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Navigating Changes and Challenges in a Post-Pandemic World

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Preface

We proudly welcome you to our prestigious scientific journal, Turistica - Italian Journal of Tourism. This publication represents a beacon of knowledge in the vast universe of tourism, offering a unique opportunity to explore the challenges, innovations, and trends in this ever-changing industry. Turistica is a publication of great tradition and prestige in tourism studies. Founded over thirty years ago by Prof. Emilio Becheri, the journal has pioneered in promoting high-quality research and providing a platform for exchanging ideas between academics, researchers, and tourism professionals. His legacy of excellence continues to be our strength. We are aware of the importance of the international perspective on tourism. For this reason, our journal is published in English, allowing researchers, scholars, and professionals worldwide to access our content and contribute to the global discussion on tourism. Turistica is a journal open to all who share our interest in tourism. We welcome contributions from emerging researchers, industry experts and professionals eager to share their findings, innovative solutions, and policy approaches. The diversity of perspectives enriches our debate. I am honored to be president of SISTUR, and I guarantee my enthusiasm and commitment to directing this journal, allowing us to deepen our understanding of tourism and contribute to its sustainable growth. Our first issue is dedicated to the theme of resilience in tourism, a topic of great importance in a world that continues to be plagued by challenges and changes. This is just the beginning of our journey, and we expect to explore many other crucial issues in the coming issues. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey of knowledge and discovery. Your voice is crucial to the journal's success. By contributing your articles, research, and experiences, we can all help shape the future of tourism. We look forward to working with you and exploring the many facets of tourism through the pages of Turistica - Italian Journal of Tourism.

Prof. Fabrizio Antolini

SISTUR - President
TURISTICA - Editor in Chief

Introduction

Welcome to the "Tourism Resilience" special Italian Journal of Tourism issue. In a world marked by dynamic changes, from the challenges posed by climate change to the recent disruptions caused by the global pandemic, the tourism industry is continually evolving to adapt and recover. This special issue focuses on various aspects of tourism resilience, drawing insights from research. The open article Resilience Frameworks in Tourism Studies provides a literature review of resilience frameworks. A comprehensive overview of the studies in this field is provided by summarising key findings and research directions related to tourism resilience. This review is a valuable resource for future research on resilience in the tourism sector. The following article examines cultural routes as social innovation projects that promote tourism development in marginal areas. Cultural routes are shown to have the potential to build resilience, and their role in preserving cultural heritage, fostering community engagement, and driving economic growth is highlighted. Challenges in effectively implementing these routes are also identified in the study. The concept of authenticity in historical art cities is explored in Authenticity in Historical Art Cities. The study examines the correlation between authenticity, cultural motivation, and loyalty, highlighting how mass tourism can threaten authenticity and be employed as a strategy to build resilience in heritage cities. Destination managers can benefit from the valuable insights the research provides, which aim to preserve cultural identity. Sustainable Tourism and Resilience are connected. A Composite Index for European Destinations comprehensively reviews sustainable tourism indicators in European Union (EU) countries. The importance of sustainability in tourism and its impact on destination competitiveness are highlighted. This study presents a framework for policymakers and stakeholders to make informed decisions on resource allocation and policy development, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches to address specific destination challenges. Another investigation point is the proximity tourism in Spain, focusing on how tourist flows changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It introduces the concept of proximity tourism, emphasizing its relevance in a post-pandemic world and its potential to support local destinations. The study utilizes an Origin-Destination Matrix approach to analyse tourism dynamics within Spain. The Regenerative Tourism Approach for Marginalized Areas explores the concept of regenerative tourism and its potential to transform marginalized areas. By examining two best practices in Southern Italy, the paper illustrates how regenerative tourism can create net positive effects by reinvigorating local communities and economies. It emphasizes these practices; role in enhancing such areas tourist attractiveness. Finally, the last contribution focuses on the influence of socio-demographic factors such as nationality, age, gender, and education on tourists' attachment, involvement, loyalty attitudes, and environmentally responsible behaviour toward a cultural Italian destination. It sheds light on how these factors affect tourists; perceptions and behaviour, providing valuable insights for cultural tourism marketing and management. Throughout this special issue, you will find diverse perspectives and insights on tourism resilience, ranging from sustainability and socio-demographic influences on regenerative tourism practices to the importance of authenticity in heritage cities. We hope these contributions will inspire new approaches and strategies to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the tourism industry.

Prof. Giovanni Ruggieri

Special Issue Editor

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Academic Research Paper

Resilience frameworks in tourism studies: a literature review

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Abstract: In recent years, there has been an increased interest in studies on economic resilience. There have been several contributions from scholars who have applied theoretical frameworks on various social and economic fields. Among these is the subject of tourism. Using a traditional narrative style, this paper summarises the main findings concerning resilience and tourism that have been published in academic journals over recent years and it provides some critical reflections about the research directions. For the selection of papers in this literature review, the author has considered those studies that have analysed the relationships between tourism and resilience within a tourist destination, in a framework of resistance and / or a recovery from shocks. The main results of this study will allow for one to acquire a complete picture of the studies in this line of research. This may be useful for future studies on resilience in the tourism sector.

Keywords: *resilience; literature; review*

JEL Codes: L83; Z32

1. Introduction

Tourism is often considered to be a useful tool for promoting economic and social development, but at the same time, its strength can significantly influence the structures and the processes of ecosystems, while deteriorating the natural resources that are non-renewable (Lacitignola et al., 2007). In addition, the tourism industry is particularly sensitive to destabilising forces, such as war (Butler & Suntikul, 2012; Mansfeld, 1999), together with the economic complexity that happens in the transition from a local market to a global market (Holling, 2001; Milne & Ateljevic, 2010), as well as with natural occurring disasters (Beeton, 2006; Ritchie 2004; Scott & Laws, 2005). However, some systems can demonstrate an ability to adapt to these disturbances and this is an obvious characteristic of resilience (Buikstra et al., 2010; Cumming et al., 2005; Gunderson, 2000; Magis, 2010; Plodinec, 2009).

The concept of resilience has emerged from the ecological sciences (Holling, 1973; Gunderson & Holling, 2002). It has always attracted more attention among researchers for its usefulness as a framework for understanding the abilities of a community to face crises and systemic shocks. As an interdisciplinary concept, resilience has been applied to different contexts, such as communities (Maguire & Hagan, 2007), human organisations (Sriskandarajah, et al., 2010) and industries (Cochrane, 2010). Resilience has also been applied as a lens for understanding the responses to different types of changes (Benard, 2002), including social traumas (Bonanno, 2004), environment deterioration (Berkes & Jolly, 2002), and economic and political changes (Simmie & Martin, 2010).

Resiliency is the ability of a system (or a subject) to absorb disturbances and to learn and to adapt to the turbulence in order to grow and become more dynamic (Holling 1973; Walker & Salt, 2012). Increasing the adaptability of economic systems and the capacities of communities, and hence, the growth of resilience, are necessary conditions in the light of fluctuating economies and global threats (such as climate changes and the loss of biodiversity) (Berkes et al., 2008; Gallopin, 2006; Rockstrom et al., 2009). Moreover, sustainable development is also one of the most common prescriptions for making a tourism destination more resilient.

Tourist destinations and economic players of global tourism compare themselves with different models of governance, when trying to deal with climate changes, demographic changes and economic crises. While the possible paths of adaptation to these impacts have been extensively analysed in the literature, in recent years, the number of studies has increased when addressing the complexities of the governance of tourism, the development of destinations, as well as their management, all from the point of view of resilience.

The aim of this work has been to assemble a review of the studies on the relationships between resilience and tourism. In particular, the work will examine those studies that have analysed the external shocks on tourist destinations, together with their effects on a particular territory, by reviewing conceptual frameworks of resiliency, and thus, highlighting useful strategies in order to restart these tourist destinations.

The paper is structured as follows: the section about "Tourism and Resilience" names the principal issues that are related to tourism Resilience research. The section "Literature Review" covers the existing literature that has analysed the resilience of tourism destinations. The paper will be concluded with some recommendations for further research.

The author hopes that the objectives and the results of the present study will be useful to future researchers on the resilience of tourism sectors.

2. Tourism and Resilience

Tourism is increasingly characterised by dynamism and complexity. There are several factors that contribute to this condition: globalisation, the development of technologies, transport, together with changes in the labour markets. Such complexities are more evident when we consider a tourist destination from a structural point of view. It can be understood as a system that is composed of a number of elements, with different types of relationships (Baggio, 2008). A tourist destination is sensitive to several factors that make it vulnerable to shocks. This would be a place-specific nature of the tourist activities, the dependency on tourism as a primary livelihood, the marketing strategies of international tour operators, and the levels of seasonality (Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008; Knox & Marston, 2001). This sensitivity to the complexity of the sector and the interrelationships between the different components of the system-destination, justify the application of a resilience theory. This concept is useful for understanding how tourist destinations are able to respond effectively and to adapt positively to sustainable development path, to increasing global changes and disturbances (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004; Tyrrell & Johnston, 2008). However, the link between resilience and sustainable development remains a fruitful evolving field of study. While sustainability is a key point for tourism research, the concept of resilience is relatively young in the literature on tourism development.

The resilience theory has been studied by many researchers in tourism sectors since the early 1990s (Sheppard et al., 2014). The concept of resilience was initially analysed in terms of tourism market fluctuations (O'Hare & Barrett, 1994) and the impacts of tourism on the environment (Nyström et al., 2000). Subsequently, in the last decade, the resilient studies applied to destination tourism are increased. Scholarly attention has focused on the resilience that is linked to climate and environmental changes, together with the related sustainability issues in tourism (Klint et al., 2012), environmental disasters, and risk management (Biggs et al., 2012a; Hall, 2010; Badoc-Gonzales et al., 2021), particularly in a spatial perspective (Cochrane, 2010; Larsen et al., 2011). Most recently, an emerging stream of literature has been examining those factors that enhance resilience in tourism governance systems.

This growing interest has manifested itself, in spite of some critical positions on Resilience conceptual vagueness (Strunz, 2012). It has led to the development of discussions about the usefulness of theoretical frameworks of resilience as a concept that is needed in order to study the impacts of tourism (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010).

This reflection on resilience, when in relation to tourism and its sustainability, inevitably involves the discussion of three important aspects. These would be the relationships that are observed between resilience and tourist destinations (meant as systems), the relationships between communities and resilience, and finally, the issues of vulnerability.

The social and economic impact that produces tourism in an area and in particular, in a destination, is the result of a complex process of actions that stem crosswise, by tourists, by the host community, and by the characteristics of the destination. These relationships have been illustrated by several authors (McMinn, 1998; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004; Faulkner & Russell, 1997). The features and the effects of this complex system of relationships can easily be understood within theoretical frameworks, such as socio-ecological systems (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). These outlooks allow for us to consider more carefully, the fragility of a destination and the risks that are associated with the excessive pressures of tourism (Kerr, 1997; Nelson et al., 2007; Cheer et al., 2019). An analysis of tourism from within this systemic vision, also allows for us to consider the nonlinearity of tourism, that is, its complex interactions with other internal and external elements of the system, framing those issues in a theme of chaos and complexity (Farrell & Twining Ward 2004 and 2005). It is precisely this aspect that represents the main differences between socio-ecological resilience and the resilience of other forms of systems. It recognises the inevitability of changes and embraces the transformation and the adaptation thereby, in order to address and manage the changes (Hegney et al., 2007).

The second aspect to consider when addressing a study of resilience in tourism, concerns the relationship between resilience and the community. This relationship is very important, because long-term resilience plans that are placed in order to ensure strength cannot be practiced without an understanding of the underlying socio-political processes (Cutter et al., 2000; Thomalla et al., 2006). In this sense, when considering the relationships between resilience and tourism, the role of the host community also needs to be analysed. It must be specified that resilience can be defined in both systemic and individual terms. When in a relationship to individuals, resilience is seen as the ability to personally cope and recover from adversity. It is embedded in clinical dimensions, development (children and youth resiliency), subjective well-being, and the social aspects of a job (Sheppard & Williams, 2016). Resilience can be thought of as a mix of personal and behavioural qualities, rather than specific characteristics (Ayala & Manzano, 2014), and as so, it is an important quality for entrepreneurs (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; Magnano et al., 2022).

Community resilience is the ability of community components to use internal resources in order to guide their communities within a changing and precarious environment (Berkes & Ross, 2013). Thus, community resilience concepts refer to the ability of communities to cope with stress, overcome adversity, and to positively adapt and to recover from negative experiences. This can all be the result of learning and experience.

In the context of community resilience, the ability to recover can be considered through economic, ecological, social, and institutional dimensions (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Martini & Platania, 2021; Paton & Johnston, 2001). For the governments of a resilient territory, the governance of the destination must support the preparation of "noise", through the creation and the maintenance of diversity (e.g. by strengthening the decentralised processes of social learning). It must respond to disturbances by creating and maintaining flexibility (e.g. by strengthening the central collective actions). Therefore, the amount of resilience in a community can be determined by the capacities of the community to buffer unexpected disruptions (Adger, 2000), its ability to self-organise (Walker et al., 2004), and its learning and the adaption of its abilities (Folke, 2006). A high degree of a combination of all of these elements leads to higher levels of persistence and a robustness of the system (such as tourism) (Folke 2006). The “Experiences of Community-Based Tourism” (CBT) is an example that these communities can improve their living conditions, without disappearing and without irreversibly damaging the environment (Musavengane & Kloppers, 2020; Cáceres-Feria et al., 2021). The aims of CBT are multiple and ambitious: “community” empowerment and ownership, a conservation of natural and cultural resources, social and economic development, and quality visitor experiences” (Hiwasaki, 2006, p.677). The pressure of tourism on a community could enable a society to pass from an unstable economy to a stable economy, but it would be necessary that this development remains characterised by the so-called "triple bottom line", in which policies and actions attempt to balance the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits (Hall & Lew, 2009). This attention to detail is vital for communities in order to protect and promote what is precious and essential for their survival (Amir et al., 2015).

Studies on resilience are complementary to vulnerability, which is an important issue in tourism sectors, especially with respect to climate changes (Batabyal, 2016; Moreno & Becken, 2009; Nyaupane & Chhetri, 2009). According to Turner, vulnerability is “the degree to which a system, a subsystem, or a system component, is likely to experience harm, due to exposures to a hazard, either as a perturbation or a stress/stressor” (Turner et al., 2003: 8074). In this definition, it is evident that there are links with resilience.

Other authors have identified vulnerability according to the following factors: (1) exposure, which is the degree of risk that a system faces from natural disasters; (2) sensitivity, which is a system’s ability to defend itself against disasters; and (3) an adaptive capacity, which is a system’s ability to recover from extreme events (Adger, 2006; Cutter et al., 2000; Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021; Gallopìn, 2006; Tsao & Ni, 2016; Turner et al., 2003). In addition, for Cochrane (2010), a resilience theory is a framework and “it is possible to analyse the factors which cause vulnerability in systems and by extension, the factors which can enhance their capacity to absorb disturbances”. In this way, the two frameworks then appear complementary. According to other studies, these two approaches differ substantially (Becken, 2013). It could be a resilience study on complex systems, with more emphasis on the size of social and governance aspects (Miller et al., 2010). As Becken (2013) clarified, the goal of resilience is to increase robustness in a dynamic sense, rather than to support stability. In contrast, studies on vulnerability have focused primarily on a reduction of vulnerability for specific groups (Nelson et al., 2007) and they have tried to understand the causes and the dimensions of the phenomena. In addition, considerations on vulnerabilities often result in managerial aspects that are related to the management of shocks, regardless of the development paths that are undertaken by destinations (Cioccio & Michael 2007).

3. Literature Review of Tourism and Resilience

3.1. Aims and significance of the review

The aim of this paper is to present a review of the research that has considered the behaviour of tourist destinations in the face of shocks of a different nature, and to investigate those effects in terms of the resilience of community, of the economic actors or of tangible and intangible resources.

The significance of this review is threefold: first, despite the fact that the effect of a shock on a touristic destination in the resilience framework has been recognized, a systematic literature review in resilience and tourism is long overdue. By mapping what is known, this review allows to identify gaps and opportunities for future research. Second, this review advances existing understanding of the different mode of the resilience framework is applied on the touristic destination behavior in front to change.

Third, the resilience framework is strictly related to sustainable development. The different approach presented in the review are usefull to have a complete picture of the implemented policies to deal with the crisis and the change.

3.2 Methodology

There are three different kind of literature review methodology: systematic review, meta-analysis and traditional. In this paper we use the last one, the traditional narrative style, which can summarize, explain and interpret evidence on a particular topic/question, because the method is more malleable and hence comprehensive (Mays et al., 2005).

A search on major citation databases (Web of Science and Scopus) (van der Zee and Vanneste, 2015), by using appropriate keywords (“resilience” AND “tourism” in keyword field), returned more of 580 entries. We next considered only studies before the 2022 (from 2021), published in referred journal articles in economics, sociology, management, finance, ecology and environmental areas. Regarding the period, following Modica and Reggiani (2015), that state in the 1980s and 1990s economic resilience did not receive the level of scientific attention, we decide to consider the contribution over the last 15 years. The results of this selection are 207 (web of science) + 271 articles (scopus) that were published between 2007 and 2021. This underlines the popularity of this topic and the growing academic interest for its applications in the field of tourism. We next considered only studies on the resilience of tourism destinations, excluding literature review articles. Finally, we consider only 186 articles.

In order to simplify the reading, the articles have been organised into subject areas. The topics that have been reviewed and a list of the references are provided in Tables 1-6. The section order was designed as being a logical way to follow the structures of the papers on resilience.

4. Review findings

4.1 Theoretical Framework on Resilience

The first elements to classify the different studies were related to the theoretical reflections on the resilience definition (table 1). A first consideration that must be made is that several studies lacked a clear theoretical framework, which refers to one of the different interpretations of resiliency that was presented at the beginning of this paper. This theoretical clarity was also evident in another way. Many of the studies have had no clear theoretical approaches and for this reason they were not of an immediate or easy arrangement.

The first group of authors set the study of tourism destinations within the Socio-Ecological Systems (SES) theory (Folke et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2006). They analysed resilience, as was stated by Holling, in since it was a measurement of the abilities of a system to persist in the presence of changes and disturbances (Holling, 1973). The need to refer to the SES theory would seem to be connected, for some authors, to the studies of community resilience that were related to the tourist phenomena (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). This is no surprise, because tourist destinations are the first examples of a SES theory, in which the interactions between resources, both social (including economic) and natural, can take many different configurations (Alvarez & Cortes-Vazquez, 2020; Becken, 2013). In this sense, references to the SES theory allow for one to explore the ability of socio-ecological systems to face, proactively, unexpected changes.

According to Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011), the framework that relate to the SES theory has identified four factors that can influence the development of resilience in a tourist community. They concern living next to the changes and the uncertainties, the support diversities for reorganisation and renewal, combinations of different knowledge, and the creation of opportunities for self- organisation. The nourishment of these factors strengthens the SES theory and reduces the vulnerability (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). For Larsen et al. (2011), a link to the SES theory was also necessary for when the roles of the stakeholders in a tourism destination agency are deepened. These authors, in fact, refer to the conventional epistemology of social–ecological systems, in which a stakeholder agency is perceived as a practice of individuals or groups (the ‘informal’ domain) that relate to institutional structures (the formal domain).

Table 1. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Theoretical Frameworks on Resilience.

Subject Areas	References
Resilience and Socio-Ecological Systems (SES)	Alvarez & Cortes-Vazquez (2020); Araral (2013); Bangwayo-Skeete & Skeete (2021); Becken (2013); Bui et al. (2020); Diaz-Aguilar & Escalera-Reyes (2020); Espeso-Molinero & Pastor-Alfonso (2020); Felicetti (2016); Hassan et al. (2019); Jones et al., (2011); Kim et al. (2017); King et al., 2021; Kutzner (2019); Larsen et al., (2011); Prayag et al. (2020); Roca Bosch & Villares Junyent (2014); Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011); Ruiz-Ballesteros & Tejedor (2020); Stotten (2021); Uddin et al. (2021); Wang et al. (2015); Weis et al. (2021).
Community Resilience	Almeida-Garcia et al. (2020); Amir et al., (2015); Bakas (2017); Bec et al., (2016); Caceres-Feria et al. (2021); Cahyanto et al. (2021a); Cerquetti & Cutrini (2021); Erdmenger (2019); Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021); Guo et al. (2018); Helgadottir et al. (2019); Lee et al. (2021); Matarrita-Cascante & Trejos (2013); Musavengane (2019); Musavengane & Kloppers (2020); Pilquiman-Vera et al. (2020); Posch et al. (2019); Powell et al. (2018); Pyke et al. (2018); Sheppard & Williams (2016); Sisneros-Kidd et al. (2019); Stotten et al. (2021); Sydnor-Bousso et al., (2011); Torres-Alruiz et al. (2018); Wakil et al. (2021); Yang et al. (2021a); Yang et al., (2021b).
Organisational Resilience	Bhaskara & Filimonau (2021); Biggs et al., (2015); Chowdhury et al. (2019); Dahles & Susilowati (2015); Mandal et al. (2021); Melian-Alzola et al. (2020); Njuguna et al. (2021); Orchiston et al., (2016); Pathak & Joshi (2021); Senbeto & Hon (2020).
Resilience and Sustainability	Awedyk & Niezgoda (2018); Badoc-Gonzales et al. (2021); Barata-Salgueiro & Guimarães (2020); Chen et al. (2021); Cheung & Li (2019); Choi et al. (2021); Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Holladay & Powell (2013); Hu et al. (2021); Jimenez-Medina et al. (2021); Keahey (2019); Lambert et al., (2010); Sheppard & Williams (2017); Sobaih et al. (2021).
Resilience and Vulnerability	Breiling (2021); Brown et al. (2018); Calgaro & Lloyd (2008); Espiner & Becken (2014); Filimonau & De Coteau (2020); Kim & Marcouiller (2015); Liu-Lastres et al. (2020); Mackay & Spencer (2017); McCartney et al. (2021); Pyke et al., (2016); Pyke et al., (2021); Tsao & Ni (2016); van der Veeken et al. (2016).

Source: Author elaboration

In this theoretical space, the relationship between SES and the stakeholders present in the area is very interesting. Ruiz-Ballesteros & Tejedor (2020) argues that in order to understand the effect of community-based tourism (CBT) on sustainability, the resilience framework is useful as a theoretical-methodological resource suitable for this purpose. The authors focus on two elements related to CBT: (1) diversification of productive activities; and (2) collective participation in tourism, thus highlighting the contribution of CBT to the resilience of the socio-ecosystem and its coherence.

There was also an agreement in the SES theory literature that regions are an appropriate scale for improving ecological and social resilience (Yorque et al., 2002). Jones et al. (2011), in particular, starting the definition of social resilience and defined regional resilience as the capacity of a region to cope with disturbances and changes. It was also said that regional planning that was focused on the development of tourism required careful consideration. This thoughtfulness was because of the diversity of the groups that are affected by tourism, the organisational requirements of a destination over time, and the wide range of areas which are affected by the various changing circumstances (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005; Schianetz et al., 2007). Resilience within the SES theory derives a line of study that considers the resilience of communities to long-term structural changes that are driven by tourism (see for example Amir et al., 2015; Bec et al., 2016; Sheppard & Williams, 2016; Sydnor-Bousso et al., 2011). Community resilience is often defined in terms of the physical infrastructure, together with the economic and community resources that are able to respond to adversity (Sheppard & Williams, 2016; Paton & Johnston, 2001). Community resilience explores the opportunities that can emerge from changes (Berkes & Ross, 2013) and it integrates both the social and environmental systems, drawing from the socio-ecological interpretations of resilience (Magis, 2010). Caceres-Feria et al. (2021) illustrate the relationship between community, resilience and tourism through CBT, an activity which, if organized and managed locally, can help to cope with the crisis and support recovery processes. Close to the resilience of communities, we found some studies that showed the resilience of community organisations. The term "organisational resilience" has emerged as an important concept in disaster management literature (McManus, et al., 2008; Smit & Wandel, 2006). It refers to the capacity of organisations to adapt to disturbances and to seize the opportunities that emerge from the changed environment. The studies of Biggs et al. (2015) on the resilience of coral reef tourism enterprises, Orchiston et al. (2016) on tourist sectors, and Pathak & Joshi (2021) on the relationship between psychological capital and organizational resilience during COVID-19, have been examples. The fourth group of studies have explored some aspects of community resilience and they have analysed the relationships between resilience and sustainability. A definition of sustainable development for tourism-based communities is the "triple bottom line", in which policies balance the social, economic and environmental costs, together with the benefits (Hall & Lew, 2009). Sustainable development is one of the most required assumptions for making a community more resilient, that is, a sustainable community is more resilient than a community that has not adopted significant sustainable development policies. Sustainability is referred to both destinations as a whole and in parts of it. Holladay & Powell (2013), in some communities in the Commonwealth of Dominica, have examined the resilience and the sustainability of community tourism development. Lambert et al. (2010) have shown that changes may affect the sustainability of whale-watching operators, from a resilience perspective, while Coghlan & Prideaux (2009) studied health and the resilience of reef ecosystems. Awedyk & Niezgoda (2018) propose new resilience planning techniques relevant to the implementation of sustainable development, which include scenario planning for the development of future strategies, for more dynamic activities, in regions that attract large numbers of tourists. Vulnerability and its relationships with resilience has been another line of study. In these researches, a theoretical approach that was based on the need to study the vulnerability of tourist destinations, as to the degree to which an exposure unit (human groups, ecosystems and communities) is susceptible to harm, due to an exposure to perturbation or stress and the ability of that exposure unit to cope, recover, or fundamentally adapt. The theoretical justification is that the design of resilience is not effective without an understanding of the underlying socio-political processes and the environmental linkages that underpin vulnerability (Cutter et al., 2000; Thomalla et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2003; Pyke et al., 2021; Tsao & Ni 2016; van der Veeken et al. (2016). The vulnerability of a community or group is determined by three dynamic and inter-connected dimensions: exposure, sensitivity, and resilience (Turner et al., 2003).

4.2 Resilience Dimension

The second reading key concerns the dimensions of resilience (table 2). It seems evident that this is crucial to the researchers for the existence of a shock of any type (economic, environmental, social), which justifies the interest of scholars. The shock dimensions and the conditions of the system's pre-post crisis (resistance and recovery) have been predominantly investigated. Most of the studies did not make a distinction so precise. Several authors have considered various shock affects, or the subjects whose might suffer in the tourist destinations. They have examined the consequences. There is, therefore, no precise examination of the stages of resistance and recovery. This has not been shown in the literature. In the first group of studies that were analysed, the question of research was limited to understanding those factors that enabled or enhanced the resilience of tourism destinations and for their own characteristics that appeared sensitive (Biggs et al., 2015; Cirer-Costa, 2021; Holladay & Powell, 2013; Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Wyss et al., 2015; Zeng et al., 2005), or to define theoretical frameworks that could help to understand the modes of adaptation of the particular tourist destinations (Lew, 2014). Cirer-Costa (2021) for example, highlights the importance of a competent business community and a social consensus able to cope with the disadvantages of tourism development for the local population while Sheppard & Williams (2016) took into account several shocks of various kinds: they tried to understand the factors that allowed for destinations to endure different moments of crises. Other studies have illustrated those factors and they have determined the vulnerabilities and the resilience (resistance and recovery) to natural shocks and disasters (seismic risk, climate changes, tsunami, war, etc.). They have all analysed the ante and post periods in terms of planning and development (Burnett & Johnston, 2020; Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008; Hillmer-Pegram, 2014; Kim & Marcouiller, 2015; Luthe et al., 2012; Orchiston, 2013).

Table 2. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Resilience Dimensions.

Subject Areas	References
Resistance and Recovery	Barata-Salgueiro & Guimarães (2020); Bernini et al. (2020); Biggs et al., (2015); Bimonte et al. (2019); Calgaro & Lloyd (2008); Cirer-Costa (2021); Cui et al. (2021); Espeso-Molinero & Pastor-Alfonso (2020); Hillmer-Pegram (2014); Holladay & Powell (2013); Kim & Marcouiller (2015); Lee et al. (2021); Lew (2014); Luthe et al., (2012); Orchiston (2013); Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011); Sheppard & Williams (2016); Wyss et al., (2015); Zeng et al., (2005).
Resistance (disturbance): Pre Shock Conditions	Biggs (2011), Burnett & Johnston (2020); Cellini & Cuccia (2015), Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Lopez et al. (2021).
Recovery	Bhaskara & Filimonau (2021); Biggs et al., (2012a); Buultjens et al., (2015); Cahyanto et al. (2021a); Cahyanto et al. (2021b); Cedeno et al. (2020); Cerquetti & Cutrini (2021); Chan et al. (2020); Chan et al. (2021); Cheng & Zhang (2020); Chin & Musa (2021); Chowdhury et al. (2019); Dahles & Susilowati (2015); Fountain et al. (2021); Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021); Gago-Garcia et al. (2021); Ghaderi et al., (2015); Jiang et al. (2021); Joshi & Gupta (2021); Larsen et al., (2011); Liu-Lastres et al. (2020); McCartney et al. (2021); McCartney et al. (2021); Morakabati (2020); Murdana et al. (2021); Orchiston et al., (2016); Paiva & Santos (2020); Prayag et al. (2020); Pyke et al. (2018); Pyke et al., (2016); Qi et al. (2021); Soliku et al. (2021); Sydnor-Bousso et al., (2011); Tsao & Ni (2016); Wearing et al. (2020).

Source: Author elaboration

These resistance dimensions have been faced in a few studies (Biggs, 2011; Cellini & Cuccia, 2015; Coghlan & Prideaux, 2009; Lopez et al. 2021). Even in these cases, what distinguished these papers was the determination of the shock periods, especially when they considered measuring the resistance of the destinations. In those studies that have taken into account economic data, this was easily determined, as in Cellini and Cuccia (2015). They described the evolution of the tourism sectors in Italy over the last few years of the so-called 'Great Recession' (2008-12). They highlighted the most important features of the changes, focusing on the differences between the regions and on the target types and the categories of accommodation. Resilience was used to explain the different degrees of success of the responses to the national negative shocks that hit the sectors. In other studies, has been taken into account the socio-economic and political problems, referring to general disturbances. Both Biggs (2011) and Coghlan & Prideaux (2009) have deeply described tourism in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR), whose natural characteristics are very sensitive, both to climate changes and to the general economic and political frameworks, such as an economic recession, a crisis in resource prices, as well as issues at a national and local level. Biggs (2011) defined a shock scenario and analysed the behaviour of enterprises in the reef tourism sectors. Coghlan & Prideaux (2009) studied the weather conditions and the reef experiences of tourists, suggesting that these issues may also be an important indicator of changes. Finally, there have been several researchers that have only investigated the subsequent periods to the shock. In most of the studies, they have analysed the responses of the different economic actors to natural types of shock (Biggs et al., 2012a; Ghaderi et al., 2015; Larsen et al., 2011; Tsao & Ni, 2016) and to man-made shocks (Buultjens et al., 2015). Several paper, as Larsen et al. (2011), Biggs et al. (2012a), Cahyanto et al. (2021a), Liu-Lastres et al. (2020) have both presented primary evidence of the governance of post-disaster recovery in Thailand's coastal tourism-dependent communities and enterprises following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Tsao & Ni (2016) examined the Shanmei community in Taiwan following Typhoon Morakot and the community's responses to crises in general and Typhoon Morakot in particular. Ghaderi et al. (2015) investigated the effects of the floods which covered parts of Thailand in 2011 and the responses (the resilience) of the public and the private sectors. Sydnor-Bousso et al. (2011) attempted to 'model' job resilience after an industry experiences a disaster. Pyke et al. (2016 and 2018) investigated the impact of bushfires on the tourism economics of Harrietville, a small town in North East Victoria, Australia. They presented adaptations that were necessary for the town to minimise the economic effects of future fire shocks. Finally, Orchiston et al. (2016) examined organisational resilience within a post-disaster context.

4.3 Characteristics of a Tourist Destination

The features of a destination in which the characteristics of resilience have been observed are another factor that has been taken into account in the literature (table 3). On the basis of the results of our literature research, an initial distinction between seaside and mountain destinations can be made. As for the first, we found several papers that referred to natural resources that may undergo changes, which could be the attractions within a destination. Indeed, we have found studies that have focused on the environmental and economic shocks that are linked to coral reefs (as Biggs, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012b; Biggs et al., 2015; Coghlan & Prideaux, 2009; Jones et al., 2011) or island (Bangwayo-Skeete & Skeete, 2021; Mazzola et al., 2019; Uddin et al., 2021) and to natural disasters (as Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008; Larsen et al., 2011). Other studies have taken into consideration some types of tourism products in seaside destinations, such as when Adams (2010) considered cruise ship tourism and when Hillmer-Pegram (2014) studied diving tourism, by referring to economic shocks. Lambert et al. (2010) analysed whale-watching tourism and the consequences of climate changes. As for mountain destinations, the studies that we considered (Cocolas et al., 2016; Espiner & Becken, 2014; Luthe, et al., 2012; Orchiston, 2013; Sheppard & Williams, 2016; Stotten, 2021; Stotten et al., 2021; Wyss et al., 2015) have some relatively common traits. Those tourist destinations that are on mountains are very appreciated by tourists and whose easy equilibrium (economic and environmental) could be altered by natural shocks. Destinations, such as mountain or seaside resorts, often may be within a protected area. In two studies that we have collected (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010; Woosnam & Kim, 2014), the analyses of resilience have also taken into account the further "wealth" of a destination and the consequent problems that are related to the presence of tourism.

Table 3. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Characteristics of Tourist Destinations.

Subject Areas	References
Seaside	Adams (2010); Anasco et al. (2021); Bangwayo-Skeete & Skeete (2021); Banos et al. (2019); Biggs (2011); Biggs et al. (2012a); Biggs et al. (2012b); Biggs et al., (2015); Cahyanto et al. (2021a); Calgaro & Lloyd (2008); Cheer et al. (2019); Choi et al. (2017); Cirer-Costa (2021); Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Cook & Jóhannsdóttir (2021); Hernandez et al. (2018); Hillmer-Pegram (2014); Jones et al., (2011); Kim et al. (2017); King et al. (2021); Lambert et al., (2010); Lam-Gonzales et al. (2021); Larsen et al., (2011); Mackay & Spencer (2017); Mazzola et al. (2019); Melian-Alzola et al. (2020); Pathak et al. (2021); Podhorodecka (2018); Ruiz-Ballesteros & Tejedor (2020); Uddin et al. (2021); Usher et al. (2020); Vereb et al. (2020a); Weis et al. (2021); Williams et al. (2020).
Mountain	Chen et al. (2021); Cocolas et al., (2016); Espiner & Becken (2014); Luthe et al., (2012); Orchiston (2013); Sheppard & Williams (2016); Sherpa (2017) Stotten (2021); Stotten et al. (2021); Wyss et al., (2015).
Protected Areas, National Parks	Strickland-Munro et al., (2010), Woosnam & Kim (2014); King et al., 2021; Felicetti (2016); Maciejewski et al. (2015); Chidakel et al. (2020).
Others (Tropical Forest, Sites for Eco-Tourism, Community, Rural Destinations; inner areas; lake)	Amir et al., (2015), Becken (2013), Holladay & Powell (2013), Pyke et al., (2016), Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011), Tsao & Ni (2016); Cerquetti & Cutrini (2021); Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021); Caceres-Feria et al. (2021); Chin & Musa (2021); Ibanescu et al. (2020); Chen et al. (2020); Alvarez & Cortes-Vazquez (2020); Espino, (2020). (2020); Engeset (2020); Rindrasih (2018); Bui et al. (2020); Grimstad et al. (2019); Kamarudin et al. (2019); Wang et al. (2015).
Urban areas	Almeida-Garcia et al. (2020); Barata-Salgueiro & Guimarães (2020); Dai et al. (2019); Erdmenger (2019); Finzi et al. (2021); Jimenez-Medina et al. (2021); McCartney et al. (2021); Naef (2020); Setiadi et al. (2021); Terhorst & Erkus-Ozturk (2019); Vecco & Srakar (2017); Yang et al. (2021b).
Macro Destinations: National or at a Regional Level	Amoamo (2021); Awedyk & Niezgoda (2018); Bernini et al. (2020); Bhati et al., (2016); Bozovic et al. (2021); Buultjens et al., (2015); Cellini & Cuccia (2015); Cruz-Milan & Lagunas-Puls (2021); Gago-Garcia et al. (2021); Karunarathne et al., (2021); Kim & Marcouiller (2015); Lee et al. (2021); Noorashid & Chin (2021); Otoo & Kim (2019); Paiva & Santos (2020); Senbeto & Hon (2020);

Soliku et al. (2021); Yang et al. (2021a); Zeng et al., (2005).

Source: Author elaboration

In addition to these two types of places (seaside and mountain), there are many other types, such as valleys (Grimstad et al., 2019; Pyke et al., 2016), sites for eco-tourism (Tsao & Ni, 2016), rural sites (Amir et al., 2015; Caceres-Feria et al., 2021; Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011) and lakes (Becken, 2013; Wang, 2015).

In recent years, researchers have increasingly focused on urban resilience and sustainability. Almeida-Garcia et al. (2020) and Barata-Salgueiro & Guimarães (2020) examine the relationship between residents of urban tourist destinations and tourism, evaluating the attachment to the place and the level of satisfaction with tourism, highlighting the role played by public policies. In some cases, studies have emphasized "urban resilience" as a core value of the city and its residents. In particular, Naef (2020) relates the notion of "branding" with that of "resilience". In the Medellin case study, showing how in the community it tends to reject the vision of resilience as self-sufficiency (adaptation), requiring instead structural changes (transformation).

Finally, the last group of researchers have proposed a macroeconomic perspective and they have analysed tourism resilience in relation to large areas, such as regional areas or national areas. They have taken into consideration, not only the effects of the shocks in terms of arrivals and presences (Bonham et al., 2006), but also those that propagate on the entire tourism sectors (Bhati et al., 2016; Buultjens et al., 2015; Cellini & Cuccia, 2015; Kim & Marcouiller, 2015; Senbeto & Hon, 2020; Zeng et al., 2005).

4.4 Typology of Shocks

Overall, the shocks on tourist destinations that the literature has examined have been of two types. The "natural", that is, those that were produced by the environment naturally or artificially and those that were "economic and social", which instead, focused on the disturbances that were produced by economic cycles and by social variables (table 4).

Inside of the studies of the first type, we found different types of shock. The first group of seven articles have focused on the effects of climate changes and on the resilience of tourism destinations, with respect to such changes. Climate changes, indeed, may potentially have an important impact on tourism models, because environmental assessments were a significant component of the decision-making processes by tourists (Braun et al., 1999). Climate changes certainly produced high levels of uncertainty between individual actors and policy-makers (Jopp et al. 2010). Climate changes were carefully considered, especially with regard to the effects of rising temperatures. These changes covered mountain destinations (Cocolas et al., 2016; Knowles, 2019; Luthe et al., 2012; Wyss et al., 2015) and seaside resorts (Biggs et al., 2012b; Coghlan & Prideaux, 2009; Lambert et al., 2010). In these kinds of ecosystems, climate changes were one of the most serious problems and they were likely to have the greatest impact.

In mountain tourist destinations, effects that were linked to changing weather patterns, threatened to produce large-scale effects and irreversible changes to the plant and animal communities and the landscapes. In particular, for these types of destinations, two studies (Bulkeley & Newell, 2015; Meehl et al., 2007) have expressed concerns about the future profitability of low-altitude farmland, for two reasons: a) the snow is decreasing in glaciers and b) the possible large-scale loss of biodiversity, caused by the increment in global temperatures.

