Tourism and hospitality industry in kuwait essay

Business, Industries



The tourism and hospitality industry in the world confers a number of growth and development opportunities for different countries but also poses a considerable number of potential problems. To the host country, the funds obtained from tourism are important in supporting various community services that would otherwise not be developed such as schools, dispensaries and so forth. Another benefit of the tourism and hospitality industry is that it promotes civic involvement in pride (Williams 43).

This is facilitated through provision of services such accommodation, trips around sceneries, and many others. Tourism also provides a forum for cultural exchange through which important ideas can be borrowed from the visitors. In addition, tourism and hospitality help in the development of infrastructure such as roads used in accessing the phenomenal features, and provision of other amenities such as electricity, which is vital in the context of regional development and growth. Moreover, through tourism, a country's population learns new skills, which are important in creation of employment to augment economic growth (Goeldner and Ritchie 45). Tourism also fosters preservation and conservation of a country's resources, which are important for cultural and heritage development.

It also facilitates community beautification, which is important in environmental revitalization (Goeldner and Ritchie 45). Briefly, the positive impacts of the tourism and hospitality industry are almost innumerable. In spite of the numerous benefits of the tourism and hospitality industry, it can be argued that the industry presents a number of challenges and threats. To begin with, the incoming visitors bring a conflict of ideas and lifestyles, which

may cause damage the host community's social fabric (Goeldner and Ritchie 45).

Tourists also cause crowding and congestion particularly in areas that have a multiplicity of features to be viewed. This requires rapid expansion of towns to accommodate visitors, which may not happen in a short period. It is therefore common to find tourism-oriented towns and cities highly congested with foreigners (tourists) who even tend to have more influence than the local people do (De Kadt, World Bank and Unesco 21).

Another problem with tourism is that too much attention may be paid to tourists at the expense of a country's local residents. This may deny the local residents opportunities for recreation and cause them to engage in unscrupulous activities such as crime (Goeldner and Ritchie 49). Additionally, as more facilities such as beach resorts are made to accommodate tourists, this may lead to displacement of hosts from their homes and cause them to resent the tourists, leading to a negative opinion about tourism (De Kadt, World Bank and Unesco 21). The tourism and hospitality industry is also responsible for an increase in several issues such as pollution, destruction of beaches and coral reefs, competition for resources and so on.

In the context of the context of the above issues, this paper will examine the tourism and hospitality industry in Kuwait. The paper will examine the impacts, both positive and negative, of the industry by addressing the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects. In the evaluation, relevant theories will be used to use to support arguments. Information about tourism in KuwaitKuwait is a small country of largely Islamic faith

located in the Middle East on the Persian Gulf. The country lies between Saudi Arabia and Iran and is a major tourist destination. Some of the famous tourist destinations in the country include the Dhow Harbor, Aqua Park, Dickson house, and the popular National Council for Arts and Letters.

The oil industry in Kuwait is also a major tourist attraction. As a famous tourist attraction, Kuwait is well served by road and air as well as marine services (Husayn et al 23; Oxford Business Group 24). Historical buildings and towers also form part of the major tourist attractions in Kuwait.

One of these is the Liberation Monument, which provides many sightseeing features. Others include Bayt Al-Bader in Kuwait City and Sadu House (Husayn et al 25). Kuwait also has beautiful sceneries in terms of several islands such as the Failaka and Green Islands. Additionally, the country's Messila Beach attracts tourists for sunbathing and other beach games (Oxford Business Group 25).

Kuwait also attracts tourists due its unique religious sites. These sites include the Grand Mosque that represents Islamic faith and Our Lady of Arabia Church and Holy Family Cathedral, which are all located in Kuwait City (Kuwait Tourism). Many other mosques in the country depict a blend of both contemporary and traditional architecture, which are very important tourist pullers.

