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<b>RESIDENTS' SUPPORT FOR TOURISM AFTER THE PANDEMIC: EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY, PERCEIVED RISK, ECONOMIC ANXIETY</b>	
Beybala TİMUR <sup>1*</sup> (orcid.org/ 0000-0002-7514-1129)	
<sup>1</sup> Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi, Gastronomi Bölümü, Eskişehir, Türkiye	
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>The covid-19 pandemic hit the world hard. Its economic and social impacts were severe, especially for countries where the economy mainly relies on tourism. Touristic activities restarted after two years with lots of question marks. While tourists may take risks voluntarily when they travel, residents do not have much to say. However, the success of the tourism policies depends on residents' support, and financial hardship might change their thoughts. Therefore, this study examined how residents' emotional solidarity, perceived risk, and economic anxiety influence their support for tourism. The results presented that perceived risk and economic anxiety decrease emotional solidarity. However, economic anxiety increases their support for tourism.</p>	
<b>Keywords:</b> Tourism, perceived risk, emotional solidarity, economic anxiety, support for tourism, social exchange theory.	

## Introduction

Tourism is among the most affected industries by the Covid-19 pandemic (Arbulú et al., 2021). Due to the strict precautions, governments banned going in and out of the country. As a result, circumstances forced tourist activities to be put on hold for a while, and the number of tourist arrivals hit bottom worldwide. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported (2020d) a loss of 300 million tourist arrivals and \$320 billion in tourism receipts, which is way above the harm the 2009 Global Economic Crisis caused.

Even though the vaccine is developed, several countries are still struggling with outcomes, and international arrivals are not expected to be on 2019 levels before 2024 (Lew et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2020b). Thus, as social distancing and lockdowns were enforced, governments took immediate measures to support the economy and employment to restart touristic activities (UNWTO, 2020a). Since international arrivals are expected to be low for a while, promoting domestic tourism seems the only feasible solution (Arbulú et al., 2021). Moreover, domestic tourism can be a life-saver under normal circumstances (D. Joo et al., 2021). It generates more income than international tourism, and countries with a high share of domestic tourism might retrieve from the effects of Covid-19 sooner and quickly (UNWTO, 2020c).

Nevertheless, the risk of infection for tourists and residents remains on the table. Tourists can somehow change their destination and avoid the infection risk (Brouder et al., 2020; Karl et al., 2020). However, the residents do not have much say in this matter. As much as tourism contributes to the economy on both national and regional scales, residents might be concerned about welcoming tourists

\* Sorumlu yazar: [beybalatimur@gmail.com](mailto:beybalatimur@gmail.com)

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and supporting tourist activities during the pandemic, regardless of domestic or international (Kamata, 2021). The perceived risk of tourism activities is significant and should not be ignored (D. Joo et al., 2021; Kamata, 2021). Especially in extraordinary situations, such as the pandemic, residents' risk perception demands more academic insight (Qiu et al., 2020; Zenker & Kock, 2020).

The pandemic is in its third consecutive year, and tourism activities restarted. Also, it is a proven fact that the success of tourism policies and strategies relies on residents' support regardless of destination (Arbulú et al., 2021; Byrd, 2007; D. Joo et al., 2021; Kamata, 2021; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017) as the resident-tourist interaction is inevitable (Woosnam et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2000). However, due to the pandemic conditions, there are still debates on whether the residents will support tourism activities during the pandemic and welcome tourists and their perceived risk and support for the touristic activities.

