Sustainable Tourism Strategies Amidst Contemporary Crises: An Overview

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Abstract | This study addresses the impact of ongoing crises on the tourism industry and aims to provide strategic insights, essential for its sustainable advancement. Through a comprehensive analysis, the study delves into the challenges posed by these crises and their influence on the tourism sector. Recognizing the urgent need for adaptability and resilience, the article explores the key strategies and the measures taken to promote sustainability and regeneration. These strategies include the diversification of tourism offerings, the integration of technology for virtual experiences, community engagement and empowerment, adaptation to climate change, and the promotion of responsible tourism practices, among others. The research employs an overview, analyzing consequences and distilling information into a concise summary that uncovers both adverse outcomes and potential advantages. The findings emphasize the critical need for commitment to proactive sustainable practices within the tourism sector, not only as a choice, but as an essential responsibility for stakeholders across the globe. The study encourages further research into evolving practices to guide adaptive strategies, underlining the necessity of a sustainable approach in the ever-changing tourism landscape.

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1. Introduction

Crisis is defined as an unsettled circumstance in which a decisive change is necessary, carrying the clear risk of a highly undesirable outcome (Yahya et al., 2021). The categorization of crises is extensively discussed by researchers. In the global literature, crises are classified in diverse ways, encompassing criteria such as the geographical scope of the crisis, the magnitude of the damage it imposes, its duration, the root causes, the affected population size, and the predictability of the crisis. It is noteworthy to highlight, that crises, along with their management, undergo a distinct life cycle (Poulaki, 2023). This recognition provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing various dimensions of crises across different contexts (Poulaki, 2023). Various types of crises, including natural, financial, technological, social, and organizational, have afflicted our world, creating disruption in nearly every aspect of our lives. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly severe, posing significant challenges. Additionally, the looming threat of climate change is causing irreversible harm to Earth's ecosystems (Giourgali & Poulaki, 2023). Compounding these challenges is the current surge in violent conflicts, reaching levels unprecedented since the conclusion of World War II. According to the United Nations (UN) (2022), a quarter of the global population resides in countries affected by war.

As Europe is the world's leading tourist destination, tourism is a crucial factor in the development of many regions, especially the less developed ones. The sector has undergone substantial transformations due to various recent crises (Flores & Costa, 2022). In response to these challenges, the need for sustainable tourism strategies has become more urgent than ever. Sustainable tourism is not only an ethical choice, but a necessity for the long-term viability of industry. This article provides a comprehensive insight into sustainable tourism strategies amidst contemporary crises, exploring how the industry can adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

2. Theoretical Framework

Recent tourism crises

A crisis consists of any significant occurrence that causes uncertainty and poses threats to industries, businesses, or organisations (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). The authors characterise as recent tourism crises those that had a direct impact on the tourism sector in the last decade. The impacts of crises are not uniform across all sectors. The vulnerability of the tourism

industry stands out due to its reliance on the collaboration of various sectors and the distinctive features of its products, which are intangible and perishable (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). The tourism sector has been significantly shaped by crises stemming from factors such as wars, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, diseases, economic instabilities, biosafety concerns, and more (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). Maditinos and Vassiliadis, mentioned in their research in 2008, that there are five types of crises that affect the global tourism industry. These include war or conflict manifestations, terrorism attacks, major criminal acts or crime, major natural disasters causing damage to urban areas, and health concerns related to epidemics and diseases (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). Over the past decade, the tourism industry has grappled with all these distinct types of crises. Consequently, it is imperative to implement robust and decisive measures to address the posed challenges. More in detail, some of the key events directly affecting the tourism sector are the following:

(i) The COVID-19 Pandemic, which emerged in 2019, stands out as the most notable and far-reaching crisis of the past decade (Flores & Costa, 2022). The tourism and hospitality industries were the worst affected industries globally, as the pandemic led to travel restrictions, lockdowns, and a sharp decline in international and domestic tourism (Hussain, 2021). In 2019, Europe received approximately the 51% of the global inbound tourist traffic. The following year, the pandemic caused a 70% decline in international arrival. The closure of borders and the fear of contagion profoundly affected the tourism sector. Airlines, hotels, and tourist attractions experienced unprecedented disruptions, livelihoods faced important risks and the region's economy dealt with severe damages (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). Concerns about the spread of diseases, even beyond their epicenters, can lead to travel restrictions, cancellations, and a decline in tourism demand.

