EXAMINATION OF IMPACT OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM PRACTICES ON QUALITY OF LIFE OF DESTINATION COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: The study endeavors to find out the perceived impact of Responsible Tourism Practices (RTPs) on destination communities' Quality of Life (QOL). Besides, the investigation tests the mediating role of community involvement in the relationship between RTPs and QOL. A well-designed questionnaire developed from the existing literature was distributed among the tourist destination residents of Pahalgam, Kashmir Valley, India. In addition, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the EFA findings through AMOSS 22. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was also applied to ascertain the impact of RTPs on QOL. Finally, the mediating role of community involvement was examined and, subsequently, the results were reported. The study's findings resulted in a significant relationship between RTPs and QOL; thereby, RTPs have a pivotal role in enhancing the QOL of the communities. Furthermore, the investigation revealed that community involvement mediates the relationship between RTPs and QOL. Thus, the study's achievements suggest that the locals should be involved in tourism activities to enhance the communities' QOL.

Key words: travel industry, Responsible Tourism Practices, Qualify of Life, destination communities, Pahalgam, mediating factor

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered to be an economic driver for various tourist destinations worldwide (Zhou et al., 1997; Hanafiah and Harun, 2010). Its dominance as a significant income contributor has made it a vital component to the strategic planning efforts and has been widely recognized (Hanafiah and Harun, 2010). Tourism has brought together cultures across the globe (Urry, 2001). Today, there are several challenges that the world is facing in terms of financial instability (Chemingui and Ben Lallouna, 2013), global warming, sustainability issues (Dávid and Baros, 2007), terrorism. There are apparent consequences of these challenges, and a stream of research is being conducted to examine these challenges. Responsible tourism is being considered as an alternative to address these issues (Carasuk, 2011; Husbands and Harrison, 1996).

According to Hanafiah et al. (2016), the association between responsible tourism practices and local communities' quality of life is gaining momentum in the tourism literature. Globally, the debate on responsible tourism practices has received considerable attention due to its full acceptance at the international level (Harrison, 1996), "which regard the host's characteristic, constructed and social conditions (Babbie, 2015) and the interests of all gatherings concerned" (Smith, 1990) and limit "the adverse effects on the destination" (Stanford, 2008). Responsible tourism is considered to be the best tool to minimize the negative impacts of tourism activities at the destination (Crotts and Holland, 1993; Garau-Vadell et al.,

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2018). The travel industry territories' improvement includes different socially cognizant strategies, for example, supporting and ecoing the travel industry, the ethical tourism and other best practices for advancement of the travel industry (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). The tourism industry is people-based and depends on the interaction between them, and is highly sensible to the destination's social and cultural setup (Hanafiah and Harun, 2010) as the tourism industry is facing several issues related to sustainability, resource management, social and economic disparity, fluctuations in the tourist demand. For this reason, destination communities must be benefited from tourism activities to minimize the detrimental effects of tourism, which is why RTPs were incorporated to address all these issues. RTPs have become an essential aspect of tourism research, improving the current manageable tourism practices (Spenceley, 2010).

RTPs focus on maximizing the economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits of tourism while also dealing with how to minimize these impacts. Besides, RTP is the most favored industry term and approach to set up a travel industry goal for the most part of the African and European countries (Bramwell et al., 2008).

The tourism industry can be developed well with the support and involvement of residents of a destination. As primary stakeholders, destination communities play a significant part in regulating and maintaining the development of tourism. Local community involvement acts as an axiom for successful tourism development at any destination. The local government has to engage the destination communities in tourism activities to get the maximum benefits. This is what the implementation of RTPs focuses upon, as destination communities' attitudes may directly or indirectly influence tourism growth in the destination (Ling and Rani, 2011). As the authorities face difficulties in community involvement while planning and managing tourism at the destination, the RTPs have proven to be a viable tool in easing these difficulties (Shani and Pizam, 2012).

Despite the developing enthusiasm in evaluating the association between the travel industry and QOL and the far-reaching learning that the travel industry has an excellent perspective for upgrading the QOL of residents, only a few investigations have assessed the effect of the travel industry on inhabitants' QOL (Kim, 2002; Benckendorff et al., 2009). Though, a study by Hanafiah, 2016 has analysed the relationship between RTPs and QOL, RTPs have been considered as mediators in this relationship. Thus, in the present study the RTPs acted as an independent variable, community involvement has been examined as a mediator in the relationship between the independent variable (RTPs) and dependent variable (QOL). So far no such study has been carried out where it was tested as a mediator in the relationship of RTPs and QOL. To bridge this gap, the investigation directs to evaluate destination communities' perception concerning RTPs and their effect on QOL. More specifically, the study aims to analyse the mediating role of community involvement in enhancing the QOL of destination communities in the light of RTPs.

