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The Impact of Institutional and Ecological Sustainability Systems on Resident Satisfaction Using Protected Area Management as an Example

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Abstract: The Special Nature Reserve "Carska Bara" (CB) contains significant water resources and wetlands whose flora and fauna should be preserved. This protected area attracts a wide range of tourists, primarily those who love the world of nature. The aim of this research was to determine whether sustainable tourism affects the satisfaction of residents, which is the main hypothesis (H1). Also, the specific aim of this research is to define the state of tourism that can be influenced by the ecological and institutional dimensions, which is the auxiliary hypothesis (H2). This research used a quantitative methodology. A total of 910 residents living in the surrounding communities were surveyed for the study. The analysis of the research results concludes that sustainable tourism has a significant impact on the satisfaction of residents, which fully confirms hypothesis H1. The research results also indicate the importance of the ecological and institutional dimensions of sustainability on the state of tourism, which fully confirms hypothesis H2. The research results obtained may be significant for the management process of this protected area and for improving the conditions for sustainable forms of tourism.

Keywords: sustainability indicators; sustainable tourism; ecological sustainability; institutional sustainability; management systems

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1. Introduction

Protected areas (PAS) are important tourist places where visitors can combine a variety of reasons for visiting [1,2]. Besides natural values, PAS also have significant socio-cultural ones, which, with proper valorization, can contribute to developing natural and cultural tourism forms [3,4]. Aside from economic and socio-cultural dimensions of sustainability, ecological and institutional dimensions of sustainable tourism (STou) are significant for a destination [5,6]. The state and perspectives of the development of various tourism forms can be seen by examining ecological and institutional aspects of tourism growth. Since it is a destination with sensitive natural values, it is crucial to study environmental factors so that other tourism potentials can be seen in the best way without affecting the environment through development [7,8].

The Special Nature Reserve "Carska Bara" (CB) is in the Vojvodina Province (Republic of Serbia). The main natural potential of this PA is the wetland created by the meandering of the Begej River in this part of Banat. Because of the rare plant and animal species that call this area home, protection status has been established. Due to the construction of infrastructure in CB, certain tourism forms need some improvement with the aim of more significant protection of nature and ecosystems [9,10].

Educating visitors about sustainable development with the participation of the locals, proper monitoring and protection, and involving the local population in tourism planning and development, are important factors of STou [11,12]. In a destination such as CB, environmental values can be positively influenced along with establishing these institutional frameworks [13,14]. The ecological sustainability dimension concerns the state of the environment, the preservation of ecosystems, the construction of ecological infrastructure, and the monitoring of the application of legal legislation on nature protection. In destinations with STou, in addition to institutional and environmental benefits, economic and socio-cultural benefits can be realized [15]. The objective of STou is to establish a balance between these four dimensions of sustainability [16,17].

STou research in PAS is important in several aspects. The first aspect concerns the environment and destination preservation, which can result in the proper tourism development and quality organization of the management system [18,19]. A contribution to preserving biological and geological diversity can be realized because of such development [20,21]. Studying the STou potential in PAS can improve educational functions based on the possibilities of realizing scientific and research work, ecological education, and numerous schools-in-nature about the acceptable use of reserve resources for recreation and tourism [22,23]. Finally, examining the state of tourism with the help of sustainability indicators can indicate unused or insufficiently used institutional and socio-cultural potentials at the destination, which determine the role of institutions, laws, and local populations in sustainable development [5,19,21].

The specificity of this study is reflected in the fact that it is focused on surveying the state of sustainable tourism from the aspect of the ecological and institutional dimensions of sustainability. These two dimensions are examined with the help of selected indicators of sustainable tourism. These indicators/factors can specify potential benefits or disadvantages of STou. In addition, the specificity of this study is reflected in the fact that it examines the impact of STou on the users of this area, i.e., the inhabitants. This study is based on the PoS (Prism of Sustainability) research model. Conclusions on the role that this protected area may possess in the tourism offer can be made by looking at the STou factors, which are categorized into dimensions. In contrast to earlier research, this study is notable for its specificity in examining sustainable tourism by utilizing respondents' assessed beliefs regarding the present and potential of tourism. The main gap in the previous research of PAS concerned the importance of tourism development within PAS. Considering the negative impacts on the environment, the basic question is whether it is advisable to develop mass tourism in these destinations. If the locations are adapted to tourist needs, they often leave consequences for the environment. If the PAS tourism industry grows without a clear plan and management, the repercussions will be more severe.

