



EVALUATION OF RESIDENTS FOR THE IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate inhabitants' opinions on tourism development as well as their attitudes toward participation in local governance in the study area. Tourism is the main source of their livelihood and is one of the most important dimensions of development. Nowadays is very important to examine the attitude of the residents toward the planning and development of sustainable tourism. The study focuses on the sociological tradition of social exchange guided by the premise that individual feelings can be important elements that influence people's social response and the community's supportive or non-supportive attitude towards tourism development. Based on this reasoning, the questions of the study are 1) How do residents of Saranda evaluate the development of tourism in their place of residence? 2) Are the Saranda residents interested in planning and developing tourism in their area? 3) What is the perception of the residents of Saranda about the impact of tourism development in their area? The purpose of this study is to help in planning the development of sustainable tourism by incorporating two main factors: the involvement of the community in the process and the inclusion of appropriate indicators to understand the factors that influence residents' participation in sustainable tourism in current conditions. In addition to providing a practical contribution to the planning and development of sustainable development strategies in the research region, the study's findings help us better understand the impact of tourism development in the study area. It also directs scientific research and other studies in measuring and analyzing additional aspects that influence how economic resources are used in the study area.

Keywords: the assessment of residents, the impact of tourism, sustainable development, community

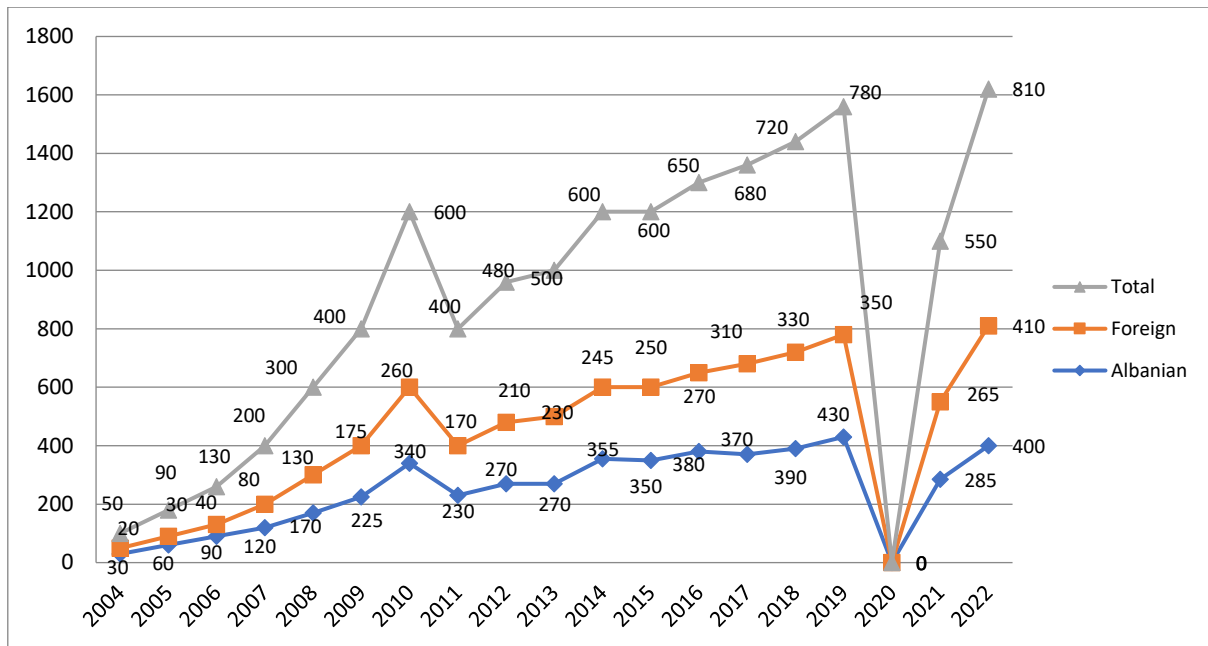
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1. INTRODUCTION

