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Research article

Residents' perceptions and support for cultural heritage tourism development: Insights from two Indian cities

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ABSTRACT

Tourism can cause both positive and negative impacts on local communities, and these impacts often shape their attitudes towards tourism, making it crucial for planners to involve local perspectives in the decision-making process. This study explores the role of local residents in ensuring the sustainability of Cultural Heritage Tourism, focusing on their perceptions of tourism impacts and support. More precisely the research examines how residence CHT image and heritage proximity influence their perceptions of tourism's impacts and their level of support for its expansion. Using a structural model based on social exchange theory a survey conducted with 465 valid responses, found that residents' perceptions of the impacts are influenced by residence cultural heritage image and heritage proximity. Additionally, residents' support for tourism development was strongly influenced by their perceptions of tourism impacts. The findings offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how local perceptions of impacts shape their support for CHT. The study provides valuable insights for tourism authorities, to develop sustainable tourism strategies that gain local support. Despite some limitations, the research contributes to both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of CHT.

KEYWORDS

Cultural heritage tourism; tourism impacts; heritage proximity; community support

Introduction

Since ancient Roman times, people have regularly travelled for the sake of cultural heritage tourism, which include exploring historical locations, monuments, and artefacts; visiting museums; and taking part in festivals and other particular occasions. All these diverse activities are part of the comprehensive tourism encounter (McKercher & Cros, 2002). In response to the growing global curiosity in heritage, there has been a rise in the number of visitors looking for cultural heritage places over the past few years. Developed countries, particularly in Europe and North America, have long recognized the benefits of cultural heritage tourism and promoted its development (Poria et al., 2001). Furthermore, cultural heritage tourism has flourished significantly in developing countries, especially in the southeast part of Asia (McKercher et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the urgency of conservation, management, alongside sustainable growth of cultural/ heritage increases as the flow of visitors and tourism-associated operations increases, from the perspectives of both academics and practitioners (Dar & Ahmed, 2023; Khan & Guleria, 2025; Hussain et al., 2026). Within the domain of tourism studies, or particularly in cultural heritage tourism, it is recognised that the impacts, constraints, and management challenges of tourism differ from developed to developing countries and improper and overly exploiting attitudes regarding these cultural and historical landmarks have posed a significant barrier towards the management of tourism and even the preservation of historical treasures (Ahmed & Dar, 2024). Further, it is crucial to acknowledge that the perspectives of communities toward the growth of tourism are among the most extensively researched subjects in the field of tourism (Wang & Pfister, 2008). Over the past few decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of studies that examine the perspectives of residents regarding the effects of tourism and their support for its expansion

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(Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021; Ahmed & Dar, 2023; Mkhize et al., 2024; Kelkar et al., 2025; Payini et al., 2026). The travel and tourism business is characterized as a double-edged sword, since its expansion has both beneficial and detrimental effects (Andereck et al., 2005; Garcia et al., 2015). Communities assess these consequences to shape their perspectives toward tourism, and their perspectives of these possible consequences might elicit both positive and negative responses to the growth of destinations (Sharpley, 2014) and will influence whether they support or oppose tourism development (Lee, 2013). It is generally believed that positive attitudes toward tourism encourage residents' support for tourism development, whereas negative attitudes may reduce their support (Gursoy et al., 2010; Stylidis et al., 2014).

Over the years, tourism scholars have sought to identify and examine the factors influencing local residents' attitudes toward tourism notably "place image (Ganji et al., 2021; Stylidis et al., 2014; Tournois & Djeric, 2019), environmental attitudes (Gursoy et al., 2002), community attachment (Eslami et al., 2019), cultural intelligence (Ahmed & Dar, 2024) cultural attitudes (Gannon et al., 2019), perceived value and impact (Tosun et al., 2020), resident's identity, attitudes and satisfaction, etc. (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012), subjective knowledge of tourism (Nunkoo & So, 2016; Rua, 2020), community involvement (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017), economic gain" (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015). Even though various predictors have been used in the past to study residents' opinions, no prior research has examined residence cultural heritage image and the way this influences the local perceptions of cultural heritage tourism impacts as well as their support. Few studies address the variable Residence Image to measure the general image of a destination; most notably among them is Stylidis et al., (2014). No prior research uses Residence Image in a cultural heritage context of developing country, hence demonstrating the existence of a research gap. In addition, the current study also uses Heritage Proximity as a possible predictor of tourism impacts, making a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion on the implications and significance of Heritage Proximity in influencing local perspectives of tourism impacts. Furthermore, previous studies have not examined these two antecedents jointly to understand residents' attitudes toward the impacts of tourism and how these attitudes subsequently influence their support for tourism development. Therefore, the current study attempts to close these gaps by developing and evaluating a social exchange theory-based structural model to address the aforementioned research issue.

