sustainability

MDPI

Article

Do Inhabitants' Perceptions Support Tourism Sustainability? The Case of Khorramabad in Iran

Mousa Pazhuhan (Panahandeh Khah) [1], Nabi Moradpour [2], Bahar Beishami [3], Rando Värnik [4], Yenny Katherine Parra-Acosta [5], Rytis Skominas [6], Maryam Pour [7] and Hossein Azadi [7,*]

1 Independent Resilience Researcher, Tehran 1418733516, Iran; pajoohan82@gmail.com
2 Department of Human Geography, University of Tehran, Tehran 1418733516, Iran; nmoradpoor@ut.ac.ir
3 Department of Tourism, Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (RICHT), Tehran 1418733516, Iran; baharbeishami@gmail.com
4 Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Chair of Rural Economics, Estonian University of Life Sciences, 51014 Tartu, Estonia; rando.varnik@emu.ee
5 Business Administration, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, Bogotá 110111, Colombia; yenny.parra@unimilitar.edu.co
6 Institute of Hydraulic Engineering, Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy, 53361 Kaunas, Lithuania; rytis.skominas@vdu.lt
7 Department of Economic and Rural Development, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège, 4000 Liège, Belgium; maryam.pour@uliege.be
* Correspondence: hossein.azadi@uliege.be; Tel.: +32-(0)9-264-46-95; Fax: +32-(0)9-264-49-85

Abstract: The present study attempted to examine the impact of inhabitants' perceptions and local community participation on supporting sustainable tourism development. The goal of the current study was to determine how local community involvement and local views affected the development of a sustainable tourism industry. Inhabitants' positive/negative perceptions and local community participation had direct but differential effects on supporting sustainable tourism development. Findings revealed that positive perceptions of residents affected their support for tourism development at twice the rate than their negative perceptions did, which indicated their higher readiness for participating in the tourism development process. Moreover, findings showed that using 16 latent variables to form a structural model and a path analysis method was good enough in terms of covering the research questions and analyzing the dataset.

Keywords: sustainable tourism development; community support; Social Exchange Theory; path analysis; factor analysis

check for updates

Citation: Pazhuhan, M.; Moradpour, N.; Beishami, B.; Värnik, R.; Parra-Acosta, Y.K.; Skominas, R.; Pour, M.; Azadi, H. Do Inhabitants' Perceptions Support Tourism Sustainability? The Case of Khorramabad in Iran. *Sustainability* **2023**, *15*, 10926. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151410926

Academic Editor: Colin Michael Hall

Received: 29 April 2023
Revised: 23 June 2023
Accepted: 7 July 2023
Published: 12 July 2023

1. Introduction

Sustainable urban tourism seeks improved quality of life in the host community, observing inter-generational equality within a generation and social solidarity among the societies and having support of local community for development of tourism in a way that fulfills visitors' satisfying experiences and residents' support [1,2]. As Sharpley argued, the eventual success of tourism and the destination is dependent upon balanced and meaningful tourist–host relationships [3]. Thus, one of the basic elements of sustainable urban tourism is the protection by and participation of the host society, which is a necessary prerequisite for the development of sustainable tourism [4]. Meanwhile, the residents' community perception of tourism's impacts has been an important topic among authors dealing with tourism development since the 1980s [5–11].

Tourism's role in diversification of the urban economy and urban cultural and social growth is undeniable [12–15]. However, increasing concerns from both the personal interests of host communities and the broader interests of the local communities have led to the need for deeper and sustainable tourism planning by which all concerns can be addressed equitably and legitimately [16,17].

In sustainable tourism planning, residents' opinions about tourism and visitors have a big impact on whether they support and even take part in the growth of the tourism industry. Therefore, the host community and their support for tourism development are inevitable parts of any effort toward sustainable tourism development [11,18,19]. There are several studies that have examined the impacts of locals' attitudes on tourism in terms of host community perceptions.

In a case study in Portugal in the Guimarães region, using cluster analysis, Vareiro et al. [20] divided the host community into clusters based on their perception of the effects of tourism and concluded that due to the negative impacts of tourism, the value of these activities had decreased dramatically in the host community. Rahmawati et al. [21] examined local participation in the historical area of Gresik in Indonesia, concluding that some factors that are related to social capacity, including daily and occupational activities of the local communities in the vicinity of historical places and their involvement in holding annual ritual ceremonies, have a considerable role in positive perceptions of tourism. Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar, and Ramayah [9] studied the effect of a host community's perceptions on their support for urban and rural tourism in Indonesia using structural equation modeling. They found that the host community's positive perceptions were the same in urban and rural structures, and there was no significant difference between the two. Eshliki and Kaboudi [22] conducted a study to examine the relationship between the effects of tourism on the quality of life of local communities and the quality of their participation in the tourism development plans in Ramsar, Iran. They discovered that tourism had an impact on the quality of life of the citizens, and there was a strong relationship between the factors influencing the quality of life and the level of their participation. In another study, Šegota et al. [23], in Slovenia, investigated the role of social awareness in the host community regarding sustainable tourism development from environmental, economic, and social perspectives using an experimental model. They found that the higher social awareness and local participation are, the more positive the perceptions of tourism will be. They finally proposed a participatory model for managing tourism destinations. Using a qualitative study, Lin and Simmons [16] investigated the impact of local community involvement on tourist planning in southern China. They concluded that structuralized intra-network collaboration that is supported by local state institutions and the private and public sectors can be the dominant local participation paradigm in tourism planning in this area.

To summarize, all scholars have come to the conclusion that the host society in any city or community might have negative or positive perceptions of tourism depending on different factors [9,20,21,24,25].

Although the role of inhabitants' perceptions in sustainable tourism has been well documented by various scholars in the current literature [19,26–33], little has been done in regard to inhabitants' perceptions in terms of the relationship between positive/negative perceptions and their participation level in sustainable tourism development, particularly in Iran's touristic cities. More importantly, this study's fundamental contribution to the existing tourist literature is the use of Social Exchange Theory to investigate the relationship between people's opinions and tourism sustainability, which has been disregarded in most studies as a valid theoretical framework. As regards domestic studies, even though some scholars have focused on citizens' perceptions, their attention has been concentrated mainly on issues such as inhabitants' attitudes toward subjective happiness, cultural heritage, or rural tourism development (e.g., Rezaei [34]; Zamani-Farahani [35]; Bahaee, et al. [36]; and Rastegar [37]). Therefore, in the Iranian tourism literature, the link between residents' perceptions and promoting sustainable tourism has been disregarded. To fill this gap, this study will model the data obtained during the field study to investigate the local community's perspectives of tourism. In addition, this article investigates the impacts of residents' perception on their support for sustainable urban tourism development.

2. Theoretical Framework

The importance of host communities' perceptions of tourism and their role in the behavior of residents toward tourists, especially, and tourism development, generally, has been reflected in a wide range of related literature since the 1980s [1,6,19,38–41]. Furthermore, as Šegota, Mihalič, and Kuščer [23] and Látková and Vogt [41] pointed out, investigations into resident perspectives and support for the development of tourism since 1990 have shown that residents who perceive personal benefits from tourism tend to have a greater awareness of positive tourism impacts and thus are more in favor of the development of sustainable tourism. What is more, a review of local community participation literature suggests that inhabitants' perceptions have a considerable role in sustainable tourism development and serve as a determinant factor in tourism planning (e.g., Vareiro, Remoaldo, and Cadima Ribeiro [20] in Portugal; Kapera [25] in Poland; Rahmawati, Supriharjo, Setiawan, and Pradinie [21] and Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Kock, and Ahmad [10] in Indonesia; Eshliki and Kaboudi [22] in Iran; and Šegota, Mihalič, and Kuščer [23] in Slovenia). Overall, all scholars have come to the conclusion that host communities might have negative or positive perceptions of tourism depending on different factors.

