

# Sense of Place and Rural Tourism: A Systematic Review of Local Residents' Impacts

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of tourist villages, the sense of place among local residents has increasingly influenced their development. In recent years, research on local residents' sense of place has gained prominence, necessitating a comprehensive literature review to enhance understanding in this area. This study employed systematic evaluation and Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methods to examine relevant literature. Utilizing resources such as CNKI and AiritiLibrary, 28 papers were selected from 522 that met the study criteria. These papers were reviewed from three perspectives: physical environment factors, social environment factors, and personal factors. The findings of the study show that, firstly, the influence of a variety of factors is felt in the place of the local residents, including historical, cultural, socio-economic, and natural environmental aspects. These factors together shape the feelings and emotions of the local residents towards their hometown. Secondly, the sense of place is crucial to the identification, dependence, and emotional expression of communities and places. Understanding and stimulating the sense of place of local residents is conducive to the development and growth of local communities. This emotion and sense of identity can promote the sustainable development of local communities and support the development of tourism villages. Finally, a sense of place significantly impacts tourism development, including attitudes and support for tourism. This is crucial to the sustainable development of local communities and the successful development of tourism villages. The participation and support of local residents is vital to the prosperity of the tourism industry, as well as the protection and preservation of local cultural and natural resources. Taken together, the study of local residents' sense of place provides researchers with important insights into the development of tourism villages. These insights can help guide local policy making and the sustainable development of the tourism industry while emphasizing the critical role of local residents in shaping and supporting local development.

**Keywords:** Sense of place; Residents' sense of place; Tourism village; Systematic review

**Online publication:** January 23, 2025

# 1. Introduction

The trend of cultural globalization undoubtedly has a profound impact on our society, integrating cultural differences geographically and potentially becoming a dominant force in future cultures. This trend may lead to cultural hegemony in the future, as mentioned in a study <sup>[1]</sup>. This globalization trend is reflected in rural tourism as a rapid development of social constructivism. Since the 1990s, the theoretical perspective of social constructivism has emphasized the role of culture in the uniqueness of rural spaces, linking rural social-cultural structures with the natural environment at the forefront of rural research <sup>[2]</sup>. However, the social constructivism perspective also raises some issues, such as Murdoch mentioned that the social construction of rural space is increasingly detached from its geographical function <sup>[3]</sup>. Social constructivism may lead to rural areas, communities, and landscapes becoming detached from their original geographical functions, turning them into a type of surreal commodity <sup>[4]</sup>. Modern rural tourism development, to meet social needs, undergoes mass standardized construction, so rural lifestyles and cultures are ignored, causing an experience vacuum. This modern functionalism construction model has become a major means of environmental construction, inevitably leading to environmental and cultural confusion and bewilderment, causing rural tourism areas to gradually lose their vitality. This has a negative impact on the sense of place, leading to a lack of place-based landscape in tourist rural areas and exacerbating the crisis in the sense of place in human habitats, losing an important spiritual foundation of human habitat culture. Furthermore, this causes rural tourism areas to face issues such as declining environmental quality, damaged rural culture, homogeneous tourism competition, and overall poor quality <sup>[5]</sup>. This also prompts reflection; under the postmodern influence, people begin to rediscover local resources to face these modern challenges <sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, the village is no longer just the traditional sense of a physical environment; rural lifestyles and culture, as an indispensable part of the village, are increasingly valued. Rural lifestyles and culture as part of the village have unique cultural and environmental values <sup>[7]</sup>. When developing tourist rural areas, the creation of a sense of place is indispensable, and as an embodiment of the relationship between people and the environment, further research and discussion on the sense of place are needed. This will provide new directions for thought and further explore the meaning of the sense of place. Global cultural integration may bring risks of cultural hegemony, but the perspective of the sense of place also offers a new viewpoint on tourist rural areas. Further research and discussion on the sense of place will better understand how culture, consumption, and tourism affect rural communities and culture.

In the current environment of prevalent consumerism, rural tourism, as a product, is consumed. Soja points out that consumption is not just a relationship between individuals and objects but also a response between individuals, collectives, and the world, a systemic activity and comprehensive response <sup>[1]</sup>. It is on this consumption system that the cultural system is established. Although rural tourism covers a wide range of tourism opportunities and practical experiences, it has long been recognized that the fundamental attraction of rural areas as tourist destinations lies in their unique local sense of place. Tourists are attracted to rural areas not only because of their physical attributes and intrinsic qualities but also because of the locality characteristics represented by the rural areas. This unique sense of place becomes increasingly precious against the backdrop of high urbanization; the cultural values of agrarian civilization's local sense of place can effectively counter the high standardization, formatting, and homogenization of modern society <sup>[8]</sup>. Research on the sense of place helps those involved in rural tourism understand the significance and value of rural cultural diversity, providing new directions for the future development of rural tourism, and providing a basis for maintaining the historical context of rural areas and sustainable development as tourist destinations.

