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Assessment the feasibility of sustainable tourism in urban environments employing the cumulative linear model

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Abstract

Creating the sustainable tourism industry depends on achieving appropriate infrastructures which are directed at economic, social, and environmental purposes. A question is posed here: "How can we identify the development towards the sustainability of tourism?" In fact, a big obstacle in assessing this issue is lack of a calculation way with a mathematical logic to report about the sustainability. To do so, a list of human needs of the tourists is suggested for gathering a set of the tourism indices. These indices are extracted from the completed questionnaires by the tourists, the study of the tourists' need assessment, and also employment of Delphi technique and the categorization of needs of these people and the coordination of these indices with the sustainable development factors. To assess the amount of the sustainable tourism achievement and make the determined assessment indices operational, the cumulative linear model is employed. In this method, the urban sustainability results from assessing two distinct amounts. One of these amounts is the degree of satisfying each index, and the other is the relative importance of the index relative to other indices.

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Key words: sustainable development; sustainable tourism; sustainability indices; assessment indices; cumulative linear model

1. Introduction

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Undoubtedly, tourism is not a new subject for human mind. Traveling on earth is one of the human's activities which has been recorded in the history of human life. In the Maslow's needs pyramid, the need for travel and tourism is located on the top of the pyramid next to the needs such as the need for respect, knowing one's own personality, etc.[1] From 80s A.D. onwards, another viewpoint was introduced which regards the tourism as a right. This means that the leisure and travel are parts of the human right and the governments are responsible for administering this right.

Tourism with the annual income of about 1000 billion dollars in the world is one of the most important phenomena of the present century which in addition to removing poverty, expanding justice, and creating employment produces a high income and creates jobs for the poor people [2]. This industry which is the third important industry in the world after oil and automobile-making industries is an important element in advancing the social and cultural purposes in addition to its role in improving economic aspects and undoubtedly it's most significant effect is the closeness of human communities via cultural exchanges. Meanwhile, those countries with tourist attractions regarding the natural scenery, culture and the ancient civilization and historical and religious works possess good talents and capabilities in attracting the tourists. They can earn billions of dollars each year by an appropriate investment in different parts of this industry and retaining their place in the world.

In the 21st century, tourism is about to affect many of the geographical places and create a new spatial model in the different geographical areas.

In the present years, the sustainable development is introduced as a new method to be used by societies in order for them to think about the level of life, the social justice, and perseverance of the resources. [3] The expansion of the sustainable tourism is very essential due to its importance and the potential positive and negative economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental effects that it may have. Determining the criteria for the sustainable tourism and measuring the degree of its sustainability in the urban societies are important issues in this area.

2. Procedure

In this paper, to achieve the purposes of the research, the various aspects of the sustainable development and its role in the urban sustainability are first investigated. Then, after introducing different types of indices, the concepts of tourism and the sustainability in tourism are studied. Finally, after merging the indices of the urban sustainability which are resulted from the concept of the sustainable development with the tourism development indices, the meaning of the sustainable development is explained and the indices extracted from this meaning are assessed by the cumulative linear model. Indeed, these indices show an attempt for systematizing the current information about the environment and the tourism and assisting the better understanding of the relationship between the completion of the tourist's activity, its environmental effects, and eventually the collective and individual policies relating to it. Next, after specifying the position of each society concerning the sustainable tourism concept, planning is dealt with, and applying some strategies for enhancement of the sustainable tourism indices makes the improvement of the current conditions possible. Hence, the resulted process is a cyclic and continuous procedure over time to eventually achieve the sustainability of tourism. (Figure1)

3. The Sustainable Development

The sustainable development was first used in the book, the Limits to Growth, (one of the most influencing books in the 70s A.D.) and since early 90s, it was widely used in the urban planning and architecture. The subjects related to the sustainability of the modern models of the urban development have a longer history, though.

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