Tourists and residents encounters

The role of apathy

Abstract

Residents' apathy has been considered a cultural barrier to community integration and participation and also a factor that might negatively affect the quality of the host-guest interaction. Despite this, to best of our knowledge the influence that residents' apathy (as perceived by visitors) can exert on perceived service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions of tourists is theorized and sometimes considered. This study aims to contribute to filling this gap by proposing a theoretical model and testing it in three different destinations, namely, Lisbon (Portugal), Isfahan (Iran) and Olbia (Sardinia, Italy). Specifically, three convenience samples were used for the purposes of the statistical analysis. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test and validate the conceptual model. This study contributes to the current body of knowledge by proposing and testing a conceptual model that aims to analyse how residents' apathy (i.e. lack of interest, lack of initiative, alienation and environmental-based apathy), as perceived by tourists, affects the host-guest interaction and, more specifically, the perceived service quality and the visitors' behavioural intentions. Managerial implications and future research are discussed.

Keywords: Resident's apathy, host-guest interaction, perceived quality, behavioral intentions, intention to recommend.

1. Introduction

During the last few decades, it has been widely recognized that a tourism planning that is sensitive to resident's perceptions, needs and attitudes towards tourism development is a key element to tourism sustainability (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Further, it is also a necessary condition to obtain residents' support for any tourism projects (Ap, 1992), for a higher sense of belonging (Del Chiappa & Atzeni, 2015), and to reach community empowerment, a high level of individual participation (Mitchell & Reid, 2001) and brand ambassadorship behaviour (e.g. Simpson & Siguaw, 2008).

According to previous research (Tosun, 2000), limitations to community participation in tourism can be divided into three categories: operational (e.g. lack of coordination between stakeholders), structural (e.g. lack of financial resources, expertise and trained human resources, skills and competences) and cultural. Among cultural barriers, the following could be considered: alienation of residents, unwillingness of the elite to share the benefits of tourism development within the wider community, poor knowledge about the tourism phenomenon among local people, the fact that residents could be unable to correctly evaluate tourism's impact, the lack of indigenous tourism planners which leads to communication barriers and language differences between planners and residents and, finally, apathy (Tosun, 2000).

Quite surprisingly, tourism-related research aimed at analysing limitations to community integration and participation appear to be underdeveloped with limitations often being cited but not deeply defined, conceptualized and analysed. This is what happens, for example, when the concept of 'residents' apathy' is considered. Apathy is a construct approached in different disciplines. More specifically, apathy can be considered as a multidimensional construct with roots mainly in psychology (Esposito et al., 2014), socio-politics (Rosener, 1982), and environmental-based literature (Heath & Gifford, 2006). Based

on an extensive literature review rooted in these major different disciplines, this study attempts to identify the dimensions of residents' apathy and to analyse its influence on supporting tourism and on host-guest interaction. More specifically, it aims to investigate the effects that residents' apathy, as perceived by visitors, exerts on: perceived service quality, the extent to which residents are seen to support the tourism phenomenon, and visitors' behavioural intentions and residents' support. As Del Chiappa & Bregoli (2012), our conceptual model relies on the idea that residents can be considered as 'frontline employees', able to significantly shape tourists' perceived quality and their behavioural intentions via offline and online word-of-mouth.

For the purpose of this study, an empirical investigation has been carried out in three specific tourism destinations, namely: Lisbon, a sparkling and popular tourism destination in Portugal; Isfahan, one of the famous destinations in Iran; and Olbia, a well-known tourism destination located on island of Sardinia (Italy). The reasons for including these three research settings in the empirical study was mainly due to cross-validate the model in tourism destinations characterized by different cultural traits in local people and by a different life cycle of the tourism destination. Relying on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1991), several differences in term of cultural traits that could affect the host-guest interaction seem to exist among the three countries. Therefore, to better understand and investigate whether the conceptual model and related relationships works differently based on the specific tourism destinations, a destination-based multigroup analysis was also used when running SEM.

2. Literature review

Residents' attitudes and behaviour are able to significantly affect the quality of host-guest interaction, thus influencing the quality of tourists' experiences (Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal, 2002; Smith, 1989). Hence, it can intuitively be argued that residents' apathy, in its different

dimensions and as perceived by visitors, is expected to negatively influence the extent to which guests think that residents are supporting the tourism phenomenon in their place and the extent to which they perceive the overall service quality related to their stay, which in turn negatively influences tourists' willingness to recommend the destination to others and/or to positively talk about it (i.e. brand ambassadorship behaviour), both offline and online (Figure 1). The following subsections introduce theoretical arguments needed to support the model and related hypotheses.

[Insert Figure 1 near here]

2.1 Apathy

Apathy has been approached in several disciplines; among these, psychology, socio-politics and environment appear to be those in which the concept has been conceptualized and considered the most.

In psychology, apathy has been defined as a lack of motivations affecting cognitive, emotional, and behavioural domains and it has usually been assessed by standardized scales, such as the Apathy Evaluation Scale (AES) (Raimo et al., 2014). Apathy is usually analysed referring to two main variables, namely lack of interest and lack of initiative. Lack of interest refers to diminished goal-directed cognition, whilst lack of initiative refers to diminished goal-directed behaviour (Landes et al., 2001; Marin, 1990).

