

THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM AND LOCAL RESIDENTS' SUPPORT ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY OF JEONGSEON, GANGWON PROVINCE, SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract: *This research seeks to examine the impact of tourism and local residents' support for tourism development in a rural tourism destination in the Gangwon province, South Korea named Jeongseon. It looks at the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impact tourism and the benefits and costs to the local residents. This study used the social exchange theory as a theoretical framework. A total of 376 valid responses were collected To achieve the research's goals, ten research hypotheses were proposed. The findings show that the economic impacts of tourism were most favorably perceived by the local people who also saw benefits in socio-cultural terms. This perception translated into local residents' support for tourism development even though they saw it as having a negative impact on the environment.*

Key words: *tourism development, perception, impacts, support, Jeongseon.*

1. Introduction

The travel and tourism industry today is one of the world's largest and most diverse business sectors. It is also an important and thriving industry in South Korea. According to the Korean National Tourism Organization (KTO), in 2010, 8.78 million foreign tourists visited Korea. This figure shows a 12.5% rise as compared with 2009; a remarkable growth rate given that on aggregate, in 2010, the world suffered a 4 % fall in tourism. The central as well as local governments are now paying attention to tourism in terms of national and regional development. One area they are focusing is the development of rural tourism destinations.

The aim of rural tourism is to develop the local economy and improve the standard of living of the local communities. Tourism development, however, can bring both benefits and costs to the local community in terms of economic, social, or environmental effects. In fact, one of the major reasons for the increasing interest among scholars in rural tourism has been the realization that while tourism can lead to positive outcomes at the local

level, it also has the potential to generate negative ones (Lankford & Howard, 1994).

Tourist destinations have had a substantial impact on both local people and tourists. Tourism itself can have both a positive and negative impact on local residents. It should therefore be carefully monitored in order to minimize its negative impact (Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001). Keeping a balanced perception of the costs and benefits of tourism for local residents is considered to be a major factor in visitor satisfaction. Fisher (2005) argued that community perception is an effective element in community development. So, understanding how local residents' perceive the impacts of tourism development is essential for the future planning and managing of the host community tourism development (Yoon et al., 2001). If residents have a positive attitude toward the impact of tourism, they are more likely to support the tourism development of the tourism destination (Lee et al., 2010). Local residents' support is especially critical to ensure the long-term success of tourism development in regional destinations (Ko & Stewart, 2002). A destination will retain its popularity in the long term only if the local residents are friendly, hospitable and welcome visitors (Hall et al., 1997). Keeping track of the impacts of tourism on a community and of

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the perception of the local residents is thus essential.

This impact study looks at a rural community in the Gangwon province in South Korea named Jeongseon. In addition to natural caves, Jeongseon has man-made attractions and tourism facilities. Approximately 41,000 people live in Jeongseon which is famous throughout South Korea for two *Arrirang* and its five day markets, named Jeongseon Jang (traditional five-day markets), and for being the hometown of “*Jeongseon Arirang*,” which has been sung for more than 600 years.

In the 1960s through to the late 1980s, at the time Korea was using coal as its main source of energy, Jeongseon population reached 110,000. Starting in the early 1990s right after the Korean government switched from coal to petroleum for environmental purposes, this number began to go down as Jeongseon saw a sharp decline in its local economy and local people started to lose their jobs. Today, much of Jeongseon’s economy relies essentially on its tourism resources such as the Kangwon Land casino, the rail road and a good natural environment. The Kangwon Land casino is located in an abandoned mining district in Jeongseon and is presently the only casino that Korean citizens may enter. The Kangwon Land is part of a tourist facility complex that includes a ski resort, hotels and a host other tourist facilities. The railroad, reused from the coal mining industry, has become an attractive tourism facility, with some trains converted into cafés or restaurants, and one of them into a unique hotel. The Korean government and local people have learned from the railroad how to reuse and recycle so Jeongseon is also place for education and travel. Starting in 2005, the number of visitors to Jeongseon has steadily increased every year. In 2010, the railroad alone drew 350,000 visitors.

2. Literature Review

- *Socio-Demographic Characteristics*

Much of the research on the impact of tourism community treats social-demographic characteristics as essential independent variables to examine the differences in the various perceptions of tourism impacts on local community (Allen et al., 1988; Williams & Lawson, 2001). The socio-demographic characteristics usually include age, gender, level of education, household income, marital status, occupation and religion.

