

Article

How to Help Crowded Destinations: Tourist Anger vs. Sympathy and Role of Destination Social Responsibility

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Abstract: Crowding at destinations is becoming an important issue in sustainable tourism. This study examines the relationship between tourist perceptions of crowding, environmentally responsible behavior (ERB), and intention to recommend a destination, from a helping behavior perspective. It proposes two discrete emotions, in particular anger and sympathy, to understand how tourist perceptions of crowding affect their helping behavior. We collected data through an online survey of tourists who had visited Jeju Island, which has emerged as Korea's tourism hub. We performed structural equation modeling (SEM) and regression analysis to empirically test the research model. The results reveal that while tourist perceptions of spatial crowding positively impact both anger and sympathy, human crowding perceptions do not link to them. Further, we investigated the incompatible roles of anger and sympathy in tourist ERB and intention to recommend. Whereas anger weakens tourist ERB and intention to recommend, sympathy may strengthen them. This study also examined whether destination social responsibility (DSR) moderates the impact of crowding perceptions on the aforementioned emotions. In addition to encouraging relevant studies, we emphasize the importance of DSR, given the need for destination management organizations and tourism managers to understand tourists' emotional responses and helping behavior at crowded destinations.

Keywords: crowding perceptions; anger; sympathy; destination social responsibility (DSR); environmentally responsible behavior (ERB); intention to recommend

1. Introduction

With the growth of the tourism industry, the issue of crowding has emerged as a major imperative of sustainable tourism [1]. Tourist activities, in particular, have caused environmental destruction of destinations. To overcome the harmful effects of tourist behavior on the environment, tourism researchers have been encouraged to conduct research leading to the enhancement of environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) among tourists [2,3]. In the meantime, tourist loyalty (i.e., return and recommendation) through crowding management may be crucial for the sustainability of destinations [4,5]. Previous research has explored a variety of antecedents that can effectively enhance tourist ERB, including individual factors (e.g., environmental sensitivity and personal norms) [6,7] and destination factors (e.g., reputation, responsibility, and service quality) [2,3,8]. There have also been attempts to identify drivers of tourist loyalty in sustainable tourism [9].

In this study, we expand our understanding of the main antecedents that boost tourist ERB and intention to recommend by investigating the potential role of tourists' crowding perceptions. It is

well established in tourism literature that crowding perceptions may relate to tourism impacts [10,11]. While it is well known that tourism impact may negatively contribute to tourist ERB [8], the influence of crowding perceptions on tourist ERB has been neglected. Specifically, the possible positive role of crowding perceptions on ERB remains unknown. Moreover, although crowding has been considered to negatively affect tourist experience, empirical evidence shows that the relationship between crowding and word of mouth (WOM) is not always negative [12]. Hence, this study's key research objective is to investigate how tourists' crowding perceptions can serve as an ambivalent role to strengthen (and weaken) their ERB and intention to recommend in terms of helping behavior. ERB can be viewed as a form of helpful behavior to support the destination environment. We also expect that recommending a destination to others will be helpful in destination management organization [9].

To this end, we emphasize the distinct role of two discrete emotions—anger and sympathy—in the relationship between crowding perceptions and tourists' helping behavior, based on the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework [13]. Environmental psychology considers crowding to be a form of environmental stimulus [14], which, in turn, promotes an internal state (i.e., emotions) and behavior. While both anger and sympathy are likely to be experienced in harmful situations, they are different in that sympathy is elicited by patients who need help, while anger is usually experienced as blaming of specific agents [15,16]. We therefore expect tourists to feel angry in response to crowded destinations, which, in turn, may negatively impact their ERB and intention to recommend. However, crowds can also elicit a sympathetic response, which could positively contribute to building tourists' ERB and intention to recommend, as sympathy involves emotional concern for the well-being of others (e.g., the local residents and destination). Moreover, the influence of sympathy on pro-social behavior is well known in marketing literature [17,18].

In addition, we also test the moderation of destination social responsibility (DSR) or “activities that protect and improve social and environmental interests of an entire destination” [19] (p. 309) in the relationship between crowding perceptions (i.e., negative outcome) and experiences of anger and sympathy. According to Wiener's attribution-emotion-action model [20], feelings of anger and sympathy depend on attribution in crisis situations [21,22]. For example, it was found that a lack of effort toward a negative outcome could cause anger, while a strong effort could lead to sympathy [23].

This study begins with a literature review for better understanding of the relationships in our research model. Then we explain the research methodology and empirical results. Finally, we discuss the key findings and present the contributions and limitations for future research.

2. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual model is shown in Figure 1. We anticipate that tourists' crowding perceptions will have a positive effect on their experiences of anger and sympathy, which will, in turn, differently influence ERB and intention to recommend. Furthermore, tourist perceptions of DSR are also expected to moderate the relationship between crowding perceptions and the two discrete emotions.

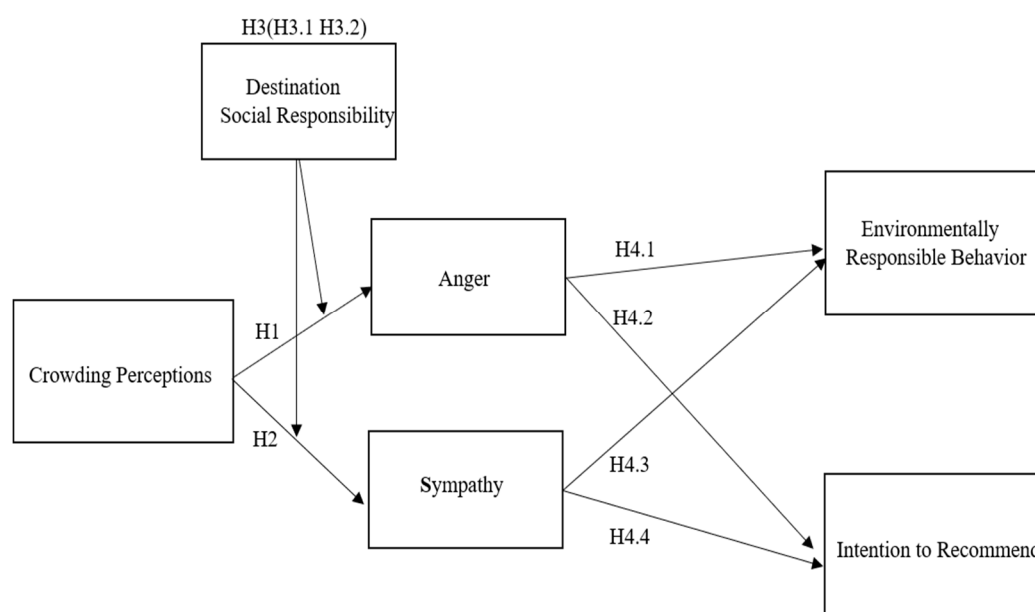


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

2.1. SOR Framework

In the SOR model, environmental stimuli essentially induce behavioral responses through internal states [3]. This study suggests a process of crowding perceptions (S)—anger and sympathy (O)—ERB and intention to recommend (R) in a congested destination context.

Previous research has categorized environmental stimuli into design, ambient, and social factors [14], among which crowding (i.e., social factor) is becoming increasingly important in destination situations. Studies have shown that tourism has become important in the global economy, meaning that popular destinations and cities attract a huge volume of tourists, resulting in crowding issues [24,25]. Boracay, a famous beach island in the Philippines, experienced the negative environmental impact of over-tourism and was recently reopened after being closed for a six-month cleanup period [26].

Emotional responses (i.e., organism) to environmental stimuli can be divided into cognitive, emotional, and physiological states [27]. Emotional responses to a destination are not only crucial for the travel experience but are also decisive determinants of behavior [28]. According to feeling-as-information theory, emotional responses perform as informative cues for making judgments [29]. Meanwhile, although positive and negative emotions have been treated as psychological mechanisms of tourist ERB in terms of valence [3,19], there is a missing link between specific emotions and tourism behavior. Anger and sympathy, in particular, can serve as affective mechanisms of a person's helping behavior [30].

Finally, from the perspective of helping behavior, this study considers tourists' ERB and intention to recommend a destination. ERB is a mechanism of environmental protection, as it comprises a person's concern for the environment and activism [31,32]. Thus, ERB can be an activity that helps environmental protection and, in turn, influences sustainable destination development [8,33]. Moreover, we consider that consumer helping covers a multitude of behaviors such as volunteering, charitable giving, intention to repurchase, and recommendation [34–36]. Consumers are especially likely to buy or recommend products to assist a victim in a crisis situation [34,36].