When researching the sense of place, there are a series of complex contradictions and challenges. These contradictions reflect the complexity of the sense of place as a multidimensional concept as follows. The contradiction between mobility and locality: The sense of place has mobility, allowing outsiders to develop emotional connections with the place, and has locality, emphasizing the deep identification of locals with specific locations. This contradiction is often manifested as a distinction between local residents and foreign tourists, as they may feel very different about the same place. Due to the long-term stability of agrarian civilization, the rural social structure is also unusually stable, and rural societies on both sides of the strait are formed by a combination of kinship and regional relationships, forming relatively independent social living spaces <sup>[6]</sup>. Local residents play a dominant role in shaping the rural sense of place, but in the process of developing rural tourism, to meet the tourists' sense of place, it may be necessary to transform the local environment, which may also have a destructive impact on local culture <sup>[9]</sup>. The contradiction between diachronicity and immediacy: The sense of place can include long-term accumulated emotions, but also immediate emotional experiences. Long-term residents may form a deep diachronic sense of place, while tourists may develop an immediate sense of place in a short time. Current research focuses more on individual emotional experiences, especially on place attachment, which makes the study of the sense of place emphasize individual subjectivity, thereby neglecting the subjectivity of local residents. The contradiction between individual experience and collective consciousness: The sense of place reflects both an individual's emotional and cognitive attachment to a specific place and is influenced by collective culture, social identity, and local knowledge. In research, the focus may be on the cognitive aspects of the sense of place, emphasizing commonality, or on the emotional aspects, emphasizing individuality. Currently, research on the sense of place focuses on individuals' emotional responses to places, with their attachment and emotional responses becoming the main focus <sup>[10]</sup>. In particular, it is noteworthy that the personal emotions of long-term residents living in tourist rural areas are often overlooked under the economic dominance of rural tourism. However, these local residents' cognitive understanding of the sense of place is of obvious importance for the development of tourist rural areas. Therefore, future research needs to pay more attention to the subjectivity of local residents in the sense of place, to more comprehensively understand the multiple facets and complexity of the sense of place. At the same time, a systematic review of the sense of place research on both sides of the strait will help provide more references and guidance for future related research.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Rural tourism**

Rural tourism refers to tourists visiting rural or rural areas to experience local culture, customs, natural landscapes, and lifestyles. This form of tourism emphasizes the exploration of the uniqueness and authenticity of rural and rural areas, where tourists can participate in agricultural activities, taste local specialties, visit historical monuments, admire natural landscapes, and experience traditional crafts. Rural tourism has become an increasingly popular research field in human geography, reflecting people's growing interest in the development and economic diversification of rural areas. The concept of rural tourism includes a series of activities, including agricultural tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism, all located in rural areas, emphasizing the unique natural and cultural features of these places. The development of rural tourism can generate some controversies, a key debate point being its contribution to the economic development of rural areas. Some

scholars believe that rural tourism can provide significant economic benefits to rural communities, such as creating income for local businesses and job opportunities for rural residents <sup>[11-12]</sup>. However, others have raised concerns about the potential negative impacts of rural tourism, such as the excessive commercialization of rural areas and the displacement of locals from their traditional lands and resources <sup>[13-14]</sup>. This form of tourism helps to raise the profile of rural areas, attract tourists, and inject vitality into the local economy, but it also needs to be managed carefully to prevent overdevelopment and the loss of cultural resources. The impact of rural tourism on local residents and culture is also controversial. Some scholars believe that rural tourism helps to protect and promote local culture, traditions, and lifestyles, thereby enhancing the sense of place and community in rural areas <sup>[15]</sup>. Some emphasize the need to balance the interests of tourists and local communities and ensure that the development of rural tourism does not lead to the commodification and caricature of local culture. Although rural tourism showcases the unique charm of rural areas, its impact and sustainability must be carefully considered and balanced during the development process.

People are increasingly concerned about the relationship between rural tourism and sustainable development, with some scholars arguing that by encouraging the protection of natural and cultural resources and promoting local economic development, rural tourism can provide a sustainable alternative to traditional forms of agriculture and resource extraction <sup>[16]</sup>. However, some are also concerned about the potential negative impacts of rural tourism on the environment and local communities, suggesting the need for more sustainable tourism practices <sup>[17-18]</sup>. Therefore, to achieve long-term sustainable development of rural tourism, a balance must be struck between community participation, cultural protection, and environmental sustainability. Overall, the concept of rural tourism has become an important research field in human geography, reflecting people's growing interest in the development and economic diversification of rural areas. Through extensive empirical and theoretical research, scholars deepen their understanding of the economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of rural tourism, and emphasize the need to develop more sustainable and inclusive forms of rural tourism.

## **2.2. Sense of place**

The sense of place refers to the emotional, cognitive, and emotional attachment of individuals or communities to a specific geographical area or place. It reflects people's deep emotional connection to a place, usually including aspects related to the history, culture, social connections, and emotional memories of that area. The sense of place is a strong emotional experience that can arise when people interact with a specific location, thereby shaping their behavior and decision-making. In discussions of rural tourism, the sense of place plays an important role. It can explain why people are attracted to rural areas with unique local features, as these places trigger their emotions and emotional attachments. Consumer culture is also closely related to the sense of place, as people's consumption decisions are often influenced by the sense of place, and they may choose to support and protect products and services with local characteristics. It helps researchers understand the complex relationships between people and geographical spaces, cultures, and social connections, and how these influence their behavior and decisions. Since 1970, human geography scholars such as Tuan and Relph have reintroduced the term "place" into humanistic geography research <sup>[19-20]</sup>. The theoretical origin of the sense of place can be traced back to American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, whose important work "Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values" explores the relationship between people and their physical environment and its impact on people <sup>[19]</sup>. In this book, Yi-Fu Tuan introduced the concept of "environmental



emotion” (topophilia), which refers to the emotional bond between people and their place of residence, and the sense of place is “people’s subjective and emotional attachment to a specific physical environment” [19]. The sense of place is rooted in people’s sensory experiences and perceptions of the surrounding world, and these perceptions are influenced by their cultural, social, and historical backgrounds.

Subsequently, the theory of the sense of place has been further developed and expanded by many scholars in human geography and related fields. For example, David Seamon’s “A Geography of the Lifeworld” and Edward Relph’s “Place and Placelessness” further developed Yi-Fu Tuan’s ideas and provided a more detailed analysis of how people experience and understand the surrounding world [20-21]. In recent years, the theory of place perception has been further developed and expanded, including a series of interdisciplinary perspectives. For example, feminist geographers have studied the impact of place perception in terms of gender, and cultural geographers have emphasized the importance of place in the generation and transmission of cultural meanings [22-23].

