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Stakeholder Perceptions Towards Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study of Vietnam

**Percepce zainteresovaných aktérů a udržitelný rozvoj cestovního
ruchu: empirická studie z Vietnamu**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how stakeholder perceptions shape tourism resilience and destination sustainability in Vietnam, a rapidly developing tourism context. Drawing on a multi-phase mixed-methods design, it investigates four stakeholder groups: residents, tourists, tourism businesses, and local government actors. The analysis focuses on perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, and tests their effects on destination sustainability through tourism resilience. The findings show that tourism resilience functions as a consistent mediating mechanism across stakeholder groups, but the factors that strengthen resilience vary by stakeholder position. This suggests that destination sustainability is not produced through a single uniform pathway, but through differentiated yet connected processes shaped by stakeholder priorities, governance conditions, and social relations. The study contributes to sustainable tourism scholarship by showing how diverse stakeholder perceptions can converge through resilience into a shared basis for sustainability assessment. It also extends existing work on stakeholder and resilience perspectives by demonstrating that adaptive capacity can provide a common analytical and practical foundation despite divergent interests and evaluations. The findings highlight the importance of stakeholder-sensitive, resilience-oriented governance for destinations facing institutional complexity, social diversity, and continuing change.

ABSTRAKT

Tato studie zkoumá, jak vnímání zainteresovaných aktérů utváří odolnost cestovního ruchu a udržitelnost destinace ve Vietnamu jako dynamicky se rozvíjejícím turistickém prostředí. Výzkum vychází z vícefázového smíšeného výzkumného designu a zahrnuje čtyři skupiny aktérů: rezidenty, turisty, podnikatelské subjekty v cestovním ruchu a představitele místní samosprávy. Analýza se zaměřuje na vnímané dopady cestovního ruchu, vztahy mezi hostiteli a hosty, uplatňování principů ESG a politickou důvěru a zkoumá jejich vliv na udržitelnost destinace prostřednictvím odolnosti cestovního ruchu. Výsledky ukazují, že odolnost cestovního ruchu funguje napříč jednotlivými skupinami aktérů jako konzistentní zprostředkující mechanismus, avšak faktory, které tuto odolnost posilují, se podle postavení jednotlivých aktérů liší. To naznačuje, že udržitelnost destinace nevzniká prostřednictvím jediné jednotné trajektorie, ale prostřednictvím diferencovaných,

avšak vzájemně propojených procesů utvářených prioritami aktérů, podmínkami správy a sociálními vztahy. Studie přispívá k rozvoji poznání v oblasti udržitelného cestovního ruchu tím, že ukazuje, jak se různorodé percepce zainteresovaných aktérů mohou prostřednictvím odolnosti proměnit ve společný základ pro hodnocení udržitelnosti. Zároveň rozvíjí dosavadní výzkum stakeholderů a odolnosti tím, že ukazuje, že adaptační kapacita může navzdory odlišným zájmům a hodnocením představovat společný analytický i praktický rámec. Výsledky zdůrazňují význam přístupů ke správě destinací, které zohledňují různé skupiny aktérů a jsou orientované na odolnost, zejména v prostředí charakterizovaném institucionální složitostí, sociální rozmanitostí a pokračující změnou.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context

Tourism has long been recognised as one of the most influential global industries, not only because of its contribution to economic growth, employment, and investment, but also because of its capacity to reshape places, livelihoods, and socio-environmental systems. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism sector contributed USD 8.9 trillion to global GDP, representing 10.3 per cent of the world economy, and supported 330 million jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2019). It also generated substantial visitor exports and capital investment, underlining its strategic importance to both national economies and local development. Yet the significance of tourism cannot be understood through economic indicators alone. As Mathieson and Wall (1982) observed, tourism generates consequences that extend across economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. More recent scholarship similarly demonstrates that tourism development shapes urban and rural transformation, community well-being, environmental quality, and the long-term sustainability of destinations (Roxas et al., 2020a).

This complexity has made sustainable tourism one of the central concerns of tourism scholarship. Since the late twentieth century, sustainable tourism has evolved from an emerging concept into a dominant framework through which tourism development is interpreted, evaluated, and guided. Although its origins are often linked to the broader sustainable development agenda and early international debates on alternative tourism, the concept has expanded into a multi-dimensional field concerned with balancing economic, social, cultural, and environmental objectives (Butler, 1999; Bramwell et al., 2017). Rather than denoting a distinct form of tourism, sustainable tourism is more commonly understood as a guiding approach that seeks to align tourism development with wider sustainability goals (Lu & Nepal, 2009). In this sense, it functions both as a normative orientation and as an analytical lens for examining how destinations are governed, managed, and transformed over time.

At the same time, sustainable tourism remains both conceptually and practically challenging. A longstanding body of scholarship has shown that tourism development often generates tensions between competing priorities, including economic competitiveness and environmental protection, visitor satisfaction and resident well-being, and growth-oriented policy and cultural preservation (Bricker et al., 2013; Cornelisse, 2019; Krippendorff, 1986; Mitchell & Reid, 2001). These tensions help explain why sustainable tourism has been subject to continuing debate

and criticism. Scholars have questioned its conceptual clarity, its operational usefulness, and the extent to which it can move beyond rhetorical commitment to effective implementation (Connell & Page, 2008; Ruhanen et al., 2015). Nevertheless, sustainable tourism remains a foundational framework because it foregrounds the interdependence between tourism development and broader systems of governance, resource management, and social legitimacy. In this respect, it has also been associated with wider debates in political economy and economic geography concerning power, regulation, institutional arrangements, and the uneven distribution of benefits and costs across destinations (Brouder, 2016).

The practical difficulty of sustainable tourism lies partly in the nature of destination governance. Tourism destinations are shaped by multiple actors, including residents, tourists, businesses, and public institutions, whose interests, values, and expectations may differ substantially. Consequently, sustainability cannot be reduced to a purely technical matter of planning or regulation. It is also a social and political process through which meanings, responsibilities, and priorities are negotiated across stakeholder groups. Recent scholarship has therefore emphasised that destination sustainability depends not only on environmental or economic management, but also on the quality of governance, stakeholder relationships, and institutional legitimacy (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Mohanty et al., 2020). This has encouraged greater attention to approaches that move beyond narrow sectoral or managerial perspectives and instead examine tourism as a dynamic system shaped by interaction, contestation, and adaptation.

Such concerns have become even more pressing in the context of recurring disruption. Tourism is particularly sensitive to external shocks, including natural disasters, disease outbreaks, political instability, and economic crises, yet destinations often remain insufficiently prepared for such disturbances (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these vulnerabilities sharply and reinforced the need to understand not only how tourism systems grow, but also how they absorb, respond to, and adapt to disruption (Prayag, 2023). Under such conditions, resilience has gained prominence as a concept relevant to tourism policy, destination governance, and long-term sustainability. Increasingly, resilience is discussed not only as a crisis-management capacity, but also as part of a broader effort to understand how destinations maintain function, adjust to uncertainty, and respond to changing conditions over time.

These issues are particularly relevant in developing tourism destinations, where rapid growth often unfolds alongside evolving institutional arrangements, uneven governance capacity, and competing development priorities. Vietnam provides a

particularly pertinent context in this regard. Over recent decades, tourism has been promoted as an important driver of socio-economic development, while sustainable development has been formally recognised in national policy discourse since the introduction of Agenda 21 in 1997. At the same time, the practical meaning and implementation of sustainable tourism remain uneven across destinations and stakeholder groups. Existing studies in Vietnam have examined the issue from a number of perspectives, including stakeholder views, institutional influences, and enabling conditions for tourism development (Le, 2016; Nguyen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020). Taken together, this body of work points to both the growing significance of sustainable tourism in Vietnam and the complexity of translating sustainability principles into practice within a rapidly developing tourism context. Vietnam therefore offers a valuable setting for examining sustainable tourism as a negotiated and adaptive process rather than as a fixed policy ideal.

1.2 Problem statement

Although sustainable tourism has become a well-established field of inquiry, its capacity to explain how destination sustainability is actually produced remains limited. Existing research has generated important insights into participation, governance, and adaptive capacity, yet these strands have not been adequately consolidated into a coherent explanation of how sustainability is negotiated, mediated, and sustained within destination settings. The literature is therefore more advanced in identifying relevant dimensions of sustainable tourism than in explaining how such dimensions operate together in shaping destination-level outcomes.

A central limitation lies in the fragmented treatment of stakeholder perspectives. Much empirical research continues to examine residents, tourists, businesses, or public authorities as separate units of analysis, thereby yielding only partial accounts of sustainability processes. While this work has deepened understanding of stakeholder-specific attitudes, concerns, and responses, it has offered less insight into how perceptions are formed relationally, how asymmetries of interest and influence are negotiated, and how sustainability emerges through interaction rather than from isolated viewpoints alone (Nunkoo, 2015). This is a substantive weakness, since destination sustainability is not simply the aggregate of individual evaluations, but the outcome of continuing negotiation among actors whose roles, priorities, and capacities differ.

A related problem concerns the absence of sufficiently integrative explanatory models. Prior research has examined a range of social, relational, governance-related, and adaptive dimensions relevant to sustainable tourism, yet these have largely been theorised and tested in parallel rather than as interconnected elements of a broader sustainability process. As a result, the literature remains limited in its ability to explain how stakeholder evaluations, relational dynamics, and governance conditions combine to shape destination sustainability (Bramwell et al., 2017; Ramkissoon, 2020). In particular, resilience occupies an important but insufficiently specified place within this discussion. Despite its growing prominence in tourism studies, especially in the context of uncertainty and disruption, resilience has more often been treated as a broad capacity or desirable outcome than as an explanatory mechanism through which stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions influence sustainability over time (Prayag, 2023; Wang & Ritchie, 2012).

These limitations become especially significant in rapidly developing destinations, where tourism expansion, institutional change, and exposure to external shocks create particularly complex conditions for sustainable development. In such contexts, sustainability cannot be understood adequately without closer attention to the interplay between stakeholder perceptions, governance processes, and adaptive capacity. Yet this remains insufficiently explored, particularly in developing settings that continue to occupy a comparatively marginal position in the sustainable tourism literature (Ruhanen et al., 2015). Accordingly, the central problem addressed by this thesis is the absence of an integrated explanation of how stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions interact, through tourism resilience, to shape destination sustainability.

1.2.1. Research gaps

The problem outlined above gives rise to four interrelated research gaps that constrain current understanding of destination sustainability.

First, there is a multi-stakeholder analytical gap. Although sustainable tourism is widely framed in stakeholder terms, empirical research remains dominated by single-group perspectives, most commonly focusing separately on residents, tourists, businesses, or public authorities. While this has generated valuable insights into stakeholder-specific attitudes and responses, it has offered less understanding of how sustainability is shaped through interaction among actors whose interests, responsibilities, and influence differ across the destination system (Okazaki, 2008; Nunkoo, 2015). As a result, current research provides only limited explanation of

how stakeholder perceptions converge, diverge, or conflict, and how these dynamics affect destination-level sustainability outcomes.

Second, there is an integrative conceptual gap. Research has identified a range of social, relational, and governance-related dimensions relevant to sustainable tourism, including perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust. However, these dimensions have largely developed within separate strands of scholarship rather than being examined as interdependent elements of a broader sustainability process (Bramwell et al., 2017; Gössling & Hall, 2019; Ramkissoon, 2020). Consequently, the literature remains limited in its ability to explain how stakeholder evaluations, relational dynamics, and governance-related conditions interact in shaping destination sustainability.

Third, there is a resilience mechanism gap. Although resilience has become central to contemporary tourism scholarship, particularly in the context of recurring crises and uncertainty, its analytical role within stakeholder-based sustainability research remains underdeveloped. Existing studies tend to conceptualise resilience as a destination attribute, an adaptive capacity, or a desirable outcome of effective management, rather than testing it empirically as a mediating mechanism linking stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions to destination sustainability (Biggs et al., 2012; Prayag, 2023; Wang & Ritchie, 2012). This leaves insufficient understanding of how destinations translate stakeholder responses to disruption and change into longer-term adaptive and sustainable trajectories.

Fourth, there is a contextual gap. Sustainable tourism research remains geographically uneven, with empirical attention concentrated largely in Europe, Oceania, and North America, while developing regions such as South-East Asia remain comparatively underexamined (Ruhanen et al., 2015). This imbalance matters because sustainable tourism unfolds under differing institutional, political, and socio-cultural conditions that shape stakeholder relationships, governance capacity, and responses to uncertainty. In Vietnam, previous studies have provided useful but partial insights into stakeholder perspectives and enabling conditions, including policy, infrastructure, and environmental factors (Le, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2020). However, they have not yet examined destination sustainability through a comprehensive stakeholder-based framework that integrates governance-related conditions and resilience within a rapidly developing tourism context.

Taken together, these gaps indicate the need for a contextually grounded and theoretically integrated study that moves beyond fragmented stakeholder and

construct-specific analyses. Addressing these gaps requires an empirical framework capable of explaining how diverse stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions interact, through tourism resilience, to shape destination sustainability.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

1.3.1. Derivation and theoretical grounding of the research questions

The research questions are derived from the need to move beyond fragmented accounts of sustainable tourism towards a more integrated explanation of how destination sustainability is interpreted and produced. As established in the preceding sections, existing scholarship has generated substantial insight into stakeholder participation, governance, and resilience, yet offers more limited guidance on how these dimensions operate together within destination systems. What remains insufficiently explained is how stakeholder meanings, relational dynamics, and governance-related conditions are connected, and how these connections shape sustainability outcomes over time.

To address this limitation, the thesis draws on Hall's heterogeneous constructivism and managerial ecology perspective (Hall, 2019). This perspective is particularly appropriate because it treats sustainability not as a fixed or universally agreed condition, but as a negotiated and evolving process shaped by multiple stakeholder interests, institutional arrangements, and changing environmental circumstances. It foregrounds the plurality of meanings through which sustainability is understood, while also recognising that such meanings are embedded in wider governance relations and adaptive processes. In this respect, Hall's framework provides a coherent basis for linking stakeholder interpretation with destination governance and resilience, rather than treating these as separate fields of inquiry.

Grounded in this perspective, the research questions are organised in two analytically connected stages. The first stage addresses the interpretive dimension of the study by examining how key dimensions of sustainable tourism are understood across stakeholder groups and how these understandings inform perceptions of tourism resilience and destination sustainability. This reflects the constructivist premise that sustainability is socially produced and contested, rather than given in advance. The second stage addresses the explanatory dimension by examining how these dimensions are related to destination sustainability through the mediating role of tourism resilience. Here, resilience is positioned not merely as a contextual condition or desirable outcome, but as an explanatory mechanism through which

stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions may be translated into longer-term sustainability outcomes.

Taken together, these two stages provide the intellectual basis for the research questions and establish a coherent progression from interpretive understanding to empirical explanation. In doing so, they align the study's theoretical grounding with its mixed-methods design and provide a clear foundation for subsequent model development and hypothesis testing.

1.3.2. Research questions

This study formulates two research questions that move from interpretive understanding to explanatory analysis. The first seeks to clarify how key dimensions of sustainable tourism are understood across stakeholder groups and how these understandings inform perceptions of tourism resilience and destination sustainability. The second examines how selected stakeholder-related and governance-related dimensions influence destination sustainability through tourism resilience, while also allowing comparison across stakeholder groups.

RQ1: How do local residents, tourists, tourism businesses, and local government actors understand sustainable tourism, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, and how do these understandings inform perceptions of tourism resilience and destination sustainability?

RQ2: How do perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust influence destination sustainability through the mediating role of tourism resilience, and how do these relationships vary across stakeholder groups?

1.3.3. Research objectives

The research objectives are designed to align directly with the research questions and to establish a coherent progression from field-level positioning to empirical testing. Together, they support the development and examination of an integrated, stakeholder-based framework for understanding tourism resilience and destination sustainability.

RO1: To map and critically position the tourism resilience literature in order to identify dominant thematic emphases and areas of limited integration with stakeholder-based sustainable tourism research.

RO2: To examine and compare stakeholder interpretations of sustainable tourism, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, and to assess how these interpretations inform perceptions of tourism resilience and destination sustainability.

RO3: To develop an integrated conceptual model linking perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust to destination sustainability through tourism resilience.

RO4: To empirically test the conceptual model and compare the direct and indirect pathways across stakeholder groups, thereby clarifying the mediating role of tourism resilience in shaping destination sustainability.

Collectively, these objectives define the analytical scope of the study by linking stakeholder perceptions, governance-related factors, and tourism resilience within a single explanatory framework. They provide a structured basis for examining how sustainability is interpreted, operationalised, and mediated across stakeholder groups, and for assessing the mechanisms through which resilience contributes to destination sustainability under conditions of change and uncertainty.

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on sustainable tourism, stakeholder theory, governance, and tourism resilience, and develops the conceptual model underpinning the study. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology, including data collection procedures and analytical techniques. Chapter 4 presents and analyses the empirical findings from the bibliometric, qualitative, and quantitative phases of the research. Chapter 5 discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and reflects on their contribution to resilience-based destination governance and sustainable tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sustainable tourism development: concept, evolution and theoretical debate

Sustainable tourism development emerged from the wider concept of sustainable development, which gained international prominence through the World Conservation Strategy and the Brundtland Report (IUCN, 1980; WCED, 1987). In tourism, it was adopted as a response to the growing recognition that tourism development can generate not only economic benefits but also environmental degradation, sociocultural disruption and uneven local outcomes (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Cater, 1993; Liu, 2003). The World Tourism Organization defined sustainable tourism development as tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. This framing helped establish sustainable tourism as a dominant paradigm in academic and policy discussion from the late 1980s onward, because it appeared to offer a way of reconciling economic, social and environmental objectives within destination development (Sharpley, 2020; Bramwell, 2015). However, from the beginning, the concept carried considerable ambiguity because sustainability, sustainable development, sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development were often used interchangeably despite referring to different analytical concerns (Liu, 2003).

A central debate in the literature concerns the meaning and viability of sustainable tourism development itself. Liu (2003) argues that the field has often been patchy, disjointed and based on weak assumptions, with much research advancing little beyond the discussion of broad principles. Similarly, Hunter (1995) and Sharpley (2000) note that the concept has often been adopted uncritically, even though it rests on fragile theoretical foundations. One important distinction is between sustaining tourism and tourism as a vehicle for sustainable development. The former focuses on making tourism activity itself more environmentally and socially responsible, while the latter assumes that tourism can contribute to broader long-term development goals (Hunter, 1995; Sharpley, 2000; Rahman, 2011). Sharpley (2020) argues that these two positions have too often been conflated, leading to unrealistic expectations about tourism's developmental role. In his view, sustainable tourism is necessary, but sustainable development through tourism is far more problematic. This critique is important because it shifts attention away from tourism-centred optimism and toward a more careful assessment of whether tourism can genuinely deliver equitable and durable development outcomes.

A second major debate concerns the relationship between sustainability and growth. Much tourism policy continues to treat tourism as a driver of economic development, employment and infrastructure, especially in developing countries (Sharpley, 2009; Rahman, 2011). Yet the sustainability literature has increasingly questioned whether continued tourism expansion is compatible with environmental and social limits. Liu (2003) criticises the literature for neglecting the role of tourist demand and for often assuming that tourism growth can be taken for granted at the destination level. Sharpley (2020) goes further by arguing that global tourism has remained firmly tied to the economic growth model, despite the language of sustainability. The rapid increase in tourist arrivals, the expansion of low-cost aviation, rising carbon emissions and growing destination dependency all suggest that tourism practice continues to diverge from sustainability principles (Sharpley, 2020). This contradiction has led some scholars to question not only the feasibility of sustainable tourism development, but also the wider compatibility of growth-oriented tourism systems with sustainable development itself (Liu, 2003; Sharpley, 2020). As a result, the literature increasingly frames sustainability not as a straightforward balance, but as a field of tension between economic expansion and long-term ecological and social viability.

A third recurring issue in the literature is that sustainable tourism has often privileged environmental protection while paying insufficient attention to equity, power and local control. Liu (2003) argues that although intergenerational equity has been widely emphasised, much less attention has been given to intra-generational equity, especially the fairness of benefit distribution among stakeholder groups and the extent to which host communities are empowered to shape tourism development. Rahman (2011) makes a similar point, noting that sustainability debates have often concentrated on environmental protection while giving less attention to the human, social and political dimensions of tourism. This criticism is reinforced by the fact that local communities are frequently treated as homogeneous entities, even though they are internally divided by class, status and power, and often have unequal capacities to participate in planning and decision-making (Harrison, 1996; Tosun, 2000; Liu, 2003). Sustainable tourism development, therefore, cannot be understood only in terms of conservation or impact reduction. It must also be examined in relation to who benefits, who bears the costs, whose voices are represented, and how competing stakeholder interests are negotiated within tourism governance (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Liu, 2003).

More recent scholarship has responded to these weaknesses by calling for stronger theoretical engagement and broader analytical perspectives. Bramwell (2015) argues that sustainable tourism research needs fuller engagement with theoretical activity, including conceptual frameworks that explain processes, relationships and change rather than merely describing problems or principles. He suggests that the field has much to gain from wider social science debates, including political ecology, mobilities, transition pathways, behavioural change and systems thinking (Bramwell, 2015). This view complements Liu's (2003) earlier call for a systems perspective and interdisciplinary approach, since both scholars argue that tourism sustainability cannot be adequately understood through isolated environmental or managerial lenses. Overall, this shows that sustainable tourism development is not a settled concept but a contested and evolving field. It remains valuable as a normative framework linking tourism to long-term social, economic and environmental concerns, yet it is also marked by persistent tensions over definition, growth, equity, governance and practical implementation (Hunter, 1995; Sharpley, 2000; Liu, 2003; Rahman, 2011; Sharpley, 2020; Bramwell, 2015).

2.2 Approaches and limitations in sustainable tourism research

Although sustainable tourism development has become a prominent field of inquiry, the ways in which it has been researched and operationalised have varied considerably. Rather than developing through one unified framework, the literature has evolved through multiple approaches shaped by different disciplinary priorities, scales of analysis and practical concerns (Liu, 2003; Bramwell, 2015). Some studies have focused on environmental protection, others on planning and destination management, others on community participation, alternative tourism, or responsible tourism practice. This diversity has broadened the field and generated important insights, but it has also made it difficult to establish a consistent analytical foundation. As a result, sustainable tourism research often appears broad in scope but uneven in structure, with substantial variation in how sustainability is interpreted, studied and translated into practice (Hunter, 1995; McCool et al., 2001).

One influential approach has been the use of environmental management perspectives, particularly those centred on conservation, carrying capacity and impact control. These approaches were important in drawing attention to the ecological consequences of tourism growth and in encouraging longer-term planning. However, their practical application has often proven difficult. Carrying capacity, for instance, has been widely discussed as a way of identifying the limits of tourism development, yet its implementation has been constrained by the complexity of destinations, the diversity of visitor types, and the difficulty of

defining fixed thresholds for acceptable change (Butler, 1997; McCool and Lime, 2001; Liu, 2003). In practice, sustainability cannot easily be reduced to a single numerical limit because destinations vary not only in ecological resilience but also in their social tolerance, governance capacity and development priorities. Consequently, many environmental management tools remain useful in principle, but less decisive in practice than their early promise suggested.

A second prominent approach has involved the development of sustainability indicators, planning models and policy guidelines intended to make sustainable tourism more measurable and actionable. These efforts have helped move the field beyond abstract principle, yet they have also exposed a persistent weakness: the gap between normative ambition and operational feasibility. Murphy (1998) observed that while it is relatively easy to advocate sustainable tourism, it is far more difficult to design effective and practical systems of measurement and implementation. Liu (2003) similarly argues that disagreement remains over what exactly should be sustained and how sustainability should be evaluated. In this respect, sustainable tourism has often functioned more effectively as a guiding ideal than as a precise management instrument. The literature therefore suggests that operational tools are necessary, but insufficient on their own, because sustainability also depends on interpretation, judgement and context-specific negotiation among competing interests.

A further strand of research has promoted alternative tourism forms, such as ecotourism, community tourism, soft tourism and responsible tourism, as pathways to more sustainable development. These approaches have made important contributions by drawing attention to smaller-scale, lower-impact and more locally sensitive forms of tourism practice. However, they have also been criticised for offering only partial solutions. Liu (2003) argues that alternative tourism cannot substitute for the structural importance of mainstream tourism and often provides only a micro-level response to a macro-level problem. Rahman (2011) likewise notes that the literature remains divided between those who regard such forms as viable sustainability pathways and those who see them as limited or overly idealised. This criticism has encouraged a broader shift in research away from asking which tourism type is most sustainable and towards examining how all forms of tourism, including conventional tourism, can be governed and managed more responsibly.

More recent scholarship has therefore called for more integrative, interdisciplinary and process-oriented approaches to sustainable tourism research. Rather than treating sustainability as a fixed technical objective, this literature views it as a complex process shaped by multiple actors, competing interests and changing

conditions (Liu, 2003; Bramwell, 2015). This shift is important because it moves the field beyond narrow environmentalism and beyond purely descriptive case study traditions. It also creates space for examining governance, adaptation, social relations and institutional capacity as part of sustainability analysis. The main limitation of earlier approaches was not that they were unhelpful, but that they often captured only one dimension of a more complex reality. This insight is important because it supports an approach that does not isolate sustainability into a single tool, indicator or tourism form, but instead examines it as an evolving and multidimensional destination process.

2.3 Stakeholder perspectives in sustainable tourism development

A growing body of literature recognises that sustainable tourism development cannot be understood solely through environmental indicators, economic performance, or destination-level planning goals. Rather, it is shaped by the perceptions, interests and interactions of multiple stakeholders who influence, experience and evaluate tourism in different ways (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Byrd, 2007; Liu, 2003). This stakeholder-centred view reflects the broader shift in tourism research away from treating destinations as purely managerial or spatial units and towards understanding them as social systems characterised by negotiation, contestation and interdependence. Sustainable tourism outcomes, therefore, are not simply technical achievements but socially mediated processes, shaped by how different groups define benefits, costs, responsibilities and acceptable forms of change. It can be concluded that stakeholder perspectives are not peripheral to sustainability, but central to how it is interpreted, pursued and assessed within destinations.

Among all stakeholder groups, local residents have received the greatest attention in sustainable tourism research. This literature has shown that residents' support for tourism development is strongly influenced by their perceptions of tourism's economic, social, cultural and environmental effects (Liu et al., 1987; Ap, 1992; Andereck et al., 2005). Where tourism is perceived to generate employment, income, infrastructure improvement and community vitality, residents are generally more supportive. Conversely, perceptions of congestion, environmental degradation, cultural commodification, rising prices or social disruption are often associated with opposition or ambivalence towards tourism expansion (Gursoy et al., 2002; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Styliadis et al., 2014). However, as Liu (2003) argues, local communities should not be treated as homogeneous entities. Internal inequalities, differences in livelihood dependence, power asymmetries and unequal participation in decision-making all affect how tourism is experienced and evaluated. Thus,

although the resident perspective is essential, it captures only one part of a much wider sustainability picture.