Literature review and hypotheses development

A plethora of studies explored communities' perceptions regarding the consequences of tourism including the variables that may possibly affect such perceptions, with the aim of identifying ways which would enhance communities' support towards tourism development. Over the course of the last several years, researchers have paid increasing attention to the relation that exists between residence image and their evaluations of the effects of tourism (Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2016; Tournois & Djeric, 2019; Shen et al., 2019; Tosun et al., 2020; Ganji et al., 2021; Stylidis & Quintero, 2022; Chang et al., 2022). With regard to the outcomes, the image of the place may exert an effect on how the consequences of tourism are perceived (either favourable or unfavourable). According to the findings of these investigations, the image that locals have regarding their respective place has a significant influence on how they feel about the positive and negative effects of tourism including their support. Additionally, findings discovered a favourable relation among place image with three impact factors, involving perceived social, economic, and environmental impacts (Stylidis et al., 2014; Tosun et al., 2020). However, these studies address the variable residence image to measure the general tourism image (Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis & Quintero, 2022), or sports tourism image (Chang et al., 2022), no single study use residence image in cultural heritage context. Hence, demonstrating the existence of a research gap, the current study will examine the local image of the area as a cultural heritage destination and the way this influences the formulation of local perceptions of the effect of cultural heritage as well as support for future tourist growth. In light of the previous discussion, the subsequent hypotheses were thus formulated:

H1a: Residence cultural heritage image positively associated with residents perceived economic impacts.
H1b: Residence cultural heritage image positively associated with residents perceived socio-cultural impacts.
H1c: Residence cultural heritage image positively associated with residents perceived environmental impacts.

Furthermore, in the present investigation, the notion of "heritage proximity" was introduced to analyse the link among perceived effects and their affiliation with the cultural heritage being promoted for tourism. In accordance with the outcomes from some handful of investigations, it was found that the heritage proximity may have an impact on resident's perception of the positive and negative impacts of tourism. Uriely et al.

(2002) concluded that residents whose heritage had been actively promoted for tourism were more willing to support the expansion of the tourism industry than those whose religious and cultural heritage had been neglected. Consequently, having a sense of affiliation towards the heritage product that is often advertised may lead to favourable attitudes towards tourism. According to Lwoga (2018), heritage proximity determines how people consider the effects of tourism, which in turn determines their support. A further investigation was conducted by Lwoga (2019) demonstrate a favourable and substantial association between perceptual proximity and residents' opinions of tourism. Recent findings by Wei et al. (2021) showed that although heritage proximity influenced perceptions of positive tourism impacts, it had no significant influence on perceptions of negative tourism impacts. Nevertheless, when examining the relation between heritage proximity and residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, prior studies have employed a pre-existing labeling of tourism effects as either positive or negative, although the severity of residents' evaluations regarding these consequences receives minimal attention. Hence, drawing on the preceding theoretical discussion, it was revealed that heritage proximity as well as the "triple bottom line" approach of locals' perceived tourism "economic, socio-cultural, and environmental" effects receive almost no attention, therefore, the following hypotheses have been put forth:

H2a: Heritage proximity positively associated with residents perceived economic impacts.
H2b: Heritage proximity positively associated with residents perceived socio-cultural impacts.
H2c: Heritage proximity positively associated with residents perceived environmental impacts.

Numerous studies have employed Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a primary theoretical framework for examining community perspectives on tourism (Ap, 1992; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2016; Hadinejad et al., 2019; Tam et al., 2022). Further, Ap (1992) argued that residents' perspectives regarding tourism are influenced by their perception of the tourism as a process of social exchanges. Employing SET as a foundation, numerous studies have shown that residents' perception towards tourism impacts have a substantial influence on their level of support for tourism expansion (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Stylidis et al., 2014; Wei et al., 2021). In summary, previous studies (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2009; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2014; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015) have demonstrated that residents' support for tourism development is proportional to the extent to which the host population recognizes and appreciates the benefits and costs generated by tourism. Hence, the level of support for additional tourism is associated with how favourably or unfavourably the community which is most directly impacted by tourism perceives the consequences of the industry. Drawing on the theoretical and empirical findings, the present study proposes an integrated framework centered on Social Exchange Theory (SET), which has received limited attention in the context of cultural heritage tourism in developing countries. As a result, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H3a: Residents perceived CHT development economic impacts positively associated with support for cultural heritage tourism.
H3b: Residents perceived CHT development socio-cultural impacts positively associated with support for cultural heritage tourism.
H3c: Residents perceived CHT development environmental impacts positively associated with support for cultural heritage tourism.

