

Research note

Females' perspectives on tourism's impact and their employment in the sector: The case of Petra, Jordan.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Tourism

Women

Economic impacts

Employment

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the trend towards gender equality in the tourism sector of the Petra region, Jordan. To do so, a mixed methods design including a questionnaire and in-depth interviews was employed for female residents of rural and urban areas in the region. The results show that women do not have favourable view of tourism's economic impacts and that several barriers exist to their employment in the tourism sector. The findings' implications and future studies are addressed.

1. Introduction

Tourism generates 10.4% of world GDP and provides one out of ten jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2019). However, job opportunities in the tourism sector are mostly of lower quality than in other sectors (Rosa, Monica, Belen, & Figueroa-Domecq Pilar, 2015). The sector, which is considered as one in which gender equality is encouraged, is increasingly creating jobs for both women and men. Women's participation in economic development is crucial, yet men have better paid wages and positions, and women occupy more jobs with lower pay (Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015).

Gender research in tourism is important to explain the current situation of the role of gender in this sector (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017; Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015). Nevertheless, the relationship between tourism development and gender still not widely understood (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). Few studies have focused on gender in tourism and its influence and importance on the perceived tourism impacts (Clevenger & Singh, 2013; Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017; Duffy, Kline, Mowatt, & Chancellor, 2015; Janta & Christou, 2019; Mura, 2018; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017).

Gender, furthermore, is considered a sensitive issue when it comes to a test in the field and as a determinant of residents' attitudes (Harrill, 2004; Huh & Vogt, 2008). What's more, gender relations have been affected by tourism development over time; they help to determine how guest and host identify with each other, and then shape their perceptions of tourism (Tucker, 2007). These perceptions differ between rural and urban areas. Rural residents have a less favourable view of tourism's

economic benefits, and they are more skeptical regarding social and cultural impacts (Mbaiwa, 2005; Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar, & Ramayah, 2017). Since they dominate the social life more in rural areas, variations could be induced by traditions and norms, especially in developing Muslim countries (Al Haija, 2011; Sonmez, 2001).

Women have been affected by economic development and motorization (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994). For instance, in the tourism industry, employment opportunities are gendered (Kinnaird, Kothari, & Hall, 1994), and women occupy most of the lower-level and low-wage tourism-related jobs. It may be a consequence of unequal social values between women and men (Trupp & Sunanta, 2017; Tucker, 2007), racial stereotypes of women (Hughes & Steven, 2003), household duties of women, and what society expects from a woman with respect to her job (Trupp & Sunanta, 2017).

Moreover, gender-tourism studies have uncovered several reasons for inequity and barriers to women working in the tourism sector, such as social (Cave & Kilic, 2010; Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017) and political barriers (Clevenger & Singh, 2013; Moser, 1993), the difficulty of balancing family needs and working hours (Rosa et al., 2015), and family restrictions (Janta & Christou, 2019). Having said that, there is notably a lack of studies regarding females' perspectives of tourism development (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Many studies have called for future research related to gender in tourism and the difficulties surrounding women in tourism employment (e.g. Cave & Kilic, 2010). However, none of the studies has suggested investigating the differences in women's perspectives on tourism's impacts between rural and urban areas.

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The current research is part of a larger study to identify and examine the impacts of tourism in the Petra region, Jordan (Fig. 1) in order to support a sustainable development agenda. However, to identify the current study's problem, after 5 years of tourism development observations, desk research was undertaken related to the available publications on women and the tourism sector in Jordan. It was found on the one hand that women in the region's urban area have more opportunities to work. On the other hand, however, the women have barriers to working in the tourism sector. Following these reflections, this study addresses two questions:

- (i) How do women in the Petra region perceive the economic impacts of tourism in rural and urban areas? *The region is in the early stages of development; thus, the difference in perceptions between rural and urban areas is considered to be highly significant.*
- (ii) Are there any difficulties faced by women in the Petra region related to working in the tourism sector?