In addition, there are many museums, which have artifacts that include art, craftwork and architecture of the ancient Kuwait. These include the Saif Marzooq Al-Shamlan Museum, the Tareq Rajab Museum and the Kuwait

National Museum (Kuwait Tourism). Other tourist attractions in Kuwait include a number of entertainment centers in such as Al-Sha'ab Leisure Park and the Zoological Garden of Kuwait, which are famous amazement parks in the country. They are attractive for both their observable features as well as their entertainment aspect (Kuwait Tourism)All the features described above attract large numbers of tourists in Kuwait, an aspect that is both beneficial and disadvantageous. The impacts will be discussed in the following sections by considering the factors highlighted earlier in the introduction. Economic impactsPositive Economic impactsContribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)The tourism and hospitality industry had been a major boon for Kuwait's economy recent years.

This is exemplified by the status of contributions made by the tourism and travel industry to the country's GDP. It was projected that the industry would contribute US\$5. 614 billion to Kuwait's GDP, and that the figure would rise to US\$12. 5 billion by the year 2019 (World Travel and Tourism Council). The sharp rise projected to occur in ten years shows how important the tourism industry is to Kuwait's economy. Tourism has also been significant in transforming Kuwait's economy through the diversified sources of income that have helped to stabilize economy.

In addition, the industry provides extra revenue to the Kuwaiti government through the taxes collected for a multiplicity of services directly linked to the industry such as airport taxes, restaurant taxes, park entrance taxes, sales taxes, employee income taxes and so on (World Travel and Tourism Council). Creation of employment opportunities in terms of employment, the tourism

industry as been a major employer. It is estimated that on average, between 65, 000 and 71, 000 jobs in Kuwait are provided by the tourism industry and this accounts for between 2.

6 per cent and 3. 5 per cent of entire Kuwaiti employed population (World Travel and Tourism Council). Apart from directly creating employment opportunities, the tourism and hospitality industry offers opportunities to do business such as operation of hotels and so forth. Thus due to the industry, many jobs have been created indirectly in tourism support facilities such as food processing and production, housing and construction. The high rate of employment notable in the tourism industry is necessitated by the fact that the industry is labor intensive. This is shown by the requirement for tour guides, travel agents, cooks, drivers, potters, personal assistants and so forth (Coleman and Crang 56). The combined factors of the tourism industry's contribution to the Kuwait economy are projected to increase over time since the tourism industry is steadily increasing tourist attractions in the country. The economic significance of the tourism industry to Kuwait can thus not be gainsaid given the direct benefits.

Improved export earnings (foreign exchange earnings) Tourism presents an important contribution to export earnings in Kuwait. The country earns significant income from goods sold to foreign tourists. The figure was projected to reach US\$3, 512. 5 million in 2009 and later rise to US\$9, 092 million in the year 2019 (World Travel and Tourism Council).

The fact that a steady rise in export earnings from tourism means that Kuwait's economy is likely to improve tremendously in the next ten years. Other positive economic impacts The other positive impacts of the tourism industry are related to a multiplier effect in that as tourists bring money into the economy, it spent over and over thus ameliorating various areas of economic development (Smith, Melanie and Robinson 65). Additionally, the industry increases the convergence of various industries that are dependent on each other, thus increasing the rate of development of such industries such as banking, online services, shipping so on.

As highlighted earlier, the tourism industry in Kuwait has caused an improvement in the infrastructures used in transport such as road, air and marine transport services. This has been pivotal in improving the general conditions of transport in the country. The condition has facilitated the development of other industries such as the processing industry, whose operations are pegged on the availability of a good transport network for distribution.; Negative economic impactsLeakageAlthough there are significant earnings from tourism to Kuwait, the negative economic consequences associated the earnings cannot be gainsaid.

This is because the direct income earned from tourism can only be calculated as the money that remains locally after deduction of taxes.