The proposed framework (Figure 1) suggests that local residents' support for further cultural heritage tourism (CHT) development depends on their assessments of the economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts of tourism, as well as their perceptions of the CHT image and heritage proximity.

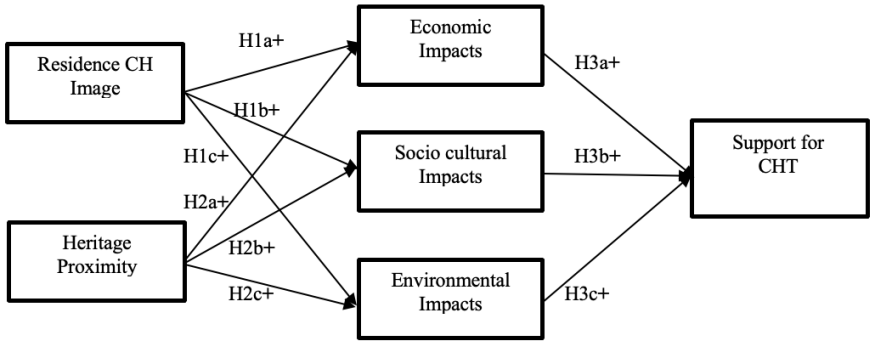

Figure 1. Proposed framework

Methods

Measurement instrument

A survey was administered to assess residence CH Image, perceived "economic, socio-cultural, and environmental" impacts, and support for CHT. The questionnaire was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. The Residence CH Image was observed using 17 questions borrowed from (Stylidis et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2019; Tournois & Djeric, 2019; Chang et al., 2022). The next component, perceived economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts, was measured using 15 items adapted from Nunkoo & Ramkissoon (2010), Stylidis et al. (2014), Stylidis & Quintero (2022), Dar & Ahmed (2023), and Wei et al. (2021). Six statements were adapted from previous tourism support studies to measure local residents' support for tourism development (Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Choi, 2013; Stylidis et al., 2014; Lwoga, 2019). In the concluding section, participants' demographic characteristics were collected. A regional expert was appointed to verify the research instruments in order to ascertain their content as well as face validity. After the satisfactory accomplishment of the initial inspection process, a preliminary study featuring (100) conveniently selected residents was accomplished. After a comprehensive review, the researcher made the necessary revisions to the instrument based on the results of the pilot survey. The Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 1998), indicating that the instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and reliability.

Sampling and data collection

In the current investigation, respondents from different cultural heritage locations were selected by simple random sampling approach. As a part of the simple random sample technique guided by electoral rolls, this research utilised the Chief electoral office of Jammu and Kashmir (assembly constituencies) and (polling stations) to divide localities into smaller, relatively homogenous subunits. The sampling was made more representatives by segmenting each location by assembly constituencies and polling stations. Next the households were selected for participation using a simple random sampling technique. The individual who opened the door was only invited to take part provided he / she was an adult aged 18 or older and thereby a permanent resident of Jammu & Kashmir. According to Wolf et al., (2013), a representative sample size using SEM need to be between, 30 to 460. As a consequence, 550 face-to-face surveys were delivered among individuals older than 18 years of age, while 470 usable surveys were filled and recovered, yielding 85.4% response ratio. The period between July to September (2024) was chosen for the surveys because they represent the period during which the area experiences the highest number of tourists.

