

CAN ECOTOURISM OFFER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: WHY COSTA RICA SUCCEEDED

Research Paper

Gal Oberhofer Dimitrijević, Swiss School of Business and Management, Switzerland, gal@ssbm.ch

College of Environmental Health and Safety, Croatia

Dario Silic, Swiss School of Business and Management, Switzerland, dario@ssbm.ch

College of Environmental Health and Safety, Croatia

Ivana Silic, Swiss School of Business and Management, Switzerland, ivana.silic@ssbm.ch

College of Environmental Health and Safety, Croatia

October
Zagreb, 2022

Abstract

Tourism has become the second fastest growing economic sector in the world and due to the high economic revenue generated from it, environmental and social damages have ensued. Due to these environmental and social impacts, there has been an increased demand for sustainable tourism and ecotourism. The aims of this research paper were to identify why ecotourism has been and is so successful in Costa Rica and if it offers and can offer sustainable development in the future. The research paper systematically analysed the critical framework of sustainable development, sustainable tourism and identified that ecotourism itself follows the three principles of sustainable development. The three pillars are economic, social and environmental. The research paper identified three areas as to why ecotourism is so successful in Costa Rica and continues to thrive compared to other neighbouring and worldwide countries with high biodiversity. These included the country's location, its unique political history as well as previous and current governmental policies, which aided in the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica. This research paper specifically analysed the current implications of ecotourism and if the industry offers sustainable development. Clear positive and sustainable outcomes were identified from the implementation of ecotourism in Costa Rica. Nevertheless, the research paper identified negative implications and effects of ecotourism as well. It analysed the environmental implications by looking at ecolodges and protected areas such as national parks. It analysed the socioeconomic implications by looking at revenues and wage distributions in the sector as well as other contributing social factors. This research paper describes that if ecotourism is implemented correctly and follows the theoretical framework of sustainable development it can in fact revert environmental damages which have already occurred due to the industry and it can offer sustainable development to Costa Rica if future recommendations are taken into consideration. These recommendations are to establish future regulations and programmes in order to increase the

education of locals in regard to environmental conservation and economic gain from ecotourism. Future policies must require the involvement of local communities in ecotourism decision making and any eco-site and eco-accommodation must be certified in order to operate. Due to the high influx of tourists and the environmental damage it has caused in protected areas, numbers of visits must be closely monitored and capped, if necessary.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Importance

Over the recent decades tourism as a phenomenon has continued to experience growth and diversification becoming one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO, 2019). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2019) in 2018 the Travel & Tourism sector outpaced growth of global GDP for the eighth consecutive year and grew by 3.9%, contributing to a record of \$8.8 trillion, 319 million jobs and generated 10.4% of all global economic activity. In 2010, 980 million people travelled internationally and by 2020 this number was expected to reach 1.6 billion (Integra, 2019). Tourism is a vital player in international commerce and represents the main source of income in many developing countries (UNWTO, 2019). The United Nations Summit on the Millennium Goals created a goal to decrease poverty levels by half (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011) and by 2030 the aim is to completely eradicate poverty (United Nations, 2019). Therefore, tourism is very important in developing countries particularly since it is the second fastest growing sector in the world ahead of Healthcare (+3.1%), Information Technology (+1.7%), Financial Services (+1.7%) and second only to Manufacturing which grew 4% in 2018 (WTTC, 2019).

In recent years there has been a decline of traditional industries such as agriculture and farming, which has led to some rural communities exploring other sources of income in order to increase economic development (Lee et al, 2013). As stated above, many developing countries use the tourism industry as their main source of economic benefit as it generates

jobs and helps develop their country. It can be used as a powerful tool in tackling major challenges in countries such as poverty or environmental conservation (Integra, 2019).

Therefore, tourism and community-based tourism have been utilised as a tool for economic development and stability on a local and even on a national scale (Lee et al, 2013).

Consequently, tourism seems to be an attractive option in order to increase development in countries. Individuals from developed or richer countries visit “far-away places”, increasing income distribution and employment for these developing countries (Jenkins, 1980).

Nevertheless, these developing nations tend to have little influence over the total demand, which can result in inadequate services, uncontrolled or mass tourism leading to long term socioeconomic issues (Jenkins, 1980). Therefore, despite clear benefits of tourism there are negative impacts of the growth of tourism and in recent years literature has shown that there is a sense of urgency regarding the growth of ‘sustainable tourism’ (Ocampo et al, 2018).

The term ‘sustainable tourism’ came about in the late 1980s and since then has been implemented in tourism and travel research, strategies and policies (Budeanu et al, 2016). Over the past decade, sustainable tourism development has become even more vital and popular with tourism theorists and policy practitioners (Sharpley, 2000). Consequently, sustainable tourism is now a desired objective by the tourism industry. The definition of sustainable tourism is considered to be extremely vague and criticised for it, which will be further discussed in my literature review. Many organisations in the tourism and travel sector have developed and published plans and principles to follow, however these are variously interpreted and therefore, its validity is questioned particularly due to the lack of consensus of its meaning and objectives (Sharpley, 2000). Therefore, following the concept of sustainable tourism it can only be achieved if sustainable development is achieved through it. Sustainable tourism according to the Brundtland Commission’s brief is “the ability to make development

sustainable - to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Robert et al, 2005, p.2). This concept and theory will further be discussed in the literature review. Sustainable development, since its birth in the late 1980s, has become a buzzword in development as well as tourism, with literature and researchers stating that the debate whether sustainable tourism is effective as disjointed (Liu, 2003). Most tourism literature focuses on the principles and practice of sustainable tourism and development due to it encompassing principles that focus on the destinations and environmental resource base (Hunter, 1997). Nevertheless, this has been criticised as some researchers believe that it is too parochial, tourism centric and does not provide policy formations with sustainable tourism and sustainable development (Hunter, 1997). Thus, this means that if it is not implemented properly, sustainable tourism does not offer sustainable development to the destination country. Most literature does not look far beyond the initial concept of sustainable tourism, which is why this research paper will look at the theory behind it, specifically looking into ecotourism and its effectiveness and will utilise Costa Rica as a case study.

Sustainable tourism is an umbrella term and many different niche tourisms exist within it. In this research paper I will be critically analysing and looking further into ecotourism. As defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2019) in 1990 ecotourism is “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” It is also popularly defined by The Ecotourism Society as “purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and the natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of the natural resources beneficial to the local people” (Integra, 2019).

Therefore, as tourism is the fastest growing industry in developing countries, it offers economic development in these destinations where the countries are capitalised off their unspoiled nature (Cater, 1993) In theory and by definition this development should lead to small scale benefits to locals and local investors, yet the debate continues whether it is possible for these countries to use their natural resources for socioeconomic benefit without destroying their environment (Cater, 1993). Ecotourism is thought to be a strategy to conserve the environment, whilst promoting sustainable local development. Yet, in literature despite it being positively advocated for, there is a substantial amount of literature that also highlights its failures through case study research as the ecotourism theory has not been successfully implemented in practice (Ross & Wall, 1999).

In Costa Rica tourism was key to development since the 1970s and by 2003 roughly 200,000 tourists were arriving annually with an annual economic impact of US\$5 million for a 4000 regional population (Blum, 2009). This number of visitors has been increasing according to the Central American Bank with a growth of 13.8% in 2016 compared to 2015 meaning approximately 260,000 more visitors. The country has very high levels of ecotourism and is a “pioneer” in ecotourism and arguably the most successful example of ecotourism. However, highly dense natural destinations are not uncommon in the world and comparing Costa Rica to its neighbouring countries in Central America, the question still remains as to why ecotourism is so successful in this specific country. What is different in Costa Rica to make it thrive there? There is a gap in the literature as to what the components for this success are and that is why this research paper will aim to identify the key and unique components of this success. Additionally, it is important to look at the framework of ecotourism principles and what is vital in ensuring sustainability and understanding what factors can minimise negative consequences (McKeone, 2011). Therefore, in this research paper Costa Rica will

be key in identifying strategies in regard to obtaining optimal economic, social and environmental sustainable development and analysing these implications.

Consequently, this research paper will critically analyse ecotourism, its benefits, consequences and the effects of it in Costa Rica. Due to the definition of ecotourism one must look at the economic, social and environmental implications for communities. Ecotourism, which focuses on communities, has in recent years become a popular tool for environmental conservation particularly in regard to biodiversity and it is based on the principle that a country's biodiversity must create economic benefits for local people (Kiss, 2004). The implications and reality of ecotourism in regard to locals will be further discussed in the research paper as it is clear that ecotourism by definition should have positive developmental effects on local people.

Development in highly bio-diverse areas is a worldwide concern as some fear that even though it can lead to socioeconomic benefits it can also lead to environmental issues such as the loss of biodiversity (Broadbent et al, 2012). This is why this research paper will look in depth into the developmental consequences of the growing ecotourism industry in Costa Rica due to its unique position. Costa Rica is only 0.03% of the world's land surface and yet is in the top 20 most bio-diverse countries in the world, with 26 national parks, encompassing 5% of the world's biodiversity, has over 850 bird species (over USA and Canada combined) and 6,000 species of butterflies (more than in all of Africa) (Sanchez, 2018).

1.2 Aims and Objectives

In view of the above, this research paper will aim to identify and understand the reasons behind the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica. It will analyse the current consequences of ecotourism in Costa Rica and the implications of it. The objective of this study is to see if

ecotourism offers economic, environmental and social sustainable development, particularly in Costa Rica. In order to do this, this research paper will critically analyse ecotourism, sustainable development and its conceptual framework. Furthermore, the research paper will aim to suggest potential solutions and policies in order to further aid sustainable development in Costa Rica.

1.3 Research Paper Overview

This research paper will be divided into three further chapters:

Chapter Two: Literature Review. This section of the research paper will define and analyse the main topics/components of this study. It will look and critically analyse the theory and components of sustainable development as well as identify the key components of sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Further, it will critically look at the implications of ecotourism.

Chapter Three: Costa Rica. This section is the case study of the research paper. The first part of chapter three will analyse and identify why ecotourism has been incredibly successful in Costa Rica. In the second section of chapter three the research paper will identify and analyse the current impacts and sustainability implications of ecotourism in Costa Rica. They will be divided into two sections; environmental and socio-economic.