In socio-politics, apathy has a long history and has been defined and employed in number of ways. Di Palma (1970) considered apathy as a type of behaviour indicating a lack of participation and lack of action in political affairs. Likewise, Bennett (1986) explained apathy as the disinterest of an individual to exploit his/her potential in political activity and psychological engagement. Socio-political literature also refers to alienation as a concept

related to apathy. In this vein, Ross (1975) defined political alienation as a feeling of political engagement and political powerlessness. Hence, alienation has been conceptualized with concepts such as normlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, isolation and powerlessness (Dean, 1956; Ross, 1975; Seeman, 1959).

Finally, in environmental-based literature, a first attempt to define apathy was offered by Rankin (1969) who argued that 'apathy has been investigated to show the level of public awareness and concern, with some attention to the perception of causes and effects toward environmental issues' (p. 566). Hence, environmental apathy occurs when the individual is affected by a lack of interest in environmental issues and/or when he/she thinks that environmental issues have been exaggerated and overestimated (Thompson & Barton, 1994).

Based on the aforementioned considerations, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Perceived lack of interest is directly related to tourist's perception toward residents' apathy.

H2: Perceived lack of initiative is directly related to tourist's perception toward residents' apathy.

H3: Perceived alienation is directly related to tourist's perception toward residents' apathy.

H4: Perceived environmental-based apathy is directly related to tourist's perception toward residents' apathy.

2.2 Service Quality

Assuring service quality is a way to increase customer satisfaction (Fornell, 1996) and loyalty, to increase/defend the market share and the economic sustainability (Munro-Faure & Munro-Faure, 1992). Based on previous research (e.g. Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002), perceived service quality is immensely affected by the quality of the interactions between

employees and customers during the experience consumption. Similarly, it could be argued that host-guest interactions exert a relevant role in influencing the perceived service quality that tourists distinguish in all the interactions (i.e. service encounters) that they have with residents while staying at the destination. Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

H5: Tourists perception toward residents' apathy negatively influences their perceived service quality.

2.3 Intention to Recommend to Others and Brand Ambassadorship Behaviour

In the existing literature, the positive relationship between service quality and behavioural intention has been widely studied and recognized (Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017). In this study, and based on this strand of research, we argue that the service quality that is perceived as a consequence of the many encounters that visitors experience during their holiday while interacting with residents, affects their behavioural intentions, namely their willingness to recommend the destination to others both offline and online.

The term "brand ambassador" is generally used to identify "a person who is included in prints, or in videos, and the presence of whom is expected to support the promotion of a product-service-destination, etc." (de Diesbach, 2012, p. 231). An ambassador not only refers to an official envoy but also to an unofficial representative who is promoting a place/city/country with his/her goodwill behaviour. Brand ambassadorship behaviour can occur both offline (traditional word of mouth, WOM) and online (electronic word of mouth, eWOM).

In the specific context of resident/community-based studies, residents have been recently considered as brand ambassadors of their destination but they would need to be effectively involved in destination branding (Kavaratzis, 2012). In general marketing literature, consumers have always been considered as acting as brand ambassadors (e.g.

Malhotra, Malhotra & See, 2013) recommending the brand to others, or talking about the brand with others, again both offline and online (uploading comments, pictures and videos on peer-to-peer applications). Consumers usually consider traditional and electronic word of mouth to be more credible and trustworthy when compared to business and commercially driven communications, and thus more able to influence their choices, (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Del Chiappa, Lorenzo-Romero, & Alarcón-del-Amo, 2015). Based on the aforementioned considerations, the following hypotheses are posited:

H6: Tourists perceptions of service quality positively influences tourists' intention to recommend the destination to others.

H7: Tourists perceptions of residents' apathy negatively influences tourists' offline brand ambassadorship behaviour.

H8: Tourists perceptions of residents' apathy negatively influences tourists' online brand ambassadorship behaviour.

H9: Tourists' intention to recommend influences their offline brand ambassadorship behaviour.

H10: Tourists' intention to recommend influences their online brand ambassadorship behaviour.

2.4 Residents' Support

Residents' support to tourism has been investigated in several theories such as social exchange theory (Ap, 1992) and identity theory (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Based on the social exchange theory of Ap (1992), residents would support tourism development (e.g. take part in tourism planning, express a positive attitude toward the idea of realizing certain tourism projects, warmly welcome guests, etc.) when tourism activity brings them more benefits than related costs. However, a real support to tourism can exist only when residents

are not apathetic towards the tourism phenomenon in their community. It appears to be evident that visitors can perceive residents as being supportive of tourism activity only when the local community expresses a non-apathetic attitude and behaviour towards guests and, broadly, towards the tourism phenomenon. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H11: Tourists perception of residents' apathy negatively influences their perception of residents' support of tourism.

3. Materials and Methods

For the purpose of this study, a survey instrument has been developed based on existing literature devoted to analyse the concept of residents' apathy and support of tourism; further, scales and items traditionally used to measure perceived service quality, brand ambassadorship behaviour and intention to recommend to others were adapted to suit the specific research topic. Specifically, the instrument included four sections. The first section asked respondents to assess their level of agreement with a list of 37 items specifically selected and adapted to measure residents' level of apathy and support of tourism development as perceived by tourists (Esposito et al., 2014; Marin et al., 1991; Raimo et al., 2014; Thompson & Barton, 1994; Van Snippenburg & Scheepers,1991). The second section asked respondents to assess the service quality that they perceived while interacting with residents (Cronin et al., 2000). The third section asked respondents to express their level of agreement with a list of 17 items used to measure their intention to recommend the destination to others and to exchange positive comments about it (brand ambassadorship behaviour), both offline and online. A 7-point Likert scale was used to obtain their answers (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neither disagree nor agree, and 7 = strongly agree). The fourth section invited respondents to provide their general socio-demographic characteristics.

