

ICOT2026
Mytilene, Greece, 24-27 June

**BOOK of
ABSTRACTS**



International Conference on Tourism (ICOT2026)

Next-Generation Tourism:
Innovation, Sustainability and Traveler Diversity

Organized by



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CONFERENCE AIM

The ICOT2026 conference builds on the eminent support of the international scholarly community and the success of the previous fourteen International Conferences on Tourism (ICOT) held in China, Thailand, United Kingdom, Italy, Portugal, Croatia, Cyprus, and Greece, but also virtually following the COVID-19 outbreak. Tourism has undergone significant changes due to technological advancements, sustainability imperatives, and diverse traveler types. ICOT2026 invites researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers to Mytilene, Lesvos Island, Greece to explore how next-generation tourism is reshaping the travel and tourism industry. As artificial intelligence personalizes guest experiences, digital platforms revolutionize booking behaviors, and smart technologies optimize destination management, tourism is simultaneously facing the urgent need for sustainable practices that preserve the planet's natural and cultural heritage. Today's travelers – from affluent baby boomers to tech-savvy Generation Z, who seek authentic experiences and embrace digital solutions – demand more than traditional tourism offerings. This conference will examine how demographic shifts, from aging populations in developed markets to emerging middle classes in Asia and Africa, are creating new opportunities and challenges. ICOT2026 will generate cutting-edge research frameworks, innovative sustainability models, and actionable strategies transforming global tourism practices and academic discourse. The conference will be a unique opportunity where academics, professionals, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and post-graduate students from the fields and industries of tourism and travel will meet, discuss, exchange ideas and express their views and scientific approaches.

CONFERENCE THEMES

The conference will focus on a broad range of topics related to tourism, including (but not limited to):

- Artificial Intelligence in Tourism
- Innovation in Tourism
- Sustainability, Degrowth and Overtourism
- Regenerative Tourism Practices and Certifications
- Climate Change and Natural Disasters
- Tourism Development, Policy and Planning
- Alternative and Special Forms of Tourism
- Community Responses to Tourists and Tourism
- Carbon Offset Programs and Re-forestation Initiatives
- Renewable Energy and Zero-Waste Infrastructure
- Protecting Water Sources and Encouraging Conservation
- Supporting Biodiversity through Conservation Efforts
- Eco-Friendly and Zero-Plastic Design Standards
- Cultivating Environmentally-Beneficial Local Production
- Circulating the Benefits within Indigenous Communities
- Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality Solutions for Recognizing Heritage
- Artificial Intelligence for Predicting Environmental Impact
- Blockchain Applications for Traceable and Transparent Supply Chains
- Online Reputation and Review Systems for Sustainability
- Trainings and Certifications for Regenerative Tourism Skills
- Education and Awareness programs for Travelers and Communities
- Transportation Infrastructure for Low-carbon Mobility
- Tech-driven Access Programs for Vulnerable Lands and Sites

- Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning for Destinations
- Financing and Investment for Renewable Energy Projects
- Tourism and Land Use Policies encouraging Regeneration
- Collaboration and Cooperation between Stakeholders
- Emerging Tourism Destinations
- Theoretical Perspectives on Tourism
- Economic/Social/Environmental/Cultural Impacts of Tourism
- Tourism Education and its Role in Managing Tourism Development
- World Heritage Sites
- Industry's Role in Managing Growth
- Destination/Place Marketing
- Information Technology in Tourism
- Tourism Research and Methodology
- Globalisation Effects
- Challenges and Best Practices of Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management
- Negotiation in Tourism
- Tourism Mobilities
- Transportation and Tourism
- Authenticity and Commodification
- The Future of Tourism
- The Effects of Crime, Terrorism, Safety and Security
- Managing Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism
- Evolution and Transformation of Booking and Distribution Channels
- Responsible Tourism for Conservation and Development
- Social Networking and New Forms of Tourism

COMMITTEES

Chair

- Konstantinos Andriotis, Hellenic Open University, Greece
- Thanasis Kizos, University of the Aegean, Greece

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- Carla Pinto Cardoso, Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal
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- Ahmed Hammad, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom
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- Anastasia Traskevich, ISM Cologne, AKALEM e.V., Germany
- Michał Żemła, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland

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- Savvas Sakkadas, Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
- Dimitrios Styliadis, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2026

17:00-18:00	Registration
18:00-20:00	Sightseeing Walking Tour
20:00-20:30	Welcome Speeches
20:30-23:00	Welcome Reception

THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2026

9:00-10:00	Keynote Speech
10:00-11:30	Parallel Sessions 1 (rooms A, B)
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break
12:00-13.30	Parallel Sessions 2 (rooms A, B)
13:30-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:00	Parallel Sessions 3 (rooms A, B)
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break
16.30-18.30	Parallel Sessions 4 (rooms A, B)

FRIDAY 26 JUNE 2026

9:00-10:00	Keynote Speech
10:00-11:30	Parallel Sessions 1 (rooms A, B)
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break
12:00-13.40	Parallel Sessions 2 (rooms A, B)
13:40-14:40	Lunch
14:40-14:50	Awards' Ceremony
14:50-15:00	Closing Speeches
18:00-23.00	Gala Dinner

SATURDAY 27 JUNE 2026

9:00-17:00	Day Trip
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

PROF. MARTIN FALK

University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Norway

Martin Thomas Falk (ORCID: 0000-0003-0518-6513) is a full Professor of management at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), School of Business. He teaches sustainability management, quantitative research methods and research integrity at master's and PhD levels. His research interests include tourism, sustainability, climate change and heritage. He holds a PhD in economics and has published over 100 scientific articles in Scopus-indexed journals.



SHARON M. JACKSON

The European Sustainability Academy, Greece



Sharon is the founder and Managing Director of the European Sustainability Academy (ESA) Crete. She is also Associate Faculty at Cranfield School of Management, Associate Scholar at University of Cumbria and Visiting Research Fellow at Athens University of Economics and

Business. She has held a Non-Executive Director role with Global Sustain, Athens, since 2015. Sharon is a hybrid, sustainability leadership academic and an entrepreneur, with a robust grounding in global business. Sharon was awarded her first Executive Board appointment in her 20s and worked for 15 years in senior roles in the global electrical / electronic component sector.

KEYNOTE SPEECH I:

PROF. MARTIN FALK

University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Norway

Threats to world heritage sites on islands and measures to mitigate them

Many natural and cultural World Heritage sites are located on or near islands. In total, there are more than 100 natural and cultural sites on islands worldwide. The term 'island' is used here in a broad sense and includes archipelagos, atolls and coral reefs. Examples of World Heritage sites on islands in Europe include South Öland (SE), Vegaøyen – the Vega Archipelago (NO), the Aeolian Islands (IT), Venice and its Lagoon (IT), Teide National Park, Gran Canaria and Ibiza (ES), the Azores (PT), Chios and Samos (GR), and Malta. Various man-made, natural and geological hazards threaten these cultural and natural World Heritage sites on islands, which are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise. However, some factors have both positive and negative impacts, such as renewable energy installations (photovoltaic and wind power plants) and tourism. This study aims to provide an overview of the threats to World Heritage sites on islands worldwide, as well as the measures being taken to address them. It draws on several databases from UNESCO (databases for periodic reports and the state of conservation), the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), the Global Disaster Database, the European Forest Fire Information System and the Joint Research Centre Risk Data Hub. The study will also present indicators of the digital footprint of World Heritage sites on islands (Google page views, Instagram posts, TripAdvisor reviews), where visitor numbers are often difficult to measure. The results show that, according to IUCN data, marine areas are more likely to be threatened by climate change; however, the conservation status database does not adequately capture these threats. Geological and natural threats are events with low probability and high impact. Tourism and urbanisation (residential development) are the most common threats. Some natural World Heritage sites on islands are wholly or partially closed to tourism (e.g.

Surtsey, the Heard and McDonald Islands, Henderson Island, the New Zealand sub-Antarctic Islands and Papahānaumokuākea). Other World Heritage sites on islands have introduced strict visitor quotas (Lord Howe Islands, Macquarie Island), high entrance fees (Fernando de Noronha) and a registration requirement (Rock Islands Southern Lagoon). Only a few World Heritage sites on islands have management plans to address threats, such as measures for sustainable tourism, regulation of uncontrolled tourism, protective measures and regular maintenance. A good example of this is Fernando de Noronha in Brazil, where a registration requirement, a high entry fee and an environmental protection levy have been introduced. Empirical models show that human-induced threats do not occur in isolation but in combination, and also correlate with strategies for sustainable visitor management. Digital footprint data show that attractiveness is very unevenly distributed and does not correlate with tourism-related threats.

KEYNOTE SPEECH II:

SHARON M. JACKSON

The European Sustainability Academy, Greece

Scaling management and leadership training and education for future tourism

Through a social-sciences lens, this keynote supports the underlying objectives of the conference in terms of understanding and preparing for the transformation in the 'world of work' in tourism and hospitality. Through engaging anecdotes and real world examples, Sharon unpicks the antecedents of the transformational level of change towards the socio-economic green transition which is vital for addressing climate chaos and increasing environment and society breakdowns across the globe. Through her own longitudinal research, since 2023, she addresses well documented skills-gaps and emerging demands for different skills in the future of work in tourism. Sharon draws from her rich life-experiences in Crete, over 15 years, since designing and building a 400m², solar powered, fully off-grid, natural materials, purpose designed, sustainability management and leadership teaching centre (ESA), with consistent net-zero operating objectives and locally sourced services, in a small, rural, hilltop village. She shares WHY, she built ESA, how her experiences in the Arctic Circle in 2007 alerted her to her own 'incompetence' and her own unconscious 'talk act gap' due to inadequate knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs), and what she did about it. She shares the sensemaking anchors that she leveraged to gain acceptance in a Cretan village, at a time when Greece was experiencing a decade of extreme economic crisis, a time when the concept of sustainability was not understood, and in many cases, ridiculed. She will give engaging, transferrable, examples of how her consistent approach to transparency, with robust analysis, has equipped her against challenges and criticisms and underpinned her decision making for continual improvement and strengthening of ESA. With a horizon-scan of the 'green skills' predicted to be essential in the 2050 tourism and hospitality workplace, the rise of VET workplace and apprenticeship style learning with portable digital credentials, Sharon presents research insights into

what people in the tourism sector are asking for. Increasing demand for enhanced management 'soft skills', such as, improved sensemaking and sense-giving 'anchors' and sharpened stakeholder communications for developing future product and services will be essential for successful business growth and resilience.

DANIEL BADULESCU, DRAGOS HODISAN, RAUL HERTE AND MANUELA BREBAN

University of Oradea, Romania

Involving private capital in cultural tourism: Sustainability challenges and digitalization opportunities

Cultural tourism is a strategic pillar of sustainable development, generating economic, social and identity benefits, but the conservation, valorisation and correct integration of heritage sites into the economic circuit face considerable challenges, particularly of a financial and organisational nature. While public funding remains dominant, budgetary pressures and the need for modernisation have brought the involvement of private capital to the fore. Europe is distinguished by its vast cultural heritage, which constitutes a pillar of tourism and sustainable development; however, this involvement is limited by institutional, fiscal and cultural barriers, especially in the emerging economies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This article analyses the evolution of the public-private relationship in cultural tourism, identifies the determinants for attracting private capital and proposes a model adapted for CEE, based on inclusive partnerships, public guarantees, cultural performance indicators and the integration of the principles of responsible investment (Environmental, Social, and Governance - ESG). Western European good practices in the field can be considered as relevant lessons and premises for emerging economies, where the adaptation of these models can contribute to the transformation of cultural heritage assets into economically sustainable tourist attractions. In addition, our article emphasizes the importance of community and business involvement in the development of cultural tourism, as a factor of sustainability and competitiveness, and concludes that without clear contractual frameworks and stimulating financial instruments, the entry of private capital into cultural tourism remains marginal, and cultural heritage is stuck with the capacity to generate bankable assets that motivate investors and bring a financial, cultural and urban advantage to local communities.

SIMONE BOZZATO AND JACOPO MANNI

Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata, Italy

From the monumental city to the territorial metropolis: Overtourism, tourism polycentrism and regenerative spatial strategies in "Greater Rome"

This study interprets overtourism in Rome as the territorial outcome of a persistent monocentric tourism model, still overwhelmingly concentrated within the monumental historic centre and its globally consolidated imagery. Such a spatial configuration generates increasing forms of congestion, functional saturation, socio-spatial conflict, and landscape pressure, while simultaneously marginalizing the extensive heritage, environmental, and productive resources distributed across the wider metropolitan territory. The study argues that the mitigation of overtourism cannot rely exclusively on containment measures within the historic core, but instead requires a broader territorial reorganization of the tourism system through a transition from the "monumental city" to the "territorial metropolis." Within this perspective, Greater Rome is interpreted as a polycentric geographical framework capable of redistributing tourism flows and constructing new metropolitan centralities beyond the traditional core of visitation. The analysis focuses on three strategic territorial systems. The first is the Tiburtine-Aniene corridor, extending through Tivoli, Subiaco, and the Apennine landscapes, where cultural heritage, inland environments, and slow tourism practices intersect. The second is the Castelli Romani area, characterized by volcanic morphology, historical settlements, viticultural landscapes, olive-growing traditions, and food-and-wine heritage deeply connected to the peri-urban dimension of Rome. The third concerns the coastal-Ostiense axis, linking Ostia Antica, EUR, the Tyrrhenian coastline, and the infrastructural gateway of Fiumicino. Adopting a geographical-territorial approach, the paper interprets these territorial axes as spaces of heritage-led regeneration and metropolitan destination management, where accessibility, mobility, diffuse hospitality, agro-food systems, and place-based branding may support more diversified tourism development. Particular attention is devoted to the "last mile" issue, metropolitan governance coordination, and the transfer of Rome's symbolic capital

toward emerging peripheral destinations through integrated territorial narratives and experiential tourism strategies.

