

RESIDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS SLUM AND DUMPSITE TOURISM:

¿Philanthropy or Strange Curiosity for Poverty

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The present study questioned whether dumpsite and slum visits are a form of philanthropic travel or a mere product of strange curiosity. Host attitudes towards dumpsite and slum tours in Mazatlán were analysed, respondents included dumpsite workers locally known as “pepenadores”, as well as residents of four poor neighbourhoods in the outskirts of the city. Mixed methods were used to collect primary data, they included: a survey, semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation as an auxiliary technique. A total of 140 questionnaires in form of Likert scale were administered to locals selected randomly, additionally, 11 opinion leaders selected purposively from the community were interviewed to complement the aforementioned survey data. Analysis was both quantitative (descriptive and inferential statistics) and qualitative by way of thematic analysis. Findings indicate that host residents generally hold negative attitudes towards dumpsite and slum visits. Extrinsic factors like interaction with dumpsite visitors and levels of benefits accruing from the visits were found to shape perceptions. Findings can help to improve the way these dumpsite and slum tours are carried out, this is important for the organizers to achieve socioeconomic sustainability and maintain a harmonious relationship between the hosts and tourists. The study recommends a more inclusive approach towards slum tourism and more broadly towards Travellers’ Philanthropy programs to enhance long term benefits and interactions between tourists and the locals.

KEY WORDS: Attitudes, residents, slum tourism, dumpsites, dark tourism, Mazatlán, Sinaloa.