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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIE'S SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE HERITAGE DESTINATION OF PURI, INDIA

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Abstract: The study aims to examine the role of socio-demographic characteristics on the host community's perception of tourism impacts in heritage tourism destinations of a developing country. The variables discussed are age, gender, religion, level of education, length of stay in the community, and involvement in the tourism sector. A questionnaire survey method was adopted, and 450 samples were collected from three host communities of Puri, a heritage destination in eastern India. The analysis was carried out using descriptive methods like distribution of the mean, frequency, etc., and statistical techniques like t-test, one-way ANOVA, post-hoc test, etc. were used. The findings revealed religiosity as the most significant variable influencing the host community's perception. The study also found level of education, and length of stay in the community as significantly influential variables. The study's findings will contribute to the literature on tourism impact assessment for heritage destinations in developing countries. It also offers practical implications for policymakers and destination managers in planning tourism development strategies.

Key words: socio-demographic variables, influence, attitude, perceptions, host communities, tourism impact

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism development plays a significant role in the upliftment of the tourism destination (López et al., 2018). It brings numerous opportunities and challenges for the destination and its stakeholders (Uslu et al., 2020). The host communities are direct recipients of tourism impacts as they are integral to tourism destinations (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). The host community's support and cooperation are essential for sustainable tourism development (Nunkoo, 2016; Raj Sharma et al., 2022; Sharma and Gursoy, 2015). Previous studies have confirmed that the host community is not homogeneous and the community members can have varying perceptions of the same tourism impact (López et al., 2018; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Deery et al.(2012); Sharma and Gursoy (2015); Uslu et al. (2020) have associated this difference in perception and attitude with the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual like age, gender, religion, level of education, length of stay in the community, etc. This aspect has been researched for quite some time (Sirakaya et al., 2002), but most of the studies focused on the host communities from developed countries (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020), and significantly less attention has been given to South Asian regions like India. Sirakaya et al.,(2002) also opined that residents' perceptions and attitudes are likely to differ in developing and developed countries. Ramchander (2006); Twining-Ward and Butler (2002) emphasised the need for additional research on different geographical locations and destinations with varying socio-economic conditions. Khoshkam et al. (2016) suggested that this will improve the understanding of various impacts of tourism development in developing countries and contribute to the formulation of an inclusive, grand model or theory of tourism (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). Responding to the need of research in tourism destinations of developing country, the present study attempts to examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of the host community on their perception of tourism impacts on heritage tourism destination of Puri, India. Puri is selected for this study as it is an important Hindu pilgrimage site and an emerging tourism destination of eastern India. Limited study on host communities has been done in this region; Sahoo and Mohanty (2022) have recently examined the impact of the demographic variable for tourists, but not the host community. The present study will also investigate the influence of religiosity and other socio-demographic variables. The influence of variable religiosity is rarely examined in tourism studies.

LITERATURE STUDY

Sharma and Gursoy (2015); Xu et al. (2016) found the host community's socio-demographic characteristics as the most determinant factors influencing their perception. These factors influence the host community's level of support and attitude towards tourism development (Bhat and Mishra, 2021; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020).

Previously studies have established a linkage between host community's perceptions and socio-demographic variables like *age* (Látková and Vogt, 2012; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017), *gender* (Brougham and Butler, 1981; Mason and Cheyne, 2000;

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Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Xu et al., 2016), *ethnicity* (Deery et al., 2012), *educational background* (Deery et al., 2012; Long and Kayat, 2011), *length of stay in the community* (Bhat and Mishra, 2021; Khoshkam et al., 2016), etc.