However, there is usually a huge leakage because most of the payments are made where services or products are purchased (Goeldner, Charles and Ritchie 67). It is estimated that in many cases, tourists spend on average 80 per cent of their money on flights (paid to airlines), hotel bookings and in many giant international companies (which are able to provide the standard of services and products required by foreign tourists).(Goeldner, Charles and

Leakages imply that if the investors in the tourism industry are not interested in the government's quest for tourism development, most of the sector's economic benefits will not be realized in the host country. This issue is widely realized in Kuwait since most of the hospitality service providers are private business moguls (Goeldner, Charles and Ritchie 78). In addition, there is a lot of expenditure on tourist-related imports (most of which are sourced from the tourists' country of origin), which means that even though a lot of revenue is being realized from tourism, the same ends up being used on purposes that are not of benefit to the local communities.; Heavy costs of putting up infrastructuresAlthough Kuwait has many infrastructures such as road transport systems to access tourism sites, the exorbitant costs involved in putting up the infrastructures are in a way a drawback to development in that a lot of attention was paid to the tourist attractions rather than development of the country as a whole. Thus, it is not uncommon to find very nice roads leading to museums and beaches while most rural are served with poor transport networks (De Kadt, World Bank and UNESCO 89)Seasonal employment and low remuneration for workersAlthough the

tourism industry in Kuwait has been doing well in terms of providing employment opportunities, it is regrettable that most of the jobs are seasonal an unpredictable. This seasonality band unpredictability depends on different events that occur in the world- both natural and human-induced.

For instance, the 1991 Gulf War in Kuwait greatly impacted on the tourism industry (World Travel and Tourism Council). The country is also affected seasonally by natural disasters such as dust storms, which are a threat to the tourism industry. Additionally other unexpected occurrences include factors such as the recent global economic recession, which affected the number of tourists going to Kuwait a great deal, and the global threat of terrorism. The combined effects of the unexpected occurrences leads employers in the tourism industry to hire workers seasonally and not offer them employment contracts. This means that the jobs can be terminated at any time deemed necessary. The effect of this is that the laid-off workers usually have a tendency to engage in crime in order to seek alternative sources of income.

Since the workers are not employed on contract basis they are usually paid lowly, and this affects their meaningful contribution the economy. Such workers also find difficulties in getting employment benefits, training or even recognition of their experience, and are subjected to unsatisfactory working or housing conditions. Enclave tourismAn enclave refers to an area or a region, country or city that is inhabited by a people who are culturally distinct from its neighbours. Enclave tourism thus refers to tourism in areas that are geographically isolated off or closed from the entire region of a

country (Williams 121). Such include resorts containing momentous facilities required by tourists and which therefore encourage them to spend most of time within the facility. In Kuwait, examples of enclaves include the Al-Sha'ab Leisure Park and the Zoological Garden, which are self-contained facilities that limit the movement of tourists across Kuwait. The problem with enclave tourism in Kuwait is that it has created an imbalance in regional development in Kuwait.

Thus, while enclaves are well maintained regions, many other parts of the country remain underdeveloped. This is not desirable as it creates different classes of lifestyle between different regions; or causes the existence of " poor" and rich "regions." Economic dependenceA common tendency for tourism dependent-countries is to rely on the industry as a major contributor to GDP. This makes them vulnerable in case numbers of incoming tourists fall. Kuwait being in the conflict-prone Middle East area is particularly vulnerable to changes in number of tourists due to factors such as international terrorism threats, which are usually followed by travel advisories against travelling to the Middle East (Oxford Business Group 79). Mechanisms for controlling the impactsThere is need to control leakages by ensuring that the money spent by tourists in Kuwait is used for the good of the common people in the country. If the populace realize the direct benefits of tourism, they will be keener on ensuring that the industry flourishes further. The Kuwaiti government should encourage small-scale investors to invest in the tourism industry to avoid too much dependence on international companies as providers of essential services to tourists.

According to one motivational theory on tourism postulated by John Urry, a British sociological, tourists want more than authenticity, and that authenticity, and that authenticity is not the basis of tourism; rather a tourist wants change from work and routine, a total inversion of ordinary (Theories of Tourism). Examples of the features that provide these services in Kuwait include museums and traditional artefacts. If the local residents are encouraged to interact more with tourists and provide the services the required, the concept of leakages will be mitigated greatly. In order to ensure that the cost of putting up infrastructure for the tourism industry does not impact so much on the economy, such infrastructure should be put up in such a way that they are not limited to use by the tourism industry but they also serve other areas of national interest.