The municipality of Saranda is located in the South of Albania, has an area of 59 square kilometers, with a population of 50,680 inhabitants, and about 50% of its population is in emigration. Saranda is an important tourist center in Albania and represents one of the richest ecosystems. The city of Saranda is known as the pearl of Albanian tourism, a popular tourist destination with special beauties, a rare coast about 8 kilometers long, Mediterranean vegetation, and the characteristic stone slabs of millions of years old (natural monuments). Saranda by the sea, further Ksamil, the jewel of Albania with crystal blue waters, virgin islands, dream beaches, water sports, and the 2500-year-old ancient city of Butrint, which will fascinate you with its beauty and tranquility. All these create a unique tourist area that makes it an amazing tourist destination and much coveted by local and foreign tourists. The traditional industries in this area are fishing, tourism, and services, while the surrounding areas develop agriculture, horticulture, and horticulture. Until the 1990s, constructions were made respecting the architecture of the city and the proper distance from the seashore. The city had a Green Crown of about 400 ha created under the auspices of the Forestry Enterprise from artificial afforestation that began from 1968 to 1990, creating a forest that surrounded the city. After the 90s, during the transition period, in the name of urban development, the Green Crown of the city and the coast were seriously damaged; one to 12-story apartments were built without criteria, up to touch the edge of the sea. Although the government has made some efforts to improve the situation, today, chaotic buildings dominate and the city lacks green environments. The rapid and uncontrolled development of facilities in this area with tourist potential also happened due to the fact that the development of tourism served as a "savior" of the local society or as a "port in a storm" by attracting the excess workforce prepared by the system of centralized Albanian economy and trying to find the best possible direction in the conditions of instability that has characterized the economic and social development of our country in the long period of transition. The tourism sector, in recent years, has increased the weight of its contribution to the area's economy, both in terms of value and employment, so it should be considered the main priority for economic and social development. Today, tourism is identified as one of the sectors with the highest potential for economic growth, simultaneously stimulating the activities of other related industries. Figure 1 shows the increase in the number of tourists in the Municipality of Saranda for 2004 - 2022. After the year 2020, with the relief of the Covid-19 pandemic, the increase in the number of tourists began, and in 2022 their number exceeded and reached the highest level in 2019.

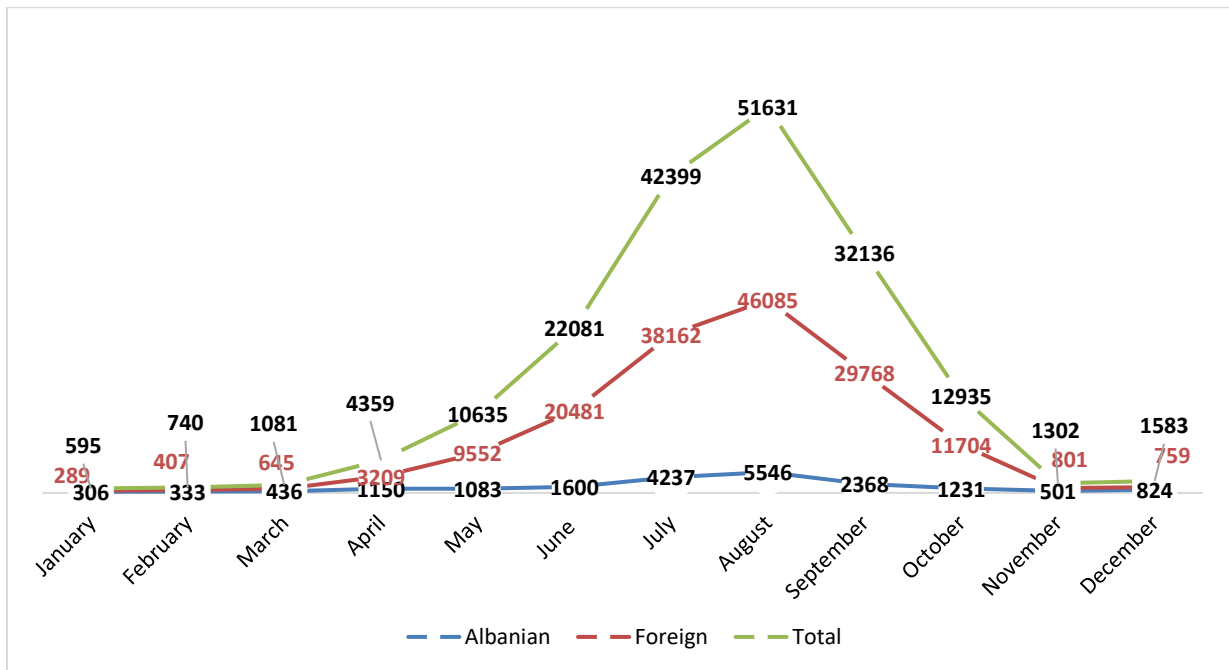
Figure 1. Number of tourists in Saranda according to years (in thousands)



Source: Municipality of Saranda

The development of tourism in the Municipality of Saranda, mainly as a pronounced seasonality characterizes mass tourism. The data in Figure 2 clearly express the seasonal nature of tourism in the study area. The number of foreigners who enter Saranda only from the seaport, compared to the month of March this year, is 5 times higher in the month of April, 15 times higher in the month of May, 32 times higher in the month of June, 60 times higher highest in July and 71.5 times higher in August. In September, this indicator decreases to 46, in October it is 18 and in November, 1.3 These data best express the pronounced seasonality of tourism in the study area. From the data of the Municipality of Saranda, 3800 businesses in the field of tourism are evident which, as a result of seasonality, in the period January - May and September - December operate far below their capacity, while in the period June - August, 3 months a year, they face congestion. In this quarterly period, the main word of all activities in Saranda is tourism, and all other activities, such as agriculture, livestock, fishing, transport, culture, security, etc. are almost a function of the tourist industry.

