

# Investigation of emotional solidarity and behavioral intention in residents' behavioral support for tourism: The case of Bartın

Ahmet Aslan

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Emotional solidarity,  
Behavioral intentions,  
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Residents,  
Bartın (Türkiye).

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The growth of the tourism industry is crucial to a destination's economic recovery and the development of the surrounding area. Empowering host communities is essential for fostering favorable attitudes towards tourism and encouraging active involvement in the growth of the tourism industry. When residents support growth and participate in tourism, it is possible to realize this development successfully. This research aims to ascertain residents' behavioral support for tourism development (BSTD) in an underdeveloped tourism destination by using the factors of emotional solidarity (ES) and behavioral intention for tourism development (BITD). Furthermore, this study aims to ascertain the mediating effect of the residents' BITD between the dimensions of ES and BSTD. In this context, data were collected from 343 people residing in Bartın through survey techniques. According to the factor analysis conducted in Jamovi 2.3.28 software, the dimensions of emotional solidarity affect the residents' BITD to support tourism development. Additionally, it was determined that the residents' BITD partially mediates the relationship between the dimensions of emotional solidarity and BSTD.

## 1. Introduction

Determining residents' perspectives and attitudes towards tourism contributes to realizing future tourism planning and developing sustainable tourism activities (Karakaş et al., 2022). The experience in the destination, the intimacy shared, and the culture learned constitute the values of the residents (Hadinejad et al., 2019). The social effects of tourism on residents are profound and frequently permanent (Deery et al., 2012), which is why residents are at the center of tourism (Pratt et al., 2023). It is not sufficient to share residents' positive and negative ideas to grow tourism in a destination (Sümbül & Erdem, 2022). Woosnam (2011) stated that the importance of residents' feelings towards tourists in the development of tourism in a destination is not sufficiently considered. Within this framework, Shariff and Abidin (2013) stated that residents' feelings towards tourists should be examined in depth and attitudes and support for tourism development in the destination should be revealed. For tourism revitalization, it is incumbent on destination managers to monitor changes in residents' attitudes and investigate the factors that influence their attitudes (Yin et al., 2022). Following COVID-19, many places are trying to get tourism back on track, so it is critical for academics to observe how

residents' attitudes are changing and offer helpful advice on how to get the results they want (Kamata, 2022). Residents' opinions on tourism have an impact on tourists' experiences and well-being (Park et al., 2017).

Numerous benefits come with tourism for residents: economic (increasing living standards, new job opportunities), socio-cultural (learning a new language, preserving and passing on culture to new generations, increasing recreation and shopping centers, increasing local services), and environmental (restoring historical buildings and protecting endangered animals) contexts, it also brings negative impacts such as inflation, cultural conflict, noise, traffic, and crowding (Aykaç & Tekeli, 2021; Khureldee & Çınar, 2021). Residents directly impacted by these effects take action by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of tourism (Erul, 2022). If the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of residents towards tourism development and tourism impacts are ignored and tourism planning and policy are made without involving them, residents may behave more negatively (such as irritable, aggressive and hostile) towards tourists instead of being tolerant and may not want tourism to develop (Harrill, 2004). Therefore, residents have become a favorite of tourism researchers, and their views on tourism

development, perceptions of tourism impacts, feelings towards tourists, behaviors, desires, etc., have been frequently discussed in the field of tourism (Wang & Pfister, 2008). In addition, visitors are active players in the tourism process. Residents' encounters with travelers help to form the tourist experience. Depending on their resources and their decisions to contribute, these exchanges could be different. Some of these resources are visitors' knowledge, abilities, and physical surroundings. The tourist experience is partly shaped by the residents' abilities, attitudes, and understanding toward travel (Prebensen et al., 2013).

Tourism officials and destination marketing organizations must consider residents' opinions when developing to achieve sustainable tourism growth (Gursoy et al., 2010; Koçoğlu et al., 2020). In contemporary times, the interaction between local communities and tourists has been explained through emotional solidarity, which refers to the emotional connections individuals have with one another. Residents' perceptions of tourism growth significantly influence a region's success as a tourism destination. Researchers have explored this critical topic by examining residents' attitudes toward and support for tourism development and the advantages they receive from it (Atsız, 2021; Bayram & Alkaya, 2020; Erul & Uslu, 2022; Karakaş et al., 2022). The literature includes studies investigating the relationship between emotional solidarity and behavioral intention (Erul & Woosnam, 2022) and behavioral support (Erul, 2022). Additionally, there has been research on the effect of behavioral intention on behavioral support (Karacabey & Erul, 2024). However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined the mediating role of behavioral intention between emotional solidarity and behavioral support. Also, there is still a need for research that explains the effect of the emotional solidarity levels of residents with tourists on their intention to support tourism development. In addition, the fact that the emotional solidarity levels of the residents in Bartın have not been investigated in previous studies reveals the originality of this study. This study aims to determine the residents' behavioral support, emotional solidarity, and behavioral intention toward tourism development in Bartın province, an underdeveloped destination in terms of tourism, and to fill this gap in the literature. Additionally, this study aims to determine the mediating role of the behavioral intentions of residents between the dimensions of emotional solidarity and BSTD.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Emotional Solidarity*