Table 4. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Typology of Shocks.

Subject Areas	References
Climate Changes	Becken (2013); Beery (2019); Biggs et al., (2012a); Cevik & Ghazanchyan (2021); Cocolas et al., (2016); Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Day et al., (2021); Forster et al. (2014); Hassan et al. (2019); Hernandez et al. (2018); Jamaliah & Powell, (2018); Jopp et al., (2010); Knowles (2019); Kutzner (2019); Lambert et al., (2010); Lam-Gonzales et al. (2021); Luthe et al., (2012); Mackay & Spencer (2017); Pyke et al., (2021); Tervo-Kankare (2019); van der Veeken et al. (2016); Wyss et al. (2015).
Natural and Environmental Disasters (Earthquakes, Tsunami, Bushfires, Floods, Hurricanes, etc.)	Cahyanto et al. (2021a); Cahyanto et al. (2021b); Calgaro & Lloyd (2008); Calgaro et al., (2014); Cedeno et al. (2020); Cerquetti & Cutrini (2021); Chan et al. (2020); Chan et al. (2021); Cheng & Zhang (2020); Cioccio & Michael (2007); Cochrane (2010); Fountain et al. (2021); Ghaderi et al., (2015); Kim & Marcouiller (2015);Larsen et al., (2011); Liu-Lastres et al. (2020); Min et al. (2020); Murdana et al. (2021); Nguyen et al. (2021); Orchiston (2013); Orchiston et al. (2016); Paiva & Santos (2020); Posch et al. (2019); Prayag et al. (2020); Pyke et al. (2018); Pyke et al., (2016); Rindrasih (2018); Sherpa (2017); Sydnor-Bousso et al., (2011); Tsao & Ni (2016); Usher et al. (2020); Wearing et al. (2020); Woosnam & Kim (2014).
Political and Social Crises (Terrorism, Impact of War)	Bonham et al. (2006); Buultjens, et al. (2015); Morakabati (2020); Vereb et al. (2020b).
Social and Economic Perturbations	Adams (2010); Biggs (2011); Burnett & Johnston (2020); Cellini & Cuccia (2015); Espiner & Becken (2014); Hamzah & Hampton (2013); Holladay & Powell (2013); Mazzola et al. (2019); Podhorodecka (2018); Terhorst & Erkus-Ozturk (2019); Walmsley (2019).
Sanitary Disasters and Epidemics	Adams et al. (2021); Bhaskara & Filimonau (2021); Bhaskara & Filimonau (2021); Bozovic et al. (2021); Chin & Musa (2021); Cruz-Milan & Lagunas-Puls (2021); Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021); Gago-Garcia et al. (2021); Joshi & Gupta (2021); Karunarathne et al., (2021); King et al. (2021); Lekgau & Tichaawa (2021); Lopez et al. (2021); Matei et al. (2021); McCartney et al. (2021); McCartney et al. (2021); Melian-Alzola et al. (2020); Noorashid & Chin (2021); Otoo & Kim (2019); Pathak & Joshi (2021); Setiadi et al. (2021); Setthachotsombut & Sua-iam (2020); Sobaih et al. (2021); Soliku et al. (2021); Zeng et al., (2005); Zheng et al. (2021).

Source: Author elaboration

With regard to seaside tourist destinations, these particular studies on resilience were justified by the various effects of climate changes. These most obviously concerned probable rising sea levels and the increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes. However, several studies have also highlighted the dangers that are associated with the effects on marine ecosystems, both with respect to coral reefs (Hoegh-Guldberg, 1999; Reaser et al., 2000) and the composition of flora and marine fauna (Wilkinson et al., 1999). These effects can subsequently affect tourists' choices (see for example, Amelung et al., 2007). The climate changes require adaptation policies and Tervo-Kankare (2019) presents a study that examines the values and attitudes of nature-based tourism entrepreneurs in relation to adaptation to climate change.

The second line of research is where they have analysed the relationships between resilience and natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, etc. These papers were all related to previous studies (many natural disasters were explicable by climate changes), but they differed from them by recognising the facts of what disastrous effects can possibly transpire on tourist destinations. Natural hazards are a constant part of human history. For those people who live near the coast (23% of the world's population live within 100 km from the coast, with a steady growth expected in the coming years), there are specific risks, such as floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, and the transmission of infectious diseases that are related to the sea (Adger et al., 2005). In the last few years, disaster planning and the management of tourism businesses have received great attention, especially in light of recent destructive natural disasters (Hall, 2010; Laws et al., 2007; Orchiston, 2013; Ritchie, 2009).

Regarding the effects of tsunamis on tourist destinations, Calgaro and Lloyd (2008) have tried to understand what socio-political and environmental conditions have contributed to the vulnerability of the affected tourism communities. This was because knowledge of the root causes of destination vulnerabilities was vital, not only for the successful implementation of regional recovery plans, but also for building a long-term resilience against future shocks. Larsen et al. (2011) have examined the efforts of recovery and the reduction of post-disaster catastrophic risks in tourism-dependent coastal communities, after the tsunami of 2004. They have defined a new conceptual framework that puts the concept of resilience in a conception of destination governments, as a result of the regulatory processes that have been negotiated.

Another line of research has been the one concerning hurricanes. Kim & Marcouiller (2015) examined the vulnerability and the resilience of 10 regional economies that were based on tourism, which included national parks and beaches, both affected by weather phenomena. The model that was used made it possible to quantify the negative effects on the regional economies, by showing that those regions with stronger economies have resilient capacities greater than those with weaker economies. Cahyanto et al. (2021b) examine existing partnerships between emergency operations centers and the tourism industry in the co-management of hurricane-related disasters, and highlight the theoretical and practical implications for current public-private partnerships and the need to improve these disaster management efforts.

The literature has also taken into account other disasters that may occur on tourist destinations. Cioccio & Michael (2007) presented the case of North Eastern Victoria (Australia) when it was hit by fire and they demonstrated the vulnerability of the territory and the lack of preparation to deal with a threat of this magnitude. The resilience of operators depended on the accumulated experiences in order to handle these types of situations. Orchiston (2013) presented the empirical results of a survey on business tourism in the Southern mountains of New Zealand, a high seismic risk zone area in which there was a tourism industry that included many micro-enterprises. They highlighted how business size was a key determinant in the uptake of Resilience tools, such as continuity insurances, staff training, induction, and disaster planning.

Crises must be distinguished from disasters. According to Faulkner (2001), disasters are sudden and unpredictable catastrophes, over which a business has very limited control, while crises tend to refer to an event that leads to negative business outcomes, which are in part, exacerbated by a lack of preparatory or planning action by managers. Among crises, there were also terrorist attacks and wars, with more and more frequent events that influenced the preferences of tourists (Rose et al., 2009). Buultjens et al. (2015) focused their attention on the effects of the armed conflicts between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which had a considerable impact on the country's tourism industry. The authors highlighted how policies were implemented in order to support the tourism sectors, by favouring large groups rather than small operators. This, in their view, threatened to reduce resilience and, therefore, the sustainability of the industry.

Perturbations and shocks that affect tourist destinations can also be of a social and economic nature. Adams (2010), when debating about tourism cruise ships, highlighted the impact within small coastal communities. This impact on the one side was positive, since it supported the waning economies. On the other hand, however, the magnitude and the intensity of passenger visits appeared to reduce social resilience. To induce changes in an economic regime, leads to a rapid socio-economic reorganisation, with clear effects on the loss of social capital. Hamzah & Hampton (2013) debated the resilience of the socio-economic systems of small destinations and they studied the evolution over time of a tourist destination in Malaysia. They addressed local responses to exogenous factors that threatened their equilibrium, and hence, the sustainability of the tourism industry on the island, by showing non-linear changes, rather than by conventional resort evolutions.

Quite differently, Cellini and Cuccia (2015) addressed the issue of large scale resilience, taking into account the evolution of the tourism sectors in Italy during the years of the so-called "Great Recession" (2008-12). They highlighted the most important features of the changes that occurred, both in terms of the demand and supply sides, as well as the different degrees of responses to the negative shocks and to the national success stories.

Moving to an another kind of social perturbations, Burnett & Johnston (2020) presents an analysis of the tourism scenario for an anticipated shock seen through the lens of Irish hospitality managers preparing for Brexit. According to the authors, the buoyancy of the industry has led management to develop complacent tendencies, a myopic point of view and a head-in-the-sand mentality. Their "wait and see" approach to anticipating shock planning suggests an industry that believes it is resilient to threats.

Among the shocks that have been considered in the literature, many have related to social and economic instability. There have also been risks related to tourism sector developments. Some examples of this are the studies of Holladay & Powell (2013) and Espiner & Becken (2014), where they have analysed the effects of changes in tourist flows to heavily dependent tourism destinations. Holladay & Powell (2013) led a case study of investments in tourism that were made in order to diversify the economies and improve the quality of life in the Caribbean. They evaluated the effects of such investments in tourism in terms of resilience, which led them to suggest that communities should invest in the strengthening of social ties, the development of the capacities of local institutions, tourism product diversifications, while also developing their infrastructures. Espiner & Becken (2014) considered as a tourist destination, a national park (Westland National Park), which although popular with tourists, was suffering from a number of conditions (geographical isolation, threats of floods and earthquakes, as well as climate change scenarios) that could undermine the economic and the social longevity of this particular destination. Mazzola et al. (2019) study the economic resilience of the islands and, in particular, the role of the tourism sector in the reaction to economic crises. The results show that the growth factors for regional islands are similar to those normally considered for other regions, but the tourism-led growth hypothesis is widely supported. Tourist demand more than supply plays a role together with accessibility.

Finally, we concluded the classification of shocks, with studies of disease, which may make a tourist destination less attractive. Obviously, this section is full of contributions related to Covid-19. These articles describe the impact of covid in the tourist destination from different points of view (on demand, on supply, on the system as a whole) and try to suggest tourist policy guidelines to address future pandemics. However, the pandemic is certainly not a new topic in the debate on resilience and tourism. Zeng et al. (2005) referred to the 2003 SARS epidemic that created a negative impact on the development of tourism in China and they considered the realisation of tourism businesses that were affected by this particular crisis. As with previous authors, even Zeng et al. concluded that a resilient system requires diversification and partnerships that can minimise the vulnerability of communities to these crises and then facilitate an economic recovery.

4.5 Elements by which Resilience is Measured

Within a tourist destination, there are basically three categories of subjects on which the shock effects of any kind can operate (table 5). First of all, the operators of the supply chain, in other words, those businesses and economic operators that allow for the accessibility and the usability of attractions for tourists. Secondly, the tourists themselves are the economic actors that activate the tourist destinations. Thirdly, the residents who normally live in the destination undergo most of the negative and positive effects of tourism. In the studies of resilience within destinations, a distinctive feature of the literature review concerned, precisely which of these three categories were to be considered in the measurements of the effects of the shocks and their Resilience capacities.

Two papers have taken into account the opinions of tourists, suggesting that this may be an important indicator of changes for a territory. Prideaux et al. (2010) developed a tourism research that evaluated how tourists were likely to respond to visual changes in mountain landscapes, while Coghlan & Prideaux (2009) tried to understand if weather conditions affected the reef experiences of tourists, suggesting that this may also be an important indicator of changes on a reef. Bernini et al (2020) use an alternative approach, considering the Italian Households Budget Survey data over the period 1997-2013 and comparing the consumption behaviour in the pre- and post-crisis time.

Table 5. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Elements upon which the Resilience was measured.

Subject Areas	References
Demand Analyses (Tourist Opinions, Consumer Demands; Tourist spending)	Bernini et al. (2020); Bimonte et al. (2019); Canh &Thanh (2020); Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Lam-Gonzales et al. (2021); Prideaux et al. (2010).
Supply Analyses (Enterprise Resilience, Job Resilience, etc.)	Ayala & Manzano (2014); Biggs (2011); Biggs et al., (2012a); Biggs et al., (2015); Bozovic et al. (2021); Brown et al. (2018); Buultjens et al., (2015); Cruz-Milan & Lagunas-Puls (2021); Cui et al. (2021); Dahles & Susilowati (2015); Engeset (2020); Hillmer-Pegram (2014); Ibanescu et al. (2020); Mandal & Dubey (2020); Mandal et al. (2021); Melian-Alzola et al. (2020); Senbeto & Hon (2020); Sobaih et al. (2021); Sydnor-Bousso et al., (2011); Terhorst & Erkus-Ozturk (2019).
Community analysis	Adams et al. (2021); Anasco et al. (2021); Cahyanto et al. (2021a); Chen et al. (2020); Dai et al. (2019); Diaz-Aguilar & Escalera-Reyes (2020); Larsen et al., (2011); Luthe et al., (2012); Pilquiman-Vera et al. (2020); Wyss et al., (2015)
Stakeholder analysis	Lee et al. (2021); Williams et al. (2020).

Regional/System analysis	Hu et al. (2021); Lekgau & Tichaawa (2021); Min et al. (2020); Podhorodecka (2018).

Source: Author elaboration

Resilience was also studied through analyses of the factors that conferred a resistance to tourism enterprises (Biggs, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012a; Hillmer-Pegram, 2014), through an individual analysis (Ayala & Manzano, 2014) or a sectorial analysis (Buultjens et al., 2015). The results of these studies have allowed for us to identify some elements that characterise the various abilities that are needed to react in a crisis scenario, such as higher levels of social and human capital in the form of governments, families, and community support, rather than formal enterprises (Biggs, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012a).

Another group of papers have taken into consideration the network structures of a community. Their point of view was to study the effects of tourism on the destination residents and their reactions. In two of the papers (Luthe et al., 2012; Wyss et al., 2014), the perspective of their analyses was the network, that is, the social processes of governance. The collaboration between communities through the existence and the strength of the connections between the actors and their embeddedness in a broader socio-economic network, gave stability and flexibility, as well as increasing their regional resilience (Luthe et al., 2012). On the contrary, a low density and a lack of integration by some of the supply chain sectors into the overall network and the lack of an integration by the public sector actors, with a high number of actors in the periphery of the network, weakened the system and made it more exposed to the risks (Luthe et al., 2012; Wyss et al., 2015). Larsen et al. (2011) focused instead on the frameworks of the stakeholder agencies as an interface between the formal and informal institutions. In our study's opinion, this was the main determinant of Resilience building.

4.6 Measuring Methods

As has been explained previously, measurements of resilience were always a critical aspect. As a result of studying the literature, this has led us to identify two different pathways that have been used by the researchers in their analyses (table 6). The first was characterised by a qualitative approach. In this first group, we have distinguished the surveys through interviews (in-depth interviews, focus groups, and resource surveys) that were directed to the various stakeholders and those that were addressed to the tourists. The first group included interviews with national and local governmental representatives (Calgaro & Lloyd; 2008), staff in the public sector (Tsao & Ni; 2016), non-governmental organisations (Sheppard & Williams, 2016), environmental action group members and local figures (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011), research institutes and media representatives, business operators (Hillmer-Pegram, 2014), and those operators in the tourism industry (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Espiner & Becken, 2014). In some studies, the assessments that were expressed by the stakeholders were used to study the social processes of governance, through the existence and the strength of the connections between the actors, as well as their embeddedness in the broader socio-economic networks, by social network analyses (SNA) (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021; Luthe et al., 2012).

Often, the issues that were addressed in the interviews to the stakeholders were preceded by past literature reviews, together with secondary document analyses (newspaper reports, NGO recovery reports, and various official and governmental documents) (Calgaro & Lloyd, 2008; Tsao & Ni, 2016). In some papers, the interviews were more emphasised and they were pointed towards tourists, seeking to investigate some important issues. For instance, the tourist's purpose, their motivations and behaviour, their knowledge, their understanding, their responses to shock risks, and their demographic details (see for example, Pyke et al., 2016).

Regarding the quantitative studies, we collected some papers in which it was interesting to note that they highlighted the variables that were used to measure shock resilience. Cellini and Cuccia (2015) analysed the impact of the crises on the Italian tourism sector in terms of resilience. They defined an index in order to capture the economic resilience at a regional level. They then deepened the structural characteristics of the regions and their strategies, through exploratory analyses. Kim & Marcouiller (2015) considered a number of variables that captured the effects of environmental shocks resulting from hurricanes, particularly the average number of fatalities and injuries from the hurricanes, together with the economic status of each county containing national parklands. Lee et al. (2021) addressed the spatially varying relationships between intertemporal specialization or instability of tourism clusters and community resilience thought spatial and aspatial regression models in a case study of sixty-seven counties in Florida.

Table 6. Summary of the arguments and the articles that have been reviewed - Measuring Methods.

Subject Areas	References
Qualitative Method	
Stakeholder's Survey	Adams et al. (2021); Amoamo (2021); Anasco et al. (2021); Ayala & Manzano (2014); Becken (2013); Biggs et al. (2015); Cahyanto et al. (2021b); Calgaro & Lloyd (2008); Chan et al. (2020); Chan et al. (2021); Chen et al. (2021); Erdmenger (2019); Espiner & Becken (2014); Filimonau & De Coteau (2020); Fountain et al. (2021); Ghaderi et al., (2015); Hassan et al. (2019); Hillmer-Pegram (2014); Jiang et al. (2021); Jones et al., (2011); Kamarudin et al. (2019); Karunarathne et al. (2021); Knowles (2019); Liu-Lastres et al. (2020); Luthe et al., (2012); Orchiston (2013); Paiva & Santos (2020); Pyke et al. (2018); Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011); Sheppard & Williams (2016); Soliku et al. (2021); Stotten et al. (2021); Villavicencio & Pardo (2019); Weis et al. (2021).
Community survey	Almeida-Garcia et al. (2020); Chen et al. (2020); Dai et al. (2019); Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021); Guo et al. (2018); Helgadottir et al. (2019); Jamaliah & Powell, (2018); Murdana et al. (2021); Powell et al. (2018); Zheng et al. (2021).
Visitors Survey	Coghlan & Prideaux (2009); Pyke et al. (2016).
Employees survey	Bozovic et al. (2021).
Supply survey	Bakas (2017); Brown et al. (2019); Brown et al. (2021); Burnett & Johnston (2020); Chin & Musa (2021); Engeset (2020); Forster et al. (2014); Mandal & Dubey (2020); Mandal & Saravanan (2019); Mandal (2019); Njuguna et al. (2021); Noorashid & Chin (2021); Pathak & Joshi (2021); Pathak et al. (2021); Pechlaner et al. (2019); Posch et al. (2019); Prayag et al. (2020); Setthachotsombut & Sua-iam (2020); Sobaih et al. (2021); Tervo-Kankare (2019); Usher et al. (2020); Walmsley (2019).
Quantitative Method	Cellini & Cuccia (2015), Kim & Marcouiller (2015); Gago-Garcia et al. (2021); Lee et al. (2021); Cui et al. (2021); Cruz-Milan & Lagunas-Puls (2021); Bangwayo-Skeete & Skeete (2021); Morakabati (2020); Cheng & Zhang (2020); Canh &Thanh (2020); Bernini et al. (2020); Min et al. (2020); Mazzola et al. (2019); Podhorodecka

	(2018); Cevik & Ghazanchyan (2021).
Mixed methods	Cirer-Costa (2021; Cedeno et al. (2020).

Source: Author elaboration

5. Resilience Tourism: recommendations for future research

Tourism is a social and economic activity, that is integrally part of a contemporary community and, as such, it reflects the challenges that communities face, as well as the increasing pressures of environmental and social global changes. This increasing pace and the complexity of social and environmental contemporary changes, explain the importance of the growth of the Resilience frameworks.

In this paper, we have presented the results of a literature review on the resilience of tourism destinations. The results are threefold. First, the papers have achieved an important result, to put under the eyes of scholars and policy makers the risks deriving from tourist pressures that make destinations weak and the effects of shocks on communities. Tourist destinations, by their nature, react to the weakness that is inherent in the system itself. It follows that understanding of how the resilience cycle works is interesting, but it necessarily configured policies and actions. Almost all of the authors have come to the same conclusion, that it was essential that a destination should have a diversified economy and not be concentrated on a few large groups of operators.

Secondly, the literature analyses have led us to highlight the relation between resilience and sustainability. Tourist destinations, together with their communities and their business operators, face several pressures for change, including the environment (changing natural resources), social (changing cultural resources) and economic situations (changing economic conditions). These pressures occur within different time rates. In some cases, the shock is slow and predictable, while in other cases, there is a need for urgent responses and flexible actions. The pressures for change occur on a variety of social and geographical scales. Sometimes, the impact is on a sole trader, while for others, the impact is on an entire community or a social group. The analysis of the paper allow to highlight the different roles of resilience and sustainability in tourist destinations.

Third, In the process of realizing the goal of sustainable and resilient development, authors should see the dominant role of social factors such as destination governance in the adaptation process. Therefore, the establishment of a "rational" tourism development mechanism could help improve the capacity of the destination more effectively to cope with the various crises involved. The different papers analysed clearly show that the development of tourism continues over time only when it is both resilient and sustainable.

Regarding the areas identified for future research, they start from the weaknesses of the review presented before, and include theoretical and methodological aspects. Some papers did not have a clear theoretical approach to resilience. In many of them, there was a generic reference to resilience, without this being connected to one of the different strands that were present in the literature. It is therefore suggested to proceed to a more thorough and in-depth theoretical framework.

The future research line should put effort into resilience measurement. The results of the literature analysis confirmed the multidimensional nature of resilience. The attempt to quantify this framework has led to the development of a large number of indicators or "metrics" of resilience, which are the formal expression of how researchers define and quantify resilience and its components. A quantitative measurement of resilience can contribute to the resolution of contradictions in the conceptualization of resilience.

Nor was it clear whether resilience was a theory, a metaphor, or rather a conceptual framework (Pike et al., 2010; Swanstrom, 2008). Moreover, the relationship among tourism, dimensions of sustainability and the benefits of tourism realized by stakeholder groups should be more clarified and debated. It need rather an improve of the dynamic relationships among various dimensions of sustainability, tourist activity and resulting short and long term benefits (Tyrrell & Johnston, 2008).

When studying the behaviour of resilience tourist destinations, it was also possible to grasp the aspects that were related to the environment, the use and the distribution of resources, the equities in their various dimensions, the causes as well as the remedies for shocks, and the effects that they all produce.

Therefore, the resilience approach to tourism has, in our opinion, a great advantage. It allows for one to give a new impetus to the ecological variables that are always an important component in socio-economic systems.

As said by Bristow (2010), the destinations (the resilience regions) are ones that, as the result of shocks, recalibrate their own path, to less standardised paths, and hence, to ones that are more based upon the resources and the territorial specificities.

Conflict of interest

All authors declare no conflicts of interest in this paper.

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Improving tourism resilience through Cultural Routes. An exploratory analysis of the Italian case "Via Francigena"

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Abstract: Cultural routes have been recognized as effective social innovation projects to promote tourism development in marginal areas. However, the resilience of these routes, particularly in the face of external shocks and disruptions, remains a critical area of investigation. This study examines the role of cultural routes (as social innovation projects) in improving the resilience of these marginal areas after pandemic crisis. The research draws upon a combination of secondary data provided by ISTAT for assessing the marginality of the study areas and primary data on the impact of the "Via Francigena" project obtained through 32 interviews with managers of accommodation facilities (B&Bs, hostels, farm stays, hotels) located along the route itself. The findings of this study reveal that cultural routes offer significant opportunities for tourism development in marginal areas. Firstly, they serve as unique selling points, showcasing the cultural heritage and authenticity of these regions. Cultural routes provide a compelling narrative that attracts tourists seeking immersive experiences, promoting sustainable tourism practices and economic growth in these areas. Secondly, cultural routes act as catalysts for local community engagement and empowerment. By involving residents in tourism-related activities and initiatives, cultural routes foster a sense of pride, ownership, and entrepreneurship among the local population. The socio-economic benefits of the project determine a diversification of income sources and increase the resilience of communities located in the most marginal areas of the Apennines. However, a successful implementation of cultural routes to develop tourism and community resilience in marginal areas requires overcoming various challenges. These include limited resources, the need for a cultural change and the need for collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders, including government bodies, local communities, tourism operators, and cultural organizations. This research contributes to the understanding of cultural routes as a powerful tool for tourism development in marginalized areas. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and destination managers in leveraging the potential of cultural routes as social innovation projects. By capitalizing on the cultural heritage of these areas, cultural routes can drive economic growth, improve community well-being, preserve environmental heritage and thereby increase the economic resilience of communities. In conclusion, this research enhances our understanding of tourism resilience through the case of Via Francigena, demonstrating its relevance as a model for other cultural routes. By identifying key strategies and factors that contribute to resilience, this study informs effective planning and management approaches for the long-term sustainability of cultural tourism destinations and the preservation of cultural heritage. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of cultural routes on tourism development, assessing visitor satisfaction, and investigating the potential replication of these projects in different marginal areas.

Keywords: *Social Innovation; Cultural Routes; Cultural Tourism; Slow Tourism; Tourism Development; Tourism resilience.*

JEL Codes: M2; M3

1. Introduction

Cultural routes (CRs) have emerged as powerful tools for promoting social innovation and revitalizing marginal areas (Aquino et al., 2018; Altinay et al., 2016). Recent tourism literature (Splendiani et al., 2023) has demonstrated the multifaceted benefits of the cultural routes as a social innovation project for marginal areas. Firstly, the cultural route, like the Via Francigena, provides opportunities for economic development by stimulating tourism (Altinay et al., 2016), creating employment, and fostering entrepreneurship in local communities (Laeis & Lemke, 2016). Secondly, it enhances social cohesion by promoting cultural exchange, intercultural dialogue, and community engagement (Kato & Progano, 2017; Cardia, 2018). Thirdly, the cultural routes contribute to the preservation and valorization of cultural heritage, promoting a sense of identity and pride among local residents (Jimura, 2016).

As highlighted by Forlani et al. (2021) several challenges and limitations must be addressed for the successful implementation of cultural routes. Among these factors, poor route design, weaknesses in attractiveness factors, lack of hospitality services (dedicated accommodation facilities such as pilgrim hostels), insufficient investments in basic infrastructure (signage, water access points, etc.), and lack of collaboration among different stakeholders, including public authorities, local communities, and volunteer organizations, are notable.

While the benefit of well-designed and managed CRs to local development is recognised, an assessment of their impact in terms of resilience, particularly in the face of external shocks and disruptions, remains a critical area of investigation.

Resiliency is the ability of a system (or a subject) to absorb disturbances and to learn and to adapt to the turbulence in order to grow and become more dynamic (Magnano et al., 2022; Pechlaner et al. 2018;

Walker & Salt, 2012, Plodinec, 2009). Increasing the adaptability of economic systems and the capacities of communities, and hence, the growth of resilience, are necessary conditions in the light of fluctuating economies and global threats (Martini & Platania; 2021; Berkes et al., 2008). As Becken (2013) clarified, the goal of resilience is to increase robustness in a dynamic sense, rather than to support stability.

This study explores the Italian case of the "Via Francigena" to investigate the potential of cultural routes for promoting tourism development and resilience in marginal areas. The Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrimage route connecting Canterbury to Rome, traverses diverse Italian territories. Some areas are developed for tourism and have world-famous cities (Rome, Siena, Lucca), while other areas (small municipalities in the Po Valley or the Apennines) are classified by ISTAT - Italian National Institute of Statistics - (2019) as marginal and/or non-touristic areas.

The case of the Via Francigena is particularly significant as a successful example that has managed to overcome these problems, creating significant flows of pilgrims with noticeable economic, social, and environmental impacts for both operators and the local population (Splendiani & Forlani, 2023).

Considering that the flow of tourists generated by the Via Francigena traverses both well-developed tourist areas and areas that are marginal from a tourism and/or economic perspective, the object of the study is twofold: firstly, understanding how the economic, social, and environmental impact of tourist flows generated by the Via Francigena varies across different areas; secondly, to assess the impact of Cultural Routes on the resilience of marginal areas and their capacity to respond to the pandemic crisis. Based on this aim, the article is structured as follow: in the second paragraph, we first introduce the perspective of social innovation, with a particular focus on the tourism dimension. Subsequently, we define the capabilities of cultural routes to activate economic and development and resilience within a territory. The third paragraph describes the methodology employed, while the fourth presents and discusses the findings that emerge from the empirical research. The article concludes by providing an overview of the main implications for future research and policy.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social innovation in tourism

A theoretical perspective that can be used to define the development, the organizational approach and the social and economic effects of the paths is represented by Social Innovation. As noted above, the paths not only produce economic values, relating to the development of services and structures addressed to the reception of tourists, but also have clear social implications. This "social role" emerges at least from a double point of view. On the one hand, in terms of territorial attractiveness, local communities contribute, with their traditions, habit and cultural heritage to the construction and animation of tourist destinations. On the other hand, in terms of governance, the peculiarity of the tourist development model of the paths lies in the ability to aggregate different actors (public and private, profit and non-profit), to generate inter-organizational architectures based on involvement and on the participation of entire local communities and to activate economic and social development in marginal areas. For these reasons they could be considered as social innovation practices, like other experiences emerged in the tourism industry (Aquino et al., 2018; Altinay et al., 2016; Malek & Costa, 2015). In this perspective, the cultural routes represent an archetype of sustainable development capable of activating the participation of local community, the protection and improvement of the quality of life and the creation and diffusion of new entrepreneurship and employment.

It then becomes necessary to understand what is the meaning of social innovation and, subsequently, to establish whether and how this theoretical perspective can be applied to the tourism industry and, in particular, to the Cultural Routes. In order to establish the content of social innovation, it is possible to recall the definition proposed by the European Commission (2013) on the basis of which the Social Innovation is "the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means".

Considering the content of this definition, some aspects assume the role of distinctive components of Social Innovation.

The first element is represented by the output of social innovation which can be different as it can give rise to the creation of new products (goods, services and experience) and new processes that did not previously exist or that, although existing, they were unable to adequately satisfy certain needs. The second element is the goals of social innovation. It is aimed at identifying and satisfying social needs or social problems, considering with this term the needs of contemporary society, relating to both poverty, marginalization and exclusion conditions of specific categories of people, and to new social needs as sustainability and quality of life. The third element is the organizational methods through which social innovation initiatives are implemented which are essentially based on collaborative architectures and relationships. Finally, the last distinctive element is the typology of the actors. The proposed definition assumes that any subject, whether for profit or non-profit, public or private, can undertake Social Innovation initiatives, highlighting, also in this case, the existence of an extreme heterogeneity of solutions and the possibility of activating different organizational configurations.

Considering this definition, the dimension most evoked by the concept of social innovation is the social change in its different forms and levels of manifestation. Therefore, innovating means trying to identify and provide solutions to the new needs of people and communities; it means planning, developing and introducing transformations in the relationships between individuals and between institutions; it basically means redefining the aims and priorities of economic and social development.

This orientation towards social innovation was already established in the past, mainly in the academic field, with the foundation of various specialized research centers (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2012) but it has particularly spread especially over 2000s. Currently, on the one hand, there is the emergence of numerous initiatives launched by large sectors of society that seek to generate experiences of social innovation or that, at least, are inspired by this approach (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010) and, on the other hand, there is a growing tendency by policy makers to consider social innovation as one of the main inspiring criteria of future economic and social development policies (for example, the creation of the OSICP - Office of Social Innovaton and Civic Participation - and the establishment of the related fund, the SIF - Social Innovation Fund - in 2009, by the American government and the launch of the initiative called "This is European Social Innovation" in 2010 by the European Commission, which gave rise, in the following years, to the financing of different research projects, also within the 7th Framework Program, directly or indirectly assigned to the theme of Social innovation).

However, despite having similar characteristics, social innovation has not been adequately explored by tourism studies. The research carried out so far are limited and extremely heterogeneous, both in terms of approaches and contents. In particular, in order to define the main declinations that the concept of social innovation has in the tourism industry, three distinct research trajectories are generally identified in the scientific literature (Mosedale & Voll, 2017).

A first trajectory has a technological nature. In this perspective, the introduction and dissemination of new technologies, based on the sharing economy approach, allow the generation of new benefits and the satisfaction of individual and collective needs. This is the case, for example, of some online tourism platforms through which users can share their time and skills and offer their services to visit and stay in different locations, developing networks of relationships that tend to generate and self-strengthen over time (Walker and Chen, 2019). Or it is the case of other important online operators such as Airbnb which decided to introduce activities in its business model aimed at the enhancement of some territories and the regeneration of particular locations or architectural buildings. The value generated by such initiatives, undertaken with the collaboration of local communities, remains and is reinvested in the territories, assuming not only an economic but above all a social meaning (Presenza et al., 2021).

A second trajectory explores the issue of governance of participatory processes. The works included in this research field try to define new and adequate methods and approaches to involve local communities in decision-making processes aimed at planning and implementing tourism programs. For example, some studies underline the need for each region to create and support innovation contexts that are based on the characteristics of the territory and that provide mechanisms and tools for community participation, in order to guarantee the shared definition of scenarios, objectives and actions (Malek and Costa, 2015). Other works, on the other hand, try to define the contents and systems of incentives and monitoring of social innovations that are aimed at the reconversion, also in a tourism development perspective, of rural or forest areas (Secco et al., 2019).

Finally, a last trajectory, particularly relevant for the purposes of this work, considers social innovation as a process capable of activating dynamics of economic and social development consistent with the intrinsic characteristics of local communities, dynamics that counteract the impoverishment of the most fragile areas and increase their resilience to external shocks. These studies show how the collaboration between subjects with different nature and purposes, including the emergence of new actors guided by exclusively social aims, can cause positive effects on territories in terms of generating new products, creating new entrepreneurship and new employment, contributing to the regeneration of entire marginal areas. A study on some rural development initiatives shows how the joint activities of university, industry, government and civil society lead to the creation of new leisure activities, to development of new tourist destinations and the generation of new entrepreneurship oriented towards tourism (Nordberg et al., 2020). Other research shows how the social innovation process can generate new entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in the tourism industry in the context of the underprivileged community (Quandt et al., 2017). Finally, even in more advanced economic and social contexts, various researches show how the implementation of collaborative processes can both improve the management of natural resources and strengthen tourism activities from an environmental sustainability perspective (Batle et al., 2018), and constitute the prerequisite for the development of new business models oriented towards greater social sustainability through the inclusion of disadvantaged people in tourism activities (Alegre & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016).

On the basis of these studies, it is therefore possible to argue that the perspective of social innovation, even if not adequately explored, can represent an effective field of research, able to explain the ways in which entire local communities are organized and able to activate bottom-up processes to produce new solutions and creative spaces (Trunfio & Campana, 2019).

2.2 Cultural Routes, local development, social value and resilience

Over the last few years there has been a constant growth in the forms of tourism that are included in the category of Slow Tourism (Losada & Mota, 2019; Guiver & McGrath, 2016; Conway & Timms, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011; Fullagar et al., 2012). The characteristics of slow travel have been well identified by Lumsdon & Mcgrath (2011): slowness and time value; authenticity of the destination; travel arrangements and travel experience; environmental awareness and sustainability. From the tourists' side, this kind of tourism is considered able to offer authentic experiences and intensive emotions through the self-rediscovery (Soulard et al., 2019; Fernandes et al., 2012; Murray & Graham, 1997) transforming the holiday in a mental journey with representative values, meanings and expectations. A kind of tourist fruition that is clearly opposed to mass tourism, promoting the experience quality and the relationship with the host community (Oh et al., 2014; Dodds, 2012; Zago, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011; Murray & Graham, 1997; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). A journey that includes sustainable consumption approach and contain various practices such as participating in local traditions, eating and drinking local products while exploring the area on foot or by bike (Guiver & McGrath, 2016).

Among the Slow Tourism perspective, that of the Cultural Routes is acquiring an increasingly important role (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011), in particular in the less touristy areas (Meyer, 2004). These initiatives, mainly aimed at the economic and social regeneration of peripheral rural areas (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004), begin to spread to various areas of the world.

One of the first definitions of route as a tourist proposal can be referred to the concept of "Heritage route", developed by UNESCO on the occasion of the Meeting of Experts on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage in Madrid in 1994: "A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multi-dimensional dialogue across countries or region, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time ".

Recognized as cultural resources, themed routes have been defined by the Council of Europe (2015, p. 15) as "routes crossing one or two more countries or regions, organised around themes whose historical, artistic or social interest is patently Europe; any route must be based on a number of highlights, with places particularly rich in historical associations".

The Cultural Routes are therefore consisting of a set of ancient roads that include art, architecture and religious sites under a unified theme (Fernandes et al., 2012). The CRs creating an intangible heritage made up of history, traditions and local culture (Cardia, 2018; Kato & Progano, 2017; Jimura, 2016) with a great power to valorise both cultural and spiritual aspects of life (Lourens, 2007; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). They have the possibility of uniting territorial systems, often very different from each other (Vada et al., 2023), giving the possibility of combining more resources that independently would not have the capacity to generate the necessary critical mass to attract tourist flows (Murray & Graham, 1997).

Meyer (2004, p. 3) added that "by combining the attractions or a number of attraction providers into regional packages, thus creating greater access to a variety of products while at the same time increasing the product's appeal, routes are important tourism development strategies".

The tourism of the paths therefore represents an alternative and sustainable development practice, not only from an economics point of view but also from a social point of view, thanks to the involvement and promotion of the host communities (Cardia, 2018; Kato & Progano, 2017; Jimura, 2016; Božić & Tomić, 2016).

Although the literature shows a general recognition of the potential of the Paths to generate value for the territory, there are few studies that, through empirical analyses, measure the multidimensional impact of these tourism enhancement initiatives.

According to Meyer (2004), the most relevant opportunities are linked to the development of services for pilgrims along the routes, capable of encouraging tourist spending and extending the average length of stay. Further advantages are linked to the possibility of providing additional employment and income, both directly and indirectly, through the creation of new business opportunities (Fernandes et al., 2012).

According to Božić and Tomić (2016) themed routes can play a pivotal role in encouraging local community to participate in cultural activities raising awareness of the local heritage importance.

Jimura (2016) in his exploratory study of the Kii mountain routes in Japan highlighted their impact on: management and conservation of heritage (environmental, religious and cultural); involvement of local communities (employment of workers, rediscovery of local culture, etc.); tourism development (increases in tourist flows, creation of new businesses).

From the analysis of the literature on Slow Tourism and Cultural Routes, it emerges that these projects (both top-down and bottom-up) can be classified as typical processes of social innovation, as highlighted in paragraph 2. Cultural routes are indeed initiatives of tourist-cultural promotion designed with social purposes, through collaborative and horizontal logics among actors of different nature (public, for-profit, non-profit), which activate economic and social dynamics that characterize slow tourism (Splendiani & Forlani, 2023; Losada & Mota, 2019; Guiver & McGrath, 2016; Fullagar et al., 2012). Like other slow tourism projects, cultural routes also increase the resilience of local communities (Splendiani et al., 2023; Sheldon & Daniele, 2017; Cheer & Lew, 2017). Slow tourism focuses on promoting local economies by encouraging visitors to engage with local businesses, artisans, and services. By supporting local enterprises, slow tourism helps diversify the economic base of an area, reducing its dependence on a single industry. This diversification enhances economic resilience, making the area less vulnerable to economic shocks or downturns. Slow tourism emphasizes sustainable practices, such as minimizing environmental impact, conserving natural resources, supports the development and maintenance of environmental infrastructure (including walking and cycling paths) and promoting eco-friendly transportation options. By prioritizing environmental sustainability, slow tourism helps protect the natural beauty and resources of an area. Preserving the environment is crucial for the long-term resilience of an area, as it ensures the availability of natural attractions and resources for future generations. Slow tourism promotes authentic cultural experiences and interactions with local communities. By encouraging visitors to immerse themselves in the local culture, traditions, and ways of life, slow tourism fosters social cohesion and mutual understanding between tourists and residents. This connection and engagement can strengthen the social fabric of a community and promote social resilience in the face of challenges or crises. Slow tourism values and promotes the preservation of cultural heritage sites, traditions, and local knowledge. By recognizing and protecting the cultural heritage of an area, slow tourism contributes to the resilience of its identity and sense of place. This preservation of cultural heritage not only benefits local communities but also enriches the tourism experience for visitors seeking authentic and meaningful encounters.