Tofflemire identified three basic dimensions of place: location, locale, and sense of place [24]. The first two refer to the physical environment of a place, while the latter reflects people’s subjective and emotional attachment to a place. Harvey believes that a place is not just a physical location, but is also shaped by power relations and social practices [25]. Casey argues that the sense of place is closely related to the identity and sense of belonging, shaped by personal experiences and cultural background [26]. Research on the sense of place explores the relationship between people and the environment from perspectives such as human perception, attitudes, and values, including deep experiences in specific places, often discussed in terms of tourist involvement, and emotional connections between people and specific places, often used to discuss the relationship between local residents and the environment.

The sense of place contains collective memory frameworks and forms in traditional rural areas on both sides of the strait, representing the rural Society society’s cultural structure formed through long-term exchanges and adjustments [27]. The sense of identity developed through long-term contact between people and the land is an important factor that can strengthen the connection between people and places. Some scholars have used dimensions such as place attachment, place identification, place dependence, institutional loyalty, satisfaction with the place, place image, sense of belonging, rootedness, sense of security, neighborly relationships, community emotions, environment and health, social connections, and adaptability to places to analyze the factors that influence the formation of the sense of place and the factors that affect it [28-29]. Researchers can interpret the sense of place from different angles to help them understand how people interact with their surroundings and are influenced by them. Overall, the theory of the sense of place has become a key research area in human geography, as well as an area of interest for scholars in other fields such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Through extensive empirical and theoretical research, scholars have gained a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between people and their places of residence.

The sense of place plays an important role in influencing rural tourism. Rural tourism can promote the creation and protection of a sense of place by providing tourists with opportunities to interact with local cultures, traditions, and environments [30]. A strong sense of place can enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of rural destinations, shape tourist attitudes and behaviors, and promote positive relationships between rural communities and the tourism industry. When tourists can interact with local residents, learn about local history and traditions, and participate in local activities, they can cultivate a sense of attachment and connection to the destination, bringing positive experiences to tourists. When tourists develop a sense of attachment and emotional connection to a place, they are more likely to appreciate and respect the local

environment, culture, and community, and engage in responsible and sustainable tourism practices <sup>[31]</sup>. This contributes to the long-term sustainability of rural tourism, as tourists become advocates for protecting and maintaining the sense of place of rural destinations. The rapid growth of the tourism industry and the commodification of local resources for tourism purposes can lead to overcrowding, environmental degradation, conflicts between tourists and locals, and a loss of authenticity, thereby negatively affecting the sense of place in rural communities <sup>[32]</sup>. Therefore, careful management of rural tourism development is necessary to ensure that it enhances the sense of place while minimizing potential negative impacts.

### **2.3. Rural tourism and resident sense of place**

In recent years, rural tourism, as an alternative form of tourism that promotes the economic development of rural areas, has received great attention, while providing tourists with opportunities to experience local culture and the environment <sup>[12]</sup>. A key concept discussed in the literature related to rural tourism is the sense of place, which refers to an individual's emotional and cognitive attachment to a specific location <sup>[20]</sup>. The sense of place is usually formed by the natural and cultural elements of the destination, as well as the social interactions that occur there <sup>[33]</sup>.

Some studies have examined the relationship between rural tourism and the sense of place, emphasizing how rural tourism influences individuals' perceptions and experiences of the places they visit. Rural tourism promotes the formation of a sense of place by providing tourists with opportunities to interact with local residents, learn about local history and traditions, and participate in local activities. Similarly, a study conducted in Spain found that rural tourism, by providing authentic cultural experiences and promoting connections with the natural environment, helps to cultivate tourists' sense of place <sup>[34]</sup>. Additionally, rural tourism has been shown to help protect and promote local culture and traditions, which in turn can strengthen the sense of place in rural communities. Rural tourism plays an important role in restoring traditional practices such as agriculture, fishing, and handicrafts, which helps to maintain the cultural heritage of the area and create a sense of place for tourists and locals <sup>[35]</sup>. Rural tourism helps to strengthen the cultural identity of local communities by promoting traditional agricultural practices, cuisine, and crafts <sup>[31]</sup>. However, some scholars have also raised concerns about the potential negative impacts of rural tourism on the sense of place. Rapid growth in rural tourism can lead to overcrowding, environmental degradation, and conflicts between tourists and locals, thereby negatively affecting the sense of place in rural communities <sup>[36]</sup>. The commodification of local culture and the environment for tourism purposes can lead to a loss of authenticity and a dilution of the sense of place <sup>[32]</sup>.

The literature indicates that rural tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on the sense of place. On the one hand, rural tourism can provide tourists with opportunities to access local culture, traditions, and environments, thereby helping to create and protect a sense of place. On the other hand, the rapid growth of the tourism industry and the commodification of local resources can pose challenges and potentially weaken the sense of belonging in rural communities. Further research is needed to better understand the complex and dynamic relationship between rural tourism and the sense of place and to develop sustainable rural tourism development strategies that enhance the sense of place while minimizing negative impacts.

### **2.4. Resident sense of place**

In past research on the sense of place, Shamai classified the sense of place into seven levels based on emotions and behaviors: no sense of place, knowing you are in a place, belonging to a place, being attached to a place,

identifying with the goals of a place, participating in a place, and sacrificing for a place <sup>[37]</sup>. Steel divided environmental factors into natural and social environments, both of which interact with individuals to form a sense of place <sup>[38]</sup>. Based on this, he constructed a sense of place composed of the physical setting, social setting, and psychological factors.

The sense of place refers to people's attachment and connection to a specific location, which is often formed by their experiences and perceptions of the physical environment. Many studies have explored the relationship between physical environmental factors and the sense of place. Natural features such as mountains, rivers, and forests can evoke strong emotional responses and contribute to the formation of a sense of place <sup>[19, 39]</sup>. Proximity to water can increase residents' sense of place attachment, social capital, and community identification <sup>[40]</sup>. Similarly, urban environments can also affect the sense of place, with factors such as architecture, public art, and landmarks also playing a role <sup>[21]</sup>. The design of public spaces in residential environments can affect residents' attachment to and identification with the local community <sup>[41]</sup>. Another important aspect of the relationship between physical environmental factors and the sense of place is the impact of environmental degradation and loss. Studies have shown that physical environmental changes, such as deforestation, urbanization, and pollution, can erode the sense of place, leading to a sense of community fragmentation and loss <sup>[42-43]</sup>. Exposure to environmental hazards can increase stress and anxiety levels, reduce residents' attachment to the local community, and lead to social disintegration <sup>[44]</sup>. Physical environmental factors can have a significant impact on the sense of place among local residents, affecting access to natural resources, exposure to environmental hazards, and the design of the built environment, all of which can shape residents' attachment to the local community and promote a sense of belonging.

