

The Construction of Place Citizenship Behaviour: From a Resident Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims to establish a conceptual framework for the formation of place citizenship behaviour from a resident perspective. A four-step destination place citizenship behaviour construction model is developed and place attachment is argued to be the key construct influencing the residents of a place to generate place citizenship behaviour, such as word-of-mouth (WOM) etc. Place brand communication and place satisfaction are also identified as significant determinants of place attachment in the model. The research not only highlights the importance of resident behaviour in destination branding research, but also provides implications for destination marketing organization (DMO) managers to enhance their destination brands through both internal and external branding.

Keywords: Place brand, resident, place attachment, place citizenship behaviour

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Introduction

In the past decades, the topic of branding has been widely applied in the tourism context (Govers & Go, 2009; Hankinson, 2006; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2010; etc). It is stated that place or destination brands (hereby abbreviated as place brands) pervade all aspects of tourism products and services, tourist behaviour, and destination image (Choo & Park, 2009). Destination brand image is crucial since it affects tourism consumer's subjective perception and behaviour and ultimate destination choice (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002). On the other hand, destination brand building is the first and most important step in implementing effective competitive strategies for the destination (Go & Govers, 2000; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Dwyer et al., 2004; 2009). Since destination image can crucially affect a tourist's travel decision, destination branding is critical for a destination to be identified and differentiated from alternatives in the minds of its target consumers (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2010).

As a result of the development of web 2.0 and social media, anyone, not least consumers, can produce, communicate, and evaluate information on tourism products and services, as well as destination images. Therefore, the traditional strategy for destinations or DMOs to simply promote their destination brands by projecting advertisements or documentaries has gone forever. User-generated content (UGC) "which refers to content created by consumers on blogs, discussion boards, forums, user groups and other social media platforms, publicly available" (Cetinkaya, 2010), is playing more important role in influencing tourists' destination image creation, and further destination decision making than ever.

Under the new circumstance, potential tourists tend to integrate the opinions and advices from experienced consumers, experts, as well as destination residents into their destination decision making process. It is indicated that word of mouth (WOM) communications are more credible than promotions or advertisements (Gremler, Gwinner, & Brown, 2001; Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008) and WOM can significantly affect tourists' destination choices (Gitleson & Crompton, 1984; Nolan, 1976; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). Therefore, WOM or UGC generated by residents can possibly be more, at least not less, effective than that from other sources.

Consequently, the study aims to construct a conceptual framework on how and why residents generate behaviours which can promote the place brand, such as positive WOM, retention, etc, no matter the behaviours are intentional or unintentional. Key constructs in the model are defined and discussed. Managerial implications for destinations and DMOs are further discussed.

Place Brand and Residents

The topic of branding has been widely discussed in the tourism context, Kerr (2006) defines place brand as the *"name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the place, which conveys the promise of a memorable life or travel experience that is uniquely associated with the place, and serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of experience in this place"*. From the DMO's perspective, to brand a place is to select a consistent element mix to identify and distinguish a

place through positive image building based on its actual geographic name of this place (Cai, 2002). Concerning the residents, while many researchers and tourism stakeholders hold the view that a place or destination can be branded in a way comparable to the brand of other products and services (Tasci & Kozak, 2006; Cai, 2002; Morgan et al, 2004; Wagner et al, 2009), it cannot be stated that residents or stakeholders would consider the place they live in as a “brand” as of any product or service. This is one important reason why the transfer of product branding to place branding simply does not work. However the mechanism residents receive, process, and integrate information of the place is similar to that of a brand, where the theory of branding can be applied in some way.

The role of residents in destination branding has rarely been studied (Choo & Park, 2009), although a lot of research on destination image considers local population as an important part in constructing their conceptual frameworks (Sainaghi, 2006; Hankinson, 2001; 2004; 2006; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie; 2005; Pike, 2005; 2009; Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2009). Local people from a destination are experienced consumers who benefit from tourism by receiving economic assistance or participating in the activities of the destination (Choo & Park, 2009). On the other hand, it is indicated that destination brand is created by DMOs and destination stakeholders jointly, and destination stakeholders’ performance can largely influence tourists’ interpretation of the destination brand. Merrilees et al (2007)’s research supports this point of view, that residents are both resident and tourist within their own environment.