Another important fact that needs serious consideration is economic anxiety. The pandemic outcomes burden tourism-driven economies such as Türkiye (Y. Yang et al., 2020). Türkiye recorded a 70% decrease in tourist arrivals and a 71% loss in tourism income in 2020 and still trying to recover (Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2021). The following year, the Turkish economy suffered from decreased currency flow and an increased inflation rate. The annual inflation rate in 2021 was recorded as 30%, and 14.6% in 2020. This also applies to the exchange rates. The Turkish lira depreciated against the US Dollar and the Euro from January 2021 until January 2022. (The Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye, 2022a, 2022b). Consequently, the reflection of these developments on economic activities and sub-indices was severe. Industrial production in Türkiye decreased by 8.2%, and capital and intermediate goods are expected to drop by around 18-25% (Mugaloglu et al., 2021). Covid-19-related economic anxiety has become an important issue worldwide (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021; Mann et al., 2020), and Turkish people also lost income and jobs and had to shut down their businesses, especially in the tourism industry as in other countries (Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021). Therefore, even though the risk of Covid-19 affects tourism support negatively (D. Joo et al., 2021), economic anxiety may have far more severe effects than health anxiety on residents (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021). For instance, it might cause new discrimination types to emerge and trigger racism (Obermeier, 2021a). Thus, further research is needed on this topic.

There is growing research on residents' tourism support. However, they were primarily conducted before Covid-19 and mainly attempted to determine residents' overall perceptions of tourism but failed to examine their interactions with tourists (Woosnam, 2011). Moreover, few studies focused on how the resident-tourist relationship contributes to the resident attitude (Moghavvemi et al., 2017). They suggest that feeling safe would improve emotional solidarity (D. Joo et al., 2021; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Simpson & Simpson, 2017; Woosnam et al., 2015) and emotional solidarity influence tourism support positively (D. Joo et al., 2021; Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Woosnam, 2012). Nevertheless, these relationships might turn around if the tourists pose a health threat to residents (Sonmez et al., 1999).

Overall, studies proved that tourists delay or cancel their travel plans if there is a significant risk (Hassan & Soliman, 2021; Karl et al., 2020). However, both Covid-19 infection and economic anxiety threaten the residents (Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021), and existing literature lacks resident-oriented research (D. Joo et al., 2021; Sharifpour et al., 2014). Furthermore, successful and sustainable tourism development requires residents' support (Gursoy et al., 2017; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Therefore, more information regarding residents' tourism support is needed, significantly when the Covid-19 outbreak changed the world. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature. For this purpose, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

- How does emotional solidarity influence tourism support?
- How does perceived risk influence

(a) support for tourism

(b) emotional solidarity

- How does economic anxiety influence

(a) support for tourism

(b) emotional solidarity

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Tourism Support and Emotional Solidarity**

The increase in tourism activities has attracted scholarly attention to residents' thoughts on tourism development and the support of the activities. Several studies attempted to examine residents' attitudes (Andereck et al., 2005; Erul, Woosnam, & McIntosh, 2020; Gursoy et al., 2017; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; D. Joo et al., 2021; Nunkoo, 2016; Nunkoo et al., 2012; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2008). The common view of these studies is that residents would welcome tourists and touristic activities if the benefits surpass the downsides regarding resident-tourist relationships. In other words, residents' positive attitudes toward the tourism industry would sway them to support tourism activities. Thus, destination managers and planners should consider residents' views seriously for successful tourism development (Erul, Woosnam, & McIntosh, 2020; Gursoy et al., 2017; Hasani et al., 2016; S. Joo & Choi, 2016; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). To this end, most of the studies in the related literature utilized the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which indicates that individuals assess every social relationship for benefits and costs. SET suggests that human behavior is based on exchange (Homans, 1974) and individuals make social decisions for personal satisfaction (Emerson, 1976).

