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Community Participation in Tourism Destination Development: A Literature Review

Ionuț-Călin CĂZAN¹

Abstract

The aim of this article is to underline the way community is involved in decisions making regarding a tourism destination, how this process was developed during years and how it was studied before. Moreover, this research wants to find out, based on past researches, how communities are motivated to participate in tourism development, what are their benefits from involving in these activities and what is the importance of communities for tourism and their perception. While involvement and participation of communities in the tourism industry can be viewed in the decision making process and in the sharing of tourism benefits, community participation through employment brings more economic benefits directly to the household level. On the other hand, participation is also open to a variety of interpretations arising from the fact that a ladder encompassing different levels of participation exists which often range from 'only being told of' to being able to influence or determine every aspect of the tourism development [5]

Keywords:

Community participation, community involvement, tourism destination development, sustainability, community perception.

1. Introduction

Tourism has become one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors and largest activities and one of the major players in international

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commerce representing the main income source for many developing countries. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destinations. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress [32]. UNWTO [33] forecasts that by 2020, international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion. Of these worldwide arrivals 1.2 billion will be intraregional and 378 million will be long stay travelers. UNWTO [32] estimates that domestic tourism represents four times the volume of international tourism. This growth goes hand in hand with an increasing diversification and competition among destinations. Tourism has become a highly competitive business for tourist destinations over the world. Competitive advantage is no longer natural, but increasingly driven by science, information technology and innovation. This global spread of tourism in industrialized and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors-from construction to agriculture and telecommunications.

Tourism has been recognized for its vast contribution to the economy in many countries in which tourism contributes to economic diversification, profitability, and employment opportunity for a country [17], [18], [12], [4]. Nonetheless, researchers in the past have noted that local communities' attitudes and perceptions toward tourism development and tourist fluctuate between the negative and positive [16]. Besides, the economic impacts are perceived mostly positive while sociocultural, legal, and environmental impacts, are viewed as negative [30].

This main purpose of the study is to identify and analyse the progress of research on community participation in tourism destination development by conducting a methodological review on more than thirty research based articles (empirical studies), literature reviews articles, case studies, books, conceptual papers and so on outlining the importance of the community role in tourism destination development.

2. Problem Statement

Mass production and mass consumption had formed the basic characteristic of Fordism economic regime among capitalist economies since post-Fordism economic regime emerged with a qualitative shift from mass production and consumption to more flexible system of production and organization in a way that it makes links to the changes how these goods and services are consumed. The applicability of these ideas to the changes in tourism has been recognized due to the growing emergence of small group

tourism activities and new alternatives in comparison to mass tourism. Moreover, Crompton (1993) contends that recent works done on the growth and development of the middle class are comprehensively associated with the growth of consumer capitalism and an emphasis on lifestyle. The new middle classes are not only considered as cultural mediators but they also reflect the political alignments or socio-environmental organizations; they are concerned with various issues; however, their engagement in assessing environmental politics and the term of sustainable lifestyle movement is linked with the development of new Third World tourism; Crompton's statement encompass the cultural regime change from modernism to post-modernism style of life which resulted in the emergence of new tourism alternatives against mass tourism [26], [13], [28].

Furthermore, the growth of mass tourism led to some problems such as environmental, social, and cultural degradation besides unequal distribution of financial benefits which have been mentioned by so many researchers and are well publicized over recent years. Therefore, it has been usually claimed that the development of alternative forms of tourism is a response to these problems; however, Mowforth and Munt [26] believe that link between the growths of new forms of tourism with the problems caused by mass tourism is misplaced; this growth in new forms of tourism has appeared more as the natural continuation of the historical inequalities between First World and Third World countries. It should be taken into consideration that the study of new form of tourism is still in its infancy, therefore, there is no clear agreement on their definitions, conceptual, and practical boundaries; consequently, implying a disagreement between those who study new forms of tourism and those who operate tours while these disagreements are evident among other groups in the field such as government officials, the conservationist and service providers. However, the new tourisms are truly contested ideas and tourism literature is peppered with claim and counter-claim, with mainly academics and interest groups advocating and defending particular terms and definitions. Protagonists consider the new forms of tourism as 'sustainable', 'no-impact', 'responsible', 'green', and 'environmentally friendly' forms of tourism [26]. There are various types of new tourism while this research article mainly focuses on two of them; Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged in recent years due to increasing attention at community involvement in tourism ventures aiming to develop the community's area, conserve resources, and develop the industry itself. Therefore, numerous research efforts have been concentrated on this issue which the new ones suggest that approaches to

community-based tourism, especially in rural areas, should consider the important role of public participation in tourism and bring the grass-root members of the community on board to be involved in decision making procedure in their region which has triggered rapid growth and evolution of CBT around the world, particularly, in developing countries [15].

Batta and Pathak [3] conclude that in unsustainable way of tourism where the local community is paying the cost of tourism development in the form of degradation of environmental resources, commercialization of landscape and congestion; the main economic benefits are not flowing to the local community; therefore, they suggest a Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) model for achieving sustainable tourism development at the destination through multiple stakeholders' partnership. Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) relies on transfer of benefits to a community regardless of location, instigation, size, level of wealth, involvement, ownership or control; therefore, in this model Stakeholders in a partnership aim at ensuring the delivery of benefits to the community while achieving sustainable tourism development [11].