2.2. Tourists' Perceptions of Crowding and Emotional Responses: Anger vs. Sympathy

Perceived crowding is an individual's subjective assessment of density in a particular space [1]. For instance, feeling crowded can result from physical proximity in a specific area, rather than number of people [37]. Accordingly, crowding perceptions are a result of density and may be affected by physical, social, and individual factors [38,39]. Thus, perceived crowding has been treated as a multifaceted

construct that includes human and spatial crowding perceptions [40–42]. Perceived crowding is also related to carrying capacity, defined as the “upper limit of visitors” that can be accommodated without causing negative tourism impacts or quality of tourist experiences [43]. Consequently, tourism literature has largely centered on the negative impact of crowding on destination evaluation [24,25,41].

Hence, although tourism experiences essentially include pleasure-seeking emotions [44], the effect of perceived crowding on emotional response is often assumed to be negative [45]. In a retail context, perceived crowding has been demonstrated to affect negative emotions, specifically anger, disgust, and contempt [38]. However, there is little research addressing the link between perceived crowding and negative discrete emotions in tourism research. We examine the relationship among perceived crowding and two specific negative emotions: anger and sympathy [46].

- **Anger.** Anger refers to other-oriented emotions elicited when people blame specific agents for a transgression or injustice [16]. For example, when tourists are in crowded places, they may suffer negative environmental impacts at the destination [11]. Such harmful acts (i.e., environmental transgressions) are also observed as a violation of carrying capacity and sustainability [45]. Consequently, this perception of violation results in negative moral emotions such as anger [47].

People are also likely to experience anger because they attribute the discomfort of crowdedness to others (e.g., the destination is blamed for its crowding management) [38]. Feelings of crowdedness are also likely to induce stress [48]. In this sense, one study highlighted that tourists tend to feel angry when faced with a crowding condition that goes against them or their well-being [49]. Crowding problems in destinations also irritate local residents [10]. Hence, our first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Tourists’ perceptions of crowding have a positive effect on their anger.*

- **Sympathy.** Sympathy is defined as an understanding of another’s condition and consists of emotional concern for the well-being of others [18,50]. Sympathy stems from an awareness of other people’s circumstances [51]. While sympathy is genuinely other-oriented and germane to pro-social behaviors toward victims, it has received little attention in tourist behavior and tourism literature [15,52].

Meanwhile, research has demonstrated that tourism activities can have a negative impact on local communities [11,19]. In particular, the risk of overcrowding is becoming a serious issue for every destination, as it disturbs local residents’ daily lives and results in environmental (or sociocultural) degradation of destinations [10]. Residents’ perceptions of negative tourism impacts are negatively linked to their overall community satisfaction [8]. Moreover, some tourists wish to avoid activities or situations that lead to negative tourism impacts [9]. Hence, their concern is more sympathetic, which involves a certain detachment from the situation [16]. In this context, we attempt to provide empirical evidence for the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Tourists’ perceptions of crowding have a positive effect on their sympathy.*

2.3. Moderation of Destination Social Responsibility (DSR)

Sustainability has become an important challenge in tourism development. DSR, a term related to sustainability in tourism, refers to tourists’ perceptions of efforts by destination stakeholders to take on social responsibilities [8,9]. Furthermore, tourists’ crowding perceptions and sustainable tourism are closely related, as they make tourists consider the negative impacts on destinations when exposed to crowded conditions [1].

Research has demonstrated that firms’ sustainable efforts have a decisive effect on consumers’ responses [53,54]. Moreover, moral emotion attributions are an important impetus for people’s

actions [47]. Thus, at a highly crowded destination, we suggest that salience of tourists' emotional responses (i.e., anger vs. sympathy) will differ with the level of DSR perceptions, for several reasons. First, attribution theory suggests that people attempt to seek causes for specific events [55]. In the case of negative outcomes (i.e., high crowdedness) and low effort, people become angry at those who do not fulfill their responsibilities, and, in contrast, sympathize with and help those who do [23,56]. Second, people feel less sympathetic toward victims who are not trying to help themselves [57]. Thus, in the case of destinations devoid of social responsibility for high crowdedness, tourists feel stakeholders do not deserve assistance and have less sympathy [34]. Meanwhile, we expect that tourists do not easily feel anger or sympathy, regardless of DSR, when they perceive that the destination is not crowded. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *DSR moderates the relationship between crowding perceptions and feelings of anger and sympathy.*

Hypothesis 3.1 (H3.1). *When exposed to a crowded destination, tourists become even more angry if they perceive DSR to be low (vs. high) but feel more sympathy in situations of high (vs. low) DSR.*

Hypothesis 3.2 (H3.2). *When exposed to not crowded destinations, no significant difference is expected in anger and sympathy levels with perceptions of DSR.*

2.4. Differential Impact of Anger vs. Sympathy on Environmentally Responsible Behavior (ERB) and Intention to Recommend

Anger is often primarily portrayed as a negative emotion in reaction to its cause [46]. It is well established in marketing and tourism literature that anger is a significant predictor of punitive behaviors such as complaints and negative WOM [58–60]. In particular, it was found that negative emotions (anger, boredom, and annoyance) have a significant negative effect on tourists' ERB [3].

