

# RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

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This study describes the support and participation of the residents in Saranda and Ksamil (Albania) in the planning and development process of tourism as a key element for the sustainable management of tourism resources (Ahmeti et al., 2019). The purpose of this study is the analysis of residents' perceptions of the governance and development of sustainable tourism. To evaluate the structural relationship between the variables, the Likert scale, and the nominal measure were used, and the exogenous variables were considered as predictors for the endogenous variable. This study found the independent variable to have a significant impact on the residents' behavior (95% level of significance), so we can say that the attitudes of the community about the environment affect community support for sustainable tourism development in their area. This area gets direct and sharpest visible impacts so far, from tourist development. There is an attractive landscape for tourists, and it is at the core of the debates on sustainable tourism development planning. The results of this study will present to the local government in Saranda to see that the attitudes of the residents towards the environment and nature are in harmony with nature.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Government Policy, Regulation, Sustainable Tourism, Residents, Tourism and Development

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Saranda is a city with more than 2,000 years of history, built on the southern coast of Albania, rich in rare values of Albanian cultural and archaeological heritage, but also European

([www.bashkiasarande.gov.al](http://www.bashkiasarande.gov.al)). The municipality of Saranda is in the South of the country with an area of 59 km<sup>2</sup>, it has a registered population of 50,680 inhabitants, while almost 50% of the population is in emigration. Saranda is an important tourist center in Albania and represents one of the richest

ecosystems with dual impacts on land and sea in relation to tourism development. For the first time, the name of Saranda is mentioned in 1412 and comes from an early Christian monastery dedicated to the Forty Saints. Saranda is very close to the National Park of Butrint and Corfu and is the main gateway that attracts the most tourists, most of whom are transients. Butrint National Park was declared a world cultural heritage in 1992 and is unique evidence of a vanished civilization, a microcosm of Mediterranean history with traces of life since the Middle Paleolithic period, with an intensive settlement from the 7th century BC, inhabited by the tribe. Illyria of the Kaons, with Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, and Ottoman monuments reflect its long history. South of the city, near Butrint National Park, is the coastal village of Ksamil, built in 1966, known as the city of lemons and oranges until the 1990s, today known as the most coveted tourist village. Based on the geographical location, the proximity between them and the tourist product offered by Saranda, Ksamil, and Butrint National Park complement each other creating a unique tourist area, as the most prominent part of the riviera in the south of Albania, designated as part of the list of UNESCO, for the authenticity and concentration of attractions. With the system change after 1990, this area faced drastic changes and many challenges. The area is highly dependent on traditional industries such as agriculture, tourism, and services. The development of tourism results in the expansion of the construction of hotels without criteria, without respecting the criteria for surfaces and public spaces, and all this looks like a chaotic development. The growth of mass tourism has created positive impacts on the economy; however, it has also affected the natural environment, which mostly has negative impacts. In the natural aspect, the development of tourism has created environmental and water pollution, damage to the landscape, damage to the soil, and damage to ecosystems. As in other countries, these show that our natural resources are being destroyed by human use. The tourism industry, as one of the biggest economic providers in the Saranda area, performs poorly compared to the tremendous opportunities it has. The impact of these factors on the local economy has serious implications for the residents of the area. The area suffers a steady loss of its young population due to the high cost of living and lack of infrastructure opportunities. Also, there is a reluctance of immigrants to invest and work in their country. In the Saranda-Ksamil area, tourism is the main source of well-being for the residents, and harming the environment means harming and compromising the efforts of generations today and in the future to increase well-being. In response, all actors in society, industry, communities, public policy, and academia have focused on the concept of sustainable development and aim to walk the path toward social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The importance of sustainable tourism and its ability to promote sustainable development is recognized and promoted globally by dedicating 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development. Sustainable tourism is based on the concept of sustainable development (Mihalic, 2016), which forms a three-

pillar holistic approach to development that includes social, economic, and environmental dimensions. The sustainable development of tourism is offered by the literature as the right solution to protect nature from the damage caused by this industry and to ensure the sustainable use of its resources. The definition of sustainable development was formulated by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, and this definition is also widely used within tourism (Zyzak, 2015). The concept of sustainable tourism is present in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which states that tourism has the potential to contribute to all seventeen goals, directly or indirectly (The World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2018). Furthermore, the UNWTO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) outline that the role of tourism in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ... can be significantly strengthened when sustainable development becomes a shared responsibility and moves to the core of policies and business decisions. -making within the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2018). According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), achieving sustainability will require an approach that de-emphasizes economic growth and includes environmental and social objectives as the basis and dimension of development. Tourism is an industry involving many local, national, and global actors and action toward sustainability within this industry is complex and comprehensive (Hall & Richards, 2000). Consequently, responsibility for sustainability is perceived in different ways and contexts. In the literature on the tourism industry, it has been discussed that people's support for tourism development can be different depending on their attitudes toward environmental problems (Jurowski et al., 1997). Residents' values and preferences for the conservation and use of development resources may differ based on their attitudes regarding human relationships with the natural environment (Gursoy et al., 2002). Hawcroft and Milfont (2010) state that one of the most pressing issues in resource management is the problem of finding an acceptable compromise between the use of nature for recreation and its protection for ecological, cultural, scientific, historical and aesthetic reasons. These researchers have examined the relationship between environmental attitudes and support for environmental protection policies. The community is considered a source of tourism and the most influential factor in the process of its development. The responsible behavior of people toward the environment is given by the literature as the right solution for the protection of nature and the avoidance of damages caused by human intervention. Growing community environmental concerns and a shift towards greener aspects were recognized as key opportunities to gain competitive advantage and were seen as measures to "green" the industry (Hawcroft & Milfont, 2010). Today, the tourism industry is facing increasing pressure to operate in a more sustainable way, and changing sustainability in this sector would be an important step given the overall sustainability of development. Community support takes on different dimensions depending on the specifics of the formation and development of different communities and cultures, and its recognition constitutes a challenge for

governance, as support for sustainability may not be perceived in the same way in different contexts. As such, community perceptions, awareness, knowledge, and support are the issues worth investigating and clarifying in light of the local and central government action plan. Therefore, further research is needed on how the community perceives the development of tourism in the study area, participation in the planning process, and the recognition of residents' perceptions of the environment and sustainable tourism. Also, deeper knowledge of how different factors affect community support is needed to create better strategies for the overall management of tourism in the path of sustainable development, as this can be seen as having the potential to minimize negative effects of the development of the tourism industry for the well-being of the community.

This study aims to address these issues in search of providing insight into the emergent discourse of the role and support of residents for sustainable tourism development within this paradigm. Consequently, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

*RQ1: How do residents of Saranda and Ksamil evaluate the development of tourism in their settlements?*

*RQ2: What are the views of the residents of Saranda and Ksamil on nature and the environment?*

*RQ3: Do residents support sustainable tourism development strategies?*

*RQ4: Do the residents' attitudes toward the environment affect their support for sustainable tourism development strategies?*

The inhabitants of the Municipality of Saranda are the target population that possesses the desired information to answer the research objectives. This area receives direct and, until now, clearly sharp impacts from the development of the tourist industry. It has an attractive landscape for tourists and is at the center of attention in tourism development planning debates. It has such geographical characteristics that make it complete as a single and with development opportunities for several types of tourism. The population concentration in this area and its demographic characteristics are such that they can help give a more complete panorama of the community's opinions on the tourist development of the area. Therefore, the overall aim of this study is to investigate residents' support for sustainability within tourism from an academic perspective with the support of empirical data from a case study. The purpose of this paper is to try to describe a clearer understanding of the comprehensive aspect of tourism development in the study area and to present the opportunities and challenges of community participation in the planning and development process. To achieve this, within the paradigm of sustainable tourism, the concept of resident support will then be explored, and the findings considered in the context of sustainable tourism. In support of this goal, the study will explore what are the resident's perceptions of the environment and sustainable tourism development strategies in the study area.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been

