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Impact of Perception of Local Community and Destination Image on Intention to Visit Destination; Moderating Role of Local Community Attitude

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Abstract

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to review the impact of perception of the local community and destination image, on the Intention to visit the destination, also the moderating role of local community attitude between the emotional perception of the local community and destination image on the Intention to visit destination of Pakistan tourism sector. This paper's framework was developed based on a systematic review of past literature which has not been tested yet. Present conceptual paper suggests future researchers test the present framework in the tourism sector in Pakistan using a quantitative approach. This research found the important influence of the study's variables on the Intention to visit a destination. However, a deep understanding provided of how three (3) variables affect the Intention to visit a destination in Pakistan. The paper emphasizes the critical value of perception and attitude of the local community and destination image, for tourism sector owner/managers consideration when acting on behalf of their company; failing which the tourism could experience poor destination image. Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Theory of Destination Image was used to underlie the conceptual framework. In addition, the implications of this conceptual model for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Perception of Local Community, Destination Image, Local Community Attitude, Intention to Visit Destination

Introduction

Tourism is a large social and cultural activity with a large economic impact on nations. After gasoline and chemicals, it is also the world's fourth largest export (Rehman et al., 2020). In the 1980s, there were 41 million tourists worldwide, growing to 45 million in the 1990s (Rehman et al., 2020). There have been 196 million visitors in the last decade. In 2015, 11.86 million individuals travelled abroad, and the global tourist industry earned US\$1.5 trillion in export revenue, propelling tourism to the world's fifth largest sector (UNWTO, 2018). Tourism and the travel industry are important economic activities all over the world. Tourism remains an important source of jobs and revenue in both the governmental and commercial sectors in many places (Manzoor et al., 2019). Furthermore, in advanced countries, it is the fundamental source and structure for a country's economic growth and advancement (Manzoor et al., 2019).

Pakistan's tourism business is well-known. Pakistan is a great country with a thriving tourism industry (Manzoor et al., 2019). Pakistan has abundant resources for environmental, historical, archaeological, and tourist activities (Haq et al., 2019). Pakistan is a renowned tourist destination due to the presence of historic heritage digs from civilizations such as the Indus Valley culture, Kalasha, Buddhists, and others. Moreover, the beautiful sections of Pakistan, such as the northern areas with gorgeous mountains, glaciers, and waterfalls, and the southern areas with the Cholistan desert, Gawadar sea beach, and temples in Sindh and Punjab, are well known for adventure sports. Despite of its immense potential, Pakistan's tourism industry has been given full rights and recognition. Travel and tourism contributed around USD 7.6 billion to GDP in 2016, and it is expected to expand by 5.1 percent in 2017 and by 5.6 percent each year to PKR 1,432.1 billion by 2027 (Arshad et al., 2018). The contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was 6.9 percent (USD 19.4 billion) in 2016, and it is expected to rise to 5.8 percent per year and 7.2 percent of GDP by 2027 (Arshad et al., 2018). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the travel and tourism business in Pakistan employed 2.3 percent of the total population (1.4 million) in 2016. Despite of that, there are a significant gap between demand and service availability, as well as departmental interaction (Arshad et al., 2018). Despite that, Pakistan was ranked 121st out of 140 countries in the 2019 Travel & Tourism Competitive Index (Nazir et al., 2021). Pakistan's tourism business has been unpredictable due to a number of political and security problems. Pakistan's tourism sector has been a significant economic contributor, and the government places a special emphasis on tourism. Pakistan government continues to support the tourism sector thorough management strategic planning for tourism growth (Haq et al., 2019). Despite of that, the country has faced a number of hurdles in increasing the economic contributions of this industry (Nazir et al., 2021). Furthermore, the reduction in foreign visitor arrivals is driven not just by safety and security concerns, but also by inadequate facilities, a lack of interaction among institutions, and a lack of private sector participation (Arshad et al., 2018). In terms of international tourist arrivals, Pakistan lags significantly behind South Asian countries (PIPS, 2018). Pakistan's international tourist receipts fell dramatically between 2011 and 2018, from 1,127 million to 8,18 million. Furthermore, the average foreign tourist arrival in South Asia was around 2.34 million from 2014 to 2018, whereas the average international tourist arrival in Pakistan was 0.80 million (WDI, 2019). As a result, declining foreign visitor

arrivals and receipts are likely to have a negative impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation (Khan et al., 2020).

