

PERCEPTION OF RESIDENTS TOWARDS COMMUNITY TOURISM IMPACTS: A CASE STUDY AT MOUNT LAVINIA, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This study has found the perceptions of the local community towards the developments in tourism and their perceptions towards the community tourism impacts. The host population was taken from the Mount Lavinia, Sri Lanka and 120 questionnaires were distributed. And the direct observations of the researcher have also included. The respondents of the study can be divided into mainly two parts. They are: The community with tourism income in their household and the community who has not engage in tourism income generation activity. Most of the community at Mount Lavinia who were not engage in tourism agreed that there are so many negative impacts of tourism while the community who engage in tourism were not concern much about the negativity that bring through tourism to their lives. The researcher has suggested that local governments and tourism promoters should pay particular emphasis to the residents to feel that their concerns are being considered, then they will support tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Perception, Impacts, Residents

1. Introduction

Tourism industry is one of the world's largest industries. The main stakeholder of the tourism industry in a country is the local community. Tourism can be make positive and negative impacts for the destination and its community. The concepts and theories related to the tourism impact analysis is important to uncover with this study. Tourism development possesses its own positive and negative impacts in whatever of the destination in the world. Tourism can be a positive input, for the development of physical, social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of a country (Gunce,2003). According to Smith (1995), tourism can play an important contribution to poverty alleviation, employment, generation and the development of remote areas.

The success of the tourism industry depends on two major factors. They are: Local attractions and the hospitality of the local residents (Gursoy et al, 2002). But, Tourism is a goose that not only lays a golden egg, but also fouls its own nest. (Hawkins, 1982. Tourism developments have costs and benefits both (Prentice,1993).

Therefore, for a tourism-based economy to sustain itself in local communities, the residents must be stakeholders in the tourism industry. Their attitudes toward tourism and perceptions of its impact on community life must be continually assessed (Perdue et al. 1990).

According to Butler (1980), the tourism destinations can be gone through seven major stages such as exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline and rejuvenation. He stated that after the involvement stage, the local participation and support for the tourism will be decreased. Now, Mount Lavinia is experiencing the stagnation stage where the carrying capacity in social, economic and environmental has exceeded.

This study is done to identify the major impacts arise on the local community due to tourism activities in Mount Lavinia according to the residents' perception and to find out the relationship between the characteristics of the community and their perceptions of impacts.

2. Literature Review

The literature that are related to this study has been divided mainly into two sections. They are: Identifying tourism impacts and identifying the respondents' profile, identifying the perception of the residents toward tourism and identifying the research question.

2.1 Identifying tourism impacts

According to Jafari (1981) as cited in Mason (2015) tourism impacts are the key factors in discussion of planning and management of tourism. And also he stated that tourism is consisted of mainly three parts. They are: tourists, industry and the local community. When considering the impacts, there should be three ways including socio-cultural, economic and environmental. Jafari's (1981) definition of tourism impacts has been proved by Andereck (1995) stating that tourism impacts can be identified mainly on three bases. They are: Economic impacts such as increased jobs, additional income & inflation; sociocultural impacts including intercultural communication and understanding, increased crimes, changes in traditional culture as well as preservation of cultural values. Environmental impacts such as protection of parks and wildlife, crowding, air, water and noise pollution, wildlife destruction, vandalism, and litter. Tourism has multi-dimensional impacts upon the regions that it operates; these dimensions include economic, social, cultural and environmental factors (United Nations educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ((UNESCO) 1976; Yildiz et al,2011). Gee et al (1989) has also given evidenced on the above identifying the impacts of tourism under three sections: Economic, Environmental and Socio-Cultural.

Gursoy & Rutherford (2004) have identified impacts under the economic benefits, the author mentioned employments, investments, and business opportunities and the tax income for the local government. The perceived benefits according to their study; provide incentive for the preservation of local culture, more parks and other recreational areas for the local, incentives for the restoration of historical buildings, and provide the standards of roads and other public amenities. Benefits of the culture are development of cultural activities by local residents, cultural exchange between tourists' locals, and positive impacts on cultural identity.

According to Cooper et al., (1993) the impacts of tourism can be benefited rural and regional economies by creating more business opportunities and favorable image for the tourism among the society.

Tourism affects the economy and the lives of societies and has proven to be a lifesaver for many destinations. There are real and perceived fears that are sometimes attributed to tourism and largely related to poorly managed or mass tourism ventures. As with any economic activity, tourism can have negative impacts on communities. These must be minimized and measured against the benefits that tourism brings. (Lee et al., 2010)

In Sri Lanka, tourism performs a major role not only within the economic sphere but also in the social and cultural spheres. Social scientists have conducted valuable research in this field. Among the social scientists, economists have placed more importance in studying tourism (G. Tantrigama, 1994).

