The Coastal Business Journal

Volume 18 | Number 1

December 2021

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Understanding Residents’ Opinions and Support Toward Sustainable Tourism Development in the Caribbean: The Case of Saint Kitts and Nevis

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ABSTRACT

Saint Kitts and Nevis are two islands forming one nation in the Caribbean. This paper examines differences in the perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism between residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis and the residents’ attitudes about the pace and direction of tourism development. A self-administered household survey was used to assess perceptions of these impacts from tourism among residents. After excluding 53 non-residents, effective sample size was 269. ANOVA was used to analyze differences between the two islands. Residents of both islands shared similar perceptions about the pace and direction of tourism development in their islands. However, there were significant differences in their perceptions of the impacts of tourism. Nevis residents, more so than Saint Kitts residents, had more favorable perceptions about the economic benefits of tourism and looked at land-based tourism more favorably than cruise tourism. Negative impacts on the environment were not salient and residents had favorable perceptions of positive socio-cultural impact from tourism. The results emphasize the importance of understanding and allows views of local community members for sustainable tourism development. Local community support for tourism is vital for effective tourism planning and management.

Keywords: tourism impacts; attitudes; perceptions; development; sustainable tourism

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism make up the largest service industry in the world and it continues to grow (Manzoor et al., 2019). Ohlan (2017) analysed that tourism and economic growth have a great relationship in the short and in long run, so tourism plays a great role in the development of a country. International tourism is one of the most important and certainly the fastest developing sector of world’s economy. During 2019 international tourist arrivals reached a total of 1.5 billion (UNWTO, 2019). The growth of tourism in recent years confirms that the sector is today one of the most powerful drivers of economic growth and development. Adrian (2017) stated that tourism has close relationship with other branches of economy because tourism increase the demand of the commodities through foreigner population which further push the industrial development in the country and solve the problems of the employment. It is each destination’s responsibility to manage it in a sustainable manner and translate this expansion into real benefits particularly to all local communities, creating opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship. By creating employment opportunities, improving the infrastructure, generating financial flux, and contributing to the
diversification of local and national economies, tourism represents one of the principle motors of socioeconomic progress of modern society. One of the core elements of tourism development is to encourage local communities’ participation, as it is central to the sustainability of tourism industry (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006). The community approach to tourism development is an attempt to integrate the interests of all community stakeholders, including residents as a critically important group, in analyses and proposals for development (Murphy and Murphy, 2004). Local communities form an integral part of the tourism development agenda (Aref et al., 2010; Bushell and McCool 2007; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Tosun 2006). Given the complex nature of most tourist destinations, there are also numerous stakeholders with varying interests and views. This provides good environment for resource use conflicts within and around tourist destinations (Haukeland 2011; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Tosun 2006). The representation of interests of the local communities in the tourism development agenda is a complex issue that needs to be addressed carefully. This paper contributes to the understanding of community views on tourism development by examining local residents’ views on the impacts of tourism development.

The nation of Saint Kitts and Nevis is an interesting and relevant focus for examining the forces that influence sustainable tourism development. Level of analysis for statistical data and research studies tends to be at the country level. In other words, while the islands comprise the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the differences between the two are often not acknowledged. Both islands are heavily dependent on tourism, but the pace of tourism development has been more rapid in Saint Kitts. The nature of tourism development is also different between the two islands. Saint Kitts is more oriented toward cruise ships, and Nevis is more dependent on high-end hotels and resorts. Therefore, it is likely there would be differences in perceptions between the residents of the two islands on tourism and its impact on various fronts. This paper examines differences in the perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism between residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis and the residents’ attitudes about the pace and direction of tourism development.

**BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region of the world (UNWTO, 2001; Chappell and Frank, 2020). Indeed, although other industries including bauxite, petroleum, sugar, and international banking make significant economic contributions in Caribbean countries, the region is highly identified internationally in terms of its very image of “sun, sea, and sand” with the tourism industry. Global tourism experienced steady growth for over six decades, culminating in an estimated 1.5 billion international arrivals in 2019, representing an increase of 3.8 percent year-on-year and well ahead of previous long-term forecasts. This strong growth is expected to continue, with arrivals in emerging markets in particular projected to grow at double the rate of advanced tourism economies. Demonstrating a similar pattern, global expenditures on travel more than tripled between 2000 and 2019, rising from USD 495 billion to USD 1.5 trillion and accounting for 7 percent of global exports in goods and services (UNWTO, 2019). The tourism sector, acknowledged as one of the major attributes for cultural, economic, and environmental development today, is perceived as a significant source of opportunity to local communities (Ramesh, 2002; Croes and Vanegas, 2008). The growth of the tourism industry is crucial to economic growth and related fields
such as transportation, leisure services, and many other sectors (Telfer, 2002; Adrain, 2017).
On the other side, tourism has also become the means of support for local communities in the
Caribbean, especially in changing the economic atmosphere.

The tourism industry generates income and provides employment opportunities
(Hanafiah et al., 2010). Ritchie and Crouch (2000) pointed out that emerging core destination
management activity is the periodic monitoring of visitor satisfaction and the regular resource
stewardship involving an effective maintenance of those resources that are particularly
vulnerable to damage caused by tourism. Local residents are the main stakeholders of tourism
developments. Currently, the number of studies on local community attitudes toward future
tourism development is increasing due to the nexus between community support and
government future development. However, there is only limited research on understanding the
roles of personal benefit on residents’ support toward future tourism development (Angelkova
et al., 2012). Jafari (2001) suggested tourism development research should consider the roles
of perceived benefit on tourism planning and development.

The islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis form one nation, the Federation of Saint Kitts and
Nevis in the Caribbean. Although once reliant on sugar monoculture, industrial
diversification, albeit at a small scale, in electronics assembly, food-processing, beverages and
clothing production were developed. By 2000, sugar production only accounted for some 20
percent of GDP, and by 2005 the sugar was closed altogether. The islands still have a small-
scale production of crops, including rice, yams, bananas, and cotton, but its present economy
is based primarily on tourism. Saint Kitts and Nevis is an upper-middle income nation, the
world’s Middle-Income Countries (MICs) are a diverse group by size, population, and income
level those with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita between $3,956 and $12,235
(World Bank, 2018). However, the country is vulnerable to external shocks and natural
disasters, as evidenced by the effects of the 2001 and 2008 global economic downturn and the
hurricanes that struck the Caribbean in the past few years. After strong economic growth in
2000, the economy hardly grew in 2001–03, reflecting the downturn in the USA and
consequent fall in tourism, but there was investment in new tourist resorts and golf courses,
and the economy picked up in 2004. It then maintained growth of 5 percent per annum over
2004–08, slowing from 2008 with the onset of the world economic downturn in that year,
shrinking by 5.6 percent in 2009 and 3.2 percent in 2010. After a pause in 2011–12, good
growth returned from 2013, continuing into 2019. According to the Eastern Caribbean Central
Bank (ECCB), Saint Kitts and Nevis had an estimated Gross Domestic Product of USD
$787.8 million in 2016, with forecast growth of 3.1 percent in 2017. During the last fiscal
year, the economy of Saint Kitts and Nevis remained buoyant fueled by revenue from its
Citizenship by Investment program, decreased oil prices, a robust construction sector, and
increased tourist arrivals.

