TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOURISM IMPACTS
A LITERATURE REVIEW

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The impacts of tourism on every society are complex and varied in subject. The tourism impacts are significant to different communities, groups and individuals depending upon their values, attitudes and the type of resources available for tourism development. Therefore, building on previous research, this paper examines the tourists' attitudes towards tourism impacts on their visiting destination; effect of socio-economic demographics and functional characteristics on their attitudes and different approaches, methods and statistical tools applied for measuring tourists' perceptions towards tourism development. Review of literature suggests that interactions between visitors and the host community can lead to short and long term positive and negative, individual and cumulative impacts on destinations across the globe. In respect of socio-economic and other functional characteristics of visitors, age, income and life stage have significant effects on tourist behavior and to assesss tourism development, the best approach would be an integrated cost-benefit approach.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a major industry globally and a major sector in many economies. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that tourism contributed 9.2 percent of global GDP and forecasts that this will continue to grow at over 4 percent per annum during the next ten years to account for some 9.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (WTTC, 2010). Over time, an increasing number of destinations have opened up and invested in tourism development, turning modern tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Tourism is also one of the largest employment generators in the world. It has been a major social phenomenon and is driven by social, religious, recreational, knowledge

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seeking and business interests; and motivated by the human urge for new experience, adventure, education, and entertainment. Tourism is both cause and consequence of economic development. It has the potential to stimulate other sectors in the economy owing to cross-synergistic benefits and its backward and forward linkages. Tourism has the potential to not only be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. The sheer size and reach of the sector makes it critically important from a global resource perspective.

Tourism development often brings a range of benefits to host communities. Improved infrastructure (power, water, and telecommunications), access, services (banks, transport) and new investments, all serve to enhance the lifestyles of communities. Community support will follow developments that service the community and provide ongoing benefits.

Tourism is an interface for cultural exchange, facilitating the interaction between communities and visitors (domestic and international). It has been said that travel is a means to "discover those things unknown or forgotten within ourselves." Tourism can boost the preservation and transmission of cultural and historical traditions, conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, the protection of local heritage, and a revival of indigenous cultures, arts and crafts.

On the other hand, tourism contributes to a wide range of issues closely associated with uncontrolled, unsustainable and massed tourism growth e.g. potential threats to natural environment due to high concentration of tourist activities such as soil erosion, increased air emissions & noises from vehicles, crowding, improper disposal of solid waste and littering, release of sewage, architectural/visual pollution, loss of biodiversity, alteration in ecosystem (damage of flora and fauna) and climatic changes due to high construction activities, increased levels of unethical practices such as drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual permissiveness, intrusion to resident's lifestyle, irritation and stereotyping (coping behavior) for local people due to tourist behavior.

So, there are lots of benefits and costs attached to tourism development in any destination. Managed well, tourism can play a positive role in the socio, cultural, economic, environmental and political development of the destination. On the contrary, unchecked tourism development can lead to very damageable impacts. Hence, tourism impacts are significant to different communities, groups and individuals depending upon their values, attitudes and the type of resources available for tourism development.

The tourism literature predominantly focuses on residents' perception beacuse it is the residents of host communities who are actually affected by the existence of tourism in the region. This exclusive focus on residents' perceptions has attracted little scholarly attention which is directed toward advancing the conceptual understanding of how visitors perceive and evaluate tourism impacts on their visiting destinations. Infact, visitors' perceptions need to be paid as much attention towards comprehensive tourism development in the region. There seem to be a plethora of actions that visitors can choose to do, or not do, that might increase or decrease the social, economic and environmental impacts of their visits individually and collectively. These, of course, can be both positive and negative. Hence, there is a compelling case for exploring visitors' perceptions towards tourism impacts.

In brief, the present study intends to explain:

(i)   the tourists' attitudes towards tourism impacts on their visiting destination;

(ii) to what extent visitors' socio-economic demographics and their functional characteristics (age, gender, tourist organization, source of information etc.) influence their attitudes; and

(iii) the approaches, models, methods and statistical tools applied for measuring tourists' perceptions towards tourism development.

