

## Resident Attitudes toward Dark Tourism, a Perspective of Place-based Identity Motives

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**Abstract:** Place-based identity theories prove to be valid in better understanding resident attitude toward support for tourism. Yet, its effectiveness is not verified in the context of dark tourism and resident attitude toward dark tourism remains unknown. Based on a survey of 526 local residents in China's Yingxiu, the epicenter of the Great Wenchuan Earthquake, the authors examined the relationships between the local residents' place-based identity motives and their attitudes toward support for dark tourism development. Results show that the motive of 'belonging/meaning' is one of the most important determinants; residents' involvement in dark tourism and bereavement affect their identity motives and attitudes toward support for dark tourism. The theoretical contributions and managerial implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** dark tourism; place identity; identity motives; resident attitude; earthquake

### Introduction

People have long been drawn, purposefully or otherwise, towards sites, attractions or events linked in one way or another with death, suffering, violence or disaster (Stone & Sharpley, 2008, p.574). The nature of tourism after a disaster is important, particularly "disaster tourism", when visitors travel to see disaster memorials or disaster sites. Natural disaster related travel destinations, though diverse, are a subset of the totality of 'dark tourism' sites which are associated death and suffering. There are two types of visitors in dark tourism: visitors with some connection with the dark sites; and general visitors with no direct or indirect connection (Beech, 2000). Apart from those who were affected by the earthquake returning to the sites to remember their experiences or the deceased, an important part with regards to dark tourism is general visitors, as the balance will shift from those with personal connections to the site to the more general visitor with time (Beech, 2003).

Dark tourism takes a significant role in disaster recovery management, as it makes a major contribution to all stages of the disaster recovery (Muskat, Nakanishi & Blackman, 2015). On May 12, 2008, one of the deadliest disasters on earth – the Great Wenchuan Earthquake - occurred in China's Sichuan province. In the quake, over 80,000 people died or were reportedly missing, and nearly half a million people were injured. A small town of 12,000 people, Yingxiu is located near the epicenter of

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the earthquake which suffered the most; half of the town's population died and almost the whole town was virtually leveled to the ground. After the quake, the town was rebuilt with supports of the central government and provinces of the country. The ruins were conserved and memorials were set up in commemorating the victims. Especially in the first few years after the quake, visitors swarmed in. The number of annual tourist arrivals to Yingxiu approximately reached 80,000 to 100,000. Disaster tourism has been adopted as a primary force in the region's recovery plan, focusing on providing new tourism products resulting from the disaster (Yang, Wang & Chen, 2011). After the earthquake, it is key for the local community to maintain a sustainable development of dark tourism.

The analysis of dark tourism cannot be complete without consideration of how disaster survivors and local community perceive the phenomenon of dark tourism and their attitudes toward support for dark tourism development. This paper seeks to fill out this gap in the literature. Notably, a dark tourism destination presents death or survivors' suffering as 'entertainment', which is considered dissonant by the local. It is assumed that formation of residents' perceptions and attitudes toward dark tourism is more complex than that toward pleasure-oriented leisure tourism. This study is designed to better understand resident attitude toward support for tourism from the perspective of their place-based identity motives, i.e., motivations towards tourism based on place-based identity, in addition to their perceptions of the impacts made by dark tourism. Specific objectives of this study include:

1. Examine the influence of identity motives on resident attitude toward support for dark tourism;
2. Examine the influence of tourism impacts on resident attitude toward support for dark tourism;
3. Investigate the moderating role of residents' tourism involvement regarding their identity motives, perceptions of impacts by dark tourism, and attitudes toward support for dark tourism;
4. Investigate the moderating role of bereavement regarding their identity motives, perceptions of impacts by dark tourism, and attitudes toward support for dark tourism.

It is noted that research on dark tourism has focused on the supply of dark tourism analyzing specific manifestations of dark tourism such as war museums and genocide commemoration sites (e.g., Wight & Lennon, 2004; Williams, 2004); disaster tourism management and planning (e.g., Ritchie, 2008; Ritchie & Campiranon, 2014); and the demand for 'dark' touristic experiences and tourist motivations such as why tourists are drawn towards sites or experiences associated with death and suffering (e.g., Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Rittichainuwat 2008; Biran, Liu, Li & Eichhorn, 2014). However, only a small number of studies have been done about how the survivors and

the local people feel about dark tourism. Coat and Ferguson (2013) have explored residents' perceptions toward economic recovery from an earthquake by dark tourism, little research has been conducted to understand resident attitude toward dark tourism development. According to Kim & Butler (2014), the importance of the inclusion, participation, and support of local residents has always been emphasized in tourism planning for the ongoing development of any tourism. Residents' satisfaction in tourist destinations lies at the heart of the movement toward more socially sustainable development (Williams & Lawson, 2001).

