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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

**AN ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION WITH TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG ADULTS RESIDING IN THE ŠALEK
VALLEY**

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU - European Union

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

Gen Z - Generation Z

ILO - International Labor Organization

ST-EP - Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty

STB - Slovenian Tourist Board

STO - Slovenian Tourism Organization

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization

WTO - World Trade Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

Some of the earliest forms of tourism can be traced back to 5,300 BC, when Chinese travelers set out to visit notable sights such as the Great Wall of China and the Yellow Mountains (Clifton & Alcocer, 2023). A few centuries later, the world's first travel blogs were obtained as Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who is regarded as the father of tourism, provided geographical and ethnographical writings accompanying his travels. A more modern concept of tourism developed in the 17th century as wealthy individuals from western and northern European countries started to travel across Europe with a desire to learn more about foreign history and culture while experiencing the food, art, and customs of various places. The unexpected experiences and stories of travelers compelled many others to explore distant lands, laying down the foundation for tourism as we know it today (Gyr, 2010).

Despite its historical roots that span centuries, tourism today represents one of the world's most significant and rapidly expanding industries. The Industrial Revolution, coupled with advancements in the transportation sector, facilitated the flourishing of tourism (Mihalič, 2021). According to the World Tourism Organization's (WTO) estimates for the year 2007, global tourism encompassed 903 million tourists with a total 856 billion US dollars spent (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Today, this global phenomenon employs roughly 230 million employees worldwide and influences financial decisions and the lives in communities, cities, and even countries (ILO, 2023). For example, more than 50% of Bahamas's residents are employed in tourism-related activities as of 2019 (Neufeld, 2020).

The technological developments and globalization of tourism have led to the emergence of mass tourism. It refers to a form of tourism in which large numbers of people visit the same destination, often at similar periods in the year (Mihalič, 2021). A notable example is the famous spring break destination Myrtle Beach in South Carolina which attracts thousands of U.S. college students from all parts of the country (CapitalOne, n.d.). While these few weeks in March are a great opportunity for local businesses to sell their services and obtain financial profits, such a large influx of people can put a lot of pressure on the environment and residents (Hampel, 2024).

In today's time, the age group most closely interwoven with various aspects of tourism is young adults, popularly referred to as "Generation Z" or just "Gen Z". They tend to travel often and represent a large portion of consumers in the tourism market. Many young adults are also employees or business owners in tourism-related activities and make up the supply side of the market. The effects of tourism on young families and young adults influence their economic status and overall satisfaction with their communities. Much

like tourism shapes Gen Z members' life decisions, young adults also influence the type of tourism supported in their communities. Having grown up amid climate change and pollution crises, Gen Z tends to display significant concern for the planet's well-being. Additionally, Gen Z tends to monitor technological advancements and global trends. These characteristics make specific types of tourist activities perceived as beneficial among young adults as they "favor businesses that align with their values of making eco-friendly choices in tourism" (Bredehoft, 2021; Shaw, 2023; Rief, 2023).

While nobody can deny the implications of numerous positive economic impacts of modern mass tourism, there has been an increase in environmental concerns connected with the various forms of tourism-induced pollution. Combining the positives of tourism with environmentally friendly practices has led to the development of sustainable tourism, which has been recognized as a strategy to mitigate the detrimental impacts of mass tourism. Initially, the concept of sustainable tourism development faced resistance, being perceived as costly and elitist. Nevertheless, around the turn of the millennium, a paradigm shift occurred, and the principles of sustainability began to be incorporated into tourism practices (Mihalič, 2021).

With sustainability becoming the biggest driver of tourism development, the three pillars of sustainable development have become the central theoretical framework for researchers and practitioners. The three pillars of tourism impacts – economic, socio-cultural and environmental, provide a framework for assessing the complex phenomenon of tourism from different points of view. Investigating this dynamic relationship can, therefore, provide valuable information on the development of tourism in a given area and can help predict the direction in which tourism and the community should and will continue to develop. It is needless to point out how broad the applications of such studies are, spanning from infrastructure and business development all the way to political campaigns and healthcare (Mihalič, 2021; Raspor & Macuh, 2021). Understanding the complexity of tourism development's impacts on host communities has facilitated interest in studying residents' support for tourism to identify both positive and negative impacts. Residents' satisfaction is a crucial determinant of successful tourism development in local communities, making it a key variable for research in this area of economics (Mavrič, 2023).

This research focuses geographically on the Šalek Valley, often referred to as Velenje or Šoštanj basin, located in the northeastern part of Slovenia. The Valley's is famous for its historic focus on heavy industry, especially the coalmining activities, which have been present in the region for 150 years and have changed and influenced countless lives in the Valley and beyond (Vrbič, 1996). Nevertheless, the coalmining activities are slowly being phased out and the questions about the restructuring of the economy and other implications the imminent closure of the Velenje Coalmine holds all demand urgent

attention and a just transition strategy. One of the industries that could diversify the local economy is the tourism industry (Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo, 2021). With local economy being at the beginning of the transition strategy, the investigation and analysis of perceptions regarding tourism development in the Valley could be very beneficial. Especially analyzing satisfaction of young adult residents regarding tourism development in the Šalek Valley can provide with some tangible indicators from a demographic that will inevitably become a key part of local communities.

Looking more specifically into sustainable tourism in the area, the questionnaire was designed according to the relevant tourism literature about impacts tourism development has on the local population. To reduce the dimensionality of the data collected, the factor analysis will be conducted to confirm whether factors do indeed form according to the three pillars of sustainability framework. The perceptions within each factor will also be evaluated to investigate the perception of satisfaction of young adult residents in the Šalek Valley within each factor and overall. With the focus on determining if young adult residents are satisfied with tourism development in the Šalek Valley, the process itself could uncover various valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of tourism industry in the Šalek Valley.

This research questions will be formed follows:

- 1) Which factors form and influence the perceptions of young adult residents regarding satisfaction with tourism development in Šalek Valey?
- 2) Are young adult residents expressing satisfaction with tourism development in the Šalek Valley?
- 3) According to young adult residents, which factor has the greatest influence on the reported satisfaction with regional tourism development?

In today's fast-paced environment, the tourism industry is continuously evolving, along with residents' sentiments. It is important to notice that this thesis evaluates only the current sentiments of young adults residing in the Šalek Valley regarding tourism development. As such, it is not designed to provide a definitive solution for local tourism in the Valley but can be used as a reflection of the current state and aid in formulation of an educated guess regarding tourism's future in the valley.

Following this introduction, the literature review will cover the development of tourism as an industry and later on, tourism development and its impacts will be explained from the perspective of local communities with an emphasis on the concept of sustainable tourism and its positive and negative impacts. The characteristics and challenges faced by Generation Z will also be discussed. More specifically, the implications economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism development have on those challenges and whether tourism development can help overcome some of those

challenges. After the chapter explaining Gen Z in detail, the chapter about the Šalek Valley will provide a short overview of its characteristics, history and current state of the tourism industry. The methodology chapter will outline the research approach, including sampling, questionnaire design, data collection, and analysis. The analysis section will present findings and interpretations, addressing the formulated research questions whilst critically evaluating the study. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the research findings and offer closing remarks.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter is divided into three distinct sections to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. First, we explore the relationship between tourism and local communities, examining historical interactions, benefits, and challenges. Next, we delve into sustainable tourism from the perspective of local communities, identifying and discussing its positive and negative impacts across economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. The economic impacts effect section addresses financial benefits and challenges such as job creation, income generation and inflation, while the socio-cultural impacts section focuses on cultural preservation, community engagement, and potential risks like cultural commodification. The environmental impacts section highlights issues such as resource depletion, pollution, and conservation efforts. Finally, we turn our attention to Generation Z, specifically young adults who will live to enjoy the long term tourism development of the future. A detailed analysis of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental challenges they face, reflecting the three pillars of sustainable development discussed earlier to possibly provide some pointers for future development will also be discussed in the same chapter.

2.1 Tourism and local communities

»Tourism is an activity for individuals travelling to places outside of their usual environment, continuously staying there less than a year with the intention of spending free time, relaxation, business or other reasons« (WTO, n.d.).

Tourism is not a new industry, and it has been around for centuries. Since ancient times, people have traveled, roamed, and bathed in thermal springs. This practice, rooted in the societal changes and developments over time, began to flourish significantly as an industry due to the industrial revolution. Various supporting activities such as transportation, agriculture, food manufacturing, waste and water management, and the development of modern banking systems have all facilitated its rapid growth (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

The significant expansion of tourism occurred after World War II (Mihalič, 2006). The adoption of the 48-hour weekend, established in the 1930s, was embraced by employers who found that offering weekends off improved efficiency and reduced absenteeism (Beaven, 2020). The post-war era was characterized by high industrial growth, the development of traffic infrastructure and various means of transportation, increased worker income, and more leisure time. These factors collectively enabled people to afford quality time off and fostered a drive towards rest, health, and exploration, leading to the development of new tourism capacities (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

The emergence of disposable free time, highly concentrated around holidays, meant that everyone wanted to vacation simultaneously. This rapid and robust growth in tourism demand directly resulted in the growth and concentration of tourism supply, setting the stage for the birth of mass tourism. This growth was not short-lived; since the 1950s, the number of international tourist arrivals has grown globally by almost 6000% (Mihalič, 2021).

Mass tourism is characterized by concentrated, large-scale industrial travel defined by two encompassing conditions. The first is the quantitative dimension, referring to the sheer number of visitors. A significant increase in visitor numbers can lead to oversaturation, which in turn affects the second dimension: the qualitative impact of tourism. This qualitative dimension pertains to the ecological damage resulting directly from tourism activities (Mihalič, 2021). Not only is the quality of the environment compromised, but the lives of local populations are also affected. Oversaturation can provoke protests from local residents in overcrowded tourist cities like Barcelona, Dubrovnik, or Venice (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

Tourism concentration can be caused either by seasonal or spatial factors. Seasonal concentration occurs due to the seasonal attractiveness of a destination, influenced by the local climate. Additionally, the tourist's place of permanent residence and its climatic characteristics can affect vacation timing and periods of leave. Spatial concentration arises when tourists converge on the same location, as seen in popular destinations such as Barcelona, Dubrovnik, and Venice (Mihalič, 2021).

The implications of mass tourism on local populations are multifaceted. Protests due to spatial concentration of visitors have one visible impact. Seasonal concentration also has significant effects, characterized by large, short-term spikes in visitor numbers. These spikes create a sudden, short-term demand for local labor in tourism and related industries, providing residents with new job opportunities and income. Additionally, there is an inevitable increase in the value of real estate and local public goods. However, the seasonality of these jobs forces the local labor force to continually search for new short-

term employment, while the inflationary effect of rising real estate values and prices of local goods can gradually displace residents from tourism areas (Mihalič, 2006).

While tourism has brought numerous benefits to local economies, such as job creation and income generation, it also poses significant challenges. The historical growth of tourism, driven by industrial and societal advancements, has led to the development of mass tourism. This phenomenon has both quantitative and qualitative impacts, affecting not only the environment but also the socio-economic fabric of local communities. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that considers both the benefits and drawbacks of tourism, ensuring sustainable development that supports both the industry and the local populations it affects, which will be discussed in great detail in the following chapters.

2.2 Sustainable tourism and local communities

At the dawn of the new millennium, a paradigm shift towards sustainable tourism began to spread from academic circles to the broader tourism industry. This new approach aimed to mitigate the negative impacts of mass tourism, particularly issues related to overcrowding and environmental degradation (Mihalič, 2021). Sustainable tourism is intrinsically linked with the imperative for the survival and coexistence of nature and humankind. It shares a close relationship with ecotourism, as both emphasize similar values regarding the execution of tourism activities in natural environments (Veljković & Colarič-Lakše, 2014).

Despite its noble objectives, the sustainable tourism paradigm was not universally welcomed by all stakeholders within the tourism industry. The strongest opposition came from the supply side of the tourism sector. Critics viewed the sustainable tourism concept as elitist, prohibitively expensive, intellectually arrogant, and ultimately ineffective. The most significant concern was that it would stifle growth and profitability (Mihalič, 2021). Nonetheless, the 1990s saw further development of the concept, gaining momentum through international conferences and gatherings (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

The most widely accepted definition of sustainable tourism development and the cornerstone of this paper is the definition by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that recognizes and defines sustainable tourism development as: “Tourism that takes full account for its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.” (UNWTO, 2024). This definition is comprised from the broader definition of sustainable development that states: “Sustainable development is development that

meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (IISD, 2024).

Therefore, sustainable tourism could also be defined as an approach that integrates all aspects of sustainable development, emphasizing that tourism development must consider its environmental, societal, economic, and climatic impacts. This definition underscores the necessity of utilizing natural resources optimally, maintaining ecological practices, and managing harmful encroachments responsibly (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). It is important to recognize, however, that even sustainable tourism does not account for every potential impact of development. The definition, formulated over 20 years ago, does not fully address the modern challenges in sustainability. For instance, the sustainable tourism paradigm often prioritizes visitor satisfaction over the quality of life of local communities, indirectly favoring tourists over residents (Mihalič, 2021).

Sustainable development can also be defined as the management of tourism activities in a way that ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural, and social resources. This approach aims to enhance individual satisfaction while enabling positive and responsible growth management (Veljković & Colarič-Lakše, 2014). Sustainable tourism practices aim to manage negative impacts to an acceptable extent for all stakeholders, including the natural environment, but they do not eliminate these impacts entirely. Therefore, to achieve true sustainability in tourism it is essential to address various inherent tensions and trade-offs. For instance, while increasing visitor numbers can generate economic benefits, it can also lead to environmental degradation and social disruptions if not managed properly. Therefore, developing robust frameworks and policies that balance these competing interests is essential for the long-term success of sustainable tourism (Mihalič, 2021).

The concept of sustainable tourism continues to evolve, and ongoing research and practical applications are necessary to address the gaps and emerging challenges. The dynamic nature of tourism requires continuous adaptation and refinement of sustainable practices to ensure they remain relevant and effective in mitigating the negative consequences of tourism while enhancing its benefits (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations in tourism development. Sustainable tourism is now seen as a critical component of broader efforts to achieve sustainable development goals. This holistic approach requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, private sector entities, local communities, and tourists themselves. By fostering such collaboration, sustainable tourism can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of environmental conservation, and the enhancement of socio-economic well-being (Veljković & Colarič-Lakše, 2014).

To support the holistic approach and to modernize the tourism industry, the integration of technology and innovation in sustainable tourism practices holds great potential. For example, the use of digital platforms can enhance tourist experiences while providing valuable data for managing visitor flows and minimizing environmental impacts. Advances in sustainable infrastructure, such as green buildings and renewable energy sources, also play a crucial role in reducing the ecological footprint of tourism activities (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

From the most widely accepted UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism development three pillars of sustainable development can be obtained. Sustainable tourism development should be aware of its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts and find an acceptable balance between those three pillars for a sustainable and balanced tourism development (Mihalič, 2021).

The following subchapters will elaborately explain the influences sustainable tourism development has on local communities. More specifically, it will clarify the effect that tourism development creates with various economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts and how those effect the local population. Each of those group of impacts has a positive and negative effect, but it is in the interest of all stakeholders involved that positive effects outweigh the negative, creating a good and quality environment for living as well as to enable tourism activity enjoyment.

2.2.1 Economic impacts on locals

The global market system, characterized by the exchange of goods and services, dominates the modern economy. Within this system, the tourism industry is expected to generate revenue that directly contributes to the growth of regional economies (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). Economic development in communities is an efficient way of increasing the quality of life, nourishing creativity and fostering growth, which influence well-being and life satisfaction (Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation, 2023; Seligman, 2003). However, like all industries, tourism sector can also create negative economic impacts on the environment (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). Nevertheless, tourism's multifaceted influence is essential for economic development, yet its interconnectedness with various other industries complicates the measurement of its economic contributions. (Truyols, 2023).

2.2.1.1 *Positive economic impacts*

Tourism impacts the host economy in numerous ways. One positive effect of tourism development is its effect on foreign exchange earnings, which are particularly important

for countries heavily dependent on tourism. The recipient country generates international tourism earnings, which are represented as foreign exchange income. This income can be used by the host economy to import foreign goods and services (Mihalič, 2021). This allows local consumers to access a broader variety of goods and services at lower prices (Roberts, 2024). The export of tourism products on the other hand differs from the export of goods and services due to their nature and can be labeled as an invisible export. Selling tourism products within the host country functions like an export because tourists pay for them with foreign currencies, impacting the national balance of payments (Mihalič, 2006). Consequently, the generated income often fuels investments in various industries, directly influencing economic growth (Mihalič, 2021).

Tourism is renowned for its capacity to generate employment directly in the tourism sector as well as in its supporting industries. The development of tourism necessitates the establishment of hotels, restaurants, entertainment providers, transport providers, souvenir shops offering goods and services to tourists, and other local businesses. Additionally, tourism demand for goods and services provided by the tourism-related businesses creates significant demand for the workforce, where, usually, the local workforce is employed, positively affecting the local population (Mihalič, 2021). In 2015, for instance, the tourism industry directly created more than 100 million jobs globally, accounting for just under 4% of all jobs worldwide (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). Therefore, empowering the growth of local businesses and supporting local entrepreneurs can help expand their businesses. This inevitably helps with job creation, result of which is that money circulates within the local community and that can fuel further investments in local businesses (Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation, 2023).

Tourism activities also contribute to government revenues and benefit the local economy mostly through taxes and levies. Tourism expenditures contribute directly and indirectly to government income, which is later on redistributed. Direct contributions result from tourism activities, such as taxes and incomes from tourism businesses and employment, as well as enforced levies on tourists, like tourist taxes. Indirect contributions come from taxes on goods and services sold to visitors (Mihalič, 2021). Locally spent taxes revenues pay salaries of public employees, keeps schools, public libraries and public transport running, contribute towards building and repairing local infrastructure, fund the maintenance of recreation facilities and public parks (Kagan, 2024).

The development of tourism also directly impacts the necessary and adequate infrastructure, including water and sewage systems, roads, and electricity systems. Such improvements benefit visitors and, most importantly, enhance the quality of life for the local population (Mihalič, 2021). However, the infrastructure must be built in accordance with the local natural and cultural environment, using sustainable practices and local architectural styles whenever possible (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

Tourism can positively affect the local economy by increasing real estate values and the value of public goods (Mihalič, 2021). Welcoming tourists can also help alleviate the burden of taxes and even generate revenue for local households despite the pressure of increased real estate prices (Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation, 2023). Furthermore, the tourism industry has a multiplier effect on the local economy because tourism activities create demand for various products and services not directly linked to the tourism industry, thus enabling additional supporting economic activity (Mihalič, 2006).

The positive economic impacts generated by the tourism industry and its development have been thoroughly examined. These impacts are closely intertwined with demand for tourism related products serving as the essential driver. The expenditure of tourists in the host country or within the local communities directly influences national GDP, stimulates employment and entrepreneurship, and fosters various investments. Moreover, it enhances real estate values and increases the value of public goods, among other beneficial outcomes like the multiplier effect that cannot be measured. Collectively, these economic impacts contribute to the overall positive economic outcomes that can be experienced by the local population and fuel their possible satisfaction with tourism development.

2.2.1.2 Negative economic impacts

The development of tourism industry also has its downsides, particularly in less developed countries, where wealthier host countries can profit more from tourism-related visits than their less developed counterparts (Mihalič, 2021). Wealthier countries can import fewer tourism products, especially capital-intensive ones, thereby more easily satisfying visitors' needs (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

One of the most well-known negative impacts of tourism is its inflationary effect. An increase in effective demand for goods and services due to the growing number of visitors results in increased prices. However, this rise is rarely matched by a proportional increase in residents' incomes, thus reducing the purchasing power of the local population (Mihalič, 2021).

The seasonality and the insecurity of tourism activities also poses a significant challenge. High employment during peak seasons can lead to substantial unemployment during off-seasons (Mihalič, 2021). The transient nature of these jobs, often characterized by poor pay and conditions, further exacerbates the problem. In this way, local population can even be pushed out of the labor market by cheaper foreign workers (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

Another negative economic impact is leakage which refers to the percentage of visitor expenditure that remains in the host country, benefiting local businesses and workers. After deducting taxes, profits, foreign labor costs, and tourism product import costs, the proportion of tourism expenditures benefiting the local economy can be quite small. For example, with all-inclusive packages, it is estimated that only 20% of the total price benefits local workers and businesses, with the rest going to foreign airlines, international accommodation companies, and outbound tour operators. Import and export leakages further exacerbate this issue. Foreign earnings from tourism may be used to satisfy local needs for imported goods, and if local tourism supply depends on imports, this creates import leakage. Export leakage occurs when profits from foreign-owned resorts and hotels are repatriated (Mihalič, 2021).

