

**RESIDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMPACTS FROM
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ANZALI WETLAND,
IRAN**

**By
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for the degree of
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my roots, My Beloved Father, My Patient Mother and My Precious Brothers (Milad and Mehrdad).

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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SIKAP PENDUDUK TERHADAP IMPAK DARIPADA PEMBANGUNAN PELANCONGAN DI ANZALI WETLAND, IRAN

ABSTRAK

Kawasan tanah lembap memperlihatkan manfaat dan kelemahan unik dari sudut sosial, ekonomi dan alam sekitar, pada skala kebangsaan dan global, terutamanya di negara-negara membangun. Perubahan dalam bekalan sedimen dan sistem ekologi merangsang kepelbagaian kontinum kawasan tanah lembap: kawasan kekal banjir, kawasan banjir bermusim dan kawasan kering. Di Iran, organisasi-organisasi yang berkaitan menyuarakan kebimbangan terhadap proses sedia ada perancangan dan pembangunan pelancongan kawasan tanah lembap. Sekalipun isu ini diberikan penekanan oleh Konvensyen Ramsar, dokumentasi yang kurang meluas telah menyukarkan pemahaman konteks asal-usul, pembangunan dan ciri-ciri kawasan tanah lembap. Tesis ini mengkaji isu pembangunan pelancongan kawasan tanah lembap di Iran melalui pemahaman mengenai sikap penduduk tempatan berdasarkan tiga dimensi. Data berkaitan sikap penduduk adalah penting dalam menafsir ciri-ciri proses pembangunan kawasan tanah lembap yang pelbagai. Dimensi sosio-budaya melibatkan peningkatan dalam kemusnahan kawasan tanah lembap dan komunikasi terhad antara masyarakat tempatan dan pihak berkuasa, sehubungan dengan pengurusan pemuliharaan. Dimensi ekonomi termasuk hubungkait antara pencemaran, penurunan peluang pekerjaan dan peningkatan kos sara hidup. Dimensi alam sekitar dikaitkan dengan pembinaan infrastruktur dan tebus guna kawasan tanah lembap bagi tujuan pertanian and penebangan hutan (akibat projek-projek yang kurang efektif). Tesis ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif di mana bancian penduduk

telah dilakukan bertujuan mengkaji sikap penduduk tempatan ke atas kesan pembangunan pelancongan kawasan tanah lembap Anzali dan mendalami persepsi ke atas perubahan masyarakat. Selanjutnya, sebanyak 445 borang soal selidik telah dianalisis oleh 'Partial Least Technique'. Hubungan positif dapat dilihat antara kesan tanggapan (merujuk kepada aspek-aspek sosio-budaya, ekonomi dan alam sekitar) dan sikap penduduk terhadap pembangunan pelancongan kawasan tanah lembap Anzali. Tesis ini juga mengenalpasti ketiadaan model komprehensif bagi memahami sikap penduduk berhubung dengan isu pendapatan, pembangunan kemudahan dan pencegahan pencemaran; yang mana perbezaan antara pendapat dan idea adalah dibentuk oleh ciri-ciri demografi. Penekanan terhadap kesedaran alam sekitar oleh pengurus dan perancangan pelancongan adalah perlu di samping melaksanakan tanggungjawab dalam mengurangkan kesan pembangunan pelancongan kawasan tanah lembap Anzali. Tesis ini memperlihatkan saling hubungkait antara sikap penduduk dan pelan pembangunan kawasan tanah lembap yang berkesan. Lebih khusus lagi, hasil kajian tesis ini akan menyumbang kepada kesedaran ke atas kapasiti kawasan tanah lembap Anzali yang seterusnya merangsang kepada perangkaan penyelesaian/strategi/alternatif pragmatic dalam mencapai pembangunan pelancongan mampan. Sehubungan dengan ini, tesis ini mencadangkan agar indeks kesan pelancongan (ITI) yang mengambilkira faktor-faktor saiz keluarga, jarak dan jangkamasa kependudukan sebagai rangka kerja pembangunan pelancongan masa hadapan bagi kawasan tanah lembap Anzali.

RESIDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMPACTS FROM TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ANZALI WETLAND, IRAN

ABSTRACT

Wetlands draw unique social, economic and environmental benefits and costs, both on national scale and global scale, particularly in the developing countries. Variation in its sediment supply and ecological systems stimulates diversity in wetlands continuum from permanently inundates, to seasonally inundated and to ephemerally inundated. In Iran, the appointed bodies have expressed concerns regarding to the existing wetlands tourism development and planning process. Whilst the Ramsar Convention agrees that this issue deserves attention, however, given the little documentation, wetlands in Iran are poorly understood in the context of their origin, development and characteristics. This thesis examines one approach in dealing with Iran's wetlands tourism development: by understanding the local residents' attitudes from three dimensions. This thesis envisages intellectual capacity on residents' attitudes is crucial to the interpretation of wetland multi-layered characteristics governing its development process. The socio-cultural dimension involves increases in the wetlands destruction and poor communication between local communities and the appointed authorities, in relation to conservation management plans. The economic dimension includes the correlation between the pollution, decreases in employment opportunity and increases in living cost. The environmental dimension relates to facilities construction and development and land reclamation for agriculture and deforestation (which are caused by inefficient and ineffective projects). This thesis exercises the quantitative method to achieve the outlined aims and objectives where self-administered survey is employed to explore the local

