

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN THE ISLANDS OF LEMNOS AND HYDRA

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*Many Greek islands, like Crete, Rhodes, Corfu, Santorini and Mykonos, are included among the most popular tourist destinations worldwide. For Greece and especially for its small islands, tourism constitutes a vital factor of development and prosperity. Our study is concentrated on two, not so popular, Greek islands (Hydra and Lemnos) with different characteristics and focuses on residents' attitudes and perceptions about tourism development. Based on a sample of 400 residents of Hydra and Lemnos, we find that the economic parameters contribute significant on the perceptions' formation about tourism development. We also find that there is a reduced perception about the negative affect of tourism on society and environment, especially when the income is directly depended from tourism.*

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JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamically developing sectors in the world economy and plays a very important role in the development and sustainability of Greek economy. In 2009 it composed 15,2 % of GNP and 18,5% of total employment (A.G.T.E, 2010). The economic situation in smaller Greek islands is not prosperous, consequently tourism,

constitutes an important source of income. Tsartas (2009) reports that it has been observed a progressive but constant and in many cases with fast rhythm "tourismization" (main economic orientation to the tourism) in the anthropography of the majority of the Greek islands. The growth of tourism, causes important impacts worldwide both positive and negative (Gürsoy et al., 2000; Haley et al., 2004) which are particularly sensitive in small islands, because of their unique characteristics, such as the limited space, the small amounts of natural goods and raw material, as well as the limited number of manpower (Kokkosis and Tsartas, 2001).

Among the positives of tourism are included the increase of income (Dwyer et al., 2000; Karamanidis, 2006; Mavrodontis, 2006), the increase of employment opportunities (Milman and Pizam, 1988), the reduction of unemployment (Dimitriadis et al., 2007; Chacko and Schaffer, 1993), the entrepreneurial opportunities (Štuhec et al., 2009), the preservation and resurgence of the culture (Mavrodontis, 2006; Mpenetatos et al., 2004; Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999), the improvement of infrastructures and services (Gyimothi, 1999), the increase of recreational installations (Lankford et al., 1997; Williams and Lawson 2001), the increase of the amusement options (Davis et al., 1988), the improvement of the police and fire safety (Lankford et al., 1997; Williams and Lawson 2001) and many others. Moreover, tourism indirectly affects a lot of other productive sectors such as building activity, technical projects, trade and recreation activities. Meliou & Maroudas (2010), found that "money" is considered amongst the most important contributions of tourism.

However, although the increase of tourism offers many positives, it can also be the cause of a lot of problems in the local societies. It has been accused for negative environmental impacts (Newsome, et al., 2004), for increase of land's value (Mpenetatos, et al., 2004), for being a threat of alteration of the local traditional culture (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Kokkosis and Tsartas, 2001), for undesirable changes in the family values (Ap and Crompton 1993; Henthorne et al., 2010), for the increase of criminality, pollution and traffic congestion (Jeong and Faulkner, 1996), for uncontrolled building (Spilanis and Karayiannis, 2009). Also there has been an increase of prices (Haley et al., 2004), taxes (Dimitriadis et al., 2007), inflation (Pearce, 1980) and others.

The attitude of the residents towards tourism is very important in order to create a hospitable and attractive environment (Var et al., 1977). According to Przeclawski (1986), when the reception community makes tourists feel welcome, it is more likely for them to visit it again and also to recommend it to others. The social exchange theory has often been used to interpret the effect of the material and psychological transactions

on the attitudes of the residents of tourist destinations (Ap, 1992; Gursoy et al., 2002; Jurowski et al., 1997; Yoon et al., 1999). Many studies (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Johnson et al., 1994; Weaver and Lawton, 2001) refer to an important relationship between the perceptions of tourism and the economic dependence from it, which implies that the residents that enjoy more economical profits, that come from tourism, have more positive attitudes in the tourist industry. Thus, the balance of perception of the residents for the cost and the benefits of tourism are considered to be an important factor for the visitor's satisfaction and it is of vital importance for the tourist growth (Allen et al., 1988; Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Lankford and Howard, 1994).

