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Estimation of Recreation Value and Factors Effecting Visitors' Decision to Visit Cultural Heritage Sites in the Northeast of Jordan

Dr. Ismaiel Naser Abuamoud

The University of Jordan

Abstract

Tourism has linkage to several types of industries, and is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The potential economic benefits derived from tourism are tremendous and therefore often provide an attractive form of economic development. Tourism for a country like Jordan is often a critical sector of the economy. The tourism sector ranked as one of the most important foreign exchange sources for the Jordan economy with about three US billion Dollars in 2017. Very few studies have examined cultural heritage tourism CHS as a potential economic development tool in Jordan. This study aims to propose a cultural heritage project to be implemented in the Northeast of Jordan with an emphasis on the uniqueness of the cultural heritage assets in the region. Two methods have been used to estimate the value of the cultural heritage sites, WTP and TC methods. For the purpose of this study, a survey has been conducted in Jordan last July 2017 on foreign tourists to examine the hypothetical entrance fee for these sites, and to estimate revenue generation from the fees, lodging, and food. The Travel Coast will help to estimate the demand curve and factors impacting visitor's decision to travel to the targeted area. The study found that income and educational level as well as region of respondents significantly affect willingness to travel to CHS in the Northeast of Jordan. Furthermore, the study found that multi-destination, and variety seeking also significantly impact WTT to the CHS. The study found that the significant variables were able to explain about 74% of the probability of willingness to travel to the CHS. The study recommends improving CHS in the study area and working closely with local communities to empower them with training and funds. Additional effort needs to be undertaken to market these sites nationally and internationally and to maximize the return of the sites on the local and national level.

Keywords: Tourism Economics, Economic Development