residents' attitudes towards the Anzali wetland tourism impacts and perceptions on community changes. A total of 445 questionnaires have been which are analyzed using the Partial Least Squares. Positive and direct relationships were observed between the perceived impacts (refers to socio-cultural, economic and environmental constructs) and residents' attitudes towards the Anzali wetlands' tourism-related development. This thesis also identified the absence of a comprehensive model used to understand residents' attitudes in relation to tourism-related income, facilities development and pollution prevention; which differs depending on opinions and ideas that are shaped by demographic characters. At the heart of this lies the realization that managers and tourism planners should enhance their environmental-related awareness along with performing their responsibilities and capabilities to minimize the Anzali wetlands' tourism development impacts. Within this thesis knowledge, the findings have provided insights on the interconnectedness between residents' attitudes and a successful wetland tourism development plan. More specifically, the results will contribute to the stakeholders' awareness on the Anzali wetland capacity and in return, stimulates the creation of pragmatic solutions/alternatives/strategies in achieving sustainable tourism development. Against this background, this thesis proposes the Index of tourism impact (ITI) approach inclusive family size, distance and length of residency factors as the Anzali wetland future tourism development framework.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis offers insights on the tourism impacts on the Anzali wetland local community attitudes where it specifically focuses on the residents' attitudes, its limitation and shortcomings. Based on the literature review and observation on the secondary data, this thesis sets out a proposal for a new tourism development framework in the Anzali wetland, which located in the Caspian Sea in the northern Iranian province of Guilan.

Chapter one provides the general overview of this thesis where the remaining of this chapter is structured as follows. Section 1.2 gives a brief explanation on the research background and the progress of tourism development in Iran. Sections 1.3 and 1.4 present the research problem and research objective of this thesis respectively, followed by research questions in Section 1.5. Section 1.6 documents the research methodology (procedures) while Section 1.7 presents the thesis significance. Section 1.8 illustrates the thesis organization as well as the conclusion, correspondingly.

1.2 Research background

Tourism industry has long been viewed as holding the potential of positively influencing the local communities' economic activities (Ko & Stewart, 2002), by improving residents' quality of life and revitalise their experiences. Given the importance of comprehending the tourism factors that motivates and hinders local

communities' economic activities, therefore, successful tourism development and sustainability are depending on the support of local residents (Jurowski *et al.*, 1997). Additionally, tourism-related development is utilized by many communities as a means to improve the residents' quality of life (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Until recently, tourism industry's development and promotion are widely recognized and accepted as a positive economic step, particularly to the developing countries (Cooke, 1982).

In relation to the above discussion, Iran is chosen as the case study of this thesis based on its natural resources potentials (Ghafouri *et al.*, 2010) in the context of tourism development. Iran has prominent natural resources including 2800 km of coastlines (Caspian Sea, Oman Sea and Persian Gulf) and famous mountains such as Alborz and Zagros, which enhance Iran's tourism-related opportunities (Pak & Farajzadeh, 2007). Iran's tourism industry potential is further increased by the Caspian Sea availability as an all-year suitable and desirable tourism destination (Panow, 2007). Additionally, the Iran's climate which appear to have four concurrent yet separate seasons (Zamani-Farahani, 2010), is also viewed as an additional value to the country's tourism industry. The existence of diverse historical and heritage cultures documented by different areas in Iran serves as a pleasant combination for tourism destinations' options, choices and preferences (Panow, 2007).

According to above statements, the number of wetlands that has been registered to Ramsar convention¹ is 250 and they are highly seasonal (Ayaft *et al.*, 2000; Jafari, 2009). International experiences in relation to wetland conservation show that participatory planning and management approaches can be applied to achieve sustainable development in the following three dimensions: economic, social and

¹ The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) which is more commonly known thereafter as the 'Ramsar Convention'

ecological/environmental purposes. However, according to Rezaei (2003), the aforementioned instruments are yet to be implemented in preserving the Anzali wetland – the case study of this thesis.

With the size of 193 km², the Anzali wetlands which located in Guilan province on the southern part of the Caspian Sea (JICA, 2005c), was part of a major stream into the Caspian Sea where it was also connected to the other seaboard and European coastlines (Ghahremani & Attaar, 2003). A unique characteristic of the Anzali wetlands, one of the largest freshwater lagoons in the world, lies in its geographical settings between the saltwater and freshwater bodies of Iran (Kardovani, 1998). The peripheral villages of the Anzali wetland are included in all-encompassing plans for tourism development to revitalise the rural communities' socio-economic development. The fact that Anzali wetland is unrivalled in Iran presents its considerable potentials and capabilities, both local-wise and international-wise (Dadras & Kardovani, 2010). Therefore, understanding the local residents' attitudes towards impacts from tourism development is crucial for a successful tourism industry.

