

ABSTRACT

There has been unceasing interest in the study of socio-cultural impacts of tourism worldwide. The results of studies in this field are pertinent for planning and policy making purposes especially in the development of sustainable tourism. The main aim of this study was to examine the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and explore the factors that are related to host perceptions in the Islamic and developing country of Iran. This research focused on two small tourist destinations in Iran, Masooleh and Sare'in, where, tourism development is in its early stages.

Drawn from empirical studies and research as well as concepts and theories, a conceptual research framework was proposed. Based on the framework several hypotheses were developed to test the relationships between the independent variables, which include Tourism Development Characteristics, Host-Tourist Interaction, Host Profiles, and Religiosity, with the dependent variable, which is the perceived Socio-Cultural Impacts of tourism by local people. A structured questionnaire back-to-back translated into the Persian language was used as the main data collection method. All the occupied houses (the first 198) from the center of the main tourist areas of the two towns were sampled. A minimum of two adults (above 18 years old) from each house were requested to answer the questionnaire. Finally, a total of 500 usable questionnaires were returned and analyzed.

The results revealed that residents largely experience positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism development in their areas. They were also highly supportive of the current and the future tourism development. All the predictor variables of Tourism Development Characteristics, Host-Guest Interaction, Host Profiles, and Religiosity had significant relationships with Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism in the study areas. Among these predictors, Host-Tourist Interaction was found to be the most important factor in influencing the perception of socio-cultural impacts of tourism. The study contributes to the further extension of knowledge in socio-cultural impacts research when both the type and the level of Islamic religiosity have positive significant relationships with the perception of socio-cultural impacts of tourism. The socio-demographic profiles of gender, marital status, length of residency, educational achievement and employment in a tourism related job had significant relationships with the perception of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the areas.

The results of this study support the theories of Destination Life Cycle Model (Butler, 1980), Doxey Irritation Index (Doxey, 1976) Social Exchange theory (Ap, 1992) and Social Distance theory (Thyne et al., 2006). More importantly, the study has confirmed that Islamic religiosity did not, in principle, play a role in instilling negative perceptions towards tourism development. Based on the results some pertinent theoretical, managerial and marketing implications of the study are discussed.

ABSTRAK

Serata dunia, minat untuk mengkaji kesan pembangunan pelancongan terhadap budaya dan sosial tidak pernah pudar. Hasil daripada kajian-kajian dalam bidang ini adalah penting untuk tujuan perancangan dan penggubalan dasar, khususnya dalam pembangunan pelancongan yang mampan. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk meneliti kesan-kesan budaya dan sosial pembangunan pelancongan dan menilai faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan persepsi tersebut di Iran, iaitu sebuah negara Islam yang sedang membangun. Kajian ini menumpu kepada dua destinasi kecil pelancongan di Iran, iaitu Masooleh dan Sare'in, di mana pembangunan pelancongan berada pada tahap awal.

Berpandukan kepada kajian empirik dan penyelidikan, serta konsep- konsep dan teori-teori, suatu kerangka kajian konseptual telah dicadangkan. Berdasarkan kepada kerangka tersebut, beberapa hipotesis dibentuk untuk menguji hubungan di antara pembolehubah bebas, yang merangkumi ciri-ciri pembangunan pelancongan, interaksi tuan rumah dan pelancong, profail tuan rumah, dan keagamaan Islam, dengan pembolehubah bersandar iaitu kesan budaya dan social pelancongan mengikut persepsi masyarakat tempatan. Suatu soal selidik berstruktur yang diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Parsi digunakan sebagai kaedah pengumpulan data yang utama. Kesemua rumah-rumah yang diduduki (198 yang terdekat) dari pusat kawasan pelancongan utama di kedua-dua bandar dimasukkan ke dalam sampel. Sekurang-kurangnya dua orang dewasa (berumur 18 tahun ke atas) dari rumah-rumah tersebut diminta menjawab borang soal selidik. Sejumlah 500 borang soal selidik yang boleh digunakan berjaya dikumpul dan dianalisa

Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan penduduk mengalami kesan budaya dan sosial yang positif daripada pembangunan pelancongan di daerah mereka. Mereka juga amat menyokong pembangunan pelancongan yang sedang dijalankan dan yang dirancang untuk masa hadapan. Semua pembolehubah peramal iaitu ciri-ciri pembangunan pelancongan, interaksi tuan rumah dan pelancong, profail tuan rumah, dan keagamaan Islam, mempunyai hubungan signifikan dengan kesan budaya dan sosial pelancongan di kawasan-kawasan yang dikaji. Antara pembolehubah- pembolehubah peramal tersebut, interaksi tuan rumah dan pelancong adalah faktor paling penting dalam mempengaruhi persepsi kesan budaya dan social pelancongan. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada perkembangan pengetahuan berkaitan kajian kesan budaya dan sosial dimana kedua-dua, jenis dan tahap keagamaan Islam mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan persepsi kesan budaya dan sosial pelancongan. Profail sosio-demografi yang berkaitan dengan jantina, status perkahwinan, tempoh kediaman, pencapaian akademik dan pekerjaan yang berkaitan dengan pelancongan mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan persepsi kesan budaya dan sosial pelancongan dalam daerah-daerah tersebut.

