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The effects of residents' social identity and involvement on their advocacy of incoming tourism

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Abstract

A long stream of literature has identified cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions of social identity. Previous studies have examined identity self-congruence of incoming tourists. However, the application of identity theory to the study of host communities' support of incoming tourism has been under-researched. This paper seeks to make a contribution by closing this gap by investigating residents' identity and its association with their propensity to become advocates for inward tourism. A largely quantitative survey methodology used a sample of 307 Welsh residents to record items measuring their identity, involvement with tourism activities and their tourism advocacy behaviours. Affective components of identity had no significant effect on advocacy, but significant direct effects of cognitive components were found and also indirect effects mediated by involvement with tourists. It is concluded that advertising images presented by many tourism destination marketing organisations are incongruent with residents' identity. Cognitive identity results in stronger advocacy behaviours, and can be encouraged by greater involvement of residents with tourism activities.

Keywords: social identity; inward tourism; residents; advocacy

HIGHLIGHTS

- Investigates residents' identity and its effects on their advocacy of inward tourism
- 307 Welsh residents recorded items measuring their identity and their tourism advocacy behaviours
- Affective components of identity had no significant effect on advocacy.
- Significant direct and indirect effects of cognitive components of identity were found
- Advertising images presented by many tourism DMOs are incongruent with residents' identity

1. Introduction

Destination marketing has become increasingly important, as cities, regions and nations seek to attract a greater share of global tourism expenditure by creating a distinctive personality for a place, highlighting its uniqueness and differentiating it from other locations (Graves & Skinner, 2009). It is widely recognised in the tourism literature that organisations charged with branding a destination often fail to create or use images that are representative of that place and which differentiate it from similar tourist locations (Leisen, 2001). Skinner (2005, p. 302) argues that “in order to create a favourable image, there is potential for a discrepancy between the actual place, ‘warts and all’, and its promoted image.” One consequence of a disjuncture between the formally communicated image of a destination and residents’ perceptions of the tourism destination is a failure by residents to identify with the aims of a destination marketing organisation. There have been many reported examples where residents of an area did not identify with officially derived destination images, a situation that often occurs, for example where official agencies seek to promote a modern image of the area in order to promote a broader range of policy objectives (especially inward investment and urban renewal), but a broad constituent of interests identifies instead with a more traditional set of values (Ollins, 2000). The active support of host communities can be crucial for successful tourism development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004) and it has been suggested that if local residents become more aware of the positive characteristics of their regions, they are more likely to become ambassadors (Schroeder, 1996). Understanding local residents’ attitudes and their involvement in tourism is thus fundamental to the sustainability of efforts to promote inward tourism (Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2009; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

Host communities’ attitudes towards incoming tourism have attracted a lot of attention and numerous studies are available on this topic (Vargas-Sanchez, Porrás-Bueono, & Plaza-Mejía, 2011). However, the majority of these focus on residents’ perceptions of the impacts of incoming tourism and their’ support for (or opposition to) tourism development in their area (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Ap, 1992; Cu & Ryan, 2011; Diedrich & Garcia-Buades, 2009; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Lee, Kang, Long, & Reisinger, 2010; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Vargas-Sanchez, et al., 2011). Relatively little attention has been paid to the role of host communities’ role as ambassadors to promote incoming tourism, and in particular whether residents’ identity with a region has a significant effect on their advocacy of incoming tourism (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). The important role of identity has been well established in the domain of sociology and has been used to explain behaviour in the fields of organizational behaviour (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Dutton & Harquail, 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992); memberships to organizations (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995); and consumers’ loyalty to brands (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Homburg, Wieseke, & Hoyer, 2009; Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008). We propose that residents’ propensity to identify with the tourism icons used to promote their area is associated with an increased propensity to adopt advocacy behaviours with respect to promoting incoming tourism. This is the key issue which this paper seeks to investigate. Advocacy comes about through indirect effects of identity creating a sense of belonging and involvement with tourism activities in their area. Resulting advocacy behaviours can take a number of forms, including word-of-mouth recommendation through friends, family and wider diasporas of expatriates, increasingly facilitated through social network media. The role of word-of-mouth in the promotion of destinations to potential travellers has long been recognised as one of the most

influential information sources (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). On the basis of social identity theory, it is suggested that the strength of residents' identification with their community is related to their likelihood of sharing their knowledge with non-locals, (e.g. friends, work colleagues, acquaintances and tourists) (e.g. Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Sukoco & Wu, 2010). Lack of identity with a tourism destination can have opposite effects, including behaviours which are disruptive and obstructive to tourists (Key & Pillai, 2006; Mirbabayev & Shagzatova, 1999).

The application of identity theory to the study of host communities' support of incoming tourism has been under-researched (Ballesteros & Ramiriez, 2007; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012) and furthermore, the role of the host community's word-of-mouth referral activity in promoting inward tourism has rarely been explored (Choo & Park, 2009). This paper seeks to make a contribution by closing this gap by focusing on individuals' identity with their area of residence as a tourism destination and its association with their propensity to advocate it to prospective tourists. Identity can be predominately cognitive, referring to evaluations based on identification with practical benefits associated with the area; or emotive, referring to deeply held but not necessarily rational beliefs about the area, for example imputed historical associations of the area (Ollins, 2000). Identity may be a passively held attitude, or may be manifested by active involvement in the activities of the local community or with tourists. This is a reciprocal relationship, because involvement may be a cause as well as consequence of identity with the area.

