

# **Perceptions of Tourism Impacts and Sustainability Concept: Insights from Kyrgyzstan**

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Submitted to the  
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Tourism Management

Eastern Mediterranean University  
February 2017  
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tourism development is mainly dependent upon socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors. This study explores the perceptions of environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts of tourism development by the representatives of government officials, the academicians and the private sectors in Kyrgyzstan. In this scope, all three dimensions (economic, socio-cultural and environmental) need to be identified whether it has negative impacts such as cost of living, environmental degradation, pollution or imitation of foreign behaviors and culture or the positive impacts such as job creation, increased willingness to understand the different cultures and protection of nature and wildlife. Thus, if it is not planned, managed, or monitored competently, the outcome could bring fundamental consequences and it will not only hinder the further development of tourism but also might damage the residents' lifestyle.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the thesis, a qualitative approach was used by applying a semi-structured interview for the data collection process. The research has revealed that current tourism development in Kyrgyzstan has both negative and positive impacts on economy, culture, and environment. Furthermore, in the light of the collected data, the main tourism development stimulators were identified such as the promotion of cultural identity and pride, enhancement of environmental quality and new perspectives to improve the quality of life.

Social exchange theory was an appropriate theoretical framework to apply for this study as the sustainability concept encompasses the three dimensions of tourism

development and sustainability recognizes the importance of the participation of all stakeholders in tourism development. Moreover, the residents are identified as the imperative stakeholders in tourism planning and development. Therefore, it is expected to be aware that sustainable tourism development recognizes and emphasizes that local residents are important stakeholders. The subject of sustainability has taken attention of many researchers in the recent years, however, these investigations were taken extensively in some developed countries rather than developing countries. Therefore, in addition, the study attempts to explore the awareness of sustainability concept of the experts and practitioners in Kyrgyzstan. The results showed that there is a lack of understanding of the concept particularly among the government officials and the private sector representatives. Moreover, the sustainability concept seems to remain invisible in the practice despite the fact that respondents had some awareness of the subject.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Development, Economic Impacts, Socio-cultural Impacts, Environmental Impacts, Kyrgyzstan

## ÖZ

Turizmin gelişimi sosyo-kültürel, ekonomik ve çevresel faktörlere bağlıdır. Bu çalışma, Kırgızistan'daki kamu kurumlarının temsilcileri, akademisyenler ve özel sektör temsilcileri tarafından algılanan turizm gelişiminin çevresel, sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik etkilerini incelemektedir. Bu kapsamda, turizm gelişiminin hayat pahalılığı, çevresel bozulma, kirlilik, yabancı davranış ve kültürlerin taklidi gibi negatif etkilere mi, yoksa iş alanları yaratma, farklı kültürleri anlama ve doğa ile yabancı yaşamın korunmasını sağlamaya yönelik gönüllülük esasını artıracak pozitif etkilere yol açıp açmadığını belirlemek amacıyla tüm bu üç faktörün tanımlanması gerekir. Bu doğrultuda, eğer yetkin bir şekilde planlanmaz, yönetilmez ve takip edilmezse, ilgili gelişmelerin sonuçları geri dönülmesi mümkün olmayan neticeleri beraberinde getirecektir. Bu durum sadece turizmin gelişmesine engel olmayacak aynı zamanda orada yaşayan sakinlerin yaşam biçimlerine de zarar verebilecektir.

Tezin amaç ve hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek amacıyla veri toplanması sürecince nitel bir yaklaşım kullanılarak yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar yapılmıştır. Araştırma, Kırgızistan'daki mevcut turizm gelişiminin ekonomi, kültür ve çevre üzerinde hem olumsuz hem de olumlu etkilere sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, toplanan veriler ışında kültürel kimlik ve özsaygının desteklenmesi, çevre kalitesinin artırılması ve yaşam kalitesinin yükseltilmesine yönelik yeni perspektifler gibi temel turizm gelişim uyarıcıları tespit edilmiştir.

Sürdürülebilirlik kavramının turizm gelişiminin üç boyutunu kapsamı ve tüm paydaşların turizm gelişimine katılımlarının önemini dikkate alması nedeniyle, bu çalışmada sosyal değişim teorisi temel alınmıştır. Ayrıca, turizm planlaması ve

geliştirilmesi kapsamında sakinler olmazsa olmaz paydaşlar olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, sürdürülebilir turizm gelişiminde yerel sakinlerin önemli paydaşlar olduğunun görülmesi ve vurgulanması beklenmektedir. Sürdürülebilirlik konusu son yıllarda pek çok araştırmacının dikkatini çekmiş ancak bu araştırmalar gelişmekte olan ülkelere ziyade çoğunlukla gelişmiş ülkeler temel alınarak irdelenmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu tez Kırgızistan'daki uzmanların ve uygulayıcıların sürdürülebilirlik kavramına dair farkındalıklarını da incelemeye çalışmıştır. Sonuçlar, özellikle hükümet yetkilileri ve özel sektör temsilcilerinin sürdürülebilir turizm kavramına ilişkin farkındalıktan yoksun olduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Katılımcıların konuyla ilgili az bir miktarda bilgiye sahip olmalarına rağmen, sürdürülebilirlik kavramı uygulamada görünmez bir yapıdadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürdürülebilir Turizm, Turizm Gelişimi, Ekonomik Etkiler, Sosyo-kültürel Etkiler, Çevresel Etkiler, Kırgızistan

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to Thank God for giving me this opportunity of coming to North Cyprus and gaining the knowledge that will help me pursuing my future goals. My sincere gratitude to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali Öztüren for your constant support, guidance, patience and contribution in completion of this thesis. I had a long journey to accomplish it and with its challenges along the way it made it even more exciting and fascinating experience.

My special thanks to all our dearest Professors of Tourism Faculty. Thank you for your professionalism, open-mindedness, friendliness and encouragement. I tried to learn how to be positive from Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Araslı, the importance of tourism planning from Prof. Dr. Habib Alipour, the logical approach to everything from Assist. Prof. Dr. Mine Haktanır and your sense of humor, the significance of research methods from Assist. Prof. Dr. Ilkay Yorgancı and thanks for your kindness, Prof. Dr. Osman Karatepe I admire your time management, high efficiency, and Prof. Dr. Turgay Avcı, thank you for sharing your knowledge about the World of Service and your energizing motivation and charisma.

Nevertheless, my sincere appreciation to our assistance for always being there for us and your patience with our never ending questions.

My special and heartiest thanks to dearest Dr. Georgiana Karadaş, thank you for always being there for me in my up and downs, your wise advice, you are an inspiration for me and I am very grateful for meeting you.

My Master degree program couldn't be more interesting, diverse and enriched without my colleagues from around the world, thank you for your friendship, sharing your knowledge and experiences. Now we are all future of the Hospitality Industry and wish you the all very best and prosperous career.

I am grateful to the people who helped me in the process of data collection in Kyrgyzstan especially I am indebted to Gulnara Kubatbek kyzy and Nurgazi Toichuev, thank you for making my journey easier. And everybody who was involved in my data collection, academicians, government officials and representatives of the private sectors, thank you all for sharing your knowledge and being responsive and supportive.

Last, not least I cannot be more grateful to God for granting me with my beloved Family. They are my precious and grace. My deepest acknowledgment is dedicated to my Father, Mother, my sisters Ainura, Kunduz, Cholpon and my brother Sagynbay, sister-in-law Gul'dana and my sweetest nieces and nephews. Thank you all without your support and I would probably not come this far.



## **DEDICATION**

I am dedicating my Thesis to my Mother.

May God Bless your soul.

I love you and will miss you every day of my life.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism Industry is one of the rapid growing industries in the world; international tourist arrivals grew by 3.9% in 2016 and reached 1,235 million according to UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (UNWTO, 2017). Therefore, it is apparent that tourists are willing to explore more and visit undiscovered places. Moreover, it has a great effect on the economy of Third World countries economy which is newly opening their doors for the international tourists.

Tourism is extensively apparent as a potential economic contribution, providing components of the better life and improved quality of life known as job vacancies, tax, economic opportunities, carnivals, eating places, natural and traditional attractions, and outdoor activity opportunities (Ap and Crompton 1993, McCool and Martin 1994 cited in Andereck et al., 2005).

However, there are worries, that tourism can have negative effects on quality of life. It can be traffic jams, parking space difficulties, increasing amount of law breaking, cost of living, relationships between tourists and residents, changes in residents' daily life. Moreover, the term “*impact of tourism*” widely used and known among the scholars (for example Ko and Stewart, 2002, Andereck and Vogt,2000) many types of research have been done in order to identify not only the positive side of the tourism development but also the negative outcomes of the tourism development.

Conceivably none of the other activities has grown last decade with the same speed and globalization as tourism. Such growth has encouraged, inspired and increased the interest among academicians, policy-makers, experts and other stakeholders in the tourism industry. These concerns must show how to shape and function the tourism industry in the next coming decades. Not only emphasizing the issues on impacts of tourism but what actions need to be used in order to overcome all the negative aspects of the impacts as well as the most essentially how to develop sustainably in order to preserve our valuable resource.

Kyrgyzstan is a new country and tourism industry is developing in an evolutionary way. On this note the researcher attempts to identify the views of the key players in the tourism industry setting emphasizes on the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism and awareness of sustainability concept.

## **1.2 Aim of the Study**

- To investigate the negative and positive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism in Kyrgyzstan
- To obtain the awareness about sustainability concept from the experts and practitioners



### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Nowadays, as the world is becoming more economically stable and the tourism industry is developing rapidly whether it is a business trip, leisure holidays or education travels. Kyrgyzstan is one of the Central Asian countries with picturesque landscapes attracting and hosting more and more tourists every year. As this country opening its doors to the guests it needs to be aware of the concept of sustainable development of tourism and economic, environmental, socio-cultural negative and positive impacts. The lack of related knowledge approaches, sustainable principles and short-time oriented tourism development may lead to a fundamental loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and social–cultural misbalances. Sustainable tourism development studies mostly oriented in developed countries, rather than developing countries.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore the tourism experts' and practitioners' perceptions of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism development in Kyrgyzstan. The majority of the studies made previously identified these impacts have two outcomes: positive or negative (Garcia, Vazquez, and Macias 2014). Furthermore, this study attempts to explore the awareness of sustainability concept from government officials, academicians, and the private sector.

### **1.5 Research Methodology**

This research applied the inductive approach in order to explore the experts' and practitioners' awareness of economic, socio-cultural and environmental tourism impacts and their perception of sustainability concept. In order to achieve this goal, a qualitative method was used as a research strategy. Hence, the qualitative methodology provides a better knowledge of understanding the issues raised and

encourages the research by this methodology. Nevertheless, qualitative methods are used fewer in this type of research (Horn and Simmons, 2002; Lepp, 2007).

As qualitative research aims to investigate people's thoughts, experiences, feelings entailing open-ended research questions. The semi-structured interviews were conducted which allowed viewing discernment of the interviewee's opinions in these arising topics. Once the relevant information gathered the ideas, and perceptions were analyzed.