## **Literature Review**

### *Dark Tourism to the Local*

Dark tourism refers to “visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives” (Tarlow, 2005, p. 48). The devastation caused by earthquakes is beyond the daily experiences of human beings. It is generally accepted that such natural disasters trigger the emergence of psychopathological symptoms and problems to survivors (Miller & Basoglu, 1992). Disasters have a negative effect on survivors' mental health and psychological functions, but research-based information about how their post-disaster needs will be met is still limited (Zhang & Zhang, 1993).

After a disaster, the local people are usually put in a painful or uncomfortable situation. On one hand, with one's hometown being turned into a site of tragic disaster, constant reminders of the site will prevent them from moving beyond the disaster; on the other hand, in the transition from a place of past disaster to a place as a dark tourism destination, death is presented as 'entertainment' (Uzzell, 1989). Such dissonance is an integral and unavoidable characteristic of dark tourism (Hartmann, 2014). The stigma of death and tragedy may be distasteful to residents who want to live a quiet existence, and desire no extra attention (Heidelberg, 2014).

Nevertheless, dark tourism plays a crucial role in empowering and stimulating the community (Muskat et al., 2015). Living in a relatively underdeveloped area located in China's hinterland, the local residents had few job opportunities provided by local factories. These factories, however, were severely damaged in the quake and as a result were either closed or relocated. The town of Yingxiu, for instance, is preserved by the government to develop disaster dark tourism. According to the local residents' comments, in order to make a living, only two options are left for them to choose after the quake: to become a migrant worker in other cities, or to be dark tourism 'entertainer' at home.

### *Assessing Resident Attitude toward Support for Tourism*

Active support of host communities is crucial for successful and sustainable tourism development. For dark tourism planners and managers, it is essential to assess local residents' supportive attitude. Motivation theories indicate that human behavior is often driven by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. In terms of residents' support for tourism, the extrinsic factors are the positive and negative impacts of tourism (e.g., Huh & Vogt, 2008; Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Social Exchange Theory is viewed by tourism researchers as an appropriate framework to explain the relationships between perceptions of tourism impacts and resident attitude toward tourism (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt 2007), which involves an exchange of resources among parties seeking mutual benefits from the exchange relationship (Ap, 1992). In contrast, one's identity is considered to be an important intrinsic factor which influences one's behavior (Mannetti, Peirro, & Livi, 2004; Hagger, Anderson, Kyriakaki, & Darkings, 2007). More recent tourism literature has stressed the importance of considering one's identity motives to better understand one's supportive attitude toward tourism (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palme, Koenig-Lewis, & Jones, 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015). In tourism research, resident attitude toward support for tourism is considered virtually an intentional behavior (e.g., Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Wang & Xu, 2015). Wang and Chen (2015) suggested that a comprehensive assessment of resident attitude toward support for tourism should not only consider the role of tourism impacts but also residents' sense of place and place-based identity. However, few studies have discussed the role of resident's identity especially in the context of dark tourism; resident attitude toward support for tourism development in the context of dark tourism remains unknown. This study aims to explore the role of identity motives in addition to residents' perceptions of tourism impacts on their attitudes toward support for dark tourism.

### *Place-based Identity Motives*

According to Amsden, Stedman and Kruger (2007), sense of place is a deep connection to the places in which people live, work, and play, and is built upon the meanings people create as they experience day-to-day life. Researchers have applied sense of place and its associated concepts for studying residents' attitudes toward tourism or their intention to participate in tourism activities (e.g., Gu & Ryan, 2008; Wang & Xu, 2015). In place-behavior research, Breakwell (1986) posited an identity process theory in which identity is seen as a dynamic, social product of the interaction between the capacities for memory, consciousness and construal, which include four motives: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. A detailed literature

review of the four place identity motives was introduced in the study of Wang and Chen (2015). In brief, of the four motives, the distinctiveness motive pushes toward the establishment of a sense of differentiation from others (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2000). For local residents, a bond with their living place enables them to differentiate themselves from people in other places (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). The continuity motive focuses on the maintenance of one's identity over time (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Places can act as cues, or memory aids, providing residents with a sense of "environmental constancy" (Taylor, 2010). Self-esteem refers to a positive evaluation of oneself with which one identifies. Twigger-Ross, Bonaiuto, and Breakwell (2003) suggest that a person gains a boost to his self-esteem from the quality of the place. The efficacy motive is oriented toward enhancing feelings of "competence and control" (Breakwell, 1993, p. 205). Twigger-Ross et al. (2003) posited that feelings of self-efficacy are maintained if the environment facilitates, or at least does not hinder, a person's everyday lifestyle.

