10.13147/SOE.2022.004

DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

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University of Sopron

Sopron

2021

10.13147/SOE.2022.004

UNIVERSITY OF SOPRON

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

The István Széchenyi Doctoral School of Economics and Management

Impact of an integrated tourism concept to strengthen the perceived quality of life in rural destinations

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IMPACT OF AN INTEGRATED TOURISM CONCEPT TO STRENGTHEN THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL DESTINATIONS

Dissertation to obtain a PhD degree

Written by:
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Prepared by the University of Sopron

István Széchenyi Economic and Management Doctoral School

within the framework of the International Joint Cross-Border PhD Programme in International Economic Relations and Management

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The supervisor(s) has recommended the evaluation of the dissertation be accepted: yes / no

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______________ 1st supervisor signature

______________ 2nd supervisor signature

Date of comprehensive exam: 20_____ year ____________________ month ______ day

Comprehensive exam result ___________ %

The evaluation has been recommended for approval by the reviewers (yes/no)

1. judge: Dr. ______________________________ yes/no ______________________ (signature)

2. judge: Dr. ______________________________yes/no ______________________ (signature)

Result of the public dissertation defense: _____________ %

Sopron, 20____ year ___________________ month _____ day

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Chairperson of the Judging Committee

Qualification of the PhD degree: _______________________

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UDHC Chairperson

Abstract

Destinations in rural areas have to be competitive on the market on the one hand and, on the other hand, have to meet the increasing demands of residents, stakeholders, and businesses. Improving the quality of life of the population is becoming a key factor to be attractive as a place to live and work in the future. Threatening migration tendencies force responsible persons of regions and destinations to establish common habitat management. The implementation of sustainability goals to improve the population's quality of life is increasingly perceived as a decisive competitive factor. This thesis examines the relationships between competitive rural destinations, the fulfillment of sustainable development claims, and the influence on residents' perceived quality of life. Incorporating concepts of integrated management, it will be possible to start and enrich a broad scientific discourse. In order to achieve the research objectives, a multi-method approach was adopted. Based on expert interviews, hypotheses were developed. Using quantitative methods, questionnaire results were analyzed in the first stage, and data from a created database were analyzed in a second. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression models. Based on all the research results, an attempt was made to present a holistic model of a region. The results showed that the perception of the impact of tourism within the sample is significantly related to the subjectively perceived quality of life. Economic impacts of tourism are most important. It was also proven that the higher the income from tourism, the higher the satisfaction with tourism is. The study also shows that tourism indicators at the level of service regions have no significant influence on the quality of life of the Austrian population. The developed framework Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism shows how a destination can be managed competitively and at the same time strengthen the quality of life of the population. Considering a common vision, a destination that sees itself as a living space and is developed as such can positively contribute to increasing the quality of life of the people. However, this can only be achieved if existing political and structural hurdles are overcome, and the principles of integrated and thus sustainable development are implemented without exclusion.

Key Words

Destination management, competitiveness, quality of life, integrated management systems, sustainability, regional development, Austria

Acknowledgments

Writing a dissertation represents a major milestone in a researcher's career. Only through the guidance of inspiring people, this project can succeed. I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. habil. Zoltán Szabó, Ph.D. MBA, and Dr. habil. Papp-Váry Árpád, Ph.D., for the many motivating and challenging discussions and years of support in achieving my research goals.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Irena Zavrl, Ph.D., Head of the Joint Ph.D. Program in International Economic Relations and Management at the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland and Prof. Dr. Csilla Obádovics, Head of the István Széchenyi Management and Organisation Sciences Doctoral School at the University of Sopron, as well as to the staff at both universities for their support.

Two extraordinary people significantly shaped my academic career: Prof. (FH) James W. Miller, Ph.D., and Prof. (FH) Dr. Harald A. Friedl. I am proud to name both of them as my mentors and thank them for inspiring me as a role model already in my student days and now as a colleague and will hopefully continue to do so in the future.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Eva Adamer-König, Head of the Institute for Health and Tourism Management at FH JOANNEUM, for the trust and support she has given me as a member of her team. Likewise, I would like to thank Peter Holler, whose professional input has played an important role in the success of the present work. In addition, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues at the Institute of Health and Tourism Management for the many discussions and consultations. I would also like to thank my employer, the FH JOANNEM University of Applied Sciences, which creates many structures to offer researchers career prospects.

My thanks go to all friends, companions, and supporters who have been with me up to this point. Thanks to my parents and my brother Maximilian, whom I wish every success in his career and private life.

To the two most important people in my life, I must thank you and apologize for the countless hours, weekends, and evenings that I was unavailable. To my wife Conny and my daughter Charlotte, who, more than anyone else, also experienced the depths of this year-long process, I would like to express my respect and deepest gratitude for their perseverance. Thank you for your love, assistance, and support.

Lödersdorf, August 2021

Daniel Binder

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e.g.	exempli gratia
i.e.	id est
et al.	et alia
etc.	et cetera

1. INTRODUCTION

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism was a steadily growing economic branch worldwide, and its economic impact was around 10.4% of global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2019. About 334 million people worked directly or indirectly in tourism (WTTC, 2021). Also, in Austria, tourism played a significant economic role. According to Statistik Austria, the tourism and leisure industry was an essential component of domestic economic output with about 5.9% of GDP and about 280,000 employees. With around 153 million overnight stays and more than 46 million arrivals, the Austrian tourism statistics for 2019 again reached record levels (Statistik Austria, 2021a).

The Corona crisis changed the worldwide tourism volume, and, as elsewhere, Austria experienced dramatic changes in Austria due to curfews, lock-downs, and the lack of foreign guests (WKO, 2021). The pandemic highlighted that tourism plays a direct or indirect role in many people's lives (Qiu, Park, Li, & Song, 2020; Williams & Kayaoglu, 2020). Above all, however, it became clear what far-reaching ramifications changes in the tourism industry can have and how comprehensively tourism policy must be thought through and implemented (Fotiadis, Polyzos, & Huan, 2021; Zhang, Song, Wen, & Liu, 2021).

The fact that tourism impacts the population has already been described in many studies (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012). On the other hand, relatively new is the demand that destinations and living environments for residents must be developed together (Pechlaner, 2019b). This demand is based, among other things, on excesses such as overtourism or climate-damaging influences of travel developments and tourist flows (Koens, Postma, Papp, & Yeoman, 2018; Mihalic, 2020) where people perceive tourist influences as disturbing, resistance increases, and can also negatively influence the guests' vacation experience (Herntrei, 2019).

Modern destinations have to face these challenges and the rampant shortage of skilled workers in tourism, which is becoming increasingly widespread (Gardini, Brysch, & Adam, 2014; Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010). Even tourism students feel that employment in tourism does not meet their requirements for a fulfilling working life (Bahcelerli & Sucuoglu, 2015; Richardson, 2009). That notwithstanding, tourism can generate added value in rural regions, which are often infrastructurally and industrially underdeveloped (Bätzing, Perlik, & Dekleva, 1996; Berger, 2013; Panyik, Costa, & Rátz, 2011).

Since rural regions are increasingly affected by outward migration, measures to make locations more attractive are increasingly necessary (Oedl-Wieser, Fischer, & Dax, 2019). Women leave rural regions more often than men when training and job opportunities are not available. As they frequently do not return, they are lost to the regional economy long-term (Weber & Fischer, 2012). Moreover, it is often young, well-educated people who leave rural regions. However, this group is crucial to the innovative and creative economic output that rural areas so urgently need (Kämpf, 2010). In examining out-migration trends, Fidlschuster et al. (2016) argue that in regional development, special attention should be paid to the importance of those factors that influence the quality of life, education, and employment. These so-called soft factors of locations (such as the quality of life or leisure possibilities) are becoming decisive elements when both people and companies decide where to locate (Pechlaner, Innerhofer, & Bachinger, 2010).

Quality of life is thus increasingly becoming a critical factor in making locations attractive for residents, companies, and visitors (Jochmann, 2010; Pechlaner, Fischer, & Hammann, 2006). In its function as a cross-sectoral industry, tourism can provide positive impetus for integrated location development, as tourism companies are more often willing to accept infrastructural disadvantages if economic success appears possible, nonetheless (Hallak, Brown, & Lindsay, 2012; Reiter, 2010).

“A region/destination is only as strong or competitive as the actors that operate in it. Conversely, the economic operators in a region/destination are only as strong as the region/destination is” (Pechlaner et al., 2006). So, it can be concluded that exogenous and endogenous factors are essential for the success of a company, but also for regions and destinations. This means that those in charge of politics, regional management, and tourism development need to create an inviting framework for potential and current residents, as well as stimulate economic and tourism economic incentives (Pechlaner et al., 2006). If this task were not tricky enough, ever more differentiated guest expectations and constantly changing impacts of digitization will intensify the competition of tourism destinations (Crouch, 2007; Pike & Page, 2016).

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is increasingly recognized that tourism and the living environment are intertwined and need to be developed together. Destinations today must have tourism competition in mind and consider the needs of the stakeholder population and tourism employees (Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017). As a result, the range of tasks for tourism managers has also expanded. Modern concepts such as “Destination Leadership” and “Destination Government” (Pechlaner, 2019b) show ways to meet these new challenges. But the tourism industry alone cannot master these tasks facing a destination. They are too comprehensive and diverse (Schuler, 2012). All organizations entrusted with the development of rural structures must follow a shared vision.

The importance of quality of life as an essential element of a sustainable destination is undisputed (Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). However, it is also essential to compare the funds used with the outcome and weigh whether an investment contributes to development in a region sufficiently to be worth the investment (Chilla, Kühne, & Neufeld, 2016; Nunkoo, 2016). These are decisions that companies also have to make. Integrated management systems aim to structure complex processes in companies and thus make them easier to influence and justify decisions (Zeng, 2011). While destinations are not businesses, many of the basic principles of management can also be applied in this sector (Bieger, Derungs, Riklin, & Widmann, 2006).

In summary, the question arises of how the competing demands on a destination in the form of guest expectations can be linked in the best possible way with the requirements for the development of the living environment in order to increase the quality of life of the residents. Moreover, today, more than ever, this question must clearly take into account the basic principles of sustainable development and satisfy the multiple interests of external and internal stakeholders.

1.2. RESEARCH GAPS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Numerous studies have examined the impact of tourism development on guests' quality of life or the local population. Some studies research the interface between tourism development and sustainability and also deal with rural areas. However, Uysal, Sirgy, Woo & Kim (2016) see a need for further research to identify subjective and objective influences on the quality of life in destinations. Also, current developments (e.g., climate change, overtourism) make increased attention to the tourism development of rural areas even more important (Brandl, Berg, Lachmann-Falkner, Herntrei, & Steckenbauer, 2021). Therefore, this dissertation attempts to bridge the gap between the development of tourism in rural areas and its impact on residents' quality of life. Instruments of integrated management are considered and examined for their applicability. The elementary research question that underpins all the activities of this thesis is, therefore:

How can integrated tourism development contribute to strengthening the perceived quality of life of residents of a rural destination?

To make this research question comprehensible and workable in its entirety, the question has been broken down into parts in the form of sub-questions to be answered individually and then blended into an overall view in answer to the main question.

Sub-question 1: What relationships exist between the tourism development of a region and the perceived quality of life of its residents?

As the literature study shows, it is sufficiently proven that there are significant correlations between the tourism development of a destination and the population's quality of life. Especially when destinations show characteristics of overtourism, the quality of life for parts of the inhabitants is worsened. Proven research tools and measurement scales also show that those segments of the population involved in the economic value chain of tourism in a region report suffering less from the negative impacts of tourism. However, since tourism development in rural regions can only be successful in the long term if all people involved benefit from it in a sustainable way (economically, socially, ecologically), it is essential to deal with the issues of integrated tourism development. This leads to sub-question 2.

Sub-question 2: How can a model of integrated tourism development in rural regions look like?

Based on both a literature review and results of the previous research approaches, a model is developed that includes the elements of (1) integration management, (2) rural tourism, (3) destination management, (4) sustainability, and (5) quality of life of residents.

1.3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To comprehensively answer the main research question and the sub-questions, a multi-stage empirical procedure has been applied.

The research process is guided by four leading research objectives (*A1-A4*). These are divided into six phases (*P1-P6*), which produce eight different results (*R1-R8*).

As can be seen in Table 1, this dissertation is based on a comprehensive literature review (*P1/A1/R1*). To answer the main research question, it is divided into sub-questions. Based on a qualitative survey, using guided expert interviews (*P2/A2/R2*), hypotheses are formed ($H1_1$, $H2_1$, $H3_1$).

Quantitative survey methods are used to generate data through which the hypotheses are tested. The data collection took place in the first step by a quantitative questionnaire distributed by a snowball system characterized by an ad-hoc sample. Based on the data obtained, hypotheses $H1_1$ and $H2_1$ were tested (*P3/A2/R3*). In a second step, a database of relevant tourism indicators from Austria was created. The data were calculated at the level of supply regions and subsequently correlated with an existing data set that is representative of Austrian health status. Thus, hypothesis *$H3_1$* could be tested (*P4/A2/R4*). The quantitative methods made it possible to answer sub-question 1 (*A2*).

To answer sub-question 2 (*A3*), a model was developed based on the previous research results (*R1-R4*), which attempts to combine the relevant results (*P5/A3/R5*). The model is simple in its overview and at the same time meaningful enough to permit different interest groups to work with it and develop it further.

All research findings were used to answer the main research question (*A4*). In doing so, all findings were first compared and discussed. Then, the scientific research contribution was derived (*P6/A4/R6*). Subsequently, conclusions were drawn about the practical feasibility of the results, and professional implications were developed (*P6/A4R7*). Finally, open research questions are discussed (*P6/A4/R8*).

For better clarity, Table 1 presents a methodological overview and the structure of the present dissertation.

Table 1: Research process

Aims (A)	Hypotheses (H)	Phase	Process	Results (R)
A1: Status quo of the literature		P1	LITERATURE ANALYSIS	R1: Current status of the literature
A2: Answering Sub-Question 1		P2	QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS	R2: Categories of tourism impact on quality of life in rural areas
	$H1_1$ $H2_1$	P3	QUANTITATIVE SURVEY	R3: Subjective impact of tourism on quality of life
	$H3_1$	P4	DATA ANALYSES	R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life
A3: Answering Sub-Question 2		P5	FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT	R5: Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism
A4: Answering main research question		P6	FINAL CONCLUSIONS	R6: Scientific contribution R7: Professional implications R8: Further research opportunities

Source: Own research, 2021

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to achieve the first aim of the thesis *A1: Status quo of the literature,* the main research question, and the sub-questions provide the frame for the literature study. This chapter spans the theoretical arc of this thesis and provides the basic knowledge to answer the central research question and the sub-questions. The elementary theoretical constructs of the topic areas are explained and discussed from current perspectives. The main sections begin with an introduction and end with a summary of the main findings. The theoretical background provides an overview of the existing state of research and addresses *R1: Current status of the literature* (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 71; Magerhans, 2016, p. 56). The theoretical framework is based on about 480 sources, which were found primarily in digital and offline available library catalogs of the Universities of Applied Sciences FH JOANNEUM and FH Burgenland, as well as the thereby accessible scientific databases (e.g., Scopus, EBSCO).

Insights from the theoretical background are implicitly incorporated into the results in the subsequent research process. The literature examined here provided the theoretical framework for the qualitative interviews *(R2).* Although the empirical survey *(R3)* is based on qualitative exploration *(R2)* of the research field, it is also theory-driven to a considerable extent. Thus, previously tested measurement scales are also used in the questionnaire. The database, which provides the basis for the data analysis *(R4),* is also built on a solid theoretical foundation. As a further result of the literature search, models of integrated development in the subject areas of this thesis are identified and examined. This step provides an essential contribution to developing a model of integrated destination development to strengthen the local population's quality of life *(R5).*

2.1. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

In an increasingly globalized economy, where supply chains are globally distributed, and their links are easily interchangeable, high-quality and agile management systems are needed (Drljača & Buntak, 2019). The ability to adapt to constantly changing conditions, especially environmental ones, requires maximum efficiency and optimized resources (Ciccullo, Pero, Caridi, Gosling, & Purvis, 2018). However, it is not enough to constantly reinvent oneself. A precise brand positioning is needed. A solid corporate foundation and trust in brands, values, and leadership give customers and employees the necessary stability and security to enter into long-term cooperative relationships (Quality Austria, 2016).

2.1.1. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In order to achieve this flexibility in conjunction with corporate success, so-called integrated management systems have become established, often implemented based on quality certificates (Davies, 2008). To understand this concept, it is helpful to break it down into its component parts: integration, systems, and management. So, what is meant by integration[1]? A look at common dictionary definitions is a good place to start:

- "to form, coordinate, or blend into a functioning or unified whole" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a)
- "to combine two or more things so that they work together; to combine with something else in this way" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.b)
- "to combine two or more things in order to become more effective" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.a).

In summary, integration can be said to be a combination of individual elements into a larger whole. Davies (2008) notes that individual parts can only be effectively integrated into systems if they are actively included or used in the system itself. Now the question arises, what is a system?

Freericks, Hartmann, and Stecker (2010, p. 125) describe a system as "an ordered totality of elements that are interrelated and interact in such a way that they can be viewed as a single entity." Luhmann helps to structure the understanding of systems by distinguishing four central systems: (1) machines, (2) organisms, (3) social systems, and (4) mental systems. He further distinguishes social systems into (3a) interactions, (3b) organizations, and (3c) societies (Kleve, 2005). Kleve continues as follows:

> "In order to recognize a system, an observer (which can also be the system itself) must base his observations on the distinction system/environment, i.e., observe elements that are distinguished from elements (of the environment) that do not belong to it. In this respect, the determination of a system in distinction to an environment is always also a construction process of an observer, a distinguisher (the system itself can be this observer/distinguisher)" (Kleve, 2005).

Kleve (2005) further explains that the complexity in understanding systems in their entirety is also based on the fact that different scientific disciplines work with different models of knowledge. While philosophy uses the approach of epistemology (constructivism), biology, for example, arrives at new results using the autopoiesis model, studying how systems function within themselves and interact with their environments. The system-relevant approach of cybernetics ultimately brings engineering sciences into connection with philosophical

[1] As this thesis does not explicitly deal with migration and social issues, the integration of immigrants into their new host societies is not discussed here.

considerations. In discourses in the field of psychology, communication theory (therapy) or even family therapy is based on inferences of how systems (e.g., family) communicate. In sociology, systems theory has become established and seeks to generate insights into the interplay, possible dependencies, and interaction potentials of systems independent of the scientific discipline involved. For Luhmann, systems produce themselves and can thus only act within their own boundaries. Parsons shows the interactions of sub-elements in systems and describes that every change of these elements affects the whole system (Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017, p. 114).

Again, a review of the term “system” as defined in common dictionaries may be helpful here:

- “a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.c)
- “a group of things, pieces of equipment, etc. that are connected or work together” (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.d)
- “a set of connected things or devices that operate together” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.c).

In summary, systems arise from interactions of individual elements and differ from other systems precisely because of these interactions.

Within a corporate context, a company can be understood as an independent system, which raises the question of how best the individual elements in such a system can serve the company's purpose. Liu, Tong, and Sinfield (2020) argue that business models should contain the following attributions: (1) goal, (2) boundaries, (3) feedback loop, (4) structure, (5) elemental functions, (6) homeostasis and (7) adaptation. In order to understand such complex systems, it is necessary to identify their crucial individual parts and bring them into harmony with each other. Norms and standards have established themselves as a way to do this in the management of companies. If we now consider the previously defined concept of “integration”, then the so-called “Integrated Management Systems (IMS)” can be derived from this.

Through the integration and ongoing review (audit) of the goal-oriented implementation of management systems, corporate processes can be demonstrably developed to benefit the company. Zeng (2011) emphasizes reducing management costs, simplifying internal processes, and the ongoing qualitative development of corporate processes. A worldwide established management standard is the ISO Management System, which offers specific standards for different economic sectors and fields of activity, according to which companies can be certified (ISO, 2020).

Nunhes, Bernardo, and Oliveira (2019) show how such management standards can be integrated and implemented into the corporate structure while pointing out that if management systems are well integrated, the company's development can be positively impacted. However, if mistakes are made during implementation, these companies can be additionally burdened and have the opposite effect.

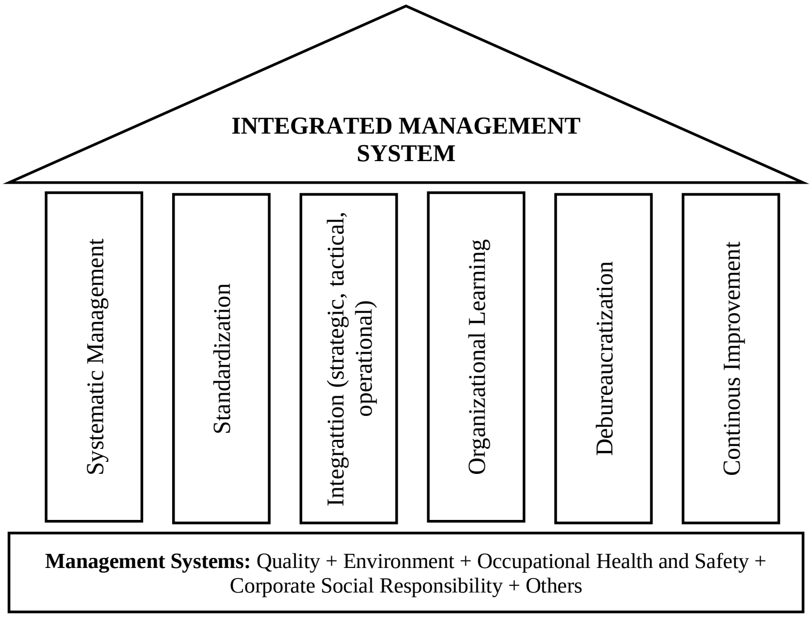

Figure 1: Principles of integrated management systems

Source: Nunhes, T. V., Bernardo, M., & Oliveira, O. J. (2019). Guiding principles of integrated management systems: Towards unifying a starting point for researchers and practitioners. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 210*, 977–993. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.11.066

Since a defined standard alone cannot yet guarantee the success of a company, mechanisms are needed to integrate these standards into companies' management processes. The Annex SL, introduced in 2012, offers possibilities for implementing ISO standards based, among other things, on PDCA[2] cycles (Quality Austria, 2016). However, Annex SL does not serve as a guideline for company implementation but as a “High-Level Structure” framework for developing ISO standards and their audits (Pojasek, 2013; Roncea, 2016).

Based on the basic model of the PDCA cycle, Drljača & Buntak (2019) developed a Generic Model of Integrated Management Systems (see Figure 2), which is intended to simplify the complex process of integrating management models and represent all management functions.

[2] Plan, Do, Check, Act, also known as Deming cycle (Moen & Norman, 2010).

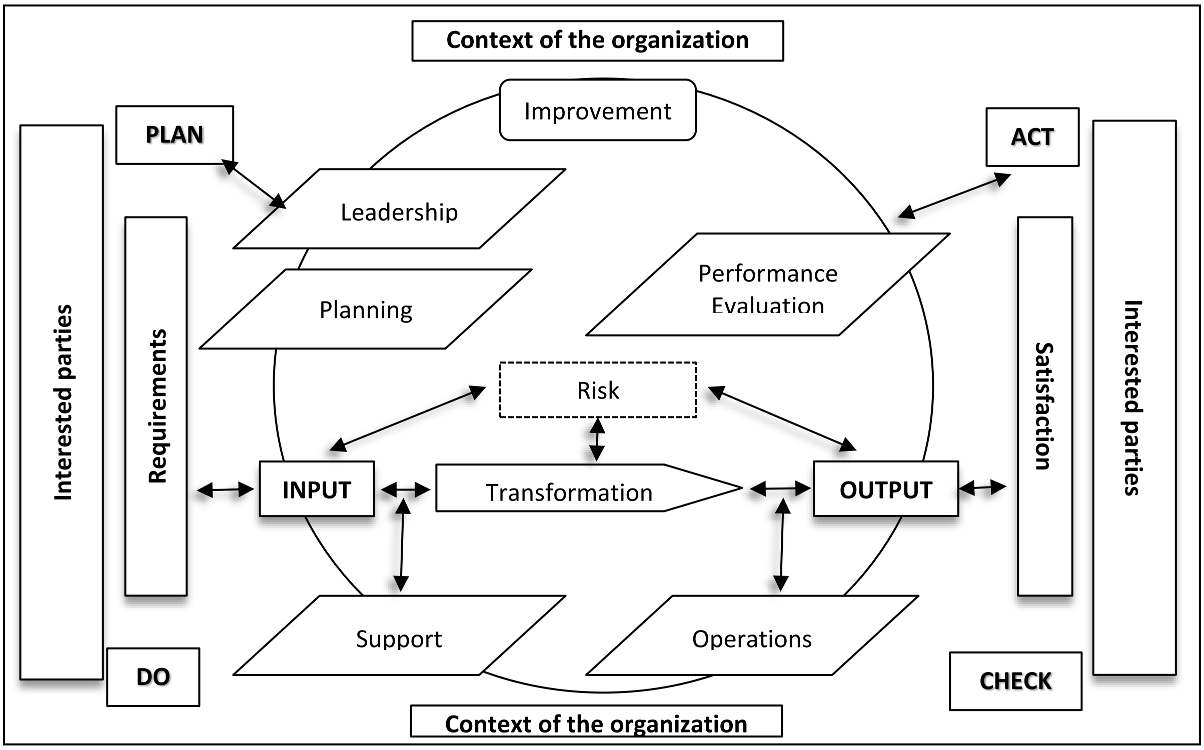

Figure 2: Generic model of integrated management systems

Source: Based on Drljača, M., & Buntak, K. (2019). Generic model of integrated management system. In *63rd European Congress of Quality*, Lisbon. Retrieved from https://www.bib.irb.hr/1073068/download/1073068.Miroslav_Drljaa_Kreimir_Buntak_Generic_Model_of_Integrated_Management_System.pdf

Davies (2008) emphasizes the importance of integration when implementing management systems. Effective anchoring of management standards succeeds when there are clear goals, senior management stands behind them and exemplifies the new realities. Ongoing training of all employees and targeted measures sustainably anchor new structures and processes in the corporate culture. In doing so, Davies examines the EFQM model, which was developed from the Total Quality Management (TQM)[3] approach. The EFQM management approach is essentially built around the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the company? Which orientation (strategy) does the company follow?
- How are the strategic goals realized?
- What results have been achieved so far? What goals is the organization pursuing in the future? (EFQM, 2019)

An even more comprehensive integrative approach is taken by the "St. Galler Integrated Quality Management" model, which is based on the "New St. Galler Management Concept" (Freericks et al., 2010). The model attempts to map a so-called "holistic integration framework" and can

[3] TQM is a Japanese management system that sees customer satisfaction as the primary focus of corporate activity (Hohmann, 2009).

thus complement management standards such as ISO or EFQM (Freericks et al., 2010; Rüegg-Stürm & Grand, 2019; Seghezzi, Fahrni, & Herrmann, 2007).

The St. Galler Management Model is based on six fundamental levels or ways of looking at things: (1) environmental spheres, (2) stakeholders, (3) interaction issues (e.g., values and norms in dealing with stakeholders), (4) moments of order (strategy, culture, and structures within the company), (5) processes, and (6) modes of development (ongoing optimization and leap-frog renewal) (Freericks et al., 2010, pp. 127–129).

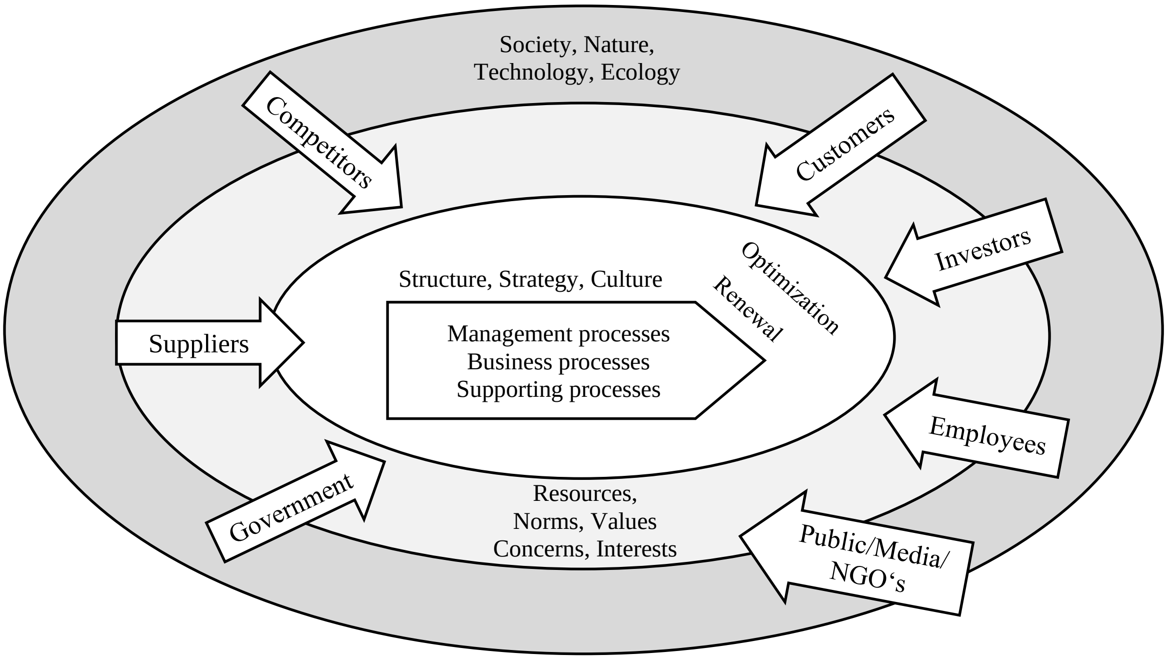

Figure 3: St. Galler Management Model

Source: Based on Freericks, R., Hartmann, R., & Stecker, B. (2010). *Freizeitwissenschaft. Lehr- und Handbücher zu Tourismus, Verkehr und Freizeit*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH.

However, Rüegg-Stürm & Grand (2019) see the St. Galler Management Model less as the ideal state of a company than as a mindset or common language that makes management processes effective. Jorgensen et al. (2006) further point out that management systems integration can and should occur at three different levels. (1) “Integration as correspondence” between different standards and to reduce bureaucracy and redundant workflows. They also see (2) “integration as coordination” as a solution to the challenges of management processes. Finally, (3) “integration as a strategy” can be understood as an approach for ongoing business development and the generation of competitive advantage (Jørgensen et al., 2006).

The “integrated management concept” can further be divided into normative, strategic, and operational management (Bleicher K., 2004). Hungenberg (2012) describes normative management as the level at which the company's foundations, standards, and goals are defined.

The “vision” developed here serves as a framework and guideline for further entrepreneurial action. Strategic management plans, structures, and decides on the actions to be taken to achieve the goals defined in normative management. The implementation of the formulated measures is the responsibility of the operational management level. This also includes target definitions for individual functional levels of the company and the planning and implementation of specific projects and orders (Hungenberg, 2012; Paul, H. & Wollny, V., 2011).

Ultimately, all integrated management systems attempt to positively influence the corporate structure to develop a successful company in the long term. Nunhes et al. (2019) conclude that the implementation of IMS is based on six pillars “(1) Systemic Management, (2) Standardization, (3) Strategic, tactic and operational integration, (4) Organizational learning, (5) Debureaucratization, and (6) Continuous Improvement“.

To summarize the findings of this chapter, the interdependent components in systems, which are also used in companies, are recognized as a central management element. Management models help map realities, and integrated management systems enable an efficient interaction of systems in companies and their influencing environments. In this context, maintaining a balance between the action potentials of companies and their environments is a central task of management. The resulting potentials create value along the value chain and are also the central management principle of the St. Galler Management Model (Rüegg-Stürm & Grand, 2019, p. 30). The elaboration of this so-called value chain and inherently related principles of value creation are, among others, the subject of the following chapter.

2.1.2. THE MANAGEMENT OF VALUES

In business development, the term values can be assigned to different characteristics and can sometimes lead to strikingly divergent opinions. On the one hand, value-based management refers to the increase of corporate financial values in the sense of shareholder value and places this goal above all other corporate goals (Mittendorfer, 2004). On the other hand, the importance of value-based management also lies in giving top priority to the corporate culture and the people working in the company. Even corporate responsibility towards the environment and the general public are identified as corporate goals and are applied in the term “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)” (Hoffmann, 2018; Keuper, 2013; Lonkani, 2018; Ruiz-Viñals & Trallero-Fort, 2021; Schneider & Schmidpeter, 2012; Willers, 2016).

New employees are often recruited according to their attitudes and values and whether these are in harmony with those of the company (Kantola, Nazir, & Barath, 2019; Lindner-Lohmann, Lohmann, & Schirmer, 2016).

Just as multiple meanings are attributed to value-based management, “value creation” is not only about maximizing corporate financial values. In the last twenty years, human resource departments and management have been sensitized to the fact that the contribution of motivated employees can and must be seen as an essential success factor in global competition (Bassi & McMurrer, 2009). Value creation from the customer's point of view, also known as customer value, means that customers must experience personal added value through products or the utilization of services (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda, Smith, & Papadakos, 2014). The more directly customers are involved in creating services and products, the more intensive the customer experience can be, which is referred to as value co-creation (Annarelli, Battistella, & Nonino, 2019). This customer-oriented added value is significantly influenced by the following parameters: (1) performance, (2) customization, (3) “getting the job done”, (4) cost reduction, (5) risk reduction, (6) usability, and (7) contract flexibility (Annarelli et al., 2019).

The concept of value creation is not new but was already described by Porter (1985). In contrast to Porter's value chain, in the value co-creation business model, the customer is already integrated into the creative process and is not the target of the primary entrepreneurial activities (Annarelli et al., 2019, p. 39).

Whatever business model one follows, Bieger & Krys (2011) summarize the following key questions that any business activity should follow:

- “How can value be created on the market?
- How must customers be processed for this purpose?
- How are commercialization and revenue mechanisms designed?
- How is the value chain configured, and how can one work with partners be worked with within the chain?
- What is the performance focus, and what are the development dynamics?
- How are product and service innovations designed?
- How can these elements be combined in a positive growth dynamic?” (Bieger & Krys, 2011, p. 2)

In a similar vein, Lonkani (2018) states that for much too long, company values have been determined solely by shareholder value. Instead, a rethinking in the direction of “corporate governance” must occur to meet the modern requirements of capital markets. Due to an increasing value orientation in the selection of employers in combination with a rampant shortage of skilled workers, environmental concerns will probably continue to be one of the significant management tasks in the future.

2.1.3. MANAGING SUSTAINABILITY

The concept clusters surrounding sustainability and sustainable development are used in an inflationary manner in many respects. Especially when in corporate mission statements corporate interests are given a CSR sugar-coating, creativity in the use of flowery empty phrases often knows no bounds. Frequently, sustainable growth, i.e., long-term economic success, is mentioned in this context (Grober, 2013), though sometimes only this form of sustainability is really taken seriously. Thus, there is a need for further systematic consideration and delineation of the terminology.

Numerous publications see the series “Silvicultura oeconomica” as the central starting point of a sustainable economy (Rein & Strasdas, 2015). Its author, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, pondered long-term forest management in the timber industry and concluded in 1713 that one should “live from the yields of a substance, not from the substance itself” (Pufé, 2012). In recent history, another publication marked the next milestone in the sustainability discussion. A study published in 1972, which had been commissioned by the Club of Rome[4], “The Limits to Growth” showed through computer simulation models that current resource-intensive growth policies are unsustainable for the planet in the long term (Meadows, 1973; Rein & Strasdas, 2015). In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development published the report “Our Common Future”. In this report, the global social imbalance between the consuming industrial nations in the North and the rampant poverty in the Southern Hemisphere is described as a crucial point. Special attention is also paid to environmental protection, social justice, and securing political participation (Balas & Strasdas, 2019; WCED, 1987). While this so-called “Brundlandt Report” was a description of the status quo, the subsequent “Rio Declaration” of the United Nations was a guideline for action for the development of a common understanding (Balas & Strasdas, 2019). In 27 articles, the declaration tried to define a set of ethical and sustainable actions, focusing in Article 1 on the right of man ... “to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” (UN, 1992). Another important milestone in the development of a global sustainability strategy was the Millennium Summit in New York to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. Based on the results of various conferences (e.g., Rio 2012), a discussion began to establish the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda focuses on 17 defined goals for global sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

[4] A union of scientists, economists, business leaders and former politicians created to address the multiple crises facing humanity and the planet. Source: https://clubofrome.org

Figure 4: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Source: United Nations (2015). *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf

Each of the 17 goals itself comprises several strategic targets to foster the realization of the specific goal globally and implement it into national strategies. The goals are linked to each other and should apply to all countries in the world (Balas & Strasdas, 2019).

In general, the SDGs are based on the definition of “Sustainable Development” as a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). Following this definition, the need to take a multi-dimensional approach to achieve the goals is obvious. This fact is taken into account by the three dimensions of sustainability: (1) Ecological dimension, (2) Economic dimension, and (3) Social dimension.

The conviction that sustainable development is only possible if all three dimensions can be reconciled has found its way into the literature. In this context, however, Balas and Strasdas (2019) point out that ecological needs are only considered when no other social, economic, or political challenges are acute or seem more attractive.

The “ecological dimension” focuses on preserving the natural environment, protecting resources, and developing and establishing renewable energy production systems (Freericks et al., 2010; Jacob, 2019). In this process, so-called planetary load limits are playing an increasingly important role. Based on nine criteria, limits are defined, which, if exceeded, can lead to irreversible damage to planet Earth (Balas & Strasdas, 2019).

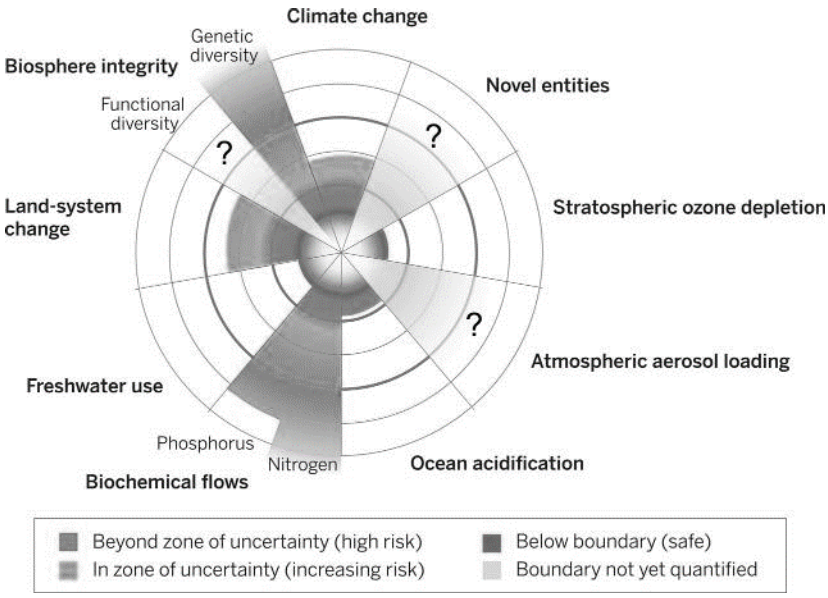

Figure 5: Planetary boundaries according to Rockström

Source: Steffen, W., Richardson, K., Rockström, J., Cornell, S. E., Fetzer, I., Bennett, E. M., . . . Sörlin, S. (2015). Sustainability. Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. *Science (New York, N.Y.), 347*(6223), 1259855. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1259855

The "economic dimension" of sustainability focuses on maintaining value chains or safeguarding economic production potentials. Economic stability and the leveling out of extreme income differences ensure competitiveness even across generational boundaries (Freericks et al., 2010; Jacob, 2019). However, this always requires a balance between economic growth and the simultaneous preservation of natural, social, and cultural resources (van Niekerk, 2020).

The "social dimension" of sustainability has a focus on social interaction. Jacob (2019) sees distributive justice, intergenerational integration, and respect for human dignity as central elements. To live a self-determined life is considered a fundamental right and is based on the social goods, life, health, provision of basic needs, education, and political participation (Freericks et al., 2010). However, Brocchi (2019) points out that the social dimension of sustainability is usually subordinated to the ecological and economic dimensions. These so-called "structures of social inequality" exist in all cultures and social organizations and usually refer to "an unequal distribution of "income, education, power, prestige, property, or self-determination" (Brocchi, 2019, p. 19).

In order to make sustainable development possible, it is not enough to merely orient oneself to the dimensions of sustainability. Guiding principles are needed to guide fundamental actions. One of these principles is the "precautionary principle". It controls the current use and consumption of existing resources so that future generations will have the same basis for life as we have today (Freericks et al., 2010, p. 251). Resources are defined as natural (e.g., air, water, raw materials), economic (e.g., economy, buildings, roads), or societal (e.g., education, health but also regulations and standards) basics (Burger, 1997). Above all, a long-term perspective should guide action (Balas & Strasdas, 2019, p. 13).

The "efficiency principle" is generally described as the increase in productivity ratios with a simultaneous reduction in the use of resources (e.g., energy, raw materials) (Freericks et al., 2010, p. 252). Rein and Strasdas (2015, p. 12) refer to this as "weak sustainability" and they compare the principle with renewable energy generation systems in the luxury hotel industry.

This principle also includes the multiple uses of goods, giving rise to recycling or upcycling. While recycling refers to the reuse of individual materials, which tends to reduce their value, the modern term upcycling refers to the creative recomposition of materials that have already been used in order to generate added value (Singh, Sung, Cooper, West, & Mont, 2019; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica). In particular, the international start-up scene has recognized these developments because so-called green businesses are in tune with the spirit of the times and are therefore booming (Md. Hasan, Nekmahmud, Yajuan, & Patwary, 2019). Pufé (2017, p. 126) notes that the efficiency principle is prevalent in politics because business models can be developed quickly, and successes are thus quickly visible. However, these efficiency gains and the resulting conservation of resources are quickly offset by increased demand. The so-called "Jevons' paradox" or rebound effect can be seen, for example, in fuel-efficient cars, which lead to more frequent use, or in the fact that there are more cell phones in the world than people (Pufé, 2017, p. 128).

"Strong sustainability" on the other hand, is achievable according to Rein & Strasdas (2015, p. 12) through the "sufficiency principle", which makes a certain degree of self-restraint necessary to enable sustainable development. Current trends resulting from this "less is more" principle include the "Slow Food" movement, the urban development platform „Cittaslow[5]", or the LOHAS[6] lifestyle.

The topics of deceleration and a reflective approach to material needs should not lead to a negative feeling in the sense of renunciation but a fulfilled, satisfying life (Pufé, 2017, p. 124).

The "consistency principle" describes the balance between the needs and views of different systems, e.g., natural areas for tourists with simultaneous species protection. Such overlapping

[5] "The aim is to improve the quality of life in slow town." Source: Hatipoglu, B. (2015). "Cittaslow": Quality of Life and Visitor Experiences. *Tourism Planning & Development*, *12*(1), 20–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2014.960601

[6] Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability. Source: Pícha, K., & Navrátil, J. (2019). The factors of Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability influencing pro-environmental buying behaviour. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *234*, 233–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.06.072

systems can also occur on different levels, e.g., regional policy, state policy, or federal policy, and refer to subsystems only (Freericks et al., 2010, pp. 252–253). Pufé (2017) describes the consistency principle as an “imitation of nature's circular flows”. In the resulting cradle-to-cradle principle, all production processes are subjected to a natural sequence in which - as in nature – “waste” is dispensed with entirely or “waste serves as the starting material for a new product” (Pufé, 2017, p. 126). Bittner (2020) points out that it could still take some time before cradle-to-cradle production finds its way into the industry as a whole. Cost arguments and a lack of feasibility are the arguments of the critics. But numerous companies are already successfully using this form of production (Bittner, 2020).

Freericks et al. (2010, p. 252) describe the 5th principle as the “partnership principle”, which is based on the assumption that only joint efforts can lead to a, ultimately, global, sustainable lifestyle. Balas and Strasdas (2019, p. 13) show that the expansion and inclusion of stakeholder groups and affected stakeholders is essential if genuinely sustainable development is to succeed. Moreover, they point to the global perspective and call for international strategies to be implemented at the national or regional level.

As mentioned above, concepts of “weak” and “strong” sustainability have found their way into the literature. Chilla et al. summarize these common concepts as follows:

Table 2: Concepts of weak and strong sustainability

	“weak” sustainability	**“strong” sustainability**
Environmental, ethical understanding	Anthropocentric	Eco-centric
Concept	Natural capital is (temporarily) replaced by physical capital	Natural capital is not replaced; it must be preserved permanently
Basic worldview	Liberalism, pragmatism	Ecologism, conservatism
Nature	Nature is the raw material for human uses; nature is an object for scientific knowledge; values are attributions	Nature has inherent value
Science theoretical basics	Constructivism, positivism	Essentialism, partial positivism
Economics	Neo classically based environmental economics	Green economy
Dominant Strategy	Efficiency	Sufficiency

Chilla, T., Kühne, O., & Neufeld, M. (2016). *Regionalentwicklung*. *utb: Vol. 4566*. Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer.

Recently, two other principles have been mentioned more and more often. These are “resilience” and “subsistence”. Jacob (2019) describes resilience as reducing companies' susceptibility to crises and subsistence as a precaution to maintain the ability to act. Fathi (2019, p. 25) takes a broader view of the concept of resilience, defining it as the answer to the question, “What must a system (individual, company, city, society, or ecosystem) be like to be robust and flexible enough to withstand unpredictable crisis situations?”. As areas of action for resilience, one can identify: "(1) diversification, (2) building long-term success potential, and (3) creating trust through transparency" (Jacob, 2019).

Jacob (2019, p. 22) further concludes that the following fields of action can be derived for the subsistence principle: "(1) Sharing Economy[7], (2) own power supply, (3) multiple uses of resources, and (4) recycling". Mapped to societies, Fathi's (2019, pp. 237–249) three societal models come into play here: the (1) developed society, the (2) sustainable society, and the (3) resilient society. Regarding an integrative social system and its handling of crises, the following "orientation principles" can be derived from the three guiding principles of society:

- "Lifelong competence development and emotional education.
- Sovereign problem solving based on knowledge and non-knowledge
- Decoupling and knowledge networking of subsystems
- Collective intelligence
- Learning culture
- (Basic) need of protection and prevention of social conflicts
- Development and preservation
- Collective wisdom" (Fathi, 2019, p. 243)

Returning to the discussion of sustainable development, many companies and even local or national governments have committed – at least on strategic levels – to a more sustainable approach in their business or political pursuits. Pufé (2012, p. 117) provides a practical approach to quickly check entrepreneurial or political projects and strategies for their effectiveness in terms of sustainable development (see Table 3).

