

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ON SUSTAINABLE ECO-FRIENDLY RESORT DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF KANDALAMA RESIDENTS IN SRI LANKA

Gayanika D M S

Abstract

Tourism is associated with economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits, which can contribute to revitalization of communities and enhancement of residents' quality of life (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010). When examining residents' support for eco-friendly tourism development, community empowerment plays a major role since, in order to achieve successful sustainable tourism development, community leaders and developers need to view tourism as a "community industry" that enables residents to be actively involved in determining and planning future tourism development with the overall goal of improving residents' quality of life (Franzoni, 2015). In Sri Lanka, there are many eco-friendly tourist hotels which pay more attention to tourist attractions and paying less attention to community. However, the hotel cannot be sustained without the community support. Therefore, while examining the residents' support for eco-friendly tourism, this study extends the existing residents' support model in the literature by testing the empowerment scales suggested by Scheyvens (1999), using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through AMOS. The results revealed that the empowerment scales in eco-friendly resort development in Sri Lanka are valid, and community empowerment plays an important role in gaining community support for the eco-friendly resort development.

Key words: Community empowerment, community support, eco-friendly tourism

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Background

Tourism is widely believed to be the most rapidly growing global industry. According to World Tourism Organization, eco-friendly tourism is believed to be the fastest growing tourism segment (Buckley, 1994; Deardon and Harron, 1993). "Eco-friendly tourism" is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations" (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). The main problem that has stemmed from this is that often the term is misused or misinterpreted for developments which do not hold true to the original meaning of eco-friendly tourism (Ross and Wall, 1999).

An eco-resort is an establishment where providing hospitality services to the eco tourists while practicing ecotourism principles. All eco resorts reflect the creative initiative and entrepreneurialism of business pioneers, rather than large multinational corporations. In the eco-friendly tourism sector of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, there are self-declared eco resorts which are registered under the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). Rangana et al. (2015) explain that the owners of these eco resorts in Sri Lanka define the concept of eco-friendly tourism in four different ways such as; Nature related tourism, Environment conservation tourism, Wildlife related tourism, and Nature and cultural related tourism, which show that there is no standard way of understanding the eco-friendly tourism concept in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan hoteliers believe that the concept of eco-friendly tourism is equal to the above-mentioned concepts, but in the international context, the above concepts are totally different from eco-tourism. As a result, the eco-friendly tourism concepts practiced in the eco resorts are also different from the global standards. Eco tourists look at the concept of eco-friendly tourism in global standards, but the practice in Sri Lanka is different from it. Since the practice is different the sustainability of this sector is threatened.

According to Rangana et al. (2015), the issue of failure to practice the eco resort concept happened due to four reasons. First, Sri Lankan eco-tourism business is not being guided by inter-

national principles and the “National Policy Plan on Eco Tourism” is yet to be formulated by the tourism authorities in Sri Lanka by the time of 2015 (still by 2018 it is not yet formalized). Secondly, there are only a few true eco resort operators who adhere to the eco resort principles. Thirdly, there are few sufficiently qualified people to handle eco tourists and finally, the non-availability of genuinely planned eco resorts that guarantee the economic benefits to the community living around the eco resort areas. This spells out that the eco resorts in Sri Lanka, which should primarily need to practice eco principals and guarantee benefits to the community, have failed to do so over the years.

Research Problem

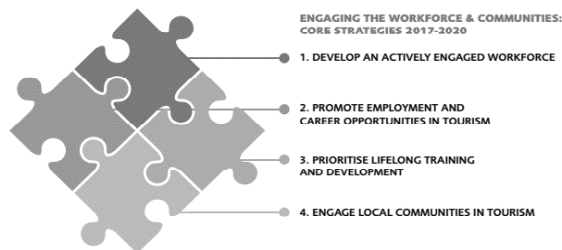
With the mismatch of concept and practice of eco-friendly tourism in Sri Lanka, the sustainability of the industry is at great danger. Evaluating the sustainability of this industry is therefore vital. Any eco-friendly resort can be successful by its operational performance, which is internal. However, it cannot be sustained if the surrounding is not supported, hence the community or the residents of the surrounding make an enormous contribution for the success of the resort.

According to Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan 2017-2020, it is identified that Sri Lanka’s prospects for sustainable tourism growth is still at its infancy, and at a critical juncture (SLTDA, 2017). In this, it states that, “The general population still does not view tourism as a sector that is good enough for their children to build careers in. These cultural and social perceptions will change only if communities are fully engaged in the process of developing tourism and feel empowered to be proud custodians, as well as beneficiaries, of the valuable endowments around them.” This elucidates that the community perception in Sri Lanka is still not positive towards the industry, and it could change only if they are engaged and empowered as key stake holders of the industry.

