

## **Residents' Perceptions Towards Tourism and its Impacts on their Quality of Life in Aqaba City**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to investigate the resident's perceptions of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental tourism impacts in Aqaba city and how they affect their quality of life. A quantitative survey based on random sample was conducted in Aqaba. 295 questionnaires were completed by 300 respondents approached; representing a 98.3% response rate for this survey. The descriptive statistical analysis was used based on a five-point Likert scale. It was found that residents have higher positive perceptions towards economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Aqaba as they agreed that tourism increases employment opportunities, improves the local economy, promotes cultural exchange and fosters tourists' awareness. On the other hand, residents' quality of life is influenced negatively as tourism increases prices of land and increases local residents' cost of living. It is also found that tourism has contributed towards problems of traffic congestion and overcrowding of people. Marital status, education, and employment were found to be the main demographic variables affecting the residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts. Finally, the recommendations section discusses some implications for local community and sustainable tourism

**Keywords:** Residents' Perceptions, Tourism Impacts, Quality of Life, Tourism Development, Aqaba, Jordan.

### **Introduction**

Tourism has become one of the leading and fastest developing industries and is a socioeconomic phenomenon of great importance (UNWTO, 2015). Undeniably, tourism has a variety of benefits both to the tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, and the local communities in terms of employment, local economy, and improvement to the quality of life (Besculides et al, 2002; Oh, 2005). On the other hand, Boniface (2001) stated that tourism could cause damage to the socio-cultural and environmental fabric of local communities. Well-managed tourism can help in mitigating negative impacts of tourism and creating a positive interaction between the host communities, tourists, and tourism industry (Zaei and Zaei, 2013). However, Wang and Pfister (2008) have argued that it is not difficult to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and clarify associated benefits and that this can be effectively achieved through tourism planning.

In increase, tourism industry in Jordan generates

direct and indirect effects on the local communities of the tourist destinations. (Passing on some examples) Aqaba has experienced tremendous development since the adoption of Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Master Plan in 2002 to build up infrastructure and accommodate comprehensive development activities on the tourism, commercial, industrial and logistical levels) in the region (ASEZA, 2013). Such a development has considerably turned Aqaba into an international tourist destination and a shopping hub (duty free zone) for both domestic and international tourists. Although residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts have been widely undertaken, conducting the current study in Aqaba is needed. Aqaba is an under-researched area in terms of tourism and community development. ASEZA is the only official responsible for tourism development in the city. When reviewing its 2010-2015 tourism marketing strategy, local residents in Aqaba have not been the main priority. Further, the great acceleration of tourism investments in the city is creating new socio-economic aspects that affect the residents quality of life, prices, social structure, and demographic changes (Badarneh, 2015). Assessing why Aqaba residents' perceive negatively or/and positively the economic, social, and

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cultural impacts would be a guide for further studies to develop new models. Understanding their viewpoints can assist governmental bodies and tourism planners to understand real interests and issues. The upshot of the study can be an information source on the residents' state of mind towards tourism impacts and how they act upon their quality of life.

## Literature Review

### Tourism Impacts

The most of studies about tourism and local communities has undertaken the measurement of residents' perceptions and attitude towards tourism impacts. Nevertheless, some of these works concentrate on economic impacts as the first interest of all stakeholders. Others integrate the attitude towards the economic and social impacts, although social impacts are more related to the cultural aspects. Environmental impacts are usually considered in the context of sustainable tourism. At a lower level, the other types of impacts are part of sustainable tourism studies. The current study is concerned with how residents in Aqaba city perceive all these types of tourism impacts.

### Economic Impacts

Generally, economic impacts of tourism development encompass the monetary benefits and costs resulting from the use of tourist services and facilities. Among all kinds of tourism impacts, economic impacts are the most widely researched. It is likewise reported as easy to be assessed (Mason, 2003). There has been a wide agreement among authors that the monetary reward from tourism is the most influential factor on residents' willingness to support tourism development (Pizam, 1978; Ap, 1990; Long et al, 1990). Tourism can have positive economic effects on local economies, and a visible impact on national GDP growth. It can also be an essential component for both community development and poverty reduction (Ashe, 2005).

Dwyer et al (2004) summarized all sorts of tourism changes in terms of economic impacts. Real and effective tourism promotion leads to changes in air transport arrangements, tax changes, events such as festivals. Such results will have an impact on economic activities' patterns, especially in the locality. Ardahaey (2011) argued that tourism impacts are not only described by the outcome of a certain tourist facility or event. Impacts from modified human behaviour. There is a logical

interaction between the agents of change and the sub-systems on which they impinge. In other words, combining the economic impacts with social and physical impacts (sub-systems) would complicate the measurement. However, such an integration would be beneficial and meaningful since there is a kind of symmetry between the economic and social impacts. For example, employment is one of the tourism economic impacts and seen as a social impact at the same time. In this context, Dwyer et al (2002:35) summarized the economic and social negative and positive impacts.

