



Social determinants of place attachment at a World Heritage Site

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Tourists' level of place attachment with the OOCF is significantly higher than residents'.
- Interaction and emotional closeness each significantly predicted place attachment factors for residents and tourists.
- Social determinants explained a greater degree of variance in place attachment factors for residents.

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ABSTRACT

While the work on place attachment is extensive, it neglects to focus on residents' and tourists' perspectives of the construct concurrently. Additionally, the role that social factors play in forging attachment to place is lacking within the tourism literature. This work focuses on whether residents' (n = 469) and tourists' (n = 461) degree of place attachment at the Osun Oshogbo Cultural Festival (Nigeria) were significantly different. Examining the psychometric properties of the place attachment scale in an international context was a second aim. The final purpose of this work was to assess whether social factors (i.e., frequency of interaction and emotional closeness) between residents and tourists could explain the resulting CFA place attachment factors. MANOVA results revealed tourists demonstrated a significantly higher degree of attachment. Each social determinant predicted the attachment factors for both samples, with the two independent variables explaining higher degrees of variance among residents.

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1. Introduction

The impact that places have on our lives is quite powerful—from memories of our past, to the present experiences we undertake, to the stories we will forge into the future. Attachment individuals feel about such places though is not unique to those who reside within a particular locale (Anton & Lawrence, 2016; von Wirth, Gret-Regamey, Moser, & Stauffacher, 2016); tourists are drawn to irreplaceable locations just as well, based on the meanings they ascribe to a place (Loureiro, 2014; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Tsai, 2012). Oftentimes, what binds individuals to a place are the shared

customs, beliefs, religious practices, and intangible cultural heritage that are manifested in a geographical space (World Tourism Organization, 2012). These practices make a space a “place” as Tuan (1977) contends. Implicit within this idea is the role that social factors play in contributing to individuals' degree of attachment to places.

Place attachment can be thought of as the formulation of positive emotional bonds between individuals and their socio-physical environment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Stedman, 2002). Derived from early research (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Relph, 1976; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Tuan, 1977) conducted primarily within human geography and social psychology, Williams and Vaske (2003) formulated a widely-accepted two-dimensional (i.e., place identity and place dependence) scale that measures the place attachment construct. This two-dimensional approach allows

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for distinguishing between affective (i.e., place identity) and instrumental (i.e., place dependence) bonds individuals have with the environment. Place identity comprising a person's self-definition, is a result of a system of particular values, attitudes, and beliefs about the physical world (Proshansky et al., 1983). Place dependence, in a basic sense, is considered an attachment to a place for functional reasons (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981); that few other places meet individuals' demands for a particular activity. In her review of the place attachment literature over the last 40 years, Lewicka (2011) indicates that the scale Williams and Vaske (2003) developed is "by far the most popular across different countries" (p. 220).

While the work concerning place attachment has been well established within the tourism literature (see Kaján, 2014; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Ram, Björk, Weidenfeld, 2016; Wang & Chen, 2015 for recent reviews), its development and application within a festival context (where arguably, few better contexts exist providing opportunities for residents and tourists to interact and potentially forge place attachment) is rather scant (Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016; Lee, Kyle, & Scott, 2012; McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010), typically focused on visitors' (i.e., tourists') development of the construct. Furthermore, collective considerations of both residents' and tourists' development of an attachment to a unique festival place is also limited as Derrett (2003) indicates. It goes without saying then that work highlighting the potential importance of social determinants of place attachments among both residents and tourists is missing within the travel and tourism and festival literature. This is somewhat surprising given Lewicka (2011) claims social predictors have demonstrated (albeit they have rarely been considered) a positive relationship with place attachment. As such, the purpose of the current work is threefold. The initial aim is to consider how residents' and tourists' perceptions of place attachment at a cultural heritage festival (housed at a World Heritage Site in Nigeria) may potentially differ. Assessing the factor structure of the Place Attachment Scale (Williams & Vaske, 2003) through confirmatory factor analysis is a second purpose of the work. Ultimately, the main focus of this paper is to examine how social determinants (i.e., degree of interaction and emotional closeness between residents and tourists) can serve to explain each group's attachment to the place.

