Local Residents’ Perceptions of Tourism Impacts and their Support for Tourism Development

—The case of Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh, Vietnam—

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This study is based on a self-administered survey and interviews of local residents in Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh, Vietnam between September and October, 2011. The findings of the study have shown that, on the whole, respondents viewed tourism positively and showed strong support for tourism development. Moreover, the study demonstrated that residents’ socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of tourism impacts could act as predictors for the overall evaluation of tourism impacts. Finally, the findings also revealed that residents’ socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of tourism impacts and overall evaluations of tourism impacts could act as predictors for residents’ support for tourism development.

Keywords: Residents’ perceptions, tourism impacts, support tourism development, social exchange theory, Ha Long Bay

1. Objectives of the dissertation

There are two primary objectives of this study: to develop and test a model explaining residents’ perception of tourism impacts and their support for tourism development, and to apply and strengthen the theoretical foundation of the study-social exchange theory (SET).

To support the primary objectives, this study identifies how residents perceive and support tourism in the study area without measuring the actual impacts of tourism development on the area. Moreover, the study also strives to understand factors, especially socio-demographic factors, which may explain the residents’ perceptions and evaluations of tourism impacts, and their support for tourism development.

2. Methodology

To satisfy the information needs and the objectives of the study, the study was conducted over 6 weeks between September and October, 2011 in Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh province, Vietnam. The study used two types of data collections: Questionnaire (quantitative) and in-depth personal interview (qualitative). 600 respondents were chosen to fill in the questionnaires (with 417 questionnaires were used for analysis, accounting for 69.5% response rate) and 11 respondents were chosen for the in-depth interviews.

The questionnaire’s validity and reliability were based on previously developed research literature, pilot test and site-specific issues. The in-depth interview guide was created based on the major issues of the questionnaire. The questionnaires and the interviews were given and conducted at the respondents’ home, office, business place or public places by interviewers trained by the researcher or by the researcher himself.

After completing the collection of the data, the information was edited and coded to be transferred for statistical analysis and content analysis. For the questionnaire data, the mean,
standard deviation, as well as frequency distribution were computed for the purpose of descriptive analysis. To find out the underlying dimensions or factors explaining residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, overall evaluation of tourism impacts, and residents' support for tourism development, factor analysis was used. To test the hypotheses, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-test, and multiple regression were used. The level of significance was set at the 0.05 level of confidence.

3. Results

The findings of the study have shown that, on the whole, respondents viewed tourism positively and showed strong support for tourism development. They were generally in favor of tourism that contributes economically and socio-culturally to Ha Long Bay. They were however slightly ambivalent to the environmental impacts of tourism.

Residents of Ha Long Bay perceived the impacts of tourism along eight different important dimensions (or factors) : support for tourism development, economic-social costs, environmental deterioration, cultural enrichment, economic benefits, physical enhancements, pricing, and overall benefits.

Moreover, the study found that residents' socio-demographic characteristics influenced their perceptions and overall evaluations of tourism impacts, and their support for tourism development.

Additionally, the study demonstrated that residents'socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of tourism impacts could act as predictors for the overall evaluation of tourism impacts.

Finally, the findings also revealed that residents' socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of tourism impacts and overall evaluations of tourism impacts could act as predictors for residents' support for tourism development in Ha Long Bay. Thus, the created model is suitable for examining residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and support for tourism development in the case of Ha Long Bay.

As expected, the findings confirmed that social exchange theory is useful in explaining residents' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, tourism. When interacting with the tourism industry, residents' perceptions and attitudes were indeed influenced by evaluations of the impacts of tourism.

4. Theoretical significances

Theoretically, the results of this study can contribute to a cumulative development of knowledge in tourism research. This study represents an effort to integrate existing theory in order to validate and improve the model that can guide investigations of tourism's impacts and residents' perceptions of those impacts. In addition, this study will contribute to Vietnamese tourism literature by introducing a study in a Vietnamese location that explains residents’ perceptions of tourism by applying theory developed and widely tested in western settings. Thus, this research may pave the way for future studies related to tourism impacts and tourism development in Vietnam, where tourism research on the mentioned area is still lacking.