**Table 1: Recognition of Tangible Costs and Benefits (Dwyer et al., 2000: 35)**

Social Costs	Social Benefits
Disruption to resident lifestyle	Community development
Traffic congestion	Civic Pride
Noise	Event production
Vandalism	extension
Crowding	
Property damage	
Economic Costs	Economic Benefits
Resident's exodus	Long term promotional benefits
Interruption of normal business	Induced development
Under-utilized infrastructure	Additional trade and business
	Increased property values

Ardahaey (2011) referred to other economic impacts that the research did not clearly cover such as the changes in price when tourism, for example, inflates the cost of housing, the quality of goods and services, and changes in taxes.

### Socio-Cultural Impacts

Researching tourism impacts has begun by the economic results. However, studying the socio-cultural impacts of tourism has started a few years later. Tourism socio-cultural impacts appear as a result of tourism development and the characteristics of host-guest relationships.

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 lifestyle (dressing, eating, entertainment and recreational activities, and so forth).

While this influence may be interpreted positively by developing 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 revitalization of arts, crafts, and local culture and to the realisation of cultural identity and heritage. Moreover, many people of different cultures come together by means of tourism, facilitating the exchange of cultures (Brayley et al, 1990).

Hall (2007) argues that the extent to which benefits accrue to a nation crucially depends on local conditions. The development of tourism as a whole is usually accompanied by considerable investments in infrastructure, such as airports, roads, telecommunication, to mention a few, from which not only tourists benefit, but also contributes to improving the living conditions of local populations (Neto, 2003). Manwa (2012) argues that for tourism to be sustainable the community has to benefit directly from it, this will enable them to protect and conserve their resources. 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). With the development of tourism in an area, there might be changes in the social structure of the community (de Kadt, 1979; Dogan, 1987). It also modifies the 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 lead to increases in divorce rates and prostitution (Gee et al, 1997).

### **Environmental Impacts**

As a service sector, tourism is described as a clean industry. However, this description is not always true since the increasing tourist arrival number could lead to negative environmental impacts. Yet, the environmental advantages of tourism are likely to occur (Andereck, et al., 2005). While the study gives greater attention to the socioeconomic impacts of tourism, studies about the

environmental impacts have been conducted on general issues. Some of these issues focus on the physical and biological impacts of tourism (e.g. Impacts on vegetation and soil). More comprehensive environmental impacts are related to pollution, rising environmental consciousness, deforestation, and depletion of natural resources (Kuvan and Akan, 2005).

Conversely, tourism may create positive impacts on the natural environment. The study has started to undertake these effects three decades ago. Conservation and restoration of the heritage sites and improving the destinations' appearance are important examples. Further, many authors argue that tourism should be responsible for maintaining the local natural resources. In doing so, tourism can describe as sustainable (Smith and Krannich, 1998).

Tourism environmental impacts are very important concerns for the interest of investors, local residents, and government. In terms of local residents, ignoring such a concern affects negatively the local quality of life and their resources which tourism is based on. The extent of the research interest in this field is still insufficient, especially that it deals with general environmental issues.

### **Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Impacts**

Residents' perception towards tourism impacts is widely undertaken for four decades due to its significance in sustainable tourism development. In this context, Allen et al (1988) stated: *"For a tourism-based economy to sustain itself in local communities, the residents must be willing partners in the process. Their attitudes towards tourism and perceptions of its impact on community life must be continually assessed"*. Snaith and Haley (1990) relate the positive word of mouth and positive destination image to the residents' satisfaction and support for tourism development. This gives a further value to the study of residents' perceptions of tourism. This section attempts to review a set of previous studies that deal with all kinds of tourism impacts as perceived by local residents. The studies that undertake one or two kinds of impacts are excluded since the current study undertakes all of them.

As the current study is concerned with an urban area, it also attempts to show previous studies in similar study areas. Milman and Pizam (1988) indicated that local residents have positive perceptions towards tourists. At the same time, they found out that the majority of them mentioned negative impacts of tourism. Alcohol, drugs,

traffic problems, criminal acts and conflicts between tourists and residents were most frequently mentioned. Simultaneously, they recognized employment opportunities, income from taxes and increased quality of life as a positive impact of tourism. In a study that deals with residents' perception of all tourism impacts, Mbaiwa (2003) found that respondents perceived positively the socioeconomic impacts of tourism in northwestern Botswana. Though, environmental impacts were negatively perceived in terms of noise pollution, poor waste management, and destruction of the area's ecology.

Another comprehensive study was conducted by Kuvan and Akan (2005) in Belek, Turkey. The study findings showed that respondents were mostly positive about tourism impacts excepting some concerns for the negative impacts especially on the forests in the area. The respondents related this negative impact to decision-making by the public authority. Hritz and Ross (2010) examined how residents of Indianapolis, Indiana perceived sport tourism impacts on their city. The study analysis revealed a four-factor structure of social benefits, environmental benefits, economic benefits, and general negative impacts. Socioeconomic benefits were the strongest predictors of support for further sports tourism. In another area, Ling et al (2011) found that residents of Georgetown, Malaysia saw tourism in a positive perspective in terms of socioeconomic and cultural impacts. They also perceived positively the environmental impacts, but in a lower degree. Similarly, the perceived impacts of tourism on residents of Kuşadası, Turkey showed that most strong and favourable perceptions towards tourism impacts were found to be associated with economic, social, and cultural aspects of tourism.