Understanding residents' attitudes is also vital in overviewing (socio-cultural, economic, and environmental) impacts from tourism development and implementing suitable strategies and policies to address local residents' needs and desires (Allendorf *et al.*, 2007). Attitude can be defined as an enduring predisposition towards people, behaviour and places, and these are usually structured based on three facets, namely the cognitive, effective, and conative, which are related to the tourism development's perceived knowledge and behaviour (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Considerable theories and models have been developed and applied to examine residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

Lankford (1994) and Murphy (1985) argue that the local residents' opinions towards preservation are derived from the consistent agreement between local leaders, residents, and professional experts. It is accomplished through the knowledge gained with regards to residents and locals' preferences, attitudes and practices. Observations and information on wetlands' resource allocation management and conservation impacts serve as significant indicators in providing insights on the relationship between residents and the protected areas such as wetlands.

Thus, this thesis attempts to address local residents' attitudes towards tourism development in the wetlands with regard to scrutinizing socio-demographic variables (family size, distance of tourism zone, length of residency) and the tourism impacts on socio-cultural, economics and environment. Additionally, this thesis seeks to study the attitudes of Anzali's local residents towards tourism development and the Anzali wetland of Iran. Subsequently, this thesis sets out a framework for the relationship between these variables.

1.3 Research problem

Tourism was criticized for its uneven distribution of negative and positive impacts in the lead to host destinations. Assessing the tourism impacts with regarding to the sustainability is to determine ways of development, for the benefit of both hosts and guests is a challenge for the tourism industry. On the other side, studies also show that tourism can cause negative impacts upon the social and culture, economy, and environment, culture and society in many destinations (Sharpley, 1999).

Accordingly, even studies on destination communities perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour in tourism have been conducted towards different perspectives, the dynamic and complex natures of the factors associated of destination communities,

particularly tourism stakeholders opinions regarding to the tourism development preferences and strategies to remove the major impacts have not been addressed yet in some ecological areas such as wetland areas in developing countries.

Thus, it is learned that the Iran's wetlands (which can be broadly categorized into the following provinces namely Caspian, Guilan, Mazandaran, Azerbaijan, Urmieh Basin, Khuzistan, Sistan, Fars, Persian Gulf and Oman Gulf) are being threatened by manufacturing, farming and urbanization activities. Additionally, the problems face by the wetlands are further worsened by environmental and social degradation issues caused by farming activities (Ahmadvand *et al.*, 2009) and war activities (Mansoori & Scott, 1995), which in return, resulted in overcrowding, erosion, and industrial industry as negative impacts (Pak & Farajzadeh, 2007).

Regardless the abovementioned issues, in general, the Anzali wetland exhibits notable development progress in tourism industry and tourism-related facilities. It is observed that studies documenting on the tourism development in the Anzali wetland are mostly focusing on ecotourism planning, ecological perspectives and management rules (Rezaie, 2003; Filizadeh 2006; Ramezani Gourabi & Foroughe, 2010; Ramezani Gourabi, 2010).

This research focuses on the Anzali wetland as a case study; which are separately analysed from the following perspectives:

Socio-cultural: Issues in this category include increased defamation of the wetlands area by tourism improper development plan; that resulted in further destruction of its flora and fauna, as well as a lack of quality feedback and comments between local communities and the appointed authorities, in relation to conservation management plans (CENESTA, 2012; JICA, 2005a). Based on personal interview with deputy director general on wetland and national parks of DOE; "Problems arise

due to difference in interests between residents and the government. Residents are move towards agriculture-based industry where the supportiveness propensity is directed towards agriculture activities. On the other hand, the government is looking forward to turn the wetland and social on tourists' destination where this in return, can contribute to the economy and social developments. In addition, 'due to residents' low awareness level, the government faces difficulty in educating the residents on wetland usage, in a wise manner'. He further stated that: 'the understanding of residents; attitudes will offer a great help in identifying their demands and needs'.

Economic: This category includes the correlation between the wetlands destruction and [1] decreases in local residents' tourism-related employment, [2] absence of local residents' non-tourism-related employment and [3] increases in living cost (CENESTA, 2012; JICA, 2005c).

Environmental: Issues are mostly related to infrastructures' construction and development (such as freeways, bridges, river routes, a canal on the river's margins and jetty for unloading petroleum products), in addition to land reclamation for agriculture and deforestation caused by projects that are managed inefficiently and ineffectively(CENESTA, 2012; JICA, 2005c).

Undoubtedly, understanding residents' attitudes with regards to the studied variables will help tourism planners and community leaders to develop an appropriate and desirable competitive advantage for the Anzali wetlands' future tourism development. Against this background, this thesis extends the tourism impact index employed by Ap and Crompton (1998) by doing the following: [1] introducing and testing new variables (attitudes toward positive and negative impacts of tourism), [2] testing the effects of residents' attitudes with the identified tourism

impacts (socio-cultural, economic, and environmental) variables and [3] testing the effects of residents' attitudes on general support for tourism development in the Anzali wetland.