In world context, the researchers found when tourism came to the local community there are some socio cultural impacts were occurred. Spanou (2007) stated that the impact of tourism on the host destination is an area that has been greatly researched by many tourism related authors.

The social aspects of tourism fall into three different categories (Affeld, 1975).

1. The tourist. Demand for the services, motivations to travel, attitudes and expectations of tourists
2. The host. The Local community, Local Organizations and Tourism employees
3. Tourist–host interrelationships. The nature of the relationship between hosts and guests, with the consequences of these contacts and with the attributes of the interacting parties.

The host culture is the culture of the host country with which tourists are in contact (Jafari, 1987). Tourist culture is the culture that tourists bring on vacation. Tourists culture explains the tourists' behavior. The elements that generate cultural differences are manners, values, material items, language, education, customs, religion, economics, politics, social institutions/family structure, aesthetics and attitudes (Hofstede 1991; Hampden-Turner& Trompenaars, 1993). Tourism can affect the culture, thoughts, clothing, behaviors and lifestyles of local people of a destination, these can be both positive and negative (Yildiz et al., 2011).

The negative socio-cultural aspects of the tourist industry can be broken down as follows according to the author, Nandasena Rathnapala, (1984):Sex Behavior: Prostitution, Homosexuality, Nudism and such other instances of behavior. The erosion of traditional values such as those caused in the institutions of the family, religion and education. Drug addiction, alcoholism and tourism. The impact of tourism on traditional culture, religion, arts and crafts and such other areas.

Paul Brunt and Paul Courtney argued that Communities in many rural, coastal, and urban destinations in Britain are affected somewhat by tourism. Its socio cultural effects in these areas, however, are less well documented, as much of the academic literature concentrates on the impacts in developing countries, or else evaluates them at a more general level. (Brunt & Courtney, 1999).

The ability to define and quantify the various socio cultural impacts of tourism on the local communities helps to create effective strategies that avoid potential conflicts between guest and host (Brunt and Courtney, 1999).

Andereck (1995) has found some environmental negative impacts which occurs on the residents such as air pollution due to emissions from vehicles; water pollution due to waste water discharge, road oil; large buildings which destroy views, clashing and unfitting architectural styles, noise pollution from vehicles and tourists; damage to geological formations such as erosion and vandalism. Based on the literature, the researcher has found the below positive and negative impacts that occur on the residents of the Mount Lavinia due to tourism activities.

Table 1. The impacts occurred on the residents

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Economic Impact	More jobs and income methods are available	Price of Land & Houses have been increased
	More facilities are available for the community due to tourism	The jobs are low paid and seasonal jobs
		Cost of living has increased
Socio-cultural Impact	Quality of life has improved due to tourism	There can be seen copying behavior among the community.
	Cultural values have been preserved	There are conflicts between haves and have-nots
	Cross cultural understanding can be seen	There is a use of Child labor for tourism
		There are families which were disrupted due to tourism
		The unacceptable human behaviors have increased due to tourism
		Security issues in Mount Lavinia has increased due to tourism
		Residents have been displaced from the area and natural resources use
		Tourism disturb the livelihood of the residents
		Privacy and stranger feeling is there for the residents
Environmental	The nature is preserved due to tourism	Pollution (air, water, noise, solid waste, and visual) is there
		Open space and natural beauty has lost

Source: based on the literature

2.2 Identifying Residents' profile

As investigated by different researchers, the perception of the impacts of tourism can be differ from person to person based on their demographic features such as Gender (Mason & Cheyne, 2000); Age (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996); Civil status (Allen et al., 1988); Having children (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996); Education level (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003); Participation (Lankford & Howard, 1994); Community attachment/length of residence (Haley et al., 2005); Type of work /Economic dependence(Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003).

2.3 Identifying Residents' perceptions

As cited in Yoon et al (1999), There were so many researches have been done in the past to identify the community perception towards tourism developments such as Akis et al., 1996; Ap 1992; Belisle & Hoy 1980; Chen 2000; Getz 1994; Hernandez, Cohen, and Garcia 1996; Jurowski et al. 1997; King et al. 1993; Lankford 1994; Lindberg and Johnson 1997; Liu and Var 1986; Long et al. 1990; McCool and Martin 1994.