Chapter Four: Conclusion. This section of the research paper will make concluding remarks of the case study and potential future recommendations for Costa Rica and ecotourism.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development

2.1.1 Conceptual Framework

The concept of sustainable development suffers from definition problems and over 70 different definitions have been proposed from different researchers that have very different

contexts and content due to the diverse fields (Sharpley, 2000). Sustainable development is widely cited and recognised, even in the political sector of the government as well as economic and cultural organisations that are developing initiatives in order to promote the concept and benefit from it (Davidson, 2005). Nevertheless, literature has still to show if these initiatives have, in fact, resulted in actual progress in terms of preservation, restoration or its adaptation in different environments (Davidson, 2005). Therefore, due to this it is often criticised for being ambiguous and often contradictory (Sharpley, 2000). Furthermore, the absenteeism of semantic and conceptual clarity of the definition of sustainable development has led to a debate over what it should entail (Lele, 1991). Sustainability originates from ecology, referring to an ecosystem subsisting over time with no change and with the concept of development it was thought to no longer look from the point of view from the environment but social and economic capital gain (Jabareen, 2008). This shows that sustainable development, if not defined clearly, appears to be disjointed as it does not focus on both concepts; the environment, economic and social development together. This issue is seen in the Brundtland Report in which the environment is deemphasised, and the issue of human needs and development is realised (Jabareen, 2008). In the Brundtland Report the vision, even though the environment was deemphasised, did not simply concern itself with maximum economic growth but also it pursued intergeneration equity (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). The authors stated that this was done by the report focusing on concepts such as fairness between groups and individuals in society as well as the fairness between the present and future generations (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). Jacobs 1991, created somewhat more clarity to the situation by linking the concept of environment protection to economic development in order to merge both concepts, sustainability and development, in sustainable development (Davidson, 2005). Therefore, sustainable development is not simply identified with the increased consumption and production but also with an improved quality of life where the

environment and its ecosystems are taken into consideration (Williams, 1998).

In this research paper the definition of sustainable development will be used from the United Nation and it is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Emas, 2015, p.1). The analysis of sustainable development has shown that there are three main approaches to the concept according to Munasinghe 1992 (Paul, 2008):

1. Economic - which maximises income, maintaining a constant or increasing stock of capital.
2. Ecological - which maintains resilience of the environments’ ecosystems and further promotes biological and physiological systems.
3. Social (Cultural) - maintaining the stability of social and cultural systems (Paul, 2008).

Environmental integrity ensures that human activities do not erode the planets resources. Ecosystems are thought to have assumed limited regenerative capability and with a growing worldwide population combined with excessive consumption, increasing pollution, accumulation of greenhouse gases and the depletion of natural resources such as deforestation will occur (Bansal, 2005). Social equity allows for all individuals to have equal access to resources and opportunities, which not only includes the basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter but also quality of life, which includes health care, education and political freedom (Bansal, 2005). This, as stated previously, allows for the notion that this sustainability is important between individuals but also generations. According to Bansal 2005, this means that future generations regardless of stature, such as the elite or indigenous people, are entitled to the same level of resources in developing or developed countries.

This can be seen more clearly in Figure 1. *The Sustainable Development Triangle*. This figure

shows that in order to obtain sustainable development all three points must be balanced and implemented. These viewpoints represent a domain and system that have its own driving forces and objectives and must be in unison (Paul, 2008). The economic viewpoint is aimed at improving human welfare through increasing the consumption of goods and services, the environmental focuses on the protection and integrity of the ecological systems and finally, the social viewpoint focuses on the improvement of human relationships between individuals and groups (Munasinghe, 2002).

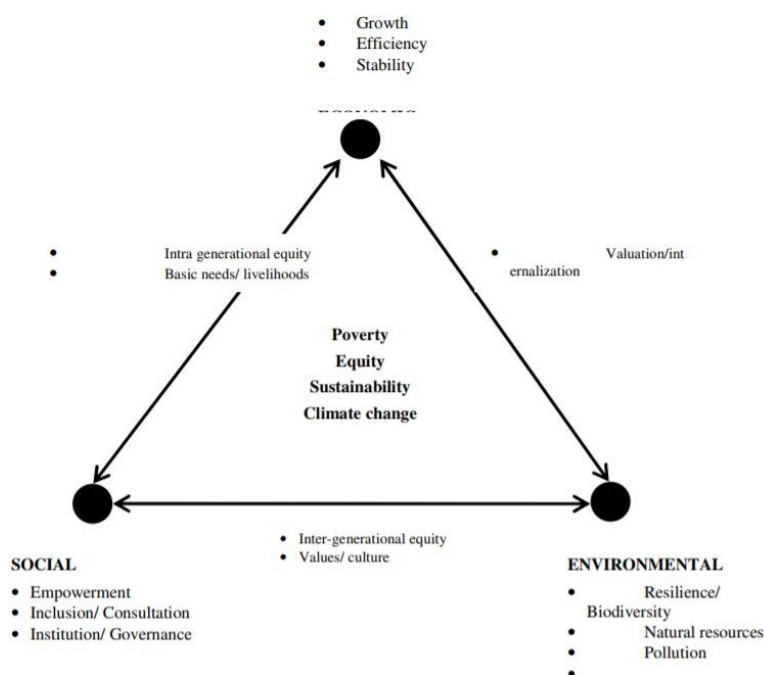


Figure 1. The Sustainable Development Triangle (Sourced from Paul, 2008).

Therefore, according to Munasinghe 2002, issues such as poverty or climate change are placed in the centre of the triangle to further show that they are linked to all of the viewpoints and in order to combat these issues all viewpoints must be addressed to create sustainable development. Gladwin et al, 1995 created their own components of sustainable development in order for the concept to reach its optimum function. This does not fall under this triangle category but in fact Gladwin et al, 1995 believed that achieving sustainable development is a process of achieving human development and this is done by obtaining development in a

‘inclusive, connected, equitable, prudent and secure manner’. These were as follows: Inclusiveness implies human development over time and space, “Connectivity entails an embrace of ecological, social, and economic interdependence. Equity suggests intergenerational, intragenerational, and interspecies fairness. Prudence connotes duties of care and prevention: technologically, scientifically, and politically. Security demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption.” (Gladwin et al, 1995, p. 878).

However, according to Lele 1991, sustainable development must be split into its components in order to critically analyse the theory as sustainable development = development + sustainability and therefore, oversimplifying the concept can provide a useful basis for the conceptualisation of its principles and objectives (Sharpley, 2000).

2.1.2 Sustainability

The concept of sustainability aims to remove the conflict between the viewpoints of the environment and economic growth, which can result in socially and environmentally neutral outcomes (Davidson, 2005). Ekins 1993, states that in order for economic growth or human life to be environmentally sustainable certain conditions must be scrupulously adhered to, particularly concerning renewable and non-renewable resources. These include the prevention of destabilisation of global environmental features, important ecosystems must be protected to maintain biodiversity, renewable resources must be reused through sustainable harvesting, non-renewable resources used as intensively as possible and recycled where it can be, depletion of non-renewable resources used on the basis of maintaining minimum life expectancy of resource, emissions into natural resources must not exceed capacity of the planet to absorb, neutralise and recycle them (Ekins, 1993). Additionally, any risks of life damaging events for the population must be avoided or kept to extremely low levels and if

they threatened the environment they must be avoided (Ekins, 1993). The ecosystems and sources of the earth are not infinite and cannot supply the needs of production and consumption, whilst absorbing the wastes that have been created in this process (Sharpley, 2000). Perspectives on sustainability vary but variables can be added in an equation to understand sustainability further. These variables are:

1. The rate at which non-renewable resources are depleted relative to the development of substitution.
2. The rate of waste which is deposited back into the ecosystem relative to the capacity of the environment.
3. Global population levels per capital of consumption (Goodland, 1992, Sharpley, 2000).

2.1.3 The Environment

Despite the debate over the focus and definition of sustainable development Estes, 2010 believes that sustainable development is a unifying concept due to the universal focus on the environment. In the recent decade, there has been a worldwide consensus that the environment, nature and other ecological concerns are the most vital factors related to socioeconomic development (Haque, 2000). The environment and the crisis that it is in has gained tremendous attention in all international forums on development and the environment development relationship is being taken into consideration when implementing policies as well as in theoretical debates (Haque, 2000). Estes, 2010 agrees with this concept and states that the issue of the environment is now at the centre of international development activity and hence at the centre of sustainable development as everyone can agree that the degradation of the environment is an issue. The environment in sustainable development is a unifying concept as it provides a vision for national and international development, it unifies the development community as well as the elements that make up the community and can most

importantly lead to and foster new solutions to recurrent socioeconomic needs (Estes, 2010).

2.1.4 Impacts of Tourism

As previously stated, tourism is one of the world’s largest and fastest growing industries with many developing countries using it for development through foreign exchange earnings, creation of direct and indirect employment (UNWTO, 2011). Tourism ultimately contributes to 5% of the world’s GDP and 7% of jobs worldwide, 6% of the worlds exports and it generates 45% of the total exports in services (UNWTO, 2011). Therefore, in this section I will briefly discuss some potential impacts that tourism can bring in order to understand its benefits and the need for sustainable tourism development. The promotion of tourism in many destinations is considered to be a source of new employment, increased revenue, additional taxes and overall an enhanced community infrastructure, which will in turn attract other industries and more revenue and benefits (Allen et al, 1988).

According to Lemma 2014, tourism impacts economies through three interrelated routes i.e. direct, indirect and induced effects. This can be seen from Figure 2 below.

Direct Contribution of Tourism	<i>Industries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation Services • Food & Beverage Services • Retail Trade • Transportation Services • Cultural, Sports & Recreational Services
	<i>Commodities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Transportation • Entertainment • Attractions
	<i>Sources of Spending</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident’s Domestic Spending • Business Domestic Travel Spending • Visitor Exports • Individual Government Tourism & Travel Spending
Indirect Contribution of Tourism		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private tourism investment spending • Government collective tourism spending • Impact of Purchases from Suppliers
Induced Contribution of Tourism (spending of direct and indirect tourism employees)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food & Beverages • Recreation • Clothing • Housing • Household Goods

Figure 2. Table of direct, indirect and induced contribution of Tourism (Sourced from Lemma, 2014).

