

# Review of: "Tourists' Activities and their Impacts on Chinhoyi Caves Heritage Site, Zimbabwe"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The topic of the paper is particularly interesting, as evaluating the effects of tourism (and overtourism) through a scientific approach in different sites around the world, is crucial for identifying vulnerabilities and threats, as well as opportunities for developing and planning sustainable tourism. The paper is based on interviews with (few) tourists and guides and the conclusions are not sufficiently supported by the results that are completely qualitative and descriptive, without any attempt of quantification of the observed phenomena. In addition, the conclusions are quite obvious and no particularly innovative solutions are provided to protect the site. Therefore, the overall quality of the paper is not sufficient for final publication.

I retain that the paper needs to be improved, unfortunately if it is not possible to enlarge the sample or to apply a quantification of the results, due to the applied methodology. Despite this, here are some suggestions for the different sections that may help to improve the overall quality.

## INTRODUCTION.

Some sentences are not adequately supported by references, i.e. "Increasing visitation also demands an increasing obligation to protect as most of the heritage sites are sensitive and are easily destroyed through tourism activities. Despite the need to promote tourism at heritage sites, the UNESCO Convention argues that protection must be prioritised over promotion hence the listing of heritage sites in danger." These two sentences need references.

Please, add a location map of the site and a short paragraph on the main characteristics and attractions of the site, as well as how tourism is managed (Is there an entrance fee? Is mandatory to be accompanied by a guide? It is a fenced site? Is the site managed by local or national authorities?)

It is true that "The deterioration of heritage sites due to tourist activities is a global problem", but not all the properties authors have taken as examples are threatened by overtourism.

## SECTION 1.1

This section seems to be a list of common problems and activities related to tourism. I suggest to reorganize this section,

as problems and activities are mixed together in a casual order. Probably authors should also include the depletion of natural resources, as the high levels of water consumption by tourists in arid or semiarid regions.

## SECTION 2

Actually, the properties listed in the UNESCO List of World Heritage in danger are 55 (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/>).

## SECTION 3

The aims of the research are not related to general "heritage sites", but to "Chinhoyi Caves, Zimbabwe"; please correct.

## RESEARCH METHOD

More details are needed. The sample seems to be really inadequate, especially the one related to tourists; 15 tourists are representative? How many tourists visit the site each year? Were the interviewed tourists local or international? In what proportion? Interviews have been carried out in 5 days, so only in a specific period of the year. How it has been chosen? Can it represent a limitation? When this survey has been done (month/year)? How the interviews were structured? Were they based on questionnaires with precise arguments (If yes, please attach the questionnaire)?

### SECTION 5.1.1

"The most common forms of art being done by tourists at Chinhoyi Caves are graffiti, painting and drawing." I won't call "art" to carve names on trunks or rocks.

"Findings from this study are consistent with what other scholars found elsewhere. For example activities like art (Hauser, 2012), pollution (Reed & Xu, 2017; Brevick & Burgess, 2013), collection of souvenirs (Berger, 2007; Houlbrook, 2017), photography (Ateljevic, 2013), sightseeing (Mac Cannell, 2011), graffiti (Bates, 2014), and vandalism (Scott, 2007)." This is not a sufficient discussion. What kind of sites are the ones mentioned in these references? Authors should analyse more in depth their findings according to other studies. The fact that graffiti or photographs are made also in other tourist sites, but with completely different characteristics is not relevant per se.

### SECTION 5.2

again, a deeper discussion needs to be included. No mention about possible differences in the answers by tourists vs

guides.

## SECTION 5.3

The strategies mentioned by the authors are not particularly innovative and we are informed that some of them are already in use. But no explanation of why they do not work is reported. What about the guides? Do they suggest some strategies to better preserve the site? How do they react in case of "inappropriate behavior" by tourists? Is there a management plan of the site?

## REFERENCES

Some of the references included in the main text are not reported in the references list at the end of the paper. Please, double-check.