Locals' Attitudes toward Mass and Alternative Tourism: The Case of Sunshine Coast, Australia

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Abstract

This study examines local residents' attitudes toward two different types of tourism development, mass tourism and alternative tourism, using data collected from residents of Sunshine Coast, Australia. The study findings reveal that host community support is affected directly and/or indirectly by the level of community concern, community attachment, ecocentric values, use of the tourism resource base, state of the local economy, and the perceived impacts of tourism development. Findings suggested that even though some of the factors influence attitudes toward both mass and alternative tourism, attitudes toward each form of development is likely to be formed based on the perceptions of different factors.

Keywords

locals' attitudes, mass tourism, alternative tourism, perceived impacts, Australia

Introduction

Understanding local residents' attitudes toward tourism development is vital for the success and sustainability of any type of tourism development. A large number of studies have examined resident attitudes and the factors that are likely to influence those attitudes. Most of those studies suggest that locals tend to have positive attitudes because they see tourism as an economic development tool. However, residents' perceptions of impacts and their level of support tend to change as a destination moves from one stage of its life cycle to the next. As suggested by Butler's (1980) cycle of evolution, diminished resident support for tourism development becomes evident as destinations move to later stages of development. At this stage, traditional economic assessment tools may not be enough to assess locals' perceptions of impacts and their support level (Theuns 2002) because positive and negative sociocultural influences need to be considered in addition to economic and environmental impacts (Jamison 1999; Ko and Stewart 2002). However, contrary to intuitive thought, residents who recognize negative impacts may not necessarily oppose tourism development (King, Pizam, and Milman 1993). While they may oppose one type of development, they may be more willing to support another type (Lindberg et al. 1999). Thus, a continuing assessment of locals' perceptions of impacts and their support level for different types of development may be necessary to ensure sustainability of industry and to manage the more critical aspects that appear as a tourism destination develops (Lawson et al. 1998). Therefore, this study attempts to examine locals' perceptions of tourism impacts, factors that are likely to influence those impact perceptions, and their support for or opposition to two different forms of development (mass tourism and alternative tourism) in a rapidly growing tourist destination in Australia using the resident attitudes model developed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004).

The model proposed in this study will demonstrate how each factor affects each of the five tourism impact perceptions and the state of the local economy separately, while showing the interplay among these perceptions and how these perceptions affect the support for mass tourism and alternative tourism. In this study, mass tourism development is defined as facilities and attractions designed to host large numbers of tourists. This type of development tends to be highly commercialized and offers minimal opportunities for contact and understanding between the hosts and the tourists. On the other hand, alternative tourism development is defined as development that is less commercialized and consistent with the natural, social, and community values of a host community. Alternative tourism developments tend to provide opportunities for relationships between locals and tourists

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(Wearing and Neil 1999). Furthermore, alternative tourism development places a strong emphasis on contact and understanding between the hosts and the tourists as well as the environment (Smith and Eadington 1992). Finally, alternative tourism development tends to include facilities and attractions designed for smaller groups. Those facilities and attractions tend to have smaller negative impacts in the natural and social environments and collaborate with other sectors (agriculture, craft) of the local economy (Newsome, Moore, and Dowling 2002).

Location

As indicated in other studies, tourism plays an important role in Australia's economic sustainability, especially in regional and coastal areas (Dyer et al. 2007; Murphy and Watson 1995). There are two main coastal beach tourism areas approximately one hour's drive south and north of Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland, Australia (Figure 1). Like the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast is a subtropical coastal area with short rivers emanating from the hinterland. The focus of economic development on the Sunshine Coast, formerly an agricultural area based on dairy, sugarcane, and cropping activities, has shifted toward tourism and other light service industries.

The Sunshine Coast, though slower than the Gold Coast in developing as a tourist site, is undergoing rapid changes and is currently one of the growth areas of Australia. The Sunshine Coast region is expected to grow by 35% in the next decade (Taylor and Birrell 2003). Even though the original impetus for development came from the area's attraction as a holiday or retirement location, opportunities offered by a rapidly developing economy in the booming sunbelt environment seems to be one of the main reason for this rapid development (Taylor and Birrell 2003).

The Sunshine Coast, in comparison with the Gold Coast, attracts more intrastate visitors, whereas the Gold Coast attracts more international and interstate visitors (Tourism Queensland 2008). The Sunshine Coast tourism market has been mainly beach holidays, with visitors attracted to relatively pristine beaches, national parks, hinterland hideaways, appealing weather, and a range of entertainment, including a zoo and marine attractions. Emerging tourism markets include golf, nature-based tourism, hinterland bed-and-breakfasts, food and wine, and events and festivals (Tourism Queensland 2008).

Sustainability of Tourism Development and Importance of Locals' Attitudes

There is no doubt that tourism generates numerous economic benefits to local communities, but it also contributes to significant environmental damages and imposes negative social and cultural impacts in many destinations (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002). Because of growing concerns over those negative impacts, tourism researchers have dedicated a great deal of attention to examining tourism impacts during the past few decades (Saarinen 2006). In recent years, the quest for sustainable development has led to a renewed interest in studying the impacts of tourism on the environment and society (Northcote and Macbeth 2006).

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), sustainability of tourism development heavily relies on meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It requires a careful management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. Basically, the WTO suggests that tourism development cannot be sustained unless it is developed through local initiatives, consistent with local values and operated in harmony with the local environment, community, and cultures. This indicates that all stakeholders should participate in the development and management so that everyone becomes permanent beneficiaries not the victims of the development (Andereck et al. 2005; Choi and Sirakaya 2005). Studies suggest that the success and sustainability of tourism development largely depends on the acceptability of tourists and tourism-related programs, offerings, and activities by local communities (Musa, Hall, and Higham 2004). Indeed, the success and sustainability of any development requires the active support of the local population. Furthermore, understanding the antecedents of such support is crucial for policy makers to determine what form of development is acceptable and why. As suggested by Lepp (2007), one indicator of tourism appropriateness is the attitudes of the host population toward tourism. Unless the desires and wishes of both visitors and residents are taken into account, irritation is likely to rise, with disastrous effects. In fact, active opposition against tourism development has been found to hinder or stop tourism development (Gursoy and Rutherford 2004).

