A Study on the Perception of Authenticity of Tourist Destinations and the Place Attachment of Potential Tourists—The Case of Ding Zhen’s Endorsement of Ganzi, Sichuan

Guodong Cong 1, Huan Zhang 1, and Tinggui Chen 2,*

1 School of Tourism and Urban-Rural Planning, Zhejiang Gongshang University, Hangzhou 310018, China; cgd@mail.zjgsu.edu.cn (G.C.); zh6study@163.com (H.Z.)
2 School of Statistics and Mathematics, Zhejiang Gongshang University, Hangzhou 310018, China
* Correspondence: ctgsimon@mail.zjgsu.edu.cn

Abstract: Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which has lasted for more than two years and significantly affected tourism, people’s yearning for better tourism has never weakened, and China’s Dual Carbon Strategy further enhanced their desire. At the end of 2020, Ding Zhen shot to stardom on the Internet because of his rugged good looks, further improving the reputation of Ganzi, Sichuan Province, and demonstrating tourists’ desire to appreciate authentic destinations. The following are worthy of research: the factors affecting tourists’ perceptions of the authenticity of destinations, the relationship between perceptions of authenticity and place attachment in potential tourists, and methods to strengthen the authenticity of a destination to enhance the place attachment of potential tourists. Taking Ganzi and Ding Zhen as the research subjects, this paper uses a co-occurrence network map analyzing the four kinds of authenticity perceived for tourist destinations, based on user-generated content, and uses the term frequency-inverse document frequency method to further calculate the weight score of factors. Finally, the paper verifies the influence of each dimension on place attachment by calculating comment sentiment scores. The results show that (1) natural landscapes, human characteristics, and preferential measures significantly impacted the perception of authenticity among potential tourists; (2) among the four kinds of authenticity perceptions, humanistic authenticity was the major promoting factor by which potential tourists formed place attachment. Based on the research results, the paper puts forward a series of suggestions to improve tourists’ emotional attachment to destinations, including creating cultural symbols of local differences, adopting preferential policies for local tickets in a timely manner, and emphasizing nature protection.

Keywords: user-generated content; big data; authenticity perception; place attachment

1. Introduction

In the era of the experience economy, tourists’ needs present characteristics of individualization and experience, which put forward new requirements for tourism destinations. Tourist attractions with local characteristics can conform to the inner expectations of tourists in pursuit of authenticity and help them obtain a rich sense of experience and realism [1]. A foreign culture with a traditional society in its original state can better meet the experience needs of tourists, and the perception of a high degree of authenticity will bring greater satisfaction to tourists [2]. Although the COVID-19 epidemic over the last two years has hindered tourists from traveling, tourists still expect a pure, authentic, and unrestricted tourist destination. In September 2020, China put forward the goals of realizing carbon peaking by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060, reminding the tourism industry that it should adopt low-carbon policies and give full play to local natural resources. By providing hiking, horse riding, ziplining, etc., low-carbon tourism experiences highlight the characteristics of tourist areas while fulfilling the demands for energy conservation and emissions reduction.
At the end of 2020, Ding Zhen’s popularity led a large number of netizens to express that they would visit Ganzi, Sichuan, by the end of the epidemic. According to Ctrip data, following 20 November 2020, the search popularity of “Litang” skyrocketed, soaring by 620% in the last week of November. In 2021, data from the Litang Culture and Tourism Bureau showed that despite the complex environment during the epidemic, Litang still achieved a total tourism revenue of CNY 1.76 billion, an increase of 6.4% compared with the same period in 2020. There were 1.602 million visitors, an increase of 6.3%. This fully proves the attraction of and attachment psychology associated with authenticity for tourists. It also raises many questions worthy of research: how do we define tourists’ perception of the authenticity of tourist destinations? What factors are included? What is the relationship between authenticity perception and place attachment for potential tourists? How can we strengthen the perceived authenticity of the tourist destination to enhance place attachment in potential tourists?

This paper takes Ding Zhen’s endorsement of Ganzi, Sichuan, as a case study for analyzing the perceived authenticity of tourist destinations and the place attachment of netizens. The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 is a literature review; Section 3 presents the research methods and data sources; Section 4 uses a co-occurrence network map to extract and analyze the main content and perceived authenticity of various elements in Ganzi, Sichuan, that netizens pay attention to, builds a model for the authenticity of tourism destinations, and evaluates and analyzes the model to explore indicators significantly affecting the perception of authenticity among potential tourists, verifying the relationship between the perceived authenticity of the tourist destination and the place attachment of potential tourists; Section 5 presents conclusions and the discussion, which provides recommendations for strengthening authenticity perception and enhancing place attachment among potential tourists, along with the conclusions and implications of this paper and an outlook for future work. The framework is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Authenticity

The word “authenticity” is derived from Greek, and Lowenthal D. (1994) proposed that it means genuine, original, honest, and holy [3]. The introduction of “authenticity” into cultural heritage began with the Venice Charter (1964), emphasizing the value of stony
heritage objects themselves. Later, the distortion of modern society was introduced into tourism research by American historian Boorstin D.J. (1964), who believed that the mass group tour organized by Thomas Cook, the founder of modern tourism and the world’s first travel agency, was a distortion [4]. On the contrary, Mac Cannell D. (1973) believed that tourists live in a modern, alienated society with fewer real things and that their motivation to travel is to seek authenticity [5].

Zhong G. Q. (2004) stated that people impacted by the economic wave and modern society are more willing to experience real life. Authenticity has become the main selling point in the development of tourism resources. Various scenic spots should be operated and managed with their authenticity in mind [6]. Zhou Y. Q. (2007) pointed out that China’s tourism development is in the context of relatively developed commerce and an accelerated modernization process, so tourists are increasingly pursuing the authenticity of tourism, and tourists’ authenticity perception in the process of tourism is often proportional to consumption desire [7]. Xu P. (2021) surveyed travel willingness and choice of travel scope through a questionnaire survey and cross-analysis method and found that 65% of tourists had travel willingness, 22.5% held a wait-and-see attitude due to the epidemic, and 45.28% preferred famous tourist attractions or tourist cities in other provinces and cities, which help them broaden their horizons, stay away from familiar circles, and appreciate different customs [8]. In the context of the epidemic, although tourists’ travel needs are temporarily inhibited, their yearning for authenticity and travel desire has not weakened. Therefore, the research on tourism authenticity has practical value.

