

Is employment at integrated resorts attractive to local residents? : The relationship between perceived personal economic benefits and attitudes towards integrated resorts

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Summary: In March 2019, the Government of Japan selected the Cabinet Order for the Specific Complex Tourism Facility Area Development Act Enforcement Order (a government ordinance related to the integrated resorts (IR) Development Act). As a result, after April 1, 2019, IRs facility requirements were gradually determined. Notably, as the development of laws and regulations progresses, the focus increases on the economic effects symbolised by regional revitalisation. This study considers economic factors to examine how residents perceive IRs and ultimately develop pro-IR behaviour. The concepts used in model creation are social exchange theory and the theory of reasoned action. Based on data derived from 1007 samples, a hypothetical structural model is used to test how perceived personal economic benefits, especially job opportunities at IRs in local communities shape attitudes towards IR and thus determine pro-IR behaviour.

Key words: integrated resorts, regional revitalisation, personal economic benefits, local residents

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I—Introduction

'IR' (integrated resort) is a general term for mixed tourist facilities, combining casino, conference, recreation, exhibition, hospital facilities and other types of facilities that contribute to tourism. The term IR was first used in the debates on casino development considered in Singapore in

approximately 2004 and is now in widespread use.

IRs has become a focus of the tourism industry because they represent a means for promoting tourism without public financing. IRs is one of few policy options which require no public funds but lead to the development of tourism attract private investment with only regulatory changes needed.

Although IRs results in economic benefits for and other positive effects on the community, negative impacts are also a concern. The main three areas of concern are crime and public safety, the dependency syndrome and the impact on youth.

The Japanese government and local authorities have emphasised the economic impacts, represented by an increase in employment and the community revitalisation that accompanies growth in tourism in the region where the IR is being considered; however, local residents can harbour deep unease and have concerns beyond just economic benefits.

Based on this state of affairs, in March 2019, the Japanese government issued the 'Ordinance for Enforcement of the Act on Development in Special Multi-Use Tourist Facility Areas' (Ordinance on IR Development Act), and requirements for future IR facilities will be gradually and subsequently decided.

In this paper, we examine the structure of the relationship between, community revitalisation on the basis of the new jobs created in the locale where IRs are proposed, as touted by the Japanese government and local authorities, and the attitudes and approval or disapproval of the local residents in response to the plan to develop IRs. Thus, we provide suggestions for a framework for policymakers in the Japanese government and local authorities, and for IR-related businesses that aim to encourage mutual understanding, agreement and support from local residents.

II—Literature review and hypotheses

Nunkoo, Smith & Ramkissoon (2013) argue that social exchange theory (SET) and the theory of reasoned action are the most frequently used theoretical frameworks in explaining residents' behaviour and the support of tourism development.

SET has been used to explain the attitude of local residents towards tourism (cf. Ap, 1992; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011a,b; Vargas-Sanchez, Porras-Bueno & Plaza Mejía, 2011; Vargas-Sanchez, Valle, Mendex & Silva, 2015). SET claims that local residents will enthusiastically participate in the exchange if the perceived benefits from tourism development exceed the costs.

The behaviour of local residents in supporting or opposing tourism development has been demonstrated to influence by their attitude towards the effects of tourism (cf. Lepp, 2007; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). This relationship between attitudes and behaviour has been supported (cf. Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma & Carter, 2007; Kwon & Vogt, 2010; Lepp, 2007) by the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). TRA holds that individuals are rational beings who use all information and assess potential outcomes in advance when making decisions (Ajzen, 1985). TRA has provided an explanation in the field of tourism studies for the relationship between the attitude of residents and their approval or disapproval of tourism development (cf. Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma & Carter, 2007; Lepp, 2007).

TRA holds that when an individual perceives behaviour as desirable, the individual tends to follow behaviour patterns dictated by SET. The field of

tourism studies has analysed the relationship between attitudes concerning the effects of tourism and the support of tourism development (cf. Boley & McGehee, 2014; Boley et al., 2014; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Based on the theoretical assumptions of SET and TRA, residents holding a positive attitude towards the effects of tourism tend to support tourism development but are highly likely to oppose tourism development if they believe the costs will outweigh the benefits (cf. Gursoy, Chi & Dyer, 2009; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

These examples in the literature are in line with the context of this paper because they are related to the attitudes held by local residents towards local revitalisation from IR and approval and disapproval of building IRs in the locale. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H.1. There is a positive causal relationship between attitudes towards IRs as a means of revitalising the community, and approval or disapproval for attracting IR to the community.