However, some researchers argue that although SET is a valuable tool for social psychology, it might not be a sufficient predictor on its own (Andereck et al., 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). Thus, previous studies adopted Durkheim's (1995) Emotional Solidarity (ES), a more recent theory, to explain individual bonds. ES postulates that individuals create solidarity through sharing beliefs and behaviors and interacting with each other (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). Emotional solidarity is the strong ties between individuals portrayed by perceived emotional closeness and amount of touch (Hammarström, 2005). The theory suggests that solidarity makes individuals feel like a close-knit group of people and nurture unity instead of "me before others" (Jacobs & Allen, 2005). Woosnam & Norman (2010) have confirmed that ES is a valuable tool for examining resident-tourist relationships and therefore support for tourism (SP). However, they also mentioned that ES should integrate with other theoretical frameworks to function better. Academics responded to their call, and several studies were conducted on this matter. For example, Woosnam (2012) suggested that emotional solidarity partially predicts residents' tourism support. Similarly, Hasani et al. (2016), Moghavvemi et al. (2017), Erul et al. (2020), and Joo et al. (2021) reported that emotional solidarity could predict residents' attitudes, which in turn predicts tourism support. However, only Joo et al. (2021) associated their model with Covid-19 and called for further research. Therefore, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** ES influences SP.

### **Economic Anxiety**

Economic anxiety (EA) refers to individuals' feeling insecure about finances. Previous studies have proven that EA severely affects both individuals, especially the young population and society. Economic recessions cause high stress and fear in individuals (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021) but also increase domestic violence, underemployment, and drug use (Fiksenbaum et al., 2017). Considering that the impact of Covid-19 related economic crisis is the highest since the 1980s (Ludvigson et al., 2020), its effects are inevitable regardless of the destination. Consequently, high economic anxiety is

observed in countries like the United Kingdom, USA, Israel, Oman, and Turkiye (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021; Mugaloglu et al., 2021). As a result, businesses shut down, and jobs were lost (Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021). This would eventually lead to serious mental issues for individuals and even increase suicide rates (Reger et al., 2020). Another important issue addressed in this context is discrimination and racism. Obermeier (2021a) stated that economic anxiety might stir up nationalism, resulting in racist attacks. As mentioned earlier, since the nature of the touristic activities involves tourist-resident interaction, the impacts of economic anxiety on residents and their effects on support for tourism and emotional solidarity require more attention. Therefore, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>2a</sub>:** EA influences SP.

**H<sub>2b</sub>:** EA influences ES.

### **Perceived Risk**

Individuals make countless decisions during their lives. They make these decisions by considering one or more possible negative consequences evaluated as risks (Dowling, 1986). However, perceived risk (PR) means individuals' instinctive feeling of potential damage (D. Joo et al., 2021; Quintal et al., 2010). PR concept has physical, social, and psychological risk components (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972). Thus, it is a ubiquitous and influential factor in individuals' decisions (Dowling, 1986). Risk is intrinsic in any decision (Dowling & Staelin, 1994), but it has a preeminent influence on touristic decisions (C. L. Yang & Nair, 2014). Although existing literature related to perceived risk is mainly focused on the tourist perspective (Sharifpour et al., 2014), several studies have proven a negative correlation between perceived risk and tourists' decisions and suggested that risk factors may convince tourists to alter their plans to avoid danger (Hunter-Jones et al., 2007; Mäser & Weiermair, 1998; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). In other words, even if tourists are willing to take a considerable risk, they tend to avoid destinations with high risk (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Indeed, perceived risk negatively influences travel intentions (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Kozak et al., 2007). Likewise, when crucial health and economic problems are on the table, residents might not support tourism and treat tourists aggressively (D. Joo et al., 2021). For example, al-Mughairi et al. (2021) reported that tourism employees were anxious about getting infected during customer visits. As a result, owners planned to carry their business to online platforms to maintain business. Also, Bareket-Bojmel (2021) advised providing financial therapy and counseling for society. These are critical because, as mentioned earlier, the perceived risk and the economic anxiety have severe mental impacts on individuals and may trigger unwanted behaviors during tourist-resident interaction. Therefore, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

