Building sustainable tourism destination and developing responsible tourism: conceptual framework, key issues and challenges

Abstrak

Tourism and sustainable development has become a prominent key area of research and as an agenda of concern for different stakeholders within developed and developing countries. Extensive research work has been carried out; yet there seems to be no conclusive or acceptable holistic conceptual framework which identifies the key attributes and guides the sustainable tourism development of a particular destination. This conceptual paper focuses on building a sustainable tourism destination by addressing its key sustainable tourism attributes and considering the importance of developing responsible tourism. Subsequently, it proposes a sustainable conceptual framework which is built upon the general conceptual model of destination competitiveness by Ritchie and Crouch (2003). It outlines the key attributes, destination competitiveness as well as the principles and guidelines of sustainable tourism in considering developing sustainable tourism. Specifically, it draws on the need to develop responsible tourism products in order to sustain the tourism destination development, which has not been well understood by tourism suppliers due to the lack of market information. The key attributes in sustainable tourism development arise from the understanding of the key influential factors – namely, supporting factors and resources, core resources and attractions, destination management and planning as well as the relevant amplifying determinants. The proposed conceptual framework, together with the said key attributes and responsible tourism, offer a more holistic perspective in the understanding of building sustainable tourism development. It serves as an important general guideline for building sustainable tourism destination, or as a useful tool for individuals or state governments in implementing or improving the status of sustainability of a tourism destination, and as a useful framework for any individual or country in the wide implementation of sustainable tourism development in a particular destination. It is of considerable significance for the state government in

making sustainable tourism development-related decisions, for the building of a sustainable tourism destination, and for developing responsible tourism that is widely accepted by the market. It draws attention to the determinants of successful sustainable tourism destination planning and development, and suggests integrating sustainability into the strategic planning of a tourist destination, as these two are nexuses. Key issues and challenges faced in developing sustainable tourism include communication gaps between communities, states and parties which affect tourism growth, neglect of community participation at the early stage, lack of support and coordination efforts towards sustainable destination development and lack of entrepreneurial initiative guidance by the government and non-government sectors. The validation of the said framework and responsible tourism serves as an important avenue for future research.