Tourists also represent an important, though comparatively less integrated, perspective in the sustainable tourism literature. Traditionally, tourists were often treated as consumers whose behaviour generated impacts rather than as stakeholders whose perceptions could shape destination sustainability. More recent work, however, suggests that tourists influence sustainability not only through consumption patterns but also through their expectations, cultural behaviour, willingness to support responsible practices, and interpretation of host destinations (Reisinger and Turner, 2003; Bramwell, 2015). Tourist experiences are shaped by the environmental quality of destinations, the authenticity or staging of local culture, and the nature of interaction with host communities (MacCannell, 1976; Hughes, 1995; Tucker, 2001). At the same time, the literature indicates that tourists are not always passive recipients of destination management, since their preferences and behaviours affect the viability of tourism products and the social atmosphere of destinations. Even so, tourist perspectives have often remained analytically separate from resident-based sustainability research, limiting broader understanding of how host and guest evaluations intersect in shaping destination development.

Tourism businesses and government actors constitute two further stakeholder groups whose roles are critical but unevenly addressed in the literature. Businesses influence sustainability through investment decisions, employment practices, service design, environmental management and their willingness to adopt responsible or ESG-oriented approaches. Yet their priorities may also remain shaped by profitability, competitiveness and market demand, which can create tensions between short-term commercial logic and longer-term sustainability goals (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Sharpley, 2020). Government actors, by contrast, play a central role in planning, regulation, coordination and destination governance. They influence not only the strategic direction of tourism development but also the extent to which different stakeholder voices are included or excluded from decision-making processes. The literature increasingly suggests that sustainable tourism depends not merely on the existence of policies, but on whether governance systems are perceived as legitimate, responsive and capable of balancing competing interests (Liu, 2003; Bramwell, 2015). Nevertheless, business and government perspectives are often examined separately from resident and tourist perspectives, resulting in a fragmented account of destination sustainability.

Taken together, these observations suggest that one of the major weaknesses in the literature is the tendency to examine stakeholder groups in isolation rather than as

interdependent actors within a shared tourism system. Residents, tourists, businesses and government actors do not simply hold different opinions; they occupy different positions within tourism development, possess unequal power and resources, and interpret sustainability through distinct practical and normative lenses. As a result, sustainable tourism development cannot be fully explained through any single stakeholder viewpoint. A more integrated perspective is needed to understand how these groups evaluate tourism, how their interests converge or diverge, and how their interactions shape broader destination outcomes. This is especially important in rapidly changing destinations, where tourism growth, governance challenges and social diversity may intensify differences in perception and influence. This gap in the literature justifies a comparative multi-stakeholder approach that treats sustainability not as a uniformly understood goal, but as a negotiated outcome emerging from different stakeholder experiences and priorities.

2.4 Tourism resilience and destination sustainability

In recent years, tourism resilience has become an increasingly important concept in debates on destination sustainability. This shift reflects growing recognition that tourism destinations operate under conditions of uncertainty, complexity, and change, rather than in stable environments where sustainability can be achieved through fixed planning principles alone. Crises such as economic shocks, political instability, environmental change, natural hazards, and global health emergencies have shown that destinations must do more than preserve resources or manage impacts. They must also be able to absorb disturbance, adapt to changing conditions, coordinate recovery, and reorganise without losing their longer-term viability. In this sense, resilience adds a dynamic dimension to sustainability by drawing attention to adaptive capacity, recovery, and transformation rather than to balance or maintenance alone (Bramwell, 2015; Sharpley, 2020). Recent review-based evidence further reinforces this point by showing that tourism resilience is increasingly understood through governance-related capacities such as risk assessment, collaborative planning, community empowerment, and adaptive decision-making in disaster-affected destinations (Zhang et al., 2024). For tourism research, this is particularly valuable because it shifts analysis from static end-states towards the processes through which destinations respond to pressure and continue to function over time.

Although resilience and sustainability are closely related, they are not identical. Sustainability is generally concerned with the longer-term maintenance of environmental, social, and economic conditions, whereas resilience focuses more directly on the capacity of systems to cope with shocks, adapt to disruption, and

continue operating under stress. A destination may pursue sustainability goals, yet still remain fragile if it lacks the institutional, social, or organisational capacity to respond effectively to crises. Conversely, a destination may demonstrate resilience in the short term, but this does not automatically guarantee equitable or environmentally sound development. The value of resilience therefore lies not in replacing sustainability, but in complementing it. It helps explain how sustainability can be supported, weakened, or reshaped through processes of adaptation and response. This interpretation is increasingly reflected in tourism governance research, where resilience is linked not only to recovery from crisis, but also to the capacity to reduce vulnerability, strengthen preparedness, and embed more adaptive and context-sensitive forms of destination management (Zhang et al., 2024). This is also consistent with broader calls in sustainable tourism research for greater attention to systems thinking, transition processes, and behavioural or institutional change, rather than relying only on broad sustainability principles (Liu, 2003; Bramwell, 2015).

The relevance of resilience to tourism destinations also arises from the fact that tourism is shaped by multiple interdependent actors and resources. Destinations are not single organisations, but complex systems involving governments, businesses, residents, tourists, infrastructures, natural resources, and social relations. Their ability to remain viable depends on how these elements interact under changing conditions. Liu (2003) argued that sustainable tourism research requires a systems perspective because tourism development is influenced by dynamic interactions between economic, social, technological, and environmental forces. This argument also supports the relevance of resilience, since adaptive capacity is not located in one part of the destination alone. It depends on the relationships among stakeholders, the flexibility of institutions, the quality of governance, the protection of resources, and the willingness of actors to adjust their behaviour. In this respect, recent evidence from disaster-affected tourism regions is particularly instructive. Zhang et al. (2024) show that resilience is strengthened where governance arrangements support stakeholder collaboration, community participation, preparedness planning, and adaptive recovery strategies. Their review suggests that resilience is not merely a property of infrastructure or markets, but also a function of how destinations organise collective action before, during, and after disruption. From this perspective, resilience provides a useful way of understanding how destinations cope not only with external shocks, but also with internal tensions and structural weaknesses.

Importantly, resilience also offers a way of connecting stakeholder perspectives to broader destination outcomes. As discussed in the previous section, different stakeholders experience tourism differently and possess unequal capacities to

influence development. Their perceptions of change, trust, responsibility, cooperation, and governance all affect how effectively a destination can respond to challenges. A destination with strong adaptive capacity is likely to depend on more than environmental quality or market performance alone. It also requires supportive social relations, credible institutions, responsive governance, and some degree of coordination among stakeholders. This point is reinforced by Zhang et al. (2024), whose review identifies collaborative planning, community empowerment, and adaptive governance as recurring strategies through which tourism destinations build resilience and support recovery. In this respect, resilience can be understood as a bridging concept between stakeholder-level conditions and destination-level sustainability. It helps explain how individual and collective perceptions may be translated into the wider capacity of a destination to endure, adapt, and develop over time. This is especially important in settings where tourism development is rapid, governance conditions are uneven, and stakeholder interests do not automatically align.

Tourism resilience is therefore positioned as a key analytical link between stakeholder perceptions and destination sustainability. The literature suggests that sustainability cannot be fully explained either by abstract principles or by isolated stakeholder viewpoints. What matters is how destinations build the capacity to manage competing demands, respond to disruption, and sustain development under changing conditions. Resilience captures this capacity more effectively than static sustainability language alone, because it directs attention to adaptation, learning, preparedness, and the governance conditions under which longer-term viability becomes possible. Recent review evidence also suggests that resilience is closely tied to practical governance strategies such as risk assessment, stakeholder coordination, crisis planning, and community-based capacity building, all of which have implications not only for recovery but also for more sustainable tourism development over time (Zhang et al., 2024). By placing resilience between stakeholder perceptions and destination sustainability, this thesis responds to calls for more integrative and process-oriented approaches in sustainable tourism research (Liu, 2003; Bramwell, 2015). It also provides a clearer basis for examining how different stakeholder groups contribute, in distinct ways, to the broader sustainability of the destination.

2.5. Theoretical background

Tourism scholarship increasingly recognises the need to understand destination development as a multi-layered process shaped by interdependent actors, dynamic feedback loops and shifting socio-economic conditions. Rather than viewing

sustainability outcomes as the product of isolated influences, contemporary debates emphasise the importance of examining how stakeholder perceptions, governance structures and resource dynamics interact across levels of a tourism system (Bramwell & Lane, 2011a, 2011b; Byrd, 2007). This systemic orientation reflects the growing awareness that tourism systems must be understood in terms of their relationships, adaptive behaviours and vulnerability to external pressures. Within this context, several theoretical traditions offer relevant insights into how stakeholders evaluate tourism, negotiate benefits and costs, and respond to perceived risks. These include Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995), Social Exchange Theory (Ap, 1990; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and the Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2015), each foregrounding different mechanisms that shape attitudes, behaviours and decision-making.

Although these theories provide valuable conceptual tools, the literature often applies them independently, thereby overlooking the interconnected forces that underpin sustainability transitions. Research tends to concentrate on specific stakeholder categories, most notably residents (Andereck et al., 2005; Gursoy et al., 2002), or examines discrete constructs such as perceived impacts, trust or threat without linking them to wider systemic processes (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Similarly, COR theory has been deployed mainly in crisis-related contexts, such as in studies analysing burnout or destination fragility during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mao et al., 2021; Bardoel & Drago, 2021), but its potential contribution to understanding collective resilience and ESG-oriented sustainability remains limited. This fragmentation makes it difficult to capture the relational and interdependent nature of sustainability, where stakeholder perceptions, governance arrangements and resource capacities interact to shape long-term outcomes. Consequently, a more integrative approach is needed to examine how diverse theoretical insights can be brought together to explain the emergence of resilience within tourism systems. Figure 1 provides the conceptual anchor for this thesis by portraying tourism as a Complex Adaptive System (CAS) whose outcomes emerge through continual interaction between structural forces and socially constructed meanings. The figure illustrates how tourism development is shaped by two complementary domains. The first is a systems-oriented perspective, in which tourism destinations evolve through adaptive processes, feedback loops and dynamic responses to external shocks. The second domain highlights the interpretive nature of stakeholder perceptions, emphasising that meanings, expectations and evaluations are socially constructed through everyday interactions. By positioning

tourism at the intersection of these two domains, the figure demonstrates that sustainability cannot be understood solely through environmental or economic indicators, but must instead be examined as a relational process shaped by adaptive behaviours, shifting perceptions and complex governance arrangements. This conceptual framing provides the rationale for integrating multiple theoretical perspectives in the analysis that follows, since no single theory is sufficient to capture the interplay between system dynamics, stakeholder interpretations and resilience pathways.

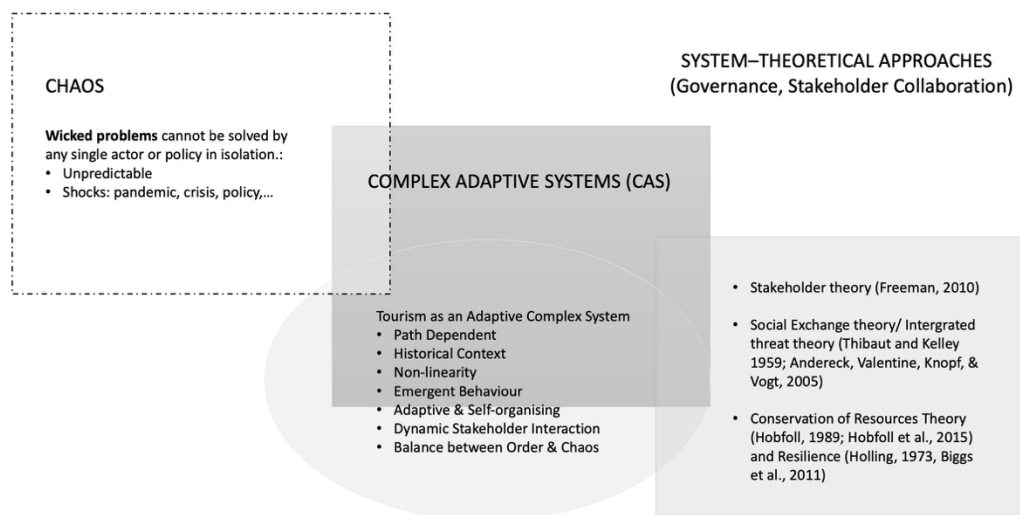


Figure 1. Critical realist and constructivist perspectives: tourism as a complex adaptive system with socially constructed meanings

Source: Author

Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory forms a central conceptual foundation for this research, given its broad influence in both academic debate and managerial practice. The theory offers a holistic understanding of organisational structures and decision-making processes by recognising that outcomes are shaped by the interests, claims and expectations of multiple stakeholder groups (Harrison et al., 2015). Unlike traditional management approaches that emphasise shareholder value, stakeholder theory explicitly incorporates ethical considerations into the governance agenda, arguing that organisations have responsibilities extending beyond narrow economic performance

(Donaldson & Preston, 1995). This ethical dimension is reinforced by the work of Phillips et al. (2003), who highlight fairness, inclusivity and moral responsibility as core principles guiding stakeholder relations. Within the tourism sector, where diverse stakeholders interact in socially, economically and environmentally sensitive contexts, the theory is particularly useful for understanding how collaboration and engagement shape development pathways.

Donaldson & Preston's (1995) articulation of the theory's three dimensions provides a structured basis for analysing stakeholder relations in tourism. The descriptive dimension concerns the factual patterns of relationships between organisations and stakeholders across historical, current and anticipated future contexts. This is relevant in tourism settings where past interactions, institutional legacies and evolving governance arrangements influence present stakeholder expectations. The instrumental dimension considers how stakeholder management affects organisational performance and outcomes. In competitive and dynamic tourism markets, shifting visitor flows or the entry of new operators may alter stakeholder influence, making the effectiveness of engagement strategies vital for maintaining legitimacy and resilience. Finally, the normative dimension establishes the ethical grounding of the theory, asserting that stakeholders deserve participation in decision-making processes not merely for instrumental reasons but as a matter of moral obligation. As Byrd (2007) argues, such inclusivity is fundamental to promoting equitable and sustainable tourism outcomes.

In this research, stakeholder theory provides an analytical lens for examining how different groups contribute to, interpret and negotiate sustainable tourism development. Tourism destinations involve multiple stakeholders, including governments, local communities, tourists and service providers, each holding distinct yet interdependent interests. Applying the descriptive, instrumental and normative dimensions supports an exploration of how stakeholder engagement influences sustainable practices and how imbalances in representation may undermine long-term development goals. This perspective is especially pertinent in Vietnam, where rapid tourism growth, institutional transitions and uneven participation can create disparities in influence and decision-making. By foregrounding ethical and collaborative engagement, the theory underscores the need for inclusive governance approaches that align stakeholder interests and support more resilient and sustainable tourism development.

Social exchange theory and Integrated Threat Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a widely applied foundation for understanding how individuals form attitudes based on perceived costs and benefits. Originating in economic principles and later extended by Thibaut & Kelley (1959) to encompass the social psychology of interpersonal relations, SET argues that people evaluate relationships according to subjective comparisons that reflect their expectations, values and experiences. These comparison standards differ across individuals and groups, influencing how satisfaction and support are formed. Within tourism research, SET has been instrumental in explaining why residents' attitudes toward tourism development depend on how they assess its personal and community impacts (Andereck et al., 2005). The theory proposes that support for tourism increases when perceived benefits exceed perceived costs, making it a suitable lens for examining attitudinal patterns that vary across social and cultural contexts.

The breadth of SET's application in tourism reflects its ability to account for the multi-level processes through which individuals form and adjust their evaluations of tourism development. Previous studies have shown that SET effectively links perceptions of tourism's economic, environmental and sociocultural impacts to levels of local support (Choi & Murray, 2010; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010a; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010b; Perdue et al., 1990). Individuals employed in tourism-related sectors, for example, tend to express more favourable attitudes because they experience direct economic gains (Haley et al., 2005; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996). Likewise, communities perceiving stronger net benefits often report more positive orientations toward tourists and tourism development (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Ryan & Montgomery, 1994). SET also extends to national-level comparisons. Pizam et al., (1993) demonstrate that residents of Fiji viewed tourism's economic benefits more positively than their counterparts in the United States, partly because tourism comprises a larger share of Fiji's economy and foreign exchange earnings (World Tourism Organization, 2005). Such evidence shows that in many developing contexts, net economic gain (Lindberg & Johnson, 1997) remains a powerful predictor of favourable tourism attitudes. Moreover, SET's conceptualisation of exchanges as encompassing both tangible and intangible elements, including verbal, non-verbal, symbolic and affective interactions (Wu et al., 2018), helps explain how trust facilitates ongoing exchanges between tourists and hosts (Akarsu et al., 2020; Coulson et al., 2014; Kang & Lee, 2018). These perspectives underline SET's

relevance for analysing the relational foundations of host-guest interaction and the adaptation strategies adopted by local communities.

To complement SET, this research incorporates Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) to capture the affective and cognitive dimensions of stakeholder attitudes that are not fully addressed through evaluations of costs and benefits alone. ITT is particularly suited to tourism contexts because of its focus on realistic and symbolic threats, both of which align closely with concerns regarding negative tourism impacts (Berno, 1999; King et al., 1993). The theory's attention to stereotypes resonates with a rich body of tourism literature examining perception biases and cultural misunderstandings between hosts and visitors (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Furthermore, ITT highlights the role of emotions in shaping intergroup relations, an aspect that has been identified as central to host–tourist interactions (McIntosh & Johnson, 2004). Integrating SET with ITT therefore enables a more comprehensive understanding of host attitudes by combining evaluations of costs and benefits with perceptions of threat, anxiety and intergroup dynamics. This dual-theoretical approach strengthens the analytical framing of this thesis by recognising that sustainable tourism development depends not only on material exchanges and net gains but also on emotional, psychological and symbolic dimensions that shape social acceptance and long-term cooperation.

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and resilience

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory offers a resource-based explanation for human behaviour and organisational adaptation by proposing that individuals and organisations are fundamentally driven to acquire, safeguard and build valued resources, while the loss or threatened loss of these resources constitutes a major source of stress (Hobfoll, 1989). As a theoretical framework, COR emphasises two core principles. First, resource loss has a disproportionately greater psychological impact than resource gain, making loss prevention a central motivation for behaviour. Second, resilience arises from proactive investment in resource protection, recovery and development, enabling individuals and organisations to respond constructively to adversity (Hobfoll, 1989; Holmgreen et al., 2017). These principles illuminate why actors facing uncertainty or crisis must prioritise resource management strategies that reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity. Bardoel & Drago (2021) further highlight that such growth-oriented responses to challenges signify not merely endurance, but the potential for strengthened resilience.

Within tourism studies, COR theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how stakeholders navigate periods of instability and change. Although COR has predominantly been applied to individual-level psychological resilience, such as coping with stress, burnout or resource depletion (Hobfoll et al., 2015), its explanatory potential extends to organisational and systemic levels, particularly in sectors characterised by volatility and interdependence, such as tourism. Applications of COR in tourism have explored employee behaviour, organisational performance and visitor experience, yet these studies often remain focused on micro-level resource processes. The growing complexity of tourism systems underscores the need to broaden COR theory to encompass how organisations and destinations mobilise resources collectively to maintain continuity, adapt to external pressures and support long-term sustainability.

Recent crisis-related scholarship has further demonstrated the relevance of COR theory in tourism contexts. Mao et al. (2021), examining organisational responses during the COVID-19 pandemic, show that proactive resource investment, such as enhanced mental health support and flexible working arrangements, helped mitigate resource loss and foster psychological resilience among employees. Their findings illustrate how resource-oriented strategies can buffer against the destabilising effects of global disruptions. Nevertheless, much of the research applying COR in tourism continues to privilege individual-level dynamics, leaving organisational and destination-level resilience comparatively under-theorised.

This research incorporates COR theory into the analysis of sustainable tourism development, with particular emphasis on the role of environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices as critical resource domains. ESG initiatives, which encompass environmental stewardship, social equity and ethical governance, align closely with COR's emphasis on resource protection, accumulation and renewal. Conceptualising ESG practices as resource-building mechanisms allows for a more integrated understanding of how destinations strengthen resilience through stakeholder collaboration and coordinated management. By framing ESG as a strategic resource base, this study extends COR theory beyond the individual level, offering insight into how resource-oriented policies and partnerships can mitigate the impacts of crises and support long-term destination sustainability.

Integrative reflection

The preceding theoretical discussions demonstrate that no single framework is sufficient to explain the complexity of stakeholder perceptions or the emergence of

resilience within tourism systems. Each theory contributes a distinctive analytical dimension: Stakeholder Theory articulates the ethical and governance-related foundations of inclusive decision-making; Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains how individuals and communities evaluate tourism through perceived costs and benefits; Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) captures socio-psychological processes, including perceptions of realistic and symbolic threats and their implications for trust; and the Conservation of Resources (COR) framework highlights the significance of resource protection, accumulation and renewal in shaping adaptive capacity. While each theory has been effectively applied in its respective domain, their isolated use limits the ability to understand how economic evaluations, intergroup relations, governance legitimacy and resource dynamics collectively shape resilience and long-term sustainability.

This thesis advances a more comprehensive analytical strategy by aligning these complementary perspectives with the study's research questions. Rather than revisiting fragmentation in the existing literature, the integrative approach presented here positions the theories as mutually reinforcing components that together illuminate the pathways through which sustainability outcomes emerge. The combination of SET and ITT provides insight into how stakeholders interpret tourism impacts and negotiate social relations, while Stakeholder Theory highlights the normative and institutional contexts in which these perceptions acquire meaning. COR theory then extends this logic by conceptualising ESG practices as strategic resource domains that underpin resilience at the organisational and destination levels. Bringing these perspectives together enables the development of a multidimensional framework capable of explaining how perceptions, trust, governance practices and resource strategies converge to influence destination resilience and sustainability.

Table 1 summarises the theoretical foundations that inform the two research questions guiding this thesis. By mapping each research question to the theory best suited to explain its causal logic, the table demonstrates how this multi-theoretical approach enables an examination of both perceptual and structural mechanisms. In doing so, it underscores the contribution of this thesis: the construction of a resilience-centred, stakeholder-informed framework that bridges disparate strands of sustainability research and provides a coherent basis for analysing the interplay between perceptions, trust, resource management and long-term development outcomes.

Table 1. Theoretical foundations addressing the research questions

Research questions	Main theories	Why this theory fits	Predicted link
RQ1. How do local residents, tourists, tourism businesses, and local government actors perceive sustainable tourism, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, and how do these perceptions shape understandings of tourism resilience and destination sustainability?	SET	Explains how perceived costs and benefits shape attitudes and levels of stakeholder support.	Favourable impacts and positive host-guest exchanges → Resilience.
	ITT	Captures how realistic and symbolic threats, stereotypes and trust influence intergroup relations.	Reduced threat perceptions and higher trust → Collaboration → Resilience.
RQ2. How do perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust influence destination sustainability through the mediating role of tourism resilience, and how do these relationships vary across stakeholder groups?	Stakeholder Theory	Frames sustainability as the outcome of balancing diverse stakeholder interests and governance legitimacy.	Political trust and inclusive engagement → Resilience → Sustainability.
	COR Theory	Conceptualises ESG practices as resource domains essential for protection, renewal and adaptive capacity.	ESG investments → Resilience → Sustainability.

2.6 Hypotheses development and conceptual model

Alignment of research questions, objectives and hypothesis testing

Building on the theoretical foundations established in Section 2.1, this section develops a set of hypotheses that specify the relationships among stakeholder-based antecedents, tourism resilience, and destination sustainability. The purpose is to move from the conceptual arguments and research gaps identified in Chapter 1 to an empirically testable model of how stakeholder perceptions and governance-related conditions shape adaptive capacity in tourism destinations and, through this, sustainability outcomes.

More specifically, Research Question 1 and Research Objectives 1 and 2 provide the interpretive and conceptual foundation for this analysis by clarifying how key tourism constructs are understood across stakeholder groups. Building on this foundation, Research Question 2 and Research Objectives 3 and 4 move to an explanatory stage by specifying the structural relationships among these constructs. These relationships are operationalised through Hypotheses H1 to H5, which examine how stakeholder-based antecedents influence destination sustainability through the mediating role of tourism resilience.

The hypotheses draw on the integrated logic developed across Stakeholder Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Integrated Threat Theory, and Conservation of Resources theory. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that sustainability outcomes are not produced by any single factor but emerge from the interplay between stakeholder evaluations of tourism consequences, the relational quality of interactions within destinations, the governance practices embedded in organisational and public decision-making, and the level of trust stakeholders hold in institutions (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Ap, 1990; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2015; Bramwell & Lane, 2011a; Byrd, 2007). In this thesis, tourism resilience captures the destination's collective adaptive capacity and is positioned as the mechanism through which these antecedent conditions are translated into more durable sustainability performance.

Conceptual model overview

The conceptual model positions destination sustainability as an outcome emerging from the interaction of stakeholder perceptions, relational processes and governance

conditions within tourism destinations. Sustainable tourism is grounded in the broader sustainable development agenda emphasising societal well-being and ecological balance, yet its operationalisation remains contested and context-dependent (Sharpley, 2000). Competing interpretations highlight the need to reconcile socioeconomic progress with ecological preservation (Boachie, 2012), while also recognising the constraints within which environmental pressures must be managed (Hopwood et al., 2005). In tourism scholarship, the UNEP and UNWTO (2005) definition frames sustainable tourism as a long-term orientation that accounts for present and future economic, social and environmental impacts while meeting the needs of visitors, industry, host communities and the environment. This definition aligns with the triple bottom line perspective emphasising interdependence among environmental, economic and sociocultural pillars (Dwyer, 2005; Weaver, 2005), and with destination-level criteria of livability, equity and viability (Tanguay et al., 2013). Extensions such as the quadruple bottom line further suggest that organisational development and internal capacities also contribute to destination sustainability outcomes (Roxas et al., 2020b).

