

Residents' Perception towards Tourism Development and its Impacts: A Review

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ABSTRACT

It has been widely recognized that tourism development is a double-edged sword for host communities. Not only does it generate benefits, but it also generates costs. Depending on the amount of benefits and costs that residents receive from tourism, they have different perception towards tourism's development and its impacts upon their communities. In other words, when residents perceive the positive impacts of tourism, they are willing to support additional tourism development and vice versa. Consequently, residents are key actors in planning for tourism development and without them; negative economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences for local communities would likely be greater. Research has evidenced that these negative influences of tourism on residents can reduce the attractiveness of a destination which can adversely affect the income potential and employment opportunities for the local tourism industry. Therefore, in order to develop sustainable tourism community, support and thorough knowledge of how residents' formulate their perceptions toward tourism development and its impacts is crucial. In view of this well-known belief, an attempt has been made in the present study to review the extant literature available on the residents' perception towards tourism development and its impacts. Further, on the basis of existing literature available on the subject, various research gaps have been identified for future research.

KEY WORDS: Residents' Perceptions; Attitude; Tourism Development; Communities; Tourism Impacts.

Introduction

The history of the research on residents' perception towards tourism development and its impacts started seven decades ago. Gilbert and Clarkes (1997) identified three stages of tourism development: Exploration, Development and Decline. Doxey (1975; 1976) pointed out that as tourism increases and develops in an area, residents move through five stages from euphoria, through apathy, annoyance and antagonism to final stage where tourists choose other destinations and tourism enters to a decline process. This idea has been adapted and extended by other researchers. As the tourism destination passes through the first four stages, the number of visitors to the destination increases and as the development process continues, tourists change from being highly adaptive and independent to being less adaptive and more dependent on the local community to provide for their needs.

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In line with the above, Butler (1980) described tourism development as a series of stages through which a destination evolves—exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline or rejuvenation. Residents' perception depends in part on these stages. In each life cycle stage there are changes in residents' perception towards tourism. Residents' perception are positive during the initial stages of tourism development because they have high expectations from the tourists on long term basis but become increasingly negative as the destination evolves towards stagnation. Similar to Butler's model (1980) Ap and Crompton (1993) also attempted to profile the intricate relationship of residents' perception towards tourism development and its impacts by measuring the stage of tourism development in a host community. They described development stages as “embracement, tolerance, adjustment and finally withdrawal”. The model describes the way in which tourism development affects local people's attitude towards tourism. Embracement takes place when local people, especially those who benefit from tourism accept it and feel positively about its impacts. In the tolerance stage, local people begin to feel the impacts of tourism. They become indecisive between being for or against tourism development. Depending on the degree of their involvement in tourism, some of them adjust as per the adjustment stage while others do not. Finally, withdrawal takes place when local people can no longer cope with the impacts of tourism and so their negative perceptions take over (**Turker and Ozturk, 2013**).

Since, the evolution of tourism development seeks to sustain tourism as an agent for socio-cultural and economic development it is believed that a participatory approach would facilitate the implementation of principles of tourism development by creating better opportunities for local people to gain larger and more balanced benefits from tourism development taking place in their localities (Tosun, 2002; 2006) resulting in more positive attitude to tourism development and conservation of local resources and by extending the limits of local tolerance to tourism. These may be either both visitor satisfaction and ongoing benefits for the residents of destination areas. Also, participation by multiple stakeholders having different interests and perspectives may encourage deeper consideration of the varied social, cultural, environmental, economic and political issues affecting tourism development. As Timothy (1998) states, participation in tourism planning by many stakeholders may promote sustainable tourism development by increasing efficiency, equity and harmony.

The general theme emerging from the literature is that the tourism development has great potential to affect the residents' perception towards it. Residents' in most of the communities although seem to have positive perception towards tourism but this does not imply that they do not have concerns about the negative impacts of tourism. Therefore, it has been argued that resident reactions are affected by extrinsic factors such as the stage of development, involvement in decision making process, seasonality in patterns of activity, tourist type, economic dependence on tourism and the degree of cultural difference between residents and tourists (Horn and Simmons, 2002; Turker and Ozturk, 2013). In other words, there is a noticeable relationship between the residents' perception towards stages of tourism development.

