

**Community Participation for Heritage Tourism
Development in Sligo**

Supervised by
Dr. Domhnall Melly

Group Submission
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Tourism with Event Management
(Submission Date: 19th April 2024)

Abstract

This research is focused on exploring how Sligo can develop heritage tourism through community participation. The aim is to achieve goal 5 of the County Sligo Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2030, which is to sustainably develop Sligo's exceptional heritage, creative sector, and tourism potential. The research objectives are to conduct a review of international literature on community participation and heritage tourism development, explore local community perceptions of heritage tourism development in Sligo, and investigate practical measures for meaningful community participation in heritage tourism development in Sligo. The researcher analysed various academic sources, such as journals and books, to conduct a comprehensive literature review. To collect data, a questionnaire was created and used to survey 50 community members. A quantitative analysis was deemed most appropriate for the data collected. The findings were analysed to understand better the motivations behind community involvement in heritage tourism development. The research results were used to create recommendations that stakeholders could employ to encourage growth in sustainable, community-based tourism approaches.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
1.0 Literature review	4
1.1 Introduction.....	4
1.2 Tourism Development	4
1.3 Community-Based Tourism.....	5
1.4 Heritage tourism.....	7
1.5 Sustainable heritage tourism development	8
1.6 Sustainable socio-economic tourism development	10
1.6 Conclusion	12
2.0 Research Methods.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Research Title	14
2.3 Research Question	14
2.4 Research Aims and Objectives	14
2.5 Research Approach	14
2.6 Questionnaire Design.....	15
2.7 Sampling	16
2.8 Data Collection	16
2.9 Data analysis	17
2.10 Research Limitations	17
2.11 Ethical Considerations	17
2.12 Conclusion	18
3.0 Data analysis.....	19
3.1 Introduction.....	19
3.2 Heritage tourism development in Sligo	19
3.3 Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo.....	21
3.4 Community Participation in Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo	23
3.5 The Future of Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo	26
3.6 Conclusion	28
4.0 Conclusions and recommendations	29
4.1 Introduction.....	29
4.2 Conclusions and Recommendations	29
4.2.1 Sustainable tourism development	29
5.0 Bibliography	34

1.0 Literature review

1.1 Introduction

Tourism development has become a crucial aspect of many regions' economic and social development strategies. It involves establishing and maintaining a tourist industry in a particular location by focusing on infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, sustainable tourism practices, diversification of tourism offerings, and collaborations and partnerships. While tourism development can bring about various positive impacts such as job creation, cultural preservation, and poverty reduction, it can also lead to negative consequences such as congestion, noise, and erosion of indigenous culture. In recent years, community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a sustainable and equitable alternative to traditional tourism development, which actively incorporates local communities in the organisation, administration, and advantages of tourist-related activities in their region. This paper explores the various aspects of tourism development, its positive and negative impacts, and the potential of community-based tourism to create a more inclusive and sustainable tourism industry.

1.2 Tourism Development

Tourism development is the process of establishing and maintaining a tourism industry in a particular location. Key aspects of tourism development include infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, sustainable tourism practices, diversification of tourism offerings and collaborations and partnerships. Traditionally, tourism has been considered an instrument for local development (López-Molina and Pulido-Fernández, 2023), through tourism development we see the infrastructure development, job creation, small business growth and cultural preservation. Tourism development refers to the process of improving and expanding the tourist industry in a certain place or region. It encompasses a wide range of tactics, activities, and investments aimed at attracting visitors, providing delightful experiences, and maximizing the economic, social, and environmental benefits of tourism. Tourism would appear to be an interesting tool to promote a local development strategy capable of harnessing the resources of a territory, which are often left idle or have lost their traditional use (López-Molina and Pulido-Fernández, 2023).

Despite this, research has established that a rise in tourism development can cause negative impacts for locals such as noise, congestion, and security concerns (Gautam and Bhalla, 2024). Other negative impacts such as violence, crime, commercialization, deterioration of indigenous culture, erosion of values, and dilution of society's multicultural identity (Lein et al. ,2023) can

occur too. Undoubtedly this raises a cause for concern when it comes to the development of tourism as these challenges will surely impair locals' quality of life and offset the economic benefits of tourism development. This is particularly significant when it is the locals themselves who play a key role in the authentic tourism experience who are negatively impacted by uncontrolled tourism development. Locals play an important part in enhancing the tourism experience (Gautam and Bhalla, 2024).

Although negative impacts are frequent topics of discussion in tourism development literature, many authors establish the positive impacts it can have in their research too. Tourism development often focusses on a balance of negative with positive impacts through sustainable development approaches. (need reference here). For example, tourism development can play a significant role in reducing poverty, given that appropriate policies are in place to support the growth of sustainable management, which lessens adverse effects and maintains stability over time (López-Molina and Pulido-Fernández, 2023). Local pride is also bolstered, and traditional handicraft is revitalized by tourists (Lei et al., 2023).

1.3 Community-Based Tourism

A method of developing tourism called community-based tourism (CBT) actively incorporates local communities in the organisation, administration, and advantages of tourist related activities in their region (Asker, et al, 2010). In addition to encouraging sustainable development and safeguarding the area's cultural and environmental assets, it seeks to socially, economically and culturally strengthen local communities. By fostering an equitable environment, CBT aims to ensure that tourism operations assist both local residents and tourists in an ethical and sustainable way. CBT seeks to benefit people, the environment, and culture by enabling local communities to take charge of their tourist resources and growth (Salazar, 2017). Several CBT initiatives throughout the world have not produced the expected results because of unfavourable conditions resulting from a complex combination of interconnected social, cultural, economic, and political factors (Seweryn, et al, 2021). In Ireland however, rural development has often made use of CBT and other community-focused sub-disciplines of sustainable tourism, creating a lot of opportunities specifically for those more rural destinations on the west of Ireland (Zielinski, et al, 2020). Some of these opportunities can range from accommodation, bed and breakfast, community halls and small-town festivals. This gives locals a chance to make money by entertaining visitors, bringing them into their homes and gives the community an enhanced feeling of self-motivation and entrepreneurial spirit, due to increased anticipation. Involving the local community in tourism development requires a

planned, sustainable strategy that maximises benefits to the community while minimising potential costs. Comprehensive planning is desperately needed, with a focus on inclusivity and sustainability (Hanrahan et al, 2017).

Destination managers have come to understand that citizens lives can be profoundly changed by actively participating in the community as an incentive for putting sustainable development concepts into practice (Hall et al., 2000). Communities become powerful movers of change who drive long-lasting socio-economic and environmental breakthroughs that directly improve their well-being and means of livelihood via meaningful involvement and participation (Dodds, et al, 2018). Although CBT has the potential to boost the local economy, it shouldn't be seen as the main or exclusive means of meeting all needs in terms of money. This is evident in a study conducted in Thailand, which indicates that CBT should not be viewed as a remedy for a community's financial problems, given that one of its goals is to limit the number of visitors in order to reduce any negative effects (Ping, 2009).

CBT has many advantages, but if it is not handled carefully, it can also have unfavourable effects. For example, excessive tourism frequently encourages the commodification of local culture, turning traditional practices and ways of life into marketable goods that are primarily intended to satisfy the needs of tourists (Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2018). This process erodes the authenticity of cultural activities, lessening their importance in the community and turning them into overcommercialised tourist attractions. The fundamental significance and value that cultural aspects possess for locals run the risk of being dominated by business motives when they are put on the market for profit, which will result in a loss of cultural identity and history (Ernawati, et al, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial that destination approaches towards CBT contain meaningful community participation in the decision-making process guiding tourism development to ensure a sustainable relationship between community and tourism industry.

1.3 Community participation in tourism development

Collaborating with local communities with the aim of developing the local tourism industry can create a strong sense of community pride as they work together to achieve the individual and collective goals of the local community (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Community involvement is an important factor in developing tourism in the local area. Since they are the primary providers of accommodation, tourist services, catering, information, and transportation, locals might be considered the primary forces behind tourism in the area (Fong and Lo, 2015). Tourism success in a destination also often relies on the local community's

input and considerations in decisions that relate to developing local tourism. The local community's involvement in tourism allows them to understand all factors of tourism such as its benefits, potential risks and implications that could affect the quality of the lives of those living within the local area (Purnomo et al., 2020). Communities' involvement in developing tourism will contribute to creating a sustainable tourism offering that will contribute positively to the local community.

Many countries have adopted the concept of Community Based Tourism where local communities become the primary decision maker regarding managing, planning and developing the local tourism industry. The degree of involvement that a community has within the local tourism industry can affect their perception of tourism. Actions such as participating in the decision-making processes, sharing local information and knowledge, and committing to supporting tourism developments increase the community's involvement and can aid the sustainable development of local tourism (Fong and Lo, 2015). This level of involvement can empower local communities by preserving their culture and protecting the values and beliefs of their society. It also improves societal development as the local communities can utilise new infrastructure and facilities that have been created to promote tourism activities (Arintoko et al., 2020). Community involvement in tourism can benefit local society as well as their tourism industry and offerings (Giampiccoli and Saayman 2018). When the benefits of tourism like so are communicated clearly with the local population, communities are more likely to support and become more involved in developing the tourism industry (Gannon et al., 2021). Consequently, communities stand to gain if they comprehend the advantages of tourism and take part in its development.

1.4 Heritage tourism

Heritage Tourism is where visitors travel to destinations to engage with the heritage of a destination, the UNWTO stated that heritage tourism is a fascination into a destination's natural history, art, philosophy, and background of a destination (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Heritage tourism has become one of the most sought-after forms of tourism in the present day. For example, according to the Heritage Council (2017) visitors coming to Ireland primarily come to experience the scenery and the heritage sites, these visitors predominately come from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, USA and domestic travellers. This indicates that the importance of maintaining heritage sites in Ireland is significant to the Irish Economy. This was proven as in 2010, overseas tourists who engaged in with Irish heritage brought over €2

billion to the Irish economy and in 2014, domestic travellers brought €1.46 billion to the Irish economy (Heritage Council, 2017).

