




## Article

# Exploring Residents' Perceptions of the Socio-Cultural Benefits of Tourism Development in the Mountain Area

Iulia C. Muresan <sup>1</sup>, Rezhen Harun <sup>2</sup>, Felix H. Arion <sup>1</sup>, Ava Omar Fatah <sup>3</sup> and Diana E. Dumitras <sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic Sciences, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, 400372 Cluj-Napoca, Romania; iulia.muresan@usamvcluj.ro (I.C.M.); felixarion@usamvcluj.ro (F.H.A.)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agribusiness and Rural Development, College of Agricultural Sciences Engineering, University of Sulaimani, Sulaimani 5100, Iraq; rezhen.rashid@univsul.edu.iq

<sup>3</sup> Department of Marketing Management, College of Administration and Economics, University of Sulaimani, Sulaimani 5100, Iraq; ava.fatah@univsul.edu.iq

\* Correspondence: ddumitras@usamvcluj.ro

**Abstract:** Development of tourism affected the socio-cultural environment of many destinations. Previous studies have focused more on analyzing the impact of tourism on all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environment and socio-cultural); therefore, the present paper examines tourism development's impact with regard to the socio-cultural benefits that enhance sustainable tourism development. A survey based on a questionnaire was employed in June 2018 in a mountain village in Cluj County, Romania. The collected data were analyzed using principal component analysis, and several statistical tests were conducted. The results indicated that the respondents have a positive attitude towards tourism development and socio-cultural perceived benefits. Older people and those running a business tend to perceive more positively the benefits of tourism development. The findings of the research could contribute to future development strategies, as it is well known that supporting local communities influences the success of tourism destination.

**Keywords:** residents' perceptions; tourism development; socio-cultural impacts



**Citation:** Muresan, I.C.; Harun, R.; Arion, F.H.; Fatah, A.O.; Dumitras, D.E. Exploring Residents' Perceptions of the Socio-Cultural Benefits of Tourism Development in the Mountain Area. *Societies* **2021**, *11*, 83. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11030083>

Academic Editor: Gregor Wolbring

Received: 27 May 2021

Accepted: 14 July 2021

Published: 19 July 2021

**Publisher's Note:** MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:** © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. Introduction

The tourism sector represents for mountain areas a social, economic and cultural development tool that enhances the wellbeing of local communities [1,2]. Mountain areas face numerous challenges due to the harsh climate conditions, natural disasters, and accessibility, which directly affect the local economy, infrastructure development and industrial production. In this context, tourism may represent a viable alternative for stimulating growth in mountain areas and increase the life standards of local communities [1]. Mountain destinations are increasingly attractive worldwide due to the wide range of tourism development assets, such as snow, diversity of traditions and cultures, mineral and hot springs, and diversity of fauna and flora [2].

Many studies have investigated the dependency of host communities on tourism and the perceived benefits of tourism development [3]. Residents that depend economically on tourism activity perceive more positively the benefits [4–6]. However, there are also studies that indicate the contrary [7,8]. Understanding residents' perceptions and expectations of tourism development represents a key factor for sustainable development [9]. Local communities' attitudes and perceptions regarding tourism's impacts have direct impact on support for its development and long-term sustainability [7]. Analysis of the perceived benefits reveals communities' attachment to and support for tourism development [10], on one hand, and offers important insights for future policies that maximize tourism's benefits and minimize the potential negative impacts, on the other hand [11]. A community's satisfaction with tourism development depends on how the residents perceive the economic, environment and socio-cultural benefits [12]. The present research analyzed host

community perceptions on the benefits of tourism development in Baisoara, a mountain commune in Romania. Revealing residents' perceptions provides a better understanding of how the tourism industry can contribute to the development of a small mountain, rural community and, on the other hand, it increases awareness of the link between tourism and economic growth at the local level. Social and cultural aspects play an important role in tourism development [13–16]; however, to what extent and which elements prevail requires a deeper investigation. Which are the cultural benefits that enhance sustainable tourism development? What about the social benefits? And, not least, do socio-demographic characteristics have an influence on residents' perceptions of tourism?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Socio-Cultural Benefits of Tourism Development

It is well known that tourism has both positive and negative impacts on social, cultural and economic development of a tourism destination [17–22]. Pham [13] concluded that local residents support tourism activity due to its socio-cultural and environmental benefits, rather than economic ones. Many researchers have focused on understanding only the socio-cultural aspects related to a tourism destination as a key factor for sustainable tourism development [14–16], which derives from the interaction of local residents and visitors. It is important to discern both positive and negative outcomes of tourism for each individual tourism destination, especially in regions with high cultural heritage. Bello et al. [15] emphasized the fact that the socio-cultural impacts are closely related to the place and to the interaction of residents with the visitors. In addition, it is important to acknowledge the role of the diversity of the communities [23] in the sustainability of tourism.

