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Call for Papers

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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is an open access, peer-reviewed interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences. The Journal publishes original research and seeks to cover a wide range of topics regarding environmental management and engineering, environmental management and health, environmental chemistry, environmental protection technologies (water, air, soil), pollution reduction at source and waste minimization, energy and environment, modelling, simulation and optimization for environmental protection; environmental biotechnology, environmental education and sustainable development, environmental strategies and policies.

Authors are encouraged to submit high quality, original works that discuss the latest developments in environmental management research and application with the certain scope to share experiences and research findings and to stimulate more ideas and useful insights regarding current best-practices and future directions in Environmental Management.

Also, this journal is committed to a broad range of topics regarding Tourism and Travel Management, leisure and recreation studies and the emerging field of event management. It contains both theoretical and applied research papers and encourages obtaining results through collaboration between researchers and those working in the tourism industry.

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Awareness and Perception Toward Heritage, Life, and Tourism in Converting Tourism Area

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Abstract: The transformation of local areas to a tourism destination requires high awareness and perception of local community about the tourism activities and the consequences evolved of this involvement including the economic changes. This study examines the level of awareness of local communities regarding their role in the development of tourism in their city, particularly in rural areas since the transformation to a tourism destination was made by the governmental arrangements. A quantitative research approach was used. The population formed the local community of the city. A simple random sample composed of 700 citizens was selected to represent different community categories. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was measured through a pilot sample. The results show the high validity and reliability of the data collection tool. The findings indicate that citizens were satisfied with the tourism development but expressed concern about its impact on their culture and privacy. The level of participation was found to be insufficient due to a lack of awareness of their role in the process. Negative perceptions regarding the quality of life also hindered their participation in local area development. The study recommends the official organization of the city's conversion to a tourism destination, including improvements in infrastructure and greater participation from locals.

Keywords: awareness of tourism; perception toward heritage; local area development; cultural life; infrastructure barriers.

JEL Classification: Z32; Z11; R11.

Introduction

Awareness of tourism refers to the level of understanding and knowledge that individuals have about the tourism industry and its impacts. It encompasses the recognition of the economic, social, and environmental effects of tourism on a destination, as well as support for tourism development. Studies have shown that residents' perception of tourism impacts plays a crucial role in determining their support for tourism development (Alvares, Dos Santos, and Perinotto 2020; Sijabat *et al.* 2017). Alvares *et al.*'s research emphasizes the importance of tourism observatories in generating knowledge and intelligence for public and private managers, enhancing the quality of the tourist offer and visitor experience (Williams, Stewart, and Larsen 2012). Additionally, the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) recognizes the need for a membership-wide agenda of priority topics to address the challenges and opportunities in the travel and tourism industry (Sadikoglu and Oktay 2017). Overall, awareness of tourism involves understanding the impacts of tourism, supporting its development, and conducting research to inform decision-making and sustainable management (Kodaş *et al.* 2022).

On the other hand, trust in local government plays a significant role in citizens' perception of tourism development, with trust in the specific context of tourism influencing their general level of trust (Pagliara *et al.* 2021). It is important to involve the local community from the beginning of destination development, sensitizing residents and including them in co-creative tourism experiences (Gupta and Hasnain 2022). The objective of this study is to investigate the awareness and perception of local area citizens toward and participation in tourism activities as part of the local area announcement as a tourism destination.

1. Literature Review

1.1 The Concept of Awareness and Perception of Tourism in Local Areas

The concept of awareness and perception of tourism in local areas is a significant factor in tourism development. Local communities play a crucial role in the growth of tourism, and their attitudes towards tourism can influence its success (Obradović and Tešin 2023). Studies have shown that factors such as economic, socio-cultural, environmental, interaction, awareness, and local development contribute to the perception of rural tourism by local people and farmers (Yilmaz and Merkez 2022). To support local economic freedom and development, it is necessary to increase local understanding of concepts such as agro-tourism (Arif, Haiyudi, and Teu 2023). Government policies should focus on building tourism-conscious areas based on local wisdom and fostering local and creative industries to create awareness and entrepreneurial characteristics among the local population (Andriansyah *et al.* 2022). The perceptions of local people regarding responsible tourism have been found to positively affect their place attachment and support for sustainable tourism development, with environmental awareness playing a moderating role (Aytekin *et al.* 2023).