Figure 2. Entry to the Port of Saranda in 2022



Source: Port of Saranda

The local government has identified 880 accommodation structures with around 25,000 beds, which only work at 100% of their capacity in July and August, while the demand is higher than the supply. As a result, we can say that this tourist destination faces over-tourism and under-tourism. As a result of the increase in the number of tourists in the destination and the pronounced seasonality of tourism in this area, economic and natural resources are under pressure. In addition to the economic benefits, the area's residents face the negative effects of infrastructure overload and the environment in general.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

In the literature, the results of studies in the field of tourism have suggested that community support for tourism development is essential for the successful operation and sustainability of tourism (Jurowski et al., 1997). This is because tourism relies heavily on the goodwill of the local community, so understanding community response to tourism development is essential in ensuring community support for tourism development. Sustainable community development is a theory and practice that “recognizes the interrelated nature of the economic, environmental, and social aspects of communities” (Beckett, 2006, p. 1). Researchers have proven that, unlike the economic impacts of tourism, the social and cultural impacts of tourism development can negatively affect residents' perceptions. Also, it has been established that if residents positively perceive the impacts of tourism in terms of physical and environmental consequences, they will support its further development. For this reason, investigating the perceived impacts of tourism development is critical to examining community support or lack of support for sustainable tourism development. Nowadays, it is important to clarify the residents' perception of the impact of tourism development in their residence. The main product of tourism is not something

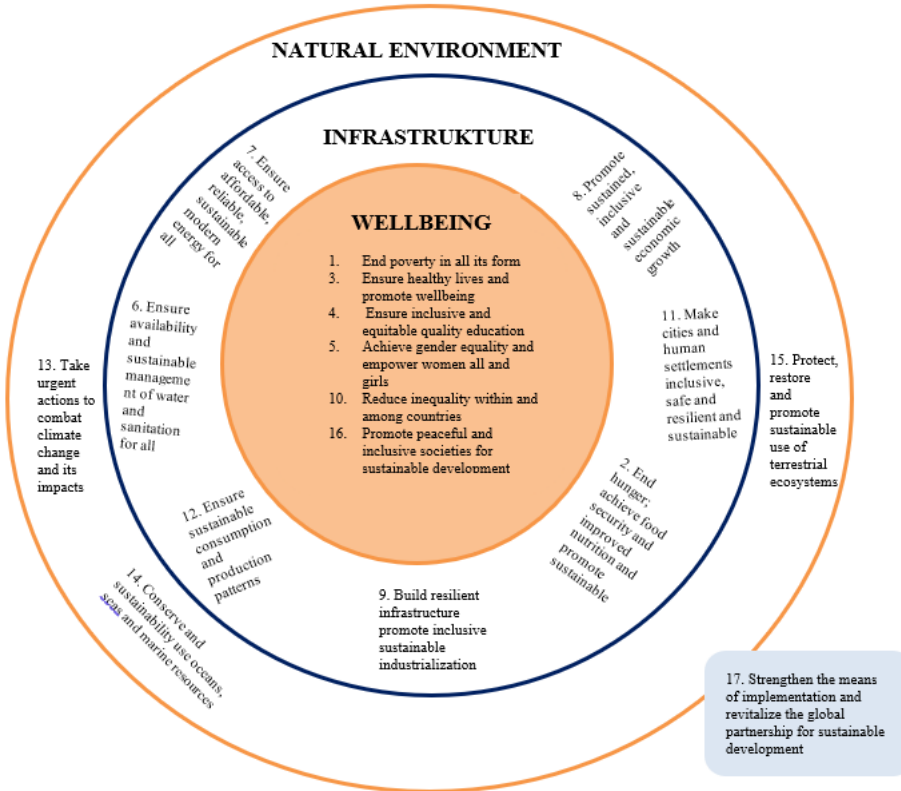
that is produced by industry. The product is often the heritage and wealth of the community that serves as a tourist destination. The business activity of the tourism industry is to promote the "marketable" or attractive aspects of the community. Suppose business activities degrade the heritage and wealth of the community. In that case, the community suffers more directly than the consumer, who may return to his community without responsibility or awareness of the impact of his tourism activity. Residents are part of the tourist activity and can contribute to the (un)success of the tourist experience lived in a destination. The intervention of many foreigners uninformed about the local social system can undermine the community's existing social relations and values. Residents are one of the tourism actors most affected, in their daily lives, by tourism development. Residents' attitudes and behaviors towards visitors influence their decision to return (or not) to the destination. According to sustainable development objectives, for the sustainable development of a thriving destination is necessary to involve the community in the planning, management, and monitoring of tourism activity. Sustainable community planning is widely accepted, but it "is still not appreciated widely enough" (Hodge and Haltrecht, 2009, p. 6). The goals sought by the community and sustainable tourism efforts are similar, economic, social, and environmental for present and future generations. As the figure shows, all goals contribute to improving community well-being. Well-being is at the heart of all sustainable development objectives, which are linked to 'people-centered' goals that aim to improve their well-being directly. They represent a well-established objective for governments; around this objective all resources, institutions, policies, and strategies of central and local government for development are focused. Governance refers to the institutions, mechanisms, or processes backed by political power and/or authority that allow an activity or set of activities to be controlled, influenced, or directed in the collective interest (Baker et al., 2005). Governance includes responsibility for resources, control, influence or direction of activities, and ensuring laws, regulations, and agreements in the collective interest. The social contract between the state and society for good governance makes individuals a key component of accountability, transparency, inclusion, and governance decision-making. The Sustainable Development Goals represent a more ambitious effort to support well-being and promote peaceful and inclusive societies, especially for those countries where governance performance is lower, and governments have less experience.

