

Chapter 12

How do Residents perceive the Social Impacts of Tourism on Rural Areas? Empirical findings from Serbia

Vedran Milojica

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0898-2032>

Independent Researcher, Croatia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism has numerous impacts on the domestic population. The domestic population can have positive but also negative perceptions depending on the type and extent of the impact, which is why it is important to examine how the domestic population perceives the tourism impacts. Accordingly, this chapter examines the perceptions of the domestic population about the social impacts of tourism on rural areas of the Republic of Serbia. It also examines whether the attitudes of the domestic population differ in relation to their personal characteristics. The authors surveyed 320 Serbian rural residents. The primary conclusion is that domestic population has positive perceptions of the social impacts of tourism in rural areas of Serbia. Research results showed that education has significant influence on the perceptions of domestic population towards the social impacts of tourism in rural areas of Serbia. Based on theoretical and empirical findings, potential directions for further research on this topic have been defined.

INTRODUCTION

Although the tourism industry contributes to the prosperity of the place where it develops, it is inevitable that this activity can also create numerous and very often immeasurable impacts on the local community as well as the quality and sustainability of the natural environment. The domestic population represents a very important interest group (Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Kamata, 2022) because they suffer the consequences of tourism development, which are manifested through the economic, ecological, and socio-cultural impacts of tourism development (Peters et al., 2018). Changes that occur due to the

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-6919-4.ch012

How Residents Perceive the Social Impacts of Tourism on Rural Areas

development of tourism can include benefits for the domestic population in the form of better material status, employment, better living conditions, but also through negative consequences in the form of criminal acts, crowds, increase in the cost of living, etc. (Tepavčević et al., 2019). Bearing in mind the high exposure of the domestic population to changes caused by tourism, the significant research area from the aspect of long-term sustainable and successful tourism development is the examination of the residents' perception of the impacts that this activity creates and how they are reflected on their quality of life. Understanding this complex research subject can greatly facilitate the definition of the development policy, which will enable the minimization of potential negative impacts as well as the maximization of the benefits of its development resulting in significant support of the domestic population for tourism (Prayag et al., 2013; Styliadis et al., 2014), but it can also affect the successful development of tourism and ecological conservation (Rastegar, 2019).

Social tourism impacts represent a complex research problem because, unlike economic and environmental impacts, they are very difficult to quantify (Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019). These impacts can be classified in different ways with one of the most credible divisions being defined by Mason (2003), who included in this group: creation of new workplaces, revitalization of poor areas, revival of local art and old crafts, improving the social life of the residents, restoration of local architecture, promotion and preservation areas of exceptional landscapes that have aesthetic and cultural value. Distinguishing between positive and negative social influences, Andereck et al. (2005) also singled out traffic congestion, overcrowding of public space, gambling, prostitution, drug trafficking, cultural devastation, and begging. The aforementioned classifications point to a key problem in the examination of the social impacts of tourism, which refers to the pronounced connection and interweaving with the other types of tourism. The negative social impacts of tourism affect the lack of support of the local community for the tourism development. Although this chapter analyzes the positive social impacts of tourism on the rural areas of Serbia, it is also important to point out that socio-cultural differences between tourists and residents can cause conflict situations between these two groups (Frent, 2016). The negative aspects of tourism development in local communities are particularly pronounced in underdeveloped and isolated areas, whose customs, culture, way of dressing, lifestyle and other traditional characteristics differ from the way of behavior and life of tourists (Archer et al., 2005). Negative social impacts are most often manifested through an increase in criminal acts, vandalism, rising living costs, crowding, but also through changes in the demographic structure, exclusion of the population from events, changes in the nature of events and activities in accordance with the requirements of tourists (Bastiaz-Perez & Var, 1995; Milošević et al., 2020). In addition, the intensive development of tourism conditions the creation of contents and experiences for tourists, which very often deviate from the activities that members of the local community are engaged in, as a result of which there is the creation of residents' resistance to tourists and tourism. The inclusion of the domestic population in the process of tourism development contribute to the identification of the key problems that make it difficult to define and implement appropriate policies and activities in order to provide maximum benefits as well as the lowest possible level of negative effects (Vujko et al., 2021). Involvement in making strategic decisions can influence the development of positive attitudes of the domestic population towards tourism and support its development through involvement in the process of creating and providing services to tourists. Considering the economic, ecological, and social benefits for the local community, tourism represents a significant factor in the revitalization of the village. Tourism also contributes to the creation of additional income for those residents, who place their products on the tourist market, but also to the preservation of local customs, crafts, culture, and cultural heritage (Podovac et al., 2019). The rural areas of Serbia represent an inexhaustible resource

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/how-do-residents-perceive-the-social-impacts-of-tourism-on-rural-areas/328083

Related Content

An Introduction to Kernel Methods

Gustavo Camps-Valls, Manel Martínez-Ramón and José Luis Rojo-Álvarez (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 1097-1101).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/introduction-kernel-methods/10958

Topic Maps Generation by Text Mining

Hsin-Chang Yang and Chung-Hong Lee (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 1979-1984).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/topic-maps-generation-text-mining/11090

Examining the Validity and Reliability of the Arabic Vocabulary Achievement Instrument to Evaluate a Digital Storytelling-Based Application

Nurul Azni Mhd Alkasirah, Mariam Mohamad, Mageswaran Sanmugam, Girija Ramdas and Khairulnisak Mohamad Zaini (2024). *Embracing Cutting-Edge Technology in Modern Educational Settings* (pp. 264-284).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/examining-the-validity-and-reliability-of-the-arabic-vocabulary-achievement-instrument-to-evaluate-a-digital-storytelling-based-application/336199

Segmenting the Mature Travel Market with Data Mining Tools

Yawei Wang (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 1759-1764).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/segmenting-mature-travel-market-data/11056

Enhancing Web Search through Query Log Mining

Ji-Rong Wen (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 758-763).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/enhancing-web-search-through-query/10905