Within this framing, the model specifies four antecedent constructs, including perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, as conditions expected to strengthen tourism resilience, which is conceptualised as the mediating mechanism linking stakeholder-level evaluations and governance conditions to destination-level sustainability. Perceived tourism impacts capture stakeholder evaluations of tourism's economic, sociocultural and environmental consequences (Andereck, 1995), while also recognising socio-psychological outcomes arising from interaction and intergroup dynamics (Pizam et al., 1991). Host-guest relationships reflect the quality of interaction, communication and exchange shaping social cohesion and experiential evaluations (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982; Bitner, 1992; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). ESG practices indicate the extent to which environmental stewardship, social responsibility and governance integrity are embedded in organisational behaviour and destination management, consistent with the diffusion of ESG as a framework for non-financial performance and accountability (Goldman Sachs, 2006; PRI, 2019; Gillan et al., 2021). Political trust reflects confidence in institutional competence and responsiveness, typically conceptualised as performance-contingent and domain-specific (Mishler and Rose, 1997; Hudson, 2006; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2003). Tourism resilience is conceptualised as the destination's capacity to absorb disturbances, reorganise and adapt under conditions of change (Holling, 1973), an

orientation increasingly regarded as essential given the volatility and non-linearity of tourism systems (Faulkner, 2001; Becken, 2013).

In this model, destination sustainability represents the longer-term outcome reflecting the extent to which environmental, economic and sociocultural objectives are maintained and safeguarded through tourism practices over time (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005; Dwyer, 2005; Weaver, 2005). A stakeholder-informed perspective recognises that sustainability is shaped by the perceptions and actions of multiple groups. Residents evaluate tourism through perceived impacts, interaction quality and livelihood dependence, shaping support and social licence for development (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Kim et al., 2020; Panasiuk, 2021; Madrigal, 1995; Murphy, 1981). Tourists influence sustainability through expectations and behaviour, with perceptions linked to destination images, satisfaction and intentions, and increasingly to sustainable tourism indicators (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023; Torres-Delgado et al., 2023; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). Tourism businesses contribute through investment decisions and operational practices while navigating regulatory conditions and resource constraints (Han, 2021; Streimikiene et al., 2021; Kornilaki & Font, 2019; Coles et al., 2016; Dosumu et al., 2017; Mihalič et al., 2016). Governments shape sustainability through policy design, infrastructure investment and regulatory oversight, including alignment with SDG-oriented development priorities (Vieira et al., 2016; Hall, 2019; Ferrer-Roca et al., 2020; Kapera, 2018). Tourism resilience therefore functions within this framework as the mechanism translating stakeholder perceptions and governance conditions into the durability of destination sustainability outcomes.

Hypotheses development

H1: Perceived tourism impacts positively influence tourism resilience.

Perceived tourism impacts are commonly categorised into economic, sociocultural and environmental domains (Andereck, 1995). These evaluations shape whether stakeholders view tourism development as an acceptable trajectory and whether they are willing to support adaptive strategies when destinations face disruption. Economic impacts may be interpreted as beneficial through employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and infrastructure investment, yet may also be interpreted as destabilising through inflationary pressure, leakage and dependency (Kim, 2002; Mason, 2003; Pender & Sharpley, 2005; Salazar & Cardoso, 2019). Sociocultural impacts can strengthen community attachment and legitimacy through cultural preservation and intercultural understanding, but can also provoke resistance

through perceived commodification, tension and congestion (Ap, 1990; Pizam, 1978; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009; Shahzalal, 2016). Environmental impacts likewise operate as a dual signal: they can reflect improved resource management, but can also represent visible externalities such as pollution, erosion and depletion (Pizam & Milman, 1986; Almeida-García et al., 2016; Segota et al., 2017; Nematpour & Faraji, 2019). Socio-psychological impacts further condition adaptive capacity by shaping trust, cooperation and conflict in host–tourist relations (Pizam et al., 1991; Stringer & Pearce, 1984; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Where impacts are evaluated as manageable and sufficiently beneficial, stakeholders are more likely to support collective adjustment and crisis-oriented coordination, strengthening resilience conditions (Andereck et al., 2005; Styliadis et al., 2014). Conversely, negative evaluations can reduce cooperation and participation, undermining adaptive capacity (Ko & Stewart, 2002). Given that existing research has often prioritised residents, modelling this relationship within a multi-stakeholder framing is necessary to capture how impact evaluations across groups contribute to destination resilience.

H2: Host-guest relationships positively influence tourism resilience.

Host-guest relationships emerge through repeated interaction that shapes emotional responses, social feedback and service evaluations (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982; Bitner, 1992; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). As destinations face disruption, resilience depends partly on whether relational conditions support communication, mutual understanding and coordinated adaptation. Interaction is particularly consequential in culturally diverse settings where difference can intensify both learning and tension, thereby affecting the stability of social relations (Crompton, 1979; Kaminakis et al., 2019). Host–tourist encounters also involve hedonic dimensions such as warmth and welcome and functional exchanges such as information and guidance, both of which shape perceived encounter quality (Voss et al., 2003; Kobia & Liu, 2017; Kaminakis et al., 2019). When interaction supports value co-creation, relationships can evolve beyond transactional exchanges into collaborative processes that enable shared problem-solving (Gummesson & Mele, 2010; Neghina et al., 2014). At destination scale, these dynamics involve not only firms but also residents and public actors, influencing the social character of tourism development and the willingness of communities to cooperate (Ap, 1990; Cohen, 1979; Woosnam et al., 2009; Bimonte & Punzo, 2016; Sharpley, 2014; Liu-Lastres & Cahyanto, 2020). Stronger host-guest relations therefore provide a plausible mechanism for resilience by strengthening trust-based networks and coordination capacity, which become salient during disruption (Pizam et al., 2000; Heuman, 2005; Colton, 1986).

H3: ESG practices positively influence tourism resilience.

ESG practices have emerged as a framework for evaluating organisational performance beyond financial metrics by foregrounding environmental, social and governance dimensions (Goldman Sachs, 2006). As ESG becomes integrated into responsible investment and organisational evaluation, environmental stewardship, social responsibility and governance quality are increasingly treated as determinants of longer-term performance and legitimacy (Dorfleitner et al., 2015; PRI, 2019; Matos, 2020; Li et al., 2021; Chua & Han, 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that ESG disclosure and performance can support competitive advantage, reduce exposure to shocks and enhance organisational value and accountability (Friede et al., 2015; Crifo et al., 2015; Cek & Eyupoglu, 2020; Bernardi & Stark, 2018; Fatemi et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2017). ESG metrics also translate CSR intentions into operationalised practices that stakeholders can evaluate and use as signals of credibility (Gillan et al., 2021), supporting institutionalisation within governance and management systems (Chen et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2024). In tourism contexts, ESG practices provide a mechanism for resilience because they strengthen risk-relevant capacities—environmental protection, social cohesion and governance integrity—that support coordinated adaptation under stress. This logic aligns with the proposition that resilience depends on investment in resource protection and accumulation (Hobfoll, 1989) and with principles emphasising diversity, connectivity, learning and governance multiplicity as components of resilient systems (Biggs et al., 2015).

H4: Political trust positively influences tourism resilience.

Political trust is commonly conceptualised as an outcome of institutional performance, strengthening when stakeholders perceive responsiveness and effectiveness and weakening when institutions fail to meet expectations (Craig et al., 1990; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Hudson, 2006; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Wan et al., 2017). Because tourism governance involves public decisions about safety, crisis response, resource management and community well-being, trust in local government plausibly conditions the willingness of stakeholders to comply with guidance, participate in collective initiatives and accept coordinated responses during uncertainty. Trust is also domain-specific, with stakeholders evaluating government differently across policy areas such as infrastructure, taxation and environmental management (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2003; Christensen & Lægreid, 2001). In tourism contexts, this domain specificity matters because stakeholder support may depend on whether government is

perceived as credible in the domains most visible to the stakeholder group. Higher trust can therefore strengthen resilience by enabling coordination and compliance during disruption, supporting recovery and adaptive capacity (Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2003; Wang, 2005; Herian et al., 2012; Goldfinch et al., 2021; Lynn & Robichau, 2013).

H5: Tourism resilience positively affects destination sustainability.

Resilience originates in ecological and socio-ecological thinking as the capacity to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change (Holling, 1973), and has been increasingly applied to tourism because the sector is highly exposed to shocks and systemic volatility (Faulkner, 2001; Russell & Faulkner, 2004; Cochrane, 2010; Becken, 2013). Resilience complements sustainability by emphasising learning, adaptation and capacity-building under uncertainty, rather than assuming stable equilibrium conditions (Lew, 2014; Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). Empirical research indicates that resilience is strengthened by human capital, crisis experience and preparedness, as well as by principles such as connectivity, participation and governance multiplicity (Biggs, 2011; Orchiston, 2013; Biggs et al., 2015). At the same time, persistent gaps between resilience scholarship and practice suggest uneven implementation and limited familiarity among stakeholders (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2024; Hoffmann et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need to embed resilience as a practical capability and a driver of longer-term strategic change (Gössling et al., 2021; Colmekcioglu et al., 2022; Thees et al., 2022; Gamage et al., 2023; Hoffmann et al., 2023). If destinations can adapt, reorganise and innovate under stress, they are better positioned to maintain environmental, economic and sociocultural objectives over time; resilience therefore functions as a pathway through which sustainability performance is sustained and strengthened.

Accordingly, Figure 2 presents the conceptual model illustrating perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices and political trust as antecedents of tourism resilience, and tourism resilience as a predictor of destination sustainability.

Hypotheses

- H1: Perceived impacts of tourism will positively affect tourism resilience.
- H2: Host-guest relationships will positively affect tourism resilience.
- H3: ESG practices will positively affect tourism resilience.
- H4: Political trust will positively affect tourism resilience.
- H5: Tourism resilience will positively affect destination sustainability.

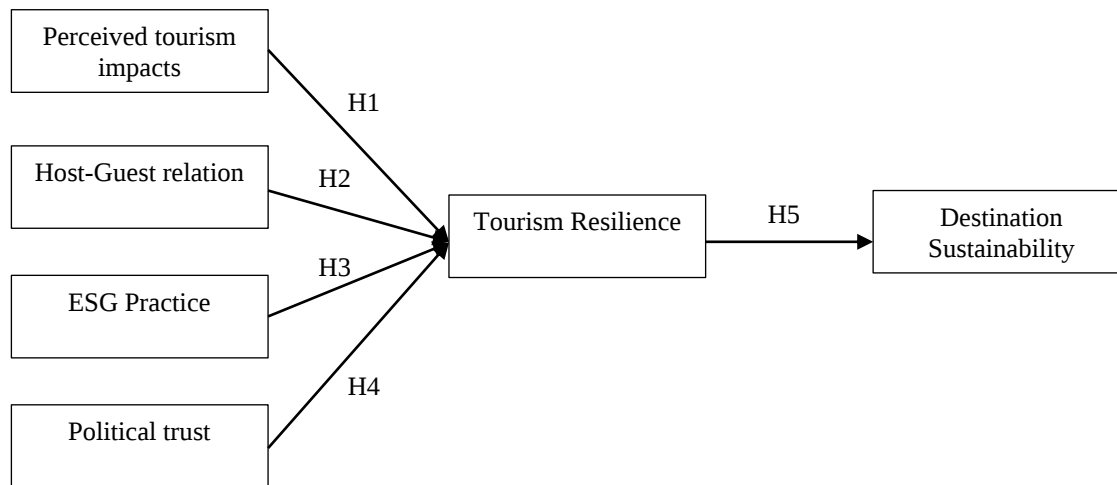


Figure 2. Conceptual model

Source: Author's work

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approaches

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach because the research problem requires both contextual understanding and analytical explanation. Sustainable tourism, tourism resilience, ESG practices, host-guest relationships, and political trust are not concepts that can be assumed to carry fixed or uniform meanings across stakeholder groups. In a destination context such as Vietnam, these dimensions are shaped by different forms of experience, institutional position, and practical involvement in tourism development. Residents, tourists, businesses, and government actors do not encounter tourism through the same material conditions or interpret it through the same priorities. For this reason, the study could not rely solely on a deductive application of pre-existing constructs, nor could it remain at the level of exploratory interpretation alone. A mixed-methods approach was therefore necessary to address the dual purpose of the thesis: first, to understand how key sustainability-related dimensions are interpreted within the Vietnamese tourism context, and second, to examine how these dimensions are systematically related to tourism resilience and destination sustainability. In this respect, the research approach reflects the complexity of the phenomenon itself, since sustainable tourism is both a socially interpreted process and an empirically analysable set of relationships.

The inductive component of the study was employed in the initial qualitative phase in order to explore stakeholder meanings before formal model testing was undertaken. This was particularly important because the study examines multiple stakeholder groups whose understandings of tourism development are likely to differ in important ways. The qualitative stage made it possible to investigate how participants described sustainable tourism, how they perceived tourism-related pressures and benefits, how they understood trust and governance, and how they interpreted resilience within their own social and institutional positions. In methodological terms, induction was not used simply to generate descriptive insight, but to strengthen the conceptual grounding of the study by ensuring that the analytical framing remained responsive to stakeholder meanings within the Vietnamese setting. This was essential because concepts drawn from the literature may not travel into context without modification, especially in research concerned with governance, social relations, and sustainability in a rapidly developing destination system. The qualitative inquiry therefore served a developmental function by clarifying relevant dimensions, refining the language and scope of the constructs, and supporting the preparation of a measurement framework that was theoretically informed yet contextually appropriate (Saunders et al., 2009).

The deductive component was then applied in the quantitative phase, where the refined conceptual framework was translated into measurable constructs and used to test theory-informed hypotheses concerning the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. This stage enabled the research to move beyond interpretive understanding and towards explanatory analysis by examining whether the proposed relationships operated in a systematic way across stakeholder groups. In particular, the quantitative analysis made it possible to assess the mediating role of tourism resilience in linking perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust to destination sustainability. However, because statistical relationships alone cannot fully explain why certain patterns emerge or why they may differ across stakeholder groups, the study returned to qualitative inquiry after the quantitative phase. This later interpretive stage added explanatory depth by contextualising selected findings and clarifying stakeholder-specific meanings that could not be captured adequately through numerical analysis alone. Accordingly, the overall research approach combines inductive exploration, deductive testing, and qualitative interpretation within a single multi-phase framework. This combination is especially appropriate for a thesis that seeks both to capture the socially constructed meanings of sustainable tourism and to examine, in a rigorous and comparative manner, how those meanings are linked to resilience and

sustainability outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McKim, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.2. Research design

The research was organised as a multi-phase mixed-methods design comprising three connected stages: an initial qualitative phase, a quantitative phase, and a follow-up qualitative phase. The purpose of this design was not simply to combine qualitative and quantitative techniques within one study, but to sequence them in a way that allowed each phase to inform the next and to contribute a distinct analytical function. This sequencing was particularly appropriate for a study concerned with sustainable tourism, tourism resilience, and stakeholder perceptions, since these issues involve both context-dependent meanings and empirically testable relationships. The overall design therefore enabled the study to proceed through three linked tasks: first, to identify how relevant dimensions were understood in context; second, to examine the structural relationships among those dimensions; and third, to interpret the resulting patterns more fully in light of stakeholder experience and institutional position (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McKim, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The first stage was qualitative and exploratory in purpose. It was used to establish how key issues associated with sustainable tourism were understood across the stakeholder groups included in the study and to determine how these understandings could be translated into analytically useful dimensions. Because the study brings together stakeholder perceptions, governance-related conditions, and tourism resilience within a single framework, it could not assume from the outset that concepts drawn from prior literature would operate in the same way within the Vietnamese tourism context. This phase therefore provided the empirical basis for refining the study's conceptual scope, clarifying the meanings attached to central constructs, and supporting the development of the measurement indicators later used in the survey instrument. This stage reflects an exploratory sequential movement from qualitative inquiry towards quantitative specification, in which early qualitative findings play a formative role in shaping later instrument development and model testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The second phase consisted of quantitative data collection and analysis. Using the measurement framework refined through the literature review and the initial qualitative findings, this stage focused on testing the hypothesised relationships among the study variables and examining the mediating role of tourism resilience in

shaping destination sustainability. It also enabled systematic comparison across stakeholder groups, thereby providing the empirical basis for evaluating how stakeholder-related, relational, and governance-related dimensions were associated with the study outcomes. This phase addressed the deductive component of the research by subjecting the conceptual model to statistical testing.

Following the quantitative analysis, the study returned to qualitative inquiry in order to deepen interpretation of the empirical results. This follow-up qualitative phase was not used to generate the original study dimensions or develop the measurement framework, as those functions had already been addressed in the first phase. Rather, it served to clarify stakeholder-specific interpretations of significant and non-significant findings and to illuminate mechanisms that could not be fully captured through statistical modelling alone. In this respect, the design moved beyond a simple exploratory sequential structure by incorporating an explanatory qualitative return after quantitative analysis, consistent with mixed-methods procedures in which qualitative inquiry is used to elaborate and interpret statistical results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Plano Clark & Badiie, 2021). Overall, the design was neither purely exploratory sequential nor purely explanatory sequential. Instead, it combined an initial exploratory sequence with a later explanatory qualitative return within a single multi-phase framework, thereby strengthening both the contextual grounding and the explanatory depth of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McKim, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Case study framing

Although this study does not employ case study methodology as a distinct qualitative tradition, it is nevertheless framed around Vietnam as a bounded empirical case. In this thesis, the case refers to the contextual focus on a single national tourism system within which stakeholder perceptions, governance-related conditions, tourism resilience, and destination sustainability are examined in relation to one another. This use of the case is consistent with broader understandings of case-oriented research, in which a bounded unit is investigated intensively in order to generate insight into a wider set of comparable phenomena (Gerring, 2007), and in which contemporary issues are examined within their real-life settings rather than abstracted from them (Yin, 2018). The case is therefore not treated here as a self-contained methodological tradition with its own procedural logic, but as an empirical frame that enables the research to remain closely connected to the institutional, developmental, and governance context within which sustainable tourism is interpreted and practised.

Vietnam constitutes a particularly suitable empirical case for this research because tourism development there is closely intertwined with state-led development priorities, ongoing institutional change, and uneven local implementation. Tourism has been promoted as a strategic economic sector within the broader trajectory of market reform and national modernisation, yet the governance and effects of tourism development remain differentiated across regions and administrative levels. As Thao (2025) argues, tourism policy in Vietnam has been shaped by the state's developmental agenda, while its implementation has often depended on varying levels of administrative capacity, inter-agency coordination, and local resource conditions. This combination of central policy direction and uneven local enactment creates a setting in which sustainable tourism cannot be understood simply as a matter of formal planning or policy declaration. Instead, it must be examined as a negotiated process shaped by multiple actors operating within shared but uneven institutional conditions. Vietnam is therefore especially appropriate for investigating how stakeholder perceptions, governance-related conditions, and adaptive processes are articulated within a single national tourism system, while still differing across social positions, localities, and administrative settings.

The case is also valuable because Vietnam reflects many of the tensions that make sustainable tourism and tourism resilience analytically important. Rapid tourism growth has created opportunities for employment, investment, and destination development, but it has also intensified pressures relating to environmental management, cultural change, infrastructure strain, and uneven distribution of tourism benefits. These tensions are not unique to Vietnam, but they are especially visible there because of the coexistence of strong state involvement, rapid market expansion, and significant local variation in tourism capacity and governance practice. As a result, Vietnam offers more than a convenient national setting. It provides a theoretically relevant case through which the interaction between stakeholder meanings and institutional conditions can be examined in a way that is both contextually grounded and analytically informative. In particular, it allows the thesis to explore how sustainability is interpreted across stakeholder groups in a developing tourism economy where resilience is not only a response to external shocks, but also a condition shaped by governance credibility, coordination, and social adaptation.

Framing the study in this way enables the analysis to remain sensitive to the policy, institutional, and developmental context in which tourism sustainability is negotiated, without treating the case itself as a separate methodological tradition.

Vietnam therefore functions as an empirical boundary for the study, helping to define the scope within which the findings should be interpreted while also supporting analytical insight beyond the immediate setting. The value of the case lies not in statistical representativeness, but in its capacity to illuminate processes that are relevant to other developing or transitional tourism economies facing similar challenges of rapid growth, uneven governance capacity, stakeholder heterogeneity, and exposure to disruption. That why Vietnam serves as a bounded yet analytically significant case through which wider questions concerning stakeholder perceptions, tourism resilience, and destination sustainability can be examined in depth.

Phase 1 – Qualitative exploration

Design and participant selection

The first qualitative phase was designed to fulfil an exploratory and developmental function within the overall mixed-methods framework. Conducted prior to the quantitative stage, it sought to examine how sustainable tourism was understood by relevant stakeholder groups in Vietnam and to identify the social, relational, governance-related, and adaptive dimensions through which those understandings were articulated. This phase was necessary because the study addresses a conceptually complex phenomenon that cannot be assumed to carry stable or uniform meaning across actors, contexts, or institutional positions. In particular, constructs such as sustainable tourism, tourism resilience, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust may appear conceptually clear in the literature, yet may be interpreted in more differentiated and context-specific ways within an actual tourism setting. The qualitative phase therefore provided an empirical basis for clarifying how these issues were understood in practice and for ensuring that the study's conceptual framing was grounded not only in prior scholarship but also in locally situated stakeholder meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2009). It also responded to the comparatively limited empirical attention given to stakeholder-based sustainable tourism research in South-East Asia, and in Vietnam in particular.

The phase was guided by a qualitative design centred on semi-structured interviewing across multiple stakeholder groups. This design was appropriate because the research sought to access participants' own interpretations of tourism development, governance, and resilience, while also maintaining sufficient consistency across interviews to permit systematic comparison. The qualitative inquiry was not intended simply to collect illustrative quotations or to provide

background context for the survey. Rather, it formed an integral part of the study's conceptual development by eliciting stakeholder accounts that could clarify how major analytical categories were understood, where stakeholder interpretations converged or diverged, and which dimensions appeared sufficiently salient to warrant inclusion in the later quantitative phase. This phase played a foundational role in the study by linking literature-based concepts with the language, concerns, and experiences of actors situated within the Vietnamese tourism system.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling in order to capture a broad range of perspectives relevant to tourism development and governance in Vietnam. Maximum variation sampling was used to ensure representation across stakeholder groups, institutional roles, and experiential backgrounds, thereby enabling the study to capture both shared themes and meaningful differences in interpretation (Patton, 2015). The intention was not statistical representativeness, but analytical breadth. By including actors occupying different positions within the tourism system, the research was able to examine how understandings of sustainable tourism and resilience were shaped by varying degrees of exposure, influence, responsibility, and dependence. In total, 111 participants were interviewed: 12 experts working in tourism and economics, 38 residents, 31 tourists, including 16 domestic and 15 international tourists, 16 business representatives, and 14 local government officials. This composition enabled comparison not only between community-based and institutional actors, but also between groups more directly exposed to tourism's everyday effects and those more involved in its management or strategic direction. A full list of participants, anonymised through coding, is presented in Appendix B.

The final number of interviews was determined with reference to both information power and semantic saturation. Following Malterud et al. (2016), the sample was considered adequate insofar as the study had a relatively focused aim, included participants selected for their relevance to the phenomenon, and generated data of sufficient richness to support thematic interpretation. At the same time, the process was informed by the principle of semantic saturation, in the sense that later interviews yielded diminishing returns in relation to the emergence of new interpretive categories and repeated already established patterns of meaning (Guest et al., 2006). Interviews typically lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and were conducted using a semi-structured guide that covered participants' understandings of sustainable tourism, perceptions of tourism-related impacts, views on host-guest relations, governance-related issues, trust in public institutions, and ideas concerning tourism resilience and destination sustainability. The interview format was deliberately flexible, allowing participants to elaborate their own experiences and

perspectives while ensuring sufficient comparability across cases for analytical purposes. Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, audio-recorded where permission was granted, and later transcribed for analysis. To support semantic and conceptual equivalence, key interview material was translated and back-translated, particularly where expressions relating to governance, trust, and sustainability carried context-specific meanings.

This first qualitative phase was therefore not supplementary to the main study, but central to its development. It enabled the research to move beyond abstract conceptual borrowing by grounding the study's analytical categories in stakeholder accounts drawn from the Vietnamese tourism context. In doing so, it informed the refinement of the conceptual framework, supported the formulation of contextually relevant measurement indicators, and strengthened the interpretive coherence of the later quantitative phase.

Data analysis

The qualitative data generated in the first phase were analysed using thematic content analysis combining deductive and inductive procedures. This analytic strategy was selected because the study sought to remain anchored in concepts already identified in the sustainable tourism literature while also remaining open to meanings, distinctions, and emphases emerging directly from participants' accounts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Miles et al., 2014). A purely deductive analysis would have risked imposing overly fixed conceptual boundaries derived from prior scholarship, while a purely inductive approach might have weakened the study's ability to connect stakeholder narratives to the theoretical concerns informing the overall thesis. The combined approach therefore allowed the analysis to function both as a means of conceptual refinement and as a way of identifying contextually grounded stakeholder meanings relevant to the study's later model development.

The analytical process began with immersion in the dataset through repeated reading of the interview transcripts. This initial stage was used to familiarise the researcher with recurring issues, stakeholder language, patterns of emphasis, and context-specific expressions related to tourism development, governance, and resilience. Particular attention was paid to how participants defined or implied the meaning of sustainable tourism, how they described desirable and undesirable tourism outcomes, and how they linked these to broader concerns such as community well-being, environmental change, trust, and institutional responsiveness. This stage of close reading was important because it allowed preliminary interpretive patterns to

emerge before formal coding began, thereby reducing the risk of premature categorisation.

Coding proceeded iteratively in several stages. First, an initial coding framework was developed from the literature review and from the study's evolving conceptual concerns, especially in relation to tourism impacts, host-guest relations, governance-related conditions, trust, and resilience. These categories were used as sensitising concepts rather than as rigid analytical containers. Second, the transcripts were coded line by line in order to identify both expected and emergent meanings. Where participants introduced ideas, distinctions, or forms of emphasis not adequately captured by the initial framework, new codes were created and incorporated into the analysis. This iterative movement between literature-informed categories and empirically grounded meanings allowed the coding process to remain theoretically aware without becoming conceptually prescriptive. As a result, the analysis was able to capture both continuity with established scholarship and specificity within the Vietnamese setting.

As coding advanced, related codes were grouped into broader thematic clusters and then compared across stakeholder groups in order to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and contextual variation. This stage of thematic development was particularly important because the study was concerned not merely with what individual participants said, but with how distinct stakeholder positions shaped the interpretation of sustainable tourism and resilience. Accordingly, the analysis paid close attention to variation across residents, tourists, businesses, experts, and local government officials. It examined how different groups framed tourism benefits and burdens, how they understood the quality and implications of host-guest interaction, how they interpreted the role of public institutions, and how they linked these issues to adaptive capacity and destination sustainability. In this way, the analysis moved beyond descriptive summary towards the identification of analytically meaningful patterns that could inform the study's conceptual refinement.