Social interactions and community dynamics can greatly influence the sense of place among local residents <sup>[45-46]</sup>. The presence of social networks and community organizations, as well as shared cultural customs and traditions, can promote a sense of belonging and attachment to a specific place. Individuals from different demographic groups may have different perceptions and experiences of a place and may assign different meanings and values to it <sup>[47-48]</sup>. Another important aspect of the relationship between social environmental factors and the sense of place is the impact of social changes and conflicts. Studies have shown that changes in the social and cultural structure of a community, such as urbanization, displacement, or the influx of new residents, can erode the sense of place, leading to community fragmentation and a sense of loss <sup>[49-50]</sup>. Culture is a pattern followed by a community or tribe, and the standardized beliefs and actions followed by the community are reflected in society. Simmel believed that everyday life must be seen as reflecting the overall nature of society from within <sup>[51]</sup>. Everyday life, as a form of culture, along with politics and economics, shapes our lifeworld <sup>[52]</sup>. The social relationships contained in everyday life, when linked to space, become a central perspective in the production of space. The everyday life, while producing space, also shapes the sense of place. Everyday life, as an important carrier of the sense of place, also promotes the development of the sense of place.

Personal emotions and emotional experiences can greatly influence their sense of place. People may attach positive or negative emotions to a specific location, which can affect their level of attachment and connection to that place <sup>[53-54]</sup>. Similarly, cognitive factors, such as perception, cognition, and memory, can also play a role in shaping the sense of place. Studies have shown that people's perceptions and thoughts about a specific place can affect their attachment and connection to it <sup>[42, 55]</sup>. Additionally, memories associated with a specific location can also shape people's attachment and connection to it. Another important aspect of the relationship between psychological factors and the sense of place is the impact of place identity. Place identity refers to the

way people define their relationship with a specific location and the social and cultural meanings associated with that place <sup>[47]</sup>. Studies have shown that a strong sense of place identity can promote a strong attachment and connection to a specific place, and personal experiences and memories can also affect this attachment and connection <sup>[56]</sup>.

The traditional rural societies on both sides of the strait allow individual emotions to be more closely integrated with the environmental and social context. Nostalgia can significantly influence people’s sense of belonging to their hometown and promote the formation of a sense of belonging <sup>[57]</sup>. People’s perceptions and thoughts about a specific location can affect their sense of belonging and connection to that place <sup>[58]</sup>.

In addition to these broad themes, many other psychological factors can shape the sense of place, including cultural identity, social norms, and individual differences in perception and cognition. For example, studies have shown that cultural identity on both sides of the strait is closely related to a sense of belonging and connection to specific places <sup>[59]</sup>. Social norms and cultural practices, such as ancestor worship traditions, can also affect people’s emotional connections and sense of belonging to a specific place <sup>[60]</sup>. In empirical research on the sense of place, the factors influencing the sense of place are also classified according to personal factors, physical environmental factors, and social environmental factors <sup>[29]</sup>. In recent years, empirical research on the sense of place has shifted from traditional communities to leisure tourism, rural settlements, and other places <sup>[28]</sup>. In research on residents’ sense of place, Zhang classified the factors influencing residents’ sense of place as the socio-economic and cultural background of the person; the functional aspects of the place, providing a safe dwelling and shelter; the structure of social networks between people and society <sup>[61]</sup>. This study will use the classification method of personal, physical environmental, and social environmental factors influencing the sense of place based on previous research (See Table 1 for details).

**Table 1.** Sense of place influencing factors (Source: Collated from this study)

<b>Physical environment</b>	Unique natural environments, locality-specific characteristics, historical and cultural aspects, proximity and distance, environmental conditions, infrastructure and services, public spaces, indigenous residents, and architectural styles.
<b>Physical and social environmental factors</b>	Social connections, socioeconomic status, welfare and health, participation in activities, government administration, the use of social media, religious beliefs, festivals, celebrations, folklore, and the transmission of stories.
<b>Personal factors</b>	Gender, age, occupation, birthplace, duration of residence or stay, local experiences, family status, race, ethnicity, educational background, motivations, interests, hobbies, lifestyle, expectations, emotions, etc.

### 3. Research methodology

The literature review method adopted in this study is designed based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol. this method has been proven to be particularly suitable for literature reviews in human geography and has been widely used in studies related to the sense of place <sup>[62-64]</sup>. Therefore, this paper employs the PRISMA method to systematically review current articles related to the sense of place among rural residents in tourist areas, following these specific steps: (1) searching for topic-related articles, (2) filtering and including articles that meet eligibility criteria, (3) specifically analyzing the content and results of the selected articles.

To understand the latest research status and related literature on the sense of place among rural residents in tourist areas, this project systematically searched “CNKI” and “Airiti Library,” using the keywords “sense

of place” and “residents’ sense of place” in combination with “tourism rural.” The search was not restricted by publication year to ensure comprehensive data retrieval. The initial search yielded 522 articles. After reviewing the titles and abstracts for relevance, 162 unrelated articles were excluded. The review then narrowed down to 360 articles relevant to the research topic (CNKI 256, Airiti Library 104), and further scrutiny based on titles and research abstracts excluded 235 articles, leaving 28 articles (CNKI 16, Airiti Library 12) for a systematic review. This study will further analyze these articles to synthesize factors influencing residents’ sense of place, focusing on trends in sense of place research and the mutual influence between rural residents’ sense of place and tourism, thereby exploring potential research areas and directions for future studies across different regions.