Data analysis

Prior to analysis, data was screened to remove incomplete or unengaged replies and confirm data normality. Five questions had important details left blank or filled incorrectly, so they were removed before further analysis, allowing 465 surveys to be utilized. Further, kurtosis and skewness statistics showed that none of the responses in any factor surpassed the normality criterion (Hair et al., 2018). This was followed by a two-stage CBSEM with SPSS 26 and AMOS 23. To validate the measurement model, CFA was employed, next CB-SEM to test the variables' potential relationships. It is crucial to point out that since the latent variable Residence CH Image was theorised to be a multifaceted concept, it was decided to use summated scale for this construct to reduce model complexity and then use these four recently created variables to represent the latent construct Residence Image. Prior studies (Qu et al., 2011; Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2020) on Residence Image have used the composite variable approach, which was then implemented within the framework of SEM, using indicators for the purpose of quantifying this concept. Hence, EFA, CFA verified the (4) factor solution; thus, the items that were used to measure each dimension were put into one indicator. Attractions, amenities, community service, and environment were employed as the newly created variables that acted as indicators for the assessment of the study construct Residence CH Image.

Results

The demographic characteristics of the survey participants are summarized in Table 1, indicating that a larger proportion of male survey respondents (66.7%) than female survey respondents (33.3%). Further, the people who participated were aged 35–54 (38.1%), 45–54 (25.8%), 25–34 (15.1%), 13.3% over 55, and 7.7% 18–24. Most of the survey respondents (39.8%) were self-employed; 34.2% worked in the private sector; 14.0% were public sector workers; and 12% were housewives. Additionally, 38.2% of respondents had a college degree, 26.5% had advanced degrees, 17.1% had technical degrees, 11.7% had only completed high school, and 6.5% had only completed primary school or less. Additionally, of those who responded to the questionnaire, 38.2% had a degree from college, 26.5% had higher education degrees, 17.1% had technical degrees, 11.7% had only completed high school, and 6.5% attended basic school or less. About 62.4% of

the respondents to the research population had lived in their areas of residence for more than 11 years, while 19.3% had lived there for 6 to 10 years, 14.0% of respondents have lived in their current residences for 1-5 years, while 4.3% have lived there for only a year.

Table 1. Demographic profile (N=465)

Demographic	Frequency	%	Demographic	Frequency	%
Age			**Employment**		
18-24	36	7.7	Private sector employee	159	34.2
25-34	70	15.1	Public sector employee	65	14.0
35-44	177	38.1	Self employed	185	39.8
45-54	120	25.8	Housewife	56	12.0
55 above	62	13.3	**Income**		
Gender			Less than 9999	46	9.9
Male	310	66.7	Rs. 10, 000 - Rs. 49, 999	173	37.2
Female	155	33.3	Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 89999	133	28.6
Education level			Rs. 90000- Rs. 129999	78	16.8
Primary school or below	30	6.5	Rs. 130000 above	35	7.5
High school	54	11.7	**Length of residency**		
College degree	178	38.2	Less than a year	20	4.3
Advanced degree	123	26.5	1-5 years	65	14.0
Technical degree	80	17.1	6-10 years	90	19.3
			More than 11 years	290	62.4

Measurement model

In line with Anderson and Gerbing (1988), CFA is carried out on the measurement model using (AMOS, 23) before examining hypotheses. Table 4 shows that the measurement model appears to be valid and satisfactory according to appropriate fit indices that were evaluated in line with the recommendations of prior studies (Byrne et al., 1989; Hair et al., 2010): Chi-square = 620.533, DF = 309, CMIN/DF = 2.008, GFI = 0.914, TLI = 0.971, CFI = 0.975, SRMR = 0.032, and RMSEA = 0.046. After achieving the measurement model, its reliability, validity, and associated variables were evaluated. The composite reliability and average variance extracted (table, 2) exceeded the stipulated cut-off values of 0.70 and 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), while (table, 2) total factor loadings exceeded 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). Table, 3 shows that each of the components' AVE square root values exceeded correlations across constructs, demonstrating discriminant validity for each proposed construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results obtained demonstrate that the measurement model proved reliable and valid. Furthermore, SPSS was employed to conduct "Harman's single factor test" in order to eliminate the possibility of "common method bias," which refers to the majority of data variation being attributed to a single variable. The single component accounted for 21% of the total variance, a figure that was significantly lower than the permissible criterion of < 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Table 2. Measurement model results