Data was collected face-to-face through self-administered questionnaires from tourists aged 18 or above visiting three different countries, namely Lisbon (Portugal), Isfahan (Iran) and Olbia (Sardinia, Italy). Respondents were approached onsite while at the destination. Overall, 947 complete questionnaires were obtained, of which 309 were collected in Lisbon, 338 in Isfahan and 300 in Olbia. For the purposes of the statistical analysis, a three-stepwise model, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM), was used to test the conceptual model. The data analysis was developed in two phases. In the first phase, an EFA followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run by using SPSS (version 23) and AMOS (version 15). EFA is used as a preliminary technique to find the underlying dimensions or constructs in the data. A subsequent CFA allows for evaluation of the resulting scales. This analysis specifies the relationship between observed variables and latent constructs, and suggests that all the constructs can be freely interrelated (Joreskog, 1993). This allowed us to identify the underlying dimension contained in the data related to perceived residents' apathy. The same approach was adopted for the remaining data describing the other constructs included in the conceptual model (namely, service quality, residents' perceived support, intention to recommend to others and brand ambassadorship behaviour). In the second phase, a structural model was estimated to evaluate the dimensions. In the third phase, a SEM analysis was run to test the hypotheses and the model fit. Hence, a multigroup analysis was also run to investigate whether differences could exist in the way the conceptual model and related paths work based on the specific tourism destinations.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Sociodemographic and Tripographic Profile of the Sample

Most respondents were reported to be females (55.5%), in the 25–34 age group (41.0%),

employees (46.5%) or students (22.2%), mostly first-time visitors (67.7%), travelling with friends (41.7%) and most had a university degree (54.5%). Respondents were mostly leisure travelers (92.2%) with an average length of stay between 3–7 days (48%). Visitors were mostly from France (19.0%), Germany (9.2%) and Spain (6.3%).

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

For the purposes of the study an exploratory factor analysis (extraction method: generalized least squares) with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization was used to reveal the underlying factors in the data. The EFA was run separately for each factor. The KMO index, Kaiser-Myer-Olkin the Bartlett's test of sphericity and Cronbach's alpha were calculated. All of them were within recommended boundaries (see Table 1 for detailed information).

[Insert Table 1 near here]

4.3 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Following the two-step approach proposed by Anderson & Gerbing (1988), the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the generalized least squares method in order to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs of the original model (Table 2 and Table 3). The scale used to measure the perceived residents' apathy was conducted separately in addition to the other set of constructs. A preliminary CFA was triggered and the model fit was assessed through fit indices as suggested by Hair et al. (2009). As the results of the main adjustment measures did not prove satisfactory compared to the reference values, some changes in the model were introduced by observing the modification indices data of the covariance matrix of the standardized residuals. As a result of this iterative process of adjustment, 45 indicators were retained for inclusion in the final model. The adjustment

results improved significantly, yielding the values in Table 2 and Table 3 and the adjustment values expressed in the last lines.

[Insert Table 2 and 3 near here]

In terms of validity and reliability, the final model results show levels that can be considered good or very good: composite reliability (CR) far exceeds the minimum recommended limits ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ and $\rho \geq 0.70$). With regard to the average variance extracted (AVE), the value obtained also clearly exceeds the reference value (≥ 0.50) set in the literature (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2009) (Table 2 and Table 3).

An initial step for evaluating the convergent validity of the measurement model is based on the observation of significant coefficient estimates (Hair et al., 2009). As can be observed, the values of standardized coefficients are between 0.513 and 0.894. The convergent validity of the items regarding their constructs is shown in the final model (Table 2 and Table 3). All indicators show a strong relationship with the construct to which they are attached (t-value > 1.96; $p < 0.05$). In addition to this analysis, the verification of convergent validity was performed by examining the adjustment measures' estimates by CFA. As can be seen (bottom line of Table 2 and 3) the results of an adjustment of dimensional structure are very suitable. The chi-square ($\chi 2$), and the degrees of freedom for the dimensional model found indicate that the fit is good with a $\chi 2$ value that does not reject the null hypothesis, i.e. the model is supported by the data ($\chi 2 = 457.656$ for apathy, $\chi 2 = 961.74$ for the second part of the model, $p = 0.000$) and the values of the other indexes are all within the recommended values (GFI = 0.946; RMSEA = 0.053;/ GFI = 0.927; RMSEA = 0.045). Given the results, it is considered that there is evidence of the reliability and validity of the constructs that compose the model. To complete this phase of the construct's validity, the analysis of the discriminant validity of the measurement model followed to assess to what extent a measure

of one construct is not correlated with measurements of other constructs. This allows for those constructs which are extremely correlated with each other (more than 0.95) not to be considered. To assess the discriminant validity, also correlations between all latent variables were analysed.