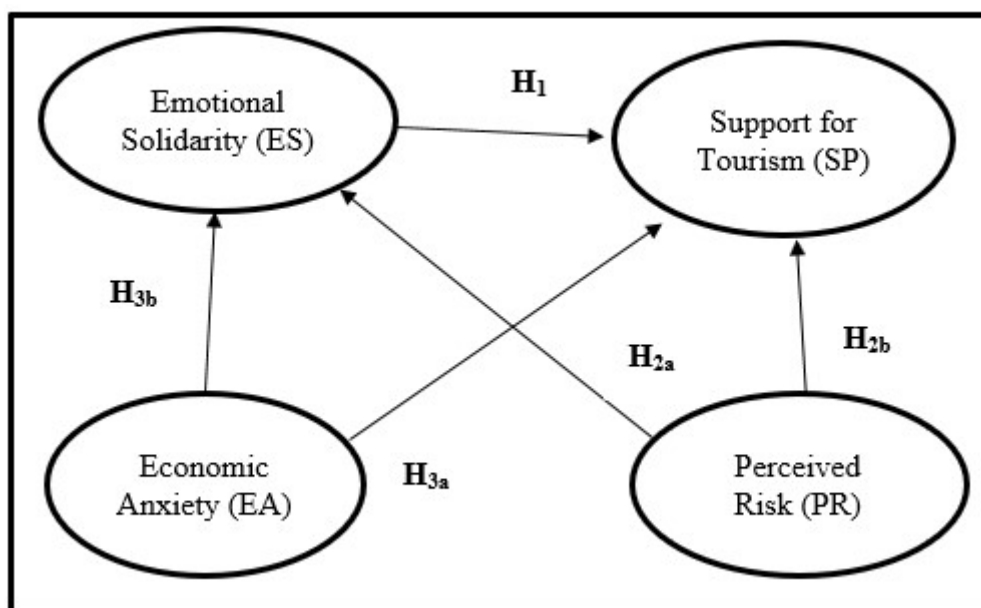
**H<sub>3a</sub>:** PR influences SP.

**H<sub>3b</sub>:** PR influences ES.

### **Data and Methods**

#### **The Research Model and Hypotheses**

The study uses a quantitative approach to gain insights into study variables. The research design examines the residents' emotional solidarity, tourism support, and perceived risk relationships. The study utilized the Structural Equality Model (SEM) since it is beneficial in studying latent variables (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2012) as well as in tourism studies (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Fig. 1 shows that the study design consists of two exogenous variables (PR, EA) and 2 (ES, SP) endogenous variables.



**Figure 1.** Proposed Research Model

The data collection instrument measures the residents’ demographics, emotional solidarity, perceived risk, economic anxiety, and tourism support. The demographics section of the survey has items on the respondent’s gender, age, education, monthly income, frequency of tourist interaction, and occupation. A 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree) was used for the attitude questions. Emotional solidarity, perceived risk, and support for tourism scales were derived from Joo et al. (2021), and the economic anxiety scale was adopted from Marteau and Bekker (1992).

Antalya was chosen as the study universe since it hosts millions of incoming tourists every year in Türkiye (CBRT Statistic Department, 2022), and therefore the residents’ income mainly relies on tourism. The study used a convenience sample of 425 residents who agreed to participate in the study, between March 2022 and July 2022, via an online survey. In the end, 393 valid surveys were convenient and included in the analyses.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	182	46.3	Z (2000)	97	24,7
Male	211	53.7	Y (1980-1999)	193	49,1
<b>Marital</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	X (1979-1965)	103	26,2
Single	147	37.4	<b>Education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Married	246	62.6	Elementary school	12	3,0
<b>Interaction of Tourist</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	High school	136	34,6
1-2 times a week	14	3.6	College	209	53,2
3-4 times a week	67	17.0	Postgraduate	36	9,2
5-6 times a week	183	46.6	<b>Income</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Everyday	129	32.8	TRY4999 and below	118	30
<b>Tourism income</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	TRY5000 – 9999	155	39,4
Yes	286	72.8	TRY10000 – 14999	73	18,6
No	107	27.2	TRY15000 and above	47	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>			

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Tab. 1 provides an overview of 393 respondents. The number of male participants (211) is slightly more than females (182). Half of the participants are Generation Y (49%), and married participants have the majority (62%). What stands out in the table is that even though the better part of the participants hold a college degree (53%), their monthly income is just a little above the minimum wage (40%). Moreover, the number of participants receiving minimum wage or below (30%) should not be ignored as well. This number is critical in the study model because most participants make their income directly from tourism-related jobs (73%) and interact with tourists 5-6 days a week (47%).