2.1. Sustainable Tourism Development and Local Community Support

A comprehensive definition of sustainable tourism development asserts that it must fully account for its present and potential economic, social, and environmental implications while satisfying the requirements of tourists, industry, environment, and host communities [42–44]. Moreover, sustainable tourism development requires 'the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders' [23,45]. Residents' support for tourism development is a significant precondition believed to impact the sustainability of any tourist destination [18,32,46–51]. The perceptions of the host community's influence on tourism encourage social interaction, boost tourist growth, and provide sustainable urban tourism [40]. Understanding the positive effects on their community encourages inhabitants to support the development of tourism while understanding the negative effects that prevent them from supporting it [3,34].

This shortcoming, which is caused by the top-down and centralized planning method, which is practiced in most developing countries, influences the local communities' perceptions and their participation in tourism development [22]. Awareness of these communities' perceptions of tourism and tourists influences the outcomes of planning in this sector, and, as pointed out by Zhang et al. [52], awareness of the local community's perceptions can minimize possible conflicts of interests between tourists and local residents. However, the factors affecting these perceptions and also the nature and structure of these effects vary across societies. Among these factors, the social structures of local communities have a considerable effect on their ability to absorb values and the values presented by the tourists [22]. Economic benefits are another stimulating factor in this respect, which have been investigated in various studies (e.g., Mathieson and Wall [53]; Demiroz and Ongan [54]; Louca [55]; Akama and Kieti [56]; Lee and Chang [57]; Burns and Fridman [58]; Ahadian [39]; Shipley and Snyder [59]; Kodera [60]; and Thyne, Watkins, and Yoshida [1]). As concluded by Harrill [61] and Dyer et al. [62], economic benefits mean more support from the local communities as development of tourism is the result of a balance between economic benefits and cultural and environmental costs in a way that these benefits compensate for the costs and bring satisfaction. In addition, the role of local governments in inhabitants' perception of tourism is very important because there is a general consensus that governments and local institutions provide the ground for tourism development, not the international tourism organizations [39,55,63,64].

Another important factor is the attempt to promote close cooperation between local inhabitants, tourists, and the public sector [31,39,50,65,66]. In this regard, a number of studies examining the influences of local residents' opinions on supporting and participating in the development of tourism have made use of the Social Exchange Theory (SET) [30].

2.2. Social Exchange Theory and local Inhabitants' Perceptions

SET provides a valuable framework for understanding individuals' decision-making processes when engaging in social interactions. SET proposes that people assess the costs and benefits associated with their interactions and are more likely to engage in interactions that bring them the greatest benefits and the fewest costs [67,68]. This theory was initially introduced in the early 1960s and has since gained widespread acceptance across various disciplines. Its fundamental assumption is that individuals tend to act in ways that serve their own interests and maximize their potential for personal gain [69].

While SET traditionally focuses on individual dyadic relationships, it also offers insights into intergroup interactions. This is important because social exchanges can occur on a larger scale between groups as well [67]. By examining the exchange of benefits and values, SET helps streamline the understanding of how these exchanges shape individuals' attitudes and behaviors. As a result, SET has been applied to a wide range of research studies on perceptions and support for tourism development [32,58,68–74]. SET is commonly used by tourism researchers to explain citizens' attitudes and support for tourism activities [7,67,75].

SET is considered a fundamental framework for various methodologies and approaches that rely on the host community's evaluation of the anticipated costs and benefits of tourism [5]. According to this theory, residents of a society determine the extent of their support based on the benefits and costs associated with tourism, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental considerations. Consequently, community engagement in tourism development and marketing is frequently motivated by specific members' desires to improve the economic and social conditions of their town [76]. Engaging in the process of tourism development can enhance residents' awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism, thus influencing their level of support for further development [76]. This is why SET has garnered significant attention from tourism researchers, as it suggests that residents are generally willing to exchange the potential benefits of tourism development for economic gains [58]. However, if residents perceive that the costs outweigh the benefits in the tourism development process, they are likely to express opposition [77].

In the present study, SET was selected as the theoretical framework due to its relevance to the host community's perception of the effects of tourism, which serves as the basis for the study. The conceptual model of the research, depicted in Figure 1, illustrates the relationships between inhabitants' perceptions, social participation, and support for tourism development in Khorramabad.

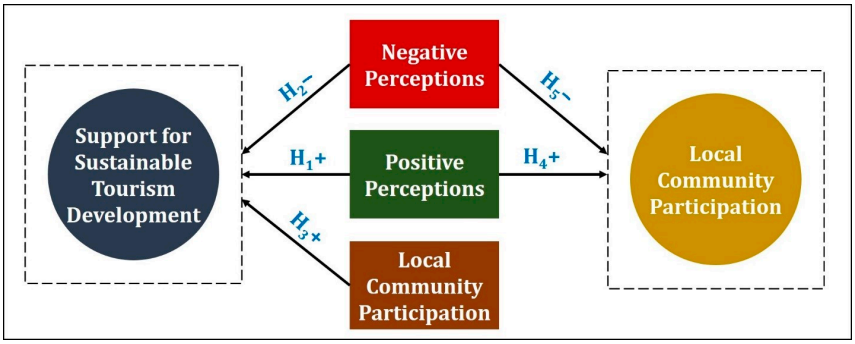

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

By concentrating on the Khorramabad case study, the direct and indirect effects of residents' perceptions on supporting tourism development through social participation (i.e., the mediating role of social participation in the inhabitants' perceptions and support for tourism development) were examined. The present study seeks to answer the main question 'To what extent do inhabitants' positive and negative perceptions affect local community participation and people's support for tourism development in Khorramabad?' Regarding this question, the following hypotheses are set up (Figure 1):

H1: *Inhabitants' positive perceptions have a significant effect on support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad.*

H2: *Inhabitants' negative perceptions have a significant effect on support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad.*

H3: *Local community participation has a significant effect on support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad.*

H4: *Inhabitants' positive perceptions have a significant effect on their local community participation in support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad.*

H5: *Inhabitants' negative perceptions have a significant effect on their local community participation in support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

Lorestan Province lies in western Iran, and its ancient history is connected with that of the rest of the Ancient Near East; in the third and fourth millennia BC, migrating tribes settled in the resistant area of the Zagros Mountains [78,79]. Khorramabad is the main city and the center of the province, and it is the most populated and first destination of tourists in the province since the most tourist traps are concentrated in the city and surrounding areas (Figure 2) [80]. Khorramabad has a unique communicative, strategic, and economic value due to its location in the province on the Tehran–Khuzestan route. Khorramabad's economy is comprises agro-industry, steel, power plants, animal husbandry, and agriculture, in addition to industries and key factories such as petrochemical facilities [81]. In terms of economics, it serves as the agriculture sector's regional hub. In 2016, there were 373,416 people living in the city as a whole. Speaking Luri-e Khorramabadi is common. The dialects of Laki, Luri, and Farsi are all widely spoken here. Most residents of this city practice Shia Islam [81]. Having considerable tourist traps, Khorramabad is quite scenic and possesses several attractions, such as five Paleolithic cave-dwelling sites. The historic valley of Khorramabad was one of the main centers for human life during the pre-historic period due to good weather conditions and intersections with ancient paths from north to south and west to east [82].

