

This paper has been pre-published online in April 2016 as:



Journal of Destination Marketing & Management

Available online 23 April 2016

In Press, Corrected Proof — Note to users



Research paper

The impact of residents' informedness and involvement on their perceptions of tourism impacts: The case of Bled

Tina Šegota  , Tanja Mihalič, Kir Kuščer

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Kardeljeva ploščad 17, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Received 22 July 2015, Revised 30 March 2016, Accepted 31 March 2016, Available online 23 April 2016

[Show less](#)

doi:10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.03.007

[Get rights and content](#)

For full reference please check if the paper has already been fully published in JDMM.

RESEARCH PAPER

The impact of residents' informedness and involvement on perceptions of tourism impacts: the case of the destination Bled

Tina ŠEGOTA*, Tanja MIHALIČ, Kir KUŠČER

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Kardeljeva ploščad 17, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

*Corresponding author: tina.segota@ef.uni-lj.si

The impact of residents' informedness and involvement on perceptions of tourism impacts: the case of the destination Bled

Abstract

The tourism development debate includes many studies on how residents perceive positive or negative tourism impacts, based on sustainability, as understood by a three-pillar concept. However, so far studies were very limited in addressing certain requirements for sustainable tourism, such as informed stakeholders' participation and cooperation – which represent the subject of this study. The survey that was undertaken follows previous ones in using the established three-pillar sustainability concept in order to define impacts of tourism. Further, it adds to tourism research by surveying informedness and developmental involvement. A four-dimensional informedness–involvement tourism grid is used to segment residents and their perceptions on tourism impacts in each segment are analysed. The model is empirically applied to the Slovenian lake and mountain destination of Bled. The findings confirm that highly informed and highly involved residents had better perceptions of tourism than all other groups, whereas those residents who were lowly informed and lowly involved had more negative perceptions of tourism. The survey contributes by expanding knowledge on resident perceptions of tourism by adding in the aspects of informedness and involvement. The proposed model can be applied to any destination to help manage residents' opinions and consequently their support for tourism development.

Key words: sustainability; local residents; participation; involvement; information; tourism impacts

1. Introduction

The belief that 'understanding resident perceptions and responses is fundamental to the successful and sustainable development of tourism' (Sharpley, 2014, p. 14) is the main reason we have witnessed an expansion of research on resident attitudes to tourism. However, regardless of the numerous papers produced on the topic over the past 30 years, the role of residents in tourism development remains in the interest of academics for many reasons (for a review, see Harrill, 2004 and Sharpley, 2014). One of the reasons explaining this interest lies in the concept of sustainable tourism development. According to Mihalič (2015), the concept, as recognised by the UNWTO, rests on the three theoretical pillars, representing the economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism respectively. The concept has been integrated into tourism strategies and policies on all levels: from the destination level to the global level. However, the more recent debate on sustainable development calls for the more successful implementation of sustainability and points out certain sustainability requirements such as customer satisfaction, awareness, participation and cooperation of all stakeholders, political power, consensus and a critical mass (Mihalič, 2015). The sustainability debate also recognises the importance of residents as stakeholders in the tourism planning and development process. Indeed, many scholars (Boley, McGehee, Perdue,

& Long, 2015; Garrod, Fyall, Leask, & Ried, 2012; Hall, 1994; Harrill, 2004; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Lawton & Weaver, 2015; Murphy 1985; Simmons, 1994) argue that residents are important destination stakeholders and thus deserve to be empowered to participate in tourism planning and development in order to approve and control the impacts of tourism in their destination. The empowerment of residents is open to a variety of interpretations. It is often difficult to define and evaluate the implementation of empowerment since it is described by different categories, including: involvement (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Lee, 2013; Murphy, 1985; Nicholas, Thapa, & Ko, 2009), participation (Li, 2006; Simmons, 1994; Tosun, 2006) or power to influence the decision-making process (Boley et al., 2015; Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011/2012; Nunkoo, Ramkissoon & Gursoy, 2012). These categories often serve as a common denominator for various resident engagement activities, such as participating in tourism activities, support for research of sustainability, being informed and involved in planning, management and decision-making. The approach employing the stakeholder theory (Byrd, 2007; Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009; Garrod et al., 2012; Nicholas et al., 2009) has proven to be valuable in underpinning the legitimacy and saliency of residents as destination stakeholders, but has not completely answered the question of the extent to which residents are informed and consulted, and thus included in tourism development. The growing recognition of this non-adequately answered question has led to a few studies that discuss different aspects of resident empowerment through Arnstein's typology of citizenship participation (Garrod et al., 2012; Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003; Lawton & Weaver, 2015; Tosun, 2006). So far, the results have shown that residents' engagement is mainly considered to be informative in nature and thus lacking in consensus, cooperation or consultancy between residents and tourism managers.

In relation to positive and negative tourism impacts on the destination and host community, social exchange theory informs tourism studies on how residents perceive these impacts and how their perceptions affect their support for or opposition to tourism. In many cases (for example, Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Ko & Stewart, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990), it was argued that if residents perceive there to be greater positive tourism impacts than negative ones then they are likely to support tourism development. Those residents who have benefited personally from tourism usually profit in terms of employment and business opportunities: hence their interests in tourism may not be similar to those of other local residents. Indeed, Garrod et al. (2012) have argued that residents represent a heterogeneous group of individuals with multiple interests and they may be allied with more than one stakeholder group, thereby resulting in an overlap of stakeholder interests. Thus, differences among residents in access to information and influence over decision-makers in tourism are determined by alliances with a certain stakeholder group. This prompts yet another important question, which has not been adequately addressed in the literature, relating to how residents evaluate various tourism impacts based on the extent of their informedness and involvement in tourism.

According to the above gaps in the literature, this paper seeks to examine residents' perceptions of tourism and how they are shaped through residents' informedness and involvement in tourism development. Following the identification of four resident groups based on their levels of informedness and involvement, group differences in perceptions will be demonstrated within the framework of the three sustainability pillars (i.e. referring to economic, environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts). In the next section, we set out the theoretical contexts concerning the role of residents in tourism development and the importance of their segmentation. This is followed by a presentation of the conceptual model and hypotheses, methodology and empirical results from a survey of local residents in the Slovenian destination of Bled. The latter are discussed in the concluding part of the paper.

2. Literature review

2.1. *The role of residents in sustainable tourism development*

The definition of sustainable tourism development (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, pp. 11-12) postulates that, as such, it takes ‘full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.’ Moreover, sustainable tourism development requires ‘the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders’ (Edgell, DelMastro Allen, Smith, & Swanson, 2008, p. 195) and constant monitoring of tourism impacts in the community to ensure the building of a consensus for the development and the possibility of introducing preventive or corrective measures (Edgell et al., 2008). According to Gunn (1994), sustainable tourism development cannot be successful without the support of residents. This is supported by several studies (Ioannides, 1995; Robson & Robson, 1996), which have demonstrated that if residents are included in discussions about tourism development, if their opinions are taken into account, and if they are involved in the planning process, sustainable tourism development is achievable. However, in order for residents to play an active role, they need to have substantial knowledge and understanding of the issues (Byrd, 2007). This can happen through informing and education, so that the decision-making process is based on the information provided and, therefore, represents an objective utilisation of collective wisdom (Byrd, 2007).

Thus, it is inevitable to say that the debate on sustainable tourism development has contributed to recognising local residents as important destination stakeholders. In outlining the debate, Mihalič (2015) noted that to make tourism sustainable (what we know as tourism being based on the three pillars of sustainability, i.e. economic, socio-cultural and environmental) it is imperative to meet the following three requirements: 1) to maintain a high level of visitor satisfaction; 2) to base tourism on awareness of sustainability and ethics, supported by environmental education and the informedness of all stakeholders; and 3) to ensure strong leadership, informed stakeholders’ participation, a consensus, cooperation and a critical mass for realising sustainable tourism. Hence, residents have been placed at the very centre of sustainable development, since both the indirect and direct residents’ participation is the foundation for implementing the sustainability paradigm (Butcher, 1997; Hunter, 1997; Jamieson & Jamal, 1997).

However, Byrd (2007) noted every community also includes individuals who do not want to be involved in any decision-making process. However, their interests also need to be represented since their lives are directly impacted by the presence of tourism in the community. Therefore, in order to ensure equal representation of *all voices* within a community, different forms of resident participation have to be ensured (Byrd, 2007).