used to conduct empirical research on residents' perceptions of sustainable tourism governance and development. Section 4 shows the significance of the results achieved. Section 5 is a discussion, presenting the attitudes of the residents toward their environment. Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Honey (1999) and Wunder (2000), tourism is important for community members to provide economic opportunities; also others, such as Cole (2006) and Yang and Wall (2009) emphasize the potential of tourism in the community to find companies with the purpose of managing resources and income for the development of their properties. Tourism, according to the community, has been done, to increase the other capacities of the industry in favor of all the interested parties who are affected by this development, their development cannot be undesirable for the community. According to Cole (2006), the goals sought by the community and the creation of sustainable tourism are similar, i.e., social and environmental for current and future generations. Some believe that it is not in itself the essence of the notion of "community-based tourism" that makes tourism sustainable. The tourism-environment relationship has become a new focus of research since 1970, in response to the negative environmental effects associated with tourism (Butcher, 2015). Consistently, this topic has generated numerous debates on achieving sustainable tourism and stakeholder involvement (Butcher, 2015). Environmental and ecological values were an integral part of the continuous search for a better standard of living. They reflected changing attitudes about what constitutes a better life. The search for environmental quality was an integral part of this rising standard of living (Taylor, 2021). Sustainable tourism is based on the concept of sustainable development as a holistic approach that considers the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. Responsibility for sustainability is recognized as the responsibility of all tourism actors and the results suggest that residents are a key element in the planning and development of sustainable tourism. In tourism, literature discussed that the support of the people for the development of tourism can be different depending on their attitudes to the environment. (Jurowski et al., 1997). Environmental attitudes are defined as a psychological tendency expressed by evaluating the natural environment with some degree of favor or disfavor and are a crucial construct in the field of environmental psychology (Hawcroft & Milfont, 2010). From the attitudes that a person expresses towards a range of social phenomena and issues, we may know much about how that person evaluates the world around them. Understanding people's attitudes, however, is only part of the picture. Ordinarily, we expect that people will act in a manner that is consistent with the attitudes that they state and so attitudes appear to offer some sort of guide as to ways in which that person might behave across a range of situations (McVittie & McKinlay, 2017). Attitudes are cognitive representations that summarize people's evaluation of an action, event, idea, or thing, or what social scientists call an "attitude object". In this case,

the attitude object is environmental protection. Although social psychology has moved a long way from the original concept of attitude as something intrinsic to the person that could be ascertained relatively easily. However, attitudes are a better predictor of behaviors when the attitudes are more specific. Furthermore, attitudes are said to predict behavior, which is important in the discussion of tourism and environmentalism. Environmental irresponsibility noticed by many people cannot be interpreted as a simple example of indifference, laziness, or improper attitude. Often has been noticed that this derives from the lack of adequate infrastructure, the lack of desirable options, or the lack of cultural support (Fotiadis, 2022). Moreover, the values and preferences of residents for the preservation and utilization of development resources can vary based on their views on human relationships with the natural environment (Gursoy et al., 2002). One of the most urgent issues in the management of resources is the problem of finding a compromise acceptable between use of nature for fun and its protection for ecological, cultural, scientific, historical and aesthetic reasons (Alrawadieh & Zareer, 2018). The researchers have examined the relationship between environmental attitudes and support of policies to protect the environment and have noticed that two groups are identified: "ecocentric" attitudes and "anthropocentric" ones. The ecocentric approach proposes that humans should live in harmony with nature, while the anthropocentric reflects the view that nature exists primarily to serve the needs of people. Jurowski et al. (1997) studied the attitudes of people in terms of their environmental concerns about values and their impact on ecocentric support for tourism development. The researchers concluded that the ecocentric attitudes of residents have a direct impact on supporting the development indicating a significant positive relationship with the sustainable use of resources on which is based the general development (McKercher, 2018).

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study, and the theoretical base to explain the issues raised, the following hypotheses, which frame the structural model of the study, were defined:

*H1: The attitudes of residents on nature in general and the environment in the study area, tend not to be in harmony with it.*

*H2: The people in the study area do not support the development strategies of sustainable tourism in its area.*

*H3: Attitudes and opinions of the environment affect the community support for the development of sustainable tourism in their area.*

Measuring the attitudes of residents toward the environment, in this study, is estimated by the new environmental paradigm (NEP), which was originally developed by Dunlap and Van Liere (1978), using 12 items with a 4-point Likert scale response system. Then, in 2000, the NEP scale was revised to include 15 items with a 5-point Likert scale, which are intended to measure 5 core components of individuals' environmental concern beliefs about humanity, limits to economic growth, anti-anthropocentrism, the fragility of nature's balance and the possibility of potentially catastrophic environmental changes or eco-crises affecting people

(Dunlap et al., 2000). This view refers to the inevitably imposed limitations of people's actions over nature, the importance of preserving the natural balance, the need for sustainable economic development, or the need to reconsider the idea that nature exists solely to satisfy human needs (Dunlap et al., 2000). The new environmental paradigm considers that man can harm the natural balance, that there should be limits on the economic and human growth of society, and that humanity has the right to rule over the rest of nature.

This measurement scale has solid content, predictive, and construct validity, for measuring residents' attitudes to the environment (Vatsa et al., 2021).

*National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Tourism 2018-2022* (Ministria e Turizmit dhe Mjedisit, 2018) determines that for a sustainable and well-planned development, public and private investments should be oriented towards areas with priority for tourism development.

In the literature on tourism, the authors also review the tensions that tourism has caused in local communities as a result of its development (or rather, still unstable development) and ever-increasing attention to the impacts of tourism in the community (Hall & Richards, 2000). The local impacts of the tourism industry are varied and often unique. Various studies on residents' attitudes toward tourism have identified the factors that influence their well-being. These factors are economic benefit, attitude towards the environment, feelings of connection to their community or country, social economic status, expanding the use of basic tourism resources, perception of the ability to control tourism development, and perception of the impacts of tourism on the quality of their lives. Scholars, such as Honey (1999) and Wunder (2000) have pointed out the importance of community-based tourism for its capacity to provide local societies with economic benefits; others (Cole, 2006; Gunn, 1988; Yang & Wall, 2009) have emphasized the potential of community-based tourism to provide the local society with justice in the distribution of resources and income, participation in the tourism development process to determine the form and extent of its expansion, democratization, and empowerment of residents as owners of the property. Community-based tourism has been done, according to them, to increase the development capacities of this industry in favor of all interested parties affected by this development, avoiding undesirable consequences for the community. However, there are researchers who have warned that community-based tourism will not lead to sustainable tourism. For example, Blackstock (2005) states that community-based tourism is "naive and unrealistic"; besides, it is only a slogan. For sustainable tourism practices to be achievable, communities engaged in tourism development must manifest certain necessary worldviews and behavioral and organizational characteristics. Also, it is important that the planning approach is captured by the dominant values that exist in the community and to the extent that these values are incorporated into the vision for the future. It should be studied how the integration of community values can be achieved in the planning process and the level at which the vision for the future of the destination is in

accordance with its values. According to Wilkinson (1991), a community is a people located in a place where people live to meet their daily needs together. The emergence of the community field brings into focus shared interests in aspects of local life. Both residents and their organizations interact to improve the overall well-being of the community, and this is known as "community agency" (Wilkinson, 1991). The community has its own expertise contributing according to the nature of the problem. Citizens, for example, have important areas of expertise including knowledge about local conditions and the environment, related to their way of life, and possess information about how similar problems have been solved before where they live or where they have traveled. Community-based tourism development is also positive in the fact that it avoids conflicts between different actors involved in tourism and implements the policy of coordination and this helps to create synergy by sharing knowledge, thoughts, and skills among all community members (Kibicho, 2008). Community-based tourism is associated with increased awareness of environmental and social responsibilities, as well as the sustainability of tourism. It has gained popularity as part of strategies for development and environmental protection. Also, policies based on the strict implementation of top-down centralized decision-making for the protection of natural resources have not been successful. From an economic and environmental perspective, if local people are not involved in the entire development process, there is a high chance that the resources on which tourism is based will be destroyed and the investment lost. From a moral perspective, it is argued that management by local people coupled with decentralized decision-making is preferable and may be more accountable and sustainable in the long term. Community-based tourism relies on the idea that tourism is a complementary industry and creates the opportunity to reduce immigration through job creation. For Murphy (1985), community-based tourism offers the possibility of greater local control and greater community participation. According to many tourism researchers, mass tourism does not generate local development but rather the devitalization of their communities. George et al. (2007), examines how community-based tourism can be a remedy for many of the general ills of the industry fueled by mass tourism. Solutions to the negative impacts of tourism are found in the common interest of the local community, tourism businesses, and tourists to preserve the natural assets and social heritage of the tourist destination. To articulate and develop this sense of common interest, an institutional mechanism must be built, in accordance with the conditions of each destination. To ensure the legitimacy of these mechanisms, the participation of all interested local groups, their interests must be guaranteed by developing an open and transparent dialogue. They see community-based tourism as a strategy for local community development that opposes devitalization to improve the tourism development process that characterizes mass tourism-oriented countries. Community-based tourism development is a strategy used by tourism planners to mobilize communities to participate in appropriate tourism development. The goal is

