

Residents' Perceptions Toward Cultural, Social and Economic Benefits and Costs of Tourism Industry: An Empirical Survey

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Abstract Tourism development plays a crucial role for the local economy and residents' quality of life, especially for Greece, a country suffering from financial crisis. The purpose of the paper is to examine attitudes of residents of a capital city at a prefecture of Central Greece that is Chalkida, the capital of Evia Island, toward tourism development. It was selected as it shares several similarities with most destinations of the neighboring region of Thessaly.

Factor analysis of scaled items measuring their attitudes resulted in eight tourism-related factors: beneficial economic, social and cultural influences, welfare impacts, economic cultural and social costs of tourism development and community support. Results indicate residents' expectations from tourism development were not met, as community support toward tourism sector is rather limited. Economic costs of tourism development exert detrimental effects on the welfare of residents, as well as their cultural and social context. In this way, tourism industry lacks community support and as a consequence a rather alienated environment for tourism developments is nurtured.

On the contrary, economic benefits are strongly and positively related to welfare, culture benefits, and community support on cultural or historic based tourism. Alike, welfare is associated with social and cultural benefits. Moreover, younger residents are less opting to support tourism development although they share the same perceptions about tourism development with older ones.

Keywords Residents • Attitudes • Tourism development • Culture • Welfare • Regional economy

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1 Introduction

In the contemporary knowledge-based economy, tourism industry is considered a valuable source to the local economy and residents' quality of life; this is especially true for Greece, a country suffering from the consequences of the recent financial crisis and a country whose tourism industry suggests its heavy industry. Building on social exchange theory which postulates that one's attitude towards tourism industry, and subsequent level of one's support for its development, will be influenced by his or her evaluation of resulting outcomes in the community, this study explores residents' attitudes toward tourism development of a Greek capital city (i.e. Chalkida, the capital city of a Central Greece's prefecture). In particular, eight tourism-related attitudes were investigated referring to beneficial economic, social and cultural influences, welfare impacts, economic cultural and social costs of tourism development and community support.

2 Literature Review

According to Fayos-Solà (1996 in Da Graca Batista, Silva, & Martins, 2014), recent decades have witnessed a change in traditional tourism, with a move from mass tourism to alternative tourism. This reflects changes in the attitudes and needs of tourists, and these changes have become a challenge for players in the tourism market who have to manage and adjust their tourism resources to the needs of tourists, in order to maintain the competitiveness of the destination (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2008).

Baud-Bovy and Lawson (1998 in Da Graca Batista et al., 2014) present the system of tourism based on the concept of "tourism product." The tourism industry does not develop in isolation; there are several external components that can influence the development of the industry and that interact with each other.

Tourism may be regarded as consisting of tourists, a business, and an environment or community in which this industry operates. If one is to understand the impact of tourism on residents, the inter-relationships between various elements in the system must be studied (Aspridis & Kyriakou, 2012; Williams & Lawson, 2001).

The WTO (1999) considers that tourism demand is extremely elastic, since a relatively small change in price or in income of tourists implies a change in demand in a greater proportion. Tourism tends to be a seasonal industry, and it is affected by a variety of subjective factors, such as taste and fashion. Tourism is widely perceived as a potential economic base, providing elements that may improve quality of life such as employment opportunities, tax revenues, economic diversity, festivals, restaurants, natural and cultural attractions, and outdoor recreation opportunities. There are concerns, however, that tourism can have negative impacts on quality of life. These can be in the form of crowding, traffic and parking problems,

increased crime, increased cost of living, friction between tourists and residents, and changes in hosts' way of life (Ap & Crompton, 1993; McCool and Martin, 1994 in Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005).

There are several reasons why resident reaction to tourism is important, not least of which is the quality of life of the host community. Additionally commercial tourism ventures may be hampered or terminated by excessive negative resident sentiment toward this development (Williams & Lawson, 2001). If it is known *why* residents support or oppose the industry, it will be possible to select those developments which can minimize negative social impacts and maximize support for such alternatives. As such, quality of life for residents can be enhanced, or at least maintained, with respect to the impact of tourism in the community (Williams & Lawson, 2001).