Researchers have investigated individual economic benefits derived by local residents from tourism and their attitudes towards the effects of tourism development (cf. Boley et al., 2014; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & So, 2016; Perdue et al., 1990). In other words, compared with residents who experienced fewer or no benefits, residents who directly benefitted from tourism have had more favourable attitudes. Similarly, perceived individual benefits from tourism have been a critical factor in explaining support for tourism development (cf. Boley et al., 2014; Ko & Stewart, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Such notions have been grounded theoretically in SET (cf. Ap, 1992; Perdue et al., 1990).

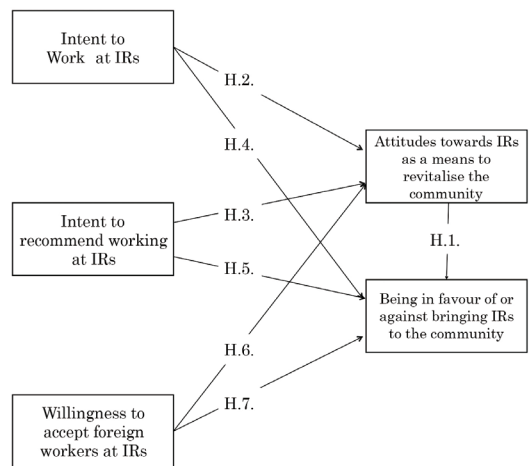


Figure-1. Proposed structural model

We referred to the discussions in the literature to in this study on job creation as an economic benefit as perceived by the individuals, families or their relatives, by means of the following hypotheses:

H.2. There is a positive causal relationship between the intent to work at IRs and attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community.

H.3. There is a positive causal relationship between the intent to make a recommendation to work at IRs and attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community.

H.4. There is a positive causal relationship between the intent to work at IRs and being in favour of or against bringing an IR to the community.

H.5. There is a positive causal relationship between the intent to recommend that someone work at IRs and being in favour of or against bringing an IR into the community.

Woosnam (2012) notes the importance of research on the relationship between the attitude of residents towards tourism and associated development, and feelings towards tourists. In other words, the degree of emotional connection between

residents and tourists may be a critical explanatory factor for attitudes towards tourism and tourism development. However, few examples in tourism literature have addressed feelings towards entities such as IRs establishing a presence. Additionally, little research has been conducted on the willingness to accept the foreign workers that work in tourism development. Therefore, we establish the following hypotheses to focus on the relationship of job creation by IRs to the acceptance of foreign workers.

H.6. There is a positive causal relationship between willingness to accept foreign workers in IRs and attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community

H.7. There is a positive causal relationship between willingness to accept foreign workers in IRs and being for or against bringing an IR into the community.

H.1. through H.7. are illustrated in Figure-1.

III—Quantitative research overview

1) Survey purpose

The relationship between attitudes towards regional revitalisation by IRs and the attraction of IRs to local communities, employment intentions, employment recommendation intentions and foreign worker acceptance intentions, are examined to test the hypotheses.

2) Sampling and data collection

In this paper, we conducted the following investigation to validate the model (Figure-1). The survey period was June 9-10, 2019. The survey methodology was a two-stage internet survey; as a pre-survey, we extracted 1007 samples from a

Sample allocation		count	%
Total		1107	100.0
1	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×30s or younger	52	4.7
2	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×40s	56	5.1
3	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×50s or older	54	4.9
4	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×30s or younger	54	4.9
5	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×40s	60	5.4
6	Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×50s or older	57	5.1
7	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×30s or younger	129	11.7
8	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×40s	123	11.1
9	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×male×50s or older	133	12.0
10	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×30s or younger	127	11.5
11	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×40s	129	11.7
12	outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka×female×50s or older	133	12.0

Table 1. Sample allocation (regional, gender and age) (n = 1107)

monitoring sample of consumers from companies registered for the survey, by city (i.e. Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka) (n = 333) and residents of other regions (m = 774); by gender (male or female); and by age (30s or younger, 40s and 50s or older). From this sample, we gathered answers on a six-point scale to measure attitudes towards IRs as a means of revitalising communities, attitudes towards inviting IRs into the community, intent to work at IRs, intent to recommend a family member to work at IRs, and willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs. Notably, for the regional distribution of the sample, we took approximately 70% of the total residents from areas with a high likelihood of developing IRs (i.e. outside of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka); the sample distribution is presented in Table 1.