Wang N. (1999) divided the concept of authenticity into several types: objectivism authenticity, constructivism authenticity, postmodernism authenticity, and existentialism authenticity [9]. As representatives of objectivism, Boorstin D. J. and Mac Cannell D. once regarded authenticity as an inherent characteristic in the tourist object and were later criticized for being trapped in dualism. Constructivism authenticity means that constructionists seek symbolic authenticity and is the result of social construction. Existentialism believes that tourists will relax due to tourism activities; it finds authenticity within individuals or the authentic experience among individuals [9], and this concept has been adopted by many scholars. Later, critics such as Li X. D. (2005) believed that this kind of authenticity ignored the host society [10], while Wang Y. (2007) proposed customized authenticity, that is, the authenticity jointly constructed by the object host society and the subject tourist [11]. Zhang C. Z. (2008) made a clear summary and distinction on the development and comparison of the concept of authenticity [12] (see Table 1).

The application and exploration of the concept of authenticity in tourism research have gone through a long process and are gradually becoming enriched, improved, diversified, and concretized, providing theoretical support for various scholars to conduct research on tourism authenticity from different perspectives.

2.2. Authenticity Perception

Zhu Y. M. (1999) proposed that authenticity based on tourists’ experiences belongs to existential authenticity [13]. Zhang C. Z. (2010) proposed that when discussing the issue of authenticity perception, we should start from the perspective of tourists’ experiences, enhance tourism attractiveness, and stimulate tourists’ tourism motivation through research on tourists’ experiences [14]. Furthermore, Dai Y. M. (2012) found through research on tourists in ancient villages that most tourists are motivated to participate in tourism activities with authenticity (such as folk festivals and residents’ life) [15]. Based on a customized perspective, Wu D. T. (2021) proposed that authenticity perception is composed of three dimensions: cultural authenticity, natural authenticity, and symbolic authenticity [16].
Table 1. Development and comparison of the concept of authenticity.

| Objectivism | Constructivism | Postmodernism | Existentialism | Modern Existentialism |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Object      | Authenticity   | Constructivism | Authenticity   | Postmodernism         | Existentialism | Authenticity | Modern Existentialism |
| Object Tourist | The construction of the tourist object and their attention | True and false boundary | The feeling of tourists | The communication between object and subject |
| Representative | Boorstin, Mac Cannell | Bruner (1994), Cohen (1995), Culler (1981) | Eco (1986) Baudrillard (1983) | Steiner C. J. and Y. Reisinger (2006) | Wang Yu (2007) |
| Main viewpoint | Authenticity is inherently characteristic and can be measured by an absolute standard | Authenticity is variable | True and false has no specific boundary | Object and subject build an authenticity environment |
| Contribution | Introduced authenticity into the study of tourism intention | Breakthrough concept, explaining the relationship between commercialization and authenticity | - | Built a new perspective for studying authenticity and guided the development of postmodernism experience tourism | Put forward the initiative construction of authenticity, changed other perspectives |
| Limitation | Limited in tourists, simplifies the concept of authenticity | Hard to balance commercialization and authenticity | Totally denies the concept of authenticity | Ignores the tourist, is not good for substantial development of tourism | - |

Based on existentialism, authenticity represents the perspective of subject–object interaction. Referring to the definition of landscape authenticity proposed by Wu D. T., the introduction of natural authenticity is the authenticity of natural scenery retained by local, non-artificial scenery, natural plants, and animals. The definition of humanistic authenticity is introduced, which refers to the localization and authenticity of local ethnic culture, ways of life, costumes, local representatives, other tourist destination residents’ characteristics, and cultural customs. Based on Wu Z. Y.’s (2020) definition of existential authenticity, this paper introduces existential authenticity, which refers to the authenticity of tourists’ experiences and feelings, and it combines self-discovery and self-recognition with the tourist destination [17]. Based on the definition of the authenticity of existence proposed by Du S. Y. (2021), including an interpretation system, sensory experience, landscape setting, tourist souvenirs, and exclusive products [18], this paper introduces interactive authenticity, which refers to the communication and interactive activities between tourists and the destination. On this basis, the effect of convenient access to the tourist destination is supplemented.

To summarize, this paper divided authenticity perception into natural authenticity, humanistic authenticity, existential authenticity, and interactive authenticity. Natural authenticity refers to the authenticity of the natural scenery retained by the tourist destination; humanistic authenticity refers to the localization and authenticity of the residents and cultural customs in the tourist destination; existential authenticity refers to the special meaning, thoughts, and values of the place given by the process of experience; interactive authenticity is the communication and activity between tourists and the destination as well as the convenience for tourists to visit the destination.
2.3. Place Attachment

Tuan Y. F. (1974) proposed “place attachment”, a special emotional connection between places and people, which is the sum of people’s relationships, perceptions, attitudes, values, and worldviews in regard to a place [19]. Gieryn T. F. (2000) pointed out that place attachment is a connection between people and places based on feelings (i.e., emotions), cognition (i.e., thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs), and practices (i.e., actions and behaviors), of which the emotional factor is the first [20]. Two dimensions of place attachment are proposed by Williams D. R. (1992): place dependence and place identity. Place dependence expresses an individual’s functional dependence on a place; place identity emphasizes an emotional attachment, that is, individuals or communities use the place as a medium to realize their own definition and emotionally regard themselves as a part of the place [21]. Zheng F. J. (2022) adopted two dimensions to explore the intrinsic dimension of authenticity perception from the perspective of residents and used a structural equation model to build a conceptual model of the relationship among residents’ authenticity perception, place attachment, and tourism support behavior [22].

Tang W. Y. (2014) pointed out that place attachment has been an imperative topic in recreational geography, human geography, environmental psychology, and tourism at home and abroad [23]. The perception and evaluation of place attachment, the influencing factors of place attachment formation, and the relationship between place attachment and the behavior of community residents and tourists in tourist destinations have attracted attention. Place attachment becomes a vital theoretical perspective in tourism research and is widely used for natural resource management and the study of tourism planning and development. Moore R. L. (1994) pointed out that people who are dependent on a place would contribute more time and money to this place [24]; Babu P. G. (2004) pointed out that place dependence is the main motivation for tourists to revisit [25]. Huang X. (2006) pointed out that the research results on place dependence have an attractive prospect in tourism resource management. For example, the research results on the structure and formation factors of the place dependence of a tourist destination can be directly used for the tourism destination. In marketing, as long as tourists’ place dependence level can be effectively enhanced, they “will contribute more time and money” and generate “revisit motivation” [26].

Based on information from tourists, most of the existing research analyzed their travel and revisit intentions. Due to the difficulty for tourism enthusiasts during the epidemic, many netizens turned to online discussions on related topics and shared their travel expectations, showing their recognition of and dependence on the tourist destinations in the comments. Therefore, these netizens have become potential tourists, and place attachment mainly appears in online comments. This paper uses Weibo topic comments as analysis data, adopts the place attachment dimensions (i.e., place identity and place dependence) proposed by Williams, and refers to the measurement model variables proposed by Zheng F. J. to research the place attachment of potential tourists to tourist destinations.

