



## Residents' attitudes and the adoption of pro-tourism behaviours: The case of developing island countries



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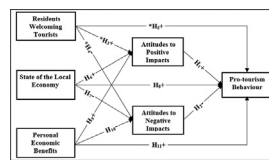
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### HIGHLIGHTS

- This study examines economic factors (State of the local economy and perceived personal economic benefits) and non-economic factor (residents' degree of welcoming tourists) as antecedents of residents' attitudes to tourism and pro-tourism development behaviour.
- Economic factors have direct influence on residents' pro-tourism development behaviour.
- The relationship between non-economic factor and pro-tourism development behaviour is mediated by positive attitudes only.
- Both attitudes to positive impacts and negative impacts have direct influence in residents' pro-tourism development behaviour.

### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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### ABSTRACT

This study considers both economic and non-economic factors to examine how residents perceive tourism and ultimately develop pro-tourism behaviour. The concepts used in model creation are Social Exchange Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action. Based on data derived from 418 residents of the Cape Verde Islands (off the coast of western Africa) a structural equation model is used to test how perceived personal benefits and general economic conditions shape perceptions of tourism, and in turn how these perceptions determine pro-tourism behaviour. Additionally, the concept of welcoming behaviour is included in the model. It is found the perceived tourism impacts mediate between welcoming and pro-tourism behaviours.

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of tourism for developing island countries is ubiquitous and well recognized by host communities (Pratt, 2015; Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2016). However, once places become tourism destinations, their inhabitants' quality of life is affected by tourism (Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). As residents' pro-tourism development behaviour is seen as a precondition for sustainable tourism (Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2010; Sharpley, 2014), this sustainability will be realised if residents' opinions are taken into account and integrated into the tourism development approach (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011b). In this sense, the central tenet of sustainable tourism is to address the fundamental needs and concerns of local residents within a tourism development strategy.

According to recent reviews, pro- or anti-tourism development behaviour can be assessed by examining local residents' attitudes, which can serve as indicators of the magnitude of residents' acceptability of tourism (Andriotis, 2005). Although many authors have assumed that attitudes of positive tourism impacts will result in pro-tourism development behaviour (i.e., Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014; Lepp, 2007; Valle, Mendes, Guerreiro, & Silva, 2011; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014), other studies have tested the relationship between resident attitudes to actual, further and additional support for tourism development (e.g., Gursoy et al., 2010; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Kwon & Vogt, 2010; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011b; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990). Nevertheless, a close examination of these studies reveals some conflicting findings. For instance, Perdue et al. (1990), Kwon and Vogt (2010), Styliadis and Terzidou (2014) and Boley et al. (2014) found that the perceived personal economic benefit from tourism is the strongest predictor of support, whereas McGehee and Andereck (2004) reported that such a benefit did not significantly predict behaviour.

Some scholars (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Gursoy et al., 2010; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014) have highlighted the fact that residents' pro-tourism behaviour is influenced by the state of the local economy. Yet others (e.g., Woosnam, 2012) have advocated that community residents' feelings about tourists is a pre-condition for their pro-tourism development behaviour. However, to the knowledge of the authors, no study exists that empirically tests an integrative model considering the influence that economic (i.e., residents' perceived economic benefits of tourism and perceptions of the state of the local economy) and non-economic factors (i.e., residents' degree of welcoming tourists) have on residents' attitudes of tourism development and pro-tourism development behaviour. Moreover, the bulk of studies focusing on residents' support for tourism development have been undertaken in the Global North (e.g., Boley et al., 2014; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & So, 2016; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014). Studies carried out in developing island countries within the Global South, such as Cape Verde islands remain scarce (López-Guzmán, Borges, Hernandez-Merino, & Cerezo, 2013; Ribeiro, Valle, & Silva, 2013), justifying the need for further research related to this topic in such a context. In light of this gap in the tourism literature, tourism is seen as one of the most viable means (oftentimes, the only strategy) for economic growth and development in many island countries (Croes, 2006; Pratt, 2015).

This study is focused on the Cape Verde islands, where tourism is emerging as an effective way to contribute to development and is one of the few bright spots in an economy that has essentially been supported by migrant remittance and foreign aid for development (Bertram & Watters, 1985; López-Guzmán et al., 2013). Thanks to the contribution of tourism to the Cape Verdean economy in recent years (López-Guzmán et al., 2013), the country has graduated from being considered a 'least developed country' (per UN

classifications) to one falling within the middle-income grouping (Mitchell & Li, 2016). The importance of tourism to the Cape Verdean economy comes at a time with dwindling remittances and foreign aid for development. Most recent figures show that tourism contributes to 21% of the country's GDP, while employing 20.1% of the workforce (National Institute of Statistics [NIS], 2015). With that said, the bulk of tourists to Cape Verde are from European nations and the majority of them are from the United Kingdom (22.0%), Germany (13.4%), Portugal (10.9%), Netherlands/Belgium (10.6%), and France (9.9%) (NIS, 2016). Tourism is concentrated to the islands of Sal and Boa Vista, which welcomed 75.1% of foreign tourists to the country in 2015 (NIS, 2016).

Based on the aforementioned gap, this study develops an integrative model to examine the relationship between both economic (i.e., personal economic benefits of tourism and perceptions of the state of the local economy) and non-economic factors (i.e., residents' degree of welcoming tourists) in explaining residents' attitudes about tourism development, and ultimately, pro-tourism development behaviour. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to measure these relationships. The proposed model (Fig. 1) was developed and uses Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Ap, 1992) and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) as guiding theoretical frameworks. Focusing on the developing island country of Cape Verde, this research contributes in expanding theoretical development within the resident attitudes of tourism literature and offers valuable insight for destination managers and practitioners in similar island contexts.

## 2. Theoretical foundation and hypothesis formulation

### 2.1. Residents' pro-tourism development behaviour

Residents' support for tourism development is a significant precondition believed to impact the sustainability of any tourist destination. While residents' support for tourism development is frequently viewed as an attitudinal measure (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002), several scholars (i.e. Kwon & Vogt, 2010; Lepp, 2007; MacKay & Campbell, 2004) have examined residents' support for tourism as measures of behavioural intentions. Therefore, considering that residents' pro-tourism attitudes would lead to a corresponding pro-tourism behaviour (Lepp, 2007), (and has been pointed out within the literature) understanding this behaviour is crucial in helping to establish a sustainable and socially-equitable tourism industry (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Sirakaya, Teye, & Sönmez, 2002).

Several studies (e.g., Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011b; Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2016; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014) recognise the importance of the host community in supporting tourism development, mainly because the success of tourism relies on residents' hospitality and their active support. Favourable attitudes among community residents also influences visitors' satisfaction and loyalty (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001; Ribeiro, Woosnam, Pinto, & Silva, *in press*), all the while contributing to the future success of a destination.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been used extensively in explaining residents' attitudes about tourism (e.g., Ap, 1992; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011a; Vargas-Sánchez, Porrás-Bueno, & Plaza-Mejía, 2011; Vargas-Sánchez, Valle, Mendes, & Silva, 2015). According to Ap (1992, p. 668), SET is "A general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation". SET proposes that residents are willing to participate in the exchange if the perceived benefit from tourism development outweighs the cost.

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