The development of tourism also incurs high infrastructural costs. Investments in infrastructure such as airports and roads, essential for tourism development, can burden local governments and taxpayers. Governments sometimes offer subsidies to foreign developers to attract tourism business, diverting funds from essential public services like health and education (Mihalič, 2021).

Finally, there is a dependency threat to economies heavily reliant on tourism. If a significant portion of GDP comes from tourism, the local economy becomes vulnerable to fluctuations in tourism demand caused by natural disasters, terrorism, and other factors. For example, in the Maldives, over 80% of the national workforce is employed in tourism, making the economy highly susceptible to drops in tourism demand (Mihalič, 2021).

While tourism can significantly boost local economies, it can also cause various negative impacts, which presents numerous challenges. These challenges necessitate a balanced approach to tourism development, ensuring that economic benefits are maximized while mitigating negative impacts on local communities and environments.

2.2.2 Socio-cultural impacts on locals

Socio-cultural environments are shaped by human activities and encompass the immediate physical and social settings in which people live. The social environment includes the culture of individuals and communities with whom they interact. In the context of tourism attractions, local social environments can lure tourists with distinctive and specific language, hospitality, openness, and friendliness of the local host community, as well as other characteristics such as safety. The social environment is closely intertwined with the cultural environment, which includes local customs, music, art, local craftsmanship, architecture, and more, all unique and defined by human activities. Tourism can help both environments thrive, providing substantial benefits to

the local population. However, tourism can also exploit various aspects of these environments, leading to potential downsides (Mihalič, 2021).

2.2.2.1 Positive socio-cultural impacts

The positive impacts of tourism on the socio-cultural environment is the preservation of the destination's cultural authenticity. Local cultural heritage attracts visitors who seek unique experiences while simultaneously contributing to its preservation. Additionally, tourism demand can generate necessary funding of authentic attractions, such as direct financing of local events through ticket purchases and similar fees. Such cultural events and products become part of the tourism trade, gathering financial contributions to cover the associated efforts and expenses. In some cases, a renewed interest in nearly lost local cultural customs can revive old events and products. Local populations may cease to nurture certain cultural habits, but new interest and financial incentives created by the tourism demand can lead to the rebirth of these cultural elements. Increased interest in tourism products can also encourage locals to become more culturally aware and take pride in their cultural habits and identity (Mihalič, 2021).

The increased number of visitors can drive demand for local sustainable products, such as souvenirs and agricultural goods based on the destination's nature, history, and culture. This demand enables the local population to maintain their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge through the production and sale of traditional products (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). The interest of visitors in exploring and engaging with the cultural habits of a destination can foster mutual understanding between the host community's culture and visitors' cultural customs. By bringing cultures and people together, tourism helps reduce tensions between different groups, acting as a driver of peace. The social environment of a destination, including its inhabitants, may respond to the increased number of visitors by implementing additional policies to protect visitors from petty crimes and to possibly enhance safety levels for visitors and locals alike (Mihalič, 2021).

The promotion of local tourism characteristics, especially socio-cultural aspects, can positively influence a destination's image and domestic policies. Improved perceptions of a country can attract visitors and businesses, leading to foreign investments. As tourism develops, positive social impacts become evident in the host community's quality of life due to increased employment, higher income levels, benefits from tourism infrastructure, and other advantages. The growth in visitation and tourism development strengthens community ties, enabling local inhabitants to participate more actively in the public and tourism life of a destination (Mihalič, 2021).

The promotion of socio-cultural characteristics, the fostering of local community collaborations, and the implementation of culturally enriched tourism activities all play a significant role in advancing sustainable tourism development within the local community. These efforts highlight and celebrate the unique local cultural identity and, most importantly, actively contribute to the preservation of local heritage for future generations.

2.2.2.2 Negative socio-cultural impacts

Despite the benefits, tourism can also negatively impact socio-cultural environments through the clash of different cultures and social settings. One major negative impact is the commodification of culture, driven by visitor demand for cultural events and products. Traditional events and products may be tailored to meet tourist expectations, maximizing revenue but potentially altering the original cultural practices. This commodification can change religious rituals and traditional values, leading to a loss of authenticity. Cultural events and products may adopt the tastes of tourists, resulting in staged authenticity where they only appear genuine (Mihalič, 2021).

Another negative impact of tourism is the standardization of tourism supply. Visitors in new environments often prefer familiar facilities and services, such as global hotel chains, recognizable food chains, and other well-known brands. Another negative implication of tourism can be the potential damaging of important cultural resources and sites through vandalism, littering, defilement, pilferage, and other detrimental activities. Locals may also contribute to cultural deterioration by illegally selling cultural items to tourists (Mihalič, 2021).

Given that tourists come from various different cultural and religious backgrounds, the potential for cultural clashes with local communities is heightened, fueled by disparities in prosperity, values, lifestyles, language, and other factors. Local inhabitants may become irritated by tourists' behavior, the inferior jobs in tourism, and apparent economic inequality. The nature of employment in tourism, requiring locals to serve guests, can deepen resentment and envy. (Mihalič, 2021). Significant cultural clashes, therefore, occur mainly due to ignorance or disregard for different customs. Tourists much too often disregard local standards, local dress codes and openly consume alcohol, which can cause tensions and even cause abandonment of local traditions. Therefore, the dissatisfaction with traditional ways of life, prompting locals to abandon their customs, can be fueled just by observing tourists' behavior (Mihalič, 2021; Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

The negative impacts on the local social environment can also be caused by tourists' lifestyle as well as their consumerism habits, whose lifestyle, characterized by seeking

pleasure, spending money, and indulging in various activities, can spark envy among locals who desire such lifestyles but lack the means to support them (Mihalič, 2021; Raspor & Macuh, 2021). In extreme cases, the desire to emulate tourists' lifestyles can drive locals to crime, prostitution, and drug trafficking. Tourism development can also lead to the growth of the gambling industry, negatively impacting social behavior. Some destinations attract tourists specifically for these characteristics, such as Thailand or Brazil for prostitution, the Netherlands for its lenient drug policies, and Ibiza or Croatia for summer festivals (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). Besides the frustration caused by the lifestyle difference, the frustration may arise from the exclusive availability and accessibility of certain goods and services to tourists, such as exclusive access to natural resources like beaches. Additionally, the scarcity of certain resources, such as water, can cause social tension and distress as well as competition between locals and tourists (Mihalič, 2021).

Imitating tourists' lifestyles, in addition to potentially engaging in criminal activities, can lead to an increased demand for imported goods, favored and used by tourists, thereby placing additional strain on the economy. Such lifestyle imitation can also create generational differences and tensions within host families and communities (Mihalič, 2021; Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

While tourism has the potential to significantly enrich socio-cultural environments and provide numerous benefits, it also poses various challenges that, if not effectively and carefully managed, can lead to significant harm to local communities. Therefore, a balanced approach is essential to maximize the positive impacts while mitigating the negative consequences on local communities, their lifestyle and cultural heritage.

2.2.3 Environmental impacts on locals

The tourism industry relies heavily on the natural environment, often utilizing it without providing adequate preservation measures. The natural environment includes elements such as climate, weather, water bodies, land and soil, rocks, flora and fauna, and ecological systems (Mihalič, 2021). Additionally, the impact of the built environment, including buildings and infrastructure, must not be ignored as they occupy space within the natural environment (Raspor & Macuh, 2021). From the perspective of the tourism industry, one of the most crucial aspects is environmental quality, which refers to attributes such as air and water quality, noise levels, and access to open spaces. These environmental characteristics significantly influence physical and mental health, implying that the quality of the environment directly impacts the lives of local residents (Mihalič, 2021). The natural environment often serves as the primary attraction for tourists; thus, its degradation can lead to a decline in tourism demand (Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

2.2.3.1 Positive environmental impacts

Tourism can positively influence the natural environment through protection and preservation efforts, preserving those environments for visitors and locals alike. The attractiveness of a clean and beautiful natural environment can generate funds through visitor admission fees, user fees, eco-taxes, and license fees for activities such as fishing, hunting, and climbing, which are collected by the government to cover maintenance and preservation expenses. These funds are particularly instrumental in less developed countries, which might otherwise struggle to finance nature preservation (Mihalič, 2006). Tourists and businesses might also voluntarily contribute to these funds, which can be used to cover conservation costs, maintenance, salaries, and other preservation activities (Mihalič, 2021).

Tourism activities can incentivize environmental revitalization and improvement of natural quality. Measures such as air and waste pollution control, architectural and urban planning regulations, and special programs to restore natural spaces can significantly enhance the environment. Such initiatives might support the return of wildlife and endangered species, contributing to biodiversity (Mihalič, 2021). Increased environmental awareness among locals and tourists alike can lead to more environmentally friendly behaviors and greater responsibility towards the natural environment (Mihalič, 2006).

Furthermore, improving environmental management and planning can positively affect the quality of the natural environment. Effective environmental management practices can reduce the negative impacts of tourism, such as pollution and waste, by minimizing water waste production, using cleaner production methods, and imposing limits on visitor numbers (Mihalič, 2021).

2.2.3.2 Negative environmental impacts

Tourism development is, in certain cases, not carefully planned, managed, and executed, which can result in numerous negative impacts on the natural environment. Among significant negative impacts is water pollution, which can result from improper sewage disposal systems or surface pollution from different tourism activities. In addition to pollution, the tourism industry is a major consumer of water, with hotels, swimming pools, golf courses, and other tourism-related activities often overusing local water sources. Large amounts sewage water from concentrated tourism areas can, if untreated, severely damage local flora and fauna and contaminate other water bodies (Mihalič, 2021). In many places during the high tourist season, tourists are known for their ignorance and can use double the amount of water compared to residents, inevitably

leading to dissatisfaction among the local population, especially during dry seasons (Mihalič, 2021).

Tourism industry is also a significant contributor to air pollution, regardless of the transportation method used, whether by train, plane, or road. Approximately half of all air travel can be attributed to tourism and with it a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions. This level of pollution exacerbates global problems like acid rain, photochemical pollution, climate change, and carbon dioxide emissions. Moreover, the electricity and other power sources consumed by tourism activities directly contribute to air pollution (Mihalič, 2021; Mihalič, 2006).

Visual pollution is another negative impact, resulting from inadequately designed hotels and other tourism infrastructure that clashes with the natural environment. This includes architecture incompatible with local styles, deforestation, poor building maintenance, large advertising billboards, littering, and unsightly utility lines, all of which can degrade scenic views (Mihalič, 2021).

The tourism industry also generates significant waste. High concentrations of tourists produce substantial waste, with remote destinations with minimal garbage disposal facilities being particularly vulnerable (Mihalič, 2021). Besides waste pollution, tourism development can also lead to ecological disasters by changing the land's purpose and use. For example, ski resorts and ski slopes can alter the landscape and cause erosion and avalanches (Mihalič, 2006).

While tourism can significantly enhance the natural environment through various preservation and revitalization efforts, it also presents numerous challenges. Effective environmental management and planning are crucial to mitigating the negative impacts of tourism and ensuring that its development benefits both the natural environment and local communities. By balancing these factors, sustainable tourism can contribute to a more resilient and environmentally conscious future (Mihalič, 2021; Raspor & Macuh, 2021).

2.3 Sustainability concerns of young adults in Generation Z

Social scientists have long been interested in studying generational cohorts within societies. Scholars argue that generational transitions play a pivotal role in propelling societal changes, as each cohort progresses through life stages collectively, impacting and altering the course of societal history. These generational transitions create distinct generational categories or cohorts, defined by similar birth years and common experiences, often marked by significant historical events. For instance, the Greatest

Generation was defined by their sacrifices during World War II. However, it must be acknowledged that such generational classifications are in fact generalizations. While they provide valuable insights into broad societal trends, they may oversimplify the diverse range of perspectives, values, and behaviors of individuals within each cohort (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

The timeframes that define generations can differ by several years across various sources. It is crucial to consider the historical and social context in which each generation grew up. Keeping in mind the risk of characteristics overgeneralization, the following generation cohorts emerge. The Baby Boomers, the first generation born after the Great War, are characterized by family traditions, the Cold War, and the moon landing. Generation X is known for its independence and is marked by the rise of consumer electronics, the fall of the Berlin Wall and dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. Generation Y, or Millennials, were shaped by the events of 9/11, the internet boom, and rapid technological advancements. Finally, Generation Z is characterized by their use of impersonal communication and multitasking, having grown up with fully developed technology such as mobile phones, and social media (Kolenc, 2020). The birth years for Generation Z vary depending on the source, typically ranging from 1995 or 1997 to 2010 or 2012 (Mantooth & Linde, 2023; Beresford Research, 2024)

According to the European Commission, young people are aged between 15 and 29 (Eurostat, 2024). However, individuals under the age of 18 are not legally considered adults (European Commission, 2024). Therefore, the age span defining the cohort of young adults is from 18 to 29 years old, placing them exactly within the Generation Z generational cohort (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Young adults are in a life phase characterized by emerging adulthood. Typically, this phase involves identity exploration, where individuals explore their identities in terms of love, work, beliefs, and values. The variety of possibilities and life choices faced by young adults is part of this exploration process and identity formation. Additionally, young adults also face instability as they test relationships with different partners while seeking purpose and reliable, enjoyable work. For instance, young adults in the United States change jobs an average of eight times during this life phase and have the highest migration rates. This period is also characterized by a feeling of being "in-between." Many young adults do not feel fully adult and experience a prolonged transition to adulthood. This phase allows them to become self-focused, aiming to achieve self-sufficiency, which is crucial for roles in later life, such as marriage or parenthood (Bredehoft, 2021).

The traits of Generation Z, along with the influence of the environment they grew in, will inevitably shape how they raise their future offspring. In the coming years, many members of Generation Z will become first-time parents, bringing a diverse, inclusive, introspective, and technologically advanced parenting style. However, due to the turbulence they have experienced throughout their lives, many are considering delaying or forgoing parenthood (Bonatsos et. al., 2023). Among the biggest concerns for Generation Z as potential future parents are mental health and financial stability. The fear of not being mentally anchored enough to care for another human being is crucial for many when deciding whether to have children. Additionally, as the cost of living continues to rise and the expenses of raising a child skyrocket, many Generation Z individuals feel uncertain about embarking on parenthood. Another factor is their rejection of traditional societal norms, particularly for women, who increasingly enjoy the flexibility of not having children and pursuing careers. The trend of overarching patriarchy dictating that women must focus on family creation is diminishing, with a notable increase in education among younger women. While this may appear selfish, prioritizing personal well-being mentally and financially is important before bringing a child into the world (Garcia, 2024). Government institutions and relevant organizations should intervene to address these concerns and potentially establish incentives to help young people ease into the challenging role of parenthood.

2.3.1 Economic concerns of young adults

In the contemporary economic landscape, a significant proportion of Gen Z expresses growing concerns about earning sufficient income. While eager to work, many are plagued with concerns about finding stable, well-paying jobs. The absence of reliable employment fosters a sense of uncertainty and discomfort within this generation (Kelly, 2023). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Gen Z, with many experiencing layoffs, and their limited work experience has further compounded the difficulty of finding employment. Despite those challenges, Gen Z was instilled that hard work is critical for success from an early age (Veltheim, 2023). As a direct result, many have been compelled by the current job market to pursue a variety of occupational paths, often managing multiple gigs and jobs (Kelly, 2023; Bredehoft, 2021). A study involving over 1,500 Gen Z participants across the United States confirms those claims and indicates that approximately two-thirds are employed either part-time or full-time. Over half of the employed respondents reports earning money through freelance or side hustle opportunities and nearly 40% combines the traditional employment with alternative income streams. This illustrates their determination and desire to achieve financial stability and independence, as well as willingness to explore diverse pathways for personal and professional growth (Kelly, 2023).

Similarly, Europe faces comparable economic disruptions, with labor market challenges exacerbated by demographic concerns. On one hand, there is a shortage of young workers on the one hand, while on the other, there are insufficient acceptable job opportunities to ensure financial stability. Despite these challenges, modern technologies are paving the way for innovative work models, giving Gen Z a comparative employment advantage due to their tech savviness. However, rapid digitalization also poses a threat to render many jobs obsolete, negatively impacting individual security and stability. Additionally, companies increasingly resort to measures and strategies such as layoffs, outsourcing, and partial sales to enhance short-term profits. These practices have fostered skepticism among Gen Z regarding the dedication of employers to employee well-being. Influenced by the experiences of older peers, many Gen Z individuals are wary of promises made by the corporations, yet their protective upbringing leads them to expect positive work environments and are not afraid to seek employers who fulfill these expectations (Scholz & Rennig, 2019).

The skepticism also extends to concerns about homeownership, starting families, and surpassing their parents' achievements. Anxiety surrounding issues like student debt and high inflation makes it very difficult to save enough for the future. According to a sample of U.S. Gen Z participants, more than 70% respondents report that their financial situation does not look promising. To make the situation even worse, young adults have witnessed repeated waves of layoffs, reinforcing their distrust of employers and job security. Observing the economic downfall of many people and the speculative investment trends in unstable meme stocks and cryptocurrencies during the pandemic has further heightened their financial anxiety, amplifying their fears of making similar mistakes with their own hard-earned money (Kelly, 2023).

2.3.2 Socio-cultural concerns of young adults

Gen Z exhibits a distinct set of altruistic values, including a strong commitment to social equity, cultural diversity, and inclusivity. They emphasize personal virtues such as loyalty, honesty, responsibility, and intrinsic motivation, reflecting their collective drive to challenge societal norms and contribute positively to social transformation (Jayatissa, 2023). As the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in history, racial equity is a central social concern for Gen Z. In addition to valuing inclusion, cultural diversity, and racial and ethnic equality, they actively advocate for the rights of sexual orientation and gender identity (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024). Moreover, Gen Z is known for its individualistic and self-reliant mindset, excelling in multitasking but often struggling with maintaining focus due to constant influx of stimuli (Jayatissa, 2023).

Technological advancements play a key role in Gen Z's socio-cultural characteristics and behavior. Concerns about the standardization of global culture arise because information

technology is deeply intertwined with their lives on a daily basis. While Gen Z faces global pressures as the first fully global generation, they do not universally share the same cultural norms and beliefs. Modern information technology has not produced a standardized, culture-free environment, particularly in Europe, where cultural diversity persists across the European Union. The freedom of travel within its borders further enhances intercultural competence of young adults, allowing them to understand and appreciate cultural diversities. As an imminent result, Gen Z's cultural identities are not subsumed by national monocultural values, rather, they incorporate intercultural multicultural values depending on the context. (Scholz & Rennig, 2019).

Technological advancements have also transformed Gen Z's social interactions. Today's young adults rely heavily on modern technology to reshape their communication patterns, often preferring texting over face-to-face conversations and using smartphones for shared mutual entertainment. The exchange of ideas has shifted towards the exchange of visual content. Furthermore, Gen Z is strongly influenced by social media figures, who dictate trends in fashion, entertainment, and lifestyle, contributing to a homogenized cultural experience (Scholz & Rennig, 2019).

The tourism industry could leverage modern technology to digitize diverse cultural heritage content, making unique local social characteristics, customs, and traditions more accessible to younger generations who frequently engage with online platforms. This approach has the potential to spark interest in cultural heritage preservation and deepen awareness of distinctive aspects of the local area.

2.3.3 Environmental concerns of young adults

From a young age, Gen Z has become aware of the profound effects human activities have on the environment. Growing up surrounded by the realities of climate change, pollution, and pervasive presence of plastic waste, most of Gen Z has adopted willingness to make lifestyle changes in order to confront these critical issues. The heightened environmental consciousness is often attributed to their status as the first generation to come of age during a time when climate change emerged as an urgent and unavoidable concern. As a result, members of Gen Z often exhibit deep concern for environmental issues, positioning themselves as critical, passionate, and politically engaged advocates for climate action. The generation's activism is not only growing in visibility but also gaining considerable momentum, with the rise of figures such as Swedish teen Greta Thunberg exemplifying the spirit of Gen Z's environmental commitment. The teen activist effectively used social media to gain worldwide attention, leveraging digital platforms to challenge global leaders on climate policies and advocating for immediate action, thereby advancing environmental activism into the digital era (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024).