However, developed guidelines are only practical if they are lived and implemented in practice. Increased consumer sensitivity to sustainability issues and steadily rising competitive and innovative pressures increasingly bring sustainable development topics into the corporate focus. For example, environmentally conscious production sites, resource-conserving supply chains, commitment to climate and environmental protection, or approaches to the "new world of work" or the common good economy can bring customer approval when employed in advertising (Binder & Miller, 2021). The corresponding lifestyles, e.g., that of the LOHAS, on the one hand, reflect these developments, and on the other hand, drive them through increased demand (Crooks, Johnston, Labonté, & Snyder, 2016; Zukunftsinstitut, 2018).

To conclude this discussion of sustainable development with all its facets and contradictions, the "basic ethical idea is to achieve intergenerational and global justice" (Fathi, 2019).

[7] According to Wang, Lin and Abdullat (2020) sharing economies are defined by mainly two aspects. "First, consumers do not own the products/services they use. Second, certain technology platforms are used to facilitate interactions between consumers and individuals/firms who provide services."

Henceforth, this central idea will act as a guiding framework for the present work and thus guide the analysis of tourism conditions. It can be summarized using the following principles:

Table 3: Principles of sustainable development

Principles	Description
Principle of intergenerational justice	Between young, old, grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren as well as future, unborn generations
Principle of intragenerational justice	Between different generations, i.e., regarding age, gender, race, religion, origin, social status, political views
Principle of holism and integration	None of the three dimensions has priority, but it is essential to include all three in decisions; networking, interrelation, and interdependence of economic, ecological, and social concerns together with an integrative view of problems and solutions; integrative cross-sectional orientation
Glocality principle	"Think global, act locally", linking globality and locality
Principle of participation, responsibility, and stakeholder involvement	Inclusion of all those affected and responsible, all "victims and perpetrators"
Principle of preventive, long-term orientation	Prevention and precaution instead of reaction and crisis resolution; attention to long-term and permanent developments instead of short, temporary ones
The character of a normative model	In essence, sustainability is an ethical-moral and action-guiding principle and a regulative idea

Source: Based on Pufé, I. (2017). *Nachhaltigkeit* (3., überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage). *utb: Vol. 8705*. Konstanz, München: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH; UVK/Lucius. Retrieved from http://www.utb-studi-e-book.de/9783838587059

2.1.4. SUMMARY: INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

This chapter has demonstrated the great importance of integrating systems and emphasizes that proper integration can only occur if the system itself is included, taking into account all its subsystems. Since companies can also be understood as a system, their sub-systems must be interlocked and coordinated. In the corporate context, this has led to integrated management systems and quality management standards. Through continuous improvement processes, quality can be continuously increased and adapted to constantly changing market conditions. In the best case, the company does not react to changes in the market but actively shapes the market (e.g., through supply and pricing policies). This can be achieved through management models such as the St. Galler Management Model or quality standards such as ISO or EFQM. Whether the effort succeeds depends, of course, on various influencing factors (e.g., the behavior of the competition). It also depends on factors becoming increasingly important, such as the values lived in a company.

It is important to note that values in companies can be financial or of a moral-ethical nature. The exact distinction is crucial. Thus, value creation can mean the increase of financial resources in the company, but at the same time, it can also be used to describe processes to win customer loyalty. Approaches in the value chain have unconditional customer use as a goal, while value co-creation already integrates customers into the production process. One may not disregard how shareholder value is created, which contributes to the long-term financing of enterprises. Modern schools of thought call for corporate governance, which places people and the environment at the center of all considerations.

The sustainability of systems is a central component of integrated management systems. However, it is essential that not only classic environmental concerns are discussed in the corporate context but also economic and social aspects of sustainability. Only by considering all three factors can economic systems or companies be developed in their entirety. At the global level, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations divide sustainable development in its entirety into 17 goals. The precautionary principle, the efficiency principle, the sufficiency principle, the consistency principle, and the partnership principle have manifested themselves as central sustainable development guidelines. Because of the Corona pandemic and the resulting crisis it has caused, the principles of resilience and substitution have gained increased attention in social, political, and corporate contexts.

Global climate movements (e.g., Fridays for Future) and Corona-related developments such as home office / home schooling or the explosive increase in video conferencing, combined with an ever-increasing shortage of skilled workers, form the framework of current and presumably future entrepreneurial business activity.

These framing conditions define the tension between the needs of customers (guests), employees, managers, and organizations. Regional and destination development companies must learn to deal with these challenges in their operations and the context of regional, national, and international competition. While in the following chapter, the characteristics and current challenges in developing rural regions will be elaborated on, the chapter after next is dedicated to developing tourist destinations in the context of sustainable development.

2.2. REGIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The second pillar of this thesis considers people's living spaces and how the quality of life in them can be influenced by tourism activities. The aim is to create a basic understanding of regions and their development opportunities. Since this thesis focuses on the effects of tourism in rural regions, special attention is paid to the tasks, potentials, and challenges of rural, regional development. These analyses are carried out based on economic, societal, and environmental fields of action. A summary at the close of the chapter will highlight its essential findings.

2.2.1. PRINCIPLES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A closer look reveals that the term “region” can be interpreted very broadly and in many ways. Before attempting a holistic analysis of the term, a first overview should be given. Thus, the term “region” is defined from a geographical or political point of view as follows:

- “an administrative area, division, or district” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b)
- “a broad geographic area distinguished by similar features“ (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b)
- “a large area of land, usually without exact limits or borders“ (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.c)
- “one of the areas that a country is divided into, that has its own customs and/or its own government“ (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.a)
- “a particular area or part of the world, or any of the large official areas into which a country is divided“ (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.b)
- “an area of a country, especially one that has a particular characteristic or is known for something“ (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.b)

These definitions show that it is not enough to talk about regions only in the context of political or administrative issues. A more sophisticated view is needed.

Chilla, Kühne & Neufeld (2016, pp. 13–22) show the different approaches to the definition of a region. Thus, regions can be distinguished from each other by (1) homogeneous characteristics, (2) functional interdependencies, (3) administrative division, or (4) discursive processes. It must be considered that there can and will be various overlaps within and between these demarcations. They further clarify this approach by explaining the term “region” through three “basic scientific perspectives", namely (1) the essential approach, (2) the positivist approach, and (3) the constructivist approach, which result in the following (see Table 4) differing definitions (Chilla et al., 2016, pp. 13–32).

Table 4: Defining regions in the spatial science approach

	Essentialism	**Positivism**	**Constructivism**
Definition „Region“	Region as an observer-independent whole, independent entity, “super-organism”	Unit that differs from objects due to certain spatial, quantifiable distributions (observer-independent)	Region as the result of ascribing meaning and significance

Source: Chilla, T., Kühne, O., & Neufeld, M. (2016). *Regionalentwicklung. utb: Vol. 4566*. Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer.

Understanding these different approaches is vital if regional development is to be understood as an integrative process. As already mentioned, administrative delimitation is of central importance. In many cases, political functions, structures, funding, and support flows can be

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derived. Such a system is represented by the NUTS classification[8], as it is used in the European Union.

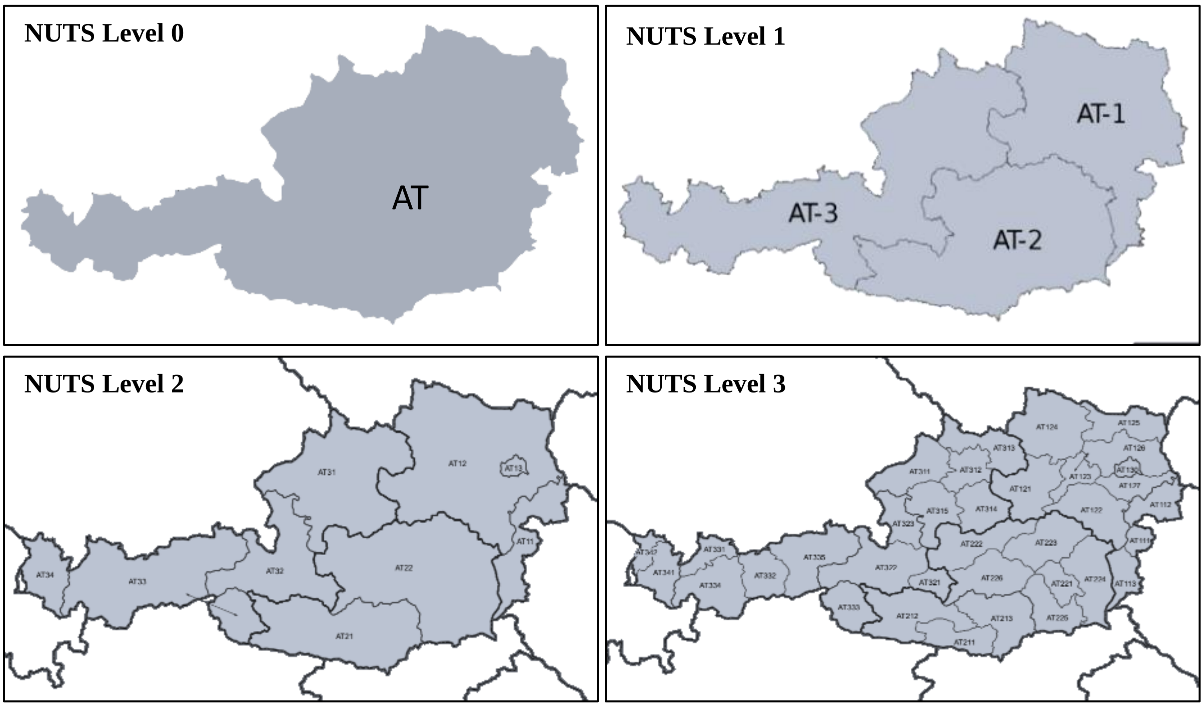

Figure 6: NUTS classification of Austria

Source: Own figure based on Eurostat (n.d.). NUTS Maps. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/nuts-maps

The example of Austria shows that even at level 3, the NUTS classification can include several political districts, making it difficult to assign them a name. The region AT224 Eastern Styria itself consists of the districts South-East-Styria and Hartberg-Fürstenfeld. These districts, in turn, include a large number of self-governing municipalities. In the nomenclature of the European Union, these small regional structures are named LAU[9] 1 and LAU 2 levels (Chilla et al., 2016). For Austria, LAU 1 is assigned to the district level and LAU 2 to the municipal level.

After this initial look at the challenge of how to delimit a region, it is necessary to work out ways to develop a region. Two different development approaches can be taken, (1) an analytical and (2) a normative approach:

- (1) ... “explains socio-economic and environmental processes within (mostly) sub-national spatial units.”

[8] NUTS (Nomenclature des Unités territoriales statistiques): "The NUTS is a hierarchical system for breaking down the economic areas of the EU" Eurostat (n.d.c).
[9] LAU: Local Administrative Units Eurostat (n.d.a)

- (2) ... “strives for an improvement in the sense of a purposeful change of the socio-economic and environmental situation within (mostly) sub-national spatial units. The underlying goals may well be different.” (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 56)

These two approaches are applied in the three major fields of action: economy, society, and environment. The “analytical” approach looks at the past, and the “normative” approach focuses on future potentials and challenges. The normative approach uses different instruments of regional development, which can be divided into legal instruments (e.g., commandments, prohibitions, laws), financial instruments (e.g., subsidies, tax rebates), and persuasive instruments (marketing, participation, and agenda-setting) as well as, different combinations of individual instruments and their implied measures, especially in a practical context (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 57).

In regional development, the distinctions and gradations between urban and rural regions are of great importance. Various research and control mechanisms attempt to explore the specific influencing factors in cities, the surrounding areas close to cities, and rural areas and to manipulate them in the respective objectives. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this thesis explores tourism-based influences on the population in rural areas. In the following chapter, the principles of rural development will now be elaborated on and discussed.

2.2.2. DEVELOPING RURAL AREAS

To distinguish between rural and urban areas, it is essential to look at their typologies in detail. The European Commission follows a three-stage approach to defining rural regions. The first step is to define rural areas that are not located in so-called “urban clusters[10]” In the second step, the NUTS 3 regions are classified according to their population living in rural areas. Here, a share above 50% of the rural population leads to the classification “predominantly rural”. A share between 20% and 50% results in categorization as “intermediate”. If the rural residential population is less than 20%, the region is classified as “predominantly urban”. Regions smaller than 500 km² are grouped (Eurostat, 2018**)**. The third step considers the size of the existing cities in a region. A “predominantly rural” region is assigned to the “intermediate” category if a city with over 200,000 accounts for at least 25% of the region's total population. If there is a city with over 500,000 residents and they make up at least 25% of the region's residents, that region is categorized as “predominantly urban”. (Eurostat, n.d.d)

[10] "‘Urban clusters' are clusters of contiguous¹ grid cells of 1 km² with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km² and a minimum population of 5,000“ (Eurostat, n.d.d).

An analysis of the NUTS 3 regions in Austria shows the following percentage distribution: 69.0% predominantly rural, 20.0% intermediate, and 11.0% predominantly urban (Eurostat, n.d.b). So, one can see that most of the areas in Austria are located in predominantly rural or intermediate areas. This leads to the conclusion that, especially for Austria, the development of rural areas is of central importance. To illustrate the importance of rural development in Austria, Figure 7 shows the extent of rural areas regarding population density compared to urban areas.

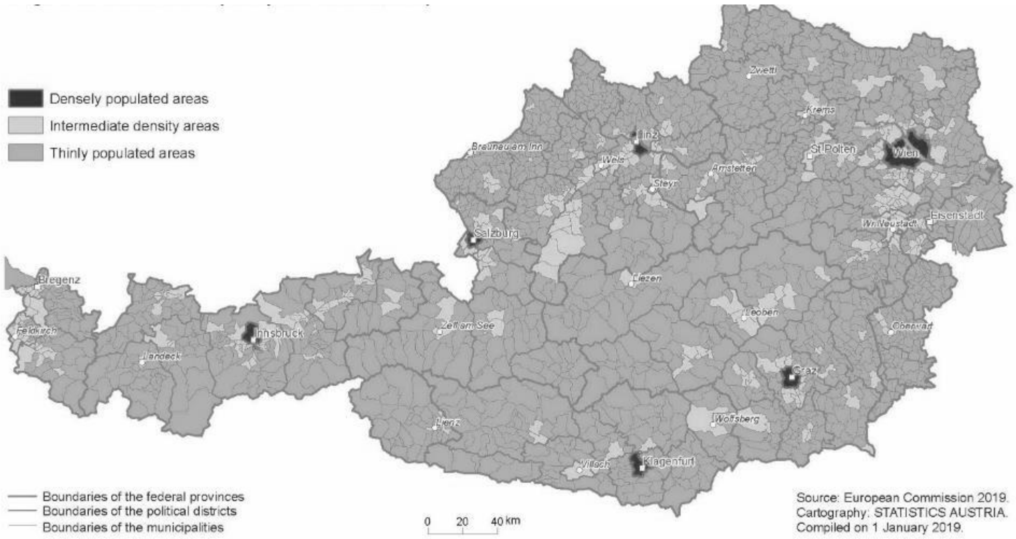

Figure 7: Degree of urbanization in Austria

Source: Statistik Austria (2019). Degree of Urbanisation (European Commission). Retrieved from https://www.statistik.at/wcm/idc/idcplg?IdcService=GET_PDF_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=108350

As can be seen, most of Austria's territory is located in sparsely populated regions. This circumstance and the central topic of this thesis justify further research on the development of rural regions.

Now that the basic structures and instruments of regional development have been explained, it is necessary to look at the possible areas of activity and their influencing factors in the development of rural areas. Chilla et al. (2016) distinguish three fundamental fields of action in which regional development can take place: (1) economy, (2) society and (3) environment. The next sub-chapters follow this logical outline.

2.2.2.1. Field of action: Economy

The economic development of rural areas is a central concern of regional development. It leads to increased tax revenues, has a preventive or mitigating effect on migration movements, and strengthens the identification of the population with their homeland (Brandl et al., 2021; Oliveira Fernandes & Olivetti, 2020; Rein & Meifert, 2012, p. 226).

Since economic development is directly linked to the establishment or retention of businesses, it is worth looking at their specific challenges, especially in rural areas. The OECD identifies the following three main threats to entrepreneurial potential: (1) decline in agricultural jobs, (2) aging population due to outflow of young people and inflow of older people, (3) problems in providing basic infrastructure and services (OECD, 2005; Smallbone, 2009, p. 5). Based on the aforementioned developments, the direct interconnection between the economy and society becomes very clear. However, Smallbone (2009) also mentions economic potentials, such as the establishment of clusters.

Favored by regional proximity, so-called "clusters" have proven to be an excellent well-suited means of strengthening the local economy.

> "Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g., universities, standards agencies, trade associations) in a particular field that compete but also cooperate" (Porter, 2000).

In 1990, Porter developed the so-called Diamond Model (Figure 8) to analyze the competitiveness of countries concerning individual industries.

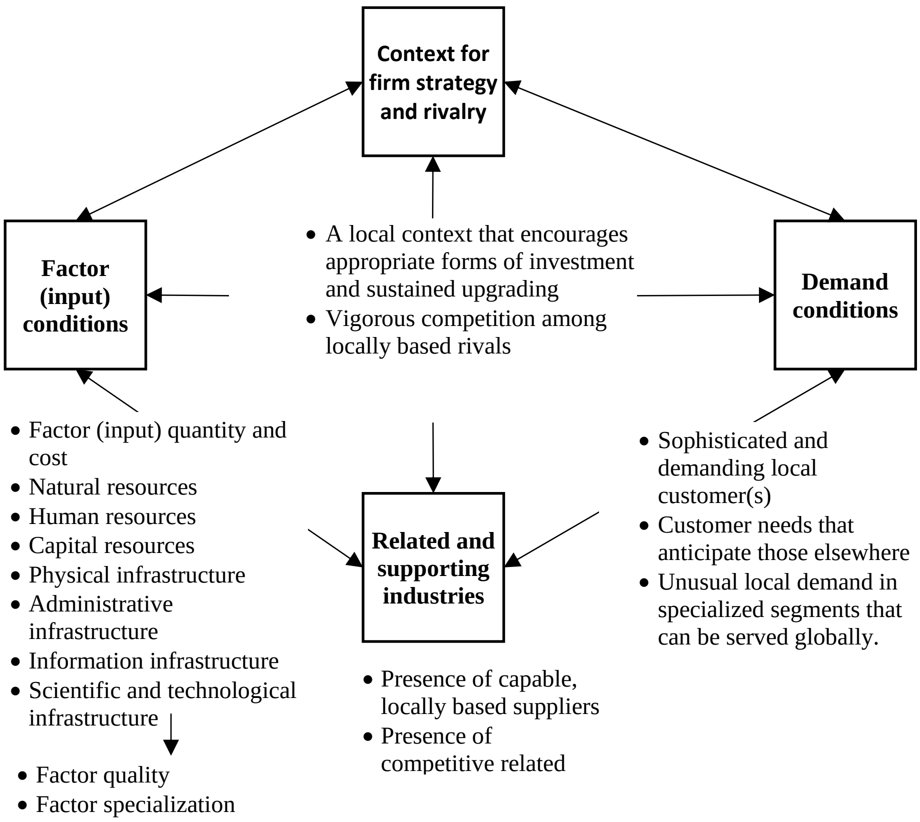

Figure 8: Porter's diamond „sources of locational competitive advantage"

Porter, M. E. (2000). Location, Competition, and Economic Development: Local Clusters in a Global Economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, *14*(1), 15–34. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/089124240001400105

Following Porter's definition, Chilla et al. (2016) argue that a mere collection of companies is not enough, however. What is needed is a multi-layered horizontal and vertical interweaving of supply and demand structures. A mix of legal, financial, and organizational measures is needed (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 182). Porter (2000) counters the criticism of possible competitive pressure in a cluster by arguing that if cooperation and competition occur at different levels, further cooperation can compensate for losses from additional competition. When that happens, a cluster can positively affect corporate success generally. However, he also recognizes that radically innovative ideas may have less chance of realization in a cluster (Porter, 2000).

The production and distribution of “regional products” have enjoyed increasing popularity in recent years. Changing consumer habits, towards more quality and a higher awareness of origin, but also more developed promotion and quality measures (e.g., quality labels) cause an increased interest in so-called regional products (Chilla et al., 2016, pp. 189–192; Rein & Meifert, 2012, p. 224).

Processing regional food holds numerous opportunities, as summarized here:

Table 5: Chances for regional products

Chances for consumers	**Chances for producers and marketers**
Product quality Transparency Safety Identification Trust Authenticity Awareness	Strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises Higher revenues Transparency Quality control Reliable supply chains Reduction of transport costs
Chances for the environment	**Chances for the region**
Less pollution due to transport Landscape conservation Fostering extensive agriculture Rediscovery (e.g., grain varieties, livestock breeds) Biodiversity	Promotion of regional economic cycles Regional markets Cultural identity Identification with homeland A positive image of local products

Source: Based on Rein, H., & Meifert, K. (2012). Kulinarik und regionale Produkte am Beispiel Oder Culinarium. In H. Rein & A. Schuler (Eds.), *Tourismus im ländlichen Raum* (pp. 223–238). Wiesbaden: Imprint Gabler Verlag.

Regional value-added cycles play a vital role in the food industry. From cultivation to production, marketing, processing, and consumption, only short distances should be covered (Rein & Meifert, 2012). Furthermore, seals of approval and quality labels are intended to provide orientation for consumers. At the European level, the quality labels “Protected Designation of Origin“ (PDO), “Protected Geographical Indication“ (PGI), and “Geographical Indication“ (GI) are available for this purpose (European Commission, 2020). Caution is advised, however, as not all quality seals must also declare the origin of the processed raw materials (Konsument.at, 2013). In individual cases, a quality seal can only give the impression that a product originates from a specific region. Styrian Pumpkin-Seed-Oil is a PGI protected oil from the pumpkin of the genus “Cucurbita pepo var. Styriaca“. However, since this pumpkin is also grown in parts of Burgenland and Lower Austria, despite the label, Styrian pumpkin seed oil does not necessarily come only from the province of Styria (Gemeinschaft Steirisches Kürbiskernöl g.g.A., 2021).

The intelligent link between the development of regional products and their added value for tourism seems obvious (Smallbone, 2009). In addition to all the opportunities, however, Meifert and Rein (2012, p. 226) also recognize that “regional products are not self-perpetuating“, that they require active marketing, and that they are confronted with “price, convenience, and disinterest“ on the part of consumers. Inseparable from the economic development of a region are social factors.

2.2.2.2. Field of action: Society

Like the economy, a region's social development is characterized by disparities (Thierstein, Abegg, Thoma, & Stahel, 2006). However, these inequalities caused by spatial structures should not be resolved entirely. However, a distinction between urban and rural or industrial and inner-city locations seems necessary (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 201).

Table 6: Indicators of living conditions in a region

Demographics	Population development (in %) Life expectancy of males (in years) Under 15s (as % of the total population)
Economy	GDP (per person employed) Employees in knowledge-intensive services (in %) R&D employees (in %)
Labor market	Unemployment rate (in %) Commuting distances (from home to work in minutes) Employment rate (employed persons at the place of work to the number of inhabitants between 15 and 65 years of age) Training place ratio (concerning training places and applicants)
Prosperity	Debt ratio of private individuals (%) Under-15s living in households in need (%) Disposable income per capita (EUR) Long-term unemployed in relation to all unemployed (%)
Infrastructure	Population density (inhabitants/km²) Travel time by car to big and medium-sized centers (minutes) Social infrastructure: Places in childcare facilities, physician-to-inhabitant ratio, beds for inpatient care (per inhabitant over 65 years), primary school network density (elementary school / km²) Technical infrastructure: Accessibility of highways, long-distance transport connections, airports (car travel time in minutes), broadband coverage (% of households)
Housing market	House price-income ratio for standard single-family houses Vacancy rate (%)

Source: Based on Einig, K., & Jonas, A. (2011). Ungleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse in Deutschland. *Europa Regional*, *17.2009*(3), 130–146. Retrieved from https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-48038-8

In order to achieve better planning and strategic control, it is necessary to identify parameters of socially relevant regional development and make them quantifiable (see Table 6).

Regarding the measurement of living conditions in regions, Chilla et al. (2016) critically note that the comparability of individual regions, in particular, depends very much on the definition of the indicator. For example, unemployment and youth unemployment are not defined uniformly across the EU (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 204).

Demographic change, visible since the 1970s but became a commonly discussed public issue only in the 2000s, is considered a central social phenomenon (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 207). This refers to the developments of a society in the areas of (1) fertility or birth rate, (2) mortality or the change in life expectancy, and (3) migration movements (Bruch, Kunze, & Böhm, 2010, p. 26).

Weber (2016, p. 93) sees the following fundamental effects for rural areas concerning demographic development: (1) declining population = “shrinkage”, (2) fewer children and young people = “under-rejuvenation”, (3), fewer people capable of working, and (4) more elderly and old people = “over-aging”.

In contrast to the somewhat negative connotation of demographic development in rural areas, Fidlschuster et al. (2016, p. 13) point out that numerous interdependencies and interactions, such as high birth rates among migrants, must also be taken into account. Nevertheless, numerous exemplary challenges can be derived from demographic change.

Table 7: Examples of challenges and solutions of demographic changes

Topic	**Situation**	**Approach**
Building and living	More people in need of assistance in their own homes Housing shortage	Housing for social assistance in return
	Growing proportion of older people with simultaneously higher needs for quality of life, independence, and security	Assistance systems
	More older people with increasing motoric difficulties	Accessibility
Economy and finances	Skills shortage	Vocational Orientation
	Difficulty in finding housing when moving in	Real Estate Service
Infrastructure	Loss of local retailers Need for such structures due to the growing number of elderly citizens with mobility restrictions	Village store
Family	Lack of childcare places	Surrogate granny / Surrogate daddy
	Differentiation of the population due to demographic change and lifestyles	Multigenerational houses
Health	More elderly people with motor impairments	Fall prevention
Integration	More people with a migration background More colorful society	International meeting places

Source: Based on Chilla, T., Kühne, O., & Neufeld, M. (2016). *Regionalentwicklung*. *utb: Vol. 4566*. Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer.

The combination of the outflow of young people, the resulting lack of births, and ultimately the increase in the proportion of older people, who are also getting older and need to be cared for longer, pose significant social and economic challenges for those responsible for rural areas (Bätzing et al., 1996; Einig & Jonas, 2011, p. 144; Oedl-Wieser et al., 2019). According to Weber and Fischer (2012, p. 91), the withdrawal of young women through outmigration can have a triple-negative impact on the financial situation of a region. First, they are not counted in the financial equalization system, determined on a per capita basis. Secondly, if they are gainfully employed, they are absent from the municipal tax revenue. Finally, their children, who could contribute to the tax revenue in the future, are also missing.

Looking at the social challenges in the development of rural regions, it becomes clear that innovative solutions are needed to succeed. For example, in rural areas, in particular, it must be possible to reverse the “brain drain", i.e., the migration of educated, creative potential, into a “brain gain” (the creation of knowledge networks) (Coenen & Fikkers, 2010; Fidlschuster et al., 2016). For this purpose, Weber (2016, p. 100) recommends the appointment of a separate “demography officer”. The increased use of emerging innovation potentials triggered by immigration could also provide a positive corrective (Fidlschuster et al., 2016, p. 24). Events and other cultural structures can also help make rural areas more livable, especially if they ultimately create jobs (Binder, 2017; McCabe, 2009; OECD, 2014; Volgger & Pfister, 2020b). Approaches like these will probably be increasingly needed in the future.

Alternatively, one can look at the situation of emigration as Weber and Fischer argue, namely that one must probably learn to deal with emigration movements and not focus exclusively on their containment. “Shrinkage should not be seen only in terms of loss, rather one must find out what ‘other’ lies within the ‘less’” (Weber, 2016). For example, the increase in senior households holds the potential for local suppliers specializing in this market to locate in the region (Smallbone, 2009, p. 5; Weber, 2016, p. 101). Not just since environmental activist Greeta Thunberg’s actions have received wide media attention, has effective regional development required an environmentally relevant component.

2.2.2.3. Field of action: Ecology

Rural areas are in many ways linked to the high value of what is generally understood by “nature”. However, Chilla et al. (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 226) point out that the term “nature” cannot be definitively explained since even a shopping center “on a greenfield site” consists of natural raw materials. This, however, does not correspond to the general understanding of naturalness. Based on Kühne (2012), Chilla et al. show the societal influence on natural areas in the following graph.

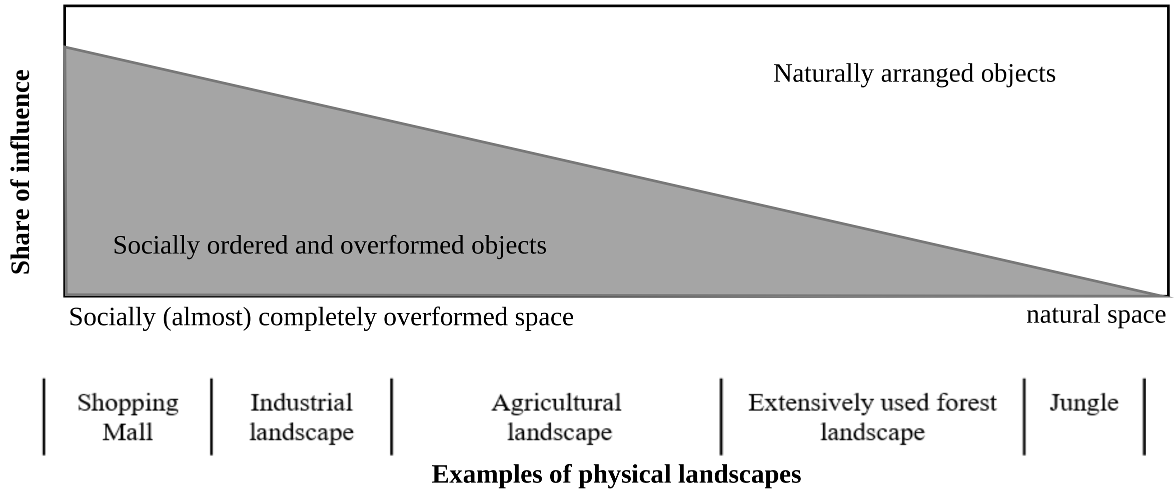

Figure 9: Social and natural influence on objects

Source: Based on Chilla, T., Kühne, O., & Neufeld, M. (2016). *Regionalentwicklung*. *utb: Vol. 4566*. Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer.

Apart from the problem of definition, the protection of natural areas is of great importance in regional development. For some time now, national parks, biosphere reserves, and nature parks have been designated as protected areas in which human intervention is precisely defined and continuously monitored (Chilla et al., 2016). Even if in different intensity, there are exciting cross-connections to these protected areas from a tourist point of view (Porzelt, 2012).

Besides the active and passive protection (Porzelt, 2012) of natural areas, the concept of "landscape" is also essential for regional development. Like the term "nature", the concept of landscape is also much discussed. There should be agreement that the perception of landscape is always directly connected with its observer. "Landscape is a construct, namely a structure in our brains, which enables us to make the countless impressions of the environment perceptible by filtering them out" (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 238). Like nature, the theme of landscape is omnipresent in the tourist development of regions. Here, mountains and water play a crucial role (Chilla et al., 2016, p. 241; Freyer, 2015; Steinecke, 2014). Nevertheless, cities, cultural monuments, and archaeological sites are of central importance for tourist use (Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017).

Since regional development always involves cross-sectional issues, the framing conditions provided by a particular can be ideally combined with regional products or services. As one example among many, winegrowing may be mentioned here. In addition to the agricultural importance, the cultivation and sale of wine also contribute to the strengthening of regional identity and economic development, often in combination with tourism and events (Dreyer, 2012; Rüdiger & Hanf, 2021; Szabó, 2018; Szabó, Totth, & Harsanyi, 2021).

Sustainable energy production in rural regions also belongs to the environmental field of action and is equally important because of its special significance in times of much-discussed climate change. As Chilla et al. (2016, p. 249) show, regional development has a wide range of instruments at its disposal. These range from directives at the EU level to national laws and regional initiatives to local activities, such as projects with citizen participation. Here, too, it is essential to weigh up the costs and benefits. Just because initiatives are good for the environment, their effects may not be welcomed by the affected population.

2.2.3. SUMMARY: REGIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The chapter examined the broad set of instruments of regional development. Starting with the division and classification of regions according to EU standards and the definition of a “region”, special attention was paid to rural development and its challenges. The chapter tried to identify the essential and valuable elements for this thesis in the three fields of action, economy, society, and environment. In economic development, the focus is on the establishment of clusters and the potential of regional products. The social field of action shows the factors influencing the local population's living conditions and is also characterized by demographic change and its effects. Possible solutions were discussed. The interconnections between social and economic actions and their environmentally relevant effects form the basis of the environmental field of action. Concepts such as “nature” and “landscape” were discussed, and implications of the social change of natural areas were shown. All fields of action were examined from the point of view of tourism use and thus serve as a basis for further research in this thesis.

As a cross-cutting issue, the challenges facing regional development are incredibly diverse (Heintel, 2018). However, no matter what measures are taken in regional development, ultimately, the principles of sustainable development should be applied and integrated as best as possible (Chilla et al., 2016, pp. 241–256).

2.3. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN RURAL DESTINATIONS

The third pillar of this thesis elaborates on the basics of rural tourism development and focuses on aspects of sustainability-oriented destination management. For this purpose, the chapter begins with an introductory look at the tourism system. The chapter also highlights the challenges of modern destination management and explores the establishment of sustainable tourism structures in rural regions. Due to the acute Corona pandemic at the time of writing, the chapter concludes with a look at its tourism implications. Therefore, all tourism indicators refer to the years up to and including 2019, as all markets worldwide have entirely changed with the outbreak of the Corona pandemic in spring 2020. The final impact of global lockdowns and pandemic travel restrictions cannot be estimated at the time of writing, as a crisis of this global magnitude has not occurred since World War II.

2.3.1. PRINCIPLES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Looking at tourist markets in general, it can be seen that several factors significantly influence tourist supply and demand regarding potential guests (see Figure 10).

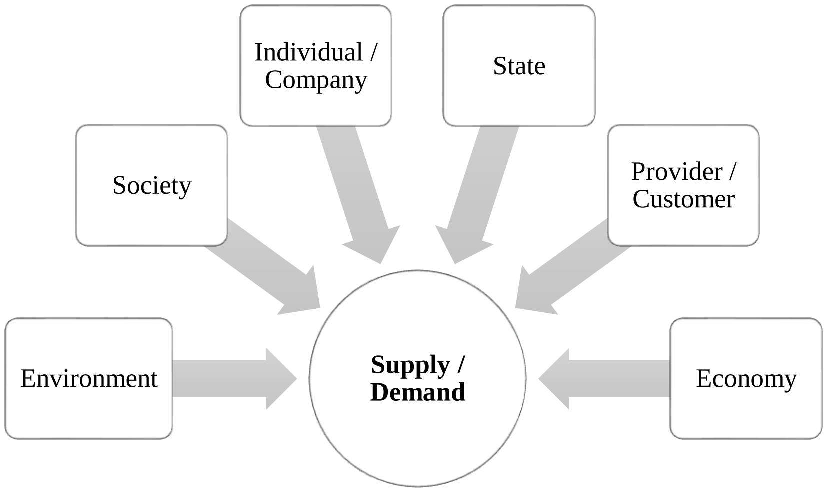

Figure 10: Influencing factors on tourism markets

Source: Based on Freyer, W. (2015). *Tourismus: Einführung in die Fremdenverkehrsökonomie* (11., überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783486857542

From this multifaceted approach, it quickly becomes apparent that there are numerous points connecting tourism with related societal, economic, social, and environmentally relevant topics. Whatever these links are, tourism necessarily contains the element "travel" and as constitutive elements (1) a change of place, (2) a stay, and (3) a motive for travel (Freyer, 2015, p. 3). The details of these criteria arise concerning the duration of the stay, whether an overnight stay is mandatory, and which travel motives are to be assigned to tourism.

There is no generally valid definition of tourism. However, the UNWTO definition from 1993 has been widely adopted in the literature: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons who travel to places outside their usual environment and stay there for leisure, business or specific other purposes for not more than one year without interruption" (Freyer, 2015, p. 2).

Within the tourism industry, however, three different manifestations must be distinguished, as the following table shows:

Table 8: Tourism economy

Tourism industry in a narrow sense (typical tourism businesses)	**Complementary tourism industry** (tourism specialized enterprises)	**Marginal tourist economy** (tourism-dependent businesses)
Typical tourism businesses offer specific tourism services that are exclusively demanded by tourists / travelers.	Untypical tourism businesses have specialized in tourists/travelers as a target group with specific tourism services.	Atypical tourism businesses specialize in targeting tourists/travelers with atypical tourism services.
Examples: Lodging, tour operators, travel agents, transportation companies, convention centers	Examples: Souvenir industry, travel guides, automobile clubs, credit card companies	Examples: Sporting goods industry, gastronomy, mountain railroads, doctors

Source: Based on Freyer, W. (2015). *Tourismus: Einführung in die Fremdenverkehrsökonomie* (11., überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783486857542

For the development of tourism markets, the coordinated interaction of businesses, as mentioned above, is essential. This leads to the concept of tourism value creation, which Freyer (2015, p. 162) defines as the consideration of all “organizations involved in the creation of the final or overall product ‘travel’ via upstream and downstream connections”. He further subdivides tourism services into (1) transport services, (2) accommodation services, (3) destination services, (4) tour operator services, and (5) travel agent services (Freyer, 2015, p. 163).

Table 9: Tourism service development

Specificity of the tourist product	**Characteristics**
Bunch of services	Partial services such as accommodation, destination, cultural monuments, landscapes, events, or transportation.
Intangible production of services	Abstract composition of time, space, and person. Tourism performance is often based on trust in services and service providers.
High level of environmental externalities	Tourism has a considerable impact on economic, ecological, and social-environmental spheres. Therefore, there is great interest on the part of politics, economy, and society.
Networks are essential	External partners are indispensable for the functioning of tourism (e.g., public infrastructure, transportation, local businesses, local people, agriculture).
The exclusion principle does not apply	Businesses provide not all services in tourism, e.g., the construction and maintenance of hiking trails can hardly be used for business purposes, as their use is generally not paid for.
Customized service	Service production takes place on the object, usually humans. Thus, people are directly and immediately integrated into the development process of services.

Source: Based on Bieger, T. (2008). *Management von Destinationen* (7., Ed.). München: Oldenbourg.

These services already indicate the peculiarities of the tourist product (see Table 9). In addition, a tourist product can be defined as follows:

> “A tourism product is a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and artificial resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential

> customers. A tourism product is priced and sold through distribution channels, and it has a life-cycle” (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 18).

Another specific feature of the phenomenon of tourism is that its consumption always presupposes a destination with the physical presence of guests - at least until such time as virtual realities can recreate travel experiences so real that physical presence at the destination is no longer necessary to experience the feeling of a vacation (Binder, Szabó, & Lukas, 2017; Sarkady, Neuburger, & Egger, 2021). The place where this service production mainly occurs and the reason for the trip, namely the stay in another place for leisure purposes, is known as the destination (Bieger, 2008, p. 55; Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017).

A destination thus acts as a hub for the provision of services in tourism, but it is only part of a whole series of factors along the so-called customer journey (Binder, 2020). This concept has become established to map the tourism product from the guest's point of view and ultimately make better management decisions (Yachin, 2018). Here, the journey described is not understood as the actual movement from A to B, but is used as a synonym for the temporal-logical phases of (1) inspiration, (2) booking, (3) arrival, (4) stay, (5) departure, and (6) after-stay (Gutounig et al., 2021). Recently, the distinction between the so-called digital and actual “touchpoints” that arise along the customer journey has come to the forefront of tourism managers' interest (Macher & Binder, 2021). In this context, “touchpoints” are seen as those opportunities to positively influence the guest concerning a destination or a company (Radde, 2016). The aim is to provide the necessary level of technical support to positively enhance the perceived guest experience as a whole (Kruse Brandão & Wolfram, 2018).

Returning to the economic component of tourism service providers, a look at the tourism value chain is particularly informative for better understanding the product and market structure of “tourism”. The following definition has become widely accepted in the literature.

> “The tourism value chain is the sequence of primary and support activities which are strategically fundamental for the performance of the tourism sector. Linked processes such as policy making and integrated planning, product development and packaging, promotion and marketing, distribution and sales, and destination operations and services are the key primary activities of the tourism value chain. Support activities involve transport and infrastructure, human resource development, technology and systems development, and other complementary goods and services which may not be related to core tourism businesses but have a high impact on the value of tourism” (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 20).

In summary, it can thus be deduced that the tourism product always consists of a bundle of services, including several upstream and downstream services, until a guest arrives at the destination of his or her trip. The following section discusses the purpose of the trip, which is defined as the destination.

2.3.2. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

A modern destination is understood as a production and information system of tourist services, managed as a process-oriented competitive unit (Bieger, 2008, p. 56). Spatial factors are significant but not necessarily decisive. Thus, a destination is much more than a spatially limited unit, such as a valley, a lake, a village, or a city (Schuler, 2012; Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017). Instead, it is a "cluster (co-location) of products and services, and activities and experiences along the tourism value chain" (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 14). From the guest's perspective, the fulfillment of needs is more decisive than the organizational structures behind a tourism region (Steinecke, 2013, p. 14). Freyer (2015, p. 320) sees tourist destinations "as 'macro-enterprises', 'collective producers', 'tourist networks', and/or competitive units' that offer their services to out-of-town visitors (inbound tourism)".

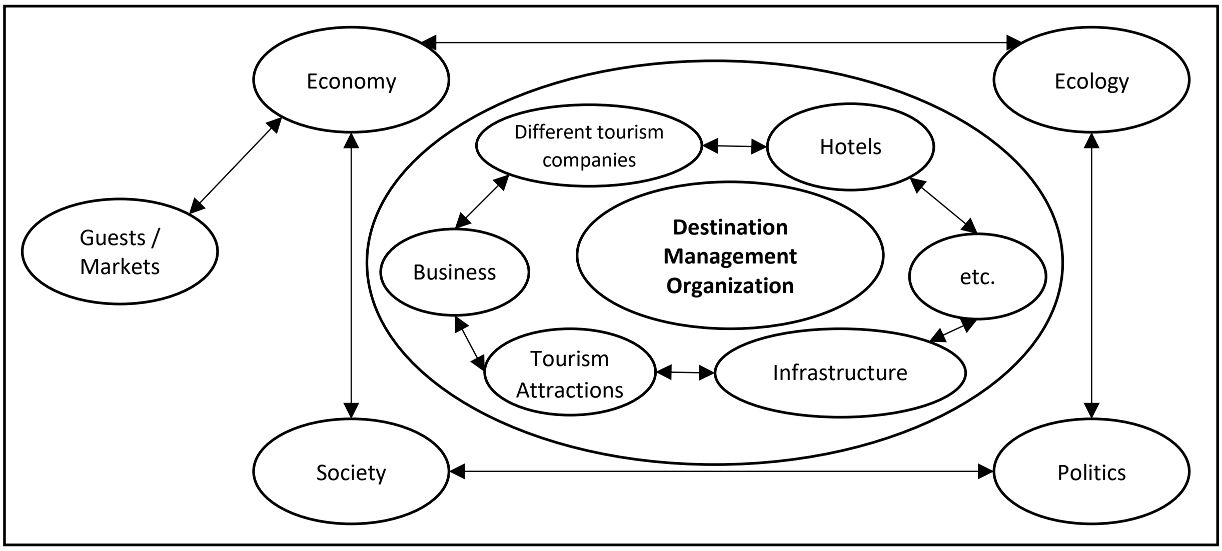

Figure 11: System destination

Source: Based on Steinecke, A. (2013). *Destinationsmanagement*. *utb Tourismus: Vol. 3972*. Konstanz: UVK Verl.-Ges.

A destination is assigned a comprehensive bundle of tasks since it is viewed from different perspectives: (1) as a tourist destination, (2) as an economic area, (3) as a political-administrative unit, (4) as a living space, and (5) as a natural area (Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017, p. 62). Due to these diverse requirements, a diagram frequently found in the literature under the label "System Destination" attempts to depict the various influencing factors in a destination (see Figure 11).

In order to be able to illustrate these numerous tasks of a tourist destination, Bieger (2008, p. 67) summarizes them in the following four areas and notes that these are always to be fulfilled cooperatively: (1) planning function, (2) supply function, (3) interest representation function and (4) marketing function. Deriving from this classification and under a modern management approach, the following task levels can be derived according to Steinecke & Herntrei (2017), which must be developed and adapted depending on the situation in each case.

Table 10: Tasks within a destination

Strategic management	Development of vision, tourism mission statement Positioning on target markets
Operative management	Brand development Communication: Public relations, online marketing, testimonials, travel fairs, etc. Product development: Basic products, derived products, human capital, special interest products, tourist information, guest relations, packaging, etc. Distribution: Direct, indirect, sales promotion Pricing: Positioning, differentiation, variation, etc. Quality management: Guest satisfaction research, qualification of employees, seals of approval, etc. Change Management: Destination life cycle, product life cycle
Cooperations	Horizontal: Thematic routes, city cooperations, etc. Vertical: E.g., coop. with transport businesses Lateral: E.g., media cross-promotion
Internal marketing	Motivate and involve tourism providers Participation in political bodies Integration of the population
Protection of natural resources	Environmental protection within companies Environmental protection in the transport business Protection of agriculture
Future perspectives	Innovational power Regional management / Destination governance Destination corporate responsibility Participative destination management Strengthen the quality of life in a destination

Source: Based on Steinecke, A., & Herntrei, M. (2017). *Destinationsmanagement* (2., überarbeitete Auflage, Nr. 3972). Konstanz, München: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH; UVK/Lucius.

There must be a professionally managed organizational unit in a destination to fulfill the tasks mentioned above. This so-called Destination Management Organization (DMO) is defined by the UNWTO as follows:

> “A destination management/marketing organization (DMO) is the leading organizational entity which may encompass the various authorities, stakeholders, and professionals and facilitates tourism sector partnerships towards a collective destination vision. The governance structures of DMOs vary from a single public authority to a public/private partnership model with the key role of initiating, coordinating, and managing certain activities such as the implementation of tourism policies, strategic planning, product development, promotion and marketing, and convention bureau activities“ (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 16).

In order to be able to fulfill its tasks, Schuler (2012) summarizes the essential cornerstones and framework conditions based on which a competitive DMO must operate:

- A destination is primarily oriented to market conditions and tourist target groups and must operate independently of political boundaries.
- All central stakeholders and actors must be involved in the creation of the product.
- A destination must have at least one independent and well-known brand. A sufficient budget must be available to strengthen the brand(s).
- The brand offers and develops guest-focused, high-quality products aligned with the consistent execution of the brand promise.
- Sufficient qualified human resources are available for key positions in strategic planning and operational implementation. A clear commitment and resources for the ongoing development of managers and employees (e.g., training, conferences) are in place (Schuler, 2012, p. 96).

