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### All-inclusive Resorts, Cruises and Sustainability. The Perspective of the Corfu Community

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present and analyze two highly popular types of tourism, the all-inclusive resorts and cruises, and examine whether they can be considered as sustainable. It acknowledges the importance of the perception of the local community and its participation in the management and practice of tourism in their region. Moreover, it aims at presenting and understanding how local communities view the functioning of specific types of tourism in their area and to which degree modern communities, experiencing the intense presence of tourism, manage to comprehend the actual concept of sustainability and its application in the tourism sector. For that purpose a case study was undertaken on the island of Corfu, because of the strong presence of the all-inclusive resorts and cruises on the island and the importance of this area as a tourism destination. In order to get the perspective of the Corfu community regarding the presence of cruises and all-inclusive resorts on the island, questionnaires were distributed in a sample of locals. The data collected by the questionnaires enabled us to reach important conclusions regarding the perception of residents about the concept of tourism sustainability.

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**Keywords:** All-inclusive; Cruises; Tourism; Sustainability; Local community

L'obiettivo di questo articolo è di presentare e analizzare due tipi di turismo oggi popolari, all-inclusive resort e crociere, e di esaminare se possono considerarsi sostenibili. Si riconosce l'importanza della percezione da parte della comunità locale e la sua partecipazione nella gestione e nella pratica del turismo nella loro regioni. Inoltre, punta a presentare e comprendere come le comunità locali vedono il funzionamento di specifici tipi di turismo nella propria area a quale grado le comunità moderne, sperando l'intensa presenza del turismo, si pongono nel comprendere

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l'effettivo concetto di sostenibilità e la sua applicazione nel settore turistico. Il caso di studio prescelto è l'isola di Corfù, a causa della forte presenza dei due tipi di turismo citati e l'importanza dell'area come destinazione turistica. Per comprendere la percezione che gli abitanti di Corfù hanno della presenza del turismo crocieristico e di quello veicolato dagli all-inclusive resort, sono stati distribuiti questionari appositamente predisposti ad un campione rappresentativo di cittadini residenti. I dati raccolti dai questionari ci hanno consentito di trarre conclusioni importanti riguardo la percezione dei residenti in merito al concetto di sostenibilità turistica.

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**Keywords:** All-inclusive; Crociere; Turismo; Sostenibilità; Comunità locale

## Introduction

The concept of sustainability has been widely discussed over the past years and its importance regarding the long-run trajectory of the economy is well-established. The importance of sustainability as a concept is evident by the fact that a number of surveys and articles have been devoted to this issue, from a more general perspective and across a number of disciplines. Indicatively, Sen (2013, p.7) mentions that "... the quandary of unsustainability may be our predicament, but the task of solving it is ours as well..." highlighting the importance of implementing sustainability. Blewitt (2015) acknowledges the importance of sustainable development and analyzes how it should be implemented in multiple sectors like urban development or environmental design. Foy (1990) and Morelli (2011) review the importance of sustainability for the environment. According to Foy (1990, p.771) "... the recent interest in sustainability is due in large part to the actual and potential adverse economic effects of widespread degradation of environmental assets ...". Morelli (2011, p.4) mentions that "... if it can be agreed that a sustainable environment is a necessary prerequisite to a sustainable socioeconomic system then it also should make sense that the actions we take to remove threats to and foster environmental sustainability should contribute to such a system ...". Mulligan (2015) provides an introduction to the concept of sustainability analyzing and reviewing some key issues. It is natural that the issue of sustainability has been discussed in the context of tourism activity, given that tourism is a sector that has a significant contribution to the output of economies, both at a local and an aggregate level.

The local community of the host area is the one affected the most by the presence of visitors, and the one that absorbs the results, both positive and negative, of tourism. The residents of such areas, who financially depend on tourism, are the ones entitled to speak of the needs and effects of tourism. That is why their opinion, regarding the operation of tourism in their region and the impact of specific forms of tourism is of high importance and should not be ignored; The importance of the participation of the locals has been acknowledged by many over the past years. Franzoni (2015, p.23) mentions that "... a community needs to measure and evaluate the return on its own investment in tourism ...". According to Warburton (1998), sustainable development demands maximum community participation and local activism. Nobody could disagree that, in order for tourism to be sustainable in the long term, destination communities

must benefit from it (Salazar, 2012). De Carlo and Caso (2007) also mention the importance of the interaction between the visitor, the community and the environment. It is essential to ensure the support of innovative mechanisms such as multi-stakeholder partnership and community capacity building (see Graci & Dodds (2010)) while equally important is the community-based tradition, focuses on local participatory planning, defines what is to be sustained and negotiates host benefits (McElroy, 2015). Cater (as cited in Hardy and Beeton, 2010), presented host population as one of the four generic groups of stakeholders in tourism, the other three being tourist guests, tourism organisations and the natural environment. As McElroy (2015) suggests, in order to achieve sustainable tourism all four must have their needs satisfied. Local businesses should be constantly profitable and growing, repeat visitation needs to be steady or rising, and finally, if the local community is visibly benefiting from the industry's income and employment, the destination is on a sustainable path. This is summarized in the following quote by the UN: "... Ensuring that economic benefits are secured at the place where costs are incurred is an important principle of sustainable development ..." (United Nations Environment Program and World Tourism Organization, 2005, p.28).

Two specific types of tourism that have gained popularity in Greece are the all-inclusive resorts and cruises. Given that Greece in general, and especially most Greek islands, are quite attractive destinations with increased numbers of visitors per year – 33% increase in arrivals in the years 2014 – 2018 with 24 million tourists choosing Greece for their vacation in 2014 and 33 million arrivals in 2018 – it is important to examine this recent increasing trend in all-inclusive resorts and cruise-based tourism. In particular, it is of primary importance to know how local communities experiencing these types of tourism feel about them and whether they see them as sustainable forms of tourism or not but also find out whether those communities fully comprehend the concept of sustainability in the first place or if further and more adequate information is necessary. This paper discusses all-inclusive resorts and cruise-based tourism focusing on the Greek island of Corfu, on the basis of analyzing the responses of a survey conducted on the island.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the first section contains an introduction to the concept of all-inclusive resorts and cruises as well as their negative and positive aspects in order to review whether they can be considered sustainable or not. The second section presents statistical data regarding the contribution of the tourism sector in the Greek economy to better explain why a Greek island was chosen for the survey. The third section presents the survey and explains the methodology used as well as the outcome of the questionnaires distributed. The fourth section discusses the results and specifically whether or not Corfu community is adequately familiarized with the operation of all-inclusive resorts and cruises and the concept of sustainability in general. The last section, concludes and provides suggestions for future action.

## **1. All-inclusive resorts and cruises – negative and positive aspects**

The concept of all-inclusive tourism is completely different from that of more traditional tourism forms where the tourist pays separately for every single service they might need to use during their vacation. In the all-inclusive tourism there are more than one services included, all in one single package. The services usually included, depending on the provider of the packages, are: accommodation, full board, selected alcoholic drinks, beverages or juices, a daily activity program, sport facilities, supervised children facilities and evening entertainment (Ikkos, 2014). However, these two types of tourism seem to have both supporters and opponents.

### *1.1 Negative aspects of all-inclusive resorts and cruises*

It has been argued that all-inclusive resorts and cruises are not sustainable as they do not allow the tourist to interact with the local community. In the case of all-inclusive resorts, the guest rarely spends enough time outside of the resort. In 2015, a survey entitled “The perceived impacts of all-inclusive package holidays on host destinations – A Consumer Survey”, was presented by Tourism Concern: Action for Ethical tourism with over 1,700 holidaymakers participating. According to the results of the survey, 55% of the participants seem to support the idea that the rise of the all-inclusive packages constitutes a negative development. Out of the participants who have themselves been on an all-inclusive holiday, 32.8% never left the resort in order to visit a local restaurant, while 34.47% never went on an excursion outside the resort. Less than 20% of respondents who had been to an all-inclusive hotel regularly left the resort to visit other bars, restaurants or go on excursions. One interesting finding of this survey is that while the majority of 87% of the sample believed that tourists benefit from all inclusive holidays, at the same time, 65% responded that local communities are in some way made worse off by the establishment of all-inclusive resorts. It should be noted that, in some cases, the entertainment provided in the resorts is closer to the visitor's culture instead of the occasional host area's, turning those places into destinations for the masses, depriving them of the opportunity to demonstrate their unique traditions. Transportation, both private and public, which used to thrive during holiday seasons, becomes less requested since tourists do not need transportation as much. This means, essentially, that fewer tourists are spending on fares which results in less revenue for both the private and the public sector, raising the issue of how much this is going to cost to the local businesses, in terms of revenue. Another issue worth mentioning, is the environmental one. The extensive use of water, “often in dry destinations where water resources are limited” (Gössling et.al, 2011, p.1) as well as the large amount of waste, are some of the repercussions of large hospitality facilities, a notable number of which are all-inclusive resorts. Becken (2014, p.10) argues that “...existence of tourism means that an additional number of people require freshwater for a wide range of end-uses...”. As a matter of fact, the guests of the resorts sometimes consume more water than the locals do (see García and Servera (2003) and Gössling (2001)). High fresh water and energy consumption as well as large amount of

waste are certainly issues which do not occur exclusively in all-inclusive resorts. However, since all-inclusive facilities are usually vast these issues get intensified. According to Tortella and Tirado (2011) the proliferation of the “all-inclusive” formula could progressively affect negatively water consumption due to higher consumption in meals and kitchens and higher use of water-intensive facilities and services. For that reason they argue that instead of focusing on meeting the high demand for water the focus should actually be on better management of water resources. It is important to bear in mind that all this intense demand for water at times occurs in areas where water is scarce, which leads in many occasions to the necessity for transferring water from the interior of the country. That demands specific and costly infrastructures as well as the enlargement of water transporting systems and waste water treatment systems (Eurostat, 2009). As a result, vast facilities are the cause of environmental concerns and issues that the locals must eventually deal with. Mark Watson, head of Tourism Concern, mentioned that:

“The all-inclusive industry was stifling businesses outside the enclave and very few benefits are reaching local communities. We are getting reports of tourists being told that their insurance doesn't cover them if they leave their hotel grounds and sometimes people will barely know where they are, paying to just sit by a pool in the sunshine.”<sup>1</sup>

Cruise tourism has also been censured for creating a gap between tourists and local communities since the passengers rarely spend enough time outside the ship. As a matter of fact, cruise ships tend to stay in the port just for a brief single-day or half-day visit (Caric and Mackelworth, 2014). Furthermore, having to visit many ports, all for a limited amount of time, passengers can neither experience the interaction with the locals nor meet the culture of the host areas like a tourist staying on the island. Having selected accommodation on the island this tourist interacts more with the locals while walking around the area, gaining a better understanding of the culture. Nowadays however, cruises and all-inclusive resorts constitute competitors to this type of tourism. Another problem is, in some cases, the highly concentrated tourism occurring with cruises which generates more negative perceptions for residents. As Klein (2008, p.99) argues: “Crowds disrupt usual routine and activities associated with cruise tourism can themselves be a problem”. Furthermore, cruise ships have also been accused of creating environmental issues, polluting the marine environments with waste (see Brida and Zapata (2010) for the full list of types of waste, adapted from The Ocean Conservancy (2002)).