2.4. Authenticity Perception and Place Attachment

Over the past two years, an increasingly large amount of research on the relationship between concepts such as authenticity and place attachment has been conducted. Yu Y. F. (2017), from the perspective of residents in tourist destinations, showed that improving the level of cultural authenticity perception of residents in ethnic tourism destinations is conducive to the construction of residents’ place attachment [27]. From the perspective of residents, Ma D. Y. (2020) confirmed that cultural authenticity affects the place attachment and support of ethnic village residents [28]. Du S. Y. (2021) explored the dimension of the authenticity perception of Hakka enclosures and the mediating influence of place identification on the relationship between authenticity perception and behavioral intention and found that constructing authenticity and referencing authenticity had greater predictive effects on place identification and behavioral intention and that objective authenticity was less predictive [18].
From the perspective of tourists, Yu Y. F. (2017) found that tourists’ authenticity perception directly affects place attachment. The stronger the perception, the stronger the sense of place attachment; cultural authenticity perception directly affects place attachment and destination loyalty. Cultural authenticity impacts loyalty through place attachment; the direct impact of cultural authenticity on place dependence is significantly greater than its impact on place identity [2]. Zheng H. D. (2018) found through a survey of tourists at the Fenghuang Ancient City that tourists’ authenticity perception impacts place attachment and is an antecedent variable of its formation [29]. Yu Y. F. (2020) concluded that tourists’ authenticity perception positively affects place attachment, and tourists’ authenticity perception is generated by the interaction between tourism and tourists [30]. Wu Z. Y. (2020) found that the path coefficients of objective authenticity and existential authenticity on urban attachment were 0.266 (p < 0.001) and 0.410 (p < 0.001), respectively, through the main effects analysis of the outcome equation model, both of which had positive effects. The place attachments of international tourists and the presence of authenticity had a larger impact on urban attachment than objective authenticity [17]. Wu D. T. (2021) found that place attachment caused a single, chain-mediated mediating effect between perceived authenticity and tourism-supporting behavioral intentions [16].

Although the research on authenticity and place attachment is increasing year by year and the research perspectives are diversified, the research objects focus on on-the-spot tourists but seldom mine and analyze potential tourists. The logical relationship between tourism destination authenticity and place attachment needs to be further studied. Since the network comments’ mining method conducts online mining based on a wide range of topics or themes and finds an expected set of problems beyond the preset scope, other topics or themes might be obtained, which will enrich the content of later research. In addition, the method can perform user portrait or temporal feature descriptions in the early stage, and the data are more universal. From the perspectives of Weibo netizens and potential tourists, this paper took Ding Zhen and Sichuan Ganzi as examples and used the big data method to explore the relationship between the authenticity of tourism destinations and place attachment.

3. Research Methods and Data Sources
3.1. Research Methods
3.1.1. Co-Occurrence Network Map

First, this paper extracted network comment data regarding Ganzi on Weibo and compared the user comments before and after Ding Zhen became popular, highlighting Ding Zhen’s influence on the local tourism industry.

Then, according to the four dimensions of the authenticity of tourism destinations, keywords were extracted from the netizen’s comments, and a co-occurrence network map was constructed.

“Using topic clustering and subject extraction methods to dig out the problems and related multiple subjects in the research object [31]” is a common research method for network comment data. As an easy-to-use natural language processing software, ROST CM6 is easily used for word segmentation and word frequency statistics, and it can extract key information from a large amount of text data, analyze emotional trends, and avoid cumbersome code procedures [32]. To obtain the main concerns of the public’s authenticity in each dimension, the online comment data of the four dimensions of authenticity were analyzed by semantic network visualization [33].

3.1.2. TF-IDF Method

The TF-IDF (term frequency-inverse document frequency) method was used to calculate the importance of each keyword. TF-IDF is a traditional method of keyword extraction based on word frequency statistics, and its importance is weighted according to word frequency and the inverse document frequency of words. The importance of a keyword increases proportionally with the number of times it appears in the text corpus but decreases...
inversely proportional to its frequency in the corpus [34]. This paper used the TF-IDF method to assign weights to each topic. The TF-IDF method consists of two parts: the TF method and the IDF method. The TF method counts the frequency of a word appearing in a document. Its basic principle is the more times a word appears in a document, the stronger the document’s ability to generalize. The IDF method counts the number of documents that have the same word. Its basic principle is if a word appears in fewer documents, it has a stronger ability to distinguish documents. The calculation formula of the TF-IDF method in this paper was:

$$TF - IDF = \frac{n_i}{\sum_k n_k} \times \log \left( \frac{|D|}{1 + |D_i|} \right)$$

where $n_i$ refers to the frequency of the subject recognition word $n_i$ under the $i$th topic appearing in the comment data, $\sum_k n_k$ is the total number of words in the corpus, and the result of dividing the two is the word frequency. $|D|$ refers to the number of comments in the corpus, and $|D_i|$ is the number of comments containing the topic identification word under the $i$th topic. The logarithm is the inverse document frequency. The multiple of the word frequency and the inverse document frequency is the TF-IDF weight of the $i$th topic.

3.1.3. Calculation of Comment Sentiment Score

Related studies show that tourists’ emotional experience is a key factor for tourism destinations’ image perception and marketing [35]. In order to further discuss the four dimensions of authenticity and the emotional analysis of potential tourists, this paper introduces the evaluation system of place attachment, calculates the emotional scores of potential tourists’ place identity and place dependence in each dimension of authenticity by identifying evaluation phrases and sentences, and finally analyzes and summarizes the results.

Due to the use of irony in Weibo, the results obtained by the traditional dictionary-based lexical weight accumulation algorithm are not ideal [34]. However, because online irony often expresses dissatisfaction and irony with exaggerated rhetoric, such comments often contain stronger emotion. Based on this, to ensure the accuracy of the sentiment score results, it is pivotal to accurately identify and score comments. Therefore, this paper identified the anti-sentence patterns in the comment data and combined the punctuation features to correct the comment sentiment score to improve the accuracy of the results.

