

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BOOSTS RESIDENTS' WELL-BEING: INSIGHTS FROM WESTERN KENYA

Sebastian ODUNGA ^{1*}, Kinga SZABÓ ², Viktória SZENTE ³

¹ Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Doctoral School of Economic and Regional Sciences, Kaposvár, Hungary; odunga.sebastian.ongango@phd.uni-mate.hu (S.O.)

² Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Institute of Rural Development and Sustainable Economy, Kaposvár, Hungary; szabo.kinga@uni-mate.hu (K.S.)

³ Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Institute of Food Agricultural and Food Economics, Kaposvár, Hungary; szente.viktoria@uni-mate.hu (V.S.)

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism affects host communities through interactions with tourists and other stakeholders, generating both benefits and costs for local residents. This study aims to examine how community involvement in community-based sustainable tourism development influences residents' overall well-being in Western Kenya, with particular attention to the mediating roles of support for tourism and community perceptions. The study addresses the limited empirical evidence on how these factors jointly shape residents' well-being in tourism contexts in developing regions. The study was guided by Social Exchange Theory and used a purposive sampling strategy. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered, of which 310 complete responses were retained for analysis representing a 77.5% response rate. The data were analysed using a binary logistic regression model to assess the effects of community involvement, support for tourism, and community perceptions on overall well-being. The findings show that community involvement significantly improves residents' overall well-being, increasing it by 10.77%. Support for tourism and positive perceptions contributed an additional 1.5% and 0.5%, respectively. Interaction effects further revealed that community involvement combined with support increased well-being by 2.3%, while involvement combined with positive perceptions increased well-being by 6.8%. These findings provide empirical support for the application of Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating how participation, perceptions, and tourism support are associated with residents' well-being in the Western Kenyan context. These results suggest that active community participation, favourable perceptions, and stronger support for tourism are important drivers of improved well-being. The study, therefore, highlights the need for inclusive tourism policies and community-centred strategies that strengthen local participation and benefit-sharing mechanisms to enhance sustainable tourism development in Western Kenya.

Keywords: community participation, sustainability, tourism strategy, Social Exchange Theory, logistic regression, community-based model

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INTRODUCTION

Community involvement in sustainable tourism development planning has long been recognized as a pathway for empowering residents to participate in decision-making and implement strategies that advance desired socioeconomic outcomes (Riyanto et al., 2023). As a bottom-up approach, community involvement addresses issues directly shaping the tourism experience and fosters a development environment aligned with local social and cultural contexts (Park et al., 2017). Importantly, such involvement protects the community's environment and cultural heritage while simultaneously enhancing socioeconomic well-being. These benefits explain why community-based sustainable tourism has attracted growing scholarly and policy attention (Nuanmeesri, 2022; Mohammed & Osumanu, 2022).

Across developing contexts, community-based tourism has demonstrated potential for poverty alleviation, livelihood diversification and improvements in local welfare (Mohammed & Osumanu, 2022; Priatmoko et al., 2025).

Tourism generates markets for local goods and services and provides diverse occupational opportunities that improve community well-being (Dogra et al., 2022; Wani et al., 2024). Achieving sustainability, however, requires balancing tourism's economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions (Li et al., 2021; Wani et al., 2023).

When practiced sustainably, community-based tourism reduces problems while maximizing benefits for local communities (Dogra et al., 2022). For these reasons, developing nations have increasingly embraced it as a strategy for advancing socio-economic resilience (Wani et al., 2024).

* Corresponding author

Despite its conceptual advancement, empirical evidence on the socioeconomic impacts of community-based sustainable tourism remains limited (Jugmohan & Giampiccoli, 2017; Wani et al., 2024). Rural communities, small islands, fishing villages, and indigenous groups could benefit substantially from such models (Wang et al., 2016; Watts et al., 2022). However, the success of these initiatives hinges on residents' active participation across decision-making, implementation, and evaluation processes (Wu et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2024). Stakeholder-driven involvement not only fosters more effective, sustainable ecotourism but also enhances human well-being (Tseng et al., 2019). Indeed, community support is strongly shaped by residents' perceptions of tourism's economic, social, and environmental impacts (Dündar & Karacaer, 2024).

