

# Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Community and Support for Tourism Development

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## ABSTRACT

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Sustainable tourism development relies heavily on the attitudes and involvement of residents (Da Silva Lopes et al., 2019; Pazhuhan et al., 2023; Vivek, 2021), who serve as key stakeholders in shaping the future of their communities. Central to this is residents' Sense of Community (SOC) (Sarason, 1974), a crucial aspect of community development, as it enhances participation and contributes to the overall well-being of communities (Talò et al., 2014). Research has shown that a strong sense of community is associated with various positive outcomes, including mental health (Park et al., 2023), well-being (Stewart & Townley, 2020), happiness (Ross et al., 2019), and community participation (Talò et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be postulated that in the context of tourism development, a SOC can influence residents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours toward tourism-related activities, shaping their willingness to support or resist such initiatives based on how they perceive the impact on their community's identity, values, and quality of life. Understanding the dynamics of SOC and its influence on support for tourism development is essential for fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism practices that benefit residents and visitors. By understanding the underlying factors impacting community engagement in tourism initiatives, this study aims to inform policymakers, destination managers, and tourism practitioners about strategies for building strong community partnerships and garnering residents' support for responsible tourism development. Through collaborative efforts grounded in a deep understanding of local contexts and community dynamics, tourism can become a force for positive change, enhancing residents' well-being and destinations' sustainability worldwide.

**Keywords:** Sense of community; sustainable tourism; tourism development; residents.