to receive the final report of the study;

I do not want to receive the final report of the study.

If you check "I want to receive interview transcript to review/summary of preliminary result of the study/final report of the study", please provide your name, mail address or e-mail address. I will send related information to you directly.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Zip Code: _____

E-mail address: _____

Your personal information will remain confidential. This document will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Once entered into a password protected computer, this form will be shredded. In addition, your contact information will be destroyed after the study is finished (no later than August, 2011).

Appendix D-2: translation

受访者对于录音文字稿和研究报告总结的申请

您好：

感谢您抽出报告时间参加调研。为了下一阶段的分析，您的回答将被诚实转为文字稿。

请选择以下选项：

___我希望收到文字录音稿检查其内容；

___我不希望收到文字录音稿检查其内容；

___我希望能收到本研究项目初步结果总结；

___我不希望收到本研究项目初步结果总结；

___我希望收到本研究项目的完整报告；

___我不希望收到本研究项目的完整报告。

如果你选择了“我希望收到文字录音稿检查其内容/本研究项目初步结果总结/本研究项目的完整报告”，请提供您的姓名、邮寄地址或邮箱地址。我会把相关资料寄给您。

姓名： _____

邮寄地址： _____

邮编： _____

邮箱地址： _____

您的个人信息会被保密。这个文件将被存放在锁住的文件柜中。当这些资料被输入有密码保护的电脑中，这些资料会被销毁。您的个人信息会在本研究项目完成后销毁（不晚于2011年8月）。

Appendix E-1: original**Research Instrument**

Interview Guide – Government Agency

The purpose of the interview is to understand your perception of the Xidi and Hongcun brand. Your responses will remain confidential. The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission. If you do not want any of this information recorded, please let me know at any time throughout the interview.

Part A: Background

1. Do you live in Xidi and Hongcun (or other). How long have you been a resident in Xidi and Hongcun (if interviewee lives in Xidi and Hongcun)?
2. What is your occupation (eg. site manager, administration staff, interpreter, etc.)?
3. Please briefly describe your job.
4. How long have you been in the position?

Part B: Current knowledge of WHS status

5. Please describe Xidi and Hongcun to me as if I were a tourist.
6. What is your opinion about tourism at Xidi and Hongcun (general, economic, social-cultural and others)?
7. Please tell me any award/outside recognition of Xidi and Hongcun.
 - 7.1 If interviewee mentions WHS,
 - a) When did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as a WHS?
 - b) Where did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as WHS?
 - c) What is your understanding of WHS status (meaning)?
 - d) What is your opinion about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

7.2 If interviewee does not mention WHS,

a) Have you heard about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

Yes: refer to 8.1 a – 8.1 d.

Part C: Utility of WHS status

8. What type of programs or activities do you provide for the public at the site (information centre, interpretation centre, tour, exhibitions, etc.)? Please describe them all in detail.

9. Why do you provide these programs/activities to the public (educate the public, promote tourism, etc.)?

10. Is WHS status discussed in any of these programs/activities?

10.1 Yes: Why do you use WHS status in these programs/activities?

How do you use WHS status in these programs, activities (example)?

10.2 No: Why don't you use WHS status in any of these programs/ activities?

Part D: Consistency of WHS status

11. Please tell me something about any change in tourism you have experienced from when you started working on the position in Xidi and Hongcun (tourists, physical, economic, social-cultural and others)?

12. What is your opinion about opportunities/benefits WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?

13. Which do you think is the most important benefits WHS status brings? Why?

14. What is your opinion about challenges/consequences WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?

15. Which do you think is the worst consequences WHS status brings? Why?

16. What is your opinion about WHS status then?

Part E: Other.

17. Is there anything you want to talk, share?

Interview Guide – Tourism Business Industry

The purpose of the interview is to understand your perception of the Xidi and Hongcun brand. Your responses will remain confidential. The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission. If you do not want any of this information recorded, please let me know at any time throughout the interview.

