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Research Paper

A Structural Model of Stakeholders' Attitude Towards Rural Tourism Development

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Abstract: Identification of stakeholders' involvement in destination tourism planning and development, as well as the factors that might influence their level of involvement, is not only important for tourism destination planners, but also helps gauge the host community's support for destination tourism development and competitive strategies. This study tests the structural equation model between stakeholders' perceptions and opinions on the impacts of tourism development and further determines their willingness to support the competitive development and marketing strategies. The implications of social exchange theory and stakeholders' theory provide the theoretical underpinning for this study. The study is descriptive in nature, and uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate the relationships between different constructs. The study area is a rural tourism spot, Karaikudi, Sivaganga District in Tamilnadu, India. Convenience and quota sampling methods were adopted to collect quantitative data from different tourism stakeholders. Convenience sampling was used because of difficulty in approaching households for interviews due to the conventional nature of the society. Quota sampling was used to ensure different subgroups of the population were included in the sample of 300. The data were analysed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the statistical package Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). The study shows some statistical significance between tourism development impacts that people may experience and their desire for more participation in the decision-making process. As the study was done in a small geographical location, the findings cannot be generalised to other rural locations. Further research has to be done to extend the reach of the study. However, the results should help rural tourism planners, governments and support organisations in other areas to better evaluate and understand stakeholders' attitude and perceptions before implementing a project.

Key words: Community satisfaction, rural tourism, stakeholders' attitude, tourism development impacts, tourism support

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Introduction

The second highest revenue-generating industry in the world is the tourism industry, coming just below the oil industry. Tourism contributes 11 % of global Gross domestic Product (GDP). The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) estimates that there will be 1.6 billion tourists in the world, representing 21% of the world population (Mmastny, 2001). The tourism industry contributes towards the high priority goals of a developing country which are increased income, employment and foreign exchange earnings. Tourism is one of the major export sectors of poor countries and the leading source of foreign exchange in 46 of 49 developing countries (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008). Tourism also supports the preservation of monuments and heritage properties and helps the survival of art forms, crafts and culture. Currently, tourism is one of the largest service industries in India. Tourism in India contributes 6.23% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 8.78% to total employment in India (ACNielsen ORG-MARG, 2007). In the tenth five-year plan (2003-2007), the government of India planned to develop 39 rural tourism sites in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Innovative Endogenous Tourism Project. The focus will be on rural tourism experience, rural art and craft skills, and cultural and natural heritage.

Rural tourism is a vital means of increasing employment and income as it can assist social and economic development of rural communities (Sharpley, 2002). The development of a strong platform around the concept of rural tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India Year: *http://tourism.gov.in/TourismDivision*). Each village has its own distinctive performing arts and handicrafts, customs and traditions, colourful festivals, cuisine as well as its own historical heritage. In 2004, the government of India identified 31 villages across the country as rural tourist spots. Among these were Karaikudi in Sivaganga district and Kazhugumalai in Thoothugudi district. Both these sites are two rural villages located in Tamilnadu. Tamilnadu is one of the top states which attracts a maximum number of foreign tourists in India. During the year 2008, 6,465,800 tourists arrived in in Tamilnadu. This figure rose to 8,040,700 in 2009 giving an increase of 1,574,900 in 2009, compared to the previous year (Tamilnadu Tourism, Policy Note 2010-2011). Against the background of economic development and the potential of international tourism, UN WTO(2008) recommends the participation of local communities and other

stakeholders in tourism development. The fundamental concept of rural tourism is to benefit the local community by creating entrepreneurial opportunities, generating income and employment opportunities, preserving and developing rural arts and crafts, investing in infrastructure development and preserving the environment and heritage.

Identification of stakeholders' involvement in destination tourism planning and development, as well as the factors that might influence their level of involvement, is not only important for tourism destination public sector planners and private sector managers, but also for the host community's support for destination tourism development and competitive strategies. Tourism destinations need to plan their development strategies and actions to succeed internationally and gain a competitive advantage (Dowling, 1993; Riege & Perry, 2000; Ritchie, 1993; Yuksel Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999). Places that do not develop strategic planning for their destinations can suffer from economic, social, and environmental problems, as well as a decline in their competitiveness as a tourism destination (Dowling, 1993).

The scope of this research is to identify the factors that may affect Karaikudi stakeholders' (Local community, Government authorities - tourism related and non-tourism related, businesses - tourism related and non-tourism related and tourists) attitudes and perceptions, and in turn examine the effect of these factors on stakeholder support for tourism development. Therefore the objectives of this study are twofold:

1. To identify the dimensions of tourism development impacts of rural tourism.
2. To examine the dimension of tourism development impacts on stakeholder tourism support.

