

# PROFILE OF RESIDENTS: ATTITUDE TOWARDS TOURISM IN BENALMÁDENA (COSTA DEL SOL, SPAIN) <sup>i</sup>

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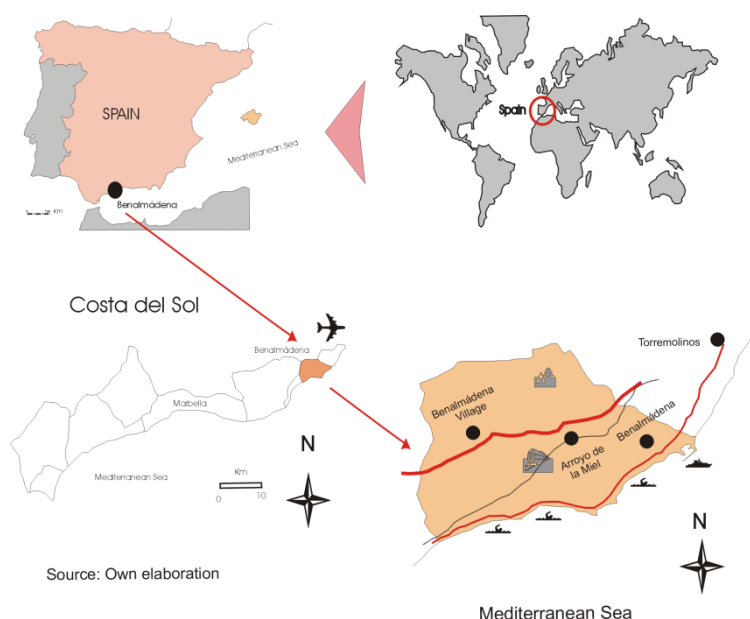
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## 1. Introduction

Tourism development and evolution along the time causes multiple impacts. Based on characteristic profiles of resident, these impacts may be assessed differently. The attitude of residents and the identification of profiles is a tool that allows to asses the status of destination and propose future strategies for improving the destination. This study aims to analyse the role of residents regarding the perception of tourism.

Benalmádena is a Spanish municipality in the province of Málaga, in Andalusia region. It is located on the Costa del Sol, about 22 km southwest of the provincial capital. Benalmádena belongs to the metropolitan area of Málaga and the Costa del Sol. Benalmádena had 66,939 inhabitants in 2014. It is the eighth largest city in the province.



## 2. Literature review

The term "impact of tourism" has gained importance in the tourist literature. The assessment of these impacts can be done through the review of residents. In recent years numerous studies have examined the attitudes and perceptions of residents of the impact of tourism development in their community. The main reason for the growing interest in this type of study has been to consider that tourism development has positive and negative effects in local levels (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Lankford & Howard, 1994).

Likewise, there are other reasons for this growing interest in understanding the attitudes of residents to the impacts of tourism (Akis, et al., 1996; Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Chen, 2000; Gutiérrez, 2010; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Landford, 1994; Liu & Var, 1986; Long et al., 1990; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012); some of these reasons are: negative attitudes among residents which could be a handicap in the development and sustainability in tourism destinations (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Butler, 1980; Diedrich & García, 2009; Harrill, 2004; Sirakaya et al., 2002). The success of this industry depends on the attractions and hospitality of local residents (Gursoy, et al., 2002). This behaviour could be a factor to restrain the tourism sector, through hostile behaviour towards tourists; or otherwise a friendly attitude could support tourism development. Generally, tourists tend to be reluctant to visit places where they do not feel welcome, that is, there is nothing more important for travellers than the way how they are treated by residents; and if not accepted, they will avoid visiting such places (Diedrich & García, 2009).

The study of the attitudes of residents in relation to the impacts of tourism development has been investigated reaching some consensus that groups them: economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Andereck et al., 2005; Diaz, 2010; Gursoy et al, 2002; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Some research has focused on analysing these categories in relation to the attitude of residents and other studies such as this one focus on the search for a set of variables that help identify a profile of the resident.

To the best of knowledge, no studies have yet explored the profile of residents in Benalmádena and their attitudes towards tourism and its impacts on economy, environment, and culture using a large stratified and representative sample. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the characteristics of residents and their perception of environmental, socio-cultural and economic impact of tourism Benalmádena.

