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**Impact of Tourism Activities
on Sustainable Community Development**

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Abstract

Tourism activities in various forms can affect air quality, land use, availability and quality of water resources, and biodiversity. There is a direct relationship between the impact of tourism and sustainability on the ecosystems of a particular area. In recent years we are witnessing an accelerated tourism development which tends to affect the balance between meeting tourism demand and its ability to be absorbed by the environment. The objective of this empirical research is to analyse from a theoretical point of view what is the impact of tourism activities on sustainable community development. Therefore, the methodology of the paper focuses on a systematic literature review of main research articles in the field. Furthermore, various studies have been analysed on this issue and relevant findings were provided. The increasing density of tourist pressure, on the one hand, is beneficial for the tourism sector and the economy of a country, but, on the other hand, increases the concern for the future viability of this phenomenon. Sustainable development of tourism in the long term can only be achieved by eliminating the negative impact on the ecosystem.

Keywords: sustainability, tourism industry, community development, sustainable tourism, regional tourism.

JEL Classification: L83, Q56, Z32

1. Introduction

The goal of any company is to achieve economic development, bearing in mind that the benefits obtained must be greater than the costs, including the costs related to conservation and environmental protection. As a result of a massive development, economic development with a massive degradation of the environment, and sustainable development – a concept formulated at the end of the 20th century – has the difficult task of harmonizing two parallel realities: economic activity and ecological mechanisms. (Mitchell, 2018) Sustainable development aims to maximise well-being as a result of economic activity, while maintaining or increasing over

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time the stock of economic, ecological and sociocultural assets and meeting the basic needs of the poor (Clini et al., 2008). From this point of view, sustainability includes two equally important functions: the fair distribution of economic results and the limitation of negative impact on the environment. Economic development depends on the natural environment of the human being, its quality and, consequently, any reckless, irrational economic activity, usually causes disturbances in nature and in the economy. Any violation of the relationship between the economy and the environment generates, sooner or later, economic, social and ecological dysfunctions, with profound harmful effects on the individual and human society. The shift to sustainable development marks humanity's entry into the age of the environment, where the risks of development must be diminished, increasingly strongly or even removed.

2. Literature Review

Sustainable development is economic growth, geared towards the use of natural resources owned by the planet, conventional and unconventional energy types, respectively, under the conditions of environmental protection and conservation (Pin & Bureau, 2017). Since the first formulations on the concept of sustainable development have been introduced to date, it has been continuously improved, improved both by formulations and especially by content as is apparent from the numerous interpretations (Rao, 1999; Parris & Kates, 2003; Elliott, 2012; Liu et al., 2018). Their analysis highlights the existence of both common and specific parts of the concept of sustainable development. The common part of these interpretations is given by the global vision, which highlights the complex and dynamic interdependencies between economic, technological, ecological and social plans (Kuik & Verbruggen, 2012). The specificity of the interpretations relating to this concept is given by the differentiation of the opinions by which sustainability is addressed at the level of the plans (Ioppolo et al., 2016; Pradhan et al., 2017):

- it highlights the need to obtain a maximum income provided that capital is up stated (physical, natural, human), i.e. income must exceed consumption, which implies an approach in terms of economic efficiency;
- it highlights the need to support natural biological ecosystems as well as anthropized ecosystems, which implies addressing the concept of sustainable development through the prism of a population in a positive numerical dynamic that results in an appropriate consumption of resources, but which exceeds stocks, i.e. the recovery potential which will have unintended consequences for maintaining ecological balance. At the same time, the need to improve and conserve global biodiversity is highlighted;
- socio-culturally, it maintains the stability of social, educational and cultural structures;
- morally and spiritually, it is based on the relationship with the ethical values held by human behaviours, as a factor in increasing the efficiency of social work.

From the analysis of the concept of sustainable development in the literature, it is concluded that it must be addressed in line with the reconciliation between the economy and the environment on a new path that supports human progress, not only in a few places and for a few years, but for the whole planet and for the long term. This involves achieving a set of economic and social objectives covering the following (Lélé, 1991; Sharpley, 2000; Holmberg, & Sandbrook, 2019):

- achieving economic growth on the basis of the conservation and protection of natural resources;
- ensuring essential requirements for work, food, energy, water, housing and healthcare for people;
- a new quality of economic growth processes;
- controlled population growth;
- conservation and increase of resource pool;
- technological restructuring and the control of possible risks;
- integrated approach to environmental protection, economic growth and energy needs.

