



Original Research Article

Sign Consumption for Sustainable Cultural Tourism:

Case Of “Mount Lushan”, Jiujiang City

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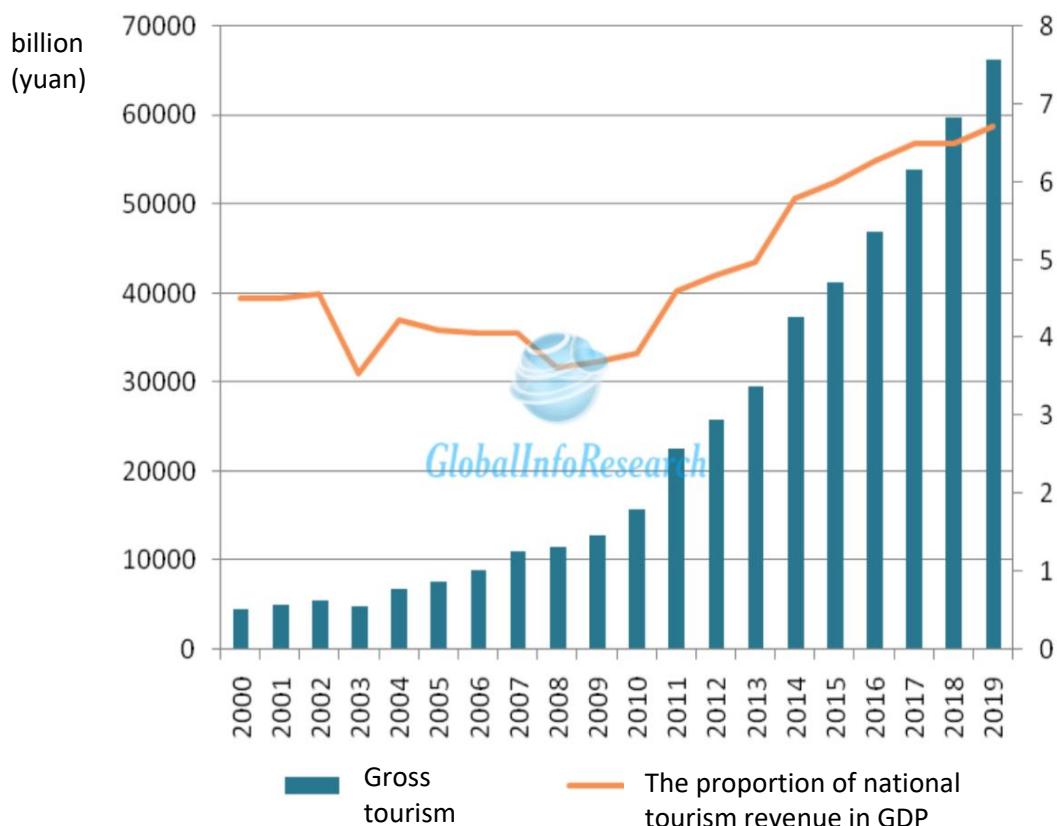
ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were: (1) To study the situation of sustainable cultural tourism of “Mount Lushan” and “Guling community”; (2) To analyse the sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of “Mount Lushan” and “Guling community”; and (3) To propose guidelines for sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of “Mount Lushan” and Guling community. The main theories is sustainable cultural tourism and semiotic. The research was qualitative research. The key informants were 18 persons. The instruments used for data collection were document, in-depth interview, and non-participatory observation. The data analysis was content analysis. The research findings revealed that; (1) Mt. Lushan National Park is located in Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province. It is the long history from Jin, Tang, Song dynasty. Designated a UNESCO world Cultural Heritage site in 1996, and the 5A criteria of tourism place in People's Republic of China. (2) 2.1 Sign consumption of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan comprises of 1) Natural conservation and cultural preservation part is divided into 9 topics. 2.2 Guling community satisfy from economic gaining with respectful from tourist, in central area, there are many tourisms facility such as restaurant, accommodation, shopping center, night market. Villa area has museums, historical villa and also the renovate villa to rent for tourists. About economic atmosphere of Guling community, many Guling people and outsider entrepreneur satisfy from income but less respectful from tourists. (3) There are common problem such as almost signs are symbols which emphasis informative content (general information, warning information) but less of education and interactive content, Lack of analyse consumer behavior in digital nowadays, but lack of using abstract or meaning from natural and cultural properties, The repetition story telling from history, political, aesthetic content but lack of using abstract sign to create many dimensions. The specific problem such as the different context between central area and villar, lack of people participation in tourism, lack of Guling culture sign presentation. The suggestions are Strengthen the interpretation of cultural heritage, Promote community tourism, Seasonal and year-round tourism development, Environmental and cultural sustainability.



