

Sustainable Tourism Governance and Community Participation: Environmental and Cultural Policy Lessons from Murree, Pakistan

¹Sarum Tanveer Awan

²Zeeshan Khan

³Kashif Zaheer

¹Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

²Lecturer Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

³Sr Lecturer Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

[¹sarumawan100@gmail.com](mailto:sarumawan100@gmail.com) [²zeeshan.khan@riphah.edu.pk](mailto:zeeshan.khan@riphah.edu.pk), [³kashif.zaheer@riphah.edu.pk](mailto:3kashif.zaheer@riphah.edu.pk)

Abstract

The Role of Local Communities in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Development and Its Impact on Environmental Conservation and Cultural Preservation it explores the role of local communities in achieving sustainable tourism development in Murree, Pakistan. The main aim of the study is to examine the impact of local communities in tourism development and to evaluate the effects of their involvement in economic sustainability, environmental protection and the preservation of socio-cultural values. The quantitative research approach was used with a descriptive research design. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the locals of Murree. Using SPSS software, a total of 74 valid responses were analyzed. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multi linear regression method were used to test the relationship between the community participation and sustainability dimensions. The findings show that tourism is traditionally considered to be economically beneficial; however, the involvement of the community does not have a statistically significant impact on economic sustainability. On the other hand, community participation has strong and statistically significant positive correlation with environmental sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability, which indicates that active local involvement enhances environmental conservation, ecofriendly practices, cultural preservation, and social integration. The Study concludes that economic growth is not enough to support sustainable tourism in Murree. The researcher suggests enhancing the community engagement by involving them in decision-making, capacity building, environmental Initiative, and policies that guarantee fair economic inclusion of the locals.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Socio cultural sustainability, Local community, Environmental, Community based tourism.

Article Details:

Received on 10 Jan, 2026

Accepted on 06 Feb, 2026

Published on 07 Feb, 2026

Corresponding Authors*

Introduction

Tourism is known as the Maneuver of individuals toward their preferred destination for a limited period of time from the places where they live or work. This travel may be for entertainment, Pleasure, adventure, visiting someone, Business purposes, Self-development and also can be combination of all these (Yu, Kim, Chen, & Schwartz, 2012).

For the development of tourism industry in a particular region, Sustainability must serve as a core indicator. The idea of sustainability is taken form the vast notion of sustainable development, which Attempt to achieve a balance between environmental protection, social equity and economic growth. Therefore, various organizations and scholars have given their own definition for sustainability for the tourism sector. For example, the world Tourism organization defines it as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the need of visitors, the industry and the environmental and hot communities" (WTO, 1998). Sustainability is also known as the key principle for tourism development. The world tourism organization (WTO) emphasizes the Significance of using the sustainable tourism development strategies and management action that are beneficial for all the form of tourism and across all types of places. The economic, socio cultural and environmental dimension show the significant pillars of sustainable tourism development (WTO, 1998)

A community is known as "A group of people who share a geographic area and are bound together by a common culture, race, value or social class". Community involvement plays a significant role in tourism industry and their participation in decision making for the tourism industry development. Mainly there are three main types of community involvement in tourism development. The first one is level of coercive community involvement, which shows the lowest form of participation. In this level the community has no authority to the process tourism development. There is very minimal role in destination promotion and also very limited economic benefits. The second is induced involvement, where there is a small participation of community; However, they still lack the power of decision making and minimal control over management actions. Finally, the third is level of spontaneous involvement, where there is full authority of community in decision making and also holds complete control over the development process (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016).

Tourism is known as the most significant economic and social activity in modern world. South

Asia is one of the top global tourism destinations. That offers both natural and man-made attraction such as beaches, temples heritage sites, hill station, diverse cultures. Mount Everest, the highest peak, and K2 are the second highest peaks in this area, which draw tourists from all over the world. However, the south Asia have many major challenges that include health issues, poverty, education gap, gender inequality and siltation problems which become a barrier for its development (Rezaur, 2016). Tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing and largest industries in today's world. In term of employment generation tourism is also recognized as the second largest industry, with almost every fifth individual engaged in activities related to tourism industry such as food and beverage services, Hotel management, accommodation, recreation and entertainment, transportation and other travel services. According to the world travel and tourism council, the tourism industry plays a significant role in the global economy every year. 2017 was recognized as a record year for the world tour and travel industry. With the contribution of 10.4% to the world's gross domestic product(GDP). Rising awareness among the people, the availability of low-cost airlines, advancement in transportation and improved accessibility of tourist destinations are some factors on which substantial growth can be attributed (Buhalis, 2021).



Pakistan is located in the center of South Asia and also recognized as an ethnically and geographically diverse country. Pakistan is famous for its rich historical heritage, high mountains, glaciers, vast deserts and reivers, all of these contribute to Pakistan's enormous potential as a leading global tourist destination. Pakistan is equipped with beautiful landscapes and many tourist attraction destinations, particularly in the north regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. Swat valley, Neelum valley, Ayyubia, Patriata, Murree Hill, Kaghan Valley and Narran valley is also most renowned tourist destination. These are famous both internationally and national for their lush green valleys, Lakes, wildlife, majestic mountains and rivers (Kashmir, n.d.).

Although Pakistan ranked places which are huge attraction for the tourist, yet Pakistan ranks 124th out of 136th countries. Pakistan has very small improvement in tourism from 2016, as at that time it was ranked as 125th out of 141 countries. Tourism helps to grow the economy and is also beneficial for job creation. In Pakistan tourism only add 2.8% to the GDP and 2.4% Jobs (WEF, 2017). Murree is known as the most famous and attractive tourist place in Pakistan. Murree is a hill station located in Rawalpindi Punjab. Murree is part of Pir Panjal Range in the region of Galyat. Murree was built in 1851 as a sanatorium by the British, but now a days it has become one of the most popular tourist places In Pakistan. The unpredictable weather of Murree is the main attraction for the tourists. Murree is also famous for its variety of wildlife which includes wild boars, monkeys, foxes, leopards and many species of birds, which add to its natural beauty (The Murree Hill Station, 2018).

Tourism

Tourism is known as the activities of community who travel from one place to another place or stay in places which are normally different from their daily routine and environment for not more than one year for leisure, visit, friend and family, business purpose (Heeley, 1980).

Local Community

Local Community is known as the cluster of peoples living in a defined boundary sharing their norms, Culture, values, interest, and organization with each other and cooperating with each other (Goodwin, 2002).

Development

The upward movement of an entire social system is known as development (Myrdal, 1974).

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is known as meeting the requirements of present generation without compromising the need of future generation (Mensah, 2019)

Research Objective

- To examine the role of the local Communities, play in promoting sustainable tourism development in Murree.
- To Assess the impact of community participation, influence environmental conservation, cultural preservation.
- To recommend strategies that can be implemented to enhance community engagement in sustainable tourism in Murree.

Literature Review

Local Community Attitude Toward Tourism Development

To test the attitudes of local community towards tourism development, Eraqi carried out research in Egypt aiming at measuring the impact of tourism on the living standards of Egyptians. The results showed that the growth in tourism in Egypt improved the economic gains, including job creation and investment in tourism-related projects, and social-cultural gains, including the positive cultural exchange and the positive effects of tourism on local



business. However, there were also adverse effects on Egyptian ways of life, including inflation, negative influence on local culture, tourist congestion in the tourist attractions, including beaches, museums, hiking trails, and parks. Regardless of these difficulties, the major findings were that the residents still had a positive attitude towards tourism even though some negative social and cultural factors were observed. According to the study, tourism strategy should aim at enhancing local skills and positive awareness and emphasize the importance of ensuring that direct contact between local households and tourists were made by inviting them to host visitors in their homes (Eraqi, 2007).

