Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting

21(22): 1-15, 2021; Article no.AJEBA.79422
ISSN: 2456-639X

Residents' Perception towards Beach Tourism Development in Sri Lanka

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Authors equally contributed to designed the study, literature review, performed the statistical analysis, writing the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJEBA/2021/v21i2230520

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/79422

Original Research Article

Received 12 October 2021
Accepted 20 December 2021
Published 22 December 2021

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aims to explore the relationship between residents' perception of beach tourism and their support for beach tourism development. Specifically, the study examined the effects of residents' perceptions on community participation and their support for beach tourism development. The mediation effect of community participation on residents' perception of beach tourism and support for beach tourism was also investigated.
Study Design: This positivistic quantitative study was carried out based on the conceptual model developed on the theoretical foundation of Doxey's Irridex model and Social Exchange theory. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire.
Place and Duration of Study: This study was carried out in Polhena beach, a village away from 160 km of Colombo, capital of Sri Lanka, during the period of March - September 2018.
Methodology: A total of 467 residents has been selected through the random sampling method. The model was analyzed based on the reflective research guidelines of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).
Results: It was confirmed that the perception of residents caused a significant impact on their community participation and support for beach tourism development. However, community

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participation does not create a meditation effect on support for beach tourism development. As such results reviled that support for tourism development is an outcome of the positive perceptions of the residents and they were also willing to join activities aimed at further tourism development. In this context, the study suggested that education and awareness programs on beach tourism would be an avenue to ensure the support of residents for beach tourism development.

Conclusion: The finding of the research validates the relationship between residents' perception and support for beach tourism development. In this context, tourism development authorities need to design programmes to improve the positive perception of residents to ensure their support for beach tourism development. The results provide insight for policymakers of tourism to implement the strategic programme on residents 'perception and their support of beach tourism development.

Keywords: Beach tourism; residents' perception; community participation; support for beach tourism development.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to UNWTO [1], travel and tourism is one of the world's largest industries and beach tourism is a major component of it, therefore it's a big draw. Warm seawater in countries along the equator creates sun, sea, and sand models for tourists and grows policies centered on beach tourism. According to Picken [2] desirability of beaches mainly depends on tourism and leisure. Hence, he was suggested that beach tourism is always amalgamated with beach, activities, leisure, and coastal resources.

Although Sri Lanka is a small island, it is famous all around the world because of its' golden beaches with shaded coconut trees. Hence beach tourism is an opportunity for Sri Lanka to attract local and international tourists throughout the year. The sector historically represents an important contributor to the national economy in Sri Lanka and is likely be continue as a major contributor as total tourist visits continuously increased each year. In recognizing this natural setting, local authorities of the coastal areas of Sri Lanka, the Tourist Development Authority, and many local hoteliers have started investing in infrastructure along the coastal line including new hotel construction, opening beach restaurants, as well as organizing water sport and beach sports activities in regular basis. The spiral effect of this development includes hotel construction, beach restaurants, and beach sports which become instrumental for the economic advancement of residents of the coastal areas.

According to Jurowski et al. [3], the predominant and most crucial factor of successful operation and sustainable tourism development is the harmonious balance between host and guest. It means the support of the indigenous population is the prerequisite when achieving the sustainable development goals in tourism development. In a practical context, residents play a vital and significant role in the entire tourism development process. The reason is most of the tourism-related activities are take place within their locality and most of the residents are directly involved in tourism and related activities. Residents' role cannot be underestimated because of the significance of the residents' impact on the development of tourism within their native area. On the other hand, whether the tourism impact is desirable or undesirable those impacts should consider when assessing their perception towards future tourism development since they are the people who are directly affected either positively or negatively [4].