As a destination develops, unmet residents' expectations as well as other negative aspects of development are also likely to result in changes in attitudes toward the industry (Teye, Sonmez, and Sirakaya 2002). According to the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, sociocultural impacts of tourism arise in the stages of consolidation and stagnation (Butler 1980). The Irridex model (Doxey 1975) also supports the claim that as destinations evolve, the presence of tourists becomes a source of constant tension to the community. Furthermore, permanent presence of tourists places a significant amount of pressure on locals. As a result, the feelings and perceptions of locals become more and more negative. Therefore, the potential benefits and costs that might be introduced to a region as tourism expands need to be understood and explored so that destinations can take necessary

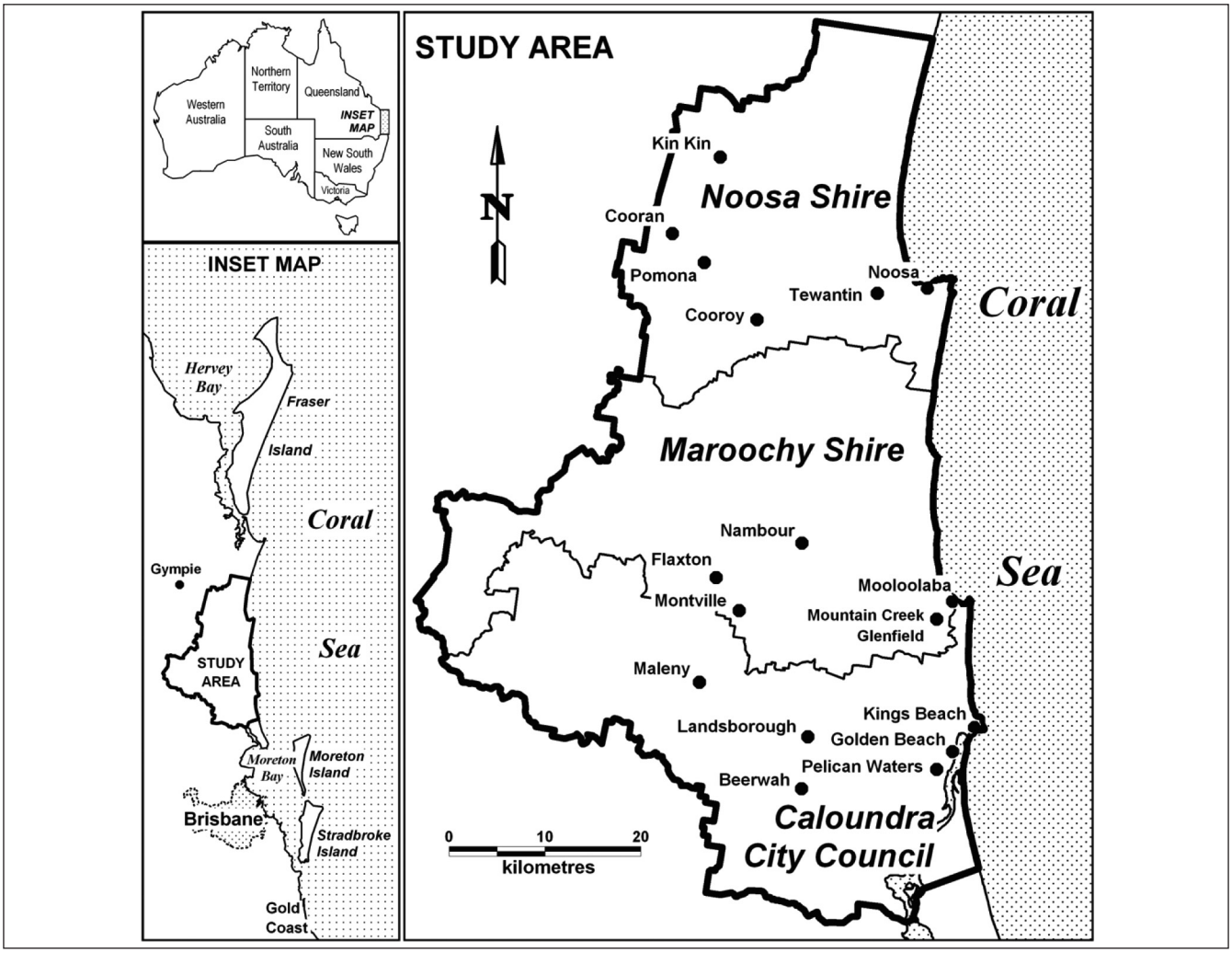

Figure 1. Sketch map showing the location of the Gold Coast, Brisbane, and the Sunshine Coast and data collection sites

steps to minimize negative effects while optimizing benefits to the community. One step that can be taken may include monitoring changes in locals' perceptions and attitudes and identifying new development initiatives that may be supported by locals. Goals of monitoring host perceptions and attitudes are to decrease the frequency of unexpected changes, to moderate the unforeseen or undesired consequences of planned or ineluctable changes, and to facilitate sustainable planning aiming at the moderation (or compensation against) of the unavoidable negative impacts of tourism (Meredith 1991).

Attitudes toward Tourism

Community involvement is an important factor that is likely to significantly influence the sustainability of any tourism development. Involvement of locals in the planning and operational stages can ensure that development will be socially and environmentally responsible and that resulting impacts will be perceived as appropriate by the host community. Considering the frequency of interaction between locals and tourists, locals' willingness to serve as affable hosts is fundamental to the success of development (Ko and Stewart 2002). Therefore, locals' attitudes and their perceptions about tourism impacts on their community must be continually assessed because over time those perceptions and attitudes are likely to change.