This generation's commitment to environmental integrity is further reflected in their expectations of corporate responsibility and accountability regarding sustainability. Gen Z holds companies to high standards and believes they should also be held accountable for their environmental impact. This generation expects businesses to prioritize sustainable practices and openly communicate about their commitment and efforts towards sustainability. Many within this generation are willing to support brands and businesses that reflect their values, such as preferring products that are sustainably produced or ethically sourced. This trend has created an increasing demand for sustainable products across various industries, notably in tourism, where Gen Z consumers are progressively seeking eco-friendly destinations and environmentally responsible activities. Businesses and destinations that emphasize sustainability and minimize environmental impact are anticipated to gain a competitive advantage in appealing to this new ever more eco-conscious market (Reif, 2023; Shaw, 2023).

Additionally, Gen Z exhibits a pronounced commitment to resource conservation, including water use. A study, involving hundred Gen Z participants implied that nearly 70% take action to reduce their water consumption. Specific behaviors about water consumption included washing clothes only when necessary, as indicated by about 75% of respondents, and an impressive 90% reported taking fewer than one bath per week as a means of water conservation (Makin, 2019).

In conclusion, Gen Z's socio-cultural, economic, and environmental concerns are a reflection of their unique historical and experiential context, which has deeply shaped their values and priorities. Their commitment to advancing social equity, promoting environmental sustainability, and supporting economic stability, combined with their technological savvy and entrepreneurial spirit, positions them as a transformative force within contemporary society. Addressing their concerns and leveraging their distinctive strengths will be essential to creating a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous future.

3 ŠALEK VALLEY

The national tourism organization in Slovenia, known as the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB), is responsible for the strategic planning and implementation of Slovenia's comprehensive tourism offerings. The STB's mandate includes systematic planning, promotion, and the further development of tourism activities, with a significant emphasis on digital and sustainable development. Among the Board's most crucial objectives is the positioning of Slovenia on the global tourism map as a safe, authentic boutique destination that is fully committed to sustainability and environmental responsibility. This commitment extends to ensuring that all individuals involved in or affected by tourism benefit from these efforts (STO, 2022).

In support of national tourism, the Slovenian Tourist Board has created four "macro destinations" based on geographical characteristics and similar tourism offerings or products (STO, 2022). One of these macro destinations, Thermal Pannonian Slovenia, includes the Savinjska region with its capital, Celje, which has a rich history (Bousfield & Stewart, 2012; STO, 2022).

The Šalek Valley is a part of the larger Savinjska region and it is also often referred to in geographical texts as the Velenje or Šoštanj basin. The Valley derives its name from the ruins of Šalek Castle, which stands on a low hilltop on the east side of the valley (Vrbič, 1996). The position of the Valley is geographically defined by the Kamniško-Savinjske Alps to the west, the Pohorje massif to the east, and the Posavje Hills to the south. The Šalek Valley encompasses the Municipality of Velenje in the southeast and the Municipality of Šoštanj in the northwest (Visit Šaleška, n.d.).

Historically, in the mid-1950s, the Šalek Valley and especially the city of Velenje underwent a significant transformation into a modern urban center due to rapidly increasing lignite excavation. The Šalek Valley is primarily known for its coal mining industry, despite its historical association with the moniker "The Valley of Castles" (Vrbič, 1996).

In recent years, the Šalek Valley has been slowly gaining on significance as a tourism destination (Visit Šaleška, n.d.). Table 1 clearly illustrates the number of tourist arrivals and the number of overnight stays between 2019 and 2023, as well as the percentage change in both metrics for the municipalities of Velenje and Šoštanj. (SORS, 2024).

Table 1: Tourist arrivals and overnight stays before and after the pandemic.

	Municipality of Velenje	Municipality of Šoštanj	Total
Tourist arrivals (2019)	12,372	34,292	46,664
Tourist arrivals (2023)	13,861	20,980	34,841
%Δ tourist arrivals	+12%	-38%	-25%
Overnight stays (2019)	28,557	115,244	143,801
Overnight stays (2023)	33,084	59,584	92,700
%Δ overnight stays	+16%	-48%	-36%

Source: adapted from SORS, 2024

The positive surplus in tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the municipality of Velenje between 2019 and 2023 supports the claim that tourism in the Valley has been gaining on significance. Contrastingly, the municipality of Šoštanj appears to have been severely affected by the pandemic, with a recorded 38% drop in tourist arrivals and nearly a 50% decrease in overnight stays during the same period (SORS, 2024). In Šoštanj, Terme Topolšica complex is by far the primary attraction, which has faced financial difficulties over the recent years, contrasting with other spa resorts in the region that have managed to secure funding. Consequently, the once-popular water park and its facilities are deteriorating, with no planned renovations in the foreseeable future, which surely effect the attractiveness of the destination and visitation (Visit Šaleška, n.d.; Intihar, 2023).

The strategic development of the Šalek Valley is crucial for its economic revival and sustainability. The region's rich historical heritage, combined with modern development initiatives, offers significant potential for tourism growth. The emphasis on sustainable practices and the responsible management of natural and historical resources will be key to ensuring the long-term viability of tourism in the Šalek Valley (Visit Šaleška, n.d.; STO, 2022).

3.1 From industry to tourism

Šalek Valley has long been recognized as a regional hub for industrial activities. Its strategic location made it an important route from Mislinja Valley to Savinjska Valley, Celje, and further towards Ljubljana (Vrbič, 1996). The valley's industrialization was significantly influenced by its geographical advantages, but it was the discovery of lignite that marked a major boost in its economic potential. The Velenje coal mine, with nearly 150 years of history and a unique patented excavation technique, underwent three major phases of excavation. Over the years, however, extensive underground activities caused irreversible damage, altering the landscape, displacing families and settlements, and leading to the creation of three lakes visible today (Zorko, 2007).

Lake Škale, formed from a small stream, is the oldest lake in the area and lies at the highest altitude. After World War II, it covered an area of 5 hectares, which has now more than tripled. Its size and shape are not expected to change in the future due to the cessation of lignite excavations in this area. Less than 100 meters away lies Lake Velenje, separated from Lake Škale by an embankment, which began forming post-World War II and continued to grow significantly until the late 1980s. Despite the fact that it is still expanding, the growth is slow, and no significant landscape changes are anticipated. Further away, the youngest of the three lakes, formed in the mid-1970s, is Lake Družmirje or Lake Šoštanj. Its size continues to grow due to ongoing lignite excavations, making it the deepest lake in the country, with the deepest point almost 90 meters below the surface (Janežič, 2010; Korelc, 2024).

Coal mining has been the most influential human activity in Šalek Valley, but the region also has a significant history in metal processing. The establishment of the Gorenje factory in 1950 marked the beginning of manufacturing agricultural machinery and various building materials. Over time, Gorenje diversified, becoming the largest manufacturer of kitchen appliances in former Yugoslavia and even exporting abroad (Zorko, 2007). In 2018, the company was acquired by the Chinese giant Hisense, which, despite some challenges, retained the Gorenje name and transformed the Šalek Valley into a research, development, and manufacturing center for Hisense Group in Europe (RTV SLO, 2018). However, the relocation of the administrative department to the capital could negatively impact the emigration rate of younger, higher-skilled workers (Bole & Nared, 2023).

The transition from secondary to tertiary economic activities is supported by more tertiary education options, addressing local economic needs and preparing young applicants for future opportunities (Mestna občina Velenje, 2016). Nevertheless, large corporations and their subsidiaries still employ the majority of the population in Velenje. Approximately 75% of all revenue generated by major corporations in industry, coal mining, and energy sectors, which is significantly higher than the national average, but with the imminent coalmining halt, the region will inevitably undergo major changes (Kotnik & Šterbenk, 2019). Despite these changes, concerns remain about creating an attractive environment for young adults, many of whom leave the region for education and do not return due to a lack of suitable positions. The imminent closure of the Velenje coal mine presents an opportunity to restructure the economic environment, potentially generating new opportunities that could attract skilled young adults back to the region as well as attract new generations of immigrants (Pipan, 2020).

A clean and safe natural environment is crucial for attracting tourists and supporting tourism-related activities. Historically, the Thermoelectric Power Plant Šoštanj was the region's largest pollutant. However, recent decades have seen ground traffic surpass the power plant as the biggest air pollutant, thanks to various upgrades at the power plant and an increasing number of ground vehicles. Until 1983, the byproducts of burned lignite were dumped directly into Lake Velenje, resulting in a biologically dead lake and polluted underground waters. It was not until 1990 that responsible disposal methods were introduced, leading to the recovery of Lake Velenje (Zovko, 2007). Since 2002, annual environmental reports have not shown exceeded values of parameters that determine degraded areas, marking the beginning of potential tourism activities in and around the lake (Kotnik & Šterbenk, 2019).

3.2 The Šalek Valley tourism overview

In the Šalek Valley, according to their target audience, there have been developing three distinctive branches of tourism. One of them is family tourism, which has long been an integral aspect of the Šalek Valley, attributed largely to its socialist characteristics. It uses green spaces, numerous playgrounds, and thematic trails designed for children to support playful activities that help develop creativity (Visit Šaleška, n.d.). Each September, the entire city of Velenje transforms into a large playground for children during the Pika's Festival, which lasts for a whole week. This festival of carefree creativity has become a symbol of playfulness and happiness in Velenje, blending creativity, competitiveness, environmental awareness, and diversity. The festival's goal is to teach children valuable life lessons and promote tolerant coexistence with nature through play and fun activities (Pikin Festival, n.d.). Therefore, with carefully structured family tourism activities, the Šalek Valley is poised to become a leading family tourism destination in Slovenia, with the potential to be the best in the country (Mestna občina Velenje, 2021).

Second branch of tourism is active tourism which offer numerous options for walking, cycling, water activities, and more to physically active individuals. The valley and its surrounding greenery are particularly well-suited for cyclists, boasting a plethora of cycling trails that provide scenic views of rolling hills, forests, lakes, and rivers. Hiking enthusiasts can discover peaks, lakes, gorges, and other natural wonders, or undertake thematic hiking trails that reveal the region's cultural and natural heritage. Around the lakes, visitors can engage in sport activities such as watersports, running, tennis, or horse riding. Even for adrenaline seekers, the Šalek Valley offers several thrilling activities. It is home to Slovenia's most demanding climbing route, a 70-meter ascent on wired ropes. Adventurous visitors can explore a cave carved by the Paka River, accessible only with experienced guides. The cave exploration involves some challenging sections that require crawling to navigate various obstacles, leading to hidden galleries adorned with stalactites and stalagmites (Visit Šaleška, n.d.).

Third branch of tourism worth mentioning in the Šalek Valley is festival tourism. The Šalek Valley is renowned for hosting a multitude of cultural events that cater to a diverse range of visitors. These events include the Festival of Young Cultures Kunigunda, various exhibitions, lectures, educational workshops, cinema shows, ethnological events, individual concerts, and more (Visit Šaleška, n.d.). In 2023, the Šalek Valley hosted MetalDays, one of Europe's largest heavy metal music festivals, for the first time since its relocation from Tolmin, proving itself as a worthy destination (Mestna občina Velenje, 2023-a). The Šalek Valley, given its strategic location and various venues, including the new Park Vista venue on Lake Velenje, holds significant potential for the development of festival tourism. The region's cultural heritage, combined with its modern venues and strategic initiatives, positions it well to become a hub for diverse and vibrant festivals. By

focusing on creating unique, authentic, and regionally themed events, the Šalek Valley can attract a broader audience, boost local economic growth, and enhance its reputation as a premier festival destination (Center poslovne odličnosti, 2022; Visit Šaleška, n.d.).

The Šalek Valley's potential for tourism is big. The region's natural and socio-cultural heritage, combined with its modern venues and strategic initiatives, positions it well to become a desirable tourism destination (Visit Šaleška, n.d.). To address the struggles of the younger generation, efforts are also being made to increase affordable housing options especially for young adults and young families, doubling financial contributions for newborns, and reducing communal fee contributions (Mestna občina Velenje, n.d.-a). Further commitments are also being made to attract young adults after finishing studies by providing unprofitable housing and making the process of securing municipal housing easier. Young adults will even get the opportunity to purchase these housing units from the municipality after residing there for five years (Naš čas, n.d.). Additionally, initiatives were put in place to inform younger members of the Generation Z about education and training opportunities aligned with the evolving job market due to ongoing economic restructuring of the Šalek Valley (Mestna občina Velenje, n.d.-a).

4 RESEARCH CONSTRUCT

The sustainable tourism development paradigm often does not prioritize the quality-of-life approach for local communities. Instead, it tends to emphasize visitor satisfaction rights and places the needs of tourists above those of residents. Sustainable tourism practices aim to manage the effect of negative impacts to an acceptable level for all stakeholders involved, rather than eliminating them entirely (Mihalič, 2021). This issue forms the basis of this thesis, as it is crucial to understand how tourism development influences the region and impacts the satisfaction of young adults who are deciding where to settle down.

The research will be based on the posed research questions that are focused, researchable, feasible, specific, complex enough and relevant. Research projects such as this thesis usually demand multiple research questions, but all are focused around a central research problem (McCombes, 2022). Focus is the perceived satisfaction of young adult residents with tourism development and the factor analysis will serve as a first step in this research to uncover the factors that influence the satisfaction of young adult residents regarding tourism development in Šalek Valley.

A happy and satisfied resident is someone who is more likely to stay and is also more likely to spread the word about the happy lifestyle the local community is providing (Bilgrami et al., 2023). Therefore, if young adults residing in the region report satisfaction

with tourism development, there should be a greater likelihood that they will choose to stay and contribute to the local community. Tourism that addresses their needs and provides opportunities for happiness and satisfaction increases the chances that they will give back to the community. The challenges faced by young adults, particularly those of Generation Z, have been thoroughly examined, and it is hoped that tourism development can at least address some economic, socio-cultural, and environmental challenges local young adults as members of the Gen Z cohort face.

The foundation of this research concept represent the statements selected to collect sentiment and opinions on various topics regarding tourism development, which should reflect some larger concepts and hopefully indicate satisfaction. Although similar studies on resident satisfaction with tourism development exist, this research specifically focuses on young adults in the Šalek Valley region, where such research has not been conducted before. To prepare the region for the future, the study includes only younger residents, who have recently come of age, providing their unique perspectives on the current situation. The first research question that must be addressed is:

- 1) Which factors form and influence the perceptions of young adult residents regarding satisfaction with tourism development in Šalek Valey?

Answering the first research question will lead towards the second research question, which is the cornerstone of this thesis:

- 2) Are young adult residents expressing satisfaction with tourism development in the Šalek Valley?

Even though sustainable tourism paradigm sometimes prioritizes visitor satisfaction over the satisfaction and quality of life of local communities, indirectly favoring tourists over residents, it is the most broadly recognized paradigm that considers interests of all stakeholders involved (Mihalič, 2021). As discussed in the literature review, sustainable tourism paradigm consists of three sustainability pillars, which can have both positive and negative effects.

Economic impacts of tourism affect local communities through foreign exchange income, which fuels investments and economic growth, the collection of taxes and levies, job creation, infrastructure development, increases in real estate and public goods value (Mihalič, 2021), and the multiplier effect (Mihalič, 2006). Negative economic impacts include inflation effects, which reduce the purchasing power of locals, the prevalence of seasonal and low-paying jobs, tourism leakage, where only a small portion of tourism expenditure remains local; overinvestment in tourism infrastructure at the expense of residential needs, and reliance on tourism activity (Mihalič, 2021). To assess the

perceived satisfaction with economic impacts effect, this study examines statements regarding economic links and development, opportunity creation, job creation, infrastructure development, cost of living, and the impact of festivals and events. Respondents' answers to statements regarding economic aspects, based on relevant literature, will provide insights into young adults' perceived satisfaction with the effect of economic impacts.

Socio-cultural impacts of tourism influence local communities by preserving and nurturing cultural authenticity (Mihalič, 2021), maintaining traditional knowledge (Raspor & Macuh, 2021), and fostering mutual cultural understanding and peace (Mihalič, 2021). Negative socio-cultural impacts include the commodification and loss of authenticity of cultural products, standardization of tourism supply, cultural clashes, envy of tourists' lavish lifestyles leading to crime, and dissatisfaction with traditional ways of life (Mihalič, 2021). This part of the study will investigate the effect of socio-cultural impacts on perceived satisfaction through statements on local culture promotion and preservation, cultural awareness, standardization, social changes, tolerance towards festival visitors, and acceptance of different cultures. Various statements based on relevant literature will highlight young adults' perceived satisfaction with socio-cultural impacts effect of tourism development.

Environmental impacts of tourism affect local communities by increasing environmental awareness, promoting protection and preservation efforts, revitalizing and improving the natural environment, and providing incentives to support biodiversity. Negative environmental impacts include water and air pollution, visual pollution from tourism infrastructure, littering and waste production, sewage water pollution, and damage to flora and fauna (Mihalič, 2021). This study assesses perceived satisfaction with environmental impacts through statements on environmental conservation and preservation efforts, the impact of tourism development on the environment, revitalization of degraded areas, tourism infrastructure interference, green spaces and recreation possibilities, natural capacity, and the impact of festivals and events.

The last research question stems from the second research question and investigates tourism sustainability pillars significance. As young adult respondents assess importance and significance differently, the final result can uncover and determine the most important pillar or factor. This can uncover regional strong points and weak points.

- 3) According to young adult residents, which factor has the greatest influence on the reported satisfaction with regional tourism development?

Therefore, the main goals of this research are to determine factors that influence satisfaction perception of young adults with tourism development, to uncover the most influential, and to gain insights into satisfaction with tourism development of young adults residing in the Šalek Valley. Since sustainable tourism development should consider the needs of local communities and tourists, it is essential to investigate the three key impacts of tourism development and regional specifics to determine if young adults are satisfied with regional efforts. Moreover, region-specific impacts effect be incorporated into the questionnaire and will thereby enrich this research with a more regional context. Satisfaction will be therefore evaluated in a general context, acknowledging that it is quite possible that dissatisfaction could also be concluded. Additionally, it is acknowledged that dissatisfaction with at least one of the impacts pillars could occur, resulting in inconclusive or skewed overall satisfaction with tourism development.

5 METHODOLOGY

With sustainability becoming a major influence on the tourism industry, there has been a growing interest among academic researchers in investigating residents' attitudes towards tourism development in recent years. This specific yet integral part of the tourism industry holds significant importance because it directly affects the success and sustainability of tourism development initiatives within local communities. A predominant portion of academic research on this topic has been characterized by a preference for quantitative methodology within the context of the positivist research paradigm (Mavrič, 2023).

This chapter of the master thesis presents a systematic explanation of the approach, and techniques used to gather and analyze data. It begins with a discussion of the research paradigm, followed by an explanation of the research approach, providing a structured framework for the analysis that follows in the subsequent chapter.

5.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm determines the manner of conducting research, providing a foundational guide in all areas of the research plan, from the aim of the study and research questions to the instruments used and the method of analysis. Most research paradigms are based either on positivism or interpretivism, guiding the theories and methodologies employed. Quantitative studies are generally led by positivist research paradigms, whereas interpretivist paradigms are linked with qualitative studies. A research paradigm framework is constructed on three pillars: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology studies the nature of reality within a certain research context and can propose a single reality, multiple realities, or no reality. Epistemology is related to ontology in that it provides answers to how this reality can be known. Lastly, methodology studies the

process of investigating the environment and provides validation of the knowledge gained (Ulz, 2023).

Studies on the attitudes towards tourism from the residents' perspective have most often been conducted under the positivist research paradigm (Mavrič, 2023). It assumes the existence of only one tangible reality, which defines the ontology of the research as recognizing a single possible reality that can be identified, measured, and understood. Positivist researchers aim to develop knowledge objectively without the influence of values on its development. Such precautions ensure that accurate, real, and certain knowledge can be developed. In terms of methodology, the positivist paradigm emphasizes variable control and manipulation within the research. Often, the primary goal is to identify and analyze causal relationships between variables, similar to practices in the natural sciences (Park et al., 2020).

However, positivism, especially in the field of human sciences, has faced scrutiny for its insistence on methodology and its disregard for other methods in the search for knowledge. Human sciences differ from natural sciences mainly because humans are emotional and passionate beings, including researchers themselves. Hence, the objective knowledge and generalizable laws that positivism aims for are often unattainable, as fully objective knowledge about humans is not feasible. This implies that conclusions are ever-changing, which spurs further discussion and study since humans are constantly growing and evolving (Jaja et al., 2022). The criticism of the positivist paradigm leads to the implementation of the post-positivist paradigm (Mavrič, 2023).