Since the 70's, extensive studies have investigated local residents' attitudes towards tourism development and identified various factors that can influence their attitudes [5]. The residents' attitudes and perceptions towards tourism and its development have descriptively been analyzed by different scholars in their empirical studies [3,6,7]. According to Andriotis and Vaughan, [8], Lawson et al., [9] and Sharpley, [10] if residents believe that tourism gives more positive outcomes rather than negatives, then they are ready to support further tourism development. According to Getz and Page, [11] resident perception of tourism can affect the residents' behaviour towards tourists and perception study becomes vital for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, to ensure active participation rather than passive involvement of residents in tourism development it is required to a careful understanding about what residents' attitudes and perceptions and how they are formed. Because host residents' desire in participating in tourism development activities highly depends on their perception of positive and negative impacts generated from

tourism. Even though economic benefits are evident in the development and exploration of beach tourism in Sri Lanka, there are negative impacts which include environmental pollution, destruction of coral reefs, loss of cultural resources, and public dispute and hazardous. A salient negative point of beach tourism is the disruption of community livelihood due to the development of beach tourism. The traditional fishing community is in a vulnerable status as they are not able to continue their job due to beach tourism development. Further beach parties, sexuality, and drug addiction, old and young marriages become common in beach tourism [12] where residents oppose such tourism development. As such it is evident that host communities within the coastal area do not have their fullest support for beach tourism citing the negative impact of the rising cost of living, high property prices and overcrowding, overuse of natural resources, and high crime rate. This generally creates a negative perception of beach tourism in residents of the coastal area.

In the meantime, Byrd, et al., [13] noted active participation of stakeholders in the planning process supports the success of the events/activities in the long term. Further, studies noted that empowering residents on decision making or partitioning the decision-making process help for sustainable tourism [14,15]. Aas, et al., [16]; Choi and Sirakaya, [14] also noted that community participation plays a vital role in the development of sustainable tourism. Specially community participation in tourism development alleviates negative effects while enhancing the positive effects. On the other hand, resident participation in management and decision-making confirms the economic benefits of development [16]. In other words, mediation effect of community participation on direct relationship of residents' perception and support for beach tourism.

While early studies on the topic were descriptive and atheoretical, the field has now reached a stage of theoretical maturity and methodological sophistication. Despite a widespread review on residents' attitudes on tourism development, research findings vary considerably among individual studies. Further, it is noted that there is no agreement on exogenous factors which are reported to have direct or indirect impacts on the formation of residents' attitudes toward the development of tourism [17]. This makes it difficult for researchers to draw general conclusions. Other than that, there is inconstancy in the strength of the reported effects of each perceived impact dimension on residents' support for tourism development among studies. In this context country-specific or locational-specific study is important to policy decisions. Therefore, understanding the relationship between these phenomena helps planners and policymakers to comprehend the residents' attitudes and perceptions towards tourism, and their willingness to support tourism which becomes invaluable input on the development of tourism policies. Not only that this understanding will also help to make policies to maximize the beneficial outcomes and minimize the negative outcomes of tourism as well. Further, it helps regulatory bodies to make precise decisions that are easily applicable in the ground-level mechanism. Without this understanding, it may be difficult to evaluate whether the sustainable development goals of tourism are being met.

Nevertheless, previous studies focused on tourism development and management contributes to the quality of life of residents [18,19], the difference of rural and urban residents support on tourism in world heritage sites [20], perception study on tourism and support on community participation [7,21,10,22], and there are no better frame investigations into the beach tourism and residents influence, or perception of and support for beach tourism development. On the other hand, relatively, few studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of community participation on the relationship of residents' perception and support for beach tourism. Therefore, in summation, this empirical study is attempted to investigate residents' perceptions towards beach tourism development with relation to their perceived positive and negative perceptions. Meantime, the study is investigated the mediation effect of community participation on residents' perception of beach tourism and support for beach tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in the field of sustainable tourism widely studied discipline [23]. Early studies on tourism are more descriptive and focused on theoretical foundation and failed to explain the relationship between residents' perception and support for tourism development [5]. However, it is noted that scholars applied theories on sociology namely social representation theory [8], bottom-up spillover theory [21], and the theory of reasoned action [4] as a means of offering a better rationalization of the factors

shaping the residents support for tourism includes the positive and negative effects of perception on tourism development.

