

Relation between Residents' Attitudes and their Support for Tourism Development

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Abstract

Tourism industry has grown by unprecedented levels across the globe. It was initially considered as a solution to economic vagaries, providing local income and employment. Studies later revealed that tourism was not without ill-effects, and that uncontrolled tourism development can have strong implications on the sustainability of tourism destinations. Attitude of local community began to be considered as very important in deciding future development of tourism in destinations. The present study attempts to identify the local community residents' community attachment, concern and ecocentric values and to identify its effect on their support for tourism development. A regression model was formulated and tested to find that residents' community attachment and ecocentric values have positive effect, and community concern have negative effect on tourism development. The regression model was found to be statistically significant.

Key words: *community attachment, community concern, ecocentric values, support for tourism development*

I. Introduction

Tourism industry is one among the world's largest industries. The direct economic impact of tourism industry includes accommodation, transportation, and entertainment. It was approximately 2.3 trillion U.S. dollars in 2016. Forecasts predict tourist arrivals to exceed 1.8 billion by 2030 (statista.com, 2018). Greater numbers of people are able to enjoy the benefits of leisure time and travel (Essays, 2018) which has given rise to a new term known as mass tourism. Mass tourism is usually defined as the activity where a leisure or tourism destination is visited by large amounts of people simultaneously. Mass Tourism has raised a number of serious concerns on the sustainability of tourism. Mass tourism is aimed only at satisfying the needs of the tourists. Many tourist destinations struggle to overcome the ill-effects of uncontrolled expansion of mass tourism (Dimitriou, 2017). There can be ill effects of traffic congestions, improper water usage, poor waste management practices, physical and habitat changes etc. (Sayed, 2017). Russo (2001) found that there was a linkage between tourist arrivals and loss in destination's attractiveness. There are evidences that in many countries, tourism development has been achieved at a considerable

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intangible cost (Britton, 1983). Thus, the residents' may have varying levels of support towards tourism development, based on how they develop a perception on how tourism is going to affect their locality. The attempt of the present study is to identify the residents' attitude and their support towards tourism development. It explores the relation between support for tourism development as a dependent variable and residents' attitude comprising of community attachment, community concern and ecocentric values as independent variables.

II. Theoretical Framework

There is a need for tourism planning to consider the needs of the major stakeholders (Sharpley, 2000). The local community residents are the major stakeholders of tourism development because they are the ones who are the most affected by it, irrespective of whether they are employed in tourism industry or not (Gunn, 1994). Stakeholder participation and cooperation is the most important factor for tourism development (Yu, Chancellor, & Cole, 2011). The three attitudes that have been researched upon in relation to tourism industry are community attachment, community concern and ecocentric attitudes.

Community Attachment: *Community attachment* is the extent to which the residents of a locality possess cognitive or affective ties to each other and to the native place. It is the sense of belongingness or rootedness in the community. Studies suggest that the residents' attachment to the community they live in is an important factor that affects peoples' support towards tourism development (Um and Crompton, 1987; Davis et al., 1988). The concept of community attachment is an important issue in tourism impact studies (McCool & Martin, 1994).

Community Concern: *Community concern* is the degree to which an individual interacts with the structure of the community, and keeps oneself actively engaged in its changes. Studies have suggested that a feeling of community concern of residents is likely to influence their feelings towards economy (Gursoy et al., 2002). It also affects their perception on costs (Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990) and benefits to the local economy (Allen et al., 1988). Concerns about local issues like environment, schools etc. may affect the way in which they view the costs and benefits of tourism (Gursoy et al, 2002). Residents' community concern can affect their perception on impact on environment (Ritchie, 1988). Based on previous studies, it is proposed that the residents' concern towards community can have an effect on their perception towards effects of tourism.

Ecocentric Values: *Ecocentric value* is a belief in oneself regarding the importance of nature and its ecosystems including land, water and air, considering it to be the epicenter of all life forms. Studies have suggested that there is a linkage between the residents' ecocentric values and their perception on the possible impacts of tourism (Jurowski, Uysal and Williams, 1997). Gursoy et al. (2002) found that there exists a significant relation between ecocentric values and their perception of benefits and costs of tourism.