Heritage is developed by local residents and is made up of tangible and intangible assets (UNESCO, 2024). The tangible assets include monuments, landscapes, literature, and arts, while intangible assets include folklore, traditions, festivals, sporting events, gastronomic elements, and the language. Heritage is also made up of natural heritage which includes culturally significant landscapes such as archaeological discoveries and biodiversity.

The UNESCO World Heritage Sites have been more consumed by visitors since this status has developed (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). The aim that UNESCO have for these sites is that they sustain their individual level of value which has become difficult as sites are more vulnerable due to the effects of urbanisation, neglect, climate change, natural disasters and world conflict (UNESCO, 2024). There is significant need to protect local heritage, this can be helped through the funding of grants from the Heritage Council to support the heritage protection across Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2022). The procedure to gain UNESCO World Heritage status is to be nominated which involves an evaluation if the destination meets a list of criteria, this is then presented to the sovereign state of the territory and is submitted to individuals who evaluate the nominees, this ensures the longevity of Sligo's heritage. Once selected and classified as an official heritage site, there are changes which have to be made such as; being actively monitored and managed, and there is a presumption that they will be granted funding so these changes can be implemented (Harrison, 2010). UNESCO listings bring more visitors to a destination due to the strong reputation developed with this accreditation. For example, Sligo's passage tombs have been given approval to be nominated to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sligo's Passage Tombs include Queen Maeves Cairn, Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetary and Carrowkeel. Specialists have campaigned for the conservation of these sites in the hopes of being listed as a leading destination, which would inevitably attract more tourists to Sligo (Mc Donagh, 2021).

1.5 Sustainable heritage tourism development

Successfully developing heritage tourism can be a difficult task. For example, factors such as conflicts with conservation goals, tourist visitation limits and local resident opinions are complex issues to solve without conflict. Sustainability is a concept that encompasses the responsible and balanced use of resources to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves considering the economic, social, and environmental impacts of our actions to ensure long-term viability

and resilience of systems (UCLA,2023). Sustainable heritage tourism development seeks to strike a delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage sites, promoting economic growth, and fostering social inclusivity. It aims to conserve the integrity and authenticity of historical landmarks and traditions while providing meaningful experiences for visitors. By actively engaging local communities in decision-making processes and ensuring their equitable participation in tourism benefits, it strives to empower marginalized groups and promote social cohesion. If preservation goals are sidelined and deemed not as important and business goals to exploit heritage gradually grow places can lose their cultural identity and core relics (GGI,2024).

Tourism relies on many external factors. Heritage tourism relies on community involvement, partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders and local businesses. These factors are crucial for sustainable development (Jamal et al, 1995). Mann (2000, pp.28) states that “community involvement can make distributing benefits and costs more efficient and more equitable”. Community involvement in sustainable heritage tourism involves complete participation of all relevant stakeholders in decision-making and co-ownership of responsibilities and benefits (Li, 2015).

Sligo is full of different heritage tourism destinations. For example, Caves of Keash, Ladies Brae, Split rock and Aughris Head to name some. All of these are natural destinations, which, if not adequately considered within strategic sustainable destination goals underpinned through meaningful conservation measures to create a harmonious relationship between heritage and tourism consumption, tourism may damage the very heritage attractions it relies on. Armstein (1969) used a ladder to understand and define community involvement with different levels. These levels are defined by firstly, how stakeholder groups collaborate with another whether passively or actively, second, how much the community participates in decision making, thirdly, the extent to which the community shares in benefit and the responsibilities and fourthly how power is distributed between stakeholder groups when decisions are made.

Heritage tourism and sustainable development work well together, heritage tourism is looked upon by some as an influential means of sustainable development as one of the world’s largest creators of jobs and income generators for some countries (Brooks et al., 2023). Thus, tourism as a sector has a lot of added value to any country including Ireland. The relationship between heritage conservation and tourism can be a massive issue in Ireland and surrounding countries, as tourism helps countries build and increase cash flow to support the conservation of heritage (Lai, 2020). Hence, the entwinement of tourism and heritage can go down a shaky path of

tourism forgetting heritage for financial gains, but Ireland hopes there is a way out and conservation of rich Irish culture can persevere.

Heritage tourism has found itself on the agenda of many countries including Ireland (Ghisoiu et al, 2018). Thus, Ireland and other countries find heritage a crucial factor in the tourism sector. Countries have recognized that Heritage tourism has many positive factors for identity formation, social and cultural development but also for the commercial benefit (Ghisoiu et al, 2018). Hence, why Ireland and other countries have put heritage tourism on their agenda, heritage tourism reminds a community of their culture and highlights their culture to benefit their economy through tourism footfall. Heritage tourism is frequently regarded with rapid developments in tourism. Heritage and tourism often clash in what is distinguished and portrayed to be their ultimate objectives, one focuses on aims to protect the specific environment and the other is focused on creating cash flow utilizing a country's heritage (Lai, 2020). Hence, heritage site managers find themselves in between conservation and commodification, swaying towards conservation can disturb the economic potential and swaying towards economic benefits with less thought to the conservation and environments may lead to damaged sites and a lack of community support for tourism development.

1.6 Sustainable socio-economic tourism development

Tourism contributes significantly to economic growth and well-being in destinations by creating jobs, promoting essential cross-cultural interactions, and producing large amounts of income (Naseem, 2021). However, unchecked expansion may also result in negative effects towards tourist destinations (Barakazi, 2023). Sustainable socio-economic tourism development is an effective method of managing tourism that aims to balance social equity, economic growth, and environmental preservation in the areas where tourism is occurring (Zolfani, et al. 2015). Furthermore, sustainable socio-economic tourism development promotes the development of tourism experiences that protect and preserve natural and cultural resources while optimising benefits for local communities (Amoiradis, et al. 2023).

Sustainable tourism development from an economic standpoint requires making sure that the advantages for nearby communities are not only maximised but also sustained over time and distributed fairly (Bayrak, 2013). Furthermore, tourism has a big role in generating economic opportunities that directly help the local population, such as jobs and income, which help to reduce poverty and diversify the economy (Bires, et al. 2020). Therefore, there is a need for strategies that not only attract visitors but also ensure that the economic gains circulate within the local economy rather than leaking out (OECD, 2020). Moreover, implementing policies

that put the welfare of host communities first while simultaneously promoting economic growth and a comprehensive awareness of local contexts is necessary for sustained economic development in the tourism industry (OECD, 2017).

Social sustainability is important to ensure that tourism development benefits local communities and fosters positive relationships between visitors and hosts (Dimitrova, 2018). Furthermore, involving local communities in decision-making procedures not only resolves possible disputes but also gives them the ability to take charge of tourism development projects (Bello, et al., 2018). Moreover, this participation can result in more equal and inclusive outcomes as well as more collaboration and support from locals (Riyanto, et al. 2023). Additionally, cultural tourism, intertwined with social sustainability, not only plays an important role in encouraging appreciation and fostering pride in local heritage but also acts as a catalyst for inclusive community development, promoting social inclusion, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, through meaningful interactions between visitors and local communities, tourism initiatives also contribute to community well-being (Nocca, 2017). Therefore, prioritising initiatives that improve social ties, protect cultural assets, and improve the general well-being of host communities is important for sustainable tourism development (Coccosis, 2018).

Environmental sustainability is important in maintaining the natural resources and ecosystems that underpin tourism attractions (Han, 2021). Moreover, Fáilte Ireland (2013, 2024) highlights the significance of implementing sustainable practices to reduce adverse effects on the environment, including pollution, habitat destruction, and resource depletion. This may include implementing measures to reduce energy and water consumption, minimise waste generation, and promote sustainable transportation alternatives (Department of Justice and Equality, 2019). Furthermore, Sun, et al. (2020) discuss the environmental implications of travel, highlighting the need for strategies to reduce carbon emissions and promote eco-friendly travel options. Overall, tourism destinations can safeguard their natural resources and guarantee that future generations can continue to enjoy them by placing a high priority on environmental sustainability. Therefore, sustainable tourism development requires careful management of environmental resources and a commitment to minimising negative impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity (United Nations Environment Programme, World Trade Organisation, 2005). Furthermore, addressing the environmental effects of travel in line with initiatives to promote sustainable socio-economic development emphasises how important it is for tourist locations to give environmental sustainability a top priority in their management strategies.

The integration of economic, social, and environmental factors into planning and management procedures is a comprehensive strategy required to achieve sustainable socio-economic tourism development (UNWTO, 2018). Sopiana, et al. (2023) emphasise the significance of comprehensive planning to tackle the interdependence of these aspects and foster collaborations among them. This entails including stakeholders in cooperative decision-making procedures and creating integrated plans that strike a balance between conflicting agendas and interests (Catiani, et al. (2016). Additionally, Ariana, et al. (2022) emphasise the role of collaboration among stakeholders are essential for achieving common sustainability goals. Thus, by fostering partnerships between government agencies, local communities, businesses, and tourists, destinations can use their collective expertise and resources to implement effective sustainability initiatives and ensure the long-term viability of the tourism industry (World Tourism Organisation, 2018).

1.7 Conclusion

The literature review has explored the multifaceted nature of tourism development, examining its potential benefits and drawbacks, with a particular focus on community-based tourism (CBT) as a sustainable alternative. Tourism development has the potential to be an effective instrument for regional development, promoting economic expansion by means of employment generation, infrastructural advancement, and assistance for local enterprises. Through the display of traditional items and rituals, tourism can also support local pride and the preservation of culture. Uncontrolled tourism growth, however, can have unfavourable effects as well, such as deterioration of the local culture, noise pollution, traffic, and the environment. Moreover, CBT has emerged as a promising approach to mitigate the negative impacts of traditional tourism development models. Local communities can actively be involved in the management, planning, and advantages of tourism activities in their area because of CBT. In addition to empowering local communities and promoting the preservation of cultural and environmental heritage, this can promote fairer distribution of benefits. However, it must be carefully planned and carried out to guarantee that they are genuinely sustainable and away from traps associated with cultural commodification.