In order to answer these questions, this study adopts a mixed method approach. The results of the quantitative data answer the first question; then it raises a query about the employment of these women. Consequently, in-depth interviews are used to answer the second question. Prior to this, literature on the residents' perceptions of tourism

development in rural and urban areas, and gender in the tourism industry are reviewed. Then, the study area is explained in terms of the study's framework. Thereafter, results are addressed, and finally conclusions and implications are highlighted.

This study contributes to the existing literature on gender-tourism by filling in the previously mentioned gaps and elaborating upon the females' perspectives and employment situations in the tourism sector in developing Muslim countries. The results can be provided to policy makers and stakeholders for use in seeking equality in the tourism sector.

2. Literature review

Tourism development has a significant influence on the destination's economy, especially in the developing countries (Sheng & Tsui, 2009). It provides new jobs, investment opportunities, creates restaurants and accommodation services, and enhances the residents' quality of life (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). Those benefits come along with negative impacts, such as increases in the cost of living, traffic, crime rate, use of drugs and external influences on residents (Jurowski & GURSOY, 2004).

In the context of residents' perceptions of tourism's impacts, several studies have investigated the difference in perceptions among residents, for instance based on the socio-demographic characteristics and

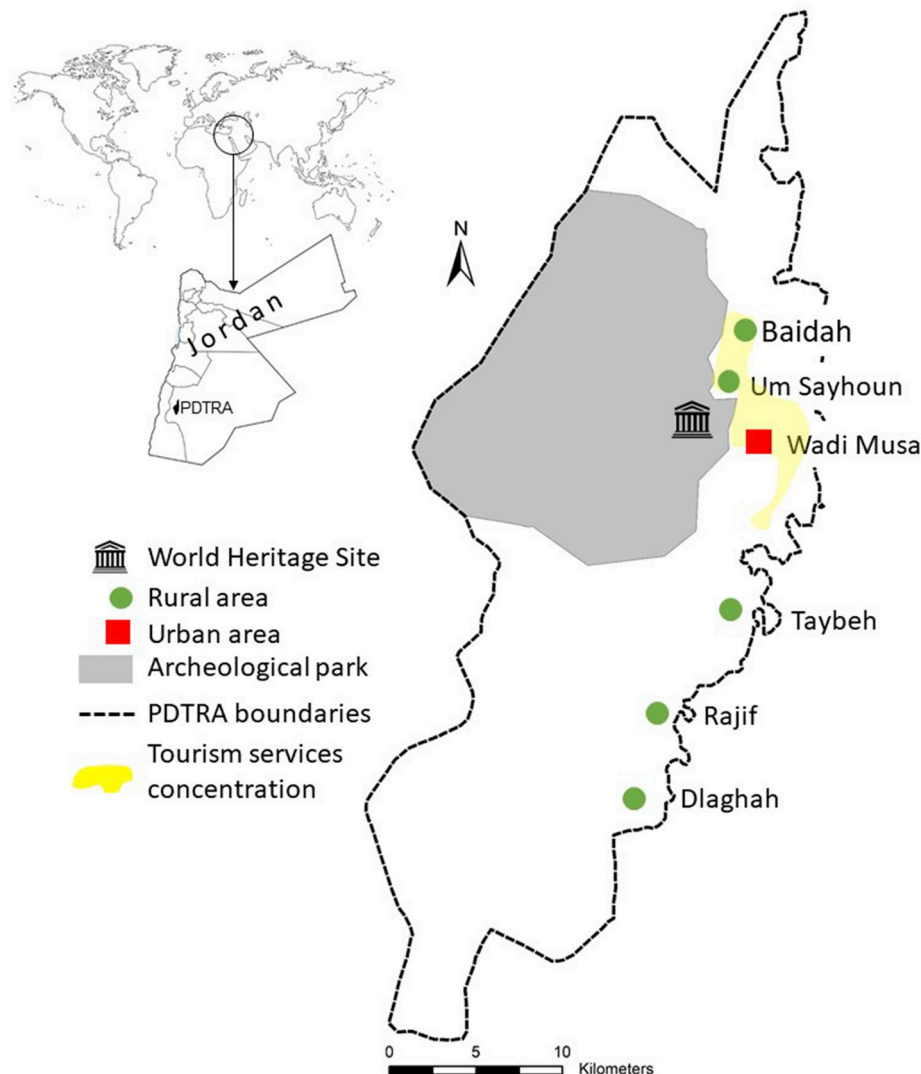


Fig. 1. Petra region location and towns' boundaries.
Source: Authors.

distance from tourism zone (Khoshkam, Marzuki, & Al-Mulali, 2016), the level of community attachment (McCool & Martin, 1994), and rural and urban areas (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). However, limited attention has been given to the role of gender in the perceptions, despite its importance in understanding the residents' perceptions and their support for tourism development (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017; Janta & Christou, 2019; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Understanding these perceptions is important to successful tourism development and to improving the positive and reducing the negative impacts (Látková & Vogt, 2012). In Muslim and developing countries, the scope of the literature has become even more limited. Gender is considered a sensitive factor when it comes to a test in the field (Harrill, 2004) and as a determinant of residents' attitudes (Huh & Vogt, 2008; Mason & Cheyne, 2000). Mason and Cheyne (2000) for instance, in a study on rural New Zealand, found that men agree to tourism development more than women and that they perceived more positive impacts. Harrill and Potts (2003) found that women perceived tourism development more negatively than men did. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) found that gender influences residents' perceptions in the Lenggong Valley.