The official role of improving awareness in tourist local areas is to establish Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) that involve local communities in the development of tourism villages. These groups play a crucial role in managing and promoting tourism destinations (Andriansyah *et al.* 2022). The performance of these groups is evaluated based on indicators such as efficiency, effectiveness, fairness, and responsiveness (Kristian 2023). Additionally, it is important to increase the awareness of residents about the consequences of tourism activities and the importance of pro-environmental behaviors (Y. Zhang *et al.* 2014). Furthermore, there is a need to raise awareness among local communities about diseases that can be linked to tourism activities and encourage proactive health initiatives (Owino and Wamunga 2014). Overall, the official role involves fostering local and creative industries, improving security and safety, and providing quality services to build awareness and a conscious character in the community (B. Asmoro, Anwartinna, and Handayani 2019).

1.2 The Factors that Affect the Awareness of Local Areas' Tourism

Local tourism awareness is influenced by various factors. One important factor is the perceived effects of tourism on the local community. Positive effects, such as the preservation of natural and cultural resources, can lead to a favorable attitude towards tourism development (Obradović and Tešin 2023). Another factor is the recognition of the role that local communities can play in tourism development. When local communities are aware of their important role and know sustainable tourism principles, they are more likely to actively participate in tourism development (Andriansyah *et al.* 2022). Additionally, the management and organizational structure of tourism groups can affect local tourism awareness. Effective organizational management and clear job descriptions can improve the performance of tourism groups and enhance local tourism awareness (Sihombing, Gunawijaya, and Akbar 2017). Overall, increasing local tourism awareness can empower local communities to become active agents in tourism development and ensure that they receive the benefits of tourism (B. T. Asmoro and Resmiatini 2021).

Tourism has both positive and negative impacts on the quality of life of local communities. Positive effects include economic improvement, employment opportunities, community pride, cultural exchanges, and increased availability of facilities. However, negative effects include impacts on health, safety, quality of the physical environment, cost of living, accessibility to public facilities, social relations, job satisfaction, and community involvement in tourism development (VT, Kumar Dixit, and Durga Prasad 2023). The attitude and perception of the local community play a crucial role in the strategic growth, development, and sustainability of tourism destinations. Factors such as the image of the temple place, economic, social, and physical benefits, community attachment, and overall quality of life influence the perceived tourism support of the local community (Kliuchnyk *et al.* 2023). The perceived authenticity of industrial heritage also influences residents' attitudes toward tourism development support, their participation ideals, and their attachment to the place (Guerra *et al.* 2022). Community participation mediates the relationship between community-based tourism and the sustainability performance of the tourism industry (Wayan, Suindari, and Wirawan 2022).

The impact of tourism development on local communities and the influence of local culture on tourism products and tourist satisfaction have been extensively studied in different contexts. Mokhele's study revealed that tourism development in the Bokong Nature Reserve in Lesotho resulted in the displacement of local communities and had detrimental effects on their livelihoods (Mokhele 2022). Bagus *et al.* demonstrated that local culture plays a crucial role in shaping tourism products and influencing the satisfaction of domestic tourists in Bali (Bagus, BrahmaSari, and Suryani 2020). Similarly, Obradovic and Tešin found that the local community in Tara

National Park in Serbia supports further tourism development due to their belief in the preservation of natural and cultural resources (Obradović and Tešin 2023). Kausar and Nishikawa examined the impacts of heritage tourism on rural livelihoods in Borobudur, Indonesia, and proposed promoting rural industries to establish better linkages with tourism (Kausar and Nishikawa 2010). Lastly, Yun discussed the potential negative impact of tourism on traditional culture and explored strategies to protect and preserve traditional culture while promoting tourism (Rasoolimanesh, Jafaar, and Ismail 2015).

Local communities play a crucial role in the development of tourism in local areas. Their attitudes towards tourism directly influence its growth and spread within the community (Lapuz 2023). When local communities are socioeconomically affected by tourism development, their attitudes are shaped based on the perceived effects (Obradović and Tešin 2023). Positive attitudes towards tourism can lead to support for further tourism development, as seen in the case of the Tara National Park community in Serbia (Al-Hassan, Obeidat, and Lansford 2010). Local communities can also be empowered through tourism development, as seen in the case of Ponggok Village in Indonesia, where the local champion played a significant role in the success and prosperity of the community (Obradović *et al.* 2022).

