

Research Report
Residents' Perception of the Silk Road
And Heritage Tourism

by

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Abstract

The current study provides an overview of literature including background, history and current revitalization of the Silk Road. The fieldwork was conducted in Xi'an by combining three methods: site review, interview, and survey questionnaire. The three research methods is able to give a comprehensive view on the topic, and support each other with findings from different angles. Findings from the site study indicates that Silk Road in the history plays important role in the formation of Xi'an heritage, in terms of historical resources, culture, and local's lifestyle. However, there is a missing link in the residents' perception when their awareness of Xi'an heritage does not connect with the historical Silk Road. Moreover, perception of the Silk Road in fact, is influenced by current development of the One Belt one Road initiative. Findings emerged from analysis of sites, interviews, and survey questionnaire survey. Heritage sites provide evidence of the extent to which Chang'an has been influenced by the Silk Road culturally and religiously. Xi'an residents' awareness of the impact from the Silk Road on the city, and how they perceive the revitalization of the Silk Road for the city were examined from interviews. Findings from survey, however, show that even Xi'an residents' have no special awareness for the Silk Road related heritages, but the heritage that most frequently chosen by them is still related to the Silk Road. Another important finding is, Xi'an residents do not see the Silk Road and OBOR as one concept, which support one fact that they live in the city, and they the Silk Road and OBOR better than people from other places. Significance appears in how the research trying to answer questions based on people, who live in the origin city of the Silk Road, and are aware of changes. This research contributes to deepen readers' knowledge on Silk Road tourism by narrowing down the scale of one city, which has been known as a starting point of the Silk Road. Besides, this research focuses not only on tangible heritages, but on the citizens who living in Xi'an. After exploring the heritage of the Silk Road in relation to living environment of Xi'an, it is able to see continuity the heritage and its value in modern days.

Key words: the Silk Road, Xi'an, Local residents, Awareness, and Perception.

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Resident Perception of the Silk Road And Heritage Tourism in Xi'an

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent decades, China has recognized the value of heritage and its importance for tourism development. Presently, there are 53 sites designated as having UNESCO World Heritage status (UNESCO, 2018). Accordingly, Chinese heritage has been researched extensively (Huang, 2006), but despite the fact that heritage tourism is an attractive topic for academic research, there are research gaps that deserve further attention. In particular, the city of Xi'an has an important and deep connection to the Silk Road, and the legacy of the historical Silk Road still exists there. However, there have been very few studies exploring Silk Road heritage in Xi'an city. Xi'an was therefore selected as the location for the current study of heritage tourism in relation to the Silk Road.

The Silk Road was initiated by ZHANG Qian in the Han dynasty, arrived at its peak prosperity peak in the Tang dynasty, before gradually declining (Gu, 2017). Besides its importance in economic exchange, the Silk Road also facilitated the exchange of art, religions, cultures, customs, and techniques, along the historical trading route (Millward, 2013). Even though the Silk Road played an important role in trade, culture, and religion exchange between different regions in the world dated back thousand years ago, the term "Silk Road" did not appear in historical research until the late 19th century. In 1877, the German geographer Ferdinand Freiherr first named this route the 'Silk Road.' Attention paid to the Silk Road in relation to tourism development was initiated later in the 1990s, when the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) called for its revitalization through cultural conservation and tourism (UNWTO, 2010). By 2014, under the effort of China, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, 33 heritage sites on the Silk Road had been certified by UNESCO as World Heritage (UNESCO, 2015), and 22 of these were located in China. In 2013, China launched the New Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative, referred as One Belt One Road, with the intent to link China with Europe and Asia through a new system of trading routes and development projects (China-Britain Business Council, 2016).

The study of Silk Road tourism in China, in general, and in Xi'an in particular, therefore, deserves the attention of academia. On the one hand, the main stream literature on Xi'an tourism mainly discusses heritage conservation, the relationships between economic growth and tourism, cultural tourism, tourism destination marketing, and so on. Generally speaking, there are very few studies connecting heritage tourism and the Silk Road. On the other hand, the study of the Silk Road was initiated in and is now focused on Mogao Cave in Dun Huang, without reference to Xi'an, even though the city used to be the capital of the Tang dynasty when the Silk Road reached its peak. It was a center where various cultures, arts, and religions integrated with one another, and also the center from where silk and other precious goods were traded to the western regions. Thus there is a gap between the two spheres of heritage tourism and the Silk Road, and this is where the current study is situated.

1.2 Research Objective and Questions

The overall objective of this study is to understand the relationship between the Silk Road and the heritage tourism of Xi'an from local residents' perspectives. The research aims to answer the following questions:

Question 1: What is the current status of the Silk Road heritage?

Question 2: How do Xi'an residents perceive Silk Road heritage in relation to Xi'an tourism?

Question 3: How do Xi'an residents distinguish between the original Silk Road and the revitalized Silk Road?

1.3 Research Methods

The current study utilized a mixed-methods approach by combining site review, interviews, and survey questionnaires. The preliminary study started with a site review, where the researcher screened heritage sites in Xi'an and categorized them based on existing literature and official documents. The researcher also conducted on-site visits to observe the Silk Road-related sites in Xi'an city. The second study included qualitative interviews conducted with 16 respondents who

were local residents in Xi'an, using both face-to-face and on-line interviews. Qualitative data collected from interviewees were analyzed using thematic coding. The third study was a questionnaire survey. The survey was designed based on the insights that emerged from the interview data. The questionnaire was distributed on-line with a goal to collect over 50 valid questionnaires. The data was analyzed using Excel. The combination of three different methods yield for higher validity and reliability as well as allowing triangulations of findings across different methods.

1.4 Importance and Significance of the Research

The study of residents' attitudes and perceptions is a core area in the tourism literature (Huang, 2006). While in China, this topic has also been under research but with limited literature produced in English. Even though there are a number of studies of the Silk Road related tourism activities, these excessively center on the economic aspects, while neglecting other social aspects. The study of resident perception is also important for policy makers, in particular with regard to the new initiative by UNESCO, the revitalization of the Silk Road for tourism development. Understanding resident's perceptions will allow the formulation of relevant policy towards promotion and branding of the Silk Road heritage for Xi'an tourism.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of 5 major parts, including the introduction, literature review, research methods, findings and analysis, and discussion and conclusion. The introductory chapter briefly presents the background of the study, the research objectives, and questions and the significance of the study, as well as the thesis structure. In the literature review, the research background and previous major studies on this topic are presented. The methodology includes design, the implementation process, and the initial outcomes. In the findings and analysis chapter, the major findings from different methods are listed based on themes, followed by an analysis in which the research questions are answered. In the discussion and conclusion chapter, the whole research process is considered, trying to find out if anything could be improved. Also, reflections on the

current study, and ideas for future research directions are discussed, followed by the research summary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review has three major parts, presenting topics regarding the Silk Road, heritage tourism, and their relationship with Xi'an (ancient Chang'an). The literature review gives the background to the current study by presenting how the Silk Road, both in the past and the present, has or is influencing this city's tourism industry. Also, the literature review sets a foundation for study design and discussion of findings in the following chapters.

2.2 The Silk Road in the Past and the Present

2.2.1 The Silk Road in History

Definition and Origins of the Silk Road

Ancient China had two major trading and cultural corridors, and one of them was the passageway along the upper reaches of the Yellow River (Sigley, 2010), known as the Silk Road. Established over two thousand years ago, through countless transformations across over 4000 kilometers, the Silk Road was a major trading route traversing Asia to Europe from the Han Dynasty (206 BC–A.D 24) (Xu, 2010; Liu, 2010; Millward, 2013). Though it is named as the Silk Road, historians think of it more as a network than as a linear route (Millward, 2013). In other words, the Silk Road is not a straight road from Asia to Europe, but a network system consisting of numerous roads and exchange spots along them.

The term "Silk Roads (*Seidenstrassen*)" was first named in literature in 1877 by Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (1833-1905), a German traveler and geographer, who studied how valued commodities travelled between China and Rome in ancient times (Gu, 2017; Millward, 2013). Albert Herrmann was the first to use it in a book title in 1910, which was widely read and cited by the leading scholars of this region (Whitfield, 2007). In 1928, E. H. Warmington wrote his examination of the classical sources on trade between Rome and India, he used the term 'silk-

routes' to indicate both land and sea routes — as indeed had von Richtofen, but it was the explorer Hedin and his archaeologist colleague, Folke Bergman (who accompanied Hedin on the Sino-Swedish Expedition of 1926–35), who seem to have been the ones to bring the term into more general usage (Whitfield, 2007).

It is interesting that the nation who contributed greatly in initiating the Silk Road never named it, and even found out its name from the neighboring country of Japan. In 1944, with Hedin's book *The Silk Road* translated into Japanese, under the title *Kinu no michi* 絹の道 (Tokyo: Takayamashoin) and a translation of Herrmann's book appeared in the same year but using 古代絹街道 for the term Silk Road (Tokyo: Kasumigase - kishobon), was when Japan first knew of this route Silk Road (Whitfield, 2007). Almost 30 years later, 'the Silk Road' was introduced to China in a direct translation — 絲綢之路 'Sichou zhi lu,' and by the 1980s it was commonplace (Whitfield, 2007).

The Chinese Section of the Silk Roads includes the Land Route and Sea Route, where the Land Route refers to the overland commercial route (WHC& UNESCO, 2018). Within China, the road goes over Longshan Mountain, follows the Hexi Corridor (Gansu Province), later passes Yumen Pass and Yang Pass (Gansu Province), before it reaches Xinjiang Autonomous Region (Sigley, 2010; WHC& UNESCO, 2018). When it goes out of China, the road stretches between the oases and the Pamir Plateau, enters and crosses Central Asia, Western Asia and Southern Asia, and then leads to Africa and Europe (Millward, 2013; WHC& UNESCO, 2018).

Figure 1 is a Map presenting the Chinese section of the Silk Road, and the inscribed properties ranked as World Heritage in Silk Roads: the Routes Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor are also marked on this map, published by the World Heritage Convention in 2014.

Figure 2.1 Map of the Silk Road (China Discovery, 2018)

The Growth, Prosperity, and Decline of the Silk Road

Here is a brief introduction of ancient dynasties' timeline of China: Han (ca. 206 BC-220 AD), Tang (ca. 618-907 AD), Song (ca. 960-1279 AD), Yuan (ca. 1271-1368 AD), Ming (ca. 1368-1644 AD), and Qing (ca. 1616-1912 AD).

Before detailed explanation, the next section provides a short introduction to the historical

timeline of the ancient Silk Road. The growth period for the Silk Road was between the Han dynasty and the early Tang, 138 BCE-AD 650, followed by a prosperous peak between the middle Tang (AD 650) and early Yuan (AD 1300) dynasties. After the Song dynasty, the Silk Road started to decline in importance.

In Chinese historical narratives, Emperor Wudi dispatched Zhang Qian on a mission to Central Asia in search of anti-Xiongnu allies (ca. 138 BCE) but this action did make him the pioneer initiator of the Silk Road, and resulted in an accelerated marketing of Chinese silk in Central Asia, whence it was traded on by way of Bactria (Kushan empire), India, ultimately ending up in Rome (Millward, 2013; Williams, 2015). At the same time, the Han court showed more interest in goods coming from the West, thus guaranteeing their safety was high on the agenda of this powerful emperor (Liu, 2010). Driven by various reasons, the Han court spent more resources on inaugurating the Silk Road for political, military and economic reasons and so on.

The Silk Road was a highway and not just for silk, but of technical innovation, as well religious beliefs, and aesthetic values (Liu, 2010). And it is a misconception to think that that silk was the primary commodity; in reality, there were a great number of goods being moved, over short and long distances, and through a variety of different mechanisms (Williams, 2015).

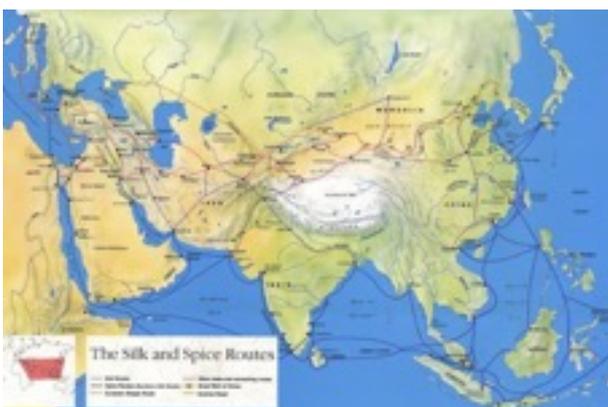
Concerning biological goods, the most famous ones include grapes, reported by Zhang Qian in Ferghana and brought back as grape seeds to be planted in the Han capital (Millward, 2013). Karakhoja sent grapes, raisins, and wine to the Tang court as gifts; cuttings from Karakhoji “mare’s-teat,” vines were planted in the Tang capital Chang’an (ancient Xi’an) (Millward, 2013). Besides grapes and their co-products, vegetables like eggplant, aubergine, lemon (India domesticated lemons), sesame, and carrots from the Himalayas and Hindu Kush, apples from the Tianshan, and onions and garlic. Originating in Central Asia, these products were brought to ancient China (Millward, 2013). Detailed linguistic analysis has also determined that Turkic *manti* was originally a loan from Chinese *mantou* 馒头 (Millward, 2013). The exchange of biological products provides a world map in biological supply and demand. For example, Eastern Asia gave Europe rice, some varieties of millet, buckwheat, sugar cane, soybeans, peaches, almonds, and some citrus fruits, and as exchange, the Mediterranean region and Iran sent back to China other citrus, alfalfa (important for horse-breeding), broad beans (fava beans), peas, turnips, spinach, and the watermelon, which is originally African but known in Chinese as *Xigua* 西瓜, or “western melon” (Millward, 2013).

