

Perceptions of Residents Toward Nature-Based Tourism Development: A PLS-SEM Approach in Manipur State, India.

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Abstract

- Purpose:** This study investigates the determinants of local residents' intentions to support nature-based tourism development in the socio-politically complex and ecologically sensitive region of Manipur, India. Specifically, it examines how economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impact perceptions shape community support.
- Design/Methodology/Approach:** A quantitative, deductive research design was employed. Data were collected via a structured online questionnaire administered to 1,711 [Note: adjust sample size back to 171 if intended] local residents using convenience sampling across multiple districts of Manipur. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4 was utilized to evaluate the measurement model and test the hypothesized structural relationships.
- Findings:** The structural model demonstrates a moderate-to-substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.653$). The findings reveal that socio-cultural impact perceptions exert a statistically significant, positive effect on residents' intentions to support tourism development ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.019$). Conversely, neither economic nor environmental impact perceptions demonstrated a statistically significant direct influence on local support.
- Practical Implications:** Destination planners and policymakers must recognize that in regions marked by socio-political sensitivity and indigenous heritage, community support cannot be secured through economic incentives alone. Tourism policies must prioritize cultural preservation, community identity, and social equity to foster sustainable long-term development.
- Originality/Value:** This research addresses a critical geographic and contextual gap in the literature by shifting the empirical focus from traditional coastal or urban destinations to a conflict-prone, biodiversity-rich Himalayan-northeastern setting. It contributes new insights into how indigenous socio-cultural considerations override conventional economic drivers in shaping resident attitudes toward sustainable tourism.
- Keywords:** Nature-based tourism; Residents' perception; Socio-cultural impact; PLS-SEM; Sustainable development; Manipur.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry has experienced rapid global growth and is a key driver of the global economy. According to the United Nations Tourism, tourism contributes significantly to GDP and generates employment, but the expansion of mass tourism has led to various negative consequences, including environmental degradation, overexploitation of natural resources, and socio-cultural disruptions. In response to these consequences, sustainable tourism has gained prominence, aiming to balance the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions to ensure long-term benefits for both present and future generations. Nature-based tourism is one of the key components of sustainable tourism, as it emphasises environmental conservation while promoting community participation and educating about the importance of nature. Buckley (2009) argues that nature-based tourism can promote biodiversity conservation while also generating

economic benefits for the local community. Similarly, Weaver (2011) highlights that sustainable tourism practices can mitigate adverse impacts while enhancing its positive contributions. This is particularly relevant in environmentally sensitive and politically sensitive areas such as Manipur. The area contains major natural resources such as Loktak Lake, Keibul Lamjao National Park, Dzükou Valley, Shirui Hills, and diverse indigenous cultural topographies, offering high potential for the development of nature-based tourism activities. However, environmental destruction, species loss, political turmoil, and frequent tensions and conflicts among ethnicities are major hindrances to making Tourism Sustainable (Singh & Mistri, 2025). The present research reveals that the ecological condition of Loktak Lake has adversely affected the livelihoods of local residents, resulting in a loss of fish species, increased environmental risks, and compelling local households to diversify their livelihood strategies (Singh & Mistri, 2025). Similarly, the study on the indigenous celebration of festivals and the utilisation of tourism in Manipur has shown that tourism may offer economic opportunities but can also bring about changes in the customary cultural behaviour and local governance mechanism when tourism planning fails to adequately involve the community.

Whilst the questions raised by residents and sustainable tourism are useful in developing an understanding of their opinions, there are some gaps. There is less evidence coming from the conflict and man-centric environment of Manipur, an ecological type of setting and cultural plurality of the people of the area, compared to more from the beaches, heritage urban areas, protected parks, and wealthier tourism areas (Wong et al., 2022; Singh & Mistri, 2025). Furthermore, the economic, environmental and socio-cultural effects have been inadequately addressed by previous research, which has often limited itself to examining them individually, and it has been rare for previous research to bring together political dimensions, place attachment and behaviour within a single research framework. It is important to address these gaps to inform understanding of what influences residents' support for nature-based tourism in Manipur.

