

Final Review Report: ISVSej_12.02.6_Nguyen
Compiled from Reviews from Two Anonymous Reviewers

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: **Balancing Tourism Development and Heritage Conservation: Restoration of the Japanese Bridge (chùa cầu) in hoi an, Vietnam**

General

This paper examines an issue related to vernacular heritage, and therefore falls well within the remit of the journal. The paper is reasonably well written. However, it has some issues that need to be resolved.

Title: The title is well composed and does not need any revisions.

Language: There are no serious language issues, although often, it does not construct a good flow of argument. For example, the abstract starts by saying that “The paper focuses on the restoration process of the Japanese Bridge (Chùa Cầu) in Hoi An, a significant cultural and architectural symbol of Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province.” It talks of the focus even before the bridge is introduced. It also does not introduce a problem or an issue. It says that this paper “ emphasizes the importance”. Sorry, the task of research is not to emphasize importance. For that, you write an essay and not a research paper. Thus, it should have started as follows. “The Japanese Bridge (Chùa Cầu) in Hoi An, is a significant cultural and architectural symbol of Hoi An City, Quang Nam Province in Vietnam. It has been restored many times and most recently in 2022. In the context of the 20th Hoi An-Japan Cultural Exchange event in 2024, this restoration addresses not only the need for conservation but also aims at tourism development. Therefore, it needs to balance heritage preservation with tourism potential to maintain the status of the Japanese Bridge as a unique cultural destination. Then it should say that ‘This paper examines the capability of the process adopted to balance heritage conservation with tourism development.

Moreover, many statements need to be revised to communicate properly and construct logical arguments. Write short and meaningful sentences, using appropriate connectors to construct an argument. Pay attention to definite and indefinite articles, which are often not well placed.

Use the sub title ‘Findings’ unless you are doing an experiment when you can get ‘results’.

References must not be numbered.

Formatting: This paper also has some issues of formatting. There should be no space between a paragraph and a sub title, or a title of the figure and the sources listed below. There should be a space between a sub title and the paragraph above it always. There should also be no spaces between paragraphs. First line of every paragraph must be indented from the left. Line spaces must be always single. Use the same font throughout. Moreover, bulleted or numbered text must be left-justified.

References are not formatted properly. Font size must be 11. Years must be within brackets. The second and third lines must be indented from the left. References should be listed according to alphabetical order. Some references are incomplete. Please use the ISVS e-journal template to the last dot.

Abstract

Abstract is not well-written. Its contents as well as language have some issues. First paragraph must introduce the bridge and the issue of its restoration afterwards. It does not do this well. The opening sentence must introduce the bridge first. It must then say that “It has been restored many times and most recently in 2022. In the context of the 20th Hoi An-Japan Cultural Exchange event in 2024, this restoration addresses not only the need for conservation but also aims at tourism development. Therefore, it needs to balance heritage preservation with tourism potential to maintain the status of the Japanese Bridge as a unique cultural destination”. The first paragraph must end by saying what it examines, not emphasizes the importance. Second paragraph must be about the research methods and the third paragraph must be about the conclusions.

Currently, methods are mentioned in the second paragraph. However, it does not explain the research methods well. This research employs field surveys, historical document analysis, and interviews with conservation experts. Please explain how data was gathered and not what the data focuses on. First sentence about conclusions is well written. However, it talks about 'sustainability' there, which this paper did not examine and therefore cannot be a conclusion. Please list the specific conclusions related to this issue briefly. An abstract is written at the end of doing a research and even after writing the full paper and therefore cannot use the term 'will'. Write short sentences and be brief. An abstract must be succinct.

Paper

1. **The introduction:** Introduction is written reasonably well, in terms of introducing the issue, but it has issues. It introduces the bridge and its restoration well. However, it makes no comment about the tourists and does not present an issue. Its first paragraph says 'This project marks a significant step in heritage conservation and reflects international interest in Hoi An's cultural heritage' So what? A research must have an issue or a problem to be investigated. Problematize. It mentions 'challenges faced by experts in balancing the needs of monument conservation and tourism development' when it talks about analysis. This is not well written.