In addition to the aforementioned, identity researchers stress the importance of the other two identity motives – belonging and meaning (e.g., Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). One way in which identity is connected to a particular place is by a feeling that you belong to that place (Rose, 1995). It is a place you feel comfortable or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place (Rose, 1995). The 'belonging' motive has been identified by Baumeister and Leary (1995) as a 'fundamental human motivation', whose sphere of influence is not restricted to identity process (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The 'meaning' motive refers to the need to find significance or purpose in one's own existence (Baumeister, 1991). Place not only contains the elements of a location, but also includes the associations and feelings that we have; bit by bit place becomes part of who we are and shapes our identity (Qazimi, 2014). Such places with personal meanings of "home" become tied to the individual's conception of "self" (Feldman, 1990). Sense of place is ultimately constructed around what a particular place means, and how people evaluate it based on these meanings; it is a complex recipe that includes settings, behaviors, and evaluations of interwoven personal and social contexts (Amsden, 2007, p. 14). The search for meaning is considered as an essential feature of human nature, portraying the sense that one's existence is meaningful as a core feature of psychological well-being (McGregor & Little, 1998). Given the distinctive role of each of the identity motives, Vignoles et al. (2006) suggested that all the six identity motives be considered to better understand human behaviors. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the roles of the two identity motives – belonging and meaning – on people's behaviors are not examined in the context of post disaster dark tourism development. This study attempts to fill up this gap by including the 'belonging' and 'meaning' motives to better understand resident attitude

toward support for dark tourism development.

## **Research Methods**

### *Measurement Scales*

The questionnaire for this study incorporated questions designed to measure the local residents' place identity motives (i.e., distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy, belonging, and meaning), their perceptions of positive and negative dark tourism impacts, and their support for dark tourism development. The questionnaire items used to measure residents' senses of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy were based on the ones applied in Wang and Chen (2015). The items on measuring place-identity motives of belonging and meaning were adapted from Vignoles et al. (2006). The questions used to measure residents' perceptions of negative and positive tourism impacts and attitudes toward support for tourism were modified based on previous studies (e.g., Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; and Wang & Chen, 2015). All the perceptual questions are measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). As a result, a total of 39 measurement indicators were developed. Apart from these, an open-ended question is included for respondents to express their comments on the venture of dark tourism in text; there are also some categorical questions including respondents' demographic information (e.g., gender, age group), involvement in dark tourism business, and witness of the disaster and bereavement.

### *Pilot Survey and Data Collection*

The questionnaire was first designed in English and then translated into Chinese by two researchers with a good ability in both English and Mandarin. In February, 2015, a pilot survey was conducted prior to implementing the formal survey. Fifty-one residents of Yingxiu participated in the pilot survey. The residents were asked to fill out the survey and make comments in terms of the wording of the items and the overall design of the survey instrument. All the feedback and comments were collected and summarized, and as a result, some of the questions (especially the questions about residents' place-based sense of continuity and self-efficacy) were reworded in order to make the expressions more easily understandable to the respondents.

The formal data collection was conducted in June, 2015. A self-administered survey was conducted by student research assistants to measure Yingxiu residents' place identities as well as their perceptions and attitudes toward tourism. The convenience-sampling technique was adopted for the data collection. The target subjects were

Yingxiu residents who were at least 18 years old and lived in the town. To conduct the survey, the research team identified five villages in Yingxiu which were close to the town's dark sites. These villages were: Xiuping, Dongcun, Yuzixi, Yangjiaping and Huangjiacun. Only those who were local residents and expressed a willingness to participate were given the survey questionnaires. As a result, 600 surveys were distributed and a total of 573 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of 95.5%. 526 surveys were identified as being complete and useful, indicating that the usable return of the surveys was 87.6%.

### *Data Analysis*

Descriptive analysis is conducted to assess the frequency and central tendency of the questions of survey. Content analysis is employed to identify the notions and themes of the respondents' comments. Factor analysis was conducted for the identity motive items, dark tourism impact items, and support for tourism items, respectively. Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, hierarchical regression analysis is done to determine which factors are salient in contributing to local residents' attitude toward support for dark tourism development. Furthermore, t-tests will be conducted to detect any perceptual differences of the determining factors identified in the regression analysis between different resident groups.

## **Results**

### *Respondents' Demographic Profiles*

About the sample, as shown in Table 1, 59.8% are females and 40.2% are males. Most of the respondents are young and middle-aged, with 33.1% aged from 18-25, 24.4% from 26-35, 22.2% from 36-45, 14.8% from 46-55, and only 5.4% are older than 55. In terms of length of residence, the sample is composed of two major groups - one is a group of residents who've lived in Yingxiu for over 20 years (43.3%) and the other group were residents who moved to Yingxiu after the earthquake (41.4%). The other people (14%) have lived in Yingxiu for 7-20 years. Among the respondents, 34.9% are involved in tourism-related business. With respect to the '5-12 Earthquake', 90.2% of the respondents reported to be witnesses of the earthquake, and 55% reported to be bereaved residents who lost their family members and/or close relatives in the earthquake.