Objectives of the Study

In view of the growing importance of understanding residents' perception towards tourism development and its impacts, an attempt has been made in the present study to make a critical review of

the extant literature available on the subject in order to generate awareness, understanding and interest for studies that have explored the residents' perception tourism development and its impacts. Such a review will provide tourism planners and policy makers an enhanced understanding of the residents' perception towards tourism development and their relative influence on support for the tourism industry with a view to make the overall tourism development more effective and efficient.

Literature Review

Residents' Perception towards Tourism Development and its Impacts

Numerous research studies have focused on the impacts of tourism and residents' perception towards tourists and tourism development. In other words, an increasing amount of research has been conducted to understand the tourism development and its impacts from the resident's perspective (Ko and Stewart, 2002; Gjerald, 2005; Urtasun and Gutierrez, 2006; Andereck and Vogt, 2006; Matarrita, 2010; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Aref, 2011; Chancellor, et. al., 2011; Manap, et. al., 2011; Khizindar, 2012; Nawijn and Mitas, 2012; Woo, 2013; Simao and Mosso, 2013; Emruallah, 2014). Further, to better understand the benefits and costs derived from tourism development, various research studies have centered on the issues related to residents' perceived impacts of tourism. Further, most of the past tourism literature has suggested and recognized three major types of impacts when residents' perception towards tourism development and its impacts is being evaluated. These are economic, social/cultural and physical/environmental impacts.

Economic Impacts

One of the critical benefits and costs of tourism development often discussed by the tourism scholars is the economic impacts i.e. positive as well as negative impact when residents' perception towards tourism impacts is being evaluated. Positive economic impacts of tourism development revolve around increased employment opportunities, improved standard of living, support for infrastructure and economic growth. For example, Mason (2008) pointed out that the Indonesian Island of Bali provided a good example of tourism stimulating significant economic growth in the 1960's to create a large number of jobs. Nicholson (1997) found that tourism dominates the economy of Boracay Island (Philippines) (Li, 2013). Kala (2008) conducted a tourism impact study in Jaipur (India) and found that 80.7% of respondents confirmed that tourism leads to direct economic benefits which include the provision of employment, an increase in income of locals and improved the living standard for regional development (Li, 2013). Faulkner and Tideswell's (1997) in their study of the Australian Gold Coast stated that tourism development contributed to economic growth and increased employment opportunities within the region. Liu and Var (1986) reported that residents strongly agreed that tourism development led to economic benefits with regards to job opportunities and increased investments in the state's economy. Similarly, residents in North Wales believed that tourism brought more investment and spending in the country's economy in addition to creating an increase in job opportunities (Sheldon and Var, 1984). Kathleen and Karin (2005) in their study found that residents' who feel tourism is important for economic development, benefit from it and are knowledgeable about the greater positive impacts of tourism development.

Although, the economic impact of tourism is generally positive, the negative economic consequences of tourism are not always largely mentioned by a local community. The negative economic impacts of tourism on the host community are considered as the opportunity costs. These opportunity costs are often known as low paid job, seasonal job and the need to invest in expensive infrastructure which may only be required for part of the year (Swarbrooke, 2001). Researchers like Wall and Mathieson (2006) found that negative economic impacts of tourism included “the danger of over dependency on tourism, increased inflation and higher land values, an increased propensity to import, the seasonality of production and the low rate of return on investments, the creation of other external costs”. Pearce (1989) and Kala (2008) are among those who identified problems connected with overdependence on tourism, and its heavy infrastructure costs that may create an unfavorable impact on the balance of payments. Din (1993) and De Kadt (1979) even argued that the economic benefits of tourism development were sometimes not evenly distributed within the local community. The income always goes to business and government, thus the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Furthermore, tourism has been criticized for creating jobs with only low level of skill, and being part time both of which will disrupt the traditional employment structure (Tosun, 2002). For instance, Mason (1995) found that tourism in Bali gave evidence of being a cause of inflation. Before 1968, land prices had been steady for 20 years, but after tourism developed, land prices rose by more than 100 percent (Li, 2013).