By contrast, sympathy has been demonstrated to positively affect voluntary behaviors intended to benefit others [61]. One study demonstrated that sympathy led to favorable consumer reactions such as purchase intention and WOM after a company crisis [36]. Another study asserted that visitors would feel sympathetic even after having trouble with a trader at a tourist spot [52]. Specifically, they found that visitors' sympathy produces significant positive effects on positive WOM of the destination and intention to support traders. Meanwhile, based on Weiner's attributional model of helping, Reisenzein explored the influence of anger and sympathy on helping behavior and empirically demonstrated that sympathy (anger) is positively (negatively) related with help [20,30]. Therefore, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 4.1 (H4.1). *Anger negatively affects tourists' environmentally responsible behavior.*

Hypothesis 4.2 (H4.2). *Anger negatively affects tourists' intention to recommend the destination.*

Hypothesis 4.3 (H4.3). *Sympathy positively affects tourists' environmentally responsible behavior.*

Hypothesis 4.4 (H4.4). *Sympathy positively affects tourists' intention to recommend the destination.*

3. Method

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

To test the conceptual model, we conducted an online survey of tourists who had visited Jeju Island. As the largest island in South Korea, Jeju has been transformed into Korea's tourism hub and is

annually visited by nearly 15 million domestic and international tourists. Thus, Jeju suffers from an excess of visitors and overwhelming amounts of garbage, noise, and traffic [62].

Data collection was conducted through web-based questionnaires using an online panel as per instructions from a specialized online research company in May 2019. We targeted adults who had visited Jeju Island over the last year with a sampling frame. Sampling was based on an even quota by gender, since men and women may experience different levels of emotion related to travel [63]. In all, 250 usable responses, of which 50% were from females, were collected. The respondents were of various ages (19.2% were aged 18–29, 22.8% were 30–39, 22.4% were 40–49, and 35.6% were 50 or older) and had a high level of education. Most respondents had been to Jeju more than once. Approximately 60% had visited Jeju during the peak season from spring to summer, and 40% from fall to winter. The respondents' characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of survey respondents.

Gender	N	%	Level of Education	N	%
Male	125	50.0	Below high school	35	14.0
Female	125	50.0	Bachelor's degree	183	73.2
			Master's degree or higher	32	12.8
Age	N	%	Number of Visits	N	%
18–29	48	19.2	First	11	4.4
30–39	57	22.8	2 visits	43	17.2
40–49	56	22.4	3 or more visits	196	78.4
50 or older	89	35.6			

3.2. Measures

This study used refined measures after reviewing related literature. We measured all constructs with multiple items, and each item was evaluated on a seven-point Likert scale consisting of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), except for two emotion constructs. We defined perceived crowding as tourists' subjective evaluation of density involving human crowding and spatial crowding [1,42]. A seven-item scale measuring two dimensions of crowding was borrowed [38,40], and three items of anger and four items of sympathy were adapted [18,22] from the literature. Each emotion item assessed the degree of respondents' feelings on a seven-point scale from not at all (1) to extremely (7).

Four items of ERB were adapted to focus on how tourists view their actions to help protect the destination's environment [2,3]. To capture intention to recommend, two items were borrowed that evaluated intention to speak positively about Jeju Island and recommend it to others [28]. Finally, four DSR items were adapted to capture how tourists perceive the destination's effort to conduct socially responsible activities [8].

4. Results

4.1. Reliability and Validity of the Measures

This study confirmed the reliability and validity of all constructs according to the procedure from the previous study [64]. First, we assessed reliability with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of all measures. As seen in Table 2, the results met the criteria of reliability, in that Cronbach's alpha was higher than 0.7, and composite reliability exceeded 0.6 in all measures [65,66].

To ensure the validity of the measures, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (see Table 2). The results indicated that the goodness of fit of measurement model was acceptable (χ^2 (df = 231) = 432.146, p = 0.000; GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index) = 0.870; CFI (Comparative Fit Index) = 0.960; NFI (Normed Fit Index) = 0.919; RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) = 0.059). In Table 2, all of the factor-loading scores were significant, and the average variance extracted (AVE) of all measures exceeded 0.5 [67], which confirmed the convergent validity. In addition, the results of

comparison between the square root of the AVE and correlations of constructs verified the discriminant validity for further analyses [67] (see Table 3).