To strengthen trustworthiness, the author undertook repeated review of the transcripts and revisited the coding framework throughout the analytical process. Codes were refined, merged, or differentiated as interpretive clarity improved, and analytical notes were maintained to document emerging insights, theme development, and relationships among categories. This process supported transparency in the movement from raw textual material to higher-level interpretation and reduced the likelihood of arbitrary thematic closure. Attention was also given to semantic and conceptual consistency across translated materials, particularly where participants used culturally specific language to discuss

governance, responsibility, fairness, or social tension. Rather than treating translation as a purely technical step, it was approached as part of the interpretive process, requiring sensitivity to how meanings might shift across linguistic contexts.

The final stage of analysis generated a set of themes that clarified how different stakeholder groups understood sustainable tourism and related dimensions within the Vietnamese context. These themes did not function merely as descriptive outputs. Rather, they played a developmental role in the study by refining the conceptual framing, informing the construction of measurement indicators for the quantitative phase, and identifying issues that warranted further examination in later stages of the research. More broadly, the analysis provided contextually grounded insight into the meanings through which tourism sustainability, governance-related conditions, and tourism resilience were interpreted by Vietnamese stakeholders. Thus, the first qualitative phase contributed directly to the explanatory architecture of the thesis by ensuring that the later survey instrument and mediation model were built upon concepts that were both theoretically relevant and empirically grounded.

Phase 2 – Quantitative phase

The scale development process consists of four steps, as shown in Figure 3.

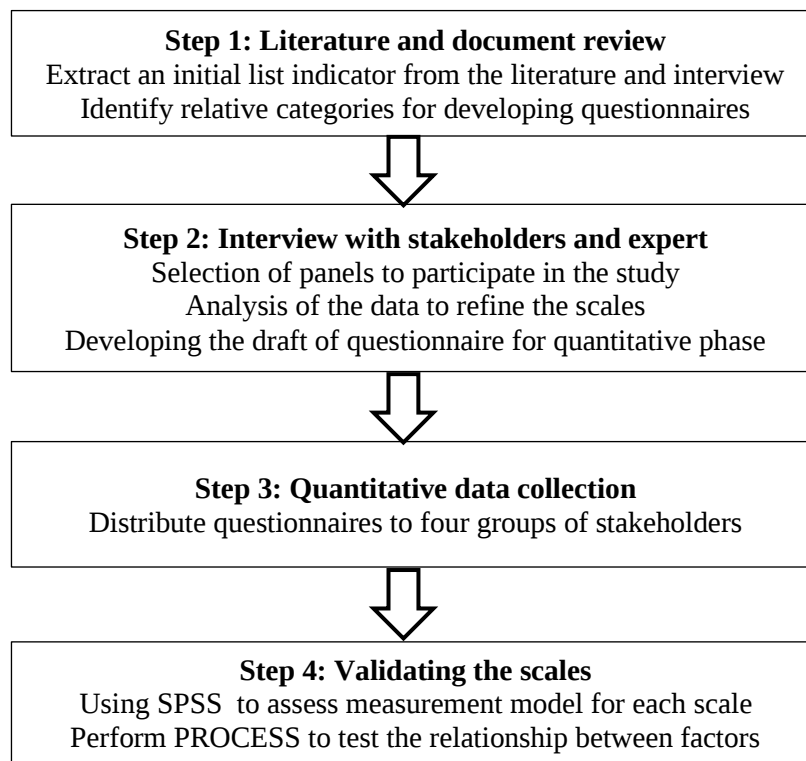


Figure 3. Scale development process

Source: Author's work

In the initial stage, a review of the relevant literature was conducted to develop a preliminary set of indicators across five categories. These indicators were subsequently refined through discussions with stakeholders and experts in order to ensure their contextual relevance to the stakeholder groups under investigation. In the next stage, quantitative data were collected from four stakeholder groups, namely residents, tourists, businesses, and government agencies. The data were analysed using SPSS 20 for reliability assessment, exploratory factor analysis, and related statistical procedures, while the PROCESS macro was employed to examine the hypothesised mediation relationships.

By combining expert input with quantitative testing, the study strengthened the reliability and validity of the measurement scales and improved the robustness of the empirical findings. This methodological approach offers a structured basis for examining stakeholder perceptions of tourism resilience and destination sustainability in Vietnam.

Measurement scale

The measurement instrument was developed through a staged process combining literature-based item adaptation, qualitative refinement, and contextual adjustment. Rather than relying exclusively on previously validated scales in their original form, the study operationalised its constructs by drawing on relevant empirical literature, refining item content through the first qualitative phase, and incorporating expert-informed judgement to ensure contextual relevance to the Vietnamese tourism setting. This approach was necessary because the study examines stakeholder perceptions across multiple groups, and several of the focal constructs, particularly ESG practices, political trust, tourism resilience, and destination sustainability, may not be interpreted uniformly across different institutional and experiential positions. The purpose of the scale development process was therefore not only to ensure conceptual alignment with the theoretical model, but also to produce indicators that were sufficiently clear, meaningful, and appropriate for the destination context under investigation.

The instrument included independent variables, a mediating variable, and a dependent variable. These were operationalised through multi-item measures, and in several cases through multiple subdimensions in order to reflect their multidimensional nature. Perceived tourism impact, for example, was represented

through economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. Host-guest relationships were also measured through several relational dimensions, including functional, hedonic, social, and government-related interaction. ESG practices were structured around environmental, social, and governance dimensions, consistent with the broader ESG literature, but the wording of several items was further refined through qualitative findings and expert input to reflect tourism-related practice more accurately. Political trust, tourism resilience, and destination sustainability were each measured through multi-item constructs intended to capture stakeholder perceptions of governance credibility, destination adaptive capacity, and longer-term sustainability outcomes respectively. Appendix D presents the full list of indicators and their associated sources.

The development of the item pool began with a review of prior literature in order to identify relevant dimensions and candidate indicators for each construct. At this stage, the intention was to establish conceptual coverage rather than to reproduce prior scales mechanically. Several items were therefore adapted in wording or emphasis to fit the aims of the study and the stakeholder groups under examination. This was especially important because some constructs in the literature are commonly measured in contexts that differ from a multi-stakeholder destination study. The initial item pool was then reviewed against the findings from the first qualitative phase, which helped identify how key themes were expressed by stakeholders in practice and which dimensions appeared most salient within the Vietnamese tourism context. This process enabled the removal, revision, or reformulation of items where direct transfer from the literature would have produced ambiguity, conceptual mismatch, or limited local relevance.

Particular attention was given to maintaining consistency between the conceptual model and the operational structure of the instrument. Perceived tourism impact was measured in a way that captured both positive and negative stakeholder evaluations of tourism-related outcomes. Host-guest relationships were operationalised more broadly than interpersonal rapport alone, reflecting the study's interest in how tourism-related interaction contributes to communication, support, and adaptive functioning in destination settings. ESG practices were measured not only as abstract principles, but as perceived organisational and destination-level practices related to environmental responsibility, social commitment, and governance conduct. In the case of political trust, the scale focused specifically on trust in local government and public decision-making in tourism development. Tourism resilience was measured through items addressing preparedness, adaptability, stakeholder coordination,

communication, innovation, and responsibility, reflecting the study's understanding of resilience as a destination-level adaptive capacity. Destination sustainability was measured through items relating to fairness, cultural preservation, environmental management, governance transparency, and long-term development orientation.

To improve clarity and usability, the wording of the instrument was reviewed carefully before final administration. This was particularly necessary for constructs such as ESG practices and tourism resilience, which were not always part of respondents' everyday vocabulary. Item wording was therefore simplified where necessary, and explanatory support was provided during data collection when respondents required clarification of specific terms. The pilot phase also helped identify items that needed refinement for clarity, cultural appropriateness, and response feasibility. In this respect, the final measurement scale should be understood as an adapted and context-sensitive instrument rather than as a direct replication of any single existing scale. Its value lies in its ability to connect the study's conceptual model with the empirical realities of the Vietnamese tourism context while retaining sufficient analytical structure for subsequent quantitative testing.

Overall, the measurement scale served as an operational bridge between the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 and the empirical analysis undertaken in the quantitative phase. By combining prior literature, qualitative grounding, and contextual refinement, the study aimed to ensure that the final instrument was both conceptually coherent and practically appropriate for a multi-stakeholder examination of tourism resilience and destination sustainability.

Sample size and data collection process for each stakeholder

To determine an adequate sample size for the quantitative phase, a statistical power analysis was conducted using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). With a confidence level of 95% and an alpha of 0.05, the analysis indicated that a minimum of 138 participants was required to detect the anticipated effect size. Given the study's multi-stakeholder design, which includes residents, tourists, business representatives and local government actors, larger samples were deemed necessary to ensure statistical reliability and subgroup representativeness. Accordingly, final sample targets were set at 250 residents, 360 tourists, 253 business representatives, and 265 local government. These sample sizes provided sufficient statistical power for model testing and the subsequent PROCESS and SPSS analyses used to validate relationships among constructs.

Data for the quantitative phase were collected between 2023 and 2024 using a structured questionnaire administered to residents, tourists and tourism businesses. Each instrument comprised two parts: demographic information and indicators measuring six core constructs on a 7-point Likert scale. Resident surveys were conducted on-site in selected destinations with the assistance of trained university students. Training covered ethical procedures, communication skills and survey administration, as well as a briefing on theoretical constructs, particularly Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices, which were unfamiliar to some respondents. To ensure comprehension, enumerators provided concise explanations and practical examples of ESG-related initiatives before administering the questionnaire. This approach enhanced response accuracy and strengthened the validity of resident feedback.

Tourist data were collected through face-to-face surveys conducted in major tourism locations over the same period. Respondents were first given a brief explanation of the aims of the study, and key constructs, particularly ESG, were clarified where necessary. The survey was designed to remain relatively concise, requiring approximately 20 to 30 minutes, in order to accommodate tourists' schedules and travel itineraries. Conducting the survey during the post-pandemic recovery period also allowed the study to capture evolving tourist expectations and perceptions of resilience and sustainability following the disruptions to global travel.

Tourism business surveys targeted a wide range of service providers, including accommodation establishments, transport operators, tour companies, food and beverage outlets and cultural attraction managers. Data were collected by the author in collaboration with university students undertaking apprenticeships or internships within tourism organisations. This partnership facilitated access to busy industry actors and supported consistent data collection. As with other groups, some respondents required clarification of ESG terminology, and brief explanations were provided to ensure accurate interpretation. This process enhanced the quality of the dataset while simultaneously raising awareness of sustainability practices among participating businesses.

Data from local government officials were collected through a structured survey distributed across district- and commune-level administrative units in key tourism provinces. Access was facilitated through official letters of introduction issued by the university, followed by coordination with provincial Departments of Tourism and Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism. These agencies helped identify officials directly involved in tourism planning, environmental management, community development, and destination governance. Surveys were administered

through two modes: hard-copy questionnaires distributed during scheduled meetings and professional training sessions, and electronic questionnaires sent to verified institutional email addresses for participants unable to attend in person. Prior to completion, respondents received a short briefing on the aims of the study and the key constructs, including ESG, resilience, and sustainability, in order to support consistent interpretation. Participation was voluntary and confidential, and responses were screened to confirm tourism-related responsibilities.

Across all stakeholder groups, the use of trained enumerators, direct engagement, and careful explanation of complex concepts strengthened the consistency and reliability of the data collection process. The 2023 to 2024 period offered a particularly relevant window for capturing stakeholder perceptions during a period of post-pandemic adjustment, thereby providing insight into how different actors evaluated tourism impacts, resilience, and sustainability under changing conditions. This structured and contextually grounded approach generated a robust dataset for empirical analysis and informed the later qualitative return used to interpret selected quantitative findings.

Data analysis

Prior to the full-scale survey, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of residents, tourists and business representatives to assess the clarity, reliability and cultural appropriateness of the questionnaire. Feedback from participants informed refinements to item wording, simplified explanations of ESG concepts and minor adjustments to survey length to reduce respondent fatigue. Pilot data were analysed for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, with all scales exceeding the minimum 0.70 threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability and supporting the instrument's suitability for the main study.

Following the pilot phase, the main dataset was screened in SPSS to identify missing values, outliers, and potential violations of normality. Missing values were examined using the Missing Value Analysis function, while outliers were identified and treated using z-scores to minimise undue influence on subsequent estimates. After data cleaning, Cronbach's alpha was recalculated to confirm internal consistency across constructs in the full sample. The dimensional structure of the measurement instrument was then examined through exploratory factor analysis using principal component extraction with Varimax rotation. This step was used to assess whether the retained items clustered in a manner consistent with the study's conceptual framework. Sampling adequacy was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

measure, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to confirm that the data were suitable for factor analysis.

The hypothesised relationships were subsequently examined using PROCESS version 3.5 (Hayes, 2013), which supports the estimation of direct, indirect, and mediated effects within regression-based path models. In particular, tourism resilience was specified as the mediating variable linking the independent variables to destination sustainability, and bootstrapping procedures were applied to generate confidence intervals for indirect effects. This approach was appropriate because it enabled clear estimation of mediation effects and facilitated comparison across stakeholder groups within a consistent analytical framework. Finally, several diagnostic checks were undertaken to assess the robustness of the regression-based models. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values indicated the absence of problematic multicollinearity, while histograms, normal probability plots, and scatterplots of standardised residuals suggested that the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were satisfactorily met.

Phase 3 – Qualitative exploration

Following the quantitative analysis, a follow-up qualitative phase was conducted in order to provide additional interpretive support for selected findings emerging from the statistical model. Unlike the first qualitative phase, this stage did not serve an exploratory or scale-development function. Rather, it was designed to elaborate the quantitative results by clarifying how different stakeholder groups understood key significant and non-significant relationships identified in the mediation analysis. This phase was therefore explanatory in purpose, allowing the study to move beyond statistical association and to examine how stakeholders themselves interpreted the meanings and implications of the empirical patterns.

Participants were selected purposively from among respondents who were available for follow-up discussion and who were considered able to offer relevant insight into the quantitative findings. In total, 16 interviews were conducted, comprising 3 tourists, 5 business representatives, 2 local residents, and 6 local government officials. The follow-up sample was smaller than that of the initial qualitative phase because the purpose here was not to generate new conceptual categories, but to deepen understanding of specific relationships already identified through the survey analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore selected quantitative patterns in greater depth, with particular attention to stakeholder interpretations of tourism resilience, destination sustainability, and the differing roles of perceived

tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust across stakeholder groups. This enabled the study to examine not only whether certain relationships were statistically supported, but also why they may have appeared stronger, weaker, or absent in particular stakeholder settings.

The data from this phase were analysed using directed content analysis, with the quantitative findings serving as the principal point of analytical orientation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Rather than coding the material inductively from a broad exploratory position, the analysis focused on how participants explained, confirmed, qualified, or contextualised the statistical results. The author reviewed the transcripts iteratively and organised the material around explanatory themes linked to the main quantitative patterns, including the stakeholder-specific formation of tourism resilience and the differing salience of governance-related and relational variables. Although limited in scale, this follow-up phase strengthened the explanatory depth of the study by connecting numerical patterns to stakeholder reasoning and context-specific interpretation. In this way, it supported a more integrated understanding of how the statistical model operated within the Vietnamese tourism setting.

3.3. Research ethics and quality assurance

This study involved human participants across all empirical phases and therefore required careful attention to ethical principles and research quality. Although the research did not obtain formal ethics approval from an institutional review body, it was conducted in accordance with recognised principles for research involving human participants and followed the ethical standards set out in the Declaration of Helsinki. Across both the qualitative and quantitative stages, participation was entirely voluntary. Before interviews and survey administration, participants were informed of the purpose of the research, the general nature of their involvement, and their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage. Particular care was taken to ensure that participation was based on informed consent and that respondents were able to contribute without pressure, coercion, or disadvantage. This was especially important given the inclusion of diverse stakeholder groups, including local residents, tourists, business representatives, experts, and local government officials, whose institutional positions and familiarity with academic research varied considerably.

Confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the research process. Interview participants were coded rather than identified by name, and no personal identifiers were disclosed in the thesis. Survey responses were treated anonymously

and used solely for academic purposes. Additional caution was exercised in relation to government officials and business respondents in order to avoid any possibility that individual responses could be linked to identifiable persons or institutions. As the qualitative interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and later translated, attention was given both to protecting participant anonymity and to preserving semantic and conceptual equivalence across languages. Research assistants and student enumerators involved in survey administration were also briefed on ethical procedures, including respectful communication, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the careful handling of completed instruments. Although formal institutional ethics approval was not obtained, the study followed ethical practice strictly in the design, collection, handling, and reporting of the data.

In addition to ethical considerations, several steps were taken to strengthen the quality and trustworthiness of the research. In the qualitative phases, analytical rigour was supported through iterative coding, repeated engagement with the transcripts, and the maintenance of analytical notes documenting theme development and category refinement. These procedures enhanced transparency in the progression from raw data to interpretation. In the quantitative phase, pilot testing was used to improve clarity and cultural appropriateness, while reliability and validity were assessed through Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure, and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The use of multiple phases and methods also strengthened the study through methodological triangulation, allowing stakeholder meanings, measurement patterns, and explanatory interpretation to be examined in relation to one another. Taken together, these ethical and quality-related procedures helped ensure that the study was conducted responsibly and that its findings were both methodologically robust and contextually credible.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Framing the field: bibliometric landscape of resilience in tourism

To situate the present study within the wider body of tourism scholarship, a bibliometric co-occurrence analysis was undertaken to examine how resilience has been conceptualised and structured across the literature. The analysis was conducted using VOSviewer on publications indexed in the Web of Science between 2000 and 2025 containing the terms tourism and resilience. The resulting keyword co-occurrence map, presented in Figure 4, provides a field-level representation of the conceptual organisation of tourism resilience research. In this visualisation, node

size reflects the relative prominence of keywords, while proximity and link density indicate the strength of co-occurrence relationships among concepts. Read in this way, the map does not simply show which topics appear frequently. More importantly, it reveals how the field has been assembled intellectually, which themes occupy central positions, which domains cluster together, and where conceptual fragmentation remains visible.

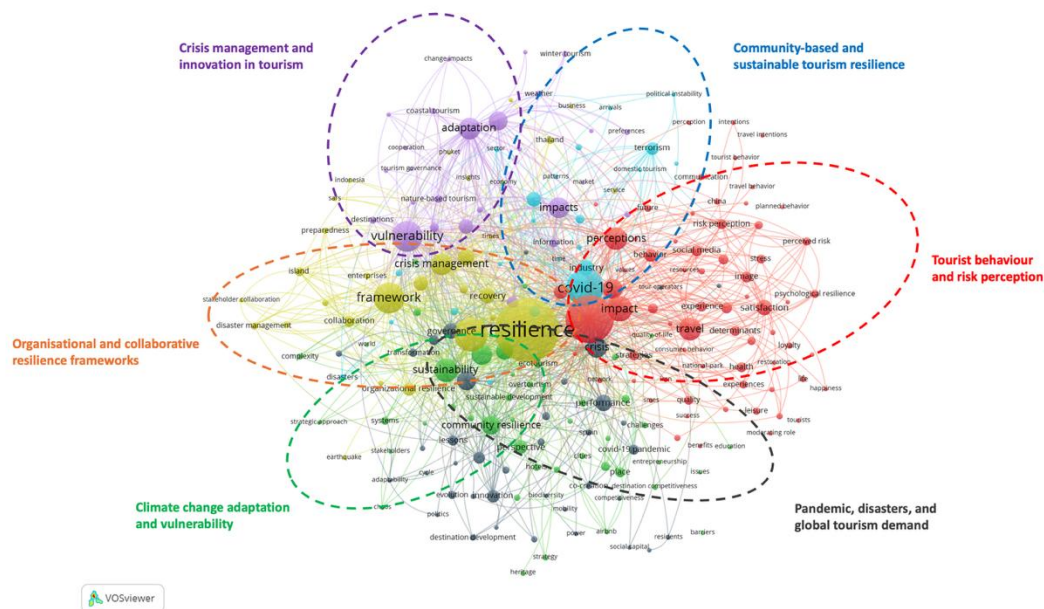


Figure 4. Keyword co-occurrence map of tourism resilience literature (2000–2025)

Source: Author's work

The network demonstrates that resilience has become a central organising concept in tourism studies, but one whose development has been markedly multi-directional. The term resilience occupies the most prominent and highly connected position in the map, surrounded by frequently co-occurring terms such as tourism, COVID-19, sustainability, impact, adaptation, and vulnerability. This centrality indicates that resilience has increasingly served as a bridging concept through which tourism scholars engage with issues of disruption, adjustment, and long-term destination viability. At the same time, the spatial distribution of the network suggests that this conceptual centrality has not translated into a fully integrated field. Rather than converging around a single dominant theoretical logic, tourism resilience research appears to have developed through several partially connected thematic trajectories. The field is therefore characterised not by conceptual absence, but by thematic diversification combined with uneven integration.

Six thematic clusters are identifiable in the map. The first cluster, shown in purple, is organised around crisis management and innovation in tourism. It includes keywords associated with adaptation, vulnerability, crisis management, preparedness, and innovation-oriented responses to disruption. This cluster reflects one of the most established directions in the literature, in which resilience is framed primarily as the capacity of tourism systems, organisations, or destinations to absorb shocks and recover from crises. Such work has made a substantial contribution by showing how tourism actors respond strategically to disruption and uncertainty. However, the cluster is also notable for its strongly managerial orientation. The analytical focus falls predominantly on system response and adaptive strategy, with less visible attention to questions of stakeholder meaning, social legitimacy, or differentiated experience within affected destinations.

The second cluster, shown in blue, centres on community-based and sustainable tourism resilience. This cluster connects resilience with terms relating to community, tourist behaviour, sustainability, local development, and broader questions of destination continuity. Compared with the crisis-management cluster, this area is closer to normative debates surrounding sustainable tourism and community well-being. It reflects an important strand of scholarship that understands resilience not solely as post-crisis recovery, but as a longer-term capacity embedded in local destinations and social systems. Nevertheless, the map suggests that this community-sustainability strand remains only partly integrated with other areas of resilience research. Although it broadens the field beyond narrow crisis response, it still appears to engage limitedly with the differentiated roles of stakeholder groups, the political conditions of governance, and the contested nature of sustainability itself.

The third cluster, shown in orange, relates to organisational and collaborative resilience frameworks. Keywords in this area point to themes of collaboration, framework, disaster management, governance, and inter-organisational coordination. The presence of this cluster indicates that the literature has moved beyond viewing resilience as an individual or destination-level trait and increasingly recognises its dependence on networks, institutional cooperation, and shared organisational capacity. This is a significant development, particularly for tourism, where adaptive capacity rarely resides in a single actor. At the same time, the cluster appears to privilege the functional aspects of collaboration, such as coordination and framework development, over more critical questions concerning power asymmetry, conflicting interests, or stakeholder legitimacy. As a result, the collaborative dimension of resilience is visible, but its political and relational complexity remains less clearly foregrounded.

The fourth cluster, shown in green, focuses on climate change adaptation and vulnerability. This part of the network reflects the strong influence of environmental and socio-ecological perspectives on the tourism resilience literature. Terms associated with climate change, vulnerability, adaptation, and ecological sustainability indicate that resilience has often been examined in relation to environmental exposure and long-term destination sensitivity to ecological disruption. This is one of the most conceptually robust areas of the field and has contributed substantially to understanding tourism as embedded within wider environmental systems. However, the prominence of this cluster also reveals a tendency within resilience scholarship to privilege macro-level environmental pressures and structural vulnerability. Comparatively less visible are the everyday social, institutional, and interpretive dimensions through which such pressures are experienced and negotiated by different tourism stakeholders.

The fifth cluster, shown in red, is organised around tourist behaviour and risk perception. It includes terms linked to perceived risk, travel intentions, behaviour, satisfaction, loyalty, and related visitor responses to uncertainty and disruption. This cluster demonstrates that resilience has also been studied through the behavioural dimension of tourism demand, particularly in relation to safety perceptions, destination image, and post-crisis recovery. Such work is clearly important, especially in periods when tourist confidence becomes central to destination continuity. Yet the cluster remains largely behavioural and consumer-oriented. It captures how tourists evaluate destinations under risk, but pays less attention to how tourists participate in wider host-guest dynamics, how their presence is interpreted by local communities, or how they relate to questions of governance and sustainability beyond individual travel choice.

The sixth cluster, shown in black, relates to pandemic, disasters, and global tourism demand. This cluster is visually distinctive and reflects the major acceleration of resilience scholarship associated with COVID-19 and related forms of systemic disruption. Its prominence is unsurprising, given the extent to which the pandemic exposed the vulnerability of tourism-dependent economies, organisations, and destinations. The cluster shows that recent resilience research has become strongly shaped by acute global shocks and by efforts to understand crisis response, recovery, and restructuring at scale. At one level, this demonstrates the responsiveness of the field to major empirical events. At another, it also reveals that resilience has often gained conceptual prominence most clearly in moments of visible rupture. Less developed, by comparison, is the treatment of resilience as an ongoing and socially embedded condition of tourism development, formed through routine pressures,

institutional arrangements, and everyday adaptation rather than only through major crisis events.

Taken together, the six clusters indicate that tourism resilience has evolved into a broad and increasingly differentiated field spanning crisis management, sustainability, collaboration, climate adaptation, behavioural response, and pandemic disruption. This breadth suggests clear maturation in the literature. Resilience is no longer confined to a narrow ecological meaning, but has become a multi-domain analytical framework used across a wide range of tourism contexts. Yet the map also points to a persistent lack of conceptual consolidation. The main clusters are connected, but not tightly integrated. The field therefore appears plural rather than unified, with resilience functioning as a common reference point across several research trajectories that do not always engage fully with one another. In analytical terms, this indicates a literature that is rich in thematic development, but still uneven in its ability to connect structural, managerial, behavioural, and social dimensions within a single explanatory account.

This fragmented structure is particularly important for the thesis because it clarifies the location of the current study within the wider literature. While the network demonstrates strong scholarly engagement with adaptation, vulnerability, crisis response, and destination management, it gives considerably less visibility to themes such as stakeholder divergence, governance trust, host-guest relations, emotional burden, and the socially embedded meanings of resilience. These issues are not wholly absent, but they do not emerge as dominant organising centres within the bibliometric landscape. Their relative marginality suggests that tourism resilience has been more frequently analysed as a managerial, ecological, or behavioural construct than as a socially negotiated and institutionally mediated process. This observation is central to the present study, which examines how residents, tourists, businesses, and local government actors perceive the conditions that shape tourism resilience and destination sustainability in Vietnam.

