

The Role of Community Attachment and Residents' Empowerment Towards Quality of Life and Support for Sustainable Tourism Development: An Application of RETS 2.0 in Ethiopia

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I. Theoretical Part

- Conduct a literature review on community attachment, residents' empowerment, quality of life, and sustainable tourism development.
- Explore the relevant theories to link the RETS 2.0 framework and its relevance to tourism studies.

II. Practical Part

- Analyze the factors contributing to residents' empowerment.
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ABSTRAKT

Tato studie zkoumá, jak komunitní sounáležitost a posílení postavení obyvatel ovlivňují kvalitu života (QoL) a podporu udržitelného rozvoje cestovního ruchu (SSTD) v Addis Abebě, Etiopie. S využitím rámce RETS 2.0 a modelování parciálních nejmenších čtverců (PLS-SEM) na základě 200 odpovědí hodnotí pět dimenzí posílení: ekonomickou, environmentální, politickou, psychologickou a sociální. Zjištění ukazují, že politické, psychologické a sociální posílení významně ovlivňují podporu udržitelného cestovního ruchu, zatímco ekonomické a environmentální posílení, stejně jako přímý vliv komunitní sounáležitosti na kvalitu života, nejsou statisticky významné. Nicméně komunitní sounáležitost moderuje vztah mezi posílením a kvalitou života, zejména v ekonomických a environmentálních aspektech. Studie zdůrazňuje důležitost integrace posílení s místní identitou a inkluzí. Praktická doporučení zahrnují podporu komunitního podnikání, podporu občanské participace a zajištění spravedlivých přínosů z cestovního ruchu. Tento výzkum přispívá k literatuře o udržitelném cestovním ruchu kontextualizací posílení v městském africkém prostředí a nabízí strategické poznatky pro tvůrce politik a odborníky.

Klíčová slova: komunitní sounáležitost, posílení postavení obyvatel, kvalita života, cestovní ruch, RETS 2.0, Etiopie

ABSTRACT

This study examines how community attachment and residents' empowerment influence quality of life (QoL) and support for sustainable tourism development (SSTD) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Using the RETS 2.0 framework and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) on 200 responses, it assesses five empowerment dimensions: economic, environmental, political, psychological, and social. Findings indicate that political, psychological, and social empowerment significantly impact support for sustainable tourism, while economic and environmental empowerment, along with the direct effect of community attachment on QoL, are not statistically significant. However, community attachment moderates the relationship between empowerment and QoL, particularly in economic and environmental aspects. The study underscores the importance of integrating empowerment with local identity and inclusion. Practical recommendations include fostering community-based entrepreneurship, promoting civic participation, and ensuring equitable tourism benefits. This research contributes to sustainable tourism literature by contextualizing empowerment in an urban African setting and offering strategic insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: community attachment, residents' empowerment, quality of life, tourism, RETS 2.0, Ethiopia

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I hereby declare that the printed version of this thesis is identical to the electronic version submitted in the IS/STAG system.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most promising and dynamic industries globally. It is crucial to strategically plan and promote tourism responsibly while seeking compromises among the environmental, economic, and social objectives of society (Streimikiene et al., 2020). Tourism has become a powerful driver of economic development, cultural exchange, and environmental awareness, especially in developing countries where many countries are transitioning to become global destinations. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that this sector is responsible for around ten percent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the entire world. Also, on average tourism creates one out of ten jobs in the world (UNWTO, 2022).

Beyond the economic, cultural and heritage conservation, tourism also enhances community wellbeing but only when its developed inclusively and sustainably (Gössling & Hall, 2019). However, the sustainability of tourism largely depends on the extent to which it benefits and engages local communities who believe to be the custodians, protectors and owners of the lands. As tourism expands into more remote and rural areas, questions emerge around how to balance development with environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and the well-being of the community. It must align with the locals, attitudes and their perceptions.

Sustainable tourism dates back to the 1980s when subbranches like Community-based tourism (CBT) was commonly used as a channel for rural development by reducing poverty, offering opportunity for conservation and economic development. As a result of the initiatives, community tourism has gradually become a key instrument of development in developing countries (Zielinski et al., 2020).

Hence, in recent years sustainable tourism has adopted more inclusive and community centred policies and approaches. Supporting residents by empowerment, enhancing their quality of life and fostering their sense of belonging. However, despite the research and immense academic and policy attention, there is still a gap in applying frameworks that assess the relationship between tourism, resident empowerment and quality of life.

Ethiopia is widely recognized for its deep rooted historical and cultural heritage. It has held a unique identity in the global stage for being the only African country that was not colonized hence its religious and cultural aspects are so unique compared to those of the other African countries and the world in general. It is also often referred to as the “Land of

origins” for being the cradle of human civilization (Woldegerima, 2017). It has several UNESCO recognized world heritage sites such as rock-hewn churches in Lalibela, the obelisks of Axum, castles of Gondar, and the walled city of Harar. Despite this unique niche in culture and enormous potential, tourism in Ethiopia has failed to attain its enormous potential.

The modern shape of Ethiopia's tourism began in the early 1960s with the establishment of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization which spearheaded tourism by promoting “Historic Route” - a circuit to all cultural and heritage sites (Tadesse, 2015). Despite these efforts the tourism industry experienced challenges due to communal conflicts, insecurity and political instability. However, the government has renewed focus in tourism by coming up with strategic plans to foster the industry in a bid to reduce poverty and create employment (MoCT, 2020).

Addis Ababa being the capital city of Ethiopia, offers unique context to explore the modern-day tourism that has a blend of urbanization and communal contexts. Addis Ababa has rapidly grown to become a significant diplomatic region in Africa hence it attracts a wide array of tourists all year round. As a result, it has experienced rapid urbanization over the recent years which has had a multiplier effect on tourism (Addis Tessema, G., and Assefa Haile, E. (2022).

The developments have received a mixed reaction from the natives, where on one hand it has helped with job creation and improving the quality of life and on the other, it has jeopardised the residents control of tourism and distribution of resources generated from tourism. Addis Ababa represents a dynamic set up where the residents are continuously exposed to tourism related changes and hence making it suitable for studying modern day tourism influences in residents.

Additionally, Addis Ababa rapid development and its global visibility make it an ideal location to evaluate the practicality of global models such as RETS 2.0 which has limited application in developing countries.

Despite the recognized importance of empowerment, this study notes a lack of research on how residents gain empowerment through tourism participation, how empowerment relates to their QoL, and whether this subsequently leads to support for sustainable tourism development (STD). Moreover, few studies have applied validated theoretical models to understand the dynamics of tourism in Africa.

In this thesis, the aforementioned gap will be addressed by applying the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS 2.0), developed by Eslami et al. (2019), to determine how different dimensions of empowerment affect the quality of lives of residents in Ethiopia. Additionally, the study introduces community attachment as a moderating variable, acknowledging that residents' emotional ties to their communities may influence how they perceive and respond to tourism development.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS OF THESIS DEVELOPMENT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between residents' empowerment, perceived quality of life, and their endorsement of sustainable tourism development utilizing the RETS 2.0 framework. Specifically, the study explores how each of the five empowerment dimensions influences residents' quality of life and support for tourism, and how these relationships are moderated by community attachment. By situating this research in Addis Ababa, the study contributes to testing the transferability and practical relevance of the RETS 2.0 model in a new cultural and geographical context contributing to broader understanding on sustainable tourism in the African context.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How empowered do residents feel in tourism-related decision-making ?
- How does empowerment impact on residents' quality of life in the context of tourism development?
- In what ways does residents' quality of life influence their support for sustainable tourism?

The general objective of the study is to develop and validate an integrated model linking community attachment , economical, environmental ,psychological, social, and political empowerment, residents' QoL, and their support for STD.

The specific objectives are:

- To assess the level of community attachment and residents' empowerment in selected tourism communities.
- To analyze the relationship between community attachment, empowerment, and perceived quality of life.
- To evaluate the influence of community attachment and empowerment on support for sustainable tourism development.
- To apply RETS 2.0 in modelling renewable energy solutions for tourism facilities in the study area.
- To explore how renewable energy integration can enhance community quality of life and support for tourism.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides both theoretical and practical contributions in understanding sustainable tourism development in the context of developing countries such as Ethiopia. By applying the RETS 2.0 framework, this research provides a guide to tourism policy makers and stakeholders in Ethiopia and any other developing nation on how to promote sustainable tourism by fostering community empowerment. The study will provide a roadmap that will help in developing strategies that prioritize local communities in long-term tourism development efforts.

From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the theoretical application of RETS 2.0 by offering cross-cultural relevance. It also enriches the existing research on tourism by incorporating community attachment in pursuit of understanding resident perceptions on tourism and by adding evidence on the usefulness of RETS 2.0 across diverse environments.

I THEORETICAL PART

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature on community attachment, residents' empowerment, quality of life, support for sustainable tourism development, and the application of RETS 2.0 in tourism settings. It also examines tourism involvement and its role in shaping community attitudes. This chapter identifies research gaps and helps build a theoretical foundation to support the hypothesis and objectives of the study.