This study contributes to the development of a research instrument and a model applied to explain residents' perception of tourism impacts, their evaluations of tourism development and support for tourism development in Ha Long Bay. The research instrument and the model may act as useful measurement tools to be utilized by other researchers in order to assess local residents’ perceptions of tourism in different geographical areas, especially in Vietnam, where there is a dearth of research.
regarding these issues.

5. **Practical applications of the dissertation**

In practice, the findings from this research will enhance the understanding of residents’ perceptions of, and attitudes toward, tourism impacts for the purpose of determining the optimal level of planning and development policies for tourism development. Hence, the results of this study can be valuable to local planners, policymakers, business operators, and tourism promoters when considering the real concerns and issues regarding the type, size, and complexity of tourism impacts and tourism development from residents’ perspectives in order to ensure appropriate policies, actions and desirable blue prints are put in place.

6. **Content of the dissertation**

The current study is organized into five chapters with the following structure.

(1) **Abstract of chapter one**

This chapter introduces the study. First it presents the research background, which mentions that a wealth of research has examined residents’ perceptions, as well as their attitudes toward, tourism impacts and tourism development, especially in developed countries, however, this kind of research is still a relatively new concern for tourism researchers and scholars of developing countries such as Vietnam.

The statement of the problem is then followed. In fact, every study on the impacts of tourism is unique because it is context dependent, making it difficult to derive any universal validity. It implies that studies on the impacts of tourism must involve residents in each specific region. Thus, this study also contributes to develop and broaden the research on residents’ perceptions of tourism impact and residents’ support for tourism development.

This chapter includes two main research objectives (as mentioned at the beginning of this abstract: (1) to develop and test a model explaining residents’ perception of tourism impacts and their support for tourism development, and (2) to apply and strengthen the theoretical foundation of the study-social exchange theory. To fulfill the research objectives, five research questions are given.

The theoretical background is then discussed and the proposed research model and underlying theory that serve as the theoretical foundation for the study are presented. This study develops a theoretical framework based primarily on the models developed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004); Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997); Perdue, Long, and Allen (1990) and utilizes social exchange theory (Blau, 1986; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1961) as its theoretical foundation to guide the study. The proposed research model (see figure 1) demonstrates that the perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts combine to formulate residents’ overall evaluations of tourism impacts, their support for tourism development and that these perceptions and attitudes are influenced by residents’ socio-demographic characteristics.

Delimitations, assumptions and definitions of the study are specified at the end of chapter.

(2) **Abstract of chapter two**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical foundations for the dissertation by reviewing the previous studies and models, theoretical frameworks that emphasize and support for the important of understanding residents’ perceptions, attitudes in achieving successful tourism development.

1) **Tourism impacts**: This section reviews the main impacts of tourism which are often classified into economic, socio-cultural or environmental impacts.
2) Attitudes and perceptions of tourism impacts and support for tourism development: This section reviews the previous studies regarding residents’ attitudes and perceptions of tourism impacts, how residents perceived overall impacts and in what way they supported/not supported tourism development.

3) Variable influencing residents’ perception, attitudes: This section discusses the variables which can be predictors of disposition for residents’ perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and its impacts.

4) Social exchange theory and model used for the study of residents’ perceptions, attitudes towards tourism impacts and support for tourism development: This section reviews what social exchange theory is, how it is different from economic exchange, and in which studies of tourism research social exchange theory has been applied. This section also examines models used for tourism research of residents’ perceptions and attitudes towards tourism impact and tourism development.

5) Testing model and hypotheses: Based on the previous sections, the testing model is drawn (see figure 2) and three hypotheses are set.

Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences in residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts, overall evaluations of tourism impacts, and their support for tourism development based on their socio-demographic characteristics of selected
respondents.  
Hypothesis 2: Residents’ socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of tourism impacts (independent variables) significantly explain their evaluations of tourism impacts (dependent variable).
Hypothesis 3: Residents’ socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of tourism impacts, and evaluations of tourism impacts (independent variables) significantly explain their level of support for tourism development (dependent variable).