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis for assessment of reliability and validity. AVE: average variance extracted.

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	t-Value	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
Human Crowding Perceptions	HCP1	0.828		0.903	0.930	0.828
	HCP2	0.914	17.265			
	HCP3	0.870	16.465			
Spatial Crowding Perceptions	SCP1	0.843		0.932	0.933	0.778
	SCP2	0.910	19.215			
	SCP3	0.926	19.823			
	SCP4	0.846	16.925			
Anger	A1	0.948		0.948	0.938	0.828
	A2	0.924	27.585			
	A3	0.912	26.479			
Sympathy	S1	0.893		0.944	0.944	0.810
	S2	0.902	21.632			
	S3	0.895	21.240			
	S4	0.909	21.999			
Intention to Recommend	INT1	0.908		0.917	0.917	0.847
	INT2	0.932	15.942			
Environmentally Responsible Behavior	ERB1	0.779		0.861	0.861	0.608
	ERB2	0.791	12.535			
	ERB3	0.720	11.327			
	ERB4	0.825	13.061			
Destination Social Responsibility	DSR1	0.861		0.894	0.896	0.685
	DSR2	0.905	18.498			
	DSR3	0.787	14.994			
	DSR4	0.749	13.886			

Note: χ^2 ($df = 231$) = 432.146, $p = 0.000$, GFI = 0.870, CFI = 0.960, NFI = 0.919, RMSEA = 0.059.

Table 3. Correlation matrix and discriminant validity.

Construct	Mean	S.D.	Correlations						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Human Crowding Perceptions	4.92	1.14	<i>0.91</i>						
2. Spatial Crowding Perceptions	3.35	1.4	0.43	<i>0.88</i>					
3. Anger	3.32	1.58	0.28	0.72	<i>0.91</i>				
4. Sympathy	3.02	1.48	0.32	0.56	0.59	<i>0.90</i>			
5. Intention to Recommend	5.46	1.08	0.16	−0.16	−0.35	−0.01	<i>0.92</i>		
6. Environmentally Responsible Behavior	5.43	1.03	0.24	−0.17	−0.16	0.10	0.46	<i>0.78</i>	
7. Destination Social Responsibility	4.34	1.22	0.25	−0.02	−0.21	0.23	0.52	0.45	<i>0.83</i>

Note: The diagonal (in italics) shows the square root of the AVE for each construct.

This study empirically tested the relationships of constructs by self-reported measures, which may result in common method variance (CMV) [68]. We first did Harman's one-factor test to examine the presence of CMV, but no single factor or general factor was found. Specifically, six factors were identified through unrotated exploratory analysis, the first of which did not comprise the majority of total variance (32%). We also performed a confirmatory factor analysis to examine if there was a single factor problem. The results indicated that the fitness of the single factor model was worse than that of our measurement model (χ^2 ($df = 252$) = 3433.681, $p = 0.000$; GFI = 0.348; CFI = 0.372; NFI = 0.357;

RMSEA = 0.225), implying that CMV may not cause problems in this study [68]. Meanwhile, while the previous study insisted the interaction effect could be weakened by CMV [69], this study including interaction terms demonstrated significant moderating effects of DSR on emotions. Finally, we allowed method factor to load all items and included it in the conceptual model. Consequently, method factor covered 17.8% of total variance, which was less than the median (25%) of method variance of previous studies [70,71]. In sum, the problem caused by CMV was not serious in this study.

4.2. Structural Equation Modeling Results

We employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to empirically test the research model, as shown in Figure 1. The SEM results show that the fit of this structural model was acceptable (χ^2 ($df = 161$) = 389.196, $p = 0.000$; GFI = 0.860; CFI = 0.947; NFI = 0.913; RMSEA = 0.075).

H₁ posits that perceived crowding has a positive influence on anger. As seen in Table 4, our results support this for spatial crowding: perceived spatial crowding positively affects anger ($\gamma = 0.75$, $t = 11.822$), but perceived human crowding and anger are not shown to be significant ($\gamma = -0.04$, $t = -0.786$). H₂, which posits that crowding perceptions positively influence sympathy is also supportive ($\gamma = 0.54$, $t = 7.879$) of the case of spatial crowding. Perceived human crowding has no significant effect on sympathy ($\gamma = 0.10$, $t = 1.551$).

