



## Article

# Survey of Residents of Historic Cities Willingness to Pay for a Cultural Heritage Conservation Project: The Contribution of Heritage Awareness

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**Abstract:** The adaptive reuse of cultural heritage (ARCH) is an innovative, sustainable approach to architectural heritage conservation; however, current research on the subject lacks public awareness surveys from the bottom-up, and the non-use value of ARCH buildings has not been clarified. We investigated the willingness to pay for ARCH among 1460 residents of the Nara Prefecture using a contingent valuation method and clarified the factors affecting the willingness to pay through an ordered logistic regression model. The results of this study showed that 75.1% of the respondents were willing to pay for ARCH projects, which were valued at JPY 6036.13 (USD 41.15) per person per year excluding zero payments and JPY 4531.23 (USD 30.89), including zero payments. In addition, residents' attitudes toward ARCH and heritage awareness positively influenced both the willingness to pay and its magnitude, while the degree of place attachment was a positive predictor of willingness to pay. This study demonstrates the role of public participation in cultural heritage conservation, emphasizes the importance of heritage awareness, and provides a reference point for policy makers in promoting public participation in ARCH buildings, which contributes to the implementation of a recycling approach to heritage conservation in a sustainable context.



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**Keywords:** heritage conservation; adaptive reuse of cultural heritage (ARCH); willingness to pay; urban residents; heritage awareness; Nara

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of cities and the introduction of sustainable development goals (SDGs), cultural heritage has gradually become an important issue in sustainable urban development. In 2015, cultural heritage was included in the SDGs for the first time at the United Nations Conference, which called on countries to strengthen their efforts to protect their cultural and natural heritage [1]. At the same time, the value of cultural heritage has progressed beyond its own aesthetic and scientific value, and its economic and social value as a driver of sustainable development is gradually being recognized [2–4].

For historic cities, which are widely distributed around the globe, their cultural heritage is particularly important for economic and social development because a large part of their urban environment consists of built heritage and sites, including both listed buildings and abandoned and neglected historic buildings. As the role of cultural heritage in sustainable development continues to be recognized, the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape [5] has once again broadened the definition of urban cultural heritage and expanded the focus of cultural heritage conservation from the “historic city center” and the “built assemblage,” to the “wider urban context and geography, including social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and intangible aspects of heritage”. In addition, the recommendation encourages a “dynamic and evolving approach” to the management of heritage resources in cities. This implies that policies and management approaches related to urban heritage need to be further updated and adapted to SDGs in

order to incorporate a focus on the broader urban context (e.g., urban communities and residents' participation) and to maximize the value of cultural heritage.

Adaptive reuse of cultural heritage (ARCH) is an iterative and sustainable approach to heritage conservation and management that has received increasing attention in recent years [6–9]. In the literature, Hedieh Arfa states that the term “adaptation” implies action or a process of adaptation and defines adaptive reuse as “the process of transforming a building into a function that is significantly different from its original function [10].” Rather than the traditional approach of cultural heritage building conservation, where the restoration simply restores the structure and style of the building, ARCH, based on principles of restoration, aims to provide a more diversified range of services to the public and reflect the changing needs of the community through providing new functions and uses for the cultural heritage [11,12]. With the increased focus on social well-being and inclusiveness in sustainability research, the ARCH methodology has been renewed and expanded: from its earlier focus on the built fabric, technological development, and its economic role in urban regeneration and tourism, special emphasis has been placed on its role in the community, i.e., the spiritual and social values that arise from its constant and dynamic interaction with the community, which is closely related to the social objectives of sustainability and represents a major shift in the ARCH methodology [13–15]. However, most of the current research on ARCH starts from a holistic perspective and focuses mainly on the evaluation system for ARCH and the challenges it faces [16–20]. These approaches tend to be top-down, aiming to identify problems in the advancement of ARCH projects as well as informing their selection and government decision-making. However, a bottom-up approach is equally important in heritage conservation and management. Because the protection of cultural heritage is insufficient with government support alone, cooperation and participation with companies, non-governmental organizations, and citizens are also important components. Stakeholders, especially urban residents, are recognized as playing an important role in the management and conservation of cultural heritage [21–23].

The bottom-up perspective implies the realization of a human-centered and democratic approach to the conservation of built heritage, i.e., placing people's needs, values, and experiences at the heart of the process [24]. Communities are recognized as not just another category of stakeholders but as an integral part of the value composition of cultural heritage. Community participation in heritage conservation and management allows for two-way benefits between heritage and people, continuity, and sharing of knowledge and resources [25,26]. Community-based approaches have also been shown to be one of the key factors in the success of the ARCH project process, as an essential support for the decision-making process [27], and are gradually gaining ground in the ARCH project [13,28–30]. This methodology places special emphasis on the attitudes and perceptions of the inhabitants, as well as on their participation and contributions [24,25]; respecting and taking into account the wishes of the inhabitants play an important role in maintaining the diversity of values and the social inclusiveness of heritage conservation [30,31]. “Willingness” is partly a reflection of people's perceptions and values, and willingness to pay (WTP) is a direct measure of people's preferences, the extent to which they are willing to contribute to heritage projects, and the non-use value they derive from them [32,33]. Thus, surveys of WTP can provide assistance in realizing a person-centered approach in the ARCH project.

Based on the above research background, our study focuses on the role of the community in the ARCH project and the assessment of the non-use value of ARCH in sustainable development. We sought to clarify whether community residents can contribute to the advancement of ARCH and the factors that influence their willingness to do so through a willingness-to-pay metric. The aim of this study was to complement ARCH in terms of public awareness surveys, as well as to provide a theoretical reference for a bottom-up approach to heritage management.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. ARCH as a Strategy for Urban Conservation

Historic buildings also play an important role in the field of urban conservation. Historic cities have the potential to contribute to the transformation of traditional cities and can provide unique insights and directions for modern urban development [34]. In an editorial, Hosagrahar also recognized the role of lessons learned regarding the resilience that historic cities provide due to their status as a common heritage of humanity in dire situations, such as a global pandemic [35]. Cody and Siravo propose a new way of thinking about historic city preservation: “a shift from a fixed monumental concept of preservation to a dynamic concept that requires a rethinking of the historic city as a living resource for future urban growth [34]”. They also emphasized the importance of the urban environment as a “recipient of values or memories.”

Historic buildings are an important part of the urban environment of a historic city; they retain traces of the city’s history and culture, they are the physical embodiment of the collective memory of society, and they represent the uniqueness of the city [36,37]. However, with the acceleration of global urbanization, a large number of historic buildings have been damaged or abandoned due to reasons such as poor planning and management [38], which undoubtedly damages the historic urban environment. On the other hand, the status quo of neglecting the value of historical buildings as cultural resources for urban development also leads to the waste of urban resources. The ARCH approach provides a solution to this problem not only by preserving the character and urban uniqueness of the original built environment and avoiding the wasteful process of demolition and redevelopment but also by investing resources in the inner-city recycling system, which contributes to the formation of a recycling city and the sustainable development of the city, and is a cost-effective urban conservation measure [39,40]. However, the skewed funding resulting from real estate-driven profit-oriented project investment and development projects often tends to contribute to the problem of ARCH gentrification and the destruction of the authenticity of the area and the continuity of the original life of the local community [8]. Community-based approaches have received much attention in this context, and surveys of public attitudes and awareness can inform and support them. However, public aspirations regarding the process of urban conservation are limited, and the public responses to and outcomes of attempts to implement a range of systems and measures (e.g., historic building inventories and adaptive reuse) are far from conclusive [41]. Therefore, there is also an urgent need for the clarification of public aspirations and responses and evaluations of ARCH at the level of urban conservation.