This will ensure multilevel economic growth. In order to ensure that the tourism industry plays a better role in creating employment opportunities, players in the sector should invest in more attractive features that are not seasonal such as museums, game reserves and national parks to ensure that the movement of tourists into the country remains almost constant all year round. This will ensure that tourism jobs will be more permanent and better paying than they currently are. The effect of enclave tourism should be avoided by ensuring that the tourism industry is spread throughout Kuwait. This can be done by ensuring that hotels and restaurants are not just built around beaches, as is the case now.

There is need to shift more focus to desert features such as sand dunes and desert storms as important tourist attractions and provide the necessary

facilities in deserts. The Kuwait government should avoid a situation where it can put too much dependence on tourism by ensuring that its other sectors such as the oil industry are well managed and therefore rely on tourism industry only as a supplementary contributor to the economy rather that a core sector. Social impacts and cultural impactsPositive social and cultural impactsAspects of community developmentFunds obtained from the tourism industry have been used in implementing a multiplicity of community based projects for the benefit of the society.

These include development of schools near important religious centers such as the Grand Mosque and Our Lady of Arabia Church in Kuwait City (Oxford Business Group 97). The move has encouraged civic involvement in pride as the public can identify with the learning institutions. The provision of various social amenities as a result of tourism activities has added impetus to the level of societal development in Kuwait. Social contacts between local people and tourists in Kuwait also result in mutual understanding, appreciation, awareness, tolerance, family boding and learning. Residents are educated about the other regions of the world from which the tourists originate and this enhances both social and cultural exchanges.

Thus, the residents in Kuwait's cities such as Abu Hulayfah, Kuwait City and Abi Huleifa are educated about the world without having to leave their homes (Coleman and Crang 86). The learning process is a two-way process since visitors also get an opportunity to learn about unique culture in Kuwait. In the places of learning, local communities in various cities in Kuwait also get benefits through the tourism industry's contribution to the development

of facilities like schools, internet cafes, libraries and so forth. These facilities have not only contributed to better leaning but have also improved communication both locally and internationally and have also enabled preservation of artifacts that would otherwise have been destroyed.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the tourism industry in Kuwait has led to development of infrastructures to facilitate better provision of services to tourists. Nevertheless, the use of these infrastructures is not limited to tourists only. The infrastructures have been important in serving many communities in Kuwait, particularly where facilities such as roads connect two regions such as Kuwait City and Abraq Khay?? n town (Coleman and Crang 87). Preservation of cultural values and other social aspects of lifeAnother positive cultural impact of the tourism industry is that the industry has facilitated the preservation of cultural events and local festivals. For instance, the three major museums in Kuwait (Saif Marzooq Al-Shamlan Museum, the Tareq Rajab Museum and the Kuwait National Museum) have been instrumental in organizing cultural events that depict the aspects of the traditional Kuwaiti society.

In addition, the religious institutions in Kuwait such as the Grand Mosque,
Our Lady of Arabia Church and the Holy Family Cathedral, which have upheld
different spiritual principles, are an important tourist attraction and this
helps in maintaining different beliefs. Negative social and cultural
impactsIntrusion of life and loss of privacyA common concern in the
development of the tourism industry is that it tends to expose local
communities too much to the influence of the visiting tourists. As tourists

visit their destinations, they bring along new ideas, some of which may not be compatible with the existing social and cultural norms. The new ideas tend to be guickly adopted by local people due to the perception that they are better than the normal local aspects of life. Nevertheless, in most cases there are conflicts as it is difficult to have different sets of ideas being used contemporaneously and working for the good of the society. Hence, the occurrence of news ideas is usually characterized by a clash with the existing norms.

The clash of ideas leads to significant changes in the characteristics of local communities. Most of the changes are usually considered as factors that lead to disintegration of the traditional social fabric. An example is the infiltration of pornographic material into Kuwait and other activities that are characteristic of moral decay such as drug and alcohol abuse (Coleman and Crang 56). The change in community characteristics has also affected family relationships and individual behavior. In this context, it has been estimated that the increase in sexually transmitted diseases in Kuwait can be attributed to occurrence of many cultures due to influence from tourism. It cannot be gainsaid that some tourists do portray behaviors that are totally unacceptable in societies such the religious Kuwait nation. The tourism industry in Kuwait has had a major impact on the loss of the country's traditional behavior. This is also referred to as cultural diffusion and results from the every day interactions between people of different cultures and societal beliefs (Williams 192).

