



Sustainable Tourism Impacts in the City of Madaba, Jordan

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Authors MMJ and AAS designed the study, wrote the protocol and supervised the work. Authors RJZ and ZAH performed the statistical analysis. Author MMJ managed the analyses of the study. Author AAS wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All of the authors managed the literature searches and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This paper assessed the indicators that presumably impact sustainable tourism in the region of Madaba, one of the most attractive sites in the Middle of Jordan. The indicators were classified into 5 subgroups and include managerial, economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. The methods of the study relied on structured questionnaires that were distributed over stakeholder and locals. The results show that the carrying capacity at the attraction sites is very high (high tourist flow in a small area). The wastewater, water and energy management is severely impacted as well

as transportation. The social impact is also very high and it is substantially contested by the inelastic cultural norms and tradition especially when tackling women inequality and empowerment.

Keywords: Sustainability; tourism; Jordan; Madaba.

1. INTRODUCTION

On an international level, attention to monitoring and evaluating sustainable tourism has been increased, and coupled with efforts on national and local policies, guidelines and codes as well as multiple conventions, programs, workshops and media coverage [1,2,3]. Local governments have become more aware of the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, societies and cultures. At the same time, the academic lexicon has been filled with huge number of related researches that primarily focused on how to find greener, and fairer alternatives that combat impacts [4]. In this regard, sustainable tourism refers to a tourism that succeeds in reducing the negative impacts or increasing the positive benefits on the environment, society and economy [5]. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defined sustainable tourism as the one that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for tourists and protecting the hosts regions [6]. Achieving sustainable tourism envisaged the management of all social, economic, and aesthetic resources where all the present needs could be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system [3].

Because tourism is a growing industry, it has brought several negative impacts on the natural and socio-cultural environment of countless tourism attractions [7,8,9]. Managing tourism based on sustainable principles ensures long term life quality for the local community as well as to the quality of visitor's experience [10,11]. Tourist destinations should be planned, prepared and experienced in the way that maintains the local community, their culture, environment and ecosystem while still being profitable [12]. There are many benefits of the social, cultural and environmental aspects of tourism including renovated recreational facilities, a wider offering of leisure activities, a cleaner community appearance, better preservation of historical buildings and cultural assets, and a better quality of life [13,14,15,16,17,18,19,9].

As the concept of sustainability expands into new territories, such as tourism, the need to

implement and develop indicators in practice are crucial for the developmental process and understanding the environmental, economic and social impacts. According to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), indicators are vital in the decision making process [20]. They serve as a guidance tool to simplify vast amounts of physical and social science knowledge to workable and manageable units of information for decision makers (*Ibid*). UNCSD [20] report "we measure what we value, and value what we measure". This is a reflection of the importance of indicators as a method to easily communicate ideas, thoughts and values. Moreover, they result in policy actions in response to problems highlighted by such indicators. Sustainable indicators measure any progress that attempts to achieve sustainable tourism goals and objectives, at the same time working as an early warning tool for potential environmental, social and economic damage [21]. The Brundtland Commission argues that measuring sustainability goes beyond economic issues, and should reflect the comprehensive approach that is the heart of sustainability in order to completely capture a true understanding of human well-being [21].

Sustainable indicators should take a more holistic approach to measurements, where the different aspects (environmental, economic, and social) that have impacts on a certain community are interconnected. In general, sustainable indicators can be distinguished from simple environmental, economic, and social indicators by the fact they are integrating, forward looking, distributional, and developed with input from multiple stakeholders in the community. During the process of selecting appropriate indicators, it is crucial to have a broad knowledge of indicators identified within literature [22].

The notion of sustainable tourism and its applications is still relatively new in Jordan, and when coupled with the absence of tourism impacts studies, sustainability may not be reached. As mentioned previously assessing the sustainable indicators of tourism may return in better economy and local community development [23]. This is very applicable in Jordan where attractions sites are distributed all

over the country with diverse types (scenic, archaeological, cultural, and religious, etc.). The city of Madaba is one of these attractive sites, which holds the value of being attractive to tourists in terms of religious, archaeological, scenic and cultural tourism. The impact of tourism has not been investigated and sustainability is far beyond the considerations of stakeholders and decision makers at the expense of the local community of the city. For this reason this study assesses the sustainable indicators in this city. Given the complexity of measuring sustainable indicators in Jordan due to the lack of available data and resources, multiple indicator systems were used to establish the database of the study.

