Resident intention to invite friends, relatives, and acquaintances:

The dynamic process of place identity as a motivator

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Abstract:

The effects of destination resource evaluation and place identity, conceptualised as a dynamic process, on destination ambassadorship, expressed in intention to invite friends, relatives and acquaintances, from the resident perspective were examined in this study. The heterogeneity of residents, defined by length of residence, and its moderating effects on the aforementioned relationships were also investigated. Analyses of data from 545 respondents living in the post-industrial city of Newcastle, Australia revealed a partial mediation of place identity process on how resource evaluation affected resident intention to invite friends, relatives and acquaintances to their home city, which varied between residents with different lengths of residence in the city. These findings offer insights into the dynamic process of place identity and related effects on resident destination ambassadorship, as well as destination planning and management in the context of VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) tourism.

Keywords

Place identity; destination competitiveness; VFR tourism; identity process theory; destination ambassadorship

Research highlights

- Place identity conceptualised as a dynamic process motivates resident intention to invite VFR tourists
- Identity principles and place identity mediate the effect of resource evaluation on resident intention to invite VFR tourists
- Length of residence interacts with continuity and self-esteem to influence place identity and subsequent intention to invite VFR tourists

1. Introduction

Post-industrial cities often adopt tourism as a mechanism to facilitate the regeneration of urban centres and better position themselves in a highly competitive global market (Amore, 2019). Signs of this strategy are evident in the restructuring of waterfronts and docklands in port cities; the development of transport, sports, and cultural infrastructure; the construction of event, hospitality, and convention facilities; and the restoration of historic neighbourhoods (Amore, 2019; Ashworth & Page, 2011; Popescu & Corbos, 2010). As a driver of change, tourism not only can strengthen the competitiveness of urban destinations. It can also affect the attributes of urban space — attributes that carry memories and meanings of significance to residents accumulated from their embodied experience of interacting with the space on a daily basis. This embodied experience is key to supporting residents' relationship with their home city and can become integrated into their sense of self. When tourism development reinforces this sense of self, residents' self-identity can be turned into a motivating force for their destination ambassadorship. Resident destination ambassadorship can play a significant role in marketing urban destinations where Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourists are targeted as residents can serve as a trustful source of information to promote the uniqueness and attractiveness of their home city as a destination to friends and relatives (Andersson & Ekman, 2009).

VFR tourists, as conventionally defined, include those who visit a destination to connect with relatives and/or friends (Moscardo, Pearce, Morrison, Green, & O'Leary, 2000). Word-of-mouth is an important source of information in shaping VFR tourists' travel decisions and behaviours in destinations (O'Leary & Morrison, 1995; Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017). Understanding residents' destination ambassadorship and how it may be expressed in their intention to encourage VFR tourists to visit their home city via word-of-mouth is crucial for destination managers to inform destination development strategies.

However, research into the role of residents as destination ambassadors to promote their home city is limited. Existing research mainly focuses on VFR phenomena from the perspective of the tourist or tourism industry (e.g., Backer, Leisch, & Dolnicar, 2017; Kashiwagi, Nagai, & Furutani, 2020). To address this research gap, this research explores the main factors contributing to resident destination ambassadorship expressed in their intention to invite VFRs to their home city. The factors examined include destination attributes and resources with which residents interact daily and the sense of self-identity derived from such interactions as a result of dynamic identity processes. The study also investigates whether the process of place identity may vary between different resident groups who have various lengths of embodied experience in their home city. Identity Process Theory (IPR) is adopted as the major theoretical framework to guide the research. The study findings provide insights for tourism planning and management that aims to encourage resident destination ambassadorship and develop VFR tourism in post-industrial cities.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

2.1. A resource-based view on destination competitiveness

Cities around the world invest in resources required for strengthening destination attributes to increase competitiveness and attract tourists (Amore, 2019; Pasquinelli & Bellini, 2017). Research differentiates between *core* and *supporting* resources (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Core resources comprise those that are 'endowed' and 'created' and are the primary destination attractions that motivate tourist visitation. Endowed resources include both natural (e.g., beaches, climate, fauna, flora) and cultural-heritage attractions (e.g., handicrafts, language, customs) (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Murphy, Pritchard, Smith, 2000); whereas created resources are built and include tourism infrastructure, events and activities, entertainment, and shopping (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999;

Crouch, 2010). Supporting resources refers to the attributes of a city (e.g., general destination infrastructure, accessibility, hospitality and quality of services) considered as the foundation of the tourism industry (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Murphy et al., 2000). This resource view is widely adopted in research on destination competitiveness to understand how destination resources can be managed to increase destination attractiveness, enhance destination image, satisfy the needs of tourists and, advance the contribution of tourism to the destination economy (Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019; Novais, Ruhanen, & Arcodia, 2018).

However, the resource view of destination competitiveness does not always consider that destination resources are also utilised by local residents and become the basis from which a sense of self-identity anchored in an urban destination can be nurtured and maintained (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Scannell & Gifford, 2017). Research concerned with destination hosts in the context of VFR tourism has focused on the perspective of general hosts or a subgroup of hosts (e.g., female residents, immigrants), and sought to unpack the relationships between VFR tourism phenomena and mobility (e.g., Dutt & Ninov, 2017; Janta, & Christou, 2019), and related impacts on the destination, its residents, and/or the hosted VFRs (Griffin, 2013; Griffin, 2014; Shani, & Uriely, 2012). Emerging research has focussed on the role of the destination as a place with which residents interact daily, and shows that these interactions nurture embodied experiences and a sense of place that residents may want to share with friends and relatives (e.g., Griffin, 2014; Humbracht, 2015). Yet, questions remain as to whether a resident's connection (or lack of connection) with a destination as a meaningful geographic location influences their intention to invite VFR tourists to the destination. It also remains largely unanswered whether different pathways may exist for residents who have resided in the destination for different lengths of time to develop this connection and destination ambassadorship.

A place-based framework that incorporates this resource view of destination competitiveness, and the extent to which destination resources nurture and maintain resident place identity, can enhance a more holistic understanding of whether and why residents are motivated to promote urban destinations to VFRs as a manifestation of destination ambassadorship.

2.2. Place identity and identity process theory

Research that examined the relationship between individuals and places of significance conceptualised as place identity, place attachment, or sense of place has shown a significant influence of related constructs on place-based evaluation, intention, and actions towards various resource and development activities (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Lai, Lyons, Gudergan, & Grimstad, 2017a; Wang & Chen, 2015). In tourism research, place constructs have been increasingly applied to understand resident perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and its impacts (e.g., Gu & Ryan, 2008; Tournois & Djeric, 2019; Wang & Xu, 2015), and engagement in destination branding or ambassador behaviours (e.g., Chen, Dwyer, & Firth, 2014; Chen & Dwyer, 2018; Zenker et al., 2017).

