

**DETERMINANTS OF
URBAN RESIDENTS' PERCEIVED TOURISM IMPACTS:
A STUDY ON THE WILLIAMSBURG AND VIRGINIA BEACH AREAS**

by

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ABSTRACT

The existing research in the field of tourism has exhibited a clearer understanding of how residents perceive the dynamic and complex phenomena of tourism. Since the goals of tourism planning and development are to seek maximization of benefits and minimization of the costs of tourism, it is apparent that the effective evaluation of tourism impacts will be valuable information in successful strategies for tourism product development and operation. With these perspectives, this study attempted to investigate the underlying dimensions explaining residents' perceived tourism impacts and to identify relationships between determinants and residents' perceived tourism impacts.

The social exchange theory provided a fundamental framework for this study. The dimensions of the tourism impacts were addressed by explicating economic, social/cultural, environmental/physical impacts of tourism development from literature review. Ten determinants which affect residents' perception were identified from past research on tourism impacts: birthplace,

length of residency, community attachment, tourism related jobs, recreational activity, tourist contacts, tourism policy participation, travel experience, levels of tourism development, and growth of community.

Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Newport News MSAs areas were selected as the study area because these areas provide fine multifaceted tourism attractions, generates many tourists, and influences the host community' life. A total of 316 useful respondents (13.2%) were analyzed by using the SPSS program. Two research questions were proposed. Factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANAOVA) were performed.

From the findings of this study, residents perceived the impacts of tourism as five different dimensions embodying economic benefits, social costs, cultural enrichment, environmental deterioration, and physical enhancement. Their perceptions were affected by eight out of ten determinants. Generally, a higher level of tourism development and growth of community affects residents' perceptions of tourism impacts. Residents who were natives, who have higher community attachment, and who had been living in the research area for a shorter time period had more concerns about the perceived impacts of tourism. In addition, perceived tourism impacts were significantly differed across household incomes and ethnic groups.

For future study, it is suggested that a further investigation of determinants affecting residents' perceptions is needed for better understanding and explanation of the impacts of tourism. It is believed that this study would help tourism planners and developers formulate and implement better strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and innermost feelings toward many people that have assisted and supported me. Without their words of encouragement and contributions, I would not have been able to complete this project and my master program at Virginia Tech. Foremost is Dr. Joseph S. Chen, committee chair, who provides patience and guideline at every phase of this project. His contributions and efforts on my behalf are gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to thank Dr. Muzzafer Uysal and Dr Eliza Tse for agreeing to be a committee member of my academic development and for their invaluable academic assistance throughout this research project. Dr. Uysal has provided unlimited advice and commitment to help me sustain my academic journey of life. I also thank Dr. Tse for providing useful feedback and suggestions that have added significantly to the quality of my work.

I also owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Eunsil Lee who has provided me with love and patience. Without her unwavering support and devotion, the completion of any part of my life would not have been possible. In addition, my warmest thanks are reserved for my family, relatives, and friends. Lastly, this little achievement is dedicated to my mother. I miss you.

TABLE OF COTENTS

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF COTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Objective of the Study	4
Contributions of the Study	5
Definitions of Terms	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Introduction	8
Theoretical Background of the Study	9
Social Exchange Theory	10
Dimensions of Tourism Impacts	12
Economic Impacts of Tourism	13
Social/Culture Impacts of Tourism	14
Physical/Environmental Impacts of Tourism	16
Determinants of Residents' Perceived Tourism Impacts	17
Birth Place	18
Length of Residency	18
Community Attachment	19
Tourism Related Jobs	20
Recreation Activities	20
Tourist Contacts	21
Tourism Policy Participation	21
Levels of Tourism Development	22
Growth of Community	22
Travel Experiences	23
Summary of Theoretical Background	23

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
Introduction	24
Research Site	25
Research Framework	26
Research Questions	28
Research Design	28
Population	28
Random Sampling	29
Sample Size	30
Data Collection Method	31
Survey Instrument and Scaling	31
Determinants of Residents' Perception	32
Perceived Tourism Impacts.....	34
Pre-Test of Survey Instrument	36
Validity and Reliability	37
Data Analysis	37
Summary of Research Methodology	23
Chapter IV RESULTS	39
Introduction	39
Analysis of Overall Survey results.....	40
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	41
Non-response Bias Tests	43
Determinant Characteristics of Respondents	48
Analysis of Perceived Tourism Impacts	47
Underlying Dimensions of Perceived Tourism Impacts	50
Research Question One	50
A Relationship of Determinants and Perceived Tourism Impacts -	55
Research Question Two	55
Determinants and Perceived Economic Benefits ----	56
Determinants and Perceived Social Costs	58
Determinants and Perceived Cultural Enrichment --	60
Determinants and Perceived Environmental	
Deterioration	60
Determinants and Perceived Physical Enhancement	63
Demographic differences on Perceived Tourism Impacts --	65
Summary of the Findings	67
Summary of Research Question One	67
Summary of Research Question Two	68

Chapter V CONCLUSION	71
Summary of the Study	71
Theoretical Standpoint	72
Methodological Standpoint	73
Summary of General Findings	73
Results of Statistical Analysis	74
Discussion on Determinants and Perceived Tourism Impacts	76
Implication for Tourism Planning and Development	77
Limitations of the Study	79
Suggestion for Future Research	80
 REFERENCES	 81
APPENDIX	90

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Geographic Distribution Profile of Survey -----	29
Table 3.2	Determinants of Residents' Perception -----	33
Table 3.3	Tourism Impacts Assessment Items -----	35
Table 4.1	Overall Response Rate -----	40
Table 4.2	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents -----	42
Table 4.3	Determinants of Respondents -----	45
Table 4.4	Tourism Impact Assessment Attributes -----	48
Table 4.5	Factor Analysis of Tourism Impact Attributes -----	52
Table 4.6	Regression Analysis of Determinants on Perceived Economic Benefits -----	57
Table 4.7	Regression Analysis of Determinants on Perceived Social Costs -----	59
Table 4.8	Regression Analysis of Determinants on Perceived Cultural Enrichment -----	61
Table 4.9	Regression Analysis of Determinants on Perceived Environmental Deterioration -----	62
Table 4.10	Regression Analysis of Determinants on the Physical Enhancement -----	64
Table 4.11	Summary of MANOVA and ANOVA on Perceive Tourism Impacts -----	66
Table 4.12	Relationship of Determinants and Perceived Tourism Impacts -----	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	A Proposed Model of Determinants and Dimensions of Perceived Tourism Impacts-----	27
Figure 4.1	Summary of Testing for Hypothesis One -----	68
Figure 5.1	Determinants of Residents' Perceived Tourism Impacts Model -----	76