This study used the theoretical background of Doxey's Irridex model [24] which is competent to review host residents' perception towards tourism development within their region based on four-stage series of actions. These actions include "euphoria," through "apathy" and "irritation." to "antagonism" [24]. The model confirmed that residents' attitudes are initially favorable but gradually become negative after reaching the threshold level. The irritation happened due unfavorable impact of tourism development. This is mainly due to incompatibilities between the host community and the tourists. Doxey's Irridex model support to an established direct relationship between resident perception and their support for beach tourism development.

On the other hand, as reviewed by Andereck, et. al., [7]; Jurowski, et. al., [3]; Jaafar et al., [19]; Liu and Var, [25]; Long et. al., [26]; Ap, [27]; Brunt and Courtney [28]; Andereck and Vogt, [29]; Sirakaya, et. al., [30]; Jamal and Stronza, [31]; Aref, et. al., [32]; Eshliki and Kaboudi, [33]; and Sharpley, [10] Social Exchange Theory (SET) also considered by the authors to conceptualize the relationship between residents' perception and tourism development in conjunction with Doxey's Irridex model. According to Prayag, et. al., [34], SET is the most appropriate theory to explain the relationship between residents' support and tourism development. A recent study by Gursoy et. al., [17] also confirmed the credibility of SET in explaining the formation of residents' support for tourism development. SET described residents' perceptions and attitudes, for both positive and negative, to the tourism impacts derived from tourism development. According to SET it is suggested residents are willing to support further tourism development if only they can collect some benefits without incurring unacceptable costs [32]. Community participation can revitalize support for development. SET argued that acceptance or rejection of the development by the host community decided with a proper review of value exchange. The empirical studies of Ap, [27], Andereck et. al., [7], Chuang [35], and Rasoolimanesh et. al., [20] confirmed that host community support is inevitable if they perceived benefit over its cost. Thus, the relationship between residents' perception, community participation, and support for beach tourism was established over social exchange theory.

As such the conceptualization is done based on the fundamental argument of Doxey's Irridex model and SET theory.

2.1 Residents Perception on Community Participation and Support for Beach Tourism Development

According to Jaafar et al., [18,19], and Rasoolimanesh et. al., [20] residents' positive and negative perception of tourism is a major contributor to their support for tourism development. Residents were likely to support tourism development if there are more positive impacts [10]. Similarly, if tourism brings negative impacts compared to positives, residents will move away from supporting it. The literature identified that each of these categories has its positive and negative effects and usually residents' perceptions on impacts are contradictory [7,36,37,38,20].

Most of the scholars have emphasized that residents are more aware of the economic benefits of tourism and those who are benefited have positive perception attitudes toward tourism development. And they further exemplified that resident become satisfied from benefitted outcomes of tourism rather than distressing about unfavorable outcomes [7,10,36,20]. Allen, et. al., [39] emphasize that residents who live in areas with minimum tourism development have the greater intention of further tourism development since they are expecting higher economic and other social benefits of tourism. Deriving job opportunities, increase in foreign exchange income, development in other industries, boosting the GDP in the tourism district, improvement in life quality of residents, and availability of commodities are identified as positive economic impacts derived through tourism [7,10]. Rasoolimanesh et. al., [20] also confirmed that community attachment is shown to increase residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, which may then increase their support for tourism development. Another study by Obradović et. al., [40] confirmed that ecological, economic, institutional, and socio-cultural which were identified as four dimensions of sustainability are significant predictors of residents' satisfaction with tourism development. The finding reviled that local communities want to be involved in tourism development to ensure that their needs are addressed. However,

negative economic impacts included, increasing seasonal jobs, increase in the cost of living and price indexes and increase in land and housing prices [41,7,6] are create a negative perception on support for tourism development of an identified destination.

In this context to explore the residents' perception towards support for beach tourism development, the current empirical study proposed the following research hypothesis.

H1: There is a significant effect of residents' positive perception of their support for beach tourism development.

H2: There is a significant effect of residents' negative perception of their support for beach tourism development.

