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 to strike a balance between economic development and resident quality of life.

A Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Results

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 exists between living distance to tourism district and residents’ attitude to tourism development. Residents’ perception on the impact of tourism works as mediator.

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

A Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

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.

Research Design

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

Evaluation of the questionnaire’s constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Alpha coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support of tourism development</td>
<td>0.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived positive impacts</td>
<td>0.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived negative impacts</td>
<td>0.873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A Conceptual Model of Residents’ Support for Tourism Development

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

Table: Measurement of the research framework model fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>Chi square/DF</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>205.11</td>
<td>3.798</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Figure 2. Summary of the estimated standardized path coefficients

A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9

H1: Residents’ support for tourism development is influenced by perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism.

H2: Perceived positive impacts are positively related to residents’ support for tourism development.

H3: Perceived negative impacts are negatively related to residents’ support for tourism development.

H4: Distance to tourism district is negatively related to residents’ support for tourism development.

H5a: Distance to tourism district is positively related to perceived positive impacts.

H5b: Distance to tourism district is positively related to perceived negative impacts.

H6: Distance to tourism district is negatively related to residents’ perception on the impact of tourism.

H7: Years of residence negatively affects residents’ perception on the impact of tourism.

H8: Profession positively affects residents’ perception on the impact of tourism.

H9: Community involvement positively affects residents’ perception on the impact of tourism.