Many researchers have studied local people's attitudes toward tourism for more than 30 years (García et al., 2015). Interactions between tourists and local communities have an economic, social, and environmental influence on those communities (Martin, 2019). Tourism is a process of exchange that involves a direct and reciprocal link between users and producers of the tourism product, which then describes the "tourism experience" (Brida et al., 2011). As a result, understanding local inhabitants' views toward tourist development is critical for the success and long-term viability of any sort of tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2010). Several participations in community tourist growth in order to improve citizens' quality of life (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Scholars continue to be interested in research on local communities (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Understanding tourist sentiments enables for the development of an adequate response mechanism to the negative effects of tourism exchange (Sharma & Dyer, 2009). Evaluation of locals' perceptions of consequences and their level of service for various types of growth may be required to ensure business challenges and to handle the most crucial features that emerge as a tourist attraction grows (Gursoy et al., 2010). There's any need to recognize the significance of travelers and their contributions to tourism. As a result, scholars and researchers must analyses tourists' attitudes and views regarding acquiring travel products. To fulfil the requirements and wants of its citizens, a town that develops and employs tourism as an alternate means of improving its economic development must establish tourism sector (Puczko & Ratz, 2000). The goal of this conceptual paper is to investigate tourist propensity to visit places, as well as local community attitudes and perceptions of tourism. As a result, the primary research objectives of this paper are to carefully analyses how willing tourists are to visit tourist attractions. Moreover, it is difficult to establish sustainable tourism without the involvement and support of community residents (Nicholas et al., 2009). Prior empirical research on the importance of visitors was undertaken by (Maziriri et al., 2021), who investigated local inhabitants' opinions of tourists and destination image; attitudes of local residents toward tourists as a mediator variable on tourists' propensity to visit a place. As a result, this work served as a foundation for some of the current studies.

Furthermore, scholars including such Nicholas et al (2009) argued that effective tourist development is heavily reliant on the development and operational participation of local citizens in the community in consideration. The support of local citizens for tourist development is crucial because the effective functioning and sustainability of tourism is strongly reliant on their friendliness (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). This study adheres to the basic theme of tourist investigation covered by the works of (Bryden, 1973; De Kadt, 1979). However, the current study looks on people's desire to visit local tourist attractions, as well as their views and perceptions about tourism sector.

There has been little investigation into how community members' commitment and encouragement affect tourism development efforts (Teye et al., 2002). There hasn't been a lot of emphasis on how local citizens' attitudes and perceptions of a location influence their support for tourism growth (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011). The current investigation is based on the destination image theory, which is discussed in further depth later in the conceptual paper. A small number of studies have looked at residents' perceptions of their surroundings. Moreover, very few have looked into how their surroundings affect their views and reactions to tourism development (Maziriri et al., 2021; Styliadis et al., 2014). As a result, the preceding study highlights the necessity for additional research on local inhabitants' opinions regarding

domestic tourism. This study is thought to add to existing understanding of the impact that local residents' perceptions have on their propensity to visit a destination. However, it was discovered that the sentiments of local residents strongly influenced their decisions to visit a local tourist destination.

Literature Review

Perception of Local Community

Tourism's perceived personal advantage to an individual, or reliance on it, and its connection to views have recently been investigated (Andereck et al., 2005). In support of social exchange theory, according to the majority of studies, residents who are dependent on the industry or feel a higher level of economic gain or personal advantage have more positive assessments of influence than others (Ajzen, 1991). Social exchange theory is a broad sociological theory that focuses on the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in interaction situations (Andereck et al., 2005).

Destination Image

Based in literature, it is usual for tourist decision-making to integrate destination image (Qu et al., 2011; Tasci & Kozak, 2006). Destination image is very important in tourists' decision-making and subsequent travel behavior (Chuchu et al., 2018). Consumers, on the other hand, obtain a variety of vacation options that offer similar attributes such as great accommodations, beautiful scenic vistas, or pleasant people. From this standpoint, the concept of destination branding is vital for a destination to be identifiable and differentiated from alternatives in the eyes of the target market (Qu et al., 2011). A destination brand's image can be defined as people's perceptions of the destination (Cai, 2002). As a result, destination branding can be used to communicate a location's distinct identity while separating it from competitors (Qu et al., 2011). Destination brands, like general brand awareness, are responsible for identification and distinction; this also applies to place marketing (Qu et al., 2011).