Finally, another important fact is that almost all of the activities associated with tourism are characterized by a high degree of seasonality. In European countries, summer season (June-September) accounts for more than half (51.9%) of the total number of tourism nights (Eurostat, 2015). This seasonal effect is bound to affect both all-inclusive and cruise-based tourism subsectors, even more so when we examine these subsectors in the context of a Greek island. Specifically, in many cases, the resorts operate during the summer–high seasons while the cruises get severely reduced during winter promoting this way only seasonal profit and occupation that cannot be satisfactory enough for the locals. In the EU in 2014 core tourism activities,

compared with the non-financial business economy, provided more part-time (24% vs. 17%) and temporary jobs (21% vs. 14%). This situation is present also in Greece where the share of temporary workers is even around three to four times higher in core tourism activities making seasonality part and parcel of tourism (Eurostat, 2015).

### *1.2 Positive aspects of all-inclusive resorts and cruises*

The supporters of these types of traveling insist that, since it is possible to find a variety of economical packages, they constitute an accessible type of tourism that allows travelers with limited budget to organize a beautiful vacation instead of staying home due to financial constraints. However, it should be noted that in the case of cruise-based tourism, we must take into account the fact that some cruise packages are quite expensive and luxurious. Moreover, for families traveling with children, the hotel or ship limits provide safety and convenience since there are, many times, playgrounds or even organized activities for children. Additionally, both forms of tourism act as advertisers for the host areas since the tourists who visit those places, mainly due to financial reasons, find themselves delighted and satisfied so they later on, recommend them thus promoting tourism in those regions. Also, many argue that in times of global economic recession, these packages boost the tourism sector. In fact these forms of tourism have enabled a number of visitors, to travel without worrying about unpredictable expenses, omnipresent in other types of tourism. Furthermore, over the past years there has been an obvious stimulation of the all-inclusive vacations and not providing them could weaken a country's competitiveness and lead travelers to selecting other destinations (Ikkos, 2014 – available in Greek).

Apart from the arguments stated in favor and against these types of tourism, the perception of the locals is of great importance on the matter of whether these two types of tourism are sustainable or not. It is therefore essential for their opinion to be heard and presented but also to find out whether they fully comprehend the concept of sustainability in tourism.

## **2. Tourism in Greece and Corfu – statistical data**

In order to thoroughly examine these issues a survey was conducted. It was considered necessary to choose a local community that experiences the presence of both all-inclusive resorts and cruise tourism and whose economy strongly depends on tourism. In Greece, tourism is one of the most profitable economic sectors and ensuring sustainability is of great importance. In particular, according to the report presented by the World Travel and Tourism Council in year 2017, which presents the statistical information regarding the economic effect of tourism in the Greek economy for the year 2016, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was EUR 13.2bn (7.5% of total GDP) in 2016, and is forecast to rise by 4.5% p.a., from 2017-2027, to EUR 22.1bn (9.6% of total GDP) in 2027<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP<sup>3</sup> was EUR 32,8bn (18.6% of GDP) in 2016, and is forecast to rise by 4.6% p.a. to EUR 54.7bn (23.8% of

GDP) in 2027. When it comes to employment, which is of vital importance for the well-being of a country's economy, in 2016 travel and tourism directly supported 423,000 jobs (11.5% of total employment). Furthermore, this number is expected to rise by 2.9% p.a. to 597,000 jobs (14.0% of total employment) in 2027. In 2016, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 23.4% of total employment (860,500 jobs). This is expected to rise by 3.4% p.a. to 1,273,000 jobs in 2027 (29.9% of total). It becomes increasingly clear, by analyzing this data, that tourism is a sector of paramount importance for Greece. Not only does tourism provide a significant contribution to GDP, but also, in a time of economic downturn accompanied by high rates of unemployment and insecurity, tourism offers occupation to a great portion of the population. In a country, where unemployment still hovers around exceptionally high rates of 20,7% in October 2017, according to Eurostat Labour Force Statistics, it is a relief to know that there is a rising business sector that is expected to offer new jobs. Furthermore, visitor exports generated EUR 15.0bn (28.0% of total exports) in 2016. This is forecast to grow by 4.8% p.a., from 2017-2027, to EUR 26.4bn in 2027 (32.2% of total). Travel and tourism investment in 2016 was EUR 3.2bn, or 15.7% of total investment. It should rise by 5.1% p.a. over the next ten years to EUR 5.5bn in 2027 (17.3% of total).

It should be mentioned that within travel and tourism, we find a variety of different components: tourism and travel for business or leisure as well as domestic or foreign. Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) generated 93.3% of direct travel and tourism contribution to GDP in 2016 (EUR22.4bn) compared with 6.7% for business travel spending (EUR 1.6bn) making Greece mostly a vacation destination rather than a business one. Additionally, domestic travel spending generated 37.5% of direct travel and tourism contribution to GDP in 2016 compared to 62.5% for visitor exports (i.e. foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts).

The Greek area considered for this research was the island of Corfu the reason being that it is a popular tourist destination both in Greece and in Europe. According to the quartely publication of the Hellenic Statistical Authority "Greece in Figures", the stays in hotels and camping facilities for 2016 in the Ionian islands, with Corfu being the capital, represented the 11,3% of the total stays in Greece bringing the Ionian islands in the third place after Crete (28,0%) and South Aegean (23,3%)<sup>4</sup>. Commercial arrivals at the Corfu airport in 2016 arrived at 1.4 million passengers according to the "Hellenic Aviation Authority"<sup>5</sup> and according to the "Hellenic Ports Association", Corfu was in the third place in cruise arrivals, in Greece, in the year 2017 receiving 679.681 cruise passengers<sup>6</sup>. Additionally Corfu ranked 19th out 75 Mediterranean ports and 3rd in the Andriatic region for the year 2016 (MEDCRUISE, p.7). Moreover, it is an area where the presence of cruises and all-inclusive resorts is highly intense.

Based on these data we can infer the effects of tourism on the domestic economy and understand why it is essential to ensure tourism sustainability, given that it has a significant impact on employment in local communities. In order to have a profitable tourism, it is useful to know the preferences of the visitors and keep them satisfied in the long term. When it comes to Greece, these data demonstrate that the target group is mostly foreign visitors coming for leisure which proves how important tourism is for Greece and thus keeping it sustainable.

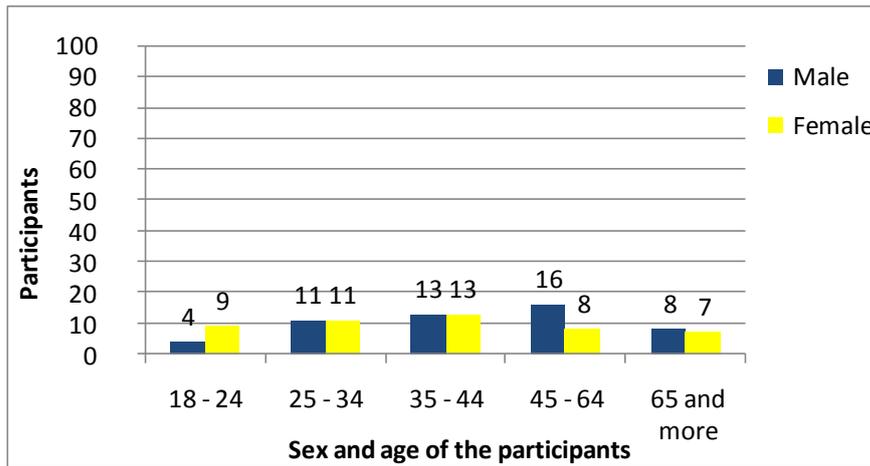
### 3. Methodology

The aim of the survey was to examine whether the Corfu community is satisfied with the operation of tourism in their area and more specifically whether the community perceives the all-inclusive resorts and cruise tourism, as sustainable or not. Questionnaires were distributed to residents of both sexes, aged between 18 and 65 or more years old. The respondents were working or studying on the island; unemployed and pensioners were also considered. The professions of the participants varied and were directly or indirectly related to tourism or not related at all. One hundred questionnaires were distributed within the period of a fortnight. Considering that the interest of the research was the locals' opinion, the sampling was a so-called "convenience sampling". The survey took under consideration the composition of the Corfu population. The respondents were exclusively people living on the island, deriving from every stakeholder typology and they were all met in public places. The times of day when the distribution occurred were random and spread throughout the entire day. Additionally, it was conducted not only in the city center but in various locations of the island. The education level of the individuals also varied from High School education to possession of a bachelor degree, Master's Degree or PhD title. The ages ranged from 18 to 65 or more and the analogy between males and females kept a satisfying balance with 52 and 48 respectively. The local community showed keen interest in the questions and in general on the conduct of this research since tourism, admittedly, plays vital role in the island and these types of tourism have become more popular in recent years. The participation in this research, by answering this questionnaire, motivated the respondents to think about issues that they had never really considered that seriously before. The questions were the same for cruises and for all-inclusive resorts. The first section was referring to cruise tourism while the second one to the all-inclusive resorts. The answer choices given were of closed type, they started with the most negative choice and ended with the most positive one.

#### 3.1 *The profile of the participants*

As regards the profile of the participants, they were divided in five age groups; 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-64, 65+. They had to write their profession in order to know whether there is a direct, indirect or no relation with the tourism sector and choose type of education (High School, Bachelor Degree, Master's Degree or PhD Title), clarify their sex (male or female) and whether or not they were residents of the island.