The empowerment of local communities in the digital transformation of rural tourism is also essential, as it leads to individual, gender, political, and social empowerment, which contributes to more effective tourism management processes (Saputro, Pujiyono, and Latifah 2023). Therefore, the role of local communities in tourism development is crucial for sustainable tourism management strategies, respecting the needs and rights of the local people, local communities play a crucial role in the development of tourism in local areas. Their attitudes towards tourism directly influence its growth and spread within the community (Obradović and Tešin 2023). The local community's support for tourism development is essential for its success (Kasim *et al.* 2021).

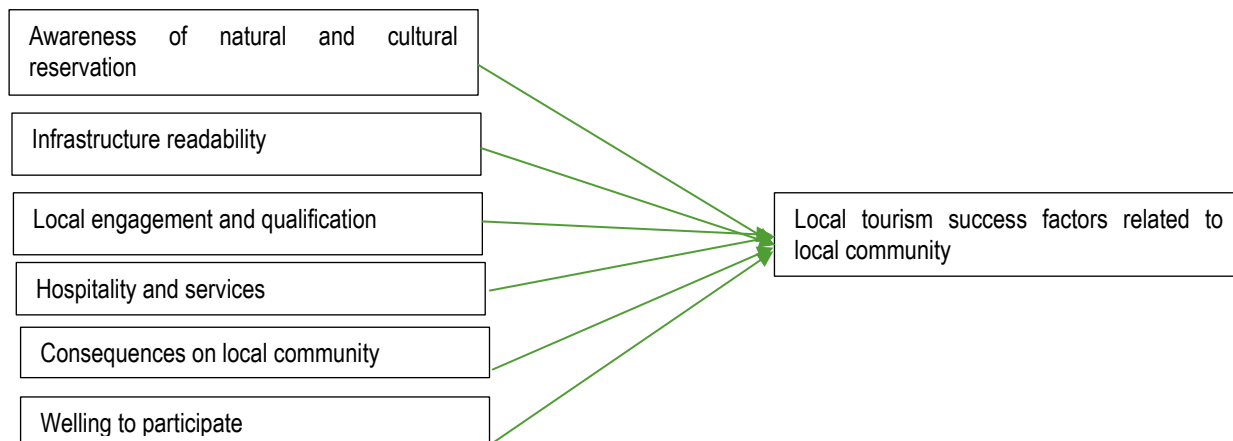
Active involvement and participation of the community in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of tourism programs are crucial for their success and benefit to those involved (Chang, Choong, and Ng 2020). Strengthening institutions and maintaining cultural heritage are important drivers for tourism development (Gunawijaya and Pratiwi 2018). However, too much dependence on local tourism resources can lead to conservatism and hinder future growth (Ohe 2020). Therefore, it is important to consider the needs and rights of the local people and develop sustainable tourism management strategies that involve and benefit the local community. Increasing local awareness has significant consequences for tourism development.

The research findings indicate that when local communities become more aware of the importance of conservation and cultural heritage, they actively participate in tourism activities and contribute to the development of tourist destinations (Retno Budi Wahyuni *et al.* 2023). This increased awareness also leads to a better understanding of sustainable tourism principles and the adoption of digital skills for effective management of tourist villages (Ghaderi *et al.* 2022). Moreover, the involvement of local communities in tourism development is seen as crucial, as they recognize their important role and have a high level of knowledge in this area (Darubekti *et al.* 2022). The positive impact of increasing local awareness is also evident in the quality of tourism village products, as interpersonal communication among stakeholders and the community plays a significant role in their development (Andriansyah *et al.* 2022). Overall, increasing local awareness fosters community engagement, promotes conservation efforts, and enhances the overall tourism experience (Sihombing, Gunawijaya, and Akbar 2017).

1.3 Theoretical Framework of Awareness of Local Tourism

The theoretical framework for the awareness of natural and cultural preservation, infrastructure readability, local engagement, hospitality, consequences on the local community, willingness to participate, and the effect on local tourism success factors related to the local community has been explored in various studies. Ab Majid *et al.* (2019) discovered that rural tourism activities have a significant impact on communities, with cultural impact being more significant than economic, social, and environmental impacts (Ab. Majid *et al.* 2019). Kyungjin's (2022) study revealed that the management of cultural heritage and residents' attitudes toward it positively affect local attachment and community formation (Kyungjin 2022). Bhandari (2022) highlighted the misuse of local community participation and the lack of holistic planning as reasons for the lack of sustainable tourism development (Bhandari 2022). Karacaoğlu and Birdir (2018) identified common success factors for community-based tourism projects, including local evaluation of the project's success (Karacaoğlu, Şeyh, and Birdir 2018). Waylen *et al.* (2010) found that the local institutional context significantly influences conservation outcomes, while community participation, conservation education, benefit provision, and market integration had limited effects (Waylen *et al.* 2010).