Tucker, McCoy, Evans (1990) argue that a qualitative method provides flexibility, adaptiveness, profundity, and practicality and has a validity that quantitative method may not offer.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

We are living in the era where the tourism industry is developing rapidly alongside with innovative technology services. Nowadays, any destination can be checked, evaluated and observed by the click of the mouse without going out of your house.

The interests of tourists are growing in visiting countries of Central Asia or the countries laid on the Silk Road as Taleb Rifai, General Secretary of UNWTO, emphasized on the Silk Road Action Plan (2016-2017) that Silk Road is an important channel for a new, vibrant and cultural- historical way of tourism, attracting and opening its doors with advanced facilitations and agreements. The main mission of the Action Plan is to work together to deliver new marketing framework and raise the competence, increasing the view of Silk Road tourism and leading the development that is sustainable, reliable and competitive worldwide (UNWTO, Silk Road Action Plan, 2016).

Among them, Kyrgyzstan lies on Silk Road Route and offers its beautiful and pure nature, enriched with the ancient traditions and culture.

Despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan is a new country and on the process of developing approaches and marketing in order to attract tourists more not only seasonally but all year-round. However, is it the only beneficial side seen and/or the negative sides are also taken into consideration? Therefore, this study explores and analyses experts' and practitioners' perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Additionally, exploring the experts' and practitioners' awareness of the sustainability concept. These themes and approaches play a fundamental role in developing the tourism industry. If not implemented accurately or concerned enough it could damage the whole tourism system colossally leaving behind a chaotic scenario. Therefore, this study would be very beneficial in terms of providing in-depth information about the negative and positive aspects of three dimensions of sustainable tourism. The provided information could be implemented by academicians, government officials, private sectors, local community and non-governmental organizations.

### **1.7 Research questions**

In order to achieve the aims and objectives, the study analyses the perceptions of the authorities in tourism industry obtaining through non-probability convenient sampling. This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How experts and practitioners perceive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism and the concept of sustainability for Kyrgyzstan?

2. How can current tourism development encourage the main impacts in Kyrgyzstan?

## **1.8 Content Structure**

This thesis contains five chapters. The first chapter identifies and explores the background of the study and importance of the research, problem statement, aims, and objectives and research questions.

Chapter 2 provides the knowledge about economic, socio-cultural and environmental tourism impacts. Additionally, the chapter introduces with sustainable tourism management and key principles of sustainable tourism. Moreover, it introduces with an overview about Kyrgyzstan. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used. Following Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research and with the data analysis. The last Chapter 5 comprises discussion and conclusion, including the limitations of the study, implications, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 The concept of sustainability**

The concept of sustainability development have been drawing the attention of many types of research and raised many discussions of all the areas of economic, socio-cultural and environmental consequences. Moving forward, the sustainability conception and the topics related regarding environment widely spread among the non-governmental, private sectors, public organizations and educational institutions.

The concept became a main part of the understanding the future of our planet. Giving an essence of the responsibility for actions taken towards environment and obligation that tomorrow's future is in our hands, inhabitants of living generations now. As consequences will appear of how the natural and the cultural heritage had been conserved and preserved for the future.

In the tourism industry, many lodging companies campaign, support and advertise Eco-efficient, eco- friendly products, the programs, and choice can be made while staying in the hotel. Primary aim to be a reduction of the energy, waste, emission and constructing more green lodgings, to use recyclable materials and reuse the wasted water, save the water and plant more for a greener future.

The word *Eco* becoming very trendy and it is a successful way of introducing the importance of the environment and inviting to be part of it doing daily choices which might do a big difference to the Planet.

The publication of the report entitled *Our Common Future* by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 recognized that continual economic development with a deteriorating resource base was not realistic. The Commission developed the concept of sustainable development, which is defined as “as development that meets the needs of the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In their report, the Commission emphasized that the overriding priority of the concept is to ensure ecological sustainability while addressing poverty in any society and in the world as a whole. The rationale for sustainable development is to raise the standard of living of the least advantage in society, while at the same time avoiding any destruction of the environment which might impact on future generations’ ability to meet their needs”( Stanhope, 2000,p 149).

The above context yet again emphasizes the concept of sustainable development unambiguously recognizes the interconnection and inter- dependency that is between environment and economic issues, themes and strategies. Thereby, sustainable development recognized as protecting the environment, enhance the economic stability, and improve the basic human needs, fair treatment to the current generation, promoting it to future stability and improving the quality of life. Nevertheless, it is logic to identify that for the long term sustainability the appropriate strategies, goals, and guidelines need to be set and not only generated but they supposed to be

applicable to all countries despite their stage of development or level of socio-cultural, political, technological conditions.

It would also be appropriate to add that sustainability progresses through carefully thought and by effective planning capturing all the areas and furthermore, it cannot exclude the fact that the residents must be involved alongside this process by educating, training and providing the information about sustainability. In the long run, the preservation of the services and products are in the interest of the residents as it provides them a living.

Steward and Kuska (2010) suggested that sustainability contains five domains which promote the system of correlation between human beings and the natural environment. Identifying the well-defined characteristics within the five domain of sustainability: environmental, socio-cultural, technology, economy and public policy.

Principles are interdependent from one another and the core of this system is the community sustainability. These components are combined and the participation of the community plays the fundamental role in achieving the balance and sustainability. Nevertheless, stakeholders need to contribute making goals that are integrated with these domains for more economic stability, socio-cultural diversity and environmental consciousness. Being educated and obtain the necessary knowledge about the impacts of the tourism industry leads to overcome and avoid the major disagreements and consequences occurred along the way.

Below mentioned seventeen recommendations are made by United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs in 2015 to reach the sustainability and to seek the balance between resource conservation and development.

Sustainable development goals are:

1. *No poverty* - To end poverty with its all forms.
2. *Zero hunger* -End hunger to accomplish food assurance and improved nutrition and advert sustainable agriculture.
3. *Good health and well-being*- Ensure healthy lifestyle and contribute well-being for all at all ages.
4. *Quality Education*- Ensure comprising and equitable quality education and support education potential for everybody.
5. *Gender Equality*- To reach gender equal of rights and authorize all women and girl.
6. *Clean water and sanitation*- To make sure accessibility and sustainable management of water and hygienic for everybody.
7. *Affordable and clean energy*- Ensure approach to reasonable, secure, sustainable and contemporary energy for everybody.
8. *Decent work and economic growth*- Contribute stable inclusive and sustainable economic increase, absolute and efficient employment and fair work for everybody.
9. *Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure*- Build flexible infrastructure, encourage inclusive and sustainable industrialization and stimulate innovatively.
10. *Reduced inequalities*- Decrease equality within and among districts
11. *Sustainable cities and communities*- create cities and communities inclusive, reliable, comfortable and sustainable.



12. *Responsible consumption and production* –To make sure sustainable utilization and manufacturing structure.
13. *Climate action*- To take immediate action to fight climate change and its impacts.
14. *Life below water*- To preserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. *Life and land*- Guard, recover and facilitate sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably operate forests, fight desertification, and stop land degradation and stop biodiversity damage
16. *Peace, justice, and strong institution*- To foster peaceful and inclusive communities for sustainable development, supply access to justice for everybody and create an efficient reliable and inclusive establishments at all levels
17. *Partnership for the goals*- To reinforce the method of accomplishment and reinvigorate the worldwide cooperation sustainable development (UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs,2015 ).

Analyzing and managing the process of tourism development without considering the perspectives of the stakeholders will probably produce inadequate or defective results. In this context, scientific studies need theoretical frameworks. One of the very well-known and credited theories for this purpose is the social exchange theory.

## **2.2 Social Exchange Theory**

Reactions to tourism development based on the theoretic concepts of the social exchange theory have studied the relations between and among the awareness of the profits, prices, effects, and support for tourism (Ap, Gursoy et al., as cited in

Jurowski and Gursoy 2004). Moreover, the factors that affect resident attitudes towards tourism development mostly defined as economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Gursoy et al., 2000). The positive impacts have been described as “*benefits*” whereas negative impacts as “*costs*” and in theory, if the benefits take advantage of the costs it is likely that residents will support the tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2002). Furthermore, Mihalic (2016) distinguished that to make tourism sustainable (tourism based on the three dimensions of sustainability; economic, socio-cultural and environmental) it is vital to base tourism development on awareness of sustainability and principles and cooperation on developing sustainable tourism. Therefore, the residents are located in the core of sustainable development, as residents’ participation whether it’s direct or indirect support is the establishment for the appliance of sustainability paradigm (Butcher, Hunter as cited in Segota, 2016). The theory suggests that residents are expected to join in an exchange (for example, to assist in planning development) if they have a confidence in more benefits than costs for the host community, they will have a positive view on tourism and be more supportive of tourism development (Ap, as cited in Latkova and Vogt, 2012). Sharpley(2014) points out that understanding perceptions and reactions of residents are fundamental in developing an effective sustainable tourism and that could be a reason of many researchers being interested in residents behavior towards tourism development. According to Segota et al. (2016), the major interest lies in the concept of the sustainable tourism development. The concept encompasses and represents the dimensions of the sustainable tourism: economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism that can support in defining how residents will reply to future tourism development through important aspects of the community (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003). There is no argument that

sooner or later the role of the community will play a great role in developing tourism development. Moreover, Steward and Kuska (2010) identified the five domains of sustainability where the community involvement and the sustainable community is the core of the other aspects such economic, socio-cultural, environmental, technology and public policy. It promotes a correlation and demonstrates the interdependence from one another in order to achieve a sustainable development. Furthermore, the sustainability distinguishes the significance of the residents in the tourism industry as stakeholders. Some scholars (Boley, McGehee, Perdue and Long, 2014; Harril 2004) argue that residents are the main stakeholders and it is vital to empower them in tourism planning and developing processes in order to support and regulate the impacts of tourism at the destination. And yet again empowering residents can be challenging and can give a variety of explanations.

According to Latkova and Vogt ( 2012) it's always difficult to identify and assess the application of empowerment, as it can be described by various types, such: involvement, contribution, authority to influence the decision-making process (Ko and Steward, 2002; Latkova and Vogt, 2012; Nunkoo and Ramkisson,2012). These categories can assist for residents to be involved in activities, for instance, to participate in tourism activities, in planning, management or decision-making process or be part of any research. Therefore, social science theory indeed plays an important role in understanding the perceptions of the residents' towards tourism development and its' impacts. On the other hand, in order to achieve a sustainable development the host community cannot be put aside and sustainable tourism development cannot be successful without the support of local residents. Tourism development will sustain when the host communities have an active involvement,

and it is required to represent the opinions of all groups (government officials, tourism private sectors, residents). On the other hand, if residents consider that tourism entails more costs than benefits, it is more likely that residents may disapprove tourism development (Dyer et al., 2007). Therefore, to achieve sustainable tourism development is a challenging task and without a doubt, all the relevant stakeholders need to take participation and a substantial amount of information needs to be provided to the community in order to achieve a consensus. In this context, in order to achieve the sustainable tourism development in Kyrgyzstan, it is important to recognize the importance of the local residents and distinguish them as main stakeholders. As studies show that without the residents' participation, awareness and being not recognized in the planning process could bring unfavorable experiences and conflicts. Moreover, the dimensions of the tourism development as discussed earlier cannot grow or develop without residents' participation. As this study explores the perceptions of environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts of tourism development without a doubt the residents are involved and discussed during the research.