### **3.1. Research analysis**

The 28 articles were reviewed, categorized into three attributes based on different focuses identified by researchers, and grounded in various theoretical foundations. Most studies emphasizing the impact of the environment on humans or the support for environmental development utilized environmental psychology. Discussions on the effects on residents and their well-being often employed social psychology theories. Researchers commonly used social exchange theory to explore rural residents’ attitudes towards tourism development, but also employed theories like media geography, migration, and diaspora theory, with only one article using humanistic geography by scholar Yi-Fu Tuan as the theoretical starting point, enriching the research field of residents’ sense of place through life course frameworks.

Reviewing the focus of the 28 articles, 12 dealt with physical environmental factors, 13 with social environmental factors, and 3 with personal factors. The main theme was empirical research on rural residents’ sense of place, focusing on cognitive aspects and support variables related to tourism. Research on factors affecting the sense of place primarily examined the physical and socio-cultural environment of tourist areas, revealing a deep linkage between residents’ emotions and local tourism development. Future research should focus on everyday human life, exploring the interactions between people and places that generate a sense of place.

Research on residents’ sense of place commonly used quantitative methods, suitable for studying attitudes, emotions, and behaviors, with fewer qualitative studies. However, the role of quantitative research methods in the sense of place studies is significant. In recent years, mixed-methods research has gained recognition among scholars, offering a balanced approach and providing more scientific and meaningful conclusions for future research <sup>[65-66]</sup>.

Researchers frequently use social exchange theory to discuss rural residents’ attitudes toward tourism development <sup>[67-68]</sup>. Social exchange theory, a utilitarian action model, often overlooks the role of culture. However, domestic rural tourism primarily focuses on cultural experiences, indicating that social exchange theory may not be entirely applicable. Researchers should carefully assess the applicability of Western theoretical models and consider developing theories that fit their specific contexts.

Although the research timeframe was not strictly limited, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of papers retrieved in the last two years. However, these studies have not fully focused on local residents, providing only a superficial understanding. The main research emphasis seems to be on the development of the tourism industry rather than an in-depth exploration of the roles and impacts of local residents. Additionally, these studies tend to analyze the impact of the environment on individuals, treating tourism development as a starting point but lacking in-depth studies on residents’ impacts on the environment.



In terms of research topics, whether in mainland China or Taiwan region, the focus has been on residents' sense of place, place attachment, and attitudes towards tourism development, indicating that a rural sense of place is a common area of interest. Both regions used quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys, in-depth interviews, and observations, helping to fully understand residents' sense of place. Factors influencing the sense of place, such as lifestyle, religious activities, festival events, and tourism development, were examined in these studies. The academic fields involved include psychology, social psychology, and environmental psychology, exploring residents' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors.

However, there are differences between the two regions, primarily due to different policy backgrounds, and social, and economic differences, which affect residents' feelings and attitudes towards places. For example, local government tourism policies may vary between the two regions, influencing residents' views on tourism development. Additionally, differences in study subjects were noted, as research in Taiwan seemed more focused on specific community groups, such as indigenous people, while research in mainland China covered a broader range of rural areas and residents. Despite regional and thematic differences, these studies collectively explored an important and complex topic—the cognition and experience of rural residents' sense of place. Through combined discussions, a better understanding of the multidimensionality of rural sense of place can be achieved, facilitating exchange and cooperation among researchers in various regions. This will also help provide a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective for future research.

### 3.2. Physical environmental factors

The sense of place is closely related to the spatial concepts in human geography. It represents the emotional and identity experience of an individual or community towards a specific geographical space. This sense is not only about personal emotions but is also closely related to the culture, history, and environmental factors of specific locations. The sense of place plays a significant role in social space as it can affect the emotions, identity, and behavior of individuals within that space. The presence of a sense of place can shape the characteristics of social spaces, such as community cohesion, cultural activities, and social networks. The sense of place is subjective and shaped by the social and cultural customs occurring within the space, where people create meanings through their daily activities and interactions (See **Table 2** for details).

**Table 2.** Physical environment impact (Data source: Compiled by this study)

Author(s)	Title	Essentials	Theoretical foundations	Research methods
Deng ZT, Mao Y, Liang B. (2013) <sup>[69]</sup>	Residents' Willingness to Participate in the Conservation of Historical and Cultural Towns—Data from Xindian Town in Hubei Province.	Discusses residents' perspectives on participation in the conservation of historical and cultural towns and offers strategies for conservation and sustainable development.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Yin LJ, Zhang J, Han GS, Zhong S, Li Q (2012). <sup>[70]</sup>	Study on Rural Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Impacts from the Perspective of Sense of Place—Case of Tiantangzhai in Anhui Province.	Develops a theoretical model with developmental expectations as a mediating variable, to understand local residents' sense of place and perceptions of tourism impacts.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
He J (2021) <sup>[71]</sup>	Study on Local Residents' Sense of Place in Tourism Villages from a Spatial Mediation Perspective.	Focuses on space as a medium in daily life and explores its impact on local residents' emotions.	Media geography	Qualitative research



