

Gardaland and its surrounding area: a study of residents' attitudes to tourism development

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Agenda



1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study
2. The Garda area and Gardaland: an overview of the destination
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Discussion and conclusions

1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study

- Importance of understanding **residents' attitudes** to tourism development (Vareiro et al., 2013):
 - benefits, e.g. employment opportunities
 - negative impacts, e.g. crowding and traffic problems
- **Uniqueness** of each destination (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012)

1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study

- **Tourism impacts** regarding (e.g., Kim et al., 2013):
 - economic aspects
 - social aspects
 - environmental aspects
- **Destination hosting theme parks**: in general tourism has positive economic impact (Milman, 2010), but negative sociocultural and environmental effects (Jamal et al., 2005)

1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study

- ▣ **Purpose of this study:** analyzing **residents' perceptions** in the area around the south-east coast of Garda Lake in the North of Italy
 - Presence of the largest theme park in Italy, Gardaland (more than 3 million visitors per year)
- ▣ **Expected contributions** (gaps in available studies)
 - understanding host community's perception of the effects of theme park tourism
 - little research on residents' perceptions of tourism and its development in Italy (Brida, Osti, & Barquet, 2010; Del Chiappa & Abbate, 2013)

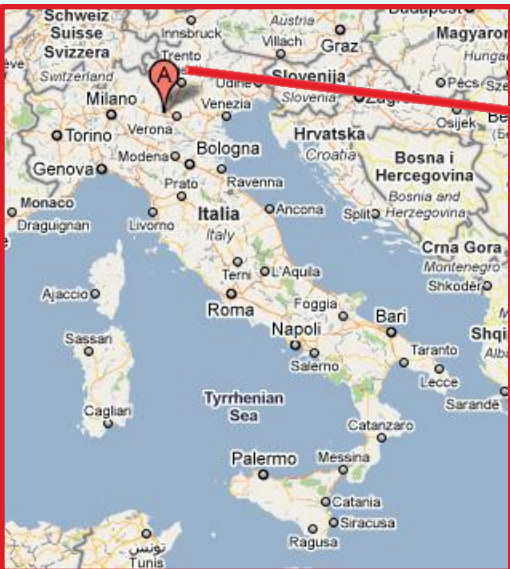
1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study

- Link between **residents' perception** of positive vs. negative impacts of tourism **and their support** vs. resistance to tourism and its development (Nunkoo et al., 2012)
- **Residents' attitudes vary** depending on:
 - Time**: from euphoria and support to antagonism (Doxey, 1975; Mason et al., 2000; Vareiro et al., 2013)
 - Socio-economic characteristics**: level of education, length of time of living in the community, personal economic benefits from tourism, etc. (Brida, et al., 2010; Pérez et al., 2005)

1. Introduction, background and purpose of the study

- In sum, the purpose of this study is to analyze residents' perceptions in the area around the south-east coast of Garda Lake, and
 - 1) analyze if and how such **perceptions vary according to demographic characteristics** of the respondents
 - 2) evaluate if and how such perceptions are **related to residents' support** to tourism and its development

2. The Garda area and Gardaland: an overview of the destination



2. The Garda area and Gardaland: an overview of the destination

▣ The tourism destination "Garda Lake":

- coastal areas of the lake
- mainly attracts international tourists
- registered about 20 million guest nights in 2012

▣ Gardaland:

- 600,000 square meters, 30 attractions and themed sites
- 200 people are stably employed by the park (1,650 staff during peak season)
- owned by Merlin Entertainment Group since 2006

2. The Garda area and Gardaland: an overview of the destination

- Gardaland had a leading role in **driving the development of its local area:**
 - **Economic positive impact** (employment opportunities)
 - **Several problems:** traffic congestion, noise, water-consuming attractions, and pollution

- But, **no significant residents' protest or resistance** against the park has been registered

3. Methodology

- **Data collection:** May 2013, convenience sample of 158 residents of the municipality of Peschiera del Garda
- As in Vareiro et al. (2013), we contacted the **municipality's primary school** and asked its director for their teachers' collaboration in handing out the questionnaire to their pupils.
- Questionnaire + instructions
- 44 items, mainly 5-point agree-disagree scales
- T-tests, correlation analysis, multiple linear regression

4. Results

(respondents' profile)

	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	51	32.3%
Female	107	67.7%
The years of residence in Peschiera del Garda		
<= 10 years	40	25.3%
> 10 years	118	74.7%
Education		
Primary school	27	17.1%
High school	74	46.8%
University degree	41	26.0%
Professional/Other	16	10.1%
Age		
Average age: 40.91 (SD:4.61)		

