

Exploring Tourists' Perception to Manage Heritage Tourism at The UNESCO Site of Hegra, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

This study explores tourists' perceptions of a "sense of place" in Hegra (Saudi Arabia) through TripAdvisor reviews. The 267 reviews on TripAdvisor between 2020 and 2023 were analyzed using the VADER sentiment analysis. The results show positive factors connected to the historical value of the place but also light weakness connected to isolation, high price, privatization of services, and high level of competition. The originality of the investigation is in the selection of the case study, an archaeological site located in a country that has recently invested in the tourism sector, and in the empirical nature of the investigation, based on the search for innovative ways to manage cultural heritage and promote a tourism destination.

Keywords: Sense of place, archaeological heritage sites, UNESCO world heritage sites, VADER-based sentiment analysis, Non-negative Matrix Factorization, Hegra, Tripadvisor, Saudi Arabia.