2.2. *Residents’ participation: the perspective of informedness and involvement in tourism development planning*

A few studies have examined different aspects of resident empowerment through Arnstein’s typology of citizenship participation (Garrod et al., 2012; Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003; Lawton & Weaver, 2015; Tosun, 2006). Arnstein (1969) typology distinguishes three categories: *Non-participation*, *Degrees of Tokenism*, and *Degrees of Citizenship Power*, which are ascribed to different levels of citizenship participation. Moving up through Arnstein’s ladder means that, both individually and collectively, partners experience greater empowerment in the planning situation (McCool, 2009). The first category acknowledges manipulation and therapy as a form of citizenship participation. Manipulation is considered

an illusionary form of participation where most frequently residents would be placed on ‘rubberstamp advisory committees or advisory boards’ (Arnstein, 1969, p. 218) for the purpose of being co-opted to grant their support for tourism development. Similarly, therapy refers to the masqueraded engagement of residents within an extensive group activity with the sole purpose of being granted support for tourism development rather than addressing the issues of the community. Most often, these two levels enable tourism managers and planners to explain their independent decisions to the stakeholders and thus be given their support. This translates to a formal top-down communication from managers to residents, which Tosun (2006) categorises as coercive participation. According to Lawton and Weaver (2015), this kind of participation is mainly rejected in tourism studies since ‘it conflicts with basic social sustainability principles’ (p. 662).

Within the second category, *Degrees of Tokenism*, there are three different levels of citizenship participation: informing, consultation and placation, which Tosun (2006) refers to as induced participation. The lowest level on the ladder for this category considers informing and educating residents about tourism development in a destination. This represents our understanding of the concept of informedness, which measures the degree to which residents become more knowledgeable about concerning issues (Holthausen & Verrecchia, 1990) in tourism development. As Arnstein (1969) noted, too frequently the emphasis is on one-way communication where information is passed down from managers to residents. The most common tools for informing residents are news media (local newspaper, online media), posters, pamphlets, responses to inquiries etc. In this sense, tourism studies have shown that little has been done to move beyond the passive participation of residents, and that the relationship between tourism managers and local residents tends to be chiefly informative in nature (Cole, 2006; Garrod, et al., 2012; Harrill, 2004). The other two levels, consultation and placation, although indicating they are for more inclusive participation, are still a far cry from it. Most often, attitude studies, neighbourhood meetings, public hearings and residents’ inclusion on various boards are used solely to validate decisions, not to ascertain that resident concerns and ideas will be taken into account (Garrod et al., 2012; Harrill, 2004). However, as pointed out by Lankford (2001), these tools should be considered as ‘the starting point in developing a citizen involvement process (which takes many years) to discuss impacts, to suggest mitigating strategies, and to decide on the scope and density of tourism development’ (p. 316). Indeed, residents have been willing to advice on tourism planning if presented with an ability and opportunity (Hung, Sirakaya-Turk, & Ingram, 2011; Lawton & Weaver, 2015).

Lastly, the third category, *Degrees of Citizenship Power*, which includes partnership, delegated power and citizenship control, indicates it concerns providing stakeholders with the ability to voice their interests and, more importantly, to directly influence the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969). This represents our understanding of the concept of involvement, which measures the degree to which residents actively participate in the planning of sustainable tourism in their community. Tosun (2006) referred to this active participation as being spontaneous, pointing towards bottom-up communication between residents and planners that has been ‘embraced as an aspiration’ (Lawton & Weaver, 2015, p. 662). Yet this level of citizen participation has been criticised for several reasons, for example, difficulty in assuring equal distribution of responsibilities and resources, overcoming the apathy and disinterest of residents, providing independence from external influencers etc. (Lawton & Weaver, 2015), which may lead to the conclusion that ‘there is a gap between the appealing conceptual idea of sustainable tourism and its alarmingly slow penetration of action and practice’ (Mihalič, 2015, p. 462).

2.3. Resident segmentation in tourism perception studies

Many tourism researchers have shown there is a wider interest in identifying various segments of residents affected by tourism development and their perceptions of tourism (Allen, Hafer, Long, & Perdue, 1993; Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Davis & Morais, 2004; Yuksel, Bramwell, & Yuksel, 1999). Some tourism researchers (Davis, Allen, & Cosenza, 1988; Frauman & Banks, 2011; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Lawton & Weaver, 2015; Madrigal, 1995; Presenza, Del Chiappa, & Sheehan, 2013; Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy, & Vieregge, 2015; Williams & Lawson, 2001) have segmented residents in order to measure their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour regarding tourism, and to evaluate dominant patterns in these responses as well as their relation to various independent variables. These results provided more general information on community reactions, enabling those responsible for tourism development and planning to be more effective in targeted reformative actions aimed at counteracting or avoiding negative impacts (Davis et al., 1988; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Madrigal, 1995).

Moreover, studies of resident attitudes and support for tourism development have shown that residents perceiving personal benefits from tourism also tended to have a better understanding of positive tourism impacts and therefore to be more in favour of tourism development (Latkova & Vogt, 2012; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990). Those residents who benefit personally from tourism usually profit in terms of employment and business opportunities, and their interests in tourism may not be similar to those of other local residents. In this sense, when the social exchange theory is placed next to the stakeholder theory, it could be argued that residents represent a heterogeneous group of individuals with multiple interests and that they may be allied to more than one stakeholder group, thereby resulting in an overlap of stakeholder interests (Garrod et al., 2012). Moreover, Latkova and Vogt (2012) have pointed out that ‘perceived influence over tourism-related decisions, as well as involvement in the tourism industry, does not guarantee that a person will see solely the positive or negative side of the tourism industry’ (p. 62).

3. Conceptualisation, hypotheses and study site

3.1. Development of the conceptual model and hypotheses

Many recent studies (Brida, Riaño, & Aguirre, 2011; Lundberg, 2015; Presenza et al., 2013; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015; Vareiro, Remoaldo, & Ribeiro, 2013) have approached the study of resident perceptions of tourism through resident segmentation. The present study also applies the segmentation approach. Residents are segmented into four groups according to their informedness about tourism development and their involvement in tourism planning. Consequently, a two-dimensional combination of a low/high informedness and low/high involvement grid is suggested (see Fig. 1). This segmentation approach is novel in tourism research. It is expected the results will help identify groups in need of either enhancing their knowledge base or gaining assurance for their participation in decision-making. This is in line with Gunn’s (1988) suggestion that in tourism planning, ‘greater accountability and better understanding of tourism are required’ (p. 243) to gain resident groups’ support for tourism developmental proposals.

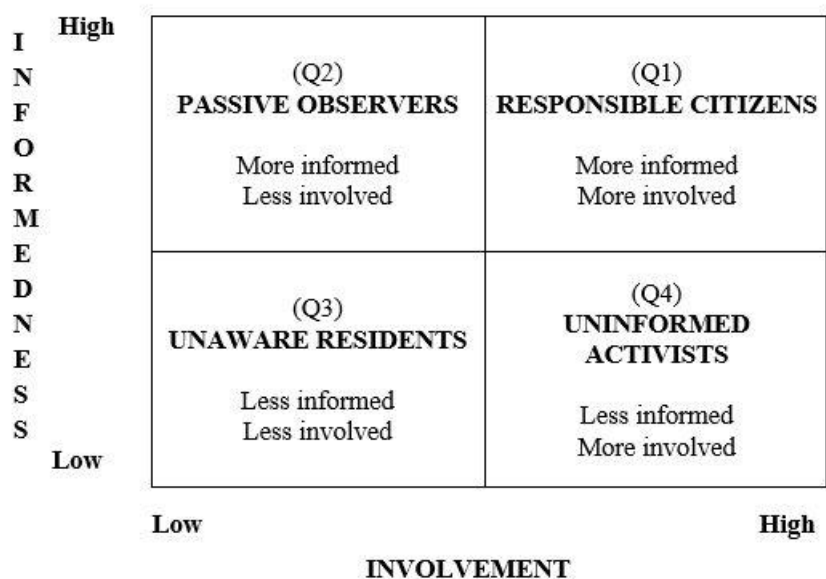
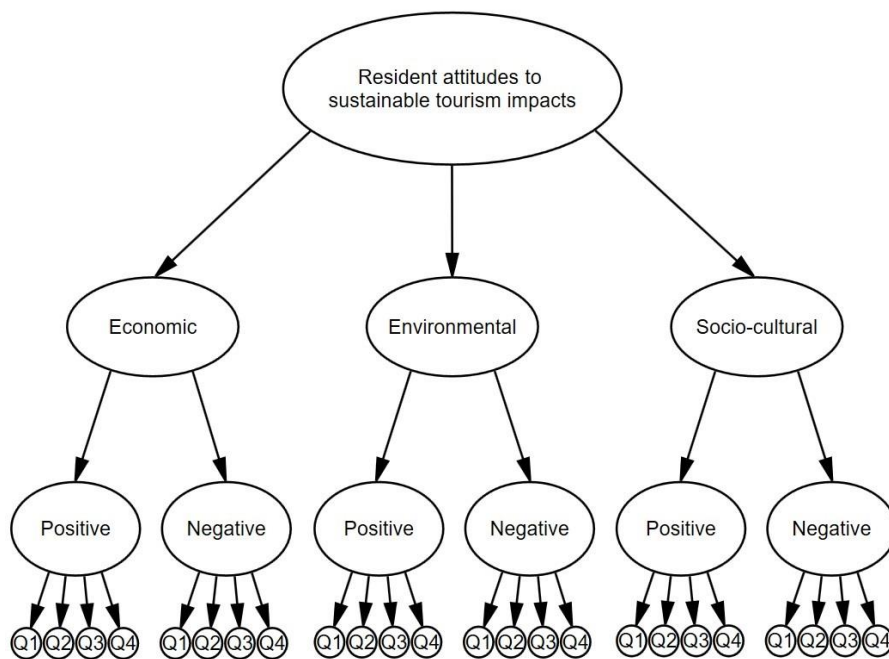