Sustainable development requires a harmonious combination, i.e. ensuring simultaneous progress on four levels (Figure. 1): economic, social, ecological and technological, hence the idea that the overall objective of sustainable development is to find an optimal interaction between these four systems that will be able to solve the problem of both economic growth and its quality.

Sustainable development is also a process of improving the quality of life for the entire population without increasing the use of natural resources beyond the limits of the earth's bear ability, which means ensuring the country's economic growth, social equity, environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources.

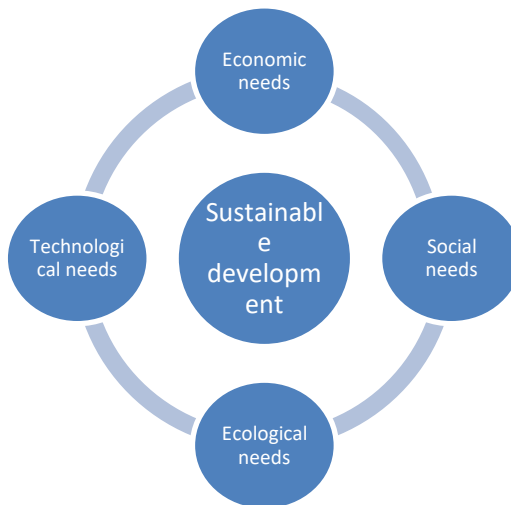


Figure1. The interdependencies of the concept of sustainable development

Source: Created by author, based on literature review

The degradation of environmental values required the development of environmental policies, grouped on the two types of values: human and environmental health; the quality of nature in terms of biodiversity and ecosystem productivity. From this exposure we can conclude that the following sustainable development can only be conceived as a relationship between the following elements (Nagimov et al., 2018):

- *culture*, which shows functions of society and what behavioural changes are essential for the application of sustainable development;
- *structure*, which must specify the organisation of how sustainable development is achieved;
- *technology*, which must establish the technological means by which sustainable development can be achieved.

3. Research Methodology

In this paper, in order to investigate the impact of tourism activities on sustainable community development, a systematic literature review including the most relevant articles and books in the field, as well as the analysis of major international research were carried out. In this regard, the present analysis aimed at three essential objectives:

- Investigating the concept of sustainable development,
- Analysing sustainable development issues in the tourism industry,
- Presenting the main considerations regarding the influence of tourism activities on the community to ensure sustainable development.

4. The Concept of Sustainable Development in the Tourism Industry

The idea of sustainable development has been strongly used over the past two decades due to accelerated industrial development over the past two centuries. Although it has a more recent history, the tourism industry stands out as particularly invasive in relation to the environment and society. The field of tourism is distinguished by the fact that sustainable development practices coexist with conventional practices. In the context of sustainable tourism, the form that arouses real interest is ecotourism.

Through the development of its many forms of concrete manifestation, management and tourism marketing sustainable tourism ensures the natural and economic integrity of the environment and rationally harnesses natural and cultural resources, but retains the necessary potential for future generations and identifies itself practically with a state of dynamic equilibrium of supply and demand, which outlines any modern tourist market.

The literature illustrates various approaches to the concept of sustainable tourism. It represents, on the one hand, all the infrastructures in the natural space that operate for the future regeneration and productivity of available resources; and on the other hand, the contribution that individuals, their consumption habits, lifestyle, income level, make within tourism (Butler, 1993). In this context, we mention that there is a

two-way effect because in order to talk about sustainability, this sector must, in turn, be able to create a range of opportunities, taking into account: the environmental approach, which focuses on the need to protect nature, the economic approach, which is based on the incorporation of resource needs, the social approach, which has as its main point of analysis the empowerment of those in a tourist destination.

