

The Effects of Tourism on Quality of Life: A Case Study of Shiraz, Iran

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Abstract: Does tourism contribute to quality of life in tourism destinations? This study investigates the effect of tourism upon quality of life in Shiraz, Iran. The results revealed that tourism has the positive effect on quality of life of residents. According to the survey, the strongest tourism impacts are found to be linked with emotional well-being, community well-being, and income and employment. While health and safety well-being are found to be the least favorable in terms of the effect of tourism on quality of life. The findings of this study will aid in the planning of strategic development programs for tourist destinations.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is often viewed as an expression of human behavior (Kim, 2002). Harrill & Potts (2003, p. 233) believed that "tourism is an invisible industry, encompassing transportation, lodging, and entertainment. Tourism is the set of ideas, theories, or ideologies for being a tourist, and that it is the behavior of people in tourist roles, when these ideas are put into practice (Przeclawski, 1986). Once a community becomes a destination, the lives of residents in the community are affected by tourism, and the support of the residents is essential for the development, planning, successful operation and sustainability of tourism (Kim, 2002). Therefore, the quality of life of the residents should be a major concern for community leaders. Numerous studies have examined local residents' perceptions of the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism (Aref, 2010). Although to date, there is a little studies about the effect of tourism on the quality of life of residents in communities (Kim, 2002). Thus, there is limited understanding of residents' perceptions of the effect of tourism on quality of life of residents in Iran. Hence, measuring the effect of tourism on quality of life of residents can help the planners and community developers for to achieving the tourism development goals in communities.

2. Literature review

Tourism is a complex industry. It provides employment opportunities and tax revenues and supports economic diversity. It has very different impacts, both positive and negative, or even mixed ones. However, from a national, regional or local planning point of view, tourism should support the

development of the quality of life of residents too (Puczko & Smith, 2001).

Tourism come in many shapes and forms such as social, cultural, economic and environmental (Godfrey & Clarke, 2000). Tourism has been a source of social-economic change in many developing countries. According to the World Tourism Organization (2009), tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and is one of the global engines of development. The tourism industry is an important economic activity involving different groups of community. Tourism is a multi sector, and as a means of economic, social and cultural exchange, it has many aspects and types (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Tourism growth provides significant economic benefits such as creating employment and additional income in both host countries and tourists' home countries (Delibasic et al., 2008). It is also an industry that has many environmental and social consequences. Few have addressed the effect of tourism on enhancing the quality of life (Cohen, 1978; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Kim, 2002; Linton, 1987; Richard R. Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999).

The concept of quality of life is implicit in much of the academic literature on tourism impacts. Tourism academics have explored in some detail the contributions that tourism makes to various aspects of the quality of life of destination residents (Moscardo, 2009). According to Constan a (2009) tourism can increase quality of life, which is carried out in various forms: rest, relaxation, recreation, maintenance of tone, knowledge development and sense of taste for beauty, aesthetic feelings, cultivate, etc...

Quality of life is the degree of well-being felt by an individual or group of people (Delibasic et al., 2008). Quality of life has been defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns (Skevington, Lotfy, & O'Connell, 2004). Quality of life is measured for many different purposes but mainly for economic and political reasons; in fact indicators of quality of life can give observers information on how well a country or a government is doing if compared to other countries or previous governments, or can be of support when taking certain decisions whose outcomes can impact the quality of life of people or when to evaluate certain strategic decisions at community levels (Delibasic et al., 2008). Historically, the early attempts to measure quality of life have come from the social indicators movement (Biderman, 1974; Parke & Sheldon, 1974). Veenhoven (2005, p. 61) claims that "quality-of-life can be measured by how long and happy people live". According to Argyle & Lu (1990), quality of life is measured by well-being, life satisfaction, made up of happiness, and absence of ill being.

According to Kim (2002) quality of life has been categorized in five domains including; material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, and health and safety well-being.

In the present study, material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, and health and safety well-being were used to measure the quality of life of the residents in the community (Kim, 2002).

Material well-being: The satisfaction of material well-being can be shared in the form of cost of living and income and employment. Three items for cost of living and four items for income and employment were used to measure residents' satisfaction of material well-being.

Community well-being: There are many aspects of community life and setting that make up people's appreciation or dissatisfaction with the greater than neighborhood area where they live. Four items were used to measure the community well-being domain.

Emotional well-being: Emotional well-being can be satisfied in the form of leisure well-being and spiritual well-being. Four items for leisure well-being and five items for spiritual well-being were proposed to measure residents' satisfaction of the emotional well-being.

Health and safety well-being: The satisfaction of health and safety well-being consists of health well-being and safety well-being. Two item for health and three item for safety well-being were used to measure the health and safety well-being domain (Kim, 2002). The Figure 1 illustrates the contribution of tourism to increase quality of life, which is carried out in various forms: material well-being, health and safety, community well-being, and emotional well-being.

