

# Tourism essay essay sample

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The Bahamas is a famous paradise holiday destination where I have a great experience spending holiday there. It is the 8th most reliant nation on tourism in the world. The Bahamas is a country consisting of more than 3000 islands, cays and islets in the Atlantic Ocean. It allocates from the north of Cuba and Hispaniola to the southeast of Florida. Nassau is the capital and which is the major port for cruise traveling and tourism shopping. Apart from the close location to the US and sunshine beaches, it is also attractive for American due to tax free shopping. The Bahamas was formed by enslaved Africans and American Loyalists who set up a plantation economy in this location. In this essay, I will address the impacts of tourism in three areas, Economy, Environment, and Culture & Society; and I will discuss how the local Bahamas government is necessary to do for the sustainable tourism.

Tourism generates two main economic benefits for the Bahamas, injection of foreign money into the economy and jobs creation for locals. The Bahamas's GDP is 46% derived from tourism industry in 2010 and tourism employs 56% of the total labour force<sup>1</sup>. Steady growth in tourism receipts and a boom in construction of new resorts and residences had led to solid GDP growth. Over 80% of all visitors are from the US or reside in the US. Therefore, overall growth prospects in the short run rest heavily on the fortunes growth in the US. However, the downturn of American economy in the beginning of 2007 leads to a significant impact in all forms of tourism in the Bahamas.

The example of fishing can examine how the Bahamas was affected by the US economy. Fishing tourism<sup>2</sup> generates \$141million in total economy; fishing visitors spent nearly \$70million directly in island economies and supported an equivalent of 2500 full-time jobs from direct expenditures. In

the downturn of American economy, fishing tourism was also affected. A business report of guides' shows a declination around 40% for fishing lodge owners, and other lodging facilities in 2009, some even exceeded a 50% decline from 2007. This example introduces the significant impact between the US economy and Bahamas's tourism; recession of American economy would lead to economic downturn in the Bahamas as well.

Another economy impact is the problem of declination of cruise visitors' spending in the Bahamas. Cruise is an ultimate all-inclusive vacation which the whole idea catering to the passengers on board and not encouraging them to spend any money at the visiting destinations. Although the Bahamas experienced an increase in cruise passengers and crew visits over the period of 2009-2012, the former's average per capita spending remained below the \$95.92 regional average, indicating that cruise visitor spending slumps 23% in three years. In the report of the Tribune Business, a Bahamian businessman said "so they are bringing nothing to the island but their trash." 3 Cruise passengers brought their own food and beverages into the islands, and they also went into hotel for using toilet facilities. Ultimately, cruise although booms the number of visitors, it does not really help the growth of Bahamas's economy. This kind of vacation generates just a little amount of revenues in the Bahamas but causes relatively more negative impacts in economy and environment.

WTTC, WTTC, 2012. Travel & Tourism Economic impact 2012 Bahamas. Travel & Tourism Economic impact 2012, [Online]. 0, 3, 4. Available at: [http://www.wttc.org/site\\_media/uploads/downloads/bahamas2012.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/bahamas2012.pdf) [Accessed 14 November 2012].

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Fredler, T, 2010. The Economic Impact of Flats Fishing in The Bahamas . The Economic Impact of Flats Fishing in The Bahamas , [Online]. 1, 13, 14.

Available at:

[http://www.fisheriesconservationfoundation.](http://www.fisheriesconservationfoundation.org_campaigns_BahamasFlatsEconomicImpactReport.pdf)

[org\\_campaigns\\_BahamasFlatsEconomicImpactReport.pdf](http://www.fisheriesconservationfoundation.org_campaigns_BahamasFlatsEconomicImpactReport.pdf) [Accessed 15 November 2012].

The Impact of Cruise Ships on Small Bahamian Islands – Bahama Pundit.