The government remains committed to creating an enhanced business climate to
attract more foreign investment in the tourism sector. In order to be sustainable, island
tourism destinations have to reconcile social, environmental and economic aspects of its
tourism development. In that sense, and in order to provide more positive economic effects
for host communities, tourism development has to satisfy the needs of relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, tourism management, local population, and tourists and at the same time it has to take into consideration the fact that all activities have to take place in the preserved cultural and environmental surroundings.

One of the best-known models of resident attitudes is the Irridex Model or Doxey’s Irridex, first developed by Doxey (1975) and described by Fridgen (1991). This model is used to describe attitudes of residents resulting from social impacts in a destination community. It suggests that in the early stages of tourism development, residents welcome the new visitation and the new dollars beginning to trickle into the community. Little tourism planning occurs in this initial stage, called euphoria. Visitors find their way to the destination without much marketing, and the community itself offers little in the way of tourism amenities. New visitors often learn of emerging destinations through word of mouth, and such travelers are often characterized as adventurous, requiring few amenities. However, over time, residents notice steadily increasing visitation and some begin to take commercial advantage of the nascent tourism development, whereas others criticize the perceived and actual changes in their community. In this stage, called apathy, tourist presence in the community is no longer considered a novelty, and the enthusiasm of the euphoria stage begins to wane. At this point, some tourism related marketing and development begins to arise, a period often characterized by the appearance of T-shirt stands and souvenir shops. The tourism planning that does occur at this stage is mainly geared toward supplying electricity, water, and transportation to these new businesses.

As tourism growth continues, residents can become irritated by the number of tourists in their community and concerned about the presence of tourism in general. This stage is called annoyance, in which the community is nearly saturated by tourists. During this phase, private entrepreneurs and public economic developers may begin to still develop more amenities to meet tourist demands and expand infrastructure to accommodate increasing tourist flows. It is also at this point that commercial and real estate interests from outside the destination begin to move in and purchase smaller tourism-related businesses. Franchise hotels and restaurants may proliferate at this time. As Fridgen (1991) noted, a final development here also includes the planning and implementation of special districts or corridors for the isolation or restriction of visitors. In its final phase of development, the destination community has grown into a mass tourist destination, leading to the stage of antagonism between residents and tourists. At this point, residents no longer welcome tourists and may exhibit behaviors ranging from indifference to hostility. Fridgen (1991) observed that during this stage, residents begin to generate negative stereotypes about tourists and tourism and that the types of tourists arriving at the destination are changing as well. Now, the community as a destination no longer appeals to its first “niche” tourists, or tourists seeking exclusive environments, but has become a tourism economy based on volume appealing to the less-discriminating touring masses. From this point, the destination continues to decline, or rejuvenates itself through redevelopment and remarketing, as first described by Butler’s (1980) destination development curve, with subsequent revisions and refinements to this model made by other tourism researchers (Haywood 1986; Martin and Uysal 1990; Meyer-Arendt, 1985).
A Del Chiappa and Abbate (2016) study discusses some pertinent issues in relation to cruise tourism development and community attitudes in a port-of-call cruise destination located in the island of Sicily (Southern Italy). Their study was carried out using a quota random sample of 1500 responses, which is representative of the population of Messina at a 1 percent level. Findings show that residents expressed overall positive attitudes toward some of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of cruise tourism development. Cruise tourism was seen as bringing in more benefits than costs, however they appeared to be concerned by the idea that most of the benefits of cruise tourism were going into the hands of external business investors. Furthermore, they found significant differences based on socio-economic and demographic characteristics (age, gender, reliance on cruise-related employment, level of education, geographical proximity to tourist areas and port, length of residency, and frequency of interaction with tourists) exist in residents' perceptions and attitudes toward cruise tourism development. The cruise tourism market appeared to be most desired by residents whose income depends on the cruise sector, middle-aged people, highly educated, living close to the tourism area, residing in Messina for more or less five years and interacting intensively with tourists.

Chen, J. M., Petrick, J. F., Papathanassis, A., and Li, X. (2019) research provided a meta-analysis of the direct economic impacts of cruise tourism, using a meta-regression, an Ordinary Least Square model, a fixed-effects model, and Sobel-Goodman mediation tests. The results revealed a significantly positive coefficient between direct economic impacts and the number of passengers, crew members, and cruise lines, expenditures per passenger, and expenditures per cruise line. The results of the meta-regression model found medium comprised effect sizes for expenditures and number of cruise passengers, crew members, and cruise lines contributing to the direct economic impacts on a port. Secondly, the subsequent OLS model and fixed-effects model found that per cruise tourist expenditures, number of cruise tourists, number of crew members, per cruise line expenditures, and number of cruise lines presented significant contributions to the direct economic impacts on a port. Lastly, the Sobel-Goodman mediation tests showed cruise lines had significant mediation effects on the expenditures of per cruise tourist and per crew member. According to the interview field notes, there was a consensus supporting the accommodation of more cruise ships and their positive economic impact for the local community. It was further found that cruise lines had significant mediation effects on the expenditures per passenger and per crew member at port destinations. Compared to North American markets, the direct economic impacts of cruise tourism on ports in the Caribbean markets and other emerging markets were significantly lower.

Lopes and Dredge (2018) case study of cruise tourism and shore excursion planning in Copenhagen, Denmark, investigated the characteristics of cruise tourism, itinerary and shore excursion planning with a view to understanding the value generated from cruise tourism shore excursions. They argued that economic value is a blunt measure, and there are other types of value, positive and negative, that are also generated. Interviews with representatives of incoming tour operators and cruise directors revealed a range of local
conditions and structural characteristics create barriers and opportunities for generating different types of value. The study highlights that destination managers and port authorities cannot assume the monetary and non-monetary value generated from shore excursions automatically flows on to, and throughout, destinations. Destination managers can make better decisions and engage in more targeted and informed strategies to optimize value for local destinations if they understand these dynamics.