Gender research in tourism helps to explain the current situation of the role of women in this sector (Costa, Bakas, Breda, & Durao, 2017). Some works illustrate that women have difficulties to work in tourism. The barriers facing women who want to work in the tourism industry were examined in different parts of the world, for instance in the Middle East (Sonmez, 2001), Egypt (Kattara, 2005), Dominican Republic (Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000), Mexico (Chant, 1992), Thailand (Trupp & Sunanta, 2017) and Turkey (Cave & Kilic, 2010; Tucker, 2007). The authors attributed the barriers to religious and traditional restrictions, political obstacles to women having a role in decision-making, the household roles of women, and gender characteristics.

Studies of tourism's impacts have indicated that there are variations in how residents perceive impacts between rural and urban areas (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Schofield, 2011). These differences can be explained by the integration of tourism activities with other sectors in urban areas. Urban residents are accustomed to witnessing the positive and negative effects of tourism (Jaafar, Rasoolimanesh, & Lonik, 2015) and they accept tourists, which makes the negative impacts be perceived less by locals (Cui & Ryan, 2011). In rural areas, residents view tourism development as a way to enhance the economy and social life (Iorio & Corsale, 2010; Jaafar et al., 2015). For instance, Tyrrell and Spaulding (1984) in their study in Rhode Island found that residents are not in favour of tourism growth near their place of residence. Mbaiwa (2005) described other negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Okavango Delta, Botswana, where rural communities do not accept tourists' behaviors. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) in their study in Malaysia, found that residents of the Lenggong Valley rural area have different view of tourism development than residents of the George Town urban area.

With respect to the Petra region, studies of residents' perceptions are limited (Al Ababneh, 2016; Al-hasanat & Hyasat, 2011; Tarawneh & Wray, 2017); however, the role of gender and place of residence (urban/rural) were absent. The study of Masadeh, Al-Ababneh, Al-Sabi, and Habib Allah (2018) examined the barriers to women working as a tourist guides in Jordan, and they found that women have an interest in work in the tourism industry, but they have different barriers that prevent them from doing so.

3. Women and the tourism sector in Jordan

In Jordan, the participation of women in the labour market is very low (ETF, 2018). It was 17.3% in 2017, and the employment rate is decreasing; it reached 11.9% in 2017. Consequently, the unemployment rate for women in 2017 was 31.2%. This can be explained by educational level, discrimination in leadership positions, and gender roles in women's work (Dandan & Marques, 2017; ETF, 2018).

