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PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOURISM (ICOT2015)

***From Tourism Policy into Practice:
Issues and Challenges in Engaging
Policy Makers and End Users***

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EDITOR: Konstantinos Andriotis

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**From Tourism Policy into Practice:
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EDITOR

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**International
Association for
Tourism Policy**

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GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM IN FOSTERING RESIDENTS SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM A PORTUGUESE HISTORIC TOWN

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This study explores the interrelationships between tourism dependence, government management of tourism, perceived tourism benefits and perceived tourism costs, and support for sustainable tourism development (STD). A quantitative research design was adopted. The data collection was performed through a personal survey conducted to 300 residents of a small historic town within the Douro World Heritage Site (Lamego town). The results suggest that government management of tourism has a positive and significant impact on perceived tourism benefits and costs. The effect of government management of tourism in fostering residents support for STD was also empirically supported. Additionally, the effect of perceived tourism benefits on residents support

for STD was also supported empirically. However, economic dependence on tourism does not have a significant effect either on perceived benefits, on perceived costs or on the residents support for STD. Also, perceived negative impacts are not a predictor to measure support for STD.

1. Introduction

Tourism is an activity of strategic importance in most countries in their economic, social and environmental aspects. We have been witnessing to a growing interest in sustainable tourism development (STD), either by public and private bodies. To develop tourism in a sustainable manner it is vital the participation of relevant stakeholders as well as strong political leadership. It is an ongoing process that requires constant monitoring of impacts, so it is crucial the existence of an adequate planning process and adjusted to local conditions and an effective and continuous management of tourism activities.

There is increasing interest in literature on the residents support for STD (Ko and Stewart, 2002) and its antecedents. Understanding the antecedents of residents support for STD is crucial both for local government and policy makers and tourism businesses. The success of any effort of sustainable development depends on an active support from local communities (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004). However, to the best of our knowledge, there are few studies that analyse the residents support for STD in historic towns, especially in relation with economic dependence, management government of tourism and perceived tourism impacts.

The main aim of this study is to gain an insight into residents' perceptions about economic dependence, government management of tourism and perceive tourism impacts and the role it has in supporting STD.

In the remaining parts of this paper, the conceptual framework and research hypotheses are reviewed. The methodology is then explained and the results are explored. Finally, some conclusions are presented.

2. Theoretical Overview and Proposed Hypotheses

Over the past several decades, interest in tourism as a tool for regional economic development has grown dramatically. Community leaders and economic development specialists have increasingly treated tourism as an important industry that can enhance local employment opportunities, tax revenues, and economic diversity (Kim, Uysal, and Sirgy, 2013).

Several studies related the positive and negative effects of tourism on economic well-being of tourism communities (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Liu, Sheldon, and Var, 1987; Perdue, Long, and Allen, 1987; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Um and Crompton, 1987).

Economic impacts include positive elements such as tax revenue, increased jobs and additional income, as well as negative elements such as tax burdens, inflation and local government debt (Chen and Chen, 2010).

Economic dependency is defined as residents' and/or their family household income is dependent on tourism-related business (Perdue, Long, and Allen, 1990). Few studies were examined the influences of community tourism development level and tourism industry dependency on tourism impact perception (Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal, 2002).

Some studies have found a positive and significant effect on resident attitudes, where those standing to gain more financially from tourism tend to have more positive attitudes towards tourism (Harril, 2004; Ko and Stewart 2002; McDowall and Choi, 2010; Perdue, Long, and Allen, 1990).

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is an effect between economic dependence and the perceived positive tourism impacts.

H2: There is an effect between economic dependence and the perceived negative tourism impacts.

H3: There is an effect between economic dependence and the residents support for STD.

The government management of tourism has a key role in the building of a sustainable model for the destination (Gorica, Kripa, and Zenelaj, 2012). Assante, Wen, and Lottig (2012), tested and confirmed empirically the positive relationship

between public management of tourism and the perception about the environmental impacts of tourism and concluded that residents tend to be more receptive to tourism impacts when they feel that the government makes effective management.

On the other hand, we can expect the existence of a relationship between the government management of tourism and the residents support for STD.

Assante, Wen, and Lottig (2012) argue that government management and stakeholders' cooperation are needed to achieve consensus on how to manage future tourism developments. The authors conclude that if residents perceive that there is effective management in control of tourism, on the part of public administration agents tend to have positive feelings about the STD. Having regard to the above, we established the following hypotheses:

H4: There is an effect between the effective government management of tourism and the perceived positive tourism impacts.

H5: There is an effect between the effective government management of tourism and the perceived negative tourism impacts

H6: There is an effect between the effective government management of tourism and the residents support for STD.