The post-positivist paradigm advises researchers to strive for detachment and objectivity but acknowledges that absolute objective reality is unreachable due to flawed human intellectual mechanisms (Murphy, 2021a). This aligns with the ontology of the positivist research paradigm and the existence of a singular reality (Park et al., 2020). However, satisfaction falls within the realm of positive psychology (Seligman, 2003), and psychology is a branch of human sciences (Giorgi, 2000). According to Jaja et al. (2022), human sciences cannot meet the epistemological requirement of the positivist research paradigm to obtain knowledge objectively. This modified objectivism and the inability to achieve total researcher impartiality are characteristic of the epistemology of the post-positivist research paradigm. Quantitative research typically reduces researcher bias, and since the survey was self-administered and distributed via social media, respondents were not influenced by the researcher (Mavrič, 2023).

In this research, the post-positivist paradigm was adopted to investigate the attitudes and satisfaction of young adults in the Šalek Valley regarding tourism development. The study's ontology recognizes a single, yet imperfectly knowable reality. Epistemology

acknowledges the potential for bias but strives for objectivity through methodological rigor. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how tourism impacts the local community, especially from the perspective of young adults who are critical to the future development of the region.

5.2 Research approach

In the field of research, there are various methodologies to examine and address research problems. Selecting the appropriate methodology is critical, as it directly impacts the validity and reliability of the study's findings. For this master thesis, the chosen post-positivist research paradigm suggests that a quantitative approach is the most suitable for addressing the research problem. This approach aligns with the paradigm's emphasis on objectivity and measurable outcomes.

5.2.1 Sample

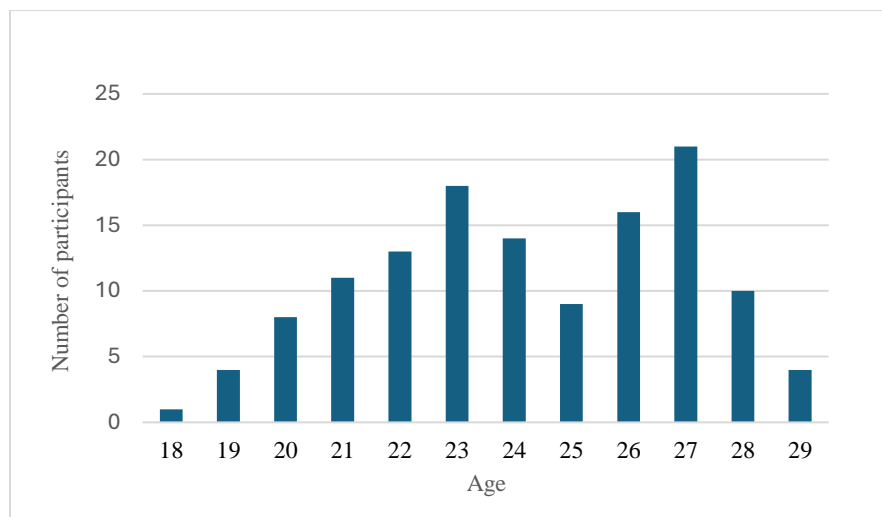
The cornerstone of this research is the young adults residing in the Šalek Valley, specifically those aged between 18 and 29 years. This demographic is critical as it represents the next generation of residents who will shape the future of the region. Besides the age requirement, the additional criterion for the target population is residency in the Šalek Valley, particularly in the municipalities of Velenje and Šoštanj.

Sampling is a crucial component of research, allowing researchers to draw inferences about a larger population by studying a smaller, representative subset. Sampling methods are divided into two major categories, probability and non-probability sampling. (Tuovila, 2024). The latter was chosen for this study, within which several methods are available, including convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling was selected for this research due to its practicality and the ease of accessing participants who meet the criteria. This method involves selecting participants who are readily accessible to the researcher. Although convenience sampling can introduce biases, it is suitable for exploratory studies that aim to gather preliminary insights (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

Thus, convenience sampling allows the researcher to select participants who are easily accessible and to access those participants who meet certain criteria. Possible participants who were eligible for this study are those who reside in the Šalek Valley and are between 18 and 29 years old. Almost 190 eligible candidates were reached via various social media channels, of which 140 have evaluated the majority of the statements from the questionnaire. Further 11 participants had to be excluded from the research due to faulty or incomplete input. Therefore, opinions of 129 participants have been evaluated for the

purposes of this thesis, of which 89 are not students and are employed or are active seekers of employment. Furthermore, around 62% of the sample are male and just under 38% of the sample are female. The age requirement of the respondents included in the analysis was satisfied and the age distribution of the respondents is presented in **Napaka! Vira s klicevanja ni bilo mogoče najti..**

Figure 1: Respondents' age distribution.



Source: own work

To mitigate potential biases, the research process was carefully structured. The recruitment process was described in detail, efforts were made to diversify data collection, and a large number of respondents were included to enhance the representativeness of the sample. The majority of respondents were at least casually known to the researcher, which facilitated the recruitment process. Social media platforms were used to reach out to potential participants, as Generation Z is most comfortable and active online. This approach allowed respondents to complete the survey at their own pace, further reducing potential bias (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

5.2.2 Questionnaire design

A questionnaire was designed to collect data from respondents, comprising a list of prepared questions or statements to gather quantitative and qualitative information about their attitudes, experiences, and opinions. It is important to note that a questionnaire is a specific data collection instrument, while a survey encompasses the entire research method, including data collection and analysis. Therefore, designing an effective questionnaire is a critical component of survey research (Bhandari, 2021).

Questionnaires can include open-ended or close-ended questions, or a combination of both. Open-ended questions provide respondents with the flexibility to express their

thoughts in detail but require more time and effort to analyze. In contrast, close-ended questions offer predefined choices, making data collection and analysis more straightforward. Given that Generation Z is known for their shorter attention spans, a close-ended questionnaire with concise questions was deemed more appropriate (Mahmutović, 2022).

Based on the method of administration, questionnaires are divided into self-administered and researcher-administered types. Self-administered questionnaires can be distributed in print or online, allowing respondents to complete them at their convenience. Researcher-administered questionnaires, essentially interviews, require the presence of the researcher and can be conducted in person, over the phone, or online. For this study, a self-administered questionnaire was chosen and distributed online, as this method is cost-effective, easy to administer, and ensures respondent anonymity, which is crucial for sensitive topics (Bhandari, 2021).

The questionnaire design process emphasized the use of clear and precise language to ensure that all respondents understood the questions in the same way. Questions were framed to avoid double negatives, jargon, and overly complex language. This approach is particularly important for Generation Z, which is highly diverse and can be easily offended by insensitive language. Additionally, the questionnaire included both positively and negatively framed questions to reduce bias and ensure balanced responses (Mahmutović, 2022).

The questionnaire was designed to be mobile-friendly, recognizing that Generation Z spends a significant amount of time on their phones. This design choice was intended to boost response rates and ensure that respondents could complete the questionnaire easily. The statements were evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, providing categorical variables for quantitative analysis. The introduction to the questionnaire explained its purpose and assured respondents of their anonymity, addressing Generation Z's concerns about data privacy (Mahmutović, 2022).

Questionnaire for this master thesis was designed based on the relevant literature and two previous researches that are very similar to this one but have investigated a different area and a different age group (Center poslovnosti, 2022; Farčnik, n.d.; Mavrič, 2023; Mihalič 2006, 2021; Visit Šaleška, n.d.). Its main objective is to collect insights into respondents' attitudes and opinions regarding regional tourism development and was distributed in the Slovene language and then later translated. The statements collecting those insights were close-ended, kept as short as possible and evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, which resulted in the provision of categorical variables. The questionnaire was self-administered and delivered to the respondents online, more specifically over

social media. The introduction to the questionnaire was also written to explain its purpose while guaranteeing the anonymity of answers. The statements themselves were written as clearly as possible and were kept as short as possible. All statements were framed positively, organized logically and were not randomized. Multiple statements were intentionally put in a progressive manner as they were a part of a larger construct of interest. The questionnaire was intentionally designed in a way that suits Generation Z characteristics while simultaneously consuming the least amount of time and resources of the researcher.

5.2.3 Data collection

Online surveys are highly advantageous for collecting data due to their quicker completion times, broad accessibility, and interactive design features. However, to maximize their effectiveness, it is crucial to ensure that questions are clearly formulated and relatively simple to facilitate self-completion. The primary advantages of online surveys include real-time verification of answer consistency and data entry correctness. Despite these benefits, online surveys also have limitations, such as reliance on internet speed, computer literacy, and access to digital devices (Bregar, Ograjenšek, & Bavdaž, 2005). The questionnaire for this study was meticulously designed with guidance from my mentor and relevant literature, and later executed using the online survey platform 1KA. The data collected was then prepared in Microsoft Excel for subsequent statistical analysis using R Studio.

The decision to use an online questionnaire was based on the fact that young adults, who are digital natives, have grown up with smartphones and constant connectivity. Conversely, the fast-paced environment in which they live negatively impacts their attention spans. To address this challenge, online surveys offer an effective solution by leveraging familiar digital platforms. Moreover, young adults tend to prefer engaging and relevant questions. Authentic surveys and user-friendly questionnaires that can be easily completed on mobile devices help maximize participation rates (Mahmutović, 2022; ReconMR, 2023).

The questionnaire aimed to gather broad information as well as answers to specific questions regarding regional tourism development. It included questions on the influence of the three pillars of tourism impact—economic, socio-cultural, and environmental—and personal satisfaction in these areas. Additionally, the survey addressed questions related to regional specifics, quality of life, inclusion, direction of development, representing region-specific impacts effect. This comprehensive approach was designed to provide a thorough insight into the satisfaction of young adults with regional tourism development.

Data for this thesis was collected via an online questionnaire administered between June 11th and June 19th. The survey consisted of 34 statements divided into five categories, and the first 32 statements were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, while the last two required respondents to select one option each, not rated on the Likert scale. Those statements should provide enough insight to answer all three research questions. It must be mentioned that the questionnaire also included some additional questions to gain insight into the demographic of the sample, which included questions regarding age, gender and student status of a respondent to determine the employment status of each respondent. Those questions, however, are not directly relevant to the following master thesis satisfaction analysis.

5.2.4 Data analysis process

For this thesis, a 7-point Likert scale was employed, allowing respondents to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements, thus providing a more nuanced measure of opinion than simple yes-or-no questions. The Likert scale assumes the linearity of attitudes or agreements with a statement and posits that these are measurable (McLeod, 2023). Likert scales are widely regarded as one of the best tools for opinion research and are frequently used in marketing research and satisfaction studies. While they are primarily used to numerically evaluate qualitative data, assigning quantitative values to responses, there is general consensus that Likert scales produce ordinal data due to the inability to precisely measure the distance between adjacent response options (Mahmutović, 2020).

Given that Likert scales provide ordinal data, non-parametric tests such as Spearman's rho for correlations, and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank or Mann-Whitney tests are appropriate for data analysis (Lakusta, 2021). The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test compares two dependent samples or one sample against a specified value (McClenaghan, 2022), while the Mann-Whitney U test, or Wilcoxon Rank Sum test, assesses whether two independent samples come from the same population (McClenaghan, 2022). Although some reports suggest that Likert scale data can approximate interval data to some extent, it is generally agreed that mean and standard deviation calculations from such data are only appropriate if internal consistency exists and the responses are normally distributed (Kostoulas, 2013).

Internal consistency of a set of survey items was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicates the extent to which a collection of items measures the same characteristic consistently. This coefficient is widely used to assess the reliability of survey designs and instruments, providing a numerical indication of reliability on a scale from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate greater agreement or consistency among the items (Frost, n.d.a). The academic rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 indicates

acceptable reliability, whereas an alpha below 0.5 suggests unreliable measurement (Newman, 2024). However, it should be noted that Cronbach's alpha only measures internal consistency and does not confirm whether the items measure the intended concept (Frost, n.d.a). In some instances, Cronbach's alpha may be observed to be relatively low, typically below 0.6, which suggests either an insufficient number of items or a lack of interrelatedness among the items (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). When there is poor correlation between items, it becomes imperative to revise or even discard certain items to enhance the internal consistency of the selected set. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) emphasize that identifying and rectifying these problematic items is crucial for maintaining the reliability of the measurement tool. To determine which specific items are adversely affecting the internal consistency, conducting a factor analysis is recommended (Murphy, 2021b). It serves as a valuable technique for pinpointing items that do not align well with the underlying constructs, thereby enabling researchers to make informed decisions about item retention and deletion to improve the overall coherence of the set (Murphy, 2021b).

The primary objective of factor analysis is to explain a substantial portion of the variance within a data set using a significantly reduced number of factors. This is achieved despite the theoretical possibility of having an equal number of factors and variables. First, the collected data must undergo some initial statistical tests to determine if a chosen dataset is even suited for conducting the factor analysis on. After determining the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and conducting the Bartlett's test of sphericity, the actual process of conducting the factor analysis can commence (Murphy, 2021b; Nijs, 2019). It begins with the determination of the number of factors to be extracted from the data set. This can be accomplished through various methods, but the most commonly employed techniques include the Kaiser rule and the scree plot. Once the number of factors has been established, the next step involves the rotation of these factors to achieve a clearer association between the selected variables and each individual factor. Ideally, these factors should be uncorrelated and thus independent. However, in many practical scenarios, this independence is unrealistic. Consequently, some analysts recommend beginning with the assumption that factors are interdependent. This is because different rotation methods are appropriate for independent (orthogonal) and dependent (oblique) factors. Orthogonal rotation methods are used when factors are assumed to be independent, whereas oblique rotation methods are employed when factors are assumed to be correlated. The evaluation of the results following the selection of the appropriate rotation method includes assessing the factor loadings. These loadings, which range between -1 and 1, indicate the degree to which variables load onto the factors. Loadings closer to 0 denote a poor association, while negative factor loadings suggest that a variable is inversely worded. Consequently, an absolute value of a negative factor loading should be incorporated into the model, or the variable should be reverse-coded. Finally, variables with factor loadings lower than an absolute value of 0.4 ($|\text{factor loading}| < 0.4$) should be

eliminated from the model (Murphy, 2021b). Simultaneously, it is recommended that each factor should ideally comprise at least three variables with high factor loadings to ensure the robustness of the factor structure (Rahn, n.d.). Following the redefinition of factors, it is crucial to check for the normal distribution of these newly defined factors. This step is necessary to determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests should be applied to the new factors, thus ensuring the appropriate statistical tests are employed for subsequent analyses.

Normal distribution, or Gaussian distribution, is a fundamental concept in statistics where data distribution is symmetric around the mean. Parametric tests, which are based on the assumption of normal distribution, cannot be used if the data deviates significantly from normality. Several methods, such as skewness and kurtosis analysis, are used to test for normality, as well as the Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Mishra et al., 2019). Skewness assesses the asymmetry of a probability distribution, while kurtosis quantifies its shape. Skewness quantifies the extent to which the data shifts to either side of a distribution, which helps in understanding the shape and outliers in a dataset. A positive skewness indicates a longer tail on the right side of a distribution and negative skewness indicates a longer left side tail. The rule of thumb is for skewness values between -0,5 and 0,5, the data exhibit approximate symmetry. Additionally, skewness values less than -1 or greater than 1 are considered highly skewed. Often complementary statistical measure to skewness is kurtosis, which compares peakedness and tails of a probability distribution to those of a normal distribution. It provides information about deviation, and it helps uncover the characteristics and outliers of a certain dataset. Hence, a positive kurtosis suggests heavier tails and a more peaked distribution, while negative kurtosis signals lighter tails and a flatter distribution. Additionally, positive, negative or near zero excess kurtosis dictates whether a dataset follows a Leptokurtic, Platykurtic or Mesokurtic distribution respectively (Gawali, 2024). Both skewness and kurtosis analysis conducted for the purposes of this thesis indicate a relatively low deviance from the normal distribution, which is the reason for selecting the one-sided t test for further analysis of the comprised factors. Results of the analysis conducted by Garren and Osborne (2021) also confirm this claim. Authors investigated the robustness of t-test based on skewness and kurtosis for several distributions and concluded that researchers may be able to relax the requirements typically required for using the test.

The one sample t-test is used to determine whether an unknown population mean differs from a specific value. The skewness and kurtosis analysis confirmed that the dataset can be treated as a normal distribution, which allows the use of parametric tests instead of non-parametric tests such as the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. Additional requirement for conducting a t-test is having one variable, where the mean of the population must have an empirical value. The statistical threshold for rejecting null hypotheses is a p-statistic value of less than 0,05, which is the most commonly accepted significance level (Frost,

n.d.b). The one-sided t-test will be used for the purposes of answering the research question regarding satisfaction with tourism development. Since the 7-point Likert scale has a neutral point, the empirical mean will be set to 5.5 as this number represents the definitely positive sentiment tipping point. This idea stems from keeping the upper 25% of the scale which increases the model' robustness and presents only important items to the respondents (Kuščer, 2012).

6 ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a comprehensive descriptive analysis of the research questions posed by this master thesis. The chapter titles align and systematically follow research questions presented in the previous chapter. The analysis begins with the formation of factors, i.e. factor determination chapter, which should provide an answer to the first research question. Following chapters will provide a detailed analysis of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts effects on satisfaction and the region-specific impacts effect on satisfaction which adds the regional flair to the analysis. Such investigation of young adult residents' perception of various areas of tourism development should provide enough information to answer the second research question. The final section presents the observation of young adults regarding the most impactful aspect of tourism development on their satisfaction and provides an answer to the final research question. It is important to note that due to the selected research approach, which includes convenience sampling, the findings may lack generalizability. Nevertheless, these findings provide valuable insights into the satisfaction of young adults residing in the Šalek Valley with the development of regional tourism.

6.1 Factor determination

The factor analysis main objective is to reduce dataset dimensionality while preserving as much information as possible. Dimensionality reduction is possible by identifying and leveraging the structure within the correlation matrix of the variables included in the analysis. The aim is to associate the original variables or items with underlying factors and provide a descriptive label for each. When conducting the factor analysis, it must be determined whether the data satisfies the requirements of the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity statistic. The KMO value is 0,7544 indicating a good suitability of the dataset, as it exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0,5. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a p-value significantly below the required 0,05 threshold. These results collectively indicate that the dataset is well-suited for conducting a factor analysis (Nijs, 2019). With both KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity statistic indicating that the dataset is well-suited for factor analysis, an answer to the first research question will be provided.

The factor analysis has been conducted on all statements from the questionnaire evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale. The objective was to determine whether the statements from the questionnaire form the factors that reflect the theoretical framework. The factor analysis shows that factors have formed according to the theoretical framework and the full statistical report can be viewed in the Appendix 8: Gradual factor loadings and alpha values. First factor represents economic impacts effect, the second represents socio-cultural impacts effect, the third represents environmental impacts effect, and the final, fourth factor represents region-specific impacts effect on satisfaction but does not hold any additional empirical value to the research by itself. This factor formation provides a definitive answer to the first research question even though some minor discrepancies do occur, as factor loadings of some statements do not meet the minimal factor loading requirement. For the purposes of providing an answer to the second research question regarding satisfaction with tourism development, all statements and more specifically their determining factors or their composed scores will be looked into. Statements with insufficient factor loading value will be eliminated from further analysis and those with possibly negative loadings will be inversely coded in order to refine the answers of respondents. The following chapters will also present Cronbach's alpha values for each factor as well as refined results according to requirements determined by theoretical framework and the conducted factor analysis, while simultaneously providing an answer to the second posed research question.

6.2 Economic impacts effect on satisfaction

Tourism plays a significant role in regional development by creating jobs and increasing budget revenues through taxes. However, it also presents challenges such as seasonal employment, low wages, and income outflows to foreign-owned businesses. Additionally, tourism can distort the labor market, inflate land values, and increase housing prices, making goods and services unaffordable for locals (Raspor & Macuh, 2022).

To investigate the economic impacts effect on perceived satisfaction among young adults residing in the Šalek Valley, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements. These statements were derived from various relevant literature sources and validated through factor analysis, ensuring that they do indeed effectively measure the effect of economic impacts. Shown in Table 2, these eight statements that are possibly influencing perceived satisfaction required subjective responses about tourism's link with the local economy, mutual development, opportunity creation, job creation, infrastructure development, cost of living, festivals regarding job creation and business opportunities, and the financial attainability of festivals and events for young adults residing in the region. Additionally, bar charts for each statement can be viewed in the Appendix 4: Economic impacts effect bar charts..