[Insert Table 3 near here]

According to Hair et al. (2009), the correlation between the variables must be less than 0.95. Based on this criterion, it can be observed that all variables comply with the suggested limit. On the other hand, according to Fornell & Larcker (1981), the AVE can be used to assess discriminant validity. The total latent variables satisfy the condition, confirming the existence of discriminant validity and suggesting that the theoretical model fits the data well and as such, the structural model was performed.

In the last stepwise analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied and the relationships between the constructs of the model were analyzed using generalized least squares. The results of the model's overall fit indices ($\chi 2 = 2849.417$, df = 977, $\chi 2$ /df = 2.916, p = 0.000, GFI = 0.896, RMSEA = 0.045) resulted in being coherent with what is suggested by the existing literature (Hair et al., 2009), confirming the goodness of fit of the model. These results suggest that the proposed model fits well with the empirical data. It should be also taken into consideration that in SEM, there is several Fitness Indexes that reflect how fit is the model to the data at hand. Specifically, there are three model fit categories namely absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious fit. In the current study, absolute model fit considered by three main indices Chi-Square, RMSEA and GFI. Their values are supported by literature (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Joreskog and Sorbom, 1984; Rigdon, 1996; Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin & Summers, 1977). The estimated model and the

values of standardized structural coefficients are shown in Figure 2 and Table 4. As can be seen, all hypotheses were supported by the data.

[Insert Figure 2 near here]

[Insert Table 4 near here]

The evaluation of the significance of a regression coefficient is performed by analysis of its t-test (Garver & Mentzer, 1999). The existence of a significant regression coefficient involves a consideration that the relationship between the two latent variables is demonstrated empirically (Hair et al., 2009) and in the case of a positive or satisfactory evaluation of adjustment measures, this confirms the predictive validity of the model (Garver & Mentzer, 1999). Because in this study it was assumed that unilateral cases (direct and positive influence), significant relations would present a t-value greater than 1.645 (Table 4).

According to the results, residents' apathy as perceived by tourists has been proven to consist of four latent constructs: lack of interest (H1: -0.642, p-value < 0.01), lack of initiative (H2: 0.472, p-value < 0.01), alienation (H3: -0.13, p-value < 0.05) and environmental-based apathy (H4: -0.359, p-value < 0.01).

In terms of the other hypotheses, tourists perception of residents' apathy was reported to negatively influence perceived service quality (H5) (0.765; p-value < 0.01). This confirms prior research stressing the fact that tourists' experiences consider in a relevant way the possibility of interacting with locals while on holiday (e.g. Correia, Kozak, & Ferradeira, 2011). Results also confirm that tourist perception of service quality influences positively the intention to recommend to others (H6: 0.57, p-value < 0.01). Further, tourists perception of residents' apathy negatively influences ambassadorship behaviour of tourists both offline (H7:

-0267, p-value < 0.01) and online (H8: -0.252, p-value < 0.01). This suggests that service quality is critical to retain and attract brand ambassadors (Ahearne et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the two hypotheses which are assumed, that intention to recommend influences the offline brand ambassadorship behaviour (H9) and online brand ambassadorship behaviour of tourists (H10), were supported by data (H9: 0449, p-value < 0.01; H10: -0.104, p-value < 0.05).

Finally, the tourists perception of residents' apathy influences negatively the perceived residents' support of tourism (H11: -0.695, p-value < 0.01).

After the SEM analysis was done, variable correlations were tested for invariance among three different groups of tourists. Multigroup analysis, as displayed in Table 5, highlights how tourists perception of residents' apathy in Portugal (Lisbon), Iran (Isfahan) and Italy (Olbia) differ from each other from the tourists' perspective. Table 5 includes only those paths (only hypotheses) that were proved to be different within the countries.

[Insert Table 5 near here]

Results suggest that lack of interest greatly explains tourist perception of residents' apathy in Portugal (-0.813, 0.000); this construct is more evident when compared to the other two countries (Italy: -0.447, 0.000; Iran: 0.655, p = 0.000). For the lack of initiative, the situation is almost the same regardless of the specific tourism destinations considered (Portugal: 0.775; Iran: 0.750; Italy: 0.471). Alienation is more evident in Iran than in Portugal and Italy (Italy = -0.382, p = 0.002; Portugal = 0.341, p = .001; Iran = 0.567, p = 0.000). This evidence could be explained by referring to the strong control to which residents are subject in Iran, that is perceived by tourists. Environmental-based apathy is more perceived within tourists visiting Italy (0.942, p = 0.000) than in Portugal (0.530, p = 0.000) and Iran (0.617, p

= 0.000), thus suggesting that Italians are perceived within tourists as more apathetic toward the environment when compared to residents in the other two destinations. Further, our findings showed that tourists perception of residents' apathy is negatively affecting perceived service quality in Lisbon (Portugal) (-0.725, p = 0.00) when compared to what happens in Iran (-0.700, p = 0.000) and Italy (-0.547).