Studies on Ye, et. al., [42] and Ko and Stewart, [43] confirm the relationship of residents' perception and participation in tourism development activities. Meantime Nicholas et. al., [44] noted that resident perception of tourism influences the decision on tourism-related community participation activities. Ye et. al., [42] confirmed that residents are willing to participate in community participating activities on tourism if they realized perceived benefits outweigh the cost of tourism. This is further confirmed by Jaafar et. al., [19] and noted that if residents perceived benefits of tourism development exceed its cost, they are willing to participate in the development process. In this context, it is contended that residents' consciousness on perceived impact leads to their involvement in participation in the tourism development process. On the other hand, Tichaawa and Moyo [45] noted that residents who possessed postgraduate studies had a stronger positive perception of the economic impacts of tourism, as compared to those with a minimal amount of education. As such study proposed the following hypothesis.

H3: There is a significant effect of residents' positive perception of their community participation.

H4: There is a significant effect of residents' negative perception of their community participation.

Studies on Andereck and Nyaupane, [6] and Látková and Vogt, [46] noted a relationship between resident involvement in the process of planning, decision making, and their support on tourism development. Timothy [47] and Tousn [48] argued that participation of residents in the process of planning and decision-making process support increases their awareness of the benefits of tourism development which ultimately ensures the support for tourism development. This argument was confirmed by Jamal and Getz, [15]; Nicholas et. al., [44]; Choi and Sirakaya, [14] and established that community participation is the key to sustainable tourism development. Further, Lee [23] confirmed that direct involvement affected the residents' support for sustainable tourism development. Accordingly, the study proposed the following hypothesis

H5: There is a significant effect of community participation on residents' support for beach tourism development.

2.2 Mediation effect of Community Participation on Resident's Perception on Support for Beach Tourism Development

Community participation in the tourism development process ensures residents' awareness of the cost and benefits of tourism, and thereby it contributes to residents' support for tourism development. According to Thongma, et. al., [49] residents' participation ensures active involvement of residents in the decision-making process of local tourism and makes them aware of what is happening in tourism within the locality. This indirectly supports increasing their respect for tourism development [50,47]. This is evident that probable indirect impact of community participation on residents' perception and support for tourism development. This can be identified as the mediation effect of community participation on residents' perception of support for beach tourism development. According to Marzuki, et. al., [51], the effect of community participation on perception and support for tourism development varies between urban and rural contexts. The engagement of rural residents is higher than that of urban residents. This might be the impact of economic benefits of community patriation in poor rural residents compared to rich urban residents [19]. In this context, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H6: There is a significant indirect effect of residents' positive perception of their support for beach tourism development.