Sun and Hou (2017) stated that China has become one of the most attractive emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific region. Cruise tourism has significant economic impacts on port cities and relevant tourism regions, outputting remarkable employment opportunities and total revenue. However, the development of the cruising sector also brings negative economic, environmental, and social and cultural impacts on cruise destinations and local communities. With the fast development of the Chinese cruise industry, influences of cruise tourism will become far-reaching. It is critical for the Chinese cruise industry to better understand impacts of cruise tourism, particularly the negative side. Using a sustainable and responsible tourism lens, the authors systematically examine the negative impacts of cruise tourism by comprehensively reviewing international studies in relation to externalities of cruise tourism. Accordingly, a model or framework of responsible cruise tourism, consisting of governments, non-profit organizations, local communities, cruise passengers, and the cruise industry, was proposed.

Wang and Pfister (2008) conducted a research on the impact of personal benefit obtained from tourism development, and they discovered that, benefit and cost assumed to be more carefully evaluated and as benefits exceed costs, residents will be more supportive on tourism development. When costs exceed benefits, residents tend to be more negative toward tourism development. Personal benefit from tourism development, especially the implicit social values in the process of exchange for residents has a significant role on favorable attitudes toward tourism development. In addition, Jurowski et al. (1997) found out when the residents did not enjoy any direct economic benefit from tourism, they will be neutral. In line with that, Allen et al. (1993) argued that communities with low tourism and strong total economic activity will foresee tourism development more favorable than communities with high tourism development and weak economic activity. Meanwhile, some researchers found that if residents did not gain direct economic benefit from tourism, they will demonstrate positive attitudes toward tourism based on a variety of shared social benefits with tourism development (Ap, 1992; Conlin and Baum, 1996; Tosun, 2002; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2011; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011).

Despite growing interest, only a handful of articles have examined residents’ perceptions of tourism development in the Caribbean. Abdool (2002) study addressed the issue of residents' perception of tourism and sought to compare resident's support for tourism between a mature destination of Barbados and a less developed destination of Tobago in the Caribbean. The findings suggest that there was widespread support for tourism development in both communities despite their varying levels of tourism sophistication and residents’ perceptions of negative consequences of tourism. This apparent paradox was explained by social exchange theory. Key variables which influence support for tourism were found to be personal and community benefits, socio-environmental impacts and community attachment.
Waterman (2009) discusses the negative social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism development in Barbados and measures their preferences for environmental management changes using the island’s lone marine reserve, the Folkestone Marine Reserve, as a case study. The research outcomes demonstrated that environmental management within the context of tourism development in Barbados requires the balancing of public needs with the environmental and economic consequences of development. As such, the results reinforced some of the theoretical and empirical revelations in the field of tourism and environmental management and further cemented the assertion that environmental management becomes onerous because of the presence of a number of innately complex and interlinked inferences: that preserving an environment that satisfies the divergent needs of users incurs both social and economic costs; that perceptions of tourism’s impacts are not mutually exclusive, which makes the issue of support for tourism development complex; that both the positive and negative impacts of tourism should be considered; that prudent environmental management is arguably the sine qua non for a viable tourism product; and that concerns remain as to whether the country can absorb the environmental and socio-economic shocks associated with tourism development.

Jordan (2014) surveyed residents of Falmouth, Jamaica, where a new cruise port was recently developed to serve some of the largest cruise ships in the world several days per week. Analysis showed 78 percent of surveyed Falmouth residents experienced stress from the development and operation of the new cruise port. Residents indicated unmet expectations, overtaxed infrastructure, crowding, increased cost of living, pollution, and police harassment were major causes of stress. Stressors were inter-related with each other and exacerbated daily hassles already faced by Falmouth residents. Research findings indicate stress and coping provide a suitable framework from which to examine how individuals respond to tourism development.

Greening (2014) highlights community perceptions of ecotourism and held values for sea turtles and explains the emergence of these perceptions within two villages on the Caribbean island of Saint Kitts. The field data revealed that community members did not perceive ecotourism to be widely beneficial, but instead viewed the government, people who work in the tourism industry, and tourists themselves to benefit from ecotourism practices. Further, community members perceived ecotourism as negatively affecting poor people, people who do not work in the tourism industry, and the environment. These perceptions of who or what is affected by ecotourism development were traced back through centuries of political-ecological processes on Saint Kitts that have mediated local people’s relationship with their land and resources, as well as their relationships with each other. The results of this research suggest a focus on the role of ecotourism in amending the persistent marginalization of local people from their resources by applying a participatory development approach to ecotourism development through collaboration with existing community groups and social networks.
Laville-Wilson’s (2017) study of Saint Kitts and Nevis residents’ perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental and community impacts of tourism development. Results suggest that those working in the tourism sector had more favorable attitudes toward tourism development and favorable perceptions about benefits from the tourism sector. MacNeill and Wozniak (2018) measured economic, social, cultural and environmental factors before and after the opening of a new cruise ship port in a new Western Caribbean port in Trujillo, Honduras in 2014. This $20 million Banana Coast project has a 50,000-square-foot shopping facility and a transportation hub along a 10-acre beachfront. Through the measurement of multidimensional indicators before and after the opening of the cruise ship port, and using control groups, the authors were able to compare community impacts with greater detail and control than previous studies. One observed benefit to communities was a decrease in crime due to an increase in government expenditure on policing. Although theory and industry multiplier estimates predict gains in employment, income, and related measures, the study found surprisingly little evidence of improvement. In fact, results show that the local population’s ability to provide for necessities and obtain sufficient food worsened, corruption increased, and there were substantial negative environmental impacts, according to the authors. Local populations also lost wealth and property due to tourism. The authors concluded that low taxation and lax regulation environments, which are the norm for cruise ship destinations in developing countries, are partly to blame for the negative impacts. Most of the profits and benefits funnel through networks formed by the cruise ship port management, bypassing local workers and community members. MacNeill and Wozniak (2018) recommend major investments in community resources and positive environmental practices before introducing tourism to any given area.

Sustainable tourism has three components: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. To successfully develop a sustainable tourism destination, all three of these components must be addressed. Residents of a destination are a vital part of successful sustainable tourism development. The primary theoretical framework that has been utilized in studying residents’ attitudes has been social exchange theory (Latkova, 2008). Resident attitudes toward tourism have been studied for over 40 years, with some of the significant early works emerging in the early 1980s, such as Butler (1980), and Murphy (1985). Several predictor variables have been identified as significant in examining residents’ attitudes toward tourism, including community attachment, level of tourism knowledge, contact with tourist, and distance to tourists’ destinations. Residents’ knowledge of the tourism industry was identified as a significant predictor variable in examining residents’ attitudes (Andereck et al., 2005; Davis et al., 1988; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Latkova, 2008), although knowledge has not been measured specifically as environmental, economic or social. Saint Kitts and Nevis like many other Caribbean nations, is seeking to expand its tourism services and products due to dwindling traditional industries. In the case of Saint Kitts and Nevis, it is to fill the void created by closing of the sugar cane industry. In the Caribbean there has been fewer than ten empirical studies about residents’ attitudes toward tourism development, therefore, this study can possibly aid in the future development of tourism in the region and help identify the areas of concern that may need to be addressed.