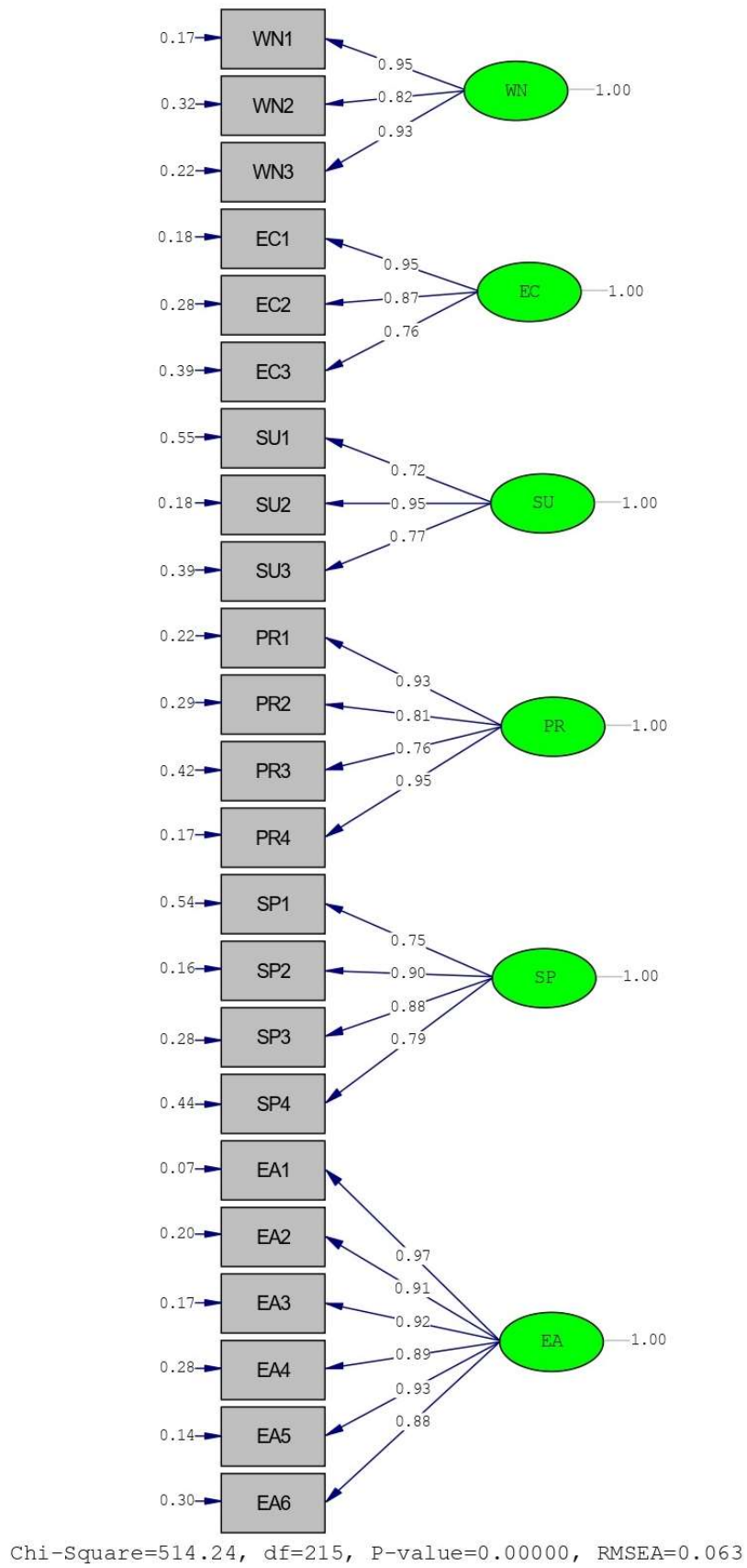
### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The study carried out a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to determine the factor structure of the proposed model (Fig.2). The Chi-square value of the model is 0.063, with an  $\chi^2$  value of 2.39 and the fit indices presented in Tab. 2 are within acceptable ranges.