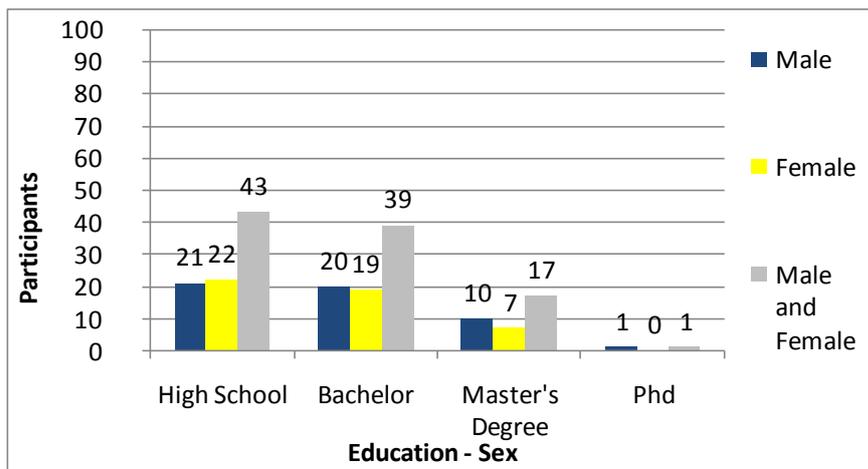
More specifically, regarding the sex of the participants, out of one hundred, 52 were male and 48 were female. Regarding the age, 13% were from 18 to 24 years old, 22% were from 25 to 34 years old, 26% were from 35 to 44 years old, 24% were from 45 to 64 while 15% were 65 or more years old (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1:** Age of male and female participants

Source: author's calculations

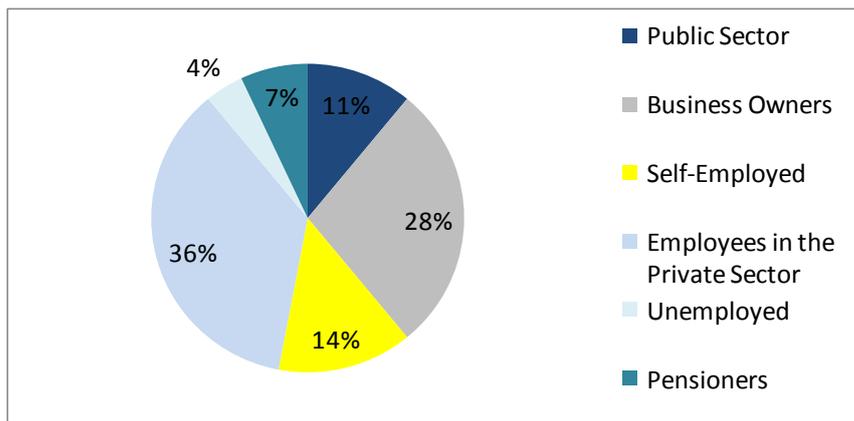
Regarding the education (**Figure 2**) of the participants, 43% had finished high school and did not possess any further degrees. When it comes to bachelor degree, 39% of them owned one. A 17% did hold a Master's degree. One held a PhD title.



**Figure 2:** Education of the participants (%)

Source: author's calculations

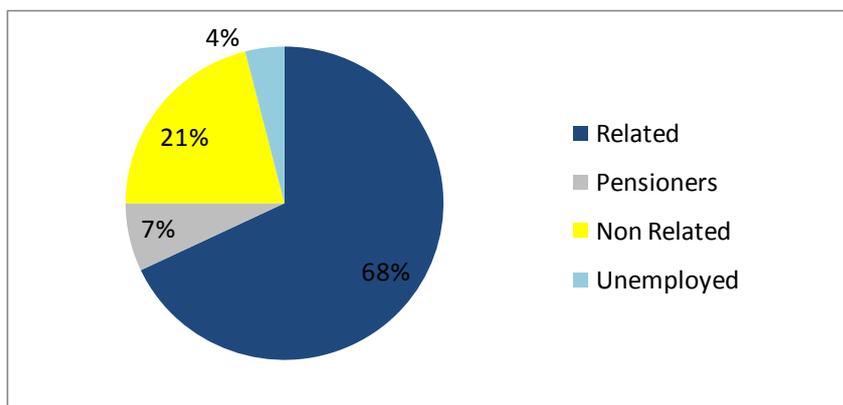
The professions of the participants varied (**Figure 3**). Only 4% of them were unemployed, in search of a job. A 7% was the pensioners. Of them 4 used to hold jobs related to tourism when still active. An 11% was working in the public sector, 28% of the respondents were business owners, 14% or them were self-employed and 36% were employees in private businesses.



**Figure 3:** Types of professions of the participants

Source: author's calculations

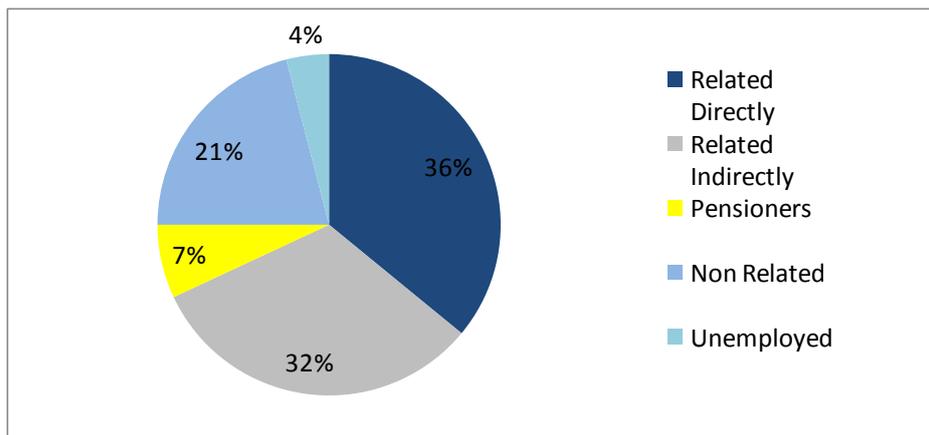
A crucial issue is how many out of one hundred individuals were practicing a profession related to tourism and in what way, direct or indirect (**Figure 4**). A 68% held a job related to tourism, in a direct or indirect way. A 21% was not related to tourism at all. A 4% was, as mentioned before, in search of a job and 7% of the respondents were unemployed.



**Figure 4:** Relation of the professions of the participants to tourism

Source: author's calculations

The participants owning a job directly related to tourism represented the 36% and those related to tourism in an indirect way the 32%. Additionally, out of the four unemployed, two were on special seasonal allowance, for summer jobs connected to tourism (hotels) (**Figure 5**).



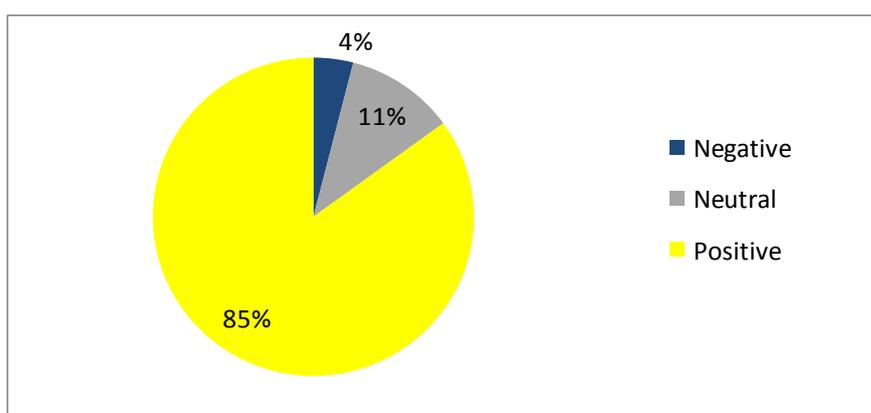
**Figure 5:** Directly or indirectly connected to tourism, unemployed and non related to tourism

Source: author's calculations

#### 4. The results

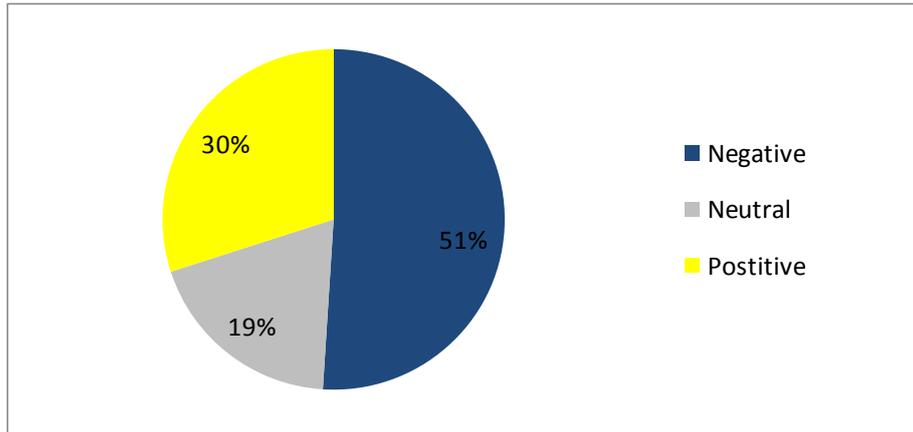
Regarding the perspective of the Corfu community on the functioning of cruise tourism and all-inclusive resorts on the island, and whether or not they are practiced in a sustainable way, the results of the questionnaires were very intriguing.

The first question of the questionnaire was: "Do you believe that cruise tourism/all inclusive resorts affect local economy in a way that is?" (**Figure 6**). The three answer choices given were "negative", "neutral" or "positive". For cruise tourism a 4% answered "negative", an 11% "neutral" while the overwhelming majority of 85% answered "positive". In the same question, for the all-inclusive resorts (**Figure 7**), 51% answered that their effect is "negative", a 30% found it "positive" and 19% answered that the effect is "neutral".



**Figure 6:** Do you believe that cruise tourism affects local economy in a negative, neutral or positive way?

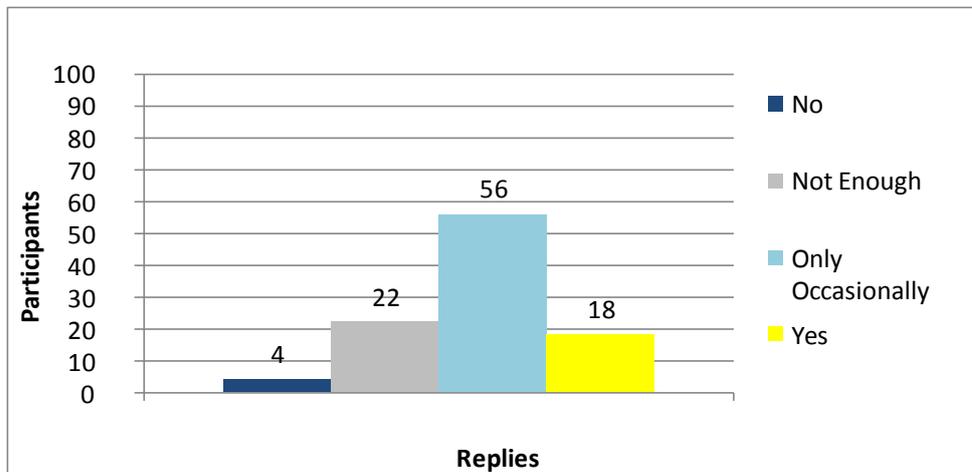
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 7:** Do you believe that all-inclusive resorts affect local economy in a negative, neutral or positive way?