JUAN GABRIEL BRIDA, VICTORIA MOGNI AND MARIA NELA SEIJAS

Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay

Cruise passengers in Uruguayan ports: Spending patterns and emerging typologies (2024–2025)

This study analyzes the profiles and spending patterns of cruise tourists arriving at the ports of Montevideo and Punta del Este during the 2024–2025 season, in a context of recovery and revitalization of cruise activity in Uruguay. Using primary data collected by the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay, the research examines how sociodemographic characteristics, travel patterns, and satisfaction levels influence tourist behavior and expenditure during stopovers. The literature on cruise tourism highlights its rapid expansion and the importance of understanding passenger profiles for destination planning and management. Previous studies have emphasized the economic impacts of cruise activity and the heterogeneous nature of tourist motivations and experiences, particularly in Latin American destinations such as Punta del Este. The study applies Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), cluster analysis, and Classification and Regression Trees (CART) to a database of 3,505 survey responses from cruise passengers. The MCA identifies key dimensions related to demographic characteristics, nationality, travel group composition, and satisfaction with tourist areas and activities. Cluster analysis reveals three distinct passenger profiles: (1) older retirees from the United States and Canada, often first-time visitors seeking cultural and recreational experiences; (2) Brazilian adults and families traveling in medium-sized groups and reporting high satisfaction levels; and (3) younger Argentine tourists traveling mainly in large groups, many of them repeat visitors. The CART analysis confirms the robustness of the segmentation, showing nationality as an important differentiating factor among tourist profiles. However, the findings demonstrate that cruise passenger segmentation cannot be explained solely by geographic origin, but also by demographic characteristics, travel dynamics, and satisfaction levels, which together shape distinct tourist profiles and behavioral patterns. These results provide useful insights for the design of targeted marketing

strategies, tourism services, and port activity planning in Uruguay's coastal destinations.

JOSÉ PEDRO SILVA GIRÃO CALHEIROS

SAL Sistemas de Ar Livre, Portugal

Stop calling it a niche, walking tourism is infrastructure: ESG in action in rural inland territories

Rural inland territories do not need more studies about sustainability; they require operational and strategic structures that transform abstract principles into tangible and measurable impact. This presentation advances a clear position: organised walking tourism networks are not niche products or leisure add-ons; they constitute essential territorial infrastructure capable of embedding Environmental, Social and Governance outcomes directly into rural development strategies. Many Southern European regions face demographic decline, ageing populations, fragile ecosystems, limited economic diversification, and reduced community engagement. While sustainable tourism is widely theorised, few models demonstrate how ESG principles can be implemented through long-term, practice-driven, and context-sensitive interventions that simultaneously address environmental, social, and governance dimensions. Drawing on over 30 years of professional experience in the planning, implementation, and governance of intermunicipal pedestrian networks, including TransAlentejo Walking Routes, municipal trail systems in Alentejo and Ribatejo, and the (Trans)Alentejo Walking Festival, this paper presents a practice-based evidence framework that combines longitudinal field implementation, multi-stakeholder coordination, adaptive management, and scalable governance models. Environmentally, structured walking networks contribute to landscape stewardship, heritage corridor activation, biodiversity preservation, and low-impact mobility. Socially, they stimulate micro-economies, reinforce place identity, promote community engagement, and serve diverse traveller segments, including wellbeing-oriented and active ageing visitors. From a governance perspective, they facilitate intermunicipal collaboration, multi-level stakeholder alignment, and sustainable territorial planning frameworks. By integrating boots-on-the-ground experience with systematic theoretical reflection, this contribution demonstrates that walking tourism can function as replicable, ESG-aligned infrastructure, offering inland

territories a strategic pathway for regenerative and resilient development. This approach not only advances academic understanding of next-generation tourism but also provides a transferable model for policymakers, destination managers, and scholars seeking to harness tourism as a structural instrument of sustainable rural transformation, adaptable across diverse rural contexts.

SAMANTHA CHAPERON

University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

JAMES KENNEL

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

The European migration crisis and tourism governance in the United Kingdom: A narrative policy framework approach

Public policy domains beyond tourism continue to set parameters for tourism's governance at the destination level. In the context of the 'polycrisis', and how this is experienced in the tourism industry, this study focuses on the impacts of a perceived crisis of migration into Europe on tourism in the United Kingdom (UK). This relationship has previously received most attention in southern European destinations driven by the visibility of migrant arrivals on tourist beaches, following established smuggling routes from the Middle East and North Africa. In the United Kingdom, although the arrivals of migrants on small boats are less obviously impacting tourism spaces, it has emboldened a resurgent right-wing nationalist politics, and has led to the rise of nativist, anti-immigrant political parties. For tourism in the UK, political tensions in this area have led to new restrictions on migrant labor, visa restrictions, the sequestration of hotel stock for temporary migrant accommodation, and impacts on destination image. Using a Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), we conceptualize tourism governance as a mediating space in which broader political narratives influence agenda-setting, coalition-building, and resource allocation for tourism destinations. Methodologically, the study analyses national, devolved, and city-regional tourism policy/strategy documents, public communications, and news articles for the period 2019-2025. Utilizing the NPF approach, we examine characters (e.g. communities, visitors), heroes and villains (e.g. immigrants, politicians, elites), plots (e.g. labor shortages) and morals (e.g. fairness, resilience) across actor groups, tracing how narrative elements travel across governance levels and become institutionalized in tourism. The study extends theoretical approaches to tourism governance by demonstrating how policy narratives shape the industry under conditions of volatility and contestation. The study contributes to hospitality and

tourism research by providing evidence of how decision-making is politically embedded and narratively constituted, with implications for destination competitiveness, stakeholder management, and industry resilience.

MARIOS CHOTZA AND SOFIA KARAMPELA

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

CHRYSOVALANTIS MALESIOS

Agricultural University of Athens, Greece

From bounce-back to bounce-forward: A systematic review of economic resilience in tourism

The transition toward next-generation tourism is occurring within an era of permacrisis, where the sector's inherent vulnerability to external shocks necessitates a fundamental reassessment of destination resilience. Significantly, this reassessment must distinguish between acute, short-term economic shocks—such as financial crises or pandemics - and chronic, slow-burn crises, like climate change. Despite an exponential surge in scholarly interest following the COVID-19 pandemic, the literature on tourism economic resilience remains conceptually fragmented and empirically dispersed across varying crisis contexts. To address these limitations, this study presents a systematic literature review of 107 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Scopus database, mapping the field's conceptual evolution amidst emerging industry transformations. Employing bibliometric mapping and qualitative thematic analysis in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, the research synthesizes high-level findings across multiple crisis typologies. The analysis reveals a significant theoretical paradigm shift from a static "bounce-back" perspective to an evolutionary understanding of resilience centered on long-term structural adaptation. Crucially, the study identifies key categories of adaptive mechanisms - namely technological innovation and strategic demand diversification - that are essential for maintaining operational stability in a volatile global market. Notably, regarding diversification, it highlights that the shift toward domestic and regional demand must function as a permanent structural change to decouple destinations from monocultural dependencies, rather than merely acting as a temporary crisis-management tactic. Furthermore, the synthesis establishes that systemic survival is increasingly contingent upon aligning economic resilience with sustainability imperatives and circular, community-based models. Notably, the review exposes a pronounced Sinocentric gravity in existing

knowledge production, contrasted by a distinct data void in the Global South that restricts the cross-cultural transferability of current strategies. By integrating these conceptual, methodological, and geographical patterns, this work provides a foundational framework for understanding resilient tourism ecosystems. It serves as a strategic precursor to more exhaustive empirical investigations, offering a high-level roadmap for researchers and practitioners aiming to navigate future systemic disruptions while fostering a "bounce-forward" trajectory for the global tourism industry.

ANNA-MARIA DAVLARA AND SOFIA KARAMPELA

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Tourism and noise pollution: A systematic study of the impacts on natural soundscapes

This study examines the acoustic degradation of natural soundscapes (soundscapes) as a critical yet often neglected dimension of tourism sustainability, which is usually overshadowed by other forms of environmental degradation, such as chemical and visual pollution. The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of anthropogenic noise on the acoustic integrity of protected areas in Greece, as well as to analyze the relationship between acoustic tranquility and the quality of the tourism experience, with a particular emphasis on Greek coastal and forest ecosystems. The study was based on the Systematic Literature Review methodology, through the analysis of studies retrieved from the Scopus, ResearchGate, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, while bibliographic references related to Greek protected areas and destinations under high tourist pressure were also utilized. The findings indicate that noise from recreational watercraft, transportation, and mass tourism activities causes the phenomenon of “acoustic masking”, disrupting wildlife communication and contributing to the abandonment of habitats by sensitive species. At the same time, the study highlights that acoustic tranquility is gaining increasing economic value in modern sustainable tourism. Higher-income visitors appear to prefer quiet and environmentally protected destinations, as they associate quietness with experiences of quality, well-being, and authenticity, setting themselves apart from the norms of mass tourism. In the Greek tourism context, where seasonal overcrowding of visitors places intense pressure on the natural environment, maintaining acoustic quality can serve as a competitive advantage for sustainable, high-value-added destinations. The study concludes by proposing the “Acoustic Buffer Zoning” framework as a tool for integrating acoustic ecology into tourism planning and biodiversity conservation.

V. G. GIRISH

The Catholic University of Korea, South Korea

CHOONG-KI LEE AND DO-YOUNG CHANG

Kyunghee University, South Korea

Investigating tourists' behavior regarding plastic avoidance

This study combines the value-attitude-behavior (VAB) model and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to examine tourists' plastic avoidance behavior on Jeju Island, South Korea. Jeju Island is the largest island in South Korea. Some of the locations on Jeju Island are also recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Data were collected from tourists visiting Jeju Island, and structural equation modeling was used to analyze them. Biosphere value, altruistic value, egoistic value, and hedonic value represent elements of personal value. Among these values, the biosphere value was the dominant factor, followed by the altruistic and hedonic values. Results also show that personal values positively influence attitudes and behaviors related to avoiding plastic. Subjective norms do not affect plastic avoidance intentions. A possible reason is that an individual's awareness of the environment may outweigh societal influences, shaping their thoughts and actions, particularly when visiting a destination for tourism. Additionally, both attitude and perceived behavioral control further influence plastic avoidance. Theoretically, this research links the value-attitude-behavior framework with the theory of planned behavior in the context of plastic avoidance. In practice, it highlights how tourists' perceptions of personal values and the constructs of the theory of planned behavior shape their intentions to avoid plastic. The outcome of this study may help various stakeholders revise policies to protect the environment and reduce plastic use, particularly among visitors.

EVA HAGSTEN
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A test of the coolcation hypothesis on European islands

Following the spells of record-breaking high summer temperatures across the south of Europe in recent summers, often in combination with forest fires and droughts, tourists may reconsider their travel plans in favour of destinations with cooler or more temperate climate zones (as well as fewer crowds). In late 2023, a journalist coined a new term for this type of holiday to cooler destinations: Anecdotal evidence suggests that interest in cooler summer holiday destinations is growing over time. Indeed, overnight stays in the Lofoten Islands in the north of Norway experience an increase of visitors by more than 15 per cent per year since 2023. This study seeks evidence of an increased interest in cooler destinations as from the start of the media hype. Islands in Europe with five or more accommodation options are selected, as they are often popular destinations and can easily be geographically identified. The interest in island destinations is measured by use of monthly Google Trends and Wikipedia page views data from 2015 to 2025. Evidence is presented for 84 island destinations in Europe, of which 50 are in warmer or hot climate zones and 34 in cooler areas. Since the study focuses exclusively on the digital ex ante interest rather than actual travel flows, the impact of the pandemic can be disregarded. Search data on the selected islands reveal that the Google Trends indicator also correlates well with actual overnight stay figures outside the pandemic years of 2020-2022. The synthetic difference-in-differences model is used to estimate the presumptive shift in interest following the media hype of Coolcation during the summer months of 2024 and 2025. This model automatically pairs each ("treated") island in the cooler climate zone with one in the warmer ("non-treated") area based on similarities in their pre-hype development. Control variables include accommodation and restaurant prices as well as a business sentiment indicator proxying demand. Empirical evidence shows that there is no significant increase in the digitally measured interest in cooler destinations during the summer season. Thus, the Coolcation hypothesis cannot yet be verified.