Literature Review

Rural Tourism

Tourism has many potential benefits for rural areas (Frederick, 1992). According to the Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), rural tourism is defined as tourism taking place in the countryside (Reichel, Lowengart & Milman, 2000). Rural tourism provides employment for local residents and prevents their immigration to cities (Sarjit Gill, 2009). A model of integrated rural tourism, taking into account the various resources (cultural, social, environmental, economic), their use, and the role of pertinent stakeholders, has been developed to explore effective methods of promoting tourism as part of a rural development strategy (Cawley & Gilmor 2008). A set of community-based rural tourism development indicators can serve as a starting point for devising a set of indicators at the local and regional level in order to be useful for rural tourism sector managers and administrators (Duk & Yoon, 2011)

Tourism Development Impact

Many researchers have observed the total development impacts of tourism on stakeholders. Stakeholders' perceptions of total impact may be influenced by the level of tourism development. The results of various studies suggest that stakeholders' perception of the total impact of tourism is affected by the perceived impact of costs and benefit factors on the stakeholders' such as economic, social and cultural, and environmental (Yoon, 2001; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Murphy, 1983). Several researchers have also found that residents do perceive the positive and negative environmental impacts of tourism (Liu & Var, 1986; Liu, Sheldon & Var, 1987).

Juroski (1994) suggests that community support for tourism development is essential for the successful operation and sustainability of tourism. This is mainly because rural tourism relies heavily upon the goodwill of the local community and residents, and an understanding of local communities' reactions toward tourism development is essential in achieving the goal of favourable host-community support for tourism development (Yoon, 2001). Positive impacts include preservation of historic and cultural resources, recreation opportunities for visitors and residents, and better roads and public facilities. Negative environmental impacts include deterioration and destruction of environment, pollution, and deterioration of cultural or historical resources (Chen, 2000).

Stakeholders perceive economic benefits as the most important factor in support of tourism development (Akis, Peristianis & Warner, 1996; Husband, 1989; Liu & Var, 1986; Ritchie, 1988; Sheldon & Var, 1984). Economic impact studies have mainly focused on job opportunities (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Davis, Allan & Cosenza, 1988) and the benefits derived from tourism activities (Davis *et al.*, 1988; Murphy, 1983). Tourism is an economic activity that has often been cited in relation to rural economics as a key strategy for regional development (Cawley & Gillmor, 2007; Saxena, Clark, Oliver & Ilberry, 2007; Fleisher & Falenstein, 2000).

Many studies conclude that host communities view tourism as providing socio-cultural benefits to the community such as opportunities for cultural exchange (McCool & Martin, 1994; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Cardoso & Faletto (1979) and Friedman (1984) also recognise that political, social and cultural processes are interdependent with economic processesbut not reducible to the host communities and are themselves able to bring about change. The extensive growth of tourism in the late 1960s raises the need for planning (Saarinen & Kask, 2008).

Hall & Brown (1998) has observed that "tourism has emerged as one of the central means by which rural areas can adjust themselves economically, socially and politically to the new global environment". Tourism and its impacts are a multidimensional phenomenon that encompass economic, social, cultural, ecological, environmental, and political forces (Singh, Timothy & Dowling, 2003). According to

Cook, Yale & Marqua (2007), tourism should be blended with, or assimilated into the environment and the local culture of an area. Tourism should evolve from the area's natural and historical/cultural attractions (Cook *et al.,* 2007).

Tourism Support

The host community relationship with tourists is vital to the visitor experience and research proposes that it is impossible to sustain tourism destination that is not supported by local people (Ahn, Lee & Shafer 2002; Twinning-Ward & Butler 2002; McCool, Moisey & Nickerson 2001). The most favourable perceptions toward tourism impacts are found to be associated with economic and social and cultural aspects of tourism (Tatoglu, Erdal, Osgur & Azakli, 2000). Several researchers and professionals suggest that stakeholders be included in the planning process (Hardy & Beeton, 2001) as sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved without considering stakeholders' interests (Ioannidis, 1995). The relationship between the community leaders' perceptions towards tourism impacts their efforts towards building support for tourism in local communities (Fariborz & Ma'rof 2009). Much of the existing tourism literature is based on comments from local indigenous residents about their favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward tourism planning and development (Doxey, 1975; Dogan, 1989; Perdue, Long & Allen, 1990; Yoon, 1998). It can be argued that within a community, there may be various levels of tourism support. Tourism stakeholders' opinions and attitudes about the factors that influence the tourism planning decision-making process, including perceived tourism development impacts, environmental attitudes, and place attachment, have not been thoroughly explored, and have become a challenging research issue.

Methods

Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire for the study was constructed based on variables adapted from existing literature. Initially the questionnaire was constructed with 30 items. After the pilot study, 2 items were deleted and it was reframed with 28 items. The final qestionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained 28 items to measure tourism development impacts and 6 items to measure tourism support (Table1). The 28 items of tourism development impacts were broken down into 10 items for Economic impacts (10 items), 12 for Socio-cultural impacts, 4 for Environmental impacts and 2 for Political impacts. The second section dealt with the socio-demographic profile of the stakeholders. The statements in the questionnaire were refined based on the rural tourism context chosen for this study.