Brougham and Butler (1981); Long and Kayat (2011) found *age* as the most influencing variable. They claimed that the younger population perceives tourism impacts more positively than the older because the participation rate of younger people in tourism activity is comparatively more. This is consistent with the findings of Bagri and Kala (2016) . While several studies have contradicted this and claimed that the older population is more favorable than the younger one as they understand the benefits they gain from tourism (Deng et al., 2011; Látková and Vogt, 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

H1: Age significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Brougham and Butler (1981); Mason and Cheyne (2000) found gender as the most influential variable. Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) associated the variation in perception within the gender with their biological and psychological differences. Mason and Cheyne (2000); Tichaawa and Makoni (2018) found male respondents comparatively more positive as they are more exposed to tourism development. Uslu et al. (2020) found moderate effect of gender on the attitude, whereas Bagri and Kala (2016); Rasoolimanesh et al.,(2017) could not find gender as a significant determinant influencing host community's perceptions and attitudes. Based on these discussions following hypothesis can be framed:

H2: Gender significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Religion is a cultural attribute that influences an individual's perception, attitudes, values, and behaviour (Eid, R. and El-Gohary, 2015). However, the religiosity of the host community has received relatively lesser attention as a variable to date (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). Shtudiner et al. (2018), suggested that examining the influence of religiosity on the attitude of the host community is necessary, especially for religious tourism destinations. As the study area in religious heritage by characteristics, religiosity needs to be examined. So, the following hypothesis is framed:

H3: Religiosity significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Deery et al. (2012) claimed education was the most influencing variable. Sinclair-Maragh (2017), found that with a higher level of education, individuals evaluate the benefits of tourism in a better way, at the personal and community level. Long and Kayat (2011) found that the enthusiasm level toward tourism development increases with their level of education. This has been contradicted by Tichaawa and Makoni (2018). They found that the higher the level of education, the more negative the respondents tend towards tourism impacts due to increased awareness levels. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be framed based on the above discussion:

H4: Education level significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Eslami et al. (2019); Khoshkam et al. (2016) found length of stay in the community as one of the most influential variables as it is associated with community attachment. The community member with a longer stay in the community, evaluate the economic impact positively and socio-cultural negatively (López et al., 2018; Stojković et al., 2020). But Papastathopoulos et al. (2020); Long and Kayat (2011) failed to find any significant relationship between these two variables. Whereas several studies claim that attitudes towards tourism development are negatively correlated with the length of stay in the community (Khoshkam et al., 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

H5: Length of stay in the community significantly influence host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Slabbert et al. (2021), found that host community's involvement in tourism activity which leads to socio-economic benefit is an important variable influencing the host community's perception. Henderson (2000); López et al. (2018); Sharma and Gursoy (2015) also confirmed that involvement in tourism is an important variable that influences the host community's perception positively as it enables them to articulate more accurate perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism (Eslami et al., 2019). Most of the study to date have focused on direct participation of the host community in planning and development of tourism, however (Slabbert et al., 2021) emphasized that host communities involvement in tourism related activities also influence their perceptions . From this, following hypothesis is framed:

H6: Involvement in tourism activities significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

The study examines these six hypotheses for the host communities of Puri region, India.

STUDY AREA

Puri region is an important heritage tourism destination in Eastern India. It houses some important heritage sites like Sri Jagannath Temple, Konark Sun Temple, Chilika lake, etc. Sri Jagannath Temple is one of the important Hindu pilgrimage destinations. Konark Sun temple is an UNESCO world heritage site known for its magnificent architectural monument. Chilika is Asia's largest brackwater lagoon. These unique attributes attract numerous tourists to this region throughout the year mostly for pilgrimage purpose.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The flow chart of the research methodology for this study is shown in Figure 1. The research gap was identified through a literature study. The aim and objective of the study was framed to address the research gap. The literature study is also utilized to select the variables (socio-demographic), factors (tourism impact statements) for this study, and a set of hypotheses are framed accordingly.

Population and Sample Size

The study's sample size is 450 (using Cochran's formula). The communities were selected from three important tourist destinations in Puri region: Puri town, Konark town, and Satapada village (a small fishing village near Chilika Lake). The survey was conducted from mid of August to the end of November 2022. A simple random sampling technique was used for the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument is the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was prepared by adopting questions from several surveys conducted on host community's attitudes towards tourism impact. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consists of inquiries related to the socio-demographic information of the respondents; the second section comprises questions measuring respondents' perceptions of tourism impacts; the third section of the questionnaire contains questions related to respondents' general perception of tourism development. The questions of second and third section are measured with a five-point Likert scale (scale ranging from: '1= completely disagree' to '5= completely agree').