Introduction

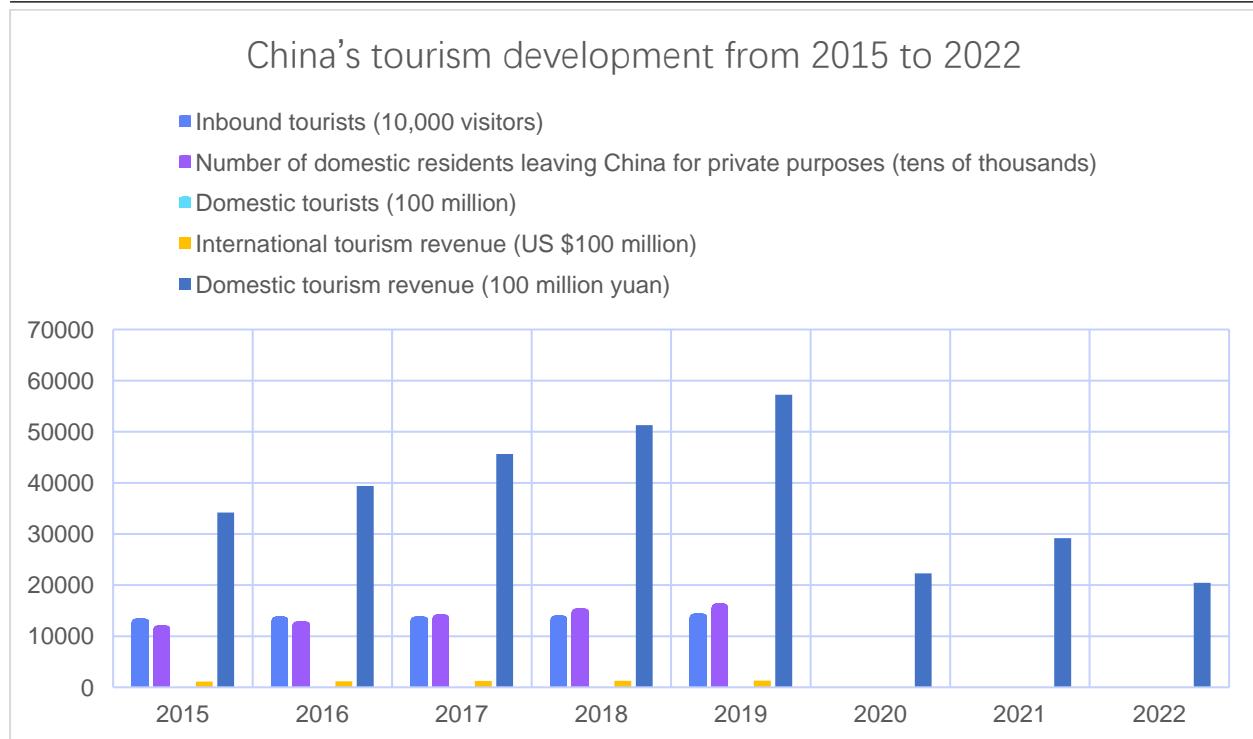
Tourism is one of income to China which bring to economic growth. According to the China Tourism Market Research report released by Global Market Consulting, this report provides the situation, definition, classification, application and industrial chain structure of the Chinese tourism market.



Reference: (<https://www.globalinforesearch.com.cn/reports/859026/domestic-tourism>)

With the rapid development of economy and the improvement of people's living standards, tourism has been developing rapidly in China. According to data, the total tourism revenue of the country reached 5.73 trillion yuan in 2019, an increase of 11.7 percent year-on-year. At the same time, the number of domestic outbound tourists also hit a record high. It can be said that tourism has become one of the important pillar industries that cannot be ignored in China's economy.

China tourism is gradually developed from the year. to the year. Even though, there are both China tour China and foreigner tour China. With the high volume of China tour China and the context of isolation atmosphere from COVID 19 pandemics, China tour China has been prosperity. (The National Bureau of Statistics of China's annual report on government information disclosure from 2015 to 2022. The author compiled a summary of China's tourism development from 2015 to 2022.



Reference: https://www.stats.gov.cn/xxgk/gknb/tjj_gknb/202301/t20230128_1892453.html

In terms of "Sustainable Tourism" which relevant with many dimensions, the meaning of tourism has not only economic dimension (income for local government) but also preservation environment, and social dimension. (WTO, 2004). World tourism organization (WTO) emphasized that sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices.

Jiujiang where the brilliant history and was once one of the "three major tea markets" and "four major rice markets" in China. not have a good natural harbour. It is an outlet for trade from Jiangxi and is connected with the rest of the province both by waterways and by a railroad to Nanchang built in 1915. Originally a customs station in the late 3rd century CE, the settlement was fortified in the 5th century and was constituted as a county town in 589. Historically, it was both a strategic place, guarding the route into Jiangxi, and a commercial hub. Between the 17th and 19th centuries Jiujiang became one of the major centres of the Chinese tea and rice trades. It was once one of the three major tea markets and four major rice markets in the country. It is a famous tourist city at home and abroad and an excellent tourist city in China. It has many famous tourist attractions, including the Yangtze River, Poyang Lake (the largest freshwater lake in China), national historical and cultural cities, former residences of celebrities (Zhu Xi, Du Fu, Li Bai, Su Shi, Xu Xiale, etc.), the birthplace of Pure Land Buddhism "Donglin Temple", "White Deer Grotto Academy" (the first of the four major academies in China), and the world cultural landscape heritage "Lushan Mountain".(World Cultural Landscape Heritage Site)

"Mount Lushan" has developed pattern of tourism by local government and the committee of the community. Although, Lushan tourism services and management system, market regulation has made certain progress, for example by strengthening tourism services and market management, promote tourism service level, , optimize the environment of tourism, and through the reform of management system, lushan scenic spots, to set up the lushan mountain city unified jurisdiction form a pattern of "big lushan mountain", so as to solve the problem of unclear powers and responsibilities, resources are difficult to rational use and

allocation. (http://www.lushan.gov.cn/zwzx_194686/lsyw/202207/t20220727_5566169.html /Lu2016)

However, Lushan still needs to be strengthened in the in-depth development and promotion of tourism culture. includes paying attention to the excavation of cultural connotation, promoting the "profound" innovation of culture, paying attention to the implementation and promotion of culture and so on. Through the construction of cultural theme park, cultural and ecological park, integration of Lushan landscape culture and Chinese civilization and other cultural resources, to promote the in-depth cultural development of Lushan tourism.(Zhang,2023)In addition, the promotion of Lushan's tourism culture needs to start from various angles, focusing on reflecting the cultural characteristics of Lushan, and widely publicizing through various media platforms such as traditional media and new media, so that more people can understand and know Lushan, and extend the value and charm of Lushan's tourism culture.