Table 4. SEM results.

		β	t
H1	Human Crowding Perceptions → Anger	−0.04	−0.786
H1	Spatial Crowding Perceptions → Anger	0.75	11.822 ***
H2	Human Crowding Perceptions → Sympathy	0.10	1.551
H2	Spatial Crowding Perceptions → Sympathy	0.54	7.879 ***
H4.1	Anger → Environmentally Responsible Behavior	−0.35	−4.640 ***
H4.2	Anger → Intention to Recommend	−0.52	−6.868 ***
H4.3	Sympathy → Environmentally Responsible Behavior	0.30	4.008 ***
H4.4	Sympathy → Intention to Recommend	0.29	4.102 ***

Note: χ^2 ($df = 161$) = 389.196, $p = 0.000$, GFI = 0.860, CFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.913, RMSEA = 0.075; *** $p < 0.001$.

H_{4.1} concerns the potential relationship between anger and ERB. The analysis shows there is indeed a negative relationship ($\beta = -0.35$, $t = -4.640$). H_{4.2}, which predicts the negative relationship between anger and intention to recommend, is also supported ($\beta = -0.52$, $t = -6.868$). By contrast, H_{4.3}, that tourists' sympathy will increase their ERB is supported ($\beta = 0.30$, $t = 4.008$). H_{4.4}, which posits the positive relationship between sympathy and intention to recommend, is also supported ($\beta = 0.29$, $t = 4.102$).

4.3. Moderation Test Results

We conducted a regression analysis to test H₃, which predicts that DSR moderates the impact of crowding perceptions on two emotions. From testing H₁ and H₂, we found that spatial crowding perceptions alone have an influence on anger and sympathy. Thus, we focused our analysis on the relationship between spatial crowding, destination social responsibility, and feelings of anger and sympathy.

Performing the third step in the regression model (tested with spatial crowding, DSR, and an interaction term) significantly improved the model for both anger and sympathy (see Table 5). Importantly, the interaction effect between spatial crowding and DSR was significant for both anger ($\beta = 0.34$, $t = 1.960$, $p = 0.05$) and sympathy ($\beta = 0.77$, $t = 4.054$, $p = 0.00$). This implies that, as predicted in H₃, the influence of perceived spatial crowding on both anger and sympathy is moderated by DSR.

Table 5. Results of stepwise moderation regression analyses.

Dependent variable	Predictors	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		β	t	β	t	β	t
Anger	Spatial crowding	0.65	13.054 ***	0.65	13.92 ***	0.39	2.696 **
	DSR			−0.19	−4.116 ***	−0.38	−3.548 ***
	Spatial crowding $\times$ DSR					0.34	1.960 *
	R^2	0.424		0.461		0.469	
	ΔR^2			0.037 ***		0.008 *	
Sympathy	Spatial crowding	0.52	9.584 ***	0.52	19.902 ***	−0.08	−0.517
	DSR			0.22	4.138 ***	−0.22	−1.827
	Spatial crowding $\times$ DSR					0.77	4.054 ***
	R^2	0.270		0.318		0.360	
	ΔR^2			0.047 ***		0.043 ***	

* $p = 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

We ran two separate regression analyses between DSR and feelings of anger and sympathy after dividing them into two groups—high and low groups—of perceived spatial crowding by applying a median split. The results showed that, for high spatial crowding, DSR positively affects sympathy ($\beta = 0.43$, $t = 5.196$, $p = 0.00$). Meanwhile, there was no effect of DSR on sympathy for low spatial crowding ($\beta = 0.07$, $t = 0.802$, $p = 0.424$). In contrast, we found that for high spatial crowding, DSR is not significantly negatively associated with anger ($\beta = -0.15$, $t = -1.581$, $p = 0.117$), whereas DSR negatively affects anger ($\beta = -0.32$, $t = -3.801$, $p = 0.00$) for low spatial crowding.

Figure 2 reflects, in greater detail, the moderation effect of using a median split of spatial crowding perceptions and perceived DSR. As proposed in $H_{3.1}$ and $H_{3.2}$, when exposed to spatial crowdedness, tourists in high DSR had more sympathy ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.39$) than tourists in low DSR ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.14$; $p = 0.002$). In addition, when exposed to not crowdedness, no significant difference in tourists' sympathy was found between high DSR ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.28$) and low DSR ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.19$; $p = 0.796$). Thus, $H_{3.1}$ and $H_{3.2}$ are supported in the case of sympathy. However, when exposed to spatial crowdedness, although tourists in low DSR expressed more anger ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.13$) than tourists in high DSR ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.39$; $p = 0.217$), there was no difference according to the levels of DSR perceptions. We also found a significant difference in tourists' anger between high DSR ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.94$) and low DSR ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.56$; $p = 0.00$) when exposed to not crowdedness. As for anger, $H_{3.1}$ and $H_{3.2}$ are not supported.