The finding of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism which is under the scope of this study demonstrates that tourism development implies all the negative and positive impacts and as the social theory suggests that without the participation and recognition of the residents' the sustainable tourism development will not be successfully achieved. Therefore, government officials, academicians, and private sectors cannot avoid this essential factor of residents' participation and cooperation in order to achieve sustainable tourism development in Kyrgyzstan.

## **2.3 Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism**

### **2.3.1 The Economic Dimension of Tourism**

#### **2.3.1.1 Positive Economic Impacts of Tourism**

Tourism industry predominantly recognized for bringing economic benefits to the countries revenue generation.

The economic dimensions have a positive view and influence toward the host communities, as it generates employment opportunities (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2010; Diedrich and Garcia, 2009; Yoon, Gursoy and Chen, 2001), signifying that it is one of the main sources of income for local residents (Bestard and Nadal, 2007; Chen 2000). Besides, residents are aware of infrastructures of the facilities, archaeological sites and recreation of public facilities (Andereck and Vogt, 2000), which improves quality and standard of life. Tourism is known for playing a significant role towards economy, as it generates employment. Moreover, employment is one of the imperative elements stimulated by tourism is the destination development. For example, a new hotel offers vacancies such as front line officer, supervisors, chefs, accountants, and housekeeping. In addition, more contacts and cooperation will be made with locals or with other private businesses in terms of delivering required stock resources. Hence, if the destination has a potential for further development and to become a favorable tourism destination more job opportunities and businesses will thrive such as souvenir shops, markets, entertaining places, restaurants and rent a car service etc. Moreover, cooperatives aid to escalate residents' participation in tourism planning and management in addition to the overall satisfaction of locals from tourism benefits (Lepp, 2002). The overall judgment of the economic impact is positive as residents experience better standards

of living, reduces poverty alleviation, improves the economy of the locals and generates business, employment opportunities and strengthen the community involvement towards tourism development.

According to earlier literature and the results given by a researcher, for instance, Gursoy et al. (2004) the economic impact has a positive effect on tourism development in terms of employment opportunities, investment opportunities and enhancing the chances of local residents to be able to have their own local businesses and generate revenues for the local governments. Moreover, in relation to positive economic impact, it is necessary to emphasize that earnings from tourism industry have a great contribution to employment generation, contribution to government profits and as well as a recreation of regional development.

Tourism entails positive economic impacts on the income level of local people and improves the standard of living; it increases the employment opportunities.

Some other literature divides economic impacts as Direct and Indirect Revenue. As Weaver and Lawton (2002) explains that indirect revenue is generated by the continued circulation of the direct spending in the destination. However, direct revenue is the cash obtained directly from a tourist in advance or expenditures at the destination and related taxes percentage. Tourists also generate taxation revenue through the purchase of good and services subject to sales tax and other levies (Weaver and Lawton, 2002:243). The multiplier effect is a measure of the repeated income made by direct tourist payments in a destination's economy. Therefore, multiplier effect represents the benefit of tourism to a destination economy and wider involvement of external settings such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing

segments that provide goods and services to tourism sector (Weaver and Lawton 2002) which generally has a positive effect on the economy of local people, their living conditions and financial independence.

### **2.3.1.2 Negative Economic Impacts of Tourism**

However, on the other hand, it can fluctuate the prices of goods, services including the prices on properties and rents leading to the increase of cost of living (Tatoglu et al.,2002)demonstrating the negative side of the economic impacts which will be discussed below in the next section. Together with the standard of living the cost of living rises (McGehee and Andereck ,2004), prices for the goods and amenities increases (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996), including values of the property and land (Saveriades,2000), consequently residents struggle to purchase their first time property buyers ( Anton and Gonzalez, as cited in Garcia et al .,2015). In addition, seasonality (Bestard and Nadal, 2007) can be another concern in the tourism industry as well as economic recessions could hit the locals' financial stability. Furthermore, price rises, opportunity costs and excessive dependence on tourism determines the negative side of the economic impact. According to Ayres (2000) negative economic impacts included property, land, foods and other products by local people increased significantly, agriculture industry lost its productivity because of the selling lands, foreign loans for tourism development, investment, become excessively dependent on foreign exchange, seasonality of the tourism industry creates temporary positions during peak seasons and lack of qualified workers occurred which can lead to unsatisfied customers who could negatively spread the experience back in the home country. Consequently, it is a danger of declining the numbers of tourists in the next season and this can undesirably affect the future tourism demand and have a direct negative impact on tourism economy.

Seasonality of the tourism may also have a great impact on the economy as mentioned above. For instance, with the good seasonal period, supply and demand will increase generating cash flow into the economy at the same time the high seasonal period or simply at the period of global economic crises when not many tourists are traveling will demonstrate completely opposite picture to the economy. Consequently, seasonality or the economic stability around the world also plays a significant role in touristic places and attractions.

De Oliviera (2003) identified that damage of the traditional industries, low paid and unskilled jobs, increases the local prices, and increases the status of the locals, less advantage to control local economy.

In the perspective that employment in tourism industry generates economic flows directly or indirectly. Mentioning the negative side of it, wages in the tourism sector known as the lowest paid comparing to other industries. Bull (Weaver and Lawton 2002:263) characterizes is it as follow:

- High rate of employees leaving the workplace
- The weak position of trade unions and cooperative trading
- The inclination of many employers to defy lowest wage protocols
- The inexperienced characteristics of majority tourism jobs
- Where there are limited or no substitutes to tourism, tourism can reduce local wages because of the absence of rivalry.



Negative effects could also be considered as following:

- Inflation – can increase prices on housing, groceries, lands etc.
- Opportunity costs – refers to the cost of involving in tourism than another form of tourism activity.
- Over-dependency on tourism- utterly become dependent on tourism development and not being able to develop other industries, any change can bring to major economic crises (Mason 2008, p 46).

### **2.3.2 The Socio-cultural Dimension of Tourism**

#### **2.3.2.1 Positive Socio-cultural Impacts of Tourism**

Comprehension of the sociocultural impacts of tourism on local communities are tremendously important and needs to be taken into consideration of government at all levels in order to keep balance and avoid any kind of a conflict between tourists and communities and tourism development. Bearing in mind that residents' are in the central attention of any tourism destination and play a great part of the "tourism product" (Deery et al.,2012) most certainly their perception and behavioral intentions have a massive influence on the success or else in the process of creating a destination image. It is subject that any kind of impacts would be reflected by positive or negative side. Krippendorf (as cited in Brunt and Courtney, 1999) argues that social perceptions are more substantial and that they have to be studied predominantly.

Economic benefits mostly known for its positive side and having an effect on improving the life of the residents. However, sociocultural impacts not always could be beneficial and could affect the daily lives of the locals. To be more clearly, tourism has its effects on the sociocultural life of the residents such on their beliefs,

values, and customs and social life either positively or negatively. The socio-cultural interaction between residents and the tourists may bring and introduce something that would be new for the locals and lead to more opportunities and exchange in terms of learning new skills, new sociocultural aspects. Nevertheless, there have been contradictories between studies done on sociocultural impacts; despite that, some studies indicate that it could bring positive influence towards the attitude of the local residents. Research studies (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Yoon et al., 2001, Andereck 2005) have identified that it creates recreational opportunities, enhances cultural activities, increases the interest in saving and sustaining the historical and archaeological areas as well as boosts the cultural identity and cultural values. In general, it improves the quality of life of the locals and provides with new opportunities and experiences by exchanging the cultural values with the tourists. Moreover, tourism development provides new job opportunities for the locals and because of the variety of the job descriptions females are offered workplaces which will break the division of gender separation (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990) in the tourism industry.

Some researchers suggest that sociocultural developments deliver positive impacts, generates opportunities such new shopping malls, recreation, overall improvement on local services by accomplishing road works and other municipal facilities (Gursoy et al., 2002). Adding a further point on positive impacts Besculides et al.,(2002) defines that tourism constructs requests of local crafts, the growth of the cultural identity and values, unity, interchange of concepts, better understanding about the beliefs of the region.

### **2.3.2.2 Negative Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

Negative socio-cultural impacts could be absolutely another way around comparing to the positive impacts. Such as creating instability in the daily lives of the residents, insecurity, generate unpleasant feelings and stress as well as the degradation of the cultural values, beliefs and social authenticity (Garcia et al., 2015). Moreover, despite the economic benefits where most of the hosts' community takes an advantage of it, especially if the community depends on seasonal tourism negative social impacts may put aside or may not be taken much into consideration. Moving along with the further point Dogan (1989) debates that tourist from industrialized countries has a negative sociocultural influence on the community in developing countries such as deterioration in local customs, values, growths of the crime rate, overpopulation, environmental degradation, become reliant on tourists and societal clashes. Abovementioned negative impacts could cause a great damage on the overall society atmosphere and locals unwillingness towards tourism development. Tourists tend to enjoy their holidays and stay long nights out and as the result of overconsumption of alcohol violent acts, crime rates rise as well as the disturbing noise level. It is known that touristic leisure zones equipped with different type of entertainment facilities with the loud amplifiers which could also increase the negative impact on locals. Sociocultural impacts are complex and change the lives of the residents' who inhabit in the touristic destinations and the daily routine of the locals interact with the touristic activities. As a result, all parties will be involved and influenced either positive or negative side of the sociocultural impact.

Adding to the negative point sociocultural conflicts could be another major negative impact which needs to be taken into attention. Conflicts occur between stakeholders in the interest of common goals and beliefs. For instance, disagreements between

local landowners and outside foreign investors on the subject of tourism development (Yang et al., 2013), among indigenous communities and non-native business people about economical beneficial side of tourism industry (Yang et al., 2013) and the conflicts among local residents and visitors over restricted resources (Yang et al., 2013). Moreover, Robinson (as cited in Yang et al., 2013) offers four measurements where cultural queries happen: tourism business-host conflicts, tourist-host conflicts, tourism-tourist conflicts and host- host conflict. The factors which impact the disagreements between tourism business and local residents are: 1) Environment and the level of the marketability of the local culture; 2) consumption of the resources as well as the use of the cultural resources; 3) the grade of the economic dependence of the local community on tourism industry (Yang et al., 2013).

Other negative effects that is not preferable in the community, such negative changes in family and societal where cultural norms modified in order to meet the requirements of the tourists (Dyer et al., 2007). In the long run, residents could begin to accepting tourists' beliefs and ethics which could lead them to become dependent on the tourist producing state (Sharpley, as cited in Dyer et al., 2007). Another noticeable issue, in the long run, is that adopting the language of the tourists and losing the native spoken language, despite that it is an opportunity for the locals to be able to learn another foreign language and yet it could be a threat of modification of it. Furthermore, the behavior of the locals could be affected by the recreational facilities and entertaining facilities. As in any tourism developing destinations, the entertainment activities and facilities are very important. Casinos, night clubs, bars and other activities are well known and locals could also be attracted and involved in

consuming alcohol, gambling (Lee and Back, 2006) nightlife activities and with the growing demand of these activities, the abovementioned activities increase alongside with prostitution (Park and Stokowski,2009) and drug trafficking. Consequently, it will lead to social instability, conflicts among the locals and family life queries, an imbalance in the relationships and weakening the family values.

