

# Residents' Place Image: A Meaningful Psychographic Variable for Tourism Segmentation?

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*Abstract:* While there has been a considerable body of research on tourists' place image, there remains limited attention on residents' place image, specifically, in relation to its segmentation utility. This study seeks to address this oversight by a) clustering the local residents based on the image held of a tourism place, and b) exploring the extent to which the identified image-based resident clusters share similar (dissimilar) demographic characteristics and attitude towards tourism development. Empirical analysis was based on a sample of 481 residents of a Greek city. The findings support the utility of residents' place image as a psychographic segmentation variable revealing the existence of three distinct resident groups - termed "Nature Loving", "Apathetic" and "Advocate." Results also suggest that these resident groups exhibit dissimilar demographic characteristics and dissimilar attitude towards tourism. In comparison with other segments, the *Apathetic* exhibits the least favourable image and the least supportive attitude towards tourism.

*Keywords:* Place image; Psychographic segmentation; Attitudes towards tourism; Support for tourism; Local residents

## **1. Introduction**

A tourism place needs to actively and constantly engage with its stakeholders (i.e., tourists, investors) for reasons such as developing positive image to entice visitors, securing funding from relevant institutions for tourism development activities, and seeking support from local residents related to tourism development projects (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Elliot, Papadopoulos & Kim, 2010; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter & Hou, 2007). More specifically, the local council of a tourism place communicates with local residents to solicit their endorsement for tourism-related development activities, instil community pride, and strengthen their attachment to the place (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). An understanding of the place image perceived by its local residents has been reported to be pertinent to the successful development and marketing activities of a tourism place (Stylidis, Belhassen & Shani, 2015). Failing to gauge the residents' perceptions of place image can have negative implications including resentment towards the tourism industry and opposition towards the proposed plans (Bandyopadhyay & Morraais, 2005).

Whilst there have been an ample of studies on place image from a tourist perspective, there is only a handful of studies on this concept from other stakeholders' perspectives such as local residents (Stylidis et al., 2015). Hence, some gaps exist in the body of knowledge related to the local residents' perceptions of a tourism place image and one of them relates to its utility as a psychographic segmentation variable. The extent to which the local residents of a tourism place can be clustered into meaningful homogeneous groups represents a prudent knowledge for achieving several benefits such as the economy of scale and efficiency of marketing activities targeted at the local residents. That is, the existence (or non-existence) of homogeneous resident groups within a tourism place can help to inform relevant institutes (e.g., the local council and marketing agencies) whether mass, undifferentiated or

differentiated marketing strategies should be employed (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Hu, 2015). Unlike other stakeholders (e.g., visitors), the relationships of the local residents with a tourism place are more complex and intricate in nature. That is, a tourism place serves as more than a holiday destination - but as a multipurpose community hub - where the local residents live, work, bring up a family, and establish social networks (Green, 2005; Hudson, 1988). As such, an understanding of residents' place image and its utility as a psychographic segmentation variable can insightfully inform the development and implementation of marketing activities pertinent to local residents.

The present study aims to investigate the utility of residents' place image as a psychographic segmentation variable. The investigation consists of three related objectives: a) determine the extent to which local residents can be clustered into meaningful homogenous groups based on their perceptions of place image; b) establish the extent to which the identified resident clusters share similar (dissimilar) attitudes toward tourism; and iii) determine the extent to which the identified resident clusters share similar (dissimilar) demographic characteristics. The knowledge provided by this research will advance the body of knowledge related to residents' place image in three ways whereby it: 1) establishes the utility of residents' place image as a psychographic segmentation variable based on a meaningful list of place image attributes; 2) corroborates the linkage of residents' place image with residents' attitudes towards tourism; and 3) proposes marketing strategies appropriate for targeting the various resident clusters within a tourism place.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Tourism Studies on Psychographic Segmentation***

Market segmentation represents a prominent concept in both academic studies and business practices (Wedel & Kamakura, 2000), which involves dividing a mass market into smaller homogeneous consumer groups based on selected variables (e.g., preferences, perceived attributes, demographics and/or psychographics) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Li, Meng, Uysal & Mihalik, 2013). Psychographic segmentation represents a segmentation approach that has been adopted widely by tourism studies, involving the practice of dividing groups via certain psychological traits (e.g., personality, attitudes or perceptions) (Armstrong, Kotler, Harker & Brennan, 2009; Davis, Allen & Cosenza, 1988). It has been favoured by tourism scholars because it delves into the cognitive, affective and behavioural facets of tourists or visitors (Dolnicar, 2004).