<Insert Table 1 here>

### *Mean Scores of the Measurement Indicators*

Table 2 shows the mean scores of all the indicators of place identity dimensions, negative impacts and positive impacts, and support for dark tourism development. Among the 24 place identity indicators, the mean scores range from 2.90 to 3.98 on a scale of 1 to 5. Only one indicator's mean is below the mid-point 3 (i.e., I feel I live out my real life in Yingxiu), and none of the indicators' mean scores is over 4. The indicators with the lowest mean scores are the four self-efficacy items (ranging from 2.90 to 3.09). The ones with the highest mean scores are the four self-esteem items (ranging from 3.75 to 3.98). As to respondents' perceptions of the dark tourism impacts, all the negative and positive indicators were perceived favorably except one negative-impact item (i.e., become overly dependent on tourism at the cost of other industries) with a neutral mean (3.01). In contrast with the place identity and impact indicators, all the 'support for dark tourism' indicators were perceived most favorably, ranging from 4.12 to 4.22.

<Insert Table 2 here>

### *Results of Factor Analyses*

Prior to the exploratory factor analysis of twenty-four place identity indicators, the indicators' internal reliability was tested. As a result, three items were excluded from the factor analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha of the remaining twenty-one items is .932, which were entered for the factor analysis. The result of the factor analysis is presented in Table 3.

<Insert Table 3 here>

The test statistic for sphericity is large (6547.79) which is statistically significant at 0.001. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy of these variables was 0.936. The communalities range from .509 to .814. As a result, four factors are extracted, explaining 67% of the total variance. Based on the items grouped under each factor, these four factors are labeled as "sense of belonging/meaning" (F1); "sense of self-efficacy" (F2); "sense of self-esteem/continuity" (F3); and "sense of distinctiveness" (F4). Among these factors, Factor 3 - "sense of self-esteem/continuity" - obtains the highest summated mean score (3.81), which is perceived most favorably by Yingxiu's residents. In turn, the second favorably rated factor is Factor 1 - "sense of belonging/meaning" (3.54), followed by Factor 4 - "sense of distinctiveness" (3.45), and Factor 2 - "Sense of Self-efficacy" (3.12).

Factor analysis is also conducted for the indicators of negative dark tourism impacts, positive dark tourism impacts, and intentional support indicators, respectively, to test the unidimensionality of each construct. The results show that all the negative impact indicators, positive impact indicators and intentional support indicators can each be grouped into one factor, each explaining 72.2%, 61% and 71.5% of the total variance,



respectively. The summated mean scores of the three factors are 2.50 ('negative impacts', coded as Factor 5), 3.60 ('positive impacts', coded as Factor 6) and 4.21 ('support for dark tourism'). All these factors are favorably perceived, with 'support for dark tourism' being the most favored construct among all the factors.

#### *Significant Predictors of Residents' Supportive Attitude*

This study assumes that local residents' perceptions of the dark tourism impacts and their place identity play significant roles in determining their level of support for dark tourism development. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to measure how the place identity factors predict residents' support for dark tourism development with the presence of the influence of the positive and negative 'impact' factors.

As illustrated in Table 5, about 45% of the total variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the predicting model - 26% is explained by the negative and positive factors, and the additional 19% of the variance is explained by F1 (belonging/meaning) and F3 (self-esteem/continuity). The other two factors (Factors 2 and 4) are found insignificant and therefore not included in the predicting model. The F-ratio of 102.95 is significant (Prob.< 0.001), indicating that the result of the equation model could hardly occur by chance. The degree of variable collinearity is considered acceptable with the variance inflation (VIF) equal to 1.01 which is less than 10.

<insert Table 4 here>

As a result, four factors (two 'impact' factors and two place identity factors) are found to be significant in predicting residents' attitude toward support for tourism. The regression model further indicates that the most important cultural tourism factor in contributing to residents' overall satisfaction is Factor 6 - "Positive impacts" (Beta=.336), the second important one is Factor 1 - "Sense of belonging/meaning" (Beta=.333), followed by Factor 3 - "Sense of self-esteem/continuity" (Beta=.162), and Factor 5 - "Negative Impacts" (Beta=-.108). The two insignificant predictors are F2 and F4.

A correlation analysis of the factors indicates that F2 and F4 are significantly correlated with 'support for dark tourism' ( $r_{F2\&Support}=.358$ ,  $p=.001$ ;  $r_{F4\&Support}=.509$ ,  $p=.001$ ), but they were insignificant in the multiple regression analysis, indicating that their influence on 'support for dark tourism' is likely to be mediated by another variable. The Sobel (1982) test demonstrated significant mediation of 'distinctiveness' by 'self-esteem/continuity' ( $z=8.47$ ,  $p=0.001$ ); Further, the results of the Sobel test also showed significant mediation of 'self-efficacy' by 'self-esteem/continuity' ( $z=8.72$ ,  $p=0.001$ ).