A further aim of this paper is to examine whether there is a relationship between an individual's type and level of identity with their area of residence as a tourism destination, their involvement in local community and tourism activities, their attitude towards interacting with tourists, and their propensity for advocacy of inward tourism.

The structure of this paper is as follows. A review of literature will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the focal constructs of identity, involvement and advocacy behaviour, within the context of tourism destination marketing. From this, five research hypotheses are specified. A methodology will then be described which tests the hypotheses in the context of residents' of Wales identity with their country as a tourism destination, their level of involvement with tourists and their propensity to recommend the country to visitors. Following the analysis of data, theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1 Social Identity

An individual acquires identity by reference to others, and identity is about stressing points of similarity with some groups and differences to others. Social identity consists of salient group classifications (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1985, 1986). Tajfel (1978, p. 63) defines social identity as "...part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership", meaning that an individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to a certain social group is a driver to classify themselves into these different social categories, such as, memberships, religious affiliations, gender, race and/or age categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Social identity theory thus examines the important connection between individuals and the larger social structure (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

The literature identifies three components of identity: (1) a cognitive, (2) an evaluative and (3) an emotional component (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999). The cognitive component is associated with a cognitive awareness of one's membership in a social group or self-categorisation (Ellemers, et al., 1999; Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), individuals identify themselves relative to individuals in other categories, for example, a person from Wales may define their identity with reference to how they are different to other people in the UK. However, it should also be noted that even though some social groups are categorical and explicit, the extent to which the individual identifies with each category can be implicit and conditional (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). A member of the Welsh community may on some occasions see themselves as similar to, rather than different from the broader grouping of UK residents.

The evaluative component of social identity is linked to group self-esteem, and relates to the positive or negative value connotation attached to a particular group membership (Ellemers, et al., 1999). McMillan and Chavis (1986, p. 10) note that "the sense of belonging and identification involves feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group." An individual can thus increase self-esteem by feeling a sense of belonging when identifying with a particular group.

The third component of identity relates to the affective commitment to the group – the emotional aspect of social identification. Emotional bases for group commitment are enhanced when the group membership is self-selected and where the group offers the opportunity to distinguish oneself as a distinct individual (Ellemers, et al., 1999). Thus it is not uncommon that a person may acknowledge belonging to Wales, but does not necessarily feel emotionally committed to that region due to a number of reasons and may even prefer to belong to another group, such as UK residents.

Past research into social identity has informed discussion about the concept of 'brand communities' in which individuals share their experiences of a brand and use the linking value of a brand to develop their identity. Haslam et al. (2001) extend Tajfel and Turner's (1979) framework by suggesting that the three components identified by Ellemers et al. (1999) lead individuals to identify themselves as part of a brand group. Support for identifying distinct cognitive, affective and evaluative components of identity in the context of brands has been found in numerous studies (e.g. Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000), however, the existence of multiple dimensions of identity in the context of residents' identity with their area as a tourism destination has not been explored.

Social identity theory suggests that an individual's sense of identification with a group encourages participation in a brand community (Algesheimer, et al., 2005; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This is particularly relevant to the current study, which seeks to explore the effects of images portrayed by a tourism destination management organisation on the attitudes and behaviour of residents in promoting their tourism "brand". Brand identification occurs when a consumer evaluates a brand as being personally relevant to his or her own self-identity (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Some authors have suggested that brands have become increasingly important in the development of shared community experience. Social groups that once identified with shared values relating to the church, work or geographic location find these sources of identity more difficult in an increasingly individualistic, secular and mobile world, and instead brands become a source of shared community experience (Cova, 1997). Some have talked of a "Brandscape" as an increasingly important type of community, in which consumers feel emotionally

linked to one another, either formally or informally, through the brands they consume (Sherry, 1998). Brands are chosen when the image that they create matches the needs, values and lifestyles of the buyer. In his discussion of “lovemarks”, Roberts has discussed the emotional bond that develops between an individual and the brands they buy (Roberts, 2004).

2.2 National/ethnocentric identity

An important basis for identity is an individual’s ethnocentricity. Ethnocentrism has been linked to patriotism in a number of studies (e.g. Wall & Heslop, 1986). In the context of ethnocentrism, it has been noted that migration between cultures or a sudden influx of other cultures may precipitate a process of defining “in-crowd” from “out-crowd” (Hall, 2000).

Ethnocentricity has been extensively studied in the context of country of origin effects and consumers’ propensity to advocate domestically produced goods in preference to those produced elsewhere. This stream of literature has also sought to identify dimensions of ethnocentrism, which largely mirror the dimensionality of the social identity construct. In their study, Vida and Reardon (2008) identified three components: a cognitive component whereby a consumer typically sees products from one country as being functionally superior to products from other countries; an affective component, typically comprising an individual’s love of their country and their emotional attachment to it (e.g. the country where they were born and with which they feel a sense of belonging), and may be impersonal, for example a country may provoke positive emotional reactions on the basis of associations with its national football team; finally, they identified a normative element that typically occurs when a consumer feels a sense of moral obligation to buy products from their own country rather than from a competing country. An example of this is when high levels of unemployment in a local industry lead to feelings of guilt and shame if an individual bought a foreign made product instead of a functionally similar but locally made product (Vida & Reardon, 2008).

Relating ethnocentricity back to Ellemers et al’s (1999) three components of identity to tourism, residents should identify themselves with, and consider themselves to be, members of their home country (cognitive), they should have an emotional connection to the place and have feelings of belonging (affective) and consider their peers to have a positive effect and influence on their sense of being (evaluative) (Choo & Park, 2009).