2. Literature review

2.1. Social interaction and relationships between residents and tourists

Positive social interaction between residents and tourists has been drawing the attention of tourism scholars for several years (see Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; Bimonte & Punzo, 2016; Chen, 2016; Loi & Pearce, 2015; Pizam, Uriely, & Reichel, 2000; Prentice, Witt, & Wydenbach, 1994; Teye, Sonmez, & Sirakaya, 2002; Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Woosnam & Norman, 2010; Woosnam, Norman, & Ying, 2009; Yu & Lee, 2014). Prentice et al. (1994) found that positive social interactions with residents (e.g., talking with residents or participating in social activities with residents) strengthened the bond between individuals. In a similar vein, positive interactions may provide greater understanding of others from different cultural backgrounds, leading to greater mutual understanding (Allport, 1954).

Previous studies have also found that negative attitudes, misconceptions, hostile behavior, stereotypes of others and prejudices can be reduced through positive social interactions between residents and tourists (Amir, 1969; Steiner & Reisinger, 2004). For instance, Wearing and Wearing (2001) claimed that positive social interactions may reduce the classification of the self and others.

Similarly, Pizam et al. (2000) found that positive interactions between residents and tourists can change the latter's perspectives from negative to positive. More intimate degrees of interaction between residents and tourists serve to reduce barriers between tourists and residents which can foster greater understanding between individuals, cross-cultural learning, mitigation of negative tourism impacts of tourism, and increased sustainable tourism (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2004; Gunn & Var, 2002; Pearce, 1989; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Lack of social interaction can also have negative economic implications for local communities. Ultimately, researchers have admitted that positive social interaction is crucial for the success of sustainable tourism (Benckendorff & Lund-Durlacher, 2013; Bimonte & Punzo, 2016; Chen, 2016; Loi & Pearce, 2015; Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Yu & Lee, 2014).

In order to increase the interaction between residents and tourists, previous researchers state that examining the degrees of emotions is necessary (McIntosh, 1988; Wearing & Wearing, 2001). Similarly, Pizam et al. (2000) found interactions between residents and tourists to be positively correlated with feelings they have toward one another. Hence, Woosnam et al. (2009) were among the first to examine residents' feelings towards tourists through their interactions in the context of tourism. Following this, Woosnam and Norman (2010) first exposed the direct positive relationship between interaction and emotional solidarity (as measured through the *Emotional Solidarity Scale*). Numerous tourism studies have followed indicating interaction serves as a significant predictor of residents' emotional solidarity or emotional closeness with tourists (Woosnam, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2015; Prentice et al., 1994; Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013; Yu & Lee, 2014).

The degree of interaction and the relationship between residents and tourists have each been measured numerous ways. For instance, "how many days per week residents interact with tourists" (Teye et al., 2002), and "how often residents talked with tourists during summer" (Akis et al., 1996) are two ways in which interaction has been measured. In addition to these, Woosnam and Norman (2010) measured the degree of interaction through five items focusing on frequency of interaction during different times of the year. To date, one of the primary means to measure the relationship between residents and tourists is through the *Emotional Solidarity Scale* (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). A modified version of the Inclusion-of-Other-Self (IOS) Scale (a 7-point visually-displayed scale focusing on extent of emotional closeness between residents and tourists) based on the work of Woosnam (2013) is another way to assess the relationship. However, the social interaction and relationships between residents and tourists rarely ever considers the role of place (i.e., place attachment). Some studies claim that these individuals (i.e., residents and tourists) can develop and improve the emotional bonds with places by building positive interactions (see Proshansky, 1978; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992).

2.2. Place attachment in tourism

Place attachment commonly refers to the affective bond developed between people and places (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), resulting from peoples' cumulative experiences with both physical and social aspects of an environment (Low & Altman, 1992; Tuan, 1977). In the tourism literature, place attachment has been explored in a variety of contexts including residents' attitudes towards tourism development (Choi & Murray, 2010; Draper, Woosnam, & Norman, 2009; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Ramkinssoon, Weiler, & Smith, 2012), perceptions and image of place (Stylidis, 2017), emotional solidarity between residents and tourists (Woosnam, Aleshinloye, Strzelecka, & Erul, 2016), tourist

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