1.1 Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that meets the demands of present visitors and host communities while ensuring that future generations can fulfil their own needs. This idea focuses on managing resources in a way that balances economic, social, and environmental issues. It strives to serve the economic, social, and aesthetic requirements of both visitors and local residents, while conserving cultural integrity, sustaining natural processes, protecting biological variety, and safeguarding life support systems (Cernat & Gourdon, 2007). However, the definition is flexible to allow different interpretations and applications across different tourism contexts. Empowerment is a crucial element of sustainable tourism development, characterized as a complex, interrelated phenomenon influencing individuals, organizations, and communities (Sharma et al., 2022).

Sustainable tourism Development has attracted a lot of attention from scholars in the past and recent years. This is because of the ambiguity with the wide context of sustainable development itself. In this regard, sustainable tourism development has attracted many scholars, hence so much literature which has been reviewed over and over (Cernat & Gourdon, 2007).

In the study by Cernat & Gourdon, they emphasize the need for a Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool (STBT) that will help in assessing tourism suitability in developing countries, further underlining the importance of studying tourism research in the developing country context. They argue that, despite tourism becoming an increasingly significant sector, developing countries have not been able to capitalize on its potential (Cernat & Gourdon, 2007).

Sustainable tourism development has also been an important topic of discussion about the future. For instance, The United Nation's 2030 agenda for sustainable development. In the study by (Hall, 2022), he explores the relationship between UN's

Nation's 2030 agenda for sustainable development and sustainable tourism development. It discusses how the Sustainable Development Goals especially those that aim at ending poverty influence tourism policies despite tourism taking a notable mention in the discussions. The study critiques the approaches employed by various tourism stakeholders in their quest to promoting sustainable tourism.

Resident support is widely recognized as a critical determinant of successful and sustainable tourism development. According to social exchange theory (Ap, 1992), residents evaluate tourism based on perceived benefits and costs. Support is more likely when residents believe that tourism brings more benefits (e.g., jobs, improved infrastructure) than costs (e.g., overcrowding, environmental degradation).

Recent studies such as a study done in Gunung Ciremai National Park, Indonesia, residents who perceived greater economic benefits from tourism, such as job creation and business opportunities, showed stronger support for tourism development. This study also suggests that despite the developments, negative impacts such as disruptions of community life can lead to decreased resident support especially in the early stage of tourism development which is very crucial (Nugroho & Numata, 2020).

Also, support is not solely based on economic returns but also on factors like cultural preservation, environmental awareness, and opportunities for social inclusion (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Su & Swanson, 2017). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that shape resident support in pursuit to design equitable and inclusive tourism policies.

In the context of developing countries like Ethiopia, sustainable tourism has the potential to serve as a tool for community development, poverty alleviation, and cultural preservation. According to Teye, Sirakaya, and Sönmez (2002), achieving sustainability in African tourism contexts requires inclusive policies, education, and a strong focus on local empowerment.

1.2 Community Attachment

Community attachment refers to an individual's emotional relationship with their community and sense of connection to their home (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). It encompasses both place dependence (functional attachment to a location) and place identity (symbolic or emotional attachment). In tourism contexts, residents with stronger attachment to their communities are more likely to be protective of the local resources, and their perceptions

significantly influence their support or resistance to tourism development (Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant, 2004).

Research has consistently shown that this attachment influences the perceptions that residents have on the impacts of tourism and their level of support for sustainable tourism development (Eslami et al., 2019; Nasr et al., 2022). Residents with stronger community attachment are more likely to embrace tourism's positive impacts, especially in terms of social, economic, and environmental benefits, hence they are in favour of the various tourism initiatives (Eslami et al., 2019). This study also concludes that the overall quality of life satisfaction has a positive correlation towards resident's support towards tourism.

However, studies also indicate that at times that strong resident attachment does not always translate to community acceptance to the tourism initiatives, as some residents may perceive tourism as disruptive to their community's identity or lifestyle, especially in the early stages of tourism development (Lee, 2013; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Therefore, community attachment not only acts as a predictor of residents' attitudes toward tourism but also as a mediating factor between the perceived benefits and support for tourism development. This highlights the importance of fostering a positive emotional connection to the community in sustainable tourism planning.

The implications of these discoveries are such that community attachment can strongly affect residents' perception of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism and, in turn, support for its growth. In this research, community attachment is viewed as an intervening factor capable of conditioning the impact of empowerment upon QoL and, in turn, resident support. Insertion of this factor enriches the research design and captures various resident reactions regarding emotional and social attachment to the surrounding area.

1.3 Empowerment

Empowerment is a process through which individuals seek to assume control over their lives and gain power for personal, communal, and societal application (Laire, 2023). Resident empowerment is defined as the level at which individuals feel empowered to impact and benefit from tourism development. As tourism has shifted from its dormant role in economics to one of community transformation, scholars have increasingly emphasized empowerment as a process and result of sustainable tourism (Boley & McGehee, 2014).

Tourism scholars have increasingly used empowerment frameworks to determine the social, political, financial, and psychological transformations caused by tourism (Tosun, 2006). Of these, Eslami et al.'s (2019) RETS 2.0 model has witnessed widespread acceptance for its systematic and culturally versatile method for measuring five dimensions of empowerment, namely, economic, psychological, social, political, and environmental. This segment discusses each of these dimensions as conceptualized in RETS 2.0 and its applicability to sustainable tourism.

1.3.1 Economic empowerment

This describes to what degree residents feel positive changes in their financial situation, employment prospects, earning stability, and links to tourism-based business opportunities. Eslami et al. (2019) state that as residents feel tangible financial gains from tourism—such as rising household earnings or jobs, their support for its growth is greater. Economic empowerment also mitigates poverty and inequity in host destinations (Scheyvens, 1999; Torres & Momsen, 2004).

Various studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between economic empowerment and tourism. For instance, according to a study done by Rachmawati et al. (2021), it determines that indeed tourism supports local communities economically by providing various money-making opportunities. However, most of the respondents believed that the economic benefits are not equally distributed. The study also identifies factors such as involvement with tourism activities, education level, geographical location and the social class to be factors that shape the perception towards economic empowerment.

In the Ethiopian context, where unemployment and underemployment are significant challenges, tourism can be a critical engine for local economic empowerment, especially for youth and women in urban areas like Addis Ababa.

1.3.2 Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment encompasses residents' feeling of pride in themselves, self-esteem, and faith in their ability to affect change in their area. This aspect portrays internal change as residents feel appreciated and valued by tourism stakeholders. Eslami et al. (2019) identify that psychological empowerment has its foundation in people's feelings about dignity, culture, and whether they feel they have been included in tourism discourses. When residents' local identity is reinforced through tourism efforts and provides outlets for

themselves to articulate themselves, they feel psychologically empowered (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012).

Studies suggest that, psychological empowerment is an integral element in promoting local people's participation in developing the area. Empowered local people can play an active part in supporting and participating in making tourism policies, which leads to more sustainable and people-oriented tourism development. Tourism agencies and local governments should encourage policy formulation to promote residents' empowerment in an attempt to increase residents' participation and ensure sustainability in terms of long-term success in implementing tourism projects (Jeong et al., 2021).

1.3.3 Social empowerment

Social empowerment aims at enhancing community unity, cohesion, respect, and cooperation among residents due to tourism development. Social capital can be improved by tourism through creating interaction, mutual objectives, and collective problem-solving, as stated in RETS 2.0. Socially empowered communities can better cooperate, advance their interests, and counteract outside forces threatening to undermine their values (Moscardo, 2008; Eslami et al., 2019).

1.3.4 Political empowerment

Political empowerment is used to denote the level to which residents possess the voice, agency, and channels of institutions to have an impact on tourist decisions. RETS 2.0 stresses that communities become accountable and develop ownership when involved in planning, policymaking, and also in processes of evaluation. Political empowerment is key in participatory governance and democratic accountability (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). However, political empowerment has been viewed as only an individualistic process despite it going beyond voting in local election set up (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021).

Additionally, the study by Scheyvens & van der Watt (2021) suggest that political empowerment is viewed as a redistribution of power from the dominant political setups. It disrupts the status quo by reshaping the power structures when the local people – often marginalize, are included. The study also identifies challenges to political empowerment that include; resistance from centralized powers, economic inequalities, corruption and cultural norms.

Various studies have been done in context on how political empowerment to local people in the community affects tourism. According to promoting political empowerment for local people ensure that tourism development is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Political empowerment of communities not only empowers them to make decisions, but also increases overall effectiveness in promoting desirable socio-economic and cultural consequences through tourism (Aghazamani & Hunt, 2017).

Political empowerment in tourism in many developing countries, such as Ethiopia, is underdeveloped due to weak capacities of institutions and top-down planning. Involving residents in tourism governance frameworks in Addis Ababa can increase policy responsiveness and ensure greater community trust in tourism activities.

1.3.5 Environmental empowerment

Environmental empowerment relates to residents' knowledge of environmental issues, ability to defend natural resources, and participation in sustainable environmental practice. Responsible tourism can promote a conservation perspective and promote environmentally friendly local behaviours (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021). RETS 2.0 identifies that empowered residents who feel they can participate in environmental conservation will tend to promote sustainable tourism (Eslami et al., 2019).

According to Scheyvens and van der Watt (2021) environmental empowerment is conceptualized as an integral part of empowering communities in tourism. They suggest that the existing conceptual frameworks of empowerment based on psychological, social, economic, and political dimensions can be complimented by an added environmental dimension. This inclusion seeks to recognize the immense potential for promoting environmentally friendly attitudes and habits by involving communities in sustainability measures. They point out that environmental empowerment entails communities gaining knowledge as well as the right to manage and protect their natural assets. This is manifest in conservation initiatives, sustainable tourism activities, and environmentally oriented initiatives led by communities.