Among positive socio-cultural benefits of tourism can be mentioned: infrastructure development; improvement of community services; leisure, recreation and support for cultural activities; intercultural communication; conservation of local culture and heritage; and revitalization of local cultural practices [5,14,23,24]. Previous studies have revealed that negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development can be reflected in changes in the behavior and values of indigenous communities, changes in tradition and culture, lower quality of life standards, and cultural decline [14,16,25,26].

### 2.2. Impact of Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Residents' Perceptions towards Tourism Development

Several studies have focused on the influence of the socio-demographic characteristics of local residents on their perceptions towards tourism development. The influence of socio-demographic characteristics on perceived tourism development benefits may differ among areas due to the particular characteristics (customs, beliefs etc.) of the communities [22,27,28]. Researchers pointed out that there are differences regarding the gender of respondents and their perceived benefits. Women tend to be more preoccupied with the environmental impact and perceive more positively the socio-cultural benefits [29–32]. Studies revealed that both gender and age had significant influence on the perceived impact of tourism development [10]. It was noticed that in general, men are more supportive of tourism development and more open to participate in this activity than women [33]. The literature underlines that younger people perceive more positively the economic impact of tourism, as the sector represents a job opportunity [34]. Some studies indicated that older people perceive less positively the impacts of tourism development [35,36]; however, other studies revealed that older residents are more supportive for tourism development [8,37,38]. Level of education is another variable used in different studies to analyze the perceived benefits of tourism impacts [39–41]. Results of previous studies enhance the idea that the positive perceptions of benefits of tourism development are higher in cases where there are more educated residents [40–42]. The analysis of the above-mentioned studies suggests that one cannot identify a common pattern of the impact of socio-demographic characteristics of residents on their perception towards tourism development.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Study Area

The research was conducted in Baisoara, a mountain commune in Cluj County, Romania. The area is known for its unique natural landscape that attracts tourists, especially during the winter season because of the ski slope.

According to the data presented by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania [43], in 2018 there were a total of 8 accommodation units (1 hotel, 1 summer camps and 6 agroturistic guesthouse), assuring a total number of 348 bed-places. In 2018 6259 arrivals were registered, and 13,345 overnight stays. Based on these data, the average length of stay was calculated to be 2.13 days, indicating that the area is mainly visited during weekends. This was noticed also in other rural destinations in Romania [44].

#### 3.2. Research Methods

For the purpose of the research, a survey based on a questionnaire was conducted among the residents of the commune during June 2018. A face to face questionnaire was administered to a sample of resident families. The research instrument was developed based on the scale presented by Osti et al. [45]. The research instrument consisted of three main parts: (1) perception regarding the community benefits of tourism development—for this part a total of 11 items were evaluated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means totally disagree and 5 totally agree; (2) enrolment and dependence on tourism activity; (3) socio-demographic characteristics.

The minimum sample size was calculated to be 153 with 10% error and 99% confidence interval (Table 1), and in the end 148 questionnaires were validated. The systematic sampling method with a sampling interval equal to 12 was used to select the resident families. The sample size met the recommendation of minimum subject to item ratio of at least 5 items per subject, in exploratory factor analysis, but not less than 100 respondents [46,47].

**Table 1.** Tourism supply indicators in 2018 in Baisoara.

Indicator	Total	Hotel	Camp	Agroturistic Guesthouse
Number of units	8	1	1	6
Bed places (no.)	348	108	79	161
Arrivals (no. Tourists)	6256	710	2400	3149
Overnight (no.)	13,345	1219	7200	4926
Average length of stay (nights) *	2.13	1.71	3	1.56

Source: [43], \* indicates own calculation based on the official data.