Old paradigm of tourism emphasizes only how to make tourist satisfy for gaining economic atmosphere. But there is many natural problems nowadays, it occurred tourism with eco-friendly. Also, the development paradigm was change from modernistic paradigm to alternative paradigm today, the concept of locality instead of globalization favor as the past. The awareness to respect local communities occurs in many tourism areas. Finally, UNESCO set local community satisfy from gaining their economic. From cultural tourism which aware to cultural preservation, sustainable cultural tourism mixed other components of nature and local community.

How to stimulate tourists to keep the concepts of "sustainable cultural tourism"? In capitalism era, Sign consumption is suitable for consumer because there is overwhelming information. To concise information with "sign" instead of text and to put the meaning of text and picture is suitable to explain in the long sentences. Because of the familiar with "Sign consumption" of people in nowadays, researcher is interesting to study "Sign consumption" for sustainable cultural tourism of Mount Lushan.

Researcher Finds the Research Gap to Study About 3 Mainly Keywords as of

1) Mount Lushan 2) sustainable cultural tourism and 3) sign consumption. Researcher found that Zhenrao, Cai, Chaoyang, Fangm Qian, Zhang, and Fulong, Chen (2021) study "Joint development of cultural heritage protection and tourism: the case of Mount Lushan cultural landscape heritage site". Also, the topic of "Harmonious Coexistence of Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism: The Mount Lushan Comprehensive Tourism Platform" (2021). The couple of studies emphasize to digital technology usage for heritage protection. While in this study emphasize in Communication message as sign to protect Mount Lushan.

Phalalert, P. and Dejasvanong, C. (2013) study "The Presentation of Locality Through Cultural Commodities of Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market Community". They study about tourism the same as this study but using semiology as "Sign of commodity of the community". Even though it studies the same as "sign" from "semiology" but difference target between sign of commodity to sign for sustainable cultural tourism.

This study not only reveals the formation mechanism of community tourism support, but also explores the factors that affect the differences in tourism support in different portal communities. These findings promote harmonious community development with tourism, enhancing community tourism support, and promoting sustainable tourism development.

As for the communication research of Lushan and urban community tourism, although there is no direct mention of which researcher specifically uses these areas as examples to conduct research on community tourism communication, similar research methods and theoretical frameworks may be applied to the research of these areas. (Liu Fajian & Zhang Jie&Zhang Jinhe&Chen Dongdong,2014)

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Tourism has emerged as a critical pillar of China's economy, driving significant growth and development. However, contemporary academic and practical discourse has expanded the definition of tourism beyond a purely economic dimension. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), sustainable tourism encompasses not only income generation for local governments but also environmental preservation and social dimensions. This reflects a broader paradigm shift in the industry: the "old paradigm" of modernistic tourism, which prioritized economic satisfaction and globalization, is increasingly giving way to an "alternative paradigm" focused on locality and eco-friendliness. In this context, the awareness of respecting local communities has become paramount, with current frameworks emphasizing that local communities must be satisfied with their economic gains while maintaining their cultural integrity. Sustainable cultural tourism, therefore, is viewed as a mixture of cultural preservation, nature conservation, and local community engagement.

The Context of Mount Lushan: Heritage and Management

The research focuses on Mount Lushan in Jiujiang City, a site of profound historical and strategic importance. Historically, Jiujiang was a major commercial hub and one of China's "three major tea markets". Mount Lushan itself boasts a long history spanning the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties and was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1996. It serves as a "three-dimensional miniature" of Chinese culture, integrating the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, evident in landmarks such as the Donglin Temple and the White Deer Grotto Academy.

Despite its status as a 5A tourist destination and recent improvements in unifying the jurisdiction of its scenic spots, literature suggests that Lushan still requires "in-depth development" regarding its tourism culture. Current management practices face challenges in fully excavating cultural connotations and promoting them effectively through media to extend the value of the site's tourism culture.

Theoretical Framework: Sign Consumption and Semiotics

To address the challenges of sustainable cultural tourism communication, this study adopts the theoretical framework of "Sign Consumption" and Semiotics. In the current capitalist era, characterized by information overload, consumers increasingly rely on "sign consumption" as a concise method of processing information. Signs, which encapsulate the meaning of text and imagery, are often more suitable than long sentences for explaining complex concepts to modern tourists.

This research utilizes semiology to analyze tourism products as signs, specifically distinguishing between the "signifier" (the object, activity, or symbol presented) and the "signified" (the interpreted value or meaning). Within the context of Mount Lushan, this framework is applied to decode natural conservation signs—such as "No Honking" or "Respect Wildlife"—as well as cultural symbols. This approach aligns with the concept that users must first recognize the signifier and then understand the content based on their experience to interpret the deeper "signified" meaning, a process vital for fostering sustainable behavior.

Research Gap and Comparative Literature

Existing literature provides a foundation for this study but also highlights specific research gaps. For instance, Zhenrao et al. (2021) examined the joint development of cultural heritage protection and tourism at Mount Lushan; however, their work emphasized the use of digital technology for protection. In contrast, this study emphasizes communication messages as signs to protect the site.

