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Understanding Fijian residents' opposition to tourism post-pandemic

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Abstract

Grounded in the norm activation theory and the theory of planned behaviour, this study investigated antecedents of residents' active and passive opposition to tourism. Data were collected from 569 Fijian residents and analysed using covariance-based structural equation modelling. Results revealed that awareness of the problem was positively associated with ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 and residents' attitudes toward tourism opposition. Residents' responsibility for COVID-19 was positively associated with personal norms regarding tourism opposition. Personal norms, attitudes concerning tourism opposition and perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism were positively associated with residents' active and passive intention to oppose tourism. However, the association of these three factors were stronger for passive intention. Subjective norms regarding tourism opposition were positively associated with residents' passive intention to oppose tourism. Overall, these findings provide practitioners and policymakers with a more robust perspective to best plan for sustainable tourism in the throes of reviving the industry.

Keywords: Awareness of the problem; ascribed responsibility for COVID-19; perceived norms regarding tourism opposition; theory of planned behaviour; passive tourism opposition; active tourism opposition

Introduction

Tourism contributes tremendously towards a country's growth and development (Ayhan et al., 2020), as it is particularly important for developing countries in fostering economic development and contributing to poverty alleviation (Ying & Zhou, 2007). Within this context, support residents have for tourism is integral to establishing sustainable tourism (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Stylidis, 2018). As residents are important stakeholders in tourism (Easterling, 2005), local government, destination managers, and destination management organizations must consider factors affecting their attitudes towards tourism and supporting/opposing behaviour. Such an understanding would allow strategy formation to mitigate factors leading to the opposition of tourists and tourism. It is widely accepted that residents can apply cost-benefit trade-offs (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012), and if the costs exceed benefits, tourists may withdraw support (as a primary tenet of the social exchange theory), hindering the future development and success of the industry (Lawson et al., 1998). Tourism planning should therefore be directed by residents' perceptions and attitudes (Ap, 1992) to be considered 'resident responsive' (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009).

Despite a proliferation of research in the past decade on residents' attitudes towards tourism (Kamata, 2022; Obradović & Stojanović, 2022; Sharpley, 2014; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2014), minimal empirical evidence exists regarding the specific factors that influence residents' opposition to tourists and tourism, especially during a pivotal time when many countries are moving toward a society without the COVID-19 pandemic (Joo et al., 2021; Kamata, 2022; Thyne et al., 2022). Prior to the pandemic, extant literature revealed that residents' opposition towards tourism was based on tourism-related impacts such as social costs like traffic conditions, openness to sex, organized crime, drugs, crime (King et al., 1993), cultural issues (Jeonglyeol Lee et al., 2007), degradation of the environment (Jurowski et al., 1997), and economic damage (Sharpley, 2014). However, the pandemic has also profoundly and holistically impacted residents' attitudes towards the tourism industry (Joo, et al., 2021; Woosnam, et al., 2022). Tourists have found themselves unwelcome in the midst of the pandemic (Yang & Wong, 2020) and subject to discrimination by residents (Devakumar et al., 2020; Tse & Tung, 2020). This indicates a negative shift in residents' attitudes and behavior towards tourism, which is not fully understood as we transition into a time where the spread of COVID-19 has slowed, and more individuals are vaccinated.

This research employs two theoretical frameworks—the norm activation model (NAM) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to determine if antecedents within each framework (i.e., problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms within the NAM; attitudes of tourism opposition, subjective norms of opposition, and perceived behavioural control of opposition within the TPB) can effectively explain residents' behavioural intentions to oppose tourism. Problem awareness signifies an individual's recognition of problems associated with tourism, while ascribed responsibility refers to the individual's sense of responsibility to address these problems. Both constructs are vital in explaining residents' attitudinal and behavioural responses to tourism. Subjective norms are the perceived social pressures to perform or not to perform a certain behaviour, attitudes encapsulate an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of tourism, and perceived behavioural control reflects one's belief about their ability to execute a certain behaviour, all of which play pivotal roles in the formation of behavioural intentions to oppose tourism. Together, these constructs within the dual-theoretical framework offer a comprehensive analysis of the factors driving residents' opposition to tourism in a post-pandemic world. Tourism opposition was approached here via two dimensions—one active and one passive—to best reflect the various ways in which residents may express their disagreement with the industry (Erul et al., 2022). This study, as such, adopts a dual-theory perspective and six constructs to offer new insights

into ways the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped residents' opposition of tourism in Fiji—an island nation balancing dependency on tourism with sensibility in returning to 'business as usual.' Such information is invaluable for destination managers desiring to embrace sustainable tourism as we inch toward the post-COVID era.

Fiji was chosen as the study site for this research given the significant contribution tourism (i.e., upwards of 40% in 2019) has historically made toward the nation's GDP (Export Finance Australia, 2023). Additionally, at the time this study was conducted (December 2022), it was exactly one year after the Fijian government began to slowly welcome international visitors back and relaxed some of its travel restrictions for inbound visitors and preventative measures to mitigate the spread of the virus (CNN Travel, 2021). Determining whether Fijian residents oppose tourism, and if so, to what degree, would be invaluable to the country as it balances providing sustainable tourism opportunities with revitalizing the industry (international visitors for 2022 was approximately 70% of pre-pandemic numbers in 2019; Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Findings from our research will have practical implications not only for Fiji but other island nations in similar situations contemplating how best to accommodate eager returning visitors.