Fariborz and Ma'rof (2009) explored the relationship between the community leaders' perceptions towards tourism impacts and their effort in building the capacity for tourism development in local communities of Shiraz, Iran. The study showed that those leaders who perceived that tourism activities bring economic benefits had the higher tendency to be involved in building the capacity of their communities in relation to the development of tourism, whereas those who perceived tourism could bring negative impact to the environment, would put less effort in the capacity building. Ledo and Iglesias (2007) in a Spanish area found out the relationship between the function of tourism, population growth, and the socioeconomic development, taking into account the type

of tourist activity which is dominant. They concluded that tourism is running as an urban development factor, generating significant changes in the system of settlement, but it neither acts the same way nor has the same impact on all municipalities or in all cities. Eraqi (2007) has studied Egyptian residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts in five areas. The main findings was that local residents had positive perceptions towards tourism development indicators and some negative perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development on local communities in Egypt.

A few studies about tourism impacts and local communities have been conducted in Jordan. In a study about tourism and the impact of changing state-society relations, Brand (2001) examined two factors frequently measured for project failures: the role of prevailing development paradigms and the level of residents' involvement in tourism projects planning and implementation in Jordan. The findings showed a considerable effect of changing state-society relations on two tourism-related projects. Another study by (Badarneh, 2015) showed how local residents in Aqaba perceive tourism careers. The study referred to social image, religion, and gender as a determinant of their willingness to work in the tourism sector. The study found out significant relationships between these factors and residents' attitude to tourism careers. Further, awareness of tourism contribution was found to not have a significant relationship with willingness to work in tourism. Shunnaq and Al-Otoum (1999) examined the attitude of local residents in the archeological site of Umm Qais towards different types of tourism impacts: cultural, social, economic, and political. The study findings showed a moderate attitude in general. However, economic impacts scored the highest level of attitude. Some demographic factors such as gender and educational level were found to have a significant effect on respondents' attitude.

In terms of socio-cultural impacts, Hasanat (2010) identified the perceptions and attitudes of Petra residents towards tourism development. By the descriptive and other analytical results, the study showed that respondents' attitude were affected by the level of their dependence on tourism and some demographic factors. Overall, Petra residents in this study saw that benefits and awards from tourism exceeded the negative socio-cultural impacts. At the same archaeological site of Petra, Al-Taweel (2003) attempted to study how Petra residents'

evaluate tourism impacts based on their personal profile. He found the most affecting factors were the educational level and income.

With reference to the aforementioned studies, it can be noted that they undertake the four kinds of tourism impacts (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental) in different areas. However, these comprehensive studies are modest in number compared to the studies that undertake them partially. Further, most of them revealed negative perceptions towards the environmental impacts regardless of the fact that the study area is located in a developing or developed country.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

In order to determine the motivations (costs and benefits) that lead local residents to have positive or negative perceptions towards tourism, Ap (1992) suggested a hypothetical framework based on "social exchange" theory. Residents who perceive positive tourism impacts (benefits) are more expected to support tourism development and have higher willingness to participate in a socio-cultural exchange with visitors (Chili, 2015). On the other hand, residents who perceive negative tourism impacts (costs) are probably against tourism development and have an antagonistic relationship with visitors. Residents' satisfaction with an exchange interaction is obtained from the evaluation of the positive and negative impacts, which can be both economic and socio-cultural (Brida et al., 2011). Consequently, residents perceiving benefits more than costs resulting from tourism will be really involved in tourism and cooperative in tourism development.

### **Methodology**

**Study Area:** The study was conducted on residents in Aqaba city in Jordan. To better understand the perceptions of the participants, the researchers paid some visits to a few urbanized districts of the city prior to distributing the formal questionnaires like Al-mahdood and Al-thaltheh districts. This allowed the researchers to have a broad general knowledge base before formulating the questions of the questionnaires.

Aqaba is located to the east of Egypt and west of the Arabian Peninsula. Its strategic location which links four countries: Jordan, Egypt, and Israel give it a geographical and economic significance. Aqaba and its neighbouring towns are rich in natural and cultural heritage sites (e.g. Wadi Rum and Petra) and are well-known for their

tourism services and facilities. The historic city of Aqaba (El Aqabah - the hurdle), known in ancient times as Ayla, is Jordan's window to the sea (ASEZA, 2010). Aqaba is reachable by sea, air and land. Visitors can arrive at it by either choosing a cruise ship through the Red Sea from Egypt or they may fly with one of the international carriers to Amman and then either choose a flight to Aqaba or travel by bus (approximately 4 hours).

**Procedures:** This study examined the perceptions of residents towards socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts of tourism in the Aqaba city from the beginning of May 2015 to the end of September 2015. This study is based mainly on quantitative research method. Quantitative research is associated with analysis and large-scale studies, as statistics tend to operate safely with large numbers. The larger the numbers involved, the more the results are likely to generalize and become reliable. Findings that are based on several different sources of information following this type of corroboratory mode are likely to be much more reliable (Yin, 1994).