The objectives of the second level, Infrastructure, go beyond individuals and communities and address many of the core basic welfare functions of government institutions. Perceived modern society within and sometimes beyond nation-states. These objectives aim to contribute to increasing well-being by reducing the intensity of resource use, pollution, and negative impacts on the environment.

The outer level, Environment, groups those goals mainly related to managing global resources and biophysical systems that support sustainable development and are greatly affected by human activities, such as biodiversity, and climate change. These goals require international

cooperation, and objective 17 requires the revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development and is left out of the three levels of the SDGs.

Figure 2. SDGs as proposed in the *Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals* according to three levels¹



2.1. Impacts of Tourism Development

The local impacts of the tourism industry are varied and often unique. No structure of any global industry works like tourism where the consumer comes to the product; it is mostly the product delivered to the consumer in his community. This structural change produces unique social effects on the local community. The main development of tourism is not something that is produced by industry. The product is mostly the heritage and wealth of the community that serves as a tourist destination. The business activity of the tourism industry is to promote the "marketable" or attractive aspects of the community, transport non-residents to the community, manage hospitality to guide and activities of visitors, and provide them with services and goods to purchase during their stay. Suppose business activities degrade the heritage and natural assets of the community. In that case, the community suffers more directly than the consumer, who may return to his community without responsibility or awareness of the impact of his tourism

¹ Thinking Beyond Sectors for Sustainable Development, Chapter Author(s): Jeff Waage, Christopher Yap, Sarah Bell, Caren Levy, Georgina Mace, Tom Pegram, Elaine Unterhalter, Niheer Dasandi, David Hudson, Richard Kock, Susannah H. Mayhew, Colin Marx and Nigel Poole
Book Editor(s): Jeff Waage and Christopher Yap, Published by: Ubiquity Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3t5rcm.17>

activity. These changes, which are related to tourism, are especially harmful in the case where residents support their livelihood mainly in tourism, as can be said for the area of Saranda and Ksamil. Community support for tourism development is essential for the successful operation and sustainability of tourism. This is because tourism relies heavily on the goodwill of the local community, so understanding community response to tourism development is essential in ensuring community support for tourism development. In the 1960s, the study of the impacts of tourism focused mainly on the perception of the economic results of this industry and was measured by the impact on the Gross General Product. In fact, tourism is a powerful source of the economic effects on the community. The creation of jobs or the reduction of unemployment has been discussed as the most tangible good of tourism development.