2012. The Impact of Cruise Ships on Small Bahamian Islands – Bahama Pundit. [ONLINE] Available at:

[http://www.bahamapundit.com/2006/05/the\\_impact\\_of\\_c.html](http://www.bahamapundit.com/2006/05/the_impact_of_c.html). [Accessed 01 December 2012].

Most part of the upscale tourism development and infrastructure in the Bahamas islands are owned by multinational corporations, like the famous Atlantis Paradise Island resort in Nassau is belonged to the Kerzner International, but do not include local Bahamian working class or middle class, therefore, large amount of revenues generated from tourism business are mostly outflow to foreign tourism investors and creates leakages in the economy. Although huge developments generate high employment rate in the Bahamas, it does not greatly benefit the local tourism industry.

Bahamian local fishing guides rely on referrals of large tourism agents or cruise ships, they do not have any ways of attracting new business as they do not know to actively marketing and promoting their service through the internet. This is due to limitation of funds of marketing, lack understanding of technology for internet presence and marketing. Such that, their revenues

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from guiding fishing are low which a large proportion is captured by large foreign agents. This scenario also occurs in many other tourism services, like local sightseeing guides. Local Bahamians' receive very little individual revenues because the majority of tourism development is belonged to foreign investors.

Environmental impact is seen as the most serious problem in tourism. 'Consumers of the environment' in the Bahamas are mostly the tourists and cruise since they pollute and destroy the environment in long term. The Bahamas is famous for sunshine, beaches, marine life and wild animals, however, increase of tourisms cause serious impact upon the paradise which is seen as a long term problem.

Cruise ships are the most common transportation to reach the Bahamas. Cruise also causes environmental impacts in the Bahamas. Some of them have been suspected of dumping sewage and waste water into the ocean. A travel throughout the Caribbean is estimated to carry an average of 3, 000 passengers per voyage, which produce more than 70, 000 tons of waste each year and each passengers on a cruise account for 3. 5 kilograms of garbage daily 4. Solid waste disposal is not easily biodegradable and which injures millions marine animals every year. They become trapped or poisoned by wastes disposed by cruise lines. Waste also contaminates beaches and coast lines in the Bahamas when it is dumped in local harbours, affecting the health of local Bahamians who live along the coast. Another problem is wastewater. It comes in the form of graywater and black water.

The most significant problem arise is eutrophication, which means excessive nutrients from the wastewater would overstimulate the growth of aquatic plants algae, and it contains harmful bacteria for the underwater marine life. Besides the problems of wastes, major marine pollution, damage of coral reefs is also a significant negative impact of tourism. Activities like anchoring, sport fishing, diving, yachting, cruising; tourism development, constructing hotels, marinas, and other infrastructure are the major sources that harm coral reefs. Sedimentation in the marine environment increases and algal overgrowth causes smothering of coral reefs and which leads to coral deaths. Activities like diving and anchoring eventually increase the possibility of trampling by swimmers, boat collisions, causing corals physical damage, such as crushing and completely removal of reefs.

Coral reefs are diverse and productive ecosystems that play an important role in supporting marine life by providing breeding, feeding and nursery areas for various types of marine animals. They also act as a protective barrier for coast against intense waves and storms. Nevertheless, it provides source of food for Queen Conch and Spiny lobster which generate millions of dollars annually in the Bahamas. A study of a cruise ship anchor dropped in a coral reef for one day and found an area about half the size of a football field completely destroyed. It is estimated that coral would take fifty years long to recover themselves or they do not even recover without human involvement

Bailey, Kalena S. , 2004. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND THE CRUISE LINE INDUSTRY . UNC MBA WHITE PAPER, [Online]. 1, 5, 6, 7. Available at:  
<http://specials.kenanflagler.unc.edu/kicse/ORIG%20Shared>

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%20Documents/Sustainable%20Tourism%20and%20the%20Cruise%20Line%20Industry. pdf [Accessed 16 November 2012].

like removal of fragments or wrecked boats, coral relocation. These human recovery treatments are very costly and thus they are mostly not practical in real life. Although, these activities provide millions of jobs and contribute billions of dollars in tourism annually, the direct degradation of the entire marine ecosystems costs more than the billions of revenues. Damage of coral reefs would decline tourism sustainability in the Bahamas by less attraction to tourists but the most important impact is the harmfulness of local marine life which would affect the local Bahamian livings. Other than marine pollution, wild lives are also threatened by tourists in the Bahamas. A report 5 mentions that Northern Bahamian Rock Iguanas in the Exumas that are regularly exposed to humans are less wary of people than those are rarely encounter people.