### **2.3.3 The Environmental Dimension of Tourism**

#### **2.3.3.1 Positive Environmental Impacts of Tourism**

Although tourism is thought to be a green industry most of the time, in reality, this is not the continuous situation. It can damage substantial environmental damage because it is frequently developed in beautiful but delicate surroundings. Also, there is the probability that local progress policy becomes concentrated on meeting the requirements of tourists, frequently lacking concern for the surroundings. This can be harmful to delicate regions where tourism often flourishes. Eventually, the industry has the impending to unconsciously weaken itself by being unresponsive to the environmental impacts it is affecting (Doggart and Doggart 1996).

The environment is being known as a major resource for the tourism industry. Ultimately, the tourism depends on environmental resources and from its condition as the most tourism activities take place or interact with nature. Hence, protecting and enhancing the importance of the surrounded nature is vital for the tourism industry. Despite the fact that tourism and environment bond can be a complex and challenging, it is not always the case where environment, ecology has been damaged considerably more by the tourism industry. Moreover, it is known that tourism industry can bring the least damage towards the environment.

According to Swarbrooke (1999), five aspects were identified by giving aspects that are integrated among each other such: The natural surroundings, flora and fauna, the cultivated environment, the constructed environment, natural resources. Clearly, the dimension of the environment concept is immense and certainly one way another development of tourism industry will integrate and approach either negatively or positively. The matter of fact is that as Mason (2008) signifies the relation to environmental impacts as mentioned below:

- The “where” fact is imperative as some environments can be more sensitive to tourism impacts than the others
- The diversity of the tourism activity
- The tourism infrastructure also plays a vital part
- When the tourism activity happens, especially any seasonal difference.

In relation to above-mentioned aspects environmental impacts can be thought thoroughly and affect tourism industry positively by stimulating the procedures to protect the surroundings, land or flora and fauna; to help to support the forming of Natural Parks and Wildlife Reserves; encouraging the conservation of buildings and memorials (UNESCO’ World Heritage Sites); to maintain historic sites, buildings, and wildlife habitats by charging certain admission fee. Though much of the literature exposes positive views by inhabitants on the economic and sociocultural aspects of tourism, it tells some opposing results with respect to thoughts concerning ecological impacts. Studies reveal that (Gursoy et al., 2002; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Mitchel and Reid, 2001, Sinclaire-Maragh and Gursoy 2016) tourism offers more parks and leisure areas, develops the quality of the roads and public facilities, and has not funded to ecological decline. Moreover, the large number of respondents

differed that tourism is the reason of traffic congestions, overloaded open-air areas, or the disturbance of peacetime and restfulness of parks. Additional studies have also established positive attitudes toward the environmental impacts such as better-quality public appearance (Andereck et al., 2011; Nunkoo et al., 2012), and more leisure and park openings (Kim et al., 2013; Garcia et al., 2015).

### **2.3.3.2 Negative environmental tourism impacts of tourism**

Tourism industry can be a reason of protecting and preserve the natural resources or at the same time, it can cause considerable damage to the environment (Garcia et al., 2015). Moreover, D. Easterling (2005) points out that firstly tourism thought to be as a “*clean*” industry comparing with for example manufacturing industry. Nevertheless, environmental impacts of tourism have caught attentions of many researchers and many subjects of studies have been related to environmental issues. According to Easterling (2005) majority of the tourist destinations are in a great danger by being a popular destination that could bring to over crowdedness and go beyond their carrying capacity damage. Hunter and Green (as cited in Easterling 2005) have indicated the several numbers of vital negative environmental impacts caused by tourism development.

- Pollution (increased amount of wastewater)
- Land erosion
- Reduction of water resources; the need to generate increased amounts of energy
- The disturbance of wildlife habitats and the decrease of vegetation.

Additionally, to above-mentioned impacts (adapted from Hunter and Green, 1995) shows a number of tourism impacts on the environment. This shows multifaceted environmental impacts and makes it more visible by comparing positive and negative

sides of environmental concerns that are affected by the tourism industry. Nevertheless, tourism industry tightly related to the environment. And according to Dwyer and Kim (2003) tourist destination and its attractiveness and setting a good image would depend on the natural environment and its climate conditions.

Tourism developments usually constructed nearby attracting and picturesque areas of the environment in order to tourists can have easy access to the entertainment zones and to have an experience of the surrounded nature. On the other side, it could lead to undesirable landscape views as sometimes without a proper planning or management of the buildings in the area could impact with a great damage on the environment as well as the natural view. Dwyer et al. (2009) identify the main trends of the environmental impacts: climate change, natural resource depletion, and biodiversity. Moving along with the negative impacts, the one aspect which appeared in many studies as an inhabitant' anxiety is the impact of tourism on traffic jams (Brunt and Courtney 1999; Yoon et al., 2001). And other alleged concern include littering (McGhee and Andereck, 2004, Andereck et al., 2005), wreckage (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996), overloading at open-air recreation amenities (Andereck et al., 2005, Bestard and Nadal, 2007), pedestrian jamming (Brunt and Courtney, 1999); and car parks difficulties (Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001). Additionally, tourism recognized as that causes pollution (Yoon et al., 2001).

Certainly, residents' concerns about the negative environment impacts shouldn't be put aside and in fact, many studies (Bestard and Nadal, 2007; Garcia et al.,2015; Dwyer et al.,2009; Ayres 2000 and Zhong et al., 2011) identifies aspects of the negative environment subjects. However, residents' support the development of the



tourism industry despite the fact of being aware of disadvantages it could cause to the environment (Garcia et al., 2015). The probable environmental concerns distinguished by Andereck (as cited in Andereck et al., 2005) are greenhouse gasses such releases from transportation vehicles and aircraft; water contamination such as waste water discharge, motorway oil; flora and fauna demolition such as a consequence of hunting, deceiving and go fishing, and disturbance of natural habitation; plant demolition and deforestation; over gathering of specimens, and woodland fires, and damage to marshlands, soil and seashores. Andereck (as cited in Andereck et al., 2005) also refers to the ecological concerns that interrupt human being such; big constructions which destroy sights, conflicting and inappropriate architectural constructions, noise, pollution from airplanes, cars, and travelers; harm to ecological formations such as destruction and vandalism.

## **2.4 Sustainable Tourism Management**

### **2.4.1 Sustainable tourism**

Sustainable tourism described as “Tourism that entirely contemplates its present and future economic, social and environmental impacts, thoughtful over the necessities of tourists, the business, the surroundings and the host population” (UNWTO, 2005).

Sustainable tourism development takes attention of many researchers, planners, policymakers and academicians for the past 25 years (Bramwell et al., 2017).

Sustainability and tourism are the contexts of development and the growth of the economy and these two definitions combine statements, ideas, and contradictions.

Sustainable development is a balance between the economic, socio-cultural and environmental capacities often bringing to compromising choices. Therefore, the development of sustainability is the complex, strategic and ever-challenging process for the policy makers, planners and etc. In some third world countries, the economic

benefit of the tourism development takes over the environment impacts or the issues related to socio-cultural impacts in favor of economic growth, stability and the quality of life. Consequently directing to the unsustainable and unstable development of the tourism industry. Mainly depending on the political approach chosen by the government. Developing countries mostly see the economic benefits and the environmental impacts put aside and if not cautioned or provide with necessary information and knowledge, the collapse of tourism industry would unavoidable. Thus, according to UNWTO sustainable tourism should be:

1. To use the natural recourses which are the essential element in tourism development, conserving vigorous natural procedures and supporting to reserve natural inheritance and biodiversity.
2. Appreciate the socio-cultural authenticity of host populations; guard their existing habitats, values, traditions and customs. And facilitate and support in inner cultural challenges and to contribute understanding more and be open-minded.
3. To make sure that long-term financial processes are practicable, all the stakeholders impartially distributed socio-economic assistance as well as regular wages and employment opportunities, public services to host communities and donating to poverty alleviation. These guidelines and practices are appropriate to use in any types of tourism and destinations and these above mentioned sustainable principles must be stable and balanced between each other in order to achieve long-term sustainability. On the other hand according to World Summit on Sustainable Development which was held between 26 August and 2 September 2002 in

Johannesburg, South Africa, describes it as tourism and combination of structures related to present and the future as described below.

- Function within the carrying capacity of the natural resources for the renewal and future output of natural resources.
- To be familiar with the contribution made by host communities, societies non-governmental groups into tourism practices.
- Acknowledge that all these inhabitants have a reasonable share in the economic proceeds of tourism, led by the appeal of the indigenous citizens and societies in the sightseeing host regions.

Thus, sustainable tourism is known to be a tourism of which pleases the requirements of the current holidaymakers and the tourism areas at the same time protects, cares and improves, increases the opportunity for the future generations. Altinay and Hussain (2005) identifies that the term “*Sustainable tourism*” has resulted from a broad Concept of “*Sustainable development*” back in 1987 at World Commission on Environment and Development report authorized as Our Common Future (also known as Brundtland Report, later the Head of groups appointed to formulate it), and there then it was first used to get together all the visible outcomes. Therefore, in the formulation of sustainable tourism development, it is imperative and essential to provide information and participation of all stakeholders as well as political representatives and has all in board involvement to generate and construct successful agreement. Accomplishing a sustainable tourism is an on-going process and it demands continuous observation of impacts, familiarizing with the precautionary or educative methods when required as well as provide high standard of tourist expectations and make sure that tourists’ are satisfied and left with memorable

experience as well as gaining knowledge about sustainability challenges and support or actively encourage the sustainability tourism practice to others (UNWTO, 2005). Nevertheless, Liu (2003) argues whether sustainability has been measured accurately, forwarding questions as how much is too much of sustainability and what are the levels of sustainability in tourism development? What are the ways of measuring these levels? According to McCool et al., (2001) there has been many discussions on sustainable tourism and yet there are still disagreements over suitable indicators of sustainability and what needs to be sustained. “Ultimately, impacts cannot be avoided, but they can be managed based on established objectives or an understanding of the biophysical or social conditions desired.” (McCool and Lima 2001:381). Thus, sustainable tourism development needs to find a balance between all the aspects of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. However, Shapley (2014) argues that there is no existing witnessed confirmation that sustainable tourism is an attainable objective, and simultaneously, some of the principles of sustainable tourism are effective, they play a huge role in representing courtesy towards tourism impacts and global character of the tourism industry. The scope of sustainable tourism is undoubtedly broad and comprises many elements of tourism system such: conservation of natural environment, pollution, resource use, wildlife, host community, public sector, and tourists. Hence, achieving a sustainable development tends to be demanding in practice rather described theoretically.