In addition, the development and use of the latest technological tools in product development, sales, and communication (e.g., apps, digital guest cards, location-based services, big data, social media) must be actively pursued and financed (Bieger & Beritelli, 2013; Schuler, 2012, p. 96; Untersteiner, 2015). Tallinucci (2019, p. 101) also recognizes the responsibility of destination governance to direct guest flows and keep destinations from moving toward overtourism.

For a comprehensive discussion about managing destinations, one cannot ignore Butler's (2004) basic concept of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), where he recognizes that destinations, like products, are subject to a market-based cycle and divides it into phases of (1) Exploration, (2) Involvement, (3) Development, (4) Consolidation, (5) Stagnation, (6) Decline, and (7) Rejuvenation, respectively. Using the Tourism Area Life Cycle as a guide, various discussions from different disciplines have emerged in recent decades. More recently, quality of life and sustainability issues have come to the fore (Boley & Perdue, 2012, p. 515; Kruczek, Kruczek, & Szromek, 2018; Tallinucci, 2019; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012).

In addition to the classic fields of research concerning the tasks of a DMO, the topics of "Destination Governance" and "Destination Leadership" have been added in recent years (Erschbamer, 2019, p. 217). Destination governance is defined as the interaction of public bodies (formal rules/interactions) and private self-organization (informal rules/interactions) (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014). For tourism, this means that tourism policy bodies can create structures in which networks are formed that empower people outside the organization (Raich, 2019, p. 209). It is precisely these informal networks of relationships that enable the involvement of, for example, local entrepreneurs and stakeholders, who in turn can come together in informal leadership networks (Bachinger, 2014; Zehrer & Raich, 2015). Such leadership networks should have the following characteristics:

- "Involvement of competent and influential actors who have recognized that they are interdependent in the destination.
- The networks are based on informal relationships and trust.
- Cooperation is characterized by spontaneous exchange and established relationships." (Raich, 2019; Zehrer, Raich, Siller, & Tschiderer, 2014).

This participatory approach can enable further development of the control functions in a destination and establish innovative organizational, financing, and marketing structures (Herle & Hausy, 2019; Raich, 2019; Schuler, 2012). Open innovation processes involving local companies and stakeholders are conducive to such restructuring, but they only succeed if all decision-makers involved are uncompromisingly behind the project and put their own "parochial thinking" aside (Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017; Storch & Pillmayer, 2019). As the five most important stakeholders for DMO's Crouch & Ritchie (2012, p. 497) identified (1) accommodation services, (2) city / local government, (3) regional / county government, (4) attractions, and (5) the state / provincial tourism department.

Whereas the theoretical approach to destination governance is primarily concerned with the "how", destination leadership is primarily concerned with "who"? Who can motivate and inspire people within a destination (Pechlaner, 2019b, p. 9; Pechlaner, Kozak, & Volgger, 2014)? When mechanisms of systemic leadership are linked to the requirements of managing a destination, human actions and their influence on networks within a destination become the focus of research agendas (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014; Volgger, Erschbamer, & Pechlaner, 2021).

Volgger et al. (2021) also recognize that although the theories of destination governance and destination leadership have made good progress in recent decades, they neglect the vital influence of the tourism experience. For this reason, the authors provide an interesting way of thinking with the concept of destination design and propose five main theses for discussion: (1) "design is holistic", (2) "design is open, human-centered and participatory", (3) "design means translation", (4) "design is ongoing and transformational" and (5) "design complements management and leadership" (Volgger et al., 2021).

As already shown, a tourist destination is always also part of people's living and working space. These living spaces are subject to constant change, and destinations must also continuously adapt to the effects of these changes (Hölzl, 2019; Steinecke, 2013, pp. 28–30). Here, destination design could provide solutions, as the approach of destination design offers a multi-layered horizon and incorporates elements of "participation, inclusion, governance, experience design and digitalization" in the development of destinations (Volgger et al., 2021). Furthermore, elements of art, architecture, and atmosphere could enrich the potential of a destination (Erschbamer, 2019; Volgger & Pfister, 2020a). Such a multifaceted approach allows for an entirely new way of thinking about destination development. Pechlaner (2019b, p. 12), for example, developed a matrix that makes it possible to analyze the interests of residents and guests. From this, possible conflict potentials at the interfaces of experience and living space can be identified.

Table 11: Matrix of destination and living space

Destination / ***Living space***	**Mobility Space** Infrastructure, Traffic	**Attraction Space** Accommodation, Culinary, Excursions	**Experience Space** Emotion, experience
Infrastructure Traffic, Transportation, Internet	Fields of the matrix to be filled by tourism and/or regional development organizations		
Service Living, Work, Leisure, Education			
Identity Work, School, Leisure, Culture			

Source: Based on Pechlaner, H. (Ed.) (2019a). *Destination und Lebensraum: Perspektiven touristischer Entwicklung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

This analysis cannot be dismissed out of hand because, in the context of long-term and sustainable destination planning, it is necessary to pay attention to the living space of the inhabitants in addition to considering the tourist space (Koscak & O'Rourke, 2020). The issue of quality of life must be considered essential and is evident in a variety of current discussions around resilience, overtourism, access restrictions, or the management of guest flows (Gill, 2004; Uysal, Sirgy, & Kruger, 2018).

Despite the relevance of current "soft" topics (e.g., quality of life, sustainability), destinations must assert themselves on the market to remain competitive.

> "The competitiveness of a tourism destination is the ability of the destination to use its natural, cultural, human, man-made and capital resources efficiently to develop and deliver quality, innovative, ethical and attractive tourism products and services in order to achieve a sustainable growth within its overall vision and strategic goals, increase the added value of the tourism sector, improve and diversify its market components and optimize its attractiveness and benefits both for visitors and the local community in a sustainable perspective" (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 26).

Crouch & Ritchie (2012) use the following figure to show how the UNWTO definition can be cast into a management-relevant model.

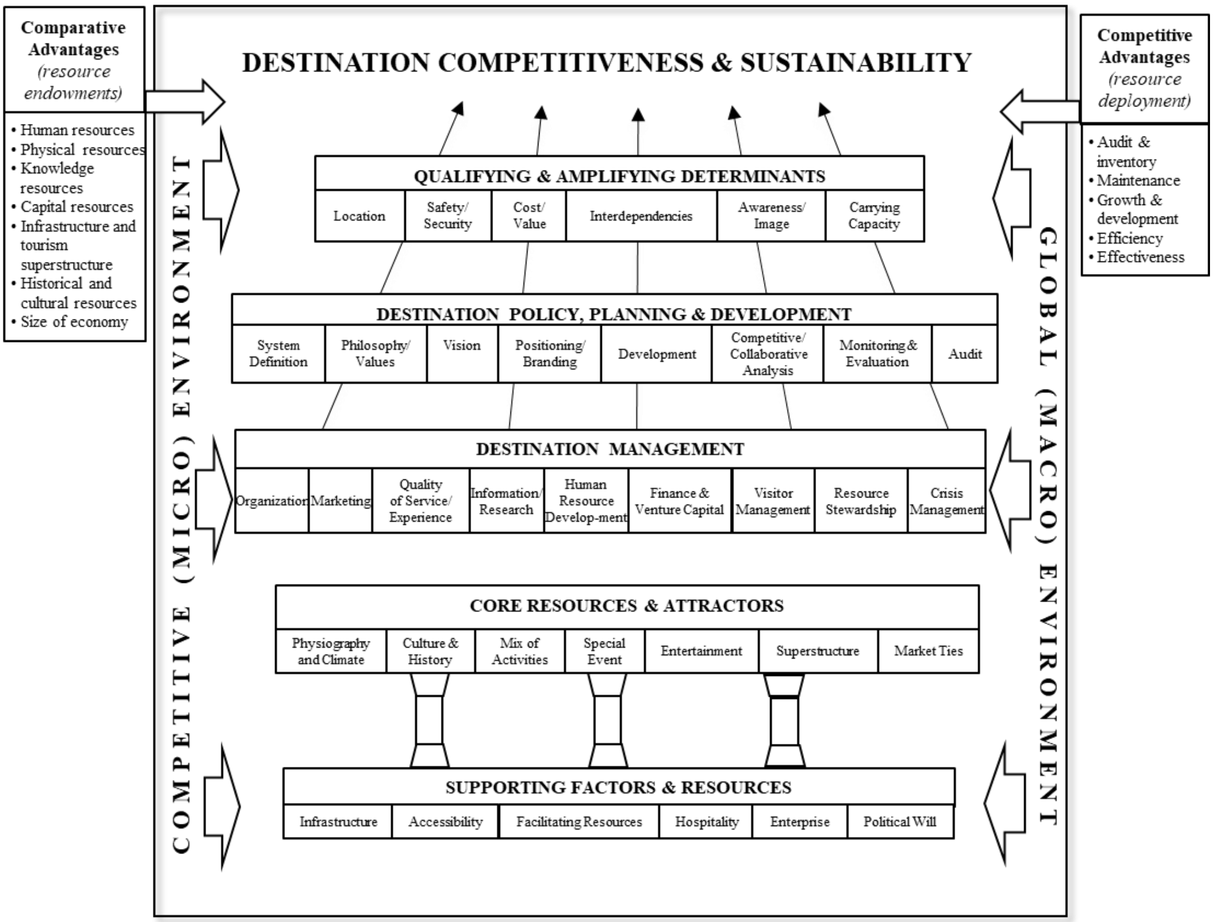

Figure 12: Model of destination competitiveness

Source: Based on Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, B. J. (2012). Destination competitiveness and its implications for host-community QOL. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 491–513). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

Further, Crouch & Ritchie (2012, p. 508) name ten elements that are of particular importance for destination competitiveness: “(1) physiography and climate, (2) culture and history, (3) tourism superstructure, (4) a mix of activities, (5) awareness/image, (6) special events, (7) entertainment, (8) infrastructure, (9) accessibility, and (10) positioning/branding”. Pike and Page (2014) come to a similar approach and name the following attitudes as essential regarding the importance in terms of destination competitiveness: (1) “an attractive environment, (2) profitable industry, (3) positive visitor experiences, (4) ongoing investments in new product development, (5) a sustainable community, (6) supportive host community, (7) ease of access, and (8) effective organization”.

However, not all factors are of equal importance for a specific destination. As destinations find themselves more and more in an international competition, the particular importance of image and positioning has to be emphasized (Crouch, 2007, p. 24). Boley and Perdue (2012, p. 523) note that tourism's impact on the population's quality of life is becoming increasingly important on tourism development and destination management.

Herntrei (2019) argues in the same direction, drawing a model of a sustainable and at the same time competitive destination based on the Social Exchange Theory (2019, p. 117; Nunkoo, 2016).

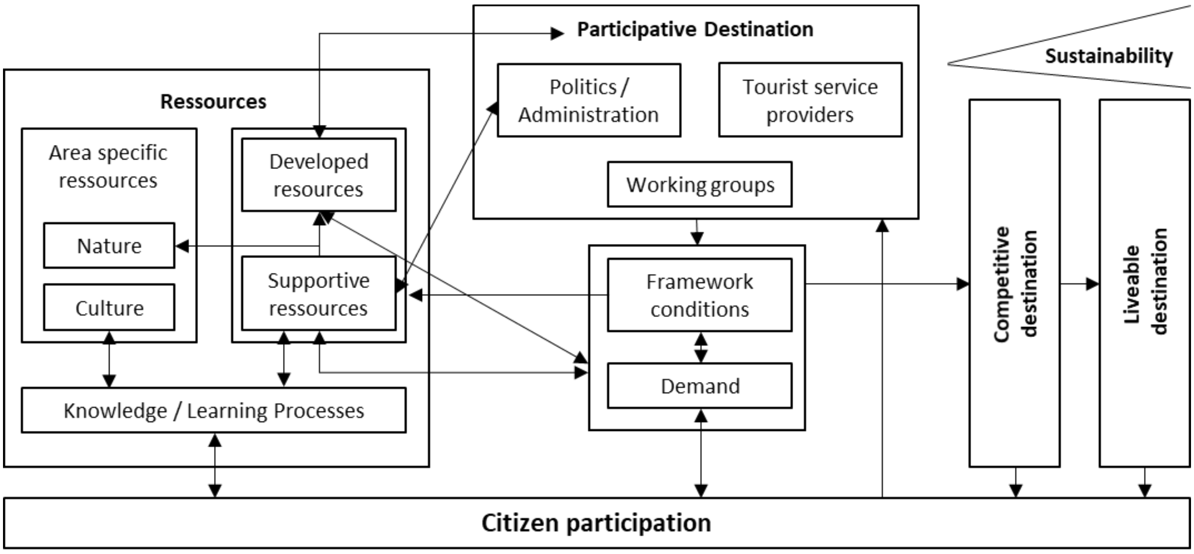

Figure 13: Model of sustainable competitive destination

Source: Based on Herntrei, M. (2019). Tourist go home! In H. Pechlaner (Ed.), *Destination und Lebensraum: Perspektiven touristischer Entwicklung* (pp. 107–123). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

The quest for absolute competitiveness leads to unbridled growth in overnight stays and guest arrivals in many places. The decrease in the acceptance of tourism by the local population, with the potential of leading to the outmigration of whole population groups, are only two examples of numerous adverse effects of so-called "overtourism", which in recent years has increasingly become a source of concern (Herntrei, 2019; Pechlaner, Innerhofer, & Erschbamer, 2020). In the meantime, there are various approaches to steer the unchecked growth in a reasonable direction without endangering the competitiveness and economic basis of many companies.

Following Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle, Tallinucci (2019) emphasizes destination governance's responsibility for ensuring that growth is meaningful in a larger context and not just a means unto itself.

Gill (2004) summarizes methods to keep unchecked growth in a destination roughly on an orderly track, noting parallels to elements of sustainable development (see Table 12). Of course, these approaches involve many discussion points and challenges. For example, setting bed limits correctly can be seen as only one small piece of the puzzle. Stakeholder and citizen participation in community-based goal development also may erode over time due to the lack of time and motivational resources of voluntary participants (Gill, 2004).

Table 12: Growth Management Strategies

Design control	"Without management controls, aesthetic quality is easily eroded by inappropriate designs, blocked or degraded views capes, and polluted environments. The basic tools for addressing such issues pre-date growth management approaches and include zoning and performance standards."
Carrying capacity	The concept "suggests growth within acceptable limits. This type of approach requires involvement and participation of the community in establishing values and priorities." Instruments such as a limitation of bed capacities are applied.
Community visioning	"The need to develop a long-term vision or strategy for growth is increasingly acknowledged, and tourism communities are increasingly identifying goals and objectives around a 'vision statement'."
Growth monitoring	"Monitoring is also a fundamental element of growth management. Without an adequate database, it is impossible to ascertain if strategies need amending."

Source: Based on Gill, A. (2004). Tourism Communities and Growth Management. In A. A. Lew, M. C. Hall, & A. M. Williams (Eds.), *A Companion to Tourism* (pp. 569–583). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Milman (2020) collected several concrete American approaches to managing areas with highly visited attractions (see Table 13).

Table 13: Visitor management solutions

Theme parks guest management	**Nature parks guest management**
Increase capacity	Park zoning and designated use areas
Capacity control policies based on guests' visiting characteristics	Increase fees in general or during peak times
Ticket price structure	Establish a reservation system
Preferential theme park access to resort guests	Use apps and social media to inform visitors about crowding levels
Skip-the-crowds tickets or passes	Allow only certain types of vehicles for designated parking lots within the parks
Virtual queuing	Free transportation to reduce car congestion within the parks
Interactive queuing experiences	Enhance the visitor experience by hiring more employees
Delay the crowds by harmonizing related experiences	Encourage visits to lesser-known national parks
Off-peak visiting incentives	Park closure
Commercial websites as a source of information for improved guest experience	

Source: Based on Milman, A. (2020). Visitor management in highly-visited attractions. In H. Pechlaner, E. Innerhofer, & G. Erschbamer (Eds.), *Contemporary geographies of leisure, tourism and mobility. Overtourism: Tourism management and solutions* (pp. 104–124). London: Routledge.

The solutions must be adapted to the specific situation, but they do provide some initial pointers. However, modern destinations do not necessarily have to strive for the highest overnight stays to be perceived as successful. Ensuring the best guest experience in combination and relation with an adequate expenditure of resources by the population can lead to a balanced relationship between a thriving destination and a high quality of life (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012). However, this requires corresponding professional management structures that consistently implement a sustainable tourism region (Purnar & Günlü, 2012).

As Uysal, Sirgy & Perdue (2012, p. 678) recognize, in the future, in addition to the competitiveness of destinations, it will also be important how the individual tourism elements of the destination contribute to the quality of life of the population, thereby consolidating the support of the population for the further qualitative development of the destination and its attractiveness. This approach is closely linked to the values of sustainable development (Rempel, 2012). How tourism can be developed sustainably so that all groups affected by it can participate in a balanced way in tourism development is the focus of the following chapter.

2.3.3. MANAGING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The previous chapters have shown that tourism is understood as a multidirectional construct and thus has numerous factors influencing other areas of life, the economy, and society, or is itself determined by them. These factors can be positive or negative. The topic of sustainability in tourism is concerned with precisely these characteristics. In order to understand the diversity of potentials and impacts in tourism, it is necessary to look at the underlying systems. Since tourism is to be understood as one of the essential developments of the leisure industry, the following chapter is first dedicated to the concept of "leisure" and then clarifies the connection between sustainable leisure use and its tourism potentials. The following historical outline of sustainable tourism development lays the foundation for an in-depth understanding of how sustainability can work in tourism. Finally, the chapter discusses measurement tools for determining the quality of sustainable tourism concepts to prepare them for destinations and make them practically applicable.

2.3.3.1. Sustainability in leisure industries

In order to now address the intensive discourse on sustainable development in the leisure industry, it is first necessary to define the term leisure and its genesis. As one of the leading scientists in this area, Opaschowski (2006, p. 35) recognizes that the significance of leisure as a work-free regeneration time is declining and is increasingly being replaced by a "synonym for quality of life and well-being". But what does "free time" mean?

Opaschowski's (Opaschowski, 1990) concept of time, which is widely recognized in leisure research, divides time into determination time, obligation time, and disposition time and is the best way of defining the term. Based on the analysis of the factor of self-determination, moreover, the "concept of time autonomy" is applied and can be presented as follows (Freericks et al., 2010, p. 35).

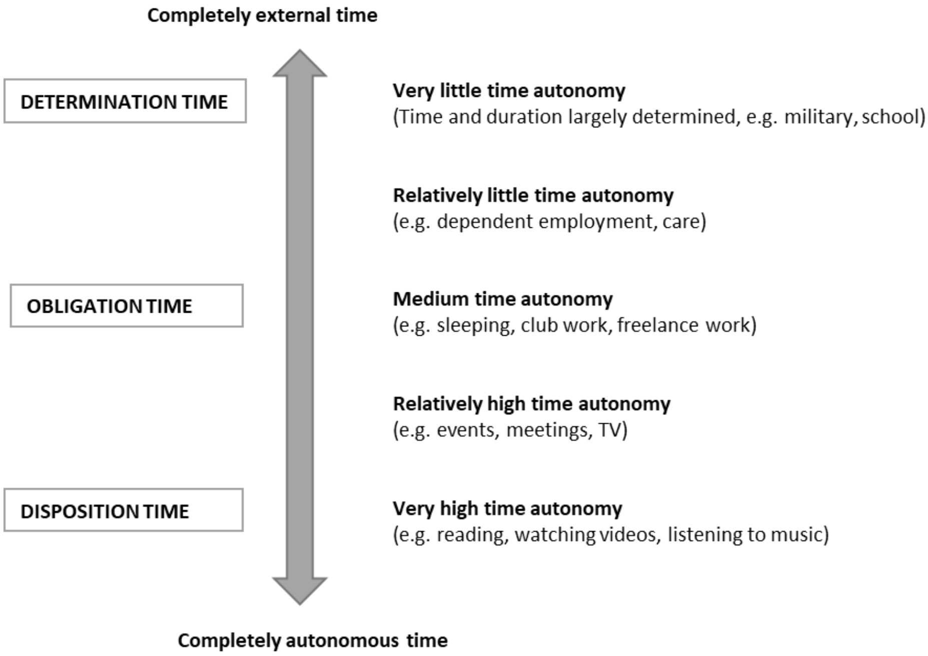

Figure 14: Autonomy of time

Source: Freericks, R., Hartmann, R., & Stecker, B. (2010). *Freizeitwissenschaft. Lehr- und Handbücher zu Tourismus, Verkehr und Freizeit*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH.

As we can see in Figure 14, time is tremendously influenced by social determinants. In principle, leisure time can also be understood as non-working time, minus the time spent performing non-work-related activities (e.g., sleeping, cooking, cleaning). However, this distinction seems to fall short, given the increasing merging of work and leisure relationships (Kleinhückelkotten, 2015). It should be noted here that current research again suggests an increased separation between work and leisure among younger generations (Hurrrelmann & Albrecht, 2014; Karlsböck, 2019).

One of the first significant studies on leisure time use was conducted by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs in 1996, defining leisure time as a time for "media use, conversation and socializing, games and sports, or music and culture" (Opaschowski, 2008). According to Kleinhückelkotten (2015, p. 513), voluntariness and self-determination thus determine a time without external constraints in which "the needs for social orientation and community, education, self-realization, leisure, idleness, regeneration, entertainment and experience" are met. This approach to free time shall henceforth also be applied in this thesis.

A systemic approach to the concept of free time is to look at the social levels at which it takes place. Immerfall and Wasner (2011, p. 14) recognize that free time's personal experience and individual quality are anchored at the "micro-level"**.** In this context, leisure time has different functions:

- Recreation: Leisure is for rest and relaxation. Leisure as the absence of work? (Agricola, 2001)
- Ventilation: Free time to release “excess energies”
- Catharsis: Leisure time to relieve psychological stresses
- Compensation: Leisure time as a possibility of distraction and diversion
- Consumption: Free time to consume (shopping) or to use what has been acquired (Immerfall & Wasner, 2011, p. 14).

Organizations form the determining parameter on leisure’s “meso-level”. On the one hand, they enable leisure options (e.g., indoor swimming pool, theater, sports club) and, on the other hand, they curtail their use in their function as employers. An existing or non-existing supply of leisure potentials thus has a formative influence on many human decisions. “The meso-level thus exerts the strongest structuring effect on individual leisure” (Immerfall & Wasner, 2011, p. 15). Especially in connection with the concept of leisure and its institutionalized organization, Agricola emphasizes the particular importance of associations as a “buffer” between the state and private-sector enterprises (Agricola, 2001).

Leisure’s “macro-level” deals with the question of what should be considered leisure time. In doing so, it often makes use of pointed and exaggerated descriptions such as “leisure society”, “consumer society”, or “experience society”. These models of society are intended to provide orientation rather than a clear planning horizon (Immerfall & Wasner, 2011, p. 16). Prahl (Prahl H. W., 2015) furthermore brings into play the “disciplinary society”, meaning that one must constantly subject oneself to self-discipline since most individuals do not have unlimited amounts of time and money at their disposal. Moreover, he notes that leisure research almost exclusively refers to peacetime and that the topics of leisure in confinement (e.g., prison) or leisure in total institutions, such as convents or asylums, hardly receive any attention (Prahl H. W., 2015, p. 27).

It can be deduced from the previous paragraphs that the concept of leisure is closely linked to human actions. These actions, taken or not taken, in turn, inevitably have an impact on their direct and indirect environment and the people living there. Alongside the world of work, the leisure industry thus has an essential function in the debate on sustainable development. The most significant leisure activities are leisure traffic, leisure and adventure worlds, large-scale events, nature-based leisure activities, leisure consumption, or experience shopping (Freericks et al., 2010, pp. 278–280).

Based on the three dimensions of sustainability, numerous positive and negative effects of leisure can be derived from this.

Table 14: Impact of leisure activities related to the three dimensions of sustainability

	Negative impact	**Positive impact**
ECOLOGY	Energy consumption, emissions, greenhouse effect; air pollution Land consumption and impairment of biodiversity Soil compaction/erosion, footfall pollution Water consumption and pollution Waste generation Noise pollution	Incentives for the use of renewable energy sources Preservation of biodiversity through protection of intact natural and cultural landscapes Expansion or designation of new protected areas Increasing environmental awareness through learning in adventure worlds; nature conservation through the enjoyment of nature
ECONOMY	Seasonality of jobs; unskilled jobs Import of workers from outside the region; pull effects High investment costs for expansion of recreational infrastructure (loans, debts) The outflow of capital/income from target area (withdrawal effects) Increase in consumer and land prices for residents	Creation of income and jobs; alternative sources of income for the local population Multiplier effects on upstream and downstream economic sectors (e.g., crafts, construction, agriculture) Regional development impulses: infrastructure development (e.g., transport routes, communication networks, energy supply) Profits for providers of leisure infrastructure and services
SOCIAL	Commercialization of regional art and culture (kitsch) Consolidation of prejudices through the superficiality of encounters Conflicts and stress between different user groups Aesthetic impairment through recreational infrastructure Destruction of traditional ways of life	Strengthening or revitalization of regional art, culture, and identity Protection of cultural monuments Broadening of horizons for visitors and visitors' visitors Qualification, education, and training in the leisure and tourism sector Increase of the quality of life

Source: Freericks, R., Hartmann, R., & Stecker, B. (2010). *Freizeitwissenschaft. Lehr- und Handbücher zu Tourismus, Verkehr und Freizeit*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH.

Somewhat more concretely, the "Institute for Social-Ecological Research and Education", or ECOLOG for short, uses 21 sustainability goals and an evaluation scheme to analyze specific leisure activities that are subject to certain scenarios. Using this method, further cases can be constructed, and thus the "sustainability" of different forms of leisure use can be calculated (Kleinhückelkotten, 2015, pp. 518–524).

Another approach to assessing leisure activities and their impact on the environment and society is to classify them according to leisure styles. In the context of a study on transport habits, one could distinguish here between (1) Disadvantaged, (2) Modern-Exclusive, (3) Fun-Oriented, (4) Burdened-Family-Oriented, and (5) Traditional-Homely (Götz, 2002). Kleinhückelkotten and Wegner (2010) assign corresponding social milieus[11] to leisure styles, making it possible to assess leisure behavior according to sustainability aspects among specific population groups. Based on this classification, communication measures can be developed to make it easier to

[11] Social milieus are surveyed by the Sinus Institute (www.sinus-institut.de) and are widely accepted in German-speaking countries for determining social strata.

prepare and address sustainability topics in a way that is appropriate for the target group (Kleinhückelkotten & Wegner, 2010).

In the discussion about sustainability, current developments (e.g., climate change, overtourism) demonstrate the high importance of the leisure perspective, especially that of the vacation period (Pechlaner et al., 2020). It is all the more astonishing that although vacations represent the most "genuine" of all forms of leisure, this time is often left out of leisure research, especially when it comes to the question of the most popular leisure activities (Opaschowski, 2008; Zellmann & Mayrhofer, 2019). There is usually good data available for tourism research, at least much better than in leisure research in general (Agricola, 2001). Moreover, when one considers that there were approximately 1.4 billion international vacation-related arrivals in 2019, the tremendous importance of travel, and therefore vacation time, especially in the context of environmental impacts, is made clear (UNWTO, 2020a). The transport sector accounts for around 24% of global CO^2 emissions, and tourism is directly responsible for around 5% of global emissions (Statista, 2020). The following chapter will elaborate on the interrelationships between "tourism" and its environment.

2.3.3.2. Development of sustainable tourism

In order to understand the approaches to current and future challenges, it is first necessary to provide a historical overview. In this context, the theoretical concepts in line with global developments will be considered in particular.

According to Balas and Strasdas, the discussion about sustainability aspects relevant to tourism began in the middle of the 20th century with Enzenberger's "Theory of Tourism" (Balas & Strasdas, 2019, p. 17). Enzenberger himself, however, cites a source from 1903, which is quite critical of the "current" developments regarding travel and the growing hotel industry (Enzensberger, 1958). Enzenberger's criticism is directed, among other things, at the exuberant consumption and excessive demand of the burgeoning tourist markets (Enzensberger, 1958). In 1975, Jost Krippendorf published 23 theses in his book, "Die Landschaftsfresser" (the landscape eaters), about how to construct a socially and environmentally oriented tourism (Krippendorf, 1977). Robert Jungk is considered one of the founders of "soft tourism" and discussed "hard" and "soft" travel for the first time (Müller, 2015). According to Rein and Strasdas (2015, p. 28), the concept of soft tourism originated in the Alps and included economic and social considerations and the ecological dimension.

The ecologically adverse effects of mass tourism, which are becoming visible due to increasing globalization, changed the focus of the sustainability discussion at the beginning of the 1990s.

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So-called “ecotourism” came to the fore, especially internationally. This focuses on developing countries and the preservation of biodiversity in endangered regions of the world. The goal is to keep the local nature intact through the tourism expenditures of the travelers there. “Nature tourism”, which has developed from ecotourism, is currently prevalent in many countries around the world and can contribute to a better ecological balance in the destination countries (Carr, Ruhanen, & Whitford, 2016; Rein & Strasdas, 2015, pp. 27–32; Rivera & Gutierrez, 2019). However, Friedl (2018) shows that nature tourism can also have significant downsides, namely when nature functions merely as a backdrop for profit maximization.

According to Rein and Strasdas (2015), the increasing demand-side rise in environmental awareness in the 1990s led to the development of numerous certifications as quality assurance instruments. However, such certificates were not crowned with lasting success. Tourism associations, tour operators, and lodging establishments installed eco-commissioners and implemented environmental protection programs. However, when it became clear that the measures taken had little effect on increasing sales, they were quickly discontinued (2015).

At the international level, critical milestones in the development of sustainable tourism can be identified as the Rio Conference (1992), the “Lanzarote Charter for Sustainable Tourism” (1995), and the ”Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry” in 1996 (Balas & Strasdas, 2019; Rein & Strasdas, 2015). However, Rein and Strasdas (2015) note that these initially optimistic approaches and agreements have been increasingly counteracted by economic and sociocultural issues and challenges in the first decade of the 21st century. Since travelers often equate sustainable tourism with higher costs, “sustainable travel” is difficult to market and seems unattractive on the demand side (Kreilkamp, 2009). A change in this approach can only be seen in the increasing discussion of global climate change in the 2010s. Although travel mobility, above all air travel, is recognized as a significant driver of global CO^2 emissions, Rein and Strasdas (2015, p. 36) point out that a rethink will probably only come about through comprehensive government intervention (Balas & Strasdas, 2019; UNWTO, 2019a). On the other hand, due to the increasing awareness of climate change, travel platforms such as “forum anders reisen” or companies specializing in offsetting flight-related CO^2 emissions are becoming increasingly important (Balas & Strasdas, 2019). Consumer developments, driven by increased media attention to ethical and environmental issues, promote the emergence of new tourism markets. Thus, the topics of climate protection, organic food, fair trade, or slow food have already arrived in tourism and began receiving even more attention since the beginning of the 2020s, among other things, due to the controversial discussion surrounding the environmental activist Greta Thunberg (Balas & Strasdas, 2019; Mkono, Hughes, & Echentille, 2020; Rein & Strasdas, 2015).

Balas and Strasdas (2019, p. 18) point out that discussions concerning sustainable travel have long been framed as either-or options or seen as an alternative to traditional travel. Instead, sustainable tourism must be understood as an integrative component of development within a destination (Koscak & O'Rourke, 2020). With the “Sustainable Tourism Program” adopted in 2012 and the “Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development“ adopted in 2015, 17 global sustainability goals were agreed upon that attempt to consider a destination in its entirety (UNTWO, 2016). With the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) founded in 2010, the global sustainability movement is experiencing further positive momentum for the practical implementation of sustainable tourism development (European Union, 2016). In 2017, UNTWO's Sustainable Tourism Program reached its global peak of attention with World Tourism Day, at least on the organizational side (UNWTO, 2017). As mentioned earlier, climate change and environmental degradation first gained global attention through the mass protests by young people sparked by Greta Thunberg (Martiskainen et al., 2020).

As one can see, the discussion around sustainability in tourism is widely based, and numerous definitions are circulating in the academic and practical world. Therefore, it is necessary to take a closer look at these definitions.

2.3.3.3. Definitions in a sustainable tourism context

Due to the diverse approach to the topics, which are often subsumed under the name “sustainable tourism”, it is necessary to make a delimitation of terms in order to be able to understand their meaning in the context of the analysis of sustainability concepts. Also, some definitions seem to be close to the topic of sustainability but turn out to be not very suitable upon closer examination.

Table 15 provides an excerpt of definitions related to sustainable tourism, which is not, however, exhaustive because each term is subject to diverse views and requires comprehensive discourse. For example, Ayazlar & Ayazlar (2015, p. 169) show that from 2000 to 2012, the definition of “rural tourism” experienced about 13 different manifestations. Though the following table excludes some expressions such as “balanced tourism”, “justice tourism”, or “equitable tourism”, in general, it covers the most commonly used terms in connection with sustainable tourism. It is possible to state that several forms of sustainable tourism combine the responsible usage of ecological, economic, social, and cultural resources of both guests and host communities.

Table 15: Definitions of sustainable tourism

Form	Designation	Definitions
Nature related forms of tourism	Agritourism	It is a combination of the two industries of agriculture and tourism. It enables various cooperations and business models, e.g., food tourism, wine tourism, and challenges, e.g., multiple usages of land and resources (Hara & Naipaul, 2008; Janet Momsen, 2016).
	Ecotourism	"… involves environmental and ecological awareness that ensure the conservation and preservation" (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017) "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015)
	Green tourism	"… spread during the 1980s, stands for small-scale tourism which involves visiting natural areas while minimizing environmental impacts. Businesses have generally adopted a broader meaning for green tourism: any tourism activity operating in an environmentally friendly manner."(Pintassilgo, 2016)
	Low-carbon tourism	"… is [] a way of travel to acquire higher value and travel experience for tourists and more social, economic and environmental benefits for our society by reducing carbon emissions occurred in tourists' activities" (Huang & Deng, 2011)
	Nature tourism	"… is a form of travel to near-natural areas, where experiencing nature and natural phenomena is the primary motivation for visiting these areas" (Rein & Strasdas, 2015)
Socially acceptable forms of tourism	Alternative tourism	"The high criticism of mass tourism and its negative effects on destination areas gave birth to a new concept of tourism, this of alternative. Alternative tourism incorporated soft tourism, small-scale tourism, green tourism, nature tourism, and integrated tourism." (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017) "… involves tourism that respects the values of local people and nature, favoring encounters and exchanges and building experiences (Agustin & Fernadez-Betancort, 2016)
	Community-based tourism	"community-based approach aims to recognize the need to promote both people's quality of life and the protection of resources" (Saarinen, 2006) "… a platform for the local community to generate economic benefits through offering their products to tourists that range from the local communities, lifestyles, natural resources, and cultures." (Donny & Mohd, 2012)
	Peace through tourism	The International Institute for Peace through Tourism defines tourism as fostering peace in several aspects like "peace within ourselves, peace with others, peace with nature, peace with past generations, peace with future generations, and peace with our creator." (IIPT, n.d.)
	Pro-poor tourism	"It is aiming in strengthening relations between tourism businesses and poor people, in a sense for the tourism sector to support the elimination of poverty and for poor people to have the opportunity to participate in the development of the touristic product." (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017) "tourism that generates net benefits for the poor" (Roe & Urquhart, 2001)
	Volunteer tourism	"volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011)
Geographically determined tourism	Rural tourism	"… any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture, and heritage at rural locations, thereby it benefits the local community economically and socially as well as enables interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience" (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017) "… it can be said that rural tourism interests people who like nature holidays and that it also includes special services such as accommodation, events, festivities, gastronomy, outdoor recreation, production and the sale of handicrafts" (Ayazlar & Ayazlar, 2015)
Integrative forms of tourism	Ethical tourism	Whether visiting a destination as a package or as an individual tourist, it is always important to treat local resources and the culture of the inhabitants with respect (Friedl, 2013). "A high contribution to the local economy can be achieved by buying regionally produced food, staying in local accommodations and preferring local means of transportation" (Friedl, 2002).

	Integrated tourism	"Integrated Tourism can be defined as the kind of tourism which is explicitly linked to the localities in which it takes place and, in practical terms, has clear connections with local resources, activities, products, production and service industries, and a participatory local community" (Lisi & Esposito, 2015)
	Responsible tourism	"… making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit." (Goodwin, 2014)
	Slow tourism	Slow tourism can be seen as an antagonist of "fast everything" and involves several "slows" like slow food, slow living, slow cities (cittaslow), slow money, or slow design. Nowadays, slow tourism is often connected to slow food movements. (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012; Hatipoglu, 2015; Markwell & Wilson, 2016)
	Soft tourism	Soft tourism can be seen as the opposite of "hard" tourism, which "is a term used to describe this type of mass tourism development that leads to detrimental negative effects and impacts on the environment, local people, and economies." (Lusby, 2017)

Source: own research and editing, 2020

Nevertheless, it is necessary to critically question all definitions to continuously develop the measures based on them and their practical relevance. For example, Goodwin (Goodwin, 2020) argues that "sustainable tourism" tends to be visionary and that it is only through taking responsibility ("responsible tourism") that concrete action takes place. On the other hand, the concept of "nature tourism" has been strongly criticized, as it does not focus on sustainability per se but could be used to exploit natural resources as a way to maximize profits (Chen & Prebensen, 2019). Müller (2015) addresses the problem of "soft tourism," which he portrays as illusory and overblown. Instead, he pleads for more "(hard) sustainability as an anchor". Butler (1999), on the other hand, sees the greatest challenge in the definition of "sustainability" and the many different ways in which it is understood. Although there are many different definitions, tourism must be seen in the context of "sustainable development" (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017). Furthermore, Butler (1999) notes that the cooperation of all stakeholders involved in a destination is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable tourism.

However, in order to finally settle on a helpful definition of "sustainable tourism", in the context of this thesis, that of the UNEP and UNTWO from 2005 will be used as a benchmark: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities".

To summarize, one could state that many of the concepts and definitions mentioned in Table 15 overlap and influence each other. Thus, a clear demarcation is hardly possible, and there is and should always be room for both academic and professional discussion.

2.3.3.4. Measuring tourism sustainability

To measure the impact of tourism activities on a host destination, different instruments are needed, which are oriented towards the four dimensions of sustainable development: economic, ecologic, social, and cultural. During the discussion on sustainable tourism development, numerous assessing instruments have been used to date. Since this thesis does not focus on further developing these measurement tools, an in-depth discussion will be omitted in favor of pointing out various indicator sets to demonstrate their diversity.

For example, a meta-analysis of the most used measurement points of sustainable tourism development between the years 2000 and 2015 shows the following set of indicators:

Table 16: Key indicators of sustainable tourism development

Dimension	Key indicator	Possible measures
Economic	Employment	Number, type, and duration of jobs Gender equity
	Business viability	Expenditure Arrivals Profitability Satisfaction, etc.
Social	Quality of life	Resident empowerment Congestion and crowding Community attitudes to tourism Access to amenities Changes in crime rate
Environmental	Water quality and water management	Volume and changes in volume Water treatment, etc.
	Solid waste management	Recycling
	Energy conservation	Reduction in energy usage
Cultural	Maintenance of the integrity of local communities	Retention of local cultures and traditions Maintenance of cultural sites Authentic representation of local cultures

Source: Agyeiwaah, E., McKercher, B., & Suntikul, W. (2017). Identifying core indicators of sustainable tourism: A path forward? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *24*, 26–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.005

The authors use the four dimensions of sustainability and name possible measurement variables for the individual indicators. They advocate reducing the number of measurement variables, which would also be easier to implement in practice than an overly complex measurement instrument (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017).

A conceptual model by Petri (2012) uses a three-part scale of sustainability (see Figure 15). The model combines the determining factors of a sustainability dimension with those elements that promote a strengthening of the dimension.

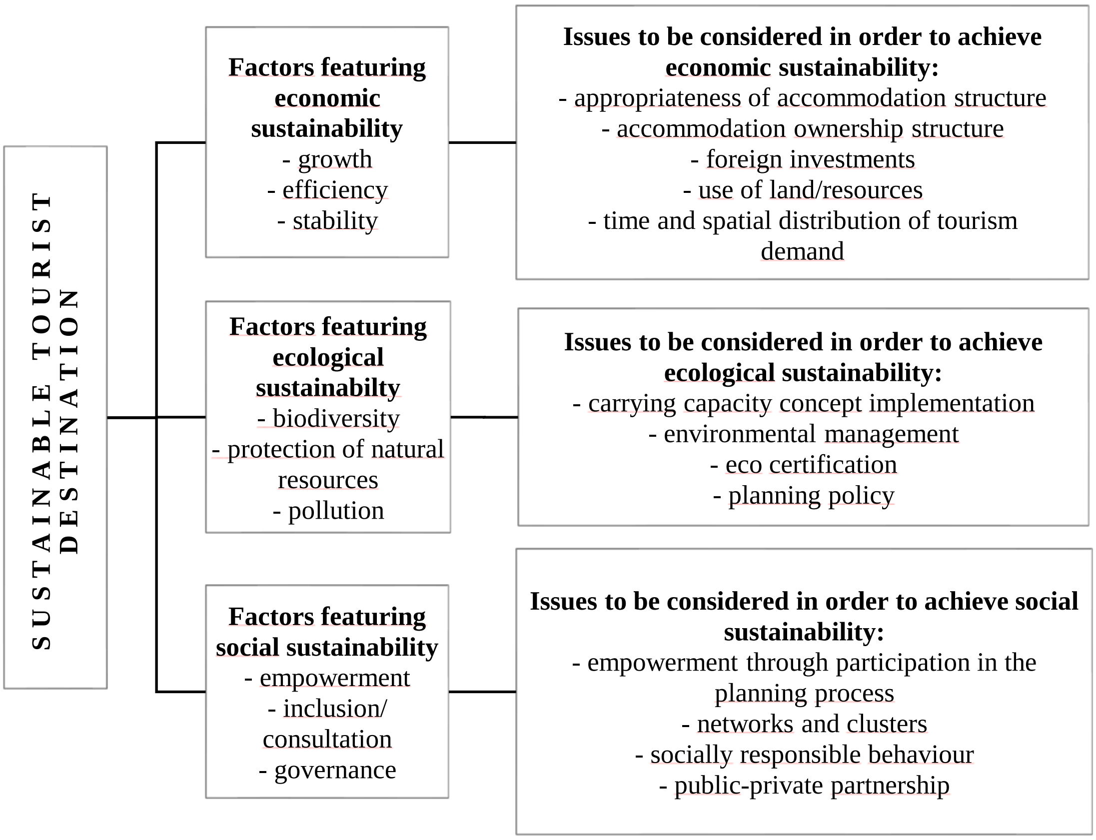

Figure 15: Model of sustainable tourism destination development

Source: Based on Petri, L. (2012). Croatian Tourism Development Model – Anatomy of an Un/Sustainability. In C. Ghenai (Ed.), *Sustainable Development - Policy and Urban Development - Tourism, Life Science, Management and Environment*. InTech. https://doi.org/10.5772/28093

There are also significant publications at the international level that discuss the measurability of effects to strengthen sustainable tourism policies. The guideline “Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers", published by the World Tourism Organization in 2005, can be regarded as a primary standard publication (UNEP & WTO, 2005, pp. 178–179). The guide contains fundamental indicators, which can be examined in greater depth during further analyses through empirical surveys and data analyses (see Table 17). For its part, the European Union published a catalog of measurements for determining the sustainability level of a destination. The European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) uses 43 core indicators, which adaptable additional scales can extend. Destinations using the guideline go through a 7-step procedure (European Union, 2016; Serdarušić & Tustonjić, 2017). The entire table, including the “ETIS core indicators”, can be found in the appendix of this thesis (see Appendix 4, p. VII). The Global Sustainable Tourism Council follows a similar analytical path, linking the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with its criteria to measure sustainable tourism (GSTC, 2019). The table can be found in the appendix (see Appendix 5, p. IX).

Table 17: Baseline issues and indicators of sustainable tourism

Baseline Issue	Suggested Baseline Indicator(s)
Local Satisfaction with Tourism	Local satisfaction level with tourism (questionnaire)
Effects of Tourism on Communities	The ratio of tourists to locals (average and peak period/days) % of locals, who believe that tourism has helped bring new services or infrastructure (questionnaire-based) Number and capacity of social services available to the community (% attributable to tourism)
Sustaining Tourist Satisfaction	Level of satisfaction by visitors (questionnaire-based) Perception of value for money (questionnaire-based) Percentage of return visitors
Tourism Seasonality	Tourist arrivals by month or quarter (distribution throughout the year) Occupancy rates for licensed (official) accommodation by month (peak periods relative to low season) and % of all occupancy in peak quarter or month % of business establishments open all year Number and % of tourist industry jobs which are permanent or full year (compared to temporary jobs)
Economic Benefits of Tourism	Number of local people (and the ratio of men to women) employed in tourism (also ratio of tourism employment to total employment) Revenues generated by tourism as % of total revenues generated in the community
Energy Management	Per capita consumption of energy from all sources (overall, and by the tourist sector, per person day) Percentage of businesses participating in energy conservation programs or applying energy saving policy and techniques % of energy consumption from renewable resources (at destinations, establishments)
Water Availability and Consumption	Water use: (total volume consumed and liters per tourist per day) Water-saving (% reduced, recaptured, or recycled)
Drinking-Water Quality	Percentage of tourism establishments with water treated to international potable standards. Frequency of water-borne diseases: number/percentage of visitors reporting water-borne illnesses during their stay
Sewage Treatment (Wastewater Management)	Percentage of sewage from the site receiving treatment (to primary, secondary, tertiary levels) Percentage of tourism establishments (or accommodation) on treatment system(s)
Solid Waste Management (Garbage)	The waste volume produced by the destination (tons) (by month) The volume of waste recycled (m^3) / Total volume of waste (m^3) (specify by different types) Quantity of waste strewn in public areas (garbage counts)
Development Control	Existence of land use or development planning process, including tourism % of an area subject to control (e.g., density, design)
Controlling Use Intensity	Total number of tourist arrivals (mean, monthly, peak periods) Number of tourists per square meter of the site (e.g., at beaches, attractions), per square kilometer of the destination, mean number/peak period average

Source: UNEP; WTO (2005). *Making tourism more sustainable: A guide for policy makers*. Paris, Madrid.

The five different approaches to measuring sustainable tourism summarized in this chapter make it clear that all measurement tools revolve around the four dimensions of sustainable development. In researching the effects of tourism activities on the ecological, economic, social, and cultural environment in the destinations visited, numerous different scales are used. In many cases, these are also adaptations of different scales that examine individual sub-areas and whose overarching evaluation attempts to answer new questions.