Hitherto, the ecotourism sector has not been systematically examined for collecting data, and thus not reaped the expected benefits. The strategic plan also identified that one of the key challenges of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka is the lack of formal data, and comprehensive research to capture information on factors attracting or discouraging potential employees to or from the tourism and hospitality sector. One of the factors that the strategic plan specifies for lack of entry, training and retention of staff in the tourism sector is due to lack of empowerment. Hence, the core strategies were developed to empower tourism workforce and to get community engagement, which will contribute considerably to a high-value visitor experience (

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Figure 1: Core Strategies 2017-2018 (Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan)



Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan 2017-2020, SLTDA

Hence, testing the level of community empowerment in eco-friendly tourism is vital since accurate data is not available and empowerment has an important role to play in community engagement and thereby contributing to sustainable eco-friendly resort development in Sri Lanka. Hence, this study aims to examine the role of community empowerment which affects their perception about the industry and the support for sustainable eco-friendly resort development.

Community support for tourism

Eco-friendly tourism development usually involves a wide variety of stakeholders, including tourists, residents, governments, managers, and so on. The success of the eco-friendly tourism sites depends on the three stakeholders; i.e. resources, community and tourists (Das and Chatterjee, 2015). It should protect natural resources and meet the conservation strategies, and for the successful implementation of such conservation policies, should get the involvement of the local community in the entire process to ensure the benefits reach residents, because the sustainable management of such areas ultimately depend on the co-operation and support of the community.

Many researches confirm the importance of understanding the needs and interests of local communities and facilitating their involvement in eco-friendly tourism (Russell & Harshbarger, 2003). As one important stakeholder, the community plays multiple roles in eco-friendly tourism (Scheyvens, 2002). As one essential element in its conceptualization, eco-friendly tourism should involve effective community participation and equitable sharing of benefits (Ross and Wall 1999). The community should be empowered to participate, monitor, and benefit from eco-friendly tourism.

Reviews of several studies analyzing the experiences of eco-friendly tourism ventures over the world, synthesize the positive and negative aspects of eco-friendly tourism. On the positive

side, many communities have been able to manage successful eco-friendly tourism ventures, and though the actual benefits of these eco-friendly tourism ventures are rather small in many cases, they still play an important role in increasing the means of living of communities, relative to a benchmark situation often characterized by poverty and exclusion (Coria and Calfucura, 2012). As proclaimed by Das and Chatterjee (2015), it is identified that the eco-friendly tourism has become the main livelihood activity of the members of the communities, replacing many traditional livelihood activities that damaged the environment, i.e. hunting, gathering, livestock, crop farming and forest clearing etc.

Through increasing the standard of living of the people by employment opportunities and small enterprise development, eco-friendly tourism empowers the local community as well. This can be through economic, social, political and psychological benefits given to the community. According to Scheyvens (1999), economic gains can empower the community economically; shared income of eco-friendly tourism among community members such as providing education and health can empower them socially; local community participation in decision making can empower them politically; and finally, by external recognition and appreciation of the community culture, their traditional knowledge can build self-esteem of community members through psychological empowerment. Therefore, an area rich in bio-diversity, where mostly the eco-friendly tourism exists, can empower the community members which can strengthen the reason for co-existence. Not only in the short run, but also by providing infrastructure and help in the education of children of community, members will lead to develop the human capital and empower the local communities in the long run as well (Das and Chatterjee, 2015).

Stronza & Gordillo (2008) in their research found that non-economic benefits of eco-friendly tourism helped enable local communities with new skills and ways of thinking. They explained that eco-friendly tourism has the ability to generate novel ideas since members reinvest profit in the community, manage projects and monitor the results of their efforts. It was identified that eco-friendly tourism contributes more income, more training opportunities, personal growth, greater ability to talk with a range of people, and as one of the local community member states, “our communities are able to handle problems better now” (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008. Pg.461).

Another positive effect of eco-friendly tourism is it reduces the gender disparity. Thien (2009) explained that in the process of eco-friendly tourism, the women can be economically empowered, who can take an active role in opening restaurants, making foods and sell to the tourists, which can reasonably emancipate themselves from traditional roles and gender norms. When women are economically empowered, the benefits are for the broad range of community members (Das and Chatterjee, 2015). When women take an active role in tourism, they become liter-

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ate, their children become literate, they increase awareness on health and hygiene which create a multiplier effect to the community. These impacts of eco-friendly tourism show that there is a significant contribution of non-economic benefits such as empowerment over the community, which can positively impact on their positive attitude towards tourism.

Theoretical findings

Tourism industry is heavily relying on the good will of the local communities and as well as their support for the development (Gursoy et al. 2002). Hence the quality of life of the community and their support for tourism have been extensively researched in the literature (Nunkoo and So, 2015, Gursoy et al. 2002, Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Social Exchange Theory (SET) remains one of the most widely used frameworks by researchers attempting to study community attitudes (Nunkoo and So, 2015, Gursoy et al. 2002, Nunkoo & Gursoy 2012). According to Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011), residents are willing to enter an exchange with the industry when the perceived positive impacts outweigh the negative consequences, which means their perceptions are such that gains are higher than the costs, and thereby their support.