Table 1. Measurement of variables

No	**Part- I Tourism Development Impacts**	Sources
1.	Tourism increases job opportunities for the local people	Belisle & Hoy, (1980); Davis *et al.* (1988); Ko & Stewart (2002); Liu & Var (1986); Williams & Lawson (2001); Yoon *et al.* (1999; 2001)
2.	Increase in income generation for local people, artisans and small businesses	(Davis *et al.*, 1988; Murphy, 1983). Ko & Stewart (2002); Yoon *et al.*(1999; 2001)
3.	Wider promotion of handicraft items	Jurowski (1994); Yoon (2002)
4.	Development of a common platform for crafts persons to display and sell their local arts and crafts	Jurowski (1994); Yoon (2002)
5.	Local labour, technology and resources optimally utilized	Yoon (2002)
6.	Tourism has created high investment, development, and infrastructure	Akis *et al.* (1996); Ko & Stewart (2002); Liu & Var (1986).
7.	Tourism creates more jobs for outsiders than for local people.	Akis *et al.* (1996)
8.	Host community getting trained in different types of hospitality management, cuisine preparation, tourist handling	Yoon (2002)
9.	Collaboration with different business institutions for market tie-ups.	Yoon (2002)
10.	Products are sold in the national and international markets	Yoon (2002)
11.	Tourism causes changes to the traditional culture of the community	Akis *et al.* (1996); Liu & Var(1986); Yoon *et al.* (1999, 2001)
12.	Tourism has encouraged a variety of cultural exchange between tourists and residents	Liu & Var (1986); Liu *et al.* (1987); Teye, Sirakaya &Sobmez (2002); Yoon *et al.* (1999, 2001)
13.	Increase in awareness on the importance of the site	Developed by researcher based on various literature
14.	Mobilisation of women artisans in the active participation in the tourism programme	Developed by researcher based on various literature
15.	Formation of activity based groups and self help groups, benefiting women community	Developed by researcher based on various literature

Table 1. Continued

16. Effective skill building of the women community	Developed by researcher based on various literature
17. Development of institution like Gurukul platform for learners and teachers	Developed by researcher based on various literature
18. Documentation of the crafts, arts and folklore	Yoon (2002)
19. Tourism benefits outweigh the negative impacts	Ap (1990); Johnson, Snepenger & Akis(1994); Lankford & Howard (1994); Yoon *et al.* (1999; 2001)
20. Improved solid waste management facilities like the garbage disposal system	Developed by researcher based on various literature
21. Tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities by the local population (e.g., crafts, arts, music)	Liu et al. (1987); Williams &Lawson (2001); Yoon *et al.*(2001)
22. Tourism increases the availability of entertainment (e.g., festivals, exhibitions, and events)	Akis *et al.* (1996); Liu & Var (1986)
23. Tourism provides an incentive for the conservation of historical buildings	McCool &Martin, (1994);Mathieson & Wall, (1982); Akis *et al.* (1996); Johnson *et al.*(1994)
24. Tourism has resulted in more crime rates	Akis *et al.* (1996); Johnson *et al.*(1994); Liu & Var (1986); Perdue *et al.* (1987); Yoon *et al.* (2001)
25. Improvement in natural beauty of the village	Yoon (2002)
26. Improvement in hygiene conditions	Yoon (2002)
27. Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities destroys the natural environment	Akis *et al.* (1996); Yoon *et al.*(1999, 2001)
28. Tourism improves public utilities (e.g. roads, telecommunication) in the community.	Akis *et al.* (1996); Teye *et al.*(2002)
29. Tourism brings political benefits to society (eg. democratic values, tolerance)	Developed by researcher based on various literature
30. The community should have authority to suggest control and restrictions of tourism development in the country.	Perdue *et al.* (1987)

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Table 1. Continued from previous page

Tourism Support	
1. Development of heritage-based tourism	Jurowski (1994); Yoon (2002)
2. Development of cultural or historic-based attractions (e.g. museums, folk villages, local historic sites, traditional markets).	
3. Development of supporting visitor services (hotels, restaurants, entertainment, banks etc).	
4. Development of small independent businesses (e.g. gift shops, guide services, camping grounds).	
5. Development of cultural and folk events (e.g. concerts, art and crafts, dances, festivals).	
6. Development of infrastructure (roads, transportation, and access facilities) for tourists.	

