



The Role of Place Attachment and Tourism Impacts on Residents' Support for Tourism Development

O papel do Apego ao Lugar e os Impactos do Turismo no Apoio dos Residentes ao Desenvolvimento Turístico

Muhammed Taş 

Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, Vocational School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, Erzincan, Türkiye, muhammed.tas@erzincan.edu.tr

Erkan Güneş 

Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, Vocational School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Department of Travel-Tourism and Entertainment Services, Erzincan, Türkiye, egunes@erzincan.edu.tr

Gürkan Alagöz 

Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, Vocational School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, Erzincan, Türkiye, galagoz@erzincan.edu.tr

Abdullah Uslu* 

*Corresponding Author

Akdeniz University, Manavgat Tourism Faculty, Tourism Management Department, Türkiye, auslu@akdeniz.edu.tr

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effect of residents' place attachment (PA) on support for tourism development (STD) within the framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET). Additionally, the study seeks to examine the moderating role of residents' perceptions of the positive (PI) and negative (NI) impacts of tourism in this interaction. The research population consists of residents living in Divriği, Sivas, Türkiye. A total of 307 samples were collected using convenience sampling via a survey. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS, and the PROCESS Macro was used to test the proposed model. The findings indicate that PA has a significant and positive effect on STD. PI serves as a moderator that strengthens the relationship between PA and STD, whereas NI weakens this effect. The study demonstrates that enhancing PA can strongly encourage residents' STD behaviours, particularly with the contribution of PI. Therefore, measures should be taken to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and increase local support for tourism.

Keywords: Place attachment, Tourism impacts, support for tourism development, Residents.

Resumo

O objetivo principal deste estudo é investigar o efeito do apego ao lugar dos residentes no apoio ao desenvolvimento do turismo no âmbito da Teoria da Troca Social. Além disso, o estudo procura examinar o papel moderador das percepções dos residentes sobre os impactos positivos e negativos do turismo nesta interação. Foram inquiridos residentes que vivem em Divriği, Sivas, Turquia e obtidos 307 questionários usando o método de amostragem por conveniência. As análises estatísticas foram feitas com o SPSS e AMOS, e o PROCESS Macro foi utilizado para testar o modelo proposto. Os resultados indicam que o apego ao lugar tem um efeito significativo e positivo no apoio ao desenvolvimento do turismo. A percepção dos impactos positivos serve como um moderador que fortalece a relação entre o apego ao lugar e o apoio ao desenvolvimento do turismo, enquanto a percepção dos impactos negativos enfraquece essa relação. O estudo demonstra que o aumento do apego ao lugar pode incentivar fortemente os comportamentos de apoio ao desenvolvimento turístico dos residentes, particularmente com a contribuição da percepção dos impactos positivos. Portanto, medidas devem ser tomadas para mitigar os impactos negativos do turismo e aumentar o apoio dos residentes ao turismo.

Palavras-chave: Apego ao lugar, Impactos do turismo, Apoio ao desenvolvimento do turismo, Residentes.

1. Introduction

Tourism activities can significantly contribute to regional economic development. Therefore, local and national governments make considerable efforts to initiate and promote tourism to improve regional and resident economic conditions. However, these initiatives are believed to be more successful when residents' attitudes toward tourism are taken into account (Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008).

Tourism researchers have long recognised the importance of gaining residents' support for the development of a successful tourism industry (Sirakaya et al., 2002). Consequently, residents' attitudes toward tourism and, more specifically, their perceptions of tourism impacts have been a subject of research for an extended period (Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Since the 1970s, extensive research has examined residents' attitudes toward tourism development, aiming to identify factors that may influence these attitudes (Gursoy et al., 2019). Residents' perceptions of tourism development are shaped by several factors, including their level of involvement in the tourism industry, personal values, and perceived tourism impacts (Rathod & Sawant, 2024).



Tourism development is increasingly recognised as a powerful strategy for revitalising communities (Liang & Hui, 2016). Researchers are placing greater emphasis on residents' support in promoting tourism development (Sharma & Dyer, 2009), and this topic is attracting increasing interest among academics (Afthanorhan et al., 2017). Early research on support for tourism development (STD) assumed that residents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism development were relatively homogeneous, driven by shared cultural backgrounds and social environments. These studies assumed that residents either supported or opposed tourism development. However, researchers soon realised that this assumption was invalid, as many early studies reported significant differences in residents' attitudes toward tourism development within settlements (Gursoy et al., 2019).

Understanding the variables that influence residents' perceptions and support for tourism development is crucial for planners to manage the tourism sector and its challenges more effectively. One of the key concepts influencing residents' support for tourism development is place attachment (PA) (Ganji et al., 2020). PA is worth examining as it is associated with various critical processes (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In the context of tourism, PA has been studied as a factor shaping residents' attitudes toward tourism development (Stylidis, 2018). However, limited knowledge exists regarding the impact of PA on residents' perceived value of tourism development and their supportive behaviours (Ganji et al., 2020). Moreover, gaps exist in the literature regarding the influence of PA on residents' attitudes toward tourism development in developing countries (Eusébio et al., 2018).

Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts have a strong effect on their support for tourism development, a finding supported by numerous studies (Erul et al., 2020; Erul et al., 2023; Erul et al., 2024a; Erul et al., 2024b; Gursoy et al., 2019; Perdue et al., 1990; Sirakaya et al., 2002; Stylidis et al., 2014; Uslu et al., 2020; Uslu et al., 2023; Uslu et al., 2024; Woo et al., 2015). Tourism development occurs in diverse environments, each with unique characteristics, and resident support is essential for its success. This development can sometimes be unplanned, making it crucial for planners to gain residents' support by considering their perceptions and attitudes toward tourism. These perceptions can be both positive and negative (Dyer et al., 2007; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008). Understanding the combination of factors influencing residents' attitudes is essential for determining how these factors are over- or underestimated across contexts (Cañizares et al., 2014). Residents' perceptions of potential tourism impacts can shape their active and passive attitudes toward destination development. Given the importance of residents as key stakeholders in tourism development, their support for tourism is closely linked to the success of destinations in tourism-related endeavours (Ativetin & Widtayakornbundit, 2025; Qin et al., 2021).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been the most frequently used theoretical framework for examining residents' attitudes toward tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2019). SET contributes to understanding the relationship between residents' perceptions and their support for tourism development (Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2015). According to SET, residents expect to exchange the benefits they receive from tourism for something of equal value (Sirakaya et al., 2002). Based on SET, residents who perceive that the benefits of the tourism industry outweigh its costs are more likely to support tourism development and engage in exchange interactions to pursue value. Thus, SET assesses how residents' perceptions of tourism costs and benefits are influenced by exchange interactions (Eslami et al., 2019). The SET framework has been widely adopted in numerous studies to contextualise the relationship between residents' perceived tourism impacts and their support for tourism (Alagöz et al., 2023; Qin et al., 2021).

This study investigates the effect of PA on STD. Additionally, it aims to provide further theoretical insights by examining the moderating role of perceived positive (PI) and negative (NI) tourism impacts on the relationship between PA and STD. In summary, this study has three main objectives. First, it aims to examine the effect of PA on STD. Second, it investigates the moderating role of PI in the relationship between PA and STD. Third, it examines the moderating role of NI in the relationship between PA and STD. The research site selected for this study is Divriği/Sivas (Türkiye). Divriği stands out as a destination for its Great Mosque and Hospital of Divriği, which were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985. As a region where tourism is only beginning to develop, this study on STD in Divriği is expected to make a significant contribution to research and planning in this field. Within this scope, the study first presents the conceptual framework and reviews the relevant literature supporting the development of the hypothesis. Subsequently, the methodology, results, discussion of findings, and theoretical and practical implications are presented.

2. Literature review

2.1 Place Attachment

The positive attachment that individuals develop toward a specific place is a crucial component of the human-environment relationship (Manzo, 2005). The emotional bond that individuals establish with the places they inhabit or attribute meaning to is generally considered a strong and positive interaction (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). People form emotional connections with places where they were born and raised, where they live, or where they dream of living, and these bonds shape their individual identities and social belonging. However, this attachment to place can sometimes strengthen social solidarity while, at other times, lead to conflicts and tensions (Giuliani, 2003). PA specifically refers to connections based on activities that occur within a particular



environment (Gu & Ryan, 2008). It is a significant measure for assessing the potential impact of development on a local community (Mohamed et al., 2022; Yankholmes & McKercher, 2019). PA serves as a fundamental framework for decision-making by individuals or communities. This attachment encompasses the way an individual identifies with a particular place and the extent to which that place meets their psychological and social needs (Quinn et al., 2015). Therefore, PA has been applied in tourism studies to understand person-place relationships better and to manage and market tourism destinations effectively (Aguilar-Rivero et al., 2025; Dwyer et al., 2019; Tasci et al., 2022).

2.2 Impacts of Tourism

Since tourism is a place-based phenomenon, tourism activities can generate both positive and negative impacts on the destinations where they occur (Ap, 1992). These impacts can transform the structural and social dynamics of a destination in various ways (GhulamRabbany et al., 2013; Joo et al., 2019; Nunkoo & Smith, 2013; Sharpley, 2014).

Tourism is a significant economic activity that directly and indirectly influences the host country's economy through multiplier effects (Comerio & Strozzi, 2019). The positive economic impacts of tourism include contributions to the balance of payments, income growth, investment stimulation, employment generation, regional development, and poverty alleviation (Ap, 1992; Mayer & Vogt, 2016). However, negative economic impacts such as opportunity costs, regional inflation, seasonal fluctuations, import dependency, and income inequality can also be observed (Icoz & Icoz, 2019).

The sociocultural impacts of tourism encompass changes affecting societies and cultures at both national and international levels (Tekin & Rahimi, 2019). Positive effects include promoting local pride, enhancing intercultural communication, and preserving cultural heritage (George, 2015). Conversely, negative effects involve increased crime rates, changes in social values, and a decline in the quality of artistic works (Cook et al., 2010; Fletcher et al., 2013).

The environmental impacts of tourism are particularly concentrated on fragile ecosystems (Ghobadi & Verdian, 2016). Tourism can foster environmental awareness, improve the destination's image, and promote the conservation of natural resources (Gössling, 2000; Imran et al., 2014). However, in the absence of proper planning, it may also lead to biodiversity loss, environmental pollution, and excessive use of natural resources (GhulamRabbany et al., 2013). Therefore, sustainable planning and awareness-raising activities are necessary to minimise environmental damage (Alagöz et al., 2023; Matias et al., 2022). Thus, destination managers must comprehensively evaluate the various economic, sociocultural, and environmental consequences of tourism. Such an evaluation is crucial for effective planning, minimising negative outcomes, and maximising overall benefits.