In recent years, an increasing number of researchers have been developing and testing theoretical frameworks to assess residents' attitudes toward tourism (e.g. Ap 1990, 1992; Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Gursoy and Kendall 2006; Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams 1997; Lindberg and Johnson 1997). Most of these studies used the Social Exchange Theory (SET) as their theoretical base (Andereck et al. 2005; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004), which has been described as

"a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation" (Ap 1992, p. 668). In the tourism framework, locals and tourists participate in an exchange process in which both look for something of value. However, locals' perceptions of the impacts tend to influence their willingness to participate in the exchange. As suggested by the theory, locals tend to participate in an exchange with tourists if they believe that they are likely to gain benefits without incurring unacceptable costs. If they believe that expected positive gains or impacts are greater than the expected loss or negative impacts, they are inclined to take part in the exchange and therefore endorse tourism development in their community (Allen et al. 1993; Ap 1992; Gursoy and Kendall 2006). This study also uses the SET as the theoretical base.

Several theoretical tourism support models were proposed based on the SET (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002; Gursoy and Kendall 2006; Hernandez et al. 1996; Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams 1997; Lindberg and Johnson 1997). Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) developed a model that integrated factors that are likely to influence local residents' reactions to tourism. In their model, they proposed that the perceived potential for economic gain, use of the resource base, attachment to one's community, and attitudes toward the preservation of the natural environment influenced how residents perceived the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism development. Their model postulated that both the antecedents of tourism impacts and the three categories of impacts had indirect, direct, or both indirect and direct effects on local residents' support for tourism development. Their findings revealed that some of the identified antecedents not only had an indirect effect on support through their effect on their perceptions of the impacts but also had a direct effect on support for various types of tourism. Later, Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002) criticized the Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) model for aggregating the costs and benefits of tourism into three categories of impacts. Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002) proposed a new model that expanded on the findings of the model proposed by Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) by segregating the impacts into costs and benefits and then examining the influence of the perceptions of the costs and benefits on support for tourism. In addition, they added two new constructs to the model: the impact of the residents' perceptions of the state of the local economy and of the level of residents' concern about their community.

While Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002) expanded the understanding of local residents' support for tourism, they examined the perceived impacts of tourism as perceived costs and perceived benefits, which limited the understanding of the impacts of perceived costs and benefits on tourism support. Later Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) further expanded the model by breaking down the perceived impact of tourism development into five areas: (1) perceived economic benefits, (2) perceived social benefits, (3) perceived social costs, (4) perceived cultural benefits, and (5) perceived cultural benefits costs. However, they only examined residents' reactions toward one type of tourism development. They argued that examination of the support for other types of tourism development may produce different results. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further expand Gursoy and Rutherford's model by examining locals' perceptions of tourism impacts, factors that are likely to influence those impact perceptions and their support or opposition toward mass tourism and alternative tourism.

The model tested in this study (Figure 2) is adopted from Gursoy and Rutherford (2004). It proposes that the perceptions of economic benefits, social benefits, social costs, socioeconomic costs, cultural benefits, and the state of the local economy are the antecedents of local residents' support for both types of tourism development. It also suggests that those perceptions are influenced by the concern residents have for their community, their emotional attachment to their community, the degree to which they are environmentally sensitive, and the extent to which they use the same resource base that tourists use. In addition, the model suggests that the state of the local economy influences the perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism development. Please see Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) for a detailed discussion on the model.

Method

Sample

A stratified random sampling approach was used to identify the sample for this study. The sample population consisted of individuals who reside in selected locations in Sunshine Coast, Australia: Caloundra City, Moroochy Shire, and Noosa Shire. These locations were selected to ensure a range of views from hinterland and coastal residents in light of residents' proximity to high levels of tourism activity. After selecting the locations, respondents were identified based on the location of their houses. The streets where the houses were located were determined using the randomly selected street map coordinates.

Survey Method

A self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Self administered survey questionnaires were hand-delivered to all houses in streets chosen according to randomly selected street map coordinates, in strategically chosen locations. The delivered package included a cover letter that was addressed to the respondent, a self-addressed and stamped return envelope, and the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to answer questions related to their feelings about tourism development, their support or opposition for alternative