For this purpose, the second section reviews the literature and the last section discusses summary findings and conclusion.

2. Review of Literature

The literature presented in this paper reviews (i) studies focussing on tourists' perceptions about tourism impacts; and (ii) visitors' characteristics and their perceptions. It also discusses various approaches, models, methods, statistical tools and techniques for measuring visitors' attitudes towards tourism development followed in the literature.[2]

2.1 Tourists' Perceptions about Tourism Impacts

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken into the desires, motivation, and behavior of tourists in relation to their impact on host societies (Sharpley,

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[2]Data is collected from multiple sources (published reports, books, journals, periodicals, and unpublished thesis and internet sites) including the use of tourism databases (6) comprising Informa World, Business Premier, Wiley, Emerald, Sage and Science Direct and books (30) with abstracts in tourism policy, research in tourism, hospitality research, sustainable tourism, culture and tourism have been referred. The citations were tracked from 2000 onwards to December 2012 mostly from well known journals (10) and other relevant data was also gathered from 1990s.

2000). These visitors' expectations and reactions are increasingly seen as important because these primarily affect tourists' cognitions, satisfaction and emotional reactions to a specific tourist venue. A study also found that a destination's unique tourism characteristics too can be the most important variable for destination competitiveness and therefore emphasized on developing the destination's brand image (Chen, Chen and Lee, 2010). There is also a large amount of marketing literature that deals with tourist demand for destination decision-making.

During 1990s, tourism impact studies were an integration of the effects of the previously determined impacts that demonstrated a clear shift from Mass tourism[3] to Sustainable tourism[4] in the form of Ecotourism[5], Heritage tourism[6], and Community tourism[7]. Cultural tourism[8] has received greater research attention recently (Lyncha *et al.*, 2009; Moyle, Croy and Weiler, 2012). It is viewed by planners as an economic and socio-cultural savior for host communities. This form of tourism has been found to offer a vital source of employment, raise standards of living, diversify dependence on limited traditional industries, further socio-cultural opportunities and support environmental conservation.

On the other hand, because of limited competing opportunities, cultural tourism jobs can be low-paying and could introduce unwanted lifestyle changes. Further, because of its geographic concentration, it might contribute to environmental degradation. Therefore, many researchers suggested that future tourism development in cultural and heritage tourist sites should be contextual and take into account the specifics of the destination to be developed, including its already existing character and image (Croes, 2006). Other scholars further indicated a focus on cultural tourism's ability to educate both tourists and the residents on the host culture as well as provide economic opportunities for host communities (Lyncha *et al.*, 2009*)*.

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[3] Mass tourism is group travel on a large scale to a destination for purposes of leisure.

[4] Sustainable tourism is attempting to make as low an impact on the environment and local culture as possible, while helping to generate future employment for local people.

[5] Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.

[6] Heritage tourism is defined as travelling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.

[7] Community tourism is a form of tourism which aims to include and benefit local communities, particularly indigenous people and villagers in the rural areas.

[8] Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history, art, architecture, religion, and other elements that help shape their way of life.

Table 1: Selected Literature on Tourists' Attitudes Towards Tourism Impacts

S. No	Issue	Source
1.	Motivations, Desires, Behaviors	*Sharpley, 1994; Lew, 1998; Honey, 1999; Wearing & Neil, 1999; Ryan et al., 2000; Khan, 2003; Mc Kercher, 2003*
2.	Destination Image	*Reilly, 1990; Chon, 1992; Ross, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Botterill and Crompton, 1996; Selby and Morgan, 1996; Baloglu and McClearly, 1999; Richards, 2001; Rittichainu et al., 2001; Vogt and Andereck, 2003; Tasci and Boylu, 2009; Chen, Chen & Lee, 2010*
3.	Forms of Tourism	
(i)	Soft Tourism	*Lindberg, 1991; Chapman, 1995; Cohen, 1995; Wheeller, 1997; Honey, 1999; Blamey, 2001; Blamey, 2001; Weaver, 2001; Butler, 2002; Deng et al., 2002;* Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; *Weaver, 2005; Reichel, Uriely & Shani, 2008; Mundet & Coenders, 2010*
(ii)	EcoTourism	*Lindberg, 1991; Chapman, 1995, Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Blamey, 2001; Haber and Lerner, 2002; Weaver, 2001, 2005; and Andereck, 2009*
(iii)	Cultural Tourism	*Lynch et al., 2009; Moyle, Croy and Weiler, 2010; Carlsen and Butler, 2011*
4.	Tourists' Perceptions	*Sharpley, 1994; Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004; Reichel, Uriely & Shani, 2008; Andereck, 2009; Guttentag, 2009; Morakabati, 2011*

