

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.

I am writing to provide a review report of the article entitled "Tourists' Activities and their Impacts on Chinhoyi Caves Heritage Site, Zimbabwe" and offer some recommendations for improvement.

The article addresses a crucial topic in the field of heritage tourism and investigates the impacts of tourist activities on the Chinhoyi Caves, a significant heritage site in Zimbabwe. The abstract provides a clear overview of the study, highlighting the need to protect heritage sites and the limited research on tourist impacts in developing countries. The research methodology, based on in-depth interviews with fifteen tourists and five Zimbabwe National Parks Authority employees, is well described.

However, I have some concerns about the depth and scope of the research and its implications for understanding and mitigating the impacts of tourism on the Chinhoyi Caves. As noted in the abstract, the article lacks quantitative measurements or assessments to determine the extent of tourism impacts. To address this limitation and enhance the scientific knowledge on show caves and sustainable cave management strategies, I recommend the following major revisions:

1. **Incorporate Quantitative Data:** To complement the qualitative findings, it is essential to include quantitative data on tourism impacts. This includes information on the number of tourists visiting the caves annually, monthly, and daily, as well as the carrying capacity of the site. Understanding the volume of tourists will help gauge the scale of potential impacts.
2. **Assess Sustainable Infrastructure:** To ascertain the level of sustainability in the development of the Chinhoyi Caves for tourism, it is crucial to evaluate the materials and methods used. Information on lighting systems, pathways, and handrails (e.g., wood vs. concrete) will contribute to understanding the site's ecological footprint and potential impacts.
3. **Spatial Analysis:** Including a map of the area surrounding the Chinhoyi Caves, including other natural landscapes/sites and nearby settlements/cities, will provide insights into the context and potential interactions with the local environment and communities.
4. **Implement Show Cave Assessment Model (SCAM):** Consider applying the Show Cave Assessment Model (SCAM) to the Chinhoyi Caves, as detailed in the publication "Applying the Show Cave Assessment Model (SCAM) on cave tourism destinations in Serbia" (Antić, A., Tomić, N., & Marković, S. B., 2022). This model will help assess the cave's sustainable management strategies and identify areas for improvement.

In conclusion, while the study contributes valuable qualitative insights into the impacts of tourist activities at the Chinhoyi Caves, it would greatly benefit from incorporating quantitative data, sustainable infrastructure assessments, spatial analysis, and the application of the Show Cave Assessment Model. Addressing these aspects will not only enhance the scientific value of the study but also aid in the formulation of effective strategies for managing tourism and preserving the heritage site's value for future generations.

I hope my review and recommendations will be of assistance in further improving your research. If you require any further information or assistance, please feel free to contact me.