After elaborating on the basics of sustainable tourism development, it can be concluded that although there are several international efforts, the long-term success of the efforts is not yet apparent. Mihalic (2020) attests that tourism has been too slow to recognize the gaps between theory and practice regarding necessary measures and practical implementation. Kirstges (2020) shows in detail the unfortunate impacts tourism can still have at present. Only when the SDGs are not just committed to paper but also put into practice by authorities through concrete measures and lived and implemented by cities, municipalities and companies will change become visible. Global development is too dependent on individual initiatives, such as those triggered by environmental activist Greta Thunberg. Destinations are ultimately still shaped primarily by economic principles (Bramwell, Higham, Lane, & Miller, 2017), and their managers are still assessed based on overnight stays and guest arrivals. However, more interdisciplinary and longitudinal research is needed to better understand sustainable development's interrelationships (Bramwell et al., 2017). The following chapter shows the connections between the development of sustainable forms of tourism and the specifics of rural regions.

2.3.4. RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

> “Rural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling, and sightseeing. Rural tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics: (1) Low population density, (2) Landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry, and (3) Traditional social structure and lifestyle” (UNWTO, 2019b, p. 34).

Following this definition, specific aspects of rural tourism development can be derived and discussed. The following chapter provides an overview of common concepts, challenges, and opportunities.

Regardless of the industry, rural regions are often characterized by small and medium-sized enterprises (OECD, 2009). Regarding tourism, the small-scale supply structure is particularly evident in the Alpine region. In the Alps, about 90% (approx. 1.8 million) of the tourism businesses belong to small and medium-sized enterprises and are run as family businesses (Pichler, 2019; Zehrer, 2019). These SMEs face numerous challenges or specific success factors (Shaw, 2004). Tourism businesses also face these challenges, with industry-specific factors to consider. Rein & Schuler (2012, pp. 7–8) analyze rural areas according to strengths and weaknesses with regard to tourism (see Table 18). In general, however, it is undisputed that tourism can shape rural areas in the long term and ensure economic development (Zeiner & Harrer, 2012, p. 25). Whether this is always positive remains debatable.

Table 18: Characteristics of rural tourism areas

Strengths of rural areas	**Weaknesses of rural areas**
Tranquility, seclusion	Often poor accessibility of tourist source areas
Clean air, clean environment	Poor public transport connections, inadequate mobility services on site
Near-natural landscapes (scenery)	The low density of tourist attractions/offers
Preserved rural-village character (townscape)	Hardly any lousy weather offers
Opportunities for landscape-related recreational activities	The relatively low cultural offer
Less traffic, low accident risk for children	Sometimes insufficiently developed recreational trail networks (hiking, biking, horseback riding, water trails), signage
Variety of animals (agriculture, nature)	Low willingness to provide services
The mentality of the people	Often rejection towards strangers
Culture, customs, festivals	
Interesting locations for parties	

Source: Based on Rein, H., & Schuler, A. (2012). Tourismus im ländlichen Raum. In H. Rein & A. Schuler (Eds.), *Tourismus im ländlichen Raum* (4-10). Wiesbaden: Imprint Gabler Verlag.

Like tourism in general, rural tourism is subject to numerous social, economic, and environmental conditions, as Tröger-Weiß (2015) notes. As shown in Table 19, the customer is becoming a central focus of efforts in tourism development.

Table 19: Rural tourism-related developments

Social and socio-economic developments	Demographic change Climate change Macroeconomic development Globalization
Leisure and tourism-specific developments: Supply-side	Natural factors Socio-cultural factors General (basic) infrastructure Public recreational infrastructure Private leisure infrastructure Trends on the supply side Displacement due to market saturation Professionalization Diversification and specialization Buyer and demand market Shortening of product life cycles Quality improvement and independence of location
Leisure and tourism-specific developments: Demand -ide	Duration of stay day trips and Short trips; Length of vacation in general
Leisure and tourism-specific developments: New market segments	Health tourism; Mass-Adventure; High-Convenience; Mobile Information; Eco-Tourism; Accessibility; Culture as a trend; Theme routes etc.
Leisure and tourism-specific developments: New demand typologies	Creative Class; Generation-related issues; LOHAS; Golden Generation etc.

Source: Based on Troeger-Weiß, G. (2015). Freizeit und Tourismus in ländlichen Räumen. Trends - Entwicklungen - Steuerunsmöglichkeiten. In R. Freericks & Brinkmann Dieter (Eds.), *Handbuch Freizeitsoziologie* (pp. 233–254). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

However, to develop precisely positioned offers and thus ultimately create fundamental added values for potential guests that are decisive for bookings, it is necessary for tourism offers to be distinguishable. Ultimately, it is the customer's point of view that decides which tourist offer is preferred. However, it is crucial to awaken those associations in customers that most closely correspond to the respective preference (Grimm, Schmücker, & Ziesemer, 2012; Streifeneder, 2019).

For example, a significant point of discussion among tourism scholars is whether a tourism product can be classified under the definition of "rural tourism" or "tourism in rural areas. " In addition, there are various terms, such as a vacation in the countryside, vacation on the farm, village vacation, or even the topic of agritourism with its many different manifestations (Grimm, Schmücker, & Ziesemer, 2012). Chalets and huts on alpine pastures are the latest achievements of the tourism industry (Streifeneder, 2019, p. 70).

According to Streifeneder (2019), the classification of tourism in rural areas can be divided into "authentic agrotourism" and "rural tourism".

Table 20: Classification of tourism in rural areas

Tourism in rural areas	
Authentic agrotourism	**Rural tourism**
Producing farm Structures / activities correspond to conditions of an active farm Agricultural activities outweigh those of agrotourism Accommodation in buildings of the farm Interaction possible	Tourism on inactive farm Tourism on producing farm Farm offers tourist facilities Activities for specific tourist purposes, without connection to the agricultural way of life and work Visits to traditional, cultural, sporting or other events in rural areas

Source: Based on Streifeneder, T. (2019). Tourismus im ländlichen Raum. In H. Pechlaner (Ed.), *Destination und Lebensraum: Perspektiven touristischer Entwicklung* (pp. 61–71). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

Numerous other forms of rural tourism flank this more agriculture-oriented approach. Lane and Kastenholz (2015, pp. 1137–1138) name numerous other forms of tourism in the countryside. Besides the classic "farm tourism" or "agrotourism" they name "wellness tourism", "activity tourism", "adventure tourism", "sports tourism" (e.g., mountain biking, cycle tourism), "cultural and heritage tourism", and "food and wine tourism" as possible forms of tourism that can be consumed or offered in rural areas. Binder & Friedl (2018) describe viticulture as a potential driver for sustainable health tourism.

Lane and Kastenholz (2015) further argue that the following points are essential to the development of tourism offerings in rural areas:

- The supply and demand sides of rural experiences are equally significant and are influenced by local conditions.
- Personal contact is vital in rural areas.

- The interplay between physical activity in the natural environment and the interaction between people that accompanies it.
- Random cooperation between regional actors enables new products and attractions.
- Rural areas are also under pressure to develop innovations on an ongoing basis (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015, p. 1138).

Smeral (2013) sees similar measures as essential in the development of tourism offerings in rural areas: (1) investment in human capital, (2) promotion of year-round tourism through innovative product development, (3) targeted development and promotion of product-market combinations for international source markets, (4) consideration of older and older people in product development, (5) development of efficient destination management, (6) orientation of destinations towards competitiveness, (7) homogenization of core competencies with market messages, (8) promotion of digital marketing, (9) development of quality infrastructure and services concerning environmentally friendly use of resources.

The RURALQUAL Index can map the quality development mentioned by Smeral (2013).

Table 21: RURALQUAL dimensions

Professionalism	The rural lodging food is well presented and flavorsome. The rural lodging employees have a clean, neat appearance. The clients are treated cordially and affably. Personalized attention is provided to each client.
Reservation	Arrival schedules are established but are pretty flexible. Room reservation is easy to make. The reservations are confirmed in the most convenient way for the client; other information of interest is also forwarded (e.g., access map).
Tangibility	The rural lodging facilities are in good condition. The rural lodging facilities and rooms have comfortable furniture. The rural lodging has a pleasant temperature. The rural lodging facilities and rooms are clean.
Complementary Benefits	The decoration uses materials and objects of local tradition. Access to rural lodging is easy. The lodging offers easy parking.
Rural and Cultural Environment	The clients are integrated into the region's rural lifestyle. Typical gastronomy of the region is included in the menu. Access to cultural, recreational, and/or sports activities is facilitated. In the surrounding region, there are fairs, local festivities, and other forms of cultural interest.
Basic Benefits	The lodging employees are aware of their duties. The lodging architecture has a regional style. The lodging is in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The lodging is in a calm place.

Source: Correia Loureiro, S. M. (2012). Tourism in Rural Areas: Foundation, Quality and Experience. In M. Kasimoğlu (Ed.), *Visions for global tourism industry: Creating and sustaining competitive strategies*. Rijeka: InTech. https://doi.org/10.5772/37483

Similar to the SERVQUAL[12] Index, the RURALQUAL Index describes parameters that make the quality of rural tourism offers measurable and thus developable (Correia Loureiro, 2012, p. 449; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 2008).

In the future, questions concerning guests' mobility will be seen as a central challenge for tourism in rural areas. In addition to air traffic, the advancing climate change also brings the massive exhaust emissions of passenger car traffic into the spotlight of media attention (Gühnemann, Kurzweil, & Mailer, 2021; Neger, Prettenthaler, Gössling, & Damm, 2021). Arrivals generate around 56% of all tourism in Germany in rural regions (not including day arrivals). Of these, around 83% of guests travel by car (Pinnow & Kersten, 2020, p. 5). By increasing the use of public transport, enormous emission savings could be achieved here.

Pinnow and Kersten (2020) propose the following recommendations for action to make public transport more attractive:

- “Consider tourist mobility and communicate its benefits.
- Forge alliances and enter cooperative ventures.
- Create a balanced relationship between push and pull measures.
- Create multimodal, intuitive, and convenient mobility offers.
- Refining mobility for tourism and thinking ‘public transport-first’.
- Monitoring of tourist mobility and its demand.
- Create a legal basis for innovative concepts.
- Expand mobile data across the board.
- Convert vehicle fleets.
- Market environmentally-friendly mobility” (Pinnow & Kersten, 2020, pp. 36–39).

When rural areas are easily accessible, they can act as a kind of retreat for harried city dwellers looking to escape urban stress (Osti, 2019). However, this is only successful if the central aspects of sustainability are considered. In addition to (1) mobility, Baumgartner (2021) identifies the following other challenges for sustainable tourism development: (2) climate change, (3) sustainable food production, (4) overtourism, (5) working conditions and, (6) accessibility. In general, the development of rural tourism offers is closely linked to the development of sustainable tourism (Doug Ramsey, Jesse Abrams, Jill K Clark, & Nick J Evans, 2013; Dower, 2005; Marzuki & Khoo, 2012; Oliveira Fernandes & Olivetti, 2020; S. Kantar & K. Svržnjak, 2017). For example, Binder et al. (2020) show how a small village can implement an event with over 6,000 guests and produce only about 240 liters of residual waste.

[12] SERVQUAL: The established index examines guest preferences in the hospitality industry (Marcolin, Becker, Wild, Behr, & Schiavi, 2021).

2.3.5. DIGRESSION: THE CORONA PANDEMIC

At the time of writing, the actual economic and social impact of the Corona pandemic is primarily based on forecasts. Although initial tourism data from 2020 are already available, they are subject to ongoing fluctuations as they are supplemented daily. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to provide a brief overview and incorporate the events into the topics of this thesis.

As already mentioned, tourism has numerous intersections with economic, social, and ecological topics. Thus, the economic effects of tourism development are particularly salient, as the following figures illustrate. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, in 2019, tourism contributes about 10.3% to the global GDP (8.9 trillion USD). “One in four new jobs were created by tourism” from 2014 to 2019, which means 330 million employees worldwide (1% of global staff). In terms of money, 1.7 trillion USD visitor exports were created, and 948 USD of capital was invested in the tourism economy (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). Up to and including 2019, the global tourism industry rushed from record to record, growing to around 1.5 billion guest arrivals, representing an annual growth rate of 4%. France reported record arrivals, and only Brexit and the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook negatively impacted global expectations. In general, growth of 3 to 4% was expected (UNWTO, 2020b). However, then Covid-19 appeared.

In March - April 2020, when the first lockdowns were imposed in many countries, international tourist arrivals fell by 97%. This figure dropped to around minus 76% in the summer of 2020 and then leveled off to around minus 87% around the turn of the year. According to current forecasts (March 2021), travel could return to the 2019 level or around minus 20% by the end of 2021 (UNTWO, 2021).

It is undisputed that the Corona pandemic has had a devastating impact on international tourism and the associated economic and social challenges. However, the pandemic also provides an opportunity to reflect on existing tourism systems. The OECD sees a clear mandate for governments to push integrated and thus sustainable tourism systems and to strengthen multilateral cooperation in order to become more crisis-resistant in the future (OECD, 2020a, 2020b). As developments show at the time of writing, a destination must be socially and economically resilient to face future crises. A clear statement on the importance of this cannot yet be made, as many studies are currently investigating what constitutes a resilient destination, how the Corona pandemic has affected it, and what conclusions can be drawn from this. Carrodini (2019) describes resilience as proactive reactivity and probably does not yet anticipate the rapid increase in importance that resilience will have in destinations in the future. Innerhofer (2019) sees a deliberately planned and executed shrinking of tourism figures as a possible development strategy for destinations. Pechlaner et al. (2020) address the omnipresent issue of overtourism up to the pandemic outbreak and show the different facets of the issue, stretching from the operational level to destinations, governments, and global climate policy.

The Corona pandemic has briefly pushed the global climate crisis out of the media spotlight. Nevertheless, this crisis could also contribute to politicians and society turning to the more responsible use of resources. In particular, the dependence on global supply chains and the vulnerability of current economic systems are prompting many sections of the population to call for resilience and mindfulness (Herntrei, 2019; Volgger, 2020).

The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) has published a report bringing together many global organizations working on sustainability in all facets. The report “Lessons from COVID-19 for tourism in a changing climate” brings together key findings and demands on governments and tourism officials (see Table 22). These central demands and takeaways conclude this Corona – Excursus.

Table 22: Tourism-related key learnings of Covid-19

COVID-19 has shown us that drastically reducing air travel is not the silver-bullet answer to neutralizing the climate threat. A multi-faceted approach is required. Government policy, business operations, and consumer choices must focus on decarbonizing the travel industry through renewable energy, regenerative processes, sustainable development and building practices, climate-smart agriculture and circular economies, and reductions in waste.
Destinations must include residents in tourism decision-making. Communities must be decision-makers on how and when tourism returns for a return to be triumphant indeed. Prioritize following destination criterion A1 of the GSTC to establish destination stewardship councils. This model prioritizes public, private, and civil sector engagement, allowing for community buy-in and tourism planning and management continuity.
Destination management and marketing must be fully integrated. Identify the type of tourism markets that most greatly benefit the environment, people, and economy of someone's community, and communicate the right message to engage those markets.
Collaborate with and learn from other destinations that are managing crises well. Many destinations are making admirable advances in public health and climate-friendly policies and practices. Ask. Share. Collaborate.
Recognize that competitive advantage as a destination or company equates to a healthy environment, culture, and linkages with the local community. Follow the Guiding Principles established by the Future of Tourism Coalition.
Consumers must demand change at scale and vote with their dollars. An awakening has occurred, and travel can provide an educational experience to help travelers bring lessons home. Consumers will protect what they love, and destinations and businesses must pick up the mantle of creating deep connections with visitors that will benefit all involved.

Source: Based on CREST (2020). *The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends & Statistics 2020*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://www.responsibletravel.org/docs/CaseforResponsibleTravel_2020_Web.pdf

2.3.6. SUMMARY: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

Tourism is characterized by the tension between public legal structures and tasks and private-sector expectations or the heterogeneous requirements of stakeholders and members. However, tourism also acts as an interface to peripheral economic sectors, such as agriculture (e.g., cuisine, refinement, production) or handicrafts (e.g., furnishings, infrastructure, products, souvenirs) or the local population. It influences the quality of life, the labor market and creates and uses infrastructure (e.g., lifts, via ferrata, thermal spas, public transport) (Freyer, 2015). From this perspective, destinations have contact points with regional development organizations, interest groups, and politics (Bieger & Beritelli, 2013; Chilla et al., 2016; Freyer, 2015; Pechlaner, 2019a).

The already diverse tasks of tourism managers are increasingly complemented by challenges concerning the quality of life of the local population and the moderate use of resources (Pröbstl-Haider, Lund-Durlacher, Olefs, & Prettenthaler, 2020; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012). Regarding the recognition of necessary measures for sustainable tourism development, Mihalic (2020) attests that tourism has been too slow to recognize the gaps between theory and practice. Bramwell et al. (2017) are convinced that more interdisciplinary and longitudinal studies are needed to understand better the links between tourism growth and its impact on the environment and society. Although many of the effects of excessive tourism growth are already apparent, most destinations are still driven primarily by economic considerations.

However, the pursuit of sustainability also has limitations, as Chilla et al. (2016) conclude that a region can never achieve the status of absolute sustainability. The demands and needs of stakeholders and the population strata involved vary too much. The constantly increasing knowledge about technologies and climate protection also leads to a constantly changing expectation of all stakeholders. Siegrist (2012) sees the following conditions as indispensable for a sustainable design of (rural) regions as a prerequisite for a comprehensive tourism policy:

- “Implemented assessment tools and criteria of sustainability in tourism regions as a basis for future regional promotion.
- Promotion models at the cantonal, regional, state, and federal levels that specifically promote sustainable tourism.
- Institutionalized forms of communication between political levels that work together on sustainability strategies.
- Marketing strategies that highlight existing sustainable approaches.
- The comprehensive integration of the topic of sustainability in tourism education and training, or the promotion of complementary approaches” (Siegrist, 2012, p. 341).

The chapter concludes with a quote that describes the multiple potentials, challenges, and interdisciplinary linkages of sustainable rural tourism developments.

> “[S]ustainability in the rural tourism sector is understood and applied as a holistic concept without being biased to environmental, economic, and social aspects. In the field of rural

tourism, it is important to pay attention to interactions in all aspects of the environment, economy, and society, and to analyze them overall" (An & Alarcón, 2020, p. 12).

2.4. QUALITY OF LIFE IN TOURISM

After the previous chapters have created an extensive knowledge base regarding an integrated tourism development of rural regions, a detailed elaboration of the topic "quality of life (QOL)" is now required - the fourth pillar of this thesis. At the center of the investigation are the certain influencing factors on quality of life in tourist regions. This chapter first attempts to provide a broad explanatory approach regarding the diverse factors influencing the quality of life on population strata. The second part of the chapter takes a comprehensive look at the tourism context and its impact on the local population's quality of life in tourism regions. Subsequently, the specific working environments of employees in tourism are examined, and approaches to solutions are developed about specific requirement patterns. Finally, the elements of consideration resulting from the context are shown and finally analyzed based on concrete, practical examples.

2.4.1. QUALITY OF LIFE

In general, one must point out that there are numerous approaches to explain the phenomenon of quality of life. This chapter provides an overview of central concepts and measurements in QOL research but does not attempt to cover the entire range of models in this field. Instead, the chapter focuses on QOL concepts that have proven themselves in the tourism context and whose strength is an investigation of tourism conditions in terms of the research question of the present thesis.

Following the WHO definitions of both health and quality of life, it is evident that QOL research needs a multidimensional approach. According to the World Health Organization, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization, 2020, p. 1). The definition of quality of life is even broader. It is seen "… as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and concerning their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns" (WHO, 1998).

Before QOL aspects are discussed in relation to tourism impacts, it is vital to focus on the characteristics of QOL itself. Understanding the influencing factors on someone's quality of life is essential to gain more profound knowledge about its impacts and interrelations. As the WHO definition of quality of life mentioned at the beginning of this chapter shows, this approach can be seen as a synthesis of diverse research efforts. Moreover, Andereck and Nyaupane (2011, p. 248) note that there are over 100 definitions of the term “quality of life”. To analyze the complex interrelationships of the factors influencing the quality of life, it is advisable to divide the concept or the influencing factors into different dimensions, as shown in the following table.

Table 23: Domains for quality of life, defined by WHOQOL

Physical	Psychological	Level of independence	Social relationships	Environment	Spirituality
Pain Energy Sexual activity Rest Sensory functions	Thinking Learning Self-esteem Positive/ negative feelings	Mobility Daily living Communication Work Dependence on substances	Personal Social support Own ability to provide or support	Freedom, Security Work satisfaction Home, Leisure Financial resources Health Learning Physical environment	*Note: no further criteria defined*

Source: Based on Naude-Potgieter, R.-A., & Kruger, S. (2018). The bet is on: A case study of the Naudé-Potgieter model of casino employees's happiness in the workplace. In M. Uysal, M. J. Sirgy, & S. Kruger (Eds.), *Managing quality of life in tourism and hospitality* (pp. 138–151). Wallingford, Boston, MA: CABI.

From the above table, it can be deduced that quality of life cannot be equated with the term “health”, but requires a much broader approach (Irtelli & Durbano, 2020, p. 2). Depending on the perspective and research focus, it becomes clear why researching quality of life issues is a multifaceted endeavor. Each of the dimensions mentioned by the WHO can be studied with great care and offers numerous different questions. Combining different elements allows for an unmanageable number of approaches to explain individuals' quality of life phenomena or entire societies. Schalock et al. (2008, p. 182) developed an action-oriented approach to classify and further investigate the quality of life of population strata:

Table 24: Framework of dimensions of quality of life

Factor	Domain	Exemplary indicators
Independence	Personal development	Education status, personal skills, adaptive behavior
	Self-determination	Choices/decisions, autonomy, personal control, personal goals
Social participation	Interpersonal relations	Social networks, friendships, social activities, interactions, relationships
	Social inclusion	Community integration/participation, community roles, support
	Rights	Human (respect, dignity, equality)
		Legal (legal access, due process)
Well-being	Emotional well-being	Safety & security, positive experiences, contentment, self-concept, lack of stress
	Physical well-being	Health & nutrition status, recreation, leisure
	Material well-being	Financial status, employment status, housing status, possessions

Source: Schalock, R. L., Bonham, G. S., & Verdugo, M. A. (2008). The conceptualization and measurement of quality of life: Implications for program planning and evaluation in the field of intellectual disabilities. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *31*(2), 181–190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2008.02.001

In principle, people's quality of life can be researched based on objectifiable data and subjectively collected attitudes. Naturally, this results in disadvantages either on the one hand (objective data) or on the other hand (subjective data). By combining data from measurements or observations with information obtained from personal interviews or surveys, the above disadvantages can be largely circumvented (Schalock et al., 2008, p. 183).

Vennhoven (2012) shows another approach of classifying factors influencing the quality of life and demonstrates the concept of the "Four qualities of life".

Table 25: Four qualities of life

	Outer qualities	*Inner qualities*
Life chances	Livability of environment	Life ability of the person
Life results	Utility of life	Satisfaction with life

Source: Veenhoven, R. (2012). Happiness, also known as "Life Satisfaction" and "Subjective Well-Being". In K. C. Land, A. C. Michalos, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Indicators and Quality of Life Research* (pp. 63–78). Dordrecht: Springer.

Regarding the above table, Vennhoven points out that quality of life depends on "opportunities for a good life and the good life itself". Whereby the so-called "outer qualities" can be equated with the quality of the environment, and the "inner quality" is connected with the personal attitude (Veenhoven, 2012, p. 63).

Magnini, Ford & LaTour (2012, p. 52) conclude that there are three basic ways of looking at the quality of life: (1) when our lives conform to the moral code of accepted systems such as religion or philosophy, (2) when people use their limited resources to satisfy their preferred desires, and (3) when a person perceives his or her own life as a good life.

This qualitative approach is contrasted with the collection of standardized data over a certain period. These so-called social indicators include key figures such as "unemployment rates, crime rates, estimates of life expectancy, health status indices, school enrollment rates, average achievement scores, election voting rates" (Kenneth, Michalos, & Sirgy, 2012, p. 1). However, not only objectively measurable data play an essential role. The measurement of subjective data concerning the personally experienced quality of life is also included in the research of social indicators (Piedmont & Friedmann, 2012, p. 313). It is precisely the collection of these "well-being"-related data that has received considerable scientific attention in recent decades (Noll, 2004, p. 7).

After this first attempt to describe the factors influencing the quality of life, it is now appropriate to examine how to measure the QOL of residents. According to Irtelli & Durbano (2020, p. 6), research instruments investigating quality of life should consist of the following dimensions:

(1) physical, (2) psychological, (3) level of independence, (4) social relationships, and (5) environmental dimension.

Over the past decades, numerous indicators are reliable in terms of what they say about the quality of life research.

WHOQOL-100 / WHOQOL-BREF / WHO-5

> “The instrument is organized into six broad domains of quality of life. These are: physical domain; psychological domain; levels of independence; social relationships; environment; and spiritual domain. Within each domain, a series of sub-domains (facets) of quality of life summarize that particular domain of quality of life” (WHO, 1998).

WHOQOL-100 consists of 100 items and is used for profound analyses of life circumstances, whereas WHOQOL-BREF consists of 26 items (Angermeyer, Kilian, & Matschinger, 2000). However, both instruments show reliable evidence, to gain more profound knowledge about social aspects of QOL WHQOL-100 should be the choice (O'Carroll, Smith, Couston, Cossar, & Hayes, 2000). WHO-5 is an even shorter questionnaire, primarily aimed at the rapid survey of mental well-being (Topp, Østergaard, Søndergaard, & Bech, 2015).

UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI is based on the premise that it takes more than just economic indicators to measure the prosperity of a country's population and make it internationally comparable. As shown in the following figure, the HDI is based on three dimensions: (1) health dimension (e.g., life expectancy), (2) education dimension (e.g., education index), and (3) standard of living dimension (e.g., GNI[13]) (UNDP, 2020).

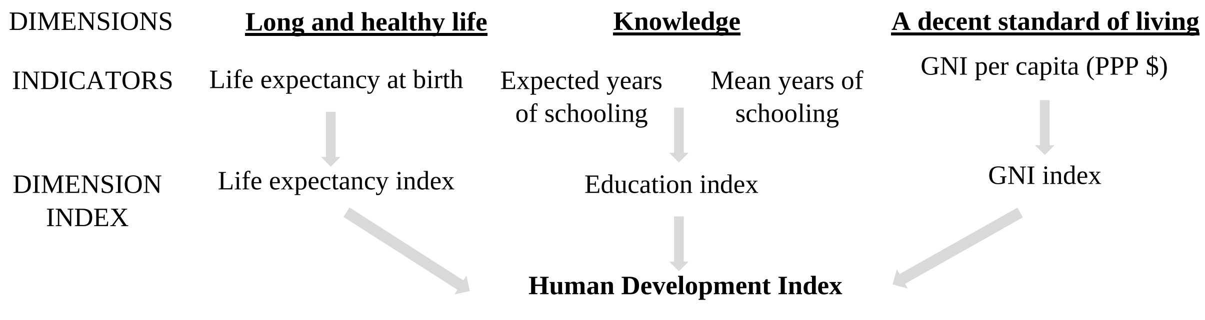

Figure 16: UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)

UNDP (2020). *Human Development Index (HDI)*. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi

[13] GNI: Gross National Income

The HDI is characterized by the necessary level of complexity and detail to provide a profound assessment of the quality of life of a population (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012, pp. 493–494).

SF 36 / SF 12 Short Form Health Survey

According to Ware & Sherbourne (1992), a 36-item short-form (SF-36) was constructed to survey health status in the Medical Outcomes Study. The SF-36 was designed for clinical practice and research, health policy evaluations, and general population surveys. The SF-36 includes one multi-item scale that assesses eight health concepts: 1) "limitations in physical activities because of health problems; 2) limitations in social activities because of physical or emotional problems; 3) limitations in usual role activities because of physical health problems; 4) bodily pain; 5) general mental health (psychological distress and well-being); 6) limitations in usual role activities because of emotional problems; 7) vitality (energy and fatigue); and 8) general health perceptions" (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992). The SF-12 is a shorter version of the SF-36, which can provide results similar to those of the SF-36, although there are some limitations to be considered (Jenkinson et al., 1997).

In addition, there are a large number of setting-related questionnaires, which are based on specific clinical pictures, for example (Kohlmann, 2013; Schalock et al., 2008; Thieme, 2021; Weiling, 2015), target specific groups of the population (Borrmann, Hofer, Rehb, Pechstädt, & Wulz, 2018; Marans & Stimson, 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Zobeltitz, 2016) or survey the quality of life of the population in a particular region or neighborhood (Amt der Steirischen Landesregierung, 2019; Bonaiuto, Fornara, Ariccio, Ganucci Cancellieri, & Rahimi, 2015; Dębek & Janda-Dębek, 2015; Holmes, Galik, & Resnick, 2019). Thus, in the research of the relationships between the development of tourist regions, numerous survey instruments have also been developed in recent decades.

2.4.2. QUALITY OF LIFE OF RESIDENTS IN DESTINATIONS

In principle, researchers in the field try to investigate objectifiable parameters or subjectively experienced influencing variables on the quality of life. Thus, economic and demographic data from the fields of economy, leisure, environment, social affairs, and health services serve as a basis for describing objective influencing factors. Psychological variables preferably describe the individually experienced quality of personal life. These include, for example, general life satisfaction or the perceived influence of defined parameters on one's quality of life or that of one's own family (Uysal et al., 2016, p. 245). This generally applicable approach has also become established for researching QOL-specific issues in tourism. Thus, Uysal et al. (2016) state that the factors influencing the quality of life in tourism can be divided into three significant areas of (1) economic influence, (2) socio-cultural influence, and (3) physical, environmental influence. The following table provides an overview with examples:

Table 26: Examples of impacts of tourism

Economic Impacts of Tourism	*Process indicators* tax revenues; job opportunities; additional incomes; public spending, foreign exchange earnings; tax base for local governments based on incomes *Outcome Indicators* changes in wages; household incomes; degree of unemployment; the number of unskilled workers; level of literacy rates; consumer cost of living indices; prices of goods and services; cost of land and housing; property taxes; the number of retail stores
Socio-cultural Impacts of Tourism	Community services; the number of parks, recreation, and cultural facilities; cultural activities; entertainment, historical, and cultural exhibits, cultural exchange, events, and identity; crime, degradation of morality, gambling, and crowding of public facilities and resources
Environmental Impacts	Emissions from vehicles and airplanes; water pollution such as wastewater discharge; wildlife destruction as a result of hunting; plant destruction; and deforestation; traffic, pedestrian congestion; overcrowding; nr. of parks and recreation facilities

Source: Based on Uysal, M., Woo, E., & Singal, M. (2012). The Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) and Its Effect on the Quality-of-Life (QOL) of Destination Community. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 423–443). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

As the above table shows, there are various parameters of how tourism can impact a community. The fact is that there can be positive and negative impacts and developments in most areas.

The development of rural regions through tourism is often understood as a panacea (Chilla et al., 2016). In this context, there are controversial discussions. For example, tourism efforts can create jobs and prosperity, but only if this happens under favorable conditions for all parties involved. Especially regarding the economic importance of tourism, it is necessary to look at the development of a destination. There must be an obvious and transparent balance between the costs of tourism development and the benefits to a region (Mayer & Vogt, 2016). It is essential to take into account all economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts (Peters, Chan, & Legerer, 2018). This is the only way to make a reliable statement about the influence of the measures on the population's quality of life (Matias, Nijkamp, & Romão, 2016). The following chapters show how the impact of measures on the population's quality of life can be measured.

Speaking about the quality of life in tourism, Uysal et al. (2018) constitute that one can distinguish between three broad research areas. First, both the general influence of tourism itself and in detail health-related programs on tourists' well-being status are examined. Approaches in the second area investigate the health and well-being status of employees working in tourism. Finally, the impact of tourism on destinations and those living in it is explored. In addition, in QOL research, one should distinguish between those residents who are directly involved and those who are not involved in tourism (Woo, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2018). Koščak et al. (2021) introduce another point of view by investigating children's life worlds in tourist destinations and show that children have their own view of tourist events.

Andereck & Nyaupane (2011, p. 249) state that the study of quality of life can be reduced to eight dimensions: (1) emotional and psychological well-being, (2) interpersonal and social relationships, (3) material well-being, (4) personal development, (5) physical well-being, (6) self-determination, (7) social integration, and (8) personal rights.

It is undisputed that responsible tourism development can only be achieved with the involvement of the various stakeholders in a region. Uysal, Sirgy, and Kruger (2018, p. 159) suggest an approach that is not exclusively based on economic criteria. The focus should be on impacts and potentials that are made possible by tourism in the first place. In the following section, the effects of tourism activity on the quality of life of the population of a region are examined.

2.4.2.1. Tourism-related impacts on quality of life

As already mentioned, quality of life research is mainly oriented towards subjective or objectifiable parameters. Uysal, Perdue & Sirgy (2012) divide the objective parameters into outcome and process-oriented ones to enable a differentiated approach (see Table 27). Accordingly, the authors define outcome indicators as all factors that deal with non-tourism-specific influences. They distinguish between economic, social, health-related, and environmental parameters (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012).

Table 27: Quality of life influencing indicators

Objective indicators		**Subjective indicators**
Outcome orientation (non-tourism-related)	*Process orientation (tourism-related)*	
Economic effects	Number of jobs created	Economic domains
Social effects	Number of sales created	Consumer domains
Health effects	Tax revenues generated	Social domains
Environmental effects	Imbalanced finances	Environmental domains
	Attractions developed	Health domains
	Accessibility of open spaces	

Source: Own table based on Uysal, M., Perdue, R. R., & Sirgy, M. J. (Eds.) (2012). *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities*. Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

It should be noted that the social and environmental factors are directly related to and affect the quality of life of the population (Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012). The following table provides information on the individual sub-areas of the outcome-oriented indicators:

Table 28: Objective outcome indicators influencing the quality of life

Economic effects	Social effects	Health effects	Environmental effects
Wage	Educational attainment	Infant mortality rates	Land pollution
Household income	Crime rate	Prevalence of certain diseases like tuberculosis, polio, hepatitis	Air pollution
Unemployment	Public transportation systems	Numbers of persons with venereal diseases	Water pollution
Low skilled workers	Number of recreational parks and programs	Life expectancy	Crowdedness
Literacy rates	Housing quality	Healthcare infrastructure	Traffic jams
Living costs	Teen pregnancies		
Prices of consumer goods	Police services		
Cost of land and housing	Fire protection		
Property taxes	Roads		
Number of retail stores			

Source: Own table based on Uysal, M., Perdue, R. R., & Sirgy, M. J. (Eds.) (2012). *International handbooks of quality-of-life*. *Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities*. Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

Process indicators are those objectifiable factors that are directly influenced by tourism activities. These include, for example, the (1) number of jobs created, (2) overnight stays and arrivals sold, (3) tax revenues generated, the (4) tourism import-export balance, (5) the range and quality of excursion destinations and tourism businesses in a region, and the (6) accessibility of local recreation areas (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012).

Uysal et al. (2012) present another observation. The approach of classifying objective and subjective factors influencing residents' quality of life within a community gives the impression that these subjective factors and their importance can be separated from the objective factors. But, this is not so. Of course, subjective perceptions can be categorized into different sub-areas (e.g., economic, social, health-oriented) and then measured and analyzed. However, the cross-connections between the areas are complex and influence each other or are additionally counteracted by non-tourism-specific conditions. Thus, the perception of tourism-related impacts on individual domains of life can influence generally perceived life satisfaction (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012).

In recent decades, numerous studies have been conducted on the impact of tourism activities on the population's quality of life. It has been shown that the only reliable link between demographic parameters and attitudes towards tourism activities of people in a region is that of the direct economic connection of people who directly or indirectly benefit economically from tourism activities (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011, p. 249; Uysal, Sirgy, & Perdue, 2012, p. 671).

Yu, Cole & Chacellor (2013) summarize that the areas of tourism development that are perceived as positive create jobs and/or additional infrastructure (e.g., recreational facilities or attractions), or develop new events or nightlife opportunities. Precisely the opposite is the case with the aspects of increasing crime, the rising cost of living, higher traffic volume, overcrowded alleys and pubs or attractions, whose offers are oriented exclusively to tourists. “The findings to date suggest that residents who are more engaged with tourism and tourists are more positively inclined toward tourism and express more positive attitudes” (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005, p. 1062).

The basic framework for the findings mentioned above, the Social Exchange Theory, should be mentioned. It provides a set of indicators that allows researchers to balance the benefits and costs of a particular interaction situation (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, p. 965). In simple terms, the aim is to determine the extent to which stakeholders affected by a tourism measure benefit from it or suffer as a result (Nunkoo, 2016; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012).

A similar approach is taken by the “social or resident capital” model. Moscardo (2012) summarizes that QOL, in general, is based on the following four dimensions of influence and depends on the extent to which people can meet their needs within these areas:

- “Physiological needs which include subsistence, good health and physical protection from harm
- Security refers to a stable place to live and work
- Belongingness or the ability to make and maintain social relationships and opportunities to engage in social, cultural, and political activities
- Self-esteem based on knowledge and confidence, and the ability and freedom to make choices” (Moscardo, 2012, p. 404)

In order to satisfy these needs, access to a specific form of capital is required (Vemuri & Costanza, 2006). Moscardo (2012, p. 405) states the following forms of capital that residents can draw on to meet their needs: (1) financial, (2) built, (3) natural, (4) human, (5) political, (6) cultural and (7) social.

Applied to a tourist region, tourism can mean the following positive or negative impact on the existing “capital” of the population:

Table 29: Tourism-related impact on resident capital

Capital	Positive tourism impacts or contributions	Negative tourism impacts or depletions
Financial	Creation of jobs, business opportunities, and through this income for destination residents	Increases in the costs of living for destination residents
Built	Building of transport infrastructure to support tourism which provides more significant opportunities for other economic sectors in the destination	Damage to transport infrastructure because of increased usage for tourism
Natural	Resources and support are provided for the conservation and restoration of natural environments that serve as tourist attractions	Tourist populations increase resource use (e.g., energy and water) and waste

Human	Provision of training and education for residents working in tourism	Tourists bring diseases with them into destinations creating health problems for residents
Political	Tourism interest in ethnic minorities or marginalized indigenous populations at destinations can support greater political power for these groups	Transnational tour operators who can control the flow of tourists to a destination can be given political power and advantage by elected representatives
Social	Tourists can support traditional festivals and events that bring destination residents together and strengthen social connections	Controversial tourism developments can create social conflict that breaks down social connections
Cultural	Incentives from the interest of tourists for the preservation of cultural traditions	Destruction of built cultural heritage to make way for tourism facilities

Source: Moscardo, G. (2012). Building Social Capital to Enhance the Quality-of-Life of Destination Residents. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 403–423). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

The above diagram shows that it is essential to determine what concrete influence tourism has in the respective areas in a specific region. Only in this way can sustainable decisions be made in regions' tourism development in the long term.

Another interesting model in evaluating the impacts of tourism is the so-called “carrying capacity”. This concept was initially developed to evaluate biological relations between species in their habitat.

> “Carrying capacity can be defined as a species’ average population size in a particular habitat. The species population size is limited by environmental factors like adequate food, shelter, water, and mates. If these needs are not met, the population will decrease until the resource rebounds” (National Geographic, n.d.).

Kerstecker & Bricker (2012, p. 477) mentioned that tourism research has adopted the “carrying capacity” model and added several aspects of community development. The so-called SIA (social impact assessment) analyses data from different aspects of social and community parameters to “identify who or what is being (maybe) affected by tourism development”. So, the interrelations between the model of carrying capacity and the sustainable development of destinations are closely given and limited, especially when measuring tourism outcomes, as sustainability always has a global component (Saarinen, 2006). When tourists exceed the local carrying capacity, one could speak of overtourism (Tokarchuk, Gabriele, & Maurer, 2020). To make tourism developments measurable, the next chapter focuses on instruments and scales.

2.4.2.1. Measuring quality of life of residents

After discussing factors influencing the quality of life of residents of a tourism region in the previous chapter, it is now necessary to present research correlations and their measurement variables. As a starting point, the model of Uysal, Sirgy & Perdue (2012, p. 675) can be used, which shows how variables influencing the QOL of a population can be measured.

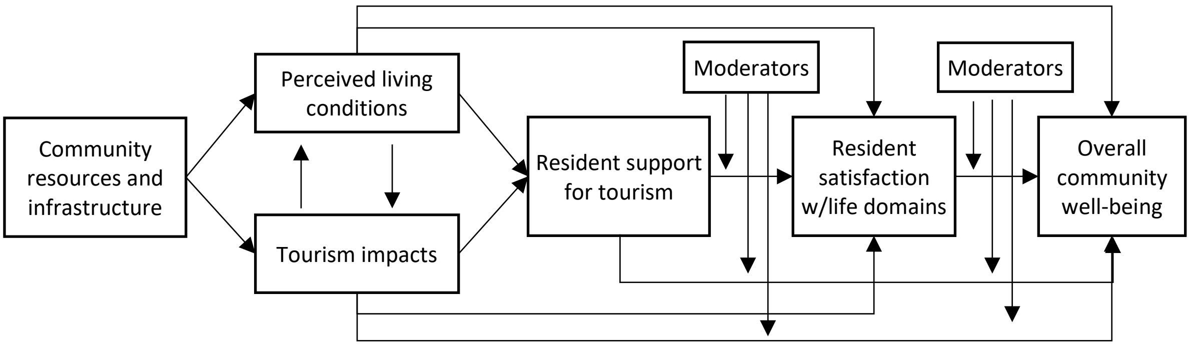

Figure 17: Integrated model of tourism-related research on QOL of residents

Source: Uysal, M., Sirgy, M. J., & Perdue, R. R. (2012). The missing links and future research directions. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 669–684). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

The model explains relations between community capital, tourism impact, perceived living conditions, and community well-being impacts. It can be seen that examining the tourism-related influencing factors on communities' or someone's QOL is highly complex. The diverse influence areas of the so-called moderators, such as stakeholders or residents in participatory processes, complicate the situation even more (Uysal, Sirgy, & Perdue, 2012; Weiermeier & Peters, 2012). From these contexts, it can be concluded that it takes various measures and research to get a reasonably general sense of residents' QOL.

It has been shown that without integrating sustainability-oriented elements into the destination development process, it is not possible to ensure a positive impact on the quality of life of the population and all those involved in the creation of offers and service provision (Băndoi et al., 2020; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012, p. 439). At least from the perspective of tourism research, the management of a destination plays a crucial role in influencing the population's living conditions. It is stated that if a specific area becomes a tourism destination, the QOL of people is influenced in different ways (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013; Uysal et al., 2016). Following Butler's (2004) Tourism Area Life Cycle, it can be generalized that the further a destination moves towards the "STAGNATION" and "DECLINE" phases, the more the perception of tourism is perceived to harm personal QOL (Uysal et al., 2016; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012). Constantly maintaining the competitiveness of destinations is a significant challenge for all stakeholders. Ultimately, a long-term, prosperous tourism region can only survive if it understands how the tourism measures implemented to affect the QOL of the population (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012, pp. 493–494).

> "In conclusion, when residents perceive the positive economic, social, and cultural impact of tourism, satisfaction with related life domains (sense of material, community, and emotional well-being) increases too. However, when residents perceive the negative

> environmental impact of tourism, their sense of health and safety decreases as a result" (Kim et al., 2013, p. 537).

The different data collection models using objectifiable data (social indicators) on the one hand and subjective scales of perception on the other have already been illustrated. Different survey instruments will now be introduced as examples.

To establish a relationship between tourism, economic, and QOL development of the population of a destination, Ridderstaat, Croes & Nijkamp (2016, pp. 4–5) work with exclusively objective data. For their analyses, they developed a model using (1) tourism receipts for analyzing tourism development (TD), (2) the GDP, and (3) the (HD) Human Development Index (see p. 67). In summary, the authors were able to show the following correlations:

- "Tourism Development and QOL are interrelated
- Tourism Development impacts QOL, but
- QOL could also affect future Tourism Development
- The bilateral effects between Tourism Development and QOL are not linear in time
- Economic growth is a mediating variable in the two-way relationship between Tourism Development and QOL" (Ridderstaat et al., 2016, p. 13).

Through their analysis, Ridderstaat, Croes & Nijkamp (2016, p. 13) were able to show that the influence on the QOL of the population is multi-layered and that it is of particular importance to understand the interrelationships within a destination. Therefore, they recommend an in-depth analysis using subjective survey methods to map the population's emotions in various indicators.

Such a model to measure the quality of life of residents and their satisfaction with life circumstances concerning tourism development is the so-called "Tourism-related Community Quality of Life" (TCQOL) approach (Yu et al., 2013). This model, developed by the BEST education network, is based on several previous research models, including the TQOL model by Andereck & Jurowski (2006) and the "Community Quality of Life Model" by Sirgy & Cornwell (2001).

The indicators used for the TCQOL model are based on the further development of different scales by various authors who have dedicated themselves to the topic of quality of life of residents in destinations: Andereck, & Jurowski, 2006; Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010; Grzeskowiak et al., 2003; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Perdue et al., 1990; Sharlock, 1996; Sirgy & Cornwell, 2001; Sirgy et al., 2000 (Yu et al., 2013, p. 329). The TCQOL model works with the following set of indicators:

Table 30: Tourism-related community quality of life (TCQOL) indicators

Community conditions	**Community services**
Job opportunities	Formal education
Property values	Medical availability and services
Prices for goods and services	Fire protection services
Cost of living	Police protection services
Infrastructure (roads, bridges, utilities)	Garbage collection services
Traffic conditions	Public transportation services
Crime level	Banking services
Personal safety	Shopping facilities and services
Entertainment opportunities	Restaurant facilities and services
Recreation opportunities	Recreational facilities and services
Clean air and water	Family supporting services
Conditions of cultural/historical sites	Overall community services
Conditions of wildlife habitats	
Conditions of natural areas	
Overall appearance in the community	
Overall community livability	
Overall community conditions	

Source: Based on Yu, C.-P. S., Cole, S. T., & Chacellor, C. (2013). *Assessing Community Quality of Life in the Context of Tourism Development: Tourism-related Community Quality of Life (TCQOL) Approach*. Kuala Lumpur.

Based on the indicators presented above, TCQOL calculates the product of the surveyed satisfaction and importance scores by the following equation: "$QOL\ score = (satisfaction * importance)^{1/2}$" The indicator sets of community conditions and community services were examined concerning their satisfaction and importance values and the perceived influence of tourism activities on these parameters. In other words, did tourism activities improve or worsen an indicator? These tourism effects are added to the TCQOL as follows: "$TCQOL = \mathrm{QOL} * (\text{tourism effect})$" (Yu et al., 2013, p. 319). If the collected mean values are inserted into a table and the TCQOL score is calculated, a ranking of the most critical indicators for the development of a specific region can be derived.

Yu, Cole & Chacellor (Yu et al., 2013, p. 324) recommend that measurement through the TCQOL model should be ongoing to provide a timeline and draw attention to certain tourism activities. Furthermore, they recommend comparing research results with other regions, obtaining stakeholders' opinions, and adding them to the results.