CARMEN HODISAN AND ALINA BADULESCU

University of Oradea, Romania

Capitalising comparative advantages for tourism in North-West region of Romania

The North-West Development Region of Romania presents a compelling case for integrated regional tourism development, combining a diverse resource base with strategic geographic positioning and growing institutional capacity. Our paper examines the comparative advantages that distinguish the region within the national and European tourism landscape, and explores pathways for translating these advantages into coherent, sustainable tourism products. The region's six counties - Cluj, Bihor, Maramureş, Satu Mare, Sălaj, and Bistriţa-Năsăud - exhibit distinct but complementary tourism profiles, spanning urban city-break, spa and wellness, rural and agritourism, ecotourism, cultural heritage, and religious tourism. The urban hubs generate feeder flows toward mountain, spa, and rural destinations across the region, offering significant potential for itinerary integration and extended stays. The analysis identifies five principal comparative advantages: (1) strategic geographical location at the intersection of European transport corridors and proximity to the Hungarian border, enabling cross-border tourism development; (2) diversified natural and cultural resources that prevent over-reliance on a single tourism segment; (3) a strong cultural and identity capital - from Maramureş vernacular heritage and Oradea's Art Nouveau architecture to Cluj's academic and creative ecosystem - that supports authentic, high-value tourism experiences; (4) superior administrative capacity and access to European structural funds in key counties; and (5) an emerging digital innovation culture in destination management. Capitalizing on these advantages requires a shift from parallel county-level profiles toward a regionally integrated tourism architecture - one in which themed routes, coordinated destination management organisations, and smart digital tools connect urban entry points with spa, rural, and cultural hinterlands, targeting international visitor segments and improving the current average stay of under two days.

MADLINE HUYSER, ELMARIE SLABBERT AND PEET VAN DER MERWE

North-West University, South Africa

Human capital and tourism: Reframing conservation capacity in South Africa's wildlife economy

South Africa's conservation sector is undergoing a significant transition from fortress-style protectionism toward more inclusive "living landscape" approaches that integrate biodiversity conservation, tourism, livelihoods, and regional socio-economic development. Tourism has become central to this transformation, and integrating the wildlife economy and the tourism sector could generate rural employment, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. However, the sustainability and competitiveness of this model depend heavily on the development and effective utilisation of human capital capable of responding to changing conservation and tourism demands. Guided by Human Capital Theory (HCT), this study conceptualises education, training, and workforce development as strategic investments that generate economic, environmental, and social returns. A qualitative phenomenological research design was adopted to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of stakeholders operating within South Africa's conservation-linked tourism environment. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 39 purposively selected participants representing employers, employees, government and quasi-government stakeholders, and educational institutions. The interview guide was developed using the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) framework, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) framework, and relevant secondary literature. Questions focused on sectoral change, economic performance, growth constraints, workforce development, qualifications, and skills requirements. Interview data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring meanings, patterns, and propositions across stakeholder groups. Four major themes emerged. First, a digital capital deficit was identified, with educational curricula lagging behind operational realities and leaving graduates underprepared for technologies associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including GIS, drones,

telemetry, and data analytics. Second, relational and soft skills remain insufficiently developed despite their importance in tourist engagement, stakeholder negotiation, and socio-ecological collaboration. Third, institutional barriers, including funding instability, regulatory inefficiencies, and limited reinvestment, undermine workforce renewal and organisational resilience. Finally, hunting tourism revenues were identified as a contested but significant economic multiplier supporting conservation land, workforce retention, and training opportunities. The study extends HCT by demonstrating that human capital in conservation tourism is multidimensional and that sustainable competitiveness requires integrated workforce strategies that align curricula, industry needs, technological adaptation, and socio-ecological realities to build resilient and future-ready conservation tourism workforces in South Africa.

VASILEIOS ISMYRLIS AND PAUL CHARALAMBOUS

University of the Aegean, Greece

Tourism education: Current trends and needs

The tourism industry is a fast-growing and human-centered industry. It is under continuous evolution as many social, economic, technological, and even other unexpected incidents affect it, such as conflicts, pandemics and natural disasters. These issues establish a challenging environment, in which tourism organisations must operate. Moreover, tourism activities are designed to attract people, while people also create the provided services or products. Hence, human interactions mainly originate and this fact introduces a challenging issue. Tourism offers accommodation through hotels, which are even more complex organizations, as they provide many diverse services and products. To address all these difficulties, the tourism industry should be fully prepared, and its employees should acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills to cope with them. Here emerges the role of organizations responsible for providing education and training on tourism issues. It can be public or private ones and usually these studies are offered in tertiary or post-secondary education. They could be bachelor's programs or master's degree ones, or even specialized training courses. We have conducted a narrative review in many scientific databases to seek specific difficulties, and challenges of these tourism education aspects, and proposed solutions. This quest may also discover propositions about what competencies and knowledge are acquired by the employees. For example, certain difficulties referred to, are: continuously changing needs of customers, rapid progress in technological issues and global competition. Some challenges to be considered, are: education should meet both the students' expectations and the needs of the tourism industry, include subjects in curricula, such as sustainability, green transition, and environmental issues and corporate responsibility, provision of certain competencies for employees, such as: adaptability, environment-centric thinking, a strong ethical compass, focus on regeneration. The future of the tourism industry depends very heavily on the education provided by the competent organisations. It is a subject taken seriously and especially universities have increasingly embraced

business logics, with emphasis on customer satisfaction, branding, performance indicators. The provision of tourism education is an ongoing process, which must balance between theoretical and practical subjects. In the context of all the above, this study presents many suggested solutions to enhance tourism education and make it modern and sustainable.

SHARON M. JACKSON

The European Sustainability Academy, Greece

Upskilling workers for managing the future world of work in sustainable tourism

Focussing on employment and the knowledge, skills, behaviours (KSBs), required in the future of work towards a green transition, this paper discusses key findings and recommendations from the Erasmus+ co-funded, vocational education project 'Upskilling Generation Net Zero' (GenNZ) 2024-25. GenNZ examines the tourism and hospitality sectors in Greece and Slovenia to address the gap between available workforce 'green management competencies' and the fast-changing world of work towards net-zero. This article presents the overarching project outcome, a 'green', vocational competencies framework and online, on-demand, teaching programme with assessment, micro-credentials and evaluation feedback from 40 pilot participants. Also, the outcomes from a scoping study and primary research which guides the design of the teaching framework to be aligned with workplace relatable needs, with country specific teaching content and learning style preferences. A mixed methods approach includes a literature review, 300 survey responses and rich discourse analysis from 40 focus group participants, including VET educators, tourism and hospitality employers and tourist boards. The GenNZ project builds on earlier studies to explore why, despite sustainability objectives set by the 'Greek Tourism Action Plan 2030', 'green management' KSBs were not generally enacted. Studies suggest this was due, in part, to 'not knowing how to', with evidence of a 'talk act gap' and inadequate sustainable management education in tourism. A similar finding in Slovenia was identified through the GenNZ project. Key findings suggest formal teaching has not delivered the necessary levels of management competencies for green transition. Non-formal, WBL oriented, on-demand approaches are preferred, with a call for more role models and best practice case studies, with portable micro-credentials, aligned to EU Qualifications, Green Competencies and Apprenticeship frameworks, for cross country recognition and for encouraging high performance. Other findings include potential for knowledge exchange between Greece and Slovenia; high

correlation in preferences for specific 'green skills' in Greece and Slovenia; widespread confusion about what 'green skills' mean beyond the energy sector; an increase in younger managers entering the tourism workforce asking for 'green skills' training, including carbon literacy, how to design green products/services and impactful sustainability communications with diverse stakeholders.

IOANNIS KATSANAKIS

University of Piraeus, Greece

Safeguarding trust in digital tourism: A risk-based framework for fraud prevention and detection

The rapid digital transformation of tourism has reshaped how tourism organizations interact with customers, suppliers, platforms and destination stakeholders. Online bookings, digital payments, loyalty schemes, refund procedures, platform-based distribution channels, customer identity verification, supplier transactions and online review systems have created new opportunities for efficiency and value creation. At the same time, they have introduced vulnerabilities to fraudulent practices that can undermine customer trust, organizational reputation and operational resilience. Fraudulent activities such as payment fraud, booking manipulation, refund abuse, fake reservations, identity misuse, misleading reviews, supplier fraud and phishing-related incidents represent growing challenges for tourism organizations operating in complex digital ecosystems. This paper aims to develop a risk-based conceptual framework for fraud prevention and detection in digital tourism. Drawing on the literature on tourism management, risk management, internal control, digital transformation and information systems security, the proposed framework identifies key fraud risk areas and links them with preventive, detective and responsive control mechanisms. The framework is structured around five interrelated dimensions: fraud risk identification, digital transaction monitoring, governance and accountability, data-driven detection capabilities, and organizational learning and response. It emphasizes that effective fraud management requires not only managerial practices, including clear allocation of responsibilities, staff awareness, ethical culture, process controls, partner due diligence and incident response procedures, but also advanced technological capabilities. These may include analytics, anomaly detection, automated monitoring, AI-enabled behavioural analysis, and blockchain-based mechanisms for identity verification, transaction traceability and trusted data exchange. The framework also acknowledges implementation barriers, including technological integration costs, data privacy compliance, workforce reskilling needs and the limited digital capacity of

smaller tourism enterprises. The paper contributes to tourism research by positioning fraud prevention and detection as an underexplored component of digital tourism management, trust-building and organizational resilience. From a practical perspective, the framework can support hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, destination management organizations and other tourism actors in assessing fraud exposure, strengthening internal controls and protecting trust in digital tourism transactions. The study is conceptual in nature and provides a foundation for future empirical research, including case studies, expert validation and fraud risk assessment tools tailored to tourism organizations.

IOANNIS KATSANAKIS, VARVARA BAMPA AND GEORGIA ZOUNI

University of Piraeus, Greece

AI Governance in tourism destination ecosystems: A conceptual framework for responsible, transparent and sustainable AI adoption

Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping tourism destination ecosystems through applications such as visitor-flow prediction, personalized destination marketing, smart mobility, environmental monitoring, automated customer service, dynamic pricing, crisis management and decision-support systems. While these applications can enhance competitiveness, efficiency and visitor experience, they also raise important governance challenges related to data quality, algorithmic transparency, privacy, accountability, stakeholder participation, bias, sustainability impacts and institutional readiness. This paper aims to develop a conceptual framework for AI governance in tourism destination ecosystems, focusing on how destinations can adopt AI in a responsible, transparent and sustainability-oriented manner. Drawing on the literature on tourism destination management, digital transformation, AI governance and ecosystem-based approaches, the proposed framework conceptualizes AI governance as a multi-level and multi-stakeholder process. It identifies key governance dimensions, including strategic alignment, data governance, ethical and legal compliance, stakeholder coordination, algorithmic accountability, risk management, human oversight, sustainability orientation and continuous evaluation. The framework also highlights the role of destination management organizations, public authorities, tourism businesses, technology providers, local communities and visitors in shaping responsible AI adoption. To strengthen practical implementation, the framework considers how destination authorities can encourage and enforce responsible AI standards across fragmented private technology providers through mechanisms such as procurement requirements, certification schemes, data-sharing agreements, transparency obligations, audit procedures and public-private coordination structures. It also recognizes that AI

governance cannot follow a one-size-fits-all model, as destinations differ in size, digital infrastructure, institutional capacity, stakeholder complexity and local community needs. Therefore, the framework is designed to be scalable and adaptable to both digitally mature destinations and smaller or less technologically advanced tourism ecosystems. The paper contributes to tourism research by extending discussions on digital transformation beyond technological implementation and by positioning AI governance as a critical capability for next-generation tourism destinations. From a managerial and policy perspective, the framework can support destinations in assessing AI readiness, designing governance mechanisms, mitigating risks and ensuring that AI-based innovation contributes to sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism development. The study provides a foundation for future empirical research, including case studies, expert validation and the development of assessment tools for AI governance maturity in tourism destination ecosystems.

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Co-creating the place experience: Learning from dark heritage sites

The marketing and branding of sustainable tourism destinations requires a more holistic appreciation of visitor experience at tourism sites. It is important to deepen the understanding of how this experience is co-created by a multitude of actors and how it is shaped by the material, social and digital contexts in which it occurs in order for destination marketing to assist in the transition towards socially, culturally, environmentally and financially sustainable tourism offerings. This paper re-conceptualizes the co-creation of place experience by combining the factors that shape it with theoretical explications of the influence of physical and digital interactions. The paper builds on an empirical study that used phenomenological qualitative interviews infused with ethnographic elements to investigate the co-creation of experience in three dark heritage sites: the Iranian memorial sites of the Iran-Iraq War, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre Memorial (Amritsar, India) and the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, UK. The findings highlight the role of the physical, cognitive and digital contexts and identify five factors shaping the co-creation of experience: political/economic interests, material/nonhuman agents, memory and identity, codes of practice, and relation to the past. Further analysis shows two broad dimensions of place experience. First, a multi-sensory, embodied dimension, where experience is shaped on-site by experiential moments and situated practices. Managerial influence in this sensory view can be exerted through design, discrete event-led interventions and through staging visitor experiences. Secondly, a relational dimension where experience is performed on- and off- site through continuous physical and digital encounters between people, institutions and material settings as individuals use and relate to places and to one another. Managerial influence is more abstract in this relational view as it focuses on everyday interactions and

wider place meaning-making processes. To understand place experience co-creation, particularly for contemporary visitors looking for authentic experiences and embracing the digital world, further integration of these two dimensions is necessary. The conceptual framework developed in this paper integrates the two dimensions enriching the co-creation factors with the notion of atmospheres for an explanation of the on-site/sensory co-creation and elements of practice theory for the off-site/digital co-creation of place experience.

