

Residents' Perceptions towards Sustainable Tourism Development: The Case of Alanya

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Abstract

Sustainable development approach is of utmost importance for the future existence of tourism destinations. Therefore, enabling tourism development based on sustainability principles economically, socially and environmentally is considered to be a necessity. All stakeholders of the tourism sector have important roles in this development process. Especially, the inclusion of residents to this process and their involvement in decision-making mechanisms represent a focal point in sustainable tourism development. Any tourism development that does not take into consideration the needs and expectations of residents does not have much chance for success.

There have been many studies made about residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and tourism development in tourism literature. However, only a few studies use sustainable development perspective in order to determine residents' perceptions towards tourism development. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the residents' perceptions towards sustainable tourism development in Alanya, an important tourism destination of Turkey and Mediterranean region. Data gathered from 134 residents in Alanya were analyzed using factor and correlation analysis, t-tests and ANOVA. Results presented a four-factor perceived sustainable tourism development measurement scale: environmental sustainability; perceived social costs; maximizing community participation; and perceived economic benefits. Findings have shown that there is a significant correlation between perceived economic benefits and two of the other three factors, which are environmental sustainability and maximizing community participation. Another main finding of the study is that residents are not fully aware of nor have

much knowledge about the concept of sustainability and its principles, yet they still have shown positive attitude towards its principles.

Keywords: Alanya, Residents, Residents' Perceptions, Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism Development, Sustainable Development, Tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The sustainability phenomenon has emerged from the negative impacts of the continuously increasing world population's pressure on environmental resources. Mankind realized that a balance was needed to be set between development and consumption of environmental resources. At that stage, the notion of "sustainable development" came up at the end of 1980s and started to be widely used. Sustainable development approach is not against the idea of economic progress. The fundamental idea here is taking into consideration the needs of the present day and future generations, while using all natural or man-made resources without depleting them or spoiling their quality (Demir & Cevirgen, 2006: 93-94).

Sustainable development approach refers to development in all sectors all together. This statement also applies to tourism sector, which is a huge driving force in yielding economic growth. Parallel to the discussions related to the notion of sustainable development, concept of "sustainable tourism" has been talked about frequently since the early 1990s. The main resources of tourism consist of the physical, social and cultural attractions of the tourism destination. Transforming these resources to economical value that is beneficial to residents will only be possible by sustainable tourism development. Sustainable tourism is considered as a tool for decreasing the negative effects of tourism to a minimum and ensuring the existence of the destination in the long term, therefore is vital for tourism destinations. Tourism stakeholders should base tourism development on environmental, economic and socio-cultural principles of sustainability for the future success of their destination.

Although all stakeholders have important roles in sustainable tourism development, residents are the most affected from and need to show full support to the process. If residents are not sold on a tourism development and do not participate in its decision making process, there is not much of a chance for the development to succeed in the long-term, simply due to the fact that residents will take a negative stance against the existing or future developments. This study aims to determine the perceptions of residents towards tourism developments in Alanya from sustainability perspective. It also attempts to explore the relationship among the factors of sustainable tourism development.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sustainable development concept was introduced by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (WCED), who published the Brundtland Report, also known as "Our Common Future", in 1987. In this report, sustainable development was defined by the WCED as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Corakci, 1991: 71; Demir & Cevirgen, 2006: 96). In order

to achieve this development, there needs to be a social structure that helps the resolution of conflicts, an economic system that enables the production of continuous source of surplus, and a source of technical knowledge. More importantly, environment must be protected (Byrd, 2007:9).

Tourism has been one of the earlier and more active sectors that adapted to sustainability principles and sustainable tourism development concept have been widely discussed since 1990s. Sustainable tourism development could be defined as all kinds of tourism developments that make a notable contribution to or, at least, do not contradict to the principles of sustainable development without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs and desires (Tosun, 2001: 290).

Another view describes sustainable tourism within sustainable development in the sense that if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, it must be economically viable, environmentally sensitive and socio-culturally appropriate. Sustainable tourism has been generally viewed as a vehicle by which the negative impacts of tourism can be addressed and by which long-term viability can be achieved (Kitnuntaviwat & Tang, 2008: 47-48).

