

IMPORTANCE-RESPONSIBILITY COMPARISON OF TOURISTS' ACTIONS: A HOST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Tourism industry has recently awakened to sustainability issues along with destination competitiveness and alternative tourism. With these changes, a related and equally important issue has emerged Responsible Tourism. The objective of this research paper is to use importance-responsibility analysis (IRA) to examine the tourists at a destination (attraction) with regard to their responsible actions, and to establish a background for understanding tourist responsibilities from the point of view of hosts. Importance Performance Analysis is applied as an instrument to develop marketing strategies in hospitality and tourism sector. It is applied to sustainable tourism initiatives study in one case & further modified to apply as importance-satisfaction analysis study in another case. This paper reconceptualises this analysis to one of importance-responsibility, enabling a focus on the responsibilities in tourism scenario.

Keywords: Responsibility, Tourist, Host, Destination Development

INTRODUCTION

It is vital for tourism industry to inculcate responsible practices for reducing the negative developmental consequences and promote the positive ones. Due to this fact, responsible tourism concept has gained attention at a global level being emerged as a major market driver (Spenceley, 2008). Responsible tourism emerged as an alternative to the damages caused by the traditional tourism practices (Wheeller, 1990). Initially responsible tourism was looked upon to be an addition to the list of alternative forms of tourism. Over a period, responsible tourism was a better-preferred alternative over other alternative tourism forms. This was understood through the acceptance and support received by responsible tourism over the other alternative tourism types such as eco-tourism or nature based tourism (Caruana et. al, 2014). In responsible tourism scenario, it is imperative for all the participating stakeholders at a destination to take responsibilities for the impacts caused due to their actions. Feruzi (2012) proposed to consider responsible tourism as an umbrella term for all the tourism forms that are more considerate and sensitive socially and environmentally. Considering this fact, it is appropriate to say that responsible tourism is not a form of tourism but includes a set of responsibilities that every form of tourism including the mass tourism, eco-tourism or wildlife tourism should adhere to, in order to make any tourist attraction a sustainable one.

Much research emergent in the field of responsible tourism is in the area of the business perspectives such as marketing and CSR activities in tourism (Manente, Minghetti, & Mingotto, 2012), evidences of the responsible tourism practices as theorised versus the reality (Frey & George, 2010), on host perspective of tourism responsibilities (e.g. Sin, 2010) & tourists own perspective of responsibilities (Mahrouse, 2011, Su & Swanson, 2017). Major literature is observed pointing in the direction of hosts to play a major role in the responsible tourism scenario. Some later studies have addressed the responsibilities of tourist in a sustainable destination development. Recent literature in the area of responsible tourism in a multi-stakeholder setting have however contradicted with the fact that all the participating stakeholders at a destination have a role to play in responsible destination development (Mihalic, 2016). For instance, understanding tourists responsibilities from the perspective of hosts will help identify the major problems in the responsible destination development. In literature however, there is actual lack of knowledge on understanding tourist's responsibilities from the perspective of hosts.

Importance-Responsibility Analysis (IRA)

Importance performance analysis (IPA) has been applied to different areas in the service industry for measuring client

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satisfaction since Martilla and James introduced it in the 1970s. IPA is a simple but effective tool that analyses quality attributes on two dimensions: performance and importance. These two dimensions are then integrated into a matrix that guides firms to identify the most appropriate strategic options to enhance competitiveness. In tourism literature, this technique is applied and extended in a number of different scenarios (Lai & Hitchcock, 2015). IPA technique is applied in a study assessing resident perception to tourism development framework (Frauman, 2012), importance satisfaction analysis is assessed in marine-park hinterlands in another study (Tonge & Moore, 2007), IPA applied to measuring tourist satisfaction from sustainability point of view (Sorensson & Friedrichs, 2013).

Several researchers have tried to extend and modify the original IPA method by adding more information to the original IPA framework (Dolinsky & Caputo, 1991; Vaske, Beaman, Stanley, & Grenier, 1996). This paper reconceptualises this analysis to one of importance responsibility, enabling a focus on the responsible behaviour at a destination. Importance-Responsibility Analysis (IRA) can be applied to measure responsibility attributes on two dimensions: responsibility and importance. Similar to IPA, these two dimensions can then be integrated into a matrix that guides firms to identify the most appropriate strategic options to enhance destination sustainability.