Community consequences emerging from tourism development are often divided into three categories (Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014). First, economic, including elements such as tax revenue, increased jobs, additional income, tax burdens, inflation, and local government debt. Second, sociocultural, including elements such as resurgence of traditional crafts and ceremonies, increased intercultural communication and understanding, increased crime rates and changes in traditional cultures. Third, environmental, including elements such as protection of parks and wildlife, crowding, air, water and noise pollution, wildlife destruction, vandalism, and litter (Andereck, 1995 in Andereck et al., 2005).

Much of this kind of research occurred at the time of a reaction against what Jafari (1990) has termed the "tourism advocacy platform". During this period a number of cautionary statements about the benefits of the industry were appearing (Pearce, Moscardo, & Ross, 1996 in Mason & Cheyne, 2000). One of the most influential works was that of this cautionary period was that of Doxey (1975 in Mason & Cheyne, 2000), who proposed an irritation index, or "Irridex", in which four time-related stages are linked to increasing numbers of tourists. Doxey argued that as tourist numbers increase, resident populations react with increasing hostility toward tourists, and the population passes through stages from euphoria to antagonism. The models of Doxey (1975) and Butler (1980), Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) which suggests that if negative impact of tourism development decreases, residents of tourism destinations become more positive towards tourism development, propose a change in resident attitudes to and involvement in tourism over time (Liu, Shen, & Gao, 2015). Some of these attitudes can be seen in Table 1.

Eagly and Chaiken (1993 in Williams & Lawson, 2001) probably came closest to a definition that would satisfy the greatest number of researchers:

Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degrees of favor or disfavor ... evaluating refers to all classes of evaluative responding, whether overt or covert, cognitive, affective, or behavioral (1993, p. 1).

As described by Ap, this is "a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation" (1992, p. 668 in Andereck et al., 2005). People engage in an interaction process where they seek something of value, be it material, social, or

Table 1 Some Possible Antecedents of Resident Opinion of Tourism

- **Distance of respondent's home** from tourism center (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Pearce, 1980; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Tyrell & Spaulding, 1984): Belisle and Hoy found that the further the respondent lived from the tourism "zone", the more negative the attitude toward the industry. The other studies cited above found the opposite effect.

- **Heavy tourism concentration** (Madrigal, 1995; Pizam, 1978).

- **Greater length of residency** in the community (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988; Brougham & Butler, 1981; Lankford, 1994; Liu & Var, 1986; Madrigal, 1995; Pizam, 1978; Sheldon & Var, 1984; Um & Crompton, 1987).

- **Native-born** (of the town, city, county, or state) status (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Canan & Hennessy, 1989; Davis, Allen, & Cosenza, 1988; Pizam, 1978; Um & Crompton, 1987).

- **Personal economic reliance** on tourism (Lankford, 1994; Liu & Var, 1986; Madrigal, 1995; Milman & Pizam, 1988; Murphy, 1983; Pizam, 1978; Pizam & Milman, 1986; Thomason, Crompton, & Kamp, 1979; Tyrell & Spaulding, 1984).

- **Ethnicity** (Var, Kendall, & Tarakcioglu, 1985).

- **Retail activity attributable** to tourism as a proportion of total retail activity (Long, Perdue, & Allen, 1990).

- **Stage in Destination Area Life Cycle** or length of time in tourism market (Johnson, Snepenger, & Akis, 1994).

- **Level of knowledge** about tourism and the local economy (Davis et al., 1988; Lankford, 1994; Pizam & Milman, 1986).

- **Level of contact** with tourists (Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; Brougham & Butler, 1981; Lankford, 1994).

- **Perceived impact** on local recreation opportunities (Lankford, 1994; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1987).

- **Gender** (Pizam & Milman, 1986; Ritchie, 1988).

- **Perceived ability** to influence tourism planning decisions (Lankford, 1994).

Source: Williams and Lawson (2001)

psychological. Individuals choose to engage in an exchange once they have judged the rewards and the costs of such an exchange. Perceptions of the exchange can be differential in that an individual who perceives a positive outcome will evaluate the exchange in a different way than an individual who perceives it negatively (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002 in Andereck et al., 2005).

From a tourism perspective, social exchange theory postulates that an individual's attitudes toward this industry, and subsequent level of support for its development, will be influenced by his or her evaluation of resulting outcomes in the community. Exchanges must occur to have tourism in a community. Residents must develop and promote it, and then serve the needs of the tourists. Some community residents reap the benefits, while others may be negatively impacted. Social exchange theory suggests people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange. An individual that perceives benefits from an exchange is likely to evaluate it positively; one that perceives costs is likely to evaluate it negatively. Thus, residents perceiving themselves benefiting from tourism are likely to view it positively, while those not, negatively (Andereck et al., 2005).

