

Cannabis Tourism and the Community: Resident Attitudes in Humboldt County, California

Ara Pachmayer
Humboldt State University

Reed Switzer
Humboldt State University

Shawn Reilly
Humboldt State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/ideafest>



Part of the [Leisure Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pachmayer, Ara; Switzer, Reed; and Reilly, Shawn () "Cannabis Tourism and the Community: Resident Attitudes in Humboldt County, California," *IdeaFest: Interdisciplinary Journal of Creative Works and Research from Humboldt State University*. Vol. 5 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/ideafest/vol5/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in IdeaFest: Interdisciplinary Journal of Creative Works and Research from Humboldt State University by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. For more information, please contact kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu.

Cannabis Tourism and the Community: Resident Attitudes in Humboldt County, California

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Spring 2017 REC 365 Data Collection Team Michael Anhorn Logan Ashdale
Genesea Black-Lanouette Michael Chavez Casey Cruikshank Zachary Dalby Sky Erbert Levi Goodeyon
Wes Hewitt Ian Marting Jorge Rivera

Cannabis Tourism and the Community: Resident Attitudes in Humboldt County, California

Ara Pachmayer (Humboldt State University), Reed Switzer (Humboldt State University), Shawn Reilly (Humboldt State University)

Abstract

Resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism in Humboldt County, California were investigated in this exploratory study. The primary purpose was to understand if the variables used to explain resident attitudes towards tourism would show similar patterns when applied to cannabis tourism. The study included a questionnaire distributed to adult residents of Humboldt County and was conducted between March and August 2017, just prior to recreational cannabis sales beginning in California. Correlations and crosstabs were performed on the data. While personal benefit was found to have an impact on resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism, other variables indicate mixed support which suggests that some variables may behave differently when considering cannabis tourism. Managerial implications are also considered.

Keywords: resident attitudes, community, tourism, cannabis tourism

Introduction

Cannabis tourism has been defined as “purchasing with the intent to consume marijuana products while temporarily traveling away from one’s normal place of work or residence” (Taylor, 2019, p. 6). In contrast, others have determined that the tourist does not need to have the intent to consume cannabis to be participating in cannabis tourism but can simply be interested in learning more about cannabis (Giraud, 2019). Cannabis tourism might also include visits to dispensaries or facilities involved in cannabis pro-

cessing, attending cannabis friendly retreats, and educational courses such as culinary cannabis classes.

In 2016, the passing of Proposition 64 allowed for the sale and taxation of recreational cannabis to begin in California on January 1, 2018. Proposition 64 opened the door for legal cannabis tourism in California and Humboldt County (Houston, 2016). Due to the international reputation of cannabis production in Humboldt County, many in the Humboldt County tourism industry saw this as an opportunity for Humboldt County to become the “Napa Valley of cannabis tourism” (“Get ready for marijuana le-

galization, or get ready to lose,” 2014). Cannabis tourism is a potential complement to Humboldt County’s existing tourism resources, which include scenic coastlines, rural beaches, redwood forests, and a variety of local businesses providing unique products and experiences.

Looking to the experiences of other US states, according to the Colorado Tourism Office, the number of out of state visitors to Colorado who reported that they were more likely to visit the state due to cannabis has increased by 10% since the legalization of cannabis (“Economic effects,” 2016). Another study found that after legalization in 2014, tourists made up 44% of recreational sales in Denver and 90% of recreational sales in mountain tourist areas (Light et al., 2015). The potential tax revenue for local communities is tremendous.

Claesgen and Kraft (2018) indicate tourism as a key component related to the cannabis industry. Beyond being the home of the redwoods, Humboldt County often promotes the wealth of locally grown and/or produced products as a selling point for visitors to the area (“Travel info for the Redwoods,” n.d.). According to Claesgen and Kraft, “it is believed cannabis tourism could help increase the demand for . . . Humboldt-branded products” (p. 9). Many communities throughout the county and other legal states are actively pursuing cannabis tourism. Despite this being seen as a good opportunity for Humboldt County and other communities in legal states, few studies have focused on how residents feel about cannabis tourism (Kang et al., 2016b).

Understanding resident attitudes towards tourism is a critical piece of tourism development and growth (Sharpley, 2014). The current study attempted to capture the attitudes of the general public across Humboldt County rather than focusing on a specific population. Another similar study is not known to the authors at this time.