Solidarity “is the ties within society that hold people together, whether through emotions or actions” (Woosnam et al., 2015). Therefore, solidarity contributes to social integration and prevents the deterioration of social bonds in society (Li et al., 2024). According to Wallace and Wolf (2006), “solidarity can be considered as a sense of

identification that one person has with another person and serves to strengthen the ties between these people”. Durkheim (2008) introduced the idea of emotional solidarity and revealed that solidarity is achieved through sharing beliefs and behaviors and interacting with others. Woosnam et al. (2009) explored the dynamics between residents and visitors by introducing the idea of emotional solidarity to the tourism field. The emotional ties people feel to one another, defined by their perceived closeness and level of contact, are reflected in emotional solidarity (Hammarström, 2005). As pointed out by Jacobs and Allen (2005), “emotional solidarity is a sense of solidarity that binds people together by fostering a sense of ‘we’ as opposed to a ‘me and you’ perspective”. People experience emotional identification and intimacy with people they meet and find similar to themselves in the tourism setting (Woosnam et al., 2009). Emotional solidarity “is defined as a level of intimacy between people that affects how locals and visitors perceive one another” (Woosnam, 2011). It may raise the likelihood of teamwork and active engagement in creating a stronger community, substantially impacting cooperation among stakeholders in local community development (Ritchie & Rigano, 2007).

Emotional solidarity “refers to the emotional connection and closeness that residents feel towards tourists, which in turn influences their overall well-being, attitudes and support for tourism initiatives” (Wang et al., 2021). For the tourism experience to be valuable and to promote healthy relationships, there must be an emotional connection between residents and visitors (Lan et al., 2021). Emotional solidarity consists of three factors: welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding. Welcoming nature refers to residents' personal interests in visitors and tourism. Many studies show that a community's welcoming nature makes destinations more attractive (Erul et al., 2020; Joo & Woosnam, 2020). Emotional closeness involves the friendships residents establish with tourists and the love they feel for them (Sümbül, 2023). Sympathetic understanding is when residents empathize with tourists and try to understand them, recognizing that tourists come from different cultures and experiences and treating them tolerantly (Eraslan, 2023). Emotional solidarity involves a two-way relationship where residents' emotional solidarity with visitors can be influenced by elements related to the community. It emphasizes the interconnectedness between residents and tourists in the tourism context (Rao & Lai, 2023). Emotional solidarity is not only limited to residents' interactions with tourists but also includes their relationships with other residents and society as a whole (Su et al., 2023).

Residents' feelings of emotional solidarity have been found to affect their perspectives on the growth of tourism (Woosnam, 2012). Emotional solidarity has been emphasized as a critical factor in residents' attitudes in line with sustainable tourism development models (Doğan, 2019). Doğan (2019) stated that emotional solidarity is

significant in residents' support for tourism in line with sustainable development principles. Emotional solidarity significantly impacts residents' opinions and support for the growth of tourism (Wang et al., 2021). According to Hasani et al. (2016), residents' opinions and support for the growth of tourism are influenced by their sense of emotional solidarity. Emotional solidarity between tourists and residents can increase destination loyalty (Ribeiro et al., 2018) and tourism support (Joo et al., 2021). Emotional solidarity has been studied in various contexts within the tourism industry, such as in the sharing economy with platforms like Airbnb (Ndaguba & van Zyl, 2023), rural homestay settings (Chen et al., 2022), and post-pandemic scenarios (Zhang & Tang, 2021). Emotional ties built on shared beliefs, common behaviors, and interactions promote positive relationships in tourism destinations (Chen et al., 2022). Furthermore, emotional solidarity has been associated with residents' attitudes toward tourism development and support for specific tourism activities (Giango et al., 2022; Kock et al., 2024). Increased support for the growth of the tourism industry and more favorable views toward travel can result from higher levels of emotional solidarity (Asimah et al., 2023). It also positively predicts emotional well-being among residents and influences their overall attitudes towards tourism (Wang et al., 2021). This emotional bond between residents and tourists can benefit both parties by increasing value co-creation in tourism experiences (Lan et al., 2021). Daskin and Pala (2023) examined the role of emotional solidarity dimensions in supporting religious tourism in Amasya province in Türkiye. According to the results of their study, welcoming nature and sympathetic understanding dimensions were related to religious tourism support, but emotional closeness was not statistically significant. In this context, the following hypotheses were developed:

**H1:** Welcoming nature has a positive effect on the behavioral intentions.

**H2:** Emotional closeness has a positive effect on the behavioral intentions.

**H3:** Sympathetic understanding has a positive effect on the behavioral intentions.

#### ***Residents' Behavioral Intention and Behavioral Support for Tourism Development***

Empowering host communities is essential for fostering favorable attitudes towards tourism and encouraging active involvement in the growth of the tourism industry (Ahn & Bessiere, 2022). Suppose residents' views are taken into account, and they are involved in tourism planning. In that case, they will be more likely to recognize the positive impacts of tourism and be more receptive to existing and potential tourism developments (Nunkoo & So, 2016). Moreover, if residents are more aware of the positive impacts of tourism, they will have more positive attitudes and be more willing to support future tourism