### *Moderating Effects of Tourism Involvement and Bereavement*

Results of the t tests reveal several interesting features (see Table 5). One is that the residents' perceptions of the two place identity factors (F1 and F3) are significantly different between all the groups split up by the two categorical variables. In general, the residents with tourism involvement and bereaved residents hold a stronger sense of 'belonging/meaning' and 'self-esteem/continuity'. The second feature is that, apart from the variable of 'tourism involvement', the variable of earthquake experience shows no effects on the residents' attitudes toward dark tourism's negative and positive impacts. The third feature is that the perceptual differences between the residents with tourism involvement and without tourism involvement are found to be significant for all the predicting variables (i.e., F1, F3, F5 and F6), and the views of the residents with tourism involvement are more favorable than the ones without tourism involvement. In addition to the above features, the residents who are involved in tourism industry, and/or lost significant others in the quake are found to be more supportive to the tourism development based on the earthquake site.

A conventional content analysis was conducted to residents' responses to the last open-ended question. The coding categories are derived directly from the text data which involve counting and comparisons of keywords and content. This question alone received 171 responses, representing one-third of the sample. Most comments are short and brief, containing one notion; very few contain more than one notion. Notions with similar meanings or keywords were pooled together as one category. As a result, five categories are identified represented by the following codes: "tourism – new hope of life" (34 counts), "tourism to be better regulated/supported by government" (42 counts), "earthquake-based dark tourism not reflecting Yingxiu's uniqueness or ethnic culture" (60 counts), "losing Yingxiu's blue sky and clean environment (31 counts), "current tourism capitalizing on residents' grief" (5 counts).

### **Discussion**

Results show that Yingxiu residents' sense of self-efficacy is not perceived as positive as the other place identity motives, indicating a wide gap between the venture of dark tourism in Yingxiu and the residents' sense of self-efficacy. This result is parallel to the residents' perceptions of the negative impact indicator – 'becoming overly dependent on tourism at the cost of the other industries' - which was modestly rated. In contrast, resident's sense of self-esteem was perceived most positively among the six identity motives. The results reflect the dissonancy of local residents' feelings toward dark tourism: they are in need of dark tourism in a hope to make a living and/or improve their quality of life; meanwhile, they are sensitive to how dark tourism

may affect their self-esteem, especially when they feel visitors show disrespect to them. The ‘support for dark tourism’ indicators receive the highest mean scores which are all above 4. This shows that local residents are supportive of the development of dark tourism. The development of dark tourism has become Yingxiu’s predominant strategy undertaken by the government. Due to this reason, for most of the residents choosing to stay in Yingxiu after the quake, tourism might be the only option for them to make a living, and that is why they strongly desire for a successful dark tourism development.

Factor analysis of the place identity motive indicators identified four factors - ‘distinctiveness’, ‘self-efficacy’, ‘self-esteem/continuity’ and ‘belonging/meaning’. The results indicate that Yingxiu residents’ sense of self-esteem is closely related with their sense of continuity, both of which are affected by the environmental landscape change of Yingxiu due to the big quake. In contrast, their senses of belonging and meaning relate more to social relationships: the shared meanings of the town offer a sense of belonging, and the sense of township belonging offers shared meanings. Results of the multiple hierarchical regression analysis show that both residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts and their place identity motives contribute significantly to their attitudes toward support for dark tourism development – the tourism impact factors explained 26% and the place identity factors accounted for 19%. Based on the regression weights, ‘positive impacts’ and ‘belonging/meaning’ showed to be the two most powerful predictors of the residents’ support for tourism, followed by ‘self-esteem/continuity’ and ‘negative impacts’.

The Beta values derived from the regression analysis indicate that the factor of ‘belonging/meaning’ is as powerful as the factor of ‘positive impacts’, and is more powerful than ‘self-esteem/continuity’ in predicting resident’s support for dark tourism. Living in an historical and ethnic-minority town, Yingxiu residents’ self-identity is closely linked with the meaning of the place or what the place implies to them. The more meanings associated with the place, the stronger sense of belonging attached to the place, and vice versa. The cohesive senses of meaning and belonging are further strengthened by their unique and enclosed ethnic culture, and the earthquake disaster as well. With their beloved ones losing lives in the quake, they become more emotionally attached to the place. In some way, dark tourism provides them an approach to appeasing their desire for the sense of belonging/meaning. If residents find dark tourism can enhance their sense of belonging/meaning, they become more favorable to dark tourism development and more supportive. Conversely, if residents feel their grief was capitalized and presented for ‘entertainment’ in front of visitors, they feel their senses of self-esteem and continuity harmed and humiliated. This study verifies the importance of considering the roles of identity motives especially the motive of ‘belonging/meaning’ when assessing

resident attitude toward dark tourism.