This table directly shows the components of tourism contribution to GDP. This shows us that tourism has a wide range of impacts not only on its specific target audience but also on a range of sectors, which can be both beneficial and negative depending on the manner of tourism involved. The table is neatly segmented into different components, yet employment and involvement are also at the heart of tourism impact. The WTTC is expecting that the tourism and travel industry will account for 328 million jobs or one in every eleven jobs on the planet by 2022 (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). However, it does not take into consideration other effects which can cross these segments such as government taxes paid by tourism enterprises, which can be a direct impact of the sector, yet taxes paid by tourism employees will be under the induced impact segment (Lemma, 2014).

From this table it is clear that tourism affects many different sectors in a nation. Steck 2010, explained that there were six main channels of impact of tourism, which included: employment creation, supply of goods and services, direct sales of goods and services, establishment of tourism enterprises, tax and levy generation and investment in infrastructure (Lemma, 2014).

Tourism does not only affect the economic aspect of nations but cultural ones too, and tourism has made a significant impact on gender, specifically women. According to the key findings of the global report of women in tourism 2010, women make up a very large portion of the formal tourism workforce, yet typically earn 10-15 % less than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, the tourism industry has twice as many female employers compared to other industries (UNTWO, 2011). In this report it shows that women make up the majority of the tourism sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, for example within the hotel and

restaurant tourism sector women make up 58.5% and 55.4% in Latin America and the Caribbean respectively.

Despite these economic and gender positive impacts made by tourism, the main consequences related to the tourism and travel industry are environmental issues. These consequences of tourism can be divided into physical and psychological subsections according to Gossling, 2002. The author also agrees that the impact can be both direct and indirect with all consequences from tourism occurring locally but ultimately adding up to a global phenomenon. Due to tourism constantly growing, specific infrastructures have consequently been integrated into the environment with some tourist destinations losing ground due to pollution, erosion of the environmental resources, disruption of local life and ultimately destroying natural lands (Hontus, 2015).

The global consequences of tourism in regard to the environment are as follows: Changes in land cover and use, energy use, the extinction of wild species and biotic exchange, spread of diseases and ultimately changes in perception or understanding of the environment (Gossling, 2002). From this section it is clear that tourism does bring its socioeconomic benefits to countries. However, there are clear environmental and economic negative consequences of tourism. Therefore, it is apparent that in order to ameliorate this situation the debate and future policies must include sustainable tourism. Consequently, this section of the research paper will analyse sustainable tourism and ecotourism and the effectiveness and consequences of both.

2.2 Sustainable Tourism

The tourism and travel industry are directly related to the environment compared to other industries and it aims to promote particular areas of unspoiled different destinations (Hontus, 2015). The greater the unspoiled nature, the greater demand for tourism and since these areas

are more fragile and require additional protection, specific infrastructure has been integrated into the environment eventually leading to a loss of tourism (Hontus, 2015). Sustainable tourism is according to Beoiley 1995, recognised by four essential features: The integration of socioeconomic interests of host communities, the consideration of the regeneration potential of the destination environment, the minimisation of natural resource depletion and finally the provision of meaningful experiences to the tourists (Drakopoulou, 2004).

Sustainable tourism development as defined by the World Tourism Organisation must meet the needs of present tourists and host regions, whilst protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. (Liu, 2003).

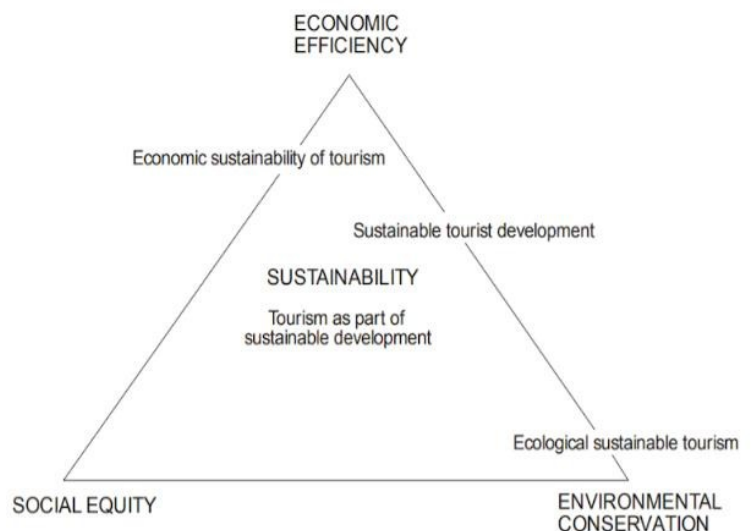


Figure 3. Tourism sustainability, three aspects (Sourced from Drakopoulou, 2004).

Figure 3 shows the three aspects of tourism sustainability. It shows that in order to have sustainable tourism there must be equilibrium of social equity, environmental conservation and economic efficiency. This shows that in order for sustainable tourism to develop it must clearly follow the same three pillar principles of sustainable development which are also an equilibrium of economic, social and environmental components.

McKercher, 2003 agrees with this ideology as the author states that tourism is ideally suited to adopt sustainability for a number of reasons. These are that tourism does not try to utilise

additional non-renewable resources, the community's resources such as culture, leisure facilities and traditions represent the core resources for the foundation of tourism itself, tourism uses both natural and cultural resources making them renewable (McKercher, 2003). Additionally, tourism represents and offers economic opportunities to remote communities thereby providing real opportunities to reduce poverty, revitalising cultures and traditions, creating employment to disadvantaged individuals, which in turn allows for regional development and finally it can also provide an economic incentive to conserve the environment and cultural assets (McKercher, 2003). Additionally, the formative educational side of sustainable tourism in countries should not be neglected and in fact it should be promoted in order for individuals to understand the role they play in managing and conserving the environment (Hontus, 2015).

Previous literature indicates that these principles mentioned above are key for sustainable tourism to develop, however the planning and management of these principles has not yet fully developed in emerging economies and therefore the plans for sustainable tourism development made by governments are often impeded by the poor understanding of the complexity of the tourism sector by stakeholders alongside the lack of frameworks needed for the implementation of the theory of sustainable tourism development (Bui, 2009).

Nevertheless, there has been an incentive to promote sustainable tourism development through policies following the World Summit on sustainable development in 2002, where it was stated that sustainable tourism development policies must be emphasised and implementation in order for host communities to benefit whilst maintaining control and environmental integrity of these areas and ultimately benefiting tourism overall (Neto, 2003). This shows that in recent years the implementation of sustainable tourism development has not been fine-tuned, which could potentially be a problem when it comes to tourism and sustainable development. In fact, O'Brien 2000 argues that national programs for sustainable

development also lack the effective instruments for management of tourism and development in developing nations and furthermore developing these types of structures is extremely time-consuming with potentially very few positive outcomes (Bui, 2009).

2.3 Ecotourism

Whilst only being 5-10% of one of the largest industries, it has a growth rate of 10-30% annually in comparison to tourism overall which is only 4% (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Sustainable ecotourism is a 'buzzword' from the 1990s and few studies have attempted to document specific cases of sustainable ecotourism in developing countries (Aylward et al, 1996), which is why this research paper is probing further into the sustainability development aspect of this type of tourism. Ecotourism is not nature tourism, adventure tourism or farm tourism but rather a unique form of tourism, which has due to green marketing become extremely popular (Bjork, 2000). According to Bjork 2000, ecotourism has been described and explained in many different manners, yet the central dimension of this type of tourism is clear, it requires that it must be sustainable and the author also states that for central groups of actors must work together in order to complete this and these are: local people, authorities, tourists and the company involved in tourism. Ecotourism comes under the umbrella term of sustainable tourism as it follows the key principles of sustainable development and sustainable tourism and additionally, it generates and focuses revenue for local communities further creating incentives for conservation (Ocampo et al, 2018). Moreover, according to Ocampo et al, 2018 one of the main causes of ecotourism is to create eco-sites to prevent further damage to the environment and its resources, whilst creating jobs, developing communities and environmental conservation and education furthering cultural preservation and experience. Therefore, from these definitions it further reinforces that ecotourism is a subsection of sustainable tourism as it follows the main principles of sustainable development: Economic, environmental and social sustainability. Nevertheless, some

researchers consider ecotourism simply to be an appealing term or catchphrase with usually very little application and often considered to simply be a marketing tool in order to attract more customers and increase economic revenue (Cobbinah, 2015). This, according to Cobbinah 2015, is due to the supposedly loose definition of ecotourism and therefore, the limited ability to implement these variables into policies. Although there are differentiating opinions from researchers in terms of ecotourism, usually most literature has agreed that the main pillars of ecotourism do follow sustainable development and most researchers agree that ecotourism follows principles that are nature-based, environmentally educated and sustainably managed (Drakopoulou, 2004). Since it has been established that ecotourism relies on management and the controlled use of natural and cultural resources, if implemented correctly it can enhance interaction between people, promote tourism itself and the environment clearly benefiting all the three principles (Drakopoulou, 2004). Due to this research, the following subsection will analyse and look at research in order to understand the current and potential economic, environmental and social implications of this type of tourism.

2.3.1 Environmental Implications

The host country is where the environmental implications of ecotourism occur. Ecotourism destinations are located in extremely vulnerable and underdeveloped areas and are therefore further susceptible to environmental degradation (Cater, 1993). Ecotourism has been utilised by global tourism and the rapid growth of technology to make the world and different countries more accessible (Tran & Do, 2011). The concept of ecotourism being beneficial for the environment and conservation is being challenged by the use of transportation where fossil fuels are used as energy producing harmful gases and ultimately contributing to global warming (Tran & Do, 2011). Tran & Do 2011 state that ecotourism uses transportation in three different stages. Firstly, tourists are transported to the location of ecotourism experience, secondly the travel between the eco-tourist sites and finally to the ultimate

destination to the developed country where the tourists are from. This transport utilised from ecotourism consequently contributes greatly to global warming and pollution due to the emission of carbon dioxide gases. Therefore, ecotourism is in danger of producing a self-destructive process as it is supplying the needs of the tourists while somewhat disregarding the future environmental consequences.

