

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF CULTURE

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Abstract

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This study meticulously explores the intricate interplay between sustainable tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage, focusing on how tourism practices can foster the protection and revitalization of cultural and ethnic traditions within diverse communities in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam (Pan et al., 2018). The research problem centers on understanding how sustainable tourism contributes to cultural preservation and the economic upliftment of ethnic minority groups. The research aims to unveil how sustainable tourism can act as a catalyst for cultural exchange, economic development, and the safeguarding of natural and cultural assets, with a particular emphasis on the involvement and empowerment of ethnic minority communities in the tourism development process (Datta et al., 2015). Employing multivariate linear regression as its primary research method, the study rigorously analyzes case studies to draw correlations between sustainable tourism activities and their impacts on cultural preservation. The main findings reveal that sustainable tourism practices significantly contribute to protecting cultural heritage, enhancing community participation, and fostering responsible tourism policies. These practices not only support the economic sustainability of ethnic minority groups but also ensure the conservation of their unique cultural identities. The implications of this research are profound, offering valuable insights for policymakers and tourism practitioners aiming to harmonize cultural heritage conservation with community well-being. By advocating for the integration of community perspectives into tourism planning and policy formulation, this study underscores the potential of sustainable tourism to serve as a powerful tool for cultural and economic revitalization, highlighting its importance in the broader context of cultural heritage management and sustainable development (Gould, 2018).

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Ethnic, Cultural, Preservation, Ethnic Minority, Vietnam

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1. INTRODUCTION

In global development and cultural preservation, sustainable tourism has become a transformative force capable of driving economic growth, safeguarding ethnic cultures, and fostering environmental stewardship across diverse global regions (Streimikiene et al., 2021). This burgeoning field holds particular promise for ethnic minority communities, whose rich cultural identities and traditional ways of life are increasingly endangered by globalization and socio-economic disparities (Croucher, 2018; Crane, 2016; Schaider et al., 2019). Amidst these challenges, sustainable tourism allows these communities to leverage their unique cultural assets for economic and social empowerment while ensuring the conservation of their heritage and the natural environment (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Cardia, 2018).

Despite sustainable tourism's recognized potential, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning its impact on socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation within ethnic minority communities. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the effects of sustainable tourism on these critical dimensions of community well-being.

Employing multivariate linear regression analysis, this research methodically examines the experiences of ethnic minority groups in engaging with sustainable tourism practices. Through this quantitative approach, the study aims to elucidate the complex relationships between sustainable tourism and its contributions to cultural preservation, economic development, and environmental sustainability. Specifically, it seeks to understand how sustainable tourism can serve as a mechanism for celebrating and protecting ethnic traditions and values, while simultaneously addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges faced by these communities.

This case study focuses on the nuanced experiences of diverse ethnic minority groups, exploring their unique cultural landscapes and the transformative potential of sustainable tourism within their contexts (Cheesman, 2015; Thi et al., 2006). By highlighting the interconnected benefits of sustainable tourism — from the preservation of cultural heritage to enhanced livelihoods and responsible environmental stewardship — this research endeavors to illuminate the multifaceted value of sustainable tourism practices. Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader discourse on sustainable development and cultural preservation, offering insights and implications for policymakers, practitioners, and communities worldwide in leveraging sustainable tourism as a pathway toward a more inclusive and resilient future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism, often called responsible tourism or eco-tourism, represents a deliberate approach within the tourism industry to mitigate its adverse impacts on the environment, culture, and local communities while fostering favorable

outcomes for all relevant stakeholders (Harris et al., 2002). It is distinguished by a set of practices and principles that accord primacy to the enduring welfare of destination areas and endeavors to harmonize the multifaceted dimensions of tourism, encompassing economic, societal, and environmental facets (Weaver, 2005).

Central to the ethos of sustainable tourism is the endeavor to strike a delicate equilibrium between the economic advantages of tourism and the preservation of natural and cultural endowments (Harris et al., 2002; Lu & Nepal, 2009). This equilibrium seeks to ensure the sustained prosperity of destinations while minimizing the deleterious consequences that may arise from unbridled tourism growth (Aronsson, 2000). Within the academic and professional discourse, sustainable tourism is widely regarded as a conscientious and morally sound approach to tourism, which places a premium on enhancing the welfare of host communities and tourists. It acknowledges the far-reaching impacts that tourism can exert on ecosystems and cultural heritage and aspires to harness the sector's potential as a catalyst for constructive transformation while attenuating its detrimental ramifications (Carr et al., 2016).