Data Analysis Methodology

The data were analysed using Statical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) and MS Excel. From the literature review, 21 impact statements were selected. By performing Factor Analysis, these 21 items are grouped into seven set of factors, based on their underlying relationships. One-way ANOVA and t-tests were conducted to compare the means values of socio-demographic variables with respect to these seven sets of factors. Post Hoc tests were carried out for further comparison within the subgroups of the socio – demographic variables. Based on the outcomes of these tests, hypothesis was tested. Lastly, the results are discussed followed by conclusion.

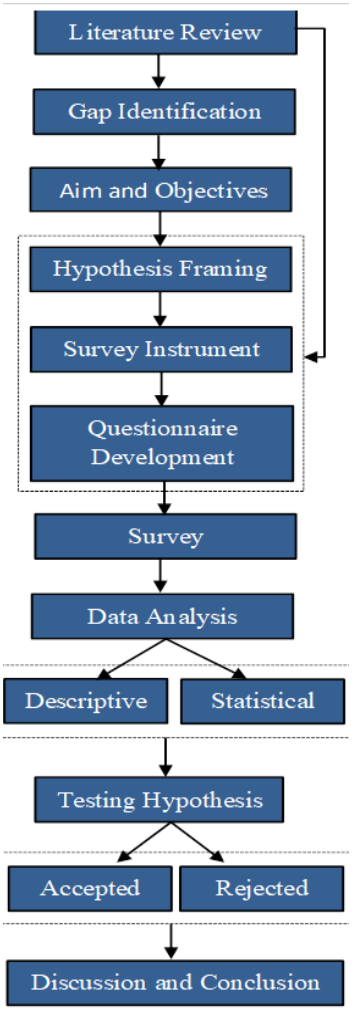

Figure 1. Flow chart of research methodology (Source: Author, 2022)

FINDINGS

1. General Profile of Respondents from three Communities

The respondents are predominately male (72%). Most of the respondents belongs to working-age group (78%), i.e., 18 years to 60 years. Hinduism is the prevalent religion followed by the respondents (94%). The low participation of respondents from other religions is because the population of people from other religions is meager in the Puri region. The education level of most of the respondents is secondary level (34%) and higher secondary level (35%). Most respondents have lived in the community for more than 10 years (63%). Even though tourism is the most important sector in the region, only 30% of the respondents are engaged in the tourism sector. The rest of the respondents (70%) are involved in sectors like agriculture, household, service, etc. Respondents with high dependence on tourism are 22%, whereas 55% of respondents have moderate or low economic reliance on tourism, whereas 23% of respondents are not at all dependent on tourism.

2. Host Community's Perception of Tourism Impact

From the literature study, 21 tourism impact items were selected. Factor analysis segregated these items into seven groups (Table 1). These seven groups are referred as seven factors, that are: Factor 1: *Support for Tourism Development (STD),* Factor 2: *Economic impact (ECI),* Factor 3: *Positive socio-cultural impact (PSC),* Factor 4: *Development and maintenance of heritage and infrastructure (DMI),* Factor 5: *Image of the region (ITR),* Factor 6: *Negative socio-cultural impact (NSC),* and Factor 7: *Environmental issues (ENV).*

The positive factors *ECI, PSC, DMI,* and *ITR* have a mean value of more than 3. This indicates that the respondents agree on the positive impacts of tourism. *ECI* has the highest mean value (3.9), indicating that the respondents recognise the income-generating power of tourism and they feel that tourism development is responsible for rise in property price. *DMI* has a mean value of 3.6, indicating that the respondents agree that lots of development and maintenance work are taking place in their region because of tourism. They also recognise the positive socio-cultural impact (mean value 3.1) of tourism development in their region. Also, they agree that tourism has improved the region's image (mean value of 3.1). The impact factor *NSC* and *ENV* have a mean value of less than 3, and the respondents disagree with the occurrence of negative impacts of tourism in their region. The factor *STD* has a mean value of 3.3, which indicates that the three host communities agree that tourism contributes to their region's upliftment and development. They are also in favour of more tourism development in their region.