Additionally, they underscore that environmental empowerment is interdependent with other dimensions of empowerment in terms of community well-being depending on the health of its surrounding environments. Environmental empowerment in tourism is, therefore, not just fundamental for an area's ecological sustainability but equally for social and economic empowerment of residents (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021).

1.4 Residents' Empowerment & Quality of Life (QoL)

Empowerment is closely tied to quality of life (QoL), which is defined as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing physical well-being, social relationships, emotional satisfaction, and access to resources (Uysal & Sirgy, 2019). Tourism can contribute to QoL by improving infrastructure, creating employment, enhancing civic participation, and elevating local pride (Uysal & Sirgy, 2019).

Empirical studies have found that empowered residents often report higher levels of QoL (Boley et al., 2015; Stylidis, 2016). For instance, Zhou et al. (2021) found that tourism-led empowerment increased life satisfaction among Chinese ethnic minorities. Similarly, Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer (2010) demonstrated that social and political empowerment positively predicted QoL in Australian communities.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RETS 2.0

This study is anchored to the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS 2.0), developed by Eslami et al. (2019). RETS 2.0 provides a multidimensional framework for understanding how tourism influences residents' lives through various empowerment domains. These dimensions include: economic, psychological, social, political, and environmental empowerment. They represent pathways which tourism can contribute to sustainable tourism development.

2.1 Overview of the RETS 2.0 Model by Eslami et al. (2019)

The Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS) 2.0, developed by Eslami et al. (2019), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how tourism empowers local communities across multiple dimensions. The model builds on earlier models that treated empowerment as a unidimensional or abstract concept. RETS 2.0 recognizes the multidimensional and contextual nature of empowerment and its role in fostering resident support for tourism development by incorporating broad discussions towards community participation and empowerment.

The model includes five core dimensions: a) economic - how residents perceive that tourism offers financial advantages, employment chances, and prospects for enhancing their economic status, b) psychological empowerment - the degree to which tourism elevates self-esteem, fosters communal pride, and reinforces one's capacity to effect change, c) social empowerment - enhancements in societal cohesion, trust, and interpersonal connections resulting from tourism, d) political empowerment - the extent to which citizens perceive their ability to engage in tourist planning and decision-making processes, and e) environmental empowerment - the conviction that tourism fosters or encourages environmental stewardship and sustainable behaviors. The model also asserts that these forms of empowerment positively influence residents' perceived quality of life, therefore influencing their support for sustainable tourism development.

RETS 2.0 is grounded in both empowerment theory and the sustainable tourism development paradigm. It integrates insights from sociology, psychology, political science, and environmental studies to offer a holistic perspective on how tourism interventions can be both people-centered and sustainable. The framework is particularly useful for exploring how tourism affects residents in emerging destinations where formal participation mechanisms and infrastructure may still be evolving.

The model has been used in several studies to examine resident perceptions for instance; Eslami et al. (2019) in Malaysia where it was used to examine the residents support towards tourism in the coastal areas, Styliadis (2021) used the model to study empowerment in tourism within Greece and Su and Swanson (2017) explored the political and psychological empowerment dimensions in rural china.

2.1.1 Limitations of the model

Despite the many advantages and suitability of the model, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged.

- The model has measurement challenges as discussed by (Zhao et al., 2023). They argue that empowerment is subjective therefore, respondents/residents can interpret the survey questions differently. They argue that level of education, knowledge of the tourism industry and language can impact the scale consistency.
- Empowerment bias - The model has been criticised for being biased towards positivity and not adequately addressing cases of marginalisation and disempowerment. According to Scheyvens (1999) if the marginalized groups are alienated from benefits, this results in disempowerment. In this case, this was mitigated by randomly sampling respondents to the questionnaire.

2.1.2 Justification for using RETS 2.0 in the Ethiopian context

The decision to use the RETS 2.0 framework in this study stems from its comprehensiveness, adaptability, and relevance to emerging tourism destinations like Ethiopia. Unlike other empowerment models that may prioritize Western governance systems or economic growth narratives, RETS 2.0 offers a nuanced understanding of empowerment that aligns well with Ethiopia's social, economic, and cultural realities. It provides a multidimensional lens that is sensitive to the complexities of urban African communities and recognizes the interconnected nature of development, identity, and governance.

Moreover, RETS 2.0 is particularly suitable for examining empowerment in a city like Addis Ababa, which is experiencing rapid urbanization, cultural diversification, and an expanding tourism sector. The framework allows for a contextualized assessment of how tourism is reshaping the lived experiences of residents, offering insights that are directly useful for policymakers and local stakeholders aiming to promote equitable, inclusive, and

sustainable tourism. The application of RETS 2.0 in this study also contributes to testing the transferability of the model in non-Western contexts, adding to its global relevance and utility.

2.2 Gaps in the Literature

While there has been growing interest in sustainable tourism development, many studies tend to focus more on environmental and economic aspects, often overlooking the social dimension, especially how tourism impacts the day-to-day lives of local residents. Research that links residents' empowerment and quality of life to their support for sustainable tourism is still relatively limited. Even when these concepts are explored, empowerment is usually measured narrowly, often reduced to participation or involvement in decision-making. But empowerment is much more complex—it includes psychological, economic, social, and even political dimensions that shape how people perceive and interact with tourism development.

Similarly, studies on quality of life tend to generalize outcomes without capturing personal, lived experiences or how tourism might influence various aspects such as community pride, safety, or access to services. Furthermore, few studies have examined how the strength of community attachment—the emotional and social bonds residents feel toward their home—might influence these relationships. Most of the available literature is also concentrated in Western or highly developed tourism destinations, with limited work done in African urban settings like Addis Ababa. This leaves a gap in understanding how sustainable tourism unfolds in different social and cultural contexts.

Additionally, there are limited studies done examining community attachment as a moderator between residents' empowerment. The quality of life, and support towards sustainable tourism.

This thesis seeks to address these gaps by applying the RETS 2.0 model in Addis Ababa, capturing a more holistic view of empowerment and quality of life, while also exploring the moderating role of community attachment in shaping residents' support for tourism development.

2.3 Hypothesis Development

Based on the RETS 2.0 framework and related studies (Santos et al., 2023; Gautam & Bhalla, 2023), the following hypotheses are proposed:

Empowerment & QoL

H1: Residents' Environmental empowerment positively impacts residents' quality of life.

H2: Residents' Economic empowerment positively impacts residents' quality of life.

H3: Residents' psychological empowerment positively impacts QoL

H4: Residents' social empowerment positively impacts QoL

H5: Residents' Political empowerment positively impacts residents' quality of life.

Empowerment & STD

H6: Residents' Environmental empowerment positively impacts their STD

H7: Residents' Economic empowerment positively impacts their STD

H8: Residents' psychological empowerment positively impacts their STD

H9: Residents' social empowerment positively impacts residents' support for sustainable tourism development.

H10: Residents' political empowerment positively impacts residents' support for sustainable tourism development.

QoL & STD

H11: Residents' QoL has a positive influence on their STD

Community Attachment

H12: Community attachment moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and quality of life.

H13: Community attachment moderates the relationship between social empowerment and quality of life.

H14: Community attachment moderates the relationship between political empowerment and quality of life.

H15: Community attachment moderates the relationship between economic empowerment and quality of life.

H16: Community attachment moderates the relationship between environmental empowerment and quality of life.

H17: Community attachment moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and SSTD.

H18: Community attachment moderates the relationship between social empowerment and SSTD.

H19: Community attachment moderates the relationship between political empowerment and SSTD.

H20: Community attachment moderates the relationship between economic empowerment and SSTD

H21: Community attachment moderates the relationship between environmental empowerment and SSTD.

2.4 Conceptual Model

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed relationships among community attachment, environmental empowerment, economic empowerment, psychological empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment, quality of life, and support for sustainable tourism development.