3) Results

The questionnaire comprised five items: attitudes towards IRs as a means of revitalising the community, approval or not for developing IRs in the community, intent to work at IRs, intent to recommend a family member work at IRs, and willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs. The scale for answering is as follows: not at all applicable = 1, not applicable = 2, somewhat not applicable = 3,

	Regional revitalisation by means of IRs		Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community		Intent to work at IRs		Intent to recommend family members work at IRs		Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
Total	1107	100	1107	100	1107	100	1107	100	1107	100
1 Not at all applicable	99	8.9	323	29.2	506	45.7	463	41.8	265	23.9
2 Not applicable	185	16.7	200	18.1	193	17.4	196	17.7	148	13.4
3 Somewhat not applicable	275	24.8	283	25.6	212	19.2	273	24.7	299	27
4 Somewhat applicable	359	32.4	192	17.3	139	12.6	126	11.4	286	25.8
5 Somewhat applicable	129	11.7	58	5.2	32	2.9	35	3.2	83	7.5
6 Quite applicable	60	5.4	51	4.6	25	2.3	14	1.3	26	2.3

Table 2. Survey items, measurement scale, simple aggregation (n = 1107)

	n	Average	Standard deviation	Unbiased variance	Standard error	Mini	Maxi	Mean
Regional revitalisation by means of IRs	1107	3.3740	1.2902	1.6647	0.0388	1	6	3
Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	1107	2.6522	1.4235	2.0263	0.0428	1	6	3
Intent to work at IRs	1107	2.1626	1.3219	1.7475	0.0397	1	6	2
Intent to recommend family members work at IRs	1107	2.2014	1.2522	1.5679	0.0376	1	6	2
Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs	1107	2.8663	1.3582	1.8447	0.0408	1	6	3

Table 3. Descriptive statistics (n = 1107)

	Regional revitalisation by means of IRs	Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	Intent to work at IRs	Intent to recommend family members work at IRs	Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs
Regional revitalisation by means of IRs	1.0000	—	—	—	—
Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	0.6257	1.0000	—	—	—
Intent to work at IRs	0.5273	0.6523	1.0000	—	—
Intent to recommend family members work at IRs	0.5661	0.6942	0.8345	1.0000	—
Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs	0.6049	0.6405	0.5379	0.6076	1.0000

Table 4. Correlation matrix

somewhat applicable = 4, applicable = 5 and quite applicable = 6.

‘Survey items, measurement scale, simple aggregation’, ‘descriptive statistics’, and ‘correlation matrix’ are as shown in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4, respectively.

IV—Analysis and discussion

1) Validation Model

Based on the validation model (Figure-1), we validated the relationships between job creation from IRs, attitudes towards regional revitalisation and being in favour of or against bringing IRs into

Variable	Partial regression coefficient	Standard error	Standard partial regression coefficient	F value	t value	P value	Significance
Intent to work at IRs	0.1360	0.0402	0.1393	11.4326	3.3812	0.0007	**
Intent to recommend family members work at IRs	0.2089	0.0451	0.2027	21.4896	4.6357	0.0000	**
Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs	0.3864	0.0272	0.4068	202.5075	14.2305	0.0000	**
Constant term	1.5124	0.0707		457.3601	21.3860	0.0000	**

(Adjusted R: 0.657 ** p < 0.01)

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis with attitude towards IRs as a means of community revitalisation as the dependent variable

Variable	Partial regression coefficient	Standard error	Standard partial regression coefficient	F value	t value	P value	Significance
Regional revitalisation by means of IRs	0.2604	0.0279	0.2361	87.3131	9.3441	0.0000	**
Intent to work at IRs	0.1866	0.0374	0.1733	24.8741	4.9874	0.0000	**
Intent to recommend family members work at IRs	0.3067	0.0421	0.2698	53.0263	7.2819	0.0000	**
Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs	0.2521	0.0273	0.2405	84.9900	9.2190	0.0000	**
Constant term	-0.0279	0.0779		0.1288	-0.3589	0.7197	

(Adjusted R: 0.7750 ** p < 0.01)

Table 6. Multiple regressions with approval or disapproval of inviting IRs into the community as the dependent variable

the community.

First, we performed multiple regression analysis with an attitude towards IRs as a means of revitalising the community as the dependent variable and intent to work in IRs, intent to recommend to someone that they work at IRs, and willingness to accept foreign workers as independent variables. Next, we conducted multiple regression analysis for the approval or disapproval of inviting IRs into the community as the dependent variable, and intent to work in IRs, intent to recommend to someone that they work at IRs and attitudes towards regional revitalisation through IRs as independent variables.

