

A Case Study on the Impact of Personal Characteristics on Residents' Support for Tourism Development

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

To assess resident attitudes towards tourism, especially on those areas that residents believe are impacting their quality of life. Specifically, the goal is to find what personal characteristics of respondents mediate residents' attitudes to tourism from perceived impact on residents' quality of life.

The research contributed to a Tourism Management Plan who aims was to strike a balance between economic development and resident quality of life.

A Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

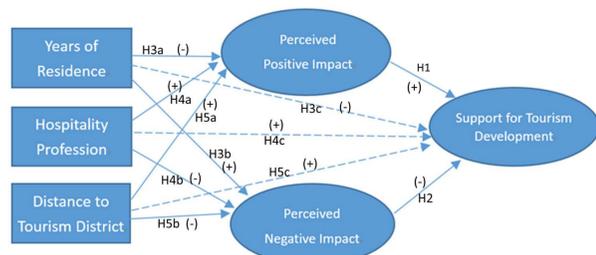


Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of Residents' Support for Tourism Development.

Research Design

Location:

Charleston, South Carolina was chosen as the case study location. Charleston is a historic city which gained national and international prominence as a tourist destination city in recent years. Its significance rests on the fact that Charleston's tourism is dependent not only on the natural, cultural, and culinary resources, but also on the public's goodwill.

Results

The alpha coefficient of the questionnaire's constructs

Construct	Alpha coefficient
Support of tourism development	0.811
Perceived positive impacts	0.845
Perceived negative impacts	0.875

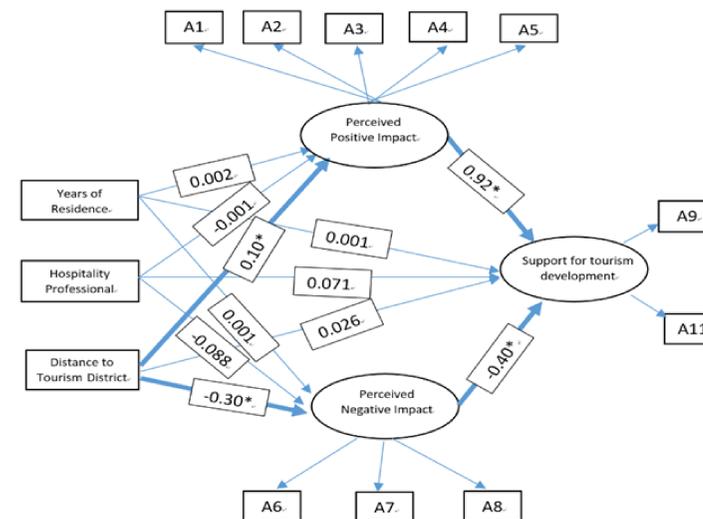
Measures of the research framework model fit

Items	Chi square	Chi square/DF	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Indices	205.11	3.798	0.942	0.902	0.942	0.07

CFI: Comparative Fit Index; IFI: Incremental Fit Index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

As shown in figure 2, H1 and H2 are supported. In this sense, social exchange theory gives a good explanation on residents' attitude to tourism development. H5a and H5b are also supported.

Therefore, an indirect relationship exist between living distance to tourism district and residents' attitude to tourism development. Residents' perception on the impact of tourism works as mediator.



Notes: n=487. Path coefficients are standardized.
* p < .05

Figure 2. Summary of the estimated standardized path coefficients



Conclusions and Discussions

In conclusion, the results support some hypotheses while do not support others. The relationships of distance to tourist district — positive/ negative impacts — support for tourism development are validated; having a profession related to tourism and years of residence do not have any significant relationships on the support of tourism. One possible explanation is that, the public consciousness of Charleston residents on supporting tourism development or protecting the environment seems to be universal. The sense of community and the public interests seem to triumph over self-interests. However, these explanations need to be validated through further research.

Questionnaire:

A draft four page questionnaire was developed by the Office of Tourism Analysis, drawing from the literature and previous research. The draft questionnaire was subsequently vetted and approved by the Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability with input from the city's Tourism Management Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of neighborhood associations, preservation groups, and tourism leaders.

Measurement of constructs

Construct	Measurement
Perceived positive impact of tourism	A1. There are better shopping, dining and cultural opportunities in Charleston because of tourism.
	A2. Tourism provided the opportunity to put the Charleston area on the map.
	A3. Tourism generates substantial tax revenues for our local government that benefit residents.
	A4. Tourism is a strong economic contributor to our community.
	A5. Tourism benefits other non-tourism sectors in our local economy.
Perceived negative impact of tourism	A6. Our community is overcrowded because of tourism.
	A7. Tourism is growing too fast in our communities.
	A8. Tourists in my community disrupt my quality of life.
Support for tourism development	A9. In general, the positive benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts.
	A11. I am proud to live in a place that provides as many tourism/visitor opportunities as Charleston does.

Distance to tourism district, which was measured by distance to downtown Charleston, was categorized into four (scaling from 1= shortest distance to 4= longest distance):

- Group 1 – downtown Charleston: South of Broad Street, French Quarter, Harleston Village, Gadsden Wharf, Ansonborough
- Group 2 – outlying neighborhood: Elliottborough/Cannonborough, East Side, Mazyck Wraggborough, Radcliffeborough
- Group 3 – northern Charleston: North of the Crosstown
- Group 4 – cross-bridge neighborhood: West Ashley, James Island, Daniel Island