(ii) Economic and financial crises pose both challenges and potential advantages for the tourism industry (Khalid et al., 2019). In terms of challenges, consumers tend to reduce their spendings, leading to a decrease in the demand for international tourism services, declines in both leisure, business travel and investments. This on its turn might cause stagnation and job losses. For instance, around 2015, Greece experienced a significant drop in tourist arrivals as potential visitors were deterred by reports of economic instability, frequent protests, and strikes, particularly those affecting transportation and public services. The crisis was mitigated through substantial efforts to improve infrastructure, output quality, enhance competitiveness

and better pricing (Pegkas, 2022). On the other hand, the opportunities include the resilience and robustness that the tourism sector displays, contrasting many other sectors. In these instances, the tourism sector has the potential to assist economies in mitigating the negative effects of economic and financial crises (Khalid et al., 2019).

(iii) Terrorism attacks, including notable incidents such as the Paris attacks in 2015, the Brussels bombings in 2016, Barcelona Attacks in 2017, New Zealand Shootings in 2019 and the most recent Sri Lanka Easter Bombings in 2019. These terror acts have obvious negative impact on tourism, as tourists frequently find themselves as the deliberate targets of these acts (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). There is often the perception that tourism embodies the principles of capitalism and conspicuous consumption. Consequently, an attack on tourists can symbolize expression of ideological opposition to these values. In regions where tourism is supported or sponsored by the state, an assault on tourists takes on an additional layer of significance, as a direct attack on the government (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008).

(iv) The exigent challenge of climate change represents a significant hurdle for society, one that is increasingly influencing tourism sector, affecting aspects such as investment, planning, operations, and demand (Scott, 2021). Extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and changing landscapes can damage infrastructure, disrupt travel plans, and negatively influence the appeal of certain destinations. The intricate relationship between climate change and tourism is also characterized by the concentrations of greenhouse gases, the primary drivers of the current climate changes, which are escalating at unprecedented rates in geological records (Scott, 2021). Projections indicate a concerning growth in CO_2 emissions from tourism until 2035, posing significant implications for the industry (Scott, 2021). This decade is decisive for ensuring the sustainability of tourism and align the industry with global targets.

(v) Natural disasters. In recent years, there seems to be an increased frequency of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and wildfires. Several wildfires, poor air quality, and safety concerns directly affect many popular tourist destinations, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and coastal areas. These have directly affected tourism in the affected regions, where they experience a decline in tourism due to concerns about safety. The consequences are significant, particularly given that many regions heavily dependent on tourism for economic sustenance are being adversely affected (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008).

(vi) Political unrest and instability in certain countries have led to declines in tourism. Both war and political instability can extend their impact to neighboring countries not directly involved in any conflict (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). Regions experiencing conflicts or sudden political changes often see a significant reduction in visitor numbers due to safety concerns and travel advisories causing fear and uncertainty. A clear example is Romania, where tourism has been significantly affected by the war in Ukraine. Potential tourists are seeking safer destinations, leading to a 40%-50% decrease in arrivals at Romanian borders compared to 2019 (Gilet-Dobrota & Dridea, 2023).

(vii) Seasonality and overtourism are gaining importance with the expansion of tourism, particularly in conventional destinations like capitals and renowned islands. Overtourism manifests in various ways, including seasonal rise in prices, decreases in service quality, extended queues, heightened pressure on carrying capacity, congestion, and severe traffic jams (Bozkurt & İçöz, 2021). Additionally, the escalating cost of living for residents, driven by increased prices and worsening environmental issues, stands out as a major negative outcome of overtourism (Bozkurt & İçöz, 2021). Consequently, public authorities are actively seeking solutions for destinations, exploring measures such as visitor number restrictions or temporary visitation bans to address these undesirable consequences.