In terms of the path of service quality on intention to recommend in the conceptual model, it could be argued that service quality influences greatly the intention to recommend to others in both Iran (0.674, p = 0.000) and Portugal (0.453, p = 0.000) with very slight differences; however, this path is not significant in the context of the Italian destination (0.022, p = 0.873). Results show that even though tourist perceived that apathetic residents in destinations are not contributing to tourism development appropriately, according the results, this does not influence the tourists' online brand ambassadorship behaviour for two destinations (Iran: 0.056, p = 0.645; Portugal: 0.113, p = 0.315); however, tourists perception of residents' apathy in Italy (Olbia) influences negatively tourists' brand ambassadorship behaviour (-0.439, p = 0.000). Overall our findings seem to suggest that tourists are perceiving their interaction with residents in Iran (Isfahan) and Portugal (Lisbon) more favourably and although results indicate tourists perception of residents' apathy exists in the destination, residents probably feel that tourism can contribute well to their community in both Iran and Portugal as tourist destinations. The offline brand ambassadorship behaviour shows no significant difference between the three destinations. In terms of the impact of tourists perception of residents' apathy on residents' perceived support, it could be suggested that this relationship is stronger in Portuguese (-0.626, p = 0.000) and Italian (-0.576, p = 0.000) residents and that the influence works negatively. This path is also significant at the $p<0.05$ level for Iranian residents, but with less effect (-0.191, p = 0.049).

5. Conclusion

Based on psychology, socio-politics and environmentally related literature, this study contributes to the current body of knowledge by proposing and testing a conceptual model that aims to analyse how residents' apathy as perceived by tourists, affects the host-guest interaction and, more specifically, the service quality that visitors perceive during their stay and, finally, their brand ambassadorship behaviour and intention to recommend a destination to others.

Findings reveal that residents' apathy is able to shape visitors' perceived service quality, residents' support of tourism (as perceived by visitors), the likelihood of tourists acting as brand ambassadors of the destination (both offline and online) and their willingness to recommend the place to others (both offline and online). Specifically, findings show that apathy directly and negatively influences perceived service quality and brand ambassadorship behaviour, and indirectly (via perceived service quality) influences the intention to recommend to others.

From a managerial point of view, our findings suggest that policymakers and destination marketers should perform internal marketing operations to make residents aware of the relevant role that their attitude and behaviour toward guests could have in guaranteeing visitors a high level of perceived service quality, thus stimulating them to spread positive talk and recommendations about the visited destination. While doing this, residents should be 'trained' and made sensitive to the local tourist resources and attractions with particular attention to what related to the intangible aspects of their local identity and authenticity; this would help guarantee that an effective storytelling can occur during the host-guest interaction, thus favoring an increase in the perceived service quality and in the willingness to talk about the destination to others. In fact, if residents do not remain informed and involved from an early stage, they may feel out of the program and could feel a sense of marginalization that

might render them less enthusiastic and less willing to play an effective and active role in welcoming visitors.

In spite of the theoretical and managerial contributions, this study does have its limitations. First, it is highly site-specific and based on a convenience sample; this renders our findings barely generalizable. It would be useful to repeat the study in other countries and destinations in order to cross-validate the findings. Further, it would be useful to more deeply investigate whether and how different intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to the destination (e.g. personal values of residents, their psychographic profile, their sense of belonging, their economic reliance on tourism, the host-guest ratio, the stage of the destination life cycle, etc.) might moderate the way the model and its relationship work.