Tourism development can transform community values, lifestyles, and quality of life, often with both positive and negative outcomes (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Sharpley, 2014; Mathew, 2022). Economically, it can create jobs, diversify income sources, and stimulate empowerment, but may also raise living costs and exacerbate property pressures (Dinis et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015). Socially, tourism can enrich entertainment, recreation, and cultural identity (Mayaka et al., 2019; Su et al., 2017), while also causing congestion, crime, pollution, displacement, or cultural erosion (Alamineh et al., 2023; Látková & Vogt, 2012). On the cultural front, it can heighten global visibility and pride in local heritage (Gursoy et al., 2019), yet it must carefully balance preservation with tourism pressures (Ashworth & Page, 2011).

Both rural and urban contexts illustrate these dynamics. In rural areas, community-based tourism supports farming, services, and crafts while promoting cultural identity (Polukhina et al., 2021). Empirical studies confirm its potential for stable job creation, income growth, and poverty alleviation (Atun et al., 2019; Cheng & Zhang, 2020; Chen et al., 2022; Cunha et al., 2020) but also highlight risks such as income inequality and uneven spatial development (Zhang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022). In urban areas, tourism interacts with complex social and economic systems. While it can boost infrastructure, cultural tourism, and socio-economic well-being (Shin, 2010; Jaafar et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2023; Ma et al., 2020), excessive tourism threatens urban liveability, widening wage gaps, and limiting long-term benefits (Ananian et al., 2018; Ashworth & Page, 2011; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Shi et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2023).

To explain these mixed outcomes, Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a valuable lens. SET posits that individuals engage in exchanges to maximize benefits and minimize costs, making it well-suited to analyze residents' attitudes towards tourism. Community attachment, empowerment and a sense of belonging, increase residents' willingness to support and participate in tourism initiatives (Olya et al., 2018; Khalid et al., 2019; Strzelecka et al., 2017; Durrah et al., 2025). Similarly, residents' perceptions of economic growth, cultural enrichment, and social improvements positively influence support, whereas perceived costs reduce it (Chili, 2015; Pazhuhan et al., 2023; Megawati et al., 2025). Participation and inclusive governance further enhance legitimacy and sustainability (Choi & Murray, 2010; Dündar & Karacaer, 2024).

Against this backdrop, understanding the role of community involvement in shaping well-being through sustainable tourism becomes crucial. This study applies SET to explore how community attachment, perceived benefits, empowerment, participation, and environmental stewardship affect residents' support and overall well-being in Western Kenya. Applying SET to Western Kenya underscores the importance of community attachment, perceived benefits, empowerment, participation, and environmental stewardship in shaping residents' support for sustainable tourism. These factors collectively contribute to improved well-being, stronger engagement, and more effective, community-driven tourism development. The integration of SET not only contextualises local behaviour but also adds scientific value by linking psychosocial theories with empirical development outcomes. Therefore, this has paved the way for a probable research gap worth filling in this study.

We focused on community-based sustainable tourism practices among residents in Western Kenya, one of the regions where the country's development is being explored. Understanding the effects of community involvement in community-based sustainable tourism development on overall well-being can provide valuable insights into the interplays between local communities and sustainable tourism development from a specific geographical setting.

The aim of this study is to examine how community involvement in community-based sustainable tourism development influences residents' overall well-being in Western Kenya, with particular attention to the mediating roles of community perceptions and support for tourism development. More specifically, the study aims to contribute to the literature by addressing the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does community involvement in community-based sustainable tourism development influence their overall well-being?
- ii. Do perceptions mediate the relationship between involvement and well-being?
- iii. What is the mediating effect of support for community-based sustainable tourism development on the nexus between community involvement and their overall well-being? By addressing these dynamics in a developing region context, this research responds to calls for more empirical evidence on the socioeconomic impacts of community-based sustainable tourism. It contributes to advancing both theory and practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was carried out in Western Kenya, covering Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega, Trans-Nzoia, and Vihiga counties, with a focus on Bungoma County due to its active tourism sector and diverse attractions. Bungoma (area $\approx$ 3,032.4 km²) hosts a range of cultural and natural sites (Mount Elgon National Park, Kitum Cave, Nabuyole Falls, Chetambe Fort, etc.) and a predominantly agricultural economy (County Government of Bungoma, 2023; Mamati & Omare, 2024; Downing et al., 2023; Kariithi, 2018). Local livelihoods combine farming with tourism-linked activities (guiding, hospitality, cultural performances, and handicrafts), making the county a suitable case for examining how community involvement in tourism relates to residents' well-being (Oduya, 2017). Figure 1 presents the study area in

Western Kenya, including the selected counties and the focal case of Bungoma County. Western Kenya, including the selected counties and the focal case of Bungoma County. Figure 2 shows selected original field photographs of tourism resources and community-related tourism activities linked to the study objectives.