The present study assesses the residents' perception of the effect of RTPs on their QOL domains in leisure-based tourism destinations, where no such research has been carried out yet. Secondly, this research aims at testing which QOL domain of destination communities is mostly affected through RTPs. These kinds of examinations are vital for both the government and non-government organizations in formulating and executing responsible tourism practices – RTP techniques to produce positive travel industry impacts on inhabitants' QOL. The study presents a thorough review of the impacts of tourism on destination communities' QOL and displays the relevance of linking the RTPs' impacts on their QOL. After the review, a description of empirical examination is introduced, followed by the methodology section in which the data collection techniques are discussed. After this, the results of the study are presented, while in the end the authors explain the practical implications to characterize responsible tourism advancement procedures that improve the residents' QOL.

Theoretical background and hypotheses formulation

Destination communities' perceptions regarding the effects of tourism development have been researched exhaustively, creating the comparative outcomes of the travel industry's influence on the economic, environmental and social formations of the tourist destinations (Lee, 2013; Hanafiah and Hemdi, 2014). Studies have found out that the local communities perceive tourism as a tool for economic improvement, socio-cultural and ecological preservation (Shani and Pizam, 2012). Some studies, at the same time, have evidenced the contradictory results that destination communities perceive tourism development negatively (Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012). The development of tourism has great potential to affect the lives of the communities and, subsequently, the residents face challenges related to various aspects of life (Lepp, 2007). Therefore, the tourist destination residents also face challenges, and their quality of life is being largely influenced by tourism activities (Matarrita and Brennan, 2010).

Despite these differences, a few studies have explicitly explored the travel industry's effect on occupants' QOL (Kim et al., 2013). In any case, it is widely perceived that the refinement of occupants' QOL ought to be the priority of the destination management organizations (DMOs). As pointed by Yu et al., 2014, "one of the significant purposes of tourism development in a destination is to improve the Quality of Life (QOL) of the host community." Thus, it is generally perceived that all travel industry improvement systems should be structured and actualized to improve the QOL of all operators, including the locals being a standout amongst the most significant specialists to accomplish a travel industry goal. To evaluate every aspect of the residents' QOL affected by the travel industry advancement, according to Jeon et al. (2016), "residents' quality of life should be conceptualized with an aggregation of residents' perception of economic, social, and environmental conditions as well as the comprehensive perception of well-being in the host community, embracing residents' subjective well-being and objective well-being." Some researchers have contemplated the QOL construct's pertinence in the travel industry and its different areas (Andereck et al. 2007). QOL measure is dependent on four domains: material prosperity (containing two measurements: pay and work and the average cost for essential items), network prosperity, enthusiastic prosperity (calculating two measures: recreation prosperity and profound prosperity) and well-being and security prosperity (Kim, 2002). However, few studies (Hanafiah, 2016; Mathew and Sreejesh, 2017) have analysed the relationship between RTPs and residents' QOL.

Most of the published investigations are uncovering, that the travel industry affects residents' QOL positively. It may likewise effect locals' QOL contrarily when it adds to the loss of social character (Jeon et al. 2016), causes ecological disturbance, expands average costs for essential items (Liu, 2015), brings in lifestyle changes (Doğan, 1989; Kasim, 2006), creates traffic congestion (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). In this way, the travel industry development does not generally affect the inhabitants' QOL positively. When the travel industry expenses surpass the apparent advantages, it may add to a reduction in inhabitants' QOL. The above context has presented a complete linkage between the tourism development impact studies and residents' QOL. However, there has been a shortage of research that has examined the role of RTPs in communities' QOL. Thus, the present investigation aims at bridging this gap by examining the relationship of RTPs with the residents' QOL. Furthermore, the studies have uncovered a reliable connection between the occupants' satisfaction and recreational facilities, shopping and administration offices (Faulkner and Tideswell, 1997), so we postulate the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: Residents' QOL (Quality of Life) is being influenced by the RTPs (Responsible Tourism Practices)

Network contribution portrays the degree to which communities are associated with offering concerns about their lives to their networks. A few examinations have surveyed the help of the host inhabitants for the travel industry advancement with an attention on the degree to which these inhabitants are engaged with the travel industry (Simpson, 2001; Goodwin, 2002; Fallon and Kriwoken, 2003; Ndivo and Cantoni, 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018). Community participation is a fundamental aspect of community-based tourism's (CBT) success (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). "The involvement of community assumes a critical job in improving network-based travel industry because network investment can build the estimation of a network by upgrading the beneficial outcomes of the travel industry and diminishing its negative impacts" (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Given the idea that native support must be joined by power redistribution, Arnstein (1969) built up a stepping stool of domestic investment as a model to clarify the natural transformative strides of this procedure.

As per this model, three dimensions of slow development, comprising non-cooperation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of inherent power are utilized to evaluate network inclusion and investment in the network-based travel industry (Okazaki, 2008; Selin and Chavez, 1995). The travel industry studies demonstrate that drawing in the community participation in the board and essential leadership can persuade the network of the need to incorporate the travel industry into the local economy (Simpson, 2001; Wang, and Pfister, 2008; Sebele, 2010; Bello et al., 2018). Engagement of the host community in the tourism-related activities opens new doors of profit for the locals (Sebele, 2010).