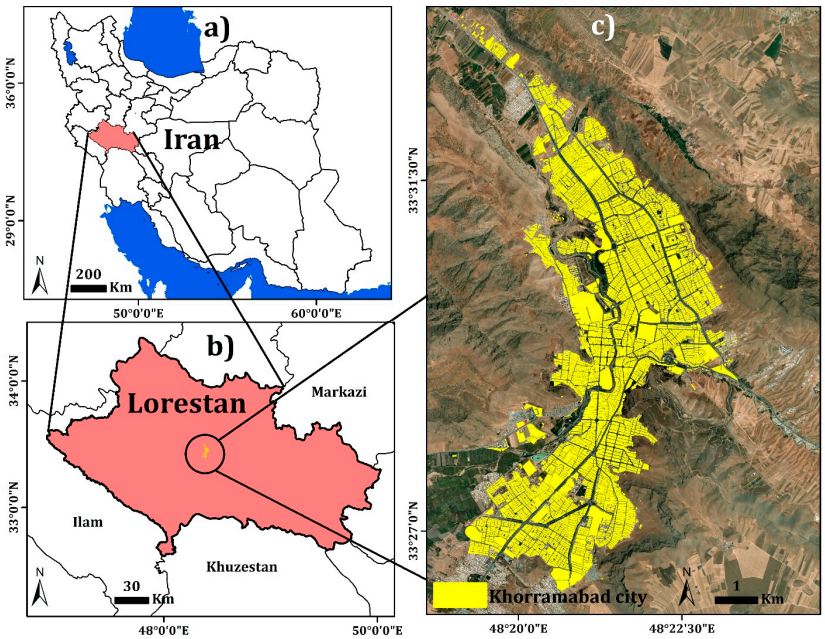

Figure 2. Position of the area under study (**c**) in Iran (**a**) and Lorestan Province (**b**).

3.2. Measurement and Analytical Methods

In order to address the research hypotheses, the present study used a combination of descriptive-analytic and inferential statistics methods. The descriptive method was used to describe Khorramabad residents' perceptions about tourism. Path analysis was used to identify latent different variables that measured residents' perceptions. In structural models, path analysis employs standardized coefficients from multivariate regression. It demonstrates which path is more vital or noteworthy. The path coefficients are computed using standardized (regression) coefficients [83,84]. In the path analysis, correlation between variables does not imply causation, and even though path diagrams are repetitive, path models are based on correlations and cannot prove causation or show direction of a causal effect (83). Therefore, this test is neutral and has no specific bias in measuring relationships between variables.

For obtaining the main estimations of the coefficients, there is a need to refer every dependent variable (endogenous latent variable) to the variables that are directly influenced by it. These coefficients are produced by formulating structural equations, or equations that specify the framework of a model's proposed connections. Only the variables that have been observed can be used for path analysis. Four latent variables—positive views, negative perceptions, engagement in the local community, and support for the development of sustainable tourism—were examined in the current study. A questionnaire was used to find out if people had good (four items) or negative (four items) attitudes of local participation (four items) and support for tourist development (four items). The residents of Khorramabad were included in the statistical population; this city had 373,416 inhabitants in 2016 [85]. Random sampling was the sample technique utilized in the investigation. Additionally, the sample size was determined to be 383 using Cochran's method, which was also used to estimate the sample population. The socioeconomic makeup of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents.

Gender	Number	Percentage	Age	Education	Job
Female	153	40	18–65	90% had a bachelor's degree or above, and 10% had a diploma or lower.	60% were unemployed, 30% had a permanent job, and 10% had a temporary job.
Male	230	60	18–65	80% had a bachelor's degree or above, and 20% had a diploma or lower.	60% were unemployed, 30% had a permanent job, and 10% had a temporary job.

Validity of the questionnaire was assessed based on experts' panel, and its reliability was confirmed based on Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, convergent reliability, z significant coefficients, R2 criterion, Q2 criterion, and general fitting of the model (GoF1 criterion). According to the data analysis algorithm in the SPLS method, after obtaining the factor loadings of the questionnaire items, there is a need to calculate and report Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability of the constructs (latent variables), and convergent reliability. Considering the fact that the desired values for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be 0.7, 0.7, and 0.5, respectively (42), and considering the fact thatall the latent variables had acceptable weights, reliability and validity of the study were confirmed.

The researchers administered the questionnaires in five days in the mornings and evenings referring to the area under investigation. The questionnaire items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 indicating 'Totally Agree' to 1 representing 'Totally Disagree'. The collected data were analyzed using PLS-SEM 4 software.

4. Results

4.1. Factor Load Analysis

After developing the conceptual model using SPLS software, factor loadings of the observable variables (questionnaire items) of the model were calculated. The criterion value for the factor loading coefficients was found to be 0.4 [86]. As shown in Table 1, all the questionnaire items had a factor loading coefficient higher than 0.4. This shows to what extent the observable variables (questionnaire items) are correlated with the latent variables of positive perceptions (four items), negative perceptions (four items), local community participation (four items), and support for tourism development (four items). According to Table 2, there is a significantly high relationship between the questionnaire items and the latent variables, which confirms the model's accuracy.

Table 2. Factor loading coefficients of the questionnaire items.

Inhabitants' positive perceptions	Tourism development creates more jobs in my community.	PP1	0.85
	Tourism development attracts more capital to my community.	PP2	0.76
	Our standard of living increases due to tourism development.	PP3	0.86
	Tourism development provides more infrastructure and public facilities such as roads, shopping facilities, etc.	PP4	0.76
Inhabitants' negative perceptions	Local inhabitants suffer from living in a tourism area.	NP1	0.74
	Tourism development causes traffic, noise, and pollution.	NP2	0.82
	Tourism development increases the cost of living.	NP3	0.75
	Tourism increases the crime rate.	NP4	0.75
Local community participation	Inhabitants participate in tourism planning.	CP1	0.86
	Inhabitants have been involved in the decision making related to tourism development and preserving tourism attractions.	CP2	0.71
	My opinion has been often sought on tourism development and planning.	CP3	0.51
	My opinion has been sought on the projects for preserving monuments attracting tourists.	CP4	0.60
Support for tourism development	I believe tourism should be actively encouraged in the society.	SUP1	0.80
	I want to support tourism, and I want to turn it into an important part of my community.	SUP2	0.83
	The government and the local authorities should support the promotion of tourism.	SUP3	0.63
	Long-term planning by the authorities in Khorramabad can help to control the negative effects of tourism on the environment.	SUP4	0.70

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Reliability

After obtaining factor loadings of survey items, the data analysis procedure in the SPLS technique states that it is necessary to compute and report Cronbach's alpha, the composite reliability of the constructs (latent variables), and convergent reliability. The reliability and validity of the study were confirmed when taking into account that the ideal values for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be 0.7, 0.7, and 0.5, respectively, and when taking that into account, as shown in Table 3, all the latent variables had acceptable weights.

Table 3. The values related to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and convergent reliability.

