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## Article

# Complex Social Value-Based Approach for Decision-Making and Valorization Process in Chinese World Cultural Heritage Site: The Case of Kulangsu (China)

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**Abstract:** China is undertaking effective actions to adhere to wider international standards with better consideration of the notion of authenticity, collective memory, identity, and the sense of belonging. Besides the traditional participatory management discussions, scholars are also interested in finding out how the ICTs can encourage and enable new forms of engagement with heritage in different cultural contexts. The article offers an innovative approach to understanding the value of community participation in order to obtain a more sustainable way for integrative approaches in cultural heritage management. It focuses on the identification of criteria for the evaluation of Digital Community Engagement (DCE) and proposes the multivariate evaluation model based on the online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The result shows that the transparency of the restoration process, the possibility of adopting bottom-up suggestions, and the coherency with the residents' interests are the most important factors to influence the Willingness to Participate and the Willingness to Pay. The analysis based on theme-coding is essential to understand the opinions of various stakeholders with different educational and professional backgrounds. It concludes that multi-disciplinary and value-based methods should be encouraged as an exploratory way of enhancing community engagement in the specified urban heritage context.

**Keywords:** sustainable urban development; complex social value; values; urban heritage preservation; cultural heritage management; holistic approach



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## 1. Introduction: Participatory Management for Cultural Heritage: Digital Tools and Chinese Urban Landscape

Although the discussion about and approval of holistic conservation approach and implementation in China lags behind the Western world, it significantly evokes wide discussions at the regional level and emphasises the sustainable development of the local community by concerning the priority of improving living conditions and sharing benefits from urban heritage conservation [1,2]. Moreover, China has received severe criticism for over-commercialization, inner-city over-gentrification, and fake reconstruction in the past several decades [3]. Some Western scholars sharply pointed out that it was mainly due to the difference in East–West discourses and the institutional fragmentation, although this cost seems unavoidable given such dramatic social and economic transition [4,5].

Dating back to 1997, the first inscribed Chinese historic cities in the World Heritage List (WHL), such as Lijiang and Pingyao, involved prodigious economic and political profits from tourism [6–8]. Since then, seeking short-term interests has become a prevalent practice among Chinese local governments. This led to a widespread exclusive approach in a long

time by maintaining only the outlook and structure of several selected monuments, while intentionally overlooking the diminution in urban infrastructure and outflow of the local population. Chinese government sees the harm of single-minded pursuit of maximum profit and takes active actions to change. Kulangsu, included in the World Cultural Heritage List in 2017, is considered as a paradigm in the Chinese cultural heritage conservation field.

Located in Fujian Province on the southeast coast of China, Kulangsu is a small island with an area of approximately 1.88 square kilometres facing Xiamen across the 600-m-wide Lujiang Strait. As one of the most famous touristic places, Kulangsu faces continued growth in tourists in the following years, which inevitably leads to lower living quality of local people [6]. As released by Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, Xiamen received 52,957,900 domestic and foreign tourists from January to June 2021. However, the number of permanent residents on Kulangsu in 2020, according to the Seventh National Census Bulletin of Siming District issued by the Statistics Bureau of Siming District of Xiamen Municipal Government in May 2021, was just 1,073,315, which reached just 2% of the number of tourists. ICOMOS noted that tourists were the key threat to the tangible Kulangsu heritage site and its environment. Beyond the sharp conflict between the local people and the tourists, more attention should be paid as to how to interpret and emphasise the value of heritage.

The application of ICTs platforms to involve the broader community has become a popular approach in the digital era [7–9]. Since 2017, many social media accounts dedicated to mining and promoting the historical and cultural value of Kulangsu (Xiamen, China) have appeared on the Internet. Spontaneously formed social groups, such as the Kulangsu Cultural Heritage Conservation Association, participate in related actions such as querying the historical background of cultural relics and strengthening collective memory. These private groups not only organise a large number of public activities, such as photography exhibitions and workshops, but also exchange and share with other netizens on social platforms with great enthusiasm. Furthermore, social media platforms were employed as a significant tool to promote the cultural heritage of Kulangsu. By cooperating with influential leaders, Xiamen Cultural Tourism Bureau launched VR panoramic experience videos on overseas social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and on domestic social media such as Wechat and Weibo. In addition, a series of hashtags and hot topics such as #There is a kind of life called Xiamen, #Spring in the Garden, and #Colorful Kulangsu were continuously launched to maintain the attractiveness of Xiamen to overseas tourists. According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, these videos have been viewed more than 1.05 million times, with 209 posts on Facebook and 159 pictures posted on Instagram [10]. With the help of KOL's influence, the online posts related to Xiamen cultural heritage and tourism has gained more than 10 million exposures.

This study explores how to improve the extremely complicated and unbalanced situation between the dramatic urbanization and the stagnant, even obsolescent, local community environment within this historic settlement. The aim is to evaluate the components of Complex Social Value (CSV) by involving social media as a digital tool to contribute to improving the efficiency of communication among different stakeholders. Following the introduction, a comprehensive review of Complex Social Value theories is conducted as the research background. Then, Kulangsu international settlement, as the selected case study, is examined from two aspects: a brief economic, cultural, and historical background and management system. The fourth part is the roadmap of the research process which contains the analysis of the Outstanding Universal Value of Kulangsu, the analysis of stakeholders' network in the management system, and the setting of the online survey and interviews. The results and discussion are presented, followed by a solid and insightful conclusion.

## 2. The Complex Social Value (CSV) Theory and the Intrinsic Value Component

The value of urban heritage is usually considered a social construct, arising from the cultural contexts in response to social, economic, and political processes [8]. Comprehended as social-ecological systems, landscapes, particularly urban and cultural landscapes, integrate environmental, economic, and social elements [11]. Coscia and Curto pointed out that under the interaction of both cultural and economic factors, the valuation in cultural heritage projects is seen as a specific and complex issue [12].

To understand the value of an urban and cultural landscape, it is critical to perceive the nature of both the valued “object” (or aspect of landscape) and the expressed values for that object. It is one of the most essential parts of the heritage management, even in the preliminary and briefing projecting phases [13,14]. These values can be expressed by those who are in the cultural context and can be read and identified by those to observe and understand [15]. In other words, people who live within and outside the heritage site are not only holding certain values but also expressing and sharing values with others. In addition, the evaluation of redevelopment scenarios should include the stakeholders’ different preferences as well as the non-monetary values (both current values, foreseen values, potential values, so as intangible values) [16].

To maximise the contribution of a landscape to culture, the decision-makers are required to know the value of that place and understand how the values benefit the cultural diversity and identity [17]. When making planning and management decisions, the context of the landscape’s cultural dynamics need to be considered, and such values should be reinforced in the design of any new development [18]. To support this, it is critical that the decision-makers fully understand the value’s range and nature in a given landscape, what their spatial distribution is, and how they interact with each other [19]. However, considering discipline-specific value typologies are emphasised in the traditional landscape assessment methods, the overlapping, diverse, and irregularly spread values held by insiders may not be appreciated [20]. Tourism activities and experiences can be a way to interpret cultural heritage values and make them more accessible to society [21,22]. In urban heritage conservation areas, non-monetary values of urban and cultural landscape and dynamic process are still ignored to a large extent. This indicates that more attention should be paid to sustaining the landscape’s contribution to cultural diversity and identity.

In addition to the physical landscape, the collective memories, identities, and meanings held by the landscape also involve the new transformations of landscape [12,23]. In the heritage declaration process of Kulangsu, experts pointed out that the multicultural interaction, based on the inclusive culture background of southern Fujian immigrants, are not only presented by architecture, but also in wider fields such as community management, social activities [24]. Therefore, communities need to be included when defining the important and distinctive factors of their landscapes. Emerging as a new concept to identify the complexity of landscape, cultural, and environmental heritage with various interpretive approaches, the Complex Social Value (CSV) theory is a result of the integration of economic values and cultural values, such as symbolical values, historical values, aesthetical values, social values. It no longer considers territory a physical–geographical reality that serves economic growth [16,25,26].

The CSV seems to be particularly suitable for its coherent expression of different value components in the sustainability framework. This means that intrinsic values are expressed through weights and indexes instead of monetary terms [27]. Focusing on the management in the landscape’s cultural transformation processes in the dynamic context, CSV can be deduced from the certain cultural, institutional, or social context in which the cultural heritage site is addressed [28]. It is also a multidimensional methodological framework oriented towards the evaluation of landscape cultural values, as noted in Forte and Girard’s article: “The evaluation of the complex value of beauty that characterises some new architectural assets, integrating tangible and intangible aspects, helps in revitalization of urban spaces projects, promoting also creative capacity” [29].

It is widely recognised that cultural and social values refer to values shared by a community or group, and their legitimacy is obtained through a way of assigning values that are socially accepted [30]. This means that landscapes can be valued in several ways: values attributed by disciplinary experts and those shared by members in an associated group [15,31]. Meanwhile, the perception by “insiders” and “outsiders” are generally different: outsiders include the majority of developers, experts, and policy-makers in the area they work, as well as those who do not belong to the same socio-economic group, the local community or share the same training and education background [16,20,32]. The Community Impact Analysis (CIA) approach, the Gephi model, and the Mendelow method contribute to categorising stakeholders, which is also applied by UNESCO to support decision-making as an iterative process [33–35]. Through the filter of their social and cultural background, the landscape is perceived, understood, and created by the insiders and outsiders.

Facing the conflicts in cultural heritage management, the community’s values are usually different from the experts’ values due to different educational backgrounds and opinions about sustainable conservation practices [36,37]. In the case of Qing Mu Chuan, a historic village in China, the local residents showed much stronger preferences and preservation willingness towards historic landscapes with cultural elements than the professionals [15]. Table 1 shows the revised version (2017) of the value evaluation framework for historic cities in China, which is evidence of the values of the outsiders: professionals and policymakers. It is an updated version modified based on the Evaluation Index System of Famous Historical and Cultural Villages in China (2004) and the Shenzhen localised version (2011). Not surprisingly, similar to the previous versions, the framework received some sharp and critical comments from Chinese practitioners, scholars, cultural heritage lovers, and the locals, which leads to additional revision works. Thus, it is necessary to understand the values of various stakeholders that come from different interest groups, and then study and discuss them deeply.

**Table 1.** The value evaluation framework for historic cities in China (Shenzhen revised version in 2017).

Material	1	Grade and quantity of cultural relics protection institutes	1.1	Number of cultural relic protection institutes	Quantitative
			1.2	The highest level of cultural relic protection institutes	
	2	Number of registered immovable cultural relics	2	Number of registered immovable cultural relics	
	3	Number of historical buildings	3	Number of historic buildings announced by the government	
	4	Overall scale of historical block/scale of historical building	4.1	Land area of historical urban area	
			4.2	Land area for cultural relics protection institutes, immovable cultural relics and historical buildings in the historic city	
	5	Characteristic environmental landscape elements	5	The number of historical elements (ancient city walls, ancient towers, ancient bridges, etc.) that reflect local characteristics and typical characteristics are preserved	
Immaterial	6	The scale of historic corridors, street and lane	6.1	The number of historical streets with complete forms and continuous relics	
			6.2	The total length of historical streets with complete forms and continuous relics	
	7	Intangible cultural heritage	7	Traditional festivals, traditional craftsmanship, and characteristic types of traditional customs, as well as the number of poems, legends, operas, and songs that originate from the local area and are widely circulated	

Table 1. Cont.