Camping and hiking are part of a lot of ecotourism programmes and can also have a dramatic change to the environment through development of physical infrastructures and the continual use of the same environmental area (Tran & Do, 2011). Cole 2004, stated that impact from camping and hiking from ecotourism is inevitable with repetitive use. Additionally, the author states that this impact and degradation can occur very quickly, whilst the recovery of the environment may be slow, which is why sustainable management in ecotourism is extremely important in these developing countries compared to other areas. The primary focus of ecotourism is the ecological impact on the production of fauna and flora and some ecotourism destinations are aimed at recruiting tourists in order to sustain the environment with programmes such as reforestation in order to increase environmental awareness to tourists whilst also benefiting the host destination (Edmond, 2019). Nevertheless, some researchers such as Drumm and Moore, 2002 argue that regardless of the principle of ecotourism many people have lost focus of the ethical and normative component of ecotourism and have misused the concept to lure tourists to increase income and therefore, further creating environmental issues (Cobbinah, 2015). Successful tourism can negatively impact the local environment increasing levels of solid waste, disturbances to natural habitats as well as causing sewage issues (Braun et al, 2015).

2.3.2 Socioeconomic Implications

As previously stated, ecotourism does bring economic revenue and benefits to communities and countries. It provides local economic benefits through employment, improved

infrastructure and increase business for local stores in communities whilst also maintaining the ecological integrity through low impact, non-consumptive resource use (Stem et al, 2003). In fact, ecotourism can create higher financial return per hectare compared to other competitive current land uses such as agriculture (Stem et al, 2003). Nevertheless, even though this type of tourism provides higher income it is also considered an unstable source of income due to external factors such as weather, politics exchange rates and fluctuations of tourist numbers (Jacobsen & Robles, 1992). According to Koens et al, 2009 ecotourism can have both positive and negative implications for host countries. It can increase foreign exchange, economic diversification as well as improved education and facilities for young people and increase community organisation through the promotion of local culture. Nevertheless, these socio-economic benefits come with drawbacks if ecotourism is not implemented correctly. This can be economic leakage, loss of resource bases, which results in an increased dependency or inflation, increase crime rates, prostitution, substance abuse and loss of access to facilities for locals (Koens et al, 2009). Additionally, ecotourism can exclude smaller communities or local people from key decision-making leading to both negative economic and social consequences for individuals but also to the environment (Braun et al, 2015).

Chapter Three: Costa Rica

3.1 Success of Ecotourism

This section of the research paper will explain the reasons why ecotourism is so successful in Costa Rica, considering that there are multiple destinations in the world where ecotourism could thrive, yet Costa Rica is the leading country in ecotourism. This section will be divided into subsections: Location, government policies and standard of living.

3.1.1 Location

Costa Rica is situated between North and South America and it possesses coasts in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, with a diverse environment including soil combinations and climatic variations (Costarica-information, 2019). Costa Rica covers 51,000 square kilometres of the world's surface, yet possesses roughly 6% of the world's biodiversity and visiting the country can offer you 12 different life zones, 20 national parks, 26 protected areas, nine forest reserves, eight biological reserves and seven wildlife sanctuaries (Costarica-embassy.org., 2019). Due to this, Costa Rica is a hotspot for ecotourists and ecotourism purely based on its location and the national parks and biodiversity. This is because the concept principle of ecotourism aims to conserve and promote the environment, biodiversity and nature itself whilst providing economic and social benefits. Therefore, simply having all these environmental factors in a very small, condensed location shows that the theory of ecotourism and ecotourism itself could thrive dramatically. Additionally, Costa Rica's infrastructure is extremely good compared to most developing countries in regard to concrete roads, telephones and electricity and its main international airport San Jose is located only a few hours away from the United States (Buchsbaum, 2004). This is extremely vital as a survey conducted in 1990 stated that the success of ecotourism was due to its location and environment because 39% of identified nature-based attractions are the primary reason why US tourists visit Costa Rica (Buchsbaum, 2004). Furthermore, as of 2016 tourists from the United States made up 42.2% of the tourist sector in Costa Rica (OECD, 2019) so this is a clear factor for the success of ecotourism.

3.1.2 History and Government Policies

Costa Rica's history as well as the government and its policies have greatly contributed to the success of ecotourism in the country and it is extremely important to analyse these components. From the period of 1821 to 1948, Costa Rica established a political entity which

was primarily based upon privileged access to land, export-based economy and the understanding of social welfare (Korsant, 2017). Despite political instability during the 19th century as the country entered into the 20th century Costa Rica created reforms that aimed at creating a more inclusive democracy, one that merged national pride with the progress that depended on the political and economic focus of land use (Korsant, 2017). Nevertheless, the protection of the environment has not always been a clear priority to Costa Rica. In fact, during the 18th century, the Spanish naturalist Fernandez de Oveido saw the country's natural biodiversity and encouraged the people to protect their land, however due to coffee and banana plantations thriving much ecological damage ensued (McKeone, 2011). By the 1970s coffee prices dropped around the world and due to the ecological damage and the coffee price drop the country looked at alternative options of land use as if they could not profit from exports they would need to try and find a new revenue source, which was tourism (McKeone, 2011). Subsequently, the Costa Rican government created new environmental policies and conservation areas to undo the environmental damage. Therefore by 1995, there were over 125 government protected environmental sites which included national parks wildlife and forest reserves (McKeone, 2011). This clear environmental damage, as well as international factors catapulted Costa Rica into investigating other options and reached the clear solution of ecotourism, which has been growing ever since.

Additionally, there was an increase of NGO activity from scientists or entrepreneurial pioneers and this was one of the reasons for the creation of ecotourism in Costa Rica and its success. The scientific basis for the countries biodiversity and need to protect the environment was established very early on and the National School of Agriculture was integrated in 1940 into the University of Costa Rica to educate young people on the importance of conservation, tourism and the environment in regards to income (Jones & Spadafora, 2016). Furthermore, the locally-based Inter-American Institute of Agricultural

Sciences currently known as CATIE was established at a similar time in 1942 and ultimately became a vital source of scientific understanding of Costa Rican biodiversity and the movement for conservation activism after 1960, where other NGOs and biologists from both the US and Costa Rica started to establish new institutions and educate new generations on conservation, tourism, protection of forests and wild life to name but a few (Jones & Spadafora, 2016). Therefore, it is clear to see that the interest in the environment in Costa Rica nationally and internationally sparked the success of ecotourism. This is because the awareness brought by the scientists and environmentalists in order to preserve tropical rainforests from 1972 onwards led by NGOs such as The World Wildlife Fund and The Rainforest Alliance led to public awareness and media reportings from non-scientists (Jones & Spadafora 2016).

Study abroad programmes in biology and natural sciences took foreign students to forested areas starting in the 1960s and 70s, where hundreds of students from the United States came to Costa Rica to study with the organisation for tropical studies at the La Selva Biological Center's Monteverdi Cloud Forest Reserve (Bien, 2010). Due to these programmes, students were able to learn about the country and see its natural beauty returning to their homes abroad allowing for the increase and success of ecotourism. This is because foreigners were leaving Costa Rica with a greater knowledge and understanding of the country and sharing this knowledge with other individuals and families leading to an influx of success and rate of ecotourism by the 1980s (Bien, 2010). According to Jones & Spadafora 2016, this awareness changed public perception of Costa Rican environment and nature from hot and hostile jungles to beautiful tourist destinations of rainforests with high levels biodiversity. This further fuelled the influx of ecotourists allowing the country to exploit its environment in a sustainable manner. Due to its stable political climate, Costa Rica became a successful pioneer in ecotourism.

Another component for the reason which projected the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica is the fact that the country continued to engage and accommodate powerful global interests to a certain extent (Braun et al, 2015). However, it ultimately chose a path to invest in a strong social democratic state, dissolving the military in 1948 (Braun et al, 2015). Comparing Costa Rica to other Latin and Central American countries historically and currently, it is extremely unique particularly regarding the government's conscious effort and path towards sustainability and development (Krahenbuhl, 2015). As stated, one of the most noteworthy components is the disintegration of armed forces and forbidding the creation of an army as this kept Costa Rica out of international turmoil, which has inundated other Latin American countries (Krahenbuhl, 2015). However, more importantly it has allowed the country to employ these 'army' governmental funds for different uses such as education and health care and conservation (Krahenbuhl, 2015). This shows us that the historical steps that Costa Rica has taken fuelled the interest of ecotourism but also provided a fertile ground, figuratively and literally, to create successfully ecotourism in the country. In the 1990s, policies and programmes for incentives and tax breaks for ecotourism were designed to benefit foreign investors, whilst local communities and businesses could not qualify for the incentives as they were too small and unable to afford environmental impact statements (Buchsbaum, 2004). These restrictions made it rather difficult for locals to earn high economic revenues and due to a series of controversies over the government's role in attracting very large foreign investors The Costa Rica Tourism Board subsequently altered its regulations to make it easier for local enterprises to qualify and distribute the economic income from ecotourism (Buchsbaum, 2004). Therefore, this shows that the governmental policies implemented in Costa Rica from conservation and deforestation to economic distribution allowed for ecotourism to thrive and succeed in the country. Additionally, even though the country was threatened by economic pressures from deforestation, which was harming other neighbouring

Central American countries Costa Rica continued with its conservation and economic policies, which has now resulted in its 5% of the world's biodiversity and the continuing ecotourism industry sector to be a significant economic driver in its development (Krahenbul, 2015).

The demand for ecotourism, as mentioned before, was promoted by study abroad programmes and scientists but was ultimately also strengthened by articles in mainstream media by journalists who were covering Central American wars and were stationed in Costa Rica in the 1980s due to its neutrality and lack of armed forces throughout this time period (Bien, 2010). They were effectively able to broadcast the political stability of the country to the rest of the world. Moreover, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the country's president Oscar Arias in 1987, which further reinforced the country's image as peaceful and stable (Bien, 2010). Consequently, Costa Rica's history of political stability comparing to other Central American countries as well as significant factors, which indicated its peaceful demeanour such as the Nobel Peace Prize further encouraged tourism particularly ecotourism to grow and develop (McKeone, 2011).

