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Residents as gratuitous referrals at destination: An integrative model from altruistic values to pro-tourism behavior

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Abstract

The altruistically shared information provided by residents is significant for travelers, affecting decisions they postpone until arrival at their destination. This study integrates altruism as a personal value with the basic postulates of social exchange theory and theory of reasoned action to explain the behavior of residents in terms of gratuitous referrals at destination (GRAD). A structural equation model is tested at a tourist destination on the coast of southwestern Spain. The results reveal that the factors influencing residents' attitude toward GRAD behavior (GRB) substantially differ from those that condition attitude toward tourism more generally. Furthermore, the altruistic values of residents indirectly condition their GRB.

KEYWORDS
altruism, behavior, gratuitous referral, resident, social exchange theory, theory of reasoned action

1 | INTRODUCTION

Host communities are key stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism and the optimization of the visitors' touristic experience. Review articles by several authors give us an overview of the "residents´ support towards tourism" topic (Gursoy et al., 2019; Hadinejad et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021). Despite the growing theoretical and methodological sophistication of research on residents' support, "almost half of the studies used social exchange theory (SET) as the theoretical basis" (Hadinejad et al., 2019, p. 152), illustrating the continuing popularity of an approach focused on the relationship between the impact of tourism perceived by the resident and their consequent attitudes toward tourism (ATT). However, sustainable tourism development needs to take into consideration the attitudes of local residents toward tourism in addition to the willingness of locals to actively contribute to tourism through behaviors that favor such development. To this end, there are already studies under the umbrella of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) or the theory of planned behavior (TPB) that have investigated residents' intentional behavior (Chen & Raab, 2012; Erul, Woosnam, & McIntosh, 2020; Kwon & Vogt, 2010; Ribeiro et al., 2017); and actual behavior (Erul & Woosnam, 2021). While some authors suggest that residents´ positive ATT will strengthen their behavior in favor of tourism (Yoon et al., 2001), several studies have expressed caution regarding the poor predictive power of ATT as a determinant of behavior (Erul & Woosnam, 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Lee & Jan, 2019). Indeed Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), authors of the TRA, stated that the attitude toward the behavior was a much better predictor.

Our aim is add to this line of inquiry by arguing that it is the attitudes regarding a particular pro-tourism behavior rather than generic ATT that influence intentions toward a specific pro-tourism behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The relationship between the ATT in general and toward pro-tourism behavior can be analyzed by linking SET and TRA. Integrating both theories will allow us to advance the study of two gaps traditionally identified in the literature: (i) the attitude-behavior gap (Jackson & Inbakaran, 2006; Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014) that occurs when what people state does not coincide with their behavior (Deery et al., 2012); and (ii) the perception-behavior gap (Jackson &

Inbakaran, 2006; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012), which addresses the difference between the views of locals concerning the impact of tourism and their behavioral responses to tourism development.

We should point out that our work focuses on a specific type of pro-tourism behavior, gratuitous referral at destination (GRAD), on which research remains highly limited despite such referrals being common practice (Walls et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2006). According to Walls et al. (2008), GRAD refers to the recommendations and referrals that residents, untainted by monetary incentives, give to visitors regarding decisions typically taken at the destination, which may include food and drink, lodging, recreation, and entertainment choices. Researchers also recognize that values can function as predictors of attitudes and behavioral intentions (Denley et al., 2020; Hirsch & Terlau, 2015; Landon et al., 2018; Woosnam, Ribeiro, et al., 2022). In this sense, considering the importance of the value of altruism in explaining the behavior of local residents (Fennell, 2006), we have incorporated altruism into our model as an antecedent of residents' attitudes toward GRAD pro-tourism behavior (Komppula et al., 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, this study proposes a structural equation model (SEM) that integrates the concept of genuine altruism as a personal value and some of the basic postulates of SET and TRA to explain the GRAD pro-tourism behavior of locals. To the best of our knowledge, no research has previously considered this topic. Our model is tested at an alternative tourist destination on the coast of southwestern Spain, that cannot be considered as package or mass tourism (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017), due to certain geographical and territorial peculiarities.

From a practical point of view, the altruistic behavior manifested by residents' gratuitous referrals has social and economic implications for achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals (UN's SDG) for a destination. This pro-tourism behavior not only promotes sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), but is also a way to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of residents and tourists (SDG 3) while preserving the cultural, natural and intangible heritage of each destination (SDG 11).

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Residents as GRAD providers

The literature reveals that word-of-mouth (WOM) is one of the most important sources of information for tourists (Tham et al., 2013), and there is a need to improve the understanding of voluntary WOM behavior by residents (Segota et al., 2021). In this sense, a local resident can be viewed as someone who, by providing a gratuitous referral, transforms brand vision into brand reality (Morhart et al., 2009). Arsal et al. (2010) found that GRAD by residents significantly contributes to strengthening the resident-tourist link beyond its traditional understanding and hence strengthening touristic development. For the tourist, the information that a local resident altruistically provides is relevant because (1) locals have greater first-hand knowledge about the destination (Arsal et al., 2010), (2) such information is perceived unbiased and more genuine and credible than information being provided by someone who would benefit from "selling" the destination (Chen & Šegota, 2015; DiPietro et al., 2005).

Gratuitous referral is defined as "a personal recommendation that is unaffected by monetary or other remuneration provided by a venue being recommended" (Walls et al., 2008, p. 651) and differs from general at-destination referral activity (Rompf, 2001). Conceptually, gratuitous referrals are closely related to WOM in the sense that "the provider of the WOM referral is said to not profit by money or other incentives when the receiver acts to patronize the benefiting entity being referred" (Rompf & Severt, 2008, p. 144). The information that a local resident altruistically shares is relevant for the traveler not only with respect to decisions made prior to arrival at the destination (i.e., offsite information) but also with respect to decisions the tourist postpones making until the destination is reached, for example, information given altruistically about local attractions, nightlife, restaurants, shopping venues, lodging facilities, and/or special events (Rompf et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2006).

