

Article

Local Communities' Perceptions of Tourism Planning in Natural Areas

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Abstract: Local communities face a double-edged sword when it comes to tourism development; their attitude directly influences tourism growth and helps spread the word within the community. The local community is increasingly affected socioeconomically by tourism development, which results in the development of attitudes (both positive and negative) based on the perceived effects. This study aimed to investigate the effects of tourism and local support for tourism development in a national park in western Serbia. The data were gathered from locals (580) who reside in the municipality where the national park belongs. Based on their own experiences and their belief that tourism can preserve natural and cultural resources and protect them for future generations, the Tara National Park community was found to favor further tourism development. They disagree that problems would arise from factors often associated with increasing tourism, such as traffic, price increases, or pollution. This study was carried out during the pandemic crisis, which is seen as a paradigm shift in the travel and tourism sectors and offers an opportunity to do better and continue operating in a more sustainable way. Therefore, we propose that these findings be taken into account when developing sustainable tourist management strategies, particularly in national parks and other protected places while respecting the needs and rights of the local people.

Keywords: community support; tourism stakeholders; tourism development; tourism impacts; national parks; residents' attitudes



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1. Introduction

The growth of tourism is essential to the cultural, social, and economic progress of countries [1]. Understanding the attitudes of the local community about the implications of tourism development is crucial for successful tourism development [2], as is ensuring their support [3–5] and satisfaction [6,7]. The effects of tourism development on the local population are evident and have an impact on their sociocultural, economic, and environmental well-being [8]. While it is well recognized that tourism has many advantages, there are also some disadvantages, such as the danger it brings to traditional ways of life, environmental damage, conflicts with tourists, etc. [9,10]. By improving the quality of life of residents in a number of ways, such as employment opportunities, enhanced amenities, and the retention of youthful people in rural settlements [11,12], tourism can help communities. Furthermore, it helps to preserve natural and cultural attractions [13], and it also benefits the local, regional, and national economies [14], and it enhances the number of festivals and chances for outdoor leisure [2]. Unfortunately, tourism also has negative effects such as conflicts between visitors and locals, higher living expenses, a rise in crime, drug use, and traffic, leading to a significant shift in the culture of locals [8,15], as well as environmental damage and pollution [16]. Understanding the views of the local populace is crucial for ensuring appropriate decisions and suitable techniques for the growth of tourism [3].

Based on the above, this study seeks to understand how the local community feels about the effects of tourism development in Tara National Park and whether or not they

support additional tourism growth. In addition to its primary objective, the survey also examines how respondents' socio-demographic characteristics impact how they perceive the effects of tourism development. There is limited research on national parks in developing countries such as Serbia, despite an increase in studies on how host communities view the effects of tourism development. This study should highlight the value of local support, particularly in protected areas such as national parks, and emphasize how local support is essential for the continued growth of tourism, especially in developing countries.

The rest of the article is organized as shown below. The second section presents a critical assessment of the local communities and tourism development. The third section discusses the case study area, methodology, data collection, survey instruments, and analysis techniques. The fourth part contains the results and analyses. In the fifth section, a discussion is provided, followed by a conclusion in the sixth section.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Development Planning in Tourism

Sustainable development is a method that enables growth to occur without deteriorating or exhausting the resources upon which it is built. In order to achieve the same or higher degree of development, sustainable tourism development entails balancing economic, social, and cultural growth without endangering the environment [17,18]. By embracing the capacity of coming generations to meet their requirements, sustainable development incorporates long-term tourism welfare [19–21].

Sustainable tourism development planning is truly environmental preservation planning, and as such, it entails a range of research activities and analysis before deciding on the development course [18]. All of these steps are taken to prevent the intensive exploitation of resources in certain areas without first taking into account their preservation [22], while also having positive economic consequences and high tourist satisfaction [23].

Increasing benefits and reducing costs while simultaneously satisfying visitors and involving the community in tourism decisions is the process of achieving sustainable tourism [24]. To accomplish this long-term desired prosperity, locals' needs and concerns should be met [25,26]. By including locals in tourism planning, resident empowerment is accomplished [19,20,27,28].

The UNESCO world heritage and sustainable tourism program is an excellent example of stakeholder collaboration. The strategy is built on discussion and stakeholder collaboration, integrating destination-level planning for tourism and heritage management, protecting and valuing natural and cultural assets, and developing responsible tourism. The local population plays a crucial role in tourism planning [29]. The local level is the first in the hierarchy of tourism planning, followed by the regional level and the national level [29,30]. The discussion of community involvement in tourism planning is not entirely new. Its inclusion in the idea of sustainable tourism that was created in the 1990s by Butler [31] confirms what was globally agreed upon in the 1980s. According to theory, community involvement in tourist planning dates back to the 1970s, when the concept of participatory development and empowerment first gained recognition [32,33].