Intention to visit destination

Competitive environment for visitors across worldwide destinations has highlighted the importance of expertise and marketing value as aspects that really can render exploring a place more appealing (Murphy et al., 2000). In tourism promotion, value is defined as the sum of a product's (destination's) quality and perceived value and related cost that a tourist will summarize as the worth obtained (Murphy et al., 2000). According to the branding notion, organizations that take a strategic stance that places visitors at the focus of strategic decision-making are market-focused (Line & Wang, 2017).

Research Design and Methods

Design and layout were identified as organizational factors in previous studies. The design/layout of a place allows people to position themselves, absorb and interpret information, and create personalized impressions and effects. Furthermore, this conceptual paper was created through a comprehensive review of the literature. Likewise, the review of the literature was conducted on scholarly literature relevant to two (2) independent variables (Perception of local community and destination image) and one (1) moderator variable local community Attitude on Intention to visit destination as it shows in (Figure 1). Four (4) hypotheses have been constructed in this conceptual paper to investigate the relationship of

the variables on Intention to visit destination. Similarly, future researchers may have employed a quantitative approach (questionnaire) to collect data for the research study. Consequently, three underlying theories, Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior, Theory of Destination Image, was used to validate the research framework. A comprehensive, standardized methodology for performing a systematic review was used during the conceptual paper process. In the future, the proposed conceptual framework could be empirically examined utilizing the non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling).

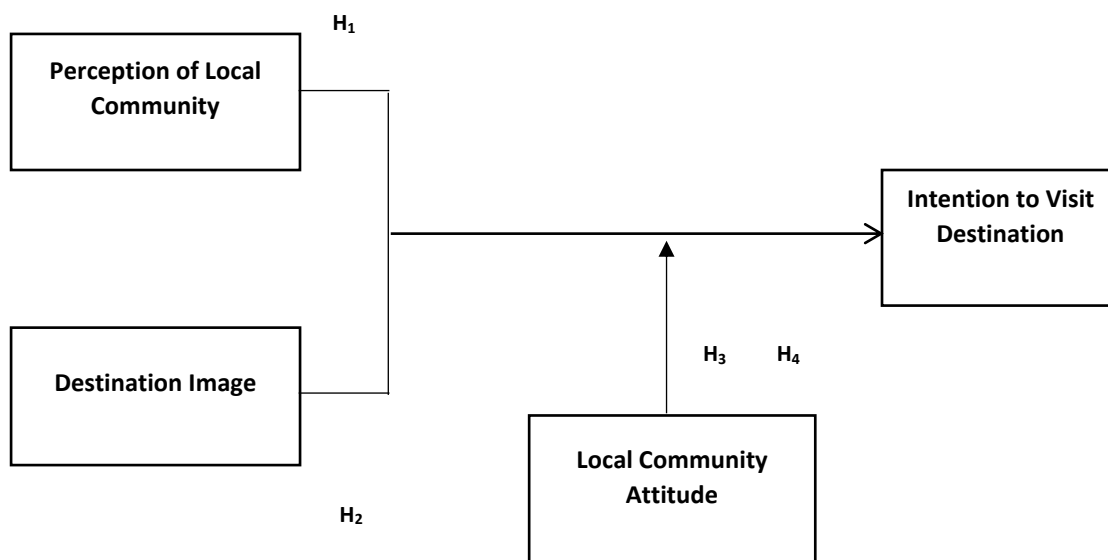


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis Development

The Relationship Between Perception of local community and Intention to visit destination

Tourism's perceived personal benefit to an individual, or dependence on it, and its relationship to views have previously been investigated (Andereck et al., 2005). Most research has found that inhabitants who are dependent on the sector or feel a greater level of economic gain or personal advantage have more positive perceptions of an influence than others, lending support to social exchange theory (Ajzen, 1991). Social exchange theory is a broad sociological theory that focuses on the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in interaction situations (Ajzen, 1991; Andereck et al. 2005). Some of the factors studied include sociocultural influences, socio-demographics, and culture. Because both positive and negative consequences are likely, large-scale ventures should be performed through local firms and in accordance with the values of host communities (Besculides et al., 2002; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Williams & Lawson, 2001). People's external behavior is linked to their perceptions. Individuals that have a favorable perception of tourism will support tourist efforts. Similarly, when local residents perceive tourism positively, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward tourists, which leads to tourists having a favorable impression of the place and tourists being inclined to return. The following hypothesis is offered based on the preceding material.

