

Assessing the Factors that Foster Sustainable Tourism Development at Swamimalai, Kumbakonam

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Abstract

The study investigates the factors that foster sustainable tourism development at Swamimalai, Kumbakonam. Using social exchange theory, the study assesses the effects of community involvement, attachment, perceived cost, and benefits on fostering sustainable tourism development. The study also recognizes the associations of four community groups and studies how it varies among handicraft sellers, farmers, merchants, and local administrative employees. 120 valid responses were taken for the study from these four local community groups in Swamimalai. Data were analyzed for descriptive statistics, regression analysis and to analyze the overall model fit of the study variables using PLS- structural equation modeling. The results of the study show that community involvement, attachment, and perceived benefits significantly foster sustainable tourism. The results of the structural equation modeling reveal that attachment and community involvement are significantly impacting sustainable tourism development and also it significantly differs across the community groups at Swamimalai. The findings of the study provide theoretical and practical implications to the host communities and other stakeholders in the locality.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism acts as a source of developing communities to live better and grow economically. To enhance current knowledge of sustainable tourism management, it is essential to understand different community perspectives in promoting sustainable tourism development. Support extended from different communities such as Policy makers, NGOs, developers, industry and local residents. The stakeholders are responsible for the development of local communities. According to Choi & Sirakaya, (2005), Local residents and government are to oversee or to scorn the importance of the local atmosphere and strive to strengthen the economic growth. If there is a community participation and attachment extended to foster sustainable tourism development, there may be a development in the tourism destination locality and there may be an increase in the standard of living of people in locality.

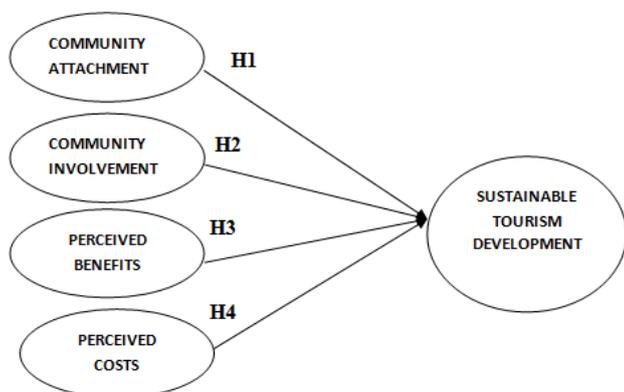
Therefore, there is a need to study the factors that foster sustainable tourism development.

After an extensive literature review, the variables such as community involvement, community attachment, perceived cost and benefits were identified to study its impacts on fostering sustainable tourism development (SSTD) at Swamimalai, Kumbakonam. Community attachment defined as the psychological connection recognized by the people who live in the community towards some meaningful elements (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). Tosun (2006) defines community involvement as the contributions of local residents' in decision making about the benefits received from the advancement plan. This involvement increases by local residents sharing their experiences, acquaintance, and views about the affirmative benefits of tourism. Perceived cost and benefits refer to increased employment

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opportunities and earnings. Also, the social and cultural benefits like supporting social wealth, and an improved sense of attachment and pride in the town/city (Rao, 2009; Su& Wall, 2012).

McIntyre (1993) defines sustainable tourism improves the host community's quality of life and provides high quality visitor experience through the proper maintenance of environment with high quality. According to Rowe (1992), Sustainable tourism concept balancing the traditional utility theory and social exchange theory, by focuses on economic costs, benefits, and the new ecological model, which concentrates and the enhancement of the well-being of communities. The relationship among the variables are depicted in the following research framework.



Research Framework(Inference: Olya, Alipour&Gavilyan, 2018)

The study enhances the understanding of management of sustainable tourism which identifies the perception of host communities' benefits and costs to advance sustainable tourism at swamimalai. The present study assumes that local communities are not united, instead, they are divided and have different discernment towards improving sustainable tourism development. Therefore, the present study widens the current knowledge of sustainable tourism development by examining the perspectives of different communities in Swamimalai. As pointed out by Brooks, Reyes-Garcia, & Burnside, (2018), to improve sustainable tourism from different

communities, customize the strategies for community involvement and attachment. The uniqueness of communities and the level of attachment towards community and involvement have a different effect on sustainable tourism development. Classification of communities around Swamimalai is justified based on the different interest groups in the communities.