Heritage tourism draws tourists to historical places and cultural events, which generates substantial economic advantages, but unchecked development might endanger the legacy that it aims to preserve. Moreover, active community involvement, ethical management techniques, and an emphasis on maintaining the authenticity of historical and cultural sites are necessary for the development of sustainable heritage tourism. In addition, managing the intricate

interactions between tourism growth, community well-being, and environmental integrity necessitates the adoption of sustainable socio-economic tourism development. It enables tourist destinations to profit from tourism while maintaining their distinctive identities and guaranteeing their permanency by balancing economic prosperity, social equity and environmental responsibility. In conclusion, the growth of tourism can offer locations many benefits but also difficulties unless it prioritises community-based initiatives, sustainable practices, and a fair assessment of economic, social, and environmental aspects.

2.0 Research Methods

2.1 Introduction

Developing a comprehensive methodology to evaluate community participation in heritage tourism in Sligo is imperative. To ensure the reliability and validity of the methodology, the researchers will provide a detailed and thorough overview of their research approach and procedures. This will include an explication of the research approach, questionnaire design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The research will employ a quantitative approach, and a survey questionnaire will be administered using non-probability convenience sampling. To analyse the data and achieve research objectives, a specially designed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet will be utilized. The researchers will also address ethical considerations and research limitations before concluding the methodology.

2.2 Research Title

An Exploration of Heritage Tourism Development through Community Participation in Sligo

2.3 Research Question

An Exploration of Heritage Tourism Development through Community Participation in Sligo?

2.4 Research Aims and Objectives

The goal of this research is to investigate how Sligo can develop heritage tourism through community participation. This study aims to achieve goal 5 of the County Sligo Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2030, which is to develop Sligo's exceptional heritage, creative sector, and tourism potential sustainably. To accomplish this research goal, the following objectives have been established:

- Conduct a review of international literature on community participation and heritage tourism development.
- Explore local community perceptions of heritage tourism development in Sligo.
- Investigate practical measures for meaningful community participation in heritage tourism development in Sligo

2.5 Research Approach

This study used a quantitative approach and a structured questionnaire aimed at the community of Sligo, especially those who express an interest in tourism, heritage and sustainability. Research studies can be more reliably conducted with a quantitative methodology. This is so that results can be more broadly applied to the entire population or a particular subset. Quantitative findings are obtained from a bigger, randomly selected sample. Due to this topic being very distinct in terms of research, the researchers began with a more broad amount of

information, covering topics such as community-based tourism which would allow the researchers to, in time, gather more in depth data to relate to Sligo. By using a structured questionnaire, the effort to address important components of community engagement for heritage development in Sligo was effective. The choice to utilise a quantitative strategy instead of a qualitative one was based of the quantitative technique’s basic characteristics of organisation, consistency, and targeted research. The project created a strong foundation for data collection by using a methodical questionnaire, which allowed for a detailed analysis of the most important issues related to heritage development. This method made it easier to gather quantitative data, which enabled accurate measurement and examination of the opinions and preferences of the population. Thus, a quantitative method offered a strong platform for fully comprehending and addressing the complexity of community participation for heritage development in Sligo by placing an emphasis on precision in heritage and sustainability.

2.6 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was developed after careful evaluation of the literature to ensure that it addressed the most recent developments related to the research topic. These questions aimed at investigating the opinions in the community regarding participation for heritage tourism development in Sligo (Table 1), such as ‘What do you consider the most important element of Sligo’s heritage?’.

No.	Question
Q1	How important do you rate the protection of heritage of a destination from tourism development perspective?
Q2	What do you consider the most important element of Sligo’s heritage?
Q3	How important is sustainable tourism development in balancing the preservation of Sligo’s heritage with its tourism potential?
Q4	How would you rate the level of sustainability in current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo?
Q5	Please comment of the level of sustainability in current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo?
Q6	How important do you believe community involvement is in the sustainable development of the local tourism industry?
Q7	Are you satisfied with the extent of host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo?
Q8	How can tourism in Sligo achieve a balance between social well-being, economic growth, and environmental preservation within tourism development?
Q9	What approaches do you think are required for Sligo to achieve sustainable tourism development?
Q10	Any other comments?

Table 1: Questionnaire contents

As the questionnaire was specifically designed for Sligo all of the questions were suited to the community for example, ‘How would you rate the level of sustainability in current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo?’. There were also questions that allowed the participant to express their thoughts such as, ‘Please comment on the level of sustainability in

current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo?'. For many of the questions, the researcher used a Likert scale, which gave them the understanding that it offered in-depth insights into concerns pertaining the engagement for heritage tourist development in Sligo.

2.7 Sampling

In order to fulfil the research aim and achieve the goal of 50 respondents, the researchers invited 50 volunteers to answer the questionnaire on their thoughts on tourism and development in Sligo. Studies demonstrate how tourism is promoted as reliable means of utilizing the natural resources already available in an area (López et al, 2023). Using the non-probability sampling strategy, the researchers approached members of the Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN) during the Fair Seas event at the Sligo Park Hotel on March 14th 2024. The researchers distributed paper questionnaires face to face during the of the event in Sligo. This approach has several benefits notably in interacting directly with possible participants and stakeholders in the tourism development process. The location was selected as the conference strategically to appeal to a members of the Sligo PPN. The researchers were able to get feedback, preferences and insights from guests who are actively participating in or interested in tourism projects by handing out paper questionnaires. The questionnaire was also distributed to the Sligo PPN through an internal email database, as well as the Sligo PPN website where only valid members of the Sligo PPN could participate. Sampling guarantees representative data gathering to efficiently guide the decision-making process. A more thorough knowledge of community needs, goals and obstacles regarding tourism development is made possible by this sample technique.

2.8 Data Collection

Data collection through questionnaires is a popular technique for getting answers, thoughts and information from participants on a range of subjects and for the purpose of this study the researchers chose to conduct a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire usually consists of a set of questions intended to elicit answers concerning the study's goals. Surveys have several benefits, its cost-effectiveness, scalability, and adaptability. Depending on the target audience and the objectives of the study, they can be conducted in a variety of ways, including paper-based, online and through interviews. For the purpose of this study the researchers chose paper-based surveys collected face to face, while also having an online version distributed to the Sligo PPN members through email and website where only valid members of Sligo PPN could participate through membership numbers. Surveys allow researchers to gather data that is either quantitative or qualitative in character, contingent upon the type of questions posed. However,

to guarantee validity, reliability, and respondent engagement, survey design, distribution and analysis must be carefully considered. To acquire survey data that is representative and valuable for research decision making, careful preparation, clear communication and proper sampling methodologies are necessary.

2.9 Data analysis

For this research, the method of data analysis used by the researcher was statistical analysis. Statistical analysis is a set of methods used to analyse specific data gathered by the researcher for their research topic (Portocarrero Sarmiento, Costa 2019). Hence, this method involves collection, handling and analysing the data relevant to the research question. The aim of statistical analysis is to create information to get a better understanding of the research questions results. Once the data had been collected the researcher had prompt it into a excel spreadsheet to further their knowledge of the findings. The researcher used the data analyse function in excel spreadsheet to analyse the data inputted. The analysed all the questionnaires questions and created charts which made it easier to understand. Data was then interpreted by the researcher to extract findings which may have been discussed in literature. This allowed the researcher to create conclusions and construct recommendations to be put forward.

2.10 Research Limitations

The researcher during this research faced some limitations that constrained the research project from its potential findings. The researcher collected questionnaires from participants within a limited geographical area. The geographical area was confined to Co. Sligo because of the restricted timeframe and researcher being a student with limited travel options without taking public transport which wasn't time efficient. This meant that the researchers' findings were confined to Co. Sligo creating a limitation for the researcher. If the researcher was to expand their geographical area for future research, they would increase the knowledge collected adding variety to the research of community participation for heritage tourism development in Co. Sligo. This would be advantageous for future research and would diminish the research limitation for future studies.

2.11 Ethical Considerations

To protect the privacy of all voluntary respondents that took part in the questionnaire, it was important to complete the ethics application to adhere to ethical standards while the researcher completed the study. Ethical standards within the study ensured all participants had guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, a secure storage of data collected from them, consent forms from each respondent, a participant information sheet explaining the research, what the

participant must do and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed participant consent was important for this research and what the participants role in the research means. The research also went through the School Research Ethics Committee (SREC) ethics application process.

2.12 Conclusion

The entire methodological strategy for this research has been outlined in this chapter. The inspiration that influenced this research is to understand how the community feel about community participation for heritage development in Sligo. For this research it was important for the researchers to choose the best data gathering strategy to answer the research question. The researchers opted to use a structured questionnaire aimed at the community in Sligo to gather quantitative primary data. Probability non-purpose sampling was implemented as the most suitable data collection method. Additionally, the primary data gathered from respondents was complimented by secondary data to assess and understand tourist's responses. It was also outlined how all procedures were followed to ensure the research followed ethical standards and guidelines and that all participants had guaranteed full confidentiality and anonymity. It was made clear to participants that the protection of their privacy was vital and ethical issues were given top priority in this study.