The purpose of the study was to explore if the variables used to explain resident attitudes towards tourism would show similar patterns when applied to cannabis tourism in Humboldt County, California. Given that legal cannabis tourism is a relatively new research topic, questions to guide the study were developed utilizing past research in the area of resident attitudes towards tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Látková & Vogt, 2012; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990). The study focused on two research questions including:

1. Is there a relationship between age, length of residency, and personal benefit from, and attitudes towards, cannabis tourism?

2. Do attitudes towards cannabis tourism differ in terms of the level of knowledge about the tourism industry and personal benefit from tourism?

Methods

In advance of research taking place, the protocol for data collection was approved by Humboldt State University’s Institutional Review Board. Data collection involved a paper-based and online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to assess resident attitudes towards tourism in general with several items aimed more specifically towards cannabis tourism. Respondents were asked a series of Likert scale items regarding attitudes towards cannabis tourism. Multiple items to assess attitudes toward cannabis tourism were adapted from Kang, Miller, and O’Leary (2016a).

In-person surveying of adult residents occurred at popular spots throughout the county in March and April 2017. Diverse sites were selected to capture residents including shopping centers, downtown districts, parks, restaurants, and cafes (Table 1). Permission to survey was sought from the appropriate people in advance of surveying. For onsite surveying, students from the Spring 2017 REC365 Travel Industry Management class at Humboldt State University were trained in random sampling and the survey distribution process and completed all in-person surveying.

An online questionnaire was made available for residents to complete between May and August 2017 to capture residents living in remote areas. Distributed through convenience and snowball sampling, a link to the online questionnaire was emailed to roughly 50 people who were asked to further distribute the link. The link to the online questionnaire was also distributed through local media outlets and press releases. In total, between onsite and online surveying, 806 individuals responded to the cannabis tourism attitude items on the survey. A majority of participants responded to the online survey which was a convenience and not a random sample. Therefore, the results apply only to people who responded to the questionnaire.

Literature

While tourism may provide an economic advantage for communities, it may also lead to negative impacts on the community and its residents. Without resident support, tourism may not be accepted in a community, and the tour-

Table 1. Survey sites and months for onsite surveying.

Survey Sites	Months
Mad River County Park, Arcata	March 2017
Rohnerville Park, Fortuna	March 2017
North Coast Co-op, Eureka	March 2017
Eureka Natural Foods, Eureka	March 201
Bayshore Mall, Eureka	March 2017 – April 2017
Union Town Shopping Center, Arcata	March 2017 – April 2017
Old Town, Eureka	March 2017 – April 2017
Arcata Plaza, Arcata	March 2017 – April 2017
College Cove, Trinidad	April 2017
Samoa Dunes Recreation Area, Samoa	April 2017
Woodley Island, Eureka	April 2017
Rays Grocery Store, Fortuna	April 2017
Redwood Curtain Brewery, Arcata	April 2017
Mad River Brewery, Blue Lake	April 2017
Starbucks, McKinleyville	April 2017
Cher-Ae Heights Casino, Trinidad	April 2017

ism resources that originally brought visitors to a destination may be changed beyond recognition (Martin, 1995). Many studies have sought to better understand resident perceptions of the impacts of tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Haley et al., 2005; Williams & Lawson, 2001). Beyond understanding perceived impacts, stakeholders should also know the factors that influence resident attitudes towards tourism. Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal (2002) state that:

“while success in the industry depends upon attractions and services, it requires the hospitality of local residents . . . Understanding local reaction and the factors that influence these attitudes is essential in achieving the goal of favorable support for tourism development.” (p. 80).

There are a host of variables that have been studied to understand their influence on resident attitude towards tourism including the level of tourism development in a com-

munity, economic dependency on tourism, community attachment, how much contact an individual has with tourists, knowledge of the industry, and demographic characteristics (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Hao et al., 2011; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017; Williams & Lawson, 2001). As noted above, the current study focused on resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism based on age, length of residency, knowledge of the tourism industry, and personal benefit from tourism and cannabis tourism.

In general, when considering resident attitudes and demographic characteristics such as age, length of residency, gender and level of education or income, no relationships have been found and often results have been conflicting (Cui & Ryan, 2011; Hao et al., 2011; Madrigal, 1993; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). For the current study, demographic statistics were collected to develop a profile of the community under study

but also to understand any influence these variables had on resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism.