The significance of Figure 4, therefore, lies not only in showing what the tourism resilience literature has covered, but also in indicating which dimensions remain comparatively underdeveloped within the field's dominant architecture. The literature is clearly strong in relation to visible shocks, adaptive systems, ecological exposure, and recovery management. It is less developed in relation to the lived, affective, and relational dimensions of resilience, particularly those associated with trust, legitimacy, stakeholder heterogeneity, and everyday tourism pressure. These less visible dimensions later emerged strongly in the qualitative phase of this study, especially in relation to perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG

practices, and political trust. The bibliometric analysis thus provides an important interpretive backdrop for the empirical findings that follow. It demonstrates that the present thesis is not positioned outside current resilience scholarship, but rather within a comparatively under-integrated part of it, one concerned with stakeholder-centred, governance-sensitive, and contextually grounded understandings of tourism resilience.

To conclude, the bibliometric landscape performs a dual analytical function in the thesis. First, it maps the principal domains through which resilience has been studied in tourism and identifies the conceptual structure of the field. Second, it establishes the intellectual justification for the empirical focus of the study by showing why a stakeholder-based and governance-oriented investigation remains necessary. By revealing that tourism resilience research has developed strongly around crisis, climate, and management, but less strongly around social meaning, relational tension, and institutional trust, the analysis positions the present research as a contribution to a more integrated understanding of destination resilience.

4.2. Stakeholder perspectives on sustainable tourism and resilience: insights from the qualitative phase

The qualitative phase was designed to address Research Question 1 by examining how different stakeholder groups perceive sustainable tourism, host-guest relations, ESG practices and political trust, and how these perceptions shape tourism resilience and destination sustainability. The bibliometric analysis presented earlier (Figure 4) shows that existing scholarship on tourism resilience is dominated by themes such as crisis management, organisational preparedness, climate adaptation and tourist risk perception, with relatively limited attention to the relational, emotional or community-embedded dimensions of resilience. The interview findings presented here complement this gap by offering a grounded account of how sustainability and resilience are understood from the lived experiences and institutional positions of residents, tourists, businesses and government officials. These perspectives do not simply mirror the dominant clusters identified in the literature; instead, they expose an underexplored layer of affect, cultural meaning, and governance dynamics that shape resilience from the ground up.

Residents articulated the most immediate and emotionally embedded responses to tourism development, reflecting their continuous exposure to its social, cultural and economic effects. Across accounts of lived impacts of tourism, participants acknowledged the role of tourism in enhancing household income and creating local employment, particularly through small-scale enterprises and homestays. At the

same time, these benefits were consistently accompanied by concerns regarding rising living costs, infrastructural pressure and cultural disruption. One resident explained that while tourism had helped improve her family's living conditions, "prices for food and basic goods have gone up, and during peak seasons the island can feel unusually crowded for a small place" (R01). Others described a gradual sense of displacement, noting that public spaces increasingly appeared oriented towards visitors rather than local needs, creating the feeling that their home was "no longer entirely ours" (R17).

Host-guest relations were characterised by ambivalence rather than overt conflict. Many residents described friendly and curious interactions with tourists and expressed pride in sharing local customs and everyday practices. However, these interactions often involved emotional labour, particularly when visitors were unaware of local norms. One participant recounted that while tourists were generally well intentioned, "some misunderstand basic rules about water use or respecting temple areas, which makes things awkward rather than hostile" (R05). Others spoke of discomfort when tourists photographed fishermen or residents without consent, experiences that generated feelings of invisibility and disrespect (R04). These encounters reveal subtle power asymmetries embedded in everyday tourism interactions.

Residents' perceptions of governance reflected cautious recognition of official effort alongside scepticism towards implementation and enforcement. Several participants acknowledged that local authorities were attempting to manage tourism growth but questioned whether policy measures translated into meaningful change. As one resident noted, "there are policies for tourism, but implementation is slow, especially when it comes to waste and water management" (R02). Concerns were also raised about uneven business practices, with some operators perceived as environmentally responsible and others prioritising short-term profit. Despite these challenges, residents consistently emphasised strong community cohesion and adaptive capacity. Drawing on experiences of storms and the COVID-19 pandemic, participants highlighted mutual support and collective coping as key sources of resilience, framing sustainability as the pursuit of balance between livelihoods, environmental protection and cultural continuity (R11).

Tourists offered a perspective shaped by temporary but often emotionally intense engagement with place. Many described experiences of tranquillity, beauty and cultural immersion, particularly in heritage and natural settings. At the same time, these positive impressions were frequently tempered by awareness of crowding and over-commercialisation. One tourist reflected that while the destination felt

peaceful, “at sunset it seemed like everyone wanted the same photo, and it made me wonder how the locals feel living with this every day” (T03). Such observations suggest an emerging sensitivity to tourism pressure, even among short-term visitors.

Interactions with residents were largely described in positive terms, with tourists frequently expressing admiration for local hospitality and patience. However, some became aware of subtle signs of fatigue or obligation. One participant noted that although locals were welcoming, “their smiles didn’t quite reach their eyes, and that stayed with me more than any complaint” (T28). Several tourists described moments of self-reflection following minor cultural misunderstandings, such as being reminded to lower voices in sacred spaces, which prompted reassessment of their own behaviour (T01). Engagement with environmental sustainability varied considerably. While some tourists reported efforts to reduce waste or support local businesses, others admitted uncertainty or limited awareness. Concerns were also raised regarding inconsistencies between sustainability branding and actual practice, with one tourist observing that “eco labels were everywhere, but the reality did not always match” (T11). Although tourists frequently expressed empathy for local resilience, their transient role limited their involvement in sustained resilience-building activities.

Business stakeholders approached sustainability from an operational and strategic standpoint, shaped by market pressures and organisational capacity. Participants widely reported changing tourist expectations, particularly increasing demand for ethical, meaningful and slower forms of tourism. One business owner noted that “guests now ask where food comes from, how staff are treated, and whether sustainability claims are real” (B03). Engagement with ESG practices was uneven but evolving. Some businesses described integrating waste reduction, ethical sourcing and staff wellbeing into daily operations, while others acknowledged that such practices were recent and incremental. Transparent communication emerged as a central strategy, with participants emphasising that explaining sustainability efforts openly helped build trust with guests (B09).

Business resilience was often framed in terms of flexibility and adaptation, particularly in response to crisis. Several participants described the COVID-19 pandemic as a turning point that exposed vulnerabilities in tourism-dependent models while reinforcing the importance of diversification and community ties. One operator explained that survival required rethinking the business entirely, stating that “resilience isn’t just about saving money; it’s about being able to change quickly when conditions shift” (B01). At the same time, frustrations were expressed regarding inconsistent regulatory enforcement and uneven government support,

which constrained the ability of businesses to invest confidently in long-term sustainability.

Government officials articulated sustainability and resilience through a systemic and institutional lens, emphasising governance complexity and coordination challenges. Participants described the difficulty of balancing economic growth with environmental protection and cultural preservation, often within fragmented administrative structures. One official remarked that while policy frameworks were well developed, “discipline and consistency are harder when responsibility is spread across many actors” (G01). Public trust was viewed as fragile and contingent on visible outcomes rather than formal plans, with officials acknowledging that credibility depended on delivery rather than rhetoric (G10).

Experiences of crisis, particularly during the pandemic, were described as catalysts for institutional learning. Officials noted improvements in coordination and preparedness, while also recognising the limitations of formal systems compared with community-led responses. Several emphasised that sustainability involved more than technical management, highlighting the importance of preserving cultural meaning and social dignity. As one official involved in heritage management observed, when cultural practices are shortened or altered to meet tourism schedules, “something essential is lost, and that loss cannot be measured easily” (G04). Such reflections point to an emerging awareness of the affective and ethical dimensions of governance.

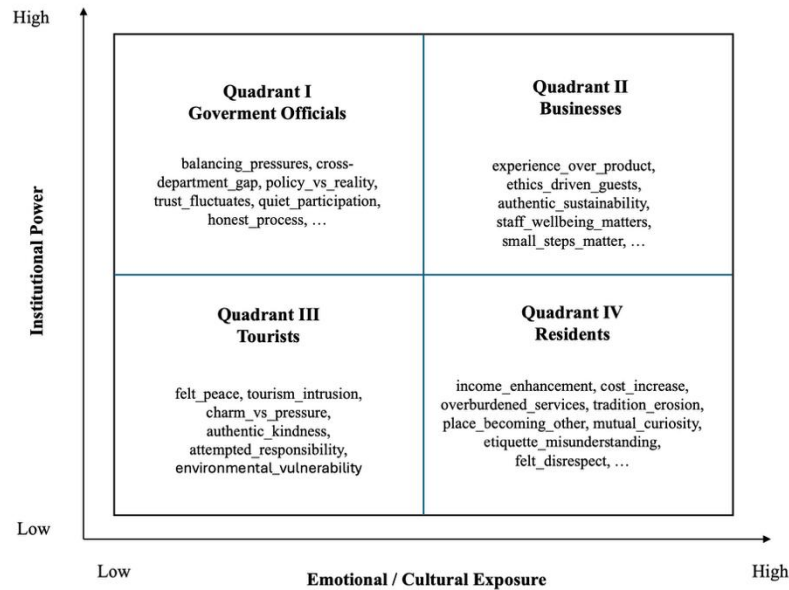


Figure 5. Stakeholder positioning by institutional power and emotional exposure

Source: Author's work

To synthesise these perspectives, Figure 5 positions the four stakeholder groups within a quadrant defined by institutional power (vertical axis) and emotional or cultural exposure (horizontal axis). This conceptual mapping reveals a structural asymmetry in how sustainability and resilience are perceived. Government officials and businesses hold greater institutional power, enabling them to shape policy and operational decisions, yet they exhibit comparatively lower emotional exposure to tourism's daily impacts. Residents and tourists, by contrast, possess limited influence but experience high emotional and cultural immersion—manifested through disruption, attachment, fatigue or appreciation. The codes placed within each quadrant illustrate the thematic emphases particular to each group and underscore the need for governance approaches that recognise differentiated capacities, responsibilities and vulnerabilities.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that sustainable tourism and resilience are not universal or static constructs. Rather, they are interpreted through diverse positionalities and conditioned by the extent to which individuals or institutions are embedded within the social, cultural and operational life of tourism. Residents and tourists, despite their opposing roles, share heightened emotional ties to place, while businesses and government actors articulate sustainability through the lens of strategy, regulation and institutional negotiation. Addressing Research Question 1, the qualitative phase thus reveals that resilience emerges not only from systems and

policies but also from the interplay of lived experiences, cultural expectations and institutional authority. A full presentation of themes, sub-themes and supporting quotations is provided in Appendix C.

4.3 Measurement validity and construct reliability across stakeholder groups

Prior to hypothesis testing, the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments for the four antecedent constructs were assessed across the four stakeholder groups: business representatives, local government officials, local residents, and tourists. These antecedent constructs comprised perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust. This step was undertaken to ensure that the measures used as predictors in the subsequent mediation models satisfied established psychometric criteria for internal consistency, sampling adequacy, and factorial validity. Tourism resilience and destination sustainability, by contrast, were modelled subsequently as the mediator and dependent variable respectively within the regression-based mediation analysis.

Internal Consistency

The internal reliability of the multi-item scales was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Across all stakeholder groups, the alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, with values ranging from 0.809 to 0.903, indicating good to excellent internal consistency. The tourist sample demonstrated the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.903$), followed by local government officials ($\alpha = 0.849$), business stakeholders ($\alpha = 0.828$), and local residents ($\alpha = 0.809$). These results confirm that the measurement items exhibited stable and consistent performance across different respondent groups.

Sampling Adequacy and Factorability

Sampling adequacy was examined using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, with all values exceeding 0.85, indicating that the data were well suited for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant for all stakeholder groups ($p < .001$), confirming the presence of sufficient inter-item correlations to justify factor extraction. Together, these diagnostics provided a robust basis for examining the dimensional structure of the antecedent measures.

Construct Validity and Factor Structure

Factor analysis using principal component extraction with Varimax rotation was conducted to assess construct validity and to examine the dimensional structure of the measurement instruments. Across all four stakeholder groups, a four-factor solution was consistently retained, corresponding to the core theoretical constructs of the study: perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust. The total variance explained ranged from 79.161 per cent among business stakeholders to 83.085 per cent among local residents, with values of 79.664 per cent for local government officials and 80.645 per cent for tourists, indicating a high proportion of explained variance and supporting the multidimensional validity of the conceptual framework. A summary of these diagnostics is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement diagnostics summary across stakeholder groups

Group	Sample Size (N)	KMO	Bartlett's Test (χ^2 , p)	No. of Factors Retained	Total Variance Explained (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Business	253	0.878	4469.111, p < .001	4	79.161	0.828
Local Government	265	0.884	4839.396, p < .001	4	79.664	0.849
Local Residents	250	0.901	5085.459, p < .001	4	83.085	0.809
Tourists	360	0.917	7432.249, p < .001	4	80.645	0.903

Source: Author's work

Overall, the consistency of psychometric indicators across stakeholder groups strengthens the empirical credibility of the measurement model. While the tourist sample exhibited the highest KMO value and a relatively high proportion of explained variance, the slightly lower variance observed among local residents may reflect greater heterogeneity in lived experience and interpretation of sustainable tourism concepts. Importantly, however, all diagnostic results meet accepted methodological standards, providing confidence in the suitability of the measurement model for subsequent hypothesis testing and structural analysis.

4.4 Stakeholder perceptions, trust and practices in shaping resilience and sustainability

This section addresses Research Question 2 by examining how stakeholder perceptions and governance-related factors influence tourism resilience (TR) and destination sustainability (DS) across four stakeholder groups: business representatives, local government officials, local residents, and tourists. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the roles of perceived tourism impacts (PTI), ESG practices (ESG), and political trust (PT). Mediation analyses were conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Model 4, with tourism resilience specified as the mediating variable and destination sustainability as the outcome variable. Indirect effects were evaluated using bootstrapped confidence intervals, with mediation inferred when the interval did not include zero.

Local residents

For local residents (N = 250), the results highlight the determinants of tourism resilience and the extent to which resilience translates into destination sustainability from a community perspective. The findings are reported in terms of direct effects on tourism resilience, the relationship between tourism resilience and destination sustainability, and mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Direct effects on tourism resilience (H1–H4).

Perceived tourism impacts (PTI) showed a strong and statistically significant positive effect on tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.467$, $p < .001$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [0.4239, 0.6874], explaining a substantial proportion of variance in resilience ($R^2 = .2177$). Political trust (PT) also emerged as a significant predictor of tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.2144, 0.4281], accounting for 12.38 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .1238$). In contrast, host-guest relationships (HGR) did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance ($\beta = 0.123$, $p = .0517$), and the 95% confidence interval [−0.0013, 0.3515] included zero. ESG practices were likewise not significantly associated with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.102$, $p = .1091$), with the corresponding 95% confidence interval [−0.0248, 0.2451] including zero. Accordingly, H1 and H4 are supported, whereas H2 and H3 are not supported for local residents.

Effect of tourism resilience on destination sustainability (H5).

Tourism resilience exhibited a consistently strong and statistically significant association with destination sustainability across all estimated models, with standardised coefficients ranging from $\beta \approx 0.77$ to 0.81 ($p < .001$). The confidence intervals for the unstandardised $TR \rightarrow DS$ coefficients excluded zero in all cases, providing robust support for H5 among local residents.

Mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Mediation analysis indicated that tourism resilience significantly mediated the relationship between perceived tourism impacts and destination sustainability, as evidenced by a bootstrapped 95% confidence interval $[0.3015, 0.4680]$ for the indirect effect, which excluded zero. Political trust also demonstrated a significant indirect effect via tourism resilience, alongside a statistically significant direct effect on destination sustainability, indicating partial mediation. Despite the absence of a statistically significant direct $HGR \rightarrow TR$ path, host-guest relationships showed a significant indirect effect on destination sustainability through tourism resilience, with a bootstrapped 95% confidence interval $[0.0060, 0.2295]$ excluding zero. By contrast, neither the direct nor indirect effects of ESG practices on destination sustainability were statistically supported, as the corresponding bootstrapped confidence intervals included zero. Table 3 summarises the hypothesis testing results for the local resident stakeholder group.

Table 3. Summary of hypothesis testing results for local residents

Hypothesis	Path tested	$X \rightarrow TR$ (β , p)	95% CI for $X \rightarrow TR$	$TR \rightarrow DS$ supported (H5)	Mediation via TR (Boot 95% CI)	Hypothesis decision
H1	PTI $\rightarrow$ TR	0.467, < .001	[0.424, 0.687]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H2	HGR $\rightarrow$ TR	0.123, .052	[-0.001, 0.352]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Not supported (direct)
H3	ESG $\rightarrow$ TR	0.102, .109	[-0.025, 0.245]	Yes	No (CI includes 0)	Not supported
H4	PT $\rightarrow$ TR	0.352, < .001	[0.214, 0.428]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported

H5	TR → DS	0.77–0.81, < .001	CI excludes 0	—	—	Supported
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Tourists

For tourists (N = 360), the results highlight how experiential perceptions and governance-related factors shape tourism resilience and how resilience, in turn, translates into destination sustainability. The findings are reported in terms of direct effects on tourism resilience, the relationship between tourism resilience and destination sustainability, and mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Direct effects on tourism resilience (H1–H4).

Perceived tourism impacts (PTI) demonstrated a positive and statistically significant association with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.340$, $p < .001$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [0.2951, 0.5328], explaining 11.59 per cent of the variance in resilience ($R^2 = .1159$). Host-guest relationships (HGR) likewise exhibited a statistically significant positive effect on tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.305$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.2826, 0.5543], accounting for 9.30 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .0930$). ESG practices emerged as the strongest predictor of tourism resilience among tourists ($\beta = 0.622$, $p < .001$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [0.4310, 0.5607], explaining a substantial proportion of variance ($R^2 = .3870$). Political trust also showed a strong and statistically significant effect on tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.540$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.3379, 0.4687], accounting for 29.14 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .2914$). Accordingly, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are all supported for the tourist stakeholder group.

Effect of tourism resilience on destination sustainability (H5).

Tourism resilience exhibited a consistently strong and statistically significant association with destination sustainability across all estimated models for tourists, with standardised coefficients ranging from $\beta \approx 0.63$ to 0.71 ($p < .001$). In all cases, the confidence intervals for the unstandardised TR → DS coefficients excluded zero, providing robust support for H5.

Mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Mediation analysis revealed that tourism resilience significantly mediated the relationships between perceived tourism impacts and destination sustainability, host-guest relationships and destination sustainability, ESG practices and destination sustainability, and political trust and destination sustainability. In each case, the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects excluded zero, confirming statistically significant mediation. Specifically, perceived tourism impacts and tourism resilience showed partial mediation, as the direct effect of PTI on destination sustainability remained statistically significant alongside the indirect effect. By contrast, the effects of host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust on destination sustainability were fully mediated by tourism resilience, as the corresponding direct effects were not statistically significant once tourism resilience was included in the model. Table 4 summarises the hypothesis testing results for the tourist stakeholder group.

Table 4. Summary of hypothesis testing results for tourists

Hypothesis	Path tested	X → TR (β, p)	95% CI for X → TR	TR → DS supported (H5)	Mediation via TR (Boot 95% CI)	Hypothesis decision
H1	PTI → TR	0.340, < .001	[0.295, 0.533]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H2	HGR → TR	0.305, < .001	[0.283, 0.554]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H3	ESG → TR	0.622, < .001	[0.431, 0.561]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H4	PT → TR	0.540, < .001	[0.338, 0.469]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H5	TR → DS	0.63–0.71, < .001	CI excludes 0	—	—	Supported

Business stakeholders

For business stakeholders (N = 253), the results highlight how organisational and governance-related perceptions shape tourism resilience and how resilience translates into destination sustainability. The findings are reported in terms of direct effects on tourism resilience, the relationship between tourism resilience and destination sustainability, and mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Direct effects on tourism resilience (H1–H4).

Perceived tourism impacts (PTI) showed a positive but modest statistically significant effect on tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.126$, $p = .0456$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [0.0031, 0.3128], explaining a small proportion of variance in resilience ($R^2 = .0158$). Host-guest relationships (HGR) demonstrated a stronger and statistically significant association with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.220$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.1541, 0.5314], accounting for a larger share of explained variance ($R^2 = .0485$). In contrast, ESG practices did not significantly predict tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.079$, $p = .2087$), and the corresponding 95% confidence interval [−0.0563, 0.2567] included zero. Political trust likewise showed no statistically significant relationship with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.076$, $p = .2264$), with a 95% confidence interval [−0.0516, 0.2170] including zero. Accordingly, H1 and H2 are supported, whereas H3 and H4 are not supported for business stakeholders. However, the relatively low explained variance in the business models suggests limited explanatory power, indicating that the present framework captures only part of how tourism businesses form resilience perceptions.

Effect of tourism resilience on destination sustainability (H5).

Tourism resilience exhibited a consistent and statistically significant positive association with destination sustainability across all estimated models for the business group, with standardised coefficients ranging from $\beta \approx 0.22$ to 0.26 ($p < .01$). In each case, the confidence intervals for the unstandardised TR → DS coefficients excluded zero, providing robust support for H5 among business stakeholders.

Mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Mediation analysis indicated that tourism resilience significantly mediated the relationships between perceived tourism impacts and destination sustainability, and between host-guest relationships and destination sustainability. In both cases, the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects excluded zero, confirming statistically significant mediation. By contrast, the indirect effects of ESG practices and political trust on destination sustainability via tourism resilience were not supported, as the corresponding bootstrapped confidence intervals included zero. While ESG practices exhibited a statistically significant direct effect on destination sustainability, political trust showed neither significant direct nor

indirect effects. Table 5 summarises the hypothesis testing results for the business stakeholder group

Table 5. Summary of hypothesis testing results for business stakeholders

Hypothesis	Path tested	X → TR (β , p)	95% CI for X → TR	TR → DS supported (H5)	Mediation via TR (Boot 95% CI)	Hypothesis decision
H1	PTI → TR	0.126, .046	[0.003, 0.313]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H2	HGR → TR	0.220, < .001	[0.154, 0.531]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H3	ESG → TR	0.079, .209	[−0.056, 0.257]	Yes	No (CI includes 0)	Not supported
H4	PT → TR	0.076, .226	[−0.052, 0.217]	Yes	No (CI includes 0)	Not supported
H5	TR → DS	0.22–0.26, < .01	CI excludes 0	—	—	Supported

Local governments

For local government respondents (N = 265), the results emphasise how governance-related perceptions shape tourism resilience and how resilience, in turn, translates into destination sustainability. The findings are reported in terms of direct effects on tourism resilience, the relationship between tourism resilience and destination sustainability, and mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Direct effects on tourism resilience (H1–H4).

Perceived tourism impacts (PTI) did not exhibit a statistically significant association with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.095$, $p = .122$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [−0.0547, 0.4597], explaining less than one per cent of the variance in resilience ($R^2 = .0091$). Accordingly, H1 is not supported for local government respondents. In contrast, host-guest relationships (HGR)

showed a positive and statistically significant effect on tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.272$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.2154, 0.5389], accounting for 7.42 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .0742$), thereby supporting H2. ESG practices also demonstrated a statistically significant association with tourism resilience ($\beta = 0.431$, $p < .001$), with the unstandardised coefficient bounded by a 95% confidence interval [0.3469, 0.5833], explaining 18.58 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .1858$), providing support for H3. Political trust emerged as the strongest predictor of tourism resilience among local government respondents ($\beta = 0.526$, $p < .001$), with a 95% confidence interval [0.4730, 0.7044], accounting for 27.62 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = .2762$), thereby supporting H4.

Effect of tourism resilience on destination sustainability (H5).

Across all estimated models, tourism resilience exhibited a consistently strong and statistically significant association with destination sustainability, with standardised coefficients ranging from $\beta \approx 0.74$ to 0.79 ($p < .001$). In each case, the confidence intervals for the unstandardised TR $\rightarrow$ DS coefficients excluded zero, providing robust support for H5 among local government respondents.

Mediation effects via tourism resilience.

Mediation analysis indicated that tourism resilience significantly mediated the relationships between host-guest relationships and destination sustainability, ESG practices and destination sustainability, and political trust and destination sustainability. In all three cases, the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects excluded zero, confirming statistically significant mediation. Specifically, host-guest relationships demonstrated partial mediation, as both direct and indirect effects on destination sustainability were significant. By contrast, the effects of ESG practices and political trust on destination sustainability were fully mediated by tourism resilience, as their direct effects were not statistically significant once tourism resilience was included in the model. Consistent with the non-significant direct effect of perceived tourism impacts on tourism resilience, neither direct nor indirect effects of perceived tourism impacts on destination sustainability were supported for this stakeholder group. Table 6 summarises the hypothesis testing results for the local government stakeholder group.

Table 6. Summary of hypothesis testing results for local governments

Hypothesis	Path tested	X → TR (β , p)	95% CI for X → TR	TR → DS supported (H5)	Mediation via TR (Boot 95% CI)	Hypothesis decision
H1	PTI → TR	0.095, .122	[−0.055, 0.460]	Yes	No (CI includes 0)	Not supported
H2	HGR → TR	0.272, < .001	[0.215, 0.539]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H3	ESG → TR	0.431, < .001	[0.347, 0.583]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H4	PT → TR	0.526, < .001	[0.473, 0.704]	Yes	Yes (CI excludes 0)	Supported
H5	TR → DS	0.74–0.79, < .001	CI excludes 0	—	—	Supported

Comparative Reflections

Across the four stakeholder groups, tourism resilience emerged as a consistently central construct, demonstrating a strong and statistically significant relationship with destination sustainability in all models. This finding suggests that, despite variation in stakeholder roles and perceptions, resilience functions as a shared mechanism through which sustainability is understood and assessed. At the same time, the antecedents of tourism resilience differed markedly across stakeholder groups, reflecting differences in lived experience, institutional responsibility, and proximity to governance processes.

For residents, tourism resilience was shaped primarily by perceived tourism impacts and political trust, highlighting the combined importance of everyday experience and institutional confidence at the community level. This pattern suggests that residents evaluate resilience not only through the material and social effects of tourism on daily life, but also through their trust in the ability of authorities to manage tourism-related pressures and respond to change. Among business stakeholders, resilience was influenced mainly by host-guest relationships and perceived tourism impacts, indicating a stronger emphasis on relational and market-

facing dynamics. However, the comparatively low explained variance for this group suggests that these predictors capture only a limited share of business resilience formation, and that additional firm-level or market-related factors may also be important. In contrast, local government respondents demonstrated a pronounced reliance on political trust and ESG practices, underscoring the importance of governance credibility, institutional coordination, and formal sustainability mechanisms in shaping official perceptions of resilience. For tourists, tourism resilience was most strongly associated with ESG practices, political trust, and experiential factors, indicating that resilience is interpreted largely through visible sustainability performance, destination management quality, and confidence in local governance.