the socio-economic empowerment and an added value of the tourist experience for local and foreign visitors with the objective of creating a culture of inclusion in the industry, where communities participate and benefit from the wealth of the industry by removing a perception of long on tourism as an exploiter of wealth, where only the rich can benefit. These economic benefits act as incentives for participants to conserve the natural and cultural resources upon which income generation depends. The relationship of the industry with the tourism products developed from the natural and cultural resources of the community is not direct, on the contrary, it is through the mediation of the community. This type of "people-centered" tourism promotes a sense of "ownership" which is also beneficial for the sustainability of the industry. The main benefits of community-based tourism are job creation; poverty reduction; less negative impact on an area's environment than mass tourism; building community capacity and pride; as well as income for the maintenance or improvement of the cultural property of the community. Continuing with the above line of thinking, community-based tourism can be defined as tourism that considers environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. It is managed by the community, owned by the community, and for the community so that visitors can learn about the community and local ways of life. Based on the above, this study will investigate the perceptions, views, and attitudes of the community in the Saranda area about tourism and its development in a sustainable way as valuable information for planning its development in the future.

## 2.1. Tourism development planning

Several different planning approaches have evolved to meet the changing, developmental demands, characteristics of the tourism industry, and global increase in visitor numbers (Hall, 2008). The environmental approach to tourism planning emerged when the effects of tourism became more tangible and partly due to the global environmental movement of the 1960s (Krippendorf, 1982). During this period, the focus shifted from the narrow economic focus of planning to address environmental concerns. The community approach to tourism planning emerged when it became apparent and clearly understood that tourism had irreversible and harmful effects on the communities and their cultures exposed to tourism and that alternative planning and management were necessary to develop societal guidelines more acceptable for tourism development (Murphy, 1985). The community approach, which is essentially a form of "bottom-up" planning, emphasizes community development rather than community development (Hall, 2008). But without community sustainability, tourism development cannot be expected to be sustainable. For this reason, Taylor (2021) argues that the concept of community involvement in tourism development has moved closer to the center of the sustainability debate. Sustainable tourism development usually relies on providing renewable economic, social, and cultural community and its environment. A holistic approach

to sustainability requires continuous improvement of the social, cultural, and economic well-being of communities as an integral part of environmental renewal. Simpson (2001) identifies two key elements for a sustainable tourism planning approach: 1) the participation of multiple stakeholders in the planning process and 2) the need for a strategic and long-term orientation in tourism planning. Achieving sustainable development goals depends on adopting a participatory model including meaningful community engagement, along with industry stakeholders and relevant government agencies that will lead to agreement on development directions and goals (Faulkner, 2003). Hall (2008) point out that this has led to a need for decision-making bodies such as governments to actively seek and consider the views of the tourism host community. Engagement and involvement of multiple groups are considered very important issues in a sustainable approach. Another prerequisite for a sustainable tourism planning approach is that strategic planning replaces conventional planning approaches (Dutton & Hall, 1989). With sustainability, in a strategic approach, tourism planning is proactive, adopts long-term planning, is responsive to community needs, and perceives planning and implementation as part of a single, ongoing process (Hall, 2000; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The importance of sustainable development cannot be overstated, and it is a concept that has been widely discussed and debated in the academic literature (Dutton & Hall, 1989). What can be said for sure is that the tourism industry and the wider community are increasingly close to adapting, adopting, and recognizing the importance of the concept (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). It is suggested that there is a growing gap between the doctrine of sustainability and its implementation in the “real world” (Simpson, 2001). Therefore, this study seeks to provide valuable information to help planning groups understand whether they are following sustainable approaches to tourism planning adapted to the management of tourism in the Saranda area.

## 2.2. Sustainable development: Sustainable tourism and community

The term “sustainable tourism” is generally used in the tourism industry, the field of environment, and community development. This term can be partially influenced by the general concept of sustainable development, the characteristic of which can be said to be the minimization of the use of natural resources. “Sustainable tourism” has been defined in different ways, but with similar meanings. According to the definition of the UNWTO (n.d.), sustainable tourism must ensure the optimal use of natural resources that constitute a key element in the development of tourism, to preserve essential ecological processes and help protect natural heritage and biodiversity; respect the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, preserve the cultural heritage of livelihood and traditional values and contribute to understanding and tolerance between different cultures; ensure in practice operations long-term economic and social economic benefits for all interest groups fairly distributed including employment and opportunities to benefit from income and social services to

the host community by improving its livelihood; to ensure a high level of tourist satisfaction by providing a meaningful experience for tourists; raise their awareness of sustainability issues and promote sustainable tourism practices; sustainable tourism development requires the participation of all interest groups and strong leadership to ensure broad participation and compromise building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process that requires constant monitoring of impacts and the establishment of necessary preventive or corrective measures when necessary. There is much discussion about the definitions of sustainability and sustainable development. Bramwell et al. (2008) describe the four basic principles of sustainable development and sustainable tourism development as a “holistic and strategic planning for the preservation of essential ecological processes, the protection of human heritage and biodiversity and development to ensure that productivity is sustainable in the long term for future generations” (p. 24). Pearce (1992), for example, refers to several studies that have looked at impacts on host communities, covering areas such as language changes, land tenure, desecration of community life, begging, prostitution, and crime. Johnston and Edwards (1994) argued that tourism can be responsive and represent structural adjustments but not necessarily structural transformations enough to make tourism sustainable. They added that sustainability is a “detached” notion, and perhaps unattainable. Each community tourism resource must be guided to understand what is good for them and can put aside short-term interests in order to achieve good long-term results, raising and maintaining the number of tourists below social and environmental capacities (Honey, 1999). Sustainable tourism can be seen in different dimensions. For example, Coccossis et al. (2001) interprets economic sustainability for tourism as a tourist activity, emphasizing a strategy that implies the strengthening, and improvement but also differentiation of the tourist product, often relying on organizational solutions, technology, and innovations. He emphasized the importance of investment in infrastructure to increase capacity and improve the product related to the tourism industry and services. Coccossis (2001) proposed another term, ecologically sustainable tourism, focusing on the protection of natural resources and ecosystems. Although it has two different dimensions, the interpretation of sustainable tourism should not exceed its common principle of environmental protection, which will have impacts on natural resources, local communities, social and local equality, as well as on economies. national. According to Hall and Richards (2000), the concept of sustainable tourism requires the assessment of the impact that local communities have been able to benefit from tourism development. In short, different writers and researchers have interpreted sustainable tourism in similar ways. According to the WCED, achieving sustainability will require an approach that de-emphasizes economic growth and that very clearly embraces environmental and social goals as a basis and dimension of “development”. From the above, the main objectives of sustainable tourism are the achievement of the economic benefits that

tourism brings to the local community and the improvement of its quality of life. Achieving these objectives depends on how planners approach policies related to tourism development.

### 2.3. The role of community participation: Opportunity and challenges

Community refers to a geographic location that is autonomous and has common interests and needs, as well as a shared sense of identity (Tolkach & King, 2015). Koentjaraningrat (2015) argues that community is a unity of human life that occupies a real area and interacts according to a system of customs linked by a sense of common identity. Community, in the perspective of tourism, is explained by Dangi and Jamal (2016) as groups that live in an area and interact with tourists in a travel experience. This community plays the role of the main actor or backbone in the implementation of tourism (Yotsumoto et al., 2016; Hasanah, 2017). Thus, tourism emerges and is directly managed by the community. Since the community must understand the stability of values, it must always strive to maintain its existence and clarify its own needs and interests (Veriasa & Waite, 2017).