The great impact of responsible or sustainable tourism on the quality of life of the population has already been pointed out in detail. Mathew & Sreejesh (2017, p. 88) substantiate this correlation and prove a direct and positive correlation between the efforts in responsible tourism, the perception of sustainable efforts in a destination, and the perceived quality of life in a region. They have developed a three-part measurement tool that evaluates the communities' (1) assessment of local responsible tourism development, (2) assessment of sustainable development efforts in a destination, and (3) perceived quality of life in the region. The following table presents the research constructs:

Table 31: Mathew & Sreejesh measuring constructs

Constructs	**Dimensions**	**Sources**
Host communities' perception of responsible tourism	Economic responsibility Social responsibility Cultural responsibility Environmental responsibility	Goodwin & Venu, 2008
Perceived destination sustainability due to tourism	Economic sustainability Social sustainability Cultural sustainability Environmental sustainability	UNEP & WTO, 2005
Quality of life due to tourism development	Economic well-being Community well-being Emotional well-being Health and safety well-being	Andrews & Withey, 1976; Cicerchia, 1996; Cummins, 1996; Sirgy, 2001

Mathew, P. V., & Sreejesh, S. (2017). Impact of responsible tourism on destination sustainability and quality of life of community in tourism destinations. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 31*, 83–89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2016.10.001

Like Mathew & Sreejesh (2017), numerous authors have investigated impacts of tourism on QOL of residents in previous studies: Land, Michalos, & Sirgy, 2012; Seyfi & Rasoolimannesh, 2020; Sharpley, 2014; Uysal et al., 2016; Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012. By reviewing some of these studies, Uysal et al. (2016, p. 257) conclude that it is not enough to analyze objective and subjective data and draw some conclusions out of it. This is because there can be regions with objectively insufficient data in which, however, residents may well have a high level of life satisfaction. Similarly, there are chronically unhappy people in prosperous economies. Thus, one must closely understand the multi-layered connections between objective data and subjective perceptions of quality of life.

What seems sure is the connection between measures taken or not taken within the framework of sustainable tourism development and the resulting life satisfaction of the population (Uysal et al., 2016, p. 257). Relatively under-researched are connections of QOL research with the working conditions of employees in the tourism industry (Kara, Uysal, Sirgy, & Lee, 2013). For this reason, the following chapter is dedicated to topics of working in tourism.

2.4.3. QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WORKING IN TOURISM

It is undisputed that a thesis on the quality of life of people in destinations must also consider aspects of employees' quality of life in tourism (Binder, Faix, & Miller, 2016). Different theoretical derivations examine the relationships between motivating and demotivating factors of work (Baumgartner, C., & Udris, I., 2006; Ferreira, 2009; Herzberg, 1987; Süß & Haarhaus, 2013). Gardini (2014) shows that tourism is facing specific challenges: (1) structure, (2) low attractiveness, (3) structured fluctuation, (4) high staff costs share, and (5) chronic staff shortage. These challenges are also based on tourism exhibits' special sociological characteristics (Heuwinkel, 2019; Kusluvan et al., 2010; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In addition, there are the influences of changing expectations of guests and generations (Albert et al., 2019; Binder & Miller, 2021; Rudolph, Rauvola, & Zacher, 2018). There is a need for a comprehensive image correction of work in tourism, which can only be achieved through consistent employer branding (Baum, 2015; Immerschitt & Stumpf, 2014; Kirchhoff-Feil & Pinnow, 2020; Myrden & Kelloway, 2015) and a recognition of the needs of people working in tourism (Bednarska, 2013; Naude-Potgieter & Kruger, 2018). Since the topic of work-life quality does not specifically focus on answering the research question in this paper, we will refrain from an in-depth analysis.

2.4.4. EXAMPLES OF QUALITY OF LIFE PROMOTING CONSTRUCTS

The following chapter provides examples of regions and organizational structures that have set themselves the explicit goal of improving residents' quality of life. Since an approach of this kind can only ever be an outline and can never claim to be complete, the following listing follows the premise of diversity and shows different approaches and forms of cooperation. It is meant to provide background for the development of a model for how to develop a health and well-being destination at the meta-level.

Healthy Regionsplus, Bavaria, Germany: “The primary objective of the “Healthy Regionsplus” is to improve the population's health status, especially regarding health equity, and increase health-related quality of life. As a professionally competent network of regional health care actors, the “Healthy Regionsplus” strives to optimize regional preventive health care, health care provision, and care in Bavaria. Consisting of a health forum with management and control tasks, topic-related working groups, and a coordinating office, the “Healthy Regionsplus” devote themselves primarily to the fields of action of health promotion and prevention, health care, and nursing” (Geuter & Bödeker, 2020).

European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA): “The European Innovation Partnership in Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA) is an initiative launched by the European Commission to foster innovation and digital transformation in the field of active and healthy aging. A European Innovation Partnership (an EIP) concept is of a partnership that can help strengthen EU research and innovation. A partnership brings together all the relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels across different policy areas to handle a specific societal challenge and involve all the innovation chain levels. The EIP on AHA was the first EIP created in 2011. It focuses on the active and healthy aging of the people of Europe" (European Commission, 2021).

Healthy Cities: "A healthy city is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential" (WHO, 2021a). "The Healthy Cities program aims to cope with health issues that have emerged with urbanization. While urbanization is underway at an alarming pace worldwide, urban health issues become complex, and this complexity requires cooperation between the conventional health sector and non-health sectors" (Alliance for Healthy Cities, 2007).

Healthy Villages: The Healthy Villages program addresses similar directives as to the Healthy Cities program simply in rural areas as opposed to urban areas. The area's residents again define health; however, the generally accepted definition of a healthy village includes a community with common infectious diseases, access to basic healthcare services, and a stable, peaceful social environment. Programs attempt to foster a holistic approach to health management through fostering communication among community leaders and members. Communication throughout the various social ranks of the village and a village health plan are necessary components of all programs. Thus, the program is vulnerable to similar issues as the Healthy Cities program, such as providing the necessary resources and maintaining momentum to succeed (WHO, 2021b).

Healthy Communities Austria: "Promoting health where health happens" - this is the goal of the "Healthy Community" initiatives in Austria's federal states. Through innovative health promotion offers, the quality of life and the well-being of the people in a community should be sustainably increased. Many Austrian communities and cities have already decided to become a "Healthy Community". (Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz, 2021).

Cittaslow - International network of cities where living is good: "Good living means having the opportunity of enjoying solutions and services that allow citizens to live [in] their town easily and pleasantly. Living slow means being slowly hasty; "festina lente" Latins used to say, seeking every day the "modern times counterpart" in other words looking for the best of the knowledge of the past and enjoying it thanks to the best possibilities of the present and of the future" (Cittaslow, 2016). "All forms of slowness, Slow Food and Slow Cities (Cittaslow towns) as well as Slow Travel and Slow Tourism, provokes a transformation in our thinking and behavior. The slow movement is described as a “socially and ecologically transformative process”, resulting in an effective social change with improvements in quality of life” (Hatipoglu, 2015).

Integrated Neighborhood Approach (INA): “The point of departure of Integrated Neighborhood is reinforcing networks between welfare, health care, informal care and community members in neighborhoods, optimizing current services, and involving the (frail) elderly. Such a demand-driven approach offers elderly people tailored care - including care-related services such as housing - in their local context to enhance self-management abilities and well-being” (Brandsen, 2021). “INA’s success depends on integration within and among the micro-level (primary delivery of care and support), meso-level (community, professional, organizational contexts), macro-level (broader policy context of care and support systems), functional integration, and normative integration” (Van Dijk, Cramm, & Nieboer, 2016).

WelDest – Health and Well-being in Tourism Destination: “The WelDest project, funded by the EACEA, was undertaken to explore and research health and well-being in tourism destinations. Based on these findings, the aim was to create a development framework to be used by public bodies, destination management organizations (DMOs), and private companies at tourism destinations willing to strengthen the elements influencing the well-being level of tourists and locals alike and willing to develop towards becoming a more holistic and sustainable health and well-being destination” (Dvorak, Saari, & Tuominen, 2014).

What all these diverse examples have in common, in addition to the common goal of improving the quality of life of people in a particular region, is that all approach the problem from an integrative perspective. Thus, integrated approaches to the development of tourism also provide an opportunity to quality of life improvements for residents and others through the vehicle of tourism.

2.4.5. SUMMARY: QUALITY OF LIFE IN TOURISM

The central finding of this chapter has been that quality of life is a much broader concept than health. Based on the pillars of (1) Physical, (2) Psychological, (3) Level of independence, (4) Social relationships, (5) Environment, and (6) Spirituality, an attempt has been made to comprehensively consider the concept of “quality of life” and its influencing factors. In addition to those listed above, some approaches also consider factors such as (7) Personal Development and (8) Self-Determination. Various indices and scales (e.g., WHOQOL, HDI, SF36) are used to make the quality of life measurable and comparable.

In the tourism context, it must first be clarified which areas of life are influenced by tourism in general. In the next step, these areas are examined for their influence on the quality of life of the people involved. Thus, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental factors can be determined. To make these factors measurable, the concept of objectifiable and subjectively perceived indicators has been established. A further distinction is made between which of these parameters are directly influenced by tourism (process-oriented) and not influenced by tourism activities (outcome-oriented). All parameters measured by social, economic, or environmental developments (e.g., wage level, crime rate, life expectancy, traffic volume) are generally considered objectifiable. The subjectively perceived influencing variables are elicited along the dimensions of quality of life through studies with affected people.

Various theories, such as the “Social Exchange Theory", “Residents Capital Theory", or the “Carrying Capacity Theory", have established themselves at the interface between the perceived quality of life and its influences. Based on such fundamental theories, factors can be determined that can be applied to tourism specifics. Numerous studies have identified the impact of tourism activity in a region on the quality of life of the people involved. In many cases, economic, social, or environmental factors have been the subject of investigation. The stages of development in the sense of the “Tourism Area Life Cycle” of destinations and the degree of involvement of people in tourism processes also play a decisive role in whether tourism is perceived as positive or negative.

The living and working environment of employees in tourism has many specific features that require special attention, primarily because of the shortage of skilled workers in tourism. Slowly in the industry, the realization is sinking in that for far too long, too little attention has been paid to what employees want and need, and that there is a clear need to rectify this by positive initiatives to improve the level of workplace satisfaction. Finally, the chapter highlights several regions and organizations that focus on strengthening the quality of life in general and that of the population in particular. All constructs have in common that they try to follow integrated management approaches and actively pursue inclusion of all stakeholders in a balanced and beneficial way to achieve improvements for each of them as individuals and for the system as a whole.

2.5. INTEGRATED TOURISM AS A CONCEPT

Since this thesis is dedicated to “Integrated Tourism Development", this chapter attempts to pick up the elements of the literature review in the previous chapters and interweave them. For this purpose, different concepts of integrated development are presented and discussed. “The core of integrated development is the comprehensive integration of space, manpower, institutions, creativity, economy, society, nature, time, and community...” (Hi & Lee, 2020, p. 315). Dower (2003, p. 9) states that integrated development must be oriented toward society, the economy, and the environment and must include public, private, and charitable organizations, in addition to local collaborations.

For example, based on the EFQM model (see p. 6) and the “Integrated Neighborhood” model (van Dijk et al., 2016), Borrmann et al. (2018, p. 106) developed an “Integrative Management Model of a Healthy Ageing Region Styria”. The connection between a management system and an approach to promote social interaction in the neighborhood seems exciting. However, the authors recognize that it is challenging to implement a model for organizations in a region. Nevertheless, favorable recommendations can be derived for implementation in a destination.

Bieger et al. (2006) recognize that a destination is constantly in the process of change and, using the “New St. Galler Management Model” (Rüegg-Stürm & Grand, 2019), to show how a location could be managed as a business unit (see Table 32).

Table 32: Phases of location development

Task	Agenda Setting	Vision Aims	Strategy	Implementation	Evaluation
Make sense	Status Quo Development Early detection Selection of fields of action	Creating orientation Common goals Involved	Involved Empowerment	Solutions	Quality development projects Quality development processes
Unlocking resources	Promotion of problem perception Early citizen participation	Determining the value of intangible resources	Promote learning processes through the exchange Determine the use of resources Flexible funding and sponsorship Selecting projects that offer solutions	Use of resources Use intangible resources	Formative evaluation (direct implementation of the results for future steps and processes).
Promote actions	Involve politics Conflict diagnosis	Motivation through mission statement process	Milestones definition Criteria for the selection of projects	Project controlling Quick successes	Project evaluation Evaluation during the process Balance winners/losers

Source: Based on Bieger, T., Derungs, C., Riklin, T., & Widmann, F. (2006). Das Konzept des integrierten Standortmanagements - Eine Einführung. In H. Pechlaner, E. Fischer, & E.-M. Hammann (Eds.), *Standortwettbewerb und Tourismus: Regionale Erfolgsstrategien* (pp. 11–26). Berlin: Schmidt.

Saxena et al. (2007) show different ways of integrating tourism into rural areas. They present various approaches in explaining the concept of Integrated Rural Tourism (IRT) (see Table 33). They convincingly argued that this concept

> "could be conceptualized as a web of networks of local and external actors, in which endogenous and embedded resources are mobilized in order to develop the assets and capabilities or rural communities and empower them to participate in, influence and hold accountable the actors and institutions that affect their lives" (Saxena et al., 2007, p. 358).

Table 33: Model of integrated rural tourism (IRT)

Level of integration	**Description**	**Sources**
Spatial integration	Integration of core tourist areas with areas where tourism is less well developed	Weaver, D. B. (1998) Peripheries of the periphery - Tourism in Tobago and Barbuda. *Annals of Tourism Research, 25*(2), pp. 292-313.
Human resource integration	Integration of working people into the economy to combat social exclusion and gain competitive advantage	Mulvaney, R. H., O'Neill, J. W., Cleveland, J. N. & Crouter, A. C. (2007) A model of work-family dynamics of hotel managers. *Annals of Tourism Research, 34*(1), pp. 66–87.
Institutional integration	Integration of agencies into partnerships or other formal semi-permanent structures	Selin, S. & Beason, K. (1991) Interorganizational relations in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 18,* pp. 639-652. Vernon, J., Essex, S., Pinder, D. & Curry, K. (2005) Collaborative policymaking: Local sustainable projects. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *32*(2), pp. 325–345.
Innovative integration	Integration of new ideas and processes into the tourism 'product' to achieve growth or competitive advantage	Macbeth, J., Carson, D., Northcote, J. (2004) Social Capital, Tourism and Regional Development: SPCC as a Basis for Innovation and Sustainability. *Current Issues in Tourism, 7*(6), pp. 502-522.
Economic integration	Integration of other economic sectors with tourism, particularly retailing and farming	Dudding, V. & Ryan, C. (2000) The impacts of tourism on a rural retail sector: a New Zealand case study. *Tourism Economics*, *6*(4), pp. 301–319. Veeck, G. Che, D. & Veeck, A. (2006) America's Changing Farmscape: A Study of Agricultural Tourism in Michigan. *Professional Geographer, 58*(3), pp. 235-248.
Social integration	Integration of tourism with other trends in the socioeconomy	Kneafsey, M. (2001) Rural cultural economy: Tourism and Social Relations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *28*(3), pp. 762-783.
Policy integration	Integration of tourism with broader national and regional goals for economic growth, diversification, and development	Dredge, (2006) Networks, Conflict, and Collaborative Communities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 14*(6), pp. 562-581.
Temporal integration	Integration of the past with current economic, social, and cultural needs and requirements, primarily through the commodification of heritage	Ryan, C. & Aicken, M. (Eds.) (2005) *Indigenous Tourism: The Commodification and Management of Culture.* Oxford: Elsevier.
Community integration	Integration of tourists into local communities as 'guests', such that they occupy the same physical spaces, satisfy their existential and material needs in the same manner, and become embedded in the same value chains	Oakes, T. (1999) Eating the food of the ancestors: place, tradition, and tourism in a Chinese frontier river town. *Cultural Geographies, 6*(2), 123-145.

Source: Based on Saxena, G., Clark, G., Oliver, T., & Ilbery, B. (2007). Conceptualizing Integrated Rural Tourism. *Tourism Geographies, 9*(4), 347–370. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616680701647527

As mentioned before, a participatory approach is appropriate for the implementation and realization of such IRT networks. It tries to involve all community members in the tourism development process. Rempel (2012) relates this approach to a tourism ecosystem and mentions the following steps that are necessary for the success of such a process:

- “The development of an overall vision for the sustainable development of tourism activities
- The setting of short-term objectives to implement the vision
- The review and building of regulations and tourism standards
- The assessment of the potential impacts of tourism projects
- The monitoring of impacts and compliance
- The implementation of adaptive management concerning tourism and biodiversity” (Rempel, 2012, pp. 585–586).

In general, it appears that involving the community population can bring benefits. Uysal et al. (2012, p. 678) stated that general residents who belong to community organizations evaluated their quality of life better than those who do not belong to any organizations. Dower (2003) sees this so-called community-based tourism as beneficial for two reasons. On the one hand, conflicts with the population can be identified and dealt with early. On the other hand, residents of rural regions feel connected to their homeland and want to have a say in its development. However, Dower (2003, pp. 9–10) also recognizes that it will never be possible to satisfy all stakeholders fully.

The need to involve the population is receiving more and more attention, both in the literature and in practice. Thus, in Austria, a tourism acceptance index was surveyed for the first time in January 2020 (BMLRT, 2020). The survey asked about people's attitudes toward the impact of tourism on (1) the economy, (2) the labor market, (3) agriculture and the environment, (4) recreational infrastructure and public transportation, and (5) social welfare and quality of life. An interesting detail is that those with a high tourism acceptance think that tourism has a strengthening effect on (1) economy, purchasing power, regions, (2) sustainability and nature conservation, and (3) jobs and infrastructure. People with a low acceptance of tourism think that tourism (1) harms the environment, (2) makes life more expensive, and (3) lowers personal security (BMLRT, 2020, p. 38). These results correlate with numerous other studies.

As the previous chapters have shown, there are different approaches to developing destinations. It is undisputed that a destination can only grow in the long term if it considers the basic principles of sustainable development (ecology, society, economy) (Băndoi et al., 2020). If sustainable tourism development is understood in its original form and includes all addressed dimensions, IRT can be equated with the concept of “Sustainable Tourism” (Saxena et al., 2007,

p. 359). However, since growth must also be measurable, the question arises as to which criteria can be used to carry out a performance measurement that meets the demands of economic, social, and sustainable development in combination with the potential to make tourism-relevant statements?

Over the last decades, numerous indicator sets have been established to measure the performance of a destination. Ultimately, these indicator sets are based on the fundamental principles of sustainable development. Uysal & Sirgy (2019) recommend a threefold division of the research focus (tourists, residents, and employees in tourism industries) as well as a distinction between input (process) and output (outcome) factors for the measurement of destination performance. The measurement of destination performance is closely linked to the competitiveness of a destination.

Uysal & Sirgy (2019) summarize indicators of measuring sustainable performance in destinations and come up with the following ones (see Table 34).

Table 34: Indicators of measuring sustainable performance in destinations

List of indicators based on UNWTO, 2004	*Indicators based on Erdogan & Tosun, 2009*
Socio-cultural issues related to community well-being, cultural assets, community participation, tourist satisfaction, etc.	**Architecture and landscape design** e.g., using local material in construction, hotel architecture harmonized with the environment and a plan that does not harm the natural and historical environment
Economic issues related to benefits, sustaining the tourist product, seasonality, leakages, etc.	**Energy efficiency/resource conservation** e.g., key-card control system in guest rooms, solar energy use, photocell lighting in washrooms, energy-saving light bulbs, etc.
Environmental issues related to protecting valuable natural assets; managing environmental resources such as water, energy, and waste; etc.	**Water reduction** e.g., solid waste separation at source, recycling paper in brochures, composting food waste, etc.
Tourism planning and management issues related to destination planning, design of products and services, controlling use intensity, transport, marketing, branding, etc.	**Water efficiency/conservation** e.g., treated water in garden irrigation, wastewater treatment, photocell water armatures, etc.
Responding to global issues related to climate change, epidemics, sex tourism, etc.	**Education and training for environmental awareness** e.g., environmental education to guests, participating in environmental meetings, etc.
	Communication for environmental awareness e.g., brochures with information on environmental protection, soliciting guest opinions on environmental activities of the hotel, etc.
	Managerial knowledge regarding environmental protection e.g., information regarding the ISO 14001, the Pine Awards, the Blue Flag Project, etc.

Source: Based on Uysal, M., & Sirgy, M. J. (2019). Quality-of-life indicators as performance measures. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *76*, 291–300. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.12.016

Hi and Lee (2020) show which concrete criteria can be used to develop a destination according to the Integrated Rural Tourism model (see Table 35):

Table 35: Integrated rural tourism innovation development evaluative indicators

Rural Tourism Network	Stakeholder Networking	Stakeholders creating rural tourism products
		Obtaining external supports
		Stakeholders holding rural tourism activities
		Stakeholder interactions
	Embeddedness	Local cultural identity
		Hiring external tourism consultants for guidelines
		Rural tourism activities subsidized by external units
		Local people investing in tourism development
Rural Tourism Capital	Tourism Scale	Parking lot status
		Tourist attraction status
	Tourism Endogeneity	Use of local products
		Use of local crafts
		Local specialty dining and accommodation
		Employing residents in tourism activities
	Tourism Complementarity	Growth of small tourism companies
		Employing residents
		Quality and condition of local tourism services and facilities
		Quality and status of rural cultural assets
		Quality and condition of parks and trails
		Quality and condition of historical monuments
		Quality and status of local developed sales areas
		Status of tourism activity subsidy
		Disposable income per person
Rural Tourism Sustainability	Sustainability	Environmental quality improvement
		Public transportation
		The road system and traffics
		Protection of natural ecological resources
		Waste disposal
		Tourists destroying the natural environment
	Local Empowerment	Local people participating in tourism-related meetings
		Local people taking charge of the development direction of tourism
		Tourism organizations in the area
		Leading status of local tourism activities
Rural Destination Brand	Destination Brand Awareness	Tourism reputation
		Name of destination
	Destination Brand Image	Beautiful scenery
		Friendly town
		Friendly residents
		Good recreation opportunities
		Interesting cultural attractions
		Relaxing atmosphere
	Destination Brand Quality	Quality accommodation
		Quality infrastructure
		Attractive local cuisine
		Clean environment
		Highly safe environment
	Destination Brand Value	Reasonable accommodation prices
		Reasonable food prices
	Destination Brand Loyalty	Future revisit status
		Number of previous visits
		Recommending friends and relatives to visit
		Special offers provided by destinations

Source: Based on Hi, P.-T., & Lee, C.-T. (2020). CONSTRUCTING INTEGRATED RURAL TOURISM INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS. *The International Journal of Organizational Innovation*, *12*(4), 300–320.

Their comprehensive list of criteria can be used as a roadmap in such an endeavor, and it is not just by chance that the list begins with stakeholder networking and embeddedness. Following the same line, Crouch & Ritchie (2012) conclude that,

> „the most appropriate way to think about destination competitiveness is as a measure of a destination's capability of achieving a set of identified goals in a competitive global tourism environment where such goals are formulated by all stakeholders in a destination" (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012, p. 508).

Here again, the same participatory and integrated approach can be seen, as already with the model of IRT and the "Sustainable Tourism" concept (Dower, 2003; Hi & Lee, 2020; Saxena et al., 2007). Thus, Crouch & Ritchie (2012, p. 508) determine that if one wants to improve residents' quality of life, tourism destinations should be guided by the "economic, social, cultural, environmental, and lifestyle values" of the community. Uysal & Modica (2016) conclude that a truly competitive destination must manage to (1) attract and inspire satisfied guests while (2) being economically profitable, (3) improving the quality of life of residents, and conserving (4) natural resources for future generations.

Hi & Lee (2020) determine that the development of rural tourism regions can be accomplished by considering the following points:

- promoting sustainability in a multi-faceted way
- empowering the local people
- protecting the ownership of resources
- helping the development of other economic sectors and activities on a moderate scale
- connecting stakeholders (Hi & Lee, 2020, p. 304).

Based on the indicators developed by Hi & Lee (2020) and the guiding principles above, a survey instrument could be developed for use in a region that can serve as a guide in participatory processes.

Such an instrument has been developed and made available by the ERASMUS project WelDest, in which the author was an active participant. Although the specific case is developing a health and well-being destination to strengthen health tourism in a region, the tools developed can be easily adapted for other kinds of destinations. One product of the WELDEST project was an eHandbook, a teaching document for universities, and a self-assessment tool, including an application guide (Dvorak et al., 2014). The self-assessment tool is an ideal vehicle for municipalities to use in participatory processes with citizens and stakeholders (Tuominen, Saari, & Binder, 2017).

Finally, the present chapter has shown that tourism development can be recognized as "integrated" when it is realized in terms of a holistic tourism policy (Freyer, 2015, pp. 485–

486) in which a triad between social, ecological, and economic objectives prevails (Dower, 2003; Hi & Lee, 2020; Saxena et al., 2007; Uysal & Sirgy, 2019). Henceforth, this finding will guide the development of a *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism,* which will be the main product of this thesis.

2.6. SUMMARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Finally, the central theoretical findings of the study so far can now be summarized. Here it is essential to bear in mind that the individual theory chapters already summarize content at the end. The results now presented here are therefore displayed in a very concentrated manner.

It was stated at the outset that the integration of systems must always include all subsystems. In the management of organizations, these are all departments and also the internal and external stakeholders. Integrated management models (e.g., ISO, EFQM, St. Galler Model, Porter's value chain) represent the decisive elements or quality standards according to which goal- and value-oriented management can occur. Current challenges, such as climate change or the shortage of skilled workers, enrich the discussion about adequate leadership concepts and a new understanding of the values of employees and target groups. Ultimately, it can be concluded that most of the challenges currently under discussion can be brought together and partially solved by following the concepts of sustainable development.

It can be stated that the same principles mentioned above also apply to regional or tourism development organizations. Regions are understood as geographic, political, and/or socio-cultural constructs that have as their overarching objective the economic, social, and environmental development of the people who live and work in them. Especially the challenges and potentials of rural regions result, due to their specific constellations (e.g., small-scale structure, mobility, landscape), in a strong connection with the development of tourism units, such as destinations.

Destinations today no longer compete just for potential guests and regular customers but are also confronted with challenges in the labor market, climate change, and developments concerning the population's quality of life. These multi-optional requirements call for new ways of thinking, instructions for action, and good leadership behavior on the part of tourism managers. However, the expectations of internal and external stakeholders must also change. For far too long, success has been evaluated solely on the basis of statistics on overnight stays, arrivals, and occupancy rates. Above all, as far as the population's quality of life is concerned, new assessment grids and development tools are needed. Livable regions create long-term and qualified jobs, which are urgently needed in tourism.

Tourism is an industry with multifactorial demands due to its manifold interdependencies with local structures and the people who live in and from it. The quality of life of people living in tourism regions is influenced positively and negatively by tourism activities in different ways. It can be seen that the higher the level of involvement of the population, the higher the acceptance by the population and vice versa. This, in turn, is an indication of the importance of an integrated tourism policy. People directly affected by tourism are all those whose jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on tourism. The specifics of tourism jobs have led to a deterioration in the perception of the attractiveness of a job in tourism in recent decades. Concepts such as employer branding or work-life balance were unheard of, especially in the catering and hotel industry. Only time will tell whether the Corona pandemic and the resulting shortage of skilled workers will lead to a rethink.

Ultimately, it becomes clear that integration in management can happen in many ways. What all projects have in common, however, is the participation of the affected stakeholders to create broad acceptance. There are examples of how this can succeed, also in tourism. In conclusion, it can be said that if a destination can be thought of and managed according to the criteria of sustainable tourism development, it can make a positive contribution to strengthening the quality of life of all people involved and at the same time be economically successful.

3. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this thesis is guided by a multilevel research design. The following flow chart is based on Table 1 (see p. 5) and shows the phases of the research process and its internal connections.

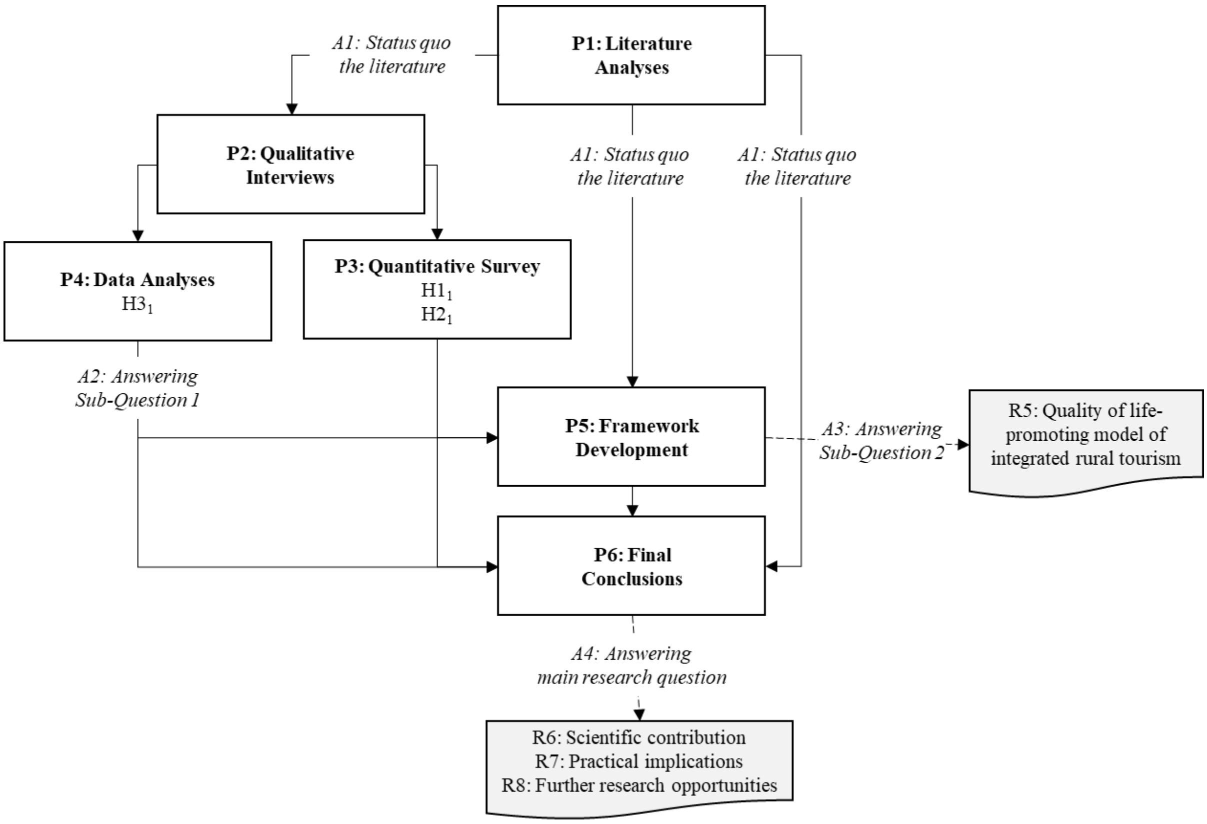

Figure 18: Thesis' methodology flow chart

Source: Own research, 2021

The following subsections, the individual phases of the research process, their objectives, and the results studied will now be explained.

3.1. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

To make the research field comprehensible in its complexity, qualitative research methods are applied. Thus, the outcome *R2: Categories of tourism impact on quality of life in rural areas* is designed to make a first contribution to answering *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*.

As Berger-Grabner (2016, p. 128) shows, qualitative survey methods serve, among other things, to present social circumstances in a describable way. From this, hypotheses can be derived, which can subsequently build theory (Mayring, 2015, pp. 22–23). In most cases, small samples conclude facts and develop new theories (Magerhans, 2016, p. 167). However, this is not about a representative presentation of results but rather about “depicting reality based on the subjective view of the persons under investigation“ (Berger-Grabner, 2016, pp. 117–118). This inductive research approach (inferring the big picture from several more minor cases) makes it possible to generate hypotheses that can be verified in a further step through quantitative investigations (Perkhofer, Gebhard, & Tucek, 2016, p. 68). However, it must be kept in mind that reducing qualitative research to the formulation of hypotheses falls short of the mark. Qualitative research can also contribute to the “modification of hypotheses and theories“ and the “partial testing of hypotheses and theories“ (Lamnek & Krell, 2016, p. 98).

The choice of methods in qualitative research is extensive. Bortz & Döring (2006, p. 315) name “non-standardized or partially standardized surveys, observations, and non-reactive procedures” as the most important forms, whereby 19 different, but partly overlapping, variants are listed for the individual surveys alone. Due to the research approach taken for this thesis, a more detailed look at qualitative interviews now follows.

In general, qualitative interviews can be divided into individual or group interviews. Berger-Grabner (2016, pp. 132–133) enumerates the following forms: (1) narrative interview, (2) ethnographic interview, (3) problem-centered interview, and (4) guided interview as the most common forms of interviews used in scholarly work. The focus group, on the other hand, is mentioned as the most common form of group discussion. Overall, the range can be spanned from largely unstructured conversations (narrative interview) to structured, guided interviews (Ritschl, Ritschl, Höhsl, Prinz-Buchberger, & Stamm, 2016).

In order to select the most appropriate interview methodology, it is first necessary to clarify whether the object of research can be recounted or represented through an interview. (Aghamanoukjan, Buber, & Meyer, 2009). Moreover, the evaluation of the following criteria is considered advisable to assess subjective experiences: “(1) reality relevance, (2) time dimension, (3) range, (4) complexity, (5) certainty, and (6) degree of structuring” (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 309). These criteria can be used to judge whether an event or a person is suitable for research with qualitative methods.

Special attention is paid to the selection of interview partners. Depending on the research design, emphasis can be placed on the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the interviewees. This usually arises either in the research process or is determined in advance to represent corresponding characteristic features (Berger-Grabner, 2016, pp. 133–134). Interview partners must be able and willing to say something about the topic, express themselves argumentatively, and have the necessary time resources (Magerhans, 2016).

Due to the research design of the present study, a guided interview with experts was chosen to explore the research field. The choice of this methodological approach was based on the fact that individual interviews offer the advantage over group methods (e.g., focus groups) of being able to deal intensively with the opinion of one person without the influence of other group members coming into play (Ritschl, Ritschl, et al., 2016). The guided interview also offers the possibility of making the results of different interviews comparable with each other and still allowing a reasonable degree of open discussion. Guiding questions and further sub-questions are formed in advance, defining the interview framework (Bortz & Döring, 2006). The expert interview tries to reconstruct the experiences and knowledge of the interviewed persons concerning the research field (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 142). Since the selection of experts directly influences the survey results, this step is of particular importance. Experts should have profound practical and theoretical knowledge in their respective fields of work (Hörold, 2016). Gläser & Laudel (2006, p. 10) explain that: "Experts are people who have a special knowledge about social issues, and expert interviews are a method to tap this knowledge." Although, or precisely because, the expert interview is a very frequently used instrument in qualitative research, according to Bogner, Littig & Menz (2005), it is still considered controversial whether the expert interview is recognized as an independent methodology. Questions surrounding the requirement for openness and non-influence remain unresolved, for example, through guided interviews. There may also be deficiencies in the theoretical-methodological foundation of the method (Bogner et al., 2005; Trinczek, 2005). Thus, like any form of a survey, there are positive and negative aspects to consider.

To evaluate expert interviews, Berger-Grabner recommends (2016, p. 142) the application of qualitative content analysis. According to Ritschl & Stamm (2016a), this form of data evaluation through text analysis is suitable for in-depth analysis of trends, phenomena, symptom complexes, written materials, or processes, among other things. Furthermore, the authors mention the methods developed by Mayring, Krippendorf, Gläser & Laudel and Kvale & Brinkmann as evaluation methods of qualitative content analysis (Ritschl & Stamm, 2016a, pp. 95–96). Bortz & Döring (2006) describe the methodology of the "global evaluation" and the "grounded theory approach". All methods mentioned differ in their fine-tuning, but roughly follow the sequence suggested by Bortz & Döring (2006, pp. 329–331): (1) text and source criticism, (2) data management, (3) case descriptions, (4) case selection for refined analysis, (5) category system, (6) coding, (7) highlighting individual cases, (8) comparing individual cases, (9) summarizing individual cases, and (10) presentation of results.

Compared to other qualitative analysis methods, qualitative content analyses offer the advantage that they do not remain attached to the text itself but consider and evaluate the information obtained in the research context (Gläser & Laudel, 2006, p. 44). According to Gläser & Laudel (2006, p. 44), another difference is that the category system for text analysis is created before the text is read. However, there seems to be a need for discussion here, as Lamnek & Krell (2016, p. 477) note that according to the principle of openness, no restrictions should be given, and the content of a text itself should guide the analysis. Bortz & Döring (2006, p. 332) recognize that a category system is created in advance, but a pretest should be used to refine this. Berger-Grabner (2016, p. 146) also follows this approach and sees the development phase of a category system as preceding the survey and evaluation phase. The basis for the development of the category system is built on theory-based findings. At the same time, this category system forms the search grid, which takes up all information (data) from the text to be analyzed. The system is designed plainly and can be extended in the course of the analysis (Gläser & Laudel, 2006, pp. 194–195).

As in quantitative research, special attention needs to be paid to quality criteria in qualitative research. “Wild interpretation” and arbitrary interpretations are prevented by systematic text analyses (Bortz & Döring, 2006). The basic principle is that of openness. What is meant by this is the conduct of an open conversation, which is oriented without prejudice to questions that are predominantly formulated openly (Lamnek & Krell, 2016, p. 33). Höhsl (2016, p. 127) sees the following points as relevant quality criteria: (1) authenticity, (2) credibility, (3) replicability, (4) transferability, and (5) reliability. In summary, it can be deduced that qualitative research results, although not indicative of representative populations, must also be guided by the basic principles of validity and reliability (Bortz & Döring, 2006; Mayring, 2015). However, Berger-Grabner (2016, p. 129) notes that comprehensibility does not mean the verifiability of results but rather the fully documented research process itself (intersubjective comprehensibility). Strategies to counteract methodological bias can include multidisciplinary research teams or data and method variation (Berger-Grabner, 2016).

As already mentioned, a guideline-based expert interview is applied for the present work to explore the research field and to generate hypotheses (Berger-Grabner, 2016; Bortz & Döring, 2006). The development of the guideline for the interview is based on the research questions of this thesis on the one hand and a theoretical framework provided by the preliminary research on the other hand. Thus, the following topics are addressed in the primary guiding questions:

- Challenges and potentials of tourism development in rural areas
- Sustainable development of rural tourism regions
- Role of regional development in the context of tourism development
- Influence of tourism development in rural areas on the quality of life of the population

In addition, sub-questions on the respective topics are prepared in order to be able to maintain the flow of the conversation if necessary (Froschauer & Lueger, 2003). The development of the main questions follows the model of Helfferich (2005, pp. 167–168): (1) “collecting questions“, (2) “working through the list under aspects of prior knowledge and openness“ and (3) “working through the list under aspects of methodological suitability“.

Subsequently, a pre-test is conducted with a person from the target group (experts) (Weichbold, 2019). Since this test was conducted under natural conditions and no comprehension difficulties were encountered, its results are included in the evaluation. For the evaluation of the results, the methodology of qualitative content analysis according to Mayring was used (Mayring, 2015), as it meets the requirements of the present work and the research questions contained therein. In-text analysis, the “summary“ is used as a basic form of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2015, pp. 69–90). In doing so, we try to reduce the text material as much as possible to obtain a “manageable corpus“ (Mayring, 2016). Moreover, this makes it possible to derive the evaluation categories inductively, as shown in the following model:

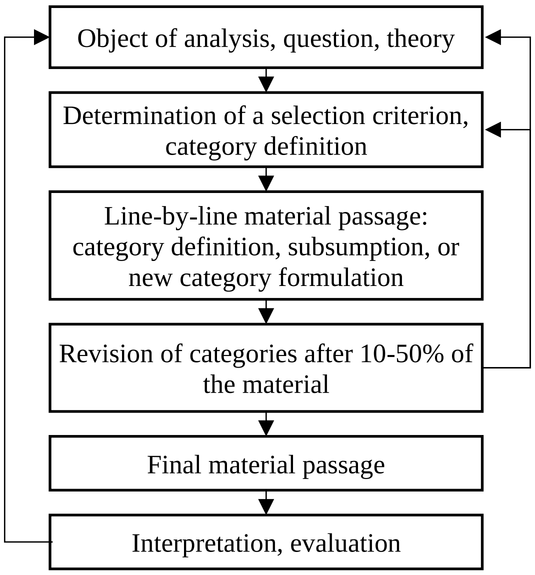

Figure 19: Model of inductive category formation

Source: Based on Mayring, P. (2016). *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung: Eine Anleitung zu qualitativem Denken* (6., überarbeitete Auflage). Weinheim, Basel: Beltz. Retrieved from http://content-select.com/index.php?id=bib_view&ean=9783407294524

From the categories obtained in this way (*R2: Categories of tourism impact on quality of life in rural areas)*, those sub-areas are then formed that contribute to the hypothesis formation of the present work.

3.2. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

A quantitative survey is used to address the research goal *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*: “What relationships exist between the tourism development of a region and the perceived quality of life of its residents?”.

In general, surveys can measure the characteristics of certain features and relate them to each other. To guarantee a standardized answer to the questions and to enable comparability of the participants' statements, the use of questionnaires has become established. Moreover, facts can be presented objectively, and correlations can be proven or rejected by statistical methods (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 117).

Since the population for the present survey can be defined as all people living in rural areas in Austria, a representative study was not conducted due to the confusing parameters, and instead, the questionnaire was distributed using the snowball method (Ritschl & Stamm, 2016b, p. 63). The resulting ad hoc sample (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 165) does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about a specific population and thus does not claim representativeness. However, analogies for further research can be derived from the sample. For the distribution of the questionnaire, a written online survey was chosen due to the advantages of the medium. Magerhans (2016) sees the following advantages and disadvantages of this survey method:

Table 36: Characteristics of questionnaires

	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Written questionnaire	Relatively inexpensive	Often low response rate, especially when surveying private households
	Spatially distant persons can be interviewed	The resulting risk of lack of representativeness
	A large number of persons can be interviewed (large case numbers)	Complicated issues cannot be queried
	No interviewer bias	The scope of the survey is limited
	Anonymity can be preserved	Influence by third parties possible
	Respondents can reflect on the answers at their leisure	Bias is possible because responders behave differently than non-responders
		No possibility for comprehension questions
Online questionnaire	Fast achievability of large case numbers	Often insufficient information about the population
	Possibility of supplementary audiovisual illustration	Risk of bias due to self-selection of participants
	Possibility of personalization	Risk of dubious answers due to anonymity
	Mapping of complex branches in the questionnaire	

Source: Based on Magerhans, A. (2016). *Marktforschung: Eine praxisorientierte Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-00891-8

An attempt was made to use mainly closed questions. While this facilitates evaluation and is more accessible for participants to complete, it also carries the risk of encouraging hasty responses. Therefore a combination of open and closed questions is recommended by Magerhans (2016, p. 121). Since the individual measurement values of the questionnaire have already been tested several times in different combinations and did not contain any open questions, here open questions were dispensed with entirely. In addition, open-ended questions are often not completed because they require a higher level of creativity and a greater willingness to respond (Berger-Grabner, 2016, pp. 194–195).

Regarding the response options, Likert scales were chosen for the response variants in the present questionnaire. Likert scales make it possible to elicit people's attitudes toward a particular topic (Weigl, 2016, p. 19). Another advantage is the mathematical calculability of the answers. In order not to make the questionnaire monotonous, assignment questions were also integrated.

3.3. DATA ANALYSES

To further address aim *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*, a stand-alone dataset was generated. Subsequently, key figures from the data set were correlated with items from an existing data set. In the following chapter, the structure of the data set created for this work will be described. Furthermore, the use of the existing dataset will be explained. As a result of this data analysis, the research result *R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life could* be fulfilled.

Following Smeral (2013) and the Austrian accommodation statistics (Bundesanstalt Statistik Österreich, 2021), key figures for the value added by tourism for the whole of Austria and its political districts were collected and processed in a database using Microsoft Excel. The data set for the Austrian tourism industry provides a representative picture of the critical tourism indicators. Based on the literature review and insights from the qualitative analysis, Table 37 shows the database items and their origin.

Based on the collected data, figures of tourism intensity were calculated (Freyer, 2015, p. 535). All key figures are available at the level of the political districts of Austria for further analysis.

The limitations of the data set are already apparent at first glance. On the one hand, not all data originate from the same year. This is due to the different data sources, as there is no central data archive for tourism in Austria. Although various organizations process data from Austria (e.g., Statistics Austria), not all data are available in the same quality. Also, not all data are collected every year, which leads to time differences. Another limitation is the tourism-specific collection

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of statistics on overnight stays and arrivals. In many cases, these are not collected by calendar year (January to December) but according to the “tourism year” (winter season: November to March and summer season: April to October). When compiling the present data set, these influences were kept as low as possible. In general, however, it is essential to know and communicate the existing limitations so that no false conclusions are drawn.

Table 37: Basic items and sources of tourism data analyses

Dimension	Item	Source
Regional structures of Austria	Political District	Statistics Austria. (2020). *Regionale Gliederung.* Retrieved from https://www.statistik.at/web_de/klassifikationen/regionale_gliederungen/index.html
	Supply Region (SR)	Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. (2020). *Regionale Gliederung 2019.* Retrieved from https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:f5dbe811-fd95-489b-a7e5-6d141979f011/regionale_gliederung,_stand_2019.xlsx
	SR Number	Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. (2020). Regionale Gliederung 2019. Retrieved from https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:f5dbe811-fd95-489b-a7e5-6d141979f011/regionale_gliederung,_stand_2019.xlsx
	Population 01.01.2019	Statistik Austria. (2020). Bevölkerung. Retrieved from https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstand_und_veraenderung/index.html
	Size km²	Statistik Austria. (2020). Regionale Gliederung. Retrieved from https://www.statistik.at/web_de/klassifikationen/regionale_gliederungen/index.html
Travel volume Austria	Arrivals total 2018	Statistics Austria. (2020). *STATcube – Statistical Database of Statistics Austria.* Retrieved from http://www.statistik.at/web_en/publications_services/statcube/index.html
	Arrivals domestic 2018	
	Arrivals inbound 2018	
	Overnight stays total 2018	
	Overnight stays domestic 2018	
	Overnight stays inbound 2018	
	Arrivals total 2019	
	Arrivals domestic 2019	
	Arrivals inbound 2019	
	Overnight stays total 2019	
	Overnight stays domestic 2019	
	Overnight stays inbound 2019	
Tourism economic data Austria	Companies tourism year[14]	Statistics Austria. (2020). *STATcube – Statistical Database of Statistics Austria.* Retrieved from http://www.statistik.at/web_en/publications_services/statcube/index.html
	Companies winter term	
	Companies summer term	
	Beds tourism year	
	Beds summer term	
	Beds winter term	
Workplace in tourism Austria	Employees in tourism 2016-2017	
	Apprenticeships in tourism 2018-2019	Economic Chamber of Austria. (2020). *Apprenticeships in tourism 2018-2019.* Data provided by the organization upon request.