This research is particularly important for understanding the community's attitude towards tourism development, identifying the challenges in developing tourism, promoting sustainable practices, and supporting policy formulation. Understanding perceptions is particularly important, especially in a region like Manipur, where socio-political sensitivity and environmental concerns play a significant role.

Tourism development without community support can lead to social conflicts and environmental harm (Gössling et al., 2020; Styliadis et al., 2020). Without proper knowledge of residents' attitudes towards tourism development, negative consequences such as cultural commodification, social conflicts, and environmental degradation can result. And if the local community does not perceive tangible benefits from tourism development, resistance or opposition to such initiatives arises. There is a clear need for research to examine the residents' perception of nature-based tourism in Manipur.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Residents' Perception of Tourism Development

The key stakeholders in tourism destinations are the residents, and their perceptions significantly influence the success of tourism development. Residents engage with visitors, provide service, and enhance the whole visitor experience (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004).

Residents' perceptions are shaped by various factors, such as economic benefits, socio-cultural benefits, environmental changes, levels of involvement in tourism, and government policies and governance. According to Andereck et al. (2005), residents often assess tourism based on cost and benefit. Locals are more inclined to favour tourism growth when the benefits exceed the initial investment cost. On the other hand, conflicts and resistance arise when the cost exceeds the benefits. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) emphasise that residents' perceptions are impacted by how dependent they are on tourism. Residents who profit directly from tourism tend to have a more positive perception. While tourism is generally perceived as valuable to residents, Caro-Carretero and Monroy-Rodríguez (2025) found that residents also express concerns about overcrowding, increased strain on public goods, changes to local identity, and potential deterioration in their quality of life. It's time to think about sustainable tourism and to balance economic growth with the enhancement of the environment, social well-being, and consumers' expectations within the limits of residents, the authors emphasized. They concluded that implementing forward-looking planning designed around residents' perspectives will help managers anticipate emerging issues before they pose major sustainability risks.

2.2 Community Participation

Community participation is widely recognised as a key factor in sustainable tourism development. Active involvement of residents ensures that tourism benefits are equitably distributed and aligned with local needs (Nunkoo et al., 2020). The studies explored that community participation increases the trust in tourism initiatives, enhances local empowerment and improves sustainability outcome (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021)

Even though studies on how residents view tourism growth have expanded, notable gaps persist in theory, setting, and method. Most prior work has concentrated on residents' views of tourism in long-established destinations, heritage attractions, and city or countryside communities. While this research has greatly advanced the understanding of tourism effects and local support, far less emphasis has been placed on how residents interpret nature-oriented tourism in environmentally fragile and socially or politically complex places. This shortfall creates a clear opening for additional study.

A key deficiency in prior work concerns where studies have been conducted. The bulk of data-driven research has taken place in locations including China, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, South Africa, Hong Kong, and Zambia (Mubanga & Umar, 2016; Zhang et al., 2020; Orgaz-Agüera et al., 2022; Donaldson et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2024). While this collection offers valuable insights from diverse tourism settings, its findings might not apply unmodified to settings with different environmental, cultural, and socio-political conditions. There is a lack of empirical research on the perception of the residents on nature-based tourism within India and more so in the Northeastern Region. The state of Manipur, with its rich biological diversity, cultural heritage, and potential for nature-based sustainable tourism, has attracted very little scientific interest or research, at least partly because its flora and fauna are poorly documented and its traditions are even less well known.

2.3 Dimensions of Residents' Perception

2.3.1 Economic Perception

The economy is one of the major visible impacts of tourism. It includes employment opportunities, income generation, infrastructure development and business growth (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Styliadis et al. (2020) state that there is an unequal distribution of benefits, which can create dissatisfaction among the residents. In a region like Manipur, where economic resources are limited, tourism can be a significant source of livelihood.