Tourism studies on psychographic segmentation have frequently focused on the tourists as the unit of analysis and two tenable explanations include that: i) they play the role of ‘revenue contributor’ who is influential to the economic health of a destination place; and ii) the backgrounds of tourists visiting a destination place are usually diverse and thus psychographic segmentation is necessary to categorise and decode their visiting motives and aspirations in order to inform the development and implementation of target marketing activities (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Only a handful of tourism studies have devoted attention to the psychographic segmentation of non-tourist stakeholders such as local residents (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy & Vieregge, 2015; Vareiro, Remoaldo & Ribeiro, 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Hu, 2015; Weaver & Lawton, 2013; Williams & Lawson, 2001). These studies tend to focus on residents’ attitude (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Davis, Allen & Cosenza,

1988; Weaver & Lawton, 2013) despite the existence of other psychographic variables such as residents' place identity (Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Hu, 2015) and residents' place image (Stylidis, Belhassen, & Shani 2015).

### *2.1.1 Residents' attitudes towards tourism*

An attitude generally refers to a lasting general evaluation that people have in relation to an object or an issue. Accordingly, in the tourism context, residents' attitude reflects a state of mind or disposition of the local residents in relation to a tourism destination. It is typically composed of thinking, feeling and behaving functions (Solomon et al., 2013). The popularity of residents' attitude as a psychographic segmentation variable can be attributed to the growing interest amongst tourism academics and practitioners in monitoring and managing the perceptions and reactions of the host community with respect to economic, social and environmental impacts (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Weaver & Lawton, 2013).

Previous studies that used residents' attitude to segment the host community, reported the existence of resident groups with varied responses to tourism (e.g., McDowall & Choi, 2010; Ribeiro, Pinto, Silva & Woosnam, 2017; Wang & Xu, 2015; Weaver & Lawton, 2013; Zuo, Gursoy & Wall, 2017). For example, Weaver and Lawton (2013) used cluster analysis (on 31 items) and identified several groups of residents with common attitudes toward tourism, termed 'supporters', 'conditional supporters', 'conditional opponents' and 'opponents'. Similarly, based on 14 attitude-based items, Vareiro et al. (2013) identified three clusters of residents termed 'sceptics', 'moderately optimistic' and 'enthusiasts'. Andriotis and Vaughan (2003) also identified the existence of two distinctive resident segments that displayed varied responses to tourism development activities. They were labelled as 'advocates' and 'haters', whereby the former group tended to favour tourism development activities for economic

reasons and the latter group tended to oppose tourism development activities for environmental reasons. Sinclair-Maragh et al. (2015) grouped residents based on their specific concerns about tourism development and identified four clusters termed: 'public service and environment focused,' 'community focused,' 'community public service,' and 'inconsequential.' The cluster solutions demonstrated groups of residents that are either concerned about one particular issue (community focused) or a combination of issues (public service and environment focused). Previous findings as such indicate that various groups of residents exist within a community with different behavioural patterns, reinforcing the necessity to segment local residents into smaller homogeneous groups for marketing effectiveness.

Residents' attitude has been typically measured based on economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. More specifically, economic impact focuses on the extent to which tourism activities or programs increase the employment and standard of living of the host community, support infrastructure development, generate income for local councils and communities, and entice new investment opportunities (e.g., McDowall & Choi, 2010; Ribeiro, Pinto, Silva & Woosnam, 2017; Wang & Xu, 2015; Zuo et al., 2017). Socio-cultural impact examines a range of benefits related to inter-cultural understanding, increased cohesion and community spirit among the locals, provision of recreational, entertainment and shopping opportunities, and preservation of the local culture (e.g., McDowall & Choi, 2010; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Terzidou, Stylidis & Szivas, 2008; Zuo et al., 2017). Socio-cultural impact may also include increased crime rates and social problems such as prostitution and alcoholism (e.g., Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma & Carter, 2007; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar & Ramayah, 2017; Wang & Xu, 2015). Environmental impact

involves issues such as environmental pollution, traffic, crowding, and noise (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Ribeiro et al., 2017; Wang & Chen, 2015).