Fig. 1. Informedness–involvement Grid

As shown, Quadrant 1 (Q1) represents more informed and more involved residents, corresponding to Arnstein's (1969) third category, and thus named *Responsible citizens*. Residents who are more informed and less involved in tourism planning are represented in Quadrant 2 (Q2), labelled *Passive observers*. Quadrant 3 (Q3) is named *Unaware residents*, which stands for residents who are less informed and less involved. Lastly, Quadrant 4 (Q4) is named *Uninformed activists* and includes residents who are less informed but more involved in the planning process.



Legend: Q1=Responsible citizens; Q2=Passive observers; Q3=Unaware residents; Q4=Uninformed activists

Fig. 2. The conceptual model.

By applying the resident group segments presented above to study tourism impact perceptions based on the three-pillar sustainability approach (i.e. economic, environmental and socio-cultural), this study hypothesises that each resident group will have different perceptions of tourism impacts (H1) (see Fig. 2).

In order to suggest assumptions for each group, it is imperative to look at their features. As noted above, some groups are more informed (i.e. have greater knowledge about tourism development) and/or more involved (i.e. have the power to influence decision-making). In the study by Andereck et al. (2005), resident perceptions were influenced by knowledge about the role of the tourism industry in the community, and – consistent with the social exchange theory – those more knowledgeable tended to perceive greater positive tourism impacts. Similarly, Kayat (2002) and Madrigal (1993) demonstrated that power over influencing decision-making is a predictor of resident attitudes, and that power is significantly related to the perception of positive tourism impacts. In Madrigal's (1993) study, power was determined by skills, economic access to resources, and positions held in the community. However, contrary to these studies, Latkova and Vogt (2012, p. 62) found that perceived influence or involvement in the tourism industry did not guarantee that perceptions of tourism impacts would be either positive or negative.

Thus, for the two 'extreme' groups (i.e. low informedness/low involvement and high informedness/high involvement) the study assumes that *Responsible citizens* would have the most positive perceptions of economic (H2a), environmental (H2b) and socio-cultural tourism impacts (H2c); and that *Unaware residents* would have the most negative perceptions of economic (H3a), environmental (H3b) and socio-cultural tourism impacts (H3c).

For the other two groups (i.e. *Passive observers* and *Uninformed activists*), it is not known whether their perceptions of more positive or negative tourism impacts would be greatly influenced by having more information about tourism development or by being more involved in tourism planning, which is in line with Latkova and Vogt's (2012) findings. These two groups' perceptions of tourism impacts are therefore best left for exploration.

Based on the social exchange theory, however, it can be predicted that those residents in the groups of *Responsible citizens* (H4a), *Passive observers* (H4b), *Unaware residents* (H4c) and *Uninformed activists* (H4d) who are benefiting economically from tourism will tend to perceive positive tourism impacts rather than negative ones.

3.2. Study-site context: the tourism destination of Bled in Slovenia

The tourism destination Bled is considered one of the most important destinations in Slovenia. It is located in the north-western region of the country between the ridges of the Julian Alps and the Karavanks. The destination has the longest swimming season of any Alpine resort, attributed to its mild sub-Alpine climate. Its development as a tourism destination began in 1855 with the Swiss hydropath Arnold Rikli who saw tourism potential in Bled's climate and beautiful landscape: he founded the Institute of Natural Healing based on bathing, sunbathing, walks and modest eating, and started by building the necessary infrastructure (e.g. accommodation facilities, Swiss-style baths, walking paths etc.). Soon after, in 1870, the newly built railway station in Bled enabled stops by express trains, accounting for arrivals of domestic and international tourists. In 1906, Bled was already officially classified amongst the important tourist spots in Imperial Austria ("The beginnings of tourism", n.d.).

Nowadays, Bled annually records more than 600,000 overnight stays, and 94.7% of those are by international tourists (SORS, 2015). Among those, the leading markets are

Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (10% of overnights for each country), whereas domestic tourists account for only 5.3% of the total. However, the numbers of overnight stays do not portray the real picture of Bled's tourism. Due to its proximity to the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, Bled also attracts one-day visitors who come to admire its beautiful landscape, attractive glacial lake and impressive medieval castle on the rock above the lake. The castle alone accounts for more than 260,000 visits per year (SORS, 2015). Moreover, its international media coverage (for example, in National Geographic Traveller, Lonely Planet, and Business Insider) helps to spread its image as one of the finest Alpine resorts.

For the current study, some important features of the Municipality of Bled need to be considered. First, apart from being famous among tourists, it also provides homes for more than 8,000 residents, covering an area of 72 km² (SORS, 2015). Second, the local government has accepted a development strategy (Municipality of Bled, 2009) that emphasises the need to further develop Bled into a green Alpine community for local residents and an attractive destination for visitors. It foresees the development of innovative and dynamic visitor-friendly content for Bled's cultural, historical and recreational attractions. On the other hand, tourism is seen as a means to increase local residents' quality of life since it improves public services while providing more public spaces as well as recreational and business opportunities for those living locally. Third, approximately 2/3 of the municipal area is subject to either nature protection or cultural heritage regulations. In this case, the development strategy also considers the preservation of Bled's nature and water quality along with established traffic regulations to ease congestion, parking space problems and water and air pollution. Finally, it is estimated that Bled's tourism provides up to 40% of employment opportunities and generates up to 28% of the municipality's finances (Municipality of Bled, 2009). However, when it comes to identifying those residents who economically benefit from tourism, only 20% of residents are employed in tourism. The remaining employees are primarily residents of neighbouring municipalities who commute to the town every day.

Communication between local government officials and residents in Bled can be classified in two ways. First, the top-down approach, where residents are informed about various issues and concerns via the local newspaper (in printed and online versions), e-mail newsletters, official websites and social media channels (i.e. Facebook). The last two channels also provide residents with the ability to express their opinion. However, the results of our review of the municipality's Facebook page and its official websites showed there was no feedback from residents whatsoever. Second, the bottom-up approach, which is implemented by representatives of local communities who participate in community meetings and municipal councils, thus transferring residents' concerns and comments to government officials.

4. Methodology

4.1. Measurement instrument and data collection

The measurement instrument followed the three-pillar sustainability model, which supposes the classification of economic, environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts. A list of tourism impacts was first created, based on an extensive literature review. Just to mention a few, the studies of Andreck et al. (2005), Gursoy and Rutherford (2004), Ko and Stewart (2002) and Lee (2013) suggested measuring *economic impacts* by observing indicators of investment, the standard of living, employment and business opportunities, infrastructure development, and industrial development possibilities. Indicators suggested for *environmental impacts* were the preservation of the environment, landscape appearance improvement, air, water and waste pollution, green area destruction, and ecological

awareness, based on research from Andereck et al. (2005) and Bestard and Nadal (2007). For *socio-cultural impacts*, we included indicators proposed by studies of Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, and Carter (2007), Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) and Teye, Sirakaya and Sönmez (2002). They related to the availability and development of public utilities, the quality of education and public services, crowding, traffic congestion, crime, preservation of local culture, host-tourist conflicts, and the over-commercialisation of historical attractions. The initial list of tourism impacts encompassed over 200 indicators, which were evaluated using the three-round Delphi methodology. A group of experts from academia and local industry representatives reduced the list to 33 indicators, which were used in the subsequent study. Further, the informedness of residents was measured by the statement 'I'm well informed about tourism development in Bled' and involvement was similarly measured by 'I am involved in the planning of sustainable tourism in my community'. The foundations for both questions can be found in the work of Lee (2013) and Nicholas et al. (2009). The above questions were designed as closed statements, which respondents were asked to evaluate on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The questions used in this research formed part of a larger study which also included demographic questions, specific questions about life in Bled and an open-ended question that gave residents an option to write comments.