The study's primary research hypothesis (H1) is that inhabitants' satisfaction is impacted by sustainable tourism. Determining whether the institutional and environmental aspects of sustainability have an impact on the level of sustainable tourism in the protected area is the goal of the auxiliary hypothesis (H2). Specific hypotheses were investigated and put to the test. The expected results can indicate whether STou can contribute to the development of the destination at a certain level while preserving nature and ecosystems, which is the basic function of PAS. Due to the increasingly frequent turning of tourists to

nature, it is necessary to examine this aspect to be able to react in the future to preserve the integrity of these destinations. Through this research, it is planned to reach results that can indicate the importance of creating a symbiosis between PAS, tourism development, visitors, the local population, and management.

The primary research gap in this study is that it only examines respondents' perceptions of the chosen protected area's STou. The absence of the perceptions of visitors and managers of the protected area may affect the reduction in the significance of the value obtained. Another significant study barrier is the lack of prior studies' findings on sustainable tourism in CB. Because of this, a comparison analysis of the collected data is impossible. The quality values of this destination with a sensitive ecosystem can be identified by comparative analysis, which can also reveal periods of growth, stagnation, or decline.

The PAS as a tourist destination can have enormous ecological and touristic importance at the regional and international level [24]. One of the important studies of STou concerns research in the Finnish PAS, an extremely important tourist destination [25]. The majority of respondents opted for natural motives for their trips, such as those that exist in the PAS. More than 70% of respondents chose to travel to national parks and nature reserves rather than visiting some other environment or space. The results of the research indicate the existence of natural conditions significant for the development of certain tourist activities within the PAS. The most important reasons for visiting these areas are the opportunities for all forms of nature-based tourism. As the most important conditions for the development of tourism, respondents listed tourist reception capacities, visitor centers, the existence of water as a significant resource, untouched nature, recreational and educational trails, the role of the local community, the existence of local products, and other factors.

It is crucial to develop certain types of tourism in addition to the infrastructure for tourists, which must not negatively affect the environment. There is a particular focus on nature-based tourism, and several studies highlight the significance of ensuring economic advantages for the local economy and society through the development of STou [26–30]. As a result, tourism can be analyzed from the perspective of sustainability, followed by the institutional, sociocultural, and economic aspects. The effects, channels, and incomes produced by tourism growth can be managed by promoting STou in popular locations like PAS [29,30].

The expansion of tourist destinations and the strengthening of internal management systems modified the necessary research focuses to be able to see the state of tourism in the best way and to reach unique results that include the proposal of adequate measures in tourism planning [28]. Besides ecological, economic, and socio-cultural aspects, this contributed to the study of STou in PAS to be expanded by another dimension—the institutional dimension. It defines the circumstances under which managers can influence the preservation of nature and tourism development, the work of legislators, and the implementation of legislation that concerns the conservation of PAS and permitted activities [29]. The author points out that it is necessary to include the institutional sustainability dimension in examining STou within the PA.

The research by Trišić et al. [31] included the use of the PoS model in examining the STou impact on the local population of the Part of Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube". The questionnaire was designed to survey community members regarding STou through four dimensions of sustainability: ecological, socio-cultural, economic, and institutional. The research results indicate that ecological, institutional, and socio-cultural dimensions of sustainability are determined to be vital for residents. STou has an essential impact on residents' satisfaction.

The article's research focuses on examining STou using institutional and ecological indicators that can show the present status of the industry and its growth potential. In addition, the subject of research is the function that CB can have in STou at the different levels.

The research objective is to examine whether the ecological and institutional dimensions of sustainability contribute to the state of tourism, i.e., whether STou in its current form affects residents' satisfaction. That is the main research question.

Quantitative methodology was used in this article. A total of 910 residents were surveyed about STou in CB using the survey technique. The survey was conducted using a random sample method. Statistical data processing included SPSS v.25 software.

The results of the research can be used as strategic planning documents for tourism development, which is the basis of the management system in PAS.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Area

The Special Nature Reserve "Carska Bara" (Imperial Pond) is situated within the middle of Banat (Vojvodina, northern Serbia) and covers the area between the Tisa and Begej rivers, with a total area of over 4726 ha. The reserve stretches from 44°12′ and 45°19′ N and from 20°18′ to 21°26′ E [32]. Its favorable location is due to its proximity to larger cities in Serbia and the region, as well as to the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. The position of CB can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Study area. Source: Trišić, I., author.