Theoretical background

Rooted in the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behaviour has been extensively deployed as a mechanism for examining individual behaviour across a myriad of contexts (Sharma, Singh, Gaur, & Sharma, 2022; Singh, Aiyub, et al., 2021; Singh, Sharma, et al., 2021), particularly in the tourism industry (Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Erul et al., 2020; Ojo et al., 2022). The theory centers on explaining an individual's behavioural intention based on three constructs, namely subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and attitudes (Ajzen, 1991). The theory has been applied to study residents' behaviour within tourism contexts (Arkorful et al., 2021; Erul et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022), further reinforcing its relevance to our study's focus. However, in keeping with emergent scholarly discourse (see Erul et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022) the study acknowledges that the reliance on a single theoretical framework may fall short of sufficiently elucidating multifaceted outcome variables, such as behavioural intention, within complex socio-cultural environments. Therefore, this study integrates the norm activation model with the theory of planned behaviour, thereby adopting a dual-theoretical perspective. This integrative approach allows for providing a more comprehensive examination of the motivations underlying resident opposition to tourism, considering both moral obligations prompted by norm activation and the behavioural intentions elucidated by the theory of planned behaviour.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

Individuals' accountability towards their environment is stimulated by ascribed responsibility (Zhang et al., 2013). De Groot and Steg (2009) offered that such responsibility refers to a sense of accountability in reducing negative outcomes. According to the norm activation model, the feeling of responsibility has been shown to trigger social norms and attitudes which activate personal norms (Schwartz, 1977). Therefore, it becomes critical to consider how residents' ascribed responsibility influences attitudes and actions (Verma et al., 2019). Previous studies have established a direct relationship between values and behaviour (Steg et al., 2005), and personal norms as mediating variables have been found to strengthen this relationship (Stern, 2000). One's thoughts about human behaviour and the natural environment refer to beliefs (Ture & Ganesh, 2014).

According to Schwartz (1992), beliefs can take the shape of either: (1) awareness of the problem or (2) ascribed responsibility. The former occurs when an individual becomes aware of the adverse consequences of something they value (Choi et al., 2015). As Ibtissem (2010) noted, the combination of these two beliefs can influence an individual's personal norms. An individual's moral obligation to engage in pro-environmental behaviour refers to personal norms (Ture & Ganesh, 2014). Personal norms are activated based on perceived threat and their ability to contribute to the threat and its solution (De Groot & Steg, 2009). Choi et al. (2015) found that awareness of consequences was positively associated with the ascription of responsibility for consumers' decisions relating to green hotels. The study also found ascription of responsibility positively influenced personal norms (Choi et al., 2015). Similar findings (i.e., awareness of the problem→ascribed responsibility→personal norms) were echoed within the research by Ritchie, Prideaux, Thompson, and Demeter (2022) regarding tourists' attitudes about interventions in the Great Barrier Reef. Most recently, O'Connor and Assaker (2022) highlighted in their study of U.S. travellers that perceived risk of COVID-19 significantly explained perceptions of ascribed responsibility. A similar finding (i.e., problem awareness of COVID-19 explaining ascription of responsibility) was echoed among festival travellers in China by Chi et al., (2021). Pursuant to this, Chi et al. (2022) demonstrated that such ascription of responsibility significantly predicted two distinct forms of norms.

This study proposes that awareness of the problem related to the perceived risk of contracting COVID-19 will positively influence residents' ascribed responsibility for COVID-19. Additionally, residents' ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 would influence their personal norms regarding tourism opposition. As such, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_1: Awareness of the problem (i.e., perceived risk of contracting COVID-19) is positively related to ascribed responsibility for COVID-19.

H_2: Ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 is positively associated with personal norms regarding tourism opposition.

Personal norms relate to individuals' perceptions of an accepted behaviour (Khan et al., 2019) and behavioural intention (Dixit & Badgaiyan, 2016; Khan et al., 2019; Wan et al., 2012; Wan et al., 2014). A positive relationship between personal norms and behavioural intention has been reported in the context of recycling/return intention (Khan et al., 2019), green hotels (Bashir et al., 2019), environmentally friendly apparel purchases (Kim & Seock, 2019), and organic food buying (Koklic et al., 2019), among others. These results highlight that individuals are driven by their morality and their perceptions of 'right' and 'wrong.' Though not considering personal, rather subjective norms, Erul et al. (2022) determined that such norms were inconclusive in predicting residents' opposition to tourism (i.e., not significant in predicting passive opposition yet significant in predicting active opposition). Such a distinction of these oppositional intentions (i.e., passive—not eating at restaurants, avoiding tourists, etc. and active—signing petitions against tourism, protesting tourism, etc.) calls into question whether personally held norms could explain either form of oppositional intentions as envisioned by Erul et al. As such, this study purports that residents' norms regarding tourism opposition will influence their behavioural intention (both passive and active). Therefore, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H_{3a}: Personal norms regarding tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism.

