

Abstract

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Tourism as a tool of development: the case study of Siwa oasis - Egypt western desert

It is clear from analysing different reports of the Tourism industry that many of the challenges confronting the world's visitor attractions vary both in scale & nature according to their location & ecosystem. Tourism is generally regarded as less destructive to the environment than most other industries, nevertheless, its sheer size & widespread presence create negative physical & social environmental damage. Accordingly, tourism development literature highlighted tourism-ecology interactions & suggested the application of strong sustainability criteria. A case study of Siwa oasis, Egypt Western Desert, is considered a remote area, seeking to build a tourism industry depending on its resources. In fragile ecosystems such as Siwa Oasis, although natural & cultural attraction sites are not perceived solely as attributes, they are always valued through tourism developments. The aim of the research is to evaluate the present state of tourism in Siwa Oasis, to consider the prospects of tourism as a tool of development in the Oasis & to establish guidelines for a sustainable development approach. A field survey was conducted based on qualitative approach using unstructured interview tool, in order to investigate experts' opinions about the development of Siwa oasis as a tourist destination. The collected data was analysed using Qualitative content analysis technique. By attracting more tourists to the area, effective visitor attractions management techniques are essential to avoid and/or reduce the deterioration of Siwa's natural & cultural environments. Conclusions were focusing on the need to reassess tourism development process in Siwa, perceiving Siwa as a natural asset that needs to be preserved & confirming that as a result of overuse of resources it is important to discourage overdevelopment especially non ecological development projects. Keywords: fragile ecosystem, remote area, tourism development, sustainability, visitor management, Siwa oasis.