Social exchange theory has been shown to be a suitable theoretical framework for analyzing residents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism development (Wang and Pfister 2008). Social exchange theory suggests individuals are likely to participate in an exchange (i.e., supporting a development plan) if they believe costs will not exceed benefits. In terms of tourism, residents who perceive tourism to be personally valuable, and believe that the costs associated with tourism do not exceed the benefits, are likely to support tourism development. Social exchange theory encompasses three points of view, economic, environmental, and sociocultural, that can assist in determining how residents will respond to future tourism development across vital aspects of a community (Andriotis and Vaughan 2003).

Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) has developed a model of residents' support for tourism based on the social exchange theory (SET), which comprises fourteen hypothesized relationships and was tested using data collected from residents of Grand-Baie, Mauritius. Results indicate that residents' support was influenced by perceived benefits, perceived costs, and community satisfaction. Perceived benefits were affected by community satisfaction, institutional trust, power to influence tourism, and neighborhood conditions. This study has further considered the role of trust in the exchange between residents and the tourism industry, which was the addition to the previous SET models which they found is a promising relational construct in understanding residents' attitudes, demanding further investigation by other researchers. Community satisfaction and neighborhood conditions did not exert a significant influence on perceived costs, and the power to influence tourism was also not found to affect community satisfaction.

The residents' support for tourism is a heavily researched area where hundreds of scholars have investigated community perceptions and their relationship with residents' support for tourism. Nunkoo and So (2015) has made significant contributions to research on residents' support for tourism by developing a baseline model and comparing it with four competing models. As they argue, Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been the most widely used theory to investigate residents' support for tourism from 1992 to-date, but many studies have conceptualized social exchanges in various ways by using different variables, reflecting one or more dimensions of SET. And there are some limitations of this as well. One reason that they bring is existing studies informed by SET are based on conflicting, yet theoretically sound, research propositions and leading to confusion among tourism scholars, thus it contains sparks of controversy. Hence this study brought together the ideas underlying social exchanges in a single study and empirically tested the different theoretical possibilities offered by SET. Therefore, it has developed a baseline model of residents' support for tourism and compare it with four competing nested models using structural equation modeling. That method facilitated in uncovering new relationships among variables, and was useful for development of the theory. The study has further uncovered that residents' trust and their level of power to be intimately connected to their quality of life and their perceptions of tourism impacts.

As explained by Nunkoo and So (2015) in their baseline model, the concept of power (PW) that exists in a set of specific relationships is central to SET, where actors are positioned within this network of power relations. As explained by Ap (1992, p. 679) "power is usually viewed as the capacity to attain ends", hence it adversely influences residents' perceptions of tourism development, while positive reactions from residents are associated with a high level of power. Hence here they argue that power is a unidimensional construct and found that residents' trust in government, and their level of power in tourism development, as the two strongest determinants of quality of life. However, in the limitations of their study, they also state, "Thus, future studies should consider the multidimensional nature of these variables to further clarify the theoretical relationships tested in this study" (Nunkoo and So, 2015, p.12).

This shows that power is an important predictor of SET, but still some controversy can be seen in the operationalization of power as a unidimensional construct. Hence, Nunkoo and So (2015) suggest that empowering local residents in tourism is another effective strategy for fostering positive attitudes and improving quality of life and education, and training of local residents to work in the tourism sector are other important sources of local empowerment. This shows that empowerment can play a major role in residents' support in tourism literature.

Scheyvens (1999) has developed an empowerment framework and identified the unidimensional

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aspect of power in tourism, which provide a mechanism with which the effectiveness of eco-friendly tourism initiatives, in terms of their impacts on local communities, can be determined. The framework has utilized four levels of empowerment: psychological, social and political, as based on Friedmann's writing (Friedmann, 1992), and economic empowerment. This framework emphasizes the importance of local communities having some control over, and sharing in the benefits of, eco-friendly tourism initiatives in their area, and could be applied in the contexts of both western and developing countries, but, because it takes as its central concern the concept of empowerment, it is perhaps particularly pertinent when examining the extent to which indigenous people, or other disadvantaged groups, are benefiting from eco-friendly tourism.

While the rhetoric is compelling, only a handful of tourism studies have gone beyond the focus of community participation to specifically concentrate on empowerment in sustainable tourism (Cole, 2006; Scheyvens, 1999). Most recently, Cole's (2012) conceptual work discusses the importance of information and empowerment as being central to achieving sustainable tourism. The seminal work on empowerment within tourism is contained in Scheyvens' (1999) conceptual article highlighting what psychological, social, and political empowerment looks like within community-based eco-tourism. This is particularly useful for the current study because it provides detailed descriptions of what empowerment should look like within sustainable tourism development. To deepen this discussion, Scheyven's (1999) descriptions of psychological, social, and political empowerment are reviewed below.