Material	8	Completeness, authenticity, and representativeness of historical features	8.1	The preservation situation of historical buildings	Qualitative
			8.2	Proportion of historical buildings	
			8.3	Treasure, pioneering, and representative of historical relics	
	9	Space value	9.1	Build design level	
			9.2	Harmony with the natural environment	
			9.3	Spatial layout and functional characteristics	
	10	Historical events, or celebrities	10	Unique status, importance of social function, and social influence	
			10	Transformation of urban morphology, or reflects the lifestyle and social customs of a certain historical period	

Source: Research on the evaluation index system of historical features area based on the principle of classification and rating: Taking Shenzhen as an example, Reprinted/adapted with permission from Ref. [38], 2006, Wen, Z.

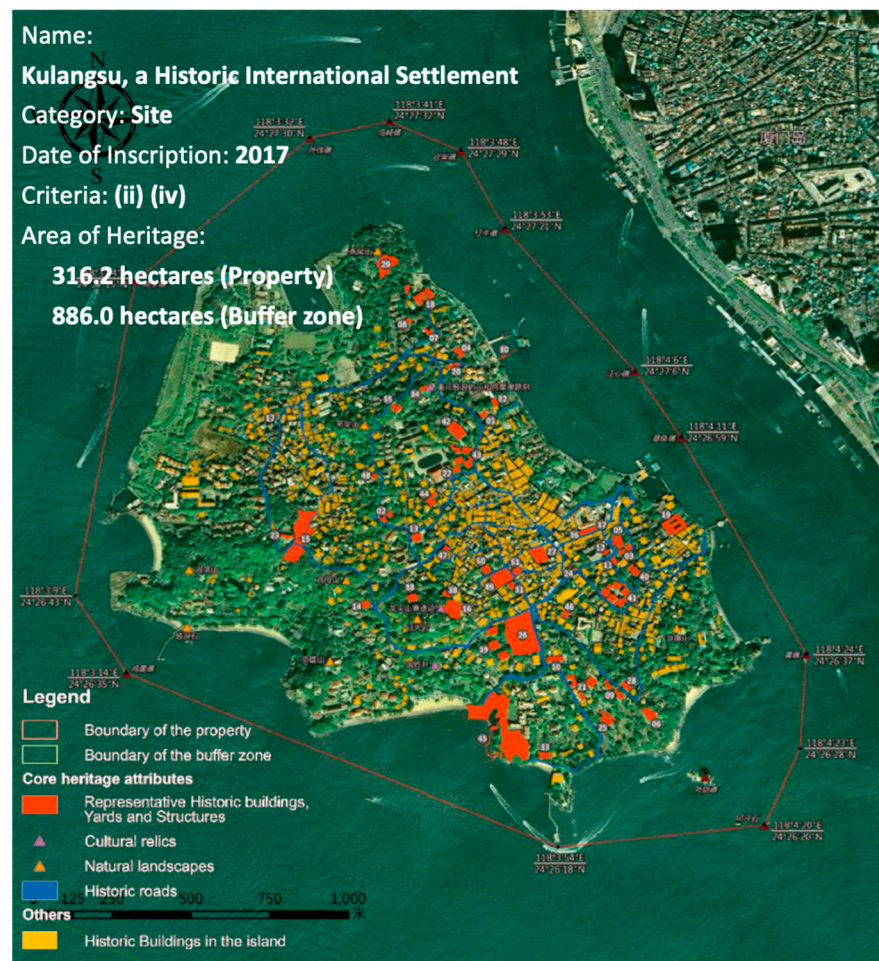
### 3. The Defined Study Case: Kulangsu, Xiamen, China, a UNESCO-Listed Urban Heritage Site

#### 3.1. The Glory and Predicament of Kulangsu to Be a National and World Listed Heritage Site

Listed as a national-level scenic spot in 1988, Kulangsu was a pioneer that initiated modern methods for architectural survey and protection in the urban area in China [39]. At that time, 391 historical buildings were assessed and recognised, and a heritage protection management system was established in the local area. Afterward, Kulangsu was recognised as National 5A Tourist Attraction in 2007 and National Historic and Cultural Urban Area in 2015. On 8 July 2017, the Kulangsu Historical International Settlement was listed as a World Heritage Site at the 41st World Heritage Conference, resulting in China's 36th World Cultural Heritage and 52nd World Heritage Site. In the nine-year process of applying to become a World Heritage Site, Kulangsu witnessed the collision of global multiculturalism and the mutual understanding of different values between China and the Western world, providing a powerful reference for the integration and development of different cultures against the accelerating globalization.

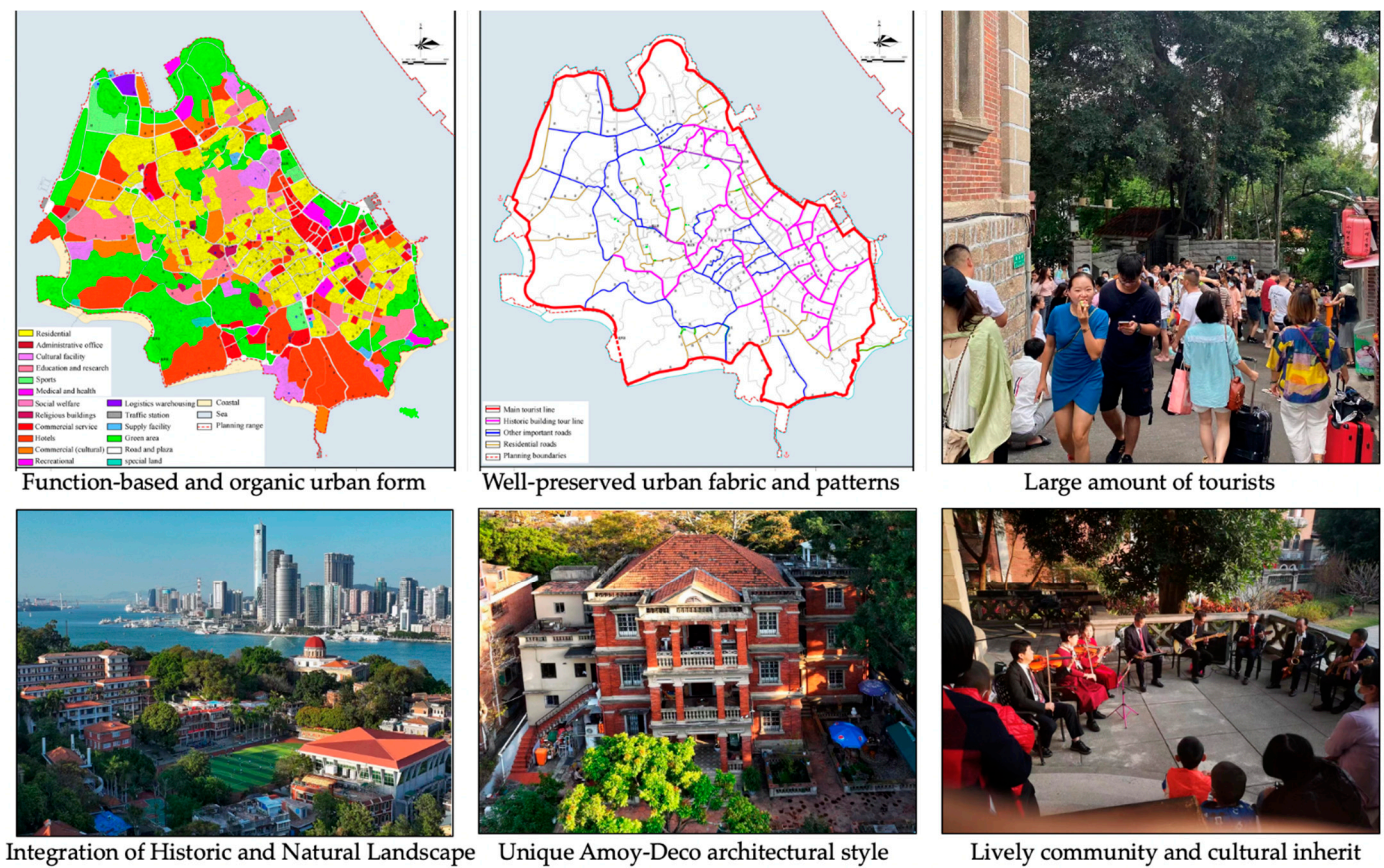
After the Opium War in the 1840s, the historical international settlement of Kulangsu gradually took shape in the context of cultural fusion [40]. As of 2021, Kulangsu is reported to boast 931 historical buildings and gardens, natural and organic historical road networks, and rich natural landscapes, which reflect the integration of modern human settlement concepts and local traditional culture, forming a distinctive regional architectural feature (see Figure 1). The people of Kulangsu are mainly composed of local residents, overseas Chinese, and nationals of other countries stationed on the island [41]. This historical city not only reflects the cultural influence brought by the settlers from other countries and regions, but also mixes with the local south-eastern Chinese architecture to form what is called the Amoy–Deco style (This style is named after Amoy, which is the name of Xiamen in the local Minnan dialect. It is an eclectic form of traditional local architectural features and early Western architectural styles.) [40,42,43]. Many buildings have continuous arches on the facades with influenced by the architecture styles from Victorian period [40]. In addition, Kulangsu, witnessing China's modernization of urban construction in the early stages of globalization, shows significant cultural diversity.





**Figure 1.** The legend and core heritage attributes of the Kulangsu heritage site. Source: Xiamen Kulangsu–Wanshishan Scenic Area Management Committee and Kulangsu World Cultural Heritage Monitoring Center.

However, the Amoy–Deco style buildings have also made Kulangsu in the public and even the local community’s cognition more of a historical testimony of the military invasion and plunder of China by the Western powers [44]. Therefore, the early-stage protection of Kulangsu was focused mainly on natural landscapes, architectural styles, and musical and artistic performances, with little attention paid to the cultural values (see Figure 2). This virtually left many historical relics in a state of obsolescence or improper use. At the same time, the tourism boom, which focuses on sightseeing, has posed severe pressure and negative effects on the living environment of the community [39,45]. In addition, the function of the community is gradually becoming single, mainly serving the tourism industry. Community public services and welfare, such as education and medical care, have been cut. Moreover, the local community groups closely related to the history of Kulangsu have gradually moved away. As a result, the idyllic and artistic residence and unique community cultural traditions are difficult to preserve and continue.