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to present the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and as preliminary analysis for the perception of tourism development benefits. A principal component analysis was conducted on the group composed of the 11 items that evaluated the perceived benefits of tourism development. Varimax rotation method was used to reduce the variables into smaller sets of newly correlated components. Factors with an eigenvalue higher than 1 and factor loading equal to or higher than 0.4 were considered significant and included in the analysis [48]; in the end, 10 items were retained for the final analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to test the internal consistency of the items. The results were above the limit of 0.6, indicating a good consistency of the scale and reliability of the data. Furthermore, in order to determine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics (gender, educational level, age, monthly household income, home-born, dependency on tourism) on residents' perceptions towards perceived benefits of tourism development, the Shapiro–Wilk test was used to test the normality of the statements ( $p < 0.05$ ), the Mann–Whitney U test was chosen to compare the two groups, and the Kruskal–Wallis test was used to compare the groups

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

From the total number of respondents, 52.4% were female and 47.6% male, assuring a gender balance. In terms of education it was noticed that more than 40% of the respondents graduated from high school, while around 31% have a university degree. Analyzing the distribution of the sample through the age groups, it can be observed that more than 60% of the respondents are between 30 and 60 years old, while almost 11% of them are older than 60 years. The distribution of the monthly household average income reveals that in general people from the research area have low income, in 52.8% of the cases the monthly household income being less than 1500 RON (375USD) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Characteristics (n = 148)	Variables	%
Gender	Female	52.4
	Male	47.6
Education	Secondary school	10.5
	Vocational school	18.2
	High school	40.6
	University degree	30.8
Age	18–29 years	22.3
	30–44 years	32.4
	45–60 years	35.5
	>60 years	10.8
Monthly household average income	<1500 RON	52.8
	1501–2500 RON	30.3
	>2500 RON	16.9
Home-born	Yes	66.2
	No	33.8
Business in tourism	Yes	3.4
	No	96.6

Note: The average exchange rate of 1 USD was 4.0033 RON (Romanian leu) at the time of data collection.

### 4.2. Perceived Benefits of Tourism Development

A principal component analysis (PCA) was employed to assess the dimensionality of the 11 items used to evaluate the perceived benefits of tourism. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-square = 516.212,  $p = 0.000$ ), providing support for the validity of the data. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) overall measure of sampling was 0.852, above the critical value of 0.6, indicating that the data was appropriate for the PCA [48] (Table 3). The PCA with Varimax rotation of the 10 items led to two factors explaining 57.16% of the total variance, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82, emerging as dimensions for perceived benefits of tourism development. The two dimensions were named “social benefits” and “cultural benefits”.

The first dimension, “social benefits” ( $2.29 \pm 1.335$ ), explains 39.40% of the total variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.82, exceeding the recommended significant level of 0.6 and suggesting a good internal consistency among attributes within each quality dimension [48]. The five items included in the first factor are related to the capacity of the traditional accommodations, implementation of ecological practices in the accommodation units, variety of food services (restaurants in the area), increasing the entertainment opportunities, and decreasing the authenticity of the traditions and customs, on the other hand. It was observed that the respondents agree that the entertainment opportunities increased ( $3.42 \pm 1.212$ ), and also the variety of food services ( $3.06 \pm 1.434$ ). The surveyed respondents do not consider that the new units should be constructed in traditional manner,

with a capacity lower than 20 placed ( $2.95 \pm 1.598$ ), and they also agree to a lesser extent that tourism leads to a decrease in authenticity of the traditions and customs ( $2.28 \pm 1.448$ ).

**Table 3.** Principal component analysis of the perceived benefits of tourism.

Component	Item	Factor Loading	Mean	SD
Social benefits $\alpha = 0.82$ (EV = 3.94, VA = 39.40%, M = 2.29, SD = 1.335)	New tourists units should be design in traditional way and have maximum 20 bed-places	0.808	2.95	1.598
	Tourist units should be eco certificated	0.790	3.28	1.608
	Tourism development enhance more dinning and shopping opportunities for locals	0.775	3.06	1.434
	Tourism development has negative impact on the local culture and traditions	0.771	2.28	1.448
	Tourism development enhance more recreational opportunities for locals	0.607	3.42	1.212
Cultural benefits $\alpha = 0.76$ (EV = 1.77, VA = 17.76%, M = 3.59, SD = 0.907)	Interaction with tourists is a positive experience	0.820	3.66	1.717
	Tourism generates more positive impacts than negative on the local culture	0.731	4.03	1.288
	Tourism provide incentives for restoration of traditional houses	0.695	2.73	1.541
	Cultural attractions should be better promoted	0.633	4.18	1.092
	Tourists are interested in local culture	0.579	3.39	1.122
$\alpha = 0.82$ , Total variance % 57.16; KMO = 0.813; Chi-square = 516.212, $p < 0.000$				

The second dimension, “cultural benefits” ( $3.59 \pm 0.907$ ), explains 17.76% of the total variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.76. This factor consists of five items related to the positive impact of the interaction between the tourists and local residents, perceptions of social and cultural effects of tourism development, restoration of the traditional houses and historical buildings, promotion of cultural attraction and interest of tourists in local culture. It was observed that the respondents agree that the cultural attractions should be better promoted ( $4.18 \pm 1.092$ ), since tourism has more positive cultural and social perceived impacts than negative ones ( $4.03 \pm 1.288$ ). At the same time, the respondents perceive benefits from the interactions with tourists ( $3.66 \pm 1.717$ ), and also appreciate that the tourists show interest in the local culture ( $3.39 \pm 1.122$ ). Even if positive cultural benefits of tourism are acknowledged by residents, actions that assure the restoration of the traditional houses and historical buildings are among perceived cultural benefits ( $2.73 \pm 1.541$ ).