II. OBJECTIVES

The study investigates the factors that foster sustainable tourism development at Swamimalai, Kumbakonam. To assess the effects of community attachment, involvement, perceived benefits, and perceived costs on sustainable tourism development, the study utilize social exchange theory. The study also identifies the associations of the four community groups in the locality namely handicraft seller, merchants, farmers, and local administrative workers.

- To study the effect of community involvement, community attachment, perceived cost and benefits on sustainable tourism development at Swamimalai.
- To study the comprehensive model effect of the study variables (Community Involvement, Attachment, Perceived Benefits, Costs and Sustainable Tourism Development,).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

A research questionnaire was administered to the four community groups in Swamimalai. 120 valid responses were taken for the study. Convenience sampling method was adopted. The hypotheses were framed and tested using regression analysis and PLS-SEM. To study the sample characteristics, the demographic details were analyzed using cross tabulations and the sample was classified based on characteristics such as age, gender, qualification, degree. The test for Skewness and kurtosis for all variables showed a favourable values and fitted into

the specified range. Thus, the normality of data established. Reliability of the instruments were tested and the values are found to be in acceptable range.

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Min	Max	Mean	StdDev	Skewness	Kurtosis		
SU	120	1.80	5.00	3.948	.9194	-.920	.221	-.722	.438
CA	120	1.86	4.86	3.903	.7536	-.847	.221	-.341	.438
CI	120	2.00	5.00	3.969	.8621	-.760	.221	-.700	.438
PB	120	1.60	5.00	3.873	.8575	-.889	.221	-.586	.438
PC	120	1.50	5.00	3.934	.8537	-1.02	.221	-.099	.438
Valid N (list wise)	120								

Multiple regression is done in SPSS to determine the relationship among the study variables such as Community Involvement, Attachment, Perceived Benefits and Costs on Sustainable Tourism Development. To analyse the structural relationships of the proposed model Partial Least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used. It consists of two components: Displaying the structural model by establishing its paths between the constructs. Second one is the measurement model displaying the relationships of the constructs and the indicator variables.

IV. FINDINGS

The results of the regression analysis show that perceived benefits and perceived cost had a significant and positive impact on fostering sustainable tourism development. However, the effects of local community involvement and attachment on sustainable tourism development diversified across the local community groups at Swamimalai.

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.915 ^a	.838	.832	.37669
a. Predictors: (Constant), PC, CI, PB, CA				
b. Dependent Variable: SU				

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.249	.223		1.118	.266
	CA	-1.555	.905	-1.085	-1.717	.089
	CI	1.433	.893	1.006	1.605	.111
	PB	.499	.111	.466	4.514	.000
	PC	.572	.108	.532	5.322	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SU

V. RESULTS OF PLS MODEL

The results of the PLS-SEM show that the overall model fit of the proposed framework is found to be significant.

	SATURATED MODEL	ESTIMATED MODEL
SRMR	0.066	0.066
d_ULS	2.166	2.166
d_G	1.783	1.783
Chi-square	971.533	971.533
NFI	0.740	0.740

Interpretation:

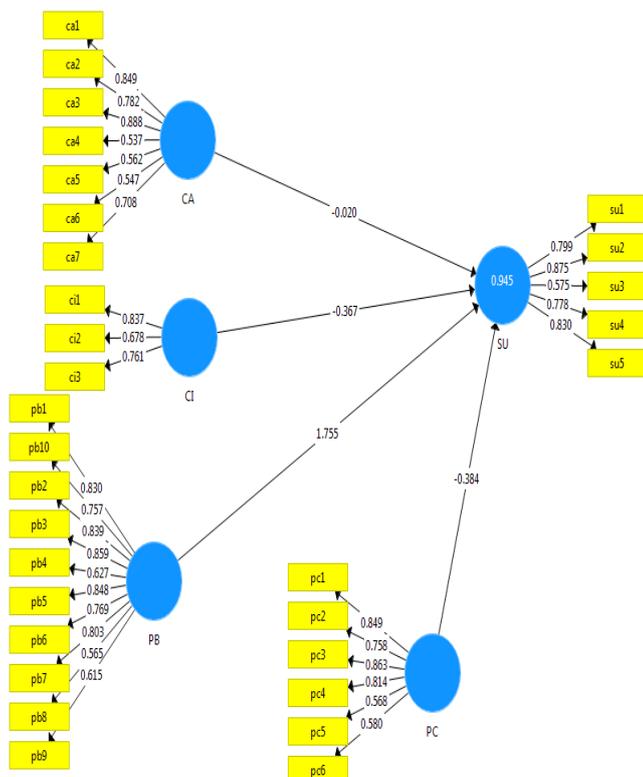
As found by Byrne, (2008), a value of 0 SRMR indicates a perfect fit, however, a value less than 0.05 SRMR indicates an acceptable fit. As given by Henseler et al, 2014, precise model of SRMR can yield a value of 0.06 and higher. Therefore, as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), the a value of 0.08 is found to be more adequate. Therefore, the SRMR value for the model is 0.066 is an acceptable fit and a NFI of 0.740, indicates a good fit.

	Cronbach's Al...	rho_A	Composite Rel...	Average Varian...
CA	0.874	0.893	0.873	0.504
CI	0.800	0.812	0.804	0.580
PB	0.929	0.937	0.930	0.575
PC	0.878	0.897	0.882	0.560
SU	0.875	0.894	0.883	0.606

The results of the study have a number of theoretical and practical implications to all the stakeholders in the local communities, policy makers and local governance, etc. The results of the study also reveals that community involvement, attachment, and perceived benefits significantly fostering sustainable tourism. The PLS-SEM results show that the effects of community attachment and involvement on sustainable tourism development differs among the local community groups at Swamimalai. The study also indicates that the sense of local community involvement and attachment for all these local community groups to be improved necessarily. The present study admits that the proposed research framework using structural model showed a acceptable fit with the given data Farmers and handicraft sellers show poor attachment towards the community; however, the possible reasons are the socio-economic conditions and the perception towards the sustainable tourism development in the local environment. To boost community attachment and involvement among the farmers and handicraft sellers, it is essential to empower unions in the community and this would act as a strategy to reinforcing the administration of unions presently. Local governance frame strategies to involve the farmers, vendors and other stakeholders to actively involved in fostering the sustainable tourism development in the local environment. By undertaking the awareness programmes and training, the attachment towards the tourism development may possibly increase in all communities. Perceived cost and benefits are equally sensed by the community groups as they feel these two factors are the return on investment. Community groups in Swamimalai perceive that the economic growth of the communities enhances the chances of being attached to the community for tourism development is high. The findings of the study reveal that effect of perceived benefits and cost, community involvement, and attachment to foster sustainable tourism development across the local community groups. The study also suggests that it is essential

Discriminant Validity

	CA	CI	PB	PC	SU
CA	0.710				
CI	0.974	0.761			
PB	0.964	1.005	0.758		
PC	0.972	0.984	1.011	0.749	
SU	0.941	1.000	0.979	1.011	0.778



VI. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS:

to implement the augmentation plan at Swamimalai by involving different community groups to foster sustainable tourism management

VII. CONCLUSION

Sustainable tourism development extends its support from different communities. Stakeholders of local environment such as policy makers, community residents, industry are accountable for the development of sustainable tourism in the local community. To intensify the economic growth, community groups needs to be trained to oversee the opportunities and utilize it in the appropriate way to please the visitors to the host communities. If there is a community involvement and attachment extended towards the development of sustainable tourism, there may be a development in the tourism destinations and quality of life and standard of living of people in the locality may raise.

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