**Figure 2.** The urban morphology, architecture typology, landscape view, tourists flow, and local community cultural events. Source: Xiamen Urban Planning and Design Institute and Songrong Cai from Kulangsu World Cultural Heritage Monitoring Center.

### 3.2. The Management System of Kulangsu: Ownership, Policy, Legislation, and Framework

The property of Kulangyu is jointly managed by two administrative institutes: Xiamen Kulangsu–Wanshishan Scenic Area Management Committee (the Management Committee) and the Kulangsu Sub-District Office of the Siming District. The management committee was established on 18 October 2003. It is also known as the Kulangsu World Cultural Heritage Monitoring and Management Centre. As the dispatched agency of Xiamen Municipal Government, it is mainly responsible for the planning, protection, construction and management of the Scenic Area. Comprehensive law enforcement agencies include municipal departments of city appearance and environment, cultural relics protection, market supervision, tourism supervision, etc., which comply with the direction of the Management Committee. The Kulangsu Sub-District Office is mainly in charge of other settlement-related aspects and plays an important role in promoting neighbourhood interaction and delivering government notices. In addition, experts, professionals, and scholars from Xiamen University are invited as external supporting consultants for heritage conservation and management.

Different from Western capitalist countries, the ownership of heritage property in China currently complies with the rules of the socialist economic system, i.e., public ownership. According to the Kulangsu survey report of ICOMOS, “the land parcels of the entire island belong to the state” [43]. Moreover, the built structures fall under four management categories, which include state-managed public structures, houses administrated by management communities, houses entrusted by their owners to state management and maintenance, and private properties. Mostly, the designated heritage structures on Kulangsu belong to the first category and are exclusively managed by the government.



Concerning the policy and regulatory system, a series of regulations are adopted and officially put into force by the government, including the Regulations on the Protection of Historic Buildings on Kulangsu Island (2000), the Conservation and Management Plan for Kulangsu Cultural Heritage (2011), the Guidelines on Control of Commercial Activities on Kulangsu (2014), and the Regulations on the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of Kulangsu (2019). The Regulations on the Conservation in 2019 is an upgraded and revised version of the one in 2012. It is also a special legislation made by the Xiamen Municipal Government to strengthen the protection of the cultural heritage of Kulangsu, which contains six chapters and 47 articles, with the purpose of promoting the optimization and integration of the management system. As shown in Table 2, in addition to the fundamental rules and legal restrictions, guaranteeing local residents' welfare and rights is highlighted in the fourth chapter of the revised version of the 2019 Regulation on the Conservation. At the macro city level, the urban morphological transformation of the settlements is monitored, and the surrounding environment quality is well controlled. At the micro building level, detailed value assessment and the development of a list of historical building features is conducted under the supervision of the urban planning bureau [39].

**Table 2.** Main contents of the Regulations on the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of Kulangsu, revised in 2019.

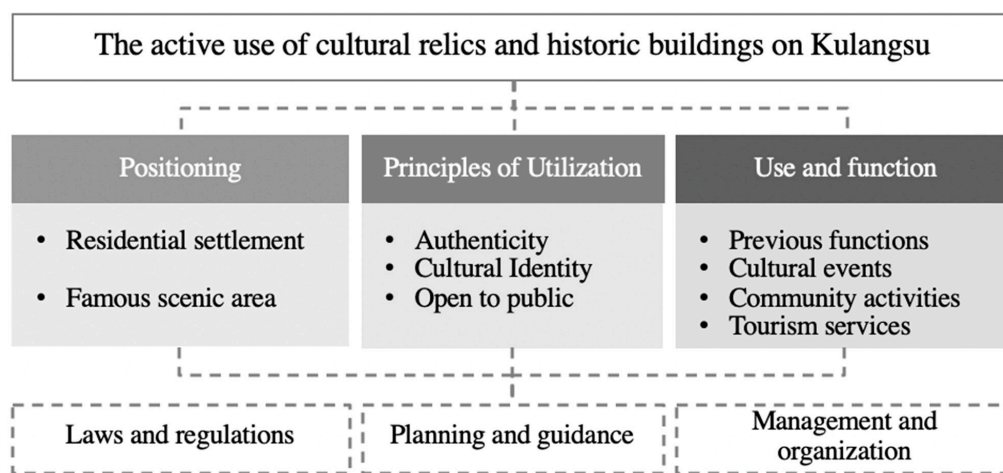
1	General Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the definition and content of cultural heritage conservation</li> <li>• Demarcate the heritage area and buffer zone</li> <li>• Explicitly put cultural heritage conservation and management into the city's national economic and social development plan</li> <li>• Establish management system for the unified coordination and management</li> </ul>
2	Planning and Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and give legal force to a multi-level planning system, and prioritise Heritage Management Plan</li> <li>• Enhance management: establish prohibitive regulations and detailed requirements</li> <li>• Clarify the protection responsibility of the owners of various heritage elements, and provide necessary subsidies and support</li> </ul>
3	Cultural Inheritance and Appropriate Use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put forward general requirements to prioritise conservation and supporting activities and projects that are conducive to the inheritance of cultural heritage</li> </ul>
4	Shared Heritage and Safeguard Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guarantee residents' welfare and rights</li> <li>• Establish a credit management system</li> <li>• Establish and improve the participation mechanism of community residents</li> </ul>
5	Legal Liability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify legal liabilities and illegal activities</li> </ul>

Source: The peoples' congress of Xiamen ([https://www.xmrd.gov.cn/fzgk/201907/t20190704\\_5291186.htm](https://www.xmrd.gov.cn/fzgk/201907/t20190704_5291186.htm), accessed on 30 October 2021).

In the conservation management plan, a strict hierarchical space management and control strategy has been formulated, which divides and defines the green space, historical protection area, restricted construction area. After Kulangsu was included in the World Heritage List in 2017, all new urban construction plans must undergo a heritage impact assessment (HIA) before they can be implemented. Government administrative departments, professional institutions, owners, and various stakeholders jointly communicate and negotiate in order to make decisions that more respect the value of the heritage. Meanwhile, the Kulangsu Monitoring Centre is connected to the national heritage monitoring platform and is equipped with an early warning mechanism. The whole system consists of

nine modules, namely, individual characteristics of heritage, body disease, tourism and tourists, social environment, natural environment, daily inspections, construction control, protection projects, and comprehensive monitoring. Additionally, since the key threat to the integrity and sustainability of Kulangsu heritage site is the tourism pressure, the government set a maximum limit on the travellers and commuters. The number of visitors has been effectively reduced by controlling the access ferries since 2017.

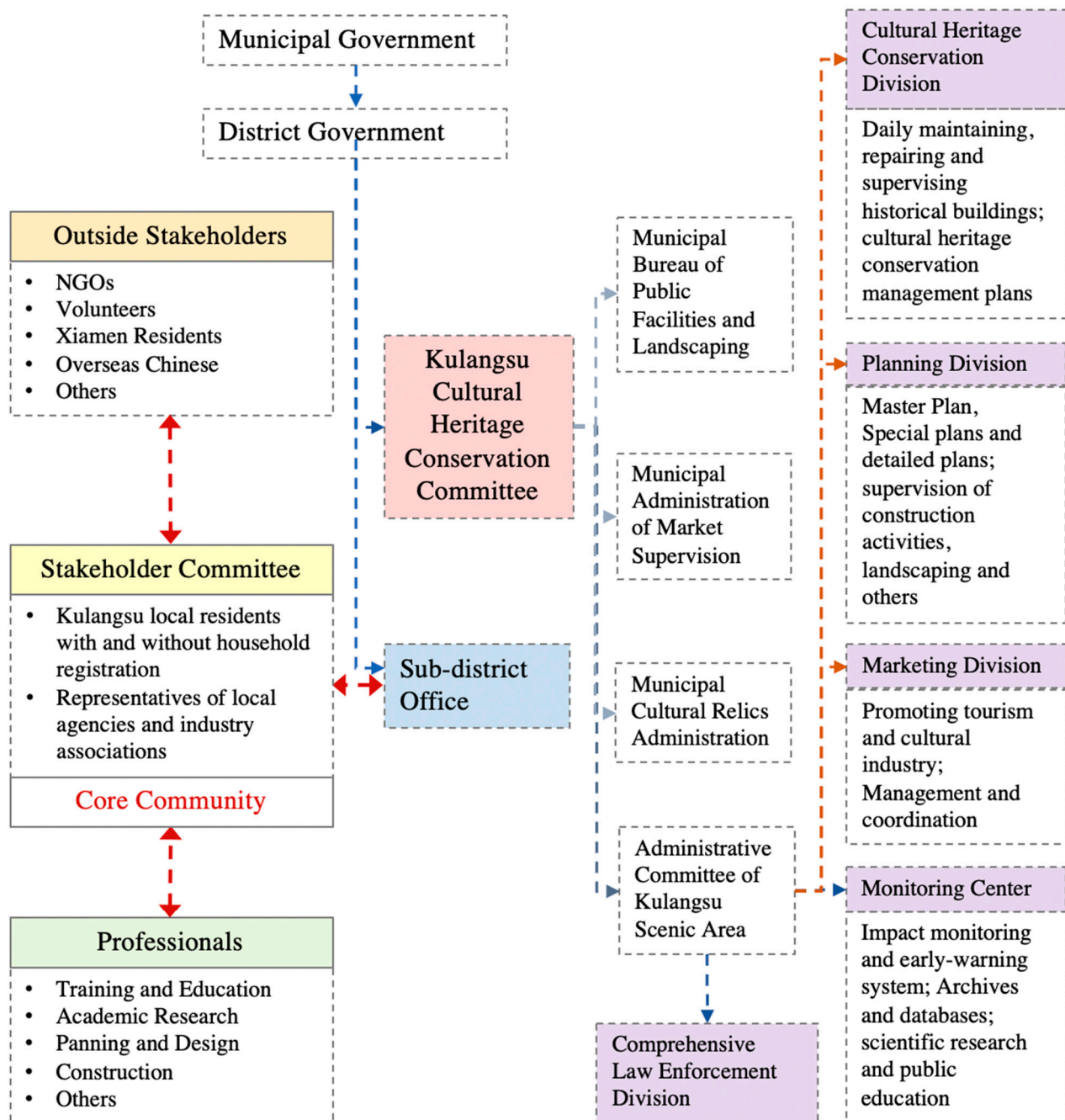
In addition to the detailed quality and style classification, the protection and renovation of Kulangsu historical buildings are mainly summarised into four ways (see Figure 3). Firstly, the original functions are largely maintained to reflect the authenticity of the heritage, which is mainly applicable to various religious buildings and residences. Secondly, some buildings partially retained their original functions and are open to the public as an exhibition place or transformed into art activity venues. Thirdly, several houses are reconstructed into non-profit Kulangsu research and management-related office premises. Lastly, a few buildings are reconstructed into tourist service facilities.