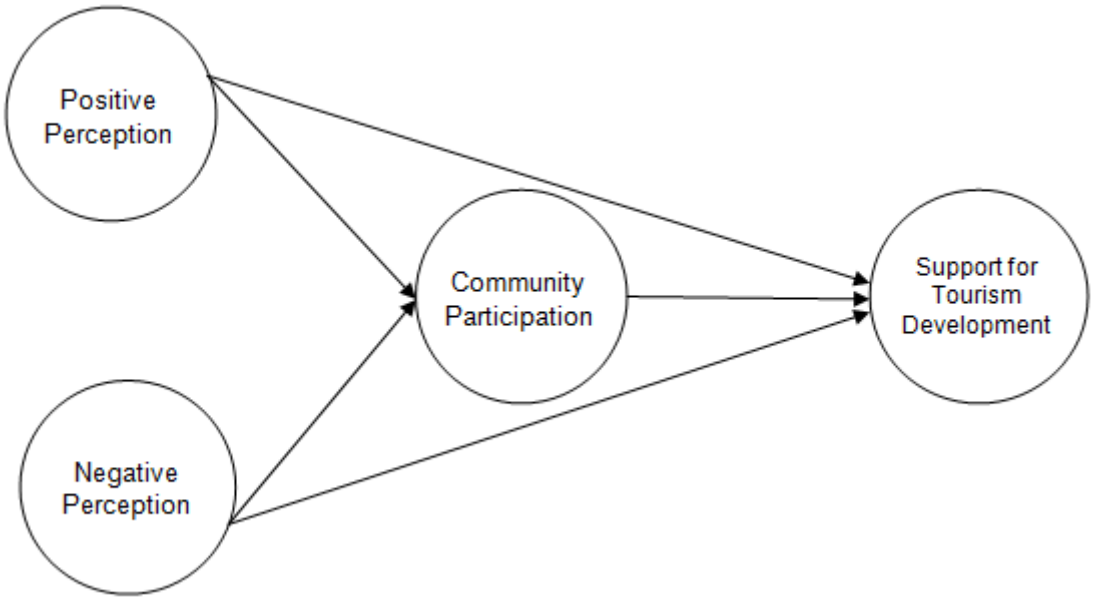

Fig. 1. Conceptual model

H7: There is a significant indirect effect of residents' negative perception of their support for beach tourism development.

Accordingly conceptual model as shown in Fig. 1 proposed.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

Polhena beach is a large sea pool located in Matara district, the southern part of Sri Lanka which has a uniform height up to a large distance from the coast. The coral reef creates a natural barrier to tide and creates a secured and protected beach that allows tourists to enjoy the sea, sun, and sand. The Polhena attracts many tourists for snorkeling activities as the reef is a breeding spot for colourful fish living in the sea includes stingrays, eels, and colorful reef fish. The area is a very popular destination among local and international tourists due to easy accessibility from Colombo, the capital of the country. Following this development, the local economy is gradually shifted away from traditional fishing business toward tourism and hospitality.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The accessible population of the study comprised all the households who lived in Polhena village. Systematic random sampling was employed. To this end, the authors distributed the 467 questionnaires in Polhena village, started selecting random starting point/house selected based on assessment number, and allowed residents therein whether they were willing to participate. If they do not will to participate, the next house was selected. A total of 400 valid responses were collected. The G*Power sample analysis confirmed a required sample size of 111 respondents while 400 valid responses (85.55% of valid response rate) confirmed a post-hoc 99% confidence with 0.01 error probability.

3.3 Method of Data Collection

The study used an adopted tested questionnaire of Rasoolimanesh et al., [20] to gather primary data. The questionnaire has developed based on four main categories of Positive Perception (PP), Negative Perception (NP), Community Participation(CMP), and Support for Tourism Development (SUP). Each construct was measured by four items (PP1-4, NP1-4, CMP1-4, SUP1-4). The respondents' answers have measured by a 5-point Likert scale, which varied from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.4 Process of Data Analysis

Basic demographic data gathered from the questionnaire survey was analyzed through

descriptive analysis method whereas the scaled data collected from five-point Likert scaled questions were analyzed through Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). SmartPLS 3.0 [52] was used as the analytical tool of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The profile of the respondents shown in Table 1. As per the respondents' occupation, approximately 37.2% of respondents are self-employed mainly in the related fields of tourism. There is a significant fact was found that a considerable percentage of the total sample (6.7%) do not have any permeant income earning method. Further, out of the total respondents, 13.9% depended on less than Rs. 10,000/- of monthly income. However, a majority (31.3%) of them earned Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 100,000 of monthly income.

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

Evaluation of measurement model includes three major assessment criteria as internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

In accessing the model's reliability, the outer loading of each indicator on its associated latent variables (LV) should be calculated [53]. The acceptable threshold value for outer loading is higher than 0.7 [54]. Table 2 indicates that all the outer loading values except one indicator (PP4) support threshold values greater than 0.7 and established the required level of indicator reliability. The indicator of PP4 got a threshold value of 0.639. Indicators with outer loading between 0.4 and 0.7 should be considered for removal only if the deletion leads to an increase in composite reliability and AVE above the suggested threshold value [53]. The construct reliability (CR) was assessed using the CR coefficient and should be higher than 0.7 to establish internal consistency [55,53]. The analysis confirmed that CR of all reflective LVs in the PLS path model was higher than 0.7 and established acceptable reliability in all four groups

The AVE of the reflective LVs establishes the convergent validity and should be higher than 0.5 55,53]. According to Table 2, all AVE of constructs were higher than 0.5 and established convergent validity. In this context, even though the PP4 got a threshold value of 0.639, as its CR and AVE established, PP4 remains in the model. According to the results, it confirmed that the measurement model possessed acceptable reliability.