### 2.2. The Role of the Tangible and Intangible Value of ARCH in Sustainable and Resilient Development

HUL emphasizes the co-realization of the tangible and intangible value of heritage in the conservation of historic urban environments. Camerin et al. understand the tangible value of an ARCH project as being the economic and use value of cultural heritage in terms of the heritage buildings that are brought back into use as real estate assets and the intangible value as being a combination of the degree of community involvement and the degree of connection of the reused/developed buildings to the local culture, character, and history, i.e., the social and historical value of cultural heritage [42]. Realizing the tangible/intangible value of cultural heritage in the ARCH project process is an effective way to promote sustainable and resilient development.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that cultural heritage contributes to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban settlements [43–45]. Firstly, cultural heritage is often an important resource for urban regeneration and community-building activities [46,47], and it can also drive urban economic development and increase employment opportunities [48,49] by attracting investment and heritage tourism [50–52]. In addition, the cultural heritage of a community can enhance the identity and sense of belonging of local residents [53] and can also contribute to the creation of a more habitable living environment for residents [2],

which is a strong contributor to the improvement of social well-being [54,55]. Finally, cultural heritage has a positive effect on social integration and de-segregation [56,57]. It contributes to social cohesion and stronger communities, thus enabling urban communities to recover from disasters more quickly [58]. Furthermore, historic urban settlements can also provide knowledge of prior experience in combating disasters [59].

ARCH buildings not only possess the original social and economic value of the cultural heritage but also provide environmental value in the formation of sustainable cities. For example, ARCH buildings reduce the generation of construction waste and the waste of environmental resources, which is conducive to reductions in carbon emissions and the protection of the urban environment [8,12,60]. In addition to this, maintaining contact with the community during the ARCH process and developing programs based on the needs and aspirations of the local community can be effective ways to enhance the role of the tangible and intangible value of heritage in sustainable development [42]. In the case of a heritage community in Salerno, Italy, measures to establish a working group for community participation were proven to stimulate cultural heritage restoration and promote community bonds, civic responsibility, and potential entrepreneurial activities, favoring long-term sustainable development [13]. The case study of the Kvarner tourism destination (Croatia) illustrates that when local communities are aware of their cultural heritage, it is possible to create sustainable tourism destinations through the reuse of resources for the revitalization of the local economy [61]. A project experiment called SSMOLL verified that collaboration with the community in the production of ARCH projects for cultural and creative activities is essential for sustainable financial support and the shaping of residents' values and community identity [62]. These cases further illustrate the value of community-based ARCH approaches for inspiring heritage and the importance of sustainable and resilient development. However, current research on ARCH and community residents is dominated by qualitative studies on specific case studies and lacks quantitative research, which provides an opportunity for our study.

### *2.3. Assessment of the Value of the Estate through WTP*

An ARCH building itself, as a public cultural asset, provides non-use values (e.g., social values, environmental values) for which there is no market price. The conditional valuation method (CVM) is an economical technique that values a non-market resource through the residents' willingness to pay (WTP) for the services provided by that resource [63]. CVM was initially used extensively in studies on the valuation of environmental resources and the WTP of residents for environmental protection-related utilities [64–67]. For example, Xu et al. used CVM to assess the non-use value of urban green spaces [64]. Tan et al. estimated rural households' willingness to pay for a green, low-carbon energy transition [66]. Subsequently, this environmental assessment technique was also introduced for the valuation of cultural heritage [32].

Some researchers have focused mainly on the measurement and assessment of the economic value of cultural heritage sites. For example, Plaza conducted a value assessment of museums as economic revitalizers through CVM [68]. Báez-Montenegro et al. estimate the economic value of the urban cultural heritage of Valdivia, Chile, and the impact of respondents' socio-economic factors on willingness to pay was explored [69]. Some researchers have also focused on other values of cultural heritage. Kim et al. assessed the use value of Chandeok, a cultural heritage site in Korea, and found that the use value of the World Heritage site exceeded its monetary benefits [70]. Del Saz Salazar and Montagud Marques assessed the social benefits of preserving cultural heritage and found that people were willing to pay much more than current per capita expenditures [71]. Other studies have revealed factors influencing willingness to pay, finding that perceptions of heritage and willingness to visit a heritage site are positive influences on the public's willingness to pay for the restoration of that site [72]. Residents' satisfaction with the heritage site and their socio-economic status also influence the level of their willingness to pay [73]. Other researchers have sought to explore what services the public is willing to pay for that cul-

tural heritage provides. For example, historic sites provide a sense of place and identity, a level of social inclusiveness and community participation [73], and the special cultural and biological values of urban heritage trees as natural heritage are also valued by residents [74]. Jurado-Rivas and Sanchez-Rivero investigated changes in tourists' willingness to pay for destinations in World Heritage cities, found that tourists' willingness to pay for sustainable tourism services has not increased, and proposed responsive countermeasures [75]. However, these studies have often been conducted in the context of traditional approaches to cultural heritage conservation management and have not yet examined the non-use values of cultural heritage in the context of sustainable and circular economy models.

#### 2.4. Resident Awareness as a Predictor of WTP

As a proposed approach to cultural heritage preservation in the context of the circular economy, not only has no study yet been conducted on ARCH using CVM to measure the non-use value of ARCH buildings, but the potential factors influencing residents' payment for ARCH have not yet been clarified. Although there is existing evidence that public perceptions and attitudes toward a public utility are the main contributors to willingness to pay for this public service [76,77], the influence of public attitudes toward ARCH projects on their willingness to pay is unassessed. In addition, several studies have verified that the public's environmental awareness positively influences their willingness to pay [78–80]. These studies have focused mainly on conservation awareness as part of environmental awareness, and few studies have addressed other aspects of environmental awareness, such as the relationship between residents' heritage awareness and place attachment and their willingness to pay for causes related to cultural heritage conservation.

Environmental awareness refers to an individual's cognition and perception of the surrounding environment, including the living environment, natural resources, and social culture [81]. Heritage awareness is part of environmental awareness and is mainly expressed through residents' perception of the value of heritage and the level of concern for it [82]. Increased heritage awareness can be effective in increasing the level of residents' heritage conservation and community engagement behaviors related to local heritage [82,83]. In addition, place attachment is another manifestation of environmental awareness as it involves an emotional connection to and perception of the environment of a particular region [84,85]. Individuals' environmental awareness can be reflected in their preferences for a particular area, their sense of identity, and the memories and emotions associated with that area [85]. Place attachment may also influence an individual's awareness of environmental protection and sustainable behavior, as people tend to be more willing to protect and improve the areas to which they are emotionally attached [86–88]. Thus, heritage awareness and place attachment may be positive predictors of residents' willingness to pay for cultural heritage conservation projects.

Based on the above background and research gaps, this study conducted an empirical survey in Nara, Japan, to examine residents' attitudes, perceptions, and environmental awareness (heritage awareness, place attachment) toward the ARCH project and to quantify respondents' willingness to pay for the ARCH project using CVM. This study developed a theoretical framework to examine the factors that influence residents' willingness to pay for the ARCH project, including socio-economic and individual psychological factors. Specifically, this study aims to address the following questions:

- (1) How do residents perceive ARCH as an approach to cultural heritage conservation?
- (2) Are residents willing to pay for ARCH?
- (3) Do residents' attitudes and awareness affect their willingness to pay and the size of their payment for ARCH?

### 3. Material and Method

#### 3.1. Study Area

Nara, Japan, as the target site of this study, provides an interesting case. First, as the birthplace of Japanese culture, a large number of cultural heritage buildings exist in Nara,



and it is one of the most representative historical and cultural urban areas in Japan. In addition, the Nara government actively promotes ARCH projects and provides a special donation payment channel for them. In addition, in some areas of Nara, ARCH projects are mainly promoted by local NGOs and community initiatives in which local residents play an important role. Therefore, we chose the residents of the Nara Prefecture in Japan as our survey respondents.