Local Community Perceptions Towards Tourism Development

In a comparative study on the perceptions of the local residents about the tourists and tourism in social, economic and environmental perspectives, a comparative study carried out among Hawaii, North Wales and Istanbul. The comparisons were made cross-nationally across the three geographic regions considering the differences in the levels of tourism maturity. The results showed that people in Hawaii and Wales were environmentalists, who accorded environmental protection a high priority over other socio-economic concerns. Despite the fact that tourism was a major aspect of their respective economies, the main concern that the residents raised was its harmful environmental impact. The information also indicated that the residents attributed environmental change to tourism activities at the same time acknowledged tourism in terms of conservation of historical sites. On the other hand, in Turkey where the growth of tourism is a priority, the respondents centered more on the growth of facilities, hospitality and promotional programs. The statistics showed that the local population of Turkey was more responsible in the environmental pollution than tourists. The comparative survey revealed that the population of places with greater development was characterized by a high level of awareness of the negative and positive effects of tourism, which seemed to be supported by social media, discussions in communities, and discussion. The heightened sensitivity to tourism exhibited by the residents in Hawaii was particularly sharp and this is explained by the fact that extremely current information related to tourism impacts was provided (Liu et al., 1987).

Many workers in the area of tourism research agree that the establishment of strong ties between the tourists and the people living in the tourist destinations should be considered as the key pre-condition of the long-term growth of the tourist attraction sites. However, the local residents' attitudes to tourism and the tourists are quite heterogeneous. It studied the perceptions of the residents of Central Florida on the social consequences and effects of tourists. An interview carried out over the phone revealed a survey of 203 households and it was found that the residents were not only supporting the continuation of tourism as it is being done but also supported the continued growth of tourism. The results indicate that the local community in central Florida shows a generally positive attitude towards tourists but also indicate that there are issues associated with negative impacts of tourism like traffic jams, drinking, crime, drug abuse and interpersonal tensions between the locals and the tourists. On the other hand, the residents have realized beneficial effects, especially job creation, improved livelihoods, and tax income (King et al., 1993).

Local Community Awareness Towards Tourism Development

Butler and Hinch (2007) argue that a lack of knowledge and awareness related to tourism may create a vast gap between the decision-makers and the local communities. The awareness of the local communities to tourism not only leads to the acceptance of tourism in their localities but also allows them to play a representative role in the development of tourism as opposed to the objectification that is often experienced among the rural communities of the developing

countries. Study emphasized the role of local community in understanding tourism in reducing the gap between tourism activities and the native culture. As a result, the issue of awareness and knowledge of the residents concerning tourism development in their region is critical to attaining sustainable tourism (Butler & Hinch, 2007).

Over the past few years, the concept of rural tourism has come out as a critical tool of increasing the economic gains of rural populations in Indonesia. Used a research project in Indonesia to examine the local community awareness in rural tourism development and to determine their understanding of sustainable tourism principles. The findings of the study indicated that the individuals participating in tourism as well as those who are not directly involved are aware of the significance of their involvement in the development of sustainable tourism and decision-making in the development of tourism despite the differences in their occupation (Mahagangga et al., 2021).

Local Community Involvement In Tourism Development

The success in development of tourism is contingent on two factors: goodwill and the cooperation of the local communities. In case local community's potential and desires are inadequate for the development and planning of tourism, then the potential of industry can be destroyed. Community engagement is a critical phenomenon to the success of the tourism project (Lijun & Ahmed, 2024).

The rural tourism sites have gained international recognition as a tourism destination in Malaysia because of their natural heritage. Rural tourism is seen to be economically viable to the marginalized regions and enhances the livelihood of the locals. The article by Jaafar et al. (2015) examined tourism development in relation to the participation of the local community in the development of Kinabalu to study how local communities understood rural tourism development and considered tourism as a benefit to host communities. Tourism benefits promoted involvement of host communities in the programs of tourism development. The Malaysian communities were greatly loyal in respect to culture and religion. Training tourism development had significant roles in enhancing host communities regarding cultural exchange. Findings showed that individuals had positive images towards tourism development. Host societies benefited through tourism, and they desired to be involved in the tourism sector due to the fact that it boosted their economic resources and living standards. The research suggested that the government must empower the host communities, establish micro-loan programs, and inform communities on opportunities that tourism development will generate (Jaafar et al., 2015).

Tourism Constraints in Pakistan

Tourism has become a significant source of income in the most recent economies both developed and developing. Pakistan is blessed with a host of natural resources and historic sites that are the source of attraction of people worldwide. The country has a wide seasonal attraction in addition to its overbearing mountains, peaks, rich cultural heritage, religious monuments, and historical sites, among others, which makes it attractive to tourists. The tourist sites cover most parts of the four provinces and also the Gilgit- Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Both domestic and international tourism has an impact on economic growth and development of Pakistan. In 2009 there were about 46.07 3million domestic tourists in the country with about 50% of them visiting relatives and friends. There was an increase in the number of foreign visitors between 2000 and 2014 by 0.577 to 0.965 million respectively. As the Ministry of Tourism 2004 annual report indicates, approximately 44 per cent of visitors were of international origin, most of them European. The tourism industry is an economic stimulus, creating jobs and generating revenue in the form of taxes, to the government. Its creation

provides growth to other sectors of the economy at the same time. The total economic performance gets increased when tourists spend more on the tourism services. Currently, the Pakistani tourism industry is not well appreciated. The threats that the sector faces are the negative image of the country associated with terrorism, the issue of the low priority assigned to tourism, the lack of research on tourism, a number of challenges are connected with visa barriers, the insufficient use of information technology in tourism promotion, and the lack of investments in tourism by the private sector. The researcher suggests that relevant policies and institutional frameworks should be adopted to curb the problems that slow the growth of the tourism industry in Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Community Based Tourism Theory(CBT)

Community Based Tourism (CBT) theory presupposes that local communities should plan, own, and manage tourism and that the main beneficiaries should be the community members. This strategy relates more to local involvement in decision-making, capacity building via training as well as empowerment of residents in tourism activities (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2014).

The Principles of CBT include

The involvement of community in the tourism planning and policymaking, consultations with the local stakeholders before implementing the project, active involvement in tourism activities management, the collaboration between local communities and government or other actors in the tourism industry and fair distribution of benefits. It is proposed that when the community is meaningfully involved, the results of tourism will be more sustainable, and the local people will receive more support as well as conservation of both natural and cultural resources become strengthened (Okazaki, 2008).

This framework is the one that directly supports the study focus to investigate the level of community participation and its involvement in the process of decisions, training perspectives, and the stakeholder cooperation in the field of Murree tourism. The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and CBT frameworks are adequate to offer a solid theoretical framework in the analysis of the role of community involvement in the development of sustainable tourism.

Sustainable Development Theory (Triple Bottom Line)

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework which is an analytical framework of tourism development, and which consists of three dimensions i.e. economic, environmental and social sustainability which are all interrelated (Jeurissen, 1997). The economic aspect questions how much tourism can help local people to prosper, which is related to income, job creation, and financial benefits received by households and small businesses (Liu et al., 2012). The environmental dimension on the other hand places much emphasis on the preservation of natural resources, i.e. forests and water bodies, as well as proper waste management measures and encouragement of environmentally friendly lifestyles among the locals and tourists. Social aspect deals with cultural heritage conservation, enhancing the community integrity, honoring local traditions, and equitable allocation of tourism resources (Schianetz & Kavanagh, 2008).