Few studies have focused on GRAD behavior (GRB). Several researchers have analyzed this phenomenon from the perspective of visitors and their search for information once at the destination (DiPietro et al., 2005, 2007). In the residents domain, several authors have incorporated GRAD as an item within the construct used to measure the resident´ protourism behavior (Ribeiro et al., 2017; Woosnam, Russell, et al., 2022). By contrast, Rompf et al. (2005), Walls et al. (2008) and Wang et al. (2006) focus exclusively on the role of residents as providers of GRAD. However, to date, no previous research has analyzed residents' GRB in the context of SET and TRA or from the perspective of altruism.

2.2 | SET and Residents' attitudes toward tourism

According to SET, local residents evaluate tourism in terms of a social exchange between the costs/benefits obtained and the services offered by locals or the locality to tourists (Ap, 1992). The generally accepted hypothesis is that the more local residents perceive the benefits of tourism exceed the costs for their community, the more favorable they will be toward greater tourism development (Dyer et al., 2007; Gursoy et al., 2002; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Perdue et al., 1990; San Martín et al., 2017; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009, 2011). Researching the impact perceived by residents has been approached at different levels. Despite the recommendation to reduce the number of items used to measure the impacts of tourism (Yu et al., 2011), to date, few studies have worked exclusively with a single, general variable (Stylidis, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011, 2014). These studies conclude that this synthetic variable is a significant predictor of residents' attitudes toward the development of tourism, establishing a direct and positive relationship. From a meta-analysis conducted from 28 peer-reviewed articles in major tourism journals to examine the applicability of SET, Gursoy et al. (2019) stated that "the overall perception of tourism impacts offers the largest effect on residents' support to tourism" (and) can be a good predictor to use in a parsimonious way" (p. 21), urging more primary studies that support the use of this variable.

The personal impact on each resident must be considered in addition to the impact of tourism development on the community as a

whole. The literature shows considerable consensus that residents who personally benefit from tourism display a more favorable attitude toward tourism (Ko & Stewart, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011, 2014). Furthermore, the more a resident perceives tourism to benefit him or her personally, the greater his or her tendency to perceive that the community benefits derived from tourism exceed its costs (Boley et al., 2014; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009, 2011; Yeager et al., 2020).

Based on this review, it seems logical that the perception of personal benefit from tourism development also influences residents' perceptions of tourists (PT) as a collective. The few studies that examine these relationships in the context of SET establish a direct and positive relationship between them, arguing that the greater the perception of personal benefit derived from tourism, the more favorable residents' PT in terms of respect (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011), treatment, and expenditure will be (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2014). Also in the context of SET, and with respect to the relationship between residents' PT behavior and their overall perception of the impact of tourism, Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2011) concluded that the more positive the residents' perceptions are of tourists' behavior, the more favorable their overall perception of tourism impact (OPTI) and their ATT development. Similar findings were reached by Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2014) regarding the respect, treatment, and expenditure behavior of tourists. Focusing on the relationship between residents' perception of tourists and their ATT, Sirakaya et al. (2002) confirmed a direct relationship between the perception of tourist behavior and their support for infrastructure and tourism attractions. Zaman and Aktan (2021) found that local residents' perception of foreign tourist attractiveness (in terms of exoticness) might also increase their support for tourism development.

Considering the views presented above, we postulate the following hypotheses:

H1. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' OPTI for the community and residents' ATT.*

H2. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' perceptions of personal benefit derived from tourism (PPB) and overall residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (OPTI).*

H3. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' PPB derived from tourism and residents' ATT.*

H4. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' PPB derived from tourism and residents' PT.*

H5. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' PT and OPTI on the community.*

H6. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' PT and resident ATT.*

H7. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' PT and resident attitudes toward GRAD behavior (ATGRB).*

2.3 | TRA and residents' behavior

In an attempt to advance the attitude-intention-behavior sequence, studies on residents have adopted the basic postulates of TRA (Kwon & Vogt, 2010; Prayag et al., 2013; San Martín et al., 2017) and TPB as an expanded version of TRA (Erul & Woosnam, 2021; Wu et al., 2017). Briefly, according to these two theories, a behavior is preceded by the intention to perform this behavior, which, in turn, depends on the attitude toward this specific behavior and the consideration that this behavior is appropriate and in accordance with the sentiment of the host location (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Wu et al. (2017) observe that among the variables that can influence intention toward behavior, attitude is the most powerful. In fact, it is common for the residents´ models proposed under TRA to focus on the attitude-intention relationship. The results of Ribeiro et al. (2017), Shen et al. (2019) and Shen and Shen (2020) establish the existence of a positive and direct relationship between attitude toward tourism and the willingness to receive tourists as an affable host, to protect the resources on which tourism depends, to provide information to tourists, to contribute to enhancing their experience and to promote the city as a tourist destination. Others claim that the strongest attitudes are those that best predict behaviors (Chen et al., 2018) and that the attitude of local residents toward tourism and tourists similarly influences their behavior in support of tourism (San Martín et al., 2017). It should be noted that several studies express caution regarding the predictive power of ATT when determining behavioral intentions (Erul & Woosnam, 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Lee & Jan, 2019). Moreover, certain studies conclude that attitudes are weakly associated with behaviors (Krosnick & Petty, 1995) and that behaviors are influenced by more variables other than simply attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

One of our aims is to enhance this line of inquiry by arguing that it is the attitude toward a particular pro-tourism behavior, and not the generic attitude toward tourism, that influences the intention toward this specific pro-tourism behavior. In fact, the relationship between the two types of attitude (i.e., toward tourism in general and toward the pro-tourism behavior) can be analyzed by linking SET and TRA. In our case, this understanding enables us to argue that the greater the predisposition of residents toward tourism development in their locality, the more likely they will provide gratuitous information to tourists that enriches the tourist experience. Finally, if we consider the original postulate of the TRA, the relationship between the ATGRB and the actual GRB is not direct but rather indirect and produced through the intention toward the GRB. To our knowledge, no previous study has considered the attitude of the resident from both perspectives (toward tourism in general and toward the pro-tourism behavior) and established a relationship between them to explain the GRB of local residents.

Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H8. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' ATGRB and residents intentions toward GRAD behavior (ITGRB).*

H9. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between the ATT and their ATGRB.*

H10. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' ATGRB and residents' GRB.*

H11. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' ITGRB and residents' GRB.*

2.4 | Altruistic values as antecedents of pro-tourism attitudes and behaviors

The term altruism was coined in 1851 by French philosopher Auguste Comte as the opposite of selfishness, designating the tendency to selflessly help others. Bar-Tal (1986) notes that altruistic behavior must benefit another person, be voluntary and intentional and not involve the expectation of anything in return. In this regard, Batson (2011) states that a motivation is purely altruistic (i.e., pure or true altruism) if benefiting another person constitutes a goal in itself and not a means to another end. Andreoni (1990) defines altruism as impure and self-interested when helpful acts benefit the individual performing those acts. In recent decades, altruistic behavior has been studied from the perspective of reciprocity (i.e., the exchange of benefits). Reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971) is understood as a type of calculated solidarity in which one person helps another in the expectation of obtaining a sufficient reward to cover the costs incurred.

The exploration of altruism in host communities has focused primarily on the analysis of the altruistic motivations of local volunteers (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017; Qi et al., 2018; Ralston et al., 2005), whilst not considering other community members. Researchers who have analyzed the motivations of local volunteers identified reciprocal altruism as one of the reasons for helping others (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017; Qi et al., 2018). However, few studies have examined pure or true altruism in local volunteers. Paraskevaidis and Andriotis (2017) analyzed true altruism and reciprocal altruism in two local volunteer associations in an approach that combined consideration of the altruistic surplus phenomenon (ASP) and SET. Their results confirm that reciprocal altruism explains the altruistic behavior of the members of these organizations. However, the ASP is a more appropriate means to explain the behavior of hosts who continue to support tourism despite their individual losses outweighing their benefits. With respect to the tourism sector, this study is one of the few that examines altruism as a personal value in a host community and outside the field of volunteering. Previously, Deschamps and Finkelstein (2012) investigated the possibility that true altruism is based on personal values and found the existence of a link between altruism considered a personal value and prosocial behaviors, especially volunteering (Ricard, 2016).

Rokeach (1973) considers that values are hierarchically ordered beliefs that serve as guidelines for our behavior. Values guide behavior according to the motivation underlying each value (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). Sagiv et al. (2011) studied how values affect two types of behaviors: competitive and cooperative. In the case of cooperation, the values of universalism and benevolence were positively correlated with participant contribution. Other research has shown that values are significantly related to various pro-environmental behaviors (Dunlap et al., 1983; Karp, 1996). Likewise, the studies carried out by Bardi and Schwartz (2003), reveal significant correlations between most of the values of the Schwartz scale (1992) and the corresponding behaviors. In relation to this, Schwartz (2017) states that, with few exceptions, the correlation between values and specific behaviors is not very strong because attitudes generally mediate this relationship. These findings are in line with other studies in which values are considered precursor variables of beliefs, identities, attitudes, and behaviors (Schwartz, 1996; Teng et al., 2015) and are therefore able to explain specific behaviors (De Groot & Steg, 2008; Komppula et al., 2018). In this sense, values can function as predictors of attitudes and behavioral intentions (Denley et al., 2020; Hirsch & Terlau, 2015; Landon et al., 2018; Woosnam, Ribeiro, et al., 2022). Their effect can be explained through the TRA model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

In accordance with these arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H12. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' altruism (ALT) and resident ATGRB.*

H13. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' altruism (ALT) and resident ITGRB.*

H14. : *There is a direct and positive relationship between residents' altruism (ALT) and resident GRB.*

Figure 1 shows the proposed theoretical model.

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Study site

We tested our model at an emerging tourist destination called El Rompido, located in a coastal enclave in southwestern Spain. The local population numbers fewer than 2000 inhabitants, and it is situated within a protected natural area (the Marismas del Río Piedras and Flecha del Rompido Natural Park). Despite its small size, El Rompido offers the visitor a wealth of sustainable tourism experiences: talks and workshops in a renovated 19th-century lighthouse; dolphin and bird watching (the Marismas del Piedras is home to numerous species