#### 4.3. Analysis of Perceived Benefits towards Tourism Development

One of the main objectives of the research was to investigate the impact of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents on the perceptions towards tourism development (Table 4). To achieve this objective, the following were taken into analysis: gender, educational level, age, monthly household income, home-born, and dependency on tourism (running a business in tourism, monthly household income depends on tourism, and tourism leads to an increase of the household income). Based on the groups’ characteristics, several non-parametric tests were performed, as presented in the Materials and Methodology section.

**Table 4.** Results of Mann–Whitney U test and the Kruskal–Wallis test of socio-demographic characteristics and tourism benefits.

Respondents' Characteristics		Tourism Benefits	
		Social Benefits	Cultural Benefits
Gender	Female	2.87 (1.115)	3.64 (0.835)
	Male	3.12 (1.157)	3.55 (0.989)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.118	0.802
Education level	Secondary school	3.74 (1.017)	3.46 (1.022)
	Vocational school	2.61 (1.049)	3.47 (0.996)
	High school	2.87 (1.159)	3.71 (0.867)
	University degree	3.24 (0.920)	3.61 (0.872)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.003 **	0.670
Age	18–29 years	2.76 (1.253)	3.60 (0.875)
	30–44 years	2.89 (0.972)	3.47 (0.962)
	45–60 years	2.93 (1.111)	3.70 (0.837)
	>60 years	3.93 (1.049)	3.61 (1.049)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.005 **	0.687
Monthly household income	<1500 RON	3.02 (1.132)	3.49 (0.950)
	1501–2500 RON	2.72 (0.974)	3.80 (0.611)
	>2500 RON	3.65 (1.158)	3.87 (1.006)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.002 **	0.084
Home-born	Yes	3.04 (1.125)	3.55 (0.961)
	No	2.88 (1.158)	3.70 (0.778)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.581	0.448
Business in tourism	Yes	3.93 (0.578)	3.91 (0.811)
	No	2.95 (1.136)	3.58 (0.910)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.045 *	0.399
My household monthly income depends on tourism activity	Yes	3.32 (1.143)	3.51 (0.934)
	No	2.96 (1.134)	3.60 (0.908)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.235	0.756
Tourism development leads to an increase of my household income	Yes	3.58 (0.983)	3.76 (0.804)
	No	2.89 (1.132)	3.57 (0.922)
	<i>p</i> -value	0.010 **	0.392

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

When analyzing the perceived cultural benefits, it was concluded that there are no significant differences among the groups based on their socio-demographic characteristics ( $p > 0.05$ ). This changed when the perceived social benefits were analyzed. It can be observed that older people ( $3.93 \pm 1.049$ ) and those owning a business in tourism ( $3.93 \pm 0.578$ ) tend to perceive more positively the social benefits ( $p < 0.01$ ), compared with people that are not running a business in tourism ( $2.95 \pm 1.136$ ). At the same time, it was observed that respondents with higher income are more satisfied with the social benefits ( $3.65 \pm 1.58$ ). There were no significant statistical differences regarding the perceived social benefits between home-born respondents ( $3.04 \pm 1.125$ ) and those that are not home-born ( $2.88 \pm 1.158$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Subsequently, the perceptions of cultural and social benefits based on tourism activity dependency were determined. Respondents with



household monthly income depending on tourism activity perceive the social benefits more positively ( $3.32 \pm 1.143$ ), compared with the group whose monthly household income does not depend on tourism activity ( $2.96 \pm 1.134$ ), but there is no significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). The cultural benefits are positively perceived by both groups, those whose household income depends on tourism ( $3.51 \pm 0.934$ ), and those for whom tourism does not influence the monthly household income ( $3.57 \pm 0.922$ ), with no significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the respondents were asked if the development of tourism in the area contributed to an increase in the household income. It was noticed that residents that benefit from an increase in income due to tourism activity perceive more positively the social benefits ( $3.58 \pm 0.983$ ), statistically different to those that declared that their household income did not increase due to tourism activity ( $2.89 \pm 1.132$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Finally, there was no statistical difference between the group that stated that their household income increased due to tourism activity development in the area ( $3.76 \pm 0.804$ ) and the group that stated that their household income did not increase due to tourism activity development in the area ( $3.57 \pm 0.922$ ), in terms of perceived cultural benefits ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