**Table 1 (Continued)**

Author(s)	Title	Essentials	Theoretical foundations	Research methods
Chen YF, Xu LJ (2013) <sup>[72]</sup>	Study on the Change of Sense of Place Among Residents of the Dai Ethnic Community in Xishuangbanna.	Conducts surveys to understand changes in local residents' identification with their living environment and their awareness of village structure and landscape due to new residents.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Zhang CS, Li GZ (2019) <sup>[73]</sup>	Emotional Bonds of Islanders—Case Study of Wang'an Township.	Explores the interaction between islanders' sense of place and nature reserves from emotional and spatial perspectives.	Environmental psychology	Qualitative research
Zhong ZW, Chen JW, Chen BK, Zhu JT (2012) <sup>[74]</sup>	The Impact of Residents' Local Knowledge, Sense of Well-being, and Place Attachment on Tourism Development	Finding a strong positive relationship between residents' sense of well-being and place attachment	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Hua HL, Zhou SY, Jiao YM, Wang M, Hu ZX (2016) <sup>[75]</sup>	The Relationship Between Local Sense and Attitude Towards Terrace Conservation Among Residents of the Hani Terrace Heritage Site.	This study analyzes the relationship between the sense of place of heritage site residents and their connections to nature, society, and terrace conservation. The results indicate that a sense of place has a positive impact on people's attitudes towards ecological and environmental conservation.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Tang Y, Zhong ML, Wang YS, Qin HY, Fu YY (2020) <sup>[76]</sup>	Cluster Analysis of Community Residents' Sense of Place in Dark Tourism Sites of Wenchuan Earthquake.	This study conducts a questionnaire survey among residents to understand their similar and distinctive characteristics based on dimensions of sense of place, to construct the dimensions of sense of place in dark tourism sites.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Zhong BC (2017) <sup>[77]</sup>	A Study on the Perception of Tourism Impact through Local Residents' Place Attachment.	The author focuses on the residents of Shenkeng Old Street, using different emotional measurement methods to understand that the residents' place attachment shows a significant positive correlation with their perception of tourism impact.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research
Yu ZY, Zhao XH, Liang CM (2020) <sup>[78]</sup>	Study on the Generation of Place Attachment among Residents of Ethnic Villages from the Perspective of Community Tourism Participation.	The research analyzes the issue of place attachment among residents of ethnic tourism villages from the perspective of community tourism participation, finding that villagers gain a strong sense of place during the process. Environmental Psychology. Qualitative Study.	Environmental psychology	Qualitative research
Yang HZ, Chen HZ, Feng BY (2014) <sup>[65]</sup>	A Study on the Attitudes of Residents in Miaoli's Hwangkeng Area towards Tourism Development.	This research explores quantitatively and qualitatively the residents' sense of place regarding the mines, further understanding the impact of tourism on the lives of local people and their attitudes towards tourism development.	Environmental psychology	Quantitative research Qualitative research
Chen JY (2020) <sup>[68]</sup>	The Relationship among Local Attachment, Well-being, and Attitudes towards Tourism Development of Island Residents: A Case Study of Kinmen.	This study uses surveys to understand that stronger local attachment among island residents indirectly enhances well-being, but has no positive correlation with attitudes towards tourism development.	Environmental Psychology	Quantitative research

Sense of place is not merely a physical or spatial concept but is deeply rooted in social and cultural factors. Therefore, analyzing the sense of place from a social perspective is important as it helps researchers understand how people’s social experiences and interactions shape their perception and attachment to specific locations. Social factors have a profound impact on the sense of place of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and it is essential to consider the cultural, historical, and socio-economic background of the local people to better preserve the local sense of place (See **Table 3** for details).

**Table 3.** Social environmental factors (Data source: Compiled by this study)

Author(s)	Title	Essentials	Theoretical foundations	Research methods
Zhong ZW, Lin JR, Huang Z <sup>[79]</sup>	A Study on the Relationship among Residents’ Sense of Place, Festival Impact and Attitude Toward Festival Development with Residents’ Differences in Different Districts as Moderating Variables	By studying the impact of residents’ sense of place on the development of festivals and their attitudes toward the development of festivals, we explored residents’ perceptions of festivals.	Social psychology	Quantitative research
Huang ZC, Weng YQ, Guo BC (2007) <sup>[80]</sup>	Attitudes of Indigenous Peoples in High-Altitude Mountain Areas toward Eco-tourism and National Land Restoration Policies: A Case Study of the Pi Mountain Area	Using the promotion of national land restoration policy as a starting point, the study aims to understand the level of support for eco-tourism and the attitude of the residents towards national land restoration policy.	Social psychology	Quantitative research
Zhang LH, Huang ZJ, Yang L (2016) <sup>[81]</sup>	Impact of Religious Activities on Residents’ Sense of Local Attachment	By understanding the degree of involvement in the religious activities of Jinmen residents in welcoming the city god and the resulting sense of well-being, and whether a sense of local attachment is generated, we try to deduce the relationship between the degree of involvement in the activities, the sense of well-being, and the sense of local attachment of the residents.	Social psychology	Quantitative research
Zeng LS (2011) <sup>[82]</sup>	A Study on Local Residents’ Perceptions of the Benefits of Festivals and Their Perceptions of Support for Festivals: A Case Study of Fung Lai Cultural Season.	The researcher used the “Benefit Recognition Scale”, “Identification Scale” and “Support Scale” to investigate the local residents’ identification with and support for the cultural season activities.	Social psychology	Quantitative research
Zhao XH (2019) <sup>[83]</sup>	A Study on the Mechanism of Sense of Place Formation of Residents in Community-Oriented Tourism Villages	The study was conducted through in-depth interviews with local residents to understand the formation and shaping of the residents’ sense of place through tourism development after the local residents had participated in the development of tourism.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Huang LM, Xian FJ (2021) <sup>[84]</sup>	Mechanism of the Influence of Residents’ Sense of Place on Their Willingness to Support the Development of Red Tourism: The Mediating Role of Residents’ Attitudes toward the Influence of the Tourism Industry	The study examines the mechanism of the residents’ sense of place on their willingness to support tourism. When the exchange of resources is balanced, or when the host receives a higher benefit from the imbalance, the residents’ influence on tourism is positive.	Social exchange theory	Quantitative research