HYPOTHESES
Tourism development has benefited both islands with growth in employment opportunities, increased revenues for local businesses, improvement in the standard of living, and development of infrastructure. Therefore, perceptions of positive impact of tourism on the economy will be high. However, tourism benefits came to Nevis much later. The emphasis of tourism is also slightly different. In Nevis, the emphasis of tourism is more on hotels and significantly less on cruise passengers visiting the island (Boylan, 2008). Tourists’ impact on the economy is pronounced in sectors like transportation and retail, including local crafts. Given the significantly greater reliance on cruise passengers for tourism in Saint Kitts, we expect Saint Kitts residents to have a greater perception of economic impact from cruise ship passengers. Therefore, we propose the following:

**H1**: Residents of Nevis will perceive greater positive economic impact of tourism compared to residents of Saint Kitts.

**H2**: Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater positive economic impact of tourism from cruise passengers compared to those from Nevis.

Tourism can also have negative impact on the economy. The cost of living can go up due to the influx of tourists. Given the seasonal nature of tourism, there may be strains in the economy due to unemployment. Local residents may also be ending up in low-skilled and menial jobs. Luxury resorts may recruit outsiders for managerial positions because the local talent pool may be very limited. High growth in tourism can also sometimes result in importing of goods to support the industry. The domestic market may not be able to supply or may not have goods that are acceptable (MacNeill and Wozniak, 2018). These negative impacts are more likely to be seen in Saint Kitts due to greater influx of tourists into Saint Kitts. We hypothesize the following:

**H3**: Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative economic impact of tourism compared to residents of Nevis.

As tourism gains in importance in a society, its effects are bound to touch many aspects of life. The local population would come in touch with tourists of many different cultures. This would give them an exposure to new ways of thinking and broaden their viewpoint. At the same time, it is common for locals to exhibit and showcase their own culture, monuments, and rituals to tourists. This has a positive effect on society as it instills greater awareness of one’s own cultural traditions and values and also engenders greater pride in their identity. We do not have a basis to suggest that there will be significant differences between residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis on their perceptions of positive impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects. However, we expect these perceptions to be high and favorable.

The growth of tourism can also have negative consequences on society. Problems such as increased crime, illegal drug and alcohol use, and illegal activities have been associated with growth in tourism (Allen *et al.*, 1988). These in turn require more investment in security
and other related services. Between the two islands, Saint Kitts, with a larger population that is dependent on transient cruise-ship based tourists, has been facing more crime. We therefore hypothesize the following:

**H4:** Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects than residents of Nevis.

Growth in tourism has both positive and negative impacts on the environment (Greening, 2014). Tourists are often interested in visiting natural structures, formations, heritage sites, and unique flora and fauna. Therefore, every effort must be made to preserve these attractions in the best condition. Resources are also devoted to disseminate information about these spots and locals are encouraged to value natural sites of beauty and other tourism spots. Greater sensitivity to the environment would create conditions for more widespread adoption of environmentally-friendly practices. Saint Kitts is more commercial and attracts more cruise ship-based tourists, while Nevis has several natural attractions that received a make-over to make them tourist-friendly. Therefore, we propose the following:

**H5:** Residents of Nevis will perceive greater positive impact of tourism on environment compared to residents of Saint Kitts.

Growth in tourism often results in negative impacts on environment as well. More tourists often result in overuse and degradation of heritage natural sites, beaches and ecological sites. There would be more traffic, increased air and water pollution, and problems in sewage and garbage systems. When cruise ships dock in these tiny islands, there is increased stress on the infrastructure and potential for additional marine pollution. Degradation of the marine ecosystem has also been seen in many parts of the world. Given the larger population and higher tourist influx in Saint Kitts, we would expect Saint Kitts residents to perceive these negative impacts more than residents of Nevis. We propose the following:

**H6:** Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative impact of tourism on environment compared to residents of Nevis.

Given the reliance of the economy of these islands on tourism, we expect a favorable perception of tourism development and more favorable attitudes toward tourism. It is reasonable to expect Nevis residents to be more inclined to attract land-based tourists who stay in hotels rather than rely on cruise ship passengers. Between the two islands, Saint Kitts with 68 square miles size is twice as big as Nevis, and slightly more developed with four times the population of Nevis. Nevis also lacks the infrastructure to accommodate large cruise ships. The following hypotheses are proposed:

**H7:** Residents of Nevis would be more favorably disposed to land-based tourists who stay in hotels than residents of Saint Kitts.
H8: Residents of Nevis and Saint Kitts will have favorable attitudes toward tourism.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory household questionnaire survey was used to identify local residents’ perception toward impacts from tourism development within the islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean. The questionnaire was based on previous studies: a survey of local residents developed to study the sustainability of tourism in the Azores, Portugal (Moniz, 2006); a survey to examine the sustainability of tourism in the Ugljan–Pasman Islands from the residents’ perspective (Manning et al. 2001); a questionnaire to collect data on the attitudes and opinions of local residents toward tourism development (UNWTO 2004); a questionnaire used to investigate the degree of satisfaction of residents toward tourism in their countries of residence in the Algarve region, Portugal (Silva et al., 2001); and a questionnaire applied to local residents of the island of Madeira, Portugal (Martins, 2000). However, a few adjustments were introduced to meet the aims of this study. In addition to Kim’s (2002) measurement items, this study also added four items to measure the perceived satisfaction with the economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Perceived economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts could be related to these items in an attempt to investigate causality.

Data was collected by one of the researchers during two vacation trips to Saint Kitts and Nevis during 2017. It was a convenient sample of ordinary citizens, college students, and professionals who participated. The respondents, who agreed to participate in the survey, were explained the purpose of the study and request for participation, then a questionnaire was given out to them for completion. Most of the respondents filled out the questionnaires immediately in 12-16 minutes. The questionnaire for this study was comprised of three sections. The first section included screening questions on participants’ socio-demographic profile including gender, education, marital status, working industry, household size, monthly household income. The second section was titled “Your feelings about how tourism impacts your community” and included twelve economic impact items, ten social-cultural impact items, and nine environmental impact items. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) on each item. The third section was titled “Overall Perceptions” and included seven items to measure residents’ satisfaction with the rate of tourism development and sustainability and three items to measure their views of the future of tourism in general. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements for each item.

