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Timeshare Owners' Perceptions of and Preferred Ways of Participating in Tourism
Planning

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Introduction

Timeshare refers to a special form of vacation accommodation ownership (Suchman et al., 1999). Timeshare is an accommodation segment that has undergone rapid growth in the U.S. and around the world. However, research on timeshare has been primarily focused on the marketing and management aspects of the timeshare industry, rather than on the aspect of tourism planning for the destination. In addition, although timeshare owners pay property taxes for their timeshare, they are often excluded from the planning process. As the first step of investigating timeshare owners' role in tourism planning, this study was designed to examine timeshare owners' willingness to participate in tourism planning and their preferred ways of participating in tourism planning.

Literature review

Tourism often falls short of the promised economic benefits, and contributes to environmental and social problems. Tourism planning emerged as a reaction to the negative impacts of tourism development. Tourism planning provides a platform for the decision-making in tourism development. For residents, tourists and other members of the public, to participate in tourism planning is a good opportunity to have their voice heard and to influence tourism development decisions. It is possible that timeshare owners' reactions toward tourism development in the timeshare resort community will influence their intentions to participate in the tourism planning process.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1. Timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning affect their willingness to participate in tourism planning.

A variety of variables that potentially influence citizen's attitudes toward tourism and tourism development have been investigated in the literature. Those factors include age (Cavus & Tanrisevdi, 2002; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 1999), gender (Harrill & Potts, 2003; Mason & Cheyne, 2000), length of residency (Girard & Gartner, 1993; McCool & Martin, 1994), distance to concentrations of tourism (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004), and personal economic dependence on tourism (Lankford, 1994; Martin, McGuire, & Allen, 1998; Pizam, 1978). Social exchange theory provided a theoretical framework for understanding attitudes toward tourism development (Ap, 1990). Social exchange theory suggested that the relationships between individuals and groups were based on subjective evaluation of benefits and costs and comparison of alternatives. . If the perceived benefits outweighed or equated to the perceived costs, the residents would support the tourism development (Ap, 1992).

Therefore, it is hypothesized that

H 2: Timeshare owners' perceived benefits of tourism planning have a positive impact on their willingness to participate in tourism planning

H 3: Timeshare owners' perceived costs of tourism planning have a negative impact on their willingness to participate in tourism planning.

Research question

The research questions which will guide the research are: (1) Are timeshare owners willing to participate in tourism planning? (2) Are timeshare owner's perceptions of tourism planning related to their willingness to participate in tourism planning? (3) Is

timeshare owner's willingness to participate in tourism planning associated with their perceived benefits of tourism planning? (4) Is timeshare owner's willingness to participate in tourism planning associated with their perceived costs of tourism planning? (5) What are timeshare owners' preferred ways of participating in tourism planning?

Methods

This study followed a cross-sectional design where research participants were surveyed using a standardized questionnaire. Since there is not a master list of all timeshare owners, the authors cooperated with an Orlando-based marketing consulting firm that owned a list of 1.45 million U.S. timeshare owners. In order to reach a large audience inexpensively with rapid response, Web-based survey was chosen as the survey mode (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). The survey questionnaire was set up on Zoomerang.com.

Data Analysis and Results

During the summer of 2007, 375 surveys were completed. The authors conducted a non-response analysis by randomly surveying non-respondents in December, 2007, which suggested that there were no significant differences in the main variables between respondents and non-respondents. After list-wise deletion for missing data, 317 complete surveys were used for this study.

The descriptive analysis was conducted by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 15.0). Table 1, table 2, table 3, and table 4 summarized the major findings from the descriptive analysis. The two-step approach was used to test the proposed model by the software package AMOS. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the goodness of fitness of the measurement model and the reliability and discriminant validity of the latent constructs. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with an Asymptotically Distribution-Free (ADF) estimation method was conducted to test the theoretical model (Figure 1).

Item loading and critical ratios (C. R.) were tested to establish the convergent validity of the measurement model (Table 5). Overall the model fit the data quite well. Goodness-of-fitness indexes also suggested that the model fit the data acceptably (Table 6). The discriminant validity of the measurement model was tested by the correlation between two latent constructs (Table 7). The hypothesized structural model was tested by SEM, which included a test of the overall model as well as individual tests of the relationships among the latent constructs. The results of structural equation analysis indicated that the fit of the overall hypothetical model was found to be "acceptable" at a significance level (see Table 6).