In past research, age has not been shown to have an impact on resident attitudes towards tourism with few exceptions (McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017; Weaver & Lawton, 2001). Sinclair-Maragh investigated the demographic profile of residents and support for tourism in Jamaica. They found that younger residents had more support towards tourism. McGehee and Andereck explored a variety of factors that predict attitudes towards tourism. In terms of age, when the authors controlled for personal benefit they found that older residents were more supportive of tourism concluding that age did predict attitudes towards tourism. Age was also found to be a factor in determining attitudes towards tourism in Weaver and Lawton with older residents having more negative attitudes towards tourism. However, the authors found that older residents also had longer term residency in the community which may have been a factor in their negative attitudes (Weaver & Lawton). In light of the mixed results from past research, age was considered in the current study given the changing stigma associated with cannabis.

Length of residency is another example of a demographic characteristic that has been included in several studies considering resident attitudes towards tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Hao et al., 2010; McCool & Martin, 1994; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Similar to age, in past studies conflicting relationships or no relationships have been found when considering the impact of length of residency on resident attitudes. Andereck et al (2005) conducted a study in Arizona to examine resident perceptions of tourism impacts. They tested the relationship between resident attitudes toward tourism and community attachment determined by length of residency along with several other demographic variables. The authors posited that those who had grown up in the community, or those with longer residence in the community, would have greater attachment to the community and as a result would perceive fewer positive impacts from tourism. In contrast to other studies, the results showed a weak and insignificant relationship (Andereck et al., 2005). Sinclair-Maragh (2017) hypothesized that length of residency would not impact support for tourism development. While it was found that residents with more than 20 years tenure in their community supported tourism development, the results were not statistically significant and the author concluded that length of residency did not impact support. Additional research found conflicting results when exploring

length of residency and attitudes toward tourism. Hao et al. (2010) explored variables that influenced resident attitudes toward tourism in a coastal resort community in North Carolina. In the community under study, Hao et al. found that people who had longer lengths of residency also had more positive attitudes toward tourism.

Like age and length of residency, no clear relationship between the level of knowledge of the tourism industry and resident attitudes can be found across several studies (Andereck et al., 2005; Látková & Vogt, 2012). Látková and Vogt considered the influence of subjective knowledge on residents' attitudes towards existing and future tourism development. When controlling for personal benefit from tourism, the authors found subjective knowledge about tourism did not predict residents' perceptions of positive or negative impacts of tourism. Andereck et al. found contrasting results in their study on residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism. The study found that residents who indicated greater knowledge about tourism were more positive towards tourism. Due to the newness of legal cannabis tourism in the state, it was determined to ask participants to describe their level of knowledge of the tourism industry.

In contrast to the other variables examined, when considering personal benefit from tourism and resident attitudes, a clear pattern can be found. Previous studies considering tourism, not cannabis tourism, have shown that individuals who indicate they benefit from tourism generally have more positive attitudes towards tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Látková & Vogt, 2011; Lee et al., 2010; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990A). Essentially the more personal benefits a resident receives from tourism, the more positive attitudes they possess towards tourism. In one of the few studies to consider resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism (Kang & Lee, 2018), the authors found that personal benefits from tourism was the most important variable when considering resident support for cannabis tourism.

Past research on resident attitudes provides background to understanding resident views on cannabis tourism. Understanding how residents perceive cannabis tourism in their communities has a two-fold impact. First, the study extends research on resident attitudes by investigating whether the variables utilized in resident attitude research can be applied to cannabis tourism. Second, stakeholders can utilize the information to determine specific resident concerns and devise ways to mitigate those concerns and promote cannabis tourism in a way where resident desires are also considered.

Results

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, correlations and cross-tabulations were performed on the data. Numbers of respondents are referenced in the data figures below and vary due to the stage of completion of individual questionnaires.

In considering the respondent's answers on potential related impacts of cannabis tourism, attitudes tended to spread across the agreement scale (Table 3). Many respondents were unsure about the cannabis tourism attitude statements. Just

over 50% of respondents tended to agree that cannabis tourism would have some benefits for the county and 51% felt it was a good opportunity. While a majority of respondents (59.2%) did not feel outdoor and recreational tourism would decrease due to cannabis tourism, it is important to note that there was concern among respondents about family-oriented tourism. 50% of respondents tended to agree or strongly agree that some family-oriented travelers would not visit Humboldt County due to cannabis tourism. Nearly 43% of respondents disagreed that the image of their community would be negatively affected by cannabis tourism, however,

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents.