Latent Variables	**Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Alpha > 0.7)**	**Composite Reliability Coefficient (Alpha > 0.7)**	**(AVE > 0.5)**
Inhabitants' positive perceptions	0.826	0.883	0.655
Inhabitants' negative perceptions	0.771	0.850	0.587
Local community participation	0.739	0.834	0.560

4.3. Divergent Validity

According to Table 4, the AVE root values of the latent variables in the main axis of the matrix are higher than their [87]. This indicates that, in the current study, the model's constructs (latent variables) have a higher frequency of interaction with their respective indicators compared to other constructs. Therefore, it is desirable for the model's reliability to diverge.

Table 4. Validity Assessment Matrix using Fornell and Larcker's method.

Variable	Inhabitants' Positive Perceptions	Inhabitants' Negative Perceptions	Local Community Participation	Support for Tourism Development
Inhabitants' positive perceptions	0.810			
Inhabitants' negative perceptions	0.807	0.766		
Local community participation	0.692	0.649	0.748	
Support for tourism development	0.361	0.367	0.404	0.685

4.4. Examining the Fitting of the Structural Model

The structural model's fit has been evaluated using three criteria: z-value, R2, and Q2. The z-value is calculated by dividing the regression coefficient by its standard error. If the magnitude of the z-value is too large (either too positive or too negative), it suggests that the associated actual regression coefficient is not 0, and the corresponding *X*-variable is important [88]. Three values, including 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67, are used to signify weak, medium, and high R2, respectively, in the R2 criteria, which quantifies the influence an external (independent) variable has on an internal (dependent) variable (Ibid). Values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for an endogenous latent construct indicate weak, medium, and strong predictive powers for the exogenous construct(s) associated to it in Q2, which also influences the predictive power of the model (Ibid).

4.5. Z-Value Criterion

The z-value coefficients (t-values) are the initial criterion for analyzing the structural model's fit. In fitting a structural model using t-values, the values should be higher than 1.96 so that we can confirm their significance at 0.95 level of significance. Considering the obtained z-values, the t-value for all the items was found to be more than 1.96. They continue to be included in the model as a result, and their significance is verified at the 0.95 level of significance. In Figure 3, the t-values related to the paths are shown. As shown in this figure, among the paths in the model, the t-values for all paths are higher than 1.96, which is indicative of the significance of the paths and fitness of the structural model.

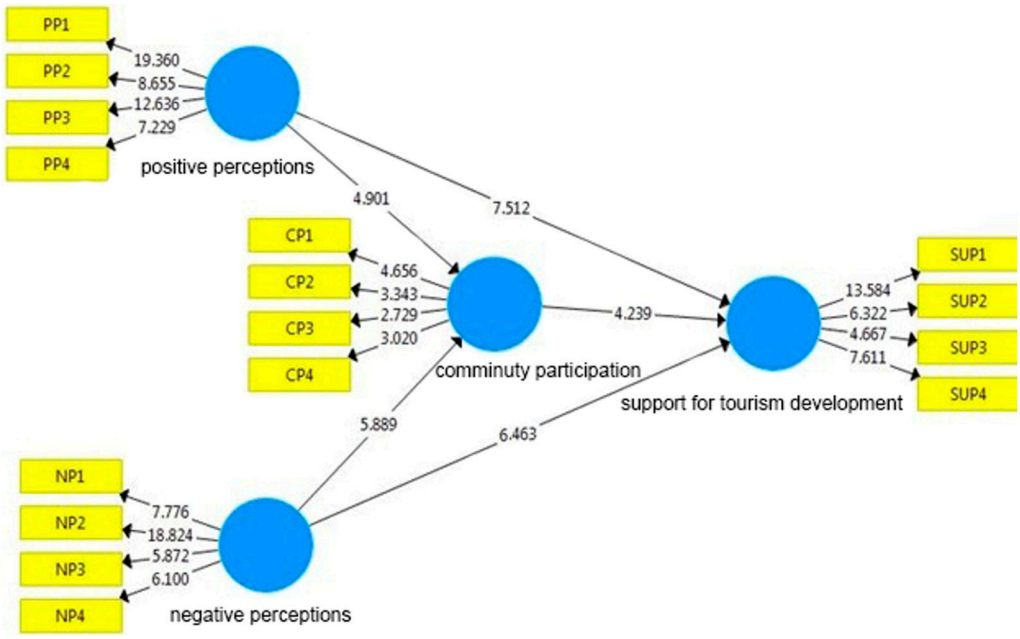

Figure 3. Significance values of the research variables.

4.6. R2 Criterion

The second criterion for examining the fitting of a structural model is the R^2 coefficients related to the latent endogenous latent (dependent) variables. The R^2 value related to local community participation was 0.524 while it was 0.493 in the modified R^2 value, which indicates a mean-to-high model fitting. In other words, this value was approximate to the mean value that articulates a medium distance to the structural model. Furthermore, R^2 values for support for local development were 0.700 and 0.699 in modified R^2, which shows a good model fitting. The latter shows more fit to the structural model than the former, as the values were closer to 1 (see Table 5).

Table 5. R^2 values for the internal variables of the study.

Endogenous Latent Variable	R^2 Value	Modified R^2 Value
Local community participation	0.524	0.493
Support for tourism development	0.700	0.699

4.7. Q^2 Criterion

Table 6 demonstrates that Q^2 values for local community involvement and support for tourist development were greater than 0.35, indicating a high level of predictive power. Therefore, it can be stated that Q^2 values are indicative of a good fitting of the structural model.

Table 6. Q^2 values for the internal variables of the study.

Endogenous Latent Variable	Q^2 Value
Local community participation	0.476
Support for tourism development	0.471

To assess model fitting, the GFI criterion is used. This measures the absolute fit of the combined model to the data, without adjusting for degrees of freedom. The calculation process is as follows:

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\text{Communalities} \times \text{R}^2}$$

The mean for communalities is obtained from the communality of the endogenous latent variables related to local community participation and support for tourism development (Table 7).

Table 7. Q^2 values for the latent variables of the study.

Endogenous Latent Variable	Q^2 Value
Local community participation	0.476
Support for tourism development	0.471
Mean	0.47

To calculate $\overline{R^2}$, all the endogenous latent variables of the study including the first-grade and second-grade are taken into account, and their mean value is calculated. R^2 values related to the variables are presented in Table 8. As shown in Table 7, the mean for these values ($\overline{R^2}$) was 0.61.

Table 8. R^2 values for latent variables of the study.

Endogenous Latent Variable	R^2 Value
Local community participation	0.524
Support for tourism development	0.700
Mean	0.61

Accordingly, the value for the GFI criterion is equal to:

$$GoF = \sqrt{Communalities \times R^2} = \sqrt{0.47 \times 0.61} = 0.54$$

Given that three values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are regarded as weak, mean, and strong model fitting, the value of 0.54 in the current study revealed powerful model fitting.

4.8. Analyzing the Relationships between Variables

The offered hypotheses may be examined and debated after looking at how the measurement models, structural models, and general models fit together generally in accordance with the SPLS method's data analysis algorithm. The results of the test are shown in Figure 4 and Table 9.