Figure 1. Geographical location of the study area in Western Kenya (Source: Retrieved from Alchetron)



Figure 2. Community-related tourism activity (Source: Photos by the author, taken during fieldwork, 2024)

Data Collection and Sampling

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from recent studies on community involvement, perceptions, tourism support, and well-being (e.g., Eslami et al., 2019; Gursay et al., 2002; Riyanto et al., 2023). The questionnaire comprised four sections: (1) socio-demographic information (age, gender, education, monthly income (KES), residence, occupational engagement with tourism); (2) community involvement in tourism; (3) perceptions of sustainable tourism (positive and negative); and (4) overall well-being. Most attitudinal items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree ... 5 = strongly agree). Participants provided informed consent prior to completing the survey. A purposive, multi-stage approach targeted households and individuals engaged (directly or indirectly) in community-based tourism across the five counties, with Bungoma selected as a primary study site for its representativeness and accessibility. The sampling frame used 2019 Census household figures for the selected areas ($N \approx 358,796$). Using Israel's (1992) formula for sample size estimation,

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

where n = sample size, N = target population size, e = level of precision (5%)

$$\text{Thus, } n = \frac{358,796}{(1 + 358,796(0.05^2))} = 400$$

A total of 400 questionnaires were administered; 90 questionnaires were incomplete and therefore excluded, leaving 310 complete responses for analysis (final response rate = $310/400 = 77.5\%$).

Ethical considerations

Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and provided consent. Survey participation was voluntary and anonymous; no identifying data beyond institutional contact details for the corresponding author were recorded. Where required, local permissions and approvals were sought.

Analytical Approach

The study applied descriptive and inferential statistics in analysing the collected data. Specifically, the demographic and socioeconomic attributes of households were analysed descriptively using percentages and frequencies, as well as means and standard deviations. Community involvement, tourism support, perceptions, and overall well-being were analysed and presented in figures. The qualitative data were analysed synthetically by summarizing familiar thematic texts.

Regarding the effect of community involvement on the overall well-being of the households, the four-item questions were summed into a score, out of which 1-strongly disagree and disagree scores were merged to imply a negative response "no" denoted by zero, and agree and strongly agree were merged into a positive answer "yes" denoted by 1. This also applied to supporting community perceptions of sustainable community-based tourism and encouraging households to support it. Since the outcome variable (household well-being) was binary, the study employed a binary logistic regression model to analyse the effect of involvement in community-based tourism, as well as the mediating effects of support for tourism and perceptions of the community. Binary responses on overall well-being were used to provide a detailed view of the influence of community-based tourism involvement. The binary logistic model was applied in this study because it is helpful for analysing binary variables and is flexible in handling a mixture of continuous and categorical variables (Agresti, 2010; Jari & Fraser, 2009). Following Agresti (2010), the binary logistic regression model was specified as follows:

$$Wi = \ln\left(\frac{P\pi i}{1 - P\pi i}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Com - invo1 + \beta_2 Com - invo * Sup2 + \beta_3 Com - invo * Perc3 + \beta_c Xc + \mu i$$

Where Wi denotes well-being, $Com - invo$ denotes community involvement, $Com - invo * Sup$ denotes interaction between community involvement and support for community-based sustainable tourism, $Com - invo * Perc$ indicates interaction between community involvement and community perceptions of tourism, $P\pi i$ denotes the probability of positive well-being, and $1 - P\pi i$ is the probability of negative well-being, β_0 denotes the intercept, $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_c$ denotes coefficient estimates of community involvement, interaction between community involvement and support, community involvement and perceptions and household covariates (marital status, education level, gender, age, residence and average monthly income). The error term is denoted by μi . The subscript i denotes households $i = 1, \dots, 310$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive and Summary Statistics

Table 1 provides a detailed description of the study variables. The social-demographic variables indicate that more than half (50.2%) of the sampled respondents were female, while 49.8% were male. The majority (75.7%) of households resided in urban regions. The majority (96.1%) of household heads have a tertiary level of education, with an average monthly income of KES 14,371.84. More than half (84.1%) of the sampled household heads were unmarried, while the majority (71.9%) engaged in community-based tourism as an economic activity.

