

The role of affective expectations in attitudes towards tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Social exchange theory (SET) has been the principal theoretical framework invoked to model attitudes of host communities regarding tourism development (Nunkoo, Smith, & Ramkissoon, 2013). After Ap (1992) SET model, most studies following this theory conceive that positive (benefits) and negative (costs) beliefs independently affect support for tourism. On the other hand, researchers applying attitude – behavioural models, such as the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), tend to consider an overall attitude depending on beliefs about specific impacts from tourism (e.g. Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010). Others (e.g. Chen and Raab, 2012) propose combining both theories and model benefits and costs as predictors of residents' overall attitude towards tourism. Regardless of the theoretical tradition, the vast majority of studies reported in the literature rely on cognitive appraisals to explain hosts' attitudes and intentions about tourism and very few include an affective component. The main purpose of this paper is to assess the inclusion of beliefs about affective outcomes of tourism in a model of resident attitude and support for tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lindberg and Johnson (1997) modelled resident attitudes towards tourism in the expectancy-value (EV) framework. They computed belief composites by multiplying measures of beliefs about tourism outcomes by evaluations of the outcomes and found that seven of those products reflected two latent variables, representing

respectively economic gain (benefits) and crowding (costs), which, in turn, contributed to explain a latent measure of overall attitude towards tourism. A caveat should be noticed about the latter, as its indicators include two statements usually found in measures of support for tourism development; two statements saying that benefits outweigh costs; and a measure of affective reaction to the interaction with tourists. Despite some limitations, mainly due to the use of secondary data, Lindberg and Johnson (1997) work is prominent in the literature because it sought to link tourism outcomes to more abstract values, conceiving that resident attitudes are favourable or unfavourable as they perceive that tourism in the community contributes positively or negatively to attain those values.

Although most work on attitude models deals solely with the instrumental or utilitarian facet, it has been largely acknowledged that attitude is multidimensional and thus beliefs and evaluations about affective outcomes should be included in attitude measurement. For example, Ajzen and Driver (1991) considered a two-factor structure representing cognitive or instrumental (benefits and costs) and affective or experiential (likes and dislikes) subdimensions of attitude. Although they have found high correlation between the two factors, they claimed that the affective factor is more important to predict behaviour regarding some objects (leisure activities), while the opposite occurs for other objects. In the same line, Trafimow et al. (2004) concluded that an affective measure of attitude globally predict intentions and behaviours better than a cognitive measure, but caution that, within subjects, affect is more important regarding some objects, but cognition is more important in others.

A hierarchical model, where overall attitude is a second-order factor of instrumental and affective attitudes, was formalised by authors such as Bagozzi, Lee, and Van Loo (2001) and Hagger and Chatzisarantis (2005). However, very few applications of this conception of attitudes may be found in the literature about resident attitudes towards tourism. Researching hosts' attitudes and intentions regarding interactions with tourists, Zhang (2008) considered two components of attitude in a TPB model: a cognitive evaluation of the outcomes; an emotional response to the interaction. Both present significant effects, although contributing less than normative and behavioural beliefs to explain intentions. Kwon and Vogt (2010) modelled residents' overall attitudes towards place marketing as being dependant on three attitudinal components, cognitive, affective, and behavioural. However, what they called affective component is a general measure of satisfaction, based on a satisfaction anchor (Oliver, 2009), detached from possible affective outcomes.

After this brief revision, one may see a few gaps in the literature about resident attitudes towards tourism impacts and support for tourism. First, the relationship between tourism impacts and personal values regarding community goals, which concerned Lindberg and Johnson (1997), has not been explored further (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2009), at least in the framework of EV theory. Second, an overall attitude towards tourism has been proposed to mediate the relationship between perceptions of tourism impacts and support for tourism development (Nunkoo

and Ramkissoon, 2010), but neither the overall attitude nor the several dimensions of impacts include measures of beliefs about affective outcomes, as advocated by the creators of TPB (e.g. Ajzen, 2011).

The present study makes some steps to address these gaps. It builds on Lindberg and Johnson (1997) by considering that the evaluation aspect of tourism outcomes should be linked to a value system. It follows Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) positing that an overall evaluative attitude mediates the relationship between belief composites and support for tourism. It departs from relevant literature on resident attitudes by including beliefs about affective outcomes of tourism.