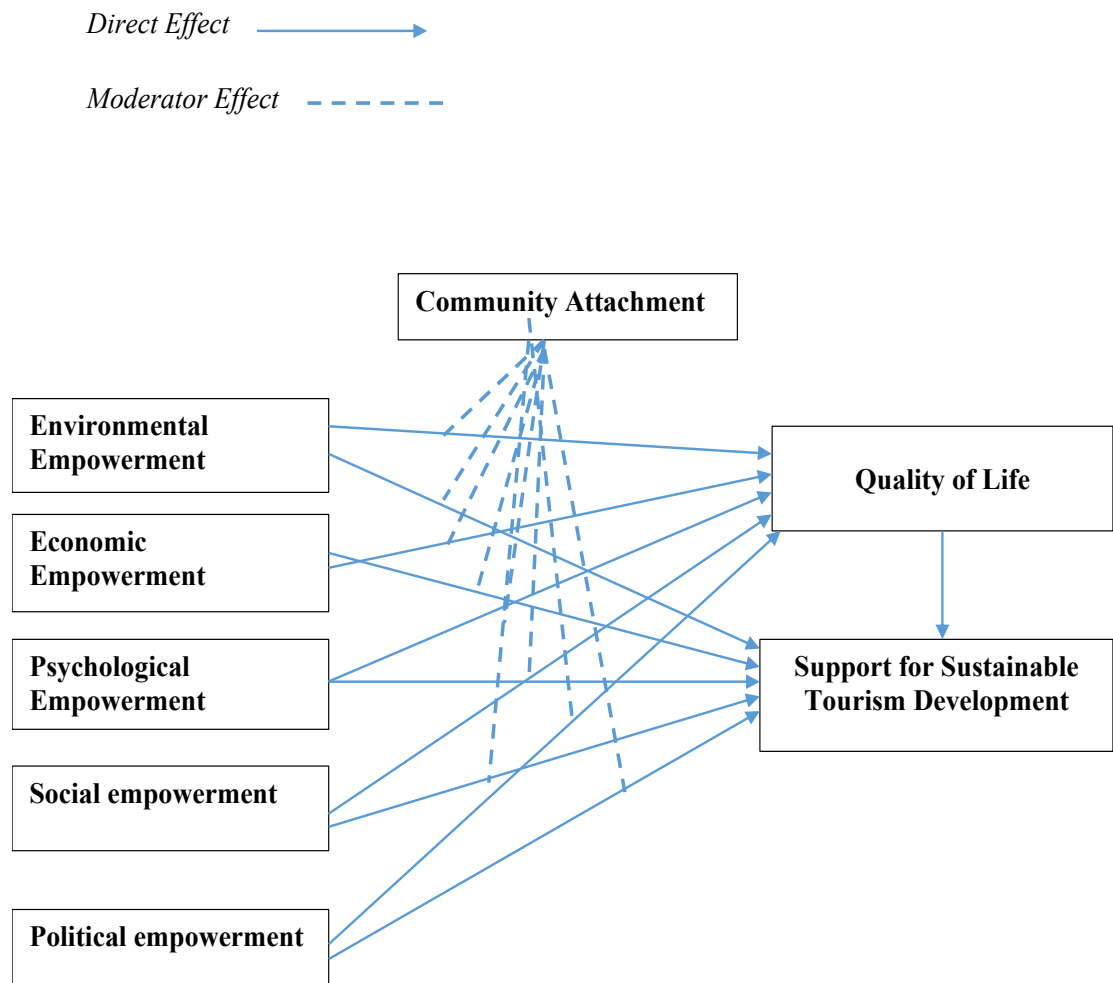


Figure 1 Conceptual model

(source: own elaboration)

II PRACTICAL PART

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between community attachment, residents' empowerment, quality of life, and their support for sustainable tourism development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The research was conducted using a quantitative design. This method enabled the collection of structured data that was suitable for statistical analysis and the testing of hypotheses

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa offers a unique context to explore the modern-day tourism that has a blend of urbanization and communal contexts. Addis Ababa has rapidly grown to become a significant diplomatic region in Africa hence, it attracts a wide array of tourists all year round. As a result, it has experienced rapid urbanization over the recent years, which has had a multiplier effect on tourism. The city is home to both domestic and international tourists, making it suitable to examine residents' attachment and its impact on tourism, empowerment, and quality of life. Figure 2 portrays the location of where the study was conducted.

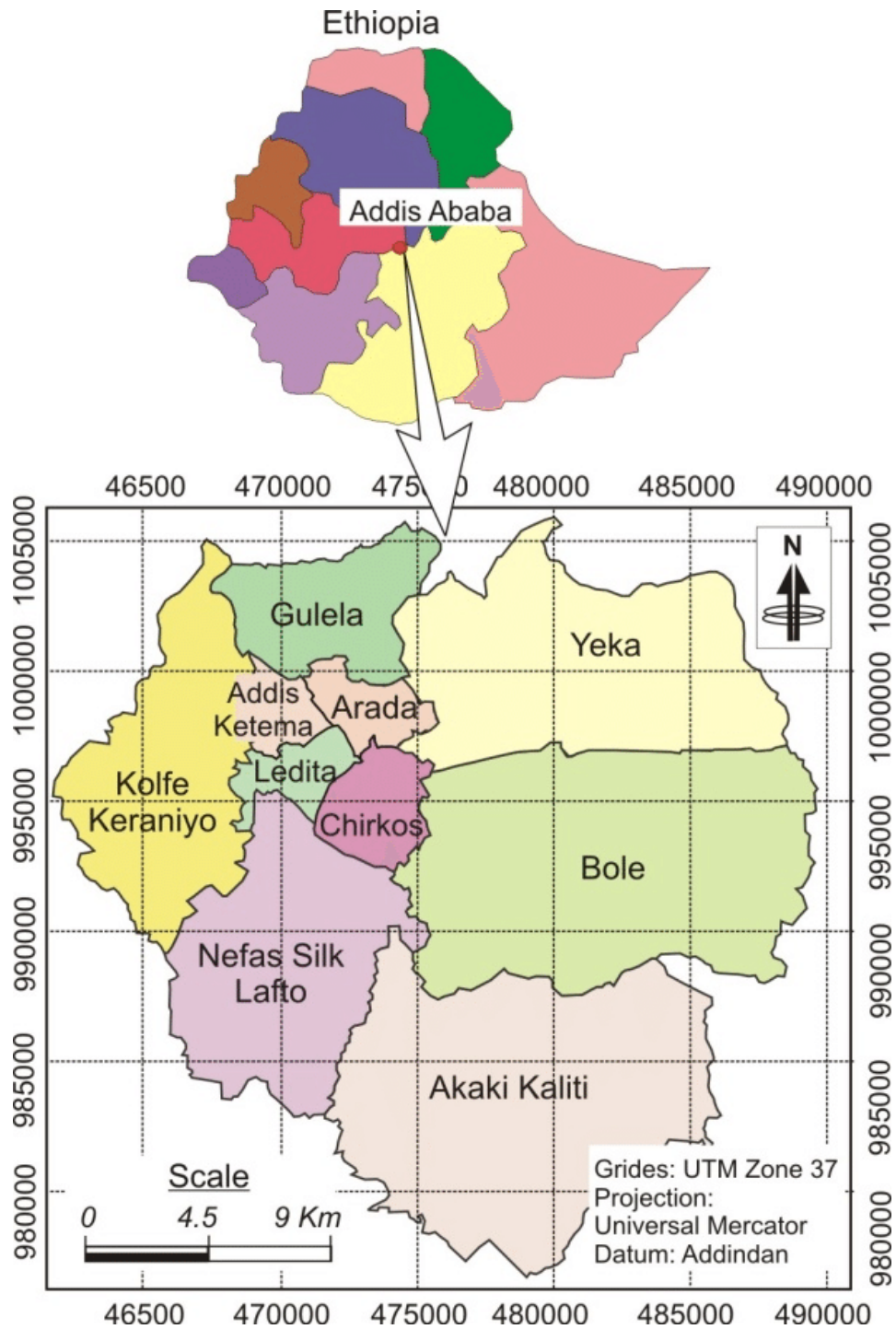


Figure 2 Location map of the study

(source: Berhanu et al., 2017)

3.3 Data Collection

The data was collected through the use of a standardized questionnaire (which is included as Appendix 1) that was distributed to people living in Addis Ababa. The questionnaire was designed to capture various constructs such as community attachment, Environmental, Economic, psychological, social and political empowerment, quality of life (QoL), and support for sustainable tourism development (STD). There were a total of two hundred replies garnered.

The exercise was carried out in a span of two months, whereby the questionnaire was administered both face-to-face and electronically. All the respondents participated willingly without coercion and signed a consent form prior to the actual data collection. Empowerment dimensions included 5 sections: psychological (covering 6 items), environmental (5 items), economic (5 items) social (6 items), and political (4 items) empowerment. Quality of life was assessed using 4 items, SSTD utilized 6 items, and community attachment used 4 items. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (agree) to 5 (neutral). Furthermore, demographic information such as age, occupation, education level, gender, and length of residence was considered

3.4 Sample Size

A total of 200 responses was used to carry out descriptive analysis. For hypothesis testing using structural equation modelling (SEM), a sample of 200 responses was used based on the guidelines for partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), which recommend smaller samples for complex models under specific conditions.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS and Smart PLS software. For the SPSS, the following steps were applied: descriptive statistics to summarize the demographics and the trend of the data. Cross tabulations and chi-square tests were employed to assess the association between different variables such as age, education level, and gender with association to tourism involvement.

To test the hypothesis, Structural equation modelling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares approach was conducted with Smart PLS. 100 samples were used in the modeling. In addition the data was coded in Excel to ensure efficiency during analysis. The Likert scales were coded as 1-5 (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and neutral),

respectively. Occupation scales 1-5 (student, own business, government employee, private employee, and other), respectively. Age scales 1-6 (18-24, 25-36, 37-46, 47-56, 57-64, and 65-above), respectively. For the binary scales, 0 is no and 1 is yes. The construct reliability and validity of the measurement model were reviewed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_c), and the structural model was evaluated to test the strength and relevance of path linkages. Both models contributed to the overall evaluation.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research project was obtained from the institution. On the respondents' side, the participants participated in the study voluntarily and signed a consent form. Also, the participants were assured that their personal details would be confidential - it would not be published or used anywhere in this study.

4 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The data analysis utilized 200 variables. Missing variables were checked, and there were no notable missing values.

A total of 200 valid responses were collected. The gender distribution was balanced, with a slight predominance of female respondents. Specifically, 53.2% of the participants were female, while 46.8% were male, as shown in Table 1.

This relatively even split provides diverse gender perspectives in evaluating community attachment, empowerment, quality of life, and support for sustainable tourism development within Addis Ababa.