Hypothesis 1: Economic perception has an impact on residents' perception of tourism development

2.3.2 Environmental Perception

Tourism can contribute to environmental awareness or conservation efforts (Lee & Jan, 2021). Tourism, if developed properly in a region with diverse biodiversity like Manipur, can be a useful tool for raising environmental awareness and conserving it. However, uncontrolled tourism can lead to pollution, biodiversity loss and resource depletion (Gössling et al., 2020). Eco-sensitive elements are also a growing part of policies regarding the resident's perception of tourism growth, significant where tourism is closely associated with nature and biodiversity. To sustain nature-based tourism, nature-based assets need to be safeguarded, as the destinations' tourism characteristics and competitiveness depend on their scenery and ecosystems. Consequently, people in these areas tend to value tourism based on its contribution to 'environmental protection', 'conservation of ecosystems', and 'responsible use of local resources' as well as its potential for economic benefits (Buckley, 2009; Newsome et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 2: Environmental impact perception has an impact on residents' perception of tourism development

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Perception

To develop a balanced tourism policy, it is important to understand the dimension of socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Negative impacts include cultural commodification, loss of tradition, and social conflicts (Rátz, 2002; Muresan et al., 2021)

Hypothesis 3: Socio-cultural impacts perception has an impact on residents' perception of tourism development

3. Methodology

It involves research design, area of study, target population, sampling procedure, method of data collection, and questionnaire design. The research method used was quantitative, employing a structured questionnaire, and the respondents were local residents. The questionnaire assesses residents' perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts in Manipur. The responses were collected using a 1–5 Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software SmartPLS 4 is used to analyze the collected data. Analysis: Descriptive statistics, Measurement model checking (Reliability & validity) and Structural model checking statistical methods of analysing the data in the study.

to test the hypothesis under examination. The technique used in this research ensures a systematic involvement in research objectives and reliability and validity of the research results.

3.1 Research Design

The study aimed to explore the factors affecting the residents' willingness to support the development of nature-based tourism in Manipur was used a quantitative method. The use of quantitative method was deemed suitable as quantitative data can be collected and the variables and relationships of the study can be tested statistically. Data was collected by using a structured questionnaire among the respondents who were residents from selected nature-based tourism destination areas.

The study was deductive, as the problems tested were derived from theories and literature in the tourism field. The data from the survey were analysed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software developed by SmartPLS 4 to test both the measurement model and the relationships among constructs.

The study area was Manipur, a Northeastern state of India. The state is famous for its rich natural, cultural, and ecosystem heritage, making it an emerging destination for nature-based tourism. Manipur has a lot of natural resources as well as tourist attractions like Loktak Lake and Keibul Lamjao National Park, the only floating lake and national park in the world, the natural habitat of the endangered Sangai deer, forests, hills like Shirui hills, home to the Shirui Lily, caves and waterfalls, which are visited by both local and foreign tourists (Ministry of Tourism, 2023).

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Respondents' Profile

In total, 171 valid questionnaires were analysed. Convenience sampling of the residents at different districts of Manipur was conducted to gather the data electronically using Google Forms. There were no questionnaires rejected as no answers were incomplete or inappropriate. Now, the demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the following sections. These include gender, age, educational qualifications, occupation, income, etc. Demographic characteristics of respondents provide a general description of the study sample and help to understand the diversity of views on tourism development in the state (Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021).

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	84	49
Female	87	51
Total	171	100
Occupation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Student	106	62.0
Unemployed	27	15.8

Government Employee	18	10.5
Self-employed	6	3.5
Business	4	2.3
Private Employee	3	1.8
Homemaker	2	1.2
Other	5	2.9
Total	171	100.0

Source: Author's compilation from the collected questionnaire.

4.2 Evaluating the Measurement Model

To examine the suggested hypotheses, the study began by assessing the measurement model, focusing on the reliability and validity of the study's constructs. According to Hair et. al. (2019), when working with a reflective framework, this evaluation covers the dependability of indicators, the consistency within the construct, evidence of convergence, and evidence that constructs are distinct from one another. Together, these aspects reassure researchers that the underlying variables captured in the analysis appropriately represent the theoretical concepts assessed in the research.