Nevertheless, even though the fundamentals of tourism planning are generally acknowledged, developing countries frequently do not include planning [34,35]. Particularly when it comes to the development of those tourist community segments that will help the local community, the local community must be involved in the planning and development of tourism [20,36,37]. Participation from the community will lead to favorable attitudes toward tourists. On the other hand, if residents' aspirations are not taken into account when planning tourism, hostilities over tourism growth may happen, which might negatively impact the industry itself [38,39].

Many authors have emphasized the importance of the local community and admitted that the support given by the local population is integral to the development of sustainable tourism [12,17,36,38–44]. According to several studies, locals are more supportive of tourist development if they view it as a tool for economic growth [8,45].

2.2. *Tourism Impacts on Local Communities*

Local communities are immediately impacted both favorably and unfavorably by the growth of tourism and the interactions that result from it [46,47], and these changes may have an impact on the values, way of life, and general standard of living of the communities [38]. Local communities, particularly those near protected areas such as national parks, can experience changes in their social, economic, and environmental growth as a result of tourism. Economic factors account for the majority of the positive effects of tourism on communities; cultural effects can be both positive and negative; and social and environmental effects are typically negative [38,48].

Local businesses can be boosted by tourism, which can also help locals find work and bring in income for the area [38,49–51]. However, the growth of the tourism industry may also have unfavorable impacts on it, such as increased crime, higher costs of living, host-community resentment of visitors, and lower standards of living for locals [4,50,52]. From an ecological standpoint, unfavorable effects could include harm to the environment and natural resources, as well as possible air, water, and other types of pollution [38,51]. Socially, tourism growth can improve the accessibility of recreational amenities [53], promote better intercultural dialogue, and promote community awareness of cultural identity [54]. However, tourism can also pose problems for local security [55], alter family values and interpersonal interactions [56], and cause traffic congestion [57]. The absence of planning or a lack of community involvement in tourism planning may be the cause of these bad effects of tourism [37,58]. In fact, the idea of tourism planning was developed in reaction to the negative effects of tourism's quick growth.

Scholars have thoroughly examined the various categories of tourism impacts, including socioeconomic [19,42], sociocultural [59], political [60], environmental [61], and the combined impact of all mentioned segments [8,62]. Research on the impacts of tourism and how local people perceive these impacts has become valuable and vast [63]. Studies on local perspectives in protected areas in developing nations are relatively rare [64], despite the fact that this kind of research is essential for the initial phases of tourism development. Therefore, this study aims to enrich the literature by investigating local community support and the impact of tourism in a national park.

2.3. *Relationship between National Parks and Local Communities*

National parks are undoubtedly the most well-known nature tourist destinations in the world, and ecological awareness and ecotourism have increased, as has their appeal [65,66].

Two fundamental principles have driven the development of national parks around the world: the preservation of wildlife and natural areas and the provision of recreational opportunities. However, the conflicts that have developed between these two concepts have been the primary causes of issues with managing and arranging national parks [66–68]. The tourism sector has also grown in importance as a user and socioeconomic component in the transformation of natural areas, which has led to the creation of new types of utilization requirements for the remaining wilderness [67,69,70].

The most crucial places for sustainable tourism are national parks and other protected areas, which puts them at the heart of the conflict [71–73]. Local communities are unavoidably impacted by national parks. On the one hand, they generate expenses such as entry limitations or land losses. On the other hand, they produce advantages, such as the preservation of delicate wildlife and nature as well as the development of recreational opportunities, and they support regional development by generating income and employment [66,74]. The long-term protection of the area's biodiversity and the maximization of the benefits for the community depend heavily on the development and improvement of relations between the local community and the protected area [75].

Due to the special environmental component and status of such areas, there is a specific dimension of influence in the relationship between tourism and the local people when it comes to protected areas such as national parks [66,76]. The local community's cooperation is essential for national parks and other protected places to keep existing

and to be successful in setting protective measures in place. Local community dissatisfaction or exclusion of the local people can result in confrontations, protests, and a lack of cooperation with managers of protected areas, as well as the degradation and loss of biodiversity [75,77–79]. To avoid this, one must be aware of the attitudes and requirements of the community [80]. Understanding the attitudes and needs of the community is essential for developing appropriate policy guidelines and management choices and mitigating negative social consequences [81]. One of the key measures of a protected area's effectiveness is the support and participation of the local community, which significantly enhances the area's conservation, protection, and sustainable management efforts [75].

Sustainable tourism development initiatives are anticipated to be successful with local community support and involvement, particularly in developing and remote destinations [8,45]. Locals should be motivated to participate and aid planners, share their ideas on planning directions, and assist in the process of implementing and supervising planning actions, in addition to reporting the effects of tourism development, they have experienced [82].

