

Resident Support for Sustainable Tourism Policies in Two Turkish Communities

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Abstract

During the last two decades, there has been increased focus on topics related to various aspects of sustainable tourism. Believing that sustainable tourism can be a serious alternative that can remedy some of the negative impacts associated with traditional tourism development, scholars and main stream tourism journals have dedicated much time and space in publishing sustainability related research. Although much distance have been covered in delineating the scope of sustainability research, there is hardly any work that tracks and understands support for such policies within the general public. After all, decision-makers are elected officials that must listen to their constituents and justify the positions they take. Hence, understanding and assessing support for sustainable tourism policies among the general population becomes paramount.

Turkey has become a very competitive country in the last 15 years; ranked number 9 among the most tourist receiving countries, it has paid scant attention in developing its tourism product in a more sustainable manner. However, the type of support that helped fuel the all inclusive, unsustainable mass tourism growth is fading among the more elite and concerned tourism developers. The industry recognizes that the current course in tourism is not sustainable. Against this background, the current study examines residents' support for sustainable tourism policies within the general population of residents in a large city-Izmir, *Turkey* and the Island of Cyprus (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) using recently validated new version of SUS_TAS items.

Data for the study were gathered in Izmir (1817 respondents) and Cyprus (955 respondents) through interviewer-administered surveys. The Turkish Cypriot data were collected via telephone interviews with a random sample of 955 adults who were 18 years of age or older using a local market research company. Data from Izmir/Turkey were collected via a clustering sampling technique proportional to populations of city-districts using a face-to-face interview method with a group of 60 student interviewers. The makeup of Izmir's population is akin to Turkey's general population. Government agencies frequently collect data (e.g., CPI) in one or in some combination of the three largest metropolitan cities such as Izmir, Istanbul, and Ankara as collected data in any one of these cities are usually considered representative of the general population in the country.

Gauging Sentiments toward Sustainable Tourism

This paper is an application of the shortened version of SUS_TAS scale. Items contained in SUS-TAS attempt to measure sentiments and perceptions toward sustainable tourism policies and thus can be used to understand support for sustainability policies among the general public.

Understanding the extent of such support or lack thereof for sustainability policies is paramount for policy makers in order for them to align their policy strategies with that of the public's will and chart the much needed new course in tourism development strategy.

Results and Discussion

There were 48.6 percent female participants with a majority making less than 2000 YTL (\$1,400 a month). The sample contained relatively well-educated mobile people (over two-thirds had at least some college education). The sample, although much care was taken to have a balanced representation, seems to be biased in favor of the more younger population. The results must be viewed with this perspective in mind. Table 1 displays the distribution of responses and means difference test between the two communities.

Table 1: Responses to Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale Items (SUSTAS) by Two Communities with and Means Differences Test

Factor structure	Do you agree or disagree that:		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std	t	P
Perceived Social Costs (4 items)	I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community.	Izmir	39.3	31.1%	12.9%	11.1%	5.5%	2.21	1.16	1.21	.226
		Turkish Cyprus	43.0	33.0	9.4	7.3	7.3	2.15			
	Tourists in my community disrupt my quality of life.	Izmir	37.8	23.7	18.9	13.4	6.2	2.41	1.16	3.14	.002
		Turkish Cyprus	40.4	31.3	10.4	9.0	8.8	2.25			
	My community is overcrowded because of TD.	Izmir	36.1	24.0	18.3	14.7	6.9	2.56		-	
		Turkish Cyprus	37.4	19.9	15.1	14.3	13.3	2.65	1.32	1.72	.086
	My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism.	Izmir	37.1	30.5	13.5	12.2	6.7	2.29			
		Turkish Cyprus	38.7	37.0	9.2	8.6	6.6	2.14	1.22	3.06	.002
Environmental Sustainability (5 items)	The diversity of nature must be valued and protected.	Izmir	1.3%	2.3%	6.8%	24.1%	65.5%	4.50	.82	1.43	.154
		Turkish Cyprus	.4	.6	4.8	40.9	53.3	4.46			
	Tourism must protect the environment.	Izmir	1.2	2.9	10.9	42.1	42.9	4.23	.84	-	.000
		Turkish Cyprus	.4	.9	7.2	44.3	47.2	4.37		4.46	
	Proper TD requires that wildlife and natural habitats be protected at all times.	Izmir	1.0	3.2	8.4	31.1	56.3	4.39	.84	1.32	.186
		Turkish Cyprus	.1	1.9	7.9	43.7	46.4	4.34			
	Community environment must be protected now and for the future.	Izmir	.8	2.7	6.7	21.8	68.0	4.53	.66	-	.000
		Turkish Cyprus	.4	.9	4.9	45.4	48.3	4.40		4.21	
Long-Term Planning (4 items)	Tourism must be developed in harmony with the natural and cultural environment.	Izmir	1.1	3.7	9.8	36.7	48.9	4.29	.86	-	.581
		Turkish Cyprus	.9	1.4	10.2	41.2	46.3	4.30		.552	
	I believe TD needs well-coordinated planning.	Izmir	1.6%	4.3%	11.3%	41.4%	41.4%	4.17%	.90	-	.000
		Turkish Cyprus	.4	2.6	6.1	45.3	45.5	4.33		4.65	
	I believe that successful management of tourism requires advanced planning.	Izmir	1.8	3.6	9.1	36.4	49.2	4.28	.89	2.72	.007
		Turkish Cyprus	1.3	3.1	9.9	37.9	47.9	4.18			