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MATYLDA SIWEK

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Digital governance vs. market-driven digitalization in urban tourism: A comparative study of Kraków and Catania

Digital transformation is increasingly reshaping urban tourism management, influencing governance structures, tourist experiences, and destination competitiveness. Despite growing interest in smart tourism, few studies directly compare centralized, public-driven digital governance models with decentralized, market-driven approaches across different cultural and regional contexts. This study addresses this gap through a qualitative comparative case study of Kraków and Catania. The case selection follows a contrasting case study logic, enabling the exploration of divergent digital governance models across differing institutional and tourism environments. The methodology combines document analysis of strategic plans, content analysis of municipal platforms and tourism applications, field observation conducted primarily in Catania, and cross-case comparative synthesis. This approach acknowledges limitations related to asymmetry in empirical data availability. Findings are based on municipal reports, platform analysis, and secondary tourism data. The results indicate that Kraków represents a centralized smart governance model, characterized by integrated municipal platforms, data-informed decision-making, and coordinated public oversight. In contrast, Catania illustrates a decentralized approach, where digital solutions are largely implemented by private actors. Building on these findings, the study proposes a dual digital destination governance framework, which extends existing hybrid governance models by emphasizing the role of digital platforms in mediating public-private coordination. The study contributes to the literature on smart tourism and destination management by offering a cross-cultural comparison of governance models and their implications for digitalization. It also acknowledges limitations related to qualitative subjectivity and the limited generalizability of a two-case comparison.

SOFIA KARAMELA

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EVANGELOS PAVLIS

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Cinematic landscapes, film tourism and the cultural production of space: The case of Greece

This study examines film tourism as a powerful mechanism for the cultural production of space, which reshapes contemporary travel behavior and global tourism demand. Cinema does not merely use the landscape as a static backdrop; it actively produces spatial imaginaries, cultural meanings, and emotional geographies through the way space is framed and narrated. In the case of Greece, cinematic destinations function simultaneously as geographical realities and cultural constructions (“real and reel”), which are aestheticized to create symbolic environments linked to desire and nostalgia. This phenomenon has transitioned from the “virtual tourism” offered by 1960s musicals to a modern, strategic economic pillar. Greece’s emergence as an international production hub, bolstered by innovative legislative measures—such as the cash rebate scheme and the establishment of regional Film Offices—has led to significant economic growth, job creation, and increased tourist arrivals. Films like “Mamma Mia” and “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin” have transformed the Greek landscape into an internationally recognizable tourism product, projecting markers of “Greekness” associated with Mediterranean “authenticity” and beauty. Concurrently, there is a transition from landscape as visual representation to landscape as lived experience (lifeworld), where travelers seek to emotionally and physically “inhabit” the cinematic myth. Primary research focusing on traveler diversity (specifically a youthful demographic) reveals that the majority of respondents consciously choose destinations influenced by films or series. However, a significant gap exists between traveler desire and sustainability; many tourists prioritize the “cinematic myth” over environmental concerns. While successful models like New Zealand’s Hobbiton demonstrate how strategic planning can foster ecological health and circular economies, the case of Dubrovnik serves as a stark

warning regarding the destructive potential of overtourism. The paper concludes that the long-term viability of film tourism requires proactive, strict management to ensure that economic gains do not come at the expense of local identity or environmental integrity. The landscape becomes a cultural symbol and an economic resource, necessitating responsible management by local authorities to preserve “authenticity” and social well-being.

THERESIA KAU

Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea

Governance and stakeholder cohesion: A case study for tourism stakeholders in the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea

This study explored tourism governance and the involvement of different stakeholders in empowering communities in the Western Highlands Province of Province of Papua New Guinea. Investigation on tourism governance and stakeholder cohesion was the focus and analysis of the collaboration between the nation, provincial, district and local tourism sectors. The aim of this study was to identify what the trends of tourism governance and development are for the Western Highlands province. The key themes of the study were on governance challenges within and among the different stakeholders, stakeholder cohesion, traditional culture and social networks and barriers of growth in the tourism sector. The philosophical world view of the study is participatory and pragmatism, hence is a purely qualitative study. Multi methods used and were all qualitative but mixed. This includes participant observations, structured interviews, focus group interviews and images were captured across all sectors of tourism. Thematic data analysis was used to evaluate data using an inductive approach where analysis and interpretation of patterns, meanings and themes were done. Data was pulled together to form common themes through data triangulation. The central proposition of the study was that communities cannot be empowered to preserve natural and cultural heritage through tourism without governance and stakeholder cohesion. While recognizing tourism as a vital economic driver, findings show that collaboration is hindered by power imbalances, communication gaps, and logistical barriers between national, provincial, district and local authorities. It concludes that effective tourism development requires reinforcing stakeholder cohesion and integrating local tourism custodians with formal tourism sector collaborative and cohesive partnerships. Recommendations were made on policy focused on bridging the gap between local tourism resource owners and the different levels of government to create a cohesive, safe, and economically viable tourism sector.

CHATHRIKA KAWMADI LOKULIYANA

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A review of circular practices at households with a focus on responsible leisure consumption

Households constitute a preliminary starting point in the transition toward a circular economy, as they play a critical role in shaping consumption patterns in micro level. In this context, inhabitants have significant responsibility and active participation in engaging circular practices, particularly by prioritizing activities and services that minimize environmental impact. Consequently, leisure represents a prominent domain of household consumption, can be categorized into two main components including recreation and tourism. For instance, in 2024, household final consumption expenditure for recreation and culture was 7.5% in EU (Eurostat, 2024). The household leisure consumption contributes to severe environmental impacts included increasing carbon footprint from local to global level. Hence, it is necessary to enhance responsible consumption practices of the inhabitants within key domains such as leisure at the household level to promote the transition of households towards greater circularity. The aim of this study is to review existing literature to identify and describe circular practices at the household level, with a particular focus on responsible leisure consumption both in recreation and tourism. The study employed an in-depth qualitative content analysis using Scopus-indexed scientific research published between 2016 and 2026 to derive key findings. The study's findings conclude that households have already engaged in various forms of circular practices in terms of leisure consumption, however, those are preliminary low impact and complementary practices rather than representing transformative circular behavioral changes that significantly impact responsible consumption. Circular practices at the household level, particularly from a leisure perspective, are described as the adoption of low-carbon mobility options, along with the sharing, repair, and reuse of leisure equipment, and waste sorting practices. Moreover, scientific literature has provided limited attention for the high circular strategies in leisure perspective such as Refuse and Rethink which have potential to promote responsible leisure consumption by reducing unnecessary resource use and reshaping consumption patterns towards

more circular oriented practices. Therefore, the study highlights promoting responsible consumption in leisure requires moving beyond from low-level circular strategies and to focus more on high-impact circular strategies such as Refuse and Rethink.

LAMPRINI MPOURELAKI AND SOFIA KARAMPELA

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“Cultivating sustainability”: An empirical assessment of agritourism enterprises in rural Greece

The sustainable development of agritourism constitutes one of the most significant issues in contemporary tourism and regional policy, particularly in rural areas facing economic, social, and environmental challenges. Agritourism is closely connected to agricultural production, the utilization of natural and cultural resources of rural areas, and the diversification of rural income, while simultaneously contributing to environmental protection, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the strengthening of social cohesion. The main objective of this research is to investigate the extent to which agritourism enterprises adopt sustainability practices and to analyze the relationship between their structural characteristics and overall sustainability. The study is based on quantitative research conducted through a structured questionnaire administered to 105 agritourism enterprises operating in different regions of Greece. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS statistical software and included descriptive statistics, the construction of composite sustainability indices, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings indicate that the enterprises in the sample demonstrate a relatively high level of sustainability, particularly in the social and environmental dimensions. Most enterprises implement practices related to cooperation with local producers, the promotion of local cultural identity, and the use of local products. In contrast, the economic dimension appears less developed, especially regarding access to financing, innovation, and digital transformation. Furthermore, the results reveal that firm size is the most significant factor positively affecting overall sustainability, whereas years of operation and geographical location do not present statistically significant effects. The study contributes to the international discussion on sustainable agritourism by providing empirical evidence from the Greek case and highlighting the need to strengthen economic organization, improve access to financing, and enhance the use of digital tools in order to support the long-term sustainable development of rural areas.

NAO NAGAOKA AND MASAKI CHUJYO*The University of Tokyo, Japan***RYO MATSUI, SHUSAKU YOSHIZUMI AND SHUNJI
UMETANI***Recruit Co., Ltd., Japan***FUJIO TORIUMI***The University of Tokyo, Japan***Gravity model analysis of domestic tourism flows considering
the air transportation network in Japan**

In recent years, the widespread use of online hotel reservation platforms has enabled large-scale analyses of travelers' behavior. In particular, the analysis of tourism flows, including movements between accommodation areas during trips involving stays in multiple regions, is important for understanding booking platform strategies, tourism policies, and regional cooperation. Gravity models based on regional size and interregional distance have been widely used in tourism flow analysis and are recognized as an effective framework for explaining tourism flows. However, because regions differ in their transportation environments, travel behavior may involve structures that cannot be sufficiently explained by a single distance measure. For long-distance travel, the use of air transportation and high-speed transport networks can create discrepancies between geographical distance and travel burden. Nevertheless, few studies have examined interregional tourism connections focusing on movements between accommodation areas while considering transportation environments. Here, we show that geographical distance and pseudo travel time capture different distance-decay structures underlying Japan's domestic tourism. To examine this, we constructed tourism flows from consecutive stays made by the same traveler and applied gravity models using geographical distance or pseudo travel time estimated from accommodation locations, airport locations, and airline networks. The results showed that the geographical distance model fitted better, suggesting that accommodation choices during trips depend more strongly on geographical proximity than on

travel time. However, when the analysis was restricted to long-distance pairs exceeding 500 km, geographical distance no longer showed a significant effect, whereas travel time exhibited strong distance decay and outperformed the geographical distance model. These findings indicate that travel time better explains tourism flows in long-distance ranges where air travel is involved. These findings suggest that transportation accessibility should be considered in tourism policy and transportation planning for long-distance travel. These results suggest that the distance-decay structure of tourism flows is not uniform: geographical proximity is more important for short-distance travel, whereas travel burden becomes more important for long-distance travel. This study highlights the importance of considering different distance measures in tourism flow analysis. The framework could contribute to tourism demand forecasting and evaluations of transportation infrastructure effects on travel behavior.

FLORINDA NARDI

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Literary research for slow and sustainable tourism

Literature can be a powerful tool for telling the story of a region and the cultural heritage it preserves.

No literary narrative can exist without places, without a setting or a space within which the characters move and tell their stories. For this reason, literature can serve as a tool for reconstructing the history of a region through evocative language and narratives capable of shaping the reader's imaginary, transforming them from a virtual traveler (thanks to a mental representation of the described region) into a real traveler (thanks to the observation of the visited region). Tourism that seeks to respect the identity of local areas and highlight the history, culture, customs, and traditions of the people who live there can stem from meticulous literary research. The proposal aims to explore research strategies and methods that can support this type of tourism planning. It is not a matter of recounting, embellishing, and making a region appealing through the allure of storytelling, but rather of seeking out descriptions of the region within a rich literary heritage that has existed and evolved over centuries, produced both by authors from the local tradition and by foreign authors who, as travelers, offer an outsider's. These literary sources can lead to a rediscovery of aspects of a region's history and culture, and above all, they can help create literary maps designed to promote sustainable tourism. Starting with narratives about specific places, walking or cycling routes can be developed, allowing travelers to bring the words of a story to life through firsthand experience of the places. Examples will be drawn from Italian literature and existing tourist routes in the Castelli Romani area (south of Rome), as well as methodological guidelines for research aimed at promoting and applying these approaches to any region.

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Competence gaps in tourism and hospitality: a structured literature review to navigate future skills development

The tourism and hospitality industry is undergoing significant changes, which increases the need for competences that enable tourism organizations to innovate and support more sustainable and regenerative forms of tourism development. At the same time, research on competence gaps in tourism remains fragmented. These developments are increasing the demand for new competences that enable organisations to support sustainable and regenerative innovation. The sector remains highly labour-intensive, characterised by high employee turnover, seasonal employment and strong reliance on human interaction. These structural conditions make competence development a central organisational challenge. Despite a growing body of research, existing studies on competence development in tourism and hospitality tend to focus on specific competence areas in isolation. As a result, the literature remains fragmented, offering limited insight into how different competence gaps interact. This study addresses this gap through a structured literature review of competence development research.

The review identifies five core competence domains: green transition competences, transferable competences and adaptability, artificial intelligence and digital competences, intercultural competences and leadership competences. Moving beyond descriptive mapping, the study develops a systems-based conceptual framework that conceptualises competence gaps as relational interactions between these domains. Specifically, the framework demonstrates how competence gaps emerge not only from shortages within individual domains but from misalignments in how competences are combined, coordinated and mobilised within organisational contexts. The analysis shows that the five domains are interdependent and linked through mechanisms of complementarity, dependency and coordination. Competences in one domain may enable or constrain the effectiveness of others, while leadership plays a central role in coordinating and aligning competences across domains. Sustainability competences provide strategic direction, digital competences enable data-informed decision-making, transferable competences support adaptability and learning, intercultural competences enable stakeholder engagement and place-based development, while leadership competences play a central coordinating role in aligning these domains. Competence gaps therefore arise both within and between domains, constraining organisations' ability to move beyond incremental improvements towards more systemic and regenerative forms of innovation. By conceptualising competence gaps as systemic and relational, this study advances existing literature by shifting the focus from isolated skill deficiencies to competence configurations and their role in enabling organisational transformation.

