

Studying tourism management



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Introduction

Tourism studies including tourism management are novel concepts and have only evolved in the past 30 years. Tourism management is a subject that consists of many facets. “ The subject area of international tourism management is so wide and varied, covering aspects as diverse as economics, accounting, marketing, politics, physical planning, sociology and environmental studies (just to mention a few) that it makes the production of a comprehensive textbook a most difficult task” writes Edmund Heery from Kingston Business School about the book “ The Management of International Tourism” from Witt et al. But not only are the areas copious, also will they vary depending on what kind of tourism management is examined; is it the activities of a tourist manager in a large hotel on the Balearic Islands or is it a tourist development planner in the Gambia. Other writers believe that the main principles of tourism management focuses on how to influence visitors’ choices of location, access, timing and product provision and to develop local understanding and knowledge of appropriate balance between demand and supply. This would imply that tourism management is about marketing, infrastructure, access, seasonality and educational efforts. And this then at least partly seems inline with Heerys’ view.

This report will not focus on the day to day activities of tourist managers, but rather address the wider implications of tourism and thus outline the more grand tourism management principals. Coltman identified that tourism affects are divided into three elements; economical, environmental and

socio-cultural. And thus it seems that the main aims of tourism management are to maximize the economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits of tourism, while minimizing the associated costs. The scope of the following report will by no means be exhaustive due to the limitations of time and word count.

Discussion

Tourism is an ancient phenomenon and existed already in the times of Mesopotamia. However, it has only started to expand significantly post-Cook area of 1880 and it was not until post-war 1950's that modern mass tourism appeared⁶. This growth of mass tourism has showed some horrific consequences and made it quite clear that the sustainable planning and development of a tourist area are some of the crucial tourist management principals.

Tourism Planning and Development

To outline each and every facet of tourism planning and development would leave one writing an entire book. However, a common contemporary theme in tourism and development, which became fashionable within the past 20 years, is the issue of sustainable tourism¹. Considering the Brundtland Commission (1987) development is sustainable when “ it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. At the Globe ‘ Conference in Vancouver a different definition was offered; “ Sustainable tourism development is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that we can fulfil economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.

Following this notion of sustainable tourism, there are three main goals that are to be achieved by tourism development:

1. Increasing economic value of tourism
2. An improvement in the life quality of people
3. Protection and responsible use of natural resources

Therefore, the tourism managers planning and development methods encompasses principals such as:

- The formulation of tourism policy
- Finding a balance between the social, environmental and economical aspect
- Clarification of the role of government
- Integration of the public and private sector
- Slow paced indigenous tourism
- Continuous marketing planning and efforts
- Adopt a regional approach towards tourism planning
- Cluster tourism activities
- Sustainable planning of natural and cultural resources
- Multi-disciplinary research, training and education
- Good access and accessibility

All these principals and methods are guidelines for tourist managers to ensure the sustainable development, and maybe also the sustainable running, of a tourist area. Again there will be numerous variations with each different situation, but the general principals and methods should follow the same patterns of sustainability. Subsequently, there will be an outline of the main tourism management principals and methods, analyzed in terms of the <https://assignbuster.com/studying-tourism-management/>

three central areas of concern in tourism management, namely; Economical, Environmental and Socio-cultural impacts.

Economical tourism management principals and methods

It often seems that one of the main reasons for tourism development in a country is the economical gain that is expected to come with it. But whether the economical gains will really exceed the costs (not only economically) of tourism, will greatly depend on the methods and principals used by the tourism management. Naturally there are the staffing costs, utilities and overheads etc. And in the day to day management, methods should be used in order to lessen these costs to a minimal, i. e. through better staffing rotas or by using electricity and water saving measures. However, these measures are mainly concerned with single tourism entities, such as a hotel. But in this report, we are more interested in the grand economic management principals.

There can be many positive economical aspects of tourism, such as a better balance of payments and easier access to foreign exchange, the contribution to GNP, the multiplier effect, job creation, revenues for the government , direct and taxation revenues and contribution to GDP⁶. However the negative impacts are also significant and include costs for infrastructure development, opportunity costs and over-dependence of the destination on tourists, low skilled work, leakages and fluctuations in intake.

As analyzed above, it seems the main principals and methods of tourism management should be focused on trying to minimize the costs and leakages that come with tourism and to maximize the profits.

Leakages are caused by the need to support tourism, in the forms of importing food and drinks, capital, technology, capital outflows through repatriation of staff, governmental investment in infrastructure to support tourism, and generally are highest in MNE's. Arguably therefore reducing the numbers of MNE's in a tourist destination, will not only minimize leakages by lessening capital outflows and repatriation of staff, but automatically also increase the multiplier effect by getting tourists to spend more money in the local economy. And arguably, another method for tourist managers would be to try and employ as much local staff as possible, ensure decent salaries, and if possible provide them with training in order to give them the chance for a promotion. This should then decrease the repatriation of staff, and at the same time increase some of the local employees' earnings possibility, which in turn should increase the multiplier effect, and may then as a result also benefit the socio-culture of the destinations.