(3) **Abstract of chapter three**

This chapter guides the research methods and procedures used to achieve the study purposes.

Firsts, research design in presented. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study.

In the next section, description of quantitative methodology is discussed in details, including:
1) Survey instrument used in the study: The questionnaire used to collect data is explained in this section
2) Description of study site: Ha Long Bay, Vietnam’s first World Heritage Site was chosen as study site given its status among tourists as one of the best-known tourist site in Vietnam, thereby greatly influencing local residents and local society.
3) Population and sampling: Population of Ha Long Bay and the sample frame for the study are discussed
4) Data collection process: This part deliberate how the data were collected.
5) Data analysis of questionnaire: The mean, standard deviation, as well as frequency distribution were computed for the purpose of descriptive analysis. To find out the underlying dimensions or factors explaining residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts, overall evaluation of tourism impacts, and residents’ support for tourism development, factor analysis was used. To test the hypotheses, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-test, and multiple regression were used

For the qualitative methodology, the description is also divided into 5 parts, including:
1) In-depth interview: This part discusses the in-depth personal interviews that was conducted in the study
2) Sampling and sample size: This part explains the sampling of qualitative method in general and the sample size of this study in particular.
3) Interview guide: This part explains the interview guide, which was used in the interview process.
4) Interview process: This part explains how the interviews were conducted, how long did they last and so on.
5) Data analysis: This part states the data analysis of qualitative data

Finally the validity and reliability of the instruments are explained.

(4) **Abstract of chapter four**

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and hypothesis testing that were carried out to answer the research objectives and questions. Data was obtained in the form of responses made by the usable 417 among 480 respondents to the questionnaire and the 11 respondents that underwent in-depth interviews. The data obtained from the survey have been presented in tabular form for clarity and simplicity.

Findings are presented by organizing the data into 2 sections.

Section one presents the quantitative research results. The first part of this section presents a descriptive analysis of respondent socio-demographic characteristics. It is followed by a section that provides an overview of residents’ responses to tourism impacts (economic impacts, socio-cultural impacts, and
environmental impacts), evaluations of tourism impacts and support for tourism development. The third part of this section presents the results of factor analysis to determine the underlying dimensions/factors explaining the Ha Long Bay residents' perceptions and evaluations of tourism impacts, and support for tourism development. The fourth part of this section displays the results of a series of ANOVAs and t-tests in order to test hypothesis 1 concerning residents' differences in their perceptions of tourism based on their socio-demographic characteristics. The next part of this section presents the results of multiple regression analysis so as to test hypothesis 2 with regard to the relationship between residents' socio-demographic characteristics, residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (independent variables) and residents' overall evaluations of tourism impacts (dependent variable). The purpose is to predict residents' overall evaluations of tourism impacts from a combination of a total of 15 independent variables. The final part of this section shows the results of multiple regression analysis to test hypothesis 3 regarding the relationship between residents' socio-demographic characteristics, residents' perceptions and evaluations of tourism impacts (independent variables) and support for tourism development (dependent variable). The purpose is to predict support for tourism development from a combination of a total of 16 independent variables.

Section two presents the qualitative research results. This section includes 5 parts: Respondent profiles, perceived benefits, perceived costs, evaluations of tourism impacts and support for tourism in Ha Long Bay, and suggestions for future tourism development in Ha Long Bay. The purpose of this section is to explore how respondents react to tourism impacts, tourism development and respondents' recommendation for further tourism development in Ha Long.

(5) Abstract of chapter five
The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the study, review its findings, provide implications, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations stemming from the study and from the review of the literature.

It begins with a summary of the study. This section reviews the objectives of study, research hypotheses, research methods, and data analysis.