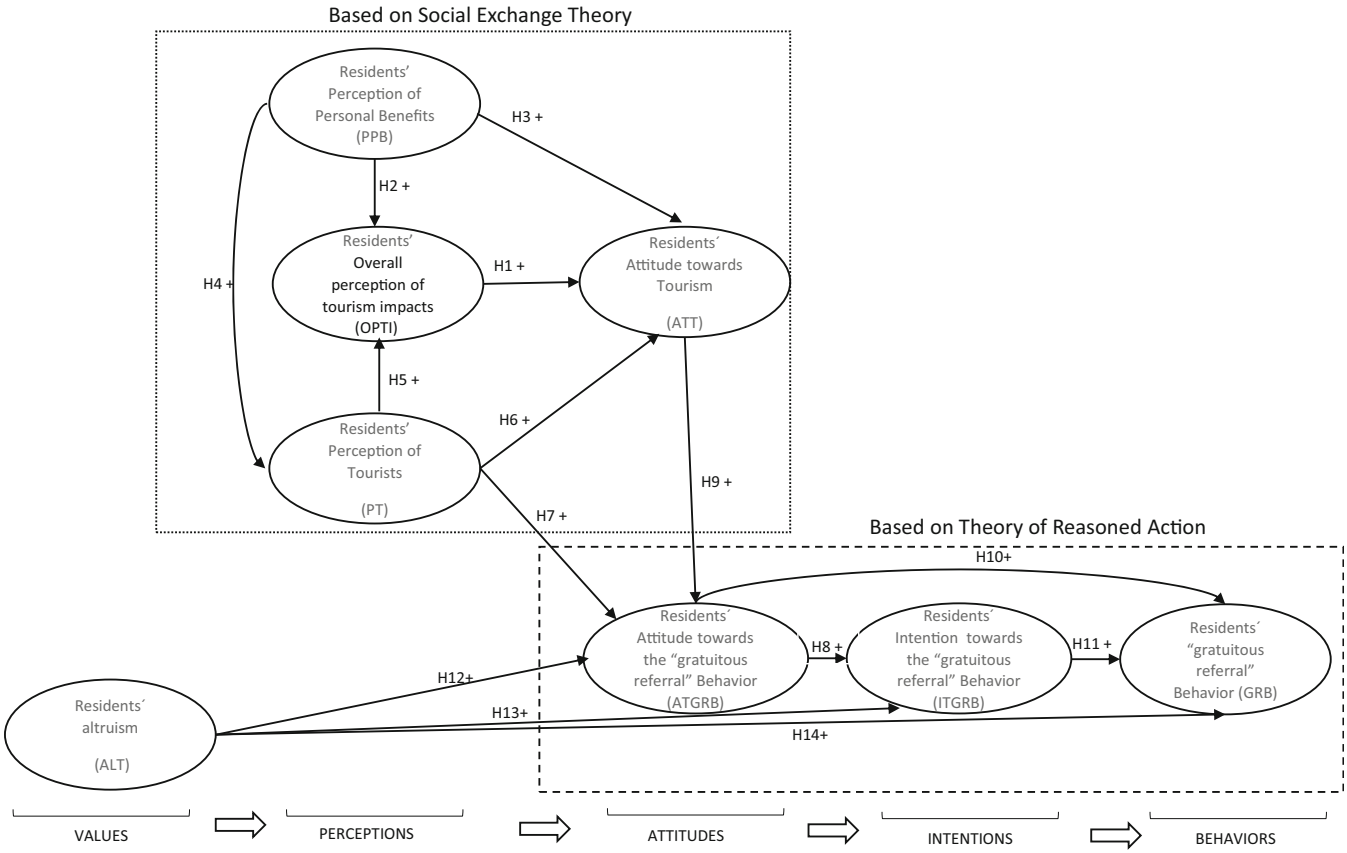

FIGURE 1 Proposed theoretical model. *Source*: Own elaboration.

of aquatic birds); the unspoiled La Flecha sandspit of fine white sand, accessible only by ferry; hiking and horseback tours through stone-pine forests and salt marshes; guided boat tours of the salt marsh ecosystem; a 36-hole golf course set in spectacular scenery; a leisure marina offering a range of recreational activities; an exquisite seafood cuisine, renowned for white prawns; visits to a *tablao* (club dedicated to flamenco); and educational walks around the former commercial fishing buildings at El Real de la Almadraba de Nueva Umbría (industrial tourism).

3.2 | Sample, data collection, and measurement instrument

The population of El Rompido in 2018 consisted of 1572 permanent residents aged 20 or older. Of these a sample of 360 was selected to ensure that the structure by gender and age was representative, and a self-administered structured questionnaire was distributed to them between December 2018 and January 2019 (low season), so as to avoid overrepresentation of temporary summer residents. A total of 324 questionnaires were returned, of which only 298 were usable for analysis. Nevertheless, the number of valid responses exceeded the minimum necessary to apply SEM, taking into account (1) the complexity of the model, and (2) the size of the effect to be detected (medium effect size) (Westland, 2010). The collected data were analyzed using the statistical programs STATA 16, AMOS 22, and SPSS 25. In terms of sociodemographic profile, 56% of the respondents were women, 70% were between 30 and 64 years old, and the average length of residency was 18 years. To test the validity of the hypotheses, we adopted a quantitative approach using the multivariate statistical technique of covariance-based structural equation modeling.

The residents questionnaire consisted of 22 items: three corresponded to sociodemographic profile (gender, age, and years of residence) while the remaining 19 to psychological variables (constituting the proposed model) aimed at measuring the values, perceptions, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of the respondents (Table 1). The psychological variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with the exception of Altruism, which used the original seven-point scale of Price et al. (1995). In the section on perceptions, PPB was measured by means of a single item, in line with Perdue et al. (1990) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2009, 2011, 2014), as opposed to the two items used to measure this construct by Ko and Stewart (2002) and McGehee and Andereck (2004). Following Kuvan and Akan (2012) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2011, 2014), the perception of the net effects of tourism was condensed into a single item, OPTI. In the case of the construct PT, we consulted Liu et al. (1987) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2014, 2015). However, due to its reduced factorial load,

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and reliability and validity