H_{3b}: Personal norms regarding tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism.

Numerous works have highlighted that residents' attitudes about tourism significantly explains support for tourism (Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017; Gursoy, Yolal, et al., 2017; Liang et al., 2021). This relationship is explained by the theory of reasoned action, which highlights that individuals are rational and make decisions by processing information (Azjen, 1980). According to the theory, attitude is formed by disapproval or approval following the assessment of an object, leading to behaviour (Azjen, 1980). Based on the social exchange theory (and an implicit notion of cost and benefit analysis), residents may oppose tourism if costs outweigh benefits. As such, residents evaluate tourism also considering the COVID-19 issues against tourism benefits (Joo et al., 2021). The fear brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., lockdown measures and health problems, including deaths) has also been understood to influence residents' attitudes (Devakumar et al., 2020; Tse & Tung, 2020), causing distrust, prejudice, and fear of tourists (Yang & Wong, 2020). Most recently, Xu et al. (2022) highlighted that residents' attitudes about tourism support were a significant predictor in their intentions to participate in local tourism (both during and after the pandemic). Therefore, we advance the following hypotheses:

H_{4a}: Attitudes of tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism.
H_{4b}: Attitudes of tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism.

Perceived social pressure to engage in particular actions relates to subjective norms (MacKay & Campbell, 2004). Individuals' behaviour is influenced by perceptions of how significant others think they should do/act (Vinnell et al., 2019). Hwang et al. (2016) highlighted that tourism was influenced by collective action. Community members feel it is their responsibility to engage in collective action (Hwang et al., 2016). Additionally, McGehee et al. (2014) found that interaction among residents enabled residents who previously were not interested in the community to develop communal interests. Similarly, it was found that residents discussing tourism issues in town meetings established collective goals for members of the community (Hwang et al., 2012). New information is more easily accepted by members, which leads to the mobilization of social movements through active social organizations (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009). Ostrom (2000) found that residents' community participation was influenced by social norms. Therefore, this study assumes that residents whose significant others or active social organizations oppose tourism would significantly contribute to residents' behavioural intent to oppose tourism. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{5a}: Subjective norms regarding tourism opposition are positively related to behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism.
H_{5b}: Subjective norms regarding tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism.

Perceived behavioural control is defined as the possible difficulties an individual perceives when intending to engage in an action (Ajzen, 1985). According to the theory of planned behaviour, individuals' perception of control over external resources (e.g., time, ability, and knowledge) is

critical in influencing intention (Ajzen, 1985). Tourism studies have shown that perceived behavioural control influences tourists' intention to travel (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Studies relating to residents' support for tourism have derived similar findings. For instance, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) confirmed that perceived behavioural control influenced residents' support of tourism. Additionally, Wu and Chen (2018) found that Taiwan's Atayal communities residents' support for ecotourism was influenced by perceived behavioural control. Erul et al. (2020) similarly found that perceived behavioural control influenced residents' support for tourism development.

H_{6a}: Perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism is positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism.

H_{6b}: Perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism is positively related to behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism.

Elements of the cognitive process, including perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs, shape an individuals' attitudes (Becken, 2007). Prior studies have highlighted that individuals aware of consequences will have a favourable attitude towards engaging in action to solve the problem (Diekmann & Franzen, 1999; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Ritchie et al. (2022) found that awareness of the consequence of not protecting the Great Barrier Reef was positively associated with attitude towards conservation. Tourist knowledge and serious concerns about environmental, safety, and social issues relating to destinations have been established to influence behaviour (Myung, 2018). This knowledge helps tourists understand and know about various tourism-related problems and issues (Han & Hyun, 2017). A low level of knowledge about the consequences of air travel has also been found to affect attitude formation about reducing air travel (Cocolas et al., 2020). Employees' attitudes towards implementing green practices were also influenced by awareness of problem and knowledge of consequences (Chan & Hawkins, 2010). As such, this study assumes that residents' awareness of problems relating to the perceived risk of contracting COVID-19 would influence their attitudes about tourism opposition. Therefore, this study develops the last hypothesis (with the proposed model presented in Figure 1):

H_{7}: Awareness of the problem (i.e., perceived risk of contracting COVID-19) is positively related to attitudes of tourism opposition.