Social Empowerment

Social empowerment, within a tourism context, ensues when one perceives tourism as increasing his or her connection to the community. Scheyvens (1999) describes social empowerment in terms of enhanced community equilibrium, with residents feeling more connected and beginning to work together. This understanding of social empowerment highlights the parent literature's focus on individuals having access to social organizations that help maintain the local quality of life and individuals working together in an organized fashion to improve their collective lives. The negative social impacts of tourism recognized by Stronza and Gordillo (2008) in the Peruvian, Ecuadorian, and Bolivian Amazon are in stark contrast to these positive descriptions of social empowerment. These include the erosion of cooperation within the community, the unequal treatment of community members from tourism development, and some community members 'buying' themselves out of traditional community obligations.

On the other hand, social disempowerment may occur if tourist activity results in crime, begging, perceptions of crowding, displacement from traditional lands, loss of authenticity or pros-

titution. Inequities in distribution of the benefits of tourism can also lead to social disempowerment through feelings of ill-will and jealousy which they may foster. Clearly in all communities there are inequalities which may be exacerbated by the introduction of a somewhat lucrative industry to which all will not have access.

Psychological Empowerment

A local community, which is optimistic about the future, has faith in the abilities of its residents, is relatively self-reliant and demonstrates pride in traditions and culture, and can be said to be psychologically powerful (Scheyvens, 1999). In many small-scale, unindustrialized societies, preservation of tradition is extremely important in terms of maintaining a group's sense of self-esteem and well-being. Boley & McGehee, (2014) explain that psychological empowerment helps communities reevaluate the worth of their culture, natural resources, and traditional knowledge. They further explained that this reevaluation of the community leads to an increase in self-esteem and pride which has a positive influence on resident perceptions of tourism.

Political Empowerment

Political empowerment, within a tourism context, speaks to residents having agency or control over the direction of tourism development within their community (Scheyvens, 1999). It is the dimension of empowerment that most closely resembles the overarching notion of residents gaining mastery of their affairs. More concretely, political empowerment necessitates residents having a voice in the tourism planning process, and being able to share their concerns over tourism development. It is similar to community participation, but represents the highest rung of ladders of community participation because the attention is shifting away from mere inclusion of residents to residents having control over the tourism planning process. As with the other dimensions of empowerment, resident perceptions of political empowerment were found to have significant relationships with how they perceived the positive and negative impacts of tourism (Boley et al., 2014).

Methodology

To examine the role empowerment plays in sustainable eco-friendly resort development, this study was conducted in Sri Lanka considering the residents in Kandalama, which is located in the north-eastern side of Dambulla in Sri Lanka. The hotel, Heritance Kandalama, is a well-known and successful hotel in Sri Lanka, which promotes eco-friendly tourism with its sustainable architecture that is not harmful to the natural environment, however built in the midst of

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huge resistance from community leaders, villagers and several other pressure groups. Twenty two years back, this small tourism city had become a focal point of attention among the community of Sri Lanka when the local community of this area and several pressure groups were organizing huge protests against the construction of the Heritance Kandalama. The construction, planned nearby the pristine lakeside of this tranquil city, has upset the local villages and prompted them to organize resistance towards the construction.

As explained by Nayomi and Gnanapala (2015), the management of Heritance Kandalama has recognized the issues, took steps to address them and work with the pressure groups as well as the villagers, to build relationships that have helped to operate this award-winning resort in a sustainable manner. This gives an interesting context to study the perception of communities towards the eco-friendly tourism, their quality of life and support. Today, they are practicing many projects to empower communities and it has been awarded many local and international awards for their eco-friendly practices and CSR activities. As identified in the study conducted by Nayomi and Gnanapala (2015), one of the hotel managers has stated that, “When we consider about the economic benefits, according to our recruiting policy, we have targeted to recruit 70% of locals within a 25 km radius from the hotel. Out of that percentage, currently there are only 55% of employees working in the hotel. We also have a purchasing policy. That means, a variety of fruits and vegetables are purchased from the local community, which directly cause to increase their incomes. Our CSR investment projects have also benefited locals like building houses for poor people, donation of spectacles to villagers, donation of wheel chairs, etc.” (Nayomi and Gnanapala 2015 p.62).

Therefore, it was identified that this eco-friendly resort as one of the best areas to study the role of economic and non-economic benefits (empowerment) in sustainable eco-friendly resort development.