The survey was conducted in the period from 31 January to 2 April 2014 by distributing the self-administered questionnaire to Bled's residents. The distribution occurred through both the local newspaper and electronic sources. Newspapers containing the questionnaire were sent to every occupied household that could be identified (3,328 households in total). Residents were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the municipality by post in a sealed envelope. An alternative submission option was given by providing a link to the online survey at the end of the questionnaire. In case of multiple-family residences, each residential unit was considered a household. The response rate of invited households was just slightly below 10%, with overall 329 questionnaires being returned. Of those, 167 questionnaires were returned by post and 162 were completed online (frequency of 50.8% and 49.2%, respectively). No systematic differences were found between posted and electronic submissions.

4.2. Sample characteristics

The survey also asked participants to answer some relevant demographic questions like age, gender, education, location of residence within the municipality, type of economic benefit from tourism (i.e. personal employment, family member's employment), and net monthly household income. Table 1 shows the statistically significant results of the chi-square test of sample representativeness. As shown, age, location and personal employment in tourism were three demographic characteristics for which our sample of Bled residents was statistically representative of the town's population.

Table 1. Sample demographic characteristics

Characteristics	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Chi-square Test
Age groups			
20 to 30 years	18.0	15.5	$\chi^2 = 6.691^*$, $df = 4$
31 to 40 years	21.1	18.8	
41 to 50 years	19.9	18.6	
51 to 60 years	15.5	17.3	
61 to 84 years	25.5	30.6	

Personal employment in tourism			
Yes	23.1	22.5	$\chi^2 = 0.068^*$, df = 1
No	76.9	77.5	
Location			
Bled - centre	66.8	63.5	$\chi^2 = 4.046^*$, df = 4
Zasip	13.2	13.0	
Bohinjska Bela	5.8	6.7	
Ribno	5.2	7.8	
Other	9.0	9.0	

* Significant at $p > 0.05$.

4.3. Information-involvement grid

As shown in our theoretical construct (Fig. 2), residents were segmented according to the information they possess about tourism development and their involvement in planning tourism within the Municipality of Bled. Hence, by reflecting the level of informedness and involvement, the four-segment matrix presented in Fig. 1 was constructed. Since a seven-point Likert scale was used to evaluate each element, the value of 4 (exact middle of the scale) was used as an arbitrary cut-off point (Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992; McKercher, 2002). It was presumed that those residents who were indecisive about whether they were well informed or involved in tourism would skew toward lower categories than those respondents who agreed that they were well informed and involved in tourism. Therefore, we interpreted answers 1–4 as meaning low informed/involved and values of 5–7 as highly informed/involved. Based on the above analysis, residents were assigned to the following groups: 1) *Responsible citizens* ($n = 51$); 2) *Passive observers* ($n = 72$); 3) *Unaware residents* ($n = 187$); and 4) *Uninformed activists* ($n = 19$). The last group resulted in a modest number of members compared to the other groups, but we acknowledge that their perceptions count equally as those of the other resident groups.

4.4. Analysis of sustainable tourism pillars

Since we had 33 indicators of tourism impacts within three pillars, we decided to perform a factor analysis to reduce the data. This data reduction technique was most helpful in identifying factors or dimension sets that could explain resident perceptions of tourism impacts for each pillar. In addition, these factors would simplify our analysis and enable a clearer presentation of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in order to accomplish sustainable tourism development. Indicators were factor analysed using principal component analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation. For each pillar we performed a separate analysis and thus in the first analysis we included 10 indicators for the economic pillar, in the second 7 indicators for the environmental pillar, and in the third analysis we included 16 indicators for the socio-cultural pillar. The results (presented in Table 2) suggested a two-factor solution for each of the three pillars, which were identified as positive and negative tourism impacts within the pillars. Both the economic and environmental pillar included four variables per factor indicating negative tourism impacts, and three variables for factors indicating positive tourism impacts. The socio-cultural pillar resulted in six variables for each factor. As evident from Table 2, total variances explained were 54.1%, 65.1% and 53.4% in the economic, environmental and socio-cultural pillars, respectively. Further, based on the identified factors we calculated the summated scale for each factor by averaging the elements comprising each factor. This procedure is being increasingly applied (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008) and is encouraged for two reasons (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009): it

helps diminish the measurement error inherent in all measured variables, and it represents multiple features of a concept within a single measure.

Table 2. Factor analyses' results about perceptions of tourism impacts

Tourism impacts	Factor loadings	
	Factor 1: Negative	Factor 2: Positive
Economic^a		
Bled is economically over-dependent on only one industry – tourism.	0.804	
Tourism hinders the development of other economic industries in my community.	0.782	
I'm bothered that tourism increases employment opportunities for foreign labour in Bled.	0.672	
Tourism increases the cost of living in Bled.	0.549	
Tourism encourages the production and sales of local products.		0.784
Tourism is likely to attract more investment to our community.		0.757
Tourism helps to increase the price of land and property.		0.588
Eigenvalues	2.106	1.678
% of variance explained	30.084	23.977
Cronbach's α	0.682	0.565
Environmental^b		
Tourism increases water pollution of Lake Bled.	0.827	
Tourism increases air pollution in Bled.	0.814	
Tourism development is likely to destroy green areas in Bled.	0.760	
Tourists pollute Bled with their waste.	0.710	
Tourism improves the appearance (and images) of Bled's landscape.		0.869
Tourism preserves the environment in Bled.		0.825
Tourism positively influences ecological awareness among locals.		0.758
Eigenvalues	2.511	2.049
% of variance explained	35.870	29.270
Cronbach's α	0.791	0.758
Socio-cultural^c		
Tourism in Bled results in crowding.	0.738	
Tourism decreases the availability of publicly accessible utilities in Bled.	0.706	
Tourism is likely to increase the crime rate in my community.	0.703	
Tourism development increases traffic congestion in Bled.	0.660	
Because of tourism, Bled Island is over-commercialised.	0.675	
Increasing tourist numbers is likely to result in conflicts between visitors and residents.	0.627	
The quality of public services (fire protection, police protection, public health services, welfare and social services etc.) in Bled is better due to more tourism.		0.819
Tourism increases the quality of education in Bled.		0.766
Tourism is likely to provide more business for local people and small businesses.		0.761
Tourism provides an incentive for the preservation of local culture in Bled.		0.751
Tourism improves shopping, restaurant and entertainment opportunities.		0.732
Tourism is likely to provide more parks and other recreational areas for locals.		0.730
Eigenvalues	2.896	3.511

% of variance explained	24.134	29.260
Cronbach's α	0.771	0.854

^a KMO = 0.626; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 436,855; sig = 0.000

^b KMO = 0.733; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 717,663; sig = 0.000

^c KMO = 0.811; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 1362,460; sig = 0.000

5. Findings

5.1. Demographic characteristics of resident groups

Unaware residents were both the largest (56.8%) and youngest group (45.58±15.45 years). Besides, they had the highest number of members living in the centre of Bled (70.7%), which put them among the core of tourism activities.

The second largest group were *Passive observers* (21.9%) and they had the highest percentage of female members (66.2%). They had the highest share of family members employed in tourism (38.9%) and the lowest share of households with an income exceeding EUR 3000 (4.3%).

Responsible citizens represented 15.5% of the sample and were the oldest (52.04±17.08 years). None of the members had finished education only at elementary school level nor did they have an education higher than a bachelor's degree.

Lastly, *Uninformed activists* were the smallest group with just 5.8% of members. They had the fewest members (5.3%) who were personally employed in tourism, but had the highest number of households (31.5%) with a monthly income of more than EUR 3000. Further, compared to the other groups, their members were the most educated, with up to 5.3% reporting they held a doctoral degree (Table 3).