Mechanisms for controlling the impactsIn order to avoid loss of the Kuwaiti's private life and intrusion into their social and cultural aspects, the Kuwait government should use watchdogs to monitor the activities of tourists to ensure that they do not bring into the country aspects of behaviour that are not of acceptable level in the country. This would involve ensuring that tourists do not bring drugs into the county and that the information they bring (through facilities such as such as books, electronic materials and so on) do not carry undesirable messages such as pornographic material. Instead, the government should provide more literature on Kuwait so that tourists can be encouraged to read more about Kuwait and its culture, societies and so on. This can be done in line with Dean MacCannnell's theory which that suggest that tourists search for authentic experiences and assume that modern life is empty and inauthentic (Theories of Tourism).

This can be achieved by ensuring that the Kuwaiti cultures remain intact or at least not so much influenced by other communities' cultures. Investors in Kuwait should make use of the growing communication facilities, which have been enhanced by tourism, to encourage learning by the people of Kuwait. There is need to ensure that the people of Kuwait use facilities such as the Internet to learn about other communities in the world rather than using the negative aspects of the facility such as surfing pornographic sites or other sites that cause an attenuation of the cultural fabric. Environmental impactsPositive environmental impactsFostering conservation of resources and maintenance of a clean environmentThe tourism industry in Kuwait fosters environmental conservation and preservation of all forms of resources i. e. natural, historical and cultural resources in a number of ways.

To begin with, most tourist sceneries are usually well maintained and are free from pollution.

For instance, the Al-Sha'ab Leisure Park, the Zoological Garden, and the Failaka and Green Islands are beautiful sceneries characterized by benign environments that are suitable for relaxation. The resources within these resources have also been protected from the wanton damage they would be subjected to in unprotected environments (Williams 182). In addition to the preservation aspect, the resources maintained for tourism purposes are usually well looked after by the neighboring communities if they know that they stand to benefit directly from the tourism industry. This ultimately encourages community involvement in beautification and revitalization projects. Through tourism, it is possible to create beneficial impacts on the environment by contributing significantly to environmental conservation and protection. The tourism industry is a good way of raising awareness of environmental matters and it can also serve a means to finance the protection of natural areas, thereby increasing their economic significance (Barcelona Field Studies Center). Looking at the various beach resorts in Kuwait, one would not be mistaken to say that the tourism industry is a clean industry.

However, as discussed in the following sections, the quality of various environments, both natural and artificial is significantly affected by the various activities that are used to shape some of the features into attractive sites. Thus, there seem to be more negative impacts of tourism than there are positive ones in the context of environmental issues. Negative

environmental impactsEnvironmental degradation due to construction activitiesThe relationship between the tourism industry and the environment is complex. Many of the activities used in designing or maintaining some unique tourist-pulling features cause hefty damages to the environment. Thus, the adverse effects of tourism-related activities cannot be gainsaid.

Many adverse effects of tourism to the environment result from construction activities that involve development of infrastructure such as airports, roads, marine courses and harbors and so forth (Husayn et al 78). It is obvious that while Kuwait boasts of having many roads and a good air transport system, many environmental impacts were realized in the construction of large roads and airports. Of particular interest are the construction activities directly related to the tourism and hospitality industry such as construction of tourism facilities that include but are not limited to resorts, restaurant, hotels, huge attractive shops, marinas and golf courses (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39).

