



# A stress and coping framework for understanding resident responses to tourism development



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Stress and coping is a framework for understanding how individuals experience and respond to tourism development impacts.
- Stress and coping is one element of individual's emotional and psychological well being and overall quality of life.
- CFA revealed adequate construct validity several stress and coping measurements in a cruise tourism context.
- The factor structure of a measurement of coping was found to differ from the theoretically predicted model.
- Individuals coped through problem focused coping, positive outlook, seeking social support, and wishful thinking.

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## ABSTRACT

Stress is one of many impacts on host community residents that can result from tourism development. Unmitigated stress can lead to a variety of negative health and behavioral outcomes. Factors like personality, social support, stress appraisal, and coping play a role in how stress affects individuals. This research conceptualizes the psychologically based stress and coping process in a tourism development context. Measurements of each element in the process are tested for construct validity in the context of cruise tourism development in Jamaica. Construct validity was supported for measures of social support and secondary stress appraisal. A measurement of coping was found to have a different factor structure in a tourism context than theoretically predicted. Valid measurement is critical to future research examining relationships within this psychological process and ultimately understanding how individuals' emotional and psychological quality of life is affected by tourism development.

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## 1. Introduction

Though tourism development often brings about a great deal of positive benefits, residents of host communities can also experience negative sociocultural changes in their daily lives. Frameworks like social exchange theory, power theory, and identity theory have often been utilized to examine resident perceptions of, support for, and responses to tourism development (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). These frameworks have helped

tourism scholars understand a great deal about how tourism development affects individuals living in host communities; however, the emotional and psychological well being of host community residents has been largely overlooked (Berno & Ward, 2005). Emotional and psychological well being is an important part of individuals' overall quality of life (Schallock, 1997), and there is a growing body of literature making important strides toward understanding how individuals' lives are affected beyond attitudes toward and support for tourism development (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013).

This research seeks to expand the tourism and quality of life body of literature by exploring the suitability of a stress and coping framework (Fig. 1) for examining psychological impacts of, and behavioral and emotional responses to, tourism development. Through discussion of relevant literature on the stress and coping

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process, the theoretical framework is situated for use in tourism contexts. Psychometric testing of stress and coping measurement tools administered to residents of Falmouth, Jamaica, a community that was recently the development site for a new cruise port, provides a basis for future research examining stress and coping with tourism development. Discussion of the structure of coping responses used by residents of a tourism host community informs future research examining relationships within the stress and coping process. The ultimate goal of research examining stress and coping is to understand coping actions that effectively mitigate stress and the role that stress appraisal, personality, and social support play in this process. Such research will provide an evidence base from which stress causing tourism development or operation practices can be modified to limit stress, or, in cases where stress is unavoidable, local organizations can promote successful coping strategies to residents of host communities in which stress occurs.

An increase in cruise tourism through construction of new facilities and/or increase in disembarkments provides researchers an optimal scenario for the study of psychological effects of tourism development (Lee, Hampton, & Jeyacheya, 2014). The nature of cruise tourism is such that a large number of tourists disembark for a short period of time, making the contrast between their presence and absence easy to differentiate for residents (Henthorne, George, & Smith, 2013). The nature of island communities means geographical proximity to physical tourism development and tourists is much more likely. Previous research has found that individuals in small island communities facing the proposal of increasing cruise passenger visitation or construction of new port facilities experience stress and cope through tourism planning designed to manage tourism growth (Jordan, 2014; Jordan, Vogt, Kruger, & Grewe, 2013). The development of a new cruise port in Falmouth provides an opportunity to examine stress and coping in a community at the next step in the tourism development process – a community that has undergone physical development of new cruise port facilities and experienced a considerable increase in tourist visitation as a result.

Though uncommon, research on the stress and coping process is not entirely foreign to the tourism and leisure discipline. In a departure from early efforts examining leisure and tourism as a form of coping with every day stressors (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993), Schneider and Hammitt (1995) sought to understand visitor responses to on-site recreation conflict by utilizing Folkman and Lazarus' (1980) conceptualization of stress and coping as a theoretical framework. In a series of articles, researchers tested models including modified appraisal and coping scales administered to outdoor recreationists (Schuster, Hammitt, & Moore, 2003, 2006;

Schuster, Hammitt, Moore, & Schneider, 2006). Their conceptualization and psychometric evaluation of modified scales provide a starting point from which this research expands.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Stress

Stress is defined as anything that causes an individual psychological distress. "Psychological distress is a negative psychological response to threats and can include a variety of affective and cognitive states, such as anxiety, sadness, frustration, the sense of being overwhelmed, or helpless" (Kemeny, 2003, p. 124). Using this definition, a variety of the economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism development could be considered stressors. Each type of tourism development has a unique set of impacts, and cruise tourism development in the Caribbean likely creates unique stressors for community residents that other types of tourism development would not generate.

Cruise tourism has been found to 'crowd out' other types of tourism, including overnight visitors, bringing tourists to host communities for a relatively short period of time, reducing the likelihood that economic capital will be injected into the community (Bresson & Logossah, 2011). The money that is brought into cruise tourism host communities often does not stay there, as leakage of economic benefits back results from skewed power structures, leaving local individuals little power over external investment, especially in the Caribbean where external ownership of resources creates neo-colonial or dependency concerns (Dann & Potter, 2001; Jamal & Camargo, 2014; Lee et al., 2014).

Cruise tourism in the Caribbean often uses themes like "Pirates of the Caribbean" on ships and in ports, serving to marginalize actual host culture and prevent bi-directional acculturation (Klein, 2011). Such themes serve to promote the cruise ship and port as the travel destination rather than the port host community, leading many cruise passengers to never enter the communities hosting cruise ports (Klein, 2011; Lester & Weeden, 2004; Wood, 2000). The development of physical cruise tourism resources like port facilities can create sedimentation and turbidity, affecting coral reefs, reef based fisheries, and the fishermen who depend on them for their livelihood (Erftemeijer, Riegl, Hoeksema, & Todd, 2012). Finally, the development and operation of cruise tourism can overtax local resources like public spaces, water systems, and waste treatment facilities (Brida & Zapata, 2010).

Each of these impacts of cruise tourism development can create or exacerbate *daily hassles*, especially when there are expectations

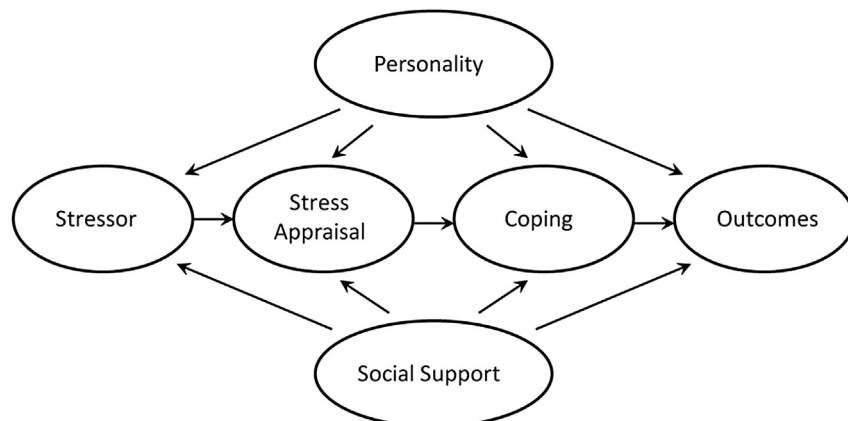


Fig. 1. Stress and coping framework (Adapted from Folkman, et al., 1986).

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