developments (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Solmaz & Uyar Oğuz, 2020; Erul, 2021). Numerous studies demonstrate a connection between residents' attitudes and BSTD (Erul et al., 2020; Kodaş et al., 2021). However, some researchers stress the significance of examining residents' BITD (Erul & Woosnam, 2022). Additionally, residents' BSTD is positively impacted by their opinions regarding tourists and tourism (Shen et al., 2019). Favorable opinions of a destination are associated with more support and a higher intention to suggest the location, according to Styliadis's (2020) investigation into the crucial roles that destination image and place attachment play in influencing residents' deliberate support for tourism development. This demonstrates how residents' opinions affect their willingness to support tourism-related initiatives. Wang et al. (2022) investigated residents' intentions to engage in pro-poor tourism in Southern Xinjiang, discovering that residents' intentions to support tourist development were highly influenced by their perception of behavioral control, highlighting the importance of individual beliefs in shaping supportive behavior. Jiang et al. (2023) examined residents' perceptions of tourism impact, participation, and support in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the mediating role of trust in government in residents' behavioral intentions. They stated that residents' participation in tourism could reduce negative perceptions and partially mediate in promoting support for tourism. Finally, Karacabey and Erul (2024) studied residents in Sivas to determine the effects of tourism, place identity, place attachment, behavioral intentions and support for tourism development, finding a relationship between support intention and support behavior. In this context, the following hypotheses were developed:

**H5:** Behavioral intentions have a mediation effect between emotional closeness and behavioral support.

**H6:** Behavioral intentions have a mediation effect between sympathetic understanding and behavioral support.

**H7:** Behavioral intentions have a mediation effect between welcoming nature and behavioral support.

Positive behavioral or attitudinal reactions of residents to tourists have been a central focus of tourism research (Harrill, 2004). To make tourism effective as a tool for sustainable development, an in-depth understanding of how residents in their communities think and behave about tourism is needed, not only to become more affected but also to participate in the creation and delivery of tourist experiences (Eraslan, 2023; Harrill, 2004). Therefore, like destination loyalty (Joo & Woosnam, 2020), one of the topics that tourism researchers have studied, support for tourism also needs to be explored (Joo et al., 2021). One crucial challenge for sustainable development is the desire of the residents to support the growth of tourism (Sharpley, 2014). The higher the residents' satisfaction with tourism, the higher the satisfaction level of tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, residents' behavior towards tourists is of great importance in the development of sustainable tourism

(Gursoy et al., 2010; İzöz et al., 2009). Residents' emotional solidarity towards tourists is often an essential determinant of how they view the impacts of tourism and how they support tourism development (Joo et al., 2021; Woosnam, 2012). In tourism research, emotional solidarity has been reported to be an essential predictor of residents' and tourists' support for tourism, showing its explanatory solid power (Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Woosnam, 2012).

Hu et al. (2022) asserted that people's endorsement and active involvement are crucial in guaranteeing the long-term viability of tourist development. Da Huynh (2018) emphasized the importance of residents' satisfaction and support for sustainable tourism development and stated that the behavior of residents should be used wisely to use local resources for tourism growth. In light of the growing interaction between residents and visitors, Chen and Dwyer (2018) asserted that local support, involvement, and participation in tourism planning are critical for destination branding and marketing. According to a study by Sinclair-Maragh and Gursoy (2017), there is a direct correlation between the support of residents for tourist growth and their thoughts on the impacts of tourism. They stated that understanding residents' views on tourism's positive and negative impacts is crucial to gaining their support. Karakaş and Şengün (2017), in a study conducted in Diyarbakır, stated that most of the local people have a positive perspective on tourism. Campón-Cerro et al. (2017) emphasized the impact of residents' perceptions of tourism development on their intention to support more tourism initiatives and stated that residents' perspectives should be considered when planning tourism growth. Kwon and Vogt (2009) emphasized the importance of economic considerations in promoting positive resident attitudes, arguing that economic benefits such as job creation and improved living standards can improve residents' attitudes towards tourism. Furthermore, Johnston and Tyrrell (2005) argue that the support of local people is critical to tourism sustainability because their conservation behaviors are essential for protecting environmental resources that attract tourists.

Residents must be involved in the planning and management of tourism in their area in order to generate local support for tourism and to build a quality, long-lasting tourist attraction (Wang & Chen, 2015). Residents will naturally want to be active in problems that may have an impact on their everyday life since they are emotionally, intellectually, and physically tied to their community (Aleshinloye et al., 2024). The way residents view tourism has a direct impact on how the industry grows in a given location. The support of residents for tourism development is essential for the success of tourism in a destination (Ertuna et al., 2012; Yeşilyurt & Koçak, 2018). Therefore, tourism development is not possible in a destination where residents do not provide positive support and tourism activities are not sufficiently supported (Özaltın Türker & Türker, 2014). Shen et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of residents' attitudes toward the impacts of

tourism development in shaping their pro-tourism behavioral intentions. Erul and Woosnam (2022) found a significant and positive relationship between behavioral support and intention to support tourism development. Also, Erul and Woosnam (2022) stated that the relationship between the BITD and BSTD has not been sufficiently investigated in the literature. In this context, the following hypothesis was developed:

**H4:** Behavioral intentions have a positive effect on the behavioral support.

### 3. Methodology

This study attempts to determine the behavioral intentions and support for tourist development among residents in an underdeveloped tourism destination using emotional solidarity factors. Within the scope of the constructed structural model, the variables of residents' ES dimensions, BITD and BSTD are tested. Furthermore, the mediating effect of BITD between ES dimensions and behavioral support will be measured. The data collected through the questionnaire form prepared to test the hypotheses determined within the scope of the research are analyzed with Jamaovi 2.3.28 software, and the findings obtained are reported.