3. Socio-Demographic Variables and Host Community's Perception

To examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the host community's perception of tourism impacts, a series of one-way ANOVA and t-tests were conducted.

3.1. Age

One way ANOVA result revealed that *age* significantly influences the perception of four factors that are *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ITR* ($p \leq 0.05$) (Table 2). This indicates a significant difference in perception within different age groups for these four factors. However, no significant differences in perception were found for the different age groups for *DMI, NSC, and ENV* ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the *H1 hypothesis is partially supported* (as *age* does not influence all seven impact factors but only *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ITR*).

Table 1. Factor set after Factor Analysis Five-point Likert scale is used for all the impact statements (The Likert scale ranged from 1= completely disagree to 5= completely agree) (Source: Author, 2022)

	Impact Statement	Mean	SD	Reliability Coefficient
Factor 1	**Support for Tourism Development (STD)**	**3.3**	**0.80**	**0.816**
Impact 1	Tourism has made a significant contribution to the development of my region	3.12	0.99	
Impact 2	Tourism is an integral part of my region	3.31	0.93	
Impact 3	There should be more tourism in my region	3.57	0.88	
Factor 2	**Economic Impact (ECI)**	**3.9**	**0.96**	**0.93**
Impact 4	There are more economic opportunities in my region	3.92	1.03	
Impact 5	Local business is thriving in my region	3.92	1.01	
Impact 6	The price of property has increased	3.92	1.05	
Factor 3	**Positive Socio-Cultural Impact (PSC)**	**3.1**	**0.95**	**0.827**
Impact 7	There are many interesting things to do in my region.	3.06	1.14	
Impact 8	Tourism provides the opportunity to interact with tourists and know other culture	3.08	1.08	
Impact 9	Tourism helps in the revival of the cultural heritage of my region (folk dance, music, local cuisine)	3.13	1.08	
Factor 4	**Development And Maintenance of Heritage and Infrastructure (DMI)**	**3.6**	**0.77**	**0.835**
Impact 10	New facilities and infrastructure have developed, which improved the appearance of my region	3.55	0.95	
Impact 11	The local bodies are promptly maintaining the public facilities	3.79	0.91	
Impact 12	There is better shopping, dining, and recreational opportunity in my region	3.5	1.01	
Impact 13	The local government is interested in maintaining and preserving the built and natural heritage (temple, monument, lake, etc.)	3.55	0.89	
Factor 5	**Image of the Region (ITR)**	**3.1**	**1.21**	**0.874**
Impact 14	Due to tourism, my region is more popular, and it showcases my region in a positive light.	3.07	1.23	
Impact 15	Tourism has made me feel proud of my region and culture	3.04	1.35	
Factor 6	**Negative Socio-Cultural Impact (NSC)**	**2.6**	**0.93**	**0.871**
Impact 16	Crime, alcohol consumption, illegal gaming, drugs, prostitution, etc. have increased in my region	2.46	1.08	
Impact 17	Customization of cultural practices, rituals, festivals, etc. is taking place to fulfil tourist demand	2.78	1.05	
Impact 18	Artificial culture is developing in my region, which leads to cultural erosion in the region	2.66	1.09	
Impact 19	The behaviour and value system are changing negatively among the youth	2.52	1.14	
Factor 7	**Environmental Issues (ENV)**	**1.8**	**0.97**	**0.794**
Impact 20	Due to tourism, my region is more crowded	1.85	1.07	
Impact 21	Due to tourism, my region is more polluted	1.75	1.05	

Table 2. One-way ANOVA and Post Hoc test results for Age
Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table (Source: Author, 2022)

Factors	F - value	p-value	Overall Mean	Age (I)	Age (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1: *STD*	26.22	0.000	3.3	< 20 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	0.446	(I > J)	.002
					> 60 Yrs.	1.202	(I > J)	.000
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.907	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.756	(I > J)	.000
Factor 2 *ECI*	8.26	0.000	3.9	< 20 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.714	(I > J)	.001
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.716	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.548	(I > J)	.001
Factor 3*: PSC*	10.14	0.000	3.1	< 20 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	0.478	(I > J)	.009
					> 60 Yrs.	0.974	(I > J)	.000
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.646	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.497	(I > J)	.003
Factor 5: *ITR*	2.56	0.020	3.1	20 to 40 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	-0.347	(I < J)	.037