Similarly, Phalalert and Dejasvanong (2013) applied semiology to study the presentation of locality in Thailand's Klong Lat Mayom floating market. While their study utilized a similar semiotic approach regarding the "sign of commodity," this research differentiates itself by focusing on the "sign for sustainable cultural tourism" within the specific context of Mount Lushan. Furthermore, while researchers like Liu Fajian et al. (2014) have studied tourism destination networks, there remains a lack of specific research applying these community tourism communication frameworks directly to the "Guling community" and Lushan area. This study aims to bridge these gaps by analyzing how sign consumption can effectively promote sustainable cultural tourism that respects both the natural environment and the local community.

Objectives

1. To study the situation of sustainable cultural tourism of "Mount Lushan" and "Guling community".
2. To analyst the sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of "Mount Lushan" and "Guling community".
3. To propose guidelines for sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of "Mount Lushan" and "Guling community".

Research Methodology

Research Scope

Scope of Content to Study

- 1) Sustainable Cultural Tourism 2) Sign consumption 3) Semiotic

Scope Format of Research

Qualitative research

Scope of key informants (Total 18 persons)

- 1) Head of Jiangxi government environmental management policy who determine policy as "the regulation of the Lushan Mountain tourist park management" 1 person.
- 2) local tourism authority staff who relevance with sign of "Mount Lushan" product/service 2 persons.
- 3) Marketing Communication academics (expert with sign of product/service) 1 person.
- 4) Marketing Communication experts from Private sector (expert with sign of product/service) 1 person.
- 5) Tourism academics (expert with sign of product/service tourism) 1 person
- 6) Travel Agency 2 persons.
- 7) Private sector who expert in Sustainable Cultural Tourism 2 persons.
- 8) Chinese tourists 4 persons.
- 9) Opinion leaders of Guling community 2 persons.
- 10) Opinion leader of foothill which relocate from Guling community 2 persons.

Scope of Instruments

1. Document

- (1) How to develop sign of preventive measures for more strengthen the protection of important landscapes, ancient buildings, history, ancient trees, rare plants and fossils by the preparation of documents, mounting signs and determining preventive measure?
- (2) How to develop sign of planning and construction: a new, improved or extended construction project must comply with the park's master plan?
- (3) How to develop sign of environmental Protection: do not release pollutants or dispose waste into water resources inside the park (waste management) and limited number of visitors?
- (4) How to develop sign of planning to relocation the crowded people from Guling town/ communities to foothill?
- (5) How to develop sign of wildfire protection: carry out all year-round wildfire protection, do not use open spaces without permission, especially at high-risk intervals?
- (6) How to develop sign about Economic growth and Efficiency: Interpret Report income each year to public (textual analysis) to Mass Media or New Media?
- (7) How to develop sign of consumer satisfaction: Interpret text/picture story telling from product/ service tourism of "Mount Lushan"? as follow:
 - (7.1) natural tourism product (A) sign of "top wonder in Mount Lu" (B) sign of "Five Old Men Peaks" (C) Sign of Small Tianchi (D) Sign of Hanyang Peak (E) Sign of Lake Lulin (F) Sea of Clouds (G) Sign of Red maple landscape
 - (7.2) Manmade tourism products (A) Sign of building (temples, pagodas, Chirstian Church, Donglin temple, White Deer Grotte (Cave) Academy, Museum, religious centers, Western style houses in Guling Communities (B) Sign of Parks and Garden (Lushan Botanic Garden) (C) Sign of Arts (poems, painting, stone crave), 3) Sign of Mountain immortals' cave.
 - (7.3) Symbiotic tourism products: Sign of Lushan Botanic Garden

(7.4) Site-based tourism products (A) Sign of Bus Sightseeing of the western route bus sightseeing (B) Sign of Bus Sightseeing of the eastern route bus sightseeing

(7.5) Event-based tourism product: sign of memory to earthquake events on “Mount Lushan”

(7.6) Tourism service

(A) Sign of hotels and resort (at Guling community, hotels at foothill)

(B) Sign of accommodation (restaurants, coffee house, bars supermarket)

(C) Sign of transportation (airline, train, cruise, taxi, bus, cable car)

(D) Sign of tourism agency (travel agencies, tours operators, tourist guides)

(E) Sign of house (homestay at Guling community)

(F) Sign of health aids (hospital)

(G) Cash aids (Banks, ATM, QR code)

(H) Sign of publication (bookshop)

(I) Sign of entertainment center (dance hall)

(J) Sign of Center Park (Guling center park (1954) (bull is the symbol of Gu Ling, Meandering pathways, fragrant flowers, flourishing trees and a pavilion all add to lively atmosphere of this delightful place)

(K) Sign of expenses (admission fee, sightseeing fee)

(L) Sign of striking photos activity with red maple landscape

(M) Sign of hiking activities along the pathway to Three Tiled Waterfall

(N) Strolling activities around the Ruqin Lake

(O) Wandering activity in the Lushan Botanical Garden, red maples (the lovely autumn).

(8) How to develop sign of local people satisfaction: Interpret message of Guling community (both on the mountain and foothill (people who relocated from the mountain) from social media about 1) local economy, 2) local identity preservation, 3) expand network to outsiders and 4) adding new experience from tourism?

2. In-Depth Interview

Example of key information person data for each group are as follows:

Set A: In-depth interview questions for 1 Head of Jiangxi government environmental management policy who determine policy as

“The regulation of the Lushan Mountain tourist park management” Example of key information person data for each group are as follows:

“The regulation of the Lushan Mountain tourist park management”

Set B: In-depth interview question for 2 local tourism authority staff who relevance with sign of “Mount Lushan” product/service

Set C: In-depth interview question for 1 Marketing Communication academics (expert with sign of product/service)

Set D: In-depth interview question for Marketing Communication experts from Private sector (expert with sign of product/service).