#### Research Area

The level of development in tourism is generally associated with indicators such as the number of tourists, tourism revenue, natural and cultural attractions, and the presence of tourist facilities (Atsız, 2021). Considering these factors, Kervankıran and Eteman (2020) examined regional development levels in terms of tourism in Türkiye and identified Bartın province as an underdeveloped destination. Accordingly, Bartın province was selected as the research area. Tourism is one of the most important industries for the Western Black Sea Region. Among the industries with strong development potential and competitiveness in the region for 2021–2025, according to the Western Black Sea Development Agency (2021), are tourism, building materials, furniture, forestry products, energy, and machinery manufacturing. The fact that Bartın has very high development potential in terms of cultural and sea tourism and that it hosts many local and foreign tourists every season with its ports, historical places to visit, and natural beauties are among the factors that make this destination stand out.

#### Data Collection Process

In line with the purpose of the research, quantitative techniques were preferred to examine the relationships between the dimensions of emotional solidarity, intention to support tourism development, and the behavior of supporting tourism development in underdeveloped destinations. The data collection process was completed with a questionnaire containing statements related to these variables. The questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part, the emotional solidarity scale was created by

Woosnam and Norman (2010) and developed by Woosnam (2012). The emotional solidarity scale consists of four statements of welcoming nature, two statements of emotional closeness, and four statements of sympathetic understanding. In the second part, the behavioral intention scale developed by Han et al. (2010) consists of three statements, and the behavioral support scale developed by Palmer et al. (2013) consists of three statements. In the last section, questions regarding the participants' demographic information were included. All statements were measured with a 5-point Likert-type rating (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree).

The research population consists of residents residing in Bartın. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (2024), the total number of residents in Bartın in 2023 is 207,238. Multiplying the number of statements in the scale by five or ten yields the appropriate sample size to represent the population (Bryman & Cramer, 2001). Consequently, sixteen statements were in the questionnaire designed to evaluate the research model and assumptions. It was established that the minimum acceptable sample size for the population was at least  $16 \times 10 = 160$  questionnaires. 350 people participated in the study, but seven questionnaires were excluded due to incomplete completion. Consequently, it can be said that the 343 questionnaires that were gathered from Bartın residents adequately reflect the universe. Since it was difficult to reach the population, data were collected by convenience sampling methods. Online and through questionnaires, the data were gathered between May 10 and June 10, 2024. The ethics committee permission required for the implementation of the study was obtained with the decision of Bartın University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with protocol number 2024-SBB-0256.

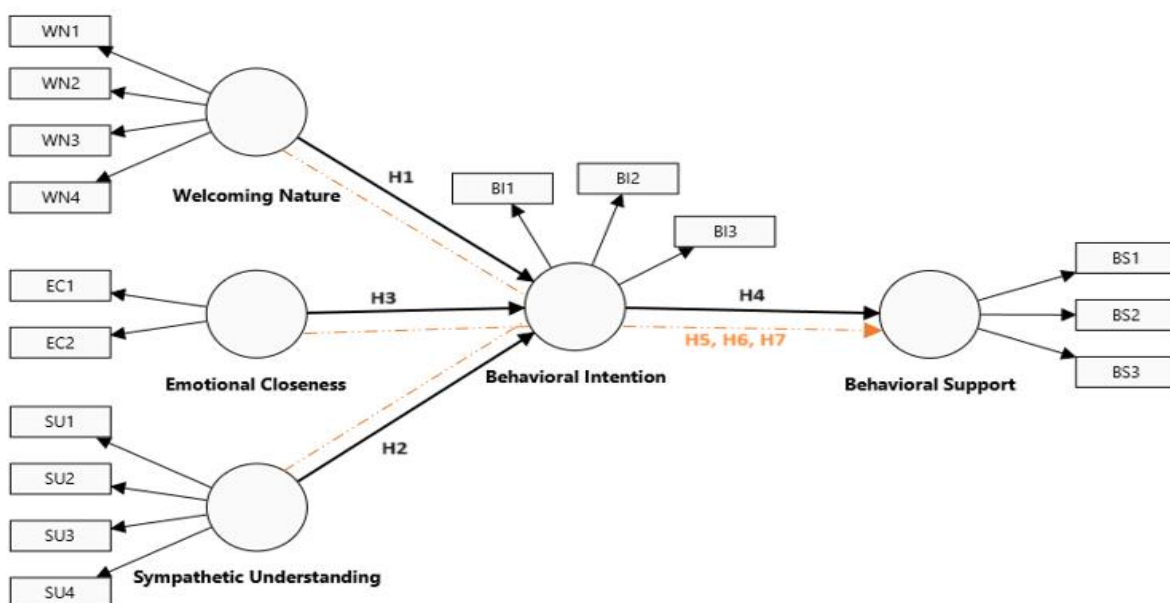
**Table 1: Demographic Information**

	n (number of people)	% (percentage)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	178	48
Woman	165	52
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years old	158	46
25-34 years old	68	20
35-44 years old	62	18
45-54 years old	46	13
55 years and older	9	3
<b>Education Status</b>		
Primary education	32	9
High School	136	40
Bachelor's degree	166	48
Postgraduate	9	3
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
17000 TL	130	38
Between 17.001- 22000 TL	89	26
Between 22001-27000 TL	46	13
Between 27001-32000 TL	23	7
32001 TL and above	55	16
<b>Profession</b>		
I work in the tourism sector	35	10
I work in a job outside the tourism sector	190	55
Student	99	29
Retired	19	6

Source: Author's own Elaboration

#### 4. Findings

As seen in Table 1, the proportions of female (52%) and male (48%) participants are almost the same. Nearly half of the participants (46%) were 18-24, 20% between 25-34, and 18% between 35-44. When the participants are analyzed in terms of education level, it is seen that almost half of them (48%) are undergraduate graduates, 40% are high school graduates, and 9% are primary school graduates. In this context, the educational level of the participants is high. Finally, when the participants'



**Fig. 1. Conceptual Research Model**

Source: Author's own Elaboration

employment status is analyzed, it is found that most of them (55%) work in a job outside the tourism sector, while 10% work in the tourism sector.