Results show that 60.3% of respondents are involved in community-based tourism, and 64.5% are involved in its development. This highlights strong local engagement in sustainable tourism practices. Lastly, the majority (61.3%) of

respondents have a positive perception of community-based tourism development. Altogether, we can state that not only do respondents support this, but the majority are looking for positive changes and are ready for the challenge.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Sampled Households
(Source: Author's own construction based on survey data, 2024) *Note: KES denotes Kenyan Shillings

Variable	Description	(n=310)	(%)	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Household head gender	Male =1	152	49.8%				
	Female =2	153	50.2%				
Tourism involvement status	No =0	87	28.1%				
	Yes =1	223	71.9%				
Household residence	Rural =0	75	24.3%				
	Urban =1	234	75.7%				
Household head's education level	No/primary education=0	7	2.3%				
	Secondary=1	5	1.6%				
	Tertiary =2	297	96.1%				
Average monthly income (KES)				0	10 0000	14 372	21 451
Household head marital status	Unmarried =0	260	84.1%				
	Married =1	49	15.9%				
Household head age in years	18-25 years=1	134	43.2%				
	26-35 years=2	105	33.9%				
	36-45 years=3	47	15.2%				
	46-55 years=4	22	7.1%				
	56+ years=5	2	0.7%				

Effect of Community Involvement on Overall Community Well-being: Binary Logistic Estimation

The effect of community involvement, along with other household characteristics, on residents' overall well-being was modelled using a binary logistic regression. Table 2 presents coefficient estimates, marginal effects, standard errors, and corresponding significance levels. The likelihood ratio value of -207.334 indicates that the binary logistic model and the selected independent variables accurately fit the collected data, suggesting that the probability of positive overall well-being, along with the explanatory variables, collectively contributes to a comprehensive understanding of overall well-being in the community. The pseudo-R-squared value of 0.4987, with a statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) greater LR Chi-square value of 3.880, indicated that the estimated logistic regression model has adequate explanatory power; hence, the model's information is appropriate. Table 2 shows that community involvement significantly predicts' well-being ($\beta = 0.431$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Summary of Binary Logistic Regression Model: Effect of Community Involvement on Overall Well-being
(Source: Author's own construction using survey data and STATA software, 2024)

Variable	Coefficient	Marginal effect	Std. Err	Z	P-value> Z
Community involvement	0.431**	0.1077**	0.244	1.76	0.018
Tourism support	0.062**	0.015**	0.248	0.25	0.003
Positive perceptions	0.019***	0.005***	0.260	0.07	0.041
Negative perceptions	-0.094*	-0.023*	0.244	-0.38	0.027
Household head gender	0.098**	0.024**	0.257	0.40	0.000
Household head age	-0.042**	-0.017**	0.131	-0.32	0.055
Household head marital status	-0.034	-0.010	0.339	-0.22	0.902
Household average monthly income	1.83e-6	4.58e-07	5.7e-6	0.56	0.750
Household head's education level	-0.058	-0.014	0.382	-0.14	0.880
Constant	-0.218		0.861	-0.25	0.800
LR Chi2 (9)	3.88				
Prob > Chi ²	0.0000				
Pseudo R ²	0.4987				
Log Likelihood	-207.334				
No. of Observations	310				

Community involvement was a significant positive predictor of residents' overall well-being at the 5% significance level. Specifically, community involvement had a positive effect on well-being ($\beta = 0.431$; $P = 0.018 \leq 0.05$). The marginal effect indicates that an increase in the number of community members involved in tourism results in a 10.77% increase in residents' overall well-being, holding other factors constant. This is because community involvement in community-based tourism reflects the extent to which residents participate in tourism-related activities, thereby influencing their overall well-being (Riyanto et al., 2023). These results align with previous studies (Abukhalifeh & Wondirad, 2019; Lee & Jan, 2019; Riyanto et al., 2023). The findings also revealed that support and positive perceptions of community-based tourism are significant positive predictors of residents' overall well-being. These findings align with those observed in recent studies (Chang, 2021; Han et al., 2023; Riyanto et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the marginal effects indicate that increases in support for and positive perceptions of community-based tourism development are associated with 1.5% and 0.5% increases in residents' overall well-being, respectively. Indeed, when the residents are informed or are privy to the perceived positive effects of sustainable community-based tourism, their lives are affected emotionally, materially, safety-wise, and health-wise, which ultimately influences their overall well-being (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Woo et al., 2015; Eslami et al., 2019; Han et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2013).