Constructs and items	Mean	SD	λ	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Perception of personal benefit[a] *(PPB)*: The extent to which the resident feels that tourism development is benefiting or will benefit him or her personally	3.37	1.27				
Overall perception of tourism impacts[b] *(OPTI)*: Degree of agreement that the benefits derived from tourism development outweigh the disadvantages	3.56	1.14				
Perception of tourist (PT)				0.828	0.823	0.699
PT1[c]: Perception of the tourist in terms of respect for property/infrastructure of the locality	3.65	0.92	0.822			
PT2[d]: Perception of tourists in terms of how they interact with residents (degree of amiability)	3.64	0.77	0.850			
Attitude toward tourism[b] *(ATT)*				0.884	0.888	0.799
ATT1: Attitude toward increased tourism development in the locality	3.57	1.39	0.899			
ATT2: Attitude toward increased numbers of tourists visiting the locality	3.19	1.50	0.889			
Altruism[e] *(ALT)*				0.899	0.906	0.666
ALT1: Importance given to "helping others"	6.08	1.29	0.784			
ALT2: Importance given to "serving humanity"	5.61	1.40	0.762			
ALT3: Importance given to "sharing what you have"	5.73	1.34	0.952			
ALT4: Importance given to "giving to others"	5.71	1.32	0.937			
ALT5: Importance given to "being selfless"	5.64	1.65	0.591			
Attitude toward gratuitous referral behavior[f] *(ATGRB)*				0.756	0.788	0.661
ATGRB1: Importance accorded to providing information to tourists to enhance their experience in the locality	4.01	1.06	0.615			
ATGRB2: Importance accorded to providing information to tourists to enhance their experience in the province	4.28	0.84	0.972			
Intention toward gratuitous referral behavior[g] *(ITGRB)*				0.936	0.932	0.874
ITGRB1: Intention to provide information to tourists to enhance their experience in the locality	4.06	1.05	0.973			
ITGRB2: Intention to provide information to tourists to enhance their experience in the province	3.97	1.10	0.895			
Gratuitous referral behavior[h] *(GRB)*				0.936	0.925	0.763
GRB1: When I meet tourists in my locality, I give them information about things to do/see	3.98	0.92	0.889			
GRB2: When I meet tourists in my locality, I give them information about tourist services (e.g., restaurants, hotels, shops)	4.07	0.95	0.921			
GRB3: When I meet tourists in my locality, I give them information about transportation	3.75	1.12	0.850			
GRB4: When I meet tourists in my locality, I give them information about other aspects (e.g., parking, pharmacies, hospitals, police, and so forth)	4.03	1.00	0.886			

[a]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = not at all; 5 = very much).
[b]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).
[c]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = very disrespectful; 5 = very respectful).
[d]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = very unpleasant; 5 = very pleasant).
[e]Items measured on scale of 1–7 (1 = very unimportant; 7 = very important).
[f]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = not important; 5 = very important).
[g]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = no intention; 5 = full intention).
[h]Items measured on scale of 1–5 (1 = never; 5 = very often).
Source: Own elaboration.

financial capacity was omitted from the questionnaire. The construct ATT consisted of two items, similar to those previously used in Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2011, 2015). ALT included five variables designed to determine the degree of importance residents accorded to various altruistic behaviors. The construct employed the five-item scale used by Price et al. (1995), adapted from that used by Pierce (1975). Finally, for the design of the latent variables corresponding to ATGRB, ITGRB, and GRB, we developed a series of items from one of the items used by Ribeiro et al. (2017, p. 529) in the latent variable "Pro-tourism Behavior," specifically, the item "I am willing to provide information to tourists and contribute to enhancing their experience."

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Evaluation of the measurement model

Prior to performing the confirmatory factor analysis, the common methods bias was applied and, in terms of statistical control, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The general amount of variance explained by a single factor (33.7%) led us to avoid a serious problem of the common method bias by being located well below the 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Likewise, we assessed the assumption of multivariate normality of the variables used in our study, using a Skewness/Kurtosis test for Normality. With the exception of the PT2 item, none of the results indicated a normal univariate distribution, which also ruled out multivariate normality. However, the individual absolute values of asymmetry were below 2, while the Kurtosis values were between 1.5 and 6. For this reason, following the recommendations of Brown (2006), the robust maximum likelihood estimation method was chosen to estimate the parameters and the robust Satorra–Bentler estimator for standard error. The goodness of fit statistics revealed a very good fit for the measurement model: chi-squared value = 245.23, χ^2/df = 1.95, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, SRMR = 0.03, and RMSEA = 0.06.

In terms of the individual reliability of the items (Table 1), all standardized factor loadings were greater than 0.707 (Carmines & Zeller, 1979) and significant ($p = 0.000$). Only the variables ALT5 and ATRGB1 yielded significant coefficients but were below 0.7 ($\lambda = 0.59$ and 0.62, respectively). These values, which far exceed 0.4, contribute to content validity and do not affect the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs of which they are part. Therefore, we decided to retain them in the model (Hair et al., 2011).

The reliability of the constructs of the scale was measured by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (Table 1). Since all the constructs in the model far exceed 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), we can conclude that the manifest variables display a high degree of rigor in their capacity to measure the associated latent variable. Convergent validity, measured by the average variance extracted (AVE) (Table 1), demonstrates the unidimensionality of each construct, as all latent variables are equal to or greater than 0.65, where the minimum desirable threshold is 0.5. Finally, discriminant validity, measured by the criterion of Fornell and Larcker (1981) (Table 2), reveals that the amount of variance that each construct captures from its indicators (AVE) is greater than the variance that this construct shares with the other constructs of the model.

