



The Role of Interpretation in Enhancing Visitors' Sustainable Behavior at Cultural Heritage Sites

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Given the increasing visitation to cultural heritage sites, visitors' behavior and their numbers may have numerous possible harmful impacts such as wear and tear, littering, graffiti and pollution, and souvenir hunting. Therefore, encouraging visitors' positive behavior could significantly minimize such kinds of impacts. A variety of heritage management approaches are used to mitigate visitors' impacts on heritage sites. Generally, these approaches are divided into two groups – direct and indirect management approaches. Direct management approach aims to control visitor behavior through regulations that limit activities or use and leave little freedom of choice, while indirect management approach aims to influence visitor behavior by educating and informing visitors about appropriate behavior at a site.

Interpretation is considered one of effective indirect management tools that help managers to achieve the goals of sustainability to heritage sites: protection of heritage resources, and provision of high-quality experience. Using Petra Archaeological Park as an example, this research aims to investigate the role of interpretation in influencing visitors' sustainable behavior at cultural heritage sites. Interpretation was found to have a significant direct and indirect effects in enhancing visitor sustainable behavior. Moreover, the findings showed that visitor experience and satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between interpretation and visitor sustainable behavior. This research contributes to our understanding of the role of interpretation in maximizing visitors' appreciation and enjoyment, and minimizing their negative impacts on heritage sites. Managerial implications are discussed in light of the empirical finding.