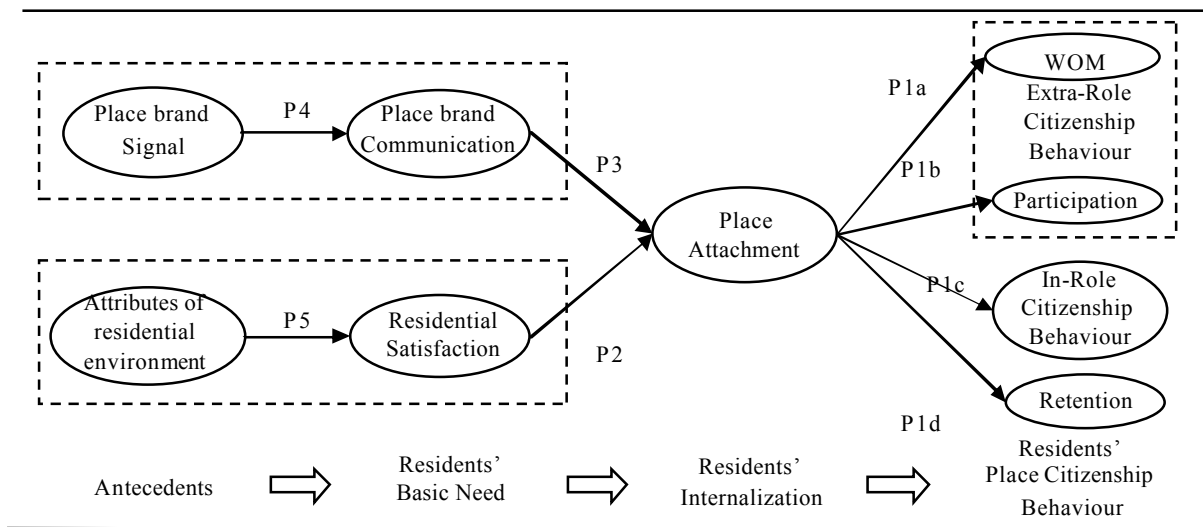
However, theories of internal branding cannot simply apply to a destination because local residents as important tourism stakeholders are at most just passively involved in destination management. Therefore, it is essential to understand how residents recognize, understand, and identify their destination as a brand (Choo & Park, 2009), and further how their voluntary brand building behaviours are motivated and generated.

Place Citizenship Behaviour Formation: the Model

The primary question of interest is to understand the nature of residents in generating behaviours which can promote the place brand, such as positive WOM, retention, etc, no matter the behaviours are intentional or unintentional. In this study, all these behaviours (intentional and unintentional) which can contribute to the place brand is defined as *place citizenship behaviour*. The conceptual model and relevant propositions are proposed in this section. Accordingly, the conceptual model of this study is proposed in Figure 1.

Residents’ place citizenship behaviour. There is a common belief on resident, indicating that residents are people from the host community of a destination (Pearce, 1980; Ap, 1990; 1992; etc.). In this study, the definition of resident is extended to more general population who currently live in the target destination, including original citizens, immigrants, long-term visitors, international students and workers, and so on. By different dimensions, the residents can be divided into natives and non-natives (Hernandez et al, 2007), or recent arrivals and long term (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). It is indicated that tourist destinations would benefit if residents and experienced tourists serve as goodwill ambassadors, advocating the destinations to their friends and families (Simpson & Sigauw, 2008). This is consistent with research on internal brand building behaviours which considers stakeholders and employees as brand ambassadors who transform brand vision into brand reality (VanAuken, 2003; Berry, 2000). Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak (2009) indicate that brand citizenship behaviours can be classified into: retention, in-role citizenship behaviour, and extra-role citizenship behaviour.

Figure 1: Four-stage Place Citizenship Behaviour Formation Process.



Retention, which refers to “employees’ upholding their professional relationship with the corporate brand” (Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2009), can be extended to residents’ upholding their residing relationship with the target destination in the context of tourism. In-role citizenship behaviour, in the context of tourism destination, refers to residents’ role as destination representatives. Extra-role brand citizenship behaviour refers to employee actions that are discretionary and generated individually by the employees themselves (Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2009). In the context of tourism destination, extra-role destination citizenship behaviour can be categorized as tourism service participation and WOM. Positive WOM is becoming the most powerful form of marketing in the new age (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). It is as well advocated that WOM is more credible because the generator is not seen as having direct profit in selling the recommended product or service (Herr et al, 1991; Murray, 1991; Silverman, 2001). In addition, WOM is particularly important in a service context as tourism, because services are intangible and difficult to evaluate before purchase (Mazzarol, Sweeney, & Soutar, 2007).

Place attachment. A variety of disciplines have shown their interests in understanding the attachments that people form with places, such as sociology emphasizes how the symbolic meanings of place influence human interactions (Grieder & Garkovich, 1994); Human geography has explored the concept of “sense of place” (Relph, 1997); environmental psychology develops the construct of place attachment (Altman and Low, 1992), which refers to “a positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place” (Williams & Vaske, 2003). Extant research on place attachment considers the human-place bond in terms of two components: place identity and place dependence (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Williams & Vaske, 2003). Place identity is conceptualized in terms of the cognitive connection between the self and the physical environment (Proshansky, 1978), and Proshansky defined it as “those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideals, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment” (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005). On the other hand, place dependence refers to “the importance of a place in providing features and conditions that support specific goals or desired activities” (Schreyer et al., 1981; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Williams & Vaske, 2003). In the context of tourism, customer loyalty is not a sufficient construct as place attachment, since

residents/tourists' experience in the target destination does not involve merely the tourism product purchase, but also the interaction and generated bonding between residents/tourists and the place. Similarly indicated as customer loyalty which can lead to customers brand building behaviours, propositions establishing the causal relationships between place attachment and different brand building behaviours are as follow:

P1a: Greater place attachment increases residents' positive word of mouth.

P1b: Greater place attachment increases residents' participation in tourism activities.