The sentiment score of a sentence was not only determined by the emotion evaluation word itself but was also affected by the degree of adverbs, negative words, and punctuation [34]. To improve the accuracy of the sentiment score, this paper selected 54 degree adverbs based on the reviewed text and Chinese grammar dictionary and defined their respective emotional strengths. The results are shown in Table 2.

| Degree | Emotion Strengths | Degree Adverbs | Numbers |
|--------|------------------|----------------|--------|
| Large  | 2                | very, special  | 27     |
| Medium | 1.5              | too, more      | 19     |
| Small  | 0.5              | relatively, somewhat, slightly | 8       |

Given the negative words appearing in the comments, this paper combined the original negative words in the HowNet dictionary and common expressions on Weibo and sorted out a total of 16 negative words after manual screening. In addition to using the degree adverbs, netizens often use continuous punctuation (such as “!!!” and “???”) to express their emotions while commenting. In this regard, the punctuation at the end of the comments is identified here, and the emotional strengths of the types of punctuation were set as shown in Table 3 below.
Table 3. Emotion strengths of punctuation.

| Punctuation | Emotion Strengths |
|-------------|-------------------|
| ! × n (n ≥ 1) | 1.5 × n           |
| ? × n (n ≥ 2) | 1.2 × (n − 1)    |

To sum up, the calculation formula of the initial sentiment score $E_i$ of the $i$th comment is as follows:

$$E_i = \sum_{j} (-1)^{N_j} W_j P_m \prod_{q} L_j$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

where $W_j$ is the $j$th emotion word in the comment; $L_j$ is the emotion strength of the degree adverb before the $j$th emotion word; $N_j$ is the number of negative words before the $j$th emotion word; $P_m$ is the emotion strength of the punctuation at the end of the comment; $q$ is the number of degree adverbs before $j$th emotion words.

3.2. Data Sources

3.2.1. Case Introduction of Ganzi and Ding Zhen

Located in the west of Sichuan Province and southeast of the Kang–Tibet Plateau, the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is a prefecture-level administrative region with the Tibetan as the main ethnic group. The Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, commonly known as Kangba Area or Kang District, is the main body and belly of Kangba, the second largest Tibetan area in China. Kangding, the seat of the prefecture capital, is a famous plateau city with a long history and is the political, economic, and cultural center of the prefecture. Ganzi is a multiethnic community mainly inhabited by Tibetans, characterized by large and small communities with simple and unique folk customs. With blessed natural and cultural–historical advantages, Ganzi is an ideal tourist destination.

Ding Zhen comes from a small mountain village in Litang County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. In November 2020, a short video posted by a photographer on a short video platform made Ding Zhen an overnight sensation. Ding Zhen has dark, tanned skin, a handsome face, and an attractive smile. His most attractive feature is his clear and innocent eyes, leading many netizens to compare them to spring water.

After going viral, Ding Zhen signed a contract with a state-owned company in Litang, Ganzi, to become a tourism ambassador for Litang and contribute to local tourism. Ding Zhen shot tourism promotional films for his hometown, such as Ding Zhen’s World, which brought a huge number of tourists to his hometown. In June 2021, he was appointed as the Ambassador of Sichuan Culture and Tourism and served as the first Ambassador of Sichuan ecological environment protection. In July 2021, the Pony First Love Fund of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, initiated by Ding Zhen, was established. Its first donation was used to sow trees in Litang’s mountains.

3.2.2. User Generated Content

Based on the existing literature review and summary, this paper selected four authenticity dimensions. Starting from these four dimensions, the data from Weibo comments were taken as the research object to study the specific performance of these four dimensions and their promotional effect on potential tourists’ place attachment. Weibo is a social media platform based on user relationships. Users can access it through a PC, mobile phone, and other mobile terminals to realize instant information sharing, communication, and interaction in multimedia forms such as text, pictures, and video. In the context of the rapid development of social media, increasingly more tourists share their travel experiences in the form of text, pictures, and videos through Weibo, WeChat moments, and other platforms, forming user-generated content (UGC), which is widely used as a data source for tourism research in recent years. By analyzing the evaluation of potential tourists based on Weibo,
we can understand the emotional tendency of potential tourists and guide the development of tourist destinations. The Weibo data are open in real time, which is convenient for inquiry, extraction, and analysis [36].

4. Result and Analysis
4.1. The Determination of the Authenticity Dimension in Ganzi
4.1.1. Analysis of Content on Topics Related to Ganzi

As a reflection of public emotion and public opinion, online comments can directly reflect the emotional attitude and willingness of tourists. To dig out the authenticity perception of potential tourists in regard to Ganzi, Sichuan, this paper crawled the corresponding topic comment information on Weibo and analyzed the authenticity perception of tourists based on the comment data.

To extract the key content from many Weibo comments, this paper first extracted the topic #GANZI#. The description of the destination in this topic is objective and comprehensive, which can provide a basis and support for the dimension delineation of the authenticity of the destination.

The time when Ding Zhen became popular was in November 2020; therefore, this paper first crawled the #GANZI# topic from 1 February 2017 to 31 October 2020, that is, before Ding Zhen’s popularity, and collected the topic content, and the format of the collected comment data is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comment data.

| USER         | TIME       | FROM                                      | USER GENERATED CONTENT                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------|------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aba beauty   | 2018/9/13  | https://weibo.com/                         | # Ganzi # Local tyrants of Kangba Art Festival come out to bask in the sun # Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture kangding #                           |
|              | 18:04      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| Deng on the  | 2018/9/10  | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/56gdD1       | Travel # tourism in chongqing, chengdu, sichuan province [place] # little brother little sister zoige # aba in garze # 2 in chengdu                           |
| travel       | 18:16      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| Lao hu       | 2018/9/10  | sinaweibo://gotovideo?selected_contain   | Ten thousand red houses paved valley # Sita #Wuming Buddhist Academy #Ganzi # O webpage link                                                                 |
| Photographer | 16:39      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| JiongJiong   | 2018/9/8   | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/56gdD1       | A spiritual journey in Seda! A lifetime visit! Travel # tourism in chongqing, chengdu, sichuan province [place] # chengdu ganzi # in aba color of ganzi Tibetan autonomous prefecture, da la rong five Ming buddhist [place] ## little sister chengdu # 2 |
|              | 20:30      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| babykiii     | 2018/9/8   | https://weibo.com/                         | There is no need to copy the beauty of this mountain, you go to feel travel # seda # Daocheng Yading # pass through your world # Ganzi #                     |
|              | 15:01      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| vitaminC     | 2018/9/7   | https://weibo.com/                         | Take a less crowded route. Go raw. The trip from September 27 to October 7 will take about 10 days. Do you have any friends to go with you? Don’t go to Yading, don’t go to Seda, don’t go to Four girls mountain, for the next 1d Chengdu – Rilong – Danba 312KM2d Danba – Luhuo – Ganzi 330KM3d Ganzi – Yulong Lacuo – Dege 188KM4d Dege – Printing house – Qamdo 346KM5d Qamdo – Class Wuqi – Ding Qing development C |
|              | 17:14      |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
| Jiangxia     | 2018/9/2   | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/13mmrA       | Be a good boy and grow up                                                                                                                                 |
|              | 2 2:25     |                                           |                                                                                                                                                       |
Table 4. Cont.