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	TD plans should be continuously improved.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.1 1.1	4.8 3.2	11.4 8.7	40.3 42.6	42.4 44.4	4.18 4.26	.89	- 2.30	.022
	TI must plan for the future.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	3.4 .5	4.2 2.5	7.9 5.9	35.7 44.3	48.8 46.7	4.22 4.32	.994	- 2.53	.012
Perceived Economic Benefits (4 Items)	I believe tourism is a strong economic contributor to community	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	.9% 1.3	4.7% 1.7	10.6% 6.6	39.6% 39.3	44.2% 51.1	4.17% 4.37	.86	- 6.08	.000
	Tourism diversifies the local economy.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.1 .7	3.8 2.2	12.9 8.0	33.9 41.5	48.4 47.5	4.10 4.27	.84	- 5.07	.000
	I like tourism because it brings new income to my community.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.7 2.1	4.6 3.7	8.0 4.1	41.0 42.3	44.6 47.8	4.22 4.30	.90	- 2.19	.028
	I believe tourism is good for our community's economy	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.5 1.7	4.2 3.0	9.8 5.9	35.8 38.8	48.8 50.6	4.26 4.34	.90	- 2.07	.039
	I think TB should hire at least one-half of their employees from within my community.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.8% 2.9	5.6% 3.1	17.7% 10.0	33.7% 38.6	41.2% 45.4	3.99% 4.14	.95	- 3.88	.000
Community Centered Economy (5 Items)	Community residents should receive a fair share of benefits from tourism.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	2.2 .8	5.8 4.7	14.1 10.5	32.7 36.1	45.2 47.9	4.00 4.14	.94	- 3.63	.000
	The TI should obtain at least one-half of their goods and services from within community.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	3.0 1.9	5.7 2.6	13.5 9.0	36.4 42.1	41.4 44.3	4.08 4.21	1.01	- 3.54	.000
	TI must contribute to community improvement funds.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.5 1.8	4.3 5.4	17.2 9.8	31.3 25.9	45.8 57.1	4.01 4.00	.88	.379	.705
	Tourism creates new markets for our local products	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.7 .6	5.2 2.0	9.1 10.0	39.9 40.9	44.1 46.4	4.20 4.25	.92	- 1.56	.119
	TB must monitor visitor satisfaction.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	2.2% .7	3.7% 2.1	9.6% 7.2	37.3% 40.9	47.3% 49.1	4.24% 4.27	.92	- 1.03	.303
Ensuring Visitor Satisfaction (5Items)	TI must ensure good quality tourism experiences for visitors.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.1 .9	3.4 2.0	8.4 7.7	33.1 41.0	54.0 48.4	4.35 4.26	.85	2.72	.007
	Community attractiveness is a core element of ecological "appeal" for visitors.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.9 .6	6.2 4.0	19.5 14.2	28.2 33.8	44.1 47.4	3.91 4.10	.94	- 5.27	.000
	I believe that local government should monitor visitor satisfaction	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	2.2 1.2	5.4 4.0	11.1 7.3	40.6 37.1	40.7 50.4	4.12 4.18	.95	- 1.68	.092
	It is acceptable for the government to invest money to improve visitor experiences	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	2.2 1.2	4.6 3.3	12.4 8.2	32.5 40.9	48.3 46.5	4.04 4.23	.91	- 5.26	.000
	Full participation in TDM by everyone is a must for successful TD.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	3.3% 2.1	14.3% 6.8	19.5% 13.1	24.9% 30.6	37.9% 47.4	3.56% 3.98	1.06	- 10.16	.000
Maximizing Community Participation (6 Items)	Community's residents should have opportunities to be involved in TDM.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	2.8 1.6	7.8 3.2	19.8 10.2	22.2 34.8	47.4 50.3	3.78 4.14	.96	- 9.51	.000
	Tourism industry must embrace the values of your community residents	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.5 .9	4.5 5.6	13.4 11.5	39.2 30.0	41.3 52.0	4.12 4.05	.90	2.19	.029
	Community residents should be given more opportunities to invest in TD.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	3.2 2.1	6.6 4.0	15.5 14.7	29.1 38.1	45.6 41.1	3.91 4.09	.99	- 4.66	.000
	I think residents must be encouraged to assume leadership roles in TP committees.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.4 1.6	6.7 7.4	23.0 14.4	24.9 27.6	43.9 49.1	3.80 3.94	.91	- 3.64	.000
	TD must promote positive environmental ethics among all parties with a stake in tourism.	Izmir Turkish Cyprus	1.2 .3	5.1 2.6	18.7 9.7	28.0 36.7	47.0 50.7	3.96 4.21	.88	- 7.55	.000

TD: Tourism Development; TB: Tourism Business; TI: Tourism Industry; Tourism: Tourism; TDM: Tourism Decision-Making; Comm: Community