Leaf Cay has the longest history of tourist food supplementation for iguanas. Iguanas on this area have higher predation risk which associated with decreased wariness and associated higher risk for iguanas to be caught and poached for consumptions or pet trades by humans. Besides that, dietary shift is also displayed from iguanas in the feeding areas of visited beaches. Instead of vegetated interior habitats, iguanas ingest higher levels of marine debris and inedible trash items due to visitors' food provisioning. Iguanas experience preliminary blood differences because of dietary shift and suppressed stress hormone response when exposed to tourists; Common Wall Lizards in tourists areas demonstrated deteriorated body condition and higher tick infection rate. In stingrays, food provisioning is linked to <https://assignbuster.com/tourism-essay-essay-sample/>

haematological changes that indicating health declines and altered fatty acid profiles. In longterm, the over exposures of wild life tourism in the Bahamas would lead to consequences of decreasing wild lives' population level, as well as altered to growth rates, survivorship, and sex ratio. Extirpation ultimately exists if there is no preservation policy done to the wild animals in the Bahamas islands.

Tourism also has done a lot on culture and society of the Bahamas and which are seen as negative impacts for the local Bahamians. The Bahamas was a Crown Colony in 1718. Due to set up a plantation economy, thousands of American Loyalists and enslaved Africans moved to the Bahamas, many African were sold to the Bahamas during slave trade in 1807, so majority of the population is formed by slaves. Cultural impacts in the Bahamas are seen as the “ myths of paradise”, meaning that racial, sexual, gender politics of tourism rooted in the history of slavery and colonialism.

Commercial considerations dominate the relations between tourist and local Bahamians. Due to the colonial background, local African Bahamians demean the value of themselves and feel dissatisfied with their way of life causing ‘ relative deprivation’ when they serve the majority white tourists from the US and Europe. In the research paper of a local African Bahamian post graduate, Dellareese M. Higgs who studies in the States, she mentioned her experience working in local Bahamas Cultural Market and serves tourists there.

As well as, the minority white elites in the Bahamas benefited financially from the tourist industry, building an economy and a country where rich



wealthy whites are served by the majority black populace, and hence ‘ white tourist culture’ is developed. ‘ I talked to these tourists about my privileged positioning, class played no role in their perception of me: I was viewed as, and reduced to, just a black body’ 6, this quote represents not only Higgs’s mind but also the majority of the Bahamians tourism workers. Their identity is undervalued due to “ white tourism”, white tourists are catered to, while black Bahamians serve. It reproduces dominant colonial and neocolonial images of the Bahamas.

HINES, KIRSTEN N. , 2011. EFFECTS OF ECOTOURISM ON ENDANGERED NORTHERN BAHAMIAN ROCK IGUANAS (CYCLURA CYCHLURA). EFFECTS OF ECOTOURISM ON ENDANGERED NORTHERN BAHAMIAN ROCK IGUANAS (CYCLURA CYCHLURA), [Online]. 6, 254, 255. Available at: [http://www.herpconbio.org/Volume\\_6/Issue\\_2/Hines\\_2011.pdf](http://www.herpconbio.org/Volume_6/Issue_2/Hines_2011.pdf) [Accessed 15 November 2012]. 6

Higgs, Dellareese M., 2008. Behind the Smile: Negotiating and Transforming the Tourism-imposed Identity of Bahamian Women. 1st ed. Bowling Green State University: Bowling Green State University, 2008.