| USER           | TIME         | FROM                                      | USER GENERATED CONTENT                                                                 |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| cChappygo      | 2018/8/25 16:15 | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/4swE93   | Open weekend mode Hot spring is a cup of cold tea in summer # Hailuogou Glacier Forest Park 2 Hailuogou Gongga Shentang Hot Spring |
| babykiii       | 2018/8/16 15:19 | https://weibo.com/                         | You don’t come to 🎧 so you don’t know # Ganzi # great Empire scenery is how magnificent Liaoli # Daocheng Yading # With microblog to travel # Ganzi tongcheng Western Sichuan tourism # Dad where to delay # L Cowher boy K second shot video |
| Kelvin_7up     | 2018/8/10 23:50 | https://weibo.com/                         | 4724 m new height. Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture                                 |
| Tibet channel  | 2018/8/2 16:58  | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/6vtZb0     | # Poverty Alleviation # Ganzi # Look, change your face! The joy of the Tibetan people in the spare time of farming. On August 1, a performance titled “Into the local–Sichuan Provincial literary and art volunteers to help fight poverty in Ganzi” was performed in Daofu County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. |
| pipa rabit     | 2018/7/30 19:43 | https://weibo.com/                         | [Cloud] There were so many people waiting for the wind that I couldn’t get in line. Let me jump on the clouds and ride the wind to find you. If I pass you, try to wave at me. # on the road # Photography # Ganzi |
| she is no longer a girl1206 | 2018/7/30 1:27  | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/3tcUuU     | I want to go to Ganzi see my six elder brother # Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture ganzi County [location] # Ganzi travel # Ganzi Side matter # 2 Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Kangding County |
| Lynnchen999    | 2018/7/29 22:42  | https://app.weibo.com/t/feed/6odKOI1    | At the 3500-m Xindu Bridge, look at the stars, look at the moon. Ganzi Photography Paradise Hotel |
| wag tail happily | 2018/7/27 23:12  | https://weibo.com/                         | Did you go to Lhasa together? # Ganzi # ORIGINALLY wanted to go to Daocheng Yading, but it is not good to change the plan temporarily |

Based on obtaining topic content data, this paper used the ROST CM software to perform preprocessing, such as word segmentation and word frequency statistics, to extract key content and obtain a keyword co-occurrence network related to Ganzi. The result is shown in Figure 2. Each node in the network represents a keyword, and if there is a connection between the nodes, it means that the keyword had a symbiotic relationship. At the same time, the node is displayed according to the size of the keyword centrality. If a keyword has a higher centrality, it means that the keyword frequently appeared together with other keywords in the network. An initial conclusion of the co-occurrence network can be obtained: before Ding Zhen became popular, the topic of #Ganzi# mainly involved travel route recommendations introductions to scenic spots high-frequency words were plateaus, snow-capped mountains, beautiful scenery, etc. Netizens rarely discussed the authenticity of the natural area of Ganzi.
The topics from 1 November 2020 to 31 January 2022 (after Ding Zhen became popular) were crawled, and 18,535 pieces of data were obtained. It can be seen that Ding Zhen’s popularity has brought huge benefits to Ganzi, Sichuan, and the topics discussed by netizens also tended to be diversified, from the simple promotion and introduction of the official cultural and tourism account to the on-the-spot sharing and experience perceptions of various netizens. A co-occurrence network map was constructed. It can be seen that the topics related to animals, beautiful experiences, hometowns, local residents, environmental protection, and many other aspects have been added, and the enthusiasm of netizens to participate was high.

By analyzing the co-occurrence network map of keywords and high-frequency words, we can obtain Figure 3. It can be seen that around the tourist destination of Ganzi, Sichuan, the core aspects that tourists and potential tourists pay attention to are natural authenticity represented by “sacred places, plateaus, starry sky, snow-capped mountains, and brown bears”; humanistic authenticity represented by “beauties, singers, Ding Zhen, guys”; existential authenticity represented by “unity, poverty alleviation, holiness, freedom”; interactive authenticity represented by “scenic spots, transportation, free, tourism festivals”. The first two factors are mainly local characteristics that need to be protected, and the last two dimensions are factors that can be shaped and regulated by the tourism departments and related enterprises. In addition, it can be seen that “revisit” and “visit many times” have guiding significance for the evaluation of netizens’ place identity and place attachment.

4.1.2. Topic Selection and Comment Data Preprocessing Related to Authenticity

This paper searched for topics regarding Ganzi, Sichuan, from 1 November 2020 to 31 January 2022 on the Weibo platform after Ding Zhen became popular. A total of 69 related topics were collected. The 14 widely discussed topics were used as data crawling objects, and octopus8 was used to crawl the relevant Weibo comment data of the 14 topics. The crawled content included the Weibo ID of the topic, the posting time, the number of forwards, the number of likes, the number of comments, the content of the comment, and the posting time of the comment, and 14,315 pieces of original data were obtained.

The Weibo comment data was segmented and stop words that cannot represent text features were removed. Since the research object of this paper was the study of the tourist destination authenticity and potential tourists’ place attachment and tourism willingness, the nouns with higher frequency in the document after word segmentation were “located, often, a piece, each, exactly”, etc. These words are relatively neutral and have little meaning for word frequency analysis; thus, such words were also added to the stop word dictionary.
Because invalid data and wrong data in the crawling process have a low utilization rate in the process of comment data analysis or cause large errors in the results, they need to be deleted. The content of data cleaning mainly included deleting repeatedly collected data, repeated words, short sentences, and meaningless or ambiguous sentences. After data cleaning, 9168 pieces of valid data were obtained. Among them, there were 2927 pieces of data on the topic of natural authenticity; 2628 pieces of data on the topic of humanistic authenticity; 1767 pieces of data on the topic of existential authenticity; 1746 pieces of data on the topic of interactive authenticity. The topics are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Related Weibo topics.

| Authenticity Dimension | Weibo Topics and Quantities |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Natural authenticity   | The beauty of Ganzi is not lost to Tibet (520) |
|                        | The white-lipped deer, a first-class protected animal, was photographed in Ganzi, Sichuan (178) |
|                        | Aerial photography of Peach Forest in Ganzi, Sichuan (216) |
|                        | Beautiful Ganzi (2013) |
| Humanistic authenticity| Ding Zhen spoke for his hometown Ganzi tourism (1958) |
|                        | The clear-eyed Ganzi child (352) |
|                        | Backpack police on the golden horse grassland in Ganzi, Sichuan (101) |
|                        | Ding Zhen protects Miao embroidery (217) |
| Existential authenticity| Ding Zhen hopes to contribute to cultural spread and poverty reduction (817) |
|                        | Ganzi tour (412) |
|                        | Kangding love song (538) |
| Interactive authenticity| Sichuan Ganzi A-level scenic spot is free of charge (1511) |
|                        | Sichuan Ganzi offers 50% discount for Chongqing tourists (173) |
|                        | Sichuan Ganzi Mountain Cultural Tourism Festival (62) |
4.2. Visual Analysis of the Different Authenticity Categories Based on a Semantic Network

4.2.1. Analysis of Natural Authenticity

Natural authenticity refers to the authenticity of the natural scenery, cultural relics, and historical sites preserved at the tourist destination; the netizen comments corresponding to the topics on Weibo were analyzed, and a co-occurrence network map was obtained (see Figure 4).