**Figure 3.** The framework of the restoration of historic buildings on Kulangsu (made by author).

The residents and tourists are not only witnesses of the spread of the heritage, but also active participants. The Kulangsu stakeholder committee as a form of public council is composed of residents with household registration, non-residents with household registration, representatives of island-based institutions and industry associations. It serves as an important platform for stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process (see Figure 4). The public council not only participates in the discussion of government resolutions and policies, but also proposes to the government on behalf of the community, involving people's livelihood and welfare, heritage protection, environmental protection, and tourism market management. In addition, through cultural policy support and a variety of exhibitions, the public can be informed of, participate in, and supervise the process of cultural heritage protection to the utmost extent. Local schools have also introduced cultural heritage conservation in the general education process. In terms of presentation and interpretation, the heritage property offers guided tours of multiple themes. Tourists can also explore this island individually via sign-guided routes and maps. Furthermore, the online presentation of the property allows for a virtual tour by means of a GIS-based exploration platform. Well-organised tourist service centres are easily found at almost every street corner. Besides, a series of online platforms have been developed and maintained by Xiamen Kulangsu-Wanshishan Scenic Area Management Committee, such as the Kulangsu World Cultural Heritage Website (<http://www.glysyw.com/> accessed on 22 November 2021) with online heritage maps, and the official visitor's guide to Kulangsu (<https://kulangsuisland.org/> accessed on 22 November 2021) to introduce both the tangible and intangible heritage value. The widely used official government platform (<http://gly.xm.gov.cn/> accessed on 22 November 2021) mainly includes three sections:

interactive communication, government information disclosure, and Kulangsu style. In the interactive communication section, users can directly initiate online complaints to the government mailbox, such as “Kulangsu rent-free for one and a half months leads to complaints from businesses”, or seek assistance from the authority, such as “academic research requests historical visitor volume data”. The government also collects public opinions in the interactive communication section from time to time in order to better collect and adopt the suggestions of the people, such as “the solicitation of public opinion on enhancing the cultural atmosphere of Kulangsu Island”.



**Figure 4.** The management system of Kulangsu Heritage site and the role of stakeholders committee. Source: Made by author according to the documents from Kulangsu World Cultural Heritage Monitoring Center.

#### 4. Method: The Research Process Roadmap

The research objective of the article is to discover the way to actively involve the core community. It builds on the online survey tools yielded by social media to obtain satisfaction ratings and feedback from citizens through structured and objective questionnaires and interviews. Analytical personal data collection is part of the research process, both as a tool for mapping and interpreting the core community, and as a means for testing the feasibility of current conservation strategies, which may enable further investigation. Table 3 shows the brief roadmap of the research process with four phases.

**Table 3.** The brief roadmap of the research design and process (made by author).

The Brief Roadmap of the Research Process		
<b>Phase 1</b>	1.1	Determining of the Outstanding Universal Value
	1.2	Mapping the Stakeholders Network
<b>Phase 2</b>	2.1	The Design and Structure of the Survey
	2.2	The Data Mining and Analysis of the Online Survey
	2.3	The Supplement of Semi-structured Interview
<b>Phase 3</b>	3.1	The General Profiles of Participants
	3.2	The Screening Process and Assessment of the Willingness to Participate (WP) and Pay (WTP)
	3.3	The Mapping of Interviewees as Representative of Stakeholders from Different Interest Groups based on Thematic Coding
<b>Phase 4</b>	4.1	The Evaluation on Identifying Relations between Values and Meanings
	4.2	The Proposal of Additional Guidelines

Phase 1 focuses on identifying and recognising the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Kulangsu heritage site. The OUV is categorised into two aspects: material value and immaterial value. Island urban form, patterns and fabrics, landscape and gardens, and buildings and courtyards are listed as the material value elements with detailed indicators. The traditions and customs, religions, and living habits of the local community are considered as part of the immaterial value. The second part of phase 1 illustrates the stakeholder's network of the core community on Kulangsu. The obligations and rights of each stakeholder are stated according to the official documents from the government. Relevant regulations and policies are created to encourage public participation in the decision-making process of heritage conservation and safeguard their welfares are listed as well.

The second phase is focused on compiling the online survey, from design throughout data mining. The online survey as specified in phase 2.1 is divided into seven sections: memory and perceptions, approach to authorities, willingness to participate, willingness to pay, the concept towards "public" building and the "personal" one, the concept of value, and personal information. In phase 2.2, the data needed in the investigation are collected through online questionnaires with the help of social media (Wechat) in November 2021. WeChat users can directly click the shared questionnaire link in the WeChat group and Moments to respond or scan a QR code to open the questionnaire. In addition, group texting and mailing were also used as an invitation method. At the end of the questionnaire, financial compensation using online payment was set as a reward mechanism for filling out the survey sheet. Following that, in phase 2.3, face-to-face interviews were conducted with professionals, experts, residents, and government administrators with a semi-structured list of questions. It is a crucial supplement to the anonymous survey to understand the differences beyond the common characteristics of different stakeholders.

Phase 3 states in detail the process of data examination and result identification of the online questionnaire. The crucial point of this step is to build up a model to transform collected qualitative data into quantitative language. In step 3.1, the general profiles of participants including the geo-distribution, the proportion of residents, occupation, gender,



and age are illustrated in detail. Meanwhile, the process of selecting effective answers based on the answering time, inconsistent answers, and the attributes of the local are also listed with corresponding results. Step 3.2 mainly contributes to the in-depth analysis of the filtered results based on SPSS. The Correlation Analysis based on the chi-square test is applied to examine the statistical dependence between different variables and tasks [16]. Next, step 3.3 further investigates and evaluates the relation between values and meanings supported by quantitative data. The possible reasons and explanations for the result of the correlated variables are extracted due to the participants' responses.

The fourth phase is to effectively analyse the content of the interview record and propose additional guidelines to the current regulation system. In phase 4.1, a systematic process to organise and highlight the meaning of distinct opinions from interviewees, with different occupations and beneficial interests, is employed in the research [46]. A hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis is used to interpret the narrative text data [47]. Architectural professionals, academic experts, government administrators, and residents are interviewed face-to-face according to the pre-set list of questions. In phase 4.2, a guideline for additional strategies is generated, taking into account the participants' values, preferences, and needs.

#### *4.1. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Cultural Heritage Property: Kulangsu*

Kulangsu, as one of the sites inscribed in the WHL, has been qualified with certain representivity in the pertinent cultural–historical context, which means it has Outstanding Universal Value [48]. In the UNESCO document, 2005 version of Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, “intrinsic” and “objective” values (“Objective values are typically defined as the immutable characteristics related to the fabric or history of a particular property . . . Intrinsic value is used to regulate and limit the proliferation of meaning by granting to “experts” the authority to identify the true significance of properties” [45]) are repeated to nominated properties and then widely discussed by many scholars [16,49,50]. The heritage valorisation on the international level helps to reinforce the national identities promoted by authorised heritage discourse [51–54]. Beside the material part, which is already well represented, the immaterial part and its value, such as cultural landscape, nonmonumental cultures, should also be actively presented and listed [55].

Culture and identity are not just about social relationships, but they are also spatial. At the beginning of the 20th century, the urban form of the historical international settlement of Kulangsu gradually took shape. With its cultural tolerance, modern infrastructure, and pleasant natural landscape, Kulangsu became an ideal settlement for the elite. From the urban planning perspective, the modern community functional system of this island is planned under the multi-national condominium model, forming a habitable space with island features. From the architectural view, the unique residential concept combining Western and Chinese elements are outstanding and impressive for both domestic citizens and foreigners. The presentative of the unbelievable coexistence and integration of diverse cultures is mainly on the reflection of value exchange in built environments carrying the cultures with strong conflict.

The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Kulangsu can be roughly summarised into two aspects: material value and non-material value (see Table 4). The material value mainly includes the overall morphological characteristics of the settlements located on the islands, the organic street system pattern and urban fabric, the eclectic style neighbourhoods, natural landscapes, and cultural and historical landmarks. At the non-material level, local cultural traditions and customs that embrace multiple cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs have also developed unique forms of music and art. Regardless of foreign religious beliefs or local superstitions, Western festivals, and local folk customs, they are all inherited and continued in the daily lives of local residents. The urban heritage of Kulangsu has contributed to the accumulation of value as a world cultural heritage for human civilization, while the local community is given the responsibility of protecting and inheriting OUV.

**Table 4.** The Outstanding Universal Value of Kulangsu heritage site (made by author).

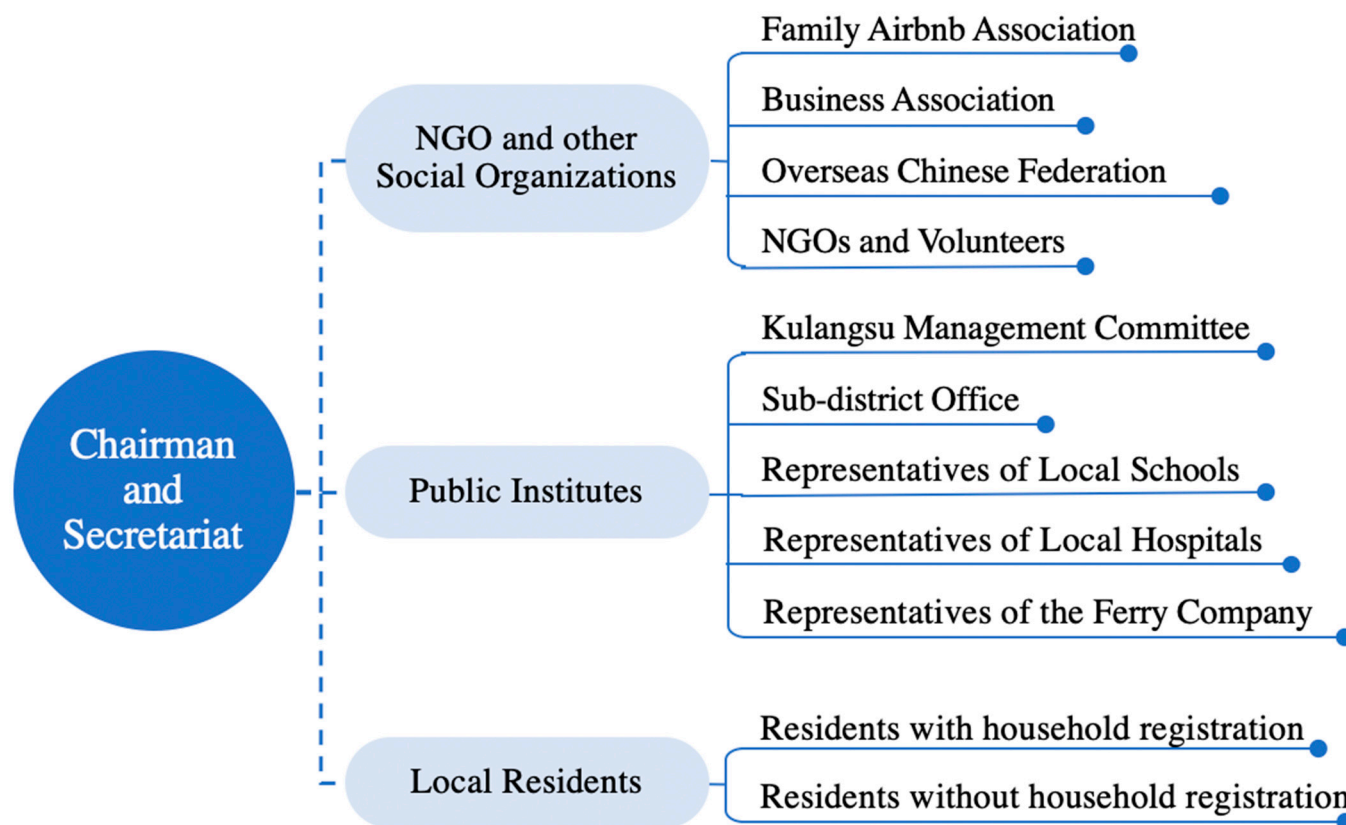
The Outstanding Universal Value of Kulangsu	
Material Value	Island Urban Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical features of the island</li> <li>• External transportation by ferry</li> <li>• Residence-based urban function</li> <li>• Morphological characteristics of the settlement</li> </ul>
	Patterns and Fabrics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic pedestrian path network on the hillside</li> <li>• Well-preserved scale of roads and interfaces</li> <li>• Various types of neighbourhood fabric</li> </ul>
	Landscape and Gardens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hilly natural landscapes</li> <li>• Historic landscapes that integrate natural and human elements</li> <li>• Street scenes endowed with connotations from different cultures</li> </ul>
	Buildings and Courtyards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic buildings with Western architectural styles</li> <li>• Representative works of Amoy–Deco style</li> <li>• Traditional and local Red Brick House Style</li> </ul>
Immaterial Value	Traditions and Customs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native cultural folks and South-eastern Chinese local customs</li> <li>• Imported Western festivals and manners</li> <li>• Open and cultural tolerant community</li> </ul>
	Religions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western-based Christianity</li> <li>• China-originated Taoism and Buddhism</li> <li>• Chinese Fengshui philosophy</li> <li>• South-eastern Chinese local superstitious</li> </ul>
	Living Habits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern living habits and entertainment activities</li> <li>• Contemporary cultural activities integrated with historic scenes</li> <li>• Dependence on the energy and labour resource from the Xiamen urban area</li> </ul>