2.3 Behavioural involvement and attitude

There is a complex association between behavioural involvement and identity. One view is that an individual’s ethnocentric identity may lead to greater involvement with their community. Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest individuals involve themselves in group activities to satisfy an underlying need for self-enhancement and increase in self-esteem. In the context of identity with brands, Sukoco & Wu (2010) propose two underlying motivations why an individual becomes involved in a brand community: ‘self-related’ (referring to a need for personal enjoyment and growth) and ‘social related’ (concerned with the need to develop an association with others within the community). Furthermore, the mere act of involvement with the community can add to an individual’s identity with the group, through a process of becoming a member of the “in-group” rather than “out-group”. It has been noted that identity involves a gradual process and this is facilitated by involvement with the sources which give identity (Hall, 2000). In the context of tourism, it has been widely accepted that

residents' likelihood of supporting incoming tourism, and their willingness to spread positive messages via word-of-mouth is influenced by the image they perceive of their area and their identification with it (Schroeder, 1996). Social exchange theory suggests that residents are more likely to have a deeper identification with a destination brand and a more positive attitude towards tourists if the perceived benefits gained from involvement with tourism exceed the perceived costs. If the economic gain is considered attractive, community members are more likely to participate with and welcome visitors to their area (Scott & Yutyunyong, 2009). As a result, positive feelings and a deep identification with the destination brand is likely to increase community participation in local tourism attractions (Key & Pillai, 2006).

Previous research has linked behavioural involvement to affective attitude (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which relates to the emotions associated with performing a behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour proposes that an antecedent of an individual's behaviour is their intention to engage in that behaviour and that intention is predicted by attitudes toward the behaviour and subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes are thus conceptualised as an individual's affective and instrumental evaluation of performing the behaviour. Much research within the field of tourism has assessed the effects of brand identity and attitude formation of international visitors towards a destination brand and their subsequent travel behaviours (e.g. Chon, 1991; Crompton, 1990; Gartner & Shen, 1992; Jenkins, 1999; Prayag, 2009; Wegner, 2008). Much less attention has been paid to the attitudes and identification of local residents (Schroeder, 1996).

2.4 Advocacy of incoming tourism

This research is concerned with advocacy by residents of their area as a destination for incoming tourism. Advocacy can be attributed with attitudinal and behavioural dimensions and numerous conceptual and empirical studies have sought to distinguish attitudes and behaviours associated with loyalty and advocacy (Dick and Basu 1994; Fornell *et al.*, 1996). Some might argue that self-consumption can be a form of advocacy, especially in the context of conspicuously consumed goods and services where such consumption implicitly or explicitly signals to others a recommendation to buy (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2002). In this paper, we are concerned with measuring advocacy behaviours as an outcome of a process of identity and involvement.

It has been noted that tourism attractions frequently target local residents as an important secondary target market (they sometimes comprise the primary market). In this study, we restrict advocacy behaviours to communications by residents to potential incoming tourists which have the effect – implicit or explicit – of encouraging them to visit their area.

Within the tourism sector, it has been noted that 'organic' information (e.g. from community members via word-of-mouth) has more credibility than induced sources (e.g. official tourist brochures) (Garner, 1993). While there is growing evidence of the effects of social network media in disseminating such organic information, it has also been noted that the opinions of local residents are perceived to be particularly useful sources of information about a tourism destination (Crick, 2003). Research has suggested that positive word-of-mouth is more frequently exchanged between individuals than negative word-of-mouth and that it is more likely to influence buyer behaviour than printed media (Ang & Buttle, 2006; Reichheld, 2006). The opposite of positive word-of-mouth can occur where residents do not identify with the tourism values of the area, leading to increased tension, hostility, and suspicion towards

visitors (Mirbabayev & Shagazatova, 1999). As a result, residents' behaviours may include "grumbling, obstruction, gossip, ridicule and in some circumstances people may resort to violence to defend themselves against insensitive and intrusive tourists" (Key & Pillai, 2006, p. 10). It follows that making "local residents more aware of the positive attributes of their home regions could help make residents better ambassadors for their region" (Schroeder, 1996, p. 72).

2. Research hypotheses

The review of literature provides extensive evidence of the importance of identity in influencing purchase decisions and advocacy behaviours, and the specific importance of ethnocentrism as a source of identity. Within the tourism sector, the role of local residents in promoting their area through word-of-mouth advocacy has been noted. The literature suggested that residents who identify with their area as a tourism destination are more likely to support inward tourism.

Having an identity and experiencing a sense of being a member of a group which is distinct from other groups has been shown to have an association with attitude and an effect in guiding an individual's behaviour (Stets & Biga, 2003; Tajfel, 1978). In the context of tourism, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) found that not only residents' attitudes to the impacts of tourism but their identities influence their support for tourism, and that self-identity is a good determinant of behaviour. They furthermore propose that identity theory should be considered a more general theory than attitude-based ones (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). The link between residents' identity with their area as a tourism destination and their propensity to promote it to prospective tourists has been under researched. Therefore we formulate the first hypothesis:

H1. There is a direct positive relationship between an individual's identity with their region and their propensity to engage in positive advocacy to support inward tourism

Identity is reinforced through involvement with the source of the identity. In the context of identity with a tourism destination, it may be expected that the strength of identity will be positively related to an individual's level of involvement with tourism related activities in their area. The relationship between involvement and identity is a complex and reciprocal one, with a suggestion that identity may be a cause as well as a consequence of involvement.