For analysing the mean differences (refer to column *I – J*, Table 2) within the subgroups, the Post Hoc test was conducted. The result of the mean difference shows that the perception of the younger age group towards tourism impacts *ECI* and *PSC* is comparatively more positive. Finding confirms that the younger age groups favour tourism development (STD) more. This is in line with the findings of Andriotis and Vaughan (2003); Huh and Vogt (2008); Long and Kayat (2011), that younger people in the community are more favourable, especially towards economic impact, compared to the older population.. The younger members display comparatively more positive attitude towards tourism development as they are more engaged in tourism activities, enjoy the social changes and modern facilities. Whereas the older age group associate these changes with the change in characteristics of the region.

3.2. Gender

The t-test gave a mixed result. There is a significant difference in perception within the gender for three factors that are *STD, NSC,* and *ENV* ($p \leq 0.05$), whereas no evidence of a difference in perception is found for *ECI, PSC, DMI, and ITR* (as $p > 0.05$) (refer to Table 3).

Therefore, the *H2 hypothesis is partially supported* (as *gender* does not influence all the impact factors).

Table 3. t-test result for Gender Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table (Source: Author, 2022)

	Factors	t - value	p - Value	Overall Mean	Male	Female
					Mean	Mean
Factor 1	*STD*	2.69	0.007	3.3	3.39	3.17
Factor 6	*NSC*	- 5.64	0.000	2.6	2.46	2.99
Factor 7	*ENV*	- 2.31	0.038	1.8	1.74	1.97

The mean value of both gender (refer to Table 3) confirms that males are more favorable towards tourism development than females, whereas females are comparatively more concerned about the negative impacts of tourism. This is in line with the findings of Long and Kayat (2011). Females perceive negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts more than males. The findings of Mason and Cheyne (2000); Andriotis (2004) also supported that females are more concerned about environmental and socio-cultural impact than males. Sinclair-Maragh (2017) has associated these differences in perception with the biological differences between the gender.

3.3. Religiosity

The t-test result confirms that religiosity has a significant correlation ($p \leq 0.05$) with all seven factors (Table 4). It is the only variable that influences all seven factors.

Therefore, the *H3 hypothesis is completely supported as religiosity significantly influences all seven impact factors.*

Table 4. t-test result for Religiosity (Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

	Factors	t - value	p - Value	Overall Mean	*Hindu* Mean	*Other religion* Mean
Factor 1	*STD*	5.91	0.000	3.3	3.4	2.5
Factor 2	*ECI*	5.63	0.001	3.96	4.0	3.0
Factor 3	*PSC*	5.42	0.000	3.1	3.2	2.2
Factor 4	*DMI*	3.86	0.000	3.6	3.6	3.1
Factor 5	*ITR*	-2.08	0.037	3.1	3.0	3.5
Factor 6	*NSC*	-2.5	0.013	2.6	2.6	3.0
Factor 7	*ENV*	-2.55	0.011	1.8	1.8	2.3

The mean values show that the community members following the region's prevalent religion, i.e., Hinduism, highly recognize the benefits of tourism *ECI* and *PSC* (Table 4). In contrast, the community members practicing other religion (Christianity, Islam, etc.) somewhat disagree with *STD* and *PSC* (mean value < 3) and agrees more with tourism's negative impacts, i.e., *NSC* and *ENV*. This finding is congruent with Hu Xin Lei and Huang Rong (2019) that community members following the prevalent religion of the region have a comparatively more positive attitude towards tourism, especially in the case of religious tourism. Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012), in the study of Iranian cities, also confirmed the positive relationship between religiosity and perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism (Shtudiner et al., 2018).

3.4. Level of Education

The one-way ANOVA test confirmed that *level of education* is an influential variable towards host community's attitudes for six factors (Table 5) except for *ITR* (as $p > 0.05$). This means that the perception of tourism impacts significantly differs with the level of education. Therefore, the *H4 hypothesis is supported by the level of education* for all impact factors except *ITR*.