The research of Proshansky and colleagues (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983) represents one of the widely cited conceptualisations of place identity. Place identity, according to Proshansky (1978, p. 155), is comprised of "ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills" that are relevant to the physical environment of significance to an individual and become the defining features of the person's self-identity. This conceptualisation of place identity views the physical environment as encompassing places, spaces, and related properties that function together to support the biological, psychological, social and cultural needs of individuals, and nurture their place identity which in turn becomes a motivator to shape or preserve the environment.

While Proshansky and colleagues recongised (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983) that place identity was developed through individuals' interactions with a place that then influenced place-based cognitions, they fell short to clearly theorise as to why and how this dynamic process unfolded (Hauge, 2007). To complement this shortfall, Identity Process Theory has been suggested to provide a better theoretical lens to understand the nature of a self-identity that is anchored in a specific geographic location and how it drives subsequent cognition, affect and behaviour associated with the place (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Twigger-Ross, Bonaiuto, & Breakwell, 2003).

Identity Process Theory conceptualises identity as a dynamic social product arising from an individual's interaction with physical and societal structures and processes, through their psychological capacities for memories, consciousness, values, beliefs, attitudes and emotions (Breakwell, 1986). In situations that call for action, the situational stimuli "gain their meaning only through interpretation within the individual's system of beliefs and values; their implications for purposive action...are, therefore, mediated by identity" (Breakwell, 1986, p. 43). As such, identity is viewed as a prime motivator for thought, emotion and action.

The elements that constitute the structure of identity and associated values do not remain static. They change over time and are regulated by two interrelated mechanisms — accommodation-assimilation and evaluation — working synergistically to define the desirable states of identity structure. Assimilation involves integrating new elements into the structure of identity that simultaneously requires the existing identity structure being adjusted to accommodate the new elements (i.e., accommodation). New and existing elements that constitute the defining properties of an individual's identity represent the content dimension of identity structure. These elements are constantly evaluated where meanings and values are ascribed to the constituent elements of identity, determining significance and forming the

value dimension of identity structure. Resources invested in a destination when assessed positively can gradually gain meaning and value, and become incorporated into resident place identity via these two mechanisms. The aforementioned process of identity is primarily regulated by four principles in contemporary western society; namely continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003).

Continuity captures an individual's desire to carry on self-concept across time and situation. Place supports two forms of self-related continuity: place-referent and place-congruent continuity (Twigger-Rose & Uzzle, 1996). Places are repertories of individuals' memories: what they once were, what they did, and their connection with the social group(s) therein (Korpela, 1989; Twigger-Rose et al., 2003). Being able to maintain bonds with places reminds individuals of ancestral roots, social ties, and past selves, and serves as an anchor to their present identity (Lewicka, 2014). Human-made or naturally induced threats to a place of significance to individuals and a subsequent loss of wellbeing often signal the importance of place-referent continuity (Lai, et al., 2017a; Marshall et al., 2019). While place-referent continuity ties individuals to a specific place, place-congruent continuity is transferrable and relies on whether new places (to which individuals are voluntarily or involuntarily relocated) are equipped with the features and resources that maintain the coherence of an individual's identity (Knez, 2005; Winterto & Warburton, 2012). Place-congruent continuity is demonstrated, for example, when an individual, who decides to relocate for employment or lifestyle reasons, chooses somewhere that supports their continuous engagement in outdoor recreation, an essential aspect of their identity.

Distinctiveness involves the inclination to maintain personal uniqueness to preserve individuality. Places are often used as a descriptor of who a person is as they often convey unique place-based characteristics (e.g., urban or rural, industrial or non-industrial) that support the identity of the person and those who live in the same place (Carrus, Bonaiuto, &

Bones, 2005; Lai, Morrison-Saunders, & Grimstad, 2017b; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). For example, the term "Novocastrian" is used by Australian residents of the city who identify themselves with Newcastle. This distinctive place-based term implies the shared values and unique lifestyle that is supported by Newcastle's natural, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics. "Novocastrian" thereby distinguishes the place and its residents from other places and their residents.

Self-esteem attests to an individual's feeling and evaluation of self-worth and/or social value within a group with which they are affiliated (e.g., a place of residence). Self-esteem is considered a central motive within identity. Research has shown that individuals often express feelings, thoughts or behaviours when they encounter an environment that encourages or threatens their self-esteem (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). When a place and the resources therein are managed to afford the maintenance, verification, improvement, and enhancement of one's self-concept, they provide a supportive environment for the individual to forge self-esteem (Fleury-Bahi & Marcouyeux, 2010; Proshansky et al., 1983). Subsequently, when place becomes an extension of one's self, that place may become a subject to which individuals attribute their pride (Proshansky et al., 1983; Twigger-Rose & Uzzel, 1996).

Self-efficacy refers to one's belief that they have the competencies to execute actions required for situational demands (Bandura, 2010). Place-based self-efficacy encapsulates the skills required to help individuals orient themselves in a physical environment. Proshansky et al. (1983) conceptualised place-based self-efficacy as including environmental understanding (knowledge about the environment and ability to detect changes) that forges environmental competence (skills required to act appropriately in the environment). These skills contribute to environmental control whereby individuals can exercise control over the environment to support their self in the environment. Managing place and its resources for stability and

certainty helps to nurture an individual's knowledge about place, and the competencies needed to fulfil role requirements (e.g., as a resident, business person). In a tourism destination, a resident's level of place identity may vary according to the extent to which the destination and resources invested therein support the operations of the four identity principles (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).

Conceptualising place identity as dynamic indicates that *time* is an essential dimension in this construct. Direct and ongoing interactions with a place through time have been identified as a necessary condition to strengthen people–place relationships (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Knez, 2005; Lalli, 1992; Proshansky et al., 1983). However, questions of whether time simply contributes directly and positively to place identity, or whether it interacts with the four identity principles to influence place identity, is not well understood. There is limited research conceptualising place identity as a dynamic process regulated by continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy and self-esteem, while also examining how time interacts with these four identity principles. This article developed the following hypothesised models to address these questions.