Source: own research and editing, 2021

Due to the lengthy research process in a dissertation, it is impossible to create daily updated data and evaluations. For this reason, a cut-off date must be set by which those data must be

[14] A tourism year starts with the beginning of the winter season on the 1st of November and ends on the 31st of October

collected and used that are available on the cut-off date. This cut-off date was set as April 30, 2020.

Since the goal of the data analysis was a comparison between tourism data and quality of life data, another data set was used in a further step that depicts parameters of the quality of life of the Austrian population. These data are available with the survey of the ATHIS - Austrian Health Interview Survey 2019 (BMSGPK, 2020). The ATHIS dataset represents the Austrian population aged 15 years and older in private households and includes about 15,000 individuals. The dataset includes data on (1) health status, (2) health care, (3) health determinants, (4) socio-demographic characteristics, and (5) additional questions (e.g., quality of life according to WHOQOL-BREF).

On the way to the comparability of the tourism dataset with ATHIS 2019, a region-related hurdle had to be overcome. According to the Austrian Structure Plan for Health (ÖSG 2017), the national territory of Austria is divided into four service zones (VZ), nine federal states, 32 service regions (VR), and 116 districts from a health care perspective (GOEG, 2020). Since the ATHIS 2019 data set was created and analyzed based on Austrian service regions and not on the district level, the tourism data set was adapted to the service region level.

3.4. FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

To address the research goal *A3: Answering Sub-Question 2* "How can a model of integrated tourism development in rural regions look like?", a framework was developed. This model was based on the one hand on the literature research *R1: Current status of the literature* and on the other hand on the findings of the quantitative studies: *R3: Subjective impact of tourism on quality of life* and *R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life*. Thus, the research goal *R5: Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* could be achieved.

Models are based on theories that function to make complex facts tangible (Weigl, 2016, p. 11). A distinction can be made between total models, representing the entirety of a process, and partial models, focusing on individual sub-areas (Berger-Grabner, 2016, pp. 125–126; Magerhans, 2016, p. 56). In the present work, the form of a total model was aimed at. Thus, it should be possible to define an easily understandable solution approach, how integrated tourism development must be structured to strengthen the quality of life of as many people as possible. The final model was based on existing models in the identified topic areas and enriched with the research results of the quantitative survey.

4. RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The following chapter presents the implementation of the empirical research and its results. Due to the multi-phase structure of the research design, a qualitative survey was conducted at the beginning to explore the research field. Hypotheses were derived from the results of the qualitative interviews. These were verified by statistical test procedures from the quantitative survey results and the analysis of the formed data set. The presentation of results follows this logic.

4.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The interview partners were selected according to professional criteria. The following table provides an overview of the experts interviewed and also explains their relevance to the research field:

Table 38: Partners of expert interviews

Expert	Job title	Subject	Relevance
Mag. (FH) Jörg PFEIFER	CEO Tourism Association Bad Waltersdorf, Styria, Austria	Rural tourism development	Around 15 years of experience in managing companies in the tourism industry. In-depth knowledge in developing rural tourism areas, focusing on health and culinary tourism.
Mag. (FH) Mathias SCHATTLEITNER	CEO Tourism Association Schladming-Dachstein; President Austrian Tourism Associations (BÖTM)	Supraregional tourism development	More than 15 years of experience in developing tourism industries. Management of one of the 5th largest tourism regions in Austria. As BÖTM President, extensive knowledge of Austrian tourism development and interlocutor in the Ministry of Tourism.
Mag. Michael FEND	CEO Association to promote the region “Steirisches Vulkanland”; LEADER Management	Regional development (LEADER)	Over 20 years of experience in regional development and LEADER management. Co-developer of the region “Steirisches Vulkanland”. The promoter of the development of quality of life in rural regions.
Prof. Dr. Christian BAUMGARTNER	Professor for sustainable tourism, FH Graubünden; CEO response & ability	Sustainable tourism development	Over 25 years of experience in international project development focusing on sustainability. Leading projects in tourism, regional development, and development cooperation in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. Lecturer at various international faculties.

Source: Own research, 2020

Criteria for selecting experts are their professional expertise, access to information, and willingness to disclose it (Hörold, 2016; Meuser & Nagel, 2005). According to Gläser & Laudel (2006, p. 113), it is essential to ask yourself the following questions before selecting experts:

- “Who has relevant information?
- Who is most likely to be able to provide accurate information?
- Who is most willing to provide information?
- Who among the informants is available?”

The number of experts interviewed (see Table 38) was decided based on the research questions, with content expertise being responsible for selecting experts. Two interviews were analyzed in the tourism field. This results from the fact that one interview was conducted as a pre-test, but the results were collected under actual conditions and could thus be included in the analysis. Any resulting influences on the research results must be identified and taken into account. Gender-specific characteristics are random and in no way arbitrary. Interviews were conducted and recorded with Microsoft Teams. Consent to record was obtained from the interview partners before recording began (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 142). For data protection reasons, all recordings were deleted from all servers and storage media after transcription.

The interviews were conducted according to the following procedure: “(1) interview planning (content, organization), (2) contact establishment, (3) interview initiation, (4) narrative and inquiry phase, (5) interview conclusion, and (6) documentation” (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 310; Froschauer & Lueger, 2003). According to Mayring (2015), the transcribed texts were first paraphrased to create consistent language. Subsequently, the text was freed from duplicate mentions and passages that did not fit the research focus and were then finally summarized.

4.1.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The choice of methodology to conduct expert interviews raises questions regarding limitations. As Bogner et al. (2005) provide detailed evidence, expert interviews raise issues primarily in selecting and identifying experts. This is probably also the most significant limitation. The selection of experts is crucial, but also, for example, current events can influence the statements. The number of people selected can also have an impact on the research results. Therefore, despite the expert status of the interview partners, it is essential to point out this fact when interpreting the results.

Since qualitative surveys have proven helpful in exploring research fields and developing hypotheses, the survey form is retained (Lamnek & Krell, 2016).

4.1.2. RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY

In the following chapter, the summarized results of the qualitative interviews are presented and finally analyzed for further hypothesis generation. The highly condensed results are presented based on the thematic complexes defined in the methods chapter.

4.1.2.1. Focus: Rural tourism development

The following questions served as a guide for the interview and were supplemented with research-relevant sub-questions depending on the interview.

- *What does tourism development in rural areas mean to you?*
- *What potentials and challenges do you see for tourism in rural areas?*

The experts agree that tourism development in rural areas must be seen as habitat management. This living space must be strengthened through investments in infrastructure and the creation of offerings that are accessible to guests and residents alike. However, these developments are in tension with the generation of value-added and the danger of overtourism. Offers that are used and created in cooperation with regional structures can bring prosperity to a rural region. The economic effect of tourism can serve as an additional benefit for the region. However, this additional value-added must benefit the region in which it is generated.

The strengths of the rural area must be preserved and cultivated to make them usable for the generation of added value on the one hand and not to lose them on the other hand. Local customs and the friendliness and openness of the rural population are identified as competitive advantages. Therefore, it is important to avoid this friendly attitude towards guests drifting into a rejection of the inhabitants towards visitors due to unbalanced tourism development.

Regional employees should find jobs in regional companies. The employment of the local population is seen as a major added value of tourism. However, the situation becomes problematic when too many people commute from out of town to work, but the money earned is ultimately spent elsewhere. On the other hand, tourism can be identified as responsible for the withdrawal of young people. Namely, life becomes unaffordable for young generations due to an enormous price increase of land and housing. In the worst case, a spiral of poorly paid tourist jobs mainly performed by immigrant "guest workers", and in turn, the exodus of a young, educated class. Experts agree that such a development must be avoided.

However, it is also noted that in regions where tourism is already established as an essential economic pillar, the absence or reduction of tourist activities is seen as problematic, as this can lead to a massive withdrawal of the population in the area specialized in tourism. Therefore, efforts should be made to use the tourism added value to benefit the region and the regional population.

4.1.2.2. Focus: Cooperation between regions and destinations:

The following questions served as a guide for the interview and were supplemented with research-relevant sub-questions depending on the interview.

- *In your view, what are the overlaps in terms of content between the actors of regional development and tourism development?*
- *Where are challenges or potentials in regional cooperation?*

All experts agree that the regional development and tourism development organizations must work very closely together. One expert even calls for the merging of the organizations into a “Living-Space Office”. There are already numerous examples of cooperation. Cooperation often takes place through LEADER projects and other funding channels. Examples of this are developing cycle paths, establishing a call-collection cab, or the organization of specialist excursions.

Regional development aims to create opportunities for as many people as possible. Guests also benefit from this. At the same time, the population also benefits from tourist infrastructures, such as roads, public transport, or a well-kept townscape. The different target groups are seen as a challenge. “While regional development aims at as many people as possible, tourism puts a few highlights on display”.

Here, too, the topic of “habitat management” is mentioned again. All industries, organizations, political representatives at all levels, and the population must be involved. “Tourism must not be a satellite floating outside but must be thought about and included in all decisions.” This means that tourism must be shown appreciation, and its importance in decision-making must be increased. “Tourism bashing does no one any good. Tourists and locals are not dissimilar - neither want inappropriate chalet villages for second homes on the alpine pastures.”

Where regional development focuses on culinary arts, locals and guests benefit. “Many young farmers are taking over farms again and producing innovative products. It means appreciation when guests come to the farm, see the production for themselves and buy products. This creates a connection to the region that lasts long after the vacation is over.”

From the experts' point of view, too many organizations are working parallel to developing rural areas. Structures need to be simplified for the benefit of the population and the living space.

4.1.2.3. Focus: Sustainable rural tourism

The following questions served as a guide for the interview and were supplemented with research-relevant sub-questions depending on the interview.

- *How can sustainable tourism be implemented in rural regions?*
- *What are the obstacles?*
- *What opportunities can sustainable tourism bring to rural regions?*

The experts agree that sustainability must be based on all three levels: ecology, society, and economy. In addition, equal opportunities for future generations are essential. A climate-neutral destination is seen as a competitive advantage, not only for the destination but also for businesses. Greenwashing, however, does much more harm than good. Only honestly defined sustainability goals and creating the appropriate structures and processes bring long-term prospects of success.

On the way to a positive CO^2 balance, it is important to balance reduction and avoidance and compensation for unavoidable emissions. In the view of the sustainability expert, there is no way around a CO^2 tax for all sectors of the economy. In addition, revenues from tourism can help cross-finance environmental and climate protection measures and thus contribute. Ecosocial tax systems should refer to this.

In the context of sustainability, the topic of “mobility” is identified as one defining issue in future tourism. Aspects of arrival and departure, luggage transport, and movement during the stay must be considered. It is noted that the car is often associated with freedom and perceived as having no alternative. Studies show that travelers in Europe would do without the car or consider doing so if there were other benefits. From the experts' point of view, smart solutions are needed for luggage transport and mobility at the vacation destination. Rural regions, which invite guests to “discover a new attraction behind every hill“, need climate-friendly mobility solutions. These are seen in the areas of e-mobility and public transport. Public transport must be expanded in rural regions and at the same time become more attractive, even if this entails an increase in the cost of individual transport as a consequence.

According to expert opinion, there is not yet a region that follows sustainable tourism development at all levels. There are isolated approaches and measures, but consistent implementation in a reference region is lacking.

4.1.2.4. Focus: Influence of tourism on quality of life

The following questions served as a guide for the interview and were supplemented with research-relevant sub-questions depending on the interview. In this topic, it must be noted that sustainable development is inextricably linked to the population's quality of life. Thus, quality of life was repeatedly referred to during the interviews.

- *Where do you see the most significant influencing factors (economic/social/ecological) of tourism on the population's quality of life in rural regions?*
- *What should a model of sustainable development look like that meets the requirements of sustainability, regional development, and tourism development and simultaneously pursues the goal of positively influencing the quality of life of the population?*

It is undisputed that the development of a region has an inherent influence on the population's quality of life. The topics of influence range from the local job situation to the price development of land and housing to the topics of traffic and infrastructure. A positive effect of tourism is seen when regional businesses employ regional staff and buy from local producers. If this is not the case, the negative effects of tourism become visible.

Therefore, the image of tourism must be improved to make it attractive as an employer for people involved in tourism, as well as those who are not. However, this can only be achieved if the measures are taken that lead to an increase in the subjective quality of life of the population. Honest employer branding and investment in quality rather than quantity can help.

"Overtourism" is currently a much-discussed topic and is often used for political rhetoric. However, it is important to make a precise distinction between the terms used. Experts speak in this context of "unbalanced" tourism, which can occur on some days in the peak season. According to the tourism expert, this is largely due to the fact that guests meet second homeowners and locals. This becomes visible at neuralgic traffic points or the lift stations. Apart from a few exceptions on special weekends and holidays, the area under discussion is far from being overtouristed all year round. Honest communication on the part of tourism officials about benefits and challenges is seen as the key to local people's acceptance and understanding of tourism developments.

To increase the population's quality of life, all regional and destination development actors must work together and act in a coordinated manner. The basis for this can be a newly developed set of indicators for measuring the impact of tourism. For this purpose, quantitative and qualitative, economic, ecological, and social metrics must be included, taking into account the individual situation of the destination.

4.1.2.5. Summary of the qualitative research

To clarify and simplify the derivation of the hypotheses, the following overview compactly summarizes the most concise statements from the qualitative interviews:

Table 39: Expert interviews main results

Tourism & Regional Development	Tourism development, understood as habitat development, creates regional added value. Tourism makes an essential contribution to the development of rural regions. Honest communication between tourism developers, the population, and stakeholders creates trust and a basis for a solution-oriented discussion culture. Tourism development as an integrated part of regional development creates and needs appreciation. Quality of life, regional and tourism development must be developed in balance. Negative trends, such as the devaluation of land or the excessive increase in the cost of housing and the problem of second homes, must be recognized at an early stage.
Sustainable Rural Tourism	Closely observe and analyze signs of overtourism and migration tendencies of the population and discuss and take countermeasures at an early stage. Under ecological, economic, and socio-cultural aspects, the sustainable creation of offers is seen as a competitive advantage in future-oriented destinations. Mobility requirements on arrival and departure and during the stay are identified as central challenges. Those who manage to create sensible, acceptable, and intelligent solutions have a competitive advantage.
Quality of Life	Well-coordinated structures (region, destination, politics) enable a joint, long-term growth of the region, especially regarding the offer and quality of life. The central issue is the shortage of skilled workers and the provision and acceptance of job opportunities in regional tourism. The motto is: “Leading by example!” An adequate, future-oriented set of indicators is needed to measure successful rural tourism.

Source: Own research and analysis, 2020

Derived from the central results of the qualitative survey, the hypotheses are formed and presented in the following chapter describing the quantitative research.

4.2. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

In order to address the thesis’ aim *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1* “What relationships exist between the tourism development of a region and the perceived quality of life of its residents?” both a quantitative survey and data analyses are carried out. The objective was to fulfill the research outcomes *R3: Subjective impact of tourism on quality of life* and *R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life*. To achieve the results, hypotheses were developed based on the results (*R2*) from the qualitative research (*P2*).

4.2.1. HYPOTHESES

It can be deduced from the experts' opinions that the involvement of the population in tourism service production and value creation can positively affect the perception of tourism in general. This was also shown in the theoretical part of the thesis.

Furthermore, it can be concluded from the qualitative interviews that tourism parameters can also influence the inflow and outflow movements of the local population. In combination with socio-economic influencing variables and findings from the literature review, the following hypothesis was formulated.

$H1_1$: Socio-economic variables (i.e., Belonging in the region in years, Socioeconomic Status, and Earnings from tourism) influence the status of perceived satisfaction with tourism.

$H1_0$: Socio-economic variables (i.e., Belonging in the region in years, Socioeconomic Status, and Earnings from tourism) do not influence the status of perceived satisfaction with tourism.

The experts agree that habitat management will be needed in the future and that regional and tourism development must address this task together. This seems to be a possible way to ensure that sustainable development of rural regions can happen, to strengthen the quality of life of the local population. Along the dimensions of sustainability, it is vital to determine which areas the perception of tourism development influences the subjective quality of life perceptions. Also, the literature sees correlations between the subjective quality of life of the population and their perception of tourism activities in the community of residence. Therefore, the sample was examined for this correlation. Since the sustainable development of tourist destinations functions as a general guideline in this work, more detailed analyses of the correlations of individual measured values along the factors of sustainable development are required. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed.

$H2_1$: The perceived impact of tourism (i.e., Economic impact, Socio-cultural impact, Ecological impact) influences the perceived quality of life.

$H2_0$: The perceived impact of tourism (i.e., Economic impact, Socio-cultural impact, Ecological impact) does not influence the perceived quality of life.

The fact that tourism development influences the subjective perception of the quality of life of the local population is a consensus among experts and is also confirmed by the literature. Therefore, in a third step, the influence of tourism intensity scores on the subjective quality of life is investigated. For this purpose, the following hypothesis was formed.

$H3_1$: Variables of tourism intensity (e.g., Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, ...) in a region influence the residents' perceived quality of life.

$H3_0$: Variables of tourism intensity (e.g., Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, ...) in a region do not influence the residents' perceived quality of life.

It is presumed that some variables could have a negative influence, and some could positively influence residents' quality of life. For example, one could assume that a higher burden of overnights and daily visitors, caused by traffic, noise, overcrowding of sights, leads to a deterioration of the subjective quality of life of the population. This assumption attempts to examine the expert opinions in a higher level of detail. Vice versa, it could be assumed that if local people do not have to travel outside the region to get a job because they find jobs in local tourism, this could strengthen the perceived quality of life. High occupancy rates can be an indicator of economic stability. Furthermore, if many small and medium-sized tourism companies offer their beds in their hotels, the local value chain profits. These examples indicate the relevance of testing several independent variables compared to the perceived quality of life score.

4.2.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

In order to test hypothesis *H1* and hypothesis *H2,* a quantitative questionnaire was used. Based on the research results to be achieved, a model for hypothesis testing was developed (see p. Figure 20). This model is based on the findings of the literature review and the results of the qualitative research.

Since the method choice was an online questionnaire, the standardized questionnaire was created using the “QuestionPro Survey“. This offers the advantage that within a short time, the achievement of large sample sizes are possible since one can distribute the access to the questionnaire by an individually created link by digital technologies (e.g., eMail, social media, messenger systems) (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 261).

Before the questionnaire was sent out, it was subjected to a pretest. A pretest is helpful to determine whether the questions are comprehensible and estimate the actual time required to complete the questionnaire (Ritschl, Weigl, & Stamm, 2016, p. 174). Care must be taken to ensure that the individuals completing the pretest match the characteristics of the defined population (Berger-Grabner, 2016, p. 114). In the present case, the pretest was sent to 6 people with a request for feedback regarding the questions and recorded the length of time. Since the questionnaire was distributed through “snowballing“ (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 128), the pretest subjects were also randomly selected. Attention was paid to equitable gender distribution, age, different levels of education, and jobs. The relevant feedback from the pretest was incorporated into the questionnaire.

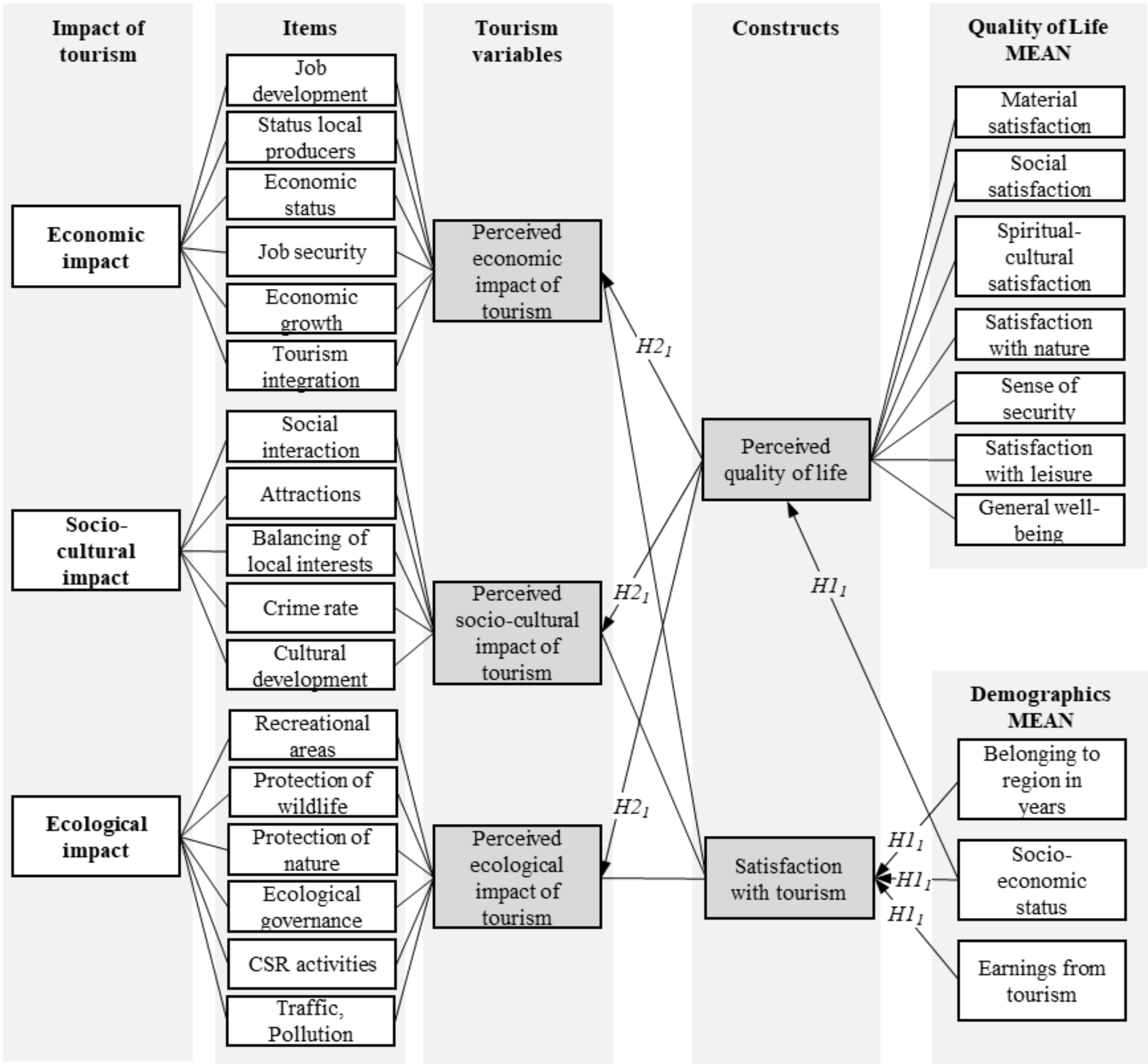

Figure 20: Influence of tourism impact on the perceived quality of life

Source: Own research, 2021

The questionnaire was distributed on April 01, 2020, via email, social media, and messenger services. Professional and private contacts of the author were selected, and forwarding was requested. Employees and students at two Universities of Applied Sciences, FH JOANNEUM and FH Burgenland, were addressed as large distribution groups. Graduates of the Institute of Health and Tourism Management were also contacted. In addition, people with a high multiplier effect were explicitly asked to help in distribution (e.g., works councils, managers, association leaders). The questionnaire went offline on April 23, 2020, at 20:00.

4.2.2.1. Measurements

Following Kim et al. (2013) and Mathew and Sreejesh (2017), a survey instrument was developed whose items have been widely tested in numerous tourism impact and quality of life studies (see also Andereck et al., 2005; Cicerchia, 1996; Cummins, 1996; Goodwin & Venu, 2008; Sirgy & Cornwell, 2001; UNEP & WTO, 2005; Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012). For this reason, validity tests (e.g., factor analyses) were not conducted to determine validity measures (Bortz & Döring, 2006). Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) for internal consistency was used to test for reliability, with $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ indicating acceptable, $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$ good, and $\alpha \geq 0.9$ indicating excellent internal consistency (Streiner, 2003). The questionnaire consisted of three parts.

Part 1 surveys the relationship between tourism development in a community and the perceived economic, socio-cultural, and ecologic influence on the community's sustainable development (exogenous factors). The economic influence was measured by six items and was rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Answers ranged from "I fully agree" to "I do not agree". The variable *Perceived economic impact of tourism* was calculated by averaging those six items. The Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.627. The socio-cultural influence was measured by five items and was rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Answers ranged from "I fully agree" to "I do not agree". In addition, one item was measured by giving alternative answer options. This item was examined to break up answering routines but was finally not used for statistical testing. The variable *Perceived socio-cultural impact of tourism* was calculated by averaging the five Likert scale-based items. The Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.308. The ecological influence was measured by six items and was rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Answers ranged from "I fully agree" to "I do not agree". The variable *Perceived ecological impact of tourism* was calculated by averaging those six items. The Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.698. The construct *Satisfaction with tourism* was calculated as follows. A composite score for each of the three domains (1) *Perceived economic impact of tourism*, (2) *Perceived socio-cultural impact of tourism,* and (3) *Perceived ecological impact of tourism* (ranged between 0 and 4) and a total score for the variable *Satisfaction with tourism,* which also ranged between 0 and 4, were calculated. The scores (1, 2, 3) were weighted equally.

Part 2 of the questionnaire surveyed 20 items influencing the personal subjectively perceived quality of life (endogenous factors). The following areas were examined: (1) material satisfaction (4 items), (2) social satisfaction (5 items), (3) spiritual-cultural satisfaction (2 items), (4) satisfaction with nature (2 items), (5) sense of security (1 item), (6) satisfaction with leisure (2 items), and (7) general well-being (4 items). A 4-point Likert scale queried nineteen items ("I am not satisfied with it"; "I am rather not satisfied with it"; "I am partly satisfied with it"; "I am satisfied with it"). In addition, one question targeted the individual quality of life status compared to the personal neighborhood. Here a 5-point Likert scale was used. This item was examined to break up answering routines but was finally not used for statistical testing.

The construct *Perceived quality of life* was calculated by averaging 19 scores. All scores were weighted equally. The Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.824.

Part 3 of the questionnaire surveys demographic data (*Age*, *Gender*, *District of residence*, *Belonging to the region in years*) and socio-economic data (in general and earnings from tourism). Attention was paid to the greatest possible flexibility regarding the evaluation options. Therefore, "age" and "belonging to region in years" were recorded as freely entered numbers. During the evaluation, categories can thus be formed without impairing the quality of the data in advance. Data on general socioeconomic status were collected with questions on "highest completed education", "current occupation", and "activity in current occupation". The questions on education, occupation, and activity are based on the stratified sociological approach and allow assessing subjective well-being based on empirically proven determinants of health (Richter & Hurrelmann, 2009, p. 19). The ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations) occupational coding index has proved its worth as an instrument for surveying socio-economic status and making it comparable. The data collected from this index can be converted into the ISEI (International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status). ISEI enables high international comparability of socio-economic status - the higher the ISEI, the higher the status of a person (Züll, 2015). The last question of the questionnaire concerned the share of personal gross income generated by tourism. One of the following options could be selected by a single-choice response: 0%; 25%; 50%; 75%; 100%. The absolute figures of *Social-economic status*, *Belonging to the region in years*, and *Earnings from tourism* served as predictor variables.

The questionnaire can be found in the appendix (see Appendix 1, p. I).

4.2.2.2. Statistical analysis

All continuous variables were expressed as mean ± standard deviation and categorical variables as frequency (%; unless otherwise stated).

In order to test hypothesis 1 (*H1*), a multiple linear regression was applied. The score *Satisfaction with tourism* was included as a dependent variable in the model. The demographic variables *Belonging to the region in years*, *Socioeconomic Status* and *Earnings from tourism,* were used as predictor (independent) variables. If several independent variables are compared with a dependent characteristic, several predictor variables and one criterion variable are compared (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 512).

In order to test hypothesis 2 (*H2*) again, a multiple linear regression was applied. The score *Perceived quality of life* was included as a dependent variable in the model. The demographic variables *Perceived economic impact of tourism, Perceived socio-cultural impact of tourism,* and *Perceived ecological impact of tourism* and the *Socioeconomic Status* were used as predictor (independent) variables.

4.2.3. RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

To address the research objective *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*, hypotheses were formed based on the qualitative interviews (*P2*). By testing the hypotheses, *R3: Subjective impact of tourism on quality of life* is achieved. Following the research design of the present work, the results of the hypothesis testing are incorporated into the implementation of the processes *P5: Framework Development* and *P6: Final Conclusions*.

For the data analysis, the answers collected in “QuestionPro Survey” were exported to “Microsoft EXCEL” and further processed before they were finally analyzed with “IBM SPSS Statistics 27". The response to the completed questionnaires can be seen in the following table:

Table 40: Basic data questionnaire

The questionnaire was seen (link opened)	1,927
Total responses	1,263
Responses closed	916
Closing rate	72,53%
Time required (average)	7 min.

Source: Own research and editing, 2021

The table above shows that 916 completed questionnaires were used. The next step was to check the data sets for essential information or errors and meaningless answers. The following steps were performed, which led to the exclusion of data records:

Table 41: Reasons for exclusion of datasets

Reason for exclusion	Amount	Justification
Answers are given before 01.04.2020	6	Pre-test answers
Answers with empty data in the *postal code*	9	Only fully completed records will be used
Answers with invalid (because non-existent) data in the *postal code*	8	Only fully completed records will be used
Responses with blank *Years living in community*	7	Relevance for hypothesis testing
Answers with intentionally false (e.g., living in a community for 1,000 years) information	2	Relevance for hypothesis testing
Answers with blank information for *occupation and activity*	43	Relevance for hypothesis testing
Answers with blank information on *earnings from tourism*	18	Relevance for hypothesis testing
Completed questionnaires	**916**	
Finally deleted datasets	59	The number is not the sum of the matching records because some records met multiple exclusion criteria.
Data sets for further analysis	**857**	

Source: Own research and editing, 2021

As shown in the table above, a database consisting of 857 data records was used for further statistical calculations.

4.2.3.1. Description of the sample

In order to better interpret the research results and make them comparable, it is advisable to describe the sample based on its characteristics (Bortz & Döring, 2006).

The sample (n = 857) has an average age of 32.1 years (SD = 12.3) and is composed of 71% female and 29% male participants. The age distribution can be seen in Table 42.

Table 42: Age of survey sample

Age category	Cases	%
18-30	515	60%
31-40	132	15%
41-50	117	14%
51-60	73	9%
61-70	16	2%
71-80	4	0%
M = 32.1; *SD* = 12.3; *n* = 857		

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The educational level of the sample is very high. Around 48% hold academic degrees (see Table 43).

Table 43: Education of survey sample

Education	Cases	%
No school degree	0	0%
Compulsory school	6	1%
Apprenticeship diploma	47	5%
Secondary school	42	5%
A-levels	336	39%
Bachelor-Degree	167	19%
Master-Degree	103	12%
University / University of Applied Sciences	147	17%
No answer	9	1%
n = 857		

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

This is a striking difference compared with the Austrian population as a whole, where the share of academics is around 17% (Statistik Austria, 2021b). The high difference is due to the circumstance of the distribution, which also took place in the university environment and can therefore influence the sample.

The vast majority of respondents live in the province of Styria (see Table 44). This can be explained by the distribution strategy of the author, who also resides in Styria.

Table 44: Place of living of the sample

Place of living	Cases	%
Styria	590	69%
Lower Austria	87	10%
Carinthia	45	5%
Burgenland	42	5%
Upper Austria	29	3%
Vienna	26	3%
Salzburg	20	2%
Tyrol, Vorarlberg	18	2%
n = 857		

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The socio-economic status of the sample was assessed using the International Socio-Economic Index (see p. 108ff). The sample has the following values: M = 47,4; SD = 19,1; n = 857. Considering the ISEI, which shows 16 as the minimum value and 90 as the maximum value, the mean value of 47.4 means a relative calculated mean value of 52.2 (16 = 0; 90 = 100). Examples of job descriptions with an ISEI-08 score of 52 include Midwifery professionals, Mechanical or chemical engineering technicians, Statistical, finance, insurance clerks, or Locomotive engine drivers (Ganzeboom, 2010).

As a different socio-economic variable, the personal income generated from tourism was asked (0% = no income; 100% = total income is generated from tourism). As Table 45 shows, around 3% of the sample have a full-time job in tourism. An Austria-wide comparison shows that around 5.1% of all employed persons (full-time equivalent) work in tourism (Statistik Austria, 2021c).

Table 45: Earnings from tourism

Earnings from tourism	Cases	%
0%	697	81%
25%	73	9%
50%	38	4%
75%	22	3%
100%	27	3%
n = 857		

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The length of time a person has lived in their current place of residence was identified as another indicator for measuring variables influencing perceived quality of life or satisfaction with tourism. The sample has lived in the current municipality for an average of 19.5 years, with the majority having done so for between 20 and 30 years (see Table 46).

Table 46: Belonging to a region

Belonging to region in years	**Cases**	**%**
0 to 5	159	19%
6 to 10	86	10%
11 to 20	195	23%
21 to 30	302	35%
31 to 40	52	6%
41 to 50	36	4%
51 to 60	23	3%
61 to 70	3	0%
over 70	1	0%
M = 19.5; *SD* = 12.9; *n* = 857		

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The questionnaire mainly focused on finding out how the sample assesses the impact of tourism and how the quality of life is perceived. The following figure shows the mean values of the answers given, ranging from 1 = I do not agree" to 4 = "I fully agree" (see also p. 108).

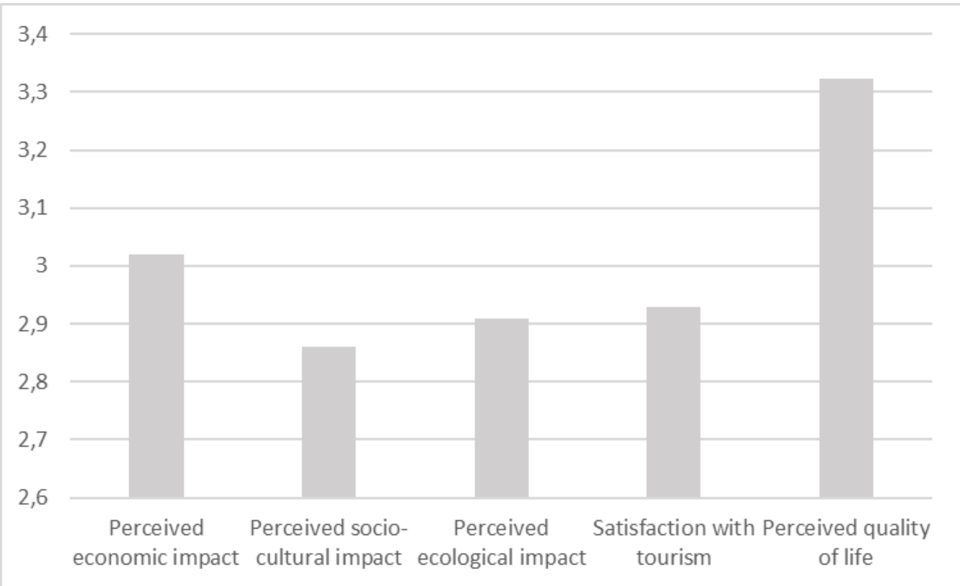

Figure 21: Perceived impact of tourism and quality of life

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

As the above figure shows, the impact of tourism is perceived positively throughout. Comparing the values of economic, socio-cultural, and ecological impact shows that the economic impact of tourism has the highest approval ratings. The individual quality of life is given a value of 3.32 out of 4 and can thus be assumed to be very positive.

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In the appendix (see Appendix 2, p. IV), the percentage frequencies of all surveyed items are presented.

4.2.3.2. Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1

In order to test the hypothesis

> *$H1_1$: Socio-economic variables (i.e., Belonging in the region in years, Socioeconomic Status, and Earnings from tourism) influence the status of perceived satisfaction with tourism.*

a model of multiple linear regression was calculated and demonstrated the following result:

Table 47: Regression of associations between tourism satisfaction and socio-economic and demographic scores

	Satisfaction with tourism				
Variables	*B*	ß	*SE B*	t	*p*
constant	2.806		.042	66.25	<.001***
years_region		.074	.001	2.166	.031*
ISEI		.028	.001	.816	.415
tour_earn		.107	.013	3.16	.002**
F		4.912			.002**
R²			.017		
R² (corrected)			.014		

Note: n = 856; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The regression of associations shows that the higher the income earned in tourism, the higher the satisfaction with tourism. This shows a highly significant correlation. Furthermore, the model shows that the number of years someone has lived in a region positively affects satisfaction with tourism. However, this effect is somewhat less pronounced. Satisfaction with tourism is not influenced by socioeconomic status (ISEI).

Since two of the three variables tested show significant influence, the null hypothesis $H3_0$ can thus be rejected for the sample surveyed, and the alternative hypothesis $H1_1$ is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

In order to test the hypothesis

$H2_1$: The perceived impact of tourism (i.e., Economic impact, Socio-cultural impact, Ecological impact) influences the perceived quality of life

a model of multiple linear regression was calculated and demonstrated the following result:

Table 48: Regression of associations between perceived quality of life, tourism impact, and socioeconomic scores

	Perceived quality of life				
Variables	*B*	ß	*SE B*	t	*p*
constant	1.581	.	.093	17.03	<.001***
econ_imp		.325	.025	10.274	<.001***
socio_imp		.129	.029	3.796	<.001***
ecol_imp		.288	.021	9.263	<.001***
ISEI		.091	.001	3.155	.002**
F		92.051			<.001***
R²			.302		
R² (corrected)			.298		

Note: n = 856; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The regression of associations shows that all tested variables of tourism impact significantly influence the perceived quality of life of the sample. Economic measures have the most significant positive impact. This is followed by the ecological dimension, which is considered to be essential. Socio-cultural influences rank third among the most important influencing factors. Socio-economic status (ISEI) is also significantly related but somewhat weaker.

Since all four independent variables significantly affect the perceived quality of life, the alternative hypothesis $H2_1$ can be accepted for the present sample, and the null hypothesis $H2_0$ is rejected.

The tested model *Influence of tourism impact on the perceived quality of life* can be seen in the following figure:

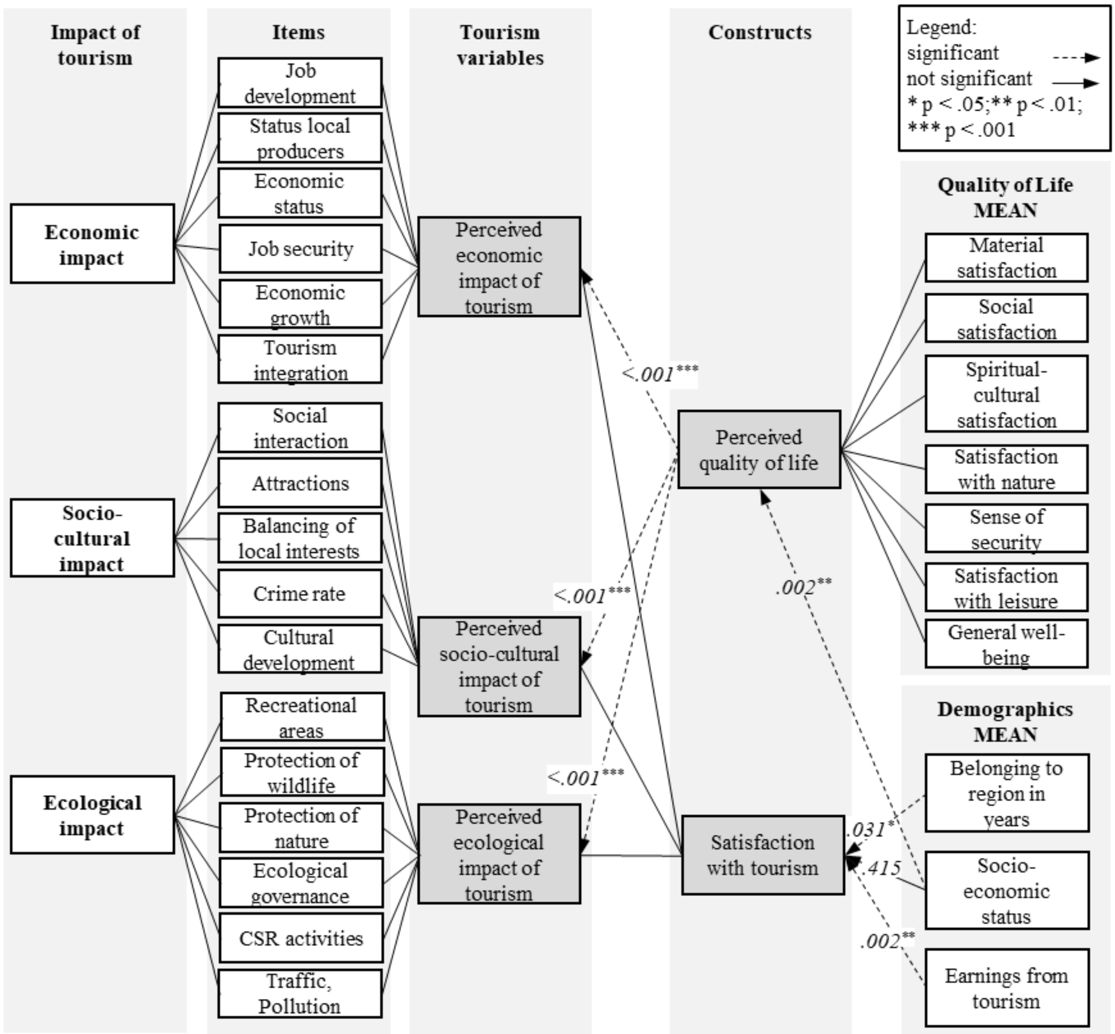

Figure 22: Tested model of the influence of tourism impact on the perceived quality of life

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The tables presenting the process of hypotheses testing can be seen in the appendix (see Appendix 3, p. V).

4.2.3.3. Limitations of the quantitative survey

The methodological approach and the selection of an ad hoc sample entail limitations in the results. Although significant correlations were found concerning the hypotheses tested, the sample is not representative of any population. Future research projects could, for example, explore randomized random samples oriented to a destination-specific population. This would allow comparisons to be made with other regions where the same survey was conducted. Although individual districts can be selected from the surveyed postal codes, their data are also not representative of any population. Theoretically, one could explore regional differences - 200 people reported living in a town with a zip code of 80xy and 142 people in a community with a zip code of 83xy - but such analyses seem of little relevance to answering the central research questions of this paper. Future publications based on the collected dataset could seek to make such comparisons. In addition, one must also take a critical look at the sample. For example, people under 51 years of age made up just under 90% of the sample. This means that population groups of people over 51 were hardly taken into account at all, and retired people were not taken into account at all. Also, in terms of educational level and gender distribution, one is in a non-comparable setting. Since demographic attributes condition differences in the perception of tourism, it is essential to take these circumstances into account when considering the research results (Li, Ali, & Kim, 2017). Among older people, in particular, the importance of quality of life is increasing, especially in the context of health (Gupta & Sharma, 2018). These circumstances also need to be taken into account and call for further research.

4.2.3.4. Interpretation of results of quantitative survey

The research results of the questionnaire survey show a clear connection between the effects of tourism and quality of life. The most significant impact is economical, ahead of socio-cultural and ecological influences. The more people earn in tourism, the more satisfied they are with tourism. While this statement seems obvious, it is still worth mentioning in light of current debates surrounding poor working conditions in tourism. Socioeconomic status plays only a minor role in the level of satisfaction with tourism. Of course, this could be due to the sample on the one hand, but there is little evidence to support such an assumption. It seems remarkable that the personal quality of life is perceived as very high. Whether this is also the case in reality or how far the response behavior differs from reality can only be conjectured at this point. In general, the sample seems to be doing well. More than 93% say they are *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with life. It should be noted here that the survey participants were asked to recall the time before the Corona pandemic. Covid-19 bias cannot be ruled out, of course. After all, the survey was conducted at the beginning of the first lockdown in Austria.

4.2.4. IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA ANALYSES

In order to achieve *R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life*, a testing model was developed to test *H3* and contribute to the aim *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*.

4.2.4.1. Measurements

As described in the Methodology chapter (see p. 96ff), numerous tourism indicators from Austria were researched at the district level and compiled into a database (see Table 49). In order to be able to compare the calculated tourism indicators of the Austrian districts with data from the area of quality of life, the existing data set ATHIS 2019 was used (see p. 96ff).

The ATHIS 2019 dataset covers 279 survey items based on about 15,000 records representatively for the Austrian population every five years. For further analysis, only those items were used that provide information about the quality of life. The general subjective state of health was also included in the analysis as an internal comparison variable. More specific items related to specific diseases or health behaviors were left out of the analysis for this thesis.

Table 49: Tourism intensity indicators

Item 1	Item 2	Calculation	Variable
Employees in tourism MEAN 2016-2017	Population of district 01.01.2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}} * 1{,}000$	Ratio of employees to population (per 1,000 inhabitants)
Apprenticeships MEAN 2018-2019	Population of district 01.01.2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}} * 1{,}000$	Ratio of apprenticeships to population (per 1,000 inhabitants)
Arrivals total MEAN 2018-2019	Population of district 01.01.2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}}$	Arrivals per inhabitant
Overnight stays total MEAN 2018-2019	Population of district 01.01.2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}}$	Density of overnight stays
Overnight stays total MEAN 2018-2019	Size of the district (km²)	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}}$	Overnight stays per km²
Arrivals total MEAN 2018-2019	Size of the district (km²)	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}}$	Arrivals per km²
Overnight stays total MEAN 2018-2019	Beds MEAN 2018 - 2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{(\text{Item 2} * 365)} * 100$	Occupancy rate %
Beds MEAN 2018 - 2019	Companies MEAN 2018 - 2019	$\frac{\text{Item 1}}{\text{Item 2}}$	Ratio of beds to companies

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

Subjective health status is measured by the variable HS1: *How is your health in general* and can be answered using a 5-point Likert scale (“very good“ = 1 to “very poor“ = 5). The variable was used as *Subjective health status* score for further analysis.

In the ATHIS 2019, a total of 26 items (*LQ1 - LQ26*) are surveyed that explicitly deal with the respondents' quality of life. All questions can be answered using a 5-point Likert scale. Because the response categories are all the same for *LQ1* through *LQ25* (“very poor“ = 1 - “very good“ = 5) but are reversed for *LQ26* ("very good" = 1 - "very poor" = 5), *LQ26* was recoded prior to analysis (1=5; 2=4; 3=3; 4=2; 5=1).

Following the same principle, the variable *HS1* was recoded before analysis to make it comparable to the values of *LQ1-LQ25*. Since ATHIS 2019 contains a variable representing the weighting of each dataset, all values were multiplied by this weighting factor before statistical analysis. A composite score for each of the two domains (1) *Subjective health status (HS1* *recoded) and* (2) *Subjective quality of life (LQ1 – LQ26),* (ranged between 1 and 5) and a total score for the variable *Subjective quality of life,* which also ranged between 1 and 5, were calculated. The scores were weighted equally.