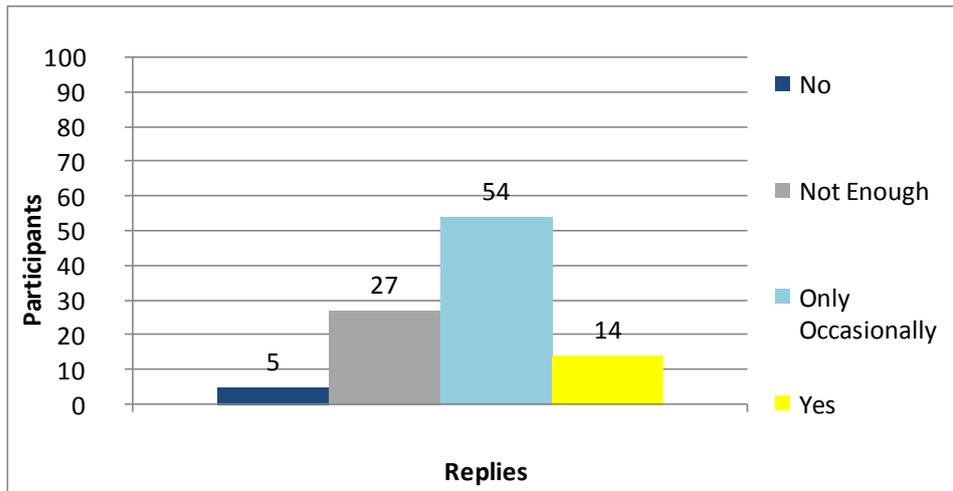
Source: author's calculations

In the second question the participants were asked whether cruises and all-inclusive resorts offer jobs to the local community and to what degree. For cruises (**Figure 8**), 56% answered “only occasionally”, that is during high seasons, 22% “not enough”, 18% said that they do offer employment and a 4% claimed that they do not offer job positions at all. For the all-inclusive resorts (**Figure 9**) 54% answered “only occasionally”, during high seasons, 27% “not enough”, 5% “not at all” and a 14% answered “yes”.



**Figure 8:** Does cruise tourism offer jobs to the locals?

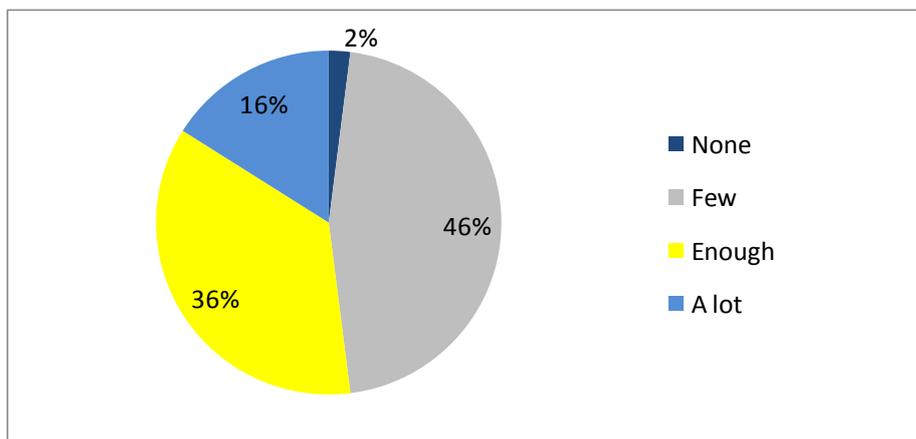
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 9:** Do all-inclusive resorts offer jobs to the locals?

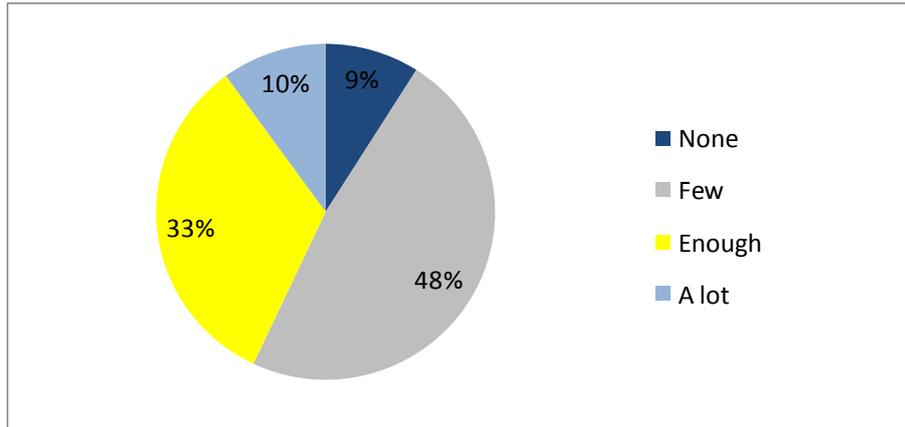
Source: author's calculations

The next question was “how many types of local activities you believe cruise tourism and all-inclusive resorts support”. A number of local activities such as festivals, concerts or feasts were mentioned to the respondents in order to provide context. The respondents had to consider whether or not cruise tourists and all-inclusive guests tend to participate in such activities. For the cruises (**Figure 10**), 46% answered “few”, followed by a 36% expressing that it supports enough activities, a 16% saying “a lot” and a 2% choosing “none”. For the all-inclusive resorts (**Figure 11**) 48% replied “a few”, 33% “enough”, 10% “a lot” and 9% “none”. The respondents considered that being mostly in the ship or in a resort, which provides its own entertainment, it is, some times, difficult for tourists to participate in local activities.



**Figure 10:** How many types of local activities do you believe that cruise tourism supports?

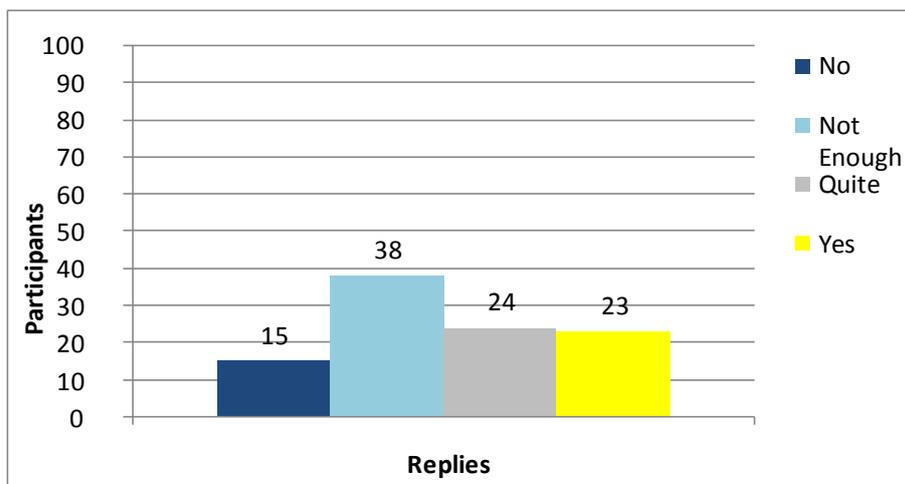
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 11:** How many types of local activities do you believe that the all-inclusive resorts support?

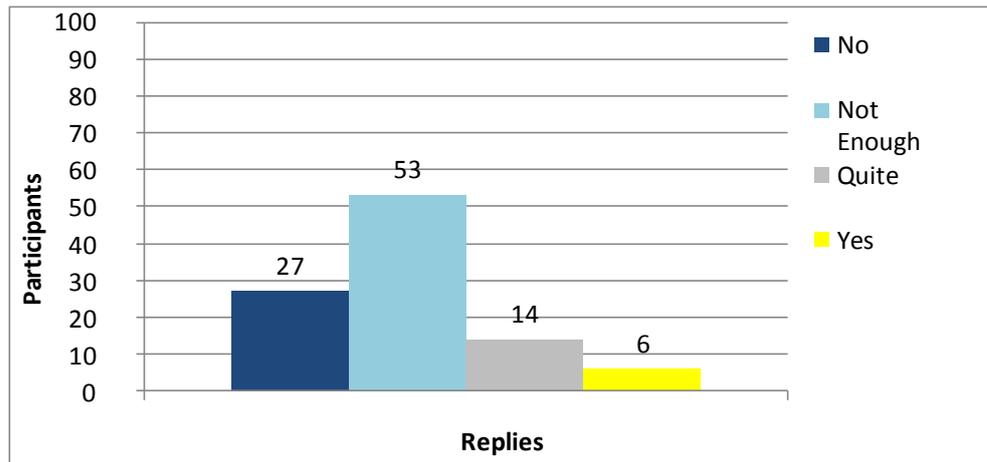
Source: author's calculations

The following question refers to whether cruise passengers and all-inclusive guests are interested in the culture of the host area or not. For cruise passengers, 38% answered "not enough", 24% "quite", 23% "yes" and 15% said "no" (**Figure 12**). Respectively, for the all-inclusive guests 53% answered "not enough", 27% "no" and just a 20% replied in a positive way, with 14% answering "quite" and only a 6% replying "yes" (**Figure 13**).



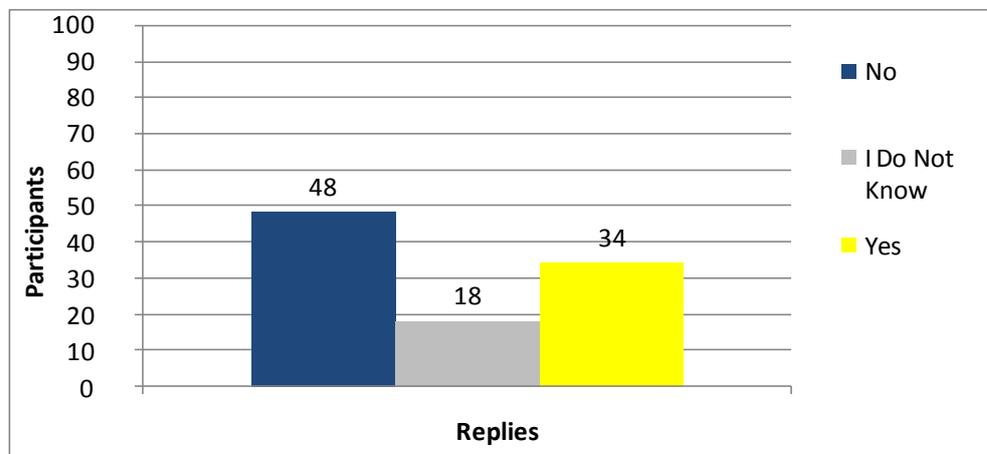
**Figure 12:** Are cruise tourists interested in the culture of the host area?

