

Chapter 55

The Perception of the Effect of Tourism on the Local Community before the Ibiza Smart Island Project

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ABSTRACT

The perceptions that residents had towards aspects linked to tourism development on the island of Ibiza is measured. In 2011 fieldwork which asked the extent of agreement with several statements was carried out. A descriptive analysis was carried out on the data obtained to determine the average valuation on various items and cross tabulations to see if there are differences between the five municipalities of the island. The results show that there is a high valuation of the economic benefits and tourism is considered to be very important, but they are half-hearted or critical towards the rest of the impacts. In addition, there are no significant differences between the five municipalities. Ibiza is a single tourist destination and works as one single social unit. In 2015 the Ibiza Smart Island project was launched, with smart city and smart destination elements, to solve the problems that affect residents and tourists.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is highly dependent on the hospitality of residents, and the support of the local population is essential for the proper development of tourism (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002; Gursay, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski, 1994; Sharpley, 2014; Styliadis & Terzidou, 2014). Moreover it is widely recognized that the planners and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector must take into account the

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resident community if they want sustainable development (Almeida, Balbuena, & Cortés, 2015; Ap & Crompton, 1998; Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2010; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010; Presenza, Del Chiappa, & Sheehan, 2013). There are many reasons why the residents' reaction is important (Williams & Lawson, 2001) and the investigation into the causes of their attitudes toward tourism is of great help for management. The impact of tourism on the quality of life of the residents should allow for an increase or at least maintain it the same (Williams & Lawson, 2001). Having the support of the population is essential since the kindness of the residents is a basic element in a tourism product (Fridgen, 1991). One of the motivations of tourism is psycho-social reasons and it often involves an increase in the contact with individuals from the surrounding area during the stay (Gómez, San Martín, & Bertiche, 1999), and if the treatment received from these people is hospitable they will have an enjoyable experience.

With the development of information and communication technologies, initiatives that seek to use this technology to improve peoples' lives have arisen.

- The concepts of smart city (Ramaswami, Russell, Culligan, Rahul Sharma, & Kumar, 2016),
- Smart island (Mahizhnan, 1999), and
- Smart destination (Del Chiappa, & Baggio, 2015; Ivars, Solsona, & Sánchez, 2016) are examples of this.

A smart city is a population that seeks sustainable development in its broad sense (economic, social, environmental, etc.) and to offer the most appropriate response possible to the basic needs of institutions, companies and residents. This implies that the initiatives and investments that have been implemented promote an improvement in the quality of life, sustainable development, participatory management and efficient use of time by everyone involved. The actions which imply being a smart city are based on the development and implementation of tools based on information and communication technologies. These tools are essential for the introduction of actions aimed at a more efficient and sustainable use of resources available, including peoples' time (Deakin, 2013; Deakin & Al Waer, 2011). Reality is that at present, this is a concept which is still unclear and which encompasses very diverse initiatives, both in its technological base and in its scope and objectives. What all the cases do have in common is that they seek an improvement in the daily life of residents and visitors.

When a population nucleus has great tourism development and decides to adopt the smart city approach, tourists are fundamental in the sustainability of local development. In these cases it is normal to talk about Smart destination (Del Chiappa & Baggio, 2015; Ivars et al., 2016) to highlight the importance of visitors in the design of the various actions undertaken. Smart destination projects seek to improve the tourist experience by providing them with useful information at a suitable time and place. This normally consists in projects that aim to facilitate access to tourist information on culture, entertainment, places of interest, etc. through electronic devices, mainly mobile technology.

The objective of this study is to measure the perceptions of residents on various aspects (economic situation) of a small and internationally well known island tourist destination, specifically the island of Ibiza. The results of the analysis show that the residents recognize the positive benefits of tourism but are also aware of the negative impacts. Estimations of various aspects related to society, public services and administrations are not good. This lack of variability between municipalities is due to the fact that the island is a single unit seen from geographical, social, economic and cultural points of view.

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