The demographic characteristics of the residents are also considered as significant factors that shape their attitudes and perceptions towards tourism. Harrill and Potts (2003) argue that women are more opposed to tourism than men. Zhang (2008) points out that older person are more aware of the profits of tourism, because they have seen the improvement of the quality of life and the economy in their community, compared to the past. In contrast, Rastegar (2010) argues that younger residents of tourist destinations show high expectations of tourism, while older residents look at it with more doubt because of the cultural changes that may tourism bring to the area. As far as the level of education is concerned, it was determined that in the Greek island environment, the individuals with higher level of education had more positive attitude towards tourism (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996).

Hydra and Limnos are the 2 islands in which the present research study was performed. Hydra is a small island, very close to Athens, with a population that does not exceed 3 thousands residents. The tourism development of Hydra began in the 50's. The island is distinguished for its natural beauties, for maintaining the local heritage, for its authentic town planning and architecture and it is famous for his intense life and every year it accepts a big number of tourists. Consequently, almost all the residents of the island are engaged with tourism (Hristodoulou, 2007). In a research which took place in 2007, Hydra occupied the 9th out of 111 selected classified tourism island destinations worldwide. However, the last few years it faces economic crisis. (Hristodoulou, 2009).

Limnos is found in the north-eastern Aegean and it is inhabited by 18 thousand permanent residents. The main activities of the residents are agriculture, livestock-farming, fishing and trade. In the last decades, Limnos gradually developed in a place of holiday, without however having a balanced strategy of tourism growth. The intense building activity, with rather negative consequences for the natural environment

and the traditional character of the island, gave job opportunities in a big part of the population, stopping the domestic immigration. However, apart from the development of similar activities, as well as the demand in the tourist sector services, the residents remain attached to the traditional agricultural and livestock-farming activities (Plantzos et al., 2005).

The purpose of the present study was to develop a valid and reliable instrument in order to be used in measuring Greek islands' residents' perceptions towards the effect of tourism. Moreover, it aims to explore the effect of the perceptions' related factors in forming the attitudes of the local residents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample and Measurement Instrument**

The sample of the present study is constituted by 400 residents living on the islands of Hydra and Lemnos islands who randomly were selected. The sample size is representative for a 5% error margin (Saunders et al., 2000). Males and females are equally presented in the sample, while the mean age is about 38 years old.

As measurement instrument a questionnaire was used, which is consisted of 49 statements or questions divided in three sections. In the first section there is only one statement which determines the attitude of the residents towards tourism development in their island. This statement is rated on a 7-point Likert scale from absolutely negative attitude (1), to absolutely positive attitude (7). The second section consists of 42 statements which measure the positive and negative perceptions of residents about the different parameter of tourist influence. For the construction of the second section we have used 10 previous instruments (Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008; Koa & Stewartb, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Yoon et al., 2001; Zhang, 2008; Huh & Vogt, 2008; Mason & Cheyne, 2000; Törn, et al., 2007). These statements are rated on a 7- point Likert scale from absolutely untruth (1), to absolutely truth (7). Finally, the third section is constituted by 5 questions referring to the demographic data of the respondents such as gender, age, income, education and relation of the occupation with the tourism. Furthermore, there is a statement about the improvement of family's income due to the tourism growth, which is measured as the statements of the second section.

## Scale Validation

The validation of the research instrument consists of two tests. The first one refers to the content validity and the second one to the construct validity. Content Validity is based on the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain of content (Carmines & Zeller, 1991) and is realized by a review of the literature on the subject of the study, and pilot test in a panel of experts (academics and professionals). In order to examine the factor structure of the instrument, the data was subjected to factor analysis and reliability analysis for each of the emerged factors.

The extraction of factors was performed with Principal Component Analysis method, using the Varimax Orthogonal rotation of the axis which is one of the most popular methods of Orthogonal rotation according to Sharma (1996) and Haier *et al.* (1995). As Measure of Sampling Adequacy (M.S.A) the index of Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (K.M.O) was used. This is the most popular diagnostic measure and it includes the degree to which some items belong to the same factor (Sharma, 1996). Sharma (1996) suggests that K.M.O has to be greater than 0,8. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test of sphericity for the overall significance of all correlations within the correlation matrix was performed. The criterion of Eigenvalue in order to determine the number of factors was used. Factors whose Eigenvalue is over one are selected. Finally, the factor loadings of the items were checked. In a sample of more than 350 individuals, a loading greater than 0,30 is considered as significant (Haier *et al.*, 1995).