The underlying problem of this thesis is a lack of a comprehensive model that is used to understand the residents' attitudes. Difficulty arises due to residents' opinions and ideas on tourism are formed and shaped by various factors. In line with this, the problem is approached by applying the structural models of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis aiming to fill the gap within the existing literature.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate *residents' attitudes towards tourism development* in the Anzali wetland.
2. To investigate *socio-demographic* factors associated with residents' attitudes toward wetland tourism impacts.
3. To establish a **comprehensive model towards tourism impacts** (socio-cultural, economic, and environmental) to understand the resident attitudes towards wetland tourism development in Anzali wetland which are divided by three major division:
 - To determine factors associated with *socio-cultural impacts* of residents' attitudes toward wetland tourism development.
 - To determine factors associated with *economic impacts* of residents' attitudes toward wetland tourism development.
 - To determine factors associated with *environmental impacts* of residents' attitudes toward wetland tourism development.

1.5 Research questions

Based on research the objectives, there are five research questions addressed by this thesis:

1. What are the *residents' attitudes (positive/negative)* towards tourism development in the Anzali wetland?
2. To what extent does the *socio-demographic* characteristic of residents effect their support on the Anzali wetland future tourism development?
3. Do *socio-cultural impacts* have relationships with the Anzali wetland tourism development toward residents' attitudes?
4. Do *economic impacts* have relationships with the Anzali wetland tourism development toward residents' attitudes?
5. Do *environmental impacts* have relationships with the Anzali wetland tourism development toward residents' attitudes?

1.6 Research procedures²

This thesis employs quantitative research technique where data/information on residents' attitudes is collected through questionnaire survey means. This thesis focuses on the local residents as its study population, while, the respondents consists of local community groups that are involved in the tourism development process. Respondents were asked to complete questionnaires with regard to their support of tourism development, in the context of present and future. Findings on residents' present and future attitudes derived from the questionnaire are compared using the PLS analysis, which are then used as a guide to develop criteria and strategies to propose the tourism development framework for this thesis.

² Chapter 5 provides further explanation of the research methodology of this study.

1.7 Significance of research

The results of this thesis are significant based on several fronts. Firstly, this thesis aims to provide a general review on tourism development and planning systems and their impacts on the natural environments in Iran.

Secondly, this study seeks to provide a general review of the theoretical and conceptual approaches to tourism development. In addition, it reviews the changes, if any, that occurred within these approaches where this may be influencing their policy implications for developing countries such as Iran. In Iran, destinations such as the Anzali wetland are considered vulnerable owing to the great volumes of tourists' arrival. The Anzali wetland has a population of 135,825 (Statistical Yearbook, 2010), thus, this thesis is also interested in investigating the effect of certain socio-demographic characteristics on attitudes. By understanding the original purposes of wetlands tourism development, it increases our understanding about the motivations and actions of relevant environment policy makers, managers, and governments' during the decision making process.

Thirdly, this thesis aims to analyse the influence of certain socio-demographic characteristics studied (family size, distance from tourism zone, length of residency) and the impacts of tourism development on reducing the negative impacts of tourism (socio-cultural, economic and environmental), at different levels. This analysis is divided into two major parts:

1. Binomial testing to analyse positive and negative effects on the study population in Anzali.
2. Smart- Partial Least Squares (PLS) of the influence of variables (The exogenous variables on socio-cultural, economic, and environmental perceptions) and (The

effects of the endogenous variables on residents' future attitudes on tourism supportiveness) on perceptions and attitudes of the wetlands population.

Finally, According to Ap (1992), the interconnection between residents, tourist, and tourism development supportiveness can be examined using the social exchange theory (further explained in chapter3). Thus, sociocultural, economic, and environmental perspectives within this study knowledge perceived tourism impacts can enhanced the Index of Tourism Impact (ITI). In the context of this study, the ITI discussed relates to residents that are affected by the studied sociodemographic indicators (family size, length of residency, and distance from tourist zone).

The outcomes of this thesis may help in explaining both residents and tourists' demands and needs, which in return, might provide assistance in terms of the future strategies organization for sustainable tourism development in wetlands areas, particularly the Anzali wetland.

1.8 Research organization

Organization of this thesis and its results are documented as follows:

Chapter 1 identifies the gaps between the current state of relevant knowledge and the contributions of this thesis. Moreover, it provides insights on this thesis's objectives, problem statement, research questions as well as the organization of this thesis.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of tourism development and tourism impacts in the developed countries generally and the developing countries specifically; and summarizes the process and its limitations. More importantly, it discusses the local communities and their attitudes with the proposed conceptual framework for future tourism development in Anzali wetland. In addition, previous studies and empirical

research summary on residents' attitudes with referring to attitudes changes in tourism development and planning are presented. In general, this chapter gives a broad overview on tourism development, particularly on residents' attitudes and their perceptions towards it.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical studies and theories pertaining to tourism development and residents' attitudes. In particular, Chapter 3 serves the purpose of structuring the conceptual framework of this research.