Source: author's calculations

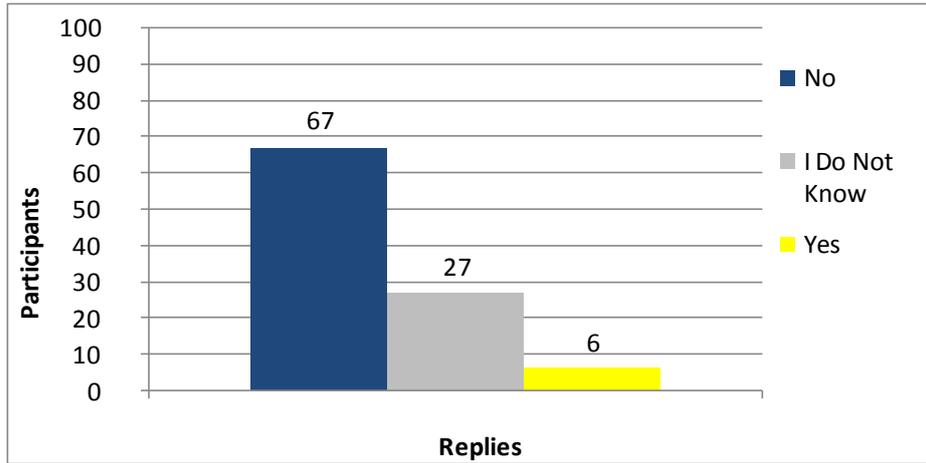


**Figure 13:** Are all-inclusive resorts guests interested in the culture of the host area?  
Source: author's calculations

The fifth question was about whether or not cruise passengers and all-inclusive guests do spend enough time outside their ship/hotel. For cruise passengers, the majority of 48% replied “no”, 18% answered “I do not know” while 34% answered “yes” (Figure 14). For the all-inclusive guests 67% believed that the guests do not leave the resort as much as they should. Of the rest, 27% chose “I do not know” and a 6% “yes” (Figure 15).

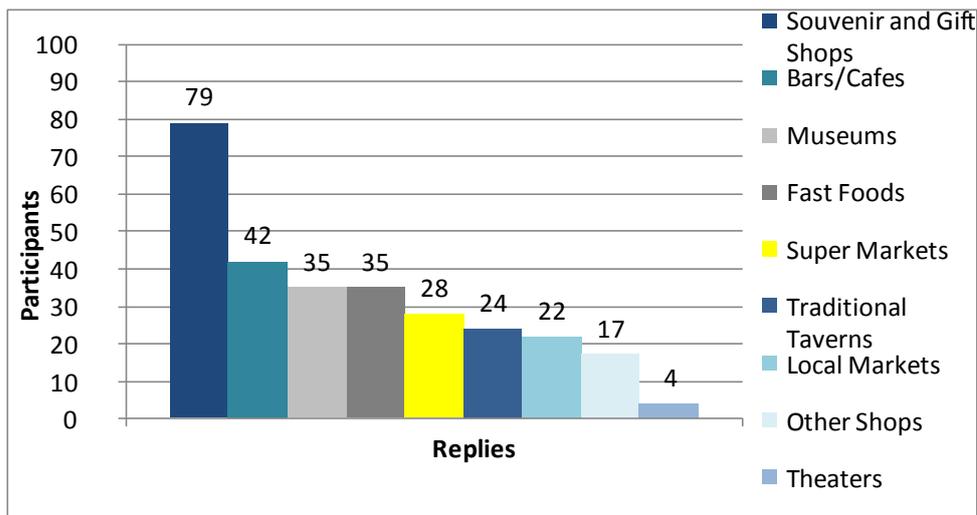


**Figure 14:** Do cruise tourists spend enough time outside the ship?  
Source: author's calculations

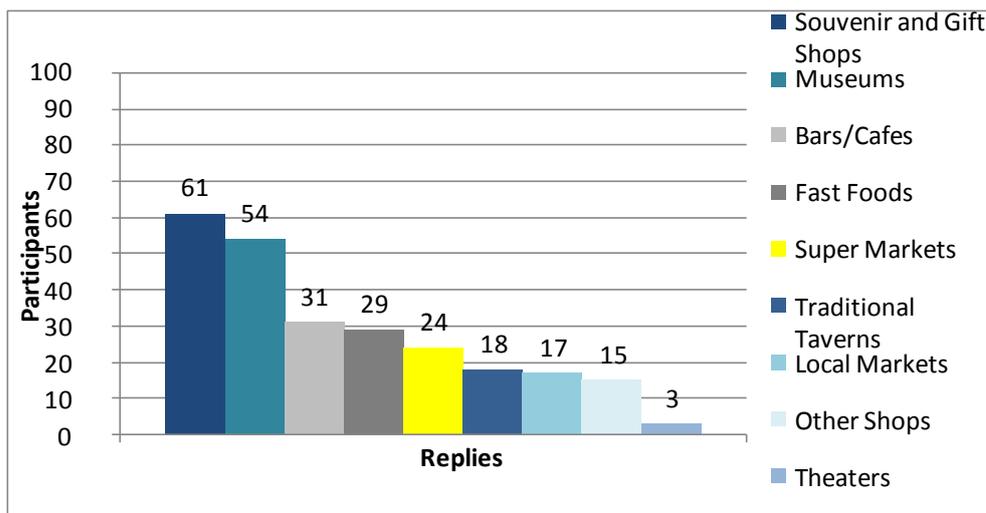


**Figure 15:** Do all-inclusive resorts guests spend enough time outside their residence?  
Source: author's calculations

The sixth question had to do with the places and activities that the passengers/guests, when outside the ship/resort, decide to spend their time and money on. Here, the participants had to choose three answers out of nine. The goal was to rank the top three choices of the passengers/guests according always to the experience of the respondents. Regarding cruise passengers (**Figure 16**), out of all the participants, 79 chose gift shops, putting them first in the cruise tourists' list of preferences. Second came the bars and cafes of the city selected by 42 people and in the third place we find a tie, between the museums and the fast foods and restaurants, both selected by 35 of the respondents<sup>7</sup>. For all-inclusive guests (**Figure 17**), first, with 61 respondents choosing them, came, just like with cruises, the gift shops. Second, selected by 54 participants, came the museums while third ranked the bars and cafes, selected by 31 individuals.



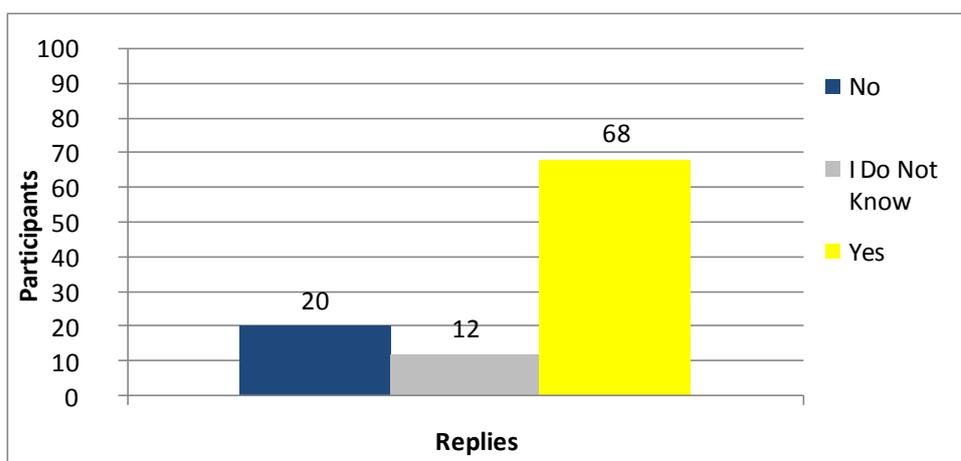
**Figure 16:** Which ones of the following do cruise tourists visit, according to your experience?  
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 17:** Which ones of the following do all-inclusive resorts guests visit, according to your experience? (%)

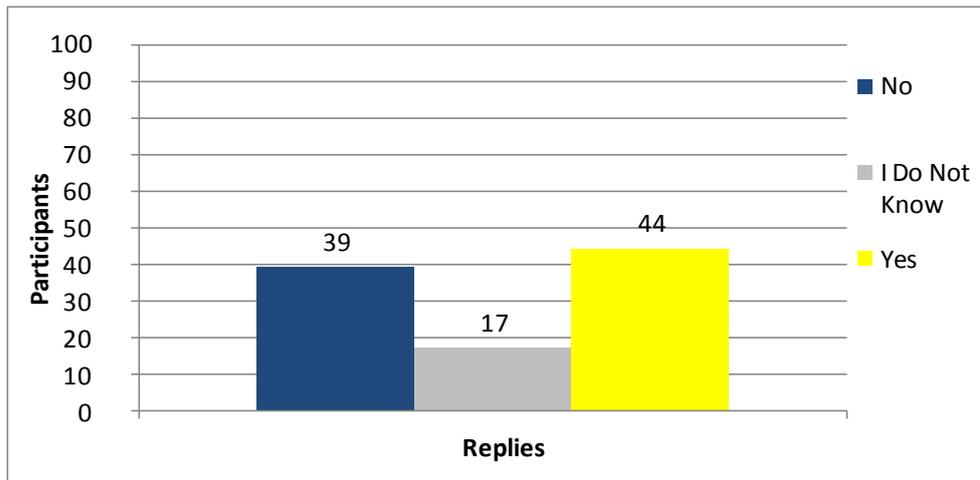
Source: author's calculations

The outcome of the following question shows whether cruise tourists and all-inclusive guests prefer to consume or purchase local and traditional products instead of famous international brands of food and beverage. In order to ensure that the context of the question was clear to the respondents, it was stated that traditional products are those produced exclusively in the host area whether, when it comes to food, choosing a traditional, local cuisine means visiting local taverns or delicatessens where you can taste local food instead of visiting a well-known, global food chain such as McDonalds. Cruise passengers, (Figure 18), according to the majority of 68% tend to ask for traditional, national products. A 20% said that they do not care for traditional purchases and 12% did not know what to answer on the matter. For the all-inclusive guests (Figure 19) 44% answered "yes", 39% answered "no" and a 17% did not know how to respond.



**Figure 18:** Do cruise tourists prefer to consume/purchase local and traditional products instead of famous international brands of food and beverage?

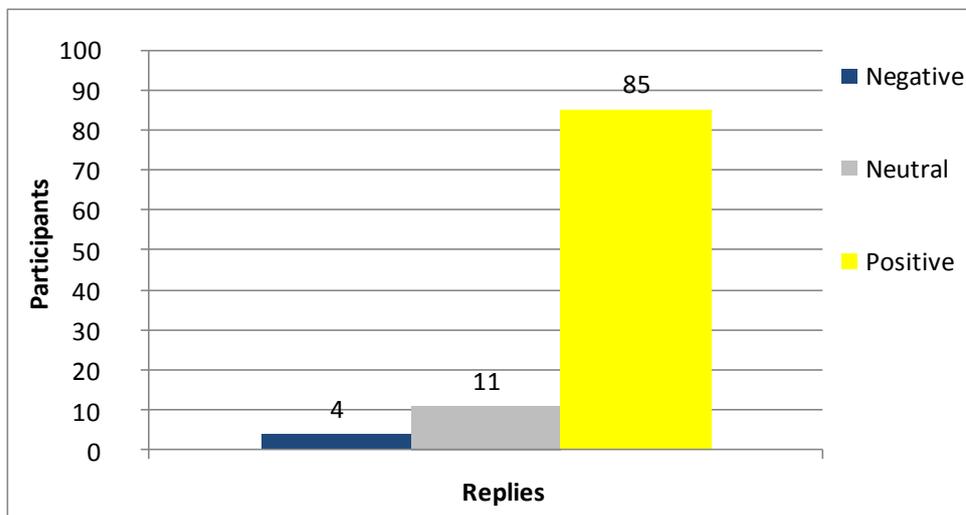
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 19:** Do all-inclusive resorts guests prefer to consume/purchase local and traditional products instead of famous international brands of food and beverage?