Keputusan kajian ini menyokong teori-teori Model Hidup Kitaran Destinasi (Butler, 1980), Indeks Kejengkelan Doxey (Doxey, 1976), Teori Pertukaran Sosial (Ap, 1992) dan Teori Jarak Sosial (Thyne et al., 2006.). Lebih penting lagi, kajian ini telah mengesahkan bahawa keagamaan Islam tidak, pada prinsipnya, berperanan dalam menyemai persepsi negatif terhadap pembangunan pelancongan. Berdasarkan kepada hasil kajian, beberapa implikasi teori, pengurusan dan pemasaran dibincangkan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, my heartfelt thanks to God for giving me the strength and courage to embark on this study and for His help and support in all moments of my life to fulfil my dreams. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Ghazali Musa for his constructive advice, patience, criticism and overall guidance, which have helped me to achieve my goal as an academic and bring this thesis to its present standard. My gratitude also goes to Associate Professor Dr. Masoud Abessi, my statistical consultant, who provided me assistance and advice in analyzing my data. I wish also to express my sincere appreciation for the valuable support, understanding, and advice of Professor Dr. Nor Khomar Ishak, who was my co-supervisor during the early stages of the research until she left the University of Malaya.

I am especially thankful to my family members: my lovely parents, and my sisters, for all their love, encouragement, sacrifices, understanding, and especially for their financial support during my studies. I will be forever grateful to them for all they have done and continue to do.

I would like to thank the ICHHTO Research Department for providing the letters for me to conduct my research in the two study areas. My appreciation goes to the ICHHTO officers based in Ardabil and Masooleh, the Municipality of Sare'in, the Faculty of Business and Accountancy and the Institute of Research Consultancy and Management (IPPP) in the University of Malaya, for all their support and help during my study. I would also like to thank the residents of Sare'in and Masooleh, whose tolerance and cooperation made my research achievable.

Additional thanks goes to the editorial teams of tourism journals like Tourism Management, the International Journal of Tourism Research and the International Journal of Culture and Tourism Research (Journal of World Cultural Tourism Association (IJCTR)) and the associated anonymous reviewers. Their thoughtful insights and specific suggestions on my four published articles have helped me greatly to improve my research, and I am very appreciative of the opportunities given to publish my research as journal articles.

My gratitude goes to those who have helped me in editing the different versions of this report. Among them, I would like to mention Dr. Devikamani Madhava Menon, Ms. Thinaranjney Thirumoorthi and Mr. Adnan Holden. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to all the academics, my friends, and fellow students, all of whom contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this thesis.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AD	After Death Christ
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
B.C	Before Christ
CALQ	Cultural Activity and Life Quality
CMS	Constant Market Share
CRB	Cultural Research Bureau
C °	Temperature (Siliceous)
<i>df</i>	Degree of Freedom
<i>F</i>	F – Value
HGI	Host-Guest Interactions
IB	Islamic Belief
ICHHTO	Iran Cultural Heritage Handicrafts & Tourism Organization
IFII	Image, Facilities and Infrastructure Improvement
IP	Islamic Practice
IRNA	Islamic Republic News Agency
IRR	Rial, the Currency of Iran
ITO	Iranian Tourism Organization
LCS	Local Community Support
KMO	Keiser - Meyer - Olkin Index
m ²	Square Meter
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
<i>P</i>	<i>P</i> – Value
PMO	Gilan Governor Planning and Management Organization
PPTA	Perceived Positive Tourist Attitudes
PTI	Positive Tourist Interaction
<i>r</i>	Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation
S.A.W	Peace be upon him.
SD	Standard Deviation
SP	Social Problems
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
sq. m	Square Metter
SWOT	Strengths , Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> - Value
TDA	Tourism Development Activity
TDC	Tourism Development Characteristics
TV	Television
UNCED	The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	The United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UK	United Kingdom
US/ USA/\$	United States of America /Dollar (currency) of USA

WTO World Tourism Organization
WTTC World Travel and Tourism Council