The concept of community-based tourism emerged as a tourism alternative to mass tourism and first appeared in the work of Murphy (1985) who studied the links between tourism and its management by the local community in developing countries and this topic was addressed later by the same author in 2004. In addition, there have been several research studies that have analyzed the links between local tourism and the community by Hall and Richards (2000). Dimitrovski et al. (2012) found that tourism is an essential tool in increasing income and preserving local cultural identity.

Tourism is believed to have a positive impact on preserving local ecology and culture (Nair & Hamzah, 2015), improving the national economy and local communities (Gezici et al., 2006; Johnson, 2010; Liu, 2010), and even facilitating poverty and providing equity or justice (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC], 2014; Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Deller, 2010; Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012). Thus, the development of the tourism industry is highly dependent on the involvement, role, and good reception of tourists (Blackstock, 2005). Carr et al. (2016) explore the original culture and cultural heritage of a community, which can be a resource for community-based tourism. This is considered very strategic because apart from economic benefits, tourism can also be a means of preserving local culture by promoting it as a tourist attraction. Ying and Zhou (2007) also explained that the community is the right environment for the development of tourism, so it is believed that the community and tourism are a good combination in the development of tourism, especially in tourism based on local values that are directly managed by the local community and it also provides direct benefits to the environment and the community. So that, the role of community involvement is essential, not only as workers but also as tourism planners and managers (Nechifor, 2014). These studies clearly show that community-based tourism has good opportunities for environmental protection, cultural preservation, and increased income for local

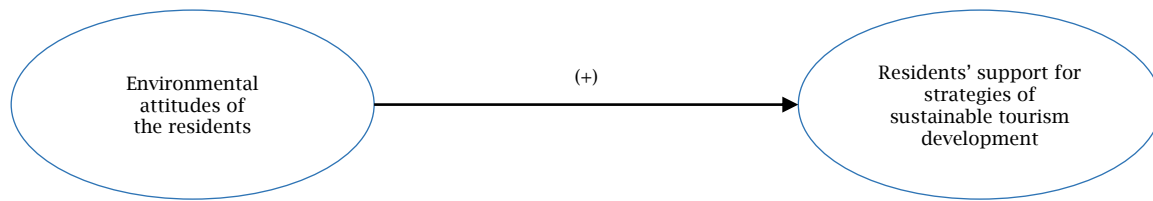
communities. Therefore, local residents have an equally important position as stakeholders in tourism development, in addition to the government and private industry (Sunaryo, 2013; da Conceição Walkowski et al., 2019). The development of community-based tourism does not always have a positive impact on local communities. On the other hand, community-based tourism is considered a concept or theory and can even be seen as something naive and unreal (Blackstock, 2005; Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012). Salazar (2012) explains the shortcomings of community-based tourism, especially regarding the limited quality of human resources in receiving guests, including cleanliness, accommodation that does not have good standards, and guiding tourists. Tolkach and Mbreti (2015) explain that there is a wide debate about the benefits of participation in tourism development related to the exercise of power between stakeholders and the capacity to achieve community development goals. Veriasa and Waite (2017) pointed out that participation is not the same as real proactive involvement. Participation should include the power to make decisions. Community-based tourism involves residents and communities not only as the "core of the tourism product" (Johnson, 2010) but as active participants in the development process. Often the community only participates in the implementation of agendas that have been determined by actors outside the community and decision-making usually comes from tourism actors such as government and private investors (Dolezal, 2011). Community-based tourism is a development that arises directly from within the community, but due to limited expertise and capital, community-based tourism development activities independently initiated by local communities are still rare and usually require the support of external partnership (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017; Nair & Hamzah, 2015). This can lead to the creation of community dependence on stakeholders outside the community and the benefits to the community result in less than the value of the optimal benefits received directly by local communities. According to Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2017), dependence on outsiders can affect the assumption of authority by outsiders.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to the definition of the UNWTO, sustainable tourism must ensure the optimal use of natural resources which constitute a key element in the development of tourism, preserve essential ecological processes, and help protect natural heritage and biodiversity.

The purpose of this research is to survey whether the inhabitant's support for the sustainable use of tourism resources is influenced by their point of view on nature and the environment in general. Nowadays, it is important to clarify whether the residents in the study area have points of view that are in harmony with nature and if they consider that sustainable use of resources is advantageous in its development. The formulation of hypotheses allows us to express the relationship between the variables of the study, which is presented graphically in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Structural model of the study



### 3.1. Research method

The method of choice is based on the concept of random selection, it is a probability choice so each element of the population has an equal probability of being part of the solution. It is considered the best technique to select a representative sample. Studying what people say about their meanings and interpretations uses qualitative techniques of interviewing different individuals. Individual qualitative techniques have to do with research about the motivations and attitudes of the people. A theoretical model of this study is designed to test empirically the structural relationship between the independent variable *environmental attitudes* and the dependent variable *residents' support for strategies of sustainable tourism development*. In this model, exogenous variables were considered predictors for the endogenous variable. The model may be useful to understand the factors that affect the support of residents for sustainable development and the relationship between a selected variable that represents important factors for sustainable tourism development in the study area. The Likert scale and the nominal meter were used for their measurement. Note on this scale indicates a degree of acceptance or rejection of the submission given in it. In this research, a survey is conducted to get the data required for the study. The questionnaire is used here to observe the environmental attitudes of residents and residents' support for strategies for sustainable tourism development. The survey used in this research has 5 questions in groups. Please refer to Appendix for the questionnaire used in this study.

The questionnaire starts with addressing questions about the demographics of the respondents. This part includes questions about age, education, gender, and occupation. This information is used to show that the sample can be considered to be a good representative of the residents in the study area. The second section of the questionnaire will determine whether or not residents support the strategies of sustainable tourism development. The third section of the questionnaire shows how residents assess the development of tourism in their area. The fourth group of questions in the survey determines the environmental attitudes' of residents according to the Likert scale with 5 levels of evaluation giving answers to 12 questions that express their views on nature and the environment. The fifth section of the questionnaire required to measure residents' assessment of the strategies of sustainable tourism development, providing answers to 10 questions in the Likert scale with 5 levels of evaluation. In this way, complete information is provided to realize this

study giving answers to all the questions raised. In this way, complete information is provided to realize this study giving answers to all the posed questions.

### 3.2. Sample and data

The sample of this study was selected randomly. Residents of Saranda Municipality are populating target that owns the information we desired to respond objectives of this study. The reasons for the determining target population are 1) this area gets direct and sharpest visible impacts so far, from tourist development; 2) there is an attractive landscape for tourists and it is at the core of the debates on sustainable tourism development planning. Hence, the sample can be considered to be a good representative of the residents in the study area. The survey was handed out to the respondents in person to avoid any uncertainty that may come up in answering the questions. A total of 396 questionnaires have been collected. Upon receiving the responses, the data was fed into a data file for analysis. Finally, analysis is carried out using SPSS Statistics based on the objectives mentioned earlier in the paper. The data collected using the survey is analyzed using SPSS Statistics. Finally, the results prove the objectives that are presented.

## 4. RESULTS

This section describes the profile of the respondents. This is followed by presenting descriptive frequencies of some questions that explain that this study considered all population groups affected by the development of tourism in the study area.

The community was identified as the main actor in the support of sustainable tourism and its views on the environment and nature, in general, are investigated as an important variable that is framed in the discourse of tourism, and therefore, the study took the character of a case study. A case study is a research strategy that focuses on a particular case and its context, and generally involves the collection of qualitative data (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Content analysis is an indirect, non-intrusive measure that allows the researcher to analyze documents as they are and in the context in which they were produced (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Therefore, the interpretive content analysis provides an opportunity to gain a comprehensive overview of the selected material, where the researcher is able to study the data in its wider socio-cultural context and further interpret the explicit content, as well as the meanings, and implied symbols. In order to understand how the community values the development of tourism in the study area, its views on the environment, and the support of



sustainable tourism development strategies, primary data were collected through interviewing residents. The technique of causality analysis will be used to test the research hypotheses. First, it should be verified if the defined variables are related to each other as shown in the proposed model. We will rely on the concept of statistical significance to prove that a causal relationship is present and if the analysis shows us that there is a systematic relationship between the variables given in the model, then we will refer to this as the existence of the link. Information about the behavior of the independent variable enables us to make a useful prediction about the behavior of the dependent variable. If there is a relationship between the variables defined in the model, for our analysis it is important to know the direction of the relationship, which can be positive or negative, as well as the strength of the relationship. Due to the complex nature of social phenomena, in the field of economics and management, we are dealing with the study of statistical relationships, and the relationship in this case is seen as a general trend. For the study, the regression analysis method is used, with which we will determine the main

direction of the connection between the variables of the proposed model. The linear correlation coefficient method (Pearson correlation) will be used to measure the intensity of the connection, which takes values from -1 to +1, close to 1 indicates a strong connection, and close to 0 indicates a weak connection. With these methods, the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables of the proposed model is confirmed.