(viii) The energy crisis was caused by several factors, including the worldwide push to cut down carbon emissions, the depletion of fossil fuel reserves stemming from divestment in fossil fuels, the suspension of oil production due to the pandemic and the war between Ukraine and Russia (Ozili & Ozen, 2023). The rise in gasoline prices coincided with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in 2021 and the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 (Ozili & Ozen, 2023). The energy crisis has impacted the tourism industry in various ways including a notable impact on winter tourism, especially in ski resorts across Europe. The high cost of energy for heating and operating ski lifts, producing technical snow, grooming slopes, and heating buildings, led to increased prices for ski passes and accommodations, heightened transportation costs and limited mobility due to increased fairs. Some resorts faced operational challenges, such as reduced hours of operation or delayed openings (Polderman et al., 2020). Moreover, it has triggered economic repercussions by impacting the disposable income of households, potentially prompting shifts in preferences and demands due to environmental concerns.

Table 1. Current Crises and their Impact on Tourism

Crisis	Impact on the Tourism Sector
(i) COVID-19 Pandemic	Widespread travel restrictions, lockdowns, and a sharp decline in international and domestic tourism.
(ii) Economic and Financial Crises	The impacts of an economic or financial crisis on tourism depend on the nature of the crisis. A debt crisis for instance, may result in the devaluation of a currency, leading to more affordable tourism services and subsequently boosting it. Conversely, during an inflation crisis, tourism services could become more costly, leading to a decrease in tourism flows.
(iii) Terrorist Attacks	Caused fear and uncertainty, resulting in declines in visitor numbers. Furthermore, these acts also have impacts on several travel and tourist procedures in order for the responsible authorities to adopt security measures.
(iv) Climate Change	Extreme weather events, rising sea levels affected tourism through damage to infrastructure and changing landscapes, investment, planning, operations, and demand.
(v) Disaster Risks	Earthquakes, hurricanes, wildfires led to declines in tourism due to destruction of infrastructure and safety concerns.
(vi) Political Unrest and Instability	Conflicts, civil unrest, and sudden political changes led to significant reductions in tourism due to safety concerns and travel advisories, affecting the economic vitality of the regions.
(vii) Overtourism	Some of the major negative outcomes caused by overtourism include seasonality, price spikes, lower service quality, long queues, congestion, escalating living costs for locals and worsening environmental issues.
(viii) Energy Crisis	Heightened transportation costs and limited mobility, economic repercussions and shifts in preferences and demands of destinations.
(ix) Health Concerns and Epidemics	Substantial impacts mainly driven by the worries of potential tourists about health and food safety. Instances such as the Ebola crisis resulted in travel limitations, cancellations, and reduced tourism demand due to health-related concerns. The ease of disease spread in the current era of global travel is a significant concern, prompting the broad categorization of entire continents based on these considerations.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

These crises with their distinct set of challenges, highlight the vulnerability of the tourism sector to a range of external factors. Apart from the above crises which are of an international character, there are others with regional or even local impact on destinations, ie the Refugee

Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean (Poulaki, 2023). The industry's capacity to withstand and adjust to these challenges is crucial for its future sustainable development. Undoubtedly, travel flows are heavily affected by concurrent crises, thus relevant literature suggests tools in order to predict such challenges (Poulaki, 2023). In any case, destinations must find forms of innovation that simultaneously ensure their economic survival, environmental protection and social well-being of tourists (Costa & Brandão, 2011). Hence, more holistic management approaches and actions are necessary, to make assumptions for the future and recover the damages (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022).

Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined as being linked to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects that underpin the development of tourism. This approach has emerged with the aim of mitigating the accumulated damage and negative effects of various tourism activities. Aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainable tourism is guided by a set of principles aimed at steering the industry towards a more responsible and eco-friendly trajectory (Santos et al., 2021). These principles encompass key environmental indicators that play a crucial role in shaping the industry's impact, such as climate change mitigation, reduction of pollution, the integration of renewable energy sources, and effective waste disposal practices. Addressing issues related to sustainable tourism necessitates special attention, as sustainability is not a static destination but an ever-evolving process navigating the complexities of tourism development (Santos et al., 2021).