The current study is advanced in a way considering responsibility of tourists from the point of view of hosts by applying the proposed Importance-Responsibility Analysis. The paper is organized as follows. A brief review of literature is included in Section 2. Section 3 is devoted to proposed Importance-Responsibility framework design. The application of the IRA model to the host-guest perspective is explained in section 4. Followed by IRA model, application of the current study approach and futuristic approach to understanding Tourist responsibility is explained. Finally, discussion on the future scope of study are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism research and practices have seen to be increasing at a global level and in Asia. Research in the area of stakeholder responsibilities in the responsible tourism scenario have necessitated that all the stakeholders need to take responsibility of the impacts caused due to their actions (Kramer & Porter, 2006). A number of studies measuring tourists support have supported the willingness of tourists to have a role in the responsible tourism scenario.

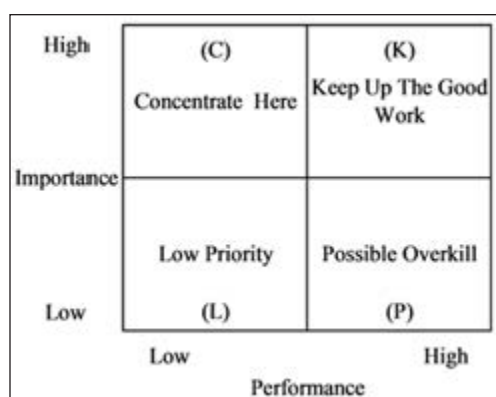
(Su & Swanson, 2017; Caruana et. al, 2014; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017). However, regardless of their pronounced positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism, just a few tourists act appropriately by purchasing responsible tourism items, opting for environmentally friendly transportation, or acting mindfully towards destination communities (Budeanu, 2007).

In the beginning, studies projected that hosts support is a major factor in destination sustainability (Sirakaya, Teye and Sönmez, 2002). Residents were considered primary stakeholders in destination development (Byrd 2007). However, the sole role of residents in responsible destination development and in overall planning of the tourism development is proven difficult to predict (Shani & Pizam, 2012). Over a period with in depth research in the area, the role of all the participating stakeholders was looked upon at a destination. These studies were mostly comparative studies assessing the level of responsibility seeking among different stakeholder groups (Smith, 2012; Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005). In reality, there is always a refusal to accept sole responsibility in such cases, thus not allowing the actual understanding the underlying problem and associated solution to the same. The interaction between the people and places is the pillar on which the tourism industry is based. Owing to this fact, the industry is extremely sensitive to the social and physical conditions of the destination micro and macro environment (Hanafiah & Harun, 2010). The possible paybacks to society from tourism development are currently not being actualised coz of the differences in the interactions at a micro and macro level environments (Frey, 2007). This is further evident from certain study reports such as the one presented by World Tourism Market Responsible Tourism (2013) or SNV (2009). As such, a few stakeholders are seen to actually act accordingly and look forward to practice responsible tourism (Budeanu, 2007).

In order to address such issues in understanding stakeholder responsibilities, considering the viewpoint of the other stakeholders in the responsible tourism scenario is a projected technique in the current study. The current study proposes to assess the responsibilities of tourists from the viewpoint of hosts at a tourist destination.

Importance-Responsibility Analysis

Importance-responsibility Analysis (IRA) is a proposed extension/modification of the existing Importance Performance Matrix. Before considering looking at proposing IPA matrix for evaluating responsibilities, it is necessary to understand the basic IPA matrix and its extension/modification in the existing literature.



Source: Ho, Feng & Yen (2014)

Fig. 1: Importance-Performance Matrix

Importance-Performance analysis (IPA) finds an application in a number of studies considering its easy administration and interpretation. In addition, the IPA technique is valued to provide easy solution to certain complex strategic problems

of planning and development. In IPA, attribute importance and performance are combined into a two dimensional grid for easier data interpretation and derive practical suggestions on satisfaction parameter (Oh, 2001; Martilla & James, 1977). As observed in Fig 1, IPA is represented into four suggestions based on importance-performance measure. (Martilla & James, 1977). Initially, these studies have been utilized in the field of health care services, dental offices and financial institutions (Bruyere, Rodriguez, & Vaske, 2002). In the area of tourism too, a number of studies are spotted such as travel and tourism (e.g., Evans & Chon, 1989; Go & Zhang, 1997), leisure and recreation (e.g., Guadagnolo, 1985; Hollenhorst, Olson, & Fortney, 1992). Tyrell and Okrant (2004) suggest that IPA has a place in economic planning processes where the prioritization of issues (e.g., tourism development) is most relevant.