![Figure 4. Natural authenticity co-occurrence network map.](image)

It can be seen that the keywords that potential tourists in Ganzi, Sichuan, paid attention to under such topics had the following characteristics: (1) place—Western Sichuan, Gongga, Kangding, Aba, Tibetan, Chengdu, Xindu District, Kangba, and Ganzi Auto Prefecture; (2) season—spring, summer, winter, and snow; (3) landscape—plateau, prairie, hot spring, lake, starry sky, snow mountain, ink stone, and glacier; (4) animal—conch. More comprehensively, it showed all aspects of the natural landscape of Ganzi that potential tourists care about.

4.2.2. Analysis of Humanistic Authenticity

Humanistic authenticity refers to the localization and authenticity of the resident characteristics and cultural customs of the tourist destination. Since the impression of local celebrities affects the impression of the local ethnic group, potential tourists associate Ding Zhen’s appearance with the local human history, regard Ding Zhen as a beautiful symbol of Ganzi, and determine that Ding Zhen’s characteristics are given by the unique attributes of Ganzi; thus, they believe Ganzi is irreplaceable, which means “going at least once in a lifetime”. At the same time, some tourists pointed out that there are many traditional colors and decorations in Tibetan homes, and these unique historical architectural styles and traditional costumes also attract potential tourists. In addition, through media publications, netizens also expressed great concern for the local Director of the Cultural Tourism Bureau and the children of Ganzi with clear eyes like Ding Zhen. Many netizens expressed that the appearance of Ding Zhen helped them discover the clearer Litang and its people. Netizens’ attention to Ding Zhen was transferred to all aspects of Ganzi’s humanities, forming a more comprehensive understanding of the authenticity of Ganzi’s humanities. By integrating and analyzing the comments of netizens on Weibo topics under the four secondary categories, a co-occurrence network map was obtained (see Figure 5).
It can be seen that after Ding Zhen became popular, many comments revolved around Ding Zhen and then turned to local character characteristics (Ding Zhen, his horse, and his appearance), lifestyle (friends and wisdom), local Chinese intangible heritage, etc. Many netizens pointed out that the local humanistic characteristics are nurtured based on the unique nature; therefore, special attention should be paid to the harmonious coexistence of local people and nature.

4.2.3. Analysis of Existential Authenticity

Existential authenticity refers to the spiritual meaning, thoughts, and values of the tourist destination given by the local culture and tourism departments and related enterprises in the process of development. Some netizens expressed that when Ding Zhen first became popular on the Internet, they had no idea who he was. However, after the local promotion film and Ding Zhen’s appointment as a tourism promotion ambassador, they felt deeply the rapid actions and attention of the tourism industry; thus, the favorability of Sichuan Ganzi increased rapidly. Many netizens pointed out that Ding Zhen’s popularity has driven the development of local tourism. Poverty alleviation, national economy and people’s livelihood, and national unity were behind this incident. Netizens expressed their high approval for this. It can be seen that the actions of local departments and the symbols and ideological meanings behind tourism promotional events also greatly promoted the national identity and tourism willingness of potential tourists. At the same time, under the promotion and reinforcement of the destination characteristics and the tourism department, based on the authenticity of experience and feelings, potential tourists combine self-discovery and self-recognition with the tourism destination and feel healing and freedom, which cannot be felt in the city. When you come to Ganzi, you will feel healed physically and mentally, and therefore, you will feel more attached to Ganzi.

We can see from Figure 6, in addition to the original features of nature and humanity that attract tourists, that some potential tourists are attracted by the meaning and travel value of local symbols, which can be seen from words such as poverty alleviation, new era, hard work, cure, love, and sacred. For example, listening to songs, appreciating Western Sichuan, and contributing to poverty alleviation work attract visitors to go sightseeing.
4.2.4. Analysis of Interactive Authenticity

Interactive authenticity is the communication and activities between tourists and the destination, as well as the convenience for tourists to visit the destination. Local departments have adopted many tourism-related promotional measures such as free 5A scenic spots, half-price scenic spots or hotels, publicity, and interaction with mountain tourism festivals. Some tourists also pointed out that the development of transportation in Sichuan Ganzi now allows them to visit Ganzi conveniently.

From the network map shown in Figure 7, it can be seen that around the topics of interactive authenticity, netizens were highly concerned about tickets and scenic spots, and they responded positively to free ticket measures. At the same time, they were also concerned about local safety and fire protection, among others, and they were more worried about adverse situations such as high anti-reflection and natural disasters in the process of feeling the authenticity of the local area. In addition, many potential tourists mentioned Huanglong, Jiuzhaigou, and other scenic spots under this topic. This indicates that some tourists from farther places want to appreciate both the style of Western Sichuan and other famous scenic spots in Sichuan.
4.3. Authenticity Evaluation Model and Weight Score

Based on the analysis of the potential tourists’ comment content corresponding to the above authenticity perception dimensions, an authenticity evaluation model was constructed to further evaluate and analyze the above four types of authenticity perception.

4.3.1. The Construction of Evaluation Dimensions

To improve the credibility of the research results, this paper refers to the various evaluation dimensions adopted by the existing research and redefined the evaluation dimensions. By analyzing multiple dimensions, the dimensions of authenticity are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Evaluation dimensions of authenticity.**

| Dimension        | Comment                                                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural authenticity | The natural scenery of Ganzi in Sichuan has its own local characteristics |
|                  | The protozoa in Ganzi, Sichuan, are beautiful                           |
|                  | The Peach Forest in Ganzi, Sichuan, is very beautiful                   |
| Humanistic authenticity | The local horse riding, singing, and dancing activities in Ganzi, Sichuan are very real |
|                  | The ethnic costumes of Ganzi in Sichuan are very unique                 |
|                  | The life scene in Ganzi, Sichuan, is still authentic and localized      |
| Existential authenticity | Sichuan Ganzi culture embodies national unity                           |
|                  | Excellent performance of tourism                                        |
|                  | Development-oriented national poverty alleviation work in Ganzi, Sichuan |
|                  | Ganzi makes me feel free, holy, healed                                  |
| Interactive authenticity | I can easily reach the destination during the tour                      |
|                  | I feel that the price of the scenic spot is acceptable                 |
|                  | The establishment of the mountain tourism festival is very meaningful   |

