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Perceived Environmental Impact and Socio-Economic Benefits as Drivers of Tourism Sustainability: Evidence from Market, Economic, and Social Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The research paper investigates the connections among the perception of the environmental impacts of tourism and socio-economic benefits of the residents and how it affects the growth of sustainable tourism. With focus on the stakeholder theory, the study introduces residents as the key stakeholders whose involvement is vital to the sustainabile tourism. The results show that the perceived environmental impact measures have a positive relationship with the market and economic sustainability, but the relationships with the social sustainability are not significant, which drives the rejection of the Hypothesis H1c. On the contrary, socio-economic benefits positively relate strongly across the three sides of sustainable tourism namely economic, market as well as social which supports Hypothesis H2a, H2b and H2c. Theoretical offerings also enhance the relevance of the stakeholder theory because the paper argues that the position of the residents cannot be ignored to make the sustainable tourism, in market, social and economic terms. Practical implications imply that tourism policymakers (e.g., TDCP, PTDC, KPCTA) need to be more active in the process of engaging residents and encourage them to involve themselves in tourism planning. Conclusively, the research can stress that resident perceptions play significant role in ensuring balanced tourism development. Sustainable tourism requires ethical standards, community involvement and reciprocity of the tourists and the locals. These findings could be advanced in further research to narrow down solutions regarding tours built should be existing in a moderate way without leaving adverse impacts on the environment and concurrently being inclusive.

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Introduction:

Tourism can be a potent economic development force, but its fast development is causing major disquiet regarding the ecological and social-cultural impacts (UNEP, 2019). Due to the challenges faced by destinations in balancing between economic gains and ecological conservation, the realization of the importance of environmental awareness among visitors in determining the sustainability of the destination has attracted utmost attention in terms of research. Although the existing literature has explored these aspects of sustainability either as a single-top-bottom aspect (social, environmental, economic), few of them take a triple-bottom-line (TBL) approach that entails the combination of all three aspects (Elkington, 1997). This paper is going to fill that gap because it is going to examine the role of environmental consciousness among tourists with regard to economic, social, and market sustainability at tourist destinations.

Triple-bottom-line model suggests that the new form of sustainability should balance the profit (economic), planet (environmental), and people (social) performance. In tourism, it is important that economic benefits are not drawn at the cost of ecological soundness as high as the state of the community. Although infrastructure and marketing generally are the core areas of attention when considering the role of destination managers and as well as policy makers, the tourist behavior especially their own conscious concerning the environment has not been fully discussed. According to the research, environmentally aware tourists tend to prefer eco-friendly companies, reduce waste, and treat local cultures (Lee & Xue, 2020). It is still not clear, though, to which degree such behaviors are translated into tangible sustainability outcomes in all three dimensions of TBL. The scope of this study is wider enough to cover the whole Tourism Industry in Pakistan. It is significant for both general practitioners and academicians as a source of knowledge. The study expects to contribute to the empirical literature.

This paper addresses these Research questions; **RQ1**. Whether there is an association between perceived environmental impact and tourism sustainability in the form of market, economic, and social sustainability? **RQ2**. Whether there is an association between perceived socio-economic benefit and tourism sustainability in the form of market, economic, and social sustainability? Advancing these researches questions into research objectives; **RO1.** To investigate the association between perceived environmental impact and tourism sustainability in the form of market, economic, and social sustainability and **RO2**. To investigate the association between perceived socio-economic benefits and tourism sustainability in the form of market, economic, and social sustainability. Translating these objectives into hypothesis, have led to two hypotheses and each has three sub-part (H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b, and H2c); ***H1:*** *Perceived environmental impact is positively associated with* ***(a)*** *economic sustainability,* ***(b)*** *market sustainability, and* ***(c)*** *social sustainability* ***H2:*** *Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with (a) economic sustainability,* ***(b)*** *market sustainability, and* ***(c)*** *social sustainability*

Literature Review

The connection between tourist behavior and sustainable tourism growth has appeared as a vital area of scholarly research in current decades. As the tourism sector continues to expand globally, understanding how tourists' environmental awareness influences destination sustainability across economic, environmental, and social dimensions has become increasingly important. This literature review synthesizes existing research on this multifaceted relationship, identifying key theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and remaining gaps in knowledge.