Table 2: Statements about economic impacts effect from the questionnaire.

Statement		mean	std
S1	Tourism in Šalek Valley is well incorporated into the local economy.	4,32	1,55
S2	The local economy is developing side-by-side with tourism.	4,38	1,43
S3	Regional tourism development brings more business opportunities.	4,63	1,50
S4	Tourism in the region creates additional employment opportunities for young adults.	4,42	1,57
S5	Tourism in the region has and will contribute towards infrastructure improvements.	4,47	1,54
S6	Tourism development excessively increases my living expenses.	3,94	1,34
S7	Festivals and other events are a good source of additional revenue for young adults.	4,65	1,55
S8	I am able to attend festivals and events on Lake Velenje, because they are financially accessible to me.	4,36	1,52

Source: own work

Cronbach's alpha for the eight statements indicated a good internal consistency of this set of economic impacts effect (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.837$). None of the loadings within this group were negative, indicating that none of the statements necessitated reverse coding. Figure 2 represents the initial factor loadings for statements about economic impacts effect of tourism.

Figure 2: Factor loadings for economic impacts effect factor.

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.857			
## S2	0.919			
## S3	0.844			
## S4	0.514			
## S5	0.781			
## S6				0.106
## S7	0.647		0.141	-0.184
## S8	0.579	0.162	-0.310	0.131

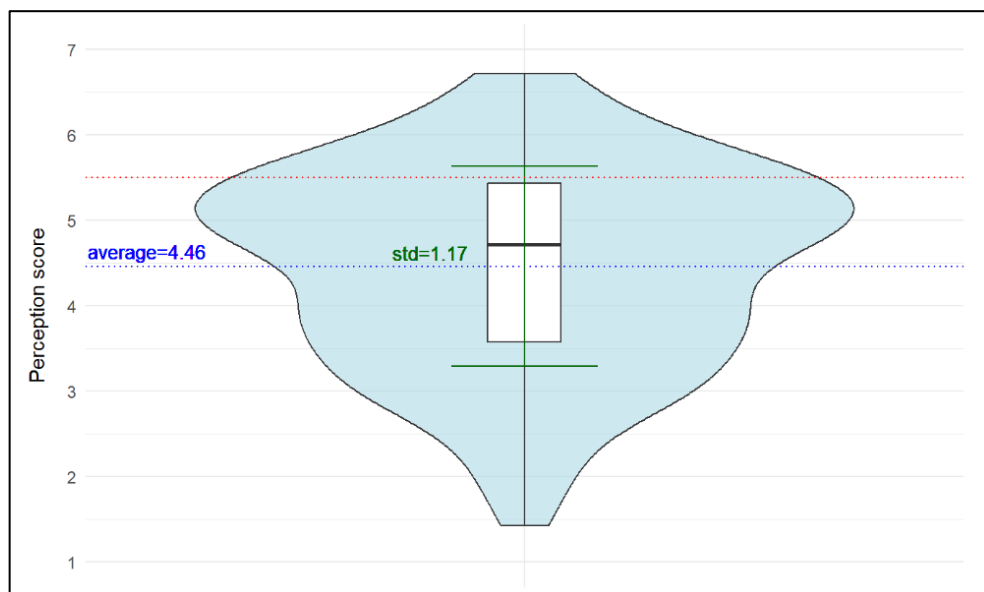
Source: own work

The initial factor analysis revealed that one statement, S6, did not measure the economic impacts effect factor and was not inversely written. This statement pertained to the rise of individual living expenses due to tourism development. Therefore, just one statement was excluded from further analysis within this construct and Cronbach's alpha increased

slightly which can be seen in the Appendix 8: Gradual factor loadings and alpha values, more specifically in the subsection Economic impacts effect factor. An improved internal consistency after the elimination of statement number six allowed the creation of the final factor labeled economic impacts effect. This newly formed factor serves as an indicator for the economic impacts effect of tourism on young adult residents. It will also serve as an indicator of their perceived satisfaction in regard to economic impacts effect of tourism development. To determine if this newly formed factor follows a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis analysis were conducted. Both allowed the assumption of normality, and the statistical values of both statistical tests can be viewed in the Appendix 9: Skewness and kurtosis analysis. Henceforth, the one sided t-test was conducted and the calculated average score of the created economic impacts effect factor was compared against the hypothetical mean of 5,5 as this threshold represents the tipping point into definite agreeance. The observed mean is notably lower than a hypothetical threshold, suggesting that the respondents' perception of economic benefits is generally less favorable than anticipated. Therefore, the analysis conducted for this factor does not indicate satisfaction of respondents while the t-test statistics can be viewed in the Economic impacts effect factor t-test section of the Appendix 10: One sided t-test statistics. With the conducted t-test, it is concluded that young adult respondents are not expressing definitive satisfaction with the economic impacts effect brought by the tourism development in the Šalek Valley which, however, does not indicate dissatisfaction.

The graphical presentation of the economic impacts effect on perceived satisfaction can be viewed in Figure 3. This violin plot illustrates the distribution of perception scores for the economic impacts effect factor, and it shows a relatively symmetric distribution of scores around the mean, with most responses falling between 3 and 6.

Figure 3: Perception of economic impacts' effect on satisfaction.



Source: own work.

Despite not providing any proof about the respondents definitely perceiving satisfaction, the results indicate that at least the economic impacts effect factor of tourism does not have a negative influence on young adults' satisfaction with tourism development within the sampled population. The economic impacts of tourism development constitute a crucial pillar of sustainability, significantly influencing satisfaction of residents. Should the majority of the identified factors fail to indicate satisfaction, the second research question will be very likely to have a negative answer. Nevertheless, these findings underscore the importance of addressing economic impacts effect in tourism planning and policymaking to enhance the satisfaction and well-being of young adults in the region.

6.3 Socio-cultural impacts effect on satisfaction

Tourism development can have multifaceted socio-cultural effects on local communities. Positive social effects include fostering peacebuilding through cross-cultural understanding, enhancing local welfare through the creation of employment opportunities, and the development of infrastructure that benefits both tourists and residents. Conversely, tourism can also bring about negative social impacts, such as the emulation of tourists' lifestyles, which might lead to the erosion of traditional values. Additionally, there can be feelings of inferiority or resentment among locals, and an increase in involvement in illicit activities driven by perceived disparities in wealth and lifestyle (Mihalič, 2006, p. 50-54).

To investigate the socio-cultural impacts effect on perceived satisfaction among young adults residing in the Šalek Valley, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements. These statements were derived from various relevant literature sources and validated through factor analysis, ensuring that they do indeed effectively measure the effect of socio-cultural impacts. Shown in tTable 3, these eight statements that are possibly influencing perceived satisfaction required subjective responses about cultural heritage promotion, exploration and acceptance of different cultures, standardization of the tourism offer, desire for heritage learning among young adults, desire for cultural events, and an increase in criminal activity due to the lavish lifestyles of tourists. Additionally, bar charts for each statement can be viewed in

Appendix 5: Socio-cultural impacts effect bar charts..

Table 3: Statements about socio-cultural impacts effect from the questionnaire.

Statement		mean	std
S9	Regional tourism promotes the cultural heritage of the region.	4,42	1,45
S10	Tourists have options to get in touch with local characteristics and customs.	4,24	1,47
S11	Regional tourism allows acquainting with other cultures which helps promote tolerance and destroys prejudices.	4,30	1,56
S12	Tourism development does not cause supply standardization and supports local character preservation.	4,24	1,34
S13	Tourism development influences my desire to know about local history.	4,13	1,57
S14	Tourism development influences my desire for local cultural heritage preservation.	4,17	1,47
S15	I would want more cultural events.	4,27	1,57
S16	Tourism development does not cause an increase in criminal activity due to tourists' lifestyle envy.	4,93	1,64

Source: own work.

Cronbach's alpha for the eight statements related to socio-cultural impacts effect on perceived satisfaction indicated a good internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.7$). It must be noted that this group had the lowest Cronbach's alpha among all uncovered factors. Represented by Figure 4, the initial factor analysis revealed that three statements, S14, S15, and S16, did not sufficiently measure socio-cultural impacts effect and were subsequently eliminated from further analysis one-by-one to potentially improve internal consistency.

Figure 4: Factor loadings for socio-cultural impacts effect factor.

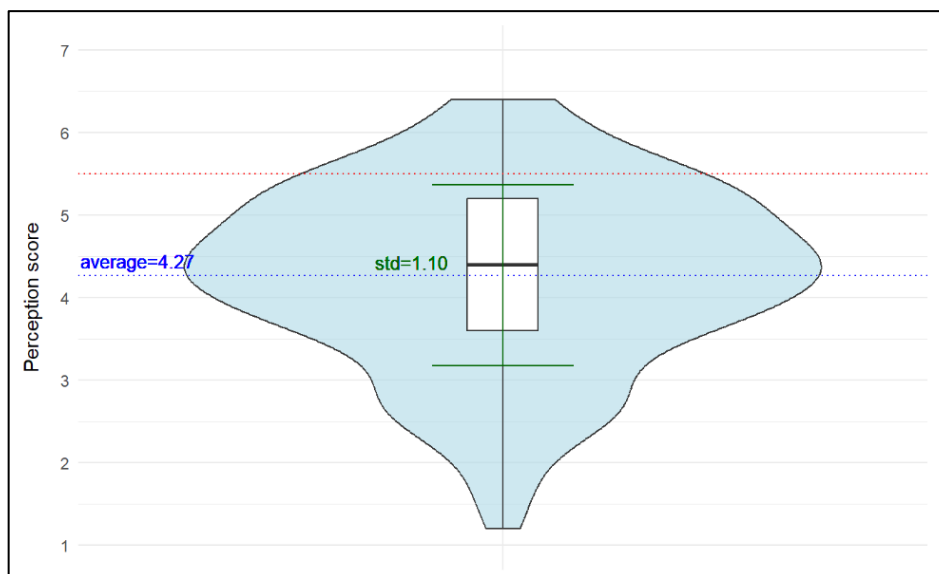
## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S9	0.105		0.106	0.800
## S10	0.159	-0.126		0.533
## S11		0.137		0.609
## S12				0.778
## S13				0.584
## S14	-0.149		0.253	0.247
## S15				0.267
## S16	-0.111	-0.124	0.242	0.105

Source: own work

After a gradual elimination of three statements an improved internal consistency allowed the creation of a factor labeled socio-cultural impacts effect. The process of elimination and the new Cronbach's alpha value can be viewed in the Appendix 8: Gradual factor loadings and alpha values. The revised Cronbach's alpha indicates an improvement and subsequently a new analytical construct was formed to contribute to finding an answer to the main research question. To determine if this newly formed factor follows a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis analysis were conducted. Both allowed for the assumption of the normal distribution and the conducted test values can be viewed in the Appendix 9: Skewness and kurtosis analysis. Therefore, the one sided t-test was conducted and the calculated average score of the created socio-cultural factor was compared against the hypothetical mean of 5,5 as this threshold represents the tipping point into definite agreeance. The observed mean is notably lower than a hypothetical threshold, suggesting that the respondents' perception of socio-cultural benefits is generally less favorable than anticipated. In other words, t-test findings, which can be viewed in the Socio-cultural impacts effect factor t-test section of the Appendix 10: One sided t-test statistics, conclude that young adult respondents are not showing definitive satisfaction with the socio-cultural impacts effect brought by the regional tourism development.

The graphical presentation of the conducted t-test evaluating perceived socio-cultural impact effect on satisfaction of young adult respondents can be viewed in Figure 5. This violin plot illustrates the distribution of perception scores for the socio-cultural impacts effect factor, and it shows a relatively symmetric distribution of scores concentrated around the mean but spanning from about 3 and 5. Compared to the economic impacts effect factor on the perceived satisfaction, this set of responses is marginally more concentrated, while the average perception score is slightly lower than that of economic impacts effect factor. This suggests a less favorable perception of socio-cultural impacts effect on satisfaction.

Figure 5: Perception of socio-cultural impacts' effect on satisfaction.



Source: own work

The findings indicate that the socio-cultural impacts effect of tourism do not positively influence young adults' perception of satisfaction with tourism development within the sampled population. These results underscore the importance of considering socio-cultural factors in tourism planning and policymaking to enhance the satisfaction and well-being of young adults in the region within the socio-cultural context. By addressing the socio-cultural implications of tourism development, stakeholders can better align tourism initiatives with the needs and expectations of young residents, thereby fostering sustainable and inclusive regional growth.

6.4 Environmental impacts effect on satisfaction

The development of the tourism sector can have significant environmental effects, both positive and negative. On the positive side, tourism can prompt conservation efforts, improve natural infrastructure, and generate revenue through entry fees. These funds can then be used for further environmental conservation and sustainability projects. Additionally, tourism raises awareness about environmental issues and encourages better ecological management practices, fostering a sense of responsibility among both tourists and locals. However, the negative impacts of tourism are also substantial. Tourism activities can lead to overcrowding, resulting in pollution, water scarcity, noise, visual degradation, and littering, all of which detract from the natural beauty of destinations and negatively affect the local environment (Mihalič, 2006, p. 54-59).

To investigate the effect of environmental impacts on perceived satisfaction among young adults residing in the Šalek Valley, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements. These statements were derived from various relevant literature sources and

validated through factor analysis, ensuring that they do indeed effectively measure the effect of environmental impacts. Shown in Table 4 these eight statements required responses about environmental protection awareness, tourism development caused environmental damage, revitalization of degraded areas, tourism infrastructure encroachment on the natural environment, wildlife space provision, recreation possibilities in nature, and the possible environmental degradation due to festivals and events. Additionally, bar charts for each statement can be viewed in Appendix 6: Environmental impacts effect bar charts..

Table 4: Statements about environmental impacts effect from the questionnaire.

Statement		mean	std
S17	Tourism development rises population awareness regarding natural environment preservation.	4,16	1,52
S18	I believe tourism is developing with minimal damage to the environment.	4,40	1,61
S19	Regional tourism development impacts revitalization of industrially degraded areas.	4,47	1,44
S20	Tourism infrastructure is developed thoughtfully and does not excessively encroach on the natural environment.	4,24	1,46
S21	Tourism development provides enough living space for wild animals.	4,18	1,59
S22	Tourism development enables access to new quality recreation possibilities in the nature.	4,57	1,45
S23	Festivals and other events in Šalek Valley do not cause permanent environmental degradation.	4,54	1,64
S24	Tourism development does not cause a drastic increase in regional road congestions.	4,77	1,66

Source: own work

Cronbach's alpha for the eight statements related to environmental impacts effect on satisfaction indicated a quite good internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.872$). The initial factor analysis already concluded that all statements sufficiently contributed to the studied factor as shown in Figure 6, which indicates that there is no need to eliminate any statements from further analysis. This directly implies that the Cronbach's alpha remains unchanged.

Figure 6: Factor loadings for environmental impacts effect factor.

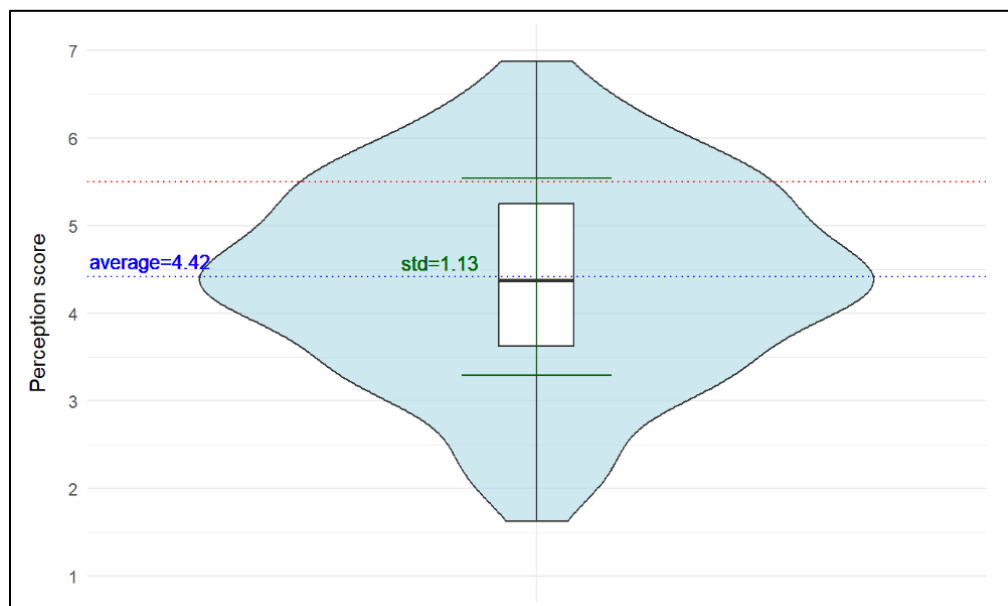
## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S17		0.711		
## S18	-0.168	0.787		
## S19		0.656		
## S20		0.707		
## S21	-0.144	0.833		
## S22		0.724		
## S23	0.134	0.555		-0.129
## S24		0.484		

Source: own work

Given the value of Cronbach's alpha and the results of the factor analysis, a new set labeled environmental impacts was constructed. This factor serves as an indicator for the environmental impact of tourism development on young adult residents. The newly formed factor follows a normal distribution according to the conducted skewness and kurtosis tests which can be viewed in the Appendix 9: Skewness and kurtosis analysis. The observed mean is notably lower than a hypothetical threshold, suggesting that the respondents' perception of environmental benefits is generally less favorable than anticipated. To put it differently, according to the findings of the conducted t-test young adult respondents are not showing definitive satisfaction with the environmental impacts brought by regional tourism development. Thorough statistics of the conducted t-test can be viewed in the Environmental impacts effect factor t-test section of the Appendix 10: One sided t-test statistics.

The graphical presentation of the conducted t-test evaluating perceived environmental impacts effect on young adults satisfaction with tourism development can be viewed in Figure 7. This violin plot illustrates the distribution of perception scores for the environmental impacts effect factor, and it shows a relatively symmetric distribution of scores around the mean, with most responses falling between 3 and 6. Compared to the previous two perceived impacts effect factors on satisfaction, the average perception score for the environmental impacts effect factor lies between the economic and socio-cultural factors. This suggests a slightly more favorable perception of satisfaction associated with environmental impacts effect than with socio-cultural impacts effect, yet still lower than that of economic impacts effect.

Figure 7: Perception of environmental impacts' effect on satisfaction.



Source: own work

The findings indicate that the environmental impacts effect does not significantly influence the young adults' perception of satisfaction with tourism development within the sampled population. These results underscore the importance of considering environmental factors in tourism planning and policymaking to increase the satisfaction and well-being of young adults in the region within the context of environmental impacts. By addressing the environmental implications of tourism development, stakeholders can better align tourism initiatives with the needs and expectations of young residents, thereby fostering sustainable and inclusive growth in the Šalek Valley.

6.5 Overall tourism development assessment

To add regional specifics and opinions of young adults on local matters, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements. These statements were derived from various relevant literature sources and validated through factor analysis. This newly formed factor, however, will only serve as a contributor of region-specific characteristics to those already formed and does not hold any additional empirical value by itself. Shown in

Table 5, those eight statements regarding the region-specific impacts effect required subjective responses about tourism development, quality of life, participation possibilities, overtourism, sustainability of tourism development, regional tourism potential, adrenaline park, and festival tourism venue. Additionally, bar charts for each statement regarding region-specific impacts effect can be viewed in the **Appendix 7: Region-specific impacts effect bar charts**.

Table 5: Statements about region-specific impacts effect from the questionnaire.

	Statement	mean	std
S25	I am satisfied with regional tourism development.	4,43	1,26
S26	Tourism supply development increases my quality of life.	4,17	1,40
S27	Participation in tourism activities is financially accessible to me.	4,46	1,34
S28	The number of tourists in the region is small and does not affect my everyday life.	4,57	1,70
S29	Tourism development in Šalek Valley is sustainably oriented.	4,46	1,45
S30	There is a lot of untapped tourism potential in the region.	4,60	1,27
S31	Tourism offer around the lakes could be enriched with a new adrenaline park.	4,67	1,72
S32	Park Vista is a great starting point for further festival tourism development.	4,77	1,47

Source: own work.

The Cronbach's alpha for those eight statements regarding the region-specific impacts effect on satisfaction indicates a good internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha = 0,862$), while Figure 8 presents factor loading values for those same statements.