In order to identify the position of host people toward tourist groups, a big part of those studies have been accentuated on examination of attitude differences among various types of host community members; several identification criteria such as remoteness from central tourism destinations and patterns of contacts with visitors, financial dependence on tourism sector, and demographics features have been taken into consideration by authors (Long et al.,1990). In most cases it has been shown that as local people have lived in a tourism-oriented community, the more negative their attitude towards this sector became (Allen et al.,1988; Liu & Var, 1986; Sheldon & Var, 1984).

People of the community dependent on tourism and related employments, and also their family members and associates, have been noticed to be more approving and tolerant towards presence of strangers within the community (Milman& Pizam, 1988; Pizam & Pokela, 1985; Perdue et al.,1987)In 1985 it was stated by Murphy: 'if tourism is to merit its community of being "the hospitality industry", it must look beyond its own doors and employees to consider the social and cultural impacts it is having on the host community at large'(Murphy, 1985:133).

2.4 Identification of the problem statement

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority has identified 45 areas to develop tourism to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on the community. Mount Lavinia is one of forty-five and it is known as the beach which closes proximity to Colombo. Mount Lavinia is famous among tourists because of the historical Mount Lavinia Hotel and the beach which calls as Golden Mile Beach. The Tourist and Hotel Trade which is well established in Mount Lavinia have also contributed to the development of the commercial and service sectors, especially in the Mount Lavinia area. As such, many shops dealing with gems and jewellery, spas and Ayurveda, local handicrafts, textiles (Batik and handlooms) are seen along the access roads to the hotels. Most of the hotels and tourist shops are not registered with Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

As 2011 census, there were 8374 people residing in the Mount Lavinia. Out of 1208 peoples were living in Coastal area. Community Concern Societies have been working for the past 28 years in the Dehiwela, Mount Lavinia, Ratmalana beach slums - which are located on the Western coastline of Sri Lanka and are suburbs of Colombo. One of the main income earners in this area is derived from the fishing industry. Due to its coastal location, tourism also contributes to the income of these residents. The average income of a family in this area is approximately Rs 3,500 (about US\$ 30) per month. Due to tourism activities in Mount Lavinia, there are so many impacts have occurred on the community because that the residential areas and non-residential areas have not been differentiated well. The residents have to live in the area where tourism is activated. Due to this unplanned and unapproved tourism developments in the Mount Lavinia, most of the residents are having issues in living there. Some of the residents have said that impacts due to tourism are positive while some disagree to the above statement.

The main research question of this study is to identify the most affected impacts occur on the residents due to tourism in their perspective. While examining the perception of the residents towards the tourism impacts, this research has attempted to find the relationships in between the demographic factors of tourism with the tourism impacts.

3. Methodology used

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through questionnaires a while secondary data were collected reading the newspapers, books, police records of Mount Lavinia and internet searching. Questionnaires were distributed among 120 residents in the area and SPSS 16.0 was used to analyze the data. Convenience sampling method was used since that the Mount Lavinia is a highly residential area during the months of January and February 2016. Questionnaires were measured using the five point Likert Scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The questionnaire was translated into the Sinhala language when the respondents requested. Most of the questionnaires were filled on the beach, on the way and inside some hotels and tourist shops. Hundred and twenty useable questionnaires were completed and analyzed. In addition to questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were held with the local community and tourism service providers.

4. Results and the discussion

Table 2. Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Factor		Total No	Percentage
Descendant of Mt Lavinia	Yes	49	40.8
	No	71	59.2
Gender	Male	89	74.2
	Female	31	25.8
Age(Years)	18-30	48	40
	31-45	30	25
	46-60	27	22.5
	Above 61	15	12.5

Civil Status	Single	67	55.8
	Married	42	35
	Divorced	11	9.2
Education Level	O/Ls	42	35
	A/Ls	36	30
	Diploma/Certificate	24	20
	Degree or above	18	15
Income Level(Rs Per Month)	10000 or less	17	14.2
	10001-25000	44	36.7
	25001-50000	35	29.2
	50001 and above	24	20
Tourism Engagement	Yes	79	65.8
	No	41	34.2
Type of tourism engagement	Employment at a hotel	30	25
	Taxi service	10	8.3
	Guide	8	6.7
	Life guard	2	1.7
	Employment at a Tourist shop	12	10
	Rent income	7	5.8
	Owner of a business	10	8.3
	No tourism income	41	34.2
Proportion of tourism income	full	55	45.8
	3/4	20	16.7
	2/4	4	3.3
	Nothing	41	34.2

Source: Researcher's field observations

The 60% of the total respondents were not the descendants of Mount Lavinia. While almost 74% of the respondents were males. The 55% of the respondents are single while 35% were married. With regard to their educational levels, majority (about 35%) were had only ordinary level qualification while 30% had Advanced level qualification and only 35% had tertiary education. Almost 56% of the total respondents were had the total household income in between Rs 10001 to Rs 50000 per month. In terms of the tourism engagement of the household, about 66% of the respondents were having relations to the tourism industry in the area. The 25% of the respondents were engage in the employment at hotels while 34.2% stated that they do not get any income from the tourism activity. Almost 45% of the respondents' income was generated only through the tourism activities.