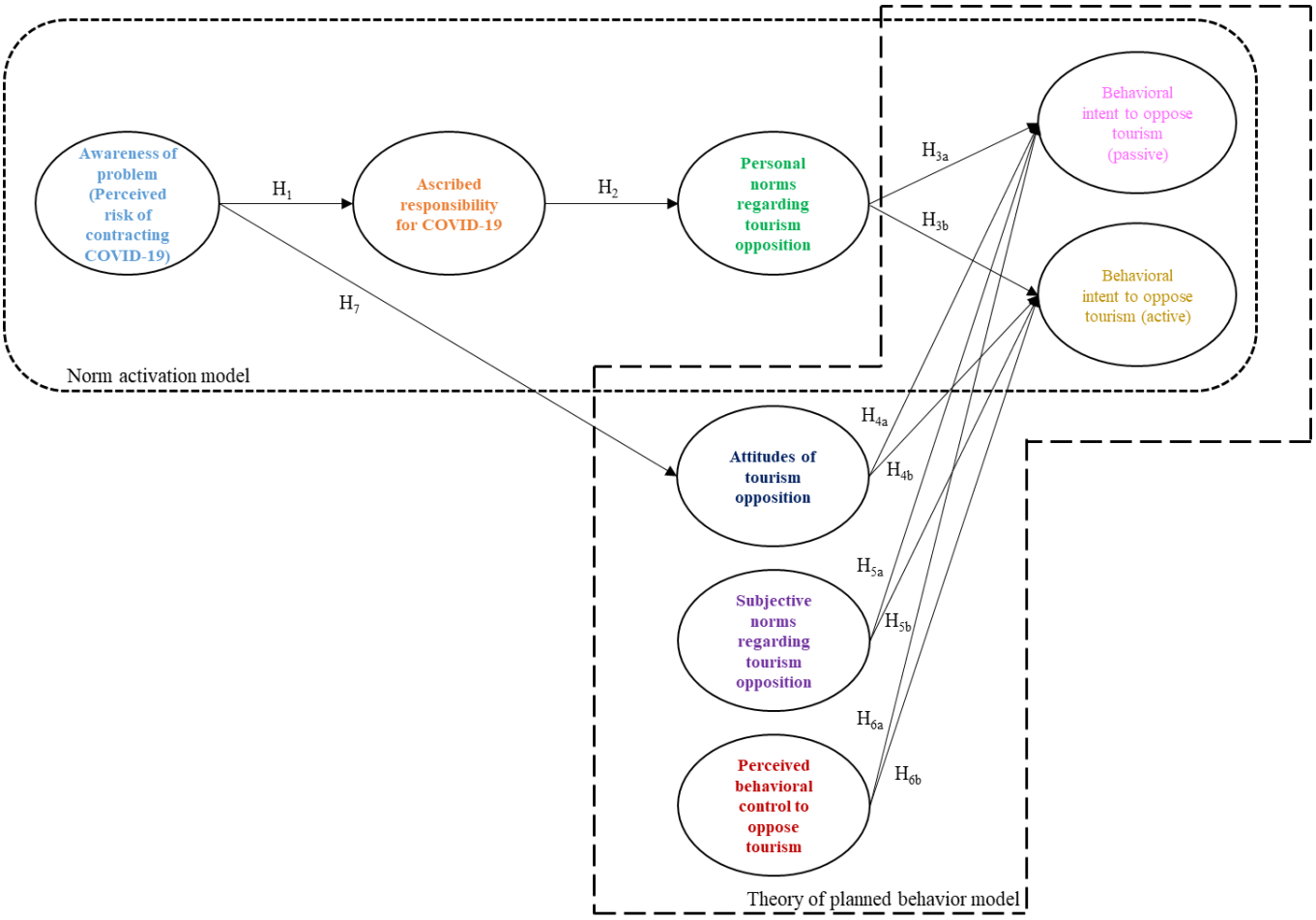

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research methods

Respondents and data collection

The population for this research was residents (numbering approximately 910,000) of Fiji—a nation comprised of over 330 islands (Vanua Levu and Viti Levu as the two major islands; only one-third of the islands as inhabited). Fiji was selected given its heavy dependence on tourism. This reliance on the tourism industry has made the country disproportionately vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, gaining insights from residents regarding perceptions of tourism opposition would contribute to understanding how individuals formulated behavioural intentions to oppose tourism. It was argued that no time is better than now (i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic) to determine if and to what degree residents of the country oppose tourism.

This study used an online survey to gather responses—during December 2022—the one-year anniversary of the Fijian Government opening its borders to international travellers. The questionnaire was hosted on SurveyMonkey, a popular platform for hosting online surveys. As of late, tourism scholars (Sharma et al., 2020) have used the platform to house questionnaires. The links to the online questionnaire were circulated to the study's population using a sponsored advertisement on Facebook. This is a popular methodology used to collect data from respondents (Sharma, Singh, Gaur, & Afaq, 2022; Singh & Sharma, 2022; Slack et al., 2023). Respondents were

informed about the voluntary nature of the survey and the anonymity of their responses. They were assured that no personal information would be retained, and data collected would be used solely for academic purposes. This communication was also intended to combat any social desirability bias issues. Data were collected from 569 individuals (four were removed due to missing data) and exported from SurveyMonkey into SPSS and AMOS, version 27.0. Sample demographics are presented in Table 1. As the sponsored advertisement reached over 2794 respondents, this gives a response rate of 20.37%, meeting the minimum response rate of 20% as suggested by Malhotra et al. (2006).