In the study, Jamovi 2.3.28 software was used for confirmatory factor analysis and determination of descriptive statistics. First of all, model fit values, factor loadings, p-value values, and fit index values were given, and then the hypotheses were tested after it was determined that the structure was appropriate. The Jamovi program is free R-based software and can be used by selecting appropriate analyses from its libraries. The conceptual research model given below (Figure 1) will be tested with the collected data.

The research model was created to reveal the relationship between the variables of ES, BITD and BSTD. The research model given in Figure 1 was tested. Behavioral intention and behavioral support variables were designed as endogenous, and welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding variables were designed as exogenous. While four true effect hypotheses were tested, three moderator effects of behavioral intention were analyzed. There are four statements in the welcoming nature variable, two in the emotional closeness variable, four in the sympathetic understanding variable, three in the behavioral intention variable, and three in the behavioral support variable.

The model image and fit values obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis performed in the Jamovi program are given in Table 2. Maximum likelihood was used as the estimation method. The baseline model and user model are given in the table. It is essential to interpret

the results when evaluating the performance of complex models. Both user and baseline model results were significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

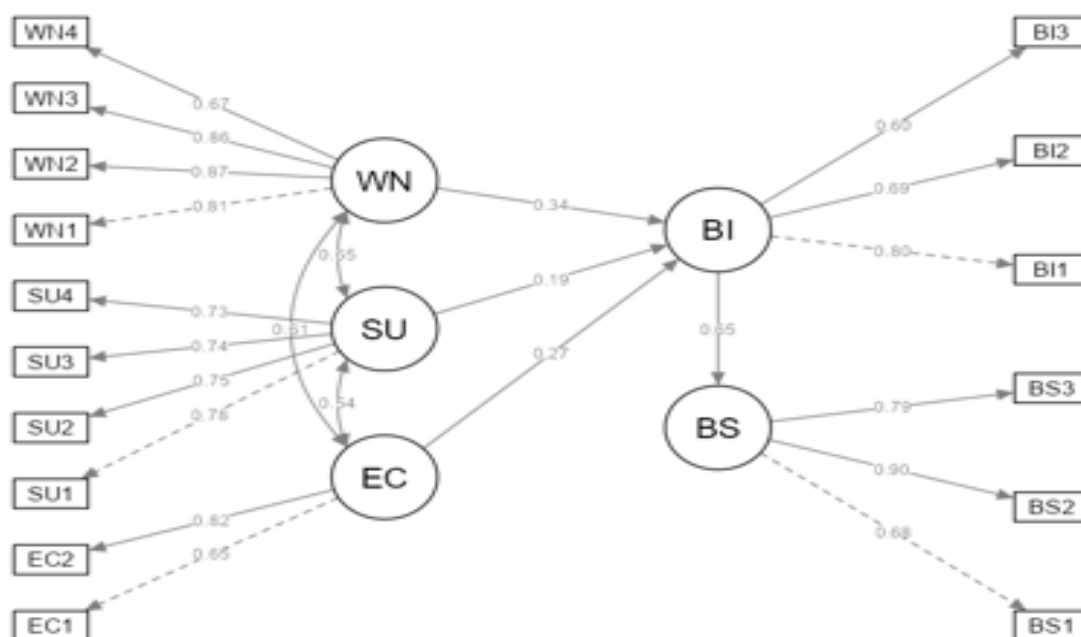
**Table 2: Model Tests and Fit Indices**

Model Tests			
Label	X <sup>2</sup>	p	
User Model	237	97	
Baseline Model	2759	120	
Fit Indices			
SRMR	0,052	AGFI	0,985
RMSEA	0,065	PGFI	0,632
CFI	0,947	MFI	0,816
TLI	0,935	RFI	0,894
NNFI	0,935	IFI	0,948
RNI	0,947	PNFI	0,739
NFI	0,914	GFI	0,990

*Note: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI), Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI), Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI), Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI), Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI), McDonald Fit Index (MFI)*

Source: Author's own Elaboration

For fit indices such as CFI, TLI, NNFI, RNI, NFI, AGFI, RFI, IFI, and GFI, values in the range of 0.90-1.00 are considered indicators of good to excellent fit (Bentler &



**Fig. 2. Factor Analysis Results**

Source: Author's own Elaboration



**Table 3: Factor Analysis Result and P Values (Measurement Model)**

Latent	Observed	Estimate	$\beta$	z	p	R Square	$\alpha$	AVE	CR
WN	WN1	1,000	0,812				0,877	0,652	0,881
	WN2	1,087	0,867	18,33	<,001				
	WN3	1,110	0,862	18,19	<,001				
	WN4	0,792	0,674	13,25	<,001				
EC	DY1	1,000	0,646				0,691	0,542	0,700
	DY2	1,252	0,817	8,67	<,001				
	SU1	1,000	0,785						
	SU2	0,937	0,754	13,74	<,001				
SU	SU3	0,842	0,739	13,45	<,001		0,839	0,567	0,840
	SU4	0,845	0,735	13,37	<,001				
	BI1	1,000	0,799			0,475			
	BI2	0,814	0,690	11,70	<,001				
BI	BI3	0,665	0,598	10,20	<,001		0,750	0,502	0,740
	BS1	1,000	0,683			0,425			
	BS2	1,284	0,896	13,29	<,001				
	BS3	1,068	0,794	12,78	<,001				

Note 1: WN: Welcoming Nature, EC: Emotional Closeness, SU: Sympathetic Understanding, BI: Behavioral Intention, BS: Behavioral Support

Note 2: The questionnaire questions are included in Appendix 1.