In order for any form of tourism development to be sustainable, residents should be the focal point in its development (Dyer et al., 2007: 410; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005: 381). Residents' attitudes are crucial for successful sustainable tourism development because an understanding of the community's attitudes and perceptions and how these perceptions are formed would be valuable knowledge for decision makers. (Esheliki & Kaboudi, 2012: 335).

Understanding the prerequisites for support by local residents towards tourism development is crucial for local governments, businesses, decision makers and policymakers, because success of any sustainable development depends on active support of residents. Any active opposition may hinder or slow the development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004: 495).

Residents' participation in planning and development stages is also a fundamental necessity for sustainability of the development (Dyer et al., 2007: 410; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008: 95). Active participation of the community can make sustainable tourism viable for the community. This viability can be created by opening carefully developed management communication channels with receptive governments (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005: 382).

Understanding local residents' attitudes toward tourism development is vital for the success and sustainability of any type of tourism development. Community involvement is one of the important factors that may significantly influence the sustainability of any tourism development. Involvement of residents in the planning and operational stages may ensure that development will be socially and environmentally responsible and that resulting impacts will be perceived as more appropriate by residents (Gursoy et al., 2010: 381, 383).

The measurement of residents' perceptions of tourism development plays a vital role in the future success of any destination (Andriotis, 2005: 68). Many studies have examined resident attitudes and the factors that are likely to influence those attitudes. Most of these studies suggest that residents tend to have positive attitudes because they see tourism as an economic development tool (Gursoy et al., 2010: 381).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in April, 2012 in the resort town of Alanya, which lies on the coast of Gulf of Antalya. Alanya, as one of the major tourism destinations of Turkey with a bed capacity of 146,533; received 1,848,607 foreign tourists in 2010, which constituted 6,45% of total foreign tourists who visited Turkey. Alanya also received 4,85% of Turkey's total tourism receipts in 2010 (Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011: 120,124; Turkish Statistical Institute, 2011: 46).

According to 2010 census, the population of Alanya Centrum is 104,000. In order to gather data, a structured questionnaire survey was applied to 134 local residents of Alanya. With this respect, the study is preliminary for any future research in the related fields. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, one being general profile of the respondents, and the other part being 26 questions about residents' perceptions on sustainable tourism development.

After the revision of empirical and theoretical research of the related literature, 26 questions about residents' perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable tourism development and tourism impact were adapted to this study (Brida et al., 2011; Cevirgen & Kesgin, 2007; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008; Prayag et al., 2010; Sirakaya-Turk et al., 2008). A 5-point Likert scale was used in this second part of the questionnaire, ranging from 1="completely disagree" to 5="completely agree".

The data collected were analyzed by using SPSS software. Data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, factor analysis, correlation analysis, t-test and ANOVA.

4. FINDINGS

According to the profiles of the respondents as shown on Table 1, 66% were male; 45% were between the ages 26-33; 50% were married; 88% were actively working; 50% were working in tourism sector; and 52% had a university or a further degree. 40% of the respondents were living in Alanya for 1 to 5 years, while 18% were in Alanya for more than 26 years. 44% of the respondents earn between 1,000 TL to 2,000 TL monthly.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Gender	n	%	Age	n	%
Male	88	66	18-25	28	21
Female	46	34	26-33	60	45
Marital Status			34-41	12	9
Married	67	50	42-49	18	13
Single	67	50	50 & above	16	12
Are you working right now?			Is your job tourism-related?		

Yes	118	88	Yes	65	50
No	16	12	No	64	50
Education			Is anyone in your family (spouse / children) working in tourism sector? (n - %)		
Elementary	12	9	Yes	29	22
Secondary	10	8	No	101	78
High school	20	15	Duration of Residency in Alanya (years, n - %)		
Vocational	21	16	Less than 1	7	5
Bachelor's	28	20	1-5	54	40
Master&PhD	42	32	6-10	17	13
Monthly Salary (~ - TL)			11-15	15	11
None	8	6	16-20	10	8
Min Wage-1000	28	21	21-25	5	4
1001-1500	29	22	26 & above	24	18
1501-2000	30	22			
2001-2500	24	18			
2501 & above	15	11			

Firstly, reliability of the whole scale was tested. Cronbach's alpha was found as 0,762; well above the generally agreed lower limit of 0,60 for research at exploratory stage (Sencan, 2005: 170). Then, the principle component analysis was performed to identify the underlying dimensions of the perceived sustainable tourism development items. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0,688, and the Barlett Test of Sphericity was statistically significant at 0,000 level, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. These 26 items were subjected to factor analyzed with Varimax rotation. Minimum item loading of 0,50 was selected to interpret variables considered significant. Two of the 26 items were dropped because their loading was below 0,50. These two items were "Alanya is overcrowded because of tourism development", and "Full participation in tourism decision making by everyone is a must for successful tourism development".