We have run a first factor analysis with the 42 initial items of the second section. Seven items were eliminated because their loadings were low or they load onto two factors equally. After the elimination of the 7 items, we have run again factor analysis and the final factorial model is constituted by 8 distinctive factors which are related with the perceptions of the residents. Four of them determined positive perceptions, while three negative perceptions. The positive perceptions are named: Improvement of finances (F2), Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures (F4), Increase of opportunities of amusement and choices of local market (F5), Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage (F6) and Reduction of xenophobia (F8). The negative perceptions are named: Increase of delinquency and affects on ethos (F1), Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment (F3) and Increase of life's cost (F7).

The results in table 1, are very satisfying as they cover the restrictions which were mentioned earlier.

**Table 1 Results of Factor Analysis**

a/a	Items	Factors	Loadings
	The tourism causes:		
1	...increase of criminality	<b>F1</b> <i>Increase of Delinquency and affects on ethos</i> <b>Eigenvalue=6,723</b>	0,783
2	...increase of alcoholism		0,778
3	...increase of prostitution		0,858
4	...increase of drug trafficking		0,773
5	...negative effects in the ethos		0,552
6	...increase of gambling		0,690
7	...transmission of diseases		0,670
8	...improvement of the economic status of the island	<b>F2</b> <i>Improvement of finances</i> <b>Eigenvalue=5,622</b>	0,741
9	...improvement of the purchasing power		0,839
10	...creation of jobs		0,824
11	...attraction of investments		0,681
12	...improvement of the economic status of the residents		0,836
13	...improvement of the tax income of the local authorities (municipality)		0,528
14	...increase of labour exploitation of local population	<b>F3</b> <i>Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment</i> <b>Eigenvalue =2,830</b>	0,481
15	...negative influence in the lifestyle of locals		0,602
16	...negative effect in the natural environment		0,765
17	...increase of the pollution of the environment		0,602
18	...difficulty in accessing the beaches		0,540
19	...negative effect in the cultural heritage		0,746
20	...reduction of the number of small businesses		0,480
21	...protection of the environment		0,822
22	...improvement of the general picture of environment	<b>F4</b> <i>Protection of environment and improvement of public</i>	0,839
23	...creation of protected regions of natural beauty		0,821

24	...improvement of public infrastructures	<i>infrastructures</i> <b><i>Eigenvalue=2,064</i></b>	0,648
25	...increase of occasions of amusement	<b><i>F5</i></b> <i>Increase of opportunities of amusement and choices of local market</i> <b><i>Eigenvalue=1,776</i></b>	0,703
26	...increase of infrastructures of recreation		0,827
27	...increase of choices within the local market		0,684
28	...conservation and restoration of historical places and monuments	<b><i>F6</i></b> <i>Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage</i> <b><i>Eigenvalue=1,578</i></b>	0,757
29	...maintenance of cultural heritage		0,744
30	...maintenance of the cultural identity		0,603
31	...increase of the price of goods and services	<b><i>F7</i></b> <i>Increase of life's cost</i> <b><i>Eigenvalue=1,294</i></b>	0,823
32	...increase of the cost of real estates		0,807
33	...increase in property rents		0,742
34	...improvement of the behaviour of the locals towards the foreigners	<b><i>F8</i></b> <i>Reduction of xenophobia</i> <b><i>Eigenvalue=1,090</i></b>	0,806
35	...reduction of xenophobia of the locals		0,812

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0,842.  
 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square=6626,35, df=595,  
 Sig. = 0,001  
 Total Variance Explained = 65,647%.

After the factor analysis, the eight new variables were created from the mean scores of the variables which explain each factor.

For testing the reliability of resulting factors Cronbach's *alpha* index was used. The concept of reliability refers to the extent at which a group of items is consistent and what intends to measure (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Nunally (1978) suggests that Cronbach's *alpha* should be more than 0,7 so as to be characterized a construct reliable. From the results, which are presented on table 2, we can conclude that all factors are reliable.