2.2. Impact of sustainable tourism on ethnic cultural preservation

Incorporating elements of ethnic culture within the tourism sector enables tourists to deeply engage with the rich cultural heritage that characterizes a destination, as noted by Buonincontri and Marasco (2017). Such engagement allows visitors to participate actively in traditional ceremonies, appreciate the nuances of local gastronomy, and interact with individuals from varied ethnic backgrounds, thus facilitating a multifaceted cultural immersion (Timothy, 2011). This immersive experience is instrumental in fostering an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the destination's heritage, contributing to a deeper cultural connection (Ezenagu, 2020).

Through their participation in these cultural activities, tourists not only assimilate knowledge regarding the traditions and customs of the local ethnic communities but also play a pivotal role in preserving and propagating these cultural attributes (Yang, 2011). This interaction engenders a reciprocal relationship between the visitors and the host communities, culminating in a mutually beneficial dynamic. Here, travelers augment their cultural comprehension and, in turn, support the efforts dedicated to the cultural preservation of the destination, as highlighted by Jamal and Camargo (2014).

This relationship posits the study's first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Cultural enrichment exerts a significant and positive impact on cultural revival.

It suggests that the depth of cultural engagement experienced by tourists can directly influence the revitalization and sustenance of the cultural heritage within ethnic communities.

Tourism catalyzes economic incentives that foster the preservation of traditional practices, encompassing various cultural elements such as handicrafts, music, dance, and art (Loulanski, 2006). The injection of tourism-generated revenue into these communities is a significant motivator for

local populations to maintain and perpetuate these cultural traditions (Gould, 2018). As these traditions become essential components of the tourism offering, they are preserved and adapted in response to the demands and interests of visitors, thereby ensuring the continued vitality and perpetuation of the community's cultural heritage.

Within this symbiotic relationship between tourism and cultural preservation, the economic gains from tourism activities foster a positive feedback loop, wherein financial benefits support the maintenance of traditional practices and their evolution and innovation. This adaptation occurs as communities endeavor to provide authentic and captivating experiences to tourists, highlighting tourism's role in conserving cultural heritage and its dynamic, adaptive evolution through time (Archer et al., 2005; Scarpato, 2002; Patterson et al., 2008).

From this perspective, the study's second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Economic benefits exert a substantial and positive impact on cultural revival.

This hypothesis suggests that the economic advantages accruing from tourism significantly contribute to the revitalization and sustainable development of cultural traditions within communities.

Ethnic tourism possesses the capacity to markedly enhance the economic landscape of local communities through the creation of employment opportunities and the initiation of new business ventures (Richards & Wilson, 2006). This form of tourism provides an economic boon for a wide spectrum of community members, including local artisans, tour guides, cultural performers, and small-scale entrepreneurs, who benefit from the economic influx resulting from tourist visitations (Tao & Wall, 2009). The resultant tourist-driven income significantly elevates the income levels of these groups, thereby contributing to considerable regional economic growth (Datta et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the economic impacts of ethnic tourism are not confined to the augmentation of individual incomes alone (Besculides et al., 2002). They further materialize in expanding local enterprises, enhancing hospitality infrastructures, and diversifying economic endeavors (Dahles & Susilowati, 2015). Tourists' quest for authentic cultural experiences translates into direct engagement with the local economy, evidenced by their purchases of handmade crafts, participation in guided tours, attendance at artistic performances, and support for small businesses (Ashley et al., 2005). Such interactions precipitate a more comprehensive economic transformation within the community, often culminating in escalated investments in infrastructure and services, thereby catalyzing enhanced economic development within the region (Rogerson, 2018).

Based on this understanding, the study's third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Traditional practices exert a substantial and positive effect on cultural revival.

This hypothesis intimates that conserving traditional practices significantly fosters the revitalization and enduring preservation of cultural heritage within communities.

Within certain contexts, ethnic cultures exhibit a profound interconnectedness with their surrounding natural landscapes (Dalley, 2023). Sustainable tourism initiatives incorporating these cultural elements typically adopt an integrated

approach, transcending cultural preservation to include environmental conservation (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). These comprehensive efforts aim to protect and conserve natural environments, which may entail preserving sacred natural sites or advancing eco-friendly practices (Fukamachi, 2020).

