

Does Disney® Magic Meet Sustainability?

Tourism is a multifaceted and often overlooked source of environmental damage. From plane flights and boat rides to souvenirs and lodging, many activities contribute to tourism's ecological footprint. The Chinese tourism industry has a critical role to play in sustainable development as this sector accounted for up to 8% of mainland China's total carbon emissions in 2019. While in the post-pandemic period, China's tourism is rebounding with vigor and brings forward the urgency to evaluate potential opportunities towards more sustainable practices. Shanghai Disney, the first Disney theme park in mainland China, has attracted crowds of tourists since its opening in 2016, with more than 100 million visitors so far. As a globally renowned and widely advertised place of entertainment, the park set the benchmark model for many tourist attractions. So a sustainability assessment of Shanghai Disney resort is of great significance in unveiling environmental, economical and social facts that could foster new opportunities for sustainable practices in tourism.



METHODOLOGY

Our approach encompasses social media analysis and a survey, as we collected 205 answers to a questionnaire on visitor's travel behavior, consumption and environmental awareness in Shanghai Disney.

While Shanghai Disney benefits from a globally positive emotional evaluation, visitors do not value much the efforts Disney made to integrate Chinese culture into activities and events. Only 22% of respondents felt the presence of Chinese culture elements. Therefore Shanghai Disney could focus on how to better integrate traditional Chinese culture.

ENVIRONMENT



Various Disney food products

(source: Red User-Bidiubidui, Hangzhouxiaokuanfeng)

Compared with non-student respondents, students didn't strongly agree with the idea that Shanghai Disney products are over packaged. Unexpectedly, this environmental issue is more strongly perceived by the older population.

Level of Agreement Regarding Excessive Packaging for Disney Products among Students and Non-students

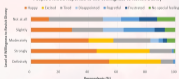


Our analysis unveils that despite the visually appealing food and goods presentation proper to Disney, the excessive packaging is posing an environmental challenge.

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SOCIETY

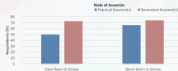
People's Mood Reported to the Willingness to Revisit Disney



The vast majority of our respondents give positive feedback like "happy" and "excited" after visiting and people's positive visiting experience motivates their revisiting.

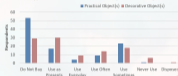
ECONOMY

Souvenir Purchase Behavior Reported to Visiting Situation



The intention of buying practical souvenirs prior to visit is higher than among actual visitors, which shows that non-visitors are reasoning on consumption behavior without the effect of impulse buying.

Types of Purchased Souvenirs Reported to Usage



A large portion of souvenirs are given as presents and the rest of them aren't used frequently. Disney souvenirs are largely subject to impulse buying and thus quickly set aside, which leads to considerable waste of resources.

CONTRIBUTION

Our assessment of Shanghai Disney's sustainability thus unveils room for improvement in various domains and could foster meaningful directions towards more sustainable practices in the entertainment industry with leading companies setting the benchmark for more sustainable urban development.

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