## ***2.2 Residents' Place Image***

Place image broadly refers to the sum of cognitive beliefs or ideas people hold of a place (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993). It is a mental construct derived from a number of impressions about a place, and thus is characterised as a psychographic segmentation variable (Davis et al., 1988; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). When compared with the tourists, the local residents are purported to have deeper connections with a tourism place, be more cognizant of and be more affected by the impacts that tourism development programs or activities might have on that place (Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006; Jutla, 2000; Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou & Apostolopoulou, 2015; Reiser & Crispin, 2009; Stylidis et al., 2015). Local residents will have a deeper understanding since their experience with the destination encompasses many activities and happens daily (Papadimitriou et al., 2015) and are also able to provide a mix of cognitive and affective images, interrelating different tourism resources and adding advice about the city's offerings online (Tamajon & Valiente, 2017). Accordingly, the collective image that the local residents have about the tourism place, also known as residents' place image, can be insightful to examine the shared vision and concerns pertinent to the host community (Stylidis, Shani & Belhassen, 2017; Wang & Xu, 2015). As the former President of the United States, Barack Obama (2016) stated 'our stories are singular, but our destiny is shared.' The local residents of a tourism destination can be inspired to work together to build a more sustainable community with respect to its economic, social and environmental well-beings. Merrilees, Miller, and Herington (2009) supported the co-creation of a sustainable community by considering the diverse positive and negative 'ingredients'

constituting the residents' place image such as social bonds, creative business, safety, nature and cultural activities.

Residents' place image is related to but also distinct from residents' attitude and residents' place identity. In comparison to residents' attitude, residents' place image is deemed to be more dynamic and specific in nature. Residents' attitude relates to a lasting general evaluation of a tourism place and can be a breadth of factors influencing this evaluation. A main interest of the present study lies in studying the residents' perceptions pertinent to a tourism place. Hence, residents' attitude may be less focused as a segmentation variable when a study seeks to primarily investigate the mind-set of the local residents related to a tourism place (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). In comparison with residents' place identity, place image is deemed to be more expressive and less intruding in nature. Residents' place identity generally focuses on psychological and emotional traits, such as distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy, which the local residents may find challenging to articulate or unwilling to share with others (Breakwell, 1986; Wang & Chen, 2015; Wang & Xu, 2015). Residents' place image tend to focus on functional and experiential attributes which local residents can easily relate to and/or gladly to share their opinions about them (Stylidis et al., 2015).

Despite their distinction, residents' place image has been purported to be related to residents' attitude towards tourism. More specifically, previous studies revealed that residents' place image positively affects residents' attitude towards tourism (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Schroeder, 1996). For example, Ramkissoon and Nunkoo (2011) reported that residents with more positive place images were exhibiting more positive attitudes towards tourism. Bramwell and Rawding (1996) also noted that local residents were likely to oppose tourism



development activities that delivered “standardized placeless images” (p.203); however, they were more likely to support development efforts that promoted the heritage of the place pertaining to its culture and inhabitants. Additionally, Papadimitriou et al. (2015) found that the propensity of local residents to recommend the destination for visitation to others rely on their perceptions of that destination (i.e., services, amenities, and attractions). This is of importance to destinations, as residents were found to be posting the majority of comments on TripAdvisor as compared to tourists in the study of Tamajon and Valiente (2017) in Barcelona. Lastly, Schroeder (1996) reported that residents who held a more positive image were more likely to recommend North Dakota as a place to visit, and more likely to undertake more trips around the area.

Whilst the concept of residents’ place image has been examined in extant literature, there is hardly any investigation into the utility or meaningfulness of residents’ place image as a psychographic segmentation variable. By establishing residents’ place image as a segmentation variable this study assists in: a) discovering the vested interests and/or implicit concerns that the local residents may have for the tourism place at both the individual and collective levels; b) appealing the interests and/or addressing the concerns pertinent to the local residents to revive their place image and secure their support for tourism development programs (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011); and c) applying the knowledge in designing and implementing marketing activities targeted at the local residents of a tourism place (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Reiser & Crispin, 2009).