There are several papers analyzing the perceptions, attitudes and support for future development of tourism in the host communities. The previous studies that have focused on the link between the local residents and tourism development tended to analyze the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environmental and sociocultural) [17,22,26], and rarely focused only on one of the three dimensions to analyze the perceived benefits and support of communities for future development.

The surveyed respondents show positive attitudes towards tourism development in the research area concerning the perceived cultural and social benefits, highlighting the fact that the standard of life has increased due to improvements in entertainment facilities, as well increased options for dining. Results indicate that the respondents perceived more positively the cultural benefits ( $3.59 \pm 0.907$ ) compared with the social benefits ( $2.29 \pm 1.335$ ). Perceived benefits from tourism development will lead to future support of tourism activity [29,49], on the one hand, but tourism development could lead to irritation of the residents due to increased traffic and overcrowding [31], on the other hand. Tourism development should improve the standard of living of the residents [50], since social benefits are recognized as increasing support for future tourism development within the host community [8,51]. The residents from the research area perceive tourism as a factor that provides cultural identity and improves the quality of recreational services, indirectly improving the standard of living. These results confirm those from previous studies [22,52,53]. Further, residents also agree that tourism does not negatively affect the customs and local traditions ( $2.28 \pm 1.448$ ), enhancing the idea that tourism has a positive impact on the cultural identity [54]. In contrast to other studies, the respondents do not consider that tourism has provided opportunities to restore and protect historic buildings. In this case, the average registered score ( $2.73 \pm 1.541$ ) was below the satisfaction level, compared with those recorded in other studies [22,55].

Tourism development in rural areas represents a viable alternative to agricultural activities and employment opportunities for women [56]. Being a source of employment and business opportunities, women support tourism development more than men [22,56]. However, the results do not indicate significant differences between women and men in terms of perceived social and cultural benefits ( $p < 0.05$ ). The influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the perceived benefits may differ between regions, as was underlined by previous research [28,56].

Older people perceive more positively the benefits of tourism development [37,38]. Cultural benefits are more positively perceived by the older residents from the research area but without any significant statistical differences between the age groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the case of the social benefits from tourism development, older people are more than

satisfied ( $3.93 \pm 1.049$ ), compared with younger ones who are more mobile and leave the commune with more ease, in order to find new recreational opportunities. Nunkoon and Ramkisson [28] pointed out that older residents perceive more positively the social benefits than younger ones. The analysis of the social benefits revealed that the less educated group is the most satisfied in terms of social benefits ( $p < 0.01$ ), education being the most significant variable that influences the perceived impact of tourism development [37]. The higher the degree of satisfaction with the perceived benefits, both social and cultural, the higher the support of the host community for tourism development [57], leading to successful activity [58]. Those that are involved in tourism activity are more satisfied with the social benefits ( $3.93 \pm 0.548$ ), compared with the group of respondents that are not involved in tourism, while no statistical differences were encountered between those that run a business in tourism and those that do not run a tourism business ( $p > 0.05$ ). Residents that depend on tourism tend to perceive more positively the benefits of tourism development [57]. The results differ from other similar studies that underlined that people with tourism-related jobs do not have a favourable perception of tourism impacts [59,60]. Household income dependency on tourism leads to higher satisfaction of the respondents regarding the perceived social and cultural benefits.

## 6. Conclusions

In summary, based on the results of the conducted interviews, it can be concluded that the respondents are aware about the social and cultural benefits of tourism in rural areas, most of them being related to different events or festivals [61,62]. In this context, the current research comes to fill the literature gap regarding rural communities' perceptions of tourism development's social and cultural benefits. The findings of this exploratory study have practical implications for future development plans and management of tourism destinations. As has already been underlined by scholars, the success of a tourist destination depends on the degree of support of the host community [63] and its perceived benefits.

This study has certain limitations. Due to the specificity and diversity of the tourist destinations the results cannot be extended to other destinations, and it is difficult to formulate recommendations for different tourism products.