It was also found that their ecocentric values also affect the residents; support for tourism. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) found that residents with high ecocentric attitudes were concerned about both social and economic impact.

Residents' Support for Tourism Development: Many of the studies on resident community's support for tourism development have been atheoretical (Andereck and Vogt, 2000). Some of the studies have been based on the theoretical framework of social exchange theory (Carmichael, Peppard, and Boudreau, 1996). From a tourism perspective, residents who believe that benefits of tourism outweigh its costs will support tourism development (Jurowski, Uysal and Williams, 1997). Studies which are based on social exchange theory have revealed that the impacts of tourism, as is perceived by local residents, affect their support for tourism development (Zhu et al., 2017). Residents who have positive perception about impact of tourism are likely to support tourism development (Boley et al., 2014; Styliadis et al., 2014). Yoon, Gursoy and Chen (2001) find that residents' support to tourism is tied to economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences. Perdue, Long & Allen (1990) measured resident support for tourism by asking if the community should try to attract more tourists.

III. Methodology

The constructs of the present study included the residents' community attachment, community concern and ecocentric values, and their support towards tourism development. The dependent variables of community attachment, community concern and ecocentric values are adopted from the studies of Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams (1997), Gursoy, Jursowski & Uysal (2002), and Gursoy & Rutherford (2004). Community attachment consists of a four-item scale anchored on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), intended to measure cognitive or affective ties of the individuals to each other and to the native place. Community concern consists of a three-item scale anchored on five-point Likert type scale, intended to measure the levels to which an individual interacts with the structure and changes of the community. Ecocentric values consist of a four-item scale, intended to measure the residents' belief in the importance of nature and its ecosystems. The outcome variable is residents' support for tourism development, which is adopted from Gursoy & Rutherford (2004) and Yoon, Gursoy and Chen (2001). It is a six-item scale, anchored on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), intended to develop insights into the extent to which the residents support for tourism development.

The study undertaken in the globally renowned tourism destination named Kumarakom in Kerala. The responsible tourism initiative was launched in 2007 to promote sustainable tourism development in tourism destinations in Kerala state through community and industry participation. The destination is also a model responsible tourism destination in the world. The population for the study consists of the host community households in Kumarakom. The sample frame consisted of the adult host community residents in Kumarakom. Systematic random sampling method was adopted to identify the respondents. The details regarding the number of households in the locality was drawn from the local self governance authorities. Selected households were visited and responses were collected from one available adult member of the household. The data were collected during the period February 2019 to June 2019. A total of 296 respondents participated in the data collection process. Out of that, 276 questionnaires were usable for final data analysis.

IV. Data Analysis and Results

The profile of the respondents reveals that 49 per cent of them are within the age category of 26 years to 35 years, 25 per cent are within 36 years to 45 years category, and 12 per cent are within up to 25 years category. Education level of respondents shows that 59 per cent were graduates, and 23 per cent are educated up to higher secondary level. Regarding their involvement with the tourism industry either directly or indirectly, 34 per cent are involved with tourism for more than five years, 55 per cent are involved for a period up to five years, and 12 per cent are not involved with the tourism industry.

Residents' Community Attachment: Table 1 shows the statistics related to the residents' responses to the items on community attachment, which shows that overall, they had above average levels of agreement. The highest mean score is for 'satisfaction with community' (3.771), followed by 'conscious about what happens in the community' (3.492). Skewness and kurtosis levels show that the data is normally distributed.

Residents' Community Concern: Table 2 shows the responses on the items related to community concern, proving that they have slightly high levels of agreement. The highest mean score is for 'Community development needs very low Crime rates' (3.779), followed by 'importance of schools' (3.670).