In summary, slow tourism's emphasis on economic, environmental, social, and cultural resilience makes it a valuable contributor to the overall resilience of an area. By prioritizing sustainability, authenticity, and local engagement, slow tourism helps create more robust and adaptable communities that can better withstand and recover from challenges and disruptions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and case selection

Given the explorative nature of this research, the methodological approach used is the case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). In particular, a multiple-case study analysis has carried out because of its robustness and generalizability, greater than the single case study research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Moreover, this method has been previously adopted in hospitality studies (Paniccia & Leoni, 2019; Peters & Kallmuenzer, 2018). The multiple-case study method is proper to the aim of the research as it provides an in-depth description of the cases and seeks to advance the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon.

The experience studied in this article is the Via Francigena, a historical-cultural itinerary represented by a bundle of roads that connects Canterbury Cathedral to Rome, passing through England, France, Switzerland and Italy and following in the footsteps of ancient medieval pilgrims. The motivations behind the choice of this experience are manifold, encompassing both theoretical and empirical factors. In particular, the Via Francigena is the most important pilgrim way of Italy with the high number of pilgrims (17,092 credentials distributed in the 2018[1]), as well as the second for number of hikers in Europe. Via Francigena is a "Council of Europe cultural itinerary" certified in 1994, the second in chronological order after the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, certified in 1987.

Given its relevance, from a theorical point of view the case of the Via Francigena has already been the subject of numerous studies that highlighted its virtuosity in management and performance perspective (Forlani et al., 2021).

The territories crossed by the Via Francigena represent contexts in which it is possible to assess the effects of policies and interventions of social innovation (such as the Via Francigena) aimed at activating dynamics of revitalization in rural areas. The initiative to revive the Via Francigena, along with other historical pilgrimage routes in Italy, emerged during the Jubilee of 2000 and is linked to the establishment of the European Association of the Via Francigena (AEVF). After more than 20 years, this project has achieved significant results: "By the end of 2020, AEVF networks 189 local authorities and 64 nonprofit organizations in England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, along with over 400 private actors in the hospitality, tourism, and technical equipment sectors."[2] It is therefore interesting to define

[1] www.percorsiditerre.it/Cammini-in-italia-ecco-tutti-i-numeri/ (Access 25/07/2023)

[2] https://www.viefrancigene.org/en/about-us/ (Access 25/07/2023)

the economic and social effects that the construction of an attraction like the Via Francigena has been able to generate in the territories it traverses.

The following sections provide a detailed description of the data collection and analysis activities, as well as the specific methods that were adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the results (Lindgreen et al., 2021).

3.2. Data gathering

The information used in the empirical investigation was of various types and derived from both primary and secondary sources. The main source consisted of in-depth interviews conducted with managers and owners of accommodation facilities located along the section of the Via Francigena that traverses Italy, comprising 45 stages spanning approximately 1,000 km. The key informants were identified by researchers from the list provided in the Via Francigena Official Guide.

The research protocol involved sending an email to all 270 accommodation facilities listed in the guide, explaining the purpose of the research and requesting their participation. The emails were sent in groups of 30, allowing for interviews to be conducted in subsequent steps. After the initial phase, a second round of emails was sent only to the facilities that had not responded positively to the first invitation. Overall, information was obtained from 32 accommodation facilities (11.8% of the total), as presented in Table 1, specifying their profile (type and nature of the activity) and their location (region and municipality).

The researchers did not continue with other interviews because no new information or issues emerging in the data were noticed, as the 'saturation point' had been reached (Guest et al., 2006).

Table 1. The hospitality subjects interviewed.

Accommodation Category	Company profile	N. interviews	Region	Municipalities
Camping	Profit	1	Valle d'Aosta (1)	Etroubles
Bed & Breakfast	Profit	13	Valle d'Aosta (1); Piemonte (4); Lombardia (2); Emilia Romagna (2); Toscana (3); Lazio (1)	Châtillon; Borgofranco di Ivrea (2); Santhià (2) Palestro; Mirandolo Terme; Piacenza; Berceto; Pontremoli; Santo Stefano di Magra; Lucca; Viterbo
Private room	Profit	2	Toscana (2)	Pontremoli; Camaiore
Guest houses	Profit	1	Toscana (1)	Altopascio
Farmhouse	Profit	1	Piemonte (1)	Sant'Ambrogio di Torino
Hostel	Secular non-profit	3	Valle d'Aosta (2); Piemonte (1);	Verres; Pont-Saint-Martin; Santhià;
	Religious non- profit	4	Toscana (4)	Aulla; Camaiore; Monteriggioni; Ponte d'Arbia
	Profit	2	Lazio (2)	Montefiascone; Campagnano di Roma
Holiday house	Religious non- profit	3	Toscana (1); Lazio (2)	Monteriggioni; Montefiascone; Viterbo
Hotel	Profit	2	Lazio (2)	Vetralla; Capranica

Source: Author elaboration

The individual interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes and were conducted using a structured guide developed by the researchers. The guide aimed to explore, in addition to demographic variables, the following themes: history/description of the business, significance of the Via Francigena (VF) for its establishment/development, analysis of the pilgrim profile, and perceptions regarding the benefits brought by the VF to the territory.

The interview protocol was developed based on theoretical considerations derived from a literature review, with the aim of identifying the main conceptual areas to analyze. It was progressively adapted according to the results obtained during the investigation, following a logic of interaction between theory and empirical feedback (Gephart, 2004). Indeed, given the breadth and complexity of the topics addressed, open-ended questions were asked, allowing the interviewees to also delve into other relevant issues. This approach helped to clarify some of the initially vague concepts during the data collection process, leading to new insights that had not been considered before (Flick, 2004). The interviews were conducted by two authors between August and December 2020. To preserve all the acquired information, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Additionally, during the meetings, the authors took notes to capture ideas and impressions that arose during the discussions. After each interview, the authors discussed the obtained information and revised the questions to include aspects that had not been previously considered but emerged during the meetings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

During the research, information was also gathered from secondary sources. Initially, data were collected from articles on the Via Francigena published in national and international specialized journals, reports available on the website of the European Association of the Vie Francigene, which provided insights into the functioning of this pathway, and from websites dedicated to pilgrimage routes and social media groups of walkers. This preliminary study on pilgrimage routes allowed for a deeper understanding of the case under study and helped define the positioning of the Via Francigena in this context.

Subsequently, once the accommodation facilities were identified, additional secondary data were acquired. This included company information available on websites and social media profiles, as well as data related to the territories where the facilities were located, such as tourist flows and indicators of tourism demand.

The use of secondary sources was valuable as they provided essential background information to comprehend the context and reality of the businesses. The obtained information allowed for the identification of topics that required further exploration and the modification or introduction of new questions concerning aspects that had not been previously considered. This supported the authors in conducting direct interviews.

Following this approach, all the collected information from interviews and secondary sources that could lead to misinterpretations or highlight critical situations was shared with the interviewees to enhance the rigor of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.3. Data Analysis

With this activity, a logical and conceptual reconstruction of the collected data and information was carried out, followed by the construction of an interpretative framework.

Firstly, an analysis of the interviews and documents from secondary sources was conducted. To increase the reliability of the research, each author independently read the interview transcripts and examined the information. On one hand, they identified the decisions and behaviors adopted by the individual accommodation facilities, and on the other hand, they identified the main changes that occurred in the territories, providing their own interpretation of events. In cases where one author's perspective differed from that of the other authors, the topic was further explored through additional verification of the correspondence between the information from the interviews and the data from secondary sources, following a triangulation logic (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Secondly, in order to assess the impact of the Via Francigena on the areas it traverses, the municipalities included in the study, where the individual accommodation facilities were located, were divided into four categories based on their degree of economic marginality and level of tourism. Economic marginality was determined by intersecting two different indicators: the list of depressed areas in 2001 (Yes: present; No: not present) and the classification of Italian municipalities according to the methodology of internal areas in 2014 (A: Pole; B: Inter-municipal Pole; C: Belt; D: Internal Area). Municipalities with at least one positive indicator were classified as marginal areas. In cases where the Via Francigena passes through peripheral areas of the municipality (hamlets), their additional level of marginality was evaluated using data from ISTAT regarding population and economic activities in the area. The level of tourism was obtained from the 2019 Tourist Classification of Italian Municipalities provided by ISTAT, which categorizes municipalities based on tourism density and assigns a score on a scale from 1 (low density) to 5 (high density). By cross-referencing these indicators, different types of municipalities emerge, each with its own characteristics, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The types of territories crossed by the Via Francigena.

	High tourism density	**Low tourism density**
Geographical peripherality and economic marginality	Type A	Type B
Geographical centrality and economic development	Type C	Type D

Source: Author elaboration

Finally, the last activity consisted of overlaying the results derived from the empirical research (primary and secondary data) with the territorial typologies identified along the Via Francigena route. This allowed for the definition of the economic, social, and environmental effects that, according to the operators' perception, the Via Francigena has generated for the territories and the accommodation facilities.

4. Findings and discussion

Below (Table 3), the ISTAT data describing the locations crossed by the Via Francigena under study and their classification based on the typologies proposed in this study (Table 4) are presented.

Table 3. The degree of economic and touristic marginality of the areas crossed by the Via Francigena.

N.	Location or hamlets	Municipality	Region	N° of inhabitants	List of depressed areas (2001)	Internal areas (2014)	Level of tourism density (1-5)	N° int.	Type
1	Etroubles	Etroubles	Valle d'Aosta	493	No	D	5	1	A
2	Châtillon	Châtillon	Valle d'Aosta	4,631	Yes	C	4	1	A
3	Verres	Verres	Valle d'Aosta	2,633	Yes	C	3	1	B
4	Pont-Saint-Martin	Pont-Saint-Martin	Valle d'Aosta	3,683	Yes	D	3	1	B
5	Borgofranco d'Ivrea	Borgofranco d'Ivrea	Piemonte	3,672	Yes	C	3	2	B
6	Santhia	Santhia	Piemonte	8,468	No	C	2	3	B
7	Sant'Ambrogio di Torino	Sant'Ambrogio di Torino	Piemonte	4,707	Yes	C	1	1	B
8	Palestro	Palestro	Lombardia	1,897	No	C	1	1	B
9	Miradolo Terme	Miradolo Terme	Lombardia	3,733	No	C	3	1	B
10	Piacenza	Piacenza	Emilia	103,942	No	A	5	1	C
11	Berceto	Berceto	Emilia	1,990	Yes	C	4	1	A
12	Previdé & Toplecca	Pontremoli	Toscana	(22) 7,182	Yes	B	3	2	B
13	Aulla	Aulla	Toscana	11,067	Yes	C	3	1	B
14	Ponzano Superiore	Santo Stefano di Magra	Toscana	(432) 7,182	Yes	C	3	1	B
15	Camaiore	Camaiore	Toscana	32,283	No	B	5	1	C
16	Valpromano	Camaiore	Toscana	(200) 32,283	No	B	5	1	B
17	Lucca	Lucca	Toscana	88,824	No	A	5	1	C
18	Altopascio	Altopascio	Toscana	15,532	No	C	3	1	B
19	Monteriggioni	Monteriggioni	Toscana	10,033	No	B	4	2	C
20	Ponte d'Arbia	Monteroni d'Arbia	Toscana	9,070		C	3	1	B
21	Montefiascone	Montefiascone	Lazio	13,387	Yes	C	3	2	B
22	Viterbo	Viterbo	Lazio	67,681	Yes	A	4	2	C
23	Vetralla	Vetralla	Lazio	13,978	Yes	C	2	1	B
24	Capranica	Capranica	Lazio	6,442	Yes	D	1	1	B
25	Campagnano di Roma	Campagnano di Roma	Lazio	11,533	Yes	D	4	1	A

Source: Author elaboration

Table 4. The types of municipalities crossed by the Via Francigena.

	High tourism density	**Low tourism density**
Geographical peripherality and economic marginality	**Type A**: Etroubles; Châtillon; Berceto; Campagnano di Roma	**Type B**: Verres; Pont-Saint-Martin; Borgofranco d'Ivrea; Santhia; Sant'Ambrogio di Torino; Palestro; Miradolo Terme; Pontremoli; Santo Stefano di Magra; Camaiore; Monteroni d'Arbia; Montefiascone; Vetralla,
Geographical centrality and economic development	**Type C**: Piacenza; Camaiore; Lucca; Monteriggioni; Viterbo	**Type D:** No municipality

Source: Author elaboration

In Table 5, the main results obtained from the interviews conducted with the tourist operators of the analyzed locations are presented.

Table 5. The impact of the Via Francigena on the perception of tourism operators divided according to the type of area crossed.

Types of territories crossed	**Economic implications;**	**Socio-cultural implications;**	**Environmental implications**
Type A	• Territory awareness; • Increased flow of tourists (Variability: in some establishments, pilgrims constitute 60% to 90% of the clientele, while in others it ranges from 10% to 20%); • Support to the local microeconomy by boosting the revenue of small shops, bars, and restaurants; • Emergence of new B&B accommodations.	• Cultural exchange • Contribution to preventing depopulation of more peripheral areas	• Restoration and maintenance of trails; • Increased attention to environmental aesthetics in the areas traversed;
Type B	• Territory awareness; • Increased and, in some areas, emerged of tourist flows (Variability: in many establishments, pilgrims make up almost 100% of the clientele, in many it ranges from 40% to 60%, only in some cases they are a minority but not insignificant, around 10% to 20%); • Support to the local microeconomy by boosting the revenue of small shops, bars, and restaurants (a fundamental contribution for their existence); • Emergence of new activities: B&Bs, guesthouses, hostels, bars, new services (luggage transportation, river crossing), and dedicated small shops (bicycle repair and rental).	• Cultural exchange and enrichment and greater openness of the population; • Improvement of the hospitality of the local community towards tourists; • Increased appreciation of local resources by citizens; • Promotion of sports activities (hiking); • New residents in areas at risk of depopulation	• Restoration and maintenance of trails; • Increased attention to environmental aesthetics in the areas traversed;
Type C	• Territory awareness;	• Cultural exchange and greater	

	• Increased tourist flow (Variability: in some establishments, pilgrims are highly significant, accounting for 50% to 80% of the clientele, while in others they are marginal, ranging from 10% to 25%; for a minority, they are almost irrelevant (1%); • Benefits for small businesses (grocery stores, bars, restaurants);	openness of the population;

Source: Author elaboration

In general, it can be stated that the Via Francigena produces direct impacts in all the territories it crosses:

1) Creation of new tourist flows with the main motivation of the journey being the pilgrimage. This type of tourism has been referred to by interviewees as "sober" as walkers require essential services for their experience and while walking, they are moderate consumers. There are two main profiles of walkers: the pure pilgrim and the hiker. The pure pilgrim covers a long stretch of the Francigena (at least 15 stages), prefers spartan and shared hospitality structures (hostels), focuses on the pilgrimage itself, and consumes the essentials (food and beverages, medical care) with an average expenditure of 30-35€. The hiker covers shorter sections (from 3 to 14 stages), uses professional yet authentic and typical hospitality facilities (B&Bs, small hotels, farmhouse, etc.) as they seek a connection with the territory, social interaction, as well as comfort and privacy. Along the route, they take the time to discover the local culture and gastronomy by dining in typical restaurants at each stage point.
2) Increased awareness of the places crossed by the pilgrimage due to communication efforts by various stakeholders and word-of-mouth generated by the walkers.
3) Increased revenues for small businesses located in the historical centers along the route (bars, grocery stores, pharmacies), particularly at the stage points (restaurants, bars, tobacco shops, grocery stores, pharmacies, accommodations).
4) Socio-cultural benefits for the local community generated by the exchange facilitated by the slow travel and the passage of walkers. The interaction between pilgrims and locals has resulted in greater openness towards foreigners and diversity in all the communities crossed, leading to an increased capacity for hospitality within the entire territorial system.

In marginal areas type A, in addition to the previous four points, the following additional direct benefits are clearly perceived:

5) Improvement of the maintenance of the Francigena route and increased attention to the environmental quality of the places crossed. This attention is certainly directed towards the safety and healthiness of the route but is increasingly focused on aesthetics as well, as communities have recognized the importance of a well-maintained territory that "looks good."
6) Creation of tailored tourist services to meet the demand expressed by pilgrims. Firstly, new

non-profit organizations (and some for-profit cases) have been established for the management of hostels and new B&Bs have been developed in response to the increased influx of pilgrims. Secondly, existing profit and non-profit organizations in the area have expanded their services, such as hospitality and catering specifically for pilgrims (pilgrim menus, adapting parts of their operations to hostels, etc.), luggage transportation, bicycle repair and rental services, river crossing services, and so on.

In marginal areas type B, unlike those located in more developed areas, especially from a tourism perspective, interviewees also perceive significant indirect and induced impacts:

7) Cultural change among the populations in the areas crossed, with a progressive openness and increased hospitality of the citizens, contributes to the improvement of the territory's tourism offerings. A better tourism culture promotes not only an enhancement of services aimed at walkers but also prepares the area for other tourism offerings.
8) Creation of new jobs (hostel staff, B&B managers, etc.) and improvement of community income.
9) Preservation of small businesses (and/or non-profit organizations) that characterize the microeconomy of small towns with fewer than 1000 inhabitants (shops, bars, restaurants, etc.) that are no longer sustainable with local demand alone. The survival of these businesses is not only important for the number of jobs and related employment but also because it ensures the preservation of basic services for the community itself (bars, grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.).
10) Maintenance of the population in small villages crossed by the Francigena. The income generated by pilgrimage tourism has allowed some interviewees to keep their struggling businesses alive and continue living in challenging and marginal areas with high environmental quality. Among the interviewees, there are also individuals who, after discovering the places as walkers, decided to change their lifestyle and moved to depopulated small villages, opening B&Bs and related businesses catering to pilgrims.
11) Particularly in underdeveloped marginal areas prior to the introduction of the Via Francigena, a slow but significant process of economic and social revitalization has been observed. Without pilgrimage tourism, these areas would have embarked on an irreversible path of decline.

These effects, considered collectively, clearly demonstrate the overall benefit that a community and a locality can derive from the inclusion and location of their territory within the Via Francigena route. From a theoretical standpoint, considering the nature of such benefits (economic, social, and environmental) and, above all, the ways in which they are achieved (involving and activating a plurality of public and private, profit and non-profit actors), it is equally evident how the Via Francigena project exhibits the characteristics and can be considered a "successful" social innovation experiment.

Table 6. The impact of the Via Francigena on tourist flows in different types of accommodation facilities, categorized by area.

Type A			Type B			Type C		
N.	Accomodation category	% pilgrims	N.	Accomodation category	% pilgrims	N.	Accomodation category	% pilgrims
2	B&B	40%	8	B&B	50%	3	B&B	12%
1	Hostel	90%	7	Hostel	96,5%	1	Hostel	80%
0	Private room	---	1	Private room	100%	1	Private room	50%
1	Other (Camping, Farm house, ecc)	10%	1	Other (Camping, Farm house, ecc)	10%	0	Other (Camping, Farm house, ecc)	---
0	Hotel	---	2	Hotel	40%	0	Hotel	---
0	Guest houses	---	1	Guest houses	60%	0	Guest houses	---
0	Holiday house	---	1	Holiday house	10%	2	Holiday house	37,5%

Source: Author elaboration

Focusing on the impact on tourism from the analysis of the incidence of walkers on the total number of tourists in the interviewed businesses (Table 6), it is possible to observe that a successful pilgrimage-cultural route produces:

1. The establishment of dedicated hospitality facilities (hostels). The interviewed facilities state that they were specifically created because of their location on the Via Francigena and primarily accommodate pilgrims (at least 80% of guests), even in areas with a higher level of tourist development.
2. Essential support for small tourism businesses (B&Bs, hotels, guest houses) in marginal areas. Numerically, pilgrimage tourism represents between 40% and 60% of the total guests in such establishments. Additionally, walkers distribute themselves over a period from April to October, making a significant contribution to the deseasonalization of these businesses (otherwise, they would only operate during July and August).
3. The emergence of tourism facilities in areas previously unaffected by the phenomenon due to a lack of attractive factors capable of capturing other tourist flows.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine how the implementation of a tourism social innovation project contributes to the development of tourism and, consequently, enhances the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural resilience of the areas involved. Specifically, the objective was to assess whether and how the perceived impacts on operators vary as the project traverses territories with increasing levels of tourist and economic marginality.

From the interviews, a highly varied picture emerges, in which the Via Francigena is recognized as playing an important role, particularly in terms of its ability to enhance the conservation and valorization of natural and environmental resources. Additionally, it enables the revitalization of peripheral areas that would otherwise be excluded from traditional tourist routes and at risk of abandonment and depopulation. The impact in terms of increased tourist flows and the emergence of new businesses linked to the passage of pilgrims, although observed, is less evident and becomes more pronounced as the area's marginality grows.

This conclusion represents a significant theoretical contribution as it allows for a relevant consideration of the level of knowledge and progressive construction of the concept of social innovation. In particular, the initiatives undertaken in each territory crossed by the Via Francigena take on all the typical characteristics of social innovation. In other words, it is as if each community self-organizes to respond to the increased flow of visitors that this project manages to attract to all territories, especially those that exhibit marginality compared to major tourist attractions. Therefore, this represents a first-level social innovation that produces its effects on a local scale. At the same time, these individual initiatives also serve as essential components of a comprehensive, second-level innovation that produces its effects on a much larger, national, and international scale, constituted, in the specific case, by the Via Francigena project. Based on such evidence, it is possible to argue that the Via Francigena represents an experiment in social innovation as it acts as an innovation platform, promoting development and incorporating widespread experiences and practices of innovation.

Another characteristic that is emerging is the importance of the role of the walker in shaping the supply system. As a result, key aspects of this type of hospitality are focused on human relationships, authenticity, and a connection to the territory. From a structural perspective, several key points emerge, such as the identification and recognition through symbols of the Camino, the respect for the simplicity of the offer, and the efficiency of services that can be useful to tourists (quick laundry service, packed breakfast preparation, proximity to religious and emergency facilities, etc.). Other important parameters in the selection and formation of the accommodation are related to more social and psychological aspects, such as openness to multiculturalism.

In summary, the overall results of this study reveal that cultural routes offer significant opportunities for the development of marginal areas and to increase their resilience to external shocks as happened with Covid 19. Firstly, they allow for the integration of communication among small territorial realities, showcasing the cultural heritage and authenticity of these regions. Cultural routes offer engaging narratives that attract tourists seeking immersive experiences, promoting sustainable tourism practices and economic growth in these areas. Secondly, cultural routes act as catalysts for the involvement and empowerment of local communities. By involving residents in tourism-related activities and initiatives, successful cultural routes foster a sense of pride, ownership, and entrepreneurship among the local population. This leads to greater community resilience and numerous socio-economic benefits. However, creating social innovation projects (cultural routes) for tourism development in marginal areas requires overcoming several challenges. These include limited resources, lack of infrastructure, and the need for collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders, including government bodies, local communities, tourism operators, and cultural organizations. Additionally, effective destination management, marketing strategies, and sustainable practices are crucial for long-term success.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and destination managers, demonstrating the potential of cultural routes as social innovation projects. By enhancing the cultural and environmental resources of these areas, cultural routes can stimulate economic growth, improve community well-being, and preserve the cultural heritage of marginal areas, thereby fostering the development of a tourism economy. The benefits are most evident in Type B areas, where not only economic benefits but also social benefits, such as increased community openness and interaction with walkers, and environmental benefits related to greater attention to urban aesthetics and the natural landscape, are perceived.

Implications for trail managers are related to the design of routes, which should consider both aspects of tourist attractiveness and those related to community involvement. Lastly, there are implications for the tourism businesses involved in the project, who must understand the importance of participation and sharing in such projects, as the competitiveness of their offerings is closely linked to the competitiveness of the cultural route. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of cultural routes on tourism development, assessing visitor satisfaction, and exploring the potential replication of these projects in different marginal areas.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Authenticity in Historical Art Cities according to the Resilience orientation

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Abstract: This research aims to validate the Consumer-Based Model of Authenticity by applying it to the realm of large historical art cities destinations. Building upon existing literature models that explore authenticity, cultural motivation, and loyalty, we apply a conceptual model that contributes to a comprehensive understanding of these significant factors. By incorporating these dimensions, our aim is to advance the theoretical framework and empirical knowledge pertaining to authenticity within the context of historical art cities, destinations known to be subject to phenomena such as 'touristification' and gentrification, in which authenticity is both jeopardized by mass tourism and at the same time an effective strategy for building resilience in heritage cities in regard to their cultural and environmental integrity. A survey was conducted on a sample of 129 respondents. The questionnaire was administered via Prolific to both tourists who have previously visited Rome and those who have never visited the city. To test the conceptual model, factor analysis and SEM were employed through R software. From a theoretical perspective, the research findings offer insights that contribute to a deeper comprehension of the nature of authenticity in the resilience of heritage cities' context. This study explores the interconnections between the factors influencing authenticity and their subsequent impacts within a heritage city as a destination. By investigating the antecedents and consequences of authenticity, this research sheds light on the intricate dynamics and relationships at play in the realm of heritage cities. Understanding the interconnections between authenticity and resilience offers valuable insights into preserving the unique cultural identity of heritage cities while adapting to tourism challenges. The study provides destination managers with a valuable tool to systematically measure the impact of marketing and communication policies on the perceived authenticity of visitors over time. It offers insights into the extent to which these strategies can influence tourists' future intentions to visit. Furthermore, authenticity acts as a powerful approach to protect historical art cities from the negative effects of mass tourism and touristification. By preserving their unique identity and cultural heritage, authenticity promotes sustainable development economically and environmentally. This research empowers destination managers to assess the effectiveness of their efforts in enhancing perceived authenticity and its subsequent influence on tourists' decision-making processes.

Keywords: *Authenticity, cultural tourism, historical art cities, cultural motivation, loyalty*

JEL Codes: Z30, Z32

1. Introduction

In the last decades, tourism has reshaped destination geography, characterized by the "world tourism cities" (Maitland & Newman 2009), as a tourism attractor. Each city is a tourist destination, connected with other cities regardless of the region or country tourism development in which they are located. This is not a polarized development of a city within a potential destination (Smith 2006) but a network of independent destinations represented by world cities. They represent, at the same time, a hub for world tourism, a place of origin, and a destination for significant tourist arrivals (Ashworth & Page, 2011). Radical changes in recent decades have definitively challenged the ways of managing tourism offerings in urban spaces of world cities. Cities have become spaces of relationships, humanized (Sachs-Jeantet, 1996), and transformed into places whose economy is based on the productive activity of knowledge accumulation. Urban space concept is based on the relationship between social relations and space (Gospodini, 2001). It expresses the complex relationships between human and local elements according to the levels of cultural space, leisure space, and landscape space. From the tourism perspective cities create new experiences and products (Ashworth, 2015). Indeed, as Maitland (2008) states, city's atmosphere and identity and the urban, historical, and social space create tourist attractiveness and experience. The world's tourism cities therefore plan for the extension of products and experiences to broaden their set of offerings needed to compete within the global network.

With this eye, the widespread belief that attractions of great historical or artistic value per se present an unchanging ability to attract tourists over time due to their uniqueness and rarity is challenged. For these cities, the perceived authenticity of cultural heritage is an essential qualifier of both the experience that feeds its attractiveness and uniqueness and for heritage management guidelines and strategies (Jigyasu & Imon, 2022).

Authenticity finds significant application in cultural heritage experience research, referring to which the accuracy of representations and the risk of commodification resulting from cultural consumption constitute a structured and ongoing field of interest in scientific research (Rickly, 2022). Authenticity is rooted in the hyper-competitiveness of tourism previously addressed, authenticity is indeed conceptualized as an attribute that describes a genuine, real experience (Le et al., 2019; Taylor, 1991) and the demand for authenticity has had a profound impact on tourists' decision-making process for years (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). As a fundamental motivation for visitors (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), authenticity is one of today's key trends in tourism, especially in cultural tourism (Jiang et al., 2016; Yeoman et al., 2007). Authenticity represents for historical cities a significative opportunity for their competitiveness, as these urban areas have unique historical and cultural assets that can provide immersive and meaningful experiences for tourists (Jansen-Verbeke, 1998). Authenticity is a key factor for these cities, as it represents the genuine and original features that contribute to the cultural identity of the place (Pendlebury et al., 2009). The historical cities are being considered a sort of 'open-air museum', containing within themselves all the typical elements of urban tourism (i.e., shopping and entertainment, gastronomy and culinary experiences, urban landscapes, accessibility, and infrastructures), which affects the perception of authenticity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly significant impact on tourism in historical art cities, traditionally afflicted by the phenomenon of overtourism and therefore not considered safe in terms of social distancing. In the last decades urban spaces dedicated to tourism experienced a complete transformation into actual tourist destinations (Belhassen et al., 2014) and city centers experiences notable negative consequences (Velasco et al., 2019) as being subjected to the processes of 'touristification' (de La

Calle, 2019) and ‘gentrification’ (Bobic & Akhavan, 2022). While historical centers hold universal significance in terms of cultural, historical and social aspects, their value is globally acknowledged and over time they became famous tourist attractions. Today mass tourism and globalization represent a significant threat to historical cities, by challenging them with tourists overcrowding and depopulation. In particular, the escalation of urban tourism has caused cities to undergo a process of environmental, economic and social change not sustainable in the long term. This is a particularly significant concern in European historical cities, where the Covid-19 pandemic has had a much deeper impact on tourism flows due to their high dependence on international arrivals (Euromonitor, 2021). At the same time, these cities have shown a quicker recovery compared to other destinations, with international arrivals already returning to pre-pandemic levels (Eurostat, 2023). Although there is a widespread belief on the ability of tourism to benefit the hosting community, by generating employment and fostering the growth of local businesses (Egresi, 2018), tourism is also a consumer of environments and local communities (Orbasli, 2000). Within this context, the concept of tourism resilience becomes a major issue in historical art cities, because all these negative phenomena (i.e. touristification, gentrification) undermine authenticity itself, as cities lose their cultural and environmental integrity (Drost, 1996) and the compensatory process of preservation is often only object-oriented (Nasser, 2003; Bobic & Akhavan, 2022). Furthermore, in the case of historical art cities, authenticity can be understood as a strategy to promote tourism resilience in times of crisis, as a subjective judgement of truthfulness and a qualifier of attractiveness and uniqueness.

Based on these premises, this paper aims to investigate, in a post-pandemic tourist industry, how authenticity contributes to the overall resilience of heritage cities, dwelling in particular on the perceived authenticity of a large historical city, understood as both the perceived authenticity of cultural heritage and the perceived authenticity of lived experience. According to these aspects, we investigate the relationship between cultural motivation, perceived authenticity, and loyalty in an historical city, specifically focusing on Rome. By examining the dynamic interplay between perceived authenticity and the resilience of heritage cities, through a quantitative research method, this research aims to provide valuable insights for destination managers, marketers, and policymakers in their efforts to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of heritage cities as authentic tourist destinations. In terms of resilience, we frame authenticity as a strategic tool for destinations to overcome economic shocks and flourish when confronted with new challenges or trends, disruptions and crises.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Authenticity

The debate about the concept of authenticity and its dimensions has grown rapidly among tourist scholars for many years. MacCannell (1973) was the first to introduce and define the concept of authenticity in a comprehensive and explicit manner. According to Wang (1999)’s literature review, authenticity is a construct consisting of three theoretical dimensions: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity, and existential authenticity. The concept of objective authenticity is traced back to the context of certified cultural heritage, this perspective adopts a positivist approach as it conceptualizes authenticity as a measurable and inherent attribute of the original object, site, or artifact (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). On the other hand, constructive authenticity is a more nuanced concept, shaped by individuals’ perceptions and attitudes and influenced by symbolic, contextual, and negotiated aspects (Chaabra, 2008; De Bernardi, 2019) that merge into a collective process of social recognition of authenticity. Existential authenticity is an activity-related concept, as it refers to phenomenological traditions and subjective interpretation. Existential authenticity is independent from objects or sites (Olsen, 2002) as it is composed of two subdimensions: intrapersonal existential authenticity (physical feelings and self-creation) and interpersonal existential authenticity (social and family ties) (Wang, 1999). Today, great attention is placed on the relation between existential authenticity and both two other dimensions of authenticity (Zhang & Yin, 2020) and between authenticity and performance indicators, as tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Yi et al., 2022). In the context of tourist experience, according to Park et al. (2019), objective authenticity doesn't influence tourist satisfaction; nevertheless, existential authenticity has an impact on tourist loyalty and satisfaction as it relates the object to individual perceptions and experience. Existential authenticity is indeed closely linked to objects and context, and previous studies (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Zhou et al., 2013) have validated the positive impact of the object-based component on the existential component of authenticity. In Wang (1999)'s perspective, authenticity theoretical dimensions should not be considered exclusive or contradictory, but rather one the complement of the other. Based on this, in this study we represent authenticity through two separate constructs, one referring to the object-based component and the other representing the existential component. Furthermore, in line with the consumer-based approach proposed by Kolar and Zabkar (2010), in this study authenticity is intended as an evaluative judgment concerning a tourist's experience in a tourist destination. According to this perspective, authenticity refers to the perceived genuineness, originality, and cultural integrity of a tourist experience, which therefore refers both to the "objects" with which tourists come into contact and to the existential experience they have during the vacation (Wang, 1999). Authenticity appears thus to be strongly related to resilience. As it contributes to creating meaningful and memorable experience through the preservation of cultural heritage and – in cities – through the enjoyment for tourists of local traditions and cultural attractions, authenticity is considered an effective tool for enabling heritage cities to survive and thrive in times of crisis and shocks, such as the recent pandemic. In the context of resilience, authenticity plays therefore a pivotal role, as it enhances heritage cities' ability to cope with the challenging effects of tourism (Hopkins & Becken, 2014; Bui et al., 2020)

2.2. The historical art cities and the experience environment

Culture and tourism have an enduring and intertwined relationship, as cultural sites, attractions, cities today still represent a fundamental motivation for travel (UNWTO, 2023), while travelling itself contributes to the creation and enrichment of culture (Richards, 2018). Cultural attractions like monuments, historical building and historic centers often serve as the primary motivation for visiting a specific destination, by engaging tourists in authentic immersive experiences that allow them to witness the 'extraordinary' or the 'wonderful' in both tangible and intangible dimensions (Rojek, 1997). Cultural tourism involves different forms of travel (Richards, 2018), including tourism to urban areas as historical art cities, where cultural attractions such as monuments, museums, building and theaters are prominent and the city itself could be defined as an 'open-air museum' (Günlü et al., 2009). The authentic experience is particularly meaningful in historical cities, as they provide tourists an opportunity to not only engaging with extraordinary cultural objects and experiences, but also experiences local life, shopping experiences and urban attractions such as festivals, cultural centers and much more. While on the side of their cultural significance, historical cities stand as authentic living testimonials to human culture and collective memory with their historic centers and artistic masterpieces, on the other side heritage cities are as well part of urban tourism (Adamo et al., 2018). In Van Den Berg et al. (1995)'s tourist city model, products as history, local cultures and attractions represent the primary asset for unique tourism offerings (Balkaran & Maharaj, 2013; Vengesay et al., 2009). In urban tourism, the dimensions of cultural motivation come together with other competitive assets of the city, such as supporting infrastructure or activities (Ben-Dalia et al., 2013), activities as shopping, dining, sports facilities, or outdoor activities (Camilleri, 2019), external and internal accessibilities (Ouariti & Jebrane, 2020; Wessels & Tseane-Gumbi, 2022). Consequently, heritage cities are an extraordinary context in which the city itself represents an authentic immersive experience, and as a result more factors influence perceived authenticity. In this sense, it's important once again to highlight the difficulties and challenges of historical art cities. The Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed an unprecedented and rapid onslaught on a global scale, with extensive travel bans, quarantine restrictions, closures of borders, resulting in severe economic consequences for the tourism sector (Gossling et al., 2020) and more specifically for urban destinations (Ntounis et al., 2022). As the Covid-19 pandemic can be considered an ‘acute shock’ (Leitner et al., 2018) on global levels, the implication of authenticity on tourism resilience is not to be underestimated in the case of historical art cities. As previously stated, the concept of authenticity in historical art cities can be viewed both as an efficient approach to support tourism resilience during periods of crisis and as a valuable asset threatened by the deteriorating consequences of mass tourism. Furthermore, from a tourism perspective, the concept of resilience – intended as the ability to recover, adapt and thrive in the face of challenges, disruptions and shocks – in regard to historical art cities involves the immutability of their historic centers. Paradoxically, historical art cities as Rome, which have unique and rare attractions and are therefore recognized as World Heritage Sites (UNESCO) face challenges in terms of their ability to embrace new types of experiences and ways of using spaces. In front of crisis and shocks, it’s not possible for historical art cities to act on the configuration of the city and its spaces, as UNESCO both preserves and enhance city’s uniqueness and at the same time draws a line in city’s management. In simpler terms, impressive historical sites like Rome, which attract tourists due to their exceptional and rare attractions, may struggle to adapt to new trends and changes. Intangible attributes such as the authenticity of the tourism experience thus represent a maneuverable margin for destination management to make the city flexible and open to change, despite the rigidity of its offerings.

2.3. Research hypotheses and conceptual model

In recent years, the need to study the tourism phenomenon by using a tourist-based approach has been called for by several scholars (see: Castéran & Roederer, 2013; Zhong et al., 2023; Manimont et al., 2022; Jie & Hemchua, 2022). A tourist-based perspective provides a way to understand and investigate tourists’ perceptions and behaviors in a more in-depth and realistic manner, offering a dynamic framework for conceptualizing authenticity and enabling the exploration of the influences and outcomes of authentic experiences (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010).

Accordingly, this research adopts the Consumer-Based Model of Authenticity (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010) by applying it to the context of heritage cities, as cities have played a central role in the recent development of the cultural tourism market (Richards, 2022) and offer a crucial context for the study of authenticity, as typically urban dimensions and external factors can influence the perception of both object-based and existential authenticity. The aim of our study is to investigate how cultural motivation influences object-based authenticity and existential authenticity in historic cities.

In line with Kolar and Zakbar’s (2010) model, we define authenticity as the extent to which tourists perceive their experiences at a cultural destination as enjoyable, genuine, and true. As existential authentic experiences are always related to a context and to objects (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Zhou et al., 2013), the following hypothesis is presented:

H1: Object-based authenticity positively influences existential authenticity.

According to Kolar and Zakbar (2010), cultural motivation is a key factor in understanding tourist behavior at heritage tourism destinations (Poria et al., 2003). In the adopted model, cultural motivation is treated as a “cluster of interrelated, intellectually based interests in culture, history and heritage”, implying that cultural motivation can be found even among tourists that are not necessarily exclusive cultural tourists (Hughes, 2002; McIntosh, 2004). This motivation can influence both existential and object-based authenticity. The following hypotheses are therefore adopted:

H2: Cultural motivation positively influences object-based authenticity.
H3: Cultural motivation positively influences existential authenticity.