**Table 2 Reliability Analysis**

Factors	Cronbach's <i>a</i>
<b>F1. Increase of Delinquency and affects on ethos</b>	0,890
<b>F2. Improvement of finances</b>	0,864
<b>F3. Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment</b>	0,796
<b>F4. Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures</b>	0,856
<b>F5. Increase of occasions of amusement and choices of local market</b>	0,750
<b>F6. Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage</b>	0,823
<b>F7. Increase of life's cost</b>	0,729
<b>F8. Reduction of xenophobia</b>	0,791

## RESULTS

The two most important factors of perceptions are “Increase of life’s cost” which expresses a negative perception and “Improvement of finances” which expresses a positive perception of the residents. There is an overstressing perception about the positive effects of tourism and degradation about the negative perception, except for “Increase of life’s cost”. The attitude of the residents towards the tourism growth is positive. However, the coefficient of variation for all the factors is very high and thus we can conclude that there are differences between the perceptions of the residents of the two islands.

**Table 3 Basic Statistics**

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
<b>F1. Increase of Delinquency and affects on ethos</b>	3,14	1,49	47,45%
<b>F2. Improvement of finances</b>	4,92	1,32	26,82%
<b>F3. Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment</b>	3,16	1,21	38,29%
<b>F4. Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures</b>	3,77	1,45	38,46%
<b>F5. Increase of occasions of amusement and choices of local market</b>	4,41	1,37	31,06%
<b>F6. Conservation of monuments</b>	4,62	1,54	33,33%

<i>and maintenance of cultural heritage</i>			
<b>F7. Increase of the cost of life</b>	5,91	1,06	17,93%
<b>F8. Reduction of xenophobia</b>	4,66	1,54	33,04%
<i>Attitude towards tourism growth</i>	5,59	1,54	27,54%

### Effect of the Place of Residence on Perceptions' related Factors

In order to determine the differences both in the attitude and the perceptions of the residents of the two islands towards the tourism growth a t-test was performed. From the results, presented in the table 4, arises that there are significant differences in the five out of eight factors of perception.

The residents of Hydra Island have better perceptions than the inhabitants of Lemnos towards the impact of tourism on "Improvement of finances" and "Reduction of xenophobia". They exaggerate the impact of tourism in the "increase of the cost of life". On the other hand, the inhabitants of Lemnos give more emphasis on the negative effects of tourism in the "Increase Delinquency and affect on ethos" and in the "Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment". The attitude towards tourism between the residents of the two islands is about the same.

**Table 4** t- test of equality of means

	Lemnos		Hydra		Sig. 2-tailed
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	
Attitude towards tourism growth	5,49	1,66	5,69	1,42	0,198
<b>F1. Increase of Delinquency and affects on ethos</b>	3,73	1,47	2,53	1,26	<b>0,000</b>
<b>F2. Improvement of finances</b>	4,73	1,28	5,11	1,33	<b>0,004</b>
<b>F3. Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment</b>	3,44	1,23	2,88	1,13	<b>0,000</b>

<b>F4. Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures</b>	3,82	1,36	3,73	1,53	0,541
<b>F5. Increase of occasions of amusement and choices of local market</b>	4,49	1,36	4,32	1,38	0,215
<b>F6. Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage</b>	4,63	1,46	4,60	1,62	0,880
<b>F7. Increase of life's cost</b>	5,63	0,99	6,20	1,04	<b>0,000</b>
<b>F8. Reduction of xenophobia</b>	4,50	1,35	4,81	1,69	<b>0,046</b>

### **Effect of Demographic Data in Attitude and Perceptions' related Factors**

The demographic characteristics were examined in relation to their impact on attitude and perceptions of the residents. Two ANOVA tests were conducted (one for Lemnos and one for Hydra), with each characteristic as the independent variable, and attitude and each perception's related factor as the dependent variables. The relation of occupation with tourism makes more positive the attitude ( $Sig.=0,000<0,05$ ) and improves the perception, ( $Sig.=0,046<0,05$ ) of the inhabitants of Hydra, towards the improvement of finances due to tourism. The attitude and the perceptions of the inhabitants of Lemnos do not depend on the relation of their occupation with tourism. The gender of inhabitants, for both islands, does not constitute a characteristic which differentiates their attitude and perceptions.

The age of Hydra's residence is positively related with the "Increase of the cost of life" (Pearson correlation =0,193 - Sig.=0,006) and the "Increase of Delinquency and the affect on ethos" (Pearson correlation =0,153 - Sig.=0,031). The age of Lemno's residence is positively related with the attitude (Pearson correlation =0,147 - Sig.=0,040) and the "Increase of occasions of amusement and choices of local market" (Pearson correlation =0,167 - Sig.=0,018).