Arts goods were also widely exchanged between the East and the West. One set of “short-necked lutes,” including the Persian barbat, various Indian lutes, the Chinese pipa, and so on others are

recognizable close cousins and had a great impact across the Silk Road: coming from Persia via Central Asia and brought to northern China (Xiongnu or Turks) (Millward, 2013). Even the color of representative china blue and white porcelain was discovered from cobalt mined in Persia, where it was known as “Muslim blue,” and exported to Tang China (Millward, 2013).

In terms of technological skills and products, the introduction of new Chinese agricultural technology and irrigation systems helped to increase the population of the oases all around the Takla Makan Basin, and thus improvements in agriculture and these population increases enabled the oases to support more commercial traffic through the Western Regions (Liu, 2010). Meanwhile, most techniques were expanded by transporting skilled humans (artisans, musicians, holy men, craftsmen, and so on) (Millward, 2013). Moreover, silk-manufacturing technology was spreading west and crossed the Atlantic during the time (Ma, 1996). Through the Silk Road, Europeans gained access to Indian and Chinese advances in medicine, chemistry, mathematics, paper making skills and Chinese ceramics as well (Kurin, 2002; Williams, 2015). In return, Chinese received high-quality blown glassware imported from Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. Cobalt blue-and-white tin-glazed ware introduced by Muslim merchants that later on was adopted by Chinese porcelain producers and exported it to the Middle East bearing decorations of Arabic script, illustrations of tulips, and depictions of pomegranates (Halawa and Ma, 2015).

Not only goods and techniques were exchanged along the Silk Road, but there was also a stream of priests and monks moving into the East bringing along Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and later Islam (Steinhardt, 2008; Toniolo et al., 2012). Buddhism itself was carried along these roads from India to Tibet and into China, and along this road, Dunhuang was one main point of entry for Buddhist missionaries and monks (Kurin, 2002; Amster and Chen, 2004). The first translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese was realized at Luoyang. Meanwhile, Chinese Buddhists also began to make pilgrimages to Scorpio (ancient India), in spite of hunger, thirst, bandits, wild animals, and some of the world’s most difficult desert and mountain terrain



(Amster and Chen, 2004). Among these pilgrims, the most famous during the silk road period was Xuanzang (ca. 596-664) who set out for India to study, collect scriptures, and visit sacred sites for over 16 years (Amster and Chen, 2004).

Islam was carried by Sufi teachers and by armies, moving across the continent from Western Asia into Persia and Central Asia and into China, (Kurin, 2002). The ancient record of the Tang dynasty describes was first introduced to China by “Saadibn Abi Waqqas,” who was one of the most important companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and his official envoy was considered as the milestone of the birth of Islam in China (Halawa and Ma, 2015). Later, Islam expanded gradually across the maritime and overland Silk Roads from 7th to the 10th centuries under the purposes of trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchanges (Gladney, 1996). In China, Muslim people are called the Muslim Hui minority ethnic group. Today, the Muslim Hui people constitute the second most significant of China’s 56 nationalities (Halawa and Ma, 2015). The great Mosque of Xi’an (西安大清真寺), also named *Huajuexiangsi*, is the largest mosque, and one of most complete mosques in China (Steinhardt, 2008, p. 345). It was built during the Tang dynasty, restored in the Qing Dynasty, and its convergence of Chinese and Islamic architectural features makes it remarkable (Steinhardt, 2008, p. 347). It was ranked as Chinese Important Cultural relic in 1988 and added to the UNESCO Islamic Heritage List in 1985.

Apart from these exchanges that boosted development for both sides, harmful exchanges also existed along the road, like the spread of disease, gunpowder production techniques, and armaments (Kurin, 2002; Williams, 2015). The Mongol expansion throughout the Asian continent from around 1207 to 1360 spread westward the dreaded Black Death, or bubonic plague, which devastated Europe in the last 1340s (Toniolo et al., 2012).

The Silk Road could not remain prosperous as it was at its peak. Other cheaper ways to transport goods between Euro-Asian countries were found; overland trade cannot compete with maritime trade, indicating the decay of the great road (Millward, 2013). This happened around the 13th century CE, when overland trade began to gradually decline (Gu, 2017). Its though unfair to claim that the Silk Road vanished in 13th century. The truth is, due to widespread use of the compass and lowered cost of sea transportation, the Silk Road was gradually replaced by the marine Silk Route. Great changes happened in that age. Inside China, after the Tang dynasty (907 AD), the political and economic center transferred to the southern part of China, and Chang’an lost its essential position and this had a negative influence on the Silk Road. Outside China, European countries like Holland, Spain, and Britain, expanded increasingly via sea power in the same period.

Their actions accelerated efficient global marine trading, meaning that the expensive and time-consuming traditional trading way (overland) would be gradually abandoned (Li, 2006).

The Importance of the Silk Road to China and to the World

The Silk Road has significant meaning both for China and for the world.

Back in its heyday, it was the world's great supply chain and contributed to the common prosperity and development of humankind for almost two millennia (UNWTO, 2016); in those days, it performed as an important vehicle for promoting intercultural dialogue, and strengthening regional cohesion, solidarity, and peace (UNWTO, 2017). Apart from this, the Silk Road played a key role in the emergence of the civilizations of China, Persia, Arabia, the Indian Subcontinent, Northern Africa, and Europe (Gu, 2017), as well as being a great opportunity for culture fusion for countries along the road, and connecting different peoples and cultures in a way that encouraged human creativity, for example, the Renaissance in Europe (Kurin, 2002).

The Silk Road was once commended as “if only considering trade volume and number of tourists, the silk road was one of the best in history; the way it could change history, greatly due to people spreading their own culture to other countries via the Silk Road” (Hansen & Valerie, 2012, p. 36). During this process, the transportation and communication revolutions not only accelerated the movement of goods but also the transfer of knowledge (Ma, 1996).

In a nutshell, the movement of goods was crucial, but the same was true for the volume of exchange that had impact on the capacity of many societies to construct the cities, religious monuments, and elite Silk Road structures (Williams, 2015). The most significant outcome of complex networks and interactions was the movement of people and ideas - the spreading of religions, social customs, languages, political ideas, agricultural practices, scientific knowledge, and technological innovations (Williams, 2015).

2.2.2 The Silk Road in the Present

UNESCO Programs for Revitalization of the Silk Road

In 1988, UNESCO launched the Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue project to highlight the complex cultural interactions that arose from encounters along the Silk Roads (Williams, 2015). This is an early Silk Roads related culture study. In 1994, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) promoted Silk Road tourism at the 5th International Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 19 countries called for "...a peaceful and fruitful rebirth of these legendary routes as one of the world's richest cultural tourism destination..." in the Samarkand Declaration (UNWTO, 2010, p. 3), which was the beginning of the Silk Road Action Plan. Over the years, UNWTO worked closely with key UN agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to advance sustainable development imperatives across regions around the Silk Road (UNWTO, 2016).

Originally this specialized programme was dedicated to advancing tourism along the Silk Road and in the meeting three focus areas including marketing and promotion, capacity building and destination management, travel facilitation (UNWTO, 2010). In the action plan, seven main Silk Road stake holders were defined as UNWTO secretariat, Silk Road task forces, partner UN agencies, educational institutions, Silk Road member states, NGOs, and other entities, and UNWTO affiliate members and private sectors stakeholders (UNWTO, 2010). 33 Member States participate in the UNWTO Silk Road Programme, including China. In 2014, UNESCO designated a 5,000 km stretch of the Silk Road network from Central China to the Zhetsyu Region of Central Asia as a new World Heritage Site.

The New Silk Road in China's Economic Development Policy

China has its own version of the new Silk Road, which is an initiative called the One Belt One Road (OBOR). The initial idea was mentioned in 2001, when previous Chinese president Jiang Zemin dubbed the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) a neo-Silk Road in order to revitalize intercontinental exchanges of goods and ideas (Thorsten, 2005). Another previous Chinese president HU Jintao also called on China and central Asian nations to open a new chapter of friendly relations based on the Silk Road (Thorsten, 2005). Until 2013, OBOR was launched by China's President Xi Jinping, to focus on improving and creating new trading routes, links, and business opportunities with China, passing through over 60 countries along the way, across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (China-Britain Business Council, 2016).

The OBOR initiative is a giant project, often known as the New Silk Road Economic Belt and One Road, known as the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, trying to achieve global impact through new Silk Roads called ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’ and ‘21st-Century Maritime Silk Road’ (Yu, 2016). In this project, One Belt aims to enhance and develop land routes by building an Eurasian land bridge, which will be a logistics chain from China’s east coast all the way to Western Europe; and to develop a number of economic corridors connecting China with Mongolia and Russia, central Asia and South-East Asia. One Road is a sea route rather than a road, which runs west from China’s east coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean (China-Britain Business Council, 2016).

Economic opportunities is expected to be generated for the major sectors, such as infrastructure, financial and professional services, advanced manufacturing, transport, and logistics. Many western regions inside China, such as Chongqing, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Xinjiang, and Yunnan will be chiefly focused on infrastructure and urbanization projects and expanding international trade opportunities (China-Britain Business Council, 2016). Over 900 deals worth more than \$US890 billion are currently underway including a gas pipeline from the Bay of Bengal to Myanmar through to southwest China and a rail link between Beijing and Germany’s Duisburg transport hub (Raymond, 2016). Beside the fact that, with 65 countries involved along the OBOR, it accounts for an economic value of USD 21 trillion, covering 70% of the planet’s population, three-quarters of its energy resources, a quarter of all goods and services, and 28% of global GDP; the new Silk Road also plans to link the policies, infrastructure, trade, finance, and people of many countries (Nataraj and Sekhani, 2016; Winter, 2016).

In 2013, China’s President, XI Jinping, delivered a speech at Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan, calling for China and central Asia to join in the creation of a new “Silk Road economic belt” that would bring immense commercial benefits to the region (Li, 2015). The concept of the Silk Road economic belt had come up at the beginning of 2010s, being recognized positively by academia. One Belt One Road is described as “the most significant and far-reaching initiative that China has ever put forward” (Winter, 2016). As President Xi indicated, in his speech to the Bo’ao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in 2015, the Belt and Road will “promote inner-civilization exchanges to build bridges of friendship for our people, drive human development and safeguard peace of the world” (Winter, 2016; Ylander, 2017). In 2017, “Exchange will replace estrangement, mutual learning will replace clashes, and co-existence will replace a sense of superiority,” President XI told the opening of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing in May (Frankopan, 2016).

OBOR also encourages other forms of economic cooperation for silk road countries. For example, in May 2018, the Silk Road International Trade and Investment Expo 2018 happened in Xi'an, which is the biggest commercial cooperation platform between East and West China and attracts participants from over 40 countries along the Belt and Road (ICON, 2018, p. 4).

2.2.3 Xi'an in Relation to the Silk Road in the Past and the Present

Chang'an (the name of the city was changed to Xi'an in 1369 AD, in the Ming dynasty and the modern Xi'an city was established in 1943 by the government Republic of China) was established as the political, economic and administrative nexus of a far-flung empire, and it was also the "Chinese ancient capital" of thirteen dynasties, a grand cosmopolis marking the gateway to the Silk Road (Harry, Alon & Fetscherin, 2012). Besides its function as the starting point for the great trade caravans of the Silk Road, Chang'an received widely varied cultural and economic influences from the road (Bonavia and Juanteguy, 1994, p. 52). With a population of two million, Chang'an, the grand capital, was the largest city in the world at the time and show its tolerance in commerce, religion, culture, and so on. For example, the local markets in Chang'an were always international, with Malayan patchouli and pepper from India, aromatic camphor from Java, pine seeds and rainbow carpets from Korea; Persians sold pilaf, figs and pistachios, and Turks brought sesame buns and *nang*-bread (Benn, 2002; Schafer, 1963). Another aspect to show the high internationalization of Chang'an is, in Tang, it was home to many Muslims, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, and Nestorian Christians (Wechsler, 1985). An inclusive aura existed in the early Tang, an embracing sense showing "the empire is open to all" (Wechsler, 1985).

Being an important historical city, Xi'an has always been a key as a transfer center to connect the mainland of China, and the rest part of world. From this point, Xi'an has been a major connecting city for large trade volumes and a people transit center not only in the past, but also in present days (Liu, 2010). This advantageous geographical location makes Xi'an a remarkable transit center especially when considering national strategic development plan. Since 21st century, Xi'an is determined as one of China's national regional center with three essential functions. Firstly, Xi'an performs as economic, technological, educational, energy, financial, cultural, and commercial centers for the Silk Road Economic Belt, the New Eurasian Continental Bridge, the Guanzhong City Group, and as well as the Yellow River Valley. Secondly, the city is one of the largest aircraft manufacturing bases in China. Thirdly, it is the political, economic, and cultural center of Shaanxi

province (China's Development and Reform Commission, 2009).

The recent development of Xi'an is marked in three major milestones. In 2009, the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Zone Development Plan was approved by China's State Council, in which it was proposed that to make Xi'an the national technology research center, a regional trading, logistics and event center, a regional finance center, an international first-class tourism destination, as well as the base for high-tech industries and advanced manufacturing industries (China's Development and Reform Commission, 2009). In 2013, the State Council approved the establishment of Xixian New District, which became the 7th state-level new district in China. Xixian New District consists of 5 new cities, 3 of which put a focus on the tourism industry or related industries, for example, one focus of Konggang New City is modern service industry, and one focus of Fengdong New City is the culture and tourism industry and event business. In 2017, the China (Shaanxi) Pilot Free Trade Zone was established and located inside of Xi'an city. The same year, Xi'an was identified as the second batch of national tourism reform and innovation precedent area, with a goal to make a breakthrough in tourism industry's mechanism, to improve tourism development speed and quality both to the national leading level, and to provide exemplary experiences for the reform of tourism in the whole province and the country (Shaanxi Provincial Tourism Development Commission, 2017).

There are more ways for Xi'an to better engage in the revitalization of the Silk Road, becoming an active participant with help of its historical influence and its important geographic position where trade, culture, people have never stopped being exchange.