1.1 Study Area (Madaba City)

Madaba city is one of the major tourism destinations in Jordan; it is accessible and located near many other significant tourism destinations such as Mount Nebo, Mukawir, Hammamat Main, Um Al-Rasas, and the Dead Sea. It is also about 20 minutes from the capital city of Amman. Madaba witnessed the presence of many civilizations: Moabite, Nabatean, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad. Its heritage is dated to at least 4500 B.C. Madaba's historic urban core includes the Saraya building and the Roman Catholic chapel of St. John [24] with many archaeological sites. During the Late Roman period Christianity gained its distribution in Madaba region, as it became the seat of bishop at least from the mid-5th century.

During the Ottoman period, Madaba witnessed major urban development especially after lands reform. This historical fabric of Madaba supports

the richness in the urban form of the city, which is characterized by a centralized morphological scheme meeting and melting on the historic core [24]. Accordingly, this represents the overlapping and co-existence of many archaeological sites in the city. One of the attractions at the city of Madaba is the famous 'Church of the Map' that contains the most preserved mosaic map of the holy land. There are religious buildings that are situated in the northwest quadrant of the historical core, which are attractive to tourists who are coming as pilgrimages. Additionally, the Burnt Palace, the Church of the Martyrs "Al Khadir", the Church of the Virgin Mary; and several other urban structures dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries such as the Houses of Twal, Jumean, Karadsheh, and Hamarneh families [25] are part of Madaba's historical core.



Fig. 1. Jordan map (Madaba Location)



Fig. 2. Aerial photo of Madaba shows its main ring road

Source: (MOTA, 2005)

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological framework that was followed to conduct this study is shown in Fig. 3. The questionnaires targeted various stakeholders in Madaba such as; enterprises, residents, visitors, and managers. The tourism impact indicators were divided into four main categories; management (sustainable tourism public policy, management in tourism enterprises, customer satisfaction, and information and communication), economy (tourism flow, enterprises' performance, quantity and quality of employees, health and safety, and tourism supply chain), society (social impact, tourist satisfaction, gender equity, accessibility, and local identity) and environment (transport impact, climate change, waste management, sewage treatment, water management, energy use, and biodiversity). These indicators were selected based on WTO manual for sustainable tourism indicators and other literary resources of similar studies; the criteria of selection took into consideration also the environmental and socio-cultural context of the study area. The questionnaires were developed after a thorough review of literature on tourism topics that include sustainable tourism public policy, tourism flow, social impact, and transportation impact [26,27, 28,29,4,22,30]. The sample targeted four main stakeholders (enterprises, residents, visitors and decision makers that are in charge of management as shown in Table 1.

The residents and the visitors (100 and 207 respectively) were selected randomly during the period of the study. The sample size of residents (no. = 100) was calculated according to the following formula:

$$ss = \frac{Z^2 * (p)(1 - p)}{c^2}$$

where

Z = Z value (1.96 for 95% confidence interval)

p = Percentage of picking a choice, expressed as decimal (0.5 in this study)

c = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (0.1 in this study)

The study was carried out during the period between March and October 2014. The collected data was analysed using the statistical software SPSS.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Almost half of the residents were satisfied with their involvement and their influence in the planning and development of tourism. A total of 8% of the tourism organizations used their own measures for environmental quality assurance. However, none of these organizations have sustainability reports according to international standards.

The results show that community commitment in Madaba was not found to be an antecedent of attitudes to tourism probably because there is a substantial involvement of the local community in this industry. However, residents' satisfaction is an important determinant of perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism [31,32]. Consequently it is necessary that the local community support future tourism development and maintain its robust growth [33]. On the other hand, the majority of the visitors (87%) were satisfied with their experience during their stay in Madaba (see Table 2 for the number of visitors). About 84% of them expressed their willingness to recommend Madaba to their friends and families. And 82% agreed that their experience in the Madaba was up to their expectations. Tourists' satisfaction plays an important role in the survival and future of any tourism products and services [34]. Satisfaction is more an evaluation than an attitude and is a complex construct [35,36], which contributes toward a positive impact in the area of Madaba as the results show. Regarding communication in the study area, a total of 76% of businesses (50 enterprises: 12 entertainment, 10 hotels, 25 restaurants and 3 other types of enterprises) communicate their sustainability efforts to visitors.