A summary of the findings and a discussion of findings are then followed. From the quantitative findings, three hypotheses and

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<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<td><strong>Hypothesis 1</strong>: There are significant differences in residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, overall evaluations of tourism impacts, and their support for tourism development based on their socio-demographic characteristics of selected respondents: (1) Age, (2) Gender, (3) Ethnic group, (4) Place of birth, (5) Marital status, (6) Level of education, (7) Monthly income, (8) Job status, (9) Length of residency.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 2</strong>: Residents' socio-demographic characteristics, residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (independent variables) significantly explain residents' evaluations of tourism impacts (dependent variable).</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 3</strong>: Residents' socio-demographic characteristics, residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, residents' evaluations of tourism impacts (independent variables) significantly explain residents' support for tourism development (dependent variable).</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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tourism impacts as benefits than costs and they supported for further tourism development in Ha Long Bay.

The implications and study limitations are then discussed.

Finally, recommendations and suggestions are made for local authorities and for future studies based on the subject of this study.

References

Figure 3. Model showing interrelationships of variables that determine residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, overall evaluations of tourism impacts and support for tourism development.
観光のインパクトに対する地域住民の認知と彼らの観光開発へのサポート

—ベトナム・ハロン湾を例として—

ファム・ホン・ロン

地域住民の観光開発に対するインパクトの認知と住民の態度を理解することは、あらゆるタイプの観光開発の成功とその持続可能性にとって基本的なものである。本研究の主たる目的は、住民の観光の認知を説明するのに役立つモデルを展開することである。本研究におけるモデルは社会的交換理論（social exchange theory）を用いるが、その理論が観光のインパクト（経済的、社会・文化的、そして環境へのインパクト）に対する住民の認知並びに住民のさらなる観光開発に対する彼らの支持を理解し評価するための理論的基礎であるからである。

本研究は、ベトナムのハロン湾において2011年9月～10月に地域住民からの聞き取り調査との自由記述調査に基づいている。研究の結果明らかになったことは、全般的に、回答者は観光を肯定的に見ており、そして観光開発に対して強力に支持していることが示されたことである。回答者は、経済的および社会文化的に観光開発がハロン湾に貢献すると見なしていた。しかしながら、彼らは、観光の環境へのインパクトに関しては僅かではあるが反対の気持ちを持っていた。ハロン湾の回答者は、8つの異なる重要な次元（要素）、すなわち、観光開発に対する支持、経済・社会的費用、環境破壊、文化的豊かさ、経済的便益、物的価値の増加、価格付け、そして一般的便益に対する観光のインパクトを認知（知覚）していた。さらに、本研究では、住民の社会デモグラフィックな属性が観光のインパクトについての彼らの認知と一般的評価に、そして観光開発に対する彼らの支持に影響を及ぼしたことが分かった。また、本研究は、観光のインパクトに対する住民の社会デモグラフィックな属性が観光のインパクトの一般的評価に対する予測因子として働いていたことを実証した。最後に、本研究における発見はまた、住民の社会デモグラフィックな属性、観光のインパクトの認知、そして観光のインパクトの一般的評価がハロン湾における観光開発に対する住民の予測因子として適切であることも示した。それゆえ、本研究で定式化したモデルは、ハロン湾のケースにおいて、住民の観光のインパクト認知と観光開発に対する支持を検討するためのモデルとして適切である。期待したように、本論文における発見は、社会的交換理論が観光の住民の認知と観光に対する態度を検討するためのモデルとして益であることを確信した。観光産業と住民が関わりを相互に持つとき、住民の認知と態度は、事実、観光のインパクトの評価によって影響される。

本研究の事実発見は、ハロン湾の観光開発により生じる問題を理解することに興味を持つ観光地計画主体やデベロッパーに有益であると期待される。本研究における事実発見は住民の観光の認知と観光に対する彼らの態度の理解を概念化することに興味を持っている研究者（特に、ベトナムやハロン湾を研究しようとしている研究者）の助けとなるであろう。

キーワード：地域住民の認知、観光のインパクト、観光開発へのサポート、社会的交換理論、ハロン湾

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