The first protection of the reserve originated in 1955, first as a reserve of exceptional rarities, and later, in 1986, it was declared Special Nature Reserve "Stari Begej—Carska Bara". The last protection under which this area is named dates back to 2011. The CB is classified as the fourth category of the IUCN, which represents a natural resource of exceptional importance in the first category. There are different levels of protection in this PA: first level—670 ha; second level—1910 ha; and third level—2146 ha.

In terms of international regimes and protection status, we should cite the following:

- IBA area of 11,570 ha;
- IPA area of 1676 ha;
- Ramsar Site of 1676 ha;

- EMERALD;
- NATURA 2000 area [32,33].

CB represents a complex—a mosaic of pool marsh, forest, meadow, steppe, and salt marsh ecosystems with diverse and rich living world and habitats of many endemics, sub-endemic, and relict species of the Pannonian area. It is located on the alluvial plain between the Tisa River and the Begej Canal, which influenced the creation of the fundamental landscape characteristics of this reserve, namely wetlands and marsh ecosystems inhabited by various representatives of flora and fauna [10].

The natural values of Carska Bara Special Nature Reserve are highly rated due to the existence of about 500 plant species, 239 species of birds (of which all eight European heron species nest in this area), 20 species of fish (of which the rare species *Carassius carassius*, *Tinca tinca*, *Misgurnus fossilis*, *Sander lucioperca*, *Perccottus glenii*, etc.). Also, 30 species of mammals, rare for this area, live there (*Lutra lutra*, *Spermophilus citellus*, *Myodes glareolus*, *Felis silvestris*, etc.) [9]. The ponds, located between two entities of protected natural resources, are of immense significance.

The reason why the authors chose this area to investigate STou is that this small, protected location attracts many visitors. According to available data, it is estimated that this destination is visited by around 20,000 visitors per year. The excellent geographic and traffic location of this reserve is one of the key factors, along with the amazing diversity of flora and fauna. This is indicated by the different structures of visitors. Along with researchers, the area attracts hikers, bird and nature watchers, recreational tourism supporters, nature school participants, and others. Certain forms of tourism sometimes have a mass characteristic, so it is necessary to constantly control tourist development to prevent negative impacts on the environment. As the main resource of this destination is the wetland, there are many rare representatives of flora and fauna that also attract tourists. The protected area has important social values in addition to its environmental qualities. Due to their rich cultural heritage, the people of this region are characterized by an extremely varied range of ethnic backgrounds. These tourist potentials can be included in the tourist offer if tourism is developed properly. In this area, the growth of STou may prevent negative impacts while ensuring satisfaction among tourism participants.

2.2. The Conceptual Model and Data Collection

The authors have chosen the PoS research model (Prism of Sustainability), which enables the target factors that influence the development of tourism to be better investigated. In the identification of factors, defined indicators (items) were used. There are a total number of 22 items in the questionnaire. The items are grouped into two dimensions of sustainability: the ecological and institutional dimensions. Items are taken from the PoS model of sustainability, which is part of the research of Asmelash and Kumar [3], Cottrell et al. [5], Cottrell et al. [6], Huayhuaca et al. [30], and Trišić et al. [31]. Claims are grouped within the environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainability. In this way, the factors that influence the state of tourism and the satisfaction of respondents can be examined. Apart from the previously mentioned, the PoS model enables the assessment of the state of STou, which is susceptible to the ecological and institutional aspects of sustainability (H2), as well as the effect of sustainable tourism on respondent satisfaction, which is the primary research hypothesis in this article (H1). The model includes a check of the validity of the scales, which was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

To examine each dimension of sustainability for respondent satisfaction, simple linear regression was used. The application of simple linear regression is part of a preconceived research PoS model [3,5,30]. The mentioned research helped the authors to conceptualize

the model, objective, and subject of the analysis in this article. To achieve the most reliable results of the PAS STou research in this part of Europe, the authors plan to examine tourism in as large an area as possible. This research differs from the authors' previous research in that the ecological and institutional indicators of STou are put into focus here. We have conducted this using the example of a protected area to examine the factors that can directly drive tourism development in detail.

Examining if and to what extent STou influences residents' contentment is the primary research hypothesis (H1) in this study. Determining if the ecological and institutional aspects of sustainability influence the current condition of tourism and the opportunities for its growth in this nature reserve is another auxiliary hypothesis (H2). The PoS research model was selected by the authors to explore the two study hypotheses. The research model was formed according to Kruger et al. [34], Scholtz et al. [35], Cottrell et al. [5], and Asmelash and Kumar [3], for testing STou in the CB. By applying this research model, indicators can be defined that indicate the importance of certain factors on the state and possibilities of development of certain forms of tourism in PAS. This research model allows the examined factors to be grouped into dimensions for easier examination of the impact of sustainability dimensions. The environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainability are defined here as two independent variables. In the model, the dependent variable is the respondents' satisfaction. By measuring the relationship between these variables, the research hypotheses can be established or refuted.