2.3 Support for Tourism Development

For tourism activities to take place smoothly and sustainably in a destination, the active participation and support of residents are essential. Understanding and seeking this support is of great importance for local governments, policymakers, and businesses operating in the tourism sector (Dyer et al., 2007; Erul & Uslu, 2022; Hossain et al., 2025; Lee, 2013; Styliadis et al., 2014; Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2015). Therefore, effective communication mechanisms should be established to understand residents' needs and concerns in the planning and implementation of tourism activities, and the necessary conditions should be met to secure their support.

The active participation of residents in the planning, decision-making, and implementation of tourism-related activities is recognised as a fundamental component of sustainable tourism development (Nugroho & Numata, 2022). Resident participation not only supports regional development but is also considered a critical factor in ensuring the long-term social, cultural, and environmental sustainability of tourism activities. In particular, if the needs, expectations, and interests of both visitors and residents are not taken into account during the tourism planning process, it is predicted that tourism activities may increasingly cause negative environmental impacts that are difficult to reverse (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). Environmental degradation, excessive consumption of natural resources, and pressures on regional ecosystems are among the most significant problems that may arise from unplanned tourism development. In this context, residents' participation in tourism development plays a vital role in aligning tourism activities with regional characteristics and in taking measures to conserve natural resources. Therefore, the long-term success of the tourism sector and the sustainability of destinations should not focus solely on economic benefits but should be integrated with an approach that prioritises social development as well (Woo et al., 2015). Strengthening the integration among tourism management, community planning, and development processes is a critical necessity to enhance residents' well-being and enable destinations to adopt sustainable tourism practices. Consequently, the support and cooperation of residents are indispensable for achieving sustainable tourism development. Adopting an inclusive approach and making residents an integral part of the process will yield beneficial outcomes for tourism development.



2.4 Place Attachment and Support for Tourism Development

Changes in activities within a location due to tourism are inevitable. In studies of residents' attitudes, place attachment (PA) is among the most prominent non-economic concepts used to explain why residents support or oppose tourism development (Strzelecka et al., 2017). PA has been widely researched in various social domains, including tourism (Erul et al., 2024b; Tasci et al., 2022; Tosun et al., 2025). Scholars agree that residents who feel emotionally attached to their community adopt different approaches when assessing the impacts of tourism compared to those with lower levels of attachment. However, there is no clear consensus on whether this relationship is positive or negative (Stylidis, 2018).

Eusébio et al. (2018) found that PA is positively related to support for tourism development (STD). Residents with higher levels of PA view tourism development more favourably than those with lower PA (Stylidis, 2018). A study by Hu et al. (2019) determined that PA mediates the relationship between destination social responsibility and residents' pro-tourism behaviours. Similarly, research conducted in Taiwan by Zhang and Lei (2010) found that PA significantly affects residents' intentions to participate in tourism development. Studies on Macao residents also indicate that PA positively contributes to support for sustainable tourism development (Man Cheng et al., 2022). Likewise, a study conducted with a sample of Manavgat residents found that as residents' PA levels increase, their support for sustainable tourism development also increases significantly (Aytekin et al., 2023). In light of the literature, it can be assumed that PA has a positive effect on STD. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: PA has a significant and positive effect on STD.

2.5 Perceived Impacts (PI) and Negative Impacts (NI) as Moderators

Tourism can significantly impact local communities, and ensuring the sustainable development of a destination is challenging without residents' support and participation. The development of tourism can lead to both positive and negative outcomes for destination communities (Su et al., 2018). The approach that considers the perceived impacts of tourism on residents in a two-dimensional manner (typically categorised as positive perceptions and negative perceptions) has been widely used in previous research (Celik & Rasoolimanesh, 2023; Eusébio et al., 2018; Gannon et al., 2021; Gursoy et al., 2019; Güneş, 2022; Karacabey & Erul, 2024; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Su et al., 2018; Uslu et al., 2020; Uslu et al., 2023).

During their travels, most tourists interact with residents. These individuals are particularly sensitive to the adverse effects of increased tourist traffic in their area. While the economic prosperity tourism brings is undeniable, residents may also face negative consequences (Gautam, 2023). Support for tourism development (STD) is influenced by residents' attitudes toward both the positive and negative impacts of tourism (Eusébio et al., 2018). Residents' positive, negative, or neutral perceptions of tourism play a crucial role in shaping their attitudes toward it (Celik & Rasoolimanesh, 2023). It has been suggested that the more positively residents perceive the various impacts of tourism, the more they support STD, whereas a more negative perception results in decreased support for STD (Stylidis et al., 2014). Gannon et al. (2021) found that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts play a significant mediating role in shaping the relationship between PA and STD. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that residents' positive perceptions of tourism positively influence their support for tourism development, while negative perceptions adversely affect their support. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: PI has a moderating role in the relationship between PA and STD.

H3: NI has a moderating role in the relationship between PA and STD.

Thus, perceived PI positively influences the relationship between PA and STD, while perceived NI negatively influences it.