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the resident groups

Characteristics	Unaware residents (%)	Passive observers (%)	Responsible citizens (%)	Uninformed activists (%)
Size	56.8	21.9	15.5	5.8
Gender				
Male	42.2	33.8	45.1	47.4
Female	57.8	66.2	54.9	52.6
Personal employment in tourism				
Yes	23.5	25.0	25.5	5.3
No	76.5	75.0	74.5	94.7
Family member employed in tourism				
Yes	26.3	38.9	27.5	31.6
No	73.7	61.1	72.5	68.4
Location				
Bled - centre	70.7	67.6	56.9	52.6
Zasip	11.4	8.5	21.6	26.3
Bohinjska Bela	4.9	8.5	5.9	5.3
Ribno	3.3	9.9	5.9	5.3
Other	9.7	5.5	9.7	10.5
Completed level of education				
Elementary school	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
High school	21.6	27.8	20.0	15.8
Technical, vocational or commercial school	11.9	19.4	22.0	15.8

Bachelor	53.5	44.4	58.0	57.9
Master	11.4	6.9	0.0	5.3
Doctoral	0.5	1.4	0.0	5.3
Net monthly household income				
Less than EUR 1000	21.5	35.7	32.7	21.1
Between EUR 1001 and 2000	43.1	42.9	42.9	26.3
Between EUR 2001 and 3000	19.9	17.1	16.3	21.1
More than EUR 3001	15.5	4.3	8.1	31.5
AGE (in years)				
Average age (SD)	45.58 (± 15.45) ^a	50.67 (± 14.33)	52.04 (± 17.08) ^b	48.32 (± 16.79)

Note: The subscripts a and b denote that labelled groups are statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$).

5.2. Resident groups' perceptions of tourism

Table 4 shows the average scores of resident groups' perceptions of tourism impacts. To test for statistical significance for the mentioned results, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with Tukey's post-hoc tests. It revealed statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences in perceptions between the groups, with post-hoc analysis confirming each. In addition, in order to observe significant relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of impacts within each group, we performed a chi-square analysis. Significant differences were observed only within the group of *Unaware residents*, which will now be described in the next section.

Table 4. Perceptions of tourism impacts by groups of residents

Tourism impacts	Unaware residents	Passive observers	Responsible citizens	Uninformed activists	ANOVA
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	F (Sig.)
Economic					
Factor 1: negative	4.59 (1.340)	4.94 (1.280)	4.44 (1.330)	4.67 (1.390)	1.76 (0.155)
Bled is economically over-dependent on only one industry – tourism.	4.75 (2.078)	5.10 (1.863)	4.71 (1.993)	5.11 (1.853)	0.71 (0.547)
Tourism hinders the development of other economic industries in my community.	4.06 ^{ab} (2.072)	4.42 ^a (1.798)	3.31 ^b (1.838)	4.32 ^{ab} (2.029)	3.29* (0.021)
I'm bothered that tourism increases employment opportunities for foreign labour in Bled.	3.42 (2.063)	4.01 (2.093)	3.49 (2.148)	3.16 (2.062)	1.66 (0.175)
Tourism increases the cost of living in Bled.	6.13 (1.305)	6.25 (1.084)	6.24 (1.088)	6.11 (0.875)	0.25 (0.863)
Factor 2: positive	4.37 ^b (1.310)	4.83 ^b (1.150)	5.51 ^a (0.960)	4.77 ^b (1.070)	12.42* (0.000)
Tourism encourages the production and sales of local products.	4.12 ^b (1.965)	4.75 ^{ab} (1.718)	5.37 ^a (1.496)	4.89 ^{ab} (1.410)	7.34* (0.000)
Tourism is likely to attract more investment to our community.	3.19 ^b (1.876)	3.68 ^b (1.806)	4.71 ^a (1.724)	3.53 ^b (1.679)	9.38* (0.000)
Tourism helps to increase the price of land and property.	5.80 ^b (1.562)	6.07 ^{ab} (1.325)	6.45 ^a (0.832)	5.89 ^{ab} (1.329)	3.01* (0.031)

Environmental					
Factor 1: negative	4.21 (1.560)	4.58 (1.270)	4.03 (1.360)	4.3 (1.440)	1.69 (0.170)
Tourism increases water pollution of Lake Bled.	4.68 (1.941)	5.15 (1.692)	4.43 (1.769)	5.05 (1.580)	1.91 (0.128)
Tourism increases air pollution in Bled.	3.67 (2.004)	3.99 (1.740)	3.45 (1.770)	3.89 (1.883)	0.90 (0.444)
Tourism development is likely to destroy green areas in Bled.	3.71 (1.910)	4.13 (1.838)	3.55 (1.770)	3.74 (1.759)	1.18 (0.316)
Tourists pollute Bled with their waste.	4.76 (1.978)	5.07 (1.613)	4.69 (1.816)	4.53 (1.577)	0.73 (0.536)
Factor 2: positive	3.46 ^c (1.380)	4.12 ^{bc} (1.370)	5.16 ^a (1.140)	4.26 ^b (1.530)	22.32* (0.000)
Tourism improves the appearance (and images) of Bled's landscape.	3.48 ^b (1.730)	4.13 ^b (1.776)	5.33 ^a (1.322)	4.21 ^b (1.813)	16.61* (0.000)
Tourism preserves the environment in Bled.	3.40 ^c (1.624)	3.96 ^{bc} (1.732)	5.06 ^a (1.287)	4.47 ^{ab} (1.541)	15.85* (0.000)
Tourism positively influences ecological awareness among locals.	3.49 ^b (1.888)	4.26 ^{ab} (1.728)	5.08 ^a (1.683)	4.11 ^{ab} (1.853)	11.22* (0.000)
Socio-cultural					
Factor 1: negative	4.18 ^{ab} (1.430)	4.71 ^a (1.080)	3.99 ^b (1.090)	4.27 ^{ab} (0.920)	3.83* (0.010)
Tourism in Bled results in crowding.	5.21 ^{ab} (1.886)	5.93 ^a (1.367)	4.78 ^b (1.770)	5.00 ^{ab} (1.826)	4.85* (0.003)
Tourism decreases the availability of publicly accessible utilities in Bled.	3.83 ^{ab} (2.027)	4.50 ^a (1.861)	3.22 ^b (1.858)	3.47 ^{ab} (1.712)	4.71* (0.003)
Tourism is likely to increase the crime rate in my community.	3.16 (1.880)	3.57 (1.912)	3.14 (1.744)	3.42 (1.465)	0.98 (0.403)
Tourism development increases traffic congestion in Bled.	5.72 ^b (1.983)	6.43 ^a (1.124)	5.61 ^b (1.834)	6.11 ^{ab} (1.729)	3.24* (0.022)
Because of tourism, Bled Island is over-commercialised.	3.98 (2.134)	4.38 (2.185)	4.00 (1.929)	4.16 (2.192)	0.63 (0.598)
Increasing tourist numbers are likely to result in conflicts between visitors and residents.	3.17 (2.003)	3.43 (1.694)	3.22 (1.858)	3.47 (1.926)	0.41 (0.745)
Factor 2: positive	3.85 ^c (1.410)	4.58 ^b (1.200)	5.41 ^a (0.930)	4.20 ^{bc} (1.430)	20.63* (0.000)
The quality of public services (fire protection, police protection, public health services, welfare and social services etc.) in Bled is better due to more tourism.	4.01 ^b (1.856)	4.81 ^{ab} (1.633)	5.53 ^a (1.332)	4.53 ^b (1.926)	11.61* (0.000)
Tourism increases the quality of education in Bled.	3.55 ^b (1.760)	4.63 ^a (1.486)	5.39 ^a (1.297)	3.53 ^b (1.926)	20.63* (0.000)
Tourism is likely to provide more business for local people and small businesses.	4.47 ^b (1.946)	5.11 ^a (1.597)	5.69 ^a (1.225)	4.53 ^b (1.867)	7.35* (0.000)
Tourism provides an incentive for the preservation of local culture in Bled.	4.14 ^b (1.857)	4.88 ^{ab} (1.752)	5.51 ^a (1.302)	5.00 ^{ab} (1.633)	9.74* (0.000)
Tourism improves shopping, restaurant and entertainment opportunities.	3.21 ^b (2.052)	3.76 ^b (1.796)	5.00 ^a (1.778)	3.68 ^b (1.857)	11.46* (0.000)

Tourism is likely to provide more parks and other recreational areas for locals.	3.75 ^b (1.924)	4.31 ^b (1.725)	5.33 ^a (1.465)	3.95 ^b (1.929)	10.40* (0.000)
--	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------

Notes: The subscript 'a' denotes that labelled group is statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$) from group 'b' and 'c'. The subscript 'b' denotes that labelled group is statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$) from 'a' and 'c'. The subscript 'c' denotes that that labelled group is statistically significant (at $p < 0.05$) from 'a' and 'b'. * denotes ANOVA significance at $p > 0.05$.