3.0 Data analysis

3.1 Introduction

This section of the research examines the primary data gathered from respondents of the survey. In this section it will be established how important tourists believe the protection of certain aspects of tourism in general and specifically the protection of elements that Sligo offer to tourists. The research scrutinizes the imperative of safeguarding Sligo's cultural essence amidst tourism development pressures, emphasizing the intrinsic value of heritage preservation. By evaluating tourists' perceptions of sustainability and the significance of community involvement, the study sheds light on effective strategies for achieving a balanced tourism ecosystem. Through a holistic approach that considers social, economic and environmental factors, Sligo can aspire to sustainable tourism development that not only protects its heritage but also enhances local well-being and fosters responsible tourism practices. This analysis seeks to provide actionable insights to guide Sligo towards a future where heritage preservation and tourism prosperity go hand in hand.

3.2 Heritage tourism development in Sligo

The survey results indicate a substantial majority (88%) consider the protection of destinations from tourism development as highly important, with the remaining portion (12%) rating it as moderately important (Figure 1). There are several factors that may contribute to these responses. Respondents may prioritize destination protection to conserve natural landscapes, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems threatened by tourist-related activities such as construction, pollution, and habitat destruction.

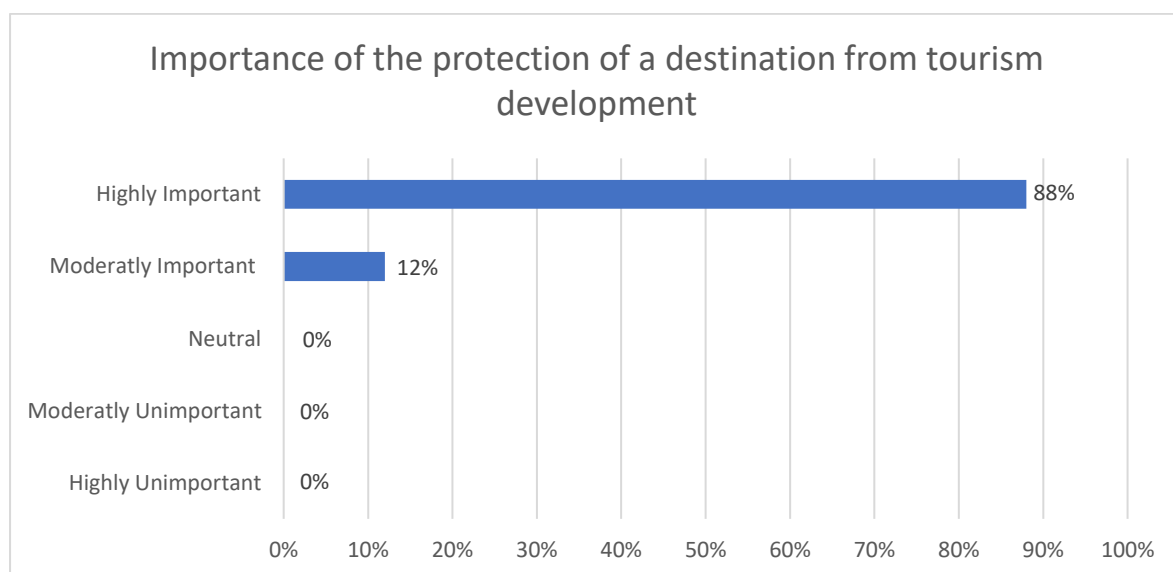


Figure 1: Importance of the protection of a destination from tourism development

Additionally, the preservation of cultural heritage sites and indigenous communities may be a significant concern. Tourism development can lead to cultural commodification, loss of authenticity, and disruption of traditional way of life. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating destination protection measures into tourism planning and policy-making processes. One recommendation for addressing this issue may be to develop and impliment robust destination management plans that prioritise sustainability and include measures for destination protection. Another recommendation may be to engage stakeholders, including local communities, businesses and government agencies, in decision making processes to ensure their perspectives and interests are represented.

The research gathered indicates that monuments and landscapes received the substantial highest percentage (78%) of responses, indicating that a significant portion believe this to be how Sligo's heritage is primarily defined (Figure 2). This suggests that historical landmarks and natural scenery play a crucial role in shaping Sligo's cultural identity. The notably high percentage (70%) of respondents who chose biodiversity highlights the importance of the regions ecological diversity. It also suggests that preserving Sligo's diverse flora and fauna is considered integral to its heritage. Culturally significant landscapes hold a high proportion (50%) of respondents votes. This category shows that many respondents respect landscapes with cultural importance, such as those related to historical events or traditions. It implies an awareness for the interplay of culture and geography in defining Sligo's history.

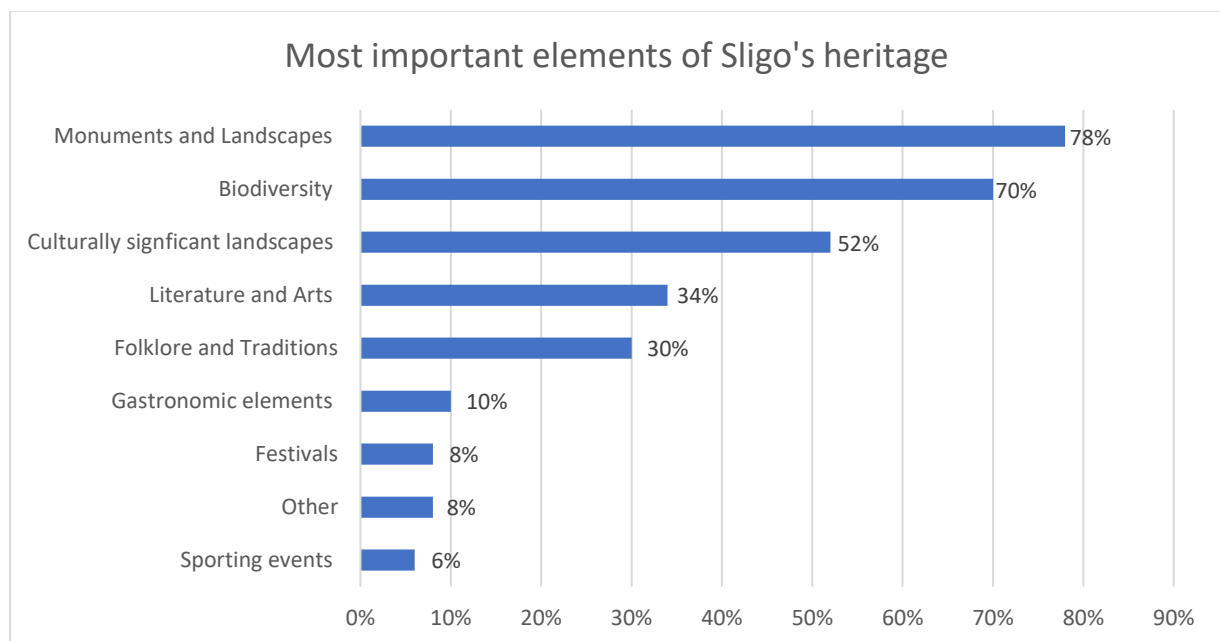


Figure 2: Most important elements of Sligo's heritage

While not as highly ranked as monuments, landscapes, and biodiversity, a significant portion (34%) of respondents still recognize the importance of literature and arts in Sligo's heritage (Figure 2). Sligo's contributions to literature and visual arts play a role in attracting visitors and bringing in higher tourism figures. Similarly, folklore and traditions are considered significant (30%) by a notable portion of respondents, indicating an appreciation for the cultural customs and oral traditions that have been passed down through generations in Sligo. Facilities such as pubs, galleries and community centers are vital for the spread and retaining of stories and traditions. While relatively low (10%) compared to other categories, the presence of gastronomic elements on the list suggests that some respondents value the culinary heritage of Sligo, including traditional dishes and food-related traditions. Events such as food festivals and taste tours could help to boost the interest in gastronomic elements within Sligo. Festivals received a relatively low (8%) vote from respondents. This could show that while they may contribute to Sligo's heritage respondents don't view them as the most important aspect.

3.3 Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo

It is clear from the data shown below (Figure 3), that majority of respondents (90%) believe that it is highly important for sustainable tourism development in the preservation of Sligo's heritage. This demonstrates a clear understanding of how important sustainability is to preserving Sligo's cultural legacy. The overwhelming majority indicates that the public majority favours environmentally friendly methods of preserving cultural assets. It suggests a sincere desire to make sure that the actions and methods used to preserve Sligo's legacy are long-lasting and do not jeopardise the preservation of the natural environment.

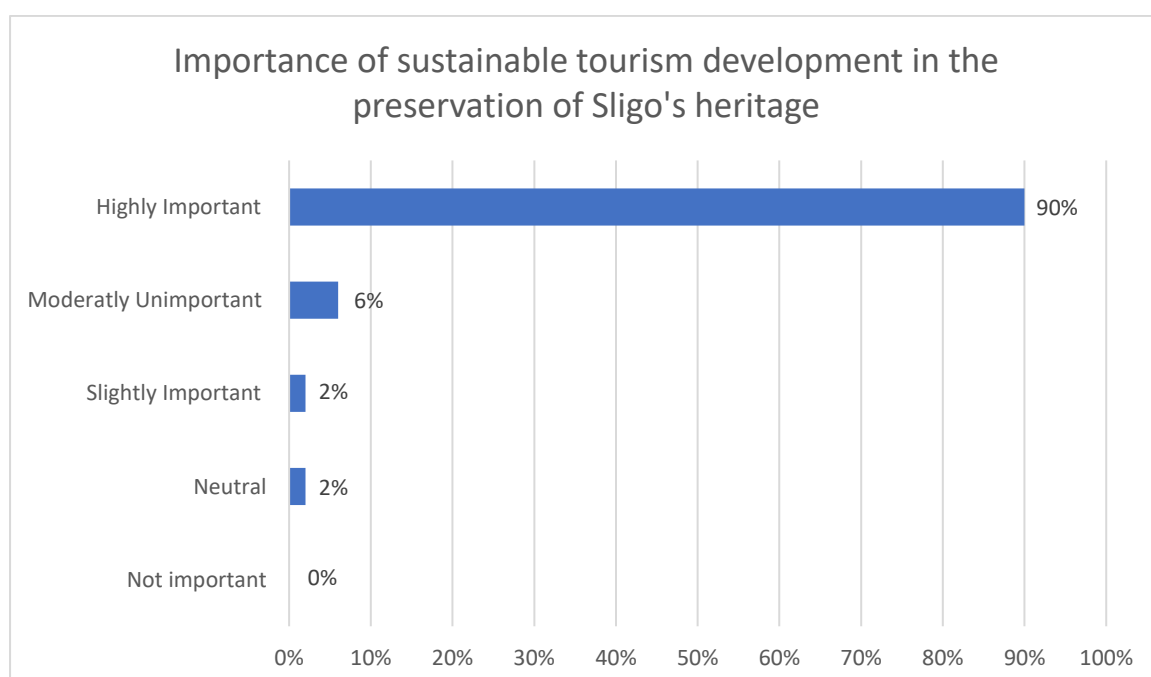


Figure 3: Importance of sustainable tourism development in the preservation of Sligo's heritage

The smaller percentages (6%) showcase a different opinion and understanding of the importance of sustainable tourism development in the preservation of Sligo's heritage. This may stand for various viewpoints within the community (Figure 3). It's likely that some respondents (2%) believe that sustainable development is less important for preserving cultural assets than others do. The existence of various viewpoints emphasises how crucial it is to communicate and provide information in order to create a common understanding of the role that sustainability plays in the preservation of heritage.