#### **2.4.2 Key principles of Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism can't easily be defined without appropriate principles established to underpin the approaches towards sustainable tourism management. These principles subject to vary according to the challenges and the effects of the tourism

improvement. Principles are valuable to distinguish the concerns associated with the procedure of accomplishing sustainable tourism development.

Main three principles of sustainable development such as following:

- Social and Cultural Sustainability- to make sure to preserve cultural identity and values, improved developments can empower inhabitants to take control over the style and quality of their lives, sustains and supports not to lose community recognition and identity.
- Economic Sustainability- to make sure that economic development is effective and capitals are well-organised in order to support the growing generation.
- Ecological and Environmental Sustainability- to make sure that development is congruent with conservation of the ecology, living organisms and long-term administration of resources (Lavery, as cited in Altinay et al., 2007).

In order to achieve sustainable development and use the resources sensibly without any haphazard decisions properly planned and organized actions needed following the certainly settled sustainability principles. However, as Wight (2002) emphasized that even though the sustainability became the main theme, it not settled and can be a *“process of change”* with the challenges that appear for that period of time. Generally saying the principles of sustainable development was not the same ten years ago and will not be same after ten years from now. They have to adjust to the time and the challenges that occur and foresee, predict and avoid the fundamental damages.

The World Tourism Organisations' formulation of sustainable tourism development identifies six main principles:

1. High level of tourist satisfaction
2. Optimal use of environmental resources
3. Respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities
4. Providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders,
5. Constant monitoring of impacts
6. Informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership (UNWTO, 2013).

One of the principles that are crucial towards the success of the sustainable development known as the participation of the all applicable stakeholders (Byrd et al., 2008; Cardenas et al., 2015). Previously, the balance between economic, socio-cultural, environmental principles were the main part of the sustainable development, but nowadays the context and approaches takes into consideration the community involvement (Cardenas et al., 2015), as well as particular needs of community attachment, community support, and improved communities' quality of life by tourism development. The central goal of achieving sustainable development is an on-going balance of principles and focusing on decreasing the number of negative impacts on all these principles and at the same time improving the positive impacts.

Educating, sharing the knowledge is apparent and yet another challenge when it comes to succeeding the sustainability development. Stakeholders must be informed and understand the concepts of the sustainable tourism development which will decline the issues of participation in any planning process and collaborate, support more the local tourism development projects and long-term plans. Hence,

Stakeholder participation is one of the key principles of sustainable tourism. Moreover, sustainable tourism development encompasses the principles that are also not less important the stakeholders' participation such as:

- Protection of cultural heritage - Maintains and promotes natural, social and cultural diversity
- Promotes appropriate activities
- Enhances and maintains heritage and natural resources
- Recognition of culture and identity of locals

These principles provide a direction, or guidance for some other possible elements of sustainable development, such as sustainable tourism, or ecotourism (Wight 2002).

### **2.4.3 Implementation of Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism development promotes partnership, cooperation, and integration among all the key actors. One of the main key actors can be identified as government. In the process of implementation of sustainable tourism, the government should undertake the inquiry of environmental, socio-cultural, economic impacts and assess the outcomes on entire ecosystem and society. Nonetheless, different tools, indicators, and mechanism have been generated by international development organizations. One of the tools known as "*Environment quality assessment*" of the tourism environment using a quantitative way and increasing the awareness of the importance of the tourism environment is essential to the sustainable tourism development (Zhong et al., 2011). Following environmental quality assessments indicators were adopted, depending on the types of the tourism activities, the selection of the indicators may differentiate as the uncertain reasons may involve upon the country's environmental state (Zhong et al., 2011).

Environmental quality assessment indicators.

1. Tourism Landscape and resources - degree of perceived scenic beauty, the degree of uniqueness, the degree of integrity, diversity of resources, scientific value, cultural, artistic value, compatibility with the natural environment.
2. Natural environment- Air quality, water quality, temperature, precipitation, Flora, Fauna, sanitation.
3. Infrastructure environment – Transportation, food and lodging, water and electricity, safety infrastructure, recreation, shopping, medical facilities, public security, fire fighting, rational price, service attitude, service efficiency, interpretation.
4. Social environment- service quality (i.e., attitude, codes of conduct, efficiency), tourism policy, tour guide qualification, local residents attitudes.
5. Tourism Information environment - Network condition, promotion performance, tourism destination image ( Zhang et al., 2011; Chen 2006; Wang and Zhu, 2006 as cited in Zong et al., 2011, p.2979).

Non-governmental organizations are also taking a great participation in promoting sustainable tourism and without a doubt, they have to be part of the tourism advisory board and participate in decision-making processes regarding the development of sustainable tourism and planning. Non-governmental organizations could also promote advice and educate the local community and advertise locals' products and products by introducing sustainability approach. The role of participation of local communities and non-governmental organizations cooperation enhanced the opportunity of conservation of natural resources and protection of biodiversity.



Some of the outcomes of non-governmental organizations role and guidance related to environmental issues are as mentioned below:

- Make tourism and conservation compatible
- Support the preservation of wilderness and biodiversity
- Use natural resources in a sustainable way
- Minimize consumption, waste, and pollution
- Respect local cultures
- Respect historic and scientific sites
- Communities should benefit from tourism
- Trained staff is the way to responsible tourism
- Tourism should be educational. Follow safety rules (Mason, 2005, p 186).

To develop a sustainable tourism is a complex and challenging procedure.

The entire stakeholder needs to be taken into consideration and work in a holistic way approach. Six main key stakeholders identified by Swarbrooke (1999) with a great interest in sustainable tourism such as:

- Governmental organizations – including well-known organizations such European Union, national authorities, local and regional councils.
- The tourism industry- all the tangible services, tour and transport operators, visitor attractions etc.
- Voluntary Sector organizations - includes mainly non-governmental organizations in some developing countries and charity organizations in developed countries.
- The host community – Residents who are directly or not directly involved in tourism.

- The media- covers both news related to travel media or non-travel media.
- The tourist – encompasses the mass tourism and ecotourism.

With such a broad and complex network of stakeholders, it is not always possible to reach an agreement among all of them. However, sustainable tourism management requires incorporating and implementing with these stakeholders in order to achieve sustainability in this industry. Moving forward, the role of the tourism industry in the sense of achieving sustainability should consider a holistic approach. It needs to direct and achieve protection of biodiversity, preserve natural resources, implementing energy efficient practices, promoting the green marketing, alleviate destructions towards environmental related issues. Introducing new trends and lifestyle to the public if there is a willingness to become more sustainable (Miller et al., 2010). Thus, it can be achieved by running a different type of campaigns, roundtables, seminars, and actions for the locals, as it mentioned above national and local councils should inform and encourage their locals for their participation. Providing with information about the importance, challenges, and opportunities it may entail. Consequently, residents would be more attracted and involved in the creation of the tourism destination; in fact the destination where they belong. It will have a direct impact on the quality of life and this type of approach would be far more successful and sustainable rather than ignorance of the residents' participation.

## **2.5 Tourism in Kyrgyzstan**

### **2.5.1 Geography**

Kyrgyzstan is located in the north-eastern part of Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan borders with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China. The average height above sea level is 2750 m. The total area of Kyrgyzstan is 199.9 thousand kilometers and 94%

of the country is mountainous. The highest peaks are Victory Peak – 7439 m, Lenin Peak – 7134 m and Khan-Tengri - 6995m. Kyrgyzstan is also blessed with lakes and rivers totaling the water surface cover with 6836 sq.km. The main river is Naryn River and the largest lake is Issyk-Kul Lake, which is known for being best destination in the summer time as well as attracting tourists in winter time with its Ski Resorts. There are other lakes are Son-Kul, Chatyr-Kul, Sary- Chelek which are getting tourists’ interest to visit the picturesque views and being surrounded by almost untouched pure and breath-taking nature. Bishkek- is the capital of Kyrgyz Republic, its diverse and green city. The second big city is Osh located in the west part of the country, known for its cultural diversity, traditions etc. Kyrgyzstan consists of seven oblasts (regions) - Chui, Issyk-kul, Naryn, Talas, Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh. The climate is continental and summer periods are hot reaching up to +40° C and winter times up to -14C in the cities and mountain areas can get an average of -30C. Kyrgyz is the state language and Russian is the official language. Currency in Kyrgyzstan is – Soms.



Figure 1: The map of Kyrgyzstan  
 (Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/kyrgyzstan.html>)

## 2.5.2 Economy

The economy of Kyrgyzstan was severely damaged by the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 by losing a large export to Former Soviet Union Countries. Leaving the nation's economic condition in the devastating stage; factories closed, farms and agriculture industry collapsed leaving the nation in great depression. Since then Kyrgyzstan recovered and rebuilt the economic stability.

This table below shows that GDP is improving and for the year of 2016 the export of touristic service summed up at 312 million USD Dollars and import of touristic services totaled 316 million USD Dollars (<http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/turizm/>).

Table 1 Tourism GDP in Kyrgyzstan

<b>Items</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
The gross added value in the field of tourism ( <i>million. soms</i> )	14205.5	16169	18904.9
	4.6	4.6	4.8
The share of tourism in GDP ( <i>percentage</i> )			
Fixed capital investments in tourism ( <i>million. soms</i> )	8040	8771.7	10635.3

Source: <http://www.stat.kg/en/statistics/turizm/>

Agriculture is an essential industry in Kyrgyzstan. In 2002, agriculture totaled at 35.6% of GDP and around half of the employment. Kyrgyzstan is mountainous country and greatly suitable for cattle breeding, which is the largest agriculture activity. Therefore, dairy products, meat, and wool are main products, including crops: such wheat, sugar beetroots, potatoes, cotton, fruits, and vegetables. It's known that most of the investors are attracted by agriculture industry and nowadays greenhouse and drip irrigation are being enormously popular. Kyrgyzstan is also very rich with mineral resources, coal, gold and other valuable metals. One of the foreign

investors known as Kumtor Gold Mine is actively stimulated by the government and making a huge economic contribution to the country. Moreover, as Kyrgyzstan have a lot of water resources and maintains territory allows producing sufficient amount of hydroelectric energy for export. The main exports also include nonferrous metals, minerals, woolen products, engineering goods and agriculture products building trade partnership with countries such Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China and Germany (Wikipedia).

### **2.5.3 Brief Description of the Tourism Industry in Kyrgyzstan**

Over the past decades, the tourism industry in Kyrgyzstan is growing interest among the tourists in Europe and Post-Soviet Union countries. Issyk-Kul Lake is known for one of the most visited destinations, especially along the North shore. Accordingly, many hotels, vacation resorts and summer camps for children are located in the north part of the lake. For those, who are interested in tracking and camping, can be offered national parks, central or southern part of the Kyrgyzstan. For the tourist that plans for a short period of time, can enjoy the trekking in the National Park close to the capital “Ala-Archa” and enjoy the picturesque nature and fresh air and peace from the noise of the city.

Kyrgyzstan can offer many types of tourism activities such:

- Resort and recreational tourism
- Mountain skiing tourism
- Mountain –climbing and adventure tourism
- Eco-tourism
- Historical- cultural tourism
- Silk-Road tourism

Recent years skiing tourism is becoming very much popular and many skiing resorts have been located not far from the capital.