Figure 1. The frame of awareness for local tourism.



2. Methods

Settings: A quantitative study conducted to investigate the awareness of heritage, lifestyle, and tourism in As-Salt City.

Problem: As-Salt City in Jordan has been internationally recognized as a heritage city. This announcement has heightened the need to enhance the city’s infrastructure and increase awareness among its residents to effectively promote tourism. However, the level of awareness among the locals and their willingness to cooperate in developing the city’s tourism sector and improving the quality of services remains unmeasured. To address this, the research aims to explore the significance of awareness in enhancing local tourism and meeting the expectations of tourists.

Populations and samples: The population of this study was the people of As-Salt City in the middle parts of Jordan. The total population of As-Salt city is 117,060 citizens. A simple random sample was selected to reach the objectives of this research. The random sample included 700 citizens.

Data collection tools: The questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The questionnaire included two parts. The first part was concerned with the demographic characteristics of citizens, while the second part was concerned with the measurement of the level of awareness among the citizens to deal with the city as a tourism city through improving services, preserving the cultural heritage, and participating in the tourism process in the city. The questionnaire included six fields: awareness of natural and cultural reservation, infrastructure readability, local engagement and qualification, hospitality and services, consequences on the local community, willingness to participate, and local tourism success factors related to the local community. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to measure the trends for awareness. The questionnaire was distributed in person in different regions inside As-Salt city.

Statistical analysis: The collected data was entered into R software. Descriptive statistics were used to measure the demographic characteristics, and the means and standard deviations were used to measure the trends in awareness items. Inferential statistics were used to measure the effect of the levels of awareness on the success factors of the conversion process to a tourism destination. The validity analysis using a pilot sample was conducted, and the reliability analysis was executed on the pilot study that included 30 respondents. The Cronbach’s Alpha was used to measure the reliability. The results showed that the values were more than 0.6, which is acceptable for such social studies (Table 1) (Sahoo 2019).

Table 1. Reliability analysis using Cronbach’s Alpha value

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha Value
Awareness of natural and cultural reservation (ANCR)	0.837
Infrastructure readability (IR)	0.828
Local Engagement (LEQ)	0.800
Hospitality and services (HS)	0.797
Consequences on the local community (CLC)	0.844
Welling to participate (WP)	0.830
Local tourism success factors related to local community (LTSF)	0.939

Ethical Issues: The introduction of the questionnaire includes a concise paragraph seeking the agreement of citizens to participate in the study. This procedure is considered ethical as it seeks permission for participation.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The random sample of the study contacted a wide variety of people living in As-Salt city to collect as much information as possible related to the awareness of citizens for tourism and their perception of participation in the tourism activity in the city. Two-thirds of the sample were females (65.7%) compared to males (34.5%), with different age ranges from less than 18 years up to 60 years. The dominant age group was people aged 31-40 (32.4%), followed by the age group 18-30 (19.1%) and then the age group less than 18 years (24.7%) (Table 1).

The responses for income showed that most of the sample had low income (50.1%) with income less than JD5000 annually. The second income category was for the annual income 10001-15000 with a percentage of 34.6%. The rest of the sample's income was distributed into higher and lower income categories. The majority of the sample had a bachelor's degree (44.4%), followed by the secondary education group (36.6%). The sample also included people with no education (6.6%) and people with primary education (12.4%) (Table 1). The citizens of As-Salt city showed that they have lived there for a long time, with the majority indicating they lived in As-Salt before 1990, reflecting that they have been residents for more than twenty years (Table 2).