Characteristics	Respondents %
Gender (n=769)	
Female	50.3
Male	49.7
Mean Age (n=762)	47.3 years
Mean Length of Residence (n=794)	19.8 years
Household Income (n=758)	
Less than \$25,000	13.3
\$25,000 - \$49,999	22.2
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21.6
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15.0
\$100,000 or more	27.8
Education (n=780)	
Less than High School	0.6
High School Graduate	3.8
Technical School Degree	2.1
Some College	24.4
College Degree	44.9
Advanced Degree	24.2

30% of respondents were also unsure if cannabis tourism would positively affect the image of their community.

Pearson correlations were performed between age, length of residency, personal benefit from cannabis tourism, and attitudes toward cannabis tourism.

Among respondents, there was a negative association between age and attitudes towards cannabis tourism. Though the correlations showed overall weaker relationships, the older the participant the less positive their attitudes were towards cannabis tourism (Table 4).

We see similar results when considering length of

residency and attitudes (Table 5). Respondents with longer lengths of residency had less positive attitudes towards cannabis tourism, though again the relationships were weak.

We see similar results when considering length of residency and attitudes (Table 5). Respondents with longer lengths of residency had less positive attitudes towards cannabis tourism, though again the relationships were weak.

In terms of personal benefit from cannabis tourism and attitudes towards cannabis tourism, there were positive correlations with moderate to strong relationships (Table 6) suggesting that respondents with higher levels of personal

Table 3. Cannabis tourism attitude items.

Attitude statements	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Unsure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Some family-oriented travelers will not visit due to cannabis tourism	6.7	20.0	23.3	32.5	17.5
Outdoor and recreational tourism will decrease because of cannabis	22.1	37.1	21.3	11.4	8.2
Cannabis tourism benefits Humboldt County	13.1	12.6	23.4	31.0	19.8
Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity	15.7	12.6	20.3	29.1	22.2
The image of my community will be negatively affected by cannabis tourism	16.3	26.6	21.8	17.0	18.4
Out of state visitors will have a negative perception because of cannabis tourism	15.4	28.3	24.3	17.1	14.9
The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism	19.6	19.8	30.8	19.1	10.8

n=806

Table 4. Pearson correlation between age and attitudes toward cannabis tourism.

Scale	Age
Age	-
Some family orientated travelers will not visit Humboldt County due to cannabis tourism*	-.109**
Humboldt County will keep attracting outdoor and recreational visitors	-.154**
Out of state visitors will have a negative perception because of cannabis tourism*	-.163**
The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism	-.189**
The image of my community will be negatively affected by cannabis tourism*	-.192**
Cannabis tourism benefits Humboldt County	-.198**
Outdoor and recreational tourism will decrease because of cannabis tourism*	-.219**
Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for Humboldt County	-.226**

n = 759; * Reverse coded items; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5. Pearson correlation between length of residency and attitudes toward cannabis tourism.

Scale	Length of residency
Length of residency	-
Some family orientated travelers will not visit Humboldt County due to cannabis tourism*	-.148**
Cannabis tourism benefits Humboldt County	-.214**
Outdoor and recreational tourism will decrease because of cannabis tourism*	-.225**
Out of state visitors will have a negative perception because of cannabis tourism*	-.227**
Humboldt County will keep attracting outdoor and recreational visitors	-.227**
The image of my community will be negatively affected by cannabis tourism*	-.234**
The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism	-.253**
Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for Humboldt County	-.271**

n = 790; * = reverse coded items; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

benefit from cannabis tourism also had more positive attitudes towards cannabis tourism.

Cross-tabulations were performed to help develop the profile of respondents in terms of perceived knowledge of the tourism industry, personal benefit from tourism, and attitudes towards cannabis tourism. In terms of level of knowledge, participants were asked to describe their level of knowledge by categorizing their perceived level of knowledge from no knowledge to very knowledgeable. Overall data patterns were similar across attitude items. Select results are presented due to space limitations.

Regarding knowledge of the tourism industry (Table 7-8) considering if cannabis tourism was a good opportunity for Humboldt County, of those who indicated they were not at all knowledgeable about tourism, 34.7% were unsure and 34.7% agreed with the statement. As knowledge

of tourism increased, respondents were more opinionated with 25% strongly disagreeing and 26.8% strongly agreeing that cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for the county. Considering the statement on positive affect on community image, opinions tend to split once again. Among the very knowledgeable respondents, 33% strongly disagreed and almost 20% strongly agreed that community image would be positively affected by cannabis tourism.