Residents' Ecocentric Values: Table 3 provides the details on the responses of the residents on various items of Ecocentric Values. It is seen that the respondents have a slightly high level of agreement to the items. Highest mean score is on the item 'face ecological disaster unless care is taken' (3.750), followed by 'humans are abusing the natural environment' (3.487), and 'balance of nature is delicate and can be easily upset' (3.485).

Table 4 presents the mean score of the responses of the residents on their support towards tourism development. 'Tourism should be the most important industry in the locality' (4.216), 'more tourists should come to the locality in the future' (4.199), and 'new nature-based tourism facilities and sites should be developed in the locality' (4.033) recorded high levels of agreement. Overall, the residents have a high level of agreement to the items on ecocentric values.

Table 1: Residents' Community Attachment

Variables	Descriptive Statistics			
	M ean	S D	Skewn ess	Kurtos is
I feel very much at home in this community	3.235	0.854	-0.240	-0.094
I am conscious about what	3.	1	-0.445	-0.761

happens in the community	492	.167		
I will be unhappy to move away from this community	3. 478	1 .195	-0.360	-0.900
I am extremely satisfied with the community	3. 771	1 .218	-0.695	-0.601

Table 2: Residents' Community Concern

	M ean	S D	Skew ness	Kurto sis
Schools are very important in community development	3. 670	1. 173	- 0.653	0.531
Community development needs very low Crime rates	3. 779	1. 152	0.591	0.481
Recreation and culture is important for community development	3. 615	1. 183	0.558	- 0.596

Table 3: Residents' Ecocentric Values

	M ean	S D	Skew ness	Kurt osis
Balance of nature is Delicate and can be easily upset	3. 485	1 .173	- 0.434	- 0.800
Humans are abusing the natural	3.	1	-	-

environment	487	.198	0.368	0.904
Face Ecological disaster unless care is taken	3. 750	0 .835	- 0.680	- 0.658
Natural ecosystems are not strong enough to recover from industrial impact	3. 561	1 .208	- 0.462	- 0.719

Table 4: Residents' Support for Tourism Development

	M ean	S D	Skew ness	Kurt osis
New nature-based tourism facilities and sites should be developed in the locality	4. 033	1 .044	- 0.980	0.60 7
More cultural and historical based activities should be included to promote tourism	3. 909	1 .132	- 0.213	0.80 6
Tourism can play an increased role in future local economic development	3. 779	1 .064	- 0.825	0.14 4
Tourism will help the community prosper in the right direction	3. 963	1 .181	- 0.223	0.59 0
More tourists should come to the locality in the future	4. 199	0 .826	- 0.086	0.54 0
Tourism should be the most important industry in the locality	4. 216	1 .038	- 0.474	0.92 8

Dependence of Residents' Support for Tourism Development on their Community attachment, Community Concern, and ecocentric values: Studies In tourism and importance of residents' support for tourism development have suggested that the residents' attitudes are important in deciding their levels of support. The study attempts to develop a multivariate regression model to explain the existence of dependence of residents' support for tourism development (dependent variable) on their attitude. Residents' attitude is measured by their community attachment, community concern and their ecocentric values (independent variables). The regression equation (1) is given below:

$$STDev_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ComAtmnt_t + \beta_2 ComCon_t + \beta_3 EcoVal_t + e_t \quad \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where, $STDev_t$ denotes residents' Support for Tourism Development, $ComAtmnt_t$ denotes residents' community attachment, $ComCon_t$ denotes residents' community concern, $EcoVal_t$ denotes ecocentric values; β_0 is the intercept, $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are the regression coefficients, e_t is the error term

The following are the results of the regression analysis:

The minimum records per independent variable for a multivariate regression are 20. With three independent variables, there needs to be at least 60 records. Since the sample size for the present study is 276, the sample size requirement is met. The normality of the dependent variable (residents' Support for Tourism Development) was tested by running the Shapiro Wilk's Test. The results are shown in Table 5. The results (statistic = 0.805; df = 276; p value= 0.506) prove that the dependent variable data follows normal distribution. Examination was done to see if there exists multicollinearity among independent variables. The Person correlation coefficients (0.235, -0.198, -0.277) between the three independent variables proved that there exist very low (less than 0.70) correlation between the independent variables. Thus, it is proven that there exists no multicollinearity (Table 6). The table also shows that the dependent variable, support for tourism development, has very high correlation (more than 0.30) with the three independent variables (0.497, -0.503, 0.591). The scatter plots for each independent with the dependent variable are plotted for identify the existence of linear relation between the dependent variable and the independents. The plots revealed existence of linear relationship.