A pivotal aspect of these sustainable tourism initiatives is conserving sacred natural sites (Wild & McLeod, 2008). These locations possess significant cultural and spiritual value for indigenous populations, serving as venues for rituals, ceremonies, and storytelling that are fundamental to their heritage (Gee et al., 2014). Integrating the protection of these sacred sites within sustainable tourism practices not only ensures their ongoing veneration and conservation but also promotes a balanced integration of cultural preservation and environmental stewardship, recognizing the essential symbiosis between these domains (Job et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the encouragement of eco-friendly practices constitutes another critical facet of sustainable tourism that involves ethnic cultures (Jamal, 2004). This encompasses the adoption of environmentally sustainable actions and behaviors among tourists, businesses, and local communities (Khairat & Maher, 2012). Through initiatives such as education and awareness programs, waste reduction techniques, and sustainable management of resources, these efforts aid in safeguarding the natural environment. Simultaneously, they enhance comprehension of the complex relationship between ethnic cultures and the ecosystems they reside in, thereby positioning sustainable tourism as a significant mechanism for both celebrating ethnic cultures and advocating for the prudent guardianship of the natural world (Pinto et al., 2018; Zorpas et al., 2014; Dwyer, 2018).

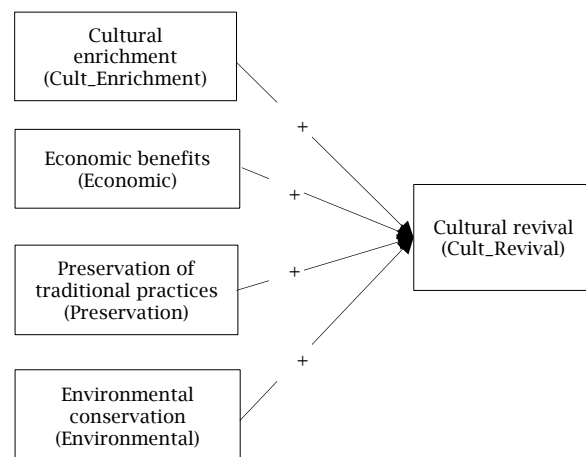
In light of this discussion, the fourth hypothesis proposed in the study is as follows:

H4: Environmental conservation exerts a substantial and positive impact on cultural revival.

This hypothesis suggests that efforts towards ecological conservation play a crucial role in revitalizing and preserving cultural heritage, underpinning the intrinsic link between artistic and environmental sustainability.

Figure 1 shows the research model proposed based on the above research hypotheses.

Figure 1. The proposed research model



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Instrument and participant

The methodology for data collection in this study was rigorously developed, leveraging an in-depth review of existing literature and expert insights from professionals in tourism management and public policy. The constructed questionnaire was bifurcated into two primary segments: the initial part aimed at eliciting demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, and professional background from respondents. The latter section was dedicated to acquiring in-depth data relevant to the research themes, namely cultural enrichment, preservation of traditional practices, economic benefits, environmental conservation, and cultural revival (Buonincontri & Marasco, 2017; Ezenagu, 2020; Kline, 2016), Economic Benefits (Rogerson, 2018; Koohafkan & Altieri, 2016; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012).

A pivotal step in the questionnaire's development was executing a pilot survey involving 40 participants (McKercher, 2016). This preliminary phase was instrumental in identifying and implementing modifications to enhance the questionnaire's relevance and applicability to the intended research demographics. Expert linguists were engaged to refine the questionnaire, ensuring its cultural adaptability to the Vietnamese

context, with these modifications meticulously documented for reference.

The research encompassed 200 individuals employed within the tourism sector in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam (Table 1). This sample size was selected because it was suitable for conducting multivariate linear regression analysis, and participants were chosen through a randomized sampling technique (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). The questionnaire was disseminated and completed in person, with participants using pencils for their responses, ensuring direct and efficient data collection. This approach resulted in a commendable 100% survey completion rate (DeVellis, 2017; Santos et al., 2016).