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

This study was conducted in Divriği, Sivas (Türkiye). Divriği is one of Sivas's prominent tourism centres, distinguished by its natural and cultural richness. The history of Divriği dates back to the Hittite period, and it was one of the significant cities of the Anatolian Seljuk State. One of Türkiye's most remarkable architectural structures, the Divriği Great Mosque and Hospital, which is also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the region's most valuable monument (Akbulut Özpınar, 2019). The mosque and hospital complex, dating back to the early 13th century, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 (UNESCO, 2025). Tourism activities in Divriği are predominantly culture and cultural heritage-based, exhibit a high degree of seasonality, and are mainly concentrated in the spring and summer months. Compared to major destinations, the district is characterised by limited tourism infrastructure and a relatively low level of tourism intensity. In this context, Divriği can be considered an emerging cultural tourism destination where tourism development has begun to take shape. According to the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and



Tourism (2025), there are eight certified accommodation establishments and one certified food and beverage establishment in the district of Divriği. Consequently, Divriği is emerging as a cultural tourism destination where tourism development has begun to take shape.

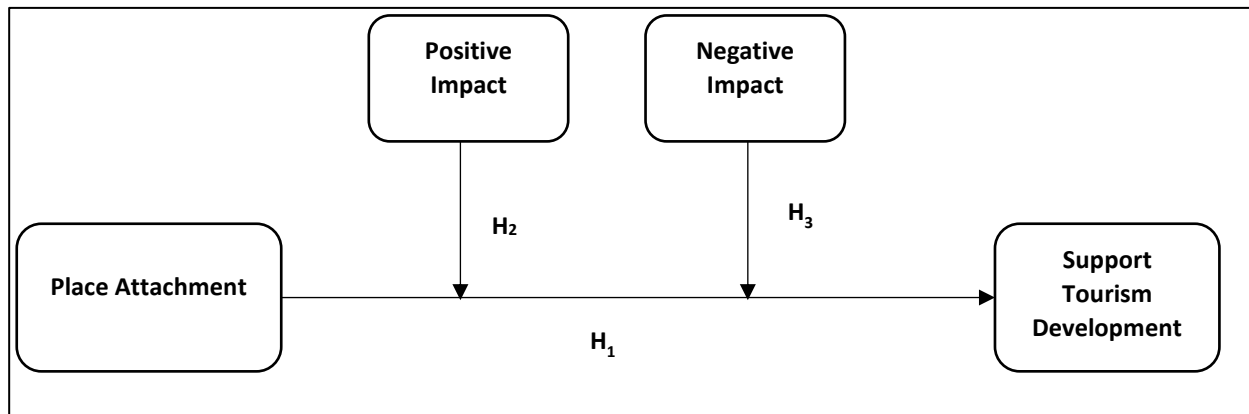
This study aims to examine the moderating role of perceived tourism impacts in the relationship between residents' place attachment (PA) and their support for tourism development (STD). The conceptual model developed within this framework is presented in Figure 1. A survey technique was employed as the data collection method.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of four sections. The first section included questions about participants' demographic characteristics. The second section measured PA using the scale developed by Eusébio et al. (2018) and adapted by Türkmen and Saatçı (2020). To assess the perceived impacts of tourism (both positive [PI] and negative [NI]), the scale developed by Qin et al. (2021) was used. The STD scale was adapted from the studies of Palmer et al. (2013) and Harrison-Walker (2001) by Megeirhi et al. (2020). Participants responded to the statements using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

In line with the objectives of the study, data were collected through face-to-face interviews with residents aged 18 and above living in the central district of Divriği who voluntarily participated in the survey between January 25 and February 15, 2025. According to 2023 data, the central district population of Divriği is 10,715 (TÜİK, 2025). Using convenience sampling, data were collected from 330 residents of Divriği. After eliminating incomplete and incorrectly filled questionnaires, analyses were conducted on 307 valid responses. The sample size was deemed sufficient based on the ratio of survey items to participants (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

The collected data were analysed using SPSS, AMOS, and Process Macro. Since the data followed a normal distribution (skewness: -0.934, 0.782; kurtosis: -0.407, -0.129), parametric hypothesis tests were applied. Descriptive statistical analyses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Pearson correlation analysis were conducted. Finally, a simple moderation effect was examined using SPSS Process Macro Model 1.

Figure 1 - Research model



Source: own elaboration.

3.2 Measurements Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 1 presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the measurement model, along with composite and discriminant validity and goodness-of-fit indices.

Table 1. Measurements Model

| Variable | Item | \bar{x} | s.e | Factor Loading | CA | CR | AVE |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----------|------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Place Attachment (PA) (3.71-0.86) | PA1 | 3.97 | 0.92 | 0.803 | 0.938 | 0.935 | 0.675 |
| | PA2 | 3.96 | 0.93 | 0.917 | | | |
| | PA4 | 3.96 | 0.94 | 0.929 | | | |
| | PA5 | 3.45 | 1.17 | 0.815 | | | |
| | PA6 | 3.85 | 0.96 | 0.844 | | | |
| | PA7 | 2.99 | 1.20 | 0.639 | | | |
| | PA8 | 3.82 | 0.99 | 0.766 | | | |
| | PI1 | 3.25 | 1.04 | 0.730 | | | |



| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | PI2 | 2.99 | 1.08 | 0.885 | | | |
| | PI3 | 2.85 | 1.06 | 0.941 | | | |
| Perception Of Tourism Positive Impacts (PI) (3.02-0.88) | PI4 | 2.68 | 1.01 | 0.900 | | | |
| | PI5 | 3.29 | 1.05 | 0.668 | | | |
| | PI6 | 2.78 | 1.05 | 0.923 | | | |
| | PI7 | 2.73 | 1.04 | 0.885 | | | |
| | PI8 | 3.57 | 1.00 | 0.540 | | | |
| | | <hr/> | | | | | |
| Perception Of Tourism Negative Impacts (NI) (3.97-0.105) | NI1 | 4.15 | 1.14 | 0.946 | | | |
| | NI2 | 4.10 | 1.20 | 0.968 | 0.897 | 0.915 | 0.737 |
| | NI3 | 4.21 | 1.11 | 0.897 | | | |
| | NI4 | 3.42 | 1.35 | 0.557 | | | |
| | <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Support For Tourism Development (STD) (2.84-0.97) | STD5 | 2.75 | 1.05 | 0.888 | | | |
| | STD6 | 2.72 | 1.03 | 0.955 | 0.910 | 0.915 | 0.782 |
| | STD7 | 3.04 | 1.08 | 0.805 | | | |
| | <hr/> | | | | | | |
| Fornell-Larcker | Variable | MSV | MaxR(H) | PA | PI | NI | STD |
| | PA | 0.161 | 0.952 | 0.821 | | | |
| | PI | 0.247 | 0.965 | 0.215 | 0.821 | | |
| | NI | 0.112 | 0.966 | 0.04 | -0.199 | 0.858 | |
| | STD | 0.247 | 0.941 | 0.401 | 0.497 | -0.335 | 0.885 |
| | <hr/> | | | | | | |
| | CMIN/DF=3.118; CFI=0.940; IFI=0.940; TLI=0.927; RMSEA=0.083; SRMR=0.783 | | | | | | |

Source: Survey's data.

Table 1 presents the CFA conducted using AMOS 24. One item from the PA scale (PA3) and four items from the STD scale (STD1, STD2, STD3, and STD4) were removed from the analysis due to factor loadings below 0.5. The analysis results indicated that the measurement model met acceptable fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 3.118$, CFI = 0.940, IFI = 0.940, TLI = 0.927, RMSEA = 0.083, and SRMR = 0.783 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

To assess the internal consistency of all scales, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) scores were examined. To assess the internal consistency of all scales, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) scores were examined. The Cronbach's alpha values were 0.938 for the PA scale, 0.945 for the PI scale, 0.897 for the NI scale, and 0.910 for the STD scale. All scores were above 0.7, it was concluded that all dimensions were reliable (Can, 2018)., and since all scores were above 0.7, it was concluded that all dimensions were reliable (Can, 2018). In terms of composite and discriminant validity, CR should be above 0.7, AVE should exceed 0.5, and CR should be greater than AVE, with the square root of AVE being greater than the correlations between factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017). The Composite Reliability (CR) values were 0.935 for PA, 0.941 for PI, 0.915 for NI, and 0.915 for STD. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.675 for PA, 0.673 for PI, 0.737 for NI, and 0.782 for STD. All results confirm that the constructs in the model are theoretically distinct and that the measurement model meets reliability and construct validity criteria (Table 1).

When examining the descriptive statistics of the factors, the mean values were found as follows: PA ($\bar{x} = 3.71$), PI ($\bar{x} = 3.02$), NI ($\bar{x} = 3.97$), and STD ($\bar{x} = 2.84$). It can be inferred that the perceived negative impacts of tourism are higher than the positive impacts, while STD is at a low level. Correlation analysis results revealed that PA was positively correlated with both PI and STD, whereas STD exhibited a positive correlation with PI and a negative correlation with NI.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Findings

The demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 2. Among the participants, 35.2% are male, and 70% are single. Regarding age distribution, 37.1% are between 31 and 45 years old, 31.6% are 46 years or older, and 31.3% are between 18 and 30 years old. In terms of occupational distribution, 7.8% of the participants are public employees, 26.4% are workers, 13% are tradespeople, 16.6% are retirees, 11.1% are students, 17.6% are housewives, and 1.6% are farmers. Concerning income levels, approximately half of the participants earn a minimum wage, while 4.9% earn above €60,001. Regarding educational background, 70% of participants have attained a university-level education, 22.8% have completed secondary education, 5.2% have completed primary education, and 2% have completed postgraduate education. Additionally, 63.8% of the participants were born in Divriği, and 73% have been residing in Divriği for 11 years or longer. When examining their economic relationship with tourism, only 30.3% reported earning income from tourism, while 69.7% stated they do not.

**Table 2. Demographic Features of the Participants**

| Gender | n | % | Income From Tourism | n | % |
|----------------------------|-----|------|---------------------|-----|------|
| Man | 108 | 35.2 | Yes | 93 | 30.3 |
| Woman | 199 | 64.8 | No | 214 | 69.7 |
| Educational Status | n | % | Income | n | % |
| Primary education | 16 | 5.2 | Minimum wage | 154 | 50.2 |
| Secondary education | 70 | 22.8 | ₺22.000-₺40.000 | 72 | 23.5 |
| Associate degree | 145 | 47.2 | ₺40.001-₺60.000 | 65 | 21.2 |
| Bachelor | 70 | 22.8 | ₺60.001 and above | 16 | 4.9 |
| Postgraduate | 6 | 2 | Marital status | n | % |
| Life Expectancy in Divriği | n | % | Single | 215 | 70 |
| Less than 1 year | 10 | 3.3 | Married | 92 | 30 |
| 1-5 years | 26 | 8.5 | Job | n | % |
| 6 to 10 years | 47 | 15.3 | Officer | 24 | 7.8 |
| 11 years and above | 224 | 73 | Worker | 81 | 26.4 |
| Age | n | % | Tradesmen | 40 | 13 |
| 18-30 | 96 | 31.3 | Retired | 51 | 16.6 |
| 31-45 | 114 | 37.1 | Student | 34 | 11.1 |
| 46 and above | 97 | 31.6 | Housewife | 54 | 17.6 |
| Birthplace | n | % | Farmer | 5 | 1.6 |
| Divriği | 196 | 63.8 | Not working | 18 | 5.9 |
| Other | 111 | 36.2 | Total | 307 | 100 |
| Total | 307 | 100 | | | |

Source: Survey's data.