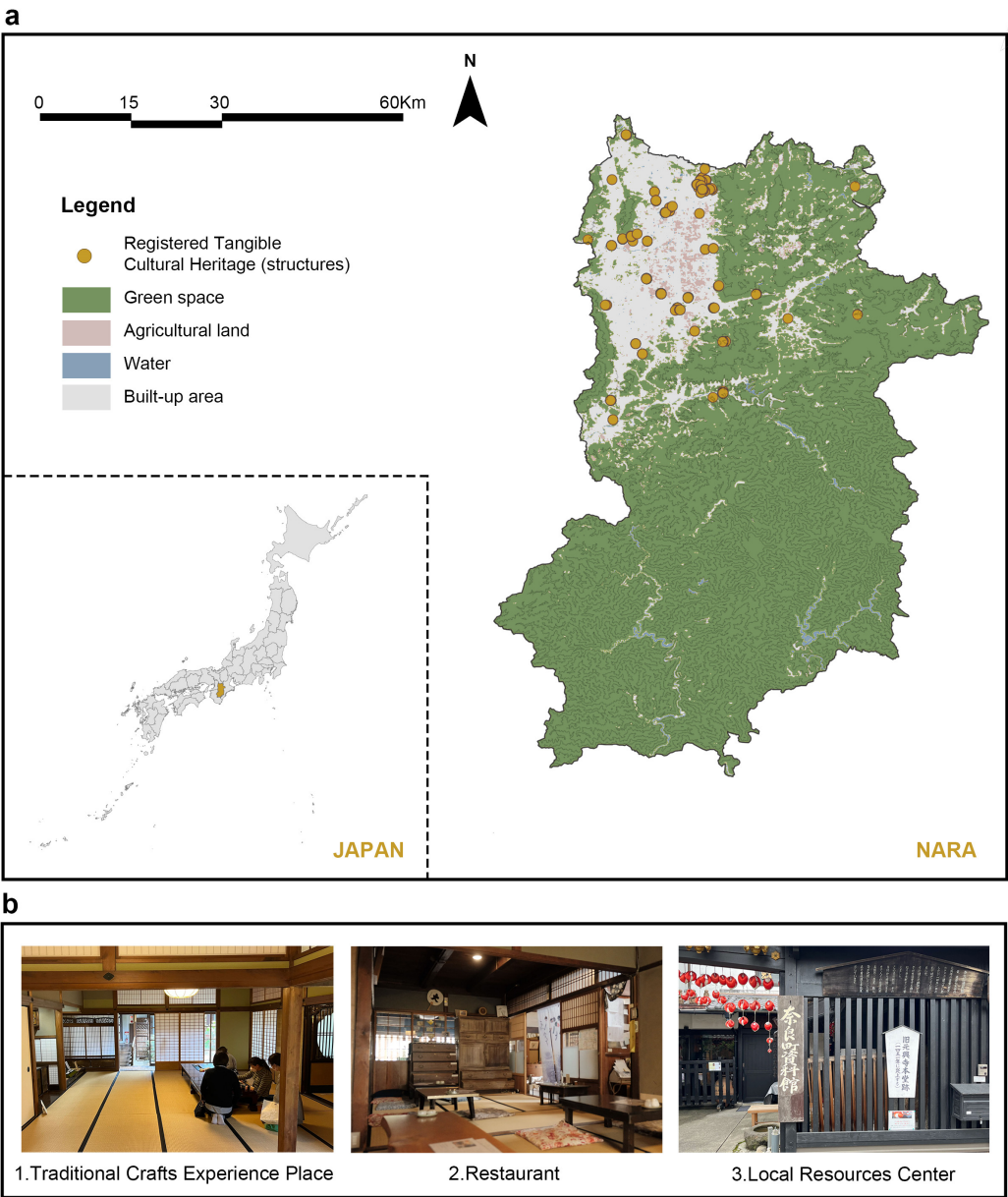
Combining the basic online database of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan and geographic information data [89], we mapped the distribution of Registered Tangible Cultural Heritage (cultural heritage buildings that require special measures for preservation and reuse) in Nara Prefecture. Currently, 319 registered tangible cultural properties are recognized in Nara Prefecture (Figure 1a), and they are mainly concentrated in urban areas in the northwest of Nara Prefecture. Some of the cultural heritage buildings have been renovated and reused (Table 1). The cultural heritage buildings that have been given new functions are mainly used as community cultural activity centers, vernacular resource libraries, galleries, cafes, restaurants, and places for experiencing traditional handicrafts, which provide a variety of services to local residents (Figure 1b). As shown in Figure 1(b1), the traditional building that was once used as a residence has been adaptively reused as a cultural activity center, where activities such as traditional handicraft experiences and art exhibitions are regularly offered to residents. Figure 1(b2) is currently a restaurant for tasting Nara's specialty tea porridge, where tourists and residents can experience Nara's traditional food culture, while it was once used as a granary for the family residence. Figure 1(b3) used to be a temple and is now a Nara-kaido archive that collects and exhibits materials related to the culture and life of this historic town.

**Table 1.** Summary of ARCH projects in Nara Prefecture.

Designation	Location	Proprietor	Original Function	Reuse Function
Akabeizan Genkiln	Nara city	Private Company	Factory	Ceramic Art Classes and Experience
Kogawa Matabei Shop		Private Company	Store	Store
Fujima Residence		Incorporated Association	Residential	Culture and Arts Center
Nakamura Residence (Old Adachi Residence)		Local Residents	Residential	Cafe
Hido Residence		Private Company	Residential	Cafe and Gallery
Old Longevity Association		Private Company	Factory	Cafe and Gallery
Bacteria Institute		Private Company	Residential	Private home
Kidera's House Edge Townhouse		Government	Local Police Station	Tourist Information Center
Nabeya Police Station, Old Nara Police Department		Private Company	Factory	Ink store and Production and Experience
Kobaien		Local Residents	Residential	Store
Sano Residence		Government	Residential	Cultural Activity Center
Naramachi Nigiwai's house		Incorporated Association	School	Convention Hall
Saho Kaikan		Local Residents	Residential	Seminar House
Masaki Residence		Local Residents	Residential	Restaurant
Matsuyama Residence Rice Storage		Local Residents	Residential	Radio
North wing of the main building of the Matsuyama Residence		Local Residents	Residential	Restaurant
South wing of the main building of the Matsuyama Residence		Private Company	Residential	Restaurant and Art Festival exhibition space
Okahashi Residence	Kashihara City	Unknown	Residential	Art Festival exhibition space
Okamoto Residence		Unknown	Bank	Wedding-style venue and Restaurant
Old 68 Bank Yagi Branch		Government	Religion	National Museum
Old Jikmenwon Hakkoden and Yakuburi	Sakurai City	Local Residents	Residential	Hotel
Old Tomita residence		Local Residents	Bank	Restaurant
Former Yoshino Bank Sakurai Branch		Unknown	Residential	Restaurant and Cafe and Gallery
Yamada Hotel	Yamatogoriyama City	Government	Red Light District	Exhibition Hall and Café and Event Center
Former Kawamoto Residence		Local Residents	Hospital	Concert venues and Gallery
Sugiyama Kodomo Hospital		Local Residents	Post Office	Restaurant
Former Inasa Post Office	Uda City	Religious Organization	Religion	Township Museum
Dangmaji Matsumuroin Kakuden	Katsuragi city	Unknown	Residential	Folk Museum
Tsuji Residence	Tenri City			

Table 1. Cont.

Designation	Location	Proprietor	Original Function	Reuse Function
Fujioka Residence	Gojo City	NPO	Residential	Cultural Exhibition Hall and Activity Center
Ota Brewery	Ikaruga Street	Private Company	store and Residential	Sake stores and Exhibitions and Sake brewing experience
Tatsumi Residence		Private Company	Residential	Office
Omote Goten, Chuguji Temple	Kouryou Street	Religious Organization	Religion	Restaurant
Matsumoto Residence	Asuka Village	Local Residents	Residential	Art Festival Exhibition Space
Former Otori Residence	Tyamazoe Village	Private Company	Residential	Hotel
Former Nomura Hospital Clinic		Local Residents	Medical Clinic	Regional Cultural Center



**Figure 1.** Map of Nara prefecture’s registered tangible cultural heritage and examples of ARCH projects (drawn by the author with reference to the online basic database of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan; (a) is the current state of land use and distribution of registered tangible cultural heritage in Nara Prefecture, (b) is tangible cultural heritage being reused).