Part A: Background

1. How old are you?

2. Where do you live (Xidi and Hongcun or other)

2.1 How long have you been resident in Xidi and Hongcun (if interviewee lives in Xidi and Hongcun)?

3. Where is your hometown (Xidi and Hongcun or other)?

3.1 Why did you move to Xidi and Hongcun (if interviewee's hometown is not Xidi and Hongcun)

4. Which business do you own (retail, accommodation, restaurant or others)?

5. How long have you owned the business in Xidi and Hongcun?

6. Why do you run your business in Xidi and Hongcun?

Part B: Current knowledge of WHS status

7. Please describe Xidi and Hongcun to me as if I were a tourist.

8. What is your opinion about tourism at Xidi and Hongcun (general, economic, social-cultural and others)?

9. Please tell me any award/outside recognition of Xidi and Hongcun.

9.1 If interviewee mentions WHS,

- a) When did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as a WHS?
- b) Where did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as WHS?
- c) What is your understanding of WHS status (meaning)?
- d) What is your opinion about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

9.2 If interviewee does not mention WHS,

- b) Have you heard about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

Yes: refer to 9.1 a – 9.1 d.

Part C: Utility of WHS status

10. How do you promote your business to attract tourists (advertisement, website and others)? Please describe them all in detail.

11. What is your opinion about the relationship between WHS status and your business (Do you think WHS status play a role for you business in attracting tourists)?

12. Is WHS status discussed in your promotion materials (advertisement, website and others)?

- a) Yes: Why do you use WHS status in these materials?

How do you use WHS status in these materials (example)?

- b) No: Why don't you use WHS status in any of these materials?

Part D: Consistency of WHS status

13. Please tell me something about any change in tourism you have experienced from when you started business in Xidi and Hongcun (tourists, physical, economic, social-cultural and others)?

14. What is your opinion about opportunities/benefits WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?
15. Which do you think is the most important benefits WHS status brings? Why?
16. What is your opinion about challenges/consequences WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?
17. Which do you think is the worst consequences WHS status brings? Why?
18. What is your opinion about WHS status then?

Part E: Others

19. Is there anything you want to talk, share?

Interview Guide – Local Residents

The purpose of the interview is to understand your perceptions of the Xidi and Hongcun brand. Your responses will remain confidential. The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission. If you do not want any of this information recorded, please let me know at any time throughout the interview.

Part A: Background

1. How old are you?
2. Where is your hometown (Xidi and Hongcun or other)?
 - 2.1 If hometown is not Xidi and Hongcun, why do you move to live in Xidi and Hongcun?
3. How long have you lived in Xidi and Hongcun?
4. How is your employment (related to tourism or not)?

Part B: Current knowledge of WHS status

5. Please describe Xidi and Hongcun to me as if I were a tourist.

6. What is your opinion about tourism at Xidi and Hongcun (general, economic, social-cultural and others)?

7. Please tell me any award/outside recognition of Xidi and Hongcun.

7.1 If interviewee mentions WHS,

- a) When did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as a WHS?
- b) Where did you hear about Xidi and Hongcun has been titled as WHS?
- c) What is your understanding of WHS status (meaning)?
- d) What is your opinion about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

7.2 If interviewee does not mention WHS,

- c) Have you heard about Xidi and Hongcun titled as a WHS?

Yes: refer to 7.1 a – 7.1 d.

Part C: Utility of WHS status

8. What is your opinion about the relationship between the WHS status and your life?

9. If you have the chance talk to outsider/tourists to introduce Xidi and Hongcun, will you mention WHS status in your conversation?

- a) Yes: Why do you use WHS status?
- b) No: Why don't you use WHS status?

Part D: Consistency of WHS status

10. Please tell me something about any change in tourism you have experienced from when you started living in Xidi and Hongcun (tourists, physical, economic, social-cultural and others)? Or what is your opinion about tourism in Xidi and Hongcun (threat, encourage)?

11. What is your opinion about living in a WHS?

12. What is your opinion about opportunities/benefits WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?
13. Which do you think is the most important benefits WHS status brings? Why?
14. What is your opinion about challenges/consequences WHS status create (economic, social-cultural and others)?
15. Which do you think is the worst consequences WHS status brings ? Why?
16. What is your opinion about WHS status then?