Chapter 4 describes the history of tourism development in Iran. The discussion focuses on the role of local communities in tourism growth. Chapter 4 also reviews the progress of tourism development in the Anzali wetland area and at the same time examines the changes brought by the tourism industry to that area.

Chapter 5 explains the research methodology employed by this research where it discusses the underlying reason in adopting the quantitative research technique. Here, detailed explanations are provided for the following subjects, namely sampling process, fieldwork procedures employed, data collection framework and data analysis procedural steps.

Chapter 6 reveals this thesis observation on database and results of data analysis regarding residents' attitudes on the impacts of tourism development by using *Smart-PLS technique*.

Chapter 7 depicts the discussion on Chapter 6's findings where the organization of the findings is done based on the justification of the hypotheses, which is stimulated by PLS.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusions and policy implications of the research, which include recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

RESIDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMPACTS FROM TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

People, their thoughts and reactions are generally known to be keeping abreast with the surroundings changes. More than ever, individuals pay attention to the important changes that has occurred and is occurring within their immediate surroundings. Therefore, the understanding of residents, their perceptions and their reactions are crucial to the interpretation of the Anzali wetland future tourism development supportiveness; and in addition to scrutinizing the gravity of residents' characteristics affecting the local community development

Chapter 2 discusses the residents' reactions towards tourism development within their respective areas where this thesis scrutinizes both attitudes and perceptions regarding to socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts. Section 2.2 elaborates on tourism development in the developing countries and its importance in wetlands areas, while Section 2.3 highlights the impacts of tourism development of the wetland areas in the developing countries as well as reviews the tourism impacts' typology (socio-cultural, economic and environmental). Section 2.4 assesses on the residents' attitudes on tourism impacts with specific attention on evaluating the similarities between Iran, the developed and developing countries. Section 2.5 looks at two subject matters that are empirical studies related to socio-demographic characteristics (residents' socio-demographics' attitudes) and the interrelation between tourism impacts and attitudinal studies. Section 2.6 concludes

Chapter 2 by identifying and justifying the principal discussion that supports the residents' attitudes towards tourism development and its impacts.

2.2 Tourism development in the developing countries

Accessibility to and availability of information has stimulated the developing countries communities' knowledge and awareness level on their natural resources value. Both knowledge and awareness level are further influencing the residents' beliefs and attitudes (in relation to socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors) towards protecting their valuable natural resources. In wetlands tourism development context, considerable studies on various aspects are readily available, including local communities' attitudes and their influence on tourism (Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Murphy, 1985; Ross, 1992; Thomason *et al.*, 1979), in socio-demographic characteristics (Nyaupane & Thapa, 2006; Spears & Boger, 2003; Teye *et al.*, 2002; Tosun, 2002; Walpole & Good Win, 2001); and living distance as a socio-demographic characteristics (Gursoy & Jurowski, 2002; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004).

The developing countries' tourism industry growth plays a significant role in economic-related development especially in accommodation, transportation, hospitality, services and leisure industries (Marzuki, 2011). In contrast to these positive impacts, tourism development has involuntary plays a precursory role in developing negative impacts on socio-cultural, economic, and environmental aspects in each tourists destination, particularly in the developing countries. These impacts include inflation, cultural degradation, increase in land prices, high leakage of economic benefits, cultural degradation, introduction of exotic species to local fauna

and flora, damage of heritage sites, environmental pollution through waste and sewage disposal (Sasidharan *et al.*, 2002).

According to Honey *et al.* (2010), tourism industry and its management system differ across countries. Costa Rica for instance, practices government-based authority to implement and to exercise the tourism policy. Nicaragua on the other hand, manages its tourism industry by involving various organizations in the development plan that is multi-layered structured. Although, the significant impacts of practiced system that is “best practice” for sustainability on tourism development can come with this example in Lisbon that is conservatively designed to encourage tourists’ motivation and to increase tourists’ arrival to least preferred tourism destinations, with specific attention is given to the length of stay (Russo & Borg, 2002).

Accordingly, a part of the development and sustainable development parental concepts are envisaged as a fitting adaptive paradigm (Tosun, 2001) to be implemented by the appointed bodies of sustainable tourism development. These parental concepts are recognized as holding the ability in meeting the tourists’ demands and needs and at the same time providing opportunities to economic growth enhancement, quality of life improvement and protection to residents’ physical environment/location; of which, are achieved through tourism development and environmental quality coexistence (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). The signification of these statements’ contribution lies in the fact that it determines the parental concepts’ specific principals (Tosun, 2001). Against this background, sustainable tourism development is “*accepted as all kinds of tourism developments that make a notable contribution to or, at least, do not contradict the maintenance of the principles of development in an indefinite time without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs and desires*” (Tosun, 1998, p. 596).