2) Multiple regressions with attitude towards IR was used as a means to revitalise the community as the dependent variable.

From the responses to the question on attitudes towards IR as a means to revitalise the community, we performed multiple regression analysis with attitude towards IRs as a means of revitalising the community as the dependent variable and intent to work, intent to recommend someone work, and willingness to access foreign workers at IRs as independent variables.

The results are presented in Table 5 and were statistically significant at the 1% level for three explanatory variables.

Hypothesised relationship	β	Significance	Supported
H.1. Attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community → Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	0.2604	**	Yes
H.2. Intent to work at IRs → Attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community	0.1360	**	Yes
H.3. Intent to recommend family members work at IRs → Attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community	0.2089	**	Yes
H.4. Intent to work at IRs → Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	0.1866	**	Yes
H.5. Intent to recommend family members work at IRs → Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	0.3067	**	Yes
H.6. Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs → Attitudes towards IRs as a means to revitalise the community	0.3864	**	Yes
H.7. Willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs → Approval or disapproval of developing IRs in the community	0.2521	**	Yes

(** p < 0.01)

Table 7. Hypotheses and verification results

3) Multiple regression analysis with attitude towards inviting IRs into the community as the dependent variable

Next, using the responses to the question on attitudes towards inviting IRs into the community, we performed multiple regression analysis with attitude towards inviting IRs into the community as the dependent variable and intent to work, intent to recommend that someone work, and willingness to accept foreign workers at IRs as independent variables. The results are presented in Table 6. The four explanatory variables were statistically significant at the 1% level (coefficient of determination after adjusting for degrees of freedom was 0.7750).

The two aforementioned multiple regression analyses empirically support hypotheses H.1. through H.7. Further details on the validation results are presented in Table 7.

The support of H.1. demonstrates a point similar to that of Lepp (2007), who argued that local residents with a positive attitude towards individual economic benefits exhibit approval behaviours with regards to tourism development.

Regarding the support of H.2. through H.5., this

result is in line with the claims in the literature on attitudes towards individual economic benefits and the impact of tourism development (cf. McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990; Teye, Sonmez & Sirakaya., 2002) and on the relationship between individual economic benefit and approval or disapproval of tourism development (cf. Boley et al., 2014; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & So, 2016; Perdue et al., 1990). In other words, residents who perceive individual economic benefits from IRs have more favourable attitudes and exhibit approval compared with those who perceive less or no economic benefits.

Finally, the support of H.6. and H.7. validates that the degree of emotional connection between the foreign workers associated with tourism development and local residents (cf. Woosnam, 2012) is a strong explanatory factor for attitudes towards tourism and tourism development.

V—Managerial implications

The findings of this study have valuable managerial implications for policymakers, local governments and IR-related industries attempting to promote regional revitalisation and tourism

promotion through IRs in harmony with local residents. This study also provides tools to better understand the complexity of factors that influence residents' pros and cons regarding IR that are crucial for harmonious growth and sustainability of a local economy.

In this context, all stakeholders responsible for regional revitalisation and sustainable growth management of local communities could consider developing educational programmes to communicate to local residents the benefits of IRs and create educational events for residents to inform them of the significance for their interactions and relationships with IRs.

The perceived personal economic benefits were observed to influence residents' pro-IR attitude and behaviour. In this sense, IR planning in the local community should be at the personal and community level to reflect this beneficence. IR initiatives should be implemented to guarantee local residents and communities benefit economically and socially from IR tourism development. Furthermore, incentives should be incorporated that promote investment in small businesses in local communities and increase local profits.

VI—Limitations and further research

This study analysed the causal relationship between perceived personal economic benefits and attitude towards regional revitalisation by IRs, and residents' pros and cons regarding IRs. This study yielded notable managerial implications but has limitations.

We examined the structure of the relationship between local revitalisation by creating new job opportunities in the community by IRs and the attitudes towards local revitalisation by IRs, and the pros and cons reported by residents regarding attracting local residents to IRs. Consideration of concrete processes and programmes for obtaining residents' mutual understanding, agreement and support regarding the location area of IRs remains a concern in practice and is a challenge for further research.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

NTTCom Online Marketing Solutions Corporation (Headquarters: Tokyo / Japan; CEO & President: Ms. Yoshie Tsukamoto) and Mr. Takayuki Fujimori, a manager of the company, provided significant cooperation on the quantitative data used in this study as a joint research partner.

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation for their cooperation.

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