Follow this by saying what this research investigates and then the aims and objectives. In this paper, there are no aims and objectives although it says that it 'will' provide recommendations. The statements with 'will' are not proper. The research has already been done and the paper has already been written.

Please note that aims are noble, unmeasurable, long term, almost-impossible-to-fully-achieve expectations while objectives are practical, measurable, short-term, achievable intentions. Objectives must be always listed starting with 'To'. The introduction must end with them. This introduction has not clearly defined the aims and objectives.

2. **Theoretical Framework:** This paper has a sub title 'theoretical framework' and some text under this sub title. However, it does not present a good theoretical framework. It does not deal with the significant ideas explored in this paper theoretically. It should discuss the theoretical notions such as 'heritage', 'restoration', 'globalization', 'conservation' and 'tourism development' to be explored in this paper. These terms must be defined first. A theoretical framework must be produced employing the voice of the authors with statements such as 'according to Godman (1999), or Lawrence (2000) argues, instead of the author making statements and putting references within brackets. This theoretical framework does not define any of the terms and does not offer any framework. Currently, the writing talks about the bridge, Venice Charter and claims that 'theories of heritage conservation and sustainable tourism development, concepts of authenticity, integrity, and sustainability in heritage conservation' are employed to analyze (there was no evidence of this later too). Unless they are defined and discussed to construct the framework, they cannot be applied in this research. Produce a framework. Refer to outstanding theoreticians (not just Venice charter). Define the terms first.

Just claiming to do so is not what is needed in the theoretical framework.

3. **Review of Literature:** A review of literature should discuss the major research that have examined the issue previously, to show the status of current knowledge. There is no review of literature here at all. What is written here is an 'introduction to the Japanese Bridge'.

A review of literature must be produced employing the voice of the authors with statements such as 'according to Oliver (1999), or Rapoport (2000) points out, instead of the authors making statements and putting references within brackets. It should be a 'critical review'. Please see 'how to write a review of literature' in the ISVS e-journal web site and follow suit. Write in the present tense because it discusses current knowledge. Sum up at the end and show what is the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. 12-15 references are needed.

Currently, there is no review of previous research that have examined this issue (not the restoration of the Japanese Bridge itself only, which must be discussed only towards the end). Please bring to light the major researchers (not research-do not refer to research but the researchers) who have examined this issue and what they have found out.

4. **Research Methodology:** This is poorly done. It starts with an awkward statement "The paper "Restoration of the Japanese Bridge in Hoi An: Between Tourism Development and Heritage Conservation" was conducted". There is no need to talk about the paper here with the title. Please get straight to explaining how the data was gathered for the research.

This research employs case study as a method within which document research, field surveys, and expert interviews are claimed to have been done. A document survey is claimed to have been done but there is no list of the documents surveyed. They must be listed. In fact, each data gathering technique must be explained in detail. Say what was employed (Case studies) (Use present tense nevertheless) then the data gathering techniques. List them first and explain how each was carried out, with full details. Currently, there are no details about the field surveys and expert interviews. Who was interviewed, how they were selected and what kind of interviews, when where and how, must be presented for interviews. Same applies to field research. They must be explained in such a way that another independent researcher can repeat them and see if they will get the same results. That is the test of science.

Current writing is totally inadequate.

5. **Case studies:** Before the findings, introduce the case study: the Bridge, and the specific location of it: where the field studies were conducted. Provide a location plan and a general descriptions of the case study. This should be an introduction to the place and the structure as it exists.
6. **Findings:** Findings are not well presented. First, there is no sub title: Findings, but results. Results can be obtained when you do lab experiments but not qualitative research such as these.

Produce the data for each data gathering technique first and analysis of data afterwards. Explain what the observations during the field research are, before analysing. More critically, cite the sources of information. There is no data from many of the techniques of gathering data. For example, where are the data from the Document Studies. Where are the data from the interviews with the experts. Just mentioning few sources cannot be claimed as a 'Document study'. Research methods claimed that 'books, scientific articles, and reports related to the history, architecture, and previous restorations of the monument'. Please produce a table consisting of all these documents and which data was taken from which source.

Field surveys are mentioned. Which data was obtained from the field surveys?

Interviews are mentioned. Not a single interview has been cited as evidence. There is a serious doubt if such a thing has actually been accomplished. Please produce data.