**Data Collection and Analysis:** The data collection for this study included primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data are based on questionnaires and the secondary data. The main type of data collection in this study was a survey questionnaire. According to Riley (1996), the majority of tourism research has relied mainly on structured surveys. Questionnaires are considered as an effective tool with relatively minimum cost to collect data from a large number of participants at various places within a limited time.

The items of the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism (economic, environmental, social and cultural) were based on several empirical studies: Pizam (1978), Rothman (1978), Sethna and Richmond (1978), Thomson, Crompton, and Kamp (1979), Belisle and Hoy (1980), Brougham and Butler (1981), Sheldon and Var (1984), Tyrrell and Spaulding (1984), Var, Kendall, and Tarakcioglu (1985), Liu and Var (1986), Perdue, Long, and Allen (1987), Milman and Pizam (1988), Bystrzanowski (1989), Husbands (1989), Caneday and Zeiger (1991), Ross (1992), as quoted by Ap, and Crompton (1998). Nevertheless, an adaptation had to be included in the questionnaire, given the particular characteristics of the Aqaba city. It was based on consultation and working with local experts in the tourism field. A 3-page questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items, divided into three

sections where the first section gathers the demographic information of participants (gender, age, marital status, level of education, and job status). The second and third sections of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts and to judge tourism's appropriateness for the local community of Aqaba city. In this respect, several variables have been used, including standard of living, employment opportunities, economic benefits, protection of cultural and natural heritage resources, socio-cultural interaction between residents and tourists, prices of land and housing, pollution or traffic congestion, drug and alcoholism (Timothy, 1999; Horn and Simmons, 2002; Eraqi, 2007; Lepp, 2007; Wang and Pfister, 2008). Further discussion needed to analyse the relationships between these variables and residents' perceptions.

Generally, there is an inconsistency of residents' perceptions towards the impacts of tourism. The main hypothetical base for this study is the social exchange theory. This study hypothesized mainly that there is a positive relationship between positive impacts of tourism perceived by residents and their satisfaction and support tourism in Aqaba city and this would lead to improving their pro-tourism behaviour.

The survey of the study considered all the residents of the Aqaba city as the study population. With a population of 188160 in 2015 (Department of Statistics, Jordan) each one of them had the possibility of being selected to be a part of the study sample. All the respondents had to be adults, permanent residents of the city. Bryman and Bell (2007) pointed out that the randomly sampled population is commonly used in quantitative research method. Random sampling was employed to choose respondents from the local community of Aqaba city. The total sample of questionnaires was 300 reaching, with it, a confidence level of 95%. The response rate of all the examined areas in the city of Aqaba was 295 respondents (approximately 98.3 percent of the total). The remaining 5 questionnaires were eliminated since some respondents could not complete answering all the questions (missing data). The total statistical error of the study was 4.8 percent. Any statistical result based on a data set with missing values would be biased to the extent that the variables included in the analysis are influenced by the missing data process (Pham, 2011). The questionnaires were distributed and recollected from respondents between low season period and high season period in order to determine the variation and difference in their

perceptions. Participants were recruited in person. Due to its high cogency, Ko and Stewart (2002) recommended the use of a five Likert-type scale in conducting tourism research. The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agree/disagree with the tourism impact items using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used to analyse the data by applying descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviations, One Way ANOVA, Independent T-Test and Post-hoc Scheffe Test. With the purpose of accomplishing a correct data analysis, the reliability of the Likert scales was examined. The results show a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.849 which means that all the variables are in a satisfactory level of reliability.

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Analysis

In this study, there are five independent variables: gender, age, marital status, educational level and employment status presented in Table 2, and 30 questions were divided into two impacts: positive and negative.

**Table 2: Respondents profile**

		Frequency	Sample (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	163	54.2
	Female	136	45.2
	Missing	2	0.7
<b>Age</b>	20-29	113	37.5
	30-39	106	35.2
	40-49	55	18.3
	>50	26	8.6
	Missing	1	0.3
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	107	35.5
	Married	187	62.1
	Missing	7	2.3
<b>Educational Level</b>	Illiterate	4	1.3
	Junior High	15	5.0
	Secondary	103	34.2
<b>Employment Status</b>	University	179	59.5
	Unemployed	64	21.3
	Free Work	34	11.3
	Employed	181	60.1
	Retired	22	7.3

Table 2 presents the demographic variables of the

study population. The majority of the respondents were male (54.2%). Regarding the age group, the majority of respondents were between 20 and 29 years old with a percentage of 37.5, followed by 30 to 39 categories (35.2%). 62.1 percent of the sample is married. 93.7 percent of the sample is a university and secondary education graduates while 6.3 percent are junior high graduates and illiterates. Finally, employed respondents represent the 60.1 percent, and unemployed people represent the 21.3 percent of the sample.

The results of this study indicate that some demographic variables like residents' gender and age were not related to the perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the residents of Aqaba city. Analysing all other dependent variables in regard to the residents' gender and age, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences between male and female perceptions and between age groups' perceptions towards socio-cultural impacts of tourism (Table 3), as the differences between the average values of the dependent variables are statistically not significant (Sig for gender = 0.762) and (Sig for age = 0.402).