The increase of the family's income due to tourism, for Lemno's residence, is positively related with the «Attitude towards the growth of tourism » (Pearson Correlation=0,235- Sig.=0,001) as well as with the perceptions «Improvement of finances» (Pearson Correlation=0,217-

Sig.=0,002) and «Reduction of xenophobia» (Pearson Correlation=0,174- Sig.=0,014).

**Table 5** Correlation Matrix

Μεταβλητές		Lemnos		Hydra	
Improvement family's income due to tourism		Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
	Attitude towards tourism growth	0,235	<b>0,001</b>	0,335	<b>0,000</b>
	<b>F1. Increase Delinquency and affect on ethos</b>	-0,022	0,760	-0,003	0,965
	<b>F2. Improvement of finances</b>	0,217	<b>0,002</b>	0,202	<b>0,004</b>
	<b>F3. Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment</b>	0,065	0,359	-0,098	0,169
	<b>F4. Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures</b>	0,084	0,238	0,256	<b>0,002</b>
	<b>F5. Increase of occasions of amusement and choices of local market</b>	0,007	0,295	-0,031	0,663
	<b>F6. Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage</b>	-0,110	0,221	0,195	<b>0,005</b>
	<b>F7. Increase of life's cost</b>	-0,010	0,886	-0,175	<b>0,013</b>
	<b>F8. Reduction of xenophobia</b>	0,174	<b>0,014</b>	0,076	0,284

For residents of Hydra, the results show that the increase of family's income due to tourism, is positively related with the «Attitude towards tourism growth» (Pearson Correlation=0,335- Sig.=0,001) and moreover with the perceptions «Improvement of finances» (Pearson Correlation=0,202- Sig.=0,004), «Protection of environment and improvement of public infrastructures» (Pearson Correlation=0,256- Sig.=0,002) and «Conservation of monuments and maintenance of cultural heritage» (Pearson Correlation=0,195- Sig.=0,005). In parallel

the increase of family's income due to tourism is negatively related, with the «Increase of the cost of life» (*Pearson Correlation=-0,175-Sig.=0,013*).

### **Effect of Perceptions' related Factors on Attitude**

In order to determine which of the perceptions influence residents' attitudes towards the tourism growth, two multiple regressions were performed. The first refers to Lemnos island and the second one to Hydra island. In both cases the stepwise method was used and the “attitude towards the tourism growth” was the dependent variable, while the eight factors of perception were the independent variables. The results of two regression analyses are presented in table 5.

**Table 5** Regression Analyses

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Lemnos</b>		<b>Hydra</b>	
		<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Attitude towards the tourism growth	F1	-0,131	0,040		
	F2	0,491	0,000	0,505	0,000
	F3			-0,276	0,000
	F8			0,154	0,005
		<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0,243</b>		<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0,445</b>	

In the first regression analysis (Lemnos) only two factors are significant (F1 and F2) while the variance explained by these factors is 24,3% of the total variance. In the second regression analysis (Hydra) there are three factors (F2, F3, F8) significant and the variance explained is 44,5%. The common factor for the two islands is the second factor “improvement of finances”. This means that the attitude, towards tourism, of the residents of both islands is positively affected principally by the improvement of their finances. Moreover, the attitude of the residents of Lemnos is negatively affected by the factor “Increase of delinquency and affects on ethos”. On the other hand, the attitude of the residents of Hydra is negatively affected by the factor “Negative impacts on Society, Tradition and Environment” and positively by the factor “Reduction of xenophobia”.

## CONCLUSIONS – DISCUSSION

In this study has been developed a valid and reliable instrument to measure the perceptions of the residents for the positive and negative effects of tourism in Greek islands. The research results show that the residents of both islands have from positive to very positive attitude concerning the tourist growth of their islands. The perceptions for the positive effects of tourism are highly emphasized, while the negative effects are relatively downgraded, except of the increase of cost of life. Although the results do not show any important differences in the attitude of the residents of the two islands, towards the tourism growth, nevertheless only the residents of Hydra conceive that the positive effect of tourism in the improvement of the economic parameters are higher and at the same time they believe that the negative effect in the cost of life is also higher. The residents of Lemnos more than the residents of Hydra, from the negative effects of tourism for example violence emphasize the morals, the social life, the traditions and the environment.