"Economics is about how people make choices" and thus those choices should be influenced and guided as best as possible. Marketing strategies should be used in an attempt to increase visitor numbers, increase average length of stay, average daily expenditure and diminish seasonality. However, it will be shown below, that these measures, although beneficial economically, may further harm the environmental and socio-cultural aspects of the destination thus cause indirect costs, and should therefore be evaluated carefully.

Environmental tourism management principals and methods

Lickorish and Jenkins outline that tourism development can be identified as being the main cause for environmental degradation in almost every country

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where there is tourism. The damages vary from water, air and noise pollution, to garbage on streets and beaches, biodiversity damages, traffic congestion, wildlife deterioration etc. Some of these damages will be irreversible and harm not only the tourist destination and its industry, but will also add to global pollution.

Since the physical and cultural environments are often the main attractions of a tourist destination¹⁰, it should be a crucial principal to tourism managers to use methods to minimize environmental damages to ensure the possibility of future business.

There are many methods a tourism manager can use to lessen environmental impacts. The list is endless and will include every possible measure from energy saving light bulbs, to water saving taps and flushes and environmentally friendly cleaning detergents, to limiting the visas and thus visitor number and awareness programmes for tourist and locals. The main point is that tourism managers' main principals should include every possible action to lessen the environmental impacts of tourism. In some cases this will even increase the profits by cutting costs, such as utilities. However, even if it decreases the profits, such as in terms of limiting the number of visitors' entry, it will provide the possibility for future gains by tourism in not destroying the natural resources used to attract tourists.

And to conclude this section, one of the vital principals to ensure the success of environmental policies is the involvement of the government in this process. Arguably the government should implement laws on land usage and ensure destinations do not get over-built. Also should it be their

responsibility to ensure that there is appropriate infrastructure to deal with the volume of tourism and to protect rare natural heritages such as Coral Reefs.

Socio-cultural tourism management principals and methods

Socio-cultural impacts can be measured on statistics of crime rates, ratio tourists to locals, cost of living for locals, increase in prostitution, large difference between rich tourists and poor locals etc. Another management method that can be used in identifying the level of socio-cultural impacts of tourism is Doxey's Irridex Model.

And naturally, tourism managers should try and avoid reaching the last stages of the Irridex Model in trying to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the socio-culture of the destination.

To prevent negative socio-cultural impacts, cultural heritage, religious buildings and cultural events should be kept preserved and original instead of staged. However, this is only a drop of water in the ocean. Tourism can cause severe damages in socio-cultural terms, and some writers even suggest that tourism is the new form of imperialism, whereby the rich western countries invade tourism nations and making them their subservients.

Nevertheless, tourism can also have a positive side and can severely increase the standard of living for the host inhabitant, as well as helping in the preservation of cultural and traditional heritage.

Some tourism management methods which help maximize positive and minimize negative impacts of tourism on the socio-culture are:

- Education about tourism
- Promote cross-cultural exchange
- Impose visitor codes of conduct
- Ensure locals access to cultural facilities
- Preserve local architecture
- Maintain authenticity
- Market to cultural sensitive tourists
- Limit tourist numbers

Tourism Carrying Capacity

A principal that has been much talked of is the carrying capacity assessment. It can be used as a tourism management method in order to control and implement sustainable tourism on all fronts. Tourism carrying capacity assessment can be applied in various forms, for example; it could determine the limit of tourism development in a place, or the limit of visitor numbers. It tries to balance the economic goals with the physical and facility carrying capacity of the destination, the social goals with the social carrying capacity of the destination and the environmental goals with the ecological carrying capacity of the destination to make sustainable tourism development a reality²⁰.

However, research has shown that carrying capacity management has been limited in its success of application, mainly due to unrealistic expectations, untenable assumptions, inappropriate value judgment and insufficient legal support systems.

Furthermore, there are various other tourism management principles such as the; environmental impact assessment, limits of acceptable change, visitor impact management and visitor experience and resource management .

None of these tools will provide the management with an all panacea but they can support the managements' efforts in building sustainable tourism.

Conclusion

The study of tourism management is a novel concept and covers subjects from marketing to politics. But its main principal should be the long term successful running of the tourist destination. To achieve such, sustainable development and management of the tourist destination will be required. And thus the main aim of tourism management is to maximize the economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits of tourism, while minimizing the associated costs.

A common theme that has surfaced during the text above is that tourism managers should not work single-handedly, but instead collaborate with the local government and public bodies. The legal enforcement is one of the main concerns, but also if numbered visas are to be distributed, the tourism manager alone will not be able to implement such without help. And generally will the success of sustainable tourism be more likely if the government and tourism managers are pulling on one string.

The methods used to achieve sustainable tourism are numerous. But the main principal stays the same; they are all aimed at the protection of the host destination, rather than focusing on the tourists demand. Clearly do the tourist demands need to be considered, but it should not be the main focus

for tourist managers when designing the tourist product. And if all tourist managers adhere to those main principals and transform them in their methods, then hopefully there is a sustainable future for tourism.

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