Lankford and Howard (1994) found that residents who worked in the tourism industry have a more favorable reaction to tourism when they are business owners. In addition, residents who have family members employed in the tourism industry also have a more positive perception of the tourism industry than other residents with no family ties to the industry (Jurowski, Uysal & Williams, 1997; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; and Sirakaya et al., 2002). Residents who have been living in their community longer than other residents tend to have a negative perception of tourism in that destination (Um & Crompton 1987). The length of residency of locals also has a direct impact on tourism development. The factors that affect resident's attitudes toward tourism are both intrinsic and extrinsic variables (Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997). The intrinsic variables refer to “the characteristics of the host community that affect the impacts of tourism with the host community” (Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997). They include factors such as employment, length of residence, proximity to tourist zones and involvement within the tourism industry. However, the perception of tourism impact and tourism development differs among residents as a result of demographics as each segment has its own social exchange relations with other stakeholders (Chen & Hsu, 2001).

- *Economic Impact of Tourism Development*

Economic growth is an essential criterion of tourism development. Furthermore, the economic impact of

tourism development on the community is a significant tool to change the local residents' perception of and attitude toward tourism development. Residents who are dependent on the tourism industry tend to have a more positive perception of tourism than other residents (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Jurowski et al., 1997; Deccio & Baloglu, 2002). Generally, the expected aim of tourism development is economic growth for the nation and the region. The economic benefits of travel and tourism in an area are the gross contributions to the residents' income and wealth resulting from the presence of travelers (Frechtling, 1994). In fact, the economic impact of tourism tends to consist of a mix of positive and negative things for the local community. For example, tourism creates employment opportunities for the local people but at the same time it also increases the cost of living, including the price of land, houses, and goods and services. Therefore, many tourism development planners seek to achieve the best balance between economic benefits and social and environmental costs (McKercher, 2003). When the destination sees increasing tourist arrivals, longer staying periods, and higher consumption, obviously the economic impact is less positive (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Lankford, 1994). Every tourism destination while developing its tourism industry almost invariably brings a mix economic benefits and negative costs. Consequently, central and local tourism planners should seek to find ways that maximize the economic benefits for the tourism destination and minimizes the costs. This is the best way to improve local resident's positive perception and support for tourism development.

- Socio-Cultural Impact of Tourism Development

The social impact of tourism is the most likely to influence and change a local community. Tourism is an interface for cultural exchange, facilitating the

interaction between tourism destination and visitors. It is a positive way for learning each other's culture and manners. However, if unplanned, it can cause those visitors to bring a bad culture to the community, such as, for example, gambling, drugs and prostitution. Some studies have found tourism may lead to a decline in moral values; a worsening of residents' attitude, an increase in crime rates, and tension in the community (Liu & Var, 1986; Milman & Pizam, 1988). In addition, with the development of tourism in a community, human relations are commercialized (Dogan, 1989). If the local community is a healthy society, it will give tourists valuable experience. Moreover, Ross (1994) found that limited facilities in public areas such as parks, gardens and beaches as well as limited local services by residents, may also result in negative attitudes towards tourists. For these reasons, the socio-cultural impact of tourism has produced multifaceted outcomes for both hosts and visitors.

- Environmental Impacts of Tourism Development

There are common environmental issues in tourism destination; the physical appearance of the environment, natural values, environmental resources and pollution (Var, Kendall, & Tarakcioglu, 1985). The main concerns in terms of environmental impacts are associated with various elements which may concern the life of the host population. The environmental impact of tourism is quite complex. It can be positive or negative. The negative impacts of tourism in the host community include the destruction of natural resources, pollution, deterioration of custom or heritage resources, and changes in community appearance (Allen & Perdue, 1988; Liu et al., 1987; McCool & Martin, 1994; Milman & Pizam, 1988; and Murphy, 1983). They can affect tourist destination, people's daily lives and tourists. By the same token, some studies have reported that tourism provides incentive factors or benefits such as the

preservation of historic sites and resources, recreation facilities, and higher quality of roads and facilities (Akis et al., 1996; Getz, 1994; Var et al., 1985; Perdue et al., 1987). The environmental impacts are not immediate phenomena (Lankfor & Howard, 1994). Environmental problems are not only tourism industry issues, but also global issues. The national and local governments should have regulations and guidelines educating people about the value of the environment and how to conserve the natural resource for the present and the next generation. Consistent environmental consideration is to be required to ensure a successful sustainable development of tourism.