### **3. Methodology**

Three strategic areas were considered when deciding the methodology for the present study: setting, sample, and questionnaire design.

#### ***3.1 Setting***

The city of Kavala, Greece was chosen as the study context because of its recent economic and social development (port expansion, privatization of a public beach for resort development), which is likely to have a significant impact on residents' image of the city and on their living and working conditions. Kavala (population 55,325) has a rich history that dates back to the 7th century B.C., and is well known for serving as the starting point of Christianity in Europe. The 51 hotels provide 3159 hotel beds and the average duration of tourists' stay is eight days. The average hotel occupancy stood to 38% in 2011 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2012). Kavala offers various tourism activities, from beaches and thermal baths to cultural festivals, an UNESCO World Heritage Site and religious tourism. Kavala is a part of the international religious tourism route tracking the footsteps of St Paul and provides attractive infrastructure to large cruise ships, attributed to the substantial investment in the religious and cruise tourism sector by the local council of Kavala in the past few years.

#### ***3.2 Sample***

The target population was defined as any Kavala permanent resident (more than one year residency) that was aged 18 years or over. A multi-stage sampling strategy was used because: i) a database recording the contact details of all residents in Kavala was not available at the time of data collection, and ii) a diverse sample consisting of the residents from various suburbs in Kavala was deemed necessary to ensure a balanced representation of the target

population (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). More specifically, based on the work of Woosnam and Norman (2010), the multi-stage sampling involved four stages: clustering the residential addresses of Kavala into five major districts based on the postcode list provided by the local post office; selecting ten random street names from each of the five major districts; generating a total of fifty (5 x 10) street names; and, finally, systematically approaching every fifth household from the pre-selected streets to complete the survey. Given its self-completion nature, the survey was hand-delivered to 650 randomly selected households. Only one member from each household was invited to complete the survey in order to avoid duplication of similar views or dominance of views from the same household (Andriotis, 2005). The survey was administered and collected on the spot over a two-month period and alternated between weekdays and weekends to minimize sampling bias (Bonn, Joseph & Dai, 2005). A total of 418 usable surveys were collected and produced a response rate of 77 percent; which could be credited to easy-to-complete and concise nature of the survey and the face-to-face data collection approach (Czaja & Blair, 2005).

### ***3.3 Survey Design***

The survey comprised three main sections. The first section measured residents' place image on fourteen attributes, via a 5-point agreement scale, and were sourced from the extant literature of residents' place image (e.g., Henkel et al., 2006; Schroeder, 1996; Sterquist-Witter, 1985) and destination image (e.g., Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002; Hankinson, 2004; Merrilees et al., 2009). Attention was also given to attributes used in place and city image literature (Hankinson, 2004; Merrilees et al., 2009; Santos, Martins, & Brito, 2007). The selection of the relevant attributes was based on several criteria. First, given a variety of attributes available in the literature, attention was given to "universal attributes" (e.g., public

services, safety), excluding attributes which may not be suitable to Kavala as the context and/or to the local residents as the unit of analysis (i.e., availability of golf facilities). Second, emphasis was given to attributes that measured the residents' intricate and multifaceted connection with the place (i.e. a place to live and work as well as a tourism and recreational place). These attributes included, for example, friendly neighbourhood, shopping, job opportunities, community services. Lastly, functional or manageable attributes were also considered because they were pertinent to the development and management of Kavala as a tourism destination (Green, 1999).

The second section focused on residents' perceived economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts related to tourism, as well as level of support for tourism development activities. Each perceived impact dimension was measured on between four and six attributes via a 5-point bipolar scale (1=strong negative and 5=strong positive) (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005; Ap & Crompton, 1998; Deccio & Baloglu, 2002). Residents' support for tourism development was measured with three attributes (i.e., general support for tourism development, support for public funding of tourism development, increase in the volume of tourists to the city) on a five-point agreement scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree), sourced from the extant literature (Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Latkova & Vogt, 2012; McGehee & Andereck, 2004).