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study, with oral informed consent obtained from all participants to underscore their voluntary engagement and comprehension of the study's objectives. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants' contributions were rigorously protected, preventing any association between individual identities and the responses provided (Fowler, 2013). Conducted in the initial year of 2023 and focusing on eco-tourism locales within Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam, the study's ethical protocols, including consent and confidentiality measures are provided in Appendix.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

		Education					
		Bachelor's degree		High school diploma		Master's degree	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Age	23-30 years old	37	66.1%	11	19.6%	8	14.3%
	31-40 years old	30	66.7%	9	20.0%	6	13.3%
	40-45years old	58	58.6%	33	33.3%	8	8.1%
Gender	Female	62	68.1%	20	22.0%	9	9.9%
	Male	63	57.8%	33	30.3%	13	11.9%
Occupation	Event planner	8	72.7%	2	18.2%	1	9.1%
	Hotel and hospitality management	13	68.4%	3	15.8%	3	15.8%
	Tour guide	55	67.1%	18	22.0%	9	11.0%
	Travel agent	24	50.0%	18	37.5%	6	12.5%
	Travel blogger	25	62.5%	12	30.0%	3	7.5%
Ethnicity	Hmong	11	52.4%	9	42.9%	1	4.8%
	Kinh	11	61.1%	1	5.6%	6	33.3%
	Tay	16	72.7%	6	27.3%	0	0.0%
	Thai	48	60.0%	25	31.2%	7	8.8%
	Tho	39	66.1%	12	20.3%	8	13.6%

3.2. Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is an essential step in assessing the quality and precision of survey data. Reliability analysis determines the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument or survey questionnaire across time and situations. This study used Cronbach's alpha to assess the degree of internal consistency dependability. The criteria for evaluating Cronbach's alpha analysis findings are subjective and dependent on the particular study environment and questionnaire or test variables being considered (Kline, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Generally, 0.7 or above indicates high internal consistency and dependability and is regarded as an acceptable criterion for most surveys (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A number between 0.6 and 0.7 may be suitable for specific surveys but may suggest that some questionnaire questions do not contribute to assessing the underlying concept and may need to

be altered or eliminated (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2016). A number below 0.6 is often considered poor, suggesting that the questionnaire questions may assess a different concept and need revision (Kline, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 2 presents the results of testing the reliability and validity of the research questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all items were more significant than 0.7, indicating the internally consistent reliability of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through construct validity testing, including exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 2019).

All items in the questionnaire were found to have good convergent validity, indicating that they are measuring the same construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was also established, as each item was more strongly correlated with its respective construct than other constructs in

the questionnaire (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). The study thus demonstrated a high level of reliability and validity in the questionnaire

used to measure the contribution of sustainable tourism to the cultural preservation of ethnic minorities in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam.

Table 2. Summary of Reliability

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
Cult_Enrichment	4	0.774	0.485
Economic	4	0.755	0.523
Preservation	4	0.768	0.547
Environmental	4	0.773	0.553
Cult_Revival	4	0.743	0.519

3.3. Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a widely used statistical tool in the social sciences that can help researchers identify underlying factors or dimensions in a set of variables. The process involves reducing the number of variables in a dataset by identifying patterns of inter-correlation among them and grouping them into a smaller set of underlying factors (Gorsuch, 1983). The number of factors to be extracted is often determined by examining scree plots and eigenvalues (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The results of a factor analysis can inform the development of more refined research questions, hypotheses, and models (Hair et al., 2010) and provide insights into the key factors that explain the relationships among variables in a dataset (Chen, 2008).

Table 3 presents the factor analysis results conducted to validate the research questionnaire. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

coefficient (KMO) = 0.878 (> 0.5), indicating that the observed variables are correlated in the population and are, therefore, suitable for factor analysis. The factor loading coefficients for all variables ≥ 0.5 indicate the validity of the factor analysis. The criterion for the practical significance of factor loading is a minimum level = 0.3, an essential level = 0.4, and a reasonable level = 0.5. Table 3 shows that all variables have factor loading coefficients ≥ 0.5 , demonstrating the validity of the factor analysis. The total load squared extraction for the six factors = 59.730% (> 50%), indicating that the extracted factors can explain significant variance in the data. The initial eigenvalue of the six factors = 1.217 (> 1.00), meaning that the extracted factors have eigenvalues more potent than one and are, therefore, valid. These results demonstrate the suitability and validity of exploratory factor analysis for the proposed research model (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Table 3. The result of factor analysis: Rotated component matrix

<i>Extraction method: Principal component analysis.</i>					
<i>Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.</i>					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Economic4	0.748				
Economic2	0.690				
Economic1	0.659				
Economic3	0.659				
Preservation3		0.774			
Preservation4		0.704			
Preservation2		0.686			
Preservation1		0.683			
Environmental2			0.744		
Environmental1			0.738		
Environmental3			0.693		
Environmental4			0.629		
Cult_Revival4				0.753	
Cult_Revival2				0.694	
Cult_Revival1				0.665	
Cult_Revival3				0.611	
Cult_Enrichment3					0.769
Cult_Enrichment1					0.714
Cult_Enrichment4					0.632
Cult_Enrichment2					0.583

Note: Rotation converged in 6 iterations. KMO and Bartlett's test (KMO = 0.878). Bartlett's test of sphericity: Chi-Squared = 1344.892; $df = 190$; Sig. = 0.000. Initial eigenvalues = 1.217; Extraction sums of squared loadings = 59.730.