Selection of the Sample

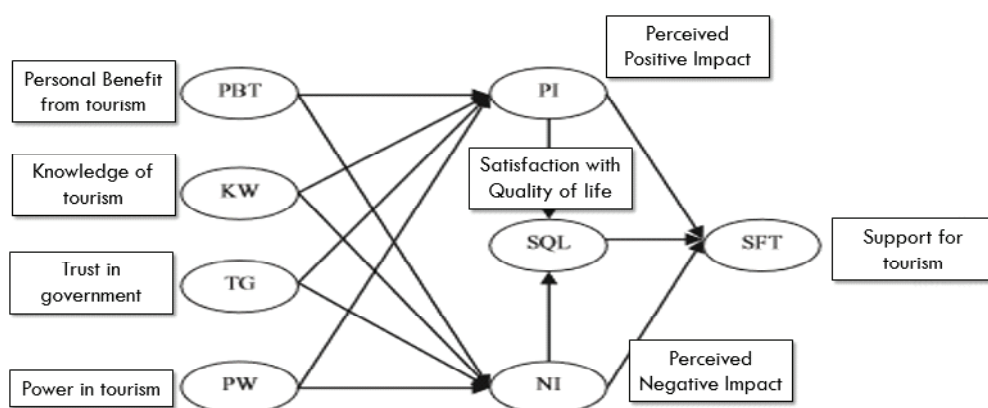
The population studied were the residents who owned a home, including permanent and seasonal residents, and was selected as the unit of analysis. Residents, who may or may not own a home, might have been an alternative sample, but these lists are often unavailable and not regularly updated. A homeowner list was obtained from Grama Sevaka officer of Kandalama village. There are 463 families in Kandalama village, and the sample consisted of 202 households. A quantitative approach was taken with 200 residents in Kandalama village who live within a 20 km radius from the hotel, the closest village to Heritance Kandalama. A door-to-door, pen and paper questionnaire was used, applying a systematic random sampling scheme, commonly used within resident attitude research. This type of sampling scheme was chosen

based upon its ability to best garner a representative sample of community residents, increase response rates, and include minority groups that may be left out from other sampling methods (Boely et al., 2014). Every second household on the right side of the road was chosen to be surveyed until 202 usable questionnaires have been completed. It is suggested that a minimum sample size of around 200 respondents is necessary to ensure effective use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. However, a sample size beyond 400 is also likely to be problematic as it may generate poor goodness-of-fit-indices (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

Measurements of the Variables

There are hundreds of models in the literature which have tested the community support using the Social Exchange Theory (SET), since it is the most widely used theory to examine the community contribution in the field of tourism. However, Nunkoo and So (2015) have made significant contributions to research on residents' support for tourism by developing a baseline model, and comparing it with four competing models empirically tested for the different theoretical possibilities offered by SET (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Baseline model in residents' support for tourism using Social Exchange Theory



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Source: Nunkoo and So (2015)

As suggested by Nunkoo and So (2015), this study has adopted the scales for four variables to test the measurement scales such as perceived positive impact of tourism, perceived negative impact of tourism, support for tourism and direct personal benefits from tourism. However, this model assumes power as unidimensional and this study assumes that power is multidimensional. The main contribution of this study is inclusion of power as a multidimensional construct. Here, power is identified, as suggested by Scheyvens (1999), as empowerment, and has three constructs; social empowerment, political empowerment, and psychological empowerment. These measurement scales are developed after an extensive literature search. These three empowerment constructs were examined using a structured questionnaire after reviewing of existing literature dealing with residents' attitudes toward tourism development and was modified based on feedback received from several county officials and tourism professionals

Research design

For each of the scales, residents were asked to mark their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. When testing this model, exploratory factor analysis was used as the initial step to test the relationships between variables using AMOS's Principal Component Analysis (PCA) within the Statistical Package for the Social Science's (SPSS.)

Analysis

A random sample was selected and the pilot test was conducted with 50 residents in Kandalama. The Cronbach's alpha scores for the latent variables of direct economic benefits from eco-friendly tourism, positive impact of eco-friendly tourism, negative impact of eco-friendly tourism, psychological empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment, residents' support for eco-friendly tourism were 0.93, 0.90, 0.94, 0.80, and 0.91, respectively. All of the scores exceeded the benchmark of 0.70. Thus, these scores indicate that the instrument had an acceptable level of internal consistency for items measuring the same construct.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Validity

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 41 items with a promax rotation using SPSS. Exploratory factor analysis is a statistical method employed to increase the reliability of the scale by identifying inappropriate items that can be removed and the dimensionality of constructs by examining the existence of relationships between items and factors when the in-

formation of the dimensionality is limited. In this study, the seven factors (i.e., Direct economic benefit of eco-friendly tourism, positive impact of eco-friendly tourism, negative impact toward eco-friendly tourism, psychological empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment, residents' support for eco-friendly tourism) were used to determine the pattern of the structure in the 41-item in the questionnaire and were used to create a scree plot.

Preliminary Seven-Factor Structure

An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, $KMO=.930$ which is above Kaiser's recommended threshold of 0.6. Since it is above .9 there is an excellent sample adequacy for the analysis. Bartlett's test of Sphericity Chi-square is 15013.621, $p < .000$, indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for EFA. Six factors had eigenvalues greater than one, as the 4.1.3 clearly illustrates the respective eigenvalue (next page). The initial 41-item structure explained 86.936% of the variance in the pattern of relationships among the items. The percentages explained by each factor were 47.581% (negative attitude of eco-friendly tourism), 14.438% (positive attitude of eco-friendly tourism), 10.534% (psychological empowerment), 5.307% (residents' support for eco-friendly tourism), 4.007% (Direct economic benefit of eco-friendly tourism), 2.865% (social empowerment) and 2.206% (political empowerment) respectively. Based on the results of the initial exploratory factor analysis, there are some cross loading such as "I like to see Kandalama as an eco-friendly tourism destination further" has a cross-loading with positive attitude of eco-friendly tourism and "I would economically benefit from more tourism development in Kandalama" has a cross-loading with three factors in the initial analysis. There are two other items in the questionnaire, such as "I like to support for the environmentally friendly tourism in Kandalama" and "Tourism at Kandalama has improved employment opportunities in my community", which also have cross-loadings in the pattern matrix.