- Residents' Support for Tourism Development

Local residents' support is essential to ensure the long-term success of tourism development. This is particularly important in regional destinations (Getz, 1994). As indicated by Jenkins (1997), if the local residents are friendly, hospitable and welcome visitors, a destination is bound to retain its popularity in the long term. There is obviously an assumption in many of the research studies that positive resident' attitudes toward tourism involve support for tourism development (e.g. Sharma & Dyer, 2009; Andriotis, 2004). Residents' attitudes toward tourism play an important role in the sustainable management of tourist destination (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Gursoy et al., 2002). The personal benefits of tourism rather than personal costs will support tourism development (Jurowski et al., 1997). But local residents are not only concerned with personal economic benefits.

- The Relationship between the Impacts of tourism and Support for Tourism Development

The relationship between local residents' perception of the impacts of tourism development and their support can be a big challenge to the tourism industry (Perdue et al., 1990). Once a community becomes a destination, the lives of the

residents in the communities are affected by tourism. The support of the entire population in the tourism community is essential for the development, planning, successful operation and sustainability of tourism (Jurowski, 1994). A number of studies suggest that providing local residents' support is essential to ensure long-term success in tourism development (e.g. Allen & Consenza, 1988; Getz, 1994; and Perdue et al., 1990). This is particularly important in the case of regional destinations.

According to the Social Exchange Theory, local residents are willing to participate in an exchange with tourists if they believe that they are likely to gain benefits without unacceptable costs. In other words, if residents perceive that the positive impacts of tourism are greater than the negative impacts, they are inclined to be involved in the exchange and, therefore, support future tourism development in their community (Ap, 1990; Madrigal, 1993; Perdue et al., 1990). Therefore, tourist destination and local community should constantly be monitored by local government and tourism authorities.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

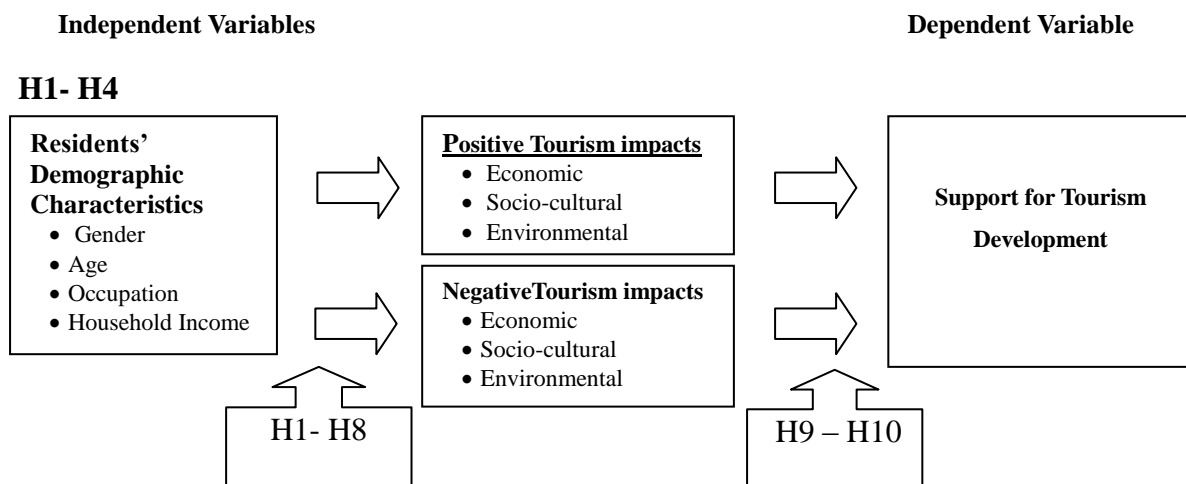
The theoretical framework is a conceptual model of how one theorizes the relationship among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problems (Sekaran, 1992). This study adapted the conceptual framework developed by Perdue, Long and Allen (1990), who have developed a model that examines the relationship between resident's perceptions and attitudes toward the impacts of tourism development and residents' support for tourism development. Their research have been applied to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which is based on the principle that human beings are reward-seeking and punishment-avoiding and are motivated to action by expectations of profits (Skidmore, 1975).