However, according to Sisterhood is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI), in the tourism sector the number of women decreased by 1% in 2016.

Only 9% (4758) of tourism employees are women, and most of them are working in hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. Moreover, 93.1% of the employees work in six tourism destinations out of another 26 destinations in the country, which indicates the lack of distribution of the work force and tourism development, especially in rural areas. SIGI attributes that to the failure of the strategic plan (2011–2015) of the Ministry of Tourism. Moreover, they indicate that the plan didn't succeed in increasing the empowerment of women in the tourism sector.

Based on over 20 articles published by national associations that focus on the empowerment of women in all sectors (Jordan Labour Watch; Phoenix Center; SIGI), problems related to women's involvement in the tourism sector are:

- (i) Social stigma (ثقافة العيب). According to Herek, Gillis, and Cogan (2009) social stigma is "the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to people who possess a particular characteristic or belong to a particular group or category" (p. 441). In Jordan, a job that requires mobility and contact with strangers puts a woman working in it into a group or category that is discriminated against by society.
- (ii) Difficulty of balancing family needs and working hours. For example, employers don't expect that women can manage late hours working shifts, which is linked to women's role in society.
- (iii) Education sector's inability to meet the requirements of the tourism industry. The educational gap between males and females is small (Dandan & Marques, 2017); however, employers in the tourism sector indicate a lack of female skilled workers (ETF, 2018). Female students have difficulties in receiving training during their studies, which can be explained by the lack of effective educational strategies to empower female students in the labour market (ETF, 2011; Sisterhood is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI),).

3.1. The Petra region

Six communities surrounding the ancient city of Petra have been managed by the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) since 2009. However, after ten years of the establishment of its autonomy, residents still have a negative view of the economic benefits of tourism. This can be explained by the unequal distribution of economic benefits among residents and the lack of effective tourism planning (Al-hasanat & Hyasat, 2011; Alrwajfah, Almeida-García, & Cortés-Macías, 2019). Fig. 1 shows the region's location and boundaries, and the lack of tourism development distribution in the region.

The local community of the region is characterized by Arab-Islamic culture. In rural areas, the influence of traditions is stronger than in urban areas (Al Haija, 2011) and women have a strong tendency to protect their families' traditions and customs, and instil them in their children. Women work mostly as teachers (552 out of 786 teachers are women), in the PDTRA (120 women) and saleswoman in clothing and beauty shops (Department of statistics Jordan (DOS), 2013).

4. Methodology

A sequential explanatory mixed method research design was employed in this study. Data was collected first using a quantitative method through a survey over three weeks in June 2017. According to the quantitative method, a stratified random sampling was employed according to the place of residence, which resulted in 232 completed female responses who were 18 years of age and permanent residents, of whom 107 from rural areas and 125 from the urban area. The respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions toward tourism economic impact in a 5-point Likert-scale to measure scales adopted from McCool and Martin (1994) and Látková and Vogt (2012). Also, respondents indicated their demographic characteristics and whether

they are working in the tourism sector or they are part of local organization. SPSS software was employed to examine the women’s perceptions of tourism’s economic impact and how it differs between rural and urban areas.

After interpreting the results of the quantitative method, the qualitative data collection employed in-depth interviews conducted with 13 women living in the Petra region in March 2019. Convenience sampling was used due to limited financial and time resources available for the investigation. The sample was chosen according to ease of access (Patton, 2015). However, authors ensured that cases are selected from all six villages of the region (rural and urban), and fairly homogeneous regarding their age and marital status. The respondents are interviewed until the phenomena becomes evident (Bernard, 2013) (Table 1). Questions were related to the employment of the women in the tourism sector and general view of respondents to tourism development in the Petra region. The interviews were conducted, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed in Arabic. Then they were translated into English. Analysis was performed manually by carefully reading each interview and identifying sub- and major themes (Table 1).