Table 5. One way ANOVA and post hoc test for Level of Education
(Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

Factors	F - value	P - value	Overall Mean	Level of Education (I)	Level of Education (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1*: STD*	33.54	0.000	3.3	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.692	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-1.133	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-1.150	(I < J)	0.000
				Matric lvl.	Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.441	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.458	(I < J)	0.000
Factor 2: *ECI*	16.7	0.000	3.9	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.811	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-1.039	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-1.144	(I < J)	0.000
				Matric lvl.	Graduation lvl.	-0.333	(I < J)	0.024
Factor5: *PSC*	8.57	0.000	3.1	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.677	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.819	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.765	(I < J)	0.000
Factor4: *DMI*	13.26	0.000	3.6	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.775	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.777	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.823	(I < J)	0.000
Factor 5*: NSC*	3.36	0.019	2.6	No school	Graduation lvl.	0.457	(I > J)	0.043
Factor 6: *ENV*	3.12	0.026	1.8	Matric lvl.	Higher Secondary lvl.	0.304	(I > J)	0.028

The post hoc test result shows that support for tourism and perception of positive impacts are more significant for people with higher education levels (Table 5). People with lesser education (no schooling or matric level) are comparatively less supportive of tourism. This is in agreement with Long and Kayat (2011); Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) that community members with higher education levels are more supportive of tourism development as they understand the benefits incurred because of tourism development.

For the negative impacts of tourism, only a single comparison is significant, i.e., for *NSC*: *No school vs. Graduation level* and for *ENV*: *Matric lvl. vs. Higher secondary lvl*., which makes it difficult to conclude.

3.5. Length of stay in the community

The one-way ANOVA confirmed that *length of stay in the community* significantly influences the perception of the host community for *STD, ECI, PSC, DMI, NSC,* and *ENV* (as $p \leq 0.05$); however, *ITR* is not influenced (as $p > 0.05$) (refer Table 6). Therefore, the *H5 hypothesis is supported for length of stay in the community* for all the factors except ITR.

Table 6. One way ANOVA and post hoc test for Length of stay in the community
(Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

Factors	F - value	p - value	Length of stay in the community (I)	Length of stay in the community (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1: *STD*	49.33	0.000	< 10 yrs.	21 to 30 Yrs.	0.249	(I > J)	.029
				Above 30 Yrs.	1.189	(I > J)	.000
			10 to 20 Yrs.	21 to 30 Yrs.	0.284	(I > J)	.005
				Above 30 Yrs.	1.222	(I > J)	.000
Factor 2: *ECI*	19.49	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	-1.044	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.929	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.836	(I < J)	.000
Factor 3: *PSC*	18.48	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	- 0.911	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.972	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.694	(I < J)	.000
Factor4: *DMI*	8.50	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	- 0.489	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.549	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.333	(I < J)	.026
Factor 5*: NSC*	3.96	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	0.483	(I > J)	.005
Factor 6: *ENV*	4.51	0.004	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	0.529	(I > J)	.003
				10 to 20 Yrs.	0.461	(I > J)	.009
				21 to 30 Yrs.	0.448	(I > J)	.017

The post hoc test confirms that the concern level towards the negative impact of tourism (i.e., *NSC* and *ENV*) is relatively high for community members with a longer stay in the community (refer Table 6). Khoshkam et al. (2016); Stojković et al. (2020) also found that the community members with a longer stay in the community are comparatively more sensitive towards the negative impacts of tourism specially the socio-cultural impact. The post hoc test result also confirms that the community members with lesser tenure are more supportive of tourism development. Sinclair-Maragh (2017) associated this with the economic opportunities they get from tourism development.