In terms of personal benefit from tourism in general, not cannabis tourism, (Table 9-10) of respondents who indicated no personal benefit from tourism, 25.8% strongly disagreed that cannabis tourism was a good opportunity for Humboldt County, while 28.9% agreed with the statement. As we would expect, respondents who indicated the highest levels of personal benefit from tourism tended to agree (22.7%) or strongly agree (37.8%) that cannabis tourism is

Table 6. Pearson correlation between personal benefit from cannabis tourism and attitudes toward cannabis tourism.

Scale	PerBen
Personal benefit from cannabis tourism	-
Some family orientated travelers will not visit Humboldt County due to cannabis tourism*	.357**
Outdoor and recreational tourism will decrease because of cannabis tourism*	.417**
Cannabis tourism benefits Humboldt County	.666**
Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for Humboldt County	.677**
The image of my community will be negatively affected by cannabis tourism*	.563**
Out of state visitors will have a negative perception because of cannabis tourism*	.519**
Humboldt County will keep attracting outdoor and recreational visitors	.455**
The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism	.670**

n = 805; * Reverse coded items; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

a good opportunity for Humboldt County. When considering if the image of their community would be positively affected by cannabis tourism, of respondents with no or low levels of personal benefit from tourism, 20.4% disagreed and 31.6% were unsure about the statement. For respondents who indicated higher levels of personal benefit from tourism, 28.6% were also unsure if cannabis tourism would positively impact community image, although we see more of these respondents agreeing (21.1%) or strongly agreeing (20.5%) with the statement.

Discussion

Understanding resident attitudes toward tourism is an

important area of study when we consider the potential negative and positive impacts tourism can have on a community. If a community is aware of how residents perceive impacts and the factors influencing attitudes, tourism development can be planned to improve tourism in the community and the quality of life for residents. A large number of studies have been conducted on resident attitudes toward tourism but very few have covered cannabis tourism.

The purpose of the study was to explore if variables used to understand resident attitudes towards tourism would show similar patterns when applied to cannabis tourism in Humboldt County, California. A comparison between the results of past research and the current study are presented below.

Table 7. Cross-Tabulation knowledge of tourism and attitudes toward cannabis tourism. Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for Humboldt County.

	Not at all knowledgeable (%)	Slightly to moderately knowledgeable (%)	Very knowledgeable (%)
Strongly disagree	12.2	14.3	25.0
Disagree	6.1	12.7	15.2
Unsure	34.7	19.8	17.0
Agree	34.7	31.0	16.1
Strongly agree	12.2	22.2	26.8

Table 8. Cross-Tabulation knowledge of tourism and attitudes toward cannabis tourism. The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism.

	Not at all knowledgeable (%)	Slightly to moderately knowledgeable (%)	Very knowledgeable (%)
Strongly disagree	16.3	17.4	33.0
Disagree	16.3	20.5	17.9
Unsure	44.9	31.6	19.6
Agree	14.3	21.1	9.8
Strongly agree	8.2	9.5	19.6
<i>n=806</i>			

Age and length of residency. Past research indicates conflicting results in terms of the age of respondents, length of residence, and attitudes towards cannabis tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Hao et al., 2010; McCool & Martin, 1994; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017; Weaver & Lawton, 2001). Regardless, correlations were performed on the data as it was suspected that attitudes towards cannabis tourism would vary with age due to the recent legality of recreational cannabis in California and the changing acceptance of cannabis. In the current study, age was negatively correlated with attitudes towards cannabis tourism. In addition, length of residency was negatively correlated with attitudes towards cannabis tourism. This differs from past research on tourism attitudes, though the relationships were weak. There

was some concern from older and more long-term residents that Humboldt County would lose outdoor and recreational tourists because of cannabis tourism. This is important to note as outdoor recreation is one of the biggest draws to Humboldt County.

As noted above, past research on length of residency and attitudes towards tourism has not shown any pattern (Andereck et al., 2005; Hao et al., 2010; McCool & Martin, 1994; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Cannabis tourism may be seen differently than other forms of tourism particularly when considering the age and length of residency of an individual. Due to the long, mostly illegal history of cannabis in Humboldt County, opinions about cannabis tourism vary greatly. Some communities are actively pursuing cannabis tourism while

Table 9. Cross-tabulation personal benefit from tourism and attitudes toward cannabis tourism. Cannabis tourism is a good opportunity for Humboldt County.

