Resident attitudes towards tourism in a destination in the stagnation stage of the tourism life cycle

L. Pennington-Gray
Centre for Tourism Research and Development,
Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Gainesville,
Florida, U.S.A.

Abstract

Research on residents’ attitudes towards tourism development and support for tourism has been a focus of the tourism research since the 1970s. Research has indicated that several factors affect residents’ support for tourism. They include host-guest interactions, length of residency in the community, economic reliance, social representations and impacts, and environmental impacts. Several researchers have suggested that community attachment and length of residency influence resident’s support for tourism. This study will test which of these variables has a greater influence on resident’s support for tourism.

Keywords: community attachment, length of residency, support for tourism, beach community.

1 Introduction

Research on residents’ attitudes towards tourism development and support for tourism has been a focus of the tourism research since the 1970s [1–6]. Research has indicated that several factors affect residents’ support for tourism. They include host-guest interactions [7], length of residency in the community [8,9], economic reliance [10], social representations and impacts [11], environmental impacts, resource use and community attachment [12]. Juroski [12] in her dissertation showed the importance of community attachment versus length of residency on support for tourism. One of the important findings was that use of the resource was negatively correlated with support for tourism, where increased use correlated with decreased support.
Butler’s destination lifecycle suggests that destinations move through a lifecycle similar to products. This lifecycle consists of five stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. Butler’s [13] theory hypothesizes a relationship in which, as the number of tourists to an area increases, residents who at first are very positive develop increasing concerns about the long term benefits and costs. This could be attributed to original expectations, which were unrealistic or benefits, which only affect a small percentage of residents. Another reason could be once the benefits are realized the social or environmental costs can be greater than expected and make the residents not appreciate the guest.

Interestingly, the bulk of research in the United States has been in rural areas [14]. The majority of this research has focused on measuring attitudes of residents where tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy or at the ‘consolidation’ stage [15] Sirakaya et al. [14] extended this research and assessed the determinants of support for tourism development in the beginning stages of the life cycle in the developing country of Ghana. Interestingly, they created and tested a model of resident’s attitudes towards tourism using two dependent variables, support for hospitality industry and support for infrastructure. The results suggested that the dependent variables were influenced by perceptions towards tourists, tourism impacts, employment status, membership in community organizations and awareness of tourism development projects.

The current study extends the resident attitudes literature by examining support for tourism in the stagnation stage of the life cycle. Less research has examined residents’ attitudes for tourism when the destination is at the ‘stagnation’ stage. Daytona Beach is a destination, which is in the stagnation stage. Spring Breakers made this destination a commodity in the 1980s. More recently, Daytona Beach has repositioned itself and has implemented laws which prohibit crudeness (no thong bikinis). As well, the destination has targeted other markets, for example, the Daytona 500, Bike Week and Black College Reunion.
in order to increase business. Despite this repositioning however, bed tax collections have remained stable since 1999 [16]. Consequently, Daytona Beach had been through all five stages of Butler’s destination lifecycle and therefore lends itself to the examination of resident attitudes towards tourism.

2 Purpose and research questions

This study differs from previous studies (in particular Sirakaya, Teye and Sonmez [14]) in that it (1) examines residents attitudes in an urban area, (2) it examines resident attitudes in an area where the destination is at the stagnation stage and (3) it includes two variables which have received little empirical testing: community attachment and use of the resource. Therefore, this study will extend the current research and examine predictors of residents support for tourism in a beach-side community in the stagnation stage of the destination lifecycle.

3 Methods

3.1 The study area

Data for this study were gathered in Daytona Beach and Ormond Beach, which are located on the east Atlantic coast of Florida, northeast of Orlando (Figure 1). The sample was comprised of individuals 18 years of age and older whose names appeared on the Volusia County Tax Roles. The Volusia County tax role included residents, businesses and primary landowners. Tenets were excluded. For each town, 500 residents were selected. Therefore, for Ormond Beach, every 66th name from the list of 33,000 was chosen. While for Daytona Beach every 88th name from a list of 44,000 was chosen. In the event a resident was selected previously or the selection was a place of business, it was subsequently skipped, until a resident could be chosen. A combined total of 1,000 residents from Ormond Beach and Daytona Beach, Florida were selected.

3.2 Sample and data

The primary means of data collection was a mail survey questionnaire using a modified total design method [17]. The first mail out was sent out October 1st, 2001. Non-respondents were sent a letter and a second survey. A response of 152 was achieved. A total of 12 surveys had to be discarded. Therefore, a final response rate of 14% (n=140) was achieved. Due to a low sample size (probably due to the events of 9/11 and the anthrax scare), an alternative method of data collection was appropriate. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were conducted three weeks in December, 2001. Interviews were conducted at three sites: two shopping malls and the beach. Approximately 36 people refused to fill out the questionnaire. A total of 100 face-to-face interviews were completed by residents of Volusia County. T-tests were run on the demographics of respondents from
both data collection methods. No statistical differences in demographics were revealed.