Besides considering cultural motivation an antecedent of the authentic experience, Kolar and Zokbar (2010) also include consequences of authenticity, loyalty. Perceptions in heritage tourism exhibit a positive correlation with loyalty, suggesting that positive experiences are likely to enhance loyalty as well (Poria et al., 2003). Furthermore, existing literature in the field of tourism provides evidence for the direct impact of motivation on loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The following hypotheses are added to the model:

H4: Object-based authenticity positively influences loyalty.
H5: Existential authenticity positively influences loyalty.
H6: Cultural motivation positively influences loyalty.

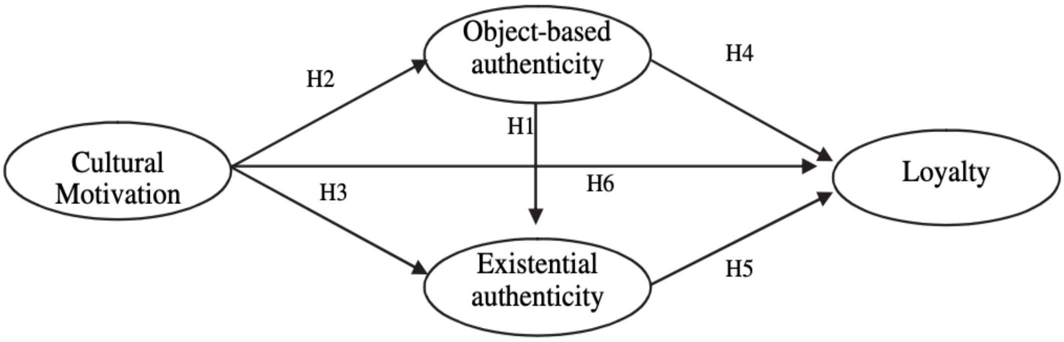

Figure 1. Conceptual consumer-based model of authenticity. Adopted by Kolar & Zakbar, 2010.
Source: Author elaboration

3. **Materials and methods**

This study aims to validate the model by Kolar and Zabkar (2010), by extending its application to the domain of heritage cities. The dimensions and variables considered in this research are presented in Table 1. The model's conceptual development draws upon existing literature models that delve into the aspects of authenticity, thereby enriching the framework with a comprehensive understanding of these crucial factors. By incorporating these dimensions, we aim to advance the theoretical foundation and empirical understanding of authenticity in the context of heritage cities.

Table 1. Dimensions, subdimensions and questionnaire variables.

Dimension and subdimensions		Reference	Variables
Authenticity	Object-based authenticity	Kolar, T., and Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism management*, *31*(5), 652-664.	OBJ1: "the destination remains itself regardless of the passage of time." OBJ2: "the atmosphere of the destination is unrepeatable elsewhere"; OBJ3: "the atmosphere of the destination is unique".
	Existential authenticity	Kolar, T., and Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism management*, *31*(5), 652-664.	EXI1: "during my stay, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture of the place"; EXI2: "I felt connected to the history of the destination." EXI3: "I felt part of the local community."
	Cultural motivation	Kolar, T., and Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism management*, *31*(5), 652-664.	MOT1: "to increase my knowledge and culture." MOT 2: "to experience local customs and culture"; MOT3: "to experience different cultures"; MOT4: "to visit cultural attractions and events."
	Loyalty	Kolar, T., and Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism management*, *31*(5), 652-664.	LOY1: "I will visit the destination in the future"; LOY2: ""I will recommend the destination to other people through my social networks"; LOY3: "I will recommend visiting the destination to my friends".

Source: Author elaboration

As one of the most important and globally well-known tourist destinations, Rome offers both attractions and experiences that encompass ancient wonders and vibrant contemporary life. The city's timeless monuments epitomize its historical significance and provide a unique backdrop for exploring the concept of authenticity. A total of 129 questionnaires were collected. Factor analysis (Gorsuch, 2013) and structural equation modeling (Rosseel, 2012) were used to test the conceptual model, with the support of "R" software.

4. Results

4.1. Sample characteristics

The sample of this research was composed of a total of 129 respondents, 58.14% of the respondents were women, compared to 41.86% of the male respondents. Regarding education, the sample shows a diverse range of educational backgrounds: 20.16% completed only middle school, while 22.48% hold high school diplomas and the same percentage holds a Ph.D. or a master's degree and the majority of them hold bachelor's degree (34.88%). The sample is mostly composed of respondents between the ages of 21-30 years. The majority of the respondents have been to Rome at least once (89.15%), while the remaining 10.85% never visited Rome. (Tab.2).

Table 2. Participant sample.

Gender		Education	
Male	41.86%	Middle school	20.16%
Female	58.14%	High school diploma	22.48%
		Bachelor's degree	34.88%
		Ph.D. or master's degree	22.48%
Age		**Visited Rome at least once**	
18-20	25.58%	Yes	89.15%
21-30	27.13%	No	10.85%
31-40	22.48%		
41-50	15.50%		
51-60	6.98%		
>60	2.33%		

Source: Author elaboration

4.2. Authenticity

To measure authenticity and empirically test the proposed model (Fig.1), the study employed a comprehensive analysis of the authenticity dimension variables: objective-based authenticity (OBJ), existential authenticity (EXI), cultural motivation (MOT), and loyalty (LOY). This analysis was conducted using "R" software, utilizing factor analysis and structural equation modeling techniques. Factor analysis is a widely used statistical methodology for exploring the interrelationships and patterns within a large set of variables (Awang et al., 2015). Its primary objective is to identify a reduced number of latent factors that can account for the observed associations among the variables. By condensing the variables into a smaller set of factors, factor analysis facilitates the identification and comprehension of the underlying dimensions present in the data. The objective was to unveil the distinct facets of authenticity represented by the OBJ, EXI, MOT, and LOY factors. Each factor captures a unique aspect of authenticity, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Following the factor analysis and the identification of the latent factors, the study advanced to structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM is a statistical approach that evaluates and validates theoretical models by examining the relationships among latent variables. This methodology allows for the estimation of both direct and indirect effects among variables, providing insights into the causal links and overall model fit. By employing structural equation modeling, it was possible to empirically assess the consumer-based model of authenticity and investigate the interrelationships among the authenticity dimensions (OBJ, EXI, MOT, LOY). This analytical framework facilitated the examination of direct and indirect effects among the latent variables, offering insights into the degree of alignment between the model and the observed data. Overall, the combined use of factor analysis and structural equation modeling aimed to measure authenticity and evaluate the validity of the proposed model. Through the analysis of relationships among the authenticity-related variables, it was gained a deeper understanding of the underlying dimensions and their impact on the overall concept of authenticity within the specific context of the study.

Table 3. Results of the factor analysis.

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Object-based authenticity (OBJ)				
The destination remains itself regardless of the passage of time	0,122	0,565		
The atmosphere of the destination is unrepeatable elsewhere	-0,112	**1,050**		
The atmosphere of the destination is unique	-0,141	0,805	0,157	
Existential authenticity (EXI)				
During my stay I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture of the place	**1,002**			-0,122
I felt connected to the history of the destination.	0,748			
I felt part of the local community.	0,444	0,135	0,128	0,162
Cultural motivation (MOT)				
To increase my knowledge and culture.	0,780			
To experience local customs and culture	0,562			0,340
To experience different cultures				**0,871**
To visit cultural attractions and events	0,839	-0,109		
Loyalty (LOY)				
I will visit the destination in the future	0,309		0,518	-0,152
I will recommend the destination to other people through my social networks			0,601	0,141
I will recommend visiting the destination to my friends			**1.095**	-0,104

Source: Author elaboration

Table 3 presents the results of the factor analysis conducted using the "R" software. The analysis reveals the relationships between the factors and the corresponding dimensions of authenticity: Existential Authenticity (EXI), Objective-Based Authenticity (OBJ), Motivation (MOT), and Loyalty (LOY). The loadings for each factor indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables and the corresponding factor (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Factor 1 corresponds to the Existential

Authenticity variables (EXI) and is positively influenced by the variables EXI1, EXI2, and EXI3. Factor 2 corresponds to the Objective-Based Authenticity variables (OBJ) and is positively influenced by the variables OBJ1, OBJ2, and OBJ3. Factor 3 corresponds to the Loyalty variables (LOY) and is positively influenced by the variables LOY1, LOY2, and LOY3. Factor 4 corresponds to the Motivation dimension (MOT) and is positively influenced by the variables MOT1, MOT2, MOT3, and MOT4 .

While factor analysis elucidates the latent dimensions and their relationships with the observed variables, it is essential to further examine the interplay among these dimensions and evaluate the overall model fit. To achieve this, the application of structural equation modeling (SEM) becomes crucial as it allows for a comprehensive measurement of authenticity. This integrated approach ensures a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of authenticity and its impact on tourists' perceptions and behaviors.

4.3. Structural model and hypotheses testing

SEM allows for the examination of latent variables and their relationships, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying constructs. In this study, we employ a structural regression model that incorporates latent variables representing Existential Authenticity (EXI), Objective-Based Authenticity (OBJ), Loyalty (LOY), and Cultural Motivation (MOT). The model specifies relationships between these latent variables:

H1: EXI ~ OBJ
H2: OBJ ~ MOT
H3: EXI ~ MOT
H4: LOY ~ OBJ
H5: LOY ~ EXI
H6: LOY ~ MOT

where latent variables are defined as:

EXI ~ EXI1 + EXI2 + EXI3
OBJ ~ OBJ1 + OBJ2 + OBJ3
LOY ~ LOY1 + LOY2 + LOY3

Below the results are presented (Table 4 and Figure 2):

Table 4. SEM results.

Regressions	Estimate	Std.Err	z-value	P(>|z|)
EXI ~ OBJ	0.204	0.130	1.570	0.117
OBJ ~ MOT	0.157	0.056	2.796	0.005
EXI ~ MOT	0.878	0.093	9.403	0.000
LOY ~ OBJ	0.319	0.104	3.073	0.002
LOY ~ EXI	0.267	0.137	1.945	0.042
LOY ~ MOT	0.047	0.135	0.345	0.730

Source: Author elaboration

The results of the structural regression model indicate several important findings. Firstly, the model demonstrates good fit to the data, as indicated by various fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.960, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.947, and Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.905. These indices suggest that the model adequately represents the relationships among the latent variables (Bentler, 1990; Shi et al., 2019; Smith & McMillan, 2001). Examining the regression paths the hypotheses were tested through the examination of the sign, size and statistical significance of the structural coefficients (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). Regarding the EXI latent variable, it showed a positive but non-significant association with OBJ (estimate = 0.204, p = 0.117). In contrast, OBJ exhibited a significant positive relationship with MOT (estimate = 0.157, p = 0.005). The most substantial relationship was observed between EXI and MOT, with a highly significant positive coefficient (estimate = 0.878, p < 0.001). Furthermore, the results indicated a positive and significant association between LOY and OBJ (estimate = 0.319, p = 0.002), suggesting that Objective-Based Authenticity influences Loyalty. The relationship between LOY and EXI was marginally significant (estimate = 0.267, p = 0.042). However, no significant relationship was found between LOY and MOT (estimate = 0.047, p = 0.730). The graphical representation of the findings is depicted in Figure 2.

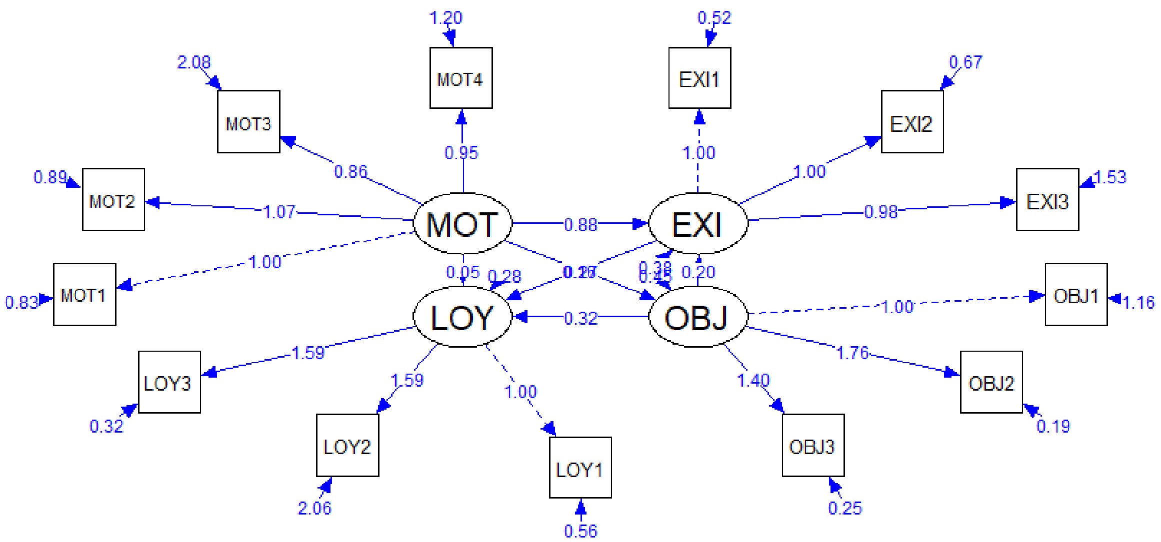

Figure 2. Structural Model Paths. *Source: Author elaboration*

The path diagram represents the relationships between latent variables and observed variables in the structural equation model. The latent variables are represented by nodes placed at the center of the circle. Each latent variable (EXI, OBJ, LOY, and MOT) corresponds to a construct that cannot be directly observed but is inferred from the observed variables, represented by nodes positioned along the circumference of the circle. Each observed variable is connected to its corresponding latent variable by an arrow, indicating the direction of influence. These arrows represent the paths or relationships between the latent and observed variables. The numbers on the arrows represent the weights of the paths. These coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. By examining the path diagram, it is possible to assess the relationships between latent variables and observed variables and understand how the latent variables influence the observed variables and how different variables are interconnected. Additionally, analyzing the lengths and directions of the arrows it is possible to gauge the strength and direction of the relationships. Table 5 provides a comprehensive overview of the previously discussed research hypotheses, presenting a concise summary of the final results obtained.

Table 5 Test of the hypotheses.

Path		Result
H1	*Object-based authenticity positively influences existential authenticity.*	Not supported
H2	*Cultural motivation positively influences object-based authenticity.*	Supported
H3	*Cultural motivation positively influences existential authenticity.*	Supported
H4	*Object-based authenticity positively influences loyalty.*	Supported
H5	*Existential authenticity positively influences loyalty.*	Supported
H6	*Cultural motivation positively influences loyalty.*	Not supported

Source: Author elaboration

The research results confirm the presence of a positive relationship between culture motivation and object-based (H2) and existential (H3) authenticity and an impact of object-based and existential authenticity on loyalty (H4, H5), aligning with the results of Kolar and Zabkar's (2010) study.
However, existential authenticity appears to be unaffected by object-based authenticity, and culture motivation does not appear to significantly influence loyalty. Subsequently, Hypotheses 1 and 6 were not supported.

5. Discussion, conclusions, and future implications

In the contemporary tourism market, tourists actively seek authentic and immersive experiences, at historical art cities, where authentical experiences related to the enjoyment of cultural heritage are accompanied by urban experiences (Richards, 2022). The concept of authenticity holds a key significance for these tourists (Morhart et al., 2015) and authenticity has become a pivotal component in shaping the expectations and desires of today travelers (Ram et al., 2016), driving their quest for meaningful and immersive tourism experiences at heritage cities (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Cinar et al., 2022). Furthermore, authenticity in urban tourism could be defined as an attempt to find a competitive advantage that set the city apart from competitors (Banks, 2022) and heritage cities (i.e., Rome, Venice, Florence, Paris) can provide tourists with authentic experiences by offering them a storytelling about the past and the present of the city (Xu et al., 2022), besides engaging them in urban tourist activities. Thus, the purpose of this study was to validate Kolar & Zabkar (2010)'s model in the high specificity context of heritage cities, by using Rome as the application field of the research. In particular, this researched aimed to understand how, starting with the cultural, authenticity affects loyalty in the context of a heritage city as Rome.

The partially confirmed measurement model and the reliability and validity indicators attest that the structural model reliably measures the constructs of perceived authenticity in the context of heritage cities. Perceived authenticity can be conceptualized and measured as an evaluative judgment that depends on tourism experiences. Furthermore, the results confirmed the relationship between object-based and existential authenticity with the antecedent cultural motivation and the consequent loyalty. Thus, authenticity is not to be considered as an "autonomous" concept but should be understood as a mediator of tourists' long-term behavioral intentions. Since the structural model shows an acceptable fit and the proposed hypotheses are mostly confirmed, we can confirm the assumed importance and centrality of authentic experiences in understanding the loyalty of cultural tourists in the city of Rome. However, our findings do not support the hypothesis that object-based authenticity positively influences existential authenticity (H1). The lack of a significant evidence on the impact of individuals' perception of object-based authenticity on their experience of existential authenticity challenges previous studies that supported this hypothesis (Kolar & Zakbar, 2010; Yi et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2013; Atzeni et al., 2021), while confirming Park et al.'s (2019) results. In the context of this study, if cities themselves represent tourist attractors, when it comes to heritage cities, we deal with special features that stem from the fact that historic centers are a cultural tourism attraction surrounded by other attractions, not only intended for tourists but also for residents, as events, shopping, dining out and outdoor activities. The lack of correlation between object-based authenticity and existential authenticity can thus be explained by the co-presence of other factors that, in the case of urban tourism in heritage cities, affect the perception of existential authenticity. Furthermore, as previously stated in this research, the results of the 'touristification' process in historical art cities could often impact the dimensions of perceived authenticity, by effectively separating object-based authenticity – which focuses on maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the tangible elements that contribute to a place's authenticity – from existential authenticity – which, instead, relates to the personal and emotional experience of individuals within a destination. This unsupported hypothesis gives empirical foundation to the last assumption, demonstrating a possible influence of touristification of urban centers on the perception of authenticity. In regard to cultural motivation, understood as the antecedent of an authentic experience, the findings prove how cultural motivation positively influences perceived authenticity. In terms of resilience, as tourists are motivated to delve into local cultures, traditions and attractions and to experience existential authenticity, they contribute to the preservation and sustainability of these elements, therefore enhancing heritage cities' resilience. Accordingly, H2 and H3 are supported hypotheses. Regarding the consequences of authentic experience, which are identified with tourist loyalty in this research, our results confirm the positive influence of both object-based authenticity and existential authenticity on loyalty. Accordingly, H4 and H5 are supported hypotheses. Last, according to our findings there isn't a significant relationship between tourists' cultural motivation and their loyalty towards a destination. Despite the assumption that greater cultural motivation would lead to increased loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Kolar & Zakbar, 2010) our research on perceived authenticity in Rome suggest otherwise. Cultural motivation thus does not seem to be sufficiently relevant to have a direct influence on customer loyalty in historical art cities, unlike authenticity, which thus appears to be a tool to support tourism resilience. In fact, cultural motivation has an influence on the perceived object-based and existential authenticity, which both influence loyalty, but cultural motivation isn't directly correlated with loyalty. In heritage cities, other factors might have a mediation role in the relationship between cultural motivation and tourist loyalty, future research could extend Kolar and Zabkar (2010)'s model by identifying and introducing these intervening factors.

In conclusion, authenticity has a substantial impact on how tourists see and enjoy a destination – in this case, a historical art city. Indeed, authenticity is associated in literature to a value judgement, which can have an impact on the overall perception that tourists have of the destination (Marine-Roig, 2015), as authenticity is always the result of a social, negotiable and contested process of authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Mkono, 2013; Hughes, 1995; Marine-Roig, 2015). Besides the influence of authenticity on visitors' perception, some studies adopting an existential approach have explored the relationship between authenticity and tourism behavior, for example the cultural motivations of tourists - in other words, the motivation of tourists to engage in cultural heritage experiences - (Brown, 2013; Knudsen et al., 2016; Park et al., 2019) or their decision-making processes (Park et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020). Our study confirms the impact of authenticity on these dimensions, thus identifying authenticity as a precious tool for tourism diversification and destination positioning in a post-pandemic world. The impact of authenticity in tourism is not only on the creation of meaningful experiences for tourists, but it also contributes in building tourism resilience in an integrated approach that ensures both the consideration of tourists' expectations and a sustainable development for the destination and its community. From a theoretical perspective, the research findings provide a way to better understand the multidimensional nature of authenticity in tourism (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Kolar and Zabkar, 2010; Poria et al., 2003; Yeoman et al., 2007), exploring the relationships between antecedents and consequences of authenticity within a heritage city.

The study offers destination managers of heritage cities a valuable tool to support them in systematically measuring over time whether and with what intensity marketing and communication

policies can increase the perceived authenticity of visitors, verifying how this in turn affects tourists' future intentions to visit. Tourism management for an historical art city in the postmodern era is a complex issue, as the city is characterized by many different but interconnected objectives. Authenticity can act as a powerful strategic countermeasure against the challenges posed by mass tourism and touristification in historical art cities, as it preserves cities' unique identity and cultural heritage while ensuring long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. With the preservation of both object-based and existential authenticity, the involvement of the community and the balance between tourism demand and local well-being, it is possible to endure tourism development whilst safeguarding cultural heritage and local community quality of life.
Some limitations of the research should be highlighted. It is important to note that the research is based on a convenience sample and as such the results cannot be generalized. In addition, the study does not test the applicability of the models on different tourist destinations, as the data collected refer to the perceptions of tourists visiting Rome.

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Conflict of interest

All authors declare no conflicts of interest in this paper.

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Evaluating Sustainable Tourism: A Composite Index for European Destinations

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the analysis of sustainable tourism indicators for the 27 European Union (EU) countries to address the challenges faced by the tourism sector. The impact of sustainable tourism indicators on destination competitiveness was evaluated using the EU Tourism Dashboard, a scheme funded by the European Commission. The Mazziotta-Pareto Index was used to construct the indicator of sustainability by incorporating the three pillars of indicators: Environmental impact, Digitalisation, and Socio-economic vulnerability. The proposed approach provides greater tractability and flexibility for decision-makers to adjust the number of indicators to meet specific case conditions. The sustainable tourism indicators aim to provide critical information for resource allocation and policymaking in the conservation of tourism sites, as well as improving the welfare and inclusiveness of local communities. The findings of the analysis highlight significant disparities among destinations in terms of the examined indicators, emphasizing variations in sustainability profiles and performance within the tourism sector. These disparities underscore the need for personalized and targeted approaches to address the specific challenges and opportunities faced by each destination in achieving sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, the proposed ranking system, updated at regular intervals, can enhance the image and reputation of European areas as high-quality and sustainable destinations, attracting increased tourism demand. Additionally, the ranking system can foster knowledge sharing and the adoption of benchmarking practices, incentivizing countries to maintain and improve their position in the ranking. This work contributes to addressing the evidence gap in tourism sustainability policymaking and provides a comprehensive framework for the development of sustainable tourism analysis in the EU context.

Keywords: *sustainable tourism indicators; European Union (EU); destination competitiveness; Mazziotta-Pareto Index.*

JEL Codes: L83; Q56; O18; C43; R58

1. Introduction

Tourism is widely acknowledged as a pivotal economic activity that engenders job creation and fosters development in numerous countries (Lee & Chang, 2008; León-Gómez et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the adverse effects of tourism have underscored the pressing necessity for sustainable tourism practices (Budeanu et al., 2016). A prevalent strategy for managing sustainability performance in tourism sites is the formulation of indicator sets. These sets are tailored to the requirements and circumstances of each location and are influenced by the geographical location of the site (Franzoni, 2015). Europe has held the top spot as the world's premier tourist destination for several years. This is primarily due to the region's rich cultural and natural heritage, which is complemented by the political instability in competing countries in North Africa and the Middle East that discourages travel. However, the tourism industry, by its very nature, has the potential to adversely affect Europe's cultural and natural heritage, traditions, and contemporary cultures. This emphasizes the essential significance of incorporating sustainability into the tourism industry, making it crucial for all destinations to embrace its principles to effectively handle and alleviate the impacts of tourism. (De Marchi et al., 2022). In addition, the complex and multidimensional nature of sustainability, combined with the pervasive impact of tourism, poses inherent difficulties. However, there is a clear intention to create composite indicators that facilitate the comprehensive evaluation of the variables influencing and determining the sustainability of tourist destinations (Torres-Delgado & Lopez Palomeque, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant and critical role in the ongoing transition towards sustainability, as it has resulted in unprecedented socio-economic consequences and heightened our awareness of the imperative role sustainability must assume in our daily lives and economic activities. The crisis has underscored the necessity of enhancing the resilience of the tourism industry and fostered a sense of unity and interconnectedness among various stakeholders. It has shed light on the vulnerability of the natural environment and the pressing need for its preservation, while also revealing unprecedented intersections between tourism, economics, society, and the environment. This juncture presents an opportunity to expedite the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns and facilitate the reconstruction of a more robust tourism sector (UNWTO, 2020). Despite these circumstances, the European Union continues to be a prominent global destination, attracting millions of domestic and international visitors annually. While the economic impacts of tourism may vary among EU member countries and regions, tourism also serves as a catalyst for promoting European culture and heritage, enhancing the well-being of both residents and tourists, and facilitating cultural and economic exchanges.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 1993) has long emphasized the need to manage destinations to achieve long-term sustainable tourism. The goal is to reconcile the development of tourism activities with the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources that support this activity. In practice, assessing the sustainability of a country's tourism is a widely employed approach globally, with rankings established based on indicators derived from pertinent demand-related information that influences the selection of specific regions as tourist destinations. In 2021, the European Union (EU) Industrial Strategy was updated to accelerate the green and digital transitions, particularly in sectors heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as tourism. Specifically, the European

Council requested that the Commission collaborate with Member States and relevant international organizations to design a flagship tool for the tourism ecosystem, called the EU Tourism Dashboard (European Commission, 2022).

This paper aims to accomplish the following objectives. Firstly, we describe and quantify the "EU Tourism Dashboard" a sustainable tourism indicator system proposed by the European Commission for evaluating the sustainability of tourism in European destinations. Secondly, to enhance the understanding of the tourism industry and to promote sustainable management, leading to improved competitiveness of the destinations, we propose to create a ranking of European tourist destinations based on sustainability. This ranking will be determined using a composite indicator, which offers an overall evaluation of each destination's situation, eliminating the need to evaluate the initial indicators separately. To derive the composite indicators, we will employ a methodology based on non-substitutability and introduce a penalty term for variability. This approach aims to reduce subjectivity and provide synthetic indicator values that are easily interpretable by industry operators. Unlike previous studies, our proposed composite indicator does not use a weighting system derived from a panel of experts in sustainable tourism. Finally, using the values of the composite indicator, we establish a system of sustainable tourism rankings that characterizes the destination country's sustainability. This system allows potential tourists to assess the sustainability of the destination and make informed decisions, influencing their behavior as consumers and the choice of destination. The article's structure comprises a description and quantification of the sustainable tourism indicator system in the following section; the proposed methodology for the composite indicator is presented in section 3, while section 4 analyzes and discusses the primary outcomes. The last section presents the conclusions.

2. A sustainable tourism indicators system for European destinations: EU Tourism Dashboard

2.1. Operationalizing sustainable tourism: The role of indicators in achieving sustainability goals

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), previously known as the World Tourism Organization (2004), defines sustainable tourism development as the provision of present tourists' and host regions' needs while preserving and enhancing opportunities for the future. This definition seeks to establish a framework for the management of resources in a manner that satisfies economic, social, and aesthetic needs, while concurrently preserving cultural integrity, ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. It emphasizes that the development and management of tourist destinations must not inflict harm upon their cultural or natural resources in the pursuit of sustainability. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is not only a future-oriented system but also an inward vision that encompasses all aspects of the economy, environment, and society to achieve its objective. Hence, touristic policies ought to be worked out to safeguard the protection of natural, social, and cultural resources that uphold the activity and their ability to fulfil the requirements of both present and future tourists and residents' populations.

According to the European Commission, the use of sustainable tourism indicators is essential to foster sustainable tourism and increase competitiveness in the European market (European Commission, 2003, 2007). Indicators of sustainable tourism can be defined as a set of measures that offer valuable information to comprehend the interrelationships between the impact of tourism on the cultural and natural environment on which it depends (UNWTO, 1996). It is posited that the information gathered from such indicators can serve as a suitable tool to enhance the socioeconomic understanding of the tourism sector and its connection to the environment. This panel of indicators furnishes details on various aspects that enable to evaluate a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with no universally recognized definition. Additionally, the components of the system help us identify the different factors that influence the sustainability of tourism, resulting in operational knowledge that more than compensates for the conceptual ambiguity. According to the UNWTO (op.cit.), sustainable tourism indicators are a collection of measures that provide necessary information to comprehend the impact of tourism on the cultural and natural environment, which it heavily depends on. Sustainable tourism indicators are used to indicate the state or level of a particular activity, identify and measure results. The indicators must focus on the triple-bottom-line, which includes environmental, economic, and social goals (Swarbrooke, 1999), to address sustainability. The UNWTO highlights the need for a set of indicators that enables tourism management to establish priorities and gain forward-looking perspectives. The selection of indicators can be performed through stakeholder agreement, experts' recommendations, or related studies (Tanguay, 2013). Multiple sustainable tourism indicator sets have been proposed in the literature, with most of them derived incrementally from previous sets, such as the one established by the UNWTO, while other organizations have also tried to develop similar sets.

The European Union has recently taken a series of initiatives to promote sustainable and responsible tourism. To maintain Europe's leading position in tourism, the EU encouraged the development of new tools to promote a more intelligent and sustainable approach to tourism planning and management based on consumer trends, dynamic monitoring, and indicators. In this regard, the EU has collaborated with member states and relevant international organizations to design an EU Tourism Dashboard, which will function as the primary tool for the tourism ecosystem.

2.2. The EU Tourism Dashboard: indicators and policy pillars

The EU Tourism Dashboard, as envisioned by the European Commission, functions as an online repository of tourism-related information, serving as a knowledge tool. Its purpose is to offer insightful visualizations and analysis of specific indicators, thereby providing valuable information that aids policy actions aimed at fostering a tourism ecosystem that is both sustainable and resilient. Notably, the dashboard encompasses all 27 EU Member States, along with Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, enabling the profiling and comparison of countries and regions based on their tourism activities. The data utilized in the dashboard are collected from various sources and harmonized to ensure consistency and reliability. Furthermore, the EU Tourism Dashboard monitors the advancement of tourism destinations over time in terms of their environmental impacts, digitalization efforts, and socio-economic vulnerability. The current set of indicators integrated into the dashboard spans from 2019 (or the most recent available year) to 2021 (or the nearest available year). In this study we use the latest value available for each indicator. However, future updates are planned to extend the time series by incorporating additional years. The primary audience for the dashboard comprises policy makers at national and regional levels, tourism industry managers, researchers, statistical officers, as well as individuals from the public sphere with an interest in the tourism ecosystem. The fundamental objectives of the EU Tourism Dashboard are to provide guidance for policy formulation and strategic decision-making within the tourism ecosystem, furnish valuable insights, and facilitate the effective dissemination of information to relevant stakeholders.

The figure (Fig.1) below shows the structure and main elements of the EU Tourism Dashboard.

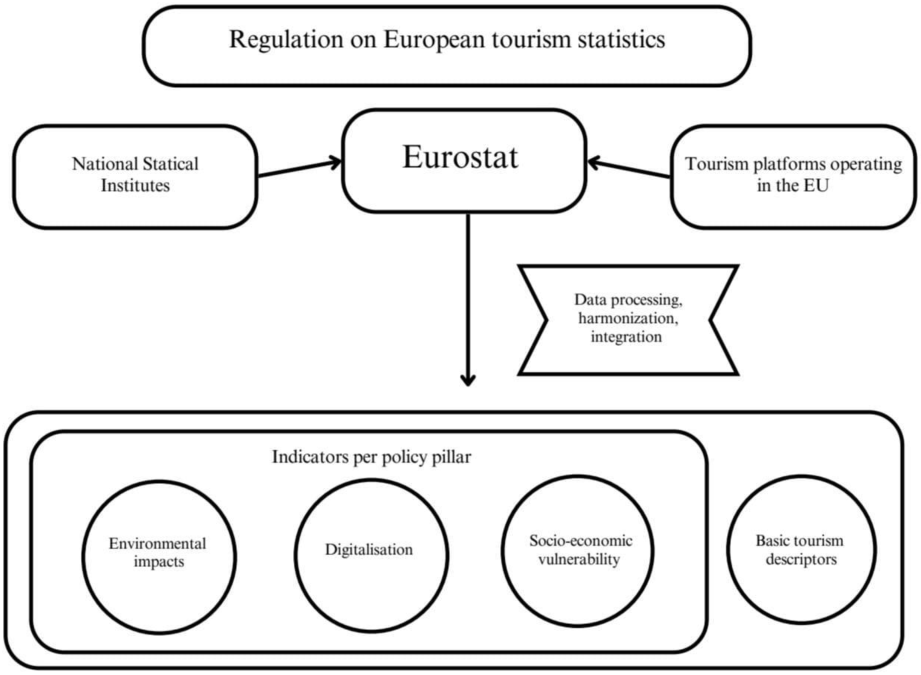

Figure 1. EU Tourism Dashboard structure. *Source: Author elaboration*

In the context of the EU Tourism Dashboard, indicators play a crucial role by going beyond mere data records or statistics. They serve as measures or estimations that depict the current state of a phenomenon by quantifying its alignment with specific objectives, thresholds, or targets (Maggino, 2017). These indicators are essential for conducting meaningful analyses across different time periods and geographical areas. To ensure comparability and consistency in the analysis, it is necessary to develop indicators in a manner that mitigates the influence of varying reporting unit sizes, such as countries or regions. This consideration is crucial to enable accurate and fair assessments of tourism sustainability across diverse contexts. By employing indicators that are carefully designed to account for such variations, the EU Tourism Dashboard aims to provide reliable and robust insights that can guide policies and strategies within the tourism ecosystem. The EU Tourism Dashboard utilizes the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), a hierarchical framework employed to delineate the economic territory of the European Union (EU) into distinct divisions. This framework facilitates the collection, development, and harmonization of regional statistics. While the primary focus of the dashboard is on national-level indicators (NUTS0), it also incorporates regional-level (NUTS2) and sub-regional-level (NUTS3) indicators for specific measures when detailed data is accessible. It is important to note that the analysis was conducted at the NUTS0 level due to considerations of data availability and comprehensiveness. By utilizing the NUTS framework, the dashboard ensures a consistent and standardized approach to regional analysis while accounting for varying levels of granularity based on the data availability and scope of the indicators. Currently, the dashboard encompasses a total of 18 indicators, classified under three policy pillars: environmental impacts, digitalization, and socio-economic vulnerability. The underlying conceptual framework posits that destinations demonstrating consistently higher scores across these pillars are more likely to possess a sustainable and resilient tourism ecosystem. A fourth pillar, referred to as Basic Tourism Descriptors, complements the dashboard with additional data and statistics to provide context and further characterization of tourism activity in countries and regions. This pillar includes relevant information related to tourism supply, demand, and offerings. The current version of the dashboard includes 12 tourism descriptors within this pillar. The development of the indicator framework primarily involves the definition and selection of indicators. The European Commission identifies individual indicators by considering conceptual and policy factors and consulting key stakeholders, while also assessing data availability. Subsequently, data is collected from relevant sources and prepared for analysis. By adopting this structured framework, the EU Tourism Dashboard aims to provide a comprehensive and comparable suite of indicators, enabling the evaluation of tourism dynamics and facilitating informed decision-making within the tourism sector. The complete list of indicators and tourism descriptors is provided in Annex 1.

3. Sustainable tourism composite indicator

3.1. Data collection

The indicators employed in the development of the EU Tourism Dashboard were derived from data and statistics obtained from reputable sources, ensuring the highest attainable level of territorial and thematic granularity. The primary data source for the dashboard was Eurostat, the statistical agency of the European Union, renowned for its reliability, consistency, and authoritative nature. Eurostat was chosen as the preferred provider of data to ensure the robustness and credibility of the dashboard. In addition to Eurostat, several supplementary data sources were employed, including: Eurocontrol; European Commission Joint Research Centre; European Environment Agency; Foundation for Environmental Education; Ookla; TripAdvisor and UNESCO. Below (Tab.1) are presented the descriptive statistics pertaining to the 18 indicators associated with the tripartite dimensions (Environment, Digitalization and Socio-economic) of tourism sustainability, as outlined in Annex 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of sustainability tourism indicators.

Indicator	Mean	Median	Dev. Std.	Min	Max
Air travel emission intensity	120,52	99,83	44,22	76,69	225,79
Tourism GHG intensity	418,75	405,42	244,72	71,66	1200,16
Tourism energy intensity	7,46	6,28	4,18	1,72	19,42
Share of trips by train	7,03	6,24	4,42	0,34	19,39
Excellent bathing water	84,78	86,90	10,79	55,17	100,00
Dependence on distant origins	12,42	8,33	12,43	3,10	66,28
E-commerce sales	43,31	43,45	10,68	23,92	60,24
Enterprises using social media	40,90	41,13	14,16	13,42	65,00
Personnel training on digital skills	10,63	10,52	4,67	3,00	18,91
Enterprises seeking ICT specialists	3,31	3,12	2,31	0,36	10,53
Internet speed at tourism destinations	75,37	74,30	21,75	44,60	117,50
Accomodations listed online	-0,56	0,83	38,37	-68,37	100,84
Tourism intensity	4,62	3,36	3,49	1,08	17,38
Tourism seasonality	0,80	0,76	0,21	0,50	1,45
Dependence on top3 countries of origin	23,65	19,74	13,41	4,46	53,66
Tourism diversity	0,72	0,78	0,19	0,30	0,97
Contribution of tourism to employment	11,37	11,72	4,47	3,72	18,62
Average tourism expenditure	85,55	85,46	17,60	52,98	112,42

Source: Author elaboration EU tourism Dashboard data

In terms of environmental impact, the average air travel emission intensity shows significant variation, with values ranging from 76.69 (Croatia) to 225.79 (Luxembourg), indicating differences in the amount of CO2 emitted per air passenger across destinations. Similarly, the tourism GHG intensity and tourism energy intensity indicators exhibit considerable variability, reflecting differences in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption in the tourism sector. The share of trips by train indicates the extent to which train travel is favoured in tourism activities. The results demonstrate variations among destinations, with values ranging from 0.34 (Greece) to 19.39 (France), suggesting differences in transportation preferences and infrastructure. Assessing the quality of bathing water is crucial for ensuring a positive tourism experience. The excellent bathing water indicator reveals variations in water quality, with values ranging from 55.17% (Hungary) to 100% (Cyprus), indicating disparities in the share of sampled bathing water sites classified as "excellent" across destinations.