Future studies should be carried out to determine tourists' perceptions about the quality and the diversity of tourism services in the area, on the one hand, and those of tourism services providers, on the other hand, especially during the current period in which the hospitality industry is experiencing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies related to the effect of the COVID-19 crisis are of great importance today, revealing consumption habits and sustainability issues related to tourism development [64–67]. Nevertheless, as pointed by Bello et al. [15], the socio-cultural impact relates closely to the place; thus, continuing the research in the studied area under these new circumstances would be useful to actors from the hospitality industry.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, I.C.M. and R.H.; Formal analysis, I.C.M.; Methodology, I.C.M., A.O.F. and D.E.D.; Validation, R.H. and F.H.A.; Visualization, F.H.A.; Writing—original draft, I.C.M. and D.E.D.; Writing—review & editing, I.C.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Ethical review and approval were waived for this study, due to the fact that participation was voluntary and all data were anonymous.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.



## References

1. UNWTO. *Sustainable Mountain Tourism—Opportunities for Local Communities, Executive Summary*; World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): Madrid, Spain, 2018.
2. Debarbieux, B.; Oiry Varacca, M.; Rudaz, G.; Maselli, D.; Kohler, T.; Jurek, M. (Eds.) *Tourism in Mountain Regions: Hopes, Fears and Realities. Sustainable Mountain Development Series*; UNIGE, CDE, SDC: Geneva, Switzerland, 2014.
3. Styliadis, D.; Terzidou, M. Tourism and the economic crisis in Kavala, Greece. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2014**, *44*, 210–226. [[CrossRef](#)]
4. Haley, A.J.; Snaith, T.; Miller, G. The social impacts of tourism: A case study of Bath, UK. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2005**, *32*, 647–668. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Andereck, K.L.; Valentine, K.M.; Knopf, R.C.; Vogt, C.A. Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2005**, *32*, 1056–1076. [[CrossRef](#)]
6. Martínez González, J.A.; Parra-Lopez, E.; Buhalis, D. The loyalty of young residents in an island destination: An integrated model. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2017**, *6*, 444–455. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Vargas-Sánchez, A.; Porras-Bueno, N.; de los Ángeles Plaza-Mejía, M. Explaining residents' attitudes to tourism Is a universal model possible? *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2011**, *38*, 460–480. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. McGehee, N.G.; Andereck, K.L. Factors Predicting Rural Residents' Support of Tourism. *J. Travel Res.* **2004**, *43*, 131–140. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Zamani-Farahani, H. Host attitudes toward tourism: A study of Sareyn Municipality and local community partnerships in therapeutic tourism. *J. Tour.* **2016**, *2*, 16–34. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Jaafar, M.; Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Ismail, S. Perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism and community participation: A case study of Langkawi Island. *Tour. Hosp. Res.* **2015**. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Bestard, A.B.; Nadal, R.J. Attitudes toward tourism and tourism congestion. *Reg. Dev.* **2007**, *25*, 193–207.
12. Homsud, N.; Promsaard, S. The effects of residents' image and perceived tourism impact to residence satisfaction and support: A case study of Hua-Hin Prachubkirikhan. In Proceedings of the 2015 WEI International Academic Conference Proceedings, Rome, Italy, 14–17 April 2015; pp. 190–199.
13. Pham, L.; Kayat, K. Residents' perceptions of tourism impact and their support for tourism development: The case study of Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh province, Vietnam. *Eur. J. Tour. Res.* **2011**, *4*, 123–146.