Part E: Others

17. Is there anything you want to talk, share?

Appendix E-2: translation

采访大纲

政府职能部门

本次采访的目的是为了了解您对于西递和宏村的有关看法。您在采访中的回答将保密。在得到您的准许后，本次采访将被全程录音。如果您在采访中有任何信息不想被录音，请在采访的任何过程中告诉我。

第一部分：背景

1. 您居住在西递和宏村或是其他地方？（如果受访者回答居住在西递或宏村：您在西递和宏村住了多久？）
2. 您现在的职位是什么（景区负责人，景区行政人员、导游或是其他）？
3. 请大致描述一下您的工作职责。
4. 您在这个职位已经工作多久了？

第二部分：目前对于世界文化遗产称号的认知

5. 如果我是一名游客，请向我介绍一些西递和宏村。
6. 您是怎么看待西递和宏村旅游发展(大体、经济层面、社会文化层面,以及其他)?
7. 能不能告诉我西递和宏村在旅游界获得的称号，比如省内、国内以及国际上？
 - 7.1 如果受访者提到了世界文化遗产称号：
 - a. 您是什么时候知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的？
 - b. 您是在什么场合知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的？
 - c. 对于世界文化遗产这个称号，您是怎么理解的？
 - d. 您对于西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产称号有什么看法呢？
 - 7.2 如果受访者没有提到世界文化遗产称号
 - a. 您有没有听说过西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录？
 - b. 如果受访者回答是，从 7.1 a - d 开始问。

第三部分：对于世界文化遗产称号的使用情况

8. 在景区中你们向游客、参观者提供什么样的活动、项目和服务（游客中心、讲解中心、导游服务、展厅等）？请具体说明。

9. 为什么你们要向游客、参观者提供这样的活动、项目和服务（教育、宣传、或是其他）？
10. 在你们向游客、参观者所提供的这些活动、项目和服务中，是否有提到世界文化遗产称号？
 - 10.1 有
 - a. 为何你们所提供的活动、项目和服务中使用世界文化遗产称号？
 - b. 你们是怎么在这些活动、项目和服务中使用世界文化遗产称号的？
 - 10.2 没有：为何你们所提供的项目、活动和服务不使用世界文化遗产称号？

第四部分：世界文化遗产称号使用的延续性

11. 能否告诉我自您在景区工作以来，西递和宏村的旅游发展有什么变化吗（总体、游客的数量、景区的基建、经济、社会、文化及其他）？
12. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后，这个称谓所带来的机会或者利益有哪些（经济、社会与文化及其他）？
13. 您认为在此中，这个称谓带来的最大利益或机会是什么？为什么
14. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后，这个称谓所带来的负面影响或者代价有哪些（经济、社会、文化及其他）？
15. 您认为在此中，这个称谓带来的最大负面影响是什么？为什么
16. 在讨论了那么多后，您对于世界文化遗产称号有什么看法？

第五部分：其他

17. 您有什么需要补充或分享的吗？

旅游事业经营者

本次采访的目的是为了了解您对于西递和宏村的有关看法。您在采访中的回答将保密。在得到您的准许后，本次采访将被全程录音。如果您在采访中有任何信息不想被录音，请在采访的任何过程中告诉我。