**Table 2.** Fit Indices of the Proposed Model

<b>Fitness Criteria</b>	<b>Fit Values</b>	<b>Proposed Model</b>
$\chi^2 / df$	$0 \leq \chi^2 / df \leq 5$	2,39
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.063
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.046
NFI	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 1$	0.93
NNFI	$0.95 \leq NNFI \leq 1$	0.97
IFI	$0.90 \leq IFI \leq 1$	0.96
RFI	$0.90 \leq RFI \leq 1$	0.95
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1$	0.97
GFI	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 1$	0.93
AGFI	$0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 1$	0.91

Furthermore, composite reliabilities and average variance extracted values are above the critical value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2009). According to these findings, it is fair to say that the study model is sufficient.



**Figure 2.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

### Structural Equation Modeling

After confirming that the proposed model is sufficient, the study undertook Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to validate the proposed hypotheses. The structural model investigated the influence of economic anxiety and perceived risk on residents’ emotional solidarity and tourism support. Also, it tested the influence of emotional solidarity on residents’ tourism support (Fig. 3).

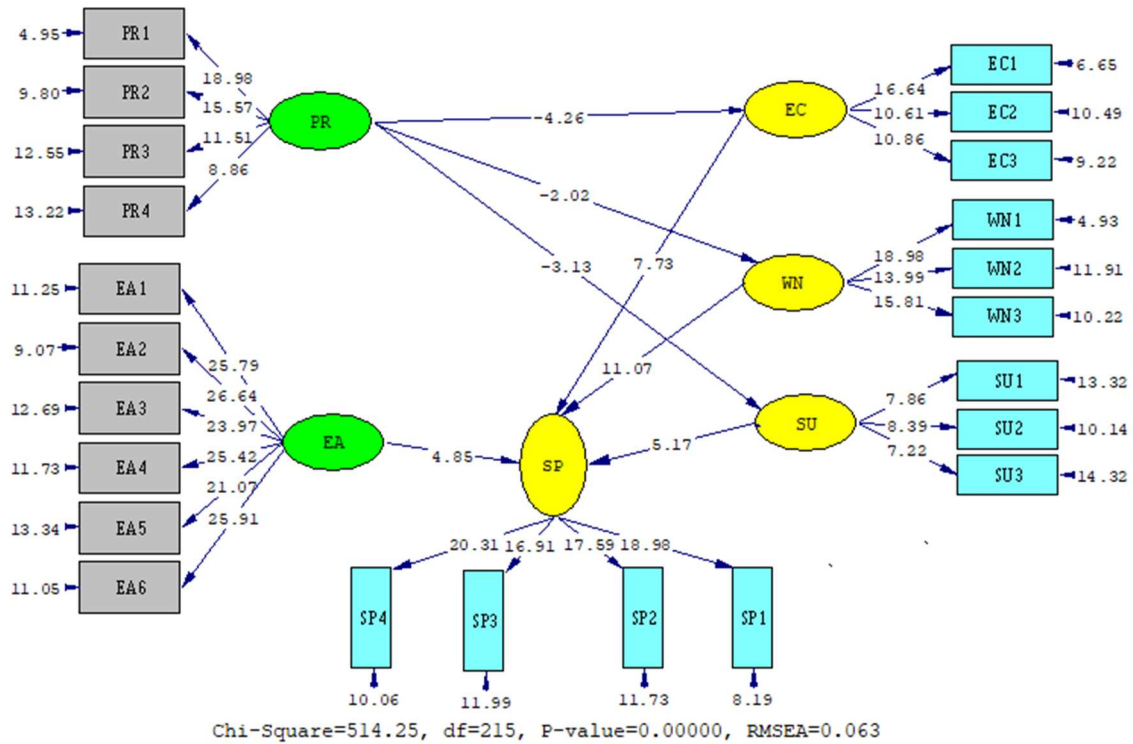


Figure 3. SEM Findings

The overall model presented a good fit by revealing Chi-square= 514,25,  $\chi^2/df= 2,39$ , and RMSEA= 0,063 (Hair et al., 2009). This means that the model is significant, and all the hypotheses were supported (See Tab.3).

Table 3 Factor loadings of the research model

Factors	Standardized loadings	t-value	R <sup>2</sup>	CA	AVE
Perceived Risk (PR)	0.93	18,98***	0.87	0.92	0.73
	0.81	15,57***	0.66		
	0.76	11,51***	0.58		
	0.95	8,86***	0.90		
Emotional Solidarity (ES)	0.95	15,18***	0.87	0.91	0.77
	0.82	14,33***	0.80		
	0.93	13,86***	0.97		
	0.77	7,22***	0.59		
Economic Anxiety (EA)	0,97	25,79***	0.94	0.96	0.83



	0,91	26,64***	0.83		
	0,92	23,97***	0,85		
	0,89	24,42***	0,79		
	0,93	21,07***	0,87		
	0,88	25,91***	0,77		
Support For Tourism (SP)				0.89	0.66
	0.75	18,98***	0.56		