In examining the impact of the environmental sustainability dimension on the state of tourism, the following environmental indicators were used: the existence of facilities that do not impact the environment, the state of the environment, the absence of pollution, the development of infrastructure, ecosystem protection, environmental activities, the role of the local population in nature protection, the attitude of visitors towards nature protection systems, etc. The ecological dimension of sustainability contains twelve indicators.

The examined institutional indicators are as follows: the management organization within the reserve, the institutions and legal regulations concerning protection, guide services and residents, the promotion of local values, educational programs and centers, and others. The institutional dimension in the questionnaire contains ten items (indicators) in total. The conceptual research model is shown in Figure 2.

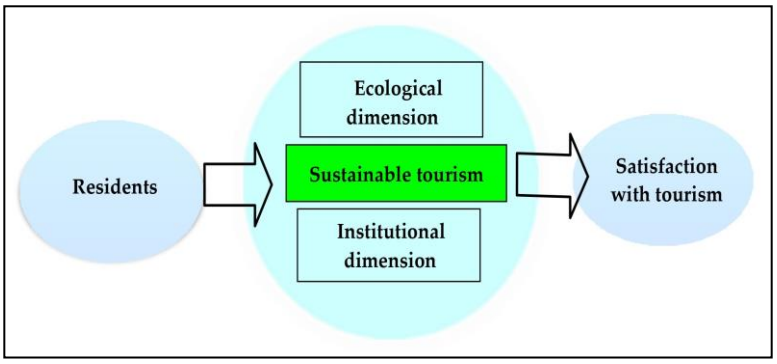

Figure 2. The conceptual model. Source: Trišić, I., author.

Two methods were utilized to survey the respondents: a written questionnaire and an internet survey. In both cases, the survey was conducted using the random sampling method. This means that each respondent could fill out the questionnaire. The online survey used a hyperlink to the questionnaire posted within social networks and thematic groups. The data from the completed questionnaires were stored in a single table. The written questionnaires were filled out in personal contact with the respondents by visiting the settlements in which the survey was conducted. In this case, the survey desk was

set up in the middle of the community. The respondents approached and filled out the questionnaire of their own free will. Both forms of the questionnaire contained instructions informing the respondent that the survey is anonymous and will be used for research purposes.

A five-point Likert scale was used to rank the responses. Responses rated 1 indicate complete disagreement, 3—neutral attitude, and 5—complete agreement with the items [16,20,33–37].

A total of 37% of respondents were surveyed in person, while 63% of residents were surveyed online. The respondents are part of the population living in the settlements of Perlez, Stajićevo, Ečka, Aradac, Mužlja, and Belo Blato. By implementing the random sample method, there was no additional need to determine the representativeness of the sample. It should be emphasized that in all the settlements where the sampling was conducted, there are about 22,000 inhabitants. The surveyed number of residents is 4.14% of the total population. After completing the survey process and checking the validity of the completed questionnaires, it turned out that a total of 910 respondents were surveyed.

We could state that all finalized questionnaires were valid for analysis. All the residents who participated in this survey are 18 and older. The survey was completely anonymous. There were not any questions affecting the respondents' discretion, nor were there any questions containing personal data. When surveying respondents, we faced limitations caused by frequent weather disasters, which affected field work and collecting questionnaires. Due to the reason mentioned above, the field survey had a slightly longer time frame than planned.

Table 1 displays the sociodemographic details of the participants.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 910).

Gender	**Male 40%**			**Female 60%**			**Std. Deviation 0.805**
Age structure	**18–24**	**25–34**	**35–44**	**45–54**	**55–64**	**over 65**	0.883
Percentage	14	21	29	20	12	4	
Education	**primary**		**high**	**higher**		**master/doctoral**	0.836
Percentage	12		61	18		9	
Occupation	**farmer**		**economy**	**students**		**retired**	0.910
Percentage	36		24	31		9	

Based on the statistics that are presented, it can be inferred that most respondents (60%) are female. The respondents' ages range from 18 to 84, with an average age of 37. According to an analysis of the age distribution, the largest percentage of respondents (29%) are between the ages of 35 and 44, while the smallest percentage (4%), are over 65. Regarding the level of education, 12% of them have finished primary school, 61% have completed high school, 18% possess higher education, and 9% have master's or doctoral degrees. Analyzing the structure of the respondents' education, it can be concluded that there is a wide range of occupations. The most numerous profession is farming, and that is 36%. A total of 24% of respondents work in various sectors of the economy, including transport, industry, catering and tourism, health, education, and others. Nine percent of respondents are retired, compared to roughly 31% of students and pupils.

