



Residents' attitude and level of destination development: An international comparison



Alfonso Vargas-Sánchez ^a, Patricia Oom do Valle ^{b,*}, Júlio da Costa Mendes ^b, João Albino Silva ^b

^a University of Huelva, Spain

^b Research member of CIEO, University of Algarve, Portugal

HIGHLIGHTS

- Clear evidence exists on a robust theoretical background, founded on the Social Exchange Theory.
- The explanatory model works differently depending on the stage of the life cycle.
- Some constructs and interrelationships seem to be affected as the life cycle progresses.
- The level of community attachment has been proved to have just an indirect effect.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 January 2014
Accepted 12 November 2014
Available online

Keywords:

Residents' attitude
Social Exchange Theory
Community attachment
Level of tourism development
Life cycle

ABSTRACT

To gain a better understanding of residents' attitudes towards tourism development, the purpose of this paper is to integrate various theoretical approaches in a more comprehensive explanatory model and, at the same time, to test the influence of the stage of the life cycle on it. To achieve this aim, a comparative study was carried out between two destinations, the Algarve (in Portugal) and Huelva (in Spain), with clear evidence of their position at different levels of tourism development. As a result, some variations were found, leading to differences in some relationships due to the evolutionary path followed by destinations. Consistently, as practical implications, emphasis should be placed on different constructs depending on the phase of development of the destination.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, many different studies have surveyed and analyzed residents' perception of the effects associated with tourism and residents' attitude towards further tourism development. Accordingly, a variety of models have been devised to shed light on the complex topic of the perceptions and attitudes of local citizens. These studies, as detailed below, have utilized diverse theoretical bases, including the Social Exchange Theory and the Community Attachment Approach, although not in an integrated perspective. Moreover, a review of the existing literature suggests that more attention should be paid to the perception and attitude of the residents in different tourist destinations. The available studies are even scarcer when referred to destinations at different stages of

development. One exception is found in [Diedrich and García-Buades \(2009\)](#), based on five coastal communities in Belize, each experiencing a different level of tourism development. As a conclusion, they found that resident's perceptions and attitudes towards tourism differ across the various stages in the life cycle, which can serve as an indicator of the development stage of tourism.

With regard to previous studies, this paper takes a step forward in this line of research, providing contributions at two levels. Firstly, it is an attempt to integrate the approaches that, to date, constitute the theoretical foundations of this topic, by constructing a more comprehensive structural equation model that brings together some of the partial perspectives that have generally characterized the preceding studies on residents' attitudes towards tourism. Secondly, this broader model tries to control an extrinsic variable, the level of tourism development, testing its influence through a comparison of two neighbor destinations (the Algarve, in Portugal, and Huelva, in Spain). These regions were selected because they are at different stages of their respective life cycles: the former, at a

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: pvalle@ualg.pt (P. Oom do Valle).

stage of stagnation, and the later in an earlier stage of development. In this sense, this approach allows us to understand the effect of the level of tourism development in residents' attitudes. While [Diedrich and García-Buades \(2009\)](#) had this purpose considering communities in the same destination, the novelty in our case is in studying two different countries.

Based on a survey carried out in the two regions, which belong to different countries, the aim of this study is to propose and validate a more wide-ranging model of residents' attitudes towards tourism development and, in this sense, to give a step further in the comprehension of this thematic. Since the model proposes "community attachment" as a formative construct, the Partial Least Squares approach to structural equation modeling will be applied. Multigroup analysis applied to the model's coefficients obtained by estimating the model in the two regions, Algarve and Huelva, will be used to test the moderate role of "degree of tourism development". As will be demonstrated, residents' attitude towards further tourism development is supported by a solid structural skeleton, although it is influenced to a certain extent by the level of tourism development. In short, this article should help to clarify and explain why the results of previous research have not produced a consensus on the way in which variables like community attachment and others influence how the local population perceives tourism and its effects.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social Exchange Theory

There is no doubt that Social Exchange Theory is the theory applied most frequently by researchers to understand residents' attitudes towards tourism development. Several authors state that the perception of impacts derived from tourism is the principal variable for explaining residents' attitude towards tourism ([Ap, 1992](#); [Kayat, 2002](#); [Ko & Stewart, 2002](#); [Tosum, 2002](#)). Further, the study by [Vargas-Sánchez, Porrás-Bueno, and Plaza-Mejía \(2011\)](#) reveals that the perception that the positive impacts outweigh the negative ones is the most powerful predictor of residents' attitude. On this point, many authors report that the residents who perceive particularly the positive effects demonstrate a more favorable attitude towards increasing levels of tourism development ([Gursoy & Kendall, 2006](#); [Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004](#); [Ko & Stewart, 2002](#); [Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990](#); [Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2001](#)). More specifically, the perception of positive economic impacts (for example, the creation of employment and wealth) is the variable that seems to exert the greatest influence ([Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter, 2007](#); [Vargas-Sánchez, Plaza-Mejía, & Porrás-Bueno, 2009](#)), although [Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer \(2009\)](#) point out the need to avoid general conclusions and identify and specify the type of tourism for which the attitude is manifested.