Items	loadings	CR	AVE
Residence CH Image		**0.92**	**0.75**
Environment	.896		
Amenities	.776		
Attractions	.916		
Community Services	.512		
Heritage Proximity		**0.91**	**0.72**
Cultural heritage means a lot to me	.859		
Cultural heritage of my area reminds me of regional history.	.900		
I feel my cultural heritage is part of me	.864		
I identify strongly with the cultural heritage of my area	.832		
Environmental Impacts		**0.94**	**0.81**
Environmental pollution	.883		
Crowding	.851		
Noise level	.873		
Traffic congestions	.843		
Economic Impacts		**0.90**	**0.64**
Job opportunities	.922		
Infrastructure	.871		
Revenue generation	.888		
Prices of land and housing	.920		
Standard of living	.856		
Socio cultural Impacts		**0.92**	**0.70**
Possibility of meeting people from diverse cultures	.937		
The spirit of community	.823		
Cultural activities/ entertainment	.854		
Crime level	.883		
Availability of recreational facilities	.870		
Support		**0.91**	**0.68**
Increase in the volume of tourists	.923		
Cultural Heritage Tourism should be further developed.	.894		
Public funding for CH tourism promotion	.914		
I support current Cultural Heritage Tourism developments in Jammu and Kashmir	.893		
It is critical to create plans to regulate historical site conservation and the expansion of Cultural heritage tourism	.880		

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Constructs	Socio-cultural impacts	Support	Economic Impacts	Environmental impacts	Residence CH Image	Heritage Proximity
Socio-cultural impacts	**0.841**					
Support	0.079	**0.827**				
Economic impacts	-0.086†	-0.026	**0.805**			
Environmental impacts	0.056	0.020	-0.002	**0.905**		
Residence CH image	0.040	0.050	-0.074	0.230***	**0.867**	
Heritage proximity	-0.106*	0.022	0.062	0.102*	-0.035	**0.853**

Structural model

Following achieving an excellent model fit, the structural equation model served to test the hypotheses being proposed. The results obtained from the SEM (table 4) reflect an acceptable model fit: Chi-square = 737.769, DF = 314, CMIN/DF = 2.350, CFI = 0.966, GFI = 0.900, RMSEA = 0.051, TLI = 0.962, and SRMR = 0.053 (Hair et al., 2018). Table 5 shows each of the examined hypotheses and their results, revealing that all were significant in the anticipated direction.

Table 4. Model fit metrics (measurement and structural model)

Fit indices	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	p	GFI	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Measurement Model	620.533	309	2.008	0.000	0.914	0.975	0.971	0.032	0.046
Structural model	737.769	314	2.350	0.000	0.900	0.966	0.962	0.051	0.053

Note: "CFI: Comparative fit index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation; GFI: Goodness of Fit-Index; SRMR: standardised root mean square residual".

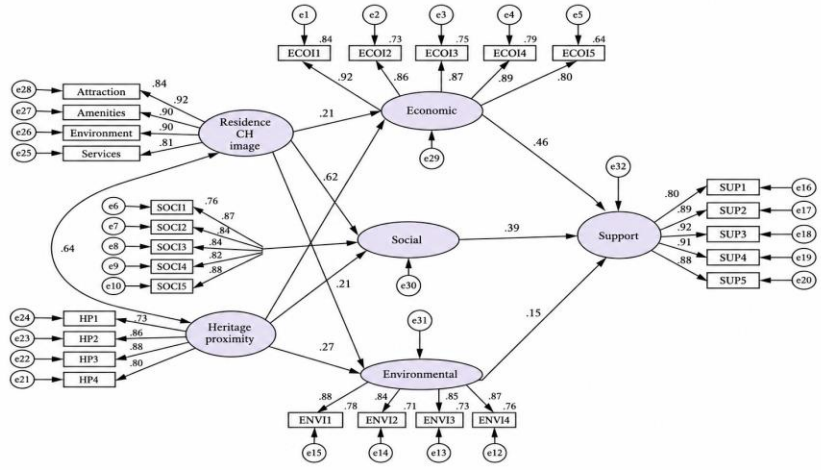

Figure 2. Structural model results.
Note: Standardized path coefficients are shown. All loadings are significant at $p < .001$.
ECOI = Economic impacts; SOCI = Socio-cultural impacts; ENVI = Environmental impacts; HP = Heritage proximity; SUP = Support for CHT development.