Over the past two decades several authors have conducted studies on the relationship that can be established between the perception on the part of residents, the tourism impacts and their support for the development of tourism (Gursoy, Jurovski, and Uysal, 2002; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Nicholas, Thapa, and Ko, 2009; Sharma and Dyer, 2009). These studies, based on the social exchange model, suggest that residents with a perceived positive impact (benefits, for example) are more likely to support the development of tourism. In this context, we established the following hypotheses:

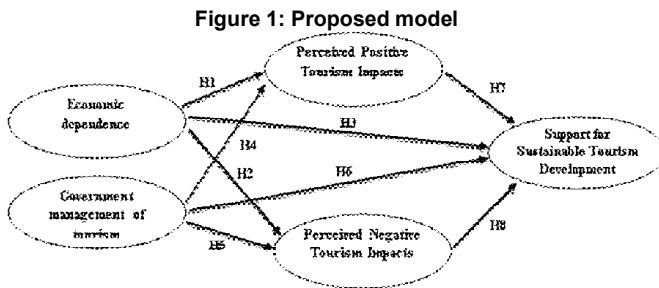
H7: There is an effect between the perceived positive tourism impacts and the residents support for STD.

H8: There is an effect between the perceived negative tourism impacts and the residents support for STD.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of this study and the hypotheses proposed.

3. Methodological Approach

This study was conducted in a small historic town in northern Portugal (Lamego) within the Douro World Heritage Site. It is one of the most ancient towns in Portugal with different heritage that represents several historic stages. Considering the life cycle of the destination proposed by Butler (1980), this town is at its development stage, where the negative impacts of tourism are almost unnoticed by all those involved.



This study adopted a quantitative approach, in the form of a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of residents of the historic town of Lamego. Face-to-face survey administration was limited to a convenience sample distributed and collected at resident's homes. A total of 300 completed questionnaires were collected.

In the questionnaire, we have analysed the perceptions of the local population in regard to: economic dependence, management government of tourism, perceived tourism impacts and support for STD. Scales that were used previously in tourism impact and STD studies were adopted to measure the constructs proposed in the study.

Economic dependence was operationalize through the scale developed by Chen and Chen (2010), with two items. We use the scale of Assante, Wen, and Lottig (2012) to measure government management of tourism, with three items. Perceive tourism impacts (positive and negative) were measure by Chen and Chen (2010) and the support for STD construct was operationalize by the scale developed by Lee

(2013), which was based on the work of Nicholas, Thapa, and Ko (2009).

A 7-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree) was utilized in all of the variables except economic dependence (1= without relation; 7= totally related).

To test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs, we used the structural equation modeling technique. The descriptive analysis was performed using SPSS - version 22 for Windows, and the structural equation models using Amos - version 22 for Windows.

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Characteristics
Gender	Female (51.9%) Male (48.1%)
Age (years)	Minimum = 18; Maximum = 81 Mean = 37.5; Standard Deviation = 14.1
Place of birth	In the region (78.7%) Other (21.3%)
Time in the community (years)	Minimum = 1; Maximum = 81 Mean = 28.8; Standard Deviation = 18.4
Education	Middle school or less (26.0%) Secondary school (41.8%) University degree (32.2%)
Employment status	Working people (63.3%) Student (22.3%) Unemployed (7.8%) Retired (6.7%)
Monthly income (Euros)	≤ 1500 (67.6%) 1501 - 3000 (28.5%) > 3000 (3.9%)

4. Results

The quality of the instruments was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through the estimation of a measurement model with the maximum likelihood method.

To assess the convergent validity we analysed the standardized factor loadings, the average variance extracted (AVE) and the construct reliability (CR) (Table 2). The standardized factor loadings were all statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and ranged from 0.602 to 0.912, above the cutoff point of 0.50 suggested by Hair et al (2010). The AVE measures the

amount of variance explained by the construct and should be higher than 0.50. In this study, the AVE ranged from 0.510 and 0.812, above the cutoff point. The CR estimates, above 0.88, suggest high construct reliability, which indicates that internal consistency exists - meaning that all the measures consistently represent the same construct (Hair et al., 2010). These results constitute evidence of convergent validity of the constructs.

Table 2: Standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR) of the measurement model

Constructs and Items	Factor loadings	AVE	CR
Perceive Positive Tourism Impacts ⁽¹⁾		0.579	0.953
Tourism has increased job opportunities for your community	0.647		
Tourism has created more tax revenue for the local government	0.650		
Tourism is useful for promoting local products	0.602		
Tourism has raised the level of life for residents	0.781		
Tourism has given economic benefits to local people	0.799		
Tourism has given economic benefits to small businesses	0.787		
Tourism has encouraged residents' participation in cultural activities	0.744		
Tourism has enriched local nightlife	0.671		
Tourism has led to a balanced local community development	0.833		
Tourism has led to more understanding of local heritage	0.808		
Tourism has increased local cultural identity	0.790		
Tourism has made intercity transport more accessible	0.744		
Tourism has increased infrastructure and facilities	0.813		
Tourism has raised more awareness of protection for heritage resources	0.850		
Tourism has increased local recreational facilities and resources	0.840		
Perceived Negative Tourism Impacts ⁽¹⁾		0.510	0.925
Tourism has raised local product price	0.621		
Tourism has increased the inequality of	0.616		