Economic growth, income distribution to the host community and government, prices of goods and services, land and housing costs, improvement of community living standards, living costs, infrastructure development, etc. are other examples of tourism development's economic impacts. Researchers have also found that the development of tourism improves local public services, changes traditional culture, and also affects the protection of the identity of local culture (Liu, 2010). Then, the negative social and cultural impacts of tourism were also discussed, such as tourism has in itself the possibility of changing the culture and worsening various factors of the inhabitants' lives, such as prostitution, crime, emigration, and the exploitation of children for work. Environmental pollution, traffic jams, and noise are examples of adverse environmental impacts of tourism development. Physical and environmental impacts are closely related to the development of natural, cultural, and historical resources, the development of tourism facilities, the protection of historical and cultural resources, the development of opportunities for recreation and entertainment for the local population and visitors, as well as more roads public goods and facilities. Also, it has been established that if residents positively perceive the impacts of tourism in terms of physical and environmental consequences, they will support its further development. For this reason, an investigation of the perceived impacts of tourism development is critical to ensure the involvement and active role of the community in the development of sustainable tourism. Due to its geographical position, tourism development in the study area has double impacts on land and sea. The tourism industry in Saranda has grown rapidly generating significant amounts of income. The development of tourism results in the expansion of the construction of hotels without criteria, without respecting the criteria for surfaces and public spaces, and all this looks like a chaotic development. The growth of mass tourism has created positive impacts on the economy. However, it has also affected the natural environment, which mostly has negative impacts. In the natural aspect, the development of tourism has created pollution of the environment, and waters, damage to the landscape, damage to the land, and damage to ecosystems. As in other countries, these show that our natural resources are being destroyed by human use. As one of the biggest economic providers in the Saranda area, the tourism industry performs poorly compared to its tremendous opportunities. The economic potential of outstanding landscape quality has not yet been fully realized. The impact of these factors on the local economy has profound implications for

residents. The area suffers a steady loss of its young population due to the high cost of living and lack of infrastructure opportunities. Also, there is a reluctance of immigrants to invest and work in their country.

2.2. Community Participation in the Planning and Development of Sustainable Tourism

Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them (World Bank, 1995). The community approach to tourism planning emerged when it became apparent and clearly understood that tourism had irreversible and harmful effects on the communities and their cultures exposed to tourism and that alternative planning and management were necessary to develop societal guidelines more acceptable for tourism development (Murphy, 1985). According to some authors, mass tourism does not generate the development of local communities. Moreover, it has many consequences that bring about their devitalization and affirm that community-based tourism can be a strategy to promote the development of the local community and oppose the process of devitalization and impoverishment that characterizes some countries oriented by mass tourism. The community approach, which is essentially a form of 'bottom-up' planning, emphasizes community development rather than community development (Hall, 1998). For the tourism sector, sustainable development has been called a possible solution to the environmental and social degradation of the industry's resources because tourism is an industry that has its resources dependent on the gift of nature and the heritage of society (Cooper, 1995; Murphy, 1994). But with community sustainability, tourism development can be expected to be sustainable. For this reason, the concept of community involvement in tourism development has moved closer to the center of the sustainability debate. Community-based tourism development is a strategy tourism planners use to mobilize communities to participate in appropriate tourism development. The goal is the socio-economic empowerment and an added value of the tourist experience for local and foreign visitors to create a culture of inclusion in the industry, where communities participate and benefit from the wealth of the industry by removing a perception of long on tourism as an exploiter of wealth, where only the rich can benefit. These economic benefits incentivize participants to conserve the natural and cultural resources upon which income generation depends. The relationship of the industry with the tourism products developed from the natural and cultural resources of the community is not direct; on the contrary, it is through the mediation of the community. This is to ensure that community aspirations are not overlooked and unrelated to the interests of the tourism industry. Continuing with the above line of thinking, community-based tourism considers environmental, social, and cultural sustainability, is managed by the community, and is owned by the community and for the community, with the aim of visitors learning about the community and the local way of life. Based on the above, this study will investigate the perceptions, views, and attitudes of the Saranda community about tourism and its development in a sustainable manner as valuable information for its planning.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

3.1. Research Method

Based on the literature review and the research objectives, we have formulated questions for the study as follows 1) How do residents evaluate tourism development in their place of residence? 2) Are the residents interested in planning and developing tourism in their area? 3) what is the perception of the residents about the impact of tourism development in their area? The objectives of the study aim to test empirically: 1) to know the assessment of residents for the tourism development, 2) to evidence how much residents know the development plans and how they think about participating in this process, and 3) to evidence the perception of the residents about the impact of tourism development in their area. Residents in the study area are the target population with the desired information to answer the research objectives. The selection method is based on the concept of random selection; it is a probabilistic selection that gives each element of the population an equal probability of being part of the selection and will be carried out through a mechanical process, so the elements presented in the sample will be chosen at random. Random sampling complies with the law of statistical regularity, according to which, if a selected sample is probabilistic on average, then this sample will have the same characteristics as the target population to which it belongs and is considered the best technique to select a representative sample. It has superiority over other methods because the obtained sample is safe in terms of probability since we can calculate the estimation errors and the significance of the obtained results; also, this method carries the possibility of generalization from statistical transitions. Therefore it guarantees representativeness and generalization of the results. The choice must be optimal; therefore, in determining its size, we have considered the requirements of efficiency, representation, reliability, and flexibility. The size of the choice depends on the desired precision for the generalization of the search results, which is usually 0.05 and the acceptable confidence level for estimation is 0.95.