	Not at all (%)	Very little to some benefit (%)	Quite a bit to a lot of benefit (%)
Strongly disagree	25.8	14.2	13.5
Disagree	14.4	12.4	11.9
Unsure	16.5	23.1	14.1
Agree	28.9	32.0	22.7
Strongly agree	14.4	18.3	37.8

Table 10. Cross-tabulation personal benefit from tourism and attitudes toward cannabis tourism. The image of my community will be positively affected by cannabis tourism.

	Not at all (%)	Very little to some benefit (%)	Quite a bit to a lot of benefit (%)
Strongly disagree	24.5	19.4	17.3
Disagree	20.4	22.1	12.4
Unsure	31.6	31.5	28.6
Agree	16.3	19.0	21.1
Strongly agree	7.1	8.0	20.5
<i>n</i> =797			

others have made moves to limit it. Cannabis is still federally illegal and many people continue to have a stigma against cannabis.

Level of knowledge of the tourism industry. In past research, no clear patterns have been found between the level of knowledge of tourism and resident attitudes toward tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Látková & Vogt, 2011). The current study had similar results when we break the respondents into groups based on their perceived level of knowledge of tourism. In this study, participants who described themselves as very knowledgeable about the tourism industry had more conflicting attitudes regarding cannabis tourism when compared to respondents with none to moderate knowledge of tourism.

Personal benefit from tourism and/or cannabis tourism. In general, past research on resident attitudes towards tourism has shown that if an individual experiences personal benefit from tourism they will likely have more positive attitudes towards tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Látková & Vogt, 2011; Lee et al., 2010; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990A). Similar to past studies, personal benefit from cannabis tourism was positively correlated with attitudes towards cannabis tourism. Also, respondents who expressed moderate to heavy benefit from tourism in general had more positive attitudes towards cannabis tourism, as we might expect based on past research.

A majority of respondents agreed with positive statements regarding the opportunity that cannabis tourism presents to the county. However, when we break down respondents based on age, length of residency, level of knowledge and personal benefit from tourism, other data patterns in answers reveal that respondents were unsure about their attitudes towards cannabis tourism and the possible opportunities and challenges cannabis might pose to tourism. It is hoped that stakeholders in Humboldt County will use this baseline study to determine specific resident concerns and devise ways to address concerns and promote cannabis tourism in a way where residents' attitudes are also considered.

Recommendations And Limitations

Currently, there is limited research considering resident attitudes towards cannabis tourism. In order to better guide community and industry responses, managerial implications and areas of future research are discussed below.

The mixed support presented in the current study suggests that some variables may present different results when considering cannabis tourism specifically. This may in turn

have managerial implications for destinations pursuing cannabis tourism, like Humboldt County. Uncertainty about cannabis tourism among residents suggests that communities interested in pursuing cannabis tourism should focus on the education of residents. For example, education could center on (1) defining cannabis tourism; (2) the structure of cannabis tourism within a community; (3) the types of cannabis tourists a community will attract; (4) the potential positive and negative impacts of cannabis tourism; (5) the potential negative impacts being mitigated.

Specific to Humboldt County, California, this study was conducted in 2017, after the legalization of recreational cannabis but before legal sales of recreational cannabis started in 2018. Further research might focus on the following questions: What has changed since 2018? Has Humboldt County seen the economic benefits of tax revenues? What challenges have cannabis tourism businesses experienced related to legalization? Another area of consideration is the practical response to resident attitudes. As other US states legalize recreational cannabis and begin to pursue cannabis tourism, it will be important to determine differing attitudes among community members and if government and community actions regarding cannabis tourism accurately represent community views.

In regards to limitations of the current study, a convenience sample was used so the results do not necessarily apply to all residents of the county. As well, the study was restricted to a rural geographic area internationally known for cannabis production. Naturally, this topic generates diverse opinions. Additionally, due to the long history of cannabis in Humboldt County, the opinions of respondents in this study are not necessarily typical of other destinations.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Spring 2017 REC 365 Data Collection Team: Michael Anhorn, Logan Ashdale, Genesee Black-Lanouette, Michael Chavez, Casey Cruikshank, Zachary Dalby, Sky Erbert, Levi Goodey, Wes Hewitt, Ian Marling, Jorge Rivera.