We build on the literature on brand communities which incorporates social identity theory to propose that an individual's sense of identification with a community encourages participation in it (Algesheimer, et al., 2005; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The complex, two way link between identity and involvement was noted by Hall (2000) and we build on this in our conceptual framework. The framework shown in Figure 1 indicates a two-way relationship between identity and behavioural involvement. We initially test a model based on identity having an effect on involvement and subsequently test a model in which involvement has an effect on identity.. We therefore hypothesise:

H2. There is a direct positive relationship between an individual's identity with their region and their individual level of involvement with tourism related activities.

Previous research has linked behavioural involvement to affective attitude (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which relates to the emotions associated with performing a behaviour.

Where residents are involved with the tourism industry (eg through employment), they are likely to become advocates of inward tourism. Social exchange theory has suggested that residents are more likely to have a closer identification with the aims of incoming tourism and a more positive attitude towards tourists if they perceive that the benefits gained from involvement with tourism exceed the perceived costs. The mere act of involvement with an economic and social group defined by tourism can add to an individual's identity with the group (Hall, 2000). The literature has suggested that the basis of this perceived trade-off may include social and economic exchange (Scott & Yutyunyong, 2009). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis in the context of inward tourism.

H3. *There is direct positive association between an individual's level of involvement with tourism related activities and their propensity to engage in positive advocacy to support inward tourism.*

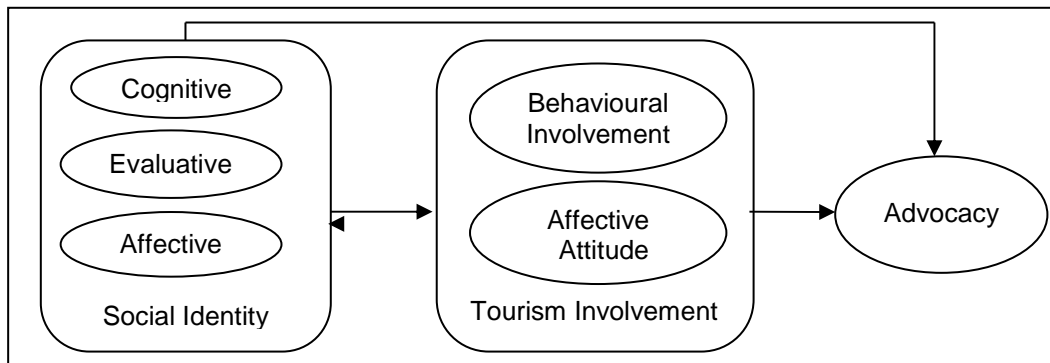
There have now been numerous studies into the effects of identity on tourists' decision making and from the perspective of host communities' receptiveness to incoming tourists. Although the literature has recognised that within a tourism context, individuals may hold multiple identities (for example different identities which may be associated with playing the roles of employee, individual tourism consumer, family tourism consumer etc), these have not generally been underpinned by distinctions made in social psychology between the cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions of identity (Ellemers, et al., 1999). Cognitive bases of identity emphasise an individual's recognition that they are a member of a social entity. Affective bases are based on emotional involvement with the group and feelings of belonging. Evaluative identity is based on an individual's assessment of the group with which they seek to identify. Support for identifying distinct cognitive, affective and evaluative components of identity in the context of brands has been found in numerous studies (e.g. Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). The existence of multiple underpinning dimensions of identity in the context of residents' identity with their area as a tourism destination has not been explored; therefore our last two hypotheses extend this conceptualisation of identity to the context of tourism involvement and advocacy.

H4. *The components of identity have differential effects on an individual's propensity to become involved with local tourism related activities.*

H5. *The components of identity have differential effects on an individual's propensity to engage in positive advocacy to support inward tourism.*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework showing the relationships between the principal constructs to be studied.

Figure 1: The conceptual framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Study context

The hypotheses were tested in the context of inward tourism to Wales. Tourism is a major source of income to Wales. In 2010, Wales attracted 8.69 million overnight visitors spending £1.45 billion. Including day visitors, tourists spent around £9 million a day whilst in Wales, which is a total of around £3.3 billion a year (Welsh Assembly Government, 2011). A strong sense of identity with Wales is held by many residents of the country, both those who were born there and those who migrated to it (Carter, 2010). There is also an extensive diaspora whose identification with Wales has been documented (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2002). However, this is counterbalanced by high levels of unemployment and social deprivation which causes despondency among some groups and reluctance to identify with positive aspects of the country which may appeal to tourists (Threadgold et al., 2008). There is also an active group within Wales which is opposed to outside influence in the country and sees tourism as a threat to the traditional culture of Wales (Carter, 2010). Tourism activities are dispersed widely throughout the country, and residents are likely to be involved with tourists in a variety of rural and urban tourism settings.

The methodology used in this study was predominantly quantitative, and used preliminary qualitative research to contextualise previously validated measurement scales.

3.2 Sample and study procedures

The population frame was initially defined as people who live in Wales. The extended diaspora of people who would consider themselves Welsh was therefore excluded. The population frame was further refined by focusing on one particular age cohort. This narrowing of the population frame was undertaken to exclude variations in identity and involvement with tourists which could be explained by greater life experience and exposure to different cultures and to tourists. It is likely, for example, that a 55 year old Welsh resident would have greater exposure to tourists visiting Wales and their construction of identity is likely to be based on events which are not shared during the shorter life of a 25 year old. The sample was therefore confined to people aged 18-25 who were residents' of Wales.