The third and final section of the survey collected the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, etc.) of Kavala residents. Guided by the blind translation-back-translation method (Brislin, 1976), the survey was written originally in English and then translated into Greek. To check the clarity of the survey, a pilot test was conducted with 65 randomly selected Kavala residents and only a few minor wording issues were identified and subsequently corrected.

## **4. Results**

### ***4.1 Participants' Profile***

Male (n= 225, 47%) and female (n=254, 53%) were almost equally represented in the sample (Table 1). Residents aged over 65 years represented the largest group in the sample, followed by the age group of 25-34. Most of the participants surveyed in the study have been living in Kavala for over 20 years (68%, n=322). In terms of income, most respondents reported earning less than 20,000€. Comparing the sample population with the city's population, it can be noted that the participants of this study are a close representation of Kavala's population as reported in 2011 census in terms of their gender, age and household income (see Table 1).

[Table 1 About Here]

### ***4.2 Two-stage Cluster Analysis***

Drawn on the process adopted by Hosany and Prayag (2013), a two-stage cluster analysis was conducted on the fourteen place image attributes to segment the Kavala participants. More specifically, the process involved, firstly, a hierarchical cluster analysis to identify a set of cluster solutions and, secondly, a non-hierarchical cluster analysis to confirm the results (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). With respect to the hierarchical cluster analysis, the Ward's method with squared Euclidean distances was applied to test two-, three-, four- and five-cluster solutions and revealed that the three-cluster solution offered the most meaningful and interpretable results. With respect to the non-hierarchical analysis, K-mean algorithm was used to also test two-, three-, four- and five-cluster solutions and reached a similar conclusion as the hierarchical cluster analysis did. Accordingly, a three-cluster solution was accepted as the basis for segmenting the Kavala participants recruited for the present study. The discriminant validity between the three resident segments was further checked via

discriminant analysis, whereby the two canonical discriminant functions extracted were significant at the .001 level, canonical correlations were high, and the hit ratio was also high and significant (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 summarises the results of the discriminant analysis.

[Table 2 About Here]

The largest cluster ( $n=205$ , 43%) was made up of Kavala residents who had the least favourable image about job opportunities, local government, transportation system, and nightlife and shopping venues available in the city (Table 3). They nevertheless, held favourable images of Kavala about the pleasant weather, attractive scenery and surrounding safety. This resident cluster is, therefore, labelled as the “Nature Loving.” The second largest cluster ( $n=145$ , 30%) consisted of the Kavala residents that had the least favourable mental picture of almost all place image attributes such as the job opportunities, local government, transportation system, friendly neighbourhood, nightlife and shopping venues, local safety, and the historical sites available in the city. They perceived good restaurants, pleasant weather and attractive scenery to be just about positive and were labelled as the “Apathetic.” Several interrelated reasons may have contributed to the existence of the *Apathetic* resident group in Kavala: i) the economy crisis has dimmed their outlook of the city’s future growth or prosperity, ii) frustrations about the higher taxes imposed by the local government to improve the budget, iii) the local government cut back on local spending to save costs, and iv) experiencing significant changes in their lives (e.g. retirement and modified income). The third cluster ( $n=131$ , 27%) was represented by the Kavala residents who had the most favourable or positive prospect of all image attributes. This cluster was thus labelled as the “Advocate.”

[Table 3 About Here]

#### ***4.3 Demographic Profile of Resident Clusters***

The three clusters were profiled using four demographic variables, namely, age, marital status, income and number of years living in the city, and the results are presented in Table 4. Cross-tab analysis revealed gender and age differences between the three resident clusters. With respect to gender composition, the *Apathetic* cluster consisted of more males (55.6%) and more senior residents (aged 55 years and above) (36.6%). On the other hand, the *Nature Loving* and *Advocate* clusters consistently comprised more females (58.5% and 53.8% respectively) and more middle-aged residents (between 35 and 54 years) (33.6% and 38.2% respectively).