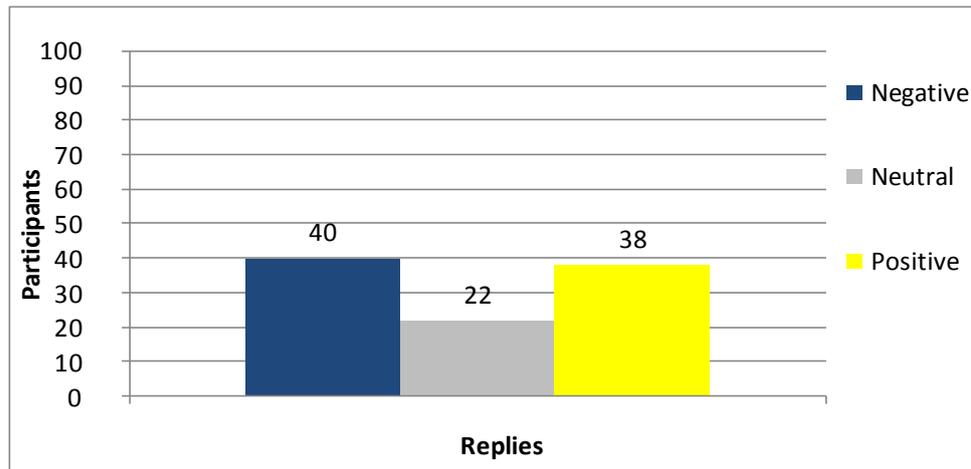
Source: author's calculations

At this point the participants were asked whether locals find the presence of cruise tourism and all-inclusive resorts in the island negative, neutral or positive. Regarding cruises (**Figure 20**), the majority of 85% said "positive", an 11% "neutral" and a 4% finds the presence "negative". Respectively, the presence of all-inclusive resort is "negative" for the 40% of the participants while 38% found it "positive" and 22% "neutral" (**Figure 21**).



**Figure 20:** Do you believe that locals find the presence of cruise tourism on the island negative, neutral or positive?

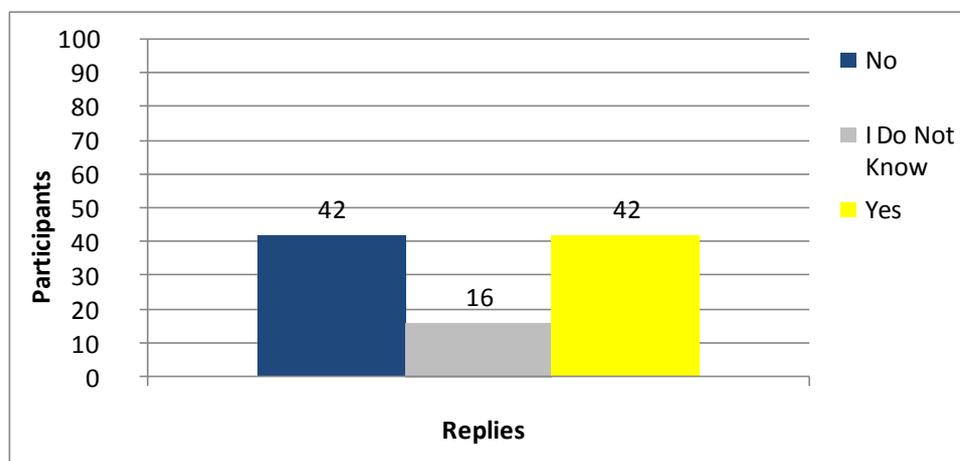
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 21:** Do you believe that locals find the presence of all-inclusive resorts on the island negative, neutral or positive?

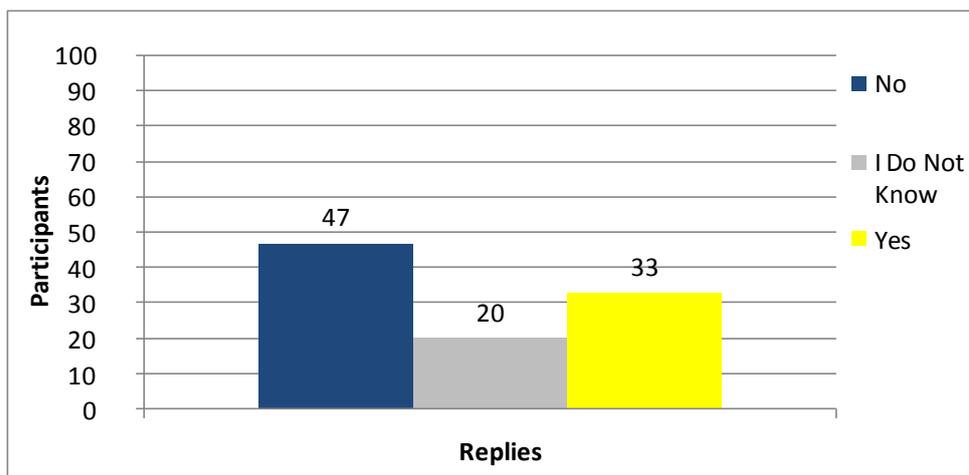
Source: author's calculations

The next question was related to the issue of seasonality and, in particular, whether cruises and all-inclusive resorts have a significant impact on the local economy outside high seasons. For cruises, (Figure 22) out of one hundred participants 42% chose "no" and 42% "yes" while 16% did not know how to answer the question. We find that the participants are being completely divided between "yes" and "no". Respectively, 47% believed that the resorts (Figure 23) do not affect the economy outside high seasons at all, while a 33% believed that they do affect it even during the low seasons. A 20% of the participants expressed their ignorance on the matter.



**Figure 22:** Does cruise tourism affect local economy outside high seasons?

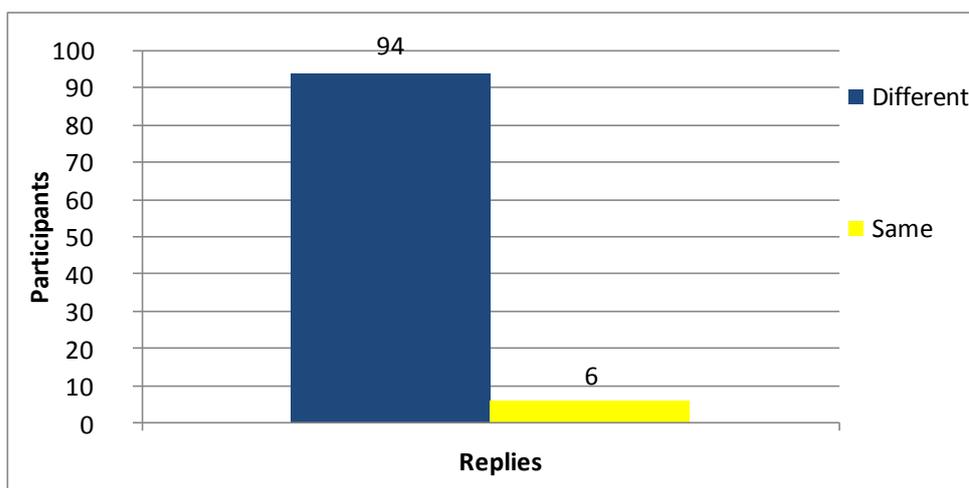
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 23:** Do all-inclusive resorts affect local economy outside high seasons?

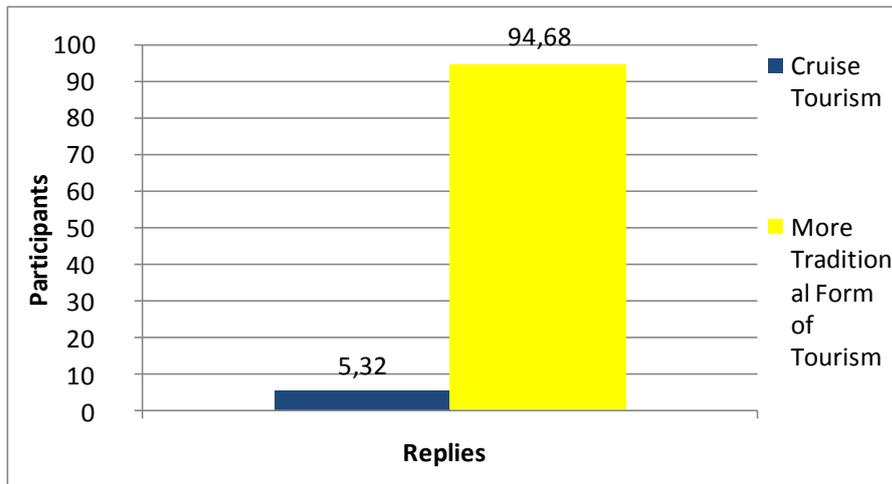
Source: author's calculations

On whether or not cruise tourism and all-inclusive resorts affect local economy in the same or in a different way than more traditional forms of tourism do, for the cruises (**Figure 24**), a striking 94% answered "different" and out of the 94 that supported that there is a difference between the two types of tourism and their functioning, the overwhelming majority of 89 respondents seemed to believe that more traditional forms of tourism are more positive for the local economy than cruises (**Figure 25**). For the all-inclusive resorts (**Figure 26**) just like with the cruise tourism, the high number of 94 individuals answered "different" and 6 said "same". Out of the ones that supported that the effect of more traditional forms of tourism and of all-inclusive resorts to the local economy is different, 91 chose more traditional forms of tourism as more profitable and positive (**Figure 27**). Only 3 participants answered differently.