2.3. Hypothesised models

Guided by the aforementioned literature, a mediation model (Figure 1) and moderated mediation model (Figure 2) were developed. The mediation model captured the identity process of assimilation-accommodation and evaluation. In this model, the resources invested to improve the place attributes of urban destinations were the raw ingredients with which residents interacted daily. These resources were constantly evaluated (i.e., Resource Evaluation: RE) to determine the extent to which they were conducive to the operation of the identity principles (Continuity: CONT; Distinctiveness: DIST; Self-Esteem: ETSE; Self-Efficacy: EFFI) and became assimilated into and accommodated by one's Place Identity (PI).

Both RE and PI were hypothesised as motivators for destination ambassadorship manifested in intention to recommend a destination to VFRs (i.e., VFR Intention: INT). H_1 below states the hypothesis tested in the mediation model.

H_1: Identity principles (i.e., CONT, DIST, ESTE, EFFI) and PI mediate the relationship between RE and INT.

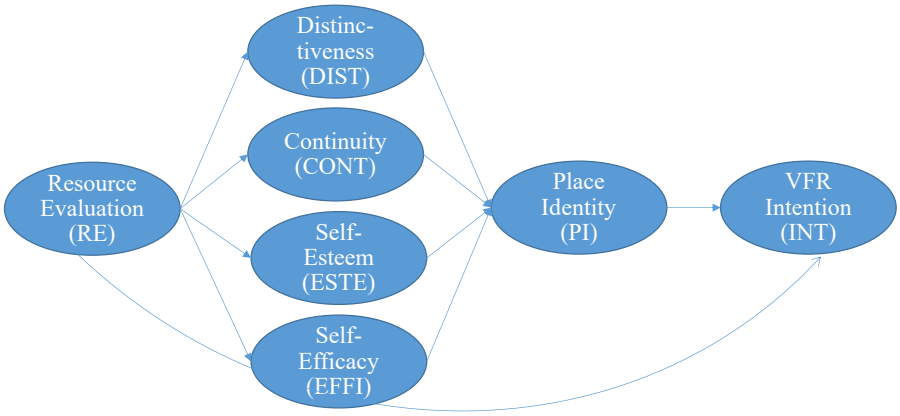

Figure 1. Mediation model

The moderated mediation model explored the time aspect of identity process by examining whether there were different pathways to develop place identity and express destination ambassadorship due to different lengths of residence time (i.e., Length of Residence or LOR). Specifically, the model involved examining whether the indirect effects of the four identity principles and PI on the relationship between RE and INT were contingent on the length of time residents interacted with the destination (i.e., LOR). H_2 summarises the hypothesis tested in the moderation model.

H_2: LOR interacts with CONT, DIST, ESTE, and EFFI to influence PI which then affects INT.

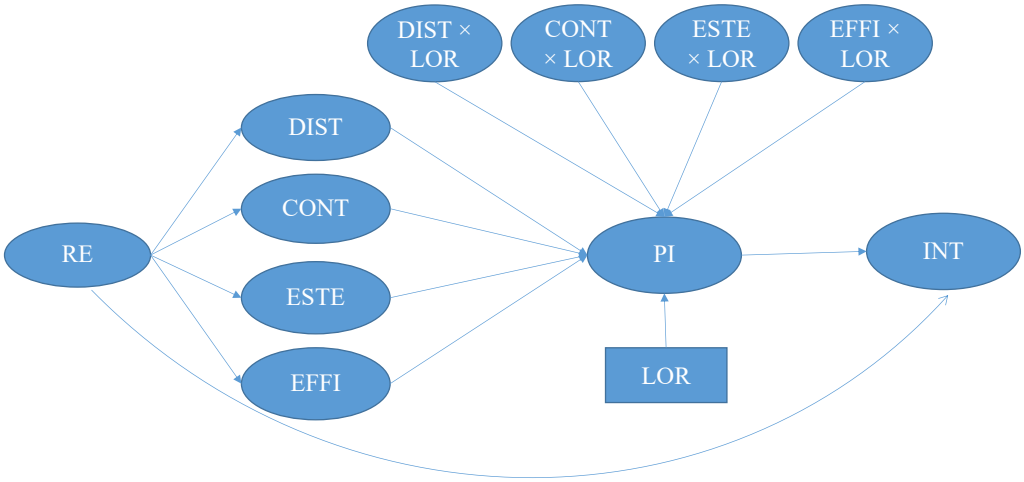

Figure 2. Moderated mediation model

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and data collection

The research was conducted using a sample of residents living in the post-industrial city of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia. As the second largest city in the state, Newcastle is rich in natural, cultural, and industrial heritage associated with steelmaking and coal exports. The decline in Newcastle's traditional industrial economic base over the past two decades, and a subsequent transition toward a service-based economy, has led to tourism being strategically positioned as one of the key mechanisms for strengthening the city's economy with the VFR market being identified as a major market segment (NCC, 2018). The data was collected in 2017 based on a survey implemented online using the Qualtrics online survey platform and complemented by paper-based questionnaires to reach a wider resident population. The online survey was promoted through the social media sites, newsletters, and other communication media managed by the local government and a regional university. Printed recruitment flyers were also placed in locations frequented by residents (e.g., museums, libraries, shops, restaurants, theatres, university campuses) to encourage completing the survey online or via printed questionnaires. The printed questionnaires were

placed alongside the flyers in the locations mentioned above and included a prepaid postage envelope for return of the printed surveys to the researchers. Overall, 822 individuals accessed the online survey and 514 completed it. Of the 150 printed questionnaires distributed, 31 were completed and returned by post. Testing of measurement invariance of the mediation model (Figure 1) was performed based on SmartPLS[1] (see next section) and involved comparing the online sample (N_1=514) and combined sample (N_2=545). The results established full measurement invariance between the two subsamples, and supported the use of the combined sample in the data analyses. A comparison of the socio-demographic characteristics between the study sample and general Newcastle population is presented in the supplementary materials (Supplementary Table 1).

3.2. Analytical approach

The research involved assessing the relationships of constructs that had not previously been considered holistically. The primary focus was on examining the utility of the hypothesised models to predict intention to invite VFRs. As such, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) served this purpose better than covariance-based structural equation modelling (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). The PLS-SEM approach was adopted to assess all the measurement scales and test the hypothesised models using the software package SmartPLS (v3.2.8) (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015).

3.3. Measurement

3.3.1. Resource Evaluation (RE)

[1] Readers interested in the procedure for testing measurement invariance, please refer to Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2016) for details.