The conceptual foundation of this examination lies in the Triple-Bottom-Line (TBL) model, originally proposed by Elkington (1997) and subsequently adapted to tourism contexts. According to this framework, a sustainable lifestyle can be achieved only under the condition that the priority is given to several important pillars, which are connected to each other but take equal part in the process, economic viability, environmental protection and social equity. Although most of the initial studies on the TBL in tourism addressed exclusively the issues of supply, i.e., the business aspects of tourism and policy actions, recent researches had come to the realization that supply-side aspects need little and negligible attention in achieving sustainability outcomes compared to the demand-side factors, especially, tourist behavioral patterns and awareness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

As an educational subject, the development of sustainable tourism Johnson has revealed increasing awareness of the many implications of tourism. Based on its origin at the discourse on sustainability by the Brundtland Commission (1987), its early studies under the sustainable tourism research were more focused on environmental conservation such as ecotourism (Weaver, 2020). Nevertheless, as the discipline became more focused, researchers began to grow more holistic, which took into account the interrelationship of economic, environmental, and social systems (Sharpley, 2020). This transition was in the trend of sustainability science overall but kept the particular issues of tourism in mind, which included seasonality, leaking effects, and commodification of culture.

The concept of environmental awareness among tourists is multidimensional because it covers environmental awareness knowledge and attitudes, and the pro-environmental behaviors that actual tourists engage in during traveling (Lee & Xue, 2020). Studies prove that environmentally conscious tourists have a particular behavior pattern and mark them by favoring eco-certified accommodations (Oklevik et al., 2020), engaging in low-impact activities (Ballantyne et al., 2021), and patronizing businesses providing sustainable locally made products (Knezevic Cvelbar et al., 2021). The set of such behaviors is contributing to the destination sustainability, but the relationships and their power and mechanism depend on specific situations.

One of the issues that have long been observed in this field is a so-called attitude-behavior gap attitude among tourists that often does not go hand in hand with adequate sustainable behaviors (Juvan et al., 2018). This disconnect is caused by several factors among them structural factors such as a lack of sustainable choices, economic factors such as price sensitivity, and phenomena such as cognitive dissonance when conducting leisure activities (Böhler et al., 2021). The

knowledge of these impediments has been essential in coming up with effective interventions in ensuring that the behavior of tourists is in line with the sustainability goals.

Most recent studies have identified several ways through which the translation of environmental awareness into sustainable tourist behaviour can be improved. Behavioral economics interventions, especially the use of nudges and changes to the choice architecture have been promising during experiments (Dolnicar, 2020). With their adequate implementation and communication, certification programs and ec labels (e.g., Green Key, EarthCheck) have proved useful in making tourists form the decision (Font et al., 2021). Compared to other schemes, carbon offset programs, particularly default enrollment strategies, have witnessed significant adoption by individuals in certain destinations (Gössling, 2021). Such results indicate that environmental conscious tourist sustainability effects can be increased through intervention strategies.

Special attention has been given to the economic aspect of sustainability in the literature that tries to analyze tourist behavior. Pro-environmental tourists are more willing to pay high prices on sustainable tourism services and outputs (Tkaczynski et al., 2020) and this enhances their incentives in the market. More than that, they tend to give credit to locally owned businesses, therefore, decreasing economic leakage and increasing local economic multipliers (Nyaupane et al., 2020). Such economic impacts enhance long-term sustainability of tourism destinations and at the same time enable support to the objectives of environmental and social sustainability.

The results of the environmental sustainability based on tourist awareness are varied and they have a number of quantifiable occurrences. The selection of transportation is an especially critical aspect, as more environmentally conscious tourists will be willing to take forms of transport that produce fewer emissions like trains rather than short-distance flights (Gössling, 2021). In destinations, such tourists show higher levels of adherence to waste reduction compared to the local residents in terms of avoidance of single-use plastic and engagement in recycling activities (Ballantyne et al., 2021). These actions have a direct effect of reducing the ecological footprint of tourism, and act as good examples to be followed by all other tourists and the locals.