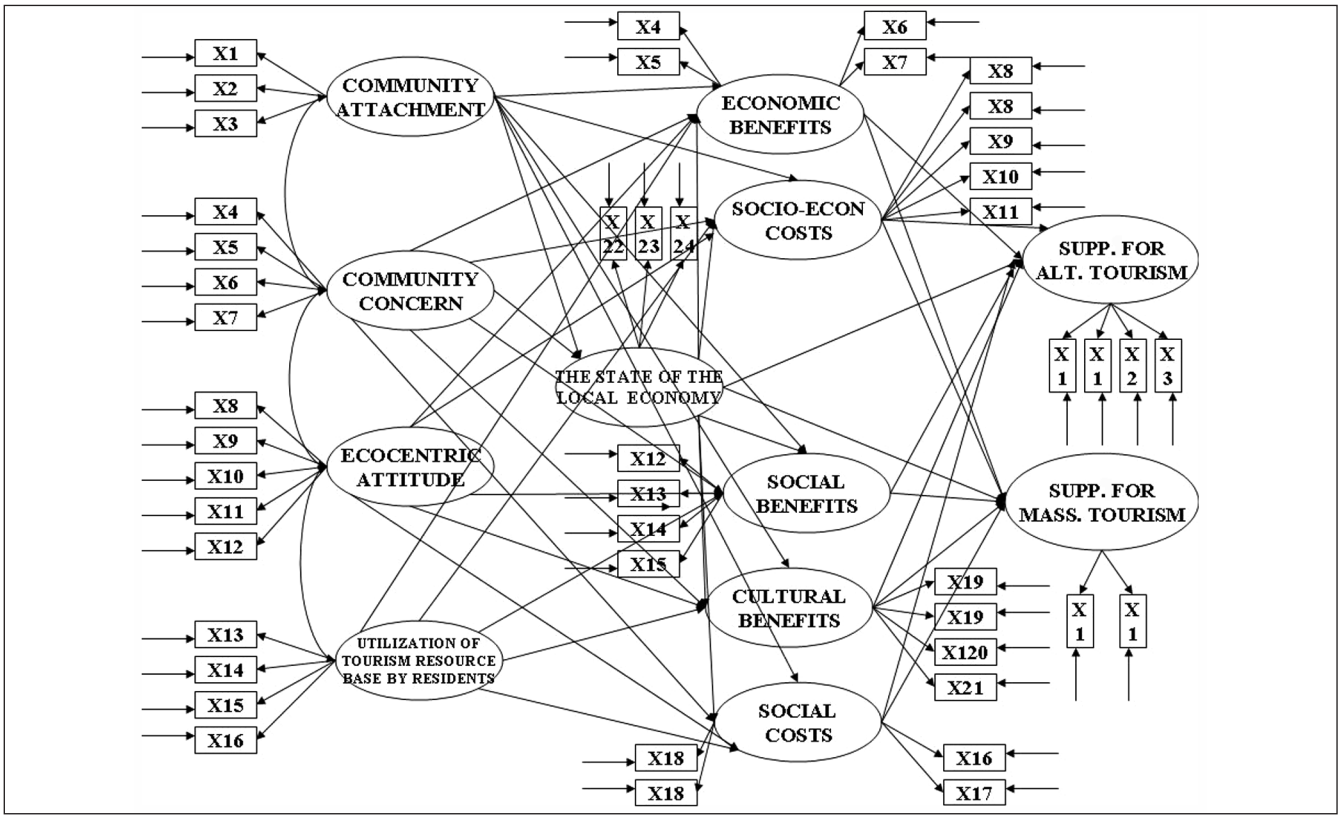

Figure 2. Proposed theoretical model: determinants of the locals' attitudes

and mass tourism, community attachment, community concern, local economy, ecocentric values, recreation area, and demographic questions. From the 5,000 questionnaires distributed, 732 responses were received, representing a response rate of 14.6%.

Analyses

A four-step procedure was used in this study to assess Sunshine Coast residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, factors that are likely to affect those perceptions and their attitudes toward mass tourism and alternative tourism development: (1) using an a priori classification approach, measurement items for each construct were determined; (2) local residents' perceptions of tourism impact attributes, factors that are likely to influence those perceptions, and their support or opposition for mass tourism and alternative tourism developments were examined by using Cronbach reliability (Cronbach and Meehl 1955); (3) underlying constructs were validated by using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA); and (4) a theoretical model was proposed and tested to examine the relationships among perceived tourism impacts, factors that are likely to influence those impacts, and residents' support or opposition for both types of tourism developments. The fit of the measurement model and the fit of the structural model were tested using the LISREL 8.72 structural equation analysis package (Joreskog 1993). The maximum likelihood (ML) method of estimation in combination with the two-stage process was used to analyze the data.

Measurement model. The fit of the measurement model that specifies the posited relations of the observed variables to the underlying constructs, with the construct allowed to intercorrelate freely, was tested with a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Furthermore, the adequacy of the individual items and the composites were assessed by measures of reliability and validity. The composite reliability, as calculated with LISREL estimates, is analogous to a coefficient alpha (Fornell and Larcker 1981), which shows the internal consistency of the indicators assessing a given factor (Hatcher 1994). A value higher than .70 is acceptable for a composite reliability. As shown in Table 1, the composite reliability scores of all constructs were higher than .70.

Two types of validity measures, discriminant validity and convergent validity, were examined. Discriminant validity addresses the concept that the measures (observed indicators) of dissimilar constructs that theoretically should not be related to each other, in fact, are observed to not be related to each other (Zikmund 1997). Convergent validity is the overlap between alternative measures that are intended to measure

Table 1. Measurement Scale Properties (n = 732)

Constructs and Indicators	Completely standardized loadings	Indicator reliability	Error variance
Community support or opposition for conventional mass tourism development		.89	
Attractions designed for large numbers of tourists such as theme parks and large resort complexes	.87	.76	.24
Mass tourism development (e.g., hotels and attractions for large number of tourists)	.92	.85	.15
Community support or opposition for alternative tourism development		.78	
Nature-based tourism development (e.g., cabins in the forest, cross-country ski trails)	.49	.24	.76
Cultural or history-based attractions (e.g., visitor centers or museums)	.61	.37	.63
Cultural and folk events (such as concerts, art and crafts, dance, festivals)	.81	.66	.34
Outdoor recreation programs (e.g., organized hikes, bike rides, and competitive events)	.80	.64	.36
Community concern		.72	
Schools	.64	.41	.59
Crime	.55	.30	.70
Recreation	.71	.50	.50
Economic development	.58	.34	.66
Ecocentric attitude		.78	
Plants and animals have as much rights as humans to exist.	.56	.31	.69
Nature can cope with impacts of industrial nations.[a]	.54	.29	.71
The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources.	.60	.36	.64
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.	.75	.56	.44
If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.	.77	.59	.41
Community attachment		.71	
How much do you feel at home in this community?	.70	.49	.51
What interest do you have in knowing what goes in this community?	.45	.20	.80
Suppose that for some reason you had to move away from this community, how sorry or pleased would you be to leave?[a]	.84	.71	.29
Use of tourism resource base		.90	
The Sunshine Coast is my favorite place to go during my free time.	.66	.44	.56
No other place can compare to this area in terms of what I like to do.	.84	.71	.29
Being on the Sunshine Coast is one of the most satisfying things I do.	.83	.69	.31
I would not substitute any other area for doing the type of things I do here.	.88	.77	.23
I use this place to help define and express who I am inside.	.78	.61	.39
State of the local economy		.83	
The government should play a role in creating jobs for people in this area.	.68	.46	.54
We need more jobs in this area.	.89	.79	.21
We need more jobs so that our young people will not have to move away to find jobs.	.77	.59	.41
Positive economic impact		.84	
Tourism is likely to create more jobs for your community	.88	.77	.23
Tourism is likely to attract more investment to your community.	.83	.69	.31
Tourism is likely to provide more business for local people and small businesses.	.81	.66	.34
Tourism is likely to create additional tax revenue from tourists for local governments.	.46	.21	.79
Negative socioeconomic impact		.86	
High-spending tourists are likely to negatively affect our way of living.	.75	.56	.44
Tourism is likely to change our precious traditional culture.	.76	.58	.42
Local residents are likely to suffer from living in a tourism destination.	.84	.71	.29
Tourism is likely to result in unpleasantly overcrowded beaches, hiking trails, parks, and other outdoor places in your community.	.77	.59	.41
The prices of goods and services are likely to increase because of tourism.	.58	.34	.66
Positive cultural impact		.76	
Tourism is likely to encourage development of a variety of cultural activities by the local residents.	.66	.44	.56
Tourism is likely to result in more cultural exchange between tourists and residents.	.79	.62	.38
Tourism development is likely to create a positive impact on the cultural identity of your community.	.74	.55	.45
Meeting people from other regions of the world is a valuable experience to better understand their culture and society.	.45	.20	.80