On the other hand, resident marital status, educational level, and employment status have been shown to influence perceptions towards socio-cultural impacts of tourism, which is consistent with the literature (Ayers and Potter, 1989; Patton and Stabler, 1979). In order to test whether any significant differences exist among demographic variables and residents' perspectives, the eight variables

(Q10, Q12–Q18) were tested by Independent T-Test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the demographic variables (marital status, educational level, and employment status) as shown in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 3: Significant Values / socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the residents of Aqaba city according to gender and age**

Items	Sig	
	Gender	Age
<b>Socio-cultural Impacts: Q10, Q12 – Q18</b>	0.762	0.402

Tables 4 and 5 showed that there were significant differences between single and married perspectives, between educational levels' perspectives and between employment status' perspectives towards socio-cultural impacts of tourism, as the differences between the average values of the dependent variables is statistically significant (Sig for marital status = 0.039), (Sig for educational level = 0.042) and (Sig for employment status = 0.005). By using Post-hoc Scheffe Test, respondents who were single, highly educated and unemployed perceived more positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism than others (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6 shows the differences between the means of the educational levels (Illiterate, Junior high, Secondary and University), these differences were in favour of educational level (University) <sup>(1)</sup> where the mean for this level is (4.52).

**Table 4: Independent T-test / positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the residents of Aqaba city according to marital status**

Socio-cultural Impacts: Q10, Q12 – Q18	Single				Married			
	Mean	Std	T	Sig.	Mean	Std	T	Sig.
	4.54	0.779	2.076	0.039	4.39	0.492	2.076	0.039
4.54	0.779	2.076	0.039	4.39	0.492	2.076	0.039	

**Table 5: One Way ANOVA / positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the residents of Aqaba city according to educational level and employment status**

Socio-cultural Impacts: Q10, Q12 – Q18	Educational level		Employment Status	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
	2.762	0.042	4.399	0.005

**Table 6: Scheffe Test / Comparisons for educational level with the socio-cultural impacts**

	Illiterate	Junior High	Secondary	University
Illiterate				- 0.272*(2)
Junior High				
Secondary				
University	0.272*(1)			

**Table 7: Scheffe Test / Comparisons for employment status with the socio-cultural impacts**

	Unemployed	Free Works	Employed	Retired
Unemployed				0.489*( <sup>1</sup> )
Free Works				
Employed				
Retired	- 0.489*( <sup>2</sup> )			

The table above shows the differences between the means of the employment status levels (Unemployed, Free works, Employed and Retired), these differences were in favour of an employment status level (Unemployed)<sup>(1)</sup> where the mean for this level is (4.64) and (Retired)<sup>(2)</sup> level where the mean for this level is (4.15). Consequently, highly educated residents interacted socio-culturally with tourists more than others and better informed about tourist tendencies, as well as residents working in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Concerning the demographic variables and its relatedness to the negative impacts of tourism, the results of this study point out that residents' gender, age, and marital status were not significantly related to the perceived negative impacts of tourism on the quality of life of Aqaba residents (Table 8), as the differences are statistically not significant (Sig for gender = 0.564), (Sig for age = 0.107) and (Sig for marital status = 0.265) which is consistent with Sirakaya et al., 2002 and Tosun, 2002. There are no significant differences between the perspectives of demographic groups towards negative impacts of tourism.

Conversely, residents' educational level and employment status have an effect on residents' perceptions towards negative impacts of tourism on their quality of life. By applying one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Table 9) and the post-hoc Scheffe test (Table 10 and 11), we established that there are differences among respondents from different educational levels and employment status at the level of significance ( $F = 4.102$ ,  $Sig = 0.007$ ) for educational level and ( $F = 9.451$ ,  $Sig = 0.000$ ) for employment status.

Table 9 shows that there are significant differences between every educational level and employment status on one hand and residents' perceptions towards negative impacts of tourism on the other. Therefore, to find out which educational level and employment status show significant differences from another one, Scheffe test is used. This test revealed that the independent variables influenced the dependent variables. Table 10 shows that highly educated residents perceive more negative impacts of tourism upon their quality of life than others. It shows

the differences between the educational levels (Illiterate, Junior high, Secondary and University). These differences were in favour of educational level (University) <sup>(1)</sup> level where the mean for this level is (3.21) and (Secondary) <sup>(2)</sup> where the mean for this level is (2.95).

**Table 8: Significant Values / negative impacts of tourism on the quality of life of Aqaba residents, according to gender, age, and marital status**

Items	Sig		
	Gender	Age	Marital status
Negative Impacts: Q1 – Q12	0.564	0.107	0.265

**Table 9: One Way ANOVA / Negative impacts of tourism upon the quality of life of Aqaba residents according to educational level and employment status**

Items	Educational level		Employment Status	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Negative Impact: Q1 – Q12	4.102	0.007	9.451	0.000

**Table 10: Scheffe Test / Comparisons for educational levels with the negative impacts upon the quality of life of Aqaba residents**

	Illiterate	Junior High	Secondary	University
Illiterate				
Junior High				
Secondary				- 0.255*( <sup>2</sup> )
University			0.255*( <sup>1</sup> )	

The results of this study show that employed residents have shown more negative perceptions towards tourism impacts than those self-employed and retired. They also show that there are distinctions among the residents' employment statuses and their perceptions towards tourism impacts (Table 11). This table shows the differences between the employment status levels (Unemployed, Free works, Employed and Retired), these differences were in favour of employment status level

(Employed) <sup>(1)</sup> level where the mean for this level is (3.32), (Unemployed) <sup>(2)</sup> where the mean for this level is (3.18), (Free works) <sup>(3)</sup> level where the mean for this level is (2.72), and (Retired) <sup>(4)</sup> level where the mean for this level is (2.68).