Sampling and Data Collection

Questionnaires were sent to stakeholders such as government authorities, businesses, residents, tourism faculty and students to the study area of Karaikudi, Sivaganga district in Tamilnadu, India. Convenience and quota sampling methods were adapted to collect quantitative data from the respondents. Of the 325 responses, 300 were usable, resulting in a response rate of 92.3%, which is more than reasonable for a survey of this nature. Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement for tourism development impacts with a series of statements shown in Table 1 using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The tourism support factors were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly oppose" to "strongly support".

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory has been utilised by most researchers in studies related to relationships between different stakeholders in destination development and residents' attitudes and perceptions. This theory has been considered the appropriate framework to develop an understanding of residents' perceptions and attitudes (Ap, 1990; Perdue *et al.,* 1990). Ap (1990) in his social exchange theory suggested that when an exchange

of resources between residents and tourism is high and balanced, tourism impacts are viewed positively by residents and vice versa. Perdue *et al.* (1990) briefly mentioned that social exchange theory is a basis for investigating residents' attitudes about tourism. They concluded that support for additional development is positively related in the case of people who perceive positive impacts from tourism, and negatively correlated in the case of people who perceive negative impacts from tourism. According to Yoon, Gursoy & Chen (2000) who studied residents' attitudes and support for tourism development by using a structural model, local residents are likely to participate in exchange (support tourism development) as long as the perceived benefits of tourism exceed the perceived costs of tourism. Since tourism stakeholders have been considered as important key players or components that influence the success or failure of tourism in a region, their participation and involvement should be considered in tourism planning and development. Thus, social exchange theory provides a theoretical foundation for identifying tourism stakeholders' perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism. The implications of the social exchange theory provide guiding assumptions for this study, in that it is assumed that people (tourism stakeholders) may receive more benefits (rewards) than costs from tourism.

From the literature we propose the model (Figure 1) and the following hypothesis.

H1. Tourism development impacts have a direct positive effect on stakeholders' tourism support.

In this structural model, the support of tourism destination competitiveness is considered as the dependent or endogenous construct. It is affected by tourism development impacts (Economic, Social and Cultural, Environmental and Political

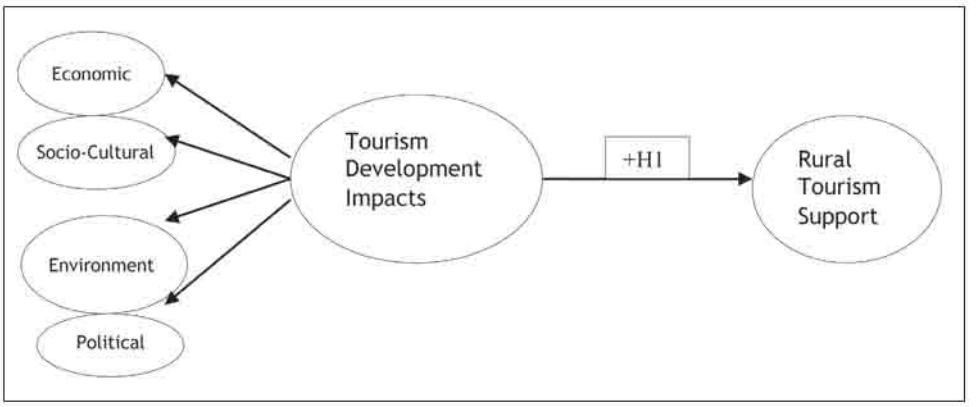

Figure 1. The proposed hypothesised model

Source: Developed for this study from an adaptation of Jurowski *et al.* (1997) and Yoon (2002).

impacts) which are exogenous constructs. The total effect on support for destination development comprises both direct and indirect effects. Specifically, the structural model empirically examined the impacts of the exogenous constructs of tourism development on tourism stakeholders' support for tourism development.

Results

The demographic profile analysis is presented in Table 2. Multivariate analysis of data was carried out in two steps. 1. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to explore the underlying dimensions of tourism development impacts. For this, the sample was split into two sub-samples: Sample 1 (n = 100) and Sample 2 (n =200). Based on MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang & Hong (1999) who recommended a sample of at least 100 for running the EFA, an EFA was performed on the 30 items of the measurement scale using the principal component analysis with varimax rotation. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to confirm the factor structure of total development impacts by using Sample 2 (n=200). The descriptive statistics of the items for the 30 tourism development impacts as well as 4 tourism support measurement items are shown in Table 3.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

An EFA was performed on sample 1(n=100) using the 30 variables related to the tourism development impacts. The criteria used for factor extraction is that the eigen value should be greater than one and the factor structure should be meaningful, useful and conceptually sound (Pett, Lackey & Sullivan, 2003). The factor loadings of the 30 items are shown in Table 3. From EFA, four factors were extracted (Table 3), accounting for 63.8 % of the total variance explained. A total of 28 items loaded properly on the factors. Two items, namely "Increase in awareness on the importance of the site" and "Improved solid waste management facilities like the garbage disposal system" were removed because they did not load good (Factor loading less than 0.4) on any of the factors. Reliability of the factors was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha. A Cronbach's alpha value of greater than or equal to 0.7 is considered acceptable for the factor to be reliable (Hair *et al.,* 2006). The Cronbach's alpha values of all the factors of tourism development impacts viz. Economic impact EC (0.91), Socio-cultural impacts SC (0.84), Environmental impacts EN(0.89) and Political impacts P(0.86) were satisfactory. The Cronbach's alpha value of Tourism Support (TS) was 0.84 which was also acceptable. Therefore the factors were found to be reliable. The 28 items of tourism development impacts were organised into four factors (Table 4).