For the purpose of this research, it was important to analyse respondent's opinions regarding the level of sustainable approaches in community-based tourism in Sligo (Figure 4). A distinct number of respondents (84%) believe that there is a moderate level of sustainability in this sector. This is a positive outcome for the community involved in tourism in Sligo as their sustainable actions are recognised by the public. Sligo's communities' efforts to ensure tourism are benefiting the economy as well as the social, cultural and environmental factors of the destination are recognised and appreciated by many respondents. Community based tourism's dedication to sustainability will encourage further community involvement to enhance sustainability further to gain long term benefits.

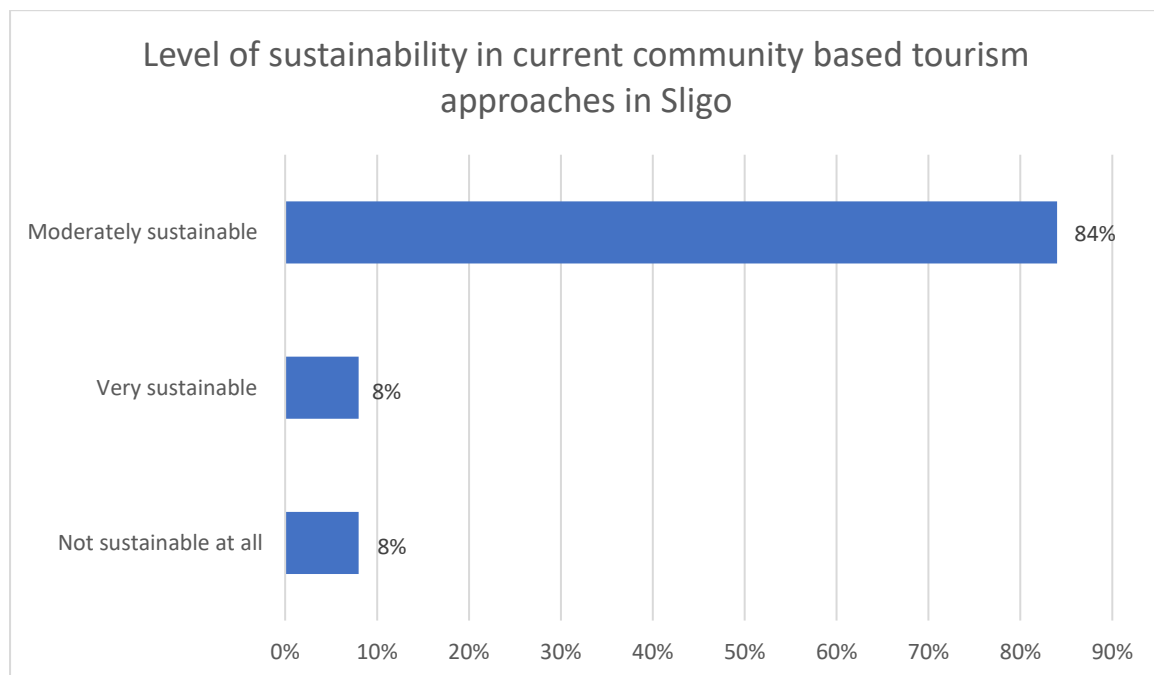


Figure 4: Level of sustainability in current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo

The research gathered also indicates that a significantly low level of respondents (8%) believes that the sustainability in community-based tourism in Sligo is very sustainable (Figure 4.). Although this number is quite low it still shows that the sustainable actions taken by the community are still appreciated by the respondents. However, this is overshadowed by a concerning low number of respondents (8%) who believe that community-based tourism is not sustainable at all. This is a worrying number as the respondents do not believe that sustainable practices are mitigating the negative impacts of tourism. This could then lead the community to resent and become unsupportive tourism to their locality.

3.4 Community Participation in Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo

This research determined that a substantial percentage (84%) of respondents indicated the importance of community involvement in the sustainable development of local tourism (Figure 5). This suggests that the respondents consider community participation to be a crucial factor in the successful implementation of sustainable tourism practices. This outcome is consistent with the existing literature that highlights the significance of community involvement in tourism development, as it helps to ensure that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably among community members. It is noteworthy that given the growing awareness of the potential impact of tourism on the environment, culture, and society.

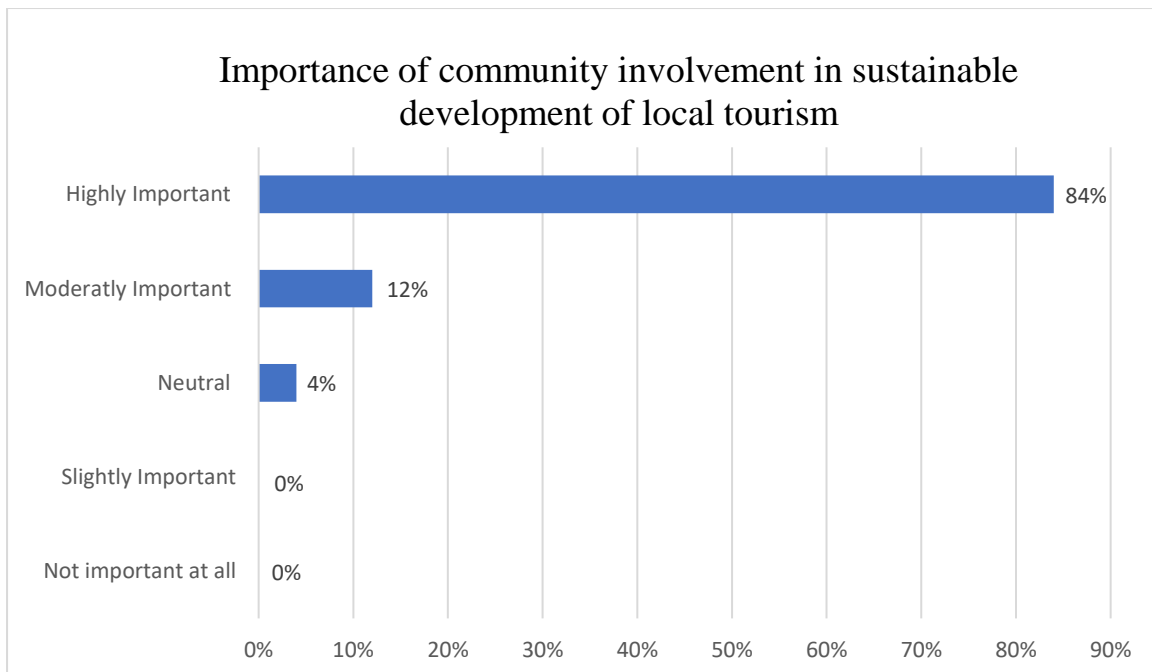


Figure 5: Importance of community involvement in sustainable development of local tourism

Furthermore, a considerable percentage (12%) of respondents indicated that it is moderately important (Figure 5). This finding is in line with the growing awareness among community

members about the environmental impact of tourism and their desire to engage in sustainable tourism. The respondents recognize the detrimental effects of over-tourism on the local environment and are motivated to take action to mitigate it, thus safeguarding the natural resources of their communities. Also, there is a low percentage (4%) indicating neutral suggesting that they may not perceive the rationale for participating in local tourism developments. It is plausible that they hold the view that the responsibility for sustainable practices lies with the local council or private companies and, therefore, may not be convinced of the value of their involvement. Additionally, zero percentage (0%) of respondents indicated slightly important. This finding highlights that community members want to get involved in Developing local tourism sustainably. This echoes with zero percentage(0%) of respondents indicating that it is not important at all. It shows that they are committed and that they value the practice of sustainable development and local areas for tourism

During this research it was important for the researcher to understand the satisfaction with host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo. A concerning percentage (70%) of respondents did not know if they were satisfied with the host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo (Figure 6). This finding highlights a highly inconclusive level of satisfaction among locals and their input and participation in tourism development decisions that affect them. Furthermore, this high response to “Don't know” could also indicate a shortfall of awareness of host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo. This may well mean that the actual level of host community involvement is low and thus could exclude the key stakeholders within important decision making for tourism development on Sligo. For example, community involvement in development decision-making can provide an impetus to help promote sustainable developments, engaging with residents will help tourism develop in a way that respects the environment, culture and social structures within the community.