In general, the overview of perceptions of tourism impacts showed that for each group the summated factor scores and item scores mainly centre on grade 4, meaning the groups were primarily indecisive about whether tourism is good or bad for Bled. However, for the summated factors scores which represent overall perceptions of economic, environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts we observed there were statistically significant differences among groups. This suggests that our first hypothesis about each resident group having different perceptions of tourism impacts (H1) is confirmed. A more detailed analysis of each group's perceptions showed that *Responsible citizens'* perceptions of positive tourism impacts were significantly different from the other groups. Moreover, they evaluated positive economic impacts ($M=5.51$), positive environmental impacts ($M=5.16$) and positive socio-cultural impacts ($M=5.41$) significantly higher than all the other groups, and negative socio-cultural tourism impacts ($M=3.99$) significantly lower than the others. This leads us to confirmation of all hypotheses (H2a, H2b, and H2c, respectively) relating to the assumptions concerning the perceptions of residents who felt well informed and greatly involved in tourism development.

In contrast to this group, *Unaware residents* were the group that evaluated positive economic impacts ($M=4.37$), positive environmental impacts ($M=3.46$) and positive socio-cultural impacts ($M=3.85$) significantly lower than most of the other groups. In terms of the latter, it can be observed that: 1) the perceptions of positive economic impacts were only significantly different between *Unaware residents* and *Responsible citizens*; 2) there were no statistically significant differences between *Unaware residents* and *Passive observers* in perceptions of positive environmental impacts; and 3) there were no statistically significant differences between *Unaware residents* and *Uninformed residents* in perceptions of positive socio-cultural impacts. By concluding that *Unaware residents* were not the group with the most negative perceptions of economic, environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts, it is not possible to confirm the hypotheses (H3a, H3b, and H3c, respectively) related to the assumptions about the perceptions of residents who felt less informed and less involved in tourism development.

As for the other two groups – *Passive observers* and *Uninformed activists* – the analysis showed that neither groups significantly differ in their perceptions of positive and negative tourism impacts, and that their average scores for their overall perceptions were always in between the scores of the other two groups (i.e. *Responsible citizens* and *Unaware residents*).

Moreover, through the chi-square analysis it was observed that personal employment in tourism is significantly related to some specific perceptions of tourism only for *Unaware residents*. For those who are employed, it is more likely that they will not blame tourism for the destruction of green areas ($\chi^2=15.268$, $df=6$, $p=0.018$), nor for hindering the development of other economic industries ($\chi^2=19.575$, $df=6$, $p=0.003$). They also do not see tourism as a provider of more parks and other recreational areas ($\chi^2=13.688$, $df=6$, $p=0.033$), nor as a reason for an increase in the quality of public services (such as fire protection, police protection, public health services, etc) ($\chi^2=19.420$, $df=6$, $p=0.004$). Those *Unaware residents* employed in tourism ($\chi^2=18.979$, $df=6$, $p=0.004$) or with a family member employed in

tourism ($\chi^2=12.776$, $df=6$, $p=0.047$) did not see Bled as being economically over-dependent on tourism. For all other groups, personal employment did not significantly influence perceptions of tourism impacts. This leads to the conclusion that the hypothesis assuming the influence of personal employment on *Unaware residents* (H4c) was confirmed, whereas all other hypotheses (H4a, H4b and H4d, respectively) were not confirmed.

6. Discussion

The findings indicate that it is useful to differentiate between residents based on informedness and involvement in tourism development and planning when observing differences in perceptions of tourism impacts. Members of four different segments - *Unaware residents*, *Passive observers*, *Responsible citizens*, and *Uninformed activists* - perceived both positive and negative tourism impacts in economic, socio-cultural and natural environment differently.

First, the majority of Bled's residents belonged to the group of *Unaware residents* (56.8%). Their perceptions of tourism impacts differed from those of *Responsible citizens*: more specifically, both groups showed statistically different perceptions of tourism's positive influence on ecological awareness. *Unaware residents* were not convinced that tourism contributes to the environment's preservation ($M=3.40$), which is similar to Harrill's (2004) observations that residents fear tourism growth would severely affect the quality of the environment. Further, differences between these two groups revealed that *Unaware residents* had significantly worse perceptions of tourism in terms of improving the quality of public services and education, providing an incentive for the preservation of local culture, bringing more business to local people, encouraging the production and sales of local products, and increasing the price of land and propriety. Their more negative perceptions of tourism impacts can be explained by their proximity to tourism since the most members of this group (70.7%) lived in the city centre, surrounded by tourist attractions. On one hand, this confirms the findings of Harrill and Potts (2003) in their study of Charleston, South Carolina, and those of Williamson and Lawson (2001) in New Zealand, indicating that neighbourhoods situated in the tourism core had more negative perceptions of tourism. On the other hand, our findings contradict those of Belisle and Hoy (1980) as well as Jurowsky and Gursoy (2004) where it was shown that proximity to tourism resulted in its appreciation. It should be noted, however, these researchers sampled residents who were highly dependent on tourism (i.e. the urban population of the Columbian capital Bogota and residents of the Virginian Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, respectively), which is contrary to the present case of Bled.

Second, 21.9% of Bled's residents belonged to the group *Passive observers*. Compared to the other groups, this group had the highest share of females (66.2%). The latter are believed to be more perceptive of negative tourism impacts (Harrill & Potts, 2003; Mason & Cheyne, 2000), especially when voicing their concerns about traffic congestion, pollution and crime. This could explain the results of the present study, which showed that this group was the most concerned with negative socio-cultural impacts: they were especially unhappy with traffic congestion ($M=6.43$) and crowding ($M=5.93$). Moreover, compared to *Unaware residents*, the group's evaluation of tourism's positive contribution with regard to the production and sales of local products, the higher value of land and property, increases in the quality of education and business opportunities for local people and small businesses was significantly higher.

Third, perceptions of *Responsible citizens* (15.5% of Bled's residents) significantly differed from all the other groups. More specifically, they were inclined to see tourism as attracting investment, improving Bled's landscape, shopping, restaurant and entertainment

opportunities, and providing parks and other recreational areas. In addition, significant differences vis-à-vis *Uninformed activists* were noticed in perceiving tourism as beneficial for increasing the quality of public services and education, and for providing more business for local people and small businesses. As for the perceptions of negative impacts, *Responsible citizens* were the least bothered by crowding, traffic congestion, non-availability of public utilities and hindered development of other economic industries. Given these perceptions, tourism managers could consider *Responsible citizens* as potential advocates or ambassadors of tourism. As expressed by Garrod et al. (2012), this form of engagement “is more advanced than simply informative participation” (p. 1167), and it also gives residents the chance to have a formal or semi-formal role in tourism.

Lastly, *Uninformed activists* represented the smallest group (5.8% of residents). In most cases, their opinion was quite similar to that of *Unaware residents* and *Passive observers*, and differed significantly from the group of *Responsible citizens*. They evaluated tourism’s contribution to the quality of education in Bled the lowest. This is an interesting perspective, since this group had the highest total percentage of members who had finished higher education (68.5%); hence, they may see the improvement of education due to other reasons. Even though not statistically significant from the other groups, they were on the one hand the most bothered by Bled’s economic over-dependence, while on the other hand they were the least bothered by tourism increasing employment opportunities for foreign labour.

Generally, the vast majority of sampled residents in Bled (78.7%) did not feel involved in tourism planning, pointing towards passive citizen participation, where information about tourism development is mainly communicated using a top-down approach. This confirms the observations by Garrod et al. (2012) and Lawton and Weaver (2015) that the informal participation of residents in tourism development and planning is more embraced and 'abused' than altered, pointing to more inclusive and spontaneous participation. Most often, attitude studies, neighbourhood meetings, public hearings and residents’ inclusion on various boards are only used to validate decisions (Garrod et al., 2012; Harrill, 2004). And indeed, this study, as a perception-based study, could be regarded as a tool for informal participation. Regardless of whether it is perceived as such, it adds to the literature on tourism planning, particularly by demonstrating that residents were willing to participate and voice their concerns when given the opportunity (Hung et al., 2011; Lawton & Weaver, 2015). In line with Lankford’s (2001) suggestions, these results represent a starting point for the Bled community to ensure a critical mass for a local debate and, thus, for the development of a long-term tourism planning involvement process for residents.