[Table 4 About Here]

#### ***4.4 Linking Residents' Place Image to Attitude towards Tourism***

ANOVA followed by Tukey's post-hoc test was then conducted to determine the extent to which attitude toward tourism varied between the three identified clusters. In line with previous studies (Ribeiro et al., 2017; Zuo et al., 2017) attitude towards tourism was operationalised by three types of tourism impacts relevant to Kavala (Table 5) and by the level of support for development activities (Table 6). The three impact types were converted into three composite variables (based on mean scores) for more meaningful analysis. This approach is commonly applied to lessen the complexity of multi-level analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Given that the sizes of the clusters are not equal, the Games-Howell test was used in the post-hoc analysis, as it is the most powerful and accurate in such cases (Field, 2013). The tests showed significant differences between the three resident clusters across the three types of impacts examined. The *Advocate and Nature Loving* displayed more positive perceptions

of the economic and socio-cultural impacts inducted by Kavala tourism and were more supportive of tourism activities. Unsurprisingly, the *Apathetic* had least positive perceptions of tourism impacts and was less supportive of tourism development activities.

[Table 5 About Here]

[Table 6 About Here]



## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to analyse the concept of residents' place image, specifically, its utility or meaningfulness as a psychographic segmentation variable. Consistent with previous segmentation studies on other psychographic variables (e.g., residents' attitude and residents' place identity), residents' place image is also postulated as a psychographic segmentation variable because it examines the mental picture that the local residents hold of a tourism place (section 2.1). Whilst they may be related, residents' place image is different from residents' attitude and residents' place identity, given that place image is more focused and easier to articulate than the other two resident-oriented psychographic variables (see section 2.2).

The present study establishes the utility of residents' place image as a psychographic segmentation variable by identifying three distinct resident groups: the *Nature Loving*; the *Apathetic*; and the *Advocate*. In particular, two resident groups consistently show a stronger appreciation of the natural landscapes and built architecture of Kavala, namely, the *Nature Loving* and the *Advocate*. They also consistently appreciate the importance of an aesthetically appealing environment contributing to a more pleasant life (Florida, Mellander & Stolarick, 2011; Schroeder, 1996). With respect to local amenities (e.g., restaurants, nightlife activities, and shopping outlets), quite surprisingly, only the *Advocate* seem to appreciate these place attributes. The *Advocate* also perceives the social environment of Kavala more positively than the other two resident segments. This finding contributes to the extant literature by suggesting that the perceived importance of social environment goes beyond the visitors and is also applicable to the local residents of a tourism place (Chi & Qu, 2008). In comparison with the other counterparts, the *Apathetic* resident exhibits lower positive image of the entertainment activities available in the city. This finding is of importance considering the extant literature

which has reported that the entertainment activities of a tourism destination add value to the visitor experience and to the perceived wellbeing of the local residents (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin et al., 2007).

The present study also establishes that these three resident groups exhibit dissimilar attitudes toward tourism, specifically, in terms of tourism impacts and support for development activities. The *Nature Loving* and the *Advocate* who were found to hold more favourable image of the tourism place will show more positive attitude towards tourism impacts and are more likely to support development activities. This finding provides further support for the positive link between residents' place image and residents' attitude toward tourism (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Schroeder, 1996). For example, Ramkissoon and Nunkoo (2011) reported that residents with more favourable place images displayed greater support for tourism development. Similarly, Devine-Wright and Howes (2010) reported that residents were likely to support (oppose) a tourism developmental plan that fit (unfit) with their place image. In the present study, the *Advocate* exhibits the highest level of support for tourism development activities as they have the most positive image of Kavala. The *Nature Loving* appears to be somewhat selective and will be supportive of tourism development activities that enhance the aesthetic dimension of Kavala. This can be attributed to their positive evaluation of the natural landscapes and architectural aesthetics of the city.

It may be easy to discount the importance of the *Apathetic* residents because of their less positive image of Kavala. However, they represent the second largest resident group in the present study, comprised of mainly senior residents who are aged 55 years or over. The tourism literature (see Wang & Pfister, 2008) has indicated that senior residents tend to

perceive fewer benefits from tourism development activities (e.g., recreational opportunities and special events) because they have different expectations in terms of social life and/or they may be experiencing major changes in their lives (e.g., modified income or deteriorating health). Considering their less positive place image together with their demographic background, the *Apathetic* represents a unique group which tourism developers and marketers can target to ensure the greater success of a tourism plan. By addressing the special requirements and expectations of older residents place managers will revive place image and secure their support for tourism activities (see Wang & Pfister, 2008).