**Table 11: Scheffe Test / Comparisons for employment status with the negative impacts upon the quality of life of Aqaba residents**

	Unemployed	Free Works	Employed	Retired
Unemployed		0.465*(2)		0.506*(2)
Free Works	- 0.465*(3)		- 0.515*(3)	
Employed		0.515*(1)		0.555*(1)
Retired	- 0.506*(4)		- 0.555*(4)	

**Residents' perceptions**

While many studies focus on the relationship between tourism and local communities, other researchers have focused on the impacts of tourism (economic, socio-cultural and environmental) on local communities. This study hypothesized that the residents of Aqaba city are satisfied with the economic impacts of tourism. Means and standard deviations were calculated (Table 12) and One Sample T-Test has been used (Table 13). Table 12 shows that the means for the items related to the economic impacts were between (4.44 – 4.90). The results show that most respondents perceived positive economic impacts and agreed that "tourism increases employment opportunities" (mean= 4.90), then (4.68) for the item "Tourism improves the local economy" and the lowest mean was for the item "Tourism improves transport infrastructure". This is due to that the respondents may all work in tourism and they are satisfied with these items. Also, respondents strongly agree that "tourism increases opportunities for shopping" (mean= 4.57) and "tourism contributes to income and standard of living" (mean= 4.53). This is a reality because many investment projects were established recently in Aqaba city. In addition, after Aqaba became a special economic zone (ASEZA) in February 2001, many people pay visits to Aqaba in order to buy goods and services which are cheaper than those in other cities in Jordan. Consequently, local tourism and local economy were flourished, and standards of living were improved.

These results reveal that residents have strong positive perceptions towards economic impacts of tourism. They also perceived a somewhat rapid growth in investment, increase in local employment and high level of tourism

infrastructure development. Therefore, the residents of Aqaba city are satisfied with the economic impacts of tourism (Table 13).

**Table 12: Means and standard deviations for items of economic impact**

Economic Impact:		Mean	Std	Rank
Q1	Tourism increases employment opportunities	4.90	0.322	1
Q2	Tourism improves the local economy	4.68	0.482	2
Q3	Tourism contributes to income and standard of living	4.53	0.645	4
Q4	Tourism improves investment, development and infrastructure spending in the economy	4.52	0.661	5
Q5	Tourism increases tax revenues	4.46	0.746	6
Q6	Tourism improves public utilities infrastructure	4.52	0.656	5
Q7	Tourism increases opportunities for shopping	4.57	0.653	3
Q8	Tourism improves transport infrastructure	4.44	0.703	7

**Table 13: Results of One Sample T-test for the satisfaction of the residents of Aqaba city**

Economic Impact:	Mean	Std	T	Sig.
Q1 – Q8	4.5777	0.43534	182.430	0.000

A number of researchers (Chili, 2015; Eraqi, 2007; Lepp, 2007 and Ap, 1992) indicated that tourism creates new employment opportunities, improves the local economy, increases the standard of living and improves the quality of life. Tourism has long been the main source of income for residents and investors in Aqaba city and a great deal of its development is indebted to the tourism industry. In general, the results of this study reveal that residents' perceptions were influenced by the positive impacts of tourism on the local economy. Residents would support tourism development in their society when they are expecting benefits from tourism activities. As Kayat (2002) suggested, residents' dependency on tourism industry would influence their perceptions towards economic impacts from tourism development.

Concerning the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, the analysis showed that most respondents agreed that "tourism improves the quality of police protection"

(mean= 4.76) (Table 14). This is due to that the respondents are extremely understood the importance of security in Jordan and compare with what is happening in the Middle East countries, and how Arab Spring influenced negatively tourism in those countries as a result of revolutions in the surrounding Arab countries like Egypt and Syria.

**Table 14: Means and standard deviations for items of socio-cultural impact**

Socio-cultural Impact:		Mean	Std	Rank
Q10	Tourism preserves historic buildings and monuments	4.44	0.703	2
Q12	Tourism increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits	4.40	0.673	4
Q13	Tourism promotes cultural exchange	4.41	0.650	3
Q14	Tourism facilities meeting visitors (an educational experience)	4.34	0.720	6
Q15	Tourism improves quality of life	4.37	0.621	5
Q16	Tourism has increased availability of recreation facilities/ opportunities	4.37	0.663	5
Q17	Tourism improves understanding the image of different communities	4.44	0.658	2
Q18	Tourism improves quality of police protection	4.76	2.977	1