#### 4.2. The Stakeholders Network of the Core Community

The Kulangsu Public Council (KPC) is a public consultation platform for stakeholders to participate and collaborate in the management of Kulangsu. It was authorised in 2016 and was established with the support and help of the Kulangsu Management Committee, the Kulangsu Sub-district Office and the Social Governance and Legal Research Centre of Xiamen University. It was mainly motivated and promoted by the two main contradictions in the cultural heritage management practices of Kulangsu. One is the conflict between residents and tourists due to different demands and diverse interests. The other one is the conflict between different stakeholders due to the lack of an effective negotiation mechanism.

The KPC is composed of 27 members from the local island, who come from local public institutes, families, commercial entities, social organizations, and NGOs, etc. (see Figure 5). The chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-general of the council were elected and became the leading group of the council. In addition, the public council should hold at least one meeting every quarter, and temporary meeting were also held when needed. The meeting must be attended by two-thirds of the members, that is to say, at least 18 members must participate, or otherwise the meeting would be cancelled. The proposals that they have made during the decision-making process mainly focus on four sections: the policy and strategies from the government, the residents' livelihood-related issues, the heritage conservation and environmental protection, and the tourism and market management. It

helps to resolve some internal contradictions promptly and promote self-management and social autonomy as a communicating platform for all stakeholders. Second, the audience can rely on the information feedback mechanism to reflect the actual situation to the authority and put forward specific suggestions to promote the government's scientific decision-making. Third, the council assists the government to communicate with residents and implementing policies that benefit the people.



**Figure 5.** The structure of the stakeholders committee as the local public council (made by author).

#### 4.3. The Setting of the Online Survey and Interviews

The objective of the data acquisition setting of the online survey is listed below. Firstly, to understand the preferences of the participants in favour of the demolition or the conservation of the historical complexes and their concept of values. Secondly, to understand whether the regeneration projects can satisfy participants' needs, values, and preferences, in order to make a comparison between the expectations of both the insiders and outsiders. Thirdly, to measure the public's willingness to participate in the decision-making, co-design, and collaboration with professionals, and their willingness to pay for the projects. The overall target is to examine whether this Western-based methodology could generate a similar or different result.

The online survey is distributed and disseminated on the Wechat platform, which is one of the most popular social media Apps in China and worldwide. On the one hand, the content of WeChat dissemination has the characteristics of personal privacy. Due to the strict requirement of dual real-name authentication of identity and bank account, the communication is mainly peer-to-peer and interpersonal. On the other hand, Wechat focuses on social interaction rather than mass communication [56]. Messages of varied forms, such as texts, images, videos, and links, can be accurately sent to designated groups and online communities through group messaging. Additionally, it is very easy to forward messages to a single friend or publish it on Moment, which is similar to Instagram. Last but

not least, during the epidemic, Wechat was used as the main platform for sending official notifications, and the communication tool for friends and for colleagues in smart working.

The questionnaire is structured with six sections as shown in Table 5. In the first section, questions regard memory and perceptions of place, including the sense of community and place. and the personal favourite renovation project to reflect certain keywords, and the main approach to renovating historic buildings. The second section focuses on the way to obtain notices from authorities, express suggestions to the responsible administrating organization, and participate in the decision-making process. A question on the degree of the possibility of adopting residents' suggestions is supplemented to understand the optimistic/pessimistic attitude held by the local people. The third section aims to understand the residents' Willingness to Participate in the decision making of renovation projects. The knowledge of the restoration procedure and the way to access to the projects are examined, as well as the difficulty to take part in the project. The fourth section is on Willingness to Pay, such as the intention to invest, to donate on which type of building, the amount of money to donate, and the reason for the negative answer. The Section 5 is about the elements and values of cultural heritage and its importance, such as environmental value, cultural value, and educational value. The last part is the collection of personal information on gender, age, education, resident household place, and occupation.

**Table 5.** The setup and main components of the questionnaire (made by author).

Part 1	<b>Memory and Perceptions</b>
	Sense of community Feeling of belonging and sense of place The method to restore the historic building
Part 2	<b>The Way to Communicate with Authorities</b>
	The way to obtain notices The way to express suggestions The way to participate into decision-making
Part 3	<b>Willingness to Participate</b>
	Knowledge of the process of renewal projects of public/private buildings (cost, time consuming, procedures...) The way to know and access to regenerated projects The degree of willingness to participate The difficulty to participate
Part 4	<b>Willingness to Pay</b>
	The degree of willingness to pay The invest preferences Personal donation amount to support heritage preservation The reason for not paying
Part 5	<b>The Concept of Value</b>
	Cultural heritage elements Values
Part 6	<b>Personal Information</b>
	Gender Age Education Residence place Occupation

According to the objectives, various question types are selected, including matrix multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank questions, multiple-choice questions, scale questions, single choice questions, etc. Some questions are set up with direct correlation and jump logic. For example, in the question “willingness to pay”, respondents whose answer is negative will skip the building types that they want to invest in and directly go to the question of why



they are not willing to invest. The same logic and structure of the questionnaire are applied to the question list of the interview. The answers were obtained very flexibly according to the interviewee's professional knowledge, educational background, and interest groups to which they belong.

The participants were selected from stakeholders of different communities to present the ideas of the certain group they belong to. Prof. Shaosen WANG, the Dean of the Department of Architecture from Xiamen University, is seen as a representative of professionals due to his experience of taking part in the Regulations on the Protection of Historic Buildings on Kulangsu Island in Xiamen Special Economic Zone. (The Regulations on the Protection of Historic Buildings on Kulangsu Island in the Xiamen Special Economic Zone was promulgated and implemented by the Xiamen Municipal Government in January 2000. In 2011, the Xiamen Municipal Government promulgated the "Kulangsu Island Cultural Heritage Site Protection and Management Plan" and "Kulangsu Island Regulatory Detailed Plan". In 2012, the "Regulations on the Protection of Kulangsu Cultural Heritage in Xiamen Special Economic Zone" was promulgated.) The presentative of academic experts is Prof. Yuan LI, professor and PhD supervisor, School of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Xiamen University. He is also a member of the Big Data Committee of the China Urban Science Research Association. The administrator from the government, Mr Songrong CAI is the director of Kulangsu World Heritage Centre, Xiamen Kulangsu-Wanshishan Scenic Area Management Committee. An anonymous resident in the urban area of Xiamen is interviewed on-site. While the record of an interview of another 67-year resident on Kulangsu island, namely Qinong DONG, is cited and translated from the "Heritage Bridge" salon event, organised by China World Cultural Heritage Center.

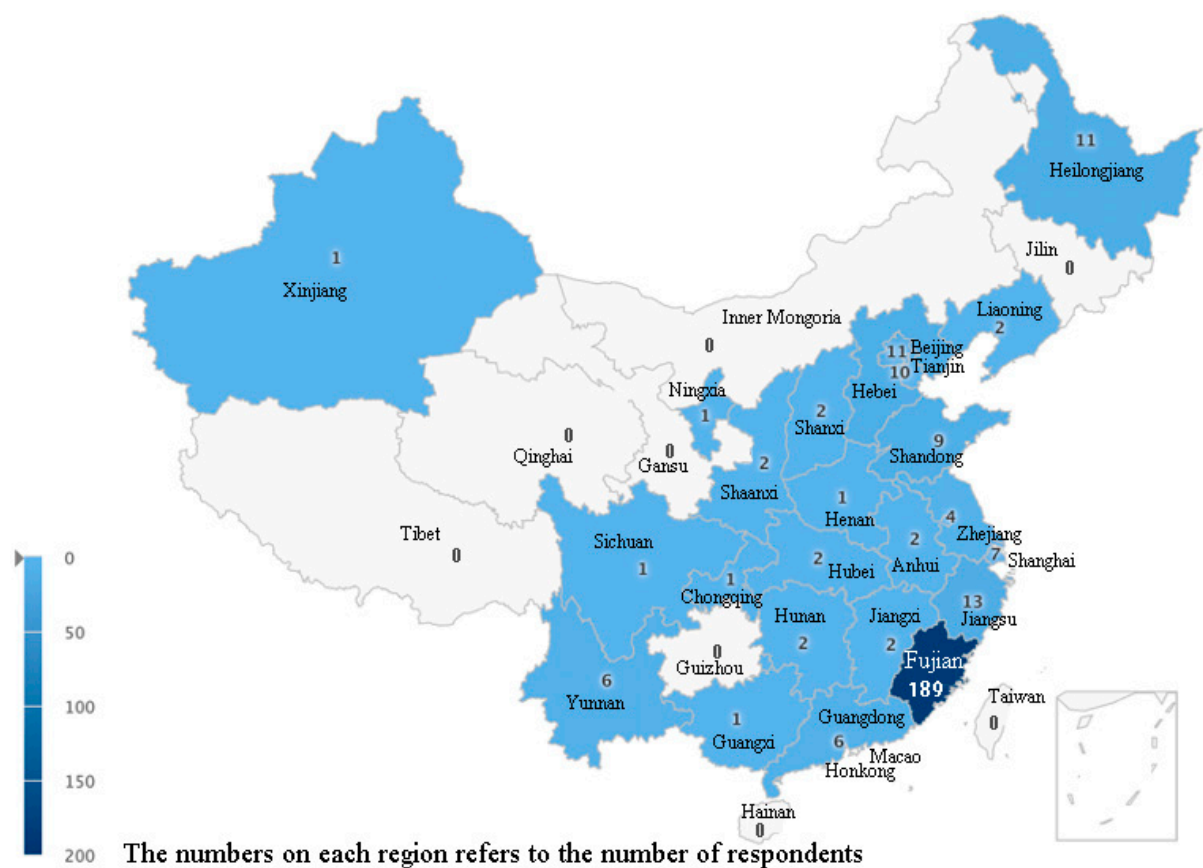
## 5. Results

Before the data analysis process, reliability analysis and validity analysis are calculated on SPSS to examine the stability and rationality of the questionnaire. The reliability analysis shows a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.877, indicating that the questionnaire setting is highly reasonable for further analysis. As the result of validity analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin value of this questionnaire is 0.869, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value is 1873.165, and the *p*-value is 0.00, indicating that the questionnaire is extremely effective.