#### 4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

This sub-section describes the profile of the respondents. This is followed by presenting descriptive frequencies of some questions that explain that this study considered all population groups affected by the development of tourism in the study area.

Table 1 summarizes the profile of respondents. The results indicate that 24.5% of respondents are 18-30 years old, 42.4% are 31-50 years old, and 33% are 51 and more years old.

Respondents were from all age categories, gender, education level, and employment status.

**Table 1.** Profile of respondents

No.	Age	%	Gender	%	Education	%	Employment	%
1	18-30 years old	24.5	M	46.7	Primary education	10.6	Private business	20.2
							Employed in the private sector	16.2
2	31-40 years old	16.9	F	53.3	Secondary education	39.6	Employed in the public sector	24.5
3	41-50 years old	25.5			Higher education	44.2	Employed in the NGO	0.8
4	51-65 years old	28.5			High education	5.6	Immigrant	7.3
							Student	3.5
5	Over 65 years old	4.5					Unemployed	17.9
							Pensioner	7.8

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

#### 4.2. The evaluation of residents for tourism development

The results show that 56% of respondents assess the development of tourism as a chaotic, inappropriate,

and damaging development. This result expresses their concern about the consequences of this industry in their place of residence, as well as their appreciation of tourism as an industry that serves the community.

**Table 2.** The respondents' attitude to the tourism development

No.	How do you assess the development of tourism in your area?	Frequency	Percentage
1	Chaotic development	92	24
2	Appropriate development	42	11
3	Inadequate development	71	18
4	Harmful development	13	3
5	Development that serves the community	174	44

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

#### 4.3. Support of residents for tourism development

Table 3 shows the responses of residents who were asked whether they support tourism development. The results show that 93% of the inhabitants in

the study area strongly support the development of tourism and this direct response shows their hopes and concerns for today and the future. The tourism industry is the main branch of the economy in this area that also determines their well-being.

**Table 3.** The respondents' support of the tourism development

No.	Do you support tourism development in your zone?	Frequency	Percentage
1	I strongly oppose	1	0.3
2	I oppose	2	0.5
3	Neither oppose nor support	23	5.8
4	I support	201	51
5	I strongly support	167	42

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

#### 4.4. Measurement of environmental attitudes

This study employed the Likert scale as a measurement scale for measuring tourism stakeholders' attitudes about their environment. As presented in Table 4, the respondents were asked to indicate the degree of their agreement with 12 statements, using a five-point Likert scale as

the response format, with assigned values ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree".

A high score on this scale means an indication of a highly ecocentric attitude and, in this case, we can say that residents have ecocentric attitudes toward nature and this means they tend to be in harmony with nature in life and their activities.

**Table 4.** Descriptive analysis of environmental attitudes of residents

No.	Instruments for measuring	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Man has the right to intervene to change nature and the environment to his needs.	3.06	1.497
2	Interference between people on nature has often devastating consequences.	4.29	1.070
3	Human ingenuity makes us think that man will not make the earth uninhabitable.	3.80	1.157
4	People are very abusive to land.	4.19	1.057
5	Earth has abundant natural resources if we know how to develop them.	4.63	0.787
6	Plants and animals have a right to exist as much as humans.	4.72	0.723
7	People are subject to the laws of nature regardless of their special qualities.	4.40	0.904
8	The so-called "ecological crisis" with humanity faces is greatly exaggerated.	3.55	1.269
9	People are created to rule over the rest of nature.	3.15	1.413
10	Natural balance is very fragile and easy to break.	4.27	1.033
11	People learn enough about how nature works to be able to manage it.	3.63	1.096
12	If things continue like this, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster.	4.31	0.997

Note: The scale of measurement: 1 = "I do not agree at all", 2 = "I disagree", 3 = "I neither agree nor disagree", 4 = "I agree", 5 = "I strongly agree".

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

#### 4.5. Measurement of support for sustainable tourism development strategies

Descriptive statistics for support of the development strategies of sustainable tourism are presented in Table 5.

This measurement scale consists of 10 sustainable tourism development strategies expressing strategies for the sustainable use of resources that support this development.

Residents were asked to indicate how favorable or unfavorable Saranda and Ksamil consider these strategies according to the Likert scale, which is composed of 5 assessment levels, from "strongly unfavorable" to "very favorable".

As shown in Table 5, all strategies have a high average score from 3.98 to 4.55 and this means that people assess strategies for sustainable development of tourism in their area very favorably.

**Table 5.** Descriptive analysis of the residents' support for sustainable tourism development strategies

No.	Sustainable tourism development strategies	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Improvement of services that increase the length of stay of tourists.	4.28	0.906
2	Improving the quality of tourism and diversification of tourism products to increase visitor spending.	4.23	0.875
3	Expansion of the parties that benefit from tourism.	3.98	0.999
4	Improving infrastructure to achieve the increase of the planned profit.	4.43	0.846
5	Encourage the participation of citizens in decision-making for the development of tourism.	4.16	1.002
6	Reducing the seasonality of tourism.	4.55	0.734
7	Developing skills and training.	4.46	0.798
8	Protection of tourism resources and improving the special qualities of the landscape.	4.44	0.960
9	Establishment of standards for tourism services.	4.42	0.882
10	Increase responsibility for protecting the environment and resources which it supports the development of tourism.	4.45	0.918

Note: The measurement scale: 1 = "Very unfavorable", 2 = "Unfavorable", 3 = "Neutral", 4 = "Favorable", 5 = "Very favorable".

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

#### 4.6. The reliability and validity of the measurement scales

Reliability is essential in any measurement scale and shows the homogeneity of the instruments that comprise it. The reliability of this scale was explained by Cronbach's alpha.

As seen from the data presented, the measurement scale for both variables has an acceptable level of Cronbach's alpha coefficient which shows that the scales of measurement are reliable and suitable for further analysis of the data.

**Table 6.** Reliability of measurement variables (Cronbach's alpha)

The measurement scale	The number of indicators	Cronbach's alpha
1. Opinions about the environment	12	0.642
2. Support for sustainable tourism strategies	10	0.894

Scale validity refers to the extent to which measuring instruments or indicators have measured what they are supposed to measure (Hair et al., 2010). Validity relates to the suitability of a scale as a measure of a particular variable. The former is used as a method to examine the adequacy of the conceptual and operational definition of the measurement scale on the basis of the theoretical background before the scale is administered to the target population. While the empirical test concerns the examination of the relationships between the instruments in a measurement scale as well as the measurements after the administration of the measurement scale has been done in the target population by testing if there is a relationship between the criterion variables and the measurement

scales. The results of the Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis (Table 7) show that there is a degree of correlation between the criterion variables and the measurement scales. In addition, the results of the linear regression analysis show that the models are significant at the 0.05 statistical level and express up to 33.1% of the variance for the degree of measurement of views on the environment and support for sustainable tourism development strategies. Empirical evidence for validity contains criterion variables and construct variables assumed to be valid for the study. Through these procedures, the content validity of the measurement scales was achieved, supporting the procedure and research for this study.

**Table 7.** Results for validity in accordance with criterion-variables

Measurement scale	Criterion variable	Pearson correlation	Regression
1. Residents' attitudes towards the environment	How much do you support environmental protection policies?	0.091	R = 0.10
			R-square = 0.012
			F = 4.60
			p < 0.03
2. Residents' support for sustainable tourism development strategies	How much do you support the development of sustainable tourism in your community?	0.167	R = 0.167
			R-square = 0.028
			F = 11.29
			p < 0.001

#### 4.7. Factorial analysis of variables of the study

From the data of the factorial analysis (Table 8), we see that the independent variable "attitudes of residents about nature and the environment", is expressed in three factors, as follows:

*First factor:* "The intervention of humans on nature undermines it" consists of items with factor loadings = or > 0.4 (item 2, item 4, item 10, item 12).