2.3 Heritage and Heritage Tourism

2.3.1 Definition on Heritage and Heritage Tourism

In academia there exist different interpretations of 'heritage,' the most widely accepted one being 'the present day use of the past' (Ashworth, 2003; Graham et al., 2000). Heritage must be broadly defined to contain not only major historic sites, but the entire location where history happens (Bowes, 1989, p. 36). In Hardy's perspective, heritage can be both tangible and intangible, in which heritage is linked to the past, and that it can be passed down to current and future generations (1988, p. 333-338), agreed by Harrison as well (2005). As many authors have pointed out, it is what elements of the past a society wishes to preserve (Fladmark, 1996; Hall and McArthur, 1998).

Heritages have been categorized in different ways. Timothy and Boyd (2003) classified heritage into tangible immovable resources (e.g. buildings, rivers, natural areas); tangible movable resources (e.g. objects in museums, documents in archived); or intangibles such as values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, and including experiences such as festivals, arts, and cultural events (p. 3). In addition, there is another way to categorize heritages, which will consist of living cultural heritage (e.g. fashions, foods, customs) (Boniface, 1995), built heritage (e.g. historic cities, cathedrals, monuments, castles) (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000), industrial heritage in which elements of a region's past that were influential in its growth and development (e.g. coal, lumber activity, textiles) (Edwards and Llurdés, 1996), personal heritage in which aspects of regions that have value and significance to individuals or groups of people (e.g. like the Normandy beach landings, cemeteries, religious sites) (Hall and McArthur, 1998), and dark heritage (e.g. places of atrocity, symbols of death and pain, and elements of the past some would prefer to forget) (Lennon and Foley, 1999) and so on. Some observers, including UNESCO, have extended the scope to include natural heritage as well (Boyd & Butler, 2000).

The UNWTO defines heritage tourism as “an immersion in the natural history, human heritage, arts, philosophy and institutions of another region or country” (Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p. 1). And heritage tourism is usually under the purview of cultural tourism (and vice versa), being one of the most notable and widespread types of tourism and is among the very oldest forms of travel (Timothy and Boyd, 2006). Its studies embrace a wide range of topics or themes, indulging the analysis of architectures and landscapes, artifacts, and traditional events and festivals representing different aspects of the past (Sofield & Li, 1998; Halewood & Hannam, 2001).

Tighe (1986) mentioned that tourism researchers realized that some people traveled specifically to gain a deeper understanding of the culture or heritage of a destination. This point gained support from Zeppel and Hall in 1992, who claimed that, in the modern tourism framework, heritage tourism has been taken as special interest travel. Timothy (2006) also agreed that heritage tourism is one of the most significant types of tourism in terms of visitors and attractions, involving hundreds of millions of people every year; and thus heritage tourism has also become one of the most researched subjects in the field of tourism studies.

In recent decades, the growth of ‘heritage industry’ is becoming obvious especially in the context of tourism (Feighery, 2008). Similarly, Silberberg (1995) considers cultural and heritage tourism as a tool of economic development that achieved by attracting large number of visitors from outside a host community who show willingness to know the community's history, art works, science,

lifestyle, and their heritage. This key feature of heritage tourism makes it a powerful economic increasing tool. Studies have shown that heritage tourists usually stay longer and spend more money for this travel experience than other kinds of travelers, thus making this form of tourism an important economic development tool (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2002). As one of the largest forms of tourism, visitors to historic places and money spent on in the areas of lodging, food, admission fees and shopping, it also employs millions of people directly and indirectly (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

2.3.2 Heritage Tourism of China and Xi'an

Heritage Conservation and Tourism Development in China

Countless relics of China's precious heritage were either destroyed or taken away by invaders during two world wars and the civil war happening of the 1930-40s. And China has in recent decades lost a great deal of tangible heritage as the bulldozers of urbanization "destroy the old to make way for the new" (*pojiulixin* 破旧立新), to replace its cultural past with a new Chinese socialist culture (Sofield & Li, 1998; Sigley, 2010). In terms of intangible cultural heritage, while there has been a major revival in some areas after the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), many traditional cultural practices have begun to disappear from everyday life and are in danger of becoming 'museum relics' or of vanishing altogether.

However, with the advent of Deng Xiaoping's "open door" policies in 1978, tourism was chosen as the approach to help China achieve modernization, and thus heritage items were put under conservation due to their tourism values (Sofield and Li, 1998). Right after these policies, the Heritage Conservation Act 1982 was passed, designed to strengthen the conservation of China's heritage (Sofield and Li, 1998), and under it the National Cultural Administrative Management Bureau was established, and each province, county and municipal council was charged with the responsibility of setting up its own heritage conservation organization (Article 3 of the Act).

With rapid economic growth, heritage conservation still faces challenges from urban development (ICON, 2018). In Shaanxi province, growth risks the survival of buried archaeology; thus, the heritage conservation needs of Shaanxi province are urgent and widely recognized - there are 7.74 million objects in Shaanxi and a quarter of all finds need conservation along with the

scientific research to support this (ICON, 2018). According to ICON's recent report (2018), another problem challenging heritage conservation is the lack of agreed standards of conservation.

In China, with a high number domestic population, heritage sites in Chinese potentially attract and serve a much higher number of domestic tourists than their equivalents in other countries (Su & Wall, 2011). There is also the fact that the Chinese have high destination preferences for heritage sites that has received official recognition, like World Heritage Sites (Nyiri, 2006). But too many visitors put fragile heritage in a dangerous situation. Large numbers of tourists do not only have negative impacts on heritage sites. By contrast, some scholars argue that tourism development helps to enhance the international reputation of a site and increases the public awareness of the value of World Heritage and the importance of heritage conservation (Fan & Zheng, 2003; Fang, 2004).

Indeed, the State Administration for Cultural Heritage announced in 2009 that over 30,000 items on the 1982 list of cultural heritage sites in China no longer exist; they have been removed from history (Branigan, 2009). So far China has 38 sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor from Xi'an (WHC, 2009; Sigley, 2010). In addition, 51 sites are on the tentative list of World Heritages (WHC, 2009).

In recent years, the Chinese government has realized how important cultural heritage is for the nation and has already put resources into protection programs. As two of the changed approaches that have resulted, the 28th Congress of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee was hosted in Suzhou in 2004, and the first 'China Cultural Heritage Day' was launched in 2006 to educate and raise the awareness of the issue amongst the general public (Sigley, 2010). Given the fact that tourism development in China is still at an early stage with mass sightseeing tourism as the main tourism style (Fang, 2004), more time may in need for China to explore how to achieve a good balance between heritage conservation and tourism development.

Heritage Tourism in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province

Xi'an was the capital city of ancient China for thirteen dynasties, existing in history for a total of more than 3,100 years. Xi'an is the oldest of the Four Great Ancient Capitals, having held the position under several of the most important dynasties in Chinese history, including Western Zhou, Qin, Western Han, Sui, and Tang (Encarta, 2008). As the most influential dynasty, Tang has left many heritage items for Xi'an, including the urban layout (Yu, 2014). The long history left Xi'an

with abundant historical heritage, tangible and intangible, which have become valuable tourism resources and attract millions of tourists for Xi'an today.

Among all the heritage sources, the Terra-cotta Warriors of the First Emperor of Qin dynasty is the most attractive one (Lihe, 1931), an immense necropolis billed as the “Eighth Wonder of the World” that has drawn a vast number of tourists from within China and abroad since opening to the public in the early 1980s. This alone makes Xi'an renowned internationally (Harry, Alon & Fetscherin, 2012). Besides the world-famous Terra-cotta Warriors, there are other exciting heritage items presenting Chinese history and cultures. The founding emperor Liu Bang of the Han dynasty established his capital in Chang'an and built his first palace, Changle Palace (长乐宫, *perpetual happiness*) across the river (Steinhardt, 1999). The City Wall was built based on the imperial city of Tang Chang'an in the Ming dynasty, and it is the best preserved and the biggest city wall in the world (Yu, 2014). The south part of the city wall (built in Ming dynasty) still stands with two famous Buddhist pagodas constructed in the early Tang, which are the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and the Small Wild Goose Pagoda (Harry, Alon & Fetscherin, 2012), and this shows the mixed heritage that belongs to various dynasties.

Besides tangible heritage, Xi'an also has well-known intangible heritages, like the Shadow Play, Shaanxi Opera that originated in the Tang dynasty, Xi'an Guyue 西安鼓乐 (ranked as China's National Intangible Heritage), and Tongshengxiang Beef and Mutton production skills. In addition to these, history tales contribute greatly to the variety of intangible heritage items. For example, the story of Monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 600-664 CE), in which a famous Chinese Buddhist monk who went to Scorpio (India) to study Buddhism and brought thousands of Buddhist scriptures back to ancient China that stimulated the spreading of Buddhism in East Asia, is well-known across the whole China. A famous novel *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西游记) which fictionalizes Xuanzang's journey to India in the company of the mythical King Monkey and other colorful characters was written by Wu Cheng'en 吴承恩 (ca. 1500-1582 CE) (Wong, 2002, p. 43), and has even been produced for television in Japan (an NHK production) and Australia (a Netflix production).

Compared with decades ago, the Xi'an government has realized the urgency and importance for the economy to develop heritage tourism to the city, and thus a series of policies have been introduced publicly to create a better environment for the heritage tourism market. In recent years, a series of tourism development policies, and relevant conferences, forums, and so on, continue to be held in Xi'an.

Initially, depending on the world-famous Terra-cotta warriors, the Xi'an Tourism Office used "Xi'an: The Hometown of Qin Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses" to promote its tourism in international markets. Between 2004 and 2005, another policy called "Prosperous Qin and Tang Dynasties Strategy" took the dominating position (Xi'an Tourism Office, 2012), and was proposed when Xi'an tourism was facing a diverse history background and an urgent need to utilize all these cultures. This strategy was a response to the problem and focuses on cultural revitalization and culture product development in a commercial sense. More specifically, the new strategy continues to focus on Qin culture, but in the meantime developing Tang culture-based tourism products, to form a culture and tourism combination of Qin and Tang.

Under the guidance of this government plan, in October 2006 the "2006 Xi'an Grand Cultural Event" was held at the site of the Tang Da-ming Palace, showing the charisma of culture and prosperity of Tang dynasty to the world, leading to strong repercussions in the community and great enhancement of the visibility of Xi'an, which promoted the simultaneous development of tourism and cultural industries in Xi'an.

In relation to the Silk Road, an annual conference held in Xi'an, the Eurasian Economic Forum has been held since 2005. Every year different topics are proposed as conference theme based on global economic forms. In 2011, the topic for the forum was Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism's Sustainable Development (Shaanxi Tourism Office, 2011), and among all topics, the Silk Road is in the center. The conference aims to protect the historical heritage of mankind, to inherit the fine national culture, and to safeguard the diversity and creativity of the world's cultural heritage, with a goal to promote heritage protection, as well as the sustainable development of tourism and the economy of the countries in Europe and Asia, especially along the Silk Road. Besides, it tries to drive the interactive cooperation and openness between the western region of China and the world, and further market the protection of cultural heritage in Shaanxi and its heritage tourism. At these conferences, it is mentioned by government officials that the Silk Road is a very competitive tourist brand from China and needs a speeding up and deepening of the development of the tourism brand of the Silk Road through joint cooperation.

In 2014, Site Protection Projects were operated by the Shaanxi Tourism Office. Xi'an has a site, of which the size can reach to 100 square kilometers, distributed with items from dynasties such as the Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang. A witness to the magnificent history of the Tang dynasty, Daming palace area once became the largest shantytown in Xi'an. After nearly 6 years of reconstruction and the relocation of 100,000 people, there has been built an area with a size equivalent to the same size

as four Forbidden City National Palace Parks. Like the Daming Palace site, Han dynasty's Chang'an City site, Datang West City, Tang City Wall, Qujiang Pool, and a large number of other sites have been developed in a protective way and integrated into public life. Zhang Jinqiu, the architect and academician who witnessed the government's effort to protect heritage sites in Xi'an has commented "Xi'an implemented a series of ruins protection projects to combine historic and cultural heritage protection with modern urban planning and construction, which added new connotations and meanings to Silk Road tourism." .

In 2017, the Shaanxi Tourism Office made several plans for redesigning heritage tourism products in Xi'an, and one goal is to upgrade historical and cultural products. For example, improvements to the environment and service quality regarding the Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses are in process, and the construction of the Han capital Chang'an National Heritage Park has been accelerated with the expectation of forming a unique Han cultural heritage area. Both of these will become part of the core competitiveness of Xi'an tourism, and will be representative heritage tourism sites in Xi'an.

2.3.3 Silk Road Tourism

The Silk Road was one of the 15 earliest heritage tourism products developed by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) for overseas tourists as "the Silk Road Tour" from 1992 (Wei, 1993; Ouyang, 2012). In the same year, 249 sites were designated as "historical culture sites," including Dunhuang, once an essential trading town on the Silk Road. Furthermore, 116 projects were designed to turn Dunhuang into an international tourism center (Sofield and Li, 1998). Silk Road tourism product is also recommended by World Tourism Organization (WTO), due to its cultural value for humanity (Ouyang, 2012).

However, Silk Road tourism products do not have a strong demand in the Chinese market, due to problems such as low investment from provinces along the Silk Road, incomplete infrastructure, and vague tourism branding (Ouyang, 2012; Ma and Liu, 2015). The Silk Road theme tourism products focus on sightseeing, with numerous visitors, low cashflow, and a short industry chain (Ouyang, 2012). For example, in UNESCO World Heritage Mogao Cave, tourists spend only around 2 hours on walking in and out of some caves, missing an immersive tourism experience.