This framework is relevant to the current study because it conforms to the research questions that examine economic gains, atmosphere conservation, social maintenance, and cultural maintenance of community involvement in the development of tourism in Murree.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The choice of a reasonable research methodology has essentially been determined by the character of the research aims and the kind of investigation. The main types of research methodology could be divided into quantitative and qualitative research approaches because each has different purposes and philosophical approaches.

This research consists of a quantitative research method, which is defined as the empirical research of observable phenomena in a systematic way with the help of statistical, mathematical, or computational methods. The quantitative method focuses on the objective measures, the numeric analysis of the data assembled by the help of organized tools, known as surveys, questionnaires, and experiments. It is a particularly appropriate methodology when the research goals are based on exploring relationships among variables, testing hypotheses, establishing cause and effect relationships and general findings on a larger population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The choice of the quantitative method is based on a number of methodological reasons in this study. To start with, quantitative methods will provide the researcher with the opportunity to measure and analyze the perceptions, awareness level, and participation rate of the local community in the local tourism promotion in Murree using standardized instruments. Second, the given method allows analyzing relationships among two or more variables and allows statistically validating the results. Third, quantitative methodology improves the credibility and validity of research results by providing the data which is organized and analyzed in a strict form. Lastly, the quantitative method is consistent with positivist paradigm, which aims at determining objective knowledge by respectively observing and measuring empiricism (Zyoud et al., 2024).

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. Descriptive research design is employed when the research objective is to interpret characteristics of individuals, groups, or situations, and to document the frequency with which certain phenomena occur. Unlike exploratory research, which seeks to investigate a problem that is not clearly defined, or explanatory research, which attempts to establish causal relationships, descriptive research focuses on the "what" questions rather than the "why" or "how" (Siedlecki, 2020).

The descriptive study design has multiple purposes. It helps in a systematic record of the community perceptions with regard to tourism development in Murree, measure the level of awareness on tourism opportunities, and evaluate the level of local involvement in tourism related activities. This design is especially suitable in the studies when the objective is to obtain full and accurate information about the current state of phenomena without manipulation of variables.

The descriptive methodology adopted in this investigation used structured questionnaires to collect standardized information about the respondents, and thus, provides consistency and comparability of the information about the respondents in the sample population. (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019).

Research Type

The research employs primary research, the specific type of research that uses original data collected directly as a firsthand source of data aimed at answering the research questions. Primary research cannot be mixed with secondary research, and the latter is a study based on preexisting data collected by other individuals under different reasons.

The key strength of the research method is the possibility to create data-collection tools that meet the research aims, allowing them to make sure that the data is pertinent and up-to-date and preserve the quality of data and data-gathering process control (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

Source of Data Collection

The data to be used in this study was collected using structured questionnaires conducted in Murree, Pakistan. The questionnaire is the main data-collection tool and includes closed-ended questions to quantify a particular group of variables concerning community perceptions, awareness, and input into tourism development of the community. Researchers were keen to ensure the questionnaire is clear and comprehensive and in line with the research objectives, thus, using the known scales of measurement where possible.

The questionnaires were divided into several segments including demographic data, perceptions on the effects of tourism, knowledge of the tourism opportunities and community participation rates. Both sections have the use of relevant scales of measurement as attitudinal measures involve the use of Likert, with categorical measures of demographic. Before actual data gathering, the questionnaire was piloted to determine reliability, validity, and understanding by the respondents.

Target Population

The population of the study includes adult members of Murree population that are aged 18 years or above. Murree is a well-known hill station and tourism resort located in the Rawalpindi District of Punjab, Pakistan;

The target population were residents with different demographic characteristics such as age groups, levels of education and gender groups. In particular, the population is divided into several age groups, namely, 18-25 years (young adults and youth), 25-35 years (young professionals and working adults), 36-45 years (middle-aged residents), 46-60 years (mature adults). This age grouping ensures that there is a representation among different generational groups as each has the potential of having different views on tourism development due to their life experience and the role they occupy in society in economic status.

The level of educational diversity among the target population is between matriculation level and postgraduate degrees, inclusive of people with the qualifications of intermediate, bachelors, and masters.

Sampling Techniques

The random sampling technique was also used in this research to recruit participants in the target population. The random sampling was chosen based on feasibility factors, such as the availability of the respondents, time, limited resources that are involved in carrying out the field research. This approach enabled the researcher to easily access information of participants who were easily accessible and willing to respond to the research in the community.

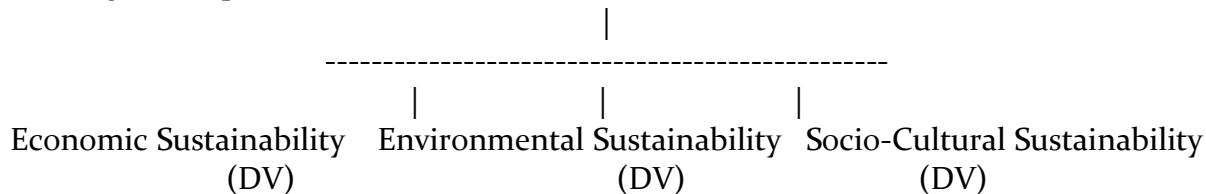
The sampling procedure was initiated by determining the places that were readily available in Murree that could be used to access the community members among them being the areas within the community, around the local markets, residential and community centers. Powerful individuals who might have answered interview questions were contacted and briefed about the purpose of the study and their involvement was fully voluntary and informed consent was taken. In quantitative studies, the sample size is a critical factor that provides the ability to balance statistical power and practical feasibility.

The sample size in this study was 80 respondents who were asked to fill a structured questionnaire. Nevertheless, in the initial screening and data validation, some of the answers were found to be unfinished and had inconsistent data, thus, possibly affecting the quality of

the data. As a result, the final and valid sample that was used in the analysis was 74 respondents after a strict data-cleaning process.

Conceptual Framework

Community Participation (IV)



Independent variable (IV)

Community Participation

- I. Participation in tourism planning and managing
- II. Engagement in tourism development activities

Dependent variables (DV)

This can be measure through three Parameters

Economic Sustainability:

- I. Employment opportunities
- II. Income generation for local residents

Environmental Sustainability:

- I. Natural Resource Conservation e:g water, forest, landscapes.
- II. Waste Management and ecofriendly activities

Socio cultural sustainability:

- I. Local culture, heritage and traditions preservation.
- II. Strengthening community participation and cohesion.

3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	70.3
	Female	22	29.7
	Total	74	100
Age Group	18-25 years	33	44.6
	25-35 years	22	29.7
	36-45 years	15	20.3
	46-60 years	4	5.4
	Total	74	100
Education Level	Matriculation	2	2.7

Intermediate	6	8.1
Bachelor	46	62.2
Master	8	10.8
Others	12	16.2
Total	74	100

As shown in Table 3.1, the sample consisted of significantly more male respondents (70.3) compared to female respondents (29.7). The age data shows that most of the participants were young adults (44.6%), aged between 18 and 25 years, 25-35 years (29.7%), 36-45 years (20.3%), and 46-60 years (5.4%). In terms of education, the highest number of respondents were those with a bachelor's degree (62.2), then those with the others category (16.2), master's degree (10.8), intermediate (8.1), and matriculation (2.7). This population heterogeneity increases the representativeness of the results and allows conducting a subtle analysis of tourism development views in different segments of the community.