### 3.2. Questionnaire Design

We followed the guidelines of the CVM methodology proposed by Johnston et al. [90] in the survey design to minimize bias arising from survey implementation and to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. After the first draft of the questionnaire was completed, we conducted a pre-survey through Freeasy (a Japanese company specializing in online questionnaire surveys. Web site: <https://freeasy24.research-plus.net/>. accessed on 10 March 2023) and recruited 200 voluntary respondents for a pre-survey to obtain the bid distribution of resident WTP. Based on the feedback from the pre-survey, the questionnaire was also modified and adjusted to make it easier for respondents to read and understand the survey questions. The final official questionnaire consisted of three parts: (1) a survey related to residents' awareness, (2) willingness to pay for an ARCH project, and (3) socio-demographic characteristics.

The first part of the questionnaire investigated residents' attitudes toward ARCH projects, heritage awareness, and level of place attachment. Respondents were asked to answer using a 7-point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Measurement items were adapted with reference to the existing literature to make them relevant to the current research setting (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Items to measure residents' awareness.

Variable	Item	References
<b>Attitude</b>		
Indicator 1	It is necessary to promote the cause of adaptive reuse of cultural heritage.	Tang et al. [91]
Indicator 2	It is beneficial to promote the cause of adaptive reuse of cultural heritage.	Ibrahim et al. [92]
Indicator 3	The benefits of the cause of adaptive reuse of cultural heritage outweigh the disadvantages.	
Indicator 4	I am pleased to see the implementation of the cause of adaptive reuse of cultural heritage.	
<b>Heritage Awareness</b>		
Indicator 5	I am interested in local cultural heritage.	Shankar and Swamy [93]
Indicator 6	I am familiar with the local cultural heritage.	National Heritage Board [94]
Indicator 7	I value the local cultural heritage.	
Indicator 8	Local cultural heritage is important to me.	
<b>Place Attachment</b>		
Indicator 9	I love my community.	Delhey et al. [95]
Indicator 10	I like the living environment here.	
Indicator 11	I want to live here forever.	

The second part of the survey focused on the amount of residents' WTP for an ARCH project. Based on a hypothetical scenario in the form of an additional contribution to the ARCH Specialized Fund (administered by the Government), respondents were asked what the maximum amount they would be willing to pay annually to support the advancement of an ARCH project was, taking into account their financial situation and ability to pay. We provided respondents with 12 payment levels (JPY 0, 100, 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 5000, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000, 50,000, and 100,000; USD 1 = JPY 141). Respondents who chose 0 as the level of willingness to pay were additionally asked to provide a reason for choosing that option, which was used to identify protest responses and true zero willingness to pay. In addition, a free-response question was set up to investigate the reasons for positive responses. Respondents who chose something other than zero willingness to pay were free to fill in the reasons why they were willing to pay.

The third section collected information about respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, occupation, annual household income, home ownership, and whether they had children, with the aim of analyzing the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on their WTP.



### 3.3. Data Collection

The official survey was also conducted through Freeasy, Inc., Osaka, Japan. The questionnaire was randomly sent to residents of Nara Prefecture who had registered on the company's website. Before entering the formal survey, all respondents were informed that survey data would be anonymized and used for academic purposes only and filled out an informed consent form. In addition, all respondents were asked to read an introduction to the content of the survey that we provided. The prospectus included the purpose of this study, a basic description of the proposed ARCH project, and a description of its environmental and social values to ensure that all respondents had a basic knowledge of the ARCH project. The survey was conducted in February 2023, and 1939 responses were received, with 1460 valid questionnaires remaining after eliminating invalid responses, for a valid response rate of 75.3%.

### 3.4. Statistical Analysis

Because there was a high level of zero willingness to pay in the survey sample, the analysis in this study was conducted in two steps. First, the factors influencing respondents' willingness to pay for the ARCH project were determined through a binary logistic regression model. Then, the factors influencing the size of residents' WTP were verified using ordered logistic regression models.

#### 3.4.1. Binary Logistic Regression Model

Binary logistic regression models are typically used for predictions where the dependent variable is binary. We interpreted respondents who chose to pay zero as having no willingness to pay and coded it as "0", and respondents who chose any other amount as willing to pay and coded it as "1." Thus, the probability of a respondent's willingness to pay is expressed as follows:

$$E(y_i) = P(y_i = \text{yes} \mid x_i') = \frac{\exp(\beta x_i')}{1 + \exp(\beta x_i')}$$

where  $P$  is the probability that the respondent is willing to pay;  $x_i'$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ) is a vector of explanatory variables;  $i$  is an individual; and  $\beta$  is the estimated coefficient for each explanatory variable. The logistic model function can be interpreted as:

$$\frac{P}{1-P} = \exp(\beta x_i') \\ \text{logit}(P) = \ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \alpha + \beta x_i' + \varepsilon$$

$\frac{P}{1-P}$  is the ratio between the probability of being willing to pay and the probability of refusing to pay,  $\alpha$  is a constant term, and  $\varepsilon$  is a random error.

#### 3.4.2. Ordered Logistic Regression Model

The CVM survey assumed that respondents would not give negative bid responses and that the minimum sample had a value of 0. The structure of these data does not satisfy a normal distribution, and the use of general linear regression for the analysis leads to biased results. In addition, protest responses, i.e., respondents who reject the hypothesized scenarios and are unwilling to indicate their preferences, inevitably occur in CVM surveys [96,97]. However, previous research studies have revealed that excluding protest responses from the analysis can lead to biased sample selection results [98,99], so we included protest bids as legitimate zero bids in our analysis. We chose ordered logistic regression models for the estimation of factors affecting WTP size because ordered logistic regression proved to have a better overall performance for the estimation of WTP size containing protest responses [74,100]. The 12 payment levels (JPY 0, 100, ..., 100,000)

were coded as ordered categorical variables from 1 to 12. Thus, the probability that a respondent's payment level is less than or equal to a particular category can be defined as:

$$\frac{P(Y \leq j)}{1 - P(Y \leq j)}$$

where  $Y$  is a particular category of the respondent's  $J$  payment levels and  $P(Y \leq j)$  is the cumulative probability that  $Y$  is less than or equal to  $j$  ( $j = 1, \dots, J - 1$ ). The log odds are expressed as:

$$\log \frac{P(Y \leq j)}{1 - P(Y \leq j)} = \text{logit}(P(Y \leq j))$$

Thus, the ordered logistic regression model can be defined as:

$$\text{logit}(P(Y \leq j)) = \log \frac{P(Y \leq j)}{1 - P(Y \leq j)} = \beta_{j0} + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_p x_p$$

where  $\beta_p$  is the slope parameter of the explanatory variable  $p$  and  $\beta_{j0}$  is the intercept for  $Y \leq j$ .

The independent variables in this study consisted of four components, including respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the ARCH project, heritage awareness, level of place attachment, and respondents' demographic characteristics. The dependent variable was based on two analytical steps, namely, respondents' willingness to pay for the ARCH project and the size of the amount they are willing to pay. Statistical analysis in this study was conducted using the MASS package in R-studio [101].