14. Mbaiwa, J.E. The Socio-cultural Impacts of Tourism Development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *J. Tour. Cult. Chang.* **2005**, *2*, 163–185. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Bello, F.G.; Neil, C.A.R.R.; Lovelock, B.; Feifei, X.U. Local residents' perceptions of socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Mangochi, Malawi. *Adv. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2017**, *5*, 1–22.
16. Zhuang, X.; Yao, Y.; Li, J. Sociocultural Impacts of Tourism on Residents of World Cultural Heritage Sites in China. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 840. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Eraqi, M.I. Local communities' attitudes towards impacts of tourism development in Egypt. *Tour. Anal.* **2007**, *12*, 191–200. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. Naghiu, A.; Vasquez, J.L.; Georgiev, I. Rural development strategies through rural tourism activities in Romania: Chance for an international demand? *Int. Rev. Public Nonprofit Mark.* **2005**, *2*, 85–95. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Kiriakidou, O.; Gore, J. Learning by example: Benchmarking organizational culture in hospitality, tourism and leisure SMEs. *Benchmarking Int. J.* **2005**, *12*, 192–206. [[CrossRef](#)]
20. Kandampully, J. The impact of demand Fluctuation on the Quality of Service: A Tourism Industry Example. *Manag. Serv. Qual.* **2000**, *10*, 10–18. [[CrossRef](#)]
21. Tosun, C. Host Perceptions of Impacts: A Comparative Tourism Study. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2000**, *29*, 231–253. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Muresan, I.C.; Oroian, C.F.; Harun, R.; Arion, F.H.; Porutiu, A.; Chiciudean, G.O.; Todea, A.; Lile, R. Local Residents' Attitude toward Sustainable Rural Tourism Development. *Sustainability* **2016**, *8*, 100. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Andereck, K.; Valentine, K.; Vogt, C.; Knopf, R. A cross-cultural analysis of tourism and quality of life perceptions. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2007**, *15*, 483–502. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Zaei, M.E.; Zaei, M.E. The impacts of tourism industry on host community. *Eur. J. Tour. Hosp. Res.* **2013**, *1*, 12–21.
25. Li, J.; Xu, L.; Tang, L.; Wang, S.; Li, L. Big data in tourism research: A literature review. *Tour Manag.* **2018**, *68*, 301–323. [[CrossRef](#)]
26. Brida, J.G.; Disegna, M.; Osti, L. Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and attitudes towards tourism policies in a small mountain community. In Proceedings of the Ninth Canadian Congress on Leisure Research, Wolfville, NS, Canada, 12–15 May 1999.
27. Afthanorhan, A.; Awang, Z.; Fazella, S. Perception of Tourism Impact and Support Tourism Development in Terengganu, Malaysia. *Soc. Sci.* **2017**, *6*, 106. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Nunkoo, R.; Gursoy, D. Residents' support for tourism: An identity perspective. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *39*, 243–268. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Wang, Y.; Pfister, R.E. Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism and Perceived Personal Benefits in a Rural Community. *J. Travel Res.* **2008**, *47*, 84–93. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Mason, P.; Cheyne, J. Residents attitudes to proposed tourism development. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2000**, *27*, 391–411. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Ko, D.W.; Stewart, W.P. A structural equation model of residents' attitudes for tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2002**, *23*, 521–530. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Lepp, A. Residents' attitudes towards tourism in Bigodi village, Uganda Case study. *Tour. Manag.* **2007**, *28*, 876–885. [[CrossRef](#)]