### **3. Methods and materials**

We have designed a 39-item self-report questionnaire. All items were measure on five-point Likert-type scale. Prior to the main survey, a pilot survey was conducted with 50 residents to avoid ambiguity and enhancing survey clarity. The questionnaire included socio-demographic questions (e.g. age, gender, place of birth, marital status, years of residents, having children, education level, social participation and type of work) and an attitude scale consisting of series of items that asses the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism (Table 1). The items of attitude scale were prepared based on the literature on resident's attitudes towards the impacts of tourism. We have used Pearce Correlation and SPSS, v.19.0 to analyse questionnaire data. Pearson's correlation and ANOVA tests were conducted.

We carried out a case study for the city of Benalmadena, Costa del Sol. This town is representative of a mature tourist destination. The main data come from interviews and statistical sources of national and regional tourism.

The sample consisted of 770 residents in Benalmádena. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling. The Benalmádena population was stratified proportionally according to: population composition (native or immigrant), gender, and age, on basis

of a population of 63,788 in 2011. After classification of population by strata, the sample was affixed in each of them.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire items corresponding with measured impacts

Economic impacts	
Positive aspects	Negative aspects
Tourism is the main economic activity in Benalmádena	Tourism increases the price of housing
More roads and urbanizations are constructed	Tourism increases the cost of living
Tourism increases employment opportunities	Tourism generates employment instability
Socio-cultural impacts	
Tourism improves the quality of life in Benalmádena	Tourism increases drugs and alcohol
There are more theaters, exhibitions with the tourism	Tourism causes more crime
Tourism improves public services (health centers, sports, etc.).	Tourism produces more congestion, accidents and parking problems
Tourism stimulates our festivals and traditions (Easter, fairs, ...)	Tourism generates loss or change of our festivals and traditions
I relate to people who speak Spanish	
I relate to Spanish people who speaks my language	
Environmental impacts	
There are more public gardens and parks due to tourism	Tourism increases pollution, noise, garbage, etc.
Tourism has improved and protected the environment	Tourism deteriorate the natural environment
	There are too many people in Benalmádena

#### 4. Results

According to preliminary analysis these are the main results of research:

##### Descriptive statistics

Results showed acceptable alpha crombach for all tourism attitude dimensions. Environmental Impact: .618, Socio-cultural Impact: .615, Economic Impact: .614.

Correlations were computed between tourism attitude dimensions and socio-demographic variables (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Correlations between characteristics of residents, and tourist impact variables

	<b>Environmental Impact</b>	<b>Socio-cultural Impact</b>	<b>Economic Impact</b>
Age	.13**	.04	-.08*
Gender	.04	.04	-.01
Civil status	.10**	-.01	-.06
Having children	.13**	.07 <sup>†</sup>	-.03
Level of studies	.04	.18**	.16**
Type of work	.00	.04	-.06 <sup>†</sup>
Social participation	.01	-.02	-.11**
Native condition	-.14**	-.17**	-.10**
Years of residence	-.19**	-.16**	-.06 <sup>†</sup>

Note: <sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 3. Stratified sample of the population

		Native	No native	
Age			Rest of Spain	Foreigners
Men	Under the age of 20	12	46	22
	20 to 44	20	80	48
	45 to 64	16	50	34
	Over the age of 65	8	26	16
Women	Under the age of 20	10	42	26
	20 to 44	18	86	52
	45 to 64	12	54	34
	Over the age of 65	8	30	20

Source: Own elaboration

### Effects of socio-demographic factors on attitude towards tourism

ANOVA tests showed a significant main effect of Age on *Environmental Impact* ( $F_{(3,770)} = 4.21, p < .05$ ). Attitude towards the effect of tourism on local environment improves progressively with age, with seniors (older than 65) having the best attitude, and youngest residents (under 20) having the worst attitude. Also a significant main effect of Age on *Economic Impact* was found ( $F_{(3,770)} = -2.75; p < .05$ ). Population

under 20 was the age group with better attitude towards the economic impact caused by tourism, whereas those between 45 and 64 showed the worse attitude.