An online survey was employed for this study. There is considerable evidence that online surveys are an efficient and effective way to collect data, especially where the target population comprises young adults who are generally heavy users of e-mail and the Internet (Dillman, 2007; Luo, 2009; Wilson & Laskey, 2003). According

to the Office for National Statistics (2009), 96 per cent of young adults in the UK aged 16 to 24 year have Internet access, and 85 per cent of these used it “every day or almost every day”. The questionnaire was made accessible online via Twitter.com and Facebook.com, as these were considered to be the most widely used and popular vehicles of communication amongst young adults with 91 per cent of the 16 to 24 year old Internet users saying they took part in social networking on websites such as Facebook or Twitter (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Twitter.com is a popular online social community, with 75 million users (RJ Metrics, 2010), 35% of whom are 18 to 24 years of age, corresponding to the defined sampling frame (Cheng, Evans, & Singh, 2009). The questionnaire was made available for nine days during September 2010, covering two weekends and five weekdays, with two reminders sent to invitees. There is evidence that varying the dates and times at which survey invitations and reminders are sent reduces problems of response bias (Babin & Zikmund, 2007). A small prize cash incentive was offered to participants, which encouraged a high response rate. There is considerable research evidence suggesting that the offer of an incentive increases response rates (Church, 1993; Collins, Ellickson, Hays, & Mccaffrey, 2000), and in this case, the incentive was felt not to bias the response.

A total of 348 responses were obtained, however 41 were eliminated due to either incomplete responses or not meeting the study’s sampling requirements, resulting in a usable sample of 307 responses. All eligible respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years with an average age of 21.2 years 59% were female and 41% were male.. The majority of the respondents were born in Wales (83.4%) and 41.7% of the respondents were Welsh speakers. Approximately half of respondents (51.5%) had completed their A-levels (equivalent to a year 12 high-school certificate), whilst 40.1% had earned a University degree.

3.3 Measures

Measurements of the constructs were drawn from previously developed and validated multi-item scales from the literature. These were refined and adapted to the context on the basis of exploratory qualitative research. The questionnaire included the constructs that form the focus of this research: social identity, behavioural involvement, affective attitude and advocacy. All items were measured on a five point Likert-scale with anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The three components of social identity were measured by nine items developed by Ellemers et al. (1999). The affective attitude measure included four items and was based on Ajzen (1991). Residents’ behavioural involvement was operationalised as participation in tourism related activities. For this, three items developed by Zhang (2008) were used to capture behaviour such as frequency of visiting local tourist sites. Advocacy was operationalised as intention to promote inward intention through word-of-mouth and was measured by a three item scale adapted from Harrison-Walker (Harrison-Walker, 2001). The measurement scales can be found in Appendix A.

4. Results

4.1 Measure validation

To test the proposed hypotheses we followed the two-step procedure of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) by firstly examining scale validity from the measurement model using Confirmatory Factor

Analysis (CFA) and secondly focusing on testing the proposed hypotheses using the structural model. The data were analysed using AMOS Version 16.0.1.

Measurement reliability and validity of the hypothetical model containing the multi-item constructs were assessed using CFA. The initial measurement model based on the constructs as identified in the literature (i.e. employing a three distinct constructs for social identity) implied an acceptable fit. However, a high correlation coefficient ($r=.870$, $p<.000$) between 'emotional identity' and 'evaluative identity' revealed poor discriminant validity between these two constructs. To explore the reasons further, an exploratory factor analysis was applied to the nine social identity items to examine the underlying dimensions of social identity in our context. Initial results showed that two out of the nine items either loaded on more than one factor, or did not load on any of the two factors, and it was decided to keep seven of the nine items for the further analyses. In contrast to the results of Ellemers et al. (1999) only two distinct constructs were identified, explaining 63.9% of the variance using Varimax rotation. The first factor included the two items 'I identify with others who are Welsh' and 'I am like others who are Welsh'. This was in line with the literature and can be interpreted as cognitive identity or self-categorisation. The second factor included the remaining items and was named 'affective identity'. These items included the original constructs of 'evaluative identity' or 'group self-esteem' and 'emotional identity' or 'affective commitment to the group'. It was thus decided to use the two factor solution for social identity in the subsequent analyses.

The fit for the final measurement model was assessed by several indices. The CFA which included the multiple-item scales gave a χ^2 value of 96.552 with 79 degrees of freedom ($p\leq.087$). The chi-squared value divided by the degrees of freedom ratio for the measurement model was 1.22 and thus within the recommended range of 1 to 3 (c.f. Carmines & McIver, 1981). The comparative fit index (CFI=.960), the goodness of fit index (GFI=.989) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI=.985) were all above the recommended threshold of .9 and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA=.027) was well below .08 (c.f. Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Steiger, 1989). Thus the measurement model fit was adequate for further analysis.