3.3 Operationalization of Variables

The questionnaire was developed to determine the perceptions of residents of the Daytona Beach and surrounding areas. The following items were specifically investigated: environmental, social and economic attitudes towards tourism, length of residency in the Daytona Beach area, use of the resource, feelings toward the community (sense of place), and overall support for tourism. Demographics were also collected.

The independent variables, attitudes toward tourism development (37 items) were factor analyzed using a varimax-rotated principle component analysis. Attitudes towards tourism were obtained using a varimax rotated principle components analysis. Eight factors were extracted and found to be internally reliable. These eight factors were: (1) resource use; (2) ecocentric/environmental impact; (3) negative community attachment; (4) positive social impact; (5) economic benefits of tourism; (6) perceived negative social impacts; (7) perceived benefits to the community (community attachment); (8) perceived investment made to community (community attachment). For each factor, a factor score was calculated using the Anderson-Rubin method through SPSS. These scores were used as independent variables to measure residents’ support for tourism.

Table 1: Description of Independent Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Independent Variable</th>
<th>Measurement level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived resource use</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived ecocentric environmental impact</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived negative community attachment</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived positive social impacts</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perceived economic benefits of tourism</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Perceived negative social impacts</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Perceived benefits to the community (community attachment)</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Perceived investment made to community (community attachment)</td>
<td>Anderson-Rubin factor score</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A varimax rotated principal components analysis was used on the nine-item scale to test for unidimensionality. Support for tourism was measured on a seven-point scale, from ‘do not support’ to ‘extremely support.’ A one-factor solution emerged from the data. Cronbach alpha indicated .90 reliability.
4 Findings

The socio-demographic backgrounds of the respondents, half of the respondents were male and the other half was female. The majority of the sample was white/Caucasian and more than seventy percent were over the age of fifty (71.5%). All but one respondent was a full time resident (this respondent was removed from the remaining analysis). Most respondents had some college or a college degree and earned between $20,000 and $60,000 a year (50.2%). With respect to the living arrangements, the majority of respondents (66.4%) said that they lived with a spouse or partner. Most respondents indicated that they were the first or second generation of families living in the Daytona Beach area (28.1%).

To understand which factors explained residents’ support for tourism a forward regression analysis was performed. This technique was used because it is most appropriate when there are a large number of independent variables and a smaller sample size. The forward regression model produced a five variable model. The five variables (in order of importance) were: perceived social impacts, perceived economic benefits of tourism, perceived benefits to community (community attachment), negative social impacts and perceived investment to community (community attachment). The general model explained 33.5% of the variation in residents’ support for tourism.

Table 2: Forward Regression Model for the support for tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perceived social impacts</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>37.39</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perceived economic benefits of tourism</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>31.01</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Perceived benefits to community (community attachment)</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>28.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Negative social impacts</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>24.27</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perceived investment to community (community attachment)</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five variables had a positive relationship with the dependent variable (support for tourism). Perceived social impacts had a positive relationship with support for tourism and were the most important factor. As residents perceptions of social impacts increased, so did their support for tourism. Also, as residents’ perceptions of the economic benefit, perceived benefits to the community, negative social impacts and perceived investment to the community increased so did their support for tourism.

5 Conclusions and implications

As residents’ perceptions of perceived social impacts (opportunities to shop, opportunities for recreation, relationship between residents and tourists, preservation of local culture) went up so to did support for tourism ($\beta = 0.380$). This seems to make sense. Pizam [1], Rothman [18] and O’Leary [19] all found a positive relationship between opportunities for shopping and recreation and support for tourism. The results of most studies imply that residents view tourism as a benefit that increases recreational opportunities (Perdue et al, 1990).

In addition, as perceived economic benefits (personally benefit, business benefits and community benefits) increased so to did support for tourism ($\beta = 0.280$). The economic impacts of tourism experiences on residents in the tourism literature vary considerably; however, generally those who perceive a
positive rise in standard of living more than they perceive a negative impact in the cost of living are more supportive of tourism [8].

Increases in perceived benefits to the community (create more jobs, higher taxes, financial sacrifice, more jobs for the young) ($\beta=.248$) and slight increases in support for tourism were seen even with negatives social impacts of tourism (crime and traffic congestion) ($\beta=.174$) were related to increases in support for tourism Davis et al (1988) found similar findings in their study in Florida which indicated that respondents were not in agreement with the statement that traffic and crime would disappear with the tourists. In addition, residents of some destinations agree that tourism does not affect the crime rate [8]. This seems to support the theory of social exchange, where people are willing to make trade-offs in exchange for tourism development. These trade-offs usually come in the form of resources provided in the area.

Finally, as residents’ perception of the investments to the community (a form of community attachment) increased so did support for tourism. Increases in investments made by residents (community attachment) resulted in increases in support for tourism ($\beta=.152$). Um and Crompton [2] found that the more attached residents were to the community in terms of birthplace, heritage, and years of residence the less positively they perceived tourism impacts on their community. McCool and Martin [20] were unable to find a clear connection between community attachment and support for tourism. They found that attached residents rated positive dimensions of tourism higher and costs of tourism lower.

References

[16] Florida Association of Convention and Visitor’s Bureaus. Found at URL: www.facvb.org, on September, 1, 2003