Figure 8: Factor loadings of region-specific impacts effect factor.

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S25			0.687	
## S26			0.658	0.133
## S27		0.154	0.718	0.221
## S28			0.812	
## S29			0.797	
## S30			0.544	
## S31		-0.118	0.739	-0.116
## S32	0.127		0.386	-0.126

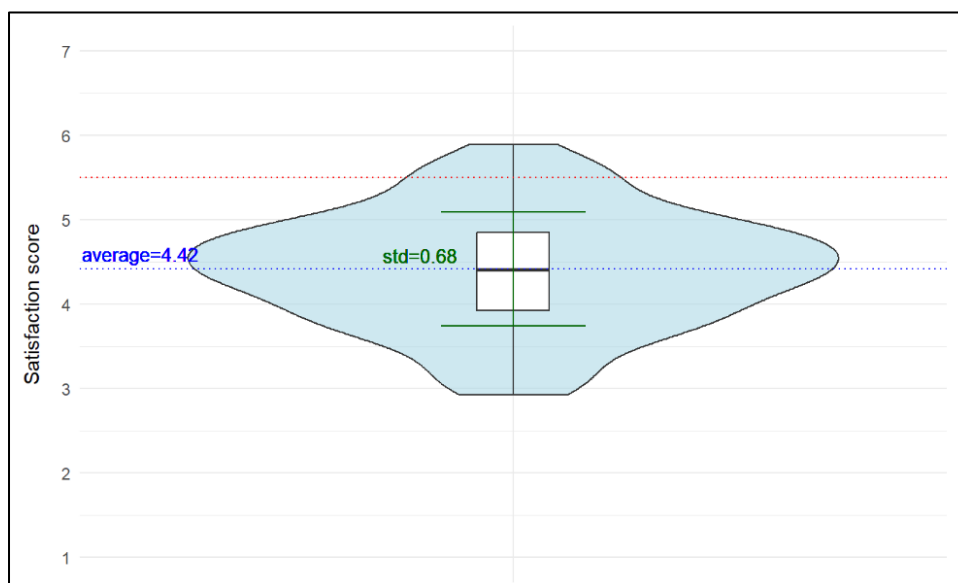
Source: own work

The factor analysis revealed the statement S32 has just slightly too low factor loading and was therefore excluded from the subsequent analysis, which just slightly increased the internal consistency. This increase and the new Cronbach's alpha value can be viewed in the Region-specific impacts effect factor section of the Appendix 8: Gradual factor loadings and alpha values After excluding one statement and with the improved internal consistency, the new dataset region-specific impacts effect was constructed. Since there is no analytical value of analyzing this factor independently, all factors and their scores with all significant statements were joined together to evaluate the overall sentiment of young adult respondents regarding tourism development in the region and to provide a definitive answer to the second research question. To determine if this newly composed dataset follows a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis analysis were conducted. Both values are well within range, which allows normal distribution assumption and the use of parametric tests. Hence, an overall indicator of perceived satisfaction was created and based on all the statements not excluded by the factor analysis. The one sided t-test provides conclusive evidence that young adult respondents cannot be labeled as satisfied when it comes to evaluating their sentiment regarding tourism development in the Šalek Valley, while its the thorough results can be viewed in the Overall satisfaction t-test section of the Appendix 10: One sided t-test statistics.

The graphical presentation of the conducted t-test assessing the overall satisfaction of young adult respondents with tourism development in the Šalek Valley can be viewed in

Figure 9. The violin plot illustrates the distribution of overall perception scores, which are relatively highly concentrated around the mean but spanning between 3 and 5. The graph shows a relatively narrow spread, highlighting a quite consistent perception among respondents regarding various aspects of tourism development in the Valley.

Figure 9: Overall perception of tourism development effect on satisfaction.



Source: own work

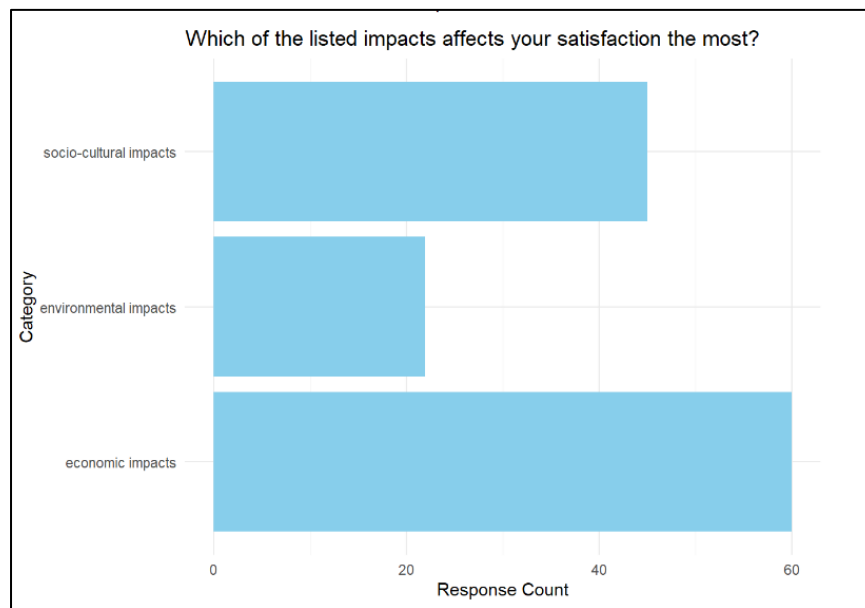
The analysis of all three pillars of sustainable tourism development individually indicated that young adult respondents are not expressing definite satisfaction with regional tourism. The literature dictates that economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts should all contribute to overall satisfaction of tourism development among residents and since the analysis clearly showed that all three pillars are not contributing towards satisfaction of young adults it can undoubtedly be concluded that young adults who participated in the survey cannot be labeled as satisfied when it comes to assessing their sentiment regarding the tourism development in the Šalek Valley. A combined overall factor score and the t-test analysis undoubtedly confirm this claim as the combined overall factor score was well below the point that indicates definite satisfaction.

6.6 Most influential impacts pillar on satisfaction

Young adults residing in Šalek Valley were asked to select just one of the three pillars of sustainable tourism development that in their opinion influences their satisfaction the most. According to the results presented in

Figure 10, young adults evaluated that environmental impacts effect of tourism development has had the lowest impact on their satisfaction, behind both socio-cultural impacts effect and economic impacts effect.

Figure 10: Most influential impacts pillar on satisfaction.



Source: own work

Figure 10 above clearly indicates that the economic impacts effect has the biggest impact on satisfaction with tourism development of young adult respondents. This provides an answer to the last research question regarding the most influential impacts pillar on satisfaction of young adult respondents. These results might reflect the financial struggles Generation Z is experiencing as they are slowly transitioning into adulthood. Additionally, responsible lignite combustion byproducts disposal practices in the region were introduced before respondents were even born which could be the reason why young adult respondents do not perceive environmental impacts as impactful. The state of environment underwent the biggest transformation just before their time, which means they have not experienced the era of biggest pollution in the region firsthand and do not remember the times when the lake they swim in was biologically dead and toxic. This impacts hierarchy also closely corresponds to the average factor scores of impacts effect factors calculated by the t-tests where the calculated mean of the economic impacts effect factor was the highest of all means calculated.

7 DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this master's thesis was to evaluate and analyze satisfaction of young adults residing in the Šalek Valley concerning the impacts of tourism development. This paper employed a systematic approach to address the research problem comprehensively and answered all formulated research questions. The analysis focused on the effects and formation of three main factors or impacts: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. Furthermore, the region-specific impacts effect regarding tourism development was assessed to provide a nuanced understanding of young adults' perspectives beyond the three pillars of sustainability with an emphasis on the local characteristics. The underlying assumption was that satisfaction would be evident if the positive impacts outweighed the negative ones, which is the reason for the formation of the overall score. Additionally, the study sought to identify which of the three identified factors is of the greatest significance among the three pillars of impacts in influencing the perceived satisfaction with tourism development.

The findings of this research yielded significant insights into the perceived satisfaction of young adults but have not provided an affirmative answer to the main posed research question about satisfaction with tourism development. Moreover, none of the factors formed with the factor analysis have indicated a definitive positive effect on the perceived satisfaction of residing young adults.

7.1 Economic impacts effect

Factor analysis validated the formation of the economic impacts effect factor, while subsequent analyses suggests that these economic impacts are among young adult

respondents from the Šalek Valley perceived as the most influential among the three pillars of sustainable development on their perception of satisfaction with tourism development. The relationship between economic impacts and the perceived satisfaction score indicates that they view tourism as an insufficient contributor to the regional economy and as an inadequate creator of economic opportunities in the Šalek Valley. Specifically, respondents perceived that tourism development has made a limited contribution to the development of infrastructure in the Šalek Valley, although this could change very quickly in the future.

Additionally, respondents also indicated that events and festivals are only somewhat financially accessible, while simultaneously being a limited source of business opportunities and supplementary income. The data also revealed a lack of strong agreement among respondents regarding the notion that tourism generates meaningful job opportunities for young adults in the Šalek Valley. While part-time and seasonal work is generally accepted among young adults, this aligns with a broader trend observed among individuals of the Gen Z cohort, who are often juggling between multiple positions to improve their financial situation. Nonetheless, it appears that attractive job vacancies are relatively scarce in the Šalek Valley. Such sentiments regarding the effect of economic impacts on perceived satisfaction levels cannot indicate satisfaction with tourism development according to relevant tourism literature (Mihalič, 2021; Christian, 2023; Kelly, 2023).

The theoretical implications of economic impacts encompass the need for advancements and improvements in tourism-related infrastructure, which also had not been identified as significantly influencing by respondents. Moreover, the inflation of tourism-related products and the resulting diminished purchasing power of local residents often arise from a demand for these products that exceed supply, leading to price increases, which are generally considered as a negative economic impact (Mihalič, 2021). Fortunately, the respondents did not report experiencing significant inflation or excessive increases in living expenses. This observation suggests that the demand for tourism-related products does not substantially outpace supply, indicating relatively low tourism activity in the Valley. On a positive note, the limited increase in expenses associated with tourism development suggests that young adult respondents are not facing overwhelming financial burdens. This circumstance may even enable them to achieve the desired financial stability, facilitating their potential to settle down in the Valley and become integral members of local communities. The low assessment of economic impacts effect may be correlated with the relatively low volume of tourism activity currently observed in the Šalek Valley, pointing towards a complex interplay between tourism dynamics and perceived economic satisfaction.

7.2 Socio-cultural impacts effect

In examining the socio-cultural impacts effect of tourism, both positive and negative theoretical dimensions were examined alongside their influence on the young adult respondents. The theoretical notion that tourism promotes cross-cultural understanding, fosters peace, and mitigates prejudices was not substantiated by the responses gathered from the administered questionnaire. Responses indicated that regional tourism does not promote cultural heritage of the Valley in a sufficient matter, and tourists encounter limited opportunities to engage with the unique local characteristics of the Šalek Valley. The demand for cultural events, which is a substantial component of tourism development, appears to be notably lacking. This absence of demand hampers efforts to support local cultural organizations and preservation efforts of unique cultural traditions Šalek Valley has to offer.

To enhance the socio-cultural landscape of the Šalek Valley and affect perceived satisfaction, tourism development should prioritize fostering greater interest in and appreciation for the local cultural heritage. Such initiatives can instill pride within local communities and ignite further interest in maintaining their cultural identity (Mihalič, 2021). However the opinions of the respondents suggest that there is a lack of enthusiasm for more cultural events, even when considering the tourism sector's imposition of a desire to learn about local history and cultural preservation. Such ambivalence raises concerns about the young adult's commitment to engaging with their cultural and historical roots.

On the negative side, tourism can lead to a range of socio-cultural issues, including the loss of authenticity, standardization, commodification of cultural heritage, rejection of traditional ways of life, envy, imitation of tourist lifestyles, and even involvement in criminal activities. The analyzed results indicate that these negative socio-cultural impacts cannot be dismissed as non-problematic by the respondents from the Valley. Particularly concerning is the apparent lack of expressed desire to learn about the local history and preserve cultural heritage, which received some of the lowest mean scores in the survey. This trend may indicate a diminishing eagerness among young adults to adopt traditional lifestyles. Equally troubling is the respondents' failure to reject the notion that criminal activities may have increased due to envy of tourists' lifestyles. Moreover, the statement regarding tourism development not causing the standardization of tourism supply and the loss of local character was also not assessed as positive (Mihalič, 2006; Mihalič, 2021).

7.3 Environmental impacts effect

The environmental impacts effect of tourism development involve both positive and negative aspects, influencing not only the appeal of a region but also the quality of life for its residents. Therefore, it is in the interest of all stakeholders to protect and preserve the pristine natural environment. Tourism affects the natural environment in many ways, however, none of the statements assessing the environmental impacts effect from the survey could be confirmed. Nevertheless, the average perceived satisfaction scores reveal some degree of variation across specific environmental implications. The results from the questionnaire indicated that tourism development has not significantly heightened the awareness of environmental protection among young adults. Considering an ideal scenario, tourism would develop in a way that minimizes environmental damage. The respondents sadly only flirted with the idea that tourism in the region is following such an example and causes minimal damage to the natural environment (Mihalič, 2021).

On the more negative side, respondents expressed the biggest concern regarding the provision of wild animal living space, which could potentially be problematic for local biodiversity. Moreover, respondents didn't provide positive feedback regarding tourism's contribution to the revitalization of industrially degraded areas, suggesting that tourism development is not directly improving the state of the environment. This provides a more negative explanation for why the respondents did not feel that tourism infrastructure does not excessively interfere with or modify the region's environment. Decision-makers should prioritize revitalizing degraded areas with additional tourism infrastructure while minimizing environmental impact in intact areas. According to respondents, tourism development also cannot be excluded as a cause of more traffic congestion (Mihalič, 2021).

In recent years, numerous cycling trails have been completed, building upon the already existing outdoor recreational infrastructure, and contributing to active tourism development in the region. Questionnaire responses, however, cannot prove that tourism development considers the need for green spaces and creates sufficient quality recreational areas (Mihalič, 2021; Visit Šaleška, n.d.). When it comes to festivals and events, it is crucial to protect the delicate environment with adequate measures. Measures for waste management, crowd control, noise level regulation, and accessibility must be considered (Allen et al., 2002). Young adults' responses do not suggest that festivals and events in the region do not cause permanent environmental degradation.

7.4 Most influential impact

Tourism development exerts a range of both positive and negative impacts, which have an opposing effect on perceived satisfaction, particularly in the realms of the local

economy, socio-cultural structure, and the environment. When the positive impacts outweigh the negative ones, the effect on the residents should be positive overall, which should result in satisfaction. The purpose of this section is to determine and explain which specific group of impacts had the biggest influence on respondents' perception of satisfaction while simultaneously identifying which had the least positive influence. Understanding these factors can be beneficial for future regional tourism development, as they highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the current stage of tourism development. This insight can guide more targeted and effective strategies to enhance tourism while mitigating its negative consequences.

The environmental impacts have had the least effect on satisfaction according to young adult respondents. Despite the fact that in the recent past, the area surrounding Lake Velenje was severely polluted due to heavy industry activities. The revitalization of this severely environmentally degraded area took nearly a decade, subsequently enabling the development of tourism activities in and around the lake at the turn of the Century. Lack of appreciation for the revitalization of this nowadays completely transformed area might stem from the fact that the target population for this study is comprised of young adults born after 1995, who did not experience or do not remember the period before the lake's restoration. Consequently, even the oldest respondents in this demographic lack personal recollection of the lake's earlier hazardous state. They have only witnessed and are familiar with the development of infrastructure around the lake. This familiarity extends to understanding the economic impacts effect of such developments and with it the creation of various economic benefits that Gen Z is striving for. This might be the main reason young adult respondents perceive economic impacts effect as the most influential and not the environmental impacts effect as the revitalization of the area where the most rewarded beach in the country is located happened just before their time. Additionally, tourism development has obviously had a limited positive impact on sociocultural impacts according to the opinion of respondents.

7.5 Overall satisfaction assessment with tourism development

Satisfaction with tourism development comprises multiple benefits such as an increase in quality of life and a positive attitude towards tourism (Mavrič, 2023). The region-specific impacts effect was assessed through mainly regionally specific statements about quality of life, availability of tourism products, opportunities, and attitudes towards tourism. Respondents, however, did not express satisfaction with regional tourism development and have simultaneously indicated that tourism development has not significantly increased their quality of life. In a broader picture, it cannot be claimed that respondents view tourism development as sustainable and environmentally friendly and that they do not feel marginalized by tourism. They have not indicated with certainty that they are able to participate in tourism activities, which indicates division of opinion. Their responses also cannot reject the claim that there are too many tourists in the region, which reflects

division among respondents regarding the lack of hostility towards tourists and an inclination towards the potential increase in the number of visitors. Respondents also hinted that there could be some untapped tourism potential in the region, but this claim was not supported. Associated with this opinion is the indifference regarding a new adrenaline park. This idea was presented by Center poslovne odličnosti in their 2022 report and according to the respondents is not undeniably perceived as a terrific addition to the existing tourism offer and infrastructure in the region. In addition, young adult respondents expressed limited support for further development of festival tourism in the Valley, while opinions regarding Vista Park complex being a great starting point for further festival tourism development are also divided. Tourism in the Šalek Valley has undeniably developed, however, it seems those efforts have been spread out thin and have had a limiting effect on satisfaction. The Šalek Valley section includes an overview of the state of tourism in the Valley and perhaps those efforts should be more focused, and the majority of further development projects should focus only on one type of tourism.

As previously mentioned, region-specific impacts effect of tourism development was incorporated in this research to add and gain insight into various regional specifics. Together with collected sentiment regarding three pillars of tourism development, which according to scholars is the most appropriate framework for developing tourism because it considers the needs of all stakeholders involved, this questionnaire based research is very well rounded and has collected opinions and perceptions of respondents on a quite broad range of relevant topics. When put together, it offers an answer to the main research question and a complete insight into young adults' satisfaction assessment regarding regional tourism development. Respondents have not expressed a definitive overall satisfaction with tourism development in Šalek Valley, but they have uncovered some weak spots that should be addressed in the future. Regional decision makers should focus on improving environmental preservation awareness among young adults as well as try to influence their desire for preserving regional cultural and historical characteristics, possibly with modern technology, which is more familiar and interacting to Gen Z. They should also strive to provide more economic benefits, despite the fact that economic impacts effect factor has had the greatest perceived effect on satisfaction among all factors. Simultaneously, it must not be forgotten to further improve the quality of life of all residents, while guiding and further developing the regional tourism industry for all stakeholders and generations to come.

8 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this master thesis was to identify impacts and to assess the young adult residents' perceived satisfaction with regional tourism development through the posed research questions. The factors have formed according to the theoretical framework and further analysis discovered that economic impacts effect factor, within which

particularly job creation and business opportunities were underperforming, is somewhat aligned with Generation Z individuals having difficulties finding a satisfactory job and achieving financial stability. Concerns about rising costs and reduced purchasing power were not significant among respondents, indicating a relatively healthy economy. From this point of view, the destination could be perceived as an attractive destination for Gen Z who tend to struggle against the rising costs. Even though young adults expressed the economic impacts effect factor has had the most important effect on perceived satisfaction, the development of sustainable tourism should remain a priority due to the highest return on investment and external benefits for the Valley in the long term.

Socio-cultural impacts effect as a factor recorded the worst overall perceived satisfaction results, with tourism insufficiently promoting local traditions and cultural heritage. Additionally, there were concerns about cultural preservation efforts and local history knowledge. The respondents showed limited support for more cultural events, which should serve as an incentive for culturally related tourist activities to promote events that cherish and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of the Valley within the communities and possibly incorporate the modern technology Gen Z is so familiar with. Moreover, environmental impacts have also not been well-rated by the respondents despite significant improvements over the years. Despite the huge importance of environmental quality for both tourists and locals as well as the completed restoration of the Lake Velenje area, environmental impacts were deemed the least important. Additionally, young adult respondents have not indicated the effect on satisfaction with recreational possibilities in nature, revitalization efforts, and event management, portraying their possible indifference of certain environmentally friendly policies in the area. With potential specialization for sustainable tourism and more efforts to minimize environmental damage, this important public opinion should gain even broader support in the future.