Set E: In-depth interview question for 1 Tourism academics (expert with sign of product/ service tourism).

Set F: In-depth interview question for 2 Travel Agency



Set G: In-depth interview question for 2 Private sector who expert in Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Set H: In-depth interview question for 4 Chinese tourists

Set I: In-depth interview question for 2 Opinion leaders of Guling community

Set J: In-depth interview question for 2 Opinion leader of foothill which relocate from Guling community

3. Non-Participation Observation as follow

1) Act 2) Activity 3) Meaning of act and activity of Chinese tourists at Mount Lushan and Guling community, Guling community (both on the top of Mouth Lushan and at the foothill of Mount Lushan) 4) Relations 5) Participation 6) Setting/Background

Scope of Area

“Mount Lushan”, Jiujiang city, Guling community (on “Mount Lushan”) The foothill community which relocates from Guling community.

Data collection

1) Document from printed media and online media

(1) Data of cultural product and service of “Mount Lushan” and Guling community

(2) Collecting data of sign of product and service tourism in terms of sustainable cultural tourism context of “Mount Lushan” and Guling community

Data Analysis

Data analysis conclusion and doing data reduction to various issues with grouping data or Typology for answer research question. Typology or Data reduction to target issues under Sign meaning communication, Sign consumption, and Sustainable cultural tourism. Moreover, the data analysis come from theory a related concept which is research framework.

Data Trustworthiness

Using Triangulation method with adding variety types for building truth worthiness for the research such as 1) variety of research data collection which comprises of data from document, in-depth interview, and non-participatory observation, 2) variety of concepts and theories such as sustainable cultural tourism, sign consumption, and semiotic, and 3) various 18 key informants.

Result

The research findings revealed that;

(1) The result of the situation of sustainable cultural tourism of “Mount Lushan” and “Guling community”. (Objective 1)

Mt. Lushan National Park is located in Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province. It is the long history from Jin, Tang, Song dynasty. Designated a UNESCO world Cultural Heritage site in 1996, and the 5A criteria of tourism place in People's Republic of China. The resident population in the area is mainly concentrated in Guling Town and surrounding villages at the foot of "Mount Lushan". Among them are local residents, scenic area staff and some long-term tourists. As Lushan Mountain is a famous tourist resort, the number of tourists receives more than 10 million people every year, and the population mobility is large in the tourist season. Guling community population: As of 2024, Guling Town has a permanent population of about 20,000 people, distributed in 12 communities and 2 administrative villages. Lushan receives about 20 million visitors a year, including 500,000 international visitors. Most tourists make short stays (1-2 days), and the main motivations include sightseeing (70%) and leisure holidays.

Historical overview: As early as the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Lushan Mountain became a secluded place for literati and writers, and famous people such as Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun had left footprints here. In the Tang Dynasty, "Mount Lushan" was an important sacred place for Buddhism and Taoism, with temples and Taoist temples all over the mountain. After the Song Dynasty, Lushan Mountain gradually became a tourist attraction for scholars and scholars, leaving a large number of poems and cliff stone carvings.

(2) The sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of "Mount Lushan" and Guling community (Objective 2)

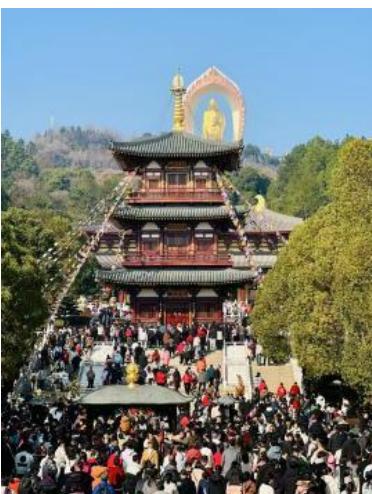
2.1 Sign consumption of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan: 1)Natural conservation and cultural preservation part is divided into 9 topic such as (1) Semiotics of natural conservation of Mount Lushan (2) Maple tree in autumn semiotics of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (3) Cultural and historical semiotics of Mount Lushan (4) Literary and artistic representations semiotics of national conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (5) Botanic Garden semiotics of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (6) Educational and scientific value semiotics of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (7) Signate and interpretation semiotics of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (8) Semiotic practice of natural conservation and cultural preservation of Mount Lushan (9) Human interaction semiotics of natural conservation of Mount Lushan.

The example to sign analysis through semiotic theory such as table 4.1 sign is real object and table 4.2 sign is symbol.

Sign	Signifier	Signified
 Donglin temple	1) Spiritual and philosophical significance: Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism, when the most eminent masters taught, blend effortlessly into a strikingly beautiful landscape which has inspired countless artists	1) Symbols of spirituality, tradition, and harmony between humans and nature. Its preserved landscapes and temples signify the belief in balanced coexistence, where human activity respects ecological limits.