The consequences of tourist sensibility to the environment regarding social sustainability create a more in-depth and multidimensional portraits. On the one hand, the environmentally aware tourists are likely to be more respectful of the cultures and traditions of the host communities, which may reduce the problem of cultural commodification (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). They tend to spend in a way that sustains social businesses and locally based travel tourism-related projects and contributes to the improving livelihood of the local people (Dangi & Petrick, 2021). Nevertheless, other research articles warn sustainable tourism activities even with the best of intentions may lead to social divisions or further complicate inequalities unless devised and developed thoughtfully (Cole & Sauers, 2018).

Although many developments as highlighted are of critical importance, literature gaps are still there. A majority of studies have been engaging in individual pillars of sustainability without enquiring how they interact systematically under the TBL model (Hall & Williams, 2019). Behavioral interventions also remain to be even more empirically proven in different geographical locations and across various cultures. Also, the existing body of research is extremely Westernized,

and there are very few inputs of developing countries and emerging tourism destinations (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). These constraints restrict the extent of theoretical and practical advancement of results.

The connection between the locale of tourist environmental awareness and the destination sustainability also presents a pertinent topic of responsibility and governance. Some researchers focus on individual responsibilities of tourists (Miller et al., 2015), whereas other researchers propose the existing institutional frameworks that should control and dictate tourist actions (Hall & Williams, 2019). This conflict recapitulates key discussions at the interface of sustainability governance and poses research opportunities between micro level behavioral analysis and the macro policy analysis.