Operationalisation of RE employed the resource-based destination competitiveness framework by Dwyer and Kim (2003), informed also by destination attribute research (Fallon & Schofield, 2006; Go & Govers, 2000; Kim, 2014; Žabkar, Brenčič, & Dmitrović, 2010) to ensure those aspects of resources (i.e., endowed, created, and supporting resources) essential to destination competitiveness were included. Since this study focused on how resources invested in urban destinations could influence the process of resident place identity, research on residential satisfaction (Fleury-Bahi et al., 2008; Kamalipour, Yeganeh, Alalhesabi, 2012) was also consulted with further input from local government personnel.

Overall, ten dimensions characterising destination resources were adopted. To reduce potential respondent fatigue, the item number was kept to the minimum possible for the survey: 1) Nature (4 items); 2) Culture (4 items); 3) Food and accommodation (4 items)[2]; 4) Transport (2 items); 5) Recreation and sports (2 items); 6) Entertainment and nightlife (4 items); 7) Events and festivals (2 items); 8) Shopping (2 items); 9) Hospitality (2 items); and 10) Management (4 items). Respondents were asked to provide their judgement regarding how much they were satisfied or dissatisfied with each of these resource items using a 5-point scale (1: very dissatisfied; 3: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 5: very satisfied). This initial scale was assessed for its reliability and validity, and found to be satisfactory (see Supplementary Table 2 for all 30 items and test results).

To obtain model parsimony and improve the precision of parameter estimates (Bentler & Mooijaart, 1989), item parcels were constructed for each of the ten RE dimensions. Following Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002), new variables (parcels) were created based on the means of the items pertaining to each dimension, which reduced the number of variables from the initial 30 items to 10 parcels.

[2]Initially Food and Accommodation were examined as two independent dimensions. However, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) estimate of RE fell below the threshold of .50. Consequently, Food and Accommodation were combined into one dimension and the AVE estimate increased to .51.

3.3.2. Continuity (CONT), Distinctiveness (DIST), Self-Esteem (ESTE), and Self-Efficacy (EFFI)

Place identity was conceptualised in this study as a process which differentiated the regulating identity principles (i.e., CONT, DIST, ESTE, EFFE) from subsequent place identity, which distinguished this study from most existing research where such a distinction was not made (e.g., Hallak, Assaker, & Lee, 2013; Knez, 2005; Wang & Xu, 2015). Consequently, only items that clearly portrayed the four identity principles as semantically differentiated from place identity as a product were adopted to construct four identity principle scales drawing upon research previously examining these principles (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010; Knez, 2005; Lalli, 1992; Vignoles et al., 2006; Wang & Xu, 2015). The selected items were adjusted to reflect only the resident perspective.

Principle One, CONT, comprised two items reflecting resident beliefs in their connection with Newcastle due to their place-based memories (CONT1) and desire to continue living here (CONT2). Principle Two, DIST, was measured by two items, including resident beliefs in whether Newcastle differed from other places (DIST1) and whether it provided unique opportunities (DIST2). Principle Three, ESTE, was measured by three items relating to feeling proud when someone praised Newcastle (ESTE1) and when showing the area to visitors (ESTE2), and taking negative comments about Newcastle personally (ESTE3). Principle Four, EFFI, measured beliefs in Newcastle's support for a sense of competence (EFFI1), and safety (EFFI2), and ability to provide adequate resources (EFFI3) (see Supplementary Table 3 for all measurement items and their sources). All items were measured based on respondents' agreement or disagreement using a 5-point scale (1: strongly disagree; 3: neither agree nor disagree; 5: strongly agree).

3.3.3. Place Identity (PI)

PI has been examined in close relationship with place attachment, and conceptualised as a construct interdependent with, subsumed under, or inclusive of place attachment (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Low & Altman, 1992; Manzo, 2003; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992). Lewicka (2011) views the definitional inconsistencies of place constructs as a theoretical question, arguing "concepts have no meaning except as part of a larger theoretical context" (Lewicka, 2011, p. 208). The conceptualisation of place identity in this study was primarily positioned within the framework of Identity Process Theory which considers that identity content comprises both cognitive and affective components (Breakwell, 1986; Cole & Murtagh, 2014). Therefore, the cognitive and affective components reflective of place identity in related research (Halpenny, 2010; Hernández, Carmen Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007; Kaltenborn, 1997; Lai et al., 2017a; William & Vaske, 2003) were adapted to form the scale of PI.

The framing of eight PI items was contextualised in the daily interactions of respondents as residents in Newcastle. They were measured using a 5-point scale (1: strongly disagree; 3: neither agree nor disagree; 5: strongly agree). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) confirmed that all these items fell within only one dimension of PI (Cronbach's α=.92) (see Supplementary Table 4 for all PI items, their sources, and EFA results).

3.3.4. VFR Intention (INT)

VFR tourism encompasses a complex array of activities, motivations, and spatial relations between hosts, guests, and places (Griffin, 2013; Moscardo, et al., 2000; Munoz, Griffin, & Humbracht, 2017). This research did not aim to delve into the complex VFR phenomena. Instead, the purpose was to examine whether residents of a post-industrial destination would promote their home city to others as a manifestation of destination

ambassadorship encouraged by resource development in destinations and the process of place identity. The scope of VFR in this study was expanded to include 'acquaintances' (such as, business associates) in addition to 'friends' and 'relatives'. By expanding the VFR definition, this study recognises that residents who work in the destination can also play a key role in attracting business visitors as an expression of their destination ambassadorship. Three items were adopted to measure INT as a proxy of resident destination ambassadorship. These items were operationalised by asking respondents to indicate how likely or unlikely they were to recommend Newcastle to friends, relatives or acquaintances based on a 5-point scale (1: very unlikely; 3: neither likely nor unlikely; 5: very likely).

3.4 Measurement scale evaluation

Evaluation of measurement scales was performed in SmartPLS. The results are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. PLS-SEM relies on indices of internal consistency (composite reliability), convergent validity (outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted/AVE), and discriminant validity (cross loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion or Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) to assess measurement performance (Hair et al., 2017). A composite reliability estimate between .70 and .90 is deemed satisfactory (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Evidence of convergent validity is shown when the outer loadings of measurement items are significant (p<.05) and no less than .70, and the AVE estimate attains at least .50, suggesting that the construct captures at least 50% of the variance in its items. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of item correlations was adopted in this study as a more conservative measure to assess construct discriminant validity. An HTMT estimate less than .90 supports the discriminant validity of the tested constructs (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

The findings revealed that all items significantly loaded on their respective construct. However, three parcels reflective of RE, including nature (.64), shopping (.68), and transport (.54), fell short of the threshold (.70) (Table 1). Following Hair et al. (2017)[3], deleting these items did not substantially increase construct AVE and composite reliability. Moreover, the items were considered as essential destination attributes supportive of an environment where place identity could be cultivated. Therefore, they were retained to maintain content validity of the scale.