3.1.3 Standard of Living

The final component that I will be discussing in regard to the success of ecotourism compared to other Latin American countries is the country's standard of living. Costa Rica has one of the highest standards of living, largest middle class, the best university education level and highest literacy rates in the whole of Latin America (Honey, 2003). According to The United Nations Development Programme Reports as of 2018 the country ranks 63rd worldwide on the Human Development Index with 0.794 (United Nations Development Program, 2019). Comparing Costa Rica to its surrounding countries, Nicaragua and Panama are ranked 124th and 66th respectively. Additionally, Costa Rica has a literacy rate of 97.4 % and a life expectancy of 80 years (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Higher

literacy rates and higher levels of education lead to a higher understanding of the importance of the environment and how it can offer a sustainable income. Costa Rica has created scientists, conservationists and attracted other researchers from around the world and consequently, there are currently more than a hundred local and international environmental NGOs who have branches within Costa Rica (Honey, 2003). Costa Rica places 3rd among 103 Human Poverty Index and the country has found a way to generate a reasonably high living standard with equitable distribution, high levels of education and healthcare, with 96.7 % of homes having electricity , 90% of the country has access to clean water and 89% of homes are connected with the sewerage system, septic tanks and 55% have landline telephones (Anywhere, 2019). The fact that Costa Rica has focused on educating its population has made it a very attractive country for investment, offering potential for the establishment of a multinational company use, further fuelling ecotourism thanks to the high standard of living and the academic level of its population (Visitcostarica, 2019). These statistics and facts clearly indicate that one of the reasons for the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica compared to other countries is the fact that the standard of living is high and the government have focused on educating the population, which ultimately further fuels businesses and a higher understanding of the need to conserve the environment. When this is combined, ecotourism flourishes as it is clearly an environment where a well-educated population understands that order to increase economic income and further reap living standard rewards the environment is a priority and therefore, ecotourism is successful.

3.2 Sustainable Development of Ecotourism

This section of the research paper will be divided into two subsections, the first being environmental sustainability and the second socio-economic sustainability. In this section of the research paper I will analyse whether ecotourism offers sustainable development in Costa Rica and the future implications of sustainable development in the country due to ecotourism.

This section will look to see whether ecotourism can continue in the country and be beneficial or detrimental. Therefore, this section is divided into the main pillars of sustainable development: Environmental, social and economic. Since economic and social sustainability and implications are very much inter-linked I will be discussing them together. I will first analyse the environmental aspects and secondly the socio-economic implications of ecotourism.

Environmental Sustainability

According to some literature, Costa Rica has been very successful in marketing ecotourism sites and attractions in order to provide tourists packages that meet their international demands whilst continuing to sustain the development of the environment (Kleszcynski, 2016). This is because ecotourism has given economic value to nature and these principles aim to prevent ecological damage such as deforestation in Costa Rica (Koens et al, 2009).

3.2.1.1 Eco-Accommodation

Eco-accommodation, such as ecological and eco-friendly hotels, is an integral part of ecotourism and sustainable development efforts in Costa Rica (Sijer, 2018). These types of accommodations are considered to be a model for providing employment to locals as well as promoting environmentally friendly practices such as recycling, waste and water management as well as solar energy solution, which are all actively encouraged by the government (Sijer, 2018). Originally following the core principles of sustainable ecotourism development, these eco-lodges were extremely basic only with a couple of beds in a wooden hut with very little else, for example the Selva Bananito lodge is an eco-lodge located on 850 ha farm, which is ultimately used to provide holiday accommodation and activities for ecotourists (Rutter, 2009). There is no electricity, solar energy is used for heating water and

biodegradable soaps are used for washing, materials such as glass and plastic are recycled and water is purified naturally using bacteria (Rutter, 2009). The local family that owns the eco-lodge also aims to educate tourists about the environment, rainforest and provide activities such as hikes and birdwatching and the price is roughly £250 for three days (Rutter, 2009). This shows that the initial implementation of ecotourism and subsequent high levels of ecotourism demonstrate that these types of accommodations do offer sustainable development. Not only are the tourists being educated about the environmental situation and the human impact that tourists can make on the environment, specifically in Costa Rica, but also due to the remote location of the eco-lodges and the small number of individuals it can provide for, the environmental impact of these eco-lodges and subsequent ecotourism is minimal. Additionally, it provides very high economic revenue further fuelling sustainable development for locals. This follows the principles of ecotourism showing sustainability and development for the country economically, environmentally and socially. Nevertheless, due to the increase in tourism in Costa Rica an increase of expectations of the tourists have grown so has their requirement in the level of luxury (Rutter, 2009). This means that all eco-accommodations do not offer this type of sustainable development and the increase in ecotourism has led to hoteliers using the ecolabel unscrupulously, increasing their price and not following the three pillars of sustainable ecotourism development leading to 'greenwashing' (Sijer, 2018). Therefore, this shows that ecotourism brings about negative effects on sustainable development as well, as different accommodations such as luxury hotels are using eco-friendly marketing tools in order to attract more tourists and increase their income revenue. For example, The Crocodile Bay Resort is a seventy floor room luxury hotel located on the Osa Peninsula and surrounded by the Corcovado National Park, which has some of the highest levels of biodiversity in the country (Kleszcynski, 2016). This luxury hotel uses ecotourism as a marketing tool as it offers eco-tours to its guests and highlights

inshore and offshore touristic activities leading to potential risks surrounding the environment and local communities (Klescynski, 2016). One must also take into consideration where these luxury hotels or accommodations are being built as the construction of infrastructure in a highly biodiverse location will inevitably have an environmental impact on the country, questioning sustainable development.

Therefore, this has led to the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) launching one of the world's most strict certification programmes in order to measure the three pillars of sustainable development; the economic, social and environmental impacts of the accommodation and to award 1 to 5 "green leaves" depending on how the business has scored on these three pillars (Hunt et al, 2015). According to Hunt et al 2015, this programme is voluntary and was created by government officials, academics, tourism leaders and NGOs in order to certify the environmental impact of hotels and accommodations, which has led to many hotels being officially certified, as of 2015 there are 226 certified hotels. Additionally, ICT launched many certified programmes for other ecotourism attractions and activities such as tour operators, hikes and beaches to name but a few (Hunt et al, 2015). Furthermore, the certification for sustainable tourism (CST) has subsequently been created by the Sustainability Programs Department of the Costa Rica Tourism Board and the Costa Rica National Accreditation Commission, which is an alternative to ICT. Similar to the ICT, CST is also a voluntary programme and remains open to all types of accommodation such as hotels lodges and resorts that want to contribute and take part in Costa Rica's environmental conservation efforts (Govisitcostarica, 2019). These types of programmes aid in protecting Costa Rica's natural environment and the revenue from these programmes usually goes to park protection and additionally offers employment opportunities to locals (Govisitcostarica, 2019). These types of programmes offer trainings in order to achieve the best management practices, assessments and the education of the promotion in environmental markets

therefore, motivating tourism companies to become more sustainable and offer sustainable development to their organisation and country (Govisitcostarica, 2019). This shows that ecotourism, if implemented correctly and if it follows regulations and policies regardless if they are voluntary or not can offer sustainable development. However, it is also clear that this is a case by case situation and in order for the accommodation created and utilised by ecotourists to be sustainable, compulsory policies must be implemented. According to Hunt et al, 2015 they found that in the Osa Peninsula 105 accommodation facilities were operating in the region and all varied considerably in terms of certification and sustainable development. Some ecolodges received eco ratings under the CST programme whilst others had a more positive impact on sustainable development offering additional ecotourism activities such as overnight treks through the Corcovado National Park or day hikes and spa and wellness orientated programmes for all the ecotourists (Hunter et al, 2015). Additionally, certain eco-lodges that are owned by less well funded Costa Rican owned ecotourism ventures utilise more environmentally damaging techniques of waste disposal, location and they do not blend into the natural environment or employ technologies such as solar panels (Horton, 2009).

This reiterates the fact that ecotourism from the perspective of accommodation is quite subjective due to many factors that play a role in its impact on sustainable development. Yet, sustainable development of ecotourism can be improved if these programmes and certifications were compulsory. In this manner hotels would have to pass in order to keep their business open and this would be graded on their environmental impact. Their environmental impact would have to be below a certain threshold in order to stay open and they would have to get tested and certified annually.

3.2.1.2 National Parks

As previously stated, one of the main components of the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica

is due to its national reserves, conservation and growth of its national parks. Therefore, it is vital to analyse the impacts of its national parks and whether they offer sustainable development to eco-tourists and ecotourism. Thus, in order to do so the national parks in Costa Rica must provide economical, environmental and social development for the country. In ecological terms, national parks on average tend to have and are required to have an extremely high biodiversity as well as a large gene pools with over 500,000 species that inhabit one single park (Courvisanos & Jain, 2006). These national parks, if sustained correctly, will aim to have forests harvested in a controlled and sustainable manner to support the influx of ecotourists raising growth domestic product, forest cover and in turn reducing lake and river siltation, reef destruction and fishery depletion (Courvisanos & Jain, 2006).

National parks and other ecotourism protected areas are extremely important for the ecotourism sector and the communities in the country, as many ecotourism activities in Costa Rica occur within communities that are either in national parks and protected areas or adjacent to them (Buchsbaum, 2004). This indicates that there is a very large social component to the national parks and in order for ecotourism to offer sustainable development is must clearly focus on the inclusion and education of local communities. The increased and high levels of influx of tourists in national parks has led to economic and social benefits for the country. Figure 4 shows the number of visits to protected areas such as national parks in Costa Rica from the years 1992 to 2017.