In the case of Tara National Park, agriculture and forestry are the two main economic pursuits. Planning for tourism growth is of secondary importance, and the economic benefits to national parks from tourism are simply symbolic. This is demonstrated by the number of locals working in the tourism industry, which ranges from 6–8% of the economically active populace [62]. As an example of the good relationship between the management of Tara National Park and the local community, user councils were established in 2019, which ensure better management of protected areas through connections with local communities. User councils are made up of managers of the national park and representatives of local self-governments, associations, and organizations. They participate in the development of plans and programs for the management of national parks, and the priority is to ensure better protection and promotion of the area through the connection between managers and the local community [83].

2.4. Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Development—Development of Research Questions

Due to the close connection between their daily lives and community development, locals are often the first to notice changes brought about by the growth of tourism. The perception of locals is therefore a useful instrument for evaluating the impact of tourism [38]. It is crucial to comprehend local communities in order to develop management strategies that are responsive to their needs [84]. Additionally, perceptions play a crucial role in determining how local efforts are received by stakeholders and are a useful indicator of their support or opposition to specific policies or programs [85]. As a result, the development of the national park plan as well as sustainable development depends on how communities view and react to tourism.

Understanding these views can give designers of targeted policy measures the information they need to address people's goals in park-to-people communication and sustainable tourism growth. Taking into account the importance of the local community in tourism development, we have applied a methodology in our study relying on surveys with the aim of investigating residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism development on Tara National Park in Serbia.

The purpose of this study is to determine how the local community perceives the effects of tourism development in Tara National Park, whether they support tourism development, and whether they want to participate in development and planning. To meet the above goal, three specific research questions are discussed:

1. What is the perception of the local community about the impact of tourism?
2. Does the local community support the sustainable development of tourism and want to be part of its planning and development?
3. Are there any differences in observed tourism impacts and tourism development support among residents with different socio-demographic characteristics?

3. Methodology

3.1. A Case Study Area

The majority of Tara's mountainous area is covered by the Tara National Park, which is located in the far western part of the Republic of Serbia, close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this area, which was designated a national park in 1981, there are mountain plateaus and peaks that are cut through by extensive river valleys [86].

The existence of Pančić spruce, maintained forest complexes, and a huge variety of animals and plants are just a few of the factors that led to Tara's designation. Almost a third of Serbia's total flora, or over 1100 plant species, may be found here. Brown bears are the largest mammal in the Balkans, and Tara is their most crucial habitat in Serbia [41]. Due to its 135 documented bird species, Tara is included on the list of internationally important areas for the conservation of birds (IBA). Tara is one of the richest mountain areas in terms of the fauna of ancient butterflies—138 species of butterflies have been identified in this region. Another claim about Tara is that it is one of the mountains in Europe with the most forest area. Forests cover 75% of the park's area and are among the most notable and important forests in all of Europe [86,87].

The tourist attractions of Tara National Park are numerous and distinctive. They include a mountainous terrain with a moderate altitude, a natural environment that has been well preserved, areas that are appropriate for summer and winter activities, a favorable climate, the River Drina with its artificial lakes Perućac and Lake Zaovine, cultural landmarks (most notably the monastery of Rača, which was built by the king Dragutin in the 13th century), and authentic traditional ethno-household structures that can be found in Kaluđerske Bare. The archeological site "Mramorje," which is noted for its necropolis from the 14th and 15th centuries, is also located within the National Park. This location is regarded as one of the most significant and well-preserved necropolises on Serbian soil. The well-known "Šargan Eight", on which the Nostalgia train travels, is located on Mokra Gora close to Tara. This remarkable engineering masterpiece is Europe's most beautiful tourist and museum railway. Drvengrad, another settlement on Mokra Gora, was developed by renowned Serbian director Emir Kusturica. Winter tourism is highly established in Tara. On Tara, there are a number of ski resorts [88]. All of these factors, along with many others, make Tara one of Serbia's most beautiful places, as well as rare and distinctive in both Europe and the rest of the world. Many tourist attractions, including cultural, archaeological, and historical sites, as well as hiking, kayaking, cruising the Drina Canyon, swimming, canyoning tours for amateurs and experts, biking, and wildlife viewing (including guided tours to see brown bears) are available [89]. Tara National Park was visited by 41,541 tourists in 2021. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of tourists was higher (69,847) [89].

According to previous research on sustainable tourism in Serbian national parks [87,90], the industry is currently only loosely planned and, to some extent, spontaneous. Planning for tourism development is currently only marginally significant, and the economic benefits to national parks from tourism are purely symbolic. For instance, the management of NP Tara obtains 80% of all money from planned forest management (forestry has a long history in this region dating back more than a century) [90].

3.2. Study Sample

Tara National Park is situated on the territory of the municipality of Bajina Bašta and 10 cadastral municipalities (Jagoštica, Rastište, Zaovine, Konjska Reka, Perućac, Beserovina, Zaugline, Rača, Mala Reka and Solotuša). In the municipality of Bajina Bašta, the approximate number of people is 24,719 (Census 2016 results). In comparison with the 2011 Census, depopulation is present (the number of inhabitants has decreased by 1303) [89]. To select respondents for the survey in each cadastral municipality, purposeful representative sampling was used (the total population is 3589). Respondents were selected based on their place of residence (it was important to cover all cadastral municipalities where Tara National Park is located).

