

designed for a wide range of consumers, middle-aged people, as well as children. This transformation of resort centers is due to two reasons:

a) a change in the nature of demand for medical and health services. A healthy lifestyle is becoming fashionable; the number of people in the world who strive to maintain a good physical shape and their need in restorative anti-stress programs is growing. Mostly these are middle-aged people who prefer active recreation, but at the same time they are limited in time. Consumers of this type, according to many experts, are the main clients of spa resorts and contribute to the flourishing of *health tourism* in the 21st century;

b) resorts are gradually losing the traditional state financial support. And in order to enter new segments of the consumer market and attract additional customers, health resorts are forced to diversify their product [2].

It should be concluded that the growth of interest in *health tourism* is fully justified, since it is due to modern trends in life that affect human health. *Health tourism* has its own characteristics. While maintaining the therapeutic function, the resorts offer a varied program of stay for patients. A wide range of health and wellness services is filled with cultural, sports and recreational activities which are more flexible in determining a treatment duration and recovery courses.

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LEBANESE TOURISM STAKEHOLDER'S PERCEPTION ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE RURAL TOURISM

The tourism industry represents one of the most important boosters of the Lebanese economy, and tourism stakeholders are the active engines of that industry. These stakeholders create strategies to match tourism demands and participate in the decision-making process to maximize the outcome of tourism practices. The involvement of tourism stakeholders, especially tourists, and their participation in decision-making supports positive stakeholders' perceptions of tourism development in a rural destination [1]. This article focuses on nine main factors that are believed

to have an influence on the decision-making process of tourists visiting a rural destination. These factors include tourist attraction, tourist transportation, accommodation, tourist entertainment, natural environment, hospitality environment, tourist information, marketing and safety and security. The aim of this study is to analyze the perception of Lebanese tourism stakeholders towards the mentioned nine factors that could affect the decisions of tourists, thereby aiding those stakeholders to create appropriate tourism strategies that match the needs of tourists more accurately.

A quantitative research approach based on a self-designed survey was followed. Data was collected using a questionnaire from several Lebanese rural villages between the months of January and March of 2020. A total of 354 respondents were chosen randomly from different villages and interviewed face-to-face. Data obtained were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0; The Chi Square test (two-way contingency table) and a correlation analysis were used to analyze data and check the validity of the proposed hypotheses.

This study presents important points sought by tourists, which could be used as anchor points for stakeholders who wish to maximize the output of their strategies. All nine studied factors showed significant influence on tourist decisions. It is noted that tourist transportation and safety/security seem to be extra important factors that stakeholders must consider.

It is very important to acknowledge that stakeholder involvement is essential for sustainable tourism development in tourism destinations [2]. And in order to achieve successful tourism development, tourism stakeholders must collaborate. If all stakeholders cooperate together, they can provide solutions to the problems that negatively affect tourism, which promotes the prosperity of the tourism industry [3]. The Lebanese government and local authorities must team up to improve basic infrastructure. Moreover, security and safety measures must be ensured by stakeholders, especially safety of payments and the overall physical security of the tourism destination. Particular efforts should also be exerted to preserve historical sites, protect the natural environment and create entertainment programs to appeal to tourists. In brief, stakeholders must consider these factors when creating tourism strategies in order to efficiently match their capabilities with the demand of tourists.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: LEBANON CASES

The definition of SMEs differs about what «small-sized enterprises» are, their nature and their distribution, but at the same time all studies agree on the importance of the role of these institutions in general.

SMEs represent nearly 95 % of businesses in Lebanon and employ about 50 % of the labor force, which constitutes a pillar of the economy and an economic engine to promote economic growth and job creation. International trade is a system based on rules and standards agreed among states for the exchange of goods and services within the agreement's programs, and is an important incentive for SMEs which provides opportunities to strengthen the productive sectors of the economy as a whole. Does Lebanon need such agreements to support SMEs in expanding their activities? Can International Trade be a major factor in economic development and growth?

In this case, SMEs benefit from developing and expanding their production processes, increasing their profits and improving their competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets, in addition to benefiting from reducing customs duties on their exports, if they are mentioned in the agreement.

In Lebanon, the governments and ministries of economy in each government coordinate with the Bank of Lebanon to support small and medium-sized companies because they are the main pillar of the Lebanese economy, but the rest of their financial resources are limited, in addition to the negative effects that have occurred in Lebanon and the economic and financial crisis at the beginning of 2020, and the instability of the exchange rate of the dollar against the Lebanese pound, which has become 4.5 times that of the previous year, and importing raw materials became very difficult, in addition to price inflation and weak purchasing power.

We can only mention the negative effects of Coronavirus on small and medium-sized companies due to their disproportionate presence in economic sectors affected by social measures and transport strikes, in addition to the service sector such as hotels, restaurants and food services. If these conditions persist, they could disrupt the supply chain to existential risks of importers and exporters, or to demand shocks.