3.4. Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), it is a way to quantify the association between two variables and determine if changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. The

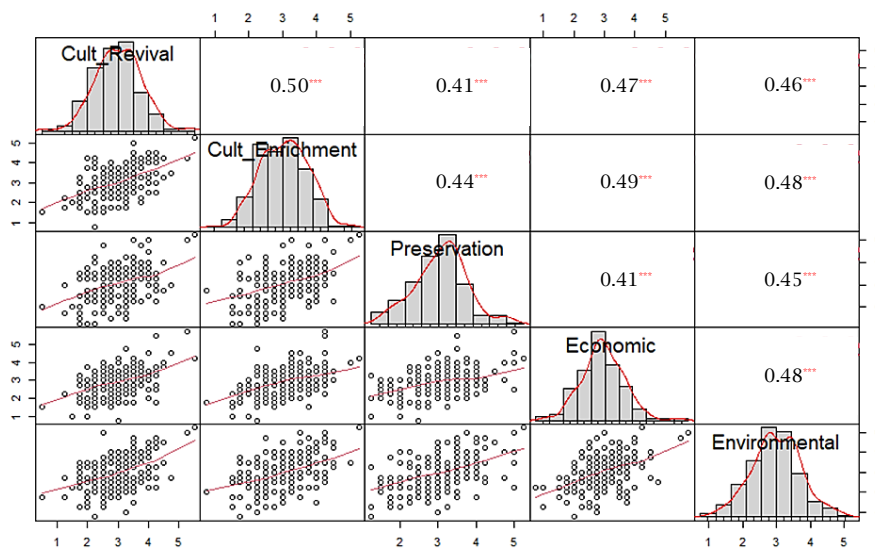
correlation coefficient, also known as Pearson's, measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables and ranges from -1 to 1 (Field, 2013). According to Black and Babin (2019), -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. Correlation analysis can provide valuable insights into the relationships between variables and can be used to make

predictions about one variable based on the values of another variable (Gronlund & Linn, 2014). However, it is essential to note that correlation does not imply causality and that other factors may contribute to the relationship between the variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009).

The results of the correlation analysis (Figure 2) show that, with a 95% significance level, the correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.05). The magnitude of the correlation coefficients ensures that the variables are used to analyze the multiple linear regression model and the variable control regression in the next step (Seraphin et al., 2019; Larose, 2014). The correlation analysis allows quantitative

examination of the relationships between variables (Field, 2018). Additionally, the significance level of the correlation coefficient is an essential element of the correlation analysis, as it determines whether or not the relationship between the variables is statistically significant (Larose, 2014). Furthermore, using multiple linear and variable control regression in the next step allows identifying the factors significantly impacting sustainable tourism development (Seraphin et al., 2019). Multiple linear regression identifies the independent variables most significantly related to the dependent variable, while variable control regression allows for controlling extraneous variables that may influence the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Field, 2018; Larose, 2014).

Figure 2. Correlation analysis results



3.5. Multivariate linear regression analysis

Multivariate linear regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). Regression analysis uses a linear equation to model the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate linear regression aims to determine the coefficients for each independent variable, which represent the strength and direction of their relationship with the dependent variable (Greene, 2003). These coefficients can then be used to make predictions about the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate linear regression is commonly used in the social sciences, economics, and other fields to understand the relationships between variables and to make predictions based on those relationships (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992).

The results of the multivariable linear regression analysis (Table 4) indicate that the regression model is valid to explain the results, as evidenced by the statistical significance of the F-test (p-value = 0.000, df = 5.194) (Hair et al., 2019). The model also does not have multicollinearity, as the variables in the model have a VIF of 1.436 (Kutner et al., 2005).

This suggests that the variables are not highly correlated, and the regression coefficients can be estimated with high precision.