Taken together, these differences suggest that tourism resilience is not formed through a single uniform pathway, but through stakeholder-specific configurations of experiential, relational, and institutional influences. Nevertheless, the consistency of the resilience-destination sustainability relationship across all groups points to a broader integrative logic: while stakeholders differ in how they perceive and construct resilience, resilience itself remains the common pathway through which those diverse perceptions are translated into sustainability outcomes.

4.5 Collective pathways to destination sustainability: an integrated quantitative–qualitative analysis

This section addresses Research Question 2 by synthesising the stakeholder-specific findings presented in Section 4.4 to evaluate the collective structural pathways through which perceived tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust shape destination sustainability via tourism resilience. Rather than re-examining individual coefficients, the focus here is on pattern coherence, functional differentiation of predictors, and the system-level role of tourism resilience as an integrative mechanism.

Differentiated roles of predictors

Although the overall resilience-mediated framework was supported across all stakeholder groups, the relative salience and functional role of individual predictors varied systematically, reflecting differences in stakeholder positionality, institutional embeddedness, and lived experience.

ESG practices as governance-based and visibility-driven mechanisms

ESG practices demonstrated a highly differentiated structural role across stakeholder groups, reflecting distinct interpretive logics rather than uniform evaluations of sustainability performance. Quantitatively, ESG exerted a strong and statistically significant effect on tourism resilience among tourists and local government respondents, while remaining non-significant for residents and business stakeholders. This divergence suggests that ESG operates less as a universally experienced adaptive resource and more as a selective governance and signalling mechanism, whose relevance depends on stakeholders' institutional proximity and informational orientation.

Qualitative evidence from government officials indicates that ESG practices are primarily interpreted as institutional coordination, legitimacy, and risk-management instruments. Senior officials consistently framed ESG not as an end in itself, but as an enabling framework that structures long-term planning, inter-departmental coordination, and crisis preparedness. G01 noted that “clear environmental and social standards help us prepare for shocks and manage tourism pressure more systematically,” emphasising the role of ESG in anticipatory governance. Similarly, G02 highlighted that “ESG gives legitimacy to long-term planning decisions, especially when balancing tourism growth and community needs.” Other officials reinforced this governance-centred interpretation by linking ESG to institutional continuity and policy credibility. G07 explained that “sustainability frameworks make it easier to justify difficult decisions when tourism growth needs to be controlled,” while G09 described ESG as “a reference point that keeps development aligned when conditions change.” These accounts help explain why ESG significantly predicts tourism resilience among government respondents: ESG enhances resilience indirectly by stabilising governance processes, reducing uncertainty, and reinforcing institutional authority during periods of disruption.

Tourists, particularly those with moderate to high ESG awareness, interpreted ESG practices through a different but complementary logic, viewing them as visible signals of destination responsibility, organisational competence, and trustworthiness. An inbound tourist (T18) explained that “when destinations show commitment to sustainability, it feels more reliable and better prepared for problems,” while T22 noted that “sustainability policies signal that the destination is managed professionally.” Domestic tourists with higher awareness expressed similar views. T07 associated visible ESG initiatives with confidence in destination management, stating that “sustainability practices make me believe the destination can manage tourism in the long run.” These perceptions suggest that for tourists,

ESG does not function as a directly experienced resilience resource, but rather as a cognitive heuristic used to infer adaptive capacity. ESG visibility shapes expectations about how destinations will respond to environmental stress, social pressure, or demand volatility, thereby strengthening perceived resilience even in the absence of direct institutional interaction.

In contrast, residents and business stakeholders tended to view ESG practices as distant, abstract, or weakly connected to everyday adaptive realities, which helps explain the absence of a significant ESG–resilience pathway for these groups. Residents frequently evaluated resilience through lived experience, material outcomes, and immediate social conditions rather than formal sustainability frameworks. R08 commented that “policies about sustainability exist, but resilience depends more on how tourism actually affects our daily life.” R21 similarly noted that “what matters is whether tourism improves living conditions, not whether there are sustainability plans.”

Business stakeholders expressed comparable scepticism, framing resilience primarily in market and relational terms. B01 remarked that “formal ESG commitments are important, but for businesses, resilience comes from demand stability and customer relationships rather than policy documents.” B14 further explained that “sustainability standards are useful, but they do not protect businesses when bookings drop or costs rise.” These accounts indicate that ESG lacks salience as an adaptive mechanism for actors whose resilience is shaped by immediate operational constraints and market exposure.

Collectively, the qualitative evidence clarifies that ESG practices function simultaneously as governance-based resilience enablers for institutional actors and as visibility-driven trust signals for tourists, while remaining peripheral to the resilience formation of residents and businesses. This functional differentiation explains the uneven quantitative effects and underscores that ESG contributes to destination sustainability not through uniform stakeholder experience, but through its capacity to stabilise governance structures and shape external confidence. As such, ESG operates as an indirect, system-level resilience mechanism whose effectiveness depends on institutional embeddedness and perceptual distance from everyday tourism practice.

Perceived tourism impacts as experiential drivers of resilience

Perceived tourism impacts exhibited a clearly context-dependent pattern, with significant positive associations with tourism resilience among business stakeholders, residents, and tourists, but not among local government respondents. This differentiated effect underscores the fundamentally experiential nature of perceived tourism impacts and highlights how resilience is shaped by proximity to, and dependence on, tourism outcomes. Consistent with social exchange theory and impact-based models of tourism support, stakeholders who directly experience the economic, social, and environmental consequences of tourism are more likely to translate those evaluations into perceptions of adaptive capacity (Ap, 1990).

Among business stakeholders, perceived tourism impacts functioned as a core economic and operational signal of resilience. Business representatives consistently linked positive tourism impacts to their capacity to absorb shocks, adjust business models, and sustain operations during periods of uncertainty. B02 explained that “when tourism brings stable income, businesses can invest, innovate, and survive difficult periods,” explicitly connecting perceived benefits to adaptive decision-making. Similarly, B10 emphasised that “positive tourism impacts give us the resources to adjust when conditions change,” highlighting the role of financial liquidity and demand stability in resilience formation. Additional business respondents reinforced this logic by framing tourism impacts as buffers against volatility. B01 noted that “strong tourism seasons allow us to prepare for weaker periods,” while B08 described how “consistent visitor flows help businesses recover faster after disruptions.” These accounts illustrate that for business actors, resilience is not an abstract concept but a materially grounded capacity rooted in perceived economic returns, consistent with prior research linking tourism benefits to business adaptability and crisis recovery (Biggs et al., 2015).

For residents, perceived tourism impacts were evaluated through a more complex balance of economic opportunity, social change, and environmental pressure. Residents frequently described resilience as contingent on whether tourism enhances livelihoods without undermining everyday life. A resident involved in tourism activities in Hoi An (R23) observed that “tourism supports local jobs, but if it becomes too crowded, it weakens the community’s ability to cope,” indicating that resilience emerges from equilibrium rather than growth alone. R19 similarly emphasised that “resilience depends on whether tourism improves or disrupts everyday life.” Other residents articulated this balance in spatial and temporal terms. R02 noted that “tourism helps during peak seasons, but pressure on infrastructure makes it harder to recover after storms,” while R16 explained that “tourism brings

income, but cultural overcrowding reduces long-term sustainability.” These narratives support the quantitative finding that perceived tourism impacts shape resilience indirectly by influencing how residents judge the destination’s capacity to adapt and recover, aligning with prior work on resident resilience and quality-of-life trade-offs in tourism contexts (Sharpley, 2014).

Tourists similarly relied on experiential cues when assessing tourism resilience, albeit from a temporary and observational perspective. Rather than focusing on long-term structural conditions, tourists evaluated resilience through visible indicators such as crowd management, environmental quality, service consistency, and local responsiveness. T05 stated that “a destination that manages tourism impacts well feels more stable and sustainable,” while T29 explained that “when tourism is well controlled, it shows the destination can handle pressure.” These perceptions suggest that for tourists, perceived tourism impacts operate as heuristic signals of adaptive capacity, shaping confidence in the destination’s sustainability and future attractiveness. In contrast, local government respondents consistently framed tourism impacts as objects of management rather than sources of resilience. G05 explained that “impacts are what we monitor and control, not what defines our resilience,” reflecting an institutional logic in which resilience is embedded in governance capacity rather than experiential outcomes. G07 reinforced this view by noting that “resilience comes from planning and coordination, not from how impacts are perceived.” This regulatory and managerial framing helps explain the absence of a significant structural relationship between perceived tourism impacts and tourism resilience among government respondents.

Taken together, these findings indicate that perceived tourism impacts function as experiential drivers of resilience for stakeholders directly exposed to tourism’s material and social consequences, while remaining conceptually distant from institutional interpretations of adaptive capacity. The divergence between experiential and governance-based logics reinforces the mediating role of tourism resilience in translating impact perceptions into sustainability outcomes. Rather than exerting a direct influence on destination sustainability, perceived tourism impacts shape resilience by informing stakeholders’ judgements about whether the destination can absorb pressure, adjust to change, and recover from disruption. This mechanism clarifies why perceived impacts are central to resilience formation among residents, businesses, and tourists, yet peripheral within institutional governance frameworks.

Host-guest relationships as relational pathways to adaptive capacity

Host-guest relationships emerged as a significant predictor of tourism resilience among business stakeholders, government respondents, and tourists, but not among residents. This differentiated pattern highlights the relationally contingent nature of resilience, whereby the adaptive value of social interaction depends on stakeholders' positionality, frequency of contact, and dependence on tourism-related exchanges. Rather than operating as a universal social good, host-guest relationships function as relational capital whose contribution to resilience varies according to social distance and institutional role.

Among business stakeholders, host-guest relationships were consistently framed as instrumental to maintaining reputation, customer loyalty, and recovery capacity. Business actors emphasised that trust-based and repeat interactions with visitors reduce uncertainty during periods of disruption by stabilising demand and facilitating flexible responses. B12 explained that “good relationships with visitors help businesses recover faster after disruptions,” explicitly linking relational quality to post-crisis recovery. Similarly, B08 noted that “repeat visitors and trust-based relationships are crucial during unstable periods,” underscoring the buffering role of relational continuity. Other business respondents reinforced this logic by describing host-guest relationships as informal resilience resources that compensate for limited institutional support. B14 observed that “when visitors trust us, they are more patient and supportive during difficult times,” while B01 highlighted that “positive guest relationships help maintain occupancy even when conditions are uncertain.” These findings align with prior research demonstrating that relational embeddedness enhances organisational resilience by strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability to shocks (Prayag, 2023; Biggs et al., 2015).

Tourists interpreted host-guest relationships through a more symbolic and affective lens, viewing relational quality as an indicator of social cohesion, safety, and destination stability. T22 commented that “friendly and respectful interactions make the destination feel resilient and well-organised,” suggesting that host-guest relations function as experiential cues of adaptive capacity. T29 similarly explained that “when locals and tourists interact well, it shows the destination can manage tourism pressure.” These perceptions indicate that tourists use relational encounters as heuristics to assess whether destinations possess the social foundations necessary to cope with stress and change. This interpretation is consistent with literature highlighting the role of emotional solidarity and perceived hospitality in shaping tourist confidence and destination resilience.

From an institutional perspective, government officials also recognised host-guest relationships as a relational pathway to resilience, though framed primarily in terms of social stability and conflict prevention. G04 highlighted that “positive host-guest relations reduce conflict and support long-term sustainability,” whereas G07 noted that “social harmony between visitors and residents makes tourism easier to manage during periods of pressure.” These accounts suggest that for public authorities, host-guest relationships contribute to resilience by lowering governance costs and facilitating coordination, rather than through direct experiential engagement.

In contrast, residents frequently described host-guest interactions as normalised, routine, and embedded within everyday life, reducing their perceived relevance for resilience formation. R18 stated that “tourists are part of everyday life here, so relationships with them do not necessarily affect how resilient the destination feels.” R21 similarly remarked that “interaction with tourists is normal and expected; resilience depends more on infrastructure and living conditions.” This normalisation effect suggests that when tourism becomes deeply integrated into daily social routines, relational encounters lose explanatory power as resilience indicators. Rather than signalling adaptive capacity, host-guest relationships are taken for granted, particularly in mature destinations with high tourism intensity. This finding aligns with research indicating that social proximity and habituation can weaken the perceived impact of tourism-related social interactions on resident attitudes and resilience perceptions.

To sum up, these findings demonstrate that host-guest relationships operate as relational pathways to adaptive capacity primarily for stakeholders who either depend on tourism exchanges (businesses), observe destinations episodically (tourists), or manage social stability institutionally (government actors). For residents, however, the routinisation of tourism interaction diminishes the salience of relational quality as a resilience driver. This functional differentiation helps explain the uneven quantitative effects and reinforces the mediating role of tourism resilience in translating social relations into sustainability outcomes. Host-guest relationships thus contribute to destination sustainability not as direct determinants, but as socially embedded resources that enhance adaptive capacity under specific relational and institutional conditions.

Political trust as an institutional confidence mechanism

Political trust functioned as a governance-based confidence mechanism, significantly influencing tourism resilience among government officials, residents,

and tourists, but not among business stakeholders. This differentiated pattern indicates that political trust operates less as a universal resilience resource and more as an institutionally mediated source of confidence, shaping how stakeholders evaluate a destination's capacity for coordination, crisis response, and long-term stability.

Among government officials, political trust was consistently framed as a prerequisite for effective implementation and coordinated action. Respondents emphasised that without public confidence in institutions, even well-designed sustainability and resilience strategies lose their effectiveness. G10 stated that “without trust in institutions, sustainability policies cannot be effectively enforced,” highlighting the role of trust in translating policy intent into practice. In addition, G07 noted that “trust allows authorities to act decisively during crises without constant resistance or doubt.” Other officials linked political trust to continuity and administrative legitimacy. G12 explained that “when people trust the system, long-term planning becomes more feasible,” while G03 described trust as “the foundation that holds coordination together when tourism faces unexpected shocks.” These accounts illustrate how political trust enhances resilience by stabilising governance processes and enabling timely intervention.

For residents, political trust was closely associated with perceptions of safety, order, and managerial competence. Residents frequently evaluated destination resilience through their confidence in authorities' ability to manage tourism pressures and respond to crises. R14 explained that “when authorities are trusted, people believe the destination can manage tourism challenges.” R08 similarly noted that “trust in local government makes people more confident that problems will be handled fairly.” Residents also emphasised the emotional dimension of political trust. R22 remarked that “trust reduces anxiety during difficult periods,” (R16) explained that “when communication from authorities is clear, people feel more resilient as a community.” These perspectives suggest that political trust strengthens resilience not only through institutional effectiveness, but also by fostering collective psychological stability.

Tourists likewise linked political trust to destination reliability and personal security, albeit from a more observational standpoint. Tourists tended to assess governance trustworthiness through visible order, communication, and crisis management cues. T19 stated that “trust in local governance makes me feel safer and more confident about visiting.” T22 noted that “destinations with strong governance feel more prepared to deal with emergencies.” Domestic tourists expressed similar sentiments.

T10 commented that “clear rules and visible management make the destination feel stable,” T14 explained that “good organisation by authorities makes tourism feel more sustainable.” These accounts indicate that political trust operates as a perceptual shortcut through which tourists infer adaptive capacity and resilience.

In contrast, business stakeholders consistently downplayed the role of political trust in shaping their own resilience assessments. Business respondents tended to prioritise market demand, operational flexibility, and informal networks over institutional confidence. B04 explained that “for businesses, resilience depends more on market demand than on political trust.” To agree, B01 remarked that “even when policies are unclear, businesses must adapt on their own.” Other business respondents reinforced this pragmatic orientation. B10 noted that “relationships with partners matter more than trust in authorities,” while B14 stated that “business survival depends on customers, not politics.” These views clarify why political trust did not significantly predict tourism resilience among business stakeholders, as their adaptive strategies are shaped primarily by market and relational dynamics rather than governance confidence.

It can be concluded that political trust functions as an institutional confidence mechanism that underpins tourism resilience for actors who rely on governance coordination, public order, and systemic stability. For government officials, residents, and tourists, political trust reinforces beliefs in collective capacity to manage uncertainty and recover from disruption. For business stakeholders, however, resilience is constructed through market responsiveness and interpersonal networks, rendering political trust comparatively peripheral. This functional differentiation helps explain the uneven quantitative effects and further underscores tourism resilience as a mediating construct through which institutional confidence is translated into destination sustainability.

Tourism resilience as a systemic integrator

Across all models and stakeholder groups, tourism resilience consistently emerged as a central mediating construct, linking diverse perceptual, relational, and institutional factors to destination sustainability. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence confirms that destination sustainability is not produced by isolated predictors acting independently, but by the capacity of destinations to absorb pressure, adapt to change, and recover through integrated social and institutional processes. Tourism resilience thus operates as a systemic mechanism that reconciles heterogeneous stakeholder priorities into a coherent sustainability trajectory.

Qualitative evidence from all respondent groups reinforces this integrative role by revealing how resilience is constructed through different, yet complementary, logics. Among residents, resilience was most frequently articulated in relation to everyday continuity, livelihood stability, and the ability of communities to cope with tourism-related pressures over time. Residents from diverse destination types, including small islands, heritage cities, and agricultural areas, repeatedly described resilience as the capacity to “continue living normally” despite tourism fluctuations. For example, R02 mentioned that “resilience means we can still live and work even when tourism changes suddenly,” whereas (R21) noted that “the destination is resilient when tourism does not disrupt daily life.” These accounts indicate that for residents, resilience is grounded in lived experience and social endurance rather than formal policy instruments.

Among tourists, resilience was interpreted through observational and experiential cues that signal destination stability and preparedness. Both domestic and inbound tourists described resilient destinations as those that manage tourism pressure smoothly, communicate clearly, and maintain service quality during periods of uncertainty. T18 remarked that “a resilient destination feels organised and calm even when there are problems,” T05 stated that “when destinations handle crowds and changes well, it feels more sustainable.” These perceptions suggest that tourists act as external evaluators of resilience, translating visible adaptive capacity into confidence in destination sustainability.

For business representatives, tourism resilience was framed primarily as an operational and strategic capacity that enables survival and recovery under volatile conditions. Business respondents consistently linked resilience to flexibility, financial buffers, and the ability to respond quickly to market disruptions. B02 explained that “resilience is about adjusting products and costs when tourism demand changes,”. B01 emphasised that “businesses survive when they can adapt faster than the market.” Importantly, although businesses relied less on formal governance mechanisms, they nevertheless benefited indirectly from system-level resilience generated through stable demand, social trust, and destination reputation.

From the perspective of government officials, tourism resilience was conceptualised as a governance capacity rooted in coordination, planning, and institutional legitimacy. Officials consistently described resilience as the ability of the tourism system to function coherently across departments and stakeholder groups during periods of disruption. G01 noted that “resilience is about how well the system responds as a whole,”. In contrast, (G12) highlighted that “adaptive capacity depends

on coordination between policy, infrastructure, and stakeholders.” These accounts underscore that for institutional actors, resilience operates as a system-level property rather than an individual or sectoral attribute.

Although experts were not directly included in the structural models, their qualitative insights further illuminate the integrative nature of tourism resilience. Experts consistently emphasised that resilience emerges when governance frameworks, community engagement, and market dynamics align. E11 explained that “resilience connects policy, business, and community responses into a single adaptive system,” E08 noted that “resilient destinations are those where stakeholders learn collectively from disruption.” These perspectives reinforce the interpretation of tourism resilience as a mechanism that transcends individual stakeholder boundaries.

At the system level, tourism resilience functions as a structural conduit through which environmental responsibility, perceived benefits and burdens of tourism, social cohesion, and institutional legitimacy are translated into sustainability outcomes. While stakeholders differ in how resilience is formed and experienced, the persistence of tourism resilience as a mediating mechanism across all models indicates a shared sustainability logic grounded in adaptation, learning, and recovery. Rather than fragmenting sustainability pathways, stakeholder diversity converges through resilience by contributing distinct yet interdependent resources.

Institutional actors strengthen resilience through governance frameworks, planning instruments, and formal sustainability practices. In contrast, lay stakeholders, including residents and tourists, contribute to resilience through social relations, experiential evaluation, and everyday adaptive behaviour. Business stakeholders bridge these domains by translating social and market signals into operational responses. These pathways are differentiated but mutually reinforcing, illustrating that effective destination sustainability depends on layered and inclusive governance arrangements that recognise stakeholder heterogeneity while strengthening collective adaptive capacity.

To conclude, the findings position tourism resilience not merely as an intermediate variable, but as the organising principle through which destination sustainability is constructed. By integrating perceptual, relational, and institutional dimensions, tourism resilience enables destinations to accommodate diverse stakeholder expectations while maintaining coherence and long-term viability. This systemic integrative role provides a robust empirical foundation for the discussion in Chapter

5, where the theoretical and solution-oriented implications of resilience-based, stakeholder-sensitive destination governance are further elaborated.

Integrative insight

In sum, the results extend stakeholder theory by demonstrating that stakeholders differ not only in perspective, but also in the functional role their perceptions play within the destination sustainability process. The integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence shows that similar constructs are interpreted and mobilised through distinct experiential, relational, and institutional logics across stakeholder groups. Insights from the qualitative phase reveal that residents anchor resilience in everyday continuity and quality of life, businesses emphasise operational adaptability and relational stability, tourists rely on experiential and symbolic cues, while government actors frame resilience as a matter of coordination and institutional capacity. Tourism resilience emerges as the key mechanism that reconciles these functional differences, enabling heterogeneous stakeholder motivations and experiences to converge into coherent sustainability outcomes. Rather than fragmenting the sustainability process, stakeholder diversity is integrated through resilience as a shared adaptive logic that translates varied inputs into collective capacity. This integrated understanding provides a robust empirical foundation for Chapter 5, where the theoretical refinement of resilience-based stakeholder governance and its policy and managerial implications are systematically discussed.

Table 7. Summary of hypothesis testing across stakeholder groups

Hypothesis	Path tested	Business	Local government	Residents	Tourists
H1	Perceived tourism impacts → TR	✓	✗	✓	✓
H2	Host-guest relationships → TR	✓	✓	✗	✓
H3	ESG practices → TR	✗	✓	✗	✓
H4	Political trust → TR	✗	✓	✓	✓
H5	Tourism resilience → Destination sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓

5. DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Interpretation of key findings

The findings of this study indicate that destination sustainability is not perceived by stakeholders as a direct consequence of individual governance practices, social relationships, or tourism impacts, but rather as an emergent outcome of a destination's adaptive capacity. Across all stakeholder groups, tourism resilience consistently functioned as the central interpretive mechanism through which diverse antecedents acquired sustainability relevance. This pattern suggests that sustainability is evaluated less as a static condition and more as a dynamic system property grounded in preparedness, responsiveness, and recovery potential. Therefore, tourism resilience does not merely mediate relationships statistically; it provides the cognitive and normative frame through which stakeholders translate experience and institutional signals into judgements about long-term destination viability.

Perceived tourism impacts, while foundational to stakeholder experience, were not interpreted as inherently determinative of sustainability outcomes. Instead, their significance lay in how such impacts were understood to be governed, absorbed, or mitigated within the destination system. Positive or negative impacts became consequential only when stakeholders believed that the destination possessed sufficient adaptive capacity to manage them without systemic degradation. This reframing advances sustainability debates by demonstrating that stakeholders do not equate sustainability with the absence of pressure, but with the presence of resilience. Tourism growth, social strain, or environmental stress are therefore not viewed as incompatible with sustainability per se, provided they are embedded within a system capable of learning, adjustment, and coordinated response.

The role of host-guest relationships further reinforces the relational foundations of adaptive capacity, yet in a way that transcends surface-level social harmony. Rather than directly shaping sustainability perceptions, host-guest interactions contributed by reinforcing confidence in information flows, mutual understanding, and behavioural flexibility during periods of disruption. The uneven salience of this pathway across stakeholder groups indicates that relational capital is interpreted differently depending on positionality. For externally oriented stakeholders, such as tourists and market actors, relationship quality serves as a proxy for destination competence and responsiveness, whereas for residents, whose exposure is

continuous rather than episodic, resilience judgements are more closely tied to structural conditions and lived impacts. This finding refines existing relational theories by positioning social interaction as a supporting infrastructure for resilience rather than an independent sustainability determinant.

Institutional dimensions, particularly ESG practices and political trust, emerged as critical yet differentiated contributors to resilience formation. Their influence was strongest where stakeholders relied on formal signals to infer system reliability, governance coherence, and long-term commitment. ESG practices operated less as ethical benchmarks and more as visible markers of organisational discipline and anticipatory governance, allowing stakeholders to extrapolate future system behaviour under stress. Political trust similarly functioned as a confidence-building mechanism, shaping beliefs about coordination capacity, policy continuity, and crisis legitimacy. Importantly, the absence of uniform effects across all stakeholder groups underscores that institutional credibility is not universally interpreted through the same lenses; resilience is assembled through multiple logics that reflect stakeholders' proximity to power, markets, and everyday consequences.

Taken together, the findings suggest that stakeholder diversity does not fragment destination sustainability pathways but instead produces a plural architecture of resilience formation. Different stakeholders activate distinct interpretive routes into resilience, drawing on experiential, relational, or institutional cues, yet these routes converge at the point where adaptive capacity becomes the shared basis for sustainability judgement. This system-level convergence provides a theoretical advance by explaining how destinations can pursue sustainability despite heterogeneous priorities and perceptions. Sustainability, in this model, is neither imposed nor uniformly defined; it is stabilised through resilience as a unifying evaluative principle that aligns diverse stakeholder logics within a common adaptive horizon.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

This study advances sustainable tourism scholarship by offering a theoretically integrated explanation of how destination sustainability is evaluated by stakeholders under conditions of complexity and uncertainty. While previous tourism research has tended to conceptualise sustainability either as an outcome of impact optimisation or as a normative governance objective (Sharpley, 2000), the findings of this research demonstrate that sustainability is more accurately understood as an emergent system condition mediated through tourism resilience. This contribution

directly addresses the gap identified in the introductory chapter concerning the fragmentation of sustainability theory and the limited integration of resilience into evaluative models of destination development.