As indicated by the literature review, natural disasters trigger the emergence of psychopathological symptoms and problems to survivors (Miller & Basoglu, 1992). The extent to which the survivors are affected by earthquakes is determined by factors such as the extent of loss, the effects of the earthquake and visitors' reactions and behaviors, among the others. That mentioned, the survivors and their community are a volatile group of people who should be treated with extra care. Unlike other tourism programs, dark tourism should not be simply operated as a regular travel business. The destination management organizations should plan to develop a real dark tourism, not making it a tourism marketing ploy. For instance, after the government decided to rebuild Yingxiu into an open-air earthquake museum, the newly developed tourism activities are entertainment oriented, which is not consonant with the principle of dark tourism. The planning and development of dark tourism should emphasize the purpose of commemorating the deceased, and information about how to behave properly at disaster commemorating sites should be readily available and delivered to visitors beforehand.

In addition to the role of the identity motives, how residents feel about the impacts of dark tourism is found to be significant predictors of residents' support for dark tourism. Results indicate that resident attitude is more related with 'positive impacts' than 'negative impacts'. Yingxiu is a remote town with an underdeveloped economy. While people from economically developed areas are becoming more concerned about quality of life in the course of tourism development, it is still a main task to improve the living standards for people living in less developed areas. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970), it is construed that people with a low living standards tend to mind more about what economic benefits they can bring them, and less concerned about what costs they may have to bear. This said, for people living in developing regions or countries, livelihoods are usually a major concern for survivors of disasters. A well-planned and developed dark tourism should create better local livelihoods.

The results of the t-test show that the residents who are involved in tourism have stronger senses of place-based belonging/meaning and self-esteem/continuity. These are the people who have frequent and direct contacts with visitors and act as representatives of Yingxiu when communicating with the visitors from the outside world. Through communications and direct encounters with the visitors, their passion and sense of responsibility for advocating Yingxiu can be strengthened. The result shows that dark tourism planners and managers should create encounter opportunities for Yingxiu residents to communicate with visitors who are here to feel the earthquake and show respect to the deceased. Such encounters will in turn strengthen their sense of place identity and supportive attitude toward dark tourism. The respondents who

are involved in tourism business are more favorable to the positive impacts, less agreeable to the negative impacts, and more supportive to dark tourism development than the ones who are not directly involved in the tourism business. The results indicate that, to gain residents' support for dark tourism, dark tourism planners and managers should provide more tourism business and job opportunities to the local residents; meanwhile, to minimize negative impacts in the course of dark tourism development.

Significant difference was also noticed between the bereaved residents and the non-bereaved residents in terms of their identity motives of belonging/meaning and self-esteem/continuity, and their attitudes toward support for dark tourism. This result indicates that the bereaved locals are more likely to become emotionally attached to the disaster sites after the earthquake. With their significant others being buried and resting forever on the commemorative sites, their senses of belonging/meaning get emotionally expanded. Also more strengthened are their self-esteem/continuity motives; they would be more sensitive to any environmental landscape changes occurring to their hometown. Nevertheless, this does not mean the non-bereaved residents are apathetic or do not share the feelings of the bereaved residents. Instead, bonds were usually formed with bereaved and non-bereaved locals in the earthquake aftermath, with the non-bereaved locals wishing to help the bereaved locals (Kelman, Spence, Palmer, Petal, & Saito, 2008). For instance, serious conflicts were reported in Yingxiu that some local restaurant owners who lost significant others at the quake triggered serious conflicts with visitors who said that they were taking advantage of the dead people for their tourism business. Such conflicts were typically ignited by an irresponsible visitor and started by a bereaved resident, then spread through all the community members, which in turn, shed shadow on the prospect of dark tourism in Yingxiu. Dark tourism planners and developers should seek comments from the bereaved residents regarding setting up rules and regulations about visitors' touring the disaster commemorative sites.

Based on the residents' responses to the open-ended question, it shows that Yingxiu residents' feelings about the disaster tourism seem to be in a dilemma. On one hand, most of the residents are dependent on dark tourism which is their major source of income after the earthquake, and hope the government can offer more regulatory and financial support to sustain its development; on the other hand, many of them feel the current form of dark tourism makes them lose their sense of place and place identity, and hurts their feelings. One implication for the government and dark tourism planners is that dark tourism should not be considered as a 100% tourism business, and should not be developed with any sacrifice of Yingxiu's environmental landscape and/or ethnic and cultural features.

## **Conclusion**

Based on identity and social exchange theories, this study explored and examined the determining factors of resident attitude toward support for tourism in the context of dark tourism. The findings indicate that resident attitude toward support for dark tourism is affected not only by their perceptions of tourism impacts but also their place-based identity motives. This study verifies that applications of place identity motives and tourism impacts complement each other in better understanding residents' support for dark tourism. In addition, this study further examined the impacts of the two moderating variables – tourism involvement and bereavement, indicating that both of the two variables are significant in impacting the residents' place identity motives and their attitudes toward support for dark tourism development.

