Resident perceptions of rural tourism impacts: A case study of Donggou village, China

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Outline

- Introduction
- Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses
- Methods and Study Site
- Results and Discussions
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

- Over the last decades rural tourism has risen to become one of the main economic activities in the majority of the rural areas in China.
- The development of rural tourism has led to extensive impacts on the rural tourism communities. Local residents, as the main recipients of the impacts, play a crucial role in the sustainable development of rural tourism.
- In practice, some rural tourism operations contribute minimally to local development, with little or no rural tourism benefits reached by local residents, which eventually leads to the demise of rural tourism.
Numerous studies have examined how rural residents perceive such impacts in their communities. However, these research findings are often contradictory. While several explanations have been provided for these contradictions, the main focus of these studies is to view residents in the community as a single group, rather than examine the variation among local subgroups, and tends to ignore possible differences in residents’ socio-demographic characteristics and their role in rural tourism development.

The absence of an integrative framework for managing the diversity of residents has been identified as a weakness (Bramwell 1999).

This study, with residents in a rural tourism community as the subjects, contributes to building the conceptual framework of the relationship between different resident characteristics and their perceptions of rural tourism impacts.
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Different resident characteristics are treated as two separate entities.

1. Gender  
2. Age  
3. Education level  
4. Involvement in tourism  
5. Residential proximity,  

*Figure 1. The framework of differentiation in resident perception of rural tourism impacts*
Mason and Cheyne (2000) found in their survey of rural New Zealanders that gender differences were revealed concerning positive and negative impacts of the rural tourism. Women were generally more opposed than men to the development on the grounds of perceived negative impacts.

Ritchie’s (1988) study of consensus policy formulation in tourism of Alberta, found that “with respect to the levels of support which men and women might accord to different types of tourism development, men tended to favor mega-events, ski areas and fishing-related development more than did women.”

The conceptual and empirical perspectives from the literature lead to the study hypothesis

Hypothesis 1a. Men have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than women.

Hypothesis 1b. Women have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impact than men.
Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

- H2a. The younger residents have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than the older.
- H2b. The older residents have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impacts than the younger.
- H3a. Residents with less education have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than those with higher education.
- H3b. Residents with higher education have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impacts than those with less education.
- H4a. Residents who are involved in tourism development have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than those who are not involved in.
- H4b. Residents who are not involved in tourism development have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impacts than those who are involved in.
- H5a. Residents who live closer to a destination have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than those who live farther.
- H5b. Residents who live farther from the destination have more perception of rural tourism negative impacts than those who live closer.
- H6a. Residents who have lived less time in a destination have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts than those who have lived in a destination for a longer time.
- H6b. Residents who have lived longer time in a destination have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impacts than those who have lived in a destination for a less time.
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Donggou village, with 201 families, is one of the most popular rural tourism destinations in Dalian.

In 2005, Donggou village was one of the first 100 national rural tourism demonstration projects in China.

In 2010, 230,000 visitors visited Donggou village and more than 30% of the rural households in the village were involved in local rural tourism development.
Study site

- The main attractions of Donggou village are its outstanding natural scenery of mountains, custom of “Man” minority, hot spring, rural accommodations, and all kinds of fruits picking, including cherry, apple, grape and strawberry.
Methodology

- Based on a comprehensive review of available literature, a comprehensive listing of the rural tourism impacts was generated. The scale containing 20 Likert-scale items was utilized to measure resident perceptions of positive rural tourism impacts (11 items) and negative rural tourism impacts (9 items).

- A personal interview survey was used for data collection during May and early July 2011. A self-completion questionnaire was available to those who prefer to respond to the questionnaire on their own.

- Data analysis was performed in two stages. In the first stage, reliability analysis was conducted using SPSS (ver.16.0) to evaluate the stability and consistency of the measured items. In the second stage, to examine where the subgroups were both similar and different with respect to resident perceptions of rural tourism, Independent-Samples T Test was used to compare mean response values on the perceptual measures across the six subgroups.
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**Results and Discussions**

● **Reliability analysis**

An acceptable measurement scale should assess the stability and consistency of measured items for each latent variable.

The CITC of items are both above 0.3. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of perceived tourism positive and negative impacts were over 0.70. The results showed that the scale (21 items) to evaluate resident perception of rural tourism impact is reliable, thus supporting the use of these items in the scale.
Results and Discussions

- In this study, The Independent Sample T-Test was used to determine if each mean of resident different characteristics differs significantly between resident perceptions of rural tourism positive and negative impacts at the .05 level of probability.
Results and Discussions

- Evaluation of hypotheses -- Resident perceptions of rural tourism positive impact

Table 2: Differentiation of Resident Perceptions of Rural Tourism Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Characteristic</th>
<th>Perception of rural tourism impact</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
<th>means</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
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<td>3.254</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>4.1191</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Refused</td>
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<td>Length of Residence</td>
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</table>

A statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores of gender, age, involvement in tourism and residential proximity.
Results and Discussions

- Evaluation of hypotheses—Resident perceptions of rural tourism negative impact

A statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores of education level and length of residence, H3b was accepted. But it was found that residents who lived shorter in the destination had more perception of rural tourism negative impacts than those who lived longer, with the mean value being 3.3 and 2.9 respectively. This result was opposite from H6b, Hypothesis6b was rejected.
Results and Discussions

In the present study, six variables, which were age, gender, education level, involvement in tourism, residential proximity and length of residence, were tested. It was found that none of these six variables had a significant difference existing in the perception of rural tourism impacts, **both positive and negative**. The finding revealed that previous research which considered resident perception of tourism impacts as one dimension instead of two dimensions (positive and negative) was inappropriate.
our variables, namely gender, age, involvement in tourism and residential proximity, had the significant difference in resident perception of rural tourism positive impacts. Two variables, education level and length of residence, had illustrated the differentiation in resident perception of rural tourism negative impacts. The phenomenon shows that residents in this case study had paid more attention to rural tourism positive impacts compared with the negative ones.
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- With respect to resident perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts, it has been noted that statistically significant differences have been found in residents’ gender, age, involvement in tourism and residential proximity and no statistically significant differences are tested in residents’ education level and length of residence. Men have more perceptions of tourism positive impacts than women. Those residents with young age, getting involved in tourism and living closer to the destination have more perceptions of rural tourism positive impacts.
In reference to residents perceiving rural tourism negative impacts, no significant differences have been detected in the mean scores between gender, age, involvement in tourism and residential proximity. There are significant differences in residents’ education level and length of residence. Residents with high education levels and shorter stay at the community have more perceptions of rural tourism negative impacts.

Conclusion
Governors are supposed to focus on the opportunity of perceptions of rural tourism positive impact. As for those of male, young people, involved in tourism and living in scenic spots, they tend to support the development of rural tourism and would love to participate in the activities of rural tourism. But for those of higher education or living in scenic spots for a shorter time, governors should carefully launch and design rural tourism products to decrease their perceptions of negative impacts and gain their support.
Thank you very much!