3.3. Profile of the Surveyed Residents

The results (Table 1) showed that 54.5% of respondents are women and 45.5% are men. The respondent's average age was 34 years (range = 15–72, SD = 9359). Most of the respondents have a secondary (high school education—30.7%), followed by those with a university degree (29.7%) and higher degrees (26.9%). The majority of respondents are employed (69.7%). The average monthly salary in Serbia is €450, and most respondents earn less than the average (47.9%).

Table 1. Respondents' sociodemographic characteristics (N = 580).

Gender	Frequency (Percent)	Employment Status	Frequency (Percent)
Male	264 (45.5%)	Student	64 (11.0%)
Female	316 (54.5%)	Employed	404 (69.7%)
Age range	Average age	Unemployed	94 (16.2%)
15–72	34	Pupil	6 (1.0%)
		Retiree	4 (0.7%)
		Housewife	8 (1.4%)
Education	Frequency (Percent)	Income	Frequency (Percent)
Elementary school	2 (0.3%)	Less than average (450€)	278 (47.9%)
High school	178 (30.7%)	Average	142 (24.5%)
College	156 (26.9%)	More than average	160 (27.6%)
University	172 (29.7%)		
Master Degree	64 (11.0%)		
PhD	8 (1.4%)		

Source: Created by the author based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

3.4. Data Collection, Sampling Procedure, and Data Analysis Techniques

The data required for meeting the study aims were obtained via online surveys (distributed via e-mail and social media (Facebook and Instagram)) using a questionnaire specifically designed for this purpose and thus focusing on the local residents' attitudes toward the impacts of tourism development. The questionnaire was distributed only to online groups in the territory of the municipality of Bajina Bašta and 10 cadastral municipalities (the territory of Tara National Park). The survey was conducted in August and September 2020. The minimum number of questionnaires to be collected was 180 (which is 5% of the total population). The study's sample consists of 580 respondents (16% of the overall population). Participants were informed that the survey was anonymous, participation was voluntary, and the survey's results would only be used for research and scientific purposes. The total number of collected questionnaires was 653, but 570 were found to be valid and usable, with a response rate of 30.77% (the response rate formula is to take the number of responses returned, divide by the number of surveys sent, and multiply the result by 100). According to Lavrakas [91], a response rate of more than 30% is considered a really good response rate.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Five questions make up the first part of the survey, which examines respondents' sociodemographic and economic characteristics such as gender, age, education, employment status, and income. The 23-item tourism impact attitude scale, or TIAS, an instrument created by Lankford and Howard [47], was utilized in the second section. This methodology enables researchers to evaluate how locals feel about tourism in various settings. The instrument consists of 27 items, and it was developed using a range of helpful approaches suggested by renowned researchers such as Likert [92], Churchill [93], and Parasuraman et al. [94]. It aims to capture residents' attitudes towards the impacts of tourism development by explicitly integrating three areas:

support for tourism development (e.g., tourism should be planned as a priority, tourism should be actively encouraged, long-term planning can control tourism's negative impacts on the environment), negative impacts (higher crime rate, increased amount of trash, noise), and benefits of tourism development (income, better roads, better services) [48,95].

With just minimal wording changes, the TIAS was adopted after being translated into Serbian. The questionnaire was then put to the test with a small sample of Tara's residents to validate it using the TIAS scale. After it was determined that the translation was successful, the questionnaire was made available to the community.

The items included in the second section required responses on a five-point Likert scale (1 = absolutely disagree, 2 = partially disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = partially agree, and 5 = absolutely agree).

The survey data were subjected to statistical analyses using IBM SPSS 25.0 Statistics [96], and descriptive statistics were reported for the respondents' sociodemographic profiles, while principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to determine the TIAS dimensions. To test the validity of the questionnaire, Pearson correlation was used in SPSS. The validity test is performed by correlating each item's questionnaire score with the total score. Sig. (2-tailed) was a significant level of 5%. Each item was validated individually in two ways: Pearson correlation and the item with a total score, also known as r_{xy} . The next step was to determine the data's reliability. The data reliability is shown in Table 1.

