

# RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN A TURKISH RESORT TOWN

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the past two decades Turkey has experienced a remarkable growth in tourist numbers with overseas arrivals doubling between 1991 and 1998 and revenues reaching \$7.2 billion as of 1998. It is estimated that such trend may have a significant impact upon host communities in Turkish tourist regions. This study attempts to identify the perceived impacts of tourism by residents in a community, Kuşadası, located on the Western Turkish coast. Based on a survey of 238 local residents, tourism impacts were assessed by a 33-item tourism impact scale which measures both belief and affect toward the impact attributes. According to the mean measures, the most strong and favorable perceptions toward tourism impacts are found to be associated with economic, and social and cultural aspects of tourism, while environmental matters are found to be the least favorable in terms of the perceived impacts of tourism. The study also identified whether there exist any significant differences between demographic variables and residents' attitudes toward tourism by the analysis of variance.

## **1. Introduction**

Over the past two decades Turkey has experienced a remarkable growth in tourist numbers with overseas arrivals doubling between 1991 and 1998 and revenues reaching \$7.2 billion as of 1998. It is estimated that such trend may have a significant impact upon host communities in Turkish tourist regions. Given the fact that tourism can flourish in an area only with the support of the area's residents, it is felt that the attitudes and perceptions of residents towards tourism development and impacts serve as crucially important inputs in identifying the strategic and managerial priorities of tourism.

This realisation has led to an increasing attention to the perceived impacts of tourism on local residents over the last two decades. This topic has been extensively studied by researchers from a variety of disciplines ranging from anthropology to geography, economics to sociology. In examining the impacts of tourism on local residents, previous research tends to focus on a number of areas including mainly economic, social, cultural and environmental factors where both positive and negative perceived impacts are assessed. Among the positive impacts, tourism increases income and the standard of living; it develops the local economy and increases the employment opportunities; it promotes cultural exchange. Some of the negative impacts of tourism, however, include the followings: it flames the prices of goods and services as well as prices of houses and rents; it causes noise, congestion and pollution; it degrades landscape and historic sites.

Using a recently developed tourism impact scale by Ap and Crompton (1998), this study attempts to identify the perceived impacts of tourism by residents in a resort town, Kuşadası, located on the Western Turkish coast. The main reason for selecting Kuşadası was its outstanding place in Turkey's tourism. Commensurate with the rapid development of Turkish tourism since 1980s, the city of Kuşadası is having a remarkable place in Turkey's tourism industry accounting for nearly 5 per cent of overall tourist revenues generated in the country as of 1997.

The remainder of the paper is organised into four sections. The next section reviews the literature regarding the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism. Then, the research methodology is presented followed by the results and discussion of the study's findings. Conclusions are set out in the last section.

## **2. Impacts of tourism**

Early work on perceived impacts of tourism, which dates back to the 1960s, tended to focus on the economic and positive effects of tourism (Pizam, 1978). However, in the 1970s, the consequences of tourism were examined more critically by anthropologists and sociologists who emphasised negative socio-cultural impacts (de Kadt, 1979). The 1980s and 1990s have been characterised by a more balanced perspective, recently called *sustainable tourism*, where positive and negative effects are discussed together (Ap and Crompton, 1998; Inskip, 1991).

The *economic impacts* of tourism are usually perceived positively by the residents. First of all, tourism acts as an export industry by generating new revenues from external sources. A host nation will gain foreign exchange, which will contribute to improve the nation's balance of payments (Gee et al, 1997; Liu and Var, 1986; Dogan, 1987). It decreases unemployment by creating new job opportunities (Sheldon and Var, 1984). Increasing demand for tourism encourages new infrastructure investment (Inskip, 1991), and communication and transportation possibilities (Milman and Pizam, 1988). The amount of taxes collected by government will also increase with the higher level of economic activity. Residents of a resort might have a better standard of living and higher income by tourism activities.