## **6. Implications to Theory and Practice**

The present study contributes to the extant literature on place image and tourism segmentation on two grounds. First, the study examines the place image concept from a resident perspective and validates residents' place image as a meaningful psychographic segmentation variable. It supports the role of residents in place image research, especially, its significance to tourism marketing and planning process (Murphy, 1985) and its sustainable approach to place marketing. Second, the present study identifies three distinct resident groups who demonstrate varied attitudes toward tourism, specifically, with respect to tourism impacts and levels of support for tourism development. That is, not only does residents' place image represent a meaningful segmentation variable, it also represents a meaningful variable for analysing the host community's support for tourism programs. The present study as such responds to the call from Vargas-Sanchez, Plaza-Mejia, and Porras-Bueno (2009) and Weaver and Lawton (2013) to identify new intrinsic variables, like place image, that condition the attitudes of stakeholders toward tourism.

Apart from the theoretical contributions, this study also provides a number of practical implications for local authorities, holiday-place marketers and tourism planners. First, it offers local authorities with an insightful and valid approach to identify the existence of distinct resident groups who exhibit dissimilar attitudes towards tourism development projects. Second, the segmentation approach based on residents' place image can also assist place marketers in diagnosing the favourable and unfavourable image that the local community has with respect to a holiday destination and, in turn, develop appropriate marketing strategies to sustain their favourable image and/or minimize unfavourable image. The segmentation approach can also help place marketers in re-imaging (re-branding) a holiday destination by tapping into the local knowledge of its community (Reiser & Crispin

2009). For instance, a marketing message featuring the local residents narrating the unique characteristics, or clarifying the misconceptions, of a tourism place can be effective in appealing its target audience, as exemplified by the Visit California campaign ([www.visitcalifornia.com/uk](http://www.visitcalifornia.com/uk)). Third and final, segmentation based on residents' place image can assist tourism planners to determine how to approach the varied resident groups and seek support and/or manage protestation based on the nature of a development project (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). For example, the present study indicates that the *Nature Loving* group is most likely to support development projects that conserve or enrich the natural environmental and architectural setting of Kavala. The *Apathetic* group, despite their gloomy outlook of Kavala, is likely to support development projects that improve the gastronomy and entertainment experiences in the city.

## **7. Limitations and Future Research**

The findings provided by the present study are insightful but not exhaustive. Given the dynamic nature of residents' place image, there are always further research opportunities for this complex concept. First, this study was based on a single place; caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other tourism places, within or outside Greece, which are expectedly unique with respect to local residents and their perceived place image. Second, the survey was conducted during a low holiday season and thus the timing might have significantly influenced the local residents' perceptions of Kavala. Future research may explore the extent to which low versus high tourism season do influence the positive versus negative image that the local residents have about a tourism place. Third, the study was conducted during a unique fiscal circumstance (economic downturn) and thus might have tinted the local residents' opinions of Kavala. Future research can consider a longitudinal approach and examine the extent to which residents' perceived image of a tourism place changes over time. Fourth, future research may also consider alternative approaches to test the direct relationship between residents' place image and residents' attitude toward tourism. The present study has mainly established their indirect relationship via ANOVA. Lastly, the present study has primarily segmented the local residents of Kavala based on place image and it would be insightful for future research to combine place image with other psychographic variables (e.g., residents' place identify) to develop a more comprehensive psychographic segmentation process (see also Wang & Xu, 2015).

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**Table 1. Sample profile**

Demographic	Sample (n=481)		Kavala Census 2011 <sup>a</sup>	
Gender	Male	47%	Male	48%
	Female	53%	Female	52%
Age group	18-24	12.1%	15-24	16.9%
	25-34	18.5%	25-34	17.8%
	35-44	17.9%	35-44	17.3%
	45-54	16.4%	45-54	15.7%
	55-64	13.4%	55-64	12.9%
	65 and above	21.4%	65 and above	20.0%
Length of residency (years)	1-9	15%	NA <sup>b</sup>	
	10-19	17%		
	20 and more	68%		
Annual income (€)	Less than 9,999	18%	Average annual income 10,200-12,650€ <sup>c,d</sup>	
	10,000-19,999	35.4%		
	20,000-29,999	23.4%		
	30,000-39,999	12.6%		
	40,000 and more	10.6%		