### 5.1. The General Profiles of Participants

At the end of the survey in November 2021, 292 respondents from various provinces of China have taken part, of which more than half are residents from Xiamen city and the Kulangsu area (see Figure 6). The questionnaire screening is structured on the answers filled in by the participants instead of the obtained IP address for identifying the locals. The two main reasons are the epidemic lockdown measures and China's household registration policy. The strict quarantine policy against the epidemic has made transporting difficult for commuters. Some residents had to stay in other places, and some tourists temporarily stayed in Xiamen. On the other hand, China's household registration policy imposes relatively strict restrictions on the settlement of residents in large cities, which has caused some residents to be unable to obtain household registration even though they have lived there for a long time.

Table 6 incorporates some other indicators to profile the participants, such as gender structure, age structure, education level, long-term residence place, and occupation. Regarding the gender structure, the male-to-female ratio among respondents is 50.7:49.3, roughly the same as that of China's overall population. Considering the age structure, the audience who replied to this questionnaire are mostly under 35 years old. The proportion of participants aged 26–35 in this survey is 47.6%, the highest among all age groups; the proportion of participants aged under 25 is 38.0%, ranking second among all age groups. In contrast, the proportion of the netizens aged over 36 is just 15.4%.



**Figure 6.** The geographical distribution of participants based on IP address analysis (made by author).

**Table 6.** Comprehensive profile of the participants in the Kulangsu cultural heritage survey (made by author).

Categories	Indicators	%
Gender	Male	50.7
	Female	49.3
Age (Years)	Under 25	38.0
	26–35	47.6
	36–45	6.2
	46–55	6.2
	56–65	1.0
	Over 65	1.0
Education Level	Without Diploma	7.9
	Junior College	8.6
	Bachelor's Degree	59.9
	Master's Degree	23.6
Long-term Residence	Kulangsu	19.9
	Xiamen (Out of Kulangsu)	45.2
	Fujian (Out of Xiamen)	8.2
	Out of Fujian	26.7
Occupation	Real estate professionals	2.7
	Professionals: Architect/Urban planner/Landscape architect	14.0
	Architectural students/Professors	24.3
	Staff related to cultural heritage protection	2.7
	Government Officials	10.3
	Other *	45.9

\* Other occupations that are not in the list above.

The highest education of the respondents is relatively higher than that of general citizens. Around 85% of the participating people have a bachelor's degree or above. According to the seventh national census released by the National Bureau of Statistics, as of 2021, there are 15,467 people with a university education per 100,000 people (approximately 15%). This gap may result from the broadcasting path of the questionnaire. The survey starts from the academic community of Xiamen University and is further spread in the Wechat groups of Kulangsu Airbnb Association, Cultural Heritage Center, and some other online communities. The determination of the users' habitual residence is based on the administrative hierarchy of cities in China. Fujian Province, Xiamen City, and Kulangsu District are applied as indicators to measure the long-term residential location. The collected information on occupation shows that architectural students and professors are the most active stakeholders, accounting for 24.3% of the whole.

The number of professionals, including architects, urban planners, and landscape architects, ranks second. The government administrative staff also show great interest in supporting this study. Nearly half (45.9) of the participants are from other subjects, such as students and teachers of non-related majors, research personnel, corporate staff, information technology technicians, engineers, freelancers, designers, restaurant service staff, financial staff, human resources salary performance experts, nursing and care workers. The study also attracts wide attention from the financial industry, transportation industry, commercial trade, tourism, manufacturing, etc.

## 5.2. The Screening Process and Assessment of the Willingness to Participate (WP) and Pay (WTP)

The objective of the screening process is to maintain a valid questionnaire of the identified local community. According to Huang and colleagues, the response time spending on each survey item should be at least 2 s and participants who have spent less time will be considered as invalid in the English questionnaire [57]. However, the difficulty of reading and understanding Chinese is different with English. Thus, 16 answer tests are done as a trail to understand the minimum responding time restriction. The effective answer time is finally determined as more than 180 s. In the first step, 65 responses are considered invalid and removed due to the time limitation (see Table 7). The second and the third steps aim to narrow down the targeted group according to the long-term resident location of the respondents. Participants out of Fujian province and Xiamen city are recognised as tourists of long-distance passengers and short-distance passengers and temporarily excluded in this study. The last step is to judge the inconsistent answers based on the repeated questions deliberately set in the questionnaire testing. For example, in the question "Have you submitted your proposal in a building renovation project", participants who answered "Yes" will jump to the question "Name of the participating project". By examining this fill-in-the-blank question, the answer sheet will be seen as invalid if the response is a "No". In the end, 155 questionnaires are maintained as valid responding information.

**Table 7.** The process of screening of obtained responding information.

Total Amount		292
Step 1	The response time is less than 180 s	65
Step 2	Long residency outside Fujian Province	51
Step 3	Long residency outside Xiamen City	19
Step 4	Invalid questionnaire with contradictory answers	2
Final Amount		155

The assessment framework of the Willingness to Participate (WP) and the Willingness to Pay (WTP) is based on the classification of the online questionnaire. The dataset contains nine variables as shown in Table 8. Each option of the variables is rated on a 1–5 scale. The exception is the code for skipped questions, which is set to number −3. In this study, the correspondence between the code and its option mainly follows the order from low

possibility to the high level, such as No = 1, Yes = 2; No = 1, Low = 2, Medium = 3, High = 4, Extremely high = 5; etc.

**Table 8.** The assessment framework of the Willingness to Participate and Willingness to Pay (made by author).

Variable Name	Description	Category	Code	%
V1	Familiarity with the ways to communicate with the government	No	1	8.39
		Low	2	18.71
		Medium	3	42.58
		High	4	23.23
		Extremely high	5	7.10
V2	Collaboration experience	No	1	96.77
		Yes	2	3.23
V3	Need of communication and collaboration	No	1	7.1
		Yes	2	92.9
V4	The restoration process is clear and transparent to the public	No	1	10.97
		Low	2	25.81
		Medium	3	36.13
		High	4	18.06
		Extremely high	5	9.03
V5	Easiness to participate in the decision-making process	No	1	10.97
		Low	2	30.32
		Medium	3	38.71
		High	4	13.55
		Extremely high	5	6.45
V6	The possibility of adopting suggestions from the residents	Impossible	1	5.16
		Low	2	15.48
		Medium	3	52.90
		High	4	18.06
		Extremely possible	5	8.39
V7	The renewal projects meet the virtual interest of the residents	No	1	1.29
		Low	2	8.39
		Medium	3	54.19
		High	4	25.81
		Extremely high	5	10.32
V8	Willingness to Participate	No	1	2.58
		Low	2	2.58
		Medium	3	25.16
		High	4	30.32
		Extremely high	5	39.35
V9	Willingness to Pay (CNY)	<5000	1	43.87
		5000–10,000	2	8.39
		10,000–50,000	3	1.29
		>50,000	4	1.93
		n.a	−3	44.52

n.a: Skip the question without an answering.

Overall, what stands out in the V1 is that around half of the group (42.58%) expresses a medium level of familiarity with the resident-government communication paths. It is apparent from the data of V2 that very few people (3.23%) have taken part in the collaboration on cultural heritage conservation. When asked whether it is necessary to be involved in the process communicatively and collaboratively (V3), 92.9% of the respondents offer a positive answer. In response to V4, one-third of those surveyed indicated that the restoration process of historic buildings is of no (10.97%) or relatively low (25.81%)



transparency to the public. Of the 155 participants who responded to the V5 item, just 20% indicated that it is easy (13.55%) or highly accessible (6.45%) to participate in the decision-making process. Concerning the possibility of adopting suggestions from the residents in V6, around half (52.9%) of the participants hold a neutral attitude, 5.16% believe that it is impossible, 15.48% think it has little chance to happen, and the rest (26%) keep a rather positive opinion.

As shown in item V7, 1 out of 10 participants (9.68%) believe that the renewal projects do not (1.29%) or hardly (8.39%) meet the virtual interest of the residents. Over half of the respondents (54.19%) think it is sufficient as a medium level, and the rest admit that it is highly (25.81%) or extremely highly (10.32%) in line with the interests of the residents. According to the responses of V8, the majority of the locals have a strong willingness to participate, while only 5.16% shows no interest or low interest. Just over half (55.48%) of those who answered the question of V9 reported that they would like to invest their money in cultural heritage conservation. Amongst those who are willing to pay, the majority (43.87%) indicated that they would like to pay a maximum of 5000 CNY on the restoration. According to the Average Wage of Staff and Workers in Urban Enterprises, Institution and Government Agencies released by the Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics, the average salary amount of Xiamen citizens reaches 108,554 CNY per year (9046 CNY per month) in 2020. It indicates that around half of the participants would like to invest a monthly salary to the cultural heritage conservation projects.

The correlation analysis is utilised to find out the relationship between the classified data. The purpose is to find out the possible influencing elements (V1–V7) on the WP (V8) and the WTP (V9). Correlation analysis uses the correlation coefficient to indicate the relationship between the analysis items, and the correlation coefficient used here is Spearman Correlation Coefficient (SCC). When judging the result, the first step is to determine whether there is a relationship. If there is an \* in the upper right corner of the number, it means the two variables are intercorrelated; otherwise, there is no correlation. Then, the affirmatives and negatives need to be checked according to the SCC value. Where the SCC value is greater than zero, it indicates a positive correlation; otherwise, it shows a negative correlation. Finally, the degree of the close relationship is judged according to the *p*-value. If the criterion of *p*-value is lower than 0.05, it indicates that the two sets of data are significantly correlated. Furthermore, the *p*-value lower than 0.01 indicates that the two sets of variables are extremely correlated. Here, the “significant” means that the appearance of the correlation coefficient is statistically significant and generally exists, rather than accidentally.