It is also demonstrated in several studies that those residents who enjoy personal benefits derived from tourism development perceive the favorable effects of tourism more strongly and the unfavorable ones less strongly and have a more favorable attitude towards further development. It appears to follow logically that those residents who benefit from tourism activity perceive the behavior of tourists more favorably, for various reasons, such as greater tolerance and familiarity ([Harrill, 2004](#); [Ko & Stewart, 2002](#); [McGehee & Andereck, 2004](#); [Perdue et al., 1990](#); [Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009, 2011](#); [Ward & Berno, 2011](#)). However, the results of the study by [Teye, Sirakaya, and Sönmez \(2002\)](#) point in the opposite direction due to the deplorable working conditions suffered by locals.

It is therefore necessary to consider residents' perception of tourists, and particularly of tourists' behavior, and the influence of

this view on the residents' perception of the effects of tourism and their attitude towards further tourism development. [Vargas-Sánchez et al. \(2011\)](#) state that the more positive the perception that residents have regarding the respectful behavior of tourists, the greater is their overall perception that the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts, and the more favorable is their attitude towards tourism development. The inclusion of this variable, one of the novel aspects contributed by this study, supports the suggestion by [Teye et al. \(2002\)](#) of including variables relating to tourists' characteristics.

[Lindberg and Johnson \(1997\)](#) include in their theoretical model a variable measuring the pleasure reported by residents regarding their interactions with tourists, while [Woosnam \(2012\)](#) incorporates the feelings expressed by residents towards tourists through the variable "emotional solidarity". Additionally, [Sirakaya, Teye, and Sönmez \(2002\)](#) and [Teye et al. \(2002\)](#), using a regression analysis, analyze the influence of the variable "social interaction with tourists" on residents' attitudes towards tourism. Even an extrinsic variable such as the "type of tourist" can affect the residents' attitude towards tourists and tourism, as [Faulkner and Tideswell \(1997\)](#) suggest. According to these authors, an "international tourism orientation" will induce an unfavorable perception of tourism, whereas a "domestic tourism orientation" will give rise to favorable perceptions.

To sum up, three main inductors have been identified with their respective implications: the personal benefits perceived from tourism development (hypotheses 1 to 4 in [Fig. 1](#) and [Table 1](#)); the perceptions of impacts derived from tourism, both positive and negative (hypotheses 5 and 6, respectively); and the perceptions about the tourists (hypotheses 7 to 9).

2.2. Level of tourism development

As stated by [Baggio \(2008\)](#), the tourism system as a whole seems to follow some general "laws." Models such as the tourism area life cycle by [Butler \(1980\)](#), although discussed, criticized, amended and modified ([Hall & Butler, 1995](#); [Lagiewski, 2005](#); [McKercher, 2005](#); [Russell, 2005](#)), are generally considered able to give a meaningful description of tourism destinations and, in many cases, have proved useful tools for managing their development. Based on the business-and marketing-oriented literature, it has become the most extensively used. Nevertheless, the same author recognizes that, in some cases, the growth of tourism appears as a wave or as a wheel more than as a cycle ([Butler, 2009](#)).

The earlier Irridex model by [Doxey \(1975\)](#) suggests that residents pass through a sequence of stages as the impacts of tourism in their area become more evident. Accordingly, initial euphoria is followed by apathy, irritation or even antagonism. However, authors such as [Faulkner and Tideswell \(1997\)](#), [Hernández, Cohen & García \(1996\)](#) and [Lepp \(2007\)](#) warn against assuming the validity of the Irridex model in all situations.

[Butler \(1980\)](#) also proposes a connection between tourism development and residents' attitudes towards tourists. Using his destination life-cycle model, he explains that as the number of tourists increases in a destination, the residents who were overwhelmingly well-disposed towards tourists tend to develop growing reservations about the long-term benefits of the presence of these tourists. Therefore, as indicated by [Beeton \(2006\)](#), the Irridex model can be considered in conjunction with Butler's tourism area life cycle model, in which the exploratory phase of the life cycle correlates with Doxey's euphoria and moves up along the curve towards antagonism when the carrying capacity is exceeded. Nevertheless, [Sofield \(2003\)](#), in his Adaptindex model, argues that the process from euphoria to antagonism is not linear. He sees the entire process not as a linear progression, but as one of "adaptancy,"

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7422091>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7422091>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)