Examining the dimension of digitalization, the indicators reflect the level of technology adoption within the tourism ecosystem. The indicator of e-commerce sales indicates the percentage of tourism ecosystem enterprises that engage in online sales. The findings reveal a range of values, with the percentage ranging from 23.92% (Greece) to 60.24% (Denmark). This suggests variations in the extent to which tourism enterprises have embraced online sales channels as a means of conducting business. Similarly, the indicator on enterprises using social media assesses the share of tourism ecosystem enterprises that utilize two or more social media platforms. The results demonstrate variability across destinations, with values ranging from 13.42% (Bulgaria) to 65.00% (Finland). This variation indicates differences in the level of engagement and utilization of social media platforms for marketing, communication, and customer engagement purposes. The indicator of personnel training on digital skills examines the share of tourism ecosystem enterprises that provide ICT (Information and Communication Technology) training to their personnel. The findings reveal variations in training efforts, with values ranging from 3.00% (Bulgaria) to 18.91% (Norway). This suggests disparities in the commitment of tourism enterprises to enhancing the digital competencies and skills of their workforce. The indicator on enterprises seeking ICT specialists measures the percentage of tourism ecosystem enterprises that actively seek ICT specialists. The results indicate differences in the demand for ICT expertise across destinations, with values ranging from 0.36% (Slovakia) to 10.53% (Spain). This reflects variations in the recognition and prioritization of ICT skills within the tourism industry. The maximum available internet speed at tourism destinations provides insights into the level of connectivity in terms of fixed and mobile networks. The values range from 44.60 (Greece) to 117.50 (Denmark), indicating differences in the quality and speed of internet connections across destinations. Higher values suggest better infrastructure and connectivity, enabling smoother digital interactions and online experiences for tourists and tourism businesses. The indicator of accommodations listed online examines the disparity between the observed number of tourist accommodation rooms listed on a key online platform (TripAdvisor) and the expected number of listed rooms based on known tourism demand. The results show a wide range of values, with disparities ranging from -68.37 (Sweden) to 100.84 (Bulgaria). This discrepancy indicates variations in the degree to which accommodations are effectively represented and marketed online, potentially affecting their visibility and competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

The results related to socio-economic vulnerability in the tourism sector provide insights into several key aspects. The indicator of tourism intensity measures the number of nights spent at tourist accommodations by the resident population. The findings indicate variations across destinations, with values ranging from 1.08 (Poland) to 17.38 (Croatia). This suggests differences in the level of tourism activity and engagement within the local population, highlighting destinations with higher resident participation in tourism-related activities. Tourism seasonality, represented by the coefficient of variation of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments per month, examines the degree of fluctuation in tourist activity throughout the year. The results show values ranging from 0.50 (Estonia) to 1.45 (Croatia), indicating differences in the extent of seasonal variations. Higher values suggest greater fluctuations in tourist demand over the course of the year, potentially impacting the stability and sustainability of tourism-related businesses. The indicator of dependence on the top three countries of origin measures the share of nights spent by tourists from the top three countries of origin relative to the total nights spent in a destination country. The results demonstrate variations across destinations, with values ranging from 4.46% (Poland) to 53.66% (Luxemburg). This reflects differences in the level of reliance on specific source markets, with destinations exhibiting varying degrees of diversification in terms of visitor nationalities. Tourism diversity, assessed using the Shannon diversity index (1949), examines the distribution of tourism accommodation establishments across five geographical zones within a destination. These zones include cities, coastal areas, rural areas, natural or mountainous areas, and snowy mountains. The results reveal a range of values, from 0.30 (Malta) to 0.97 (France), indicating differences in the diversity and dispersion of tourism accommodations across these zones. Higher values suggest a more balanced and diversified distribution of tourism facilities. The indicator of the contribution of tourism to employment assesses the net overall effect of tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments along the value chain, including direct, indirect, induced, and catalytic effects within related activities and the entire tourism ecosystem. The results demonstrate variations across destinations, with values ranging from 3.72% (Romania) to 18.62% (Croatia). This indicates differences in the extent to which tourism contributes to employment generation and economic opportunities within the destinations. Finally, the average tourism expenditure represents the average economic value generated per night spent at the tourist destination. The findings reveal values ranging from 52.98 (Netherlands) to 112.42 (Estonia), indicating variations in the average spending patterns of tourists. Higher values suggest destinations with a higher economic impact per visitor, indicating the potential for greater revenue generation and economic benefits.

Overall, the findings reveal significant disparities among destinations in terms of the examined indicators, highlighting the diverse sustainability performance and profiles within the tourism sector. These outcomes emphasize the necessity for approaches to tackle the distinctive challenges and prospects encountered by each destination in their endeavor to achieve sustainable tourism development. The observed heterogeneity underscores the significance of adopting a comprehensive viewpoint facilitated by composite indicators when examining sustainable tourism. By integrating multiple indicators, we can obtain a comprehension of the varied sustainability profiles and performance levels exhibited by distinct destinations.

3.2. Aggregation procedure: Mazziotta-Pareto Index

The indicator system presented in the preceding section is a valuable source of information regarding the impacts of tourism and their connection to the environment. However, on its own is not very practical due to the large number of indicators it encompasses. The size of the system creates difficulties in obtaining a comprehensive evaluation of the status of each analysed destination.

To address this limitation, we propose augmenting the initial system by incorporating the information it contains into a composite indicator of sustainable tourism. In computing terms, a composite indicator refers to mathematical combinations or aggregations of individual indicators that represent the various aspects of the concept being measured, in our case, sustainable tourism. This composite indicator provides a multidimensional assessment of the concept, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation. The international literature on composite indicators has demonstrated that the final outcomes are highly sensitive to the methodology employed (Saisana & Tarantola, 2002; OECD, 2008). This sensitivity is particularly pronounced when methodologies involve weighting criteria and/or conflicting aggregations. However, this limitation associated with constructing a composite indicator can be mitigated by carefully selecting the methodology.

The choice of methodology should be based on the intended purpose of the composite indicator and the requirements it must fulfil. In this work, we utilize Mazziotta-Pareto Index (MPI). The MPI is a non-linear composite index which transforms the individual indicators in standardized variables and summarizes the data using an arithmetic mean adjusted by a ‘penalty’ coefficient related to the variability of each unit. The aim is to penalize the units with ‘unbalanced’ values of the indicators in a non-compensatory perspective. The Mazziotta-Pareto Index (Mazziotta & Pareto, 2017; Mazziotta & Pareto, 2013) is a composite index based on the assumption of ‘non-substitutability’ of the indicators, i.e., they have all the same importance and a compensation among them is not allowed (De Muro et al., 2011). The index is designed to satisfy the following properties: (i) normalization of the indicators by a specific criterion that deletes both the unit of measurement and the variability effect; (ii) synthesis independent from an ‘ideal unit’, since a set of ‘optimal values’ is arbitrary, non-univocal and can vary with time; (iii) simplicity of computation; (iv) ease of interpretation. Let us consider a set of individual indicators positively related with the phenomenon to be measured. Given the matrix $X=\{x_{ij}\}$ with *n* rows (in our study, the European countries) and *m* columns (sustainability indicators), we calculate a standardized matrix $Z=\{z_{ij}\}$ as follow:

$$z_{ij} = 100 + \frac{\left(x_{ij} - M_{x_j}\right)}{S_{x_j}} 10;\ if\ indicator\ j\ has\ a\ positive\ polarity$$

$$z_{ij} = 100 - \frac{\left(x_{ij} - M_{x_j}\right)}{S_{x_j}} 10;\ if\ indicator\ j\ has\ a\ negative\ polarity$$

where M_{x_j} and S_{x_j} are, respectively, the mean and the standard deviation of the *j-th* indicator.

Denoting with M_{z_i} and S_{z_i}, respectively, the mean and the standard deviation of the standardized values of the *i-th* unit, the generalized form of MPI is given by:

$$MPI_i^{+/-} = M_{z_i} \pm S_{z_i} * cv_i \tag{1}$$

where $cv_i = S_{z_i}/M_{z_i}$ is the coefficient of variation of the *i-th* unit and the sign ± depends on the kind of phenomenon to be measured. If the composite index is ‘increasing’ or ‘positive’, i.e., increasing values of the index correspond to positive variations of the phenomenon, then $MPI_i^{-}$is used. Vice versa, if the composite index is 'decreasing' or 'negative', i.e., increasing values of the index correspond to negative variations of the phenomenon, then MPI_i^{+} is used. In the EU tourism dashboard conceptual framework, it is assumed the tourist destinations scoring consistently higher across pillars likely have a more sustainable and resilient tourism ecosystem so MPI_i^{-} will be used for each policy pillar (domain). The Mazziotta-Pareto index approach is characterized using a function ($S_{z_i}* cv_i$) to penalize the units with 'unbalanced' values of the indicators. The 'penalty' is based on the coefficient of variation and is zero if all the values are equal. The purpose is to favour the units that, mean being equal, have a greater balance among the different indicators. In our study, starting from the dashboard of m tourism sustainability indicators, depending on the polarity of the measured phenomenon with respect to the analysed domain, we distinguish between positive and negative indicators. This notation is marked with a (+) when the indicator is positive and with a (-) if it is negative, as shown in Annex 1.

4. Results

The table below (Tab. 2) shows the Mazziotta-Pareto indices calculated for each sustainability domain. The table includes the simple arithmetic mean of these indices, allowing for a holistic evaluation of the overall sustainability performance.

Table 2. Mazziotta-Pareto indices sustainability domain 27 EU countries.

EU country	MPI's mean	Environmental impact	Digitalisation	Socio-economic vulnerability
Austria	102,15	107,89	97,74	100,82
Belgium	97,41	96,42	97,20	98,62
Bulgaria	92,75	88,16	93,26	96,83
Cyprus	99,09	94,43	104,94	97,90
Czechia	97,34	99,28	95,98	96,75
Germany	102,10	105,06	98,77	102,47
Denmark	100,40	98,13	105,80	97,26
Estonia	98,28	96,13	95,73	102,99
Greece	96,19	97,77	95,86	94,93
Spain	104,38	102,19	110,73	100,21
Finland	100,19	95,65	102,70	102,22
France	100,22	102,37	96,79	101,49
Croatia	100,60	101,69	105,67	94,44
Hungary	96,02	93,80	96,57	97,70
Ireland	101,68	100,30	105,62	99,13
Italy	***99,30***	***104,35***	***92,18***	***101,35***
Lithuania	99,88	100,16	99,69	99,80
Luxembourg	94,34	98,69	92,00	92,33
Latvia	96,22	90,68	98,94	99,03
Malta	102,90	102,83	104,82	101,05
Netherlands	97,05	95,15	97,31	98,71
Poland	99,86	100,93	101,43	97,22

Portugal	98,98	97,25	99,55	100,13
Romania	98,90	102,78	93,31	100,59
Sweden	104,31	104,23	104,50	104,21
Slovenia	102,40	102,91	101,34	102,94
Slovakia	94,18	97,77	90,95	93,83
EU mean	***99,15***	***99,15***	***99,24***	***99,07***

Source: Author elaboration EU tourism Dashboard data

These rankings provide valuable insights into the overall performance of European Union (EU) countries in the tourism sector across different dimensions. Higher values in the respective indicators indicate better performance in specific areas.

In terms of environmental impact, Austria (107.89), Germany (105.06), Italy (104.35), Sweden (104.23), and Slovenia (102.91) stand out as the top performers. These countries demonstrate a relatively high level of environmental sustainability in their tourism practices. On the other hand, Bulgaria (88.16), Latvia (90.68), and Hungary (93.80) rank lower in environmental impact, suggesting the need for greater attention to environmental sustainability practices in their tourism sectors. These countries may face challenges related to pollution control, resource management, and conservation efforts. Higher-ranking countries are likely implementing eco-friendly policies, promoting renewable energy sources, adopting sustainable waste management practices, and encouraging responsible tourism behaviour. In contrast, lower-ranking countries may need to enhance their efforts to address environmental concerns such as carbon emissions, resource preservation, and biodiversity conservation.

Spain (110.73) emerges as the top performer in digital sustainability in tourism, indicating a strong focus on leveraging digital technologies and platforms to enhance the tourism experience. Denmark (105.80) and Croatia (105.67) also demonstrate high digital performance, reflecting their commitment to digital transformation in the tourism sector. Conversely, countries like Slovakia (90.95), Luxembourg (92.00), and Italy (92.18) rank lower in digital sustainability, suggesting a need for improvement in their digital infrastructure, digital services, and adoption of innovative digital practices in the tourism industry. The leading countries in digital sustainability are likely providing visitors with enhanced digital experiences, seamless transactions, personalized services, and innovative solutions. On the other hand, lower-ranking countries may face challenges in implementing digital strategies, impacting their competitiveness in attracting tech-savvy tourists and offering cutting-edge digital services.

In terms of socio-economic vulnerability, Sweden (104.21), Estonia (102.99), and Slovenia (102.94) rank highest, indicating their robust and resilient tourism ecosystems with lower vulnerability to economic fluctuations. Conversely, Luxembourg (92.33), Slovakia (93.83), and Croatia (94.44) rank lower, suggesting challenges related to economic dependence on tourism, limited economic diversification, or weaker social safety nets for tourism-related employment. Higher-ranking countries are likely to have diversified economies, robust social welfare systems, and effective policies in place to mitigate risks associated with fluctuations in tourism demand. In contrast, lower-ranking countries may have a higher degree of economic reliance on tourism, making them more vulnerable to external shocks, seasonality, or disruptions in the tourism sector. These countries could benefit from strategies promoting economic diversification and enhancing the resilience of their tourism industries. These rankings underscore the significance of environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and socio-economic stability in the tourism sector. Countries that excel in these areas are more likely to attract environmentally conscious tourists, offer enhanced digital experiences, and build resilient and sustainable tourism economies. Policymakers can leverage these insights to identify areas for improvement, develop targeted strategies, and promote sustainable tourism development in their respective countries.

The use of an aggregate composite indicator, such as the arithmetic mean of the sustainability pillars, enables a comprehensive assessment of countries' performance in achieving sustainable tourism. This engenders a more comprehensive and cohesive evaluative framework, facilitating cross-country comparative analysis of sustainability in the tourism sector. In this regard, Spain (104.38), Sweden (104.31), Malta (102.90), Slovenia (102.40), and Austria (102.15) exhibit higher mean scores across the MPI's indicators. These nations showcase superior overall tourism sustainability performance in relation to their European counterparts. Conversely, countries such as Bulgaria (92.75), Slovakia (94.18), and Luxembourg (94.34) attain lower rankings, highlighting the imperative to enhance their overall sustainability performance within the tourism sector. The adoption of a unified composite indicator, derived from the mean of the previously calculated sustainability pillars, provides a lucid and comparable perspective on the sustainability performance of European countries in the domain of tourism. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that a singular indicator may obscure significant variations within each sustainability pillar, warranting further analysis and understanding of specific aspects within the broader framework of tourism sustainability.

5. Conclusions

This paper aims to develop a framework for assessing the sustainability levels of tourist destinations and addressing the future challenges faced by the European tourism sector, as emphasized by the European Commission. Within the context of the tourism sector, two primary requirements are identified as deserving particular attention. Firstly, the European Commission recognizes the importance of acquiring a better socio-economic understanding of tourism and its interactions with the environment. Enhancing this knowledge is fundamental for promoting the sector's competitiveness and fostering the development of responsible tourism characterized by quality, diversity, and sustainability. In response to this need, the "EU Tourism Dashboard" has been developed and is currently maintained by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the DG GROW, in compliance with the invitation of the Council of the European Union on May 27, 2021. This system has been comprehensively quantified, enabling the utilization of statistical information available from European governmental entities. One of the key findings highlights significant disparities among destinations in terms of the considered indicators, underscoring diverse performance and sustainability profiles within the tourism sector. These conclusions emphasize the necessity of adopting personalized and targeted approaches to address the specific challenges and opportunities encountered by each destination in pursuing sustainable tourism development. The observed heterogeneity underscores the importance of taking a holistic approach facilitated by the use of composite indicators to analyse sustainable tourism. By integrating multiple indicators, a comprehensive understanding of the various sustainability profiles and performance levels exhibited by different destinations can be achieved. On the other hand, the European Commission places significant emphasis on enhancing Europe's image and reputation as a collection of high-quality and sustainable tourist destinations. Progress in this area is crucial to strengthen the attractiveness of destinations and increase the flow of demand, both by attracting non-European visitors and consolidating domestic demand. To address this need, this article proposes a ranking which enables the evaluation of each destination in terms of sustainability, dividing this assessment into three dimensions: environmental impact, digitalization, and socioeconomic vulnerability. To define this ranking, a composite indicator based on the Mazziotta-Pareto index is adopted. The continuous use of the proposed indicator system and its associated aggregation methodology could contribute to the establishment of a standard for assessing the sustainability performance of the 27 European Union countries in the tourism sector. The proposal of a Sustainable Tourism Ranking and its regular updates could contribute to improving the image of European areas as high-quality and sustainable destinations, aiming to attract a greater flow of tourist demand. Furthermore, this tourist demand could differentiate various European destinations based on their position in the sustainability ranking. Countries would be incentivized to maintain and improve their position in the ranking, thereby promoting the exchange of experiences and the adoption of benchmarking practices. The analysis presented in this article serves as a starting point for the study of a key issue in the sustainable development of European tourism. Further research is crucial to delve deeper into the evaluation system and study its implications and the enhancements it brings to destination activities. Furthermore, although the proposed indicator aggregation system is designed to manage the ranking at the national level, it can also be applied at lower territorial levels, such as small urban cities, rural and coastal tourist destinations, regions, and other territories that share common tourism resources. In any case, the availability of statistical information to quantify the initial indicator system is a key element for the success of this type of analysis.

Conflict of interest

All authors declare no conflicts of interest in this paper.

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Supplementary

Annex 1. Description and polarity of sustainability indicators divided by pillars.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

INDICATORS	Polarity with pillar	Description
Air travel emission intensity	*(-)*	Average amount of CO2 emitted per air passenger
Tourism GHG intensity	*(-)*	Amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by the tourism ecosystem per Million Euro of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the tourism sector
Tourism energy intensity	*(-)*	Amount of energy used in tourism-related economic activities per Million Euro of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the tourism sector
Share of trips by train	*(+)*	Share of trips taken by train
Excellent bathing water	*(+)*	Share of sampled bathing water sites that are classified as "excellent" within a tourist destination
Dependence on distant origins	*(-)*	Share of nights spent at accommodation establishments by foreign tourists arriving from distant origins (more than 2000 km)

DIGITALISATION

INDICATORS	Polarity with pillar	Description
E-commerce sales	*(+)*	Percentage of tourism ecosystem enterprises with online sales
Enterprises using social media	*(+)*	Share of tourism ecosystem enterprises using two or more social media
Personnel training on digital skills	*(+)*	Share of tourism ecosystem enterprises providing ICT training to their personnel
Enterprises seeking ICT specialists	*(+)*	Percentage of tourism ecosystem enterprises seeking ICT specialists
Internet speed at tourism destinations	*(+)*	Maximum available speed of internet connection at tourism destinations (municipality level), considering both fixed and mobile networks
Accomodations listed online	*(+)*	Difference between observed number of tourist accommodation rooms (in hotel and short-term vacation rentals) listed on a key online platform (TripAdvisor) with the expected number of listed number of rooms given known tourism demand

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

INDICATORS	Polarity with pillar	Description
Tourism intensity	*(-)*	Number of nights spent at tourist accommodations by the resident population
Tourism seasonality	*(-)*	Coefficient of variation of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments per month
Dependence on top3 countries of origin	*(-)*	Share of the nights spent from the top three countries of origin for each destination country in relation to the total nights spent in the destination country
Tourism diversity	*(+)*	Shannon diversity index of the distribution of tourism accommodation establishments across five geographical zones within a destination: cities, coastal areas, rural areas, natural or mountainous areas, and snowy mountains

Contribution of tourism to employment	(+)	Net overall effect of tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments along the value chain (direct, indirect, induced and catalytic effects in related activities) and the whole tourism ecosystem
Average tourism expenditure	(+)	Average economic value generated per night spent at the tourist destination
	BASIC DESCRIPTORS	
INDICATORS	**Polarity with pillar**	**Description**
Night spent	(+)	Total number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments in a destination (country or region) in a given year, from both domestic and foreign tourists
Arrivals	(+)	Total number of arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments in a destination (country or region) in a given year, from both domestic and foreign tourists
Tourism capacity	(+)	Number of beds available at tourism accommodation establishments available at a destination (country or region) in a given year
Occupancy rate	(+)	Percentage of time within a year that available beds within a tourist destination (country of region) are occupied by tourists
Average duration of stay	(+)	Total number of nights spent divided by the total number of tourist arrivals
Tourism density	(+)	Total number of nights spent over a year in a tourist destination (country or region) per square kilometre of land of the tourist destination
Dominant tourism typology	(+)	The classification is first determined at NUTS3 level based on the proportions of tourism capacity (i.e., no. of rooms) across different geographical zones. The NUTS3 classification is then aggregated to NUTS2 level by selecting the category with the highest aggregate tourism demand (nights spent).
Share of foreign tourists	(+)	Share of nights spent by foreign tourists in relation to the total number of nights spent (domestic and foreign) in accommodation establishments
Progress of tourism recovery	(+)	Proportion of nights spent in a given year in relation to the equivalent period in 2019 (baseline)
Presence of blue flags	(+)	Number of “Blue Flag” awarded to beaches, marinas and tourism boats operators
UNESCO sites	(+)	Number of World Heritage Sites designated by UNESCO
Share of protected/designated land	(+)	*Share of protected/designated land belonging to the European networks Natura 2000 or Emerald Network in relation to the total area of the country or region*

Source: Author elaboration EU tourism Dashboard data

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Academic Research Paper

Measuring proximity tourism in Spain during the pandemic. An Origin-Destination Matrix approach

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Abstract: This work aims to provide more clarity around the concept of proximity tourism giving an overview of how tourist flows changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept of proximity changed over the years in different ways. Indeed, if in the past it was understood only on a geographical or physical level, today it makes sense to talk about the different typologies of proximity such as cultural, political, and social. The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the growing importance of domestic tourism. We use an Origin-Destination (O/D) Matrix approach, considering trips made to Spain in the three years 2019-2021. The idea is to build three matrices containing the coefficients of attraction. This is the first time that this methodology is used on Spanish data to understand the dynamic behind the different Spanish regions in terms of tourism proximity. This study is relevant in terms of political decision-makers and can bring to stimulate tourism within the national territory and encourage local mobility. Proximity tourism is a different way of doing tourism than foreign travel because it allows for greater sustainability in line with the needs of the time, turns out to be a different way of vacationing, and supports local destinations that are often vulnerable.

Keywords: *COVID-19, domestic tourism, local destination, tourist attractiveness coefficient*

JEL Codes: L83; Z32

1. Introduction

Starting from 2019, the world is being hit by COVID-19 through a rapid spread (WHO, 2021). In 2020, the number of cases confirmed were 153.954.491 and deaths exceeded 3 million. The diffusion of the virus was influenced and stimulated by the mobility of people and therefore became a global pandemic (Li et al., 2022).

Government-imposed restrictions on long-distance travel, such as limitations on mobility, control over seat availability in transportation, and the implementation of safety measures pertaining to social distancing, have been implemented as part of efforts to mitigate the rapid spread of infectious diseases. In addition, the pervading sense of apprehension and perceived risks associated with contracting infections has significantly hindered the willingness of tourists to embark on cross-border journeys. Consequently, these multifaceted factors have collectively contributed to a substantial decline in revenue within the tourism sector. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), recent data indicates that the figures pertaining to tourist arrivals and the broader tourism industry have regressed to levels comparable to those observed in the 1990s (UNWTO, 2020). The pandemic thus triggered a global crisis that impacted health systems first, which collapsed due to a lack of beds and a shortage of equipment. Secondly, economic systems and related industries were hit hard by the restrictions brought about by the proliferation of the virus and the resulting government decisions to block the internal and external mobility of citizens. Tourism was one of the hardest-hit sectors.

Recent WHO data (2021) describe the United States as the country with the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by India and Brazil. Even in Europe, France, Spain, the UK, and Italy show a high number of confirmed cases. COVID-19 caused an unprecedented crisis in Europe. After China surpassed the peak of infections, Italy and Spain became the epicenter nations of Europe in terms of several infected cases. Spain reached one of the highest mortality rates in the world (Zhang et al., 2020). The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Spain was reported on 31 January 2020. It was an imported case corresponding to a tourist visiting the Canary Islands.

The impact of the pandemic on the Spanish economy has been severe, resulting in significant losses. According to the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2021), there has been a notable decline in GDP growth. Specifically, in the last quarter of 2019, the GDP growth rate stood at 2%. However, in the first quarter of 2020, Spain experienced a sharp contraction, with negative figures reaching -5.24%. This downturn can be attributed to the state of alert imposed on March 12th, along with the implementation of strict containment measures to curb the spread of the virus.

The tourism market in Spain always played an important role in the economy of the country. Indeed, according to OECD (2020) in 2017 tourism accounted for 11.8% of GDP, and in 2018 it sustained 13.5% of employment. Finally, in 2019 tourism greatly contributed to GDP by 14.6%. As a concern the international tourist flows in the last ten years, these have been growing continuously. Indeed, before the COVID-19 pandemic (2019) Spain received 83.7 million tourists, 1.1% more than in 2018. Unfortunately, the pandemic stopped this growing trend and in 2021, only 31.1(-62%) million tourists visited Spain. The impact of COVID-19 on international tourism in Spain can be appreciated through the following table proposed by the INE, comparing the international tourist arrivals in 2019-2020-2021 (Table 1).

Table 1. Resident trips by country of destination: Spain or Abroad (2019-2020-2021)

YEAR	SPAIN	ABROAD	TOTAL
2019	173,754,971.00	20,119,745.00	193,874,716.00
2020	96,449,394.00	5,074,468.00	101,523,862.00
2021	135,687,709.00	7,205,752.00	142,893,461.00

Source: Author elaboration. Comparative 2019-2020-2021 (Millions)

Domestic tourism, due to its nature, was less affected by mobility restrictions concerning international ones, and this justifies the increase in the months of July, August, and September that coincide with the erasing of the restrictions. These two tourism markets are characterized by different flows of tourists and different features. International tourism sometimes is preferred by the government and destination managers due to the higher spending capacity but on this occasion, after the pandemic, domestic tourism could play an important role in the global tourism recovery. Indeed, according to Arbulú et al. (2021) "domestic tourism is the key driver of the tourism sector globally" and "its importance in relieving the tourism industry crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic cannot be underestimated".

Only in recent times, the proximity concept has gained further importance due to COVID-19 which has forced people to stay in their countries of residence without being able to travel abroad, despite this, the current literature on the topic of proximity tourism is severely lacking (Salmela et al., 2021). For instance, according to Lebrun et al. (2021) with COVID-19 there has been a considerable change in tourism, in terms of mobility, consumption habits, and free time. Furthermore, this has led to an increase in domestic and proximity tourism because proximity and more accessible destinations have been considered.

Given the importance of domestic tourism and the problems associated with COVID-19, the concept of proximity tourism is more relevant today than ever before: that is, the possibility of doing tourism without moving from national borders.

The present study endeavors to delineate the concept of proximity within the field of tourism. In pursuit of this objective, an exhaustive examination of the existing literature on the subject was undertaken. Additionally, given the substantial influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector, the secondary aim of this investigation is to assess the prevailing situation in Spain with regard to tourism, thereby furnishing policymakers with essential guidelines to enhance the charm of tourist destinations. Moreover, by employing a coefficient of attraction, a comprehensive overview of the alterations in tourist behavior induced by the pandemic will be provided.

To summarize, the primary objectives of this study can be outlined as follows:

• To establish a definitive definition of proximity tourism, thereby contributing to the extant body of literature on this subject.

• To assess the contemporary framework of Spanish tourism flows through the implementation of an O/D matrix.

• To elucidate any modifications in tourist movement patterns within destinations resulting from the pandemic, utilizing the coefficient of attraction.

The subsequent sections of this paper are organized as follows: following a review of the literature concerning proximity tourism and the utilization of O/D matrices, The subsequent paragraph provides a detailed exploration of the data and methodology employed. This section elucidates the processing of data obtained from microdata accessible on the official Spanish website (https://www.ine.es/en/), along with the construction of three matrices corresponding to the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

As confirmed by Alvarez-Diaz et al. (2020) the first uses of the O/D matrices are in the context of migration between rural and urban areas of a country and travel times in relation to the mobility of cities (Coeymans, 1983). Extensive use of the O/D matrix can be found in tourism literature (Pérez, 2016; Gàlvez et al., 2014, Guardia and Muro, 2009).

In the work of Guardia and Muro (2009), geographical distance and the economic weight of the territory appear to be the predominant factors in the attractiveness of a tourist destination. The scholars investigated inter-regional tourism flows in the period 2004-2008 for Spain, establishing which regions were the most attractive in terms of tourism. They analyzed inter and intra-regional tourism at a descriptive level by constructing an O/D matrix. Following this, they calculated attractiveness coefficients and determined the most attractively dense and marginalized areas, respectively. In Guardia and Muro's (2009) study, the Autonomous Communities that attract the most tourists from other regions were Aragon, Cantabria and Valenci.).

Alvarez-Diaz et al. (2020) using the methodology proposed by previous authors, present a study of tourism in Colombia using data provided by the Survey of Domestic Tourist Expenditure (Encuesta de Gasto Interno-EGIT). The author's study conducted over the period of 2012-2013, and based on the estimation of attractiveness coefficients, reveals a predilection for intra-regional tourism within Colombia, as opposed to inter-regional tourism. The main reason for this lies in the distance between the regions and especially the mountainous nature that of origin-destination trips using data from 2012-2013, as well as the estimation of attractiveness coefficients of these flows. Once the O/D matrix is constructed, they find that domestic tourism in Colombia follows an intraregional rather than an interregional tourism pattern. The objective of our study is to construct three matrices comprising attraction coefficients. The anticipated outcomes are associated with the notion that travel patterns have been altered as a result of the pandemic. Moreover, it is expected that there has been an enhanced attractiveness of Spanish destinations over the three-year period under examination, particularly in relation to tourism emphasizing proximity.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework on tourism proximity

The concept of proximity nowadays acquires a different meaning from the past, because if before it was understood only on a geographical/physical level, now it might make sense to talk about different proximities (cultural, political, social, and, organizational).

Citarella (2013) elucidated the concept of proximity by asserting that "everything is related to everything, but the things that are near are more correlated than things far." Through this statement, the author aimed to convey the multifaceted nature of proximity, which manifests itself in various forms depending on the relationships involved (Citarella, 2013).

According to the author, the concept of proximity encompasses the scale of interaction between the local and the global. At the physical-geographical level, proximity manifests itself in the identification of individuals residing in the same geographic location and sharing a common language. This proximity-based identification fosters relationships that are inherently influenced by spatial proximity. Despite this, social ties are no longer only limited to "face-to-face" because thanks to new technologies it is possible to develop relationships and, in general, international relations, even at a distance regardless of geographical proximity (Citarella, 2013).

Today's society is steeped in the phenomenon of hypermobility), or long-distance travel that corresponds to cosmopolitanism (Cohen and Gössling, 2015). According to Andriotis (2018), mobility over shorter distances, along with minimal consumption is more considered in lifestyles to date. According to Rosu (2020), there is a significant shift away from previous statements that determined immobility as disadvantageous.

In this sense, Citarella (2013) expresses the inadequacy of geographical proximity, both at the physical and functional level, proposing to consider the various works that have highlighted multiple proximities other than the spatial one, namely those related to cognitive, institutional, socio-cultural aspects (Citarella, 2013).

One of the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, which would be in line with the principles of sustainability, has been the strengthening of local tourism at the expense of long-distance travel (Dot Jutgla et al., 2022). This proximity tourism has many specific characteristics regarding the organization of tourist activity. They all favor a demand in terms of short geographic distance from the domestic tourist and, to a large extent, also from the working and middle classes (Dot Jutgla et al., 2022). According to Gilly and Torre (2000), it is possible to define two types of proximity in addition to the one based on Euclidean distance (the geographical-physical one): social and virtual. The concept of social proximity has to do with tacit and codified knowledge: the former manifesting itself on a local scale, the latter on a global scale.

Cultural proximity pertains to the interconnectedness and interplay of individuals within a network, sharing common knowledge, values, and experiences (Boschma, 2005). On the other hand, virtual proximity refers to the concept of proximity in the digital field, specifically within cyberspace. This type of proximity represents a "non-place/non-space" since the internet is perceived as a novel domain that is accessible to anyone, anytime (Citarella, 2013).

The context highlights the transformation of activities that were traditionally confined to local contexts, which can now be conducted from any location worldwide. Within this framework, tourism emerges as a significant aspect of people's lives, encompassing various leisure and recreational pursuits. Consequently, tourism exhibits distinct characteristics associated with the notion of proximity. The aforementioned context highlights the transformation of activities that were traditionally confined to local contexts, which can now be conducted from any location worldwide.

Some authors have attempted to define the concept of tourist proximity (Jeuring and Diaz-Soria, 2017; Rantala et al., 2020). Jeuring and Diaz-Soria (2017) define it as a particular form of tourism that highlights the local destination with short distances and low-carbon transportation modes. Recent literature suggests that the concept of proximity extends beyond mere physical distances and encompasses the notion of novelty and freshness in one's perspective (Rantala et al., 2020).

Salmela et al. (2021) conducted a thematic literature review aimed at establishing the relevant search terms associated with proximity tourism. The authors undertook a systematic analysis to discern the forward-looking aspects and diverse perspectives within the field.

The literature around domestic tourism is dense and does not provide a definition or conceptual framework for proximity tourism. “Proximate", "intraregional", "intra-regional”, “near-home”, “nearby”, “near-by”, “short-distance”, and "home-bound" are the synonyms proposed by the authors for the concept of proximity tourist (Salmela et al., 2021).

Diaz-Soria (2017) in his work proposes an important question: "How is it possible to visit a place in a tourist way if that place is next to our home or feels familiar?"

In addressing this question, the author initially delves into the foundational concept of proximity, which traditionally pertains to geographical distances. However, the author subsequently highlights alternative perspectives, that challenges the limited perspective associated with the geographical notion. These viewpoints argue that in our contemporary world, characterized by high specialization and globalization, there are no longer any limits to accessing diverse locations, individuals, and experiences.

As stated by Boschma (2005) it is a complex and multidimensional concept because it is both physical and spatial but also has an abstract dimension based on the perception that organizations and individuals have of distances. Furthermore, the multidisciplinary discourse revolves around the interplay between centers and peripheries within a specific urban context, aiming to comprehend the intricate connection between rural and urban areas (Bertacchi et al., 2021).

In pandemic times, the importance of exploring one's own city's cultural endowment due to excessive governmental restrictions has prompted citizens to learn about their own natural riches (Bertacchi et al., 2021).

In this sense, Jeuring and Haartsen (2017) explain that the subjective nature of the concepts of distance and proximity holds significant importance in defining tourism activities, as they are not purely physical parameters but rather reflect subjective perceptions and emotions. The distance can be interpreted both in terms of time and cost, and as experience (i.e., the perception of change in scenery and climate).

From an experiential point of view, some types and situations that are created within the tourism experience can be considered "Proximate/Neighborhood". Considering the study conducted by Rantala et al. (2020), they propose the concept of proximity tourism as an approach that addresses the global environmental crisis by fostering responsible practices and choices focused on genetic and environmental conservation (Rantala et al., 2020).

The previous discussion has elucidated the dependence of proximity tourism on the perceptions held by institutions and individuals regarding the notion of distance and its impact on tourism activities. Furthermore, it has been established that domestic tourism cannot be encompassed within the scope of proximity tourism due to the frequent occurrence of domestic trips exceeding distances of over 500 kilometers.

To provide a clearer understanding of proximity tourism to a broader audience, it is essential to consider situations where individuals engage in proximity trips out of necessity rather than choice. In such instances, choosing not to renounce to long-distance travel and instead opting to explore familiar surroundings becomes crucial to maintain their tourist status, even if the activities pursued may not strictly adhere to conventional tourism standards.

The situation just described is one that fully interprets the travel freeze due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of time, numerous pandemics and epidemics have impacted the world, leading governments to implement containment measures that involved the closure of both inbound and outbound borders. These measures were implemented to mitigate the transmission of infectious diseases. However, with the advent of COVID-19, these measures have assumed greater significance due to several factors. Firstly, COVID-19 represents the first global pandemic that has affected the entire world extensively. Secondly, the rapid and unprecedented impact of the virus on a global scale distinguishes it from previous outbreaks.

Romagosa (2020) in this regard discusses the opportunities that proximity (and sustainable) tourism can provide in the era of crisis from COVID-19. The impact that COVID-19 has had on tourism has been resounding change in travel habits, reorganization of spaces dedicated to recreational activities, redistribution of space and allocation of hours and shifts in museums and other points of interest, the emergence of remote work practices, changes in consumption patterns, evolving health requirements, and other related factors have contributed to a shift in various aspects of society.

However, the author (Romagosa, 2020), emphasizes the resilience of the tourism sector, which possesses an impressive capacity to adapt and shelter from crises and disasters. Romagosa's work views proximity tourism as a form of sustainable tourism encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Proximity tourism entails a deliberate choice by individuals to engage in travel activities within proximity to their residential or familiar surroundings. This conscious decision to avoid long-distance travel minimizes the negative impact on the environment, as it reduces carbon emissions associated with transportation. Additionally, proximity tourism promotes social sustainability by encouraging interaction with local communities, fostering cultural exchange, and supporting local economies. From an economic perspective, proximity tourism generates opportunities for small-scale businesses, stimulates local employment, and enhances the overall economic resilience of the destination. Thus, proximity tourism aligns with the principles of sustainability by promoting responsible travel practices and contributing to the well-being of both the environment and the host communities.

3. Materials and methods

The analysis performed is based on the microdata on national trips made in Spain in 2019, 2020, and 2021. In other words, these years represent the periods before, during, and "after" the pandemic, although it should be noted that the year 2021 cannot be considered entirely free from the impact of COVID-19. The idea behind the use of these three years is to obtain a full perspective of the changing tourist behavior and travel patterns in the scope of new mobilities.

The microdata was provided by INE after downloading the data, a process of encoding variables and value labels were successfully encoded using SPSS software. The data obtained, have been processed into three different data matrices, for each year.

Three O/D matrices (in the next tables, 2,3 and 4) were constructed with the aim of defining domestic tourism in Spain and excluding from the destination columns the trips towards foreign destinations. In addition to the three matrices with the attraction coefficients, there are also a fourth and fifth matrices-shaped by the ratio between the coefficients of 2020 and those of 2019 and, 2021-2020, respectively. We, therefore, limit ourselves to trips made by residents from region x to region y of Spain and within the same region of origin. Spain is divided into 17 autonomous communities, respectively: Andalusia (AND), Aragon (ARA), Asturia Principality of (AST), Balearic Island (BAL), Canaries (CAN), Cantabria (CANT), Castile and Leon (CAST1), Castile la Mancha, (CAST2), Catalonia (CAT), Valencian Community (VAL), Extremadura (EXT), Galician (GAL), Madrid Community of (MAD), Murcia Region of (MUR), Navarra Floral Community of (NAV), Basque Country (BAS) and finally, Rioja (RIO).

The origin-destination matrix (1) has the following structure:

$$\text{O/D Matrix} = \begin{bmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} & \cdots & x_{1j} & \cdots & X_1 \\ x_{21} & x_{22} & & x_{2j} & & X_2 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & \vdots & \vdots \\ x_{i1} & x_{i2} & & x_{ij} & & X_i \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & \\ Y_1 & Y_2 & & Y_j & & T \end{bmatrix} \qquad (1)$$

Where:

- x_{ij}= number of trips originated in cell ii and within the destination in cell j;
- X_i = number of trips originated in cell i;
- Y_j = number of trips received by cell j;
- T= total trips.

