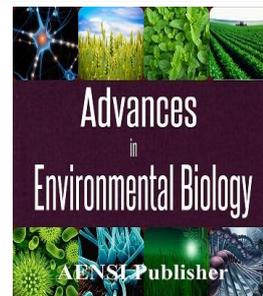




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Sustainability tourism in heritage Destinations, Main Concepts

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism destination management is to be one of the essential knowledge areas that should be researched to achieve sustainable destination, most importantly for the emerging destinations. This study is a trial to contribute in the literature of the sustainable tourism in a proper way to provide a neat background to be a base that could be useful for researchers in the field of tourism in general and sustainable heritage tourism destination in a special terms. The results are to be particularly significant to practitioners who seek a better implementation in managing tourism destination in addition to reach the sustainability in tourism destinations as a final objective. Regarding the findings of this study, a gap is found in the searches, and the study strongly suggests the need for more imperial studies especially with the specific characteristics and its influence on the whole image considering the managerial framework with flexible and dynamic characteristics regarding the differences in tourism destinations..

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INTRODUCTION

By reviewing the literature of the significant elements that influence the tourism industry; Tourism Destination "TD", this paper will go through the specific characteristics of the TD, the specific heritage tourism destinations "HTD" to review the literature of these characteristics to compile this knowledge to assist the researchers, and in structuring and assessing the destination.

This paper will discuss the literature review of a three characteristics of the TD in a raw; Tourism Destination "TD"; Heritage Tourism Destination "HTD", and finishing the paper with a clarifying of the sustainability in "RHTD" and its effect on the short and long term successfulness on the "TD".

Main Concept of Tourism Destination:

The term 'tourism destination' has been defined in different ways [1]. There is not a total agreement on a specific meaning of this terminology ([1]; [2]). Four main characteristics are expected in a tourism destination: it should be a limited defined geographical area; it must be selected and visited by tourists; it needs to provide different types of tourism products and services; and it involves multiple stakeholders with different interests and needs. First, many defined the destination as a particular specific limited geographical area toward which the tourist goes to visit and consume the tourism products and services, is the contrast to an origin place, a place from where the tourist comes, ([3]; [2]; [4]; [5]). Secondly, a destination is to be tackled with in a various scale and different relations due to the perceived attraction in the destination, a town or a city, a tourism district, a province, a tourism region within one country, or a whole country. Also, a single trip might visit a single or multiple tourism destinations [4], and destinations within [6]. Third, a local tourism destination is defined as a physical space where a tourist can spend at least one overnight. To consume the tourism products, attractions and tourist resources within one day's return travel time, at least. It has physical and administrative boundaries defined by its management, and the destination market competitiveness is determined by the tourists' images and perceptions [7]. Lastly, tourism destination incorporate various, interrelated and even interest conflict stakeholders that represent the most of the affected host community, and they can nest to form larger destinations[8].

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Heritage Tourism Destination:

Heritage Tourism recent definition is; "travelling to experience the places, artefacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past, and it can include cultural, historic and natural resources [9], whereas the Heritage tourism team [10] considered it to encompass elements of living culture, history, and natural history of place that communities value and steward for the future. These elements are very specific to a community or region and can contribute to pride, stability, growth, and economic development.

Heritage tourism was to be considered different from tourism as a general concept [11]. The main heritage objective is to preserve the historical properties and maintain them in good status, the heritage objectives focus on comprising a conservation goal with financial and public access constraints[12]. So most of the heritage managers try to implement the method of "user pays" which is can be used as a financial leverage and used for promoting sustainability in the main forms of tourism ([13]; [14]; [15]), In spite of the worries of the managers that this method is not sufficient to cover all financial needs of the historical buildings "full social costs" [16].According to WHS [17] the world heritage sites can be categorize into these main categories; Geological formation; Wildlife habitat; Natural landscape; Religious structure; Archaeological site; Urban landscape; Secular structure; Human activity.

Sustainability in Tourism Destination:

One of the first definitions that was assigned to sustainable tourism by the United Nation World Tourism Organization in [18]: "tourism which leads to management of all areas, in such a way, that the economic, social and environmental needs are being fulfilled with the cultural integration, ecological processes, biodiversity and supporting the development of societies". additionally, [18]explained that sustainable tourism as a process that "takes into account the needs of present tourists and traveller needs of the future generations as well". The figure 1. Describes the main three dimensions of the sustainability in tourism industry:

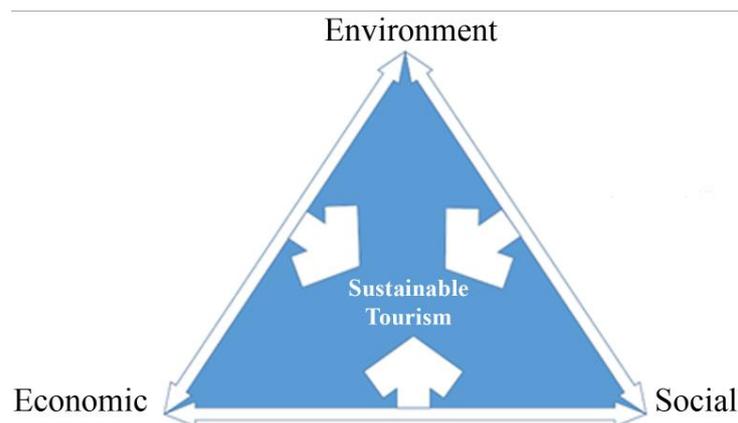


Fig. 1: Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism, Source: Sustainable Tourism Online [19]

Social and environmental issues were the first main attention for tourism researchers [20-28]. The term of sustainable tourism started to be used two decades ago [29, 30]. The first decade stated compilations [31-35], and basic frameworks from backgrounds in mass tourism [36-40], economics [41, 42] and environmental management [43]. Whereas the second decade researchers started to reconsider the concepts and provide more critical thinking to the issues of sustainability such as Sharpley [44], Gossling [45], and Lane [46].

The outcome of the researchers in the third decade in assessing the focus, scope, and outcome of the academic research publication in the field of sustainable tourism versus practical tools of the sustainability in tourism industry from a commercial point of view. The main issues in sustainable tourism is defined based on the principles of sustainability, away from the literature of tourism research. They tried to construct externally-generated themes by implementing the main concepts of sustainability to tourism as a different entity, and use this method to evaluate the sustainable tourism literature.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

A significant gap is in due to the emerging heritage sustainable destination, because most of the researchers is directed to study the cases of mature heritage tourism destinations, and multiple reasons are behind this attitude, starting by the importance and level of concern about the urban destination rather than rural, due to the population and wealth concentration, then the infrastructure provided to the urban destination, whether it is information or physical infrastructure, surly the urban destination is better equipped with various more technological assets that can ease the process of research, and also because of the significance and relation between urban destinations and the main stake holders who are willing to finance the studies.

Moreover, knowledge area to be enhanced by studies is the influence of the salience stakeholders on the sustainability of the heritage tourism destination, coordinating and collaboration between the different and possibly contradicted interests, objectives and goals of the stakeholders' parties.

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