A first major theoretical advancement concerns the extension of Social Exchange Theory within tourism studies. Social exchange perspectives have long been used to explain stakeholder support for tourism based on perceived benefits and costs (Ap, 1990; Gursoy et al., 2002). While these models have been effective in explaining attitudinal support, they implicitly assume that positive exchange evaluations translate directly into sustainable outcomes. The present study refines this assumption by demonstrating that perceived tourism impacts and host-guest relationships do not directly shape sustainability judgements. Instead, they influence sustainability indirectly through their contribution to tourism resilience. This suggests that stakeholders assess exchanges not solely in terms of immediate outcomes, but in terms of whether the destination system can absorb, manage, and adapt to those outcomes over time. In doing so, the study responds to critiques that social exchange theory insufficiently captures long-term system dynamics and vulnerability (Nunkoo & Smith, 2013).

The study also contributes to the tourism resilience literature by repositioning resilience from a predominantly managerial or operational construct to a shared evaluative mechanism. Foundational resilience theory conceptualises resilience as the capacity of systems to absorb disturbance while maintaining function (Holling, 1973). Tourism scholars have subsequently applied this concept to crisis preparedness, governance coordination, and adaptive learning (Biggs et al., 2012; Hall et al., 2020). However, much of this literature treats resilience as an objective destination attribute rather than as a perception-driven construct. This research extends existing work by empirically demonstrating that resilience operates as the principal pathway through which stakeholders interpret sustainability itself. By doing so, it supports recent conceptual arguments that resilience should be embedded more centrally within sustainability frameworks rather than treated as a complementary or post-crisis concern (Lew, 2014).

A further theoretical contribution lies in the refinement of governance-based explanations of sustainability, particularly in relation to ESG practices and political trust. Previous studies generally assume that strong governance, transparency, and ethical practice directly enhance sustainability outcomes (Bramwell & Lane, 2012; Font et al., 2016). Similarly, political trust has been widely linked to resident support for tourism development and policy acceptance (Nunkoo & Smith, 2013;

Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). The findings of this study complicate these assumptions by demonstrating that ESG practices and political trust do not exert uniform or direct effects on sustainability perceptions across stakeholders. Instead, they function as institutional signals that shape confidence in adaptive capacity. This aligns with legitimacy and signalling theories and advances governance scholarship by showing that institutional credibility contributes to sustainability primarily through its effect on perceived resilience, rather than through normative compliance alone.

The study also advances stakeholder theory by addressing the persistent issue of perceptual divergence in tourism sustainability research. Classical stakeholder models often assume that sustainability depends on the alignment of stakeholder interests (Freeman et al., 2010; Byrd, 2007). However, empirical tourism studies frequently document conflicting priorities among residents, businesses, tourists, and public authorities (Waligo et al., 2013). This research demonstrates that such divergence does not necessarily undermine sustainability outcomes. Instead, different stakeholders rely on distinct interpretive pathways to assess tourism resilience, drawing on experiential, relational, or institutional cues. These pathways converge at the level of resilience, producing a shared sustainability judgement without requiring consensus at the level of antecedents. This finding contributes to pluralistic governance perspectives by demonstrating how functional convergence can emerge within heterogeneous stakeholder systems.

Finally, the study refines relational theories of tourism by repositioning host-guest relationships within a resilience framework. Previous research has frequently linked positive host-guest relations directly to sustainability, community support, and destination competitiveness (Ribeiro et al., 2017). While these studies highlight the importance of social interaction, the present research demonstrates that relational quality alone does not directly shape sustainability perceptions. Instead, host-guest relationships contribute by strengthening adaptive capacity through improved communication, mutual understanding, and behavioural flexibility. This reconceptualisation integrates social capital theory with resilience thinking and advances relational tourism scholarship by embedding social interaction within system-level adaptive processes.

Collectively, these theoretical advancements are synthesised in Table 8, which illustrates how the study extends and refines established theories by positioning tourism resilience as a unifying mechanism across impact-based, governance-based, and relational frameworks.

Table 8. Theoretical extensions and contributions

Theory	Dominant application in tourism literature	Theoretical extension offered by this study
Social Exchange Theory	Explains stakeholder support for tourism development based on perceived benefits and costs (Ap, 1990; Gursoy et al., 2002)	Extends exchange logic by demonstrating that perceived tourism impacts and host–guest relationships shape destination sustainability indirectly through tourism resilience, indicating that exchange evaluations are filtered through assessments of adaptive capacity rather than support alone.
Integrated Threat Theory	Explains resistance and opposition through perceived threat, intergroup anxiety, and institutional distrust (Nunkoo & Smith, 2013)	Refines threat-based explanations by showing that political trust strengthens resilience and sustainability judgements beyond institutional actors alone, but does so unevenly across stakeholder groups, suggesting that governance confidence is differentiated by stakeholder position rather than uniformly distributed.
Stakeholder Theory	Assumes alignment or consensus among stakeholder interests enhances sustainability outcomes (Freeman, 1984; Byrd, 2007)	Reconceptualises stakeholder heterogeneity by demonstrating that divergent interests can converge functionally through tourism resilience as a shared evaluative mechanism, without requiring perceptual or interest-based alignment.
Conservation of Resources Theory	Applied mainly to individual stress, coping, and resource depletion in tourism contexts (Hobfoll, 1989)	Extends the theory to a system-level perspective by identifying ESG practices as institutional and signalling resources that strengthen tourism resilience selectively across stakeholder groups, particularly where they are interpreted as visible markers of governance capacity and adaptive preparedness.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings of this study carry important implications for tourism policy and destination management by demonstrating that sustainability interventions are most effective when they prioritise the enhancement of tourism resilience rather than the isolated optimisation of impacts, governance indicators, or stakeholder satisfaction. Traditional policy approaches in tourism have often focused on managing discrete issues, such as environmental degradation, resident opposition, or governance transparency, as standalone objectives. The present research suggests that such fragmented interventions risk limited effectiveness unless they are integrated within a broader strategy aimed at strengthening adaptive capacity. From a policy perspective, this implies a shift from outcome-based sustainability targets towards resilience-oriented governance frameworks that emphasise preparedness, flexibility, learning, and coordination across the destination system.

For public authorities, the findings highlight the central role of institutional credibility in shaping perceptions of resilience. Political trust emerged as a key mechanism through which residents and tourists infer a destination's capacity to manage disruption and maintain continuity. This suggests that policy effectiveness depends not only on regulatory competence, but also on the perceived legitimacy and transparency of decision-making processes. Governments should therefore prioritise inclusive governance practices, clear communication during periods of uncertainty, and visible coordination across agencies. Crisis response plans, sustainability strategies, and long-term development visions should be communicated not merely as technical documents, but as signals of institutional reliability and adaptive intent. In this way, political trust becomes an asset that reinforces resilience rather than a passive contextual condition.

The differentiated role of ESG practices across stakeholder groups also carries significant implications for destination governance and organisational strategy. The findings indicate that ESG initiatives contribute to sustainability primarily by enhancing perceptions of resilience, particularly among stakeholders who rely on formal signals to assess destination preparedness. For destination management organisations and tourism enterprises, this implies that ESG should not be treated solely as a compliance exercise or reputational tool. Instead, ESG practices should be explicitly aligned with risk management, crisis preparedness, and long-term adaptability. Policies that link ESG reporting to tangible resilience outcomes, such as environmental risk mitigation, workforce stability, and community preparedness,

are more likely to strengthen sustainability perceptions than symbolic or isolated ESG disclosures.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that businesses play a crucial role in operationalising resilience through relational and adaptive practices rather than reliance on institutional assurance alone. Unlike residents and tourists, business stakeholders did not derive resilience primarily from political trust, indicating a greater dependence on network relationships, market responsiveness, and operational flexibility. Destination managers should therefore support collaborative platforms that facilitate knowledge sharing, joint contingency planning, and cross-sector coordination among tourism businesses. Policies that encourage clustering, partnership development, and collective learning can strengthen destination-level resilience without imposing uniform governance models that may not align with business realities.

The findings also point to the importance of rethinking community engagement strategies. While host-guest relationships contribute to resilience, they do so indirectly by supporting communication, behavioural flexibility, and mutual understanding during periods of stress. Community-based tourism initiatives and visitor management policies should therefore move beyond promoting social harmony as an end in itself. Instead, they should focus on building relational infrastructures that enable adaptive responses, such as conflict resolution mechanisms, feedback channels, and co-created norms for responsible behaviour. For residents, whose sustainability perceptions are shaped more strongly by lived impacts and governance credibility than by everyday tourist interaction, engagement strategies should prioritise tangible improvements in adaptive capacity rather than symbolic participation.

At the destination level, the study suggests the need for integrated resilience governance that recognises stakeholder heterogeneity while maintaining system coherence. Policymakers should avoid one-size-fits-all sustainability frameworks that assume uniform stakeholder priorities. Instead, governance arrangements should accommodate differentiated pathways into resilience, allowing institutional actors, businesses, residents, and tourists to contribute through roles aligned with their positionality and capacities. The key managerial task is not to eliminate divergence, but to ensure that diverse contributions are aligned towards strengthening adaptive capacity. This approach supports sustainability without requiring consensus at the level of perceptions or interests.

These implications are summarised in Table 9, which maps the study's key theoretical insights onto concrete policy and managerial actions across stakeholder groups.

Table 9. Policy and managerial implications derived from the resilience-mediated sustainability framework

Domain	Key insight from the study	Policy and managerial implications
Destination governance	Sustainability is evaluated through perceived resilience rather than isolated outcomes	Shift policy focus from impact control to resilience enhancement, including preparedness, flexibility, and learning-oriented governance
Public institutions	Political trust strengthens resilience perceptions among residents and tourists	Invest in transparent decision-making, inclusive governance, and clear crisis communication to reinforce institutional credibility
ESG strategy	ESG practices act as signals of adaptive capacity rather than direct sustainability drivers	Align ESG reporting with risk management, crisis preparedness, and long-term adaptive objectives rather than symbolic compliance
Tourism businesses	Resilience is derived from networks and operational flexibility rather than political trust	Support business collaboration, knowledge-sharing platforms, and joint contingency planning at the destination level
Community engagement	Host-guest relationships support resilience indirectly	Design engagement initiatives that enhance communication, behavioural adaptability, and conflict management rather than focusing solely on social harmony
Stakeholder coordination	Divergent stakeholder priorities can converge through resilience	Implement flexible governance frameworks that allow differentiated contributions while aligning actors towards shared adaptive capacity

5.4 Limitations and future research

While this study offers a theoretically informed and empirically grounded analysis of destination sustainability, its findings must be interpreted within clearly defined contextual, structural, and methodological boundaries. Making these boundary conditions explicit is essential not only for situating the results appropriately, but also for clarifying under what circumstances the resilience-mediated sustainability framework developed in this thesis may be applied to other destinations, why such transfer is plausible in some contexts and constrained in others, and how future research can extend the analysis beyond the empirical setting examined here.

A first and central boundary condition concerns the structural role of tourism within the destination system. The findings indicate that destination sustainability is evaluated through tourism resilience primarily in contexts where tourism generates sustained and multifaceted pressures that require ongoing adaptation. The mediating role of resilience presupposes a tourism system that is sufficiently developed to produce continuous economic dependence, social negotiation, and environmental stress. In destinations where tourism remains marginal, highly seasonal, or peripheral to local livelihoods, sustainability is more likely to be framed in terms of growth potential, investment attraction, or short-term economic opportunity rather than adaptive capacity. Under such conditions, resilience may not function as a central evaluative mechanism, and the explanatory logic identified in this study is likely to be weakened or displaced by alternative development-oriented perspectives. The framework is therefore most applicable to destinations where tourism constitutes a persistent system stressor rather than an emerging or supplementary activity.

A second boundary condition relates to governance visibility and institutional signalling. The differentiated effects of ESG practices and political trust across stakeholder groups demonstrate that these factors contribute to tourism resilience only where governance arrangements are sufficiently legible for stakeholders to infer coordination capacity, preparedness, and long-term commitment. In contexts characterised by weak institutional capacity, fragmented authority, or predominantly informal regulatory practices, ESG frameworks and political trust may lack salience as resilience signals. In such destinations, adaptive capacity may instead be constructed through informal social networks, household strategies, or market-based adjustment rather than through formal governance mechanisms. Consequently, the resilience-mediated pathway identified in this study is most transferable to settings

where governance structures are institutionally embedded and publicly visible, and less applicable where institutional signals are opaque, inconsistent, or contested.

A third boundary condition concerns stakeholder plurality and interaction. The convergence observed in this study does not arise from consensus at the level of stakeholder interests, but from the capacity of tourism resilience to operate as a shared evaluative principle across heterogeneous groups. This presupposes a destination context in which multiple stakeholders actively interpret, contest, and respond to tourism development, and where sustainability judgements emerge through interaction rather than unilateral imposition. In destinations characterised by highly centralised decision-making, limited stakeholder participation, or restricted public deliberation, sustainability may be framed primarily as a managerial or technical objective. In such cases, resilience may function as an operational tool rather than as a shared evaluative mechanism, thereby constraining the applicability of the framework proposed here.

Beyond these contextual and structural boundaries, the study is subject to methodological limitations that shape its interpretive scope. The cross-sectional design captures stakeholder evaluations at a specific point in time and cannot fully account for the dynamic and processual nature of tourism resilience. Resilience is shaped by experience with disruption, recovery trajectories, and institutional learning, and stakeholder judgements may evolve before, during, and after crises. Longitudinal research designs, including panel studies or repeated qualitative engagements, would enable future research to examine how resilience evaluations change over time and whether resilience operates as a relatively stable evaluative lens or as a context-sensitive judgement influenced by recent experience and collective memory.

The reliance on perceptual measures represents a further limitation. While perceptions are theoretically central to the study's focus on stakeholder evaluation, they may not fully capture material constraints, infrastructural capacity, or informal coping practices that shape adaptive capacity in practice. In destinations where resilience is grounded primarily in material resources, informal social arrangements, or technological systems, perceptual pathways alone may provide an incomplete explanation of sustainability outcomes. Future research could strengthen explanatory depth by integrating perceptual data with objective indicators, policy analysis, or behavioural evidence.

Importantly, this study does not seek to offer a universally generalisable or prescriptive model of destination sustainability. The framework developed here is analytically transferable rather than contextually invariant, and its relevance in other national or regional settings depends on whether tourism resilience functions as a meaningful evaluative reference point for stakeholders. For researchers working in different destination contexts, the framework should therefore be treated as a diagnostic heuristic rather than as an assumed explanatory structure. Its primary value lies in enabling scholars to examine whether sustainability is evaluated through resilience, to identify which stakeholder-specific pathways shape that evaluation, and to determine whether alternative mechanisms emerge where institutional arrangements, cultural norms, or tourism development trajectories differ. In contexts where resilience does not operate as a shared evaluative principle, the framework may require substantial adaptation or may be replaced by other analytical logics, reinforcing the need for comparative and context-sensitive research rather than direct replication.

Finally, while this study identifies tourism resilience as a central mediating mechanism, it does not imply that resilience exhausts all possible pathways to destination sustainability. Variables such as place attachment, social capital, risk perception, technological readiness, and environmental vulnerability may interact with, moderate, or substitute for resilience under different structural and cultural conditions. Future research should explore these interactions in order to refine the boundary conditions of resilience-based sustainability models and to develop more nuanced, context-sensitive explanations of destination sustainability.

Taken together, these limitations indicate that the findings of this study are most applicable to destinations characterised by sustained tourism pressure, visible and credible governance arrangements, and active stakeholder engagement. Where these conditions are absent, the resilience-mediated logic identified here may be weakened, reconfigured, or replaced by alternative sustainability pathways. By explicitly defining these boundaries and outlining clear directions for comparative and longitudinal inquiry, the study provides a transparent and robust foundation for future research on sustainable tourism governance across diverse destination contexts.

5.5 Conclusion

This study set out to examine how destination sustainability is constructed and evaluated by multiple stakeholders, and to clarify the role of tourism resilience in

linking perceived impacts, social relations, governance practices, and institutional trust to long-term sustainability outcomes. In addressing these aims, the study responds directly to persistent fragmentation within sustainable tourism research, where impacts, governance, and stakeholder perspectives have often been examined in isolation. By adopting an integrative, multi-stakeholder approach, the thesis provides a coherent explanation of how sustainability judgements are formed within complex destination systems.

The central point is that destination sustainability is not perceived as a direct or static outcome of tourism development practices, but as an emergent condition mediated through tourism resilience. Across residents, tourists, tourism businesses, and government actors, resilience consistently functioned as the primary mechanism through which diverse experiences and institutional signals were translated into sustainability evaluations. This finding reframes sustainability as a dynamic and adaptive system property, shifting analytical focus away from isolated performance indicators towards collective capacity for anticipation, absorption, and recovery. In doing so, the thesis advances a resilience-centred understanding of sustainable tourism that is both theoretically robust and empirically grounded.

A further conclusion concerns the differentiated yet convergent roles of stakeholders within the destination system. While stakeholder groups varied in how they interpreted tourism impacts, host-guest relationships, ESG practices, and political trust, these differences did not result in fragmented sustainability outcomes. Instead, divergent perspectives converged through tourism resilience as a shared evaluative lens. This demonstrates that stakeholder heterogeneity is not inherently detrimental to sustainability. Rather, it constitutes a plural architecture through which adaptive capacity is constructed. This insight challenges consensus-based assumptions within stakeholder theory and provides a more realistic foundation for sustainability governance in contested and dynamic tourism contexts.

The study also concludes that governance and institutional factors influence sustainability primarily through their capacity to generate confidence in adaptive systems. ESG practices and political trust were shown to operate less as direct sustainability drivers and more as signals of preparedness, credibility, and long-term commitment. This finding refines existing governance-based sustainability models by emphasising perception, legitimacy, and institutional legibility as critical components of resilience formation. It further suggests that sustainability governance is as much about how institutions are perceived to perform under uncertainty as about formal policy design.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of integrating multiple stakeholder groups within a single structural framework. By combining qualitative insights with comparative quantitative modelling across stakeholder groups, the research captures both the depth and the structural coherence of stakeholder evaluations. This approach moves beyond single-actor analyses and provides a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability as a system-level phenomenon. The methodological design thus contributes not only to empirical findings, but also to the advancement of research practices in sustainable tourism studies.

In conclusion, this thesis makes a substantive contribution to sustainable tourism scholarship by positioning tourism resilience as the central mechanism through which destination sustainability is evaluated, negotiated, and stabilised. It offers a theoretically integrated framework that accommodates stakeholder diversity, contextual complexity, and temporal uncertainty. By doing so, the research provides both scholars and practitioners with a clearer understanding of how sustainability can be pursued in tourism destinations facing ongoing change and disruption. The findings affirm that the future of sustainable tourism lies not in the elimination of pressure or difference, but in the cultivation of adaptive capacity that enables destinations to endure, evolve, and thrive over time.

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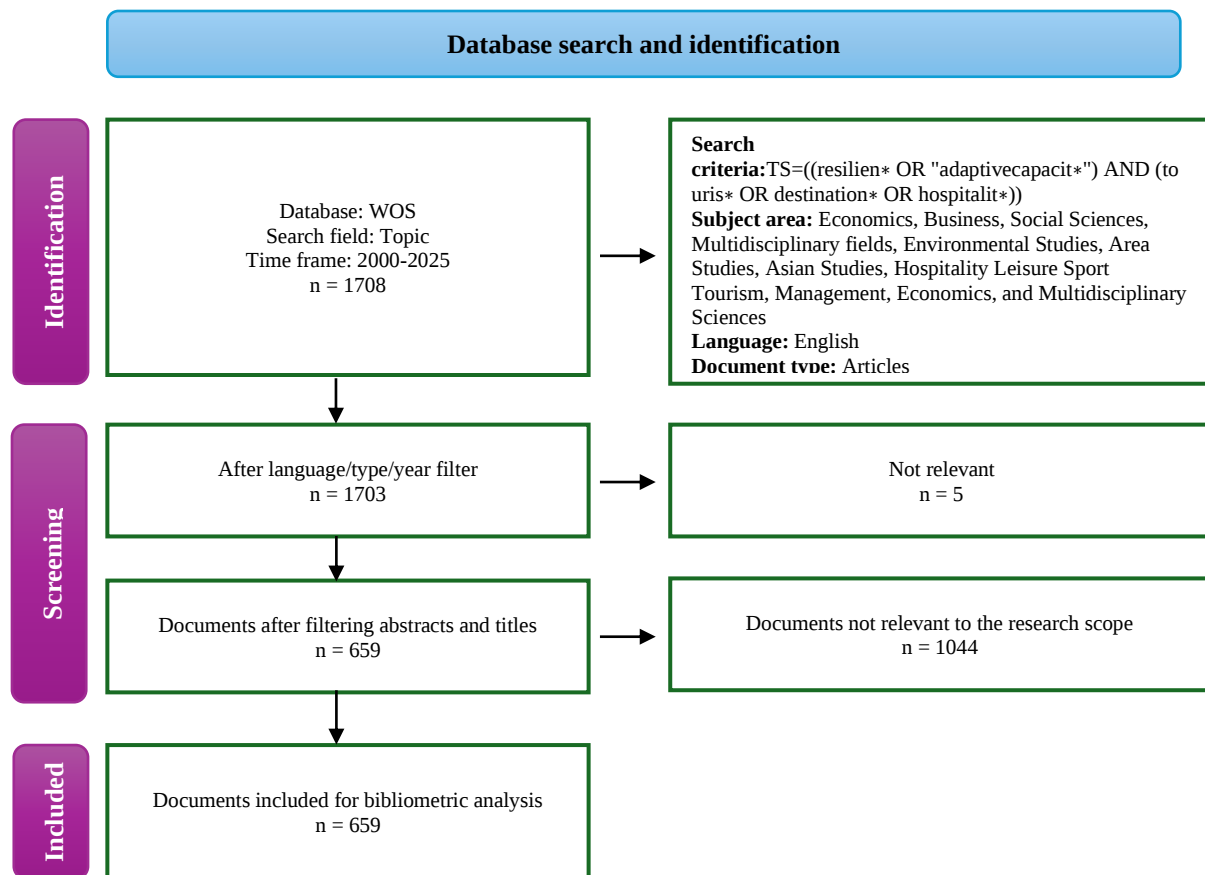
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Appendix A. Bibliometric design

This study employed the Web of Science Core Collection (WoS) as the exclusive data source. Records were retrieved from the *Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)*, *Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)*, and *Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI)*. Although alternative databases such as Scopus or Engineering Village also provide bibliometric coverage, WoS was selected for four main reasons.

1. Academic reliability: WoS indexes rigorously peer-reviewed journals and applies consistent editorial and citation standards, ensuring the quality, traceability, and longitudinal comparability of records (Chen, 2006; Geng et al., 2024).
2. Interdisciplinary coverage: WoS integrates environmental, social, business, and management sciences, providing balanced representation of the cross-disciplinary foundations of tourism-resilience studies (Hu & Xu, 2022).
3. Avoidance of duplication: Restricting data collection to WoS prevents redundant or conflicting entries from overlapping databases, thereby preserving the integrity of co-occurrence structures.
4. Software compatibility: VOSviewer (v1.6.20), the visualisation software used in this study, reads WoS record formats directly and supports accurate mapping of citation and keyword networks.

The search was conducted on 21 August 2025 for the period 1 January 2000 – 21 August 2025, a range that coincides with the global policy emphasis on sustainability following the Millennium Development Goals. Data refinement followed PRISMA-S standards as figure below.



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Appendix B. Interview information

A1. Respondent information

1. Residents ($n = 38$)

Code	Gender	Age	Participate in tourism	Type of destination	Sites
R01	Female	34	Yes	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R02	Male	45	Yes	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R03	Female	29	Yes	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R04	Male	51	No	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R05	Female	40	Yes	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R06	Male	33	Yes	Small islands	Phu Quy island
R07	Female	27	No	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R08	Male	58	No	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R09	Female	36	Yes	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R10	Male	44	Yes	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R11	Female	31	Yes	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R12	Male	38	Yes	Coastal tourism	Nha Trang
R13	Female	26	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hue
R14	Male	47	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hue
R15	Male	35	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hue
R16	Female	50	No	Heritage & Culture	Hue
R17	Female	41	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Da Nang
R18	Male	30	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Da Nang
R19	Male	63	No	Heritage & Culture	Da Nang
R20	Female	20	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Da Nang
R21	Female	55	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R22	Male	38	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R23	Female	37	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R24	Male	43	No	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R25	Female	28	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R26	Male	39	Yes	Heritage & Culture	Hoi An
R27	Male	26	Yes	Nature, trekking	Quang Binh
R28	Male	45	Yes	Nature, trekking	Quang Binh
R29	Female	42	Yes	Nature, trekking	Quang Binh
R30	Female	52	Yes	Nature, trekking	Quang Binh
R31	Male	47	Yes	Nature, trekking	Lam Dong
R32	Male	28	Yes	Nature, trekking	Lam Dong

R33	Female	25	Yes	Nature, trekking	Lam Dong
R34	Female	33	Yes	Agriculture	Vinh Long
R35	Male	35	Yes	Agriculture	Vinh Long
R36	Male	30	Yes	Agriculture	Vinh Long
R37	Male	32	Yes	Agriculture	Vinh Long
R38	Male	37	Yes	Agriculture	Vinh Long

2. Tourists (n = 31)

Code	Gender	Age	Type of Tourist	Preferred Destination Type	ESG Awareness
T01	Female	24	Domestic	Cultural	Low
T02	Male	31	Domestic	Natural	Low
T03	Female	29	Domestic	Cultural	Moderate
T04	Male	42	Domestic	Mixed (Natural + Cultural)	Low
T05	Female	35	Domestic	Natural	Moderate
T06	Male	27	Domestic	Natural (adventure-focused)	Low
T07	Female	32	Domestic	Cultural	High
T08	Male	38	Domestic	Natural	Low
T09	Female	22	Domestic	Urban	Low
T10	Male	50	Domestic	Natural	Low
T11	Female	26	Domestic	Cultural	Moderate
T12	Male	34	Domestic	Natural	Moderate
T13	Male	45	Domestic	Cultural	Low
T14	Female	30	Domestic	Mixed (Cultural + Urban)	Low
T15	Male	28	Domestic	Natural (coastal)	Moderate
T16	Female	40	Domestic	Natural	Low
T17	Male	33	Inbound	Cultural	High
T18	Female	52	Inbound	Natural + Cultural	High
T19	Male	45	Inbound	Cultural	High
T20	Female	30	Inbound	Mixed	Moderate
T21	Male	27	Inbound	Natural (mountain/trekking)	Moderate
T22	Female	38	Inbound	Cultural	High
T23	Male	56	Inbound	Natural	Moderate
T24	Female	25	Inbound	Cultural	High

T25	Male	62	Inbound	Natural (island/beach)	Moderate
T26	Female	34	Inbound	Cultural	High
T27	Male	41	Inbound	Mixed	Moderate
T28	Female	47	Inbound	Cultural	Moderate
T29	Female	29	Inbound	Natural + Cultural	High
T30	Male	36	Inbound	Mixed (Urban + Cultural)	Moderate
T31	Female	55	Inbound	Natural	High

3. Business Representatives (n = 16)

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Years in Tourism
B01	Male	37	Hotel manager	12
B02	Female	44	Tour operator	18
B03	Male	29	Restaurant supervisor	6
B04	Female	41	Travel agency director	13
B05	Male	35	Cruise tourism operator	10
B06	Female	32	Spa and wellness manager	7
B07	Male	47	R&D specialist	20
B08	Male	39	Adventure tourism operator	14
B09	Female	28	Cafeteria owner	5
B10	Male	52	Tourism transport company owner	22
B11	Female	36	MICE event coordinator	9
B12	Male	43	Tour guide	15
B13	Female	32	Tour guide	10
B14	Male	43	Tour operator	20
B15	Female	24	Tour operator	2
B16	Male	24	Sales and marketing tour	2

4. Government Officials (n = 14)

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation / Role	Experience years
G01	Male	54	Tourism department deputy director	22
G02	Female	46	Urban planning officer	15
G03	Male	38	Tourism promotion officer	10
G04	Female	50	Cultural heritage specialist	18
G05	Male	42	Tourism management department	12
G06	Female	34	Tourism promotion officer	7
G07	Male	57	Tourism management department	20
G08	Female	40	Tourism management department	11

G09	Male	33	Smart tourism project officer	8
G10	Female	48	Tourism department deputy director	24
G11	Male	52	Cultural and tourism center	21
G12	Female	36	Investment and planning officer	8
G13	Male	45	Tourism promotion center	14
G14	Female	44	Tourism information Center	13

5. Experts (n = 12)

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation / Role
E01	Male	61	Lecturer in tourism management
E02	Female	52	Environmental economist
E03	Male	47	Sustainable tourism researcher
E04	Female	62	Lecturer in development studies
E05	Male	58	Policy advisor (tourism)
E06	Female	49	Cultural heritage expert
E07	Male	42	Economist
E08	Female	45	Climate adaptation specialist
E09	Male	55	Lecturer in tourism management
E10	Female	40	Lecturer in hospitality management
E11	Male	50	Destination management consultant
E12	Female	37	Lecturer in hospitality management

A2. Interview questions guiding

With residents

Q1. How do you perceive the positive and negative impacts of tourism on your community and daily life?