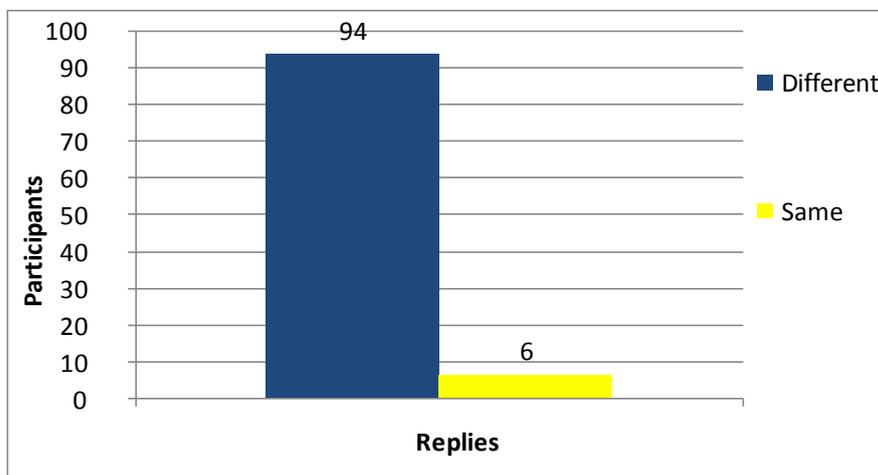


**Figure 24:** Do you believe that cruise tourism affects local economy in a same or in a different way when compared to more traditional forms of tourism?

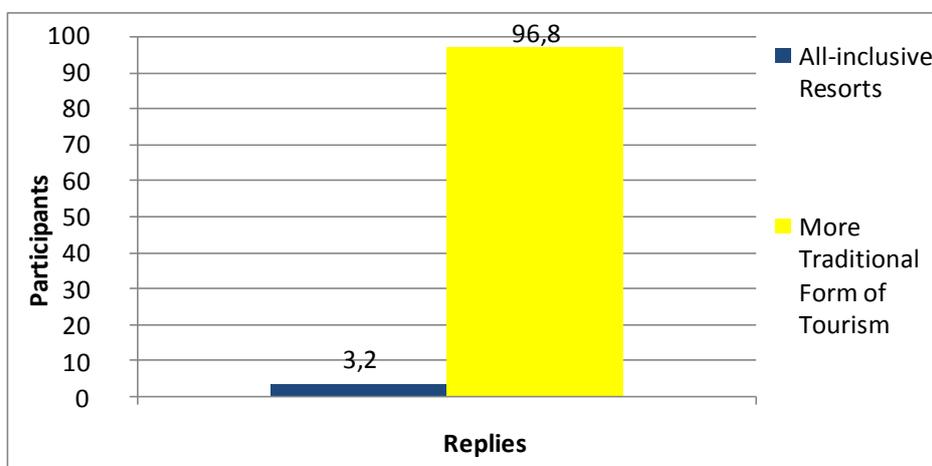
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 25:** If different, which do you think is more positive for the local economy?  
Source: author's calculations

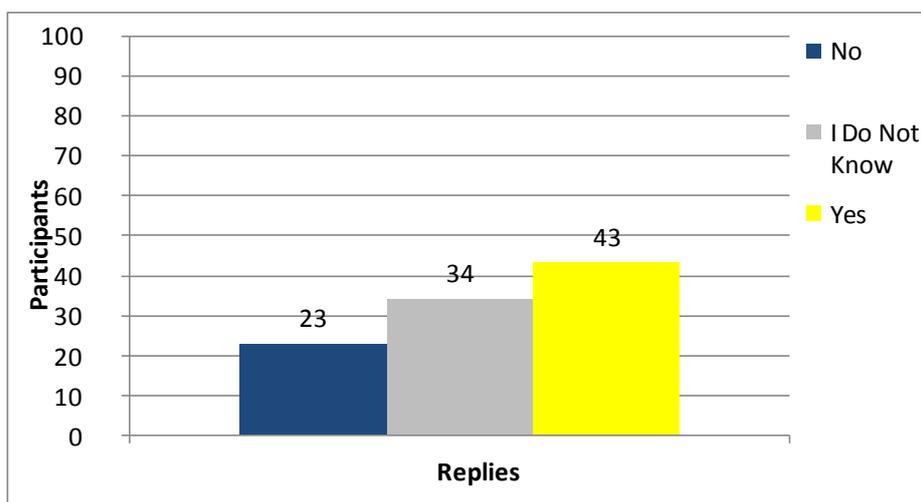


**Figure 26:** Do you believe that all-inclusive resorts guests affect local economy in a same or in a different way when compared to more traditional forms of tourism?  
Source: author's calculations



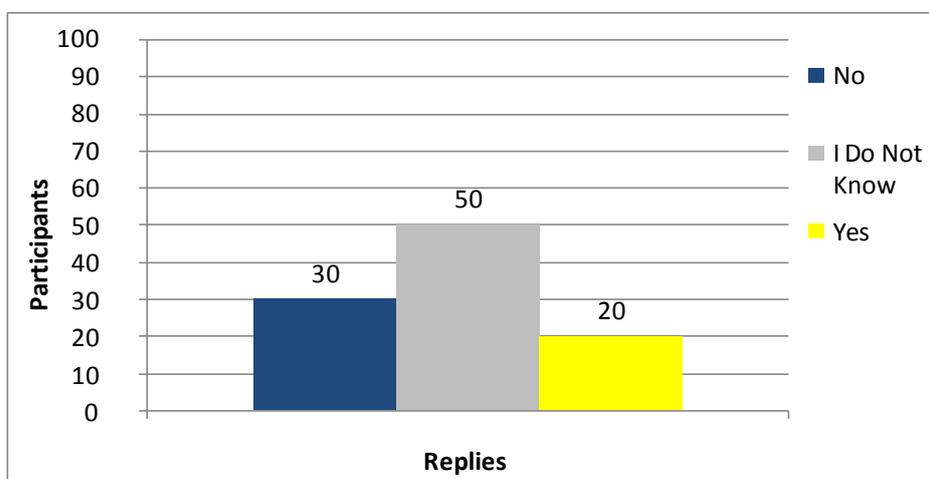
**Figures 27:** If different, which do you think is more positive for the local community?  
Source: author's calculations

On whether cruises and all-inclusive resorts are friendly to the environment, for cruises (**Figure 28**), 43% answered yes, 23% said no and a percentage of 34 expressed their ignorance on the matter. For the resorts (**Figure 29**), half of the participants (50%) replied “I do not know” supporting that there are no data or researches conducted that can inform them adequately on the matter. Of the rest, 30% said “no” and a 20% “yes”.



**Figure 28:** Is cruise tourism friendly to the environment?

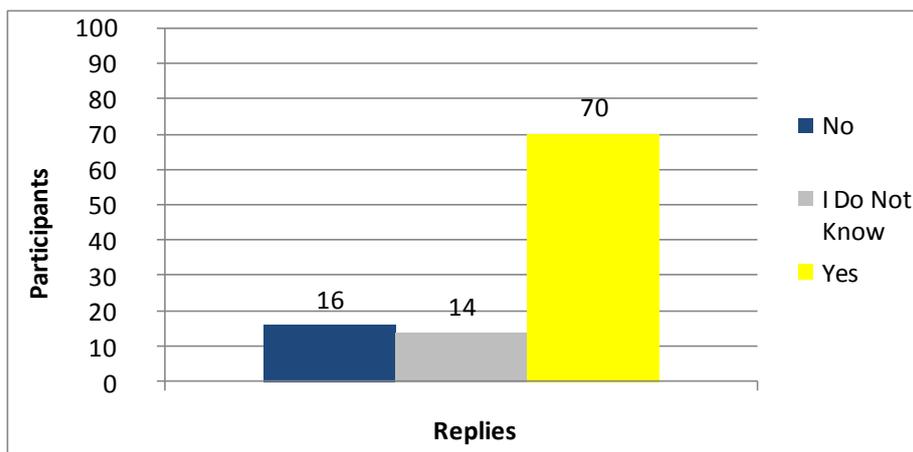
Source: author's calculations



**Figure 29:** Are all-inclusive resorts friendly to the environment?

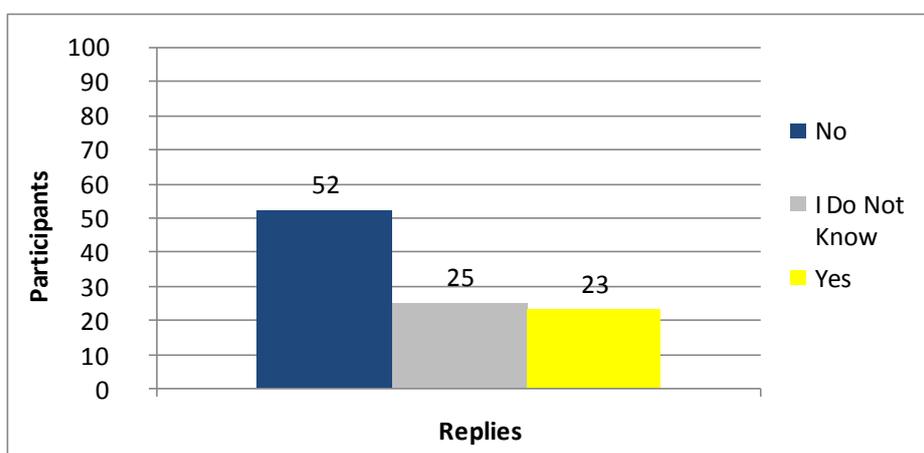
Source: author's calculations

Finally, the last question was whether or not, according always to the sentiment of the locals and to their previous answers, these types of tourism are sustainable or not. 70% of the participants answered “yes” for cruises (**Figure 30**), 16% “replied no” and 14% “I do not know” while for the resorts (**Figure 31**) a little more than half of the participants, 52% answered “no”, 23% “yes” and 25% “I do not know”.



**Figure 30:** Considering all the above do you believe that cruise tourism is a sustainable type of tourism?

Source: author's calculations



**Figure 31:** Considering all the above do you believe that all-inclusive resorts are a sustainable type of tourism?

Source: author's calculations

When it comes to the perspective of the Corfu community on the presence of the resorts on the island, the results of the questionnaires show considerable differences from the ones for cruises, deriving from the differences in the nature and functioning of the two types of tourism.

#### 4.1 Analysis of the Results

After conducting the survey and presenting its results, it is important to analyze the reasons that led to these replies. The presence of contradictions in some of the answers is undeniable and indicates that the concept of sustainability in tourism may still be quite unfamiliar to the locals.

Apropos of the presence of all-inclusive resorts in the Ionian island of Corfu the opinion of the locals appears to be clearer, given the more coherent and consistent responses. Specifically, when it comes to the effect of all-inclusive resorts on the local economy,

the majority of the locals maintained that it is negative (Figure 7). This is in agreement with the rest of their replies. The locals have had the opportunity to have a first experience with this type of tourism since the opening of Club Med, in 1952, one of the first all-inclusive resorts<sup>8</sup>. After all these years of all-inclusive resorts operating on the island, the participants have been able to familiarize themselves with them and gather empirical knowledge and information which enables them to create a clearer perception.