TABLE 2 Discriminant validity Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion

	PT	ATT	ALT	ATGRB	ITGRB	GRB
PT	**0.836**					
ATT	0.391	**0.894**				
ALT	0.130	0.214	**0.816**			
ATGRB	0.380	0.384	0.351	**0.813**		
ITGRB	0.367	0.491	0.382	0.700	**0.935**	
GRB	0.346	0.343	0.284	0.529	0.580	**0.873**

Note: The bold diagonal elements are the square roots of each AVE; construct correlations are shown off-diagonal.
Source: Own elaboration.

4.2 | Assessment of the global structural equation model (and within it, the structural model)

We find that the goodness of fit of the initial global SEM is fairly good, according to the criteria of Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Hair et al. (2006): chi-squared (292.94; $p < 0.001$), χ^2/df = 2.10, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06, and SRMR = 0.06. With respect to the path coefficients (Table 3), of the 14 hypotheses, only two are rejected: one formulated according to the SET (H6), and the other concerning the relationship between ALT and GRB (H14). In addition to these direct effects, it is necessary to note 16 indirect effects, all of them significant. In the case of the influence of ALT on ITGRB and GRB, the weight of the indirect effects on total effect (65% and 82%, respectively) exceeds that of the direct effects.

Next, to delve into why hypotheses H6 and H14 were rejected, a bootstrapping analysis was performed. The results yield three effects of full mediation and one of complementary partial mediation. In the case of hypothesis H6, it is seen that OPTI completely mediates the relationship between PT and ATT (the indirect relationship is significant, but the direct relationship is not). There is also a complementary partial mediation of OPTI in the relationship between PPB and ATT (both the indirect and direct relationships are significant and positive). Regarding the sequence ALT-ATGRB-ITGRB-GRB, the results show that ITGRB completely mediates the relationship between ALT and GRB (H14) and that, in turn, the relationship between ALT and ITGRB is completely mediated by ATGRB. In both cases, the indirect effect is significant and positive, but the direct effect lacks significance (see Table 4).

In terms of R^2, the model explains 38% of the variance in the GRB, 59% of the ITGRB, 35% of the ATGRB, and 42% of the ATT. The explanatory power of the variable ITGRB is highly noteworthy since, of the 59%, 55.1% is explained only by means of two direct antecedent variables (ALT and ATGRB) and nearly exclusively by the latter. GRB is explained in equal measure by ATGRB and ITGRB (Table 5).

TABLE 3 Hypothesized relationship between constructs from the initial structural model

Hypothesized relationship	β	t-statistic	Supported?	Hypothesized relationship	β	t-statistic	Supported?
H1: OPTI–ATT	0.34	5.67***	Yes	H8: ATGRB–ITGRB	0.73	14.98***	Yes
H2: PPB–OPTI	0.24	4.28***	Yes	H9: ATTT–ATGRB	0.30	5.10***	Yes
H3: PPB–ATT	0.36	5.78***	Yes	H10: ATGRB–GRB	0.33	3.37**	Yes
H4: PPB–PT	0.35	5.50***	Yes	H11: ITGRB–GRB	0.31	3.30**	Yes
H5: PT–OPTI	0.25	4.13***	Yes	H12: ALT–ATGRB	0.28	4.71***	Yes
H6: PT–ATT	0.15	1.95ns	No	H13: ALT–ITGRB	0.11	2.21*	Yes
H7: PT–ATGRB	0.29	4.45***	Yes	H14: ALT–GRB	0.04	0.77ns	No

Abbreviation: ns, not significant.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; *Source*: Own elaboration.

TABLE 4 Analysis of the significance of direct and indirect effects between PT and ATT and between ALT and GRB

	95% bootstrap confidence intervals			
	Direct path	**Lower limit**	**Upper limit**	**Significance ($p < 0.05$)**
PT–ATT	0.146ns	−0.019	0.306	$p = 0.073$; No
PPB–ATT	0.364**	0.230	0.497	$p = 0.001$; Yes
ALT–ITGRB	0.110ns	−0.020	0.232	$p = 0.090$; No
ALT–GRB	0.042ns	−0.077	0.163	$p = 0.522$; No
	Indirect path	**Lower limit**	**Upper limit**	**Significance ($p < 0.05$)**
PT–ATT	0.087**	0.029	0.162	$p = 0.005$; Yes
PPB–ATT	0.165**	0.095	0.242	$p = 0.001$; Yes
ALT–ITGRB	0.205**	0.099	0.324	$p = 0.001$; Yes
ALT–GRB	0.190**	0.110	0.281	$p = 0.001$; Yes

Abbreviation: ns, not significant.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; *Source*: Own elaboration.

TABLE 5 Breakdown of the variance explained

Dependent variable	*R*-squared	Direct antecedents	Path coefficients	Correlations	Explained variance
PT	0.125				
		PPB	0.353	0.348	12.3%
ATT	0.423				
		PPB	0.364	0.391	14.2%
		OPTI	0.340	0.509	17.3%
		PT	0.146	0.391	5.7%
ATGRB	0.348				
		ALT	0.282	0.351	9.9%
		PT	0.293	0.380	11.1%
		ATT	0.300	0.384	11.5%
ITGRB	0.592				
		ALT	0.110	0.382	4.2%
		ATGRB	0.727	0.700	50.9%
GRB	0.377				
		ALT	0.042	0.284	1.2%
		ATGRB	0.328	0.529	17.4%
		ITGRB	0.310	0.580	18.0%

Source: Own elaboration.