4.3.2. The Construction of the Evaluation System

Since netizens often evaluate authenticity from different standpoints and perspectives, the comments may correspond to different evaluation dimensions. Based on this, this paper used the framework semantic dictionary matching method, took the authenticity identification word as the label system, and completed the identification of the corresponding dimension of the review by extracting and matching the evaluation words in the user-generated content. Among them, the authenticity topic recognition word dictionary was mainly generated based on the frequency of the review word segmentation combined with manual selection. Due to the large number of recognized words, the semantic logic induction method was used to summarize and refine them, forming 11 themes: natural scenery, weather, animals, characteristics of local people, residents’ life, intangible cultural heritage, national unity, spiritual pursuit, preferential measures, festival activities, and transportation. Combined with the evaluation dimension constructed in Table 6, the themes corresponded to four evaluation dimensions, and a comment content evaluation system was obtained, as shown in Table 7, which could avoid the semantic confusion caused by a large number of subject words, thereby improving the structure of the data and clarifying the evaluation dimension to which the text belonged.
Table 7. Comment content evaluation system.

| Dimensions         | Identification Word                                                                 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural authenticity | Natural scenery: Mountain, plateau, prairie, lake, hot spring, starry sky, mountain, ink stone, glacier, forest, Aba, Kangba |
|                    | Weather: Spring, snow, sunny, winter                                                  |
|                    | Animal: Conch, red fox, white-lipped deer, brown bear                                |
| Humanistic authenticity | Characteristic of local people: Eyes, clear, complexion, handsome, innocent          |
|                    | Residents’ life: Accommodation, food, clothing, Tibetan                               |
|                    | Intangible cultural heritage: Miao embroidery, history, art                           |
| Existential authenticity | National unity: Poverty alleviation, poverty alleviation, prosperity, solidarity   |
|                    | Spiritual pursuit: Symbol, freedom, sacredness, purity                               |
| Interactive authenticity | Preferential measures: Free, half price                                                |
|                    | Festival activities: Mountain Tourism Festival, May Day, National Day, interactive activities |
|                    | Transportation: High-speed rail, subway, directly arrive, roadblock                   |

Here, it was necessary to use the abovementioned comment content evaluation system to map comments to different evaluation dimensions. By identifying and matching comments, a total of 6446 comment data related to four evaluation dimensions were extracted. The specific results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Comment classification.

| Theme                          | Score |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Natural authenticity           |       |
| Natural scenery                | 1676  |
| Weather                        | 173   |
| Animal                         | 141   |
| Characteristic of local people | 1955  |
| Residents’ life                | 207   |
| Intangible cultural heritage   | 184   |
| Humanistic authenticity        |       |
| National unity                 | 107   |
| Spiritual pursuit              | 576   |
| Existential authenticity       |       |
| Preferential measures          | 1312  |
| Festival activities            | 47    |
| Transportation                 | 68    |

4.3.3. Authenticity Weight Score

Using the TF-IDF (term frequency-inverse document frequency) method introduced above, the weight of each topic could be obtained as shown in Table 9.
Table 9. Weight score of four types.

| Theme                      | Weight Score |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Natural authenticity      |              |
| Natural scenery           | 0.1275       |
| Weather                   | 0.0162       |
| Animal                    | 0.0667       |
| Humanistic authenticity   |              |
| Characteristic of local people | 0.1935     |
| Residents’ life           | 0.0113       |
| Intangible cultural heritage | 0.0093     |
| Existential authenticity  |              |
| National unity            | 0.0079       |
| Spiritual pursuit         | 0.0673       |
| Interactive authenticity  |              |
| Preferential measures     | 0.1032       |
| Festival activities       | 0.0528       |
| Transportation            | 0.0035       |

Here, themes with a weight greater than 0.1, namely key topics, significantly impact authenticity perception. Based on the above table, natural landscapes, human characteristics, and preferential measures impact the authenticity perception of potential tourists. The natural landscape drives tourists to travel, playing a pivotal role; the significant role of the characteristics of the local people is Ding Zhen’s celebrity effect; preferential measures are a central driving factor to encourage potential tourists to visit Ganzi.

4.4. Sentiment Score of Potential Tourists’ Authenticity Place Attachment

4.4.1. Composition of Place Attachment Identification

According to the existing literature, this paper defined the two classification indicators of place attachment—place identity and place dependence—and extracted the main identifying words as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Place attachment and identification words.

| Dimensions | Examples                                                                 | Identification of Evaluation Word                        |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Place identity | Sichuan Ganzi brings me a sense of satisfaction, freedom and healing | Like, moved, longing, relaxed and happy                 |
|             | I love Sichuan Ganzi                                                   |                                                          |
|             | I have a strong sense of identity with Sichuan Ganzi                   |                                                          |
|             | I found my true self in Ganzi, Sichuan                                 |                                                          |
| Place attachment | Compared with other scenic spots in Xichuan, I prefer Ganzi in Western Sichuan Ganzi is a special place for me My travel experience in Ganzi, Sichuan, is unique I want to visit Ganzi, Sichuan, many times | Ganzi is different, must go, unique experience, and want to come again |
| Place dependence |                                                                 |                                                          |

Based on this, the composition of the place attachment identification system of potential tourists’ natural authenticity, humanistic authenticity, existential authenticity, and interactive authenticity in Ganzi, Sichuan, was further constructed as shown in Table 11.
Further analysis was conducted on the Weibo data, and the relevant data were extracted and matched as shown in Table 12.

### Table 12. Related comment data.

| Dimensions | Natural Authenticity | Humanistic Authenticity | Existential Authenticity | Interactive Authenticity |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Place identity |                     |                         |                          |                         |
|            | 660                  | 748                     | 178                      | 446                     |
| Place dependence |                   |                         |                          |                         |
|            | 324                  | 436                     | 95                       | 321                     |

#### 4.4.2. Result of Sentiment Scores

After the above calculations, which were based on the specific comments corresponding to Table 11, the sentiment scores of various authenticity topics were calculated, and the results are shown in Table 13.