A few researchers of the travel industry have utilized the seen advantages and expenses as the mediating factors of community involvement for the travel industry advancement (Nicholas et al., 2009), also as the ecological frame of mind (Gursoy et al., 2002; Nicholas et al., 2009) and as a method for evaluating hypothetical models. Butcher (1997), likewise, proposed that both immediate and circuitous community involvement are valuable because both reinforce the benefit base of practical improvement of the travel industry. Accordingly, this examination states that inhabitants with economic travel industry improvement frames of mind will be effectively linked with network associations and open undertakings. Along these lines, community involvement may have an interceding impact between RTPs and QOL of local communities. Thus, the present investigation has formulated the second hypothesis:

H2: Community involvement mediates the connection between RTPs (Responsible Tourism Practices) and QOL (Quality of Life)

Research framework

The present examination aims at evaluating the perceived impact of responsible tourism practices on the quality of life of communities/residents in the Kashmir Valley. As was said before, the study also tests the mediating role of community involvement in the relationship between RTPs and QOL. An exhaustive literature review was conducted related to these variables and, consequently, a research framework was developed (Figure 1). The exploration structure embraced for the present investigation covers the examination's objectives, which incorporate all the measurements that shape and impact communities' perception regarding RTPs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study both the primary and secondary data have been used to evaluate the role of RTPs in the local community's Quality of Life and the relationship between these two variables in the presence of a mediator – community involvement (Mertler and Vannatta, 2004). The secondary data was collected from various international and national journals and reports. The primary data was compiled through a questionnaire drafted on existing literature and distributed among the residents of the Pahalgam destination.

1. Research Instrument

Host communities' perception of the significance of RTPs in the QOL of communities was measured through a scale developed by considering the previous literature (Chiappa et al., 2016, Hanafiah, 2016; Mathew and Sreejesh, 2017). It consisted of 20 items, measured on a five-point Likert type scale, where grade 1 represented strong disagreement, grade 5 – strong agreement. The second construct, i.e. the Quality of life, was developed from the study of Kim, Uysal and Sirgy (2013) and was measured on a five-point Likert type scale (from 1 = strong disagreement to 5= strong agreement). The mediator, i.e. the community involvement, was adopted from the studies of Lee, 2013; Cheng et al., 2017 and was subsequently measured on a five-point Likert scale, too. To extract dimensions from responsible tourism and QOL, *Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)* was carried out. To validate the EFA, *Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)* was also applied. Finally, the *Structured Equation Model (SEM)* was used to test the proposed hypotheses and to evaluate the effect of responsible tourism practices on QOL.

2. Sampling Design

The study was conducted in Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, Kashmir region, Jammu, and Kashmir, India. The study sample was created from the residents whose age was 18 years or above, living in the selected villages. The sample frame was obtained from the electoral roll record of 2011 of the concerned Block Development Officer (BDO) area. The method of collecting quantitative data from the respondents' sample of these identified and independent sampling units has been systematic. Initially, the sampling interval was obtained using the formula (total number of household residents, collected from the electoral voter list / sample size obtained applying the formula of Taro Yamane).

Using the random number table, we selected a family number between 1 and the obtained sampling interval. These families were then contacted via door-to-door format to gather information.
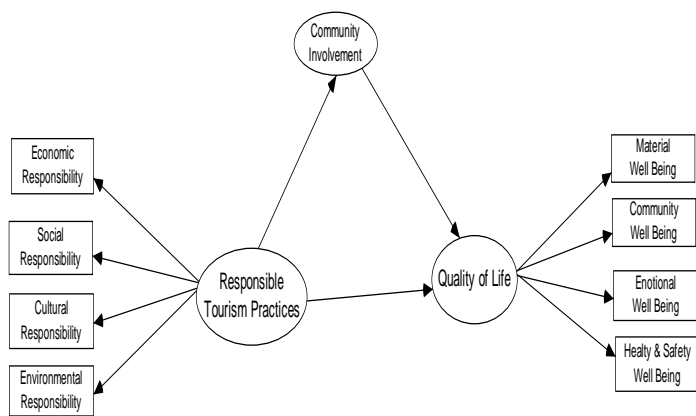

Figure 1. The Research Framework (Source: own compilation)

Table 1. Results of the Reliability Test (Source: own compilation)

Dimensions	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha (α) Value
Economic Responsibility	04	.912
Social Responsibility	03	.865
Cultural Responsibility	03	.838
Environmental Responsibility	04	.913
Responsible Tourism Practices (RTPs)	**14**	**.863**
Material Well-being	03	.882
Community Well-being	03	.859
Emotional Well-being	02	.706
Health and Safety Well-being	03	.766
Quality of Life (QOL)	**11**	**.805**
Community Involvement	05	.935
Note: Cronbach Alpha (α) for all the constructs are above the threshold level of .60		

3. Sample Size

Selection of optimum sample size is the researchers' core concern to come up with a reliable study. The present study sample was calculated using the Taro Yamane (1973) formula with a 95% confidence level. The formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)2}$$

where:
n= sample size required
N = number of people in the population
e = allowable error (%)

