

COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION AS AN INDICATOR OF A DESTINATION'S LIFE CYCLE

Towards Development of an Early Warning System for Small Destinations

Seweryn Zielinski
Camilo Mateo Botero Saltaren
Universidad de Magdalena - Colombia

The tourism development in small destinations is more sensitive than in the case of larger ones, thus it is necessary to have an early warning tool to inform about the conditions that can accelerate the destination's decline. The Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle model – TALC defines the development stage of a destination, although numerous studies have established that new variables should be included, which difficult its quick application. The objective of this research was to establish residents' perception ranges for small tourist destinations, in order to facilitate the determination of the exact stage of development and foresee the destination's decline. The methodology consisted of determination of the level of tourism development, based on the TALC model, and through the community's perceptions of the tourism development. The results of the application of the TALC model demonstrate that the research area is in the mid-development stage. The main conclusion of the research is that the community's perception study is an easier and more effective tool to determine the development level of a small tourism destination than the TALC model, while it is also useful as an early warning sign for a destination's decline.

KEY WORDS: Butler, TALC, tourism destination, community's perception, Taganga, Colombia.