During the past years and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a profound decline in the travel and tourism sector, which has prompted a period of reflection and exploration that would lead to a robust and sustainable recovery. This recovery aims to not only support local communities and generate employment, but also to promote culture and innovative resilience models (Duxbury et al., 2020). Sustainability has often been used in business to move towards gradual, low-impact changes over extended periods, neglecting the integration of essential elements needed to run a holistically sustainable business. In some instances, companies allocate more resources to promoting their sustainability efforts than actually implementing them, leading to a propensity for greenwashing (Hussain & Haley, 2022). As consumer awareness of greenwashing grows, they seek assurances from third-party certifications, creating consumer confusion and harming consumer trust.

One of the concepts within the emerging practices promoting sustainability in tourism, is regenerative tourism (Duxbury et al., 2020). This concept acknowledges the interconnectedness of natural and social environments, and recognises that visitors and destinations are part of a living system, connected to the natural environment, following nature's rules (Hussain, 2021). While sustainable tourism treats tourism as an industry, regenerative tourism is aligning with living systems at local levels and emphasizing inclusivity and harmony with economic development (Bellato et al., 2022). Regenerative tourism operates on the principle of a sector renewing itself and thriving in ever-changing situations, without much human interference (Hussain, 2021). The term "sustainable" is not more than mere longevity, where in contrast the term "regenerative" implies the capacity to bring back into existence (Hussain & Haley, 2022). It is crucial to recognize that sustainable solutions may lack long-term viability if they do not possess intrinsic regenerative qualities. While sustainability preserves existing systems, it falls short in restoring lost ecosystems (Hussain & Haley, 2022). The crucial challenge here, lies in balancing human intervention, marketing, and tourism product development, as these may interfere with natural recovery processes (Hussain, 2021).

In order to create a symbiotic relationship, tourism should involve practices such as environmental improvement, biodiversity restoration, cultural enhancement and economic well-being and resilience within host communities (Hussain & Haley, 2022). Regenerative approaches are rooted in systems that pave the way for positive outcomes, going beyond merely minimizing damage. Unlike the conventional focus of sustainable tourism, regenerative tourism shifts its attention towards utilizing tourism as a tool for revitalization, emphasizing on actively contributing to the regeneration of communities, cultures, heritage sites, landscapes, and more (Duxbury et al., 2020).

Emerging methods of measuring tourism success are beginning to prioritize well-being and healing, where understanding worldviews, and natural processes are essential prerequisites (Bellato & Pollock, 2023). According to Dredge (2022:270), "regenerative tourism is emerging as an ontological shift in the way we understand, approach and act with respect to travel and tourism, while it seeks to ensure that travel and tourism delivers a net positive benefit to people, places and nature, and supports the long-term renewal and flourishing of our social and ecological systems". Notwithstanding, regenerative tourism differs significantly from sustainable tourism as it focuses on enhancing entire systems for regeneration, rather than merely managing socioecological impacts while also pursuing

endless economic growth. Nonetheless, within the ecological sector, sustainability is acknowledged as a vital and interlinked component of the regeneration process. The distinctions between the two approaches have some fundamental differences and while both aim to benefit future generations, sustainable tourism aims to minimize social-ecological damage, whereas regenerative tourism seeks to create positive effects on these systems. Although there are fundamental elements in a regenerative approach, only a few communities, associations, or companies have committed the necessary time and resources to understand its system-changing implications (Bellato & Pollock, 2023). The increasing scientific interest in regenerative tourism suggests a growing appeal among enterprises in embracing regenerative approaches and practices (Bellato et al., 2022). One significant application of regenerative tourism, lies in the rejuvenation of tourist destinations that have suffered from the adverse effects of mass tourism. Additionally, it can serve for marginalized landscapes, communities, or places that may not be traditional tourist destinations, but possess the potential to become such. Regardless of the specific applications, such strategies must explicitly prioritize the well-being of the local communities, ensuring that the growth of tourism aligns with the principles of sustainability and regeneration (Duxbury et al., 2020).