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

#### 4.1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3 presents the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the 1460 respondents with valid questionnaires. The age of the sample was concentrated between 30 and 44 years (31.2%) and 45 and 59 years (36.5), with 18.8% of the respondents being over 60 years old and a small number of respondents between 18 and 29 years (13.4). The proportion of male respondents was 53.2%, slightly more than female respondents (46.8%). More respondents were married (64.7%) than unmarried (35.3%). The occupational status of the respondents showed that most of the respondents were in employment, including part-time employment (16.7%), employed by a company (49.0%), self-employed or freelance (6.0%), and other types of employment (3.2%). Only 20.0% of respondents, including housewives, were unemployed. In addition, 5.1% of the respondents were students. Regarding the respondents' annual household income, 24.4% of the respondents had an annual household income of less than JPY 3 million, 26.4% had an annual household income of between JPY 3 million and 5 million, 22.1% had an annual household income of JPY 5–7 million, 17.1% had an annual household income of JPY 7–10 million, 7.3% had an annual household income of JPY 10–15 million, and only 2.8% of the respondents had an annual household income higher than JPY 15 million. In addition, 72.5% of the respondents owned the house they lived in. Respondents with children at home (57.8%) were higher than those without children (42.2%).

**Table 3.** Demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18–29	196	13.4
30–44	456	31.2
45–59	533	36.5
60+	275	18.8

Table 3. Cont.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	777	53.2
Female	683	46.8
<b>Marriage</b>		
Married	944	64.7
Unmarried	516	35.3
<b>Career</b>		
Student	75	5.1
Offboarding (Including housewives)	292	20.0
Part-time	244	16.7
Onboarding	715	49.0
Operator/self-employed	88	6.0
Others	46	3.2
<b>Annual household income (JPY)</b>		
<3 million	356	24.4
3~5 million	386	26.4
5~7 million	322	22.1
7~10 million	249	17.1
10~15 million	106	7.3
>15 million	41	2.8
<b>Homeownership</b>		
Hold	1058	72.5
Tenancy	339	23.2
Others	63	4.3
<b>Kids</b>		
No	616	42.2
Yes	844	57.8
<b>Total</b>	1460	100

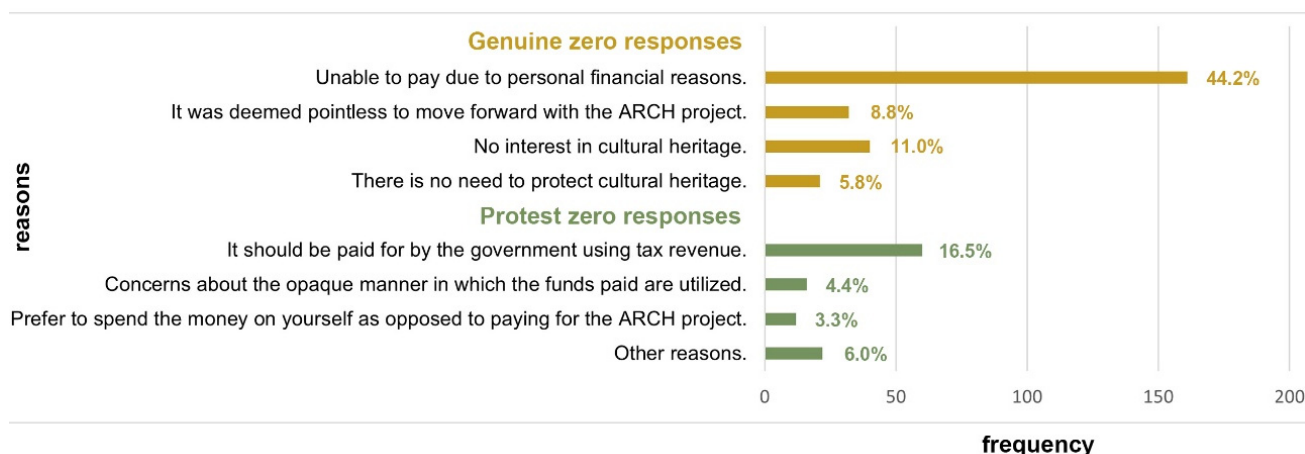
#### 4.1.2. Willingness to Pay

Of the 1460 valid responses, 75.1% of respondents indicated that they were willing to pay something for the ARCH project, while only 24.9% were not. For respondents who showed a positive WTP, the estimated ARCH average WTP was JPY 6036.13 (USD 41.15) per person per year. If all respondents were considered, the estimated ARCH average WTP was JPY 4531.23 (USD 30.89) per year. The distribution of WTP bids is shown in Table 4, where the majority of respondents (29.521%) have a WTP amount of JPY 1000 (USD 6.77), except for zero payment.

Table 4. Distribution of WTP.

Amount of WTP	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	364	24.932
100	61	4.178
500	99	6.781
1000	431	29.521
2000	61	4.178
3000	124	8.493
5000	115	7.877
10,000	138	9.452
20,000	18	1.233
30,000	14	0.959
50,000	12	0.822
100,000	23	1.575
<b>Total</b>	1460	100

We summarized the reasons for zero willingness to pay and distinguished between true zero responses (due to personal financial reasons or lack of perceived value of ARCH) and protest responses. The majority of respondents (44.2%) indicated that they were unable to pay due to personal financial reasons. Of the respondents who showed a protest reaction, 16.5% believed that the government should pay, 4.4% showed mistrust and concern about the way the money was spent, and 3.3% said they would prefer to spend the money on themselves (Figure 2).

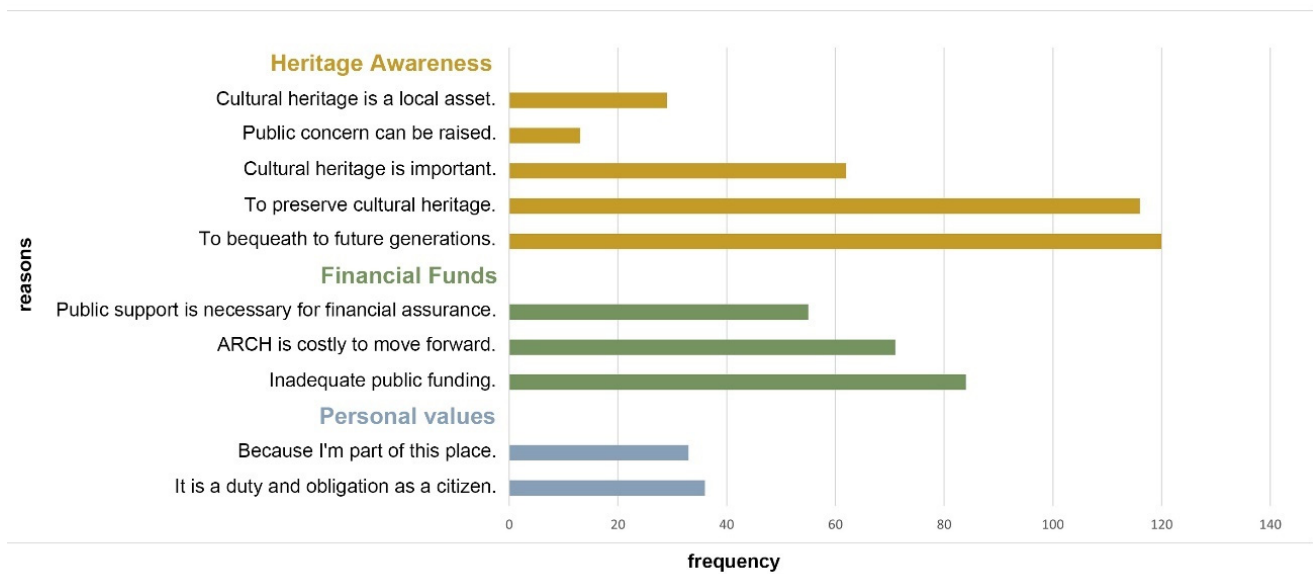


**Figure 2.** Reasons for zero payments and frequencies.

We conducted a qualitative analysis of 551 texts that were voluntarily filled out with positive reasons for willingness to pay and summarized them into three themes, “Legacy Awareness”, “Financial Resources”, and “Personal Values”. According to Figure 3, we can observe that most of the respondents’ willingness to pay is based on their perception of the value of cultural heritage. Most of the respondents realize that cultural heritage is a treasure to be left to future generations and that protection and conservation are necessary. Some respondents also believe that cultural heritage is an important local asset that can be used as a tourism resource to generate economic income for the local community and also promote regional activation. Some respondents mentioned that appealing for public payment can increase public interest in cultural heritage and help cultivate heritage awareness. Regarding the reasons for offering financial resources, contrary to the reasons for zero willingness to pay, interviewees believed that it was not enough to rely solely on the funds provided by the government or related organizations. The majority of respondents indicated that ARCH costs a lot of money and that public support is necessary to ensure the advancement of the cause. Finally, some respondents indicated that it was their responsibility and duty as citizens to pay for causes related to the conservation of cultural heritage. Some of the respondents were willing to pay because of their personal feelings about the territory, and they believed that as a resident of this particular place, they should contribute to it.