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Constructs and Indicators	Completely standardized loadings	Indicator reliability	Error variance
Negative social impact		.82	
Tourism is likely to increase the crime rate.	.82	.67	.33
Tourism is likely to lead to more vandalism in your community.	.82	.67	.33
Tourism is likely to result in noise and pollution.	.66	.44	.56
Tourism is likely to lead to prostitution in your community.	.61	.37	.63
Positive social impact		.82	
Tourism development is likely to provide an incentive for the restoration of historical buildings.	.69	.48	.52
Tourism development is likely to provide an incentive for the conservation of natural resources.	.82	.67	.33
Tourism development is likely to provide an incentive for the preservation of the local culture.	.86	.74	.26
Our roads and other public facilities are likely to be kept at a high standard because of tourism.	.50	.25	.75

[a]Reverse coded.

the same construct but that have different sources of undesired variation (Judd, Smith, and Kidder 1991). Results indicated that the proposed measurement model has both discriminant and convergent validity.

The overall fit of this final measurement model was $\chi^2(968) = 1{,}840.65$ ($p = .00$); goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .90; adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = .89; normed fit index (NFI) = .94; nonnormed fit index (NNFI) = .97; comparative fit index (CFI) = .97, incremental fit index (IFI) = .97, and parsimony goodness fit index (PGFI) = .78; parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) = .85; and critical $n = 430.88$. Furthermore, the indicators of residuals, root mean square residual (RMR), standardized RMR (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were .043, .046, and .035, respectively.

Structural equation model. The review of the proposed theoretical structural model revealed that the χ^2 value of the proposed theoretical model was not significant, which indicated that the proposed theoretical model might be underidentified and could be improved. A series of five nested structural models were tested to identify the best model for the study. After assessing five nested structural models, sequential chi-square difference tests (SCDTs) were conducted to provide successive fit information (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). The SCDT results indicated that there was a significant difference in the χ^2 value between the theoretical model (M_t) and the saturated model (M_s), which has the smallest χ^2 value of any structural model at the .05 probability level, $M_t - M_s$ χ^2 difference (19) = 529.10, $p = .00$. This indicated that the theoretical model (M_t) was ill fitted, compared with the saturated model (M_s). Results also indicated that there was a significant difference in the χ^2 value between the constrained model (M_c) and the saturated model (M_s), $M_c - M_s$ χ^2 difference (7) = 81.21, $p = .00$. On the other hand, the unconstrained (M_u) model's χ^2 value was not significantly different from the saturated model's χ^2 value (M_s), $M_u - M_s$ χ^2 difference (6) = 6.99, $p = .32$. As a result, the unconstrained model was selected as the best model. Figure 3 presents the accepted unconstrained model.

Results and Discussion

The unconstrained model, a better-fitted model, indicated that it was necessary to include 15 additional paths in the model. However, analysis also indicated that it was not necessary to test two paths included in the original model. As a result, in the accepted unconstrained model, 54 paths were estimated retaining 39 of the 41 proposed paths. However, only 21 of them were found to be statistically significant in the direction predicted at the .05 probability level. In addition, 10 of the 15 new paths identified in the constrained model were found to be significant at the .05 probability level (Table 2). The new paths indicated that there were interactions among the perceived costs of tourism constructs and the perceived benefits of tourism constructs. Similar findings were also reported by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004). Furthermore, these paths suggested that antecedents of impact perceptions do not only affect locals' support for tourism development through affecting their perceptions but also directly affect their support for tourism development (Table 2).

All of the goodness-of-fit statistics of the unconstrained model were above recommended threshold values. Although the χ^2 value with 974 degrees of freedom equal to 1847.64 ($p < .00$) was significant, it was within the rule of 2.5 to 3 times the number of degrees of freedom, suggested as acceptable by Bollen (1989). Given the known sensitivity of the χ^2