Data Analysis Technique

Analysis of the data was done using software known as Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Before subjecting the data to the inferential procedures, it was first screened preliminarily, which entailed the identification of missing values and also the accuracy of data entry was checked. The descriptive statistics were then calculated to summarize respondents' demographic profile and analyze respondent response's reaction towards the different items of the survey.

Analytical tool that was used in the study was multiple linear regression which is the main inferential statistical tool in elaborating the relativity among independent and dependent variables. The additional preliminary analyses included frequency distributions, the measures of central tendency, and the measures of dispersion to support a preliminary investigation of the data.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a potent statistical tool that can be used to analyze the relationship between variables, make predictions, and test hypotheses about the nature and strength of the relationships between the variables (Uyanık & Güler, 2013).

The research measured the different aspects of community involvement and tourism involvement based on Likert-scale answers. Community Participation to tourism planning and decision-making, involvement in management processes, training, stakeholder cooperation, economic gains, environmental conservation efforts, and cultural preservation efforts were found to be the antecedents of the independent variables.

Regression analysis in this study allowed the test of the effects of different independent variables, such as the community involvement in the planning process, the practices in consultation, the training opportunities, and the mechanisms of cooperation on the dependent variables regarding the community perceptions, awareness levels, or the participation outcomes in tourism development.

Multiple Linear Regression

The use of multiple linear regression as the main analytical method was explicitly decided upon since it allows considering the impact of two or more independent variables on a

dependent variable and, therefore, obtaining a more sophisticated view of the phenomenon under study. It offers a simple way of evaluating the distinct contribution of each predictor whilst holding other variables included in the model constant (Dodhia, 2005).

Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter focuses on carrying out the statistical analysis and interpretation of data collected from a structured questionnaire with the aim of determining the significance of role of community participation in promoting sustainable tourism development in Murree, Pakistan. The analysis has been conducted with the use of a statistical package tool called SPSS.

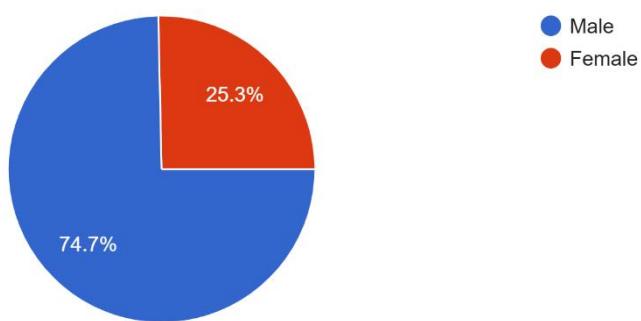
Response Rate

A total of 75 questionnaires were completed and found usable for analysis, representing a satisfactory response rate for my research.

Demographic Profile of Respondents (Descriptive Statistics)

Gender

Gender
75 responses



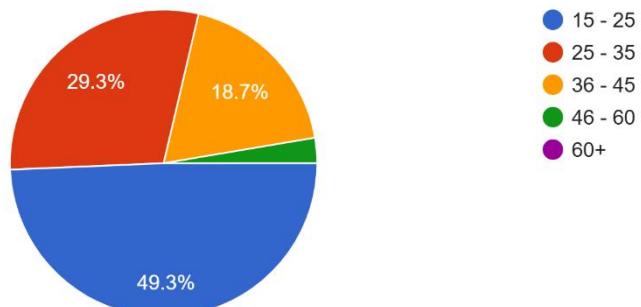
This indicates balanced community representation.

Age Group

Most respondents belonged to:

- 15–25 years
- 25–35 years

Age Group
75 responses



This reflects strong participation from the economically active population.

Education Level

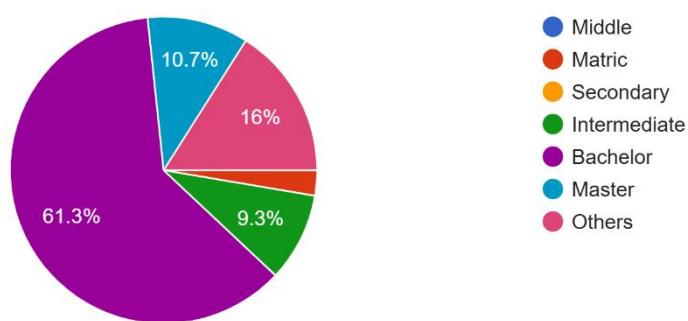
Respondents were primarily:

- Bachelor level
- Intermediate level

This suggests adequate awareness to provide informed responses regarding tourism and sustainability.

Education level

75 responses



Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Community Participation (IV)	≈ 0.85	Good reliability
Economic Sustainability (DV)	≈ 0.88	Good reliability
Environmental Sustainability (DV)	≈ 0.92	Excellent reliability
Socio-Cultural Sustainability (DV)	≈ 0.90	Excellent reliability

Interpretation

All Cronbach's alpha values exceed the acceptable level of 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire items are reliable and internally consistent.

In the case of the reliability analysis, a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 indicates high level of internal consistency of a scale or questionnaire meaning that there are very good relationships between the items that compose it and they always measure the same construct. Normally, alpha levels between 0.70 and 0.89 can be considered as being within the acceptable range of satisfactory internal consistency.

Descriptive Statistics (SPSS: Analyze -Descriptive Statistics)

Statistic	Community Participation	Economic Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability	Socio-Cultural Sustainability
N (Valid)	44	44	44	44
Mean	3.446	4.335	3.936	4.091
Std. Deviation	0.524	0.699	0.686	0.642
Minimum	2.25	2.50	1.80	2.60
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Interpretation

The respondents viewed economic sustainability in the most positive way (Mean = 4.33, Std. Deviation = 0.70), which means that there was a high level of agreement that tourism brings in

income, jobs, and household and business gains. Close behind is socio-cultural sustainability (Mean = 4.09, Std. Deviation = 0.64), indicating that tourism is seen as a source of ensuring cultural preservation and social cohesiveness. Environment sustainability had moderate level of agreement (Mean = 3.94, Std. Deviation = 0.69), whereas community participation was least significant (Mean = 3.45, Std. Deviation = 0.52) which indicated perceived restriction in involvement, consultation and training.

Correlations (SPSS: Analyze > Correlate > Bivariate – Pearson)

Pearson Correlations

	Participation	Economic	Environmental	Socio-Cultural
Participation	1.000	0.150	0.385**	0.386**
Economic	0.150	1.000	0.400**	0.522**
Environmental	0.385**	0.400**	1.000	0.546**
Socio-Cultural	0.386**	0.522**	0.546**	1.000

Interpretation

Positive correlations between the variables were found by the Pearson correlation analysis (correlation coefficient). Environmental sustainability ($r = .385$, $p < .01$) and socio-cultural sustainability ($r = .386$, $p < .01$) had a moderate positive relationship with community participation, but economic sustainability had a weak and non-significant relationship with community participation ($r = .150$, $p > .05$). There was an interconnection between the dependent variables (e.g., socio-cultural and environmental: $r = .546$, $p < .01$), which implied holistic advantages of sustainable practices.

This tendency means that the perceived involvement is positively correlated with the beliefs in the environmental and socio-cultural benefits, whereas the economic benefits seem to be loosely connected with the level of participation.

Community involvement has statistically significant positive relationship with all the dimensions of sustainability. All the correlations are statistically significant (two-tailed) at the level .01.