The main objective of this master's thesis was to evaluate the satisfaction of young adults residing in the Šalek Valley regarding tourism development, focusing on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts. The questionnaire results, however, do not confirm that the positive impacts of tourism development outweigh the negative ones, indicated by the inconclusive overall effect on satisfaction among respondents. These correlations provide supporting evidence that decision-makers have a lot of room for improvement to persuade residents to support further tourism development in the area, and to transform regional tourism into a potentially very important and lucrative industry. Combining the future different mindset of resident's and their inclination to tourism with the further development of the infrastructure, natural resources, and a beautiful landscape, tourism could be a part of the Valley's long-term vision. If developed properly and strategically, tourism can become one of the leading contributors to the local economy and can ease the transition from heavy industries of the past.

While this research underscores the need for ongoing efforts to balance economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts to ensure sustainable and satisfying tourism development in the Šalek Valley, it is important to understand its limitations of generalizability as a consequence of convenience sampling. However, this study is a first step towards understanding the needs of young adults that reside in the Šalek Valley, which has, despite its limitations, provided some tangible insights for better planning and a thoughtful tourism development in the future. It is impossible to identify the “best possible” niche tourist specialization for the area, but this study provides important results that inform the broader discussion of tourism development in the area and its potential, especially within the framework of sustainable tourism.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of the thesis in Slovene

To poglavje predstavlja povzetek celotnega dela prilog magistrske naloge. Vsaka priloga je sistematično vključena, priloge pa si tako sledijo po logičnem vrstnem redu. Naslednjo, drugo prilogo predstavlja abstract oz. izvleček, v katerem se nahaja kratek povzetek magistrske naloge. Tretjo prilogo predstavlja originalni anketni vprašalnik, s katerim sem pridobil podatke za nadaljnjo analizo. Vprašalnik je sestavljen iz nagovora, petih sklopov vprašanj, ki odražajo teoretske sklope in kratke zahvale udeležencem. Naslednjo prilogo sestavljajo po vrsti razvrščeni histogrami rezultatov prvega sklopa vprašanj o ekonomskih učinkih razvoja turizma. Peta priloga predstavlja po vrsti razvrščene palične grafikone rezultatov drugega sklopa vprašanj o družbeno-socialnih učinkih razvoja turizma. Naslednjo prilogo analogno sestavljajo palični grafikoni rezultatov tretjega sklopa vprašanj o okoljskih učinkih razvoja turizma. Sedma priloga pa palične grafikone rezultatov četrtega sklopa vprašanj o splošnih občutkih, ki celotni analizi prinesejo dodatno ovrednotena mnenja o regionalnih posebnostih.

Osmo prilogo sestavljajo rezultati faktorske analize, natančneje postopoma izvedena faktorska odčitavanja, iz katerih je razvidna postopna eliminacija tistih vprašanj, katerih faktorska vrednost ni zadoščala pragu vključenosti. V sklopu te priloge se nahajajo še štiri podpoglavja, katera vsebujejo vrednosti Cronbachove alfe pred in po eliminaciji vprašanj. Vsako izmed teh podpoglavij predstavlja enega izmed sklopov vprašanj iz anketnega vprašalnika. Naslednjo prilogo sestavljajo statistični rezultati testov normalnosti izvedenih na posameznih sklopih, ki odražajo tako anketni vprašalnik kot formacijo faktorjev. Zadnja, deseta priloga pa vsebuje rezultate enostranskih t-testov izvedenih na izoblikovanih faktorjih. Računalniški izpis statističnega testa je znotraj te priloge prikazan po podpoglavjih, medtem ko zadnje podpoglavje predstavlja skupni, sestavljeni faktor.

Appendix 2: Abstract

Emerging as one of the leading industries on a global scale, tourism enables individuals to explore distant destinations, while significantly contributing to the welfare of local communities and businesses. At any successful tourist destination, the development of tourism must be undertaken with the endorsement and support of the local population and in alignment with sustainable tourism development principles. The concept of sustainable tourism development offers a comprehensive framework, encompassing the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts associated with tourism development. This master's thesis examines Šalek Valley, a rural destination in Slovenia, which is in the process of transitioning from its historical heavy industry roots towards becoming a recognized tourist destination. Due to its important geographic location and limited size, the Valley is a perfect location to research the relationship between tourism and local communities. Each of the three dimensions of sustainable tourism was analyzed according to the opinions of young adults, members of the Generation Z cohort, residing in the Šalek Valley. As young adults represent the majority of the future community members and a target population in this study, generation Z's characteristics and challenges were also taken into consideration due to its close relationship with the future development of tourism in the region. Tailored to the preferences of Generation Z, online self-administered questionnaires were utilized, intended to obtain opinions regarding the impacts of tourism on the Valley. A total of 140 young adult respondents participated in this study, offering a substantial data set for analysis. This method provided valuable insights into the determining factors and satisfaction levels of young adults regarding each of the three sustainable pillars of sustainable tourism development, as well as an overall sentiment toward tourism development, and examined region-specific environmental impacts. The study further identified several areas of regional tourism that require improvement, presenting opportunities for local decision-makers to enhance the positive effects that tourism has already had on local young adults. Consequently, negative by-products of increased tourist activities were identified as well, presenting another potential area of growth for the community and its leaders. By understanding and addressing these weak points, local authorities can ensure a more balanced and sustainable development of tourism that aligns with the needs and expectations of the community.

Key words: sustainable tourism development, young adult residents, Generation Z, impacts of tourism, satisfaction

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

Analiza zadovoljstva mladih odraslih prebivalcev Šaleške doline z razvojem turizma.

Pozdravljeni!

Sem Igor Krstulović, študent magistrskega programa Turizem na Ekonomski fakulteti v Ljubljani. V sklopu zaključne študijske naloge sem se odločil raziskati zadovoljstvo prebivalcev Šaleške doline starih med 18 in 29 let z razvojem turizma.

Pred vami se nahaja vprašalnik, ki mi bo služil kot glavni način zbiranja povratnih informacij. Vprašalnik se nanaša na vaše mnenje o ekonomskih, družbeno-kulturnih in naravnih vplivih turizma v Šaleški dolini, vaše zadovoljstvo z razvojem turizma in vplivom na kakovost življenja v Šaleški dolini.

Vprašalnik je razdeljen na pet sklopov. Velika večina trditev bo ovrednotena s 7-stopenjsko lestvico, pri čemer število 4 predstavlja nevtralni element. Zadnji dve vprašanji bosta izbirnega tipa, kjer boste lahko izbrali vam najustreznejši odgovor.

Podatki, pridobljeni s pomočjo spodnje ankete, bodo uporabljeni izključno za potrebe moje raziskave, pri čemer naj poudarim tudi, da je anketa popolnoma anonimna. Vse tiste, ki boste izpolnjevali spodnjo anketo, prijazno prosim, da jo izpolnite kar se da natančno in iskreno.

Za sodelovanje se vam iskreno zahvaljujem!

Igor Krstulović

- 1) Prvi sklop trditev se nanaša na ekonomske učinke turizma. Ocenite naslednje trditve z 1 (sploh se ne strinjam) do 7 (popolnoma se strinjam).

1 (*sploh se ne strinjam*), 2 (*se ne strinjam*), 3 (*se bolj ne strinjam kot strinjam*), 4 (*niti se ne strinjam, niti strinjam*), 5 (*se bolj strinjam kot ne strinjam*), 6 (*se strinjam*), 7 (*popolnoma se strinjam*)

- Turizem v Šaleški dolini je dobro vpet v lokalno gospodarstvo.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Gospodarstvo v Šaleški dolini se razvija skupaj s turizmom.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini omogoča več poslovnih priložnosti.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Turizem v Šaleški dolini ustvarja dodatne zaposlitvene možnosti za mlade odrasle.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Razvoj turizma je in bo prispeval k izboljšanju infrastrukture v Šaleški dolini.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini prekomerno viša moje življenjske stroške.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Festivali in drugi dogodki v Šaleški dolini so dober vir dodatnega zaslužka mladih odraslih.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Lahko obiskujem festivale in dogodke na Velenjskem jezeru, ker so mi finančno dostopni.

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- 2) Drugi sklop trditev se nanaša na socialne in kulturne učinke turizma. Ocenite naslednje trditve z 1 (sploh se ne strinjam) do 7 (popolnoma se strinjam).

1 (*sploh se ne strinjam*), 2 (*se ne strinjam*), 3 (*se bolj ne strinjam kot strinjam*), 4 (*niti se ne strinjam, niti strinjam*), 5 (*se bolj strinjam kot ne strinjam*), 6 (*se strinjam*), 7 (*popolnoma se strinjam*)

- Turizem v Šaleški dolini promovira kulturno dediščino regije.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Turisti imajo dovolj možnosti, da se seznanijo z značaji in običaji Šaleške doline.

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- Turizem v Šaleški dolini prispeva k spoznavanju drugačnih kultur, kar pomaga širiti strpnost in ruši predsodke.

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- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini ne povzroča standardizacije ponudbe ampak ohranja lokalni pridihi.

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- Turizem v Šaleški dolini vpliva na mojo željo po poznavanju krajevine zgodovine.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Razvoj turizma povečuje mojo željo po ohranjanju lokalne kulturne dediščine.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Želel/a bi si še več kulturnih dogodkov v Šaleški dolini.

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- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini ne povzroča rasti kriminalnih dejavnosti zaradi zavidanja življenjskega sloga turistov.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 3) Tretji sklop trditev se nanaša na učinke, ki jih ima turizem na okolje. Ocenite naslednje trditve z 1 (sploh se ne strinjam) do 7 (popolnoma se strinjam).

1 (sploh se ne strinjam), 2 (se ne strinjam), 3 (se bolj ne strinjam kot strinjam), 4 (niti se ne strinjam, niti strinjam), 5 (se bolj strinjam kot ne strinjam), 6 (se strinjam), 7 (popolnoma se strinjam)

- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini ozavešča prebivalstvo Šaleške doline o potrebi ohranjanja naravnega okolja.

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- Turizem v Šaleški dolini se razvija z najmanjšo možno škodo za okolje.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini vpliva na revitalizacijo industrijsko degradiranih območij Šaleške doline.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Turistična infrastruktura se razvija premišljeno in ne posega pretirano v naravno okolje.

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- Razvoj turizma zagotavlja dovolj življenjskega prostora divjim živalim.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini omogoča dostop novih kakovostnih območij za rekreacijo v naravi.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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- Festivali in drugi dogodki v Šaleški dolini ne povzročajo trajne degradacije okolja.

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- Razvoj turizma ne povzroča drastično večje gneče na cestah v Šaleški dolini.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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- 4) Četrty sklop trditev se nanaša na splošne učinke turizma v Šaleški dolini. Ocenite naslednje trditve z 1 (sploh se ne strinjam) do 7 (popolnoma se strinjam).

1 (sploh se ne strinjam), 2 (se ne strinjam), 3 (se bolj ne strinjam kot strinjam), 4 (niti se ne strinjam, niti strinjam), 5 (se bolj strinjam kot ne strinjam), 6 (se strinjam), 7 (popolnoma se strinjam)

- Zadovoljen/a sem z razvojem turizma v Šaleški dolini.

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- Razvoj turistične ponudbe v Šaleški dolini viša mojo kvaliteto življenja.

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Udejstvovanje v turističnih aktivnostih v Šaleški dolini mi je finančno dostopno.

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- Število turistov v Šaleški dolini je malo, kar nima vpliva na moj vsakdan.

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- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- Razvoj turizma v Šaleški dolini je trajnostno naravnan.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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- V Šaleški dolini je veliko neizkoriščenega turističnega potenciala.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

- Turistično ponudbo okoli jezer bi lahko nadgradili z novim adrenalinskim parkom.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

- Park Vista je odlično izhodišče za nadaljnji razvoj festivalskega turizma v Šaleški dolini.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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5) Peti sklop se nanaša na nekaj splošnih vprašanj glede razvoja turizma.

Izberite tisti odgovor, za katerega vi menite, da najbolj opisuje razvitost turizma v Šaleški dolini.

- Naraščanje števila turistov spreminja občutke prebivalstva do njih. Kateri izmed naštetih pojmov najbolj opisuje vaše občutke do turistov v Šaleški dolini glede na obiskovanost?

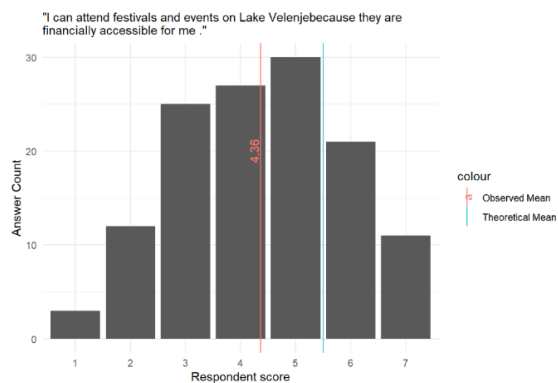
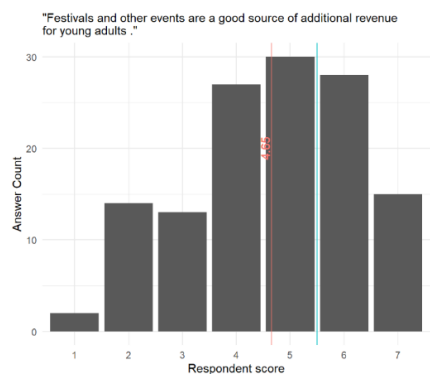
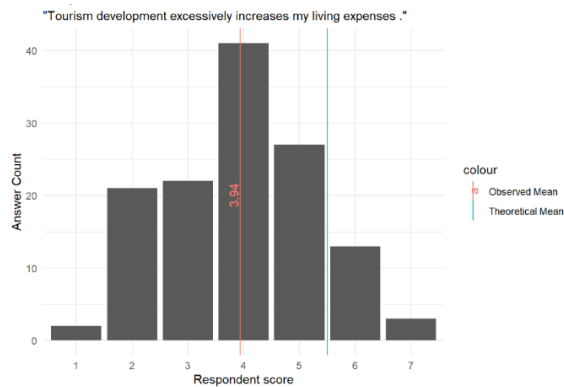
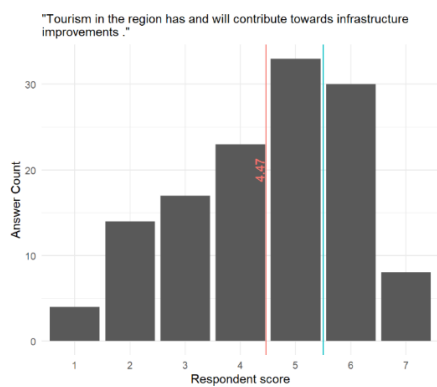
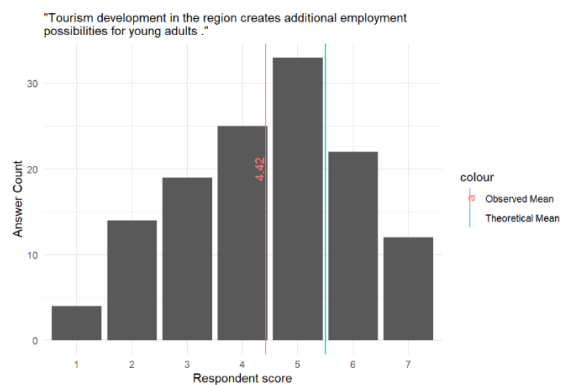
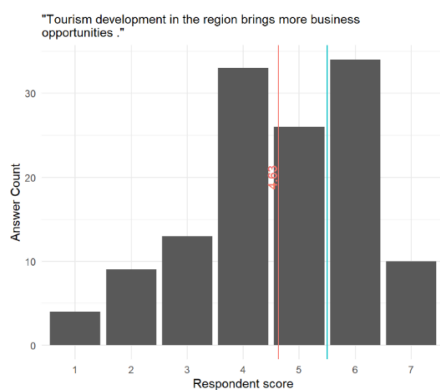
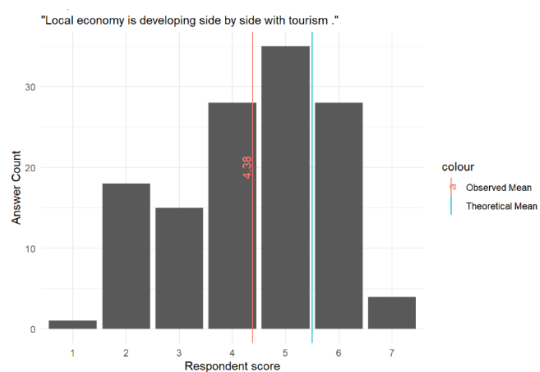
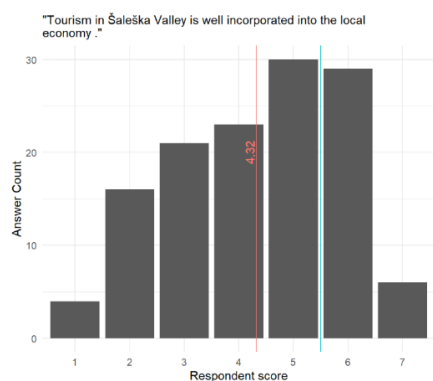
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
 navdušenje apatičnost razdraženost sovraštvo

- Razvoj turizma vpliva na življenja mnogih. Kateri spodaj naštetimi učinki so za vas najpomembnejši?

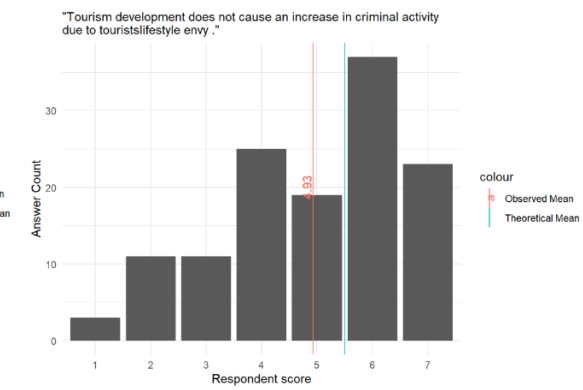
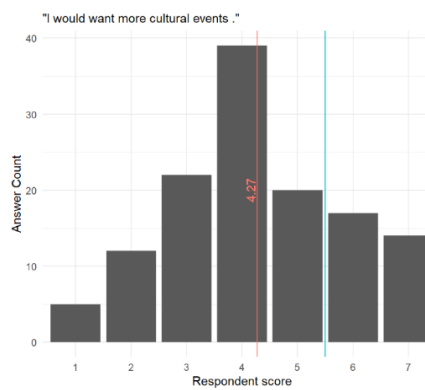
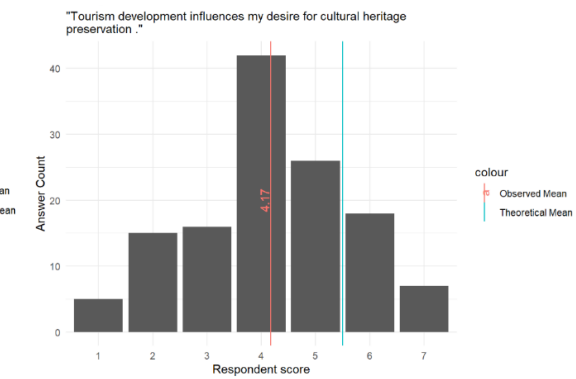
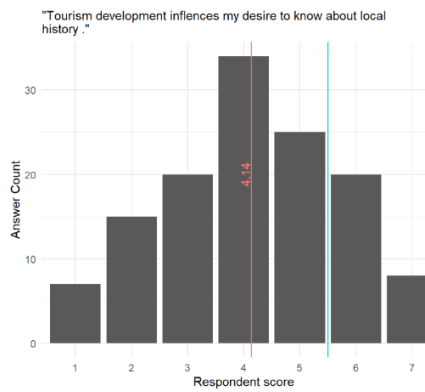
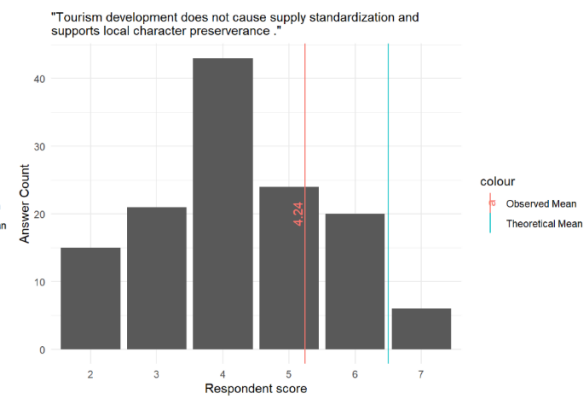
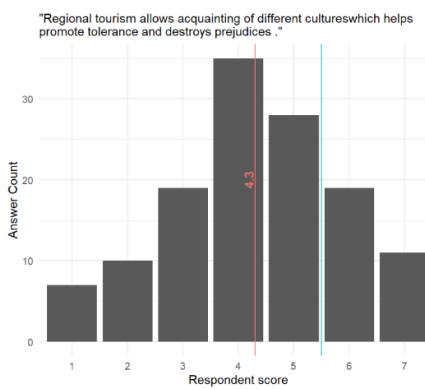
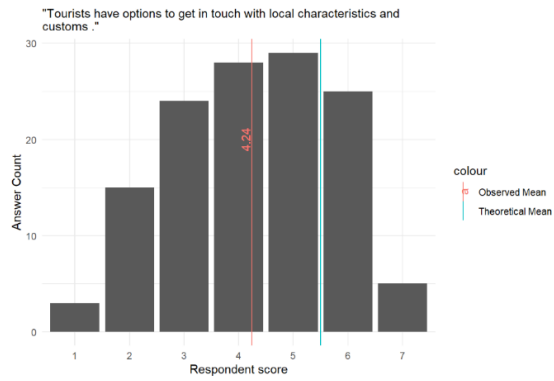
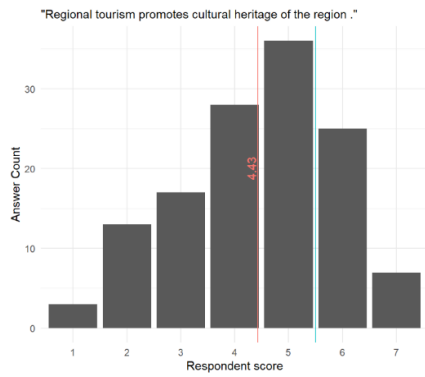
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 družbeno-socialni učinki okoljski učinki ekonomski učinki

Hvala za sodelovanje.