The incomes of the population in this part of Vojvodina are very different. The population's most significant income is from agriculture and crafts. The population's primary sources of income are crafts and agriculture. While most of the population's income falls within the national average, trade and catering account for a sizable portion of overall income. Taking into consideration the educational structure of the respondents, the result points to the fact that they can fully understand the circumstances and phenomena

concerning STou in CB. This contributed to a more prominent validity of the answers given for statistical analysis and research results.

The survey took place from April to October in 2024. The validity of the completed questionnaires was determined by personally checking each questionnaire. On that occasion, we noted that each questionnaire was filled in correctly.

We analyzed the data collected with the help of SPSS v.25 software (IBM, Armonk, NY, USA), and presented it in tabular form.

3. Results

In Table 2, you can see the average values of the examined sustainability dimensions, that is, the average values of items (indicators), a total of 22, which indicate the state of certain factors in the destination.

Table 2. Average values of sustainability items (n = 910).

Items	Residents	
Dimensions	**Cronbach's Alpha Value**	**Mean**
Ecological	**0.810**	**3.75**
Ecological facilities		3.27
There are restaurants without a negative impact on the reserve		2.88
There is the protection of nature		4.11
There is a visitor center		3.47
Visitors and residents support nature protection		4.13
Traffic has no negative impact on the environment		3.88
Nature-based tourism activities		4.03
There is no wastewater		3.88
There are hiking and trim trails		3.68
There are various forms of tourism		4.22
The nature protection is promoted		4.14
There are no waste dumps		3.25
Institutional	**0.793**	**3.45**
There are nature conservation activities		3.50
There are adopted legal provisions		3.45
There are notices about the protection of the area		3.82
Visitors and residents make contact		4.02
Residents educate visitors about nature protection		3.06
Residents are hospitable to visitors		3.21
There are trained guides		2.88
Important tourist information is provided		3.05
Residents and visitors participate in joint actions to protect the area		3.44
Visitors prefer traditional accommodation		4.11

If the values of the examined dimensions of sustainability are analyzed, we can conclude that ecological and institutional dimensions have relatively identical average values (3.75 and 3.45). It may be concluded that numerous variables have values above the average (M > 3.00) based on the analysis of the individual values of both sustainability dimensions and the indicators studied within the dimensions. The claim that there are conditions for the growth of different types of tourism within the reserve and that there are activities aimed at promoting nature protection is the most valuable aspect of the ecological dimension of sustainability. The suggestion that some hospitality facilities have no effect on the environment and ecological components of the infrastructure is one of the lowest values in the ecological dimension of sustainability. According to this study, CB has certain detrimental effects on the environment. Activities aimed at reducing the impact of tourism

should receive consideration. The conclusion is that the CB needs infrastructure, but it must be built sustainably and ecologically, involving the local community.

The assertions that tourists like traditional services and goods made by local artisans or workshops are the most valuable within the institutional dimension of sustainability. The selection of lodgings and food would be included under this category. Additionally, it may be predicted from the demonstrated values that locals should interact with guests by participating in a variety of activities together. The least valuable statements are those claiming there are qualified local guides at CB and that crucial tourist information is lacking. These outcomes correspond with the findings of sustainability's ecological dimension. The local population must be involved in educational initiatives and guide services that will interact directly with tourists to promote nature-based tourism in the CB. The guides can also serve as tourist advisors, offering crucial details about the region's history, the area's preservation, and the nature reserve's tourist attractions.

The highest-rated claims are those related to ecological activities, the importance of preserving ecosystems and natural values, the development of nature-based forms of tourism, and other indicators. The significance of the interaction between residents and visitors, the existence of accommodation for visitors in ethnic style, and the development of programs protecting and improving natural values were set apart as crucial institutional factors. What the interviewees singled out as a priority in development is the construction of such infrastructure that is compatible with natural potential, then facilities for food and drink and reduction and control of pollution. Among the institutional values, it is important to strengthen the role of local tourist organizations and engage the local population in the role of trained guides and educators in the reserve.