Concerning Silk Road tourism development, Chinese scholars (Ma and Liu, 2014; Luo *et al.*,

2016) emphasize the importance of regional joint cooperation by building a Silk Road tourism economic belt. Wang *et al.* (2007), Ouyang (2012), and Ma and Liu (2015a) identify the disadvantages existing in Silk Road tourism products and its future development paths, followed by their suggestions for Silk Road tourism development in terms of branding, international cooperation, government support, and so on. In Ma and Liu's paper (2015), the current status and problem of Silk Road heritage tourism are analyzed, and strategies proposed in terms of branding, deepening both domestic and international market, cooperation and innovation. Zhang, Shen, and Liu (2015) propose regional cooperation on Silk Road tourism in the Silk Road Economic Belt background after analyzing the historic background, possible cooperation model, and cooperation mechanism. Besides the historic background of the Silk Road, its modern concept in the framework of OBOR is broadly mentioned in Chinese scholars' discussion, indicated by Ouyang (2012), Ma and Liu (2014), Ma and Liu (2015), Zhang, Shen, and Liu (2015), and others.

In 2013 and 2015, the 6th and 7th Silk Road International Tourism Conference was held in Dunhuang, Gansu province, and Xi'an, Shaanxi province, separately making some practical achievement on tourism development cooperation on Silk Road tourism (Ma and Liu, 2015). According to the Xi'an Initiative (2015), in the meeting, tourism ministers have reached the following consensus: expanding the scale of interchange of visitor and raising the lever of travel facilitation, conducting joint marketing, and carrying out the program of "Visit the Silk Road," and deepening regional cooperation and boosting the quality of tourism exchanges (UNESCO, 2015).

2.4 Literature Gaps and Synthesis

The literature review reveals several gaps that warrant further study. The Silk Road is an important research topic. However, owing to its complexity and massive geographical coverage, the Silk Road is still under-researched and over-simplified (Williams, 2015). Research on the Silk Road has been done by joint effort on its situation in the past, for example Wood (1946), Liu (2010), Sigley (2010), Hansen (2012), Chin (2013), Millward (2013), and Williams (2015). In these studies, the description of the Silk Road in the past is quite comprehensive, including the origin of the road, the detailed exchanges happening along the road, positive and negative impacts of the road, and so on. Other scholars have discovered other interesting exchanges and their impact along the Silk Road, like Amster and Chen (2004) studied the spread of Buddhist art, Frankopan (2016) studied the Silk Road in today's and future concepts, Halawa and Ma (2015) discovered how migration

happened along the road with a focus on the Hui Chinese ethnic group, and Ma (1997) researched the position of the Silk Road on the raw silk market in modern history. In Chinese academia, scholars have researched certain topics in terms of regional tourism cooperation in the context of the Silk Road by Luo *et al.* (2016), Hexi corridor tourism resource integration by Wang *et al.* (2007), Silk Road world heritage tourism development strategy by Ma and Liu (2015), and intangible heritage tourism development by Ouyang (2012) and so on.

The first gap in the existing literature is that Silk Road studies have mainly focus on its historic facts, functions, and influences, while there is a lack of studies on how people who were once close to this part of history perceive it. Same can be said for the study of the new Silk Road; it focuses on the economic aspects and few studies have looked at its impact on local people and to what extent locals are aware of the changes caused by the new Silk Road. Besides this, studies of people's perception of the Silk Road in the past and modern times has never been done, and this is an important work before digging deeper on how people feel connected with the Silk Road, and so on. For Chinese people, especially for Xi'an residents, as they have lived in the city generation by generation since Tang Chang'an, even now they live and are immersed in a heavy historic atmosphere, while they cannot really be conscious of this special city atmosphere, like the road they pass by everyday maybe built 2100 years ago, as they are getting so used to this.

The second gap is about the focus and current status in Chinese tourism academia. Research on World Heritage tourism in China is a recent topic if compared with other developed countries, emerging gradually in the past 10 years (Su and Wall, 2011), and research on heritage tourism is still quite new to Chinese academia. In the paper Chinese Research on World Heritage Tourism by Su and Wall in 2011, they admitted that most papers reviewed in their study were published after 2004. And according to Zhang and Ma (2006), and Huang (2006), compared with research worldwide, Chinese academics still have not often studied on local communities at World heritage sites in China. What's more, studies in China focus on economic influence, and how to drive economic increase by all means through tourism (Huang and Chen, 2016). Studies regarding local community and tourism's influence on them are never taken as something important, neither do they cover locals' awareness of tourism's influence on lifestyles and their perception of how tourism changes a city bit by bit.

Another gap exists in the effective exchange between international academia and China domestic academia (Huang and Chen, 2016). There is still little understanding and knowledge of tourism studies in China conducted by academics outside of China (Bao *et al.*, 2014). Problems happen due

to language barrier, as relevant papers are only available in Chinese and thus bring difficulty to academic studies.

In conclusion, in order to meet the research purpose of this study, the literature review has focused on the Silk Road related part, especially on exchanges along the road and the following impact on the city. This part is the foundation of the research, because these impacts last when time passes, and they will be the hint to remind people of Silk Road history. Besides these changes remaining from history, the other hint left by the existence of the Silk Road is some heritage items in the city. They have stood in Xi'an for at least 1000 years, people living in the city have been too familiar to notice them, or know them well. This aspect could be a good angle to test people's perception for the Silk Road. Last but not least, the gap analysis has shown that China domestic academia lacks attention and research on local residents' perception in a heritage city or the community that lives around heritage sites. Lacking enough literature from this perspective can however make the present study more relevant and necessary.

Chapter 3: Study Methods

3.1 Introduction

This research combines three methods; site review, interview, and survey. The combination of the three methods gives the research a comprehensive view to answer research questions, as they complement each other.

In the site review study, the Silk Road heritage sites were systematically classified into a few categories according to the Chinese heritage classification system. One benefit of this kind of review is it is able to investigate the continuous development of heritage sites using an official ranking requirement. During the site visiting tour, each site was carefully studied, pictures taken, and the information on tourism brochures read. The disadvantage of site review is that it is limited to gaining information only by observing sites and reading tourism brochures. In order to have a deep understanding towards these heritage sites, pre-work is necessary, like knowing the historical and cultural backgrounds of heritage sites from literature reviews.

The first study of the study is far away from residents' perception and totally based on the heritage items themselves. While the second and third studies gained insights into residents' perception by interviewing them or reviewing data collected from survey questionnaires.

An interview is a very straight and clear way to dig out what buried in the interviewees' mind. Unlike survey questionnaires, an interview allows interviewees to make clarification about their answers, and thus the interview responses are capable of reflecting quite comprehensive thinking by interviewees. However, as a research method, interviews also have their limitations, like small audiences, time consuming, low efficiency, and further, its data collection and analysis process is complicated and might be subjective (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 2013).

Compared to interviews, a survey questionnaire is a low-cost and more accessible method to assess opinions and trends if surveys are able to reflect the views of a genuine cross-section of the population (Shuttleworth, 2008). Moreover, quantitative data collected from survey questionnaires is easier to process using analysis tools like SPSS and Excel, and the data analysis process is more objective (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 2013). The disadvantages of surveys include prone to error, low recovery ratio compared with interviews, and samples need careful selection as they need to ensure statistical meaning.

The combination of three methods is a good way to gain a comprehensive insight in the research. For example, by visiting silk road heritage sites in Xi'an, there was a chance to see how these heritage sites connected with the city. From this it appears that the Silk Road heritage sites and Xi'an closely bonded with each other. These sites are separated around the city, easy to approach as residents may pass by them every day when go to work or school. However, this may affect residents' identity as a citizen of Xi'an, and more or less influence their perceptions of the city and heritages. Interviews are an essential part of the research and also are a pilot study for the survey questionnaire.

Site review outcomes are integrated with the other two study methods to answer the first research question. Interview data are open-coded, and the survey questionnaire has been prepared based on the open coding outcome. Data collected from survey questionnaire are analyzed with Excel. The results of interview and survey questionnaire are used to answer the second and third research questions.

3.2 Study I: Comprehensive Site Review: System Analysis and Site Investigation

Prior to the site review tour, relevant information about the Silk Road heritage sites was reviewed and later used classify them into three categories, including general tourism sites, heritage sites, and Silk Road related sites. In 1981, Xi'an was listed as a "World Historic City" by UNESCO. Table 3.1 presents the classification of heritage sites in Xi'an (Xi'an Tourism Office, 2017).

Table 3.1 Classification of Heritage Sites in Xi'an (Source: Xi'an Tourism Office)

Name	General Tourism Sites	Heritage Sites	The Silk Road Related Sites
Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses (Qin)	√	√	
The Huaqing Hot Spring (Qin)	√	√	
E-fang Palace Site (Qin)		√	
The Silk Road-the Routes Network of Chang'an - Tianshan Corridor (Han)	√	√	√
Xi'an Han City Lake Scenic Area (Based on Han Chang'an site)	√	√	
Xi'an City Wall (Han)	√	√	
Zhangqian Tomb (Han)	√	√	√
The Hanyang Emperor Mausoleum (Han)	√	√	
Cottage Temple (Han)	√	√	√
The Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Tang)	√	√	√
The Small Wild Goose Pagoda (Tang)	√	√	√
Da Xing Shan Temple (Tang)		√	
Daming Palace Site (Tang)	√	√	√
Xingjiao Temple (Tang)	√	√	√
Bin County Buddhist Temple Grottoes (Tang)	√	√	√
Great Mosque of Xi'an (Tang)	√	√	√
Forest of Stone Steles Museum (Song)	√	√	√
Shaanxi Historical Museum (Modern)	√		

Among all the heritage sites listed above, the most relevant one for this study was the Silk Road - the Routes Network of the Chang'an - Tianshan Corridor, from the Tang dynasty, as declared by China, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. This was the first successful case that reported a world cultural heritage item by joint countries (ICOMOS CHINA, 2018). When the Silk Road spanned Eurasia, 22 heritage sites in the Routes Network of the Chang'an - Tianshan Corridor were actually in China, including imperial capitals, palace groups, and Buddhist cave temples (ICOMOS CHINA, 2018). The heritage sites linked with the Silk Road are listed on the official page of the Silk Road UNESCO website, and this is the foundation for the choice of sites to review.

These heritage sites are spread across 4 provinces of China, including Shaanxi, Gansu, Xinjiang,

and Henan Provinces. In Shaanxi province, heritage sites involved with the Silk Road include the Han Chang'an Weiyang Palace Site (汉长安城未央宫遗址), the Zhangqian Tomb in Hanzhong City (张骞墓), the Tang Chang'an Daming Palace Site (唐长安城大明宫遗址), the Big Giant Wild Goose Pagoda (大雁塔), the Small Giant Wild Goose Pagoda (小雁塔), Xingjiao Temple (兴教寺), and the Bin County Buddhist Temple Grottoes that located in Bin County (彬县大佛寺石窟) (ICOMOS CHINA, 2018). Most sites are located in Xi'an in the Wei-yang District, and Yan-ta District; while 2 sites (Zhangqian Tomb and the Bin County Buddhist Temple Grottoes) are located outside the city. The research was carried out in March 2018, lasting for one week. During the visiting, 2 things were focused on: First was to read the heritage introduction carefully to check if any of them mention the Silk Road; and the Second was to observe heritage sites carefully, trying to find hints to prove the cultural and religious connection between Xi'an and the Silk Road.

A brief site description is as follows:

1. Han Chang'an Site (Han Dynasty)

Han Chang'an site is located in Weiyang District of Xi'an, which used to be the capital city of the Han Dynasty, consisting of Changle Palace, Weiyang Palace, city wall, and so on associated sites. When the dynasty changed, the great palace was abandoned, and there is therefore only a few palace remnants left for today.

Figure 3.1 Han Weiyang Palace Site (Source: personal photography)



2. Zhangqian Tomb (Han Dynasty)

During the West Han's 210 years of history, Chang'an was its political, economic, and cultural center. It is considered to be where the Silk Road started in history. Han is also recognized as the dynasty to initiate the Silk Road by sending Zhang Qian to visit central and western Asia.

Zhang Qian was a Chinese diplomat and explorer from Han. He travelled to Central Asia twice in great risk. As exchanges, he brought back reliable information about Central Asia area to the Chinese imperial court and played a key role in pioneering the major route of transcontinental trade, the Silk Road.

Figure 3.2 Zhangqian Tomb (Source: personal photography)



3. Cottage Temple Scenic Site (Later Qin Period, 384-417)

In the Later Qin, Kumārajīva resided in Caotang Temple, where he translated Madhyamika-sastra (中论), Sata-sastra (百论) and Dvadeshamukha Shastra (十二门论), which laid the foundation for the theory of East Asian Mādhyamaka, so he is respected as the founder of East Asian Mādhyamaka and Caotang Temple is considered as the cradle of East Asian Mādhyamaka.

Figure 3.3 Cottage Temple Scenic Site (Source: personal photography)



4. Tang Chang'an Site (Tang Dynasty)

Daming Palace was the largest palace among the three main palaces, in which the Tang emperors lived and dealt with daily work.

Figure 3.4 Tang Daming Palace Site (Source: personal photography)



5. The Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Tang Dynasty)

Xuan Zang was confirmed as the first host by a Tang emperor right after the completion of the monastery, translating Buddhist scripture for over ten years. The Pagoda was used for reserving Buddhist scriptures Xuan Zang brought from Scorpio (ancient India).

Figure 3.5 The Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Source: personal photography)



6. The Small Wild Goose Pagoda

The Small Wild Goose Pagoda was built to preserve the Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist figures, and so on, brought back from Scorpio (ancient India) by Monk Yi Jing (义净).

Figure 3.6 The Small Wild Goose Pagoda (Source: personal photography)



7. Xingjiao Temple

Xingjiao Temple was built in 669AD to re-inter Xuanzang and was one of eight famed temples in Fanchuan in the Tang Dynasty. Inside the temple, there is a five-storied Buddhist relic pagoda,

preserving the relics of Xuanzang, along with the pagodas of his disciples, Kuiji and Yuance.