The following items were deleted due to low loading estimates (below .5): 'Generally speaking, for me to interact with tourists is stressful. (R)' (from the Affective Attitude scale), 'I feel good about being Welsh', 'I think the Welsh have little to be proud of' and 'I would like to continue interacting with Welsh people' (from the 'Affective Identity' scale) (Bollen, 1989). The remaining items loaded substantively (above .5) and significantly on their underlying constructs ($p<.001$) thus demonstrating convergent validity. The average variance extracted for all constructs exceeded .5. With regards to discriminant validity, the average variance extracted by each final factor exceeded the corresponding squared inter-construct correlation estimates (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The reliability of the multiple-item constructs was assessed using the measure of Construct Reliability, which is computed from the squared sum of factor loadings and the sum of error variance terms (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). All constructs were internally consistent with construct reliabilities ranging from .73 for cognitive identity to .82 for affective identity (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The construct reliabilities, average variance extracted and inter-construct correlations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Construct reliabilities, average variance extracted and correlations among latent constructs

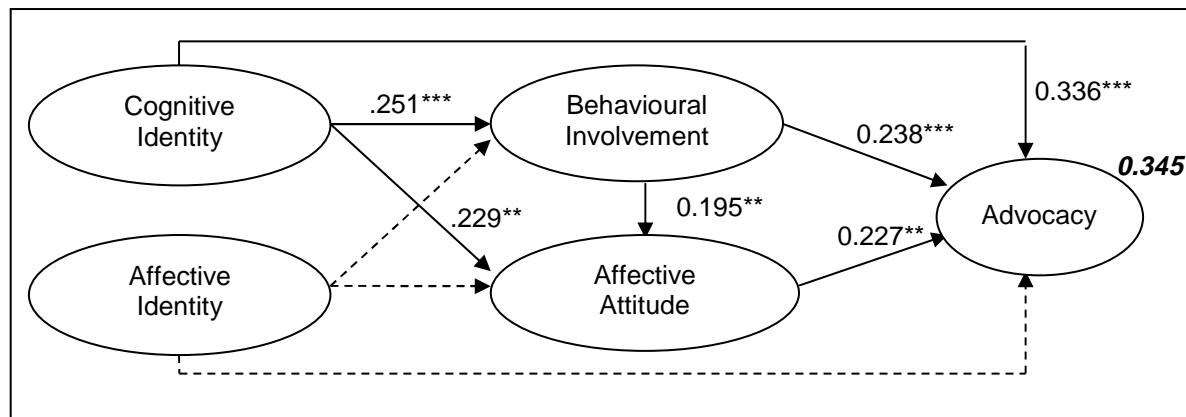
Measurement parameter estimates	CR	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Cognitive Identity	.73	.581				
(2) Affective Identity	.82	.215	.548			
(3) Behavioural Involvement	.78	.239	.000	.554		
(4) Affective attitude	.78	.290	.117	.250	.560	
(5) WOM Intention	.79	.471	.158	.375	.391	.561

Note: Values in the diagonal represent the variance extracted

4.2 Hypotheses testing

The proposed conceptual model was estimated with Structural Equation Modelling. An inspection of the goodness of fit indicators demonstrated a good fit for the structural model ($\chi^2=96.552$, $df=79$; $\chi^2/df=1.22$, $p<.087$, $GFI=.960$, $CFI=.989$, $TLI=.985$, $RMSEA=.027$) and was thus considered suitable for testing the hypothesised relationships. The results for the structural model are presented in Figure 2 below. The proposed model explains 34.5% of the variance in advocacy (word-of-mouth intention). In the following section, the results are discussed in the context of the research hypotheses.

Figure 2: Standardised path estimates



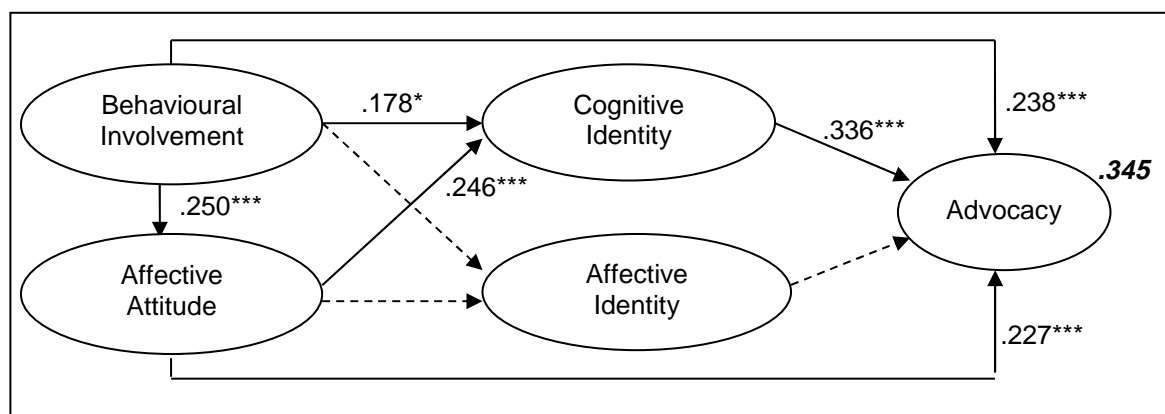
Note: * $p\leq.05$, ** $p\leq.01$, *** $p\leq.00$, Dotted line denotes non-significant relationship

An individual's cognitive identity with their region has a direct positive effect on their propensity to engage in advocacy to support inward tourism ($\beta=.336$, $p<.001$). There were also significant indirect effects, mediated by behavioural involvement and affective attitude. However, affective identity had no significant influence on word-of-mouth intentions. Thus the results indicated only partial support for H1. The findings suggested a similar picture for H2, which postulated a direct positive relationship between social identity and involvement in tourism related activities, as H2 was also only partly supported. An individual's cognitive identity had a positive significant influence on their level of behavioural involvement with tourism related activities ($\beta=.251$, $p<.01$) and affective attitude toward tourism ($\beta=.229$, $p<.01$). The path between affective identity and involvement in tourism related activities was insignificant. Our results indicate support for H3; an individual's level of involvement with tourists ($\beta=.238$, $p<.001$) and their affective attitude ($\beta=.227$, $p<.01$) had positive

effects on their propensity to engage in positive word-of-mouth to support inward tourism. Furthermore, a higher level of participation in tourism related activities also leads to a more positive attitude towards interacting with tourists ($\beta=.195, p<.01$). Differential effects of cognitive and affective components of identity on an individual's propensity to become involved with local tourism related activities were found, thus supporting H4. Cognitive identity had a significant effect on involvement, but affective identity had no significant influence. H5 is also supported as only a higher cognitive identity will lead to increased positive word-of-mouth intention, but not a higher affective identity.