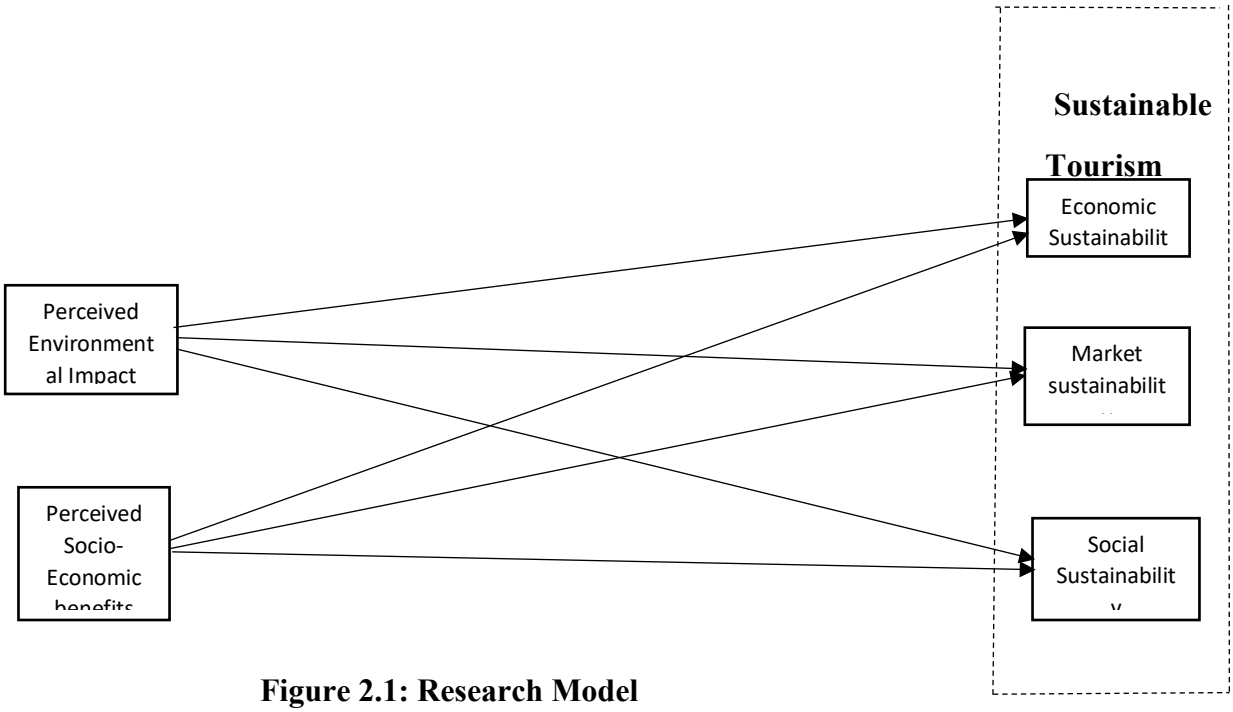

Figure 2.1: Research Model

The new research areas are taking interest in the power of digital technologies in closing the awareness-action gap. Real-time sustainability feedbacks emerging on smartphone applications, the concept of digital nudges within online booking systems, and blockchain-empowered traceability system solutions should be regarded as the areas of future research (Gretzel et al., 2020). In the same vein, the COVID-19 affects on tourist awareness and behaviour patterns of the environment require some systematic investigation as the industry reacts and changes.

The paper identifies the important, but less investigated, environment awareness of tourists in realizing the holistic sustainability of destination. Although the previous studies have laid valuable groundwork, there is still a lot of unexplored territory when it comes to knowing how these relationships work, what moderates them and their boundary conditions. Future research with integrated approaches, rigorous experimental methods and incorporation of differing cultural context will go a long way into not only contributing to the body of knowledge but also with regard

to best practice in ensuring sustainability in the development of tourism. The potential for tourist behavior to serve as either a barrier or catalyst for sustainability underscores the importance of continued investigation in this domain.

Research Design and Methodology:

Target population selected for this research paper are the residents of Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtun Khwah and Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan. Strength of the population of these areas includes residents of northern areas i.e., Khyber Pakhtun Khwah, Azad Jammu Kashmir Gilgit Baltistan which makes it approximately 40 million people. As the population is very large the sample size would be 290. Sample Size is calculated while using Rule of Thumb. Twenty (29) items are used in a scale, multiplying these items by 10 (Rule of Thumb). 290 local residents of these areas are randomly selected on the basis of convenience from all three regions (KPK, GB & AJK). Unit of analysis will be the individual residents that are considered locals of those areas. For the operationalization of the research constructs, scale is adopted and validated from previous empirical works. Online Survey method is employed for the collection of data on the following items.

Perceived Environmental Impact

This construct is assessed by using a five point Likert scale used in past research (Kanwal et al., 2020). It consists of 4 – items, and an example question is, “Tourism activities do not disturb the natural environment.”

Perceived Socio-economic benefits

The scale established by Ko and Stewart (2002) consisted of 6 – questions. The example of item is “Tourism development has increased individuals’ incomes in my region.” Respondents have rated their perception on a five-point an agreement scale.

Tourism Sustainability

Evaluates on a scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and developed by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) and comprises three dimensions, e.g., Economic Sustainability, Market Sustainability, and Social Sustainability. I adopted 19 – items from this scale, Seven items for Economic Sustainability, Five items for market Sustainability, and Seven questions for the Social Sustainability.

Analysis and Results:

The outcomes of the data analysis are offered in detail in this section. PLS-SEM analysis with measurement and structural model evaluation included. The measurement model establishes the construct's validity and reliability. The structural model establishes the claimed relationships' importance. The following hypotheses were put up to assess how predictors relate to the result.

H1: Perceived environmental impact is positively associated with (a) economic sustainability, (b) market sustainability, and (c) social sustainability

H2: Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with (a) economic sustainability, (b) market sustainability, and (c) social sustainability

In the following tables abbreviations of variables is used as PEI: Perceived environmental impact, ES: Economic Sustainability, MS: market sustainability, SS: Social Sustainability, PSEB: Perceived socio-economic benefits.

Measurement Model Assessment:

The assessment of the measurement model is used to determine the quality of the study's constructs. The measurement and structural model are evaluated using Smart PLS 4.0. This statistical program estimates the parameters of the structural model and evaluates the measurement model's psychometric qualities. Evaluating the factor loadings is the first step in assessing the quality requirements. Next, construct validity and reliability are established.