Sustainable tourism is a complex problem present in the economic and social environment, which shows awareness of the complex link between the environment and the economy. There is also a pressing need to integrate these two components, which means based on the premises of a profound and lasting development that will have a positive impact on society as a whole (Nagimov et al., 2018). The increasing need for sustainability is also a result of the high volume of knowledge and concern regarding the impact on tourism and environmental issues in general. The development of tourism without sustainability can lead to a serious deterioration of the society, but also of the environment and of the entire tourism industry.

The direct relationship between tourism and sustainable development is also created because in tourism, unlike other industries, the consumer, namely the tourist, moves towards the producer and the product, and when it is properly planned and managed, it can be a means of maintenance for rural and urban communities. From the above, three key aspects of the sustainable tourism-development relationship emerge:

- Direct and indirect *interaction* between tourists, the host community and the local environment;
- *Awareness* of environmental issues and cultural differences, paying more attention to the sustainable aspect;
- *Motivation* of tourists to visit regions with an intact, attractive natural environment and to get in touch with local communities.

From the point of view of this relationship, tourism can have a positive impact in terms of local sustainable development, but it can also cause environmental damage. *The positive impact* is based on creating opportunities for local economic development and increasing the number of jobs; stimulating the incentives; creation and development of local infrastructure; establishing inter-cultural links; obtaining income from the exploitation of natural and cultural resources, which can be used for conservation and environmental protection activities. *The negative impact* can be manifested by: exerting direct pressure on fragile ecosystems; the exercise of considerable pressure on host communities which may lead to the loss of its authenticity; increase local pollution.

To date, sustainable tourism has undergone three paradigm shifts (Clarke, 1997). The first paradigm dissociates sustainable tourism from mass tourism, the first being considered good, while the latter is considered harmful. The second paradigm deals with sustainable tourism on a scale from weak to strong, in which weak implies well-being through economic growth and technical innovation and strong, the protection of scarce resources. The third paradigm argues that sustainable tourism should include all types of tourism and mass tourism should be subject to improvement. In addition to these issues, we note that in order to talk about convergence, all forms of

tourism should be sustainable. Saarinen (2006) underlines the importance of sustainability in tourism, while taking into account discussion and criticism, as well as the need to understand the nature of growth limits (Saarinen, 2006). According to Sharpley (2000), over the past decade, the concept of sustainable development in tourism has become the goal of increased attention of tourism theorists and practitioners alike. Today, this concept enjoys broad acceptance as an objective of tourism development and practice policy, and many tourism industry organisations have adopted several principles and sustainable development plans in tourism (Sharpley, 2000). It also draws attention to several differences between sustainable development and sustainable tourism.

Although it involves environmental protection objectives, sustainable tourism does not pay enough attention to the development component. Currently, it makes its presence felt more than ever, as the need to find a balance between all forms of tourism, economic interests has to be in balance with social and environmental aspects (Kilipiris & Zardava, 2012). This means that companies could maximize their profits while assuming a social and environmental responsibility.

Sustainable economic development in the short term and in the long term can be achieved by: promoting partnerships between small and medium-sized enterprises and multinational tourism organisations; organising training courses for tourism workers; obtaining international certification; diversifying the tourist offer; allocating resources to promote and diversify tourism products and services.

Sustainable environmental development can be achieved by: promoting ethical codes and rules of conduct among tourists; continuous monitoring of the environmental impact of tourism; drafting development policies and strategies in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; applying sustainable management in protected natural areas visited by tourists.

Sustainable cultural development can be achieved by: preserving cultural integrity; preserving local cultural diversity; ensuring the protection of the natural environment and traditions; encouraging local people to keep traditional habits; respecting the property rights of local people; educating tourists to adopt appropriate behaviour.

The sustainable development of local communities, aimed at generating economic benefits, is achieved: if the community maintains control over the development of tourism; through tourism jobs created for residents; if small local entrepreneurs are encouraged; if there is an increase in local living standards as a result of tourist activities.

In order to reduce the pressure of tourism on natural and anthropogenic resources, a management plan should be drawn up to be properly applied at all levels. Marine and coastal regions, historical cities, cultural-historical objectives and fragile natural environments are the first destinations where corresponding resource management should be applied.