economic gain among residents		
Tourism has increased residents' living costs	0.674	
Tourism has destroyed the level of residence quality	0.815	
Tourism has increased crime rates and prostitution	0.747	
Tourism has reduced local safety and security	0.775	
Tourism has increased conflicts between visitors and residents	0.768	
Tourism has overused the resources of local heritage	0.698	
Tourism has caused more traffic congestion and parking problems	0.692	
Tourism has caused more litter and pollution	0.651	
Tourism has destroyed the local way of life	0.759	
Tourism has caused more inconvenience for local residents	0.719	
Economic Dependence ⁽²⁾	0.812	0.896
My job is closely related to the tourism industry	0.912	
My household income is closely tied to the tourism industry	0.890	
Government Management of Tourism ⁽¹⁾	0.741	0.895
The local government does a good job balancing residents' and tourists' needs	0.892	
The local government listens to residents about their concerns with tourism	0.877	
The quality of public services has improved in Lamego due to tourism	0.811	
Support for Sustainable Tourism Development ⁽¹⁾	0.620	0.889
I support the development of community-based sustainable tourism initiatives	0.570	
I participate in sustainable tourism-related plans and development	0.828	
I participate in cultural exchanges between local residents and visitors	0.752	
I cooperate with tourism planning and development initiatives	0.897	
I participate in the promotion of environmental education and conservation	0.847	

(1) Measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree";

(2) Measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "Without relation" to 7 = "Totally related".

The discriminant validity was verified by comparing the square root of the AVE values for any two constructs with the correlation estimate between these constructs. According to Hair et al. (2010), the square root of the AVE estimates should be higher than the correlation estimate. The values in Table 3 show that all the constructs met this criterion, providing evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 2: Correlations between the constructs and the square root of average variance extracted

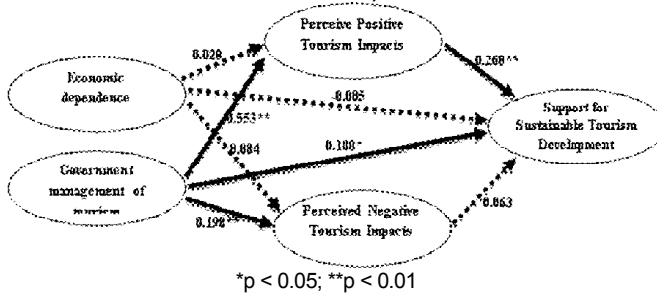
Constructs	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Perceived Positive Tourism Impacts	0.761				
2. Perceived Negative Tourism Impacts	0.248	0.714			
3. Economic Dependence	-0.040	0.070	0.901		
4. Government Management of Tourism	0.544	0.178	-0.130	0.861	
5. Support for STD	0.372	0.154	-0.027	0.338	0.787

Diagonal values indicated the square root of average variance extracted of each construct

Overall, these results showed that the measurement model had adequate psychometric requirements with convergent and discriminant validity.

The structural model was estimated to test the hypothesized relationships between the latent constructs. The chi-square test of the structural model ($\chi^2 = 1212.592$; $df = 579$; $p < 0.001$) was significant, but the chi-square/df ratio ($\chi^2/df = 2.094$) was lower than the threshold of 3 suggested by some authors (Hair et al, 2010; Kline 2005). The CFI of 0.930 and RMSEA of 0.060 were also lower than the recommended cutoff point. Given the sample size and the number of items, the model fit indices indicate an adequate goodness-of-fit (Hair et al, 2010). Despite the good fit, the structural model has only supported four of the eight proposed hypothesis (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Structural model (standardized coefficients estimates)



5. Conclusion

This study was motivated by the need for research that can lead to a better understanding of the role of management government of tourism, economic dependence and tourism impacts in fostering residents support for STD in a historic town context.

The findings supported four of eight proposed hypotheses. Evidence was found to support the direct and positive relationship between the effective government management of tourism and perceived positive tourism impacts. Support was also found for the hypothesis that a direct positive relationship exists between the government management of tourism and perceived negative tourism impacts. Also, government management of tourism has a positive direct effect on support for STD. Economic dependence has not a significantly effect on perceived positive tourism impacts and the effect of economic dependence on perceived negative tourism impacts was not empirically supported. Lastly, perceived negative tourism impacts do not significantly contributes to residents support for STD.

This study offers additional research on the role of economic dependence, government management of tourism and perceived tourism impacts on resident support for STD, presenting interesting challenges for further research among practitioners and academics. This study may contribute to the literature on STD in small historic towns, since it emphasises this problem within an urban context by highlighting

sustainability issues related with the economy and social aspects rather than focusing only on environmental sustainability. Local authorities and tourism managers and planners should recognize the importance of analyzing residents' perceptions in the decision-making and planning policy for tourism development.

To conclude, this research was subject to several limitations, such as: convenience sample, cross sectional nature of the study, the analysis of only one stakeholder group. Future research is required with the introduction of new variables related to STD, which would allow the improvement of the proposed model and enabling the discovery of new factors influencing the residents perceptions and attitudes.

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