In our study we replicated the methodology proposed by Guardia and Muro (2011) using as input the flows that are generated by the O/D matrices. We focused on regions within Spain, considering in the row the region of origin, and in the column the regions of destination.

The applications of the index in literature are very few (Torres and Monsalve, 2018; Gàlvez and Romero, 2014; Guardia and Muro, 2011), the use of the index to assess the change in attractiveness over time is uncommon, as most studies typically rely on matrices composed of the averages of the time series considered instead of utilizing the index. The tourist attractiveness index (2) is calculated as follows:

$$ca_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\sum_j x_{ij_i}} \Big/ \frac{y_j}{\sum_j y_j} \qquad (2)$$

Where:

- ca_{ij} : is the coefficient of tourist attraction between the regions (Spanish communities) i (origin) and j (destination)
- x_{ij}: number of trips made by the region i (the single intersection cell, i.e., the joints one between destination i and destination j)
- $\sum_j x_{ij}$: total tourist demand of the region's residents i (the total of the single row in the matrix),
- $\sum_j y_j$: total demand flows
- y_j: number of trips received by the region (community) j

A place, whether it is a site or an object, achieves the status of an attraction when it is acknowledged as such by tourists. The term "attraction" refers to the correlation between a specific place or site and the tourists who express a desire to visit it. The strength of a tourist flow is determined by the attraction coefficient, with a coefficient greater than one indicating a strong flow, while a coefficient less than one indicates a weak flow (Pérez, 2016). This implies that the flow *x_ij* holds more significance in the overall number of trips to destination *j* compared to the total number of trips originating from location i (all in relative terms) within the total number of trips (Pérez, 2016).

4. Results

For a correct interpretation of the results, it is necessary to look at the most important facts that have occurred in Spain with the advent of the pandemic. Spain had its first epidemic manifestation in January 2020 due to the entry of a tourist on the Canary Island of La Gomera. Starting in March, a state of emergency is declared, leading to the closure of all public places. Thus, a period of first quarantine begins which will see a gradual reopening starting in May. This is followed by a summer period with a relaxation of restrictions and subsequently, starting from September, a further increase in infections. In 2020, therefore, travel between regions was also quite complicated due to the bans imposed by the government, including the ban on moving from one region to another during the Easter holidays. In addition, the Spanish government imposed a ban on entry for non-residents in the country until May 2020. All these pandemic-related restrictions have influenced the tourism sector and travel, especially international travel. Indeed, looking at the absolute number of trips taken by Spanish abroad, a sharp reduction can be observed.

Looking at the coefficient matrices, an increase from 2019 (Table 5) to 2020 (table 6) is visible and considering the ratio between these coefficients in the two years, a concentration of coefficients can be intercepted along the main diagonal (Table 8). As we expected, looking at the biennium 2021-2020 (Table 9) (with respect to Table 6 and Table 7), there appears to be a different trend in travel, as the coefficients are less concentrated along the main diagonal compared to the previous biennium. The reason behind this reduction may be related to the relaxation of government-imposed travel restrictions (the ratio denoted a decreased of this form of tourism with values lesser than 1.

Table 2. Trips of residents to Spain by autonomous community of origin and destination (2019).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO	TOT
AND	21843535	92899	155494	226122	143577	83665	286590	340947	330463	536453	550673	187348	1854884	329385	52412	134965	11010	27160422
ARA	291210	3095997	26016	45495	35469	68393	252911	77494	900681	636443	28514	59998	289168	34573	98954	205946	69234	6216496
AST	159048	31083	2120671	34511	43444	178850	689875	13831	98845	87272	55705	340189	205342	6561	14384	82051	14163	4175825
BAL	210880	62957	36194	1652168	31032	13370	49298	42745	424778	147964	18260	76720	240325	10901	10646	23712	555	3052505
CAN	228970	24970	19014	20477	5084115	10227	66159	34797	129898	86795	3991	141454	490803	11455	7621	50544	5617	6416907
CANT	87137	37666	141361	16301	35022	730359	373169	14919	46357	67015	10868	53324	204514	2829	9580	88887	24615	1943923
CAST1	528883	126663	498971	45503	117137	747716	5504625	76428	209364	438897	210624	423486	1182172	29213	45724	275369	80924	10541699
CAST2	950054	128145	53364	30751	66571	105214	346362	2627111	89421	1441821	201809	60299	1352182	320088	6913	63746	5554	7849405
CAT	1100264	1287906	116978	546662	196408	112636	435388	423664	20364155	987341	127326	313143	1248220	61805	173483	366568	90252	27952199
VAL	943976	719879	98657	181294	65513	62203	289490	1362646	695936	10101877	47439	169579	737902	344118	87053	101408	60495	16069465
EXT	936756	18051	49873	11419	16453	9803	131061	156464	42622	60468	1624015	21865	442810	20292	1274	12053	2312	3557591
GAL	167416	19681	262765	46740	127698	68354	451287	50644	161177	144968	38757	6759703	446985	85088	19851	71635	7440	8930189
MAD	3682312	906012	903103	298575	420835	634769	6612456	5350820	882615	3647270	1397801	1047390	3904330	616211	232810	763359	223097	31523765
MUR	863885	59985	30171	26189	15888	20899	89009	310039	94520	719537	23122	46506	288040	1654142	16526	36101	16773	4311332
NAV	113028	237221	27315	16647	19854	65057	140997	35563	219930	186161	13880	30000	169022	2724	1007292	272160	121534	2678385
BAS	279977	477649	284306	66928	80119	1053108	1718318	61181	451415	405263	108288	252752	499921	8857	1079070	2272983	566259	9666394
RIO	57336	96958	19226	9062	7487	72531	113706	15289	110812	75531	5453	15148	104442	3228	49906	104982	332431	1193528
TOT	32444667	7423722	4843479	3274844	6506622	4037154	17550701	10994582	25252989	19771076	4466525	9998904	13661062	3541470	2913499	4926469	1632265	173240030

Source: Author elaboration

Table 3. Trips of residents to Spain by autonomous community of origin and destination (2020).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	**4.29**	0.08	0.20	0.44	0.14	0.13	0.10	0.20	0.08	0.17	0.79	0.12	0.87	0.59	0.11	0.17	0.04
ARA	0.25	**11.62**	0.15	0.39	0.15	0.47	0.40	0.20	**0.99**	0.90	0.18	0.17	0.59	0.27	0.95	**1.16**	**1.18**
AST	0.20	0.17	**18.16**	0.44	0.28	**1.84**	**1.63**	0.05	0.16	0.18	0.52	**1.41**	0.62	0.08	0.20	0.69	0.36
BAL	0.37	0.48	0.42	**28.63**	0.27	0.19	0.16	0.22	0.95	0.42	0.23	0.44	**1.00**	0.17	0.21	0.27	0.02
CAN	0.19	0.09	0.11	0.17	**21.10**	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.14	0.12	0.02	0.38	0.97	0.09	0.07	0.28	0.09
CANT	0.24	0.45	**2.60**	0.44	0.48	**16.12**	**1.89**	0.12	0.16	0.30	0.22	0.48	**1.33**	0.07	0.29	**1.61**	**1.34**
CAST1	0.27	0.28	**1.69**	0.23	0.30	**3.04**	**5.15**	0.11	0.14	0.36	0.77	0.70	**1.42**	0.14	0.26	0.92	0.81
CAST2	0.65	0.38	0.24	0.21	0.23	0.58	0.44	**5.27**	0.08	**1.61**	**1.00**	0.13	**2.18**	**1.99**	0.05	0.29	0.08
CAT	0.21	**1.08**	0.15	**1.03**	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.24	**5.00**	0.31	0.18	0.19	0.57	0.11	0.37	0.46	0.34
VAL	0.31	**1.05**	0.22	0.60	0.11	0.17	0.18	**1.34**	0.30	**5.51**	0.11	0.18	0.58	**1.05**	0.32	0.22	0.40
EXT	**1.41**	0.12	0.50	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.36	0.69	0.08	0.15	**17.71**	0.11	**1.58**	0.28	0.02	0.12	0.07
GAL	0.10	0.05	**1.05**	0.28	0.38	0.33	0.50	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.17	**13.11**	0.63	0.47	0.13	0.28	0.09
MAD	0.62	0.67	**1.02**	0.50	0.36	0.86	**2.07**	**2.67**	0.19	**1.01**	**1.72**	0.58	**1.57**	0.96	0.44	0.85	0.75
MUR	**1.07**	0.32	0.25	0.32	0.10	0.21	0.20	**1.13**	0.15	**1.46**	0.21	0.19	0.85	**18.77**	0.23	0.29	0.41
NAV	0.23	**2.07**	0.36	0.33	0.20	**1.04**	0.52	0.21	0.56	0.61	0.20	0.19	0.80	0.05	**22.36**	**3.57**	**4.82**
BAS	0.15	**1.15**	**1.05**	0.37	0.22	**4.67**	**1.75**	0.10	0.32	0.37	0.43	0.45	0.66	0.04	**6.64**	**8.27**	**6.22**
RIO	0.26	**1.90**	0.58	0.40	0.17	**2.61**	0.94	0.20	0.64	0.55	0.18	0.22	**1.11**	0.13	**2.49**	**3.09**	**29.56**

Source: Author elaboration

Table 4. Trips of residents to Spain by autonomous community of origin and destination (2021).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	**4.29**	0.08	0.20	0.44	0.14	0.13	0.10	0.20	0.08	0.17	0.79	0.12	0.87	0.59	0.11	0.17	0.04
ARA	0.25	**11.62**	0.15	0.39	0.15	0.47	0.40	0.20	**0.99**	0.90	0.18	0.17	0.59	0.27	0.95	**1.16**	**1.18**
AST	0.20	0.17	**18.16**	0.44	0.28	**1.84**	**1.63**	0.05	0.16	0.18	0.52	**1.41**	0.62	0.08	0.20	0.69	0.36
BAL	0.37	0.48	0.42	**28.63**	0.27	0.19	0.16	0.22	0.95	0.42	0.23	0.44	**1.00**	0.17	0.21	0.27	0.02
CAN	0.19	0.09	0.11	0.17	**21.10**	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.14	0.12	0.02	0.38	0.97	0.09	0.07	0.28	0.09
CANT	0.24	0.45	**2.60**	0.44	0.48	**16.12**	**1.89**	0.12	0.16	0.30	0.22	0.48	**1.33**	0.07	0.29	**1.61**	**1.34**
CAST1	0.27	0.28	**1.69**	0.23	0.30	**3.04**	**5.15**	0.11	0.14	0.36	0.77	0.70	**1.42**	0.14	0.26	0.92	0.81
CAST2	0.65	0.38	0.24	0.21	0.23	0.58	0.44	**5.27**	0.08	**1.61**	**1.00**	0.13	**2.18**	**1.99**	0.05	0.29	0.08
CAT	0.21	**1.08**	0.15	**1.03**	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.24	**5.00**	0.31	0.18	0.19	0.57	0.11	0.37	0.46	0.34
VAL	0.31	**1.05**	0.22	0.60	0.11	0.17	0.18	**1.34**	0.30	**5.51**	0.11	0.18	0.58	**1.05**	0.32	0.22	0.40
EXT	**1.41**	0.12	0.50	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.36	0.69	0.08	0.15	**17.71**	0.11	**1.58**	0.28	0.02	0.12	0.07
GAL	0.10	0.05	**1.05**	0.28	0.38	0.33	0.50	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.17	**13.11**	0.63	0.47	0.13	0.28	0.09
MAD	0.62	0.67	**1.02**	0.50	0.36	0.86	**2.07**	**2.67**	0.19	**1.01**	**1.72**	0.58	**1.57**	0.96	0.44	0.85	0.75
MUR	**1.07**	0.32	0.25	0.32	0.10	0.21	0.20	**1.13**	0.15	**1.46**	0.21	0.19	0.85	**18.77**	0.23	0.29	0.41
NAV	0.23	**2.07**	0.36	0.33	0.20	**1.04**	0.52	0.21	0.56	0.61	0.20	0.19	0.80	0.05	**22.36**	**3.57**	**4.82**
BAS	0.15	**1.15**	**1.05**	0.37	0.22	**4.67**	**1.75**	0.10	0.32	0.37	0.43	0.45	0.66	0.04	**6.64**	**8.27**	**6.22**
RIO	0.26	**1.90**	0.58	0.40	0.17	**2.61**	0.94	0.20	0.64	0.55	0.18	0.22	**1.11**	0.13	**2.49**	**3.09**	**29.56**

Source: Author elaboration

Table 5. The coefficients of tourist attraction between the regions (Spanish communities) *i* (origin) and *j* (destination) (2019).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	**4.52**	0.10	0.07	0.22	0.11	0.05	0.09	0.14	0.05	0.09	0.65	0.10	0.53	0.33	0.07	0.10	0.00
ARA	0.13	**14.02**	0.14	0.17	0.07	0.42	0.37	0.32	0.81	0.79	0.23	0.18	0.55	0.12	**1.48**	0.66	0.89
AST	0.12	0.07	**20.83**	0.12	0.08	**1.20**	**1.71**	0.06	0.10	0.12	0.14	**1.20**	0.57	0.15	0.02	0.96	0.53
BAL	0.30	0.39	0.26	**32.06**	0.21	0.14	0.11	0.13	0.61	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.69	0.13	0.17	0.03	0.18
CAN	0.10	0.01	0.01	0.06	**20.42**	0.03	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.19	0.54	0.04	0.09	0.19	0.06
CANT	0.17	0.19	**2.71**	0.24	0.18	**18.62**	**1.67**	0.07	0.12	0.14	0.35	0.42	**1.41**	0.00	0.04	2.63	0.91
CAST1	0.17	0.21	**1.49**	0.21	0.17	**1.89**	**6.58**	0.29	0.08	0.20	0.85	0.42	**1.14**	0.09	0.30	0.57	0.72
CAST2	0.39	0.23	0.38	0.20	0.04	0.29	0.46	**6.76**	0.06	**1.48**	0.60	0.18	**2.55**	**1.23**	0.10	0.17	0.11
CAT	0.15	1.26	0.18	**1.01**	0.13	0.20	0.12	0.13	**5.50**	0.24	0.22	0.24	0.35	0.12	0.44	0.34	0.41
VAL	0.25	0.89	0.21	0.52	0.04	0.17	0.10	**1.12**	0.17	**5.80**	0.06	0.09	0.53	**1.49**	0.25	0.25	0.23
EXT	0.92	0.10	0.11	0.04	0.00	0.09	0.34	0.29	0.09	0.08	**22.63**	0.02	**2.07**	0.13	0.19	0.14	0.03
GAL	0.07	0.09	0.55	0.20	0.21	0.14	0.40	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.14	**15.05**	0.40	0.00	0.08	0.59	0.01
MAD	0.58	0.57	**1.24**	0.58	0.29	**1.27**	**1.81**	**2.58**	0.22	0.94	**1.37**	0.68	**2.38**	0.95	0.68	0.69	0.46
MUR	0.72	0.16	0.34	0.18	0.08	0.25	0.18	**1.74**	0.09	**1.41**	0.19	0.15	0.75	**21.38**	0.07	0.12	0.07
NAV	0.18	**1.80**	0.43	0.24	0.20	**1.73**	0.67	0.02	0.55	0.40	0.10	0.25	0.68	0.05	**22.76**	**2.99**	**8.75**
BAS	0.20	0.82	**1.26**	0.43	0.25	**5.13**	**1.72**	0.07	0.26	0.36	0.22	0.25	0.50	0.23	**5.24**	**10.18**	**5.96**
RIO	0.14	**1.82**	0.35	0.14	0.07	**3.31**	**1.36**	0.21	0.34	0.59	0.06	0.20	0.71	0.00	**2.37**	**3.11**	**37.58**

Source: Author elaboration

Table 6. The coefficients of tourist attraction between the regions (Spanish communities) *i* (origin) and *j* (destination) (2020).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO	TOT
AND	18449860	70053	99520	142675	125880	35900	197637	266018	185412	383648	400425	199870	828147	203257	17868	80641	22612	21709423
ARA	118760	2640969	14665	61098	33540	42822	145218	56509	656050	438240	13102	42749	167016	19214	94219	70050	37680	4651901
AST	113279	18823	1363435	19791	37745	153172	451139	5193	47322	79735	20483	258936	157332	6122	4587	57582	3204	2797880
BAL	161308	15672	7959	2187388	23891	4046	20957	27854	199870	150966	10310	40992	206019	10574	10794	13266	0	3091866
CAN	98880	14944	32189	8791	4134041	5183	67950	18672	86702	60668	4073	66032	285052	10543	5696	26654	0	4926070
CANT	62223	17909	96823	19137	14941	863214	261316	9034	26554	36053	15188	42170	163203	3926	12714	63292	28416	1736113
CAST1	331236	45168	288546	60750	35009	379296	4511907	137927	158894	311463	117593	329894	840125	18457	19083	155344	53805	7794497
CAST2	642671	104190	66219	27719	35849	59955	255725	2443760	97466	982163	174539	83120	620290	204626	12854	36548	612	5848306
CAT	864544	1378115	94123	595015	189936	78098	304810	175874	16716168	959477	100047	239607	684056	127050	117591	377102	98804	23100417
VAL	785114	533498	61927	169841	62018	38574	83057	907508	760931	9357234	37268	116367	481118	255665	26487	128860	21918	13827385
EXT	660506	35129	23964	27256	4107	18124	155699	88600	34123	22603	1277240	45829	337287	4150	3790	15599	1818	2755824
GAL	125182	4359	129597	40129	73729	65248	224792	34354	86231	64070	43418	5774858	289505	4407	7809	57274	5966	7030928
MAD	2393193	467450	663034	245429	288569	458423	4439552	3957758	854634	2725472	1089997	784532	3246877	336138	140044	356229	121674	22569005
MUR	517749	62032	24819	35361	23236	26379	48275	268234	73006	592605	8893	38357	301987	1490422	15363	14411	0	3541129
NAV	69673	145543	13316	15167	14742	46823	155221	10058	232696	121414	10926	40817	109508	20270	962705	208977	26378	2204234
BAS	291432	233802	162324	86921	56383	953966	1102984	75071	296403	344139	127221	192974	402038	9917	430076	1406380	569467	6741498
RIO	38734	105944	13771	6548	4007	52808	83669	6094	78555	65393	6638	22385	57805	10763	48280	65611	332294	999299
TOT	25724344	5893600	3156231	3749016	5157623	3282031	12509908	8488518	20591017	16695343	3457361	8319489	9177365	2735501	1929960	3133820	1324648	135325775

Source: Author elaboration

Table 7. The coefficients of tourist attraction between the regions (Spanish communities) *i* (origin) and *j* (destination) (2021).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	**4.47**	0.07	0.20	0.24	0.15	0.07	0.10	0.20	0.06	0.14	0.72	0.15	0.56	0.46	0.06	0.16	0.11
ARA	0.13	**13.04**	0.14	0.47	0.19	0.38	0.34	0.19	0.93	0.76	0.11	0.15	0.53	0.20	**1.42**	0.65	0.83
AST	0.21	0.15	**20.89**	0.26	0.35	**2.26**	**1.74**	0.03	0.11	0.23	0.29	**1.51**	0.83	0.11	0.11	0.89	0.12
BAL	0.27	0.12	0.11	**25.54**	0.20	0.05	0.07	0.14	0.42	0.40	0.13	0.22	0.98	0.17	0.24	0.19	0.00
CAN	0.11	0.07	0.28	0.06	**22.02**	0.04	0.15	0.06	0.12	0.10	0.03	0.22	0.85	0.11	0.08	0.23	0.00
CANT	0.19	0.24	**2.39**	0.40	0.23	**20.50**	**1.63**	0.08	0.10	0.17	0.34	0.40	**1.39**	0.11	0.51	**1.57**	**1.67**
CAST1	0.22	0.13	**1.59**	0.28	0.12	**2.01**	**6.26**	0.28	0.13	0.32	0.59	0.69	**1.59**	0.12	0.17	0.86	0.71
CAST2	0.58	0.41	0.49	0.17	0.16	0.42	0.47	**6.66**	0.11	**1.36**	**1.17**	0.23	**1.56**	**1.73**	0.15	0.27	0.01
CAT	0.20	**1.37**	0.17	0.93	0.22	0.14	0.14	0.12	**4.76**	0.34	0.17	0.17	0.44	0.27	0.36	0.70	0.44
VAL	0.30	0.89	0.19	0.44	0.12	0.12	0.06	**1.05**	0.36	**5.49**	0.11	0.14	0.51	0.91	0.13	0.40	0.16
EXT	**1.26**	0.29	0.37	0.36	0.04	0.27	0.61	0.51	0.08	0.07	**18.14**	0.27	**1.80**	0.07	0.10	0.24	0.07
GAL	0.09	0.01	0.79	0.21	0.28	0.38	0.35	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.24	**13.36**	0.61	0.03	0.08	0.35	0.09
MAD	0.56	0.48	**1.26**	0.39	0.34	0.84	**2.13**	**2.80**	0.25	0.98	**1.89**	0.57	**2.12**	0.74	0.44	0.68	0.55
MUR	0.77	0.40	0.30	0.36	0.17	0.31	0.15	**1.21**	0.14	**1.36**	0.10	0.18	**1.26**	**20.82**	0.30	0.18	0.00
NAV	0.17	**1.52**	0.26	0.25	0.18	0.88	0.76	0.07	0.69	0.45	0.19	0.30	0.73	0.45	**30.62**	**4.09**	**1.22**
BAS	0.23	0.80	**1.03**	0.47	0.22	**5.83**	**1.77**	0.18	0.29	0.41	0.74	0.47	0.88	0.07	**4.47**	**9.01**	**8.63**
RIO	0.20	**2.43**	0.59	0.24	0.11	**2.18**	0.91	0.10	0.52	0.53	0.26	0.36	0.85	0.53	**3.39**	**2.84**	**33.97**

Source: Author elaboration

Table 8. Coefficient Ratio (2020-2019).

O/D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	1.04	1.22	0.33	0.48	0.79	0.41	0.90	0.71	0.63	0.49	0.81	0.83	0.60	0.55	0.62	0.57	0.00
ARA	0.52	1.19	0.90	0.43	0.44	0.87	0.90	1.60	0.81	0.87	1.28	1.03	0.92	0.42	1.54	0.56	0.74
AST	0.56	0.42	1.12	0.26	0.30	0.64	1.03	1.18	0.59	0.66	0.27	0.83	0.89	1.97	0.12	1.36	1.45
BAL	0.84	0.82	0.63	1.15	0.81	0.75	0.68	0.59	0.65	0.94	1.68	0.89	0.71	0.77	0.85	0.12	9.78
CAN	0.50	0.13	0.13	0.35	0.96	0.41	1.04	0.34	0.47	0.39	2.73	0.50	0.56	0.40	1.24	0.68	0.67
CANT	0.70	0.42	1.04	0.53	0.36	1.15	0.88	0.58	0.70	0.45	1.60	0.88	1.05	0.00	0.13	1.62	0.67
CAST1	0.61	0.73	0.86	0.90	0.56	0.60	1.24	2.47	0.60	0.54	1.07	0.58	0.78	0.62	1.13	0.60	0.86
CAST2	0.60	0.59	1.56	0.95	0.16	0.51	1.04	1.27	0.70	0.91	0.60	1.32	1.16	0.61	1.88	0.60	1.49
CAT	0.71	1.20	1.23	1.00	0.71	1.19	0.82	0.55	1.13	0.79	1.25	1.28	0.63	1.10	1.22	0.76	1.22
VAL	0.80	0.85	0.96	0.87	0.39	1.01	0.57	0.83	0.59	1.05	0.55	0.47	0.91	1.42	0.78	1.14	0.57
EXT	0.64	0.80	0.21	0.23	0.00	0.72	0.93	0.41	1.07	0.53	1.25	0.18	1.29	0.44	8.56	1.19	0.36
GAL	0.71	1.70	0.51	0.71	0.53	0.42	0.79	0.82	0.64	0.53	0.84	1.13	0.62	0.00	0.59	2.06	0.13
MAD	0.94	0.86	1.22	1.16	0.83	1.49	0.88	0.98	1.16	0.94	0.80	1.19	1.53	1.01	1.55	0.82	0.63
MUR	0.67	0.49	1.34	0.56	0.84	1.19	0.90	1.53	0.62	0.96	0.90	0.77	0.88	1.13	0.29	0.39	0.17
NAV	0.80	0.88	1.19	0.73	1.05	1.67	1.30	0.12	0.98	0.66	0.49	1.28	0.85	1.11	1.03	0.84	1.83
BAS	1.29	0.70	1.17	1.15	1.09	1.08	0.96	0.71	0.79	0.97	0.50	0.54	0.75	5.03	0.78	1.21	0.94
RIO	0.53	0.95	0.60	0.36	0.42	1.26	1.43	1.05	0.52	1.06	0.33	0.89	0.63	0.00	0.94	1.00	1.26

Source: Author elaboration

Table 9. Coefficient Ratio (2021-2020).

O\D	AND	ARA	AST	BAL	CAN	CANT	CAST1	CAST2	CAT	VAL	EXT	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	BAS	RIO
AND	0.99	0.75	2.83	1.10	1.35	1.25	1.04	1.37	1.05	1.66	1.11	1.50	1.07	1.40	0.80	1.58	/
ARA	1.03	0.93	0.99	2.79	2.78	0.91	0.92	0.61	1.14	0.97	0.48	0.85	0.97	1.76	0.96	0.99	0.93
AST	1.83	2.07	1.00	2.16	4.17	1.88	1.02	0.47	1.13	1.86	1.99	1.25	1.46	0.70	4.69	0.92	0.22
BAL	0.91	0.30	0.42	0.80	0.95	0.39	0.70	1.12	0.70	1.01	0.34	0.57	1.41	1.28	1.43	5.78	0.00
CAN	1.11	5.91	19.58	1.07	1.08	1.55	1.41	2.10	1.75	2.12	0.49	1.14	1.57	3.00	0.92	1.23	0.00
CANT	1.11	1.24	0.88	1.68	1.29	1.10	0.98	1.17	0.87	1.22	0.98	0.94	0.98	/	13.06	0.60	1.84
CAST1	1.32	0.63	1.06	1.34	0.69	1.06	0.95	0.98	1.59	1.59	0.69	1.65	1.39	1.36	0.57	1.51	0.98
CAST2	1.49	1.81	1.27	0.86	4.33	1.44	1.04	0.98	1.98	0.92	1.95	1.30	0.61	1.41	1.55	1.58	0.09
CAT	1.36	1.08	0.97	0.92	1.67	0.69	1.16	0.96	0.87	1.42	0.79	0.69	1.25	2.35	0.81	2.07	1.07
VAL	1.18	1.00	0.91	0.85	2.76	0.68	0.64	0.94	2.07	0.95	1.67	1.57	0.96	0.61	0.54	1.58	0.71
EXT	1.37	3.03	3.54	9.01	/	3.14	1.77	1.76	0.91	0.82	0.80	13.82	0.87	0.59	0.52	1.70	2.68
GAL	1.30	0.16	1.45	1.03	1.33	2.74	0.87	1.04	0.99	0.96	1.68	0.89	1.50	/	0.98	0.59	7.28
MAD	0.96	0.83	1.02	0.68	1.15	0.66	1.18	1.08	1.13	1.04	1.38	0.84	0.89	0.77	0.64	0.99	1.19
MUR	1.06	2.51	0.89	1.98	2.07	1.23	0.80	0.69	1.43	0.96	0.52	1.21	1.67	0.97	4.50	1.51	0.00
NAV	0.93	0.84	0.60	1.04	0.86	0.51	1.13	3.04	1.27	1.12	1.97	1.23	1.08	8.33	1.35	1.37	0.14
BAS	1.12	0.97	0.82	1.09	0.90	1.14	1.03	2.47	1.13	1.14	3.33	1.87	1.76	0.32	0.85	0.89	1.45
RIO	1.49	1.34	1.70	1.64	1.49	0.66	0.66	0.46	1.54	0.89	4.45	1.83	1.20	/	1.43	0.91	0.90

Source: Author elaboration

Looking at domestic tourism within regions, there is a coefficient greater than one in all regions, while in other (not all), this ratio is lower (Tables 5,6 and 7, respectively). This suggests that residents of the regions, influenced by COVID-19 restrictions, preferred to travel within their region of residence rather than move to different regions. However, in contrast to the concentration on the main diagonal, there are some cases.

In fact, in the matrix of relationships between coefficients, it is possible to identify a ratio of 2.5 (Table 8) caused by residents of Castile and León (the largest Spanish autonomous community) who have traveled to the Castilla-La Mancha region. This could be explained by geographical reasons since the two regions are neighboring and it is easily possible to travel by car.

Looking at the attraction coefficients for the year 2021, what often emerges is that the coefficient tends to return to pre-2020 levels. Looking at the attraction coefficients of the Cantabria region for residents in Navarra, we find coefficients of 1.04 (2019), 1.73 (2020), and 0.88 (2021). In addition to these coefficients, others seem to approach their original values after 2020, which could mean a return to travel habits even though 2021 is still too immature a year to talk about post-pandemic. Indeed, the reasons for these two regions presenting high attraction coefficients are not clear.

Finally, what emerges from the results is certainly a trend for residents to travel within their region, but there doesn't seem to be a great tendency to travel to nearby areas. The significance of domestic tourism has been acknowledged considering the pandemic, leading some regions to prioritize national tourism by temporarily suspending international promotion efforts and emphasizing the concept of high-quality tourism without overcrowding. Among these regions are Asturias, Galicia, Cantabria, and the Basque Country, all territories of the so-called "Green Spain" circuit that extends along the northern coast of Spain and is loved for the nature that constitutes one of its main resources.

5. Discussion, conclusions, and future implications

Today, more than ever, the importance of domestic tourism has grown exponentially. The pandemic crisis has trained international travel, and as an immediate consequence, there has been a substantial drop in tourist flows. During the most restrictive periods of the pandemic situation, travel was not even allowed domestically, borders were closed for months, and all this led to a new way of thinking about tourism. Proximity tourism was therefore a key turning point for the recovery of the tourism sector: the recovery of regional and domestic travel allowed for a limited recovery of tourism in general in 2019-2020-2021.

The work conducted explained the situation in Spain in terms of proximity tourism, also considering how the global crisis has affected not only the tourism sector but all economic, social, and political sectors. Spain was one of the European countries hardest hit by the crisis and the Spanish tourism market, which has always been recognized as internationally renowned, suffered substantial losses.

The use of the O/D matrix has demonstrated to be a valuable tool for analyzing domestic tourist flows within Spain. While international demand has received more attention in research, the study of domestic demand has been relatively overlooked. Therefore, the authors believe that this methodology could be applied in various countries to enable comparisons of proximity tourism within Europe and worldwide. The fundamental concept remains the same; only the geopolitical structure of the country's changes, which does not limit the implementation of this methodology. In this context, the contribution of this study is limited to the pandemic years. The primary objective of the authors was to provide an overview of internal flows, focusing on understanding changes in domestic demand and the impact of COVID-19 on travel patterns.

Another point to consider is the possibility of expanding the methodology by proposing contiguity matrices or matrices of distances from the centroids that can capture the aspect of geographic distance, which is not sufficiently considered in this study. Future lines of research will indeed be oriented towards considering the distance between regions as a significant variable in explaining attraction coefficients, and to do so, the methodologies could be useful.

The study's findings could potentially support policymakers' decisions, with a general perspective of enhancing destination experiences, promoting local tourism, and supporting local accommodations. The utilization of the proximity concept during lockdowns has a dual added value: on one hand, there is a community interest in fostering domestic tourism during challenging and crisis-ridden times like the COVID-19 pandemic; on the other hand, the use of this methodology could benefit domestic tourism campaigns, territorial marketing, and tourism networks.

Another aspect that could be further explored relates to the findings of the study regarding the need to improve connectivity between regions for better tourist flow utilization. In this regard, understanding the infrastructure of countries and assessing their strengths and weaknesses could facilitate internal policies and enhance tourist flows.

Conflict of interest

None.

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Academic Research Paper

A regenerative tourism approach for the development of marginalised areas. Insights from two best practices in Southern Italy.

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Abstract: In recent years, travel habits, needs and desires have been gradually changing and influencing both demand and supply in the tourism industry. Macro-phenomena like the pandemic, the climate change with consequent environmental issues, and the digital turn have been introducing new trends and directions. In this view, the need of addressing tourism towards new itineraries is proving crucial for activating processes of regenerative tourism, which acts as a transformational approach and aims to identify the potential of places to create net positive effects. The focus of the paper is on marginalised areas, specifically on areas with low population density, distant from the main hotspots and endowed with significant environmental assets and cultural heritage. The paper chooses to employ the concept of regenerative tourism for investigating the conditions that foster and sustain the development of these communities. To this aim, the analysis of two Italian best practices is meant to provide a new approach to brand-identity, tourism and local industry in marginalised areas. The case of "Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi" ("Widespread Museum of the 5 Senses") identifies new itineraries and builds new economies in a village in Sicily through the reconnection of the local community with its land. The case of "Sea Working Brindisi" reevaluates a marginalised area as a destination for nomad workers and works for the activation of innovative economies in the South of Italy. The analysis conducted will be based on online material (i.e. website, social media, journal articles) and literature review (when available). Based on this material, the paper will analyse the two cases along the value chain *ecosystem-intuition-design-action-dissemination*. The value chain will help identify the connection of each practice to the territory and to the local community as well as their potential to enhance the tourist attractiveness of the area. The analysis of the two successful cases, explored through the lens of regenerative tourism, has the merit to define the connection between regenerative tourism and the development of marginalised communities, providing directions to realise successful practices in other areas. The acknowledgment of the two cases as contemporary forms of tourism will help foster further practices and outline incentives that enhance tailored projects based on the uniqueness of each place.

Keywords: *regenerative tourism; community resilience; community empowerment; local entrepreneurship; marginalised communities*

JEL Codes: O18; O35; Z32

1. Introduction

Sustainability, creativity, co-creation, immersive experiences are some of the recurring terms in the field of tourism. Meanwhile, tourism practices are evolving fast and in connection with contemporary events which are marked by fast variables (e.g. economic crisis) and slow change variables (e.g. climate change or economic migrations) (Lew, 2013). In this context, new approaches of research in the field and in tourism practices have emerged (Davoudi, 2012), and all encompass a vision that goes beyond the sustainable approach. This paper aims to contribute to the innovation in the field through the analysis of a contemporary model of tourism that promotes the development of marginalised areas, whose potential represents a tool for strengthening the national strategy on tourism and improving their recovery and resilience through collective policy actions (Ottomano Palmisano et al., 2022). To this aim, two case studies were selected in order to present the conditions for the relationship between regenerative tourism and the development of marginalised communities to originate and thrive. The case studies are located in Southern Italy, where inner areas have remarkable and extensive development potential tied to their environmental, economic, and social capital (Barca et al., 2014). The paper adopts a theoretical framework for the exploration, that is regenerative tourism, a recent concept that proves useful to frame the cases. The concept of regenerative tourism was chosen as a framework because it describes practices rather than providing labels. As such, it helps identify and extract key elements and features of the cases in order to promote their replicability, yet taking into account their distinctiveness. To build on the theoretical framework, the paper employs an analytical approach for the analysis of the cases, that is the value chain applied to the creative sector (Santagata, 2009). Findings will resume and develop the conditions for tourism to create regenerative processes in marginalised communities, and will act as a ground for forthcoming practices. The cases will prove that a recovered sense of the identity of places in inner areas creates local empowerment and foster new forms of entrepreneurship, acting as a regenerative force for communities. Based on the findings, the paper will give directions and guidelines for the development of regenerative tourism in marginalised areas.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 From sustainable development to regenerative tourism

The sustainable development paradigm, promoted by the United Nations-led sustainable development agenda, opens the path to various approaches, theorisations and labels. In the tourism sector, sustainable development is commonly read as sustainable tourism, a concept that has been evolving over time since 1988, when the World Tourism Organization offered the first definition: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (Sustainable development | UNWTO, n.d.).

The concept of sustainable tourism is broad. For this reason, new terms and practices have been originating over time, and other definitions have been evolving and further developing the concept of sustainable tourism. The aim of the paper is to investigate the beneficial relation between regenerative tourism and the development of marginalised areas, to find which are the conditions that foster and sustain the relationship. The analysis stands within the broader concept of sustainable tourism, however, it focuses on one branch, that is regenerative tourism. The following part will explain the determination of regenerative tourism as the most appropriate theoretical framework for the analysis of the conditions that generate the social, cultural and economic development.

Regenerative tourism will be here identified as a counterpart of another branch of sustainable tourism, which may seem appropriate for the present analysis, yet carries significant limitations: creative tourism. The concept of creative tourism was first defined by Richards & Raymond as a ‘‘tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken’’ (2000, p.4). Later, the concept was defined by UNESCO as "travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture" (UNESCO, 2006, p.3). Studies have been expanding on the topic, hence following two paths: on the one hand, on the nature of alternative tourism that offers visitors the opportunity to self-develop through participation in creative activities (workshops, courses) that are typical of the place where they are undertaken (Marques & Richards, 2014; Richards, 2017; Bieliková & Palenčíková, 2021). On the other hand, they have been relying on the opportunity to see creative tourism as an extension of cultural tourism that engages local communities to provide interactive, immersive and experiential activities for tourists (Tan et al., 2013; Lee, 2015; Richards, 2020; Amaral & Rodrigues, 2020; Roque, 2022).

Regenerative tourism, as well as creative tourism, has been emerging as a branch of sustainable tourism. However, the two concepts present some significant differences. The term has appeared in discourses around tourism as a niche subject pioneered by three non-Indigenous practitioner groups based in the UK, USA and Chile (Dwyer, 2018; Mang & Reed, 2012; Pollock, 2012; Teruel, 2018), aiming to improve and transform social-ecological systems where tourism practices occur (Hes & Coenen, 2018). Studies on regenerative tourism include (Mang & Haggard, 2016) regenerative agriculture (Regenerative Travel(b), 2020) and regenerative economies (Lovins, 2020; Raworth, 2017), climate change, urbanisation, justice and inequality (Caniglia et al., 2020). Beyond pure conceptualisations of the term, the transformative potential of the regenerative paradigm has been investigated by Bellato et al., (2022). According to them, the concept of regenerative tourism was initially born from practice and then implemented at local or regional levels. Also, two international alliances have emerged: The Global Initiative for Regenerative Tourism was established in Latin America in 2015 (Araneda, 2019), while The Regenerative Travel Alliance was initiated in 2019 (Regenerative Travel, 2020). As opposed to creative tourism, regenerative tourism originated from practice, hence a universal definition is yet to be adopted. Recently, Bellato et al. (2022) have sought to identify the attributes, in order to better define the concept:

> Regenerative tourism is a transformational approach that aims to fulfill the potential of tourism places to flourish and create net positive effects through increasing the regenerative capacity of human societies and ecosystems. Derived from the ecological worldview, it weaves Indigenous and Western science perspectives and knowledge. Tourism systems are regarded as inseparable from nature and obligated to respect Earth's principles and laws. In addition, regenerative tourism approaches evolve and vary across places over the long term, thereby harmonizing practices with the regeneration of nested living systems (p.9).