Q2. How would you describe your interactions with tourists in this area?

Q3. Have you experienced any misunderstandings, tensions or situations that made you feel uncomfortable?

Q4. How confident are you in the way local authorities manage tourism development?

Q5. Do you think local businesses or authorities act in an environmentally and socially responsible manner?

Q6. How well do you think your community can cope with unexpected shocks, such as natural disasters, pandemics or sudden drops in visitors?

Q7. What does sustainable tourism mean to you as a resident of this area?

With tourists

Q1. How do you think tourism is affecting the destination you visited — both positively and negatively?

- Did you notice any environmental pressures or improvements?
- How do you think tourism affects local culture or daily life?

Q2. What were your impressions of the environmental conditions in the places you visited (cleanliness, waste management, natural conservation)?

Q3. How would you describe your interactions with local residents during your trip?

- What made you feel comfortable or welcomed?
- Were there any moments of misunderstanding or tension?

Q4. Did you feel that the relationship between tourists and residents is generally positive?

- In what ways do locals contribute to your visitor experience?
- Did you observe any signs of irritation or conflict?

Q5. Do you look for environmentally friendly or socially responsible tourism products when you travel?

Q6. Did you encounter businesses or services that promoted environmentally responsible or community-based tourism?

Q7. Do you feel that tourism is well managed in this destination?

Q8. How well do you think the destination could cope with future challenges such as natural disasters, overtourism or pandemics?

With business

Q1. Could you describe your main tourism products or services and how they have evolved in recent years?

Q2. What recent trends in tourist preferences have you observed, particularly regarding cultural, natural or experiential products?

Q3. What does ESG or responsible tourism mean to your business?

Q4. Does your business currently implement any environmental or socially responsible practices?

Q5. How do you communicate your tourism products and any ESG-related efforts to customers?

Q6. How do tourists respond to sustainable or environmentally friendly products?

Q7. How does your business engage with the local community or collaborate with local authorities?

Q8. How well do you feel your business is prepared to deal with crises such as pandemics, natural disasters or sudden drops in demand?

Q9. From a business perspective, what does sustainable tourism development mean in this destination?

Q10. What future strategies or investments would help your business improve its sustainability performance?

With government official

Q1. Could you describe your role in tourism management and how it relates to the development of this destination?

Q2. What do you consider the most important sustainability issues facing this destination today?

- Environmental pressures
- Cultural preservation challenges
- Social/community issues

Q3. How does your department integrate sustainability principles into tourism planning and policymaking?

- Existing policies or guidelines
- How sustainability criteria are set or evaluated

Q4. How does your organisation address the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the local community, culture and environment?

- Infrastructure management
- Visitor flow control
- Waste and environmental regulations

Q5. How do you work with residents, businesses and community groups to support sustainable tourism?

- Platforms for participation
- Consultation mechanisms
- Challenges in multi-stakeholder governance

Q6. How do you assess the level of public trust in local tourism governance?

- Transparency of decisions
- Communication with residents and businesses
- Perceived barriers to trust

Q7. How prepared is the destination to cope with crises such as natural disasters, overcrowding or pandemics?

- Existing resilience plans
- Operational or emergency coordination
- Lessons from past crises (e.g., COVID-19)

Q8. What forms of support or incentives does the government provide to encourage tourism businesses to adopt sustainable practices?

- Training programmes
- Certification schemes
- Subsidies or regulatory requirements

Q9. What is your vision for a sustainable tourism destination over the next 5–10 years?

- Infrastructure development
- Community involvement
- Environmental protection goals

With experts

Q1. How well do you think the constructs included in this study (tourism impacts, host-guest relations, ESG practices, political trust, resilience and destination sustainability) capture the essential dimensions of sustainable tourism in Việt Nam?

Q2. Based on the full set of indicators, to what extent do you think the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impact items collectively capture how tourism affects destinations in Việt Nam?

Q3. Considering the indicators across functional interactions, hedonic interactions, resident–tourist social interactions and government–tourist interactions, do you believe the host-guest relations construct effectively reflects the relational dynamics that contribute to resilience in a tourism destination?

Q4. Looking at the environmental, social and governance dimensions together, do these ESG indicators adequately represent how tourism businesses in Việt Nam contribute to sustainability and resilience, or should any elements be added, removed or revised?

Q5. Taken as a whole, do the political trust items suitably capture how residents and other stakeholders perceive government fairness, responsiveness and credibility in tourism development?

Q6. Considering the full set of resilience indicators—including preparedness, adaptability, collaboration, risk management, communication and responsibility development—do these items accurately represent the resilience of a tourism destination in the Vietnamese context?

Q7. As a complete set, do the destination sustainability indicators sufficiently reflect long-term sustainable development, including economic fairness, cultural preservation, environmental management, governance transparency and technological innovation?

Q8. When considering all constructs, how suitable and culturally appropriate is the phrasing of the measurement items for different stakeholder groups in Việt Nam?

Q9. Taking all factors together, do you believe the measurement framework is conceptually comprehensive and contextually valid for assessing sustainable tourism, resilience and governance in Việt Nam.

Appendix C. Qualitative analysis

Grounded Codebook – Tourists

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Definition	Illustrative Quote
Affective Encounters with Place	Emotional immersion	felt_peace	Tourists express emotional or spiritual connection to the landscape or town atmosphere	“The slow river, the incense in pagodas, the quiet courtesy of people.” (T17)
	Disrupted beauty	tourism_intrusion	Moments when crowding, noise, or overdevelopment disturbed the sense of place	“The crowds made me wonder how the locals feel.” (T03)
	Temporal tension	charm_vs_pressure	Awareness that heritage or natural beauty is under strain due to tourism volume or pace	“It felt like the city was trying to hold onto its calm while rushing to please everyone.” (T01)
Tourist–Local Relations	Warmth and welcome	authentic_kindness	Deep appreciation of locals’ patience, generosity, or hospitality	“A monk gave me tea during a sudden rainstorm and we sat in silence for a while — that moment meant more to me than any monument.” (T17)
	Social discomfort	awkward_moments	Tourists recognising when their behaviour (or others’) caused offence or discomfort	“A tourist shouted at a ticket inspector at the Citadel, and the staff looked deeply embarrassed.” (T17)
	Emotional labour	visible_fatigue	Recognition that residents were smiling out of obligation, not ease	“Their smiles didn’t quite reach their eyes. That spoke louder than any complaint.” (T28)
	Moral reflection	behavioural_reflection	Tourists self-correcting or reassessing their own conduct after subtle local cues	“A woman in a temple gave us a gentle reminder to lower our voices; I felt embarrassed but grateful.” (T01)
Environmental Awareness & Ambivalence	Noticing degradation	visible_pollution	Noticing rubbish, litter, overcrowding, erosion or degraded natural sites	“Plastic drifting along the river edge... it made me uneasy.” (T18)
	ESG inconsistency	eco_mismatch	Perceived contradiction between green	“They used ‘eco’ on the menu and carried on.” (T28)

			branding and actual practice	
	Conscious consumption	attempted_responsibility	Trying to choose eco-options, despite confusion or limitations	“I travelled with a refill bottle, avoided plastic, and chose small family-run accommodations.” (T29)
	Apathy or indifference	low_engagement	Explicit disinterest or lack of awareness about sustainability	“I didn’t really think much about sustainability when planning trips.” (T08)
Tourism Strain & Management	Overcrowding discomfort	too_many_footsteps	Negative emotional response to mass tourism environments	“At sunset it felt like everyone wanted the same photo.” (T03)
	Superficial management	polished_surface	View that cities seem organised, but deeper strain is evident	“Tourism is managed in appearance, but the human side feels strained.” (T28)
	Fragile infrastructure	not_ready_for_shock	Concern that tourism systems cannot withstand crises	“If something big happened... I feel the people would stay strong, but the tourism part might collapse fast.” (T16)
	Cultural commodification	depth_loss	Fear that cultural practices are being flattened into performance	“Tourism pushes traditional work to become fast and shallow.” (T22)
Resilience Perceptions	Human spirit	emotional_resilience	Perception that locals have emotional strength and quiet dignity	“I think the community has emotional resilience, but environmental resilience? I’m not so sure.” (T18)
	Ecological fragility	environmental_vulnerability	View that landscapes or ecosystems are delicate under pressure	“The land seems tired in some places, like it’s asking for slower footsteps.” (T18)
	Infrastructure risk	management_fragility	Doubt about the tourism system’s capacity to absorb disruptions	“Tourism feels both well-planned and overwhelmed.” (T07)
	Cultural continuity	cultural_endurance	Hope or admiration for how traditions survive amidst modern pressures	“The cultural spirit feels incredibly strong.” (T26)

Grounded Codebook – Businesses

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Definition	Illustrative Quote
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Changing Tourism Trends	Shift in demand	experience_over_product	Observing that travellers now seek immersive, meaningful, or slower tourism experiences over traditional packages	“People now want slower journeys... guided walks instead of buses.” (B04)
	Tourist expectations	ethics_driven_guests	Growing demand from tourists for responsible practices, ethical sourcing, or community impact	“Guests ask whether the seafood is ethically sourced, whether we use plastic straws.” (B03)
ESG Awareness & Application	Emerging ESG understanding	learning_curve	Businesses only recently became familiar with ESG, but are adapting and learning to apply it meaningfully	“I didn’t even know the term until maybe four years ago... but it made sense.” (B01)
	Beyond greenwashing	authentic_sustainability	Emphasis on doing sustainability sincerely rather than using it as a marketing strategy	“We never pretend to be perfect. I tell guests honestly what we’re working on.” (B06)
	Internal culture	staff_wellbeing_matters	Businesses highlight fair treatment, mental health, and emotional care for staff as part of sustainability	“Wellness starts inside the business. We give fair schedules, training, emotional support.” (B06)
	Operational practices	small_steps_matter	Implementing practical ESG actions like waste sorting, local sourcing, energy-saving systems	“No single-use plastic onboard, trained staff on reef protection, buy catches directly.” (B05)
Communication & Storytelling	Values in storytelling	honest_communication	Telling the story behind sustainability practices to build trust with guests	“We tell our story through handwritten notes on the menu, through conversations.” (B09)
	Engagement outcomes	story_builds_trust	Guests respond positively when businesses share the human and ethical side of operations	“They notice when we separate trash or repurpose jars... they trust us.” (B09)
	Reciprocity & embeddedness	mutual_support_network	Strong ties with local communities; mutual help during crises, shared values	“Fishermen supported us with discounted supplies when we reopened.” (B03)
	Collaboration challenges	uneven_authority_support	Mixed experiences with local government	“Cooperation is improving, but

			support; sometimes helpful, sometimes slow or bureaucratic	enforcement at sea is still inconsistent.” (B05)
Resilience & Adaptation	Coping with crisis	pandemic_recalibration	COVID forced business model shifts and revealed the importance of flexibility	“We survived by turning half the hotel into long-term rentals for local workers.” (B01)
	Redefining success	values_over_volume	Businesses shift from mass growth to quality, sustainability, and meaning	“I’ve realised that bigger rarely means better.” (B14)
Future Vision	Purpose-driven goals	future_ethics_investment	Aspirations to expand ESG efforts — electric vehicles, local funds, training, or conservation	“My dream is to build a herbal garden and teach how our ancestors used plants.” (B06)
	Youth-led innovation	next_gen_sustainability	Young professionals bring fresh ideas and embed ethics from the start	“Young travellers like me want authenticity, but we also don’t want to hurt the communities.” (B15)

Grounded Codebook – Government Officials

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Definition	Illustrative Quote
Governance Complexity	Multi-stakeholder tension	balancing_pressures	Officials describe conflict between business demands, community needs, and environmental priorities	“Businesses want flexibility, communities want protection, tourists want convenience.” (G05)
	Institutional fragmentation	cross-department_gap	Challenges in aligning departments and responsibilities within government	“My role now is to coordinate policy among different units and ensure nothing important slips through the cracks.” (G10)
	Regulatory frustration	policy_vs_reality	Disparity between official plans and on-the-ground implementation	“Policy is the easy part; discipline is harder.” (G01)
Sustainability as Struggle & Standard	Limits and boundaries	setting_thresholds	Use of zoning, visitor caps, or development limits to prevent long-term damage	“These limits are not popular. But limits are what prevent collapse.” (G10)
	Cultural sustainability	protecting_meaning	Concern that tourism weakens the depth or authenticity of cultural practices	“When a ceremony is shortened for a tour schedule, something inside me aches.” (G04)

	Emergent norms	normalising_responsibility	Aspiration to make sustainable behaviour the expected norm, not an exception	“A system where responsible behaviour is normal, not exceptional.” (G05)
Trust, Voice, and Participation	Fragile legitimacy	trust_fluctuates	Officials reflect on unstable or conditional public trust	“Trust is earned slowly, lost quickly.” (G10)
	Listening practices	quiet_participation	Emphasis on subtle forms of engagement like informal feedback, questions, messages	“Not always loudly, but consistently. They send messages, call, ask questions.” (G08)
	Transparency efforts	honest_process	Value placed on open communication, even when unpopular	“Transparency must be paired with consistent results; otherwise it means little.” (G10)
Resilience and Crisis Memory	Learning from disruption	post_crisis_reflection	Officials reflect on how COVID-19 and storms exposed system weaknesses and enabled change	“Crises like COVID humbled all of us.” (G01)
	System upgrades	coordination_improved	Noting better communication, preparedness, or response mechanisms after crises	“Crisis readiness has improved, mostly through experience.” (G07)
	Local solidarity	community_response_strength	Recognition that local communities often act faster and more effectively than formal systems	“During floods, cultural events paused, and communities helped each other without being asked.” (G11)
Communication and Representation	Tourist-resident mediation	interpretive_role	Officials describe their role as translating between visitors’ expectations and residents’ needs	“Some days it feels like we’re translating between tourists and residents.” (G06)
	Story as strategy	narrative_responsibility	Promotional work includes values and sustainability messaging, not just visual appeal	“My dream is to promote not just places, but values — respect, slowness, authenticity.” (G03)
	Data-driven insight	smart_feedback_loops	Using digital tools and visitor data to inform real-time planning and guide behaviour	“If you can measure a problem, you can address it earlier.” (G09)

Vision and Ethical Direction	Cautious growth	gentle_tourism	Vision of tourism that is slower, lighter, and less extractive	"Tourism that grows gently, not aggressively." (G01)
	Partnership model	tourism_as_partnership	Aspiration for tourism to be negotiated, shared, and accountable to place	"Tourism should feel like a partnership, not an invasion." (G10)
	Human-centred governance	systems_with_empathy	Designing systems that prioritise wellbeing, dignity, and continuity	"Sustainable tourism survives on practical kindness — the small, repeated actions..." (G14)

Grounded Codebook: Residents

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Definition	Illustrative Quote
Lived Impacts of Tourism	Economic improvement	income_enhancement	Perception that tourism provides income, creates jobs, or improves family livelihoods	"Tourism has helped my small seafood business, as visitors often buy local products." (R05)
	Economic strain	cost_increase	Concern about inflation, housing prices, or rising living costs due to tourism	"Prices for petrol and construction materials have risen, which affects everyone." (R02)
	Infrastructure strain	overburdened_services	Tourism pressure on roads, public spaces, water, or waste systems	"Waste from boats and homestays seems to grow each year." (R34)
	Cultural disruption	tradition_erosion	Perception that tourism leads to loss of customs, rituals, or everyday cultural rhythms	"Some traditional practices are disappearing." (R04)
	Place transformation	place_becoming_other	Sense that the place feels less like home, more like it belongs to outsiders	"Sometimes the city feels divided between spaces for tourists and spaces for locals." (R17)
Host-guest Experiences	Positive interactions	mutual_curiosity	Residents describe friendly or curious interactions with tourists	"I enjoy recommending dishes or telling them about local fishing traditions." (R11)
	Everyday tensions	etiquette_misunderstanding	Minor conflicts due to tourists not knowing or following local norms	"Some misunderstand basic rules about water use or respecting temple areas." (R01)
	Emotional discomfort	felt_disrespect	Incidents where residents felt hurt, invisible, or disrespected	"Once, someone pulled my sleeve to pose for a photo without asking." (R21)

	Unequal power	treated_like_scenery	Feeling objectified or reduced to a backdrop	"It shows how invisible we can feel." (R21)
	Cultural labour	explaining_our_world	Effort residents make to explain customs, foods, or beliefs to outsiders	"I like explaining local food or customs." (R03)
Governance and Regulation	Partial trust	trust_gap	Residents mention effort by authorities but also doubt follow-through	"I think the authorities try hard... but many rules aren't followed strictly." (R20)
	Ineffective enforcement	weak_enforcement	Perception that policies exist but are poorly implemented	"There are policies for tourism, but implementation is slow." (R02)
	Misaligned priorities	surface_management	Officials focus on appearances or festivals but ignore deeper issues	"They decorate the streets beautifully, but behind the scenes, waste piles up." (R21)
	Uneven business practices	inconsistent_ESG	Perceived disparity between responsible and negligent operators	"Some businesses promote sustainable practices, but others still rely on mass tourism." (R15)
Community and Resilience	Strong social fabric	mutual_support	Residents emphasise community solidarity during crisis	"Neighbours shared food and helped each other survive." (R11)
	Tourism vulnerability	fragile_dependency	Concern that reliance on tourism creates economic fragility	"Tourism income feels like a river—sometimes flowing, sometimes dry." (R35)
	Coping with shocks	storm_resilience	Residents note past experience managing natural disasters	"We help each other during storms or shortages." (R04)
	Youth opportunity	local_retention	Tourism enables young people to stay and work locally	"Now some of us can stay and earn a living here." (R03)
Defining Sustainability	Balance ideal	livelihood_ecobalance	View that sustainability means balancing jobs and environmental protection	"Sustainable tourism means enough visitors to support livelihoods without damaging the island's fragile environment." (R01)
	Place-based ethics	protect_what_makes_us_us	Desire to preserve the unique identity of the place and its rhythms	"Sustainable tourism... means preserving the calm and dignity of Hué." (R16)
	Dignity and respect	respecting_people_and_place	View that tourists should respect locals as people, not just providers	"Visitors who see us not just as service providers, but as people

				with our own stories." (R33)
	Cultural continuity	slow_tourism	Preference for mindful, non-invasive forms of tourism	"Fewer but more mindful visitors... protect our fragile old houses." (R26)

Appendix D. Measurement construct

Dimension	Indicator	Source
Perceived Tourism Impact	Perceived Economic Impacts 1. Tourism has created employment opportunities in the community. 2. Tourism has increased the cost of living in the community. 3. Tourism has attracted investments beneficial to the local economy. 4. Tourism has increased business revenue in the area. 5. Tourism contributes positively to the local economy.	Song et al.,(2017) Cadima et al. (2023) Šegota et al. (2022)
	Perceived Socio-Cultural Impacts 1. Tourism has contributed to the preservation of local traditions and heritage. 2. Tourism has caused overcrowding during peak seasons. 3. Tourism has encouraged cultural exchange between visitors and locals. 4. Tourism has fostered stronger community connections	
	Perceived Environmental Impacts 1. Tourism has increased pollution levels in the community. 2. Tourism has improved the conservation of natural resources and the environment. 3. Tourism has caused environmental harm in certain areas. 4. Stakeholders (residents, businesses, tourists, etc.) take responsibility to reduce environmental impacts.	
Host-guest relation	Functional Interaction 1. My interactions with others in the tourism context contribute to my ability to adapt and recover from disruptions. 2. My interactions with others in the tourism context help to maintain a functional and resilient tourism experience during challenging situations.	Tabaeeian, et al., (2022). Liu et al., (2020)

	3. The information shared by tourism stakeholders helps enhance preparedness and resilience during challenges. 4. Timely and accessible information from tourism stakeholders supports resilient decision-making during crises. 5. The willingness of stakeholders to help and respond to issues strengthens the resilience of tourism in the area. Hedonic Interaction 1. Positive interactions with others improve tourists' emotional resilience, making their experience more satisfying despite challenges. 2. The emotional benefits of interacting with others contribute to a more resilient and enjoyable tourism experience. 3. Enjoyable interactions with others can provide tourists with positive memories, contributing to resilience through emotional recovery. Social Interaction with Residents 1. Polite interactions with local residents promote a positive environment, strengthening social resilience in tourism. 2. Easy communication with local residents helps build mutual understanding and support, which strengthens tourism resilience. 3. The willingness of residents to share experiences fosters community resilience, contributing to the overall resilience of the tourism destination 4. Residents' willingness to assist visitors in their time of need supports tourism resilience during difficult moments. 5. Local residents' readiness to help visitors in challenging situations enhances the destination's resilience.	
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	6. Strong interpersonal connections with residents contribute to long-term resilience in tourism communities. Government Interaction 1. The government's communication platforms allow effective dissemination of information, which supports tourism resilience during disruptions. 2. The government's responsiveness to feedback improves destination resilience by addressing issues raised by tourists and residents. 3. Friendly interactions with government representatives create a welcoming environment that supports tourism resilience.	
ESG practices	Environmental 1. The tourism business adopts effective waste management practices, including recycling and waste reduction, contributing to environmental sustainability and enhancing the resilience of the tourism sector. 2. The tourism business promotes sustainable products and services, including eco-friendly transportation and accommodations, which build resilience by adapting to climate change and reducing environmental impact. 3. The tourism business integrates eco-friendly practices, such as renewable energy use and sustainable resource management, strengthening the business's environmental resilience and contributing to long-term sustainability in tourism. Social 1. The tourism business ensures fair wages, benefits, and a healthy work environment for employees, fostering social resilience by supporting employee well-being and	Lin (2024) & Expert's opinions from the result of interview

	contributing to the stability of the workforce. 2. The tourism business consistently offers high-quality, customer-centered products that enhance satisfaction and contribute to social resilience by meeting evolving consumer needs in a competitive market. 3. The tourism business fosters strong relationships with the local community through support for local businesses, cultural initiatives, and job creation, which enhances the overall resilience of the destination and its stakeholders. 4. The tourism business co-creates experiences with both tourists and local communities, contributing to social resilience by ensuring mutual benefits and long-term sustainability for all involved. Governance 1. The tourism business protects intellectual property, ensuring that its offerings remain authentic and competitive, which contributes to the resilience of both the business and the tourism sector. 2. The tourism business invests in research and development to create innovative solutions that adapt to market changes and improve the resilience of the business, ensuring it remains competitive in the evolving tourism landscape. 3. The tourism business operates with transparent governance practices, ensuring ethical decision-making and adaptability, which strengthens its resilience and the overall resilience of the tourism sector in the face of challenges.	
Political trust	1. How much do you trust local elected officials to make the right decisions in tourism development? 2. How much do you trust local government	Nunkoo (2015)

	to do what is right in tourism development without you having constantly to check on them? 3. How much do you trust local government to look after the interests of the community in relation to tourism development? 4. How much do you trust tourism decisions made by local government?	
Tourism resilience	1. The destination is well-prepared to handle crises and disruptions. 2. The destination can adjust and adapt effectively to changes and challenges 3. Stakeholders (tourists, community, and service providers) work together to support tourism recovery." 4. The destination has strategies in place to manage risks and ensure safety. 5. Emergency procedures are clearly communicated to tourists through local channels (e.g., signage, digital platforms). 6. The destination promotes sustainable tourism practices. 7. The destination uses innovative solutions and technology to enhance resilience. 8. Tourism businesses in this area are flexible in adapting services during unexpected events. 9. Enhancement of the quantity and quality of education and interpretation 10. Development of a sense of responsibility among tourists 11. Development of a sense of responsibility among residents and operators 12. Local communities are actively involved in training and awareness programs to handle tourism disruptions. 13. Creation of guide program for residents and tourism operators	Choi et al.(2021) Prayag G. (2023)

Destination sustainability	1. <i>Destination sustainability is ensuring that tourism revenue is fairly distributed to support local communities and infrastructure.</i> 2. <i>Destination sustainability is preserving cultural heritage while involving local stakeholders in tourism planning.</i> 3. <i>Destination sustainability is minimizing environmental impact through effective waste management and eco-friendly practices.</i> 4. <i>Destination sustainability is achieved through transparent governance and fair policies that prioritize long-term development.</i> 5. <i>Destination sustainability is leveraging smart technologies to optimize resources and enhance visitor experiences.</i>	Rasoolimanesh et al., (2025a) Rasoolimanesh et al., (2025b)
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