Results were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Software v.23. Exploratory factor analysis was used to verify the underlying structure of the variables (items) from the survey. This was used to develop scales for the different constructs. Reliability of the scales was assessed with internal consistency measurement using Cronbach alpha values (Hair et al, 2010). Hypotheses were tested using ANOVA, with island of residence as the grouping variable.
RESULTS

The sample consisted of 322 respondents. Of these 211 were from Saint Kitts and 58 were from Nevis. The rest were residents living abroad in the USA, Canada, and Europe. For purposes of this analysis, these 53 respondents were not included in this analysis. About two-thirds of the respondents were female. The characteristics of this sample are summarized in Table 1. In 2018 the population of Saint Kitts and Nevis was 52,500 with 77 percent living in Saint Kitts and 23 percent lives in Nevis. The study sample of 269 people was 5 percent of the population, 78 percent from Saint Kitts and 22 percent from Nevis, therefore, it’s a fairly good sample. For more than two decades, tourism studies have been a part of the school’s curriculum, and there are many infomercials on television, radio, and in main newspapers. The nation has a literacy rate of 98 percent, people are very familiar with tourism development. Seventy-six percent of the sample falls within the age ranges of 18-44, while 43 percent of the sample makes more than $50,000 US per year. Sociodemographic variables have been found to influence the perceptions of residents in regard to the way they perceive and support tourism development. Almeida-García et al. (2016) found the older residents tend to have a more positive attitude toward tourism regarding the local environment and a more negative attitude relating to its economic impact, with the younger residents considering tourism to have a more positive impact on the local economy. Additionally, the more educated residents had a positive attitude toward tourism with regards to the local culture and the economy than did the less educated. Sheldon and Abenoja (2001) note that the longer a resident lives within a community, the more positive they tend to be toward tourism being conducted in the area, Almeida-García et al. (2016) suggest the contrary. Other demographic variables, such as gender (Sinclair-Maragh, 2017), economic status, and income (Tichaawa, Mhlanga, 2015) influence how residents perceive tourism development.

TABLE 1. – Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Residence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>65.53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevis</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18.01 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign countries</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16.46 %</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>64 %</td>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 – 24</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 34</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 64</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Household Income</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $ 50,000</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 50,000 – $ 75,000</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$76,000 - $ 99,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scale purification

Scale purification was done to improve psychometric properties of the measures for measuring perceived impact of tourism on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. Recommendations from Hair et al (2010) were used for factor loading cut-offs. Hair et al (1998) recommend a cut-off of 0.40 for sample size of 200 and 0.45 for sample size of 150 for assessing practical significance of factor loadings. For this exercise, a 0.45 loading cut-off was used.

Perceived impact of tourism on economy

Tourism’s impact on the economy was assessed through 12 items listed in Table 2. These included four items for positive impact and two items for impact of cruise ship tourism. Perceived negative impact of tourism on economic aspects was assessed through six items.

Factor analysis was performed to explore the dimensionality of these variables. Principle components analysis of the six items revealed two components. Items one through four loaded on component one (loadings between .496 and .824) and had low loadings on component two (below .35). Cross-loadings were observed for the variables relating to the impact of cruise ship tourism (Items five and six). Varimax rotation revealed two components. Items one through four were related to positive impact of tourism on economic aspects, and items five and six were related to positive impact of cruise ship tourism on economic aspects. Items one through four were combined to create a composite scale. The internal consistency of this four-item scale was acceptable (Cronbach alpha = 0.709). Items five and six were combined to create a composite scale for positive impact of cruise ship tourism. However, the internal consistency of this scale was low (Cronbach alpha = 0.472).
TABLE 2. Rotated component matrix for items measuring positive impact on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Components*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECON1</td>
<td>Tourism increases hotels, restaurants, and other tourism businesses, creating lots of new employment opportunities.</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON2</td>
<td>Tourism significantly improves the locals’ standard of living.</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON3</td>
<td>Tourism helps to develop infrastructure on the islands e.g. utilities, ports, roads etc.</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON4</td>
<td>Tourism contributes significantly to the Economic growth of Saint Kitts/Nevis.</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON5</td>
<td>Cruise passengers significantly impact transportation like taxis, buses, tour operators.</td>
<td>.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON6</td>
<td>Cruise passengers purchase many items from local shops, craft merchants and Caribelle Batik.</td>
<td>.766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*loadings below 0.45 not shown

Perceived negative impact of tourism on economic aspects was assessed through six items (Table 3). Factor analysis revealed all items had factor loadings above 0.45 and low cross loadings. Factor loadings for only one component are shown. These six items were combined to yield a composite measure for perceived negative impact of tourism on economic aspects (Cronbach alpha = 0.67).

TABLE 3. Rotated component matrix for items measuring negative impact on economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Component*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECON7</td>
<td>Tourism has significantly increased prices and the cost of living on Saint Kitts/Nevis.</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON8</td>
<td>Tourism employment is seasonal with too many foreigners in managerial positions.</td>
<td>.645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON9</td>
<td>Tourism can be very fickle; the economy needs to be more diversified.</td>
<td>.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON10</td>
<td>Tourism causes an uneven distribution of benefits across the population.</td>
<td>.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON11</td>
<td>Tourism results in the import of too many goods to support the tourism industry.</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON12</td>
<td>Tourism should have a much stronger link with other sectors of the economy e.g. Agriculture, Education, and Communications.</td>
<td>.528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*loadings below 0.45 not shown

Perceived impact on socio-cultural aspects

Perceived impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects was assessed with ten items (Table 4). A factor analysis with equamax rotation revealed three components. The first five items had positive loadings above 0.5 on the first component and no significant cross-loadings on the other two components. The first component showed good support for representing positive impact on socio-cultural aspects. These items showed high consistency and were combined to form a composite measure (Cronbach alpha = 0.72).

Three items had factor loadings above 0.5 on Component 2 with no cross-loadings greater than 0.45 on other components. These three items (SC8, SC9, SC10) were combined
to represent negative impact on socio-cultural aspects (Cronbach alpha = 0.5). Tourism leading to increased crime (SC7) had high factor loadings on Component 2 and 3. Therefore, it was not included for further analysis. The third component had two items (SC6 and SC7) with loadings above .45. SC6 tapped into the negative connotations of adopting customs associated with American culture and was positively correlated with SC7. SC6 was not included in further analysis and further research is needed to understand perceptions of “Americanization” of local culture.