Likewise, while reviewing ecotourism in terms of minimizing the tourism impacts, there is considerable neglect in assessing the impact of tourism activity on tourists themselves. However, the tension between the need for financial profits and the original perspective of 'hard'[9] ecotourism as a complete opposite to mass tourism has been compromised by the perspective of 'soft'[10] ecotourism (Blamey, 2001; Weaver, 2001). In other words, visitors with a stronger nature orientation were observed to have more positive

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[9] Ecotourism can be further subdivided into two categories: "hard" ecotourism or "soft" ecotourism. Hard ecotourism tends to involve a scientific interest in natural surroundings, wildlife and/or biodiversity. Hard ecotourism is the least luxurious form of ecotourism, often involving a lack of hotel accommodations or additional amenities.

[10] Soft ecotourism is the reverse of hard ecotourism.

views of environmentally responsible practices by tourism businesses than tourists who are not nature-oriented (Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Musa, Hall & Higham 2004; Andereck, 2009) (Refer Table 1).

Many studies have advocated that viability of tourism ventures depend upon high levels of tourist satisfaction and a large number of visitors to generate financial profit (Blamey, 2001; Weaver, 2001).Therefore, a need for financial sustainability combined with the quest for environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism has stimulated numerous discussions and debates about the scope and nature of tourism development (Cohen, 1995; Weaver, 2001; Blamey, 2001; Deng *et al.*, 2003and Guttentag, 2009).

In this context, a large number of studies have examined the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural consequences of tourism and its associated development. Broadly, these studies have indicated a direct relationship between tourism development and negative impacts on social and environmental structures (Carter, 2004) i.e. tourism can provide economic benefits, such as income and jobs, but often results in costs that are borne by environments and communities. Historically, the economic impacts of tourism have received the most attention because of the positive effects they can have on destinations and communities, both directly and indirectly, and their relative ease of assessment (Dyer *et al.*, 2007).

Since the negative social and environmental implications of tourism have become increasingly evident in many destinations, a more critical view of tourism impacts has emerged. While much of the literature has found tourism to have negative socio-cultural impact, some studies have also found that tourism has positive social impacts (Andereck, 2009) or that there are both positive and negative social impacts .

The environmental impacts of tourism have also received considerable attention in the literature (Deng *et al.*, 2003). The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. However, the tourism industry's relationship with the environment is complex as it involves many activities that can adversely affect the environment, such as the construction of infrastructure (e.g., roads and airports) and visitor facilities (e.g., resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses, and marinas). In some cases, the negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends .

Therefore, many researchers have examined the tourists' preferences for the development of sites with appropriate infrastructure and themed simulations that could

preserve local nature and culture (Milman and Pizam, 1995; Andereck, 2009). Besides this, Tasci and Boylu (2009) explored tourists' perception of the safety and security of a destination in relation to the level of satisfaction with their trip using visiting destination image and its visitors as a case in point.

Further, a very recent study by Morakabati (2011) too found out that people have become more aware and concerned with respect to the risk issues when they travel as tourists. Hence, behavior of tourists could be directly influenced by making them aware of the negative impacts of some forms of tourism.

Conversely, tourism has the potential to be beneficial to the environment by contributing to protection and conservation. Further, tourism is often seen as a way to raise awareness of environmental values, to finance protection of natural areas, and to increase their economic importance. Regardless, studies generally conclude that tourism has a negative impact on the environment. Therefore, Eagles (2004) indicated that the conservation of the environment and of local society and its culture requires both funding and political support. Further, Sharpley and Pearce (2007) link tourism marketing to the creation of sustainable development. Lane (1994) discusses this concept of sustainable tourism as a conservation and development tool.