The second part of the questionnaire contains items directly related to respondents' satisfaction with STou. The results of the respondents' answers to claims of satisfaction with STou can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Satisfaction of respondents with sustainable tourism.

Index	Residents (n = 910)	
	Cronbach's Alpha Value 0.769	**Mean 3.73**
I am satisfied because tourism benefits me		3.52
I am satisfied with tourism in the reserve		3.13
I am satisfied with the overall ecological opportunities		4.14
Ecological and institutional sustainability factors satisfy me		4.13

A considerable level of satisfaction with STou was indicated by the respondents, even though the indicators of the sustainability dimensions under investigation have different values. If the individual claims of residents' satisfaction are analyzed, it can be inferred that residents are most satisfied with the ecological possibilities and potential within the reserve (4.14). In addition, the environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainability affect their satisfaction (4.13). If the individual values of the dimensions examined are analyzed, it can be judged that the degree of satisfaction with the possibilities possessed by CB is independent of the current state of sustainable tourism. This information can be important in the process of the valorization of ecological and institutional potentials, to optimally influence the development of tourism, but in a sustainable way. The obtained values indicate that the factors of ecological and institutional dimensions can be used during statistical analysis and determine the state and level of influence on the users of this protected area.

The research model included a Likert Scale in data collection. Therefore, it is important to check the validity of the obtained values after statistical analysis. The reliability of the given answers was tested using Cronbach Alpha within the statistical analysis. According to Spangenberg [38], Nunnally and Bernstein [39], and Cortina [40], any value of the obtained coefficient $\alpha \geq 0.60$ can be considered reliable for statistical analysis and data processing. Analyzing the obtained values for the "α" coefficient after testing, it can be concluded that all values are above the minimum 0.70. This means that they can be used as very reliable values for analysis. Such high values indicate that every single value within the examined sustainability dimensions calls attention to a significant connection between sustainability dimensions and the state of STou.

The value $R^2 = 0.388$ was used in the simple linear regression, accounting for the statistical assumption that 39% of locals are satisfied with STou. Thus, the relationship that exists between sustainability dimensions and respondents' satisfaction was examined (Table 4).

Table 4. Regression analysis on respondents' satisfaction.

Index	Residents		
	β [1]	*p*-Value	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity
Ecological dimension	0.254	1.090	0.000
Institutional dimension	0.289	0.107	0.000

[1] Standardized β value used; $R^2 = 0.388$.

Among other things, the PoS research model was created to assess the degree to which respondents' satisfaction was impacted by STou by analyzing the correlation between independent and dependent variables. One of the applied statistical techniques is the use of simple linear regression. A simple linear regression analysis can be used to determine that there is a substantial and strong association ($p > 0.05$) between the variables under investigation, indicating that respondents' fulfillment (the dependent variable) is strongly impacted by STou. We can see that respondents are significantly satisfied with STou, i.e., that STou significantly contributes to residents' satisfaction ($0.107 > p > 1.090$). This is indicated by the application of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$), after which it is concluded that the obtained values are statistically very significant. After analyzing the results, it can be noted that inhabitants' contentment is significantly impacted by both aspects of sustainability. Contrasting these data with the results of a separate analysis of the sustainability dimensions leads to the conclusion that residents' satisfaction with sustainable tourism is unaffected by the situation of tourism at the moment. This would mean that the respondents recognized potential opportunities with the help of which the ecological values of CB can be improved on the one hand, while on the other hand the conditions for the development of certain forms of tourism can be strengthened, which will not have negative effects on the environment and will contribute to strengthening the role of residents and their local economy.

4. Discussion

Using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, simple linear regression, and Cronbach Alpha to analyze each value, it can be said that the research findings are significant. The main hypothesis (H1) is to examine whether STou affects residents' satisfaction. By analyzing the obtained values using simple linear regression and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, it can be concluded that STou has a significant impact on the satisfaction of respondents. Also, the second hypothesis (H2) was confirmed, namely that the ecological and institutional dimensions of sustainability have a significant impact on the state of STou. If these research results are compared with the research that influenced the definition of the goal of this