In terms of theoretical contributions of this study, while tourism literature stressed the importance of the four place identity motives, i.e., distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy, this study introduced and empirically verified the important roles of the two other identity motives – belonging and meaning in tourism studies, stressing that, in the context of dark tourism, residents' senses of place belonging and meaning are a key factor in predicting residents' support for dark tourism development. This study represents the first attempt to empirically analyze the roles of all the six identity motives in the context of tourism research, which provides a good foundation for future studies to explore the roles of residents' sense of place and place identity motives.

Results of this study also reveal several managerial implications. Tourism management organizations tend to pursue sustainable tourism development by making efforts to maximize positive tourism impacts and minimizing negative tourism impacts to the local community (i.e., economic, social/cultural and environmental impacts). This study suggests that, at least in the context of dark tourism, the local residents' place identity motives should be fully considered by the local government and tourism management organizations, which can greatly impact residents' attitudes toward support for tourism. The local government and tourism management organizations should create tourism job opportunities and good prospects for more local people, and develop community-based dark tourism allowing more local people to get involved which will be helpful for a sustainable dark tourism. The people who lost significant others in the quake are found to have stronger senses of belonging/meaning and self-esteem/continuity. Dark tourism planners and managers should seek these people's comments to avoid potential conflicts between the local

residents and visitors.

Future study on disaster tourism should focus more on the sustainability of dark tourism and of dark tourism related livelihoods following the widespread exposure of earthquake vulnerability. For instance, is there a general pattern in disaster tourism development? Or is there a measurable growth in tourists' interest in dark tourism? To make the results of this study more generalizable, more studies are necessary to explore the different patterns of the impacts of place identity motives for different types of dark tourism. This study focused on residents living in a traditional Chinese town surviving a natural disaster; other studies can study dark tourism based on the other types of disasters and disasters having occurred with different economic and/or socio-cultural backgrounds.

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Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profiles

		Frequency	Valid Percent (%)			Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Gender	Male	209	40.2	Length of residence	<1 year	80	15.2
	Female	313	59.8		1-3 years	103	19.5
Age	18-25	170	33.1		4-6 years	35	6.7
	26-35	125	24.4		7-10 years	25	4.7
	36-45	114	22.2		11-20 years	49	9.3
	46-55	76	14.8		>20 years	228	43.3
	56-65	12	2.3		Tourism involvement	yes	161
	66+	16	3.1	no		300	65.1
Earthquake witness	yes	468	90.2	Bereavement	yes	283	55.0
	no	51	9.8		no	231	45.1

Source: By the authors.

Table 2. Mean scores of the Indicators of Perceptions of Place Identity, Dark Tourism Impacts, and Support for Dark Tourism

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Indicators of Yingxiu residents' place-based identities:</i>			
I feel I can live out my real life in Yingxiu.	527	2.90	1.150
I am hopeful about having a good business or career prospect in Yingxiu	527	3.00	1.109
I feel confident to enjoy my life by staying in Yingxiu.	527	3.03	1.131
I am confident in obtaining a satisfactory business or career.	527	3.09	1.168
Yingxiu's lifestyle is very unique.	527	3.27	1.081
I am confident in living a self-satisfied life in Yingxiu.	527	3.31	1.074
Yingxiu's landscape is very unique compared with other towns.	527	3.38	1.107
Attractiveness of Yingxiu is very different from other places.	527	3.46	1.041
Yingxiu means a lot to my life.	527	3.54	1.095
I have a sense of belonging in Yingxiu <sup>a</sup> .	527	3.57	1.727
I feel more attached to Yingxiu than other places.	527	3.58	1.070
I feel I belong here.	527	3.59	1.091
To me, Yingxiu is a place with lots of implications.	527	3.61	1.031
I think Yingxiu is very distinctive.	527	3.62	1.094
Yingxiu has been a very important place to me all the time.	527	3.66	1.125
My life experience is closely linked with Yingxiu <sup>a</sup> .	527	3.66	1.719
My important life experience took place in Yingxiu.	527	3.66	1.136
Yingxiu is my home.	527	3.72	1.100
I'm proud of being a Yingxiu resident.	527	3.74	1.041