As per the Block Development Officer, the destination's electoral roll (core zone) as of September 2018 was 2367. Therefore, the sample size by using the Taro Yamane (1973) formula for the study was 342.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Initially, problems related to missing values and outliers were experienced. Then reliability was checked through the Cronbach Alpha (α). The results of Cronbach Alpha (α) were above the threshold level of **0.60** (***Table 1***), thus indicating the internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The normality of the variables was checked through skewness and kurtosis and was in the range of ±2.00, indicating the data's normality. As indicated in ***Table 2***, 57.3% (n=196) of respondents were males, while 42.7% (n=146) were females. Approximately 41% (n=141) of households were residing there for the last 10-20 years. The majority of the participants were associated with the local business (59%, n= 87), and only 16% (n=23) were involved in governmental jobs. Most of the respondents were between 31-43 years (43%, n=135). The respondents' majority (44%, n=152) was directly involved in the tourism activities at the destination.

Table 2. Demographic profile of the respondents (Source: own compilation)

Profile of respondents (Demographic)			
Age	18 to 30 years (28.9%)	31 to 43 years (39.5%)	44 to 56 years (22.2%)	57 and above (9.4%)
Gender	Male (57.3%)	Female (42.7%)		
Occupation	Local Business (59%)	Govt. Job (16%)	Professionals (19%)	Others (6%)
Years of Residency	1-10 years (18.1%)	10-20 years (41.2%)	20-30 years (31.6%)	above 30 years (9.1%)
Household income (annual)	Less than Rs. 1,00,000 (32.7%)	Rs. 1,00,000 – Rs. 2,00,000 (51.2%)	Above Rs. 2,00,00 (16.1%)	
Involvement in tourism	directly employed (44.4%)	indirectly employed (31.9%)	not employed (13.5%)	employed in the tourism industry other than my village (10.2%)

1. Factor Analysis Results

To extract the Responsible Tourism Practices (RTPs) and Quality of Life (QOL) factors Principal Component analysis and VARIMAX Rotation with Kaiser Normalization were performed. The scale consisted of **14** items for RTPs and **11** items for QOL. The 14 items of RTPs got converted into 04 factors, namely Economic (04 items), Social (03 items), Cultural (03 items) and Environmental (04 items) responsibilities, and accounted for 78.714% variance. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for Responsible Tourism Practices was **.832,** indicating an adequate EFA sample.

Table 3. Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis with descriptive statistics (Source: own compilation)

| Attributes	Factor loading	Mean	SD	Commu-nalities	VE
Factor 1: ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY					
Responsible Tourism creates more employment opportunities for residents in the community **(EcR1)**	**.920**	3.76	.914	.899	
Responsible Tourism provides skill development and vocational training opportunities for local residents **(EcR3)**	**.874**	3.77	.955	.815	**36.74%**
Responsible Tourism creates a new market for local products **(EcR2)**	**.870**	3.79	.956	.787	
Responsible Tourism Prefers the local candidates in recruitment **(EcR4)**	**.821**	3.79	.954	.695	
Total		**3.81**	**.866**		
Factor 2: ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY					
Responsible Tourism gives special attention to environmental conservation and the protection of natural eco system **(EnvR1)**	**.882**	3.75	1.13	.830	
Responsible tourism controls the littering activities by providing the recycle and reuse concept **(EnvR4)**	**.859**	3.73	1.14	.795	**19.27%**
In Responsible Tourism building materials are from green or sustainable sources **(EnvR3)**	**.850**	3.64	1.13	.800	
Responsible Tourism promotes Eco friendly vehicles **(EnvR2)**	**.828**	3.79	1.09	.755	
Total		**3.94**	**.960**		
Factor 3: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY					
Responsible Tourism takes initiatives for social and infrastructure community development **(SolR2)**	**.865**	3.85	1.22	.797	
Responsible Tourism engages with local communities **(SolR1)**	**.861**	3.94	1.16	.804	**13.13%**
Responsible Tourism develops the sense of personal guardianship of heritage **(SolR3)**	**.825**	3.89	1.10	.769	
Total		**3.69**	**.937**		
Factor 4: CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY					
Responsible Tourism has increased residents' pride in the local culture towards community through their participation in the decision making **(CulR1)**	**.886**	4.00	.935	.814	**9.57%**
Responsible Tourism helps in preservation of culture and heritage **(CulR3)**	**.865**	4.00	.955	.764	
Responsible Tourism builds awareness/appreciation of cultural heritage **(CulR2)**	**.819**	4.06	.925	.695	
Total		**3.90**	**.784**		
Factor 1: MATERIAL WELL-BEING					
Economic Security of Job **(MWB1)**	**.891**	4.01	.938	.840	
Income at Current Job **(MWB3)**	**.878**	4.00	.996	.820	**34.59%**
Family Income **(MWB2)**	**.847**	3.92	1.03	.773	
		3.85	**.783**		
Factor 2: COMMUNITY WELL-BEING					
Services and Facilities **(CWB3)**	**.889**	4.12	.991	.818	
Community Environment **(CWB1)**	**.865**	4.04	1.00	.767	**18.80%**
Community Life **(CWB2)**	**.839**	4.09	.984	.761	
		3.93	**.786**		
Factor 3: HEALTH AND SAFETY WELL-BEING					
Air Quality **(HSWB1)**	**.845**	3.73	.946	.729	
Water Quality **(HSWB2)**	**.830**	3.73	.981	.704	**13.46%**
Safety and Security **(HSWB3)**	**.735**	3.94	.924	.640	
		3.34	**.642**		
Factor 4: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING					
Religious Services **(EmWB1)**	**.867**	3.67	1.04	.788	**9.53%**
Spiritual Life **(EmWB2)**	**.840**	3.74	.987	.765	
Total		**3.04**	**.642**		
Note SD = Standard Deviation, KMO; VE = Variance Extracted					
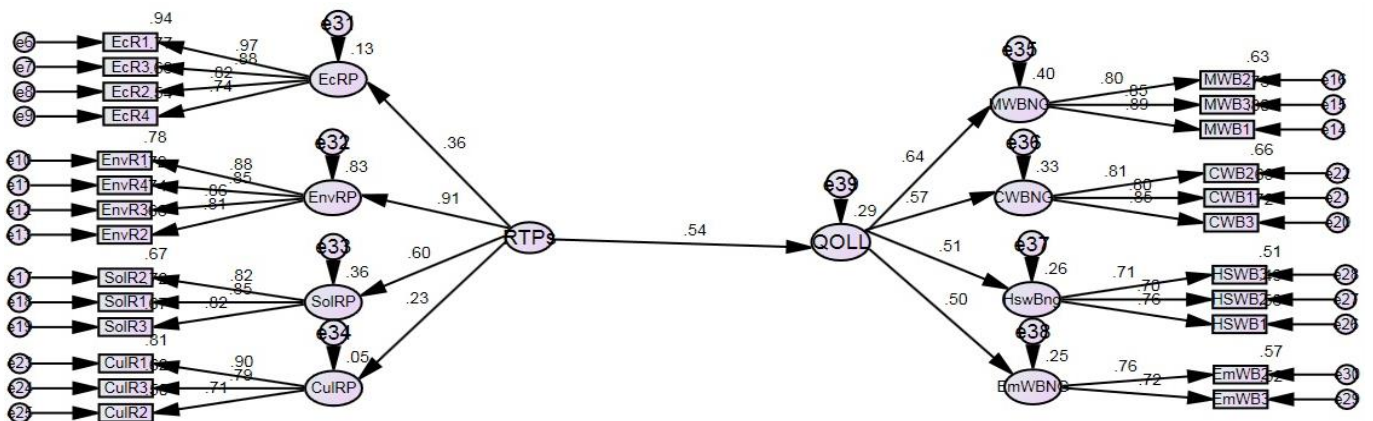
Figure 2. Relationship between the RTPs and the QOL (Source: own compilation)