However, if not well planned and controlled, tourism may lead to negative impacts or reduce the effectiveness of positive ones. The prices of goods and services might go up with the increased demand from foreign customers (Liu and Var, 1986; Husbands, 1989). Increasing demand for accommodation, especially in tourism seasons, might push up the rents as well as the land prices for building new houses and hotels (Pizam, 1978; Var et al, 1985). New revenues from tourism usually flows to the landowners and businessmen while the residents suffer from increasing cost of living. This might cause a maldistribution of income (Dogan, 1987). New employment opportunities attract people to migrate to the resort area, creating new social and cultural problems.

Tourism might cause a gradual change in a society's values, beliefs and *cultural* practices. Local residents feel this impact more heavily. By observing the tourists, local people might change their life style (dressing, eating, entertainment and recreational activities, and so forth). While this influence may be interpreted positively as an increase in the standard of living, it may also be considered negatively as an indication of acculturation (Brunt and Courtney, 1999, Dogan 1987). Tourism can contribute to the revitalisation of arts, crafts and local culture and to the realisation of cultural identity and heritage. In order to attract more tourists, architectural and historical sites are restored and protected (Inskeep, 1991; Liu and Var, 1986). Moreover, many people of different cultures come together by means of tourism, facilitating the exchange of cultures (Brayley et al, 1990).

In addition to its cultural impacts, tourism is perceived to contribute to changes in value systems, individual behaviour, family relations, collective lifestyle, moral conduct and community organisations (Ap and Crompton, 1998). These kind of *social* impacts may be positive or negative. With the development of tourism in an area, there might be changes in social structure of the community. Basically two different classes; a rich class which consists of businessmen and landowners, and a lower class which contains mostly immigrants might emerge in the community (de Kadt, 1979; Dogan, 1987). It also modifies internal structure of the community by dividing it into those who have and have not a relationship with tourism or tourists (Brunt and Courtney, 1999). Intense immigration from different cultures of people brings about social conflict in the area. Generally, impacts of tourism on women are perceived positively such as more freedom, more opportunities to work, increase self-worth and respect, better education, higher standards of living with higher family income. However, some argue that tourism distracts family structure and values, and also leads to increase in divorce rates and prostitution (Gee et al, 1997).

Tourism may lead to a decline in moral values; invokes use of alcohol and drugs; increases crime rates and tension in the community (Liu and Var, 1986; Milman and Pizam, 1988). Moreover, with the development of tourism, human relations are commercialised while the non-economic relations begin to lose their importance in the community (Dogan, 1989). In relatively small tourism resort towns, increased population and crowd especially in summer seasons cause noise, pollution and congestion. This limits the use of public areas such as parks, gardens and beaches as well as of local services by the residents, which sometimes result in negative attitudes towards tourists (Ross, 1992).

Urbanisation caused by rapid development of tourism might improve governmental and local services such as fire, police and security (Milman and Pizam, 1988). In addition, the variety of social entertainment and recreational activities may increase in such cities.

The negative impacts of tourism on the *environment* have been discussed in the recent works within the framework of sustainable development of tourism. Unplanned and uncontrolled constructions, distorted urbanisation and inadequate infrastructure damage the natural environment and wildlife, and cause air and water pollution. Overuse or misuse of environmentally fragile archaeological and historic sites can lead to the damage of their features (Inskeep, 1991; Gee et al, 1997). Costs of the loss of wild life areas and natural landscape, and undertaking historical and cultural preservation are very high.

However, if planned well, efforts and works to restore historic sites and buildings to build recreational areas and parks to improve infrastructure system to prevent water and air pollution and waste disposals are all positive contributions to the region. Knowing that visitors prefer a clean and natural environment, the residents should be cognisant of environmental and ecological issues (Liu and Var, 1986; Inskeep, 1991).

By and large, the extent and the level of these impacts on the residents vary with the number of visitors, their ethnic and economic characteristics, their length of stay and activities. Social, cultural and economic structure and conditions of the host country are also important factors in perception of impacts of tourism. One should also note that some negative impacts of tourism might inevitably occur in parallel to economic development of the country. Such problems in this process cannot necessarily be attributed to tourism.