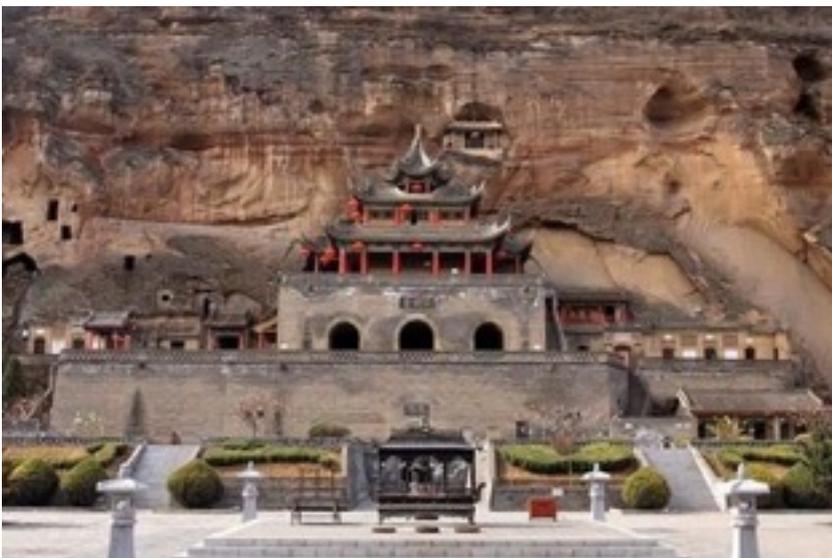
Figure 3.7 Xingjiao Temple (Source: personal photography)



8. Grand Buddha Grottoes

Inside the caves, the stone sculptures, clay sculptures, and colorful paintings of the grotto reflect characteristics of the Buddhist culture of Central Asia, and how Buddhism spread along the Silk Road.

Figure 3.8 Grand Buddha Grottoes (Source: personal photography)



9. Forests of Stone Steles Museum

In the Forests of Stone Steles Museum, there are two national treasures existed as historic records of the Silk Road. One is a Stele recording the propagation in China of the luminous religion of Daqin, erected in 781 AD, documenting 150 years of early Christianity in China; the other is the Da Xia Stone Horse, which is the only heritage item found in China to prove the existence of the Xia dynasty.

Figure 3.9 Forests of Stone Steles Museum (Source: personal photography)



10. Great Mosque of Xi'an

The Great Mosque of Xi'an was initially built in the Tang Dynasty, while the majority of it was completed during the Ming Dynasty. Overall, the mosque's architecture combines a traditional Chinese architectural form with Islamic functionality.

Figure 3.10 Great Mosque of Xi'an (Source: personal photography)



Upon reviewing the Silk Road sites, there are some standout findings. For example, the outlook of Great Mosque of Xi'an might make visitors misunderstand it as a traditional Chinese Buddhism temple. Only after people step in the building, they will find out Muslim cultures are hidden inside. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that heritage in Xi'an has changed along with the history of China. Many sites had been destroyed and rebuilt, which change the original look, other were rebuilt and preserved their original shape. The heritage of the Silk Road, therefore, cannot be explored or fixed to a particular period, but it should be seen as being under continuous development and change.

3.3 Study II: Qualitative Interviews

The researcher identified local residents in accordance to the category of stakeholders engagement according to the Silk Road action plan 2016-17 (UNESCO, 2017). Reseracher used quota sampling methods to recruit informants for interviews from the business sector, the education sector, the political sector, the NGO sector and so on. Then the main category of five sectors can be listed in detail. The residents were selected for interviews with a broad relevance, and therefore it brings more insights for the research (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Stakeholder Analysis (Source: Adapted from *Action Plan for the Silk Road 2016-17* by UNESCO)

	Business sector	Education sector	Political sector	NGO sector	Others
1	Souvenir shop	Professor	Government department	NGO	Destination promotion (advertisement)
2	Travel agency	Student	Tourism office (provincial and city level)		Task force
3	Restaurant	Educational institutions	World organizations (UN, UNESCO, UNWTO local offices)		Resident
4	Hotel (can be further classified based on star levels)		Other related offices		

5	Transport (Taxi, flight company, bus company)				
6	Tourism sites				

In the original plan, the ideal situation was to interview two or three participants from each category. In reality, the political and NGO sectors are not that easy to access. Therefore, most of the participants in the interview are from the business sector education sector, and local residents of Xi'an.

Some interviewees were chosen randomly when doing site reviews, like the shop owner and the souvenir shop owner; other interviewees were acquaintances who live in Xi'an. The reason these people were chosen is they are accessible; otherwise, it would have been difficult to interview people if there is no connection between them and the research. That is why interviewing acquaintances became the first priority. One criterion when picking interviewees was they have proper educational backgrounds, Bachelor Degree or above, to ensure they had a clear vision for the Silk Road and what is likely to happen in the city after the revitalization of the Silk Road.

6 people were interviewed in person. During the data analysis process, one problem showed up in that not enough information was gained from these 6 interviewees. In this case, it was decided to add 10 more interviews to the study and an online interview was the best solution for this (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Interviewee Presentation (Source: authors' own work)

Interviewee	Interviewee category	Interviewee	Interviewee category
1	Shop owner	9	Citizen 3
2	Souvenir shop owner	10	Citizen 4
3	Travel agency	11	Citizen 5
4	Professor	12	Flight company employee
5	Student 1	13	Citizen 6
6	Student 2	14	Citizen 7
7	Local Residents 1	15	Citizen 8
8	Local Citizen 2	16	Tour guide

The interview protocol was prepared based on three major themes emerged from the literature review and the site review: tourism in Xi'an, the Silk Road in the past and present, and heritage tourism in Xi'an. The interview questions can be found in the appendix part.

3.4 Study III: Questionnaire Survey

Based on the themes that emerged from the interviews, the survey questionnaire included 19 questions covering the 3 aspects. Considering the geographical inconvenience, I chose an on-line channel to distribute survey questionnaires. Compared with the traditional distribution way, on-line distribution is more flexible for both sides and usually means a high response rate. By this way, more participants showed willingness to join the survey as they can use time fragments to finish a questionnaire.

The work process for the on-line survey questionnaire included question input, questionnaire distribution, collection, and analysis. As the research was designed to study residents' perception and awareness, the researchers' friends living in Xi'an and their parents were chosen as the target group. The 16 interviewees were invited to join the survey, and a total of 37 participants joined the survey. In total, 53 effective responses were collected. The average time to finish the survey questionnaire was around 5 minutes. For the detailed content of the survey questionnaire, please check Appendix: Survey Questionnaire at the end of the thesis.

After going through the data collected from the survey questionnaire, Excel was selected as the main analytical tool to process these data.

3.5 Conclusion

To sum up, three methods were used in the research; site review, interviews, and a survey questionnaire. As each method has its own pros and cons, combination of the three may be an efficient way to achieve a comprehensive study.

All data collected from this section were used in the study, as seen in the next chapter, Findings and Analysis. Considering the purpose of the research, the data are reported on by theme, and the research questions answered.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The findings and analysis chapter covers, the findings as organized based on research themes, and the answers to the research questions.

In the site review analysis, the historic backgrounds of each heritage site are explored, focusing on the impact of the religion and art spreading along the Silk Road on heritage sites in Xi'an. The interview data analysis explains the local residents' perception of Xi'an tourism and the Silk Road in the past and the present. The survey data analysis focus on heritage and heritage tourism in Xi'an, how city residents perceive the Silk Road, and their perception on the Silk Road in the past and the present as well.

4.2 Study I: Site Review

The site review was conducted in March 2018. Silk road heritage sites located in Xi'an or close to the city were visited. Before each site review tour, the heritage sites were screened and collected from heritage tourism attraction list available on the Shaanxi Tourism Bureau official website, and selected sites that were linked to the Silk Road and located in or close to Xi'an. During each site visit photos were taken, interviews carried out including tourists and administrators, and relevant site information recorded. The summary of findings from the site review are presented in table 4.1. Please note the following dynasty period dates: Han dynasty (ca. 206 BC-220 AD), Tang dynasty (ca. 618-907 AD), Song dynasty (ca. 960-1279 AD), and Ming dynasty (ca. 1368-1644 AD).

Table 4.1 Summary of Findings from the Site Review

Theme	Site Name	Findings
The Silk Road	Han Chang'an Site (Han)	Not much left as the site is more like ruins.
The Silk Road	Zhangqian Tomb (Han)	The person who initiated the great road was found in a crude, normal tomb that seems affordable in his dynasty.
The Silk Road	Tang Chang'an Site (Tang)	Not much found related to the Silk Road.
Religion spreading-Buddhism	Cottage Temple Scenic Site (Later Qin)	A heritage site witnessed the integration of Buddhism with Chinese culture.
Religion spreading-Buddhism	The Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Tang)	Decoration style is under the influence of West Asian cultures; the place where the Monk Xuan Zang introduced India Buddhism scriptures with Chinese fellows.
Religion spreading-Buddhism	The Small Wild Goose Pagoda (Tang)	The place where the Monk Yi Jing introduced Buddhism scriptures to Chinese public.
Religion spreading-Buddhism	Xingjiao Temple (Tang)	A Chinese Buddhist temple where reserved śarīra of Monk Xuan Zang.
Religion spreading-Buddhism	Grand Buddha Grottoes (Tang)	The cave inside the grottoes tell how the art of carving large buddhas in stone coming from the West region of Asia and getting popular in inner China part.
Religion spreading-Christianism	Forests of Stone Steles Museum (Song)	Among all heritages presented in the museum, there are two precious heritages telling the story of the Silk Road, which are Stele to the Propagation in China of the Luminous Religion (Nestorian) of Daqin (Roman Empire) and the Great Xia Stone Horse. Both of these show how various cultures and religions spread throughout the Silk Road and finally bloomed in Chang'an, leaving historic puzzles for successors.
Religion spreading-Islam	Great Mosque of Xi'an (Tang)	The mosque was established in Tang, existing till today. Its outside looks like a normal temple, but in nature it's a mosque, showing how Islam spread along the Silk Road and settled down in Chang'an.

The Silk Road Relics

Heritage sites of the Silk Road in Xi'an city are diverse and complicated. Dating back 2000 years, the heritage of the early day Silk Road in the Han Dynasty has not been well-preserved. For example the Han Chang'an Weiyang Palace is in fact is a ruin of a former palace, without much trace of the Silk Road left. Despite that Zhang Qian being a significant hero who contributed to the

prosperity of the silk trade, his Tomb (the person who initiating the Silk Road in Han dynasty) is simple and insignificant, lacking attention and interest from tourists. The information on Zhangqian's contribution to the Silk Road is written on touristic brochure of the site.

Figure 4.1 Zhangqian Tomb (Source: personal photography)



After the Han dynasty, the Silk Road reached its peak of prosperity during the Tang dynasty. In Shaanxi Historic Museum, the narrative of the Silk Road has often been connected to the Tang dynasty, however, the Chang'an name is rarely mentioned. Being initiated in the Han dynasty, the Silk Road influence on culture, art, religion, commerce expanded in the Tang dynasty. In the early days of the Silk Road in the Han dynasty, the route system functioned to making political allies to defend against the Xiongnu group and trading with western region. At that time, the Han counter invested human resources to keep developing the road, and to maintain it in good condition. The Silk Road really created impact after the Tang dynasty, when numerous goods were exchanged, various people travelled along the road as well as their culture, customs, lifestyle, techniques did. During this time, the impact was really significant.

Religion Exchanges Along the Silk Road

The second major finding is how religions spread along the Silk Road. Among the seven sites visited during the research tour, there were five sites related to Buddhism, one for Christianity, and one for Islam. In the Tang dynasty, Chang'an was a meeting place for various religions. Religions originating outside China followed the traders on the Silk Road to enter and be gradually integrated into local lives, such as Islam and Christianity. Religious infusion imprinted on the architecture and layout of the city. For example, Islam brought their lifestyle to Chang'an and gradually formed their community, changing the city layout.

When Muslim craftsmen and businessmen entered Chang'an, they stayed together and formed a residential area close to the city wall. The integration of the Islamic community with Chinese locals continued until the Ming dynasty, and a place for Chinese Muslims is called Huifang (回坊). Muslim groups built the first mosque in A.D 742, named the Great Mosque of Xi'an. But, if they only observe the mosque's appearance, people will never know this building is a mosque. The architecture of the Great Mosque of Xi'an is designed in the Chinese traditional temple style, but inside, every tiny decoration tells visitors that this is a place of worship for Muslims. Now that mosque is a popular attraction for tourists who come to Xi'an.

Figure 4.2 Great Mosque of Xi'an (Source: personal photography)



For Christianity, there is one extremely precious heritage item preserved in Stele Forest Museum, Stele to the Propagation in China of the Luminous Religion (Nestorian) of Daqin (Roman Empire) (大秦景教流行中国碑, abbreviated 大秦景教碑), proving the existence of Nestorian Christianity in China. Proven by the Chinese national historic book, the minor branch of Christianity, Nestorian

Christianity (景教), entered ancient China in the middle Tang dynasty. The stele has insignificant meaning for Nestorian Christianity study, and shows an inclusive, relaxed ideological environment in Tang dynasty.

Figure 4.3 The Stele to the Propagation in China of the Luminous Religion (Nestorian) of Daqin (Source: personal photography)



Art Exchange Along the Silk Road

The Silk Road paved the way for Western art design to influence Chinese art, with its height in the Tang dynasty. For example, in Shaanxi Historic Museum, there is one exhibition hall presenting famous porcelain Tricolor Glazed Pottery from the Tang dynasty. Among this pottery, there are some made in the shape of camels and Western Asian looking female dancers. Given the fact that camel is not an indigenous animal in Chang'an, the reliable explanation for this is the camel carried goods to Chang'an and was painted by Tang artists. There is one gold plated silver plate in an

apparently Eastern Rome style, reflecting the fact that the Tang absorbed various cultural elements that travelled by the Silk Road (Shaanxi Historic Museum, 2018).