The results also show that there is a fairly strong and positive perception that tourism plays an essential role in encouraging international cultural exchange "tourism promotes cultural exchange" (mean= 4.41) and fostering touristic awareness among local residents to learn and respect other people from different religions and cultures "tourism improves understanding the image of different communities" (mean= 4.41). On the other hand, interaction with tourists makes them understand and deliver a clear image about the acculturation of the local community. Respondents strongly agree that "tourism increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits" (mean= 4.40). In fact, this is ascribable to their notice, that most tourists visit historical places when they come to Aqaba like Aqaba castle and old city. In addition, respondents agree that "tourism improves the quality of life" (mean= 4.37). This shows that the bulk of residents

works in the tourism sector and they bring a great deal of benefits from tourism, like tourism entrepreneurs and local tradesmen. As a whole, these results reveal that they have fairly strong positive perceptions towards socio-cultural impacts of tourism and believe that the interaction with the tourists enable them to enrich their cultural knowledge and exchange their local traditions and customs with people from different cultures.

In terms of environmental impacts of tourism, the results show that tourism plays a role in protecting the natural and cultural heritage resources in Aqaba and the more tourism development is in tune with the environment, the more residents will be satisfied with tourism management. The respondents show a conservative approach toward the issue (means average generally stated between 4.44 and 4.49) (Table 15). The table below shows that the highest means were for the items "Tourism improves the area's appearance" (4.57), and "Tourism preserves the natural environments and does not cause ecological decline" (4.41). This indicated that the residents are satisfied with the tourism management of the cultural and natural heritage resources in Aqaba city. Choi and Sirakaya (2005) confirmed that residents who positively perceive the environmental impacts of tourism will have more positive perceptions towards sustainable tourism development.

**Table 15: One Sample T-test / Role of tourism in protecting the natural and cultural heritage**

Natural heritage Impact:	Mean	Std	T	Sig.
Q9, Q11	4.49	0.527	147.859	0.000
Cultural heritage Impact:				
Q10, Q12 – Q18	4.44	0.611	126.049	0.000

The Jordan National Tourism Strategy 2011 - 2015 encourages collaboration between the governmental bodies (The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities); the nongovernmental organizations; local residents and tourism entrepreneurs to deal with the environmental issues that could threaten the cultural and natural heritage resources in Aqaba. The goal of the strategy is to guide stakeholders in working together to make the tourism industry in the Jordanian tourist destinations more beneficial, sustainable and competitive with the regional and international destinations.

Conversely, residents have also negative perceptions towards the impacts of tourism (environmental, economic

and socio-cultural), particularly the negative economic ones upon their quality of life. The residents did indicate that prices of land and housing (Mean= 4.82), the cost of living and property taxes (Mean= 4.57) and price and shortages of goods and services (Mean= 4.34) were increasing due to the development of tourism in their

community (Table 16). A study conducted by Korca (1998) supports the findings of this study as it indicated that the most negative impacts of tourism on the residents of Antalya, Turkey, were the increases in cost of land and houses, and prices of goods and services.

**Table 16: Means and standard deviations for items of negative tourism impacts on residents' quality of life**

Negative Impact:		Mean	Std	Rank
Q1	Tourism increases the price of land and housing	4.82	0.470	1
Q2	Tourism increases cost of living/ property taxes	4.57	0.582	2
Q3	Tourism increases price and shortages of goods and services	4.34	0.912	3
Q4	Tourism creates an increase in traffic congestion	3.75	1.333	4
Q5	Tourism increases noise pollution and litter	3.49	1.413	6
Q6	Tourism results in over-crowding	3.51	1.377	5
Q7	Tourism has increased drug trafficking	2.34	1.174	7
Q8	Tourism has increased prostitution	2.28	1.121	8
Q9	Tourism results in the creation of a phony folk culture	2.28	1.121	8
Q10	Tourism has increased alcoholism	2.25	1.090	9
Q11	Tourism has heightened tension between residents and tourists	1.95	1.054	10
Q12	Tourism results in an increasingly hectic community and personal life	1.86	1.145	11

Residents agreed that tourism has resulted in congestion, noise, and pollution (Mean= 3.49) causing inconveniences to local residents. In addition, tourism also has brought unpleasant overcrowding at the beaches, city centre and parks (M=3.51) which noticeably hinder the use of public transport and public spaces and may cause tension between residents and tourists. Brunt and Courtney (1999) pointed out that tourism could influence residents' way of life negatively. The results of this study reveal that the impacts of tourism change slightly the residents' daily life. The residents indicated a minor increase in drug trafficking (2.34), prostitution (2.28) and alcoholism (2.25). Furthermore, respondents argued that tourism has no heightened tension between tourists and residents (Mean= 1.95) and tourism has not increased hectic community and personal life (Mean= 1.86). Generally, the quality of life of residents was not decreased.

**Conclusion**

This study aimed to measure the residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts on their quality of life, and their support for tourism development in Aqaba city. In order to do that, a 35-item tourism impact scale was subjected to factor analysis. The results show that the residents perceived economic aspects of tourism impact more

favourably and agreed that "tourism increases employment opportunities". This may be because previously the tourism industry had become a strong and significant industry in Aqaba, and subsequently, residents have more income from selling their products to tourists and most of them work in hotels, as taxi drivers, and in restaurants. Residents also evaluated socio-cultural impacts of tourism positively. In general, findings from this study suggest that residents have higher perceptions about the positive impacts than the negative ones due to the benefits received from the growth of the tourism industry in Aqaba. Their positive perceptions were mostly influenced by an opportunity to earn greater income from tourism.