Regression Models (SPSS: Analyze > Regression > Linear)

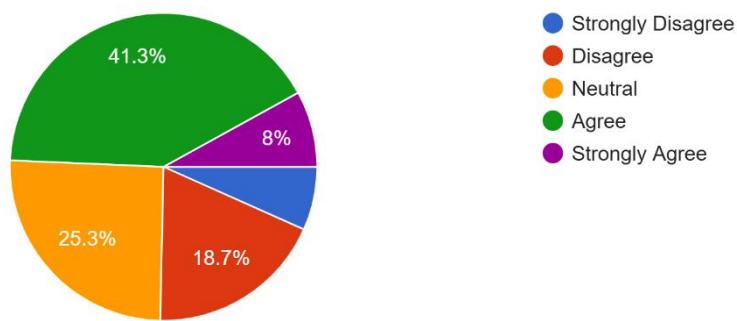
linear Regression Analysis: Impact of Community Participation

Three separate simple linear regressions tested the predictive role of community participation (IV) on each sustainability dimension (DV) economic, environmental,

Community Participation (IV)

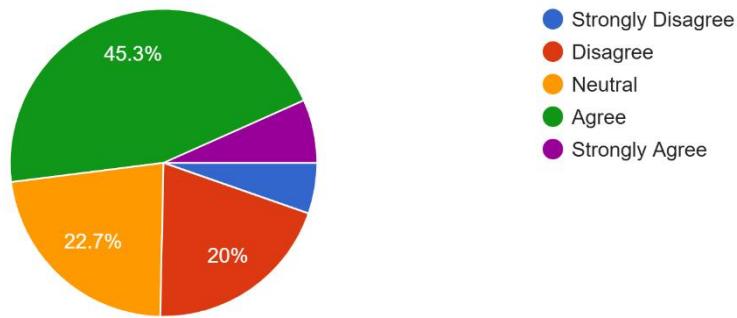
Local community members are involved in tourism planning in Murree.

75 responses



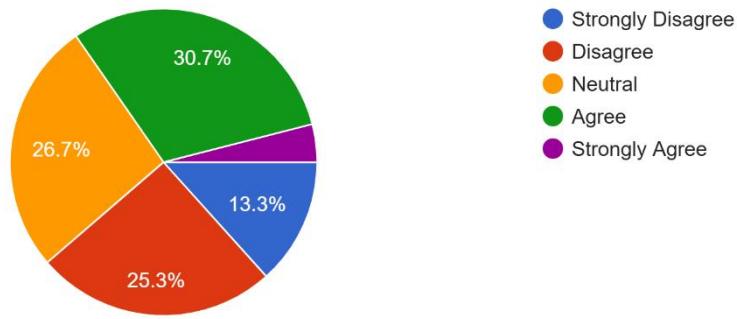
Community opinions are considered in tourism decision-making.

75 responses



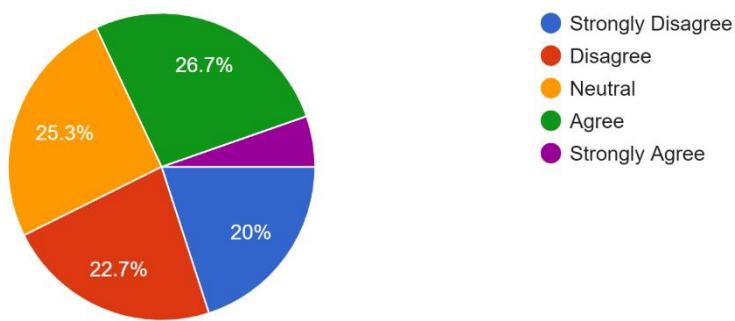
Local residents have opportunities to participate in tourism policy discussions.

75 responses



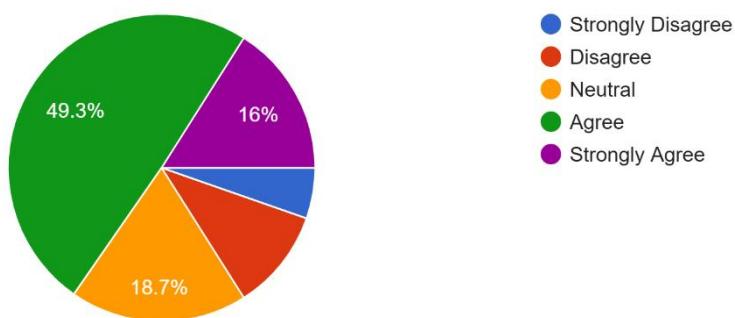
Authorities consult community members before starting tourism projects.

75 responses



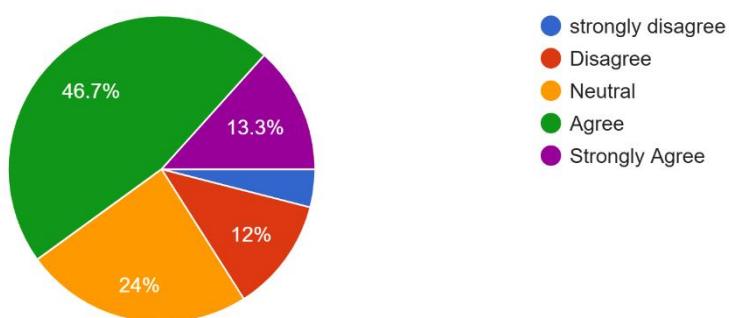
Local people actively participate in managing tourism activities.

75 responses



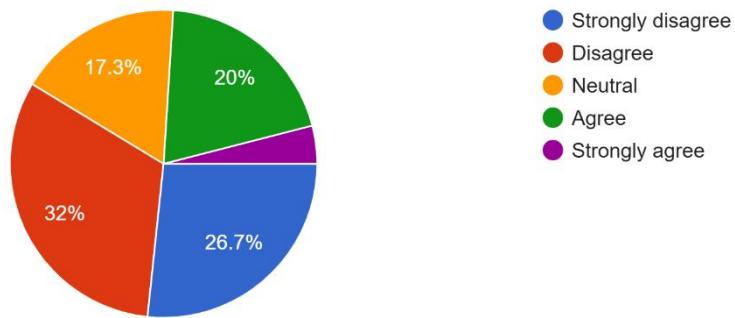
Community members are involved in tourism development programs.

75 responses



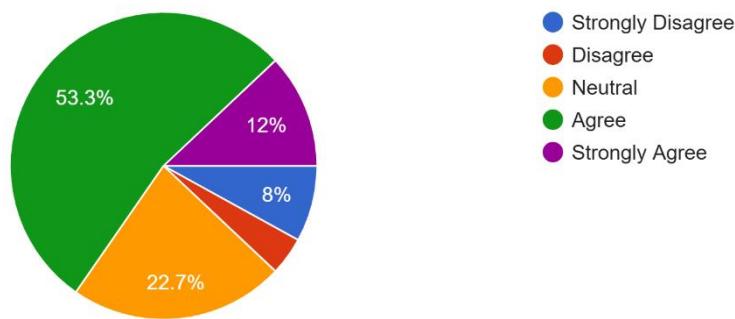
Local residents receive training for tourism-related activities.

75 responses



Communities cooperate with government and private tourism stakeholders.