Table 4. Results of regression analysis

Dependent variable: Cult_Revival	
Model	
Cult_Enrichment	0.250*** (0.068)
Preservation	0.131** (0.066)
Economic	0.195*** (0.068)
Environmental	0.163** (0.065)
Constant	0.791*** (0.219)
Observations	200
R ²	0.362
Adjusted R ²	0.349
Residual Std. error	0.605 (df = 195)
F-statistic	27.627*** (df = 4; 195)
VIF	Cult_Enrichment = 1.537433; Preservation = 1.408497; Economic = 1.508432; Environmental = 1.530489

Note: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

4. RESULTS

The empirical findings presented in Table 4 of this study furnish compelling evidence substantiating a significant and positive influence of cultural enrichment on cultural revival. This influence is

underscored by the estimated regression coefficient (β) of 0.250 and a p-value of 0.000 at a 95% confidence level, thereby attesting to its statistical significance. By this statistical evidence, the study supports *H1*. These outcomes are consistent with antecedent scholarship in the field, which underscores the substantial and advantageous role of cultural enrichment in the process of cultural revival.

These findings align harmoniously with the existing corpus of literature, which emphasizes the multifaceted nature of cultural enrichment's impact on cultural revival. The influence of cultural enrichment is manifested through a confluence of mechanisms, encompassing the preservation of cultural heritage, educational initiatives, community engagement, economic incentives, and the facilitation of cultural exchange. This amalgamation of factors collectively contributes to revitalizing and sustaining artistic traditions and heritage, thereby ensuring their continued relevance and significance in contemporary society. Previous scholarly works by Buoincontri and Marasco (2017), Timothy (2011), Ezenagu (2020), Yang (2011), and Jamal and Camargo (2014) corroborate and fortify these research findings.

Similarly, the research results documented in Table 4 illuminate insights into economic benefits' noteworthy and advantageous influence on cultural revival. This influence is validated by the regression coefficient (β) of 0.195 and a p-value of 0.000 at a 95% confidence level, collectively providing robust statistical support. Consequently, *H2* receives empirical validation. These findings align with prior scholarly inquiries, posing that economic benefits constitute a pivotal driving force behind cultural revival. This influence emanates from their capacity to provide financial incentives, stimulate economic development, and facilitate the preservation of cultural heritage. The symbiotic relationship between economic prosperity and the conservation of cultural elements underscores the substantial and beneficial impact of economic benefits on cultural revival initiatives within communities. Previous research by Richards and Wilson (2006), Tao and Wall (2009), Datta et al. (2015), Besculides et al. (2002), Dahles and Susilowati (2015), Ashley et al. (2005), and Rogerson (2018) resonates with and substantiates these research findings.

Furthermore, the research outcomes presented in Table 4 underscore the substantial and favorable impact of the preservation of traditional practices on cultural revival. This impact is substantiated by a regression coefficient (β) of 0.131 and a p-value of 0.001 at a 95% confidence level, signifying statistical significance. The hypothesis *H3* is empirically supported in light of these empirical results. These findings echo prior research, emphasizing that the preservation of traditional practices occupies a central and indispensable role in the process of Cultural Revival. Its significance resides in safeguarding cultural heritage, reinforcing cultural identity, transmitting cultural knowledge across generations, and catalyzing broader cultural revitalization endeavors. These preservation efforts' substantial and beneficial influence stems from their ability to ensure the enduring legacy of artistic traditions and nurture their revival within communities. The research conducted by Loulanski (2006), Gould (2018), Archer et al. (2005), Scarpato

(2002), and Patterson et al. (2008) resonates with and corroborates these research findings.

Finally, the research results in Table 4 provide compelling evidence of a substantial and beneficial impact of environmental conservation on cultural revival, as substantiated by a regression coefficient (β) of 0.163 and a p-value of 0.001 at a 95% confidence level, signifying statistical significance. Accordingly, *H4* finds empirical support. These findings are consistent with prior research, suggesting that environmental conservation is pivotal in facilitating cultural revival by preserving sacred natural sites, promoting sustainable cultural practices, fostering holistic cultural preservation, and encouraging cultural stewardship. This intrinsic interplay between environmental and cultural protection underscores environmental conservation's substantial and advantageous influence on the continuity and revitalization of community traditions. The research conducted by Dalley (2023), Everett and Aitchison (2008), Fukamachi (2020), Wild and McLeod (2008), Gee et al. (2014), Job et al. (2020), and Xu et al. (2014) substantiates and reinforces these research findings.