4. Results

4.1. Factor Analysis of the Attitude of Local Communities towards the Tourism Development Impacts

Initially, 23 TIAS items' factorability were assessed. All 23 items have a factor analysis correlation of at least 0.3 with at least one other item, indicating that factorability is reasonable. Three domains in which the items were grouped were revealed by principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. Domain descriptors and accompanying alpha reliability coefficients are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor analysis of the attitude of the host community towards the tourism development impacts.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Support for Tourism Development ($\alpha = 0.95$) (Mean = 3.56)	Negative Impacts of Tourism Development ($\alpha = 0.85$) Mean (2.70)	Personal and Community Benefits ($\alpha = 0.85$) Mean (2.49)
The development of tourism in my place will provide more opportunities for employment for the local population.	3.83	1.47	0.876		
The municipality should make tourism a priority.	2.96	1.65	0.872		
The municipality's government is appropriate in supporting the promotion of tourism.	4.00	1.45	0.859		
Tara National Park should become more of a tourist destination (for domestic and foreign tourists).	2.96	1.60	0.839		
Tourism in Tara National Park should be actively encouraged.	3.74	1.49	0.836		
A major role in the economy of the community should be played by tourism development.	4.09	1.45	0.790		

Table 2. Cont.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Support for Tourism Development ($\alpha = 0.95$) (Mean = 3.56)	Negative Impacts of Tourism Development ($\alpha = 0.85$) Mean (2.70)	Personal and Community Benefits ($\alpha = 0.85$) Mean (2.49)
Government officials' long-term planning can control tourism's negative impacts on the environment.	3.04	1.52	0.788		
Visitors are welcome, and they have a positive impact on my place.	2.78	1.50	0.781		
In the future, tourism will have a leading economic role in my place.	3.30	1.58	0.671		
The community should stimulate the more intensive building of tourist facilities.	3.39	1.40	0.649		
Tourism provides various employment opportunities for locals.	2.21	1.37	0.631		
Mainly, the benefits of tourism development outweigh the negative impacts.	1.93	1.21	0.626		
The existing tourist activities create noise that has a negative impact on life in my place.	3.02	1.50		0.883	
The increased number of visitors is the reason for the rising amount of trash at my place.	3.38	1.53		0.794	
There is a negative impact of tourism on the environment.	3.90	1.43		0.786	
I am opposed to new tourism facilities that will attract more visitors to Tara National Park.	3.87	1.41		0.720	
The possibilities for recreation outdoors in my place are reduced due to tourism.	2.32	1.48		0.710	
The crime rate is higher because of tourism.	2.21	1.35		0.574	
Because of the development of tourism, the quality of public services (health care, water supply, cleanliness, fire protection . . .) in my place has improved.	2.41	1.48			0.838
Due to tourism, my community has better roads.	2.64	1.54			0.807
Tourism created more possibilities for recreation (playgrounds for children, new sports fields, swimming pools . . .).	3.25	1.43			0.760
Tourism has created better shopping opportunities in my community.	2.84	1.48			0.689
Tourism has provided me with more money.	3.29	1.49			0.664

Source: The authors created based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

In this study, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin, which measures sample adequacy and whose value is typically 0.6, was 0.918 [97,98]. Significant results were found in Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(253) = 9801.908, p = 0.000$). The eigenvalues criteria were used to confirm that a total of 65.35% of the variance could be explained (larger than 1). All the common-

alities were higher than 0.3, confirming that every item had some common variance with other components.

Reliability assessments were conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the items measuring each factor. The most widely used reliability tool is Cronbach's internal consistency reliability, according to earlier studies [99,100]. Nunnally and Bernstein [101] suggested that a reliability coefficient of 0.6 or higher is acceptable, and a score of 0.7 or higher is the desired reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the TIAS variables in our study ranged from 0.85 (lowest) to 0.95 (highest), with 0.90 representing the entire scale's reliability. This indicates that the variables had an internally consistent relationship with their grouping factor and showed a satisfactory to high correlation. The overall reliability of the TIAS in our research is 0.90, which is comparable to the 0.90 alpha value reported by Wang et al. [102], whereas the alpha value reported in the original study by Lankford and Howard [47] is slightly higher (0.96), and Nurhazani [103] reported four factors with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.64 to 0.91.

Factor analysis of the TIAS revealed that the three-factor scale accounted for 65.35% of the variance. While Lankford and Howard's [47] is a little under 58% (two dimensions), Petrović et al.'s [104] analysis revealed 47.7% of the variance (four dimensions), Wang et al.'s [101] analysis revealed 51% of the variance in attitudes toward tourism (two dimensions), and Nurhazani's [103] cumulative variance accounted for 48.4%.

In several other studies [103,105,106], as well as the original study by Lankford and Howard from 1994 [47], Factor 1 was referred to as "Support for the Tourism Development". It consists of 12 items, with factor loadings ranging from 0.626 for the statement "Generally, the benefits of tourism development outweigh the negative impacts" to 0.876 for the statement "Tourism provides a variety of employment opportunities for locals." Additionally, studies by Wang et al. [102] and Wang and Pfister [105] found 12 elements categorized under this factor. However, different from Wang et al.'s [102] research, in our study, three dimensions are determined, and there are a total of 20 items. Our research is consistent with Woosnam's [106] study, which included nine items for this dimension.