Since the data in ATHIS 2019 is only available at the service region level, where multiple counties are combined into larger units, the tourism data was also calculated for this geographic unit. Using partial results calculation with Microsoft Excel, the data of individual districts were summarized to the level of service regions and calculated by averages.

Since tourism data are only collected for the entire city of Vienna and are not available on a district or service region basis, the data from ATHIS 2019 were summarized by averaging the three service regions in Vienna. Thus, further statistical tests are performed with the mean values from 30 supply regions.

4.2.4.2. Statistical analyses

All continuous variables were expressed as mean ± standard deviation and categorical variables as frequency (%; unless otherwise stated).

In order to test hypothesis *H3*, a multiple linear regression was applied. For this process, a model for hypothesis testing was developed (see Figure 23). The score *Subjective quality of life* was included as a dependent variable in the model. The tourism-related variables *Ratio of employees to population (per 1,000 inhabitants), Ratio of apprenticeships to population (per 1,000 inhabitants), Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, Overnight stays per km², Arrivals per km², Occupancy rate %, Ratio of beds to companies* were used as predictor (independent) variables.

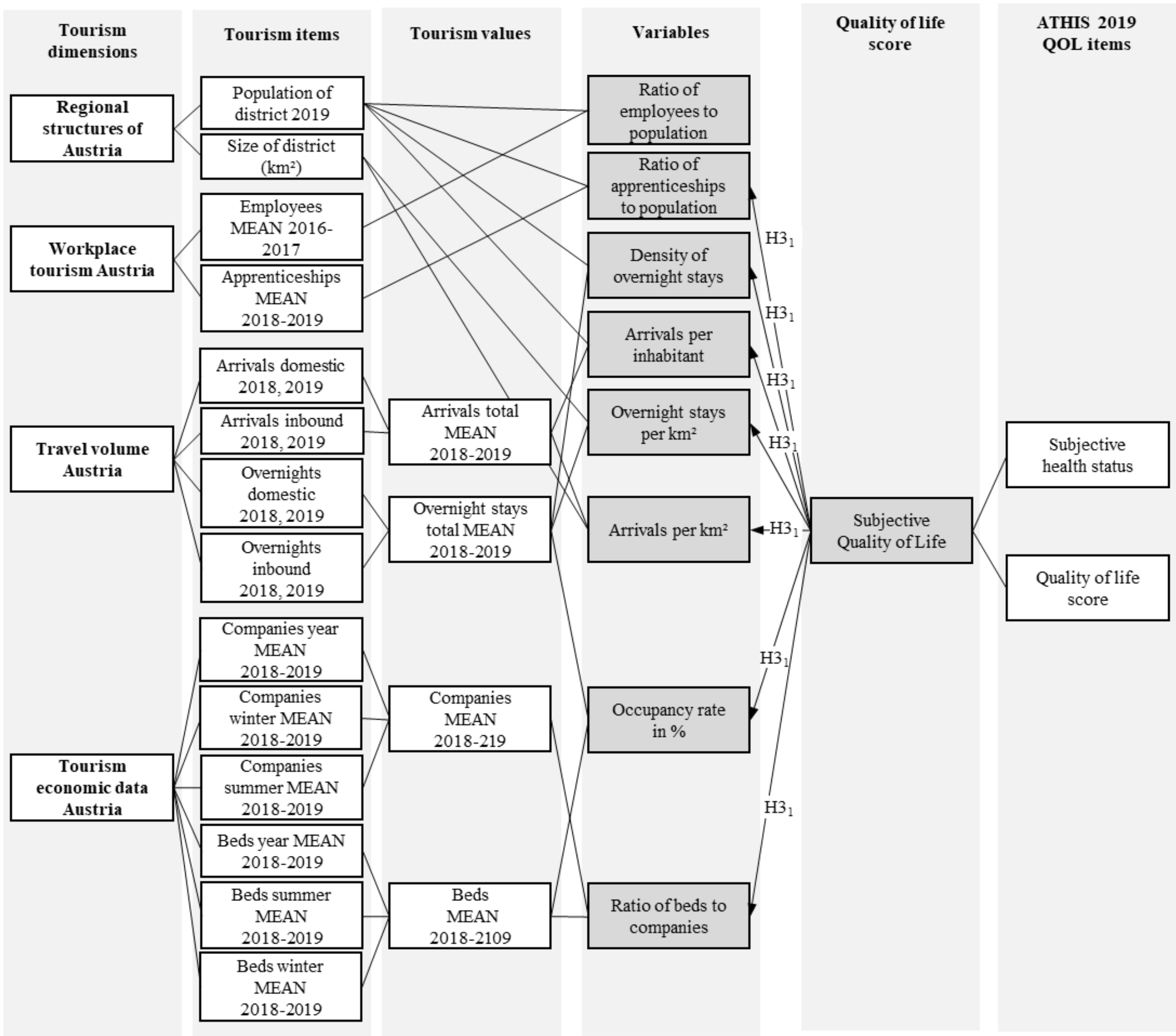

Figure 23: Influence of tourism intensity on subjective quality of life

Source: own research, 2021

The tables presenting the process of hypotheses testing can be seen in the appendix (see Appendix 3, p. V).

4.2.5. RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSES

To address the research objective *A2: Answering Sub-Question 1*, hypotheses were formed based on the qualitative interviews (*P2*). By testing the hypothesis, the result *R4: Objective impact of tourism on quality of life* will be achieved. Following the research design of the present work, the results of the hypothesis testing are incorporated into the implementation of the processes *P5: Framework Development* and *P6: Final Conclusion*.

4.2.5.1. Descriptive results

Since the primary data are taken from various Austrian tourism databases, and these data are evaluated and presented on an ongoing basis by the Ministry of Tourism and other federal and provincial organizations, this thesis does not present the essential data. The data from the ATHIS 2019 dataset are also not explicitly presented in this dissertation. All basic data that have been statistically analyzed are available on the website of Statistik Austria[15]. The data used are described in the methodological section of the present work (see p. 96ff).

For better comprehensibility of the interpretations and the research findings, the data is descriptively described in detail. As follows, frequency tables, diagrams, and further descriptive analyses of the identified variables are presented. All data are presented at the level of Austria's service regions. A list of the supply regions can be found in the appendix (see Appendix 6, p. X).

The ratio of tourism companies to population

For the following diagram, the number of tourism businesses in a service region was divided by its inhabitants and multiplied by 1.000 for a more understandable overview. The mean value of all quotient values was then calculated and defined as 100% as a base. From this basis, the percentages of the individual averages were calculated. This shows that a large number of the supply regions are below the average of 11.4 (=100%) establishments per 1,000 inhabitants. The most striking deviations are the regions Tyrol West (492%), Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau (457%), Liezen (296%), Tyrol North-East (289%) and East Tyrol (274%).

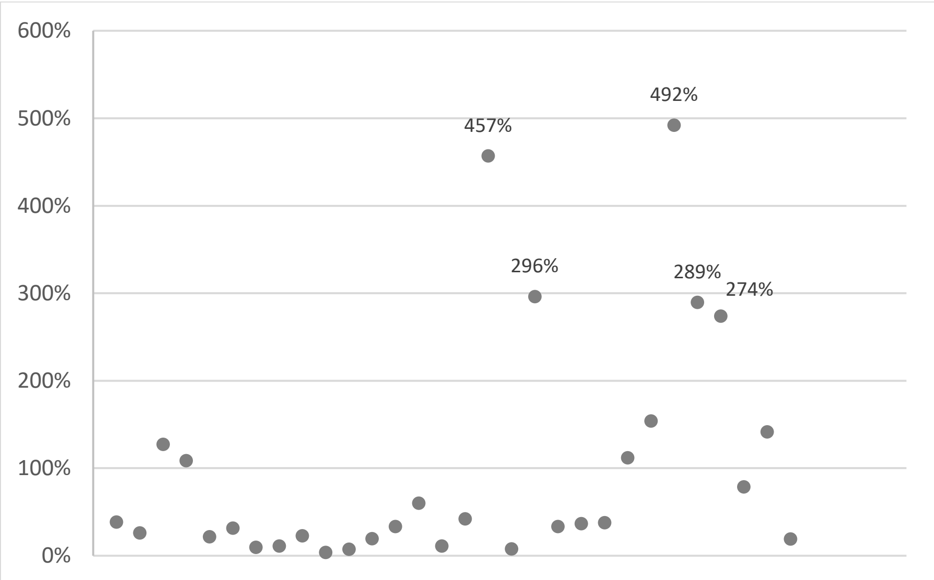

Figure 24: Ratio of tourism companies to population

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The ratio of employees to population

[15] Statistics Austria website: https://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/index.html

For the analysis of the following key figure, the mean value of the supply regions was defined as 100%, and the individual mean values of the regions were then calculated for purposes of comparison with this base value. Concerning employees in tourism, the picture is similar to that for establishments. Even if not so clear, it can be seen that there are a few supply regions in which many more employees are employed in tourism than in other regions. On average, 29.8 (= 100%) employees per 1,000 inhabitants are employed in tourism in Austria's service regions.

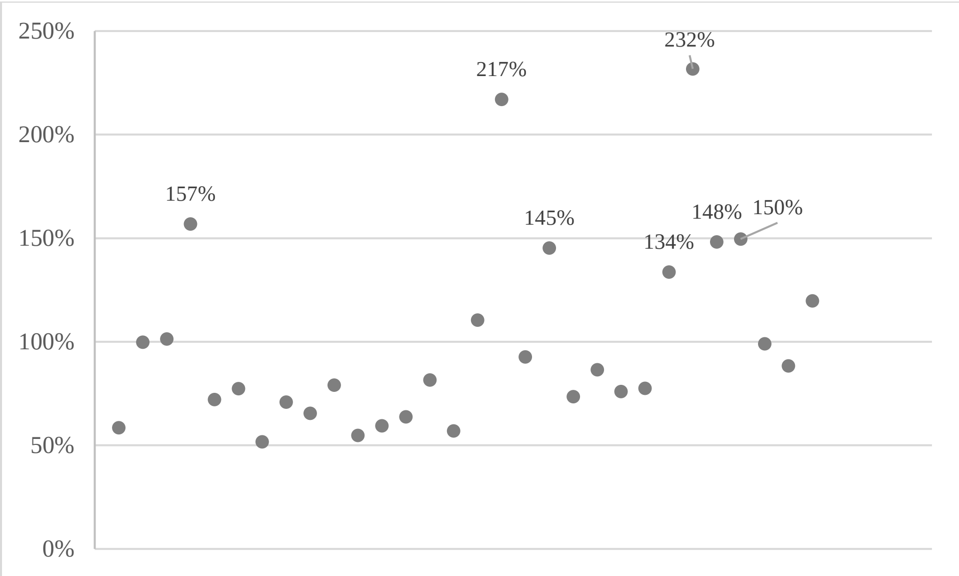

Figure 25: Ratio of employees in tourism to population per 1,000

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

In the regions of Tyrol West (232%) and Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau (217%), the number of employees per 1,000 inhabitants is more than twice as high as the Austrian average. Here, too, it can be seen that many regions are below the 100% line and thus below average.

Density of overnight stays

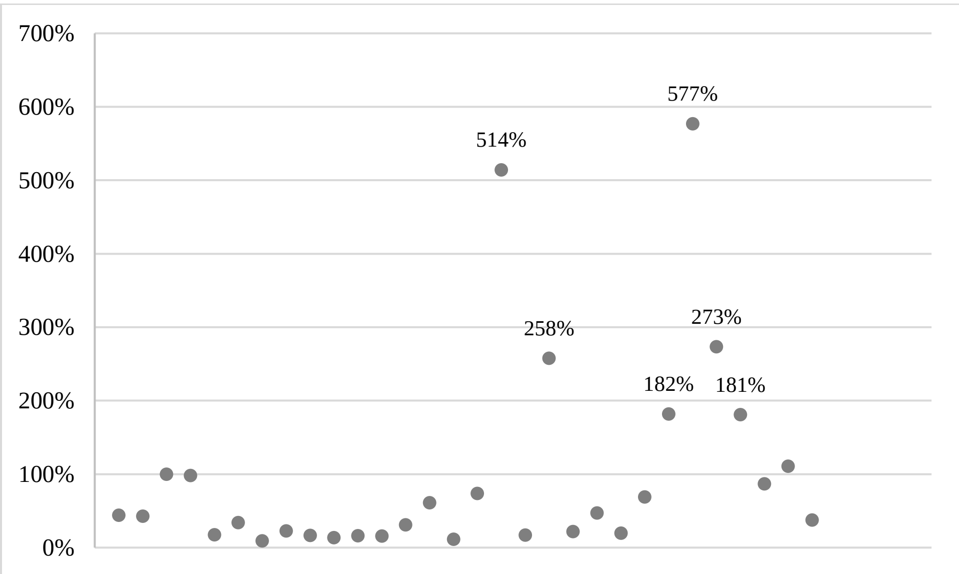

Figure 26: Density of overnight stays

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The picture that emerges when looking at overnight stays compared to the resident population is similar to that of the previous key figures. Once again, the regions Tyrol West (577%), Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau (514%), Tyrol North-East (273%), Liezen (258%), Tyrol Central Region (182%), and Tyrol East (181%) stand out very clearly from the rest of the regions. The 100% basis and thus the average value of all overnight stays to the number of inhabitants is 24.0.

Ratio of arrivals to population

The ratio between arrivals and the number of inhabitants in the Austrian supply regions has an average value of 6.4 (= 100%). This means that there are around six guests for every inhabitant. The order of the regions in this category is as follows: Tyrol West (506%), Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau (413%), Liezen (248%), Tyrol North East (232%), and Tyrol Central Region (190%).

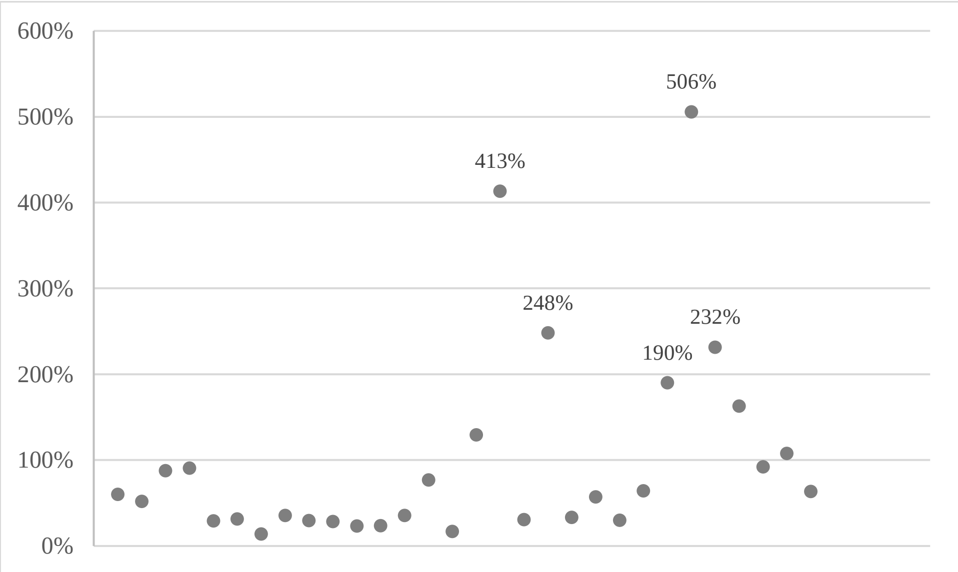

Figure 27: Ratio of arrivals to population

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

In absolute figures, this means that in Tyrol West, per resident, there are 32.5 guests, and in the Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau region, there are 26.5 guests.

The ratio of overnight stays per km²

In order to get a feeling for the tourism volume in a region, the number of overnight stays was compared with the size of the supply region. The average value of 1,630.2 for all regions provides the 100% basis. However, it must be mentioned that Vienna was excluded from the calculation because with its 41,070.0 overnight stays per km², it would skew the average too dramatically and make comparisons among the other regions hardly meaningful.

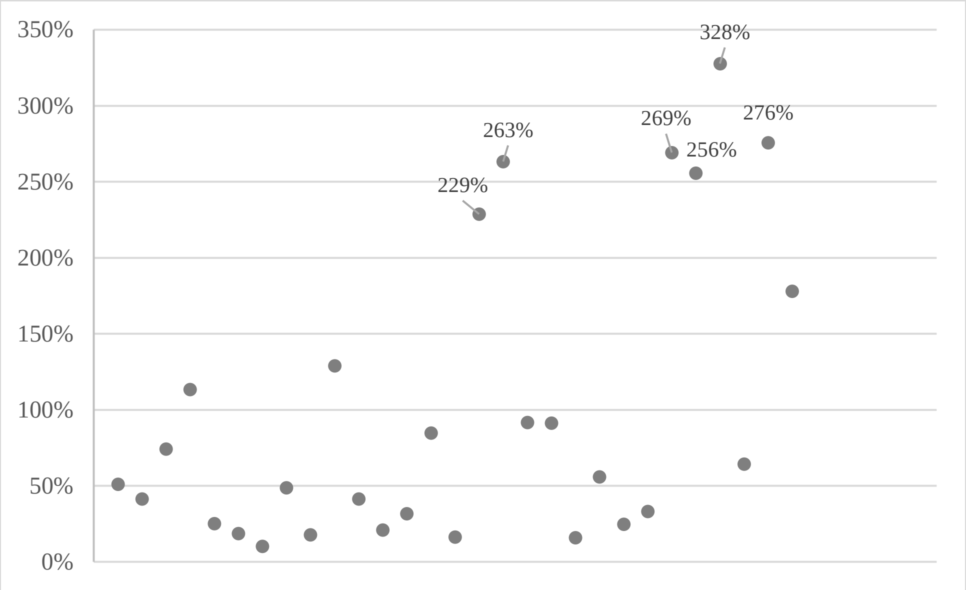

Figure 28: Overnight stays per km²

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

Moreover, urban tourism justifiably represents a separate field of research and cannot be compared with the structures in rural regions. The ranking of most visitors per km² is as follows: Tyrol North-East (328%), Rheintal Bregenzerwald (276%), Tyrol Central Region (269%), Pinzgau, Pongau, Lungau (263%), Tyrol West (256%), Salzburg North (229%).

The ratio of arrivals per km²

In addition to overnight stays, the number of arrivals (=guests) always provides a good overview of the tourist utilization of a region. Based on the Austrian supply regions, the following picture emerges.

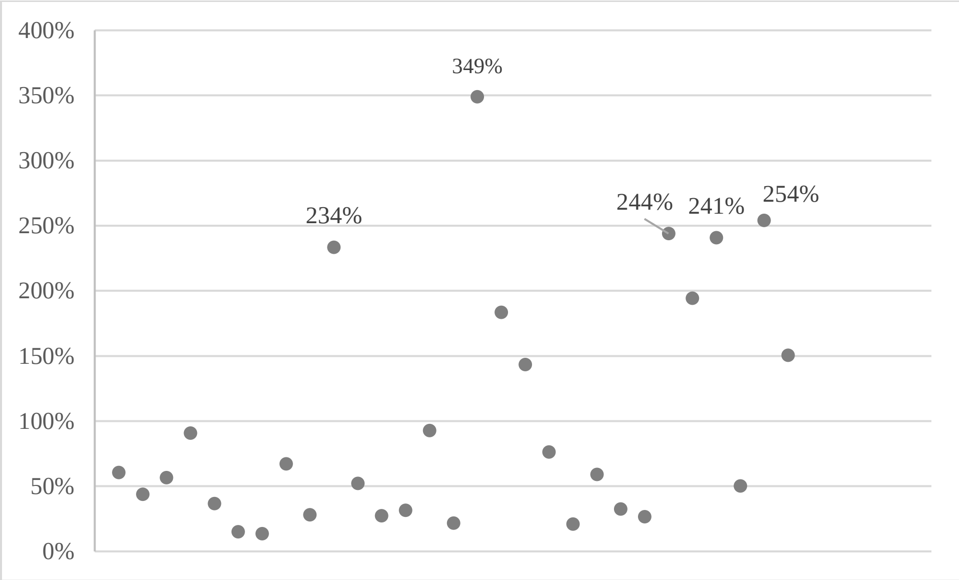

Figure 29: Ratio of arrivals per km²

Source: Own research and analyses, 2021

On average, 502.3 (= 100%) guests arrive in an area of one km². Vienna was again excluded, as it has an average of 18.634.4 per km². In the ranking, Salzburg North (349%) takes first place, followed by Rheintal-Bregenzerwald (254%) and Tyrol Central Region (244%) as well as Tyrol North (241%) and Upper Austria Central Region Linz (234%).

It is essential to note that this indicator can only be considered because the areas of the individual supply regions are not the same size and are therefore difficult to compare. Instead, the parameters for determining service regions are based on a region's population density rather than its areal size (Sozialministerium, 2021). Thus, larger cities have a minimizing effect on the area. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that the supply regions in the west are significantly better developed for tourism than those in the east of Austria.

The ratio of beds to companies

If one wants to make a statement about the size of the tourism enterprises in a supply region, this can be done by comparing the number of beds offered and the number of enterprises. For the Austrian supply regions, this means that, on average, 23.4 (= 100%) beds are offered. The Austria-wide comparison shows the following picture.

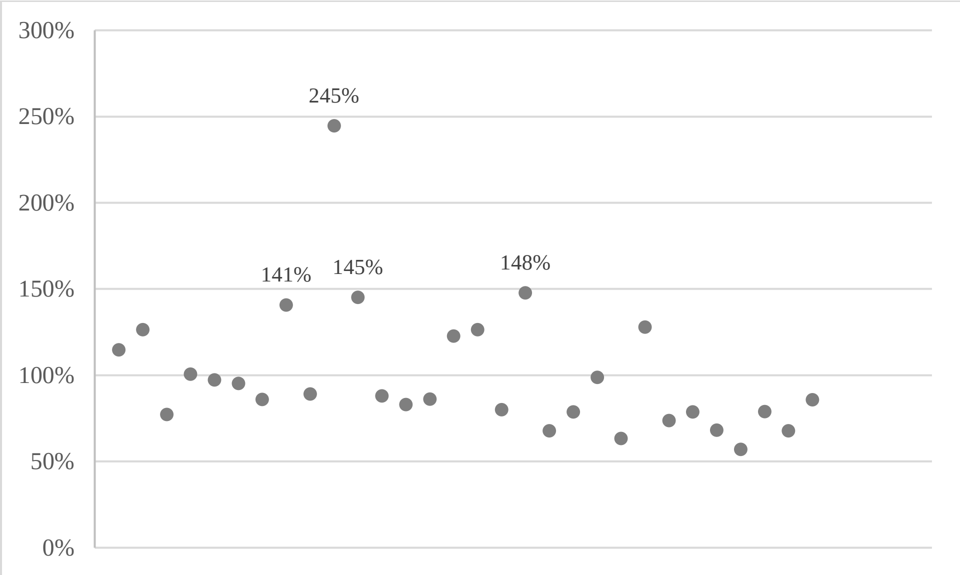

Figure 30: Ratio beds to companies

Source: Own research and analyses, 2021

The chart shows that most establishments offer around 20 beds. However, there are upward outliers, and this time they are not located in the west of Austria. With 245%, Upper Austria Central Region Linz is in the first place, ahead of Graz (148%), Upper Austria Central Region Wels (145%), and the Thermenregion (141%) in Lower Austria. Atypical tourist regions also occupy the following places: Western Upper Styria (128%), Burgenland South and Salzburg North (126%), Innviertel (123%), and Burgenland North (121%). So, it could be assumed that only a few hotels offer many beds in these regions. An interesting detail in this connection is the fact that the supply regions in Tyrol rank between 60% and 80% on the scale.

Occupancy rate

One of the most important key figures in tourism is the annual occupancy rate of the rooms on offer. The number of overnight stays generated is divided by the number of beds sold per year and shown as a % value. The average utilization rate in the Austrian supply regions is 30% (= 100% as a base for purposes of comparison). It should be noted that this calculated figure differs from official data. For example, an occupancy rate of 24% was reported for the 2020 summer season (Statistik Austria, 2020). Since all key figures in this report were calculated using average values from 2018 and 2019, differences may arise. However, the ratios essentially remain the same, and general statements can be made, nonetheless. The chart shows that there are hardly any significant differences in the occupancy rates of hotel beds. Only Vienna is on the higher end with 190%. Tyrol Central Region achieves higher occupancy rates (133%), followed by Upper Austria Central Region Linz and Upper Austria Central Region Wels (129% both).

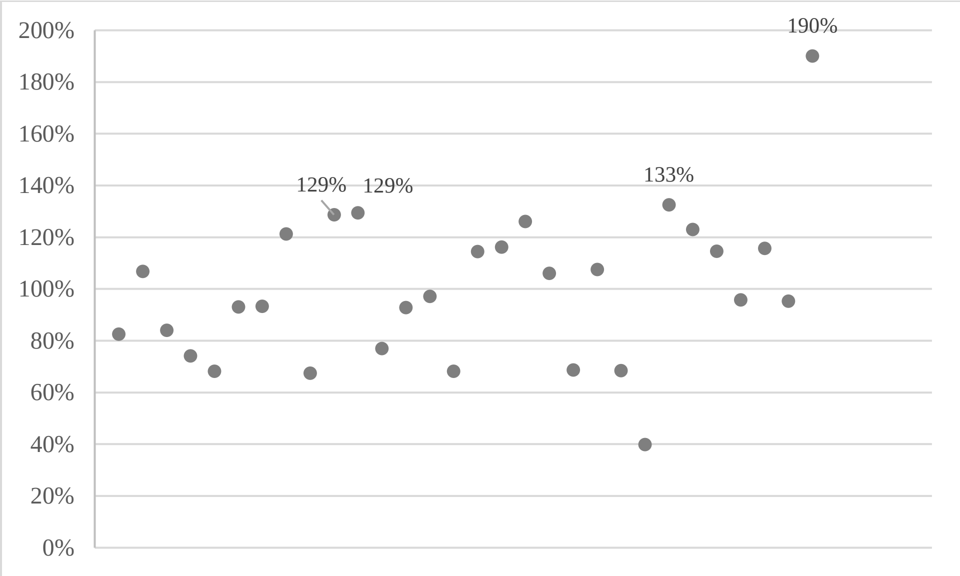

Figure 31: Occupancy rate in supply regions

Source: Own research and analyses, 2021

Length of stay

One key figure that has been declining in Austria for years is the length of stay. If the number of overnight stays is divided by the number of arrivals, the following picture emerges for the Austrian supply regions.

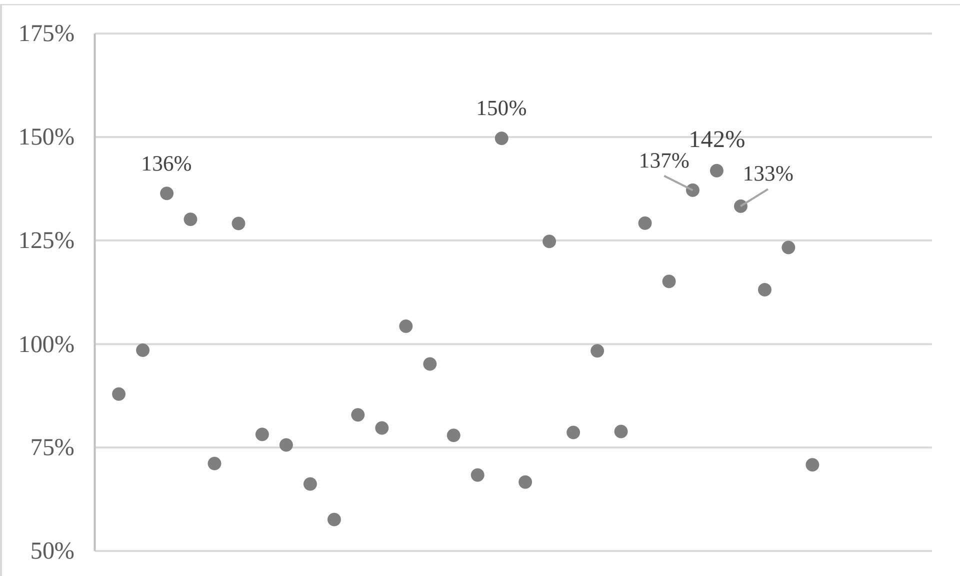

Figure 32: Length of stay

Source: Own research and analyses, 2021

On average, guests spend 3.1 (= 100%) days in an accommodation facility. Guests stay longer in the regions of Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau (150%), Tyrol North-East (142%), Carinthia East (137%), East Tyrol (136%), and Carinthia West (133%). The length of stay of foreign guests is higher than that of nationals. Thus, those regions that are attractive for guests from abroad have the advantage here.

4.2.5.2. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 3

In order to test the hypothesis

> *$H3_1$: Variables of tourism intensity (e.g., Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, ...) in a region influence the residents' perceived quality of life.*

a model of multiple linear regression was calculated and resulted in the following:

Table 50: Regression of associations between tourism intensity and subjective quality of life

	Subjective quality of life				
Variables	*B*	ß	*SE B*	t	*p*
constant	549,637		892,300	,616	,545
comp_pop		-1,111	54,919	-1,226	,235
employ_pop		,588	38,671	1,025	,318
apprentice_pop		-,457	673,581	-1,109	,281
arrive_inhab		,542	178,084	,372	,714
dens_nights		-,025	49,199	-,014	,989
nights_km2		,433	,345	,155	,878
arrive_km2		-,388	,743	-,143	,888
occupancy		,347	29,073	1,271	,218
beds_comp		,048	22,562	,223	,826
F		2.581			.037
R^2			.733		
R^2 (corrected)			.537		

Note: n = 856; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The regression of associations shows no significant influence of one of the independent variables on the dependent variable subjective quality of life. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis *$H3_1$* is rejected, and the null hypothesis *$H3_0$: Variables of tourism intensity (e.g., Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, ...) in a region do not influence the residents' perceived quality of life* is accepted.

The model *Influence of tourism intensity on subjective quality of life* shows the following picture after testing the hypothesis:

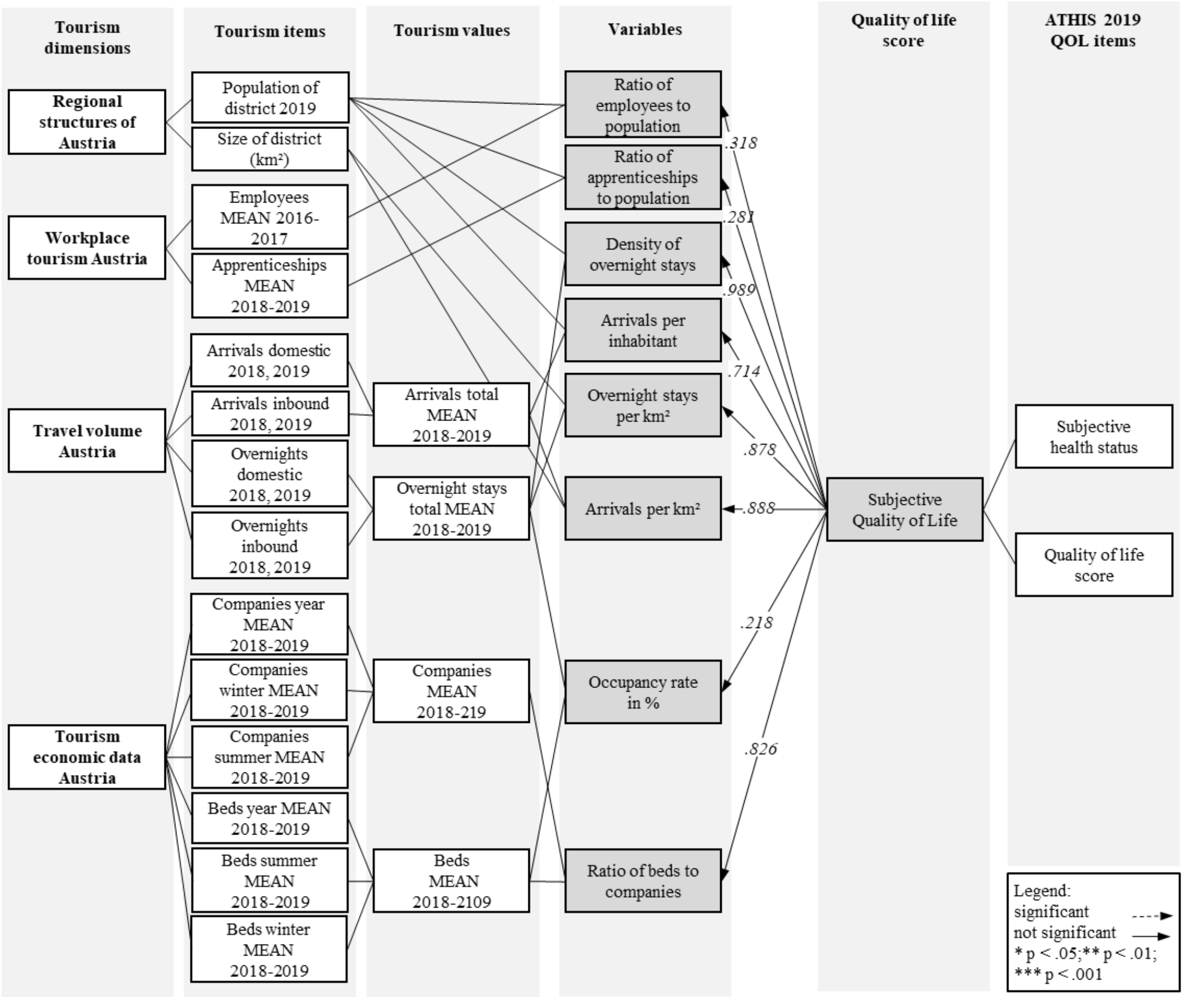

Figure 33: Tested model of the influence of tourism intensity on subjective quality of life

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

The tables presenting the process of hypotheses testing can be found in the appendix (see Appendix 3, p. V).

4.2.5.3. Limitations of data analyses

On the one hand, the data analysis is based on a self-generated dataset consisting of tourism key figures. On the other hand, the health dataset ATHIS 2019 compiled by Statistik Austria on behalf of the Ministry of Health was used. Although the tourism data set was compiled to the best of the author's knowledge and belief, errors may have crept in during the data transfer and evaluation. Furthermore, not all data can be analyzed for the same period. For example, 2016 and 2017 were available at the time of data aggregation but not yet from 2018 or 2019. However, overnight stay data are always available very recently. Here, the data could have been homogenized with the corresponding years.

However, it should be noted that differences in the availability of data may also occur due to winter and summer seasonal counting of tourism key figures. This problem is discussed in detail on page 96ff. Thus, while data analysis focused on a particular reporting period can be assured for the individual data category, the situation becomes much more difficult when data are collected and provided by different organizations. In addition, the data had to be available at the district level. Which data was available for which reporting period only became apparent in the course of the survey process, and therefore, because of a lack of resources, it was no longer possible to modify the methodology accordingly.

4.2.5.4. Interpretation of results of data analyses

The data set's evaluation showed no significant correlation between quality of life parameters and tourism intensity indicators. This result may come as a surprise since the assumption of a correlation was the motivation for conducting the tests. Thus, it can be stated that the methodology of the data comparison at the level of the supply regions does not reveal any significant correlation.

The analysis of the tourism data set yielded remarkable results. The supremacy of the province of Tyrol as the top Austrian tourism destination was impressively proven. In hardly any of the categories tested is Tyrol not number 1, be it in the number of businesses and employees per 1,000 inhabitants or overnight stays and arrivals. The gap to the rest of Austria is mostly exorbitantly high, except for the province of Salzburg. Further studies in the province of Tyrol regarding the quality of life of the population are considered relevant.

A description of the data set on the quality of life has been omitted because these data have already been analyzed in detail from different perspectives in other studies (BMSGPK, 2020).

Now that all of the research findings have been presented, the following chapter summarizes all of the findings to date in the framework *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism*.

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5. FRAMEWORK: QUALITY OF LIFE-PROMOTING MODEL OF INTEGRATED RURAL TOURISM

Based on the results of the literature review (*R1*), as well as the results of the empirical survey (*R2, R3, R4*), sub-question 2 (*A3*) of the present work, *How can a model of integrated tourism development in rural regions look like* can now be answered. The answer to sub-question 2 is provided by the development of a model and the associated descriptions. In the following section, the developed model is presented first. Then, on the following pages, those models, theories, and concepts are explained that were used in developing the model. This approach achieves the result *R5: Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* of the present work.

The *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* is understood as an amalgam of different concepts and theories dealing with the issues of competitive destination management in rural areas, regional development issues, and the emergence and influence of quality of life of the population. The model is an attempt to represent the diverse demands on the management of any particular region in a simple way. In the following, the authors used in the model are named, their concepts are analyzed, and the model's use is explained[16]. For this purpose, the model is divided into five subsections described after the presentation of the framework (see Figure 34).

[16] Note: The concepts and key terms concerned are marked in *italics* in the text.

5.1. THE FRAMEWORK

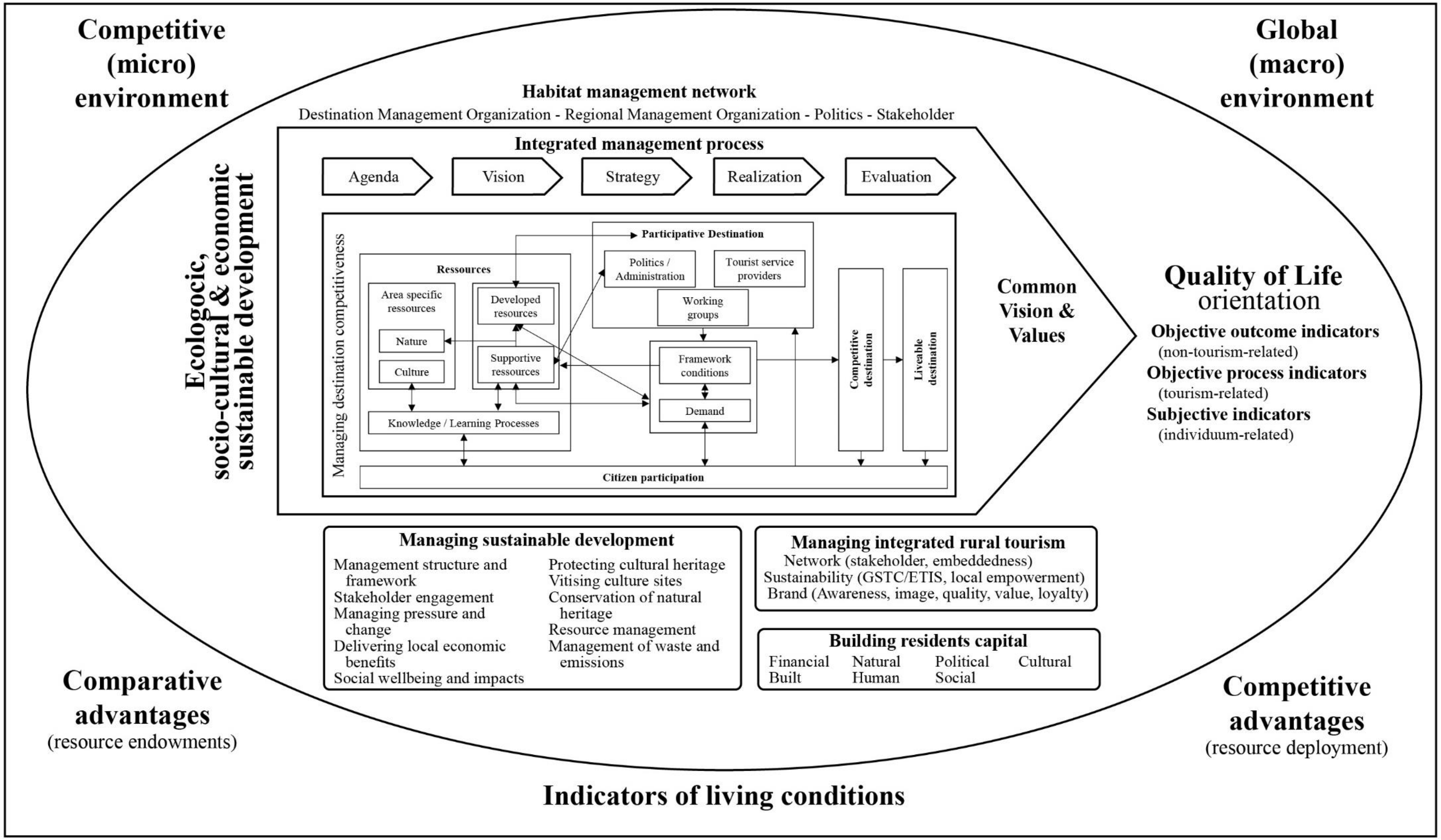

Figure 34: Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism

Sources: Own analyses and editing, 2021 based on Bieger, T., Derungs, C., Riklin, T., & Widmann, F. (2006). Das Konzept des integrierten Standortmanagements - Eine Einführung. In H. Pechlaner, E. Fischer, & E.-M. Hammann (Eds.), *Standortwettbewerb und Tourismus: Regionale Erfolgsstrategien* (pp. 11–26). Berlin: Schmidt.; Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, B. J. (2012). Destination competitiveness and its implications for host-community QOL. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 491–513). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.; Dvorak, D., Saari, S., & Tuominen, T. (2014). *Developing a Competitive Health and Well-being Destination*. Turku. Retrieved from http://julkaisut.turkuamk.fi/isbn9789522165404.pdf ; Einig, K., & Jonas, A. (2011). Ungleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse in Deutschland. *Europa Regional*, *17.2009*(3), 130–146. Retrieved from https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-48038-8; European Union (2016). *The European Tourism Indicator System*. Luxembourg. Retrieved from https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4b90d965-eff8-11e5-8529-01aa75ed71a1 ; GSTC (2019). *GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0*. Retrieved from https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf ; Herntrei, M. (2019). Tourist go home! In H. Pechlaner (Ed.), *Destination und Lebensraum: Perspektiven touristischer Entwicklung* (pp. 107–123). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.; Hi, P.-T., & Lee, C.-T. (2020). CONSTRUCTING INTEGRATED RURAL TOURISM INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS. *The International Journal of Organizational Innovation*, *12*(4), 300–320; Moscardo, G. (2012). Building Social Capital to Enhance the Quality-of-Life of Destination Residents. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 403–423). Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.; Tuominen, T., Saari, S., & Binder, D. (2017). Enhancing the competitiveness of a wellness tourism destination by coordinating the multiple actor collaboration. In M. K. Smith & L. Puczkó (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of health tourism* (pp. 285–298). London, New York: Routledge.; Uysal, M., Perdue, R. R., & Sirgy, M. J. (Eds.) (2012). *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities*. Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York: Springer.

5.2. EXOGENOUS FACTORS

Every region and destination is embedded in an environment that affects the region itself somehow (Bieger & Beritelli, 2013; Chilla et al., 2016; Freyer, 2015). However, as in a system, there are also feedback effects in a region, which means signals from the region impact its surroundings (Freericks et al., 2010; Kleve, 2005; Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017).

According to Crouch & Ritchie (2012), competitive advantages can be derived from this environment, characterized on the one hand by the presence of resources (*comparative advantage*) and on the other hand by the use of resources (*competitive advantage*). While the innovative use of resources is in the hands of the destination, it has comparatively little influence on competition from neighboring or similar destinations (*competitive micro-environment*). A destination can try to create trends and make them useful for itself, but there are global developments, such as climate change, digitalization, or pandemics, whose occurrence can only be influenced to a limited extent (*global macro-environment*). Instead, what the destination needs to do is learn how to deal with these global changes to derive competitive advantages (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012).

The model attempts to highlight the significant influence that the living conditions in a region have in general and on the perception of tourism in particular through the item "*Indicators of living conditions*" (Kim, 2002; Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017; Uysal et al., 2016). Einig & Jonas

(2011) cite as key influencing variables: (1) demographics, (2) economy, (3) labor market, (4) prosperity, (5) infrastructure, and (6) housing market. Presumably, there is a high probability of overlap between the individual elements of the exogenous factors. In this regard, it is noted that models approximate reality and should and must be further developed through discussion.

5.3. ORGANIZATION

Regions like destinations represent complex systems with demands from multiple stakeholders. Tuominen et al. (2017) argue for close cooperation between all stakeholders involved to meet these different needs and expectations. In many different theoretical concepts to represent the competitiveness of destinations, the coordinated interaction of all organizations and stakeholders involved within a region, with its development, is considered essential (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Voigt & Pforr, 2014). In recent publications, a destination is increasingly understood holistically as a living space for residents, guests, and businesses (Brandl et al., 2021; Pechlaner, 2019a). From the results of the qualitative survey of the present work, it can be concluded that concerted structures and coordinated processes for developing a region are seen as decisive success factors (see p. 101). As a more pointed demand, one expert even called for the establishment of a habitat management agency. The *Destination Management Organization* and the *Regional Management Organization* must be brought together and work closely with *political entities* and *stakeholders*. The organizational challenges involved are daunting, of course, but experts consider them to be feasible in a model region.

5.4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The framework is based on fundamental parameters that make the success and actions of the region's management evaluable. These principles of action are deliberately designed to overlap and should and must be adapted to each region individually. In the best case, this happens through a comprehensive participatory process with the population and stakeholders (Chilla et al., 2016). The model is based on a holistic understanding grounded in *ecological*, *socio-cultural*, and *economic sustainable development*. To make these fundamental values measurable, three sub-guiding principles were formulated: (1) *managing sustainable development*, (2) *managing integrated rural tourism*, and (3) *building residents' capital*.

Managing sustainable development

Under the slogan "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were ratified by the United Nations (2015). Since then, the SDGs have been considered the benchmark for planning, implementing, and evaluating projects and decisions by companies and organizations regarding their development. Since the SDGs were developed as indicators for all economic and life sectors, an adaptation for destinations is needed. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed this action guideline and thus enables a destination to be assessed concerning the implementation of the SDGs based on 36 criteria (GSTC, 2019). Each of the main criteria is assigned to the relevant SDGs and can be assessed using several indicators. Thus, an implementation in a destination is easily possible (see Appendix 5, p. IX).

The European Union (2016) has also released a set of indicators for sustainable tourism development. Divided into the sections (1) destination management, (2) economic value, (3) social and cultural impact, and (4) environmental impact, 43 indicators are used to determine the level of sustainable tourism development of a region (see Appendix 4, p. VII). The model recommends using the GSTC criteria. However, it provides for interleaving with the European Union recommendations where appropriate.

Managing integrated rural tourism

Under the second sub-guiding principle, those factors are grouped that are specifically dedicated to integrated tourism development in rural areas. The factors are based on the evaluation criteria of Hi & Lee (2020), which deal with assessing the innovation potential in rural tourism regions. A comprehensive survey instrument attempts to correlate the areas of (1) network, (2) capital, (3) sustainability, and (4) brand to derive a clear picture of a region's innovation capacity (see also p. 86).