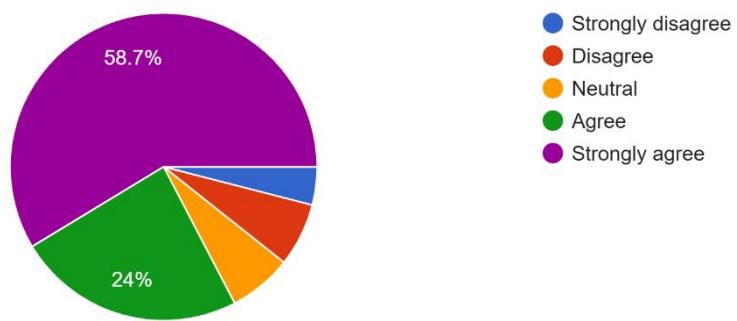
75 responses



Model 1: Economic Sustainability (Dependent Variable)

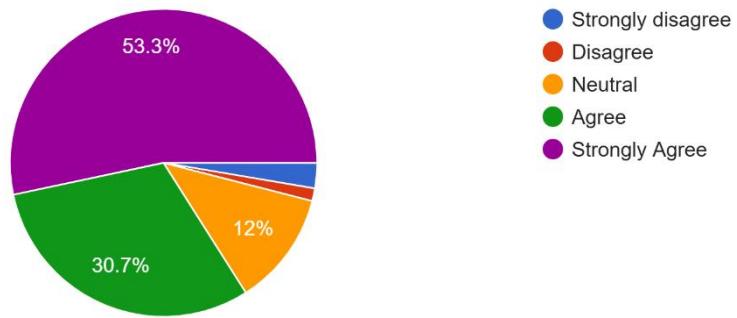
Tourism provides income opportunities for local residents.

75 responses



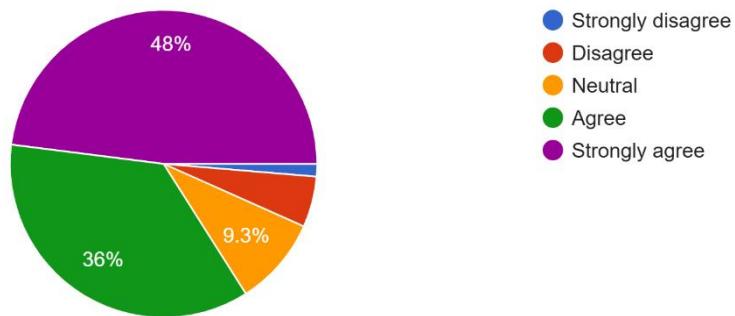
Tourism has increased employment opportunities in Murree.

75 responses



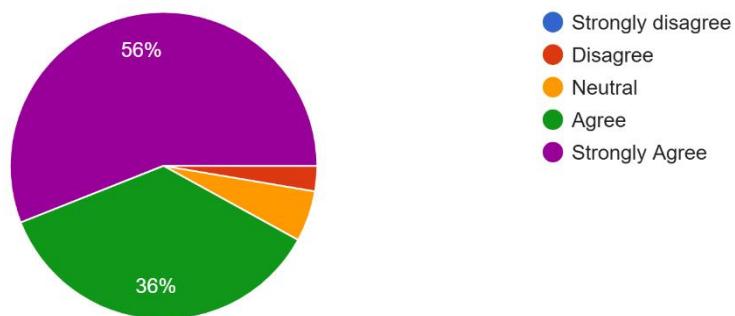
Local households benefit financially from tourism activities.

75 responses



Small local businesses benefit from tourism development.

75 responses



Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.150	0.022	-0.001	0.701

4.5 ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.473	1	0.473	0.963	0.332
Residual	20.641	42	0.491		
Total	21.114	43			

Coefficients

	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.648	0.708		5.150	0.000
Participation	0.200	0.203	0.150	0.981	0.332

Economic Sustainability The model was not significant ($F(1,42) = 0.963$, $p = 0.332$, $R^2 = 0.022$). Community participation explained only 2.2% of variance in economic outcomes (β standardized regression coefficient $\beta = 0.200$, $p = 0.332$).

Interpretation

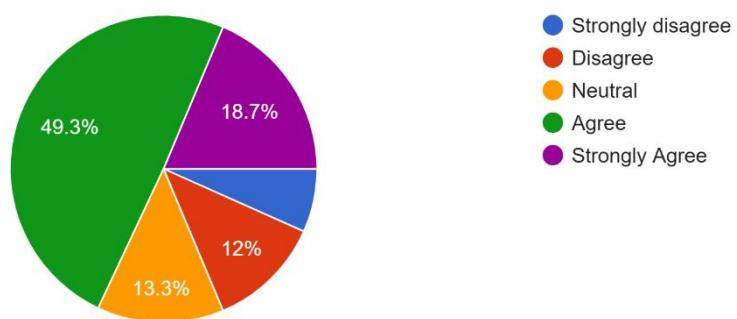
While tourism is strongly perceived as economically beneficial, these benefits do not appear to depend on the level of community participation. Locals may attribute economic benefits

primarily to tourism volume or external factors (e.g., visitor influx) rather than inclusive governance.

Model 2: Environmental Sustainability (DV)

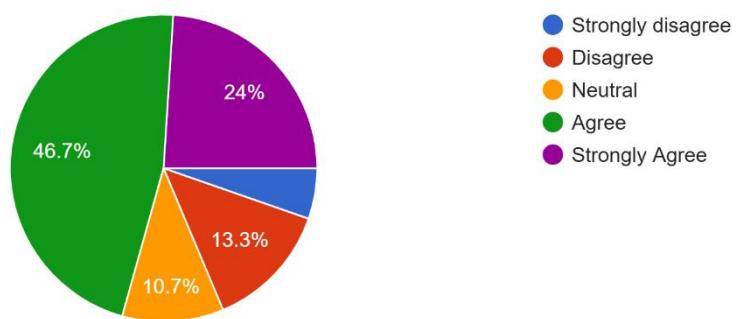
Local communities help conserve forests, water, and natural landscapes.

75 responses



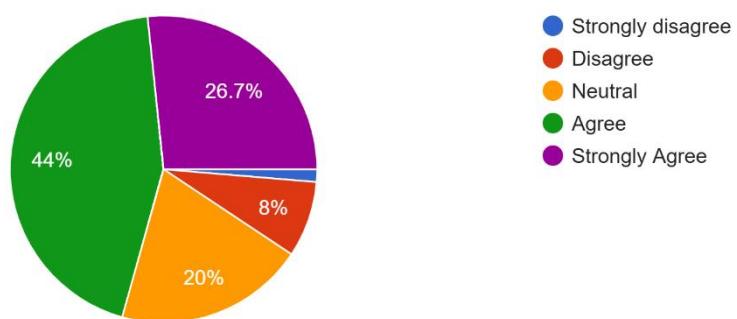
Tourism development encourages protection of natural resources.

75 responses



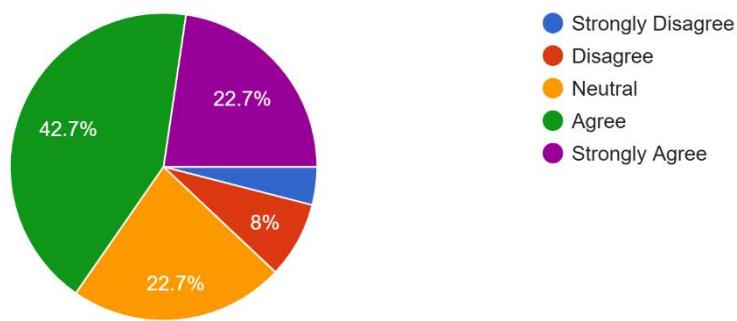
Community participation reduces environmental damage caused by tourism.

75 responses



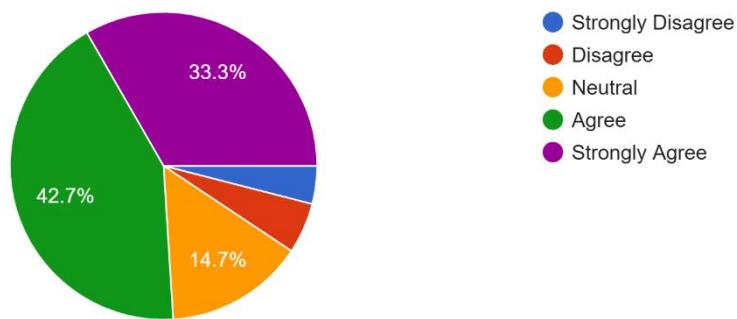
Local communities are involved in waste management activities.