References

- Andereck, K. L., Valentine, K. M., Knopf, R. C., & Vogt, C. A. (2005). Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*(4), 1056-1076.
- Claesgen, D., & Kraft, M. (n.d.). *Workforce Report Humboldt*

- County's New Cannabis Landscape* (Rep.). Humboldt County Workforce Development Board.
- Cui, X., & Ryan, C. (2011). Perceptions of place, modernity and the impacts of tourism—Differences among rural and urban residents of Ankang, China: A likelihood ratio analysis. *Tourism Management*, 32(3), 604-615.
- Economic Effects of Colorado's Legalization of Cannabis 2017. (2016, December 29). Retrieved September 22, 2017, from <https://eufloracolorado.com/economic-effects-of-colorados-legalization-of-cannabis-2017>
- Get Ready for Marijuana Legalization, or Get Ready to Lose. (2014, November 22). *Eureka Times-Standard*. Retrieved October 10, 2017, from <http://www.times-standard.com/>
- Giraud, R. F. (2019). Blazing a Trail: Cannabis Tourism in the United States. In McGettigan, T. (Ed.), *The politics of marijuana: a new paradigm* (pp. 105 - 112). Peter Lang
- Gursoy, D., Jurowski, C., & Uysal, M. (2002). Resident attitudes: A structural modeling approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(1), 79-105.
- Gursoy, D., & Rutherford, D. G. (2004). Host attitudes toward tourism: An improved structural model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 495-516.
- Haley, A. J., Snaith, T., & Miller, G. (2005). The social impacts of tourism a case study of Bath, UK. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(3), 647-668.
- Hao, H., Long, P., & Kleckley, J. (2011). Factors predicting homeowners' attitudes toward tourism: A case of a coastal resort community. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(6), 627-640.
- Houston, W. (2016, October 17). Creating Humboldt County's marijuana tourism market. *Eureka Times-Standard*. Retrieved August 15, 2017, from <http://www.times-standard.com/>
- Jurowski, C., & Gursoy, D. (2004). Distance effects on resident's attitudes toward tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(2), 296-312.
- Kang, S. K., & Lee, J. (2018). Support of marijuana tourism in Colorado: A residents' perspective using social exchange theory. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 9, 310-319.
- Kang, S., Miller, J., and O'Leary, J., (2016a) "One year after legalized cannabis: Residents' image, place attachment, and support of marijuana tourism in Colorado". *Tourism Travel and Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 27.
- Kang, S., O'Leary, J., & Miller, J. (2016b). From Forbidden Fruit to the Goose That Lays Golden Eggs: Marijuana Tourism in Colorado. *SAGE Open*, 6(4).
- Látková, P., & Vogt, C. A. (2012). Residents' attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(1), 50-67.
- Lee, C. K., Kang, S. K., Long, P., & Reisinger, Y. (2010). Residents' perceptions of casino impacts: A comparative study. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 189-201.
- Light, M. K., Orens, A., Lewandowski, B., & Pickton, T. (2015). *Market size and demand for marijuana in Colorado*. Marijuana Policy Group.
- Madrigal, R. (1993). A tale of tourism in two cities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 336-353.
- Martin, S. R. (1995). Montanans' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward tourism: Implications for sustainability. *Linking Tourism, the Environment, and Sustainability: Topical Volume of Compiled Papers from a Special Session of the Annual Meeting of the National Recreation and Park Association, 1994: Minneapolis, MN, October 12-14, 1994*, (323) 69.
- McCool, S. F., & Martin, S. R. (1994). Community attachment and attitudes toward tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 32(3), 29-34.
- McGehee, N. G., & Andereck, K. L. (2004). Factors predicting rural residents' support of tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(2), 131-140.
- Perdue, R. R., Long, P. T., & Allen, L. (1990). Resident support for tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 17(4), 586-599.
- Sharpley, R. (2014). Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research. *Tourism Management*, 42, 37-49.
- Sinclair-Maragh, G. (2017). Demographic analysis of residents' support for tourism development in Jamaica. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(1), 5-12.
- Taylor, L. L. (2019). Defining Marijuana Tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(3), 438-446.
- Travel info for the Redwoods. (n.d.). Humboldt County Visitors Bureau. Retrieved December 30, 2020, from <https://www.visitredwoods.com/things-to-do/shopping/>
- Weaver, D. B., & Lawton, L. J. (2001). Resident perceptions in the urban-rural fringe. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 439-458.
- Williams, J., & Lawson, R. (2001). Community issues and resident opinions of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 269-290.