Large travel companies have responded to sustainability by developing responsible strategies, with a focus on social issues, while some small and medium-sized enterprises have tried to make themselves known through their interest in social

and environmental policies, and it seems, they have, indeed, succeeded due to the active involvement of their owners in this regard. However, there is an increase in their interest and response, supported by national governments. We are currently seeing a clear increase of interest in terms of the consumption of sustainable products and services, and the market segments represented by cultural and nature-based tourism are increasingly represented.

The sustainability of businesses and the way of transposing this concept into everyday practice begin when both researchers and practitioners started to realize that the dynamics of increasing the exploitation of natural resources will be greater than the possibilities of their regeneration. As the gap between the consumption of natural resources necessary to ensure the life of mankind and the degree of their renewal will increase, the resulting situation will influence both the environment and the level of resources and raw materials available to future generations.

The transposition of the concept of sustainable development in tourism businesses has some major features. Although it is sometimes difficult or even impossible to quantify the impact of the tourism business on the environment, the adverse effects of unsustainable economic activity can cause the disappearance of tourism in a given area or drastically diminish its importance (Hobson & Essex, 2001). Excessive pollution of a beach area, the absence of a uniform, pleasant architecture may cause tourists' preference for a particular destination to change regardless of the motivation for visiting it (Elmo et al., 2020). Both those responsible for companies with tourist activities (tourist agencies, tour operators, accommodation and food establishments, transporters, etc.) and representatives of local authorities may face a number of major environmental problems. Among them there is the lack of a clear strategic vision in terms of the harmonious and integrated promotion and development of the resort, the coordinated non-involvement of all tourism actors in the controlled design and transposition into operation of a sustainable strategy of the area, the increase in the amount of waste and waste water generated by local tourism businesses, the absence of energy efficient transshipment between railway stations or airports, increased energy consumption, limited possibilities for reuse of packaging, the impossibility of purchasing local products to support producers in the region, etc. (Persic-Zivadinov & Blazevik, 2010).

The relevance of the conservation of natural resources, in conjunction with ensuring the social balance of tourist destinations, is a true strategic driver of sustainable development achieved at international and national level. This reality is acknowledged by many organisations, associations and institutions with activities in the area of international tourism, as they contribute to supporting the efforts undertaken by national and local authorities, but also by representatives of tourism businesses, who admit that their activities impact the environment and lead to the degradation of infrastructure in the area. It should be noted that these efforts also enjoy broad acceptance and appropriate support from the public (Fang, 2020). The proliferation of sustainable tourism within different tourist destinations cannot take place without the existence of appropriate legislation (Morgera, 2010) aimed at regulating a number of specific factors. These include investments in biodiversity

conservation and the promotion of sustainable local business, the integrated approach to the ecosystem, the protection of local communities from the negative effects of discrimination and/or marginalisation, the harmonious preservation and support of local traditions and customs with a view to passing them on to future generations, reducing waste and pollution, reducing social risks and the rush for resources, supporting opportunities for future generations in order to increase their employment in local communities, etc. (Larimian & Sadeghi, 2019). Additional, methodological rules of application, penalties and fines must be laid down, as the proper implementation of restrictive measures and the sanctioning of the culpable ones must be pursued consistently and seriously (Ghahramanpouri et al., 2013). A problem relevant to local communities is the concrete quantification of sustainable development (Shirazi & Keivani, 2019).

In order for a particular region to benefit from the positive contribution of sustainable development highlighted through the economic component – improving the transport system, restoring infrastructure, increasing the income of residents, increasing urban security, increasing the standard of living and employment, using local infrastructure for sporting, cultural events, etc. it is necessary for public decision-makers to draw up a concrete action plan with carefully defined objectives, to support local tourism initiatives and businesses aimed at attracting more tourists, to invest sustainably in promoting tourism at national and global level (Akpan & Obang, 2012). The success of implementing a strategic vision focused on sustainable development within your own tourism business also depends to a large extent on the capacity in which decision-makers are able to implement some substantial adjustments to everyday realities, to market signals, to behavioural or attitude changes, as well as to customers' wishes and preferences (Berry & Ladkin, 1997). Initiatives in the area of sustainability of tourist accommodation businesses have long been a novelty, and even become a strategic vector used more and more intensively by the management of large hotel chains in promoting and sustaining their own visions.