75 responses



Tourism encourages eco-friendly practices among residents and visitors.

75 responses



Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.385	0.148	0.128	0.639

4.8 ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	2.981	1	2.981	7.296
Residual	17.164	42	0.409	
Total	20.145	43		

Coefficients

	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.203	0.649		3.394	0.002
Participation	0.503	0.186	0.385	2.701	0.010

The model was significant ($F (1,42) = 7.296$, $p = 0.010$, $R^2 = 0.148$). The community participation was determined as positively predict the environmental outcomes with a standardized regression coefficient of 0.503 ($p=0.010$), with a value of 14.8% variance.

Interpretation

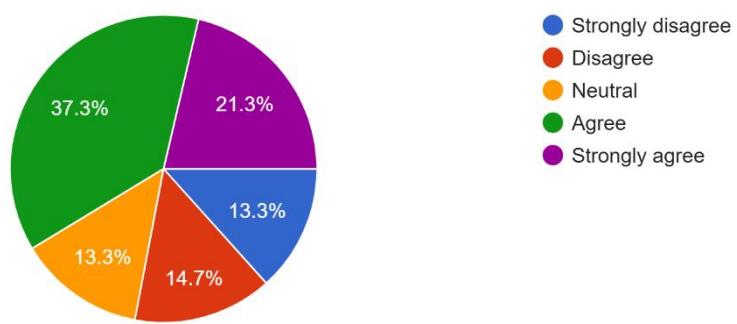
Higher levels of community involvement are associated with the elevated level of environmental conservation perceptions, reduced ecological degradation, and integration of environmental friendly practices. These results support the assumption that participatory

strategies can help the local populations to preserve natural resources in line with the concepts of sustainable tourism.

Model 3: Socio-Cultural Sustainability

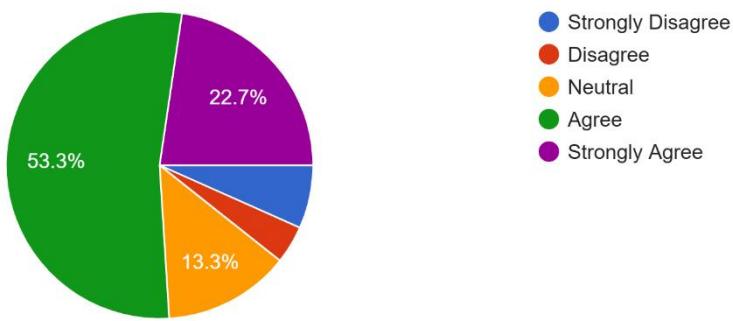
Tourism helps preserve local culture and traditions.

75 responses



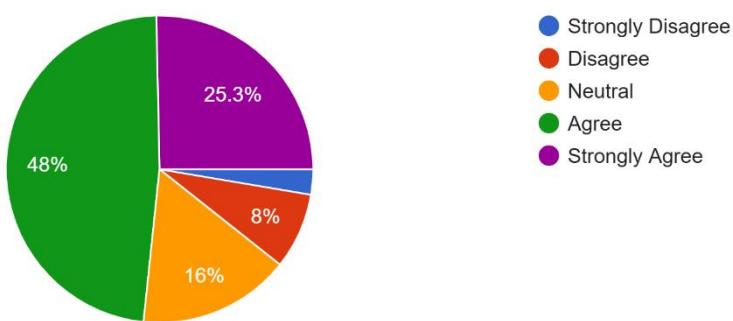
Community participation supports the protection of cultural heritage.

75 responses



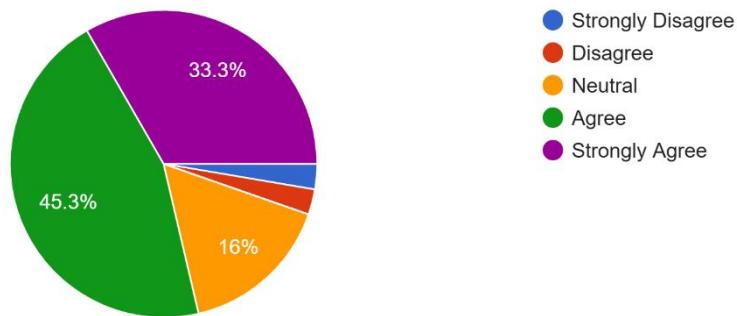
Tourism promotes respect for local customs and values.

75 responses



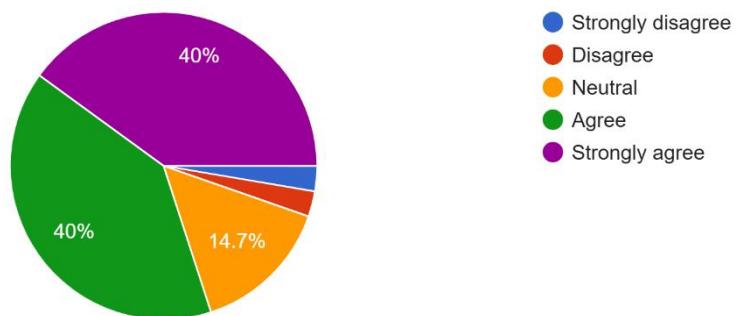
Tourism strengthens cooperation among community members.

75 responses



Community participation in tourism increases social unity.

75 responses



Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.386	0.149	0.129	0.598

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.638	1	2.638	7.366	0.010
Residual	15.046	42	0.358		
Total	17.684	43			

Coefficients

	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t
(Constant)	2.462	0.607		4.055
Participation	0.473	0.174	0.386	2.714

The model was also important ($F(1,42) = 7.366$, $p = 0.010$, $R^2 = 0.149$).

Socio-cultural outcomes were positively forecasted by community participation (β standardized regression coefficient, 0.473, $p=0.010$), and they have explained 14.9 0.1 -based variance.

Interpretation

The higher the involvement, the greater is the belief that tourism maintains the culture, fosters appreciation of traditions and social cohesion. This observation highlights the need of inclusive procedures in the conservation of the cultural heritage of Murree in the face of tourism development.

The findings confirm that the community participation induces a considerable impact on the environmental conservation and cultural preservation/social cohesion but not considerably on the economic benefits. The results that have been obtained lend some support to the research objectives, highlighting the critical importance of the role of participation in non-economic aspects of sustainability.

There is no statistically significant effect of community participation on economic sustainability ($p = 0.332$), but a positive and statistically significant influence on the environmental sustainability ($p = 0.010$, $R^2 = 0.148$) and socio-cultural sustainability ($p = 0.010$, $R^2 = 0.149$).

Group Differences

By Gender (Independent t -tests): Males were found to have a better perception of economic sustainability as compared to females ($t = 2.8$ or so, $p < .01$) which may be due to the fact that males were more involved in the tourism activities associated with income-generating activities. Subscales The rest of the subscales showed no statistically significant gender difference.

By Age Group and Education (One-way ANOVA): There were no statistically significant differences at any subscale by age group or education level (all $p > .05$). The image of the effects of participation and sustainability also seemed to be uniform among these demographic subgroups in the sample.