#### 4.1.3. Resident Awareness

The reliability tests, as well as the statistical characteristics of all measurement items, are presented in Table 5. The validity test through factor analysis yielded a KMO value of 0.89 and passed the Bartlett test ( $p < 0.001$ ), which indicates that the validity of the measurement items is good and can effectively express the conceptual information about residents’ attitudes toward ARCH, heritage awareness, and place attachment. Meanwhile, all measurement items passed the reliability test with a Cronbach  $\alpha$  of 0.91, which indicates that the internal consistency of the questionnaire results is good. Among them, the Cronbach  $\alpha$  of attitude was 0.91, and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  of heritage awareness and place attachment was 0.89.



**Figure 3.** Reasons for willingness to pay and frequencies.

**Table 5.** Reliability test of measurement items.

Dimension	Proportion/Mean	SD	Cronbach $\alpha$
<b>Attitude</b>	4.64	1.16	0.91
Indicator 1	4.73	1.33	
Indicator 2	4.68	1.34	
Indicator 3	4.42	1.29	
Indicator 4	4.75	1.3	
<b>Heritage Awareness</b>	3.89	1.35	0.89
Indicator 5	3.95	1.63	
Indicator 6	3.23	1.53	
Indicator 7	4.4	1.5	
Indicator 8	3.97	1.53	
<b>Place Attachment</b>	4.64	1.36	0.89
Indicator 9	4.7	1.51	
Indicator 10	4.74	1.42	
Indicator 11	4.49	1.58	
<b>KMO = 0.89</b>			
<b>Bartlett test (<math>p = 0.000 &lt; 0.05</math>)</b>			

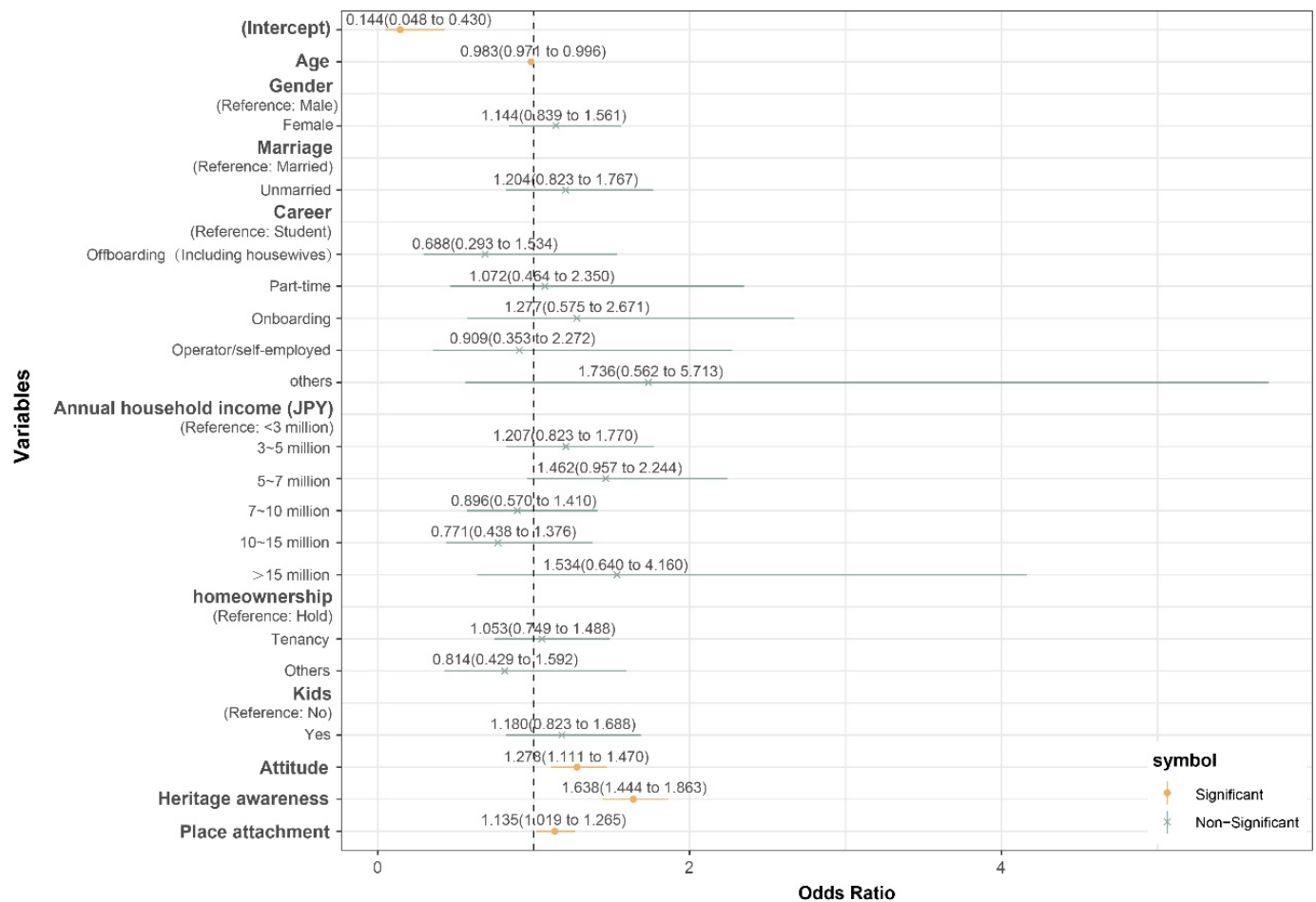
Overall, respondents held more positive attitudes toward the ARCH project, with a mean score of  $4.64 \pm 1.16$ . At the same time, respondents generally possessed a high level of place attachment (mean =  $4.64 \pm 1.36$ ). In contrast, heritage awareness had the lowest mean score of  $3.89 \pm 1.35$ .

#### 4.2. Factors Affecting WTP

Figure 4 summarizes the results of the binary logistic regression model, showing the factors influencing residents' willingness to pay for the ARCH project. All three variables in residents' awareness have a significant positive effect on WTP. This means that an increase in attitude, heritage awareness, and place attachment is conducive to increasing residents' WTP. Based on the OR ratios in Figure 2, we can learn that for every one-unit increase in attitude, the probability of residents' willingness to pay increases by 1.278 times (95 CI: 1.111 to 1.470); for every one-unit increase in heritage awareness, the probability of willingness to WTP increases by 1.638 times (95 CI: 1.444 to 1.863); and for every one-unit increase in place attachment, the probability of WTP willingness increases by a factor of 1.135 (95 CI: 1.019 to 1.265). Thus, among the residents' awareness variables, heritage awareness



had the strongest effect on the increase in WTP willingness, followed by attitudes toward the ARCH project, and lastly, the degree of place attachment. Among the demographic characteristic variables, only age had a significant negative effect on WTP. The probability of willingness to pay decreases by a factor of 0.983 (95 CI: 0.971 to 0.996) for every one-unit increase in the age of the population.