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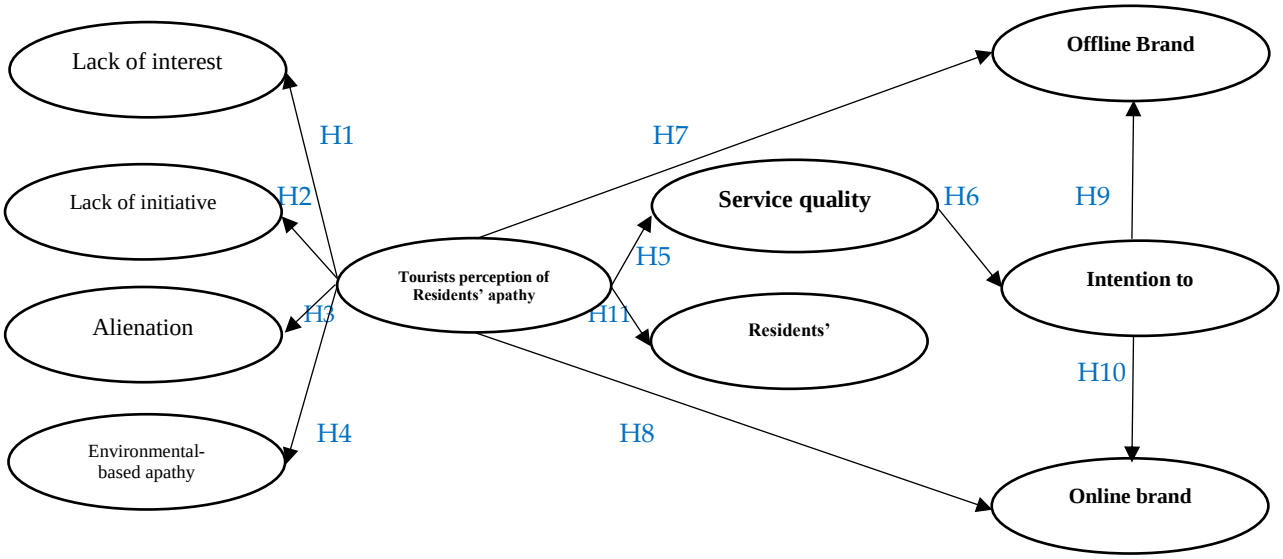
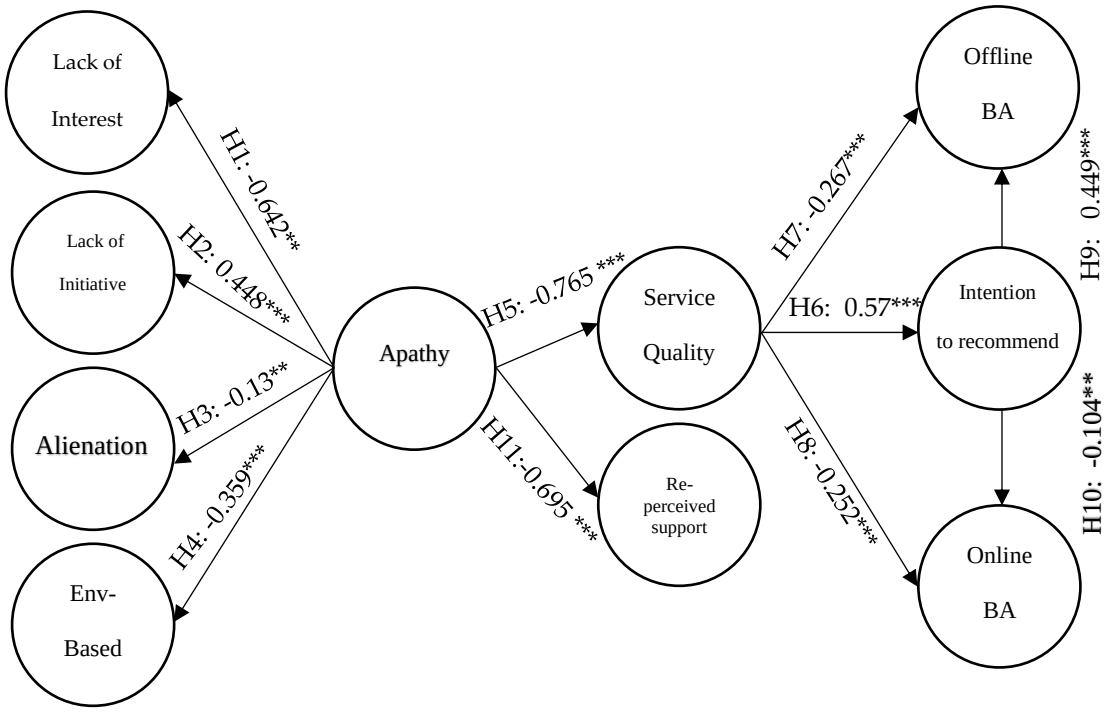


Figure 1 Proposed conceptual model



Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05;

Figure 2 Structural Equation Modelling

Table 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (Tourists: n = 947)

Constructs and Indicators	Eigen values	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total variance explained (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: Lack of interest				**26.239**	**.893**
(A1)I think residents are always ready to learn new things and increase their knowledge about tourists	.738	4.7793	1.40026		
(A2)I feel tourists arouse residents' curiosity	.699	4.8944	1.48119		
(A3)In my experience, residents are active persons who take the initiative to host or welcome tourists	.784	5.0327	1.40596		
(A4)In my experience, once a resident starts an interaction with a tourist s/he sees it through to the end	.672	4.8691	1.34674		
(A5)I think when a resident has to host or welcome tourists, s/he begins spontaneously (without being asked)	.650	4.8226	1.42916		
(A6)I think residents make an effort to complete the commitments they have started with tourists (commitments such as having interactions, hosting or welcoming tourists)	.778	5.0581	1.28243		
(A7)In my mind, getting together with friends is important to them while they are involved in welcoming or hosting tourists	.657	4.9314	1.32009		
(A8)I feel residents are interested in having new experiences in terms of welcoming or hosting tourists	.731	4.8733	1.40551		
Factor 2: Lack of initiative				**14.152**	**.857**
(B1)For me, residents have no interest in hosting and welcoming tourists	.646	2.8194	1.61916		
(B2)I feel it is difficult for residents to host or welcome tourists	.694	3.1499	1.66252		
(B3)In my opinion, residents are less spontaneous and less active than usual while hosting or welcoming tourists	.731	3.0718	1.56842		
(B4)I feel residents don't feel emotions when they host or welcome tourists	.816	2.9113	1.57294		
(B5)I feel residents are less enthusiastic about hosting or welcoming tourists than about their usual interests	.798	3.2228	1.65528		
Factor 3: Alienation				**8.686**	**.705**
(C1)I feel residents often wonder what the meaning of hosting or welcoming tourists is	.695	3.9652	1.55105		
(C2)In my opinion, today residents need experts in the tourism industry more than before	.744	4.4087	1.74022		
Factor 4: Environmental-based apathy				**5.073**	**.734**
(D1)I find it is hard for residents to get too concerned about tourism environmental issues	.681	4.3041	1.43072		