A Bahamian poet proclaims ‘ we produce nothing, or hardly’ 7 shows that there are only very limited supply of locally-produced food and products in the Bahamas. Products are imported from the US and Europe, which are mostly controlled by foreign companies. Therefore, the definition of “ paradise” in the Bahamas is not originated itself but determined a lot from outside. Besides, Bahamians are “ conditioned” to provide service for tourists, there are just a few of them participating in other natural industries,

such as fishing and agriculture. These industries are continuously undervalued since the local Bahamas government put its attention and support mostly on tourism. Majority focuses on a single industry would destroy the country in exploration and utilizing other resources.

Apart from cultural impacts, society in the Bahamas is also affected by overcrowded tourism. The article of ‘ Increase Crime in Bahamas 2012’ 8 mentions that rate of robberies, sexual assaults, and drugs increase due to tourism industry. Tourists are seen as wealthy in the locals’ eyes, robberies, for example ‘ cash for gold’, towards tourists by some lower class locals. Some tourists go to the Bahamas just for party and demand for illegal drugs and it is more easily satisfied by Bahamians who are willing to commit a criminal act to profit from the party tourism. Prostitution and illicit sex put the Bahamas at higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS. Underage drinking by inexperienced teenagers would eventually end in a “ Rape” accusation when they sober up.

The last but not least, opening of casinos for attracting tourism is a “ sinful” practice of gambling in the Bahamas though it can raise millions in tax for the local Bahamas government. Cultural and social impacts of tourism are seriously harmful to the Bahamas. Cultural impacts from demeaning the majority nations’ values and identities, and limitation of discovering other resources would finally undermine the Bahamas’s uniqueness and traditions. Society impacts raise the awareness of public security of the Bahamas in the world. Eventually, the sustainability of tourism would be declined through these impacts.

Sustainable tourism is defined as “ Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” in UNWTO 9 . Therefore, good planning, management and education are the keys to sustainable tourism.

In the aspects of economic, although tourism generates lots of business opportunities and provides jobs more than half of all employments, this main industry depends too much on the American economy. Cruise is the most popular transport to reach the Bahamas from the US. The Bahamas received five million visitors in 2005, 3.3 million were cruise passengers. In a report of the Tribune, “ People keep measuring tourism in the region in head count.” 10 from Mr. VanderpoolWallace, the former Director General of Tourism in the Bahamas.

Positive economic impacts of tourism should be related to tourist spending but not the visitor numbers, so the government should approach the strategy of “ fewer but richer” tourists. The Bahamas government can limit the number of cruise travelling to the Bahamas ports and make it harder to reach; taxing the tourist by raise up the cruise landing tax is able to lessen low spending cruise tourists, but at the meanwhile, the government can build a small airport in order to only attract rich stopovers who tend to be more affordable for expensive trips and spend more than the all-inclusive cruise passengers. It is 7

Bethel, Guanahani, My Love, 26.

U. S. State Department: Crime In Nassau, Bahamas Is Critical : Cruise Law

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News. 2012. U. S. State Department: Crime In Nassau, Bahamas Is Critical : Cruise Law News. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.cruiselawnews.com/2012/05/articles/crime/us-state-department-crime-in-nassau-bahamas-is-critical/>. [Accessed 20 November 2012].

Definition | Sustainable Development of Tourism. 2012. Definition | Sustainable Development of Tourism. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://sdt.unwto.org/en/content/about-us-5>. [Accessed 14 November 2012]. 10

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also attractive for tourists out of the US like European rich tourists, such that the Bahamas does not need to rely mainly on the American economy. Higher tourists' spending would be more effective to boost the Bahamas's economy since it would raise the employments, wages, tips, and salaries for the majority of local Bahamians working in the main industry, tourism. Besides that, government should also provide education of internet usage for local tourism guides who have less knowledge on internet marketing and substitute them for internet usage. This would effectively help the local guides to promote themselves to tourists that are seeking to “do it yourself” throughout the internet, instead of depends on the tourism companies outside the Bahamas; such that, local guides would have larger market and earn higher revenues which would also boost the Bahamian economy.