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 300)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	168	56
	Female	132	44
Age Group	15-24 years	82	27.3
	25-44 years	129	43
	44-65 years	77	25.7
	>65 years	12	4
Education	Elementary	91	30.3
	Secondary	112	37.3
	Higher qualifications	92	30.7
	Uneducated	5	1.7
Occupation	Self-employed	123	41
	Employed in government	20	6.7
	Self Help group	14	4.7
	Employed in private sector	45	15
	Retired	13	4.3
	House wife	21	7
	Student	43	14.3
	Unemployed	21	7
Monthly income	<Rs 5000	79	24
	Rs 5001-10000	131	42
	Rs 10001-15000	66	21
	Rs15001-25000	18	5
	>Rs25001	26	8
Marital status	Single	97	30.3
	Married	197	60.7
	Separated/Divorced	11	4
	Widows	15	5
Family size	1-3	101	31.3
	4-6	176	58
	7-9	22	7
	10 & above	11	3.7
Length of residency	0-5 years	45	14
	6-10 years	68	21
	11-15 years	55	17.3
	16-20 years	47	15
	>20 years	105	32.7
Nature of business	Tourism related	80	26.7
	Non-tourism related	220	73.3
Distance of residence	Very close	145	48.3
	Far Away	155	51.7

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tourism Development Impacts		
Increase in job opportunities	2.79	1.390
Increase in income generation	2.54	1.104
Promotion of handicraft items	2.65	1.254
Common platform to sell	2.45	1.157
Optimal utilisation of technology	1.60	1.235
Creation of high investment	2.65	1.221
Creation of more jobs for outsiders	2.43	1.218
Training for host community on hospitality management	3.43	1.106
Collaboration for market tie-ups.	2.52	1.155
National and international markets	2.30	1.245
Changes in traditional culture	3.70	1.116
Cultural exchange between tourists and residents	3.38	1.101
Increase in awareness on importance of site	1.12	1.016
Mobilisation of women artisans	3.43	1.096
Formation of activity based groups	4.38	1.101
Skills building of women	4.30	1.175
Gurukul(teacher-student) platform for learners	2.25	1.202
Documentation of crafts & arts	2.53	1.189
Benefits outweigh negative impacts	2.33	1.166
Improved solid waste management facilities like the garbage disposal system	1.02	1.121
Encourages a variety of cultural activities	2.55	1.194
Availability of entertainment	2.57	1.153
Incentive for the conservation of historical buildings	2.93	1.200
Increased crime rates	2.35	1.066
Improvement in natural beauty	2.52	1.096
Improvement in hygienic conditions	2.45	1.122
Destruction of natural environment	2.75	1.192
Improved public utilities	2.62	1.273
Political benefits to society	2.36	1.138
Authority to control and restrict	2.28	1.120
Tourism Support(TS)		
Heritage-based tourism	3.84	1.092
Cultural or historic-based attractions	4.61	1.144
Supporting visitor services	2.84	1.232
Small independent businesses	2.54	1.172
Cultural and folk events	3.56	1.199
Infrastructure for tourists	2.71	1.218

Table 4 . Rotated factor matrix for Tourism Development impacts

Factors	Factors	Measurement items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Economic Impact(EC)	EC1	Increase in job opportunities	.784	.91
	EC2	Increase in income generation	.762	
	EC3	Promotion of handicraft items	.684	
	EC4	Common platform to sell	.665	
	EC5	Optimal utilisation of tech	.608	
	EC6	Creation of high investment	.604	
	EC7	Creation of more jobs for outsiders	.590	
	EC8	Training of host community in hospitality management	.565	
	EC9	Collaboration for market tie-ups.	.542	
	EC10	National and international markets	.532	
Socio-Cultural Impact(SC)	SC11	Changes to traditional culture	.852	.84
	SC12	Cultural exchange between tourists and residents	.823	
	SC13	Mobilisation of women artisans	.813	
	SC14	Formation of activity based groups	.790	
	SC15	Skills building in women	.775	
	SC16	*Gurukul**platform to learners	.774	
	SC17	Documentation of crafts, arts	.773	
	SC18	Benefits outweigh negative impacts	.632	
	SC19	Encourages a variety of cultural activities	.605	
	SC20	Availability of entertainment	.576	
	SC21	Incentive for conservation of historical buildings	.536	
	SC22	Increased crime rates	.510	

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Environ-mental Impact (EN)	EN23	Improvement in natural beauty	.690	.89
	EN24	Improved hygienic conditions	.659	
	EN25	Destruction of natural environment	.641	
	EN26	Improved public utilities	.621	
Political Impact(P)	P27	Political benefits to society	.765	.86
	P28	Authority to control and restrict	.595	

* teacher-student

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The four factors identified through exploratory factor analysis were confirmed through CFA on Sample 2 (n=200). The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS 18.0.