The path coefficients for the model are illustrated in Figure 3. Perceptions of tourism planning have a significantly positive impact on willingness to participate in tourism planning. Perceived costs have a significantly negative impact on willingness to participate in tourism planning. Perceived benefits of tourism planning do not have a significant impact on willingness to participate in tourism planning.

All those respondents who indicated that they were willing to participate in tourism planning were asked about their preferred ways of participating. There was a pattern between respondents' preferences and the level of involvement of the different options (Table 4). One-way repeated measures ANOVA was employed to test the difference among these three levels. The results suggested that there was significant difference among the three levels of involvement in participation (Table 8 and Table 9).

Discussion

Most timeshare owners supported tourism planning for the destination city. A substantial proportion of timeshare owners were willing to participate in tourism planning for the city. The more positive timeshare owners perceive tourism planning, the more likely they were to participate in tourism planning. This finding provides some insight into the gap identified by Lankford (2001) and McGehee and Andereck (2004) that there is a disconnection between attitude studies and citizen participation in tourism planning. Timeshare owners' perceived costs negatively impacted their willingness to participate in tourism planning, which could be a potential constraint that timeshare owners need to overcome if they are invited by tourism planners to get involved in tourism planning. It is plausible that timeshare owners made rational choices based on the balance of benefits and costs in terms of making decisions about participating in tourism planning. Therefore, timeshare owners need to be educated on the benefits of participation and on multiple methods of getting involved.

Overall, timeshare owners were willing to receive information about tourism planning but reluctant to get involved in person. Timeshare owners preferred indirect ways of participation such as authorizing their timeshare management company to participate in tourism planning or getting involved through the Internet. Timeshare owners' preferred ways of participation in tourism also reflect the level of participation that timeshare owners may commit. Participation in planning is voluntary and participants contribute at different levels (Sanoff, 2000). From the perspective of Arstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, most timeshare owners are satisfied with participation at the tokenism level.

Levels of citizen participation in planning and phases of planning are related. Hamdi and Goethert (1997) proposed a model to describe the relationship between levels of citizen participation and phases of planning. Generally, tourism planning could be divided into eight phases (Nickerson, 1996). While the eight-phase model for tourism planning catches many essential steps of tourism planning, tourism planning could be viewed as a continuous process of four stages from the participative perspective. Those four stages are identified by four essential tasks of each phase: initiate, plan, implement, and review. Timeshare owners' contribution to the tourism planning process will concentrate on the initiative stage and the planning stage. The local government and other stakeholder groups take responsibility for implementing the tourism plan and evaluating the plan. Timeshare owners will provide input to the tourism planners and receive information about the planning process. The role of timeshare owners in tourism planning is proposed in figure 4, based on the combination of levels of participation of timeshare owners and different stages of tourism planning.

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Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (%) (n=317)
Gender	
Male	68.6
Female	31.4
Age	
21-30	0
31-40	3.7
41-50	16.3
51-60	38.9
61-70	26.6
71-80	13.0
81 and up	1.7
Education	
Less than high school	0
High school	17.4
Bachelor's degree	39.0
Graduate or professional	43.5
2006 Annual household income	
Less than \$49,999	9.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	23.4
\$100,000 to \$124,999	19.0
\$125,000 and up	28.1
Marital status	
Divorced	8.1
Married or partnered	80.5
Single and never married	6.2
widowed	5.2

Table 2. Frequency table

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	S.D.
I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare. (WIL1)	11.7	16.4	40.1	24.9	6.9	2.99	1.08
I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare. (WIL2)	12.9	21.8	37.9	21.8	5.7	2.85	1.08
The city should plan and manage the growth of tourism. (PER1)	3.8	2.8	12.9	51.4	29.0	3.99	0.94
I believe that successful management of tourism in the city where I own my primary timeshare requires planning. (PER2)	6.0	1.6	10.7	46.1	35.6	4.04	1.03
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services.(BEN1)	2.2	1.9	18.0	63.1	14.8	3.86	0.77
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare contributes to the attractiveness of my primary timeshare in the timeshare exchange market. (BEN2)	3.5	4.4	19.2	50.8	22.1	3.84	0.94
If I participate in tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located, it would take too much of my valuable time. I would rather be doing other things with my free time. (COS1)	3.8	18.9	43.2	24.3	9.8	3.17	0.97
Tourism planning does not allow for free market development of the city. (COS2)	13.9	47.3	32.8	5.0	0.9	2.32	0.81

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree; S.D. =Standard Deviation.