### **3. Research Methods**

#### **Survey Instrument**

In this study, perceived impacts of tourism by local residents in Kuşadası were assessed by using a recently developed tourism impact scale by Ap and Crompton (1998). This scale originally consisted of 35 items and assessed tourism impacts by measuring both belief and affect towards the impact attributes. The scale was demonstrated to have dimensional distinctiveness and stability, internal consistency, content validity, and convergent validity. The Ap and Crompton's scale was first translated into Turkish and later back-translated into English by a group of academicians who are experts in both languages to avoid any ambiguity in interpretation and wording of the items. Drawing on a series of interviews with a group of local residents in Kuşadası including normal residents, touristic shop owners and public officials, some adjustments (both additions and deletions) were then made to the original scale. The new scale consisted of 33 items.

Using the same methodology by Ap and Crompton, the perceived tourism impact scale measured both belief and affect components. The belief component was measured by asking respondents to rate the level of change associated with each item. A five-point scale was used (1 = large decrease, 2 = moderate decrease, 3 = no change, 4 = moderate increase, and 5 = large increase). An additional sixth point was placed as a category for a "don't know" response. The evaluation component of the scale was measured by asking respondents to indicate their level of like or dislike with each item on a five-point rating scale (1 = dislike, 2 = somewhat dislike, 3 = neither like or dislike, 4 = somewhat like, and 5 = like). Thus, a respondent who believed that there had been a large increase in "the revenue generated in the local economy" caused by tourism may have indicated a score of 5 for this item. If this respondent's evaluation of this change were something that he or she liked, then a score of 5 would be assigned. The respondent's multiplied score on this item would be a maximum of 25. This high score indicates that there is a strong and favourable perception with the revenue generated in the local economy created by tourism. While a higher score for an item shows a strong and favourable perception, lower score denotes a weak and unfavourable perception associated with that item.

#### **Sample Selection and Data Collection**

This study was conducted in Kusadası, located on the Western Turkish coast. A sample of 300 residents was randomly drawn from local electoral rolls. To avoid an enrolment bias, residents immediately adjacent to the selected address were interviewed. All adult members of the household were approached. Trained interviewers gathered data in a two-week period in January 2000, which is a low tourist season in the city. Interviews were undertaken during both the day and the evening, and on all days of the week so as to obtain a more representative sample within households. 238 respondents completed the survey, with a response rate of 79.3%. The sample appears to well represent the population in terms of the demographic profile of respondents, which is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 238)**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	80	33.6
Male	158	66.4
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20 years	23	9.7
21-30 years	95	39.9
31-45 years	83	34.9
Over 45 years	37	15.5
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	103	43.3
Married	126	52.9
Divorced/widowed/separated	9	3.8
<b>Education</b>		
Primary school	43	18.1
High school	127	53.4
University	68	28.5
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Under 3 billion TL	129	54.2
3 billion TL - 6 billion TL	85	35.7
Over 6 billion TL	24	10.1
<b>Occupation</b>		
Trade	72	30.3
Worker	49	20.6
Civil Servant	18	7.6
Tourism	33	13.9
Student	10	4.2
Retail/Sales representative	27	11.3
Retired/Other	29	12.1
<b>Length of Residency</b>		
Less than 5 years	28	11.8
5-10 years	45	18.9
11-15 years	46	19.3
15 + years	119	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Data Analysis**

Factor analysis was used to identify the underlying dimensions of perceived impacts of tourism. Then the areas where the impacts of tourism are perceived favourably or unfavourably are determined by mean ranking of each impact item. ANOVA was used to assess whether there exist any significant differences between demographic variables and residents' attitudes towards tourism.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to determine the underlying primary dimensions governing the full set of 33 impact items. The items with factor loadings greater than 0.4 were grouped for each factor derived. The factor analysis generated seven underlying dimensions of the perceived impacts of tourism by local residents, which make good conceptual sense and explained a total of 63.5 per cent of the observed variance, as shown in Table 2. The seven factors may be labelled as: *Social and cultural, economic development, quality of environment, state and local services, cost of living, community attitude, and crowding and congestion*. All seven factors exhibit satisfactory level of construct reliability as suggested by Nunnally (1978), with Cronbach alpha values ranging from 0.61 to 0.82. These factors are largely consistent with the findings of Ap and Crompton (1998).