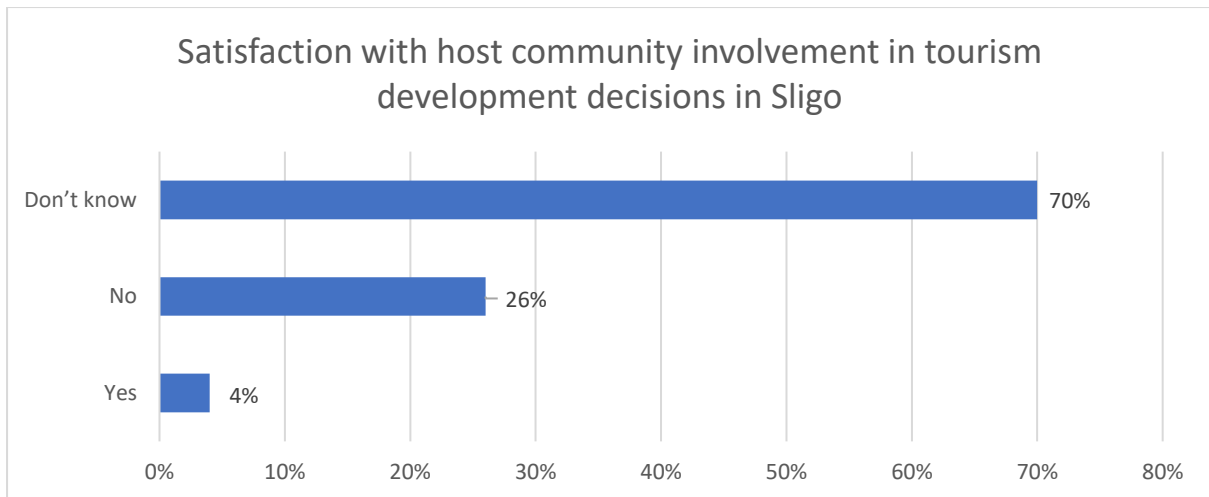


Figure 6: Satisfaction with host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo.

Another concerning finding was the significant percentage (26%) of respondents said no to being satisfied with the host community's involvement in tourism development decisions (Figure 6). This suggests that there is a shortfall of host community involvement in decision-making when it comes to tourism development decisions in Sligo and lead to a misalignment of tourism development goals between host community and tourism planners. If the tourism officers want to develop tourism with no issues from the community, the community needs to be involved in the development, so they feel they are part of the ongoings in their place of home. In contrast, just a small percentage (4%) indicated that they are satisfied with the host community's involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo. This concerningly low level of satisfaction indicates a disconnect between the host community as key stakeholders in Sligo as a destination, and tourism planners. This concern emanates from the need for a harmonious relationship between host and tourist, which is at risk due to a clear lack of host community participation or input in tourism development decisions in Sligo.

From the results on the balance of tourism in Sligo between social well-being, economic, growth and environmental preservation within tourism development, a significant percentage (36%) responded with increasing community awareness regarding tourism in Sligo (Figure 7). This shows the important role that local-residents have in shaping and sustaining the tourism industry. Moreover, it suggests that there is a desire with the community members that they want to know about the impacts of tourism in their surroundings. Therefore, by prioritising community awareness, these individuals are likely to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents towards the tourism sector which will lead to promoting a more sustainable and inclusive approach to development. Additionally, there was a substantial

percentage (31%) of respondents that chose for the monitoring of progress towards sustainable tourism in Sligo. This suggests that there should be a commitment to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism do not have a negative effect on the environment or the community. Furthermore, it shows that accountability and long-term planning is important in tourism development. Thus, by implementing ongoing assessment and evaluation of tourism practices, these individuals are likely to identify areas of improvements which can be made utilised.

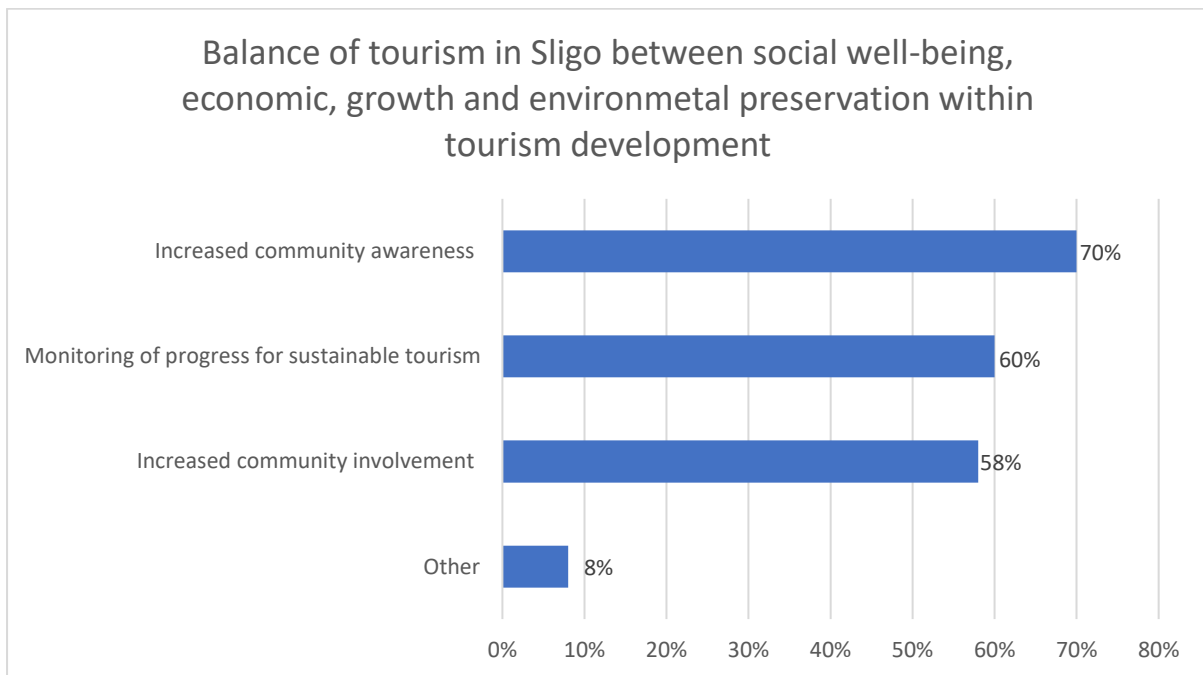


Figure 7: Balance of tourism in Sligo between social well-being, economic, growth and environmental preservation within tourism development

The findings also identified a notable percentage (29%) which highlighted the importance of increased community involvement in tourism development in Sligo (Figure 7). This suggests that residents have the desire to have an active role in the decision-making process and to also have a voice on how tourism impacts their community. Thus, by advocating for increased community involvement, these individuals are likely to promote a sense of ownership, which will foster a more inclusive and collaborative approach to the development of tourism in Sligo. In addition, a minor percentage (4%) of respondents mentioned other. This suggests that there may be other considerations that needs to further acknowledgement and understanding to achieve a balanced approach to tourism in Sligo.

3.5 The Future of Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo

From the findings, a considerable percentage (76%) responded to providing incentives for businesses and tourists to adopt sustainable practices in Sligo's tourism sector (Figure 8). This

suggests that there is recognition on the importance of sustainability, but there may be some barriers that are preventing the adoption of sustainable practices. Furthermore, it highlights the need for policies and/or initiatives that promote sustainability but also give benefits for those who want or choose to participate. In addition, a noteworthy percentage (60%) highlighted the importance of stakeholder collaboration within tourism planning approaches in Sligo. It shows that there is importance in fostering partnerships and shared responsibility to develop inclusive and effective strategies that address the needs and interests of all stakeholders involved. Therefore, by prioritising collaboration, Sligo can obtain insight and resources from all the stakeholders to create sustainable tourism initiatives that benefit both the environment and the community.



Figure 8: Required approaches for Sligo to achieve sustainable tourism development

With the findings, it showed that a notable percentage (52%) of respondents emphasised that it is necessary to provide opportunities for stakeholders to share their ideas in Sligo's tourism planning processes (Figure 8). Furthermore, it shows the significance of communication and the exchange of knowledge to foster sustainable development. It also reflects the awareness that different perspectives and ideas are essential for developing comprehensive and effective strategies that align with the community. Hence, by providing opportunities, Sligo could have the ability to gain insight from the stakeholders which could lead to more informed decision-making and the co-creation of sustainable tourism initiatives. Additionally, a noticeable percentage (50%) of respondents highlighted the importance of campaigns that are aimed at raising awareness about sustainable development among stakeholders in Sligo. This highlights the need to create a culture of sustainability by increasing awareness and further understanding of the importance of developing a sustainable tourism industry with the stakeholders.

Therefore, by launching campaigns that raise awareness about sustainable practices and their benefits, Sligo could empower stakeholders to make informed decisions and act towards a more sustainable tourism industry.

3.6 Conclusion

The findings from the questionnaires identified an understanding about Community Participation for Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo which included sustainable tourism development being of key importance. This research led to conclusions that there are significant opportunities for local stakeholders to further enhance tourists and local's expectations by developing policies which ensure they are obeying these expectations, leading to increased satisfaction about Sligo.

4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Introduction

This research has explored key areas around community participation for heritage tourism development in Sligo. Through an assessment of tourist opinions relating to the importance of protection of heritage of a destination, most significant elements of Sligo's heritage, and different preferential approaches required for Sligo to achieve sustainable tourism development. This has developed into numerous findings which emerged from the data collection. It is necessary to discuss the findings in relation to the literature and create recommendations from this.