It was noted in the literature review that the link between social identity and involvement can be complex and reciprocal, therefore to further explore the nature and robustness of this association, an alternative model was run in which identity was the consequence rather than an antecedent of involvement. The alternative model is shown in Figure 3. The results of analysing this model were consistent with the main model, in that cognitive identity had significant antecedent factors in behavioural involvement and affective attitude ($\beta=.178, p<.05$ and $\beta=.246, p<.00$) respectively, but there was no, significant antecedent link to affective identity.

Figure 3: Alternative Model - Standardised path estimates



Note: * $p\leq.05$, ** $p\leq.01$, *** $p\leq.000$, Dotted line denotes non-significant relationship (Model Fit: $\chi^2=96.552$ (df=79, $p=.087$), GFI=.960, CFI=.989 TLI=.985, RMSEA=.027)

5. Discussion

This study has extended our understanding of the role of identity in consumer decision making within a tourism context. Previous studies within the domain of marketing have concentrated on the construct of identity in informing tourism purchase decisions. This study has additionally found that social identity can have a role in encouraging individuals to promote tourism related services. The role of personal advocacy is particularly important for services involving high credence qualities and high levels of personal involvement. Tourism covers a range of services that typically cannot be evaluated before purchase; consequently consumers are likely to seek word-of-mouth recommendation of others. The tourism literature had suggested that residents of an area can have an important influence in promoting their area to incoming tourists, with reports that positive behaviours by residents can add to the appeal of an area on the basis of authenticity and a welcoming attitude (e.g. Lawson & Williamson, 2001). On the other hand, negative attitudes towards tourists can result in an antipathetic or obstructive attitude to tourists, manifested

through formal and informal activities to discourage further visits (Mirbabayev & Shagzatova, 1999).

This study makes an important contribution to tourism theory because of its still novel use of social identity theory to show empirically a role for the construct in developing consumer advocacy behaviour. Recent research has suggested that residents who identify with their area and its tourism resources are more likely to support tourism (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). The results of this study show a significant positive relationship between an individual's cognitive identity and their propensity to engage in advocacy to support inward tourism, thus partly confirming the results of past studies.

An important contribution of this research is to build upon previous research in social psychology which has found identity to be a multi-dimensional construct, and to test its existence in a tourism context. The social psychology literature has attributed the construct of identity with three distinct dimensions: cognitive, affective and evaluative. This study sought to replicate this structure of identity, but found no evidence to support a separate evaluative component of the construct, and the findings of this study therefore contradict the results of previous research conducted in different contexts (e.g. Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers, et al., 1999). This may reflect the nature of an individual's identity with their region of residence in which calculations about the value of identifying with its values are less likely to be made than is typically the case involving other types of membership association – on which many previous studies using the three dimensions have been based. One possibility is that the quality of being Welsh was perceived as having being given to respondents at birth and therefore a source of identity over which they had no control or influence. This may be in contrast to the way that evaluative assessments are made in respect of aspirational identity groups for example, a particular pop group or religious group (Akerlof and Kranton 2010)

The analysis proceeded with two components of identity, cognitive and affective which had acceptable levels of discriminant validity. Given that much of the literature on ethnocentricity in a tourism context has stressed emotional links underlying individuals' identity with the place of their birth or place of current residence, it might seem surprising that the emotional component of identity did not have a significant influence on advocacy behaviour for tourism. There was, on the other hand, a significant effect of cognitive elements on behavioural involvement and advocacy. The country of origin literature might have attributed this to consumers' repeated exposure to the products of a country, with repeated functional reliability leading to cognitive identity with the products of the country. In the case of tourism, the experience of residents can be quite different to incoming tourists who typically see only a small part of the total product offer available at the destination. The predominance of cognitive over affective identity might have reflected respondents' familiarity with the practical aspects of day to day life in their community, for example work and leisure facilities, but a failure to engage emotionally with the concept of attachment to the area as a tourist destination. This may be reinforced among members of the Welsh community who feel despondent about the economic and social standing of Wales (Carter 2010)

A further explanation for the predominance of cognitive over affective identity on residents' advocacy behaviour may be a mismatch between emotional messages which are frequently used by tourism destination marketing organisations and typically include references to historical or abstract images which are not part of

residents' current experience. It has been noted that abstract images have become increasingly important in marketing destinations (Ollins, 2000) and while such images may appeal to incoming tourists, there is a suggestion from this study that they might have a negative effect on residents' propensity to advocate their area as a tourist destination. Higher levels of advocacy were seen to derive from residents' involvement in tourism activities, for example through working within the sector or encountering tourists as fellow consumers.