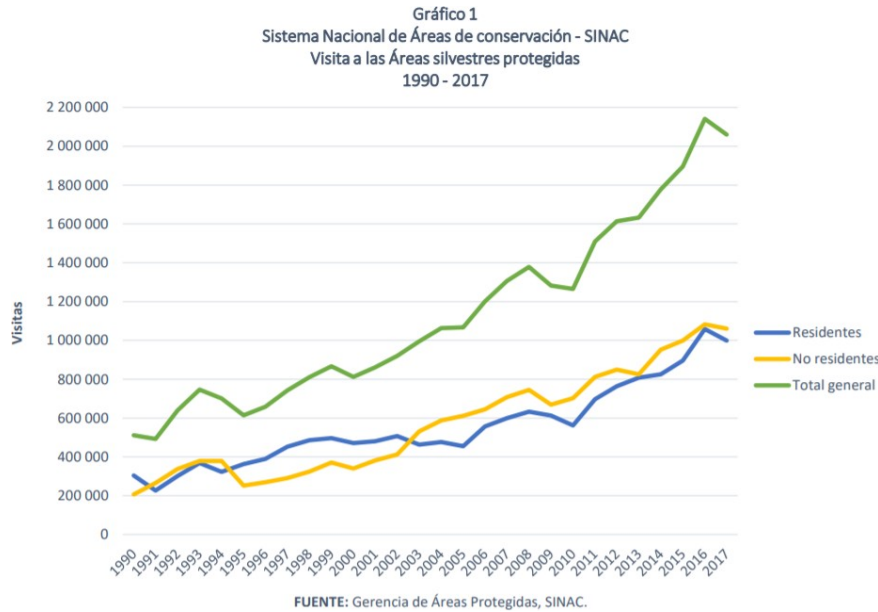


Figure 4. SINAC Number of Visits to Protected/ Conservation Areas (Sourced from ICT)

The figure clearly shows that the number of visits to protected areas has doubled over the last two decades from both residents and non residents. As previously stated, national parks and conservation areas are one of the main reasons why ecotourists visit Costa Rica and the number of tourists is constantly increasing as shown by the figure above. For example, Monteverde National Park is considered to be one of the most popular national parks in Costa Rica and the main tourist attraction for ecotourists due to its high biodiversity and Cloud Forest Biological Reserve (Menkhaus & Lober, 1996). The region received 75,000 visitors in 2004 (Koens et al, 2009) and the Manuel Antonio National Park, which is also an extremely popular national park, increased the numbers of visitors from 311, 606 in 2011 to 475, 052 by 2018 according to the Costa Rican Tourism Board (Instituto Constituyente Costarricense de Turismo, 2019). This shows that ecotourism is to some extent sustainable as the influx of tourists are constantly increasing and therefore, drawing an economic revenue. Yet, the increased number of visits to national parks can lead to the degradation of the environment in these areas, particularly trail areas and recreation sites within the parks (Farrell & Marion, 2001). Soil erosion, excessive erosion, exposed roots, muddy soil and

visitor created trails are some of the consequences that can be created due to high levels of eco-tourists in Costa Rica (Farrell & Marion, 2001). According to Farrell & Marion, the number of visitor created trails in Manuel Antonio Park is currently 11 at the entrance and another 4 trails leading to a different trail called Puerto Escondido. Additionally, sites such as the picnic sites in the park have almost complete or total loss of vegetation cover, with only widespread soil in the area due to the high number of tourists in recent years walking over the area and utilising it. This shows that due to the high levels of ecotourism in national parks the environment is being damaged and does not have the time to recover. It also indicates that if the number of visitors continues to increase at a high rate the environment will not be able to cope and there will be a large loss of land and biodiversity. Potentially, new policies could be implemented in order to ensure sustainable development, such as capping the number of tourists or having a tourist limit per day to minimise soil erosion and also have rangers within the parks at all times to guide visitors in order to decrease visitor created trails. This could potentially lead to economic revenue for locals and decrease employment levels.

Even though ecotourist sites and areas are created and established for sustainable development they tend to focus on short term economic benefits. This can be seen in the example of the Guayabo National Monument, which is 217 ha and one of the most significant archaeological sites in Costa Rica (Courvisanos & Jain, 2006). The lack of funding by the government has led to the deterioration of the popular ecotourist site, destroying the environment and also decreasing the number of tourists and therefore economic income revenue (Courvisanos & Jain, 2006). This shows us that in order for ecotourism to continue to offer sustainable development in Costa Rica, the government must look at the future and the longevity of its resources. Funding must be allocated to its tourist attractions in order to continue to reap economic and social benefits.

One must also take into consideration the transportation between eco-sites, eco-activities and accommodation from tourism and how it has an environmental impact. Tourists tend to utilise buses, which are the cheapest form of transport in Costa Rica as well as renting cars and utilising taxis. The demand for cars in Costa Rica has doubled from roughly 700,000 to 1.5 million between the years of 2000 and 2014 (Blanchard, 2018). This has led to extreme issues with pollution in the country that has a particularly green reputation for using renewable energy for electricity, yet it uses predominantly gasoline-dependent transport (Blanchard, 2018).

Additionally, there are also negative sustainable development consequences from ecotourism sites such as national parks. For example, in the Osa Peninsula the creation of the Corcovado National Park created a lot of controversy and conflict in the region and in the country as a whole (Horton, 2009). This is because a United Fruit company had to be demolished in order to create this national park. Consequently, this led to mass unemployment in the area and in nearby banana zones as well as the unemployment of hundreds of gold miners who also worked in the area (Horton, 2009). As previously mentioned, ecotourism promotes the conservation and creation of national parks, yet the forceful prioritisation of the environment can actually have negative consequences and not lead to sustainable development.

Prioritising the environmental impact over the economic impact of locals does not lead to sustainable development as the three pillars of sustainable development must be as equal as possible in order to promote ecotourism successfully for the benefit of all.

3.3 Socioeconomic Sustainability

In this section of the research paper I will discuss the economic and social implications and sustainability impacts generated by ecotourism.

3.3.1 Revenue, Wages and Distribution

As previously mentioned, one of the primary reasons for the popularity of ecotourism in the host country is economic benefit. The revenues from tourism in Costa Rica have been extremely high as tourism and ecotourism are the main economic revenues for the country. Between 2012 and 2016 the tourism and ecotourism sector contributed to a 1.9% increase in GDP from 4.4% to 6.3% according to a report published by the Central America Data in 2018, with accommodation food and beverages being the most important activities and services. Additionally, the revenues generated from tourism between March 2016 and 2017 was \$3.9 billion and this was a 26% increase in revenues from the previous 12 months (Centralamericadata.com, 2017). This clearly indicates that ecotourism does offer sustainable development in terms of economic revenue as the number of ecotourists are constantly increasing and so is the revenue. In fact, it is estimated that around 20% of the Costa Rican population works directly in ecotourism and another 60% receive indirect economic benefits from the ecotourism sector (Horton, 2009). Individuals who are employed or self-employed in ecotourism as well as those whose businesses are indirectly impacted from ecotourism evaluate ecotourism as having an overall positive economic impact on the country (Horton, 2009). This does imply that ecotourism offers economic sustainability and stability to the country, yet the question remains if it offers social sustainability as well. In order for ecotourism to offer sustainable development it must have a relatively equal distribution of the three pillars of sustainability.

The provision of employment is a highly desirable impact from ecotourism, which can be seen above through the economic revenue of tourism. Nevertheless, the employment offered by ecotourism is considered to be temporary due to the seasonality aspect of the influx of ecotourists (Zambrano et al, 2010). Therefore, even though the income is significantly higher amongst individuals who work in the ecotourism sector their position is not always

permanent and often they work only during the dry season of Costa Rica (Zambrano et al, 2010). Furthermore, high ranking or management roles are typically not held by locals but rather by elite Costa Rican nationals due to either a language or cultural barrier (Zambrano et al, 2010).

Moreover, the wages and wage distribution are significantly higher in the ecotourism sector. Traditionally employment in the mass tourism sector had low pay, long hours and unstable work which was usually given to local workers (Horton, 2009). However, currently and specifically in the Osa Peninsula, ecotourism wages are equal to or higher than wages in non tourism sectors such as agriculture and currently ecotourism offers positions that require more skills and training at roughly \$50 a day (Horton, 2009). Yet, the distribution of this ecotourism employment is between locals and foreigners, where higher paying jobs that require direct customer contact are held by foreigners or individuals from outside of the region, which leads to fewer opportunities for locals in regards to training or advancement to higher positions and ultimately pushing them out of employment (Zambrano et al, 2010).

Despite this, the economic opportunities in regard to conservation areas for locals and Costa Rican nationals are better than that of the international visitors. This can be seen by the entrance fees into the national parks. In the early 1990s The Costa Rican National Park Service increased the entrance fee by 1100% from 200 colones or \$1.25 to 24000 colones or \$15, whilst the entrance prices for locals and residents stayed at 200 corners (Chase, 1998). This has continued to be the case even today with prices for tourists ranging from \$15-\$50. This indicates that ecotourism does bring socio-economic sustainability to its residents as the sector is able to offer fair and sustainable fees to Costa Ricans who are visiting ecosites and experiencing their country indicating that they are directly or indirectly benefitting from ecotourism. Ecotourism is successful and subsequently more profitable than other competing destructive land uses such as agriculture, mass tourism, hunting or cattle grazing and these

entrance fees give protected land a higher economic value and prevent deforestation (Buchsbaum, 2004).

3.3.2 Education and Training

Education, particularly environmental education is stated to be at the centre of efforts in order to achieve sustainable development and since the start of ecotourism in the 1980s Costa Rica has been a pioneer in attempting to promote environmental learning and improving national development policies to promote education, conservation and ecotourism (Blum, 2008). In Costa Rica ecotourism enterprises are also expected to offer and make available opportunities for their employees to be educated about biodiversity, conservation and ecology (Zambano et al, 2010). This indicates that in order for ecotourism to offer sustainable development it must follow the three pillars of sustainable development and the rise of ecotourism in Costa Rica has aimed to promote this through education. In fact, the development and creation of training programmes due to changes from ecotourism have been implemented in order to engage locals and employees to identify and benefit from the influx of tourists and increase their income revenue, whilst at the same time getting educated about the environment, conservation and the implications of this. In response to the impacts of the 24 fold increase in park visitation over the past decade a tour guide training programme was created for local communities surrounding the Tortuguero National Park, in order to involve rural communities in resource management, to improve their income revenue whilst also providing environmental education to the locals (Jacobson & Robles, 1992). This training programme helped both tourists and locals. The tour guide programme helped decrease the tourist impacts on the surrounding beach, which had high numbers of endangered sea turtles, it provided education to locals who would not be able to reach this information through other governmental means and additionally it allowed locals to engage in part-time employment and reap direct rewards from tourism (Jacobson & Robles, 1992). These eco-tours are

designed to be much smaller in order to maintain standards of quality and care when visiting eco-sites, the tour guides tend to be well-trained and are thus able to further educate local institutions, offering courses to students and ultimately educate ecotourists further (Lumsdon & Swift, 1998). This interaction can be socially beneficial and sustainable as it offers an intercultural exchange between the ecotourists and the locals (Koens et al, 2009).