Six items are included in Factor 2, "Negative effects of tourism development". The factor loadings range from 0.574 for the statement "The crime rate is higher because of tourism" to 0.883 for the statement "The existing tourist activities create noise that has a negative impact on life in my place". This component has not been established by Lankford and Howard's [47] original TIAS scale. Factor 2 was recognized in later studies by Schneider et al. [95,107,108]; similarly, this factor has been named in our study. The claim "The crime rate is higher because of tourism" has the largest difference in factor loadings. Differences in factor loadings and mean values can be explained by the reality that tourism has not yet had an impact on the rise in crime rates in Tara National Park.

The title of Factor 3 is "Personal and Community Benefits", as it was in numerous earlier studies that used the TIAS scale [47,95]. The factor loadings for Factor 3's five items range from 0.664 (the lowest loading) for "Tourism has given me more money" to 0.838 (the highest loading) for "Because of development tourism, the quality of public services (health care, water supply, cleanliness, fire protection, etc.) in my place has improved". The factor in Lankford and Howard's [47] research has nine items, whereas all five of the statements in our study matched the ones in the factor with the same name in Lankford and Howard's study [47].

4.2. Local Communities' Perceptions toward TIAS's Factors

In general, community members showed agreement with factors affecting tourism development (Table 3). The level of agreement with support for tourism development was 71%, and with negative impacts, it was 54%, while the level of agreement with benefits was 50%. The community experienced lower personal and community benefits associated with tourism development at this stage. When we take into consideration all the statements relating to the benefits, such as "Tourism has provided me with more money", it is clear why residents expressed such attitudes in Tara National Park. They cannot feel the benefits

of tourism at a high level because tourism has not yet achieved the necessary level to increase local residents' satisfaction.

Table 3. Perceptions of tourism planning, development, and support in Tara National Park.

TIAS Factors	Mean	SD	Level of Agreement in %
Support for tourism development	3.56	1.17	71
Negative impacts of tourism development	2.70	1.11	54
Personal and community benefits	2.49	1.15	50

Source: Created by the authors based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

4.3. Results of Independent Samples *t*-Test

A *t*-test has been used to determine whether there are any differences in the responses of the respondents based on their gender and TIAS variables.

The responses of respondents with two TIAS variables are statistically different, as shown in Table 4. Similar to the study of Iroegbu and Chen [109], men evaluate personal and community benefits more than women do ($F = 12.077, p = 0.001$). Contrarily, research by Tepavčević et al. [110] showed that women place a higher value on benefits than men do. According to Table 4, women are more likely than men to support the development of the tourism sector ($F = 21.559, p = 0.000$). Yet, research by Wang et al. [101] revealed that respondents' responses were consistent regardless of their gender. Nunkoo and Gursoy [41] confirmed that gender is a reliable predictor of both favorable and unfavorable views about travel.

Table 4. Results of the *t*-test of the respondents by gender and in relation to TIAS factors.

		Male	Female
Support for Tourism Development	Mean	3.48	3.63
	F		21.559
	<i>p</i>		0.000 *
Negative impacts of tourism development	Mean	2.63	2.76
	F		0.965
	<i>p</i>		0.326
Personal and community benefits	Mean	2.50	2.47
	F		12.077
	<i>p</i>		0.001 *

* value $p < 0.01$ Source: The authors created based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

4.4. ANOVA—One-Way Analysis of Variance Results

The ANOVA test was used to assess the respondents' responses on their education and relationship to the TIAS factors (Table 5).

Table 5. ANOVA test—education of respondents and tourism impact attitude scale factors.

Factors/Domains	F-Value	LSD Post-Hoc Test
Support for Tourism Development	3.700 *	6 > 3, 4, 5
Negative impacts of tourism development	3.597 *	4, 5 > 2, 3
Personal and community benefits	0.825	/

* $p < 0.01$ Note: (1) elementary school; (2) high school; (3) college; (4) university; (5) master's degree; (6) Ph.D. degree. Source: The authors created based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

Table 5 demonstrates the statistically significant differences in the respondents' responses for the two TIAS components. Ph.D. holders are more likely than other respondents to favor the growth of tourism ($F = 3.700, p < 0.01$). Locals with university and master's degrees take into account more negative effects of tourism than those with only high school or some college education ($F = 3.597, p < 0.01$). The study by Scaccia and De Urioste-Stone [111] also revealed a clear distinction in the responses of the respondents regarding their educational background. Tepavčević et al. [110] study revealed that respondents with higher education expressed greater concern about the impacts of tourism development. It has long been recognized that education level is one of the main determinants of attitudes [112–116]. This earlier research also supported the notion that education level serves as an excellent indicator of how the local population will react to the effects of tourism development.

There are variations in respondents' answers based on income, according to an ANOVA test (Table 6). Those with lower incomes are more likely to consider the negative effects of tourism than people with higher incomes ($F = 4.229, p < 0.01$). Low-income groups supported tourism more than other groups, according to researchers McMinn and Cater [117]. This can be explained by the fact that the area's poorest citizens reach a point where earning a sufficient income is their top priority, and employment in the tourism industry aids them in achieving this objective.