第一部分：背景

17. 您的年纪是？
18. 您住在什么地方（西递和宏村或是其他地方）？
 - 18.1 如果受访者回答居住在西递活宏村：您在西递和宏村住了多久？

19. 您的家乡在哪里（西递和宏村或是其他地方）？

3.1 如果受访者回答家乡不是西递和宏村：为什么当初想到要搬来西递和宏村？

20. 您在西递和宏村主要做什么有关旅游的生意（零售、住宿、饭馆或是其他）？

21. 您在西递和宏村做生意多久了？

22. 为什么您要在西递和宏村做生意呢？

第二部分：目前对于世界文化遗产称号的认知

23. 如果我是一名游客，请向我介绍一些西递和宏村。

24. 您是怎么看待西递和宏村旅游发展（大体、经济层面、社会文化层面，以及其他）？

25. 能不能告诉我西递和宏村在旅游界获得的称号，比如省内、国内以及国际上？

25.1 如果受访者提到了世界文化遗产称号：

e. 您是什么时候知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的？

f. 您是在什么场合知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的？

g. 对于世界文化遗产这个称号，您是怎么理解的？

h. 您对于西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产称号有什么看法呢？

25.2 如果受访者没有提到世界文化遗产称号

c. 您有没有听说过西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录？

d. 如果受访者回答是，从 7.1 a - d 开始问。

第三部分：对于世界文化遗产称号的使用情况

26. 为了吸引游客、参观者，您是怎么对您的生意进行推广（广告、网站、或者其他）？

请具体说明。

27. 在您看来，西递和宏村获得世界文化遗产这个称号和您的生意之间有无联系（比如，您是否认为取得这个称号可以帮助你的生意吸引更多的游客）？

28. 在您的任何宣传资料中（广告、网站、或者其他）有没有提到世界文化遗产这个称号？

28.1 有

c. 为何您的宣传资料中要使用世界文化遗产称号？

d. 您是怎么在这些宣传资料中使用世界文化遗产称号的？

28.2 没有：为何您的宣传资料中不使用世界文化遗产称号？

第四部分：世界文化遗产称号使用的延续性

29. 能否告诉我自您在西递和宏村做生意以来,西递和宏村的旅游发展有什么变化吗
(总体、游客的数量、景区的基建、经济、社会、文化及其他) ?
30. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后,这个称谓所带来的机会或者利益有哪些(经济、社会与文化及其他) ?
31. 您认为在此中, 这个称谓带来的最大利益或机会是什么? 为什么?
32. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后,这个称谓所带来的负面影响或者代价有哪些(经济、社会、文化及其他) ?
33. 您认为在此中, 这个称谓带来的最大负面影响是什么? 为什么?
34. 在讨论了那么多后, 您对于世界文化遗产称号有什么看法?

第五部分：其他

17. 您有什么需要补充或分享的吗?

当地居民

本次采访的目的是为了了解您对于西递和宏村的有关看法。您在采访中的回答将保密。在得到您的准许后, 本次采访将被全程录音。如果您在采访中有任何信息不想被录音, 请在采访的任何过程中告诉我。

第一部分：背景

35. 您的年纪是?
36. 您的家乡是哪里(西递和宏村或是其他地方) ?
 - 2.1 如果受访者回答家乡不是西递和宏村:为什么当初想到要搬来西递和宏村?
37. 您在西递和宏村住了多久?
38. 您现在从事的工作是什么(与旅游有关或无关) ?

第二部分：目前对于世界文化遗产称号的认知

39. 如果我是一名游客, 请向我介绍一些西递和宏村。
40. 您是怎么看待西递和宏村旅游发展(大体、经济层面、社会文化层面,以及其他)?
41. 能不能告诉我西递和宏村在旅游界获得的称号, 比如省内、国内以及国际上?
 - 41.1 如果受访者提到了世界文化遗产称号:
 - i. 您是什么时候知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的?

- j. 您是在什么场合知道西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录的？
- k. 对于世界文化遗产这个称号，您是怎么理解的？
- l. 您对于西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产称号有什么看法呢？
- 41.2 如果受访者没有提到世界文化遗产称号
- e. 您有没有听说过西递和宏村被列入世界文化遗产名录？
- f. 如果受访者回答是，从 7.1 a - d 开始问。

第三部分：对于世界文化遗产称号的使用情况

- 42. 在您看来，西递和宏村获得世界文化遗产这个称号和您的生活之间有无联系（比如，您是否认为取得这个称号改变了您的生活）？
- 43. 如果您有机会和外面/游客、参观者介绍西递和宏村，您是否在你们的对话中提到西递和宏村取得了世界文化遗产这个称号？
 - 43.1 有：为何您要提到世界文化遗产称号？
 - 43.2 没有：为何您不提到世界文化遗产称号？

第四部分：世界文化遗产称号使用的延续性

- 44. 能否告诉我自您住在西递和宏村以来，西递和宏村的旅游发展有什么变化吗（总体、游客的数量、景区的基建、经济、社会、文化及其他）？或者您是怎么看待西递和宏村的旅游（是一种威胁，或是一种鼓励）？
- 45. 您是怎么看待居住在世界文化遗产的景区中？
- 46. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后，这个称谓所带来的机会或者利益有哪些（经济、社会与文化及其他）？
- 47. 您认为在此中，这个称谓带来的最大利益或机会是什么？为什么？
- 48. 您认为西递和宏村在取得世界文化遗产称号后，这个称谓所带来的负面影响或者代价有哪些（经济、社会、文化及其他）？
- 49. 您认为在此中，这个称谓带来的最大负面影响是什么？为什么？
- 50. 在讨论了那么多后，您对于世界文化遗产称号有什么看法？

第五部分：其他

- 17. 您有什么需要补充或分享的吗？