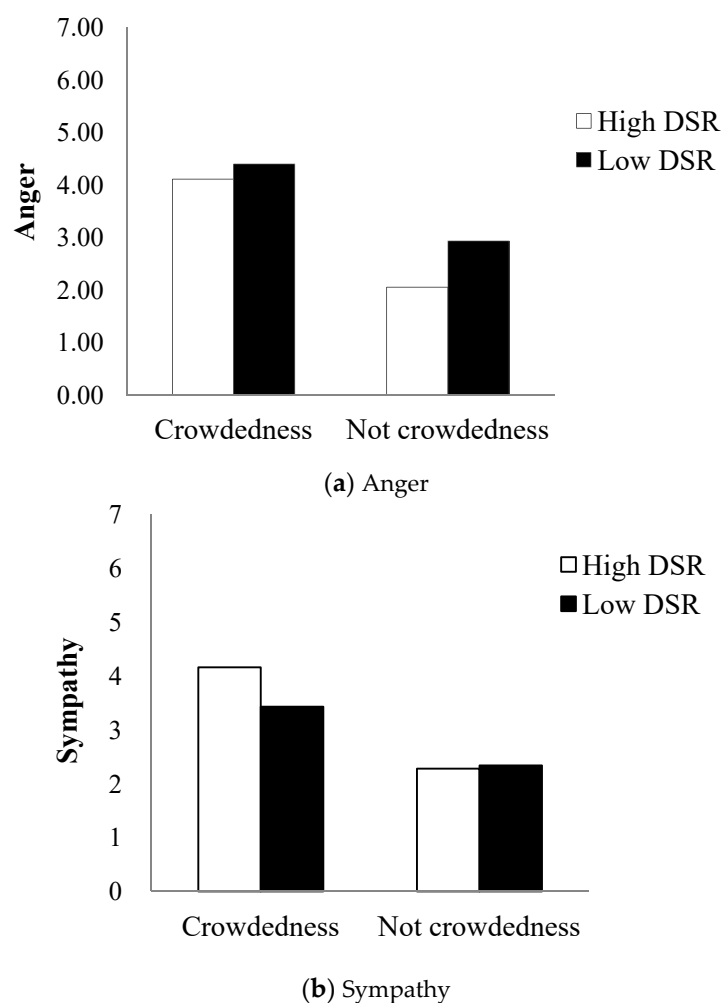


Figure 2. Interactions between DSR perceptions and perceived spatial crowding.

5. Discussion

This study investigated how tourists' crowding perceptions can lead to and/or disrupt their helping behaviors toward a destination. It especially offers insights into tourists' emotional experiences and how anger and sympathy play vital but differentiated roles in increasing ERB and intention to recommend a destination in response to crowdedness.

The results indicate that tourists' perceptions of spatial crowding positively impact anger, which, in turn, reduces their ERB and recommendation. On the other hand, spatial crowding perceptions are found to have a positive relationship with sympathy and can strengthen tourists' ERB and intention to recommend the destination. Meanwhile, human crowding perceptions are not directly associated with tourists' anger and sympathy. Although studies have emphasized the relationship between crowding perceptions and negative emotions [72], only a few have demonstrated that human crowding perceptions also generate positive emotions [73] or can be inversely associated with negative emotions [40].

The findings demonstrate that tourists' emotional experiences were different when they acknowledged the efforts of a destination at a crowded site. In other words, DSR plays a moderating role between spatial crowding perceptions and feelings of anger and sympathy. Specifically, tourists in conditions of spatial crowdedness are more likely to experience sympathy in high DSR than tourists in low DSR. By contrast, tourists in conditions of lower spatial crowdedness have sympathy to the same extent, irrespective of the level of DSR. Therefore, the results confirm that sympathy arises when a person recognizes someone else's suffering, especially when the difficulty is considered to