The negative impacts of developing these facilities usually destroy the environment, even though gradually, to an extent that the original environmental resources cannot be retraced. Negative environmental impacts from tourism arise when the rate of visitor use of a given resource exceeds the environment's own natural ability to cope with the change in resources (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39). In Kuwait, there is evidence of massive degradation and destruction of various natural ecosystems (Husayn et al 78). This problem has been experience widely throughout most of the coastal region of the Gulf. Most of the destruction is attributed to factors

such as urban and industrial development, but tourism development has also been identified as one of the major reasons for destruction of the coastal region (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39). According to Abu-Zinada and Barth, large stretches of the coastal ecosystems in the Gulf region have been destroyed by developers for construction of chalets and beach resorts. In particular, the region south of Kuwait has been intensively damaged that it is now almost impossible to gain access to the coastline. In addition, the coastlines along the Kuwait shoreline and those bordering other countries such as Bahrain are currently artificial; the original beaches having been removed by developers putting up tourist-appealing facilities (39).

Abu-Zinada and Barth also note that various developments to construct beach resorts, hotels and so forth lead to destruction or and degradation of high value habitats such as mangroves In this context, other organisms such as coral reefs are on the brink of being exterminated due to tourism developments along coastlines. Some construction activities extent further into the sea, causing destruction of sea grass beds and destruction of the underlying organisms such as sea urchins, sea stars and others. Many keystone species have also been destroyed in the beaches and this threatens the survival of the species (39-40).

From the above examples, it is inarguable that conventional tourism presents several potential threats to many natural habitats in the world- the threats are not limited to coastal areas only. The pressure presented by tourism development activities leads to further impacts such as pollution of different ecosystems, soil erosion, discharges into the sea, loss of natural

habitats, increased pressures on endangered species such as the green turtle, and increased vulnerability of forests to fires. Some of the tourist resorts, which appear to provide excellent services to visitors, are notorious for pollution of ecosystems due to smoke from their chimneys, uncontrolled discharges and so forth. These facilities also pose competition for important resources such as water, which is usually biased against the local communities. Many of the tourism-related constructions involved in Kuwait encompass sand mining, beach and sand dune destruction and lead to destruction of habitats used by a multiplicity of wildlife species and fish. Construction of ski resorts also requires clearing of large tracts of coastal vegetation such mangroves and draining wetlands, which is a major scare to the future sources of water in Kuwait (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39-40). A major problem is that the ecological impact of construction is usually overlooked since the benefits of tourist attractions always seem to outweigh the ecological impacts (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39-40).

Mechanisms for controlling the impactsThere are many strategies to mitigate the effects of construction activities along beaches in Kuwait. Some of the measures include construction of artificial beaches, which however cannot be considered to provide habitats and ecosystems similar to those provided by the original beaches since they lack the features that possessed by the original ones. In other areas, there are efforts to replace destroyed ecosystems such as mangrove forests by planting new crops of the plants (Abu-Zinada and Barth 39-40).

Is evident that in spite of the efforts to replace habitats destroyed by development along coastlines, it is almost impossible to create environments that totally reflect the qualities of the original ecosystems. The same applies to other habitats in different places such as forests, wetlands and so forth. The best means to avoid this thus lies in proper planning to ensure that construction activities do not present multiple adverse effects, or that these effects can be controlled before long-term destruction of the environment is realized. In spite of the theory that tourists are looking for " authentic experiences in other places and times," there is need to put forward consideration for the environment before looking at the benefits of tourism. This is because despite the benefits that might be realized from tourism activities, the consequences of the activities may be too costly in the long term. For instance, it is not possible to replace coral reefs once they are destroyed, yet they are equally attractive sceneries that would be preferred by tourists.

; ConclusionThe tourism industry in Kuwait has provided many development opportunities but also poses challenges due to its negative consequences. The development opportunities include improvements in foreign exchange earnings; creation of job opportunities and so in. The industry also offers local people a forum to exchange ideas with people from other regions of the world and ensures that valuable resources in Kuwait are protected from destruction. On the other hand, the negative impacts of tourism in Kuwait include infiltration of various kinds of behavior into the country, some of which are destructive to the social norms. In addition, there are economic problems associated with tourism in the country such as creation of enclave

tourism that causes imbalanced regional development. Finally, some of the worst negative consequences of tourism are reflected on the environment, which is wantonly destroyed to create tourist facilities especially along beaches.;;;;;;;; Work citedAbu-Zinada, A. H.

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