According to Hair et. al., [53], PLS-SEM applied three criterion evaluations to establish the discriminant validity of the path model as Cross Loadings, Fornell and Larcker, and Heterotrait-Monotrait criterion. The current study is adopted HTMT.85 as it offers the best balance between high detection and low arbitrary violation rates compared to the Fornell and Larcker's [56] criterion. As per Table 3 all threshold values are lie below 0.85 and the discriminant validity is established.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation

PLS-SEM structural model evaluation consists of collinearity estimation, assessing the significance of path coefficient, coefficient of determination of R^2, assessing the effect size (f2), and the predictive relevance (Q2) of the model [57].

The inner VIF values as given in Table 4 confirm that all combinations of endogenous constructs and corresponding exogenous constructs are clearly below the threshold of 5 [53]. Thus, collinearity among the predictor constructs is not a critical issue in the structural model.

Assessing the significance and relevance of the structural model relationship is served as a significant aspect in the PLS results evaluation process. The p-value approach to hypothesis testing uses the calculated probability to determine whether there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The path coefficients and the p values of the current study are provided in Table 5 show an inside detail about the significance of the relationships between exogenous and endogenous constructs based on the 5000 re-sample bootstrap procedure. As per the results, except for the relationship between Community Participation (CMP) and Support for Tourism Development (SUP), all other relationships become significant.

R^2 represents the amount of variance in the endogenous construct explained by all of the exogenous constructs linked to it. The estimated R^2 is 0.117 with the adjusted rate of 0.113 can be interpreted as a moderate level impact [55]. The effect size has been interpreted based on the threshold value set by Cohen, [58]. As per the results illustrated in Table 6, the positive

perception does not create an effect on Community participation, while it creates a medium effect on Support for Tourism Development. However, Negative perception has a small effect size on community participation and support for Tourism Development. CMP does not have any effect on Support for Tourism Development.

Q^2 effect size is initially assessing the predictive relevance of the path model and this is calculated using the blindfolding procedure in Smart PLS [53]. According to Table 7, the exogenous constructs of the current empirical study have predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs under investigation. Hence these results are revealing that the Positive Perception and Negative Perception of Residents' have a considerable degree of predictive relevance on both endogenous constructs of Community Participation and Support for Beach Tourism development [58].

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of demographic profile

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	169	41.9
Female	231	57.3
Age (Years)		
18-20	11	2.7
21-30	51	12.7
31-40	147	36.5
41-50	79	19.6
51-60	69	17.1
61 and above	43	10.7
Civil Statues		
Married	320	79.4
Unmarried	55	13.6
Widow	25	6
Length of Residency (Years)		
Below 1 year	1	0.2
1-9	78	19.4
10-19	95	23.6
20 and above	226	56.1
Level of Education		
No. Formal Education	1	0.2
Below G.C.E. (O/L)	114	28.3
G.C.E. (O/L)	136	33.7
G.C.E. (A/L)	116	28.8
Diploma	20	5
Basic Degree or above	13	3.2
Occupation		
Govt. Sector	16	4
Privet Sector	83	20.6
Self-employment	150	37.2
Unemployment	27	6.7
Other/Retired	124	31.5
Level of Monthly Income (Rs.)*		
Below 10,000	56	14
10,000 – 30,000	26	6.5
30,000 – 50,000	118	29.5
50,000 – 100,000	126	31.5
100,000 – 200,000	62	15.5
200,000 and above	12	3

**Note: USD 1 is equals to Rs. (LKR). 176.80 at the time of data collection*
Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Table 2. Reliability and validity

Variable	Variable Indicator	Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
Support for Tourism Development	SUP01	0.892	0.912	0.722
	SUP02	0.917		
	SUP03	0.746		
	SUP04	0.833		
Community Participation	CMP01	0.796	0.866	0.619
	CMP02	0.736		
	CMP03	0.831		
	CMP04	0.782		
Positive Perception	PP01	0.741	0.827	0.548
	PP02	0.710		
	PP03	0.854		
	PP04	0.639		
Negative Perception	NP01	0.891	0.892	0.675
	NP02	0.748		
	NP03	0.873		
	NP04	0.764		

Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Table 3. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations

	NP	PP	CMP	SUP
CMP				
NP	0.37			
PP	0.234	0.223		
SUP	0.196	0.27	0.502	

Source: compiled by author based on survey data, (2018)

Table 4. VIF values in the structural model

	CMP	SUP
CMP		1.133
NP	1.035	1.132
PP	1.035	1.054

Source: compiled by author based on survey data, (2018)

Table 5. Path coefficient with p-values and t-values

	Beta (Path coefficient)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis Result
CMP -> SUP	0.035	0.032	0.044	0.789	0.43	Not Supported
NP -> CMP	-0.293	-0.298	0.050	5.819	0.00	Supported
NP -> SUP	-0.154	-0.154	0.039	3.931	0.00	Supported
PP -> CMP	0.132	0.136	0.045	2.910	0.00	Supported
PP -> SUP	0.435	0.440	0.046	9.440	0.00	Supported

*Note:*P=0.05*

Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Table 6. Effect size (f2)

	Community Participation	Effect Size	Support for Tourism Development	Effect Size
CMP			0.001	No effect
NP	0.094	Small effect	0.028	Small effect
PP	0.019	No effect	0.239	Medium effect
SUP				

Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Table 7. Blindfolding and predictive relevance Q2

	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)
CMP	1,600.00	1,498.69	**0.063**
NP	1,600.00	1,600.00	
PP	1,600.00	1,600.00	
SUP	1,600.00	1,339.94	**0.163**

Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Table 8. P values, t values, confidence interval and bias corrected confidence interval

	Indirect Effect	P Values	T Values	Hypothesis Results
NP -> CMP -> SUP	-0.204	0.445	0.764	Not Supported
PP -> CMP -> SUP	0.547	0.467	0.728	Not Supported

Source: compiled by authors based on survey data, (2018)

Finally, by setting the variable of "community participation" as a mediator in the PLS path model, the study evaluates both direct and indirect effects of residents' perception of support for tourism development and support for tourism development through residents' involvement in the tourism process. The results given in Table 8 confirmed that there is no significant effect of residents' positive perception of their support for beach tourism development and residents' negative perception of their support for beach tourism development.

The study result showed that the positive perception of the people, who lived in Polhena, creates a positive inspiration toward the development of beach tourism. The effect size of this relationship highlighted the significance and the importance of the positive perception of the local community in future tourism development. The results show that the people are more interested in the positive impacts of beach tourism since it derives more job opportunities attracts more investments and will improve their current living standard. Therefore, the residents of Polhena are ready to support for further development of beach tourism. This finding agrees with the scholarly discussions that perceiving a positive perception of host residents' supports on tourism development and will encourage them to participate in tourism activities [7,20,36,59,37,60,61,10,38,62,63] and the finding is consistence with of previous studies.

On the other hand, results suggested that positive perception of the residents create a significant influence on community participation, and it provides a motivation on the community to participate and involve in the decision-making and planning process of the tourism in Polhena. The outcome indicates that the residents believe that community participation in the decision-making and planning process in Polhena beach tourism will empower residents and it will improve their awareness of the benefits of tourism development. These findings are consistent with the findings from previous studies [7,20,64,65].

As per Tosun, [48]; Jamal and Stronza, [31]; Aref et. al., [32]; Rassolimanesh et. al., [20] community participation in the decision-making process increases people's trust and confidence

in the tourism industry and brings a sense of community to take responsibility on themselves and others live in the same society and at the same time they willing to share and interact to those responsibilities. However, the effect size of the relationship between positive perception and community participation is not much strong, when compared with the association between positive perception and support for tourism development. This may be happened due to most of the people in Polhena engaging in tourism-related economic generating activities and those economic benefits may motivate them to actively support further tourism development rather than involving in the planning and decision-making process.