4. 2 Hypothesis Testing

Following the validation of the measurement model, the research hypotheses were tested. Table 3 presents the analysis results of the hypotheses. Accordingly, it was first determined that PA significantly and positively affects STD ($\beta = 0.372$, $p < 0.000$). Therefore, H1 was supported. Additionally, PI was positively associated with STD ($\beta = 0.400$, $p < 0.000$), while NI was negatively associated with STD ($\beta = -0.301$, $p < 0.000$).

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

| Variables | STD | | | | |
|---|---------|-------|--------|-------|------------------|
| | β | SD | t | p | LLCI-ULCI |
| PA (X) | 0.372 | 0.061 | 6.110 | 0.000 | (0.252, 0.491) |
| PI | 0.400 | 0.056 | 7.176 | 0.000 | (0.290, 0.509) |
| Interaction of (PAxPI) | 0.161 | 0.054 | 2.982 | 0.003 | (0.055, 0.266) |
| Effects of PA (X) on STD (Y), moderated by PI (W) | | | | | |
| Low PI | 0.230 | 0.061 | 3.764 | 0.000 | (0.110, 0.350) |
| Ave PI | 0.372 | 0.061 | 6.110 | 0.000 | (0.252, 0.491) |
| High PI | 0.514 | 0.091 | 5.667 | 0.000 | (0.335, 0.692) |
| STD | | | | | |
| PA (X) | 0.373 | 0.058 | 6.427 | 0.000 | (0.259, 0.487) |
| NI | -0.301 | 0.046 | -6.573 | 0.000 | (-0.391, -0.211) |
| Interaction of (PAxNI) | -0.100 | 0.044 | -2.281 | 0.023 | (-0.186, -0.014) |
| Effects of PA (X) on STD (Y), moderated by NI (W) | | | | | |
| Low NI | 0.478 | 0.063 | 7.586 | 0.000 | (0.354, 0.602) |
| Ave NI | 0.373 | 0.058 | 6.427 | 0.000 | (0.259, 0.487) |
| High NI | 0.270 | 0.083 | 3.253 | 0.001 | (0.107, 0.433) |

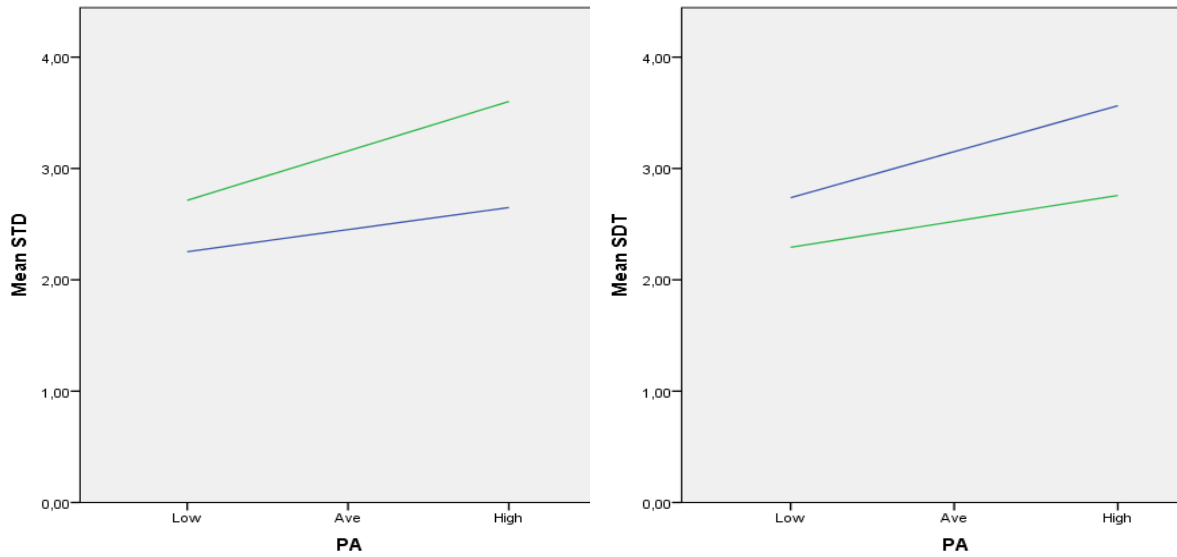
n=307; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit CI = confidence interval

Source: Survey's data.

According to the moderation analysis, PI moderates the interaction between PA and STD ($\beta = 0.161$, $p < 0.003$). Regarding the magnitude of the moderating effect, when the PI level is low, the effect of PA on STD is ($\beta = 0.230$, $p < 0.000$), whereas when the PI level is high, the effect increases to ($\beta = 0.514$, $p < 0.000$). As shown in Figure 1, as the PI level increases, the intensity of PA's effect on STD also increases. Consequently, H2 is supported.