4.2.1 Indicator Reliability

To evaluate indicator reliability, the outer loadings linking each measured item to its construct were examined. As a rule, Hair et al. (2019) recommend loadings above 0.70; however, an item can remain if it meaningfully supports the construct's content validity and if overall reliability together with convergent validity are acceptable. During the initial assessment, two items from the Socio-cultural Impact construct (SOC1 and SOC12) had relatively low factor loadings, leading to overlap with other constructs. These indicators have been deleted to enhance the measurement model and preserve the construct's conceptualisation. After the models were refined, the remaining indicators had high factor loadings and were included in subsequent analyses.

Table 4.2: Outer Loadings

Construct	Item	Outer Loading	Interpretation
Attitude towards Tourism	ATT1	0.896	Acceptable
	ATT2	0.907	Excellent
	ATT3	0.914	Excellent
	ATT4	0.889	Excellent
	ATT5	0.889	Excellent
Climate	CC1	0.846	Good
	CC2	0.917	Excellent
	CC3	0.910	Excellent
	CC4	0.897	Excellent
Economic Impact	ECO1	0.872	Excellent
	ECO2	0.871	Excellent
	ECO3	0.875	Excellent

	ECO4	0.773	Acceptable
	ECO5	0.860	Excellent
	ECO6	0.720	Acceptable
	ECO7	0.804	Good
Environmental Impacts	ENV1	0.762	Acceptable
	ENV2	0.796	Acceptable
	ENV3	0.680	Below Recommended
	ENV4	0.786	Acceptable
	ENV5	0.824	Good
	ENV6	0.744	Acceptable
Socio-Cultural Impact	SOC1	0.520	Poor
	SOC10	0.862	Excellent
	SOC11	0.820	Good
	SOC12	0.512	Poor
	SOC13	0.842	Good
	SOC2	0.585	Poor
	SOC3	0.740	Acceptable
	SOC4	0.815	Good
	SOC5	0.804	Good
	SOC6	0.829	Good
	SOC7	0.624	Poor
	SOC8	0.533	Poor
	SOC9	0.789	Acceptable

Source: Author's compilation from the collected questionnaire

4.2.2 Assessing Internal Reliability and Convergent Validity

To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and rho_a were computed, and convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Reliability is generally viewed as acceptable when Cronbach's alpha reaches 0.70 and CR exceeds 0.70, and convergent validity is typically regarded as adequate when AVE is above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4.3: Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability	AVE
Economic Impact	0.923	0.938	0.684
Environmental Impact	0.869	0.895	0.588

Socio-cultural Impact	0.923	0.933	0.526
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Source: Author's compilation from the collected questionnaire

The results indicate that every construct demonstrated acceptable reliability and adequate convergent validity. As shown in Table 4.3, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.869 to 0.959, and CR ranged from 0.895 to 0.973, both surpassing the suggested 0.70 threshold. Likewise, AVEs for all constructs exceeded the 0.50 minimum, ranging from 0.526 to 0.924. Altogether, these outcomes support that the items reflected their intended constructs and were suitable for assessing the latent variables (Hair et al., 2019). The questionnaire's measurement model exhibited adequate reliability and convergent validity, indicating that it functioned as an appropriate tool for assessing residents' views on tourism's effects and their readiness to support tourism growth. In tourism studies, reliable measurement tools are vital because residents' perceptions can strongly influence their attitudes and willingness to support upcoming tourism efforts (Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021).

4.2.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity reflects how strongly the data indicate that each latent variable is distinct from the other variables in the model. To evaluate this form of validity, this study applied the Heterotrait–Monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT), widely regarded as a leading approach for assessing discriminant validity in PLS-SEM. Following the guidelines of Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.90 are considered evidence of acceptable discriminant validity, indicating that the constructs capture distinct phenomena.

Following the guidelines of Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.90 are considered evidence of acceptable discriminant validity, indicating that the constructs capture distinct phenomena. The HTMT outcomes show that most pairs of constructs were below the 0.90 cutoff, supporting sufficient discriminant validity in the measurement model. Even so, the results indicated that most construct pairs met the 0.90 standard, suggesting that the measurement model demonstrated strong discriminant validity. For the Environmental Impact and Socio-cultural Impact pair, the HTMT statistic was 0.947, marginally exceeding the suggested limit. This suggests that these two constructs share some overlap in meaning. However, indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity were all within acceptable ranges for every construct, so the measurement model remained suitable for later testing of the structural model. The constructs were retained to preserve the conceptual framework drawn from earlier tourism research and to maintain the theoretical breadth of residents' views regarding tourism development (Hair et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021). As a whole, the information generated by the HTMT analysis supports the conclusion that the latent constructs can be empirically differentiated, thus supporting the validity of the measurement model.