Table 2. The demographic characteristics of the sample

Character	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	240	34.3
Female	460	65.7
Age		
< 18	173	24.7
18-30	134	19.1
31-40	227	32.4
41-50	99	14.1
51-60	67	9.6
Annual Income (JD)		
Less than 5000	351	50.1
5000 – 10000	79	11.3
10001 – 15000	242	34.6
15001 – 20000	10	1.4
More than 20000	18	2.6
Education		
Not educated	46	6.6
Primary school	87	12.4
Secondary school	256	36.6
Bachelor or higher	311	44.4
Start living in AsSalt city		
1869 or before	78	11.1
1870 – 1889	27	3.9
1890-1909	26	3.7
1910-1929	16	2.3
1930-1949	115	16.4
1950-1969	46	6.6
1970-1989	109	15.6
1990 - 2012	283	40.4

3.2 The Attitudes toward Participation in Tourism Activities in Local Areas

3.2.1 Awareness of Culture and Heritage Importance

The shift to tourism activities requires sufficient awareness of the importance of culture and heritage. However, the level of awareness regarding the significance of culture and heritage fell below the minimum requirements, with a score of 2.83 ± 0.59 . The highest level of moderate awareness was observed in the belief that transforming the city into a tourism destination would facilitate the preservation of cultural heritage, scoring 3.10 ± 0.56 . On the other hand, aspects such as engaging with local traditions, preserving historical sites, and deepening cultural traditions did not meet the minimum required levels. These findings emphasize the need for increased awareness and efforts to promote the cultural and heritage values of the city (Table 3).

Table 3. Awareness of natural and cultural preservation

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
The conversion to a tourism destination will facilitate the conversation of the cultural heritage of the city	3.10	0.56
The organized campaign to manage the city tourism encouraged me to support the tourism of the city	2.89	0.69
The reserve and maintenance of old places in the city will improve its face as a tourism destination	2.88	0.74
The transformation to a tourism destination will deepen the preservation of the local traditions	2.74	0.85
The local cultural traditions will work as an attractive element to encourage tourism to visit the city	2.54	0.89
Total	2.83	0.59

3.2.2 Infrastructure Readability

The evaluation of infrastructure readability received a negative rating of 2.90 ± 0.58 . The local roads were deemed insufficient for smooth traffic flow, scoring 2.97 ± 0.69 . The city's accommodation services were also found inadequate, with a rating of 2.97 ± 0.69 . The transportation network was deemed insufficient to support local tourism, scoring 2.96 ± 0.71 . Furthermore, the connections between different areas in the city were also lacking in terms of supporting local tourism, receiving a rating of 2.82 ± 0.79 . Lastly, the city was found to have a shortage of entertainment venues that could attract local tourists, with a rating of 2.77 ± 0.89 (Table 4).

Table 4. Awareness of the importance of infrastructure readability

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
The local roads are qualified to serve the extra movement of tourists	2.99	0.67
The accommodation services are enough to meet the tourists' needs	2.97	0.69
The available transportation available in the city is enough to serve the tourists	2.96	0.71
Connectivity among the areas in the city is available and safe	2.82	0.79
The city has good entertainment places to serve tourists	2.77	0.89
Total	2.90	0.58

3.2.3 Local Engagement

The awareness of local engagement was very low, with an average score of 2.82 out of 5. The only positive assessment was for the encouragement to engage with local campaigns to increase the experience in local tourism, with an average score of 3.08 out of 5. However, the assessment related to the rise of local cultural traditions and behaviors whenever possible was negative, scoring an average of 2.85 out of 5. The support of local societies that plan local tourism strategies also received a negative assessment, with an average score of 2.78 out of 5. Additionally, the assessment of the support of local community activities toward tourism conversion and the share in safety exercises to ensure the safety of tourists and local citizens were both negative, scoring an average of 2.75 out of 5 and 2.82 out of 5 respectively (Table 5).

Table 5. Awareness of local engagement

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
Encourage participation in local campaigns to increase the experience in local tourism	3.08	0.59
Raise the local cultural traditions and behave whenever possible	2.85	0.84
Support the local societies that plan local tourism strategies	2.78	0.79
Encourage the local community activities to support tourism in the city	2.75	0.78
Share in safety exercises to ensure the safety of tourists and local citizens	2.65	0.80
Total	2.82	0.57

3.2.4 Hospitality and Services Introduction

The awareness of the importance of hospitality and services introduction assessment was negative (2.96 ± 0.50). The moderate assessment was for the well to cooperate with tourist groups inside the city (3.09 ± 0.65). The responses related to the tendency to host tourist groups in heritage old places, the tendency to enrich the services of tourists when possible, the tendency to receive tourists from different areas, and the telling stories about the history of the city were negative. (Table 6).