**Table 2. Factor Analysis of Tourism Impact Items**

Factors	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach alpha
<b>Factor 1:</b> Social and Cultural Opportunities to learn other people and cultures Variety of restaurants in the area Change in life style Variety of cultural facilities and activities in the community Variety of entertainment in the area Understanding of different people and cultures by residents Opportunities to restore and protect historical structures Awareness/recognition of the local culture and heritage	0.77 0.71 0.59 0.58 0.56 0.53 0.48 0.43	9.17	27.8	27.8	0.82
<b>Factor 2:</b> <b>Economic Development</b> Number of jobs in the community Personal income of local residents Standard of living Revenue generated in the local economy Variety of shopping facilities in the area	0.81 0.79 0.78 0.70 0.51	4.04	12.2	40.0	0.79
<b>Factor 3:</b> <b>Quality of Environment</b> Quality of buildings and city planning Quality of natural environment Opportunities to benefit from activities in the public areas Recreation and sport facilities	0.57 0.51 0.45 0.44	2.10	6.4	46.4	0.62
<b>Factor 4:</b> <b>State and Local Services</b> Quality of local services Adequacy of local services in meeting residents' demands Financial resources of local services Adequacy of state services in meeting residents' demands Level of investment, development and infrastructure spending	0.81 0.77 0.50 0.47 0.43	1.59	4.8	51.2	0.76
<b>Factor 5:</b> <b>Cost of Living</b> Property values and housing prices Price of goods and services Inequality of income distribution	0.80 0.73 0.59	1.45	4.4	55.6	0.62

Table 3 shows residents' attitudes towards the perceived impacts of tourism. Based on the mean measures of impact items, the impact items associated with *economic development* have the highest scores. Some of the economic development items of tourism impact, which are most favoured by residents, are as follows: "Variety of shopping facilities in the area" (14.37), "standard of living" (13.87), and "revenue generated in the local economy" (13.68). Following the economic impact of tourism, *social and cultural* aspects of tourism impact are evaluated relatively favourably. Some of the items comprising the factor of *social and cultural* are: "variety of restaurants in the area" (13.58), "change in life style" (12.82), "opportunities to learn other people and cultures" (12.48), and "variety of entertainment in the area" (11.88). However, the tourism impact items, which are associated with quality of environment, community attitude, and crowding and congestion, are the least favourable impact attributes perceived by residents.

**Table 3. Residents' Attitudes Towards Perceived Impacts of Tourism**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b><i>Social and Cultural</i></b>				
Opportunities to learn other people and cultures	231	12.48	7.74	8
Variety of restaurants in the area	231	13.58	6.87	4
Change in life style	228	12.82	7.03	7
Variety of cultural facilities and activities in the community	230	8.69	6.20	15
Variety of entertainment in the area	232	11.88	6.82	9
Understanding of different people and cultures by residents	226	10.17	6.93	11
Opportunities to restore and protect historical structures	219	7.39	6.05	23
Awareness/recognition of the local culture and heritage	215	6.02	6.03	28
<b><i>Economic Development</i></b>				
Number of jobs in the community	234	13.52	6.02	5
Personal income of local residents	226	12.91	5.70	6
Standard of living	231	13.87	6.26	2
Revenue generated in the local economy	226	13.68	5.54	3
Variety of shopping facilities in the area	235	14.37	7.13	1
<b><i>Quality of Environment</i></b>				
Quality of buildings and city planning	223	5.00	4.86	31
Quality of natural environment	230	3.85	3.89	33
Opportunities to benefit from activities in the public areas	224	6.24	5.77	27
Recreation and sport facilities	225	7.84	5.64	19
<b><i>State and Local Services</i></b>				
Quality of local services	228	7.80	6.09	20
Adequacy of local services in meeting residents' demands	220	7.16	6.09	25
Financial resources of local services	191	9.57	6.04	12
Adequacy of state services in meeting residents' demands	226	7.31	5.84	24
Level of investment, development and infrastructure spending	210	8.94	6.35	13
<b><i>Cost of Living</i></b>				
Property values and housing prices	234	8.07	4.57	18
Price of goods and services	235	8.76	4.85	14
Inequality of income distribution	222	5.95	4.39	29
<b><i>Community Attitude</i></b>				
Positive attitudes of local residents towards tourists	234	8.67	7.09	16
Community spirit among local residents	224	5.35	5.48	30
Traditional and moral values of local residents	228	4.89	4.73	32
Dynamism and liveliness of community	232	10.41	7.22	10