To sum up, tourism planning should employ holistic approaches including the level of satisfaction of both the host community and the tourists as cited in several studies (Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004; Raymond & Brown, 2007; Okazaki, 2008; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2009; Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams, 2010; Morrison, Carlsen and Weber, 2010). Also, the key information (effective knowledge of the market, destination management and a competitive tourism industry) is required to enable sustainable tourism that seeks to address the triple bottom line-of the economy, of the environment and of local society and its culture.

2.2 Visitors' Characteristics vs. Visitors' Perceptions

Many studies have identified different segments of tourism that vary in their socio-economic characteristics and tourism objective. On the similar lines, Yankholmes and Akyeampong (2010) differentiated between tourists knowledge of a heritage site relative to their socio-demographic indices. Some have also derived personal ecological explanations for variation in travel preference, travel intention and travel choice behavior of a wide range of destinations (Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2009). However, the choice of heritage attraction and the extent of experience depend largely on the information available to the potential tourists (Lyncha *et al*., 2009; Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010) (Refer Table 2).

Various researchers have investigated the factors influencing destination image formation. The destination image formation is determined partly by distance from the destination, because people are more likely to have visited the destinations near their homes (Hunt,1975) and are likely to have stronger and more realistic images of a destination if it is near their home.

Some tourists derived personal ecological explanations for variation in travel preference, travel intention and travel choice behavior of a wide range of destinations (Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2009). Yankholmes and Akyeampong (2010) further support the findings that some segments of heritage tourists get emotionally involved and assign personal meaning to artefacts presented at heritage sites. On the similar lines, Lyncha *et al.*(2009) too suggested the use of heritage as a means to construct identity.

Table 2: Selected Literature on Visitors' Characteristics vs. Visitors' Perceptions

S. No	Issue	Source
1.	Distance from the Destination	*Hunt, 1975 and Scott et al., 1978*
2.	Authenticity	*Lowenthal, 1985; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Timothy, 1997; Poria et al., 2006; Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2009; Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010*
3.	Source & Preference of Travel	*Nolan, 1976; Lyncha et al., 2009; Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010*
4.	Age, Gender, Marital Status	*McKercher and Chan, 2005; Sheng et al., 2008; Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2009*
5.	Period of Stay & Nationality	*Baloglu and McClearly, 1999; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Richards, 2001; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Selby and Morgan, 1996; Vogt and Andereck, 2003; Tasci and Boylu, 2009*

In the past, Nolan (1976) investigated the sources of travel information used by domestic tourists and also measured 'objectivity' of such information sources by asking respondents to rate whether the sources were biased/unbiased, and inferred from the results that an overall bias in the communication of travel information (especially travel brochures) was recognised by the respondents. Another study has also found an overestimation of tourist interest in aboriginal tourism where usually their participation in such activities is not the primary purpose of their trip (Notzke, 2004).

On the contrary, more recently, tourists' knowledge of a heritage site relative to socio-demographic indices (purpose of visit, source of information) were differentiated using Cohen's (1979) typology of tourist experience indicating that differences in respondents' perceptions were related to their educational attainment (Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010). Likewise a new study also disclosed that tourists visiting cultural sites were found to be highly educated and deeply interested in learning about culture and participating in authentic cultural experiences (Lyncha *et al.*, 2009*)*. Such results indicated that "other" sources and word of mouth are the primary methods for learning about cultural tourism. And therefore, they advocated importance of authenticity in marketing.

Following the suggestions of McKercher and Chan (2005), it was found that recognizing the preferences based only on trips might lead to significant errors. Sheng *et al.* (2008) directly explored the special interest tour preferences in terms of their types and compared whether or not consumers with different demographic attributes such as age, gender, marital status result in discrepancies in special interest tour preferences.