Table 6. Awareness of hospitality and services

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
The well to cooperate with tourist groups inside the city	3.09	0.65
The tendency to host tourist groups in heritage old places	2.99	0.73
Tendency to enrich the services of tourists when possible	2.97	0.65
The tendency to receive tourists from different areas	2.87	0.65
Tell stories about the history of the city	2.86	0.66
Total	2.96	0.50

3.2.5 Consequences on the Local Community

The respondents had a positive awareness of the consequences on the local community (3.12 ± 0.53). They recognized that local tourism would increase job opportunities (3.25 ± 0.58). They were also aware of the positive impact on income (3.15 ± 0.69). The conversion to tourism was seen as empowering women (3.11 ± 0.70). Additionally, the respondents acknowledged the positive consequences of private sector participation in the city (3.08 ± 0.65) [3]. They were also aware of the potential improvement in technology for promotion (3.03 ± 0.77). Overall, the respondents had a positive perception of the benefits of tourism for their community (Table 7).

Table 7. Awareness of the consequences of converting to tourism on the local community

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
The local tourism activities will increase job opportunities in the city	3.25	0.58
The citizens' income resulting from the tourism activities will increase	3.15	0.69
Include women in traditional and handicraft activities will improve women empowerment in the city	3.11	0.70
Tourism will encourage private-sector projects that will improve the infrastructure of the city	3.08	0.65
Tourism will improve the concern with technology to improve promotion	3.03	0.77
Total	3.12	0.53

3.2.6 Welling to Participate

The findings suggest that the level of awareness and willingness to participate in tourism-related activities among the citizens of the city is moderate, with a score of 3.00 ± 0.57 . The citizens have a positive attitude towards their responsibility in promoting tourism in the city, participating in campaigns targeting tourism, and introducing the history of the city. However, the assessment of the encouragement of local groups who work in tourism was negative, with a score of 2.87 ± 0.84 . The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the global tourism economy, with potential declines of 60-80% in international tourism in 2020. Recovery measures such as lifting travel restrictions, restoring traveler confidence, and rethinking the tourism sector for the future are necessary to build a stronger, more sustainable, and resilient tourism economy. Sustainable tourism practices that consider the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism are also important for the long-term health of the industry (Table 8).

Table 8. Awareness of willing to participate

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
I believe that the tourism in the city is the responsibility of all citizens	3.03	0.68
I will participate in the social activities that call for organizing the local tourism	3.03	0.65
I will participate in the campaigns related to tourism education in the city	3.03	0.75
I will take any opportunity to introduce the history of the city	3.02	0.74
I will encourage the local groups that work for tourism promotion in the city	2.87	0.84
Total	3.00	0.57

3.3 Local Tourism Success Factors Related to the Local Community

The assessment of local tourism success factors was moderate, with a score of 3.01 ± 0.62 . Respondents showed moderate awareness that local tourism would increase closeness to local traditions, ranking it in the first position with a score of 3.12 ± 0.73 . They also believed that increasing the number of tourists was the responsibility of the local community, with a score of 3.07 ± 0.75 . Respondents recognized that cooperation with official agencies directly benefited the local community, scoring it at 3.05 ± 0.68 . Additionally, they believed that local tourism would improve the quality of life for citizens, with a score of 3.03 ± 0.72 . The respondents were aware that the city would be connected with other tourism areas in the region, scoring it at 3.01 ± 0.76 . However, there was a negative assessment of tourism's contribution to distributing the city's culture and heritage worldwide, scoring 2.98 ± 0.78 . The social structure and local community attractiveness for local tourism also received a negative assessment, scoring 2.97 ± 0.72 . Finally, the overall assessment of the impact of tourism on the area over the years was negative, with a score of 2.92 ± 0.73 . (Table 9).

Table 9. Awareness of the factors to the success of local tourism

Item	Mean	Sd Dev.
The local tourism will increase the closeness to the local traditions	3.12	0.73
Increasing the number of tourists is the responsibility of the local community	3.07	0.75
Cooperation with official agencies directly connected to the local community	3.05	0.68
The success of the local tourism will improve the standards of living in the city	3.03	0.72
The city will form a connection with other tourism sectors within the region	3.01	0.76
The success of local tourism will distribute the cultural heritage of the area internationally	2.98	0.78
The social structure will strengthen due to the integrated roles of the local society	2.97	0.72
The local community becomes attractive for local tourism as well as external tourism	2.97	0.75
The tourism impact on the area has been continuous all over the years	2.92	0.73
Total	3.01	0.62

3.4 Model Testing

The structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to assess the impact of various factors on the awareness and success of the conversion to tourism activities in the city. To ensure the validity of the analysis, the normal distribution of the different variables was tested, and any items that were not normally distributed were eliminated. Covariance among the variables was taken into account to achieve a well-fitting model. Figure 2 displays the fitted model, along with the regression coefficients of the different items.