All constructs, except CONT, attained satisfactory requirements for the remaining reliability and validity measures. The composite reliability estimate of CONT (.66) was below the commonly applied threshold .70. Moreover, the HTMT estimates failed to show that this construct was distinctive from EFFI, ESTE, and PI. Further examination identified that item CONT2 loaded somewhat high on EFFI (.53), ESTE (.56), and PI (.66). After removing the item from the scale, the issue interfering discriminant validity was resolved (Table 2).

The reliability and validity of all measurement scales were further assessed based on two subsamples derived from randomly splitting the overall sample. The results (Supplementary Table 6 and Table 7) provided additional support for the reliability and validity requirements for the scales. Permutation results also indicated reliability and validity values did not differ significantly between both subsamples. These findings supported the adoption of the scales to measure their respective constructs and test the hypothesised models.

[3]While items with loadings below .40 should be removed, those with loadings between .40 and .70 should only be removed when removal substantially increases construct AVE and composite reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and quality measures

	Mean (SD)	Loading[a]	Composite Reliability	AVE
Resource evaluation (RE)	**3.40 (.57)**		***.91***	***.51***
RE1 (Nature)	3.91 (.64)	.63		
RE2 (Culture)	3.33 (.78)	.72		
RE3 (Food and Accommodation)	3.65 (.70)	.78		
RE4 (Transport)	2.38 (1.06)	.53		
RE5 (Recreation)	3.34 (.78)	.83		
RE6 (Events)	3.51 (.84)	.75		
RE7 (Entertainment)	3.27 (.85)	.84		
RE8 (Shopping)	3.62 (.94)	.68		
RE9 (Hospitality)	3.82 (.73)	.60		
RE10 (Management)	3.20 (.75)	.73		
Continuity (CONT)	**3.91 (1.02)**		--	--
CONT1	3.91 (1.02)	--		
Distinctiveness (DIST)	**3.58 (.75)**		***.81***	***.69***
DIST1	3.89 (.79)	.77		
DIST2	3.27 (1.01)	.88		
Self-Efficacy (EFFI)	**3.54 (.78)**		***.80***	***.57***
EFFI1	3.51 (.95)	.69		
EFFI	3.79 (.91)	.73		
EFFI3	3.33 (1.20)	.84		
Self-Esteem (ESTE)	**3.57 (.87)**		***.88***	***.71***
ESTE1	3.47 (1.04)	.85		
ESTE2	3.35 (1.09)	.81		
ESTE3	3.90 (.96)	.87		
Place Identity (PI)	**3.87 (.79)**		***.94***	***.65***
PI1	3.88 (.96)	.72		
PI2	3.98 (.97)	.86		
PI3	3.93 (.98)	.84		
PI4	4.12 (.89)	.76		
PI5	4.16 (.92)	.82		
PI6	3.81 (1.00)	.85		
PI7	3.69 (1.06)	.80		
PI8	3.40 (1.07)	.76		

VFR Intention (INT)	**4.08 (.86)**		***.95***	***.87***
INT1	4.15 (.90)	.95		
INT2	4.15 (.93)	.94		
INT3	3.95 (.94)	.91		

[a]All outer loadings significant at p<.001

Table 2. Discriminant validity based on HTMT

	RE	CONT	DIST	EFFI	ESTE	INT	PI
RE	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
CONT	.210	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
DIST	.726	.327	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
EFFI	.824	.422	.884	.000	.000	.000	.000
ESTE	.640	.444	.717	.778	.000	.000	.000
INT	.607	.339	.680	.733	.746	.000	.000
PI	.569	.605	.752	.855	.826	.742	.000

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 summarises the descriptive statistics of all constructs. Overall, the average assessment of the resources invested in Newcastle approached neutral ($Mean_{RE}$=3.40). Respondents generally agreed that the four identity principles were supported by the city reflected in that all mean values fell between 3.54 and 3.91. Moreover, a sense of place identity ($Mean_{PI}$= 3.87) and positive intention ($Mean_{INT}$=4.08) to recommend Newcastle to friends, relatives and acquaintances were evident.

4.2. Hypotheses assessment

4.2.1. Mediation model

We followed Hair et al. (2017) to examine the mediation model (Figure 1) that involved assessing the effects of five mediators (i.e., CONT, DIST, ESTE, EFFI, PI) on the

relationship between RE as an exogenous variable and INT as an endogenous variable. Evidence of mediation is present when the direct effects of the exogenous variable on the mediator ($\beta_{Exo \rightarrow Med}$) and the mediator on the endogenous variable ($\beta_{Med \rightarrow End}$), and the indirect effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable via the mediator (i.e., $\beta_{Exo \rightarrow Med} \times \beta_{Med \rightarrow End}$) are all statistically significant. The Variance Accounted For (VAF) was adopted to estimate the size of the indirect effect proportional to the total effect. When an indirect effect contributes to VAF by more than 80%, it is considered a full mediation. A VAF estimate between 20% and 80% is viewed as a partial mediation, while VAF less than 20% indicates no mediation (Hair et al., 2017).

The base model (Figure 3) was assessed first, followed by assessing the mediation model. Significance tests were performed in SmartPLS based on bootstrapped sampling distributions (5,000 samples). The base model assessed the direct effect of RE on INT. The results showed a significantly direct and positive effect of RE on INT ($\beta_{RE \rightarrow INT}$=.56, p<.001) that explained, however, only 31% of the variance in INT and suggested potentially other motivators for INT (Table 3). The variables that comprised the process of place identity (i.e., CONT, DIST, EFFI, ESTE, PI) as additional motivators were then introduced to mediate the relationship between RE and INT (Figure 1). The results revealed that RE remained a statistically significant predictor of INT ($\beta_{RE \rightarrow INT}$=.27, p<.001), and significantly affected all four identity principles each of which directly contributed to PI at p<.001. PI also exerted a significantly direct effect on INT ($\beta_{PI \rightarrow INT}$=.55, p<.001) which was twice the direct effect of RE on INT. In sum, all direct paths illustrated in the hypothesised mediation model were significant (Table 3).