Sign	Signifier	Signified
	<p>who developed the aesthetic approach to nature found in Chinese culture.</p> <p>The Buddhist Donglin Temple takes universal sentient beings as its core, the Taoist Temple pursues the unity of heaven and man, and the Confucian White Deer Cave Academy advocates the rule of etiquette.</p>	<p>2) Symbols of enlightenment and retreat from worldly concerns.</p> <p>3) They reflect centuries of cultural practices and reverence for the mountain.</p> <p>4) Embody centuries of spiritual and architectural heritage</p>
	<p>From the integration of Zen and Taoism in the Tang Dynasty to the innovation of neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, and then to the cultural inheritance of the Ming and Qing dynasties, Lushan has become the epitome of the pluralistic unity" of Chinese culture.</p>	
		
Mountain immortals Cave		
White Deer Grotte Academy		
Chirstian Church (jiujiang.gov.cn)		

Sign	Signifier	Signified
  Du Simin		
 The image is from Jiujiang Municipal People's Government(jiujiang.gov.cn)	2) Mt. Lushan Pilgrims' Journey on the Great Mountain with Significance for Man	<p>Lushan Five Religions Prayer Garden is a cultural park located in Lushan area of Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province.</p> <p>With the theme of five religions Prayer, it brings together five religions and cultures, namely Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity.</p> <p>The cultural park was officially opened on January 1, 2011, with the aim of carrying forward the</p>

Sign	Signifier	Signified
		<p>blessing cultural tradition of Lushan Mountain. There is a 38.5-ton copper prayer bell in the cultural park.</p> <p>The bell body is made of ringing copper and engraved with the symbols of the five religions. On the first day of the New Year every year, representatives of the five denominations will ring bells and pray for world peace, the prosperity of the motherland, the happiness of the people and social harmony</p>
 	<p>3) Lushan Mountain is not only a wonder of natural landscape, but also a three-dimensional miniature of Chinese culture, history and spirit, carrying multiple symbolic meanings from ancient times to the present. Lushan Mountain is famous for its perilous peaks, waterfalls, sea of clouds and hot springs.</p> <p>In 1996, it was listed as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, and has preserved historical sites such as White Deer Cave Academy (one of the four ancient Chinese academies) and Donglin Temple (the birthplace of the Pure Land Buddhism),</p>	<p>It is a typical symbol of Chinese landscape culture and is known as "the magnificent Kuang Lu in the world", representing the extraordinary workmanship of nature. There are many places symbolizing the profound accumulation of Chinese civilization., the harmonious coexistence of diverse cultures, symbolizing the practice of sustainable development concept.</p>

Sign	Signifier	Signified
 <p>One Hill At A Time: Mt. Lushan Du Simin</p>		
 <p>4) Imperial villas and gardens: relics such as the residences of Emperor Kangxi and other imperial gardens. There are hundreds of ancient buildings on Lushan Mountain.</p>		<p>They reflect China's imperial history and artistic achievements.</p>
	<p>5) Mount Lushan as cultural identity and national pride</p>	<p>Mount Lushan symbolizes China's rich cultural heritage and natural splendor. Its preservation represents a commitment to safeguarding national identity and historical continuity. It stands as a testament to China's imperial past, religious traditions, and artistic legacy.</p>

Table 4.1 Cultural and historical semiotics of Mount Lushan

From Table 4.1 Cultural and historical semiotics of Mount Lushan, Signifiers comprise of Chinese culture and Chinese history on Mount Lushan. The Chinese culture is pluralism culture from five religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. History of religions on Mount Lushan situated many years ago such as Tang Dynasty with the integration of Zen and Taoism to the innovation of neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, and the cultural inheritance of the Ming and Qing Dynasty. There are many signified of the culture and history



such as spiritual and philosophical significance as Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism. *The Buddhist Donglin Temple* takes universal sentient beings as its core, the *Taoist Temple* pursues the unity of heaven and man, and the *Confucian White Deer Cave Academy* advocates the rule of etiquette. Moreover, it is the symbols of spirituality, tradition, and harmony between human and nature. Its preserved landscapes and temples signify the belief in balanced coexistence, where *human activity* respects ecological limits. The big prayer bell in the cultural park engraved with the symbols of the five religions. On the first day of the New Year every year, representatives of the five denominations will *ring bells and pray for world peace, the prosperity of the motherland, the happiness of the people and social harmony*. Lushan Mountain is not only a wonder of *natural landscape*, but also a three-dimensional miniature of Chinese culture, history and spirit, carrying multiple symbolic meanings from ancient times to the present. In 1996, it was listed as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, and has preserved *historical sites* such as White Deer Cave Academy and Donglin Temple (the birthplace of the Pure Land Buddhism), (It is a typical symbol of Chinese landscape culture and is known as "the magnificent Kuang Lu in the world", representing the extraordinary workmanship of nature. There are many places symbolizing the profound accumulation of Chinese civilization., the harmonious coexistence of diverse cultures, symbolizing the practice of sustainable development concept. Imperial villas and gardens: relics such as the residences of Emperor Kangxi and other imperial gardens. They reflect China's imperial history and artistic achievements. Mount Lushan symbolizes China's rich cultural heritage and natural splendor. Its preservation represents a commitment to safeguarding national identity and historical continuity. It stands as testament to China's imperial past, religious traditions, and artistic legacy.

Sign	Signifier	Signified
 <p>"No buses." sign</p>	<p>1)Sticking of trails (1) The icon is a traffic sign that says "No buses." This sign is usually placed at the entrance of certain roads or areas to inform bus drivers and passengers that the area is not allowed for buses. This may be due to narrow roads, heavy traffic, safety concerns or other reasons. Bus drivers and passengers need to obey this sign to ensure safe and smooth traffic.</p>	<p>Traffic sign "No buses" is red circles and slashes: This is an international forbidden sign, indicating that a certain behavior is not allowed. Black bus pattern: indicates that the sign is for buses. It is the natural conservation and cultural preservation for the important space at Mount Lushan form destroy of buses.</p>

Sign	Signifier	Signified
		
  <p>No honking" sign.</p>	<p>Sticking of trails: (2) This icon is an internationally used "No honking" sign. This sign is usually set in areas that need to be quiet, such as hospitals, schools, residential areas or specific public places.</p>	<p>The "No honking" means "no use of sound devices." A red circle indicates prohibited behavior. A red slash, from the top left corner of the circle to the bottom right corner, runs through the center of the icon to further emphasize the prohibition. In the center of the icon is a horn, indicating that honking is prohibited., in order to reduce noise pollution and ensure people's quiet environment and quality of life.</p>