The community participation is viewed as a discussion or consultancy between the local people and the local government based on the Skeffington Report (1969). In addition the report explains the involvement of the both party's action of policies and proposal development. Nevertheless, it is only a comprehensive participation when there is complete participation by the local in the planning procedure (Litchfield, 1996). Kayat (2002) also discuss that public involvement is not solitary about the affiliation between the local government and the local community but it is an authorization process given to the local community for decision making [21].

The necessity for community to take part during decision making process are for their own interest in addition to the society's broad involvement, since preparation undertakings effects the community lives was enlightened in detail. There are also numerous debates as to why the community participation process is vital from the perspective of professional and citizens working with local government which have been developed by 2002.

The view of the locals must be taken into consideration so that it will aid attain worthy decision making process and manage resource competently and effectively. The professionals in the other pointer has approved that involving the community might contribute to an enhanced decision making, in fact, community participation also has the probability to teach and escalate their responsiveness by being more receptive.

Based on a study conducted by Glass (1979) community participation in development will produce greater information exchange between the community and the planners, which can be a significant component to upkeep the government and the proposed development. To confirm the projected plan will mirror their aims encouraging community to give their say and recognising their opinions on a concern is essential to be completed.

A study conducted by Fagence (1977) has explained that community participation is a portion of the democratic system which will permit the locals to express their views on development matters which will affect their lives in the future. Based on another study by Chekki (1979, cited in James and Blamey, 1999) has elucidated that the participatory democratic is 'all acts of citizen that are intended to influence the behavior of those empowered to make the decisions' [29].

Most of the scholars has propose that community participation process which being a part of democratic system also comprises community's decision making process. Timothy [31] in his study has enlightened that tourism planning which has community participation fundamentals occurs from approaches to safeguard locals from the effect of tourism planning and gain the benefits of tourism development.

In 1980 Tschiderer postulated that tourist places may be developed just as an organization. After a decade, tourist destination was viewed as a competitive unit and simultaneously as a community with different stakeholders with accordingly diverse interests. Today, destination planning refers to all the activities and processes involved in developing a tourist place or region with a strategic aim that eventually leads to an increase of its competitiveness. Numerous case studies illustrate the challenges of effective destination management and planning, up to the point that collaborative destination planning is questioned on principle. Recent research in the field is subsumed under the term 'destination governance'. One of the first contributions that explicitly used the concept of governance, pointed to the differences between institutional and individual level of analysis and to the control variables that must be analysed for an effective destination management. The destination management concept is a holistic approach to development that relies on partnerships, and aims to help destinations compete effectively. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride highlight that a destination is not a single product, but a composite one which includes: accommodation and eating/ dining establishments, tourist attractions, arts establishments and cultural venues. The whole atmosphere of a place, the hotels in which tourists stay, the friendliness of the local people and the overall impression are essential for the creation of a successful destination brand. An

increasingly systematic research approach has been adopted towards measurement of destinations' performance and competitiveness concept at international level. The reasons are multiple: from economical point of view the highest motivation is revenues generated by tourism but we have to consider also multiplication effects on other activities observing social, environmental, cultural impact or crowd, jams, residence attitude [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [34], [36].

Studies done by Keogh [19], [20] describe that it is significant to transfer information between decision makers and stakeholders. An explanation in swapping the information and gaining the feedback from the stakeholder must be done to ensure effectiveness of the decision [25].

Timothy and Tosun [31] in their study added that the participation in the decision making process means that residents have the opportunities to voice their hopes, desires and fears for the development and contribute to planning process form their own experiences.

Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degrees of favor or disfavor [13]. Therefore, it is essential to understand local communities' attitude because an understanding of local communities' attitudes allows tourism stakeholders to adopt an adequate responsive mechanism to the negative influences that arise from tourism.

Perception can be refer to "attitudes" [24], "residents' opinions"[35], or "reactions" . Therefore, local communities' perceptions of the cost and benefits of tourism is the major factor in tourist satisfaction and are important for the success of the tourism industry [1].

Community involvement can be defined as the magnitude to which the residents are involved in the daily activities within the communities that they live in [2], [22], [23], [27]. Hence, tourism development will be more successful with the involvement of the local communities as their perception and attitudes are important for the decision makers to achieve sustainable rural tourism [14].

A ladder of citizen participation proposed by Arnstein (1969) addresses the degree of power distribution in terms of a typology of citizen participation that includes eight rungs (manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control) [31] that are further categorized into top, middle, and bottom levels of participation. The bottom rungs of the ladder, manipulation and therapy, represent levels of nonparticipation because the authority holds the real power to avoid allowing local community participation in decision-making about development. The middle rungs of the ladder, informing, consultation, and placation, describe levels of tokenism that allow the local community to

know and offer opinions on projects. It is not ensured that their views will be taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The top rungs of the ladder are partnership, delegated power, and citizen control [31]. Real participation begins where negotiation between various stakeholders is included and the local community takes up part of the responsibility for decision-making. At levels 7 and 8, participants' views have been taken into consideration in the decision-making arena, and they are empowered to make decisions about development.

3. Conclusions

This research has analyzed how communities could be involved in tourism destination development, starting from 1969 with Arnstein ladder of implication. Community participation is regarded as an important process to achieve sustainable tourism development. However, limited studies have been done to evaluate the level of community implication in tourism development and to explore the differences between local residents' expected and actual participation in public consultation activities.

While involvement and participation of communities in the tourism industry can be viewed in the decision making process and in the sharing of tourism benefits, community participation through employment brings more economic benefits directly to the household level. On the other hand, participation is also open to a variety of interpretations arising from the fact that a ladder encompassing different levels of participation exists which often range from 'only being told of' to being able to influence or determine every aspect of the tourism development [5]

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