METHODOLOGY

A path model was defined conceiving support for tourism depending on place attachment and overall attitude. The later depends on affective (beliefs about changes of the affective qualities of the place) and cognitive (instrumental beliefs multiplied by the value of the outcomes) components. The model was assessed from data collected in a quota sample of 349 residents in a municipality of North Portugal largely covered by a natural park with some natural and rural attractions. Quotas were defined proportionally according to the distribution of the population in three demographic characteristics censused in 2011: sex, age, and education. Measures’ reliability and validity and paths between variables are estimated by SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende and Becker, 2015).

RESULTS

Residents show a great deal of support for tourism development, resulting from strong place attachment and favourable attitudes towards tourism. The instrumental facet of attitude is mainly affected by the two outcomes mostly attributed to tourism, namely its contributions to the affirmation of the community and to its economic welfare (Table 1). Although residents do believe that tourism will bring both negative and positive affective changes to the place, they put stronger expectations on the latter.

Table 1: Measurement model

<i>Variables and items (composite reliability)</i>	<i>Mean scores</i>	<i>Convergent validity</i>	
		<i>Weight / loading</i>	<i>Variance extracted</i>
Cognitive component^{ac}	n.a.		n.a.
Affirmation of community	0.62	0.507	n.a.
Economic gain	0.50	0.405	n.a.

Facilities	0.46	0.391	n.a.
Pleasing environment	0.40	0.323	n.a.
Interaction with residents	0.31	n.s.	n.a.
Quiet area	0.01	n.s.	n.a.
Positive activation^a (0.757)	1.38		0.609
Excitement	1.53	0.803	0.645
Joy	1.23	0.757	0.543
Excitation	1.42	n.s.	
Negative activation^a (0.728)	0.90		0.576
Hurry	1.11	0.664	0.441
Unrest	0.68	0.843	0.711
Uneasiness	0.30	n.s.	
Attitude^a (0.721)	0.91		0.564
Negative / positive	0.79	0.726	0.528
Unfavourable / favourable	1.02	0.774	0.599
Place Attachment^b (0.913)	4.14		0.680
Means a lot to me	4.18	0.843	0.711
Belongs to me	4.17	0.830	0.689
Says a lot about me	4.04	0.678	0.459
Attached to	4.19	0.893	0.798
Sense of belonging	4.14	0.863	0.744
Support^b (0.852)	4.46		0.591
More visitors	4.52	0.804	0.647
Favours tourism development	4.40	0.747	0.559
More tourism	4.46	0.785	0.616
Increase investment in tourism	4.46	0.737	0.543

^a Scores from -2 to +2

^b Scores from 1 to 5

^c Formative indicators. Scores refer to beliefs, weights are obtained from the product belief^cevaluation

^d Reflective indicators

It may be seen in Table 2 that both cognitive and affective facets contribute to explain the variance of the global attitude towards tourism. However, a finer examination of the results leads to two important conclusions: (i) although residents expect tourism to activate some negative affective appraisals, such as hurry and unrest, these have no impact on the globally positive attitude; (ii) expected changes on positive affective qualities of the place, like excitement and joy, have a much stronger effect on the global attitude (and indirectly on support for tourism) than the instrumental beliefs do.

Table 2. Path model

	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>f</i> ²
Standardized path coefficients			
Cognitive → Attitude	0.384	5.854	0.348
Positive Activation → Attitude	0.573	8.360	0.773
Negative Activation → Attitude	n.s.		
Attitude → Support	0.382	5.316	0.219
Attachment → Support	0.396	5.379	0.236
Indirect effects			
Cognitive → Support	0.147	3.907	
Positive Activation → Support	0.219	4.126	
R² (adjusted)			
Attitude	0.621	8.339	
Support	0.350	5.371	

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main purpose of this article was to verify if, along with instrumental beliefs regarding tourism impacts, residents’ affective expectations also contribute to explain attitude and support for tourism. Results from residents in a rural area from North Portugal, where tourism is emerging, show that both positive and negative affective changes are expected, but only the positive expectations contribute to explain overall attitude. A noteworthy result is that the global evaluative attitude towards tourism is much more dependent on the positive affective outcomes from tourism than on the instrumental outcomes. In our view, this should encourage researchers to include affective beliefs in composite measures of resident attitudes. Although the attitude is relatively well explained by the cognitive and affective beliefs, only 35% of the variation in support for tourism development may be associated to attitude and attachment. Consequently, to increase hosts’ support, attention must be given to additional factors involved in the social exchange, such as community power and trust (Nunkoo, 2016).

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