Final Seven-Factor Structure

After deleting four items which were cross-loaded on five factors, the final seven-factor structure in this study was composed of 37 items. The total variance explained by the seven factors now shows the value 90.232%. However, after removing the four cross loaded items, there creates an issue of Heywood cases (Heywood, 1931), which are greater than 1 in the pattern matrix the final EFA has the total variance explained of 90.396%. The final seven-factor struc-

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ture includes 34 items in the pattern matrix loaded in to clear seven factors as expected after removing cross-loadings and Heywood cases. Table 1 below explains that each of the seven factors percentage of variance explained in initial seven-Factor structure with 41 items and final seven-factor structure with 34 items.

Table 1: Eigenvalues, total variance explained of the initial structure and the final structure

	Initial seven-factor structure				Final seven-factor structure			
	Eigenvalues			KMO sampling adequacy	Eigenvalues			KMO sampling adequacy
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %		Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	
Factor 1	19.508	47.581	47.581	0.930	16.466	48.428	48.428	0.921
Factor 2	5.920	14.438	62.019		4.971	14.621	63.049	
Factor 3	4.319	10.534	72.554		3.991	11.740	74.789	
Factor 4	2.176	5.307	77.860		1.961	5.768	80.557	
Factor 5	1.643	4.007	81.867		1.517	4.462	85.018	
Factor 6	1.175	2.865	84.732		1.041	3.061	88.079	
Factor 7	.905	2.206	86.938		.788	2.316	90.396	

Source: Survey data

According to Table 1, the final model has increased percentage of variance in each factor compared to the initial structure. The percentages explained by each factor were 48.428% (negative impact of eco-friendly tourism), 14.621% (positive impact of eco-friendly tourism), 11.740% (psychological empowerment), 5.768% (residents' support for eco-friendly tourism), 4.462% (direct economic benefit of eco-friendly tourism), 3.061% (social empowerment) and 2.316% (political empowerment) respectively and the total percentage explained by the seven factor-structure is now 90.396% and the KMO sampling adequacy is 0.921 which is excellent and the factor analysis is appropriate.

There are seven factors loaded as shown in Table 2, nine items for factor 1 represent Negative impact of eco-friendly tourism, seven items for factor 2 represent positive impact of eco-friendly tourism, and five items for factor 3 represent psychological empowerment, four items for factor 4 represents residents' support for eco-friendly tourism, three items for factor 5 represents economic benefits from eco-friendly tourism, three items for factor 6 represents social empowerment and three items for factor 7 represents political empowerment.

Table 2.: The Items and Final Seven-Factor Structure after Factor Reduction Procedures

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 1: Negative impact of eco-friendly tourism</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Tourism has created significant solid waste, air, water, noise and soil pollution in Kandalama	989						
Tourism encourages residents to imitate the behavior of the tourists and relinquish cultural traditions	986						
Due to eco-friendly tourism our traditional occupations are under threat	971						
The prices of many goods and services in the community have increased because of tourism	966						
Tourism has negative attitudes on the natural resources (including the collection of plants, animals, rocks, or artifacts by or for tourists)	962						
Tourism income generated in the area goes to outside organizations and individuals.	955						
Most of the natural places are unpleasantly overcrowded as a result of tourism	954						
Tourism contributes to social problems such as crime, drug use, prostitution, alcoholism, gambling, smuggling, and so on in the community	933						
Tourism damages village environment and local culture	928						

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Table 2.: The Items and Final Seven-Factor Structure after Factor Reduction Procedures

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 2: Positive impact of eco-friendly tourism</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Our standard of living has increased considerably because of eco-tourism	999						
Tourism at Kandalama has created new businesses to our peoplen	952						
Tourism has promoted our awareness and participation in environmental protection now than before	946						
Tourism at Kandalama has increased residents' pride in the local culture of the community	935						
Tourism has improved the public infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water in the area.	911						
Tourism at Kandalama has encouraged various cultural activities such as arts, crafts and music in the local residents	892						
Tourism has improved the area's appearance (visual and aesthetic)	884						

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 3: Psychological empowerment</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Eco-friendly tourism at Kandalama,							
Makes me proud to be a Resident of Kandalama	998						
Makes me want to tell others about what we have to offer in Kandalama	977						
Makes me feel special because people travel to see my village unique features	960						
Makes me want to work to keep this area special	956						
Reminds me that we have a unique natural resources to share with visitors	952						

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 4: Residents' support for eco-friendly tourism</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
I would like to see tourism become an important part of my community.	960						
I believe there should be more investments to promote Kandalama as an eco-friendly tourism destination	819						
I will join the activities which are relevant to the promotion of eco-tourism	801						
I believe that tourism should be actively encouraged in my community.	780						