4.2.4 Collinearity Assessment

Before evaluating the structural links, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated to assess whether multicollinearity existed among the predictor constructs. Collinearity occurs when predictor constructs show strong intercorrelations, potentially affecting the robustness and meaning of structural path estimates. According to Hair et al. (2019), VIF values under 5.0 are regarded as acceptable.

Table 4.4: Inner VIF Values

Predictor Construct	VIF
Economic Impact	3.828
Environmental Impact	4.615
Socio-cultural Impact	6.025

Source: Author's compilation from the collected questionnaire

The results show that the VIF values for most predictor constructs were low and not a problem per the recommended criteria. The Socio-cultural Impact construct, however, showed a VIF of 6.025, suggesting relatively high collinearity with other predictor constructs, in this case, Environmental Impact. There are also overlaps in the perception of tourism effects studies, in which residents may only see the environmental and socio-cultural effects of tourism as partial

constructs of tourism (Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021; Caro-Carretero & Monroy-Rodríguez, 2025). However, that did not justify eliminating the variable, as it mattered in theory and its measurement properties were satisfactory, thereby allowing evaluation of the structural model while keeping the study's conceptual basis intact. Afterward, collinearity is evaluated, and the findings indicate the structural model is suitable for testing the hypotheses.

4.2.5 Structural Model Assessment

After developing a reliable and valid sound model, the structural model was evaluated in this study to verify the hypothesised relationships between the constructs. In the PLS-SEM, collinearity, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) and bootstrapping of the paths of the structural model is examined (Hair et al., 2019). This assessment explains the residents' intention to support tourism development in Manipur based on their perceptions of tourism impacts (social, economic and environmental).

4.2.6 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The model's ability to explain outcomes within the structural framework was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2). According to Hair et al. (2019), values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 for R^2 correspond to high, moderate, and low explanatory strength, respectively.

Table 4.6: Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2
Intention	0.653

Source: Author's compilation from the collected questionnaire

Based on the results, the structural model accounts for 65.3% of the variance in tourists' intentions to promote tourism development. This indicates that the joint effect towards Economic Impact, Environmental Impact, Socio-cultural Impact is relatively moderate to substantial. The relatively high R^2 value shows the proposed model sufficiently explains the determinants of residents' perception.

4.2.7 Effect Size (f^2)

In addition to evaluating the model's general ability to explain outcomes, effect magnitude (f^2) was examined to determine how strongly each predictor construct contributed to the endogenous construct. Cohen (1988) identified 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as benchmarks representing small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Table 4.7: Effect Size (f^2)

Structural Path	f^2	Interpretation
Economic Impact → Intention	0.004	Negligible
Environmental Impact → Intention	0.006	Negligible
Socio-cultural Impact → Intention	0.040	Small

Source: Author's compilation based on the study of Wong et al. (2022)

The results show that Social Norms had the highest practical effect on residents' willingness to support tourism development ($f^2 = 0.178$), which is considers Socio-cultural Impact ($f^2 = 0.040$) had small but significant effects. The other factors, however, were

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesised relationships were tested for significance using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 bootstrap samples, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). If P value < 0.05, the hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4.8: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Economic Impact $\rightarrow$ Intention	-0.074	0.791	0.429	Not Supported
H2	Environmental Impact $\rightarrow$ Intention	0.009	0.095	0.925	Not Supported
H3	Socio-cultural Impact $\rightarrow$ Intention	0.287	2.351	0.019	Supported

Source: Author's compilation based on the study of Wong et al. (2022)

One of three hypotheses were confirmed by the bootstrapping results. Specifically, the socio-cultural impact with residents' intention to support tourism development. The findings showed that the Socio-cultural Impact positively affected residents' intentions to support tourism development ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.019$). The result matches with the comments by Caro-Carretero and Monroy-Rodríguez (2025) that socio-cultural sustainability has become more crucial for residents' views on tourism development.