The developing countries' tourism development concept can be broadly encapsulated into three main pillars, namely nature-based tourism (else known as eco-tourism), coastal tourism and heritage/cultural tourism (Lumsdon & Swift, 1998).

Considerable studies documenting on the relationship between local communities' attitudes and tourism development, in the developing context, are readily available including Iran (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2012; Mohammadi *et al.*, 2010; Rastegar, 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2008), Egypt (Eraqi, 2007), Jordan (Alhammad, 2012), Vietnam (Pham, 2012) China (Cottrell *et al.*, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2010; Zhong *et al.*, 2008), Malaysia (Marzuki, 2010, 2011), Uganda (Lepp, 2007), Ghana (Teye *et al.*, 2002) and São Vicente (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2012). Although the importance of tourism development and their impacts on local communities was well recognized, the abovementioned studies highlight the necessity to pay more attention to various constrains which are referring to the developing countries' rural communities, wetland communities, tourism support, management development, cost and benefits of tourism impact, with the main focus given to studying the significant tourism impacts to local residents and local communities.

Wetlands are some of the most productive and biodiverse ecosystems which houses extraordinary cultural, economic, and environmental values, and have be received international recognition (Whitten *et al.*, 2002; DSE, 2007). A positive shift in the residents' attitudes towards wetlands is established as a motivation factor in promoting wetland development that prioritize wetland sustainability and functionality (Dobbie & Green, 2013). There are many studies in the developing countries reporting significant relationship between benefits experienced and residents' positive attitudes towards conservation projects in areas including

wetlands (Studsrod, & Wegge, 1995; Walpole & Goodwin, 2001; Goodwin, 2003; Mbaiwa & Sronza, 2011). It is believed that inaccessibility to economic benefits has influenced residents' negative attitudes towards tourism development. The negative attitudes are further motivated by the realization that tourism conservation projects holds the possibility of inducing natural resources destruction and endangering the wildlife population (Mehta & Kellert, 1998; Ite, 1996; Fiallo & Jacobson, 1995 cited in Mbaiwa & Sronza, 2011).

According to Sah and Heinen (2001), wetlands' natural resources management in Ghodaghodi (Nepal), which consists of diverse forest types that are deemed valuable by people who displaying various attitudes patterns, are focusing on both indigenous people and the migrants. Observation detects positive attitudes towards conservation by both indigenous people and the migrants where these attitudes are strongly related to the following factors: educational level, natural resources usage purposes and more importantly, areas' demographic conditions as well as natural resources management.

In another study, Dimitrakopoulos *et al.* (2010) seek to sought Greece wetlands' (The National Park of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Wetland of Kalloni, and Lake Tavropou) management-related issues and alternatives as well as natural-related problems, from the environmental awareness context. Findings indicate the protected areas supportiveness is stimulated by sound knowledge on environmental issues which then leads to participatory management; where this is induced by physical distance to environmental and natural settings. Additionally, the positive management stance is learned to be initiated by economic benefits experienced.

Against this background, it is within this thesis interest to emphasize the importance of appropriate wetlands management and planning guidelines in the Anzali wetlands, especially laws and policies that prioritize public-related aspects. In this view, this thesis proposes to investigate the Anzali wetland's local population's attitudes and perceptions, from the tourism perspective. The rationalization of undertaking the research lies in the limited number of studies readily available and more specifically the lack of well-established studies that examines the role of tourism in understanding residents' attitudes towards protected areas such as wetlands (Mbaiwa & Sronza, 2011; Lee, 2013).

2.2.1 Issues of the protected or conservation areas with tourism development in the developing countries

Countries with high dependence level on nature-based tourism industry (serves as the major income generator) are becoming more concerned with environmental and socio-cultural setbacks/disadvantages, which usually associated with tourism industry that is unsustainable and poorly organized. Against this background, practical and sensible solutions/approaches are pressingly in demand to address the issues more effectively, in addition to promoting pragmatic sustainable tourism development framework. By doing so, it enables the possibility of structuring a well-established natural resources' planning and management system, which might resulted in enhancing the conservation's ideas and implementation (Gössling, 1999).

Table 2.1 presents studies that specialize on protected areas and natural area destinations where specific attention is given to policies, performances, impacts and residents' perceptions. Findings are used as the underlying guidelines in measuring possible solutions/approaches to overcome the issues/threats caused by and

associated with environmental impacts, to improve and to enhance the outcomes projection with regards to socio-cultural concerns. This in return, will provide assistance in addressing the local communities' demands, needs and issues.