Finds

The results are very subtle and persuasive in describing the sustainable tourism in Murree. The economic benefits are significantly visible, which means that tourism brings great economic benefit to local inhabitants and makes them economically stable. However, such economic advantages are not largely dependent on the involvement of the community as regression analysis indicates that returns depend more on the overall market forces, the presence of tourism infrastructure or external investments than on the active involvement of the local people. This fact highlights the need to have policies that would involve the community in the economic aspect of tourism, that is, the distribution of financial benefits in a way that is fair and sustainable in the long term. These findings can be used to enhance the community-based tourism in developing settings, and these findings support the idea that project sustainability is not only reliant on the economic gains but also the involvement of the locals. Overall, the findings highlight the idea that sustainable tourism in hilly destinations is a multidimensional process, in which economic, environmental, and socio-cultural goals are interdependent and have to be empowered and actively engaged by the community.

On the other hand, the benefits that are closely linked to community participation are environmental and socio-cultural, which have positive correlations and regression results. The involvement seems to expand the environmental management practices, such as the preservation of natural landscapes, care of the ecological cleanliness, and the preservation of the local biodiversity. On the same note, socio-cultural sustainability is boosted when the local population is well engaged in tourism planning and cultural festivals as well as heritage conservation. The findings confirm the significance of the community in the protection of the fragile ecosystem of the hills in Murree and its rich cultural heritage, and that sustainable



tourism should be based on economic growth and at the same time integrate social and environmental aspects.

Conclusion

It Concludes that policymakers and tourism authorities can realize the meaningful participation is not only a social cohesion and cultural preservation tool but also a long-term environmental stewardship tool. By prioritizing the idea of inclusive governance and promoting the feeling of collective responsibility among locals, private operators, and the local authorities, Murree can be able to enhance its sustainability performance and at the same time, improve the experiences of the visitors.

The moderate level of reported community participation is an indication that there is much to be desired. There are possibilities to enhance consultation, capacity-building efforts, and joint decision-making by stakeholders. Formal training initiatives may provide knowledge to local communities on the management of sustainable tourism, environmental conservation and cultural promotion. Similarly, structured involvement in tourism planning can also guarantee the inclusion of local voices and development to match their needs and values, which may lead to the improvement of positive results already achieved in environmental and socio-cultural sustainability.

References

1. Yu, X., Kim, N., Chen, C.-C., & Schwartz, Z. (2012). Are You a Tourist? Tourism Definition from the Tourist Perspective. *Tourism Analysis*, 17(4), 445–457. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354212x13473157390687>
2. World Tourism Organization. (1998). Guide for Local Authorities on Developing Sustainable Tourism.
3. Rasoolimanesh, S. M., & Jaafar, M. (2016). Community Participation toward Tourism Development and Conservation Program in Rural World Heritage Sites. *Tourism - from Empirical Research towards Practical Application*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/62293>
4. Rezaur, R. M. (2016). THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE LIVELIHOOD IN SOUTH ASIA : Case Rangamati, Bangladesh. *Urn.fi. urn:NBN:fi:amk-2016103115572*
5. Buhalis, D. (Ed.). (2021). *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486>
6. Kashmir, J. (n.d.). Tourism in Pakistan INDIAN ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from [https://tourism.gov.pk/advertisements/Tourism%20in%20Pakistan%20English%20with%20PTDC%20\(1\).pdf](https://tourism.gov.pk/advertisements/Tourism%20in%20Pakistan%20English%20with%20PTDC%20(1).pdf)
7. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM. (2017). The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 Paving the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TTCR_2017_web_0401.pdf
8. The Murree Hill Station. (2018, March 31). Safarnama. <https://safarnama011.wordpress.com/2018/03/31/the-Murree-hill-station/>
9. Heeley, J. (1980). The definition of tourism in Great Britain: Does terminological confusion have to rule? *The Tourist Review*, 35(2), 11–14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ebo57811>
10. Goodwin, H. (2002). Local Community Involvement in Tourism around National Parks: Opportunities and Constraints. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5(3-4), 338–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500208667928>
11. Myrdal, G. (1974). What Is Development? *Journal of Economic Issues*, 8(4), 729–736. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4224356>

12. Liu, J. C., Sheldon, P. J., & Var, T. (1987). Resident perception of the environmental impacts of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14(1), 17–37. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(87\)90045-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(87)90045-4)
13. King, B., Pizam, A., & Milman, A. (1993). Social impacts of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20(4), 650–665. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(93\)90089-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(93)90089-1)
14. Butler, R., & Hinch, T. (2007). *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080553962>
15. Mahagangga, I. G. A. O., Anom, I. P., Suryawan, I. B., Koesbardiati, T., Wulandari, I. G. A. A., & Mutolib, A. (2021). Traditional myth and social environment Balinese tourism (A qualitative approach to sustainable development). *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 739(1), 012050. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/739/1/012050>
16. Jaafar, M., Noor, S. M., & Rasoolimanesh, S. M. (2015). Perception of young local residents toward sustainable conservation programmes: A case study of the Lenggong World Cultural Heritage Site. *Tourism Management*, 48, 154–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.10.018>
17. Ahmed, K., Rahpoto, S., & Ahmed, F. (2024). Tourism in Pakistan: An Economic Analysis. *Journal of Development and Social*, 5(2), 2709–6254. [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024\(5-II-S\)42](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024(5-II-S)42)
18. Mtapuri, O., & Giampiccoli, A. (2014). Towards a comprehensive model of community-based tourism development. *South African Geographical Journal*, 98(1), 154–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03736245.2014.977813>
19. Okazaki, E. (2008). A Community-Based Tourism Model: Its Conception and Use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159594>
20. Jeurissen, R. (1997). John Elkington, Cannibals With Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 23(2), 229–231. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1006129603978>
21. Schianetz, K., & Kavanagh, L. (2008). Sustainability Indicators for Tourism Destinations: A Complex Adaptive Systems Approach Using Systemic Indicator Systems. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(6), 601–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159651>
22. Liu, C.-H., Tzeng, G.-H., & Lee, M.-H. (2012). Improving tourism policy implementation – The use of hybrid MCDM models. *Tourism Management*, 33(2), 413–426. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.05.002>
23. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
24. Zyoud, M. M., Bsharat, T. R. K., & Dweikat, K. A. (2024). *Quantitative Research Methods: Maximizing Benefits, Addressing Limitations, and Advancing Methodological Frontiers*. ISRG Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (ISRGJMS), II(IV), 11–14. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10939470>
25. Siedlecki, S. L. (2020). Understanding descriptive research designs and methods. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 34(1), 8–12. ResearchGate. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NUR.0000000000000493>
26. Aggarwal, R., & Ranganathan, P. (2019). Study designs: Part 2 – descriptive studies. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 10(1), 34–36. NCBI. https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.PICR_154_18
27. Hox, J. J., & Boeije, H. R. (2005). Data Collection, Primary vs. Secondary. *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement*, 1(1), 593–599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/Bo-12-369398-5/00041-4>

28. Tucker, H., & Boonabaana, B. (2012). A critical analysis of tourism, gender and poverty reduction. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(3), 437–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.622769>
29. Uyanık, G. K., & Güler, N. (2013). A Study on Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 106(1), 234–240. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.027>
30. Eraqi, M. I. (2007). Local Communities' Attitudes Towards Impacts of Tourism Development in Egypt. *Tourism Analysis*, 12(3), 191–200. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354207781626848>
31. Lijun, L., & Ahmed, E. M. (2024). THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. 3(3 (2024)), 1–17. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386292289> THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
32. Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and Implications for Human action: Literature Review. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1–21. Tandfonline. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>