Therefore, ecotourism has led to the education of locals about the environment and protected areas on one side and this has had beneficial and sustainable implications for the communities and for the country on the other side. According to Hunt et al. 2015 local Costa Ricans identified hunting as the highest threat to local biodiversity and species followed by deforestation. Locals, for their own economic needs would poach animals in the national parks as well as obtain different materials such as wood and seeds. However, following the increase of ecotourism and its popularity as well as receiving education through eco-sites and programmes Hunter et al, 2015 found that 37.5% of non-tourism workers stated that they had extracted items from the national park compared to 17.5% of tourism workers. This shows that the individuals who are included in the ecotourism sector choose to conserve the environment and its wildlife. The decrease of poaching since the increase of ecotourism, shows that the education and involvement of individuals in the industry has had a social and environmental benefit. Consequently, fewer individuals take resources from national parks due to this (previously individuals, usually locals would take resources such as wood for their own personal use damaging the environment

3.3.3 Exclusion

If ecotourism is not implemented correctly it can lead to alienation. Alienation occurs when the tourists start to dominate local land and the local population are subsequently excluded leading to great hostility (Buchsbaum, 2004). An example of this would be the Sardinal

community in Guanacaste and a Hotel Riu in the community. The company that owned the hotel decided to extract water from the aquifer in the valley of the community for the hotel without consulting the community (Kleszczynski, 2016). Additionally, the hotel privatised its surrounding beaches for the tourists, which is prohibited by Costa Rican law and led to locals not having access to the beach (Kleszczynski, 2016). By solely focusing on economic development in regard to ecotourism, it can lead to decreased resources for local people only to increase rates of exclusion. Alienation and hostility can further occur when ecotourism only focuses on economic benefits and disregards social implications automatically undermining sustainable development. This is very much a case by case basis and this does not occur in every community. However, from this further regulations and policies must be put into place in order to ensure that communities are being included in changes made by and for ecotourism. This exclusion of locals, according to Roberts and Thanos 2003, is essentially detrimental to sustainable development as if conservation efforts exclude people that are part of the issue how can sustainable development and harmony ever be reached (Buchsbaum, 2004)? If ecotourism focuses primarily on economic benefit and environmental benefit but disregards social sustainability of locals and Costa Ricans, then by definition of the three pillars of sustainable development ecotourism cannot offer sustainable development in Costa Rica. In fact, large ecotourism companies in Costa Rica often portray locals as smiling and welcome faces for international tourists, which ultimately serves only the interest of local elites and global elites, diminishing sustainable development for local people in Costa Rica (Braun et al, 2015). According to Koens et al 2009, this has led to fewer opportunities for Costa Ricans and has led to additional social issues such as increased crime and increased rates of prostitution in order for locals to survive or increase their income revenue. Therefore, it is vital for local Costa Ricans to be included in ecotourism and its decision making in order for sustainable development to occur.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

The aim of this research paper was to identify the reasons for the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica, considering that there are highly biodiverse areas in the world that do not receive high ecotourism levels. Additionally, this research paper aimed to look at whether ecotourism can offer sustainable development and if ecotourism will continue to be environmentally, socially and economically beneficial for Costa Rica. The research paper identified three main components as to why ecotourism is so successful in Costa Rica. Firstly, the location of Costa Rica itself is in a very favourable position as high levels of US tourists are only hours away by plane and it is surrounded by the Caribbean and Pacific coast. Additionally, the country has extremely high levels of biodiversity for its geographical size. Secondly, the history of Costa Rica is extremely unique as in 1948 the country abolished all armed forces and prohibited the formation of its military. This meant that the government was able to use these funds for the development of different sectors of the country such as healthcare and education. The country was considered to be extremely stable, by foreigners and tourists, due to a number of reasons, such as its democratic government which disintegrated its army and the president winning a Nobel Peace Prize during this time period. Additionally, due to international factors such as the drop of coffee prices the country could no longer rely on exports for its income. Subsequently, the government invested the majority of its fund into the tourism sector, particularly ecotourism as many foreigners were coming into the country and increasing the country's economic revenue due to its national resources. Therefore, additional policies were implemented to create national parks and reserves in order to increase levels of ecotourism and this was the reasoning for the initial and consequent success of ecotourism. The final component of the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica is the country's high standard of living and education. The importance of the education of environment conservation was highly emphasised by the government and many study-abroad

and scientific programmes increased the stability and success of ecotourism. The research paper identified three main pillars of sustainable development, which are economic, environmental and social. In order for ecotourism to be successful it must follow all three pillars at an equal level. However, it is clear from this research paper that the definitions of sustainable development and eco-tourism are quite vague and the theories for both concepts have not been fully enlightened and need to be further explored.

This research paper clearly identified that ecotourism does offer economic sustainability. However, due to a high influx of tourists in Costa Rica, ecotourism has also created environmental and social implications. Therefore, it is necessary to implement additional policies and regulations in regard to the ecotourism sector in Costa Rica. Further policies and regulations regarding the sustainability of ecotourism must be implemented in order to ensure that ecotourism offers future sustainable development. If implemented correctly by considering all three aspects, economic, environmental and social then it will be successful but if one aspect is put at the forefront, such as environmental, it can lead to negative consequences. All three pillars are equally important and must remain in a sense of equilibrium. This research paper identified the importance of establishing future compulsory policies regarding the education of ecotourism, conservation and economic implications for locals so they can benefit from ecotourism. Additionally, it is clear that the involvement of local communities must be compulsory in the decision-making process of ecotourism to avoid and decrease social implications that affect local communities. In order to further decrease environmental damage created by the high influx of tourists, potential policies and regulations must be implemented in order to cap the number of visitors to national parks or conservation areas in order to restore the environmental damage that has already occurred. Furthermore, any eco-site and eco-accommodation must be certified in regard to sustainable development, in order to be allowed to operate and label themselves as being part of the

ecotourism sector and being an eco-accommodation/site. Currently, ecotourism can offer sustainable development in the future if changes to regulations and policies are implemented.

Reference List

Aylward, B., Allen, K., Echeverría, J. and Tosi, J., 1996. Sustainable ecotourism in Costa Rica: the Monteverde cloud forest preserve. *Biodiversity & Conservation*, 5(3), pp.315-343.

Allen, L.R., Long, P.T., Perdue, R.R. and Kieselbach, S., 1988. The impact of tourism development on residents' perceptions of community life. *Journal of travel research*, 27(1), pp.16-21.

Amir, A.F., Ghapar, A.A., Jamal, S.A. and Ahmad, K.N., 2015. Sustainable tourism development: A study on community resilience for rural tourism in Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 168, pp.116-122.

Anywhere.com. (2019). *A Current Snapshot of Sustainable Development in Costa Rica*. [online] Available at: <https://www.anywhere.com/costa-rica/travel-guide/sustainable-development> [Accessed 29 May 2019].

Attfield, R., 2015. *Ethics of the global environment*. Edinburgh University Press.

Bansal, P., 2005. Evolving sustainably: A longitudinal study of corporate sustainable development. *Strategic management journal*, 26(3), pp.197-218.

Bien, A., 2010. Forest-based ecotourism in Costa Rica as a driver for positive social and environmental development. *Unasylva*, 61(236), pp.49-53.

Björk, P., 2000. Ecotourism from a conceptual perspective, an extended definition of a unique tourism form. *International journal of tourism research*, 2(3), pp.189-202.

Blanchard, D. (2018). *Solving Costa Rica's traffic and pollution problem*. [online] The Tico Times Costa Rica. Available at: <https://ticotimes.net/2018/07/16/solving-costa-ricas-traffic-and-pollution-problem> [Accessed 31 May 2019].

Blanke, J. and Chiesa, T., 2013, May. The travel & tourism competitiveness report 2013. In *The World Economic Forum*.

Blum, N., 2008. Environmental education in Costa Rica: Building a framework for sustainable development?. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(3), pp.348-358.

Blum, N., 2009. Teaching science or cultivating values? Conservation NGOs and environmental education in Costa Rica. *Environmental Education Research*, 15(6), pp.715-729.

Braun, Y.A., Dreiling, M.C., Eddy, M.P. and Dominguez, D.M., 2015. Up against the wall: ecotourism, development, and social justice in Costa Rica. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 11(3), pp.351-365.

Broadbent, E.N., Zambrano, A.M.A., Dirzo, R., Durham, W.H., Driscoll, L., Gallagher, P., Salters, R., Schultz, J., Colmenares, A. and Randolph, S.G., 2012. The effect of land use change and ecotourism on biodiversity: a case study of Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica, from 1985 to 2008. *Landscape ecology*, 27(5), pp.731-744.

Buchsbaum, B.D., 2004. Ecotourism and sustainable development in Costa Rica.

Budeanu, A., Miller, G., Moscardo, G. and Ooi, C.S., 2016. Sustainable tourism, progress, challenges and opportunities: an introduction.

Bui, D.T., 2009. *Tourism industry responses to the rise of sustainable tourism and related environmental policy initiatives: The case of Hue city, Vietnam* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).

Cater, E., 1993. Ecotourism in the third world: Problems for sustainable tourism development. *Tourism management*, 14(2), pp.85-90.

Centralamericadata.com. (2017). *Tourism Revenue Continues to Rise - CentralAmericaData* :: *The Regional Business Portal*. [online] Available at: https://www.centralamericadata.com/en/article/home/Tourism_Revenue_Continues_to_Rise [Accessed 31 May 2019].

Cobbinah, P.B., 2015. Contextualising the meaning of ecotourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, pp.179-189.

Cole, D.N., 2004. Impacts of hiking and camping on soils and vegetation: a review. *Environmental impacts of ecotourism*, 41, p.60.

Costarica-information.com. (2019). *Tourism Statistics — costarica-information.com*. [online] Available at: <http://costarica-information.com/about-costa-rica/economy/economic-sectors-industries/tourism/tourism-statistics> [Accessed 28 May 2019].