Kyrgyzstan is unique with its natural beauty and in order to preserve the wonderful natural landscape, flora and fauna it created ten strict nature reserves, nine national parks, and one Biosphere territory.

Tourism industry directly created 31,000 jobs in 2014 which represents nearly 4 % of total employment (World Tourism and Travel Council, 2015). According to the government statistics tour agency services summed as 1265,7 thousand, sanatorium activity services as 520,9 thousand, hotel and tourist accommodation, as well as other lodgings for short-term accommodations 2303,6 thousand places offering job opportunities and it is expanding as tourism industry becoming popular and as long it's in demand and politically stable.

The visa-free regime for sixty days was launched for forty-five countries inviting more travelers to experience the hospitality of Kyrgyz nation and its magnificent nature.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research methodology

The qualitative method utilized for this research applying semi-structured interviews.

Interviews were taken from the experts' and practitioners' in tourism area connected directly or indirectly to the tourism industry. A qualitative research method is known for being appropriate in order to identify the perceptions and experiences. This research is a more subjective to social science research. There always has been an ongoing debate over the ideal research methodology. However, McGrath (as cited in Amaratunga et al., 2002), in his studies of the choice of the methodology identifies that there is not any perfect resolution for it. It is rather set of compromises. Moreover, Yin(as cited in Aramatunga et al., 2002) research strategy suggested to be chosen according to the situation of the investigation, as each research technique have its particular approach to accumulating and examine the data, and for that reason, every strategy has advantages and disadvantages. Qualitative research's major distinctive attribute is that the concentration on real issues, conventional situations with the strong, rich information, holistic approach and finding the outcomes in complex researches (Amaratunga et al., 2002). Hence, qualitative data collection emphasizes the importance of the humans' experiences and ideally describes their lives, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and assumptions. By contrast, quantitative approach characterizes more relying on the statistical evidence and does

not provide with a wide explanation of perceptions and attitudes. Another advantage of the Qualitative research is that having a capability to provide rich and explanatory material. Qualitative research examines a small number of occurred issues with paying great attention to it while quantitative research covers a large number of respondents or observations with less depth research (Weaver and Lawton, 2002, p 406-407). Moreover, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) describe the qualitative research studies the dynamic qualities of a situation rather than its components and the balanced relationships among them. The advantage of the semi-structured interviews is that it is adaptable and flexible. Data can be collected over the phone or any other communication channels, which can be provided in our technologically developed era if the respondent or the group of respondents are on the different side of the world. Moreover, semi-structured interviews give an opportunity to respondents to be more open, feel less tension and answer the questions more genuine way and interact with the interviewer if any questions occur there and then whereas quantitative research is more fixed and at times given the limited option of answers which can entail non-accurate outcome of the research. Therefore, qualitative data collection was chosen to be the most appropriate for this research.

Non-probability convenience sampling was used for the selection of the interviewees.

Non –probability sampling consists of several group sampling techniques such:

- Quota sampling
- Convenience sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Self-selection sampling



- Snowball sampling

The main advantage of the non-probability sampling techniques is that samples are chosen according to subjective judgment than a random selection. In order to complete this research non-probability convenience sampling method was implemented (Aaker et al., as cited in Altinay et al., 2005). This method is known for being a most practical way to collect primary data (Altinay et al.,2005). Convenience sampling relatively time-saving, less costly and gives the researcher to achieve the sample size needed in short period of time comparing to other research samples.

### **3.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis**

In qualitative research a small sample size can be questioned, however, Patton (2002) points out that, sampling has to be considered according to the purpose and the background of the study and not on the rationality, aim and suggested a sample size of probability sampling. Nevertheless, according to Bertaux (1981, p.35) fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample (adapted from Guest et al., 2006) in qualitative research the term “*small sample size*” have been known for using in the discussions as an expression to indicate the small number of respondents (often less than 20) (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006).

In this research twenty experts and practitioners participated and data saturation occurred after five interviews with academicians and five interviews with governmental officials and ten private sector representatives. Participants were Executive Director of Community Based Tourism in Kyrgyzstan; primary partner is a Swiss Association for International Cooperation; Director and Deputy Directors of Tourism Department, Executive Director of Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators, Coordinator of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development Program,

Academicians and Doctor of Science, specializing in tourism industry and tourism marketing, Experts of tour branding, Directors and Chairman of travel agencies and Chairman of Tourism Committee. Respondents were contacted personally and meetings were arranged by phone and email letters, mostly at the respondents' workplaces. Interviews lasted from one hour up to two and a half hours. Conversations were recorded with permission of the interviewees and informed prior the day of the interview. Interview questions were generated based on the knowledge from the literature review (Altinay et al., 2007). The interview questions organized by the division of two sections: The first section includes the dimensions of sustainable tourism and their negative and positive impacts. The second section covers the perception of sustainability concept. The questions were open-ended and some questions had sub-questions in order to gather more probes and opinions. Interview questions were asked mostly in Russian which is the official language in Kyrgyzstan; however one respondent an academician preferred to answer in Kyrgyz, the native language and two respondents from private sector answered in English. In social science research back-translation used extensively because of its probability to reduce incorrectness in the translation with the outcome that makes an effort of similarity across languages (Lopez, Figueroa, Connor and Maliski, 2008). Moreover, Douglas and Craig (2007) pointed out that the equivalence between back-translation description and the original description is thought to demonstrate the translation truthfulness. Interviews were taken in languages that researcher can speak fluently and if so researcher was capable of over-viewing and assess the back-translation outcome (Guest et al., as cited in Sutrisno et al., 2014). Furthermore, assessing back-translation outcomes can also develop accuracy, giving an extra opportunity to double-check and divide the outcomes (Sutrisno et al., 2014).

The researcher used an investigative instrument such as taking self-notes, short memos during the interview procedure and while recording and articulating the findings (Saunders et al., as cited Altinay et al., 2007). Hence, it gave a benefit for the researcher to document reflections and additional information in the categories followed in the primary research and analysis. Interviews were taken during the period of July up to September 2016 and it was challenging as this period of time is the high season for the tourist's arrivals and experts from the private sectors were occupied and the interview dates needed to be postponed several times upon their convenience, as well as it was the start of holiday period for some of the academician experts leading to search for the available candidates during that time. Once all the data collection was completed the gathered information was transcribed, and similarities of the answers between the respondents appeared by listening to the record for several times, continually comparing them among participants, and putting them under the coding method that was easy to understand and process the amount of information in order to unite and accumulate them into main themes. The qualitative results characterized by themes, specifically capturing the negative and positive outcomes of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism, and perception of sustainability concept.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS**

The research findings gave interesting outcomes over the perceptions of the tourism development in Kyrgyzstan. The dimensions of the sustainable tourism: economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts gave a broad view of the experts' and practitioners' perception particularly being asked the negative and positive impacts as well as the perception of the sustainability principles and implementation in the tourism industry. In order to provide a better understanding of the results researcher divided into main themes and identified the perceptions as negative and positive. According to the total of research, respondents were all male. Respondents' age category was:

- Government officials between 20-44 years old
- Private sector between 20-64
- Academicians between 45-65 years old.

Most of the respondents were Kyrgyz and other nationals. Private sector and governmental sector interviewees hold Bachelor and Master Degrees; however, academicians had Ph.D. and Doctor of Science. Interviewed respondents had high job positions such: General Managers, Chief executives, Directors, Deputy Directors, Professors and Coordinators of sustainable development program. Largely participants' work experience in the tourism industry was from 10-20 years and over.

However, in comparison with other sectors, the personnel in Department of Tourism appear to be the youngest and work experience less than 5 years.

Overall, the meaning of “sustainability” indicated on the level of knowledge and awareness of the respondents. Those respondents from the academic environment are informed far well about the concept than private sector or the government officials. The view and the knowledge of sustainability concept and the general information given by academicians were much broader because they are involved and participate in such organizations, seminars and in the academic world, they interact with this type of terminology. Academicians’ point it out that the economic, socio-cultural and economy factors concerns of all stakeholder participation in tourism development. Community involvement identified as one of the important principles. However, private sector respondents seem to be not aware much about the concept and their knowledge is fairly adequate and the “sustainability” approach viewed as the fashionable word and expressed the lack of enthusiasm or perceptiveness of the concept. Governmental official participants’ demonstrated awareness of the importance of the concept, however, has not been able how to articulate their opinion and mostly relating the meaning to have a balance between economic growth and environmental resources.

Despite the fact is that National Strategy of Sustainable Development was designed for years 2013-2017 in Kyrgyzstan with voluminous information of how to reach sustainability and implement them in all areas of industry including tourism, respondents’ demonstrated reluctance and referring that with the changes of the top government officials these strategies will change constantly. Political instability and weak governmental institution coordination and cooperation entail uncertainty and

present disinterest of the concept. According to academicians many types of research has been done and strategies generated, however, most of them could be on the shelves gathering dust, the ideas were not heard, suggestions refused or not applied fully. Some respondents are not concerned about sustainability concept as Kyrgyzstan is a very new country and we do not host that amount of tourists in order to implement this strategy; however it could be beneficial for future generations or if mass tourism would be the concern. Private sector respondents emphasized that tourism should take a holistic and comprehensive approach in order to achieve sustainability which exists as a big gap in the system.

#### **4.1 Findings about Economic Impacts of Tourism**

Generally, respondents' perception of the economic impact of tourism was positive. Tourism development generates employment opportunities and it additionally illustrates that tourism industry in the source of considerable income for government treasury. Moreover, economic growth facilitates tourism infrastructure, building new hotels, restaurants, cafes, attractions and entertaining zones. Below Table 2 demonstrates the economic effects of tourism in Kyrgyzstan.

Table 2: Economic Effects of Tourism in Kyrgyzstan

<b>Economic Effect</b>	<b>Positive / Negative</b>
Job generation	Positive
Economic growth	Positive
Standard of living	Positive
Support for infrastructure	Positive
Increased prices	Negative
Increased cost of living	Negative

Seasonal employment	Negative
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Hence, quality and standard of living increases without a doubt, at the same time the cost of living raises. The cost of living evaluated as the negative side of the economic impact, increasing the prices on real estates, land etc. Moving forward, seasonality of the tourism industry seen as a negative side, for reason being is that temporary work opportunities which generate low wage paid job opportunities and long working hours. Skillful personnel may move to other cities, countries for better-paid salaries and conditions, for sure it indicates the economic instability of the area. Nevertheless, respondents point it out that seasonality of the tourism industry entails to the increase of the costs especially at the peak time of the season.

As local people have a chance to boost their income at the particular time of the year. In the perspective of the local people it may provide them some financial income but in terms of tourist perspectives, it will lead to the negative perception of the destination and unwillingness to pay for some services that are overpriced.

#### **4.2 Findings about Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

Socio-cultural effects are accumulated and demonstrated in Table 3 below. Both negative and positive sides are perceived at current tourism development stage.