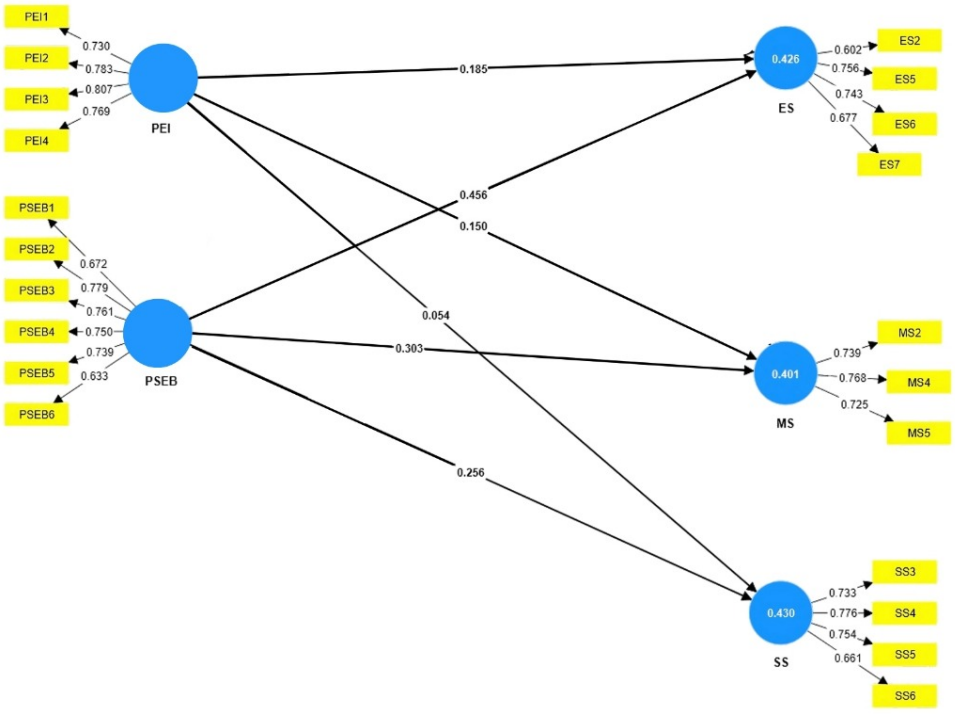

Figure 4. 1 Measurement Model

Factor Loadings

Factor loading gives insights that to which extent each item is correlated with another in the correlation matrix. Its range varies from -1.0 to +1.0. Higher value denotes the higher association and vice versa (Pett et al., 2003).

First, all of the items of the model have factor loadings that are higher than the 0.50 minimum acceptable value (Hair, 2010). In social science studies, researchers often achieve smaller outer loadings (<0.70), despite the fact that factor loading beyond 0.7 is preferable (Vinzi et al., 2010). Instead of automatically removing indications, the influence of removing the item on content, convergent validity, and composite reliability will be investigated. Items with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 are often only taken into deliberation for removal if doing so raises the composite reliability or average variance extracted (AVE) above the suggested level (Hair et al., 2016). In the current study, 6 items (SS1, SS2, ES1, ES3, ES4, MS1 &MS3) are removed due to low factor loading below 0.50 and removal of these have made a significant increase in composite reliability and AVE. According to Sarstedt et al. (2021) 20% items can be deleted of total items.

Table 4. 1 Factor Loadings

	ES	MS	PEI	PSEB	SS
ES4	0.756				
ES5	0.745				
ES6	0.778				
ES7	0.653				
MS2		0.777			
MS4		0.77			
MS5		0.672			
PEI1			0.743		
PEI2			0.775		
PEI3			0.759		
PEI4			0.786		
PSEB1				0.672	
PSEB2				0.773	
PSEB3				0.764	
PSEB4				0.754	

PSEB5	0.744	
PSEB6	0.627	
SS3		0.749
SS4		0.755
SS5		0.769
SS6		0.649

Reliability Analysis

According to Mark (1996), the extent of stability and steadiness of a measurement item is known as its reliability. Repeatability is the foundation of reliability. Cronbach's alpha and Composite dependability (CR) are the two most widely used methods for evaluating dependability. Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) findings are shown in Table 4.2. Composite Reliability (CR) scores ranged from 0.822 to 0.868 and Cronbach alpha varied from 0.711 to 0.817. Both reliability numbers are higher than the required 0.70 i.e., threshold (Hair et al., 2011). Hence construct reliability is established.