	0.90	17,59***	0.81		
	0.88	16,91***	0.77		
	0.79	20,31***	0.62		

Specifically, as suggested in H<sub>1</sub>, emotional solidarity positively influences support for tourism ( $\beta=0,41$ ,  $p<0,001$ ). This means that as the feeling of emotional solidarity increases, so does the support for tourism. However, as supported by H<sub>2a</sub> and H<sub>2b</sub>, even though economic anxiety slightly increases support for tourism ( $\beta=0,14$ ,  $p<0,001$ ), it also decreases emotional support ( $\beta=-0,23$ ,  $p<0,001$ ). Finally, as suggested in H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub>, perceived risk negatively impacts support for tourism ( $\beta=-0,16$ ,  $p<0,001$ ) and emotional solidarity ( $\beta=-0,19$ ,  $p<0,001$ ).

**Table 4.** Hypothesis Test Results

Hypotheses	Results		
H <sub>1</sub> : ES → SP	0,41	5,78**	Supported
H <sub>2a</sub> : EA → SP	0,14	2,73***	Supported
H <sub>2b</sub> : EA → ES	-0,23	-3,35***	Supported
H <sub>3a</sub> : PR → SP	-0,16	-2,74***	Supported
H <sub>3b</sub> : PR → ES	-0,19	-3,35***	Supported

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$  ( $t > 2.58$ ); \*\* $p < 0.05$  ( $t > 1.96$ ); \* $p < 0.10$  ( $t > 1.65$ )

## Discussion and Conclusion

The *new normal* after Covid-19 came with severe economic, physical, and psychological impacts on both countries and individuals. Touristic activities were put on hold due to the virus spread, developing countries' economic growth slowed down, jobs were lost, and suicide rates increased (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021; Bechtel, 2021; Mann et al., 2020; Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021; Mugaloglu et al., 2021; Obermeier, 2021). It is only natural that these effects confuse the residents who make their living mainly from tourism-related jobs. Moreover, previous tourism studies are mostly tourist-oriented and have avoided resident-oriented research. Thus, there is a lack of knowledge on the resident perspective because only a handful of studies focused on how residents react to tourist activities (D. Joo et al., 2021; Kamata, 2021). Therefore, this study attempted to examine the residents' support for tourism, emotional solidarity, perceived risk, and economic anxiety.