Moreover, some authors define regenerative tourism as opposed to sustainable tourism. In brief, "the sustainable tourism regime primarily regards tourism as an industry and tends to prioritise top-down, standardised and compartmentalised interventions. In contrast, regenerative tourism approaches reflect and are co-created within place contexts. Regenerative tourism aligns with living systems to work at local levels and prioritises equitable and inclusive co-creation in multiple domains and harmony with economic development. While both approaches promote the wellbeing of future generations, sustainable tourism strives to minimise social-ecological damage. In contrast, regenerative tourism seeks to create net positive social-ecological systems effects" (p. 10). As such, its deep interconnection with community resilience becomes evident. Indeed, the resilience planning approach is gradually substituting the more established sustainable development paradigm. In fact, while sustainability actions are limited to maintaining resources above a safe level in order to mitigate or prevent change, a resilience planning approach allows industries and communities to adapt to change by building capacity to return to a desired and previously existing state, requiring different modes of response according to the rate of change (Lew, 2013). As one of the most diffused social practices, tourism is now encompassed within community resilience research. More specifically, community resilience applies to regenerative tourism practices that by definition aim to increase the regenerative capacity of local communities and ecosystems through fulfilling the potential of tourist destinations to thrive and create net effects (Bellato et al., 2022).

In this view, even though both the concepts of creative and regenerative tourism derive from sustainable tourism yet evolving and developing it, the former is formulated on a more theoretical basis, while the latter originate from practice. Moreover, while the former was first formulated in 2000 by Richards & Raymond and later rephrased on contemporary needs and practices, the latter was crafted and implemented for and within contemporary practices. Also, based on their attributes and definitions, the latter deepens, modernises and actualises the former, eventually turning into practice and concrete directions those labels which are typically associated with creative tourism, such as creativity, co-creation, interaction, participation.

2.2 Entrepreneurship defines new itineraries

In contemporary discourses on tourism, "co-production" and "co-creation" are recurring terms that involve the perceived needs of tourists within a mass tourism perception more than a true exchange with the local community (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Binkhorst, 2005; Prebensen et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2015; Rihova et al. 2018; Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019). This logic implies that tourists are the main actors of an industry replicating the mechanisms of manufacturing standardised production. On the other side, research has been focusing on the need to foster the offering of local products and activities, a practice which is commonly labeled as "tourism social entrepreneurship", a strategy that responds to the call for community-centric tourism development (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019), initiated in its preliminary form of social entrepreneurship by Dees, (1998) and recently employed by non-governmental organisations (Dahles et al., 2020). Tourism social entrepreneurship is intended as a new kind of tourism that capitalises on local resources, knowledge, skills, and social structures (Alvord et al., 2004), making changes in the tourism experience and in the life of host communities (Aquino, 2022). As well as for creative tourism, the label of tourism social entrepreneurship eventually delineates strict boundaries to an idea that proves low application. According to Jørgensen et al. (2021), the existing literature has established that many examples of tourism social entrepreneurship "exist in and for marginalized communities" (Aquino et al., 2018, p. 24), but a limited understanding of marginalised communities has been applied, and the focus has been mostly on the tourism social entrepreneurship in developing countries (i.e. Biddulph, 2018; Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2011; Laeis & Lemke, 2016; Porter et al., 2018; Sigala, 2016; Sloan et al., 2014; Stenvall et al., 2017). Moreover, studies do not make clear who the entrepreneur is, focusing on one actor rather than the community itself (Jørgensen et al., 2021). In this view, Jørgensen et al. analyse two cases of marginalised communities that use tourism as a means for collective action in Denmark, and ask for a more collective perspective on social entrepreneurship in the tourism field (p. 16). The insight of Jørgensen et al. is in fact needed to highlight the multifaceted nature of the employment of entrepreneurship and tourism when intertwined with the development of local communities. The definition must be collective since successful cases of entrepreneurship in marginalised areas differ widely and never lead to a model.

Labels like "tourism social entrepreneurship" represent a self-contradiction in a way that narrows the boundaries of a phenomenon that is supposed to extract the unique values and hallmarks of an area, with the close involvement of its community. Entrepreneurship as a tool to revalue marginalised areas should consider the involvement of local communities as a first step towards the rediscovery of local uniqueness. In ancient times and middle ages traveling was intended as a deep and extended activity that put voyagers in direct contact with local habits, people, commerce and products (e.g. Odysseus' journey in literature, pilgrimage in traditional practices). Later, the "Grand Tour" paved the way for the emergence of a widespread phenomenon characterizing contemporary mobility: mass tourism. The latter refers to the movement of a large number of people towards popular holiday destinations. This phenomenon goes together with mass consumption and with the use of standardized tourist packages (Poon, 1993). Then, in the second half of the twentieth century, the increase of spending power and personal mobility, the improvement of public transport and infrastructures, and the growing globalisation and internationalisation of societies led to a substantial increase of leisure travel (Bramwell, 2004). Holidays started to be considered as recreational experiences in leisure resorts. Initially, tourist flows came from industrial regions to the seaside destinations in France and UK and to winter resorts in the Alps, but in the post-war period many coastal areas in Spain and Italy have developed tourist infrastructures, followed by other Southern European countries. The range of mass tourism destinations has increased over the years, including North Africa and Middle-Eastern countries. In the last decades, the development of accessible air transport and charter flights have contributed to popularising long-haul destinations, such as Indonesia, Thailand, Maldives, and so on (Naumov & Green, 2015). A further push to mass tourism practices has been favored by the implementation of online reservation systems that made the travellers increasingly autonomous in organising their trips. The rapid development of mass tourism, on the one hand, has favored greater economic accessibility of travel, job creation and increased income as well as foreign exchange earnings. On the other hand, it has brought to the loss of identity and of cultural specificity, and to the overexploitation of natural and cultural resources (Page, 2012; Poon, 1993). These negative impacts have constituted the breeding ground for the emergence of alternative and more sustainable forms of tourism. In this sense, some practices of contemporary tourism are seeking to reestablish a true connection between tourists and the communities. In this view, the concept of regenerative tourism helps identify a sustainable form of tourism that is beyond mass tourism since it does not drain resources and territories, but rather creates net positive effects through increasing the regenerative capacity of human societies and ecosystems (Bellato et al., 2022). Regeneration occurs with transformation, and originates as a bottom-up process, it prioritises inclusive co-creation in multiple domains and in harmony with economic development. Even though regenerative tourism does not define entrepreneurship in detail, it provides a wider and more useful approach to the development of entrepreneurship in connection with tourism in marginalised areas. In this context, practices of valorisation of cultural heritage and preservation of local culture through the development of new forms of entrepreneurship have been analysed. One example based on the enhancement of entrepreneurship in marginal areas is the valorisation of Cultural Routes, as in the case of the via Francigena, where the impact generated by the Routes prove relevant from an economic point of view, but also on a cultural, social and environmental level. Moreover, the analysis of the impacts generated by the route shows a direct correlation between its development and the enhancement of local enterprises (Splendiani et al., 2022).

As the cases analysed in this paper will try to prove, the concept of regenerative tourism in this sort of practices lies in the creation of a circular economy that emerges as a bottom-up process, to the valorisation of local products and the development of local infrastructures and services both for tourists and citizens. In the two cases, the harmonisation of tourism with the community through the creation of new forms of local entrepreneurship proves to be a tool for the regeneration of inner and neglected lands, products and communities.

3. Methodology

Based on the theoretical framework, the paper chooses to employ the concept of regenerative tourism for investigating the conditions that foster and sustain the development of marginalised communities. The concept is employed as a series of practices that serve as a theoretical framework for the analysis of two best practices, the "Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi" ("Widespread Museum of the 5 Senses") in Sciacca, Sicily, and the "Sea Working Brindisi" project in Brindisi, Puglia. These cases were selected because they are located in Southern Italy, a country where the North-South divide has been lasting since country unification because of asymmetries in productive performance (e.g., per capita GDP) (Daniele and Malanima, 2014; Felice, 2019; Iuzzolino et al., 2011). Since the 70s, Italy has been divided into three Italies: the industrialised North, the few industrial districts in the South (medium enterprises operating in isolated industrial districts), and the rest of the Mezzogiorno (Bagnasco, 1977). Since then, events like the stagflation, the progressive structural change from manufacturing to service sectors, and the reductions in public investment for the South from 13% to 8% of the Italian GDP (Daniele & Malanima, 2011) totally halted the development of the South. This was the scenario before the Great Recession of 2007–2008 (Lagravinese, 2015; Petraglia, 2019) and the pandemic crisis (Dosi, Fanti et al., 2020), which further deepened the dilemma of the North-South gap in Italy. Moreover, Southern Italy has been experiencing significant variations as a destination for tourism. According to Mileti et al. (2022), tourist knowledge of Italian regions focuses mainly on Sicily, Tuscany (in the North), and Sardinia. In general, the interest of tourists addresses few, mostly fixed centers. The rate of tourism in Campania, for instance, is concentrated around specific sites such as Pompei, Vesuvius and Capri, yet other parts of the region are little explored. On one side, tourism in Southern Italy has generated economic returns, on the other the growth of tourist infrastructure, such as coastal resorts, has been the subject of uncontrolled planning and development (Inskeep, 1991). Moreover, as mentioned, the distribution of tourism appears rather unbalanced towards a few regions and areas, mostly urban areas or heritage sites.

In this context, we chose to analyse two best practices that, though in different ways, aim to counter these tendencies by broadening the opportunities of cooperation between tourists and the local communities, and enhance the attractiveness and sustainable development of two different areas. The cases of "Museo Diffuso dei Cinque Sensi" in Sciacca and "Sea Working Brindisi" belong to two different regions, Sicily and Puglia. According to the data Mileti et al. (2022) report in their study, Sicily has reached a consistent interest in tourists (54% of the interviewee would choose Sicily as a destination), while Puglia has less recognition (18% of the interviewee would choose Puglia). Even though located in Sicily, Sciacca, the city involved in the first case, has a small population (according to Istat, 39.000 in December 2022) and does not represent a typical tourist destination in Italy, yet presents the features of marginalised areas (Casalini, 2022). On the other hand, the city of Brindisi has a larger population (according to Istat, 87.773 in December 2022), yet it does not represent a typical tourist destination.

The analysis conducted will be based on online material (i.e., official website, official social media pages, the main online press news) and on literature review when available. Although conscious of web-based material's limited reliability, we decided to base our research on the findings that emerged from a variety of online materials for two main reasons. On the one hand, the projects' websites and social media pages allowed us to have an up-to-date idea of the initiatives seen through their own lens, deepening the vision that the projects themselves want to transmit. On the other hand, we decided to use newspaper articles to explore the external perception of the project from multiple sources. Looking for newspaper articles dealing with the two projects has also allowed us to become aware of its degree of dissemination. By combining together the findings from all web-based material used, we were able to build our own value-oriented vision on the two projects. Indeed, the paper will analyse the two cases along the value chain *ecosystem-intuition-design-action-dissemination*, following Santagata's (2009) theorisation of the creation of value in the creative industry.

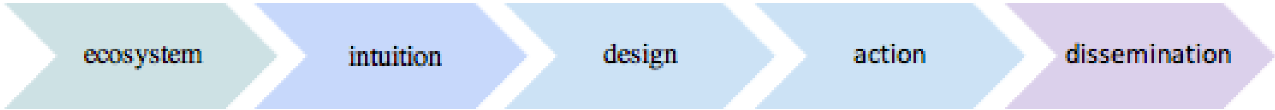

Figure 1 - The value chain *ecosystem-intuition-design-action-dissemination*, built on Santagata's (2009) theorisation of the creation of value in the creative industry. *Source: authors' figure.*

In this case, the value chain will allow us to identify the strong connection of the practices to their territory and local community and, at the same time, its potential to enhance the tourist attractiveness of the destination. The paper will then provide some useful insights that emerge from the analysis and that could be applied to other creative contexts and other destinations with similar features. To this aim, some guidelines will be eventually provided to practitioners and policy makers to develop community-based policies, tailored projects and regenerative tourism practices.

When analysed together, relying on the same theoretical framework and adopting the same value chain, these two case studies constitute a significant example of how very different projects and experiences sharing an interest in the development and regeneration of a community and a territory can open the path for further replications of the value chain in other projects. Indeed, the value chain proposed can be applied to a variety of experiences that, thanks to the combination of a favorable ecosystem, a peculiar intuition, a functional design and action, and a positive dissemination, could be potential value generators.

4. Case studies and empirical findings

4.1. A diffused experience of tourism in Sciacca

The construction of the "Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi" (trad. "Widespread Museum of the 5 Senses") in Sciacca, Sicily, tells the story of an *ecosystem* that is specific to inner areas in Southern Italy: a neglected land, a marginal area of Sicily with a low percentage of tourism (Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi, n.d.). An area that was eventually rehabilitated by its community through an operational cooperation combining many people: different in age, profession, way of thinking and living, working for the future of their land, brought together by the awareness of the great value of the territory, products and traditions making their land unique.

Today, the community works as a cooperative, but the *intuition* began in February 2019 when all the representatives of the "Sciacca produ(A)ttiva" sat around a table, from residents to restaurant owners, from commercial activity managers to craftsmen, from potters to accommodation business managers, from event organizers to cultural operators, from tour guides to museum managers. The purpose was to deal with the emergency of the historic center which in Sciacca, as in many other Italian villages and cities, has been drained of traditional commercial, economic, social and human presence. The entrepreneurs around the table had to tell the element that characterises Sciacca and identifies it among all other cities. Eventually, it became clear that Sciacca has so many identities that it was certainly not possible to choose one in particular.

At that precise moment a project aimed at tourists, residents, entrepreneurs and the entire hinterland of Sciacca was being *designed*: the idea consisted of an open-air museum, displaying all and conceived for all. A project that was meant to enhance Sciacca, its traditions, its historic center, its territory, and to become the brand identity of the city. A magical place, where emotions are perceived with the five senses and where the five entrance doors of the city are transformed into entrance doors to the diffused museum, a museum of experiences, a sensory museum. The streets become the corridors of the museum, the squares become the exhibition halls, the monuments are the attractions, and the shops, housing facilities and restaurants complete the picture of sensory experiences. And Sciacca retrieves its community.

In March 2019, the *action* began, and the concept of the museum was presented to the city through the description of about two months of work. The concept was ready, and the museum as well, a museum that has always been there for all to see, yet still hidden to be perceived by everybody. Two weeks after the presentation, the vision of a community that takes action and focuses on a new idea of tourism for the sustainable development of its territory, and the mission of a city that aims to become a destination were illustrated at TravelExpo in Sicily, being a huge success. From that moment, the project started to be identified as best practice. On 18 April 2019 the association "Ecomuseo dei 5 Sensi" (trad. "Ecomuseo of the 5 Senses") was established in Sciacca, social media and the website started to share the project, and on May 18, the synergy of all the main characters of the Diffused Museum was tested during the Night of the Museums, an occasion to work on the five senses, involving residents and tourists. It was an evening dedicated to culture and sensory experiences, which turned out to be a huge success with the public who will repeatedly ask to repeat it.

Meanwhile, the *dissemination* began and a collaboration between the Museum and the institutions was signed with two important protocols, one with the Municipality of Sciacca and one with the Regional Tourist Office of Agrigento, and the President of the Sicily Region declared appreciation for the work done in Sciacca. The approval at the local and regional level eventually materialised with the sponsorships received from the Municipality of Sciacca, the Libero Consortium of Agrigento, the Regional Tourism Department and the Sicilian Regional Assembly. During summer, the Museum enriched the quality and quantity of experiences already presented in March, proposing a package of offers related to painting, the processing of Coral, the modeling of Ceramics and Papier-mâché. The 2019/2020 school year began, an opportunity for the Museum to be launched in educational institutions through a project aimed at constructing identity narratives, with the goal to push young people to narrate their land and hallmarks, hence exploiting the imagination and creativity of children and teenagers. Thus originated, over time, the need to support the association with an operating structure that was able to do business, seek funds, support initiatives, interact with investors, and promote with professionalism and competence Sciacca in the world. Therefore, they created the Identity and Beauty Cooperative in January 2020, following the will of an entire community that once again intended to network and focus on new tools and challenges. Today, the Cooperative is made of artisans, traders, accommodation facilities, restaurants, cultural associations, educational and cultural institutions and local boards of residents. Viviana Rizzuto, President and founder, is the community manager, a contemporary role that is extremely useful in the process of valorisation of territories, alongside local administrations. The Cooperative is then managed by a board of directors and a management board. The role of Viviana and the Cooperative is to keep involving the community, the local institutions and entrepreneurs in a process of cooperation and connection for a continuum of ideas, connections and offering of experiences for voyagers (Casalini, 2022). The process of dissemination has been also realised through social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) and the action of Viviana Rizzuto, who actively engages the community on social media. From the analysis of social media channels, it emerges that the communication is mostly in Italian, hence preventing foreign tourism to include the museum within their itineraries. In general, it would prove interesting to assess the actual increase of tourism in the area, but the general upheaval in tourism trends generated by COVID-19 makes it difficult to measure it.

The analysis of the case on the value chain helps assess the development of the "Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi" as an effort made by its community to keep tourism sustainable through a stable focus on the community needs, on the awareness of the territory's values, and on the valorisation of local traditions for attracting voyagers and temporary citizens. A museum without walls was conceived in order to materialise something that was already there, and to create a brand identity for the community and the passengers. The effort created strong connections, social cohesion and an integrated range of services and activities that ended up increasing the value of the overall supply. Moreover, a certain level of tourist carrying capacity has been defined and monitored, in order to preserve the territory with its people and generate emotions that go beyond what we understand as modern tourism. In Sciacca, the modern concept of tourism, the massification and commodification, are left behind and replaced with a collective vision that works to create a welcoming, beautiful, usable place for everyone, travelers and residents.

The weakness of the museum stands in the last part of the value chain, that concerns the dissemination. The reason is twofold: on one side, the project is recent hence more developed on the first part of the value chain; on the other side, the tools for communicating a brand's new way of experiencing tourism may suffer from the lack of a traditional and standardised model for building the communication and the diffusion of the project. Future research and forthcoming practices may deepen and develop this part of the chain.

For now, the impact of the Museum can only be supposed for three main reasons. First, regional and provincial data provided at a national (Istat) and regional level (Osservatorio Turistico Regione Sicilia, 2023) have not been updated for the years following the pandemic. The second reason is that the success of a project based on the development of tourism starting in 2020 will need an assessment of tourism flow that does not cover the first years following the pandemic. In this sense, a proper assessment will need to be constructed starting from 2023. The third reason is that both national and regional data consider indicators which need to be updated according to the latest research in the field of sustainable tourism, matching the success of emerging practices in tourism with new criteria measuring economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts (Splendiani et al., 2022).

4.2. A future for the repopulation of neglected areas in Brindisi

A unique seaside city, whose two-thousand-year history is closely linked to its port, the city of Brindisi is home to "Sea Working Brindisi" (Sea Brindisi, n.d.), a project launched by Emma Taveri, Councilor for Tourism of the Municipality of Brindisi, during the pandemic to reposition a marginal area as a destination for nomad workers and for the relocation of companies in the South of Italy. The *ecosystem* in which the project takes place is hence a buzzing port city, also recognised as a Monument of Hospitality and Peace by Unesco and constitutes a crossroads between the sea and the hinterland, soaked in different cultures.

The *intuition* behind this project came to Emma Taveri, a passionate nomad who decided to return to Brindisi during the pandemic, with the objective of bringing a change to her homeland and of making her skills available to the city. For this reason, as an important recognition for her commitment, she received the title of Councilor for Tourism, Territorial Marketing and Creativity in the area where she was implementing her project, which was based on the new needs of the travelers and aimed at making Brindisi more and more a smart, adaptive and attractive destination for new travelers and holiday workers. Among others, the initiative is conceived and promoted by Destination Makers, a consultancy company specialising in destination marketing and management, with the support of a network that includes the Municipality of Brindisi and other institutional entities, businesses and the world of associations. The project aimed at reinforcing the city's identity and at increasing its appeal as a "south working" destination.

As regards the *design*, the project started as a contest named "Sea Working, Win an office on the sea" that gave one person the opportunity to live and work for ten days, from 3 to 13 October 2020, on a sailboat moored in the port and experience recreational and cultural experiences that include kitesurfing courses, tastings and guided tours. Massimiliano Frattoloni, a 26-year-old computer consultant from Lombardia region, was the winner of the contest and was selected out of 764 applications, both from Italy and from foreign countries (including overseas ones). While participating in the programme, he got the chance to immerse in the Brindisi culture, having various experiences outside working hours aimed at increasing productivity and quality of life of the city, such as yoga, horseback riding, tasting of typical products and experiences related to the sea such as surfing, kite surfing or sailing trips. This is because "Sea Working Brindisi" implies a deep connection with the place people work from. The sea worker can enter a territory from which one has always left, trying to imagine a new future together with the local community where one can decide to return and stay (Brindisi Report, 2020).

Following the initial contest, the project consists in the possibility to apply to the programme through a specific section of the project website (Sea Brindisi, n.d.). Once one gets accepted, he or she receives the "Sea Work & Live" card to get a number of benefits, e.g., special discount in restaurants, gyms, shopping centers, sport courses, and free workspaces. There are three main criteria for selection: the travelers/workers must reside outside the Puglia region, they must be 18 or above and they must be available to move to Brindisi (including its province) for at least one month. The contest, indeed, is part of a larger project that aims to develop smart working in the area. The project captures the city's desire to open up to smart workers and, more precisely, to "south workers". The *action* of the project consists indeed in the involvement of people who are able to work remotely and wish to extend their holidays beyond the usual summer holidays, settling down for a few weeks in areas where the relationship between cost and quality of life is more favorable than in the big cities of the center-north. Smart working tools are thus developed in the area, involving institutions and companies in the co-design of a series of incentives and additional services (such as tax relief, dedicated packages and discounts, creation of co-working hubs) to potential users. In May 2022 Brindisi also participated in the Airbnb call "Live and Work Anywhere" dedicated to smart working destinations, reaching a positive outcome thanks to this project. The objective of the call was to select a small group of smart working destinations at an international level, which Airbnb will promote to travelers from all over the world through a free promotion campaign and the improvement of local services. Through this project, Brindisi became recognised as one of the two Italian Airbnb's top destinations to work remotely (L'Ora di Brindisi, 2022).

The *dissemination* of the project occurred through the main local and national press and through the main social media platforms. All these tools could be further exploited to foster the link with local entrepreneurship, which is crucial and unavoidable, and to seasonally adjust tourism and tourists' presence in the South. The presence of smart workers should in fact have positive implications on the territory because, in addition to generating a direct economic induced, it would trigger a virtuous process of service innovation and bring flows of new residents, even permanent ones in the future, and encourage the return of the "natives" that had previously left for work reasons. It is a potentially beneficial evolution that seeks to ride rather than undergo the social and cultural changes - as well as labor regulations - imposed by Covid 19 (Manager Italia, 2020). The "Sea Working" project is also paving the way for a restored positive exchange between the local population and voyagers, encouraging the latter to stay longer in a certain place, not necessarily in the high season, and giving them the opportunity to work from there.

To sum up, the project aims to build a new culture of hospitality in the city of Brindisi, and to propose it as a privileged destination for digital nomads and for people who travel in "bleisure" mode (i.e. both for vacation and for work), while enhancing structures and tourist services with a view to seasonal adjustment and thus bring new life to the territory. In such a way, the melting cultures deriving from this project would bring a renewed sense of authenticity to the city, also contributing to re-shape its identity, thus enhancing its attractiveness and competitiveness throughout the years and not just in the high season. The main weakness of the project is that no international press article was found about this project, and a few Italian national journals have mentioned it. Moreover, the Facebook page, though updated, does not count on a significant number of followers and interactivity. The Instagram page, instead, is not even active. These gaps highlight how the dissemination tools are not fully contributing to spreading the project inside and outside the area.

As regards the impact of the project on tourist flows in Brindisi, we can make some considerations based on the data collected through Agenzia Regionale del Turismo (Osservatorio di PugliaPromozione, 2022). The report highlights how the arrivals and presences to the province of Brindisi increased from 2019 to 2022 by 5% and 6%. There is no proof that this increase has been influenced by SeaBrindisi, but there is a certain chance that the latter has contributed to improve the city's reputation as a tourist destination and a livable place. It is also crucial to highlight that in 2022, in the whole Puglia region the number of employees grew by +10% compared to 2019, while the companies involved in the tourism sector increased by +6%. As regards the variation in the population living in Brindisi, it is too early to evaluate the impacts of this project, considering that the most updated data available are related to 2021, and show a decreasing trend (Tuttitalia.it, n.d.).

4.3 Regenerative tourism practices re-establish the identity of places and empower local communities

Some global macro-phenomena are influencing behavioral patterns and consumption habits of tourists, favoring the emergence of new kinds of tourist attractions, as opposed to mass tourism. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated a process, initiated some years before due to the environmental issue and climate change, of gradual shift towards more sustainable ways of traveling (Gössling et al., 2020; Pang et al., 2013; Pencarelli, 2020). A renewed attention towards the preservation of the environment and of local cultures as well as the revaluation of rural areas and little hamlets is currently taking place. In many cases, however, this shift towards eco-friendly destinations, and the attention towards local communities, is mostly theoretical or put in practice as a niche phenomenon and does not bring any actual benefit to the destination (Bâc, 2014). However, the two best practices analysed demonstrate that some steps forward are being done, even from a practical point of view, in line with the emergence of regenerative tourism literature in the last few years.

The analysis of the two experiences, both taking place in marginalised areas, is framed within a regenerative tourism approach. One of the main features emerging from the analysis is the will of both cases to create a positive impact on the places through the engagement of the local community. This urgency had been already identified by Owen (2007a; 2007b), while describing regenerative tourism. Applying it to ecotourism facilities, the architecture scholar moved from the exclusive focus of ecotourism facilities in the external and natural environment to highlight the need to reinforce the image and the identity of a place also through human cultural artifacts. The traditional ecotourism approach, as Owen states, misses the opportunity to actively engage with the place and to build a regenerative relationship with it. A regenerative tourism approach, instead, would create a positive impact, contributing to reconnect the human with nature and taking into consideration the socio-political dimension, contrarily to the sustainability discourse which is entirely focused on environmentalism. These considerations can be seen as the starting point for the re-establishment of the identity of a place through a major internal and external awareness that comes from regenerative tourism practices such as the experiences of Sciacca and Brindisi.

In the case of the "Museo dei Cinque Sensi" in Sciacca, the local population is involved in a variety of activities that aim to regenerate the area, to contribute to its sustainable development, and to build a stronger sense of community in the city through the creation of networks. Moreover, it aims to strengthen the citizens' sense of belonging to the same territory, history and culture. Once the local inhabitants become aware of the value of their city and of the need to valorise its multiple identities and meanings, Sciacca could indeed acquire a greater tourist attractiveness and reputation. Indeed, the widespread museum actually shapes the new brand identity of the city.

In the case of Brindisi, the "Sea Working" project aims to repopulate a marginalised area by attracting temporary citizens to work and live in the area. To do so, the project is activating a sustainable offer of services in the area, contributing to their regeneration. As a result, Brindisi has been recognised as one of the two Italian Airbnb's top destinations to work remotely.

In general, the identity of places is gradually losing ground, also due to the depopulation of villages which are not considered among the top mainstream destinations. The two projects analysed demonstrate how it is possible to turn the tide by simultaneously fostering community resilience and developing the tourism industry through regenerative tourism practices that see the involvement and empowerment of the local population. Supporting and involving the local community, in fact, is the only way to foster tourism that, in the future, would become synonymous with cultural growth, economic development and environmental protection (Davolio & Somoza, 2016). In other words, it is important to empower local communities through effective cooperation between tourists, local administrations and the hosting community. To sum up, both projects highlight the need to work on the re-establishment of the identity of marginalised areas working in synergy with the local community, local industries and institutions, in order to make them more attractive both for the local community and for tourists.

5. Limitations of the research, conclusions and guidelines for the development of tourism in marginalised communities

The analysis of the two cases proves that the development (i.e. the creation of infrastructure and services conceived for tourists, such as B&Bs) and enhancement (i.e. selling local products or fostering local services, such as restaurants or gyms, for welcoming nomads) of local entrepreneurship is the key to a new sense of traveling that creates a deeply-rooted connection between hosts and guests. As such, extra charges and high seasonality are replaced by a different economy for places, where tourism is not a draining and unbalanced force, but rather a transformative and enriching experience for the area. The starting point is represented by local actions of consolidation of communities and territories, led by single entrepreneurs and/or local administrations. The actions of consolidation aim at fostering exchanges, connections, circular economies and a sense of a common identity. The whole community must be resolute, self-confident, and visionary in order to invest in their territories, rediscover their traditional hallmarks, and valorise local products and handicraft to rebuild cultural heritage and local identity. Through the creation of a new identity to be communicated and the valorisation of the territory's activities supported by the action of every member of the community, the process of revitalisation of places can be intense and rooted, offering the opportunity for a deep exploration.

Through the analysis, features and tools for the establishment of a renovated form of tourism were identified. The cases of Sciacca and Brindisi do not aim to function as models, but rather to give insights and tools to work towards a more spread and shared redefinition of traveling that deeply and genuinely connects with local communities, fostering the regeneration of local economies. In recent years, travel habits, needs and desires have been gradually changing and influencing both demand and supply in the tourism industry. Macro-phenomena like the pandemic (Gössling et al., 2020), the climate change with consequent environmental issues (Pang et al., 2013), and the digital turn (Pencarelli, 2020) have been introducing new trends and directions. Accordingly, the need of addressing tourism towards new itineraries and specifically marginalised areas is becoming crucial for activating processes of regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2022), which acts as a transformational approach whose aim is to identify the potential of places to create net positive effects (Bellato et al., 2022). In this regard, the analysis of two best practices in the South of Italy highlighted the need to identify and fulfil the identity of destinations by entirely exploiting the potential of both tourists and local communities' expertise, experience, and local economy. The limitations of the analysis concern the scarcity of existing academic literature on the cases and the almost exclusive reliance on non-scientific journal articles. Moreover, due to the outbreak of the pandemic (especially in the case of Sciacca) and to the fact that the two projects are still in a pioneering phase, a primary analysis based on reliable data has not been developed yet. Thus, the regenerative impact of the projects is not based on empirical measurements and can only be deduced from a theoretical analysis. The table, based on the categories proposed by

Bellato et al. (2022) to build the concept of regenerative tourism (2022), provides a summary of the analysis through the lens of our empirical findings:

Table 1. The cases of Sciacca and Bridisi through the lens of regenerative tourism [based on Bellato et al.' categories building the concept (2022)].

Regenerative Tourism	**"Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi", Sciacca (Sicily)**	**"Sea Working Brindisi", Brindisi (Puglia)**
Purpose To build the capacity of support systems for net positive impact and sustainability of social, economic and ecological systems **Potential** Place-based development designed for realising potential	The local population is involved in a variety of activities that aim to regenerate the area, to contribute to its sustainable development, and to build a stronger sense of community in the city through the creation of networks. Moreover, it aims to strengthen the citizens' sense of belonging to the same territory, history and culture. Once the local inhabitants become aware of the value of their city and of the need to valorise its multiple identities, Sciacca could indeed acquire a greater tourist attractiveness and reputation. A museum without walls was conceived in order to materialise something that was already there, and to create a brand identity for the community and the passengers. The effort created strong connections, social cohesion and an integrated range of services and activities that ended up increasing the value of the overall supply.	The project aimed at reinforcing the city's identity and at increasing its appeal as a "south working" destination. It is activating a sustainable offer of services in the area, contributing to their regeneration. The presence of smart workers should have positive implications on the territory because, in addition to generating a direct economic induced, it would trigger a virtuous process of service innovation and bring flows of new residents, even permanent ones in the future, and encourage the return of the "natives" that had previously left for work reasons.
Systems Adopts whole systems, living systems thinking; Social, cultural environmental, economic, political, spiritual and ecological elements are interrelated **Stakeholder Relations** Humans and nature are interconnected and co-evolving, relations based on reciprocity, respecting planetary boundaries	A project that is meant to enhance Sciacca, its traditions, its historic center, its territory and nature, and to become the brand identity of the city. Sciacca is the vision of a community that takes action and focuses on a new idea of tourism for the sustainable development of its territory, and the mission of a city that aims to become a destination.	The project enhances structures and tourist services with a view to seasonal adjustment and thus bring new life to the territory. In such a way, the melting cultures deriving from this project would bring a renewed sense of authenticity to the city, also contributing to re-shape its identity, thus enhancing its attractiveness and competitiveness throughout the years and not just in the high season. Smart working tools are thus developed in the area, involving institutions and companies in the co-design of a series of incentives and additional services (such as tax relief, dedicated packages and discounts, creation of co-working hubs) to potential users.

Change Agents Hosts and local communities are integral agents of change; change comes from interventions at the edges of intersecting systems **Power and Colonial Relations** Power and colonial relations transform through including all stakeholders and diverse expertise at multiple levels, including grassroots leadership **Participation and Collaboration** Diverse stakeholders participate & collaborate; community-level focus	An area that was eventually rehabilitated by its community through an operational cooperation combining many people: different in age, profession, way of thinking and living, working for the future of their land, brought together by the awareness of the great value of the territory, products and traditions making their land unique. A collaboration between the Museum and the institutions was signed with two important protocols, one with the Municipality of Sciacca and one with the Regional Tourist Office of Agrigento, and the President of the Sicily Region declared appreciation for the work done in Sciacca. Today, the Cooperative is made of artisans, traders, accommodation facilities, restaurants, cultural associations, educational and cultural institutions and local boards of residents. Viviana Rizzuto, President and founder, is the community manager, a contemporary role that is extremely useful in the process of valorisation of territories, alongside local administrations. The role of Viviana and the Cooperative is to keep involving the community, the local institutions and entrepreneurs in a process of cooperation and connection for a continuum of ideas, connections and offering of experiences for voyagers.	The "Sea Working" project is also paving the way for a restored positive exchange between the local population and voyagers, encouraging the latter to stay longer in a certain place, not necessarily in the high season, and giving them the opportunity to work from there. The project was launched by Emma Taveri, Councilor for Tourism of the Municipality of Brindisi, during the pandemic to reposition a marginal area as a destination for nomad workers and for the relocation of companies in the South of Italy. Taveri's objective was bringing a change to her homeland and of making her skills available to the city. For this reason, as an important recognition for her commitment, she received the title of Councilor for Tourism, Territorial Marketing and Creativity in the area where she was implementing her project, which was based on the new needs of the travelers and aimed at making Brindisi more and more a smart, adaptive and attractive destination for new travelers and holiday workers. Among others, the initiative is conceived and promoted by Destination Makers, a consultancy company specialising in destination marketing and management, with the support of a network that includes the Municipality of Brindisi and other institutional entities, businesses and the world of associations.

Source: authors' elaboration

Based on the analysis and on the empirical findings, the paper provides guidelines to address future practices in the field of tourism and eventually transform the tourists' approach to travelling. These guidelines identify a general process able to extract specific values and craft innovative and tailored economies. The first stage of the process entails the (re-)creation of local communities, their involvement in well-defined projects that clearly identify the hallmarks of territories rather than copy-pasting others' best practices. After the project has been defined in strong connection with territories and communities, the key is to highlight and communicate to residents those elements retrieving and revaluing local activities, services and products. In this way, projects should be built on a strong circle of people, a devoted community, which is brought together by common traits and pursues a common objective. A further level of involvement is represented by the cooperation among the community, the voyagers and the local institutions. To mobilise communities, to create locally-sourced experiences addressed to people that are still unrelated to the territory represents an opportunity for the enhancement of identity awareness, for the development of situations for exchanging ideas and competences, and for the creation of connections and social cohesion. Once a connected community is established, the value of the overall offer increases through the formation and connection of ideas, and the actions of each individual generate multiple results on the economic and social growth of the territory. For instance, the B&Bs of the Diffused Museum in Sciacca are replacing soap bars with dispensers that are made by local potters who customise them for each room. Besides avoiding the wasting of materials, the B&Bs thus increase the quality of the offer, and the craftsman benefits from the promotion of their products that can be purchased or created by the B&Bs' guests. Everyone supports the other and connections generate ideas (Casalini, 2022). Third point is the seasonal adjustment of tourism flows through the extension of the journey to a longer period of time, an idea that recalls the ancient and medieval conceptualisation of travelling, when the journey was protracted and not yet classified as leisure. This view, shared by the community and the voyagers, should foster a new sense of exploration, awareness and dialogue, leading to innovative local economies and the development of localised services. The fourth and last phase of the process proves vital for the preservation of territories and communities. The development of "regenerative indicators" thus becomes necessary to assess the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of the growth resulting from the regenerative project, and to monitor the numbers of tourism carrying capacity, defined by World Tourism Organization as "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction" (UNWTO, 1981, p.4).

The whole process is functional to re-address tourism towards an innovative path that retrieves and extends the original sense of travel. On a practical level, the paper suggests that connecting communities, creating awareness, empowering, and developing small local economies based on entrepreneurship brings value to contemporary societies, and should represent a new model for the whole travel industry rather than being limited to address niche tourism. Only if this process is tailored on territories and eventually accomplished, communities can thrive and voyagers can fully exploit the economic, social and cultural value of travelling, which is represented by its transformative ability.

The paper's ultimate aim is to contribute to studies on regenerative tourism on one side and to enhance a new sense of local entrepreneurship on the other. he study advances the understanding of regenerative tourism development in marginalised areas, starting from its conceptualisation (Dwyer, 2018; Mang & Reed, 2012; Pollock, 2012; Teruel, 2018; Hes & Coenen, 2018; Bellato et al., 2022) and giving directions for its practical implications adopting a value-based approach. Moreover, the study provides a framework for further research in the field of tourism that goes beyond the concept of tourism social entrepreneurship as yet theorised (Biddulph, 2018; Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2011; Laeis & Lemke, 2016; Porter et al., 2018; Sigala, 2016; Sloan et al., 2014; Stenvall et al., 2017; Jørgensen et al., 2021).

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Academic Research Paper

The influence of socio-demographic factors on feelings of attachment, involvement, loyalty attitudes, and environmentally responsible behavior toward a cultural destination

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Abstract: Tourist demand is very diverse and there are many alternatives for segmentation, with even basic demographic factors not only effectively discriminating in some markets but serving as a valuable starting point for creating market segmentation methods. Against this perspective, this study aims to provide a deeper analysis into whether and how socio-demographic factors, in terms of nationality, age, gender, and education explain tourists' place attachment, in terms of place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging, both online and onsite activity involvement, recommendation and revisit intentions, and environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) toward a cultural Italian destination. Data were collected from 384 tourists participating in a cultural heritage tourism experience. Descriptive statistics were analyzed and reported, and a series of ANOVAs were performed using SPSS to analyze possible differences among nationality, age, gender, and education, regarding the variables of interest. According to the literature, factors that may affect tourists' perceptions include socio-demographic data. However, current research on cultural tourism lacks an in-depth investigation of the relationships between various socio-demographic factors and tourists' perceptions and behavior. While studies have looked at how these elements affect marketing in general, more data is still required to forecast cultural visitors' feelings of attachment, involvement, intention, and environmental behavior toward a cultural destination. Results highlight that tourists of an Italian cultural destination have varying levels of education, age, and gender, and are partly represented by foreign visitors. Findings mainly confirm that the variables of interest can be influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists, with a major impact coming from nationality, age, and education. Moreover, they showed that the main differences were recorded for place identity, sense of belonging, onsite and online activity involvement, revisit intention, and responsible behavior, with only nationality and age respectively affecting place identity and recommendation intention.