### Table 13. Result of sentiment scores.

| Dimensions | Natural Authenticity | Humanistic Authenticity | Existential Authenticity | Interactive Authenticity |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Place identity |                   |                         |                          |                         |
|            | 0.1637               | 0.1764                  | 0.0634                   | 0.1362                  |
| Place dependence |                   |                         |                          |                         |
|            | 0.1372               | 0.2130                  | 0.0299                   | 0.1463                  |
| Place attachment |                   |                         |                          |                         |
|            | 0.3009               | 0.3894                  | 0.0933                   | 0.2825                  |

The results explain the relationship between the authenticity perception and the place attachment (i.e., place identity and place dependence) of potential tourists. Horizontally, it shows that:
(1) The highest score of potential tourists’ place identity and place dependence was humanistic authenticity. This may be because some potential tourists transferred their good impression of Ding Zhen to their identification with Ganzi, Sichuan. This indicates that the localization and authenticity of cultural customs and local characteristics (such as local culture, local ethnic clothes, and local representatives) can arouse potential tourists to have a sense of local identity (such as expressing likeness and praise) and then generate a sense of local dependence that must be experienced;

(2) The existential authenticity with the lowest score means that tourists did not link too much the special meaning given to the tourist destination with their thoughts, values, and attachment to the place but simply expressed their compliments to the Ganzi tourism department and the destination. To summarize, the feeling of local affection did not promote visitors to travel and spend money.

Longitudinally, it shows that:

(1) Place dependence had higher scores than place identity in terms of humanistic authenticity and interactive authenticity, indicating that Ding Zhen’s local celebrity effect and ticket discount measures were the direct driving force for tourists to visit, which will directly attract tourists to Ganzi;

(2) However, the sentiment scores of place identity for natural authenticity and existential authenticity were higher than place dependence, which may be because although natural authenticity and existential authenticity are attractive, other scenic spots outside of Western Sichuan also have these characteristics; therefore, they cannot directly motivate potential visitors.

In general:

(1) The highest score for place attachment was human authenticity, followed by interactive authenticity, indicating that the integration with local culture, friendly communication with local people, and related preferential measures were the most significant factors for tourists to develop place attachment;

(2) The second highest score for place attachment was place dependence, indicating that the authenticity of natural scenery, represented by glaciers, snow mountains, peach forests, local natural plants, and animals, was still the main evaluation criterion for tourists to form their local impression of the tourist destination;

(3) Although the score for existential authenticity was not high, it was still positive, indicating that focusing on the creation of a local symbolic spirit and bringing different spiritual experiences to tourists can promote the formation of place attachment.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

This paper took Ding Zhen’s endorsement of Sichuan Ganzi as an example to analyze the place authenticity and the place attachment of potential tourists. Firstly, using the core word co-occurrence network graph, the key content of Ganzi, which was concerned with of netizens, was extracted according to the four authenticity dimensions. The authenticity evaluation model of the tourist destination was established and the weight score of the model was calculated. The relationship of netizens’ place attachment was analyzed, and the results showed that: (1) the perception of authenticity consisted of four dimensions: natural authenticity, humanistic authenticity, existential authenticity, and interactive authenticity; (2) in the subdivision of authenticity perception, natural landscapes, human characteristics, and preferential measures significantly impacted the authenticity perception of potential tourists; (3) Ding Zhen’s popularity led the local cultural authenticity to become a major factor for potential tourists to form place attachment.

Based on the analysis results, this paper puts forward the following suggestions on how to strengthen the authenticity of tourist destinations and enhance the place attachment of potential tourists:

(1) Strengthening the authentic interactive experience of tourists: authentic tourist destinations should also stand from the perspective of tourists and consider providing
tourists with more service experiences of trying on local clothing, tasting exclusive foods, and taking pictures of famous scenic spots. At the same time, this will increase the creation of characteristic homestays to bring tourists a more immersive experience of local humanities and folk customs. In addition, it can cooperate with famous tourist destinations nearby to design a more comprehensive experience tour for tourists;

(2) Deepening the connotation of the local authenticity: Ding Zhen’s popularity is a landmark in the internet era. Through Ding Zhen, who shoulders the task of publicity and promotion, the public witness the victory of poverty alleviation, the rich Tibetan culture, national unity, and responsibility, these spiritual meanings have a driving effect on the travel of potential tourists. At the same time, Sichuan Ganzi, as a place that emphasizes nature and practices public welfare all year round before being an instant hit, has a positive reputation. Therefore, each tourist destination should also carry out local infrastructure construction in a realistic manner when it is not popular, pay attention to improving the local authenticity and good life experience, and deepen the connotation of local authenticity;

(3) Intensifying efforts to protect the nature authenticity in tourist destinations: Tourists’ love for nature authenticity puts forward strict requirements for protecting the local environment. On the premise that the local natural landscape is protected from human activities and the wild animals can live normally, tourism can be developed, and natural resources should not be consumed blindly, but a sustainable development strategy must be thoroughly applied at all times;

(4) Creating local cultural symbols: Considering the serious homogeneity of scenic spots in Sichuan and Tibet raised by the comments, Ganzi seized the opportunity to quickly make Ganzi popular with the help of Ding Zhen’s popularity and launched several topics, creating local characteristics and differentiation. Given the increasingly serious homogeneity of scenic spots, various tourism departments should increase the promotion of local tourism characteristics to avoid stereotypes and imitations. Each authentic tourist destination has its landscape characteristics and ethnic characteristics. Through the analysis, screening, beautification, and promotion of these characteristics, it is necessary to form its own unique local cultural symbols, such as Ding Zhen and Li Ziqi in Sichuan. Local cultural and tourism departments should continue to build local humanistic images, pay attention to local native humanistic characteristics, and carry out continuous infiltration publicity on the Internet;

(5) Accurately grasping the psychology of potential tourists, contributing to efficient and timely online marketing: While producing the promotional video, the Sichuan Ganzi government formulated and launched relevant tourism preferential policies, and the two-way promotion of publicity and welfare detonated the public opinion field. Taking advantage of Ding Zhen’s popularity, the Ganzi government has issued invitations to potential tourists for winter tours, proposing that from November 15, 2020, to February 1, 2021, all scenic spots (including 67 A-level scenic spots) were free of tickets. This quick, accurate, and ruthless combination has achieved excellent dissemination effects and has clear guiding significance for other tourist destinations. All tourism departments should accurately grasp the marketing opportunities and provide convenient tourism policies and preferential treatment from the perspective of tourists to promote the development of local tourism and enhance the local reputation.

Moreover, from the perspective of user-generated content (UGC), this paper provides a new idea for the study of authenticity and place attachment. The four dimensions of authenticity discussed in this paper also provide a reference for the further study of the relationship between authenticity and place attachment.

Due to the limitations of the data sources and other aspects, this paper had the following shortcomings, which need to be further studied in the future:

(1) This paper focused on the experience of tourists. From the perspective of potential tourists, the analysis of Weibo comment data was introduced into tourism authenticity research. The construction of the data analysis model was not proficient enough, and
comment content, such as pictures and videos, could not be encoded. Therefore, the model will be further optimized in the future;

(2) This paper mainly analyzed and researched the authenticity of Sichuan Ganzi and the place attachment of netizens. The scope of tourism destinations can be expanded upon in the follow up to verify the feasibility of the conclusion.

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