7. Conclusion

Theoretically, this study is informed by the extended sustainable tourism model, which adds requirements for the implementation of sustainable tourism development to the narrower three-pillar conceptual understanding of economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability. Among others, informed stakeholders’ participation and cooperation are some of the most important requirements for implementation of sustainable tourism development (Mihalič, 2015), and thus an important element in the study of sustainability. Positive and negative perceptions of economic, environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts are associated with residents’ informedness about tourism in a destination and their involvement in a tourism planning and development process.

Based on the informedness-involvement grid, Bled’s residents were segmented into four groups - *Unaware residents*, *Passive observers*, *Uninformed activists*, and *Responsible*

citizens - which perceive tourism's positive and negative impacts differently. Highly informed and highly involved residents had better perceptions of tourism's positive impacts than all the other groups, whereas those residents who were poorly informed and weakly involved had more negative perceptions of tourism impacts than the others. In total, the vast majority of Bled's residents do not feel involved in tourism planning.

In general, the above findings add to the literature on tourism planning, particularly by demonstrating that residents were willing to participate and voice their concerns when given the opportunity (Hung et al., 2011; Lawton & Weaver, 2015). Tourism managers and tourism planning officials shall work to improve the informed inclusion of residents in the tourism planning process in order to make tourism development sustainable.

Limitations of this study relate to the narrow sample representativeness and low response rate. Further, some questions posed to Bled's residents were specific to Bled as a tourism destination. Other researchers are likely to encounter different tourism destination characteristics: however, they should be encouraged to use those specific features in their studies.

As for future tourism research, the conceptual model could be examined in the context of destinations in different stages of the life cycle. It would also be interesting to examine ways of including residents in tourism planning at the start of a tourism development, and how this inclusion changes in various stages of planning and implementation. Further, it would be interesting to survey how other additional residents' characteristics, such as occupation, length of employment in tourism, and type of employment, as well as household benefits from tourism impact residents' affection to tourism.

The above results provide decision-makers with the ability to manage support for tourism development by informing and involving residents in tourism developmental planning. In order to maximize residents' positive attitudes towards tourism initiatives, policy-makers should develop informedness and involvement scenarios and portray how each scenario would contribute to the community's support for economic, environmental, and socio-cultural tourism-based development.

REFERENCES

1. Allen, L., Hafer, H., Long, P., & Perdue, R. R. (1993). Rural residents' attitudes toward recreation and tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 31(4), 27–33. doi: 10.1177/004728759303100405
2. Andereck, K. L., & Vogt, C. A. (2000). The relationship between residents' attitudes towards tourism and tourism development options. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39(1), 27–36. doi: 10.1177/004728750003900104
3. Andereck, K. L., Valentine, K. M., Knopf, R. C., & Vogt, C. A. (2005). Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(4), 1056–1076. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2005.03.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.03.001)
4. Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224. doi: 10.1080/01944366908977225
5. Belisle, F. J., & Hoy, D. R. (1980). The perceived impacts of tourism by residents: A case study in Santa Marta, Colombia. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(1), 83–100. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(80\)80008-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(80)80008-9)
6. Boley, B. B., McGehe, N. G., Perdue, R. R., & Long, P. (2014). Empowerment and resident attitudes toward tourism: Strengthening the theoretical foundation through a

- Weberian lens. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 49, 33–50. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2014.08.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.08.005)
7. Brida, J. G., Riaño, E., & Aguirre, S. Z. (2011). Residents' attitudes and perceptions towards cruise tourism development: A case study of Cartagena de Indias (Colombia). *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11(3), 181–196. doi: 10.1177/1467358411415153
 8. Bestard, A. B., & Nadal, J. R. (2007). Modelling environmental attitudes towards tourism. *Tourism Management*, 28(3), 688–695. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.004)
 9. Butcher, J. (1997). Sustainable Development or Development? In M. J. Stabler (Ed.), *Tourism and Sustainability: Principles to Practice* (pp. 27–38). Wallingford: CAB International.
 10. Byrd, E. T. (2007). Stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and their roles: applying stakeholder theory to sustainable tourism development. *Tourism Review*, 62(2), 6–13. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/16605370780000309>
 11. Byrd, E. T., Bosley, H. E., & Dronberger, M. G. (2009). Comparisons of stakeholder perceptions of tourism impacts in rural eastern North Carolina. *Tourism Management*, 30(5), 693–703. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2008.10.021
 12. Chen, C-F., & Tsai, D. C. (2007). How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioural intentions? *Tourism Management*, 28(4), 1115–1122. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2006.07.007
 13. Chi, C. G-Q., & Qu, H. 2008. Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 624–636. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2007.06.007
 14. Choi, H-S. C., & Sirakaya, E. (2005). Measuring residents' attitude towards sustainable tourism: Development of sustainable tourism attitude scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(4), 380–394. doi: 10.1177/0047287505274651
 15. Cole, S. (2006). Information and Empowerment: The keys to achieving sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(6), 629–644. doi: 10.2167/jost607.0
 16. Crowley, A. E., Spangenberg, E. R., & Hughes, K. R. (1992). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of attitudes towards product categories. *Marketing Letters*, 3(3), 239–249. doi: 10.1007/BF00994132
 17. Davis, D., Allen, J., & Cosenza, R M. (1988). Segmenting local residents by their attitudes interests and opinions towards tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(2), 2–8. doi: 10.1177/004728758802700201
 18. Davis, J. S., & Morais, D. B. (2004). Factions and enclaves, small towns and socially unsustainable tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(1), 3–10. doi: 10.1177/0047287504265501
 19. Dyer, P., Gursoy, D., Sharma, B., & Carter, J. (2007). Structural modelling of resident perceptions of tourism and associated development on the Sunshine Coast Australia. *Tourism Management*, 28(2), 409–422. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.002)
 20. Edgell, D. L., Sr., Jr DelMastro, A. M., Smith, G., & Swanson, J. R. (2008). *Tourism policy and planning, yesterday today and tomorrow*. Amsterdam: Butterworth–Heinemann.
 21. Frauman, E., & Banks, S. (2011). Gateway community resident perceptions of tourism development: Incorporating Importance–Performance Analysis into a Limits of Acceptable Change framework. *Tourism Management*, 32(1), 128–140. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.013)
 22. Fredline, E., & Faulkner, B. (2000). Host community reactions: a cluster analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 763–784. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00103-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00103-6)

23. Garrod, B., Fyall, A., Leask, A., & Reid, E. (2012). Engaging residents as stakeholders of the visitor attraction. *Tourism Management*, 33(5), 1159–1173. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2011.11.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.11.014)
24. Green, A. O., & Hunton–Clarke, L. (2003). A typology of stakeholder participation for company environmental decision–making. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 12(5), 292–299. doi: 10.1002/bse.371
25. Gunn, C. (1988). *Tourism planning* (2nd ed.). New York: Taylor Francis.
26. Gunn, C. (1994). *Tourism planning, basics concepts cases* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Taylor Francis.
27. Gursoy, D., Chi, C., & Dyer, P. (2010). Locals' attitudes toward mass and alternative tourism: The case of Sunshine Coast, Australia. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(3): 381–394. doi: 10.1177/0047287509346853
28. Gursoy, D., Jurowski, C., & Uysal, M. (2002). Resident attitudes, A Structural Modeling Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(1), 79–105. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(01\)00028-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(01)00028-7)
29. Gursoy, D., & Rutherford, D. G. (2004). Host attitudes toward tourism: An improved structural model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 495–516. doi: [doi:10.1016/j.annals.2003.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2003.08.008)
30. Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2009). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
31. Hall, C. M. (1994). *Tourism and Politics, Policy, Power and Place*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley.
32. Harrill, R. (2004). Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism Development: a Literature Review with Implications for Tourism Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 18(3), 251–266. doi: 10.1177/0885412203260306
33. Harrill, R., & Potts, T. D. (2003). Tourism planning in historic districts: Attitudes toward tourism development in Charleston. *Journal of American Planning Association*, 69(3), 233–244. doi: 10.1080/01944360308978017
34. Holthausen, R. W., & Verrecchia, R. E. (1990). The Effect of Informedness and Consensus on Price and Consumer Behavior. *The Accounting Review*, 65(1), 191–208. Retrieved on 20 March 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/247883>.
35. Hung, K., Sirakaya–Turk, E., & Ingram, L. J. (2010). Testing the efficacy of an integrative model for community participation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3), 276–288. doi: 10.1177/0047287510362781
36. Hunter, C. (1997). Sustainable Tourism as an Adaptive Paradigm. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(4), 850–867. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(97\)00036-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(97)00036-4)
37. Ioannides, D. (1995). A flawed implementation of sustainable tourism: the experience of Akamas, Cyprus. *Tourism Management*, 16(8), 583–592. doi: [10.1016/0261-5177\(95\)00081-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(95)00081-X)
38. Jamal, T. B., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration theory and community tourism planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 186–204. doi: [10.1016/0160-7383\(94\)00067-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(94)00067-3)
39. Jamieson, W., & Jamal, T. (1997). Tourism Planning and Destination Management. In C. Gee, & E. Fayos–Sola (Eds.). *International Tourism: A Global Perspective* (pp. 321–337). Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization. Retrieved on 22 March 2015 from <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284402311>.
40. Jurowsky, C., & Gusoy, D. (2004). Distance effects on residents' attitude towards tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(2), 296–312. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2003.12.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2003.12.005)