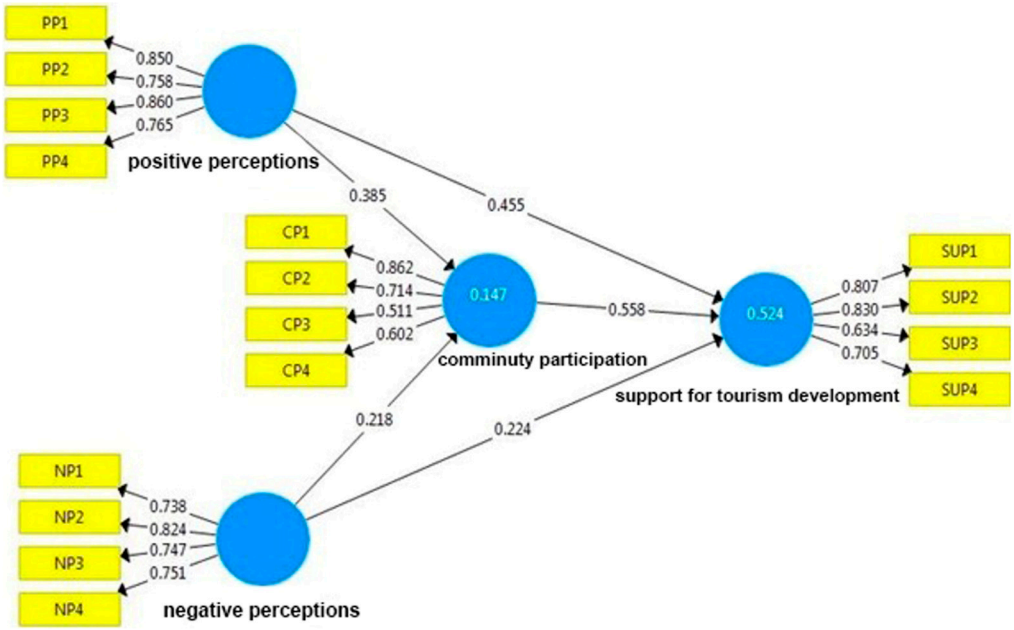

Figure 4. The model outline along with standardized factor loading coefficients.

Table 9. Analysis of the research hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	t-Value	Result
H1	0.455	7.51	Confirmed
H2	0.224	6.46	Confirmed
H3	0.558	4.24	Confirmed
H4	0.385	4.90	Confirmed
H5	0.218	5.89	Confirmed

The standardized path coefficient in Khorramabad between the variables of residents' positive perceptions and support for sustainable tourism development shows that the residents' positive perceptions variable accounts for 45.5% of the variance in that support. Given the findings in Table 8 and the fact that the t-value is larger than 1.96, it is possible to conclude that residents' favorable impressions have a noticeably beneficial impact on support for tourist development. Additionally, the standardized path coefficient in Khorramabad between the variables of residents' negative perceptions and support for sustainable tourism development reveals that the variable of residents' negative perceptions accounts for 22.4% of the variance in that support. Given the results in Table 8 and the fact that the t-value is larger than 1.96, it is possible to infer that residents' unfavorable attitudes have a noticeably beneficial impact on support for tourist development at a 95% level of confidence.

According to Khorramabad's standardized path coefficient, local community engagement accounts for 55.8% of the variation in support for sustainable tourist development. Local community involvement has a considerable and favorable impact on support for tourist development, as shown by the t-value being greater than 1.96 (see Table 9) at the 95% level of confidence. From the perspective of positive perception, the standardized path coefficient of the indirect effect of residents' positive perceptions on social participation in support for the development of sustainable tourism in Khorramabad demonstrates that through social participation, the variable of residents' positive perceptions explains 38.5% of the variance in support for the development of sustainable tourism.

It may be inferred from Table 9 that, at the 95% level of confidence, residents' favorable impressions have a considerably beneficial impact on support for tourist development because the t-value is higher than 1.96. In Khorramabad, the standardized path coefficient of the indirect relationship between residents' negative perceptions and their social participation in support of sustainable tourism development shows that the variable of residents' negative perceptions, via social participation, explains 21.8% of the variance in that support. It may be concluded from Table 8's 95% level of confidence that residents' unfavorable attitudes have a considerably beneficial impact on support for tourist development because the t-value is higher than 1.96.

5. Discussion

5.1. Examining the Local Community Support for Tourism Development

As previously stated, locals' opinions about tourism are a significant predictor of their support for tourist growth, which was the study's final latent variable. According to the social exchange idea, inhabitants will only participate in exchanges if they believe the benefits will outweigh the risks [7,89]. We explored the linkages between locals' attitudes, support for sustainable tourist development, and engagement in Khorramabad using this conceptual framework. The study's findings demonstrated that residents' positive and negative impressions, as well as local community engagement, had a direct impact on promoting sustainable tourist growth in Khorramabad. As seen in Figure 4 and Table 9, the H1 test results reveal that citizens' favorable perceptions influence their support for tourist development by up to 45.5%, confirming the hypothesis. Simultaneously, the H2 test findings reveal that this proportion lowers to 22.4%, which is roughly half of the impact of positive resident perception. In other words, Khorramabad locals' favorable perceptions had a greater impact on their support for tourist growth than their negative sentiments.

The association between local community engagement and people's support for sustainable tourism development in Khorramabad (H3) was also discovered to be good, with H3 test results indicating 55.8% efficacy. This suggested that if citizens participated in tourist activities, they would promote sustainable tourism development to a greater extent than tourism simply being promoted via their favorable opinions. This study demonstrated that including the local people in tourist activities has a significant impact on their support for long-term tourism planning and development. This study also investigated locals' favorable (H4) and negative (H5) attitudes, as well as their influence on social involvement in support of sustainable tourist development. The findings revealed that while inhabitants' positive perceptions supported 38.5% of their participation in sustainable tourism development, this pattern for negative perceptions declined to 21.8%. This is an unprecedented finding within Iranian tourism literature because it showed that when the respondents were asked about their participation in the tourism development process, they were very keen on engaging in the process. However, when it came to practical experiences, such as tourism planners and policymakers paying attention to their needs and opinions, the percentages dropped, on average, for both positive and negative perceptions. These, therefore, showed that although the residents of Khorramabad were ready to participate in the tourism development process, there is not enough room for them to do so. In addition, the test results showed that the positive perceptions of inhabitants in Khorramabad had stronger effects

on their participation than their negative perceptions. Therefore, the findings point to the importance of residents' positive perceptions of the sustainable development process.

5.2. Comparing the Study Results with the Current Literature

From a global experiences point of view, involving the host community in social and economic activities in the framework of festival activities, creating plans for the development of local products, creating eco lodges, and helping in marketing and selling cultural products lead to the creation of positive perceptions of tourism and its benefits among the inhabitants and ensure sustainable tourism development via long-term and dynamic participations of these communities. However, whenever local communities are not involved in tourism activities and local or national governments develop tourism without taking into account the host communities' demands and opinions, as in the case of Poland [25], the local communities react with lack of participation and not welcoming tourism, and the developed plans lead to the failure and non-sustainability of these kinds of tourism planning activities. According to the current study's findings, residents with good opinions of tourist development are willing to engage, and encouraging residents' involvement will lead to their support for sustainable tourism growth in their community. Thus, the findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Andereck, Valentine, Vogt, and Knopf [48]; Vareiro, Remoaldo, and Cadima Ribeiro [20]; Kim [2]; Sharpely [3]; Nunkoo and Gursoy [7]; Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar, and Ramayah [9]; Hammad, Ahmad, and Papastathopoulos [28]; and Lee and Jan [90] in terms of high relationships between positive perceptions and sustainable tourism development support. Moreover, the results further confirmed the main hypotheses related to the Social Exchange Theory in terms of the effect of inhabitants' positive and negative perceptions on the development of tourism in Khorramabad and are consistent with the findings of Adongo, Kim, and Elliot [67]; Chang, Chien, Cheng, and Chen [71]; and Kanwal et al. [91]. Finally, it is worth noting that the serious lack of similar domestic studies in terms of the residents' perceptions and their support for tourism planning and development was a big limitation for our study that constrained us from developing comparative results based on previous studies of other Iranian touristic cities.