The above strategy can effectively address the economic impacts but also a certain part of environmental impacts. Limitation of cruise would also help to diminish the pollution of ocean and coastline and also lower the degree of overcrowded in the Bahamas. Elimination of large amounts of waste water can be done by setting up more stringent air and wastewater regulations, tougher requirements, like the tightening regulations in Alaska, and EPA proposed Clean Water Act. Besides, the government should only allow cruise that have recycling program for plastics, aluminum, glass, wood and steel, batteries, etc. In order to fulfill the regulations, cruise ships would need to invest greatly in the technology of waste reducing and wastewater treatment, cost of cruise line would increase, and higher price is charged to cruise passengers; at the meanwhile, it can pursue richer cruise tourists, which also helps the economy growth in the Bahamas. Apart from management by the government, education is also a key of sustainable tourism.

Lack of knowledge is one of the greatest threats to marine lives and animals in the Bahamas. The local government should substitute local guides for training opportunities in order to provide tourists knowledge and outreach about the importance of marine lives and animals during activities like wild live sightseeing or even diving. It is effective to encourage tourists to be more mindful of their actions and reduce damaging actions to the wild creatures. Some other options can be taken, such as limiting daily numbers of visitors, controlling approach distance to reduce impacts on wariness, preventing predator introductions, discouraging feeding by tourists, only allowing guides to feed. There were several successful examples of these

regulations on Little Water Cay in the Turks, although the visiting capacity was lowered and reduced local tourist revenues, the local attitudes toward tourism remained positive.

In order to approach sustainable tourism, cultural impacts should be solved by reconstruction of tourism habits in the Bahamas. Firstly, government should encourage tourists to live in locals' motels or even locals' family and large infrastructure like hotels built by the multinational company should be banded in order to increase the cultural awareness and also locals' revenues earning from tourism industry. Secondly, local cuisines should be offered, such as fresh seafood crawfish, conch salad, pea soup and dough, and local craft souvenirs can be offered. These methods can promote more willing to meet and understand local Bahamian. By living in local hostels or families, providing local foods and Bahamian traditional souvenirs, this would help cultural exchange between the African tourism labors and tourists instead of “black serving the white tourists”, and further eliminate the undervalued mind of the local African Bahamians.

Increase supply of local food and products would also increase the uniqueness of the Bahamas that can reduce the imports and dependency on foreign countries. Furthermore, it is also able that tourists to enjoy not only parties and paradise holiday, but also increase the awareness of experiencing the local life in the Bahamas, which broadens their travelling experiences. The last but not least, these methods also encourage local Bahamians to explore more other natural resources to sustain tourism for example the traditional industry, fishing and agriculture. The society's problems can be easily eliminated by tighten control pubs and clubs with <https://assignbuster.com/tourism-essay-essay-sample/>

straightly prohibiting drugs, underage drinking, and sexual assaults. This can help to decrease crimes rate. Increase of the locals' wages and salaries through the above sustainable tourism methods can "gradually lower robberies since local Bahamians would feel enough for living instead of earning money through committing crimes. Ultimately, the social security would be increased and maintain tourism confidence traveling to the Bahamas.

Tourism although provides short run benefits for the Bahamas which are mainly in economic aspect, it is tied with more negative impacts in long run for all three areas, economy, environment, and culture & society. To be concise, sustainable tourism should be focused and aware by heavily tourism dependency country like the Bahamas since it is the main way to support the economic growth for the Bahamas local residents and also maintain good condition as a holiday paradise in the long run in terms of time. It is possible to maintain sustainable tourism through government's planning, management and public education for the locals and tourists in three major areas, economic, environment, and culture that I discussed above.

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