BEATA PALIŚ*Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland***ADRIENNE TINGYAO LIU***City University of Macau, Macau***AGATA NIEMCZYK***Krakow University of Economics, Poland***MOYOSOLA TIMOTHY AGBOOLA***Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom***How to shape satisfaction for the shopping tourists in the face of trends in the contemporary international shopping tourism market?**

Shopping tourism is a key segment of modern urban tourism. In recent years, new trends in the international tourism market and changes in tourists' preferences have been observed. Monitoring these trends enables the development of appropriate marketing strategies for tourism destinations. This article examines the factors influencing the satisfaction of shopping tourists in the contemporary international shopping tourism market using the DEMATEL method. A qualitative study was conducted with 19 experts worldwide, all specialising in shopping tourism and related trade. The article develops a model of tourist satisfaction in shopping tourism. The following research problems were addressed: verification of contemporary shopping tourism characteristics and their impact on the competitiveness of shopping destinations; analysis of the expectations of contemporary shopping tourists and assessment of their satisfaction with shopping; identification of contemporary global and regional trends in shopping tourism worldwide in terms of their relevance to the development of this tourism segment in cities; and identification of directions for development of shopping tourism in cities. The research identified who contemporary shopping tourists are and the factors influencing their travel behaviour. It was found that experiences related to innovation and eco-products are essential for modern shopping tourists and should be promoted to develop

appropriate shopping tourism products in the future. Contemporary global shopping tourism and the experiences of shopping tourists on the worldwide market were characterised. Selected unique shopping facilities worldwide and the importance of shopping for tourists are described. Furthermore, loyalty strategies and innovation were examined. Based on the identification of shopping tourists and the factors influencing their satisfaction, directions for developing this tourism segment were proposed. The findings indicate that, in the post-pandemic era, the tourism market is recovering, with a noticeable shift towards personalised, experiential shopping. In conclusion, contemporary shopping tourism is no longer limited to purchasing goods. Shopping tourists now expect to combine shopping with unique experiences such as entertainment, culture, leisure, and well-being.

EVANGELIA PAPADIONYSIOU AND NAOUM MYLONAS

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Examining the relationship between intercultural consciousness and hotel performance: The mediating roles of international experience and innovation capacity

This study investigates the influence of intercultural consciousness on hotel performance by examining the mediating roles of international experience and innovation capacity within the hospitality industry. Grounded in sociocultural theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV), the study conceptualizes intercultural consciousness as a strategic intangible capability that enables hotels to navigate increasingly complex cross-cultural environments while fostering sustainable competitive advantage. Although prior research has independently examined cross-cultural competencies, international experience, and innovation-related outcomes, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the mechanisms through which intercultural capabilities are transformed into superior organizational performance in hospitality settings. To address this gap, the present study develops and empirically tests a multiple sequential mediation model linking intercultural consciousness, international experience, innovation capacity, and hotel performance. Data were collected from 176 four- and five-star hotels across Greece, a sample size considered adequate for the estimation requirements and statistical power of the specified PLS-SEM multiple sequential mediation model and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that intercultural consciousness exerts a positive direct effect on innovation capacity while significantly strengthening international experience, which in turn enhances both innovation capacity and hotel performance. Furthermore, innovation capacity emerged as a key organizational mechanism through which international experience translates into improved performance outcomes. Sequential mediation analysis further confirmed that intercultural consciousness contributes indirectly to hotel performance through the combined effects of international experience and

innovation capacity. These findings underscore the strategic significance of culturally informed managerial capabilities in shaping organizational adaptability, innovation-oriented behavior, and service excellence in globally interconnected hospitality markets. By integrating cultural and capability-based perspectives into a unified explanatory framework, this study advances prior research that has largely examined these constructs independently and provides novel empirical evidence regarding the role of intercultural consciousness in strengthening innovation capacity and organizational effectiveness in hotel settings. The study further contributes to hospitality management literature by illuminating how cross-cultural competencies are transformed into tangible performance outcomes while offering practical implications for hotel managers seeking to cultivate internationally oriented and innovation-driven organizational environments responsive to culturally diverse customer expectations and changing market conditions.

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**Strategic pathways to sustainability: An SEM-based analysis of
economic performance in Greek wine tourism**

Wine tourism in Greece is currently at a critical turning point, evolving from a traditional agricultural activity into a complex economic ecosystem. Recent evidence indicates that while the integration of sustainability practices - such as organic farming, local community collaboration, and resource conservation - is gaining momentum, the sector still grapples with systemic inefficiencies. Specifically, Greek wineries frequently encounter obstacles related to seasonal demand volatility, underdeveloped digital marketing strategies, and restricted access to capital. These structural barriers often hinder the transition from mere environmental awareness to long-term economic viability. To address this gap, this study advances the academic discourse by moving beyond descriptive assessments to explore the causal links between sustainability initiatives and business performance. The research relies on primary data collected through structured questionnaires administered to wine tourism enterprises, providing a robust empirical foundation for our analysis. In this study, we further extend the previous descriptive research on sustainable wine tourism in Greece by applying structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine whether and how sustainability practices drive economic outcomes among Greek wineries. Three progressive models are estimated, each answering a distinct research question. A preliminary regression confirms that sustainability practices predict economic outcomes, measured as perceived contribution to revenue and expected business growth from sustainable tourism. Path analysis then reveals the underlying mechanism:

formal environmental certification (ISO14001) drives sustainability engagement, which in turn drives business growth. A hybrid SEM with one latent factor confirms that the effect is stronger than simpler models suggest. Findings are consistent across all three approaches and carry a clear policy message: supporting formal environmental certification (e.g. ISO14001) is the most effective lever for simultaneously improving sustainability and economic performance in Greek wine tourism.

ERAN KETTER
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Building resilience in heritage tourism: Adaptive strategies for climate change challenges

Climate change and extreme weather events present significant challenges to heritage tourism sites, threatening their preservation, accessibility, and long-term sustainability. This study aims to explore the intersection of climate change and heritage tourism, with a specific focus on the development of resilience strategies to mitigate environmental impacts. The research seeks to answer the question: How can heritage tourism sites adapt to the challenges posed by climate change while maintaining their cultural and historical integrity. To address this question, a systematic literature review was conducted, analyzing articles from the top 100 academic journals (as ranked by the SCImago Journal Ranking) in 2020-2023, with a focus on resilience, resilience strategies, and climate change. In addition, the study conducted a systematic review of resilience-related resolutions by the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA), in the years 2000-2023. The review reveals several key findings. First, climate change is increasingly recognized as a critical threat to heritage tourism, with impacts ranging from physical deterioration of sites to altered visitor patterns due to extreme weather events. Second, resilience is often discussed in terms of adaptive management strategies, including proactive planning, community engagement, and the integration of sustainable practices in tourism management. Third, there is a growing emphasis on the need for collaborative governance models that involve stakeholders at all levels, from local communities to international organizations, to enhance the resilience of heritage sites. The implications of these findings are significant for both tourism management and policy development. Developing resilience in heritage tourism requires a multidimensional approach that incorporates environmental, social, and economic considerations. Heritage sites must adopt flexible and adaptive strategies that can withstand the uncertainties of climate change while preserving their cultural significance. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of continuous research and knowledge exchange to foster

innovation in resilience practices, ensuring the sustainable management of heritage tourism in a changing climate.

JOSÉ MARÍA RAMOS PARREÑO, ANDRÉS ARTAL TUR AND JOSÉ MIGUEL NAVARRO AZORÍN

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Analysis of the economic impact of music festivals in the region of Murcia

This study assesses the economic impact of live music festivals held in the Region of Murcia and integrated under the Festivales RM brand. The study contributes both theoretically and empirically to understanding how cultural events function as strategic tools for regional economic development and territorial identity-building. From a practical standpoint, the findings offer evidence-based guidance for cultural and tourism policymakers seeking to optimise public investment in the live music sector. The analysis is grounded in original primary data collected from two complementary sources. Organisers of all 21 festivals included in the Festivales RM portfolio completed detailed questionnaires covering total expenditure, attendance figures, and the share of spending allocated to regional suppliers. In parallel, a purpose-designed survey was administered to more than 4,400 attendees across a representative sample of events spanning three categories - macrofestivals, medium-sized festivals, and smaller locally-oriented events. The survey instrument gathered information on sociodemographic characteristics, travel behaviour, length of stay, visit motivation, and itemised expenditure patterns during the stay in the region. As for the economic impact, only expenditures representing genuine new injections of money into the regional economy are considered: specifically, the share of organisational spending directed at regional suppliers, and the expenditure of non-resident attendees whose primary motivation for visiting the region was festival attendance. Spending by local residents and by visitors for whom the festival was not the main reason for travel is systematically excluded. Direct expenditures are allocated across sectors using the regional input–output table, enabling the estimation of direct, indirect, and induced effects on output, value added, and employment. A complementary log-linear expenditure function is estimated using individual survey data to identify the key determinants of attendee spending, including festival type, overnight stay, age, gender, travel

motivation, and prior experience. The results indicate that Festivals RM generate a net direct expenditure of €24.56 million, producing a total economic impact of €39.93 million in output, €24.00 million in value added, and 445 full-time equivalent jobs. These effects are heavily concentrated in the services sector - particularly hospitality - confirming the strong multiplier dynamics associated with music festivals as tourism-oriented cultural events.

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Tourism and creative industries: Spatial conditions for place-based revitalization

Tourism policies increasingly promote creative industries as drivers of destination differentiation and regional development. However, such strategies often assume that tourism–creative synergies can be mobilized uniformly across space, neglecting the role of spatial frictions and accessibility constraints. This paper provides a policy-oriented assessment of where and under which conditions tourism and creative activities are likely to reinforce each other. Using municipality-level panel data for Japan, the study examines the relationship between tourism activity and creative industries through spatial econometric models and local spatial association analysis, complemented by the utilization of indexes measuring the intensity and sectoral coupling of tourism and creative industries at municipality level. Spatial interaction is defined using a transport-embedded weights matrix that captures functional accessibility through commuting-time thresholds. Results indicate that creative activities benefit from tourism primarily through regional spillovers rather than purely local effects. While local tourism intensity has a positive impact, tourism in accessible neighbouring municipalities exerts a stronger and more robust influence on creative performance. Exploratory spatial analysis based on Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA and BILISA) further identifies distinct spatial regimes by detecting statistically significant clusters and co-location patterns between tourism and creative activities across neighbouring municipalities. As this analysis has two major limitations (a scale bias implying that large metropolitan areas dominate results and a spatial dependence bias that neglects local economic importance when not embedded within regional clusters), complementary intensity indexes support the creation of a diverse typology of regions, with the related policy implications. These findings highlight the limits of place-blind tourism policies and the risks associated with replicating “creative tourism” models without accounting for spatial context. The paper contributes an empirically grounded diagnostic tool for spatially differentiated tourism policy design to support more realistic expectations for

regional revitalization, particularly in non-urban areas where creative activity cannot be sustained through local tourism alone but may benefit from integration into wider regional tourism systems.

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A research model proposal for examining the impact of perceived educational benefits of genAI on learning performance in tourism education

The increasing use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in higher education has raised important questions about how students perceive its educational benefits and how these perceptions may be reflected in learning outcomes. This issue is particularly relevant in tourism education, where students are expected to develop both academic knowledge and practice-oriented competencies for a rapidly digitalizing industry. While previous studies have often examined GenAI through technology acceptance, adoption, usage intention, or concerns about overreliance and academic integrity, less attention has been given to how perceived educational benefits of GenAI may relate to learning performance through learning-related factors. Building upon the existing literature on GenAI use in higher education, student engagement, academic self-efficacy, and learning outcomes, this study presents a research model proposal designed to examine the impact of perceived educational benefits of GenAI on students' perceived learning performance using these tools in tourism education. The proposed model suggests that students' perceptions of GenAI's educational benefits may support academic self-efficacy and engagement in learning processes, which may subsequently be associated with perceived learning performance. In this respect, the model moves beyond a purely technology-oriented perspective and positions GenAI use within a broader educational framework that considers students' academic development and learning experience. The study is currently designed for empirical testing through data collection from undergraduate tourism students. By proposing this model, the study aims to provide a conceptual basis for examining how such perceptions may be connected to students' perceived learning performance in tourism education. It also offers practical relevance for tourism educators and

curriculum designers seeking to integrate GenAI tools into educational processes in a pedagogically meaningful way. Overall, the proposed model contributes to the emerging discussion on GenAI use in tourism education by focusing not only on the use of GenAI, but also on how its educational benefits are perceived and how these perceptions may shape students' learning experience.

MÓNICA SILVA E SILVA AND CARLA PINTO CARDOSO

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Community marketing as a tool for fostering cohesion in hybrid communities: The urban-rural context

Urban-rural communities face a growing tension between preserving local identity and the pressures of touristification, which often leads to the exclusion of residents and the loss of assets of cultural heritage. Community marketing can be a key tool for sustainable and regenerative development both for the community as a territory and as a destination, and its application in hybrid urban-rural contexts remains underexplored. Although the definition of community marketing is a term we aim to expand upon in this study, we take it to mean a strategy focused on two-way engagement that enables the community to be involved in pursuit of a common purpose towards specific targets. This gap is particularly critical in territories where digital strategies fail to engage residents with low literacy levels, intensifying social exclusion and reinforcing urban-led narratives that dominate local development agendas. This research employed a case study methodology in a hybrid urban-rural community, integrating ethnographic techniques, design thinking and mixed methods - including interviews with residents and stakeholders - to explore how community marketing might mitigate these tensions. The focus is on understanding the influence of local identity, digital inclusion and power relations between urban and rural stakeholders in promoting community cohesion and territorial value for Fontoura, a rural parish in Alto Minho, northern Portugal. Initial findings show that urban stakeholders build and govern digital platforms, which promote local businesses and services, but often marginalise rural areas with low literacy. However, analogue and participative methods tailored to rural residents' literacy and culture may promote integration and preserve local identity. This research presents a modified community marketing model for hybrid environments, including collaborative governance, digital literacy initiatives, and the co-creation of narratives that represent the perspectives of both urban and rural participants. This study enhances the literature by tackling

the distinct difficulties of digital exclusion and narrative disparity in hybrid communities, providing practical insights for public policy and local management strategies to promote equitable and resilient territorial development.