6. Conclusions

In this study, we investigated how various citizens' opinions of tourism affected their support for tourism growth and community involvement in Khorramabad, a touristic city in western Iran. The results showed that, based on the five hypotheses developed in the study, inhabitants' positive and negative perceptions and local participation had a direct effect on sustainable development of tourism in this city. However, these effects were not equally high; positive perceptions, with a higher score compared to negative perceptions in the structural equation modeling, had a deeper effect both on direct support via participation and indirect support for tourism development. Using Social Exchange Theory to analyze and model the effects of various feelings of inhabitants in an ancient Iranian city regarding support for the development of sustainable tourism and local participation, this study makes a practical and theoretical contribution to the international literature on inhabitants' perceptions. In the current study, we focused on the correlations between citizens' favorable and negative impressions, their support for tourist sustainability, and their proclivity for social involvement. Our findings were different and somewhat unique. While positive perception of residents affects their support for tourism development by up to 45.5%, negative perception had lower effects (22.4%) on their support, which indicated their higher readiness for welcoming the tourism development process. Moreover, the results articulated the considerable eagerness for participating in tourism planning and activities among respondents. Furthermore, the results showed the moderate and low effects of positive and negative perceptions of the residents on their participation in supporting sustainable tourism development, 38.5% and 21.8%, respectively.

This study extends and validates a unique structural model by adding 16 latent variables in support of tourism development and local participation using the path analysis method. Moreover, the findings of this article have some important policy implications for the decision makers responsible for the planning and management of Khorramabad's tourism development:

- Given the readiness of the residents in tourism planning, it is a great opportunity for city authorities to set up participatory tourism planning and engage the local community in tourism development.
- Although people in Khorramabad feel that their standard of living would be promoted if tourism develops, they should see the advantages of this development in their own lives. Therefore, development of any tourism plan should tie in with residents' employment development in this field and engage them economically.
- Any tourism development should pay close attention to controlling social abnormalities and crime rates due to the local community's sensitivity to them.
- Social participation has a key role in sustaining and materializing tourism development, and it has considerable potential among the city residents, so this needs to be addressed by tourism planners and authorities.

Our study faced some difficulties during its execution such as a serious lack of domestic literature on local community perceptions in touristic cities and conservative opinions among respondents toward some questions with economic contents. Another limitation of this study was the distribution of the samples, more specifically, the fact that some residents lived in the old parts of the city and were illiterate. Thus, future research should pay close attention to the spatial distribution of respondents and accessibility to them.

Finally, some further studies should be conducted, including investigating differences between various age and gender groups' perceptions and effects of these differences on participation in sustainable tourism development, the role of the provincial government in tourism development and assessing their plans through the lens of Social Exchange Theory, and evaluation of residents' perceptions' role in their socioeconomic participation in tourism development.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.P., Y.K.P.-A. and H.A.; Methodology, M.P., N.M.; Validation, M.P., N.M. and Y.K.P.-A.; Formal analysis, M.P., R.V., Y.K.P.-A. and H.A.; Investigation, M.P., N.M., B.B., R.V., Y.K.P.-A. and H.A.; Resources, B.B., R.V. and H.A.; Data curation, B.B. and R.V.; Writing—review & editing, M.P., N.M., R.S., M.P. and H.A.; Visualization, B.B., N.M., R.S. and M.P.; Supervision, R.S. and M.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The authors indicate that this study has been conducted ethically, keeping in mind privacy, consent, and appropriate reporting of those involved in the study.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Thyne, M.; Watkins, L.; Yoshida, M. Resident perceptions of tourism: The role of social distance. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2018**, *20*, 256–266. [CrossRef]
2. Kim, J.S. Estimating the economic value of urban forest parks: Focusing on restorative experiences and environmental concerns. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2021**, *20*, 100603. [CrossRef]
3. Sharpely, R. Host perceptions of tourism. *Tour. Manag.* **2014**, *42*, 37–49. [CrossRef]
4. Lin, C.-L. Evaluating the urban sustainable development strategies and common suited paths considering various stakeholders. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* **2022**, *24*, 14033–14073. [CrossRef]
5. Ap, J. Residents' perceptions on tourism impacts. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **1992**, *19*, 665–690. [CrossRef]