Keywords: *Cultural tourism, Place attachment, Activity involvement, Intentions, Environmentally responsible behavior, Socio-demographics*

JEL Codes: M2; M3

1. Introduction

Prior to COVID-19, global tourism had been expanding quickly for several years and emerged as a major force in global trade to such an extent that, since the late 1990s, the number of destinations generating $1 billion or more in US dollars from foreign tourism had nearly doubled and in 2019 tourism injected $8.9 trillion into the global economy (UNESCO, 2021). Businesses experienced a sudden and extraordinary disruption due to the COVID-19 epidemic as policymakers limited the flow of people worldwide (Temperini et al., 2022). Tourism has historically experienced crises (Blake and Sinclair 2003; Sönmez et al. 1999), however, the impact of COVID-19 has been more tragic than any previous crisis in recent memory, at least from an economic perspective (Hall et al. 2020; UNWTO 2021). As a result, the crisis has raised fresh concerns about how the travel and tourism sector is reacting to and recovering from this crisis and, eventually, how it will change as a socio-economic activity in our society (Gretzel et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up to a more environmentally and socially conscious global travel market and unprecedented potentialities for slow and proximity tourism leading (UNESCO, 2021).

Social distancing policies, travel restrictions, and ban on public meetings for cultural events all had a negative impact on cultural tourism (Mitrică et al., 2022). In this context, restarting cultural tourism, in addition to being a major concern for governments around the world, represents critical challenges as well as market opportunities for cultural tourism managers. In fact, one of the side effects of the pandemic is the need for sustainable, calm, quiet, and safe spaces, leading to a search for a new "slow living" lifestyle, representing a valuable chance for cultural tourism (Rodríguez-Vázquez et al., 2023). Although no real consensus on the definition of cultural tourism and cultural tourists exists (among others: Hughes, 1996; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011), it can reasonably state that a tourist's primary objective in engaging in cultural tourism is not just to consume but also, to learn about, explore, and experience both tangible and intangible cultural attractions and products in a travel location (Richards, 2018).

Cultural tourists typically have a larger budget to spend on local high-quality goods rather than on mass-manufactured ones, participate in arts-related activities, and visit museums, monuments, and historical sites, thus making cultural tourism a tool for differentiating the country's tourism product and reduce seasonality (Vergori & Arima, 2020). Market data reveal a total expenditure of 16.1 billion euros in 2019 which decreased to 3.3 in 2021 and 115.2 million overnight stays against 23.9 million in 2021 (Eagan, 2023). By looking at these data, we entail the central role of cultural tourism in driving economic growth in the tourism sector and the urgency to return and outweigh pre-pandemic levels. Cultural tourism, being one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry and accounting for an estimated 40% of all tourism worldwide (UNESCO, 2021), is a powerful element of attraction that can function as a locomotive of tourist demand. Also in Italy, the cultural products are a point of strength of the tourist offer, capable of attracting a large number of tourists, internationally known, representing the strategic offer segment for the entire tourist system of the Country (Assoturismo-Confesercenti, 2022). However, it is necessary to identify the key elements that allow for understanding the potential of cultural tourism and its response to the demands of new post-pandemic tourist behavior (Rodríguez-Vázquez et al., 2023). Within this scenario, cultural tourism has attracted greater interest from researchers (Cerquetti and Romagnoli, 2022; Carreira et al., 2022; Du Cros and McKercher, 2020; Richards, 2018). Research seeks to understand why people engage in cultural tourism through studies of motivation and related factors such as satisfaction and loyalty (Richards, 2018), authenticity and destination image (Carreira et al., 2022).

Heritage, and especially the destination of 'World Heritage Sites' (WHS), being one of the fundaments of cultural tourism, is where most of research is focused on (Richards, 2018). Literature comparing cultural and non-cultural tourists, through a series of socio-economic-demographic variables, highlights that a "new cultural tourism" is emerging in Italy, and that demographic aspects (i.a., age and education) are often stereotypes deeply rooted in the literature or variables taken for granted (Tangeland et al., 2013) than empirically confirmed propositions (Vergori & Arima, 2020). Due to their ability to facilitate understanding, managing, and promoting a destination and/or facility, as well as discriminating well in certain markets (Mohsin, 2008), socio-demographic variables are of major importance for stakeholders of tourism including the research communities (Gössling et al. 2020; Hall et al. 2020; Jamal and Budke 2020), especially in light of their use in market segmentation strategies (Weaver et al., 1994). Against this background, the present study aims at integrating socio-demographic characteristics as independent variables (exogenous variables) and perceptions and intentions toward a cultural destination as dependent variables (endogenous variables). We fall within the scope of cultural heritage tourism studies (Magliacani e Francesconi, 2022), focusing on an Italian UNESCO WHS (World Heritage Site) by attempting to understand which socio-demographic factors help explain tourists' feelings, experiences during their visit, as well as behavioral intentions.

The study examines variables that signify attachment and involvement to a cultural destination because such connections bear significant positive implications for visitors' behavioral intents, such as revisiting and recommending intentions (Dwyer et al. 2019; Amaro & Duarte, 2015). The study also covers a topic related to environmental sustainability, with the inclusion of a construct, namely Environmentally Responsible Behavior (ERB), which represents the best indicator for sustainable tourism in destination management (Kafyri et al., 2012). Specifically, this exploratory research provides a deeper analysis into whether and how nationality, age, gender, and education explain tourists' attachment (in the form of place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging), activity involvement (both online and onsite), recommendation and revisit intentions, and ERB. The paper is organized as follows. First, a review of the literature presenting the theoretical background and the research questions is provided. In the subsequent section, the methodology is described, followed by statistical analyses of the data. Finally, we discuss the findings and propose conclusions, implications, and suggested avenues for future research.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Socio-demographic characteristics and tourism: a brief overview

Socio-demographic factors are employed as segmentation criteria for a variety of reasons, including their cost effectiveness, simplicity of understanding, and suitability for usage in commercial settings, while offering a foundation for deeper, more intricate studies (Tangeland et al., 2013).

Thus, it comes as no surprise that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race, tenure, and education have long been considered important variables in research, especially in psychological studies (Zedeck & Cascio, 1984). This line of research has produced findings showing that demographic variables are significantly associated with characteristics, perceptions, attitudes, and work outcomes (Tsui & O'Really, 1989). In recent tourism literature, researchers have argued that there is a relation between individuals' demographic profiles and the types of travel experiences they seek (Goodrich 1980; Weaver et al., 1994). Buckley and Papadopoulos (1986) highlighted that greater attention must be paid to the characteristics of visitors when trying to develop a more rational marketing strategy: a clear market segment should be identified, and an investigation made of the buying decision factors that predominate in that segment with the aim of aligning tourism products with the client profile.

Since the tourist demand is very diverse and there are innumerable alternatives for segmentation, with even basic demographic factors, like age and gender, effectively discriminating in some markets, serving as a valuable starting point for creating market segmentation methods (Mitchell & Haggett, 1997), many are the studies that have focused on the analysis of socio-demographic factors when exploring tourists' attitudes and behaviors. Uysal et al. (1994), in their study of Australian visitors to U.S. national parks and natural areas, analyzed demographic characteristics and found that college graduates, professionals, and high-income groups have a higher propensity to visit national parks and natural areas. In a similar vein, Huang and Xiao (2000) argued that demographic research is important because it has the potential to both broaden the understanding of tourist behavior and improve destination management and planning. Their research shows that gender differences and professional composition have a substantial impact on Changchun leisure travelers' behavior patterns and attraction preferences. A very recent study from Yang et al. (2023) examined how demographic factors affect the quality of cultural perception and found interesting results from an age, gender, and education perspective.

Generally speaking, the geographical, demographic, and economic dimensions are important research variables to understand the motivation of tourists (Almeida, 2020). More specifically, there are many potential differences in the determinant factors affecting perceptions and selection of cultural heritage attractions among visitors with different demographic characteristics (Siriphanich, 2007). Based on this, the main objective of this study is to analyze how the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists influence perceptions and intentions toward a cultural heritage destination.

2.2. Tourists' attachment: place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging

To better understand the connections between people and places, as well as to manage and market tourist attractions, place attachment has been extensively researched across disciplines (Dwyer et al., 2019). Place attachment is not only an immediate sensory response but a deeper reflective resonance with specific locations (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013). It is a multidimensional construct, with roots in environmental psychology and tourism, that captures the complexity of the meanings that both visitors and locals attribute to their physical surroundings (Dwyer et al., 2019). Usually, researchers identify two main cognitive dimensions of place attachment, namely place identity and place dependence (Chen & Dwyer, 2018). More recent works in environmental psychology propose affective attachment as another key dimension of place attachment (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001; Jorgensen and Stedman 2001), making belongingness or social bond another dimension of place attachment (Chen & Dwyer, 2018). Place dependence is an outcome of the cognitive justification process that involves an individual attachment to a place for functional reasons. Generic place-dependent individuals can be attached to areas that they have never visited because the area may afford them a unique setting in which to accomplish their goals (White et al., 2008). Place identity is an outcome of a cognitive justification process that reflects an individual's personal identity defined in relation to the physical environment, influenced by conscious and unconscious ideals, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills (Proshansky, 1978). The sense of belonging is an enduring reaction that implies a tourist's feeling of identification with or attachment to a cultural tourism destination that they have visited (Lin et al., 2014). Tourists' attachment adds value to cultural and heritage tourism and place marketing research and is grabbing researchers' and practitioners' attention because of its potential for interpreting behaviors (Chen & Dwyer, 2018). Indeed, attachment has a beneficial impact not only on tourists' willingness to revisit the destination but also on their disposition to promote the place (Dwyer et al. 2019). In light of this, we believe it is important to explore how socio-demographic factors affect this concept in its cognitive and affective dimensions. Thus, the first research question is:

RQ1. What differences in place dependence, place attachment, and sense of belonging emerge across nationality, age, gender, and education?

2.3. Tourists' involvement: online and onsite activity involvement

According to Havitz Dimanche (1997, p. 246), involvement is described as an "unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest towards a product or activity evoked by a stimulus or situation" that affects tourist's perceptions and perceived value (Prebensen et al., 2013). By highlighting both mental state and a behavioral process behind involvement, Stone (1984) defined it as the time and/or intensity of effort expended in pursuing a particular activity. Kim and Ritchie (2014) noted that involvement can have a significant impact on tourism experiences (Forlani, 2018), not only when travelers plan for their trips (i.e., planning phase) but also when travelers are at their destinations. Thus, it should not be surprising that researchers have agreed that the importance of tourist involvement has increased due to its impact on tourists' experiences (Hung et al., 2019;), especially because a higher level of experience involvement brings a more memorable and meaningful experience to the consumer (Cioppi et al., 2022;

Zatori et al., 2018).

Grounded on Rothschild's (1984) definition of involvement, the current study defines onsite involvement as a person's level of interest, emotional attachment, or arousal with both websites and social media (Splendiani et al., 2023). Travelers may be more passive or active when they receive advertising communication, and limit or expand their processing of this information, depending on their level of involvement (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). As a result, online participation is a helpful tool for online travel marketers to adjust to these variances. In the same vein, the influence of onsite activities, defined as the extent to which a tourist is interested and engaged in activities hosted by a cultural tourism destination (Lee & Chang, 2012), should equally be considered when examining tourists' consumption, especially of cultural destinations, which offer a greater number of activities than other types of tourism destinations (Hung et al., 2019). If the present tourism literature puts a great emphasis on the influence of involvement during the planning phase (Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Lu et al., 2015), researchers have also noted that immersion in onsite activities could have a profound impact on tourists' actual experiences (Hung et al., 2019). Thus, following Amaro and Duarte (2015), the study focuses its attention on the analysis of tourists' involvement both onsite and online as travelers who feel more involved might have different characteristics that could be fruitfully used to target and customize both online and offline touristic activities. This leads us to the second research question:

RQ2. What differences in online activity involvement and onsite activity involvement emerge across nationality, age, gender, and education?

2.4. Tourists' intentions: revisit and recommend

Behavioral intention is one of the most important concepts in marketing and consumer behavior, as consumers' behavioral intentions for a product or service are likely to translate into actual purchase or consumption behaviors (Oliver, 2010), being this the most proximal and salient determinant of their actual behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).

Scholars in heterogeneous contexts agree that the repurchase/revisit and recommendation intentions are the two major constituents of behavioral intentions (Choo et al., 2016). From a different perspective, repurchase/revisit intentions and recommendations to others are the most commonly used measures of loyalty, which is an indicator of long-term satisfaction and interest in a brand or a destination (Eusébio & Vieira 2013; Horng et al. 2012). What is certain is that both revisiting and recommending intentions are of high relevance in tourism research (Han et al., 2019). When placed in a tourist context, behavioral intentions refer to tourists' willingness or perceived likelihood of engaging in revisit and word-of-mouth behaviors for the community-based tourism destination (Han et al., 2019). Visitors who perceive a higher value in a holiday destination are more likely to revisit and recommend it (Quintal & Polczynski, 2010). As much as customers form post-purchase intentions and engage in repurchase or recommendation behaviors based on their appraisal of product/service performance (Oliver, 2010), travelers form their revisit and recommending intentions according to their assessment of the overall experience.

Given that boosting visitors' favorable decisions/behaviors is one of the essential requisites for successful sustainable destination development under the competitive market environment, tourism companies are invited to pay attention also to tourists' socio-demographic characteristics in order to match them with their value proposals and increase tourists' motivation (Hassan et al., 2023). Thus the third research question is:

RQ3. What differences in revisit intention and recommending intention emerge across nationality, age, gender, and education?

2.5. Environmentally Responsible Behavior

ERB represents people's environmental concerns, beliefs, and ecological knowledge concerning the

reduction of environmental problems (Chiu et al., 2014), and reflects actions to minimize negative impacts on the environment (Lin & Lee, 2020; Lee & Jan, 2015). The term is used interchangeably with "ecological/environmental/sustainable behavior" or "environmentally concerned or significant behavior" (Lee et al., 2013).

Tourists, either consciously or unconsciously, might add to environmental destruction, for example by picking flowers (Chang, 2010); interfering with wildlife (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Chen, 2011); by increasing pollution activity (Logar, 2010; Teh & Cabanban, 2007); or by simply overcrowding destinations (Dickinson & Robbins, 2008; Poitras & Getz, 2006). However, individuals who manifest environmentally responsible behavior can reduce the harmful impact and create a positive effect on the natural surroundings (Wang & Zhang, 2020; Barbaro and Pickett, 2016). Therefore, as suggested by Lin and Lee (2020), ERB plays a pivotal role in reducing environmental problems (Sivek & Hungerford, 1990) by minimizing impacts on the environment (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002), and improving environmental sustainability (Meijers & Stapel, 2011). Also, researchers report that tourists' ERB has been pointed out as the best indicator for sustainable tourism in destination management (Kafyri et al., 2012; Lin &Lee, 2020).

As such, we believe that the understanding of how socio-demographic antecedents shape tourists' environmental responsibility (Luo et al., 2020) is necessary because of their role in facilitating segmentation and targeting, and thus enhancing the formulation of strategic marketing communication efforts. In this respect, we formulate our last research question:

RQ4. What differences in environmentally responsible behavior emerge across nationality, age, gender, and education?

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Data collection and measures

The research aimed to develop an exploratory analysis (Malhotra and Grover, 1998) to discern which demographic factors affect key variables for cultural and sustainable tourism: place dependence and identity, sense of belonging, online and onsite activity involvement, intentions, and environmentally responsible behavior.

During summer 2022, tourists were asked to fill out the questionnaire at Urbino's old town, a significant UNESCO World Heritage site. Other studies have already previously analyzed this context of study with respect to the cultural tourism dimension (Vesci et al., 2020; Conti et al., 2020; Pencarelli et al, 2017). The study used a non-random sampling approach. Participants at the end of the visit to Urbino, received a tablet with a link to the Google Form with the survey displayed on it for them to complete on their own. Participants were informed about the overall storage and processing of data according to Regulation (EU) 2016/ 679 GDPR and expressed their explicit consent to participate in the study. Following the ethical standards of the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki, participants were informed of the right to refuse to participate in the study or to withdraw consent to participate at any time without negative consequences.

The survey was conducted in several languages using a translation-back translation technique. We collected 384 valid replies after removing respondents with consistent response styles and incomplete responses. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first related to individuals' demographic aspects taken into consideration: nationality, age, gender, and level of education. The second section recorded individuals' evaluations regarding the statements of the constructs of interest.

We used pre-existing, empirically validated scales to operationalize the constructs. Using a seven-point Likert scale, from *totally disagree* (1) to *totally agree* (7), participants were asked to indicate the extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the questions. The measures for place dependence (4 items, e.g. "I enjoy recreating in Urbino more than any other cultural area/destination") and place identity (5 items, e.g. "Urbino means a lot to me") were taken from White et al. (2008). The measures for sense of belonging (4 items, e.g. "I feel a strong sense of belonging to Urbino"), online activity involvement (4 items, e.g. "While visiting Urbino, I search for travel information on its social media websites"), and onsite activity involvement (3 items, e.g. "I was interested in the cultural/sustainable activities Urbino hosted") were taken from Hung et al. (2019). The measures for recommendation intention (3 items, e.g. "I will recommend Urbino to a relative or friend") and revisit intention (3 items, e.g. I intend to revisit Urbino in the future") were taken from Altunel and Erkurt (2015). Finally, environmentally responsible behavior (6 items, e.g. "If there are cleaning environment activities, I am willing to attend") was adapted from Su et al. (2020).

3.2. Data Analysis

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed using F-tests to statistically test the equality of means (Markowski & Markoski, 1990) and analyze differences among nationality, age, gender, and education, regarding the variables of interest. By using SPSS v.22, a multivariate analysis of variance was run in the system (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006) due to its ability to consider several continuous dependent variables simultaneously, identifying significant differences due to an independent variable while offering results for Univariate tests for each independent variable.

The ANOVA test is a statistical technique used to determine if there are significant differences among the means of three or more groups (Markowski and Markoski, 1990). It is employed to compare the means of multiple groups in order to evaluate whether these differences are statistically significant or simply due to chance. The methodology of the ANOVA test involves analyzing the variance between groups and the variance within groups. In general, the ANOVA test is based on the null hypothesis (H0) that all group means are equal, while the alternative hypothesis (H1) asserts that at least one mean is significantly different from the others. The ANOVA test calculates the between-group variance and the residual variance within the groups. If the between-group variance is much larger than the residual variance, then there are significant differences among at least two of the groups. Conversely, if the between-group variance is similar to or smaller than the residual variance, there are no significant differences among the groups. To assess whether the differences between group means are significant, the ANOVA test utilizes an F statistic, which compares the between-group variance with the residual variance. If the calculated F value exceeds a critical threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that there are significant differences among at least two groups.

4. Results

The study reveals that tourists of an Italian cultural heritage destination have varying levels of education, age, and gender and are also considerably represented by foreign visitors. Our sample includes a slightly higher number of foreign participants (197) compared to Italians (187), 195 men and 189 women, 62 visitors with an age between 18-29, 75 visitors with an age between 30-39, 86 between 40-49, 93 between 50-59, and 69 who are more than 60. Regarding education, 131 participants have a lower level of instruction since they do not possess a bachelor, 137 participants declared to possess a bachelor, and 116 participants report holding a master or a Ph.D. Descriptive statistics for all the factors considered are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*Number (N = 384)*	*Percentage (%)*
Nationality	Italian	187	48.7
	Foreign	197	51.3
Age	18-29	62	16.1
	30-39	75	19.5
	40-49	86	22.4
	50-59	92	24.0
	>60	69	18.0
Gender	M	195	50.8
	F	189	49.2
Education	No Bachelor	131	34.1
	Bachelor	137	35.7
	Master/PhD	116	30.2

Source: Author elaboration

4.1. Feelings of Attachment: Place Dependence, Place Identity, Sense of belonging

The first research question aims to trace (any) significant differences that emerged concerning the feelings of attachment of the different individuals' factors considered. Respondents were asked to evaluate, based on a seven-point Likert scale, the feeling of place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging. As shown in Table 2, results regarding place dependence are modest; only nationality shows a significant difference ($F(1, 382) = 32.242$, $p = <.001$), with Italians scoring higher (4.65) than foreigners (3.88). There are no significant differences when considering age, gender, and education.

Table 2. Place identity in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	4.66 (1.43)	32.242	<.001	.078
	Foreign	3.88 (1.25)			
Age	18-29	4.31 (1.58)	1.288	.274	.013
	30-39	4.04 (1.15)			
	40-49	4.14 (1.38)			
	50-59	4.32 (1.38)			
	>60	4.52 (1.32)			
Gender	M	4.17 (1.38)	1.429	.233	.004
	F	4.34 (1.41)			
Education	No Bachelor	4.44 (1.39)	2.785	0.63	.014
	Bachelor	4.28 (1.38)			
	Master/PhD	4.03 (1.40)			

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

Regarding place identity, as reported in Table 3, while there is no significant difference in age and education, nationality and gender have an impact on participants' feelings of place identity. The effect is stronger for nationality (F(1, 382) = 16.653, p = <.001), where, on average, Italians score significantly higher (3.85) than foreigners (3.16). Men (3.70) provided significantly higher scores for place identity compared to women (3.28), F(1, 382) = 6.068, p = <.05.

Table 3. Place dependence in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	3.85 (1.81)	16.653	<.001	.042
	Foreign	3.16 (1.45)			
Age	18-29	3.11 (1.80)	2.099	.080	0.22
	30-39	3.31 (1.56)			
	40-49	3.49 (1.52)			
	50-59	3.68 (1.66)			
	>60	3.83 (1.78)			
Gender	M	3.28 (1.60)	6.068	.014	.016
	F	3.70 (1.71)			
Education	No Bachelor	3.49 (1.65)	.324	.723	.002
	Bachelor	3.42 (1.61)			.042
	Master/PhD	3.59 (1.76)		<.001	

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

Interesting results emerge when we observe sense of belonging (see Table 4). In this case, only age has not a significant influence, while nationality, gender, and education significantly impact participants' sense of belonging. Specifically, Italians (4.11) score higher than foreigners (2.98), F(1, 382) = 49.768, p = <.001; Men (3.73), on average, score higher than women (3.32), F(1, 382) =5.956, p = <.05; and participants that are not possessing a bachelor (3.83) score higher than people with a bachelor (3.51) or Master/Ph.D. (3.22), F(2, 381) = 4.287, p = <.05.

Table 4. Sense of belonging in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	4.11 (1.59)	49.768	<.001	.115
	Foreign	2.98 (1.56)			
Age	18-29	3.46 (1.79)	.924	.450	.010
	30-39	3.30 (1.56)			
	40-49	3.49 (1.61)			
	50-59	3.58 (1.61)			
	>60	3.82 (1.81)			
Gender	M	3.32 (1.57)	5.956	.015	.015
	F	3.73 (1.74)			
Education	No Bachelor	3.83 (1.61)	4.287	.014	.022
	Bachelor	3.51 (1.58)			
	Master/PhD	3.22 (1.78)			

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

4.2. Involvement: Online and onsite activities

The second research question aims to identify (any) significant differences that emerged with reference to the feelings of involvement of the different individuals' factors considered. Respondents were asked to evaluate, based on a seven-point Likert scale, the feeling of both online and onsite involvement. As regards online involvement, as reported in Table 5, both education and nationality have a significant effect, while gender and age are not statistically significant. Italians (3.65) compared to foreigners (3.21) declare to be, on average, more involved in online activities (F(1, 382) = 5.859, p = <.05). Similarly, participants with no bachelor (3.79) are more involved in online activities, compared to participants with a bachelor (3.32) and Master/PhD (3.14), F(2, 381) = 4.495, p = <.05.

Table 5. Online activity involvement in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	3.65 (1.82)	5.859	.016	.015
	Foreign	3.21 (1.73)			
Age	18-29	3.63 (1.74)	2.067	.084	.021
	30-39	3.36 (1.76)			
	40-49	3.70 (1.76)			
	50-59	3.45 (1.76)			
	>60	2.93 (1.79)			
Gender	M	3.48 (1.78)	.360	.549	.001
	F	3.37 (1.79)			
Education	No Bachelor	3.79 (1.79)	4.495	.012	.023
	Bachelor	3.32 (1.72)			
	Master/PhD	3.14 (1.81)			

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

As reported in Table 6, with regard to onsite (offline) involvement, interesting results were found for nationality, age, and education, which significantly influence this type of involvement, in contrast to gender. In line with the other results, Italians (5.73) declare to be more involved in onsite activities compared to foreigners (5.48) (F(1, 382) = 4.147 p = <.05). Concerning age, 18-29 (5.07) reported the lower score compared to 30-39 (5.42), 40-49 (5.77), 50-59 (5.80), and > 60 (5.78) who report the higher score (F(4, 379) =, 5.260 p = <.001).

Table 6. Onsite activity involvement in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	5.73 (1.19)	4.147	.042	.011
	Foreign	5.48 (1.18)			
Age	18-29	5.07 (1.49)	5.260	<.001	.053
	30-39	5.42 (.99)			
	40-49	5.77 (1.02)			
	50-59	5.80 (1.26)			
	>60	5.78 (1.03)			
Gender	M	5.68 (1.15)	1.684	.195	.004
	F	5.52 (1.23)			
Education	No Bachelor	5.62 (1.26)	4.411	.013	0.23
	Bachelor	5.38 (1.21)			
	Master/PhD	5.82 (1.04)			

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

4.3. Intentions: Revisit and Recommend

As concerns the main intention variables, and more precisely revisit intentions, a clear difference emerged for nationality and age. As reported in Table 7, a statistically significant effect of age was detected (F(4, 379) = 4.275 p <.01) and, among the different ages, older people, on average, reported higher scores: >60 (5.36), 50-59 (5.01), 40-49 (5.36); compared to younger people: 30-39 (4.76) and 18-29 (4.44). The effect of nationality is even stronger (F(1, 382) =22.916 p = <.001), where Italians report higher levels of revisit intentions (5.40) compared to foreigners (4.63).

Table 7. Revisit intention in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	5.40 (1.56)	22.916	<.001	0.57
	Foreign	4.63 (1.61)			
Age	18-29	4.44 (1.76)	4.275	0.002	0.43
	30-39	4.76 (1.64)			
	40-49	5.36 (1.46)			
	50-59	5.01 (1.60)			
	>60	5.36 (1.59)			
Gender	M	4.95 (1.70)	.389	.533	.001
	F	5.06 (1.63)			
Education	No Bachelor	4.80 (1.79)	1.814	.164	.009
	Bachelor	5.17 (1.55)			
	Master/PhD	5.05 (1.63)			

Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Source: Author elaboration

Interestingly, as reported in Table 8, regarding recommendation intentions, a very clear difference emerged only for age (F(4, 379) =5.636 p <.001). Here, same as for revisit intentions, lower scores were recorded for younger generations: 18-29 (5.81) and 30-39 (6.05); compared to older generations: 40-49 (6.46), 50-59 (6.40), >60 (6.26). In contrast, none of the other factors show significant effects on recommendation intentions.

Table 8. Recommendation intention in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	6.34 (.89)	2.493	.127	.006
	Foreign	6.18 (1.15)			
Age	18-29	5.81 (1.52)	5.636	<.001	.056
	30-39	6.05 (.88)			
	40-49	6.46 (.68)			
	50-59	6.40 (1.09)			
	>60	6.26 (1.03)			
Gender	M	6.27 (1.06)	.016	.900	<.000
	F	6.25 (100)			
Education	No Bachelor	6.21 (1.18)	2.136	.120	.011
	Bachelor	6.17 (1.01)			
	Master/PhD	6.42 (.86)			
Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001					

Source: Author elaboration

4.4. Environmentally responsible behavior

Finally, as shown in Table 9, regarding the environmental-related variable, namely environmentally responsible behavior, same as place identity, we found a significant effect of both nationality and gender. Specifically, nationality has the strongest effect (F(1, 382) =21.595 p = <.001), with Italians scoring higher (5.87) compared to foreigners (5.41) in environmentally responsible behavior. Although the effect is less strong (F(1, 382) =4.323 p = <.05), gender also affects environmentally responsible behavior: in this case, women score, on average, higher (5.74) than men (5.53).

Table 9. Environmentally responsible behavior in relation to nationality, age, gender, and education.

Factor	*Item*	*M(SD)*	*F*	*Sig*	*η2*
Nationality	Italian	5.87 (.94)	21.595	<.001	.054
	Foreign	5.41 (1.01)			
Age	18-29	5.63 (1.00)	.818	.514	.009
	30-39	5.53 (.98)			
	40-49	5.60 (.95)			
	50-59	5.61 (1.03)			
	>60	5.82 (1.04)			
Gender	M	5.74 (.88)	4.323	.038	.011
	F	5.53 (1.10)			
Education	No Bachelor	5.66 (1.07)	.692	.501	.004
	Bachelor	5.69 (.99)			
	Master/PhD	5.54 (.95)			
Note(s): Significantly different average scores * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001					

Source: Author elaboration

5. Discussion

Despite socio-demographic variables are of major importance in tourism (Gössling et al. 2020; Hall et al. 2020; Jamal and Budke 2020), especially in light of their application in market segmentation and targeting strategies (Weaver et al., 1994), in Italy, there are no studies that analyze how socio-demographic factors respond to the digital, environmental, and cultural revolution. The present research provides a preliminary and exploratory contribution to fill this research gap by examining how nationality, age, gender, and education explain tourists' attachment (in the form of place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging), activity involvement (online and onsite), recommendation and revisit intentions, and environmentally responsible behavior.

Overall, our results confirm that constructs outcomes can mostly and multifacetedly be explained by socio-demographics of tourists. By examining all the feelings of attachment included in the study, the result suggests that, interestingly, the outcomes for each construct are not always the same. Nationality places a significant role in determining all the variables, that is, place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging since, not surprisingly, Italian visitors reported significantly higher scores compared to foreign visitors. This aligns with Prayag et al. (2018) who confirm that domestic tourists have a stronger connection to the country's heritage than foreign visitors. However, by having a look at gender, the significant effect holds for place identity and sense of belonging, while it is not significant for place dependence. Men feel a stronger emotional connection to the historical place and its community compared to women; however, such bond does not appear to be unique as they do not perceive the place as more recreating or satisfying than other historical sites. On the other hand, education plays a significant role only in determining a sense of belonging. In this instance, visitors with lower levels of education present a stronger sense of belonging and membership to the historical place compared to people with higher levels of education. Although the scores record the same positive trend for both place dependence and place identity, the effect is not statistically significant. It is worth mentioning that different ages do not seem to affect any of the considered variables, meaning that the elderly do not show a particular higher sense of attachment to the historical site compared to younger generations. This result seems to contradict the commonly accepted stereotype of the cultural tourist (Vergori & Arima, 2020) and agrees with Alegre and Pou's (2004) findings that the aging of a population has an ambiguous effect on tourism demand.

All over, among the variables that were included here as a proxy for detecting a feeling of attachment to the historical place, sense of belonging is the more attention-getting one, being highly impacted by socio-demographic factors such as nationality, gender, and education.

Regarding activity involvement, both in the online and online form, exception done for gender, we found considerable results regarding our socio-demographic factors. First of all, it is worth noting that, on average, onsite activity involvement received higher scores compared to online activity involvement. This result emphasizes how crucial sustainable offline activities are for cultural destinations. In fact, as the world gradually recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, after a period of forced use of virtual platforms, the value of authentic experiences might be increasingly appreciated bringing travelers to manifest a renewed interest and need towards onsite activities.

On the other hand, the finding regarding online activity involvement highlights the importance of finding the right key to convey appropriate online content that can pique interest and boost online visitors' interaction.

Overall, our results align with Hjalager and Jensen (2012), who posit that online behavior changes depending on the traveler's socio-demographic characteristics. The results are also in line with Tangeland et al. (2013), where the likelihood of participation in outdoor activities was significantly influenced by the socio-demographic variables.

Taking into account the nationality of visitors, Italian visitors feel more involved both in online and onsite activities compared to their foreign counterparts.

From the educational perspective, visitors with lower levels of education interact with their social media by updating their location and enjoy reading online travel information much more than visitors with higher levels of education, while from the onsite perspective, we found the opposite result. In this case, it is the visitor possessing a higher level of education to engage and enjoy cultural/sustainable onsite activities more. This result is similar to Okumus et al. (2021), who confirmed that tourists with a higher level of education were more willing to participate in culinary tourism experiences compared to visitors with a basic level of education.

Another interesting result was found for age. Major differences were found for onsite activity involvement, where the younger generation scored significantly lower compared to older generations, while for online activities the opposite trend emerges. Here people older than 60 reported a scarce interest in social media activities. This is not surprising as members of Generation Z are also known as the digital natives, and in line with Aina and Ezeuduji (2021) and Monaco (2018), who found that post-millennials prefer touristic places with Internet access, and find it necessary to take pictures, upload, and submit reviews on social media regarding the tourism sites they have visited.

With regard to intentions, while no significant results were detected for either gender (in line with Mohsin, 2008) or education, contrary to Lu et al. (2021), we found a strong effect of age. These results are similar to those of Pasaco-González et al. (2023) and Lu et al. (2021), who found that loyalty did not differ according to the gender of visitors. Generally, higher scores, on average, were recorded for recommendation intention compared to revisit intentions. In particular, with advancing age both intentions get stronger. The fact that younger generations are less inclined to revisit or recommend the historical destination is rather surprising, considering that Urbino is also a major university town. Another interesting finding regarding intentions is that while nationality significantly affects revisit intentions, with Italian visitors being more prone to revisit the historical site, it does not turn into a factor explaining recommendation intention. In fact, although even in this case, foreign visitors report lower scores compared to Italian visitors, the difference is not statistically significant.

Finally, regarding ERB, we found significant effects for nationality and gender while. Contrary to findings from Tasci et al. (2022) and Hedlund et al. (2012) where the perceived importance of environmental sustainability in vacation choices is influenced by both age and education, we found no significant difference in ERB for neither age nor education. Specifically, in line with most of our results, Italian tourists seem more willing to protect the natural environment and practice cleaning environmental activities in the cultural site compared to their foreign counterparts. In the same vein, by harmonizing with studies demonstrating how women possess stronger attitudes towards environmental quality and display “greener shopping habits” than their male counterparts (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003), we found that women are more willing to comply with the legal ways not to damage the local environment compared to men, which is also in line with Tasci (2017), who reported higher ratings of women in sustainability benchmarks.

6. Implications and future research

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes several contributions. First, following Richards’ (2018) invitation to focus on touristic experience consumption, the study contributes to the literature on cultural tourism consumption by offering an understanding of how socio-demographic factors impact the perception and intentions toward cultural sites. By understanding how socio-demographic variables shape individual interests and attitudes in an experiential tourism context, our research enriches the literature on the multivariate effects of socio-demographic variables in different contexts (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989), including tourism Hedlund et al. (2012).

Additionally, although previous studies have explored the substantial relevance of place attachment for the nature of the tourist-place relationship and behavioral intentions and outcomes (White et al., 2008; Dwyer et al., 2019), this work provides additional evidence about the feelings of attachment perceived by different tourist categories in regard to cultural tourism experiences. Then, with the inclusion of activity involvement, both online and especially onsite, this study contributes to the body of knowledge about how immersion in onsite activities has a profound impact on tourists' experiences (Kim & Ritchie, 2014, Hung et al., 2019) by granting an enhanced understanding of this subject from a post Covid-19 perspective. Finally, our findings enrich knowledge regarding intentions toward cultural destinations, also in sustainable tourism destination management, by including a construct that plays a major role in reducing environmental issues in touristic sites (Lin & Lee, 2020). By specifically contributing to the stream literature of sustainable behaviors and the analysis of socio-demographic characteristics affecting ERB in the context of cultural tourism, the study helps to a gap in the more recent literature focused on the “green” attitudes and behaviors of travelers in the domain of cultural tourism (Throsby, 2016).

From a practical viewpoint, this research extends knowledge that could guide tourism professionals in establishing marketing strategies appropriate to the unique needs of each market segment, which will subsequently determine not only their attachment and engagement with the experience but also their revisit intentions. The findings of this study offer important insights for tourism managers, DMOs, and public policy makers regarding both online and offline marketing practices that should be designed to convey appropriate messages for each market segment and generate a sustainable development of tourism in cultural sites. For example, the lower level of attachment (place dependence, place identity, and sense of belonging) in all its three components attested by foreign visitors draws attention to a careful consideration about whether and how services, in terms of reception and entertainment (activities carried out both online and onsite) respond to the needs of this type of tourists (e.g., language translations). Analogously, in cultural destinations, due to historical reasons bringing women to be less represented in published literature and art than men, these seem to find fewer identity elements that diminish their place identity and sense of belonging to the cultural site compared to men. Professionals in tourism management should find the proper way to address the needs and preferences of women when designing tourism experiences in historical sites (Conti et al., 2020).

According to our findings, destination managers should systematize a variety of both physical and virtual components in the form of digital representations of the physical elements (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2014) to increase youngers’ attachment and onsite engagement. For example, considering the attributes that generally have a greater effect on younger generations, managers could implement gamification practices and new technologies in cultural activities. Gamification and innovative digital practices (such as virtual reality or augmented reality) have the potential to revolutionize the engagement of younger generations, enticing them to explore and connect with cultural heritage (Xu et al., 2017). By incorporating gamification elements, such as quests, challenges, and rewards, museums and UNESCO heritage sites could transform educational experiences into immersive and interactive adventures. Virtual and augmented reality could allow visitors to step into the past, experience historical events firsthand, and interact with artifacts in a digital realm. These approaches not only foster a deeper appreciation for culture but also bridge the generational gap, making heritage sites more appealing and accessible to younger audiences who will be more prone to recommend such historical places to friends. The usage of these innovative technologies, however, could offer more and more suitable solutions not only for young tourists but for all visitors in the form of dynamic packaging that provide a wide range of experiential products (Presenza et al., 2014).

Although this research makes several contributions to the pertinent literature and offers significant practical implications for cultural destination managers, it is not free from limitations. First, the cultural tourism destination investigated in this research is a town with a small historic center. Future studies should be extended to examine visitors' perceptions and intentions in the case of bigger urban areas with historical sites located throughout the city. Second, although the summer season is indeed a favorable time to study tourism in Italy due to increased travel – particularly by foreign and younger tourists – this might have had some implications for certain groups, such as individuals who are more vulnerable to heat or for younger people, who visited a university cultural site during a period where the city was depopulated by students who returned home for summer holidays. This could have affected the vibrancy and social atmosphere, potentially impacting the overall experience and interactions.

Then, this study examined the association between demographic variables like age, gender, and educational level. Future studies could include other variables such as income, occupation, travel arrangements, the number of people traveling together, and the length of stay. Finally, attachment, engagement, ERB, and behavioral intentions were considered as the outcome variables. Future studies could analyze outcome variables associated with the personal sphere of tourists, such as satisfaction, happiness, and well-being (Dini e Pencarelli, 2020).

Moreover, this research applied self-reported measures to collect data. However, visitors' responses might not fully indicate their actual ERB because of the existence of biases such as the social desirability. To resolve this possible inconsistency, future studies should apply different methodological approaches, such as in-depth interviews, and direct behavioral observation to identify visitors' actual environmentally responsible behavior.

Finally, it would be interesting to determine which types of on-site cultural experiences, such as guided tours, technology-driven experiences or food and wine experiences, are most valued by different socio-demographic groups. Likewise, the role fulfilled by social media should be further examined through qualitative studies, which allow a deeper understanding of the topic.

Conflict of interest

All authors declare no conflicts of interest in this paper.

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