<sup>a</sup> Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (2013). <sup>b</sup> Information of length of residency is not available in the 2011 census. <sup>c</sup> Only the average annual income figure is provided in the 2011 census. <sup>d</sup> 1€ = 1.16US\$ (as of 9 November 2017)

**Table 2. Discriminant analysis of resident clusters based on place image**

<b>Discriminant Functions Results</b>					
Discriminant Functions	Eigenvalue	Cannonical correlation	Wilk's lambda	Chi-square	Significance
1	3.587	.884	.155	880.499	.000
2	.411	.540	.709	162.260	.000
<b>Classification results</b>					
Actual group	No of cases	Predicted group membership			
		1	2	3	
Cluster 1	205	203 (99%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	
Cluster 2	145	7 (4.8%)	137 (94.5%)	1 (0.7%)	
Cluster 3	131	9 (6.9%)	0 (0%)	122 (93.1%)	
<i>Hit-ratio: 96%</i>					

**Table 3. Mean responses between resident clusters**

	<i>Nature Loving</i> (n=205)	<i>Apathetic</i> (n=145)	<i>Advocate</i> (n=131)
Good job opportunities	1.91	1.73	3.05
Effective local government	2.52	1.92	3.61
Good transportation system	2.60	2.23	3.97
Effective local services	3.06	2.35	3.91
Pleasant weather	4.24	3.22	4.28
Attractive scenery	4.71	3.93	4.66
Interesting historic sites	3.92	2.67	4.02
Nice architecture	3.64	2.58	3.92
Safe place	4.09	3.17	4.23
Clean	3.67	2.79	4.22
Friendly locals	3.15	2.01	3.74
Good restaurants	3.48	3.21	4.20
Good nightlife	2.29	1.86	3.76
Good place to shop	2.55	1.98	3.88

**Table 4. Demographic characteristics of resident clusters**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Clusters (%)</b>			<b>F-ratio</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<i>Nature Loving</i> (n=205)	<i>Apathetic</i> (n=145)	<i>Advocate</i> (n=131)		
<b>Gender</b>				6.792	.034
Male	41.5	55.6	46.2		
Female	58.5	44.4	53.8		
<b>Age</b>				23.354	.010
18-34	33.1	31.7	25.2		
35-54	33.6	31.8	38.2		
55+	33.2	36.6	36.6		
<b>Income</b>				10.441	.235
0-9,999	16.2	17.9	21.1		
10,000-19,999	35.4	35	35.8		
20,000-29,999	22.7	22.9	25.2		
30,000-39,999	10.6	15	13		
40,000+	15.2	9.3	4.9		
<b>Years in Kavala</b>				7.314	.120
0-4 years	14.1	25.5	21.1		
5-9 years	33.8	28.4	28.9		
10+	52	46.1	50		

**Table 5. Relationships between resident clusters and perceptions of tourism impacts**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Clusters</b>			<b>ANOVA</b>	<b>Post Hoc</b>
	Cluster 1 <i>Nature Loving</i> (n=205)	Cluster 2 <i>Apathetic.</i> (n=145)	Cluster 3 <i>Advocate</i> (n=131)	<i>F Ratio*</i>	
Economic	3.47	2.99	3.76	32.658	All
Socio-cultural	3.33	2.92	3.70	41.427	All
Environmental	2.69	2.43	2.76	5.874	All except 1-3

*\*All reported F-values are significant at 0.001*

**Table 6. Relationship between resident clusters and support for tourism development**

	Clusters			ANOVA	Post Hoc
	<i>Nature Loving</i> (n=205)	<i>Apathetic</i> (n=145)	<i>Advocate</i> (n=131)	<i>F Ratio*</i>	
Further tourism development	4.28	3.25	4.56	67.847	All
Public funding for tourism promotion	4.21	3.03	4.42	68.886	All except 1-3
Increase in the volume of tourists	4.10	2.98	4.33	57.852	All except 1-3

*\*All reported F-values are significant at 0.001*