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Stakeholders' Contribution in Sustainable Tourism

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ABSTRACT

A lot of studies recently considered the Sustainability as an effective tool to reach the best status a tourism destination can reach, and by taking a look onto the most important three elements of the sustainable tourism; Environment, Economy, and Society, and surely the last element is an effective element dealing with the multiple component of the society; "the stakeholders". Multiple with so many different interests, authorities, responsibilities, and level of contribution. This review paper will look into the significance rule of the stakeholders in sustainable tourism destination and the main issues and challenges the faces the collaboration in-between these stakeholders, by inspecting the related literature review to enhance the significance relation between the stakeholders' collaboration and reaching the sustainability in tourism destination.

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INTRODUCTION

To define the 'Sustainable tourism' (ST) it signifies a special status of tourism derived from the basic concepts of sustainable development, considering it as a "full representation of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts"[1], taking the needs of stakeholders into main consideration. This general definition sets the main three bases that format sustainable development, emphasizing the interests, objectives, and concerns of the concerned parties (the stakeholders) as a critical issue in the context of implementing the ST as stated in[2]. The concept of "stakeholders" is considered the most important concepts that is clearly increasing and attracting researchers to dig deeper and deeper to investigate the relation in between the ST and Stakeholders' influence trying to track [3, 4].And the quality of the touristic products a destination propose is directly affected by its organizational structure that is formed as a interdependent complex network of multiple stakeholders [5]. The approach of stakeholders' collaboration is considered widely as an effective tool to solve conflicts occur in between the multiple stakeholders as a result of misunderstanding or miscommunication that are related to tourism sustainable development [4, 6, 7]. The aim of this study is to make a significance contribution in the knowledge body as to stakeholders' contribution in implementing the ST. In this paper will start examining the stakeholders as a concept to be cleared by an extant literature then it will portrait the relation between the implementation of the ST and the stakeholders collaboration, after that the study will highlight the expected challenges that might face the process of ST implementation, concluding the paper with future possible subjects to be enhanced with further researches.

The Concept of Stakeholders:

Regarding the godfather of the stakeholder theoryFreeman [9] since his famous book Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach had a wide acceptance since the book of Freeman [9]argued that the stakeholders should be considered as a significant component of an organization or/and industry's structure and the concepts of the participation in decision making according to the specific roles assigned to each stakeholder is essential.

At a basic definition the stakeholder concept started in the organization as a center of network of significant relationships that are interconnected between the related interested parties[10, 11]. After that a major significant study was conducted in the early 60s at the Stanford Research Institute that study evaluated the necessity for the

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support of all relative stakeholder groups in order to survival and success[12]. Face to face with the management old school that only was concern about internal effective stakeholders and discarding the external stakeholders[13, 14],Freeman [9] argued the failure of the old management school approach to convey a wide range of very significant parties that affect and are affected by the organization in a narrow perspective or even the whole industry as a holistic look, so called the "stakeholders", and when "stakeholders" concept is mentioned in this study, that will refer to all inter connected groups or/and individuals that are strongly related with the terms of tourism development initiatives and therefore can affect or are affected by the process of decision making and activities that concern those initiatives.

Stakeholders'Importance:

By studying through, evaluating and analyzing the importance of the stakeholders, the understanding of the concept of the Sustainable Tourism "ST" was enhanced significantly the main studies that addressed this issue was [15-18]. When inspecting the literature of the tourism the study came across different types of stakeholders with multiple typologies e.g.[19, 20]these categories can be sorted into six broad categories: local community, government, tourists, industry, educational institutions and special interest groups. By the tools of regulation, human resources, research and supply and demand these stakeholder groups are influencing tourism development in so many different ways.

The publication of Murphy's which was called Community Approach [21], illustrating the necessity of conducting connectionsin between and with stakeholders, and this concept has been commonly used in tourism[22, 23]. Murphy [21] stated that there should be a partnership that hold a mutual benefits between the stakeholders in the stage of tourism planning, but also, the importance of stakeholders combination can convey a wide range of different tourism contexts and phases, and for certain the collaboration of the stakeholders has a huge impact on tourism development [20].

In spite of the increasing interest in the concept of the stakeholders, the process of involvement of the stakeholders especially in the decision making process, and most of the time these problematic complications are underestimated[24-26]. The Collaboration process is considered to be complicated due to the existence of multiple, cross interest, and diverse stakeholders that often have different and contradict objectives and visions[27, 28]. But till the current date there is a gap in documenting most of the empirical studies on the issues and cases that connect the stakeholders concepts to tourism industry, and especially to the concept of sustainable tourism [29, 30]. considering the sustainable tourism main dimensions are economic, social and environmental dimensions of tourism development, but most of researchers have concentrated on the environment and economic dimensions development only, whereas largely disregarding the social concept and stakeholder processes[31, 32].

Main Issues and Challenges:

Due to the fragmented formation of the tourism industry, it always creates a significant need for collaboration and coordination in planning phase[22, 30]and although many different stakeholders could have many interests in the tourism planning phase processes [27]. Cooperation and collaboration are considered to be the major issues in the planning phase. They also have been connected to the concept of sustainable tourism development[22, 33]and, especially in the context of community-based tourism, that consider the integration and participation as main two concepts. the identification and legitimization of all potential stakeholders is more Critical than the implementation of the collaborative planning approach, including all parties who are involved in the planning process [34].Regarding the destinations experiencing emerging tourism development, where interests are not collectively organized, it can be said that the identification of stakeholders is a quite complicated task[32].

The main objective is to include all those affected parties by the proposed tourism development within the planning and after that the development process [25]. The literature shows that bringing various and varied interests together are to be considered the first stage in phase of establishing an effective collaborative process. Considering too many definitions of stakeholders and collaboration, it might be looked upon as an operation of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stake holders of a domain of tourism community, to find solution for the planning problems of the domain and/or manage issues connected to the planning and development of the domain. [11].

Conclusion:

In spite of all obstacles and difficulties that stakeholders' collaboration might bring to a tourism destination, much more advantages would be accomplished,a consensuswithin the tourism development processes. Such a practicesare tending to avoid the expensive costs of confronting and resolving conflicts, replacing it with the long term and mutual relations and participation that can achieve costeffectivenessin finding solutions by pooling resources. Moreover advantage is thatstakeholder collaboration enhance the concept of democracy.

If the Political point of viewis to be considered, thecollaboration processesare to be considered more equitable, and fair than the conventional traditional approach. Furthermore, it considers the use of local aggregated knowledge toreach better decisions and solutions to reach the optimum target which is the sustainability in tourism destinations.

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