There is increasing evidence that residents of communities that attract tourists hold diverse opinions about development in their region. This diversity of opinion has sparked increasing amounts of research into resident attitudes over the past two decades (Mason & Cheyne, 2000).

3 Methodology

The sample population consisted of individuals who reside in Chalkida, the major central city of Evvoia Island, in Central Greece. It was selected using a convenience sampling approach, based on responses of residents and shop owners at the Central Streets, a central shopping and leisure location, during April 2015. However, the sample was tested for the representation of age groups and it was found to be in alignment with the total population. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data. A total of 141 usable questionnaires were collected for a response rate of 28 %. However, for the purpose of this research, returned questionnaires with missing data were eliminated from the analysis, in order to eliminate any bias imposed to statistical findings due to missing values (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Therefore, 128 responses with complete data were retained for the analysis.

All measures of the structured questionnaire developed were based on established and validated instruments on the relevant literature. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements that measure perceived impacts on a 7-point Likert type totally agree–totally disagree scale. More specifically, similar items with those used to measure the positive and negative perceived impacts of tourism development, and community support can be found in surveys conducted by Liu, Sheldon, and Var (1987), Akis et al. (1996), Teye, Sonmez, and Sirakaya (2002), Gursoy et al. (2002), and Gursoy and Rutherford (2004).

4 Results

With respect to selected sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, the majority of the respondents were female (53 %). The majority of the respondents (73 %) indicated that they were born in the city where they reside, in Chalkida. Also, the 71 % of the respondents have lived for more than 30 years in the same community. Additionally, the 52 % hold a college degree, and the majority (72 %) had monthly wage of less than 800€ (the 97 % had less than 1200€ monthly payment). The work of the majority (53 %) was not related directly or indirectly to tourism. The 89 % of the sample have the Greek Nationality.

A varimax rotated principal component analysis was used on 33 items describing tourism benefits, costs and community support in order to extract general groups of

resident attitudes toward tourism. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin statistics of 0.67, the significance of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$) and the inspection of correlations among the items indicated that the data was suitable for a factor analysis. A cut-off point of 0.40 was used to include items in the interpretation of a factor. Factor loadings were inspected and solutions improved by deleting items that either loaded on several factors or had low loadings. Therefore, these items were dropped from further analysis. After several runs, the data revealed eight distinct principal components with eigenvalues greater than one, explaining 65.8 % of the variance in the original data set.

These eight factors were labeled as cultural cost, social cost, cultural benefit, economic benefit, welfare, economic cost, social benefit and community support.

The eight conceptually meaningful domains from the factor analysis results were then tested for reliability, which was assessed by Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients. The coefficients ranged from a high 0.84 to a low 0.59, indicating that the variables exhibited moderate correlation with their factor groupings and thus may be cautiously regarded as internally consistent and stable. Table 2 displays items’ factor loadings, eigenvalues, percentage of variance explained by individual domains, and corresponding alpha reliability coefficients.

Results indicate residents’ expectations from tourism development were not met, since community support has scored relatively low (mean = 2.26, SD = 0.471).

5 Discussion

Performing correlation analysis, economic costs of tourism found to be negatively related to economic benefits ($r = -0.214$, $p < 0.05$), welfare ($r = -0.238$, $p < 0.05$), social benefits ($r = -0.234$, $p < 0.05$), and cultural benefits ($r = -0.405$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, cultural costs are associated negatively with community support on nature based tourism development ($r = -0.281$, $p < 0.01$).

Thus, economic costs of tourism development exert detrimental effects on the welfare of residents, as well as their cultural and social environment. In this way, tourism industry lacks community support nurturing a hostile environment for tourism development in the region under investigation, due to its impact on the social, cultural and economic context. This finding is in alignment with social exchange theory which assumes that potential beneficial or negative outcomes will create positive or unconstructive attitudes toward tourism (Andereck et al., 2005).

On the contrary, economic benefits are strongly and positively related to welfare ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$), culture benefits ($r = 0.216$, $p < 0.05$), and community support on cultural or historic based tourism ($r = 0.241$, $p < 0.05$). Alike, welfare is associated with social ($r = 0.227$, $p < 0.05$), and cultural ($r = 0.295$, $p < 0.01$) benefits. In a similar vein, social benefits are positively linked with cultural impacts ($r = 0.350$, $p < 0.001$).