Figure 2. The structural equation model for the consequences of awareness on the results of local tourism success.

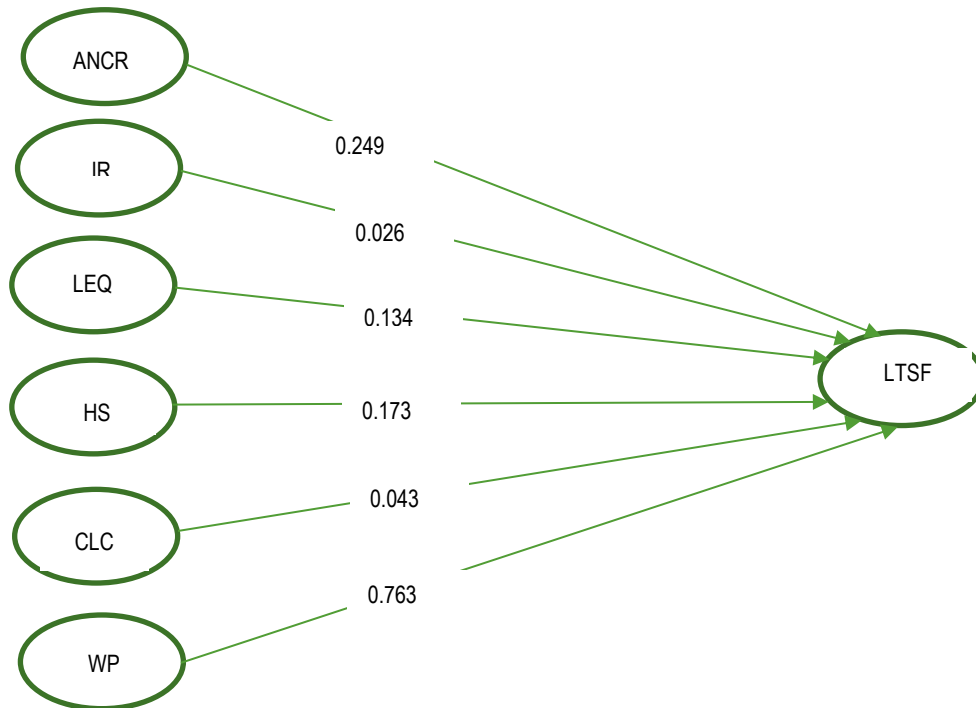


Table 10 provides a summary of the model's fitness criteria. The Chi-square to df ratio was less than 5, which indicates an acceptable fit. The model's fitness was found to be significant with a p-value less than 0.01. However, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) fell below the accepted threshold of 0.949, suggesting a less than optimal fit. On the other hand, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) both met the accepted thresholds of 0.055 and 0.929, respectively. (Table 10).

Table 10. Fitness Criteria of SEM

Criteria	Acceptable value	Model Value	Result
Chi-square/df	≤ 5	3.11	Accepted
Chi-square	--	1028.3	
Probability	≤ 0.05	0.001	Accepted
CFI	≤ 0.9	0.949	Accepted
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.055	Accepted
TLI	≤ 0.9	0.929	Accepted

The results indicate that the awareness of natural and cultural reservations had the highest significant effect on the success factors of converting to tourism in the city, with a regression coefficient of 0.249 and a probability of 0.016. The second significant effect was observed for local engagement, with a regression coefficient of 0.134. The impact of hospitality and services introduced was also significant, with a regression coefficient of 0.173 ($p < 0.05$). The most significant effect was recorded for the willingness to participate, with a regression coefficient of 0.763 ($p < 0.001$) (Table 11).