The results indicated that household head age and community negative perceptions were significant negative predictors of residents' overall well-being. Specifically, the marginal effects indicate that a 100% increase in household heads and negative perceptions results in a decline in residents' overall well-being of 1.7% and 2.3%, respectively.

These results align with the findings of Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017), who found that a negative perception of the socioeconomic impact of community-based tourism leads to reduced community involvement and support for tourism, ultimately affecting overall well-being. Furthermore, the findings confirm the views of Hunt & Stronza (2014) that residents who are not fully involved in community-based tourism tend to hold a more negative attitude towards it, thereby negatively influencing their overall well-being. On the other hand, household gender had a positive and significant effect on residents' overall well-being ($\beta=0.098$; $P=0.000\leq 0.05$), implying that an increase in male-headed households by 100% results in an increase in residents' overall well-being by 2.4% as indicated by the marginal effects.

Mediating Roles of Tourism Support and Community Perceptions: Binary Logistic Estimation

The study also examined the mediating role of support and community perceptions in the impacts of community-based tourism development. In particular, the need to have a deeper understanding of how community involvement in community-based sustainable tourism development has pushed many researchers to investigate the role played by the community's perceptions and support for sustainable tourism development in influencing their involvement and their overall well-being (Nawijn & Mitas, 2012; Koh et al., 2020; Riyanto et al., 2023). Specifically, studies have started examining the mediating effect of community perceptions and support for community-based sustainable tourism development (Gannon et al., 2021; Han et al., 2023; Riyanto et al., 2023; Tosun et al., 2021). The study started by classifying community perceptions into positive and negative perceptions, where previous studies have observed a significant positive link between positive perceived socioeconomic impacts of tourism and residents' overall well-being (Eslami et al., 2019; Han et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2013; Riyanto et al., 2023; Woo et al., 2022).

Table 3. Mediating Effect of Community Perceptions and Support for Tourism Development on Overall Well-being
(Source: Author's analysis using survey data, 2024) (Note: ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1)

Variable	Coefficient	Marginal effect	Std. Err	Z	P-value> Z
Community involvement	0.275**	0.069**	0.576	0.48	0.033
Tourism support	0.003**	0.001**	0.388	-0.01	0.000
Positive perceptions	0.154	0.039	0.426	0.36	0.718
Negative perceptions	-0.021	-0.005	0.394	-0.05	0.957
Community involvement*Support	0.092**	0.023**	0.508	0.18	0.046
Community involvement*Positive	0.271***	0.068***	0.545	0.50	0.020
Community involvement* Negative	-0.182	-0.045	0.486	-0.37	0.708
Household head gender	0.094	0.023	0.252	0.37	0.600
Household head age	-0.038*	-0.010*	0.133	-0.29	0.017
Household head marital status	-0.071	-0.018	0.342	-0.21	0.836
Household average monthly income	1.81e-6**	4.52e-7**	5.76e-6	0.31	0.053
Household head's education level	0.046	0.011	0.383	0.12	0.079
Constant	-0.134		0.943	-0.14	0.887
LR Chi2 (12)	4.32				
Prob > Chi ²	0.0105				
Pseudo R ²	0.2770				
Log Likelihood	-207.113				
No. of Observations	310				

On the other hand, inadequate planning and management of community-based tourism development led to negative perceptions, which ultimately impact the overall well-being of residents (Xu & Hu, 2021). How the community perceives the socioeconomic impacts of community-based tourism development influences their support, and this has a significant influence on their overall well-being (Eslami et al., 2019; Han et al., 2023; Jeon et al., 2016; Latip et al., 2018; Riyanto et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2018). Table 3 highlights the mediating roles of perceptions and tourism support in the relationship between involvement and well-being, with positive perceptions exerting the greatest influence.