Table 3. Preferred ways of voting on tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Online	186	54.5
Not interested in voting	107	31.4
By mail	48	14.1
In Person	0	0.0

Table 4. Frequency distributions (percentage) for preferred ways to participate in tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
I would like to get information about tourism planning for the city in the form of newsletters or regular letters.	2.2	1.1	6.5	65.6	24.7	4.12	93
I would be willing to authorize my timeshare management company to participate in the tourism planning process for the city.	2.2	6.5	20.7	51.1	19.6	3.80	92
I would like to participate in meetings related to tourism planning as a citizen representative.	1.1	5.4	35.5	44.1	14.0	3.65	93

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree.

Table 5. Summary statistics

Construct	Items	Loadings	C.R.	Construct Reliability	AVE
Willingness	WIL1	0.96	-	0.91	0.84
	WIL2	0.87	14.33		
Perception	PER1	0.87	-	0.82	0.70
	PER2	0.80	13.80		
Benefit	BEN1	0.96	-	0.88	0.78
	BEN2	0.80	11.45		
Cost	COS1	0.72	-	0.50	0.35
	COS2	0.41	4.54		

Table 6. Summary Statistics

	Measurement model	Structural model
Chi-square	26.697	26.697
Degree of freedom	13	13
P-value	0.014	0.014
RMR	0.069	0.069
GFI	0.954	0.954
AGFI	0.872	0.872
CFI	0.941	0.941
TLI	0.874	0.874
RMSEA	0.058	0.058
Confidence interval	0.025,0.089	0.025,0.089

Table 7. Correlation between latent constructs

	Estimate
Willingness <--> Perception	0.256
Willingness <--> Benefit	0.276
Willingness <--> Cost	-0.723
Perception <--> Benefit	0.600
Perception <--> Cost	-0.288
Benefit <--> Cost	-0.424

Table 8. Mauchly's test of sphericity

Mauchly's W	Approximate Chi-Square	df	Significant level	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
0.84	15.39	2	<0.01	.862	0.877	0.50

Table 9. Tests of within-subject effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Significant level
Sphericity assumed	10.87	2	5.434	10.891	<0.01
Greenhouse-Geisser	10.87	1.723	6.306	10.891	<0.01
Huynh-Feldt	10.87	1.753	6.199	10.891	<0.01
Lower-bound	10.87	1.000	10.867	10.891	<0.01