Model Fit

First order CFA

A first order CFA was run on the measurement model consisting of the four dimensions of Tourism Development Impacts and Tourism Support. The values of the fit indices indicated a reasonable mediocre fit of the measurement model with data (Table 5). The results indicate that the measurement model confirms to the four-factor structure of the dimensions of tourism development impacts of rural tourism.

Second order CFA

Next, a second order confirmatory factor analysis was run on the measurement model consisting of the Tourism Development impacts (TDI) as a latent construct. The measurement model revealed an adequate mediocre model fit to the data (Table 6). The items that loaded significantly on the latent constructs are shown in the Table 7.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The second order construct was measured for reliability. Cronbach's alpha for the tourism development impacts instrument (TDI) was 0.84, an indication of the reliability of the instrument and which is acceptable. The composite reliability (CR) of the TDI instrument was 0.936 which is greater than the acceptable limit of 0.70

Table 5. I order model-fit statistics

Absolute Fit Measures		
Chi-square of estimate model/d.f	2. 967, p <0.001	p<5 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996)
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0:86	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit(Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995)
Root mean square residual (RMR)	0. 08	<1 (Hu & Bentler, 1994)
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0:08	0.08(mediocre fit) (MacCallum, Browne & Sugawara, 1996)
Incremental Fit Measures Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0. 82	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995)
Parsimonious Fit Measures Comparative fit index (CFI)	0. 90	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995

Table 6. II order mode-fit statistics

Absolute Fit Measures		
Chi-square of estimated model/d.f	2. 911, p <0.001	p<5 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996)
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0:86	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995)
Root mean square residual (RMR)	0. 08	<1 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0:08	0.08 (mediocre fit) (MacCallum, Browne &Sugawara, 1996)
Incremental Fit Measures Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0. 82	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995)
Parsimonious Fit Measures Comparative fit index (CFI)	0. 91	0-1.Value close to 1 is good fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1995

Table 7. Measurement model results

			Estimate	p-value
EC	<—	TDI	.906	***
SC	<—	TDI	.989	***
EN	<—	TDI	.806	***
P	<—	TDI	.828	***
EC1	<—	EC	.790	***
EC3	<—	EC	.789	***
EC5	<—	EC	.833	***
EC7	<—	EC	.767	***
EC8	<—	EC	.626	***
EC9	<—	EC	.734	***
SC20	<—	SC	.617	***
SC19	<—	SC	.605	***
SC15	<—	SC	.710	***
SC14	<—	SC	.656	***
SC13	<—	SC	.698	***
P28	<—	P	.819	***
P27	<—	P	.681	***
ET26	<—	EN	.647	***
ET24	<—	EN	.694	***
TS2	<—	TS	.647	***
TS3	<—	TS	.730	***
TS4	<—	TS	.688	***
TS5	<—	TS	.775	***
TS6	<—	TS	.752	***
SC12	<—	SC	.646	***

Note: *** denotes factor loadings that are significant at $p<0.001$

(Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The indicator reliability (IR) is defined as the squared multiple correlation (SMC) between a latent factor and that indicator. The indicator reliability for each indicator was greater than 0.5 which is acceptable (Bollen, 1989). Construct validity is a measure of how well a set of measured variables actually reveal the latent construct they are designed to measure (Hair *et al.*, 2006) and is measured by establishing convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed by examining the factor loadings and average variance extracted of the constructs as suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981). The convergent validity (average variance extracted (AVE)) of the tourism development impacts instrument was 0.79 which is greater than or equal to 0.5 and is acceptable (Fornell &Larcker, 1981)