Table 1 Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	93	46.80%
	Female	107	53.20%
Age group	18–24	20	10.00%
	25–36	38	18.90%
	37–46	37	18.40%
	47–56	38	18.90%
	57–64	31	15.40%
	> 65	36	18.40%
Total		200	100%

(source: own elaboration)

A chi-square test examined the association between respondents' gender and age group. As shown in Table 2, the test revealed no statistically significant association, $\chi^2(5, N = 200) = 6.47, p = .264$. This suggests that gender and age group are independent in this study sample.

Table 2 Chi-square tests for age and gender crosstabulation

Chi-Square tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.465 ^a	5	.264
Likelihood Ratio	6.554	5	.256
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.30.			

(source: own elaboration)

As indicated in Table 3, the majority of both males and females in this sample have at least a Bachelor's degree.

Females are more represented in higher education levels (Bachelor's and Master's+), while males are more represented in the Elementary category. This might suggest greater access or motivation for formal education among females in this sample, or reflect a generational shift, where younger, more educated respondents are more likely to be female.

Table 2 Educational level vs gender crosstabulation

Educational Level * Gender Crosstabulation				
		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Educational Level	Bachelor's	53	40	93
	Elementary	2	8	10
	Master's +	42	35	77
	Secondary	10	10	20
Total		107	93	200

(source: own elaboration)

Although the crosstab showed some differences (e.g., more males in the Elementary group, more females in Bachelor's and Master's+), the chi-square test (Table 4) indicates that these differences are *not statistically significant*. So, we *cannot conclude* that gender is associated with educational level in this sample of 200 respondents.

Table 3 Chi-square test of educational level vs gender crosstabulation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.099 ^a	3	0.165
Likelihood Ratio	5.335	3	0.149
N of Valid Cases	200		
^a 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.65.			

(source: own elaboration)

As regards age vs involvement, the highest involvement (100%) is seen in the 37–64 age range (See Table 5). The lowest involvement is in the 25–36 age group (78.4%). The 18–24 and 65+ groups have high involvement but also contain most of the people not involved. The total number of people not involved in tourism-related activities is quite small (15 out of 200).

Table 4 Crosstabulation of age and involvement in tourism-related activities

Count				
		Involvement in tourism-related activities		Total
		Yes	No	
Age	18-24	17	3	20
	25-36	29	8	37
	37-46	37	0	37
	47-56	38	0	38
	57-64	31	0	31
	65-Above	33	4	37
Total		185	15	200

(source: own elaboration)

The p-value (.001) is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant association between Age and Involvement in tourism-related activities. This means that age group and

involvement in tourism are not independent, some age groups are more or less likely to be involved.

Table 6 Chi-square tests results of age vs. involvement in tourism-related activities

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.437 ^a	5	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	25.664	5	0.000
N of Valid Cases	200		
^a 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.50.			

(source: own elaboration)

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were modelled simultaneously, which accounted for the moderating relationship in the constructs. In addition, the model represented the shared variance and overlapping influences. Figure 3 depicts the structural model implemented in this study.

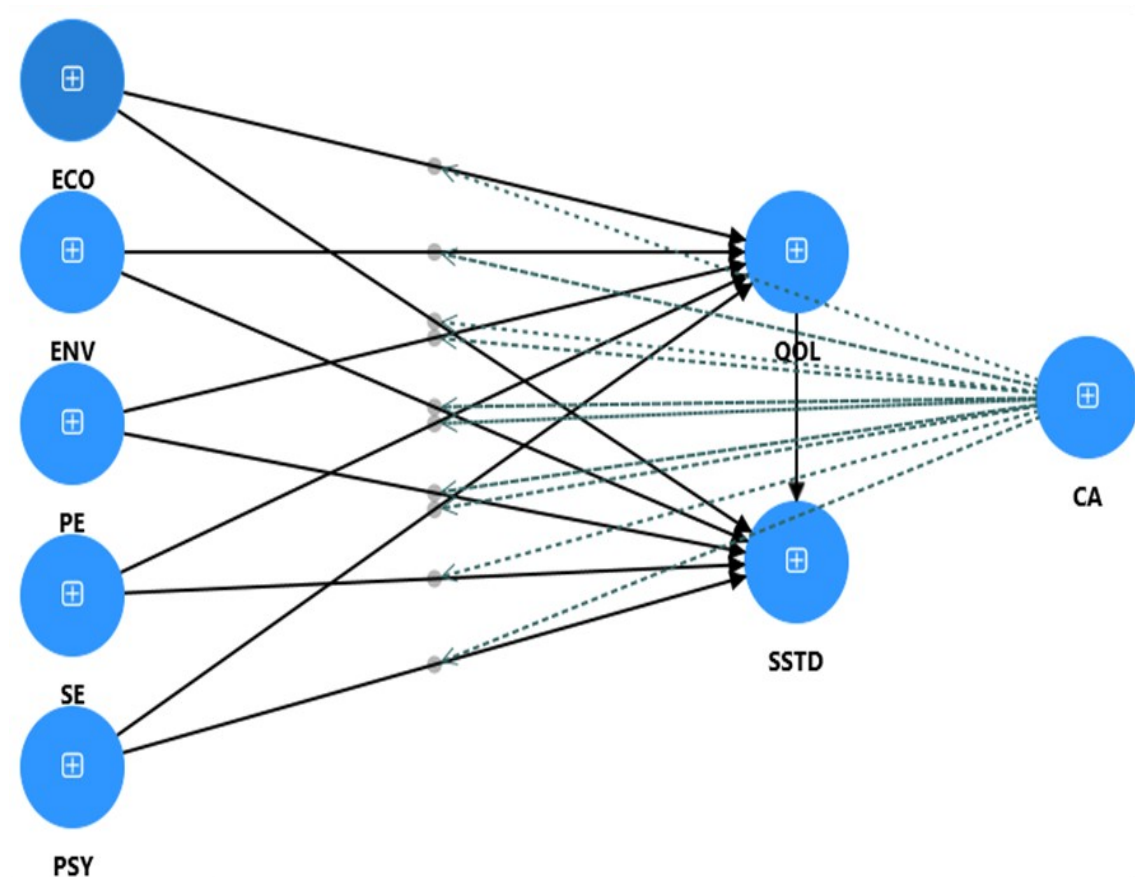


Figure 3 Structural model

(source: own elaboration)

Table 7 provides a comprehensive overview of all the proposed hypotheses and their corresponding outcomes based on the structural model analysis. The structural model revealed a mix of significant and non-significant relationships among the constructs. In total, 8 out of 21 hypotheses were supported.

Table 7 Hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis	Description	P-value	Supported
H1	ENV -> QOL	0.23	Not supported
H2	ECO -> QOL	0.887	Not supported
H3	PSY -> QOL	0.679	Not supported
H4	SE -> QOL	0.002	Supported
H5	PE -> QOL	0	Supported
H6	ENV -> SSTD	0.384	Not supported
H7	ECO -> SSTD	0.076	Not supported
H8	PSY -> SSTD	0.011	Supported
H9	SE -> SSTD	0.002	Supported
H10	PE -> SSTD	0.041	Supported
H11	QOL -> SSTD	0.248	Not supported
Moderator effect			
H12	CA x PSY -> QOL	0.992	Not supported
H13	CA x SE -> QOL	0.475	Not supported
H14	CA x PE -> QOL	0.187	Not supported
H15	CA x ECO -> QOL	0.013	Supported
H16	CA x ENV -> QOL	0.049	Supported
H17	CA x PSY -> SSTD	0.581	Not supported
H18	CA x SE -> SSTD	0.854	Not supported
H19	CA x PE -> SSTD	0.326	Not supported
H20	CA x ECO -> SSTD	0.358	Not supported
H21	CA x ENV -> SSTD	0.728	Not supported

(source: own elaboration)

4.1.1 Significant hypotheses

- H2: Community Attachment (CA) → Support for Sustainable Tourism Development (SSTD).

The hypothesis that Community Attachment (CA) positively influences Support for Sustainable Tourism Development (SSTD) was strongly supported. This finding suggests that residents who feel emotionally connected to their community are more likely to endorse tourism initiatives.

- H7: Political Empowerment (PE) → Quality of Life (QOL) and H8: Political Empowerment (PE) → Support for Sustainable Tourism Development (SSTD).

Political Empowerment (PE) was found to significantly influence both Quality of Life (QOL) and Support for Sustainable Tourism Development (SSTD). These results indicate that residents who perceive themselves as influencing political processes experience enhanced well-being and are more supportive of tourism initiatives.

4.1.2 Non-significant paths

The remaining hypotheses were not statistically significant and were therefore not supported by the model results.

- CA → QOL and QOL → SSTD were not significant, which contrasts with many existing studies. This may be explained by the unique urban context of Addis Ababa. Despite the city's centrality to Ethiopia's governance and economy, rapid urbanization, informal settlement growth, and limited infrastructure can erode residents' perceived benefits from community belonging and local development. Consequently, even with high attachment to place, this may not translate into perceived quality of life improvements or visible support for tourism-related initiatives.
- Most other empowerment dimensions (ECO, ENV, PSY → QOL; ECO, ENV, PE → SSTD) did not show statistically significant effects. This could stem from the limited direct involvement of the general population in tourism development in Addis Ababa, where decision-making tends to be centralized, and benefits may not trickle down to community levels.