Source: Author's own Elaboration

Bonett, 1980; Smith & McMillan, 2001). RMSEA value less than 0.07, SRMR value less than 0.08, PNFI, PGFI, and MFI values greater than 0.50 indicate a good fit (Hooper et al., 2008; Newsom, 2015; Steiger, 2007). The model shows a good fit according to the fit indices obtained. Moreover, according to Table 2, both the user model and baseline model performance results are significant. The model is sufficient to make this measurement.

The results of the factor analysis conducted in the Jamovi program are given in Figure 2. Figure 2 also shows the t-values of the external loading values with the items of each variable (arrows), path coefficients between variables, and t-values (arrows).

The variables' standardized and unstandardized factor loadings are displayed in Table 3. Some of the calculations were performed in the Excel program. Accordingly, when the standardized values are examined, factor loadings in the range of (0.674-0.867) for welcoming nature, (0.646-0.817) for emotional closeness, (0.735-0.785) for sympathetic understanding, (0.598-0.799) for behavioral intention and (0.683-0.896) for behavioral support were obtained. When the results of the z-tests and p-values are analyzed, it can be said that the loadings of these items are significant. Some of the reliability and validity results are also presented in Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50 and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 indicate that the model is reliable and valid.

Heterotrophy Monotrophy Ratio (HTMT) and Fornell Larcker criterion results were also examined to check whether the discriminant validity was also met, and the results obtained were combined and presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: HTMT and Fornell Larcker Criterion Results**

	WN	EC	SU	BI	BS
WN	<b><u>0,807</u></b>				
EC	0,489	<b><u>0,736</u></b>			
SU	0,580	0,395	<b><u>0,752</u></b>		
BI	0,482	0,427	0,416	<b><u>0,708</u></b>	
BS	0,482	0,336	0,386	0,498	<b><u>0,795</u></b>

Source: Author's own Elaboration

HTMT values below 0.85 proves that divergence validity is ensured (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016). The bold and underlined values in Table 4 are square roots of AVE values. For example, the value in cell WN-WN is obtained by taking the square root of 0.652. This value should be the largest value of the row and column. When Table 4 is examined, the rows and columns with dark-colored values are the most significant values. The data set in all its expressions is appropriate for factor analysis. The model shows a good fit, and hypotheses can be tested.

The three dimensions of emotional solidarity (welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding) positively influenced behavioral intention, significantly influencing behavioral support for tourism development. Specifically, welcoming nature had the highest impact on behavioral intention, followed by emotional closeness and sympathetic understanding.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Test Results (Direct Effect: H1-H4) (Specific Indirect Effect: H5-H7)**

95% Confidence Intervals									
Paths	Estimate	Lower	Upper	$\beta$	z	p			Decision
H1: WN→BI	0,349	0,179	0,507	0,343	33,78	<,001			Support
H2: SU→BI	0,197	0,032	0,347	0,190	11,73	0,020			Support
H3: EC→BI	0,326	0,102	0,429	0,266	5,90	0,002			Support
H4: BI→BS	0,514	0,567	0,736	0,652	3,71	<,001			Support
H5: EC→BI→BS	0,168	0,0642	0,282	0,173	2,965	0,003			Support
H6: SU→BI→BS	0,101	0,0200	0,228	0,124	2,283	0,022			Support
H7: WN→BI→BS	0,179	0,1129	0,335	0,224	3,723	<,001			Support

Source: Author's own Elaboration

**Table 6: Direct Effect Results to Calculate the Size of the Mediation Effect**

Dep	Pred	Estimate	SE	$\beta$	95% Confidence Intervals		z	p
					Lower	Upper		
BS	WN	0,426	0,0531	0,533	0,443	0,623	8,02	<,001
BS	SU	0,353	0,0540	0,442	0,340	0,544	6,54	<,001
BS	EC	0,379	0,0728	0,409	0,290	0,528	5,21	<,001
BS	BI	0,474	0,0603	0,596	0,503	0,689	7,87	<,001

Source: Author's own Elaboration

According to the values given in Table 5, all hypotheses were supported, and the path coefficients were significant. After this stage, the direct effect results (Table 6) were taken, and Variance Accounted For (VAF) values were calculated to determine the mediation effect size. The obtained values are presented in Table 7.

Based on the collected results, all direct and indirect effects are significant. This is sufficient to talk about the existence of the mediation effect. Accordingly, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4 H5, H6, H7 are accepted. In order to find out the size of the mediation effect, direct and indirect effects and total effects should be calculated. Using these values, VAF values were calculated. Variance Accounted For (VAF) values can be used to determine the size of significant indirect effects. These values are obtained by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect. An effect level between 0.20 and 0.80 means partial mediation, while an effect level of more than 0.80 indicates a full mediation effect (Hair et al., 2011). Values less than 0.20 can be interpreted as a minimal mediation effect. Accordingly, the BI variable has a partial mediation effect in the relationship between EC-BS, SU-BS, and WN-BS.