The results of the correlational analysis between WP (V8) and the other variables are set out in Table 9. V8 shows no correlation with V1 or V3, judging from the over-0.05 *p*-values (V8 and V1, *p* = 0.159; V8 and V3, *p* = 0.124). The relationships between V8 and V5 and between V8 and V6 both show a significance at the 0.05 level (*p* ≤ 0.05), provided with the under-0.05 *p*-values (V8 and V5, *p* = 0.011; V8 and V6, *p* = 0.039). The correlation is positively attributed to the greater-than-zero SCC value (V8 and V5, SCC = 0.204; V8 and V6, SCC = 0.166). Different from above, a significant negative correlation at the 0.05 level is presented between V8 and V2 with an SCC value of −0.203 and a *p*-value of 0.011. In addition, the SCC value shows 0.251 between V8 and V4, and 0.240 between V8 and V7, indicating a positive correlation therebetween. Moreover, a significant correlation (*p* ≤ 0.01) is shown between V8 and V4 and between V8 and V7, which means that V4 and V7 are closer to and have a greater impact on V8 than V5 and V6.

In parallel, Table 9 also provides the intercorrelations between the seven variables (V1–V7) and WTP (V9). The *p*-values between V9 and V2, V9 and V3 are 0.156 and 0.399, respectively, both greater than 0.05, which means that there is no correlation between V9 and V2 or V3. Furthermore, there are some positive correlations at both 0.05 level (*p* ≤ 0.05) and the 0.01 level (*p* ≤ 0.01). At the 0.05 level, the variable V1 (SCC = 0.172, *p* = 0.032) and the variable V5 (SCC = 0.197, *p* = 0.014) perform a relatively broader significant positive correlation with V9. At the 0.01 level, V9 and V4 (SCC = 0.330, *p* = 0), V9 and V6

(SCC = 0.211,  $p = 0.008$ ), V9 and V7 (SCC = 0.261,  $p = 0.001$ ) present the SCC values with positive numbers, indicating a stronger significant positive correlation.

**Table 9.** The influencing factors of the willingness to participate and pay (made by author).

X Variable	Indicators	V8 Y <sup>1</sup> Variable	V9 Y <sup>2</sup> Variable
V1	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	0.114 0.159	0.172 * 0.032
V2	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	−0.203 * 0.011	−0.114 0.156
V3	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	−0.124 0.124	−0.068 0.399
V4	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	0.251 ** 0.002	0.330 ** 0
V5	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	0.204 * 0.011	0.197 * 0.014
V6	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	0.166 * 0.039	0.211 ** 0.008
V7	Spearman Correlation Coefficient $p$ -value	0.240 ** 0.003	0.261 ** 0.001

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Overall, the WP is influenced by the following issues: the participation frequency of the residents, the transparency of the architectural restoration process, the easiness to take part in the decision-making phase, the possibility of adopting the residents' suggestions, and the consistency with the local interests. Amongst others, the project management transparency and the optimistic attitude toward bottom-up feedback are more influential to the WP. On the other hand, the remaining six variables have relatively poor connections with the public's eagerness and enthusiasm to be involved in the heritage-management process. Meanwhile, the WTP is more related to management transparency, the acceding of residents' opinions, and the fulfilment of the grassroots' desire.

### 5.3. The Interviewee to the Representative of Stakeholders from Different Interest Groups

Thematic coding and the reorganization of text data are employed as a practical method of organising and classifying the interview-record content [58]. The aim of thematic coding is taking chunks of text and labelling them as falling into certain categories, in a way that allows for later retrieval and analysis of the data [46]. According to Fereday and Miur-Cochrane, the process of coding should contain six steps as shown in Table 10 [47].

**Table 10.** The stages undertaken to code the data of discourse (made by author).

No.	Coding Process
Stage 1	Developing the code manual
Stage 2	Testing the reliability of the code
Stage 3	Summarising data and identifying initial themes
Stage 4	Applying template of codes and additional coding
Stage 5	Connecting the codes and identifying themes
Stage 6	Corroborating and legitimating coded themes

Source from: Reprinted/adapted with permission from Ref. [47]. 2006, Fereday, J.

For this study, codes were identified by the label name, the definition of the theme, and the description of the judgement criteria at the first stage. Reliability testing is commonly employed in quantitative studies and content analytic work. The aim of the inter-rater reliability checks is merely objective for ensuring the same subjective perspective to the text.

The process of paraphrasing or summarising involves listening to, recording, rephrasing the oral speech into literature expression and categorising the content of each piece of data [59]. In stage 4, the analysis of the text was guided, but not confined, by the preliminary setting of codes. Expanded codes from the original manual are supplemented according to the raw data. In stage 5, similarities and differences between separate data groups were emerging in the process of connecting codes. The final stage illustrates the process of further clustering the themes that were previously identified from the coded text. The previous stages were closely scrutinised to ensure that the clustered themes were representative of the initial data analysis and assigned codes.

Seven broad themes emerged from the interview record analysis, among which three are selected as key themes. A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that one of the important communication ways are through door-to-door visits of the community committee or sub-district office. As the anonymous resident noted *"We shall first report our complaint to the community committee, then the committee will mediate the views of all residents to reach a consensus."* The public council, the mayor's hotline, the website, and social media are also mentioned by the interviewees. The majority of participants agreed with the statement that to achieve the agreement among most citizens is a compulsory procedure issued by the government before any restoration project on the island. Prof. Wang pointed out: *"In general, a historical building renovation process needs to be publicly announced by the government both online and offline. If there is any objection, a complaint may be filed during the publicity period online or through sub-district office."* When asked about values, the participants were unanimous in the view that the heritage site of Kulangsu presents multiple values, such as social value, economic value, cultural value, historical value, in which the humanistic aspects matter most to Kulangsu. Mr Cai from the Kulangsu management committee states: *"Kulangsu shows good economic value, because it is a popular touristic place in China. I would also highlight the humanistic value"*.

As shown in Table 11, WP, WTP, and Public/Private are narrated from the professional, academic expert, authority, and the local representatives. A common view amongst interviewees on WP was that the local has a strong willingness to participate in the decision-making of the heritage conservation projects. As one interviewee, the local Xiamen citizen, said: *"I hope that Kulangsu could remain a sustainable tourist attraction instead of losing its original characteristics in a short period of time. Therefore, our local residents are very concerned about the renovation projects in Kulangsu."* Interestingly, the interviewee whose occupation is a coordinator in the government used powerful terms: *"The restoration projects are only approved when the residents agree. If there are objections, the government will not conduct any forced intervention."* While the scholar from Xiamen University spoke about integrity and inclusiveness describing WP: *"It's not just experts who need to step in, cultural heritage enthusiasts around the world can also participate in the conservation"*.

When asked about WTP, three out of four participants were unanimous that it is a positive answer. The experienced professional believes that *"Most Kulangsu people are willing to pay for the construction renovation projects, especially when their houses are rated as historical buildings and it is necessary to be repaired."* This view was echoed by another informant who is from the management committee: *"The house owner conducts the reconstruction, pays for the repair and applies for subsidies on account of the corresponding financial statistics."* A common citizen states that *"Running short of money, we can get some funding for the protection of historical buildings from the commune, Xiamen Ancient Building Protection Association (NGO), or private fund-raising."* However, the academic expert expresses that *"WTP is an undefined result under multi-factors" interaction: "This issue involves management mechanism and subsequent benefits, and residents need to make judgments based on these aspects"*.

**Table 11.** Connecting the data-driven codes, identifying themes, and details (made by author).

Code 1			
Label		The Willingness to Participate (WP)	
Definition		The views and attitudes towards public participation	
Description		The degree of willingness to be engaged in the decision-making process	
Feedbacks	P	keyword	Strong willing
		Detail	Xiamen people care about their architectural heritage so much that strongly hope that the illegal buildings could be demolished, and the historic buildings could be well protected.
	AE	keyword	Inclusive participation
		Detail	It is not just experts who need to step in, cultural heritage enthusiasts around the world can also participate in the conservation.
	A	keyword	Compulsory participation
		Detail	The restoration projects are only approved when the residents agree. If there are objections, the government will not conduct any forced intervention.
	L	keyword	Strong willing
		Detail	I hope that Kulangsu could remain a sustainable tourist attraction instead of losing its original characteristics in a short period of time. Therefore, our local residents are very concerned about the renovation projects in Kulangsu.
Code 2			
Label		The Willingness to Pay (WTP)	
Definition		The opinions towards WTP of the local	
Description		The positive or negative attitude while evaluating the WTP	
Feedbacks	P	keyword	Positive
		Detail	Most Kulangsu people are willing to pay for the construction renovation projects, especially when their houses are rated as historical buildings and it is necessary to be repaired.
	AE	keyword	Undefined
		Detail	This issue involves management mechanism and subsequent benefits, and residents need to make judgments based on these aspects.
	A	keyword	Positive
		Detail	The house owner conducts the reconstruction, pays for the repair and applies for subsidies on account of the corresponding financial statistics.
	L	keyword	Positive
		Detail	Running short of money, we can get some funding for the protection of historical buildings from the commune, Xiamen Ancient Building Protection Association (NGO), or private fund-raising.

P: professional, AE: academic expert, A: authority, L: the local.

Overall, these results indicate that opinions from different stakeholders varies due to their cultural, educational background, and the interest group they presented. To summarise their comments is a strong support and necessary supplement for the quantitative analysis of group preference. Besides, while focusing on the growth in Internet users, we still need to pay attention to the non-netizen's community. Shortage of skills, limited literacy level, and inadequate devices are significant reasons why non-netizens do not access the Internet [60]. The theme-coding method to study interview contents is suggested to apply on mapping the broader communities.



## 6. Discussion

Discovered from the previous Spearman correlation analysis, the greatest influencing factors for both WP and WTP are the transparency of the management process and the satisfaction of the residents' needs and interests. The government's attitude towards residents' opinions contributes to the motivation of WTP. In other words, improving the transparency of governance could largely help to promote public participation. Meanwhile, it is essential to meet the needs and interests of the public and local communities. At the same time, strengthening the trust in bottom-up communication and collaboration is another important factor. These relationships above may partly be explained by the following feedback from the participants.

The knowledge of the locals in Table 12 about the renovation process of protected buildings could help to identify the need-to-improve aspects of the governance (V4). The analysis of the public familiarity with various aspects of the building renovation process mainly takes the average value as an indicator of the central tendency. According to the table, the lowest value appears at the insight into the declaration process of the restoration projects (average score = 3.32). Sorted according to the degree of familiarity from low to high, the order is the involved department, the time consumption, and the relevant policies. In contrast, participants showed high proficiency in the cost of building renovation (average score = 3.46).