5. DISCUSSION

This study delves into the intricate relationship between sustainable tourism and preserving ethnic cultural heritage, specifically focusing on the ethnic minority communities residing in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam. The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively explore the extent to which sustainable tourism practices contribute to safeguarding and revitalizing ethnic minority cultures in this region. By concentrating on this specific case study, the study endeavors to unravel the intricate dynamics and mechanisms through which sustainable tourism initiatives can effectively be harnessed to preserve, promote, and rejuvenate ethnic and cultural heritage (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Tao & Wall, 2009).

The implications drawn from the research outcomes of this study hold significant importance for preserving ethnic minority cultures, not only in Thanh Hoa province but also in similar regions facing analogous challenges and opportunities. Firstly, the findings underscore the tremendous potential of sustainable tourism as a potent tool for preserving and promoting ethnic and cultural heritage (Datta et al., 2015). By cultivating responsible tourism practices that prioritize respecting and celebrating local customs and traditions, ethnic minority communities can effectively showcase their cultural identity to a broader audience while reaping economic benefits (Besculides et al., 2002). This financial incentive, in turn, is a powerful motivator for the continued perpetuation and transmission of their unique cultural heritage from one generation to the next (Dahles & Susilowati, 2015).

Secondly, the research highlights the pivotal role of education and cultural exchange within the context of sustainable tourism efforts (Dalley, 2023). This study underscores the mutual learning process by emphasizing the significance of meaningful interactions between tourists and host communities. Tourists gain valuable insights into the traditions and lifestyles of ethnic minorities,

fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (Job et al., 2020). Simultaneously, host communities also benefit from this exchange as it reinforces the importance of preserving their ethnic traditions and offers an opportunity to share their cultural richness with the world (Xu et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the research findings emphasize the critical necessity for sustainable tourism policies and strategies that prioritize the conservation of both natural and cultural assets (Gee et al., 2014). Recognizing that the longevity and effectiveness of sustainable tourism initiatives depend on preserving the environments and cultural heritages that attract tourists, this study underscores the importance of comprehensive planning (Wild & McLeod, 2008). Such planning ensures that tourism development aligns with the long-term sustainability of these invaluable assets, thereby securing the continuity of ethnic minority cultures and the economic benefits of tourism (Fukamachi, 2020).

Lastly, this study highlights the empowerment of ethnic minority communities in the decision-making processes related to tourism development (Loulanski, 2006). It advocates for their active involvement in shaping the direction of tourism initiatives, thereby ensuring that these efforts align with their cultural preservation goals (Scarpato, 2002). By actively participating in the planning and implementation of tourism activities, these communities gain agency in preserving, protecting, and sharing their cultural heritage on their terms, allowing them to assert their cultural identity and contribute to its perpetuation (Gould, 2018).

In conclusion, this research not only explores the intricate relationship between sustainable tourism and ethnic and cultural preservation but also offers practical insights and implications for policymakers, practitioners, and communities interested in preserving and promoting the rich and diverse cultural heritages of ethnic minorities, particularly in regions like Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam.

Several limitations are associated with this study. Firstly, its findings are geographically specific to Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam, and may need to be more readily generalizable to other regions with distinct cultural, economic, or environmental contexts. Secondly, limitations like incomplete or potentially biased data may have influenced the study's outcomes. Additionally, the study offers a cross-sectional perspective, limiting the ability to establish causality between sustainable tourism and ethnic cultural preservation (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). A more comprehensive understanding would benefit from longitudinal research approaches. Methodologically, while the study provides valuable insights, it may need to fully capture the intricacies of the sustainable tourism-cultural preservation nexus, warranting future qualitative research and exploration of community heterogeneity. Furthermore, external factors like political stability, global economic trends, and policy frameworks may influence the observed dynamics but must be comprehensively examined (Patterson et al., 2008). Lastly, the study's focus on the perspectives of ethnic minority communities may not fully elucidate the behavior and motivations of tourists, warranting

further investigation into tourist attitudes and preferences (Timothy, 2011). These limitations underscore opportunities for future research to address these constraints and advance our comprehension of this multifaceted relationship.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has thoroughly explored the intricate relationship between sustainable tourism and ethnic cultural preservation, centering its investigation on ethnic minority communities. The research has illuminated the potential contributions of sustainable tourism practices to the safeguarding and rejuvenating of ethnic and cultural heritage. While recognizing the contextual nature of the findings within this region, several critical implications and insights have emerged.