Figure 4.4 Camel Style Pottery (Source: Shaanxi Historic Museum)



Diplomacy Along the Silk Road

In the Xi'an Stele Forest Museum, the Great Xia Stone Horse is a rare heritage item that proves the short existence of the country of Great Xia established by Xiongnu nomads, which only existed for 24 years. The exhibit shows the diplomatic relationship between Great Xia and Tang China. Due to the fact that Great Xia only existed for a short period in history, there are few hints about this mystery country in the history books, and thus, the Great Xia Stone Horse is powerful proof to show the history, and the broad diplomacy relationships the Tang built with the Silk Road countries.

Figure 4.5 Great Xia Stone Horse (Source: author's own photo)



This part introduces the Silk Road heritage status in Xi'an. The Silk Road Relics tell the diverse and complex situation of the Silk Road heritage. These heritage sites reflect multi-culture infusion with a time span of over 1000 years. The religious exchange along the road reflects how religion once influenced heritage, lifestyles, and even the city layout of Chang'an. The art exchange explains the fused elements that emerged on heritage sites, especially during the Tang dynasty. All the items listed above present a general picture of the current status of the Silk Road heritage. Status characteristics include diverse, well-preserved, and long-time span occurrence. Considering the two facts that heritage sites are the foundation of Xi'an tourism and the Silk Road heritage sites are an important part of Xi'an heritage, it is fair to say that Silk Road heritage is important for Xi'an tourism and thus deserve more attention.

4.3 Study II: Interviews

Resident Perception of Xi'an Tourism

Xi'an is a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists (participant 1, personal communication, 2018) with a promising future market given the abundant tourism resources it possesses (participants 7, 9, 11 and 12). Some interviewees made comments such as: "Xi'an has its unique tourism resources," "Xi'an tourism industry is pretty advanced, and a lot of tourists visit the city during holidays," and "tourism in Xi'an is popular annually, as Xi'an has a speciality for every

season.” The most familiar tourism attractions, voted by Xi’an residents, include the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Terra Cotta Warriors, Tang Hibiscus Garden, Bell Tower, and Huaqing Pool, all of which are heritage sites.

In recent years, given the finalization of high speed railways connecting Xi’an and Chengdu and Lanzhou (participants 3, 10, and 15), and gaining popularity on TikTok without any problems (participants 10, 11 and 16), more domestic tourists are attracted to Xi’an (participant 3), especially during short holidays or weekends (participants 13 and 15). “More domestic tourists are travelling to Xi’an due to the newly constructed high-speed railways since last year,” “now there is high speed railway between Chengdu and Xi’an. Not mention the short holidays, even during weekends, many people crowd into Xi’an,” “recently Xi’an became a hit on TikTok and that brought more tourists to Xi’an,” and “a popular short video application called TikTok makes Xi’an well-known among Chinese internet users,” quoted from interviewees.

Some participants claim that the Xi’an tourism market depends on its abundant tourism resources, like heritage sites (especially the Terra Cotta Warriors) (participants 9, 11, 12 and 16), history and culture background (participants 5, 7, 12 and 15), delicious local food (participants 11 and 15), and so on. International tourists prefer visiting heritage sites in the city (participant 6) and show great interest in the history of Xi’an (participant 9). This is supported by the following few quotations from interviewees, like “Xi’an tourism industry highly depends on its heritage sites; most international tourists interest in Chinese history and heritages in Xi’an,” “people travel to Xi’an as they interest in Terracotta Worriers and the delicious local food,” and “the advantages of Xi’an tourism include it has a long history and a lot culture heritages with abundant tourism resource,” and so on.

In the meantime, there are some unsatisfactory aspects existing in Xi’an tourism that deserve attention, including no updated forms of heritage tourism (the “tourism industry in Xi’an is not being updated with time and trend,” according to participant 5); inaccuracy of English tourism brochures (“some tourism brochures don’t supply 100% accurate translation of spot explanations,” quoted from participant 9); inconvenient transportation systems (“the transportation system in Xi’an is still far from convenient,” and “Xi’an’s bus system is not developed well enough,” participants 11 and 16 said), underdeveloped tourism infrastructure (“tourism industry related infrastructure still need developing,” and “Xi’an’s infrastructure is relatively poor,” quoted from participants 12 and 16), and existence of tourism chaos (“tourism chaos still exists, such as overcharging tourists, fake tourism spots, and so on,” explained by participant 14).

With specific reference to heritage tourism in Xi'an, most interviewees claimed that heritage tourism is the mainstream in the tourism products of Xi'an (participants 4, 7, 10, 11, 13 and 14, personal communication, 2018) and almost 80% tourists visited Xi'an for heritage tourism (participant 10). Heritage tourism in Xi'an still has further potential, because of its relevant development experiences (participant 4), resourceful tangible and intangible heritage in the city (participants 4, 8 and 16), nostalgic atmosphere in the old town (participant 15), and so on. When talking about heritage tourism in Xi'an, interviewees presented their opinions on different aspects, such as "Xi'an government tries to develop heritage tourism industry as a selling point of local tourism. In fact, over 80% tourists visited Xi'an due to its heritage tourism," "the heritage tourism in Xi'an is a good showcase to present the abundant historical and cultural heritage sites preserved in Xi'an," and "the ancient charm and historical atmosphere of Xi'an attracts many tourists to visit and experience the city."

Impacts of Xi'an's heritage tourism can be considered positive and negative at the same time. Positive impacts include: first, heritage tourism helps to improve the public's awareness of heritage protection (participant 9) and push government to take careful control of heritage protection (participants 3 and 10) ("Xi'an government should increase protection for heritage," and "the biggest challenge for Xi'an heritage tourism is how to protect historical sites effectively, as a lot tourists will create negative impact on these sites"). Second, it gradually becomes a showcase of the city, and helps to increase city income (participant 8).

In order to improve heritage tourism in Xi'an, the interviewees proposed suggestions for action: Knowledge regarding heritage sites should be more accessible (participant 10); immersive visiting experiences should be provided for heritage tourists instead of the traditional one-way non-interactive visiting experiences (participant 14); more attention should be made to intangible heritage in Xi'an, like traditional folksongs and instruments, otherwise they will disappear from history (participant 16). According to the interviewees, "heritage tourism related knowledge has not been given to the public well, and more comprehensive heritage explanations or site immersive experiences should be provided for tourists," "the current experience is interactive, one-way only, and not immersive," and "intangible cultural heritage is not well protected and given little attention as well, not to mention passing it to the next generation." In other word, while heritage tourism seems to have a good development status now, more actions are urgently needed to make it updated and to reflect new trends, and/or more sustainable which is considered as the primary issue.

When asked to select the most familiar heritage tourism attractions, the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Terra Cotta Warriors, City Wall, the Small Wild Goose Pagoda, and Bell Tower were on the list. Surprisingly, the most familiar one is not the Terra Cotta Warriors, even if it is always the representative when people talk about Xi'an. From these heritage surveys, 2 of the sites are in relationship with the Silk Road, the Small and Giant Wild Goose Pagodas.

Residents' Perceptions of the Silk Road in the Past and the Present

Residents' Perception of the Silk Road in the Past

The Silk Road is important in Chinese history. Among the 16 interviewees, 15 knew of the importance of the historical Silk Road. They claimed that the Silk Road started from Chang'an (ancient Xi'an) (participants 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15, personal communication, 2018) in the Han dynasty (participants 6, 14, 15 and 16) and was initiated by Zhang Qian (participants 4, 5, 6, 11 and 13). Some interviewees point out that, the Silk Road includes the roads on the continent and the marine route together (participants 5, 6, 9, 10 and 16), but the road discussed in the interviews is the land one. "Xi'an is where the Silk Road starts," "the Silk Road consists of the land road and the marine route, from Chang'an, initiated by Zhang Qian in Han dynasty," as indicated by the interviewees.

The Silk Road performs as a bridge, connecting Europe and Asia (participants 3, 4 and 13). After leaving Chang'an, the Silk Road passes by Gansu and Xinjiang Provinces inside China (participants 11, 15 and 16), moves through the central and western Asian region (participants 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16), and finally reaches European destinations, like Rome (participants 5, 11, 12 and 14). The major functions of the Silk Road include commercial (participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 14, 15 and 16), cultural (participants 1, 3, 4, 12, 14, and 16), and political exchanges (participants 4 and 16). The popular Chinese products include silk (participants 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 15), tea (participants 5, 6 and 13), china (participants 1, 6 and 11), and production techniques (participants 1 and 11), while receiving foreign products like fruits and vegetables (participants 5, 6), and various religions (participants 11 and 16). The Tang dynasty was an unprecedented peak in the prosperity of the Silk Road (participants 11 and 16), and after the Song dynasty the Silk Road starts to decline (participant 16). When asked to name the silk road heritage interviewees feel most familiar with, answers

covered Mogao Cave, Tang Daming Palace, the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Han Weiyang Palace, and the Zhangqian Tomb. According to the interviewees, “the Silk Road started to connect the western and eastern regions by commerce, politics, and culture exchanges,” “China sent silk and tea and received fruits and foreign vegetables from the western region,” “the land Silk Road starts from Xi’an, passing by Gansu, Xinjiang provinces of China, central and West Asia region, and finally approach most part of the Euro-Asia region,” “in the Tang dynasty, the Silk Road reached an unprecedented peak, and it started to decline after the Song dynasty; not only economic exchange, but also political and cultural exchanges happened along the road,” and so on.

Residents’ Perception of the Silk Road in the Present

(Analysis based on Questions 3.1, 3.2)

Since 1980s, the Silk Road has been linked with various revitalization programs. The interview outcome shows that, most interviewees know some silk road revitalization programs or related conferences, such as the Silk Road Economic Initiative, Energy Mining Joint Program, UNWTO Silk Road Programs, the Silk Road Conference, and so on.

However, it is noted that impacts of the revitalization of the Silk Road cannot happen in such a short time (participants 4, 6, 11, 12, 13 and 15, personal communication, 2018), but there does seem to be something happening in the city. In terms of the tourism aspect, participants 1, 2, 7 and 10 claimed that some tourism sites have been improved, and more marketing and promotion brings in more tourists for the city. “changes cannot happen so shortly,” “not much changes happen in the city,” “changes include improvement on tourism sites, more tourism marketing, more tourists, stronger environmental protection sense, and more serious about security,” and “the development of the Silk Road stimulates the economic performance of Xi’an, makes the city more well-known, and boosts the tourism industry as well,” said by interviewees.

In terms of the economy, interviewees mentioned that more regional cooperation programs happen along the Silk Road, exporting and importing is happening more frequently among silk road countries (participants 4 and 16) (“Xi’an has established some cooperation programs with the countries along the Silk Road, including exporting and importing programs,” quoted from participant 4), and more investment crowds into Xi’an (participants 10 and 15), and according to interviewees, “the main change is that Xi’an attracts more financial investment depending on the

development of the Silk Road and Xi'an's strong city identity linked to the road"). To be more specific, since the initiation of the Silk Road Economic Initiative, the inland port in Xi'an has been established (participant 14), as well as the China-Russia industrial park (participant 14), and development of the high-tech zone in Xi'an ("the visible change is in the high-tech zone, high-rise buildings are getting more," according to participant 15). Besides, construction of the transportation infrastructure is also noticed by residents ("not many changes happen except for transportation, like more airports and railways are constructed," quoted by participant 12), as well as the improved urban environment (participant 14). Generally, interviewees tended to link the Present Silk Road to specific programs or any changes that may be caused by these programs. Besides, most changes they mentioned are quite positive.

Connection between the Silk Road in the Past and the Present

(Analysis based on Question 4)

Having discussed the Silk Road in the past and modern times, some interviewees admitted that they think of the Silk Road in modern times as the revitalization of the ancient Silk Road through the One Belt One Road (participants 9, 10 and 12). "One Belt One Road is the revitalization of the Silk Road," "One Belt One Road is the stretch and redevelopment of the Silk Road", according to some interviewees), and the Silk Road provides the historical background for it (participants 9, 10, 13 and 14), some interviewees stated that "the Silk Road was chosen because of its historical background".

What is more, they pass through similar regions (participants 11, 14). Participant 16 points out that the route of the modern Silk Road is extended and thus a larger number of countries engage in the construction and exchange along the road. Both routes have economic, political goals, and exchange cultures, and commerce along the road (participants 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16) ("the roads achieve triple development of culture, economy, and history," "they pass by similar regions with similar goals like economy growth and culture exchange," "the similarity exists on purposes, like increasing trade along the road, developing economy, strengthening the politic connection, and so on," according to interviewees). Only participants 13 and 16 stressed that the Silk Road in the past and in modern times are two different concepts with different fundamental purposes. "All in all, OBOR is not exactly what the Silk Road was in the past," quoted from interviewees. Participants 11, 13 and 14 all think the modern one will have deeper influence and longer lasting impact than the

ancient road. In fact, it was mentioned by participant 16 that the modern silk road only borrows the name of the Silk Road; the rest is fundamentally different.

In conclusion, Xi'an residents consider Xi'an as a popular tourism destination, in which its abundant heritage resources and historical atmosphere are an outstanding selling point. They also observe that in recent years, with the construction of more high-speed railways and an increasing popularity on TikTok, Xi'an attracts more tourists than before, which could have negative and positive impact on city heritage at the same time. Thus, the daily life of Xi'an residents includes heritage. When asked to list Xi'an tourism attractions, almost all those listed were heritage sites, and most were related to the Silk Road. From this point, it is clear that Xi'an residents understand the essential role that heritage has for Xi'an tourism, and they focus much attention on heritage as a whole, without categorizing them into Silk Road heritage and non-silk-road heritage.

