*Abstract for «Sustainable Tourism Development in the Changing World» (STEP) conference*

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***Residents’ Attitudes as the Basis for Tourism Strategy Development***

***Key words:*** *tourism, place marketing, residents, residents’ attitudes*

Nowadays tourism industry is one of the most growing industries in the world as it provides places with various social and economic advantages. Different places around the world compete with each other in seeking ways to build up catchy images in order to attract tourists. Obviously, tourism development and growth is often welcome, but unmanaged tourism can cause intense pressures and problems (Dore and Crouch 2003).

In order to create efficient tourism strategies city managers and all those who are responsible for the implementation of these strategies should take into account not only existing place attributes such as infrastructure, culture, history as the resources for the effective tourism development, but also people – residents in particular. There is no doubt that residents play crucial role in maintenance of places as they are the main labor force, tax payers and mediators of the values of cities (the ambassadors of culture, traditions, knowledge and history). So not only physical place attributes, but also residents can play the role of crucial places’ resources.

However, in the reality there are plenty of examples then tourism and place marketing strategies were not appreciated by residents and hence it didn’t create the desirable tourism attraction and even was negatively appreciated by tourists.

Researchers proved that residents can play a crucial role in tourism development (for example, Liu and Wall, 2006; Andereck and Vogt, 2000). Also it was stated that while developing tourism strategies it is important to consider local residents’ attitudes in order to involve them into strategies development, reduce negative attitudes held by residents and to build up efficient tourism strategies.

In order to examine residents’ attitudes to tourism development and place marketing Kwon and Vogt (2009) proposed the following model:



 **Figure 1.** Model of residents’ attitudes toward place marketing (Kwon and Vogt (2009).

This model is based on the attitude theory by Eagly and Chaiken’s (1993), the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) and social exchange theory (Ap 1992; Skidmore 1975).

Cognitive, affective, and behavioral components were modeled as factors influencing on residents’ attitudes toward place marketing. Also personal benefit from tourism was also modeled to identify its moderating influence on the relationship between the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components and residents’ attitudes toward marketing their community of residence (Kwon and Vogt (2009).

This model was empirically verified on the sample of 2109 households in 2007. Moreover, the success of this model is also verified from the practical point of view as some places, for instance Valencia (Spain) utilized this model in its tourism development strategy. However, while analyzing this model we have mentioned that very important factor is missed in this model, which can strongly influence residents’ opinions and attitudes. This factor is personal network. Personal network is defined as a set of human contacts known to an individual, with whom that individual would expect to interact at intervals to support a given set of activities (Louch, 2000).

We consider that not only personal beliefs and benefits from tourism can influence residents’ attitude to a particular tourism development strategy, but also his or her relationships can play crucial role in the appreciation of the tourism policy. Personal network is of a particular importance for place and consequently tourism development as it is considered that personal networks among residents strengthen the desire of people to benefit from it local benefits and thus make its own contribution to the development environment. Also it is believed that residents with strong personal ties are active members of local non-professional, volunteer or other community organizations. Which means that the this type of residents are more involved in ongoing activities and events in the city, and therefore can be of great benefit for the city by taking a direct part in introducing new tourism strategies or in solving local problems. Moreover, this type of residents is believed to be more responsible residents (DiPasquale and Glaeser (1999). Taking into account all the positive effects that personal network can have on the residents and therefore their appreciation of tourism product development we propose the following model:



**Figure 2.** Proposed conceptual model of residents’ attitudes toward tourism

Based on the identified issues there is need to set the research aim and objectives. The aim of this study is to develop a residents’ attitudes evaluation model for tourism strategy. To achieve this goal it is necessary to solve the following problems:

1) to analyze the theoretical approaches to assessment of the residents’ attitudes to tourism;

2) to develop a conceptual model for evaluating residents’ attitudes to tourism;

3) to assess the residents’ attitudes to tourism with the empirical studies in the several cities;

4) identify and classify groups of residents with similar characteristics;

Thus this study is going to hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis:** Sustainability social network will have a significant impact on the attitude of the people to tourism strategies.

We are planning to carry out the research in various cities with different levels of tourism development (well developed, moderately developed and least developed). For our research we are devising the questionnaire, which will address residents personal characterizes, their personal networks as well as their opinions towards tourism development. All the respondents will be then divided into three groups according to their attitudes to tourism strategies (negative, neutral or positive). So that this data can be used in order to develop efficient tourism development strategies.

Taking everything into account, it is concluded that this model will help in understanding residents’ attitudes and perceptions to various tourism products, which can be the basis for future development of a particular city.

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