The 11 items of Quality of Life were extracted into 04 factors as well, namely: Material Well-being (03 items), Community Well-being (03 items), Emotional Well-being (02 items), Health and Safety Well-being (03 items). The results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for QOL was **.716**, thus affirming the EFA data suitability. The value for Bartlett's test of Sphericity appeared to be **3115.66** for RTPs (.000 significance with a degree of freedom 91) and **1696.08** for QOL (.000 significance with a degree of freedom 55), thereby indicating that factors are related to each other. One item for Emotional Well-being (Cultural Exchange) got deleted because of the cross-loading. Table 3 shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis.

Table 4. Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Source: own compilation)

Dimensions	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Economic Responsibility	EcR1	**.969**	0.733	0.916
	EcR3	**.878**		
	EcR2	823		
	EcR4	**.737**		
Environmental Responsibility	EnvR1	**.885**	0.725	0.913
	EnvR4	**.845**		
	EnvR3	**.857**		
	EnvR2	**.817**		
Social Responsibility	SolR2	**.816**	0.684	0.866
	SolR1	**.850**		
	SolR3	**.814**		
Cultural Responsibility	CulR1	**.897**	0.643	0.843
	CulR3	**.788**		
	CulR2	**.710**		
Material Well-Being	MWB1	**.883**	0.719	0.885
	MWB3	**.858**		
	MWB2	**.801**		
Community Well-Being	CWB3	**.850**	0.670	0.859
	CWB1	**.786**		
	CWB2	**.818**		
Health and Safety Well-Being	HSWB1	**.748**	0.524	0.767
	HSWB2	**.691**		
	HSWB3	**.731**		
Emotional Well-Being	EmWB1	**.722**	0.547	0.707
	EmWB2	**.757**		
Community Involvement	CInv4	**.932**	0.745	0.936
	CInv2	**.900**		
	CInv5	**.855**		
	CInv1	**.783**		
	CInv3	**.838**		

Note:
X^2 = Chi-square; df = degree of freedom; GFI = goodness of fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; IFI =incremental fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability

Goodness of fit indices (GFI)

X2	558.183
df	370
GFI	0.906
AGFI	0.883
CFI	0.970
IFI	0.971
RMSEA	0.039

2. Measurement model

A measurement model with nine factors, including the mediator (community involvement), was tested by confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate the suitability of the data for model fit. ***Chi-square = 558.183***, with degree of freedom = 370 at probability level = .000 (P < 0.05), ***CMIN/DF = 1.509, GFI = 0.906, AGFI = 0.882, CFI = 0.970, IFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.965, RMSEA = 0.039***. The results of the CFA indicate that the data fits the model very well.