The finding that the economic impacts of tourism are perceived most favourably by local residents tends to support the view that tourism acts as export industry and contributes to the nation's balance of payment. Tourism has long been the major source of income for the city of Kusadası and much of its development is owed to the tourism activity. However, residents evaluate the impact of tourism on property values, housing prices, and the prices of goods and services fairly negatively as such that new revenues generated from tourism usually flow into the property owners and businessmen while residents suffer from increased cost of living.

The finding that there is a relatively strong and favourable perception towards some of the social and cultural aspects of tourism is not particularly surprising in that tourism plays an important role in facilitating the exchange of cultures and creating opportunities to learn other people and cultures. Recognising the fact that Turkish population is composed predominantly of younger generation might lead to a more favourable perception towards the social impacts of tourism.

However, the findings that quality of environment, community attitude, and crowding and congestion are the least favourable aspects of tourism impact do not appear to be surprising. Distorted urbanisation and inadequate infrastructure in tourist regions damage the natural environment and wildlife, and cause air and water pollution. Local residents have also negative perceptions towards the impacts of tourism particularly on traditional moral values and community spirit among local residents. As argued by Dogan (1989) the development of tourism may lead to a decline in moral values by increasing materialisation of human relations. Hence, the non-economic relations and community spirit begin to lose their importance in the community. Moreover, in relatively small resort towns like Kuşadası, increased population and crowd especially in summer seasons cause noise, pollution, and traffic congestion. In the high season, infrastructures are stretched beyond their limits, and overcrowding and traffic congestion often cause inconveniences to local residents. This situation obviously hinders the use of public areas such as parks, gardens, and beaches as well as the provision of local services, which may partially result in friction between residents and tourists.

In order to test whether any significant differences exist among demographic variables and residents' attitudes towards tourism, the thirty-three variables were tested by analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the following demographic groupings:

- Gender: Male, Female;
- Marital Status: Single, Married, Divorced/Widowed/Separated;
- Education: Primary, High School, University;
- Income: Under 3 billion TL, 3 billion TL – 6 billion TL, Over 6 billion TL;
- Occupation: Trade, Worker, Civil Servant, Tourism, Student, Retail/Sales Representative, Retired/Other;
- Length of Residency: Less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, 15 + years;
- Job Type: Tourism-related, Nontourism-related;
- Travel Abroad: Yes, No.

Of the 231 F-values for the 33 tourism impact variables by the 7 demographic grouping variables, Table 4 shows that only 26.2 per cent (61 items) are significant at less than 10 per cent level. By demographic subgroups, education, occupation, and income show the most significant differences ( $p < 0.1$ ) with each category comprising 39.4 per cent of the 33 tourism impact items (13 items), followed by job type (11 items).



Of the 8 impact items comprising the *social and cultural* factor, significant differences are found for 5 items by education and 3 items by demographic variables of occupation, income and job type, respectively. Overall, only 25 per cent of the 56 F-values are significant at the 10 per cent level. It is, however, surprising that no significant differences are found between the social and cultural aspects of tourism impact and the demographic variables of age, length of residency, and travel abroad. These results are largely consistent with the findings of Liu and Var (1986).