The results showed that the number of tourist nights per month in the last year was 1929 nights. The relative contribution of tourism to Madaba's economy was accounting for approximately 13% of its total GDP. The number of 'same day' visitors in high and low seasons was not included in the tourism statistical initial bulletin prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) for the period from January–March, 2013 and 2014. Yet, it was showed that the total number of tourists in Madaba in the high season during the period between April-May was increased in 2014.

According to MOTA (2012), the average length of stay of tourists in 2014 (Jan-Sep) was 1.95 days, in 2013 was 1.91 days and in 2012 was 1.4 days.

An average of 1.8 hours was spent by same day visitors for the year 2014. Eight enterprises, 8 hotels, and 17 restaurants were involved in the managements/cooperative marketing at the site (Table 3). Shorter stays represent greater administration costs for enterprises in tourism industry; the economic impact of tourism on destinations depends to a large extent on the

length of stay [37] because the tourist product must adapt itself to the amount of time the tourist has available at destination [38]. Two days of stay as in the case of Madaba is relatively long compared to similar attraction sites in the country, which means a positive economic impact. This is also supported by the number of arrivals to hotels at the study area.

Table 1. Targeted organizations

Stakeholders	The number of distributed questionnaire	
Enterprises	Entertainment	12
	Hotels	10
	Restaurants	25
	Others	3
	Total	50
Residents		100
Visitors		207
Management	Three Main Organizations: Ministry of Tourism And Antiquities (MoTA); Department of Antiquities of Jordan (DoA); Greater Madaba Municipality(GMM)	

