

Community Participation and Place Identity as Mediators on the Impact of Resident Social Capital on Support Intention for Festival Tourism

Authors : Nien-Te Kuo, Yi-Sung Cheng, Kuo-Chien Chang

Abstract : Cultural festival tourism is now seen by many as an opportunity to facilitate community development because it has significant influences on the economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of local communities. The potential for tourist attraction has been recognized as a useful tool to strengthen local economies from governments. However, most community festivals in Taiwan are short-lived, often only lasting for a few years or occasionally not making it past a one-off event. Researchers suggested that most governments and other stakeholders do not recognize the importance of building a partnership with residents when developing community tourism. Thus, the sustainable community tourism development still remains a key issue in the existing literature. The success of community tourism is related to the attitudes and lifestyles of local residents. In order to maintain sustainable tourism, residents need to be seen as development partners. Residents' support intention for tourism development not only helps to increase awareness of local culture, history, the natural environment, and infrastructure, but also improves the interactive relationship between the host community and tourists. Furthermore, researchers have identified the social capital theory as the core of sustainable community tourism development. The social capital of residents has been seen as a good way to solve issues of tourism governance, forecast the participation behavior and improve support intention of residents. In addition, previous studies have pointed out the role of community participation and place identity in increasing resident support intention for tourism development. A lack of place identity is one of the main reasons that community tourism has become a mere formality and is not sustainable. It refers to how much residents participate during tourism development and is mainly influenced by individual interest. Scholars believed that the place identity of residents is the soul of community festivals. It shows the community spirit to visitors and has significant impacts on tourism benefits and support intention of residents in community tourism development. Although the importance of community participation and place identity have been confirmed by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, real-life execution still needs to be improved. This study aimed to use social capital theory to investigate the social structure between community residents, participation levels in festival tourism, degrees of place identity, and resident support intention for future community tourism development, and the causal relationship that these factors have with cultural festival tourism. A quantitative research approach was employed to examine the proposed model. Structural equation model was used to test and verify the proposed hypotheses. This was a case study of the Kaohsiung Zuoying Wannian Folklore Festival. The festival was located in the Zuoying District of Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. The target population of this study was residents who attended the festival. The results reveal significant correlations among social capital, community participation, place identity and support intention. The results also confirm that impacts of social capital on support intention were significantly mediated by community participation and place identity. Practical suggestions were provided for tourism operators and policy makers. This work was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology of Taiwan, Republic of China, under the grant MOST-105-2410-H-328-013.

Keywords : community participation, place identity, social capital, support intention

Conference Title : ICCTOLD 2017 : International Conference on Creative Tourism and Local Development

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : August 07-08, 2017