Table 4 shows that compared to social and cultural impacts of tourism, a relatively larger percentage of significant differences are found for the five impact items constituting the *economic development* factor. Of the 35 F-values, 43 per cent are significant ( $p < 0.1$ ). Education, income, occupation, and job type show greater variance in terms of the perceived impact of tourism while surprisingly gender, length of residency, and travel abroad do not exhibit significant differences.

The factors of *community attitude* and *crowding and congestion* constitute the other two areas where there exist significant differences between demographic variables and resident perception of the impacts of tourism. For *community attitude* 36 per cent of the 28 F-values are significant ( $p < 0.1$ ), while for *crowding and congestion* only 25 per cent of the 28 F-values are significant ( $p < 0.1$ ).

Table 4 indicates that the resident perception of the impacts of tourism on quality of environment, state and local services, and cost of living hardly varies across demographic variables with all three areas having much fewer percentages of significant differences at the 10 per cent level.

Table 4. Demographic Differences in Resident Perception of the Impacts of Tourism

Mean Rank	Factor Items	Analysis of Variance F-value and Level of Significance						
		Gender	Occupation	Income	Education	Length of Residency	Job Type	Travel Abroad
	<b><i>Social and Cultural</i></b>							
8	Opportunities to learn other people and cultures	1.26	1.99**	2.89**	7.67***	0.52	0.41	0.04
4	Variety of restaurants in the area	0.01	0.75	0.79	2.76**	1.00	2.49*	0.23
7	Change in life style	0.32	2.46**	5.34***	4.54***	1.44	0.72	2.29
15	Variety of cultural facilities and activities in the community	0.35	0.50	0.65	4.71***	0.84	3.99**	1.67
9	Variety of entertainment in the area	0.04	0.95	0.12	0.78	0.28	0.49	0.21
11	Understanding of different people and cultures by residents	0.36	1.79*	2.27*	4.56***	0.94	0.30	0.01
23	Opportunities to restore and protect historical structures	0.27	0.27	0.24	1.51	0.26	0.42	0.40
28	Awareness/recognition of the local culture and heritage	0.01	0.47	0.06	0.96	0.19	2.17*	0.14
	<b><i>Economic Development</i></b>							
5	Number of jobs in the community	0.97	1.71*	4.93***	4.33***	1.30	0.08	8.09***
6	Personal income of local residents	5.68***	0.58	3.01**	3.38**	0.33	2.07*	0.11
2	Standard of living	0.12	1.01	1.02	2.95**	0.69	1.07	0.37
3	Revenue generated in the local economy	0.02	2.14**	2.08*	7.30***	0.70	3.27**	0.53
1	Variety of shopping facilities in the area	0.01	0.31	1.13	4.09***	2.09*	0.02	0.05

## 5. Conclusions

Using a recently developed tourism impact scale, this study has made an attempt to identify the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism in a Turkish resort town. In order to determine the underlying dimensions of the perceived impacts of tourism by local residents, a 33-item tourism impact scale was subjected to factor analysis. The analysis yielded seven factors: *Social and cultural*, *economic development*, *quality of environment*, *state and local services*, *cost of living*, *community attitude*, and *crowding and congestion*, with each factor having a satisfactory level of reliability.

The study has found that the local residents perceived the economic aspects of tourism impact most favourably. Residents also evaluated social and cultural impacts of tourism positively. These findings provide support for previous studies. However, quality of environment, community attitude, and crowding and congestion were found to be the least favourable aspects of tourism impact.

The study also identified whether there exist any significant differences between demographic variables and residents' perception of tourism impact. Only 26.2 per cent of the 231 F-values for the 33 tourism impact items by 7 demographic variables were found to be significant. The highest percentage of variation was found for *economic development* items (43 per cent), followed by *community attitude* (36 per cent), and *social and cultural* impact items. By seven demographic categories, education, occupation, and income indicate the most significant differences and warrant further investigation.

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