### TABLE 4. Rotated component matrix for items measuring impact on socio-cultural aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC1</td>
<td>Tourism enhances the understanding of other peoples and cultures.</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC2</td>
<td>Tourism enhances greater community pride and cohesion in Saint Kitts/Nevis.</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC3</td>
<td>Tourism enhances conservation, restoration, and preservation efforts e.g. Brimstone Hill in Saint Kitts and Baths in Nevis.</td>
<td>.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC4</td>
<td>Tourism enhances the display of local culture through the steel pan music, local dance, foods, and handcrafts.</td>
<td>.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC5</td>
<td>Tourism directly enhances locals’ interests in tourism/hospitality jobs/careers.</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC6</td>
<td>Tourism causes acculturation with respect to values, tastes and customs causing Saint Kitts/Nevis to be too “Americanized”.</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC7</td>
<td>Tourism causes increased social deviance: crime, drugs, prostitution, and other social pathologies.</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC8</td>
<td>Cruise passengers experience too much harassment in our cities.</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC9</td>
<td>Tourism has overloaded the police services on the islands causing more crimes.</td>
<td>.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC10</td>
<td>Tourism needs much more security to enhance tourists’ safety and security.</td>
<td>.532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*loadings below 0.45 not shown

### Perceived impact on environmental aspects

Factor analysis was done on the nine items that measured perceptions about impact on environmental aspects. The rotated solution revealed two dimensions (Table 5). The first dimension corresponds to the positive impact on environmental aspects (ENV1 through ENV5), while the second dimension aligned with negative impact on environmental aspects.

The five items measuring positive aspects were combined to create a composite score (Cronbach alpha = 0.756). The four items for negative impact on environmental aspects were combined to create a composite score (Cronbach alpha = 0.702).
### TABLE 5. Rotated component matrix for items measuring impact on environmental aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENV1</td>
<td>Tourism development enhance environmental protection.</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV2</td>
<td>Tourism enhance environmental education and interpretation for locals and tourists.</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV3</td>
<td>Tourism enhance appreciation of our tropical rain forests.</td>
<td>.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV4</td>
<td>Tourism enhance locals’ efforts in the practice of Renew-Reuse-Recycle.</td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV5</td>
<td>Tourism help to create a greater interest in enhancing the natural environment.</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV6</td>
<td>Tourism development cause increase of environment and marine pollution especially from cruise ships.</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV7</td>
<td>Tourism development has increased the level pollution, garbage, and waste on the islands.</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV8</td>
<td>Tourism development cause deterioration of the ecosystem (sand erosion, coral reefs damages to flora and fauna).</td>
<td>.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV9</td>
<td>Tourism development cause increased traffic congestion and overcrowding in Basseterre and Charleston especially when the cruise ships are in port.</td>
<td>.561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*loadings below 0.45 not shown

### Attitudes toward tourism development

Seven items were used to assess overall attitudes toward tourism development. Factor analysis revealed three factors (Table 6).

### TABLE 6. Rotated component matrix for items measuring overall attitudes toward tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATT1</td>
<td>The current rate of tourism development in Saint Kitts/Nevis is sustainable.</td>
<td>.681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT3</td>
<td>Eco-Tourism needs to be the focus for further tourism development.</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT2</td>
<td>Saint Kitts should accept no more than two (2) cruise ships per day, due to the carrying capacity.</td>
<td>.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT4</td>
<td>Tourism development should focus more on land-based tourists staying in hotels rather than cruise ship passengers.</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT5</td>
<td>Tourism development in Saint Kitts/Nevis is moving in the right direction and is good for the Federation's economy.</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT7</td>
<td>Overall, I am very satisfied with tourism development in Saint Kitts/Nevis.</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT6</td>
<td>I will highly recommend and promote Saint Kitts/Nevis to any potential tourists.</td>
<td>.580/.514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*loadings below 0.45 not shown
The first factor reflects attitudes toward eco-tourism in the islands. Two items (ATT1 and ATT3) loaded on this factor. These two items were combined to create a composite scale for attitudes toward tourism. The reliability for this scale was not high (Cronbach alpha = 0.39). Given the low internal consistency, individual items were analyzed.

The second factor relates to the attitude toward land-based tourism (as opposed to cruise ship-based tourism). Two items (ATT2 and ATT4) had high factor loadings on this factor and small loadings on other factors. The scale formed by combining these two items had a Cronbach alpha score of 0.56. The third factor relates to the satisfaction with tourism development in the islands. Two items (ATT5 and ATT7) displayed high factor loadings with small cross loadings on other factors. The scale created by combining these two items had an acceptable reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.70). One item (ATT6) had cross-loadings on two factors and therefore, was not included with other variables. This item measures the willingness to recommend the islands to potential tourists and was analyzed separately.

**Hypotheses testing**

Only residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis were included in the analysis.

**Impact of tourism on economy**

Residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis viewed consequences of tourism on the economy favorably. Residents of both islands had favorable perception of tourism’s impact on the economy. However, Nevis residents, compared to residents from Saint Kitts, had a significantly greater perception of the positive impact of tourism on economy ($\bar{x}_{Saint Kitts} = 3.96$ vs. $\bar{x}_{Nevis} = 4.19$; $p = .02$). Therefore, H1 was supported.

The perception of impact of cruise ship passengers on the economy was mixed. While residents of both islands perceived positive impact of cruise passengers on taxis, buses, and tour operators ($\bar{x}_{Saint Kitts} = 4.05$; $\bar{x}_{Nevis} = 4.07$; $p = .86$), their perception of the impact of cruise passengers on purchases from local shops, crafts, and Caribelle Batik was less favorable and significantly lower for Nevis residents ($\bar{x}_{Saint Kitts} = 3.31$; $\bar{x}_{Nevis} = 2.93$; $p = .01$). Therefore, there was some support for H2.

Residents of both islands had similar scores on negative impacts of tourism on economic aspects. A one-factor ANOVA did not reveal any significant difference between responses from residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis ($\bar{x}_{Saint Kitts} = 3.64$; $\bar{x}_{Nevis} = 3.74$; $p = .21$). Therefore, H3 was not supported.

**Impact of tourism on society and culture**

Residents of both islands had positive perceptions of tourism’s impact on socio-cultural aspects on their societies. The scores suggest that residents of the two islands were receptive to tourists. The scores were above the mid-point of the scale used to assess these perceptions. Residents were also showing interest in tourism-related careers. They were
particularly appreciative of the restoration and preservation initiatives in Brimstone Hill and Baths that showcased cultural aspects of the islands (mean scores above 4). One-way ANOVA analysis using the composite five-item scale showed no significant differences between the means for the two groups on positive consequences of tourism on socio-cultural aspects ($\overline{x}_{\text{Saint Kitts}} = 3.98; \overline{x}_{\text{Nevis}} = 4.06; p = .36$).