MARIA SAVVINOPOULOU AND NAOUM MYLONAS

Ionian University, Greece

Entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial business networks, and organizational agility in wine tourism firms: Evidence from Greek wineries

The present study investigates the relationships among entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial business networks, and organizational agility in the wine tourism sector. Specifically, the research examines how entrepreneurial orientation influences the development of entrepreneurial business networks and how these factors enhance organizational agility among wine tourism firms in Greece. A significant research gap exists in the literature on wine tourism and entrepreneurship. This study addresses this gap by integrating entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial business network, and organizational agility into a single conceptual framework. Although prior research has examined entrepreneurial orientation, networking capabilities, and firm performance across tourism and hospitality contexts, little work has investigated their combined role in fostering flexibility and adaptability within wine tourism firms. Drawing on the dynamic capabilities view, this study offers a framework for understanding how entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial business network contribute to competitive advantage and long-term sustainability in wine tourism firms. A quantitative research design was used to test the proposed conceptual framework. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire administered to Greek wineries engaged in wine tourism. The survey was conducted between March and October 2024 through personal visits to wineries, participation in exhibitions and wine festivals, and online distribution via Google Forms. Because no comprehensive, centralized database of Greek wine tourism firms exists, a snowball sampling technique was used to access winery owners and managers across Greece's wine-producing regions. In total, 180 valid responses were obtained from 430 wine-producing firms, yielding a response rate of approximately 41.86%. The questionnaire items were measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Structural equation modeling shows that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences entrepreneurial business

networks and organizational agility. In addition, entrepreneurial business networks significantly enhance organizational agility, underscoring the importance of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic partnerships for improving flexibility and responsiveness in wine tourism firms. The study contributes to the growing literature on wine tourism entrepreneurship by highlighting the strategic importance of entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial business networks in achieving organizational agility. The findings also offer practical implications for winery entrepreneurs seeking to strengthen competitiveness, adaptability, and sustainable growth in an increasingly dynamic tourism environment.

MATYLDA SIWEK

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Accessible family tourism: Travelling with a child with a visual impairment

Rather than being an occasional occurrence, family travel with a child with a disability is becoming increasingly common. To maintain balance, the tourism industry should therefore adapt its offerings to this specific customer group, and supply should grow in line with increasing demand. This group is unique in that it combines elements of family tourism and tourism for people with disabilities, i.e. it falls within the broader category of accessible tourism. The issue of families travelling with children with disabilities, including visual impairments, should be viewed holistically as a process involving organisational matters, travel-related issues and the preparation of valuable tourism services. Accessible tourism, including in the context of family tourism, is a research topic for academics, organisations, and institutions working with people with disabilities. However, there are still many gaps in this area. Most studies focus on specific, narrow aspects without attempting to take a broader view of the issue. This study will aim to define a travel model for families with a visually impaired child and to identify the main motivations for travel, as well as the barriers, expectations, and needs of the whole family. This paper presents selected results from a qualitative pilot study conducted among parents of a visually impaired child who, for the study, should be under 18 years of age. The survey aimed to gather information from families with at least one child with a visual impairment who had taken at least one holiday. The interview consists of two sections: a main section with different forms of questions and a demographic section. A pilot study is currently being conducted, and the final sample will be representative. The findings will significantly advance research in this field, providing specific conclusions and recommendations for policymakers and the tourism industry.

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From leisure travel to work-lifestyle mobility: Reflecting on digital nomad communities and their needs

Digital nomadism signals a shift in tourism from short-stay leisure travel toward more hybrid forms of mobility that combine work, temporary residence, and everyday life. As destinations adapt to this change, digital communities are becoming increasingly important in shaping how mobile workers experience place, belonging, and wellbeing. This paper explores how the needs of digital nomads can be understood through both reflective insight and review-based evidence. The paper combines reflective field notes from visits to digital nomad communities in different parts of the world with qualitative analysis of online reviews written by digital nomads about their experiences with co-living providers. Rather than focusing only on service evaluation, this paper reinterprets the material to examine what digital nomads' experiences reveal about changing tourism needs and the growing significance of digitally mediated communities. The findings suggest that digital nomads seek more than accommodation. They look for environments that enable continuity in daily life across destinations through workspace functionality, social connection, privacy, flexibility, and trust. Community emerges not as an optional extra but as a core part of tourism infrastructure for longer-stay mobile workers. Dissatisfaction arises when this broader ecosystem breaks down, particularly through weak management, poor maintenance, lack of privacy, or unstable service relationships. The paper argues that tourism for digital nomads differs from conventional tourism because it depends on communities and infrastructures that support living, working, and belonging at the same time. Its implications therefore extend beyond co-living operators to destinations, planners, and tourism stakeholders seeking to respond to more diverse, digitally connected, and potentially more sustainable forms of mobility. In this way, digital nomad communities offer a useful lens for understanding emerging trends in next-generation tourism.

CHARISIA VLACHOU, ZAFEIRO MIMIKOU AND ADONIS GARIFALLOPOULOS

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Greek street food as a tool for gastronomic tourism development: A stakeholder-based SWOT analysis

Street Food has increasingly emerged as an important component of contemporary gastronomic and experiential tourism, contributing to destination identity, authenticity, and local cultural expression. Despite growing international interest in Street Food, limited research has explored its strategic role in the development of Gastronomic Tourism in Greece. The aim of this study is to develop a strategic framework for the promotion of Greek Street Food as a tool for Gastronomic Tourism development. Specifically, the study investigates the key characteristics of Street Food and examines the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges associated with the sector in Greece. A qualitative research approach was adopted based on the perspectives of stakeholders from the gastronomy and Street Food sectors representing both the public and private sectors. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight of the eleven identified stakeholders in 2023 and analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis. Secondary data were gathered through an extensive literature review to establish the theoretical background of the study. The findings were subsequently synthesized through a SWOT analysis to formulate strategic directions for the sector. The findings indicate that the main strengths of Greek Street Food include locality, accessibility, strong flavor identity, the abundance of local raw materials, and its close connection with Greek food culture and everyday life. Key weaknesses identified include legislative constraints, bureaucracy, lack of organization, and inadequate infrastructure. Opportunities include the establishment of a Greek Street Food certification body, product diversification, the enhancement of outdoor public spaces, and the stronger integration of local products and authenticity into the tourism experience. The study concludes by proposing a strategic framework for the development and promotion of Greek Street Food within the broader context of Gastronomic Tourism in Greece. The proposed framework contributes to

destination differentiation, authenticity, and local development while highlighting the potential of Street Food as a strategic tourism resource.

GIOVANNA GIULIA ZAVETTIERI AND LISA SCAFA

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Decoloniality and tourism reductionism: Geography, mobility bias and neo-colonial narratives in contemporary travel discourse

Contemporary tourism discourse may reproduce forms of geographical reductionism rooted in colonial systems of representation. Places are often interpreted through simplified narratives that classify territories according to presumed standards of development, functionality, aesthetics and civility. This study develops a theoretical reflection on tourism through the lens of decoloniality, distinguishing its perspective from earlier understandings of decolonization, focused primarily on political and institutional independence. The study argues that decoloniality and neocolonialism operate in a complementary manner within contemporary tourism practices. While decoloniality provides a critical framework for analysing the persistence of colonial structures of knowledge and representation, neocolonialism describes the continuation of asymmetrical relations through cultural, behavioural and economic mechanisms. Within tourism, these dynamics may emerge through the construction of “single dominant narratives” that reduce local complexity into externally interpretable categories. The paper examines how spaces of economic exchange may become moral indicators of legitimacy or progress, while infrastructural differences and local mobility systems are frequently interpreted through assumptions of inefficiency or dysfunction. Particular attention is devoted to the relationship between aesthetic validation and epistemic authority. Local spaces often acquire symbolic legitimacy through external recognition, reinforcing the implicit perception that cultural value requires validation from outside observers. At the same time, visitors may occupy the role of culturally advanced interpreters of local realities, reproducing behavioural forms of neo-colonial hierarchy embedded within everyday tourism experiences. Rather than presenting a case study, this contribution proposes a theoretical framework connecting decolonial critique, tourism studies and geography in order to expose how contemporary tourism naturalises colonial categories under

the language of sustainability, authenticity and cultural experience.

MARIA ZULFAQAR

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Stakeholder coordination and sustainable coastal tourism: A case study approach

Coastal areas attract large numbers of tourists due to their ecological value, recreational appeal, and cultural heritage. Aside from the benefits of coastal tourism, such as economic growth and development and socio-cultural exchanges, there are negative consequences. Poor coordination among stakeholders contributes to ineffective waste management, resulting in litter in open spaces that eventually pollutes the coast. Apart from environmental degradation, socio-economic challenges also weaken the sustainability of coastal areas. Reliance on low-paid, seasonal work drive poverty and deprivation in many coastal communities. Furthermore, effective coastal governance depends on meaningful stakeholder participation in policy decisions. When local actors are excluded, collaboration disappears, and governance outcomes suffer. All these environmental, economic and socio-cultural conditions undermining the long-term sustainability of coastal destinations. Rather than viewing sustainability as solely an environmental objective, this research explores the need for balanced integration of environmental protection, economic development, and social equity. By examining stakeholder values, norms and beliefs, their roles and perception about cost and benefits and equitable participation in decision making process, this study seeks to identify practical pathways for sustainable coastal tourism development. The study adopts a pragmatist research philosophy with an abductive reasoning approach within a case study design focusing on coastal tourism development. The research is based on Stakeholder Theory, VBN theory, Institutional theory and Social Exchange theory which provide a framework for understanding stakeholder interactions and sustainable tourism planning. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews from key stakeholders including local government representatives, destination management organisations, academicians, local business representatives and environmental groups in Brighton. All the interview are transcribed and analysed using NVivo 12. The results show that although stakeholders showed a

clear willingness to adopt more sustainable practices, however, cooperation is often hindered by factors such as profit pressures, seasonality, poor communication, and differing stakeholder interests. Moreover, the stakeholders believe that protecting coastal ecosystems is essential, yet not all development projects are sustainable. Stakeholders also suggested that those benefiting from tourism should give back to the community through philanthropy, voluntary contributions or structured tax schemes.

SPECIAL SESSION 1:

The xenophile paradigm of resilience building: Adaptive supply chains and learning destinations

ORGANIZED BY:

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Developing AI literacy and responsible innovation capabilities in tourism ecosystems: An educational framework for next- generation tourism

Tourism education is increasingly challenged to prepare future professionals and destination stakeholders for a sector shaped by rapid technological change, sustainability pressures, data-driven decision-making and rising expectations for ethical and inclusive innovation. In this context, artificial intelligence should not be approached only as a technological tool, but as a socio-technical transformation that requires critical understanding, responsible judgement and collaborative capacity across tourism ecosystems. This paper aims to develop an educational framework for cultivating AI literacy and responsible innovation capabilities in tourism. Building on previous work on stakeholder learning and engagement for resilient and sustainable tourism destinations, the proposed framework shifts the focus toward the competencies required for next-generation tourism in an AI-enabled environment. Drawing on the literature on tourism education, AI literacy, responsible innovation, digital transformation, sustainability and ecosystem-based approaches, the framework identifies key educational dimensions, including AI awareness, data literacy, ethical reasoning, algorithmic accountability, privacy and data protection, digital trust, risk awareness, human-centered service design, sustainability orientation and collaborative governance. These dimensions are conceptualized as interconnected capabilities that enable students, professionals, managers, policymakers and destination stakeholders to understand AI systems, evaluate their implications and contribute to their responsible use in tourism contexts. The framework also addresses systemic constraints that may limit inclusive AI adoption, particularly the digital divide between large online travel platforms and independent tourism SMEs, as well as differences in access to data, skills, infrastructure and financial resources. To support implementation, the paper proposes pedagogical approaches such as micro-credentials,

experiential learning simulations, project-based learning, living labs, case-based learning and industry-academic partnerships. The paper contributes to tourism education research by positioning AI literacy as a strategic capability for responsible tourism transformation rather than as a purely technical skill. From a practical perspective, the framework can support higher education institutions, vocational training providers, destination management organizations and tourism businesses in designing curricula, training modules and capacity-building initiatives. The study is conceptual in nature and provides a foundation for future empirical research, including expert validation, curriculum mapping, case study applications and assessment tools for evaluating AI literacy and responsible innovation capabilities in tourism education.