The intention was to ascertain the 'rehabilitation process of the Japanese Bridge, particularly the challenges faced by experts in balancing the needs of monument conservation and tourism development'

In this case, three sub titles are needed. 1. Rehabilitation Process; 2. challenges faced by the experts and how they have been resolved; 3. balancing the needs of monument conservation and tourism development'

Currently, not a word has been said about tourism in these 'results'. Some discussion exists under 'discussion'. This is wrong.

Please cite the sources for all the information presented under the findings and the discussion. For example, it says 'The restoration project has garnered significant interest from the local community and visitors, with nearly 978,199 visitors during the restoration period'. However, there is no source for this data. How did the authors know this number? There are many such statements without sources not acknowledged. Not acceptable.

Very problematic.

Discussion: Current writing that explains the restoration process and the tourism developments must be part of the findings. Under the sub title 'discussion', please discuss the findings of this research with other research that have examined the same issue if any and show if they are similar or different. If different, explain why. Discuss what the findings mean and what their implications are.

7. **Conclusions:** Poor from the opening statement itself. It begins with a statement that says 'demonstrated the importance and necessity of balancing tourism development with cultural heritage conservation'. This paper did not examine the 'importance and necessity' and cannot make such statements in the conclusion. Please remember that this paper studied only the restoration process. There are many statements which are not justified. For example, it says that "The increased number of visitors and strong support from the local community, government agencies, and international organizations has created a favorable environment for the project's implementation". Such aspects were not examined in this paper. How do you know that there was 'community support'? This was not examined.

List the conclusions separately. Currently, it claims many things which are not conclusions derived from data in this research. For example, it says "Implementing strict management policies and enhancing community and visitor education about the monument's value is necessary to ensure long-term protection and respect for the cultural heritage." This paper did not examine these specifically. If these have not been studied, such 'conclusions' cannot be made. If it identified any specific conclusions related to the restoration process of the case study: the Japanese Bridge and how it balanced the need for conservation and tourism development, they must be listed here. That is what the title says and that is what was investigated. Say what this research 'concludes'. Please note that 'concluding remarks for an essay' is not acceptable in research as conclusions. Please discuss the strengths and weaknesses after the conclusions.

8. **References:** References are poorly done. First of all, they should not be numbered. Years must be within brackets and no full stop afterwards. Most of the references have publishers listed but no place of publication. Some of the page numbers are missing. Books do not require page numbers. Pay attention to details and be consistent. Use Harvard system as per the template. Avoid 'Vol' and 'pp'. Follow the template to the last dot. Left justify and list according to the alphabetical order of the second name of the author.

Final Decision: Major Revisions

Summary of the overall observations of the paper:

This is a very valuable paper that could make a potentially significant contribution to knowledge about balancing tourism development and heritage conservation. It examined the restoration of the Japanese bridge (chùa cầu) in hoi an, Vietnam. However, it needs major revisions to bring the argument to be cohesive supported by clear findings. The abstract needs to be succinct but must have sufficient details of research methods and the specific conclusions. Introduction needs to be presented in the proper order ending with proper aims and objectives. Introduce a proper theoretical framework, and write a proper review of literature. The research methodology requires to be presented well with a list of techniques employed to gather data and explanations of how each was carried out. Re-organise the findings to be meaningful and to show the main finding of how the restoration of the Japanese Bridge (chùa cầu) in hoi an, Vietnam has balanced (or not balanced) tourism development and heritage conservation. Detailed data are needed in terms of the document survey, field research and interviews if they were carried out. Demonstrate the ways in which the restoration of the Japanese Bridge (chùa cầu) in hoi an, Vietnam has balanced (or not balanced) tourism development and heritage conservation. That is what this research is about.

Write the conclusion with only the specific conclusions arising from the findings related to restoration of the Japanese Bridge (chùa cầu) in hoi an, Vietnam and how it has balanced (or not balanced) tourism development and heritage conservation. Do not make general statements about things that were not investigated. This should not be 'concluding remarks' but 'conclusions derived and substantiated by data'. At the end, discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this research. Re-examine and reproduce the references to be compatible with the ISVS e-journal template.