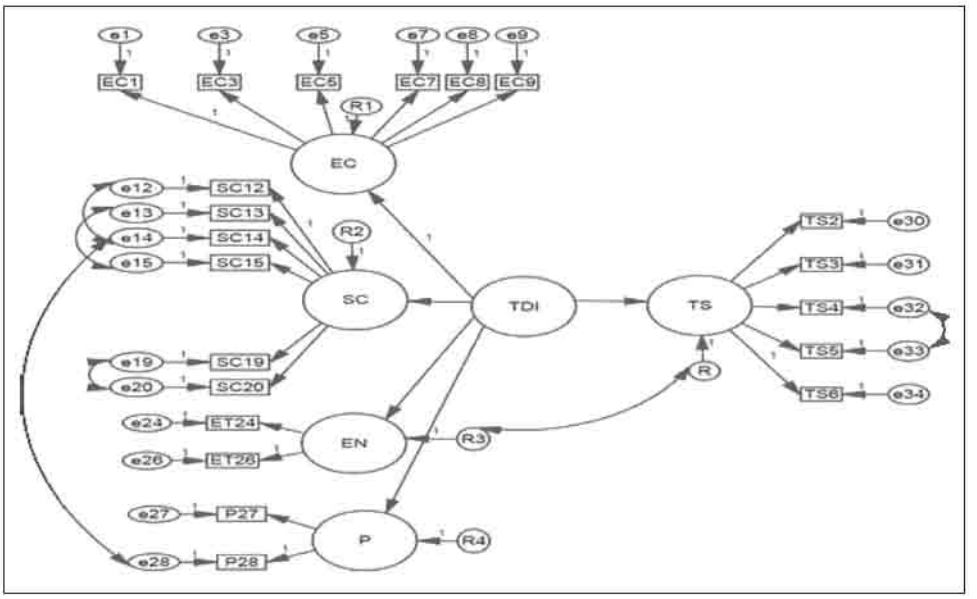

Figure 2. Structural model

Impact of Tourism Development Dimensions on Tourism Support

H1 was examined by using the structural equation model (AMOS 18.0). The structural model on Tourism Development impacts and Tourism Support is shown in Figure 2. The results of the structural equation modeling indicate an adequate model fit to the data (x^2 /df=2. 826, p <0.001 (<5); GFI = 0:87; AGFI=0. 82, CFI=0. 91, RMR=0. 08, and RMSEA = 0:08). Results also indicate that Tourism support is influenced positively and significantly by Tourism Development impacts (Beta coefficient (â) =0.584, at p <0.001).

Interpretations

The results of the descriptive statistics analysis for the tourism development impacts scale are presented in Table 2. This measurement scale consisted of 28 items reflecting the perceived economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political impacts of tourism development. Respondents were asked to provide answers to each item based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree.

Based on descriptive analysis of the statistics, the mean score of each item shows that from an Economic perspective, respondents disagreed that tourism increases job opportunities for the people of Karaikudi (M=2.79, SD=1.39), but they agreed

that the host community is being trained on hospitality management (M= 3.43, SD=1.106). Additionally, they disagreed that handicraft items were being promoted (M=2.65, SD=1.25) and that there was an increase in income generation for local people and small businesses (M=2.54, SD=1.10).

From a Socio-cultural perspective, respondents tended to strongly agree that tourism encourages formation of activity based groups (M=4.38, SD=1.10), and further strongly agreed that tourism increases skills building of the women (M=4.30, SD=1.17). Additionally, respondents agree that tourism results in changes to the traditional culture of the community (M=3.70, SD=1.116), for example, lifestyle and language. Further, they strongly disagreed that tourism improved solid waste management facilities such as the garbage disposal system (M=1.20, SD=1.12)

From an Environmental perspective, respondents disagreed about receiving incentives for the conservation of historical buildings (M=2.93, SD=1.20); they also disagreed that when people interfere with nature, disastrous consequences may result such as environmental degradation and the disappearance of certain species (M=2.75, SD=1.19). However, respondents disagreed that the development of tourism improves public utilities (M=2.62, SD=1.27).

From a Political perspective, respondents disagreed that those in authority in society receive political benefits (M=2.36, SD=1.13); they further disagreed that they have power to control and restrict tourism development (M=2.28, SD=1.12).

Structural equation modeling was utilised to test the hypothesis proposed in this study in an attempt to identify the structural relationships between dependent (tourism support) and independent constructs (tourism development impacts). The proposed hypothesis H1 is strongly supported and is significant, based on the outcome of the final structural model. Amongst construct factors of Tourism Development impacts, the strongest positive effect was for the 'Socio-cultural impact' factor (estimated value: 0.989) (see Table 4) on the support for tourism developmental strategies. The Economic impact (estimated value: 0.906), Political impact (estimated value: 0.828) and the Environmental impact (estimated value: 0.806) had a positive effect on stakeholder's support for tourism. These strong relationships support the outcomes of other previous studies (e.g. Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002; Upchurch & Teivane, 2000), which indicate that communities, in the early stages of tourism development are not greatly vulnerable to negative socio-cultural impacts. However, our finding contradict research studies that approve the negative socio-cultural and environmental community's perception towards tourism development (Yoon *et al.,* 2001). Despite the strength of Karaikudi society's culture and its characteristic of being conservative, this positive perception expressed by the tourism stakeholders towards tourism development could be attributed to the fact that tourism development in Karaikudi is still in its infant stage. Further, as the type of tourism that Karaikudi

experiences is at a higher-level, the distance between tourists and the local communities has been maintained at a manageable level, preventing an immediate effect on the community