Sign	Signifier	Signified
  "Respect the Plant Life" sign	<p>2) Respect the Plant Life: Pattern: Holding a plant in one hand, expressing the protection and care for plants and the natural environment. Text as "Love flowers, love grass, love nature, let us live with them". In English as "Be Respectful of the Plant Life Respected les plantations". The main purpose of which is to remind tourists to observe the relevant management regulations when visiting the nature reserve.</p>	<p>The sign of "Respect the Plant Life" represents the responsible tourism practice for environmental awareness. The meaning of this sentence is to advocate that people take good care of flowers and plants and the natural environment, and live in harmony with nature by responsibility of protecting the natural environment and natural resources.</p>
  "Respect Wildlife" sign	<p>3) "Respect Wildlife" by the icon of "No hunting" or "No Harm to Wild Animals." Such signs are often found in nature reserves, national parks, or other places where wildlife needs to be protected.</p>	<p>The design elements of the icon include: a red circle indicating prohibited behavior. In the center of the icon is a deer and several birds, which represent wild animals. Deer and birds have landscape patterns below them, representing the animals' natural habitat. This sign represents (1) responsible tourism practice for environmental awareness and respect for the site. (2) reminding tourists not to hunt or harm wildlife in the area to protect the local ecosystem and biodiversity.</p>

Sign	Signifier	Signified
  <p>“Please do not disturb, feed, touch or provoke wild these monkeys” sign</p>	<p>4) “Please do not disturb, feed, touch or provoke with these monkeys” The sign is compliance with such rules is important for personal safety.</p>	<p>The design of the icon includes: a red circle to indicate the prohibited behavior. A red slash, from the top left corner of the circle to the bottom right corner, runs through the center of the icon to further emphasize the prohibition. In the center of the icon is a simplified pattern showing a hand reaching out to the animal, which means that touching or playing with the animal is forbidden, and is used to remind people not to touch the animal to prevent other safety incidents.</p>
 	<p>“Respect and protect the natural environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources”</p> <p>5) The icon is a warning sign includes: the message on located in the Lushan National Tourist Scenic Area in China, the main purpose of which the text as those who enter the nature reserve for sightseeing and tourism shall abide by the regulations on management and natural resources of the nature reserve. The warning sign emphasizes that while enjoying the natural beauty, visitors should also “respect</p>	<p>The design of the icon includes: green peaks of mountain inside green circle represents Mount Lushan natural conservation from tourists' responsibility to protect the environment and natural resources as sustainable tourism.</p>



Sign	Signifier	Signified
“Respect and protect the natural environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources”	and protect the natural environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources”.	

Table 4.2 Human interaction semiotics of natural conservation of Mount Lushan

From table 4.2 Human interaction semiotics of natural conservation of Mount Lushan, researcher emphasizes about the interaction of human to environment. Therefore, the signifiers comprise of 1) Sticking of Trails which having (1) “No bus” sign (2) “No honking” sign 2) “Respect the plant life” sign which text is Text as “Love flowers, love grass, love nature, let us live with them” 3) “Respect Wildlife” by the icon of “No hunting” or “No Harm to Wild Animals.” 4) “Please do not disturb, feed, touch or provoke with thesÙs monkeys” sign, and 5) “Respect and protect the natural environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources”

Signified from this topic is 1) Traffic sign “No buses” is red circles and slashes which is an international forbidden sign, indicating that a certain behavior is not allowed. Black bus pattern indicates that the sign is for buses. It is the natural conservation and cultural preservation for the important space at Mount Lushan from destroy of buses. 2) The “No honking” sign means “no use of sound devices.” A red circle indicates prohibited behavior. A red slash, from the top left corner of the circle to the bottom right corner, runs through the center of the icon to further emphasize the prohibition. In the center of the icon is a horn, indicating that honking is prohibited., in order to reduce noise pollution and ensure people's quiet environment and quality of life. 3) The sign of “Respect the Plant Life” represents the responsible tourism practice for environmental awareness. The meaning of this sentence is to advocate that people take good care of flowers and plants and the natural environment, and live in harmony with nature by responsibility of protecting the natural environment and natural resources. 4) The design elements of the icon include a red circle indicating prohibited behavior. In the center of the icon is a deer and several birds, which represent wild animals. Deer and birds have landscape patterns below them, representing the animals' natural habitat. This sign represents (1) responsible tourism practice for environmental awareness and respect for the site. (2) reminding tourists not to hunt or harm wildlife in the area to protect the local ecosystem and biodiversity. 5) The design of the icon of “Respect and protect the natural environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources” includes green peaks of mountain inside green circle represents Mount Lushan natural conservation from tourists' responsibility to protect the environment and natural resources as sustainable tourism.

2.2 Guling community satisfy from economic gaining with respectful from tourist: Researcher divide Guling community into two main parts such as central area and villa area. In central area, there are many tourisms facility such as restaurant, accommodation, shopping center, night market. There is also component of Guling people such as central park, school, hospital, Bank, local government offices. Villa area has museums, historical villa and also the renovate villa to rent for tourists. About economic atmosphere of Guling community, the price of accommodation, food, bus, taxi is quite high. Therefore, many Guling people and outsider entrepreneur satisfy from income. However, the business use only cultural capital form long history at Guling and the relation between Guling people and tourists is capitalist and

customers. Therefore, Guling community tourism has not use human capital form people who stay over there and design the activities from Guling people to present their identity and use it to be new cultural capital to sharing knowledge with tourists. Because of lack of Guling cultural identity of people, tourists have not high respectful manner to this place.

