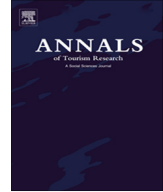




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## Research Note

## Towards a universal measure of “Support for Tourism”

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With the maturation of the resident attitude literature beyond its initial atheoretical focus (Belise & Hoy, 1980), resident “Support for Tourism” has become the ultimate dependent variable of interest for researchers. While almost every resident attitude regression and structural equation model include some measure of “Support for Tourism,” there is little agreement over which measures are best and which ones are the most reliable and valid. For example, Perdue, Long, and Allen (1990) measure the construct using a single item while more recent articles tend to use multiple items but disagree over the number to use and how to best word the items. This can be seen in Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal’s (2002) use of a 2-item scale, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon’s (2012) inclusion of a 4-item scale, Wang and Xu’s use of a 5-item scale and McGehee and Andereck (2004) measuring Support for Tourism using of a 9-item scale. These are only four examples but they demonstrate the many divergent approaches used to measure the construct. This type of diversity in measuring “Support for Tourism” significantly hinders the ability of resident attitude researchers to compare findings across communities and use advanced statistical techniques such as meta-analysis to identify universal trends and compare effect sizes of different antecedents (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004).

With this gap in mind, this research note seeks to revise Woosnam’s (2012) nine item “Support for Tourism Development” scale into a more parsimonious measure of “Support for Tourism” that resident attitude researchers can rally behind and collectively use within future data collection efforts. The research note proceeds by presenting how a combination of Churchill’s (1979) and Rossiter’s (2002, 2011) recommendations for scale development were followed to revise and test the proposed “Support for Tourism” scale (STS) within two international settings (i.e., U.S. & Poland).

Step one and two of Churchill’s (1979) recommendations call for specifying the domain of the construct and generating a pool of items to measure the construct. Rather than redefining the construct and developing new items, the proposed STS scale significantly alters Woosnam’s (2012) nine item “Support for Tourism Development” scale, which has its foundations in Lankford and Howard’s (1994) original work (Table 1). Rossiter (2002, 2011) emphasizes that high content validity is of utmost importance and that no other validity matters if the items do not appear to be grounded in rationalism. With this call for an increased focus on rationalism and content validity in scale

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**Table 1**  
EFA and reliability analysis of the “Support for Tourism” scale.

Scale	N	Mean	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance	Cronbach alpha
<i>Support for Tourism Scale (STS)</i>				5.4 (3.6) <sup>a</sup>	77.4% (89.7%) <sup>a</sup>	.94 (.96) <sup>a</sup>
I support tourism and want to see it remain important to Giles County	113	4.53	.92 (.94) <sup>a</sup>			
I believe tourism should be actively encouraged in Giles County	113	4.50	.94 (.97) <sup>a</sup>			
Giles County should support the promotion of tourism	113	4.48	.92 (.94) <sup>a</sup>			
Giles County should remain a tourist destination	112	4.52	.95 (.94) <sup>a</sup>			
<i>In general, the positive benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts in Giles Co.</i>	113	4.33	.85 (Deleted)			
<i>I support new tourism facilities that will attract new visitors to Giles County</i>	113	4.50	.80 (Deleted)			
<i>The tourism sector will continue to play a major role in the Giles County economy</i>	113	4.24	.76 (Deleted)			

The italics signifies items deleted during the purification process.

Note: Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

KMO (Kasier–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) = 0.92 (.87<sup>a</sup>); Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity:  $p = .000$ .

<sup>a</sup> EFA performed with last three items deleted.

development, [Woosnam’s \(2012\)](#) two items of “Long-term planning can control negative environmental impacts” and “It is important to develop plans to manage growth of tourism” were removed. These items appear to deviate from a true measure of “Support for Tourism” by asking residents more about their support for the need of planning and regulation rather than their support for tourism.

In alignment with steps three and four of [Churchill’s \(1979\)](#) recommendations, the revised 7-item “Support for Tourism” scale was pretested in Giles County, Virginia during February 2013 to assess the reliability and validity of the scale. Out of the 129 surveys distributed to residents, 113 were returned and included in the pretest analysis. The principal components factor analysis of the seven items indicated unidimensionality with only a single Eigenvalue over 1.0, explaining 77% of the variance ([Table 1](#)). The factor loadings ranged from 0.76 to 0.95 and the Cronbach Reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.94. While the scale demonstrated unidimensionality and a high reliability, the decision was made to reduce the scale to four items by deleting the items “The tourism sector will continue to play a major role in the Giles County economy,” “In general, the positive benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts in Giles Co,” and “I support new tourism facilities that will attract new visitors to Giles County.” These items had the lowest factor loadings and they each appeared to deviate from a logical measure of “Support for Tourism” since they pertain to the future conditions of tourism in the county and residents’ evaluations of the positive and negative impacts of tourism rather than residents’ current Support for Tourism. The deletion of these items did not adversely affect the quality of the scale and the amount of variance explained increased from 77% to 90% ([Table 1](#)).

Steps five, six and seven of [Churchill’s \(1979\)](#) recommendations specify collecting a second round of data and subjecting the scale to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess reliability and validity. In accordance with Churchill’s recommendations, the refined STS was administered to residents of Botetourt, Floyd, and Franklin County, Virginia using a self-administered, door-to-door, questionnaire following a census-guided systematic random sampling scheme during the spring of 2013. Of the 984 eligible residents intercepted, 703 completed the survey and were included in the CFA. CFA was chosen to assess reliability and validity because it provides a stringent test of construct validity. Construct validity is “the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflect the theoretical latent constructs those items are designed to measure” ([Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010, p. 686](#)).

The CFA model in SPSS’ AMOS revealed acceptable model fit with a high Comparative Fit Index of 0.99. While the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was noticeably high (0.14), [Kenny, Kaniskan, and McCoach \(2015\)](#) recommend disregarding RMSEA for models with small degrees of freedom ([Table 2](#)). The CFA demonstrated that the STS was in fact construct valid with all four items

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