Meanwhile, RE also affected INT via the hypothesised mediation process where CONT, DIST, ESTE, EFFI, and PI absorbed some of the direct effect of RE on INT. The overall indirect effect of RE on INT via the four identity principles and then PI was .28

(p<.001) as opposed to the total effect of RE on INT being .55 (p<.001) (Table 3). Accordingly, the five mediators together accounted for 50.91% (=.28/.55) of the total effect of RE on INT, suggesting a partial mediation where half of the effect of RE on INT was direct and the other half was indirect through the process of PI. Overall, the variance explained in INT increased by 40.4% (=(52%-31%)/52%) from the base model to the mediation model.

The mediation model was further assessed based on the effect size (f^2) of RE and PI on INT, and the model's predictive relevance (Q^2) and its relative measure (q^2) (Hair et al., 2017). The f^2 estimate assessed the change in the R^2 of INT when either RE or PI was absent from the tested model expressed as a percentage. The results revealed that if RE was omitted from the mediation model, there was a reduction in the R^2 of INT by .11 (f^2=.11) which was substantially smaller than if PI was omitted (f^2=.45). Q^2 assessed the model's predictive relevance, and, therefore its ability to correctly predict the data points of the three items measuring INT. The blindfolding function in SmartPLS revealed that the Q^2 estimate of INT (Q^2=.43) was greater than 0, the threshold value of this quality measure, and provided evidence for the predictive relevance of the model. The (q^2) effect size was then assessed by calculating the relative difference in Q^2 when either RE or PI was included in the mediation model and when it was excluded expressed as a percentage. A q^2 value of 2%, 15%, or 35% indicates that the latent predictor has a small, medium, or large predictive relevance to the endogenous variable, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). Excluding RE from the model would reduce its predictive relevance by .07 (q^2=.07) suggesting a small to medium effect whereas excluding PI from the model would more substantially reduce the model's predictive relevance by .32 (q^2=.32), a medium to large effect.

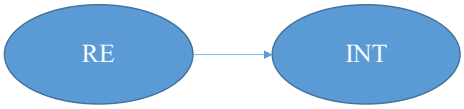

Figure 3. Base Model

Table 3. Mediation Model

Effect	Path coefficient (β)	Total indirect effect	Total effect	VAF	R^2_{INT}
Base Model					
Direct effect					
RE → INT	.56***				.31
Mediation Model					
Direct effect					
RE → INT	.27***				
RE → CONT	.20***				
RE → DIST	.52***				
RE → EFFI	.62***				
RE → ESTE	.55***				
CONT → PI	.31***				
DIST → PI	.14***				
EFFI → PI	.26***				
ESTE → PI	.38***				
PI → INT	.55***				
Indirect effect		.28***			
RE → DIST → PI → INT	.04***				
RE → CONT → PI → INT	.03***				
RE → ESTE → PI → INT					
RE → EFFI → PI → INT	.12***				
	.09***				
Total effect					
RE → INT			.55***		.52
VAF				50.91%	

4.2.2. Moderated mediation model

Following Hair et al. (2017), the product indicator approach was employed to test the moderated mediation model (Figure 2) by introducing interaction terms into the model. LOR, a continuous moderator, was hypothesised to interact with CONT, DIST, ESTE, and EFFI to

influence PI. Four latent variables, CONT×LOR, DIST×LOR, ESTE×LOR, EFFI×LOR, were introduced, and each was reflected by the interaction terms created by multiplying the indicators of each identity principle by the indicator measuring LOR. Past research, in general, showed significant effects of gender and education on individuals' evaluation of the physical environment and resources therein, and subsequent development of person-place relationships (Hull, Lam, & Vigo, 1994; Lewicka, 2011). The two variables were, therefore, included in the tested model to control for their effect on RE.

The findings revealed that the indirect effects of the four identity principles and PI on the relationship between RE and INT remained significant after the interaction terms were introduced (Table 4). Moreover, LOR significantly interacted with CONT ($\beta_{CONT\times LOR\rightarrow PI}$=.14, p<.001) and ESTE ($\beta_{ESTE\times LOR\rightarrow PI}$=-.10, p<.01) to influence PI. Figure 4 illustrates the magnitude and direction of the interaction effect of LOR with CONT on PI. When LOR was at the average level ($Mean_{LOR}$=18.20 years), CONT directly and positively contributed to PI ($\beta_{CONT\rightarrow PI}$=.28). When LOR increased by one standard deviation (SD=17.34 years) from the mean, the effect increased from .28 to .42 ($\beta_{CONT\rightarrow PI}$=.28+.14=.42). Decreasing LOR by one standard deviation from the mean reduced the direct effect of CONT on PI by half ($\beta_{CONT\rightarrow PI}$=.28-.14=.14).

The positive effect of interaction between LOR and CONT on PI suggested that the longer the resident lived in the city, the more important CONT became in forging PI. Conversely, the shorter the resident lived there, the effect of CONT on PI decreased but still remained positive. Kenny (2018) recommends when the effect size of moderation (i.e., the proportional increase in the explained variance in the dependent variable after including the moderator) is greater than .005, .010, or .025, it indicates a small, medium, or large effect size, respectively. Accordingly, the interaction term of LOR×CONT (f^2=.04) represented a large effect size.

Table 4. Moderated mediation model

Effect	Path coefficient (β)	Indirect effect	Total effect	Effect size (f^2)	VAF	R^2_{INT}
Direct effect						
RE → INT	.27***					
RE → CONT	.20***					
RE → DIST	.52***					
RE → EFFI	.62***					
RE → ESTE	.55***					
LOR → PI	.15***					
CONT → PI	.28***					
DIST → PI	.16***					
EFFI → PI	.23***					
ESTE → PI	.37***					
CONT×LOR → PI	.14***					
DIST×LOR → PI	.01					
EFFI×LOR → PI	-.02					
ESTE×LOR → PI	-.010**					
PI → INT	.55***					
Indirect effect[a]						
RE → DIST → PI → INT		.05***				
RE → CONT → PI → INT		.03***				
RE → ESTE → PI → INT		.11***				
RE → EFFI → PI → INT		.08***				
Total indirect effect		.27***				
Total effect			.54***			.52
VAF					.50	
Effect size of moderation (f^2)						
CONT×LOR				.04		
DIST×LOR				.00		
EFFI×LOR				.00		
ESTE×LOR				.02		