Table 5 : Tests of Normality of Dependent Variable

Support for Tourism Development	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
	0.805	276	0.506

Table 6 : Pearson Correlation

Predictors	Support for Tourism Dev.	Communit y Attachment	Commun ity Concern	Ecoce ntric Value
Communi ty Attachment	0.497	1.000	0.235	-0.198
Communi ty Concern	-0.503	-0.235	1.000	-0.277
Ecocentri c Value	0.591	-0.198	-0.277	1.000

Table 7 : Multivariate Regression - Model Summary

Mode l	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.734 ^a	0.539	0.517	0.428

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community Attachment, Community Concern, Ecocentric Value

Table 8 : Multivariate Regression - Model Summary (F Change)

M odel	Change Statistics				
	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.539	21.432	3	272	0.000

The multiple regression coefficient (R) is found to be 0.734. It is indicative of a very high quality for prediction power of the independent variables Coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.539, which shows that the three independent variables together accounts for nearly 54 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable (Table 7). The table 8 shows that the regression model is significant (p value < 0.001).

Table 9: Multivariate Regression - ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.815	3	1.605	3.707	0.022 ^b
Residual	117.811	272	0.433		
Total	122.626	275			
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Support for Tourism Development</i>					
<i>b. Predictors: (Constant), Community Attachment, Community Concern, Ecocentric Value</i>					

The multivariate regression Anova table (9) shows the result of the test whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The results prove that the three independent variables (*Community Attachment, Community Concern, Ecocentric Value*) statistically significantly predict the dependent variable (*Support for Tourism Development*), $F(2, 272) = 3.707$, $P < 0.05$. Thus, it is proved that the regression model developed is a good fit of the data.

Table 10: Multivariate Regression - Coefficients ^a				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.875	0.152		18.9 10	0.0 00
Community Attachment	0.435	0.072	0.236	6.04 2	0.0 00
Community Concern	-0.221	0.059	0.323	- 3.746	0.0 11
Ecocentric Value	0.242	0.076	-0.260	3.39 5	0.0 17
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Support for Tourism Development</i>					

Table 10 reveals the estimated regression model coefficients. From the results, the regression equation can be formulated as:

$$\text{Support for Tourism Development} = 2.875 + (0.435 \times \text{Community Attachment}) - (0.221 \times \text{Community Concern}) + (0.242 \times \text{Ecocentric Value})$$

The unstandardised coefficients (B) show the amount of variation in the dependent variable along with a independent variable, while holding the other dependent variables constant. The results show that for one unit score increase in community attachment, the support for tourism development increases by 0.435 units, holding community concern and ecocentric values constant. A one unit score increase in community concern results in a decrease in support for tourism development by 0.221 unit score. Similarly, one unit score increase in ecocentric value creates an increase of 0.242 increase in support for tourism development. The t scores and its significance levels (p value < 0.05 in all cases) show that all the independent variable coefficients are statistically significantly different from zero.

V. Conclusion

The study attempted to analyze the attitudes of the local community residents and its effect on their support towards tourism development. The attitude of residents were composed of community attachment, community concern and ecocentric values. The items of these variables were developed from previous studies. The mean scores how that the residents have a moderately high level of community attachment, concern and ecocentric values. They

also support tourism development. A multiple regression model was developed to identify the nature and extent of dependence of support for tourism development on the residents' attachment, concern and ecocentric values. The predictor variables statistically significantly predicted the dependent variable (support for tourism development), $F(3,272) = 3.703$. $P < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.539$. All the three predictor variables added statistically significantly to prediction, $p < 0.05$.

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