As a further basis for high-quality work in destinations and thus a contribution to the competitiveness of destinations, Correia Loureiro (2012) developed the RURALQUAL instrument, which tries to measure and ultimately raise the offer quality in rural destinations based on the parameters (1) professionalism, (2) reservation, (3) tangibility, (4) complimentary benefits (5) rural and cultural environment and (6) basis benefits. RURALQUAL can serve as a quality benchmark in the framework.

An essential factor in integrated management recognizes the scope of “integration”. Therefore, the question is: “which elements can and should be considered and developed in an integrated way in rural tourism"? Saxena et al. (2007) show different levels of integrated rural tourism and formulate nine different forms of integration (see p. 83). The presented possibilities should serve as a guideline to recognize the potentials of integrated tourism in the destination.

Building residents capital

Based on the “social exchange theory”, which examines cause-effect principles and their effects on a social environment, *residents' capital* can be built up in the context of tourism (Moscardo, 2012; Nunkoo, 2016; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Vemuri & Costanza, 2006). Depending on how tourism is developed or perceived by the population, positive or negative effects on the “capital” of the population can result. In this context, the “carrying capacity” theory should also be mentioned, which can also be applied to tourist regions in a further developed form. The aim is to determine the level of tourism impact that is tolerable for a habitat to balance resource generation and resource consumption (Kerstetter & Bricker, 2012; Saarinen, 2006). If this balance is negative compared to the available resources, one can speak of “overtourism” (Tokarchuk et al., 2020).

The effects of the measures taken have a positive or negative, direct or indirect impact on the population's quality of life (Kim et al., 2013). The tolerable extent and proportionality of tourism burdens and benefits must be determined individually for a destination. Corresponding actions are to be derived from this.

5.5. QUALITY OF LIFE ORIENTATION

The central objective of the framework is to improve the perceived *quality of life* of the population in a destination. All guiding principles should be subordinate to this goal. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the quality of life is necessary. According to the WHOQOL definition (WHO, 1998), Naude-Potgieter & Kruger (2018) show the following dimensions of quality of life are essential: (1) physical, (2) psychological, (3) level of independence, (4) social relations, and (5) spirituality (see also p. 65). Uysal, Woo & Singal (2012) see economic, socio-culture, and environmental impacts on the population's quality of life in tourism. According to Uysal, Perdue & Sirgy (2012), these can be divided into *objectifiable* and *subjectively* perceived influencing variables. Regarding the objective criteria, it is stated that there are *outcome-oriented* (non-tourism-related) and *process-oriented* (tourism-related) influencing variables (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012).

The effects of the actions undertaken for the region's development and their influences on the population's quality of life require holistic, ongoing monitoring. At the beginning of the establishment of the model region, the status quo should be ascertained, which should subsequently be checked in regularly recurring surveys. It is vital to establish direct causality between the actions undertaken and the effects. Both models *Influence of sustainable tourism impact on the perceived quality of life* (see p. 117) and *Influence of tourism intensity on* *subjective quality of life* (see p. 130) of the present study serves to determine the status quo. The two models act as a basis for the further development of indicator sets, which must be adapted to the respective destination.

5.6. MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Now that the framing conditions have been defined and basic instructions for action have been drawn up, it is time to look at the internal management processes. A central *vision and common values* of the region form the basis of all actions. In the course of a comprehensive strategy process, a future-oriented mission statement is developed, on which the operational management is based (Bleicher K., 2004; Hungenberg, 2012; Reisinger, Gattringer, & Strehl, 2017).

Following the *St. Galler Management Model* (Rüegg-Stürm & Grand, 2019), the operational management for each project goes through the cycle of (1) agenda setting, (2) develop vision, (3) define strategy, (4) implement project, and (5) evaluate results (see p. 82). The basics of the *PDCA cycle* according to Quality Austria (2016) and the "*Model of Integrated Management System*" by Drljača & Buntak (2019) (see p. 11) are also taken into account, as is the adaptation of the *St. Galler Management Model* by Freericks et al. (2010) und Bieger et al. (2006) with a concept for "*integrated location development*".

At the heart of the management process is developing a competitive destination in cooperation with the regional development actors. Herntrei (2019) developed a model based on Dwyer & Kim (2003), which sees citizen participation as a central element of *managing destination competitiveness*. The underlying theory is again referred to as "*social exchange theory"* (Nunkoo, 2016). Herntrei's model is used to represent the management process in the framework. At the same time, it is pointed out that further discussion and differentiation from other models already mentioned in this chapter are needed. Also, at this point, reference is made to the individualization of the framework to a specific region.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results of the theoretical elaboration are compared and discussed with the results of the empirical investigation in the following chapter.

The structures necessary to achieve sustainability-oriented objectives can usually only be realized by implementing integrative systems familiar to management. For this purpose, it is necessary to know the principles of these management systems and to be able to adapt them to the individual circumstances of organizations or regions. The St. Galler Management Model has established itself as a proven instrument for developing destinations (Bieger et al., 2006; Rüegg-Stürm & Grand, 2019). Based on 5 phases, the model tries to approach how a destination can be managed as a business unit. Of course, it should be noted here that a region or destination is only rudimentarily comparable with a company. The public interest alone is entirely different.

Integrated management systems are of great importance when it comes to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. (United Nations, 2015). As the qualitative survey results, in particular, suggest, new ways of thinking are needed, but also interlocking forms of organization, if the SDGs are to be achieved at least in part (see p. 104). In addition, this work shows numerous examples of how tourism systems can be developed in an integrated manner (Rempel, 2012; Saxena et al., 2007). This integration seems to be a sine qua non if we want to maintain the future competitiveness of destinations and at the same time comply with the dimensions of sustainable development (An & Alarcón, 2020; Crouch & Ritchie, 2012; Freyer, 2015; Siegrist, 2012). Integration means involving relevant stakeholders who are actively involved in developing a destination or region in organized associations or loose networks in participative processes (Raich, 2019; Steinecke & Herntrei, 2017).

If integrative, participatory approaches to destination development, such as destination leadership or destination governance, are consistently followed, this can ultimately have a positive effect on the quality of life in general (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014; Pechlaner, 2019b; Tallinucci, 2019; Uysal, Woo, & Singal, 2012). This is due to the direct link between the impact of tourism and the perception of personal quality of life (Boley & Perdue, 2012; Freericks et al., 2010; Herntrei, 2019; Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012). The present research also confirms this relationship (see p. 111ff). Moreover, the results show that when people are actively involved in tourism and derive income from tourism, they perceive tourism more positively than those not involved in tourism, a finding that is in keeping with previous studies (Andereck et al., 2005; Yu et al., 2013). Thus, it can be concluded that if people can be actively involved in tourism, the acceptance of future tourism projects among the population can be greater. In order to depict the network of relationships between tourism and the population, it is advisable to take a look at the “Social Exchange Theory“ or the “Social Capital Theory“ (Moscardo, 2012; Nunkoo, 2016; Vemuri & Costanza, 2006). These theoretical approaches allow structured analysis of positive and negative influences brought about by tourism activities.

Based on Dwyer & Kim (2003), Herntrei (2019) derives a model for competitive destination development. In combination with other concepts, this model is the basis for the framework *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* developed in this thesis (see p. 133). The developed model should help to create a mutual understanding of habitat development. The associated need for a shared vision of the region is undisputed.

Because, as the research results show, there are entirely different views on how regions should be developed. Furthermore, although all the experts surveyed agree that the population's quality of life must be at the top of the agenda as a critical element. However, the various ways of looking at tourism development can be well illustrated by the experts' answers in this work (see also p. 101ff).

Thus, from the point of view of regional development, tourism is seen as an additional effect that can be taken to generate guests and thus more users for the offers that one has developed for one's population. From the point of view of the tourism experts, tourism creates wealth and jobs in regions with weak infrastructures. Disadvantages are also admitted, but the advantages outweigh them. From the perspective of sustainable development, it should be noted that tourism already creates jobs, but the regional population must also want to fill such jobs. If workers have to be “imported” from outside as seasonal workers because locals don’t want to work, this is not very sustainable for a region. The economic dimension is increasingly pointed out in the context of the sustainability discussion with regard to tourism. Experts in regional development and sustainability do not emphasize economic concerns as much.

Ultimately, all organizations have people at the center who are accountable to a higher-level body and thus must prioritize the interests of the organization. Only if these hurdles can be overcome can habitat management be indeed implemented sustainably. The framework developed in this thesis is intended to be the basis of such a discourse.

One of the aims of this dissertation was to find correlations between tourism intensity in a region and the perceived quality of life of the population. This experiment has shown that with the chosen methodology, namely comparing tourism metrics with existing quality of life data, no significant interdependencies could be identified (see p. 129). This research approach was based on the assumption that differences in the subjective quality of life can be found in tourism regions compared to low-tourism regions. This assumption has to be revised or cannot be proven with the chosen methodology, at least when looking at the service regions for which quality of life data is available. Thus, it is recommended to adapt the methodology regarding selected districts, regions, or destinations and perform the tests again.

Further limitations of the present work were discussed on pages 100, 117, and 130. Furthermore, it should be noted that the research results suggest taking a detailed look at the individual aspects of the present work. Therefore, further research questions are presented on page 146.

Finally, an attempt can now be made to answer the research questions of this thesis. Starting with sub-questions 1 (*A2*) and 2 (*A3*), the main research question will be answered in conclusion (*A4*).

Sub-question 1: What relationships exist between the tourism development of a region and the perceived quality of life of its residents?

The empirical investigation and the theoretical derivations clearly show that tourism development is directly linked to the perception of the population's quality of life. Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism are noticed by the population and influence well-being. Regions, as well as destinations, need to be aware of this fact. Ultimately, both sides, people and organizations, need each other to develop and preserve a shared habitat for future generations.

Sub-question 2: How can a model of integrated tourism development in rural regions look like?

With the Framework *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* (see p. 133), a model for sustainable management of habitats was developed. The model is embedded in environmental factors that provide a competitive framework and, at the same time, provide potential for further development. In addition, the model is based on the dimensions of sustainability, incorporates the principles of integrated management, and attempts to promote the positive development of the residents' capital. The management processes are based on managing competitive destinations, combined with phases of the St. Galler Management Model. The management of this model habitat consists of organizations of regional and tourism development, politics, and stakeholders. All bodies make use of the creative potential of the people in the region in comprehensive participation processes. A common vision, namely to increase the quality of life of the people in the region, motivates the people and organizations involved.

Main Question: How can integrated tourism development contribute to strengthening the perceived quality of life of residents of a rural destination?

The central research question of this dissertation can be answered as follows, taking into account the qualitative and quantitative research results and deriving the theoretical foundations. One can only speak of integrated tourism development if the principles of sustainable development are followed. This statement is especially true in rural areas. Because especially in rural destinations, the connection between nature and man is particularly noticeable, even if this connection no longer works as it should, owing to unbalanced tourism, for example. However, it can be assumed that if the principles of sustainable tourism development are adhered to, this will lead to a gain in quality of life not only for the population but also for employees. This applies to people employed in tourism, for example, through improved working conditions and, in particular, to people who are not or only indirectly involved in the tourism value chain, because it could be shown that the higher the satisfaction with tourism, the higher the perceived quality of life.

7. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Finally, this dissertation demonstrates the following scientific (*R6*), and practical contributions outlined (*R7*) and provides the basis for further research (*R8*).

7.1. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

This dissertation has revealed multiple potentials and challenges that need to be considered in researching whether destinations contribute to strengthening the quality of life of the population. The following paragraphs present the main findings of the present work and address the result *R6: Scientific contribution*.

Scientific outcome 1: Within the scientific discourse on the development of regions, the present work contributes to deepening a general understanding of destination development. This is to be done against the background of the increasing realization that it is no longer sufficient to consider population and tourists separately. They must be perceived as influencing factors in a shared living space.

For tourism researchers, this research provides an insight into the diverse factors influencing the quality of life in general and in destinations in particular. Furthermore, concepts of integrated destination development in rural areas are summarized and discussed.

For those interested in researching the quality of life, the results may provide insight into how regions and destinations interact as a system and can be developed with integrated management concepts to enhance the subjective quality of life.

Scientific outcome 2: By implementing the test model *Influence of tourism impact on the perceived quality of life* (see p.117), the quantitative survey showed that within the sample, the perception of the impact of tourism is significantly related to the subjectively perceived quality of life. Economic impacts of tourism have the most significant influence, followed by ecological and socio-cultural ones.

Based on the sample, a correlation could be shown between an individual's income generated from tourism and satisfaction with tourism. The higher the income from tourism, the higher the satisfaction. Furthermore, it was found that the Socioeconomic Status of the sample does not influence tourism satisfaction.

Scientific outcome 3: The test model *Influence of tourism intensity on subjective quality of life* (see p. 130) showed that the comparison of tourism indicators with data from the quality of life research based on Austria's service regions does not reveal any significant correlations. Nevertheless, the model can serve as a basis for further discussion in the scientific discourse.

The analyses of the developed dataset have confirmed the east-west divide in Austrian tourism. This means that the western part of Austria, with the provinces of Salzburg and Tyrol, accounts for a large part of Austrian tourism, measured in terms of arrivals, overnight stays, and businesses and labor force. Tourism intensity, measured in terms of establishments and guests relative to population size, is also many times higher in western Austria than in the country.

Scientific outcome 4: The framework *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* (see Figure 34, p. 133) represents a model of a rural tourism region that has set strengthening the populations' quality of life as a future-oriented guideline for action.

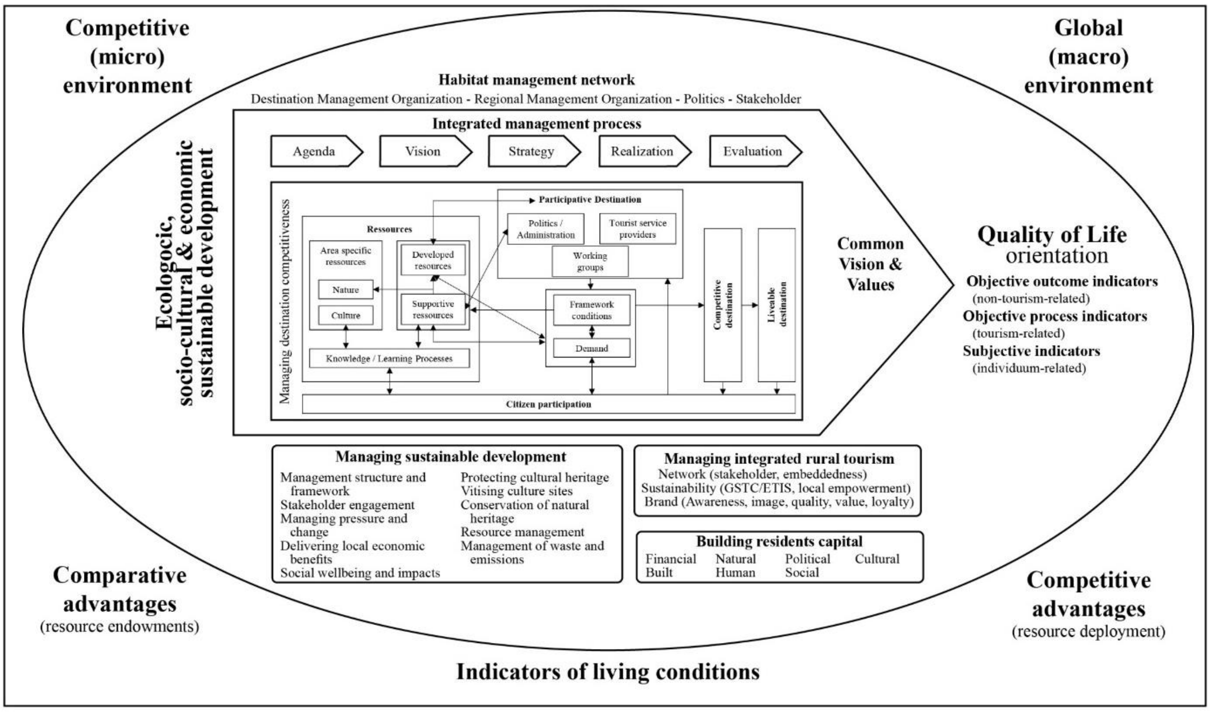

Figure 35: Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism (small version)

Source: Please find a large version of the framework and all sources on p. 133

The model attempts to present a holistic approach to destination development along the dimensions of sustainable regional development. It indicates how future habitats can be developed utilizing integrated management approaches. Moreover, the framework represents a contribution to the scientific discussion of established theories of destination competitiveness and social development to strengthen the quality of life and relations between visitors and residents of a region.

Scientific outcome 5: Based on the qualitative results, it can be stated that to sustainably design living spaces for people in an intact environment, well-coordinated structures and organizational units committed to shared goals are needed. The quality of life of people can only be secured in the long term if the principles of sustainable development are followed. Rural regions, in particular, offer great potential to contribute positively to the regeneration of systems and people. Moreover, they positively affect the quality of life of the population, the people working in tourism, and the guests.

7.2. PROFESSIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the previous research findings, outcomes for practical implementation could be developed, and thus the result *R7: Practical implications* has been achieved.

In the course of the research process, the qualitative interviews, in particular, it became clear that the previous indicators used to measure successful tourism will no longer be sufficient in the future. The requirements on the part of the guests and those of the population and the public are too diverse. Especially the discussions around the tourism re-start from the Corona crisis show that there should be new key figures to measure tourism.

This insight should be the guideline for the practical recommendations of the present work. For this reason, examples are given of indicators whose collection and analysis can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of successful destination development. These indicators are to be understood as a basis for further discussion and development and should be supplemented and individualized for destinations. However, a clear recommendation resulting from the thesis is that a uniform system of key figures as a basis at the EU or country level should be developed so that data can be centrally collected, compared, and analyzed commensurate with the Big Data discussion. The recommendation to start with a model region and learn from it is echoed in the qualitative interviews.

Many of the indicators presented (see Table 51) are aimed at tourism managers and those responsible in regions, and they provide a sufficient basis for discussion in academic discourse, which will be elaborated upon in the following chapter. After an intensive discourse and practical application, the indicators could also find their way into textbooks. Furthermore, they could serve as a thought-provoking impulse for new ideas in the tourism industry.

Table 51 presents an attempt at enumerating possible metrics that can be used to assess future tourism. It is important to note that each indicator by itself can never represent the level of holistic development of a destination. Rather, each metric can contribute a small part of the knowledge gained on the way to a sustainable tourism region.

Table 51: Indicators (examples) of successful future tourism

Dimension	Examples of indicators
Tourist value-added	Using adapted data from tourism satellite account Usage of governance data, e.g., sales figures from sales tax Transparency of equity ratio Visibility of additional value-added by guests (direct/indirect) Full occupancy days The average length of stay Diversity of accommodation types (e.g., apartments, hotels)
Daily spending by guests	On average Per room, per bed Per m² of built tourism area/attraction area Per inhabitant, per km²
Sustainability indicators	CO_2 - footprint per guest (arrival - stay - departure) Increase in value of land concerning the income of the population Inflow/outflow tendencies concerning tourism key figures Public good balances in companies and destinations Mapping of participation processes and resulting liabilities
Quality of life	Ongoing quality of life measurement in destinations (QOL - Barometer) Evaluation of satisfaction with tourism, etc. ... concerning overnight stays and arrivals ... by asking people involved in tourism ... by asking people not involved in tourism ... by asking businesses and stakeholders
Working in tourism	Job satisfaction indicators Jobs created - retained through tourism (comparison with other economic sectors) Staffing by residents Staffing by non-local employees

Source: Own research and analysis, 2021

7.3. PROSPECTS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the available research findings, other research topics are developed, and thus the result *R8: Further research opportunities* is achieved.

It was shown that the test model *Influence of tourism intensity on subjective quality of life* (see p. 130) could not provide any significant findings in the selected sample (based on the service regions of Austria). Perhaps the model does not allow any significant conclusions in general. A recommendation for further research, therefore, is to collect both strands of data, tourism intensity and quality of life within a specific destination. This could provide information on possible correlations. If this survey is carried out in different destinations, they could be compared with each other, and then conclusions could be drawn about specific tourism activities and their effects.

In general, it is recommended to use existing scales to measure the quality of life in destinations and apply them to specific regions on an ongoing basis. It could be conceivable that developments that one would like to avoid (e.g., unbalanced tourism) can be recognized early through a monitoring system. What such an evaluation and monitoring tool should look like can be the subject of further research.

The development of a reliable and valid set of indicators to measure tourism satisfaction and quality of life in tourist destinations certainly represents one of the most significant future scientific discussions. Since the field of activity ranges from questions of ethics and sustainability, guest satisfaction, work-life balance of employees, perception of involved and non-involved parts of the population to questions of mobility and the economic efficiency of operations, this opens up a variety of possibilities for further research of this complex of topics (Brandl et al., 2021; Koscak & O'Rourke, 2020; Pechlaner, 2019a; Uysal et al., 2018). How can the signs of overtourism and unbalanced tourism be recognized and their effects be mitigated (Pechlaner et al., 2020)? What can well-being tourism contribute to an increase in the population's quality of life, and how are these two factors related to each other (Dvorak et al., 2014; Konu & Pesonen, 2018)? How can a destination develop further in increasing competitive pressure and the demands of digitalization, experience design, and sustainability?

If a serious rural exodus is to be prevented, intensive research is needed on how regions must develop and position themselves in the future so that they remain or become attractive again as places to live. The present work has shown possibilities for cooperation. How these can be implemented and in which contexts and which resources and stakeholders are required for this can be the subject of future research projects.

A further recommendation is to test the results of this dissertation in rural regions that are committed to integrating and thus sustainable development. Thus, reference values could be obtained and transferred to other regions. This could be done within the framework of further research projects, for example, financed by the LEADER program. A concrete proposal for implementation would be to look at the destination *Thermen- und Vulkanland Steiermark*[17] as a test region. The region is characterized by its geographical location in rolling hills of southeastern Styria and the mild climate there, but above all, the consistent valorization of existing resources for “human, ecological and economic sustainability”. The model developed

[17] The destination “Thermen- und Vulkanland Steiermark” represents a tourism marketing unit consisting of parts of the regional development organization “Steirisches Vulkanland” and the Thermenland Süd- & Oststeiermark Marketing GmbH. The destination extends over the districts of Hartberg-Fürstenfeld and Südoststeiermark. (Sources: www.thermen-vulkanland.at; www.vulkanland.at)

in this work (see p. 133) can serve as a basis for the touristic use of the already established structures and thus form the basis for integrated tourism development to strengthen the quality of life of its residents.

10.13147/SOE.2022.004

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present work sought to answer the research question: *How can integrated tourism development contribute to strengthening the perceived quality of life of residents of a rural destination?* To this end, it was divided into two sub-questions: Sub-question 1 examined the relationships between tourism development in a region and its impact on the perceived quality of life of the population. Sub-question 2 examined how a region's model might look, in which concepts of integrated tourism development are applied to increase the quality of life of the population (see p. 3).

To answer the main research question, a 6-step research design was chosen, which, based on a literature review, used qualitative and quantitative survey methods to develop hypotheses on the one hand and to test them on the other hand (see p. 4). To test the hypotheses, models for hypothesis testing were developed based on the literature review and expert interviews, which were tested using regression analysis methods (see p. 90).

The literature review was guided by the research questions and included the topics of (1) integrated management, (2) regional development, (3) sustainable tourism development, and (4) quality of life. It emerged that integrated management systems in tourism always deal with sustainability issues and vice versa. Also, in rural development, sustainable use, development, and preservation of material and immaterial resources are the topics most commonly discussed. Diverse manifestations of rural tourism only function in harmony with nature and the inhabitants of rural regions. Here, a distinction is made primarily between tourism in rural areas and rural tourism as such.

Based on the research results, different ways of thinking of regional development and tourism development were shown. While regional developers see tourism as a larger or smaller part of an overall regional development strategy, tourism managers naturally put tourism concerns first in their interests. It is evident that this will result in different views concerning the setting of priorities. The experts interviewed in this work agree that only well-coordinated processes will succeed in mastering the challenges in the sustainable development of a living space. All stakeholders and participating organizations, and the population must be involved in a participatory manner in developing rural areas. The instruments of integrated management and sustainable development can serve as a guide for implementation.

With the SDGs and the concrete actions that can be derived from them, a useful set of possibilities is available for tourism regions to meet the multiple demands of guests and their local populations in the future. It is undisputed that sustainability-oriented topics are increasingly being added to the list of demands of guests and employees alike. It is particularly important to note here that sustainability means more than environmental policy but must encompass socio-cultural and economic dimensions. The explosive nature of the issue is reflected in a manifest shortage of employees, particularly in the gastronomy and hotel industry. Thus, a balanced approach to the resources of employees is also needed.

The research results show that an above-average number of people are employed in tourism, especially in highly frequented destinations. Since at least parts of the local population benefit directly or indirectly from tourism, this closes the circle to the topic of the influence of tourism on the perceived quality of life. This is because people who earn part or all of their income from tourism perceive the effects of tourism more positively than people who do not earn any income from tourism. Following the literature, the present study was also able to prove this fact.

The manifold relationships between tourism development and the quality of life in a rural region are based on objective and subjective criteria for researching the quality of life. Concerning objectifiable parameters, the present study was unable to establish any correlation between tourism indicators and the quality of life of the Austrian population at the level of service regions. However, it has been proven that the greater the satisfaction with the economic, socio-cultural, and ecological effects of tourism, the higher the subjectively perceived quality of life. This finding is already known to experts in the field. Thus, the results of the present work contribute to the consolidation of the state of knowledge.

In order to illustrate the research results and to transfer them into a discourse relevant to practice and science, based on the results of the primary and secondary survey, a model of a rural region was developed which set itself the goal of developing a destination to increase the quality of life of the population by using instruments of integrated management.

The framework *Quality of life-promoting model of integrated rural tourism* (see p. 133) can be seen as a system for developing a living space for the population, employees, businesses, and guests alike. In it, sustainability and value creation principles are combined with integrated management of a competitive destination to enhance the quality of life. On the one hand, the model is a basis for discussion for future research work, and, on the other hand, it can serve as a basis for practical implementation in a test region.

This final chapter of the dissertation has presented the new scientific findings resulting from the research, their practical implications, and the open research questions arising from the results (see p. 143). Finally, it is noted that the greatest research and development potential is seen in the discourse and derivation of indicators to measure successful tourism, along the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, to ensure the quality of life in rural areas in the long term.

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10. APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Questionnaire[18]

Hello, thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. This survey asks people about their assessment regarding their personal quality of life and satisfaction. When answering the questions, please think only about the time before the federal government's Corona measures. Thank you for this. Please answer all questions spontaneously. The response will take a maximum of 10 minutes. Participation in this survey is voluntary. Whenever you wish to cancel the survey, you can do so at any time. All data will be collected anonymously and used only for the purpose of this survey. At no time will data be shared with third parties. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Daniel Binder at eMail-Adresse. Thank you for your time and support. Begin the survey now by clicking the Continue button below. All the best, Daniel Binder

For each statement, please spontaneously think of your home community and check the appropriate box.

	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
The residents of our community are satisfied with their standard of living.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Jobs in our region are secure and fairly paid.	❑	❑	❑	❑
The businesses in our community have enough opportunities to grow stably.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism is a well-integrated part of the local economy.	❑	❑	❑	❑

For each statement, please spontaneously think of your home community and check the appropriate box.

	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
Tourism strengthens social interaction in our community.	❑	❑	❑	❑
In the high season, the population avoids tourist destinations, cultural institutions or places of interest.	❑	❑	❑	❑
The needs of residents and guests alike are taken into account when developing infrastructure projects (e.g., road construction).	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism promotes crime and brings security risks.	❑	❑	❑	❑

The following measures are important to my home community. (Multiple answers possible).

1. the preservation of historical facilities
2. cultural organizations are supported
3. arts and crafts are cultivated
4. regional customs are practiced

For each statement, please spontaneously think of your home community and check the appropriate box.

,	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
Tourism creates new jobs for residents in our community.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism promotes the preservation of traditions, handicrafts or the production of souvenirs.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism favors the preservation of natural areas, parks and recreational areas in our community.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism increases the demand for local products and thus ensures the preservation of regional businesses.	❑	❑	❑	❑

For each statement, please spontaneously think of your home community and check the appropriate box.

	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
Our community pays attention to the protection of nature and wildlife habitats.	❑	❑	❑	❑

[18] The questionnaire was sent in German and translated for this dissertation.

The protection of the regional environment is close to our people's hearts.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Environmental issues are important to local stakeholders (e.g., politicians).	❑	❑	❑	❑
Businesses in our community pay attention to environmental protection.	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism causes congestion, noise and other pollution in our region.	❑	❑	❑	❑

How satisfied are you with the following items related to your living environment?

	Not satisfied with	Rather not satisfied with	Rather satisfied with	Satisfied with
Personal income	❑	❑	❑	❑
Household income	❑	❑	❑	❑
Job security	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cost of living in your community	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cost of basic food items	❑	❑	❑	❑
Infrastructure (e.g., school) in your community	❑	❑	❑	❑
Services (e.g., stores) in your community	❑	❑	❑	❑
Recreational opportunities in your community	❑	❑	❑	❑
Time at your disposal	❑	❑	❑	❑

How satisfied are you with the following items related to your living environment?

	Not satisfied with	Rather not satisfied with	Rather satisfied with	Satisfied with
Political atmosphere	❑	❑	❑	❑
Personal social status	❑	❑	❑	❑
Church services and spiritual life	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cultural life	❑	❑	❑	❑
Natural and recreational areas	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cleanliness of the environment	❑	❑	❑	❑
Health care	❑	❑	❑	❑
Influx of tourists	❑	❑	❑	❑
Sense of security	❑	❑	❑	❑

How satisfied are you with your life in general?

	1	2	3	4	5
Life satisfaction	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Which option is most true for you?

1. my life is much worse than most of the other people around me.
2. my life is somewhat worse than most of the other people around me.
3. my life is about the same as most of the other people around me.
4. my life is somewhat better than most of the others around me.
5. my life is much better than most others around me.

Please provide some information about yourself in the following section.

Age:

Gender:

1. female
2. male
3. diverse

Postal code of your place of residence:

How many years have you lived in the current community?

Which of the following options best describes your current household?

1. living in marriage or partnership with children
2. living in marriage or partnership without children
3. living alone or in a shared apartment

4. single parent with children
5. other __________
6. no answer

How many people (including yourself) live in your household?

Your highest completed education:

1. no compulsory education
2. compulsory schooling
3. apprenticeship diploma
4. vocational secondary school without Matura (e.g., commercial school, 3-year HBLA)
5. general or vocational secondary school with Matura (e.g., AHS, HTL, HAK)
6. bachelor studies
7. master studies
8. university / university of applied sciences other
9. other __________
10. no answer

What is your current occupation? (Note: If you are not employed or retired, please indicate the occupation you had the longest before)

What activity do you engage in at work? (Examples: Making furniture, payroll for 20 people, managing a travel agency with 5 employees).

What is the approximate share of your gross income that is earned in tourism?

1. no share (0%)
2. small share (approx. 35%)
3. medium share (approx. 50%)
4. large share (approx. 75%)
5. total share (100%)
6. no answer

Thank you for answering the questions.

Appendix 2 Results of the survey

Percentage distribution of responses to the questionnaire (n=857)

Economic impact of tourism	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
The residents of our community are satisfied with their standard of living.	1[19]	2	49	47
Jobs in our region are secure and fairly paid.	2	18	61	19
Tourism increases the demand for local products and thus ensures the preservation of regional businesses.	9	22	38	32
The businesses in our community have enough opportunities to grow stably.	3	21	52	25
Tourism creates new jobs for residents in our community.	11	23	36	30
Tourism is a well-integrated part of the local economy.	9	23	29	39
Socio-cultural impact of tourism	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
Tourism strengthens social interaction in our community.	14	39	31	16
In the high season, the population avoids tourist destinations, cultural institutions or places of interest.	8	20	36	35
Tourism promotes the preservation of traditions, handicrafts or the production of souvenirs.	12	32	38	19
The needs of residents and guests alike are taken into account when developing infrastructure projects (e.g., road construction).	10	28	46	16
Tourism promotes crime and brings security risks.	60	33	6	1
Ecological impact of tourism	Do not agree	Rather not agree	Partially agree	Agree
Tourism favors the preservation of natural areas, parks and recreational areas in our community.	13	29	37	21
Our community pays attention to the protection of nature and wildlife habitats.	5	19	44	32
The protection of the regional environment is close to our people's hearts.	2	11	49	37
Environmental issues are important to local stakeholders (e.g., politicians).	7	28	47	19
Businesses in our community pay attention to environmental protection.	5	31	52	12
Tourism causes congestion, noise and other pollution in our region.	10	25	39	26
Perceived quality of life	Not satisfied with	Rather not satisfied with	Rather satisfied with	Satisfied with
Personal income	4	14	48	35
Household income	2	11	44	42
Job security	2	7	34	57
Cost of living in your community	3	15	48	33
Cost of basic food items	3	10	50	37
Infrastructure (e.g., school) in your community	4	11	32	53
Services (e.g., stores) in your community	6	16	30	47
Recreational opportunities in your community	8	22	33	37
Time at your disposal	4	17	40	38
Political atmosphere	8	23	49	20
Personal social status	1	4	36	59
Church services and spiritual life	6	10	40	43
Cultural life	3	12	43	41
Natural and recreational areas	2	8	31	58
Cleanliness of the environment	1	10	37	52
Health care	2	10	30	59
Influx of tourists	4	12	50	34
Sense of security	0	2	25	73
How satisfied are you with your life in general?	1	6	46	47

Source: Own research and analyses, 2021

[19] The values are given in % and show the frequency of the mentions in relation to the total number of mentions.

Appendix 3 Statistical testing

Regression model hypothesis 1

$H1_0$: Socio-economic variables (i.e., Belonging in the region in years, Socioeconomic Status, and Earnings from tourism) do not influence the status of perceived satisfaction with tourism.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,130[a]	,017	,014	,36378

a. Predictors: (Constant), tour_earn, ISEI, years_region

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,950	3	,650	4,912	,002[b]
	Residual	112,884	853	,132		
	Total	114,835	856			

a. Dependent Variable: sat_tour
b. Predictors: (Constant), tour_earn, ISEI, years_region

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,806	,042		66,250	,000
	years_region	,002	,001	,074	2,166	,031
	ISEI	,001	,001	,028	,816	,415
	tour_earn	,043	,013	,107	3,160	,002

a. Dependent Variable: sat_tour

Source: Own research, 2021

Regression model hypothesis 2

$H2_0$: The perceived impact of tourism (i.e., Economic impact, Socio-cultural impact, Ecological impact) does not influence the perceived quality of life

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,549a	,302	,298	,32293

a. Predictors: (Constant), ISEI, ecol_imp, econ_imp, socio_imp

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38,399	4	9,600	92,051	,000b
	Residual	88,852	852	,104		
	Total	127,251	856			

a. Dependent Variable: qol
b. Predictors: (Constant), ISEI, ecol_imp, econ_imp, socio_imp

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,581	,093		17,030	,000

	econ_imp	,254	,025	,325	10,274	,000
	socio_imp	,112	,029	,129	3,796	,000
	ecol_imp	,196	,021	,288	9,263	,000
	ISEI	,002	,001	,091	3,155	,002

a. Dependent Variable: qol

Source: Own research, 2021

Regression model hypothesis 3

H3$_0$: Variables of tourism intensity (e.g., Arrivals per inhabitant, Density of overnight stays, …) in a region do not influence the residents' perceived quality of life.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,733[a]	,537	,329	746,99733

a. Predictors: (Constant), beds_comp, arrive_km2, apprentice_pop, occupancy, dens_nights, employ_pop, comp_pop, arrive_inhab, nights_km2

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12960627,258	9	1440069,695	2,581	,037[b]
	Residual	11160100,257	20	558005,013		
	Total	24120727,515	29			

a. Dependent Variable: sub_qol
b. Predictors: (Constant), beds_comp, arrive_km2, apprentice_pop, occupancy, dens_nights, employ_pop, comp_pop, arrive_inhab, nights_km2

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	549,637	892,300		,616	,545
	comp_pop	-67,311	54,919	-1,111	-1,226	,235
	employ_pop	39,641	38,671	,588	1,025	,318
	apprentice_pop	-747,068	673,581	-,457	-1,109	,281
	arrive_inhab	66,178	178,084	,542	,372	,714
	dens_nights	-,676	49,199	-,025	-,014	,989
	nights_km2	,054	,345	,433	,155	,878
	arrive_km2	-,106	,743	-,388	-,143	,888
	occupancy	36,937	29,073	,347	1,271	,218
	beds_comp	5,029	22,562	,048	,223	,826

a. Dependent Variable: sub_qol

Source: Own research, 2021

Appendix 4 ETIS European Tourism Indicator System

Section A: Destination management		
Criteria	*Indicator reference#*	*ETIS core indicators*
A.1 Sustainable tourism public policy	A.1.1	Percentage of tourism enterprises/establishments in the destination using a voluntary certification/labelling for environmental /quality/sustainability and/or Corporate Social Responsibility
A.2 Customer satisfaction	A.2.1	Percentage of tourists and same-day visitors that are satisfied with their overall experience in the destination
	A.2.2	Percentage of repeat/return visitors (within 5 years)
Section B: Economic value		
Criteria	*Indicator reference#*	*ETIS core indicators*
B.1 Tourism flow (volume and value) at destination	B.1.1	Number of tourist nights per month
	B.1.2	Number of same-day visitors per month
	B.1.3	Relative contribution of tourism to the destination's economy (% GDP)
	B.1.4	Daily spending per overnight tourist
	B.1.5	Daily spending per same-day visitors
B.2 Tourism enterprise(s) performance	B.2.1	Average length of stay of tourists (nights)
	B.2.2	Occupancy rate in commercial accommodation per month and average for the year
B.3 Quantity and quality of employment	B.3.1	Direct tourism employment as percentage of total employment in the destination
	B.3.2	Percentage of jobs in tourism that are seasonal
B.4 Tourism supply chain	B.4.1	Percentage of locally produced food, drinks, goods and services sourced by the destination's tourism enterprises
Section C: Social and cultural impact		
Criteria	*Indicator reference#*	*ETIS core indicators*
C.1 Community/social impact	C.1.1	Number of tourists/visitors per 100 residents
	C.1.2	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with tourism in the destination (per month/season)
	C.1.3	Number of beds available in commercial accommodation establishments per 100 residents
	C.1.4	Number of second homes per 100 homes
C.2 Health and safety	C.2.1	Percentage of tourists who register a complaint with the police
C.3 Gender equality	C.3.1	Percentage of men and women employed in the tourism sector
	C.3.2	Percentage of tourism enterprises where the general manager position is held by a woman
C.4 Inclusion/accessibility	C.4.1	Percentage of rooms in commercial accommodation establishments accessible for people with disabilities
	C.4.2	Percentage of commercial accommodation establishments participating in recognized accessibility information schemes
	C.4.3	Percentage of public transport that is accessible to people with disabilities and specific access requirements
	C.4.4	Percentage of tourist attractions that are accessible to people with disabilities and/or participating in recognized accessibility information schemes
C.5 Protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets	C.5.1	Percentage of residents that are satisfied with the impacts of tourism on the destination's identity
	C.5.2	Percentage of the destination's
Section D: Environmental impact		
Criteria	*Indicator reference#*	*ETIS core indicators*
D.1 Reducing transport impact	D.1.1	Percentage of tourists and same-day visitors using different modes of transport to arrive at the destination

	D.1.2	Percentage of tourists and same-day visitors using local/soft mobility/public transport services to get around the destination
	D.1.3	Average travel (km) by tourists and same-day visitors from home to the destination
	D.1.4	Average carbon footprint of tourists and same-day visitors travelling from home to the destination
D.2 Climate change	D.2.1	Percentage of tourism enterprises involved in climate change mitigation schemes — such as: CO_2 offset, low energy systems, etc.— and 'adaptation' responses and actions
	D.2.2	Percentage of tourism accommodation and attraction infrastructure located in 'vulnerable zones'
D.3 Solid waste management	D.3.1	Waste production per tourist night compared to general population waste production per person (kg)
	D.3.2	Percentage of tourism enterprises separating different types of waste
	D.3.3	Percentage of total waste recycled per tourist compared to total waste recycled per resident per year
D.4 Sewage treatment	D.4.1	Percentage of sewage from the destination treated to at least secondary level prior to discharge
D.5 Water management	D.5.1	Water consumption per tourist night compared to general population water consumption per resident night
	D.5.2	Percentage of tourism enterprises taking actions to reduce water consumption
	D.5.3	Percentage of tourism enterprises using recycled water
D.6 Energy usage	D.6.1	Energy consumption per tourist night compared to general population energy consumption per resident night
	D.6.2	Percentage of tourism enterprises that take actions to reduce energy consumption
	D.6.3	Percentage of annual amount of energy consumed from renewable sources (Mwh) compared to overall energy consumption at destination level per year
D.7 Landscape and biodiversity protection	D.7.1	Percentage of local enterprises in the tourism sector actively supporting protection, conservation and management of local biodiversity and landscapes

Source: Based on European Union (2016). *The European Tourism Indicator System*. Luxembourg. Retrieved from https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4b90d965-eff8-11e5-8529-01aa75ed71a1

Appendix 5 GSTC Destination Criteria

Sub-section	*Criteria*	*SDGs*
SECTION A: Sustainable management		
A(a) Management structure and framework	A1 Destination management responsibility	16 Peace, justice and strong institutions 17 Partnerships for the goals
	A2 Destination management strategy and action plan	17 Partnerships for the goals
	A3 Monitoring and reporting	12 Responsible consumption and production
A(b) Stakeholder engagement	A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards	12 Responsible consumption and production 17 Partnerships for the goals
	A5 Resident engagement and feedback	17 Partnerships for the goals 11 Sustainable cities and communities
	A6 Visitor engagement and feedback	12 Responsible consumption and production 11 Sustainable cities and communities
	A7 Promotion and information	12 Responsible consumption and production 11 Sustainable cities and communities
A(c) Managing pressure and change	A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities	12 Responsible consumption and production 11 Sustainable cities and communities
	A9 Planning regulations and development control	11 Sustainable cities and communities 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure
	A10 Climate change adaptation	13 Climate action
	A11 Risk and crisis management	11 Sustainable cities and communities 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
SECTION B: Socio-economic sustainability		
B(a) Delivering local economic benefits	B1 Measuring the economic contribution of tourism	9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure 8 Decent work and economic growth 1 No poverty
	B2 Decent work and career opportunities	8 Decent work and economic growth 4 Quality education 5 Gender equality 10 Reduced inequalities
	B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade	8 Decent work and economic growth 12 Responsible consumption and production 2 Zero hunger
B(b) Social wellbeing and impacts	B4 Support for community	3 Good health and well-being 4 Quality education
	B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination	10 Reduced inequalities 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
	B6 Property and user rights	11 Sustainable cities and communities 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
	B7 Safety and security	3 Good health and well-being 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
	B8 Access for all	3 Good health and well-being 10 Reduced inequalities
SECTION C: Cultural sustainability		
C(a) Protecting cultural heritage	C1 Protection of cultural assets	11 Sustainable cities and communities
	C2 Cultural artefacts	11 Sustainable cities and communities
	C3 Intangible heritage	11 Sustainable cities and communities
	C4 Traditional access	11 Sustainable cities and communities
	C5 Intellectual property	16 Peace, justice and strong institutions
C(b) Visiting cultural sites	C6 Visitor management at cultural sites	11 Sustainable cities and communities 12 Responsible consumption and production
	C7 Site interpretation	11 Sustainable cities and communities 4 Quality education
SECTION D: Environmental sustainability		
D(a) Conservation of natural heritage	D1 Protection of sensitive environments	14 Life below water 15 Life on land
	D2 Visitor management at natural sites	14 Life below water 15 Life on land

	D3 Wildlife interaction	14 Life below water
	D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare	14 Life below water 15 Life on land
D(b) Resource management	D5 Energy conservation	7 Affordable and clean energy
	D6 Water stewardship	6 Clean water and sanitation
	D7 Water quality	3 Good health and well-being 6 Clean water and sanitation
D(c) Management of waste and emissions	D8 Wastewater	3 Good health and well-being 14 Life below water
	D9 Solid waste	12 Responsible consumption and production 14 Life below water 15 Life on land
	D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation	13 Climate action

Source: Based on GSTC (2019). *GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0*. Retrieved from https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf

Appendix 6 Supply Regions of Austria

SR_Nr.	Supply Region
11	Burgenland North
12	Burgenland South
21	Carinthia East
22	Carinthia West
31	Lower Austria Middle
32	Waldviertel
33	Weinviertel
34	Thermenregion
35	Mostviertel
41	Upper Austria Central Region Linz
42	Upper Austria Central Region Wels
43	Mühlviertel
44	Pyhrn-Eisenwurzen
45	Traunviertel-Salzkammergut
46	Innviertel
51	Salzburg North
52	Pinzgau-Pongau-Lungau
61	Graz
62	Liezen
63	Eastern Upper Styria
64	East Styria
65	South-West-Styria
66	Western Upper Styria
71	Tyrol Central Region
72	Tyrol West
73	Tyrol North-East
74	East Tyrol
81	Rheintal-Bregenzerwald
82	Vorarlberg South
91-93	Vienna

Source: Based on IFGP (n.d.). Prävalenz von körperlicher Inaktivität in Österreich - nach Versorgungsregionen. Retrieved from https://www.ifgp.at/cdscontent/load?contentid=10008.727094&version=1574241122

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Daniel Binder, born in 1981, studied “Health Management in Tourism” and is currently working at the FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences as a Senior Lecturer. At the Bachelor's level, he teaches Marketing; Information Management; Communication Management; Trends in Tourism Research; Sociology of Tourism and Leisure. At the Master's level, Daniel teaches Destination Management; Economy of Events in Sports and Leisure; Project Management; Research and Project Work. He supervises about ten bachelor theses and three master theses per year. Since 2017 he acts as Bachelor Thesis coordinator. From 2014 to 2019, Daniel was course director for the MBA course International Hospitality and Spa Management. He was responsible for the development, set-up, and ongoing operation of the course and managed an annual budget of EUR 75,000. Daniel Binder was a collaborator in three ERASMUS projects and led the ERASMUS project WelDest - Health and Well-being in Tourism Destinations. In total, he acquired about EUR 330,000 in research projects for the Institute of Health and Tourism Management at FH JOANNEUM. Since 2016, Daniel Binder has been studying in the Joint Ph.D. program for International Economics and Business Relations at the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland and at the István Széchenyi Management and Organization Sciences Doctoral School of the University of Sopron. In his studies, Daniel focuses on strengthening the quality of life of the residents of tourism destinations and digital literacy in tourism. Daniel lives in Austria, is married, and father of a little daughter.

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10.13147/SOE.2022.004

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