Table 2.1 Summaries of empirical studies of tourism & protected areas in the developing countries

Author(s)	Date	Location	Scope of the study
Ross	1992	China	Applying environmental policies in developing countries with negative attitudes towards tourists
Mathieson & Wall	1996	Europe	Poor environmental management can ultimately destroy tourism
Lindbergh & Enrique	1997	Belize	Economic performance of tourism in protected areas
Ames & Keck	1997	Latin American (Brazilian States)	Applying environmental policies in developing countries
Vyas & Reddy	1998	India	Applying environmental policies in developing countries
Walpole & Goodwin	2001	Komodo National Park, Indonesia	Recognized the impacts of protected area tourism
Tosun	2001	Turkey	Challenges to sustainable tourism development in developing countries
Mbaiwa	2005	Okavango Delta, Botswana	Wildlife resources, protected areas with negative perceptions of resident communities of wildlife conservation
Mbaiwa & Stronza	2011	Okavango Delta, Botswana	Changes in resident perceptions from being negative to positive in conservation area and tourism

The absence of environment-related legislation and relevant policies within the developing countries' enforcement systems has led to low acceptance level on cost-intensive strategies that are planned to address issues related to environment, social and economic aspects (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2011; Mbaiwa, 2005; Tosun, 2005; Walpole & Goodwin, 2001). Tourism-related appointed authorities are thus dependent on tourists' awareness and consideration to ensure the protected areas vitality in addition to assist in reducing the tourism negative impacts (Hearath, 2002).

Having addressed the developing countries' tourism development characteristics, the following section presents the characteristics of tourism development impact.

2.3 Impact from tourism development

Literature review pertaining tourism research which can be principally dated back as early as 1960, was observed to be focusing on positive and negative impacts from 1960s to 1970s, meanwhile, these impacts (positive and negative) were balanced with positive and negative impacts of tourism (Jafari, 1987). Early studies showed that tourism brought about net economic benefits to the host destinations (Theobald, 1998; Ko & Stewart, 2002), in addition to concentrating on recognizing the different perceived effect of tourism development (Thomason *et al.*, 1979; Allen *et al.*, 1988; Ross, 1992; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Andereck & Vogt, 2000).

Impact studies emerged in 1960s, emphasized on economic growth as a form of national development, measured in terms of "Gross National Product (GNP)," the multiplier effect, and rate of employment (Krannich *et al.*, 1989). The impacts of tourism ventures on social-cultural issues were seeing in the 1970s (Bryden, 1973). Environmental impacts of tourism became the sole concern of tourism researchers in the 1980s (Butler, 1980). By 1990s, tourism impact studies were an integration of the effects of the previous determined impacts, leading to a shift from "Mass Tourism" to "Sustainable Tourism" in the form of heritage tourism, Community tourism, and Eco-tourism (Jurowski *et al.*, 1997).

Tourism impact terminology, which has been recognized as important tourism literature pillar (Ko & Stewart, 2002), is broadly categorized into social, environmental and economic impacts (Williams, 1979; as cited in Gu & Wong, 2006). According to Jurowski *et al.* (1997), tourism impact studies involves the act

of judging and determining the tourism impacts; where this in return serves as the underlying guideline to review other forms of sustainable tourism namely ecotourism, community tourism and cultural tourism.

Dogan (1989) and Nunkoo and Juwaheer (2009) suggest that socio-cultural dimensions' positive and negative impacts differ across countries and more importantly, it is strongly interconnected to community's responses and adjustments to tourism industry generally and to local tourism destinations particularly. The gravity of responses' intricacy develops proportionately to tourism's destinations and activities growth where this might lead to conflict of interests between tourism stakeholders (government, private organizations, local communities and international tourists), nevertheless, it contributes to the shaping of interests (refers to groups and characteristics) within the community (Dogan, 1989).

According to Ko and Stewart (2002), host residents' perception aspect is gaining in popularity and in importance, and given the unique characteristics observed within and across communities combined with changes in communities' characteristics, the studies' database is in need of constant update. Table 2.2 shows the readily available studies that measure the attitudes and effects of tourism development in various areas.

Table 2.2 Empirical studies of residents' attitude towards tourism development since 2000

Author(s)	Date	Country	Place
Mason & Cheyne	2000	New Zealand	Rural areas
Ko & Stewart	2002	Korea	Jeju Island
Mc Gehee & Andereck	2004	United States	Arizona
Haley <i>et al.</i>	2005	United Kingdom	Bath
Kuvan & Akan	2005	Turkey	Belek, Antalya
Andereck <i>et al.</i>	2005	United States	Arizona (a southwest US state)
Gu & Wang	2006	China	Dachangshan Dao, North-East China
Eraqi	2007	Egypt	-
Gu & Ryan	2008	China	Beijing
Mohammadi <i>et al.</i>	2010	Iran	Kermanshah
Zhou	2010	Macao	Fomula-3 car racing Grand Prix
Marzuki	2011	Malaysia	Langkawi Islands
Chuang	2011	Taiwan	Rural areas
Prayag <i>et al.</i>	2012	UK	Olympic Games in London
Vareiro <i>et al.</i>	2012	Portugal	Guimarãe

From Table 2.2, it is learned that studies undertaken give specific attention to aspects of models, methodologies, and analyses, in empirical studies; where the findings on residents' attitudes are then grouped demographically, in relation to the following aspects: number of family, distance of tourist zone from living area, length of residence and index of the tourism scale.