Some other researchers used the social exchange practice model as a theoretical basis for understanding whether residents perceive tourism impacts positively or negatively. The model is based upon the concept of exchange relations, whereby a resident is more likely to be inclined towards and supportive of tourism development if he/she perceives more favorable impacts (benefits) than negative impacts (costs) from tourism development (Ap, 1992).

In their research, Perdue, Long and Allen (1990) concluded that local resident support for tourism development is dependent on perceived benefits or anticipated costs of development. Specifically, local people are more likely to have a positive behavior towards

tourism and its perceived benefits than costs. So, as is the case with Perdue, Long and Allen's study, this research's theoretical framework contains five underlying constructs about tourism impacts and support for tourism development: perceived positive tourism impact, Perceived negative tourism impact, personal benefits, support for additional tourism development, and residents' demographic characteristics. The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics act as the independent variable. In order to study the relationship between the impacts of tourism and local residents' support for tourism development, the impacts of tourism and the local residents' support for tourism development are the dependent variables.

Figure 3.2 - Conceptual Frameworks for the Research



Source: Developed by this researcher for this study (based on Perdue, Lang and Allen, 1990).

The questionnaire consists of 35 items adapted from the Tourism Impact Attitude Scale (TIAS) (Lankford and Howard, 1994) and the Tourism Impact Scale (Ap and Crompton, 1998). All the items were rated on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' = 5 to 'strongly disagree' = 1.

A total of 389 questionnaires were distributed and collected from March through April 2012. 376 were validated questionnaires. The response rate was 96.7%. The majority of the respondents

consisted of males (195 - 51.9 %), aged between 41 and 50 years old. 73 of them were government officials and 108 (28.7%) had a household income under \$30,000.

4. Findings and Discussion

The results of the descriptive statistics analysis for the positive impacts of tourism scale are presented in Table 5.1 below. This measurement scale consists of 16 items reflecting the perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impact. the mean scores of the measurement items

were between = 4.12 and = 2.97. Based on the mean score of each item, it can be concluded that the respondents tend to strongly agree that tourism provides economic benefits to Jeongseon local community ($M = 4.12, SD=.79$). In fact, tourism is now the most important industry in Jeongseon ($M = 4.09, SD = .77$). Moreover, the residents also agree that Jeongseon is becoming increasingly more

popular as a tourist destination as the high scores indicate ($M = 4.06, SD = .66$). The respondents also tend to agree that tourism has resulted in a better conservation of Arirang ($M=3.91, SD=.82$) and has created more jobs ($M = 3.86, SD = .86$). There is, however, much less of a consensus regarding the preservation of the Jeongseon natural environment as a result of tourism development ($M = 2.97, SD = .88$).

Table 5.1- Local Residents' Perception of the Positive Impacts of Tourism

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tourism is the most important industry	376	2	5	4.09	.765
Tourism provides economic benefits	376	1	5	4.12	.791
Tourism creates more job	376	2	5	3.86	.860
Our standard of living has increased	376	1	5	3.57	.864
More investors	376	1	5	3.63	.826
Increasingly popular as a tourist destination	376	2	5	4.06	.655
More variety of recreational facilities	376	1	5	3.60	.849
Better standard of services	376	1	5	3.23	.826
Greater cultural exchange	376	1	5	.343	.858
Pride in the local culture	376	1	5	3.53	.813
Conservation of Arirang	376	1	5	3.91	.819
Preservation of Jeongseon natural	376	1	5	2.97	.879
Improved the environment	376	1	5	3.39	.878
Residents' concern for the environment	376	1	5	3.41	.862
Improved Jeongseon's appearance	376	1	5	3.41	.847
Higher standard of public facilities	376	1	5	3.61	.856
Valid N (listwise)	376				

Table 5.2 below presents the results of the descriptive statistics analysis with regard to the negative impact of the tourism scale. The measurement scale consisted of 11 items reflecting the perceived negative economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impact. Respondents were asked to provide an answer for each item measured by a five-point Likert scale. The mean scores range between = 3.57 and = 2.57. Based on the

mean score of each items, it can be said that the respondents tend to agree that tourism increases the cost of property and rental and therefore put strains on local businesses ($M = 3.57, SD = 0.94$). It also causes an increase in the cost of living for local residents ($M = 3.57, SD = 0.88$). Additionally, they also agree that tourism development increases the gap between the rich and the poor in Jeongseon ($M = 3.42, SD = 0.91$). Most respondents disagree,

however, with the statement that the seasonality of the tourism industry makes the local economy more unstable ($M = 2.57, SD = 1.05$).