Yingxiu always reminds me of my past time.	527	3.75	1.095
I'll feel uncomfortable if I see negative news about Yingxiu <sup>a</sup> .	527	3.76	1.116
Yingxiu always strongly arouses my old memory.	527	3.80	1.085
I feel proud when hearing someone lauds Yingxiu.	527	3.81	1.077
I'll feel pleasant when seeing media promote Yingxiu.	527	3.98	.951
<i>Indicators of Yingxiu residents' attitudes toward the impacts of dark tourism development: "I think the development of dark tourism based on Yingxiu's earthquake sites is likely to –"</i>			
Damage Yingxiu's natural environment.	527	2.39	1.057
Damage Yingxiu's Tibetan and Qiang ethnics' folklore	527	2.41	1.033
Hurt the feelings of victims' families	527	2.73	1.124
Degrade local people's living standards <sup>a</sup>	527	2.80	1.110
Become overly dependent on tourism at the cost of other industries <sup>a</sup>	527	3.01	1.148
Provide more job or business opportunities for the locals	527	3.51	1.150
Be conducive to conserving Yingxiu's minority ethnics' cultures	527	3.53	.994
Be conducive to conserving Yingxiu's earthquake site	527	3.56	1.029
Be conducive to improving Yingxiu's infrastructure	527	3.57	.984
Boost the development of other industries	527	3.62	1.021
<i>Yingxiu residents' intention of support for tourism -</i>			
I think Yingxiu should boost the development of the earthquake site related tourism.	527	4.12	.909
I hope there are more things to be provided for visitation at the earthquake site.	527	4.14	.861
The government should continue to support the development of the earthquake site related tourism.	527	4.17	.965
I hope there are more visitors coming to visit Yingxiu's earthquake sites.	527	4.21	.917
I hope visitors can extend their length of stay when visiting Yingxiu.	527	4.22	.898

Scale: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree

a. Deleted indicator as a function of reliability analysis

Source: *By the authors.*

Table 3. Factor Analysis of Place Identity Indicators

Variables	Varimax Rotated Loading				Communality
	F1	F2	F3	F4	
Factor 1- Sense of Belonging/meaning					
Yingxiu is my home.	.744				.719
I feel more attached to Yingxiu than other places.	.766				.737
I feel I belong here.	.809				.765
To me, Yingxiu is a place with lots of implications.	.705				.641
My important life experience took place in Yingxiu.	.757				.699
Yingxiu means a lot to my life.	.783				.696
Only in Yingxiu can I feel I live out my real life.	.655				.572
Factor 2 – Sense of Self-efficacy					
I am confident in obtaining a satisfactory business or career.		.842			.793
I am hopeful about having a good business or career prospect		.863			.814
I am confident in living a self-satisfied life in Yingxiu.		.753			.678
I feel confident to enjoy my life by staying in Yingxiu.		.833			.787
Factor 3 – Sense of Self-esteem/continuity					

Yingxiu has been a very important place to me all the time.			.613		.593
Yingxiu always reminds me of my past time.			.830		.749
Yingxiu always strongly arouses my old memory.			.771		.688
I feel proud when hearing someone lauds Yingxiu.			.517		.524
I'll feel pleasant when seeing media promote Yingxiu.			.497		.509
I'm proud of being a Yingxiu resident.			.504		.571
Factor 4 – Sense of Distinctiveness					
I think Yingxiu is very distinctive.				.738	.678
Attractiveness of Yingxiu is very different from other places.				.743	.632
Yingxiu's landscape is very unique compared with other towns.				.775	.663
Yingxiu's lifestyle is very unique.				.700	.570
Eigenvalue					
Eigenvalue	9.08	2.47	1.43	1.10	
Variance (percent)	43.2	11.8	6.8	5.2	
Cumulative variance (percent)	43.2	55.0	61.8	67.0	
Summated Mean	3.45	3.12	3.81	3.54	
Number of items (total=21)	7	4	6	4	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: By the authors.

Table 4. Significant Variables in Predicting Support for Dark Tourism

R = .671, R <sup>2</sup> = .450, Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .446, F(4,503) = 102.95, $\Delta R^2_{F1\&F3} = .190$ , $\Delta R^2_{F5\&F6} = .260$ .				
Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.811		11.629	.000
Meaning/Belonging (F1)	.269	.333	6.977	.000
Self-esteem/continuity (F3)	.146	.162	3.300	.001
Negative Impacts (F5)	-.087	-.108	-3.249	.001
Positive Impacts (F6)	.307	.336	9.455	.000

Dependent Variable: Local Residents' support for dark tourism development

Source: By the authors.

Table 5. Perceptual Differences Based on Tourism Involvement and Bereavement

	Tourism involvement (yes vs. no)			Bereavement (yes vs. no)		
	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.
F1	6.76	.000	.57	5.44	.000	.43
F3	5.80	.000	.44	4.46	.000	.32
F5	-2.49	.013	-.22	-.22	.828	-.02
F6	3.05	.002	.23	-1.31	.193	-.09



SPT	6.31	.000	.43	3.02	.003	.20
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F1=Belonging/meaning, F3=Self-esteem/Continuity, F5=Negative impacts,  
 F6=Positive impacts, SPT=Support for Dark Tourism Development

*Source: By the authors.*