Applied Sustainability Initiatives:

In response to the ongoing crises affecting the tourism sector, a range of innovative strategies and practices are being implemented to enhance sustainable transition and resilience within the industry. These initiatives are geared towards minimizing environmental impact, supporting local communities, promoting inclusivity and collaboration and ensuring long-term viability. There is an acknowledged need to enhance the development of natural, historical, and cultural assets of cities and regions, focusing on fostering development, encouraging innovation, and finding a balance between human activities and the environment (Flores & Costa, 2022). The European Union (EU) has committed to a smarter, greener, and sustainable Europe, by promoting innovative and smart economic transformations, circular economy, access to inclusive and quality services in education and training, and integration of marginalized communities (Flores & Costa, 2022). Moreover, the EU has established an agenda for the coming years, that aims to make Europe better prepared in handling crises. Regarding tourism, the EU is actively promoting sustainable tourism practices, emphasizing in conservation, responsible travel, and the development of eco-friendly initiatives (EU

Council, 2022). Preserving and promoting Europe's rich cultural heritage is a key aspect of the EU's tourism agenda, while also working towards making tourism more accessible and inclusive for all (EU Council, 2022). Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on embracing digital technologies to enhance tourism experiences, improve accessibility, and facilitate innovation in the sector. Addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU is focused on supporting the recovery of the sector providing financial aid, safety protocols, and collaborative efforts (EU Council, 2022). These actions encompass several categories, such as the following:

Eco-Friendly Infrastructures and Practices:

Tourism establishments and destinations are progressively embracing eco-friendly practices as part of their commitment to sustainable operations (Giourgali, 2022). Efficient utilization of environmental resources is necessary, requiring careful preservation of essential ecological processes and active contribution to biodiversity conservation. These practices include the adoption of renewable energy sources, the implementation of waste reduction initiatives, and the incorporation of sustainable building materials and designs. The overarching goal of such efforts is to mitigate the industry's carbon footprint and promote sustainable energy usage. Moreover, in response to the pressing need for environmental conservation, the hotel industry is embracing ecological practices and supporting eco-friendly hotels through grants and certifications (Melnyk & Moshura, 2020). The key characteristics of these environmentally conscious hotels are rooted in factors like their reliance on the natural environment, commitment to environmental sustainability, contributions to conservation efforts, consideration of local cultures, provision of economic benefits to the local communities, and adherence to strict "green" principles ensuring safe, non-toxic, and energy-efficient accommodations (Melnyk & Moshura, 2020).

Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Contemporary visitors have an increased interest on genuine connections with the host communities, aspiring to engage in meaningful interactions and maintain authenticity (Silva et al., 2019). The fair distribution of employment and income opportunities in the host communities, contribute to ensuring the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, sustainable and long-term economic functions, as well as poverty alleviation. (Flores & Costa, 2022). A study made by Silva et al., in 2019, in the city of Porto in Portugal, showed that while tourism positively contributes to employment rates among locals, it does

not necessarily translate into increased family incomes. Instead, the economic benefits of tourism concentrated within families directly linked to the tourism sector. This underscores the need for strategic measures to broaden the distribution of economic benefits within the entire host communities. A sustainable tourism destination should involve local community, integrate residents and foster positive relationships between tourists and locals. This involvement is crucial in ensuring that the economic advantages of tourism growth extend beyond a select few families and diffuse through the entire community (Silva et al., 2019). This approach ensures a more equitable distribution of tourism benefits, granting local communities a space in decision-making processes that impact them, and understanding the uniqueness of each place (Duxbury et al., 2020). Practices such as promoting cultural preservation, collaborations with indigenous communities and sharing of their values and aspirations, facilitate dialogue between different actors and sectors, and contribute significantly to cultivating a heightened sense of empowerment within local communities. Engaging the community has demonstrated considerable power and benefits. Research affirms that the inclusion of people in decision-making processes leads to increased protection of resources and cultural heritage. This sense of ownership and responsibility not only benefits the preservation of unique local attributes but also enhances the overall sustainability and resilience of tourism initiatives. The central idea of this initiative is to rethink tourism in terms of social and ecological justice, advocating for a shift towards prioritizing the rights, interests, and knowledge held by local communities. There is a need to make tourism serve the public good and prioritize social and ecological considerations over profit and growth (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

Digitalization and Innovation:

The use of technology to enhance sustainability has been a growing trend. The integration of technology within the tourism sector brings multiple benefits such as simplifying processes, optimizing resource use and reducing waste. Practices such as green certification programs, smart destination management systems, community-based platforms and artificial intelligence (AI) for resource optimization can drive the industry towards sustainability, offering solutions to preserve natural resources, protect cultural heritage, and support local communities. Digital platforms and smart destination management systems, facilitate efficient booking systems and enable data-driven decision-making, aiding in better resource management and minimizing environmental impact. CSR is also a fundamental pillar for smart hospitality. Customers are more loyal to organisations that actively participate in fostering a sustainable environment by

minimizing waste, promoting recycling, conserving energy, and contributing to their communities. As the demand for high-quality service continues to rise, hotels find themselves under pressure to enhance their environmental practices. By implementing these practices, organizations can effectively optimize energy consumption while fostering eco-friendliness and reducing carbon footprints. When integrated with smart city initiatives, these efforts not only enhance corporate social responsibility (CSR) but also align with and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals. The integration of smart hospitality operations within destination and hospitality ecosystems further facilitates the creation of sustainable and eco-friendly environments (Buhalis et al., 2023).

Resilience:

Resilience, is a system's ability to swiftly return to its normal after a disturbance, or its capacity to endure various changing conditions. Resilient organizations prepare and adapt to changes, during or after a shock (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). In industries, resilience is defined as the capability to manage crises effectively, securing stability and flexibility for further development. The tourism industry currently lacks the necessary resilience to withstand major external shocks, and tourism entities are actively developing strategies to mitigate the impacts of crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, or political instability. These strategies involve contingency planning, crisis communication, insurance mechanisms, and flexibility in operations to swiftly adapt to changing circumstances (Giourgali, 2022). The key to recovery lies in rebuilding the travelers' confidence through a focus on prevention, anticipation, risk management, and scenario planning. Resilient such as emergency response plans, risk assessment mechanisms, resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, diversification of offerings and communication channels to mitigate risks, enhance preparedness, and ensure the long-term viability of tourism destinations and businesses. The measurement of resilience can take a qualitative approach assessing stability and efficiency, as well as a quantitative approach, considering economic indicators such as employment and unemployment (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). Equally important, is the respect for the authenticity of the host destinations, preserving the cultural heritage, values and tradition. In this, cross-cultural understanding and tolerance is essential (Giourgali, 2022). Policymakers have a range of measures at their disposal to foster greater synergy between tourism and destination resilience. These include the implementation of accommodation regulations, the protection of historical sites, more equitable distribution of tourism profits to bolster local businesses and exercising control efforts to regulate prices and the cost of living (Silva et al., 2019). These

measures collectively aim to enable communities to uphold their quality of life while simultaneously benefiting from the positive aspects of tourism.

Scenario planning

Scenario planning contains features such as creativity and risk management. It serves to foster understanding, clarify risks, acknowledge uncertainties and depict likely futures. Scenarios aiming to envision the long-term future of the world prove beneficial for organizations, enabling preparedness for potential challenges. Consequently, the significance of scenario planning in tourism and hospitality plays a crucial role in fostering resilience and long-term viability, as it allows companies to anticipate the future and adopt proactive behaviors in the face of events like wars, terrorism, and pandemics. However, the accuracy of scenarios, particularly in predicting tourism demand, holds vital importance for the industry practitioners (Seyitoğlu & Costa, 2022). Given the unpredictable nature of crises, scenario planning emerges as a crucial tool for making assumptions about the future of the tourism industry and preparing for uncertainties.

Education and Awareness Campaigns:

Education and awareness campaigns can encourage sustainable behaviors and practices among individuals and communities. Public awareness campaigns are an important element of influencing people's attitudes. They advocate for environmental actions, encourage positive shifts in behavior, and enhance overall awareness of ecological issues (Borawska, 2017). Some actions of such kind can include environmental education programs, cultural experiences, responsible tourism campaigns, sustainable tourism certification or labels, community engagement and storytelling. These can help raise awareness, inspire action, and shift perceptions about the role of tourism in sustainable development. Education is key in fostering changes in behavior patterns, and it is essential to customize approaches based on the specific behaviors and community characteristics being addressed. Tourism stakeholders are engaging in educational campaigns to raise awareness about responsible tourism practices. Travelers are being encouraged to minimize their environmental impact, respect local cultures, and contribute to community development through responsible spending and donations.