3.6. Involvement in Tourism related activities

The t-test result for *involvement in tourism related activities* has confirmed significant influence on three factors: *DMI, ITR,* and *NSC* (as $p \leq 0.05$) (Table 7), whereas no evidence of significant influence on impact factors *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ENV* was found. Hence the *H6 hypothesis is partially supported as Involvement in tourism activity significantly influences the perception for only three factors not all.*

The comparison of the mean values of the two groups indicate that the community members involved in the tourism sector are relatively more positive towards the impact factor: DMI and

Table 7. t-test result for Involvement in tourism (Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

	Factors	t - value	P - value	Overall Mean	Involved Mean	Not involved Mean
Factor 4	*DMI*	0.52	0.001	3.6	3.79	3.32
Factor 5	*ITR*	2.46	0.014	3.1	3.27	2.96
Factor 6	*NSC*	- 3.52	0.000	2.6	2.37	2.7

ITR, and they are comparatively more in disagreement towards the negative impact, i.e., *NSC*. Slabbert et al. (2021) also found in their study that the more community members are involved in tourism activity, the more positive their attitudes towards tourism development are.

Host community's involvement in tourism planning and development enable them to articulate more accurate perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism (Eslami et al., 2019; Sharma and Gursoy, 2015), whereas when they are involved in tourism-related activities like taking part in fare, visiting public areas like shopping mall, garden, experiencing good facilities etc., they themselves behave like a tourist and view tourism facilities from a different prospective (Henderson, 2000). This may be a reason that they became more positive towards tourism development.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the role of socio-demographic characteristics of the host community concerning their level of support for tourism development for heritage tourism destinations of a developing country. The findings suggest that the host community's attitude is favorable towards tourism development and want more tourism as they look at tourism as an engine of growth and prosperity for themselves, their community, and the entire region.

The study confirms that the socio-demographic variables influence the perception of the host community, this is in agreement with the findings of Andriotis and Vaughan (2003); Huh and Vogt (2008); Long and Kayat (2011). The study also confirms that the community comprises of several groups of individuals (based on socio-demographic characteristics) with varying perceptions. Previously Long and Kayat (2011); Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996); Brougham and Butler (1981) also agreed that the perception of the community members are not homogeneous.

The study revealed that the degree of influence is not same for all the socio-demographic variables. The variable '*religiosity'* is the most influential variable as it affects the host community's perception of all impact factors. Shtudiner et al. (2018), in studying the sacred city of Jerusalem, also found '*religiosity'* as an essential variable, especially for religious tourism destinations, and associated this with the "Social Distance Theory". This theory describes the level of acceptance between individuals based on their degree of similarities for dimensions like social, ethnicity, occupation, and religion (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). This confirms that *religiosity* is an essential variable for the study of heritage tourism destinations in India.Other variables that highly influence the perception of host communities are *education level* and *length of stay*. At the same time, the study found moderate impact of *age*, *gender*, and *involvement in tourism activities* on the perceptions of the host community. The findings show that the host community supports tourism development as they perceive the positive impacts of tourism. This confirms the applicability of "Social Exchange Theory" (developed by Ap, 1992), which states that if the perceived positive impacts of tourism (economical, socio-cultural, or environmental) are more than the perceived negative impacts, then the host community tends to support the tourism development in their region. Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996), Long and Kayat (2011), Sinclair-Maragh (2017) also agreed that the exchange is not only economic; it can be socio-cultural or environmental. In the present study, most community members are *not involved in tourism*, but the rate of agreement and support for tourism development is relatively high. This indicates that even though the individuals may not get any personal or direct benefit from tourism, they still support tourism development. This can be because these community members recognize that tourism benefits their community and region. However, for sustainable tourism development, stakeholder's involvement in the decision-making process and engagement in the tourism sector is essential (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Kurniawan et al., 2021), so that they can receive the benefits of tourism and provide continuous support for tourism development.

The outcome of this study reveals a significant relationship between the socio-demographic variables and the perception of tourism impacts on the host communities of heritage tourism destinations in a developing country. The findings suggest that the tourism planners need to consider the host community's socio-demographic variables' role in supporting tourism development. The study's findings have academic significance and provide practical implications for understanding the host community's attitudes and perceptions. Accordingly, government, destination managers, and policymakers can develop sustainable tourism development strategies.

The study contributes to the knowledge of tourism development for a heritage tourism destination of a developing country. The researchers suggest further studies in heritage destinations of developing countries to generalize the relationship between the socio-demographic variables and their relationship with tourism impacts.

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