4.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.2.1 Sustainable tourism development

From the findings of this research there is a noteworthy understanding around the importance of sustainable tourism development in Sligo. This is significant as sustainable tourism development is crucial for preserving the planet and protecting the very natural resources which tourism depends on. Furthermore, such development could entice policy development aimed at decarbonisation (Environmental Protection Agency, 2024). The protection of heritage of a destination from a tourism development perspective has shown to be highly important to majority of individuals. This outlines the need for policies to be developed to ensure the protection of destinations, these policies include the protection of natural landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems threatened by tourist activities such as pollution, construction and destruction. This coincides with the protection of preserving Sligo's heritage in terms of sustainable tourism development, as this deemed to be of significant importance from a community point of view. This identifies an opportunity for local authorities to consider how they grow in the future to ensure they are adhering to community voices and to encourage the development of the destination in a sustainable manner.

There is a clear gap between the level of sustainability in community-based tourism approaches in Sligo and in preserving Sligo's heritage within sustainable tourism development. There is an expected level of sustainability in Sligo from the community as there is an outstanding level of significance in preserving Sligo's heritage and sustainable tourism development yet there is only a moderate level of sustainability in current community-based approaches in Sligo. This is crucial to ensure the community do not begin to resent tourism for the locality. Therefore, there is an immense opportunity for the need to facilitate meaningful community collaboration with Local Authorities and all relevant tourism destination stakeholders to maintain a harmonious relationship between host community and tourism industry. This has the

opportunity to make Sligo a leading sustainable tourism destination which leads to more tourism footfall, which creates more employment and income for the local economy.

4.2.2 Community Involvement

As indicated by the research findings, active involvement of the community holds significant importance in maintaining sustainable tourism within a location. The result of the study shows that community involvement in tourism planning is vital to maintaining the sustainable development of local tourism. From this information, it is clear that community involvement in tourism decision-making is valued by the local population in Sligo. It reassures the community that sustainable decisions will be made to protect the natural landscape, heritage and culture of a destination of which local communities value. This community involvement will also encourage future involvement to enhance sustainability practices and to reach long-term benefits.

This is important as many people consider tourism assets such as monuments, the environment and flora and fauna to be the most important tourism assets available in Sligo. Community involvement also gives the local population control of how their local area will be utilised for tourism and also allows them to voice their opinions regarding tourism practices being introduced to the locality.

Recommendation

Based on the large importance community involvement in tourism, it is recommended that the Sligo community become more engaged with the tourism sector in their locality. Further community involvement in tourism will aid the preservation of many tourism assets such as culture, heritage and the local landscape. Tourist especially valued monuments, natural environment, biodiversity and folklore and traditions. Enhanced community participation can mitigate the risk of destruction of these vital elements, which are crucial to the success of Sligo's tourism industry.

Further community involvement will increase sustainability with regards to tourism. Community involvement in important decision-making processes will allow the community to voice their opinions regarding tourism development. Through this they can ensure the development is sustainable and does not threaten to impact the locality negatively. This will also begin to empower local communities to take pride in their local area. This will also be of benefit to visitors as they interact with the local communities during their visit, allowing them to witness authentic experiences provided by Sligo community. Therefore, creating a stronger

and more sustainable tourism strategy that focuses importance on community involvement can significantly enhance Sligo tourism industry dramatically.

Increasing community involvement in Sligo's tourism industry can protect regional tourism assets and advance sustainability. It can ensure responsible expansion that benefits both visitors and local residents as they gain more control of the decisions that are to be made regarding local tourism in Sligo.

4.2.3 Enhanced Stakeholder and business collaboration

The findings demonstrated that there is a need for sustainability. All parties involved recognised how critical it is to preserve the environment and cultural legacy that are the foundation of Sligo's tourism industry. Thus, recognising the importance of sustainability can create the potential for cooperation and creativity. Stakeholders can co-create a future for Sligo's legacy tourism that is not only economically successful but also environmentally and culturally sensitive by encouraging open communication and a culture of collective responsibility. Another essential component of a sustainable future is collaboration. A considerable segment from the research findings emphasised the importance of stakeholder participation in tourism development. This indicates a shared desire for the creation of inclusive methods and shared responsibilities. Through collaboration, stakeholders can contribute a wide range of viewpoints and assets. Furthermore, this culture of cooperation encourages the development of thorough and practical strategies that meet the requirements and goals of all parties concerned.

The findings also emphasised how crucial it is to promote open communication and knowledge sharing. For well-informed decision-making, a forum where all opinions can be heard must be established. This cooperative setting makes it possible for sustainable projects to be co-created that are advantageous to the community as well as the tourism sector. In addition, attaining sustainable development depends heavily on increasing awareness. The survey's findings highlight the necessity of awareness-raising initiatives that highlight the value of sustainable practices to all parties involved. Through education and awareness campaigns, Sligo may encourage a sustainable culture that will enable stakeholders to actively contribute to the development of a more sustainable tourism sector. Through putting sustainability first, encouraging cooperation between stakeholders, and encouraging open communication, Sligo can develop a flourishing tourism sector that protects its legacy and ensures a bright future for its locals. Moreover, this course of action promises to preserve Sligo's distinctive identity for

upcoming generations while also making the journey to the area more meaningful and enriching for all travellers.

Recommendation

From the findings by the research, recommendations have been created for the use of the board and the community. A recommendation for sustainability could entail putting in place financial incentive schemes that encourage companies and visitors alike to embrace environmentally responsible behaviours. Furthermore, by establishing a strong eco-certification programme, more businesses would be encouraged to participate since it would serve as a badge of environmental responsibility in addition to recognising already sustainable businesses. In addition, creating and distributing educational seminars would provide participants the information and abilities they need to adopt sustainable practices in their areas of influence.

Another recommendation includes promoting teamwork and open communication. This can be done by establishing a physical or digital platform that would work as an essential medium for the communication of stakeholders. This platform would allow a wide range of stakeholders, including businesses, residents, community organisations, and government agencies, to share ideas, best practices, and concerns. In addition, it could also be used to offer a forum for continuing discussions and updates on developments. Thus, having a more thorough grasp of the difficulties and possibilities related to Sligo's sustainable tourist growth can be fostered through open and productive discussions.

Fourth, it's critical to spread the word about the many advantages of sustainable activities. It is recommended that educational campaigns be initiated through many communication channels to enlighten stakeholders on the advantages of sustainable tourism development for the environment, society, and economy. Illuminating the connection between conscientious tourism methodologies and the conservation of Sligo's distinct cultural and environmental assets could strike a chord with interested parties and cultivate a perception of collective accountability for the industry's sustained prosperity.

5.0 Conclusion

The examination of both primary and secondary data has helped to achieve this study's research objectives. The major goal of measuring the development of Sligo's heritage tourism through community involvement was discovered through the numerous aspects highlighted and judged relevant by participants and the study conducted. The researchers gained important insights into participants beliefs, preferences, and actions about community involvement in heritage development. These findings were supplemented and contextualized using secondary data obtained from existing literature and research, resulting in a full picture of the present landscape of heritage development in Sligo. The research revealed several key findings regarding the awareness, motivations and preferences of developing heritage tourism. Furthermore, the study underscored the importance of active involvement from communities and sustainable tourism development. Based on these findings, recommendations were made to encourage active involvement from the community in all aspects of developing heritage sites and tourism and sustainable tourism development such as initiating new policies regarding the development of heritage tourist sites.

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the perceptions and practices surrounding heritage tourism development in Ireland. By uncovering key trends and patterns, the research has laid the groundwork for future efforts to improve community involvement in developing these sites and doing so in a sustainable friendly manner. Through continued collaboration and innovation, it is possible to build upon these findings and create a more community involved and sustainable heritage development plan.

6.0 Bibliography

UNESCO, (2024). 'Tangible and Intangible Heritage'. Available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/tangible-and-intangible-heritage-00097#:~:text=Although%20intangible%20cultural%20heritage%20often,on%20the%20World%20Heritage%20List.>

Government of Ireland, (2022). 'Heritage Ireland 2030: A framework for Heritage'. Available at: file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/216633_d5e7370d-ee0e-41a8-81b5-9bc46bc75e17.pdf

Amoiradis, C., Velissariou, E., Thomas, P. (2023). Overview of Sustainable Development and Promotion in Tourism. *Journal of Economics and Business*. 6. 10.31014/aior.1992.06.03.516.

Ariani, L., Trivellato, B., Martini, M. et al. (2022), Achieving Sustainable Development Goals Through Collaborative Innovation: Evidence from Four European Initiatives. *J Bus Ethics* 180, 1075–1095. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05193-z>

Arintoko, A., Ahmad, A.A., Gunawan, D.S. and Supadi, S. (2020). Community-based tourism village development strategies: A case of Borobudur tourism village area, Indonesia. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 29(2), pp.398-413.

Asker, S.A., Boronyak, L.J., Carrard, N.R. and Paddon, M., 2010. Effective community based tourism: A best practice manual.

Barakazi, M. (2023), Unsustainable Tourism Approaches in Touristic Destinations: A Case Study in Turkey, *Sustainability* 15, no. 6: 4744. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15064744>

Bayrak, G.Ö. (2013). Sustainable Tourism. In: Idowu, S.O., Capaldi, N., Zu, L., Gupta, A.D. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-28036-8_654. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Bello, F. G., Lovelock, B., & Carr, N. (2018). Enhancing community participation in tourism planning associated with protected areas in developing countries: Lessons from Malawi. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 18(3), 309–320. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26478290>

Bires, z., Raj, S. (2020), Tourism as a pathway to livelihood diversification: Evidence from biosphere reserves, Ethiopia, *Tourism Management*, Volume 81, 104159, ISSN 0261-5177, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104159>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Cantiani, M.G.; Geitner, C.; Haida, C.; Maino, F.; Tattoni, C.; Vettorato, D.; Ciolli, M. (2016), Balancing Economic Development and Environmental Conservation for a New Governance of Alpine Areas. *Sustainability*, **8**, 802. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8080802>

Coccosis, H. (2008). Cultural heritage, local resources and sustainable tourism. *IJSTM*. 10. 8-14. 10.1504/IJSTM.2008.020340. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220399023_Cultural_heritage_local_resources_and_sustainable_tourism. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Council of Europe (2020), Cultural heritage management for local and regional development. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/cg-cur-2020-15-03-en-cultural-heritage/16809f9fbd>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Department of Justice and Equality. (2019). Measures taken to minimise waste and maximise recycling. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/46226/2fda29b8789148f9833ab5bab983755f.pdf>

Dimitrova, M. (2018). Sustainability in Tourism Enterprises Social Sustainability. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354342996_Sustainability_in_Tourism_Enterprises_Social_Sustainability (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Dodds, R., Ali, A. Galaski, K., 2018. Mobilizing knowledge: Determining key elements for success and pitfalls in developing community-based tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(13), pp.1547-1568.