6. Oviedo-Garcia, M.A.; Castellanos-Verdugo, M.; Martin-Ruiz, D. Gaining residents' support for tourism and planning. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2008**, *10*, 95–109. [CrossRef]
7. Nunkoo, R.; Gursoy, D. Residents' support for tourism: An identity perspective. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *39*, 243–268. [CrossRef]
8. Garau-Vadell, J.B.; Díaz-Armas, R.; Gutierrez-Taño, D. Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts on island destinations: A comparative analysis. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2014**, *16*, 578–585. [CrossRef]
9. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Ringle, C.M.; Jaafar, M.; Ramayah, T. Urban vs. rural destinations: Residents' perceptions, community participation and support for tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *60*, 147–158. [CrossRef]
10. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Jaafar, M.; Kock, N.; Ahmad, A.G. The effects of community factors on residents' perceptions toward World Heritage Site inscription and sustainable tourism development. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2017**, *25*, 198–216. [CrossRef]
11. Wang, R.; Dai, M.; Ou, Y.; Ma, X. Residents' happiness of life in rural tourism development. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2021**, *20*, 100612. [CrossRef]
12. Dias-Sardinha, I.; Ross, D. Perceived impact of the Alqueva dam on regional tourism development. *Tour. Plan. Dev.* **2015**, *12*, 362–375. [CrossRef]
13. Sánchez-Fernández, R.; Iniesta-Bonillo, M.Á.; Cervera-Taulet, A. Exploring the concept of perceived sustainability at tourist destinations: A market segmentation approach. *J. Travel Tour. Mark.* **2019**, *36*, 176–190. [CrossRef]
14. Cohen, E.; Cohen, S.A. Current sociological theories and issues in tourism. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *39*, 2177–2202. [CrossRef]
15. Xue, L.; Kerstetter, D.; Hunt, C. Tourism development and changing rural identity in China. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2017**, *66*, 170–182. [CrossRef]
16. Lin, D.; Simmons, D. Structured inter-network collaboration: Public participation in tourism planning in Southern China. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *63*, 315–328. [CrossRef]
17. Bozdağ, A. A spatial analysis for sustainable planning of tourism impacts using GIS: Çesme (Cyssus), İzmir, Turkey. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* **2022**, 1–26. [CrossRef]
18. Abdollahzadeh, G.; Sharifzadeh, A. Rural residents' perceptions toward tourism development: A study from Iran. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2014**, *16*, 126–136. [CrossRef]
19. Ananian, P.; Perras, A.; Borde, M.A. Living in Old Montreal: Residents' perceptions of the effects of urban development and tourism development on local amenities. *Can. Geogr. Géographe Can.* **2018**, *62*, 535–550. [CrossRef]
20. Vareiro, L.M.d.C.; Remoaldo, P.C.; Cadima Ribeiro, J.A. Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in Guimarães (Portugal): A cluster analysis. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2013**, *16*, 535–551. [CrossRef]
21. Rahmawati, D.; Supriharjo, R.; Setiawan, R.P.; Pradinie, K. Community participation in heritage tourism for Gresik resilience. *Procedia-Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2014**, *135*, 142–146. [CrossRef]
22. Eshliki, S.A.; Kaboudi, M. Community perception of tourism impacts and their participation in tourism planning: A case study of Ramsar, Iran. *Procedia-Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2012**, *36*, 333–341. [CrossRef]
23. Šegota, T.; Mihalič, T.; Kuščer, K. The impact of residents' informedness and involvement on their perceptions of tourism impacts: The case of Bled. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag.* **2017**, *6*, 196–206. [CrossRef]
24. Chen, J.S. An investigation of urban residents' loyalty to tourism. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2000**, *24*, 5–19. [CrossRef]
25. Kapera, I. Sustainable tourism development efforts by local governments in Poland. *Sustain. Cities Soc.* **2018**, *40*, 581–588. [CrossRef]
26. Mitchell, R.E.; Reid, D.G. Community integration: Island tourism in Peru. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2001**, *28*, 113–139. [CrossRef]
27. Gannon, M.; Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Taheri, B. Assessing the mediating role of residents' perceptions toward tourism development. *J. Travel Res.* **2021**, *60*, 149–171. [CrossRef]
28. Hammad, N.M.; Ahmad, S.Z.; Papastathopoulos, A. The moderating role of nationality in residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism development in the U nited A rab E mirates. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2019**, *21*, 61–75. [CrossRef]
29. Harun, R.; Chiciudean, G.O.; Sirwan, K.; Arion, F.H.; Muresan, I.C. Attitudes and perceptions of the local community towards sustainable tourism development in Kurdistan regional government, Iraq. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 2991. [CrossRef]
30. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Hamid, A. Residents' perceptions towards heritage tourism development: The case of the historical city of Kashan, Iran. In *Tourism in Iran*; Routledge: London, UK, 2018; pp. 127–143.
31. Olya, H.G.; Gavilyan, Y. Configurational models to predict residents' support for tourism development. *J. Travel Res.* **2017**, *56*, 893–912. [CrossRef]
32. Ribeiro, M.A.; Pinto, P.; Silva, J.A.; Woosnam, K.M. Residents' attitudes and the adoption of pro-tourism behaviours: The case of developing island countries. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *61*, 523–537. [CrossRef]
33. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Jaafar, M. Community participation toward tourism development and conservation program in rural world heritage sites. In *Tourism-from Empirical Research towards Practical Application*; IntechOpen: Rijeka, Croatia, 2016.
34. Rezaei, N. Resident perceptions toward tourism impacts in historic center of Yazd, Iran. *Tour. Geogr.* **2017**, *19*, 734–755. [CrossRef]
35. Zamani-Farahani, H. Host attitudes toward tourism: A study of Sareyn Municipality and local community partnerships in therapeutic tourism. *J. Tour.* **2016**, *2*, 16–34. [CrossRef]
36. Bahaee, M.; Pisani, M.J.; Shavakh, F. Residents' attitudes toward international tourism: A case of Iran. *J. Tour. Recreat.* **2014**, *1*, 1–14. [CrossRef]
37. Rastegar, H. Tourism Development And Residents'attitude: A Case Study Of Yazd, Iran. *Tourismos* **2010**, *5*, 203–211.

38. Maruyama, N.; Woosnam, K.M. Residents' ethnic attitudes and support for ethnic neighborhood tourism: The case of a Brazilian town in Japan. *Tour. Manag.* **2015**, *50*, 225–237. [CrossRef]
39. Ahadian, O. Residents' perceptions of tourism development–implications for small economies business: The case study of Ali Sadr, Iran. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2013**, *16*, 97–106. [CrossRef]
40. Jaafar, M.; Rasoolimanesh, S.M. Tourism growth and entrepreneurship: Empirical analysis of development of rural highlands. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2015**, *14*, 17–24. [CrossRef]
41. Látková, P.; Vogt, C.A. Residents' attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities. *J. Travel Res.* **2012**, *51*, 50–67. [CrossRef]
42. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Roldán, J.L.; Jaafar, M.; Ramayah, T. Factors influencing residents' perceptions toward tourism development: Differences across rural and urban world heritage sites. *J. Travel Res.* **2017**, *56*, 760–775. [CrossRef]
43. Pazhuhan, M.; Shiri, N. Regional tourism axes identification using GIS and TOPSIS model (Case study: Hormozgan Province, Iran). *J. Tour. Anal. Rev. Análisis Turístico* **2020**, *27*, 119–141. [CrossRef]
44. WTO. Tourism Highlight 2004 Edition. Available online: www.unwto.com (accessed on 29 September 2005). [CrossRef]
45. Edgell, D.L., Sr.; Allen, M.D.; Smith, G.; Swanson, J.R. Political and foreign policy implications of tourism. *Tour. Policy Plan.* **2008**, 141–180. [CrossRef]
46. Joppe, M. Sustainable community tourism development revisited. *Tour. Manag.* **1996**, *17*, 475–479. [CrossRef]
47. Nasser, N. Planning for urban heritage places: Reconciling conservation, tourism, and sustainable development. *J. Plan. Lit.* **2003**, *17*, 467–479. [CrossRef]
48. Andereck, K.L.; Valentine, K.M.; Vogt, C.A.; Knopf, R.C. A cross-cultural analysis of tourism and quality of life perceptions. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2007**, *15*, 483–502. [CrossRef]
49. Choi, H.C.; Murray, I. Resident attitudes toward sustainable community tourism. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2010**, *18*, 575–594. [CrossRef]
50. Lee, T.H. Influence analysis of community resident support for sustainable tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2013**, *34*, 37–46. [CrossRef]
51. Montaguti, F.; Mingotto, E. Ecotourism in natural parks: An assured sustainable success? Tourist behavior, attractiveness and sustainable development issues in two Italian parks. *Tour. Plan. Dev.* **2015**, *12*, 99–110. [CrossRef]
52. Zhang, J.; Inbakaran, R.J.; Jackson, M.S. Understanding community attitudes towards tourism and host—Guest interaction in the urban—Rural border region. *Tour. Geogr.* **2006**, *8*, 182–204. [CrossRef]
53. Mathieson, A.; Wall, G. *Tourism, Economic, Physical and Social Impacts*; Longman: Harlow, UK, 1982.
54. Demiroz, D.M.; Ongan, S. The contribution of tourism to the long-run Turkish economic growth. *Ekon. Časopis* **2005**, *9*, 880–894.
55. Louca, C. Income and expenditure in the tourism industry: Time series evidence from Cyprus. *Tour. Econ.* **2006**, *12*, 603–617. [CrossRef]
56. Akama, J.S.; Kieti, D. Tourism and socio-economic development in developing countries: A case study of Mombasa Resort in Kenya. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2007**, *15*, 735–748. [CrossRef]
57. Lee, C.-C.; Chang, C.-P. Tourism development and economic growth: A closer look at panels. *Tour. Manag.* **2008**, *29*, 180–192. [CrossRef]
58. Burns, P.M.; Fridman, D. Actors' perceptions of the newly designated South Downs National Park: Social exchange theory and framework analysis approach. *Tour. Plan. Dev.* **2011**, *8*, 447–465. [CrossRef]
59. Shipley, R.; Snyder, M. The role of heritage conservation districts in achieving community economic development goals. *Int. J. Herit. Stud.* **2013**, *19*, 304–321. [CrossRef]
60. Kodera, A. Foreign tourism emerges as bright spot amid Japan's dim economic prospects. *Jpn. Times* **2016**.
61. Harrill, R. Residents' attitudes toward tourism development: A literature review with implications for tourism planning. *J. Plan. Lit.* **2004**, *18*, 251–266. [CrossRef]
62. Dyer, P.; Gursoy, D.; Sharma, B.; Carter, J. Structural modeling of resident perceptions of tourism and associated development on the Sunshine Coast, Australia. *Tour. Manag.* **2007**, *28*, 409–422. [CrossRef]
63. Kılıç, İ. Toplumsal Taşıma Kapasitesinin, Turizmin Gelişmesine Yönelik Destek Üzerindeki Etkisinde, Toplumsal Kalıtımın ve Yaşam Kalitesinin Rolü. 2020. Available online: https://platform.almanhal.com/ (accessed on 29 September 2022).
64. Zuo, B.; Gursoy, D.; Wall, G. Residents' support for red tourism in China: The moderating effect of central government. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2017**, *64*, 51–63. [CrossRef]
65. Sirakaya, E.; Teye, V.; Sönmez, S. Understanding residents' support for tourism development in the central region of Ghana. *J. Travel Res.* **2002**, *41*, 57–67. [CrossRef]
66. Liao, Y.; Chern, S. Survey on the Use of Green Concepts in Building the Green Library in Beitou: An analysis of the Taipei Public Library Beitou Branch. *J. Tour. Hosp.* **2016**, *5*, 1–6.
67. Adongo, R.; Kim, S.S.; Elliot, S. "Give and take": A social exchange perspective on festival stakeholder relations. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2019**, *75*, 42–57. [CrossRef]
68. Ward, C.; Berno, T. Beyond social exchange theory: Attitudes toward tourists. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2011**, *38*, 1556–1569. [CrossRef]
69. Özel, Ç.H.; Kozak, N. An exploratory study of resident perceptions toward the tourism industry in Cappadocia: A Social Exchange Theory approach. *Asia Pac. J. Tour. Res.* **2017**, *22*, 284–300. [CrossRef]
70. Park, D.-B.; Nunkoo, R.; Yoon, Y.-S. Rural residents' attitudes to tourism and the moderating effects of social capital. *Tour. Geogr.* **2015**, *17*, 112–133. [CrossRef]