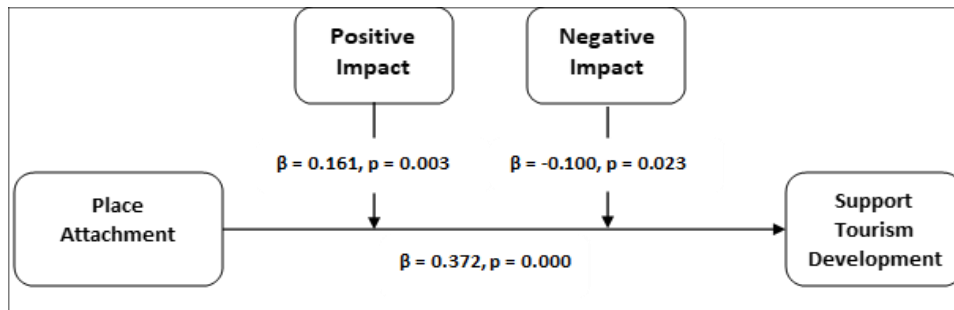
Figure 2. Moderation Effect



Source: own elaboration.

According to the moderation analysis, NI significantly moderates the interaction between PA and STD ($\beta = -0.100, p < 0.023$). As seen in Figure 2; regarding the magnitude of the moderating effect, when the NI level is low, the effect of PA on STD is ($\beta = 0.478, p < 0.000$), whereas when the NI level is high, the effect decreases to ($\beta = 0.270, p < 0.000$). Examining the graph, it is observed that as the NI level increases, the intensity of PA's effect on STD decreases. Consequently, H3 is supported. The results of the hypothesis tested in the research model are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Proposed Research Model and Results



Source: own elaboration.

5. Discussion

In this study, within the framework of SET, the effect of PA on STD was examined. Additionally, the moderating role of the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism in the relationship between PA and STD was investigated.

The first finding of the study reveals that PA has a positive and significant effect on STD. Pai et al. (2024) state that (PA), as one of the factors influencing residents' perceptions, positively affects their attitudes toward tourism to a certain extent. This result is consistent with many studies in the literature. For example, in their study, Cao et al. (2021) found that PA positively influences support for tourism development. However, this effect occurs directly and partially through positive perceptions among urban residents, whereas for town residents, it is indirect and mediated by both positive and negative perceptions. Similarly, Ganji et al. (2020) examined the influence of place image and PA on perceived value and support for tourism development, and analysed the relationships among these factors. In his study, Styliadis (2018) investigated residents' PA levels in relation to perceived tourism impacts and found that PA positively affects support for tourism development. Yuan et al. (2019) found that residents' perceptions of place attachment (PA) in Huangshi, a city in China undergoing a transition toward industrial heritage tourism, have a significant and positive effect on their support for tourism development. Blešić et al. (2022) highlighted that PA influences STD through both



the positive and negative impacts of tourism. All these findings suggest that residents' attachment to their region can significantly impact their support for tourism development.

The second finding of the study concerns the results on the moderating variables—the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism. It was found that as the perceived positive impacts of tourism increase, the effect of PA on STD strengthens. Specifically, when the perceived positive impacts of tourism are low, the effect of PA on STD is weaker, whereas as this perception increases, the effect becomes stronger. Furthermore, regarding the second moderating effect, as perceptions of tourism's negative impacts increase, the effect of PA on STD decreases. When the perceived negative impacts of tourism are low, the effect of PA on STD is higher, whereas as negative impacts increase, this effect diminishes. Similar studies have demonstrated that the perceived positive and negative effects of tourism influence STD. Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) found that residents' perceptions of positive impacts are positively related to STD, while perceptions of negative impacts have a negative relationship. In a study conducted by Güneş (2022), the perceived positive impacts of tourism were identified as a mediating factor in the relationship between personal benefits from tourism and STD. Eusébio et al. (2018) indicated that perceived positive impacts of tourism development have a positive effect on STD, whereas perceived negative impacts have a negative effect on STD. Additionally, they determined that these perceived positive and negative impacts mediate the relationship between PA and STD. Su et al. (2018) found that perceived positive effects of tourism partially mediate the relationship between destination social responsibility and support for tourism, whereas negative effects do not. Celik and Rasoolimanesh (2023) showed that residents' positive and negative attitudes toward tourism indirectly affect their support for tourism. Therefore, it can be stated that residents' support for tourism development increases when the perceived positive impacts outweigh the perceived negative impacts.

6. Conclusions and Contributions

6.1 Conclusions

This study found that PA has a significant effect on STD, and the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism moderate this effect. The recognition of tourism's economic, social, and cultural benefits enhances residents' support for tourism activities, while its environmental, economic, and sociocultural drawbacks reduce such support. Therefore, involving residents who are both positively and negatively affected by tourism in the development process and incorporating their views and preferences will contribute to a more effective, sustainable development (Lee & Oh, 2018). Indeed, resident participation can strengthen communication between residents and tourism authorities, reducing conflicts. Numerous studies have demonstrated that resident participation is a fundamental factor in sustainable tourism (Blešić et al., 2022; Zhang & Lei, 2010). The findings suggest that in the formation of sustainable tourism policies, residents' expectations and concerns should be taken into account.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

Although numerous tourism studies have examined the positive and negative impacts of tourism development, the moderating potential of perceived positive and negative tourism impacts on the relationship between residents' PA and STD has been largely overlooked. This study focuses on this potential. Furthermore, conducting the research in Divriği, an important cultural tourism destination, provides insights applicable to developing destinations.