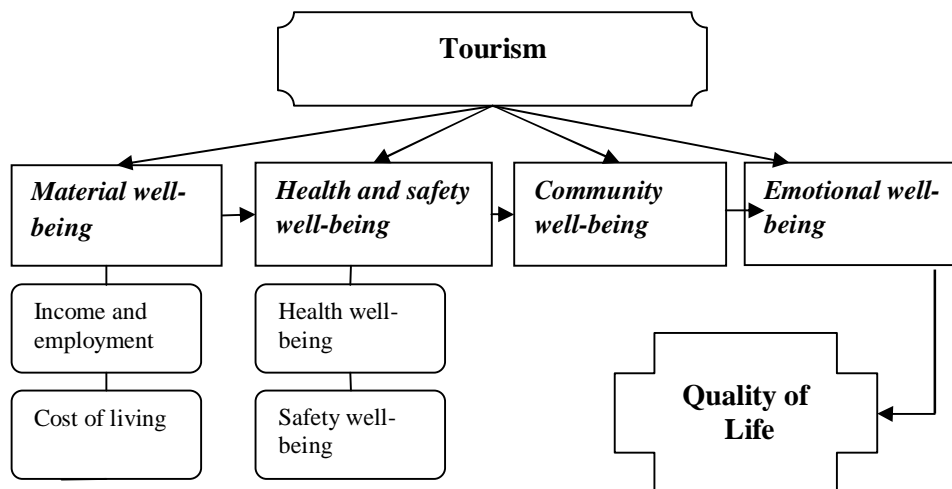


Figure 1: The effect of tourism on quality of life

3. Research Design

This study was carried out in tourism destinations in Shiraz, Iran. It uses questionnaire survey to examine the effect of tourism on quality of life through 200 residents in the communities. The questionnaire was structured around a Likert scale. Each statement was situated on a five scales with 1 representing a response of “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree”. A face to face onsite self-administered survey was conducted using the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling methods has been widely used by almost all the major public opinion polling groups, political groups and market research organization (Deng et al., 2010). Five variables that are presented for measurement the quality of life were; material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, and health and safety well-being. The items were adopted from Sirgy (2001), and Kim (2002). Pre-testing of the research instrument was carried out to examine the appropriateness and reliability of the instrument by taking 35 convenience samples. Thirty two questionnaires, a 91.42% response rate, indicated that the results were sufficiently comprehensive and verified the value of the instrument and the statements received.

4. Finding of the Study

According to the results, most respondents were highly educated (61.03), earned more than 700 USD (59.18%), male (82%) and female (18%) with an average age of 55.10 years. Majority of them (62.5%) were engaged in tourism activities. Descriptive statistics revealed that respondents rated higher on positive statements and lower on negative statements, indicating consistency in the direction of their perceptions. As shown in Table 1, the perceived impacts of tourism by residents were measured by 20 impact items embodying both the benefits and costs of tourism on quality of life. Based on the mean measures of impact items, the impact items associated with health and safety well-being have the lowest scores. Some of the health and safety well-being impacts, which are most favored by residents, are as follows: “Increase the water quality” (3.95). Following the health and safety well-being impacts of tourism, Emotional well-being impacts are evaluated relatively favorable. Some of the items comprising the factor of social and cultural are: “cultural lives” (4.49), “spare time” (4.36), “leisure life” (4.15). The findings that show that community well-being, Material well-being are the most favored impacts among the residents of the communities.

Table 1: The effects of on quality of life

Variables of QOL	Indictors	Mean	Std. D
Health and safety well-being	Health well-being		
	Increase the air quality	2.80	1.18
	Increase the water quality	3.95	0.64
	Safety well-being		
	Increase the accident rate	2.02	0.79
	Increase the crime rate	2.93	1.24
Emotional well-being	Increase the safety and security	2.70	1.02
	Spare time	4.36	0.60
	Leisure activity	4.06	0.83
	Your leisure life	4.15	0.58
Community well-being	Your cultural life	4.49	0.52
	Improve the conditions of the community environment	3.21	1.08
	Increase the community services	4.34	0.55
	Increase the community facilities	4.06	0.52
Material well-being	Improve the community residents wellbeing	4.49	0.52
	Income and employment		
	Your income at your current job	4.62	0.47
	Economic security of your job	4.50	0.60
	Your family income	4.59	0.49
	Pay and fringe benefits you get	4.53	0.58
	Cost of living		
Increase your real estate taxes	3.38	0.94	
Increase of cost of living	3.62	1.19	
Increase cost of basic necessities	2.46	1.10	

As shown in Table 1, all the indicators show that the respondents have rather positive attitudes toward tourism impacts in their quality of life in their community. Meanwhile differences among respondents were also observed. Most of the 20 attitudinal items had the max range from the minimum (1 point) to maximum (5 points), indicating a variation of individual respondents' attitudes toward tourism impacts. The size of the standard deviations of the 20 statements also indicated a moderate spread around the theoretical mean. Findings of this study supported the research question that there is positive effect of tourism on quality of life. The result reported here is consistent with previous research findings (Kim, 2002). In consist with this finding Crotts and Holland (1993) summarized that tourism has a positive influence on the quality of life of rural populations. Perdue, Long and Gustke (1991) also analyzed the relationship between tourism and quality of life of local citizen. They concluded that tourism has an influence on type of employment, cost and quality of education and health services provision. Therefore, this study concludes that tourism has the positive effect on quality of life (well-being).

5. Conclusion

The results of this study provided some explanation of tourism effect on quality of life. The results showed that respondents strongly agree that tourism has many effects on their quality of life. As Moscardo (2008) believed, lack of understanding of tourism impacts is a factor for underdevelopment of tourism in third world countries. Hence, the findings help to understanding relationship between tourism impacts and level of quality of life with support for tourism development (Aref, 2010). The findings of this investigation can assist tourism stakeholders community developers in the implementation of tourism development strategies based on residents' attitudes towards tourism impacts on quality of life in tourism destination.

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