Table 4. 2 Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho c)
ES	0.716	0.824
MS	0.781	0.851
PEI	0.787	0.855
PSEB	0.817	0.868
SS	0.711	0.822

Convergent Validity

It is is the degree of agreement between numerous attempts to measure the same notion. The idea is that two or more measurements of the same object should differ substantially if they are valid representations of the concept (Bagozzi et al., 1991). When items converge to measure the underlying construct and the AVE value is more than or equal to the recommended value of 0.50, convergent validity is demonstrated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Convergent validity results show that all construct values, except for ES, had somewhat lower AVEs based on the AVE data used in this investigation. However, the CR values for every construct were greater than 0.70. Thus, convergence is not an issue. Table 4.3 shows the AVE value for each construct.

Table 4. 3 Construct Convergent Validity (AVE)

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ES	0.539
MS	0.554
PEI	0.597
PSEB	0.525
SS	0.536

Discriminant Validity

It is the degree to which measures of many ideas differ from one another. It is believed that if two or more of the legitimate measures of each conception are different, there shouldn't be a significant association between them (Bagozzi et al., 1991).

Fornell and Larcker Criterion

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, discriminant validity is recognized when the square root of AVE for a variable is greater than its correlation with all other variables. This research paper indicates that a square root of the construct of AVE is higher than its connection with other constructs (Table 4.4). Consequently, the inception of discriminant validity is strongly supported.

Table 4. 4 Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	ES	MS	PEI	PSEB	SS
ES	0.697				
MS	0.554	0.744			
PEI	0.420	0.374	0.773		
PSEB	0.612	0.538	0.416	0.724	
SS	0.506	0.531	0.294	0.514	0.732

Cross Loadings

If an item from a particular construct loads higher as compared to its parent construct and from other research structures, cross loadins is a useful tool. According to the results (table 4.5), the factor loading of each item is greater on the underlying construct to which it belongs than on any

other study construct (Chin, 1998)**.** Therefore, cross-loadings is used to achieve desired results in the form of discriminant validity.

Table 4. 5 Cross Loadings

	ES	MS	PEI	PSEB	SS
ES2	0.602	0.267	0.306	0.38	0.226
ES5	0.756	0.389	0.325	0.489	0.335
ES6	0.743	0.424	0.262	0.469	0.472
ES7	0.677	0.468	0.283	0.352	0.366
MS2	0.477	0.739	0.389	0.418	0.399
MS4	0.408	0.768	0.235	0.401	0.383
MS5	0.343	0.725	0.196	0.379	0.403
PEI1	0.268	0.189	0.73	0.206	0.148
PEI2	0.259	0.207	0.783	0.229	0.168
PEI3	0.288	0.213	0.807	0.229	0.108
PEI4	0.414	0.436	0.769	0.493	0.375
PSEB1	0.381	0.392	0.384	0.672	0.352
PSEB2	0.478	0.41	0.358	0.779	0.379
PSEB3	0.441	0.362	0.306	0.761	0.409
PSEB4	0.425	0.398	0.26	0.75	0.318
PSEB5	0.463	0.435	0.211	0.739	0.405
PSEB6	0.467	0.339	0.297	0.633	0.364
SS3	0.34	0.407	0.193	0.372	0.733
SS4	0.418	0.384	0.231	0.426	0.776
SS5	0.337	0.354	0.232	0.394	0.754
SS6	0.39	0.414	0.207	0.305	0.661

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

The HTMT ratio is used to verify discriminant validity. Nonetheless, there has been discussion in the literature on the HTMT threshold. Teo et al. (2008) emphasizes on threshold of 0.90 or less,

however Kline (2011) proposed a threshold of.85 or less. The HTMT ratio is below the necessary cutoff of 0.90, according to the results (Table 4.6).