The majority of the locals strongly believes that all-inclusive resorts do not offer enough employment opportunities and when they do the jobs offered are seasonal (Figure 9) which is expected given the nature of this industry. Indicatively, according to the monthly reports on registered unemployment and unemployment benefits, provided by the "Manpower Employment Organization"<sup>9</sup>, in 2017, in the Ionian islands, the number of individuals occupied in tourism related jobs that received the unemployment benefit exhibited high volatility varying from 10,693 in January to 126 in July to 104 in August to 10,812 in December. Moreover, in 2017 in Greece, the tourism sector was responsible for the 49,29% of the unemployment benefits given in January but just for the 4,96% during August. This may have a significantly negative impact on the lives of the individuals occupied in seasonal jobs who depend on the allowance during low-seasons and even support more family members with it.

Among the additional negative factors that the locals have noticed over the years is that all-inclusive resorts have failed to support local activities (Figure 11) and, to make the guests engage with the culture of the host area (Figure 13), which is important in order to achieve a positive impact in the local economy and well-being of the community. It is not facile for tourists that choose all-inclusive resorts for their vacation to contribute to the local economy and interact with the locals when, according to the experience and general belief of the 67% of the locals asked, the guests do not spend enough time outside the resorts (Figure 15). Being mostly away from populated areas, these resorts accommodate great numbers of tourists that could have contributed to the local economy, had they spent more time outside the resorts. We see a divided opinion on whether, during the times these guests do leave their resort, they do indeed purchase or consume local products (Figure 19). 44% believes that they do so but a very similar percentage (39%) supports that many of these tourists, even when outside the resort, do not demonstrate any desire to meet new traditions. This highlights once again the necessity of providing more information to tourists. Taking this into account, all-inclusive resorts could change into being more profitable and positive for the host areas.

An interesting result, is the general belief of the locals regarding the effect that these resorts have onto the environment (Figure 29). A 30% does believes that the impact is negative while the 50% that answered "I do not know" specified that it is their belief that the effect is negative but, not having proof, due to the lack of official data and research, they could not answer "no" for sure. Indeed, when searching for scientific studies conducted on that matter, the findings are negligible. It is essential to show initiative and keep locals aware of the environmental impacts vast facilities, operating on their location, have on the environment.

Considering all the above, the majority of the locals seem to perceive the all-inclusive resorts, and mostly the way they operate, as not being sustainable (Figure 31). Changes

in the management, functioning and role of these facilities could turn them into being friendlier to the local community and local economy and closer to the general concept of sustainability in the foreseeable future. Additionally, locals cannot either forget or overlook that a more traditional form of tourism has been more preferable over the years and the impact of all-inclusive resorts on it has been, at times, negative. An area that has been profiting for decades by a more traditional type of tourist sees now the constantly raising popularity of these economical and highly advertised resorts and is quite worried about the future.

When it comes to cruise tourism, the results were dubious. The effect of cruise tourism, being a more recent arrival in Corfu, is, judging by the results of the questionnaires, not as clear in the minds of the locals as we notice contradictions in their replies, which did not occur with the all-inclusive section.

The overwhelming majority of locals found cruise tourism positive (Figure 6) for the local economy, however, further replies created doubts on whether something like that is true. According to the majority of the participants, cruises do not offer enough job opportunities (Figure 8) to the locals. Furthermore, opinions were divided on whether cruises affect local economy outside high season (Figure 22). As a matter of fact, according to the cruise programme provided by the port of Corfu in 2017<sup>10</sup> the number of cruise ships arriving in the island exhibited high volatility varying from only one cruise ship in January and none in February, to 69 in July and 64 in August to 1 in December. This fact raises questions regarding how beneficial and sustainable cruises can be for the local community. One reason for the locals to believe them to be so beneficial may be that, since even one ship can host more than 2,000 passengers and those will all walk on the streets of the city making their presence obvious, their judgment on that matter, is kind of vague.

Another result that indicates that cruise tourism is not actually perceived as sustainable is that a 94% of the participants considers more traditional forms of tourism to be different (Figure 24) and more desirable than cruise tourism (Figure 25). Moreover, a 48% believes that the passengers do not spend enough time outside their ship (Figure 14), which makes it impossible for them to spend enough money on the island, interact with the locals, get acquainted with the island and its history, culture and tradition and turn it into a known and appealing future destination. In 2017, according to the port of Corfu, out of the 406 cruise ships expected only 36 did actually spent the night in the port. It is true that the passengers arriving in town, during the hours that they manage to spend in it, do indeed consume and purchase local products and services. According to the study of visits, conducted in 2014 by the Port Authority of Corfu, the approximate expenditure of tourists amounts to 45,75 euros per person. More specifically, during the period considered in the research conducted by the port, 1,827 passengers spent €83.608 on the island (Port of Corfu, 2014). However, even passengers themselves complained of not having enough time on the island and additionally not obtaining adequate information for the host area's culture. Most of the respondents also complained about the facilities for the reception of the cruise passengers as being inadequate. The high expenses however, for the construction, as well as the maintenance, of such facilities, are to be covered by local governments and it is not at all certain whether they will or will not recoup their investment (Klein, 2011). Lack of transportation to and from the town, insufficient information about the

area's culture or heritage and inadequate advertising or organized excursions were some of the basic problems mentioned by the respondents.

It is, therefore, surprising that the locals believe that cruise tourism is a sustainable type of tourism. Nonetheless, this can be explained by the fact that locals are not as familiarized with cruises as they are with all-inclusive resorts. Additionally, cruise passengers, unlike all-inclusive resorts guests, do spend time in town and get to be seen by the locals, walking around the streets during high seasons. Neglecting that these passengers are there only for a few hours so they will not be entertained at night in local bars, restaurants and evening local attractions, and focusing only on their momentary presence on the island, the locals employ a different set of criteria regarding cruises. They believe that the daily purchases and the half-day stays on the island are enough to be considered profitable. But, they themselves contradict that by supporting that the time spent outside the ship is not enough, arrival in town is not easy, the jobs offered are only seasonal while traditional forms of tourism are much more preferable. At this point it must be mentioned that number of residents holds businesses near the port, a place tourists staying in town do not approach easily, while cruise passengers, when disembarking or embarking onto the ship, get to visit more easily and in higher frequency.

Overall, the majority of the locals found the presence of cruises positive (Figure 20) and sustainable (Figure 30). However, they later on contradicted themselves through the rest of their answers highlighting the fact that they may not be yet adequately familiarized with this type of tourism.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Sustainability has become the center of attention and many attempts are being made in order to ensure that the concept of sustainability is implemented at an economic, socio-cultural and, naturally, environmental level. However, this aim has yet to be achieved. Cooperation and constant improvement are of great importance and could lead towards a more sustainable future in the tourism sector.

### 5.1 Sustainability and local communities

One important aspect is to ensure that the locals are better informed regarding the ways tourism is operated and also, fully comprehend the meaning of sustainability in order to participate actively in the practice of a tourism that is sustainable in their region. Accordingly, tourists must be aware of the culture and traditions of the areas they visit and contribute to the local economy instead of being isolated and not fully aware of what host areas have to offer. Finally, the authorities and everyone responsible and related to tourism, both local and international (travel agents, hotel managements, cruise companies, tourism organizations etc) must cooperate, address the malfunctions of tourism and provide better information and possible solutions. De Carlo and Caso (2007, p. 30) argue that “the public administrations, responsible to address the economic, social and environmental policies, should convey the economic

benefits of tourism in the most proper and sustainable direction, both in a local, regional and national level” (available in Italian).

### *5.2 Sustainability in all-inclusive resorts and cruises*

All-inclusive resorts and cruises have become popular in the tourism sector over the years and their impact is intensified. Foresight is of primary importance in economy and thus, when seeing the strong position that tourism already holds as an industry, it becomes clear that vision and good management are essential in order to ensure an even stronger future performance for the sector. There are ways for these two types of tourism to follow a more sustainable path in the foreseeable future; provide more information to tourists in the resorts of the cultural treasures of the host area, bringing them in contact with the local traditions and elements through, for instance, providing entertainment that is closer to the area’s culture or serving food made with local ingredients, which will give prominence to traditional tastes and financially support local producers. It is also important to promote locations, monuments, local shops or attractions with cultural beauty and characteristics. Respectively, better information would be necessary on cruises, of the history, culture and heritage that the places the passengers are going to visit have to offer prior to their disembarkation. If tourists were more aware of what exactly the area they are visiting is, they would probably be more interested in exploring it upon their arrival. This information can be offered via brochures, organized excursions and advertising. However, it is crucial for the passengers to express, on their own accord, the necessity and desire to be aware of the culture and uniqueness each area they arrive at has to offer. All these will eventually intensify the need of tourists to meet the area and visit more places. Whether or not passengers are given the opportunity to spend enough time outside the ship is also crucial since the stress of being back on time and the limited free time may be reasons for them to neglect local attractions, museum visits, or even a simple stroll around the city in order to admire the architecture, taste some traditional food or interact with the locals. The time offered to them to spend on the island should be adequate enough so that they may include more than one activities in their program, if so desired. For that reason, adequate port facilities are necessary in order to enhance mobility and help tourists organize their schedule.

### **Conclusions**

As tourism becomes an increasingly important sector for the national economies, it must be ensured that it is sustainable. It is imperative to keep on researching the possibilities as well as the procedures that must be followed so that it can be ensured that a sector so profitable can also comply with sustainability principles. This must be done in a way that enhances the participation and support of all parties included, especially the local communities, which should be part of every future decision making process that may be related to their region. In the survey conducted the respondents provided valuable insight regarding the operation of tourism in their region which highlights how important it is to keep them constantly aware in order for them to have a say and actively participate in the practice and development of tourism. That is why

providing adequate information and achieving the full understanding of the sustainability concept by the locals is a necessity in order to prepare them and give them the tools for their active participation in the practice of a sustainable tourism.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2014/mar/08/all-inclusive-holidays-travel-ethical-tourism>

<sup>2</sup> The direct contribution is, according to the WTTC: “the contribution to GDP that is generated by industries which deal with tourists and travelers directly. That would include hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transport services, as well as all the activities of restaurant and leisure industries that deal directly with tourists”.

<sup>3</sup> That is, income “generated directly by the travel and tourism sector plus its indirect and induced impacts” (World Travel and Tourism Concern, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Hellenic Statistical Authority (2016) “Greece in Figures”, for the months from July to September, p.154 and October to December, p.154.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ypa.gr/en/profile/statistics/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.elime.gr/images/Docs/Krouaziera/2017\\_Stoixeia\\_Krouazieras\\_Synolika\\_Xoras.pdf](https://www.elime.gr/images/Docs/Krouaziera/2017_Stoixeia_Krouazieras_Synolika_Xoras.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> These results agree with the research conducted in 2014, by the Port Authority of Corfu, on 5.365 participants (3.012 passengers and 2351 crew members), according to which the majority of tourists (24,4%) spends indeed on souvenir shops and an 18,2% spends on food and beverages.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/should-all-inclusive-holidays-be-banned>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.oaed.gr/statistika-stoicheia-ana-mena>

<sup>10</sup> <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1ZvAwRWgXbXSkp6SnRLZFhZdVk/edit>