4.1.3 Simple slope analysis for moderating effects

To further interpret the significant moderation results, a simple slope interpretation was conducted (Figure 4). Among the moderating effects, only two hypotheses were supported:

- H14: $CA \times ECO \rightarrow QOL$ ($p = 0.013$)
- H16: $CA \times ENV \rightarrow QOL$ ($p = 0.049$)

$CA \times ENV \rightarrow QOL$: The interaction plot shows (Figure 4) that when community attachment is high (+1 SD), the relationship between environmental empowerment and quality of life becomes negative, whereas at low levels of CA (-1 SD), the relationship is positive. This suggests that in less attached communities, improvements in the environment are more strongly associated with perceived quality of life, potentially because these communities are more sensitive to visible changes.

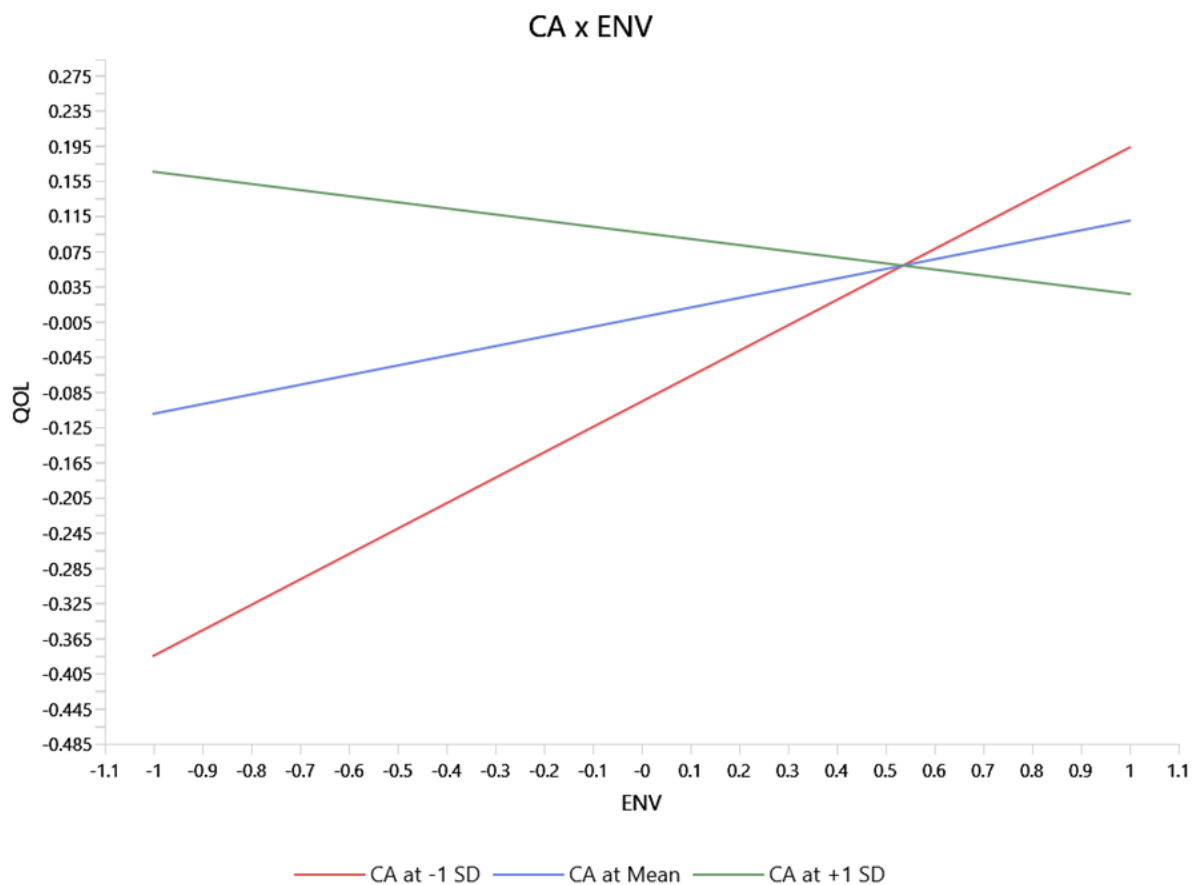


Figure 4 Simple slope analysis $CA \times ENV \rightarrow QOL$

(source: own elaboration)

$CA \times ECO \rightarrow QOL$: In this interaction (Figure 5), the effect of economic empowerment on quality of life is strongest and positive at low levels of community attachment. As community attachment increases, this relationship weakens and even turns negative. This indicates that individuals who are less emotionally or socially invested in their community may place greater value on economic opportunities, while those with higher attachment may have different expectations for what improves quality of life.

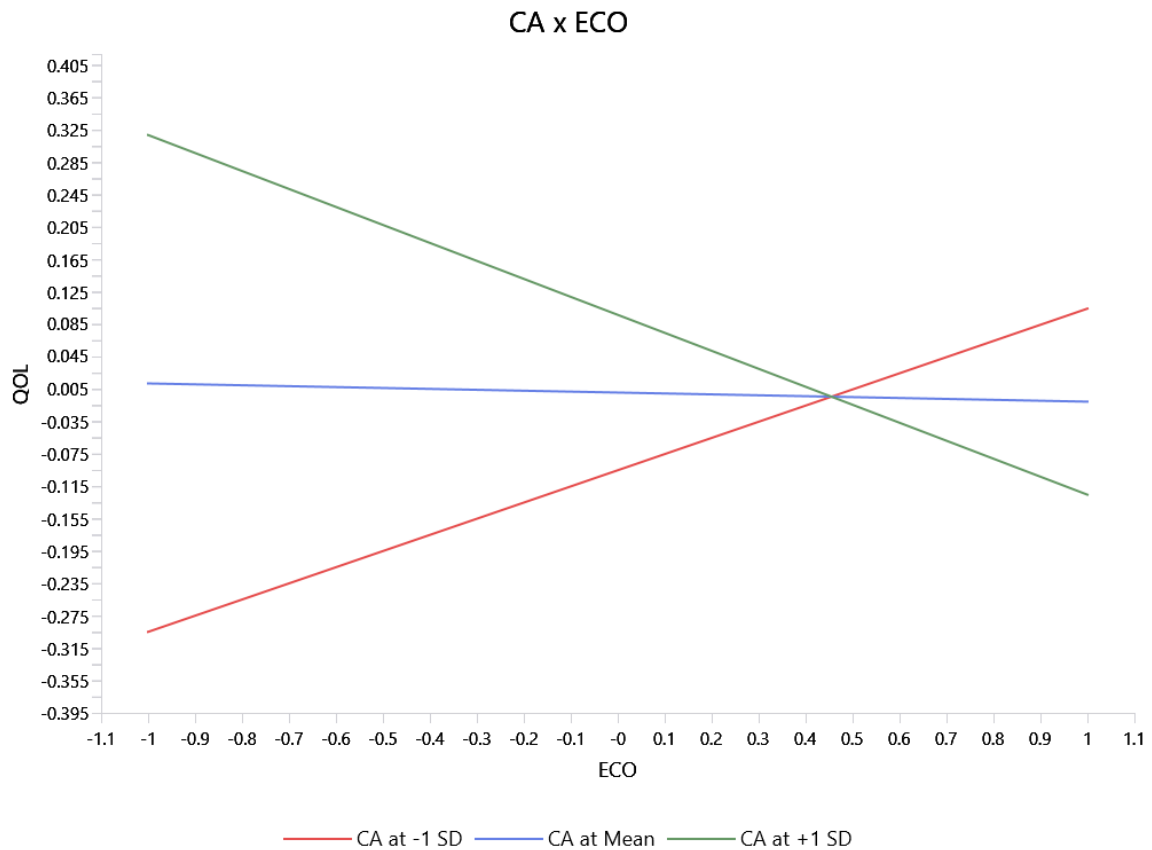


Figure 5. simple slope analysis $CA \times ECO \rightarrow QOL$

(source: own elaboration)

These findings indicate that community attachment moderates the effects of economic and environmental empowerment on quality of life. All other moderating hypotheses were not statistically significant. Many moderation paths (interactions with CA) also did not yield significant results. This may indicate that community attachment in a large, diverse city like Addis Ababa is not a strong enough moderator to meaningfully shape how empowerment influences residents' attitudes toward tourism and quality of life.

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

To assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model, standard criteria such as Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were evaluated. Table 8 summarizes the reliability and validity measurement results.

Table 8 Reliability and validity measures

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Community attachment	0.387	0.241	0.583	0.304
Economic empowerment	0.648	0.7	0.757	0.396
Environmental empowerment	0.505	0.557	0.715	0.36
Political empowerment	0.658	0.7	0.794	0.496
Psychological empowerment	0.668	0.695	0.777	0.385
Quality of life	0.576	0.617	0.749	0.441
Social empowerment	0.706	0.717	0.798	0.402
SSTD	0.694	0.731	0.794	0.402

(source: own elaboration)

According to the results, political, psychological, social, economic, and environmental empowerment, as well as quality of life, demonstrated high reliability, whereas tourism support and community attachment showed moderate to good reliability. Overall, the constructs indicate strong internal consistency, except for some challenges in convergent validity, particularly for community attachment and environmental empowerment.