3) To propose guideline for sign consumption of sustainable cultural tourism of “Mount Lushan” and “Guling community”. (Objective 3)

There are common problem such as 3.1 Almost signs on Mount Lushan and Guling community are symbols which emphasis informative content (general information, warning information) but less of education and interactive content 3.2 Lack of analyse consumer behavior in digital nowadays 3.3 There are many text signs through symbol but lack of using abstract or meaning from natural and cultural properties on Mount Lushan 3.4 The story telling about Mount Lushan is repetition as history, political, aesthetic content but lack of using abstract sign to create many dimensions. There are specific problem such as The different context between central area of Guling community and villar, lack of Guling people participation in tourism. lack of Guling culture sign presentation for tourism. The suggestions are Strengthen the interpretation of cultural heritage, Promote community tourism, Seasonal and year-round tourism development, Environmental and cultural sustainability

Discussion

This study compares with Phalalert., P. and Dejasvanong, C. (2013) from Thailand from using the same theory of Semiotics to analyst tourism product. However, tourism product and field site are difference. The research field site of Phalalert, P. and Dejasvanong, C. is Klong Lat Mayom floating market community, Thailand but this research field site is Mount Lushan and Guling community, China. The study has not analyst locality in cultural commodity issue but sustainable cultural tourism (natural conservation, cultural preservation, local community satisfy from gaining economic with respectful) instead. This study conforms to result of Dejasvanong, C, in terms of attribution of sign to communicate meaning, there is “signifier” which present to receiver for perceiving and interpreting. There are many various signifiers such as object, activity, or general social phenomena. However, this study clearly unfolds signified or interpret value of real thing and various symbols.

This research accord with Na, G. ., Yossakrai, K. ., & Buranadechachai, S. . (2025) in terms of New Media Consumption Process which comprise of access, perception, and consumption information. Moreover, this study use the same concept of perception step by content recognition, understand the content, interpret meaning form message, and response to the content and media. It means that from recognize signifier, user has to understand the content from his/her experience and then he/she can interpret the content or signified. However, it is difference to use about consumption step. Na, G. ., Yossakrai, K. ., & Buranadechachai, S defines it as intention to media exposure, the attribute of reflexing meanwhile media consumption, duration to consume media, and activities during media consumption but this research use sign consumption as semiotic instead.

Conclusion

This research has successfully achieved its objectives by examining the situation of sustainable cultural tourism at Mount Lushan and the Guling community, analyzing the consumption of signs within these areas, and proposing guidelines for future development. The findings confirm that Mount Lushan is a site of immense historical and cultural magnitude, distinguished as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site and a prominent 5A tourist destination in China. Its significance is rooted in a rich history spanning the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties, serving as a convergence point for Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Through the lens of semiotics, the study identified that sign consumption at Mount Lushan is primarily categorized into natural conservation and cultural preservation. The analysis of "signifiers"—such as "No Bus" or "Respect the Plant Life"—reveals that current signage effectively communicates regulatory and protective meanings intended to preserve the environment. However, a critical disparity was observed in the Guling community. While the local population and entrepreneurs' express satisfaction with the economic benefits derived from tourism, there is a marked lack of "respectful" interaction from tourists. The current relationship is predominantly transactional, defined by a capitalist-customer dynamic rather than a cultural exchange. This stems from a failure to utilize human capital effectively; the activities designed do not sufficiently present the unique identity of the Guling people, resulting in a tourism experience that lacks depth in local cultural engagement.

Furthermore, the study diagnosed a prevalence of "informative" and "warning" content in existing signs, such as general information or prohibitions, while identifying a significant scarcity of educational and interactive content. The storytelling surrounding Mount Lushan was found to be repetitive, focusing heavily on political and aesthetic history without employing abstract signs to create multidimensional meanings. Consequently, while the physical preservation of the site is managed through regulatory signs, the deeper cultural and sustainable communication required for a profound tourist experience is currently underutilized.

Recommendations

To address the identified gaps and enhance the sustainable cultural tourism framework of Mount Lushan and the Guling community, this research proposes a shift in the paradigm of sign consumption.

First, there is a critical need to strengthen the interpretation of cultural heritage through more sophisticated sign consumption. The current reliance on symbols that emphasize general or warning information must be evolved into signs that offer educational and interactive content. Rather than merely presenting repetitive historical or political narratives, signs should utilize abstract meanings that convey the natural and cultural properties of the site in new dimensions. This approach will help mitigate the problem of repetitive storytelling and engage tourists on a deeper intellectual and emotional level.

Second, the management authority must promote community tourism that emphasizes local participation. To transform the current "capitalist-customer" relationship into one based on mutual respect, the tourism model should integrate the Guling community's unique culture into the visitor experience. This involves designing activities where Guling people can present their own identity and share knowledge, thereby converting local human capital into a new form

of cultural capital. By doing so, the community can garner the respect it currently lacks, fostering a more sustainable social environment.

Third, the development of tourism signs must encompass digital consumer behavior analysis. In the modern digital era, understanding how tourists consume information online is vital. Future strategies should integrate digital sign consumption with physical experiences to ensure the message of sustainability reaches a broader audience.

Finally, the study recommends a holistic approach to environmental and cultural sustainability that includes seasonal and year-round tourism development. By diversifying tourism products beyond the peak seasons and ensuring that signs communicate the "abstract meaning" of nature conservation—such as the harmony between humans and nature found in the site's religious history—Mount Lushan can achieve a balanced development that honors its status as a cradle of Chinese civilization.

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