Table 5.3 shows the descriptive statistics in respect of support for tourism development. The measurement scale consisted of 4 items regarding Jeongseon local residents' support for future tourism development which tried to predict whether local people will come to join local community and enroll in some activities relating to tourism. Respondents were asked to provide answers on each item that was measured by a five point Likert scale. The mean scores of the measurement items were between = 4.06 and = 3.85. The highest mean score was 'community and local tourism organization should do more to promote the region and to develop tourism products' ($M = 4.06, SD = 0.78$), followed by 'wanting to see more tourists' ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.82$) and 'I would support a tourism planning' ($M =$

3.88, $SD = 0.81$). The lowest mean score was 'I would support tourism having a vital role' ($M = 3.85, SD = 0.85$).

To summarize, the findings indicate that Jeongseon residents have a relatively positive perception of the economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Yet, they have a neutral perception of the negative impacts of tourism (economic, socio-cultural and environmental). They also happen to have a neutral perception of the positive environmental impacts have as they neither agree nor disagree. The findings also show that local people have different perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of tourism development depending on their demographic characteristics.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the extent to which the local residents' perception of tourism impacts can affect their support for tourism development. The findings in this

Table 5.2- Jeongseon Local Residents' Perception of the Negative Impacts of Tourism Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increased the gap between rich and poor	376	1	5	3.42	.906
Increased costs of living for Jeongseon residents	376	1	5	3.57	.882
Increases the cost of property and rental	376	1	5	3.57	.935
Seasonality of tourism makes the economy unstable	376	1	5	2.57	1.051
Suffered from living costs	376	1	5	3.07	.988
Crime problems	376	1	5	2.94	1.036
Affect on local's habits	376	1	5	3.00	1.042
Casino has negative consequences	376	1	5	3.13	.976
Increase in noise, pollution	376	1	5	3.41	.843
Land used incorrectly	376	1	5	2.91	.851
Tourists facilities destroyed our nature	376	1	5	3.05	.922
Valid N (listwise)	376				

Table 5.3 - Jeongseon Local Residents' Support for Tourism Development Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Want to see more tourists	376	1	5	3.99	.823
Promote and develop tour products	376	2	5	4.06	.784
Would support any tourism planning	376	1	5	3.88	.813
Willing to be involved a vital role	376	1	5	3.85	.852
Valid N (listwise)	376				

particular case, a small community in South Korea named Jeongseon, show that the local people believe that tourism development has a positive economic and socio-cultural impact but has a negative environmental impact. However, the perception is not homogenous and varies according to the demographics of the residents sampled. Jeongseon residents' perception of the positive economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism was related to their support for tourism. On the other hand, the perceived negative impact of tourism was negatively correlated to the support for tourism development. The perceived negative impact may end up affecting the local people's positive perception and support for tourism development. Therefore, their positive perceptions of tourism should be a key tool to encourage local residents' to support tourism more. Furthermore, tourism planners and policy makers should make sure to manage well the negative key impacts and make efforts to generate more benefits for the Jeongseon community.

These findings may help the government tourism planners, tourism operators, and policy-makers further understand what are the key issues concerning the impact of tourism on Jeongseon local people and therefore develop a tourism plan accordingly and implement it successfully. Although, the positive perception is higher than the negative perception, there are some

problems to solve.

- Suggestions for Further Research

This study used only closed-ended questions to collect data to evaluate the perception of local residents and their support for tourism development. Further study should use a different research methodology such as interviews with local people and collect data with an open-end questionnaire which may help to understand problems more clearly and invite comments.

Furthermore, this research focused only on local residents and the local community. Tourists were left out. Therefore the author would like to suggest that various issues related to tourism in Jeongseon and its impact on the local community should be considered such as, for example, tourist satisfaction with the local people and the tourist facilities, tour products, and tour facilities. This may help to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this tourist destination with respect to its attraction. It would also be helpful to observe the local people's behavior toward tourists, all of which being part of designing future plans and managing the place. Finally, this research did not make a distinction between those who received direct economic benefits from tourism from those who did not. Further studies should include independent variables that reflect this divide along the 'works in tourism,' 'job related to tourism,' 'job not related to tourism' line.

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