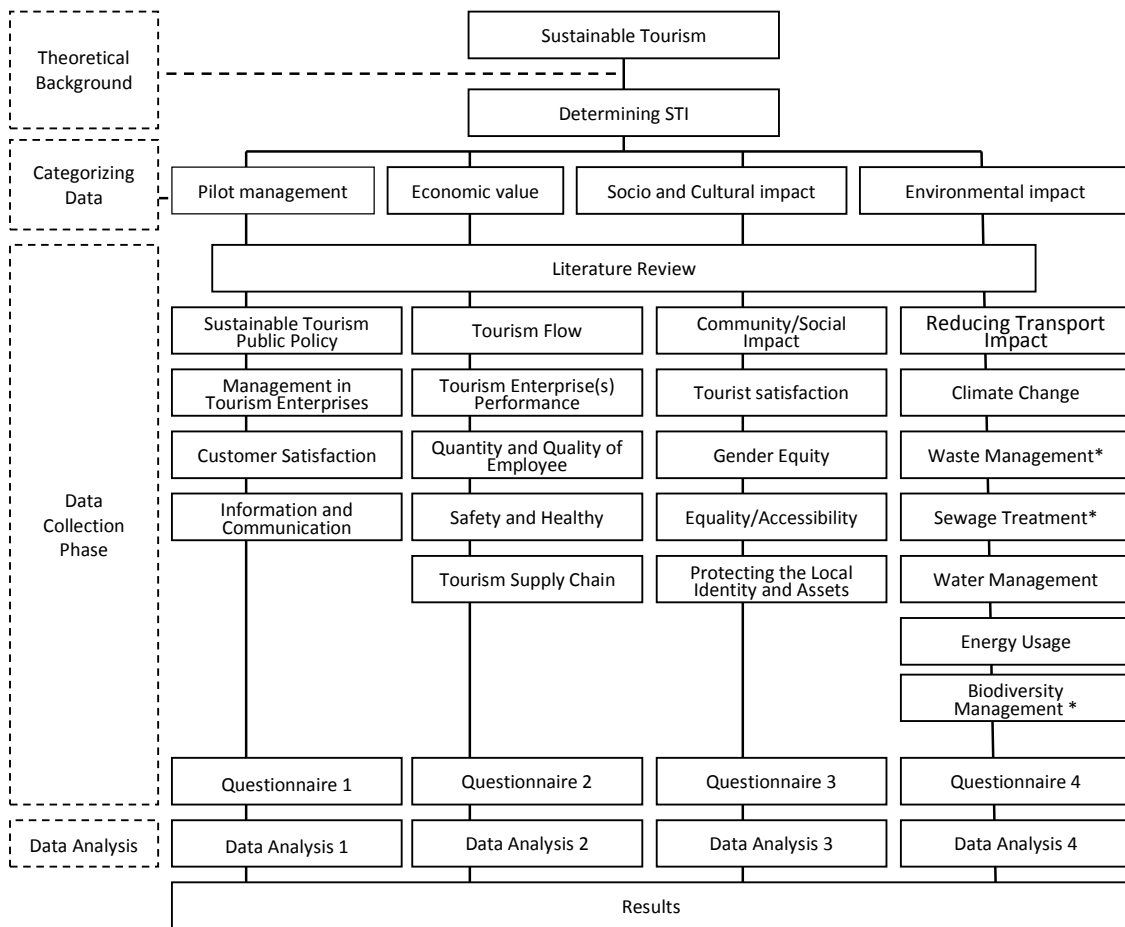


Fig. 3. The methodological framework
 (*) Unavailable indicators due to the lack of data

Table 2. The total number of tourists visited Madaba in the high season

Month	Relative change 13/14			2014			2013		
	Total	Jordanian	Foreign	Total	Jordanian	Foreign	Total	Jordanian	Foreign
January	10.2%	-50.0%	10.6%	1050	32	1046	952	64	946
February	17.1%	-42.9%	17.3%	1410	24	1407	1204	42	1200
March	11.4%	-5.9%	11.4%	2360	64	2354	2120	68	2113
April	17.1%	-57.1%	18.7%	3420	258	3394	2920	601	2859
May	28.8%	241.4%	28.2%	2880	198	2860	2236	58	2230
June	37.7%	64.7%	37.6%	1418	56	1412	1030	34	1026
Total	19.8%	-27.1%	20.2%	12539	632	12476	10463	867	10376

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2013-2014

Table 3. The involvement in the managements/cooperative marketing

Enterprise type	Involve in the managements / cooperative marketing		Do not involve in the managements / cooperative marketing	
	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage
Entertainment	8	66%	4	34%
Hotels	8	80%	2	20%
Restaurants	17	68%	8	32%
Other	0	0%	3	100%
Total	33	66%	17	34%

Table 4. Percentage of men and women employed in the various tourism enterprises

Tourism enterprises	Men		Women	
	Male number	Percentage	Female number	Percentage
Entertainment enterprises	21	55.26%	17	44.74%
Hotels	87	73.72%	31	26.28%
Restaurants	262	81.36%	60	18.64%
Others	2	66.67%	1	33.33%

About 82% of tourism enterprises are actively taking steps to source local, sustainable, and fair trade goods and services in Madaba. Madaba is covered by a policy that promotes local, sustainable and/or fair trade products and services. About 66% of tourism enterprises are sourcing a minimum of 25% of food and drink from local/regional producers. It is found that 44% of hotel residents are satisfied with tourism. The percentages of men and women employed in the various tourism enterprises in Madaba are shown in Table 4.

Based on the table above, there is a substantial disparity in gender employment in the study area. Previous studies rationalized gender disparity in tourism to the culture of tourism [39,40,41,42]. Tourism is a powerful cultural ground and process that shape and is shaped by gendered representations of places, people, nations and cultures [43]. In Jordan, the image about the transformation from women's social reproduction work to reproductive work is still static. Gender disparity in tourism in Jordan is attributed to the lower social status of women. The results of the study by [44] showed that the current social and

economic status of women in Jordan is already behind that of men, which brings challenges to women in the tourism sector. This is also supported by the percentages of men and women holding the position of 'general manager' in tourism enterprises in Madaba as shown in Table 5.

The gender disparity in Madaba, which is culturally constructed, lowered the average wages of women compared to that of men. The gross wages for men and women for the years 2012 and 2013 in all sectors are shown in the Tables 6 and 7 below (Statistics for the year 2014 are not available to the public yet).

A total of 100 residents were asked about the impact of tourism on the integrity of the identity of Madaba. Most of the reviewed respondents perceived tourism as improving and maintaining the identity of Madaba. However, place identities should be reconstructed to meet tourist desires but at the same time maintains authenticity and tradition [45]. The effect of tourism on identity is actually multi-factorial [46], which can either obliterate identity and local tradition [47,8] or

renaissance them [48,49]. At historical site of Madaba, the foreign market may contribute to identity loss although locals gain economic benefits [47].