Table 4. 6 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio HTMT

	ES	MS	PEI	PSEB	SS
ES					
MS	0.884				
PEI	0.555	0.478			
PSEB	0.834	0.767	0.465		
SS	0.742	0.816	0.342	0.671	

Indicator Multicollinearity:

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic is used to assess multicollinearity in the indicators (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). If the VIF value is less than 5, multicollinearity is not a significant issue (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4.7 displays the VIF readings those depict that each indicator's VIF is below then the recommended threshold.

Table 4. 7 VIF

	VIF
ES4	1.41
ES5	1.33
ES6	1.417
ES7	1.261
MS2	1.145
MS4	1.273
MS5	1.227
PEI1	1.682
PEI2	2.12
PEI3	2.023
PEI4	1.252

PSEB1	1.453
PSEB2	1.813
PSEB3	1.882
PSEB4	1.756
PSEB5	1.628
PSEB6	1.42
SS3	1.343
SS4	1.441
SS5	1.421
SS6	1.253

Model Fitness

Coefficient of determinants (R^2), effect size(f^2) and predictive relevance measure(Q^2) elaborate the Goodness of fit for the model. R^2 signifies that how much change has been incurred in dependent variables because of independent variable. As a general guidelines Cohen (1988) suggested R^2 values for the endogenous latent variables are assessed as follows: 0.26 (substantial) 0.13 (moderate) 0.02 (weak). The results in table 4.8 show that R^2 for all the endogenous constructs is over 0.26 which shows that model illustrative power is substantial**.**

To better evaluate the illustrative value of each exogenous variable in the model, the change in R^2 is assessed if a given exogenous construct is neglected from the model. This degree is referred to as effect size (f^2). The effect size is the main influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The impact of predictor variable is high at the structural level if f square is 0.35 and it is medium if f square is 0.15 and small if f square is 0.02 (Cohen, 1988)**.** The results table 4.8 revealed that f square effect size ranges from 0.004 (negligible) for PEI on SS. Finally, the Q-square values for endogenous constructs were over 0, however predict relevance established.

Table 4. 8 Model Fitness

Predictor	Outcome	R-Square	f-square	Q square
PEI	ES	0.426	0.049	0.401
PSEB			0.240	
PEI	MS	0.401	0.031	0.317
PSEB			0.102	

PEI	SS	0.430	0.004	0.282
PSEB			0.076	

Structural Model Assessment

Next step is the SEM is testing the hypotheses and their validation which is as mentioned below.

Path Coefficients

After assessing the measurement model, next is to determine the path coefficients (relationships among the variables) along with the their statistical significance.

H1a gages whether perceived environmental impact is positively connected with economic sustainability. The result revealed that perceived environmental impact is positively associated with economic sustainability ($B = 0.185$, $t = 3.886$, $p < 0.05$). Hence H1a was supported. H1b estimates whether perceived environmental impact is positively linked with market sustainability. The result revealed that perceived environmental impact is positively associated with market sustainability ($B = 0.150$, $t = 2.613$, $p < 0.05$). Hence H1b was supported. H1c assesses whether perceived environmental impact is positively coupled with social sustainability. The result revealed that perceived environmental impact is not positively associated with social sustainability ($B = 0.054$, $t = 1.067$, $p = 0.143$). Hence H1c was not supported.

H2a appraises whether Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with economic sustainability. The result revealed that Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with economic sustainability ($B = 0.456$, $t = 8.126$, $p < 0.05$). Hence H2a is supported. H2b estimates whether Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with market sustainability. The result discovered that Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with market sustainability/.y ($B = 0.303$, $t = 4.677$, $p < 0.05$). Hence H2b was supported. H2c assesses whether Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with social sustainability. The outcomes revealed that Perceived socio-economic benefit is positively associated with social sustainability ($B = 0.256$, $t = 4.437$, $p < 0.05$). Hence H2c was supported.