research and the research model, the relative similarity in the obtained results can be judged. Asmelash and Kumar [3] specifically highlight the importance of ecological values for the growth of tourism. In addition, it is emphasized that institutions are important in the adoption of certain regulations and for the control of expansion tourism. The examination of the main research question contributed to the conclusion that sustainable tourism has a significant impact on the satisfaction of respondents within the protected area. This coincides with the results of the research in this article. Cottrell et al. [5] are part of this study's main hypothesis, which is the influence of sustainability dimensions on the respondents. The conclusion that coincides with this research is that ecological, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions have a remarkable influence on the satisfaction of respondents and that these dimensions of sustainability contribute significantly to the state of tourism. In addition, the authors point out that within the protected area it is necessary to develop the forms of tourism that aim to improve natural values without negative impacts on the environment. According to Huayhuaca et al. [30], the active involvement of the local community in the design and development of tourism is crucial for achieving sustainable outcomes inside protected areas, in addition to enhancing natural benefits. The study's conclusions coincide with the outcomes of this paper, which indicate a strong correlation between respondents' satisfaction and sustainable tourism experiences. According to comparative analysis, managers need to understand how crucial ecological sustainability is to the growth of PAS's tourism industry. Nature protection must be a primary activity in the development of tourism, as indicated by the results of this research. We can conclude that, through both dimensions of sustainability, the residents have identified nature protection as the essential resource of this potential tourist destination. Since there are certain tourist activities in this area, further development of the existing tourism is exclusively conditioned by nature-based tourism forms. If these values are compared with the results of the author's previous research, we can deduce that the most important dimension is ecological sustainability, which is the driver of STou [3,5,30].

This result also coincides with the data from the author's earlier research. The development of nature-based tourism forms within PAS can have sustainable characteristics if the objectives and expected outcomes are defined in advance and potential threats to development are identified [41–43]. Management systems within PAS as attractive destinations have the task of generating the need for nature protection and the development of institutional values through the inclusion of socio-cultural values and economic expectations for the local economy and population [44–46].

This result is completely identical to the results of the author's previous research. Also, it is crucial for the residents that the PAS are being developed for tourism, that the local population is more actively involved in the management systems, and that tourism forms compatible with nature are developed within the reserve. This information is vital for institutions that have the task of enacting certain legal regulations [47–50].

In this research, the respondents assessed ecological and institutional sustainability as important dimensions of sustainability, i.e., dimensions that can significantly contribute to STou. This would mean that environmental and institutional factors are primary in destinations such as PAS. This fact can be used in planning and developing specific forms of tourism, such as educational tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, rural tourism, health, sports, events, and cultural, i.e., tourism forms based on natural and socio-cultural resources [51–53]. To preserve PAS, the development of nature-based tourism with ecological and sustainable components would be of great importance. The role of the local population in tourist activities is crucial for creating the image of a destination [54–56].

We can deduce that all subjects that use space must have a share in preventing environmental degradation in STou. Those subjects are the state, the locals as the most

significant party, representatives of direct monitoring and protection, and visitors as the main users of the space. The role of tourists and the local community in management systems and protection improvement is insufficiently represented. The government and other important entities in the protection system have contributed to the protection by adopting appropriate legal provisions, protection studies, and management plans. Accordingly, the conclusion can be that the adoption of many regulations and norms and adherence to them can contribute to better ecological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional destination sustainability, which is one of the main aims of STou [57–59].

The results of this research identified insufficient potential for STou development in terms of the built tourist infrastructure. The construction of ecologically supported facilities for the accommodation of tourists should be a primary objective. Considering the field research, we can conclude that certain facilities provide local and authentic food and drink services in CB, which proved significant from the visitors' point of view. Since the population that inhabits the areas around this protected area has a rich cultural and ethno-social tradition, building such facilities can surely improve the state of tourism. Constructing tourist accommodation facilities should be harmonized with the ambient and natural whole of PAS [60–62]. The revitalization or construction of visitor and educational centers, where various educational and scientific activities can be organized, is needed to improve the potential for specific forms of nature-based tourism. In addition, building these facilities would improve marketing management processes in presenting the natural and social values of PAS [63–65].

The extension of educational health trails and the construction of observatories for observing nature and animals can be an attractive tourist attribute [66,67]. As PAS differ in their spatial scope, constructing a larger number of these facilities is required. Following the example of similar areas around the world, cable cars or funiculars could be built to study and observe biogeographic values from above, as such areas often have inaccessible and rare wetland habitats. Since the research has shown that visitors to PAS are interested in natural and social values, ecological means of transportation can be introduced in PAS, intended for group observations with the participation of expert guides [68,69]. The construction of sports and recreation facilities can contribute to the significance of STou, but only if they comply with ecological criteria [70].