Table 11. The loading factors for the dimensions on the results of the local tourism results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
LTSF	<---	ANCR	.249	.103	2.419	.016
LTSF	<---	IR	.026	.096	.274	.784
LTSF	<---	LEQ	.134	.074	1.823	.048
LTSF	<---	HS	.173	.078	2.215	.027
LTSF	<---	CLC	.043	.077	.560	.575
LTSF	<---	WP	.763	.077	9.894	***

4. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the awareness and perception of citizens regarding the conversion of As-Salt city into a tourism destination. As-Salt city was recently recognized as a tourism city internationally by UNESCO, making it an ideal case study for this research. The study encompassed all categories of people and their distribution across the city, considering factors such as age groups, educational levels, and income levels. The questionnaire was distributed in various areas of the city to ensure a representative sample (Gupta and Hasanain, 2022). It is widely acknowledged that the local community plays a crucial role in the successful development of tourism. They can contribute to sustainable practices and initiatives by collaborating with stakeholders and engaging in tourism activities (Bichler 2021).

The citizens of As-Salt City in Jordan have low awareness of the conversion process to a tourism area. This reflects the lack of organization and citizen involvement in the conversion process. The announcement of the city as a tourism destination caused confusion among the people about its implications and consequences. The responsibility for announcing an area as a tourism destination varies depending on the context and country. In Central Aceh, the tourism sector is being developed as a mainstay for the area, with a focus on improving attractions, accessibility, and amenities (Syaripuddin 2021). Local tourism governance plays a crucial role in destination development in Sweden (Yushan 2016).

One important awareness criterion for the conversion to a tourism area is the importance of culture and heritage. The citizens' awareness of culture and heritage in the city is negative, possibly due to their previous living conditions. However, the citizens recognize that the conversion to a tourism destination can enable them to distribute their culture and heritage internationally. Cultural and heritage resources enhance the attractiveness of a destination's brand and make it more appealing to tourists and visitors (Kim, Chhabra, and Timothy 2022). Cultural heritage, when incorporated into the tourism supply, becomes an important economic resource for the community, contributing to its financial profit, economic development, and the financing of cultural heritage maintenance and enhancement (Opačić 2019). Cultural heritage is also crucial for attracting tourists and visitors, as seen in the case study of Prizren in Kosovo (G. Zhang *et al.* 2020).

The conversion to a tourism destination requires the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in the local area. The responses of the citizens show that the city is not ready to receive high numbers of tourists due to the lack of suitable infrastructure. This reflects the official shortage in dealing with the conversion process. Furthermore, it reflects the lack of internal arrangements to deal with the conversion process. Suitable infrastructure, especially transportation, plays a crucial role in encouraging tourists to visit the city. The transformation of cities to accommodate the tourism sector is evident, with an emphasis on renovated waterfronts and other urban areas (Judd 2015). The impact of cycling infrastructure on destination performance is also recognized, highlighting the need for evaluation and support at various levels (Šebešová and Kršák 2018). Stakeholder feedback is valuable in identifying a destination's attributes to attract tourists, including the importance of accessibility and technological infrastructures (do Rosário *et al.* 2022). The correlation between tourism and infrastructure is significant, as infrastructure is necessary for both the object and the tourist, and attention must be paid to the relationship between tourism and the surrounding environment (Saryani 2021).

The awareness and local engagement were negative among the citizens of the city. This reflects that the announcement did not change the mentality of the citizens regarding the conversion to tourism destinations. The importance of local engagement and hospitality is considered crucial and attractive factors to increase the number of tourist visitors. Research conducted by Bastaman and Yodfianfinda (2021) on Tokyo Metropolitan Train Customers found that the local people in Tokyo are helpful and friendly towards foreigners, despite their busy schedules.

Despite the moderate awareness among the local citizens about the consequences that will evolve from the conversion to a tourism destination, they do not tend to participate or take any action to increase the success factors of converting to a tourism city.

Conclusions and Further Research

The objective of this study was to investigate the level of awareness among local citizens regarding the conversion of As-Salt into a tourist destination and the impact of this awareness on the success factors of the conversion process. The study found that the citizens of As-Salt have a very low level of awareness when it comes to participating in tourism activities. However, they do expect tourism activities to have an effect on their cultural life. Additionally, the study revealed that the citizens have a low level of awareness and perception of the value of their historical houses. They are unclear about their role in the development of tourism in the area, especially in the absence of organized work in their field. The study recommended implementing education

programs aimed at increasing awareness among the citizens about participating in tourism activities and recognizing the value of their inherited houses. Furthermore, the study suggested that official participation is necessary in terms of organizing and managing the infrastructure, involving investors, and determining the methods of local citizens' participation to improve the economic conditions of the city. The future research should concentrate on building local models to transfer to tourism activities in rural areas to modulate the contributions of different parties in the transformation process.

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