(D2)I feel residents have the idea that most environmental problems caused by tourism will be solved on their own over time	.774	4.2682	1.38928		
(D3)I feel residents don't care about environmental problems caused by tourism	.653	4.2112	1.69371	**Total:54.150**	
Factor 5: Service quality				**58.372**	**.918**
(E1)Residents are always willing to help tourists.	.781	5.4256	1.35290		
(E2)The behaviour of residents should instil confidence in tourists	.653	5.5407	1.17730		
(E3)Generally, the residents provide information on the area reliably, consistently, and dependably.	.756	5.4013	1.20671		
(E4)Generally, the residents are competent and well informed about the tourist offerings of the area.	.717	5.2091	1.33604		
(E5)Generally, the residents enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	.840	5.4836	1.29420		
(E6)Generally, the residents are approachable and easy to contact.	.827	5.5671	1.32806		
(E7)Generally, the residents are courteous, polite, and respectful.	.792	5.6853	1.23130		
(E8)Generally, the residents are trustworthy, believable, and honest.	.729	5.1162	1.49743		
(E9)Generally, the residents make the effort to understand my needs.	.763	5.6558	1.24731		
Factor 6: Offline brand ambassadorship behaviour				**37.636**	**.859**
(F1)I 'talk up' this destination as a tourism destination to people I know.	.791	5.8944	1.36532		
(F2)I bring up this destination as a tourism destination in a positive way in conversations I have with friends and acquaintances.	.920	6.0148	1.16856		
(F3)In social situations, I speak favourably about this destination as a tourism destination.	.747	5.9789	1.18998		
Factor 7: Online brand ambassadorship behaviour				**22.672**	**.874**
(G1)I have provided online reviews about this destination as a tourism destination on my social networking sites.	.664	4.0602	2.07155		
(G2)I frequently provide online reviews about this destination as a tourism destination on my social networking sites.	.716	3.5892	1.96836		
(G3)I often post images of the city on my social networking sites.	.554	4.2450	2.11737		
(G4)I often post information about this destination on my social networking sites.	.688	3.7043	2.02448		
(G5)I frequently participate in knowledge-sharing activities about this destination as a tourism destination in travel or tourism online forums, e.g. TripAdvisor.com.	.833	2.9820	1.91486		
(G6)I usually involve myself in discussions of various topics about this destination as a tourism destination in travel or tourism online forums, e.g. TripAdvisor.com.	.847	2.7804	1.80916		
(G7)When participating in travel or tourism online forums, e.g. TripAdvisor.com, I usually actively share my knowledge about this destination as a tourism destination with others.	.781	2.8923	1.87253	**Total: 60.308**	
Factor 8: Residents' perceived support				**53.336**	**.863**
(H1)I perceive the overall impact of tourism development in this community positively.	.673	5.1700	1.40357		

(H2)I think residents would support tourism development in their community.	.741	5.2777	1.28084		
(H3)I feel further tourism development would positively affect this community's quality of life.	.804	5.3516	1.35071		
(H4)Tourism is the most important industry for this community.	.738	5.0053	1.52948		
(H5)Tourism helps this community grow in the right direction.	.765	5.2429	1.37254		
(H6)Tourism continues to play an important economic role in this community.	.651	5.6051	1.23047		
Factor 9: Intention to recommend to others				**72.318**	**.884**
(I1)I will say positive things about this destination to other people.	.846	6.2946	.97474		
(I2)I will recommend this destination to someone who seeks my advice.	.884	6.2471	1.04860		
(I3)I will encourage friends and relatives to visit this destination.	.820	6.1616	1.13203		

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Tourists: n=947), Tourists perception of residents' apathy

Constructs and Indicators			St. Regression	S.E	*C.R.*	P
A8	<---	Lack of interest	0.736			
A6	<---	Lack of interest	0.825	0.044	23.911	***
A5	<---	Lack of interest	0.686	0.051	19.344	***
A4	<---	Lack of interest	0.71	0.05	18.843	***
A3	<---	Lack of interest	0.815	0.051	22.591	***
A2	<---	Lack of interest	0.735	0.053	19.961	***
B5	<---	Lack of initiative	0.799	0.067	18.519	***
B4	<---	Lack of initiative	0.837	0.064	19.395	***
B3	<---	Lack of initiative	0.771	0.061	18.808	***
B2	<---	Lack of initiative	0.678	0.056	19.389	***
B1	<---	Lack of initiative	0.655			
C1	<---	Alienation	0.842			
C2	<---	Alienation	0.618	0.133	6.106	***
D1	<---	Environmental-based apathy	0.808			
D2	<---	Environmental-based apathy	0.674	0.126	6.377	***
D3	<---	Environmental-based apathy	0.744	0.07	15.196	***
A7	<---	Lack of interest	0.636	0.041	20.17	***
A1	<---	Lack of interest	0.784	0.049	21.813	***

	CR	**AVE**	**MSV**	**ASV**	Alienation	Lack of interest	Lack of initiative	Environmental-based apathy
Alienation	0.701	0.545	0.042	0.035	0.739			
Lack of interest	0.908	0.553	0.065	0.045	-0.192	0.743		
Lack of initiative	0.865	0.564	0.065	0.037	0.205	-0.254	0.751	
Environmental apathy	0.787	0.554	0.033	0.021	0.161	0.182	0.064	0.744

GOF Indexes	**X^2**	**df**	**P**	**X^2/df**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**
Whole sample (n=947)	457.656	126	0.0	3.632	0.946	0.777	0.73	0.053

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01

Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Tourists: n=947)