Table 1: Demographic profile

Variables	***N***	**%**
Gender		
Male	268	47.4
Female	297	52.6
Age		
18-25 years	187	33.1
26-30 years	212	37.5
31-40 years	161	28.5
41-50 years	5	0.01
Income (FJD)		
I do not earn an income	53	9.4
Under $15,000	204	36.1
$15,000-$29,999	162	28.7
$30,000-$44,999	79	14.0
$45,000-$59,999	38	6.7
$60,000-$74,999	15	2.7
$75,000-$89,999	6	0.01
$90,000 +	8	0.01

Construct measures and data analysis

Pre-existing scales adopted from prior studies were used to measure model constructs, and responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). Awareness of problem (i.e., perceived risk of contracting COVID-19) was measured using five items adapted from Joo, Xu, Lee, Lee, and Woosnam (2021). Ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 was captured via four items adapted from Kim and Hwang (2020). Personal norms regarding tourism opposition were measured following Shin, Im, Jung, and Severt (2018). Six items measured attitudes of tourism opposition, based on Erul, Woosnam, and McIntosh (2020). The subjective norms scale with five items was adapted from Erul, Woosnam, and McIntosh (2020). Perceived behavioural control was measured via five items borrowed from Hsu and Huang (2012) and Wu, Tsai, and Lee (2017). Items measuring behavioural intentions to oppose tourism were adopted from Erul, Woosnam, and Denley (2022), which were initially adapted from item wording used in Erul, Woosnam, and McIntosh, (2020) and Joo, Woosnam, Strzelecka, and Boley (2020). Ordinal scales with predetermined classification were used to collect socio-demographic information (age, gender, income) about respondents.

A pilot study was conducted with 20 individuals. This sample for the pilot study was drawn from the target group to ensure that it characterized the study's population. Appropriate modifications were made to the questionnaire to ensure clarity and coherence. Each scale and corresponding items are presented in Appendix A.

Data analysis was carried out using a two-step covariance-based structural equation (CB-SEM) modelling approach, whereby a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to establish a measurement model followed by structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the structural model and each hypothesis (Olya, 2023; Sharma et al., 2022b). This was accomplished using SPSS and AMOS (version 27). CB-SEM was considered appropriate given the data met multivariate analysis requirements and the study's hypotheses were based on theory. Prior to undertaking the main analysis, however, the data were examined for normality (i.e., kurtosis and skewness) (Erul et al., 2023). Further a common method bias test was performed (given data were collected using a single approach) to identify any issues with the factor structure of the seven model constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Results

Multicollinearity and data normality

Kurtosis and skewness values were examined before confirming distribution normality for data analysis. The data met the normality assumption that values were below the recommended cut-off estimates. Using self-reported data required us to examine the presence of common method bias through the single-factor test (without rotation) (Harman, 1976). The variance explained (through one single factor) was 31.86% which is well below the 50% cut-off suggested by (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Data suitability was further ascertained by examining multicollinearity. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was below three while the tolerance values were greater than 0.1. As both these values conformed to the suggested thresholds, the absence of multicollinearity issue was confirmed.

Measurement model

The factor loadings were satisfactory, as the values for each scale item were above the recommended threshold of 0.60 (see Table 2). The confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated a good model fit (i.e., $\chi^2/df = 1.94$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05).

Table 2: CFA and SEM factor loadings

Measurement items	CFA	SEM	CR	AVE
Awareness of problem				
AOP1	0.73	0.73		
AOP2	0.75	0.75		
AOP3	0.76	0.76	0.86	0.56
AOP4	0.71	0.72		
AOP5	0.79	0.79		
Ascribed responsibility for COVID-19				
ARC1	0.71	0.71		
ARC2	0.79	0.79	0.85	0.58
ARC3	0.74	0.74		
ARC4	0.81	0.81		
Personal norms regarding tourism opposition				
PRN1	0.82	0.82		
PRN2	0.83	0.83	0.90	0.69
PRN3	0.87	0.86		
PRN4	0.8	0.8		
Attitudes of tourism opposition				
ATT1	0.78	0.78		
ATT2	0.85	0.85		
ATT3	0.83	0.83	0.92	0.66
ATT4	0.83	0.83		
ATT5	0.78	0.77		
ATT6	0.8	0.8		
Subjective norms				
SBN1	0.81	0.81		
SBN2	0.88	0.88		
SBN3	0.81	0.81	0.92	0.69
SBN4	0.86	0.86		
SBN5	0.78	0.78		
Perceived behavioural control				
PBC1	0.83	0.83		
PBC2	0.82	0.82		
PBC3	0.81	0.81	0.92	0.68
PBC4	0.81	0.81		
PBC5	0.86	0.86		
Passive opposition				
PSO1	0.81	0.81		
PSO2	0.84	0.85	0.94	0.68
PSO3	0.83	0.83		

PSO4	0.73	0.73		
PSO5	0.88	0.88		
PSO6	0.85	0.85		
PSO7	0.81	0.81		
Active opposition				
ACO1	0.74	0.74		
ACO2	0.75	0.75		
ACO3	0.77	0.77	0.87	0.58
ACO4	0.77	0.78		
ACO5	0.78	0.78		

As the scale items were adopted from prior studies, checking their reliability and validity of the constructs was essential. The recommended threshold values by Hair et al. (2011) for average variance extracted and composite reliability were met, as both figures were greater than 0.50 and 0.70, respectively. As such, the scales' reliability was confirmed (see Table 3). Discriminant validity was confirmed as inter-construct correlations were below their respective square root of the average variance extracted (see Table 4). To ascertain further confirmation for discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations was performed. The HTMT is a measure that compares the correlation of indicators across constructs (heterotrait) with the correlation of indicators within the same construct (monotrait). A lower HTMT value indicates a greater degree of discriminant validity. The correlation between the study variables was below the recommended 0.85 thresholds (Henseler et al., 2015). This suggests that the constructs are distinct, indicating strong discriminant validity.