Socio-cultural Impacts

With respect to social-cultural benefits and costs of tourism development, several tourism scholars have found that residents perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism as creating congestion, traffic jams and noise. Researchers also found that with regards to residents' attitudes, socio-cultural impacts of tourism improved local public services (Keogh, 1990) cultural activity (McCool and Martin, 1994) changed traditional culture (Johnson, et. al., 1994 and Akis, et. al., 1996) and allowed preservation or identity of local culture. However, researchers such as Liu, et. al., (1987) and Tosun (2002) argued that the socio-cultural impacts may be negative also and could be related to increased traffic congestion, overcrowding in destinations, increases in crime, pollution, low wages, seasonal employment, and social conflicts and finally a decline in traditions. Some researchers provided detailed case studies illustrating significant socio-cultural impacts on host communities. For instance, by conducting a case study of the Sunshine Coast, Sharma and Dyer (2009) found that the negative socio-cultural impacts may include traffic congestion, pressure on local services and high prices for real estate as well as noise and pollution. Chazapi and Sdrali (2006) found that residents on Andros Island, Greece, expressed high levels of agreement on positive socio-cultural impact, such as improving the socio-economic life status for women, but felt that would bring issues pertaining to safety and crime. Some researchers also argued that tourism will distort traditional family structures, leading to increase in divorce rates and possibly prostitution (Gee, et. al., 1997; Li, 2013).

Environmental impacts

Tourism development has both positive and negative impacts on the physical environment. Positive environmental impacts of tourism could be tourism helping in “the creation of wildlife parks

and preservation of historic buildings” responsible for “introducing planning controls in order to maintain the quality of the environment” (Wall and Mathieson, 2006) and generating a greater awareness of preserving the natural environmental and historic sites which in turn stimulate measures to protect the environment, landscape and wildlife (Ap and Crompton, 1998; Mason, 2008). Researchers such as Hall and Lew (2009) suggested that tourism provided a financial support for conservation and at the same time, they also had a view that tourism could potentially involve local residents in protecting a local environment. Indeed, by investigating the local residents’ attitude toward tourism impacts in Jouzhaigou (China) it was pointed out that there were positive environmental impacts in that place, because tourism encouraged host residents to fully participate in environment protection policies (Li, et. al., 2003; Li, 2013). However, literature has also suggested that although tourism is often considered a clean industry, in reality this is not always the case (Pappas, 2008; Singh, 2013). It can cause significant environmental damage because it often developed in attractive but fragile environments. In addition, there is the possibility that local development policy becomes focused on meeting the needs of tourists, often without regard for the environment. This can be detrimental to fragile areas where tourism often abounds. Ultimately, the industry has the potential to unwittingly undermine itself by being insensitive to the environmental impacts it is causing.

Conclusion and Scope for Future Research

After reviewing the extant body of literature, it is to be concluded that the residents’ perception towards tourism development and its impacts is both positive as well as negative. For example, on one hand, tourism has brought an increase of income and employment opportunities leading to positive perception among residents’ but on the other hand, it has also provided additional taxes and embellishment of tourism resources and public physical facilities leading to negative perception among them. In other words, in spite of these various kinds of economic boons, tourism development has also created some negative impacts and costs such as crowding, noise, crime, pollution and environmental destruction. In other words, tourism although contributes towards the development, yet it tends to incorporate the worst societal aspects of the origin countries that act as their source markets and collaborates in hindering the permanency of local cultures and in spreading processes in social pathogen phenomena. So, a better long term strategic planning for tourism development must be conducted with a clearer understanding of how community residents perceive and react to the complex phenomena of tourism i.e. the most realistic approach will be to focus on an analysis of positive and negative impacts of tourism development.

Further, pertaining to the literature review available on the relationship residents’ perception towards tourism development and its impacts, it was found that most of the empirical studies conducted worldwide have stressed more on tourists’ perception towards tourism development and its impacts rather than permanent residents of the area in which tourism takes place. Therefore, it provides the scope for future researchers to take into consideration the residents’ perspective while evaluating the said relationship.

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