In this study, we will use the qualitative interviewing technique. The individual qualitative approach is concerned with researching people's motivations and attitudes and is superior to other methods because it is flexible, practical, and easy to organize. Moreover, it is assumed that they create the possibility to get more accurate and deeper information.

Data collection will be done through structured questionnaires, thus providing primary data. Through the interview, we aim to highlight the attitudes and perceptions of the participants involved in the election to find out how they value the development of tourism in their area and their perception of the impact on their life of development. This method gives the respondent enough time to give well-thought-out answers independent of the subjective judgments of the interviewer; there are several opportunities to reach the respondents and create the opportunity to cope with a large volume of choices, so the results may be more reliable. The use of the interview is based on the assumption that the participants' viewpoints in the survey are clear

and that these viewpoints or their opinions are important and influence the provision of qualitative data appropriate for this research.

This study employed the Linkert scale as a measurement scale for measuring residents' attitudes about their environment. It used individual qualitative techniques for the data collection on the motivations and attitudes of the residents and it distributed 450 questionnaires. The data collected using the survey is analyzed using SPSS. Finally, the results prove the objectives that are presented.

3.2. Research Design

Based on the literature, the theoretical framework of this study consists of the measurement and analysis of two factors: the assessment of residents for the development of tourism and the perception of the residents about the impact of tourism development in their area. Measuring the perception of residents of the impacts of tourism development will be done through the Likert scale with five levels of agreement for the statements (instruments) as in Table 1. This measurement scale consists of 12 instruments that reflect the residents' perception of the economic, social-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism development. The Likert scale is more expressive for analysis, it respects the principles of calculating the mean that requires the use of interval scales, and it is considered a technique with good reliability, good validity, very fast, and very simple. The mark on this scale indicates a degree of acceptance or rejection of the submission given in it. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, this research consulted the mature scales in foreign references in the operational definition and measurement of the variables like motivations and attitudes of the people. For their measurement, the Likert scale was used. Note that this scale indicates a degree of acceptance or rejection of the submission given in it. In this research, a survey is conducted to get the data required for the study. The preliminary questionnaire was examined carefully by specialists in the field, and revisions were made according to the feedback. Through the process of specialists probing case interviews and pre-test, the final questionnaire includes twelve items for measuring the perception of the residents of tourism development, with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = I do not agree, 5 = I agree very much) and measuring the perception of the impacts of tourism development by residents through the Likert scale with five levels of agreement for the statements as in the table below.

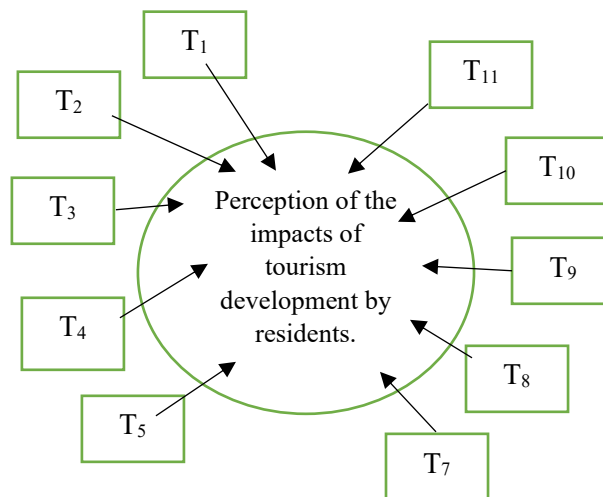
Table 1. The measuring scale perception of the impacts of tourism development by residents

No.	The impacts of tourism development.	
1	Tourism has created more income for the residents.	T ₁
2	Tourism has created more jobs for residents.	T ₂
3	Our standard of living has increased considerably due to the development of tourism.	T ₃
4	Tourism has attracted investments that have a positive impact on the community.	T ₄
5	Tourism has influenced the increase in prices in Saranda and Ksamil.	T ₅
6	Tourism has encouraged various cultural activities for the residents as well.	T ₆
7	Tourism has caused residents to suffer from noise, traffic jams, and environmental pollution.	T ₇
8	Tourism has increased environmental pollution.	T ₈
9	Construction near the sea has damaged the coast.	T ₉
10	Tourism has enriched our traditional culture.	T ₁₀
11	Tourism has damaged the special qualities of the natural landscape.	T ₁₁
12	The development of tourism has not been accompanied by sufficient measures for the protection of the environment.	T ₁₂