Table 3: Socio-cultural Effects of Tourism in Kyrgyzstan

<b>Socio –cultural effects</b>	<b>Positive/ Negative</b>
Increased willingness to understand the different cultures	Positive
Promotes to maintain historic sites and wildlife habitats	Positive
Demand for local arts and handicrafts	Positive
Increase of crime, drug, and prostitution	Negative

New perspectives to explore other cultures	Positive
Imitation of foreign behaviors and culture	Negative
Improves quality of life	Positive
Strengthens cultural identity and pride	Positive

Respondents put emphasis on that by the development of tourism the interest of learning foreign languages increased among the host community as well the geography, culture, cuisine and traditions of the tourists. In some rural areas young residents provided with courses of being a tour guide as they know the local area better than others. Therefore, they can take part in the generation of tour packages for travel agencies and contribute to the local economy and society. Moreover, hospitality is known as the main advantage in Kyrgyzstan, it is very much a tradition and culture. Travelers have the high willingness of re-visiting the country over again. Therefore, community's recognition of culture, uniqueness, identity and pride escalates promptly. Consequently, some of the forgotten traditions, customs or ethnic games revitalize entailing the enrichment of the traditions and attracting more travelers. Reborn of historical heritage sites and restoration of some other sightseeing sites such historical and natural museums, monuments demonstrates that tourism development has a significant positive influence. Moreover, the demand for handcrafting souvenirs, jewelry or traditional outfits increases, not only because of the visiting tourists but also among the host community and nationwide. It explains that traditional values and identification of the culture enhances along with tourism development. One of the respondents shared that one of the communities in one of the regions of Kyrgyzstan that makes only handcrafted Yurts (traditional dwelling houses), all the residents involved. Firstly, it differentiates them from other communities, secondly gives them community identification, thirdly, it attracts more



tourists and fourthly, it contributes to the economy of the community. Consequently, the quality of life improves; tourism infrastructure improves, especially in the rural areas as well as the desire to learn more about other countries, traditions and culture and willingness to visit which broaden the perception and understanding of tourism service and ideas to implement. The majority of the respondents were the least worried about the socio-cultural impacts on tourism in Kyrgyzstan, by explaining that the country doesn't host the amount of tourist that would damage socio-cultural values of the community. However, they were some cases when young residents try to imitate the behavior of the tourists, change the appearance style or try to speak the visitor's language. The amounts of this kind of cases are very rare and the same situation with the increase of crime, drugs, and prostitution.

### **4.3 Findings about Environmental Impacts of Tourism**

Environmental impacts demonstrated below in Table 4 are findings that experts' and practitioners' concerns of tourism development. Environment and natural resources are an essential part of the life of human beings and tourism can be one of the reasons to help to protect and conserve the natural resources or if the settings are not balanced it could bring a great damage.

Table 4: Environmental Effects of Tourism in Kyrgyzstan

<b>Environmental Effects</b>	<b>Positive/Negative</b>
Increased pollution (air, noise)	Negative
Recreation of parks and community	Positive
Traffic congestion, lack of parking space	Negative
Water pollution, littering, waste water	Negative
Destroys the beauty of the landscape	Negative

Helps to protect environment and wildlife	Positive
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According to respondents, positive environmental impacts can be identified by improved recreational or beautification of the community infrastructures such as local parks, playgrounds and improving the landscape design. The majority of respondents emphasized that some communities learn more about the behavior of caring environment from the tourists, especially littering is the main concern. Visitors are more responsible, respectful, and simply educated in environmental issues. Therefore, it promotes of being more respectful towards nature and activates some campaigns from the government institutions and private sectors. Moving forward, tourism development stimulates to protect wildlife, landscape, and environment. One of the organizations mentioned during the interview was “*The Snow Leopard Trust*” “Kyrgyzstan is the member of this international organization. The aim of it which to protect from the distinction of the wild habitat, from illegal hunting and trust cooperates under the community-based projects providing information and understanding the importance of the wildlife. Participants were well informed about the negative environmental impacts such as air pollution, noise, traffic and parking congestions, water pollution, littering and waste water recycle. However, in Kyrgyzstan, it is not at the stage of concerning environmental degradation which caused by the tourism development. Yet, littering was a concern of respondents but rather done by the local people and lack of education or poor upbringing was the explanation. Nevertheless, water pollution was associated with the development of tourism, especially in the area of where beach tourism which is developing in Issyk-Kul Lake, as wastes from the restaurants, hotels and harmful oil

leakages from some water sport activities can significantly damage the quality of the water, surface.

#### **4.4 Tourism Development as a Stimulator: Three Clusters**

From the variety of the impacts given by the experts and the practitioners, noticeable impacts emerged which is mostly perceived in Kyrgyzstan. After an in-depth study of the findings the researcher accumulated the three main areas that experts and practitioners had their views, concerns, perceptions identified and tourism development stimulates identified themes and it will have a positive reflection on both sides (see figure 3).

The tourism industry is not a single product and described as multidirectional, with its complexity and dimensions. Developing countries are seeing the opportunity and perspectives of this industry and evidently, for the past decade the interest has grown in developing countries, and among them, Kyrgyzstan is opening its doors for the new perspectives of development through tourism. This country is rich with natural resources and has magnificent natural beauty.

Tourism development provides job opportunities and economic growth as it discussed in literature review and consequently enhances the quality of life. On the other hand what is behind the understanding of the quality of life: the understanding of regarding all the aspects of human life, psychological happiness, and physical condition, and social happiness (Dolnicar et. al.,2012).Moreover, the main two dimensions were categorized: material life( financial, economic) and non-material life( community well-being, emotional, health, and safety) Woo et al.( 2015).

Tourism development stimulates themes that the researcher identified and releases the importance of these outcomes and the implementation of the suggestions that can progress in two ways.

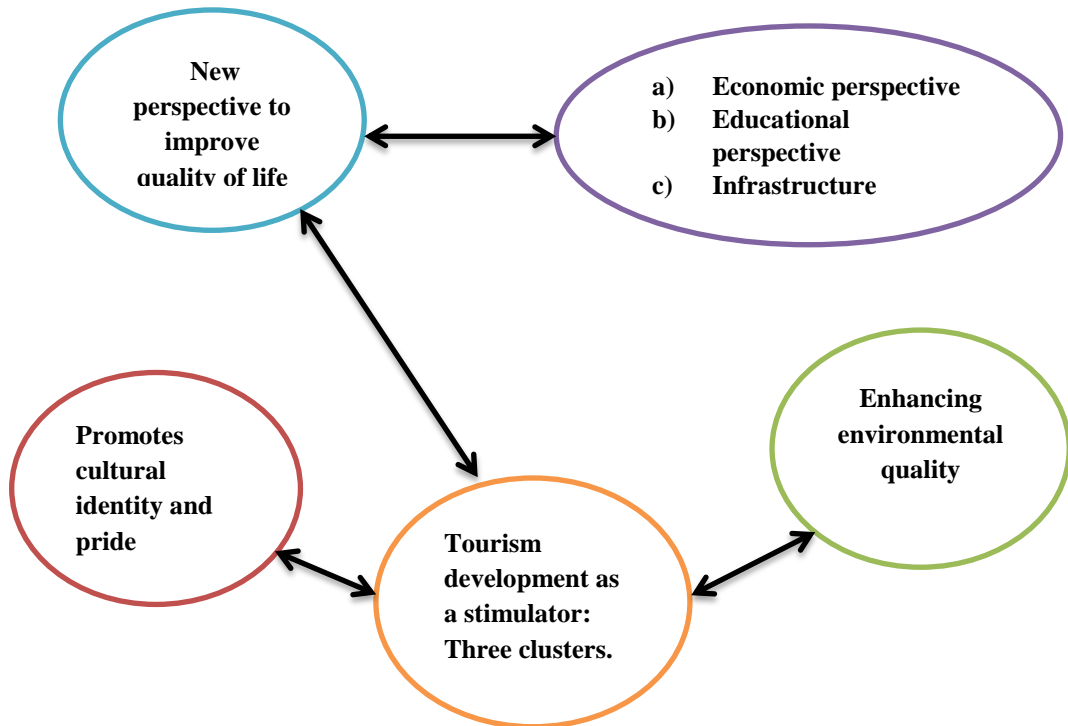


Figure 2: Tourism development as a stimulator: Three clusters  
(Source: Own Illustration of the Author, 2017)

New perspectives are placed in three directions:

- a) Economic Perspective
- b) Educational Perspective
- c) Infrastructure Perspective

Tourism industry needs to be comprehended as one of the main economic contributors of the country. It can't be done without the support from the government side in terms of having an effective policy, insurance, regulations, and planning. Identifying tourism as a profitable industry it will attract local entrepreneurs to invest or even attract foreign investors, offering medical tourism, business tourism, sports tourism and halal tourism. Kyrgyzstan is capable of providing these types of tourism services and passion for learning how to accomplish it in a sustainable approach. In terms of investing into to host communities and motivating sometimes can be challenging. Most of the time host communities willing to see the immediate flow of incomes without realizing the background issues such attracting those tourists, branding destination and service quality. However, providing information and training the host communities with relevant sources, broadens the mind and contributes generating better plans in order to attract new tourist and loyal customer not only internationally but also nationally. However, Kyrgyzstan has a huge gap in terms of promoting its own tourism products for the residents, to promote to travel within the country; to improve the domestic tourism potentially enhances the tourism development. Moving forward, educational perspective; by the progress of tourism development residents' gaining education in different fields, for instance, becoming tour guides, learning the historical facts, and surrounding nature, different foreign languages, etiquette and providing a good

service quality. The more educate and informed the residents are the possibilities of the job opportunities will grow to bring a level of financial satisfaction which in turn will reflect the quality of life. We live in the era of supply and demand, therefore the quality of the service received needs to be excellent if the case is to sustain longer in such competitive industry as tourism. Tourism developments initiate to explain more about the importance of the education in human resources, and growing young generation are participating in such seminars, training where it can be taught and explained. Another aspect needs to be mentioned what type of service manner and the mentality of understanding of service the country providing at some point it needs to move on from the old Soviet approach.

Additionally to education perspectives, interest in environmental science and policy subjects have grown, which is fascinating and fundamentally important part of the tourism industry. Moving along to infrastructure perspectives, tourism development demands appropriate facilities for the travelers. It has been observed that tourism infrastructure improved in Kyrgyzstan over the past years. However, it still needs massive progress in this area. According to respondents were community-based tourism developing continuously, residents understood promptly the necessary requirements of the visitors and learning to meet the basic needs. As an example: newly designed constructions for more convenient facilities or reconstruction the existing dwellings. Also, the residents who are not related to tourism, adopting this behavior resulting to better recreation and well-being of the host communities. Abovementioned perspectives are dominated by the development of the tourism, it facilitates to understand that new perspective that tourism offering enhances the quality of life and happier, satisfied society.

Tourism development enhances the identity of the culture and preserves the traditions that ancestors left behind. Despite the globalization and advertisement of more western culture and style of living, there are some negative and positive impacts discussed in literature review. In Kyrgyzstan, tourism development stimulates the cultural identity, glory, and pride.