**Table 3 (Continued)**

Author(s)	Title	Essentials	Theoretical foundations	Research methods
Chen SW, Zhao HL, Li W, Li DZ, Li MR (2020) <sup>[85]</sup>	Influence of Sense of Place of Residents in Northwest Alpine Ethnic Areas on the Support of Tourism Development--The Case of Xiahe County in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	A theoretical model was developed to understand the relationship between a sense of place and support for tourism development, whereby local residents' perception of benefits from tourism activities is significantly enhanced, leading to a welcoming attitude towards tourism development.	Social exchange theory	Quantitative research
Wang DG, Wang JL, Chen T, Zhang Y (2020) <sup>[86]</sup>	Modeling and Mechanisms of Rural Residents' Tourism Support — A Comparison of Tourist Villages in Suzhou Based on Different Life Cycle Stages	By constructing a structural relationship model of resident support in tourist destinations, the influence mechanism of resident support in tourist destinations at different life cycle stages was investigated.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Yang YY, Wang YH (2016) <sup>[87]</sup>	The Impact of Rural Family Tourism on Residents' Sense of Place--A Case Study of Jiufeng Village in Pengzhou, Sichuan Province	The study explores the sense of place from the perspective of local practitioners in four dimensions: environmental, institutional, social, and emotional.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Xu MJ, Wang RY, Liu Y, Wu HM <sup>[88]</sup>	A Study of Scale Preferences and Influential Factors on Residents' Sense of Place	Through quantitative and qualitative arguments and discussions on the scales of students' sense of place in their places of residence, the researcher aims to understand the relationship between the mechanisms of sense of place formation and the scales of residents' sense of place preferences.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Guo BX <sup>[89]</sup>	Dependent or Severed Local Experiences? A Study of Local Identity in the Baozangyan Settlement of Taipei City	Participatory observation is utilized to understand the relationship between local people and places. People's awareness of and connection to the environment, and the influence of the local environment on the construction of people's sense of place.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Lin GW (2020) <sup>[90]</sup>	Study on "Sense of Place" of Residents of Tourism-driven Traditional Villages in the Hexi Corridor: A Comparative Analysis of Peri-urban and Scenic Peri-urban Types	A study of the general characteristics and differences in the sense of place of tourists in tourism-driven traditional villages.	Social psychology	Qualitative research
Zhang CY (2014) <sup>[91]</sup>	A Study of Lifestyle Migration: Residents' Self-identification and Sense of Place in Miaoli's "Sanyi Art Village".	The study aims to understand the new immigrants' experience of urban-rural migration, their self-identity, and the impact of their lifestyle on the sense of place in the place of relocation.	Migration and dispersion theory	Qualitative research

Place attachment refers to an individual's sense of belonging and emotional attachment to a residential area, while the social environment encompasses numerous factors such as festival impacts, ecotourism policies, religious activities, festival event benefits, red tourism development, support for tourism development, the operational status of tourism villages, scale preferences, local experiences, and so on. These studies indicate that social environmental factors significantly affect residents' sense of place. For example, the perceived benefits of festival activities and a sense of

identity affect residents' support for festival activities <sup>[82]</sup>; ecotourism policies impact residents' attitudes and support for the tourism industry <sup>[80]</sup>; involvement in religious activities influences residents' place attachment <sup>[81]</sup>; the operational status of tourism villages affects residents' sense of place <sup>[84]</sup>; and local experiences affect residents' identification with their residential area <sup>[89]</sup>. This demonstrates that sense of place is not just an individual emotion, as it is also influenced by factors such as social environment and cultural background. For instance, cultural activities like tourism and festivals not only strengthen people's identification with their locale but also promote community cohesion and unity, enhancing residents' support for the area. Furthermore, factors like religion, lifestyle, and policies can also impact residents' sense of place. Religious beliefs can affect people's emotional identification with their locale and have a significant impact on social and cultural values. Understanding the influence of religious beliefs on the sense of place helps people better comprehend social and cultural diversity and complexity, thereby affecting residents' attitudes and support for the area. These findings reveal that the factors influencing the sense of place in the social environment are diverse, but their impact is generally positive, enhancing residents' sense of belonging and identification.

In summary, these studies provide researchers with a deep understanding of the relationship between residents' sense of place and social environmental factors. It is important to note that these studies are not isolated; they can corroborate, complement, and expand one another. For example, understanding residents' sense of place is crucial for promoting tourism development, improving residents' quality of life, and protecting the environment. In addition, these studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of place attachment formation, influencing factors, and how to enhance sense of place. The findings can serve as references for relevant departments and businesses to better understand residents' attitudes and behaviors toward the social environment and to formulate corresponding policies and measures to improve residents' quality of life and satisfaction, thereby promoting community development and social stability.

### 3.3. Personal emotional factors

Sense of place is a profound personal and emotional experience shaped by individual experiences and perceptions. By analyzing the sense of place from a personal emotional perspective, researchers can deeply understand how people's emotional attachments to specific locations influence their behavior, attitudes, and decisions (See **Table 4** for details).

**Table 4.** Personal factors (Data source: Compiled by this study)

Author(s)	Title	Essentials	Theoretical foundations	Research methods
Li HE (2017) <sup>[92]</sup>	A Study on the Sense of Place of Rural Out-migrant Youth and Young Adults in the Progress of Tourism Development—Based on the Perspective of Individual Life History	By sorting out the cognition, emotion, and behavioral intention of migrant youths toward their hometowns at different stages of tourism development, researchers can understand the trajectory of the change in people's sense of place brought about by the development of tourism for migrant youths while reconstructing the space of the countryside.	Phenomenal sociology	Qualitative research
Huang JF (2007) <sup>[93]</sup>	The Daily Life of Little Liuqiu Residents and the Shaping of a Sense of Place	The study focuses on how the fishery production and daily life of local residents shape the sense of place and the impact on religious identity.	Humanistic geography	Qualitative research
Zhang CS, Li GZ <sup>[94]</sup>	Emotional Bonding of Islanders — Take Wangan Township as an example.	Sense of Place Bridging Nature Reserves explores the interaction between islanders and sense of place islands from both emotional and spatial perspectives.	Environmental psychology	Qualitative research