5. Results and discussion

The general profile of the sample population indicates that only (6%) of the respondents work in the tourism sector and the majority of the respondents were members in a local organization (71%). Sixty percent of the respondents were married and highly educated.

To examine the overall perceptions of tourism’s economic impacts and whether there is a difference in perceptions between rural and urban respondents, an ANOVA test was conducted. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviation for each item.

In general, it was found that women in rural and urban areas had a negative view of the economic impact of tourism. Negative perceptions items scored ($mean^{all} = 3.22-3.55$) and positive perceptions items scored ($mean^{all} = 2.30-2.79$). Moreover, respondents they didn’t believe that tourism is a sector that create job opportunities ($mean^{all} = 2.79$), and also they expressed their concern of seasonal unemployment of tourism jobs ($mean^{all} = 3.47$). We suggest that negative views are related to unequal distribution of the tourism benefits in the region, moreover, the it can be explained by the lack of development and tourism services in especially in rural areas, as the residents expect to gain economic benefits from tourism. In developing countries, tourism seen as key way to improve the quality of life (Lepp, 2007). Several studies investigated matured tourism developments have reported a greater number of concerns among residents regarding the negative impact of tourism (e.g. Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

Results of cross tabulation (Table 2) indicates that urban women who worked in tourism sector and part of local organization indicated better views than rural women did. Generally speaking, respondents in rural and urban areas who were member of local organization were have better views of tourism especially as a sector creating business and jobs

Table 1
Interviewees’ profile.

Interviewee’s code	Occupation	Economic dependence on tourism	Age	Marital status	Children	Place of living
SU-R-01	Unemployed\Homemaker	No	65	Married	Yes	Rural
RW-R-02	Teacher	No	24	Single	No	Rural
AS-U-01	Community development officer	No	36	Married	Yes	Urban
SA-U-02	Event manager	Yes	39	Married	Yes	Urban
SU-U-03	Phlebotomists	No	26	Married	Yes	Urban
XX-R-03	Local association employee	No	27	Single	No	Rural
MR-R-04	Unemployed\Homemaker	No	54	Married	Yes	Rural
QL-R-05	Nurse	No	25	Single	No	Rural
JM-U-04	Student	No	23	Single	No	Urban
JMP-U-05	Human resources	No	39	Married	Yes	Urban
OP-U-06	Community developer	Yes	45	Married	Yes	Urban
DM-R-06	Local association director	No	41	Married	Yes	Rural
SM-R-07	Secretary	No	35	Married	Yes	Rural

opportunities.

Findings shows significant differentiation between rural and urban areas. Rural area respondents reported less positive and more negative perceptions of the economic impacts of tourism (positive scale, $mean^{rural} = 1.59-2.07$, $p < 0.001$; negative scale, $mean^{rural} = 4.53-4.64$, $p < 0.001$) and urban area respondents reported more positive views on the positive impact scale (positive scale, $mean^{urban} = 2.63-3.34$, $p < 0.001$), and they agreed with the negative scale less than rural respondents ($mean^{urban} = 3.25-3.68$, $p < 0.001$). Findings from the quantitative data suggest that women in rural areas don’t view tourism as an industry that creates jobs or enhances the transportation, and they were concern the most regarding the prices of properties (mean = 4.64). Urban respondents were concerned most about the cost of living. However, this can be explained by absent of the tourism benefits and development in the southern rural areas and poor transportation services in the region. Transportation for women is difficult, as shown in section 3, and women are tend to be concern about it.

The results are consistent with several studies which have noted that women have negative views of tourism development (e.g. Alrwajfah et al., 2019). For instance, Harrill and Potts (2003) found that women of Charleston are concerned about economic benefits. Mason and Cheyne (2000) noted that women are more opposed to tourism’s impacts, such as acquired economic benefits, than men in rural New Zealand. Women in the Petra region may have these unfavorable views of economic impacts due the unequal distribution of tourism benefits and the lack of job opportunities (Al Haija, 2011; Alrwajfah et al., 2019). The same concepts can explain the difference between rural and urban views; furthermore, women in rural areas may view the tourism industry as a sector that creates marginal economic benefits.