H₁: There is a positive relationship between perception of local community and intention to visit destination

The Relationship between Destination Image and Intention to Visit Destination

Destination image is a multidimensional construct that is influenced by cognitive, unique, and effective concepts that influence tourist behavior. As a result, image serves as a bridge between cognitive, distinctive, and effective product involvement and behavioral intents (Maumbe & Wyk, 2016). According to Maumbe and Wyk (2016), brand image is defined as tourists' and potential tourists' perceptions of the place. Many variables contribute to a destination's image, including recreational activities, weather conditions, safety and security, and a variety of other aspects. In order to create a favorable destination image in the minds of tourists, the marketer must develop ways to strategically showcase the location's distinctive traits and capabilities. In addition, it is tough for marketers to reposition a destination's image after it has gained a negative image. This is due to the fact that travelers may have a variety of different destinations in their memory set. As a result, marketers must maintain a favorable and appealing reputation for the place. The hypothesis below is proposed.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between destination image and Intention to visit destination

Moderating Role of Local Community Attitude

Community participation is essential for tourism initiatives (Mokoena et al., 2016). Communities' attitudes are a crucial indicator of effective sustainable tourist development. The attitudes of community members are critical for the successful management of a tourism destination (Mokoena et al., 2016). Moreover, because perceptions drive an individual's behavior toward an object or event, positive perceptions of tourism will positively influence local community members' attitudes and actions toward tourism. Community members, on the other hand, are more likely to oppose tourism development plans and activities if they have negative impressions of tourism. As a result, local communities may be hostile to tourists. The consequences of shown poor behavior may have a severe impact on the local economy, as tourists may not return to the destination or publicly discuss their unfavorable experiences. Locals often have good opinions about tourism since they regard it as an economic development instrument. However, as a destination progresses through its life cycle, local inhabitants' opinions of tourism impacts and their level of tourism support tend to shift (Gursoy et al., 2010). Destination image influences traveler intent (Chuchu, 2020). Monitoring changes in local perceptions and attitudes, as well as identifying new development ideas that may be supported by locals, are two steps that can be performed (Gursoy et al., 2010). Moreover, because perceptions shape attitudes, it is obvious that positive impressions lead to positive attitudes, which ultimately determine whether or not local citizens are prepared to support tourism. Local service providers must emphasize how the improvement or establishment of local facilities would improve inhabitants' quality of life. Marketers must also devise tactics to create jobs for communities in order to promote tourism development.

An attitude is a judgement on something (Bohner & Dickel, 2011). Attitude objects include anything a person can think of, from the commonplace to the abstract, such as things, people, groups, and ideas (Bohner & Dickel, 2011). A tourist's attitude is a broad assessment of a traveler's particular action (Gumpo et al., 2020). In order to quantify the unavoidable tourism effects on the local community, and the views created and reactions expressed by inhabitants, an investigation of attitudes from local residents should be included (Brida et al., 2011). Understanding consumer sentiments enables the development of an appropriate response

mechanism to the negative effects of tourism exchange (Brida et al., 2011). Hence, it would be worthwhile to explore the moderating effect of local residents' attitudes toward tourists on perceptions of tourism and destination Image (Maziriri et al., 2021). The following hypothesis are proposed.

H₃: Local community attitude moderates the relationship between perception of local community and Intention to visit destination

H₄: Local community attitude moderates the relationship between destination image and Intention to visit destination

Underpinning Theory

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action is a popular model for predicting behavioral intentions and behavior (Madden et al., 1992). The model accurately predicts behavioral intentions and behavior and is useful in determining where and how to target behavioral change initiatives (Sheppard et al., 1988). The concept of reasoned action was developed and tested under the assumption that the behaviours being researched were completely voluntary (Madden et al. 1992). When an individual has volitional control, he or she can choose whether or not to do a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Behavioral intentions are determined by salient information or thoughts about the likelihood that a specific behavior will result in a specific outcome (Madden et al., 1992).