A main effect of *Civil status* on *Socio-cultural Impact* was found. Married residents (vs. non-married) reported better perception on the effects of tourism on social life and culture ( $F_{(1,770)} = 3.98; p < .05$ ).

It was found a significant main effect of having children on total attitude ( $F_{(3,770)} = 4.52; p < .05$ ). Residents with children showed a better attitude towards tourism compared to those with no kids.

It was found a significant main effect of *Level of studies* on *Total attitude* ( $F_{(3,770)} = 8.18; p < .01$ ). Attitude towards all effects of tourism improves progressively with the level of studies.

ANOVA analysis showed significant differences of *Type of work* on *Economic Impact* ( $F_{(3,770)} = 3.07; p < .05$ ). Residents working in induced employment of tourism had the best perception of the impact of tourism on local economy. Those who work in jobs indirectly related to tourism presented the worst perception. ANOVA analysis showed also significant differences ( $F_{(3,770)} = 3.16; p < .05$ ) on *Socio-cultural Impact*. Post-hoc *t* test showed that residents working in jobs indirectly related to tourism were the ones with better attitude regarding the tourism impact on social life and culture, whereas those working in non-tourism-related employment had the worst attitude.

*Social participation* had a significant main effect on *Total attitude* towards tourism ( $F_{(2,770)} = 3.78; p < .05$ ), with residents participating occasionally in social associations having the best attitude towards tourism and those participating regularly having the worst attitude.

*Native condition* had a significant main effect on *Total attitude* towards tourism ( $F_{(2,770)} = 11.41; p < .01$ ), with natives having the worst attitude towards tourism and foreigners having the best attitude.

Years of residence had a significant main effect on *Total attitude* towards tourism ( $F_{(2,770)} = 14.73; p < .01$ ), with those living for more than ten years in Benalmádena having the worst attitude towards all effects of tourism and those living for less than five years having the best attitude.

A significant interaction of *Native condition* X *Years of residence* on *Total Attitude* was found ( $F_{(12,770)} = 4.67; p < .01$ ), with native residents living in Benalmádena for more than 10 years having the worst perception of all the effects caused by tourism, and foreigners living in Benalmádena for less than five years having the best perception.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

Natives and those who have been living more than 10 years in Benalmádena are the residents perceiving more adversely the impact of tourism. Similar results were found in the study by Davis et al. (1988). It is possible that residents in cities with high tourism development with time come to perceive the negative impacts of tourism rather than positive impacts, as they have lived with the problems created by tourism growth such as overcrowding, noise, and environmental degradation (Yoon et al., 1999).

Attitudes towards tourism improve with educational level. Natives and non-native residents who have spent more than ten years living in Benalmádena, and whose level of education is low, show a more negative view of tourism. Therefore, this profile of residents is the group that should receive more attention from planning and tourism policies, with the aim of improving their relationship and attitude to tourism. It would be necessary to invest in specific programs intended to educate residents on the benefits of tourism in mature touristic areas, whose first income comes from tourism. Education on the effects of tourism with native residents and residents living in the city for more than ten years would encourage a more positive attitude toward tourism issues (Stylidis, 2014). For example, special events such as ‘Native Day’ might be helpful in promoting more favorable attitudes toward tourism (Davis et al., 1988). In addition, it could be of great interest to involve residents in decisions related to tourism development and management. The involvement of residents in these decisions would help them understand the importance of tourism in their towns and, once they feel part of the decision making, they would be more prompted to accept the inconveniences that come from tourism.

Therefore, it is necessary to know the opinion of residents in the planning process and governance of destinations. This fact must be taken into account from a technical point of view during the implementation of tourism plans (Liu et al., 1987) and, from a political point of view, during the development of local tourism policies (Manning, 1998). The tourist areas are transformed over time, and therefore the perceptions of residents and their support for tourism development are as well. Hence, the relationship between the attitudes of residents and modification of the destinations should be analyzed periodically (Stylidis, 2014). If the community does not support the tourism model and does not perceive its benefits, it could lead to the development of a strong opposition to tourism (Gursoy et al., 2002). For this reason residents’ participation in planning and destination management is crucial for the future of destination (Dyer et al., 2007).

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