The analysis of the qualitative data was intended to explain the negative views towards tourism’s economic impacts on the part of women in the Petra region. Moreover, it was designed to explore the barriers to women’s involvement in the tourism sector and, from their perspective, whether there are any opportunities to empower women in the sector.

Table 3 shows the extracted components of several themes. The social component identified by “social stigma” was the most important component for respondents who work in the tourism sector and those who don’t.

“Social stigma prevents women from working in the tourism sector” (SA-U-02).

and

“Society is the main problem preventing women from work in the tourism sector her image in society will be negatively affected, it will affect her future, such as getting to marry” (XX-R-03).

Older interviewees indicated their lack of knowledge about the tourism sector; however, they were against the employment of women

Table 2
Difference in perceptions of Tourism’s economic impacts (ANOVA).

Scale	Over all view of economic impact			ANOVA Rural-Urban			Cross tabulation							
							Rural (n = 107)				Urban (n = 125)			
					work		NGO		work		NGO			
	M	SD	Rural	Urban	F	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	
Positive economic perceptions														
Tourism increases my family income	2.30	1.141	1.74	2.63	37.856**	1.50	1.74	1.75	1.72	2.83	2.61	2.53	2.89	
Tourism creates better public transportation	2.55	1.247	1.59	3.17	128.482**	1.50	1.59	1.61	1.53	3.17	3.17	3.18	3.14	
Tourism helps to build more roads	2.77	1.271	1.81	3.34	102.744**	2.00	1.81	1.77	1.91	3.25	3.35	3.46	3.06	
Tourism helps to create business opportunities	2.75	1.271	1.86	3.14	63.882**	1.50	1.87	1.85	1.88	3.00	3.16	3.16	3.11	
Tourism helps to create more jobs	2.79	1.397	2.07	3.21	45.418**	3.00	2.05	2.04	2.13	2.25	3.31	3.27	3.06	
Negative economic perceptions														
Tourism increases the price of properties	3.42	1.381	4.64	3.43	74.683**	4.00	4.66	4.61	4.72	2.75	3.50	3.73	2.66	
Tourism increases the cost of living	3.55	1.363	4.53	3.68	36.822**	4.50	4.53	4.51	4.59	2.75	3.78	3.84	3.26	
Tourism generates seasonal unemployment	3.47	1.348	4.56	3.55	58.851**	4.50	4.56	4.53	4.63	3.25	3.58	3.70	3.17	
Tourism increases dependency on one sector	3.22	1.334	4.57	3.25	92.142**	4.50	4.57	4.59	4.53	3.08	3.27	3.21	3.34	

Note: **p < 0.001.

M = mean.

NGO = membership in local organization.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

Table 3
Extracted themes.

Components	Themes
Social	Social stigma Family restrictions Women’s image in the society
Political	Support of government Women in decision making level
Tourism industry/Employment	Job opportunities Type of jobs are not suitable for local women Local associations
Religious	Mix with foreigners Wearing hijab and tourism related jobs
Traditions	The role of women in the family The role of women in the society Family duties

in the sector.

“I’m an old woman I wanted to complete my studies but then I have kids, and now I’m happy of what I have, thanks to God Tourism sector is a place just for men to work in” (SU-R-01).

Religion emerged as a theme important to the respondents. They didn’t see the tourism sector a place for local women to work. The tourism sector, as they mention, is a place where women can’t wear the hijab and they have to travel to other countries.

“Our society is Muslim and mixing with foreign men is prohibited” (RW-R-02).

The role of women in the society was evident. Interviewees indicated that once a woman gets married, her main responsibility is to take care of the house and children. It’s difficult to manage household duties and working hours, especially in the tourism sector.