The findings of this study contribute to the tourism literature by establishing a detailed empirical model that links PA, PI, NI, and STD. By measuring the role of perceived positive and negative tourism impacts in the relationship between PA and STD, this study addresses a gap in the literature. The findings indicate that the effect of PA on STD is directly associated with the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism. Specifically, when the perceived positive impacts of tourism are high, PA has a strong effect on STD, whereas when the perceived negative impacts of tourism are high, the effect of PA on STD weakens. Perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism development influence local support for tourism. Additionally, social changes resulting from tourism development can enhance residents' place attachment, which, in turn, affects tourism sustainability.

Resident support is crucial for the sustainability of tourism development in any destination. SET remains a dominant theoretical framework in research on residents' support for tourism, as many scholars praise its explanatory power (Qin et al., 2021). This study contributes to the tourism literature by extending Social Exchange Theory (SET) from a conditional perspective. Specifically, it demonstrates that the effect of place attachment (PA) on support for tourism development (STD) is not uniform; rather, it depends on residents' perceptions of tourism's positive and negative impacts. Moreover, as the proposed model can be applied to different variables and contexts, this research contributes to the tourism management literature and to the body of research on resident–tourism relationships by providing a deeper understanding of the effect of residents' PA on STD. The findings of this study are supported within the framework of SET.



6.3 Practical Contributions

The findings of this research provide significant practical contributions for policymakers, local administrations, and tourism enterprises developing tourism policies. This study emphasises that residents' support is a critical factor in a destination's sustainable development. The conducted empirical research revisits the role of local support in tourism development, offering a new perspective that contributes to the more effective planning of tourism projects and related policy processes. Within the scope of this study, internal dynamics, such as PA, that shape residents' support for tourism have been clarified. Understanding this mechanism can guide destination managers and developers in strengthening such support. Therefore, residents' support for tourism activities is one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable destination management. In this regard, authorities must consider residents' perspectives when formulating and implementing destination policies and plans to ensure sustainable development.

The study findings indicate that residents' attachment to their place of residence is a key antecedent in their support for tourism development. Furthermore, for this fundamental antecedent to be reinforced, the perceived positive impacts of tourism must be high. In contrast, when tourism impacts are perceived as negative, residents' sense of attachment has a diminished effect on STD. Therefore, local tourism managers and authorities must take measures to mitigate the economic, sociocultural, and environmental adverse effects of tourism to enhance residents' support for tourism.

To address economic drawbacks, incentive systems that allow residents to receive a greater share of tourism-generated revenue can be implemented. For instance, priority can be given to local entrepreneurs in the establishment of tourism enterprises. Additionally, entrepreneurship training programs can be introduced to increase the number of local entrepreneurs. Furthermore, giving preference to residents when hiring for these enterprises can help ensure the workforce is mainly local. Providing tourism training for local employees can also improve service quality.

To mitigate potential sociocultural drawbacks, tourism investments and activities must consider residents' cultural values, sensitivities, and beliefs. The most influential driver of tourism activity is curiosity and discovery (Ciasullo et al., 2019; Davari & Jang, 2024), as tourists seek to explore the unfamiliar and the unknown. Therefore, in an attempt to appear more appealing to tourists and generate higher revenues, residents' sensitivities, sociocultural characteristics, and beliefs should not be disregarded. Tourism activities and investments conducted with this awareness and commitment will help sustain residents' support.

The most effective way to mitigate potential environmental drawbacks is to adhere to a strategic investment plan that considers all relevant conditions efficiently and effectively. Investments should be designed to prevent environmental degradation and preserve the natural landscape. For instance, in infrastructure projects, architectural designs that align with the region's existing urban identity should be preferred, ensuring that the investments do not negatively impact the local flora and fauna. To prevent environmental pollution, waste management and recycling facilities tailored to the city's needs can be established. These measures will minimise residents' perceived negative impacts of tourism, thereby strengthening their support for tourism development.

The role of local residents in the tourism development process is becoming increasingly important. Understanding residents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism development is of great significance for tourism planners and entrepreneurs (Apak et al., 2025). Therefore, to increase residents' support for tourism, tourism policymakers should place greater emphasis on enhancing the positive impacts and reducing the negative impacts of tourism-related projects implemented in the district. In this way, residents' perceptions of tourism may become more positive. Moreover, involving residents who are positively or negatively affected by tourism development in the process and taking their views and preferences into account can contribute to more effective tourism development.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on perceptions of the local population in a specific region (Divriği, Türkiye) and on data collected through convenience sampling. This limits the direct generalizability of the findings to regions with different sociocultural characteristics, population structures, levels of tourism development, and types of destinations. Therefore, the results should be interpreted specifically in the context of Divriği and approached cautiously regarding external validity. Future research employing comparative designs and probability sampling methods across different destinations and populations could enhance the generalizability and external validity of the proposed model. The second limitation is time. Data collection at different time intervals could allow for comparative analysis. Thirdly, although demographic variables such as length of residence and education level were not included as control variables in the research model—a limitation of the study—incorporating them in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding. Lastly, residents' perceptions of tourism have been examined in two dimensions: positive and negative. Although these two dimensions reference economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects, they have not been evaluated separately. While previous research has demonstrated that individuals' assessments of tourism are linked to the economic, sociocultural, and environmental conditions of the region they live in (Güneş, 2022), these factors have not been explicitly considered in this study. Therefore, future research could examine these dimensions individually.



Credit author statement

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