The manufacturing of traditional outfits or using the traditional ornaments, patterns on the products, becomes an identity and a nation brand. Identifying the uniqueness and unity as a nation. Therefore, preserving and developing the local traditions are imperative in tourism development. As more tourists are seeking the rich culture, unforgotten traditions from the past and new experiences with full of adventure. The World Ethno sports Confederation established in Kyrgyzstan developing this idea of revitalizing traditional games, culture and to promote its potentiality and bring it to the international level of competition games. Yet again, it will introduce and create destination image which is also vital in tourism development. Country identity is what needs to be differentiating the tourism product or destination from others.

Over the years environment has been of the most discussed issues whether it is related to tourism industry or any other. Tourism industry can enhance the protection of natural resources, wildlife etc. as discussed at literature review. Tourism development in Kyrgyzstan enhances the knowledge of caring for nature and learning the importance of ecosystem among the host residents and the nation.

One of the nations' negative challenges to overcome has been observed as littering behavior. The lack of responsibility, low level of education and/or repeating the behavior of adults if it's a younger generation. Surprisingly, international tourists

bringing the knowledge not to litter and be more attentive towards the environment as a whole. Earlier studies have discovered tourist' environmentally responsible behavior from the perceptions of single commitment, attraction, and participation (Cheng and Wu, 2015). Thus, visiting tourists have a better environmental knowledge than the residents which can be observed by the behavior. Hence, enhancing the environmental quality through tourism development is not enough; even it played a role in stimulating and adopting such behavior. However, it needs to take attention to bigger audience and in such case arrangements from governmental level or non-governmental organizations could provide more effective holistic approach.



## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The tourism industry is becoming as one of the fastest growing industries in the world and the main category in export earnings after fuel, chemicals and food production. The travel and tourism industry has a great contribution to global economy entailing direct economic input, including accommodation, transportation, entertainment, and attractions.

Despite the economic downturns, the tourism industry is generating jobs opportunities and fundamentally contributes to economic recovery. By the growth of the tourism, new tourism trends are also emerging in our lives. Nowadays, especially popular is to be involved in alternative tourism: such eco-tourism, adventures, recreational, active and historical-cultural explorative tourism and sustainable tourism etc. Kyrgyzstan offers these types of tourism and gaining a considerable amount of interest of tourists around the world. Introducing the brands such as “Land of Celestial Mountains”, “Skyland” and “Kyrgyzstan so much to discover”. Emphasizing on the natural beauty of mountains, its purity, and untouched land. Moreover, it offers to immerse in a nomadic culture, taste variety of cuisine and experience genuine hospitality of Asian people. The researcher attempts to explore the perception of experts’ regarding economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism and sustainability concept.

Based on the social exchange theory, the local voice from the representatives should be included and considered in the decision-making process for the tourism development. In the light of this theory, this thesis focused on the perceptions of the representatives of the tourism sector in Kyrgyzstan. Overall according to the results tourism has a positive impact on the economy by generating job opportunities, being a fundamental contributor to economic growth. Consequently improving life standard and have support for tourism infrastructure. However, it is unavoidable that the cost of living increases together with prices for any other range of goods or services.

Seasonality of the destination has a negative impact, in a short period of time host community urges to make income leading to overpricing strategy. This is also affected because of the scant competition in some host communities or regions. In relation to socio-cultural impacts, there is an increased demand on exploring and understanding different cultures, learning foreign languages and geography, especially among the young growing generation. Moreover, it's seen that by hosting tourists they can make additional income during the seasonal time, except land cultivation and cattle breeding. Thus, improves the quality of life and gives financial independence. Nonetheless, according to the literature review, financial adequacy may bring to conflicts and family instability in host communities, but according to respondents, it is vice versa, communities willing to earn and save money, either for the education of their children or improving some facilities in order to host tourists in a better environment. Negative impacts such, drug trafficking, gambling, and prostitution cannot be the case or generalized. Moving forward, tourism has a fundamental socio-cultural impact on demand for local arts, handcrafting, and

reviving some of the diminishing traditions or ethnic sport. As an example, from 3-8 September 2016 World Nomad Games was hosted in Kyrgyzstan for the second time, attracting participants from sixty-two countries. This occasion united and as well as introduced not only the national games which exist in Kyrgyzstan but also the cultural values, traditions, hospitality and pure nature. In globalization world, this kind of events assisting to preserve the identity and strengthen the pride not only the host country' as well the countries that have participated. Furthermore, an environmental impact perceived as the most important that has to be concerned about. However, tourism industry seems to be the less damaging to natural resources or environment in Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, basic things such littering needs be taught if it still not to be effective then it was suggested by one of the respondents that there have to be laws, fines against littering. The littering impact observed among the natives rather than tourists. One more respondent points it out that the long and short of it residents prerequisite to conserve the environment and conserve natural resources as it's essential for the country and for them and the future generation. Tourism development contributes protecting the environment, landscape, and wildlife. Although, without good planning and sustainable approach it could destroy the beauty of the landscape. Traffic congestion, noise, lack of parking space, water pollution, waste water can be observed particularly in the summer season in Issyk-Kul region, where most of the tourist visitors. According to respondents other regions not affected as much as to be concerned.

According to the research sustainability concept – was described as fashionable word, stability, and balance between all the principles that trigger from economic, socio-cultural or environmental factors that mentioned earlier. Generally,

sustainability concept was linked or explained to either economy or environmental dimensions; without the sustainable management of the natural resources or preserved ecology, there will be a low chance of the existence of tourism development, no tourist willing to visit the polluted or naturally damaged country. Linking sustainability concept to economic dimension: it provides stable growth and has multipliers effect into other service industries. Consequently creating job opportunities and contributing to the countries economy. Some private respondents assumed that sustainability is when there is a stable growth in international tourist arrivals and the host country can provide the appropriate service in accommodation, transport facilities and overall satisfaction of the stay. It demonstrates that there is a narrow understanding of sustainability concept and considered and limited in the perspective of the service delivery. While, from the perception of academicians and government officials knew that community involvement, creating long-term planning, policy, effective strategies and clear vision can make tourism development closer to the sustainability. Although the sustainability plan and strategies have been generated it has no effect on the tourism industry itself meaning that there is a massive gap of communication and weakness of the guide implementation of policy.

Sustainability needs to be evolved through effective planning, instrumental tools that guide and educate. Sustainable tourism needs to be considered as fundamental principles as an economic, socio-cultural and environmental provider to a destination and treasured by the government officials and agreement by all government parties to make sure continues and reliable approach to sustainability (Dodds 2007). However, in Kyrgyzstan, some respondents mentioned that tourism industry is in the evolutionary, transition stages and developing chaotically. Thus, unsystematic

approach leading to uncertainty, lack of motivation, not being able to generate long-term approaches and a shortage of all stakeholders' participation. Moreover, community participation, community support, community's quality of their life mostly contributed by the private business entrepreneurs. However, this is not sufficient enough to reach the sustainability it has to implement the holistic approach.

Moreover, in order to gain awareness about tourism impacts and sustainable tourism development, concepts and management extensive amount of information and knowledge need to be provided to all relevant stakeholders. As it was discussed earlier, sustainable tourism development is achievable, however in order to stakeholders to take an active position, they need to be well informed and provided with information. As Byrd (2007) points out that residents need to be educated and have a knowledge and awareness of the issues, hence at the decision-making process new ideas, solutions, agreements, and disagreements can be discussed and make space for new strategies or approaches. Therefore, top government officials need to identify the tourism industry as a main economic contributor and a potential source for the revenue generation. In that case, allocation of financial sources will be considered and the educational programs will be created by the experts. Hereafter, the residents can be taught and explained the importance of the tourism development and its' outcome.

The roundtable meetings, training and inviting experts and tourism practitioners from abroad can also be other options. At the same time to support governmental officials, academicians and private sector to participate in some big international tourism conferences, symposiums, and meetings. Hence, they can implement the gained knowledge and experience in Kyrgyzstan and follow the world trends and standards.

Tosun (2001) emphasizes that sustainable tourism should be environmentally responsible, socially well-suited, in cultural terms to be proper, relevant, governmentally fair, technologically reassuring and lastly economically feasible for the host public. In Kyrgyzstan, the tourism industry is facilitating under the Ministry of Culture and Technology and known for being a Department of Tourism. Department of Tourism needs to be separated from Ministry of Culture and Technology and become of Ministry of Tourism; it requires substantial financial support in order to develop marketing institution of the country, research centers and employ planning and policy strategists. Top government officials need to consider it as the biggest economic contributor. Then tourism industry can thrive, however it should be a clear vision of the capacities that Kyrgyzstan can offer. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the environmental impact assessment used for each touristic destination to review their environment for improved development of strategies, policies and the principles of sustainable tourism needs to implemented as preservation of environment is a prior condition in order to improve and sustain tourism industry at every stage (Altinay and Hussain, 2005).

Several limitations occurred during the research. One of them is that data collection was taken from the experts and practitioners only in Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, to identifying and targeting the participants was not an easy task. Another limitation restricted the extensiveness of the research is the knowledge of the respondents about the topic of sustainability concept which is under the scope of this thesis. It is likely that some of the respondents have not been confident enough to deliver adequate information and lack of information about the concept itself which have hindered interaction between respondent and interviewer.

Additionally, there is a limited literature on sustainability in developing countries it is mostly oriented in testing developed countries (Altinay et al., 2007).

Further research is recommended to be taken in Issyk-Kul region, as it is known for most visited destination in Kyrgyzstan and this study can utilize in quantitative methodology. Moreover, it is also recommended to research the residents' perceptions in most tourist visited regions in Kyrgyzstan. Residents are an essential part in tourism development and according to Choi and Sirakaya (2005), one of the elements of alternative tourism development is the support and collaboration of local people. Furthermore, residents' participation in tourism development may give resolutions of conflicts between the locals and the management (Sdrali et al., 2015). Additionally, according to Wang et al. (2010) reinforces residents education and to train them in tourism related challenges can increase residents opportunity to be involved in tourism planning and regulate it at the high-class service.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: Interview questions**

1. What are your thoughts on the economic impact of tourism?
  - Negative economic impacts of tourism
  - Positive economic impacts of tourism
2. From the mentioned impacts which ones can be related to Kyrgyzstan?
3. What are your thoughts on the socio-cultural impact of tourism?
  - Negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism
  - Positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism
4. From mentioned impacts which ones can be related to Kyrgyzstan?
5. What are your thoughts on the environmental impact of tourism?
  - Negative environmental impacts of tourism
  - Positive environmental impacts of tourism
6. From mentioned impacts which ones can be related to Kyrgyzstan?
7. Sustainable tourism management is highly discussed and even Year 2017 was announced as an International Sustainable Tourism Development by UNWTO, what are your thoughts on it?
8. What is your opinion regarding this concept?
9. Which key principles those are necessary for reaching sustainability?
10. Do you think sustainability concept is implemented in Kyrgyzstan?
  - If no, Why?
  - If yes, how?
11. Is there any need for sustainability concept in Kyrgyzstan?