Discussion

First, this research contributes to the identification of stakeholders' perceptions and attitude towards the dimension of tourism development impacts in relation to rural tourism. The dimensions identified in this study are Economic impacts, Socio-Cultural impacts, Environmental impacts and Political impacts. These dimensions should serve as guidelines for rural tourism planners, governments and support organisations as it will help them to understand the particular dimensions that stakeholders' look into for extending their support to tourism development in their area. Second, the study contributes to the understanding of the differential impact of these dimensions on tourism development and the support (or otherwise) for tourism in their area. This is in line with tourism impact literature linking perceived tourism support to economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political impacts (Yoon *et al.,* 2001; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Murphy, 1983). The first dimension of Economic impacts of rural tourism development consists of items related to job opportunities (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Davis *et al.,* 1988) and the benefits derived from tourism activities (Davis *et al.,* 1988; Murphy, 1983). This dimension highlights the importance placed by stakeholders on the positive impacts of tourism. The second dimension of Socio-cultural impacts projects socio-cultural benefits to the community such as opportunities for cultural exchange (McCool & Martin, 1994; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). The third dimension of Environmental impacts relates to the preservation of historic and cultural resources, recreation opportunities for visitors and residents, and better roads and public facilities, destruction of the environment, pollution, and crime (Liu & Var, 1986; Liu *et al.,* 1987; Chen, 2000). The last dimension of Political impacts relates to authority and control, and empowerment of local officials. Amongst the constructs of tourism development impacts, the strongest positive effect was from the 'Socio-cultural impact' factor (estimated value: 0.989) (see table 4) for the support of tourism developmental strategies. Next in order of importance for positive effect on stakeholder's support for tourism were Economic impacts (estimated value: 0.906), Political impacts (estimated value: 0.828) and finally Environmental impacts (estimated value: 0.806).

The different dimensions obtained in this study highlight that perceived impacts have some universal aspects. Moreover the Economic, Socio-cultural, Environmental and Political impacts are important factors in determining support for tourism. All these dimensions are applicable to all rural destinations and are termed as generic in nature. Since these dimensions are generic in nature, they may be applied to future studies aimed at identifying attitudes of stakeholders in the rural areas. The study has

also identified the dimensions of the impact of tourism development that stakeholders support. By applying first order CFA, the revised four constructs were measured by sixteen items related to Economic impacts (EC1, EC3, EC5, EC7, EC8, EC9), Socio-cultural impacts (SC12, SC13, SC14, SC15, SC19, SC20), Environmental impacts (EN24, EN26) and Political impacts (P27, P28), as shown in Figure 1. The modified Tourism Support construct was measured by five items (TS2, TS3, TS4, TS5, TS6). The first order measurement model revealed an adequate model fit to the data. Next, the revised construct TDI following II order CFA was projected by four factors, EC, SC, EN and P, as shown in Figure 2. II order CFA strongly fit the data.

The proposed relationship between constructs was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). A linear relationship was constructed between TDI and Tourism support and the structural model was tested. The final model has been found to fit the data very strongly and is the best possible model for this study. Hence the hypothesis is accepted (coefficient (c) =0.449, at $p < 0.001$). The researcher found that Tourism Development impact affects support for tourism positively and significantly.

Conclusion

The Socio-cultural impacts factor had the strongest positive effect on support for tourism developmental strategies. Next in order of importance for positive effect on stakeholder's support for tourism were Economic impact, Political impact and finally Environmental impact. These strong relationships support the outcomes of other previous studies which indicate that communities in the early stages of tourism development are not very vulnerable to negative socio-cultural impacts.

However, the findings of this study contradict research studies that approve the negative socio-cultural and environmental community's perception towards tourism development (Yoon *et al.*, 2001). [Despite the strength of Karaikudi society's culture and its characteristic of being conservative, this positive perception expressed by the tourism stakeholders towards tourism development could be attributed to the fact that tourism development in Karaikudi is still in its infant stage. Further, as most of the tourists to Karaikudi are of a high level, the distance between the tourists and the local communities is maintained at a manageable level, with no observable immediate effect on the communities.

The findings of this study make a modest attempt to enhance empirical knowledge on stakeholders' perception towards tourism development impacts and their support of rural tourism development in India. The findings of this study are limited by the nature of the sample. Non-Governmental organisations and members of the international business community need to be included in the sample. These findings cannot be generalised to all rural spots in India, since residents differ with respect to perceptions toward sustainable tourism development. Thus, before any tourism

development project is initiated, an analysis of the perceived impact of tourism development on the community should be studied from a longitudinal perspective. This entails an appropriate methodology to monitor and examine long-term development so as to cope with the changing requirements of the tourism industry.

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