Figure 2. Structural model results

To be more specific, the data supports the hypothesis H_{1a}, that there is a positive relation among residence CH image and CHT economic impacts (p=.000, t=4.724, β=.209), H_{1b} among residence CH image and CHT socio-cultural impacts (p=.000, t=4.948, β =.318) and H_{1c} among residence CH image and CHT environmental impacts (p=.000, t=3.339, β=.214). Regarding, H_{2a} the data supports that there exists a positive relation among heritage proximity and CHT economic impacts (p=.000, t=15.360, β=.690), H_{2b} among heritage proximity and CHT socio-cultural impacts (p=.000, t=8.799, β=.459) and H_{2c} among heritage proximity and CHT environmental impacts (p=.000, t=4.403, β=.273). Finally, the path H_{3a} CHT economic impacts has a positive influence on support (p=.000, t=9.820, β = .463). Likewise, there is a positive relations (H_{3b}) among CHT socio-cultural impacts and support (p=.000, t=4.699, β=.389). Regarding H_{3c} the value of the path coefficient (p=.000, t=5.602, β=.152), indicates that CHT environmental impacts positively associated with support.

Table 5. Hypothesis results

(H)	Constructs	Standardised estimate	S.E	C.R	P	Results
H1a	Residence CH image→ Economic impacts	.209	.087	4.724	***	Supported
H1c	Residence CH image→ Environmental impacts	.214	.124	3.339	***	Supported
H2a	Heritage proximity→ Economic impacts	.690	.048	15.360	***	Supported
H2b	Heritage proximity→ Socio-cultural impacts	.459	.051	8.799	***	Supported
H2c	Heritage proximity→ Environmental impacts	.273	.065	4.403	***	Supported
H1b	Residence CH image→ Socio-cultural impacts	.318	.272	4.948	***	Supported
H3c	Environmental impacts→ Support	.152	.103	5.602	***	Supported
H3b	Socio-cultural impacts→ Support	.389	.032	4.699	***	Supported
H3a	Economic impacts→ Support	.463	.042	9.820	***	Supported

*** P < 0.001.

Discussion and conclusions

The objective of this investigation was to assess the influence of residence CH image and heritage proximity in shaping locals' perspectives concerning the "economic, socio-cultural, and environmental" impacts of CH tourism, which were predicted to determine their support in the context of CHT. Regarding the testing of hypotheses (H_1 a-c), the study results indicate that the residence CH image positively influences the formulation of residents perceived Cultural Heritage Tourism impacts. Therefore, the presence of a positive relationship between residence CH image and residents perceived impacts indicates that locals with a favourable image of Jammu and Kashmir as a cultural heritage destination perceive impacts more positively and support tourism more than those with a negative or less favourable image. The results support the findings of the prior studies, which also found a positive link between residence image and tourism impacts (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Krishnaswamy et al., 2018; Stylidis et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2019; Tournois & Djeric, 2019; Tosun et al., 2020; Ganji et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2022; Stylidis & Quintero, 2022). Regarding the testing of hypotheses (H_2 a–c), the study results indicate that Heritage Proximity positively influences the formulation of residents perceived Cultural Heritage Tourism impacts. Therefore, the presence of favourable relations among Heritage Proximity and residents perceived impacts indicates that the greater the degree to which local residents associate themselves with the cultural heritage that has been promoted for tourism, the more positively they perceive impacts and support Cultural Heritage Tourism than those who have less identified with their cultural heritage. These findings are in agreement with the inferences from prior findings (Uriely et al., 2002; Lwoga, 2018; Wei et al., 2021). Regarding the testing of hypotheses (H_3 a-c), the study results indicate that residents perceived Cultural Heritage Tourism impacts have a positive influence on their support. This is consistent with social exchange theory and the findings of prior studies, which found that communities' favourable evaluations of tourism impacts resulted in their support for the tourism industry (Gursoy et al., 2010; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Woo et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2014; Almeida-García et al., 2016; Gnji et al., 2017; Stylidis & Quintero, 2022). Consequently, the present study supports the premise of Social Exchange Theory in developing countries, particularly in the context of cultural heritage tourism, according to which local residents are more inclined to support tourism development when they perceive its benefits to outweigh its potential costs.