These evolving practices collectively represent a proactive approach to ensuring the sustainability and resilience of the tourism sector amidst challenging times, ultimately contributing to its long-term vitality and growth. Achieving sustainable tourism requires

continuous monitoring of impacts and refocusing with the necessary corrective measures whenever necessary (Giourgali, 2022). Despite the availability of numerous guidelines, plans and toolbooks, it has been observed that many destination planners are grappling with confusion regarding the concept of regenerative tourism its practical applications. Responses often vary widely, from a general sense of uncertainty and ambiguity about the principles and practices involved, to strong sentiments of resistance (Pung et al., 2024).

3. Methods

The authors initiated their research by conducting a comprehensive analysis aimed at evaluating the direct and indirect consequences brought about by recent large-scale crises on the tourism industry. The decision to explore on this matter stemmed from the following fundamental questions:

-   Are steps being taken to avert or better react to forthcoming tourism crises?

-   Does regenerative tourism truly represent the future of the industry, addressing the enduring needs of tour operators, and ensuring the sustainability and resilience of local communities?

The analysis specifically honed in on the most recent major crises and their repercussions on the tourism product, concentrating on mapping the nature and scope of the existing literature and distill the information into a concise summary that serves as a valuable tool for uncovering both unfavorable outcomes and potential advantages. Additionally, the authors conducted thorough background research on the subject of interest, which played a pivotal role in embracing a multitude of perspectives and establishes the initial step in further exploring how destination planners, travelers, local communities, and other stakeholders are attempting to implement regenerative tourism principles. Systematically analysing the positioning of regenerative tourism in relation to sustainable tourism and exploring the intricate relationship between adaptation, sustainability, and tourism; the research aimed to identify their distinctness and transformative potential. All the information presented in this study was gathered from authoritative scientific databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus. The authors also examined the latest secondary sources, including articles, newspapers, books, and reviews, ensuring that the most pertinent and up-to-date information was included while maintaining an objective evaluation of the studies. The selection criteria for the literature were based on the relevance to the topic and the publication date. A total of

62 articles have been gathered and analysed, of which 31 have been selected as relevant and were consequently cited in this research.

4. Results

Employing a systematic literature review, the authors diligently analysed the consequences of recent large-scale crises on the tourism industry. Simultaneously, they investigated the innovative strategies and practices that are being implemented to enhance sustainable transition and resilience, in response to these crises. The focus was on distilling information from diverse sources, consolidating it into a concise summary that uncovers both adverse outcomes and potential advantages. Extensive background research was conducted, embracing a multitude of perspectives and systematically exploring the intricate relationship between crises, sustainable transition, regeneration and tourism. Data were sourced from authoritative scientific databases, ensuring the inclusion of the most up-to-date information while maintaining an objective evaluation of the studies. The main outcomes of this study emphasize the significance of the integration of sustainable practices within the tourism sector, geared towards minimizing environmental impacts, supporting local communities, and ensuring the industry's enduring strength. The results have yielded valuable insights, extending from the current state to future considerations. The key findings emphasize on:

Impact of crises in tourism:

As previously mentioned, there is a significant effort put on supporting and financing sustainability though the current numerous crises. The tourism industry has experienced significant disruptions due to recent crises, leading to reductions in travel, substantial economic losses, and notable shifts in tourist behavior. These crises have underscored the sector's vulnerabilities, particularly its over-reliance on specific markets and destinations, making the need for diversification and resilience more apparent. As travelers adjust their preferences, the industry must adapt to the changes to mitigate the impact of future disruptions and foster sustainable growth.