Accordingly, the findings indicate a positive and significant mediating role of positive perceptions in the link between community involvement and residents' overall well-being ($\beta = 0.271$; $P \leq 0.05$). The marginal effects indicate that a 100% increase in the interaction between community involvement and positive perception results in a 6.8% increase in residents' overall well-being, holding all other factors constant. The findings align with the observations made by previous studies that sociocultural natural interactions with tourists are significantly associated with positive perceptions among residents, thereby promoting positive lifestyles, safety, and higher life satisfaction in non-material well-being domains (Carneiro et

al., 2018; Han et al., 2023; Hu et al., 2022; Xu & Hu, 2021). On the other hand, the results indicated a positive and significant interactive effect between community involvement and community-based tourism development on residents' overall well-being ($\beta = 0.092$; $P = 0.046 \leq 0.05$). The marginal effects indicate that a 100% increase in the interaction between community involvement and support for community-based tourism development results in a 2.3% increase in residents' overall well-being, holding all other factors constant. These findings corroborate previous studies showing that communities' perceptions of socioeconomic impacts influence their support and involvement in tourism (Dodds et al., 2018; Wani et al., 2024) but also provide new insights by quantifying effect sizes. Specifically, community involvement increased residents' well-being by 10.77% with additional effects from support (1.5%) and positive perceptions (0.5%).

Interaction effects between community involvement and support raised well-being by 2.3%, while involvement combined with positive perceptions increased it by 6.8%. These proportions are notably higher than those reported in earlier studies focusing on qualitative or non-context-specific analysis. The study extends Social Exchange Theory by empirically validating that perceived benefits (economic and social) significantly drive community members to exchange their support and involvement in tourism for improved well-being. This model-based, data-driven evidence from a rural Kenyan context offers a differentiated contribution to the literature and provides a replicable approach for other developing regions. For instance, the development of community-based tourism infrastructure increases social interaction and experiences as well as socioeconomic gains, thereby influencing overall well-being (Carrie et al., 2022; Jeelani et al., 2024; Wani et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Community involvement and residents' goodwill are paramount for the success and sustainability of any community-based tourism development. To evaluate residents' overall well-being resulting from community involvement, perceptions, and support for community-based sustainable tourism development precincts, this study drew on social exchange theory.

It incorporated various constructs related to residents' overall well-being, involvement, perceptions, and support for community-based tourism development. The study findings revealed a significant positive effect of community involvement on residents' overall well-being. The results further indicated a significant positive mediating effect of support and community perceptions of community-based tourism development. Most importantly, the study revealed that community perceptions of the socioeconomic impacts of community-based tourism development influence their involvement and support, which ultimately affect their overall well-being, as summarized in Table 4.

Additionally, the study synthesizes the research questions, key statistical findings, and recommended policy actions.

Table 4. Summary of Research Questions, Key Findings, and Policy Implications
(Source: Author's summary based on study findings, 2024)

Research Question	Findings	Policy Implications
To what extent does community involvement influence well-being?	Community involvement increases well-being by 10.77%.	Develop programs to boost local participation in tourism planning and implementation.
Do perceptions mediate the relationship between involvement and well-being?	Positive perceptions add 0.5%; when combined with involvement, they raise well-being by 6.8%.	Launch education campaigns to promote awareness of tourism's benefits.
What is the mediating effect of support on involvement and well-being?	Support alone adds 1.5%, and with involvement, increases well-being by 2.3%	Strengthen local support through inclusive policy frameworks and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

It can be inferred that involvement in community-based tourism improves residents' lives and demonstrates appreciation for their local heritage by fostering socioeconomic transformations (Kim et al., 2013; Riyanto et al., 2023; Wani et al., 2024). Therefore, the study presents a clear picture that enhanced involvement and support for community-based tourism development among residents can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation, thereby increasing social well-being among rural households. Based on the observed positive impact of community involvement, positive perception, and support for community-based tourism on residents' overall well-being, it can be posited that policies and programs should be conceptualized and implemented to enhance the development of community-based tourism.

However, more cautious policy strategies are required to promote increased community-based tourism development, in line with the ideal local government incentives. The aims of community-based tourism development should prioritize the preservation and protection of local heritage, the environment, the local economy, and everyday life, thereby enhancing residents' social well-being. At the top of these policy incentives should be a focus on aiding rural communities' social well-being by implementing community-based tourism development strategies in a more sustainable manner, including identifying the most effective ways to implement this while minimizing potential adverse effects.

Although this study yielded several insightful findings relevant to policymaking and academic discourse, a few limitations need to be addressed by forthcoming studies. To begin with, the study used a small sample from only one of the five counties in Kenya. A slightly larger sample size can improve the generalizability of this study's findings. Thus, future studies can focus on larger sample sizes. Secondly, future studies can examine how factors such as stakeholder perceptions and the local government's role influence community-based tourism development.

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