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior introduced by Ajzen's (1991) model, integrates perceived behavioral control as an ascendant to behavioral goals (Madden et al. 1992). Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior expands on the boundary condition of pure volitional control provided by the theory of reasoned action. This is accomplished by integrating ideas about having the necessary resources and opportunity to conduct a given behavior. The stronger the perceived behavioral control over behavior, the more resources and possibilities individuals believe they have (Madden et al., 1992). Ajzen (1991) highlights two constructs related to planned behavior theory: Predicting behavior: intentions, and Perceived behavioral control.

Destination Image Theory

Destination Image Theory Destination image theory in tourist literature explains a stimulated image duality (Hunter, 2013). The theory evolved into three principles based on the idea that influenced and endogenous image views are conditionally independent. Destination image, perception of destination image, and projected destination image (Hunter, 2013). The tourism environment, including physical things and experiences, is referred to as destination imagery (Hunter, 2013). When exposed to destination imagery, the perceived destination image is formed, and the projected destination image is formed as a result of the development and packaging of pictures for promotion or discussion in print and digital media (Hunter, 2013). The notion of destination image will serve as the foundation for the investigation. This idea aids in understanding how tourists make judgments about exploring destinations, such as whether they want to return or recommend a location. The destination image hypothesis has received a lot of attention in tourism and marketing studies (Stylidis et al., 2017). The destination image theory is a well-studied issue in both tourism and travel (Chuchu, 2021). Previous studies have used the destination image theory to investigate the

many characteristics of destination image, emotional solidarity, and place attachment (Agapito et al., 2013; Chuchu, 2021; Styliadis, 2022). The repercussions of a traveler's thoughts, conceptions, and perceptions about a destination are reflected in the destination picture in tourism (Chuchu, 2021). A destination's image has a substantial impact on traveler intention (Chuchu, 2020). In the early 1970s, the notion of image in tourism research was created. Concepts of destination image can be cognitive or affective, and a combination of the two is typically used to identify and describe a tourist's image of a destination (Tan & Wu, 2016). The destination image has a significant impact on tourist behavior (Chuchu, 2021). A destination is defined as an idea or concept that comprises of practical components that pertain to a destination's more physical qualities and emotional components that relate to the destination's more intangible factors (Chuchu, 2021).

Design/Methodology

A systematic review was conducted by four (4) reviewers, with a focus on the blind and simultaneous acquisition and analysis of material. Similarly, the evaluation procedure was well-developed in order to avoid biases and obsolete or low-quality material. A systematic review starts with a well-formulated research question that is then supported by the use of a methodology. Furthermore, a thorough research assessment is required in a systematic review process. As a result, we will have access to all conceivable data, including those that are particularly pertinent to our activities. Except for the requirement of a full, realistic, and reproducible literature review, these three (3) characteristics distinguish a Systematic review from a normal narrative analysis. Following the selection of the study, an accurate, full, and systematic synthesis of all knowledge presented in each published paper was examined.

Results and Discussion

The conceptual paper was built through a thorough study of journal papers, proceedings, conferences, and books relevant to the keywords and research subject. The following theoretical structure was constructed based on the scope of the literature review and research discrepancies (Figure 1). According to the analysis of the literature, previous studies have primarily discovered that Perception of local community and destination image have a good influence on Intention to visit destination. Thus, when the Perception of local community and destination image level increase; this will also improve Intention to visit destination.