Table 5 shows the convergent validity and discriminant validity results, thus affirming the Composite Reliability (CR). The table results depict that the values of CR are higher than the threshold value of 0.60 (Koufteros, 1999), which reconfirms the convergent validity (internal consistency of variables).

Besides the CR values, the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) were also higher than the suggested threshold value of **0.50** (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). These results verify the convergent validity of the dimensions measured. Furthermore, we examined the constructs' discriminant validity by examining the square of all the pairs of correlations with AVE values. The values of the square root of the AVE were higher than the values of the correlation coefficients (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), presenting hereby the proof for discriminant validity.

Table 5. Results of the Convergent Validity and the Discriminant Validity (Source: own compilation)

	CR	AVE	HswBng	CoInv	EcRP	EnvRP	MWBNG	SolRP	CWBNG	CulRP	EmWBNG
HswBng	0.767	0.524	**0.724**								
CoInv	0.936	0.745	0.199	**0.863**							
EcRP	0.916	0.733	0.118	0.229	**0.856**						
EnvRP	0.913	0.725	0.186	0.222	0.315	**0.851**					
MWBNG	0.885	0.719	0.337	0.310	0.155	0.289	**0.848**				
SolRP	0.866	0.684	0.117	0.092	0.218	0.554	0.145	**0.827**			
CWBNG	0.859	0.670	0.424	0.349	0.112	0.425	0.262	0.147	**0.818**		
CulRP	0.843	0.643	0.012	0.204	0.335	0.173	0.166	0.156	0.051	**0.802**	
EmWBNG	0.707	0.547	0.123	0.275	0.073	0.199	0.503	0.049	0.192	0.109	**0.740**

*Notes: The values in the diagonal of the above matrix are the square root of the AVE. **HswBng** = Health and Safety Well-Being; **CoInv** = Community Involvement; **EcRP** = Economic Responsibility; **EnvRP** = Environmental Responsibility; **MWBNG** = Material Well-Being; **SolRP** = Social Responsibility; **CWBNG** = Community Well-Being; **CulRP** = Cultural Responsibility; **EmWBNG**= Emotional Well-Being*

3. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

After the confirmatory factor analysis the next step was to test the proposed set of hypotheses through SEM.

The results of the model showed that the data fits it very well. ***Chi-square = 502.202***, with degrees of freedom = 267 at probability level = .000 (***p<0.05***); ***CMIN/DF = 1.881***; ***GFI = 0.900; AGFI = 0.878; CFI = 0.951; IFI = 0.951; TLI = 0.945; RMSEA = 0.051***. The results of structural equation modelling, along with path coefficient are shown in the Figure 2. The study revealed that Responsible Tourism Practices explained a **29%** variance on the communities' QOL. From the examination of way coefficients it was discovered that QOL is being influenced by the RTPs (***β = 0.54, p<0.05***).

4.Results of the Mediation Test

To analyze the mediating effect of community involvement between responsible tourism practices and communities' quality of life, the sample number was set to 2000. The 95% confidence interval was obtained by the help of the bootstrap