Therefore, residents’ welfare is driven by economic, cultural and social benefits of tourism fostering community support on the relevant tourism development of cultural

Table 2 Results of PCA for tourism benefits, costs and community support

	Cultural cost	Social cost	Cultural benefit	Economic benefit	Welfare	Economic cost	Social benefit	Community support
Item 1						-0.735		
Item 2						-0.777		
Item 3		0.851						
Item 4		0.888						
Item 5		0.835						
Item 6	0.763							
Item 7	0.885							
Item 8	0.872							
Item 9	0.793							
Item 10	0.613							
Item 11				0.598				
Item 12				0.673				
Item 13				0.757				
Item 14				0.717				
Item 15					0.600			
Item 16					0.784			
Item 17					0.674			
Item 18					0.656			
Item 19							0.509	
Item 20							0.693	
Item 21							0.665	
Item 22			0.779					
Item 23			0.822					
Item 24			0.624					

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	Cultural cost	Social cost	Cultural benefit	Economic benefit	Welfare	Economic cost	Social benefit	Community support
Item 25			0.571					
Item 26								0.551
Item 27								0.688
Eigenvalues	4.060	3.287	2.388	2.009	1.891	1.543	1.336	1.253
% of total var.	15.04	12.18	8.84	7.44	7.00	5.71	4.95	4.64
Cumulative % of total var.	15.04	27.21	36.06	43.50	50.50	56.22	61.17	65.80
Cronbach's alpha	0.839	0.838	0.709	0.719	0.689	0.611	0.605	0.593
Mean	1.77	3.86	4.90	6.36	5.67	2.78	4.54	2.26
Std. dev.	0.719	0.807	0.566	0.668	0.621	0.641	0.454	0.417

Rotation: Varimax normalized, factor loadings above 0.45 are highlighted, Valid N: 128

and historical heritage. Results provide supporting evidence to the social exchange theory's hypothesis. Given that residents evaluate favourably the resulting outcomes in the community from tourism activities, they will reciprocate as in exchange by promoting and supporting tourism development (Andereck et al., 2005). Then, community serves the needs of the tourists and advances tourist 'experience'.

It is interesting that no statistical differences comparing for other demographic variables such as gender and age were detected for respondents' attitude towards tourism benefits or costs (*t*-test analysis). This finding is in alignment with Liu and Var's (1986), for the impact of demographic variables on residents' attitudes toward tourism. On the contrary, and in partial support with Teye et al. (2002), respondents aged more than 35 years old are more inclined to support tourism development than the younger ones ($p < 0.05$). Perhaps, given that elders are possibly more tied with the local community, and are characterized by higher levels of community attachment and concern, interaction with tourists strengthens their cultural identity and fosters their support to tourism development.

6 Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate a number of important conditions which are essential to the understanding of residents' attitudes toward tourism in Chalkida, the capital of Evia Island which shares many similarities with capital cities of the Thessaly Region such as Larissa (both prefectures located at Central Greece). Moreover, Chalkida is almost 1.5 h far away from Athens, the Capital of Greece, as long as Larissa is far from the second largest city in Greece, Thessaloniki. In practical terms, these two cities are similar in terms of their economic, social, and governmental structures.

To summarise, this research provides striking evidence for the social exchange theory. Residents assess favourably the economic, cultural and social benefits of tourism, and as a result in exchange they support and promote the relevant tourism development of cultural and historical heritage. On the contrary, economic costs of tourism development exert detrimental effects on their cultural and social environment leading to lower level of welfare, and lack of community support.

It is also interesting that elder residents are more opt to support tourism development, as they value its impact on the social and cultural context, as well as on community attachment and concern through the interaction with tourists. In this way, tourism development may strengthen residents' cultural identity and foster their support to tourism development.

Several limitations restrain the ability for generalization and interpretation of our findings to other contexts and circumstances, such as sample size, in Greece, a country with specific national culture characteristics. Also, the cross-sectional approach and correlation analysis performed can not investigate causal relationships and thus prevent such inferences. In addition, the conceptual model of this study may include a number of variables affecting residents' attitudes such as community concern, community attachment, and residents' engagement.

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