Integrative Framework

Despite previous studies, some apparent determinants of perception and attitude, especially local community-related notions, have stayed unexplained. According to Perdue et al. (1990), the perceived personal advantage of tourism to an individual, or dependence on it, and its relationship to attitudes has previously been investigated. According to the majority of studies, residents who are dependent on the industry or feel a higher level of economic gain or personal advantage have more positive assessments of influence than others (Brunt & Courtney, 1999). Perceived behavioral control is an ascendant to behavioral goals in the idea of planned behavior (Madden et al., 1992). The study will also contribute to the relationship between destination image and tourists' intention to visit a destination. According to Qu et al (2011), it is widely understood that tourism locations must be included in the evocative set of consumers from whom an ultimate decision is made. According to Chang and Wildt (1994), value can be defined as the sum of a product's (destination's) perceived quality and related

price, which a visitor will sum as the value received (Murphy et al., 2000). The study will also contribute to the understanding of local inhabitants' attitudes toward visitors, which will discover a favorable association between tourists' propensity to visit a destination. Understanding people's opinions entails determining whether residents support or oppose tourism development schemes (Brida et al., 2011). Maziriri et al (2021) suggested further investigation of the frame work to explore the moderating effect of local residents' attitudes toward tourists on perceptions of tourism and destination Image.

Implications of the Study

Present research contribution will be made by examining the impact of perception of local community and destination image on Intention to visit destination and the moderating role of local community attitude on the relationship between perception of local community and destination image on Intention to visit destination in Pakistan tourism sector. Theoretically, the present findings will add new knowledge to destination image, local community perception and attitude. Unlike the past studies, the present research will a valuable contribution to the literature by further understanding the relationship between destination image, local community perception and attitude and Intention to visit destination of Pakistani tourism sector. Present research expanded the model of Maziriri et al (2021), and research was also investigated in other country. In addition, present research used "local community attitude" as moderator variable. The research's theoretical contribution is a unique conceptual model, based on a theoretical perspective. However, it revealed some significant managerial implications for destination image, local community perception and attitude and Intention to visit destination, demonstrating that these notions have a causal relationship. The current study's conclusions could assist business owners and managers in making better use of their company's resources. The current research findings will be useful to the owners/managers of tourism businesses in Pakistan in order to gain a competitive advantage. Furthermore, the results will provide the importance of destination image, local community perception and attitude and Intention to visit destination, it will help the organization create revenue In practice, the study's findings will provide important information to tourism stakeholders and policymakers about the importance of key success factors and effective tourism development implementation, particularly for tourism sites in Pakistan. Tourism marketers must understand local residents' perceptions of tourists, which lead to attitudes, whether favorable or unfavorable, that may influence tourists' willingness to visit a destination. The current conceptual study findings may provide some recommendations to Pakistan's tourist business in order to strengthen competitive advantages. As a result, increased tourist arrivals and receipts in the future could indirectly benefit the Pakistani economy.

Future Research Opportunities

This study like any other had its fair share of limitations. First, the study will be purely quantitative, this limited the extent to which participants could express themselves. This is because a limited Likert-scale questionnaire will have used to collect responses from participants. This could have resulted in local tourists' attitudes being partially or not fully measured regarding their attitudes towards tourism. It would be beneficial if future research incorporates a qualitative aspect through the form of in-depth interviews. Since local tourists would not be restricted by a structured scale, this will be able to provide responses with rich depth and provide deeper insights on the topic. Future research should include a more

diversified sample of local tourists, as this will provide more objective input from different points of view. In terms of conceptual advice, the existing model could be improved by analyzing prospective hypotheses that were not tested in this study. Despite its centrality, the conceptual framework has not been empirically tested. Future study could put the current conceptual framework to the test in Pakistan tourism destinations or other countries. Future studies may add additional mediator or moderating variable, such as social media, risk perception, and test them empirically. Aside from these suggested future research options for improving the model, it may be useful to investigate longitudinal elements of destination image, given that each construct is very dynamic and depending on individual experiences (Woosnam et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This conceptual paper focuses on perception of local community and destination image and its impact on Intention to visit destination. Also highlighted on the moderating role of local community attitude on the relationship between perception of local community and destination image on Intention to visit destination. High emphasis on perception and attitude of local community and destination image might be enhance the level of intention to visit destination in Pakistani tourism would also motivate other companies in utilizing the companies' resources efficiently. Moreover, it will explain how perception and attitude of local community and destination image factors could be used to increase the level of intention to visit in Pakistan tourist destination. Companies should effectively exploit their resources to boost their performance. As a result of the rapidly market dynamics and competitive market, the tourism sector involves specialized approaches to develop a stronger competitive edge in improving existing products or services to fulfil the demands of its visitors. Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior, Theory of Destination Image were used to underlie the conceptual framework. In addition, implications of this conceptual model for theory and practice are discussed.

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