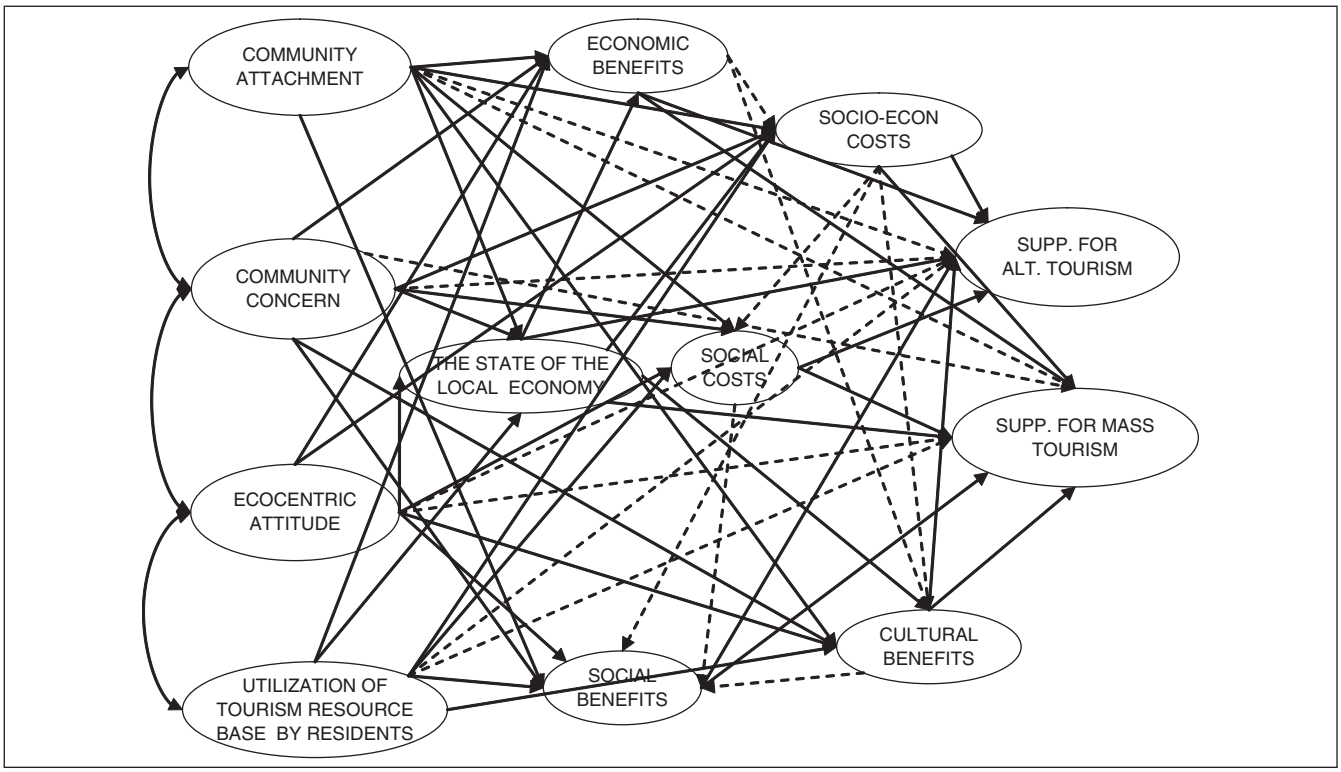

Figure 3. Modified theoretical model: determinants of locals' attitudes
Note: Dotted lines indicate new paths.

Table 2. Path Coefficients

	SOLE	PEI	NSEI	PCI	NSI	PSI	MT	AT
CC	.26*	.05	.03	.14*	.09*	–.05	.06	.03
EA	.10*	–.15*	.27*	.01	.00	–.04	–.28*	.22*
CA	.08	–.10	.18*	–.05	.09	.00	.20*	–.05
UTRB	.11*	.10	.11*	.02	.14*	.05	.07	–.04
SOLE		.10*	–.13*	.15*			.21*	.17*
PEI			–.33*	.25*			.10*	.17*
NSEI				–.36*	.61*	–.27*	–.34*	–.07
PCI						.56*	.09	.33*
NSI						.10*	.07	–.12*
PSI							.04	–.03

MT = Community support or opposition for conventional mass tourism development; AT = community support or opposition for alternative tourism development; CC = community concern; EA = ecocentric attitude; CA = community attachment; UTRB = use of tourism resource base; SOLE = state of the local economy; PEI = positive economic impact; NSRI = negative socioeconomic impact; PCI = positive cultural impact; NSI = negative social impact; PSI = positive social impact.
*p = .05.

statistics test to sample size, a number of fit indices were used to measure the fit of the proposed model. All of these fit indices indicated that the proposed structural model fits the data well: GFI = .90; AGFI = .89; NFI = .94; NNFI = .97; CFI = .97, IFI = .97, and PGFI = .78; PNFI = .85; and critical n = 431.77. Furthermore, the indicators of residuals, RMR, standardized RMR, and RMSEA were .043, .047, and .035, respectively.

Impacts of Level of Community Concern

Findings suggested that locals' level of community concern is likely to have a significant impact on their perception of the state of the local economy (b = 0.26, t = 5.40) and on their perceptions of positive cultural (b = 0.14, t = 2.93) and negative social impacts. These findings suggest that residents who are highly concerned about their community and community issues are more likely to be concerned about the local economy. While they believe that tourism creates cultural benefits for their community, they are also aware that tourism is likely to negatively influence society. However, findings indicated that level of community concern is not likely to have direct impacts on locals' attitudes toward either mass or alternative tourism. This might be because of the perception that while tourism generates cultural benefits, it is also likely to result in negative social impacts. As a result, they may choose to stay neutral to any form of development. This finding may also be explained by the fact that the influence of community concern on other impact perceptions and on attitudes toward development may be mediated by the perception of the state of the local economy.

Impacts of Level of Environmental Attitudes

Level of environmental attitudes of locals was found to have direct significant impact on perception of the state of the local economy ($b = 0.10$, $t = 2.23$), negative socioeconomic impacts ($b = 0.27$, $t = 6.48$), and significant inverse relationships with perceptions of positive economic impacts. These findings are consistent with the findings of previous studies that residents with high ecocentric values are likely to view benefits less favorably and place a greater importance on the costs associated with the proposed development (Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Liu, Sheldon, and Var 1987; Milman and Pizam 1988). While people with high ecocentric attitudes were found to support alternative tourism development ($b = 0.22$, $t = 4.92$), findings suggested that they are likely to oppose any form of mass tourism development ($b = –0.28$, $t = –6.91$). This finding might be explained by the fact that alternative tourism may be seen as a form of development that is likely to have less negative impacts, especially on the environment. Results suggested that level of environmental attitudes is not likely to influence perceptions of positive cultural impacts and neither negative nor positive social impact perceptions.

Impacts of Level of Community Attachment

Level of community attachment was found to have a significant relationship with perceptions of negative socioeconomic impacts ($b = 0.18$, $t = 3.14$), suggesting that residents with higher levels of community attachments are likely to view socioeconomic impacts of tourism more negatively compared to other residents. While this is consistent with findings of Gu and Ryan (forthcoming) and Um and Crompton (1987), who suggest that the more attached residents are to the community, the less positively they perceive tourism impacts, it contradicts with the findings of Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) and Davis, Allen, and Cosenza (1988), who argue that attached residents are likely to evaluate the economic and social impacts of tourism positively. Interestingly, findings suggested that residents with high community attachment are likely to support mass tourism development ($b = 20$, $t = 3.82$). This might be explained by the fact that they may believe mass tourism is likely to generate more positive economic impacts, and the revenue generated by mass tourism may be used to address some of the concerns they may have.