41. Kayat, K. (2002). Power, Social Exchanges and Tourism in Langkawi: Rethinking Resident Perceptions. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(3), 171–191. doi: 10.1002/jtr.375
42. Ko, D–W., & Stewart, W. P. (2002). A structural equation model of residents' attitudes for tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 23(5), 521–530. doi: [10.1016/S0261-5177\(02\)00006-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(02)00006-7)
43. Lankford, S. V. (2001). A Comment Concerning 'Developing and Testing a Tourism Impact Scale'. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39(3), 315–16.
44. Latkova, P., & Vogt, C. A. (2012). Resident attitudes towards existing and future tourism development in rural communities. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(1), 50–67. doi: 10.1177/0047287510394193
45. Lawton, L., & Weaver, D. W. (2015). Using residents' perceptions research to inform planning and management for sustainable tourism: A study of Gold Coast Schoolies Week, a contentious tourism event. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(5), 660–682. doi: 10.1080/09669582.2014.991398
46. Lee, T. H. (2013). Influence analysis of community resident support for sustainable tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 32, 37–46. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2012.03.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.03.007)
47. Li, W. (2006). Community decisionmaking participation and development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 132–143. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2005.07.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.07.003)
48. Lundberg, E. (2015). The Level of Tourism Development and Resident Attitudes: A Comparative Case Study of Coastal Destinations. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 15(3), 266–294. doi: 10.1080/15022250.2015.1005335
49. Madrigal, R. (1993). A Tale of Tourism in Two Cities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 336–353. doi: [10.1016/0160-7383\(93\)90059-C](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(93)90059-C)
50. Madrigal, R. (1995). Residents' perceptions and the role of government. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 86–102. doi: [10.1016/0160-7383\(94\)00070-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(94)00070-9)
51. Mason, P., & Cheyne, J. (2000). Residents' attitudes to proposed tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 391–411. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00084-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00084-5)
52. McCool, S. F. (2009). Constructing partnership for protected area tourism planning in an era of change and messiness. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(2), 133–148. doi: 10.1080/09669580802495733
53. McKercher, B. (2002). Towards a classification of cultural tourists. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(1), 29–38. doi: 10.1002/jtr.346
54. McGehee, N. G., & Andereck, K. L. (2004). Factors predicting rural residents' support for tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 11(43), 131–140. doi: 10.1177/0047287504268234
55. Mihalič, T. (2015). Sustainable–responsible tourism discourse: Towards 'responsustainable' tourism. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 111(PartB), 461–470. doi: [10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.12.062](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.12.062)
56. Municipality of Bled. (2009). Razvojni program občine Bled 2009–2020. [The development strategy of the Municipality of Bled 2009–2020]. Internal document: Author.
57. Murphy, P. (1985). *Tourism: A Community Approach*. London: Routledge.
58. Nicholas, L., Thapa, B., & Ko, Y. (2009). Residents' perspectives of a world heritage site – the Pitons Management Area, St. Lucia. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3), 390–412. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2009.03.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.03.005)

59. Nunkoo, R., & Ramkissoon, H. (2011). Developing a community support model for tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), 964–988. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.017)
60. Nunkoo, R., & Ramkissoon, H. (2012). Power, trust, social exchange and community support. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 997–1023. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2011.11.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.11.017)
61. Nunkoo, R., Ramkissoon, H., & Gursoy, D. (2012). Public trust in tourism institutions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), 1538–1564. doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2012.04.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.04.004)
62. Perdue, R. R., Long, P. T., & Allen, L. (1990). Resident Support for Tourism Development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 17(4), 586–599. doi: [10.1016/0160-7383\(90\)90029-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(90)90029-Q)
63. Presenza, A., Del Chiappa, G., & Sheehan, L. (2013). Residents' engagement and local tourism governance in maturing beach destination. Evidence from an Italian case study. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 2(1), 22–30. doi: [10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.01.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.01.001)
64. Robson, J., & Robson, I. (1996). From shareholders to stakeholders, critical issues for tourism marketers. *Tourism Management*, 17(7), 533–540. doi: [10.1016/S0261-5177\(96\)00070-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(96)00070-2)
65. Sharpley, R. (2014). Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research. *Tourism Management*, 42(1), 37–49. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2013.10.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.10.007)
66. Simmons, D. G. (1994). Community participation in tourism planning. *Tourism Management*, 15(2), 98–108. doi: [10.1016/0261-5177\(94\)90003-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(94)90003-5)
67. Sinclair-Maragh, G., Gursoy, D., & Vieregge, M. (2015). Residents' perceptions toward tourism development: A factor-cluster approach. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 2(1), 36–45. doi: [10.1016/j.jdmm.2014.10.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2014.10.001)
68. Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia (SORS). Municipality of Bled. (2015). (<http://www.stat.si/obcine/Vsebinska.aspx?leto=2011&id=6&lang=eng>) Accessed 25.3.15.
69. Teye, V., Sirakaya, E., & Sönmez, S. F. (2002). Residents' attitudes toward tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 668–688. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(01\)00074-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(01)00074-3)
70. The beginnings of tourism (n.d.). Retrieved October 23, 2015, from Bled Tourism website, <http://www.bled.si/en/about-bled/the-beginnings-of-tourism>.
71. Tosun, C. (2006). Expected nature of community participation in tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 27(3), 493–504. doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2004.12.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.12.004)
72. UNEP & UNWTO. (2005). *Making Tourism More Sustainable, A Guide for Policy Makers*. Retrieved August 25 from <http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=DTI/0592/PA>
73. Vareiro, da Cruz L. M., Remoaldo, P., C., & Ribeiro, J. A. C. (2013). Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in Guimarães (Portugal): A cluster analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 16(6), 535–551. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2012.707175
74. Williams, J., & Lawson, R. (2001). Community issues and resident opinions of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 269–290. doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(00\)00030-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00030-X)
75. Yoon, Y., Gursoy, D., & Chen, J. S. (2001). Validating a tourism development theory with structural equation modelling. *Tourism Management*, 22(4), 363–372. doi: [10.1016/S0261-5177\(00\)00062-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00062-5)

76. Yuksel, F., Bramwell, B., & Yuksel, A. (1999). Stakeholder interviews and tourism planning at Pamukkale, Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 20(3), 351–360. doi: [10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00117-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00117-4)



Tina Šegota is a teaching assistant and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana. Her research interests include seasonality, sustainable tourism development, tourism impacts on the quality of life, advertising and consumer behaviour in tourism.



Tanja Mihalič, PhD, is a vice rector at the University of Ljubljana and a professor of tourism at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana and the head of its Tourism Institute. Her research interests encompass tourism economics, environmental economics, policy and sustainable tourism development. She is a member of the UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics and a member of the executive body of the International Association of Tourism Economics.



Kir Kuščer, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the field of tourism at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana. In his research, he specializes on mountain tourism, innovativeness and development. He was a partner in INTERREG IVC project (Digital Agenda for New Tourism Approach in European Rural and Mountain Areas). He has published papers in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Economics*, *Tourism Analysis*, and *Journal of Vacation Marketing*.