Table 3. The Mean and Standard deviation of the responses

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Negative socio-cultural impacts		
There can be seen copying behavior among the community(1)	3.88	0.958
There are conflicts between haves and have-nots(2)	4.22	0.804
There is a use of Child labor for tourism (3)	3.01	1.531
There are families which were disrupted due to tourism (4)	3.58	1.135
The unacceptable human behaviors have increased due to tourism(5)	3.76	1.181
Security issues in Mount Lavinia has increased due to tourism(6)	4.12	0.842
Residents have been displaced from the area and natural resources use(7)	3.55	1.194
Tourism disturb the livelihood of the residents(8)	3.33	1.311
Privacy lost and stranger feeling is there for the residents(9)	3.83	1.133
Positive socio-cultural impacts		
Quality of life has improved due to tourism(10)	3.26	1.293
Cultural values have been preserved(11)	1.93	0.796
Cross cultural understanding can be seen(12)	3.41	1.273
Negative environmental Impacts		
Pollution (air, water, noise, solid waste, and visual) is there(13)	3.88	1.117
Open space and natural beauty has lost(14)	3.66	1.17
Positive environmental impacts		
The nature is preserved due to tourism(15)	1.98	0.799
Negative economic impacts		
Price of Land & Houses have been increased(16)	3.88	0.881
The jobs are low paid and seasonal jobs(17)	3.19	1.404
Cost of living has increased(18)	3.87	1.045
Positive economic Impacts		
More facilities are available for the community due to tourism(19)	3.4	1.198
More jobs and income methods are available(20)	3.86	2.437
General perception		
Tourism brings more benefits than costs(21)	3.29	1.233

Source: Researcher's field observations

When considering the Table 3, there can be seen some important aspects of the community perception on tourism. The highest mean values in the table can be seen for issues related to security and the concerns of haves and have nots representing 4.12 and 4.22. The lowest mean values representing the disagreement levels of the community with the questionnaire variables. The most of the respondents were disagreed with the statements of that due to tourism, the preservation of culture and environment is there.

Table 4. Correlation

	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Negative environmental impacts (NEI)	120	-.715**	.000
Positive environmental impacts (PEI)	120	-.258**	.004
Positive economic impacts (PECOI)	120	.533**	.000
Negative economic impacts (NECOI)	120	-.539**	.000
Positive socio-cultural impacts (PSCI)	120	.718**	.000
Negative socio-cultural impacts (NSCI)	120	-.702**	.000

Source: Researcher's field observations

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

Dependent variable is Perception of the residents towards tourism

The NEI sig. value for two tailed test is .000., and it is less than 0.01. This indicates that the relationship is statistically significant between NEI and the perception of the residents. Pearson correlation value is -.715, which exceeds 0.5, and it indicates that there is a strong negative relationship between the perception and the negative environmental impacts. The Sig. value for PEI is .004, and it is less than 0.01 where it implicates that the relationship in between PEI and the perception is statistically significant. Pearson correlation is -.258 and it is lower than 0.5 stating that there is a week negative relationship between the perception and PEI.

When considering the PECOI Sig. value, it is .000 and less than 0.01 which implies that the relationship is statistically significant and the Pearson correlation value is .533, where the value is exceeding 0.5, which indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between the perception and the PECOI. NECOI Sig. value is .000, and it is less than 0.01. Pearson correlation value is -.539 and it is slightly exceeding the value 0.5 indicating that there is a moderate negative relationship between NECOI and the perception.

PSCI Sig value is 0.000 and it is less than 0.01 which indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between two variables. Pearson correlation value is .718 and it is exceeding 0.5 indicating that there is a moderate positive relationship between NECOI and the perception.

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851 ^a	.724	.709	.665

a. Predictors: (Constant), NSCI, PEI, PECOI, PSCI, NECOI, NEI

There is a strong positive correlation is there indicating that if any one of the independent variables (NSCI, PEI, PECOI, PSCI, NECOI, NEI) is changed, holding the other five factors constant, the dependent variable will be changed by 72.4%.