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 5: Economic Benefits from eco-friendly tourism</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
My family's economic future depends upon tourism in Floyd County	972						
A portion of my income is tied to tourism in Kandalama	898						
I will join the activities which are relevant to the promotion of eco-tourism	713						

<i>Factors</i>							
<i>Factor 6: Social empowerment Eco-friendly tourism at Kandalama</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Makes me feel more connected to my community	934						
Provides ways for me to get involved in my community	926						
Provides ways for me to get involved in my community	769						

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Factor 6: Political empowerment	Factors						
I feel like,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have access to the decision making process when it comes to eco-friendly tourism in Kandalama	848						
I have a voice in eco-friendly tourism development decisions in my area	834						
I have an outlet to share my concerns about tourism development in Kandalama	810						

Moreover, four factors (e.g. political empowerment, positive impact of eco-friendly tourism, negative impact of eco-friendly tourism and social empowerment) in this study were highly correlated to each other, as shown in Table 1.5.3. The factor correlation between factor 3 (psychological empowerment) and factor 6 (social empowerment) was .615; the correlation between factor 1 and factor 7 (negative attitude of eco-friendly tourism and political empowerment) was .561; the correlation between factor 2 and factor 7 (positive attitude of eco-friendly tourism and political empowerment) was -.638.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1.0000						
2	-.454	1.0000					
3	.296	-.436	1.0000				
4	.436	-.184	.448	1.0000			
5	-.126	.418	-.240	-.102	1.0000		
6	.446	-.490	.615	.367	-.225	1.0000	
7	.561	-.638	.450	.291	-.143	.494	1.0000

Table 3.: Factor Correlation Matrix

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of an instrument or questionnaire is concerned with the consistency, stability, and dependability of the scores (McMillan, 2007). For this reason, the internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's alpha for each competency in SPSS. If the alpha value is higher than 0.9, the internal consistency is excellent, and if it is at least higher than 0.7, the internal consistency is acceptable. Excellent internal consistency means that the survey items tend to pull together. In other words, a participant who answers a survey item positively is more likely to answer other items in the survey positively.

Table 4.: Reliability analysis

	<i>Mean value</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
Negative impact of eco-friendly tourism	2.5	0.991	9	excellent
Positive impact of eco-friendly tourism	3.71	0.977	7	excellent
Psychological empowerment	3.06	0.986	5	excellent
Residents' support for eco-friendly tourism	3.8	0.893	4	acceptable
Economic benefits from eco-friendly tourism	3.6	0.825	3	acceptable
Social empowerment	3.04	0.984	3	excellent
Political empowerment	3.4	0.927	3	excellent

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) verifies the number of underlying dimensions of the instrument (factors) and the pattern of item–factor relationships (factor loadings) (Boley et al., 2014). Therefore, CFA was performed prior to testing the proposed hypothesis to assess model fit and the validity of the constructs (Hair et al., 2010). The CFA revealed good model fit for the absolute fit indices and the incremental fit indices with chi square value 1496.256 ($p = 0.000$) and absolute Goodness of Fit ($GOF = CMIN/DF$) 3.035 which is really at the margin of 3. While the chi-square statistic was noticeably high and significant, it is important to note the chi-square is very sensitive to large sample sizes and should be compared to other fit statistics that account for sample size such as the RMSEA (Hair et al., 2010). RMSEA of the data set is .101 which is again high as a result of high sensitivity to the sample size. However, CFI = 0.922 which is above 0.9, and PCFI = .811. It was concluded an acceptable model's fit (Hair et al., 2010). The values are not above the threshold, however, due to the measurement models that comprise many indicators and several factors in which the majority of cross-loadings and error covariances are fixed to zero.

Table 5: Model fit indicators

	Default model	P value
CMIN	1496.256	0.000
DF	493	
GOF	3.035	
RMSEA	0.101	
CFI	0.922	
PCFI	0.811	

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In addition to testing a measurement model's goodness-of-fit, CFA provides a stringent test of construct validity (Hair et al., 2010) which consists of four components: convergent, discriminant, nomological, and content validity. Convergent validity is indicated by evidence that different indicators of theoretically similar or overlapping constructs are strongly interrelated (book). Hair et al. (2010) recommend that at a minimum all factor loadings should be statistically significant and have loadings that are 0.5 or higher to represent convergent validity. In order to determine convergent validity through the amount of variance extracted (AVE), Hair et al. (2010) suggests AVE should be above 50%.

Discriminant validity is indicated by results showing that indicators of theoretically distinct constructs are not highly inter-correlated. Hair et al (2010) recommends calculating the Construct Reliability (CR) when using CFA because CR incorporates measurement error into the calculation. CR values higher than 0.7 indicate internal consistency, which represents all of the items of the scale consistently measuring the same latent construct (Hair et al., 2010). The Table 5 indicates the validity and reliability measures of the CFA model.