P1c: Greater place attachment increases residents' destination ambassador behaviour.

P1d: Greater place attachment increases residents' retention to the destination.

Place satisfaction. The concept of consumer satisfaction occupies a central position in marketing, which is a major outcome of marketing activity and links to post purchase activities such as attitude change, repeat purchase, and brand loyalty (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). According to Churchill and Surprenant (1982), consumer satisfaction is defined as "an outcome of purchase and use resulting from the buyer's comparison of the rewards and costs of the purchase in relation to the anticipated consequences". On the other hand, in psychology, Shin and Johnson (1978) define life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria" (cited in Diener et al., 1985). Satisfaction to places, based on the discussion, cannot be simply drawn equal to either consumer satisfaction or life satisfaction. Accordingly, place satisfaction can be defined as residents' subjective evaluation of benefits across the rich bundle of goods and services during the residential "life cycle" in the particular place, including public service, community experience, and so on. As indicated by Low and Altman (1992), physical space is called as a place when "personal, group, or cultural processes have been given meaning through it" (cited in Insch & Florek, 2008). Place satisfaction depends on social and physical resources within residential environments and can result in residents' attachment, which is indicated as loyalty in marketing terminology (Insch & Florek, 2008), to the place (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Shumaker and Taylor (1983) state a strong positive relationship between satisfaction and attachment in the context of marketing. Hereby, proposition regarding place satisfaction and place attachment is as follow:

P2: Greater place satisfaction increases residents' place attachment.

Place brand communication. Place brand communication is considered as a measurement of residents' psychological need to the residential place, and it can reflect residents' overall evaluation of a place. In the context of service, place brand communication consists of controlled place communications, uncontrolled communications, and place names (Grace & O'Class, 2005). The concept of controlled communication is studied as an outcome of effective advertising, while uncontrolled communication such as WOM and non-paid publicity may be an even stronger influence on a consumer's attitude to the subject (Swanson & Kelley, 2001). In addition, due to that place name is usually fixed for years, it stands for meanings which can hardly be influenced by either controlled communication or uncontrolled communication. Moreover, brand communication is indicated to play an important role in the brand management as well (Grace & O'Class, 2005). Furthermore, based on communication, resident perceptions on the place are critical in the place image, which are important from both supply and demand side (Phillips & Schofield, 2007). Usually it is advocated that place communication has a positive influence on the commitment between the residents and the place. Hereby, the proposition regarding place communication and place attachment is as follows:

P3: Greater place communication increases residents' place attachment.

Place brand communication formation process. This process is on the whole based on existing conceptualisations of customer-based brand equity. Given that residents have access to both internal and external branding information of the destination, their perceptions on how clarified and credible the place branding information is can largely influence their brand communication of the destination. Erdem and Swait (1998) indicate that the unambiguity of information conveyed by the brand's marketing efforts determine the clarity of a brand. Buss (2002) argues that the credibility of a proposed brand affects expectations and subsequent evaluations in the internal experience. On the other hand, brand consistency has a substantial influence on brand equity as well (Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2006). Since all products and services and other aspects of a destination are accessible for them, residents' perception on the destination is formed as or even before the destination's internal branding efforts. Thus internal place brand signals such as place brand clarity, credibility, as well as consistency are possible antecedents for residents' place brand communication. Thus, hypotheses regarding brand salience formation are as follows:

P4a: Greater place brand clarity increases residents' place brand communication.

P4b: Greater place brand credibility increases residents' place brand communication.

P4c: Greater place brand consistency increases residents' place brand communication.

Place satisfaction formation process. There is a bunch of research done in the topic of satisfaction in marketing since 1960s. Insch and Florek (2008) present a model of city resident place satisfaction by reviewing prior definitions and conceptualizations of the related concepts of quality and value. Perceived quality, residents' expectations, and perceived value are three antecedents of place satisfaction. Hereby, propositions regarding place satisfaction formation are as follows:

P5a: Greater perceived quality increases residents' place satisfaction.

P5b: Greater residents' expectations increase residents' place satisfaction.

P5c: Greater perceived value increases residents' place satisfaction.

Conclusion and Further Research

By proposing a conceptual model to explain how residents perceive their destination brand and how their brand building behaviours are motivated, the paper provides a better understanding of residents' roles in destination branding based on knowledge of branding, social psychology, environment psychology, consumer behaviour. Further empirical research is required to test the conceptual model, and relevant moderating effects are as well required to be discussed in the current stage of information technology and transnational connections.

Results of the research will contribute to tourism knowledge in different ways. First, the research proposes a conceptual model on how residents perceive their place and how their citizenship behaviours such as WOM are motivated. This provides a better understanding of residents' roles in place branding. Second, the research analyses different constructs such as place attachment, place satisfaction, place brand communication, and their effects on brand behaviour such as WOM, place retention, and so on within a tourism context. The results can offer insight regarding the under researched domain of triggers of place citizenship behaviour in a tourism context and suggest methods to better understand the intrinsic features of this sort of behaviour. Third, the study assists in filling the void in the literature regarding the role residents in place branding to learn how they can influence potential consumers of their destinations.

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