Theoretical and managerial implications

The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on local communities' attitudes toward cultural heritage tourism (CHT) and their support for its development. To be more specific, the research makes a theoretical contribution by establishing a holistic image of an area as a cultural heritage destination and examining how this influences the formation of local resident's perceptions of CHT impacts and their support. The majority of prior studies on place image centered on examining the image of the destination as perceived by visitors, and while a limited number of studies recognize the significance of residence images, none of them employ them in the context of cultural heritage. Therefore, the current investigation provides an extensive framework for future studies measuring residence image in a CHT context which is distinct from those used by earlier studies. Additionally, this study considers Heritage Proximity as a possible predictor of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, contributing to an ongoing debate in cultural heritage context regarding the relevance and function of Heritage Proximity in influencing local perceptions of tourism impacts. It is interesting to note that, in prior studies, the notion of "proximity" has primarily been interpreted in terms of geographical proximity (Sharma & Dyer, 2009; Gu & Ryan, 2008), whereas only a few studies have examined perceptual proximity in the context of heritage tourism (Lwoga, 2018, 2019; Wei et al., 2021). Therefore, the present study measures the relation between Heritage Proximity and the triple-bottom-line method of locals' opinions of tourism's socio-cultural, environmental, and Economic Impacts, in cultural heritage tourism context in less developed country which helps to gain a better understanding of how Heritage Proximity affects different domains of these impacts. Also, by demonstrating the applicability of social exchange theory, this research adds to theoretical advancement within the domain of Cultural Heritage Tourism. The findings reinforce the proposition of social exchange theory; according to this theory, residents are more inclined to support tourism when they perceive the advantages of increased tourism to exceed any potential costs. Furthermore, despite the fact that Residence Image and Heritage Proximity have been examined separately to predict resident's perception of tourism impacts (see Stylidis et al., 2014; Wei et al., 2021) their combined influence was previously unknown. Thus, by investigating these two factors in the context of Cultural Heritage Tourism, the current research makes a theoretical advancement.

The present study provides valuable insights that can inform future strategies for the marketing and development of cultural heritage tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. The results indicate that residents perceive the economic and sociocultural impacts of CHT positively, while perceiving its environmental impacts as slightly negative and the findings further revealed that residents' attitudes are a major determinant of their

support for tourism development. Accordingly, authorities should address negatively perceived impacts, as these may adversely affect residents' quality of life in the area. If these impacts are not adequately addressed, local residents may become increasingly resistant to further CHT development. Previous studies indicate that residents' support for tourism tends to decline as tourism development intensifies (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009). Therefore, authorities need to focus on projects that aim for the conservation and preservation of the local environment. These projects should involve local residents to address environmental concerns and negative attitudes. Also, authorities need to organize an awareness campaign for locals to inform them about the positive benefits of CHT and assure them that future tourism growth in the region will be much more beneficial. Further, residents perceive Jammu and Kashmir positively as a cultural heritage destination, despite some concerns. These findings can help authorities address negatively perceived attributes to enhance the destination image, attract tourists, and create economic opportunities. Enhancing negatively perceived destination attributes may help residents recognize the benefits of cultural heritage tourism (CHT) and support its further development. As destination attributes vary by place, tourism authorities should assess residents' perceptions of their destination and tourism impacts before formulating development strategies. Incorporating residents' views, concerns, and attitudes into the planning process can support community-based approaches and sustainable tourism development. Also, authorities should consider residents' affiliation with local cultural assets to mitigate the negative impacts of CHT development. Thus, residents' CHT proximity should be a key consideration in planning and developing cultural heritage tourism. This can be achieved by developing tourism that makes use of cultural heritage in a way that supports local cultural identity rather than undermining local residents' affiliation to their cultural heritage. Additionally, authorities should develop tourism that makes use of cultural heritage in a way that supports local cultural identity. Furthermore, the incorporation of cultural heritage and the local cultural identity into Cultural Heritage Tourism planning would not only support tourism development that benefits local residents but would also differentiate tourism products from rivals and contribute to cultural heritage experiences.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has several limitations that suggest avenues for future research. First, its quantitative, closed-ended design may limit respondents' ability to express their views fully. Future studies should therefore adopt mixed methods to capture more detailed perspectives on specific destinations. Second, the study's cross-sectional design limits assessment of changes over time. Longitudinal research could examine changes in residents' support for CHT in relation to impact perceptions, CHT image, and heritage proximity. Another limitation concerns the choice of indicators included in the model. Although grounded in the literature, other factors, such as the stage of tourism development and seasonality, may influence residents' perceptions. Future studies should therefore examine these additional antecedents to better explain the phenomenon. Lastly, the study examined only residents' attitudes towards CHT in the study area. Other stakeholders in tourism besides the local residents include tourists, tourism organisations, business associations, and the government, among others. These stakeholders may have different opinions, attitudes, and behaviours than locals; consequently, it is recommended that the perceptions and attitudes of other stakeholders participating in Cultural Heritage Tourism be studied in future studies.

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