*The second factor:* "Man has the right to intervene in nature, does not make the earth uninhabitable and can control nature" consists of item 1, item 3, item 8, item 9, and item 11 with

loadings factor = or > 0.4.

*The third factor:* "Earth has abundant natural resources, plants, and animals which have a right to exist as much as the people who are subject to the laws of nature" consists of item 5, item 6, and item 7 with loadings factor = or > 0.4. The three factors expressed a 45.009% variance.

For the dependent variable "Supporting the strategies of sustainable tourism", we see from the data factor analysis (Table 8) that there is only one factor, which contains 10 items with factor loading from 0.513 to 0.833, and that stated 52.538% of the variance.

**Table 8.** Confirming factor analysis results for the measurement model

Variables	Factors	Coefficient of importance	Coefficient of reliability	Variances (%)
ABM				45.009
	ENVIRONMENT 1	0.732	0.600	16.312
	ENVIRONMENT 2	0.561	0.579	16.089
	ENVIRONMENT 3	0.747	0.457	12.608
STQ				
	STRATEGY	0.719	0.894	52.538

Note: ENVIRONMENT 1 = "Human intervention in nature damages it"; ENVIRONMENT 2 = "Man has the right to interfere with nature, it does not make the earth uninhabitable, and the ecological crisis is exaggerated because humans can control nature"; ENVIRONMENT 3 = "Earth has abundant natural resources, plants and animals have the right to exist as well as humans who are subject to the laws of nature".

#### 4.8. Regression analysis

Hypothesis testing is the procedure based on sample data and probability theory to determine whether the hypothesis is a reasonable statement and should be accepted or is unreasonable and should be rejected. The level of significance/risk ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) ensures the critical values of the test.

##### 1. Model testing:

$$H1_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0;$$

$H1: \beta_1 \neq 0, \beta_2 \neq 0, \beta_3 \neq 0$ , or at least one of them different from 0.

From the data in Table 9, we have a p-value of  $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ ,  $H1_0$  is rejected,  $H1$  is true, and it is

concluded that the model is statistically significant.

##### 2. Testing of the independent variable "ENVIRONMENT 1":

$$H2_0: \beta_3 = 0;$$

$$H2: \beta_3 \neq 0.$$

According to SPSS Statistics data, Table 10 shows that the factor "ENVIRONMENT 1", with  $\beta_3 = 0.169$ , Sig. =  $0.002 < 0.05$ .

Conclusion: The variable "ENVIRONMENT 1" has a statistically significant impact on the model.

##### 3. Testing of the independent variable "ENVIRONMENT 2":

$$H3_0: \beta_4 = 0;$$

$$H3: \beta_4 \neq 0.$$

According to SPSS Statistics data, Table 10 shows that the factor "ENVIRONMENT 2", with  $\beta_4 = -0.012$ , Sig. = 0.706 > 0.05.

Conclusion: The variable "ENVIRONMENT 2" has no statistically significant impact on the model.

#### 4. Testing of the independent variable "ENVIRONMENT 3":

$$H4: \beta_5 = 0;$$

$$H4: \beta_5 \neq 0.$$

According to SPSS Statistics data, Table 10 shows that the "ENVIRONMENT 3" with  $\beta_5 = 0.176$ , Sig. = 0.003 < 0.05.

Conclusion: The variable "ENVIRONMENT 3" has a statistically significant impact on the model.

#### 4.9. Hypotheses testing

*The first hypothesis (H1):* This hypothesis is addressed in Questions IV (1-10), in which residents were asked how they appreciate their relationship with nature. From the results presented in Table 4, we see that the questions that express the negative impact of the intervention of man on the environment have a consistent degree greater compared with assertions positive as "Human intervention in nature often brings disastrous results" (M = 4.29, SD = 1.070), "People are very abusive to earth" (M = 4.19, SD = 1.057), "The natural balance is delicate and easy to be ruined" (M = 4.27, SD = 1.033), "If it continues so we soon will experience an environmental disaster" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.997). Allegations relating to the human right

to rule and change nature have a lower mean (M = 3.10, SD = 3.15) and it indicates that this factor is not important, and it represents the element of reasoning that is not part of the attitudes and views of the residents in the study area. From this result on hypothesis H1, we can now come up with the conclusion that residents have ecocentric attitudes about their environment and so, they tend to be in harmony with nature in life and their activities.

*The second hypothesis (H2):* This hypothesis is addressed in Questions IV when residents were asked if they support sustainable tourism development. The data show that 80%-91.4% of residents support and assess favorable and very favorable strategies for sustainable tourism development with a coefficient that expresses the importance of 0.719% and 52.538% of the variance.

*The third hypothesis (H3):* This hypothesis is addressed in Questions IV when residents were asked about their relationship with nature and V (1-10) when residents were asked about the level at which they think of their favorite sustainable tourism strategies. Linear regression analysis was utilized to check the extent to which community attitudes towards nature match residents' sustainable development behavior. The results of the regression with support of the community for sustainable tourism development strategies as a dependent variable and community attitudes towards nature and the environment in general as the independent variable are shown in Tables 8-10.

Table 9. Regression results summary

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.392	0.154	0.147	0.595

Note: Predictors: (Constant), ENVIRONMENT 1 "Human intervention in nature undermines it"; ENVIRONMENT 2 "Man has the right to intervene in nature, does not make the earth uninhabitable can control nature"; ENVIRONMENTAL 3 "Earth has abundant natural resources, plants, and animals have a right to exist as much as people who are subject to the laws of nature".

Source: Processing of questionnaire data by SPSS Statistics.

Table 10. Regression results, ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1					
Regression	26.847	6	4.475	12.693	0.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	136.429	387	0.353		
Total	163.277	393			

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), ENVIRONMENT 2, ENVIRONMENT 3, ENVIRONMENT 1. b. Dependent variable: STRATEGY "Support of sustainable development strategy".

Table 11. Regression results, coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	1.834	0.302		6.081	0.000
ENVIRONMENT 1	0.169	0.055	-0.0184	3.074	0.002
ENVIRONMENT 2	-0.012	0.032	-0.018	-0.379	0.706
ENVIRONMENT 3	0.176	0.059	0.153	2.974	0.003

Note: a. Dependent variable: STRATEGY "Support of sustainable development strategy".

The "environmental attitudes" variable is statistically significant, factor 1, which states that "Human intervention is harmful to nature" for which  $\beta_1 = 0.169$ , Sig. = 0.002 < 0.05 (according to SPSS Statistics presented in Tables 10 and 11) and factor 3, which states that "Earth has abundant natural resources, plants, and animals have a right to exist as much as the people who are subject to the laws of nature", with  $\beta_3 = 0.176$ , Sig. = 0.003 < 0.05, while, factor 2 said that "Man has

the right to intervene in nature, does not make the earth uninhabitable and can control it",  $\beta_2 = -0.012$ , Sig. = 0.706 > 0.05, indicating that this factor is not important statistically and it represents the element of reasoning that is not part of the attitudes and views of the residents in the study area.

The results in Table 11 show  $\beta \neq 0$  and this implies that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. The results in Table 10 show the significance level of

p-value = 0.000 <  $\alpha$  = 0.05 and this means that the model is significant.  $H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0$ .  $H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0, \beta_2 \neq 0, \beta_3 \neq 0$  or at least one of them different from 0. From the data in Table 10, we have p-value = 0.000 <  $\alpha$  = 0.05,  $H_0$  is rejected,  $H_1$  is true, Conclusion: The model is statistically significant.

We consider the independent variable to have a significant impact on the residents' behavior (95% level of significance), so we can say that the attitudes of the community about the environment affect community support for sustainable tourism development in their area. The positive relationship between residents' attitudes towards nature and the environment in general and their support for sustainable tourism development strategies means that the more friendly and in harmony they are with nature bigger would be their support for sustainable development.