A literature reviews on Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) based on the spectrum of issues in the tourism sector in particular shows how IPA finds its applicability in different circumstances and types and Table 1 below summarize this.

Table 1: The Summary of Literature Reviews Upon Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Application and Modification in Tourism Sector

Field	Researchers	Year	Subject	Findings
Tourism	Eric Frauman & Sarah Banks	2012	(1) Used Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), (2) Residents evaluated environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic area attributes (3) Designing of Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP)	(1) VERP used as a visual means for those interested in better understanding resident perceptions.. (2) Environmental Attributes are important and of real concern currently and in future (3) IPA Modified to use VERP framework for intended purpose
	Joanna Tonge & Susan A. Moore	2007	(1) Importance-Satisfaction Analysis (2) Assessing the quality of experience (3) Basic two frameworks used include importance performance analysis and service quality gap, were modified and applied for evaluating satisfaction	(1) Study provided an analysis of the management needs for a range of condition-related attributes, based on the relationships between importance and satisfaction (2) In this case satisfaction exceeded importance and hence no management attention is needed.
	Anna Sorensson & Yvonne von Friedrichs	2013	(1) Applying IPA to analyse performance of a destination (2) To analyse whether international tourists and national tourists differ in the sustainability factors	(1) Study helped improve the sustainability factors that tourists think are most important (2) IPA scale designed can be used to study other destinations on sustainability parameters
	Jerry J. Vaske, Jay Beaman, Richard Stanley & Michel Grenier	1996	(1) Applying IPA for assessing resource allocation optimisation (2) Influence of the attributes of service or destination area and relative performance (3) checking on performance to incrementally guide more optimal resource allocation	(1) Findings highlight need for client segmentation prior to IPA application. (2) IPA analysis without segmentation likely to result in user displacement.
	Tonge, J., Moore, S.A. and Taplin, R.	2011	(1) Visitor satisfaction in the area of leisure studies applying Importance-satisfaction analysis (2) Review of IPA, gap analyses, threshold performance targets and overall satisfaction to assess performance and satisfaction levels (3) Case study Analysis	(1) Current study is a review of satisfaction surveys and analyses (2) Highlights grid-based approach combined with tabulated gap analyses (3) Study recommends to collect information on visitor satisfaction

Using the original IPA matrix (Martilla & James, 1977) in this study below IRA model is proposed. In IRA model, Importance of responsibility is proposed to be assessed against the responsibility attribute (Refer Fig. 2). Before progressing to the model design, it is ideal to define importance and responsibility.

A number of different studies have adapted the definition of attribute importance differently depending on the type of conceptualisation and the implications that it would offer to the users of IPA (Jaccard et al, 1986). Importance is conceptualised in certain studies in terms of goal-oriented search attribute that is looked up by consumers in the target product while deciding a purchase (Jacoby, 1975). It is reflected in certain other studies as change. I.e. any particular characteristic is said to be important if the change in the individuals' perception of that product characteristic leads to a change in attitude towards the product (Oh, 2001). Oh (2001) has also quoted the statement by Martilla and James (1977) that importance is closely associated with expectations as these particularly are stated in literature to be antecedents of perceived performance (Oh, 2001). In the current study, this contemplation by Martilla and James (1977) about closer association of expectation and importance is considered suitable for responsible tourism study.

Responsible Tourism (RT) is about providing better holiday experiences for guests and good business opportunities to avail improved lifestyle through enhanced socio-economic assistances and better-quality management of natural resources (Spenceley et al., 2002). It is the "Tourism that creates better places for people to live in, and better places to visit" (Weeden, 2005). Responsible Tourism is characterized