The factor analysis revealed four major factor areas; environmental sustainability (8 items), perceived social costs (5 items), maximizing community participation (5 items), and perceived economic benefits (6 items). Table 2 shows the results and Cronbach's Alpha of each factor.

Reliability of the four factors ranged from 0,749 to 0,867. The four factors explained a total of % 52,62 of the variance.

Residents showed their highest perception to perceived economic benefits with mean of 4,16 among the four factors. Residents generally are positive towards all of the factors except their neutral approach towards maximizing community participation with a mean of 3,09.

Table 2. Results of Factor Analysis

ITEMS	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	% of Variance Explained	Mean	Alpha (α)
Factor 1. Perceived Economic Benefits (PEB)		5,23	16,51	4,16	
PEB23 – Tourism creates new sources of income	,924			4,23	
PEB24 – Tourism is good for local economy	,908			4,34	
PEB22 – Tourism diversifies the local economy	,897			4,19	
PEB21 – Tourism is a strong economic contributor to community	,883			4,36	0,867
PEB25 – Tourism creates new markets for local products	,593			3,72	
PEB26 – Tourism increases awareness for protection of natural resources	,535			4,10	
Factor 2. Environmental Sustainability (ES)		3,26	14,88	3,52	
ES7 – Tourism protects the environment	,761			3,58	
ES2 – Tourism enables better public services (roads, etc.)	,748			3,53	
ES1 – Tourism has improved the infrastructure (electricity, etc)	,687			3,64	0,840
ES8 – Community environment must be protected now and for the future	,671			3,84	
ES4 – Tourism development helps the protection of natural life	,660			2,78	

ES6 – Biological diversity is being protected	,637		3,57
ES3 – Tourism encourages the creation of parks and leisure areas for residents	,628		3,70
ES5 – Tourism is being developed in harmony with natural and cultural environment	,583		3,53
Factor 3. Maximizing Community Participation (MCP)		2,76	11,41
MCP16 – Residents are given opportunities in tourism decision making	,802		3,11
MCP19 – Residents should be encouraged to assume leadership roles in tourism planning committees	,764		2,93
			0.761
MCP20 – Tourism promotes positive environmental ethics among all parties with a stake in tourism	,710		3,30
MCP18 – Residents should be given more opportunities to invest in tourism developments	,693		3,15
MCP17 – Tourism industry must embrace the values of residents	,621		2,94
Factor 4. Perceived Social Costs (PSC)		2,43	10,20
PSC12 – Residents’ quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism	,802		2,33
PSC10 – Tourists disrupt the quality of life in the region	,768		2,61
PSC11 – Residents often feel irritated because of tourism	,758		2,53
			0.749
PSC14 – Tourism negatively affects the life style of residents	,687		2,90
PSC13 – Tourism causes problems in security and crime	,636		3,06
Overall Reliability of the Scale (α)			0.762

Total Variance Explained	52,62
KMO	0.688
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Sig. 0.000

According to the correlation analysis as shown in Table 3, positive and statistically significant correlation was found twice, between three factors: environmental sustainability with perceived economic benefits ($p < 0,05$); and maximizing community participation with perceived economic benefits ($p < 0,01$).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Groups	1	2	3	4
Environmental Sustainability	1			
Perceived Social Costs	-0,105	1		
Maximizing Community Participation	0,119	-0,112	1	
Perceived Economic Benefits	0,213*	-0,046	0,254**	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ANOVA and t-tests were applied in order to test whether there were any statistically significant differences between residents' perceptions towards sustainability tourism development and their characteristics. According to these tests, no significant difference was observed between the four sustainable tourism development factors and gender, work status, tourism related work, tourism related working family member, and age.