There are different modes of transportation that have been used by tourists to reach the site. About 58% of the respondents reached Madaba using rental cars, 18% of them used public transportation, 14% through travel agencies and only 10% used taxi. The average travel distance by same day visitors within the site is estimated to be 2 km. The area of Madaba is very small which is vulnerable to tourist overuse and overdevelopment, which possesses extra burdens on the carrying capacity of the site [50]. During high seasons, road congestion and pollution is increased which impacted the local environment taking into consideration that the infrastructure at the site is modest. Previous studies show that transportation at destination sites may impact the ecology, degrade the destination, affect tourist experience and economy [51], which is actually the case in the city of Madaba.

None of the enterprises are involved in climate change mitigations schemes in any of its forms. There are currently no climate change adaptation strategies or planning conducted by any

governmental or non-governmental organizations.

The data regarding the waste volume produced by Madaba or the volume of recycled waste is unfortunately not available, which needs cooperation from the Municipality of Madaba in the future. However, the study shows that only 8% of tourism entertainment enterprises are separating different types of waste and none of the hotels, restaurants or other enterprises is actually considering this issue. Data on the percentage of sewage treated at a secondary level prior to discharge in the pilot site is not available and could not be gathered from surveys. The percentage of commercial accommodation connected to central sewage system and/or employing tertiary sewage treatment is not available. However, tourists consume water 20 times more than the residents per night in most Jordanian touristic destinations, such as, Madaba. The percentage of tourism enterprises in Madaba that have switched to low-energy lighting is 94%. Only 4% of the enterprises used renewable sources of energy. There are currently no plans for the protection, conservation, and management of local biodiversity and landscapes. In addition there are no biodiversity management and monitoring plans or even measures to combat light and noise pollution.

Table 5. Percentage of tourism enterprises where the general manager position is held by a woman or man

Tourism enterprises	Men		Women	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Entertainment enterprises	8	66.67%	4	33.33%
Hotels	9	90%	1	10%
Restaurants	20	80%	5	20%
Others	2	66.67%	1	33.33%

Table 6. The gross wages for men and women in all sectors for the year 2012

Pilot area level (above 15 years old) 2012									
<111.1 euros		111.1- 221.1 euros		222.2- 332.2 euros		333.3- 554.4 euros		>555.5 euros	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0.7	2.2	10.9	16.8	27	27.8	52.8	47.6	8.6	5.6

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Table 7. The gross wages for men and women in all sectors for the year 2013

Pilot area level (above 15 years old) 2013									
<111.1 euros		111.1- 221.1 euros		222.2- 332.2 euros		333.3- 554.4 euros		>555.5 euros	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0.9	1.3	5.9	10.1	25	20.2	56.8	60.7	11.5	7.7

Source: Ministry of Tourism

4. CONCLUSION

The study assessed five categories of sustainable tourism impacts and includes managerial, economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. Unfortunately some of the subcategories were not assessed because of the unavailability of data and/or a measure, and include (waste management, sewage treatment, and biodiversity management). Therefore, the study recommends that the Municipality of Madaba initiate measures regarding waste and sewage quantities estimation on a monthly scale, where estimations can be used to forecast future quantities and then proper management. The carrying capacity of the site is very high (i.e.: the very high tourist flow in a small geographical area), which possessed further demands on water, wastewater and energy management plans that may contribute to better sustainability. The situation is aggravated in summer due to the massive tourist flow, where the stay reaches approximately 2 days. Most of the tourism enterprises have very good measures of safety but needs to be upgraded continuously. The transportation impact is very high in the city mainly due to extensive use of rented cars by tourists and the modest infrastructure. There were no measures to combat climate change in this particular region of the country. On the social level, the city is almost like any other Jordanian city, where the norms, tradition and culture are predominating over the collective behaviours of the residents and how they deal with tourism in general and visitors in particular. Women are still treated with inequity in the tourism sector, which consequently interferes with the visitors' attitudes, interactions and stay at the city of Madaba. Sustainable tourism in the city of Madaba is severely impacted due to nature of the site as a geographically-restricted site and at the same time as a culturally driven site and people.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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