Most interviewees show their knowledge of the past when introducing the Silk Road, with good understanding for its purposes, mapping, and goods exchanged along the road. When asked about the revitalized Silk Road, most interviewees mention the One Belt One Road initiative, without however a deep understanding of the program's propose. The interviewee group admitted that there are similarities between the road in the past and the present, in terms of economic purpose, passing by regions, and so on. What is more, even though some of them know little about the One Belt One Road initiative, most interviewees considered these two as different concepts. They state that the One Belt One Road borrows the name and historical background of the Silk Road; but the modern one will have deeper influence and impact a wider region in the future.

4.4 Study III: Survey Questionnaire

Heritage and Tourism in Xi'an

(Analysis based on Section 1 of the Survey Questionnaire)

Table 4.2 Overall Analysis of Heritage and Tourism in Xi'an

Item	Agreeable ratio	Item	Agreeable ratio
1. Increased tourists	96.2%	3.4. By nature scenery	26.4%
2.1. Caused by TikTok	83%	4.1. Need improving on infrastructure	86.8%

2.2. By railway	77.4%	4.2. On public transportation	71.7%
2.3. By tourism attraction	73.6%	4.3. On tourism brochure translation	41.5%
2.4. By government promotion	58.5%	4.4. On well-designed souvenirs	32.1%
3.1. By heritage	98.1%	5. Top three tourism attraction	The Big Wild Goose Pagoda (84.9%), Muslim Street (83%), and Terra Cotta Worries (49.1%)
3.2. By local food	96.2%	6. Top three heritage tourism attraction	Bell Tower (81.3%), City Wall (79.2%), and Big Wild Goose Pagoda (73.6%)
3.3. By culture atmosphere	69.8%		

With regard to tourism in Xi'an, 96.2% of them agree that in recent years the number of tourists in Xi'an has increased. Participants claim that the increased number is caused by TikTok (83%), opening of high speed railways between Xi'an and other provincial capital cities (77.4%), the original abundant tourism attractions (73.6%), and government promotion (58.5%). If we continue exploring which kind of tourism elements that attract tourists the most, 98.1% participants go for Xi'an heritages, 96.2% for Xi'an local food, 69.8% for culture atmosphere, and only 26.4% for natural scenery.

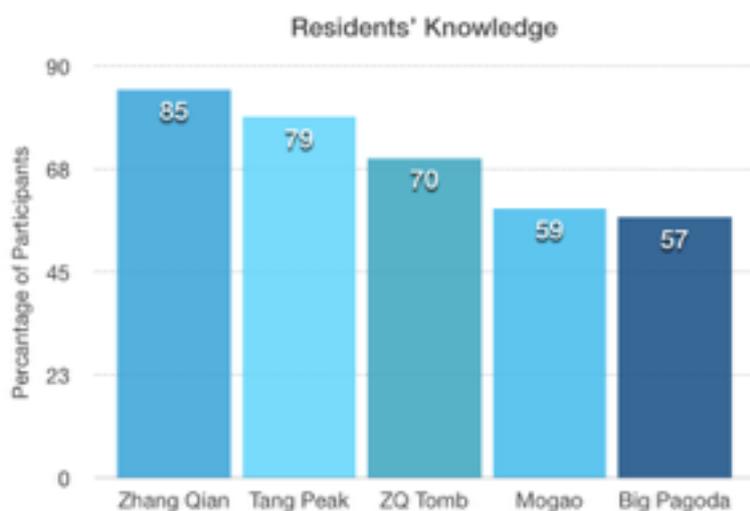
When asked for aspects that Xi'an tourism industry still needs to improve, 86.8% chose its infrastructure construction, 71.7% for public transportation, 41.5% for inaccuracy of English tourism brochures, and 32.1% for lacking well-designed souvenirs. The top three tourism attractions in Xi'an that residents feel most familiar with include the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (84.9%), Muslim Street (83%), and Terra Cotta Warriors (49.1%), all of which are heritage attractions in Xi'an, and the most recognized tourism attraction is not the Terra Cotta Warriors. The top three heritage tourism attractions include Bell Tower (81.3%), City Wall (79.2%), and Big Wild Goose Pagoda (73.6%). Only 47.2% participants choose Terra Cotta Warriors.

Residents' Awareness of the Silk Road

(Analysis based on Section 2 of the Survey Questionnaire)

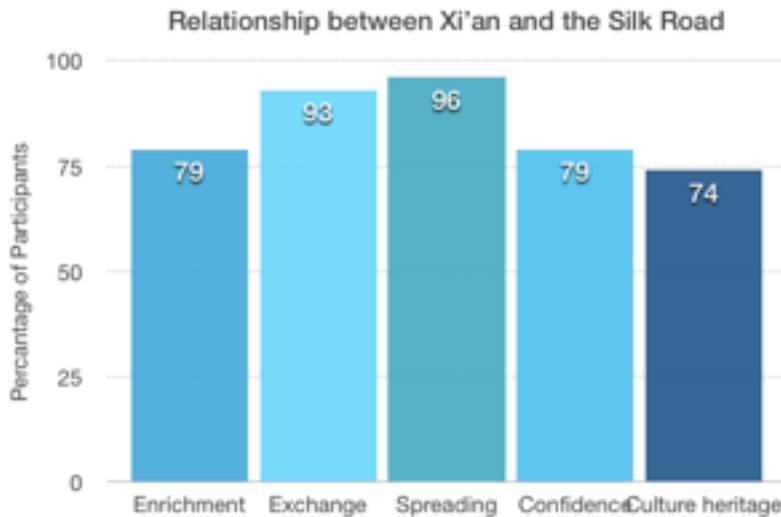
Among all responses, 84.9% of the participants agree that the Silk Road was initiated by ZHANG Qian in the Han dynasty, and 79.3% agree with the statement that the most prosperous dynasty for the Silk Road was the Tang. The results suggest that most participants have a correct understanding of the Silk Road knowledge. Among all the options, the three heritages that were most frequently chosen by participants include Zhangqian Tomb (69.8%), Mogao Cave (58.5%), and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (56.6%).

Table 4.3 Residents' Knowledge for the Silk Road (Source: authors' data)



Talking about the relationship between the Silk Road and Xi'an, 79.3% of the participants agreed that the Silk Road enriched cultures in Xi'an; 92.5% agreed that the Silk Road deepened cultural exchanges between Xi'an and the outside; 96.2% felt positive for it helped to spread Chinese culture to the Western Region; 79.3% agree that the impact of the Silk Road improved Chinese culture's confidence as a nation. Besides, 73.6% participants agreed that the Silk Road left Xi'an with abundant heritage resources.

Table 4.4 Residents' Perception for the Connection Between Xi'an and the Silk Road (Source: authors' data)

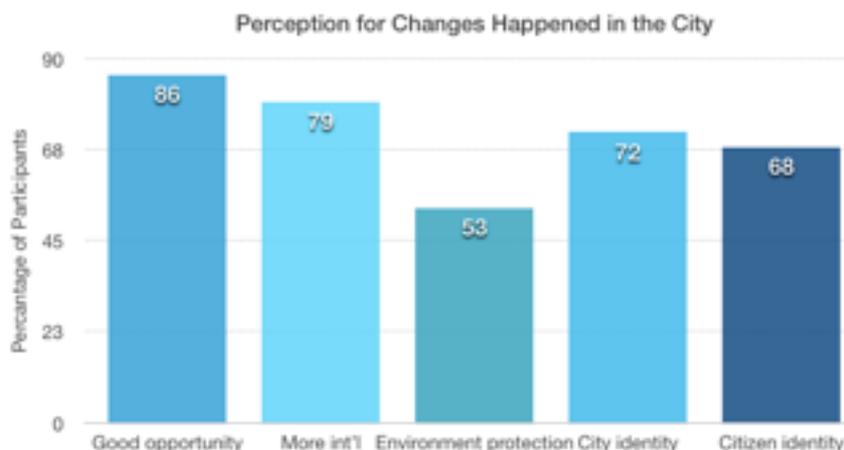


Residents' Perception of the Silk Road in the Past and the Present

(Analysis based on Section 3 of the Survey Questionnaire)

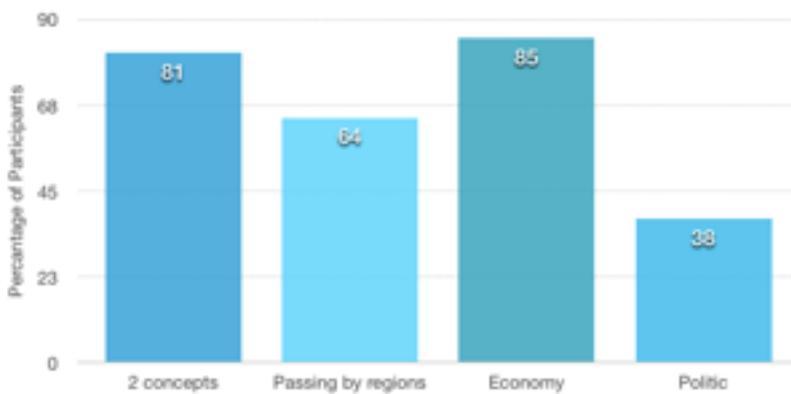
86.8% of participants agreed that the Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative is a great opportunity for the city and its heritage, and will make changes happen. Just reflecting on changes happening recently, participants claimed the city gets more international visitors (79.3%), people have a stronger sense of environmental protection (52.9%), they have stronger city identity (71.7%), and they have stronger identity as Xi'an residents (67.9%).

Table 4.5 Residents' Perception for Changes Happened in the City (Source: authors' data)



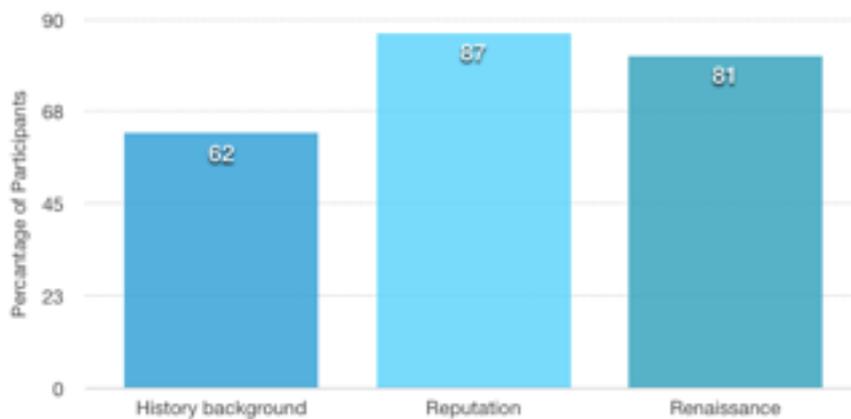
Even though 81.1% participants think the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt are two different concepts, people still find similarity between them. 64.2% of participants think both of them pass by similar regions, and 85% consider the most important purpose for both of them is to develop the economy; only 37.7% think they have similar political goals.

Table 4.6 Residents' Perception for the Similarity between the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt (Source: authors' data)



As for the connection between these two concepts, 62.2% participants also agreed that the Silk Road provides a historical background for the Silk Road Economic Belt; 86.8% agreed with the statement that the Silk Road Economic Belt takes advantage of the Silk Road's reputation, and 81.1% think that the Silk Road Economic Belt is the modern renaissance of the Silk Road.

Table 4.7 Residents' Perception for the Connection between the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt (Source: authors' data)



The interesting part is, when asked whether they agree there is much similarity between the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt, over 70% chose yes. Here the conclusion can be, even with the great similarity, the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt are still two different concepts.

In summary, 98.1% participants agreed that the most attractive element for Xi'an tourism is the heritage in Xi'an. When asked to list the most familiar tourism attractions, participants listed heritage tourism attractions. From this one conclusion is that heritage tourism is the most essential part of Xi'an tourism, and Xi'an residents perceive the fact without conscience. The Terra Cotta Warriors are only ranked as the third most familiar heritage, and the first and the second heritage items are the Silk Road heritage. Maybe it is time for people to realize that in Xi'an there is diverse heritage from 6 dynasties, not only the Terra Cotta Warriors from the Qin dynasty. Also, another potential reason to explain is that the Terra Cotta Warriors are too far away in the residents' life, and the Silk Road heritage can be found in the city center, passed by thousands of people every day.

When coming to distinguish the Silk Road and the revitalized Silk Road, survey participants tend to consider the revitalized Silk Road to be the same as the Silk Road Economic Belt. Most participants can distinguish the Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt, however, they still claim that the two concepts have quite a lot of similarity, like passing by similar regions, with economic growth as one goal, but increasing exchanges among countries along the Silk Road, and so on as being just as important.

4.5 The Integration of Study I, Study II, and Study III to Answer the Research Questions

Answer for Question 1: what is the current status of the Silk Road heritage?

From the preliminary study, I reviewed 17 major tourism sites in Xi'an, and 9 of them are related to the Silk Road, which is 53% of the total. It was found that the Silk Road heritages are major components of Xi'an heritage relics. Most silk road heritage is locate in Yanta District, which is not only the city center, but also the popular location for tourists. Within the Silk Roads: the Routes Network of the Chang'an - Tianshan Corridor was ranked as UNESCO World Heritage successfully, the Silk Road heritage in Xi'an have a higher rankings as well.

In the interview questionnaire responses, among the top 5 heritages residents feel most familiar with, 2 of them (the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda and the Small Wild Goose Pagoda) silk road

heritage, showing Xi'an residents are quite familiar with silk road heritage sites with or without consciousness or not. And in the survey questionnaire, among the top 5 silk road heritages chosen by participants, 4 (Tang Daming Palace, the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Han Weiyang Palace, and Zhangqian Tomb) are located inside or close to Xi'an. Given the fact that every interviewee could name a few silk road heritage items and over 60% could select pick silk road heritages correctly, it is fair to say Xi'an residents have a good understanding and recognition of silk road heritage.