The long-lasting mingling of the residents of Hydra with tourism, concerning the residents of Hydra brings the results of the present study in contrast with the other precedents, that are based on the life-cycle theory of tourism (Butler's life - cycle theory) and which claim that the residents that present smaller exposure to tourism have more positive attitude towards it, than the residents that have an extensive experience (Akis *et al.*, 1996). The exact opposition is also observed to the discoveries of Allen *et al.* (1988), whose searching based on the "tourism carrying capacity theory", determined that the perceptions of the residents deteriorate when there is an increase of tourist growth. Although Hydra has a tourist tradition for over 50 years, its residents do not present more negative attitude towards the tourist growth, compared to the residents of Limnos. On the contrary, the residents of the "developing" Limnos are those that point out, more than the residents of Hydra, the negative effects of tourism to the society, the traditions, the culture and the environment.

The attitudes of the residents of both islands concerning the tourism growth are influenced, in decisive degree, from their perception of the positive effect of tourism in the improvement of the economic parameters, with the residents of Hydra giving in this factor bigger importance. The consequences that tourism has on the society, the traditions and the environment influence negatively the configuration of the attitude of the residents of Hydra, while they also influence negatively the attitude of the residents of Lemnos the increase of delinquency and the negative effect of

tourism to the morals. However, both effects are very weak and they affect the least in the configuration of the attitudes, particularly if they are lined up against the positive perceptions for the effect of the economic parameters.

From the results it is rendered obvious that the more important perception, that determines the positiveness of the attitude of the residents towards the tourism growth, is the one related to the improvement of the economic parameters, individual and social, because of tourism. Previous studies, in the frame of the theory of social transaction, support that the residents that conceive the economic profits that arise from tourism, are very likely to have more positive attitudes and perceptions and support the tourism growth (Jurowski et al., 1997; King et al., 1993).

The improvement of revenue due to tourism was found to make the attitudes of residents more positive, in both islands, towards the tourism growth and stronger in their perception for the positive effect of tourism in the improvement of their finance. This discovery aligns absolutely to the theory of social transaction and the arising opinion that the residents conceive that their personal profits from tourism are increasing will express more positive attitude to the tourist growth (Ap, 1992).

There is an interest in the discoveries that concern the residents of Hydra which indicate its positive cross-correlation in the improvement of the family income due to tourism, not only with the perception for the improvement of the economic parameters, but also with the increase of the perception in maintaining the monuments, the cultural heritage, the protection of the environment and the improvement of the public infrastructures due to tourism. At the same time the negative cross-correlation in improvement of the family income was recorded with the perception in the increase of the cost of life. Although the perceptions for these effects, except of the improvement of the economical parameters, are very weak, they may indicate that the higher the dependence of family income is in tourism, in a period of tourist crisis, the less objective the residents perception for the positive and negative effects of tourism are. These results are in agreement with those of Gursoy and Rutherford (2004), who states that the more the inhabitants understand that the local economy needs improvement the better they evaluate the economic profits and minimize the social cost and this leads the residents to support tourism development.

However, it has already been pointed out that the growth of the tourism activity although it is economically desirable, it can simultaneously be socially and environmentally detrimental (Igoymenakis et al., 1998). The over-estimation of the positive repercussions of tourism,

but mainly the ignorance or the neglect of its negative effects upon the local societies and the environment, can finally downgrade the tourism destination, turn the tourists to other destinations and finally bring about dramatic reduction in the economic prosperity of the residents (Holder, 1988).

The results of this study indicate that the decision making only from professionals of tourist sector, who usually constitute the members of organizations with weighty and decisive opinion (Chambers, Councils e.t.c.), may include risks for the tourism sustainability. Many theorists recommend the participation of the local community in decision making for the tourism development (Ap & Crompton, 1993; Williams & Lawson, 2001).

The differentiation of the perceptions of the residents of Limnos and about the Hydra effects of tourism indicates that the conclusions of the present study are very difficult to be generalized. It appears that the diversity in the tourism growth and in the economic dependence of the residents from tourism can influence their perceptions regarding its effects. Consequently, for the precise estimation of the attitudes and perceptions of the residents of every Greek island concerning tourism may require separate studies.

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