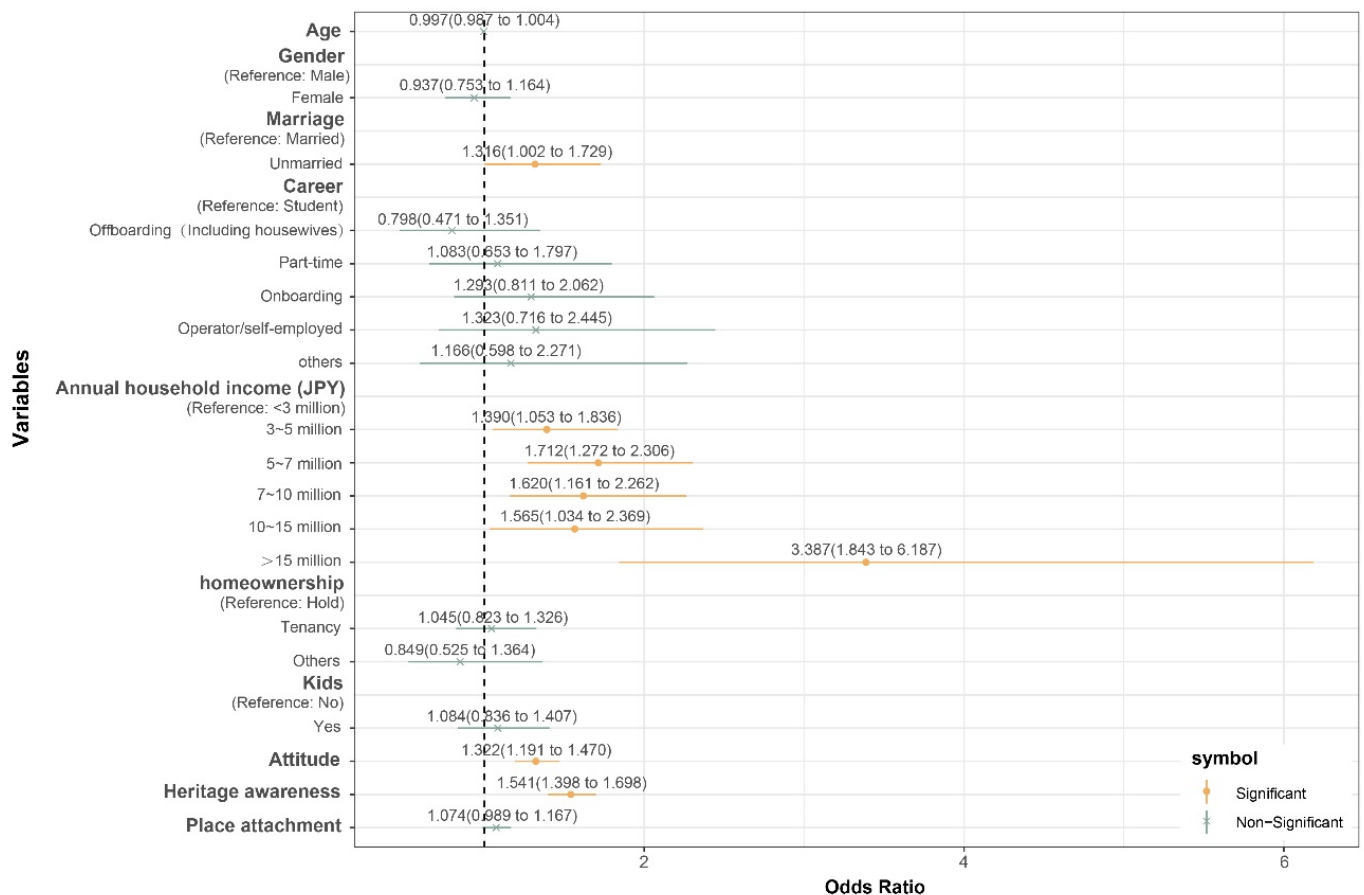


**Figure 4.** Results of binary logistic regression (Hosmer–Lemeshow test: Chi-squared = 12.521, df = 8,  $p$ -value = 0.1294).

#### 4.3. Factors Affecting the Amount of WTP

As shown in Figure 5, the results of the ordered logistic regression indicate that among the residents' awareness variables, attitude and heritage awareness have a positive effect on WTP size, and place attachment is no longer a significant predictor. At the same time, heritage awareness is also the predictor with the strongest effect on WTP size among the awareness variables. For every one-unit increase in heritage awareness, the likelihood of a one-level increase in WTP size was 1.541 times higher (95 CI: 1.398 to 1.698), and for every one-unit increase in attitude, the likelihood of a one-level increase in WTP size increased by a corresponding 1.322 times (95 CI: 1.191 to 1.470). Among the demographic variables, age is no longer a significant predictor, while marital status and annual household income status significantly affect the size of residents' WTP. Compared with married individuals, unmarried individuals are 1.316 times more likely to have an elevated WTP size (95 CI: 1.002 to 1.729). Compared with respondents with annual household incomes of less than JPY 3 million, respondents with annual household incomes of JPY 3 to 5 million, 5 to 7 million, 7 to 10 million, 10 to 15 million, and 15 million or more are 1.390 times more likely to have their WTP size boosted by one notch (1.053 to 1.836), 1.712 times more likely

(1.272 to 2.306), 1.620 times (1.161 to 2.262), 1.565 times (1.034 to 2.369), and 3.387 times (1.843 to 6.187), respectively.



**Figure 5.** Results of ordered logistic regression model (likelihood ratio test: Chi-squared = 357.682,  $p$ -value < 0.001).

## 5. Discussion

ARCH is a dynamic, sustainable approach to the conservation and management of cultural heritage that generates environmental and social values and provides a wide range of services to its residents, thereby enhancing their well-being and quality of life [102,103]. A human-centered ARCH approach linked to local communities can increase the tangible and intangible value of cultural heritage, contribute to urban conservation, and allow the needs and aspirations of local communities to be better met whilst promoting the formation of sustainable cities and societies. This study investigated residents' perceptions and WTP for ARCH and, for the first time, attempted to explore the relationship between residents' attitudes and awareness and WTP for ARCH. The results of this study reveal the non-use value of ARCH and provide knowledge and insights into what should be conducted in the future to raise the awareness of residents in order to realize the role of the community in the implementation of the ARCH project. The results of this study also add to the current lack of public surveys in ARCH-related research.

### 5.1. Residents' Willingness to Pay for ARCH

The positive response rate of willingness to pay in this study was 75.1%, which is comparable to the results of previous studies. In Báez-Montenegro et al., 74.2% of residents were willing to pay for the conservation of cultural heritage [69]; in Yung and Chan's findings, the positive response rate was 73.2% [73]; and in Giannakopoulou and Kaliampakos's results, it was 72.6% [104]. Regarding the price of willingness to pay, the

estimated average WTP excluding zero payment is JPY 6036.13 (USD 41.15) per person per year. Considering the estimated average WTP of JPY 4531.23 (USD 30.89) per year for all respondents, this is 0.17% and 0.13% of the average annual income in Nara Prefecture, respectively, and 2.50% and 1.88% of the average annual cost of leisure and recreation expenditures [105]. This amount of willingness to pay is higher than in most of the countries and regions in Asia. In the survey on Hong Kong residents' WTP for architectural heritage conservation, the average WTP amount was HKD 9.03 per month (USD 13.84 per year) [73]. The average resident of Georgetown, Malaysia, is willing to pay MYR 57.46 per year (USD 12.27 per year) for the conservation of the historic city [106]. However, the willingness to pay estimated in this study is lower than in some related studies in European cities, such as in Greece, where residents are willing to pay EUR 196.85 per year (USD 209.92 per year) for architectural heritage conservation [104], and in Spain, where it is EUR 52.95 per year (USD 56.47 per year) [71]. The amount of willingness to pay (WTP) in this study shows higher levels compared with South America. In the two surveys for Chile, residents' WTP for the conservation of historic cities was CLP 16,432 per year (USD 18.50 per year) [69] and CLP 5072 per year (USD 5.73 per year), respectively [107]. Differences in WTP may be due to a variety of factors, including the society's level of economic development, regional cultural differences, the state of conservation of local cultural heritage, relevant local policies, and socio-demographic characteristics. Overall, the majority of residents in Nara Prefecture are willing to pay a certain amount of money for the advancement of the ARCH project, demonstrating that residents value their local cultural heritage and recognize the ARCH methodology, as well as the great potential for civic engagement in cultural heritage preservation.