The following section will describe the studies with regard to the tourism impacts in three major aspects.

2.3.1 Socio-cultural Impacts

Socio-cultural effects of tourism involve aspects such as the re-emergence of traditional crafts and ceremonies, awareness of the increased crime rate, intercultural communication growth and traditional culture transformation (Andereck, 1995).

Pizam (1978) looks at the social district of tourism impacts with specific attention is given to tourism negative impacts. Pizam's (1978) work plays a significant role in influencing and in directing tourism studies related to social-cultural impacts, in addition to stimulate scholars' recognition towards the relationship between socio-cultural impacts and local residents of the host community. Echoing Pizam's (1978) work, Pizam and Milman (1984) suggest a range of socio-cultural impacts classifications including occupational, demographic, cultural, transformation of customs, environmental impacts and adaptation of samples consumption.

The importance of addressing the socio-cultural impacts is further emphasized by Murphy (1985) who state that '*Social impacts more immediate changes in the social structure of the community and adjustments to the destination's economy and industry. While the cultural impacts focus on the longer-term changes in a society's norms and standards, which will gradually emerge in a community's social relationships and artifacts*' (Murphy, 1985, p. 117).

Jafari (1987) illustrates tourist places as entities that are subjected to and influenced by multi-layered and multi-faceted tourism phenomenon, thus, suggests an integrated six-attribute tourism model which then is employed for identifying and labelling studies areas purposes. Of importance, the studies areas identification process is undertaken in accordance to the socio-cultural aspects of tourism (Jafari, 1987). To Travis 1984 (cited in Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996, p. 504), differentiation and similarization between local tourism destinations contribute to classifying the tourism costs including changes in traditional ethics and political deterioration, commercialized host-tourist relationships, social unsteadiness, changes in the law and social arrangements, consumerism and host culture obliteration and debasement. Given the observed complex interconnection between local tourism

destinations and tourism impacts (refers to residents' social and cultural aspects), it is declared that tourism impact and tourism costs work generically yet uniquely on socio-cultural benefits. The socio-cultural benefits envisaged including positive cultural interchange and political modifications, social and amenity improvements, improved image of host community, education and conservation, improved public health, social change and choice, cultural development (modernization and exchange).

Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) who examine the role of women and young adults in economic and social aspects from the tourism impacts perspective, found that the studied groups' attitudes vary and fluctuate depending on the economic dependency level and the perceptions on tourism industry (theoretically and conceptually). According to Ap (1990; 1992), the theoretical direction demonstrates the social exchange model for predicting the residents' attitudes. Literature review has presented considerable number of reports on social and cultural impacts including Jafari (1974; 1987), Dogan (1989), King *et al.* (1993), Ap (1990), Brunt and Courtney (1999), where according to Travis (1984, cited in Gu & Wong, 2006), these impacts are generally classified into recreation opportunities, social instability, changes in law and social order, crime, historical value, traffic congestion, political modification, customer and traditional, and commercialized host-visitor relationship changes in the prevailing local norms.

Substantial studies have concentrated on host communities' attitudes and perceptions of the tourism impacts based on the socio-cultural opportunities, which are classified in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Literature on socio-cultural impacts of tourism studies

Author(s)	Date	Research Focus
Jafari	1987	To place the tourist
Haralambopoulos & Pizam	1996	Impacts of tourism, as perceived by the residents
Ap & Crompton	1998	Infrastructure support
McGehee <i>et al.</i>	2002	Personal characteristic variables
Andereck <i>et al.</i>	2005	Education and awareness
Haley <i>et al.</i>	2005	Benchmark
Dyer <i>et al.</i>	2007	Tourism impact perceptions and support of it
Azimi	2007	Living distance
Huttasin	2008	Job creation for women
Tsundoda & Mendlinger	2009	Perceived impacts of tourism on the lives of people
Mohammadi <i>et al.</i>	2010	Residents incentive to show their ancient heritage
Marzuki	2011	Cost & Benefit from tourism development, and Socio-economic effects from tourism development
Chuang	2011	Positive social impacts
Deery <i>et al.</i>	2012	'layers' of social impact understanding
Zamani-Farahani & Musa	2012	'Islamic Belief', 'Islamic Practice', and 'Islamic Piety'

Table 2.3 shows that studies undertaken give specific attention to tourist placement, infrastructure support, education, bench marketing, socio-demographic characteristics, presence the ancient heritage, Islamic (beliefs, practice, and piety). Findings reported by these studies are referred to gain insights on the underlying tourism development's social-cultural impacts as well as to understand tourism's costs and benefits, in general. This provides assistance in addressing the local communities' demands, needs and issues.

2.3.1.1 Positive impacts of tourism based on the socio-cultural dimension

There is a large volume of published studies describing the positive socio-cultural impacts. The following studies document the positive impacts with specific attention is given to residents attitudes:

Generically and logically, residents' support propensity is viewed to be more inclining toward positive cultural benefits (Lui & Var, 1986; McGehee & Andereck,