Table 3: Results of measurement model reliability analysis

	MSV	**ASV**	**AOP**	**ARC**	**PRN**	**ATT**	**SBN**	**PBC**	**PSO**	**ACO**
AOP	0.02	0.01	**0.82**							
ARC	0.05	0.03	0.47	**0.84**						
PRN	0.07	0.05	0.16	0.25	**0.78**					
ATT	0.03	0.01	0.38	0.37	0.34	**0.84**				
SBN	0.08	0.06	0.28	0.21	0.13	0.13	**0.78**			
PBC	0.02	0.01	0.15	0.39	0.43	0.35	0.11	**0.87**		
PSO	0.04	0.03	0.11	0.23	0.26	0.28	0.22	0.17	**0.81**	
ACO	0.05	0.02	0.46	0.24	0.17	0.46	0.25	0.12	0.15	**0.84**

Table 4: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations analysis

	AOP	ARC	PRN	ATT	SBN	PBC	PSO	ACO
AOP								
ARC	0.44							
PRN	0.35	0.28						
ATT	0.38	0.55	0.38					
SBN	0.41	0.46	0.35	0.16				
PBC	0.24	0.29	0.33	0.59	0.55			
PSO	0.23	0.44	0.47	0.32	0.13	0.41		
ACO	0.34	0.23	0.19	0.45	0.51	0.54	0.29	

Structural model

The study's structural model had a good fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.57$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.04). Proposed hypotheses were then examined (Table 5). Awareness of the problem was positively associated with ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 (H_1: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and attitudes of tourism opposition (H_7: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 (H_2: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) was positively associated with personal norms regarding tourism opposition. Personal norms regarding tourism opposition were positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism (H_{3a}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism (H_{3b}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Attitudes of tourism opposition were positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism (H_{4a}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism (H_{4b}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Subjective norms regarding tourism opposition were positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism (H_{5a}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism (H_{5b}: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism was positively associated with behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism (H_{6a}: $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$) and behavioural intent to actively oppose tourism (H_{6b}: $\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5: Hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis	Path	*β*	Support
H_1	AOP → ARC	0.52^{***}	Yes
H_2	ARC → PRN	0.33^{***}	Yes
H_{3a}	PRN → PSO	0.46^{***}	Yes
H_{3b}	PRN → ACO	0.33^{***}	Yes
H_{4a}	ATT → PSO	0.38^{***}	Yes
H_{4b}	ATT → ACO	0.34^{***}	Yes
H_{5a}	SBN → PSO	0.22^{***}	Yes
H_{5b}	SBN → ACO	-0.01^{ns}	No
H_{6a}	PBC → PSO	0.38^{***}	Yes
H_{6b}	PBC → ACO	0.19^{***}	Yes
H_7	AOP → ATT	0.46^{***}	Yes

*** $p < 0.001$

^{ns} not significant

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to assess Fijian residents' degree of intention to oppose tourism one year from the date that the nation's government welcomed international visitors back. Ten of the 11 proposed hypotheses were supported. The study confirmed that awareness of the problem is positively associated with ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 (H_1). This implies that residents' awareness of the adverse consequence of COVID-19, which is the perceived risk of contracting the virus, stimulates their feelings of responsibility to reduce negative consequences. This aligns with prior study by Choi et al. (2015) regarding green hotels. Similarly, ascribed responsibility for COVID-19 was confirmed to be positively associated with personal norms regarding tourism opposition (H_2). This indicates that residents' feelings of responsibility to reduce the risks of COVID-19 would cultivate a personal moral obligation to engage in tourism opposition. This was also echoed in Choi et al.'s research.