5.1 Implications

This research has confirmed the application of a multi dimensional construct of identity to situations of consumer advocacy, and specifically in the context of tourism services which are co-produced and co-consumed. The findings contribute to current debate on "co-creation" which has been discussed in the context of Service Dominant Logic (SDL) (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). While SDL has talked generically about the role of consumers as co-producers of a service, this study has contributed to the development of SDL by noting the effects of identity and involvement on the propensity of individuals to become active advocates.

Identity was closely related to involvement, and it follows that an important means by which tourism destination marketing organisations can seek to maximise advocacy is to encourage a virtuous circle of greater involvement in the tourism sector leading to greater identification with the tourism aims of the area, which in turn leads to greater involvement in the sector.

A significant finding of this study has been the greater effect on advocacy activities of cognitive rather than affective aspects of identity. One implication of this might be that expenditure by destination marketing organisations on building abstract emotions-based images of their areas may fail to elicit identity with the area as a tourism destination by residents. However, gaining greater awareness of the practical aspects of tourism facilities through cognitive processes of involvement may create a sense of identity with tourism goals, and subsequently advocacy of the area. Strategies to increase residents' involvement may therefore be effective in leveraging this advocacy behaviour.

There are numerous examples of strategies used by tourism destination marketing organisations to increase involvement by residents, including free or subsidised entry for residents to local tourist attractions during quiet seasons; shared use of tourism facilities (eg leisure services) for local community use; and involvement in local tourism strategy development processes.

Given the increasing power of word of mouth advocacy through internet based social media, the use of tactics such as residents' events at local tourism attractions may be cost effective in leveraging "free" publicity through advocacy behaviour by residents, although it is beyond the scope of this study to assess whether this is cost-effective, compared, for example, to conventional media advertising which targets incoming tourists as a primary audience and residents as a secondary audience. It is possible that with the proliferation of increasingly fragmented and segmentable channels of communication, tourism destination marketing organisations will be able to develop quite distinctive communication programmes for resident and incoming customer markets. While the latter may be amenable to identities based on emotional appeals, a finding of this study is that the resident target is more amenable to communication which is built on cognitive appeals to identity.

5.2 Limitations and further research

This study has examined one specific context, young adult residents in Wales, and while this provides a contribution to knowledge by extending theories of identity to this specific context. While the use of a narrow research context can be justified because of the ability to control other confounding factors related to the experience of respondents or the characteristics of an area, it may be difficult to generalise the results to other regions and contexts. As no similar studies appear to have been conducted in this context, further research will be needed to assess how far the results of this study are valid in other settings. Young adults provided an interesting starting point, given their relatively high propensity to use social network media as consumer advocates. It would be interesting to investigate the propensity of older adults to act as advocates of their area, taking into account their possibly longer life experience of their home area and their greater propensity to rely on more traditional forms of word of mouth advocacy.

Although this study recorded respondents' propensity to advocate their area to potential incoming tourists, the methodology has not allowed an assessment to be made about whether this form of advocacy behaviour is cost effective for a tourism destination marketing organisation to facilitate, compared with traditional communication media. While the effectiveness of all communication media can be difficult to quantify, and even harder to place a monetary value on, there is still considerable debate about how to measure the commercial value of messages disseminated through social network media.

The findings of this study may have implications, beyond the tourism context, in other service sectors involving high credence qualities and extensive consumer-producer and consumer-consumer co-production. This research echoes the findings of Homburg et al. (2009) who noted that the construct of social identity deserves more attention in marketing research and Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) who postulate that identity theory should be incorporated into future studies on host's attitudes and support for tourism.

The research adopted a predominantly quantitative approach, and although preliminary qualitative research was undertaken to contextualise the measurement scales, further phenomenological studies would be useful to explore the linkages between identity, involvement and advocacy behaviour.

Appendix A

Constructs and measures	Standardized loading	VE	CR	A
<i>Cognitive Identity – Self-categorization (Ellemers, et al., 1999)</i>		0.58	0.73	0.72
I identify with others who are Welsh	0.821			
I am like others who are Welsh	0.698			
<i>Evaluative/Emotional Identity – Group commitment (Ellemers, et al., 1999)</i>		0.55	0.82	0.79
I have little respect for the Welsh (R)	0.500			
I would rather not tell others that I am Welsh. (R)	0.632			
I dislike being Welsh. (R)	0.882			
I would rather belong to another nationality. (R)	0.875			
I feel good about being Welsh.	Deleted due to low loading			
I think the Welsh have little to be proud of. (R)	Deleted due to low loading			
I would like to continue interacting with Welsh people.	Deleted due to low loading			
<i>Residents' participation in tourism related activities (Zhang, 2008)</i>		0.55	0.78	0.77
I visit local tourist sites on a monthly basis.	0.565			
I often offer my assistance to tourism promotional events/activities in my region.	0.865			
I often attend local community meetings.	0.771			
<i>Affective attitudes towards tourists (based on Ajzen, 1991)</i>		0.56	0.78	0.75
Generally speaking, for me to interact with tourists ... is pleasant.	0.801			
... is enjoyable.	0.880			
... is stressful. (R)	Deleted due to low loading			
... is boring. (R)	0.514			
<i>Residents' WOM intention (based Harrison-Walker, 2001)</i>		0.56	0.79	0.79
I will tell more people about the tourist attractions in my home area than in other regions.	0.761			
When I tell others about the tourist attractions in my home area, I tend to talk about them in great detail.	0.783			
I only have good things to say about the tourist attractions in my home area.	0.701			

Note: $n=307$, All standardized loadings are significant at $p<0.001$ (VE=Variance extracted, CR=Composite reliability, α = Cronbach's Alpha)

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