Impacts of Use Level of Tourist Resource Base

Use of the tourist resource base was found to have significant relationships with perceptions of negative socioeconomic impacts ($b = 0.11$, $t = 2.01$) and negative social impacts ($b = 14$, $t = 2.81$). This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies that locals who use tourist resource bases are likely to have more negative perceptions of the impacts of tourism (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002; Lankford 1996; O'Leary 1976). This finding might be explained by the fact that those who use the resource base may perceive tourism as an activity that forces them to share their resources with others. Therefore, heavy resource users may perceive the costs of tourism to be higher and the benefits to be lower. Results also indicated that the level of tourism resource base is significantly correlated with perception of the state of the local economy ($b = 10$, $t = 1.99$), suggesting that residents who are heavy users of resource believe that the local economy is not in good shape. However, as suggested by the findings, they neither support nor oppose any form of tourism development. This might be explained by the fact that opposing tourism development may hinder development of new resources while supporting the development may result in crowding because of the expected increase in the number of tourists visiting the area.

Impacts of the Perception of State of the Local Economy

Perception of the state of the local economy was found to have a significant inverse relationship with negative socioeconomic impacts ($b = –0.13$, $t = –3.06$) and positive relationships with perceptions of positive economic impact ($b = 0.10$, $t = 2.21$) and positive cultural impact ($b = 15$, $t = 3.49$). This might be explained by the fact that the more residents feel the local economy needs improvement, the more favorably they evaluate the economic benefits of tourism and the more likely they are to underestimate the social costs associated with the development and support the proposed development (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal 2002). This is consistent with the studies that concluded that residents tend to underestimate the cost of tourism development in economically depressed regions and overestimate the economic gains (Liu and Var 1986). For example, residents in Turkey acknowledge willingness "to put up with some inconvenience in exchange for tourist money" (Var et al. 1985, p. 654). Therefore, the more negatively the state of the local economy is perceived, the more positive the local residents' reaction will be to tourism development. A poor economic situation is likely to result in a maximization of perceived benefits and a minimization of perceived costs of tourism development. Residents who believe that the economy is in trouble were found to support both mass ($b = 21$, $t = 5.23$) and alternative tourism ($b = 0.17$, $t = 4.04$) developments. This might be because of the perceived economic benefits of any type of development. Findings also suggested that the state of the local economy did not have any significant relationship with the positive social impact and negative social impact perceptions. The lack of relationship reported in this study between the state of the local economy and perceived

social benefits and perceived social costs may indicate that residents who believe the local economy is in a bad shape are likely to be more concerned with socioeconomic benefits rather than the cost of the development.

Tourism Impact Perceptions

Results also indicated that tourism impact perceptions are correlated as suggested by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004). Positive economic impact perceptions were found to be inversely correlated with negative socioeconomic impact perceptions ($b = –0.33$, $t = –7.98$) and positively correlated with positive cultural impact perceptions ($b = 0.25$, $t = 5.85$). On the other hand, negative socioeconomic impact perceptions were found to have inverse relationships with positive cultural ($b = –0.36$, $t = –7.63$) and positive social impact perceptions ($b = –0.27$, $t = –4.73$), while it was found to be significantly correlated with negative social impact perceptions ($b = 0.61$, $t = 13.71$). Perceptions of positive social impacts were found to have significant correlation with positive cultural impact ($b = 0.56$, $t = 11.18$) and inverse relationships with negative social impacts ($b = 0.10$, $t = 2.01$). These findings suggest that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts are not mutually exclusive. A change in perceptions of one type of impact is likely to influence the perceptions of other types of impacts. If residents perceive one impact factor more important than others, it is likely that the perception of that impact factor is going to influence the perceptions of other impact factors. For example, if a resident has a very strong perception of tourism's economic benefits, that perception is likely to influence his or her perceptions of social and cultural impacts of tourism. In other words, most salient perceived impact is likely to influence the perception of all other impacts.

Support for Mass Tourism and Alternative Tourism

Overall findings suggested positive relationships between tourism development and perceptions of positive impacts and negative relationships between negative impact perceptions and support for development. Residents who see tourism as creating positive economic impacts are found to support both mass tourism ($b = 10$, $t = 2.44$) and alternative tourism development ($b = 17$, $t = 3.86$). However, support for alternative tourism development was found to be higher. This finding is consistent with other studies that positive economic impact is one of the main reasons for wanting development in local communities (Lee and Chang 2008; Yoon, Gursoy, and Chen 2001). However, residents who see tourism as having positive cultural impacts on the local community are likely to support alternative tourism ($b = 33$, $t = 4.77$), while they are likely to neither support nor oppose mass tourism development ($b = 0.09$, $t = 1.41$). Positive social impact perceptions were found to have no significant relationship with either mass tourism or alternative tourism. While residents with negative socioeconomic impact perceptions were found to strongly oppose mass tourism development ($b = –0.34$, $t = –5.56$), they indicated neither support nor opposition for alternative tourism development. On the other hand, residents with negative social impact perceptions indicated a strong opposition for alternative tourism development ($b = –12$, $t = –2.18$), while neither support nor opposition was indicated for mass tourism development. This finding may be the result of a perception that travelers who participate in alternative tourism activities are likely to have more interaction with locals, resulting in higher negative social impacts, while mass tourists tend to minimize their contacts with locals.

Implications

This study adopted a modified version of the residents' attitude model proposed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) and further improved the model by examining locals' attitudes toward two different types of tourism development, mass tourism and alternative tourism, in a different country, Australia. Findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. The most critical theoretical implication of this study is that understanding local residents' attitudes toward any form of tourism development requires an examination of a set of very complex and interrelated factors.

Findings of this study suggest that both positive and negative perceptions of residents regarding tourism impacts should be examined. While most of the residents were found to be concerned about economic benefits, others were more concerned about specific benefits and costs of tourism. However, findings further suggested that while several factors influence attitudes, some of the antecedents of attitudes are correlated, especially the impact perceptions. Therefore, it is crucial for developers and policy makers to thoroughly understand the interplay among impact perceptions because the most salient impact perception is likely to influence how the perception of other impact factors are formed. This finding suggests that instead of attempting to address every single impact factor, planners and policy makers should first identify the most salient impact factor for each stakeholder. Once the most important factor is identified, addressing issues and concerns related to that impact factor is likely to change the locals' perceptions of other impact factors because of the interplay among the perceptions of impact factors. For example, findings suggested that residents with negative social impact perceptions are likely to oppose any form of alternative tourism development. Because the negative social impact perceptions construct is significantly correlated with the negative socioeconomic impact perceptions and positive social impact perceptions, improvements in any of those

impact perceptions is likely to lessen the negative social impact perceptions and increase the support level for alternative tourism development.