Next, proposed personal norms regarding tourism opposition were found to be positively associated with behavioural intent to passively and actively oppose (H_{3a} and H_{3b}). Similar relationships were also confirmed in contexts centred on recycling/return intention (Khan et al., 2019), green hotels (Bashir et al., 2019), environmentally friendly apparel purchases (Kim & Seock, 2019), and organic food buying (Koklic et al., 2019). This result implies that residents' morality and feeling about 'right' behaviour influence their behavioural intention to oppose tourism passively and actively. Interestingly, the study revealed that the association between personal norms regarding tourism opposition was stronger for the behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively and actively. Residents' passive opposition intention would include not visiting attractions, festivals/special events, shops, stores, and restaurants frequented by tourists, not welcoming and discouraging others from welcoming tourists, and generally avoiding tourists in my community during the pandemic. On the contrary, residents' active opposition intention would include writing emails or making calls to influence tourism decisions, signing a petition against tourism, attending meetings held influence tourism opposition and gathering information about a tourism issue, intending to be involved in protests/march/rally regarding tourism opposition during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subsequently, H_{4a} and H_{4b}, confirmed that the attitudes of tourism opposition are positively associated with behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively and actively, were confirmed. Prior studies have also validated that residents' attitudes were a key predictor of their support towards tourism (Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017; Gursoy, Yolal, et al., 2017; Liang et al., 2021). The result implies that distrust, prejudice, and fear experienced because of the COVID-19 virus and the resulting lockdown measures influence residents' attitude, leading to their intention to oppose tourism passively and actively. The findings also revealed that the association between residents' attitudes towards tourism opposition was stronger on behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively than actively. This means that residents are more likely to have the passive behavioural intention to oppose tourism than active due to their attitude. H_{5a} and H_{5b} proposing that subjective norms are positively associated with behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively and actively. These hypotheses were based on the premise that individuals' behaviour is influenced by their perceptions of how their significant others think they should behave (Vinnell et al., 2019). This relationship was confirmed in the tourism context, with studies showing that subjective norms influence residents (Hwang et al., 2016; Ostrom, 2000). This study's result confirmed H_{5a}, which involved behavioural intent to passively oppose tourism; however, H_{5b} was not supported. The insignificant result for H_{5b} could be attributed to the fact that while residents' significant others influence their intention to

oppose tourism, this behaviour is passive rather than active. That is, residents are not likely to try to bring about significant change in the tourism industry but rather avoid the tourist and tourist locations in the country.

H_{6a} and H_{6b} highlight that perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism was positively associated with behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively and actively, respectively. Empirical results from this study confirmed both hypotheses. This indicates that if residents possess the resources of time, ability, and knowledge to oppose tourism, they will form the behavioural intention to passively and actively oppose it. Results showed that the association between perceived behavioural control to oppose tourism was stronger on behavioural intent to oppose tourism passively than actively. This means that residents are more likely to have the passive behavioural intention to oppose tourism than active due to perceived behavioural control. Lastly, $H_{7,}$ which proposed that awareness of the problem is positively associated with an attitude of tourism opposition, was confirmed. The positive association between awareness of consequences and attitude has been previously confirmed in the context of air travel (Cocolas et al., 2020) and green practices (Chan & Hawkins, 2010). These results imply that residents' awareness of the risk of contracting COVID-19 would influence their attitudes about opposing tourism.

Theoretical implications

Our research provides a robust perspective of the antecedents (i.e., problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, personal norms, subjective norms, attitudes of tourism opposition and perceived behavioral control) to residents' passive and active opposition to tourism. First, problem awareness (i.e., adverse consequences of contracting COVID-19) was found to determine levels of responsibility for COVID-19, leading to actions to minimize its negative consequences, which is further associated with personal moral obligation to oppose tourism. This, in turn, predisposes behavioural intent to oppose tourism (passively and actively). Though these findings have been validated in research on green hotels and ecotourism, (Choi et al., 2015; Fenitra et al., 2023; Ritchie et al., 2022), the role of problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms in the context of residents' support/opposition to tourism has not been examined. Our results further extend the application of the norm activation proposition in the context of opposition to tourism, and insensitive tourist behaviour, which Fenitra et al. (2023) have most recently claimed are integral in contemplating sustainable tourism. It should be noted that as of late, work surrounding residents' opposition of tourism has not fully tested a model as we have; rather, it has either been qualitative in nature (Kim & Kang, 2020; Zerva et al., 2019) or has only considered theory as a guide (Litvin et al., 2020).

Additionally, attitudes of tourism opposition and perceived behavioural control were linked to behavioural intention to oppose tourism (passively and actively), while subjective norms were associated only with the intent to passively oppose. Such mixed findings were recently echoed in the work by Xu et al. (2022), that found only attitudes (and not subjective norms or perceived behavioural control) were a significant predictor of behavioural intentions. It thus seems that some factors can lead to an intent to passively oppose tourism, but not necessarily to actively oppose (perhaps because of the collective perspective that tourism is highly important to the island nation), which further indicates that specific correcting actions should be undertaken to prevent passive oppositions from converting into those that are more active. Future researchers may consider how negative reinforcement (or at least sensitivity to it) (Li & Chen, 2019) or acknowledgement of personal benefit from tourism (Woosnam et al., 2022) may moderate the relationship between intentions to passively oppose and actively oppose tourism. This, of course, suggests the notion

that, perhaps, passive opposition may precede active opposition. To examine this, future researchers should examine this relationship, especially given the transtheoretical model of behaviour, which argues that behaviours change over time and can become more assertive (DiClemente, 2007).

Finally, our study is part of a growing body of research within the tourism literature highlighting the complementary use of the theory of planned behavior and norm activation theory (Budovska et al., 2020; Esfandiar et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2017; Manosuthi et al., 2020; Meng et al., 2020). Though our work focused on residents' opposition to tourism considering the two theories, this is just the tip of the iceberg for researchers considering how best to explain other behaviours especially through norms of a personal nature as well as those influenced by others. In our work, subjective norms played a minor role in contributing to the two forms of tourism opposition. However, this was not true with personal norms, as the construct revealed some of the higher regression coefficients within the model. While this was in keeping with what Zhang et al. (2020) found, it is contrary to what various other studies (Han et al., 2017; Meng et al., 2023; Woosnam et al., 2022) demonstrated—in other words, subjective norms were a stronger predictor than personal norms.