4.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was confirmed through both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The square roots of AVE for each construct exceeded the inter-construct correlations, demonstrating that each construct is more closely related to its own indicators than to other constructs. Additionally, all HTMT values remained below the conservative threshold of 0.85, further validating that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. These results confirm that each construct in the model is empirically distinct from the others, thus supporting strong discriminant validity and ensuring the robustness of the model's findings. Table 9 summarizes the discriminant validity results.

Table 9 Discriminant valid Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios

	CA	ECO	ENV	PE		Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Community attachment	0.552				ECO <-> CA	0.422
Economic empowerment	-0.171	0.63			ENV <-> CA	0.168
Environmental empowerment	0.004	-0.021	0.6		ENV <-> CO	0.188
Political empowerment	0.298	-0.264	0.037	0.705	PE <-> CA	0.624
Psychological empowerment	-0.015	-0.18	0.101	0.157	PE <-> ECO	0.375
Quality of life	0.234	-0.185	0.123	0.413	PE <-> ENV	0.181
Social empowerment	0.28	-0.112	0.044	0.037	PSY <-> CA	0.254
Support for sustainable tourism development	0.435	-0.262	0.119	0.303	PSY <-> ECO	0.377

(source: own elaboration)

4.4 Path Coefficient Results and Hypothesis Testing

Table 10 summarizes the path coefficients, including the original sample values, sample means, standard deviations, t-statistics, and p-values for each hypothesized relationship. The analysis aims to evaluate the direct and moderating effects of various constructs on quality of life (QOL) and support for sustainable tourism development (SSTD).

Table 10 Path coefficient results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
CA -> QOL	0.096	0.082	0.094	1.021	0.307
CA -> SSTD	0.304	0.31	0.077	3.931	0
CA x ECO -> QOL	-0.211	-0.19	0.085	2.473	0.013
CA x ECO -> SSTD	0.07	0.071	0.076	0.92	0.358
CA x ENV -> QOL	-0.179	-0.136	0.091	1.966	0.049
CA x ENV -> SSTD	0.025	0.028	0.071	0.348	0.728
CA x PE -> QOL	-0.11	-0.103	0.083	1.321	0.187
CA x PE -> SSTD	-0.077	-0.07	0.079	0.983	0.326
CA x PSY -> QOL	-0.001	0.005	0.08	0.01	0.992
CA x PSY -> SSTD	0.039	0.03	0.071	0.552	0.581
CA x SE -> QOL	0.053	0.058	0.074	0.714	0.475
CA x SE -> SSTD	0.013	0.017	0.072	0.184	0.854

ECO -> QOL	-0.011	-0.017	0.079	0.142	0.887
ECO -> SSTD	-0.119	-0.121	0.067	1.776	0.076
ENV -> QOL	0.11	0.102	0.091	1.2	0.23
ENV -> SSTD	0.089	0.092	0.102	0.871	0.384
PE -> QOL	0.353	0.351	0.081	4.344	0
PE -> SSTD	0.184	0.182	0.09	2.04	0.041
PSY -> QOL	0.032	0.05	0.078	0.413	0.679
PSY -> SSTD	0.178	0.18	0.07	2.553	0.011
QOL -> SSTD	-0.117	-0.114	0.101	1.156	0.248
SE -> QOL	0.248	0.257	0.082	3.03	0.002
SE -> SSTD	0.262	0.269	0.084	3.108	0.002

(source: own elaboration)

4.5 Moderating Effects

Among the moderating effects, only two hypotheses were supported:

- H14: $CA \times ECO \rightarrow QOL$ ($p = 0.013$)
- H16: $CA \times ENV \rightarrow QOL$ ($p = 0.049$)

These findings indicate that community attachment moderates the effects of economic and environmental empowerment on quality of life. All other moderating hypotheses were not statistically significant. The majority of moderation paths (interactions with CA) also did not yield significant results. This may indicate that community attachment in a large, diverse city like Addis Ababa is not a strong enough moderator to meaningfully shape how empowerment influences residents' attitudes toward tourism and quality of life. (interactions with CA) also did not yield significant results.

As shown in Table 11, the model explains 33.8% of the variance in Quality of Life (QOL) and 36.8% of the variance in Support for Sustainable Tourism Development (SSTD). These values indicate a moderate level of explanatory power, suggesting that the predictors in the model account for a substantial portion of the variability in these dependent variables.

Table 11 R-squared values

Dependent Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
QOL	0.338	0.299
SSTD	0.368	0.328

(source: own elaboration)

The model fit indices presented in Table 12 provide insights into how well the model fits the data. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values for both the saturated and estimated models are 0.089, indicating a good fit. The d_ULS and d_G values are consistent across both models, further supporting the model's adequacy. The Chi-square values are very close, suggesting minimal discrepancy between the models. However, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.328 indicates that the model has room for improvement in terms of fit.

Table 12 Model fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.089	0.089
d_ULS	6.481	6.481
d_G	1.6	1.6
Chi-square	1674.535	1674.207
NFI	0.328	0.328

(source: own elaboration)

To assess multicollinearity, an expanded set of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values was reviewed (see Table 13). All indicators reported VIF values below 3.3, suggesting that multicollinearity does not pose a threat to the validity of the structural model.

Table 13 Collinearity assessment (VIF values)

Variable	VIF	Variable	VIF
CA1	1.102	QOL1	1.269
CA2	1.029	QOL2	1.383
CA3	1.048	QOL3	1.238
CA4	1.098	QOL4	1.405
ECO1	1.22	SE1	1.317
ECO2	1.208	SE2	1.692
ECO3	1.196	SE3	1.315
ECO4	1.257	SE4	1.479
ECO5	1.387	SE5	1.341
ENV1	1.038	SE6	1.463
ENV2	1.191	SSTD1	1.118
ENV3	1.424	SSTD2	1.38
ENV4	1.291	SSTD3	1.488
ENV5	1.568	SSTD4	1.477
PE1	1.202	SSTD5	1.344
PE2	1.266	SSTD6	1.444
PE3	1.377	CA x ECO	1

PE4	1.402	CA x ENV	1
PSY1	1.092	CA x PE	1
PSY2	1.435	CA x PSY	1
PSY3	1.541	CA x SE	1
PSY4	1.438		
PSY5	1.65		
PSY6	1.143		

(source: own elaboration)

5 DISCUSSION

The research identified that the 18–24 age group exhibited a male predominance, with 70% male representation, whereas older age groups demonstrated a greater presence of females. This can reflect cultural and socioeconomic barriers that limit young females' participation in the activities of tourism. In addition, while most of the respondents held at least a bachelors' degree, gender differences in education seen were not found to be statistically significant, reflecting equal provision of higher education in this sample. Residents aged 37–64 demonstrated full participation, while in the 25–36 age group, the lowest level of participation was found at 78.4%. This reflects middle-aged residents' stronger integration in employment related to tourism, while young adults face barriers such as limited opportunities or increased competition. That significant association was found for age and participation ($\chi^2 = 21.44$, $p = .001$), illustrating the need for targeted interventions in engaging young age groups.

The marginal significance of political empowerment on quality of life shows that increased political influence may influence the quality of life of residents. This may be through providing residents with control of local decisions and improving access to local resources, and this improves oneness within the community. In addition, psychological and social empowerment may be insignificant because the relationship may be more complex and indirect. No significant relationship between empowerment and sustainable tourism development, suggesting in this study empowerment does not directly influence tourism development. This suggests that empowerment alone cannot impact tourism development. Even though community attachment significantly enhances quality of life, it does not impact empowerment or quality of life or tourism development.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This research provides an understanding of sustainable tourism by confirming the centrality of resident empowerment, as suggested in the RETS 2.0 framework. It challenges assumptions that tourism involvement leads to empowerment, indicating that empowerment may come from broader community engagement, governance quality, or social cohesion. Additionally, the findings reveal the diverse nature of empowerment, emphasizing its role as both an outcome of and a contributor to community development and sustainability. The results also show models that propose QoL as a mediator between empowerment and tourism attitudes. While QoL is associated with both dimensions, its failure to mediate suggests a

more complex interplay that may involve additional factors such as cultural values, perceived tourism impacts, or trust in institutions.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings highlight for policymakers on tourism in Addis Ababa and similar urban contexts that it is important to enhance residents' empowerment (economic, social, and political aspects) for sustainable tourism initiatives. Programs should focus on participatory planning, civic education, and the strengthening of local associations that give residents a voice in tourism governance. Tourism development should not just increase economic participation but must also aim to improve residents' sense of agency and control over their environment. Empowerment-driven strategies are more likely to yield lasting community support than economic incentives.

