
Part 3

Sustainable Tourism Development

8

Host–tourist interactions and residents’ attitudes towards sustainable tourism development

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The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Investigate how the interaction between local community and visitors influences the residents’ attitude.
- Assess the results of positive or negative attitudes on overall tourism development of an island.
- Suggest the establishment of roles and regulation for protecting the island resources.
- Suggest further research on sustainable tourism development in developing nations.

Keywords: host-tourist interactions, resident perceptions, resident attitudes, sustainable tourism, tourism development, North Cyprus.

Introduction

Tourism is often prescribed as a powerful catholicon for socio-economic development of island states (Chen et al., 2011; Ribeiro et al., 2013). Although tourism provides some benefits for residents and destinations, its introduction creates adverse impacts as a by-product of its functioning that erodes sustainable development goals (Alipour et al., 2020); therefore, in order to minimize the unintended impacts, the involvement of all stakeholders in the planning process is recommended by many scholars (e.g. Chang & Mak, 2018; Cusick, 2009; Ribeiro et al., 2018). Amongst the many stakeholders involved in the sustainable tourism management of an island, residents have been considered as the most important and effective, without whom any plans towards sustainable development goals may be doomed to failure (Lalicic & Önder, 2018).

Investigating the attitude of residents about the impacts of any development plan is gaining momentum in tourism, as an essential concern in managing and marketing sustainable tourism products and services (Chen & Chen, 2010; Choi & Murray, 2010; Kebete & Wondirad, 2019; Wang & Chen, 2015). Accordingly, the literature has been enriched with a variety of different studies related to residents’ attitudes, interactions with tourists and different aspects of sustainable development, yet the ambiguity in the perception of these topics by locals is far from adequately explored (Eusebio et al., 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to delve into the host–tourist interactions to have a richer understanding of the residents’ role in sustainable tourism development. Notably, it is vital to consider tourism as one of the biggest industries considered beneficial in developing countries and small state islands due to political and development nature of these areas, yet, there is a lack of adequate studies specifically in the developing nations (Akhshik et al., 2020; Sirivongs & Tsuchiya, 2012).

The attitude of the residents about sustainable tourism development is a concept that has received different definition by different scholars (Chen & Raab, 2012), but yet there is no clear-cut definition for the term (Ribeiro et al., 2013; Woosnam, 2012). Since there is no universally accepted definition, sustainable tourism development has been defined in a variety of explanations, and different theories have been employed (Wang & Chen, 2015). However, Sharpley (2014) categorizes the formation of these attitudes as intrinsic and extrinsic. On the other hand, the behavioral dimension of residents’ attitudes was used in most of the significant studies of measures of support for sustainable tourism development (Woosnam, 2012). Thus, the

same approach adopted in this study. One of the leading tourism experience components is the quality of the interactions between residents and tourists, that is capable of influencing both residents' and tourists' satisfaction either positively or negatively (Andereck et al., 2005; Kastenholz et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2015; Pizam et al., 2002).

There is a variety of conceptualizations of host-tourist interaction in the literature. A careful review of the related literature concludes that scholars should pay more attention to the sustainable aspect of marketing for more clarifications toward understanding the antecedents relevant to residents' attitudes (Eusebio & Carneiro, 2012; Sharpley, 2014). Although different factors may influence the residents' attitudes towards sustainable tourism development, there are different approaches to adopting the factors. However, host-tourist interactions have received less attention in the literature compared with other factors, such as perceptions of tourism impacts and community attachment (Eusebio et al., 2018). Consequently, there is a call to conduct more studies to explore the abovementioned factors that may influence tourists' attitudes toward sustainable tourism development in developing countries (Chen & Chen, 2010; Sharpley, 2014; Woosnam, 2012).

This empirical study, in North Cyprus, intended to examine the effects of three determinants, such as host-tourist interactions, and residents' attitude through positive and negative impacts of perception towards sustainable tourism development, by using a structured equation model (SEM). Therefore, the study will answer the question of whether the interactions between the local community and tourists influences the locals' attitudes towards sustainable development in the tourism industry. Thus, the objective of the study is narrowed down to: a) investigate how the interaction between local community and visitors influences the residents' attitudes; and b) assess the results of positive or negative attitudes on overall tourism development of an island. Following a literature review of relevant studies, a theoretical model has been developed and conceptually tested. The study also contributes to the theory and practice, the details of which is provided in the conclusion section.

Literature review

Scholars have contradictory definitions for residents' attitudes towards sustainable tourism development (e.g. Akis et al., 1996; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Ribeiro et al., 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015; Woosnam, 2012; Yeager et al., 2019). As a result, there is no clear-cut definition of this phenomena in the tourism in the literature (Chen & Raab, 2012; Latkova & Vogt, 2012;