

DOES EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH VISITORS IMPACT RESIDENTS' ATTACHMENT TO THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY LIVE?

Kyle M. Woosnam
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas, USA

And

Jingxian Jiang
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas, USA

ABSTRACT

Using the coastal destination, Galveston Island (Texas), as the study site, this paper examines how residents' solidarity with tourists can impact the formers' community attachment. Multiple regression analysis shows that each of the three *Emotional Solidarity Scale* (ESS) factors significantly predicted *Community Attachment Scale* (CAS), explaining 16.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. Theoretical and practical implications of the study are discussed.

Key Words: emotional solidarity scale (ESS); community attachment; residents and visitors

INTRODUCTION

Throughout much of the literature concerning emotional solidarity, the concept has been examined among members of the 'in-group' devoid of considerations involving the concept among those in the 'out-group' as well as how solidarity affects individuals' attachment to the community in which they reside. Using the coastal destination, Galveston Island (Texas), as the study site, this paper examines how residents' solidarity (as measured through Woosnam and Norman's (2010) 10-item *Emotional Solidarity Scale* or ESS) with tourists can impact the formers' community attachment (as measured by the 5-item *Community Attachment Scale* or CAS created by Matarrita-Cascante, et al. (2006). During the fall of 2009, residents of Galveston were visited at their homes following a multi-stage cluster sampling scheme and asked to participate in the study.

DATA SOURCE

Throughout a five-week period, 1,364 households were visited by the research team. Considering non-response and seasonal resident households, heads of households (or spouse) at 623 homes were contacted and asked to participate, of whom 94 declined (an acceptance rate of 84.9%). Of the 529 surveys that were distributed, 456 were completed by residents (a completion rate of 86.2%), resulting in an effective response rate of 73.2%.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Respondents

Demographics	Categories/Range	Percentage/Mean
Type of visitor	Day visitor	28.9%
	Family and friends traveler	21.3%
	Family vacationer	16.6%
	Summer Vacationer	10.5%
	Others	22.7%
Age	15-93	M=48.1
Gender	Female	51.9%
	Male	48.1%
Race	White alone	61.7%
	Latino or Hispanic	15.2%
	Black or African American alone	13.2%
	Others	9.9%
Highest education	Some college (including junior college)	32.5%
	Four-year college (BA, BS, BFA)	28.9%
	High school diploma or GED	12.8%
	Master's degree (MA, MS, MFA, March, MBA)	9.4%
	Others	16.4%
Household income	\$100k or more	22.6%
	\$20k – 39,999	19.7%
	\$40k – 59,999	17.3%
	\$60k – 79,999	15.3%
	Others	25.1%

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Given factor structures for each of the two scales had been assessed in prior studies, composite factor means were calculated and assessed for reliabilities. The three ESS factors (*welcoming nature*—four items, $\alpha = 0.80$; *emotional closeness*—two items, $\alpha = 0.93$; *sympathetic understanding*—four items, $\alpha = .84$) as well as the unidimensional CAS ($\alpha = .87$) all yielded sound coefficients. Using multiple regression analysis, each of the three ESS factors significantly predicted CAS ($F_{3,441} = 28.77, p < 0.001$), explaining 16.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. As a check for multicollinearity, both VIF and tolerance were examined. The former ranged from 1.21 to 1.77 while

the latter ranged from 0.56 to 0.82 —both of which exhibited no concerns for multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 2
Descriptives of Independent and Dependent Variables

Variables	Mean/S.D.	Cronbach α reliability
IV: Emotional Solidarity Scale (ESS) ^a		
ESS <i>welcoming nature</i>	6.17/.87	.80
ESS <i>emotional closeness</i>	3.78/1.72	.93
ESS <i>sympathetic understanding</i>	4.76/1.18	.84
DV: Community Attachment Scale (CAS) ^b		
	5.44/1.09	.87

^aEach of the CAS items was asked on a 7-point scales where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

^bEach of the ESS items was asked on a 7-point scales where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

Table 3
Multiple Regression Output

CAS model with ESS ($F_{3,441} = 28.77, p < 0.001, R^2 = .164$)	B	Beta(β)	t	tol	VIF
ESS <i>welcoming nature</i>	.14	.12	2.10*	.63	1.60
ESS <i>emotional closeness</i>	.05	.08	1.75	.82	1.21
ESS <i>sympathetic understanding</i>	.26	.28	4.84***	.56	1.77

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

Despite explaining a modest amount of variance, residents' level of emotional solidarity with tourists does seem to factor into their connection with the community. What this conveys to tourism practitioners and planners is that connecting with individuals outside the community does not translate to a compromised level of attachment one feels with the community in which they reside. As a result, residents may be made aware of the potential benefits in welcoming visitors to their community—not only for the economic and social exchange, but the fact that community fabric will not be compromised. Additional implications exist from this work, most notably the finding that community attachment may serve as a viable outcome variable of emotional solidarity within Durkheim's (1995[1915]) model in future work concerning the construct.

REFERENCES

- Durkheim, E. ([1915]1995). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Matarrita-Cascante, D., Luloff, A. E., Krannich, R. S., & Field, D. R. (2006). Community participation in rapidly growing communities in southern Utah. *Community Development, 37*(4), 71-87.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using Multivariate Statistics*. 5th edition. Boston: Pearson.
- Woosnam, K. M., & Norman, W. C. (2010). Measuring residents' emotional solidarity with tourists: scale development of Durkheim's theoretical constructs. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(3), 365-380.