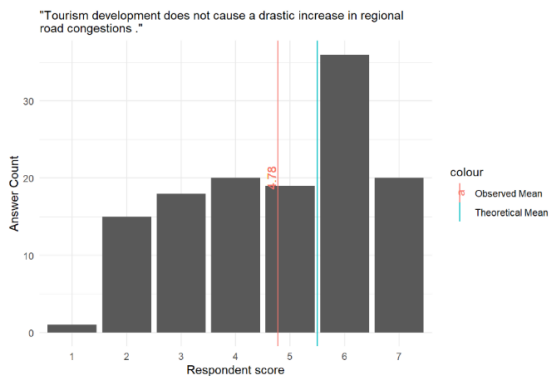
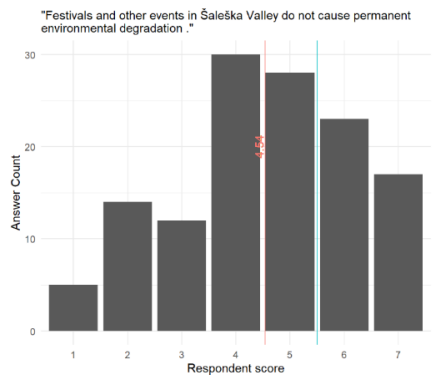
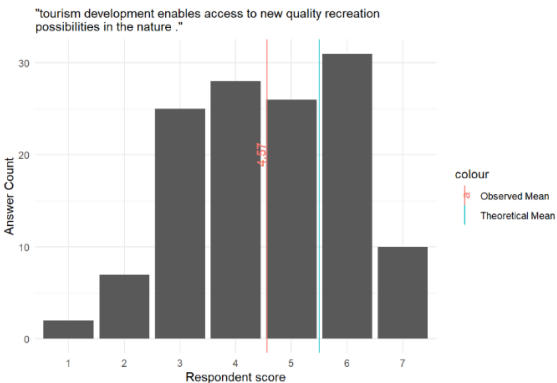
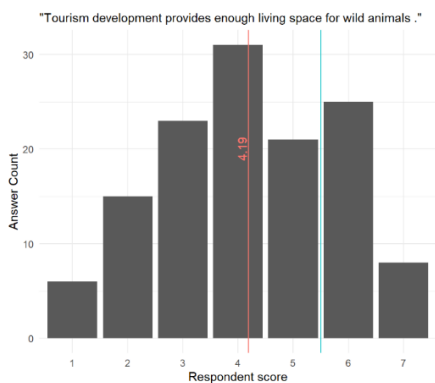
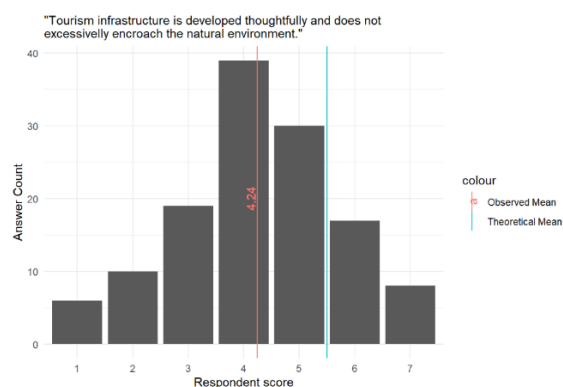
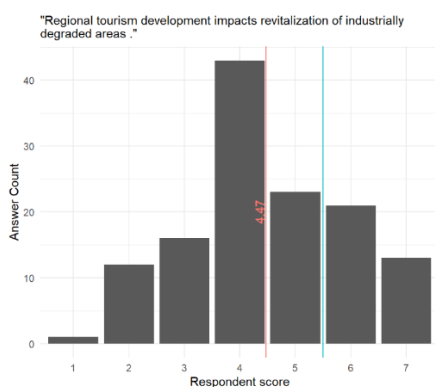
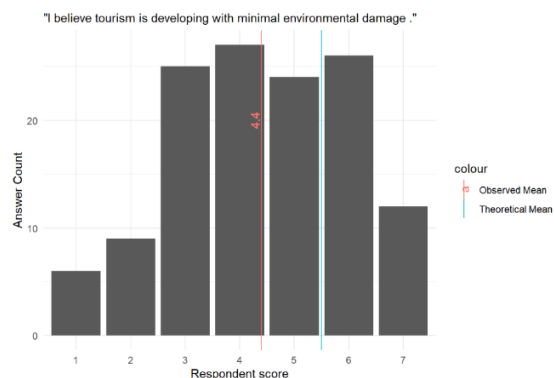
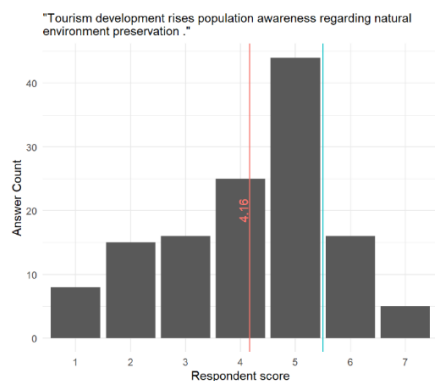
Appendix 4: Economic impacts effect bar charts.



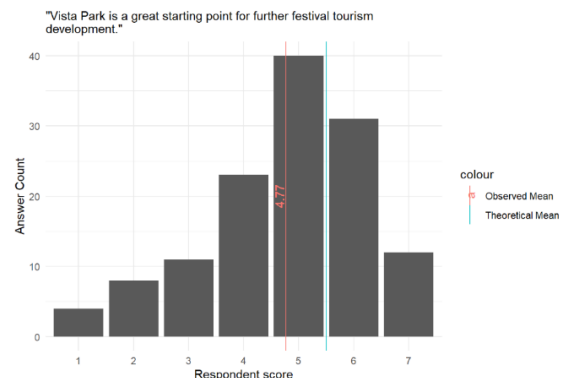
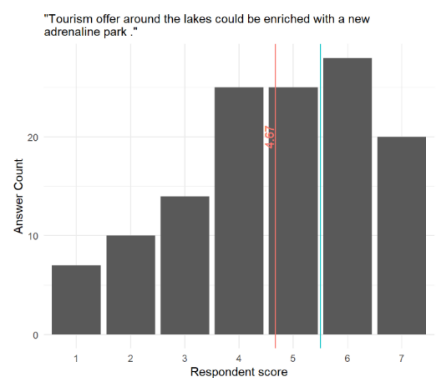
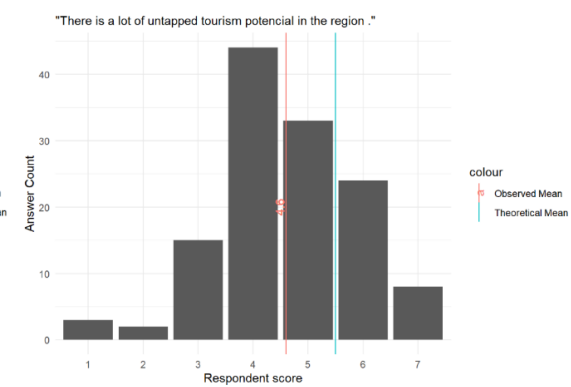
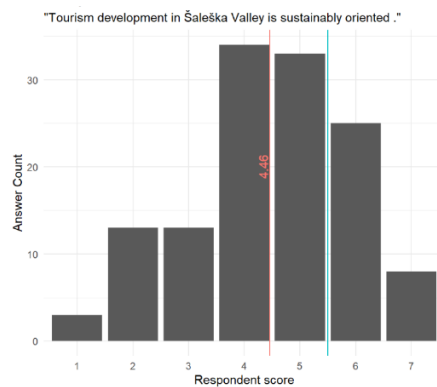
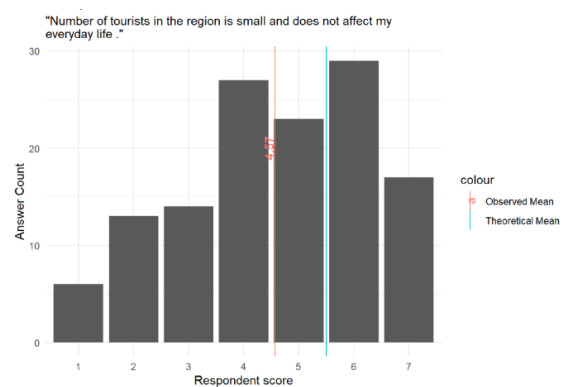
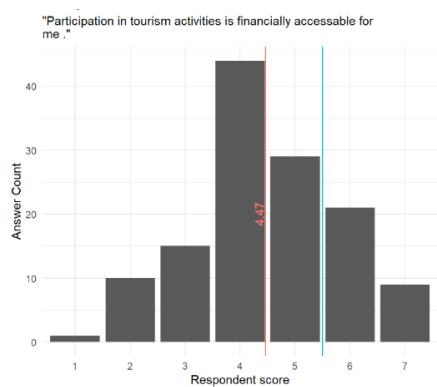
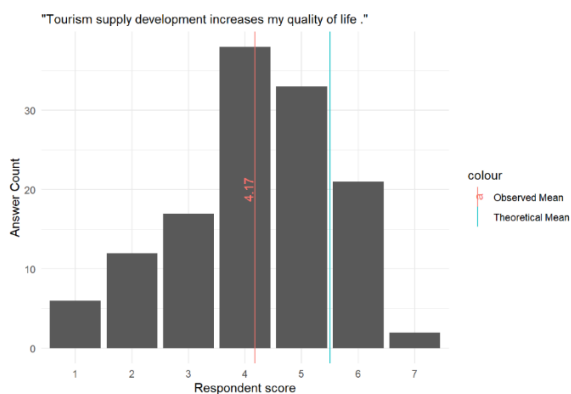
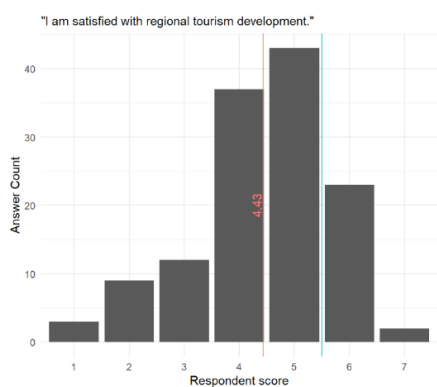
Appendix 5: Socio-cultural impacts effect bar charts.



Appendix 6: Environmental impacts effect bar charts.



Appendix 7: Region-specific impacts effect bar charts.



Appendix 8: Gradual factor loadings and alpha values

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.857			
## S2	0.919			
## S3	0.844			
## S4	0.514			
## S5	0.781			
## S6				0.106
## S7	0.647		0.141	-0.184
## S8	0.579	0.162	-0.310	0.131
## S9	0.107		0.107	0.797
## S10	0.160	-0.128		0.532
## S11		0.133		0.607
## S12				0.779
## S13				0.588
## S14	-0.148		0.252	0.243
## S15				0.273
## S16	-0.110	-0.125	0.241	
## S17		0.716		
## S18	-0.173	0.785		
## S19		0.659		
## S20		0.705		
## S21	-0.152	0.827		0.103
## S22		0.730		
## S23	0.119	0.543		-0.108
## S24		0.482		
## S25			0.650	
## S26			0.620	0.115
## S27		0.181	0.665	0.197
## S28			0.818	
## S29			0.792	-0.100
## S30			0.525	
## S31		-0.120	0.768	-0.109
## S32	0.129		0.394	-0.121

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.858			
## S2	0.919			
## S3	0.844			
## S4	0.514			
## S5	0.781			
## S7	0.646		0.142	-0.180
## S8	0.579	0.162	-0.311	0.128
## S9	0.105		0.106	0.800
## S10	0.159	-0.126		0.533
## S11		0.137		0.609
## S12				0.778
## S13				0.584
## S14	-0.149		0.253	0.247
## S15				0.267
## S16	-0.111	-0.124	0.242	0.105
## S17		0.715		
## S18	-0.175	0.788		
## S19		0.659		
## S20		0.704		
## S21	-0.153	0.830		0.105
## S22		0.729		
## S23	0.118	0.543		-0.103
## S24		0.481		
## S25			0.649	
## S26			0.618	0.112
## S27		0.181	0.664	0.193
## S28			0.818	
## S29			0.793	
## S30			0.525	
## S31		-0.120	0.769	-0.103
## S32	0.129		0.394	-0.120

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.860			
## S2	0.920			
## S3	0.846			
## S4	0.516			
## S5	0.779			
## S7	0.653		0.120	-0.195
## S8	0.577	0.161	-0.303	0.134
## S9			0.125	0.793
## S10	0.151	-0.130		0.528
## S11		0.127		0.619
## S12				0.781
## S13				0.598
## S15				0.271
## S16	-0.103	-0.115	0.216	
## S17		0.714		
## S18	-0.171	0.787		
## S19		0.657		
## S20		0.709		
## S21	-0.149	0.830		
## S22		0.726		
## S23	0.127	0.550		-0.119
## S24		0.482		
## S25			0.672	
## S26			0.640	0.129
## S27		0.164	0.698	0.220
## S28			0.818	
## S29			0.795	
## S30			0.535	
## S31		-0.119	0.753	-0.111
## S32	0.127		0.393	-0.117

```

## Loadings:
##      Factor1 Factor2 Factor3 Factor4
## S1    0.860
## S2    0.920
## S3    0.846
## S4    0.515
## S5    0.779
## S7    0.653          0.122 -0.193
## S8    0.578    0.166 -0.310  0.116
## S9          0.125  0.820
## S10   0.151  -0.136          0.553
## S11          0.131          0.608
## S12          0.763
## S13          0.583
## S16  -0.104  -0.116  0.220
## S17          0.714
## S18  -0.170  0.789
## S19          0.658
## S20          0.704
## S21  -0.149  0.832
## S22          0.727
## S23   0.128  0.550          -0.121
## S24          0.483
## S25          0.670
## S26          0.635  0.121
## S27          0.168  0.692  0.209
## S28          0.819
## S29          0.797
## S30          0.534
## S31          -0.120  0.757 -0.104
## S32   0.126          0.394 -0.121

```

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.859			
## S2	0.921			
## S3	0.847			
## S4	0.516			
## S5	0.780			
## S7	0.656		0.109	-0.199
## S8	0.575	0.163	-0.297	0.128
## S9			0.128	0.812
## S10	0.152	-0.135		0.548
## S11		0.130		0.610
## S12				0.766
## S13				0.593
## S17		0.711		
## S18	-0.168	0.787		
## S19		0.656		
## S20		0.707		
## S21	-0.144	0.833		
## S22		0.724		
## S23	0.134	0.555		-0.129
## S24		0.484		
## S25			0.687	
## S26			0.658	0.133
## S27		0.154	0.718	0.221
## S28			0.812	
## S29			0.797	
## S30			0.544	
## S31		-0.118	0.739	-0.116
## S32	0.127		0.386	-0.126

## Loadings:				
##	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
## S1	0.856			
## S2	0.917			
## S3	0.844			
## S4	0.517			
## S5	0.778			
## S7	0.657		0.118	-0.205
## S8	0.566	0.161	-0.282	0.131
## S9			0.120	0.803
## S10	0.147	-0.135		0.544
## S11		0.129		0.610
## S12				0.770
## S13				0.596
## S17		0.710		
## S18	-0.170	0.785		
## S19		0.656		
## S20		0.708		
## S21	-0.145	0.833		
## S22		0.724		
## S23	0.137	0.555		-0.127
## S24		0.485		
## S25			0.680	
## S26			0.663	0.121
## S27		0.153	0.719	0.209
## S28			0.807	
## S29			0.784	-0.101
## S30			0.545	
## S31		-0.117	0.727	-0.129

Economic impacts effect factor

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop1_ekonomski_ucinki' data-set
##
## Items: 8
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.837
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.789 0.871
```

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop1_ekonomski_ucinki_improved' data-set
##
## Items: 7
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.884
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.843 0.915
```

Socio-cultural impacts effect factor

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop2_druzbenosocialni' data-set
##
## Items: 8
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.7
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.601 0.767
```

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop2_druzbenosocialni_improved' data-set
##
## Items: 5
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.793
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.717 0.849
```

Environmental impacts effect factor

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop3_okolje' data-set
##
## Items: 8
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.872
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.825 0.904
```

Region-specific impacts effect factor

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop4_splosno_zadovoljstvo' data-set
##
## Items: 8
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.862
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.819 0.894
```

```
## Cronbach's alpha for the 'sklop4_splosno_zadovoljstvo_improved' data-set
##
## Items: 7
## Sample units: 129
## alpha: 0.869
##
## Bootstrap 95% CI based on 1000 samples
## 2.5% 97.5%
## 0.827 0.900
```

Appendix 9: Skewness and kurtosis analysis

Results of skewness and kurtosis analysis can be viewed below for economic impacts effect, socio-cultural impacts effect, environmental impacts effect, region-specific impacts effect factor and overall sentiment respectively.

##	Factor	Skewness	Kurtosis
## Factor1	economic impacts	-0.56630557	0.4075038
## Factor2	socio-cultural impacts	-0.27024127	-0.2700635
## Factor3	environmental impacts	-0.08043468	0.3812652
## Factor4	general sentiment	-0.26261117	-0.3770594
##	combined	-0.07233811	-0.4542267

Appendix 10: One sided t-test statistics

Economic impacts effect factor t-test

```
## Mean: 4.460687
## Standard Deviation: 1.171004
##
## One Sample t-test
##
## data: economic_impacts_avg
## t = -10.081, df = 128, p-value = 1
## alternative hypothesis: true mean is greater than 5.5
```

Socio-cultural impacts effect factor t-test

```
## Mean: 4.269767
## Standard Deviation: 1.09791
##
## One Sample t-test
##
## data: sociocultural_impacts_avg
## t = -12.727, df = 128, p-value = 1
## alternative hypothesis: true mean is greater than 5.5
```

Environmental impacts effect factor t-test

```
## Mean: 4.417636
## Standard Deviation: 1.126463
##
## One Sample t-test
##
## data: environmental_impacts_avg
## t = -10.913, df = 128, p-value = 1
## alternative hypothesis: true mean is greater than 5.5
```


Overall satisfaction t-test

```
## Mean: 4.417743
## Standard Deviation: 0.676195
##
## One Sample t-test
##
## data: overall_avg
## t = -18.178, df = 128, p-value = 1
## alternative hypothesis: true mean is greater than 5.5
```