Table 6. ANOVA test—income of respondents and tourism impact attitude scale factors.

Factors/Domains	F-Value	LSD Post-Hoc Test
Support for Tourism Development	0.919	/
Negative impacts of tourism development	4.229 *	1 > 3
Personal and community benefits	0.986	/

* $p < 0.01$ Note: (1) less than average; (2) average income; (3) more than average. Source: The authors created based on data analysis in SPSS 25.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL, USA).

5. Discussion

5.1. Perception of the Local Community on Tourism Impact and Support for Further Development

Considering the findings, the community of Tara National Park is in favor of further tourism development. The mean value for the factor of the negative impact of tourism development is lower, which is expected given that tourism has not yet developed sufficiently to demonstrate the negative effects of its development, so the local population does not fully experience them. Nevertheless, they are conscious of how tourism harms the environment. On the one hand, local Tara National Park inhabitants are unable to observe negative consequences such as a rise in crime, rising living expenses, hostility toward tourists, or lower standards of living. On the other hand, they believe that tourism causes noise that is unfavorable to local life and that there is a rise in trash because of the increased number of visitors.

Since personal and community benefits have not yet achieved the necessary level to increase local residents' satisfaction, the mean value for factor 3 is even lower. Nevertheless, they claim that tourism increased opportunities for leisure and generated more money. The management of Tara National Park and tourism developers should be focusing on improving the quality of public services because it has not improved in recent years. Most importantly, Tara National Park locals want to encourage continued tourism growth because it will boost the local economy. Since they are in favor of further development, it is likely that they are hoping for increased tourism to benefit local businesses, which will also help them find employment and generate income for the community. According to the results of the profile of the respondents, their incomes are lower than average, so it is no wonder that they hope that the development of tourism will bring them more.

The findings of the current study suggest that opinions toward tourist support and impacts are mostly influenced by gender, education, and income. One of the many elements

that significantly influence how communities feel about the effects of tourism growth is their demographic structure. Prominent researchers such as McGehee and Andereck [118], Cavus and Tanrisevdi [119], Iroegbu and Chen [109], Rastegar [120], and Snyman [121] have looked into the relationship between the effects of tourism and the demographics of local citizens. Furthermore, the ANOVA test was used to assess how residents with different occupational statuses and ages responded to the TIAS components. There are no statistically significant differences in either situation. Age is also not acknowledged as a factor that influences residents' attitudes toward tourism in the studies done by Wang et al. [102] and McGehee and Andereck [118].

5.2. Community Participation in Tourism Planning and Development

Local communities play a significant role in the growth of the tourism industry, and their involvement is one of the most effective tools for the development and conservation of national parks [66,76]. Based on survey results from the present study, with respect to different tourism impact factors, we found that in this national park, people mostly support tourism development. An in-depth investigation reveals that the local population thinks that tourism should be promoted and planned as a priority because it has more positive effects than negative ones. They think that thorough planning can reduce the possibility of negative impacts on the national park. The likelihood that locals will see the development of tourism in national parks favorably increases if they believe that tourism can have more positive effects than negative ones [12]. In order to maintain their current status and successfully implement protective measures, national parks, and other protected areas depend on the cooperation of the local community.

With local community support and involvement, sustainable tourism development projects are expected to be successful, particularly in young destinations such as Tara [8,45]. Residents of Tara National Park are inspired to participate and support planners, offer their thoughts on planning objectives, and help with the implementation and supervision of planning actions. Sustainable tourism development initiatives are anticipated to be successful with local community support and involvement, particularly in developing destinations [8,45] such as Tara. The locals of Tara National Park feel motivated to participate and aid planners, share their ideas on planning directions, and assist in the process of implementing and supervising planning actions. In order to obtain the support of the local community, national park management must establish good communication with the local population [77], which was mostly achieved in Tara National Park. It is very important for the local community to understand that NP operates and develops tourism in line with the interests of the local population [45]. The national park and the local community form a partnership for the successful protection and conservation of natural and cultural resources, but they also utilize its benefits and work on tourism development [8]. To make sure that the residents are active in tourism development efforts, it is crucial to maintain strong communication between the national park manager, tourism developers, and the local population. Locals' exclusion from tourism development or their dissatisfaction can result in a number of disputes and issues, including confrontations, demonstrations, and a failure to cooperate with managers of protected areas, as well as the degradation and loss of biodiversity [77,78]. By forming user councils, Tara National Park's management demonstrated excellent initiative in involving the local community. Local residents participate in the planning and development of local programs to guarantee greater protection and promotion of the national park. Better management of the protected area is assured through interaction with the local community [83]. The management of Tara National Park set a good example by developing user guidelines because the long-term preservation of the region's biodiversity and the maximization of the benefits for the community heavily depend on the growth and improvement of relationships between the local community and the protected area [75]. Local community support and involvement significantly enhance the national park's conservation, protection, and sustainable management efforts in Tara

National Park. This is very important because locals are often the first to notice changes brought about by the growth of tourism [38].