The measurement scale : 1 = I do not agree at all, 2 = I do not agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = I agree, 5 = I agree very much

Source: Authors

Figure 3. Evaluation path diagram of evaluation of the residents for the impact of tourism development



Source: Authors

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Table 2 summarises the profile of respondents. The results indicate that 20 % of respondents are 18-30 years old, 51 % are 31-50 years old and 29 % are 51 and more years old. Respondents were from all categories of age, gender, education level, and employment status.

Table 2. Profile of the respondent

No	Age	%	Gender	%	Education	%
1	18-30 years old	20	F	54.8	Primary education	13
2	31-40 years old	18	M	45.2	Secondary education	79
3	41-50 years old	33		44.8	Higher education	8
4	51-60 years old	25				
5	Over 60 years old	4				

Source: From the questionnaire data

Table 3. Frequency of the residents' responses to the question

No.	<i>How do you assess the development of tourism in your area?</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1	Chaotic development	189	45
2	Appropriate development	33	7.8
3	Harmful development	37	7.9
4	Development that serves the community	161	38.3

Source: From the questionnaire data

According to the data in Table 2, 52.9 percent of the interviewed residents evaluate tourism development in their area as chaotic and harmful. To clarify if the residents of Saranda are interested in the process of planning and developing tourism in their area, the analysis of the data shows (Table 4) that 90.2 percent of the residents interviewed say that the development of tourism in Sarande needs the participation of the residents in the planning process and 83.9 percent say that they would like to give their opinion on this process (Table 5).

Table 4. Frequency of residents' responses per the question

No.	<i>The development of tourism in Saranda needs the participation of residents in the planning process.</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1	I strongly disagree	5	1.2
2	I disagree	7	1.6
3	I neither agree nor disagree	30	7
4	I agree	147	34.7
5	I strongly agree	235	55.5

Source: From the questionnaire data

Table 5. Frequency of residents' responses per the question

No.	<i>I would like to give my opinion on the development of tourism, but I am not given the opportunity and I do not know how to help in the planning of tourism in my city.</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1	I strongly disagree	17	4
2	I disagree	24	5.7
3	I neither agree nor disagree	27	6.4
4	I agree	135	32.2
5	I strongly agree	217	51.7

Source: From the questionnaire data

To measure the perception of residents of the impacts of tourism development interviewees were asked to answer each statement/instrument measured through a Likert scale, with 5 levels of agreement from 1 "I do not agree at all" to 5 "I strongly agree".

The results of the descriptive statistics analysis for the measurement scale of the perception of tourism impacts are presented in Table 6. This measurement scale consists of 12 instruments that reflect the residents' perception of the economic, social-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism development.

Table 6. Descriptive analysis of the perception of the impacts of tourism development by residents

No.	The impacts of tourism development.	M (Mean)	S (Standard Deviation)
1	Tourism has created more income for the residents.	3.94	0.969
2	Tourism has created more jobs for residents.	3.87	1.029
3	Our standard of living has increased considerably due to the development of tourism.	3.46	1.137
4	Tourism has attracted investments that have a positive impact on the community.	3.57	1.164
5	Tourism has influenced the increase in prices in Saranda.	4.42	0.985
6	Tourism has encouraged various cultural activities for the residents as well.	3.97	1.071
7	Tourism has caused residents to suffer from noise, traffic jams, and environmental pollution.	4.21	1.141
8	Tourism has increased environmental pollution.	3.95	1.249
9	Construction near the sea has damaged the coast.	4.38	1.057
10	Tourism has enriched our traditional culture.	3.62	1.093
11	Tourism has damaged the special qualities of the natural landscape.	4.04	1.177
12	The development of tourism has not been accompanied by sufficient measures for the protection of the environment.	4.20	1.082

Source: Data of the questionnaire processing by SSPS

4.2. The Reliability of the Measurement Scale

Reliability is essential in any measurement scale and shows the homogeneity of the instruments that comprise it. The reliability of this scale was explained by Cronbach's Alfa (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha is a useful statistic for assessing the internal consistency of a questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha is a measure of the correlation between observed scores and true scores. Cronbach Alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of instruments in a measurement scale to assess its reliability. It is recommended that if the measurement scale has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.70 it is acceptable as a scale with an internal consistency that serves further analysis. A coefficient of Cronbach's alpha less than 0.70 means that the reliability is less. Initially, to examine the reliability of the measurement scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated in SPSS and the data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Reliability of measurement variables (Cronbach's Alpha)

The measurement scale	The number of indicators	Cronbach's Alpha (a)
The impact of tourism development	12	0.730

Source: Data processing by SSPS

As can be seen from the presented data in the Table above, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.730 > 0.7 and we conclude that the measurement scale for the impact of tourism development is reliable and suitable for data analysis.