method. The indirect effects of Responsible Tourism Practices and Quality of Life were significant (*.105, p<0.05*). The examination of the direct path of RTPs on QOL in the presence of a mediator (community involvement) showed that the direct impact was also significant (*.450, p<0.05*). Thus, we could indicate the mediating effect of community involvement in the relationship between the responsible tourism practices and quality of life.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study undertook to assess the relationship between the Responsible Tourism Practices (RTPs) and Quality of Life (QOL), and also check the role of RTPs in enhancing the QOL of the destination communities. Besides, the study endeavoured to analyze the mediating effect of community involvement in the relationship between R.
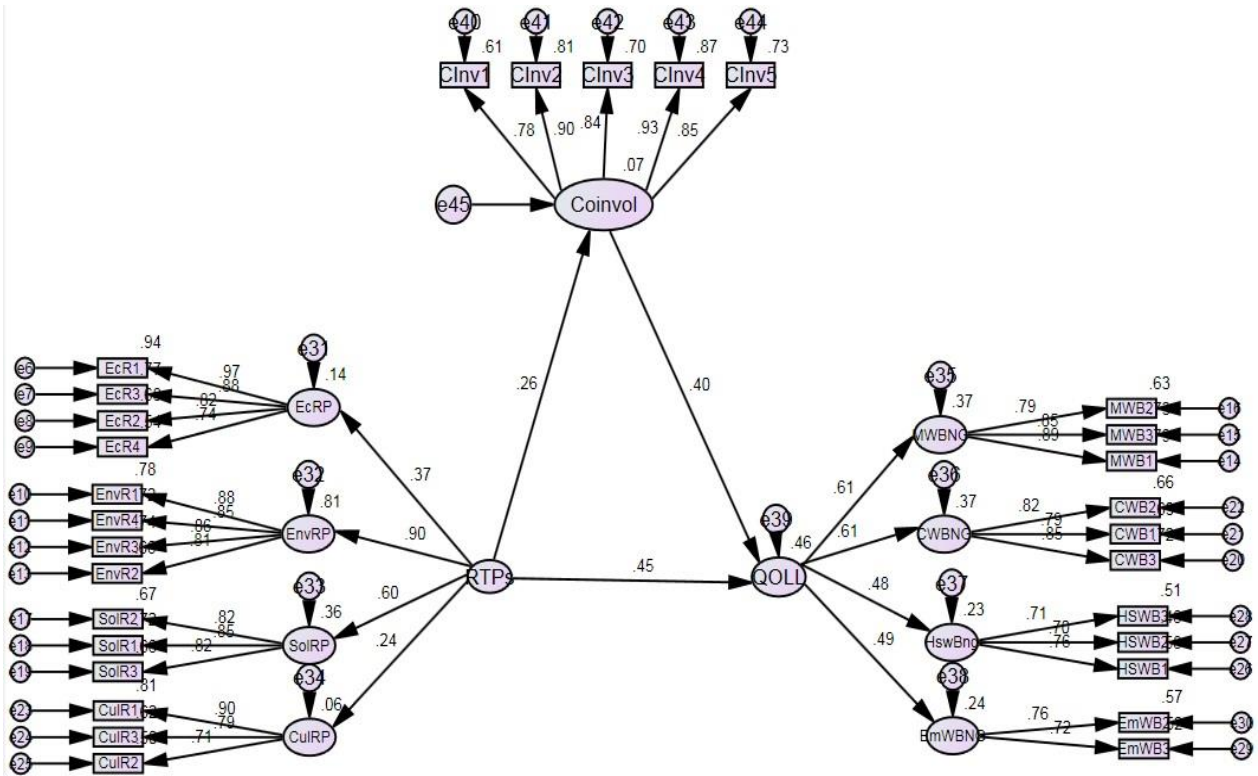
Figure 3. The mediating effect of community involvement (Source: own compilation)

TPs and QOL. The study's findings revealed that host communities perceive that both RTPs and QOL consist of four 2nd order constructs: Economic Responsibility, Environmental Responsibility, Social Responsibility, Cultural Responsibility and Material Well-Being, Community Well-Being, Emotional Well-Being, Health and Safety Well-Being respectively. The four dimensions of Responsible Tourism Practices significantly influence the residents' QOL (*β = 0.54, p<0.05*). It was also found out that destination communities perceive the important role of RTPs in enhancing their quality of life. The findings of the investigation uncovered that RTPs are a crucial indicator to impact the QOL of host communities.

The majority of respondents agreed that RTPs create more employment opportunities for residents in the community (*mean = 3.76; EcR1*), provide skill development and vocational training opportunities for them (*mean = 3.77; EcR3*) and create a new market for the local products (*mean = 3.79; EcR2*). Likewise, residents agreed that RTPs engage the local communities (*mean = 3.94; SolR1*), take initiatives for social and infrastructural community development (*mean = 3.85; SolR2*), develop a sense of personal guardianship of the heritage (*mean = 3.89; SolR3*), increase residents' pride in the local culture towards the community through their participation in the decision making (*mean = 4.00; CulR1*), build awareness/ appreciation of the cultural heritage (*mean = 4.06; CulR2*). Furthermore, the practices drive special attention to environmental conservation and the protection of the natural ecosystem (*mean = 3.75; EnvR1*), control the littering activities by providing the recycle and reuse concept (*mean = 3.73; EnvR4*), promote the eco-friendly vehicles (*mean = 3.79; EnvR2*) and the building materials from green or sustainable sources (*mean = 3.64; EnvR2*).

The results of the study revealed that the Material Well-Being domain of the Quality of Life has the highest variance (**34.59%**). The factors inside it are appraised as generally essential to inhabitants, like Economic Security of Job (*mean = 4.01; MWB1*), Income at Current Job (*mean = 4.00; MWB3*) or Family Income (*mean = 4.01; MWB2*), followed by Community Well-Being that shows a **18.80%** variance with the item Services and Facilities (CWB3), having a mean value of **4.12**, Community life (CWB2) with a mean value of **4.09** and Community environment (CWB1) with a mean value of **4.04**. The third construct of Quality of Life, Health and Safety Well-Being has a **13.46%** variance. The items in this variable comprise of Safety and Security (HSWB3), having a mean value of **3.94**, followed by Air Quality (HSWB1) with a mean value of **3.73** and Water Quality (HSWB2) making up a mean value also of **3.73**. The fourth dimension of Quality of Life, Emotional Well-Being, shows a 9.53% variance. In this construct, the item Spiritual Life (EmWB2) has the highest mean value of **3.74**,

followed by Religious Services (EmWB1) with a mean value of **3.67.** As it is evident from the SEM results, Responsible Tourism Practices (RTPs) have the highest impact on Environmental Responsible Practices (EnRP) (*β=.91; p<0.05*), thus indicating that ERP has a tremendous role in RTPs. This is why DMOs should incorporate environmentally responsible practices at tourist destinations for proper implementation of RTPS. It can be achieved by implementing eco-friendly procedures like reducing waste production and it's recycling, avoiding the use of plastic cutlery, applying reusable bags and containers, having alternative sources of energy like solar batteries etc. Through this, the negative environmental impacts can be minimized and the destination sustainability can be achieved. Besides, it is also suggested to use local materials and implement local architecture while designing any tourist destination infrastructure.