Nowadays, community resilience is crucial for sustainable tourism growth [122,123]. We can say that Tara's local community is resilient if we take into account that resilience means being able to exist, grow, and participate in tourism development. They showed they are eager to participate in tourism development and planning. Residents of a community can adapt and deal with the effects of a change brought on by tourism [124,125]. They must be resilient, or, in other words, robust enough to adjust to or resist modifications [125,126] if they are to provide long-lasting benefits. They should always be aware that changes are unavoidable.

Tara National Park's tourism developers should include the local people in the governance structure and consider their opinions when making decisions and managing the national park's tourist development in order to prevent any problems in the future. The local community of this national park and the people who are responsible for developing tourism can work together to increase tourism while also preserving the park's natural and cultural qualities and gaining benefits for both sides.

Our study reinforces earlier research [127–129] that contends that key destination stakeholders' support is crucial to the implementation of tourism policies and managing tourism development, which is a key factor in the development of sustainable tourism [130,131]. The local community is the stakeholder that has the ability to affect the success and sustainability of any development, but at the same time, this stakeholder group is strongly affected by tourism and its effects [128].

The creation of management systems that guarantee sustainable tourism development, environmental sustainability, and evident long-term advantages for the local community is the biggest problem facing many protected areas in Serbia [80]. Empowering rural communities and bringing management to the local level is required to achieve peace and harmony between the community, those in charge of running the national park, and those who are dedicated to developing tourism [76,132]. The amount of human and social capacity is crucial to the success of local community participation in tourism development, though these processes are frequently complex [133]. All parties must work together effectively and communicate well to accomplish this.

6. Conclusions

In light of prior research, TIAS has been acknowledged as a valid and reliable method for assessing locals' perceptions of tourism in developed areas (such as Hawaii, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Charleston, South Carolina), protected areas (such as Taiwan's Penghu National Scenic Area and the Columbia River Gorge region in Oregon and Washington), and urban areas (such as Nanaimo, British Columbia) [95]. Our study confirms earlier findings and backs up the claim that TIAS is a valid tool for assessing locals' perceptions of the impact of tourism, including in national parks where the industry has not yet established itself as a big source of revenue and in developing countries such as Serbia.

In theory, tourist development, especially ecotourism, may contribute to the conservation and preservation of the local environment and cultural heritage while also raising the standard of living of local residents. However, this requires effective collaboration between all stakeholders, including the most important stakeholder—the local community. In this particular instance, a small community in Tara National Park thinks that tourism development should be actively encouraged and that Tara has the ability to attract both local and foreign visitors. The residents think that tourist services should be enhanced and expanded. The local population values the municipality's long-term planning efforts and attempts to prevent or lessen the negative effects of tourism development, but they are not completely aware of both its disadvantages and benefits. The results, in particular, confirmed earlier claims that residents' attitudes can be influenced by demographic factors (such as the level of education, gender, and income). There may be no differences in views toward tourism based on age or type of employment due to the existing status and level of

development of tourism in this national park. Dogan [134] claimed that at the beginning of development, residents' responses to tourism can be uniform. The management of Tara National Park, tourism organizations, and government representatives should give locals access to information about tourism development and give them the opportunity to participate in decision-making and advance tourism development while also educating them on tourism's negative impacts. The managers and developers of Tara National Park's tourism must give the inhabitants access to tourism facilities and assist them in comprehending the importance of tourism to their quality of life. By doing this, tourism will develop alongside the local population, which is already prepared to support it. Nevertheless, they will also be mindful of the negative impacts that tourism has on natural and cultural resources, as well as its many beneficial effects.

Our study is relevant because resident participation is a crucial and essential component of ecotourism development in protected areas. The perception of the local community is highly valued when developing sustainable tourism strategies, positioning, and other decisions. The need to consult locals when creating destination marketing and management plans goes beyond the obvious. One of the most important factors for protected areas, such as national parks, is the local population's acceptance and tolerance of tourists.

These findings may help in better understanding the key issues concerning the impact of tourism on Tara National Park for government tourism planners, tourism operators, and policymakers. In that way, the tourism plan would be implemented successfully and accordingly. Even though a positive perception of tourism is greater than a negative one, some problems need to be addressed. Creators of tourism policy not only in the Tara National Park but also in other destinations in Serbia should, when creating tourism management and marketing and management strategies, consider the attitudes of the local population. Further research is required, for example, by conducting resident interviews and gathering information from an open-ended questionnaire to seek feedback and better understand issues (for instance, by observing how locals interact with tourists). However, our research focused only on residents, and it is needed to investigate tourists' opinions (for example, their satisfaction with the local people, tourist facilities, products, and services) as well as the management of Tara National Park. The limitation of this research is that it did not distinguish between those who achieved direct economic benefits from tourism and those who did not. Future research should include independent variables indicating this category, but also about their type of work and whether it is in the tourism industry or not.

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