## 5. Conclusion

The study seeks to ascertain the behavioral intentions and support of the residents of Bartın towards tourism development by using emotional solidarity factors. All seven hypotheses created to show the relationship links were accepted in line with this purpose. According to the natural and cultural attractions of tourism destinations in Türkiye, tourism development is spread over different regions, and the stages of tourism development differ for each destination. Although residents' perceptions towards tourism differ in each destination, measuring their attitudes towards tourism is essential. The study's first three hypotheses (H1-H2-H3) were formulated to examine the effects of residents' emotional solidarity levels on their behavioral intention. The study results show that locals' behavioral intention to promote tourist development is favorably correlated with their degree of emotional solidarity. The findings of this study align with earlier research that emphasizes the importance of emotional solidarity in tourism development (Erul & Uslu, 2022; Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Moghavvemi et al., 2017). Woosnam

(2012) and Wang et al. (2021) similarly found that emotional solidarity between residents and tourists positively influences residents' attitudes and support for tourism. Both studies highlight that emotional solidarity contributes to stronger community ties, which benefits tourism activities. Moghavvemi et al. (2017) tried to ascertain residents' attitudes toward tourism developments using emotional solidarity theory and found that emotional solidarity factors positively affect residents' attitudes toward tourism developments. Erul and Woosnam (2022) reported that the relationship between behavioral intention and support has yet to be sufficiently investigated in the literature, and therefore, hypothesis H4 was formulated. Moreover, behavioral intentions to support tourism development have a positive effect on tourism development support behavior. This result is in line with the findings of Karacabey and Erul (2024).

This study expands the application of emotional solidarity in elucidating residents' endorsement of tourism. Various studies have tested emotional solidarity and shown its effectiveness in explaining residents' attitudes toward tourism (Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Woosnam, 2012). However, no study has examined the mediating role of behavioral intention in the studies conducted so far. In this context, the mediating role of welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding, as well as the dimensions of the emotional solidarity scale between behavioral intention and behavioral support, was examined (H5, H6, H7). According to the findings, it was determined that behavioral intention has a mediating role between the sub-dimensions of emotional solidarity and behavioral support. Variance Accounted For (VAF) values were calculated to determine the effect size. Accordingly, the behavioral intention variable partially mediates the relationship between ES and behavioral support (EC-BS, SU-BS, and WN-BS). Unlike earlier studies, such as those by Nunkoo and So (2016), which treated behavioral support as a direct outcome of emotional and cognitive factors, this research emphasizes the intermediary role of behavioral intention, showing its critical function in shaping residents' supportive behaviors.

When the research results are analyzed, it is understood that residents in underdeveloped destinations generally

**Table 7: Mediation Effect**

	Indirect Impact	Direct Impact	Total Impact	VAF	
H5: EC→BI→BS	0,173	0,409	0,582	0,30	Partial
H6: SU→BI→BS	0,124	0,442	0,566	0,22	Partial
H7: WN→BI→BS	0,224	0,533	0,757	0,30	Partial

Source: Author's own Elaboration



support tourism development. Accordingly, local governments in the destination should encourage residents to support tourism while planning tourism investments. As seen in previous studies, it has been revealed that the conditions for residents, who are among the most critical stakeholders of tourism, to support tourism development depend on these factors. In addition, to increase the interaction and sincerity of residents with tourists, tourism-related activities such as fairs, festivals, activities and seminars can positively affect tourism development and increase residents' support for tourism. These tourism activities will also allow residents to integrate with their community. In addition, destination managers should consult with residents on projects related to their intention to support tourism development.

#### ***Theoretical Implications***

This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the role of emotional solidarity in shaping residents' attitudes and behaviors toward tourism development. Unlike previous research, this study examined the mediating role of behavioral intention between emotional solidarity and behavioral support, providing a new perspective on how emotional connections between residents and tourists can impact tourism growth. The findings underscore the importance of considering residents' emotional bonds in tourism planning and policy-making to ensure sustainable tourism development. By revealing the mediating effect of behavioral intention, this study brings a new understanding to the existing theories of emotional solidarity in the tourism context. Unlike previous research, this study emphasizes the intermediary role of behavioral intention, suggesting that emotional connections alone may not be sufficient to translate into direct behavioral support for tourism. Instead, behavioral intention is a critical pathway through which emotional solidarity transforms into concrete support behaviors.

The research also supports the argument that emotional solidarity should be integrated into sustainable tourism development models. By examining the role of emotional solidarity and behavioral intention, this study underscores the importance of emotional bonds in shaping the community's response to tourism. The findings suggest that fostering emotional connections between residents and tourists can strengthen not only the attitudes of residents but also their willingness to participate in and support tourism activities. This theoretical implication is especially relevant for underdeveloped tourism destinations, where community support is vital for growth. Furthermore, this study expands on Durkheim's (2008) theory of emotional solidarity by applying it within a tourism context, reinforcing the notion that emotional bonds contribute to social integration and community development. The results indicate that tourism development efforts should account for the emotional dimensions of resident-tourist interactions to build sustainable and resilient tourism communities.