In addition, the findings exhibited that there is a significant inverse relationship of the effect of the negative perception of residents on support for tourism development. Thus, the findings are suggested that residents are highly concerned about the negative effects of beach tourism and if tourism brings more negative outcomes rather than its positive consequences, then they do not willing to support further expansion of tourism development. The resulting fact is previously ascertained by Sharpley [10] as positive perceptions encouraging residents to support further tourism development while negative perception withdraws their support for tourism development. The same idea was further established by different scholars in their empirical studies [5,19,14,20] thus indicating that the results of the present study are consistent with those of previous studies. Nevertheless, the effect size of the association between negative perception and support for tourism development is comparatively low with relation to the effect size between positive perception and support for tourism development. The reason might be community is more aware of the positive impacts rather than distressing about the negative outcomes since the positive consequences directly influence to enhancement their living standards.

However, the results exhibited that the negative perception of the residents in Polhena indicated a significant negative relationship with community participation. It is revealed that when beach tourism occurs undesirable impacts as traffic congestion, noise, pollution, high cost of living and high rate of crime will move away from them from their desire on participating in the planning and management of beach tourism. This might be mainly because the development of beach tourism might change the neighborhood and village characteristics, which negatively affects their lifestyle. This is also discouraging them from giving their active participation in the decision-making process of beach tourism in Polhena. Such demotivates are always directly and indirectly associated with the negative perception of perceived negative through community participation. The same findings have previously been documented by Choi and Sirakaya [14] as residents' participation in planning, management, and decision-making process depends on their perception of positive and negative tourism impacts and thus the findings of the current empirical study are in accordance with the previous scholars' findings.

Further, the findings of the study confirmed that, no relationship between community participation and support for tourism development. It is indicated that the residents in Polhena do not believe that involvement in tourism planning and decision-making process create any impact on their intention of support for tourism development. The results highlighted that, whether there is a significant positive influence of positive perception of community participation and significant negative influence of negative perception and community participation as aggregate community participation is incapable to make a significant influence on community support for tourism development. A similar idea was established in a previous study, that the community is more aware of the positive outcomes brings via tourism rather than participating planning and decision-making process [32,18,19,20,63].

Finally, the results showed that there is no mediation effect of community participation toward support for tourism development and it is indicating that positive perception and negative perception of the residents in Polhena unable to influence their support for beach tourism development through community participation. However, this result is inconsistent with the findings of previous studies [6]. Even though the literature highlighted the importance of community participation in the planning and decision-making process and its spiral effect on residents support on further tourism development, Rasoolimanesh et. al., [20] stated that “in rural tourism destinations, only direct effects are apparent and positive perception and negative perception cannot influence support for tourism development through community participation” thus indicating that the results of

the present study are consistent with those of previous studies.

5. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to analyze the residents' perception of community participation and support for beach tourism development in one of the finest beach tourism destinations Polhena, Sri Lanka. Moreover, The impact of people' positive and negative impressions of tourism development in general on their support for tourism development in Polhena via community participation in the beach tourism planning and decision-making process was investigated in this study. The outcomes of the study revealed a positive effect of residents' positive perceptions on their support for beach tourism development in Polhena. More ever residents high in positive perceptions were willing to support tourism development and they were also willing to join activities aimed at further tourism development. However, the results are not supported either any of the indirect effects of the positive or negative perception of the local community for their support for beach tourism development through community participation.

As residents are regarded as an important asset in tourism development and it is within their neighborhood that these activities have taken place, their perceptions on positive and negative tourism impacts are a critical predictor of their support for and participation in tourism development, and the achievability of sustainable tourism development and management in any tourism destination. Therefore, the responsibility falls on authorized regulatory bodies and policymakers, to propose more interactive and collaborative tourism development programms towards encouraging residents' positive perception and reducing negative perception and involve them to support future tourism development in Polhena. Despite the above contributions, this study is focused on the specific geographical location of Sri Lanka where generalization become difficult which was identified as the limitation of the study. Thus, future studies call for a more rigorous cross-sectional beach cities in Sri Lanka,

CONSENT

All the interviewees consent the use of their views for analysis and publication purpose of the study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors kindly acknowledge the Centre for Real Estate Studies of Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for its support extended to carry out this publication.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist

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