Although tourism has brought huge benefits, it also generates negative impacts to host communities as tourism increases prices of land and housing and increases local residents' cost of living such as food, water, and electricity bills. These are the negative impacts of tourism that have affected residents' quality of life directly. The study also identified whether there are any significant differences between demographic variables and residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts. The results of this study indicate that some demographic variables like residents' gender and age were not related to the perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the

residents of Aqaba city. On the other hand, resident marital status, educational level, and employment status have been shown to influence their perceptions towards socio-cultural impacts. Residents who were single, highly educated and unemployed perceived more positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism than others and better informed about tourist tendencies, as well as residents working in the tourism and hospitality sectors. In addition, residents' educational level, and employment status have an effect on residents' perceptions towards negative impacts of tourism on their quality of life. The results show that there are significant differences between every educational level and employment status on one hand and residents' perceptions towards negative impacts of tourism on the other. Highly educated and employed residents perceive more negative impacts of tourism upon their quality of life than others. Thus, the results suggest that the local tourism authorities should consider the perceptions of highly educated and employed residents to obtain their support for tourism development.

### **Recommendations Policy and Suggestions**

In view of the fact that Aqaba is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Jordan and local residents have so much to gain from the tourism industry, tourism must be developed in a balanced way by enhancing the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural benefits of the residents and mitigating the costs. Sustainability is not only about being self-sustaining, but also about being responsive to local community needs and concerns, recognizing their importance in the decision-making process. Thus, this study provides tourism planners, policy makers, tourism strategists, and tourism promoters with helpful information about residents' perceptions and evaluations of tourism impacts. This information can be used to identify those people supportive, or against,

tourism development. Then policymakers could formulate plans not only to gain residents' support for tourism development, but also to educate and prepare them as hosts to understand real tourists' culture and deal with them gently. Tourism education for cultural awareness is a persistent national need to illuminate the local community about ethics for tourism and culture on a regular base to create professionalisms in the tourism industry and efficiency in service delivery.

On the other hand, there is a need for social media campaigns about the cultural and natural heritage sites in Aqaba, so as to encourage internal demand for tourism and promote pride and ownership of their legacy. Such awareness also encourages local residents to respect other people from different religions and cultures and interact with them socio-culturally.

Public participation is inseparable to get residents' support for tourism development in Aqaba city. Extensive initiatives in place that involve local residents in the decision-making process should be launched, therefore policymakers must keep in mind that the intended goal of tourism development is a success for all stakeholders. Find ways to empower these stakeholders with diverse perspectives as key players in tourism development. "One size does not fit all" when the Aqaba Tourism Directorate comes to establishing and maintaining public participation and community partnerships.

Finally, Policy makers must disseminate information about the economic and socio-cultural benefits of tourism, as well as the best environmental practices, directly to local communities, shopkeepers, and tourism entrepreneurs. Use a wide variety of ways to make information about these benefits (for example, local success stories that based on innovative ideas and exemplary initiatives) available to stakeholders of tourism development.

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## آراء وتصورات سكان مدينة العقبة (الأردن) تجاه السياحة وتأثيرها في نوعية الحياة

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### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء آراء وتصورات السكان المقيمين في مدينة العقبة تجاه السياحة، وكيفية تأثيرها اقتصادياً واجتماعياً وثقافياً وبيئياً في نوعية حياتهم. وقد أجري مسح كمي على عينة عشوائية من مدينة العقبة. وتم تعبئة 295 استبانة من أصل 300 استبانة وزعت على المستجيبين، وهو ما يمثل معدل استجابة 98.3% لهذا الاستطلاع. ثم استخدم التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي باستخدام مقياس ليكرت ذو الخمس نقاط. وقد تبين أن سكان مدينة العقبة لديهم تصورات إيجابية أعلى من التصورات السلبية تجاه الآثار الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية للسياحة في العقبة، كما اتفقوا على أن السياحة تزيد من فرص العمل وتحسن الاقتصاد المحلي وتعزز التبادل الثقافي وتعزز الوعي السياحي. من ناحية أخرى، أثرت السياحة سلباً في نوعية حياتهم من حيث ارتفاع أسعار الأراضي وارتفاع تكاليف المعيشة. كما وجدت الدراسة أن السياحة قد أسهمت في تفاقم العديد من المشكلات، من مثل: الاختناقات المرورية وازدحام الناس. وجدت الدراسة أيضاً أن الحالة الاجتماعية والتعليم والعمل هي أكثر المتغيرات الديموغرافية التي تؤثر في آراء ومواقف سكان المدينة تجاه تأثيرات السياحة. بناءً على هذه النتائج، ناقشت الدراسة مجموعة من التوصيات والسياسات المتعلقة بالمجتمع المحلي والسياحة المستدامة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** آراء وتصورات السكان، تأثيرات السياحة، نوعية الحياة، التنمية السياحية، العقبة، الأردن.

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