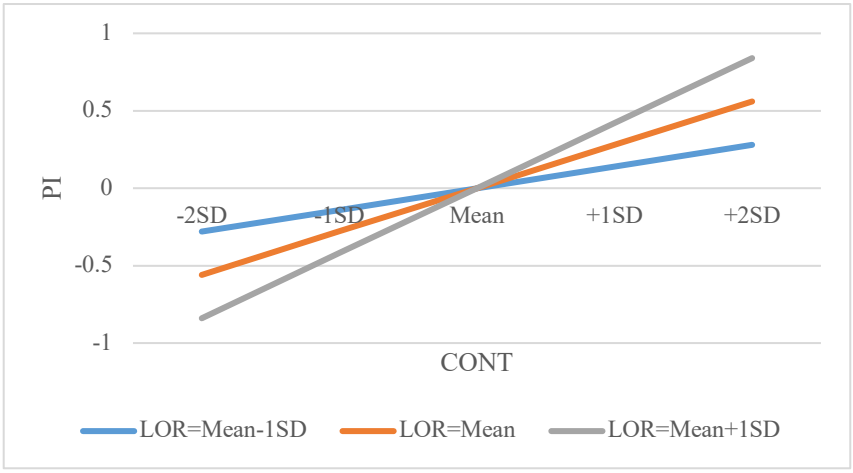

Figure 4. Interaction effect of CONT×LOR on PI

The results also showed that LOR significantly interacted with ESTE to influence PI. Specifically, at the average level of LOR, ESTE directly and positively contributed to PI by.37 ($\beta_{ESTE \rightarrow PI}$=.37). Interestingly, LOR moderated this relationship in a negative direction ($\beta_{ESTE \times LOR \rightarrow PI}$=-.10). That is, when LOR increased by one standard deviation from the mean, the effect of ESTE on PI reduced from .37 to .27 ($\beta_{ESTE \rightarrow PI}$=.37+(-.10)=.27). Conversely, a one-standard deviation decrease to LOR increased the effect by .47 ($\beta_{ESTE \rightarrow PI}$=.37–(-.10)= .47) (Figure 5) suggesting the positive effect of ESTE on PI was stronger among those respondents who resided there for a shorter time than it was for longer-term residents. The effect size of LOR×ESTE (f^2=.02) fell between the range of medium to large (Kenny, 2018).

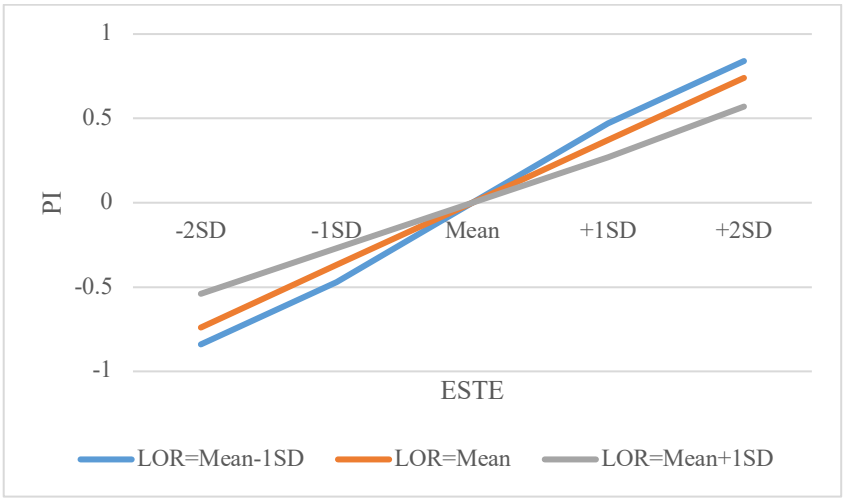

Figure 5. Interaction effect of ESTE×LOR on PI

5. Discussion

Guided by Identity Process Theory (Breakwell, 1986), this study integrated the resource view of destination competitiveness with place identity conceptualised as a dynamic process, and examined their motivating effects on destination ambassadorship expressed in residents' intention to promote their home city to VFR tourists. The utility of this conceptual framework was assessed by testing two hypothesised models — a mediation model and moderated mediation model — based on data collected from a sample of residents in Newcastle.

The mediation model assessed the indirect effects of four identity principles — continuity (CONT), distinctiveness (DIST), self-esteem (ESTE), and self-efficacy (EFFI) — and place identity (PI) on the relationship between resource evaluation (RE) and intention to invite VFR (INT) as a proxy of resident destination ambassadorship. The assessment of the model revealed a partial mediation suggesting two pathways for RE to influence INT. Both pathways had approximately equal contribution to INT. The first pathway involved a direct effect of RE on INT. The second pathway illustrated the effect of RE on INT as indirect via the process of place identity. This finding highlights the need of destination development to invest in and manage resources conducive to the operation of four identity principles (i.e., CONT, DIST, ESTE, EFFI) to meet the identity needs of residents. Existing research suggests that changes to places that support resident place identity can have an adverse effect on well-being which, seemingly, implies a preference for stability in the relationship between residents and their city (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Kyle, Manning, & Bacon, 2004; Lai et al., 2017a). However, when place identity is deconstructed as a process that is regulated by identity principles evolving through time, stability is essential in maintaining resident place identity, particularly for those who have lived in the city for an extended period and

accumulated meaningful memories. This finding does not, however, implicate that destinations should remain unchanged. Rather, the results reveal that destinations can be developed in a way that allows place identity to be maintained when managed to support identity principles.

The nature of people–place relationships has been shown to be fluid and dynamic (Chapin & Knight, 2015; Hay, 1988; Hernández, et al., 2007; Lewicka, 2010). This dynamic nature of people–place relationships was further investigated in this study by testing the moderated mediation model where the interaction effect of length of residence (LOR) on the process of place identity was examined. Contrary to much existing research (e.g., Brown et al., 2003; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Knez, 2005) that assumes a linear relationship between time and place constructs, this study reveals that the effect of time on place identity is more complex when the process of place identity is unpacked.

The significant moderating effect of LOR that positively interacted with CONT to influence PI suggests that maintaining a sense of continuity reflected in the memories that connect residents to the city plays a more important role among longer-term residents to nurture place identity than shorter-term residents. Indeed, as indicated by Lewicka (2014, p. 52), all memories are "acquired through 'living' in a place and need time to develop." Through an extended length of direct interactions with the city, longer-term residents acquire embodied memories which then become an essential component in forging place identity. In comparison, due to the reduced timeframe in accumulating embodied experiences, this identity principle has a less positive effect on shorter-term residents' place identity.