Besides this, Kattiyapornpong and Miller (2009) ascertained the effect of socio-demographic constraints (age, income, life stage) on dimension of travel choice. It also explained personal ecological explanations for variation in travel preference, travel intention and travel choice behavior of a wide range of destination and therefore, suggested that travel motivations of constraint groups need to be considered in order to better understand travel behavior.

Tasci and Boylu (2009) revealed in their study that the visitors' perception of hygiene, health, safety and security, along with the number of days spent in destination, existence of product or service failure and education and nationality variables were significant in explaining their trip satisfaction. This could be another support for the postulation that visitation improves destination image (Milman and Pizam, 1995).

Despite numerous studies exploring the relationship between socio-economic variables and visitors' attitudes, the literature suggests that socio-economic and functional demographic factors play a relatively minor but sometimes a contradictory role in explaining the variation in visitors' attitudes toward tourism development (Sheng *et al.*, 2008; Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2009; Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010).

2.3 Approaches, Models, Methods, Statistical Tools and Techniques for Measuring Visitors' Attitudes Towards Tourism Development

Visitors' attitudes about tourism impacts are ususaly an important planning and

policy consideration for the successful development, marketing and operation of existing and future programs and projects. An important general planning policy to reinforce positive and mitigate negative impacts is the involvement of communities so that they can understand tourism, participate in its decision making and receive benefits from the industry.

One of the means of exploring tourists' perceptions about tourism impacts is conceptualized in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which has been extensively employed in the study of tourism impacts, though previously focused on residents' perceptions (Andereck, 2009 and Ap, 1992). The basic premise of SET is that in order to sustain interaction there must be at least a two-way exchange of material, social, or psychological resources between individuals or groups of individuals (Ap, 1992).

Many scholars have proposed several new approaches and concepts to examine visitors' preferences for sustainable tourism (Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Hunt and Crompton, 2008; Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams, 2010) (See Table 3). Besides this, some researchers have studied tourism impacts in planning marketable tourism destinations within a community and demonstrated that tourism development has costs as well as benefits (Singh and Singh, 2011).

For analysing visitors' perception towards tourism impacts, some scholars advocated the use of segmentation techniques that could provide useful information to policy-makers and tourism managers for strategy formulation, product development and service delivery. Prior to this, Raymond & Brown (2007) indicated that there could be place specific differences in acceptable development and inappropriate development preferences. Therefore, he recommended a situation assesment approach using spatial survey techniques for measuring and integrating local and regional tourism development preferences for tourism planning purposes.

Cluster analysis was also widely used as the technique to separate respondents into mutually exclusive groups. Moreover, recent studies used this methodology to separately examine the opinion of groups in order to find out socio-demographic and behavioural determining factors. Non-hierarchical cluster analysis and multinomial logit analysis of rare events too provide an alternative approach to assess the uniqueness of each market segment. Likewise, Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams (2010) employed the cluster concept as a particular spatial articulation for exploring differences in compatibility among visitor attractions at the regional and the local scales. Linear discriminant analysis as a supplementary technique was also employed to further grasp the unique characteristics of