Figure 1. theoretical model

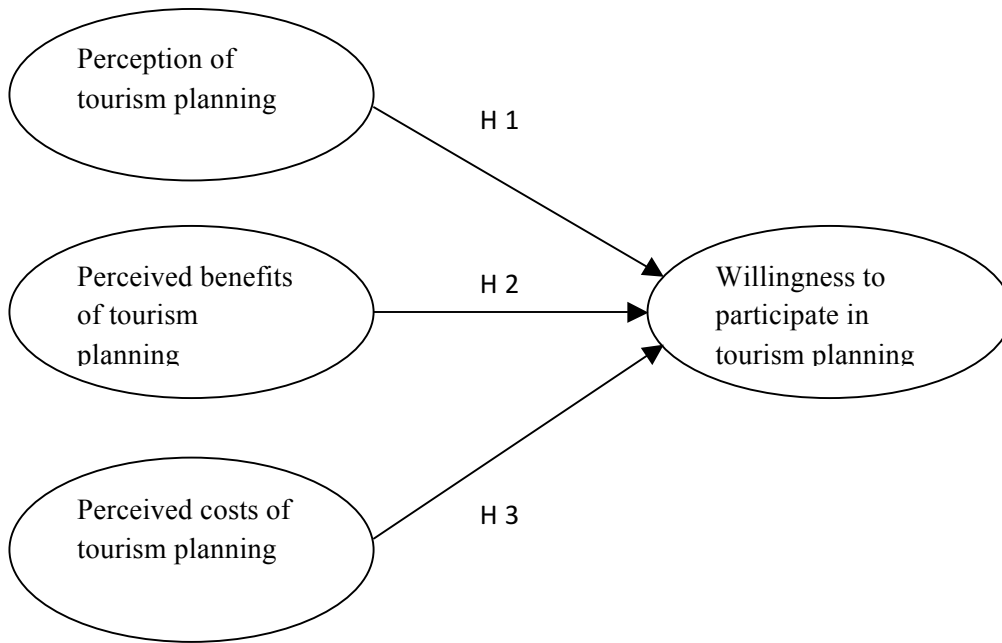


Figure 2. Standardized results from the measurement model

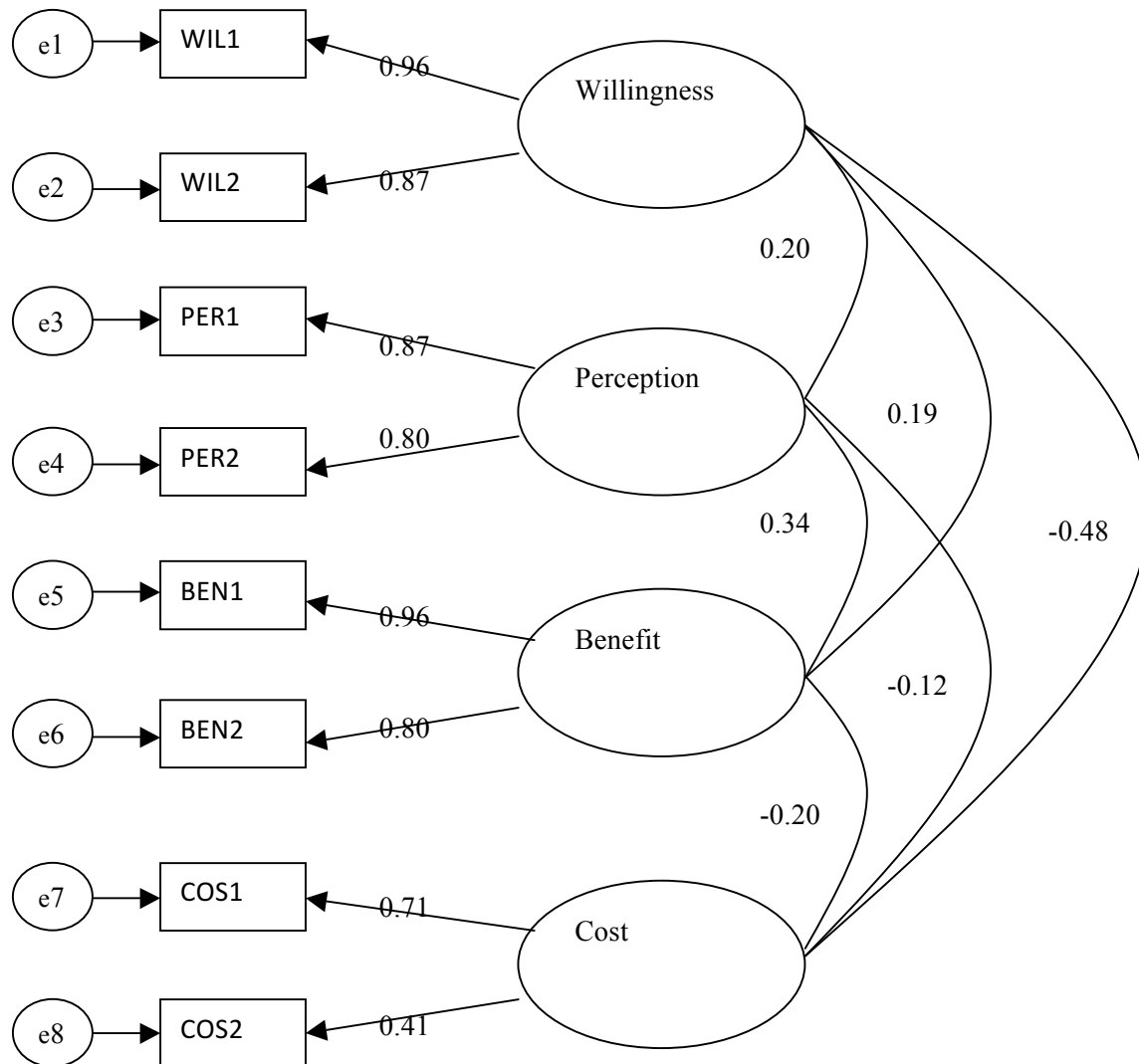
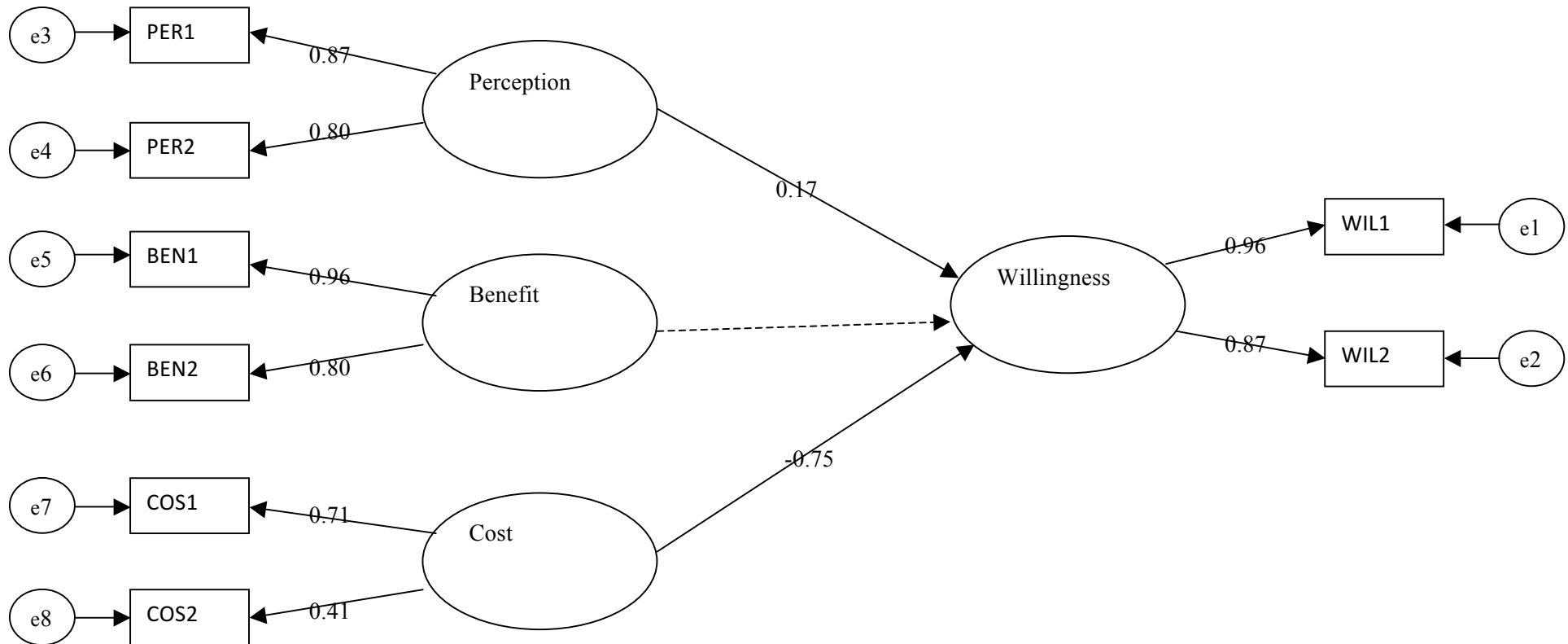


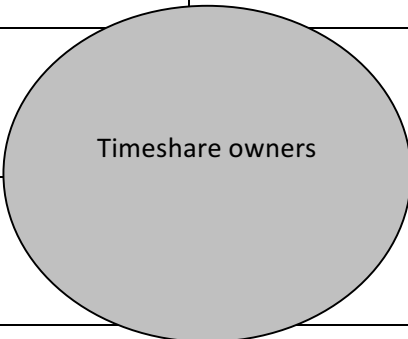
Figure 3. Standardized results from the structural model



Note: Solid lines indicate statistically significant paths; dotted lines indicate statistically insignificant paths.

Figure 4. A framework of timeshare owner's participation in tourism planning

Levels of participation	Stages of tourism planning			
	Initiate	Plan	Implement	Review
None				
Indirect				
Consultative				
Shared control				



The diagram consists of a gray circle with a black outline, centered horizontally between the 'Indirect' and 'Consultative' rows of the table. The text 'Timeshare owners' is written in black, centered within the circle.