as an approach that minimizes all harmful impacts of tourism and contributes to tourism destinations in aspects of culture, economy, and environment (Gao et al, 2016; Stanford, 2008). Outlining the tourists' ethical responsibilities in three main types of issues: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (Hedlund, Marell, & Garling, 2012), in order for making available better holiday experiences for the tourists and enhanced business opportunities for the entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, responsible tourism is necessary. In addition responsible tourism brings in for the local communities, a life that is of better quality via improved socio-economic benefits and improved management of the available natural resource (Spenceley et al., 2002).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study aims to consider the relationship between hosts and guests in a manner in which the guests' responsibilities are understood from the point of view of the hosts. Hosts include the residents, government and entrepreneurs at a destination. This classification of hosts is charted from the study by Poudel & Nyaupane, 2016 who broadly categorized as hosts (e.g., tourism entrepreneurs and residents) and guests (i.e., tourists) and further Hardy & Beeton, 2001 added government mainly to function as a regulator for the tourism activities. Byrd et. al (2009) have confirmed the existence of the four major stakeholders to be Residents, Government and Business Entrepreneurs to be the hosts and Tourists to be the guests. Below is the representation of the conceptual study framework wherein the responsible tourism is represented to be cumulative effort wherein hosts and guests interaction playing a pivotal role (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Conceptual Representation of Study Constructs

In order to test the equivalence amongst the hosts and guests on responsibility parameters, the Importance-responsibility approach (Fig. 3) is proposed wherein the responsibilities of the tourists are understood from the point of view of the three types of stakeholders on the economic, environmental and social domain. This study would help take care of the issues

faced by the hosts that are mainly due to the irresponsible behaviour of the guests. In addition, this study will provide detailed overview of the Tourists responsibilities in a responsible tourism management, which otherwise remain unattended.

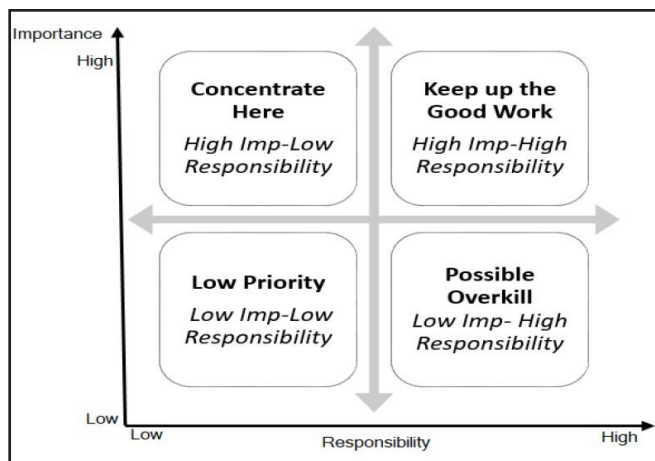


Fig. 3: Importance-Responsibility Analysis (IRA)

DISCUSSION

This paper examines how tourists responsibilities towards sustainable tourism can be best understood from the perspective of the hosts. There are a number of motives to drive sustainability research. However the major studies cumulatively act as a guide for the development of phenomenon or systems for predicting or influencing some future state of system. The current study in particular, concentrates on the hosts as the destination managers who are responsible for sustainable management of the destination in a responsible manner. The number of benefits received by residents through tourism include an improved quality of life & economic wellbeing. Destination managers however face a major challenge in terms of destination development. A number of research papers majorly ignored the role of tourists in responsible destination management. In order to achieve the better outcomes from tourism activities and develop better quality of life and other economic benefits will require the tourism sector that is able to understand the loopholes in responsible management of the attraction. Considering the fact that the responsible management of a destination is possible with the participation of all the concerned stakeholders at an attraction, the role of tourists to arises in the scene. Importantly, the unawareness about the tourists responsibilities by tourists is a major hurdle for the managers of a destination. As a result of Importance-Responsibility (IR) modelling, the the responsibilities of tourists will be better understood basis which the management decisions are expected to alter.

Several challenges remain, most relate to broader issues associated with sustainability of a destination on the three domains economic, environmental and social. However, since sustainability is impossible to achieve without all the participating stakeholders taking responsibility for their

actions there is a need to give attention in that line. The study highlights the issue that majorly arise due to ignorance of considering the tourists responsibilities in responsible destination management. Responsibility awareness / unawareness continue to challenge sustainability research at a fundamental level in the host guest scenario. In order to understand tourists responsibilities from the point of view of hosts (residents, government, entrepreneurs) can potentially be addressed by using the IR grid-based approach described here. The empirical analysis in an attraction specific manner considering hosts to be the respondents will help managing the destination in a responsible manner. We hope the research topics identified above will encourage researchers to explore tourism's potential contribution to destination sustainability and provide the kind of evidence necessary to change policy and practice.

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