Environmental Protection Agency, (2024). 'Ireland's Environment: Sustainable Economy'. Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/sustainable-economy/#:~:text=Through%20integrating%20sustainable%20policies%20into,environment%20and%20our%20critical%20resources>.

Ernawati, N.M., Sudarmini, N.M. and Sukmawati, N.M.R., 2018. Impacts of Tourism in Ubud Bali Indonesia: a community-based tourism perspective. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 953, No. 1, p. 012078). IOP Publishing.

Fáilte Ireland. (2013). Environmental Sustainability in Business. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/1_StartGrow_Your_Business/Environmental-Sustainability-in-Business-BT-ESB-C9-0913-4.pdf. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Fáilte Ireland. (2024). 'Driving Sustainable Development' Industry Briefing 2024. Available at [Fáilte Ireland - Driving Sustainable Development | Industry Briefings](#) (Accessed 23 February 2024)

Fong, S.F. Lo, M.C. (2015). Community involvement and sustainable rural tourism development: Perspectives from the local communities. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 11, pp.125-146.

Gannon, M., Rasoolimanesh, S.M. and Taheri, B. (2021). Assessing the mediating role of residents' perceptions toward tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(1), pp.149-171.

Ghisoiu, Mihaela & Bolan, Peter & Gilmore, Audrey & Carruthers, Clare. (2018). Conservation and co-creation through film tourism at heritage sites: An initial focus on Northern Ireland.

Giampiccoli, A. and Saayman, M., (2018). Community-based tourism development model and community participation. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(4), pp.1-27.

Giampiccoli, A. and Saayman, M., 2018. Community-based tourism development model and community participation. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(4), pp.1-27.

Hall, D.R. and Richards, G. eds., 2000. *Tourism and sustainable community development* (p. 1). London: Routledge.

Han, H. (2021), *Consumer behavior and environmental sustainability in tourism and hospitality: a review of theories, concepts, and latest research*, Routledge, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, volume 29, number 7, Pages 1021-1042, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1903019>, (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Hanrahan, J. Maguire, K. Boyd, S. (2017). Community engagement in drive tourism in Ireland: case study of the Wild Atlantic Way, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12:5, 509-525, DOI: [10.1080/1743873X.2016.1242594](https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2016.1242594)

Harrison, R., 2010. What is heritage. *Understanding the politics of heritage*, 9

Lai, L.W.C. (2020) 'Sustainable development of heritage conservation and tourism: A hong kong case study on colonial heritage', *Sustainable Development*, 28(5), pp. 1181–1188. doi:10.1002/sd.2067.

López-Molina, D. and Pulido-Fernández, J.I. (2023). Proposal to measure tourism development within a destination and segment its different territories. *Heliyon*, [online] 9(10), p.e20496. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20496>

Mc Donagh, M. (2021) 'Sligo passage graves a step closer to destination as a UNESCO Heritage Site'. *The Irish Times*, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/sligo-passage-graves-a-step-closer-to-designation-as-unesco-heritage-site-1.4734700>

Naseem, S. (2021), The Role of Tourism in Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from Saudi Arabia, *Economies* 9, no. 3: 117. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9030117>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Nocca F. (2017), The Role of Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Development: Multidimensional Indicators as Decision-Making Tool. *Sustainability.*; 9(10):1882. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9101882>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

OECD (2017), Policy Statement - Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. Available at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/OECD-Policy-Statement-Tourism-Policies-for-Sustainable-and-Inclusive-Growth.pdf>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

OECD. (2020), Rethinking Tourism Success for Sustainable Growth, Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/rethinking-tourism-success-for-sustainable-growth_82b46508-en.pdf?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fcomponent%2F82b46508-en&mimeType=pdf. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Ping, W.J., (2009) Community-based ecotourism development in northern Thailand.

Purnomo, A., Idris, I. and Kurniawan, B., 2020. Understanding local community in managing sustainable tourism at Baluran National Park–Indonesia. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 29(2), pp.508-520. DOI 10.30892/gtg.29210-485

Rasoolimanesh, S.M., Jaafar, M., Ahmad, A.G. Barghi, R., (2017). Community participation in World Heritage Site conservation and tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 58, pp.142-153.

Riyanto, Iqbal, M., Supriono, Fahmi, M., Yuliaji, E., (2023), The effect of community involvement and perceived impact on residents' overall well-being: Evidence in Malang

marine tourism, Cogent Business & Management, volume 10, number 3, pages 2270800, Cogent, O.A, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2270800>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Salazar, N.B., 2017. Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. In *Tourism and Poverty Reduction* (pp. 131-144). Routledge

Sopiana, Y., Harahap, M. (2023), Sustainable Urban Planning: A Holistic Approach to Balancing Environmental Conservation, Economic Development, and Social Well-being. Available at: <https://wsj.westscience-press.com/index.php/wsis/article/view/87>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Sun, Y., Lin, P., Higham, J. (2020), Managing tourism emissions through optimizing the tourism demand mix: Concept and analysis, *Tourism Management*, Volume 81, 2020, 104161, ISSN 0261-5177, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104161>.

The Heritage Council, (2017). 'An introduction to developing a sustainable tourism sector in your historic town: Tourism for Towns'. Available at: [https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/ Tourism_for_towns_995kb.PDF](https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Tourism_for_towns_995kb.PDF)

Timothy, D.J. & Boyd, S.W. (2003). *Heritage tourism*. Harlow: Pearson Education

UNESCO (2021), Cutting Edge | Bringing cultural tourism back in the game, Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-bringing-cultural-tourism-back-game>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

UNESCO World Heritage Centre (2024). 'World Heritage Partnerships for Conservation'. Available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>


United Nations Environment Programme, World Trade Organization (2005), Making Tourism more Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers, Available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/8741;jsessionid=F0FB420766FA5E3120C1AE286BD42DB9>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

World Tourism Organisation (2018). Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers. Retrieved from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284408214?download=true>

Zielinski, S. Jeong, Y. Milanés, C.B. (2021). Factors that influence community-based tourism (CBT) in developing and developed countries, *Tourism Geographies*, 23:5-6, 1040-1072, DOI: [10.1080/14616688.2020.1786156](https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1786156)

Zielinski, S., Jeong, Y., Kim, S.I. Milanés, C. B. (2020). Why community-based tourism and rural tourism in developing and developed nations are treated differently? A review. *Sustainability*, 12(15), p.5938.

Zolfani, S., Sedaghat, M., Maknoon, R., Zavadskas, K. (2015), Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications, *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, volume 28, pages 1-30, Routledge, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.995895>. (Accessed 20th February 2024)

Official Use: Questionnaire code: _____ Date: _____	Community Participation for Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo	 Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh Atlantic Technological University
---------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

You are being invited to participate in this research project and I am required to provide a consent Form to receive your consent to participate and to convey that participation is voluntary. You are welcome to ask me any questions you may have. The data for this project will be kept confidential. The purpose of this research is to find out about Community Participation for Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo.

- In ticking the consent box I agree to volunteer to participate in this research study being conducted
- I confirm I am over the age of 18 and I consent in participating in this research

“Tourism development is the process of developing strategies and plans to increase/develop/encourage tourism in a particular destination.” (Abir & Khan, 2022, P41)

1. How important do you rate the protection of heritage of a destination from tourism development perspective?

Highly important	
Moderately important	
Slightly important	
Neutral	
Not important	

2. What do you consider the most important element of Sligo’s heritage (Please select top 3)?

Monuments and Landscapes	
Folklore and Traditions	
Biodiversity	
Culturally significant landscapes (archeological discoveries)	
Language	
Gastronomic elements (food)	
Festivals	
Literature and Arts	
Sporting events	
Other	

Please elaborate: _____

3. How important is sustainable tourism development in balancing the preservation of Sligo’s heritage with its tourism potential?

Highly important	
Moderately important	
Slightly important	
Neutral	
Not important	

Please elaborate: _____

“Community based tourism is a community development tool that strengthens the ability of rural communities to manage tourism resources while ensuring the local community's participation” (APEC, 2009, p4)

Examples of Community based tourism include locally produced arts and crafts, local tour guides, local food and beverage tourism offerings.

4. **A.** How would you rate the level of sustainability in current community-based tourism approaches in Sligo

Very sustainable	
Moderately sustainable	
Not sustainable at all	

B. Please elaborate on your answer: _____

5. How important do you believe community involvement is in the sustainable development of the local tourism industry?

Highly important	
Moderately important	
Slightly important	
Neutral	
Not important	

6. **A.** Are you satisfied with the extent of host community involvement in tourism development decisions in Sligo?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

6.B. If no, please elaborate why? _____

7. How can tourism in Sligo achieve a balance between social well-being, economic growth, and environmental preservation within tourism development? (Please tick all that apply)

Increased community involvement in Local Authority tourism decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased community awareness around sustainable tourism development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring of progress for sustainable community socio-economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify): _____

8. What approaches do you think are required for Sligo to achieve sustainable tourism development? (select all that apply)

Stakeholder collaboration within tourism planning approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide opportunity for stakeholders to share ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incentives for businesses and tourists to adopt sustainable practices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campaign to raise awareness about sustainable development among stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify): _____

9. Any other comments?

Thank you for your participation.

