

Evaluating the Effects of Tourism Based on the Host Community Perceptions (Case Study: Samen Zone, Mashhad)

Mohammad Ajza Shokouhi

Associate Professor in Geography and Urban Planning, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Shirin Sabaghi Abkooch¹

PhD in Geography and Urban Planning, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Alireza Moeini

PhD Candidate in Geography and Rural Planning, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Foroogh Kazaaee Nezhad

Assistant Professor in Geography and Urban Planning, Kosar University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the world flows that well represents the combination of economic, social and cultural states and leaves various impacts on the geographical spaces. Since 1990s, moving from mass tourism toward sustainable tourism development was began and accordingly, tourism areas requires efficient management and movement of development proceedings in line with sustainability. In general, where tourism activities have a close relationship with local communities, tourism is able to influence economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions. Understanding and evaluating the impacts of tourism in local communities is important for long-term maintain and sustainability and successful of tourism industry, creates an important planning, and attracts political attention for successful tourism development. Accordingly, this study aimed to evaluate the host community perception of the effects of tourism in Samen area, Mashhad metropolis. In line with the aim of research, the research questions are as follows:

- What is the attitude of the host community towards the social, economic and environmental effects of tourism in Samen region?
- According to the attitude of the host community, which indicators do have the most impact on tourism among the various social, economic and environmental dimensions?

2. Theoretical Framework

Tourism has become the largest industry in the world due to its positive social, cultural and economic impact. Different effects of tourism and its sustainability depend on factors such as the amount and volume of tourism activities, the type

1. Corresponding author. E-mail: sh.sabaghiabkooch@mail.um.ac.ir

and purpose of tourism activities, the involvement of the host community in tourism sector and carrying capacity of tourism destinations. Local communities play a key role in tourism development. They must play an active role and work extensively with NGOs to ensure the positive benefits of tourism. In the tourism literature, the concept of the host community attitude is expanded under the title of "mental image of local residents" and its impacts on tourism behavior and choice of tourism destination are examined. There are several theoretical frameworks for examining the attitude of the host community towards tourism, the most important of which are social exchange, life cycle and technical methods. The mental image of local residents is one of the key factors in understanding the support for the development of the tourism industry, which emphasizes the unique characteristics of the place instead of the psychological involvement of the person in the place.

3. Method

In this study, the research method is descriptive-analytical. Library and statistical resources were used to explore theoretical issues of research, to study the zone and to select the indicators related to research aim. Field studies were done through interview and preparing, arranging and completing the questionnaire. The statistical community include residents, officials of hotels and travel agencies and government officials (the employees of tourism sector in Samen zone municipality and central municipality). Cochran method was used to determine the sample size of the host community and the sample size of 374 people was chosen. Non-parametric tests, including Chi-Square test, Friedman test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to analyze data.

4. Results and Discussion

Studies show that in Samen region, tourism has different effects from different dimensions. The most important positive economic effects include the inflow of large capital to this region ($x=3.9$), increase in residents' income level ($x=3.9$) and increase in job opportunities ($x=3.8$). There is a significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) between tourism and economic indicators. In terms of understanding the economic effects of tourism, there is no significant difference between the three groups because the significance is 0.152, which is more than 0.05. In the socio-cultural dimension, the positive effects of tourism can create and develop better and more recreational facilities for the local community ($x=3.7$) and increase the level of awareness and knowledge of the people ($x=3.4$). Gaining valuable experience of meeting tourists ($x=3.4$) and positive cultural exchange ($x=3.4$). In general, there is a significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) between tourism and each of the socio-cultural indicators. Also, there is no significant difference in the perceived socio-cultural effects of tourism between the three groups, because the significance is 0.462, which is more than 0.05. In the environmental dimension, the adverse effects of tourism are more evident, the most important of which are the increase in traffic in the region ($x=4.5$), noise pollution ($x=4.0$), increase in waste and waste ($3.9 = \bar{x}$) and reducing the quality of the region's environment ($x = 3.4$). There is a significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) between tourism and each of the environmental indicators. There is no significant difference between the three groups in terms of

understanding the environmental effects of tourism by the community, because the significance is 0.393 and is more than 0.05.

5. Conclusion

The results obtained from the study of Samen tourism effects show that from the perspective of the host community, this industry has left different effects in different dimensions. In the economic dimension, the increase in the level of incomes, the inflow of large capitals into the economy and the increase in the level of job opportunities are evident. In the socio-cultural dimension, the greatest impact of tourism is on increasing congestion and crowding, creating and developing recreational facilities and positive cultural exchange. Finally, in the environmental dimension, the effects of tourism are increasing the level of traffic in the region, increasing the amount of garbage and waste, and creating noise is more evident than anything.

According to the attitude of the host community to the effects of tourism, the following suggestions are provided to reduce the negative effects:

- More supervision of city managers on the land and housing market in Samen area;
- Monitoring and controlling the market of goods and services and preventing any fraud and price increase in this field;
- Implementing the laws on income tax from tourism industry and laying the groundwork for the participation of private sector investors;
- Convincing the district municipality to develop the facilities and infrastructure of the district;
- Laying the groundwork for the rational distribution of tourism revenue sources to reduce the income gap, especially in the host community living in the region;
- Holding cultural festivals in order to revive the traditional values of the host community.

Keywords: Effects of tourism, Perceptions of the host community, Mashhad, Samen Zone.

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