Emotional factors play a crucial role in shaping a sense of place, where nostalgia, pride, and happiness are closely linked to people's emotional connections and sense of belonging to their hometowns <sup>[95]</sup>. The personal emotional dimension focuses on studying people's emotional identification and perception of place across different social backgrounds. Li's research, from the perspective of personal life history, explores the changes and reasons behind the sense of place among rural youth and middle-aged people during the development of tourism. The findings suggest that tourism development impacts the local sense of place to varying degrees, but these changes are not entirely negative, as tourism development also brings positive effects on economic development and cultural heritage. For young people who still live in their hometowns, their sense of place is more based on their identification with and understanding of the local history, culture, and social relationships. Huang focuses on the everyday life of residents of Xiao Liuqiu and the shaping of their sense of place, finding through interviews and observations that residents' sense of place is often closely related to their daily lives, such as their lifestyle, beliefs, and values <sup>[93]</sup>. Thus, for these residents, a sense of place is a deep cultural identification and emotional connection, influenced by family traditions, religious beliefs, and other factors. Zhang and Li's study, using Wang'an Township as an example, explores the emotional ties of islanders to their hometown <sup>[94-96]</sup>. The study reveals that islanders' sense of emotional identification with their hometown is multifaceted, encompassing their lifestyle, cultural traditions, and historical memories, as well as their recognition and feelings towards the natural environment of the island. This emotional connection is not only a personal emotion but also a social collective emotional identification, as it can bring together collective identification and a sense of belonging. Overall, these three papers explore the personal emotional aspects of a sense of place, discussing people's emotional identification and perception of place in different social contexts. These research findings help researchers better understand people's emotional identification with places, thus providing a vital theoretical and practical basis for the protection and sustainable development of local cultures.

#### **4. Research discussion**

The papers discuss the sense of place among residents in different cultural and social contexts, including aspects of travel development, festival activities, religion, ecotourism, red tourism, and traditional villages. These discussions address how the residents' sense of place is shaped and their attitudes towards tourism development. Some studies also differentiate between types of place attachment, such as attachment and identification. The research shows that residents' feelings and identities towards places are influenced by various factors, including history, culture, socioeconomic status, and natural environments. For example, some papers explore how residents' lifestyles, personal experiences, and cultural backgrounds affect their sense of place, as studied by Li Haie. Other studies investigate the relationship between a sense of place and activities such as tourism and festivals, as researched by Zhong Zhengwei et al. Further studies focus on specific areas such as religion, ecotourism, and red tourism, as examined by Zhang Lihui and Huang Zhengcong. These studies indicate that the formation, influencing factors, scale preferences, and attitudes towards tourism development vary among residents, as does their emotional and identity connection to places.

Synthesizing these findings, we can conclude that the sense of place among residents is a complex concept influenced by various factors, including individual life experiences, cultural backgrounds, family, and social relationships. The impact of different contexts and tourism development also affects residents' sense of place. An individual's sense of place is not just an emotional experience but also a cognitive and meaning-making

process. The sense of place continuously forms, transforms, and reconstructs throughout an individual's life course. In rural areas, the sense of place among the youth is often more susceptible to the impacts of tourism development than among the elderly. Residents' sense of place also influences tourism development, such as attitudes and support for the tourism industry. It is an important factor to consider in tourism development, which should respect and take into account the local residents' sense of place and identity. The sense of place is not a static concept but dynamically changes and reconstructs throughout the life course. Thus, for rural tourism development, it is crucial to consider residents' sense of place, respect their culture and lifestyle, and focus on understanding and responding to local residents' opinions and needs through communication and negotiation to establish a symbiotic and win-win relationship for sustainable development.

## **5. Conclusion**

In summary, the sense of place among local residents plays a key role in the development of rural tourism. First, the sense of place among local residents is one of the important factors in rural tourism development. They have deep feelings for their homeland and culture, which can inspire their active participation in rural tourism development. Secondly, their participation and support are crucial for the sustainable development of rural tourism, as they have a profound understanding of the place, thus providing valuable advice and opinions. Finally, the identification with their sense of place also affects the quality and image of rural tourism, with their attitudes and behaviors significantly impacting tourists' impressions and experiences. Researchers often overlook the influence of residents on the sense of place and their role in daily life in rural development. The study of the sense of place requires more dimensions to fully understand its impact. Each resident's personal life experience is crucial in forming and maintaining a sense of place, hence the need for close attention to their opinions and needs, and establishing effective communication mechanisms to foster their participation and support.

However, research on rural tourism residents' sense of place is still lacking, with researchers often neglecting the impact of residents' sense of place perception and their daily life roles in rural development. The basis of place sense is the dynamic relationship between individuals and their social environment. It is a composite of emotions, social identity, cultural traditions, and social interactions, not only reflecting an individual's emotional experience of place but also the profound connections between society and place. When studying a group with complex social relationships, it is necessary to observe and research place sense from multiple perspectives to make the study more comprehensive. Each resident's personal life experience subjectively influences their everyday environment, providing ongoing vitality to place perception, and keeping rural tourism vibrant and not forgotten by time. Therefore, it is crucial to closely monitor local residents' opinions and needs, establish effective communication mechanisms, and encourage their participation and support. Planners and managers of rural tourism should establish effective resident participation mechanisms, encouraging their involvement in decision-making and project formulation. Protecting and maintaining place perception is key to sustainable tourism development. Managers of rural tourism should ensure that tourism activities do not damage the local culture and environment, maintaining the continuity of place perception. Future research should delve deeper into how residents' subjective emotions affect their attitudes and behaviors toward their daily living environment. Place perception includes not only emotions but also identification and connections. Therefore, future research could focus more on these dimensions to fully understand the role of place perception in rural tourism development. Planners and managers of rural tourism should establish



effective resident participation mechanisms, encouraging their involvement in decision-making and project formulation. Protecting and maintaining place perception is key to sustainable tourism development. Managers of rural tourism should ensure that tourism activities do not damage the local culture and environment, maintaining the continuity of place perception.

## Funding

Interim Achievements of the General Project for Philosophy and Social Sciences Research in Colleges and Universities in 2024: “Local Sense and Spatial Activation Strategies of the Cultural Landscape at the Edge of Nanjing Ming City Wall (2024SJYB0365)”

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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