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As seen in Table 6, the factor loadings for each scale (AVE) were above the 0.5 cutoff and ranged from 0.679 to 0.956, indicating strong convergent validity. Discriminant validity was tested for the distinctness of each construct from the other constructs included in the model (Hair et al., 2010). A rigorous test of discriminant validity is to compare the AVE for any two constructs to the square of the correlation between the two constructs (Hair et al., 2010). According to that, Square root of AVE for all seven variables are greater than any inter factor correlation (Social empowerment 0.977, negative attitude of eco-friendly tourism 0.958, positive attitude of eco-friendly tourism 0.932, psychological empowerment 0.963, residents' support for eco-friendly tourism 0.824, political empowerment 0.905 and economic benefit 0.834). Composite reliability (CR) measure for all seven variables are above 0.7 which shows great internal consistency.

Based upon these tests of convergent, discriminant, and composite validity, the construct validity of the scales within the model is confirmed, allowing the analysis of the relationships to continue at the structural level.

Table 6: Construct Validity of the Scales

	CR	AVE	Social empowerment	Negative impact	Positive impact	Psychological empowerment	Community support	Political empowerment	Economic Benefits
Social empower	0.985	0.956	0.977						
Negative impact	0.990	0.918	0.462	0.958					
Positive impact	0.979	0.869	-0.523	-0.463	0.932				
Psychological empower	0.985	0.927	0.660	0.273	-0.462	0.963			
Community support	0.894	0.679	0.455	0.488	-0.248	0.536	0.824		
Political empower	0.931	0.819	0.559	0.624	-0.714	0.477	0.395	0.905	
Economic benefits	0.863	0.695	-0.297	-0.201	0.498	-0.290	-0.198	-0.288	0.834

Discussion on Findings

The CFA performed on this Sri Lankan sample demonstrated that the factors of psychological, social, and political empowerment were construct-valid and shared the same psychometric properties. The AVE for each dimension of the Empowerment were above the 50% criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2010). These three measures of convergent validity all come together to suggest that there is a strong convergent validity within the sample. Further testing discriminant validity, the Square root of AVE for all seven variables are greater than any inter factor correlation (Social empowerment 0.977, negative attitude of eco-friendly tourism 0.958, positive attitude of eco-friendly tourism 0.932, psychological empowerment 0.963, residents' support for eco-friendly tourism 0.824, political empowerment 0.905 and economic benefit 0.834) hence confirm the discriminant validity. As Explained by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, (2012), the empowerment scales better represents the Foucauldian perspective of power where power is omnipresent and manifests itself within all aspects of the social relationships among the tourism actors. Social, political and psychological empowerment can be then measured using this scale which is also in par with Boely et al, (2014) RETS scale.

Conclusion

With the empirical measurement of resident empowerment in its infancy, academics have yet to examine what successful empowerment of the local people looks like across cultures where empowerment norms may be different. Hence it is important to test cross-cultural validity of scales before conducting hypothesis testing using these new scales. Mainly the empowerment in tourism studies are still developing, and mainly these scales are tested in Western samples. The EFA results of Sri Lankan sample appear supportive of using the identified empowerment scales to further use in modeling community support in eco-resort development. Now these scales

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of empowerment can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of managers' initiatives directed at empowering residents in local eco-resorts. The scales of psychological, social, and political empowerment can be used to assess how residents perceive various marketing messages, town hall meetings aimed at political empowerment, or how tourism infrastructure designed to be used by residents and tourists alike actually affects the community's cohesion over time. By being able to track perceptions of empowerment, managers may be able to find out which initiatives are being successful at empowering residents and which ones are not, and make the needed changes. Measuring and tracking perceptions of empowerment over time will give managers a good gauge of how the community is being affected by tourism development, which has implications of not only increasing support for the local tourism industry, but also enhancing the community's general well-being and quality of life. This can also be used as an effective indicator of how sustainable a destination's tourism industry is. For example, if residents begin to perceive themselves as being psychologically, socially, or politically disempowered by tourism development, through periodic assessment, should be able to identify this important change and alert those involved in tourism that a change is needed.

There are a few limitations of this study. The first limitation relates to the analysis method. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is an advantageous statistical method used to examine the construct validity and psychometric properties of an instrument. However, because EFA is not a sufficient tool to test the theoretical foundations of the instrument, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with hypothesis should be conducted to further the knowledge in this area. The second limitation of this study is an essential sampling bias. The samples in this study were collected from a single community who are living around Heritance Kandalama. This sampling process might threaten the ability to generalize the results of this study, although various samples were included from different areas and different hotel types. Another potential limitation is associated with political empowerment scales used within the study. While the scales had strong precedence with past resident attitude research, the factor loading is low and therefore need further empirical studies to support the scale for political empowerment.

Future studies can definitely examine the relationships of these empowerment constructs with community attitude and their support for sustainable development. And also, further testing of the scales and its influence on resident attitudes toward tourism is needed across various settings and environments. This can also be tested in other types of tourism as well. Finally, the use of qualitative interviews could perhaps capture a deeper level of how tourism influences resident perceptions of psychological, social, and political empowerment. Managers could then use the findings to help foster these types of empowerment through marketing and management initiatives.

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