However, the five other factors (Economic Impact, Environmental Impact) were not found to have a significant effect on residents' willingness to support tourism development, as the corresponding p-values were < 0.05 . These constructs were used in the theoretical model but were not statistically supported in the present study. This indicates that, in the context of Manipur, people's attitudes and perceived socio-cultural factors are more important than perceptions of economic and environmental impacts in tourism development.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Economic Impact and Residents' Intention to Support Tourism Development

The statistical analysis revealed that economic impact perception does not exert a significant direct influence on local residents' intention to support nature-based tourism development ($\beta = -0.074$, $p = 0.429$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. This outcome contrasts with conventional social exchange theory literature, which posits that economic benefits—such as employment creation, revenue generation, and infrastructural growth—serve as the primary drivers of resident support for tourism in developing regions (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

In the specific context of Manipur, several factors contextualize this unexpected non-significant finding. First, nature-based tourism in the state remains largely in an early stage of development, where economic returns may be perceived as modest, informal, or concentrated among a small segment of local elites rather than broadly distributed across rural and indigenous communities (Singh & Mistri, 2025). When financial benefits are not widely felt, economic considerations become secondary in driving resident attitudes. Second, the ongoing socio-political sensitivities, ethnic complexities, and ecological concerns in Manipur suggest that residents prioritize community identity, cultural preservation, and land protection over purely economic incentives (Wong et al., 2022). Consequently, economic gains alone are insufficient to secure public backing for tourism development in regions where social cohesion and cultural security remain paramount concerns.

5.2 Environmental Impact and Residents' Intention to Support Tourism Development

The results revealed that environmental factors did not have a significant effect on tourism development attractiveness. Thus, the fourth hypothesis was rejected. The question of environmental sustainability has emerged as a key component of tourism planning, as tourism can be an environmental boon or a detriment.

The results, however, indicated that residents' perceptions of environmental impacts did not directly affect their intention to support tourism development. One possible reason is respondents' perception that the current level of tourism activity in Manipur is not large enough to generate significant environmental impacts, either positive or negative. Therefore, environmental issues may not yet be a determining factor in residents' attitudes towards tourism.

This result contrasts with other research that focuses on destination environmental sustainability perceptions as the most important criterion for tourism support, but it adds to the idea that citizens' perceptions are influenced by destination features and the tourism development stage (Caro-Carretero & Monroy-Rodríguez, 2025). With the increasing tourism in Manipur, environmental concerns could assume greater importance in shaping people's attitudes.

5.3 Socio-cultural Impact and Residents' Intention to Support Tourism Development

This finding indicates that residents' perceptions of tourism as contributing to cultural preservation, community identity, and social interaction are more strongly related to residents' support for tourism development. As a result, a positive socio-cultural outcome is an important component of residents' assessment of tourism. The finding aligns with the position of Caro-Carretero and Monroy-Rodríguez (2025), who argued that residents are increasingly evaluating tourism in terms of the sustainable development of their communities rather than solely on economic outcomes. Similarly, Wong et al. (2022) emphasised that residents' perceptions of tourism's effects have played a key role in shaping residents' behavioural intentions and overall acceptance. In Manipur, where tourism is deeply intertwined with local traditions, cultural heritage, festivals, and identity, enhancing socio-cultural benefits could promote more sustainable tourism development and build community acceptance of tourism.

6. Limitations of the Study

First, the study used convenience sampling, which restricted the generalisability of the findings to the whole population of Manipur. Future research could use probability sampling methods to get a more representative sample. Secondly, the study was cross-sectional, in which data were collected at a single point in time. Feelings can vary at different stages of tourism development or as socio-political changes occur. Longitudinal studies would give a clearer idea of changes in residents' attitudes over time. Third, data were gathered using a self-administered online questionnaire, which may be subject to response bias and to variation in respondents' understanding of the questionnaire items. Lastly, while the study did include some tourism impact dimensions, others, including destination image, trust in government, place attachment, perceived quality of life, and community participation, may enhance the ability of future models to explain the situation.

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