Practical implications

Our findings provide insight to the tourism and travel industry in understanding residents' perceptions and behavioural intentions of opposing tourism following an unprecedented global pandemic. As the tourism industry enters a new phase of combating the COVID-19 virus while reviving the tourism industry, a coordinated approach is essential to the industry's interdependent nature. The path coefficient analysis confirms that residents' risk perception of contracting COVID-19 enhances their ascribed responsibility and attitude of tourism opposition, leading to passive and active behavioural intention to oppose tourism. As such, governments and policymakers must anticipate the risk concerns of residents relating to COVID-19 and develop recovery strategies that adopt these concerns when resuming tourism as the COVID-19 curve flattens out. For instance, tourism businesses such as hotels, aviation, and cruise, together with attractions, should adopt control and presentive strategies to reduce risk relating to COVID-19 (items 2, 3, and 4 of the awareness of problem construct). Governments can provide action packages through subsidies and tax rebates for businesses to engage in digital transformation. This can include replacing tour guides with 'smart tour guides' (Gao & Pan, 2022) and 'digital storytelling services' (Fusté-Forné, 2022) and enabling contactless payments, especially in hospitality contexts (Chen et al., 2021)—many of which have been in place prior to the pandemic. Such hygiene and health screening measures can gain residents' recognition and revive their confidence in the tourism industry.

To potentially alter tourists' oppositional attitudes about tourism, government officials and policymakers should make every effort to reduce residents' risk perception of contracting COVID-19. Promotional and marketing campaigns (through websites and social media) leveraged by government officials and tourism associations communicating the country's safety and control measures to safeguard against the virus can effectively influence residents' perceptions (Wan et al., 2022). Additionally, as residents' ascribed responsibility is confirmed to influence personal norms and tourism opposition, there is a need for government officials and policymakers to capitalize on residents' emotions in support of tourism development rather than opposition. This can be done by providing rewards or affirmations to residents supporting the tourism industry. For example, providing domestic travel vouchers (Cvelbar et al., 2021) to residents to spend on local attractions. Subjective norms were confirmed to influence residents' opposition to tourism. Peer-to-peer communication platforms like review websites, blogs, online communities, and social media

platforms can be effectively used by tourism businesses and government departments to depict safe and sustainable tourist practices, thus reducing the impact of subjective norms in tourism opposition Femenia-Serra et al., 2022). Moreover, perceived behavioural control was confirmed as a determinant of the residents' behavioural intention to oppose tourism passively and actively. As such, residents need to be provided with adequate support in providing their views and opinions regarding tourism to government officials and policymakers (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). In doing so, residents will be relieved to know that their concerns are being considered and addressed. Tourism's future will undoubtedly be shaped by the measures put in place today.

While it goes without saying, it is important to point out that our study should not be considered unique to Fiji. Other small island developing states (SIDS) that are heavily dependent on tourism (based on 2019 figures) such as Antigua and Barbuda (91% of jobs are in travel and tourism), Aruba (84%), St. Lucia (78%), U.S. Virgin Islands (69%), Macau (66%), Maldives (60%), St. Kitts and Nevis (59%), British Virgin Islands (54%), Bahamas (52%), and Anguilla (51%) (Neufeld, 2020) should take into consideration how their residents perceive the return of tourists. Should opposition be noted, similar strategies mentioned above may be considered. However, it may take the assistance of international organizations providing aid (e.g., the European Union, U.S. Agency for International Development, UNICEF, United Nations, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank, etc.) to help reduce residents' potential opposition to tourism.

Limitations and directions for future research

Despite this study's theoretical and practical contributions, its limitations must be contextualized. These limitations provide avenues for future research. To begin, our study was conducted solely among Fiji residents. As Fiji is a country that relies heavily on the tourism sector, it would be worthwhile to see if residents' perceptions and behavioural intentions to oppose tourism in other countries that equally dependent on tourism (especially other SIDS in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans) are comparable. Additionally, this research relied on self-reported data from Fijian residents. Therefore, one should exercise caution in trying to generalize our findings—this is especially true for two main reasons: 1) we secured a sample based on convenience and 2) one-third of our sample was comprised of individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. An additional limitation, which might influence the representativeness of the data, is the potential non-response bias and overrepresentation of certain demographics in the online survey disseminated through Facebook. Future studies can test the model in different destinations, across distinct degrees of tourism dependence, using probability sampling schemes where the age of the population may be more accurately represented.

Given that our research was cross-sectional in nature, behavioural insights are given at a single point in time. Therefore, situational and changing behaviour is not captured. As such, future studies should consider conducting longitudinal studies and experimental designs to capture behavioural change and causality. Finally, this study's conceptual model was developed based on the norm activation model and the theory of planned behaviour. Future studies may consider additional theoretical frameworks concerning behaviour, such as the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory or the theory of value-attitude-behaviour (VAB), to examine residents' behaviour. Such work may be equally insightful, if not more.

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