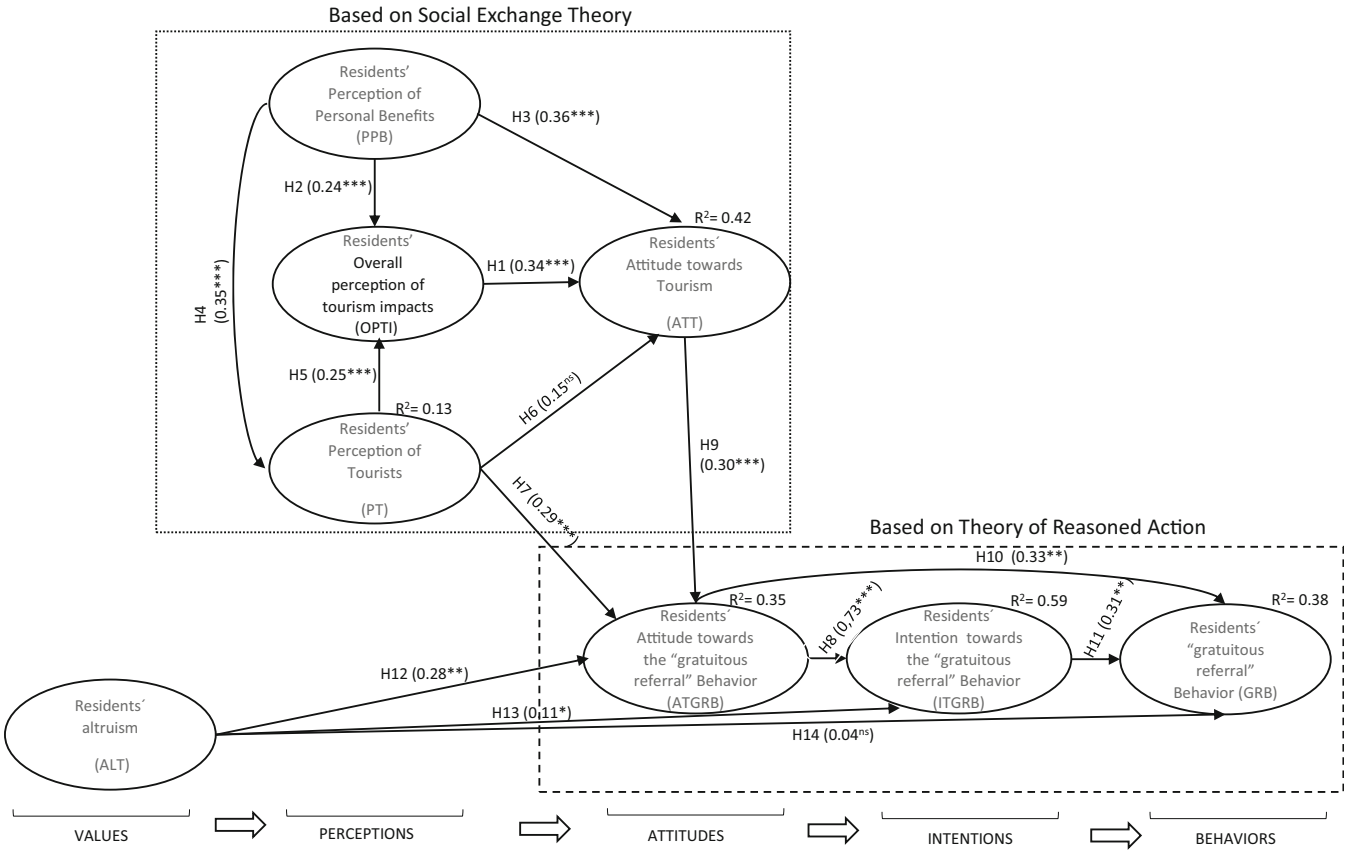

FIGURE 2 Structural model. *Source*: Own elaboration. ns, not significant. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

Figure 2 summarizes the main results obtained for the structural model.

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | Theoretical implications

The results of this study revolve around two main theoretical implications: (a) the need to differentiate between residents' ATT and their attitudes toward a specific type of pro-tourism behavior; and (b) the relevance that values in general, and altruism in particular, have in explaining specific behaviors toward tourism.

a. Beginning with the first, one of the main obstacles that studies on local residents have encountered when analyzing the factors that condition ATT and searching for antecedents of pro-tourism behavior is the confusion between attitudes toward a phenomenon (i.e., tourism development) and attitudes toward a specific type of behavior. Indeed, the use of the term "Residents' Support" in numerous articles has only exacerbated this difficulty (Plaza Mejía et al., 2020). Discerning these two concepts (framing the first as a final endogenous variable of SET and the second as an antecedent variable of intentions and behaviors in TRA) enable us to link the two theories and obtain a view of the psychological process that governs the attitudes and behavior of residents toward tourism, from their own personal values and perceptions to their attitudes and intentions and, finally, to their behavior. The differentiation between the two types of attitudes reveals another highly relevant finding for the literature: the factors that influence ATGRB may substantially differ from those that condition ATT generally. Our study concludes that ATT have as their main antecedents two types of perception: PPB (H3) and OPTI (H1). These results are in line with most of the previous studies developed under SET (Ko & Stewart, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue et al., 1990; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015; Stylidis, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009, 2011, 2014;). However, the antecedent factors regarding ATGRB involve three variables: PT (H7), ALT (H12), and ATT itself (H9). According to our results, the more favorably residents view the tourist (in terms of behavior), the more they manifest altruistic values; and the more favorable their ATT in their locality, the more predisposed they will be to provide information and recommendations altruistically to visitors.
b. The second theoretical implication highlights the importance of the values of residents, in particular altruism, in encouraging specific pro-tourism behaviors. In this sense, the rejection of hypothesis (H14) reveals that ALT does not directly influence GRB, and seems to contradict significant correlations between specific values and behaviors found by other authors (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Dunlap et al., 1983; Karp, 1996; Sagiv et al., 2011). However, in accepting hypotheses H12

and H10 (which show the ALT-ATGRB-GRB sequence) and hypotheses H13 and H11 (with the ALT-ITGRB-GRB sequence) along with the results of the mediation analysis carried out, it is clear that altruistic values do indirectly influence residents' GRB mediated by their attitudes and intentions. These results are supported by Schwartz (2017), who suggests that the correlation between values and specific behaviors is usually mediated by attitudes. Our results are in line with other studies that propose values as being predictors of attitudes and behavioral intentions (Denley et al., 2020; Hirsch & Terlau, 2015; Landon et al., 2018; Woosnam, Ribeiro, et al., 2022).