**Table 12.** The knowledge about the protection and renovation process of public/private buildings.

Aspects \ Degree	1	2	3	4	5	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Time consumption	17 10.97%	13 8.39%	49 31.61%	45 29.03%	31 20%	3.39	1.213
Cost	17 10.97%	14 9.03%	38 24.52%	52 33.55%	34 21.94%	3.46	1.239
Declaration process	22 14.19%	15 9.68%	45 29.03%	38 24.52%	35 22.58%	3.32	1.313
Department involved	18 11.61%	16 10.32%	49 31.61%	34 21.94%	38 24.52%	3.37	1.28
Relevant policies and regulations	18 11.61%	16 10.32%	46 29.68%	36 23.23%	39 25.16%	3.4	1.287

The vital demands of the audience are illustrated in Table 13 concerning the elements that need improvement in the heritage conservation process (V7). 76 out of 155 participants responded to this section. As seen in the chart, the greatest demand and critical view is for local custom conservation (61.84%) and transportation accessibility (59.21%). Despite that, other components of cultural heritage that need to be upgraded are intangible heritage and traditional crafts (50.00%), function (34.21%), building exterior (26.32%), and landscape (26.32%). Besides, 7 respondents, accounting for 9%, pointed out that there are other areas that need to pay attention to.

Figuring out the reason for unwillingness to invest (see Table 14) in the renovation of construction projects could support collecting fruitful feedbacks and advancing the bottom-up collaboration (V6). A total of 107 answers are received for this question. What is striking in this table is the opinion (66.36%) that "I have no way to participate in the project", which is far ahead of other options. Interestingly, this answer tightly corresponds to the question about the easiness of participation (V5). Closer inspection of the table shows that 15.89% of the respondents assume that "It matters only to the government and has nothing to do with me", and 9.35% conceive that the investment activities are restricted by policies and regulations. Six citizens noted that they did not desire to pay due to their disagreement with the current way of cultural heritage protection. In addition, 23 participants expressed

other reasons for the unwillingness to pay, such as “there should be specific funding from the government to cover all the cost”, “I would like to, but I do not have enough money for living”, etc.

**Table 13.** The areas should be improved in the heritage conservation process.

Option	Amount	Proportion
Building exterior	20	26.32%
Function	26	34.21%
Transportation accessibility	45	59.21%
Landscape	20	26.32%
Local customs	47	61.84%
Intangible heritage and traditional crafts	38	50.00%
Other	7	9.21%
Number of valid entries in this question	76	

**Table 14.** The reason for unwillingness to invest in the renovation of construction projects.

Option	Amount	Proportion
It matters only to the government and has nothing to do with me.	17	15.89%
I have no way to participate in the project	71	66.36%
Restricted by policies and regulations	10	9.35%
I don't agree with the current way of protecting cultural heritage	6	5.61%
Other	23	21.50%
Number of valid entries in this question	107	

According to the correlation analysis in Table 15, there is a convincing linkage ( $p$ -value = 0) between the communication–method familiarity (V1) and the easiness of public participation (V5). Thus, revealing the utilization of varied communicative platforms could assist to enhance the easiness of participation and boost the efficiency of double-way communication.

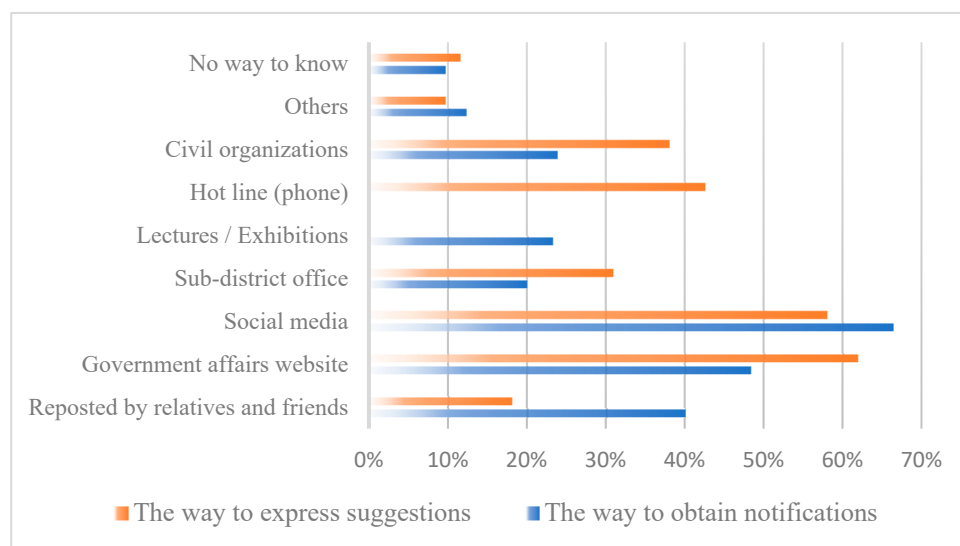
**Table 15.** The correlation between the familiarity with communication methods (V1) and easiness of participation (V5).

Indicators		V1 Y Variable
V5	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	0.525 **
X variable	$p$ -value	0

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

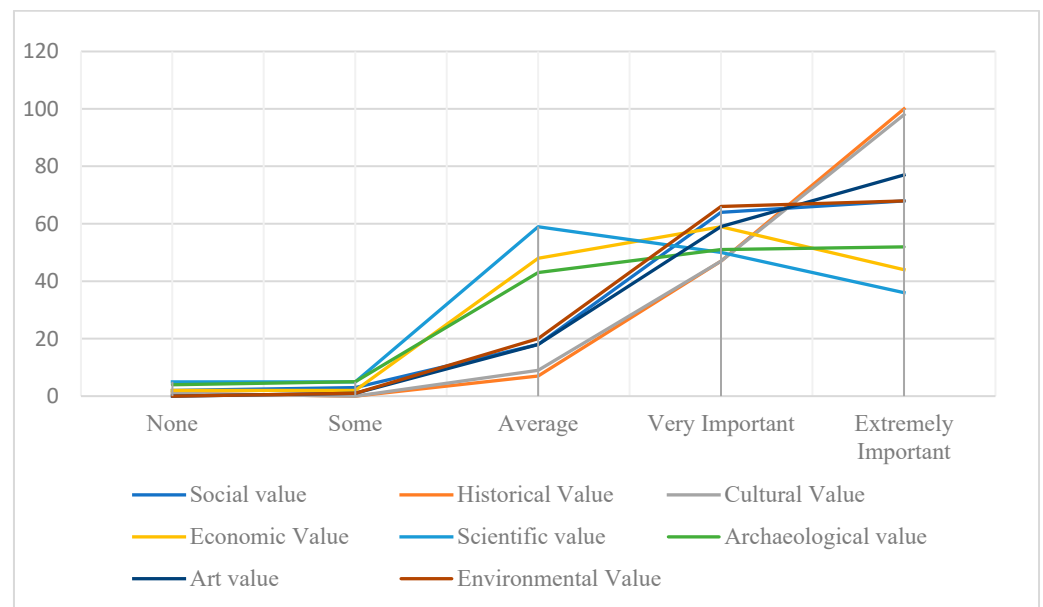
The results obtained from the online questionnaire on both the top-down and bottom-up communication approaches can be compared in Figure 7. As expected, social media platforms show excellent performance in the two-way conversation and can be considered as the most popular communication tool. Dialling the mayor's hotline to complain and seek help is among the most popular bottom-up connecting ways. In addition, the government affairs website and the civil organizations are more used to express suggestions and complaints than to receive government notices. In total, 96 residents admit that they used to submit comments and suggestions on the government affairs website, while only 75 residents prefer to read the notice announcement on the official website. A total of 59 citizens have tried to express their complaints through civil organizations and heritage preservation associations, and 37 people have received bulletins from these agencies. To obtain proclamations reposted by relatives and friends is much trendier than giving

suggestions. Door-to-door notification and communication by sub-district offices and neighbourhood committees are among the less popular top-down approaches together with lectures and exhibitions. What is worth mentioning is that around 10% of the participants voted on the option “no way to know” and another 10% choose other tools.



**Figure 7.** The channels to receive notifications from the government and to express suggestions from the residents.

An assessment of the residents’ opinions towards the values of Kulangsu heritage property is completed as a supplement. In general, the eight listed values are all voted as vital attributes of cultural heritage with the minimum score as the average level. What stands out in Figure 8 is that historical values and cultural values top the “extremely important” sector. The residents are more concerned about the history carried by cultural heritage and related cultural events, such as exhibitions, traditional celebrations, local dialects. It is in line with the research findings of Gao and partners who pointed out the tourists are interested in cultural and historical values based on a 705-questionnaires on-site survey in Kulangsu and following data analysis [6]. Residents living in the Kulangsu heritage site and their living habitat are also widely considered as one of the essential components of the cultural heritage. Moreover, environmental values, social values, art values, and economic values are also considered as important aspects of heritage values. Due to the continuous inflow of a large number of tourists, the protection of these values is greatly threatened. Last but not least, scientific values and archaeological values appear relatively less crucial to the locals.



**Figure 8.** The values attributed to the Kulangsu cultural heritage set in the mind of the local.

## 7. Conclusions

The article shows that the heritage asset could embody diverse values and it focus on the value perceptions and preservation attitudes of residents and professionals. Such information provides important paradoxes for future research, especially value orientation, place attachment, and its relationship with heritage preservation. Considering diverse values could be embedded in heritage assets, including social, aesthetic, age, historic, economic, scientific, political, and ecological values [25], it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive community-based survey to get rid of the current dictatorship dominated by standard expert-based studies on urban heritage's material forms [37].

In terms of value-based heritage, investigation can go deeper into the differences between the interpretation of users and experts in terms of heritage values. This is to promote the communication discourse and provide information to future typologies of values systems. In this study, the online questionnaire and a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews involve people of different professions, ages, and permanent/temporary residents. It was shown in the results that the different analyses should complement one another within the historic urban landscape approach to provide insights into local's opinions and further enhance public participation. Both interview/surveys and social media data can provide important insights about urban and landscape heritage preferences, but neither in isolation is perfect. In addition, future participatory conservation planning, implementation, and assessment should be addressed among the broader community and involved stakeholders.

As more and more heritage professionals adopt the values-based approaches, one of the emerging challenges is how to gather interpretations of heritage and significance and organise them into actionable information [61]. Thus, the limitation of this study is that the national criteria to evaluate urban heritage values is not reviewed by the community. To improve the national criteria for assessing heritage value, it would be critical to include a critical review of the community to increase the comprehensiveness of objectiveness [62]. Future research should identify what heritage is, explore aspects of value that explain the significance of each feature, justify why some features should be given priority in conservation efforts. Generally speaking, instead of merely serving as a complement with sharing information, the government should provide a greater role to the public to bridge the collaboration in two-way communication, offer an interpretation to the community

based on scientific data analysis, and thus can be counterproductive in protecting and preserving heritage.

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