On the other hand, results of statistically significant differences were presented on the tables below. According to Table 4, single and married respondents showed statistically significant difference in terms of their perception towards environmental sustainability ($p = 0,001 < 0,01$).

Table 4. Summary of t-test results for Marital Status

Dependent Components	Marital Status	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p
Environmental	Married	3,65	0,69	1,873	0,001**

Sustainability		Single	3,39	0,91		
Perceived Social Costs		Married	2,55	0,86		
		Single	2,83	0,75	-2,029	0,626
Maximizing Community Participation		Married	3,19	0,72		
		Single	2,98	0,78	1,631	0,233
Perceived Benefits	Economic	Married	4,34	0,57		
		Single	3,97	0,85	3,000	0,185

According to Table 5, respondents' perception towards maximizing community participation showed statistically significant differences with respect to their level of education ($p=0,000<0,01$). A post-hoc Tukey test was used to detect the differences in means among education levels. Vocational school graduates (3,44) responded significantly higher than Master and PhD graduates (2,69). There were not any other significant differences between the other levels of education.

Table 5. Summary of ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey multiple comparison test results for Education

Factors		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Environmental Sustainability		132	1,098	1,708	0,137
Perceived Social Costs		132	0,627	0,961	0,445
Maximizing Community Participation	Community	132	2,392	4,800	0,000**
Perceived Benefits	Economic	132	0,819	1,515	0,190

According to Table 6, respondents' perception towards maximizing community participation showed statistically significant differences with respect to their monthly income ($p=0,003<0,01$). A post-hoc Tukey test was used to detect the differences in means among monthly income. Residents earning 1,001 to 1,500 TL (3,52) responded significantly higher than residents earning 1,501 to 2,000 TL monthly (2,78). There were not any other significant differences between the other levels of monthly income.

Table 6. Summary of ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey multiple comparison test results for Monthly Income

Factors	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Environmental Sustainability	133	1,350	2,129	0,066	
Perceived Social Costs	133	1,255	1,971	0,087	
Maximizing Participation	Community	133	1,998	3,872	0,003**
Perceived Economic Benefits	133	0,745	1,375	0,238	

According to Table 7, respondents' perception towards environmental sustainability showed statistically significant differences with respect to their duration of residency in Alanya ($p=0,003<0,01$). A post-hoc Tukey test was used to detect the differences in means among duration of residency. Residents who have been living in Alanya for 16-20 years (2,82) responded significantly lower than residents living in Alanya for more than 26 years (4,00). There were not any other significant differences between the other levels of duration of residency.

Table 7. Summary of ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey multiple comparison test results for Duration of Residency in Alanya

Factors	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Environmental Sustainability	131	2,083	3,452	0,003**	
Perceived Social Costs	131	1,619	2,599	0,021	
Maximizing Participation	Community	131	1,205	2,196	0,048
Perceived Economic Benefits	131	1,102	2,088	0,059	

5. CONCLUSION

According to the results of this empirical study, residents in Alanya have shown positive perceptions towards sustainable tourism developments. Yet, they have shown neutral approach towards maximizing community participation, which is one of the most important principles of sustainable development. This situation shows that residents do not have strong awareness about the concept of sustainability. Another point to mention is that residents do not feel they are a part of the decision making process of tourism development of the region.

Residents of Alanya think that tourism developments generally have a positive contribution to environmental sustainability, but their belief that tourism does not protect the natural life limited their level of support towards tourism developments.

Tourism developments in Alanya do not create significant level of perceived social costs, according to residents. This positive attitude of residents towards tourism developments is of critical value for the sustainability of tourism in the region.

Residents of Alanya also think that tourism contributes greatly towards regional economy. In order to maximize the economic benefits of tourism, more involvement and participation of residents into tourism decision making mechanisms is needed.

In the light of these findings, tourism leaders and planners need to make substantial effort in order to raise the awareness of residents on sustainability principles and to maximize community participation, because residents' involvement in tourism developments is of utmost importance for sustainable development of the destination.

It would be beneficial for any future studies to focus on including the other stakeholders of tourism sector and comparing the results of each stakeholder's perceptions.

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