

Place attachment, host-tourist interactions, and residents' attitudes towards tourism development: The Case of Boa Vista Island in Cape Verde

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A clear understanding of residents' attitudes towards tourism development and its determinants is crucial for designing tourism development strategies to promote sustainable development. Although tourism is considered by political and development agents as one of the most important economic activities to promote the sustainable development of developing countries, a limited number of studies has been conducted in these countries. However, these destinations typically face several economic and social constraints that inhibit their integrated development, and the residents are frequently excluded from tourism decision-making and planning.

Tourism is nowadays one of the most important economic activities in the Cape Verde Archipelago. Nevertheless, tourism in this country has been developed based mainly on foreign investment. Consequently, the involvement of the local community in the tourism development process has been highly neglected.

In this context, the present study aims at developing and testing a structural model (see figure 1) to examine direct and indirect causal effects of place attachment, host-tourist interaction, and perceived positive and negative tourism impacts on the residents' attitudes towards tourism development in an island tourism destination – Boa Vista Island in Cape Verde.

The findings suggest that there is a relatively stronger residents' perception of negative effects when compared with residents' perception of positive effects (see table 1). This is possibly because the tourism development approach that has been adopted in this island is highly dependent on foreign investment. Consequently, the support for tourism development is also relatively weak. Still, the residents show a robust place attachment. These results reveal several shortcomings of the tourism development model that has been employed

in this island. Given that the inhabitants of this island are one of its most valuable assets, tourism should offer more perceived benefits than costs in order to encourage the residents' support for its development. The strong place attachment of the residents and their friendliness and hospitality should be included in the tourism development approaches and models. Inhabitants should be part of the tourism development process to stimulate sustainable development.

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FIGURE 1
Conceptual model proposed – factors influencing the residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

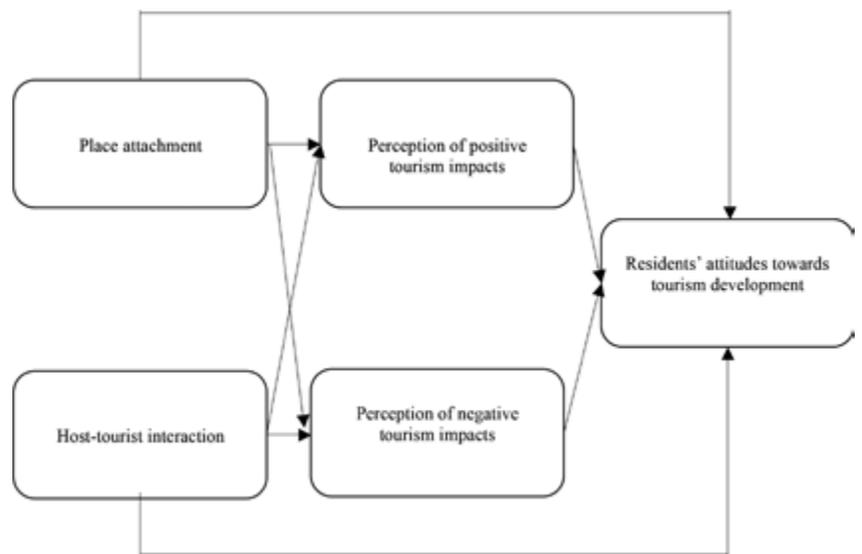


TABLE 1
Residents' attitudes towards tourism development and factors influencing these attitudes.

Dimensions analyzed*	N	Mean
Host-tourist interaction	300	4.35
Place attachment	300	6.05
Perception of negative tourism impacts	300	6.26
Perception of positive tourism impacts	300	4.54
Residents' attitudes towards tourism development	300	3.73