Table 6. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.306	.571		7.539	.000
	NEI	-.407	.100	-.347	-4.050	.000
	PEI	-.191	.062	-.157	-3.076	.003
	PECOI	.130	.046	.167	2.819	.006
	NECOI	.252	.114	.185	2.219	.028
	PSCI	.414	.092	.312	4.517	.000
	NSCI	-.457	.147	-.316	-3.122	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Perception of the residents

Coefficient table for multi independent variables disclose whether the above five independent variables affect to the perception of the residents in Mount Lavinia. Sig value for NEI is .000 and less than .005 at 95% confidence level stating that statistically significant relationship in between the NEI and the perception. There is a negative value (-.407) as the slope value and it indicates that NEI did not influence the perception of the residents when considering the combine effect of five variables together. And also the Sig. value for PEI is 0.003 and it is less than 0.05 at 95% of the confidence level indicating that there is a significantly relationship in between the PEI and the perception and the negative slope value (-.191) indicates that PEI did not influence the perception of the residents when considering the combine effect of five variables together.

The Sig. value for PECOI is 0.006 and it is more than .005 at 95% confidence level stating that there is a moderate relationship between PECOI and the perception. The slope value is .130 and it indicates that PECOI can influence the perception of the residents when considering the combine effect of the five variables together. And also this positive slope indicates that if the PECOI is changed by 1%, then the perception of the residents will be changed by 13%.

Moreover, when considering NECOI Sig. value, that is 0.028, which is more than 0.005, at 95% confidence level, indicates that there is a strong relationship between NECOI and dependent variable. The positive value (.252) of the slope represents that if the NECOI is changed by 1%, then by 25.2%, the perception of the residents will be changed.

Sig value for PSCI is .000 and less than .005 at 95% confidence level stating that statistically significant relationship in between the PSCI and the perception. There is a positive value (.414) as the slope value and it indicates that PSCI will influence the perception of the residents by 41.4% when considering the combine effect of five variables together. Finally, NSCI Sig value is 0.002 where it is lower than 0.05 at 95% confidence level indicating its statistically significant relationship in between the NSCI and the perception of the residents. Slope value is -.457 indicating that PSCI will not influence the residents' perceptions when considering the combine effect of the five independent variables together with the perception of the residents.

One of the important finding of this study is that the change of the perception of the residents can be done giving them more positive economic and positive socio-cultural impacts. Therefore, the development of the sustainable tourism plan in the Mount Lavinia should be focused more on giving positive economic and positive socio-cultural benefits to the residents in the area. Some commentaries of the respondents can be linked here that the people high class need the socio-cultural positive impacts while the low class/low income holders need more positive economic impacts.

The most of the respondents of this study were engage in tourism business or the activates. Therefore, because of the economic benefits they received/ the economic dependency, they do not like to accept that tourism in Mount Lavinia has adverse impacts on the residents. Most of the respondent did not agree that due to tourism their environment and the culture has been recovered. The most of the residents said that the environment is highly polluted during the weekends. And also some said that the problem of the culture is not because of the foreign tourists in Mount Lavinia, but because of the local people who come for the hotels and the beach searching for low cost hotels and places for romance. They mentioned that the most of the hoteliers in the area are providing the room facilities for the young crowd during the weekdays. Most of them, highlighted that tourism authorized people should take necessary actions to abolish these businesses for the sake of the residents' wellbeing.

When considering the relationship between the demographic profile and the tourism impacts, the following things can be found and evidenced the previous researchers' findings. There is a significant relationship between tourism income proportion and the negative tourism impacts perception. When the residents depend mainly on the tourism income, they do not perceive the negativity in tourism activities. (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). There is a significant relationship between the education levels and the perception of tourism impacts. When the resident is well educated that they would perceive more negative impacts. (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). There is a significant relationship between civil status of the respondents and the tourism impacts. Singles were ignoring most of the negativity. (Allen et al., 1988).

Limitations of the study can be identified as follows. A new research should be done with the residents who do not engage in the income generating activity related to tourism to calculate the actual impact of the tourism on the residents. The most of the respondents of this study were engage in tourism related income generation and most of them do not concern much about the negativity that brings tourism to their lives due to the economic benefits that they receive. Therefore, a new study on the residents should be focus more on the residents without any tourism engagement. This research has done in a small tourism area in the country and it would be better to do a research including the mass tourism areas such as Negombo, Bentota, Mirissa and Passikudah. And also that the perception of the residents in tourism impacts in other countries should need to be concerned.

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