### *5.2. Factors Affecting Residents' WTP and Amount Size*

Our findings suggest that residents' attitudes and their legacy awareness have a positive impact on their WTP and the size of the amount. That is, residents with more positive attitudes toward ARCH and a higher sense of the importance of legacy are more willing to pay for ARCH projects and offer higher WTP amounts. Past studies have shown that perceptions strongly influence WTP [76,77], and residents with higher heritage awareness are more willing to participate in traditional heritage conservation-related activities [82,83]. Our study further demonstrates this phenomenon. It is noteworthy that heritage awareness is not only related to WTP but also strongly influences the size of the WTP amount. This is further evidence of the important role of heritage awareness in heritage conservation. However, in our survey, heritage awareness scored relatively low. There is an urgent need to create and increase heritage awareness among residents, which requires commitment and local support, and cooperation between local heritage conservation organizations and companies has proven to be an effective approach [93]. In addition, the support and cooperation of governments and civil society organizations, as well as publicity and education related to cultural heritage, are essential in helping the public develop heritage-related knowledge and awareness and in raising their awareness of heritage [108]. In addition, the highly favorable attitudes towards ARCH and the high percentage of residents who are willing to pay for it indicate that sustainable heritage conservation and management through the ARCH approach is widely recognized by the public. This finding proves that the ARCH approach meets the public's aspirations and reflects human-centered values. Therefore, the government should strengthen the dissemination of knowledge about ARCH projects and cultural heritage by expanding the channels of dissemination and adopting modes of information delivery that correspond to the needs of different age groups, for example, by using a combination of online and offline information, so that residents can recognize the benefits of ARCH and contribute to the enhancement of heritage awareness. In addition, there is a need to strengthen partnerships with companies and civil society organizations, provide policy support for cultural heritage-related activities, and increase residents' knowledge of and access to local cultural heritage in order to cultivate heritage awareness. Lastly, in the course of implementing the ARCH

project, the government should constantly pay attention to the public's response and the community's needs and adjust and update the project in light of the actual situation to facilitate the thorough implementation of the human-centered approach in the ARCH.

Place attachment is a positive predictor of WTP but is not significant in the predictive model for amount size. This suggests that the level of place attachment affects residents' WTP for ARCH but that higher place attachment does not lead to higher payment amounts. Previous research has shown that the decisions of "whether to pay" and "amount of willingness to pay" are determined by different variables [74,109]. Chen argues that when residents make a decision about whether they are willing to pay, it is a moral decision motivated by their personal moral values; meanwhile, the amount of WTP is an economic decision based on an individual's economic level [74]. As a result of paying for ARCH being a form of heritage conservation behavior, residents who are more emotionally connected to the place may be more willing to participate in activities to protect local cultural heritage, but residents with higher place attachment do not necessarily have a higher ability to pay, due to reasons such as income level and social status.

Among the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, age was the only factor that was valid in the prediction of WTP. This is similar to the findings of García-Llorente et al. [110] and Chen [74], where the older the residents, the less willing they are to pay for utilities. A possible explanation for this is that, as people age, their level of social participation decreases, and they are less inclined to spend their energy or financial resources on social causes [111]. Alternatively, another potential reason is that the ARCH project, as an emerging cultural heritage conservation project, has limited public understanding. Older residents tend to be less receptive to new developments and may prefer to follow the traditional approach to heritage conservation, i.e., maintaining the original function of cultural heritage rather than giving it a new function. This finding reveals the shortcomings regarding social inclusiveness in the current implementation of relevant policies and measures. In the implementation of the community-based ARCH approach, more attention should be paid to socially disadvantaged groups, and appropriate participation projects should be tailored to them in order to achieve a more inclusive society.

Annual household income is another important predictor of the size of the WTP amount. Residents with higher annual household incomes are likely to pay more for the ARCH project than residents of lower-income households. This result demonstrates the validity of this study's CVM and its WTP estimates, as it is consistent with the a priori expectations of economic theory [112]. In addition to this, the effect of marital status on the size of the WTP amount is significant, with unmarried residents more likely to pay higher amounts. This may be caused by the fact that married residents have more household expenses to consider.

### *5.3. Limitations and Future Research*

This study has certain limitations that need to be addressed in future research. First, the questionnaire was randomly distributed by the questionnaire company to its registered users, inevitably missing unregistered Nara Prefecture residents. In future surveys, this limitation can be addressed by partnering with government and local organizations to conduct face-to-face interviews with community residents to improve the survey sample. Second, although this study considered the non-use values of ARCH buildings, it did not value and compare the specific items in the non-use values by residents, and WTP differences in environmental and cultural values could be considered in future studies. Further, this study investigated residents' WTP for the specific object of ARCH and its influencing factors but did not investigate residents' preferences in more depth. In future research, the investigation of residents' preferences for ARCH buildings with different use functions can be included by exploring the mixed use of alternatives and CVM based on this study. However, CVM has been proven to be scientifically significant in investigating WTP and heritage value assessment; whether people are actually willing to pay extra remains unclear due to the general weaknesses of CVM. We plan to investigate actual ARCH project

public payments in future studies and compare them with the results of willingness-to-pay surveys using the CVM methodology to clarify the relationships and gaps between the two. Finally, our methodology and findings can inform community-based ARCH approaches to some extent. However, considering the cultural and geographical contexts of different cities, the applicability of the findings of this study to residents in other regions needs to be further explored. Further cross-regional as well as cross-cultural studies are needed for future validation.

## 6. Conclusions

This study investigated residents' attitudes and perceptions of recycling approaches to cultural heritage conservation and estimated the non-use value of ARCH buildings using CVM. Factors affecting residents' WTP and the magnitude of the amount offered were clarified through binary logistic regression models as well as ordered logistic regression models, including residents' awareness variables and socio-economic characteristic variables. Our study fills a gap in the research related to the public responses to and outcomes of implementing specific systems and measures of urban conservation. It also provides a framework for quantitative research on bottom-up approaches that can effectively realize the value of cultural heritage. The results of this study also have reference value for other regions in Japan, as Nara is a representative historical city and region in Japan. The results show that residents generally have positive attitudes towards the recycling approach to heritage conservation, and most of them are willing to pay for the ARCH project. The results demonstrate that the implementation of ARCH is in line with the values of human-centered heritage management and reveals the great potential of public participation in heritage conservation activities. Support is provided for the role of implementing a community-based approach in ARCH for historic city conservation and increasing the tangible and intangible value of heritage. At the same time, this study has also emphasized the important role of heritage awareness and the positive impact of place attachment. Unfortunately, however, the current heritage awareness of residents is still at a low level. For local heritage conservation, the government should strengthen cooperation among various stakeholders, conduct heritage-related activities, increase residents' access to their cultural heritage, and enhance the promotion of cultural heritage in order to develop heritage awareness. In addition to this, in the formulation and implementation of project programs, continuous attention should be paid to the changing social needs and responses of the vulnerable groups in society in order to achieve a more sustainable and inclusive society.

This study develops a theoretical framework with which to measure residents' perceptions of recycled heritage conservation methods and the non-use value of ARCH buildings in a specific territorial context and proposes a quantitative methodology for testing the factors influencing residents' WTP for ARCH projects. This methodology can be replicated in civic awareness surveys in other historic cities around the globe, providing a reference point for policy makers in promoting public participation in ARCH buildings and contributing to the implementation of recycled heritage conservation methods in sustainable contexts.

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