#### ***Practical Implications***

The findings suggest that tourism developers and policymakers should prioritize building emotional solidarity between residents and tourists in order to gain community support for tourism initiatives. Strategies to foster emotional solidarity include cultural exchange programs, community events involving tourists, and other initiatives that promote direct and positive interactions. Emphasizing welcoming behaviors, emotional closeness, and empathetic understanding will help build stronger bonds between residents and tourists, leading to a more supportive environment for tourism development. Destination managers should also focus on effectively communicating the benefits of tourism to local communities, ensuring that residents feel emotionally connected to tourism activities and view them as beneficial. Tourism officials can improve overall community well-being and achieve more sustainable tourism outcomes by understanding and enhancing the emotional solidarity between residents and tourists.

Training can be provided to help residents and tourism workers understand the value of welcoming nature and emotional solidarity. Training that includes cultural awareness can enhance sympathetic understanding and reduce potential cultural friction between residents and tourists. Policymakers and tourism developers should communicate the benefits of tourism to the community, emphasizing how tourism can improve local infrastructure, create job opportunities, and increase cultural preservation efforts. Ensuring that residents perceive tangible benefits helps foster a sense of collective involvement and emotional solidarity. Tourism marketers should include residents' stories and cultural narratives in promotional materials to build a deeper connection between tourists and the community. Storytelling can highlight the area's unique cultural heritage and foster sympathetic understanding by encouraging tourists to appreciate local customs and traditions. Giving residents an active role in planning and executing tourism activities can enhance their sense of ownership and emotional solidarity with the tourism industry. Initiatives such as community-guided tours or local cultural exhibitions provide direct ways for residents to engage with and benefit from tourism activities. It is vital to establish platforms for residents to voice their concerns, suggestions, and satisfaction regarding tourism activities. Such mechanisms enhance behavioral intention by making residents feel heard and valued and help tourism managers adopt strategies that align with community interests, fostering further emotional solidarity.

#### ***Limitations and Future Research***

This study was conducted in Bartın, an underdeveloped tourism destination in Türkiye. The generalizability of the findings may be limited to similar regions, and results may vary in more developed or different cultural contexts. Future research could extend this study to other regions to

test the applicability of the findings across diverse settings. Most of the participants in the study are young and educated individuals. Future studies should increase demographic diversity. Also, in future studies, other variables can be included, and emotional solidarity and residents' support for tourism can be explained in more detail. Moreover, this study was conducted using quantitative techniques. In future research, qualitative research methods that explore residents' perspectives in greater depth and assess the extent and nature of their tourism-related expertise will also yield beneficial outcomes for developing tourism in underdeveloped destinations. This study primarily focused on residents' perspectives. However, tourists' perspectives on emotional solidarity and their influence on the tourism experience were not examined. Future research could consider a dual approach that includes both residents and tourists to gain a more comprehensive understanding of emotional solidarity in tourism.

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## APPENDIES

### Appendix-1: Questionnaire Questions

Emotional Solidarity Scale (ESS)	<b>Welcoming nature</b>
	1.I am proud to have visitors come to Bartın
	2.I feel the community benefits from having visitors in Bartın
	3.I appreciate visitors for the contribution they make to the local economy
	4.I treat visitors fair in Bartın
	<b>Emotional closeness</b>
	5.I feel close to some visitors I have met in Bartın
	6.I have made friends with some visitors in Bartın
	<b>Sympathetic understanding</b>
	7.I identify with visitors in Bartın
	8.I have a lot in common with Bartın visitors
	9.I feel affection towards visitors in Bartın
	10.I understand visitors in Bartın
	<b>Behavioral intentions to support tourism development</b>
	11.I will make an effort to support tourism development in Bartın
	12.I am willing to support tourism development in Bartın
	13.I plan to support tourism development in Bartın
	<b>Behavioral support for tourism development</b>
	14.I visit the tourist places of Bartın
	15.I help with tourism encouraging organizations in Bartın
	16. I attend the meetings organized by the people of the region about tourism

## INFO PAGE

**Investigation of Emotional Solidarity and Behavioral Intention in Residents' Behavioral Support for Tourism: The Case of Bartın****Abstract**

Tourism development is essential for the development of the region and the revitalization of the economy in a destination. The successful realization of this development is usually possible with residents' positive support and participation in tourism. The purpose of this study is to determine the behavioral support of residents for tourism development in an underdeveloped tourism destination by using the factors of emotional solidarity and behavioral intention. In addition, this study aims to determine the mediating effect of the behavioral intentions of residents to support tourism development between the dimensions of emotional solidarity and behavioral support for tourism development. In this context, data were collected from 343 people residing in Bartın, an underdeveloped tourism destination, through survey techniques. As a result of the factor analysis conducted in Jamovi 2.3.28 software, it was determined that the dimensions of emotional solidarity affect the behavioral intentions of residents to support tourism development. In addition, it was determined that the behavioral intentions of residents to support tourism development have a partial mediating role between the dimensions of emotional solidarity and behavioral support for tourism development.

**Keywords:** Emotional Solidarity, Behavioral Intention, Behavioral Support, Bartın (Türkiye).

**Authors**

Full Name	Author contribution roles	Contribution rate
<b>Ahmet Aslan:</b>	Conceptualism, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision	100%

**Author statement:** Author(s) declare(s) that All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. **Declaration of Conflicting Interests:** The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

**Ethics Committee Satatement:** Ethics committee report is available for this research and it has been documented to the journal

Ethics committee: Bartın Üniversitesi, Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulu

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