Sustainability and Resilience Strategies:

Stakeholders at various levels, including governments, the European Union, tourism organizations, and businesses, are actively engaged in formulating comprehensive

sustainability plans and embracing eco-friendly practices, emphasizing the need for a strong commitment and unified policies to drive sustainable development. Various innovative strategies are being implemented, emphasizing the development of natural, historical, and cultural assets, the focus is on fostering growth, encouraging innovation, and striking a balance between human activities and the environment. The EU's agenda prioritizes crisis preparedness, particularly in the context of tourism, where sustainable practices, conservation, responsible travel, and eco-friendly initiatives are actively promoted. The visual representation in Figure 1 below, provides an overview of distinct categories representing the current initiatives investigated in the context of this research:

Figure 1. "Strategic initiatives for sustainable tourism"
Source: Authors' own elaboration

These practices collectively embody a forward-thinking strategy, aimed at ensuring sustainability and resilience in the tourism sector in the face of challenges. The pursuit of sustainable tourism necessitates an ongoing process of impact assessment and readiness to apply corrective measures whenever necessary. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight the importance of a thorough reevaluation of the role played by tourism destinations in fostering resilience and sustainability. This can result in meaningful and inspiring transformations in individuals, while acknowledging that achieving this goal universally may not always be feasible. Tourism experiences have the potential to serve as possible solutions and tools

fostering elements such as meaning, purpose, reflection, and interconnection (Nandasena et al., 2023).

<u>Future Considerations:</u>

Sustainable tourism requires continuous impact assessment and a readiness to implement corrective measures to ensure its positive evolution. Reevaluating the roles of tourism destinations in promoting resilience and sustainability is essential, as this can lead to significant transformations in individuals and communities, even though universal achievement may not always be feasible. Furthermore, tourism experiences have the potential to foster a sense of meaning, purpose, reflection, and interconnection, contributing significantly to overall sustainability and resilience. By embracing these principles, the tourism industry can support both environmental and communities' well-being. The researchers aim to further explore the practical applications of the aforementioned practices by conducting a thorough examination and a series of interviews with key tourism stakeholders, starting with those in Greece. The study will delve into the real-world impact of these practices on the tourism industry, assessing their effectiveness, challenges, and benefits. By gathering insights directly from industry professionals and local communities, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these practices are being implemented on the ground. This initial focus on Greece will serve as a case study, offering valuable lessons that can be applied to other regions. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on crises management and sustainable tourism development, enhancing the sector's resilience.

5. Conclusion

This paper marks a groundbreaking effort to analyze, explore, and assess the existing literature on sustainability efforts, while providing a holistic understanding of the current crises' impact on the tourism industry. Through a methodical exploration of the intricacies presented by the identified challenges, the research presents a theoretically oriented review, focusing on two main research inquiries: understanding the influence of ongoing crises on the tourism sector and discerning the measures taken to promote sustainability in the face of these challenges. This research highlights the emergence of new practices for measuring tourism success, and calls attention to the prioritization of well-being, regeneration, ethics, the understanding of diverse worldviews and broader socio-environmental impacts. Regarding the

noted resistance or poor application of regenerative practices, it can arise from various factors, including a lack of clear understanding of how to effectively implement regenerative tourism strategies, concerns about the potential impact on existing frameworks, and distress about the resources required to adopt such approaches. Embracing a holistic approach considering all that, necessitates investment in training programs, research that extends beyond the tourism field, and implementation of continuous assessment mechanisms.

Some limitations that have been faced during the study of the effects of ongoing crises on the tourism sector and the initiatives for sustainability, should be acknowledged. One limitation to consider involves the specific context and impact of each crisis. The consequences can vary significantly among diverse regions, countries, and types of tourism. Therefore, achieving generalizations is challenging, as the proposed strategies may not uniformly exhibit the same intensity and effects on a global scale. It is essential to recognize the nuanced nature of these impacts and tailor strategies to the unique circumstances of each location. Finally, another difficulty that this study is facing, is the assessment of long-term effects. Ongoing crises can have enduring and evolving impacts on the tourism sector, making it inherently difficult to accurately predict or assess the long-term consequences. Finally, another limitation of this study lies in its theoretical nature. To expand the framework and enhance the understanding of these tourism approaches, empirical studies, case observations, and developmental experiments should be conducted. For this reason, the researchers plan to further investigate the practical applications of the discussed practices within the Greek sector, as previously mentioned. By acknowledging these limitations, the study emphasizes the ongoing commitment required for assessing and fostering sustainable practices in the dynamic landscape of the tourism sector.

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