Following table 4.9 presets the results and the structural model is presented in figure 4.1

Table 4. 9 Direct Relations

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SE	t -value	p value	Results
H1a	PEI -> ES	0.185	0.048	3.886	0.000	Accepted
H1b	PEI -> MS	0.150	0.058	2.613	0.005	Accepted
H1c	PEI -> SS	0.054	0.051	1.067	0.143	Rejected
H2a	PSEB -> ES	0.456	0.056	8.126	0.000	Accepted

H2b	PSEB -> MS	0.303	0.065	4.677	0.000	Accepted
H2c	PSEB -> SS	0.256	0.058	4.437	0.000	Accepted

Note: β = Beta Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, T = t-statistics, P = Probability(P) value, relationships are significant at P < 0.001, PEI: Perceived environmental impact, ES: Economic Sustainability, MS: market sustainability, SS: Social Sustainability, PSEB: Perceived socio-economic benefits.

Discussion & Conclusion

In this study, it has been observed that due to higher influx of tourist at tourist destination witnesses the fact that resident behavior of such areas is worth studying. Though the economic wellbeing of these residents is almost fully dependent on tourist foot fall but the perception of these residents on environmental and socio-economic benefits of tourism needs much exploration. With respect to resident perception, environmental impact and socio-economic benefits of tourism are the variables those are associated with sustainable tourism (economic, social & market) through community satisfaction and community support for tourism. Focusing on stakeholders' theory it is concluded that residents act as a primary stakeholder in tourism sector.

Results of the study confirm that perceived environmental impact is positively associated with sustainable tourism, particularly in the domain of market and economic sustainability. Though, the association between perceived environmental impact and social sustainability was not significant, leading to rejection of Hypothesis H1c. Conversely, Socio- economic benefits were positively associated with sustainable tourism across all three aspects-economic, market and social sustainability. Therefore, hypothesis H2 was accepted (H2a, H2b & H2c), and these findings align with prior studies (Bujosa Bestard & Nadal, 2007).

Theoretical implications

This research paper adds to the literature on stakeholder theory by concentrating on residents as primary stakeholders in the tourism sector. According to Freeman (1984), A Stakeholder Approach states, "Stakeholders are those clusters without whose support the organization would cease to exist." This perspective aligns with the understanding that residents, as key stakeholders, play a vital role in developing the sustainable tourism. The findings underscore that residents' perceptions of the environmental impacts and socio-economic benefits of tourism play a critical role in shaping their support for tourism development. These perceptions influence the degree to which residents engage with and support tourism initiatives. As Mowforth and Munt (2015) suggest, effective community involvement is essential for achieving sustainable tourism, and residents' perceptions form the foundation of this involvement. In addition, Gursoy et al. (2009)reveal that attitudes of residents to both positive and negative effects of tourism determine directly their satisfaction level and acceptance of tourism.

Practical Implications

Practically, this study recommends that the tourism departments and policy-making bodies (PTDC, KPCTA) take the residents into account as important stakeholders during tourism planning process. Through enhancing the perceptions of the locals/residents regarding the environmental impacts and socio-economic returns of tourism, the stakeholders are able to realize the community satisfaction as well as community support of tourism, which are imperative to long term sustainability tourist destinations. Consultation with local people to get their concerns and expectations, it is also very important as far as ensuring that the development of tourism harmonizes with the values and priorities for which community is concerned. Such participation assists in development of trust and cooperation, which positively leads to higher chances of successful tourism programs that count on positive effects to both the community and the tourist business.

Conclusion

The paper has made a great contribution towards the research on sustainable tourism because it has highlighted an important aspect of sustainable tourism, which is the perception of the residents as major aspects that contribute to the attainment of tourism development. As the stakeholder theory suggests, this study exposes the fact that residents are not just victims of tourism effects, but stakeholders who have the opportunity to influence tourism sustainability through their perception of socio-economic and environmental benefits. This information is very useful to tourism policy-makers, local authorities and tourism professionals who aim to come up with tourism activities not only economically feasible but also socially viable and environmentally.

To sum up, local population may be a key to gain sustainable tourism. It focuses on the significance of participation of society, ethical operations, and the need to consider each other between the tourist and the local people to create long-term sustainability. Through the fact that I have discussed the limitations, and identified the future directions that have been proposed, future research work will be able to improve on these findings and enlighten more on the sustainable tourism practices making sure that the residents and the tourists have something to gain due to tourism development. Furthermore, Gursoy et al. (2009) demonstrate that residents' attitudes toward both sides of tourism which directly shape up their satisfaction and support for tourism.

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