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Educational resilience and experimental learning environments: Collaborative approaches for sustainable regional development

The growing complexity of global social, ecological, and economic challenges increasingly requires educational systems to strengthen resilience-oriented learning capacities. In this context, the concept of educational resilience extends beyond individual coping mechanisms toward collective, applied, and community-oriented learning processes. The present study explores how experimental and practice-based learning environments contribute to the development of educational resilience within the framework of sustainable regional development. The research aims to conceptualize educational resilience as a multidimensional pedagogical process through which learners actively contribute to community development and regional well-being. The study builds on experiences from the *International Summer School for Sustainable Development (ISSD)* in Epidavros, Greece, implemented in close collaboration with the local municipality. In this living-lab environment, students engage with real regional challenges through collaborative, applied, and sustainability-oriented learning formats. Specifically, the project assignment focuses on developing an integrated approach for surveying and analyzing community attitudes and behaviors. Based on these insights, students design behavior-changing measures that enable the regional government to foster public acceptance of sustainable policies. Based on a systematic review and comparison of existing community development models, students navigate a structured challenge: assessing community needs and resources, analyzing objectives and barriers, developing a model of change, creating strategic action

plans, and designing interventions for participation and behavioral change. The study adopts a conceptual and exploratory research design, combining theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, and didactical synthesis. Theoretical analysis is used to examine existing approaches to resilience-oriented education and transformative learning. Comparative analysis contrasts traditional classroom-oriented teaching models with the experimental, community-based learning approach implemented in Epidavros. Didactical synthesis integrates these perspectives into a structured framework for educational resilience development. The research identifies several interconnected dimensions shaping educational resilience: supportive framework conditions, intercultural cooperation, collaborative project structures, coaching-oriented supervision, and experiential engagement with authentic regional development challenges. Within this framework, students are positioned not merely as recipients of knowledge, but as active contributors to local innovation processes, community interaction, and sustainability-oriented problem solving. By linking higher education with regional experimentation, municipal partnership, and cooperative learning processes, this research demonstrates how educational resilience emerges most effectively in learning environments characterized by openness, interdisciplinarity, intercultural interaction, and practical engagement with real societal contexts. Ultimately, the study contributes to ongoing discussions on transformative education and resilience-oriented regional development.

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The xenophile paradigm of resilience building: Conceptual foundations for adaptive tourism destinations

Recent disruptions in global tourism have intensified interest in resilience as a core principle of sustainable destination development. Existing research has largely framed resilience in terms of resistance, recovery, and structural robustness. However, such perspectives often underexplore how destinations evolve through learning, innovation, and interaction with external change. This study introduces the xenophile paradigm of resilience building, proposing a reframing of resilience as an adaptive and learning-oriented process within tourism systems. In this study, tourism systems are understood as integrated socio-economic configurations comprising tourism supply chains, local communities, governance structures, and supporting infrastructures. The research adopts a conceptual design, combining theoretical analysis (to clarify key constructs and assumptions in resilience research), comparative analysis (contrasting supply-chain-oriented and destination-based resilience frameworks), and conceptual synthesis (to integrate these perspectives into a coherent developmental paradigm). Building on this approach, the study defines the xenophile destination as a tourism system in which stakeholders-residents, businesses, and institutions - demonstrate openness and curiosity to external influences and actively engage with new knowledge, technologies, and cultural diversity. Within this paradigm, openness and curiosity are expressed through strategic orientation, collaborative practices, and the continuous integration of external inputs into local development processes. The paradigm is operationalized through four principles: flexibility, customer centricity, iterative learning, and participatory governance, which together describe how adaptive capacity is cultivated and reinforced over time. The xenophile perspective highlights resilience as an evolving capability shaped by learning processes, collaborative adaptation, and the integration of external

knowledge into local systems. It contributes a complementary analytical lens that foregrounds dynamic transformation, while acknowledging that its implementation depends on context-specific institutional capacities, stakeholder alignment, and governance conditions. By integrating cultural, managerial, and systemic dimensions, the xenophile paradigm contributes to ongoing debates on tourism resilience and provides a structured foundation for future empirical research. It advances a process-oriented understanding of how destinations evolve in response to change, offering a conceptual basis for examining resilience as a continuous and context-dependent developmental trajectory.

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From everyday practices to destination resilience: A community-centred reframing of the leisure sharing economy

The study introduces the *ResoluSion-Model*, a novel input-output framework that conceptualises the leisure sharing economy as a community-centred pathway for enhancing tourism acceptance and destination resilience. Building on an integrative synthesis of resilience theory, community-based tourism, and sharing economy research, the model positions household-level leisure practices as key inputs into destination-level resilience processes. It advances a structured understanding of how locally embedded resources - both tangible and intangible - can be mobilised through socially mediated mechanisms to support adaptive and inclusive tourism development. At the core of the model lies the mediating role of tourism awareness and acceptance, operationalised through five interrelated domains: experiential quality, cultural embedding, inclusive wellbeing, cooperative engagement, and inclusive participation. These domains capture how everyday leisure practices, such as shared meals, storytelling, or collaborative crafting, are translated into meaningful tourism experiences that foster both visitor satisfaction and resident engagement. In doing so, the model reframes the leisure sharing economy as a socially embedded system of value creation. The study applies a semi-quantitative, expert-informed assessment involving 36 tourism policymakers in Germany. The analysis distinguishes between bipartite (direct) and tripartite (mediated) relationships, enabling a nuanced examination of how leisure sharing practices relate to destination resilience outcomes. The findings reveal strong and consistent expert agreement on the relevance of community-based leisure contributions, particularly highlighting the central role of intangible resources such as knowledge exchange, cultural expression, and interpersonal interaction. At the same time, results indicate a distinction between conceptual importance and practical implementation, with tangible

household assets providing entry points for operationalisation. Beyond its conceptual contribution, the study offers practical implications for destination management and policy. It highlights how community-based leisure sharing can serve as an entry point for resident participation, transforming households from passive observers into active contributors to tourism development. In this sense, the ResoluSion-Model provides a structured basis for designing context-sensitive, resilience-oriented tourism strategies that are rooted in local capacities and social dynamics. Overall, the study contributes to ongoing debates on the future of tourism by demonstrating how community-centred, everyday practices can be systematically integrated into resilience-building processes at the destination level.

SPECIAL SESSION 2:

Innovation meets protection: Managing risk, safety and security in tourism

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Participants' risk perception and behavioural responses at large-scale events

Large-scale events have become central instruments of territorial development and tourism competitiveness. However, it is increasingly evident that these events are taking place in environments characterized by heightened perceptions of health, security, and crowd-related risks. Despite the acknowledgement within the field of tourism research that behavioral responses are shaped by subjective risk perception rather than objective risk conditions, extant studies have predominantly approached risk as a unidimensional construct and have inadequately integrated emotional mechanisms into explanatory models. The present study aims to address this gap by conducting an analysis of how participants' multidimensional perception of risk influences satisfaction and future participation intentions at large-scale events in Portugal. The research draws on Perceived Risk Theory and Protection Motivation Theory to develop an integrated framework in which perceived risk exerts both direct and indirect effects on behavioral outcomes through emotional responses. Anxiety and confidence are conceptualized as key mediating mechanisms, while prior event experience is examined as a moderating factor shaping variations in participant responses. The study adopts a quantitative explanatory design based on a structured digital questionnaire administered to participants attending major events across Portugal. The instrument operationalizes multiple dimensions of perceived risk, emotional responses, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. It is hypothesized that divergent risk dimensions will exert differential effects on behavioral outcomes, with emotional responses mediating these relationships to a greater extent than traditional direct-effect models, thereby facilitating a more nuanced understanding. The findings are also expected to demonstrate that prior experience has the capacity to attenuate the negative impact of perceived risk

on satisfaction and future participation intention. Empirical testing of a multidimensional and emotionally grounded model has been undertaken in this study, thereby advancing theoretical debates on risk perception in high-density experiential environments and contributing to tourism and event studies by offering a more comprehensive explanation of participant behavior. The results of the study will provide insights into event governance, risk communication strategies, and the design of safer, more resilient, and participant-centered large-scale events.

ANDREIA PEREIRA AND CLAUDIA SEABRA

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Measuring tourists' situational physical risk perception: Scale development and validation

Risk perception is recognized as a multidimensional construct, and physical risk is usually considered in tourism research alongside other risk domains. However, there remains scope to capture how tourists perceive the possibility of physical harm in the environments they encounter during their visits in specific settings. Perceived physical risk is often associated with injuries, accidents, and other hazards. These dangers could be inferred from situational cues at a specific destination. This study develops and validates the Tourist Situational Physical Risk Perception Scale, designed to measure visitors' on-site evaluations of physical risk during their visit. Item generation was supported by prior qualitative interviews and by user-generated travel reviews, which revealed situational domains of perceived physical risk. Data collection occurred at major tourism spots in the cities of Lisbon and Porto, Portugal, between December 2024 and January 2026, with a total sample of 265 valid responses. The latent structure of the instrument was examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and validated with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The final nine-item scale consists of three dimensions: public space vulnerability, disorder and petty crime cues, and direct threat exposure. Results indicate satisfactory internal consistency, factorial validity, and measurement invariance across tourists with and without previous experience in the studied destinations. Findings suggest that tourists' on-site physical risk perceptions are associated with situational cues present in the visited environment. The present scale was developed within the context of Portuguese cities. Future studies may examine its applicability in other destinations.

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**CARLA SILVA, MANUEL REIS AND JOSÉ LUÍS
ABRANTES**

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Risk perception of pandemics and beyond: A generational approach

The world has experienced several diseases and pandemics over time. The last one - Covid-19 pandemic - was very recent, and it is estimated that it has been responsible for almost 7.000.000 deaths in the World (WHO, 2023). The tourism industry was the most affected one, with unprecedented impacts on travel consumer planning and behavior, as the COVID-19 pandemic increased the risk perception among the general population worldwide. Despite the growing interest in generational analysis, there has been very little research carried out on consumers' perceptions of different cohorts in the tourism context. Within this context, the main purpose of the present research is to measure risk perception and travel planning and behavior among Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z generations concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and possible other future pandemics. To address these goals, a quantitative research approach was adopted with an online survey conducted in Portugal in 2024. The results confirm that there are significant differences between generations' cohorts considering risk perception by fear, knowledge and beliefs and the subsequent travel decisions and behaviors. Specifically, Generation Z presents a unique risk profile, marked by tourists' notably low participation in protective activities, while showing the highest levels of fear and much lower knowledge scores compared to other groups. This work attempts to contribute to academic literature by looking at the travel risk perception related to pandemics from a generation's perspective.

PEDRO VAZ SERRA AND CLAUDIA SEABRA

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Tourism and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development: From intentions to actions

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was approved, from which the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) emerged, as a global commitment incorporated into 17 goals and 169 targets. In this context, the Agenda advocates that public entities, civil society, and private operators commit to the SDGs, and monitoring contributions, including those most directly related to tourism activity, is essential. From inclusive economic growth to the use of oceans and marine resources, as well as consumption and production, tourism can and should contribute to sustainable practices across these dimensions, addressing its interactions with these realities, employment levels, exports and service provision, and intermediate consumption for final products. Ten years after the approval of the 2030 Agenda, it seems pertinent to take stock of the policies implemented, not only in Portugal but also in Europe and globally. Using secondary sources, namely the UN (United Nations), NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), international consultancies, and public entities active in the tourism sector, an analysis of the path taken between 2015 and 2025 is proposed. The survey will also include a SWOT analysis, which, by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, will reveal the greatest vulnerabilities and the most robust aspects of a path that, ideally, should have already achieved most of the initially identified objectives. We expect significant contributions that, allowing an assessment five years before the end of the 2030 Agenda, make it possible to foresee, based on the dynamics of the recent past, the degree of commitment and achievement of stakeholders to a common goal of the utmost importance.

LUÍS SIMÕES AND CLAUDIA SEABRA

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Sport mega-events as strategic soft power instruments: The case of the 2030 FIFA World Cup and European tourism positioning

European tourism is undergoing profound structural transformation driven by geopolitical instability, climate imperatives and intensifying global competition, generating complex governance and planning challenges for destinations. Although mega-sporting events have traditionally been assessed through economic impact and legacy models, their systemic implications for tourism governance and development planning remain underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by advancing an integrated conceptual framework that positions mega-sporting events as strategic policy arenas capable of accelerating institutional adaptation and multi-level governance coordination in response to emerging tourism challenges. A scoping review was conducted following the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines, with a pre-registered protocol on the Open Science Framework. Searches were performed across Scopus, Web of Science and SPORTDiscus using a structured Boolean query combining terms related to mega-sporting events, soft power and host destination dimensions. From an initial pool of 893 records, 567 unique entries were screened by title and abstract, 118 proceeded to full-text review and 51 studies met all eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Eligibility was operationalised through a PCC (Population-Concept-Context) framework, requiring an explicit focus on mega-events as instruments of soft power or public diplomacy and an analytical link to destination image, place branding or sustainability. The findings demonstrate that mega-events operate less as automatic growth engines and more as governance stress-tests that expose structural constraints, intensify policy alignment and catalyse strategic repositioning within competitive tourism systems facing environmental and geopolitical pressures. Sustainability emerges as a critical planning dimension, shifting from symbolic commitment to a mechanism for regulatory innovation and intergovernmental cooperation. The jointly hosted FIFA World Cup 2030 serves as an

illustrative lens through which emerging models of transnational planning and collaborative destination management can be examined. By foregrounding governance innovation and strategic planning, this paper advances tourism development debates beyond impact-based analyses and proposes a systemic understanding of how mega-events influence institutional resilience, long-term competitiveness and policy transformation under conditions of structural uncertainty.