In addition, the results obtained validate the use of SET and TRA in future studies of resident attitudes and behavior toward tourism. Regarding SET, support for the first five hypotheses shows the importance of perceptions (OPTI, PPB, and PT) when forming ATT. With respect to TRA, the results obtained allows us to assume the validity of the core postulates of this theory to try to explain the pro-tourism behaviors of residents using their own values as a point of departure.

5.2 | Practical implications

Along with the theoretical implications, this work highlights some practical implications with respect to meeting the UN's SDG. Information gratuitously provided to the tourist at the destination ultimately increases the satisfaction level of the visitor. The visitor perceives that local residents have the most authentic knowledge about the cultural, natural, and intangible heritage of a destination. (Rompf & Severt, 2008; Walls et al., 2008). The altruistic behavior of the resident as a GRAD can drive tourists to acquire and consume local products such as gastronomy, events, crafts, shows, and so forth, and thus contribute to SDG 2 ("End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture") and SDG 11 ("Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"). In this way, it can be an economic boost for local economy (SDG 8) and could have positive consequences on how much the tourist spends at the destination, their satisfaction, loyalty, and even their own word of mouth interactions with other tourists.

However, beyond the economic implications, consequences of a sociocultural nature are in evidence. GRB by the local population positions the residents as vehicles for conveying local ideas and customs and as a channel of enriching, intercultural understanding for residents and tourists (SDG 12). For residents, feeling the admiration and appreciation of tourists for the destination and what it offers can boost their pride, attachment to their locality and psychological empowerment, ultimately resulting in a way of ensuring healthy living and promoting the well-being of the local population (SDG 3).

In light of the theoretical results, tourism managers should first clearly identify, given that the factors affecting each option may differ, whether their objective is to focus on the attitudes of residents toward tourism in general or to go further and encourage pro-tourism behaviors. In the event they choose the second objective, there are several actions that tourism managers can take to promote residents' behavior, such as GRAD. (1) They should guarantee the resident population access to infrastructure and tourist attractions (UN's SDG, target 9.1), through forms of direct communication such as advertising and promotions (Walls et al., 2008), discount vouchers, and open houses. (2) Local entrepreneurs could strengthen marketing efforts to directly impact those individuals in the local community who make GRAD (DiPietro et al., 2005; DiPietro et al., 2007). (3) Residents could be trained about tourism and sustainable development and its potential impact, both economic and sociocultural, at the community and individual level, and should also be kept up to date about the complete local catalog of tourist products and services (UN's SDG, target 4.7). Furthermore, (4) the cooperation of tourism service companies with local producers could be encouraged, so that the resident population perceives that most of the benefits of tourism stay local (SDG 12).

On the other hand, as has been evident in our research, the GRB of residents is illustrative of the altruistic values that support it. These values emphasize the voluntary concern of the host for the well-being of the visitor. In general, and in response to perceived goodness, tourists feel gratitude toward their hosts. The gratitude experienced motivates visitors to reward their hosts (Filep et al., 2017) (e.g., sharing stories highlighting the generosity of the locals) and to behave prosocially on future occasions, (adopting the same GRB with other tourists) (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In short, acts of spontaneous generosity can contribute to improving the outcomes of the tourist experience, increasing the mutual trust and well-being of hosts and visitors (Filep et al., 2017; Pressman et al., 2014).

6 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the theoretical and practical implications, this work also presents some shortcomings which should be addressed in future research. Among the general limitations are (i) the fact that the suggested model has been tested in a destination with a very specific type of tourism and at a specific moment in time; (ii) the only analyzed value within the framework of Positive Psychology has been altruism; and (iii) the focus has been on a very specific resident behavior (GRAD). For this reason, and in order to verify the possible generalization of our conclusions, it would be desirable to test this same model in different tourist destinations, in particular, a mass tourism destination, and from a longitudinal perspective. Especially, in light of the results of previous studies analyzing the pro-tourism behavior of residents during COVID (Armutlu et al., 2021; Joo et al., 2021; Woosnam, Russell, et al., 2022) we add, as a future line of research, the need to replicate our study in the same locality in order to test the potential consequences of the pandemic for the perception, attitude, and behavior of its residents toward tourism, as well as for the relationship between these variables.

Also of interest would be the incorporation of other variables of Positive Psychology (such as flourishing or resilience) to see if they could also explain other pro-tourism behaviors by residents or even their general pro-tourism behavior. In addition, future research could

adopt a qualitative approach to develop a deeper comprehension of the conclusions. This approach would be especially interesting for discerning the actual behavior of residents, since our measure of behavior is a self-reported questionnaire, and it is possible that residents perform that behavior by chance.

More specifically, we believe it is necessary to further differentiate between the variables attitude toward tourism and attitude toward pro-tourism behavior to identify, for example, which variables might influence each of these attitudes, or the effect of each of these types of attitudes on the degree of support by residents for tourism.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors conceived and designed the work and fully approve this article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The authors had full access to all of the data in this study and take complete responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis. This work has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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