It is evident from the results that there is a moderate contribution of Cultural Responsible Practices (CuRP) (*β=.23; p<0.05*), thereby indicating that much attention needs to be given while incorporating Responsible Tourism Practices at a particular tourist destination. The authorities concerned should promote heritage sites, monuments and landmarks, museums and exhibitions through various social media platforms to encourage visiting the valley in order to gain a rich cultural experience. Thus, the earned income can be used to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the destination. DMOs should develop responsible tourism with dignity, respecting and nurturing local cultures (including religion) to enrich the tourism experience and build pride and confidence among the local communities. Besides, sufficient support has to be given to developing sustainable local handicraft enterprises by improving the design, production, packaging and marketing skills of the craft workers adapting to the market demand. It is also suggested to encourage the production of local cultural products, crafts and artefacts so that the local community could get the maximum benefits from the tourism activity. Through these practices, the destination's rich cultural heritage can be sustained for a longer period. Accordingly, the destinations can become competitive by offering the tourists a unique and rich cultural experience.

The findings of the study have revealed that Economic Responsible Practices (EcRP) have a better contribution (*β = .36; p<0.05*) towards RTPs. So, tourism authorities should give due consideration while incorporating the Economic Responsible Practices in RTPs so that by implementing RTPs the QOL of destination communities could be enhanced. For these, best employment opportunities for locals, various economically rich initiatives (like developing niche products based on local raw materials) should be created. The small, medium and micro-enterprises should be encouraged to employ locals and enhance their service standards in order to maximize their revenue potential. Furthermore, the focus should be given to encouraging tourists to buy locally made products and to use locally produced services from locally operated businesses, so that the best of the economically responsible tourism practices could be utilized and implemented. It is also suggested that locals must be consulted while designing any policy and strategy regarding the responsible tourism practices. It is of utmost importance to promote awareness concerning responsible tourism's potential benefits to QOL among the residents.

The results of the research have also disclosed that Community Well-Being (CuWB) has the highest impact (*β = .57; p<0.05*) on the quality of life. This means that it is a good predictor of QOL. Based on the indicators proposed in the study, Services and Facilities (CWB3), Community environment (CWB1) and Community life (CWB2) have to be taken to the fore of the agenda of tourism. Due consideration should be given to these indicators to enhance the QOL of destination communities. It is also revealed that Health and Safety Well-Being (HsWB) has the lowest contribution (*β = .51; p<0.05*) towards QOL, thus indicating that communities do not perceive much contribution in this regard. A possible reason for this might be that destination communities are not so health-conscious. As it was said before, community involvement has a mediating role between the relationship of RTPs and QOL of communities. Therefore, governments and local authorities should focus on locals' participation in tourism activities to enhance their QOL. This can be achieved by the involvement of locals in the decision-making process and by giving more opportunities for communities to participate in tourism-related activities, for example, privileging the locals in employment to realize the tourism's actual benefits. Besides, promotional campaigns and programs should emphasize the involvement of locals. Their increased participation in tourism-related activities is crucial for the support of Responsible Tourism Practices. Thus, the research results offer a significant insight for local authorities in community participation for the advancement and development of responsible tourism practices.

CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The findings of the investigation revealed a positive relationship between RTPs and QOL, and that responsible tourism practices have a significant role in enhancing the quality of life of the destination communities. The results proved that community involvement mediates the relationship between RTPs and QOL. To sum these up, we can state that the communities' perception of Responsible Tourism Practices incorporates the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions that influence the destination domains' quality of life. Despite its commitments, this investigation has a few limitations that ought to be expanded in the future research. This study focused only on one destination community. Examination of various types of local communities, such as native networks, horticultural networks etc. may lead to contrary conclusions for implementing responsible tourism practices. Future studies should lead to comparable results over a wide range of destination communities to overcome this impediment. Given the need to survey the impacts of RTPs and QOL on support for the practical advancement of RTPs, the future research ought to thoroughly inspect this conduct model regarding the host communities by testing the community involvement as a moderator. Subsequently, it is important to evaluate, whether this model can be connected to different network-based types in the travel industry.

Besides, only communities directly associated with the tourism activities were examined. It would be intriguing to study the perceptions of those that are not associated with the tourism phenomenon or not involved in tourism. Future research has to include them as well and also the others that are most certainly not engaged with the travel industry improvement at all. These communities must be looked at by the moderating effect of community involvement in the travel industry. As the present

study's design was cross-sectional, longitudinal sectional studies should be carried out to test the mediation effect of community involvement with other variables such as community attachment and support for future tourism.

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