Sustainable development in tourism is not only the preserve of public authorities (national, regional or local), business representatives in this sector (accommodation, food, transport, etc.), but also of consumers. Tourists need to know and understand the principles of sustainability, to shape all their behaviour, preferences, consumption habits or attitudes according to the rules and norms of the field, and to contribute to proper compliance with the dimensions of sustainability. In addition, however, they can objectively assess the sustainable development actions undertaken by the authorities or actors of the tourist industry, highlighting relevant views or even proposing directions to improve the activities already practiced. The consumption of tourist products can become sustainable only to the extent that the concept of sustainability is properly translated into practice, understood and pursued by tourists (Niñerola et al., 2019). Tourism business representatives seek the optimal way to present their own benefits properly, highlighting to customers the sustainable traits obtained by them through consumption (Cheer & Lew, 2017). According to the principles of sustainability development, by increasing the increased responsibility

for some environmental problems (reducing the amount of waste (reducing the amount of waste, efficiency of the water or energy consumption of a hotel, etc.) business management may lead to an increase in the number of tourists (Hobson & Essex, 2001).

The close relationship between tourism and the environment is based on: geographical elements considered to be tourist attractions; tourist facilities and infrastructure belonging to the artificial environment; and the environmental impact generated by the development of tourism and the tourist use of the regions. Taking into account the need to ensure the sustainability of tourism activities, it is necessary to interconnect tourism with the environment in its two forms: the reduced form and the extended form. The reduced form includes two directions: environmentally sensitive tourism and environmentally dependent tourism. Environmentally sensitive tourism is aimed at pollution, nature conservation and the protection of the built environment, and environmentally dependent tourism refers to the Green Sector area of the tourism industry that provides an experience in nature. The broad form includes the emergence of tourist events in the context of local culture and the improvement of the economic profitability of the tourism industry.

Since the last decades of the last millennium, we have been seeing an accelerated tourism development which tends to affect the balance between meeting tourism demand and its ability to be absorbed by the environment. It is noted that there is pressure affecting tourist resources or the component of tourism potential (natural and anthropogenic); the social component, i.e. the impact on the resident population in those areas. Practically, exceeding the maximum visitation capacity (through direct tourist pressure on the landscape or other tourist attractions by incorrectly capitalizing tourist attractions) leads to a number of negative effects, starting with tourist attractions and the satisfaction of tourists and ending with the perception of residents. Residents compete with those who temporarily visit the city (tourists, visitors, commuters, migrant workers) for the use of space and services. Competition is particularly strong when real estate is used, due to the increase in demand for non-residential use. As there is excess demand, it generates higher prices in the real estate and product markets, which leads to an increase in the cost of living. The use of tourism can help improve the economic and social conditions of some of the inhabitants, but it can also cause an increase in environmental problems. In addition, they make it difficult for residents to access public transport. The negative impact is highlighted by environmental, water, air, noise, visual pollution, waste, environmental risk, impact on architectural or historical sites, as well as damage as a result of land use as a whole.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the pressure of regional tourism based on the scale of the relationship between supply and demand, the interdependence of tourism demand indicators and the absorption capacity of the region highlights a number of negative influences in terms of environmental protection and quality, economic growth processes and population well-being. We understand that tourism activities in

various forms can cause negative effects related to air pollution, land use, availability and quality of water resources, and biodiversity. It is obvious that there is a direct relationship between the impact of tourism and sustainability on the ecosystems of a particular area. On the basis of this argument, the sustainable development of long-term tourism can only be achieved by eliminating the negative impact on the ecosystem.

In order to strike a balance between development and conservation, it may be necessary to limit or even cease the extended development, requiring a wide range of tourism management measures. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a need to develop a new form of tourism, a sustainable tourism capable of maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensuring a significant experience for tourists, under the conditions of awareness of sustainability issues and promotion of sustainable tourism practices.

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