**Table 3: Selected Literature on Most Relevant Approaches,
Models and Statistical Techniques Applied**

S. No.	Particulars	Source
1.	Approach	
(i)	Segmentation Approach	*Gitelson and Kerstetter, 1990; Calantone and Mazanec, 1991; Spotts and Mahoney, 1991; Loker and Perdue, 1992; Mo et al., 1994; Ryan & Huyton, 2000;Palacio, 2007; Kibicho, 2008*
(ii)	Clustering and Compatibility Approach	*Hunt and Crompton, 2008; Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams, 2010*
(iii)	Situation Assessment Approach	*Raymond & Brown, 2007; Abhinav, Jinlin and Deepika , 2010; Bisht, 2010*
(iv)	Strategy Based Approach	*Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004; Poitras & Donald, 2006; Choi & Murray, 2010; Nunkoo, Gursoy & Juwaheer, 2010; Dhar, 2011*
(v)	Comprehensive Framework	*Ap, 1992; Perdue et al.,1990; Faulkner & Tiudeswell, 1997; Fennell & Butler,1997; Reisinger & Turner, 1999; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003; Raymond & Brown, 2007; Chopra, 2009; Gill, 2010; J. Swarbrooke, 2010; Singh and Singh, 2011*
2.	*Attitude Scale*	
	Measuring Perceptions of Tourists' Attitudes towards Tourism Development	*Ryan, 1991; Lankford & Howard, 1993; Dakota, Kang et al., 1996; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Lankford, 2001; Harrill, 2004*
3.	*Statisitical Tools*	
(i)	Correlation Analysis	*Husbands, 1989; Liu & Var, 1996; Lankford & Howard, 1994; Ryan & Montgomeray, 1994; Williams & Lawson, 2001; Harrill & Potts, 2003; Jackson & Inbakara, 2006*
(ii)	Multinomial Logit Analysis	*Knoke and Burke, 1980; DeMaris, 1992; Chen & Hsu, 1999*
(iii)	Cluster Analysis	*Loker and Perdue, 1992; Mazanec, 1992; Mo et al., 1994; Shoemaker, 1994; Cha et al., 1995; Silverberg et al., 1996;* Ryan & Huyton, 2000; *Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Aguiló and Roselló, 2005; Young et al., 2007; Oviedo-García et al., 2008; Bernini, 2009; Roca et al., 2009*
(iv)	Linear Discriminant Analysis	*Johnson and Wichern, 1998; Bieger and Laesser, 2002*
(v)	Factor Analysis	*Turner and Reisinger, 1999; Harril, 2004; Badan & Bhatt, 2007; Kibicho, 2008*

each segment.

Prior to this, Reisinger and Turner (1999) applied factor analysis and chi-square test to find the main relationships between cultural differences and tourist satisfaction levels with a view to develop cultural models that could provide insight into the factors influencing their perceptions with host community interaction. On the similar lines, some researchers had also determined negative and positive correlations between residents' perceptions and intentions to act towards tourism impacts (Ryan & Huyton, 2000).

Considering all tourism costs, advantages, impacts and potential benefits, Swarbrooke (2010) took a broad view of sustainable tourism management and offered an objective, balanced perspective on sustainable tourism management. According to him, there was no real hard evidence that sustainable tourism is an achievable goal; therefore, he indicated to concentrate on approaches to tourism management rather than types of tourism. Therefore, commonality and consensus of interests of four stakeholders' perspectives (the tourists, the developers, the providers of services and the local population) may lead to some kind of righteous tourism aimed at in the philosophy of searching sustainable tourism strategies (Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004; Choi & Murray, 2010; Nunkoo, Gursoy & Juwaheer, 2010; Dhar, 2011).

Overall, these studies have found that the likelihood of visitors participating in future exchanges is based on their active evaluation of the exchanges and the positive outcomes of these. Thus, on the basis of current critical thinking, tourism measurement and evaluation involving the development of good performance indicators would be of great help for sustainable management of tourism that could bring economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits more specifically to the host community.

3. Conclusion

The interactions through continual exchanges between visitors and the host community can lead to short and long term positive and negative, individual and cumulative, and sometimes profound impacts on destinations, businesses, and communities across the globe. Moreover, the impacts are interrelated and hence, cannot always be easily assigned to one specific category. Despite this, environment is one of the main domains in which planners should assess the potential effects of tourism from the perspectives of both the host and visitors' community before they decide to embrace or reject the development proposal.

In respect of socio-economic and other functional characteristics of visitors, age, income and life stage have significant differenntial seemed to be significant differential and interactive effects on tourist behavior. Further, the socio-economic characteristics should be explored with the help of a conceptual framework that takes into account the destination characteristics and visitors profile for determining the tourism impacts. Among the different approaches and models applied to assess the role of tourism as to its positive or negative effects against this benchmark of sustainable tourism, the best approach would be to have an integrated cost-benefit approach that could bring great social, economic and environmental benefits more specifically to the host community. To conclude, tourism is an industry with enormous economic impacts, environmental and social consequences. Thus, a thorough understanding of each component of the tourism phenomenon is essential so that those involved with planning, management and policy determination can have a basis for decision-making .

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