The results in Table 9 indicate that the R-square value for the model is only 0.154. This means that only 15.4% of the variation of the dependent variable "Support of sustainable development strategy" is explained by the independent variable "Residents' attitudes towards nature and the environment in general". This implies that there are other factors affecting the residents' behavior, that are not included in this model.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The previous section describes the findings from the studied literature, as well as the analysis of residents' assessment of sustainable tourism development as a prime example of the complexity and multidimensional nature of the notion of sustainable tourism development based on community perceptions and support. This section will discuss these findings in relation to each other and the background information presented, as well as in relation to the research questions and purpose of the study. The literature clearly describes the complexity and players present in the emergent discourse of sustainable tourism and emphasizes the role of residents in sustainability. The relationship of the industry with the tourism products developed from the natural and cultural resources of the community is not direct, on the contrary, it is through the mediation of the community. Tourism is an industry involving many local, national, and global actors and action toward sustainability within this industry is complex and comprehensive (Hall & Richards, 2000). Consequently, the responsibility for sustainability is perceived in different ways and contexts and this helps us in addressing the first research question, how the community values the development of tourism in the study area. The results show that 56% of respondents assess the development of tourism as a chaotic, inappropriate, and damaging development. This result expresses their concern about the consequences of this industry in their place of residence, as well as their appreciation of tourism as an industry that serves the community. Tourism relies heavily on the goodwill of the local community, so understanding community response to tourism development is essential in ensuring community support for tourism development. Today, the principle of wider community involvement in tourism planning and

development is widely accepted and approved (Brayley & Var, 1989) and the above result confirms the findings in the literature on the importance and role of the community in the development of tourism persistence. The researchers, such as Honey (1999) and Wunder (2000) have pointed out the importance of community-based tourism for its capacity to provide local societies with economic benefits; others, such as Cole (2006), Gunn (1988), and Yang and Wall (2009), have emphasized the potential of community-based tourism to provide the local society with justice in the distribution of resources and income, participation in the tourism development process to determine the form and extent of its expansion, democratization, and empowerment of residents as owners of the property. Also, it supports the conclusion that the more comprehensive the development of tourism based on the community, the more it benefits the community itself. From an economic and environmental perspective, if local people are not involved in the entire development process, there is a high chance that the resources on which tourism is based will be destroyed and the investment lost (Brandon, 1996). Today, the tourism industry, otherwise known as the hospitality industry, is facing increasing pressure to operate in a more sustainable way (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2019), and a change in sustainability in this sector will be an important step in the light of the overall sustainability of development. As such, the perceptions, awareness, knowledge, and support of the community is an issue that is worth investigating and clarifying in the function of the action plan of the local and central government.

### 5.1. Support of residents for tourism development

The community field is like other special social fields, except for the fact that it follows the common interests and needs of the entire community. Indeed, a locality's economy, sociocultural characteristics, and physical resources are essential parts of the community and its inhabitants. However, these characteristics serve only as background to local life and reveal little about the motives and ability of residents to act together. Community, from a field theory perspective, is seen to emerge when feedback from the experiences of conscious citizens comes together to address common needs. The emergence of the community field brings into focus shared interests in aspects of local life (Bridger et al., 2010). The results show that 93% of the inhabitants in the study area strongly support the development of tourism and this direct response shows their hopes and concerns for today and the future. This result confirms the findings in the literature. According to Cole (2006) and Wall (1997), the goals sought by the community and sustainable tourism efforts are similar, economic, social, and environmental for present and future generations. Some believe that the sustainable development of tourism is at the very core of the notion of "community-based tourism". Community-based tourism has been created to increase the development capacities of this industry in favor of all interested parties affected by this development, avoiding undesirable consequences for the community. The tourism

industry is the main branch of the economy in this area that also determines their well-being. According to many tourism researchers, mass tourism does not generate local development but rather the devitalization of their communities. George et al. (2007), examines how community-based tourism can be a remedy for many of the general ills of the industry fueled by mass tourism.

## 5.2. Residents' attitudes toward the environment

Our work has considered the growing concern and findings in the literature on environmental issues, seeking to investigate the attitudes of the community towards the environment in the study area. From the analysis of the data, we see that the questions that express the negative impacts of human intervention on the environment have a greater degree of agreement compared to positive statements, such as "Human intervention in nature often brings destructive consequences" ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 1.070$ ), "People are very abusing the earth" ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 1.057$ ), "The natural balance is delicate and easy to break" ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.033$ ), "If it continues like this we will soon experience an environmental disaster" ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.997$ ). Since the statements related to the human right to rule and change nature have a lower mean ( $M = 3.10$  up to  $-3.15$ ), it means that the residents' views on the environment tend to be ecocentric and that the residents tend to be in harmony with nature in their activity and life in the community.

## 5.3. Community support for sustainable development strategies

Today, the tourism industry, otherwise known as the "hospitality industry", is facing increasing pressure to operate in a more sustainable way (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2017), and a change in sustainability in this sector will be an important step in the light of the overall sustainability of development. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process that requires constant monitoring of impacts and the establishment of necessary preventive or corrective measures when necessary. Based on the poor performance of the tourism industry in the study area and the findings of the literature, in this study, we raise the question of residents' support for sustainable tourism development strategies. As can be seen from the data analysis, all sustainable tourism development strategies result in a high average score from 3.98 for "Expansion of the parties that benefit from tourism" to 4.55 for "Reducing the seasonality of tourism". Likewise, for "Protecting tourist resources and improving the special qualities of the landscape" ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.960$ ) and "Increasing responsibility for the protection of the environment and resources on which the development of tourism is based" ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 0.918$ ). In the sustainable tourism literature, it is clear that the main objectives of sustainable tourism are the achievement of the economic benefits that tourism brings to the local community and the improvement of its quality of life. Achieving these objectives depends

on how planners approach policies related to tourism development and the data of this study help in this direction. Jurowski et al. (1997) studied the attitudes of people in terms of their environmental concerns about values and their impact on ecocentric support for tourism development. They concluded that the ecocentric attitudes of residents have a direct impact on supporting the development indicating a significant positive relationship with the sustainable use of resources on which the general development is based (McKercher, 2018). The model in Figure 1 represents the connection of views on the environment with community support for sustainable tourism strategies. From the data analysis of this study, we can say that the attitudes of the community about the environment affect community support for sustainable tourism development in their area. The positive relationship between residents' attitudes towards nature and the environment in general and their support for sustainable tourism development strategies means that the more friendly and in harmony they are with nature bigger would be their support for sustainable development.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Tourism is a dynamic sector and is very sensitive to different trends and developments in the new values of life. Reflecting on global developments today, there are many special interest tourists, whose orientation is no longer related only to natural beauty but is more a pleasure in interaction with the culture and lifestyle of local communities. The segment of the tourism market with special interest has influenced developments that emphasize the role of local communities in tourism activities. Local communities have a very important role in the development of tourism. Planning and management by local communities can create sustainability in the tourism industry. From the perspective of interaction or cooperation, the community consists of social groups whose members act to achieve different interests and goals. The concept or field of community connects all these different groups. The community field is like other special social fields, except for the fact that it follows the common interests and needs of the entire community. Indeed, a locality's economy, sociocultural characteristics, and physical resources are essential parts of the community and its inhabitants. However, these characteristics serve only as background to local life and reveal little about the motives and ability of residents to act together. Community, from a field theory perspective, is seen to emerge when feedback from the experiences of conscious citizens comes together to address common needs.