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CLAUDIA SEABRA

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Travel in times of uncertainty: The impact of war-related worry on future travel planning

The tourism industry is particularly exposed to crises, in which the perceived risk and worry significantly influence travel decisions. The current situation of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the escalating war involving the United States, Israel and Iran, have significant impact of tourism. The relationship between war and tourism are complex and in the context of large-scale conflicts, the impacts are not confined to the war zone. Uncertainty in the context of travel is linked to increased fear, anxiety, and worry, generating substantial psychological distress that affects subsequent travel behavior. Within this, the present study intends to measure the impact of war-related worry on future travel planning. To do that, a quantitative approach was undertaken through a questionnaire applied in January of 2026 to people who want to make a national or international trip during the next 6 months. The questionnaire was designed based on existing literature and considered three sections: risk perception, war-related worry and future travel plans. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). To ensure reliability and validity, all measurement scales were pre-tested in a pilot study before full-scale implementation. The results highlight the positive relation between the worries and future travel plans concerning risk perception of war. Insights from an empirical study of 388 tourists reveals that the cognitive dimension of war-related worry have significant impact on caution and self-protective travel behaviors. The cognitive dimension leads to more rational and preventive behaviors, such as increased caution, destination substitution, and safety-oriented planning. On the other hand, the emotional dimension of war-related worry impacted on travel behavior generating stronger avoidance reactions, including postponing, cancelling or reducing travel. Based on that, several theoretical and managerial implications regarding risk

perception, worry and travel planning are discussed. Primary, the study contributes to tourism risk literature by demonstrating that war-related worry is multidimensional. The distinction of cognitive and emotional worry helps explain why tourists respond differently to geopolitical crises. On the other hand, the study demonstrates that contemporary geopolitical conflicts produce effects beyond directly affected regions. Thus, destination management organizations should actively reinforce positive destination image and perceived safety. Also, and since cognitive and emotional worries affect travelers differently, tourism businesses should adopt differentiated communication strategies, using factual safety information and flexible policies for cognitively worried travelers, while emphasizing reassurance, trust, and emotional security for emotionally worried travelers.

CARLA SILVA*Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal***CLAUDIA SEABRA***University of Coimbra, Portugal***MANUEL REIS***Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal***A gender-based analysis of travel safety perceptions**

Safety and security have emerged as key issues in the global tourism industry. In the current context of intensified global mobility, tourism is increasingly shaped by heightened awareness of risk and uncertainty. Travel has become more influenced by a wide range of threats, including geopolitical instability, terrorism, health crises, climate-related events, and digital vulnerabilities. As a result, safety has emerged as the key requirement in travel and destination choice. On the other hand, tourism literature recognizes the importance of studying gender differences on the perceptions of risk due to the impacts on travel decisions. As the literature shows, perceptions of risk and safety are gendered, making them a central factor in tourists' decision-making processes. Given that the need for safety is fundamental to all individuals, this study aims to investigate whether significant differences exist between female and male travelers in their perceptions of travel safety. To achieve this, a quantitative approach was employed using a questionnaire applied in January of 2026 to people who want to make a national or international trip during the next 6 months. The current study involved 229 female and 151 male respondents, resulting in a total of 380 valid questionnaires. The results reveal that female respondents perceived travel as involving higher levels of risk and reported feeling less safe than male participants. Also, men report higher levels of personal comfort and safety confidence than women. However, no gender differences were observed regarding the importance attributed to safety, which was equally valued by both groups. While safety is universally valued across genders, its interpretation and the intensity of risk perception differ, highlighting how broader social inequalities continue to

shape mobility patterns in contemporary tourism. Thus, the study supports previous research suggesting that risk perception is socially constructed and confirming that perceptions of travel safety are gendered. On the other hand, the study examines gendered safety perceptions through a multidimensional risk framework that incorporates wars and geopolitical conflicts, pandemics and climate-related events, contributing to a more holistic perspective in tourism studies. Regarding practical implications, tourism businesses and destination management organizations should recognize that female travelers may require higher levels of perceived security and safety and reassurance during travel planning. Thus, marketing and communication strategies should emphasize trust, reliability, and safety transparency, particularly when targeting female travelers.

SPECIAL SESSION 3:

Rural destinations and their quest for sustainable transformation: Can wine tourism offer a brighter future?

ORGANIZED BY:

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From collective production to experiential value: Rethinking the role of cooperatives in Aegean Island wine tourism destinations

Viticulture in Aegean Island contexts represents a deeply rooted socio-ecological system, where vine cultivation has historically structured rural economies, cultural landscapes, and collective forms of organization. In geographically constrained environments—characterized by land fragmentation, insularity, and limited market accessibility—agricultural cooperatives have long functioned as key institutions for sustaining smallholder production. Today, however, these systems are being reshaped by dynamics highlighted in rural geography and the geopolitical analysis of food systems, including supply chain vulnerabilities, climate pressures, and shifting regulatory and market frameworks. Within this evolving context, wine tourism is no longer a complementary activity but an increasingly structural component of rural development strategies, requiring a reconfiguration of how value is produced, communicated, and distributed across territories. The growing relevance of experiential tourism calls for a transition from product-centred logics to experience-oriented models, in which visitors engage with landscapes, practices, and local identities. In this perspective, cooperatives are confronted with the need to evolve beyond their traditional functions of production coordination and price stabilization. They are increasingly required to assume new roles in governance, territorial positioning, and narrative construction. This implies the capacity to articulate place-based identities, design and manage visitor experiences, and participate in the co-creation of value with tourists, local communities, and other stakeholders. Such a transition entails the emergence of new governance configurations, including hybrid public–private arrangements, strengthened networks, and more adaptive

organizational forms capable of integrating agricultural production with tourism development. At the same time, this process generates tensions related to authenticity, inclusivity, and the potential commodification of cultural landscapes. At stake is whether cooperative models can reposition themselves as central actors in the governance of wine tourism destinations, contributing to the sustainable transformation and long-term resilience of rural wine territories.

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Grape on skin: Wine and food-based treatments at Greek hotel spas

Among the numerous trends shaping hotel spa offerings in recent years, the use of food and beverages as treatment ingredients has gained considerable momentum worldwide. Since the launch of vinotherapy at Les Sources de Caudalie in the Bordeaux wine country in 1999, concepts based on grapes, wine, chocolate, caviar, herbs, and spices have proliferated across hotel spas globally. Greece presents a particularly rich case study in this regard: from yogurt-based treatments in Athens to honey therapies on Kos Island, and from wine-infused rituals to oleotherapy — a concept developed by Costa Navarino drawing on ancient olive oil practices referenced in clay tablets from the nearby Palace of Nestor and the writings of Hippocrates — Greek hotel spas have embraced food and beverage-based treatments with notable creativity and cultural depth. Despite this proliferation, the phenomenon has attracted limited scholarly attention, with existing mentions remaining sporadic and unsystematic. The present paper addresses this gap by offering the first systematic analysis of wine and food-based treatments across Greek hotel spas. It is based on a rigorous content analysis of 120 Greek hotels with spa facilities, examining both their websites and spa menus using a 234-item checklist. The analysis was conducted in summer 2023, building on a comparable study from 2020, thus enabling longitudinal comparison over a three-year period. Findings highlight the adoption rate and diversity of food and beverage-based treatments in Greek hotel spas, document changes between 2020 and 2023 in terms of menu presence, treatment duration, and pricing, and situate these treatments within broader spa pricing structures. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for wine growers, cosmetics companies, and spa managers on identifying suitable treatment concepts, incorporating them effectively into spa menus, establishing pricing benchmarks, and selecting appropriate marketing approaches. By combining empirical analysis with actionable guidance, this study contributes to both the academic understanding and practical development of a

distinctive and culturally grounded dimension of the hotel spa experience.

ARGYRO KOUTSOURADI, MYRSINIA KOUTSOURADI AND MARIA DOUMI

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Small-scale wine production, wine tourism, and institutional governance: The wine ecosystem in the North Aegean

This study investigates the contribution of small-scale wine production to the development of wine tourism and the wine ecosystem in the North Aegean, focusing particularly on the role of institutional governance and cooperation among stakeholders. International literature views wine tourism as a complex system of interactions in which wine producers, tourism businesses, and institutional organizations contribute to the creation of local economic and social value. Special emphasis is placed on collaboration, networks, and clustering processes, as these strengthen the competitiveness, authenticity, and sustainability of wine-producing regions. At the same time, effective institutional organization and active stakeholder participation are considered essential conditions for coordinating actions and creating integrated wine tourism experiences. The study follows a qualitative methodological approach and is based on semi-structured interviews with small-scale wine producers from all islands of the North Aegean Region. The sample was purposively selected, focusing on producers engaged in both wine production and wine tourism activities. Data analysis is conducted through thematic analysis in order to identify key patterns and relationships characterizing the wine ecosystem of the region. The findings highlight that small-scale wine producers contribute significantly not only to primary production but also to strengthening the local economy through wine tourism activities. However, the sustainability and competitiveness of the wine ecosystem depend greatly on the level of cooperation and coordination among institutional actors, such as Chambers of Commerce, Municipalities, and Regional authorities. Limited collaboration leads to fragmented promotional practices, difficulties in establishing a unified destination identity, and reduced access of producers to funding instruments and development programs. In addition, the absence of coordination weakens trust-based relationships and social cohesion among local stakeholders. The study

concludes that effective institutional governance, stronger collaboration, and the development of integrated wine tourism strategies are key factors for the sustainable development and resilience of the island regions of the North Aegean.

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Does wine tourism certification make a difference online? Examining the website content of Greece's open-to-the-public wineries

The role of digital communication in wine tourism practices has been increasingly addressed by scholars. As contemporary consumers tend to seek information through digital channels, wineries' websites serve as an essential tool for marketing strategies (Maesano, Castellini & Spadoni, 2026), acting as a platform where wine tourism providers can showcase their services, increase visibility and engage with potential visitors. The literature has so far offered various frameworks for evaluating the content of wineries' websites based on several classification criteria. Despite the importance of these contributions, to date no study has explicitly focused on the role of certification in open-to-the-public wineries' online presence. This study focuses on the content of Greek wineries' websites at the national level. To this end, previous literature informed the development of a detailed and comprehensive benchmarking model that classified wineries' websites into Newbies, Explorers, Integrators and Experts depending on the levels of their digital competences according to their final scores at a set of 64 indicators. The population of study included all wineries certified by the Greek Ministry of Tourism as open to the public (115 at the time of the study). Content analysis and descriptive statistics were employed to evaluate the data, grouping also website criteria into distinct categories, such as informational, interactive, transactional and integration. At the second stage, two major wine regions -Northern Greece and Crete- were selected to provide a basis for comparisons between mainland and inland wineries as well as among certified and non-officially certified ones. In addition, research

sought to identify specific references to sustainability in wineries' online presence. Findings indicate that wineries certified as open-to-the-public generally perform better across most indicators and demonstrate more advanced and integrated digital strategies. Main weaknesses identified include outdated website content; limited sustainability communication; insufficient visitor information; and underdeveloped e-commerce functions. Research also highlights opportunities for stronger collaboration among wineries and tourism stakeholders, as well as the need for better coordination at the collective level. This study adds to the wine tourism literature by providing insights from an Old-World destination with a strong mass tourism tradition and an emerging wine tourism sector.

NINA ZISIADI*Hellenic Open University, Greece***MARIA ALEBAKI***Hellenic Agricultural Organization DIMITRA, Greece***DIMITRIOS STERGIU***Hellenic Open University, Greece***Small-scale wineries and wine tourism marketing strategies:
Evidence from the “artisanal winemakers of Greece”**

Wine businesses are nowadays required to continuously adapt to the demands of a rapidly changing and complex environment. Given the serious threats arising from climate change, evolving consumers preferences, and financial uncertainty, wine tourism has emerged as a promising opportunity for both business resilience and sustainable local development. This opportunity is considered particularly critical for small wineries, which lack the economies of scale and the necessary resources to access new technologies. Despite the importance of this issue, few studies have attended to explore artisanal wine producers' perceptions on their individual and collective marketing strategies. Even less evidence exists on small wineries' digital efforts to communicate with target markets and promote their wine tourism offer. This paper attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the Mediterranean context. The population of study included all wineries-members of the Artisanal Wineries of Greece (AWG). Research methodology included two complementary steps: (1) Content analysis of all wineries' websites (88 at the time of the study) based on established classification approaches followed by descriptive statistics, with the objective to identify distinct types of online communication and digital competencies. (2) In-depth interviews with members of the network's management board, aiming to explore their perceptions on the challenges associated with engaging in wine tourism activities, and individual and collective marketing. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns in participants' responses. Overall, a significant number of wine businesses were found to have a limited or unclear digital presence, as their websites are either under

construction or provide only minimal information. Distinct types of orientation in wineries' websites were addressed, according to the level of digital competences. In-depth interviews revealed a constellation of challenges, including, structural and organizational deficiencies; the lack of coordination among members and the low participation in networking initiatives; the complexity of the legal and tax framework which acts as a barrier to wine tourism certification and e-commerce development; the absence of relevant educational programs, and the need for adequately trained personnel to manage winery visits and support the association's operations. Findings confirm previous research indicating the interaction of multiple challenges at both the macro- and the micro- level, as well as their combined effects on the Greek wine sector's sustainability.