Interestingly, residents in both islands disagreed about the negative socio-cultural consequences (mean scores less than 3). In other words, the respondents did not perceive any major problems in the society arising from increased tourism. Residents of Saint Kitts had higher scores on average than Nevis residents ($\overline{x}_{\text{Saint Kitts}} = 2.80; \overline{x}_{\text{Nevis}} = 2.47; p = .005$). Given the low internal consistency of the scale used to measure negative impact on socio-cultural aspects, this result is not reliable. Therefore, H4 was not supported.

**Impact of tourism on the environment**

Both groups of residents perceived tourism to have similar effects on environmental aspects. There were no significant differences in perceptions of positive impact of tourism on the environment ($\overline{x}_{\text{Saint Kitts}} = 3.51; \overline{x}_{\text{Nevis}} = 3.58; p = .44$). H5 was not supported.

Mean scores for Saint Kitts’ residents for negative impact of tourism on the environment were higher, indicating they were more in agreement with perceptions about negative impact on the environment on dimensions like tourism’s effects on marine and land pollution, traffic congestion, and deterioration of the ecosystem. Nevis residents had significantly more disagreement than residents of Saint Kitts about some negative consequences ($\overline{x}_{\text{Saint Kitts}} = 3.27; \overline{x}_{\text{Nevis}} = 3.02; p = .03$). Therefore, there is support for H6.

**Overall attitudes**

Residents from both islands had moderately favourable attitudes toward current state of tourism development. The means scores were between three and four on the five-point scale. Analysis did not reveal significant differences between the residents of the two islands on rate of tourism development and need to focus on eco-tourism for future. Compared to residents of Saint Kitts, Nevis residents favoured greater emphasis on land-based tourists than cruise ship passengers. This difference was significant ($\overline{x}_{\text{Saint Kitts}} = 3.09$ vs. $\overline{x}_{\text{Nevis}} = 3.59; p = .01$). Therefore, there is support for H7.

Residents agreed with the direction of tourism development and were highly likely to recommend and promote their islands to potential tourists. Mean scores for this single item were above 4.30. A one-sample t-test against a comparison value of three, revealed the means scores for each island were significantly greater than three. Therefore, there is support for H8.

**DISCUSSION**

Results of this study support findings from previous research about the Caribbean (Abdool, 2002; Laville-Wilson, 2017) and other research from islands in Asia who reported that each tourism impact element has both positive and negative impacts (Andereck and Nyauptane, 2011; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2011; Tosun, 2002; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Ap, 1992). The finding of this research is also consistent with the previous study by King (1993)
who contended that, once a community becomes a destination, the lives of residents in the 
community are unswervingly affected by tourism. Table 7 presents the summary of 
hypotheses. Broadly, residents are aware of positive economic impacts but also perceive 
negative socio-cultural and environment impacts. Given the differences in the level and nature 
of tourism development between the islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis, some interesting 
differences were observed in how residents of the two islands perceived impact of tourism on 
economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. More cruise ships visit Saint Kitts and 
Nevis accepts very few small luxurious cruise ships, therefore residents of Saint Kitts 
perceive a greater positive economic impact of cruise-related tourism than residents of Nevis. 
Nevis residents are more positively disposed toward land-based tourists than residents of 
Saint Kitts. However, residents of both islands are favourably disposed toward tourism 
development. This is in line with earlier findings of Abdool (2002). This study addressed the 
issue of residents' perception of tourism and found there was widespread support for tourism 
development in both communities of Barbados and Tobago despite their varying levels of 
tourism sophistication and residents' perceptions of negative consequences of tourism. 
Residents of both islands perceived negative economic impacts of tourism. However, there 
were no significant differences, and the mean scores suggest that these perceptions were not 
very salient.

### Table 7. Summary of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of tourism on economy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Residents of Nevis will perceive greater positive economic impact of tourism compared to residents of Saint Kitts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater positive economic impact of tourism from cruise passengers compared to those from Nevis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative economic impact of tourism compared to residents of Nevis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects than residents of Nevis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of tourism on environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Residents of Nevis will perceive greater positive impact of tourism on environment compared to residents of Saint Kitts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Residents of Saint Kitts will perceive greater negative impact of tourism on environment compared to residents of Nevis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residents of both islands perceived positive impact of tourism on socio-cultural dimensions (e.g., effects on conservation, restoration, and preservation efforts, displays of local culture, and enhanced understanding of other cultures). They did not perceive negative socio-cultural impacts to be high (e.g., increased social deviance, and overloading of police services). This is in contrast to the findings by MacNeill and Wozniak (2018) that found the local community in Honduras was worse from an economic and socio-cultural view point with substantial negative environmental impact after substantial investment in a port to attract cruise tourism.

Scores on perceptions of environmental impact of tourism were not very high for residents of both islands. However, for negative impact of tourism on the environment, mean scores for Saint Kitts’ residents were higher, indicating that they were more in agreement with perceptions about negative impact on the environment on dimensions like increased marine and land pollution, traffic congestion, and deterioration of the ecosystem, this finding support previous studies (Hanafiah et al., 2013; MacNeill and Wozniak, 2018). According to Mieczkowski (1995), ecosystems that attract the attention of tourism are more environmentally vulnerable such as seashores, mountains, lakes and coral reefs. The coastal areas of Saint Kitts are presently showing signs of regression and alteration of the seashore interface due to the construction of several tourist facilities. Some of the oceanic changes along the coast can be seen in several places: at Port Zante that was constructed to berth tourist ships; at the Saint Kitts Ferry Terminal that was constructed to house the ferries that travel between the federation’s islands; at Friars Bay Beach where the underwater digging and dredging occurred in an attempt to build an underwater aquarium; at the change of the natural salt pond which was changed into a marina to accommodate tourists’ yachts; and along Irish Town Bay Road where a pier was built to accommodate tourists vacationing at Ocean Terrace Inn (OTI). As a result, coastal areas have suffered from erosion and change in the patterns of coastal waves (Laville-Wilson, 2017). A profound long-term impact stemming from tourism developments along coastal areas is the dying sea life, many of which was and still is a part of the people’s daily diet. The sea reefs and their habitat (whelks), the conch, turtle, lobster, and crab, are now threatened. As this crisis progresses, both islands are witnessing a decrease in the number of local fishermen whose economic survival is based on the sea life they caught and sold to the local people and businesses (Laville-Wilson, 2017).

The question of sustainability is particularly appropriate in the context of tourism development in the Caribbean since islands provide an interesting and unique site for understanding the complexity of the links between social, cultural, economic and natural systems (Noronha et al., 2003). Many authors point out that sustainable tourism development is almost impossible without the support and participation of the local community, in fact community-based approach to tourism development is a prerequisite to sustainability (Woodley 1993, Fallon and Kriwoken, 2003; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004). Studying
Residents’ attitudes can help both residents and planners since in that way it is possible to select those developments that can minimize negative impacts and maximize support for the industry (Williams and Lawson 2001). By doing so, the quality of life of residents can be maintained or enhanced and the negative impacts of tourism in the community can be reduced (Zhang et al. 2006). Hence, understanding residents’ perceptions helps tourism planners strategically utilize resources to improve resident involvement and, therefore, increase the sustainability of future tourism development (Lottig et al., 2010).