Another finding, which is likely to have significant theoretical and practical implications, is the role that perception of the local economy plays in forming locals' impact perceptions and their attitudes toward tourism. Findings suggested that how locals perceive the state of the local economy is likely to mediate the influences of community attachment, community concern, ecocentric attitudes, and use of tourism resource based on locals' impact perceptions and on their attitudes toward both mass and alternative tourism development. As indicated by the findings, the more local residents feel the economy needs improvement, the more likely they are to support both forms of development and the less likely they are to be troubled by some of the costs associated with the development. This finding indicates that communities investigated may be willing to enter the exchange process if the potential for economic gain is significant. Identification of residents who feel the economy needs improvement may help planners and policy makers in convincing other residents about the benefits of tourism. Developers and policy makers can take the help of those residents in their internal marketing efforts to change the opinion of residents who feel that they have little to gain from tourism by promoting the positive economic benefits of tourism on one-to-one and face-to-face bases.

Findings clearly indicate that even in rapidly developing tourist destinations, each individual's attitude toward development is likely to vary, which makes it almost impossible to come up with a type of development that will receive everyone's endorsement. For example, this study reported that the degree and direction of locals' support or opposition for alternative and mass tourism is likely to vary. While individuals who are concerned about the state of the local economy and believe tourism can assist them economically are likely to support both forms of tourism, others who believe tourism is likely to generate cultural benefits are more likely to support alternative tourism. These findings and others suggest that to gain locals' support, developers and planners need to thoroughly understand which factors are likely to influence their support for what form of development. However, only understanding what factors may influence locals' attitudes toward development may not be enough. Developers and policy makers should create opportunities for locals to participate in planning and management of the development. As suggested by several other studies, community participation and involvement is a must for sustainability of development because locals have a historical understanding of how their community adopts to change and, therefore, they will be able to identify the most appropriate form of development for the community. In addition, they are the ones who will be most closely affected by the development because they are expected to become an integral part of the experience (Nyaupane, Morais, and Dowler 2006).

Findings suggest that most locals do not see tourism development as either good or bad. Instead, while they believe certain aspects of the development may have negative impacts or certain types of development may not be appropriate, they tend to support the appropriate form of development that is likely to minimize those negative aspects. For example, findings suggested that residents with high ecocentric attitudes are likely to oppose any form of mass tourism development because of the perceived negative impacts. However, findings also suggested that they are likely to support alternative tourism development, which may seem more appropriate for locals with high ecocentric attitudes. Therefore, developers who are planning alternative tourism development may be able to get endorsement from environmentally conscious individuals and environmental organizations. It will be better if developers can get those individuals and groups involved in the planning and management process. However, some developers may be facing a losing battle if they try to get support for alternative tourism development from residents who believe tourism creates significant negative social impacts.

Many of the findings of this study reinforce previous findings on attitudes of residents toward tourism, while some findings differ. Because these new and different findings of this study adds further insights into the genesis of these perceptions and attitudes, planners have additional information to help guide developments that can be more consistently congruent with local attitudes. The most important practical contribution of this study is that it attempted to further the understanding of locals' attitudes toward two types of tourism development. These findings can be valuable to local planners, policy makers, and business operators as they consider the type, size, and complexity of tourism development.

Limitations

Like other studies, this study is not free of limitations. One limitation of the study is that respondents were not asked how much tourism development they perceived to be acceptable. They were only asked to indicate whether they would oppose or support mass tourism and alternative tourism in their community. It is possible that the specification of the level of tourism development may alter the magnitude and direction of the relationship in the model because as suggested by Butler's (1980) cycle of evolution, resident support for tourism development is likely to diminish as destinations move to later stages of development. Future studies should inquire how much tourism development is likely to be supported by local residents.

Another limitation is that whether respondents' livelihoods were dependent on tourism was not explored. Even though the study area is a well-developed tourist destination

and a stratified random sampling approach was used, it may still limit the applicability of the findings to other areas. Another possibility is that if the residents' livelihood was dependent on tourism or if they were involved with tourism at any level, their dependence or involvement level with tourism may explain some of the variance in impact perceptions and their attitudes toward tourism.

Another limitation of this study was that this study did not examine the environmental impact perceptions. Several studies suggest that the environmental impact perceptions are likely to influence residents' support for tourism development (Yoon, Gursoy, and Chen 2001). Therefore, it is possible that if the environmental impact perceptions were included in the model, the proposed model could have explained a larger percentage of the variance in residents' support for tourism. Future studies should include the environmental impact perceptions in their model.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to expand the theoretical understanding of residents' attitudes toward tourism. Drawing from the tourism literature and theory on residents' attitudes toward tourism and its impacts, a previously developed theoretical tourism support model was adopted for this study and further improved to examine the direct and/or indirect causal effects of both perceived impacts of tourism and the factors that are likely to influence the perception of tourism impacts and subsequent support for tourism development.

This study demonstrated how community attachment, community concern, use of the tourism resource base, and ecocentric attitudes of residents affects each of the five tourism impact perceptions and the state of the local economy separately and shows the interplay among these perceptions and how these perceptions affect tourism support. The model tested here also advanced the theory of our understanding of local residents' reactions and attitudes toward tourism development by validating the model developed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) in a new setting.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that locals do not see tourism development as either good or bad. Like any other form of development, they believe that any form of tourism development is likely to have both positive and negative impacts on their community. To minimize the negative consequences of development, locals are likely to support the form of development that optimizes positive impacts while minimizing negative impacts. However, each individual's assessment of development impacts on the community is likely to vary, which makes it almost impossible to come up with a type of development that will receive everyone's endorsement. To facilitate a consensus among locals, developers and policy makers should create opportunities for locals to participate in planning and management of the development because locals have n historical understanding of how their community adopts to change and therefore they will be able to identify the most appropriate form of development for the community.

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