Tourism activities, traditionally defined by the tourism industry, essentially involve the transport and hospitality of the tourist in a local community, i.e., where the tourism product is consumed. No structure of any global industry works like tourism where the consumer comes to the product, it is mostly the product that is delivered to the consumer in his community. This structural change produces unique social effects on the local community, including damage to

local customs and traditions of life, the spread of infectious diseases, local demographic changes, and changes in labor markets. The main product of tourism is not something that is produced by industry. The product is often the heritage and wealth of the community that serves as a tourist destination. The business activity of the tourism industry is to promote the “marketable” or attractive aspects of the community, transport non-residents to the community, manage hospitality to guide and activities of visitors and provide them with services and goods to purchase during their stay. If business activities degrade the heritage and wealth of the community, then the community suffers more directly than the consumer, who may return to his community without responsibility or awareness of the impact of his tourism activity. Tourism activities can degrade the social and natural wealth of a community. The intervention of many foreigners uninformed about the local social system can undermine the existing social relations and values of the community. Tourism in natural areas euphorically called “eco-tourism”, can be a major source of degradation of local social, economic, and ecological systems. The intervention of many foreigners with a high rate of consumption and waste in natural areas, or in the case where the waste management infrastructure is inadequate, can produce changes in these natural areas at such a rate that is greater than the rate imposed by local residents. These changes, which are related to tourism, are especially harmful in the case where local residents support their livelihood, mainly in tourism, as can be said for the area of Saranda and Ksamil. The sustainable approach can also be considered an umbrella for some of the *ad hoc* methods advocated from the literature and, therefore, this approach has emerged as one of the most comprehensive and accepted for tourism planning. Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host communities while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. The plans for the development of tourism show that the representatives of the central government are involved, but that the residents and the local government have very little participation in the process. In addition to the widespread acceptance of the concept of sustainability, especially in the academic sector, it should be sought that destination planners, managers, and industry operators who are making day-to-day decisions about tourism within their respective destinations, in fact, are applying the key principles of sustainable development theory. Cultural impacts can be minimized by involving local communities in decisions that affect their lives, especially regarding the type and amount of tourism that should occur. This is a tourism industry that will have to be environmentally friendly, both natural resources and man-made environment, and also involve people in its local activities without destroying their natural and cultural heritage. It can be seen in different dimensions: economic, social, cultural, natural, resource distribution, and management dimensions. Each dimension within sustainable tourism efforts must be carried out carefully, leaving no difficulty unsolved for future generations for the problems they have, will create, or be involved in. Community-

based tourism that is not properly managed will cause different types of problems that will turn into challenges such as community dependence on partnerships; the unclear ownership status of community-based tourism development where the community is still in a position between management and ownership or just being or the workforce; high dependence of the community on seasonal tourist activities; the existence of conflict between tourists and local communities due to differences in the perceptions and urbanization activities of young people; due to the conflict of interest between local communities, as well as problems in the use of tourist resources in the area; meeting the needs of tourists by the community often appears as an imposition of the tourists’ will on local communities. Environmental damage is becoming an increasingly troubling problem nowadays because we are seeing more and more clearly that harming the environment means damaging the resources on which a country’s life and economy are based. By harming the environment man damages the natural and economic resources on which his life and well-being are based. But how should we address this problem? Why do we waste the resources on which we rely in life and the economy? This problem put the authors in front of the question of what the views of residents on the environment are and are their attitudes towards the environment are the cause of this environmental situation. Sustainable tourism is based on the concept of sustainable development as a holistic approach that considers the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. The guiding principle of this study is that the support of residents and their active participation in the planning process and development of tourism is a key element for its successful development through the sustainable use of tourism resources.

Based on the empirical results, the following is a summary of the findings of this study: Residents in Saranda and Ksamil appreciate the tourism development as a chaotic development; residents in Saranda and Ksamil support sustainable tourism development; residents in Saranda and Ksamil have ecocentric attitudes about nature in general and the environment; residents in Saranda and Ksamil rate favorable the development of sustainable tourism strategies. There is a significant effect of the attitudes of the community about the environment on community support for sustainable tourism development in their area.

Based on the results, this study can contribute to some recommendations: Residents of Saranda and Ksamil, as well as in other countries, assess the total impact of tourism development, which are positive and negative effects on the environment, culture, and society. For this reason, we recommend policies and strategies for the development of tourism in this area, which till now have not produced the desired results by residents, to reflect the need of the community and to be in the interest of residents by obtaining environmental dimension in tourism development. Plans for tourism should be development plans in this area and serve as the basis for its residents’ actions in the interest of their own and the tourism industry, otherwise,

the tourism industry will produce these effects as negative until today, and as recorded in this study. The attitudes of residents about the environment and nature are ecocentric, which means that residents want to be in harmony with nature and the environment where they live, and work and it has a positive correlation with the strategies and policies supporting the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, we recommend businesses in Saranda and Ksamil, orient their investments for future development without sacrificing the interests of the residents, but to find appropriate tools and methods to guarantee the protection of the natural environment of the area.

In summary, our study has important implications for clarifying the views and attitudes of residents in the study area towards natural resources and their support for sustainable tourism development strategies. This study has limitations that should be considered. First, only one variable that affects support for sustainable development was examined, while other variables affect and should be the object of further studies, such as the perception of the impacts of tourism by residents, etc. In addition, this study considered only personal attributions which refer to factors within the person.

Nowadays, researchers have attempted to redefine attitudes in different ways and argued that attitudes are not unidimensional evaluations but rather reflect different factors (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) and so attitudes are treated as comprising elements of feeling, doing, and thinking. Personal attributions refer to factors within the person, such as personality characteristics, motivation, ability, and effort. For more, the attitudes of residents towards the environment are also affected by situational attributions refer to factors within the environment that are external to the person. Contemporary models of attitude-behavior relations describe how attitudes predict behavior in conjunction with other variables (e.g., social norms, perceived control) that influence behavior. Our implications should not ignore the possible influence of institutional actors, such as the quality of policies and institutions and economic performance, which can have a significant impact on the formation of attitudes. Examining a single year cannot reflect the complex dynamics of environmental attitudes that change over time (Franzen & Vogl, 2013). This dictates the need for more complete studies by analyzing other factors that influence the behavior and action of different actors in sustainable development.

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## APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE

Greetings!

This questionnaire is designed for the study and in this study special attention is paid to the thoughts, opinions, and suggestions of the inhabitants of Saranda regarding tourism development problems. For this reason, we wish to make you a few questions about your attitudes towards environmental issues and support for the development of tourism as a very important of the sustainable development of your city. The answers provided will be protected and will not be published.

Thank you very much and wish you all the best!

Parashqevi Proda (Draçi)

Interview date \_\_\_\_ / July / August / 2020

Saranda District Municipality SARANDA

\* Required

### I. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Resident of:**

- Saranda
- Ksamil

**Gender:**

- F
- M

**Age:**

- 18-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years,
- over 60 years

**Education:**

- 8 years
- Secondary
- University
- Postgraduate studies

**Work status:**

- Private business owner
- Employed in the private sector
- Employed in the public sector
- Employed in the non-governmental organization
- Unemployed
- Pensioner
- Immigrant
- Student

### II. DO YOU OPPOSE OR SUPPORT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

(Please put a cross in the appropriate number: 1. "I strongly oppose", 2. "I oppose", 3. "Neither oppose, nor support", 4. "I support", 5. "I strongly support").

### III. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SARANDA/KSAMIL?

- Chaotic development
- Inappropriate development
- Harmful development
- Development that serves the community
- Appropriate development

#### IV. ON THE ATTITUDES OF RESIDENTS TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Man has the right to intervene to change nature and the environment to his needs.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
2. Human intervention in nature, often has devastating consequences.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
3. Human ingenuity makes us think that man will not make the earth uninhabitable.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
4. People are very abusive to the ground.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
5. Plants and animals have a right to exist as much as men.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
6. People are subject to the laws of nature regardless of their special qualities.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
7. People were created to rule over the rest of nature.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
8. Natural balance is very fragile and easy to break.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
9. People learn enough about how nature works to be able to manage it.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
10. If things continue like this, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5

#### V. STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Below are some strategies for sustainable tourism development, according to the World Tourism Organization, which may be applied to the development of tourism in Saranda/Kamil. Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you consider each of these in your town by clicking on the following scale where 1 = "Very unfavorable", 2 = "Unfavorable", 3 = "I do not know", 4 = "Favorable", 5 = "Very favorable".

1. Improvement of services that increase the length of stay of tourists.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
2. Improving the quality of tourism and the creation of new tourism products to increase visitor spending.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
3. Expansion of the parties that benefit from tourism in Saranda  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
4. Improving infrastructure and increasing the profits from tourism.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
5. Encouraging the participation of citizens in decision-making for the development of tourism.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
6. Extension of tourist season in Saranda/Kamil.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
7. Skills development and training on tourism.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
8. Protection of sea, land, and special qualities of the natural landscape as tourist resources tourism in Saranda/Kamil.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
9. Setting standards for tourist services.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5
10. Increased responsibility to protect the environment and resources on which tourism development in Saranda/Kamil.  
\*     1           2           3           4           5

*Thank you!*