33. Greene, S. Including young mothers: Community-based participation and the continuum of active citizenship. *Community Dev. J.* **2005**, *42*, 167–180. [CrossRef]
34. Almeida García, F.; Balbuena Vázquez, A.; Cortés Macías, R. Resident's attitudes towards the impacts of tourism. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2015**, *13*, 33–40. [CrossRef]
35. Cavus, S.; Tanrisevdi, A. Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism Development: A Case Study in Kusadasi, Turkey. *Tour. Anal.* **2003**, *7*, 259–269. [CrossRef]
36. Almeida-García, F.; Peláez-Fernández, M.Á.; Balbuena-Vázquez, A.; Cortés-Macias, R. Residents' perceptions of tourism development in Benalmádena (Spain). *Tour. Manag.* **2016**, *54*, 259–274. [CrossRef]
37. Liu, X.R.; Li, J.J. Host Perceptions of Tourism Impact and Stage of Destination Development in a Developing Country. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 2300. [CrossRef]
38. Tomljenovic, R.; Faulkner, B. Tourism and older residents in a Sunbelt Resort. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2000**, *27*, 93–114. [CrossRef]
39. Shen, F.; Cottrell, S.P. A sustainable tourism framework for monitoring residents' satisfaction with agritourism in Chongdugou Village, China. *Int. J. Tour. Policy* **2008**, *1*, 368–375. [CrossRef]
40. Haralambopoulos, N.; Pizam, A. Perceived impacts of tourism: The case of Samos. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **1996**, *23*, 503–526. [CrossRef]
41. Korça, P. Resident perceptions of tourism in a resort town. *Leis. Sci.* **1998**, *20*, 193–212. [CrossRef]
42. Hernández, S.; Cohen, J.; García, H. Residents' attitudes towards an instant resort enclave. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **1996**, *23*, 755–779. [CrossRef]
43. Tempo Online. Available online: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table> (accessed on 15 May 2021).
44. Arion, F.; Muresan, I. An overview of rural tourism in the development regions of Romania. *Bull. UASVM Hort.* **2008**, *62*, 35–40.
45. Brida, J.G.; Osti, L.; Faccioli, M. Residents' Perception and Attitudes towards Tourism Impacts: A Case Study of the Small Rural Community of Folgaria (Trentino, Italy) (1 October 2009). *Benchmarking Int. J.* **2011**, *18*, 359–378. [CrossRef]
46. Gorsuch, R.L. *Factor Analysis*; Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ, USA, 1983.
47. Hatcher, L. *A Step by Step Approach to Using the SAS System for Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling*; SAS Institute, Inc.: Cary, NC, USA, 1994.
48. Hair, J.; Black, W.; Babin, B.; Anderson, R.; Tatham, R. *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 6th ed.; Pearson Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ, USA, 2006.
49. Choi, H.C.; Murray, I. Resident attitudes toward sustainable community tourism. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2010**, *18*, 575–594. [CrossRef]
50. Lee, T.H. Influence analysis of community resident support for sustainable tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2013**, *34*, 37–46. [CrossRef]
51. Zhang, J. Understanding Host Community Attitudes towards Tourism and Resident-Tourist Interaction: A Socio-Behavioural Study of Melbourne's Urban-Rural Fringe. Ph.D. Thesis, School of Management Business Portfolio, RMIT University Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, February 2008.
52. Hanafiah, M.H.; Jamaluddin, M.R.; Zulkifly, M.I. Local Community Attitude and Support towards Tourism Development in Tioman Island, Malaysia. *Proc. Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2013**, *105*, 792–800. [CrossRef]
53. Escudero Gómez, L.A. Residents' Opinions and Perceptions of Tourism Development in the Historic City of Toledo, Spain. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 3854. [CrossRef]
54. Soldić Frleta, D.; Đurkin Badurina, J. Factors affecting residents' support for cultural tourism development. *ToSEE Tour. South. East. Eur.* **2019**, *5*, 641–653.
55. Ramseook-Munhurrin, P.; Naidoo, P. Residents' attitudes toward perceived tourism benefits. *Int. J. Manag. Mark. Res.* **2011**, *4*, 45–56.
56. Figueroa-Domecq, C.; Pritchard, A.; Segovia-Perez, M.; Morgan, N.; Villace-Molinero, T. Tourism gender research: A critical accounting. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2015**, *52*, 87–103. [CrossRef]
57. Sirakaya, E.; Teye, V.; Sonme, S. Understanding Residents Support for Tourism Development in the Central Region of Ghana. *J. Travel Res.* **2002**, *41*, 57–67. [CrossRef]
58. Andriotis, K.; Vaughan, R.D. Urban residents' attitudes toward tourism development: The case of Crete. *J. Travel Res.* **2003**, *42*, 172–185. [CrossRef]
59. Teye, V.; Sönmez, S.F.; Sirakaya, E. Residents' attitudes toward tourism development. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2002**, *29*, 668–688. [CrossRef]
60. Alrwajfah, M.M.; Almeida-García, F.; Cortés-Macías, R. Residents' Perceptions and Satisfaction toward Tourism Development: A Case Study of Petra Region, Jordan. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 1907. [CrossRef]
61. Baptista Alves, H.M.; María Campón Cerro, A.; Vanessa Ferreira Martins, A. Impacts of small tourism events on rural places. *J. Place Manag. Dev.* **2010**, *3*, 22–37. [CrossRef]
62. Lin, H.H.; Hsu, C.H.; Liu, C.Y.; Cheng, B.Y.; Wang, C.H.; Liu, J.M.; Jhang, S. The Impact of Cultural Festivals on the Development of Rural Tourism—A Case Study of Da Jia Matsu Pilgrimage. In Proceedings of the IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, Nanning, China, 22–24 May 2020.
63. Khalid, S.; Ahmad, M.S.; Ramayah, T.; Hwang, J.; Kim, I. Community Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism Development: The Mediating Role of Community Support for Tourism. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 6248. [CrossRef]
64. Jones, P.; Comfort, D. The COVID-19 crisis and sustainability in the hospitality industry. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* **2020**, *32*, 3037–3050. [CrossRef]

- 
65. Almeida, F.; Silva, O. The impact of COVID-19 on tourism sustainability: Evidence from Portugal. *Adv. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2020**, *8*, 440–446.
  66. Moreno-Luna, L.; Robina-Ramírez, R.; Sánchez, M.S.-O.; Castro-Serrano, J. Tourism and Sustainability in Times of COVID-19: The Case of Spain. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2021**, *18*, 1859. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
  67. Fermani, A.; Sergi, M.R.; Carrieri, A.; Crespi, I.; Picconi, L.; Saggino, A. Sustainable tourism and facilities preferences: The sustainable tourist stay scale (STSS) validation. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 9767. [[CrossRef](#)]