The significant moderating effect of LOR that interacted with ESTE to negatively affect PI demonstrates that the self-worth feeling associated with living in the city has a greater positive effect on PI among shorter-term residents. For our study sample, longer-term residents tended to be older in age (Mean=44.71, SD=15.12) than shorter-term residents

(Mean=34.40, SD=13.48), and LOR positively correlated with age (r=.53, p>.01). This finding corroborates Breakwell's (1986) argument that depending on the life stage one is experiencing, the identity principle(s) viewed important by the individual to drive identity processes are likely to vary. However, the exact nature of why ESTE exerts differential effects on the place identity of residents with different lengths of residential time is less clear.

One explanation can be drawn from migration research that suggests migration movement is often motivated by the natural, social-economic and/or cultural amenities of places (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2012). Accordingly, it can be surmised that shorter-term residents in this study are likely comprised of individuals who chose to move to Newcastle for its reputation of providing a range of attractive amenities, such as those supportive of a coastal lifestyle. Therefore, they are more likely to project Newcastle's positive reputation as a city with attractive amenities onto their self-image. Research on aging studies provides additional circumstantial evidence that self-esteem reaches its peak during adulthood and decreases as individuals age (McMullin & Cairney, 2004; Orth, Trzesniewski, Robins, 2010). Whether decreased self-esteem can weaken positive contribution to place identity and whether such decreased effect may be complemented by an increased effect of other identity principles (e.g., continuity) among older residents requires further investigation. Overall, the study findings contribute towards a better understanding of the differential effects of place identity process and its antecedent on destination ambassadorship between heterogeneous groups of residents.

6. Conclusion

In post-industrial cities, residents can play an important role in promoting these cities as destinations to VFRs. This role is substantiated in this research supported by the findings that resident destination ambassadorship expressed in intention to invite VFRs can be

strengthened directly when destinations' investment in different aspects of resources is appraised positively by residents. This positive appraisal also equally contributes to resident intention to invite VFRs indirectly via the dynamic process of place identity although variations exist between longer-term and shorter-term residents. As such, this research makes significant theoretical contributions to the VFR tourism research scholarship. A major theoretical contribution of this research rests in its cross-fertilisation of the resource view of destination competitiveness with the dynamic conceptualisation of place identity to inform its research design, implementation and interpretation despite such an approach has been largely omitted in VFR tourism research. This cross-fertilisation helps shed light on the nuanced process affecting resident destination ambassadorship and on the variations between different groups of residents. Failing to consider the regulating function of identity principles (i.e., continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy) to accommodate and assimilate valued destination resources into resident place identity overlooks this important mechanism that can substantially affect resident destination ambassadorship and intention to promote the destination. Similarly, neglecting that variations can exist among residents due to different lengths of embodied experiences in the destination can limit the effect of strategies designed to encourage resident destination ambassadorship.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study also generates managerial implications for destination planning and management that aims to develop VFR tourism and encourage resident support. The direct effect of resource evaluation on resident destination ambassadorship suggests that destination resources need to be managed to satisfy the needs of residents to promote destination ambassadorship. It is equally important that destination managers consider the indirect effect of place identity process that draws attention to the need to invest and develop destination resources to sustain the memories that residents develop from embodied experiences in the destination (the continuity principle), and establish and

promote the unique features and opportunities that distinguish the destination from other cities (the distinctiveness principle). Moreover, destination resources should also be managed to strengthen the destination attributes through which residents' sense of pride evolves (the self-esteem principle), and to support them to meet the needs of daily living, and their sense of safety and environmental competence in the destination (the self-efficacy principle).

Similar to many post-industrial cities striving to forge their destination competitiveness Newcastle values VFR tourists as a significant market to grow its visitor economy and transform its destination image. The city's aboriginal and industrial heritage sites, and various locations frequented by its residents serve as anchors where they accumulate embodied experiences and memories, and maintain a sense of continuity (Lai, Maruyama, Woosnam, & Mcginnis, 2019). Easy access to beaches, ocean baths, and other water-based recreation, and the coexistence of the industrial past (e.g., restaurants, museums converted from previously industrial warehouses) with contemporary industry (e.g., busy vessel activities in Newcastle Harbour that continue to export coal internationally) present some of the unique characteristics that distinguish the city from many other places (Lai, et al., 2019). Residents' self-efficacy not only is supported by the city's accessibility. It can also be further reinforced via an improved sense of safety and various mechanisms that forge environmental competence (e.g., being empowered in the planning process of destination development, knowing what and where changes to the city may occur). Many of the aforementioned attributes of Newcastle and its ability to maintain these attributes and related opportunities can also nurture a sense of pride among the residents. Moreover, residents' sense of pride has also been reinforced via the promotion of the positive image of Newcastle via media such as a recent article featured by *National Geographic* that prised the impressive progress of Newcastle to become a smart and liveable city (Miller, 2017). In the meantime, when the city is evaluated negatively, local residents can be provided with opportunities to address related

issues through community consultation or inviting direct resident inputs via various platforms accessible to residents of all ages.

Another managerial implication derived from this research is the need of destination managers to take note of how the dynamic process of place identity can evolve differently between different groups of residents, which can add further insight into destination planning and management. In this study, place identity principles – particularly continuity and self-esteem – were found to operate differently. When promoting urban destinations to VFRs, a strategy directed towards longer-term residents needs to place more emphasis on destination resource development that ensures the continuity of the destination attributes to which important memories are anchored. These attributes may include social and natural places frequented by residents for socialisation, and heritage sites that convey historical meanings significant to residents who have resided in the city for a long time. Alternatively, when destination messaging is directed towards shorter-term residents, how the attributes of a destination (e.g., urban amenities that support work and play) essential to shorter-term residents' sense of pride can be highlighted.

While this research makes important theoretical and managerial contributions as presented above, it is equally important to recognise the limitations due to the research focus on model testing informed by a set literature. First, the identity principles considered in this research pertain primarily to Western society. Consequently, the application of these principles may be confined to residents of tourism destinations dominated by Western culture. The use of length of residence as a proxy of time to examine the dynamic process of place identity presents another limitation. Further research involving a longitudinal study design that monitors how place attributes may support resident place identity via identity principles will provide further insight. Additionally, since this study examined destination ambassadorship in the context of VFR tourism, the use of resident intention to invite VFRs

(INT) as a proxy for this latent construct was considered as appropriate. However, INT only captured a limited scope of destination ambassadorship and research wishing to more broadly examine this construct will need to go beyond VFR intention to incorporate cognitions or behaviours relevant to their study context. Future studies that consider these opportunities will further provide valuable understandings of the dynamic process of place identity and related contribution to destination management.

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