

Abstract

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Title: Sustainable skiing - An analysis of the perceptions of tourists and locals with regard to the sustainable development of ski tourism at the Stubai Glacier	

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The tourism economic sector in general and alpine winter tourism in particular are undergoing change. Especially in recent years, this change has accelerated. The Covid 19 pandemic has revealed this and made further problem areas in tourism even more obvious. Climate change is advancing and logically affects skiing in winter tourism. Therefore, this master thesis deals with the perception of ski tourism in society with regard to a sustainable development. For this purpose, guests and locals around the ski area of the Stubai Glacier in the Austrian province of Tyrol are interviewed about their assessment of ecological, economic and socio-cultural factors with regard to ski tourism. Tyrol is considered the home of alpine skiing and is therefore historically a predestined skiing destination and benefits enormously from it economically. Prior to the study, theoretical concepts linking these issues are described, including popular models such as the Doughnut model of sustainable development. Explanatory approaches such as social exchange theory highlight the relationship between the various stakeholder groups and how they relate to tourism development. The data collected by means of questionnaires are first analyzed descriptively and then with correlation, regression, and mean analyses. It can be determined that the ecological and socio-cultural aspects have a statistically significant influence on the attitude towards a tourism development. The higher these two aspects are rated by the respondents, the more positive is their attitude towards a tourism development. Moreover, the underlying theory just described states that environmental and social factors should be given more importance in relation to sustainable development. Thus, the results reinforce the prior research and emphasize the relevance of these aspects. In addition, the results from the study are examined for differences in perception between guests and locals. It turns out that no statistically significant differences in the perception of ski tourism and its development can be found between these two stakeholder groups. Based on these results, it can be said that ecological and socio-cultural aspects should be more strongly included in the communication and strategy of comparable destinations. Nevertheless, due to the relevance of the topic and the limitations of this study, further research is needed.

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