Courvisanos, J. and Jain, A., 2006. A framework for sustainable ecotourism: Application to Costa Rica. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 3(2), pp.131-142.

Davidson, K., 2005. Will the concept of 'sustainable development' provide any solutions for the 21C.

Drakopoulou, A., 2004. Tourism certification and community-based ecotourism as tools for promoting sustainability in the Greek tourism sector—the example of Zagori. *Lund: Lund University*.

Edmond, A. (2019). *Ecological and Social impacts of Ecotourism*. [online] Available at: https://www.academia.edu/9173003/Ecological_and_Social_impacts_of_Ecotourism [Accessed 28 May 2019].

Ekins, P., 1993. Making development sustainable. *Global ecology: A new arena of political conflict*, pp.91-103.

Emas, R., 2015. The concept of sustainable development: definition and defining principles. *Brief for GSDR*, pp.1-3.

En.centralamericadata.com. (2018). *Tourism: Contribution to the Economy Increases - CentralAmericaData :: The Regional Business Portal*. [online] Available at:

https://en.centralamericadata.com/en/article/home/Tourism_Contribution_to_the_Economy_Increases [Accessed 31 May 2019].

Estes, R.J., 2010. Toward sustainable development: From theory to praxis. *Transnational social work practice*, 76.

Farrell, T.A. and Marion, J.L., 2001. Identifying and assessing ecotourism visitor impacts at eight protected areas in Costa Rica and Belize. *Environmental conservation*, 28(3), pp.215-225.

Garrod, B. and Fyall, A., 1998. Beyond the rhetoric of sustainable tourism?. *Tourism management*, 19(3), pp.199-212.

Go Visit Costa Rica. (2019). *Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program*. [online] Available at: <https://www.govisitcostarica.com/travelInfo/government-programs/cst-program.asp> [Accessed 29 May 2019].

Goodland, R., 1992. The case that the world has reached limits. *Population, Technology, and Lifestyle-The Transition to Sustainability*. Island Press, Washington, DC, pp.3-22.

Gössling, S., 2002. Global environmental consequences of tourism. *Global environmental change*, 12(4), pp.283-302.

Haque, M.S., 2000. Environmental discourse and sustainable development: Linkages and limitations. *Ethics and the Environment*, 5(1), pp.3-21.

Honey, M., 2003. Giving a grade to Costa Rica's green tourism. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 36(6), pp.39-47.

Hontus, A.C., 2015. Sustainable tourism development-important component of spatial touristic planning. *Scientific Papers: Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture & Rural Development*, 15(1).

- Horton, L.R., 2009. Buying up nature: Economic and social impacts of Costa Rica's ecotourism boom. *Latin American Perspectives*, 36(3), pp.93-107.
- Hunt, C.A., Durham, W.H., Driscoll, L. and Honey, M., 2015. Can ecotourism deliver real economic, social, and environmental benefits? A study of the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(3), pp.339-357.
- Hunter, C., 1997. Sustainable tourism as an adaptive paradigm. *Annals of tourism research*, 24(4), pp.850-867.
- Jabareen, Y., 2008. A new conceptual framework for sustainable development. *Environment, development and sustainability*, 10(2), pp.179-192.
- Jack, J.T., 2016. Dependency and Third World Underdevelopment: Examining Production-Consumption Disarticulation in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 10(4), pp.204-223.
- Jacobson, S.K. and Robles, R., 1992. Ecotourism, sustainable development, and conservation education: Development of a tour guide training program in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. *Environmental Management*, 16(6), pp.701-713.
- Jenkins, C.L., 1980. Tourism policies in developing countries: a critique. *International Journal of Tourism Management*, 1(1), pp.22-29.
- Jones, G.G. and Spadafora, A., 2016. Entrepreneurs and the Co-Creation of Ecotourism in Costa Rica. *Harvard Business School General Management Unit Working Paper*, (16-136).
- Integrallc.com. (2019). [online] Available at: <http://www.integrallc.com/2012/08/13/ecotourism-vs-sustainable-tourism/> [Accessed 05 May 2019].
- Instituto Constituto Costarricense de Turismo (2019). *Visitas de residentes y no residentes a las áreas silvestres protegidas*. [online] Available at: [https://www.ict.go.cr/en/documents/estad%C3%ADsticas/cifras-tur%C3%ADsticas/visita-a-](https://www.ict.go.cr/en/documents/estad%C3%ADsticas/cifras-tur%C3%ADsticas/visita-a)

las-%C3%A1reas-silvestres-protegidas-sinac/1397-2017-2/file.html [Accessed 31 May 2019].

Kiss, A., 2004. Is community-based ecotourism a good use of biodiversity conservation funds?. *Trends in ecology & evolution*, 19(5), pp.232-237.

Kleszczynski, K.A., 2016. Impacts of Ecotourism in Costa Rica: A Sustainable Alternative to Conventional Tourism.

Koens, J.F., Dieperink, C. and Miranda, M., 2009. Ecotourism as a development strategy: experiences from Costa Rica. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 11(6), p.1225.

Korsant, C., 2017. *Environmentalisms in Practice: From National Policy to Grassroots Activism in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula* (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London).

Krahenbuhl, P. (2015). *Costa Rica & the Birth of Ecotourism*. [online] Good Nature Travel. Available at: <https://www.nathab.com/blog/costa-rica-the-birth-of-ecotourism/> [Accessed 28 May 2019].

Lee, J.H., 2019. Conflict mapping toward ecotourism facility foundation using spatial Q methodology. *Tourism Management*, 72, pp.69-77.

Lee, T.H., Jan, F.H. and Yang, C.C., 2013. Conceptualizing and measuring environmentally responsible behaviors from the perspective of community-based tourists. *Tourism Management*, 36, pp.454-468.

Lele, S.M., 1991. Sustainable development: a critical review. *World development*, 19(6), pp.607-621.

Lemma, A.F., 2014. Tourism impacts: evidence of impacts on employment, gender, income. *EPS PEAKS, London*, pp.2-3.

Liu, Z., 2003. Sustainable tourism development: A critique. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 11(6), pp.459-475.

Lumsdon, L.M. and Swift, J.S., 1998. Ecotourism at a crossroads: The case of Costa Rica. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 6(2), pp.155-172.

McKeone, E., 2011. Ecotourism in Costa Rica: Environmental impacts and management.

McKercher, B., 2003, November. Sustainable tourism development-guiding principles for planning and management. In *National seminar on sustainable tourism development, Bishkek, Kyrgystan* (pp. 1-10).

Menkhaus, S. and Lober, D.J., 1996. International ecotourism and the valuation of tropical rainforests in Costa Rica. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 47(1), pp.1-10.

Munasinghe, M., 2002. The sustainomics trans-disciplinary meta-framework for making development more sustainable: applications to energy issues. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 5(1-2), pp.125-182.

Ocampo, L., Ebisa, J.A., Ombe, J. and Escoto, M.G., 2018. Sustainable ecotourism indicators with fuzzy Delphi method—A Philippine perspective. *Ecological indicators*, 93, pp.874-888.

OECD (2019). Costa Rica. [online]. Available at:<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/tour-2018-46-en.pdf?expires=1559068189&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=DD75FF1CB175B2800297F7AA927D383F> [Accessed 28 May, 2019]

Nyaupane, G.P. and Poudel, S., 2011. Linkages among biodiversity, livelihood, and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), pp.1344-1366.

Paul, B.D., 2008. A history of the concept of sustainable development: literature review. *The Annals of the University of Oradea*, 17(2), p.581.

Robert, K.W., Parris, T.M. and Leiserowitz, A.A., 2005. What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values, and practice. *Environment: science and policy for sustainable development*, 47(3), pp.8-21.

Ross, S. and Wall, G., 1999. Ecotourism: towards congruence between theory and practice. *Tourism management*, 20(1), pp.123-132.

Sanchez, R.V., 2018. Conservation Strategies, Protected Areas, and Ecotourism in Costa Rica. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(3).

Santos, T.D., 1970. The structure of dependence. *The american economic review*, 60(2), pp.231-236.

Sharpley, R., 2000. Tourism and sustainable development: Exploring the theoretical divide. *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, 8(1), pp.1-19.

Sijer, G. (2018). *Ecolodges in Costa Rica - Green or Greenwashed?*. [online] Rooms For Change. Available at: <https://www.roomsforchange.com/ecolodges-in-costa-rica-green-or-greenwashed/> [Accessed 29 May 2019].

The International Ecotourism Society. (2019). *What Is Ecotourism - The International Ecotourism Society*. [online] Available at: <https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Thompson, K. (2015). *Dependency Theory*. [online] ReviseSociology. Available at: <https://revisesociology.com/2015/10/17/dependency-theory/> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Tran, L. and Do, A., 2011. Impact of Ecotourism: A Study on the Environmental Impact of Ecotourism in Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere, Viet Nam.

United Nations Development Program. (2019). *Human Development Reports*. [online] Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CRI> [Accessed 29 May 2019].

United Nations Sustainable Development. (2019). *Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere - United Nations Sustainable Development*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

UNWTO 2011 *Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010: Preliminary Findings* United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2011.

Vincent, V.C. and Thompson, W., 2002. Assessing community support and sustainability for ecotourism development. *Journal of travel Research*, 41(2), pp.153-160.

Visit Costa Rica. (2019). *About Costa Rica*. [online] Available at: <https://www.visitcostarica.com/en/costa-rica/general-information> [Accessed 29 May 2019].

Williams, M., 1998. Aid, sustainable development and the environmental crisis. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 3(2), pp.19-33.

WTTC. (2019). *Travel Tourism continues strong growth above global GDP*. [online] Available at: <https://www.wttc.org/about/media-centre/press-releases/press-releases/2019/travel-tourism-continues-strong-growth-above-global-gdp/> [Accessed 05 May 2019].

Www2.unwto.org. (2019). *Why tourism? | World Tourism Organization UNWTO*. [online] Available at: <https://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism> [Accessed 05 May 2019].

Zambrano, A.M.A., Broadbent, E.N. and Durham, W.H., 2010. Social and environmental effects of ecotourism in the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica: the Lapa Rios case. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 9(1), pp.62-83.