Firstly, sustainable tourism has demonstrated the potential to serve as a formidable tool for preserving and promoting ethnic and cultural heritage (Buonincontri & Marasco, 2017). By fostering responsible tourism practices that respect and celebrate local customs and traditions, communities can not only showcase their cultural identity but also derive economic benefits, thereby incentivizing the perpetuation of their heritage (Ezenagu, 2020).

Secondly, the study underscores the pivotal role of education and cultural exchange in sustainable tourism. Encouraging meaningful interactions between tourists and host communities facilitates cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (Yang, 2011). It promotes the preservation of ethnic minority traditions and encourages cultural richness sharing on a global scale (Jamal & Camargo, 2014).

Thirdly, sustainable tourism policies and strategies must prioritize preserving natural and cultural assets to ensure the long-term sustainability of these initiatives (Ashley et al., 2005). Balancing economic gains with cultural and environmental preservation is essential for maintaining ethnic minority cultures and the financial benefits derived from tourism (Rogerson, 2018).

Lastly, it is paramount to empower ethnic minority communities in the decision-making processes related to tourism development. Their active involvement ensures that tourism initiatives align with their cultural preservation goals, granting them agency in preserving, protecting, and sharing their cultural heritage (Archer et al., 2005).

While this study has provided valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, such as its regional specificity, data constraints, and the need for more extensive qualitative research to capture nuances (Gould, 2018). Nevertheless, these findings offer a foundation for policymakers, practitioners, and communities interested in preserving and promoting the diverse cultural heritages of ethnic minorities. By harnessing the potential of sustainable tourism, ethnic cultural preservation can thrive, fostering a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity on a global scale. The journey towards cultural conservation and sustainable tourism is ongoing, promising a more prosperous, interconnected world.

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APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE

Your profile: Please select ONE answer from each statement that best describes you.

Ethnicity:

Age:

Gender:

- Male
- Female

Education level:

- High school
- College, University
- Master
- PhD

Occupation:

Years of residence in Thanh Hoa Province:

This survey aims to identify the contribution of sustainable tourism to ethnic cultural preservation, socio-economic advancement, and environmental conservation. On this scale, there is no correct or incorrect response. Instead, mark the number that best represents your viewpoint on each survey topic on a scale of 1 to 5, as shown.

Cultural enrichment						
<i>Cult_Enrichment1</i>	Engaging in tourism activities in this region has enriched my understanding of the local culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Enrichment2</i>	I have had opportunities to learn about the traditional customs and practices of the local ethnic communities through tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Enrichment3</i>	My experience as a tourist in this region has positively influenced my appreciation for local art and cultural heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Enrichment4</i>	Tourism in this area has allowed me to interact with residents and learn about their cultural traditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preservation of traditional practices						
<i>Preservation1</i>	Tourism initiatives in this region have contributed to preserving traditional practices among local communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Preservation2</i>	I have observed efforts by local authorities and communities to maintain their traditional way of life due to tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Preservation3</i>	The presence of tourists has encouraged locals to continue practicing and passing down their traditional customs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Preservation4</i>	Tourism has helped protect the cultural heritage of this area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic benefits						
<i>Economic1</i>	Tourism has provided residents with economic opportunities for employment and income generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Economic2</i>	I have witnessed improvements in the local economy due to tourism activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Economic3</i>	Tourism has stimulated the growth of small businesses and enterprises in the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Economic4</i>	I believe that tourism's economic benefits have positively impacted local communities' living standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental conservation						
<i>Environmental1</i>	I have noticed efforts to protect and conserve the natural environment in this tourist destination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Environmental2</i>	Tourism activities here are carried out in a way that minimizes harm to the local ecosystem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Environmental3</i>	Local authorities and residents are actively engaged in environmental preservation due to tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Environmental4</i>	Tourism has contributed to the overall conservation of the region's natural resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural revival						
<i>Cult_Revival1</i>	Tourism has played a role in reviving cultural traditions and practices that were fading away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Revival2</i>	Due to tourism, I have seen a resurgence of cultural festivals and events in this area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Revival3</i>	Because of tourism, local communities are actively involved in efforts to revitalize their cultural heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cult_Revival4</i>	Tourism has contributed to the revival of cultural practices in this region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your participation