The first question in this study sought to determine how emotional solidarity influences tourism support. The results showed that emotional solidarity and support for tourism are positively correlated. Under normal circumstances, residents support tourism activities if they feel emotional solidarity (D. Joo et al., 2021). This is based on the idea that they have more to benefit from than to lose, as the social exchange theory suggested (McGehee & Andereck, 2004). The findings also answered the second research question by showing that if the residents feel at risk, they will think otherwise, and their support for tourism and emotional solidarity will decrease (D. Joo et al., 2021; Kamata, 2021).

However, extreme circumstances might lead people to have contradicting feelings and behaviors. Since the economic impact of Covid-19 was fierce on country economies, even the people of developed countries have suffered from economic anxiety (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021; Mann et al., 2020). Thus, the third research question was set to determine how economic anxiety would influence the support for tourism and emotional solidarity. The findings revealed that the residents of Antalya city were no exception and, despite the risk they anticipated, the economic anxiety increased their support for tourism and emotional solidarity. This inconsistency may be because the city and country economies mostly rely on the tourism industry, and changing the type of employment and acquiring work skills are very time-consuming. Understandably, residents would want to hold on to their jobs for economic reasons.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The study has several theoretical implications. First, existing studies mainly focused on tourists' risk perception so far, and the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to turning the spotlight on residents' point of view (D. Joo et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2020; Zenker & Kock, 2020). This study also contributed to acquiring information on residents' risk perceptions and supported the idea that risk perception will be a popular topic for tourism studies soon (D. Joo et al., 2021; Sharifpour et al., 2014). Second, the study findings not only proved that emotional solidarity is an essential predictor of support for tourism (Erul, Woosnam, & McIntosh, 2020; Hasani et al., 2016; D. Joo et al., 2021; Woosnam & Norman, 2010) but also showed that the social exchange theory and the emotional solidarity theories would work well together. Third, the findings proved that the conceptual model is relevant and applicable in cities where the economy mainly relies on tourism (D. Joo et al., 2021). Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic put a massive burden on both countries and individuals regarding the economy. Businesses shut down, jobs were lost, and people suffered from economic anxiety, which has severe mental and physical negative impacts (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2021; Ludvigson et al., 2020; Mann et al., 2020; Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021; Obermeier, 2021b). This study appears to be the first model that attempted to assess the impacts of economic anxiety on the resident-tourist relationship.

### **Practical Implications**

This study's findings have several important implications for future practice. First, the study findings revealed that the perceived risk and the economic anxiety have different impacts on residents' support for tourism. Nevertheless, they both negatively impact emotional solidarity. This situation forces destination managers to take preventive measures to create a safe environment for tourism activities. The first step would be analyzing and understanding which variables influence residents' support for tourism (Moghavvemi et al., 2017). Therefore, governments or destination management organizations (DMOs) should develop and promote policies that consider residents' feelings to decrease risk perception and enhance emotional solidarity. Second, DMO managers should provide instant information on tourism statistics in the area so that the residents can regulate their life flow accordingly and feel safe (Kamata, 2021).

Besides that, since economic anxiety negatively impacts emotional solidarity, tourism officials and governments should also seek ways to secure jobs. For example, financial support for businesses to adopt technology-driven services and educate employees might be adequate (Mohammed Said Al-Mughairi et al., 2021). Furthermore, tourism officials and governments should also consider policies to create and improve mutual understanding between tourists and residents to avoid problems such as discrimination and nationalism (Obermeier, 2021b; Tse & Tung, 2020).

## Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study, naturally, has its limitations. First, the study universe is limited to Antalya city. Generalization of the results would require more research in other cities. First, participants mainly consist of young individuals. Further studies may target the elderly population and compare the points of view (D. Joo et al., 2021). Moreover, the cultural aspects of the residents would be included in the model to examine the other impacts on study variables (Moghavvemi et al., 2017).

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