71. Chang, K.G.; Chien, H.; Cheng, H.; Chen, H.-I. The impacts of tourism development in rural indigenous destinations: An investigation of the local residents' perception using Choice Modeling. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 4766. [CrossRef]
72. Chuang, S.-T. Rural tourism: Perspectives from social exchange theory. *Soc. Behav. Personal. Int. J.* **2010**, *38*, 1313–1322. [CrossRef]
73. Coulson, A.B.; MacLaren, A.C.; McKenzie, S.; O'Gorman, K.D. Hospitality codes and social exchange theory: The Pashtunwali and tourism in Afghanistan. *Tour. Manag.* **2014**, *45*, 134–141. [CrossRef]
74. Mazón, T.; Huete, R.; Mantecón, A. Tourism dependence and host community perceptions. Notes on the social exchange theory. *Tour. Manag. Stud.* **2010**, *5*, 25–36.
75. Stylidis, D.; Biran, A.; Sit, J.; Szivas, E.M. Residents' support for tourism development: The role of residents' place image and perceived tourism impacts. *Tour. Manag.* **2014**, *45*, 260–274. [CrossRef]
76. Thongma, W.; Leelapattana, W.; Hung, J.-T. Tourists' satisfaction towards tourism activities management of Maesa community, Pongyang sub-district, Maerim district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand. *Asian Tour. Manag.* **2011**, *2*, 86–94.
77. Aligholizadeh Firouzjaei, N.; Ramezanzad Lesbouei, M.; Esmaeili, M. Assessment of attitude of the host community to the development of tourism in rural areas of desert regions: A case study of rural areas of Khour and Biabanak. *J. Geogr. Stud. Arid. Reg.* **2014**, *18*, 37–53.
78. Irna. Archeologist: First Signs of Achaemenids Discovered in Western Iran. Available online: https://irna.ir (accessed on 8 February 2017).
79. Olszewski, D. *The Paleolithic Prehistory of the Zagros-Taurus*; UPenn Museum of Archaeology: Philadelphia, PA, USA, 1993; Volume 83.
80. Zendehdel, H. *Lorestan Province*; Tourism Research Institute: Nairobi, Kenya, 2000.
81. MCTH. Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (MCTH). Report for the Touristic Attraction of Khorramabad City. Available online: https://www.mcth.ir (accessed on 25 January 2020).
82. Moradpoor, N.; Taghavi Ziravani, E. Explain the impact of tourism on the development of urban walkability index (Case study: Khorramabad). *Urban Tour.* **2017**, *4*, 99–112.
83. Mohsenin, S.; Esfidani, M. *Structural Equations Based on Partial Least Squares Approach with the Help of Smart-PLS Software*; Institute of Mehrban Publishing: Tehran, Iran, 2014.
84. Davoodi, K.; Faghihi, A.; Mirsepasi, N.; Azar, A. Design of Development Management Model in Iran Using Structural Equation Modeling Method. *Public Manag. Res.* **2020**, *13*, 59–82.
85. Statistical Centre of Iran. General Population and Housing Census Report. Available online: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj3sqb5uJ_vAhUeMVkFHZnLDJEQFjAAegQIAR-AD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.amar.org.ir%2Fenglish%2FPopulation-and-Housing-Censuses&usg=AOvVaw12_0O_1Gk6GiLS8etp9ZVY (accessed on 13 July 2018).
86. Hulland, J. Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. *Strateg. Manag. J.* **1999**, *20*, 195–204. [CrossRef]
87. Fornell, C.; Larcker, D.F. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *J. Mark. Res.* **1981**, *18*, 39–50. [CrossRef]
88. Gefen, D.; Straub, D.; Boudreau, M.-C. Structural equation modeling and regression: Guidelines for research practice. *Commun. Assoc. Inf. Syst.* **2000**, *4*, 7. [CrossRef]
89. Moghavvemi, S.; Woosnam, K.M.; Paramanathan, T.; Musa, G.; Hamzah, A. The effect of residents' personality, emotional solidarity, and community commitment on support for tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *63*, 242–254. [CrossRef]
90. Lee, T.H.; Jan, F.-H. Can community-based tourism contribute to sustainable development? Evidence from residents' perceptions of the sustainability. *Tour. Manag.* **2019**, *70*, 368–380. [CrossRef]
91. Kanwal, S.; Chong, R.; Pitafi, A.H. Support for China–Pakistan Economic Corridor development in Pakistan: A local community perspective using the social exchange theory. *J. Public Aff.* **2019**, *19*, e1908. [CrossRef]