From the previous analysis, it is interesting to determine why the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda was always mentioned by residents. A possible explanation is that in daily life, as it is located in city center, the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda is passed by numerous people. Besides, after the construction of the city entertainment plaza around the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, it is one popular square for citizens to chill out in. Some people will take a walk there while enjoying the music and lighting shows, and some may go to the shopping center next to the heritage site and have food. Therefore residents have a deep impression for the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda.

Answer to Question 2: how Xi'an residents perceive the Silk Road heritage in relation to Xi'an tourism?

Xi'an residents know the fact that Xi'an is a popular destination for tourists, and heritage tourism is its mainstream tourism type due to its abundant heritage resources. When asked to name tourism attractions that they feel familiar with, residents listed silk road heritage without thinking. And Terra Cotta Warriors is only ranked as the third most familiar heritage. It is an interesting finding, as the Terra Cotta Warriors used to be the city representative heritage site and attracted numerous tourists. Even residents realize how essential that heritage is for Xi'an tourism, they still consider heritage in the city as a whole, lacking knowledge and deeper understanding of them, not to mention categorizing them into the Silk Road heritage and non-silk-road heritage. But when asked to name silk road heritage, most of them responded with a high knowledge ratio. They know about the Silk Road heritage, without separating them from the rest.

Besides, in regard to the usage of the heritage for the city's development, they share their ideas openly regarding how to achieve economic growth by promoting Xi'an tourism with the Silk Road concepts and heritage. Some shows worries on how these heritages can be sustainable under the visiting of many tourists. Some also worry that the government will not invest enough human

resources and funds to protect these fragile heritages. These worries make sense as these challenges are what Xi'an tourism is facing right now.

In summary, Xi'an residents do not pay enough attention on whether their heritage items are related to the Silk Road, however, they know that heritage tourism is important for the Xi'an tourism industry, and the Silk Road heritage is essential, so the Silk Road heritage deserve better protection.

Answer for Question 3: how do Xi'an residents distinguish the Silk Road and the revitalized Silk Road?

Most interviewees present their understanding of the Silk Road in the past, such as its purpose, the regions it passes by, and the details of exchanges that happened along the road. When asked about the revitalized Silk Road, most interviewees mention the Silk Road Economic Belt, and it seems that in their mind, the revitalized Silk Road is the Silk Road Economic Belt. When asked if these two roads are the same concept, 81.1% participants denied it. Besides, their fundamental purposes are totally different, as pointed out by residents. However, what they do not deny is that there is much similarity between the Silk Road in the past and the revitalized Silk Road now. For instance, both of them pass by similar regions, various exchanges happen along the road no matter in the past or the present, with economic purpose, and so on.

Interviewees were also able to see the deep connection between the Silk Road in the past and the present. Some stated that, while the Silk Road provides its name and historical background to the Silk Road Economic Belt; the revitalized one has deeper influence and will impact a wider region, compared with the Silk Road.

In summary, Xi'an residents have a clear mindset on the Silk Road in the past and the present. Despite that there are much similarity between the two, they are still able to tell the differences.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter of the thesis the major findings are restated, the contribution the study makes to the existing literature and the silk road programs are added, and the limitations are pointed out as well. In the research implication section, to the findings from the 3 studies are integrated and explained.

5.2 Research Implication

Integrated Major Findings of Three Study Methods and Possible Explanation

Site review findings tell that the heritage in Xi'an is diverse and complicated due to the complex historical background, and this is matched by Xi'an residents' perception of the heritage in the city. Whether in interview or survey questionnaire, Xi'an residents always identify heritage as the most essential element for the city and its tourism. In the literature review part, history of the Silk Road was comprehensively discussed, from which the importance of the Silk Road on Xi'an in the areas of culture and heritages can be well stressed. When it comes to the site review and its findings, this part of the literature backs up the view point that silk road related heritage is an essential component of the heritage resources located in Xi'an. And these silk road heritages integrate in local residents' life in an unconscious way. However, in the interview or survey questionnaire findings, none showed that Xi'an residents are more familiar or knowledgeable about the Silk Road heritage over other general heritage items. As a result, they do not show a deep connection with the Silk Road.

As an explanation for these two findings, according to previous literature, in the cultural revolution (1966-1976), most heritage was destroyed and local residents' were forced to stay away from this heritage because they represented awful things left from the feudal society in Qing dynasty. Because of this, residents are not really emotionally connected with their heritage as a whole. Just like the Chinese government strategy in 1980s, they consider heritage as important resources to create opportunities for the modernization of China,. When talking about heritage, they think of heritage tourism and helping Xi'an boost its economy. This is very sad, as little humanity

was detected in the interviews.

What is more, they tend to link the Tang Dynasty and the Silk Road together. On one hand, the Tang period was the prosperous peak for the original Silk Road, and it is not wrong to connect Tang and the Silk Road; on the other, this is not respectful to the previous efforts made in the Han dynasty period as their stories are all an essential part of the Silk Road.

The Silk Road also influences Tourism Promotion Strategy in Xi'an tourism

After 2014 when the Silk Road was successfully declared as World Heritage by UNESCO, the concept attracted more attention, along with a higher ranking for heritage related to it. Xi'an tourism office was aware of this new trend and changed its tourism strategy from Terra Cotta Warriors only to a Qin-Tang joint promotion strategy (Shaanxi Tourism Office, 2012). In this strategy, the Terracotta Warriors were located outside the city, and most Tang heritage was within. Joining both would give a comprehensive tourism experience for tourists. For example, in a one-day tour product in Xi'an (presented on Taobao), in the daytime, tourists will be guided to the Warriors around 40 kilometers from the downtown, and when night falls, tourists will come back to the city center, taking a walk on Muslim Street while enjoying snacks. From this perspective, the combination of two dynasties' in the Xi'an tourism campaign will be a practical and popular idea.

One more thing that deserves attention is the effort of the Xi'an government to create a place brand for Xi'an by transformation and re-design of the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (Harry, Rothschild, Alon, & Fetscherin, 2012). After decades' of re-construction, now the Big Wild Goose Pagoda is not only some heritage site. It takes a broader meaning as a landmark for Xi'an. Nowadays, besides its original function as a tourism spot, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda also performs as the leisure playground for citizens, surrounded by restaurants and shopping malls. In Harry, Alon, and Fetscherin's joint research, they call this phenomenon "the new vision of monumentality reflected in Big Goose Pagoda and contiguous public spaces, in short, is a carefully calculated hybrid of modernity and history, a nightly celebration linking contemporary Xi'an to historical Chang'an in the newly-created public space just north of Big Goose Pagoda."

Contribution to Existing Literature and the Silk Road Tourism Programs

This research was designed to detect the silk road nation's perception for the Silk Road in the past and the present, including how the impact of the road is perceived, and how to perceive changes related to it. The study discovered something fresh about the Silk Road, especially in relation to Chinese academic research. Due to the fact that heritage tourism study is still quite new in China, there is not enough work been done on the heritage community's perceptions. As a comprehensive Silk Road heritage study it has contributed to other scholars who will study the Silk Road, especially the two precious heritage items the Great Xia Stone Horse and the Nestorian Stele that are rarely been mentioned in previous Silk Road studies.

For better development of Silk Road tourism, according to these findings and analysis, the Xi'an tourism office needs to improve heritage visiting experiences. One-way interactive tours cannot satisfy those tourists who demand more in experiences, including a good educational background. Immersive visiting in heritage sites can provide much better experiences for tourists according to the interviewees. In recent years, domestic tourism in Xi'an has become more popular, but this has created worries among the people who care for heritage. They think too much visiting especially to the previous ones, will be a heavy burden if we take sustainability into consideration.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

The limitation of the research mainly lies in 3 aspects:

First is the range of interviewees and the survey participants sample chosen. Most interviewees and survey participants have an advanced educational level, holding a Bachelor Degree or above, which cannot match the average education background of Xi'an residents. There, the deviation in the sample selection progress will probably lead to the inaccuracy of the research outcome. To be more specific, under this situation, the result can only be representative of Xi'an citizens who hold a higher educational degree.

The second limitation is about the effectiveness of the revitalization of the Silk Road. UNESCO's New Silk Road program happened roughly 20 years ago, and the focus is for all silk road related countries, not only for China. So how much influence this program actually has on this city can be a question. Besides, even the OBOR was proposed at least 5 years ago. While some construction and city improvement programs could be finalized in such a short time, how about the effect? Are these effects really engaging in people's daily life? That is one issue that deserves to be

asked. One more point in this aspect, changing is always a slow and continuous process. What happens if the influence of the revitalization of the Silk Road does not fully benefit Xi'an? Does it mean that this research has missed some evidence?

Last but not least is the fact that changes in Xi'an happen not only because of the revitalization of the Silk Road. Without the Silk Road, as Shaanxi Province's capital city, Xi'an always gets enough financial support and political benefits from the central government of China. So how can the influences caused by Silk Road revitalization and the general national support be distinguished?

Future study should be based on the attachment of other silk road nations. How do they perceive the Silk Road? How do they consider the impact of the revitalization of the Silk Road on their country? A comparative study maybe more interesting here, as it can show deeper insights, and give researchers more room to determine the origin of the attachment issue.

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Appendix

Interview Questionnaire

- Q1.1: How much you know about tourism in Xi'an? Can you list a few tourism attractions that you feel familiar with?
- Q1.2: How much you know about heritage tourism in Xi'an? Can you list heritage tourism attractions in Xi'an?
- Q2.1: Have you ever heard of the Silk Road? Can you explain what is it?
- Q2.2: Is there any heritage sites that linked to the Silk Road? Please name a few.
- Q2.3: Can you state what is the connection between the Silk Road and Xi'an in your understanding?
- Q3.1: Do you have any idea of any programs related with revitalization of the Silk Road? If possible, please name a few of them.
- Q3.2: Can you share if you feel any change of the city that caused by the development of the Silk Road?
- Q3.3: Does the Silk Road programs make the heritage tourism in the city any different?

Survey Questionnaire

Section A. Tourism in Xi'an (7 questions included)

1. How do you think of the change on the number of tourists who visiting Xi'an?
A. Increased B. Decreased C. Maintaining the same D. I don't know
2. To what extent do you think the high speed railway between Xi'an and Chengdu will bring more domestic tourists for Xi'an?
A. Very few B. Few C. Many E. Quite a lot
3. Assuming that more tourists visit Xi'an, which elements listed below could be the reason in your opinion?
A. Promotion on TikTok B. High speedy railway construction C. Government campaign
D. Abundant heritages in Xi'an

4. In your opinion, which elements listed below help Xi'an attract tourists?
 - A. Local food B. Historic heritage C. Cultural attraction D. Natural scene
5. In which aspects do you think Xi'an tourism still need improving?
 - A. Accuracy of English translation of tourism brochures B. Public transportation
 - C. Tourism infrastructure D. Representative souvenirs
6. Please select three tourism attractions that you feel most familiar with.
 - A. Xi'an Historic Museum B. Muslim Street C. Tang Hibiscus Garden
 - D. Drum Tower E. Terracotta Warriors F. The Giant Wild Goose Pagoda
7. Please select three most famous historical sites that you feel most familiar with.
 - A. Daming Palace B. City Wall C. Bell Tower D. Terracotta Warriors
 - E. The Giant Wild Goose Pagoda F. The Small Wild Goose Pagoda

Section B. The Silk Road and Its Relationship with Xi'an (6 questions included)

8. Do you agree with the following statement that the Silk Road was initiated by ZHANG Qian in Han China?
 - A. Yes B. No C. I don't know
9. In your opinion, in which dynasty the Silk Road was in its prosperous period?
 - A. Han Dynasty B. Tang Dynasty C. Qing Dynasty D. I don't know
10. To what extent do you think the Silk Road reinforce strength of ancient Chinese dynasty?
 - A. Not at all B. Very insignificant C. Somewhat significant D. Very significant
11. Please select the historical sites that you think are related to the Silk Road from the following items.
 - A. Xi'an City Wall B. Famen Temple C. Daming Palace D. Qinglong Temple
 - E. Mogao Cave F. The Big Wild Goose Pagoda G. Xingjiao Temple H. Zhangqian Tomb
12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement about the relationship between Silk Road and Xi'an (1. not at all, 2. somewhat do not agree, 3 agree, 4. highly agree).
 - A. The Silk Road started from ancient Xi'an (...)
 - B. Many heritages in Xi'an regarding the Silk Road (...)

C. The Silk Road brings various cultures to Xi'an (...)

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the Silk Road and Xi'an culture (use scale 1 to 4 as above).

A. Deepening cultural exchanges (...)

B. Strengthening cultural understanding (...)

C. Spreading Chinese civilization to Central and Western Asia (...)

D. Enhancing cultural self-confidence for modern Chinese (...)

Section C. Influence and Changes (6 question included)

14. Do you agree with the following statement: the redevelopment of the Silk Road is a rare opportunity for the relics of Xi'an, and it has also brought many changes to the city.

A. Yes B. No C. I don't know

15. To what extent do you think the changes appearing in the cultural atmosphere of Xi'an after revitalization of the Silk Road (scale 1-4).

A. More internationalized (...) B. Stronger environment protection awareness (...)

C. Enhanced recognition of the city (...) D. Stronger citizen identity (...)

16. How does the Silk Road relate to OBOR?

A. The same B. Different C. I don't know

17. Please indicate to what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning the similarities between the Silk Road and OBOR?

A. Passing by similar countries and regions (...)

B. The Silk Road and OBOR served to develop the economy (...)

C. The Silk Road and OBOR served for political purposes (...)

18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the connection of the Silk Road and OBOR?

A. The Silk Road provides a historical background for the Belt and Road (...)

B. The Belt and Road takes advantage of the historical influence of the Silk Road (...)

C. The Belt and Road is a modern renaissance of the Silk Road (...)

19. To what extent do you think the Silk Road is different from OBOR?

A. Not at all B. Very insignificant C. Somewhat significant D. Very significant