Based on the average scores of each question, it can be seen that the respondents tend to agree that tourism has created more income (M=3.94 SD=0.969), that tourism has created more jobs (M=3.87 SD=1.029), that tourism has influenced the increase in the standard of living (M=3.46, SD=1.137), that tourism has attracted more investments (M=3.57, SD=1.164), that tourism has increased cultural activities (M=3.97, SD=1.071), that tourism has enriched traditional culture (M=3.92, SD=1.093). On the other hand, the descriptive analysis data show a higher degree of agreement for the statements related to the measurement of the perception of the negative impacts of tourism, so the perception that tourism has influenced the increase in prices has an average of M=4.42, SD=0.985, tourism has caused residents to suffer from pollution, noise and other problems (M=4.21, SD=1.141), constructions near the sea have damaged the coast (M=4.38, SD=1.057), tourism has caused environmental pollution to increase (M =3.95 SD=1,249), tourism has damaged the unique qualities of the natural landscape (M=4.04, SD=1.177), that the development of tourism has not been accompanied by sufficient measures to protect the environment (M=4.2, SD=1.082).

The evaluation of empirical evidence reveals that the development of tourism is perceived by residents not only in terms of economic benefits but also of social and cultural benefits such as the increase in the standard of living, the increase in cultural activities, and the enrichment of the cultural tradition of the area. However, it has been asserted by the residents that tourism in the Saranda area has also caused negative impacts such as environmental pollution, damage to the coast, damage to the natural landscape, and increase in prices and that this development has not been accompanied by the necessary measures to protect the environment. This perception, measured through a Likert scale with 12 indicators, is also confirmed by the data resulting from the interviewees' answers to the question - How do you evaluate the development of tourism in your area? - the results of which are reflected in the following slide- the Saranda area residents view the tourism industry as chaotic. Therefore, this study helps us better understand the community's attitude and appreciation for participation in the planning and development process.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study contribute to clarifying some of the most critical issues of the development of the tourist industry in the study area. So, the picture of the development of the

tourist industry in this area is so visible and the problem is so clear for the residents that they express that they are worried about the situation and the community finds the solution in sustainable tourism development. These results show that the perception of tourism impacts can be a critical determinant of supporting the development of sustainable tourism in the Saranda area. This conclusion supports the general argument that residents are an integral part of the tourist destination, and their values and perceptions can be valued and incorporated into the destination management process. Central and local government institutions to improve policies and strategies for the successful management of the tourism industry in search of the right balance between economic growth and the protection of economic resources for today and future generations by emphasizing the good use of community resources. The political, economic, and social situation in our country, particularly in the study area, is currently estimated to have exceeded the transition, overcame the decline caused by the Covid19 pandemic, and now it is at the limit of sustainable growth. The adaptation of the legal framework towards sustainable development policies and the strengthening of the competencies and institutional capacities of the local government is creating the right ground to enable the participation of residents in the development process. Achieving sustainable growth requires not only the mobilization of physical and financial resources for implementing development policies and strategies but also the mobilization of human resources by participating in this development and making the process more participatory and inclusive. Likewise, from a demographic point of view, a certain stability can be observed in the study area regarding immigration and population displacements from rural areas toward Saranda as an urban favorite area. In this sense, even the residents as a community are crystallizing their features and goals, they are evidencing better than before their common interests, and what is most important, they are reacting to the problems caused by the tourist development. They want to influence the process of tourism planning and management. This shows that it is moving in the direction of creating the social capacities of the community necessary to become part of the development process in the study area.

This study helps gauge the evaluation of the residents of the study area for the development of the most important industry in the economy of this area. In addition to providing a practical contribution to the planning and development of sustainable development in the research region, the study's findings help us better understand how the community evaluates tourism development and how to support it. It also directs scientific research and other studies in measuring and analyzing additional aspects that influence how economic resources are used in the study area. This study is geographically limited; the collected data are only for the residents of the Saranda area. Residents in other areas may have different perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding tourism development. This study is also limited in terms of time frame. Other studies in the future should consider these limitations.

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