Constructs and Indicators			Estimate	S.E	*C.R.*	P
E1	<---	Service Quality	0.762			
E2	<---	Service Quality	0.623	0.034	20.689	***
E3	<---	Service Quality	0.711	0.036	23.336	***
E4	<---	Service Quality	0.72	0.043	21.251	***
E5	<---	Service Quality	0.873	0.039	27.81	***
E6	<---	Service Quality	0.851	0.041	26.374	***
E7	<---	Service Quality	0.792	0.039	23.821	***
E8	<---	Service Quality	0.701	0.039	20.016	***
E9	<---	Service Quality	0.753	0.039	22.37	***
F3	<---	Offline BA	0.77			
F2	<---	Offline BA	0.907	0.045	22.516	***
F1	<---	Offline BA	0.722	0.042	19.253	***
G1	<---	Online BA	0.568			
G2	<---	Online BA	0.626	0.049	21.374	***
G3	<---	Online BA	0.459	0.07	11.63	***
G4	<---	Online BA	0.591	0.071	14.522	***
G5	<---	Online BA	0.878	0.098	15.961	***
G6	<---	Online BA	0.91	0.095	15.766	***
G7	<---	Online BA	0.843	0.092	15.534	***
I1	<---	Intention to recommend	0.834			
I2	<---	Intention to recommend	0.845	0.043	25.439	***
I3	<---	Intention to recommend	0.773	0.046	23.172	***
H6	<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.63			
H5	<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.773	0.08	17.559	***
H4	<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.728	0.082	17.676	***
H3	<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.773	0.088	16.182	***

H2					<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.792	0.087	15.402	***
H1					<---	Residents' perceived Support	0.701	0.089	14.114	***
	CR	**AVE**	**MSV**	**ASV**	Intention to recommend	Service Quality	Offline BA	Online BA	Residents' perceived Support	
Intention to recommend	0.858	0.669	0.288	0.154	0.818					
Service Quality	0.923	0.574	0.281	0.134	0.530	0.758				
Offline BA	0.844	0.646	0.288	0.124	0.537	0.340	0.803			
Online BA	0.874	0.512	0.035	0.011	-0.056	0.064	0.017	0.716		
Residents' perceived Support	0.875	0.540	0.135	0.076	0.205	0.367	0.301	0.187	0.735	
GOF Indexes		**X^2**	**DF**	**P**	**X^2/df**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	
Whole sample (n=947)		961.74	330	0.0	2.914	0.927	0.766	0.732	0.045	

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01

Table 4 Structural Equation Modeling (Testing hypothesis) (Tourists: n=947)

Hypotheses				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H5	Service Quality	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.765	0.19	-8.26	***
H6	Intention to recommend	<---	Service Quality	0.57	0.032	13.502	***
H1	Lack of interest	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.642	0.141	-7.439	***
H2	Lack of initiative	<---	Perceived Apathy	0.448			
H3	Alienation	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.13	0.148	-2.313	0.021**
H4	Environmental based Apathy	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.359	0.159	-5.22	***
H11	Residents' perceived Support	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.695	0.147	-7.213	***
H9	Offline brand ambassadorship	<---	Intention to recommend	0.449	0.056	10.434	***
H10	Online brand ambassadorship	<---	Intention to recommend	-0.104	0.062	-2.144	0.032**
H8	Online brand ambassadorship	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.252	0.132	-3.817	***
H7	Offline brand ambassadorship	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.267	0.106	-5.134	***
	GOF Indexes	X2	DF	P	X2/df	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA

	Whole sample (n=947)	**2849.417**	**997**	**0.0**	**2.916**	**0.869**	**0.54**	**0.513**	**0.045**

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05;

Table 5 Multi-group analysis (Tourists: n=947)

Destinations			**Italy**		**Portugal**		**Iran**		**Portugal-Iran**	**Portugal-Italy**	**Italy-Iran**
Constructs and items		**Constructs**	Standardized Regression	P-value	Standardized Regression	P-value	Standardized Regression	P-value	Z-score	Z-score	Z-score
Lack of interest	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.447	0.000	-0.813	0.000	-0.655	0.000	-2.618***	-4.326***	-1.619
Lack of initiative	<---	Perceived Apathy	0.471		0.775		0.75				
Alienation	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.382	0.002	0.341	0.001	0.567	0.000	0.025	-8.54***	-4.47***
Environmental based Apathy	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.459	0.000	0.258	0.012	0.276	0.021	1.092	-6.191***	-3.978***
Residents' perceived Support	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.576	0.000	-0.626	0.000	-0.191	0.049	-2.684***	0.11	-3.842***
Online brand ambassadorship	<---	Intention to recommend	-0.18	0.108	-0.135	0.185	-0.086	0.427	0.486	-6.989***	-0.648
Online brand ambassadorship	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.439	0.003	-0.113	0.315	-0.056	0.654	0.051	7.349***	-2.349**
Service Quality	<---	Perceived Apathy	-0.547	0.000	-0.725	0.000	-0.7	0.000	-1.711*	1.968**	-2.084**
Intention to recommend	<---	Service Quality	0.022	0.873	0.453	0.000	0.674	0.000	-0.789	0.754	-5.105***
Offline BA	<---	Perceived Apathy	0.76	0.505	0.14	0.493	0.139	0.848	0.065	5.426***	0.543

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.1