5.3 Economic Implications of Tourism Development

Tourism development in Addis Ababa has significantly contributed to local economic growth by creating diverse employment opportunities and boosting income levels for residents. The hospitality and transportation sectors, in particular, have seen substantial growth, providing stable jobs and fostering entrepreneurship. Moreover, the influx of tourists has encouraged local investment, leading to improved infrastructure and new business ventures. However, to ensure that the economic benefits are equitably distributed, it is crucial to implement policies that support small businesses and provide training programs for residents. By focusing on sustainable tourism practices, Addis Ababa can achieve long-term economic stability and growth, benefiting the entire community. This aligns with the findings of Du et al. (2015), who emphasize the importance of integrating tourism into broader development strategies to maximize its economic benefits. Additionally, addressing the challenges highlighted by Thullah and Jalloh (2021) regarding the potential negative impacts of tourism, such as increased living costs, is essential for sustainable development. Rachmawati et al. (2021) also found that while tourism can provide economic opportunities, these benefits are often unevenly distributed, leading to disparities within the community. Therefore, policymakers should focus on enhancing the economic benefits of tourism by supporting small businesses, providing training programs for residents, and offering incentives for sustainable practices. By addressing these challenges, Addis Ababa can achieve long-term economic stability and growth, benefiting the entire community.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The study has limitations despite its contributions. First, causal inferences are limited due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. Studies that follow participants over time may better document shifts in attitudes and empowerment. Second, social desirability bias could be introduced because the survey uses self-reported measurements. Lastly, the study is centered on Addis Ababa; its conclusions could not apply to other urban or rural areas of Ethiopia or other countries. Further studies could examine whether the association between empowerment and STDs is mediated or moderated by cultural context, leadership styles, and public institution trust. Qualitative research would provide further insight into how locals see and understand empowerment in connection to tourism.

6 CONCLUSION

The research proved that the influence of psychological, social, and political empowerment on citizens' support for sustainable tourism development was important. Participation in tourism did not result in empowerment; however, empowerment (consisting of psychological, social, and political empowerment) was a major predictor of both quality of life and support for sustainable development. These findings show that prioritizing empowerment, rather than just encouraging involvement, should be an important approach for long-term tourist planning. Establishing empowered communities can enhance local dedication to sustainable practices and long-term developmental objectives.

This study contributes to the idea that understanding how community attachments model residents' perceptions in relation to tourism. The moderating effect of community attachment between empowerment, quality of life, and empowerment with sustainable tourism development was insignificant. Suggesting that community attachment independently contributes to tourism development. In addition, attachment may not individually encourage tourism initiatives from the residents. Bonds to a certain place may improve residents' quality of life; this contributes to active support of tourism development. Tourism policies should balance effective dimensions, such as participation benefits. Empowered and attached community members are well-positioned to contribute to sustainable tourism development goals. Future study interventions should emphasize strategies that strengthen empowerment and community attachment to encourage inclusion and better decision making, and further cultivate a shared vision for the tourism role in community development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BSS	Between-Group Sum of Squares
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
df	Degrees of Freedom
IS/STAG	Information System/Student and Teacher Administration Group
MoCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
p-value	Probability Value
QoL	Quality of Life
RETS 2.0	Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale
S.E.	Standard Error
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPCS-T	Sociopolitical Control Scale for Tourism
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSTD	Sustainable Tourism Development
STD	Sustainable Tourism Development
t-value	T-Statistic
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation

APPENDICES

APPENDIX P I: Constructs used in the questionnaire

APPENDIX P II: Survey questionnaire

APPENDIX P I: CONSTRUCTS USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Constructs	Indicators/Items	Sources
Economic Empowerment	- The profits from tourism-related endeavors facilitate economic empowerment.	Scheyvens & Van der Watt (2021)
	- Economic empowerment is improved by having access to productive resources.	
	- Tourism-related jobs and business prospects provide economic stability.	
	- Locals are empowered when tourism advantages are distributed fairly and sustainably.	
	- Economic empowerment is improved via tourism-related services and entrepreneurial endeavors.	
Environmental Empowerment	- Reminds me that I have the obligation to protect my natural surroundings.	Shafieisabet & Haratifard (2020); Cole (2006)
	- Makes me want to adopt reuse, reduce, and recycle practices.	Ramos & Prideaux (2014); Nesticò & Maselli (2020); Lee & Jan (2019)
	- Provides ways for me to promote environmentally friendly initiatives.	Shafieisabet & Haratifard (2020); Cole (2006)
	- Makes me want to protect Ethiopia's biodiversity.	Eluwole et al. (2022); Ramos & Prideaux (2014); Nguyen et al. (2021)
	- It gives me opportunities to support eco-friendly projects.	Nesticò & Maselli (2020); Ramos & Prideaux (2014)
Psychological Empowerment	- Feeling of pride and self-worth as a result of visitors appreciating the importance of the local way of life, the environment, and customs.	Scheyvens (1999)
	- Tourists' desire to experience the local way of life and natural resources	Boley & McGehee (2014)

	motivates the sharing of knowledge and skills.	
	- Conviction that the ecology and culture of the area are extremely valuable.	Di Castri (2004)
	- Self-worth and a sense of communal pride support the growth of sustainable tourism.	Nguyen et al. (2021)
	- Attending local activities boosts psychological empowerment and strengthens a sense of community pride.	Magno & Dossena (2020)
	- Participation in development and planning promotes psychological empowerment.	Strzelecka, Boley, & Strzelecka (2017)
Social Empowerment	- To optimize the benefits of tourism, community members collaborate effectively.	Scheyvens (1999)
	- Travel promotes group advantages and strengthens ties within the community.	Boley et al. (2015)
	- The belief is that travel strengthens ties with the local community.	Boley & McGehee (2014)
	- Enhanced ties between involvement, attachment, and community bonding because of tourism.	Gohori & Van der Merwe (2021); Nguyen et al. (2021)
	- The cohesion of the community influences the success of community-based tourism.	Nguyen et al. (2021)
Political Empowerment	-Residents are motivated to use social and political resources and exhibit political efficacy.	Strzelecka, Boley, & Strzelecka (2017)
	-Community structures represent the needs and interests of both people and groups.	
	-Locals can access decision-making platforms and have a say.	Boley & McGehee (2014)

	- Residents can influence policies for the development of sustainable tourism through political empowerment	Phuc & Nguyen (2020)
Support Sustainable Tourism Development	-Tourism-based plans and development to sustain local sociocultural values and traditions.	Eslami, S., Khalifah, Z., Mardani, A., Streimikiene, D., & Han, H. (2019).
	-Cultural exchanges between residents and visitors	
	-Promotion of environmental education and conservation.	
	-Tourism planning initiatives to develop local economy and local employment.	
	-Regulatory environmental standards to reduce the negative impacts of tourism	
	-Tourism planning and development initiatives to promote local products	
Quality of life (QoL)	-The conditions of my life are excellent so far	Eslami, S., Khalifah, Z., Mardani, A., Streimikiene, D., & Han, H. (2019).
	- I have gotten the important things I want in life	
	-I am satisfied with my life as a whole	
Community Attachment	- I am satisfied with living in Addis Ababa	Eslami, S., Khalifah, Z., Mardani, A., Streimikiene, D., & Han, H. (2019).
	-I feel at home in this community	
	-I know about what is going on in my community	

APPENDIX P II: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questionnaire for Residents' Empowerment through Tourism

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
3. Educational Level: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's+
4. Occupation: _____
5. Length of residence in the community: _____ years
6. Involvement in tourism-related activities: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Economic Empowerment

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding tourism's impact on economic empowerment in your community?

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. Earnings from tourism-related activities have contributed to my economic well-being.
2. I have better access to productive resources due to tourism development.
3. Tourism has created employment and business opportunities in my community.
4. Tourism provides sustainable economic gains and equitable distribution of benefits.
5. Entrepreneurial ventures in tourism have strengthened the local economy.

Section 3: Environmental Empowerment

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding tourism's impact on environmental empowerment?

1. Tourism fosters ecological behavior and awareness in me.
2. Tourism provides opportunities for me to develop skills for long-term environmental conservation.
3. I can contribute to my community's well-being by preserving physical surroundings.
4. Tourism encourages me to participate in creating environmental regulations.
5. Tourism initiatives provide ways for me to promote environmentally friendly practices.

Section 4: Psychological Empowerment

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding tourism's impact on psychological empowerment?

1. I feel a sense of self-esteem and pride when tourists recognize the value of my local culture and environment.
2. I am motivated to share knowledge and skills about my culture and natural resources with tourists.
3. My local culture and environment hold great value.
4. Tourism enhances my sense of community pride and self-esteem.
5. Attending local tourism-related events reinforces my pride in the community.
6. Being involved in tourism planning and development strengthens my psychological empowerment.

Section 5: Social Empowerment

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding tourism's impact on social empowerment?

1. Community members work together effectively to maximize tourism benefits.
2. Tourism increases community bonding and encourages collective benefits.
3. I feel a stronger connection to my community due to tourism.
4. Tourism strengthens relationships, attachment, and involvement within the community.
5. Community union plays a role in the success of community-based tourism initiatives.
6. Infrastructure development projects from tourism help bring residents closer and socially empower them.

Section 6: Political Empowerment

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding tourism's impact on political empowerment?
2. Tourism encourages residents to participate in political and social decision-making.
3. Community structures influenced by tourism represent the needs and interests of residents.
4. I have a voice and access to decision-making platforms due to tourism activities.
5. Political empowerment through tourism allows residents to influence policies for sustainable development.

Section 7: Support Sustainable Tourism Development

1. Tourism-based plans and development to sustain local sociocultural values and traditions.
2. Cultural exchanges between residents and visitors.
3. Promotion of environmental education and conservation
4. Tourism planning initiatives to develop local economy and local employment.
5. Regulatory environmental standards to reduce the negative impacts of tourism
6. Tourism planning and development initiatives to promote local products

Section 8: Quality of life (QoL)

1. The conditions of my life are excellent so far
2. I have gotten the important things I want in life
3. I am satisfied with my life as a whole

Section 9: Community Attachment

1. I am satisfied with living in Addis Ababa.
2. I feel at home in this community.
3. I know about what is going on in my community