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate, using the respondents' perceptions, the current situation and potential for sustainable tourist development in a particular nature reserve. This protected destination has various potential attractive to visitors. The measuring of STou indicators, which are categorized into two sustainability dimensions—the ecological and institutional dimensions—is the main method used to examine the current state of tourism. Each of the dimensions can have its own influence on the state and possibility of tourism development, which was confirmed by this research. The authors have developed a wider range of indicators to achieve more reliable results. The primary findings of this study highlight the significance of protecting nature. All protection-related initiatives can provide more substantial outcomes when combined with the destination's institutional potential. The symbiosis of these two dimensions of sustainability can provide answers to the question that it is necessary to develop tourism within the PAS. If the results are analyzed, it can be concluded that tourism can be a complementary activity and can contribute to various benefits, both for the local community, as well as for visitors and managers.

The local population must be actively involved in all activities of PAS tourism to have a sustainable character. The results show that the ecological and institutional dimensions

have a significant impact on STOu. This information suggests that it is necessary to strengthen the role of institutions as part of the planning and development of tourism with the help of the local population through the education of visitors about the importance of protecting this area and developing potential STou forms. These activities can be organized within the program of various workshops and educational centers. Assorted institutional benefits for the destination can be ensured by intensifying or introducing these activities and involving the local community representatives [71–73].

The main research hypothesis (H1) in this paper has been confirmed. This means that the research on the state of tourism in the Central Bank has yielded significant results indicating that STou contributes to the satisfaction of residents. If we look at the different individual values of the examined factors within the two dimensions of sustainability, it can be concluded that the level of satisfaction is independent of the state of STO. The auxiliary hypothesis (H2) has also been confirmed. This means that the ecological and institutional dimensions contribute to the state of sustainable tourism in the Central Bank. The concluding considerations indicate that tourism development is desirable but in a sustainable manner. It is necessary to define the role of locals in this system more significantly. This would mean that residents must have an active role in planning and controlling tourism development and that tourism must be directed towards the protection of nature and species. The primary tourist resource in the Central Bank is wetlands. Conditions for STou can be created by building tourist infrastructure, strengthening nature promotion and protection programs, more actively engaging residents in management systems, introducing educational programs, and promoting local culture. The development of tourist infrastructure should be focused not only on the needs of visitors but also on residents and nature. Strengthening ecological and institutional potential is possible through visitor education, professional guide services, resource use control, management processes, and tourism promotion [74–76].

The results of this research can be used in tourism planning within the management system of this protected area. Local products must have an important position in the tourist offer. Locals should be included in education programs as educators [77–80].

Educational tourism can be a form of another kind of tourism or instruction-in-nature. Study forms and field exercises can use PAS as a foundation of research work. With a proper tourism strategy, all the mentioned forms can improve the area, its management, and protection.

The expected scientific contribution of this study could be described as the possible use of these research results for the examination of STou in other national or international PAS. The fact that the research findings can help in creating strategic initiatives for planning tourism development and identifying the types of tourism that are possible in these areas, enhances the scientific value of this study. Since the primary purpose of PAS is environmental conservation, the types of tourism that are implemented within these areas must also have an ecological basis. The results of this research can be used by managers of other PAS when developing tourism development strategies and managing PAS.

Limitation and Future Research

The main limitation of this study is that the research model is designed to examine the impact of sustainable tourism on the satisfaction of the respondents and to examine the state of sustainable tourism, only with the help of the perception of residents (as a group of respondents). Accordingly, sustainable tourism has been studied in a limited way. To solve this limitation, future research by the authors will include visitors and managers of this nature reserve. In this way, more reliable results can be obtained. In addition, another major limitation of this research relates to the lack of previous research in this protected

area, which would allow for comparative analysis with previously obtained scientific data. Also, the lack of comparative analysis affects the absence of the ability to identify the growth or decline in the quality of the environment, habitat, and satisfaction of users of this destination.

Therefore, based just on the analysis of these two aspects of sustainability, utilizing a limited number of indicators, it is highly challenging to reach a single conclusion and provide sufficient directions for future development. The authors intend to increase the sample size to include two additional respondent groups in order to provide a distinctive image of the condition of sustainable tourism in the CB. These are the people who visit and managers who administrate this protected region. The results obtained in this way can provide more significant insights into the role of sustainability dimensions in the state of tourism. The authors plan to include in their future analyses the examination of socio-cultural and economic dimensions of sustainability. In an effort to obtain more precise data on the role that PAS can play in STou, the authors intend to greatly broaden the scope of research on the Balkan Peninsula in order to offer results that are globally noteworthy.

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