4. Results (how perceptions vary according to demographic characteristics)

- ▣ **In general**, more positive than negative attitudes

Perceptions and demographic characteristics:

- ▣ **a) gender**: women evaluate more severely some environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism;
- ▣ **b) years of residence**: people who have been living in Peschiera del Garda for more than 10 years have a worse attitude toward the presence of the park;
- ▣ **c) education**: people with higher levels of education demonstrate higher support for tourism development;
- ▣ **d) correlation between tourism and respondent's job**: people whose job is directly linked to tourism perceive higher positive economic tourism impact

4. Results (link between perceived impacts and support to tourism development)

	Beta	T-value	Sig.	VIF.	Impact on further tourism development
(Constant)	3.684	7.722	.000		
Economic impact (benefits)	.254	3.277	.001	1.00	Positive
Environmental impact (costs)	-.148	-1.753	.082	1.18	Negative
Sociocultural impact (costs)	-.130	-1.543	.125	1.18	Not significant

R²=.121; Dependent variable: I will support further development of tourism.

4. Discussion and conclusions

- **Further evidences** for the link between residents' **socio-economic characteristics** and their response to tourism
- Findings relevant to destination managers: residents' support for further (theme park) tourism development may arise by **balancing, at least until a certain point, the negative environmental impact** with **economic benefits**.
- **Limitations:**
 - The study took place in a very specific area (a strength and a weakness)
 - The sample was quite limited and composed by respondents of a specific age range

APPENDIX

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	Total sample (n=158)	Male (n=51) / Female (n=107)	Years of residence ≤ 10 years (n=40) / > 10 years (n=118) [t-test]	Education University degree (n=41) / Lower levels (n=117) [t-test]	Correlation with “My job is directly linked to tourism in my municipality” [Pearson’s coeff.]
Scale	1-5 Disagree - Agree	1-5 Disagree - Agree	1-5 Disagree - Agree	1-5 Disagree - Agree	-1 > < +1
General attitude toward tourism (development)					
The presence of tourists in my municipality has become intolerable	1.87	1.76 / 1.92	1.77 / 1.90	1.88 / 1.81	n.s.
I am proud that my municipality is able to attract many tourist	4.13	4.14 / 4.12	4.10 / 4.14	3.98 / 4.24	.171**
Tourism development has become uncontrollable	2.38	2.67 / 2.25**	2.13 / 2.47	2.51 / 2.22	n.s.
I will support further development of tourism	3.05	3.16 / 3.00	2.80 / 3.14	3.39 / 2.22**	n.s.
Economic impacts					
Tourism is a source of economic benefits for me and for my family	2.81	2.72 / 2.85	3.13 / 2.70	2.20 / 3.03**	.566**
Tourism is a source of economic benefits for the whole population	2.20	1.98 / 2.31	2.30 / 2.17	2.22 / 2.13	.218**
Economic tourism benefits are greater than costs	2.78	2.94 / 2.70	2.79 / 2.78	3.02 / 2.59**	n.s.

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Environmental impacts					
Tourism is the cause of lake water pollution	2.69	2.45 / 2.80	2.55 / 2.74	2.78 / 2.64	n.s.
Tourism is the cause of street and beach pollution	2.74	2.20 / 3.00**	2.68 / 2.68	2.78 / 2.66	n.s.
Tourism is the cause of traffic congestion	4.32	4.29 / 4.33	4.05 / 4.41	4.51 / 4.25	n.s.
Tourism is the cause of parking problems	3.42	3.45 / 3.41	3.00 / 3.56**	3.41 / 3.42	n.s.
Sociocultural impacts					
Tourism has a negative impacts on residents’ quality of life	2.28	2.24 / 2.30	2.17 / 2.31	2.32 / 2.13	n.s.
Tourist presence on the beaches is a problem	2.04	1.80 / 2.15*	2.03 / 2.04	2.27 / 1.85*	n.s.
Tourist presence in cafés/restaurants is a problem	1.63	1.51 / 1.69	1.85/ 1.56	1.73 / 1.51	n.s.
Tourist presence during local events and fair is a problem	1.51	1.31 / 1.60*	1.64 / 1.47	1.55 / 1.40	n.s.

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Theme park impact					
The presence of Gardaland created more benefits than negative effects for local population	3.35	3.41 / 3.62	4.03 / 3.39**	3.39 / 3.64	.206**
The presence of the theme park is causing traffic and pollution	3.48	3.41 / 3.51	3.23 / 3.57	4.00 / 3.24**	n.s.