Residents appear to be satisfied with the direction of tourism development in their islands and very likely to promote their islands to potential tourists. These findings have significant meaning to the citizens of Saint Kitts and Nevis and the government can find useful in formulating public policies especially since the islands can be said to be in the “development stage” of tourism development. However, the government must begin to address the issue of the continuous deterioration of the island’s coastal and marine resources with legislation and management controls. Neither of the two approaches proposed above can be successfully implemented without the support and participation of the general public.

More can be done to further recognize the importance of sensitizing the public on coastal and marine related issues. A number of sensitization and awareness activities can be undertaken such as publication of brochures, flyers, call-in programs, and radio and television panel discussions. The government is making every effort to support the sustainable tourism development concept. For example, in 2015, much effort was made by the new government to maintain bonds and foster relationships with stakeholders, planners, developers and other players in the tourism industry. Currently, the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis appears to be in alignment with the tourism trends in terms of developments (hotels, marinas, airport, etc.). There were several private developments to the infrastructure and a number of newly built hotels. Destinations need to adopt a firm marketing philosophy, not only addressing developmental efforts directly at the needs and desires of the tourist but also the needs and desires of the local community. This in practice includes the need to deliver an experience that is seamless despite the widely-acknowledged issues deriving from the fragmented nature of the industry. A multi-stakeholder approach to tourism planning and management can help address many of these issues, and also the socio-political and social justice element of sustainable development, so often overlooked.

Local community support for tourism is necessary to ensure the commercial, socio-cultural, physiological, political and economic sustainability of the industry. Their role in influencing the tourism development activities through working together with the government is vital (Jamaludin et al., 2009). Furthermore, Cottrell and Vaske (2006) argued that the perception of local residents was the most accurate factor in evaluating the current situation toward the destination due to the closeness of the area. Wall and Mathieson (2006) recommend that citizens be partners in the process if tourism is to sustain itself in host communities. Tourism development implies high local community involvement and without its support and participation it is almost impossible for a tourism destination to be sustainable. This study fills the void of research on community-based tourism development for the
Caribbean. Additionally, since there have been few studies conducted in the Caribbean addressing local residents’ perceptions of tourism development, the results of this study can be used as a theoretical base explaining how people’s views differ on a given issue about tourism development in their areas of residence.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine residents’ attitudes toward tourism development in the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean. The perceptions of locals varied by country of residence, with tourism having mainly positive economic and socio-cultural impacts, whereas its environmental impacts remain negative more so in Saint Kitts. However, the overall results of this study show that residents of both islands have positive attitudes in general toward tourism development. Residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis, like many other countries in the Caribbean, have embraced the development of tourism as a key driver and vehicle for the harnessing of socio-economic benefits including job creation and the elimination of poverty (Makoni and Tichaawa, 2017). This is a good sign for the Federation’s tourism industry as more emphasis is being placed on tourism expansion. However, there is still room to increase residents’ positive attitudes toward tourism and strengthen the industry further. Based on residents’ attitude toward tourism and the federation’s plans to expand tourism promotion, it is believed that, at the time of this study, the federation was in the apathy stage of Doxey’s Irridex. Similarly, based on Saint Kitts and Nevis residents’ attitude toward tourism, the well-defined tourists’ market area, and tourism marketing efforts, it is believed at the time of this study the federation was in the development stage of Butler’s tourism area cycle of evolution. Based on the stage of tourism development in the federation, it is recommended that actions be taken to increase residents’ awareness of tourism and increase positive attitudes toward tourism. This will help to prevent the federation from moving into the later stages of tourism development where more significant negative impacts occur to the community and residents resent the tourism industry and tourists.

The growing recognition of environmental tourism impacts, and the negative environmental impacts generated from the seaports in Saint Kitts may have had an impact on the association between residents’ attitude toward tourism and the environment. While a great deal of tourism development and activities provide a net benefit for residents of host communities, negative impacts are often an unavoidable byproduct, for some like negative impacts on the environment. Lankford and Howard (1994) stated, “Educational programs, public meetings, and workshops can be undertaken at the local level to help residents understand the tourism industry and its impacts” (p.135). For tourism to be successful, it will arguably depend on environmental preservation. Policy makers must still grapple with the dilemma of encouraging economic development on one hand, while simultaneously restricting specific components of what is seen as one of the major sectors of growth. Uncertainty regarding cruise tourism carrying capacity is compounded by the realization that attitudes may have greater negative impacts with bigger cruise ships at the cruise port.

The results of this study could help tourism planners to better integrate the local communities in tourism planning and development and understand areas of frustration and dissatisfaction. It cannot be over-emphasized that residents of the two islands are different and
as such every effort must be made to be sensitive to that. The likely antecedents of attitudes to tourism can also assist in formulating a program of internal marketing to the benefits of those most affected by tourism development. Such factors have been found to be a prerequisite for the sustainable development of tourism in a destination. It is expected that this research will further raise the consciousness on sustainability issues in small economies, more precisely on the role of communities in the sustainable development of the tourism industry. One thing is certain that can be learnt from this study: tourism growth must be planned and managed in a sustainable way.

LIMITATIONS

Although our findings contribute to investigating a somewhat neglected area in Caribbean tourism research, the study does have some limitations. First, the sample was convenient, one of the researchers while vacationing two times in Saint Kitts and Nevis collected the data from the local population. Secondly, Saint Kitts and Nevis is a unique situation. There are two islands that form one nation, and the contrast cannot be greater due to distinguishing different cultures, different tourist markets, a different focus on tourism development. The findings also focus on just one tourism destination in the Caribbean, and even if they seem to confirm some pioneer research on residents and tourism development, they should be considered somewhat specific to this destination. Thirdly, the findings of this study indicate factors that affect or even determine residents’ support for tourism development are, in general, similar. However, each destination has a set of peculiar conditions critical to increasing residents’ support for tourism development, thus, other researchers must be careful to generalize the results. The use of factor analysis also reduces the replicability of these results. Aside from the limitations just discussed, the present study does highlight several possible future research paths. Future research could be aimed first at monitoring, in a given destination, whether and how residents’ perceptions change over time along with each stage of its life cycle. Finally, it would be interesting to carry out an empirical investigation to measure the overall impact (economic, environmental, sociocultural, and marketing) of cruise tourism and to assess how far the local residents’ perceptions of these impacts correspond to reality.

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