be undeserved (e.g., a destination trying to fulfill its social responsibility) [22,74]. The results of our empirical test demonstrate that when exposed to spatial crowdedness, tourists feel angry, but the level of DSR made no difference, indicating that DSR (i.e., effort) does not act as a mechanism to defend against tourists' anger in spatially crowded conditions [19]. In addition, there is evidently a strong relationship between spatial crowding and anger [38]. Furthermore, it is important to note that tourists feel more anger in low DSR than tourists in high DSR, even when exposed to destinations that are not crowded.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study expands our understanding of tourists' perceptions of crowding in terms of building sustainable tourism. Studies have recently recognized the risks of over-tourism and emphasized that it is essential to manage perceived crowding to develop a sustainable tourism industry [1,10]. However, studies of tourists' responses to crowding have largely focused on satisfaction and/or destination appraisal [24,25,40,41]. This study is one of the first attempts to examine the relationship between perceived crowding and tourists' ERB and intention to recommend. Such relationships are explained by applying the SOR frame, which will help expand the theoretical foundation of tourism studies [3].

In particular, this study introduced crowding perceptions that positively influence tourists' ERB and intention to recommend from a helping behavior perspective. Crowdedness at destinations has a disastrous impact on communities and residents' quality of life, including the environment, economy, and culture. It is therefore meaningful to enlist the help of tourists in destination crisis management [36].

This study illuminates the incompatible roles of anger and sympathy in bridging perceptions of crowding and tourists' helping behavior. Studies have emphasized the influence of positive emotions on tourists' experiences [28]. In sustainable tourism research, while a few studies have considered the effects of emotions on tourists' behavior [3,9,19], there is a lack of understanding about the role of discrete emotions in tourists' behavior. This study, based on Wiener's attribution-emotion-action model of helping behavior, expands on the sustainable tourism literature by demonstrating the differential impacts of anger and sympathy on tourists' ERB and intention to recommend the destination [20]. Furthermore, studies of moral emotions (such as sympathy and guilt) must be emphasized in tourism research [63].

Our results suggest that destination efforts such as DSR can induce tourists' support in crowded destinations [19]. Hence, tourists generally experience more sympathy when they perceive that the destination is socially responsible, which, in turn, positively contributes to the development of their ERB and recommendation. These results highlight the important role of DSR in resolving crowding issues.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Destinations are now facing a dilemma: while growing numbers of visitors are an indication of a destination's attractiveness, they are also a source of negative outcomes. This finding has important implications for destination management organizations dealing with crowd management that must attempt to reduce the negative effects of spatial crowding, rather than simply controlling the large number of visitors. Researchers highlight that well-planned traffic patterns, sufficient staff, and staff training programs help to manage spatial crowding [40].

This study also has valuable implications for managing tourists' emotional experiences. Tourism organizations and destination managers strive to promote tourists' emotional experiences, usually in terms of positive emotions [28]. Although the importance of tourists' positive emotional experiences is rarely questioned, it is a challenge for destination managers to handle tourists' negative emotions such as anger and sympathy. First and foremost, an effort to reduce tourist anger at crowded destinations is required; for example, consider the case of tourists being upset by long wait times at a crowded tourist spot. Managers can propose response strategies (e.g., a mobile app) that consider that tourists may feel more anger because they can't control the problem.

Moreover, the value of sympathy to a destination's marketing communication has not been emphasized in tourism marketing. Managers should actively communicate with their visitors about the destination's situations or problems resulting from crowdedness. Studies suggest that consumer sympathy can be evoked through communication [52]. In addition, organizations should identify different negative emotions experienced in various crises to strategically establish their crisis communication practices [22].

Finally, given the moderation effects of DSR on anger and sympathy, we propose that it is very effective for destination management organizations to actively engage in social responsibility activities. Organizations should try to identify appropriate responsible initiatives for the destination and to encourage the participation of local residents and tourists. These activities contribute to building the destination's reputation and image [3].

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations that future studies should address. First, this research has a limited scope of generalization, as it was limited to one destination in South Korea. Moreover, the conceptual model was tested using online survey data; therefore, including samples that cover on-site interviewed visitors in other destinations will be beneficial for future research. Second, although this study examined the causal relationships among variables, we could not completely rule out the influences of other possible variables. Future research on manipulating certain variables (e.g., level of crowdedness and DSR) using an experimental design would be useful to enhance the internal validity of the study. Third, this research did not consider other possible forms of moderation in the relationship between crowding perceptions and emotions. Tourists' motivations, for example, could be considered to be factors influencing perceived crowding in sustainable tourism management [1]. Finally, future research could explore the effect of other negative emotions on tourists' helping behavior. Feelings such as shame and guilt are known to affect consumers' pro-environmental behaviors [75].

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