“Women in my community don’t have time to work in the tourism industry because she has a lot of things to do in her house it is very difficult for her to work in tourism or any other sector”.

All interviewees suggested that a local organization is the best way for women to directly reap the economic benefits of tourism. This kind of job, as they mentioned, does not affect the women’s health, reputation, and her image in society.

“I don’t mind local women working in the tourism sector despite the cultural restrictions these jobs must be suitable for women and don’t affect her health and dignity” (AS-U-01).

Education was mentioned in two regards. First, women in the Petra region have the educational ability and skills to work in the tourism sector; however, there are no “socially” appropriate opportunities for them in the sector. Second, young women are directed by family and society to study a subject that allows them to work in the public sector as a teacher, nurse, or in administrative positions.

“Women’s education is not related to the tourism sector such as studies related education sector, medical sector”.

The outcomes of the interviews concur with the articles related to women’s empowerment and with several other studies (e.g. Cave & Kilic, 2010; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Scott, 1995; Sisterhood is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI),). Religious values and cultural norms were highly evident. Jafari and Scott (2014) suggested that religion influences tourism activities in Islamic countries; this is similar to what Cave and Kilic (2010) found in Antalya, Turkey. What’s more, being part of local organizations positively influences residents’ views of tourism development (Teye, Sönmez, & Sirakaya, 2002). Local associations can provide jobs to women related to hand crafts and souvenirs (Swanson & Timothy, 2012), rural tourism (Olga & Caroline, 1995) and gastronomy (Montero, 2018).

A common view of the two methods results provide an evidence of the importance of the employment in the tourism sector to the Petra region women. They seem to have a negative view of tourism benefits and that could be explained by their lack of integration and working in the tourism sector. Previous studies have found that having a job in tourism negatively influence the perceived impacts (Teye et al., 2002), despite that, other studies reported that women are more likely to recognize the positive influence of tourism (Mason & Cheyne, 2000), and they are more concerned about economic benefits of tourism (Harrill & Potts, 2003). Moreover, results indicate that women tend to be member of local organization, and that consist with the outcome of the interviews. Which indicates that women in the region expect to integrate in the sector through the local organizations. These results support previous researches in developing Muslim countries, such as the study of (Çiçek, Zencir, & Kozak, 2017) in Turkey.

6. Conclusions

This paper aimed to explore women's perspectives on the economic impact of tourism and to acquire a deeper understanding of their lack of involvement in the tourism sector of the Petra region. In conclusion, the research has revealed that women in the Petra region face difficulties in benefitting economically from the tourism industry. Despite the social, religious and educational restrictions, women are interested in gaining from tourism. Having said that, the way of obtaining these benefits should be socially accepted. Therefore, this study suggests that local organizations are a preferable approach to enhancing their involvement in the sector, especially in rural areas, and to reducing women's negative perceptions of tourism's impacts. This recommendation is not meant to emphasize the traditional role of women in the society nor to increase the number of women on the lower rungs of the employment ladder. Swanson and Timothy (2012) pointed out that this can help to empower women economically or increase higher positions for the men. However, this approach is accepted by the local community of the region. It is hoped that this study will enhance women's empowerment in the Petra region and in Jordan. Future studies regarding rural tourism as a sustainable tourism tool in the rural Petra region are recommended.

Author contributions

Moayad Mohammad Alrwajfah; Conceived and designed the analysis, Collected the data, Contributed data or analysis tools, Performed the analysis, Wrote the paper, Other contribution, Fernando Almeida García, Wrote the paper, Other contribution, Rafael Cortés Macías; Collected the data, Wrote the paper, Other contribution

Acknowledgments

The research was supported by research projects: "Transformations of the historical urban landscape induced by tourism: contradictions and controversies, government and local governance" (CSO2016-75470-R); "Overtourism in Spanish coastal Destinations and Tourism degrowth strategies An approach from the social dimension"(RTI2018-094844-B-C33), Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (National Plan for R+D+i).

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